

Affective Foodscapes in an Economy of Passion:

Repetition, opposition and adaptation in Mexican restaurants in Amsterdam, Madrid and San Francisco

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Thesis

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To Carlos and the power of his passions

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO MEXICAN FOODSCAPES

A sculpture of a virus, made out of spoons.
Charlotte infected me with inspiration for writing this thesis.¹



1. René van Corven. *Charlotte*

1.1 SYNTHESIS

This research analyzes how the desire to affect (*affectus*) and be affected by (*affectio*) foreign bodies informs the commoditization of food products offered in Mexican restaurants in Amsterdam, Madrid and San Francisco. I argue that actors' attachments to passionate networks enable diverse Mexican foodscapes to be enacted. I conceive of foodscapes as intersemiotic translations of landscapes. In these translations, food commoditization is based on relationships with entities dwelling in Mexican and U.S. landscapes. In their efforts to enact these affective foodscapes, entrepreneurs arrange entities according to particular themes, genres and chronotopes; they provide coherence to the translations; and they enable their repetition, opposition and adaptation. The resulting foodscapes have the power (power as both *pouvoir* and *puissance*) to function as potent or impotent signs, which are able to constitute or destroy relations among bodies by fixing beliefs or contaminating new passions.

1.2 THE HISTORY OF A RESEARCH PROBLEM

In 1996, I visited a Mexican restaurant in the Netherlands for the first time. At that time, I was living with a Dutch family as an exchange student from Mexico. A few months after I arrived, the family with whom I was staying took me to a restaurant in The Hague called *Alfonso's*.

I was experiencing some culture shock at the time, and my Dutch family thought that eating Mexican food would help me feel better. When we entered the restaurant, the first image I saw was a human-size cactus smiling and wearing a hat. I remember laughing at the image, which was unlike anything I had ever seen in a Mexican restaurant before. This was my first time visiting a Mexican restaurant abroad, and in fact, it was my first time in a specifically Mexican restaurant: restaurants I had gone to before had simply been restaurants in Mexico. *Alfonso's* was decorated with icons that I knew from cartoons like Speedy Gonzales and American western movies, not from daily life in Mexico. I also saw an image of a drunken fat man wearing white cotton clothes and a straw hat, and carrying a gun.

Once we were sitting, family members asked me for food recommendations. I remember not recognizing many dishes on the menu, and I had a hard time making suggestions. During the meal I also had some difficulty trying to explain how the foods should be eaten. I spent a long time comparing the food that we were eating to the food that I was used to eating at home. At the end of the day, a dinner that was supposed to help me overcome culture shock in fact made me felt even more anxious: I was now experiencing cultural tension between Mexico and the Netherlands, but also struggling with questions about what was supposed to be the culture of my own country. This tension was reinforced during the year that I lived in the Netherlands. On many occasions, people in bars asked me for the “right” way to drink *tequila*. Sometimes they would express skepticism about my explanations and offer an alternative procedure. Other times they accepted my instructions and tried to drink *tequila* the Mexican way. However, I never explained to anyone that, in fact, I learned to drink *tequila* “the Mexican way” in the Netherlands.

I was confronted with similar tensions in private homes. Sometimes people would prepare Mexican food for me and ask my opinion about it. Other times, I would make Mexican food for them. Most of the time they seemed pleased to be eating Mexican food made by a Mexican. However, I did not actually know how to cook before going to the Netherlands. I learned through telephone calls and letters with my family and friends.

On a couple of occasions, people from the student exchange program that I was with (AFS Intercultural programs) asked me to participate in a talent show to share my culture with the other exchange students. The first time I was not sure what to do. Kelly, an exchange student from California, and Marilia Elisa from Venezuela, did not know what to perform either, so we sang the Mexican pop song “La Bamba” together. Since the song was very popular in each of our home countries, we decided that, somehow, it represented all three of us. The next time that I had to perform in the talent show, I was better prepared. Someone loaned me a colorful *poncho*, and I sang a popular Mexican song. People liked my performance. They believed in my Mexican-ness. However, what they did not know was that I had never dressed like that in Mexico nor had I sang such a type of songs. In one year living in the Netherlands I learned how to enact the Mexican body: I learned how to eat, drink, dress and sing like a Mexican.



2. Yearbook of AFS Intercultural programs, the Netherlands, 1997²

Thanks to those awkward Mexican dinners, *tequila*-training parties, and silly Mexican performances, I became curious about how people used to attach my Mexican body to certain objects (e.g. cactus, food, *tequila*, songs and ponchos), knowledge (e.g. how to drink *tequila*), and affections (*affectio*). I became interested in how following those simple attachments I was able to qualify myself as Mexican in the Netherlands. I also started to wonder how the same phenomena extended to restaurants. It seemed that displaying certain objects (e.g. anthropomorphized cactuses, or a drunken fat man in white cotton clothes and hat and carrying a gun) was enough to mark an establishment as Mexican. Somehow, in both cases (my own self and the restaurants), Mexican-ness was produced by attachments to objects and images of a foreign land. By extension, attachments associated our hybrid bodies to affections related to Mexican-ness: happiness, informality, relaxed behavior, etc.

After I returned to Mexico, I started studying Social Anthropology. I was looking for explanations about how Mexican culture was produced by particular attachments to objects, images and affections. However, after four years of studying anthropological theories with a Marxist orientation, my interest in hybrid attachments was eclipsed by my new knowledge about social theory. In my undergraduate studies I became interested in the circulation of economic resources in transnational communities and I did field research in a Mixtec³ community in Fresno, California. The Mixtecos are an indigenous community from the state of Oaxaca, in southern Mexico, the state where my family also comes from.

One day, while I was in Fresno, California, the idea of production of culture through attachments to objects, images and affections crashed into my head once again. I bought a *tlayuda* at a Oaxacan festival. Since I was born in a Zapotec⁴ family, I was very pleased at having the opportunity to eat something distinctive from Oaxaca, the state where Zapotecs are usually from. I very proudly told some Mixtec friends – also from Oaxaca – at the festival that I had just eaten a *tlayuda*. I expected them to understand how happy I was to find a *tlayuda*, something I considered to be quintessentially Oaxacan, in California. Yet to my surprise, they did not have any affection (in the sense of *affectio*) at all for *tlayudas*, and had actually never tried them before. I was confused: How was it possible that people from Oaxaca did not know what a *tlayuda* was? I suddenly understood that my Mixtec friends did not know about *tlayudas* because there is actually no such thing as an all-inclusive “Oaxacan” cuisine.

Indeed, for the Mixtecos at the festival, *tlayudas* and other objects and images presented there were very far away from their quotidian life. I also realized that to some extent the Oaxacan festival in Fresno, California, and *Alfonso's* in The Hague, followed similar practices in the marketing and sale of food products. In both cases, the commoditization of food was based on attachment to selected objects and images of specific landscapes.

After my experience in Fresno, I obtained a master's degree in social anthropology. For my thesis, I did research on Oaxacan restaurants in Los Angeles, California. I was curious about how entrepreneurs strategically used their Oaxacan ethnicity in order to sell food in their restaurants. I assembled a collage of structural and constructivist perspectives to build the theoretical framework for the project. For instance, Bourdieu's theory of capital explained how entrepreneurs used different kinds of capital to set up their entrepreneurial projects (Bourdieu 1997). His theory about the allocation of capital in social structures and *habitus* (Bourdieu 2002) helped me articulate how the consumption of ethnic food was related to the reproduction of U.S. and Mexican social structures. Drawing on perspectives about the instrumental use of ethnicity (Comaroff and Commaroff 1992), I also explained how entrepreneurs manipulate expressive ethnic symbols in order to commoditize food products. This combination of perspectives functioned pretty well and I obtained my master's degree in social anthropology.

A couple of years later, I started my doctoral studies at Wageningen University in the Netherlands. During my research on Oaxacan restaurants in Los Angeles, I had realized that symbols and discourses related to ethnicity were crucial to commoditize foods. In my doctoral research I set out to analyze how Mexican restaurants in European and U.S. cities use different signs and discourses in order to commoditize food products, paying almost exclusive attention to the symbolic realm. Some of the first books I read in my doctoral studies were *We Have Never Been Modern* (Latour 1993) and *Reassembling The Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Latour 2005). Thanks to those books, I realized that what I had done in my master studies was 'sociology of the social' (Latour 2005), while what I sought to emphasize in my PhD was semiotics of culture.

Latour's main critique of the former perspective is the assumption of the social as something that exists 'out there' in micro and macro social structures, institutions, capitals and so forth. However, Latour argues that, in fact, the social is constantly being produced by the active attachment of humans and objects to each other. Without the attachment of things and people, the social vanishes (Latour 2005). The challenge of perspectives that focus exclusively on culture is that they posit an artificial separation of nature and culture, a separation which is the product of an illusory modernity (Latour 1993). From this perspective, culture is embedded in the human mind, while the 'natural' belongs to a different realm. In none of those perspectives is there room for social hybridization among humans (culture) and objects (nature). However, in reality there is a constant process of translation between the two realms. The social can only be enacted through the attachment of humans and non-humans in actor-networks. Latour therefore argues that humans, nature, objects, technology, ideas and symbols (among many others) are actors in networks, inasmuch as they mobilize other actors to produce particular enactments (Latour 2005).

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

I came to understand that exclusively focusing on symbols and discourses in the commoditization of food in Mexican restaurants would amount to adding a new brick to the wall of theory that divides the modern world in two separate realms. I therefore decided to revisit the anxieties that led me to become an anthropologist many years ago: How is my Mexican-ness (and the Mexican-ness depicted at *Alfonso's* restaurant) produced by particular attachments to objects, images and affections? How is it possible that I shared affections (happiness, informality, relaxed behavior, etc.) with a restaurant (*Alfonso's*) because of our attachments to similar objects and images associated with Mexico? I translated those original preoccupations into research questions to explore how the entanglements of objects, images and affections enables the commoditization of food products in Mexican restaurants in European and U.S. cities.

By the time I started my doctoral research, I had visited many Mexican restaurants in many places. I knew that some of them looked quite similar and sold essentially the same food; however, others were very different in their look or approach. I consequently started to wonder how such differences emerged inside the market for “Mexican” food. Why did some entrepreneurs decide to commoditize certain foods in relation to particular objects and images related to Mexico, but not others?

While reviewing restaurants’ websites, I noticed that many owners of Mexican restaurants in Western Europe had gone to Mexico before establishing their businesses, and that it was only after being affected by experiences in Mexico that they decided to open Mexican restaurants in Europe. Some restaurant owners explained that during their trips to Mexico they fell in love with the country, the food, or a particular woman or man. Those passionate stories suggest that entrepreneurial projects are not always developed by rational, goal-oriented actors. Instead, they can be the realized dreams of individuals motivated by many different kinds of passions and emotions.

I then started to wonder how entrepreneurs’ intimate passions influence the commoditization of food in Mexican restaurants abroad. Does variation in the enactments of Mexican restaurants result from the encounter of intimate passions with public signs from the nation? If so, how could I study the role played by immaterial and effusive entities such as affections, belief and desires in the commoditization of Mexican foods?

Much of the literature about food commoditization follows a purely social or purely cultural perspective, where actors are pre-framed by the researcher. Whereas social sciences privilege the analysis of commodity chains in relation to actors organized by social class, capital, structures and institutions, cultural approaches delve into the symbolic realm related to the marketing and significations of food consumption in order to frame actors’ production of meaning. There are some interesting theoretical combinations, but most researchers frame actors’ behaviors before embarking on their studies. Therefore, with the aim of not framing the number or type of actors participating in the enactment of Mexican restaurants prior to beginning my research, I decided to start with a perspective inspired by the principle of “symmetry”⁵ of actor-network theory (ANT).

Specifically, I argue that passion is a relevant actor in the commoditization of Mexican foods abroad, and in many cases a very powerful one. However, passion does not arise out of nothing: passions unfold due to humans' relations with objects and images. Passions are products of hybrid entanglements in which a particular belief has been fixed. In many cases, entrepreneur's intimate passions for objects and images associated with the Mexican landscape have been crucial in launching their entrepreneurial projects, and the food eaten by consumers is the product of those intimate passions.

Gabriel Tarde's *Psychologie Économique* (1902) provided a useful theoretical perspective on the role entrepreneurs' passions play in the commoditization of food. Tarde's economy of passion (Latour and Lépinay 2009) is concerned with the expansion of desire and the fixation of beliefs through processes of repetition, opposition and adaptation. Highlighting the attachment and dissemination of desires, beliefs and objects in the beginning of the 20th century, Tarde inaugurated a new approach to economics that opposed the political and neoclassical economy of his time. Instead of showing how structures and superstructures are reproduced by class exploitation, or trying to establish the rationality behind consumer's economic behavior, Tarde argued that inventions are the real motor of economy. He believed that the coalition of human passions produce radical innovation that are followed by repetitions, oppositions and adaptations.

In my analysis I follow the main principles of Tarde's economy of passion to trace how the entanglement of human passions, objects and images has led to the emergence and differentiation of Mexican restaurants in Amsterdam, Madrid and San Francisco. However, with the aim of broadening the heuristic scope of Tarde's theory, I also draw on concepts derived from philosophy and semiotics (particularly affect, or *affectus*, and affection, or *affectio*, potent and impotent signs, intersemiotic translation and dominant)⁶. Using this combination of approaches, I explore Tarde's economy of passion in empirical terms.

In the next section I present a brief account of perspectives that can be classified as purely social or purely cultural approaches to the commoditization and signification of foreign food. I identify some of their main problems and argue that the alternative perspective that I propose in this project helps avoid falling in the same trap. I then present my proposal to analyze the entanglements of human passions, objects and signs in Mexican restaurants in Amsterdam, Madrid and San Francisco.

1.4 STATE OF ART: SOCIAL AND CULTURAL APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF FOOD FROM ABROAD

The authenticity of foods and their imaginary geographies (Bell and Valentine 1997) are common topics in the analysis of ethnic restaurants. From Girard's (1996) point of view, regional cuisines lose their internal coherence in the process of commoditization. The result is substitutions of traditional dishes with unrecognizable origins or social functions. Girard argues that in modern cities, thousands of fake chefs simplify traditional dishes, adapting them into Western food habits and the laws of the markets (*Ibid*: 183). While Girard denounces the vulgarization of ethnic and regional foods on Western tables, I draw attention to processes

of hybridization and innovation. From an actor-network theory (ANT) perspective, ethnic or regional foods do not exist by themselves. Likewise, ethnicity as an inherent quality or region as an autonomous entity do not exist either; ethnic and regional food are produced in dynamic interactions between human and non-human actors (or *actans*, in ANT terms). However, the attachments are not permanent. People have to put forth a lot of effort in order to continue enacting such relations. It may be that one day an ingredient used to prepare a particular food is no longer available, and a new entity will take its place: a substitution which produces innovation in the network. Likewise, something considered a distinctive food from a particular region today may acquire a different color, shape, or taste tomorrow.

Some researchers argue that in the commoditization of so-called ethnic or regional foods, communicating a sense of place or regional identity is important. For instance, Tellstrom *et al* (2005) argue that the aesthetics of food from abroad is a resource used by entrepreneurs who aim to close knowledge gaps between producers and consumers. Appadurai also acknowledges a knowledge gap about commodities: "...wherever there exists inequality in the knowledge that accompanies the movement of a commodity, problems related to authenticity and experience appear on the scene" (Appadurai 1991: 63). The problem with these perspectives is that the most relevant actors (aesthetics, authenticity, knowledge, etc.) are pre-framed by the researcher. However, when "traditional," "ethnic," or "exotic" foods are commercialized outside the geographical context where they are allegedly produced, even more actors become enmeshed in their networks. Aesthetics, authenticity and knowledge are only a few actors among many (Latour 2005), and they are not necessarily the most relevant in these emergent relations. Any entity, such as a food, technology, a virus, or ideas, can become a significant actor depending on the particular configuration adopted by the network.

Bell and Valentine (1997) and Barthes (1997) describe western consumers' experience with ethnic food products as "gastronomic tourism." However, for many western consumers, ethnic foods have become part of their daily food habits. For people in the United States or Europe, eating *tacos* does not necessarily imply a form of entertainment or the enactment of imaginary travel through Mexico. These cultural explanations contend that consumers' processes of meaning-production occur before their practices; in my project, however, I ask how actors produce meaning in practice.

Warde and Martens (2000), utilizing a sociological approach, suggest that consumers who frequent ethnic restaurants in England are largely young, middle class people with academic backgrounds. Warde and Martens argue that these consumers regard their consumption practices as expressions of an open-minded worldview superimposed upon their cosmopolitan social identities. Gabaccia (2002) likewise frames ethnically heterogeneous eating habits as suggestive of tolerance, curiosity and openness to a culinary multiculturalism. She contends that ethnic restaurants function as scenarios to "make more attractive the image that the consumers want to have of themselves as open to the ethnic diversity and culinary adventures" (2002: 40). For Gabaccia, as well as Warde and Martens, ethnic food consumption corresponds with advanced education and high social class. These authors aver that such actors' consumption practices express their knowledge, sophistication and cultural openness. However, this perspective reproduces the same mistake as the cultural gastronomic tourism and entertainment explanation to food consumption. By positioning consumers in a particular

kind of social structure (young, middle class people with academic backgrounds), these studies reify the existence of a social structure internalized in consumers' minds and externalized in each act of consumption. In such perspectives the social is already defined. In my research, however, I attempt to explain how actors construct the social in practice.

Scholars have also studied ethnic restaurants in host societies as spaces where migrants recreate their ethnic identities and reinforce their notions of community (Kalcik: 1984, Rاسpas: 1984, in Bell and Valentine: 1997). For example, in a study of Mexican restaurants in Los Angeles, Sylvia Ferrero (2002) uses the concept of "foodscape" to refer to the enactment of Mexican food traditions in Los Angeles. She explores how traditional food can fortify ethnic identity and potentially subvert dominant consumer culture. I disagree with Ferrero's framing of ethnicity as an inherent value embedded in immigrants' minds that can be strengthened by the consumption of ethnic food: only the active assemblage of human and objects enact ethnicity. Furthermore, her view that culture can subvert social structures is problematic, inasmuch as ethnicity, as a cultural substance, is rarely, if ever, able to mobilize social structures and subvert dominant actors.

The term "foodscape" was first proposed by Yasmeen in *Bangkok's Foodscape: Public Eating, Gender Relations and Urban Change* (1997). With this term, Yasmeen sought to emphasize the specialization of foodways and the connections between people, food, and places: " 'Foodscape,' drawn from 'landscape,' is a term used to describe a process of viewing a place in which food is used as a lens to bring into focus selected human relations" (Yasmeen 1997: 523). Adema, in *Festive Foodscapes: Iconizing Food and the Shaping of Identity and Place* (2006), also explores the concept of foodscape:

"... when the association between a place and a food item is abstracted and promoted, and the food becomes emblematic of the place, the communal landscape becomes a foodscape. When a locality stages a festive performance of its food-themed identity, it becomes a festive foodscape" (Adema 2006: vi).

A problem with Yasmeen's and Adema's proposals is that foodscapes are described as localized associations of places, food and people. Nevertheless, foodscapes do not need material lands or specific places to be enacted. On the contrary, as explained below, the suffix *-scape* implies its continuous deterritorialization. Sometimes foodscapes emerge in the form of local festivals, other times in the form of restaurants, food products, tableware, paintings, post-cards, etc. I argue that a dynamic and open conception of foodscapes is needed, instead of purely social and cultural frameworks, to study the commoditization of foods from abroad. The concept of foodscapes also helps avoid unproductive dichotomies such as vulgarization-authentication or micro- and macro-structures: in the words of Dolphijn (2004: 10), "foodscapes are never complete, foodscapes are always on the move, they never stop affecting and being affected."

In my study of the commoditization of foods from abroad, I attempt to avoid several problematic assumptions yielded by social and cultural perspectives:

1. The question of foods' "authenticity" or "vulgarization" in processes of commoditization.

Instead, I focus on processes of hybridization and innovation.

2. The attribution of immutable, human, or moral qualities to foods, and vice versa (e.g., the putative links between the consumption of ethnic foods and an individual's moral qualities). Instead, I argue that people's and food's qualities are produced in dynamic interactions.
3. Assumptions about the number or type of actors participating in the commoditization of foods. Instead, I analyze the active constitution of assemblages.
4. Framing actors' production of meaning by superimposing cultural conceptions or positioning them in social structures. Instead, I ask how actors construct meaning in practice.

In this project, I propose an approach in which society and meaning are constantly evolving through the active interaction of human actors' passions, objects, and signs in the enactment of Mexican foodscapes.

1.5 CENTRAL CONCEPTS

In this section I present the main concepts that I utilize as alternatives to the purely social and cultural perspectives presented before. First, I explore the concepts of affect and affection in relation to body politics. Then I delve into Deleuze's semiotics. I propose distinguishing between potent and impotent affective signs in an effort to synthesize Deleuze's complex theory of signs. I continue with an exploration of the concepts of intersemiotic translation, dominant, landscapes and foodscapes. I next argue that Tarde's approach to economics – specifically, his *Psychologie Économique* and theory of *rayons imitatifs* – allows us to understand how processes of repetition, opposition and adaptation enact the passionate networks of the Mexican foodscape. I close this section by explaining how passion is contaminated, fixed and quantified through web pages.

1.5.1 SPINOZA AND DELEUZE: BODIES, POWER AND AFFECTION

Spinoza, the quintessential rationalist philosopher, distinguishes between *affectio* and *affectus*. In English, the closest translation of the former is *affection*, while the latter relates to *affect*. Affection is the instantaneous effect of an image of a thing on the self. Affect is the transition between different instances of affection; affect cannot exist without affection. An affection created in our bodies by a thing can generate a short or everlasting affect in our minds (Deleuze 1981).

For all his rationalism, Spinoza believed that desire, of all things, is man's essence. He argued that men are led more by desire than by reason (Spinoza 2010 [1677]). In discussing Spinoza's and Blyenbergh's passionate correspondence about the nature of good and evil,⁷ Deleuze argues that desire is a form of affection – in the sense of *affectio* – that can only be qualified by its association with an image of a “thing” (*Ibid*). For example, the desire for carnal pleasure can be qualified as an image that finds its “thing” in someone else's body. The image of a thing associated with an action is affection.

A body's affection determines its power to affect and to be affected.⁸ Nonliving and living entities have affections – that is, instantaneous effects – on other bodies. Nevertheless, only living organisms are able to experience such relations, which are affects that increase or decrease bodies' power. In one of his letters to Blyenbergh, Spinoza compares the affection of a blind man with the affection of a stone. He argues that neither the blind man nor the stone is deprived of anything, because neither has visual images. The blind man is as perfect as he can be, judging by his affections (*Ibid*).

Deleuze provides a simple example to explain how affection and affect relate to power in human bodies. He asks us to imagine ourselves in a dark room in two very different situations: 1) meditating and 2) trying to find our glasses. When someone turns the light on, we experience the passage from one state to another: “your whole body is in a kind of mobilization of itself, in order to adapt to this new state. The affect is what? It is the passage. The affection is the dark state and the lighted state... it is your body that makes the transition” (*Ibid*: 6). If you were meditating, you would be furious with the person who turned on the light. If you were looking for your glasses, you would be very pleased. In the first case, you experience a decrease in lived power. In the second case, an increase. As such, the former state relates to sadness, the latter to joy.⁹

Why does the image of a thing decrease my power (*pouvoir*) to act? According to Deleuze, this decrease occurs because “...all things whose relations tend to decompose one of my relations or the totality of my relations affect me with sadness... therefore by the same token, in the same way, it decreases my power” (*Ibid*: 9). If someone turns on the light and I try to continue with my meditation, I have to make a heavy investment of my power in order to prevent the destruction of my relations. I have to fight against both the person who entered the room and the light; they are a single entity trying to destroy my relations.¹⁰ On the other hand, why does the image of a thing mean an increase in my power (*puissance*) to act? Because it agrees with my relations: “...when the relations are composed, the two things of which the relations are composed form a superior individual, a third individual which encompasses and takes them in as parts” (*Ibid*: 11).

Continuing with the example of the dark room, when the light is on and I am able to find my glasses, the light and I form a superior individual who is able to find the glasses; the sum is greater than the whole of its parts, and the result is a relation of joy. In Spinoza's terms, an open body is able to achieve its maximum potential by constituting relations with other bodies. The emergence of a superior individual does not mean that this entity preexists, nor that its components are mere parts; rather, it emerges from the composition of relations (*Ibid*).

Following a similar logic, Latour claims that a body can be understood as an “interface that becomes more and more describable when it learns to be affected by many more elements” (Latour 2004: 1). Consider the nose and palate of a wine taster trained to perceive a great diversity of fragrances and tastes. When the toolkit relates with the wine taster (and many other objects) a new body is enacted. Without the toolkit used in his or her training, there would be only a few fragrances and tastes; there would not be an immense wine world. Michel Serres (1982) refers to such hybrid bodies as quasi-subjects and quasi-objects: To define a clear-cut line between the subject and the object is unproductive; in the enacted network, they are one and the same.

The increase or decrease of power (both *pouvoir* and *puissance*) due to affection and affect takes place in any kind of bodily interaction. The same affection that inspires sadness in me might inspire joy in thousands of people who share the same passion. If that is the case, my animosity toward this affection is going to extend to all the related entities. I will oppose all the entities merging in such relations, insofar as they are opposed to my joy. From this perspective, power is the ability to compose or decompose relations either by destroying the previous ones or by composing new ones.

In the next paragraphs I apply Spinoza's and Deleuze's affection theory to two quotations in order to explain in practical terms how I use these concepts to study relations among entities in Mexican restaurants:

Fabulous Mexican Restaurant, By Miranda's ~ Rites from London, NYC, 06/18/06. Last Visit: June 2006

"What a great find in Covent Gardens area! Cafe Pacifico has everything you could want in a Mexican restaurant: Excellent food and wide array of drinks (alcoholic and non-alcoholic); the *salsa* and chips were incredible and the meals were deliciously authentic. Fabulous atmosphere... FUN!...great music and bar area. The service was friendly and so helpful. I love the warm hostess; she's a doll and will do anything to make your time in the restaurant a great experience. I loved the restaurant so much, I went back two days later with my family...again with delicious and fun experience. Add to your restaurants in the Covent Garden area, conveniently located off the main road. Fun atmosphere."

Mexican? By A Yahoo! Contributor, 05/18/07. Last Visit: April 2007

"I guess I'm used to eating Mexican a little closer to home. This place shouldn't even call what they cook Mexican food. It was more like a frozen Patio brand meal. The *salsa* was more like chunky V8 and the *tortilla* chips were probably made in Belarus and kept in a warehouse in Afghanistan. And they cost 5 euro. The service was pretty good as everyone seemed to be friendly and spoke good English, but they weren't Mexican. Our waiter was Turkish and the other staff looked Middle Eastern. I don't think they know what Mexican food is supposed to be like."

From the first quotation it is evident that Miranda experienced "FUN!" That is, she experienced joy at a restaurant while being affected by diverse entities including its food, drinks, atmosphere, music, architecture and service. Her power (*puissance*) increased because she and the entities from the restaurant agreed in their relations, and in this agreement they composed a third individual. In the second case, the anonymous *Yahoo* contributor did not manage to compose relations with the rest of the entities because s/he was used to eating Mexican food "a little closer to home." His or her power (*pouvoir*) to act – that is, to enact the Mexican body – decreased because the image of the "chunky V8" *salsa*, the Belarussian *tortillas* chips, the warehouse in Afghanistan, the price of the meal and the ethnicity of the staff did not agree with the customer's previous compositions. As a result, this person experienced sadness.

1.5.2 SIGNS AS AN EFFECT OF OUR AFFECTIONS: POTENT AND IMPOTENT SIGNS

Following Spinoza's philosophy, Deleuze identifies two modalities of primary signs. These are experienced from sensuous impressions which affect the body and the mind, as an attribute of bodies' extension and thoughts imprinted in the mind. As such, one type of sign belongs to the realm of affection and other to that of affect:

"A sign, according to Spinoza, can have several meanings, but it is always an effect ..., for example, the effect of the sun on our body, which "indicates" the nature of the affected body and merely "envelops" the nature of the affecting body. We have knowledge of our affections through the ideas we have, sensations or perceptions, sensations of heat and color, the perception of form and distance It has been remarked that as a general rule the affection (*affectio*) is said directly of the body, while the affect (*affectus*) refers to the mind." (Deleuze 1997: 138-139, in Drohan 2010: 283-284).

We are unaware of a sign's implications until we discover its meaning. In the continuous search for its meaning, a sign expressed in different modalities extracts different quantities of power from and adds different quantities of power to my body. Signs take us on a continual search for their meaning. This is Deleuze's first thesis in *Proust and Signs* (2008 [1964]). His second thesis is on the essence of signs and refers to our inability to fix their meaning:

"[T]he sign engenders the very search for its meaning and, thus, announces itself before whatever objects or significations we meaningfully relate to it. Second, even after these meanings have been established, there is nothing to stop a sign from continuing to sign." (Drohan 2010: 277).

The sign and its meaning are always in a state of becoming. They flash from materiality to immateriality, from impression to essence. Deleuze's approach to semiotics is both pragmatic and existential. My thesis is concerned with the pragmatic side of Deleuze's semiotics. Regardless of their essence, signs have a direct effect on our bodies and minds in the here and now. They also have the capacity to trigger similar relations in future encounters with our bodies, because sometimes we have fixed our beliefs on them. We create habits between signs, objects and our minds.

In this research I focus my analysis on two basic forms of signs in order to analyze the way they affect our bodies and minds. 1) Potent signs: signs that have an effect on our bodies and minds by increasing the power (*puissance*) to act and having an effect on other bodies by constituting fruitful relations, and 2) impotent signs: signs that have an effect on our bodies and minds by decreasing their power (*pouvoir*) to act and having an effect on other bodies by destroying relations. Both kinds of signs promote the composition or decomposition of relations between the bodies they encounter, but only the actors who have been affected by them can evaluate the encounters and the particular relations established by the signs. In practice, we tend to create habits in the way we relate to signs that have an effect on our bodies and minds. The composition and decomposition of relations – the continuous increase and decrease of our power – therefore relates to the habits we construct in our lives.

My approach to signs, based on Deleuze's conception of the sign and his theory of power, is closely related to Spinoza's understanding of affections and affects. Within this conception of the sign, I also follow Peirce's pragmatic maxim:

"Consider what effects, that *might conceivably* have *practical bearings*, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our *conception* of these *effects* is the whole of our conception of the object." (Peirce: 1878).

Or in De Waal's terms:

"[A]ny conception...cannot mean anything other than the totality of the practical consequences we can conceive the object of that conception to have. Practical consequences mean experiential effects that can influence future rational or deliberate conduct." (De Waal 2001: 25).

Following this argument, the meaning of any sign is nothing but the conceivable practical effects it has. A sign increases or decreases my power to affect or be affected by other bodies. My particular engagement with a sign promotes the constitution or destruction of relations with other bodies.

1.5.3 STREET SANDWICHES AND FAMOUS ARTISTS: INTERSEMIOTIC TRANSLATION AND THE DOMINANT

Consider the last time you watched a movie based on a book you read. Which did you like better: the movie or the book? Books and movies are different media.¹¹ Every medium has a particular affection due to its highly specific materiality or constituent substance. Therefore, the full translation of information between different media is impossible, since some information is lost and other is gained in the transfer.

The transfer of information between different media is a process of intersemiotic translation (Jakobson 1966 [1959]). In my research, I analyze how landscapes translate into commoditized foodscapes; the latter is the intersemiotic translation of the former. Returning to the question at the beginning of this section, I argue that landscapes share a common status with books, and foodscapes with movies.

Entrepreneurs translate landscapes into commoditized foodscapes. Consumers are able to dispute those translations because they have experienced landscapes in one way or another, e.g. dwelling in them, traveling, surfing the Internet, watching movies; in other words, by having experienced the same landscape in some way, consumers and the entrepreneur have read the same book. Although this book may have the same name for both – let's call it *Mexican Landscapes* – it is a book of multiple beginnings and no end.

The term intersemiotic translation was coined by Roman Jakobson in *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation* (1959). Jakobson argues that intersemiotic translation is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs from nonverbal systems (*Ibid*). Because some information is lost and some is gained in any translation of signs between two different media, Jakobson

also refers to this type of translation as “transmutation.” Intersemiotic translation does not construct equivalences the way intra- and interlinguistic translation does. Instead, what matters is the transmutation of information. As Jeha explains, trying to compare equivalences in the process of intersemiotic translation is like comparing apples with apples pies: “... they are not supposed to be compared, for one is what the other has become” (Jeha 1996: 639).

A prosaic example of intersemiotic translation can be found on the streets of Mexico City, where sandwiches called *tortas* are given the names of famous musicians and artists – e.g., Thalia, Tatiana, Paulina. For example, if an actress is well known for her legs, then a *torta* with a lot of ham – which comes from the leg of the pig – will be named after her. The same metaphorical relationship is extended between other foods and parts of the body. However, in this case, the ham is in an iconic (and ironic) relation with the actress’s legs. How do people recognize these translations? Moreover, how do they come to agree about the distinctive parts of an artist’s body? I argue that people create coordination through practice and recurrence. The relationship between a *torta* and an artist is not stable: it has to be enacted over and over again in order to be preserved. Otherwise it will vanish, and new relations will take over.

Torop (2000) argues that when analyzing intersemiotic translations, it is essential to determine the dominant. From Jakobson’s point of view, “... the dominant may be defined as the focusing component of a work of art: it rules, determines, and transforms the remaining components” (Jakobson 1987: 41). Torop argues that in the practice of translation, the dominant is often imposed on the text, and translating it is subject to presupposed functions and the translator’s aims (Torop 2000).

What is the dominant of the Mexican identity abroad? Happiness, laziness, melancholy? Furthermore, what is the dominant of the Mexican landscape? Desert, forest, beach? Next, what is the dominant of the Mexican foodscape? Juxtaposing these different dominants yields combinations like happiness-desert-*nachos*, laziness-forest-*tortillas*, or melancholy-beach-*tequila*. My argument is that in the commoditization of the Mexican foodscape, the dominant is not imposed, but is instead negotiated among the many actors involved in translating Mexican landscapes into restaurants. In this process, the identity of the constituent entities adapts or is adapted to a dominant which fulfills the translation’s requirements: to become a potent sign capable of affecting the largest number of bodies and minds.

In the process of translation, entrepreneurs select various entities associated with the Mexican landscape. They chose from a vast symbol pool the signs they believe will affect consumers’ bodies in a joyful way, in order to generate economic returns. Entrepreneurs arrange these entities under a specific dominant and its correlated chronotopes (space and time, Bakhtin 1981) in order to provide coherence to the translation. These selections are made according to multiple factors. In some cases the entrepreneurs have lived in the landscapes they are translating –they were born or have traveled there. In other cases, they have had only indirect contact with them – e.g. via communication devices or by working in or visiting Mexican restaurants in Western Europe. This is a creative process of intersemiotic translation. The source text is the Mexican landscape. The target texts are Mexican restaurants in Amsterdam, Madrid and San Francisco. In order to achieve agreements with consumers, entrepreneurs and workers create equivalences and differences between the source and target texts.

Torop argues that the analysis of intersemiotic translations has to take two paired dimen-

sions into account. The first dimension corresponds to analysis-synthesis and relates to the researcher's focus of attention: either the source text or the target text. In the second chapter of this thesis, I focus on the constitution of what I consider the source text: the Mexican landscape. In the chapters that follow, I focus on the target text: Mexican foodscapes in Amsterdam, Madrid and San Francisco.

The second dimension corresponds to transposing-re-coding. It refers to the translation of the content plane (transposing) or the expression plane (re-coding). Re-coding analysis draws attention to linguistic and formal characteristics. Transposing analysis, on the other hand, draws attention to the translator's creativity (Torop 2000: 88-89). Relying on these dimensions, Torop proposed a taxonomical model for analyzing intersemiotic translations. Following his typology, I argue that the different processes of translation between the Mexican landscape and the foodscapes materialized in the form of restaurants can be classified as: 1) thematic, 2) genre-specific and 3) free translations. According to Torop, the dominant of a thematic translation is a theme – the Mexican landscape, in our case. The chronotope of this type of translation also relates to the theme. The chronotope can be archaized or modernized in the process of translation. For example, a Mexican restaurant that depicts pre-Hispanic symbols is an example of an archaized chronotope, while a restaurant where symbols of a Mexican urban world are privileged is a modernized chronotope, but the two share the theme of a Mexican landscape. In the case of translations among genres, the dominant is expressive (formal). Mexican foodscapes vary depending on the chosen genre. The chronotope of this type of translation is abstract. For example, Tex-Mex or Cal-Mex are genres of the Mexican foodscape. Free adaptation renders an individual version of the landscape. The chronotope of this type of translation is concrete. In this case, the entrepreneur's direct or indirect experience with the landscape serves as the dominant.

1.5.4 OBJECT, REPRESENTATION AND EXPERIMENTATION: LAND- AND FOODSCAPES

Tracing the semantic networks between the German term *Landschaft* and the English word landscape, Cosgrove states that the “landscape idea” is “a characteristically modern way of encountering and representing the external world: in its pictorial and graphic qualities, in its spatiality and ways of connecting the individual to the community” (Cosgrove 2006: 5-6). The German *Landschaft* “... applied originally to quite specific locations in the North Sea and Western Baltic regions.” *Landschaften* denote “a particular notion of polity rather than... a territory of a particular size Custom and culture defined a Land, not physical geographical characteristics – it was a social entity that found physical expression in the area under its law” (Olwig 2002: 17 in Cosgrove n.d: 9). The scenic dimension became attached to the geographical landscape “... in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. The designation of landscape as a type of painting was first made by Italian connoisseurs, but was applied primarily to Northern European art works” (Gombrich 1966 cited in Cosgrove 2006: 11).

European mimetic representations of landscapes became possible only after perspective was developed. Thanks to the use of perspective, “... no matter from what distance and angle

an object is seen, it is always possible to transfer it – to translate it – and to obtain the same object at a different size as seen from another position” (Latour 1986: 7). With the use of perspective:

“... a new set of movements are made possible: you can go out of your way and come back with all the places you passed; these are all written in the same homogenous language (longitude and latitude, geometry) that allows you to change scape, to make them presentable and to combine them at will.” (Latour 1986: 7).

The use of perspective enabled the materialization of modern hybrids: “nature seen as fiction, and fiction seen as nature, with all the elements made so homogenous in space that it is now possible to reshuffle them like a pack of cards” (Latour 1986: 8). National landscape representations are examples of modern hybrids. Human bodies, objects and nature from diverse spaces and times are compressed in single frames: quasi-objects and quasi-subjects *par excellence*.

Three-dimensional objects depicting landscape representations were invented in the 17th century. These “included the cabinets from the rare-showmen, wooden stereoscopic boxes, alabaster egg-shaped boxes, dioramic boxes, etc.” (Della Dora 2009: 335-336). Della Dora identifies those inventions as “traveling landscape-objects”:

“[G]raphic representations embedded in different material supports which physicality move through space and time, and thus operate as active media for the circulation of place; worlds in miniature visually and physically possessed by the beholder and yet able to exercise their own agency.” (Della Dora 2009: 336).

Della Dora argues that the landscape representations contained in these objects are not mere visual text. Instead, she prompts us to understand “landscape representations as ‘enchanted’ material objects, or more than human bodies; sensuously interacting with emotional human bodies” (Della Dora 2009: 334). The foodscapes I analyze in this thesis belong to a vast genealogy of landscape objects. They are able to exercise agency due to their interaction with consumers.

In the late 18th century, landscape representations were theorized within the aesthetics of the picturesque, “... a fusion of aesthetics and moral thinking provoked directly by modernity’s social and spatial disruptions...Pictorial, cartographic and parkland landscapes offered media through which questions of national identity were debated” (Cosgrove 2006: 14). Other scholars support the thesis of the picturesque landscape as a tool deployed in the discursive construction of nationalism in the late 19th and the 20th century (Daniels 1993; Mitchell 2002). The represented entities were treated as faces of the nation or affection-images (Deleuze 1983). National landscape representations were able to “... put into material form the matter of dwelling, to adopt Heidegger’s sense of pulling together earth, sky, the divinities (in the pagan sense of the life-sustaining natural elements and forces) and the mortals, individually and collectively” (Cosgrove 2006: 17).

Within the national modern discourse, landscape representations began to function as inscription devices materializing the purified signs of the national discourse. In their construction, entities from multiple temporalities and geographies were connected and framed together. The different types of connectors that hold those framed views together turn them into social entities (Latour 2005) capable of being socialized (Lindström K. 2008). Landscape socialization implies that the identities of the entities are more or less stable, allowing the reenactment of similar landscape representations. Upon materializing in different modalities they become “mobile but also immutable, presentable, readable and combinable” (Latour 1986: 6), functioning as mnemonic sites of national discourse (Lindström K. 2008). National landscape representations convey the idea that diverse entities are:

“... balanced and harmonious, and that harmony is visible geographically. Balance and harmony carry positive moral weight, so that a disordered or formless landscape seems something of contradiction. Scenic values thus come to act as a moral barometer of successful community: human, natural or in combination.” (Cosgrove 2006: 7-8).

The moral judgments related to landscape representations extend the realm of poetics to the terrain of politics. Approaching landscapes from a critical perspective, Mitchell (1996) dissected its “... capacity to ‘naturalize’ social or environmental inequities through aesthetics of visual harmony” (Cosgrove 2006: 5). For example, in *Lie of the Land* (1996), Don Mitchell explores “... in the context of struggles over the form that the reproduction of labor power in industrialized agriculture would take, the connection between the material production of landscape and the production of landscape representations in California” (Mitchell 1996: 2). In a similar vein, Kenneth Olwig argues that “... the role of representation in objectifying the meaning of landscape, and hence the link between landscape and alienation, becomes clear... when the word is broken down into its component parts, *land* and *-scape*” (Olwig 2005: 20). Whereas land is physical, *-scape* is abstract; their arbitrary link defines some abstract qualities – nature, state or constitution – from land’s materiality. When the *-scape* is represented, the land is concretized and can be acted upon:

“... there is thus a certain circularity between the abstract, ideal nature of the land, its representation, and the shaping of the land. This circularity, however, is greatly influenced by the way in which the land is represented, because the mode of representation...is not neutral.” (Olwin 2005: 21).

Landscape’s discursive efficacy also relies on its capacity to provide direct contact with some of those symbols that have been attached to ourselves and other selves as constitutive beings of close environments: sites, regions, nations. As Mitchell has pointed out, landscape “... doesn’t merely signify or symbolize power relations; it is an instrument of cultural power, perhaps even an agent of power that is (or frequently represents itself as) independent of human intentions” (Mitchell 2002: 1-2). Landscape representations fix the power of those entities that are represented. Some people take advantage of these fixations; others try to fight against the representations.

Tim Ingold has criticized the exclusive attention that landscape studies used to pay to the analysis of representations. Instead, he emphasizes the phenomenology of landscape experience. Ingold argues that landscape is not land, nature or space. Landscape is not land because “where the land is qualitative and homogenous, the landscape is qualitative and heterogeneous” (Ingold 2006: 190). And landscape is not nature because it is not outside of the organism: “... in a landscape, each component unfolds within its essence the totality of its relations with each and every other” (*Ibid*: 191). Landscape is not space because “... in the landscape, the distance between two places, A and B, is experienced as a journey made, a bodily movement from one place to the other” (*Ibid*). Ingold’s approach to the study of landscape follows the ever-growing lines of life traced between organisms and living things (objects, in ANT terms), connected by the extension of their bodies. However, Ingold argues that in modern times the fluid lines of life have been fragmented into dots, mostly at the service of capital. Nowadays we travel from point A to point B without knowing what is in the middle. We occupy the environment instead of inhabiting it.

I argue that instead of changing our focus from landscape representations to the organisms and living things inhabiting the landscapes, we have to broaden our scope and pay attention to how landscape representations are constructed and contested by entities which do both: walk and stand, inhabit and occupy. Doing so makes it possible to understand how the diverse organisms and living things which inhabit the environment are continuously translated into landscape representations; how the modern landscape idea has been translated into commoditized foodscapes; and how, in their becoming, landscape representations are contested by experimentation and vice versa.

Mexican landscape representations are used for commoditizing food products in Western Europe are crucial in qualifying them as Mexican. They form the Mexican *socius* (Deleuze and Guattari 2011 [1972]: 10)¹² – fill it with whatever you want. Some icons – the cactus, *sombreros*, deserts, wrestlers – have achieved the status of potent signs capable of generating agreements when enacting Mexican foodscapes. Otherwise, how do we explain the fact that for some European consumers the main characteristics of a *tortilla* are its hardness and its triangle shape – as in *tortilla* chips – but that a flexible, round thing can also pass for a *tortilla*? It is obvious that there is no resemblance between those two very different kinds of *tortillas*. Yet consumers still buy both of them and recognize them as *tortillas*. Where do the consumers’ pre-existing attachments lie in this case? I argue that consumers’ former attachments are not only linked to the material qualities of the Mexican food products, but also to the icons of the landscape used in their commoditization. Soft and hard, triangle and circle – anything is possible when *tortillas* come from idealized landscapes translated into the form of foodscape.

Like landscapes, upon entering the market as a commodity, a foodscape:

“... has a mediated, indirect relationship to physical ontology or place, a foodscape may variously capture or obscure the ecological sites and social relations of food production, consumption, and distribution. Foodscapes involve elements of materiality and ideology and are contested spaces where actors struggle to define the terrain of political action, including the extent of market involvement and private ownership of food.” (Johnston, Biro and MacKendrick 2009: 512-513).

Foodscapes are enacted when food becomes the main entity defining the landscape of a site, region or nation. Food provides a semantic field for multiple entities to organize the relation between land, -scape and food. Foodscapes are both physical and abstract. In representative fashion, foodscapes unfold in different modalities: festivals, food packages, restaurants, art, architecture, books, etc.; each of these modalities can be characterized as a traveling food-scape object.

Rick Dolphijn approaches the concept of foodscape in order to develop a Deleuzian ethic of food consumption (2004). Traveling in the cities of Hangzhou, Boston, Bangalore and Lyon, Dolphijn explores "... how food functions in immanent structures that are always in a process of change..., how food moves in structures, how it changes them, and is changed by them" (Dolphijn 2004: 8). Dolphijn argues for an ethic of food, in the Deleuzian sense of the word:

"It does not come up with rules that inform us to 'what is good', but show us ways of searching for it. Composing a manifold of scapes based on how foods affect and are affected. They compose an ethology as they map the politics and ethics of the real" (Dolphijn 2004: 10).

My conception of foodscape shares similarities with Dolphijn's approach to the concept. From my point of view, foodscapes are always on the move because they are part and parcel of landscapes. Indeed, foodscapes precede, produce and exceed landscapes. Foodscapes precede landscapes because they are products of intensive interactions with the environment, not the consequences of political struggles to shape territorial aesthetics. Foodscapes produce framed views of the landscape when they function as one of the resources used in the representation of harmonic wholes (Cosgrove 2006). Foodscapes exceed landscapes' frames as its intersemiotic translation.

In this thesis I center my analysis on the later modality: foodscapes as lived and represented landscapes. When landscapes translate into foodscapes, food plays the role of a dominant entity providing a semantic field of action for multiple entities that, while they affect and become affected, create and destroy relations.

1.5.5 GABRIEL TARDE AND THE ECONOMY OF PASSIONS

Tarde defines economy as "the science of passionate interests." Tarde's *Psychologie Économique* (1902) is concerned with the inter-psychological¹³ processes that occur when individual passions contaminate other selves due to the spread of *rayons imitatifs* (imitative rays). Tarde's imitative rays echo Spinoza's affections, in that they create relations among bodies affected in a similar way. In the methodological procedures of Tarde's inter-psychology, society is not opposed to the individual, "... but rather, he sees the two as nothing but temporary aggregates, partial stabilizations, nodes in networks" (Latour and Lépinay 2009: 9). The owner of a restaurant, a chef, a waiter, a consumer or an Internet surfer, are nodes of a passionate network with multiple beginnings and no end. They are conceived of as "... a monad, that is a representation, a reflection, or an interiorisation of a whole set of other elements borrowed from the world around it" (Latour 2010: 116). From this point on, the

intimate is also the social. There is no such thing as a micro-macro opposition, but only continuous formation, “... coordination, standardization and compatibility, ending up temporarily resolving certain conflicts through new adaptations” (Latour and Lépinay 2009: 59).

Tarde argues that “[b]ecause value is a highly psychological dimension and one that depends on belief and on desire, it is quantifiable because it possesses a certain intensity” (*Ibid*: 8). Tarde’s notion of value extends to all possible assessments of human beliefs and desires. From his point of view, value is conceived of as “the harmonization of the collective judgments concerning the aptitude of objects to be more or less – and by a greater or lesser number of people – believed, desired or enjoyed” (*Ibid*). Harmonization of judgments is always a partial stabilization; what one consumer might consider the best Mexican restaurant ever, another might perceive as the worst one. To analyse the rhythm of an economy based on passion, Tarde proposed following the postulates of his *Social Laws* (1899). These laws consist of the three basic states any entity follows: repetition, opposition and adaptation.

“The pullulating of living societies whose intertwining forms the texture of the world is not chaotic but ends up by creating interferences, rhythms, and amplifications, on condition that one agrees to discern three stages in this proliferation: the *repetition* of a first instance, the *opposition* created by the repetition, and, finally, the *adaptation* making possible for it to temporarily get out of these oppositions thanks to new differentiations.” (Latour and Lépinay 2009: 34).

After Tarde, Deleuze approached the same principles from a philosophical perspective in his book *Difference and Repetition* (2011 [1968]). Deleuze himself admitted he was inspired by Tarde’s work. For both of them, repetition is at the service of difference and not vice versa. In the coming sections I briefly delve into Tarde’s *Psychologie Économique*. I follow the three facets he proposes to understand how the intertwining of different sorts of passions participates in the emergence, consolidation and differentiation of markets. I argue that the Mexican foodscape and its many actualizations follow Tarde’s basic laws of repetition, opposition and adaptation.

1.5.6 REPETITION OF PASSION

History demonstrates how the contamination of individual passions creates and destroys institutions, communities and markets:

“[P]assions of unprecedented intensity, prodigious ambitions of conquest, a sort of new religion, socialism, and proselytizing fervor unknown since the primitive Church. These are the interests, the passionate interests, which it is a question of making agree with one another and with the equally passionate interests of billionaire capitalist, no less inebriated with the hope of winning, the pride of life and the thirst of power” (Tarde 1902, in Latour and Lépinay 2009: 24).

From Tarde’s point of view, communicating our thoughts to others is equivalent to a gift of asset, the unilateral beginning of an exchange of goods. In Tarde’s economy, a simple syl-

logism constructed through spoken or written language has the power to affect other minds and transmit passion:

“If it is a question of forcing our judgments into someone else’s head, through demonstration, we will need a more or less explicit syllogism, that is, a relationship between species and genus or between genus and species, established between two ideas, which means that one is included in the other, is of the same type (indeterminate or determinate but real) of things which are similar, and perceived as similar, that the other, the general proposition, encompasses and contains.” (*Ibid*: 40)

Following Spinoza and Deleuze’s semiotics, it is possible to extend Tarde’s “syllogism” to any kind of affection imprinted in our bodies. For example, the general atmosphere of a restaurant can be considered as an affection capable of affecting minds by imprinting multi-modal signs – colors, lights, sounds, smells, tastes, etc. – in consumers’ bodies. In this case, the contamination occurs as open bodies encounter a potent affection.

The repetition of passionate interest spreads by constituting and destroying relations among entities. These relations can form superior individuals (Deleuze 1981) which are able to function as potent or impotent signs through the contamination of their passions – from the owner of a restaurant to the chef, from the chef to a waiter, from the waiter to a consumer and from the consumer to a virtual reader of a post on the internet, “... there is a continuous and invisible transmission of feeling – an exchange of persuasions and excitement through conversations, through newspapers, through example – which precedes commercial exchanges” (Tarde 1902, in Latour and Lépinay 2009: 39). Many of the commercial exchanges that occur in restaurants are preceded by the contamination of passion via internet. Before visiting a Mexican restaurant in Amsterdam, Madrid or San Francisco, many consumers have searched online for restaurants, reading reviews, critiques and recommendations. They know what to expect. Some of them even know what to order; they have been contaminated by someone else’s passions. The repetition phenomenon extends to all the entities participating in the economy of passions: from the repetition of a thought to the repetition of the aesthetic lines of Mexican restaurants. However, repetition also produces differentiation through the opposition of passions.

1.5.7 OPPOSITION OF PASSION

Once the partial stabilization of the qualities that characterize goods is achieved through the contamination of passions, the problem of differentiating among similar goods arises:

“In fact, every time any one of us hesitates between two modes of verbal expression, two ideas, two beliefs, or two modes of action, it means that an interference between two imitation-rays takes place in him; these rays have started from different generating centers, often widely separated in space and time (namely, certain individual inventors and imitators of primitive times), and have spread onward, till they reached the individual in question. And how is his difficulty solved?” (Tarde 1899: 64-65).

I have been asked numerous times in Europe about the difference between *tacos* and *tortillas*. Some people claim that *tacos* are the ones with the hard shell; a soft *tortilla taco* is not a *taco* but a *tortilla*. Hard corn triangles (*tortilla* chips) are considered *tortillas*, not *tacos*. Why does the *taco-tortilla* dilemma arise in the European market? How do consumers solve *taco-tortilla* dilemmas? Following the principles of Tarde's *Psychologie Économique*, the origin of *taco-tortilla* dilemmas is found in the second law of his *rayons imitatifs* theory: the opposition phenomena. First of all, Tarde warns us not to confuse the real phenomenon of opposition with that of extreme contraries:

“Opposition is erroneously conceived by the average thinker as the maximum degree of difference. In reality, it is a very special kind of repetition, namely, of two similar things that are mutually destructive by virtue of their very similarity.” (*Ibid*: 86).

Tarde argues that there are two kinds of oppositions, simultaneous or successive: “In the former there is a collision, strife, and then equilibrium; in the latter there is alternation and rhythm. In the former there is always destruction and loss of energy; in the latter there is neither” (*Ibid*: 93). These two kinds of opposition are auxiliary and have an intermediate character: “As rhythm, it is only of direct service to repetition, and of indirect service to variation, and it disappears when the latter appears. As strife, it is only of use in stimulating adaptation” (*Ibid*: 143). In Western Europe, flour and corn soft *tortillas* can be considered successive opposition that produces rhythm at the service of variation. Flour and corn soft *tortillas* are in simultaneous opposition with hard shell *tortillas*, because the latter are no longer conceived of as *tortillas* by European consumers, but as *tacos*.

Following Tarde's law of opposition, Thrift has proposed that in contemporary capitalism, aesthetics¹⁴ allows consumers to differentiate among similar products. Thrift conceives aesthetics as an “affective force.” From his point of view, a product's aesthetics generates affects capable of being amplified and reproducing value: “... many of the objects and environments that capitalism produces have to demonstrate the calculated sincerity of alluring if people are to be attracted to them” (Thrift 2010: 290). Thrift's concern for aesthetics as an affective force reminds us that what reproduces an economy is not only the production of differentiation: what makes a market grow is the power of objects to trigger passions.

1.5.8 ADAPTATION OF PASSION

As I have argued in the last two sections, similitude and difference are the two basic stages of products and goods in markets: “Different and similar, singular and comparable, such is the paradoxical nature of the economic goods constituting the dynamics of markets” (Callon *et al* 2002: 201). But what about radical innovation which changes market patterns? Tarde argues that when opposition is not a successive rhythm but a simultaneous collision producing strife, two different phenomena can be expressed; one is the consequence of discordances; the other a product of harmonious synthesis:

“[T]he discordant sides of their nature come together in certain minds, giving rise to logical or teleological duels, which constitute first germs of social oppositions (wars, competitions, and polemics); while the harmonious sides of their nature come together in the mind of the Genius or sometimes even in the ordinary mind, producing true logical syntheses, inventions, and fruitful originations, which are the source of all social adaptation.” (Tarde 1899: 135-136).

Tarde’s simultaneous and successive oppositions and Spinoza’s constitution and destruction of relations refer to a similar phenomenon. Recall the example of the dark room presented before: if we are meditating and someone turns on the light, a collision occurs. There is destruction, we lose energy and power. On the other hand, if we are trying to find our glasses and someone turns on the light, we gain power and form a new rhythm, a superior entity. Simultaneous opposition produces sadness, while a successive one produces joy.

A logical synthesis due to simultaneous opposition implies putting together some of the qualities that define the identity of two objects, creating a new object with a particular identity capable of producing joy in the minds and bodies who relate to it. For example, in Los Angeles, Korean-style grilled meat and Mexican *taco*-style *tortillas* were synthesized in Mark Mangera’s mind in order to create “Korean *tacos*.” The resulting entity has produced joy among the thousands of consumers who have related to it. The new entity resulted so powerful that many have repeated the formula across the U.S. The contamination of passion for this new entity spread via Twitter and other technological devices, and, amazingly, Korean *tacos* have become a culinary trend in the U.S.¹⁵

In Tarde’s *Psychologie Économique* there are no definitive plans in the development of markets. There are only potential paths of growth via imitation and destabilization due to opposition and adaptation. The problem can be summed up as follows:

“To grasp as closely as possible the genesis of inventions and the laws of imitations. Economic progress supposes two things: on the one hand, a growing number of different desires, for without a difference in desires, no exchange is possible, and, with the appearance of each new, different desire, the life of exchange is kindled. On the other hand, a growing number of similar exemplars of each desire taken separately, for, without this similitude expands or prolongs itself, the more production is widened or reinforced.” (Tarde 1902, in Latour and Lépinay 2009: 35).

From Tarde’s point of view, inventions necessarily produce differences, and repetition allows for their diffusion:

“... conflict is inevitable; no pre-established harmony allows for a solution ...: it is necessary to invent yet other solution in order to temporarily generate other innovations, which, by repeating themselves, will produce other differences, and the cycle will begin again.” (*Ibid*: 39).

The interference of desires promotes innovation, changing the paths of markets in a gradual process consisting of multiple creative explosions. Some create joy, others produce sadness. The intersection of desires and passions is better suited to providing information on the probability of inflection points. Whereas the cognition of products is possible due to the partial

stabilization of their qualities and values, innovation is the destabilization of such agreements due to the simultaneous and successive opposition of desires in the networks of production. The supreme law in Tarde's economy is not negation, "... but rather invention, which, once repeated obstinately, brings about countless struggles, which can only be gotten out of through other inventions" (Latour and Lépinay 2009: 35). In Tarde's economy, inventions are the main form of capital. Savings, goods and products are only secondary forms:

"In my view, there are two elements to be distinguished in the notion of capital: first, essential, necessary capital: that is, all of the ruling inventions, the primary sources of all current wealth; second, auxiliary, more or less useful capital: the products...born from these inventions." (*Ibid*: 49, 50).

Once the phenomena of repetition, opposition and adaptation have been explored, it is possible to zoom in on Tarde's *Psychologie Économique* as follows: passions spread via communicative encounters and technological devices, acting as production factors. The desire to affect and be affected by other passions launches markets. Any achieved agreement is temporary, but the basic fact of an economy based on passion means that new oppositions will appear and the process will begin anew.

1.5.9 QUANTIFICATION OF PASSION

By following the contamination of passion through repetition, opposition and adaptation, Tarde attempted to develop economics into a truly "quantitative science." He wanted to take into account all the possible valuations made by people in relation to an object of passion. Only by the quantification of all the subjective valuations, Tarde argued, was it possible to "... bring to light that which was hidden [by the traditional political economy] and ask the signified for an explanation of the signifier, and ask the human spirit for an explanation of social material" (Tarde 1902, in Latour and Lépinay 2009: 12).

Latour has proposed the term "valuameter" referring to all the technological devices used to display "metrological" work inside consumer's networks. The term valuameter describes "... all of the devices which make visible and readable the value judgments that form the foundation of what Tarde calls economics." (Latour and Lépinay 2009: 16). Valuameters build metrological chains facilitating the comparison of subjectivities (Latour and Lépinay 2009: 19). Contemporary media offer excellent tools to aggregate the social and disaggregate the individual. Thanks to new media we are able to:

"... navigate on our screens from the individual data points to the aggregates *and back*...the "whole" is now nothing more than a provisional visualization which can be modified and reversed at will, by moving back to the individual components, and then looking for yet other tools to regroup the same elements into alternative assemblages." (Latour 2010: 116).

The "whole" to which Latour refers is the early forms of mass media – such as newspapers,

books, and TV – where statistics used to be presented as bulks of information and where the possibility for disaggregation was canceled. Nowadays, Tarde’s quantification of passion is widely accessible thanks to the interactivity offered by new media. In 2008, when I was doing field research in Amsterdam, a TV commercial announcing the new KPN services showed a couple in their 50’s in front of a restaurant. The man was reading the menu on the restaurant’s front wall to decide if it was a good idea to enter. Meanwhile, the woman was using her cell phone to read consumer reviews of the place. The marketing campaign was titled “KPN generations” and the main goal was to promote new ways to affect and be affected through technological devices. The use of a restaurant website to decide where to eat or to report where you have eaten is a clear example of a valuation process based in the metrology work done by consumers who wish to share their passions. The main characteristic of these website is to serve as valuemeters of the subjective. Therefore, websites have developed innovative ways for quantifying passions, belief and desires.

The new media and technology that operate through many of our modern devices – computers, smartphones, iPads – offer everyday consumers the possibility of tracing the social quantum backwards and forwards; one click is enough to affect and be affected by other consumer’s passions. That is feasible because new media offers the opportunity of sending individualized messages to an infinite number of people, while each person involved shares reciprocal control over the content (Crisbie 2002). Nevertheless, new media enabled the possibility for the creation of a truly dialogical space only when more interactive options were offered to consumers, specifically with the arrival of what was initially known as “Web 2.0.”¹⁶ These new interactive options enable users with relatively little technical knowledge to easily exchange information and engage in dialoge with other users, even if they do not know one another; the hallmark of Web 2.0 is that users are recognized now as practitioners (Harrison and Bartel 2009). Interactivity¹⁷, hypertextuality¹⁸ and hypermediacy¹⁹ were the main characteristics of Web 2.0 websites. The non-linear interactive fashion in which information is rendered in those web pages seems to be chaotic, but in fact, as Tarde pointed out more than a century ago, “... the pullulating of living societies whose intertwining forms the texture of the world is not chaotic but ends up by creating interferences, rhythms and amplifications” (Tarde 1902, in Latour and Lépinay, 2009: 39). The internet’s most interactive tools allow us to trace those interferences, rhythms and amplifications backwards and forwards:

“If statistics continues to progress as it has done for several years, if the information which it gives us continues to gain in accuracy, in dispatch, in bulk, and in regularity, a time may come when upon the accomplishment of every social event a figure will at once issue forth automatically, so to speak, to take its place on the statistical registers that will be continuously communicated to the public and spread abroad pictorially by the daily press.” (Tarde 1903, 167-168).

Tarde’s time has come. Nowadays it is common to browse on websites to check for the rankings on the most diverse social issues and measure patterns of consumption. Valuemeters, glorimeters and egometers are populating our virtual world. In the empirical chapters of this thesis, I show how these technologies enable the quantification of consumer’s passions in relation to the Mexican foodscapes.

1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

My approach to the theories and concepts presented above lead to the main objectives guiding this thesis:

1. To understand how Mexican restaurants in Amsterdam, Madrid and San Francisco have generated innovation in the commoditization of food products through the translation and coordination of humans' passion, objects and signs.
2. To explore the main postulates of Tarde's "economy of passion" from an empirical perspective, with the aim of understanding the role played by desires, beliefs and affections in the commoditization of food products through Mexican restaurants.

1.7 CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTION

In light of the considerations in the state-of-art section above and the concepts I have chosen to follow, I present the main research questions guiding this thesis:

How do actors attached to passionate networks translate landscapes into affective Mexican foodscapes materialized in restaurants in Amsterdam, Madrid, and San Francisco?

1.7.1 RESEARCH SUB-QUESTIONS

1. How did diverse bodies, affections and environments become historically assembled in the enactment of the Mexican landscape representations which have allowed the repetition, opposition and adaptation of foodscapes in Amsterdam, Madrid and San Francisco?
2. How do entrepreneurs translate their intimate affections for objects and signs associated with the Mexican, Texan and Californian landscape into commoditized, materialized foodscapes in Amsterdam, Madrid and San Francisco?
3. How do chefs, waiters and managers affect consumer's bodies in order to contaminate their passions for a particular foodscape?
4. How do consumers enact or reject the Mexican body when delving into Mexican foodscapes?
5. How does the virtual world actualize the enactment of Mexican foodscapes by expanding entrepreneurs' desires and fixing consumers' beliefs in particular objects and signs?

1.8 METHODOLOGY

In order to answer these research questions, I draw on a methodology composed of mixed research techniques to obtain qualitative data. I conducted three main periods of field research in Amsterdam, Madrid and San Francisco. During my field research, I manage to get jobs at a couple of Mexican restaurants in Madrid. In the rest I did extensive participatory observation and held open interviews and interactions with restaurant owners, workers and consumers. I also use of virtual ethnography in order to follow actors through the internet. I focused mainly on three Web 2.0 websites where people describe their consumption experiences in restaurants. I have followed the actors I talk about in this thesis since the very beginning of the research project. I have also written articles and posts about Mexican restaurants in Western Europe and the U.S. on two websites. When using a citation taken from a web page, the virtual names of the actors are provided. I have registered all those interactions in field diaries and recorded more than 100 hours of open interviews. All these materials have been transcribed. I also developed an audiovisual corpus from all the Mexican restaurants I visited. Different categories of systematization were created in relation to the specific topics explored in the course of this thesis.

I chose to situate my research in Amsterdam, Madrid and San Francisco because I wanted to implement the study in countries representing contrasting historic relations with Mexico. For instance, while the Netherlands almost entirely lacks such relations, Spain is saturated with them. On the other hand, while Spain has a historic relation with Mexico, U.S. has a contemporary and vigorous one. I chose Amsterdam and Madrid because they have the largest number of Mexican restaurants in their respective countries, and the oldest Mexican restaurants in Western Europe are located there. In the case of San Francisco my decision was due to the fact that this city has the largest concentration of Mayan-Yucatecan restaurants in the United States, and likely outside of Mexico. In my master's thesis I explored the case of the Oaxacan restaurants established in greater Los Angeles, and on this occasion I wanted to study the case of the Yucatecan restaurants. My aim was to explore how Mexico's regional cuisine has been commoditized abroad and what were the similarities and differences were in comparison with the commoditization of the Mexican foodscape.

Setting off on my research, I believed that the historic relationships between each of the three countries with Mexico would be reflected in and would shape the intersemiotic translations between Mexican landscapes and foodscapes: the more closely related the actors, the better the translation. While the translations from Amsterdam should be diffuse, the ones from San Francisco should be transparent. But no, that was not the case. Indeed, I did not find three more or less homogenous phenomena to compare, with regard to the countries' historic relations. What I found could better be described as a multitude of vibrating foodscapes, exploiting and de-stabilizing in different ways the identity of all the actors that fall under the jurisdiction of a transnational Mexican foodscape: Tex-Mex (Texan-Mexican), Cal-Mex (Californian-Mexican), regional-Mex (Mayan/Yucatecan-Mexican), Mex-Mex (Mexican-Mexican) and "Real"-Mex (urban and Mexican *haute* cuisine) are some of its genre actualizations. Therefore, instead of taking a comparative approach, looking for contradictions and recurrences between Amsterdam, Madrid and San Francisco, I instead analyze different

foodscapes that have repeated, opposed and adapted to the aforementioned genres.

The foodscape genres that I analyze in this thesis are a synthesis of entrepreneurs', consumers' and food critics' beliefs. While the categories Tex-Mex, Cal-Mex, Mex-Mex are commonly used by actors, I coined the terms regional-Mex (Mayan-Yucatecan food is identified by some consumers and food critics as Mexican regional foods) and "Real"-Mex (since some entrepreneurs in Madrid insist that they commoditize foods from the *real* Mexico, not a stereotypical one) with the intention of continuing the logic of the existing nomenclature. However, in practice the active translation of the Mex-foodscapes genres promotes its constant hybridization and purification.

I conducted different periods of field research between 2008 and 2010. The first formal visit was to Amsterdam between June and November, 2008. The second period occurred during December, 2008 in San Francisco. This field research period was a collective one. I conducted the research with Leah Muse-Orlinoff, a friend (and editor of this thesis) who was doing her PhD in the Department of Sociology of the University of California San Diego at the time. Our research was funded by UCMEXUS as part of the project "Modeling Migrant Networks: Yucatecan Migrants in San Francisco, California." In consequence, most of the data I present in the chapter five, "Regional-Mex: The Mayan-Yucatecan foodscape in San Francisco", was jointly collected. I carried out a third period of field research in Madrid from February to July, 2009.

In August, 2009 I traveled the U.S. "cross country"²⁰ with the same friend with whom I had conducted field research in San Francisco. We traveled from San Diego to New York, following the Mexican-U.S. border until Louisiana. From there we went north until reaching New York. We visited as many Mexican restaurants as we could and we wrote about them in a blog called *Cabeza de cochino*.²¹ I decided to carry out this trip because I wanted to experience signs similar to the ones that had imprinted the bodies and minds of the entrepreneurs, workers and consumers about whom I talk in this thesis. It was after this trip when I started to understand the differences and similarities among the Mex- foodscapes in relation to a multiplicity of deterritorialized landscapes. After these experiences, I returned to Europe and continued visiting Mexican restaurants in Amsterdam and Madrid.

During my field research in San Francisco, I registered nine Yucatecan-Mayan restaurants. Most owners of the San Francisco Bay area-based Mayan-Yucatecan restaurants were migrants from Yucatán, although some came from Cuernavaca (a city in central Mexico) and Vietnam. I conducted participatory observation and open interviews in five of those restaurants. By July, 2010, when I concluded field research in Amsterdam, I had registered 17 Mexican restaurants. I conducted participatory observation and open interviews in seven of these restaurants. Most of the owners of the Amsterdam-based Mexican restaurants were local residents, and were migrants from the United States, Middle East or Latin America. In the cases of Amsterdam and San Francisco, when a restaurant owners was Asian (two cases) or Middle Eastern (three cases) it was harder to establish the rapport necessary to conduct field research. I assume that they felt threatened by the research, since they were commoditizing a cuisine very different than their own. In the rest of the cases, restaurant owners were open to my research. In December, 2010, when I formally finished my field research in Madrid, I had registered 74 Mexican restaurants. Most of the owners of the Madrid-based Mexican

restaurants were Spanish or migrants from Mexico and Latin America. In Madrid I visited 22 Mexican restaurants. However, I came to know about the existence of all 74 Mexican restaurants through the organization *Sabores Auténticos de Mexico* (SAM).²² During the time I was conducting field research in Madrid I collaborated with this organization as external consultant.

I tried to get a job in Mexican restaurants in Amsterdam and Madrid in order to become an actor inside the foodscapes. In the case of Amsterdam, that proved impossible. I visited all the Mexican restaurants in Amsterdam, but owners did not want to hire me because of my lack of a full working permit. Some of them claimed that it was not convenient to employ students, since they are not allowed to work full time. To them, it was also strange that someone wanted to work without being paid. Fortunately in one restaurant I was allowed to conduct my field research without restrictions. In the rest of the cases I only did interviews with the owners and workers and had select interactions with consumers. In Madrid I got a job for several weeks at a couple of Mexican restaurants. I also did interviews with the owners, workers and consumers from other restaurants. Because of the short time that I conducted field research in San Francisco, I did not manage to get myself employed in the Mayan-Yucatecan restaurants. I only worked as volunteer for a day in one of them. However, I held open interviews with different owners, workers and consumers. The case studies I present in that section of my thesis were chosen because of the high quality of the information I obtained during the field research and their relevance for the central argument.

While working in the restaurants I usually introduced myself openly to owners, workers and consumers, so that they knew that I was conducting field research. All of the people I interacted with in those places agreed to be a part of a study of this kind. All of the names provided in the citations related to the cases of Amsterdam and Madrid are genuine. In the case of the Mayan-Yucatecan restaurants in San Francisco most of the names are fictitious, because it was requested by the collaborators or because I consider it important to keep their names anonymous. The names of all the restaurants I talk about are the original ones.

1.9 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

In Chapter 2 I answer the first research question raised in this thesis. I explore how nature, aesthetic forms, bodies, affections, moral ideas, technology and other entities were historically translated, allowing the enactment of representations of the Mexican landscape. In this chapter's different sections I delve into the production and commoditization of multiple metaphoric bodies that dwell in Mexican landscapes; the Corn, Flour, Corn-Flour and *Tortilla-Chip* bodies. I argue that some of those landscapes and bodies, and the affections associated with them, have been constituted as dominants of Mexican foodscapes. Those relations are used in the process of commoditization of Mexican foods abroad.

In Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 I answer the rest of the research questions raised in this thesis. All the chapters are informed by three case studies (Chapter 7 consists of four cases) that illustrate in detail how processes of repetition, opposition and adaptation enact passionate networks. In these empirical chapters I explore the different translations from the Mexican

landscape into foodscapes. I argue that in the process of translation, entrepreneurs select various signs associated with the Mexican landscape idea. They choose from a vast symbol pool the signs they consider capable of affecting consumers' bodies in a joyful way and generating economic earnings. Entrepreneurs arrange all those entities under a specific dominant and its correlated chronotopes in order to provide coherence to the translation. I identify five main genres among those translations: Tex-Mex, Cal-Mex, regional-Mex, Mex-Mex and "Real"-Mex foodscapes. On a meta-level, those genres relate to a particular theme: the Mexican landscape. In practice, all these foodscapes are free translations attempting to generate agreements with consumers.

In the concluding chapter I present the main research findings derived from the analysis of the general tendencies I found in the empirical chapters. In this thesis I am not interested in making predictions about future innovation in the Mexican food market. However, the information provided in the different chapters can be helpful for actors interested in making such a type of predictions or for the ones interested in commoditize food products by attaching to them objects and images related to Mexican-ness. Hopefully, this study will diffuse some awareness about the ethical implications of commoditized food products relying on attachments to national passions.

NOTES

1. The sculpture is in the botanical garden 'Arboretum' in Wageningen, Netherlands.
2. Photo collage of myself dressing a poncho and standing next to a fake cactus with the legend "Max: een echte Mexicaan? Echt niet" (Max: a real Mexican? not really).
3. Indigenous ethnic group from Oaxaca, Mexico.
4. Indigenous ethnic group from Oaxaca, Mexico.
5. Latour argues that to be symmetric simply means: "not to impose a priori some spurious asymmetry among human intentional action and a material world of causal relations" (Latour 2005: 64).
6. The author and the editor beg the readers' patience with any initial confusion that may result from the use of the terms "affect," "affection," and "potent signs." These terms, which are taken from and inspired by the work of Deleuze and Spinoza, are used throughout this thesis in order to draw attention to the complex relationships established when diverse entities coincide and yield repetitions, oppositions, and adaptations.
7. Letter XXXVIII. (XXVII.): *Spinoza to Blyenbergh. Benedict de Spinoza, The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza*, vol. 2 [1662] http://oll.libertyfund.org/?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=1711&chapter=199499&layout=html&Itemid=27 Accessed: 10/01/2011
8. In the translation notes of Deleuze and Guattari's "A Thousand Plateaus" (2004), Brian Massumi states that "two words for "power" exist in French, *puissance* and *pouvoir*. In Deleuze and Guattari, they are associated with very different concepts (although the terminological distinction is not consistently observed). *Puissance* refers to a range of potential. It has been defined by Deleuze as a "capacity for existence," "a capacity to affect or be affected," capacity to multiply connections that may be realized by a given "body" to varying degrees in different situations. It may be thought of as a scale of intensity or fullness of existence (or a degree on such a scale), analogous to the capacity of a number to be a race to a higher "power" ... the authors use *pouvoir* in a sense very close to Foucault's, as an instituted and reproducible relation of force, a selective concretization of potential"

(Deleuze & Guattari 2004: xviii).

9. In *Navigating Movements* (2002), Massumi explains that "... joy for Spinoza (or 'gaiety' in Nietzsche's vocabulary) is not the opposite of unhappy. It's on a different axis. Joy can be very disruptive, it can even be very painful. What I think Spinoza and Nietzsche are getting at is *joy as affirmation*, an assuming by the body of its potentials, its assuming of a posture that intensifies its powers of existence. The moment of joy is the co-presence of those potentials, in the context of a bodily becoming. That can be an experience that overcomes you" (Massumi 2002).). In: <http://www.brianmassumi.com>. Accessed: 12/12/2011
10. This "single entity" can be also understood as a third individual: "When I spoke of a third individual of which the two others are no more than parts, it doesn't at all mean that this third individual preexists, it is always by composing my relations with other relations, and it is under such a profile, under such an aspect that I invent this third individual of which the other and myself are no more than parts, sub-individuals" (Deleuze 1981). In: <http://www.webdeleuze.com>. Accessed: 12/12/2011
11. I start from a universal conception where *media* are means of reaching others (Mulder 2006). From this point of view, media are understood as any entity that carries, expresses or utters meaning, including bodies, dogs, pens, clouds, languages, or books. Any entity can become a media when it mediates meaning for an entity.
12. Deleuze and Guattari identify this *socius* with capital. They argue this is the Body Without Organs [BWO] of the capitalist being: "... in a word, the socius as a full body forms a surface where all production is recorded, whereupon the entire process appears to emanate from this recording surface" (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 10).
13. Latour and Lépinay argue that "Despite Durkheim's well-known criticism of him, what Tarde designates as psychological phenomenon never refers to anything personal or interior to the subject – what he latter calls "intrapyschological" and about which he often assets that nothing can be said – but always to that which is the most social in us, and which he calls, for this reason, "inter-psychological" (Latour and Lépinay 2009: 9).
14. Thrift's conception of aesthetics: "Aesthetics is the way we communicate through the senses. It is the art of creating reactions without words, through the look and feel of people, places, and things [...] aesthetics may complement storytelling, but is not itself narrative. Aesthetics shows rather than tells, delights rather than instructs. The effects are immediate, perceptual, and emotional" (Thrift 2010: 291).
15. Gelt, Jessica, 2009, "Kogi Korean BBQ, a *taco* truck brought to you by Twitter." <http://www.latimes.com/features/la-fo-kogi11-2009feb11,0,4771256.story>. February 11 2009. Accessed: 2/09/2010
16. The term Web 2.0 was proposed in 2004 by O'Reilly (Graham, 2005 in Harrison and Bartel, 2009: 159): "Web 2.0 services and applications make possible more dynamic interactions between clients and servers, more engaging webpage displays and applications and ultimately more direct, interactive and participative user-to-user interactions than heretofore experienced on the web" (Harrison and Bartel, 2009: 157).
17. "Interactivity implies the capacity of a communication medium to be altered by or have its products altered by the actions of a user or audience, as well as suggesting a technology which requires input from a user to work effectively" (Cover, 2006: 42).
18. "... is the presentation of information as a linked network of nodes which readers are free to navigate in a non-linear fashion. It allows for multiple authors, a blurring of the author and reader functions, extended works with diffuse boundaries, and multiple reading paths" Hypertext: towards a definition. In: www.media-studies.ca/articles/hypertext.htm. Accessed: 30-11-2010
19. In the words of William J. Mitchell (1994) this aesthetic style "[...] privileges fragmentation, indeterminacy, and heterogeneity and... emphasizes process or performance rather than the finished art object" (Bolder and Grusing, 2000:31). Instead of erasing the bracketing, in hypermediacy the hybridization is celebrated and the interface is always present. There is a hyperconscious recognition or acknowledgment of the medium. Users are able to go

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back and forward while navigating a hypertext. Aggregation and disaggregation of data provide a total view of the whole and the parts.

20. "Cross-country" is a popular expression used in the U.S referring to a trip across the whole or a major portion of the United States.
21. www.cabezadecochino.com. We lost the domain in the summer of 2010.
22. Sabores Auténticos de Mexico (SAM). This organization was born as an official program of the Mexican government. Its main goal was to promote Mexican rural products in U.S and Canada through restaurants. In 2009 the organization was extended to Madrid. Diverse problems related to accounting were detected in the program and the Mexican government decided to wind down the program. After the program finished, SAM was divided into two private institutions: SAM-USA and SAM-Madrid.

CHAPTER 2

THE MEXICAN BODY: A BODY FULL OF AFFECTIONS

This chapter offers a succinct historical overview which answers the first question raised in this thesis: How did diverse bodies and environments, including aesthetic forms, bodies, affections, moral ideas, technology and other entities, actually come to represent a Mexican landscape? To answer this question, I describe the production and commoditization of multiple metaphoric bodies that reside in Mexican landscapes. I call these bodies the Corn body, the Wheat body, the Corn-Wheat body, and the *Tortilla*-Chip body.

I have baptized these metaphoric bodies with names referring to raw and manufactured products made from corn and wheat (flour) because corn and wheat in their various forms constitute the *materia prima* and the dominants of both the products for consumption and the assemblages of nature, bodies, technologies, and other entities of the Mexican foodscape. These two staple ingredients function as potent signs which stabilize the subjectivities of many bodies in the Mexican landscape. Moreover, the attachment of bodies to corn and wheat products has produced diverse quasi-objects and quasi-subjects with particular moralities and affections (*affectio*). Many combinations of those relations are used in the process of commoditization of Mexican foods abroad in order to produce repetition, opposition and adaptation in Mexican-landscapes.

I begin this chapter with a historical analysis of the emergence of corn bodies and wheat bodies, in pre-Hispanic and post-Conquest Mesoamerica. In the following section, I explain processes of hybridization in which, following the Mexican Revolution, corn and wheat combined into new Mexican bodies. These bodies were described as having diverse internal characteristics by various actors; I articulate several of the most important. The final section of this chapter considers the links between industrialization, food and mass media by exploring the concept of *Tortilla*-Chips bodies. I conclude the chapter with two examples which illustrate the complex interactions between food and the entanglement of bodies, emotional states, and historically problematic landscapes.

2.1 THE CORN BODY

In this section I describe the metaphoric Corn Body. Corn played a central role in the organization of native people's worldview in Mesoamerica: corn symbolized the flesh of their ancestors; foods made out of corn were used to mimic goods, animals, mountains and humans; and native people's agricultural practices shaped not only the landscape but also their worldviews.

For native people from Mesoamerica¹ corn was the mother grain. Most of the foundation myths of Mesoamerican cultures make reference to this fact. For instance, in the *Popol Vuh* – considered one of the most important books of the Mesoamerican mythology – gods failed to create the first Mayan man on their first attempt, when they used mud and wood as the main materials. Those initial men lacked souls and the ability to talk:

“They came together in darkness to think and reflect. This is how they came to decide on the right material for the creation of man.... Then our Makers Tepew and Q’uk’umatz began discussing the creation of our first mother and father. Their flesh was made of white and yellow corn. The arms and legs of the four men were made of corn meal.”²

These corn bodies of the Mesoamerican myths were born from thousands of years of biocultural interactions: “[By] 1500 B.C. was corn fully domesticated to produce large, hard kernels that could be stored for long periods and support sedentary populations. By this time, also, the bean had yielded a softened seed coat that made it edible after cooking” (Pilcher 1998: 11).

After corn was fully domesticated, the peoples of Mesoamerica invented *tortillas*. *Tortillas* are traditionally made out of corn through a process called nixtamalization (*nixtamalización*) – a traditional method “[in which] the corn is cooked in a solution of water with lime to be... milled after an overnight steeping, to obtain a wet dough (*masa*) from which *tortillas* are formed” (Caballero-Briones and Castro-Rodríguez 2000: 21). Here lime does not refer to the citrus fruit, but rather to dissolved calcium oxide typically obtained from limestone deposits. This fact underscores the chemical and gastronomic sophistication of native Mesoamericans who knew that using lime during the nixtamalization process helps corn lose its indigestible outer husks and enriches the mixture with important vitamins and minerals, including calcium, riboflavin, and niacin.

Mesoamerican indigenous people consumed other products of the corn plant in addition to the kernels. In particular, they valued a corn fungus called *huilacoche* (or *cuitlacoche* in contemporary Mexico). *Huilacoche* is a gray and black fungal parasite that infects a corn cob and then grows around it. The name *huilacoche* derives from the Nahuatl word *cuital*, which means fecal matter, and *cochtili*, meaning sleeping: *huilacoche* is consequently “sleeping fecal matter produced from corn.” Despite the fact that *huilacoche* diminishes the productive value of corn harvests, it is considered a delicacy and has been consumed in Mesoamerican communities for thousands of years; the Nahuatl in particular referred to it as the “food of the gods.” This seeming paradox – a delicacy which destroys – parallels the Mesoamerican view of food consumption and bodily waste. For the Nahuatl, fecal matter was not merely waste, but a kind of surplus: distilled food, or indeed, distilled corn. The reverence that the Nahuatl had towards waste matter resulting from the consumption of corn and corn-based products is reflected in the name of the 10th Aztec *tlatuani* or emperor (c. 1476-1520), who was called Cuitlahuac, meaning “dry fecal matter of ancient shamans.”

For the native peoples of Mesoamerica, corn was the flesh of their ancestors and therefore worthy of respect. For native people every mouthful of corn signified a bite of the lands from which life is born. Therefore, corn was handled with great respect:

“Women carefully blew on kernels before placing them in the cooking pot to give them courage for confronting the fire. Once every eight years they ‘rested’ the corn, cooking it plainly, ‘for we brought much torment death, so we revived it.’” (Pilcher 1998: 17).

Following Deleuze and Guattari (1972), it can be said that the Corn body was a well-articulated body, with organs that were connected to the multiple domains of the Mesoamerican *socius*. In Mesoamerica, shamans were in charge of the regulation of the affections (*affectio*) and affects (*affectus*) of that extended body. In the Mayan religion, the Corn God, together with the Sun God and the Moon God, occupied a central place in natives' people worldview (Jacques Soustelle 1996 [1982]: 175).



3. Yumil Kaxob, Mayan God of Corn³

Corn was also present in every aspect of daily life: “The cultivation and preparation of food largely defined pre-Columbian domestic spaces.... corn fields and kitchen gardens determined the layout of household enclosures, while the dwelling themselves centered around spaces for storing, shucking, and cooking corn” (Pilcher 1998: 14). In pre-Columbian Mesoamerica aspects of corn’s development and qualities were attached to different kinds of human bodies: terms like “corn blossoms,” “tender green ears” and “Lord Corn Cob” were used to define the quasi-subjects of babies, young girls and warriors (Clendiennen 1991 in Pilcher 1998:17). Corn, in effect, organized Mesoamerican social identities related to gender, generation and occupation.

In Mesoamerica, corn production shaped not only the landscape but also the worldviews and bodies of the native people as a product of thousands of years of biocultural interactions with the environment. In this sense it is possible to say that the corn foodscape preceded the Mesoamerican landscape, since the need to ensure consistent corn harvests was the single most important priority in agricultural organization and the construction of Mesoamerican settlements.

Food made out of corn included objects or patterns found in nature and thereby functioned as an extension of nature:

“The Mexica prepared *tortillas* in the shapes of butterflies and leaves as well as *tamales* imprinted with sea-shell designs or garnished with seeds and beans. Other common corn treats included oval-shaped *tlacoyos*, snake-headed *polkanes*, and canoe-like *chalupas*. Religious rituals inspired some of the finest confectionery, including corn and amaranth breads resembling gods, animals, people, and mountains.” (Pilcher 1998: 19).

In other words, in Mesoamerica, corn reflected mimetic relations between nature and culture. The use of natural corn was used to repeat forms from local nature in small-scale illustrates an inter-semiotic process of translation between the landscape and the corn foodscape. In Mesoamerica, landscapes and foodscapes – lived and represented – produced each other.

2.2 THE WHEAT BODY

After the conquest of the Mexica capital of Tenochtitlan by the Spanish in 1521, corn bodies were set in opposition to wheat bodies. A new moral universe emerged in relation to the consumption of these staple grains:

“Father Sahagún⁴ instructed them [the indigenous people] to eat ‘that which the Castilian people eat, because it is good food, that with which they are raised, they are strong and pure and wise... You will become the same way if you eat their food.’ Although Sahagún later questioned the wisdom of acculturating Indians, wheat remained a religious necessity because it was the only grain recognized by the Roman Catholic Church for the Holy Eucharist. Since the eleventh century, priests could substitute no other bread for the body of Christ.” (Pilcher 1998: 35).

Sahagún links the consumption of wheat with the supremacy of Castillian bodies: he contrasts pure, wise, Christian bodies with contaminated, inept and pagan ones. While wheat symbolized the body of Christ, corn symbolized the bodies of pre-Hispanic, non-Catholic gods; both staple grains functioned as quasi-objects involved in the production of the quasi-subjects that emerge from the encounter of the conquerors’ Christian passions with the indigenous peoples’ bodies.

Despite Sahagún’s exhortations to Mesoamerican Indians to change their food habits and become like their Spanish conquerors, the cultivation of wheat in Mesoamerica was introduced quite slowly, especially compared to the rapid adoption of cattle raising. Pilcher argues that the substantial investment, both agricultural and industrial, that the cultivation of wheat required hindered its introduction:

“Native Americans, when left to their own devices, almost invariably planted corn instead of wheat, in part because they disliked the taste of the foreign grain... Economic considerations also contributed to Indian rejection, for they found the foreign grain to be a poor subsistence crop... wheat grew only under favorable conditions and was highly susceptible to disease... Modern authorities have estimated wheat’s yield to be only 80 percent of corn’s when measured by seed, and 70 percent by area planted.” (Pilcher 1998: 35-36).

Only in the northern, desert part of New Spain⁵ (*Nueva España*; an area encompassing the contemporary border area between the United States and Mexico) did wheat start to defeat corn’s omnipresence. *Tortillas* made from wheat flour were one of the first hybrid foods to emerge in New Spain (Pilcher 2001: 58). Indigenous women who prepared food for the conquerors invented this culinary hybrid, using the round, flat shape of the corn *tortilla* as a

model for a product made from the conquering wheat. In flour *tortillas*, wheat grains play the role of – in other words, they mimic – corn.

By reproducing their home landscape in foreign lands, the Spanish conquerors and their descendants tried to take control over the natural resources of the new continent. However, in their role as receivers or consumers of a product invented and made by indigenous people, the Spanish were also receivers of hybridized foods.

A distinction between the foods of different social groups including natives, conquerors, *criollos* (also known as Creoles; people born in the New World to parents of Spanish heritage), and *mestizos* (descendants of mixed Spanish and indigenous ancestry), was maintained, at least in discourse, throughout the colonial period:

“The staple grains, corn and wheat, remained for the most part mutually exclusive, with bread feeding a wealthy Creole society and *tortillas* becoming the province of poor and Indian communities. The hierarchical associations of food within New Spain helped the unification of the Mexican nation itself.” (Pilcher 1998: 27).

In his extensive review of cookbooks from the second half of the 18th century, José Luis Juárez argues that Creoles started to incorporate some foods from New Spain into their regular food consumption patterns. These foods functioned as symbols which underscored the particularity of *criollo*/Creole identity in the context of incipient Mexican nationhood. However, Juárez notes that Creoles used only a limited selection of Mesoamerican foods and that native foods played a distinctly secondary role in cookbooks. This gastronomic hierarchy reflected and reinforced the hegemony of Spanish dishes over indigenous ones (Juárez 2005: 101).

Juárez also points out that in the late 1700's bread made from wheat flour started to be extensively consumed in Mexican urban areas among the different social groups. The local government strictly regulated the production and quality of bread. Bread (*pan común*, or “common bread”) for poor people was particularly regulated by the administration (Juárez 2005: 111), a practice made all the more notable by the fact that for government oversight to be desired a good must be sold or consumed in quite substantial quantities. Indeed, Juárez refers to the consumption of bread at this time in urban areas as “massive” (*Ibid*).

Corn continued to be a very stigmatized food among Spanish people and Creoles living in the New World through the 18th century. Corn consumption was not only considered immoral, but also foolish due to the (mistaken) notion that corn provided only limited nutrients.

The moral and social tension between wheat consumption and corn-eaters played out in efforts to reduce the consumption of *tortillas* in the New Spain. For instance, the Creole José Antonio Alzate, suggested to the government that corn should be made into bread, arguing that this type of bread was eaten in some provinces in Spain. For Alzate, the problem with *tortillas* was not simply in their moral dimension – the content plane – but also with their very form – the expression plane -. For Alzate, bread, even if made from corn, was preferable to round, flat *tortillas* (Juárez 2005: 111).

Whereas in the initial phase of the conquest of the New World Spanish people accepted *tortillas* only after they were made with wheat, by the end of the colonial period the Creoles

were open to accepting corn only if it was made in the form of Spanish bread. In both cases, the repetition of forms and contents produced notable oppositions and gave rise to interesting culinary adaptations. However, wheat bodies continued to occupy a privileged position in the gastronomic and cultural hierarchies of the nascent Mexican society:

“Traditionally identified with manna, our bread, the body of Christ and the main food. ‘I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.’” (Juárez 2005: 111, author’s translation).

Juárez’s observation calls to mind Serres’ question in *Theory of the Quasi-Object*: “Do we ever eat anything else together than the flesh of the word?” (Serres 1982: 232). In the context of Mexican criollo and mestizo culture, Corn bodies and Wheat bodies remained opposed until the emergence of Mexican nationhood.

2.3 THE CORN-WHEAT BODY

In this section I describe the emergence of the Mexican body after the 19th century and its consolidation in the 20th century. Using the metaphor of a Corn-Wheat body I argue that Mexican independence from Spain in 1821 slowly gave rise to a hybrid body which, in its culinary patterns, reflected both pre-Hispanic and Spanish influences.

Since Mexican independence and the official end of the Mexican Revolution in 1920, Mexican politicians and intellectuals have offered many different notions of how to reconcile the antagonistically opposed bodies associated with corn and wheat. Such attempts at fusion imply a long process of affective modulation. Few entities were selected as models from the Mexican nation. After the revolutionary period, the selected bodies started were reproduced in the mass media and gave rise to an intense process of contamination.

Ten years after Mexico gained independence from Spain, *El Cocinero Mexicano* (*The Mexican Cook*, 1831) was published. This cookbook had an important influence on the way Mexican food would be perceived by elites in the 19th century. *El Cocinero Mexicano* acknowledged the particularities of Mexican national cuisine. Many words used exclusively in Mexico were used in the cookbook, in order to create difference from the Spanish cuisine. Spiciness was highlighted as one of the defining qualities of Native American dishes. The anonymous author of *El Cocinero Mexicano* asserted that continental Spanish people’s palates were too soft to deal with those flavors; only the strong palates from the New World were able to truly enjoy spicy food.

El Cocinero Mexicano became a very influential cookbook during the 19th century and served as model for many future Mexican cookbooks. However, despite the inclusion of numerous native foods in *El Cocinero Mexicano*, many dishes fundamentally associated with Corn bodies – including *tamales*, *tortillas*, and *enchiladas* – were excluded from the new national cuisine (Pilcher 2001: 79-79).

During the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz (1876-1911) there was no consensus among the Mexican elite about what the core national symbols should be. This uncertainty also extended

to food. Mexican elites during the Porfirian era admired French modernity and reproduced many of its signs in the public and the private space:

“[D]espite the abortive and resented French-supported empire of Maximilian in Mexico (1864-1867), by the 1880s France was the foremost cultural and intellectual model for the Porfirian elite...In fact, cultural and intellectual analyses of the period often have been written as the history of Mexico’s *afrancesamiento* (Francophilia).” (Tenorio-Trillo 1996: 20).

This passion for French signs extended to *la cuisine*, a term which refers both to “the kitchen” and to culinary patterns. During the Porfirian era French dishes were prepared in houses of the elite and offered in some exclusive restaurants.

Whereas French-style *haute cuisine* was extending its influence among the elites, the low *cuisine* of Corn bodies was being attacked through the emergence of an anti-*tortilla* discourse articulated in the Porfirian dictatorship (Pilcher 1998). At the turn of the century the fight against food from and for Corn bodies was radicalized. Some post-revolutionary intellectuals used the period’s scientific knowledge to justify the attack:

“Mexican elites launched a full-scale attack on corn, which they blamed for the failure of national development campaigns. Using spurious applications of the newly developed science of nutrition, intellectuals claimed that corn was inherently inferior to wheat and that progress would only be possible if the government could wean Indians of corn and teach them to eat wheat.” (Pilcher 1998: 3).

While Spanish colonial rulers sought to detach Mesoamerican indigenous people from their corn practices for religio-moral reasons, the elites from the new Mexican nation did so for political motivations; in their view, only wheat bodies could be modern.

In his analysis of Mexican cultural stereotypes after the Mexican Revolution, Pérez Montfort suggests that:

“The official national discourse of the 19th and the 20th century was, without doubt, partly responsible for prompting, in addition to many other elements, an ahistorical and maybe inhuman notion of the cultural and identity process of Mexican and Latin American traditions and folkloric expressions, maybe in all of the world.” (Pérez 2007: 12, author’s translation).

These ahistorical views were articulated in order to gain political control and generate economic growth, prioritizing earnings over bodies dwelling in the post-revolutionary Mexican landscape. The result was the development of different notions of what Mexicans and Mexican bodies were. This section identifies several primary types of these bodies and traces their historical development.

After the end of the Mexican Revolution, the government started to commoditize the national landscape by promoting tourism. At that time, the post-revolutionary nation’s icons had not yet been defined. That may be the reason why, in an article from the magazine *Greater Mexico*, published in New York around 1940, Mexico was promoted as the ‘Egypt of

America': "... there exists a country to the south of us that is so picturesque and so rich in historical ruins that it has been justly called the 'Egypt of America'. This country is México" (Pérez's 2007: 278, author's translation).



4. Poster "Mexico" National Department of Tourism.
Mexican Tourism Association, circa 1940⁶

The lack of clarity regarding post-revolutionary national symbols is also pointed out by Tenorio-Trillo in his study on the participation of Mexico in World Fairs. At the end of the 19th century, Mexico participated in the World Fairs, displaying a view of the country manufactured to suit to the Porfirian elites' own interests. In the 20th century the post-revolutionary governments used the same symbols:

"Mexico displayed exactly the same agricultural products, pictures, books, and crafts that had graced the preceding fifty years of its presence at world's fairs – tropical fruits, coffee, cocoa, cactus, hats, and gaudy ornaments, together with the same seemingly eternal products of industry: beer (Cervecería Cuauhtémoc), cigarettes (El Buen Tono), and canned food (Clemente Jacques)...The oil industry and contemporary indigenous handicraft were some of the few innovations presented in post-revolutionary fairs. The pictures and figures of *tipos populares*, Indian cloth, *huaraches*, furniture in Aztec and Maya styles, and traditions were displayed just as they had been in the nineteenth century." (Tenorio-Trillo 1996: 235).

Pérez Montfort argues that following the centralization of the post-revolutionary government, Mexican intellectuals and artists, in conjunction with the mass media, popularized national stereotypes and promoted symbols related to or based on expressions of and from rural Mexico. In particular, folkloric expressions of mestizos from western Mexico were privileged. *Mariachis*, *boleros*⁷ and *rancheras*⁸ became the principal styles of popular music. The main singers of those songs were western bodies. In the lyrics, singers yearn for women they have left and express nostalgia for rural life. A common trope in these songs is expressing a desire to return to a time and place when life was better: the songs "Volver, volver, volver" ("To come back, to come back, to come back") and "Allá en el rancho grande" ("Back on the big ranch") exemplify this passionate musical style: "Mexican music, no doubt, was a fundamental component of the nationalist imaginary feelings that populated the official cultural

discourse of much of the twentieth century in Mexico” (Pérez 2007: 97, author’s translation).

Starting in 1920, the *Jarabe Tapatio*, a dance originating in the 18th century, became the archetype of the Mexican national *fiesta*. The *charro mestizo*⁹ and *china poblana* were the main performers of the Jarabe Tapatio dance. The *chinas* were represented as graceful and independent women (Pérez 2007: 28), and the *mestizo* models were shown as graceful men and women. The inhabitants of the mythical Mexican national landscape were therefore primarily depicted as non-indigenous, independent bodies from the *ranchos* (farm communities and livestock ranches) of western Mexico.



5. Pedro Infante¹⁰



6. Jorge Negrete¹¹

The flourishing of Mexican cinema that began in 1940 solidified the privileged position of western-Mexican and Revolutionary¹² bodies in folk culture, and added the images of *indios*¹³ and urban *pelados*.¹⁴



7. Emiliano Zapata¹⁵



8. Pancho Villa¹⁶



9. Adelita¹⁷

Regional body types were also brought onto the scene, with particular objects or appearances that signified their regional origins. Certain songs, dances, foods, bodies and colors came to be strongly associated with specific regional areas and traits. For example, *jarochos*¹⁸ from the eastern state of Veracruz were framed and perceived as festive and flirtatious (Pérez 2007:

198), and the song “La bamba” became an international anthem of the Mexican nation and the *Jarocho* passions.

During this consolidation of a Mexican national iconography, contemporary indigenous bodies and their cultural practices were subsumed into the regional types associated with specific local geographies. As happened with the participation in the World Fairs, indigenous bodies were included in the national discourse only as material expressions – their handi-crafts, and the landscapes and bodies of their ancestors, principally the Mayas and Aztecs:

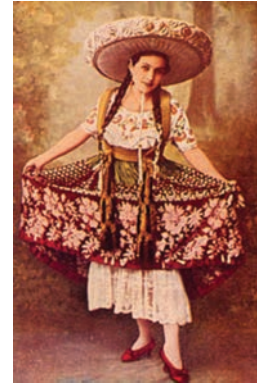
“A strong interest in Indian people and their time-honored customs exerted a powerful hold on visual artists of the 1920s, as seen in the work of Francisco Goitia, Julio Castellanos, Ramón Cano Manilla and Gabriel Fernández Ledesma, and muralists, led by Diego Rivera, showed sympathy for native subjects and provided idealized views of pre-Hispanic cultures.” (Fulton 2008).

When Indian or pre-Hispanic motifs were depicted by the artists of the epoch, or included in other technologies by the state in order to socialize them, they were treated as passive subjects. In the national discourse, indigenous people were depicted as romantic motifs, not as active agents of the nation (Fulton 2008).

From Tenorio Trillo’s point of view, Mexican folkloric arts found a prominent place in post-revolutionary international contexts thanks to the convergence of several phenomena that made Indian motifs fashionable in the Western cosmopolitan world:

“The popular mobilization of the Revolution of 1910; the metamorphosis of cosmopolitan aesthetics (more innovative and avant-garde, yet more socially engaging); the movement of disciplines like anthropology and archaeology toward a more culturalist (Boasian) paradigm; and the official policies to delineate by all available means (education, media, murals) the meaning of the new revolutionary nation. By the 1920s the combination of these factors had made Indian motifs into fashionable and acceptable cosmopolitan tokens.” (Tenorio-Trillo 1996: 210).

Tehuanas’ bodies were one of the contemporary indigenous types to be socialized at national and international level starting around the time of the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz. Like the *china poblana* and Adelita, *tehuanas*, who come from southeastern Mexico, were represented as independent and graceful women. The *tehuana* image, printed on 10-peso bills between 1920 and 1970, circulated around the nation (Pérez 2007: 1956) and even appeared in Mexican and Hollywood cinematographic productions. In 1937 the Hollywood actress Lupe Velez embodied a *tehuana* in *La Zandunga*¹⁹. Frida Kahlo also enacted the body of a *tehuana* several times.

10. Lupe Velez²⁰ as tehuana11. Frida Kahlo as tehuana²¹12. China poblana²²

Pérez Montfort asserts that the *charro*, the *china*, the *Adelita*, the *tehuana* and the *indito* depict a limited repertoire of affects in the national imagery: “bragging, sentimentalism, machismo, submission, coquetry or disdain” (Pérez 2007: 105). But by 1940, these national body types and their particular affections (*affectio*) had been broadly disseminated within and beyond Mexico: images of “... handicrafts, regional foods, regional costumes and of course the folkloric fiesta, in particular, that was celebrated with mariachis, paper flags, rodeos, cock fights, debt games, charros, and chinas poblanas dancing the Jarabe Tapatio” (Pérez 2007: 121, author’s translation), became the dominant images of Mexico and Mexican bodies.

In the second half of the 20th century, the national landscape framed to attract U.S. consumers during the previous decades was regionally fragmented in order to attract tourists to new destinations. In 1953, Mexican tourism authorities printed the first calendar of folkloric and regional festivities in the Mexican Republic. With the publication of this calendar, regional festivities also became major tourist attractions (Pérez 2007: 119, author’s translation).

Pilcher argues that in the second half of the 20th century the commoditization of regional cuisines also reached its apex, thanks to the Mexican tourist industry’s diversification of tourist destinations: “Promoters were able to attract tourists with beach and pyramids, but good food was also needed and the fifties were the golden age of Mexican gourmet restaurants” (Pilcher 1998: 203). It was around this time – the middle of the 20th century, more than 200 years after Mexican statehood – that regional cuisines were included as part of the Mexican gastronomic landscape. Indeed, before 1940 there was no such thing as a comprehensive Mexican “national cuisine” (Pilcher 1998: 16), because wheat and corn were part of different gastronomic cosmologies stemming from different environments, ideologies and economic statuses. Fundamentally, the food eaten by non-elites was not accepted by the Mexican elite until the commoditization of the Mexican landscape by the tourist industry managed to reconcile corn bodies with wheat bodies.

The reconciliation of corn and wheat bodies opened the possibility of experimenting with new oppositions and adaptations of the formerly antagonistic *cuisines*. One of the most intriguing products of the national dishes produced after the reconciliation of the corn and the wheat bodies is Jaime Saldivar’s *huitlacoche* crepes: the pre-Hispanic “sleeping fecal mat-

ter,” a corn parasite, nestled in a delicate French blanket of wheat.

In his study about the constitution of national body types, Pérez arrives at the following compelling conclusion:

“Rather than being a response to self-knowledge, the invention of the stereotypical Mexico resulted from translation for the tourist and the foreign consumer, mainly from the United States, who was different from himself. From this point of view, the creation and construction of the Mexican national stereotypes can be seen more as a process of ‘North-Americanization’ than of ‘Mexicanization.’” (Pérez 2007: 298, author’s translation).

Pérez’s claims notwithstanding, national stereotypes functioned in some cases as potent signs for the Mexican population under oppressive conditions. Consider, for example, the glorified images of the Aztec emperor Cuauhtémoc, painted by Jesús Helguera in the 1940s:

“His paintings exemplify an ideal of indigenous strength and beauty...Helguera’s two Cuauhtémoc images are enormously popular even today, and ubiquitous throughout Mexico, translated into such mass produced mediums as posters, calendars, beach towels and cast aluminum statuettes.” (Fulton 2008).

Images such as Helguera’s were massively popularized in the United States in the second half of the 20th century, as Mexican migrants adopted Helguera’s images of powerful Aztecs to fight against the stereotyped bodies produced by U.S. industries. Many of the Mexicans I interviewed in California during field research recalled that this image had been with them since childhood. In 2009 it was relatively easy to find Helguera’s paintings in Mexican restaurants in California: “Helguera’s landscapes of pre-European Mexico and the rural scenes depict an almost reverent respect for the power of nature. Smouldering volcanoes and desert hillsides teeming with the desert ecosystems remind the viewer that *Tonantzin* (Mother Earth) is volatile and temperamental.”²³

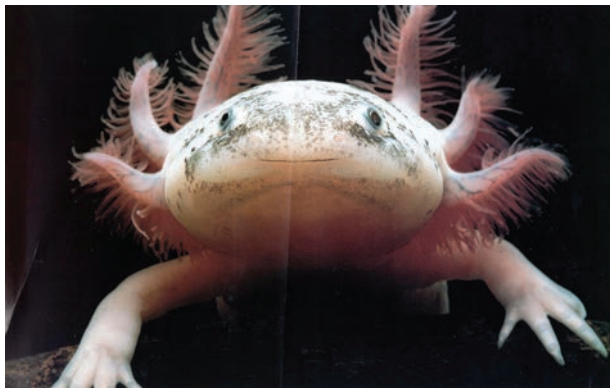


13. Grandeza Azteca (Aztec Greatness), *La Leyenda de los volcanes II* (*The Legend of the Volcanoes II*), Jesús Helguera²⁴, 14. *The Legend of the Wedding Cakes*. San Francisco, CA., 2009

Helguera's *The Legend of the Volcanoes* is frequently seen in Mexican bakeries established in California. Here, again, we see the juxtaposition of corn bodies and wheat bodies, as the archetypal image of pre-Hispanic, indigenous, corn-bodied Mexican adorns the wall of bakeries which produce treats made from wheat and which nourish the hybrid corn-wheat bodies.

Moreover, the image of the Aztec warrior carrying a dead princess and weeping over her death became a romantic symbol of love and marriage among the Mexican population in the U.S.: a noble man grieves over the death of his princess before they even get married. Even in signs used as potent symbols of ethnic pride, the Mexican body is condemned to be in mourning.

Roger Bartra has also studied the Mexican body types and their repertoire of affections (*affectio*). According to Bartra, intellectuals, as part of the hegemonic political culture, played a central role in the production of Mexican subjects after the revolution. His main thesis is that those subjects were created in close relation to western archetypes. In *La Jaula de la Melancolía. Identidad y Metamorfosis del Mexicano* (*The Cage of Melancholy: The Mexican's Identity and Metamorphosis*: 2005), Bartra contends that the hegemonic definition of the Mexican subject, consolidated after the revolution, has been crucial for justifying its political and economic exploitation²⁵. Trying to find some connections between the European *socius* and signs that have been attached to Mexican bodies, Bartra compares the affections (*affectio*) of the *axolotl* with the Mexican subject to explore the hybridism of Mexican subjects. The *axolotl* (*Ambystoma mexicanum*), is a salamander native to Mexico City lakes that fails to undergo metamorphosis. As a result, the adults remain aquatic and gilled. One of the *axolotl*'s most distinctive characteristics is its ability to regenerate most body parts.



15. Axolotl (*Ambystoma mexicanum*)²⁶

Bartra describes a national myth in which Mexico's idyllic agrarian history is periodically destroyed and regenerated: just as the *axolotl* can re-grow most of its body parts, Mexico is able to regenerate its subverted agrarian paradises after their destruction. According to Bartra, the common view is that the Mexican national began with the conquest in 1492 and ended with the revolution in 1910. According to this conventional notion, Indians were joyful subjects until the conquerors came and destroyed their graceful relations with the environment, and peasants had an idyllic life before they had to migrate to the city. Bartra,

however, argues that the mythologized, idyllic landscapes where indigenous people and peasants used to dwell are, in, fact anti-utopias, and:

“...demarcate the national status, the definition of the “authentic” national being in opposition to any utopia willing to revolutionize (or contaminate) it. In this sense, the subverted Eden can be defined as an arqueotopy, meaning: today’s idea of a previous and ancient place as a happy kingdom.” (Bartra 2005: 34, author’s translation).

A subject in mourning emerges from this subverted Eden. Mourning Mexican bodies, evincing susceptibility, melancholy and suffering, are also found in literary works depicting melancholy peasants²⁷ dwelling in rural landscapes. Novels written by Juan Rulfo and José Revueltas are outstanding examples²⁸ of the presence of the melancholy subject in Mexican literature. Bartra argues that Mexican populist politicians and intellectuals have used the notion of anti-utopian spaces full of affected subjects to legitimize their power and to explain the lack of development in the nation. Common arguments in this vein include the idea that if the Spanish conquerors had not come, Mexicans would still be living in paradise, or if the U.S had not taken the half the Mexican territory, Mexico would be a rich nation.

In this thesis I argue that many entrepreneurs draw on these anti-utopian landscapes to commoditize Mexican food not only because some of them believe in the existence of such scapes, but because even if they do not, some consumers do and even expect such imagery in Mexican restaurants. The Mexican body is condemned to anti-utopian landscapes: a melancholy and nostalgic being that suffers and drinks *tequila* to forget his woes; a body that spends its time dancing and partying because it is pointless to work hard when Eden has been corrupted.

Bartra argues that the stereotype of the lethargic Mexican does not only have its origin in the colonial system of exploitation. Some Mexican intellectuals have presented this affection (*affectio*) as set of values which stand in opposition to the pragmatism of White, Anglo-Saxon Protestants. For example, in the symphony *Caballos de vapor* that Carlos Chávez composed in collaboration with Diego Rivera, Mexican tropical exuberance contrasts with modern, northern European rhythms.

Diego Rivera depicted the image of the lethargic Mexican in some of his paintings (Bartra 2005: 50). Rivera is generally acknowledged as the creator of the “crouched-down hero”: a seated man hiding himself under a *sarape* and a *sombrero*. From Bartra’s point of view, the crouched-down hero is the imagined inhabitant of Mexico’s lost, idyllic Eden.



16. Pareja indigena (Indigenous Couple), Diego Rivera,²⁹ 17. Familia de indios (Indigenous Family), Diego Rivera³⁰

When thousands of peasants from the rural areas started to migrate to Mexico City in the second quarter of the 20th century, the myth of the *pelado*, the unwillingly urbanized peasant farmer, emerged. Bartra argues that these actors resemble the *léperos*³¹ of the 19th century: they are both savage, vulgar bodies and full of vices. They are also both corn bodies, whose psyches are a product of the violent occupation of their pristine Eden.

The *pelado* is not an indigenous person, but a mestizo, born of indigenous and Spanish ancestors. The *pelado*, born after the revolution, is a hero of the rural past lost in the modernity of the urban jungle. *Pelados* like to party, sing and drink in order to forget their affections (*affectio*). In this, *pelados* represent a hybridization of the vivacious, fiesta-going and alcohol-consuming Mexican of the tourist industry's imagination, and the melancholy, expelled-from-paradise Mexican from Rulfo's and Rivera's oeuvres. The *pelado*'s psyche is also affected by an inferiority complex; nevertheless, he is proud of his misery (Bartra 2005: 51). From Bartra's point of view, the *pelado* is the perfect metaphor for the post-revolutionary Mexican subject:

“[he] is a peasant of the city who has lost his original innocence but has not become a Faustian being. He has lost his parcels and has not won the fabric: between two streams, he lives the tragedy of the agrarian world and the industrial civilization.” (Bartra 2005: 126, author's translation).

Cantinflas³², Tin-Tan³³ and El Chavo del Ocho,³⁴ celebrities from Mexican television, represent some of the most famous Mexican *pelados* of the 20th century. These characters do not want a better life. Instead, they are traditional and passive subjects living in the modern world.

The characters of these *pelados* became well-known bodies of the Mexican *socius* in Latin America and Spain as a result of mass media technologies.



18. Cantinflas³⁵



19. Tin-Tan³⁶



20. El Chavo del 8³⁷

Many intellectuals have written about the Mexican inferiority complex. Samuel Ramos was one of the first philosophers to point out this affection (*affectio*). Years later, Octavio Paz in his *Laberinto de la soledad* argued that the inferiority complex was rooted in a deeper affection (*affectio*): loneliness. Ramos avers that Mexicans have historically been trapped in a contradiction between what they want to do and what they can do. Bartra argues that this inferiority complex developed in counterpoint to European modernity. For Bartra, the “underdeveloped” Mexican body is related to image of a child or a good savage.

It is well-known that Mexicans have a particular affection (*affectio*) for death; they make fun of it. This predilection first emerged in the pre-Hispanic among the Mesoamerican groups, and has endured long into post-Conquest Mexico. Over the last 500 years the Mexican approach to death has evolved in many ways, and expressions of it are found in multiple modalities: rituals and their paraphernalia, artifacts produced by cultural industries, and the collective imagination. From Bartra’s perspective, the idea of the Mexican *socius* being indifferent to death is also a product of the European mind. From the point of view of the civilized mind, the savage does not care about time. If life is time, a life unmarked by time is equal to death. Motionless Mexicans do not care about time, life or death; these subjects live in an eternally lethargic state: “The occidental cultural politic has generated the myth of the two times: an unquantifiable idyllic time in contradiction with the industrial rationality and the progressive and dynamic time of the civilized man” (Bartra 2005: 71, author’s translation). For the savage, time is senseless, whereas for the civilized, death is senseless.



21. *La calavera* (The Skeletons)³⁸



22. *La catrina*, Guadalupe Posadas (The Elegant Woman)³⁹

Following Bartras' thesis, the invention of the Mexican national body and its affections (*affectio*) can be understood as the repetition of, opposition to, and adaptation of Western modernity. Yet the Western *socius* has constructed many modernities. Some of the affections (*affectio*) attached to the hybrid Corn-Wheat body belonged to European bodies before attaching themselves to Mexican ones. Old affections (*affectio*) have been attached to new bodies, and the affections (*affectio*) of older bodies have been imprinted on the empty bodies of new nations. Affective modernities helped to organize the national *socius* and take advantage of the bodies attached to it. Indeed, bodily affections (*affectio*) belong to different modernities. The opposition between the rational European and the lethargic Mexican is just one of its many expressions.

2.4 THE TORTILLA-CHIPS BODY

As explained in the previous chapter, picturesque landscapes promoted the discursive construction of nationalism in the late 19th and 20th century (Daniels 1993; Mitchell 2002; Cosgrove 2006). These scenic representations came to act as the moral barometer of a successful community. But what about national landscapes depicted by non-members of the nation? More specifically, what if those nonmembers of the nation in fact wanted to colonize it? What should we call this type of landscape – obscuresque? Degradesque?

Whereas in the previous sections I explored the constitution of *inner* bodies of the Mexican nation, in this section I analyze the creation of several *outer* types of Mexican bodies. Drawing on the metaphor of a Tortilla-chips body, I attempt to explore both the constitution of stereotyped bodies that have fixed the power (*pouvoir*) of the Mexican population in the U.S., and the commoditization of these stereotyped bodies by U.S. industries which have the power (*puissance*) to affect (*affectus*) other bodies with their passions and to create economic earnings.

Most of the stereotyped bodies used in the commoditization of Tex-Mex foods were born in the desert lands conquered by the U.S. in the mid-19th century. Mitchell (2002) pointed out the relation between the Western landscape idea and the logic of empire, arguing that

declaring a territory classified as “underdeveloped” seems to confer a presumptive right of conquest, which in turn naturalizes imperialist expansion:

“Since the beginning, Americans have been turning toward their own Western frontier as a wilderness to be traversed in search of a promised land, a Zion. The “Great American Desert” was an *idée fixe* imposed on the reality of the fertile Western plains for several generations, as if Americans needed a desert to wander in, a diasporic ordeal to purify them for the promised Canaan of California. This Canaan had, of course, its Canaanites in the form of Indians, the Lost tribes of Israel according to some accounts, aboriginal dwellers on the land who had to be dispossessed, removed, or sentimentalized as the vanishing remnants of a lost Eden.” (Mitchell 2002: 269-270).

The “emptiness” logic of the Mexican desert was disseminated by thousands of American Anglos following their “manifest destiny⁴⁰.” Horsman argues that the ideology of manifest destiny was prompted by the different wars that Mexico and the U.S have had:

“The confrontation between Mexicans and Anglos in the Texas Revolution, the Mexican War, and the Southwest resulted in Americans clearly designating themselves as an Anglo-Saxon race. Anglos clearly categorized Mexicans not only as an inferior people unable to make use of the land but also as an obstruction to their westward march.” (Horsman 1981: 286).



23. Manifest Destiny. John Gast 1872⁴¹

In a painting by John Gast, *Manifest Destiny* is depicted as a gigantic white woman. She is flying from the civilized northeast to the savage southwest, bringing light to an empty and dark landscape. She “...shows the way for farmers, travellers, the stage-coach, the telegraph and the railway. Ahead of her, wild animals, buffalo and Indians (the darkness) turn and run, leaving the way clear for settlement.”⁴²



24. Guaymas: Execution of Yaqui Indians. Unknown publisher.
Used postcard, no stamp⁴³

During the 19th century, Anglo-Americans conquered the Wild West by expelling and killing Native American people and Mexicans; indigenous people who inhabited the region were confined to territorial reserves. The Anglos occupied the desert in order to connect local production factors with their capitalist, anti-production *socius*. They sought gold and land in order to achieve the American dream.

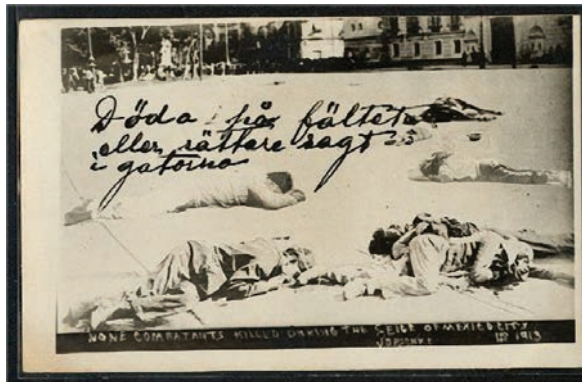
The conquest of the empty desert allowed the modulation of an idealized Texan landscape and its future socialization via mass media technologies. In *Tex{t}-Mex: Seductive Hallucinations of the Mexican in America* (2007) Anthony Nericcio analyzes the emergence of Mexican stereotypes,⁴⁴ focusing on the translation from printed images captured in the Mexican-US wars and the Mexican Revolution to the moving images of Hollywood cinema.

Nericcio argues that the fact that these wars coincided with the growth of the U.S. image-technology industry is crucial for understanding the emergence and spread of Mexican stereotypes. The U.S. mass media socialized Mexican body types by inscribing some of their idealized models on multiple stereotyping machines, which were able to repeat and spread them virally. At the beginning of the 20th century, the affections (*affectio*) associated with the Mexican people started to reach new audiences in the USA. They also spread faster thanks to the emergence of the daily press and other technologies:

“Along the U.S.-Mexican border, and culminating in the years between 1910 and 1920, one encounters a portentous set of individuals, circumstances, and events that help establish the stereotype of Latinos in U.S. mass culture. New technology (the motion picture), new industry (the postcard business), and a (re) new(ed) border conflict (General Villa’s and General Pershing’s forays onto each other’s territory) come together to form a series of major and minor spectacles that reach Americans from coast to coast.” (Nericcio 2007: 143).

When analyzing the case of the postcards industry, Nericcio quotes a passage from Paul J. Vanderwood and Frank N. Samponaro’s *Border Fury* (1988) to provide a taste of the images reproduced in postcards by H. H. Stratton’s savvy company and distributed by U.S. postmen across the country:

“The jingoistic patriotism of so many soldiers, frustrated by national policies which precluded their outright invasion of Mexico, also is apparent in the postcards. These men did not just disparage Mexicans as an enemy; they disdained them as human beings, and the popular literature of the times nourished this bias. Photo images of Germans during World War I, or even Spanish people during the Spanish-American War, were not nearly as sinister or degrading as those of Mexicans during the revolution.” (Vanderwood and Samponaro 1988, in Nericcio 2007: 26).



25. Noncombatants killed during the siege of Mexico City. Real photo by Jorschke. Unused postcard⁴⁵



26. The remains of burnt bodies, Mexico City (1913). Published by Jorschke. Unused postcard⁴⁶

Nericcio equates the postcard camera with a gun:

“[G]iven not only that the history of the representation of “Mexicans” in the cultural space of the United States is filled with acts of violent semantic and semiotic intrigue, but also that this violence continues as ethnocentrism and racism abound owing to the continued proliferation of seeds spitting out of ‘guns.’” (Nericcio 2007: 128).

The bodies depicted by those “guns” were doubly devastated: first by the real bullets from a tragic war, and second, as part of the strategies used by U.S. politicians and entrepreneurs to take control over the bodies of their southern neighbors. At the time, images of dead Mexican bodies were more valuable than walking Mexicans.

In the case of the Mexican subject-positions produced by the U.S. cinema industry, D. Keller’s *Chicano Cinema: Research, Reviews, and Resources* concludes:

“Hollywood has produced a huge number of films that depict Hispanic characters, mostly Chicano or Mexican...The Hollywood Celluloid Factory reflect[s] and reinforce[s] the pervasive racial antagonisms that have been the bane of American society from its origins. The initial Hollywood result was the cloning of greaser stereotype upon stereotype: incompetent bandidos, goodhearted simpletons, easy mujeres, perfidious criminals...and so on.” (Nericcio 2007: 20).

The cartoon industry also contributed to the socialization of stereotyped Mexican subjects. One of the main characters in this process was Speedy Gonzales, the “fastest mouse in Mexico.” Warner Brothers developed this character after the Second World War. Speedy Gonzales, the Mexican mouse, lives in trash, is a frequent visitor of cantinas, is always chasing after pretty women, and loves to steal cheese. In addition, the character’s distinctive costume evokes the style of dress among *mestizos* living in Veracruz, Mexico, which served as a critical port of entry for U.S. invasions of Mexico in 1846 and 1914:

“Warner Brothers animators, faced with the challenge of crafting a decidedly Mexican space, for a decidedly Mexican animal hero, call on the collective memory of American adventurism in Mexico. Not for nothing are Speedy and his crew often found hanging out around the docks – as in *Here Today, Gone Tomorrow* (dir. Friz Freleng, 1959) – lolling about in the trash, sporting the garb of Mexican Veracruzanos. And this coincidence of film, photography, border conflicts, and stereotypes is no accident. What are stereo-types but “bloodstains,” the socially conserved oral and textual remnants of communities in conflict?” (Nericcio 2007: 129).



27. Speedy Gonzales. Looney tunes meal⁴⁷ 28. Jarochos’ traditional costume, Veracruz, Mexico⁴⁸

Like the image of Speedy Gonzalez, many of the icons used in contemporary marketing campaigns for Tex-Mex foods and Mexican restaurants have their origin in the violent American occupation of the empty Mexican desert: cactus, sheriffs, horses, guns, bandits, easy *mujeres*, sleeping Mexicans, terracotta colors, etc.

I use the metaphor Tortilla-Chip body in order to highlight the attachment of Tex-Mex food with the icons for the conquered desert and the consequent fixation of the Mexican body. *Tortilla* chips are one of the most prominent Tex-Mex food products around the world.⁴⁹ In almost all Mexican restaurants outside of Mexico, *tortilla* chips are offered as free snack. Indeed, many consumers from the U.S. point to the crispiness and saltiness of the *tortilla* chips to define what a good Mexican restaurant is.

The attachment of the icons from the empty desert with the Tex-Mex foods has given rise to multiple quasi-objects: bandido/nacho/fun, *tortilla*/mamá/home, gun/*tequila*/crazy, lazy Mexicans/beans/flatulence, easy *mujeres*/hot *salsa*/sex, cowboys/cheddar cheese/blond, Mexican wrestler/Texas cowboy/hamburger/*taco*, etc.

The “Frito Bandito” was one of the most infamous stereotyped bodies used in the marketing of Tex-Mex food products. This cartoon was used to promote Frito’s corn chips from 1967 to 1971 in the United States. Mel Blanc, the same person who voiced Speedy Gonzales, spoke for Frito Bandito in the commercials. Frito Bandito’s specialty was robbing people of their Frito’s corn chips⁵⁰, while singing, “Ay, ay, ay, ay! I am dee Frito Bandito. I like Frito’s Corn Chips. I love them, I do. I want Frito’s corn chips. I’ll take them, from you!”⁵¹



29. Frito bandito⁵²

Although Frito Bandito was banned from the commercial Tex-Mex foodscape in 1969 under pressure from the Mexican Anti-Defamation Committee,⁵³ his friends and relatives still inhabit the empty desert of the US-Mexico borderlands. One of the most recent actualizations of the Tex-Mex foodscape is found in the “Wanted” food products.

The “Wanted” products, primarily sold in Europe, resemble a family related by blood – or, more accurately, by *salsa*. “Wanted” family members include Mama *Tortilla*, Jose *Tortilla* and Maria *Salsa*. In creating this family, the directors of the marketing campaign drew on characteristics they considered to be distinctive of Mexican social organization. Large flour *tortillas* play the role of a mother who knows how to cook and take care of her children. Her

eyes look straight at the consumers/children with confidence. Jose *Tortilla* plays the role of *tortilla* chips or *nachos*. Jose, a bandit from the wild desert, wears a *sombrero* that conceals his mischievous eyes. Perhaps he is looking for his next prey or a graceful girl such as Maria *Salsa*? For her part, Maria looks straight at her consumer/lover with big, open and beautiful eyes.



30. Wanted tortillas/wraps⁵⁴



31. Wanted Taco sauce. Maria salsa on the top left bottle⁵⁵



32. Wanted Tortilla chips. Jose tortilla is on the left side⁵⁶

On Wanted's web page, the company offers stories about the "origins" of the Mexican food products they sell. Their version of how *tortilla* chips came to exist is particularly interesting. The following quote is very long, however I decided to include it in its entirety because is an excellent illustration of how a prosaic food product discursively relates with the many types of metaphoric bodies that I have explored so far in this chapter:

"First, it is a known fact that *tortilla* chips are associated with Mexico and/or Mexican Food. Why? First, you must understand that the country we know of today as Mexico had no wheat. If you review history, you will see that one of the greatest natural resources that the inhabitants of Mexico at that time had - as far back as 8,000 years - was corn. These original inhabitants of what we call Mexico were Indians. There were Mayans, Aztecs, *Incas*, and many other tribes of well-known Indians living in and around Mexico. There are numerous reports of architectural diggings finding - among other things - corn seed in these Indian caves that date back to this period. Now, what do we see today? First of all, the current inhabitants of Mexico are the largest consumers, per capita, of corn in the world. Because they had no wheat, their original bread - that of their ancestors - the Indians - was made from corn. The Indians - and some Mexican families still today - take either corn of what is known as "corn flour", grind it in an old stone bowl - often made from lava - and form the "masa" into a round shape. This round shape was originally put on a hot stone - now it is put on something called a "comal" (stands for hot "plate"), is heated, and is used as bread. Many of the world's breads are considered "flat breads", and this most popular form of bread in Mexico is one of these.

So, what does bread have to do with *tortilla* chips? Well, as the world started to 'commercialize' there was a need for fresh corn *tortillas* (Mexican Bread) to be distributed and sold to those consumers where "mamacita" (the mother in the house) no longer made fresh corn *tortillas* for each meal. As commercialization continued, larger production facilities for corn *tortillas* were developed, and of course, these products had to be distributed through a delivery system. One of the key things with fresh bread, using no preservatives, is that it has a very short shelf-life. Some corn *tortillas* have a shelf-life of as little as 3 - 7 days. Here is where the story gets interesting. Some commercially minded manufacturer always asked himself: "What can I do with old corn *tortillas* that I have to take back from the stores. They will not keep them anymore, because the shelf-life is about gone; I do not want to have mold on my corn *tortillas*, or the customers will think that I make a bad product; but if I could find a way to use these, I would reduce my waste, and increase my profits. Somebody (nobody really knows who), cut these corn *tortillas* into quarter pieces, and fried them.

A new product was born! The *tortilla* chip was created. The original *tortilla* chip was a corn *tortilla*, cut into quarter pieces (or sometimes strips), and fried in lard or other fat. Today, some of the very thin *tortilla* chips found in high quality restaurants serving what is called "Ethnic Mexican Food" or "Tex-Mex Food" have a very thin corn *tortilla* made for them. These are then frozen. They are delivered to the restaurants, where the restaurants cut them, and deep-fry them. Today's customers are enjoying a product very, very close to what the old Indians used to make."⁵⁷

According to the "Wanted" creation myth, mass-produced, flash-frozen, and commercially distributed *tortilla* chips are very close to foods that the "old Indians" ate. And furthermore, Jose *Tortilla*, an inhabitant from the empty desert, is somehow related to ancient Aztecs, Mayas and Incas - the latter group having lived in South America, more than a thousand miles from Mesoamerica!

The “Wanted” products exemplify some of the schizophrenic quasi-objects offered by the Tex-Mex industries: entities from multiple chronotopes which merge into an idealized land-*scape*. In the process of commoditization of Mexican food, the lands of the U.S. deserts were occupied by the Tex-Mex industry in order to create an idealized “scape” in which they assemble the most diverse entities.

While I was conducting field research in Madrid during 2009, the *Texican Whopper* arrived in Spain:



33. Texican Whopper⁵⁸

“Brought together by destiny. People said it would never work. But somehow one plus one was three. The Texican Whopper. The Taste of Texas with a little Mexican spice. To understand it you must try it.”⁵⁹

The *Texican Whopper* is a hybrid assembly with an ephemeral existence. Entities from different times and spaces are mashed together, allowing its enactment. In the printed edition of the commercial that promoted the *Texican* in Spain in April 2009, destiny (or Manifest Destiny, if you prefer) brought together objects, human beings, ideas, technology and nature from Mexico and the U.S. – or rather, from the U.S. to Mexico. Two men, one from Mexico and the other from the U.S. are part of this encounter. A masked midget wrestler represents Mexico. The Mexican flag covers his body like a poncho. He is like a child who dreams of becoming a superhero; he is a grown-up man who still plays like a child. The other, U.S. man is a tall, lanky cowboy wearing a cowboy hat. He is a serious man, representing law and order in a desert land inhabited by childish Mexicans, savage Indians, and bandits. The child-man and the man-man lean against a wooden fence; a wagon wheel is shown next to them. Behind the fence, we see an open and sunny desert landscape. The opposed bodies with particular affections (*affectio*) are commoditizing a Tex-Mex foodscape. The Mexican body depicted in this advertisement is similar to that of the *axolotl* – a body that fails to undergo metamorphosis: a man who is still playing like a child on a deserted playground.

The top of the poster advertises the main ingredients that make the *Texican* different from traditional Whoppers: Cajun sauce, Cheddar cheese and a *taco* made of meat and beans. These constituent entities originate from different geographic areas and were brought to

existence in the daily life of different food traditions. In 2009, thanks to “destiny,” Louisiana’s Cajun sauce, English cheddar cheese and a Mexican *taco* got together in an American hamburger to be sold in Spain. Destiny cannot be controlled, destiny is apolitical, amoral.

In point of fact, the *Texican* was assembled by a transnational fast-food industry. The marketing campaign was produced in Chicago, the final product sold in Spain. As a moral idea, the *Texican* was contested when it appeared in the Spanish market. The *Texican*’s existence was ephemeral, not only because it was meant to be a special offer for a short period of time in Europe, but also because its existence inspired a moral debate among Mexicans, particularly among those living in Spain. Some Mexicans felt offended by the campaign. They felt affected (*affectus*) – specifically, insulted – by it. Others thought the advertisement was funny, and considered those who felt insulted to be Mexicans living in the past. The *Texican* incident ended when the Mexican ambassador to Spain formally asked Burger King’s local manager to stop the campaign. From the ambassador’s point of view, the advertisement was damaging Mexico’s image in Spain; firstly because of the way Mexicans were depicted, and secondly because of the inappropriate display of the Mexican flag.

At the height of the controversy, I tried the *Texican*. I was curious about how two fully-formed food concepts – a *taco* and a hamburger – were mashed together. How was a *taco* able to become an ingredient of hamburger without losing its main identity? To my surprise the *Texican*’s *taco* was fully re-semiotized. It was not made out of *tortilla* – neither hard nor soft, neither corn nor wheat; the *tortilla* had been replaced by hundreds of breadcrumbs forming a cylindrical structure that covered a mixture of meat and beans. It was obvious that there was no resemblance between the original model – the Corn body – and the re-semiotized entity in its *Tortilla* Chip body. Still, consumers in Madrid accepted the new entity as a legitimate type of *taco*. Where did the consumers’ former attachments lie in this case? What was the token of this re-semiotized type?

Following the argument developed in this thesis, I propose that in Western Europe’s Mex-foodscape, the majority of consumers’ former attachments are not linked to the material qualities of Mexican food products, but to the icons of the landscape used in their commoditization. In the Tex-Mex foodscape, what matters is the idealized space where food comes from, a place that was declared empty by Anglo settlers, U.S. politicians and the Tex-Mex industry in order to colonize it.

2.5 CONCLUSIONS

In the globalization of the Mexican landscape it is possible to speak about a process of entanglement. The idealized bodies which dwell in it cannot be described without referring to the stereotyped bodies inhabiting the Tex-Mex desert. Both types of bodies have been constituted as dominants of the Mexican landscape representations. If those bodies are not present, the landscape cannot be qualified as Mexican when it is commoditized abroad. On one hand, Mexican intellectuals, artists and politicians created the internal models of the nation between 1920 and 1940. On the other hand, the military, politicians and entrepreneurs from the U.S. constituted external models for their southern neighbor after their military interventions.

Both groups attached bodies and affections to particular landscapes in order to gain political control over the nation and generate economic earnings.

At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, two antagonistic models of the Mexican body-affection-landscapes were socialized in different directions – one in the U.S., the other in Mexico and Latin America. The era's technological devices played an important role in spreading and repeating these opposite models. These opposing models had the power to produce strife, disputes, theological duels, wars, sadness. Nevertheless, after the Second World War, the inner and outer models of the Mexican nation were softened in order to generate economic earnings for both sides; the coalition of the models produced rhythm, fruitful inventions, economic earnings and joy – at least for some.

Whereas the Mexican government started to socialize the national landscape in order to attract tourism from the United States (Pérez 2007), Mexican bodies in the U.S. desert were used by diverse industries to generate economic earnings. Food played an important role in this process of integration. In Mexico, regional foods started to be promoted as part of the national foodscape. In the U.S., foods that once belonged to Mexican bodies started to be commoditized as part of the U.S. landscape. This process of softening and appropriation gave rise to a diversity of Mex-foodescapes promoting the entanglement of different models.

It would have been almost impossible to open a Mexican restaurant abroad – outside of the U.S. – before the second half of the 20th century. It was first necessary to articulate Mexican bodies dwelling in diverse landscape and to attach them to particular affections (*affect*). The different affections (*affect*) related to Mexican bodies – *charros*, *chinas poblanas*, *catrinas*, bandits, sleeping Mexicans, etc. – and the objects occupying the landscapes where they live – handicrafts, regional foods, regional costumes, fiestas with *mariachis*, paper flags, rodeos, cock fight, *Jarabe Tapatio*, etc. – affect (*affectus*) consumers in a passionate way with their melancholy and nostalgia, their informality and relaxed attitude, their vulgarity and corruption, their festiveness and their indifference to time. The fact that all these entities share a small repertoire of Mexican affections (*affect*) expressed through their particular attachments reveals the impossibility of distinguishing *pure* Mexican subjects or objects; all of them belong to the realm of the *quasi*. One cannot actualize the Mexican identity without constituting relations with the other. In the coming chapters I will explain how the translation of the Mexican *socius* has given rise to many processes of repetition, opposition and adaptation that have materialized in Tex-Mex, Cal-Mex, Regional-Mex, Mex-Mex and “Real”-Mex foodscapes in Amsterdam, Madrid and San Francisco.

NOTES

- 1 *Mesoamerica*: “[...] is a geographical culture area extending from central Honduras and northwestern Costa Rica on the south, and, in Mexico, from the Rio Soto la Marina in Tamaulipas and the Rio Fuerte in Sinaloa on the north. Prehistoric groups in this area are characterized by agricultural villages and large ceremonial and politico-religious capitals. Well known cultural groups within Mesoamerica include Mayans, Aztecs, Olmecs, Mixtecs, Toltecs, and Zapotecs.” In: Gregonis, Linda M. & Karl J. Reinhard, *Hohokam Indians of the Tucson Basin*: <http://www.uapress.arizona.edu/onlinebks/hohokam/Glossary.htm>. Accessed: 05/06/2010

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- 2 <http://www.crystalinks.com/popolvuh.html>. Accessed: 05/06/2010
- 3 <http://www.jacksbromeliads.com/mayancivilizationii.htm>. Accessed: 10/10/2011
- 4 Father Sahagún: “Missionary and Aztec archeologist, b. at Sahagún, Kingdom of Leon, Spain, in or before the year 1500; d. at Mexico, 23 Oct., 1590. He studied at the convent of Salamanca where he took the vows of the order, and in 1529 was sent out to Mexico, being one of the earliest missionaries assigned to that country, where he labored until his death more than sixty years later.” In: New Advent <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13325a.htm>. Accessed: 05/09/2011
- 5 New Spain: “Viceroyalty of New Spain, Spanish Virreinato de Nueva España, the first of the four viceroyalties that Spain created to govern its conquered lands in the New World. Established in 1535, it initially included all land north of the Isthmus of Panama under Spanish control. This later came to include upper and lower California, the area that is now the central and southwestern portion of the United States, and territory eastward along the Gulf of Mexico to Florida.” In: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/412085/Viceroyalty-of-New-Spain>. Accessed: 05/09/2011
- 6 Poster Mexico. National Department of Tourism. Mexican Tourism Association, circa 1940: <http://art-and-posters.com/mexico-cactus-article-449.html>. Accessed: 11/05/2011
- 7 *Bolero*: is a form of slow-tempo Latin music and associated dance and song.
- 8 *Rancheras*: Popular music from Mexico’s rural northwest region.
- 9 *Charro*: Creole commonly associated to the rural areas of Western Mexico.
- 10 Pedro Infante: http://image2.findagrave.com/photos/2003/96/7336759_1049704930.jpg. Accessed: 03/06/2011.
- 11 Jorge Negrete: <http://s11.allstarpics.net/images/orig/m/s/msajdwpsmkdaasdd.jpg>. Accessed: 03/06/2011.
- 12 The most prominent revolutionary body types were Zapata, Villa and Adelita.
- 13 *Indito*: Disparaging term referring to indigenous people. “Indito” means “little Indian,” in a pejorative sense.
- 14 *Pelados*: poor Mexican population from the rural areas who migrated to the city in the beginning of the 20th century.
- 15 Emiliano Zapata: http://www.freedomarchives.org/La_Lucha_Continua/images/e_zapata.jpg. Accessed: 03/06/2011
- 16 Francisco Villa: <http://www.atwistedspoke.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/pancho1.jpg>. Accessed: 03/06/2011
- 17 Adelita: http://www.umich.edu/~ac213/student_projects06/joelan/adelita.html. Accessed: 03/06/2011
- 18 Jarocho: popular expression used in Mexico referring to people from Veracruz.
- 19 Here it is important to recall Nericcio’s insights about Hollywood machinery working in the *latinesque* body: “After Velez, one came to expect a certain type of Latina in film – perhaps more than any other figure save Dolores Del Rio and Carmen Miranda, Velez and her handlers helped concretize an image of Latina “exoticness,” sensuality, and silliness” (Nericcio 2007: 157).
- 20 Lupe Velez: <http://pictures.todocoleccion.net/tc/2011/02/10/24641837.jpg>. Accessed: 03/06/2011
- 21 Frida Kahlo: http://libbysniche.blogspot.com/2008_06_01_archive.html. Accessed: 03/06/2011
- 22 China Poblana: <http://www.posdataeditores.com/?author=2>. Accessed: 06/09/2011
- 23 <http://www.q-vomagazine.com/jesushelguera.html>. Accessed: 03/06/2011
- 24 Grandeza Azteca [Aztec Greatness] or *La Leyenda de los volcanes II* [*The Legend of the Volcanoes II*], Jesus Helguera: <http://foros.elsiglodetorreon.com.mx/foro.php?foro=7&post=166947>. Accessed: 12/11/2011
- 25 Bartra acknowledges that these mechanisms of exploitation are not exclusive to Mexico. They are found in the long history of colonization and exploitation carried out by Western nations.
- 26 Axolotl: <http://eco13.net/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/axolotl.jpg>. Accessed: 03/06/2011

- 27 From Bartra's point of view, a melancholy psyche is not exclusive to the Mexican body. This affection has played a central role in the structuring of the Western *socius*. Its history can be traced back to Aristotle's philosophy and the black bile. Melancholy has been the affection of the lonely genius, the hero and the quixotic person. In the case of the Mexican body this affection has acquired particular relevance for two reasons: "[...] first, because of the antiquity of the process that started with the Spanish conquest and acquired the form of a clashing and melting of different cultures; second – a paradox and drama – because the end of the rural world began with one of the biggest peasant revolutions of the 20th century" (Bartra 2005: 37 author's translation).
- 28 Many of the intellectuals who developed the "Philosophy of the Mexican" after the revolution also highlight melancholy as a characteristic feature of the Mexican psyche – for instance, Samuel Ramos, Emilio Uranga, Jorge Carrión, Octavio Paz, Santiago Rodríguez, etc. (Bartra 2005 author's translation).
- 29 Pareja indigena [Indigenous Couple], Diego Rivera: <http://www.elperromorao.com/2011/03/15/indios-again/>. Accessed: 11/05/2011
- 30 Familia de indios [Indigenous Family], Diego Rivera: <http://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/Familia-de-indios/8770C9ACF596CE8F>. Accessed: 11/05/2011
- 31 *Lépero*: vulgar man.
- 32 Cantinflas: Popular Mexican comedian.
- 33 Tin-tan: Popular Mexican comedian.
- 34 El Chavo del ocho: Popular Mexican comedian.
- 35 Cantinflas: <http://rodajes.net/files/2010/04/cantinflas.jpg/>. Accessed: 03/06/2011.
- 36 Tin-tan: <http://www.yomarnathalia.com/GVTT/gvtintan/TinTan02.jpg>. Accessed: 03/06/2011
- 37 El Chavo del ocho: http://www.arkivperu.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2008/06/chavo_america_1979_arkivperu.jpg. Accessed: 03/06/2011
- 38 *La Calavera*: <http://www.vinmag.com/online/media/gbu0/prodlg/RGC030-la-calavera-dancing%20skeletons-card.jpg>. Accessed: 03/06/2011.
- 39 *La Catrina*: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Posada2.Catrina.jpeg>. Accessed: 03/06/2011.
- 40 O'Sullivan used this term in public for the very first time in the summer of 1845 in the *Democratic Review of New York*. In December of the same year, O'Sullivan once again used the phrase in the *New York Morning News*: "And that claim is by the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government entrusted to us" (Horsman 1981: 301).
- 41 *Manifest Destiny*. John Gast, 1872: http://www.historyonthenet.com/American_West/manifest_destiny.htm. (Library of Congress LC-USZC4-668). Accessed: 05/03/2011
- 42 http://www.historyonthenet.com/American_West/manifest_destiny.htm. Accessed: 07/03/2011
- 43 Guyamas: Execution of Yaqui Indians. Unknown publisher. Used postcard, no stamp http://www.postcardman.net/mexico_revolution.html. Accessed: 07/03/2011
- 44 In stereotyped representations, diverse entities – e.g. nature, food, objects and ideas – are auto and hetero attached to human beings, forming hybrid collectives able to enact both quasi-objects and quasi-subjects. In this kind of representations, concrete and particular types are attached to abstract and general tokens. Stereotypes are affections attached to bodies in order to regulate their power to act. Whereas stereotypes are imprinted as impotent signs for the violated bodies, they function as potent signs for the bodies that produce and circulate them.
- 45 Noncombatants killed during the siege of Mexico City. Real photo by Jorschke. Unused postcard: http://www.postcardman.net/mexico_revolution.html. Accessed: 3/03/2011
- 46 The remains of the burnt bodies, Mexico City (1913). Published by Jorschke. Unused postcard: <http://www.>

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- postcardman.net/mexico_revolution.html. Accessed: 3/03/2011
- 47 Speedy Gonzales. *Looney tunes* meal: <http://toolooney.blogspot.com/2007/04/tyson-looney-tunes-meals.html>. Accessed: 4/03/2011
- 48 Jarocho's traditional costume, Veracruz, Mexico: <http://www.mexicoenlapiel.net/content/view/1062575/La-Muerte-Catrina.html>. Accessed: 4/03/2011
- 49 In 2003 the *tortilla/tostada* segment in the U.S was clearly the second largest in annual sales at \$4.1 billion, compared to potato chips at \$6.0 billion. In: Sparks companies INC. 2003. The U.S. Corn Masa Industry: Structure and Implications for the Great Plains Region. Document prepared for: MRC. Agricultural marketing resource center. Department of Agricultural Economics. Kansas State University. <http://www.agmrc.org/search/index.cfm>. Accessed: 13/10/2011
- 50 Advertizing mascots – people: http://www.tvacres.com/admascots_frito.htm. Accessed: 13/10/2011
- 51 *Ibid.*
- 52 Frito bandito: <http://blogvecindad.com/frito-bandito/>. Accessed: 13/10/2011
- 53 Advertizing mascots – people: http://www.tvacres.com/admascots_frito.htm. Accessed: 13/10/2011
- 54 *Wanted tortillas/wraps*: <http://www.wantedfoods.com/site/333>. Accessed: 15/09/2011
- 55 *Wanted taco* shells: <http://www.wantedfoods.com/site/333>. Accessed: 15/09/2011
- 56 *Wanted tortilla* chips. Jose *tortilla* is on the left. <http://www.wantedfoods.com/site/333>. Accessed: 15/09/2011
- 57 <http://www.wantedfoods.com/site/333>. Accessed: 05/09/2011
- 58 *Texican Whopper*: <http://maskalucha.com/Portals/0/Images/Blog/texican-ad.jpg>. Accessed: 05/02/2009
- 59 Texican Whopper from Burger King: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNabO2d-zbw>. Accessed: 07/02/2010

CHAPTER 3

TEX-MEX: DETERRITORIALIZING THE DESERT AND TERRITORIALIZING THE AIR

In this chapter I empirically explore the translation of the Mexican landscape into Tex-Mex foodscapes in Amsterdam and Madrid. In the previous chapter, I argued that the Tex-Mex foodscape was translated from the Mexican landscape; in this chapter, I contend that entrepreneurs have arranged those translated signs under a specific dominant and its correlated chronotopes to provide certain coherence to the translation. For instance, entrepreneurs have selected various signs associated with representations of the Mexican landscape which were developed in the U.S., and which typically deal with idealized entities dwelling the empty desert. In the following pages I analyze the processes of repetition, opposition and adaptation of the Tex-Mex landscape by exploring the first Tex-Mex foodscape established in Madrid, the first Tex-Mex restaurant established Amsterdam, and the most recent Tex-Mex foodscape established in Amsterdam.

3.1 EL CHARRO: THE FIRST TEX-MEX FOODSCAPE IN MADRID

“My father’s gourmet-quality *tamales* were the best I’ve ever tasted! And today, whenever I get the chance, I always eat *tamales*. They remind me of those old times. I remember the smell of corn soaked in water and the steam wafting to my cheek, a refreshing breeze that does everyone good. The steam from my father’s pot conjured up visions of the land he’d left when he was just a toddler” (Rocha 2006[b]: 89- 90)



34. Ventura’s *Tamales*, 2009

In *An Immigrant Named America* (2006[b]), Ventura Rocha traces the history of his family members who, beginning in the 19th century, migrated from Spain to New Spain, from New Spain to the United States, and who ended up back in Spain two centuries later. Ventura Rocha conceives of his life history as a circle:

“I [Ventura Rocha] am an American by birth... America personifies the immigrant. It is the immigrant. Living in Spain has made some of us Rochas come full circle; this was where [we] originated [and now we’ve come back]. But there’s always the possibility of an entirely new circle getting started all over again. An immigrant’s story may have a beginning but it has no ending.” (Rocha, 2006[b]: 8).”

One fall afternoon in the 1990s, Rocha was in his restaurant *A Todo Mexico* in Madrid, when his life lines opened up a new connection:

“No one among the diners looked outstandingly different from my usual clientele. So I didn’t pay any particular attention to them. But there was this man who asked if I could come to his table, which I did, and I found out he was a Mexican and my relative, too. I was intrigued. I’ve always known we Rochas hail from Mexico but I had yet to meet any one of us who actually lived there. He told me he was Raul Charles Rocha, a dentist, and lived in Monterrey...before I knew what I was letting myself in for, I was eagerly arranging a visit with him. There at his home in Mexico he showed me the Rocha family tree that his own cousin had compiled. And there was where I knew I was going to spare no time and effort in digging into the origins of the Rochas.” (Rocha 2006[b]: 14- 15).

Digging into his family roots, Rocha found his earliest parental rhizome on his mother’s side: Tirso de Taboada (c. 1820-1876), his great-grandfather, a Spanish man who arrived in Mexico with his two brothers in the 1840s. After disembarking in the port of Veracruz, the Taboada brothers decided to take different routes. One of them traveled to the city of Puebla, another moved to Mexico City, and Tirso chose Monterrey to start his new life. Tirso married a Creole woman named Benita Garza. The youngest of their four children was Matilde Taboada Garza, Ventura’s maternal grandmother.

Camilo Rocha, Ventura’s Creole paternal great-great grandfather, was born in 1790 in San Luis Potosi and married Juana Manríquez. In 1821 they had Pedro Rocha Manríquez, who married Diega Urizar; their son Vicente Rocha was Ventura’s paternal grandfather (Rocha 2006[a]). Vicente Rocha Urizar married Matilde Taboada, and in 1883 they migrated from Monterrey to Texas¹.

What happened to Vicente once they were in the United States is a mystery. He disappeared and Matilde had to look after their children by herself. Antonio Rocha Taboada, Ventura’s father, the eighth of the couple’s ten children, was four years old at that time. In light of her difficult situation, she decided to put her youngest sons in St. John’s Orphanage while she took care of her daughters. A decade later, the orphanage burned down and the children came back to live with Matilde:

“The whole fatherless family was reunited once more until 1929 when Matilde died and the fam-

ily was split up – this time for good. Some of the family decided to return to Mexico while others opted to remain in America. Those who did lost all connection with those who left. That’s why until I met my cousin Raul Charles on that fateful day in my restaurant in Madrid, I didn’t know any Rochas who lived in Mexico.” (Rocha 2006[b]: 73).

In 1906 Antonio Taboada Rocha married Juana Criollos (1887-1989), a Mexican-American woman born in Eagle Pass, Texas (Ventura Rocha 2006[a]). Ventura, born in 1925 in Orange, Texas, is the youngest of the four children the couple had, following Concha, Domingo and Chema. In his autobiography and during our interviews, Ventura explained to me time and time again how hard it was for him and his family to cope with the economic crisis of the Great Depression. To help bring in money for the family, Ventura’s father made and sold *tamales* in the street. Ventura remembers how he and his brothers used to help his father to make the *tamales*, spreading the sauce on the corn husks:

“My father was an excellent cook, [he] supplemented the paltry family income with the *tamales* that he would prepare at night and sell the next day....It wasn’t so hard to sell the *tamales* which went for 25 [cents] a dozen. My father constructed a small two-wheel cart to put the *tamales* in and push around the streets of Port Arthur, Texas. The aroma of rich flavor coming from the cart drew happy unresisting customers to our *tamales*; trade was brisk! Generally the customers were Mexicans – local born or immigrants – though there were also a few gringos who wanted a taste of our exquisite product.” (Rocha 2006[b]: 89-90).

As can be gathered from Ventura’s quote, within the first few decades of the 20th century, non-Hispanic residents of Texas were already adopting some of their Mexican neighbors’ food traditions.

Ventura has an interesting theory to explain how some Mexican foods were not only adopted but also appropriated by U.S. citizens and industries. In the case of *chili con carne* he states:

“I think it became popular in Texas, but I think it is Mexican because what happens is that in Mexico they do not use that name. It is only sauce made out of chile ancho and a bit of onion, garlic and cumin. They used to make that dish in Mexico without putting a particular name on it. I think it originated from there and Mexicans brought it to Texas, and there all the cowboys used to eat it, and then they used to put beans there and they used to call them chili beans. When there was no meat they used to put beans instead.” (Ventura Rocha 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

For Ventura, naming a dish is enough to catalyze a process of appropriation: it was only after the previously un-named stew acquired the moniker of *chili con carne*² that it became a standard part of the Tex-Mex foodscape.

In order to cope with the financial crisis of the Great Depression, Ventura’s family moved to San Antonio. There, his father sold newspapers, and Ventura and his brothers helped him. Ventura also started selling tomatoes and shoe polish at the age of eight. Ventura remembers

that in San Antonio his mother used to have a *chile* plant in the back yard of the house. In the hardest days of the Great Depression, his family used to eat the plant's *chiles* with homemade flour *tortillas*: "I also remember that sometimes my mother made *burritos* for my lunch, which I sometimes exchanged for the sandwiches of my gringo classmates" (Rocha 2006[b]: 108). Rocha's anecdote about the *burrito*/sandwich exchange highlights the ongoing exchange of culinary objects between Mexicans and "gringos" in Texas, which gave rise to the hybridized foodscape of Tex-Mex gastronomy.

During the Second World War, Ventura enrolled in the Marines. He was assigned to Hawaii and the Palmyra Atoll. After two years of service, he returned to the United States. Thanks to the G.I. Bill (educational benefits offered to American soldiers by the U.S. government), Ventura studied architecture at a college in Texas. After graduating in 1951, he worked for several companies around the U.S. In 1953, he married Nora Rose Narvaez. That same year, Spain signed a defense agreement with the U.S., allowing the establishment of U.S. military bases on its territory. Ventura was selected by Architects and Engineers for Spanish Bases (AESB), established by the U.S. government, as a specifications writer. In 1955, as a 30-year-old married man, Ventura traveled with his family to the land of his ancestors in order to work in the U.S. military bases in Spain: "Those were the times of the Cold War and we were constructing all the defenses to confront all that could happen. And of course we made the Rota Port, the forces of Torrejón and Zaragoza and the station for flight advice in different sites in Spain" (Ventura Rocha 2009, personal interview).

After living in Spain for some time, Ventura realized that there was nowhere to buy Mexican food:

"I used to think that Spanish food was like the Mexican food. I went there and said, 'a *tortilla*' and they used to give me a *tortilla* made out of potatoes and eggs and this kind of thing that they make here, and I said, 'no, this is not a *tortilla*³,' and after a year of saving some money I said, 'I will try to make something here.'" (Ventura Rocha 2009, personal interview. Author's translation).

With \$1,500 and a monthly rental of \$40, and using his wife's identity for administrative purposes⁴, Ventura started on his entrepreneurial adventure in what used to be a soap shop:

"I cleaned it and everything. I started there without knowing if something was coming out of there. I took a risk. It was something that I thought it was good and I want it. I need food for myself, or whatever, that was the way I started" (Ventura Rocha 2009, personal interview. Authors's translation).

In Ventura's recollection, he did not start his entrepreneurial career in Spain from a rational idea, nor did he have a "business plan." Before traveling to Spain he had no intention of opening a Mexican restaurant. Instead, Ventura decided to open the restaurant because he was not able to eat Mexican food in Madrid. He yearned for the foods he used to eat with his friends and family back home in the U.S.: *tales*, *tacos*, *burritos* and chili bowls. Ventura wanted to affect his body with those foods to trigger old passions.

Ventura figured that his U.S. military friends in Spain missed that kind of food as well. Most of them were not of Mexican heritage, but their assurances that they would be pleased if Ventura opened a Mexican restaurant in Madrid indicates that by the middle of the 20th century, Tex-Mex food was already extensively socialized among U.S. soldiers. After deciding to start *El Charro*, Ventura invited his brother Domingo to be part of his entrepreneurial adventure. Domingo had learned to cook Tex-Mex food while working in a restaurant in San Antonio, Texas. In 1957, the first Mexican restaurant in downtown Madrid – maybe in all of Europe – opened, offering Mexican food with a taste of Texas. During Franco’s dictatorship, it was extremely difficult to obtain food items from Mexico or Texas in Spain. Ventura was, therefore, faced with a dilemma: how to enable the translation of Tex-Mex food for consumers in Spain? Ventura integrated multiple resources into networks to supply his restaurant with foods that could mimic Tex-Mex dishes: avocados for the *guacamole* traveled by plane from the Canary Islands and Spanish (later Equatorial) Guinea. Pinto beans came from Leon, in Castilla de la Mancha. Finding the right corn for making *tamales* and corn *tortillas* proved more difficult for Ventura, but he eventually found it in Valencia:

“I made several trips to Valencia, on the Mediterranean coast, looking for sweet corn. The yellow corn I was able to find in other places was bad quality; they were fit only for animal feed and basically that was what the corn was for in those places” (Rocha 2006[b]: 193).

The machines for making the *nixtamal* for *tortillas* and *tamales* were bought by Ventura’s brother Chema Rocha, in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. Chema “...took them to Texas, and from there sent them to my military address in Madrid. That way we not only circumvented the Mexican trade embargo but also got total tax exemption” (Rocha 2006[b]: 194). Years later, Ventura created an informal partnership with the employees of the Mexican consulate in Lisbon, Portugal in order to get advice about how to import Mexican food products:

“Sometimes I invited them to see the *toros* (bull fighting) here. I used to go there, and in this way I managed to find out if I was able to bring things or not, and the things I was able to bring I had to bring from Texas or from Mexico. And I had to, as I was explaining to you, I used to bring those things, because I had to make ship travels from Oviedo to Veracruz and from there I used to bring the things I needed here.” (Ventura Rocha 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

The networks that allowed Ventura to translate the ingredients necessary to prepare Tex-Mex food extended across different cities and continents. His distribution networks have changed over time, which has affected the composition of the dishes offered on his menu.

El Charro’s first menu was in English, although many of the items available were indicated by their Spanish or pre-Hispanic names. The main dishes on the menu were *tamales*, chili (with beans, rice, cheese, or *carne*), *enchiladas*, soft or crispy *tacos*, *chalupas*, beans, and rice. Ventura also used to offer a variety of steaks at the restaurant.

Four things about the first *El Charro*’s menu stand out. First, most of the dishes offered on the menu, with the exception of Texan *chili*, were included in the first Mexican cookbook that appeared in 1831:

“*El cocinero mexicano* (The Mexican Chef] (1931), provided a long list of popular dishes including *quesadillas*, *chalupas*, *enchiladas*, *chilaquiles* and *envueltos*. The *envuelto* (Spanish for “wrap,” appropriately) comes closest to what would now be called *taco*, although it was something of a cross between a *taco* and an *enchilada*, with chile sauce poured over the fried *tortilla*.” (Pilcher 2008: 28).

A second important point about the initial *El Charro*’s menu is that Ventura offered *tacos*, but not *burritos*. And furthermore, he distinguished between soft and crisp *tacos*. Thirdly, the restaurant offered some dishes that have since then become to be identified as part of the Texas – rather than strictly Mexican – food tradition, particularly chili and steaks. Finally, it is worth noting that *tamales* played a central role on that first menu; indeed, Ventura explains that his father’s *tamales* have always been a central dish in his restaurant.

These four observations about *El Charro*’s first menu suggest that Ventura translated foods that he strongly related to: from the first foods of the Mexican nation (*tacos*, *chalupas*) to the ones that became part of the Texan state (chili, steaks), and those from his most intimate experiences of living with his parents and sharing their food (*tamales*). Ventura translated flavors that affected (*affectus*) his body in a joyful way when he was a child. However, Spanish people did not accept Ventura’s intimate flavors at first:

“When I arrived here Spanish people were not used to eating anything, only steaks, fish and French fries. That was the menu of the Spanish people. I used to put *menudo* on the menu, I used to put that and on the second or third day I had to throw it out because people did not even try it. That is the reason why the menu is a limited one, because what we could offer was not a lot. You have also to consider that this menu is more Texan, more American than Mexican. Because that is what I know how to cook. I have not been to Mexico before. I did not know the authentic Mexican food. Only what our parents taught us of course. It was Mexican of course, but from the north.” (Ventura Rocha 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

According to Ventura, during Franco’s dictatorship, it was difficult to get Spanish people to try, much less accept, foreign cuisines. For one thing, he argues, they were very proud of their own Spanish foods; for another, at that time Spanish people did not have access to much international food. In an 1967 interview Ventura gave to a Texan newspaper, he explained Spanish people’s taste in the following way: “What do Spanish people like best in the Mexican food line? They prefer the mixed plate (the Tex-Mex plate)... The younger Spanish people go more for our type of food. The old-timers seem to prefer the traditional Spanish dishes.”⁵

It is important to recall that Spanish people did not include corn in their food tradition while ruling the lands of the New Spain. That rejection of corn is one of the reasons for the invention of (wheat) flour *tortillas* in New Spain. Moreover, until the 20th century, corn was considered an immoral food by some Spanish people. Yet Ventura persisted in including *tortillas* and other foods made with ground corn at *El Charro*:

“When we opened, here in the corner, it was a little restaurant and it had a lot of success. Americans came and some Spanish as well. During the nights there was a line coming in, of course we did not manage to please everybody. We were open all day long. To make the food for the next

day we had to work all night with the restaurant closed, with a double number of people working in the kitchen to make the *tortillas*. Well, we did not use to make the *tortillas*, I used to make them in my house, I had a mill and I had people working there making [nixtamal] and all that.” (Ventura Rocha 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

Since many of the dishes Ventura sold in his restaurants were made from or using corn, and given Spanish people’s general rejection of corn-based foods, most of the early consumers at *El Charro* were U.S. military. Curiously enough, a Mexican restaurant located in Mexico’s former colonial power (*puissance*) became a meeting point for bodies of an institution that had tried to conquer Mexico only a few decades earlier.



35. *El Charro*. Ventura’s personal archive⁶

Photos from the early days of *El Charro* show design elements which seek to represent Mexican-ness. The icons shown at the top of the photo belong to pre-Hispanic bodies – or Corn bodies, as I called them in a previous chapter. Their aesthetics suggest that they are depictions of Mayan petroglyphs. The fabric of the chairs’ seats evoke the colors of the Mexican flag. A wool carpet similar to those produced in the Mexican state of Oaxaca hangs on the door in the center of the photograph. By using these icons, Ventura sought to distinguish his restaurant as Mexican. He remembers that at the beginning, he did not have enough Mexican signs in the decoration, but he thought that consumers would recognize his restaurant as Mexican based on its name:

“Because you have to put a name such that when [people] read it, [they] know where it comes from. *El Charro*, I had a lot of difficulties here with *El Charro*... *El Charro* was less known, the Mexican *charro*, but I realized that people, I think from Navarra [a region in northern Spain], are known as *charros* as well. The Spanish who used to visit the place thought that Spanish *charros* were inside because of Navarra’s *charros*, [but] I said ‘no! Mexican *charros*!’, because I thought *charros* were only from Mexico.” (Ventura Rocha 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

After Ventura realized that it was not enough to name his restaurant *El Charro* in order to be identified as Mexican, he asked one of his brothers, who lived in Texas at the time, to buy some “landscape objects” (Della Dora 2009) for the restaurant. Ventura also changed the aes-

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thetics of his menu. On the first menu, he only used a few icons from the national landscape to qualify the offered dishes as Mexican, whereas on the upcoming menus he included many signs to characterize the origin of the food being commoditized.



36. First Charro's menu



37. Second Charro's menu



38. Last Charro's menu

On the first menu there are no bodies, but it includes two icons associated with a Mexican man's body: a *sarape*⁷ in green, red and white, the colors of the Mexican flag, and a *sombrero*.⁸ The letters of *El Charro* are square; although they tilt to the right, they nevertheless display stability.

On the second menu, the logo is placed in the right corner; under it, a running Mexican man wearing a *sombrero*, a *sarape* and *huaraches*⁹ hurries to bring drinks to someone on the other side of the desert. In addition to his clothing, the figure's black hair and big mustache point to the man's Mexican identity. In this version of the menu, the letters of the restaurant's name, the words *El Charro*, are twisted. They adapt to the shape of the Mexican body in order to avoid crashing into his big *sombrero*. Below, a map of Mexico with foods superimposed upon it territorializes some elements of the depicted foodscape: avocados, *margaritas*, *nachos*, crispy *tacos* and *tamales*. A Mexican man, holding a *taco* bigger than himself, is placed over the northern state of Nuevo Leon. The top of his *sombrero* touches the Mexico-U.S. bor-

der, and is just a millimeter away from being in Texas. In the bottom left-hand corner of the menu, a bottle of *tequila* balances the graphical composition, and a border of what appear to be pre-Hispanic patterns frames the menu's cover. Since Ventura's family comes from Nuevo Leon, Mexico, and he was born in Texas, I asked him if the new menu's design was related to his life story; he just laughed and changed the topic.

The oldest menu (above, on the left) depicts icons related to the national landscape. The second, newer menu on the right privileges icons created by the Tex-Mex food industry. On *El Charro's* third menu, Ventura placed the map-food icon he developed over a new frame. This menu also includes a zig-zag pattern resembling the stairs of a pyramid and is a warm terracotta color which recalls the ambience of the desert. By comparing these menus, we can appreciate that Ventura was trying to coordinate his translation of the Mexican foodscape with his target consumers' knowledge.

In 1959 Ventura and his brother Domingo opened the restaurant *Mexico Lindo* in downtown Madrid. Around that time, Ventura acquired the nickname "The Big Enchilada" among his military friends. In 1962, Ventura moved to Bangkok to work with the U.S. Marines for six years. During that time, his brother Domingo took care of the business in Madrid. Ventura made intercontinental trips to supervise the restaurants and brought ingredients to prepare *tamales* for his family back to Thailand.

In 1965 Ventura decided to internationalize his business and he opened a second *Mexico Lindo* in Jackson, Mississippi, U.S., where his sister lived. In this endeavor, a Mexican foodscape was translated back to the U.S. from Spain. According to Ventura, there were no Mexican restaurants in Jackson, Mississippi at that time, and the Mexican foodscape was not well defined in the U.S. (with the exception of the southwestern states that used to belong to Mexico). Ventura was therefore translating a Mexican foodscape between two states of the U.S. – from Texas to Mississippi, with his experience in Madrid mediating the translation:

"What happens with me is that I have always been a pioneer, I had always been ahead. If you go there now the Mexican restaurants are a good business. When I was there I was the first one, and being the first one you have to fight to get clients and so. It is not the same when people are already accustomed. Because I was the first restaurant in Mississippi, the first Mexican restaurant and it was so Mexican, like in Texas and other parts of Mexico. *You have to accustom the people.* They did not know what the *tamales* where, they did not know what is that, and it is hard when people do not know." (Ventura Rocha 2009, personal interview. Author's translation).

Ventura's restaurants in Madrid were generating good profit. In 1969, he opened another *Mexico Lindo* in Alicante on Spain's Mediterranean coast. The Mexican body depicted on this restaurant's menu was the same as the one depicted on the menu for the second *El Charro*; in this case, however, the Mexican body is not running out of a desert landscape but rather from a blue sky. The body is crossing another empty place as fast as possible in order to serve drinks to the hypothetical consumers in the lived space of an idealized Mexican landscape.



39. Menu, Mexico Lindo
(Beautiful Mexico)



40. Menu, Adelita's Ahorita
Mismo (Adelita's Right Now)



41. Menu, A Todo Mexico
(Full Mexico)

When Ventura opened additional restaurants in Spain, he paid more attention to the name, decoration and general aesthetics of the places:

"I loved applying my multicultural background to my business ventures" (Rocha 2006[b]: 229). The names *A Todo Mexico* [Full Mexico], *Mexico Lindo* [Beautiful Mexico] and *Adelita's Ahorita Mismo* [Adelita's Right Now] did not create confusion among Spanish consumers the way *El Charro* did: "Adelita's Ahorita Mismo. As with my other restaurants, the name of this one reflects Mexican folklore and linguistic usages." (Rocha 2006[b]: 229).

Adelita's Ahorita Mismo was established in 1994. Ventura opened the place with his son Ventura Rocha Jr: "He is something of an expert on Mexican history and was the reason why he has called his first restaurant Adelita's."¹⁰ Ventura and his son started to create more detailed descriptions of the signs of the depicted landscapes: they were teaching consumer how to read the translations. For example, the menu of *Adelita's Ahorita Mismo* reads: "Adelitas were women who used to accompany, work, prepare food, and fight together with the Mexican Revolutionaries. They have passed on to us a very extensive and varied cuisine. From it, we offer this menu." On the menu, a smiling Adelita with red lips and big eyes is running to serve consumers. She is wearing a traditional white, blue and pink Mexican dress. In one hand, she is carrying a platter with a *margarita*, a bottle of *tequila* and what seems to be a bowl of *guacamole*. Around her torso, Adelita wears a bullet strap.¹¹

The design of Ventura's restaurants has changed quite dramatically since 1957. While the initial design of *El Charro* only depicted some pre-Hispanic bodies and a couple of Mexican fabrics, Ventura Rocha's next restaurants started to incorporate more complex aesthetics, including easily recognizable, stereotyped Mexican bodies and icons from the Mexican landscape. Ventura remembers that on his trips to Mexico or the U.S., he tried to bring back decorations for his restaurants in Spain. He used to ask his family to do the same. On one of his trips to Mexico, Ventura's son Turi, brought back photos taken by Hugo Brehme and Agustin Casasola:

“Hanging on the restaurant’s wall, the photos shows some of the most important moments of those times. One photo shows Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata sitting quietly after having taken the Mexican capital. Some photos show firing squads, and others show the Adelita’s helping out during the battles.”¹²



42. *La Leyenda de los volcanés II* (The legend of the volcanoes) in *A Todo Mexico*. 2009, 43. Revolutionary bodies in *A Todo Mexico* restaurant, 2009



44. Folkloric bodies. *A Todo Mexico* restaurant, 2009 45. Navy certificate, *A Todo Mexico* restaurant, 2009.

The bodies depicted in the decoration of *A Todo Mexico* in 2009 were very different from the ones depicted at the end of the 1960s in *El Charro*. This more recent design is more elaborate. It is composed of multiple Mexican bodies translated from different chronotopes. The first photo on the left shows a print of Helguera’s painting *La Leyenda de los Volcanes II* (The legend of the volcanoes). As explained in the second chapter, this painting has become a symbol of ethnic pride – a potent sign – among the Mexican population and their descendants in the United States¹³.

Folkloric bodies from the Mexican landscape can be seen in the third picture. In the middle is a photo of Pedrito Fernández, a Mexican icon from the 1980s who was famous for singing *rancheras*, one of Mexico’s popular musical genres. Above it are two pictures of Hugo Sánchez, another Mexican icon who rose to fame in the 1980’s playing for Real Madrid’s foot-

ball team. After the fall of Franco's dictatorship, Sánchez became the best-known Mexican public figure in Spain. The fourth photo does not depict a Mexican body. Instead, it shows a certificate from the U.S. Navy that says: "A testimony and tribute to outstanding service to the Navy league of the United States Madrid Council for over a Quarter of a Century." The scenography depicted in this restaurant is comprised of signs related to multiple passions: The "glorious past" of the Mexican body, Turi's passion for revolutionary bodies, Spanish people's passion for Hugo Sanchez, Ventura's passion for the Navy. Due to the intimate passions that can accompany these signs' significations, they can be considered quasi-objects; however, for those not affected by them, they are simple objects.

The icons in Ventura's various restaurants reveal how Mexican bodies represented in the design have been actualized over time¹⁴. At first Ventura thought the name *El Charro* was enough to evoke a Mexican body and its related affections (*affectio*). Afterwards, he understood that it was necessary to make use of many other stereotypical bodies to create agreements with consumers.

The dishes offered in Ventura's restaurants have also changed over the last few decades. Newer menus include many "Mexican" dishes created or popularized in Texas: *nachos*, *fajitas*, *burritos* and Texan *enchiladas*. By 2009, Ventura was even thinking about including "puffy *tacos*" on *A Todo Mexico*'s menu. This type of *taco* is unknown in Mexico, but very popular in certain parts of Texas.¹⁵ A dish called *El Texano* was also offered on *A Todo Mexico*'s menu. *El Texano* consisted of *enchiladas* covered with *chili con carne* and melted cheese, accompanied by Mexican rice, beans and a fried beef *taco* on the side. Such combo plates are very common in Texas and incidentally, in Tex-Mex food throughout the U.S. As hinted by the name of the plate, people in Texas do not consider these type of dishes part of the Mexican or Tex-Mex food tradition. Rather, they consider these dishes part of the Texan foodscape.¹⁶

Ventura's menus also started to include food from different regions of Mexico: *enchiladas* and *mole poblano*¹⁷ (a style of *mole* named after Puebla, a state in the center of Mexico) and *carne a la tampiqueña*¹⁸ (named for Tampico, a city in Mexico's northeast). "Other interesting items brought directly from Mexico are the unique *molcajetes* which are mortars made from volcanic rock. These are used to serve piping hot *queso ranchero*, *puntas de filete con chile colorado* and *carnitas con calabacín y maíz tierno*."¹⁹ Ventura also included seafood dishes from the Gulf of Mexico.

Most of the foods Ventura has introduced on his restaurants' menus are foods that have affected him during trips to Mexico and the U.S. Ventura assumes that if his body creates joyful relations with the dish, then the same dish can affect other bodies in similar ways, and trigger the same passions. Most of the time, Ventura tries to experiment with new dishes made out of corn:

"We experiment, I experiment a lot. Especially with the foods I like. To prepare foods made out of corn is really cheap because we prepare them from scratch²⁰. A ball of corn is very cheap. And with this ball you make all the *tortillas* and the dough for making the *tamales*, afterwards you can make more things with the *tamal* dough. You can make *tostaditas*, but a corn *tortilla* is also a bread made with the *tamal* dough and if you put some meat on the top, and melted cheese,

the tamal dough is very delicious. And you start playing with that, with the cheapest you have. Well, it is cheap because you make the corn dough.” (Ventura Rocha 2009, personal interview. Authors’ translation).

At one point Ventura also experimented with *nachos* (*tortilla* chips). He started to produce them in home and tried to masively commercialize them. Nevertheless he had to stop the business because he did not have a licence to produce *nachos* in Spain: “Rocha recalls how they also started a corn chip factory and ran that for a time until Spanish officials cracked down because they only had a license for *buñuelo* (fried pastries).”²¹

As the menus at his restaurants changed, Ventura started to train Spanish consumers’ bodies. For instance, he introduced signs on some of the menus in order to teach consumers how to drink *tequila*. He also taught them how to become affected (*affectio*) with the help of different devices, by introducing the signs of the Mexican nation to their bodies. In some of his restaurants he implemented visual devices depicting the main dishes of the Mexican and Tex-Mex foodscapes. In this way the clients were able to understand the external qualities of the foods. Ventura also included some notes explaining the geographical origins of the dish or the particular way it was prepared. On one of his menus he added a note telling the consumers that if they wanted to learn how to make their own *tacos* they should ask the waiter. Ventura has introduced many new dishes to his restaurants’ menus. He changes some dishes on his menus every one or two years, and with every change, he starts a new process of training. Taking into consideration the fact that Ventura is a military veteran that served the U.S. Navy for more than 25 years, it is not impossible that his military education influences his training techniques.



46. Poster used to promote the foods in the *Mexico Lindo* restaurant.



47. Instructions on how to drink *tequila* on the back of a menu from the *A Todo Mexico* restaurant.

Ventura established nine restaurants in Spain and three in the U.S. in 37 years. In most of his entrepreneurial projects Ventura has established partnerships with close relatives. He firmly believes that it is very convenient to make business with family, but problems arise when the in-laws take part in the management of business. From Ventura’s point of view, that affects the trust relationship between brothers:

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“And that is what happens with that as well, when the children are little there is no problem but when they are 18, 20, 25 years old they want to get what their parents have, because they do not have someone else to give it away. You give it away to them and they do not think like the other brother. It is hard, not with the close grade family but with the families that come from those brothers, with the wives, with the sons.” (Ventura Rocha 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

After decades of successful entrepreneurship, Ventura has been losing most of the restaurants he owned, due to problems with his relatives. In the 1990s Ventura and Domingo ended their entrepreneurial partnership and went to court. In the summer of 2009, after more than ten years of expensive legal procedures and as a consequence of the economic crisis, Ventura decided to close *El Charro*, the first Tex-Mex restaurant established in Madrid and maybe in all of Europe. After the closing of *El Charro*, the only Ventura owned restaurant was *A Todo Mexico*. When *El Charro* closed down, some of the old consumers were lost, but others moved on with him to *A Todo Mexico*. Most of the restaurant’s clients are Spanish people who like to visit the place with their family. Some consumers have been visiting Ventura’s restaurants for decades. Together with Ventura they discovered how to affect (*affectus*) their bodies with dishes from the Tex-Mex foodscape. Nowadays some of the descendants of the first *Charro*’s consumers visit the restaurants with their own families and teach to their children how to affect (*affectus*) their bodies as well:

“The first time I went into this place I was in a stroller... and my parents used to come eat at this place already a long time ago. Now, 37 years after, to me it is the best Mexican restaurant I have ever been to. The food is as astonishing as the waiters’ service. Could it be the reason why a family has been eating in the same place for 40 years?” Pedro Arauzo, 04-03-2011 22:47.²²



48) El Charro Mexicano restaurant, Madrid²³



49) Ventura Rocha at A Todo Mexico



“I will never be able to make *tamales* as good as my father used to make. When you remember those things... he used to make them delicious...” (Ventura Rocha 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

Although Ventura has tried to mimic his father’s *tamales* for more than 50 years, he admits that he will never succeed. Ventura’s Proustian memories display the same noble admiration Don Quijote feels for Amadis de Gaula: “At the end of the Search, the interpreter understands what had escaped him in the case of the madeleine or even of the steeples: that the material meaning is nothing without an ideal essence that it incarnates” (Deleuze 2008: 9). Ventura is the only person who knows the ideal essence of his father’s *tamales*. His body is the only interface able to sense this quasi-object and compare the model with the reproductions he enacts in his restaurant.

Since Ventura Rocha established *El Charro*, hundreds of Tex-Mex restaurants have opened in Madrid and Western Europe. Some of those restaurants are repetitions of *El Charro*, others are oppositions that took off from different modelos. However, the main model for this type of restaurant has been the Tex-Mex foodscape consolidated in the second half of the 20th century. From this point of view, *El Charro* itself was a repetition; however, it can be considered an adaptation as well due to the creative opposition Ventura developed between the Mexican and the Tex-Mex foodscapes in Madrid.

3.2 LA MARGARITA: OPPOSITION TO THE TEX-MEX FOODSCAPE IN AMSTERDAM

La Margarita was the second Mexican restaurant established in downtown Amsterdam. This restaurant can be seen as one of the different oppositions that the Tex-Mex foodscape has experienced in its processes of repetition around Western Europe. Opposite, imitative rays from the Mexican foodscape meet in this restaurant: the Texan desert, the Californian beach and regional Mexico.



52. *La Margarita*'s façade. The owner, Alex appears sitting inside, 2008

La Margarita was opened in 1981 by Leo, a Dutch entrepreneur who was affected by the Mexican foodscape during a trip to Los Angeles, California in the 1970's. Leo tried Mexican cuisine at the restaurant in the hotel where he was staying. After a few days, he spoke with the workers in the kitchen and offered them jobs in Amsterdam opening up a Mexican restaurant. They accepted the proposal and traveled to the Netherlands.

During the time I was doing field research in Amsterdam, *La Margarita* was the only Tex-Mex restaurant where it was possible to get *cochinita pibil* in the city. *La Margarita* offered *cochinita pibil* on its menu because the workers who traveled from Los Angeles to Amsterdam to enact a Mexican foodscape were Mayan migrants from Yucatán. They therefore put together a menu with food close to their particular affections. Other dishes from the Mexican foodscape that were offered at *La Margarita* were *estofado* and *tamales*. The Yucatecan workers also incorporated many of the Cal-Mex dishes they learned to make in Los Angeles, including *burritos*, *nachos*, *fajitas* and *chimichangas*.

Despite the restaurant's inspiration in coastal California, the decoration from restaurant did not follow aesthetic lines commonly related to the Californian beach landscape. Instead, icons taken from the empty desert were used to establish the identity of the place. A mustachioed Mexican man wearing *sombrero* and carrying foods and drinks has been the main symbol of *La Margarita* since the place opened. This Mexican body can be appreciated on the restaurant's website, menu and business cards. In the beginning, *La Margarita* was wood-paneled and the light was dim; "like a traditional Dutch bar" (Victor 2008, personal interview. Author's translation).



53. *La Margarita*, Amsterdam²⁴

After several years of success, Leo opened a second *La Margarita* restaurant in a gay- friendly neighborhood in Amsterdam in 1992. The new *Margarita* offered the same menu: Yucatecan and Los Angeles-style Mexican food. The two *Las Margaritas* started to experiment with the Caribbean foodscape as well. A distinctive plate developed by the creative encounter of those food traditions was the “fruit *burrito*”: “a big soft flour *tortilla* filled with cheese, banana, melon and pineapple, from the oven.”²⁵ Of the hundreds of Mexican restaurants I have visited in U.S. and Western Europe, *La Margarita* is the only place where I found this kind of *burrito*.

In 2001 Leo sold the first *La Margarita* to his nephew Alex. The second *La Margarita* was rented to another entrepreneur. In order to differentiate between the *Margaritas*, the second location experimented with Caribbean and Colombian food traditions while the first one remained “Mexican.” The aesthetics of the second *Margarita* migrated southeast from Mexico, towards the Caribbean and Latin America. The aesthetics from the Mexican *Margarita* migrated from a traditional Dutch bar to a colorful “Mexican restaurant.” Many icons from the Texan and the Californian landscape were included in this translation.



54. Advertising for the first *Margarita*, 2008



55. Advertising for the second *Margarita*, 2008

The main logo of *La Margarita* appears in the first image: a Mexican body wearing *sombrero* and mustache. However, in comparison with the sober face of the Mexican body showed before, in this case the Mexican body depicts a silly face. An intriguing element about this image is the object on the shirt's left lapel. Is it a bone in a pocket? Military medals? The second image depicts a woman dressed in a complicated, multicolor dress. Is she Caribbean, Mexican, Colombian, or all three at once?

Victor, a Mexican who has lived in Amsterdam since 1988, started to work at the first “Mexican” *La Margarita* after Alex bought it. He helped make a new decoration for the place. Victor also participated in the modification of the original menu. The new administration removed many dishes from the original menu, but not *burritos*, *nachos*, *enchiladas* or *fajitas*. Those dishes are potent signs from the Mexican foodscape in Western Europe. If those dishes are not part of the menu, some consumers become sad. Most of the plates that were taken out of the menu were replaced by seafood dishes: *salmonsada*, garlic shrimp, *calamares fritos*, and *sopa de pescado*. *La Margarita* also offers *tamales* on special occasions once or twice a year. However, *tamales* are not included on the menu. When they are available, waiters offer them to consumers who are searching for so-called authentic Mexican food. At *La Margarita*, *tamales* are served with rice, beans and salad on the side, which is uncommon in Mexico, where *tamales* are usually eaten by themselves. *La Margarita*'s adaptation responds to what is considered a “complete” Mexican dinner in the Netherlands. In the right-hand photo below, enchiladas from the oven are shown. This type of combination plate has become the stereotypical Mexican dish in many European cities: lots of melted cheese on top of something – an *enchilada*, a *taco*, or a *burrito* – with sour cream and *guacamole*, beans and rice, and perhaps a salad. These types of combo plates, or mixed plate, as Ventura named them, are uncommon in Mexico, but very popular in Texas, and Tex-Mex foodscapes in the U.S. and Western Europe.



56. *Tamal*, *La Margarita*, 2008



57. *Enchiladas*, *La Margarita*, 2008.

In 1991, David, a Peruvian immigrant, started to work in *La Margarita*'s kitchen. David learned to cook Mexican food from Alex and by referring to cookbooks; he soon became the new chef of the place, replacing a chef who was from Mozambique. David believes that everybody can learn to prepare Mexican food; the difficult thing is to hit the right taste. David

claims that he does not care very much about the presentation of the plates. He pays more attention to how everything tastes. After 18 years of cooking at *La Margarita*, David still tries the dishes he makes every single day.

In 2008 two Peruvians and one Mexican were working in the kitchen at *La Margarita*. As head chef, David decides who works with him. In David's opinion, Peruvians and Mexicans have shared food tastes since the times of the Incas and the Aztecs. Therefore, he argues, it is not necessary to have Mexican kitchen workers in order to prepare good Mexican food. For David, the idea that Peruvian-Incas and Mexican-Aztecs share affections (*affectio*) allows the enactment of the desirable quasi-object. David commented that some people who used to work in the kitchen of *La Margarita* are now working for other Mexican restaurants in Amsterdam. Indeed, owners of other Mexican restaurants have offered him jobs; however, he is loyal to *La Margarita*. David also explained to me that sometimes workers from other Mexican restaurant in Amsterdam visit *La Margarita* in order to copy his recipes. David says he feels comfortable working in the kitchen of *La Margarita* because the kitchen team is usually exclusively Latino men who work hard without complaining as much as Dutch workers do.

A special menu offered recently by *La Margarita* is "Yucatán": "a Mexican menu having *tortilla* chips and dips, *sopa mejicana* as a starter, *burrito*, *chilaquile*, roasted sparerib and *es-tofado* as main course and ice-cream or cake as dessert."²⁶ Which ingredients or dishes from Yucatán are included in this plate? None! In fact, the restaurant stopped offering Yucatecan dishes some years ago because consumers did not order them. Consumers prefer Mexican foods more closely related to the Texan and Californian cuisine over Yucatecan food. Considering this experience, it seems that regional-Mexican foods are not the next "organic trend" as Boland argues,²⁷ at least in the case of Amsterdam's consumers of Mexican food.

However, this raises the question of what exactly regional-Mexican cuisine is. Moreover, what is a region? Can we consider the food traditions from the north of Mexico and the south-eastern U.S. as one type of regional food, compared to Mexican foods from other regions?

After almost a quarter of century being the only Mexican restaurant in Amsterdam which offered regional foods (in this case, from Yucatán in southeastern Mexico), the Yucatecan foodscape at *La Margarita* was cannibalized in the process of translation: the Yucatecan landscape was detached from its previous objects and attached to the bodies of a deterritorialized Mexican foodscape.

In this process of apposition and adaptation, innovative Mexican plates have also been invented. That is the case of the *fajita Margarita with salmon*:

"This is a plate that came out of us. It is a dish made out of salmon with red sauce, a bit spicy. It is wrapped in a *tortilla* with cheese; it goes in the oven and avocado on the top. It is a super dish. People from here love salmon. They love cheese. One day we tried and the new dish began."
(Victor 2008, personal interview. Author's translation).

The origins of the *Fajita Margarita with Salmon* provide an excellent opportunity to reflect about the process of innovation in restaurants. Unfortunately, no one at *La Margarita* recalls precisely how the process was activated. Victor simply remembers that one day he and David invented the new dish, and Alex liked it. They started to offer the *Fajita Margarita with*

Salmon as a special, and customers accepted it. However, when a new dish is introduced to the menu, an old one has to be removed, so they stopped offering *pescado al horno* (baked fish) since people were not ordering it at that time.

Some of the dishes offered at *La Margarita* have been invented by the disturbance of passionate networks. From time to time, consumers ask for special dishes and disrupt the coordination of passionate networks inside restaurants, and thus a new process of innovation begins. For example, suppose a consumer asks for *fajitas* made with fish instead of beef. This type of exotic request can create problems for the restaurant's management. For one thing, the waiter has to make special notes in the order because there is not a set code for the requested dish (in the management of restaurants all entities are coded – tables, dishes, people, etc). The waiter may then have to explain the specifics of the order to the staff in the kitchen, which takes time and opens up the possibility of confusion and errors in translation. Another potential problem is the cost of the new entity. How should the restaurant staff calculate the cost of something that does not exist?

Despite these problems, sometimes a consumer creates such joyful relations with a new dish that he or she leaves a particularly good tip. After realizing the potential of the new dish, the waiter talks with the owner of the place, who then tries the new dish. If the owner is also affected (*affectio*) in a joyful way by the new dish, a process of calculation and network coordination will be activated in order to introduce the new dish into the menu. On the other hand, sometimes new dishes emerge not from a customer's special request, but due to problems in the management of the kitchen. This could have been the case with the *Fajita Margarita with Salmon*; it could have been that, in fact, the one day the kitchen ran out of beef and the chef decided to replace it with salmon.

My point here is that all the actors who merge in restaurants have a potential to activate a process of disruption and innovation in passionate networks. In the first hypothetical case a consumer who made an exotic requirement activated the process; in the second case, the lack of beef triggered the innovation.²⁸

Under Alex and Victor's administration, the decoration of *La Margarita* changed drastically. Aesthetics lines from the Texan desert and the Mexican landscape became more accentuated. Alex and Victor tried to make the restaurant more warm and colorful. Most of the new signs used to decorate the place were taken from a Wild West landscape: Indians, bandits, *sombreros*, mustaches, sleeping Mexicans, etc. Icons from the folkloric and pre-Hispanic Mexico including *Nahuatl*²⁹ handicrafts, a wooden Aztec calendar, and a painting of a woman making *tortillas* are also depicted on the restaurant's walls.



58. Sombreros and North American Indian, *La Margarita*, 2008



59. North American Indian and Aztec Calendar, *La Margarita*, 2008



60. Mexican bandit, *La Margarita*, 2008

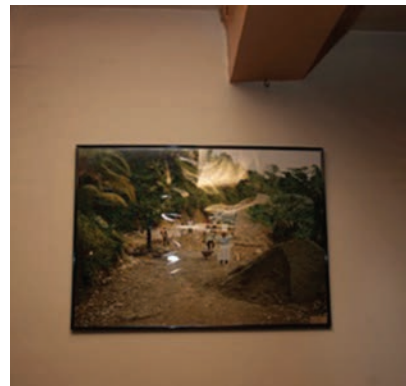


61. Sun and virgin Maria, *La Margarita*, 2008

Photos from Mexican, Latin American and Caribbean landscapes are also included in the scenography. In some of those photos, close relatives and a friend from *La Margarita* are depicted together with the inhabitants of those landscapes. Images of Buddha and a couple of Buddhist meditating statues acquired during the owners' trips to Asia are also positioned in the main room. The fact that Asian artifacts are included in *La Margarita's* decor highlights the importance of personal experiences and individual beliefs when restaurant owners assemble their foodscapes. In this case, the supernatural powers of the artifacts and the benefits they supposedly bring to the restaurant are more important than the coherence of the general aesthetics; the entanglement of multiple, personal passions creates hybridization in the Mex-foodscapes.



62. Lived landscape I, *La Margarita*, 2008



63. Lived landscape II, *La Margarita*, 2008

64. Buddha at *La Margarita*, 200865. Asian religious symbols at *La Margarita*, 2008

Elements of the decoration at *La Margarita* change faster than dishes offered on the menu; in recent years, some signs have started to change every six months. As Martinec notes, some modalities of the foodscape are more dynamic than others (Martinec 2000). A man who specializes in the creation of set design is in charge of the decoration of the restaurant's front window. He is free to choose the theme in relation to the season, but includes artifacts related to the selected theme in other sections of the restaurant in order to coordinate with the signs depicted in the foodscape. When I started my field research in this restaurant, the general theme was the countryside. Anthropomorphic mushrooms – characteristic of the fall season in the Netherlands – were next to Indians, bandits, virgins and sleeping Mexicans. With the arrival of the winter, the decorations changed. Fake nature, mainly composed of gold and silver trees, was introduced to the restaurant. Some of the regular consumers complained about the new decoration. Since the owner was attentive to their comments, he decided to take it down. To me this reaction exemplified the active role consumers play in the enactment and constant translation of foodscapes.

“Because it changes every time and is unique, I don't know any restaurant with the same decoration, you know, with the little Mexican guy in the corner, they always have the Mexican in the corner but also during the Easter they put the duck and the bunnies and it's nice, and you can

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find it back in different places in the restaurant, so you go upstairs and you also see a little bit of the entourage that you find there and I think that's nice, it's all over the place.” (Naty 2008, personal interview).



66. The Mexican guy in the corner, *La Margarita*, 2008, 67. Mini Landscape: Mexican friendship and nature, 2008



68. Mini landscape: lively mushrooms and a sleeping Mexican, 2008

At least five types of consumers visit *La Margarita*: 1) Dutch people who visit the place to have dinner, 2) Dutch people who visit the place on weekends to have a drink before going out to party, 3) Latin Americans living in Holland, 4) expats from the U.S., and 5) tourists from all over the world. Since Dutch consumers are the majority, the Mexican food from *La Margarita* has been adapted to their tastes:

“What surprises me is that some times people who come to eat tell us ‘I went to Mexico and I did not eat well. I did not like the food. But the food from here I like a lot’. So I explain to them that the dishes that we offer are adapted to Holland, to the culture from here. That is what people like.” (Victor 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).

Natally, a Dutch-Surinamese consumer, has a name for the adaptation of international cuisines to the tastes of Dutch’s consumers: “they ‘re-Dutch’ the dishes.” From Natally’s point of view, however, the Mexican food offered at *La Margarita* has not been “re-Dutched.” On the contrary, she thinks it is very authentic.

Natally remembers that she found out about *La Margarita* via internet. After finishing her bachelor's degree in Maastricht, Natally moved to Amsterdam. She was new in town and wanted to go out for dinner to celebrate her grandmother's birthday. In order to decide where to have dinner, she used a website called *Iens* where mostly Dutch people review their visits to restaurants in the Netherlands. *Iens* is one of the main *valuameters* (Latour and Lépinay 2009: 16) used by Dutch people in order to "contaminate" their food passions:³⁰

"I was looking for restaurants who had some good food for a reasonable price and also a nice atmosphere, so is very big so I had no clue and on the site they recommended this restaurant and the restaurant is scored like an 8 or 7.5 and they also said that the atmosphere and the service is very well and that the food is very good as well. I came here for the first time to have dinner with my grandma and my boyfriend and we eat so it was very nice." (Natally 2008, personal interview).

Natally was not only looking for good food at a reasonable price, but also for a nice atmosphere. Indeed, she was not looking for a specifically Mexican atmosphere but rather a nice one. It is important to notice that when consumers talk about the atmosphere of a place they do not refer to the textual dimension of the scenography. What they evaluate is the overall composition in raw terms. They refer to an extra-textual dimension that is sensed by their passionate bodies rather than by their rational minds. As Thrift noted, aesthetics "shows rather than tells, delights rather than instructs. The effects are immediate, perceptual and emotional" (2003, 6).

The sum of 47 consumers' passions that have been affected (*affectio*) by the atmosphere, service and foods at *La Margarita* has given an overall score of 7.5 to the place in *Iens*. These 47 consumers have conformed a metrological chain (Latour and Lépinay 2009: 19) in which 60% consider the place to be incredible and 15% think it is very bad. In order to facilitate the contamination of passions among Internet surfers, the former reviews are highlighted with green color and the latter with red. Those numbers and color represents the temporal stabilization of passions. It is a metrological chain constructed by many consumers separated in space and time but temporarily stabilized by its encounter in *Iens*. These numbers and colors were significant for Natally in order to decide where to have dinner.

Having visited the restaurant many times, Natally describes the "warm bump of Mexican atmosphere" that *La Margarita* has imprinted in her mind:

"There are things here that really caught eye, that I, how do you say it? That was printed in my memory but in the other hand I also find it comfortable because that means that the whole place is balanced and that there is a whole, sort of is more like you get a warm bump of Mexican atmosphere when you come here, and there are some items that are really catching your eye" (Natally 2008, personal interview).

Natally explained that when she was a child the most common food at her home was Surinamese. She remembers that when she was teenager, during the 1990's, her food habits changed. Instead of Surinamese food, her parents started to explore international cuisine.

Dutch, Italian and French dishes became common in her home. At that time, one of her favorite dishes was the lasagna her father made. Natally believes that her parents started to explore other cuisines because the ingredients to prepare Surinamese foods became quite expensive in the Netherlands. After she left home for university, she started to experiment with what she calls “student foods”: ready-made meals from the supermarket, cheap menus offered in the university’s cafeteria, and fast food restaurants.

Natally tried Mexican food for the first time at a classmate’s house. After that, she started to prepare *tacos* at home for herself. She remembers that, as a student, she visited an international restaurant in Maastricht. That time she ordered *tapas*.³¹ For a long time she thought *tapas* was a Mexican dish. She now knows that *tapas* are not Mexican, but she stills thinks that they are quite close to the Mexican food tradition. Natally tried “real” Mexican food in a restaurant for the first time after she finished her studies and moved to Amsterdam.

This pattern of consumption is quite common in the Netherlands. Whereas most Dutch people I interviewed tried Mexican food first in private homes and then in restaurants, in Madrid the opposite pattern is the norm. In Spain people visit restaurant/bars as a daily practice, and to do so alone is a common practice. It is possible to relate these patterns of consumption with Protestant and Catholic attitudes towards money, food and socialization: Catholicism is a culture of abundance; Protestantism is a culture of restraint. People from the former do not feel guilty about eating out every day and spending money on restaurant food. People from the latter culture eat out only on special occasions, in order to save money. As a result, in Spain and the Netherlands, religious morality has shaped the way consumers relate to Mexican food. Since Catholicism and Protestantism apply opposite moral attitudes to the practice of eating out, different quasi-objects are enacted in relation to consumer’s religion orientation.

In our conversation Natally asked me if it was true that there were many cactuses and deserts in Mexico. From her point of view, this type of landscape belongs to a stereotyped image. She imagines that the real Mexican landscape is mainly composed of Indians and temples: “the Mayas and the colorful plates they made” (Natally 2008, personal interview).

Natally also explained that for her it is very important to feel conformable when she visits a restaurant. She likes *La Margarita* because it is a cozy place and the waiters are friendly. Other consumers I talked to at *La Margarita* also mentioned the importance of feeling *gezel- lig* (comfortable). For most of them, eating out is not only about trying good food but also about feeling welcome. A consumer left the following message in *La Margarita*’s guestbook:

“Do you remember Cheers? That’s what *La Maragarita* represents to me. For a quick cocktail or a complete dinner, just what suits you at the moment. No need to make reservations months earlier, or having to dress especially for the occasion with as a result not feeling comfortable or in place. At *La Margarita* you won’t find any of this, and that’s what it makes so completely relaxed. A welcome change to ordinary, the nine to five, the suits and the computer monitors.”³²

Naty, a Dutch Surinamese waiter at *La Margarita* was affected (*affectio*) by the same feeling of comfort. Naty was a regular customer at the restaurant, and became friends with the workers. After some months, the manager offered her a job. Naty feels that the workers at *La*

Margarita are like her family. On her free days, she visits the restaurant as client. Naty has also tried to prepare *burritos* and other Mexican dishes at home. On a recent visit to Barcelona, she visited Mexican restaurants, but was disappointed because the dishes were not spicy enough. She insists that the Mexican food from *La Margarita* is much better.

As a waiter at *La Margarita*, Naty always tries to affect (*affectus*) consumers with her own passions for particular dishes. She talks to customers about her favorite foods in a sensuous way. By means of a “more or less explicit syllogism” (Tarde 1902 cited in Latour and Lépinay 2009: 40), Naty contaminates consumers with her passions:

“It is really important, I do the same thing sometimes when I go to a restaurant that I don’t know I asked them what would you recommend and it depends on how they bring it you know, sometimes someone can talk in a special way that it makes you praise for the dish that they’re telling you about ‘oh wow that sounds really good, let me order that!’ no I won’t take that or sometimes somebody says to you something and you are like ok, that doesn’t sound very good, you know what...” (Naty 2008, personal interview).

For Naty, it is very important to be on the same “vibe” as the rest of the workers at *La Margarita*. The restaurant managers agree, believing that it is important for *La Margarita*’s employees to connect with the consumers and be congenial and collegial with each other. During the time I was doing field research in the restaurant, a Peruvian woman in her 20s asked for job. She was given a one-day trial. After consulting with the rest of the workers, the owner decided not to hire her because her character did not fitted with the relaxed vibe of the work team. The owner perceived that her presence would not allow for the establishment of joyful connections with consumers, and comfortable atmosphere that characterizes the place would not be enacted:

“Well, because we make a lot of connection with people it is very important that someone who comes to work with us has the same vibe. So if you’re more like reserved to your self it would be strange because we have a happy bartender and all the other worker are making connections with the clients.” (Naty 2008, personal interview).

After being at *La Margarita* for several years, Naty has created a singular segmentation of consumers in relation to ethnicity and affections (*affectio*). I present Naty’s segmentation in the coming paragraphs, with the aim of exploring her view of how ethnicity, affections (*affectio*) and Mexican food consumption relate to one another. Naty’s segmentation demonstrates how quasi-subjects and quasi-objects are enacted through the attachment of particular objects and passions to consumer’s bodies.

Naty thinks consumers from the U.S. are special because they behave as if they know everything about Mexican food. She also mentioned that she sometimes feels uncomfortable when they question her ethnicity. After Naty makes clear that she comes from Surinam – and not from Mexico – the next question they usually ask is, ‘Is Surinam in Africa?’

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When they order, like, you have a *burrito* and they want the *burrito* with no sauce, extra cheese, no chicken, with a salad on the side but in the salad no tomatoes and extra jalapeños on the side, they make it like really different or they order a dish or like *fajitas Margarita* but then don't want the fajita sauce, they don't want the chili, they don't want the this, they don't want that, and then in the end they just have like a plate of *fajitas solitas* [alone]. Yeah, then I ask them would you like to have some *fajitas solitas*, with the *fajitas solitas* you get everything on the side, with the *tortillas* on the side, your meat on the side, your salad on the side, your rice on the side, everything on the side, even the sauces are on the side, if you don't want sour cream you can leave it alone. No, they don't want it —No, I want this, this and this and this with out this and this and with this and this— and then you bring it and they're like no, I didn't order it like that.” (Naty 2008, personal interview).

Naty believes that Mexican and South American consumers are very easy to deal with. When a Mexican customers arrives at the restaurant, she always bring extra sauce to the table. She believes that Mexicans and South Americas enjoy the food in a more passionate way:

“They are very easy, Mexicans are also easy but they always ask for extra *salsa* so I put extra *salsa* on the side...well is a mix, I love it when Mexicans come over and they are better you know like most of the south Americans. They also when I go out, they always have time you know, they enjoy their food, they enjoy everything that... that's great.” (Naty 2008, personal interview).

Naty thinks Dutch consumers are also easy to deal with. She particularly like the ones that visit the restaurant before going out to party on weekends: “the Dutch [customers] I like as well, they are easy and also when they... they really go out and is nice” (Naty 2008, personal interview). She also thinks that Northern European consumers are nice people and like to party:

“It depends, when they're from Denmark they drink a lot, they eat a little bit but they drink a lot. And Norway, like the Scandinavians they really go party when they come over and they spend a lot of money but most of the time they spend a lot of money on drinks because here the drinks are a lot cheaper than in their country and they love to drink” (Naty 2008, personal interview).

Naty has had some bad experiences with French and Russian consumers, and thinks they are quite impolite. Nevertheless, she tries to understand them because they are often hungry and tired from traveling:

“They want their food really fast and even if you explain to them is going to take a while, you're in a restaurant and everything is made fresh so is going to take a while, they don't really understand, they are like, I want food, I order this so I want it like now so you really have to distract them, you have to keep them busy.” (Naty 2008, personal interview).

Naty distracts upset consumers by talking to them about many things. After a nice chat, they commonly calm down. She believes that by giving a lot of attention to these consumers they feel better “and if you are lucky, some times they even forget about the food” (Naty 2008, personal interview).

One afternoon a couple of women from the U.S. arrived at *La Margarita*. When one of them noticed that I was taking a photo of the *tamal* that I was about to eat, she told me that she use to make paintings of the food she ordered in restaurants. She did not really care about the taste of the food; for her, the form was more important. She experienced joy in her relationship with the food's aesthetic dimension, rather than its physical introduction to her body. A similar phenomenon occurs with those consumers who order a dish because of its aesthetic dimensions, rather than its textual description in the menu. For instance, new consumers frequently ask the waiter to bring them whatever the people at the neighboring table are eating. They do not know the essence of the dish; rather, the form has captivated them. The same phenomenon occurs with other forms depicted in the Tex-Mex foodscapes; consumers do not know its essence, but they feel attracted to it.

La Margarita has tried to get rid of the Tex-Mex bodies for a long time in order to make the restaurant more "Mexican." Nevertheless, that has proved to be impossible. Mexican foodscapes cannot easily get rid of the potent signs from the empty U.S. desert, or they would not attract clients. Furthermore, the restaurants might not even be recognized as Mexican: the imaginary bodies dwelling in the Tex-Mex desert have gained control over the Mexican landscape. The opposition between those two models has not been solved yet. Indeed, some entrepreneurs believe that it is better to not get rid of this relation; to them both types of cuisines can share an all-inclusive Mexican foodscape.

3.3 TOMATILLO: THE ADAPTATION OF THE TEX-MEX FOODSCAPE IN AMSTERDAM

In recent years, the Tex-Mex foodscape has gained autonomy in Western Europe. The Tex-Mex foodscape has become detached from the Mexican and Californian landscape; it is pure Texan. Nowadays it is possible to find Tex-Mex restaurants that are no longer identified with fast food, low quality or inauthenticity. This new Tex-Mex cuisine features slow, organic and authentic food. Such is the case with *Tomatillo*, the newest Tex-Mex restaurant established in Amsterdam:

"And that is all part of the idea here, we are trying to use animal-friendly meats, organic vegetables, also local grown vegetables, using people in the community that have, you know, that also support people here in Amsterdam. It is not only organic but also locally grown and supporting your local community and people in your areas." (Douglas 2009, personal interview).

Whereas Ventura was proud that his food networks extended across three continents more than fifty years ago, the owner of *Tomatillo* is proud of the fact that his business networks (or at least the ones that he makes visible to consumers) only reach across the Netherlands, and support local people. The owner of *Tomatillo* is Douglas, a white 35-year-old U.S. citizen who was born in Montana and has been living as an expat – he does not call himself a migrant – in Amsterdam since 2000. In the U.S., he was a production manager in the food industry.

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Like Ventura, he says that after moving to Amsterdam, he started to miss the Mexican food he was accustomed to eating. He therefore decided to recreate what he was used to back in America. He also wanted to have his own business, to become his own boss. Douglas argues that at the time it was not possible to find quality Mexican food in Amsterdam. The Mexican food was “Hollandaise”:

“It’s just that in Holland, the Mexican food here is Hollandaise. It is like they pass it, they have adjusted it to the people in the country. What is different, you know, maybe they do not get the same ingredients so they have kind of adjusted to it, maybe this, or the taste that Dutch people or the American people have, so they kind of adjust the flavor of the food to the people in the country.” (Douglas 2009, personal interview).

Douglas remembers he grew up with those flavors: when he was a child, his mother prepared Tex-Mex food for him and he used to eat *tamales* with his neighbors. His favorite food from the Tex-Mex foodscape is *huevos rancheros* (scrambled eggs with *tortillas* and *salsa*): “Flour *tortilla* with black beans, a little cheese, we melt that under the grill, 2 free-range organic eggs, topped with a warm ranchero sauce and a swirl of jalapeno sauce. Delicious for breakfast, lunch, brunch... anytime!”³³

Douglas has translated this dish and other foods in his restaurant in Amsterdam. When I met Douglas, he mentioned many times how proud he was of being the only “authentic” Tex-Mex restaurant in Amsterdam. He also stressed that Tex-Mex food is not only a mix of the Mexican and U.S. food traditions, but also includes the flavors of Cajun food, Texan grills and the “American Indians;” in other words, this culinary hybrid is formed by the opposition of many rays belonging to multiple chronotopes. *Tomatillo*’s website explains Tex-Mex food in the follow way:

“A long long long time ago, *Aztec Indians from Mexico lived on the border of Texas*; there they mixed traditional Mexican food with influences from the Spanish and still later with American Indians and cowboys. As we know, Tex-Mex food features fresh ingredients and spiced dishes.”³⁴ (emphasis added).



69. Tomatillo restaurant, Amsterdam³⁵

Tomatillo opened in 2009 in downtown Amsterdam. I visited the restaurant just a couple of months after it opened. The most prominent colors on the walls are red, green and white. In contrast to the rough materials that characterize Ventura's restaurants, most of *Tomatillo*'s furniture of is made of synthetic and smooth materials. In Ventura's restaurant the light is just light. In *Tomatillo*, the light is well directed, creating different atmospheres. Most of the photos hanging on the walls of *El Charro* depict folkloric bodies of the Mexican nation. The pictures on *Tomatillo*'s walls in 2009 were black and white shots of Mexican children dwelling in rural landscapes. An artist friend of Douglas took the photos during a sixth-month trip through Mexico and Latin America. She lent the photos to Douglas, who displays them on the walls of the restaurant. The photos transform the Tex-Mex restaurant into a sophisticated gallery.

While the logo of *El Charro* is a quintessential image of a Mexican body dwelling in the desert, the logo of *Tomatillo* is a pure tomatillo. In this case, the tomatillo has been deterritorialized from the actual world. In the logo, there is no reference to any concrete space or landscape. This tomatillo belongs to virtual space, from which any kind of actualization can be made:



70. Tomatillo restaurant, Amsterdam

"Why Tomatillo? Because it is also something that is new, people do not know what it is, and you look at it, "What is it?" And the tomatillo, and we use it a lot, is one of our main ingredients, and just looking for a name we had a list like this long, and going through it we came out with this and the picture because it is take away food, with that picture there you see also the, the, the, yeah, how do you call that, the paper you know, of the take-away bag, and it almost looks like wings, which is the feeling of motion and moving, which then goes together with take away." (Douglas 2009, personal interview).

Most of the consumers of *Tomatillo* are expats from the U.S. and international people living in Amsterdam. However, some Dutch people also visit the place. *Tomatillo*'s rating on *Iens* is 8.4 for the food, 8.2 for the service, and 7.6 for the décor. 73% of consumers believe the place is incredible, 9% good, 9% common and 9% regular.³⁶ Although most Dutch consumers evaluate the place positively, some believe the decoration is quite sophisticated in relation to the foods they sell.

U.S. expats also talk about their experiences at *Tomatillo* and other Mexican restaurants in Amsterdam on the blog *dutchgrub*. Most of the time they compare *Tomatillo* with food they used to eat back in the U.S. *Tomatillo* is generally graded as a good Tex-Mex restaurant. Some expats express happiness about the fact that the Mexican food in Amsterdam is becoming more authentic:

Ann says:

"This is the best Tex-Mex food in Amsterdam bar none and I should know I lived in Texas for 37 years. I have had pretty the whole menu-my favorites are the Steak *Burrito* which I always think I will save half to put in my lunch box the next day (Texas size portions as well) but seem to polish it off in the one sitting because it is soooo good. I would walk a mile through hot coals for their HUEVOS RANCHEROS. Don't forget their Mango Liquido...I take mine home and add a shot of vodka. Beats a los pilones mango *margarita* any day." May 30th, 2010 at 19:09.³⁷

Dutchgrub says:

"...I'm just glad that the availability of Mexican food has improved significantly since the days Rose's Cantina on Reguliersdwaarsstraat was the only option. I crave Mexican every now and then (especially lately before or after one of the beer fueled World Cup parties...) and finally have several good options!"
—dutchgrub August 14th, 2010 at 11:34.

Since people commonly ask for take-away service, *Tomatillo* has high tables where people wait for their food. Since the restaurant is next to the Vondel Park, one of Amsterdam's main public areas, some consumers ask for the special picnic menu.

Notably, at *Tomatillo*, most of the dishes offered on the menu are not translated into Dutch or English, and only a short explanation is provided. Why? Analyzing the translation of food words from Mexican novels into Dutch language, Nico Wiersema argues that this phenomenon is related to globalization. From his point of view, the translator does not need to translate terms in the target language if this would make the target language text lose credibility. Wiersma contends that texts have become more exotic by means of globalization. In some cases, the use of "foreign" terms contributes to a better and more correct understanding of the source culture:

"An excessive translation is a translation that fails to foreignise/exoticise, i.e., use source-language terms in the target-language text, to the degree that I believe is now acceptable. As an example I would like to refer to translations of Mexican food names. There are several options to translate a word like *mole*; instead of finding words in the target language (an explanatory translation like a *spicy sauce on a chocolate basis*), I recommend using the Spanish word. (This is done in both the Dutch and English translations of *Arrancame La Vida* by Angeles Mastretta (De Pijn van de Liefde/Tear This Heart Out). In the Dutch translation of the same work, the word "gorda" is translated as *blauwe maispannekoek* (blue corn pancake). This is what I consider an excessive translation."³⁸

The menu of *Tomatillo* makes use of both resources: the original name as well as an explanation of its food products. Nevertheless, in the case of the Tex-Mex foodscape, rather than

being a consequence of globalization in the service of commoditization due to exoticization, using the name of the dish in the foreign language helps stabilize its identity without territorializing it: *tacos*, *tostadas*, *guacamole*, *burrito*, and *salsa* do not refer to Mexico any more. The fact that these dishes' names are not translated does not imply an effort to maintain an equivalence between the source and target text due to the impossibility of translation; rather, it implies their deterritorialization and appropriation by the Tex-Mex industry.



71. Steak burrito, Tomatillo³⁹

Tomatillo's menu also explains the origins of some of the foods they use and the way they are treated in order to get out the best of their essences. As explained before, *Tomatillo* is proud of its local and organic networks. For example, the pork they use to prepare *carnitas* is made out of local "happy pork"—whatever that particular affection (*affectio*) means for a pig:

"The pigs of National Nature [Netherlands] Rob Butcher are produced by farmers who take care for their pigs and their health. The pigs can go outside with their noses in the ground and burrow in natural manner with other hogs. We believe that in this way the pigs are healthier and happier and that makes for better pork."⁴⁰

When I asked Douglas if he uses *halal* meat⁴¹ in his business, at the beginning he did not even know what *halal* meant. As I started to explain it to him, he said right away: "ah, yes the Muslim thing. No, no, we are not going for this market" (Douglas 2009, personal interview). The quasi-objects enacted by *Tomatillo* aims to target a market that cares about the morality of nature – those that want to eat healthy and happy pork – not for the consumers who choose what or where to eat according to religious morality.

Like Ventura did in his restaurants, *Tomatillo* also has started a process of training the consumers so they know how to be properly affected (*affectio*) by Tex-Mex dishes. For example, the advice they give for eating *huevos rancheros* is: "Before you start eating, use your fork to break the egg yolk, so with every bite you will have a wonderful mix of silky black beans, creamy egg yolk and ranchero sauce with a hint of jalapeno in your mouth."⁴² That is to say, they are training the consumers to learn how to fracture food assemblies into more manageable components of these complex networks; the idea is for customers to be able to recog-

nize layers, the disposition of various elements, consistencies, textures, colors, temperatures, smells and flavors to register new world counterparts.

Douglas wants to make sure that his Tex-Mex foodscape is not taken for a Mexican one. Therefore, he has to teach consumers in Amsterdam what this food concept is. He explains:

“What we are trying to do, more or less, is to introduce Amsterdam to something else. Like we use the word “Tex-Mex to go”, and people say, half of Holland doesn’t even know what Tex-Mex is, I am like, ok, and they are like, “Why are you not making sure that you put Mexican food instead of Tex-Mex,” it is like, because this is not Mexican food, this is Tex-Mex food, and I am supposedly trapping people or not trapping people, bringing people to eat Mexican food, we want people to come and say what is Tex-Mex? So you introduce them to something new and different, we do not want to have to explain to them that this is Mexican food, this is Tex-Mex, we want to say to them, this is Tex-Mex.” (Douglas 2009, personal interview).

In this process of adaptation, the Tex-Mex foodscape has not only gained autonomy from the Mexican foodscape, but has also gotten rid of some of its previous connotations. *Tomatillo* is trying to attach its body to modern affections in order to provide a new morality to the Tex-Mex foodscape.

3.4 CONCLUSIONS

Analyzing the translations made by *El Charro*, *La Margarita*, and *Tomatillo*, I explored how the Tex-Mex foodscape has been translated in Western Europe since its arrival in the middle of the 20th century. Each of these cases points at the idiosyncratic ways in which the Tex-Mex foodscape has been repeated, opposed and adapted in Madrid and Amsterdam. Each of those translations were triggered by intimate experiences and affections (*affectio*) experienced by the entrepreneurs. In their entrepreneurial practices, the restaurants’ owners coordinate multiple entities in passionate networks which are able to contaminate other bodies.

Ventura’s entrepreneurial trajectory illustrates the impossibility of commoditizing Mexican food in Madrid by exclusively relying on icons from the Mexican landscape. Ventura did not succeed in turning the signs of the Mexican land into potent ones. His father’s *tamales* were not enough to contaminate Spanish consumers’ bodies with foreign passions. Consequently, he had to use signs from the Tex-Mex landscape in order to create agreements with his U.S. and Spanish consumers. A similar phenomenon can be identified in the case of *La Margarita*, a restaurant that was supposed to be the translation of a Los Angeles-Yucatecan-Mexican restaurant, but ended up reproducing potent signs from the Tex-Mex foodscape. The earliest consumers at these restaurants did not want to create joyful relations with bodies dwelling in the Mexican or Los Angeles-Mexican-Yucatecan foodscape; they wanted to play with the bodies from the Tex-Mex landscape.

After Tex-Mex industries entered the Western European market, this type of relation was reinforced through the widespread use of icons of the empty desert which are used in the commoditization of those food products. The Mexican foodscape abroad shares affections

with Bartras' *axolotl*: it is a curious animal that fails to undergo metamorphosis (Bartra 2005) when going from the Tex-Mex to the Mexican foodscape. However, when it goes in the opposite direction, it does achieve metamorphosis.

Both *El Charro* and *La Margarita* are repetitions of the Tex-Mex foodscape in Western Europe. However, since neither one followed a straight pattern of translation, both can also be considered oppositions of the Tex-Mex foodscape, in which two or more imitative rays – Mexican, Californian, Yucatecan – encountered each other, producing variations (but not radical adaptation) in the Tex-Mex foodscape. They still belong to the same constellation.

Neither the owner of *El Charro* nor the owners of *La Margarita* wanted to detach completely from the Tex-Mex foodscape because they believe that instead of gaining clients, they would lose them. Indeed, they fear that doing so might mean that they would not even be recognized as Mexican: the imaginary bodies dwelling in the Tex-Mex desert have gained such strong control over the Mexican landscape that Mexican foodscapes cannot get rid of the potent signs of the Tex-Mex foodscape.

In the case of *Tomatillo*, we can identify the purification or detachment of the Tex-Mex concept; specifically, its de-territorialization from the Mexican desert. *Tomatillo* exemplifies an intriguing process of adaptation. Tarde argues that innovation is produced by the dialectical strife of two simultaneous imitative rays producing a harmonious synthesis (Tarde 1899: 135-136). Nevertheless, this case shows that innovation can be also the product of purification or detachment. In his process of translation Douglas eliminated the Mexican side of the Tex-Mex relation – the Mexican bodies dwelling in the conquered Texan desert. The result is a “slow, organic and sophisticated” Tex-Mex foodscape where tomatillos fly and pigs live happy lives before they become green sauce and meat for *burritos*.

However, reviews of internet posts by Dutch people and expats makes it clear that the ones that care about *burritos*' organic-ness are the Dutch consumers. Expats pay more attention to the dishes' authenticity and price. This divide parallels the experiences of idiosyncratic segmentation reported by Naty, the waitress at *La Margarita*: consumers tend to have particular preferences for forms, flavors and moralities associated with foods based on their particular ethnicities and affections (*affectio*). Indeed, food plays an active role in the production of quasi-subjects and quasi-objects.

Additionally, such translations can be considered thematic ones. According to Torop (2000), the dominant of a thematic translation is a theme – the Mexican landscape, in this case. The chronotope of this type of translation is also related to the theme. In the cases considered in this chapter, the Tex-Mex foodscape became a “genre” of the Mexican landscape.

The chronotope of a thematic translation can be archaized or modernized in the process of translation. *El Charro* is an example of the former case, while *Tomatillo* represents the latter. It is also possible to identify this process as a translation between genres: if Tex-Mex is the theme, then the inclination for *Mex*, as in the case of *El Charro*, or for the *Tex*, as in the case of *Tomatillo*, can be viewed as the translation of a single theme in two different genres. Both cases can also be understood as free translations. The chronotope of this type of translation is concrete. In this case, the entrepreneur's direct experience with the landscape serves as the dominant.

NOTES

- 1 Texas was already part of the U.S. by that time, but then, like now, many Mexican families live on both sides of the border.
- 2 The term *chili con carne* is, in itself, a bit of hybridization and pseudo-Spanish: chili is an Americanization of the Spanish word “chile,” which comes from the indigenous Nahuatl word *chilli*, referring to a category of spicy, edible peppers. *Con carne* is Spanish for “with meat.” However, the dish *chili con carne* has become part of the American vernacular, typically pronounced with no effort to reproduce the rolled Spanish “r” in *carne*. Furthermore, Americans commonly make reference to any kind of piquant flavoring added to dishes “chili peppers,” presumably without any understanding of the word’s pre-Hispanic or indigenous roots.
- 3 For Ventura, the Spanish *tortillas* were deplorable mimics, related in name only to the Mexican model.
- 4 “It wasn’t easy implementing the idea, though. In the first place, I was in Spain as a special representative for the U.S. government. Technically speaking, I was a visiting diplomat. As such I couldn’t establish any business on my own. I had to put the restaurant in my wife’s name. [...] The funny thing was that my wife had to ask me for my permission to go into the business that I had had to out in her name since, as I said earlier, the Franco regime didn’t allow women any meaningful measure of independence from their husbands” (Rocha 2006[b], 190-191).
- 5 Castillo, Ed, “Mediterranean *Tortillas*? Mexican Food a Hit in Spain”, in *Sunday*, November 21, 1976, p. 13-A.
- 6 The restaurant closed in the summer of 2009. The photograph here was taken from Ventura’s personal archive and shows what the restaurant looked like in the 1960s.
- 7 Sarape: Piece of fabric woven from colorful wool or cotton. Wearers wrap sarapes around them like cloaks or blankets.
- 8 Sombrero: hat, usually with a wide brim.
- 9 Huaraches: sandals. Also a food made out of a corn *tortilla* with the shape of a sandal.
- 10 “Adelita’s Ahorita Mismo. The last addition to an established chain of Mexican restaurants”, in *Spain Magazine*. Volume 11, Number 10, October 1995.
- 11 In some Tex-Mex restaurants and bars it is possible to see waitresses dressed like Adelitas; instead of bullets, the strap is filled with *tequila* glasses.
- 12 “Adelita’s. The latest addition to an established chain of Mexican restaurants”, in *Spain Magazine*. Volume 11, Number 10, October, 1995.
- 13 Out of all of the Mexican restaurants I visited in Europe, *A Todo Mexico* was the only one where I found this painting, whereas in Los Angeles and San Francisco many restaurant owned by Mexicans display this sign. The second photo in the center shows various frames containing images from the Mexican Revolution. Comparing these photos, I noticed that revolutionary bodies and their landscapes are commonly depicted in black and white, while the pre-Hispanic bodies and their landscapes are colorful; the latter bodies are actualizations full of life, while the former are dead and frozen in time. Is there a body politics in these representations? Which of those bodies are more valuable?
- 14 It is important to remember that Ventura opened his first restaurant in the middle of the 20th century, just a few years after the main signs of the Mexican nation started to be socialized at international level via technological devices.
- 15 Puffy *tacos* “are generally believed to have originated in the Tex-Mex joints of Texas. The most commonly accepted origin story is that they were invented at a San Antonio establishment called Henry’s Puffy *Tacos* in 1978. Henry’s is still around, and its website proclaims it “home of the original puffy *tacos*.” <http://www.puffytacos.com/used>. Accessed: 25/04/2011
- 16 Field notes, San Antonio, Texas, 2009

- 17 Mole: It has been said that in about 1680, a nun from a convent in Puebla de Los Angeles, created the mole in honor of Viceroy Tomás Antonio de la Cerda y Aragón (Pilcher 1998: 25). The name of the nun was Sor Andrea de la Asunción. She made a selection of native chilies and spices from the Old World. After frying and toasting the ingredients she ground and mixed them together. Mole is one of the quintessential national dishes from the Mexican foodscape, and emerged from the fusion of native and foreign ingredients.
- 18 Carne a la tampiqueña is not a dish, but rather a food concept related to the way some people inhabiting the west Mexico used to eat. The concept was synthesized by the restaurant industries in a dish composed of a steak, *guacamole*, *tortillas*, beans and chile. <http://www.encyclopediade gastronomia.es/recetas/platos-de-carne/recetas-de-carne-de-vacuno/carne-a-la-tampiqueña.html>. Accessed: 25/04/2011.
- 19 “Adelita’s Ahorita Mismo. The latest addition to an established chain of Mexican restaurants”, in *Spain Magazine*. Volume 11, Number 10, October 1995.
- 20 As explained before, Ventura was probably the first person to bring to Europe a machine for producing corn *masa* for *tortillas* and other items. Indeed, to this day, most Mexican restaurants in Western Europe use flour instead of corn *tortillas*. Corn *tortillas* are usually reserved for making crispy *tacos*.
- 21 Castillo, Ed, “Mediterranean *Tortillas*? Mexican Food a Hit in Spain”, in *Sunday* newspaper, November 21, 1976, p. 13-A.
- 22 http://madrid.salir.com/a_todo_mexico-san_bernardino_4/opinion/117482. Accessed: 08/03/2011
- 23 http://madrid.salir.com/el_charro-san_leonardo_3. Accessed: 08/03/2011
- 24 <http://www.mexican.nl/>
- 25 La Margarita: <http://www.mexican.nl/>
- 26 <http://www.mexican.nl/>
- 27 Boland, Michael, (n.d), *Authentic Mexican Food: The next Organic Trend?*, Agricultural Marketing Resource Center. Value-added Business Profile. Iowa State University. In: http://www.agmrc.org/markets__industries/food/ethnic_foods_market.cfm. Accessed: 01/09/2011
- 28 In ANT (Actor Network Theory) terms, those actor-networks functioned as mediators who translated the composition of the assemblage.
- 29 Papel amate: [paper made out of cork] painted by Nahuatls from the Alto Balsas, Guerrero, Mexico.
- 30 <http://www.iens.nl>. Accessed: 15/07/2011
- 31 Tapas: a Spanish food concept that has been popularized around the world. In Spain it basically means any type of dish offered as snack in a bar.
- 32 La Margarita: <http://www.mexican.nl/>. Accessed: 9/10/2011
- 33 <http://www.tomatillo.nl/tomatillo-menu/>, 04/04/2011
- 34 <http://www.tomatillo.nl/>, 04/04/2011
- 35 <http://www.dutchgrub.com/2010/05/20/tomatillo-amsterdam-tex-mex-to-go/>, 04/04/2011
- 36 <http://www.iens.nl/restaurant/27199/amsterdam-tomatillo>, Accessed: 07/09/2011
- 37 <http://www.dutchgrub.com/2010/05/20/tomatillo-amsterdam-tex-mex-to-go/>, Accessed: 07/09/2011
- 38 Wiersema, Nico, 2004, “Globalization and Translation. A discussion of the effect of globalization on today’s translation.” In: *Translation journal*. Volume , No. 1, January. <http://translationjournal.net/journal/> Accessed; 07/03/2011
- 39 <http://vegetarianduck.blogspot.com/2009/11/tomatillo-overtoom.html>, Accessed: 07/09/2011.
- 40 <http://www.tomatillo.nl/>, Accessed: 22/02/2011
- 41 Halal meat is from animals slaughtered according to Islamic rules about dietary purity.
- 42 <http://www.tomatillo.nl/>

CHAPTER 4

CAL-MEX: THE EMPTY BEACH AND THE OCCUPIED SKY

In this chapter I explore Cal-Mex foodscapes in Amsterdam. Drawing on several types of data, I describe processes of opposition, repetition and adaptation between the Mexican and the Californian landscape and Cal-Mex foodscapes. I argue that entrepreneurs made personalized selections of signs associated with the Pacific Coast according to two basic factors: they either inhabited the landscapes they translated, or they occupied those lands. Here I follow Ingold who contends that in modern times, fluid life lines have been fragmented into dots, mostly at the service of capital (Ingold 2007). The foodscapes I analyze in this chapter are both the translation of landscapes inhabited by entrepreneurs as free travelers, and their actualization in the form of dots which cut fluid life lines. These dots are the signs of an idealized map belonging to an experienced land: the storytelling of their lives and their actualization as pre-composed plot, materialized in the form of restaurants.

4.1 CAFE PACIFICO: THE FIRST CAL-MEX FOODSCAPE IN AMSTERDAM

Landscapes from the Californian coast have spread around the world thanks to the Hollywood movie industry and mass media communication technologies. The blue color of Californian beaches (Californian blue), palm trees, and sunshine are some of the potent signs attached to this idyllic landscape: a land that has required a high material investment (including the daily exploitation of Mexican migrant workers), in order to produce its landscape representations (Mitchell 1996).

Mexican food products have also participated in the production of the idyllic Californian landscape, giving rise to the Cal-Mex foodscape: cuisine which blends Californian and Mexican ingredients and methods. Many of the ingredients used in this cuisine relate to images of fresh vegetables grown in California and seafood from the Pacific Ocean. Dishes representative of Cal-Mex food are fish or shrimp *tacos* and *burritos*, *taco* salads, and wraps (a type of “healthy” *burrito*), all accompanied by prolific use of avocado and sour cream.

“Healthy” and “organic” qualities have recently been attached to the Cal-Mex foodscape. Previously, Mexican food sold in California was considered low quality by many U.S. consumers; only bodies belonging to subaltern groups related with this foodscape.¹

In some ways, the Cal-Mex foodscape can be seen as an opposition of the Tex-Mex foodscape. Whereas the latter is commonly related to huge food portions, lots of meat, combo plates and heavy caloric intake, the former is commonly related to smaller food portions, lots of vegetables, and balanced caloric intake. However, as explained in the last section of the third chapter, in recent years this contrast or opposition is diminishing, as the Tex-Mex foodscape is mimicking some of the healthy and organic qualities associated with the Cal-Mex

foodscape. But aesthetics continue to differentiate the two foodscapes.



72. Northern California Surf #2²



73. Californian Turkey wrap³



74. Cal-Mex tostada⁴

In the photo on the left, a landscape painting of the Pacific beach in Northern California is shown. The photo from the middle depicts a Californian wrap. What specifically about California is in it? The avocado? The fact that it looks healthy? Perhaps its aesthetic composition? In the photo on the right, a Cal-Mex *tostada* is shown. Here again, the “Cal” quality is achieved due to the aesthetics of the dish and not the food itself.

Jeffrey Pilcher argues that the commoditization of Mexican food around the world took off in the 1960s and 1970s from the Californian beaches. From his point of view, this imitative ray has widely spread around the world thanks to Californian surfers and other subaltern groups:

“They [surfers] ate *tacos* because they were cheap, and that really sort of helped to transport them around the world. The founder of one of the oldest Mexican restaurants in Europe was a gym teacher in southern California who wanted to move to Amsterdam, but needed to find some way of being employed there, so that he would be able to migrate legally. Being a restaurant owner was about the only way that he could get a visa. He was actually trying to take the Magic

Bus down to Panama. He got halfway there, but when he was in Mexico the idea hit him that he should open up a Mexican restaurant in Amsterdam. And so he stopped on his way back in Mazatlan at the Pacifico Brewery and picked up some old advertising implements, signs and ashtrays and whatnot, and opened up the Pacifico Café in Amsterdam.”⁵

But the story is more complicated than that. Tomás Estes, the owner of *Cafe Pacifico*, the first Mexican restaurant established in Amsterdam, remembers that when he was a university student, he used to cross the U.S.-Mexico border to visit *Hussong's Cantina*, the oldest bar in Ensenada, Mexico, a fishing town on the Pacific coast: “Drinking *tequila* at this famous Long Bar in Tijuana and sleeping off the effects on the beach found him in all sorts of trouble. He is not slow to admit to having spent a few nights behind bars.”⁶

The history of *Hussong's Cantina* dates back to the end of the 19th century, when Johan Hussong and two of his brothers migrated from Forsham, Germany to New York in 1880. On the cantina's website, the establishment's history is described as follows:

“They remained together [the brothers] until 1890 when Johan decided that 10 years of southerly direction to a sleepy fishing village of 5,000, mostly North American and European inhabitants, called Ensenada. Johan Hussong became John and in May of 1892 he opened a little restaurant and stage coach stop that served a limited menu enhanced by nickel beer and bonded dime whiskey.”⁷

However, the website omits some salient facts; the history of *Hussong's Cantina* is not so straightforward nor so simple. Indeed, Johan Hussong's life story is related to the American ideology of “Manifest Destiny,” the moral imperative to conquer the western and southern lands of the North American continent.

John Hussong arrived in New York in 1886 at the age of 23,⁸ around the time that the American Anglo population was greatly expanding in the west. Like many others, Johan Hussong headed west and arrived in Indiana where he changed his name to John. A year later, thanks to the construction of a railway system across the United States, he moved to San Francisco and from there southward, experimenting with different jobs such as carpentry and sales. After spending time in both Los Angeles and San Diego, he moved to Ensenada, in Baja California, Mexico. In 1889, the *Compañía Internacional*, a U.S. company, sold the rights to buy and colonize land in Baja California, México to an English company, the *Compañía Mexicana de Terrenos y Colonización* (Mexican Company of Land and Colonization). Mancillas (1992) believes that the marketing campaign of this company and the U.S. fever to find gold in the Mexican town of El Álamo influenced Hussong's decision to move to Ensenada.

When Hussong arrived in Ensenada in 1889, there were only 1,337 inhabitants in the town. He first worked as bird hunter, then bought a barbershop, and later made a living by transporting provisions between Ensenada and El Álamo. One day, at the end of 1891, he crashed his wagon, and his colleague Newt House broke a leg. Looking for a place where his House could rest, Hussong took him to J. J. Meiggs' *cantina* in Ensenada. A few days later, Meiggs, the cantina's owner, was arrested for attacking his wife with an axe. When Meiggs

was released a few days later, he sold the cantina to Hussong and took the money to California to look for his wife. Neither Meiggs nor his wife ever returned to Ensenada, but within a few years, *Hussong's Cantina* had become very popular in Ensenada.

Since the beginning of the 20th century *Hussong's Cantina* has been a tourist destination. In the 1930's, it was a common for visitors to take a mule trip within the establishment, starting at the door of the cantina, making a loop around the salon, and exiting. Mr. Chaves used to charge 10 cents for for this entertainment. It is said that even Marilyn Monroe and other famous artists visited *Hussong's Cantina*. In 2011 *Hussong's Cantina* translated itself and opened a new place in Las Vegas. In Las Vegas, city of shows, Mexican bodies from Ensenada have become part of an exotic performance where everything goes; from *tequila* shot *bandidas* to sexy *mariachitas*:



75. *Hussong's Cantina*, Ensenada.⁹ 76. *Hussong's Cantina* Bandidas, Las Vegas.¹⁰ 77. Mariachis and Mexican mariachitas, Las Vegas.¹¹

The famous drink *Margarita* (*tequila* with lime and sugar served over ice) was allegedly invented at *Hussong's Cantina*. One afternoon in 1941, Carlos Orozco, the cantina's bartender, was opposing different spirits, trying to invent a new drink. That same afternoon, *Margarita* Henken, the daughter of a German ambassador and a regular at the cantina, tried Orozco's creation. According to the story¹², since she was the first person to taste the new drink, Carlos decided to call it *Margarita*¹³.

Can a *Margarita* be thought of as quasi-object? Yes, and a very potent one due to its power (*puissance*) to serve as mediator¹⁴ in enacting the Mexican body. There are no moral qualities from *Margarita* Henken attached to the drink; however, many affections commonly attached to the Mexican bodies abroad have been related to *Margaritas*; these include parties, festivities, drunkenness, and rowdy or informal behavior. Nowadays, *Margaritas* are probably the most famous Mexican drink in the world. Tomas Estes is one of its main promoters in Europe; for that reason, the Mexican government has named him Mexico's "Official Ambassador of *Tequila*" in Europe.¹⁵

Thomas Estes, as his name was spelled at birth, was born in 1945 in Whittier, California, a city in Los Angeles County. Tomas remembers that when he was child his father took him to Mexico:

“I remember seeing all the signs in Spanish and thinking it was so foreign and so exciting. To me, Mexican life seemed so immediate and real compared with life in the US which I find artificial, materialistic and status conscious - like living in the head rather than the heart and soul.”¹⁶

Those visits to the other side of the border triggered excitement in Tomas’ body as “worldly signs”¹⁷ (Deleuze 2008: 5) do, and gave rise to unknown worlds, actions and thoughts in Tomas’ mind. To him, life in Mexico was immediate and real, so he decided to explore this unknown world with his body in order to decipher the “signs of love”¹⁸ (Deleuze 2008: 7) that excited his mind. Years later, Tomas started to reproduce those “sensuous signs”¹⁹ (Deleuze 2008: 8) in altogether different objects: restaurants and bars all over the world.

Thomas graduated from college with a degree in liberal arts in 1967. As a university student, Tomas would cross the border to visit friends who owned a liquor store just few doors from *Hussong’s Cantina*. In his travels across the border he had some life experiences as a U.S. citizen who was trying to be accepted into the Mexican community: “I’ve been a rascal – nothing serious – usually to do with alcohol and all in my youth – but in the Mexican community you are not totally accepted until you’ve been in jail.”²⁰ Besides having fun in Ensenada, Thomas used to compete as a wrestler. After graduating he taught English to teenagers in California for seven years.

Tomas’ affection for the Mexican community led him to change his name from Thomas to Tomas. In doing so, he – perhaps unwittingly – was following in the footsteps of Johan, the founder of *Hussong’s Cantina*, who changed his name from the German “Johan” to the English “John” at the end of the 19th century. This name-translation related to crossing borders [symbolic or territorial] is in relation with Ventura’s naming theory mentioned in the third chapter. Names are potent signs with the power to constitute and destroy relations: Johan wanted to be part of the U.S. community, so he changed his name to John. Thomas wanted to be part of the Mexican community, so he changed his name to Tomas.

In 1970 Tomas made a trip to Amsterdam and fell in love with the city: “I decided I really wanted to live there – I loved the architecture, the music, the literature and the radical liberality of it.”²¹ What happened after has been explained in Pilcher’s quotation presented some paragraphs before; Tomas was part of the Californian rebels who in the 1960s and 1970 moved abroad, taking with them memories of *tacos*, *burritos*, *tostadas* and other signs of the Cal-Mex foodscape. When Tomas Estes *Cafe Pacifico* in 1976, it was the first Cal-Mex restaurant in Amsterdam.

Contrary to Ventura’s approach to the décor at *El Charro*, Tomas paid attention to the aesthetics of his place from the very beginning. Even before traveling to Amsterdam, he had already collected many icons with to assemble his Mexican foodscape. Tomas chose the icons he considered the most representative from diverse entities dwelling on Mexico’s Pacific Coast, picking the ones that had affected him and which he considered able to affect others’ selves. *Café Pacifico* was a success since the very beginning:

“Nobody had ever seen *tequila* or experienced that kind of atmosphere before – Mexican restaurants have a special kind of buzz and ambience. And it was then that I came to appreciate how central *tequila* was to my business and I began to delve into it seriously.”²²

Tomas is talking about an atmosphere that has a “special kind of buzz.” Following Thrift (2010), I argue that this “special kind of buzz” is the power (*puissance*) of affections which are triggered by our bodies’ relations with the ambience or aesthetics of Mexican restaurants. Tomas also reflects on the importance *tequila* has played in his business; its central place in the creation of that ambience is why he started to delve into it seriously. *Tequila* has become a main potent sign in his entrepreneurial career. The belief that he had in *tequila* and consumers’ desire for “exotic” drinks were attached from the beginning of his entrepreneurial carrier.

Tomas Estes’ foodscape at *Cafe Pacifico* was a resemblance of the Mexico he experienced in Los Angeles and during his travels through Mexico before 1976. The restaurant’s foodscape was the translation of a landscape he both inhabited and experienced as a traveler following many life lines. His foodscape tells stories about the trip he made to Mexico, and its actualization as pre-composed plot materialized in *Cafe Pacifico*. Yet *Cafe Pacifico* is also a repetition of *Hussong’s Cantina* in Amsterdam; on both the aesthetic and the affective levels, Tomas has translated signs that used to trigger affections (*affectus* and *affectio*) in his body and mind.

In his translation, Tomas Estes opposed his Cal-Mex foodscape to the Tex-Mex foodscape. The models for the aesthetics of the place, the foods and the drinks were taken from the Californian landscape and the Pacific coast, not from the Texan desert: blue beach versus terracotta desert, single dishes versus combo plates, counter-cultural icons versus mainstream U.S. symbols, etc. With this translation, Tomas inaugurated a new imitative ray of the Mex-foodscape in the Netherlands. This model was partially repeated by *La Margarita* in its first years and opposed years later when the Tex-Mex foodscape became popular in Amsterdam.

Cafe Pacifico is divided into four main rooms on two floors. The restaurant’s lighting is modest. Most of the furniture is made out of dark wood. In the first room is a long bar, the cashier and the kitchen. There is also a long table commonly used by big groups and special guests. The mirror behind the bar is full of stickers. Of all the stickers attached to this surface the one that caught my attention was a blue one with the inscription *Hussong’s Cantina*. The same logo also appears in a photo on the second floor. *Hussong’s Cantina* also appears the space of a T-shirt worn by a person who is painting *Cafe Pacifico*’s first menu: we can’t tell who it is because his back is to the camera, but could this be Tomas?



78. Mirror with *Hussong’s cantina* sticker. Cafe Pacifico, Amsterdam 2008



79. Man wearing a *Hussong's cantina* T-shirt painting *Café Pacifico's* menu, Amsterdam, 2008

Many revolutionary and folkloric bodies related to the Mexican *socius* occupy the first room. Next to the kitchen, the slogan “*Canta no llores*” (Sing, don’t cry) appears. This passionate sentence comes from one of the most famous Mexican songs, written in 1882 by Quirino Mendoza. The song has been recorded by many popular artists from Mexico, and has become a potent sign for Mexicans living abroad:

¡Ay! ¡ay! ¡ay! ¡ay!, ¡canta y no llores!
Porque cantando se alegran, cielito lindo, los corazones...



80. *Canta y no llores*, Café Pacifico, 2009

The second room on the first floor is painted white and pastel colors. Some palm trees painted on the walls resemble the forest associated with the Pacific Coast. The colorfully painted statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe provides some warmth to the establishment’s atmosphere. Signs of Mexican folkloric bodies are depicted on all the walls, including posters from the gold era of the Mexican cinema, *tequila* and beer advertisements, and bullfighting posters.



81. *Café Pacifico* first floor 1



82. *Café Pacifico* first floor 2

The restaurant's second floor resembles a bar from a Mexican beach town and is mostly used for private parties. As can be seen in the photo below, fishing nets hang from the roof and a painting of a colorful mermaid adorns the wall. The second photo shows many folkloric bodies from Mexico: Pancho Villa, some *Adelitas*, a couple dancing *jarabe tapatio*, and other stereotypical bodies from Western Mexico. The third photo shows two people enacting the Mexican body in the restaurant's front door from the restaurant. They wear *sombreros* and *serapes* and hold guitars. The fourth picture is a stencil of Zapata. The revolutionary hero is depicted in black and white. The blurring effect on his right side makes it look like he comes from another chronotope:



83. Mermaid



84. Folkloric bodies

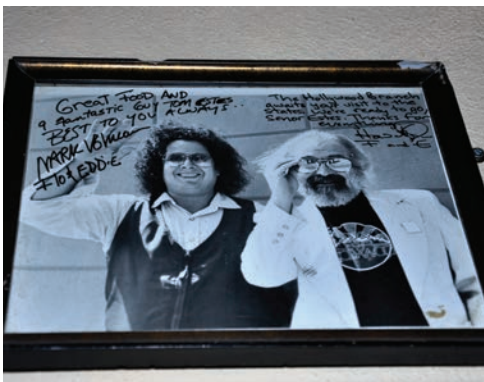


85. Enacting the Mexican body in Amsterdam

86. Zapata in *Cafe Pacifico*

Cafe Pacifico became very popular in the 1980's, and many rock and pop artists used to visit the place when they were in the Netherlands. Indeed, Mexican restaurants, particularly in their Cal-Mex variants, have been used by consumers as scenarios to express counter-cultural attitudes²³. Following Pilcher, I argue that this phenomenon is related to the fact that most Cal-Mex restaurants abroad were established by young entrepreneurs who were part of sub-altern groups in the U.S.²⁴ One of the managers of *Cafe Pacifico* who I interviewed in 2008 remembers the place used to be more alternative in its early years:

"A lot of musicians used to come here...a lot of famous musicians used to like, their after parties used to be here and this was, I don't know, this was like the place where to be...but it lost the hype, I mean after, now of course it loses the hype, now there are so many Mexican restaurants and is not the only one anymore but we still have people that are still coming from 30 years and you hear all the crazy histories." (*Cafe Pacifico's* manager, personal interview 2008).

87. Photos of U.S singers who visited *Cafe Pacifico*, 88. Photo of the Blues Brothers Band

Tomas sold *Cafe Pacifico* Amsterdam to the *Dubson-Uzcuñun Group* in the 1990's. Since then, the menu has changed but the decor has remained the same. The restaurant's menu explicitly states that most of the dishes come from the Mexican food tradition developed in the U.S., but sometimes clients complain because they think the food offered in the restaurant is "not Mexican." When that happens, Valeria, the only Mexican who works at the restaurant (and who has worked there since 2002), explains that the food is not Mexican because they are not in Mexico. Valeria considers most of the dishes offered in the place to be Tex-Mex. To her, there is no difference between the Cal-Mex and the Tex-Mex foodscape. Nevertheless, if consumers insist on trying "authentic" Mexican food, she offers them *pozole* or a *torta cubaneza*.



89. *Torta cubaneza*, Mexico²⁵



90. *Torta cubaneza*, Café Pacifico, Amsterdam, 2009

Cafe Pacifico is the only restaurant in Amsterdam offering these dishes. Valeria's mother taught the head chef how to prepare *pozole* on a trip he took to Mexico City to visit Valeria's sister, with whom he had become friends. *Pozole* affected *Cafe Pacifico*'s chef on his trip to Mexico, and he assumed consumers would also be joyfully affected (*affectio*) by the dish as well. But consumers in the Netherlands did not accept the translation: most of them still prefer to order *fajitas Pacifico*.²⁶

Why didn't this processes of innovation succeed as the chef expected? Because most consumers in the Netherlands, be they locals or foreigners, do not visit Mexican restaurants in order to experiment with exotic foods. On the contrary, most of them do it because they feel secure dwelling in Mex-foodscapes. During my field research in the Netherlands two couples explained to me that when traveling abroad they have visited Mexican restaurants because they felt comfortable in such places. They know what to order. There are no surprises. A similar phenomenon occurs with the U.S. consumers in the Netherlands who visit those places because they feel nostalgic about their traditional foodscapes; they go to Mexican restaurants because they want to eat "comfort food."

Dutch consumers evaluate *Cafe Pacifico* on *Iens* in a mediocre way: food 6.3, service, 6.7 and décor 7. In most of the posts, consumers complain about the quality of the food and the service. Consumers from the U.S. also evaluate the restaurant as poor. Reviewers argue that something at *Cafe Pacifico* went wrong during the management change:

Reviewed July 30, 2011:

“We’ve been going to *Pacifico* since it opened in the seventies. Wonderful food, reasonable prices, and good ambiance. It now still carries the name *Pacifico*, but since it changed ownership, it’s not the same restaurant anymore. The food was terrible, the *Margarita* like water, and the service was poor. It was a waste of money. We will never go there again. Pity, we have many good memories of the place. They don’t deserve the name *Pacifico*.”²⁷

In 2010, after more than 34 years, the first Mexican restaurant established in Amsterdam closed down. The *Dubson-Uzcudun Group*, a partnership between two Argentineans, did not manage to create joyful relations with the clients of *Cafe Pacifico*, who were more accustomed to Tomas’s management. Although the *Dubson-Uzcudun Group* owns many Argentinean, Mexican and Spanish restaurants in Amsterdam, they did not make a profit with *Cafe Pacifico*. The restaurant went bankrupt, not because of bad administration, but because after Tomas left, the place lost its “hype,” as one of the restaurant’s managers said. Without Tomas’ passion for the Cal-Mex foodscape and the Pacific coast, the new owners were not able to enact the desirable quasi-object; consumers did not believe in the new administration and its related objects.

Since 1976 Tomas Estes has expanded to more than 17 restaurants and bars in the Netherlands, England, France, Germany, Italy and Australia. He owns some of these places, and others have become franchises. On the websites for *Cafe Pacifico* and *La Perla Bar* he states that his restaurants and bars have served more than 8 million *margaritas* since 1976.²⁸ In recent years, Tomas’s passion for *tequila* – initially triggered by his visits to *Hussong’s Cantina* in Ensenada – has become more accentuated. Nowadays, he wants not only to affect (*affectus*) consumers’ bodies with *margaritas*, but to do so with high quality *tequila*. Tomas even developed his own brand of *tequila*: *Tequila Ocho* (*Tequila Eight*). Tomas argues that his *tequila* is unique because he was the first one in applying the principle of *terroir* (from winemaking) to the production of *tequila*:

“*Tequila Ocho* is the only brand Tomas Estes has been personally involved with as a partner. He spent the last 20 years going on a yearly pilgrimage to Burgundy in France tasting red and white wine “en primeur” (from the barrel before bottling), which developed his wine appreciation as well as his palate. It is for this reason that Tomas insists on a “Slow Food” process for his brand *Tequila Ocho*. The respect for the artisanal process is why of all the distillers he knows well, Tomas chose the Camarenas family to create *Tequila Ocho* with him. Together they created an agave-led product that proves “terroir” from a single estate has an effect on agave just as it does on wine. *Tequila Ocho* celebrates the different nuances from each vintage and estate –making *Tequila Ocho* rare and collectable.”²⁹

The land itself has become an important actor in Tomas’s efforts to enact his quasi-object. He trained his body for twenty years before he was able to distinguish new-world counterparts in the cosmology of *tequila*. With *Tequila Ocho*, Tomas is trying to detach *tequila* from its *scape* and take it down to the land.

Tomas’ desires and affections for *tequila* and the Mexican foodscape has also expanded to different latitudes: The next lines were taken from websites of *Cafe Pacifico* branches in London and Sydney:

“Cafe Pacifico is London’s original Mexican Cantina opened in a Covent Garden banana warehouse in 1982. Since that time, Cafe Pacifico has provided great value for money, friendly service and a lively atmosphere. The long wooden bar and Mexican decor re create the authentic feel of a cantina and this venue has been popular with regulars and tourist alike. Pacifico serves Modern & classic Mexican Food and Premium Tequilas, superb *Margaritas* and Cocktails that are world famous – all at competitive prices. A perfect venue for parties of any size.”³⁰

“Cafe Pacifico in East Sydney is Australia’s version of a concept which is also booming in London, Paris and Amsterdam. Conceived by the Pacifico guru, Tom Estes, in 1973, who finally opened the first spot in Amsterdam in 1976, Cafe Pacifico specializes in Los Angeles-style Mexican cooking - and a reputation for offering the finest tequilas in this corner of the planet. Traditional Mexican dishes have been added to the menu such as the Fundido Rajas (an entree of melted cheese over Poblano chillis and onions, topped with pico de gallo and served with three flour *tortillas*); and the Filete Tampiqueña (char-grilled 250g tenderloin steak with a cheese enchilada, pico de gallo, guacamole and Mexican rice based on a recipe from the Tampico Club in Mexico City). Of course, there’s plenty of *Fajitas*, *Tacos*, *Burritos*, *Nachos*, *Quesadillas* and *Tortillas* for people who like to use such words in the presence of others. Head honcho Phil Bayly is a blast. Huge bar, party atmosphere, this place is great for functions and group bookings.” (Emphasis added).³¹

Those quotations highlight the importance paid to the quality of the materials used to assemble Cal-Mex foodscapes. Thanks to a long wooden bar and Mexican decor, *Cafe Pacifico* in London recreates the authentic feel of a cantina with a lively atmosphere – perhaps even Hussong’s original cantina. *Cafe Pacifico* Sydney also offers a party atmosphere. As the quote notes, the Sydney branch is “Australia’s version [translation] of a concept which is also booming in London, Paris and Amsterdam. Whereas *Cafe Pacifico* in London specializes in “modern & classic Mexican food,” Sydney’s *Cafe Pacifico* specializes in “Los Angeles-style Mexican cooking” and “traditional Mexican dishes such as *filete tampiqueña*,” a dish which itself is a misspelled translation from a recipe created in the Tampico Club in Mexico City.

The quotation’s opposition between Los Angeles-style Mexican cooking and traditional Mexican is striking. Whereas the former is related to perceptions of pretentiousness, the latter is related to authenticity: “Of course, there’s plenty of *fajitas*, *tacos*, *burritos*, *nachos*, *quesadillas* and *tortillas* for people who like to use such words in the presence of others.” What could be wrong with using those words in the presence of others? Nothing, of course, but it seems that for the owners of *Cafe Pacifico* in Sydney, *tacos*, *burritos*, *nachos*, *quesadillas* and *tortillas* are somehow vulgar words, and possibly not authentic Mexican foods. Moreover, it appears that for the Australian restaurant’s owners a body which is able to pronounce the made-up words “*filete tampiqueña*” is closer to a Mexican body than one pronouncing the much more usual or quotidian utterance “*taco*.” By the way, the right way of spelling *filete tampiqueña* is *filete a la Tampiqueña* (and the *torta cubaneza* offered in Café Pacifico Amsterdam is in fact a sandwich usually known as a *torta cubana*).

In the picture below, a client at the *Cafe Pacifico* in Sydney enacts the Mexican body by donning a war bonnet similar to the ones used by the Plains Indians in North America. The picture on the right is of Tomas Estes training bodies at *Cafe Pacifico* London. He stands in front of a sunset in a Californian blue *scape*. *Tequila* bottles and special *tequila* tasting cups

sit on the table to his right. A pupil with a notebook and a pen sits to his left, watching the spirit, waiting for its answer.



91. Enacting the Mexican body in *Cafe Pacifico* Sydney,³² 92. Tomas Estes in *Cafe Pacifico* London.³³

Although *Cafe Pacifico* is becoming a franchise operation, each location has adapted the original concept in its own particular way. This is an interesting phenomenon, because franchises commonly try to closely control the concept they sell and leave little room for creative translations. The whole premise of franchising is to affect (*affectus*) the biggest possible quantity of bodies with a constant quotation of the same concept. Nevertheless, the food offered at every *Cafe Pacifico* is different. The particularization of the concept stems from the fact that each *Cafe Pacifico* only shares a similar concept at the expressive level, not in its internal organization. This practice brings to mind Torop's argument about the importance of taking into account the paired dimension of source-target text and content-expression plane in analyzing extratextual (intersemiotic) translation: the second dimension corresponds to the transposing-re-coding. It refers to the translation of the content plane (transposing) or the expression plane (re-coding). Re-coding analysis paid attention to linguistic and formal characteristics. Transposing analysis paid attention to translator's creativity (Torop 2000: 88-89). Using this framework, *Cafe Pacifico* franchises around the world share the concept at the expression plane but differ at the content or transposing plane because of commodity networks, experiences with the Mexican landscape, consumers' tastes, etc.

Tomas Estes named his place *Cafe Pacifico* because many places close to the Pacific Ocean happened to be significant landscapes throughout his life. He grew up close to the Pacific – on the beaches of Los Angeles county. He experienced his first *tequilas* and the freedom of Mexican society on the beaches of Ensenada, close to his friend's liquor store, *Hussong's Cantina*, and the Pacific Ocean. He got the idea of becoming a restaurant entrepreneur close to the Pacific – on beaches in Mazatlan, close to the Pacifico Brewery. Since childhood, the Pacific Ocean has affected Tomas as "signs of love" do (Deleuze 1964), by taking him into unknown worlds that materialize in multiple foodscapes where other bodies are affected (*affectio*) by the carrier of potent signs originating in landscapes in California and the Pacific Coast.

Cafe Pacifico's foodscape expands out of the Californian lands. Indeed, the category "Cal-Mex" is too short to frame the extension of this foodscape. I found the same problem when I tried to apply the category Tex-Mex to *El Charro*; Ventura's translation overflows the frame. I argue that on one hand, the impossibility of fixing the boundaries of those foodscapes relates to the fluidity and extension of the owners' life lines, and on the other, it is a consequence of the fictitious boundaries imposed by the idea of a national landscape. Foodscapes are dynamic: they are always on the move, searching for new bodies to affect (*affectus*) and be affected (*affectio*).

4.2 THE TACO SHOP: OPPOSITIONS TO THE CAL-MEX FOODSCAPE

One of the newest Mexican foodscapes translated from California to Amsterdam is *The Taco Shop*. This restaurant was established in 2008. Kevin, an expat from Colorado, opened the first *Taco Shop* in the year 1992 in Copenhagen, Denmark. A year later, he established a second *Taco Shop* in the same city. The *façade* of the first *The Taco Shop* defines itself as the "home of the *chimichanga*."



93. *The Taco Shop* 1. Copenhagen, 2008

Before the first *Taco Shop* was established in Copenhagen, Kevin worked for one year at different Mexican restaurants in California. He went from north to south, following the Pacific coast, in order to experience different Mexican foodscapes. Following Ingold's metaphor about the map and the land, Kevin traveled from point A to point B without knowing what was in the middle. However, he managed to assemble all those dots into a business to produce economic earnings (Ingold 2008: 20-26). In Kevin's words, *The Taco Shop* is the best of all the Mexican restaurants he worked in. Kevin opposed many pieces from the Mexican foodscape as it developed in California, and translates them to Europe. Kevin's process was one of innovation through multiple oppositions which produced synthesis and variation.

Kevin's innovation calls to mind Tarde's claim that there are two types of oppositions, simultaneous and successive. The former opposition produces adaptation, the latter, repetition. *The Taco Shop* belongs to the second type: "As rhythm, it is only of direct service to repetition, and of indirect service to variation" (Tarde 1899: 143). The synthesis of similar oppositions produced a rhythmic alternation in the Cal-Mex foodcape that Kevin translated to Europe.

The resulting foodscape resembles a Cal-Mex restaurant close to the Californian beach. The main color imprinted in *The Taco Shop* is Californian blue. Surfboards, rock concert adds, street signs, license plates and photos of rock idols populate the walls from *The Taco Shops*. These signs all relate in some way to the countercultural bodies of the Californian lands. One particular landscape object at the second *Taco Shop* is the restaurant's name painted in the style of street graffiti over what seem to be a Californian city living from dawn till dusk:



94. Kevin at the second *Taco Shop*. Copenhagen, 2008

The Mexican bodies depicted in *The Taco Shop*'s logo are constituted by two anthropomorphized beans.³⁴ One is browner than the other, but they both have mustaches and wear sombreros. The body-beans are sleeping on a colorful carpet. The sun is shining behind them. There is no evidence of the actual landscape where the action is taking place. Instead, the carpet and the body-beans float in a dark space:



95. *The Taco Shop*'s logo

As I explained before, these types of Mexican bodies have long dwelt in the lands of the empty desert. In this case, Mexican bodies have been detached from this desert and territorialized in an idealized landscape of Californian beach town.



96. Third *Taco Shop*. Amsterdam, 2009

In 2007 Kevin helped his 23-year old son Logan open a third *Taco Shop* outside of Copenhagen. They had been planning to open a third *Taco Shop* somewhere else in Europe for a long time; in fact, during family trips around Europe they used to joke, “this city needs a *Taco Shop*!” Finally, in 2007, Logan went traveling around Europe in order to find the best location for the third *Taco Shop*; he eventually decided that Amsterdam was the perfect place to open his restaurant. He made the decision not only because he believed there was a market opportunity for his business, but also because, like Tomas, he fell in love with the city. Kevin, Logan’s father, helped him find the right spot to open the place. They decided that De Pijp was the best neighborhood because there were no Mexican restaurants in the area and because it was mainly inhabited by young people who seemed to be open to non-Dutch food traditions. Once the right spot was found and consumers were identified, Logan came back to U.S. in order to apply for a Dutch working permit, and Kevin stayed in Amsterdam developing the project.

When Logan came back to Amsterdam, he agreed with Kevin about the necessity of having a business partner who would help him to run the shop. They decided that the best option was to transfer one of the most experienced workers from Copenhagen to Amsterdam. Slade, a South African man who used to manage the kitchen at one of *The Taco Shops* in Copenhagen, was chosen for the mission. Kevin and Logan thought that Slade had the knowledge required to enact the desirable quasi-object. They offered him an attractive deal. If he would move to Amsterdam with Logan he would not be a worker, but a partial partner of the new business. That deal also benefitted the new *Taco Shop*’s finances: since Logan did not have to pay for an employee he would be able to pay Kevin back the money he borrowed to open the new business faster.

Logan and Slade became partners and worked together in order set up the *Taco Shop* in Amsterdam. They achieved an important grade of equivalence in the translation: if the three *Taco Shops* were put side-by-side, consumers would not be able to tell that the shops were

territorialized in different cities. A legend placed in one of the main windows of the third *Taco Shop* defines the identity of the space enacted by the repetitions of familiar chain: “Copenhagen – Amsterdam. The Pacific Coast Highway.”

After two years of working with Logan, Slade decided to return to South Africa. Logan thinks Slade made this decision because he was homesick and had family problems. After Slade quit, Logan did not look for a new partner. Instead, he decided to hire local workers. Since then, he has had several different employees. The common profile among them has been that they are younger than him and open to people. Logan feels he can relate with them as a boss and as a friend.



97. Logan at the third *Taco shop*, Amsterdam, 2009

While the translation from *The Taco Shops* in Copenhagen to *The Taco Shop* Amsterdam achieved an important grade of equivalence with the source text in the expression plane, Logan made some variations in the content plane:

“I changed the operation of putting out food. So as I was saying the only thing that I did was change the way that food was put out as far as the way we take order. I change a lot of stuff... well the old operation used to be a bigger box and everything inside the big box. I separated everything, so like there is no more salsas on top, everything on the side, the salad is on the side, it just travels better” (Logon 2009, personal interview).

From Logan’s point of view, to make the food travel better is not only making the operation of his restaurant faster³⁵ but is also a question of respect for consumers. When everything is separated, consumers can regulate the taste of their dishes. The system developed by Logan also helps preserve the qualities of the main dishes; the crispiness of *nachos* or *tostadas* are lessened by cream or *salsa*. “To travel better” also means to avoid interactions among entities, in order to preserve their main identities.

Logan wants to have a restaurant for everybody. Therefore he uses *halal* beef and chicken to prepare some of the dishes he sells. He is aware that the Muslim population in Amsterdam is quite big, and he does not want to exclude them from his customer base. He also has vegetarian plates and dishes made with pork meat. The Turkish distributor that provides *The Taco*

Shop with *halal* meat also delivers the vegetables. A local dairy company delivers the milk products. Another distributor brings him the pork meat. A distributor from England delivers *tortillas*, chilies and dry or canned Mexican products. The connection of all those networks, plus the aesthetics of the place, allow the enactment of Cal-Mex foods in Amsterdam: *tacos*, *burritos*, *chimichangas*, *tostadas*, *nachos* and *quesadillas*, Californian style:



98. *Tostada*. *The Taco Shop*, Amsterdam, 2009

One afternoon I took a Belgian friend living in Amsterdam to *The Taco Shop*. We asked for food to take away. Once we were at his house we started to talk about the experience. He explained to me that he did not feel like *The Taco Shop* was a Mexican restaurant:

“And in *The Taco Shop*, there in Amsterdam I didn’t feel in México, you really have nothing, there was nothing, even in the interior I didn’t notice it, there were like little posters with things written on it, a small bar and then you have some ovens and a white guy...I think it was a little bit strange that there was a white guy making my *burrito* you know, it would add something more if it was a Mexican. Maybe that’s really strange but yeah, it would add something more, it would be, maybe is not, when it would be a Mexican and when making my *burrito* you could think ‘oh he was teach from his grandma or something’” (Pieter 2009, personal interview).

Pieter was looking for other qualities that could qualify the place and his *burrito* as Mexican. From his point of view, aesthetics, ethnicity and traditional knowledge are some of the actors that were missed. And in fact, Pieter was right: *The Taco Shop* is not a Mexican restaurant. Instead, it is a Cal-Mex restaurant. The aesthetics of the restaurant and the food are related to the Cal-Mex foodscape. *The Taco Shop* is Kevin’s synthesis of his experience working in Mexican restaurants in California. That is why Pieter did not find a single body he could relate with the Mexican landscape. Although he knows that Mexico is not simply an enormous desert, he expected to at least see some cactuses. But since *The Taco Shop* is not a Tex-Mex restaurant, there are no signs from the Texan landscape either.

The translation made by *The Taco Shop* is unclear for consumers who are not from or familiar with the U.S. For non-American consumers, *tacos*, *burritos* and *quesadillas* come from Mexico, not California. Nevertheless, for expats from the U.S. living in Amsterdam

the translation has achieved an important grade of equivalence. Those who have inhabited or occupied the Californian landscape believe especially strongly in the coherence of the translation. Most expats understand this is only one of many possible ways to translate the Mex-U.S. foodscape: Tex-Mex, Cal-Mex (or Mexi-cali), Arizona-style Mexican food, and southwestern food are some of its other variations. These consumers are able to compare among many genres from a single theme:

“Doesn’t get any better than The *Taco Shop*” Reviewed December 23, 2009. For Tex-Mex or Mexi-cali food this is the absolute best place in Amsterdam. Great for take away or dining in, although the restaurant is built more for take-out. It’s a fun environment, laid back. The food is fresh and the quality cannot be beaten. This is a “must” if you are heading the Amsterdam way, and the prices, you really cannot beat them!”³⁶

Most of the consumers at *The Taco Shop* are U.S. expats. The place has become a kind of community center, where people from the U.S. meet and share their life experiences in the Netherlands. Most of the people I met there explained to me that they grew up eating Mexican food in the United States. For them, eating Mexican food in Amsterdam is akin to biting into a piece of the land where they were born. They have affections (*affectus*) – for this type of food. If they feel nostalgic for home, they can eat some *tacos*, *burritos*, *enchiladas*, *chimichangas* or *tostadas*. If they want to share affections (*affectio*) with compatriots, they only have to visit a Mexican restaurant (in one of its variants) and start talking about their knowledge of the Mexican food:

“Yeah, absolutely, especially the Americans, they talk about the things that they like and the things that they dislike. The first conversations are always about, like, they’ve been here for a certain amount of time and they haven’t eaten any Mexican food, this kind of Mexican food.” (Logan 2009, personal interview).

The U.S. expats who visit *The Taco Shop* also share information about life in Amsterdam: job offers, education, or accommodation are common topics. In 2008 *The Taco Shop* became a political center for the expat community living in Amsterdam. It was a popular place to discuss politics in the U.S. (most of the citizen-consumers indicated a preference for Obama). Somehow the Mexican foodscape, in its many repetitions, oppositions and adaptations, has become a constitutive part of the U.S. landscape even overseas. For expats living in Amsterdam, such spaces have become extensions of the landscape they inhabited back in their country. They therefore feel authorized to criticize the translations if the enacted foodscapes do not precisely repeat the potent signs that imprinted their bodies back in the United States. Since *The Taco Shops* repeat some of those signs with a good deal of equivalence, expats, or at least the ones who used to dwell in those lands, are able to create joyful relations in this foodscape. On the other hand, for those more used to the Tex-Mex foodscape, this place opposes some of their passions.

4.3 MY BURRITO: THE DETERRITORIALIZATION OF THE CAL-MEX FOODSCAPE



99. My burrito's logo³⁷

My burrito was the last Mexican foodscape established during my research in Amsterdam. The restaurant opened in February of 2009. The translation of this foodscape was also inspired by the Californian landscape, but in a minimalist way; the Californian blue and organic, fresh and healthy foods are the only potent signs translated from this landscape. The owner of *My burrito* is Lasa Nielsen, a Dutch man who used to live in San Francisco, California. After five years of living in this Californian city, Lasa developed affection for the San Franciscan *burritos* and the local organic food:

“Nielsen spent five years in San Francisco, where cheap *burritos* are everywhere. ‘I liked the idea that it was fast food, but freshly prepared.’ This inspired him to open his own *burrito* outlet back home, despite worrying that the Dutch - who historically have closer culinary links to Indonesia and Surinam - wouldn’t ‘get’ the concept.”³⁸

Lasa decided to establish the first Mexican restaurant in Amsterdam using organic food and, when possible, locally produced products. Throughout most of his life, he explained, he had worked in restaurants where things were not made in the right way. In the U.S. *burritos* are commonly associated with fast food. With his translation, Lasa wanted to demonstrate that it was possible to make “slow” *burritos*. When I asked him to explain what a *burrito* was to me, he told me *burritos* were big *quesadillas*. Afterwards he told me they were big soft *tortillas*. On his website he explains the identity of the *burritos* in the following way:

“My burrito is your *burrito*. My *burrito* prepares fresh and organic *burritos*, *quesadillas*, and *tacos* within minutes. Made to your personal taste: just the way you like it. Our main specialty is the *burrito*: a Mexican-Californian dish that consists of a tortilla filled with rice, beans, cheese and *salsa*. By adding extras like meat, veggies, *guacamole* or sour cream you can complete your meal.”³⁹

How does *My burrito* manage to make organic *burritos* in Amsterdam? Consider how Lasa fractured a *burrito* I ate on one of my visits to his place:

Where does the *tortilla* come from?

“It’s made by Santa Maria, Santa Maria. It’s a large European company, they are a multinational

company that do a lot of Mexican food and a number of years ago they started with an organic range, so they do regular *tortillas*. I think they also do taco shell, the dough, you name it. They do stuff like salsas, bottled salsas, that kind of things, but like many companies they decided that organic is the way to go for the future so they started an organic range and that is what this *tortilla* is from. It is whole wheat, it's 100 percent organic and it's baked in Sweden. It used to be baked in the Netherlands but the company closed its plant here and now they bake them in Sweden. It's more structure on it, it's kind of pleasant...I like it."

Where does the beef come from?

"The beef is a Dutch producer, he is called Rob Rijks, his web site is *Natuurslagerij Rob Rijks*, if you look it up in Google you will find him. Great producer, he has a contract with the Dutch forestry who work to keep the forest and the areas that belong to the government to keep them healthy, they need animals to graze... and then you know they live that manner, so that is good, that is the natural way for the thinks to grow and to make sure that certain things don't, it is a very natural way to keep things in balance, so basically he has a contract where his animals, all organic, can just walk around and do what they gonna do and they are their natural life, they are completely free and every one, so when is time obviously they get, they got to the butchery and they get slaughtered but the life they live is totally different than the animals in the food industry where they are treated as things."

Where does the lettuce come from?

"My supplier is *ecobill*, *ecobill.nl*, great supplier, very nice guy, also very passionate, he get his staff from all over, his avocados there are organic from South Africa, two weeks ago they were from Brazil, sometimes they are from Spain, is really difficult, has to be organic, that is the minimum requirement and then it depends on what time in the year is possible we get them from Europe, and sometimes when the European season is gone then we go somewhere else and he does that. And for instance the tomatoes are Dutch, eco certified, he has a number of producers, and sometimes is this tomatoes, sometimes is a Roma tomato, whatever nature has to give at that moment and has to be organic and has to be fresh."

Where does the sauce come from?

"Everything in the chipotle sauce is organic, there is tomato in there, organic tomato, organic cilantro, organic salt, a little bit of organic cane sugar, to counteract the acidity of the tomatoes, and the only thing that is not organic is the chipotle, they come from Mexico, they are made by... one second, so this is the producer, La Torre, and this is where I get it, and if I could get this organic or fair trade or something, wow, that would be wonderful."

Where does the sour cream come from?

"I have two suppliers, one is a Dutch company, I get it through my green grocery actually because he knows a lot of people in the organic, organic producers, and he is very motivated, very passionate, so I talk with his staff about, you know, very great guy. The sour cream, because it has to be organic, is not a product that is readily available commercially. I order it specially, so that means that they need some time, is very fat, is rich cream, so I have to order it, and some times one or two weeks latter I get a bottle of five liters."(Lasa 2009, personal interview)

Lasa argues that the fact he mainly uses organic ingredients in his restaurant means that his business model runs in accordance with nature. *My burrito's* networks contract and expand

according to the season; sometimes the avocados come from Brazil, other times from Spain. The same happens with most of the ingredients he works with. If his business runs out of organic cream, he do not run to the shop to buy regular cream. The flavors of the dishes he offers also change due to the instability of the organic distribution networks he connects with. He just explains to the customers what the concept is all about: the *burrito* you eat one week might not taste the same next week. At *My burrito* a consumer cannot fall in love with a particular flavor, because the same flavor might never be achieved again; that is nature, Lasa explains. The different actors that mesh into *My burrito's* network are not stable, they are fluid and adapt to natural variations. What makes those networks stable are the moral qualities attached to the “slow” *burritos*; organic products, if possible, locally produced and humanely treated animals:

“It is natural in my philosophy, that all things live, all things suffer and all things die in the end, and one creature may become food for another creature, that is nature, there is nothing wrong with it, but to use another creatures and to make them suffer only to make more money, to torture them really, put it in small confine spaces, that is wrong, that is ethically wrong.” (Lasa 2009, personal interview).

A couple of times consumers have complained about a lack of *guacamole*, but Lasa does not step back in this process of evolution as he names it (I would call it adaptation). Some U.S. consumers believe that Lasa has achieved a good level of coordination in his translation. However, they refer to the organic qualities attached to those food products:

“The name, *My burrito*, is terrible, but the *burrito* was very good! I am a San Francisco burrito boy thru and thru and these guys delivered with the steaming of the tortilla, perfectly seasoned pinto beans, light rice and very flavorful beef. Not to mention the fresh pico de gallo and guacamole. Still no Gordo's or La Taqueria, but after tasting very subpar *burritos* in Paris, Rome and Barcelona...I would have to say the best *burrito* in Europe for me to date. I know that is a huge statement, but the steaming of the tortilla, flavor, quality of the food and tight roll were solid.” (Christian, 5/24/2011).⁴⁰

When I asked Lasa if he uses *halal* meat in his business model he took some time before giving me the following intriguing answer:

“I have looked in to it. I thought how great it would be if you can get *halal* meat and also be organic, then you could satisfy the Muslim community and so stick to your principles. As it turns out, the way *halal* animals are butchered is not considered humane in the organic sense; in Europe the organization that certify is called *skal*, they are very, very strict, they control every single detail of the production process, and so they look at the process of the halal butchery, there is a way in which they slaughter the animal and is left to bleed out, and that is stressful for the animal, so *skal* does not recognize that. How I do say this, *halal* is not recognized as a humane way of killing those animals. I would love to do that, so I could go one step back and say you know what, business is important to me, and I will go from organic to free range beef, that is

halal, but that is moving back in evolution.” (Lasa 2009, personal interview).

My burrito’s business model emphasizes nature and its ethics, not cultural or religious differences, while *The Taco Shop* privileges the latter moral quality. Although both restaurants are related to the Cal-Mex foodscape, each business enacts very different quasi-objects due to their relation with opposed moralities: conventional versus natural morality, or cultural difference versus animal rights. This fact relates to a recent process of adaptation in the Cal-Mex foodscape; whereas some years ago the Cal-Mex foodscape was attached to counterculture, nowadays it is related to more exclusive practices of food consumption.

For both *Tomatillo* and *My burrito*, quality, locally produced, fair trade and organic food have become prominent concepts. Additionally, both restaurants share distribution networks. For instance, they both work with the same meat distributor (Natuurslagerij Rob Rijks), and both promote this distribution network as a constituent part of their business model. They also share aesthetic lines. Whereas the distribution networks of both places have become more natural, the materials used in the decoration of their foodscapes have become more synthetic. In *My burrito*’s foodscape there is not a single sign related to the Mexican or the Californian landscape. The restaurant is only one room of some 30 square meters. All the materials are painted white and green. Most of the furniture used in *My burrito*’s foodscape is made from artificial materials with smooth textures. The only sign that refers to the Cal-Mex landscape is the Californian blue. Blue is the predominant color on the restaurant’s flyer and website; however, the blue in this case is not attached to the Californian lands. *My burrito*’s flyer and website do not depict a landscape, but a pure *scape*.



100. *My burrito*, Internet page, Amsterdam ⁴¹



101. *My burrito*, flyer, Amsterdam

In this most recent adaptation of the Cal-Mex foodscape in Amsterdam, air has replaced land. Corn, tomato, wheat and avocados fly in an extended blue sky, balanced against an army of soft cirrus clouds. This foodscape had gained autonomy from the Californian land. What matters in *My burrito*’s adaptation is the quality of foods, not whether they are produced in specific territories or nations. Food occupies the space of the concept in this foodscape, and the concepts occupy the food space: Cal-Mex food is a territorialized concept. The ingredients used to prepare the dishes of *My burrito* come from a fluid set of producers and retailers that enable the enactment of organic *burritos*.

4.4 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter I presented different Mexican foodscapes that have taken the Californian landscape and the Pacific coast as the source texts for their translations. I explored how the Cal-Mex foodscape has been translated in Western Europe since the 1970s. Following Tomas Estes's life lines, I explained how landscapes close to the Pacific Ocean have affected (*affectio*) him since childhood. The foodscapes that he has translated around the world are repetitions of this affection. *Hussong's Cantina* was a main model for this translation. Tomas copied the prolific use of *tequila* from this foodscape as a potent sign to affect (*affectus*) consumers' bodies in Amsterdam. However, in his career as entrepreneur, he has become more attached to the Mexican land. He insists that *tequila's* essence is attached to a particular *terrior* he found in a specific area in Mexico. Nowadays his main desire is to make consumers believe in his passion for *Tequila Ocho*, his quintessential quasi-object.

In the case of *The Taco Shop* foodscape, I explored the ways in which various landscapes and foodscapes from California were opposed, synthesized and translated by Kevin to Western Europe, ultimately enacting a California beach town. In this process of translation, Kevin chose signs from the various Mexican restaurants along the Pacific Coast where he worked. The resulting foodscape is a rhythmic innovation, due to opposition and adaptation. However, this translation is not a radical innovation. Instead, it is one of direct service to repetition, and of indirect service to variation.

The case of *My burrito* is especially intriguing. Lasa used to live in San Francisco, where *burritos* and local organic food affected (*affectio*) him. He decided to translate both food concepts, giving rise to the first organic *burrito* shop in Amsterdam. However, he did not translate potent signs associated with San Francisco or California. Instead, in his translation air has overtaken land. Food occupies the space of the concept, and the concept occupies the space of the food. This foodscape has gained autonomy from the land; *My burrito* is a radical adaptation of the Cal-Mex foodscape in Amsterdam.

The common theme in all of these cases is the Californian landscape. The genres can be identified as the Californian beach bar, the *taco* shop in a Californian beach town, and an organic restaurant in San Francisco. These foodscapes use signs from an idealized map that belongs to an experienced land: the storytelling of their lives and its actualization as pre-composed plot materialize in the form of restaurants.

The foodscapes explored in this chapter are translations made by entrepreneurs who have inhabited or occupied the Californian landscape and the Pacific coast. Some of them have developed intimate affections (*affectio*) with the signs they commoditize; other ones only use them because of their power (*puissance*) to relate with consumers. The translations made by the former type of entrepreneurs tend to be more faithful to the source text, the translations from the latter type tend to promote radical innovation in the target text. The first type of translator does not want to be traitor, the second type of translator betrays in order to innovate. The former conserves, the latter liberates. In practice, consumers who have dwelt in the Californian landscape promote its preservation through repetition. The ones who have not related directly with those lands promote its opposition and adaptation. Those who have dwelt in other genres from the Mexican foodscape, either partially understand or radically reject

the translations. Whereas some genres have been cannibalized in the process of translation, others have been popularized through synthesis and innovation. This process of repetition, opposition and adaptation becomes evident in the scenographies depicted in the Cal-Mex restaurants in Amsterdam and the type of food they offer. Whereas the first translations used to be composed by potent signs coming from the Californian and the Mexican landscape, the more recent entrepreneurial projects have only focused on the *scape* from the Californian lands.

The foodscapes analyzed in this chapter also reflect processes of softening and purification. While in the first foodscapes the materials used to imprint the Mexican signs were natural, the materials are synthetic in more recent cases. In the earlier cases, textures were rough. In the later cases, textures are smooth. The light in the first foodscapes was just light. In the new cases, light creates atmospheres. Mexican bodies and lands are being replaced by abstract entities dwelling in pure *scapes*; the Cal-Mex foodscape is gaining autonomy from its land.

NOTES

- 1 <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4136885>. Kitchen Wisdom: Food Traditions and Globalization. October 15, 2004. Accessed: 08/09/2011
- 2 Northern California Surf #2: <http://www.walrusproductions.com/znortherncalifornia2.html>
- 3 California Turkey Wrap (photo: National Turkey Federation): http://food-management.com/food_feature/wrap-sandwiches-versatile-0309/. Accessed: 09/09/2011
- 4 Halibut Tostadas with Yogurt-Lime Sauce. Fish makes a quick and healthy Cal-Mex meal: <http://www.sunset.com/food-wine/fast-fresh/halibut-tostadas-with-yogurt-lime-sauce-00400000012825/>. Accessed: 09/09/2011
- 5 <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4136885>. Kitchen Wisdom: Food Traditions and Globalization. October 15, 2004. Accessed: 08/09/2011
- 6 http://www.thedrinksreport.com/full.articles/full.0409_estes.html. Accessed: 10/05/2011
- 7 <http://www.cantinahussongs.com/eng/maineng.htm>, Accessed: 13/04/2011
- 8 In this brief historical overview, I rely on the data presented by Gloria Mancillas in the article *John Hussong: Un Pionero* (1992).
- 9 *Hussong's Cantina*, Ensenada. Honorable Mention: World's sleaziest bars. <http://letmesaythisaboutthat.com/index.php/2009/10/30/honorable-mention-worlds-sleaziest-bars/>. Accessed: 09/09/2011
- 10 *Hussong's Cantina Banditas*, Las Vegas. Hussong's Cantina Grand Opening Las Vegas Sun, September 10, 2011. <http://www.lasvegassun.com/photos/galleries/2010/jan/22/hussongs-cantina-grand-opening/43245/>. Accessed: 10/09/2011
- 11 Mariachis and Mexican mujeres, Las Vegas. *Ibid.*
- 12 Mancillas, Gloria, 1992, X *John Husson: Un pionero*. <http://www.cantinahussongs.com/images/press.pdf> 13/04/2011
- 13 Following this story, it can be said that *Margarita* is not an intersemiotic translation from Margarita, but a product of trivial coincidence, or if you prefer, a consequence of the butterfly effect properly explained by the chaos theory: the drink could just as easily have been called the Juanita or the Lourdes.

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- 14 Latour argues that mediators “transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry” (Latour, 2005: 39). From my point of view, mediators are potent signs or quasi-objects because they have the power of “do things.” They have the power of create or destroy relations among the most disparate entities.
- 15 Tomas Estes, Mexico’s official *tequila* ambassador to Europe: <http://www.fortequilalovers.com/about-us/tomas-estes>. Accessed: 16/10/2011
- 16 http://www.thedrinksreport.com/full.articles/full.0409_estes.html. Accessed: 05/09/2011
- 17 Worldly sign: “[...] appears as the replacement of an action or a thought [...], it is therefore a sign that does not refer to something else [...]; the worldly signs are the only ones capable of causing a kind of nervous exaltation, expressing the effect upon us of the one person capable of producing them” (Deleuze 2008: 5)
- 18 Sign of love: “[...] they are deceptive signs that can be addressed to us only by concealing what they express: the origin of unknown worlds, of unknown actions and thoughts that give them meaning. They do not excite a superficial, nervous exaltation, but the suffering of a deeper exploration” (*Ibid*: 8).
- 19 Sensuous sign: “[...] it may happen that a sensuous quality gives us a strange joy at the same time that it transmits a kind of imperative. Thus experienced, the quality no longer appears as a property of the object that now possesses it, but as the sign of an *altogether different* object [madeleine, trees, napkin, noise of a spoon or a pipe] that we must try to decipher, at the cost of an effort that always risks failure” (*Ibid*: 7).
- 20 http://www.thedrinksreport.com/full.articles/full.0409_estes.html. Accessed: 05/09/2011
- 21 *Ibid*.
- 22 *Op cit*.
- 23 California was a countercultural epicenter in the 1960s.
- 24 <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4136885>. Kitchen Wisdom: Food Traditions and Globalization. October 15, 2004. Accessed: 08/09/2011
- 25 Torta cubana, Mexico *Aviña, José*, Las tortas. Realmente Mexicanas? http://www.revistabuenviaje.com/cono-cemexico/saboramexico/tortas/las_tortas.html. Accessed: 09/09/2011
- 26 Fajitas pacifico: A diversity of ingredients marinated in lemon juice and Mexican spices following famous Pacifico’s recipe. “Sizzling” served as side dishes in a pan with grated cheese, lettuce, pico de gallo, sour cream, *guacamole* and warm flour *tortillas* to fill themselves. Pacifico fajitas. With grilled chicken, steak, lamb sausage and prawns: <http://www.cafe-pacifico.nl/>. Accessed: 08/07/2011
- 27 http://www.tripadvisor.com/Restaurant_Review-g188590-d1656816-Reviews-Cafe_Pacifico-Amsterdam_Noord_Holland.html. Accessed: 10/09/2011
- 28 <http://www.cafepacifico-laperla.com/>. Accessed: 07/07/2011
- 29 Tomas Estes, Mexico’s *Tequila* Ambassador to the World www.altamarbrands.com/Sales/441.pdf 5/06/2009. Accessed 16/10/2011.
- 30 <http://www.cafepacifico-laperla.com/cpl.html>. Accessed: 07/07/2011
- 31 <http://www.cafepacifico.com.au/>. Accessed: 07/07/2011
- 32 <http://www.cafepacifico.com.au/index.php?s=gallery>. Accessed: 07/07/2011
- 33 <http://www.bibendum-times.co.uk/posts/food-wine/2010/02/05/the-future-of-tequila-el-tesoro-cafe-pacifico/>. Accessed: 07/07/2011
- 34 It is worth noting that in the U.S., the word *beaner* is used as a derogatory term for Mexicans, and refers to the perceived low social class of people who eat beans as frequently as Mexicans are thought to.
- 35 Logan learned this process for packing food in the U.S. when he was working at a *Taco Bell*.
- 36 <http://www.tripadvisor.com/members/harasa>. Accessed: 12/09/2011

- 37 *My burrito*'s logo: <http://www.thuisbezorgd.nl/my-burrito>. Accessed: 16/10/2011
- 38 <http://www.eat-amsterdam.com/other-restaurants-in-amsterdam/108-my-burrito-mexican-cafe.html>. Accessed: 12/09/2011
- 39 <http://www.myburrito.nl/>. Accessed: 15/11/2011
- 40 <http://www.yelp.com/biz/my-burrito-amsterdam>. Accessed: 12/09/2012.
- 41 *My burrito*, Internet page: http://buro7.nl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2&Itemid=3. Accessed: 15/09/2011

CHAPTER 5

REGIONAL-MEX: THE MAYAN-YUCATECAN FOOD-SCAPE IN SAN FRANCISCO

In this chapter I identify the regional-Mex foodscape as another genre that has been translated from the Mexican landscape. In order to translate this landscape, entrepreneurs select signs associated with the Mayan and Yucatecan¹ landscape, most of which relate to idealized entities of pre-Hispanic Mayan culture. However, I argue that the regional-Mex foodscape could not have been actualized in San Francisco before the consolidation of the Mexican landscape. The Mayan-Yucatecan foodscape and its related bodies are fragments of the national landscape. Nevertheless, the regionalization and archaization of the Mexican landscape chronotope has prompted the emergence of a niche market for the regional-Mex foodscape in San Francisco.

The emergence of the Mayan-Yucatecan foodscape was not rationally oriented. Instead, its emergence derives from the entanglement of multiple passions. The owners of Mayan-Yucatecan restaurants in San Francisco translated intimate passions such as moralities, traditional knowledge, ideas, dreams and visualizations into their entrepreneurial projects and their enactments of affective (*affectus*) foodscapes. In order to analyze this entanglement of entrepreneurial projects and passions, I rely on the concept quasi-object, or in more straightforward terms, the assemblage of human passions and objects through the mediation of potent signs.

5.1 TOMMY'S MEXICAN RESTAURANT: THE PERSON, THE RESTAURANT AND THE QUASI-OBJECT

“If you were lucky to have met Tommy (RIP), then you were lucky to have met a legend in the Bay Area.” (Moxie W. 5/24/2011, 11 reviews, 34 friends, *Yelp*)

Tomás Bermejo (1932-2011) migrated from Oxkutzcab, Yucatán, Mexico to the United States in the middle part of the 20th century. Initially contracted for agricultural work through the Bracero Program in the 1950's, Tomás worked in different rural areas in the U.S. before settling in San Francisco, California in the 1960's. In 1965 he established *Tommy's Mexican Restaurant*, usually referred to as *Tommy's*. *Tommy's* website explains the restaurant's history in the following way:

“In 1965 Tommy Bermejo and his wife Elmy focused their culinary talents and realized their long-time dream of opening a family restaurant specializing in the cuisine of their native Yucatán. Thanks to three decades of immeasurable dedication and an intense commitment to excellence, the Bermejos have built Tommy's into the extraordinary San Francisco institution that it is

today. Just ask one of the countless regulars - Tommy's authentic Yucatecan cuisine, outrageous premium *margaritas* and an always-friendly Bermejo welcome, combine to provide an experience that is truly surpassed by none."²

The restaurant's narrative proudly notes the ethnicity of its founders and the authenticity of the Yucatecan cuisine offered at the restaurant. However, as will be explained later, the Yucatecan food offered at *Tommy's* is limited to a couple of distinctive dishes.

Notice also that in this narrative, Tomás Bermejo is referred to as Tommy. In his case – just like what happened with Johan/John and Thomas/Tomas – the translation of a name from Spanish to English functioned as a potent sign to stabilize the identity of the restaurant by the attachment of private passions to material relations. Tommy, a Yucatecan migrant in the U.S. who did not want to be identified as Tomás after he obtained his residence permit, opened *Tommy's Restaurant*, not *El Restaurante de Tomás* or even *Tomás's Mexican Restaurant*, both of which would have been acceptable and appropriate names for Mexican restaurants in the United States. In some societies identifying an object (a product or a service) with the name of its distributor or creator reveals the existence of social relations between objects and humans, but in others it denotes appropriation.³ The object-person naming phenomenon implies a process of colonization, by imposing idiosyncratic human qualities on an object. Naming a product after its owner highlights the passion that prompted the product's creation or commoditization; the passionate interests “inebriated with the hope of winning, the pride of life and the thirst of power” (Tarde in Latour and Lépinay 2009: 24).

Tommy's was established on Geary Boulevard in the Richmond district of San Francisco. This neighborhood has never been known for a significant Mexican population, although a small Yucatecan community has resided there since the opening of *Tommy's* (see below). Rather, the neighborhood is known for its concentration of Russian and Chinese migrants and its quiet, almost suburban feel. However, neither Mexicans nor Chinese nor Russians have traditionally been customers at *Tommy's*. Since the restaurant opened, San Francisco Anglos have been its regular customers.

When Tommy Bermejo first opened the restaurant, he brought workers from his hometown in Yucatán to San Francisco. He would cover the cost of their illicit entry into the United States, and provide accommodation when the workers first arrived in San Francisco. The workers were supposed to pay him back from their income; however, since they were paid very low salaries, it was hard for them to get out of debt. After some years, when they had managed to liberate themselves from *Tommy's* system of indentured servitude, the workers would change jobs. However, before departing from *Tommy's*, they would often recommend a family member or a friend for the vacant position. Otherwise, Tommy would bring new workers from Oxcutzcab, Yucatán through his informal debt system.⁴

Tommy's initially offered only “Mexican” food to its clients. However, after learning of Tommy's origins, some regular customers encouraged him to serve Yucatecan food as well. These customers encouraged Tommy to commoditize dishes he had eaten when he was still Tomás, back in Yucatán. In 1968 *Tommy's* started to serve Yucatecan-style chicken and pork *tamales*. Years later, *Tommy's* introduced “*escabeche*, *relleno negro*, *carne asada*, *bistec*, lots of things from Yucatán, *frijol con Puerco*, *chocolomo*, a lot of dishes” to his menu (Tomas

2008, personal interview). Some of the Yucatecan dishes introduced by Tommy were accepted by consumers; others were not and quickly disappeared from the menu. Over the years Tommy also introduced seafood and Cal-Mex dishes into the menu.

In 1984 a Yucatecan cook started to manage the kitchen. The menu has not changed radically since then. The establishment's long history the stabilization of its identity have promoted intergenerational passionate networks among affected (*affectio*) consumers and *Tommy's*:

"*Tommy's* holds a special place in my heart. My family has been coming to *Tommy's* since I was a little girl (and that's a long time - and no I won't say how long). I know I'm biased, but I love the food and *margaritas*. I love the house salad. It comforts me. My favorite dish is the Shrimp Vera Cruz - shrimp, tomatoes, bell peppers, onions, green olives. So good. I love the *margaritas*. The owners and staff have always been friendly and welcoming. My only problem is that it has gotten so busy over the last 5-10 years. We have to go early in the evening or during the week to avoid the crowds and noise. If you haven't been, give it a chance. When not so busy, its just a great neighborhood place. Maybe you will be taking your kids there too." (Lisa A. 4/22/2011. 6 reviews, 5 friends on *Yelp*).



102. *Poc-chuc*, *Tommy's* restaurant, 2008



103. *Pollo pibil*, *Tommy's* restaurant, 2008

In 2011 *Tommy's* menu was divided into the following sections: appetizers, Bar-B-Q, from our Yucatecan cuisine, shrimp specialties, *ceviche de Tommy*, *burritos*, sandwiches, specialties of Mexico, large combination, combination plates, egg specialties and house specials. Yucatecan dishes included *poc-chuc*, *pollo pibil*, Yucatecan *tamales*, *carne asada*, beef or chicken *fajitas* and *chuletas* (pork chops). The menu also includes beverages and *margarita* pitchers. Most of the main dishes are served with rice, beans, salad and corn *tortillas*. The "specialties of Mexico" section includes *enchiladas*, *tacos*, *chiles rellenos* and *chimichangas*. It is possible to identify different food traditions on *Tommy's* menu: Mexican national foods, Cal-Mex food, Yucatecan food and personal food represented by *ceviche de Tommy* (*Tommy's ceviche*) all appear. Here again, the object-personal naming makes evident the existence of an intimate passion attached to the object in the process of commoditization.

772 consumers ranked *Tommy's* restaurant on the consumer review website *Yelp* between 2006 and June 17, 2011.⁵ The restaurant's overall rating was four stars. In most *Yelp* reviews,

Tommy's is not specifically identified as a Yucatecan or Mayan restaurant. Instead, *Tommy's* has become most famous for its *tequila* bar. When it comes to the evaluation of food, *Tommy's* mostly receives a low rating. However, *Tommy's margaritas* always get high marks. It is common to find reviews where the *nachos* and *salsa* are evaluated; crispiness, thickness and spiciness are relevant qualities in these evaluations. However, the Yucatecan-Mayan food is barely mentioned. In one exceptional review a consumer compares *Tommy's* food and the Mexican food of San Diego, California. Somehow, for this consumer, it was hard to admit that a San Francisco restaurant was able to offer good Mexican food:

“This is a great place to go with 4-6 people who love mexican food, good service, hot *salsa*, and quality *tequila*. The beef *fajitas* are among the best i've had, which is tough to admit for a san diego native. They are tender and have that good salty/zesty taste you want in carne asada. Order a couple flour *tortillas* and you're on your way to some solid self made soft *tacos*...complete with blackbeans (just a little), mexican rice (also just a little), the carne (mucho), some homemade *gauc*, grilled onions/peppers, and throw some of that hot red *salsa* on top for the grand finale. Get some extra napkins too, cause if you made em right, there's bound to be a little drippage. Don't fill up on the salad before getting those *tacos* rolling, although, to be fair, the salad is tasty too. Who'd have guessed iceberg lettuce, parmesan cheese, and *salsa* (vinegarett?) would work? Not me, but i eat it all everytime i go there. Keep in mind i eat alot. I'm way out of order here, but also dont fill up on the chips and *salsa*. It always impresses me how within 5 seconds of sitting down, they've got a warm basket of *tortilla* chips and their hot red and hot green *salsa* on your table, and the water is quick to follow. But enough about the food. Order those *fajitas* and have at it. The best part about this place is the *margaritas*! Quality *tequila*...from blancos to anejos, they've got every type of *tequila* here that you'd want to try. Talk to your server, talk to the bartender, ask them what they think about the tequilas and which ones they like and why. They get stoked on talking to you about the *tequila* and will help you out. Yeah, and the mix they use, flat out quality. No premade, just fresh agave, fresh limes and thats all she wrote. I'm going there this week after this little rant. Ha and another great thing about this place is its a family owned and operated joint through and through, you'll see tommy there, you'll see his wife, you'll see pictures of his relatives etc. A duder favorite.” (Garrett M. 2/12/2008, 2 friends, 6 reviews, *Yelp*. Emphasis added).

In the underlined section of his passionate review, Garrett explains to consumers how to distribute food ingredients in order to make a proper *taco*. He explains the quantity of ingredients and the final consistency a good *taco* should achieve. Instead of writing a review of the restaurant, Garrett is actually training consumers. He tries to affect (*affectus*) them with his own passions, to modulate their movements and the process of introducing food into their bodies. It is as if he would like to create mimics of himself by teaching others how to enact the quasi-object of his passion. Those consumers who believe in Garrett's passion for the Mexican food could follow his instructions and enact similar *tacos*. This training spirit is commonly found in the reviews written by consumers in *Yelp*. Garrett also encourages consumers to ask the waiters for suggestions about *tequilas*. Nevertheless, in some posts consumers complain that they did not get good advice from waiters and bartenders. They wanted more explanations about the *tequila* cosmology, but nobody would help them. In fact, some of them describe their experiences in very sad terms because of the bad service:

“In a word - AWFUL!!! I implore anyone reading the reviews on this place to seriously read the 1 & 2 star reviews before setting foot in this place. And no offense to those of you who gave the place 4 & 5 stars, but I have to ask - really? Please go to Los Angeles and visit Paco’s *Tacos*, El Cholo, Pancho’s, El Coyote - or any of the other outstanding Mexican places around town - and then get back to me about Tommy’s. From the moment my friend & I walked in, it was a miserable experience. The place was half full and we just wanted drinks & appetizers so we asked if we could sit at the bar. No, they don’t serve food at the bar. OK then, we’ll take a table. We were then directed to a small 2 seat table in the back of the restaurant, where there were literally more empty tables than people. When we asked if we could sit at a larger table, our surly waiter (one of FIVE surly waiters who attended to us throughout the course of the evening) said No, that table is for 3 people. Oh OK, I guess you’re expecting a rush of people at 8 pm on a Sunday evening. Whatever. He also left us with one menu which I guess we were supposed to share. Surly Guy #2 then comes by and we ask for another menu and order 2 cadillac *margaritas*. As he had no idea what a cadillac *margarita* was, Surly Guy #1 comes back and takes the drink order. Surly Guy #3 then comes by with chips and “*salsa*” - quotes around *salsa* because it tasted like watered down ketchup with some spices. And the chips - you can find better ones at the grocery store.” (Trish E. 10/10/2011, 3 friends, 3 reviews, *Yelp*).

While some consumers describe *Tommy’s* waiters as really impolite, others highlight their attentiveness. What makes the difference in service? Sometimes the place is very busy, other times the waiter may be feeling bad or the customer is rude. Customers’ expectations and their previous experiences consuming Mexican food also play an important role in their evaluations. It is not enough to simply have money to spend and to go to a restaurant to ensure a joyful experience; multiple entities need to coordinate in order that their affections can relate.

The fact that *Tommy’s* is a family restaurant is commonly mentioned in customers’ reviews. Some consumers acknowledge Tommy’s Yucatecan origins. Tommy’s presence in the restaurant was highly appreciated by consumers; in some posts, new consumers tried to guess if Tommy was the old man in the corner or the old man at the register. Regular consumers referred to themselves as Tommy’s friends. In some of the most recent reviews, consumers talk about how lucky they are to have had the chance to meet Tommy before he passed away in early 2011. Other consumers talk about *Tommy’s* as a San Franciscan “institution,” but it is not always clear if they are talking about Tommy the person or the *Tommy’s* the restaurant. Tommy was a person who translated himself into a restaurant, and became a quasi-object with the power of affect (*affectus*) consumers’ bodies and minds.



104. Mexican Fiesta, Tommy's restaurant, 2008

Héctor, a Yucatecan-born waiter who has worked at at *Tommy's* since 2003, mentioned that most of the consumers ask for *puc-chuc*, shrimps and *enchiladas*. He also explained that in recent years, every once in a while consumers ask him to teach them Mayan language: “How do you say *hola*? How do you say *gracias*?” Some of *Tommy's* consumers are not satisfied with learning the Spanish words written on their placemats (like the one in the picture above). Instead, they want to speak the language of the indigenous Mayan workers who serve their dishes. In other words, some consumers no longer want to interact with the stereotypical bodies of the *Mexican Fiesta* (Pérez 2000). Instead, they want to pronounce Mayan utterances, while drinking *margaritas*.

Tommy's sceneography has been described by many consumers as "old-fashioned." The restaurant is composed of two main rooms. Food is served in the bigger one. The small one, with only 10 stools, functions as a bar. Furniture made of dark wood predominates. The walls are also covered with wood. An old red carpet covers the floor. Photos of the Bermejo family and their friends, Mexican handicrafts and magazine reviews of the restaurant hang on the walls. Yet since *Tommy's* is a well-known *tequila* bar-restaurant in San Francisco, new consumers expect to encounter and be affected (*affectio*) by a chic foodscape, not a "kitschy" one:



105. Julio on the left and Tomas Bermejo in the middle⁶

“I heard about *Tommy’s margaritas* a long time ago, but had never found the time to go. My wife and I just moved closer to the Richmond, so we decided it would be a great way to start off our New Year’s Eve. Walking in, it was a bit different than I had thought. I expected a fancier place, but it looked like sort of a kitschy Mexican restaurant, with some weird art on the walls and the red booths. I was comforted, however, by the old Mexican woman at the counter, who looked like someone’s grandma [Elmy]. We sat down after a short wait, and I couldn’t stop eating the complimentary chips and *salsa* that they brought out. The green one was nice and spicy, but the red one was much tastier. We started with a pitcher of the *Siete Leguas Blanco margarita* -- I saw it recommended in one of the magazine reviews/articles that was hung inside the restaurant. The *margaritas* were strong and the lime juice tasted very fresh. I think next time I would go with individual *margaritas* though, so we can taste the difference between all the tequilas. My wife had the *tamales* and I had the *Pollo Pibil*. Both came with rice and beans. The *Pollo Pibil* were three thin chicken breasts cooked with onions and peppers and tomatoes in a spicy red sauce. It was delicious, especially with the fresh corn *tortillas*. My only complaint was that I only got 3 *tortillas* and had to order another side of *tortillas* to eat my meal. I don’t think they charged me for it though (even though the menu says that it was \$2.50 for a side of *tortillas*), so it’s ok. Oddly, the extra order came with FOUR *tortillas*! My wife’s *tamales* were good. They were filled with pork and chicken, and were pretty meaty. The red sauce on them was pretty good too. The salad that came with the meal was only ok, and I’m not sure I was a fan of the red *salsa*-ish dressing on it. I would probably pass next time. The portions are huge, and I wasted my stomach on the salad. However, I did come home with leftovers, and I’m looking forward to eating them tomorrow! I will definitely be going back again, especially now that we’re much closer!” (Pilan 1/1/2011, 66 friends, 136 reviews, *Yelp*).

The way Pilan describes his first impression of *Tommy’s* scenography points to a tension between the power of the aesthetics and the passionate network that *Tommy’s* has constructed through communicative encounters. Pilan had arrived at *Tommy’s* with a mental plot that was shattered by the power of a kitschy scenography.

Like Pilan, many of *Tommy’s* consumers have heard or read about the place long before they visit it. A *Yelp* reviewer even says that she heard about *Tommy’s* at a bar in Melbourne. How do people in Australia imagine *Tommy’s* scenography? In his review, Pilan also mentions how a magazine article hanging on the wall influenced his choice of a *Siete Leguas margarita* pitcher. It appears that technologies in scenographies do double-duty in training consumers: they fix the power of consumers’ bodies (*pouvoir*) and enhance them (*puissance*) if they manage to construct joyful relations.

As can be appreciated from the consumers’ quotations presented so far, they have particular affections (*affectio*) for *Tommy’s margaritas*. Why are these *margaritas* so famous? The answer is partially the fact that Tommy’s son, Julio Bermejo, is the official “Ambassador of *Tequila*” in the United States (the same title held by Tomas – formerly Thomas – Estes in Europe). Julio studied political science at the University of California - Berkeley. During his time in college, he used to visit *Raleigh’s Bar*, famous among students for its beer-drinking club. Students were able to “graduate” from the beer club only after trying an extensive selection of beers. However, Julio never got his diploma because he was not a true lover of beer; he only visited the place because it was a nice spot. In 1989, a friend introduced Julio to the *tequilas El Tesoro de Don Felipe* and *Patrón Añejo*. Julio dates the beginning of his passion

for *tequila* from this encounter: as Deleuze would say, for Julio it was the origin of unknown worlds (Deleuze 2008: 7). Four months later, he was visiting *tequila* producers in Jalisco, Mexico. By 2008, more than 300 *tequilas*, all of them 100% agave, were offered at *Tommy's*:

"Tommy's Philosophy about our selection: We do not play the ridiculous game of carrying every single 100% agave *tequila* out there. As connoisseurs know, some of Mexico's 136 distilleries contract so many tequilas that Tommy's will not carry 50 products from a distillery. In this case we try to carry the brand owned by the distillery owners and possibly one more."⁷

Tommy's mainly specializes in distilleries' tequilas, instead of brands that do not produce their own agaves. Julio argues that a distillery never sells its best product to a third party; therefore, the quality will always be inferior. Their passions are not attached to the land, the plant, the distillations; they only care about its commercialization.

Julio got the idea of starting the *Blue Agave Tequila Club* at *Tommy's Restaurant* from his regular visits to *Raleigh's Bar*. Julio's club is both the repetition and the opposition of *Raleigh's Bar*. Julio repeated the business model, but also opposed it by changing the alcohol affecting consumer's bodies: instead of beer he introduces club members to hundreds of brands of 100% agave *tequila*. By 2008, more than 7,000 members had registered in the *Blue Agave Tequila Club*. 700 had graduated from it and 200 had been taken on a trip to visit *tequila* producers in Mexico. A vintage collection of 92 extremely rare tequilas is offered only to the most distinguished members:

"The first level of the club is called the Master Level. Tuition is \$10. The new member receives a blue Master card that lists our selection. It is broken down by category: Joven Abocado, Silver or Blanco, Reposado, Añejo and Extra Añejo. At this level, the student graduates by tasting 35 different tequilas. There is no time limit, but tastings are conducted only Sunday through Thursday. There is a maximum of three tastes per visit. At the time of graduation the student receives an oak framed diploma, a *Tequila* Master t-shirt and a *Tequila* Master Booklet. Upon completion of the Master level, the student is invited to join the Ph.D. level and earn his or her "doctorate" in *tequila*. Tuition is complimentary. The Master receives a red Ph.D. card. At this time, the Master decides whether or not to become a regular Doctor of *Tequila* or a Ninja Master. In either case the Master must try another 35 different tequilas. The regular Ph.D. candidate can enjoy his selections either in *margaritas* or neat in snifters. The Ninja Master can enjoy his selections only in snifters. At this level, we offer the Ph.D. candidate different tequilas unavailable to the Master candidate. These are tequilas that are either no longer available or extremely rare. The extremely rare products are allowed to be sampled only in snifters. The candidate graduates after his or her tastings and after the successful completion (80% or better) of a written examination with 70 questions that covers fermentation, distillation, *tequila* regions, brands, and Blue Agave Club personalities. This exam must be completed in 25 minutes or less. The reward at the doctoral level is either a black Ph.D. t-shirt or an embroidered Ninja Master soldier shirt. The apex of *tequila* education at *Tommy's* culminates in becoming a "Demi-God" of *tequila*. This is the Doctor of *Tequila* who brings us proof that he or she has visited *tequila* distilleries in the denomination of origin. *Tommy's* then bestows the title of Demi-God of *Tequila*. If you are a member in good standing, and you have passed your Ph.D. exam, you can put yourself on a waitlist to go to Jalisco with us. *Tommy's* has taken hundreds of people to Mexico from all over the world. Often imitated, never duplicated!"⁸

I know many PhDs who love *tequila*, but I have never heard about ninjas having strong affections (*affectio*) for this spirit. When I interviewed Julio, he laughed at me when I explained to him that I was a PhD student doing research about Mexican food: “yeah, yeah, a PhD student in a *Tequila* bar.” But which is more awkward in a *Tequila* bar, a PhD student or a ninja? Not to mention the mysterious “demi-Gods” of *tequila*: are these beings half human, half *tequila*? For sure, demi-god is a perfect name for the type of quasi-objects Julio aims to enact.

The phrase “often imitated, never duplicated” in the quotation is commonly used in the U.S. to market services or products when competitors are perceived to be openly or overly imitative. As explained above, *Raleigh’s Bar* served as the model for *Tommy’s Blue Agave Tequila Club*. However, after some years, Julio’s version also became a model for other bars in San Francisco, including one which offers a “rum club” called *Rumbustion*.¹⁷² This transition from being a repetition to being a model implies the achievement of an autonomous identity. Whereas repetition is needed to create accumulation, the real force of an economy based on passion lies in its ability to create differentiation. The saying “often imitated, never duplicated” synthesizes this principle: models are never fully duplicated because every repetition implies a process of translation, which gives rise to more oppositions and new adaptations.

Membership in the *Blue Agave Tequila club* is proudly mentioned in *Yelp* consumer reviews. Nevertheless, nobody on the site seems to be a real expert in the cosmology of *tequila*. Some *Tommy’s* consumers try to train other bodies about how to make *tacos*, but when it comes to *tequila*, consumers limit themselves to talking about the freshness of *Tommy’s margarita* mix, the quantity of the alcohol used in the *margaritas*, or the fact that they are made with 100% blue agave *tequila*.

Julio is meticulous when it comes to training consumers’ bodies. When he tried to train mine to differentiate between different tequilas, he quickly got frustrated with the fact that I confused the flavor of one of his best tequilas with that of a regular one. He laughed quite openly at my mistake. I felt very ashamed and my face turned red. Then he tried both products and displayed a confused look on his face. Afterwards he asked the barman to put the *margaritas* in the mixer again and remove the ice. While I was trying the *margaritas* again, he was watching my face and waiting for my answer. Since I already knew what he wanted to hear, I gave to him the right answer. He seemed pleased and moved over to train other bodies at the bar that day.

After Julio left, I stayed at the bar talking to the bartender. He was a young Mayan migrant from Chumayel, Yucatán – the very place where one of the books composing the *Chilam Balam* were written. His face was adorned with piercings and his hair was styled into a Mohawk. His body was covered in tattoos, and he wore a tight T-shirt and pants. He spoke perfect Maya, Spanish, and English. In short, he was a *yucafranciscan*,¹⁰ engaged in teaching bodies how to become affected by the quintessential drink of the Mexican nation in what used to be – or described itself as – a Yucatecan restaurant.

“Julio Bermejo, of Tommy’s Mexican restaurant in San Francisco, disciplines his customers on the types of *tequila* they should and shouldn’t drink. Julio also offers degrees, like the one featured bottom right, for the serious agave drinker. When Julio goes to taste *tequila*, he carefully selects his glassware. Although many *aficionados* pour a *blanco* and even a *reposado* in a traditional shot glass

and turn to a snifter to capture the nose of an *añejo*, Julio tastes all his *tequilas* in a whisky glass or snifter. When at tastings, 'I always look at color first,' says Julio. With the exception of Herradura, which reflects a light golden hue from time spent in oak, 'if it's a silver, it should be radiant and clear,' he says. For *reposados* and *añejos*, 'again color is important. Depending on how faint or dark the color is, it will be an indication of the type of wood that was used to age the product.' Next, Julio uses scent to help recognize a *tequila*'s qualities. 'I like to swirl it around and smell it,' he says. 'My mouth is always open when I'm smelling.' With the honing of one's sense of smell, some can even tell if a *tequila* is a lowlands or highlands product. As a general rule, the area around the town of *Tequila* is considered lowlands. 'Lowlands products,' says Julio, 'tend to be more vegetal and more earthy.' Agave products from the Highlands, which lies 40 miles east of Guadalajara, 'should have some fruit component.' Finally, and perhaps the most important element of evaluating *tequila* — the tasting. 'Tasting is pretty much the same for anything,' says Julio. 'The only thing I would definitely make sure people do is acclimate their palate.' Julio tells people to take a sip of spirit, and without forming an impression, swallow it and drink a lot of water. This helps the mouth move past the shock of the alcohol and on to the flavors. From here, Julio takes tastes, and analyzes what part of the palate the *tequila* is hitting. He'll observe whether the attack is harsh or soft, and what flavors — such as citrus, wood or spice — can be detected."¹¹

When testing *tequila*, Julio follows a specific procedure for sensing the object of his passion. He follows a sense hierarchy in his relation with *tequila* in order to produce scale-folding intensities. One focuses first on the color, then the smell, and lastly the flavor. What would happen if the order was reversed? Indeed, in some Mexican restaurants the training process follows the opposite hierarchy. In these cases, waiters blindfold customers who then have to drink a shot of *tequila* in one gulp. Afterwards, their heads are shaken or their heads are put into a metal pot that a waiter bangs on several times. When they are able to see again, their world is turned upside down for a while thanks to this particular sense/object relation: taste/*tequila*, touch/movement, sound/pot and the visual/aesthetics relation.

There are many procedures for drinking *tequila*. All of them can be regarded as the construction of networks aiming to enact quasi-objects:

"Can honestly say that Tommy's Mexican restaurant single handedly opened my palate to *tequila*. Within the asian community, our libation of choice would be the all mighty conzac, but i guess I've never had great *tequila* until now! Tommy's could be considered a local SF institution, but after interacting with our SF shot callers, and reading article upon article about this place, I've come to learn that not only is this a SF landmark, but is also a world destination for those searching for the El Dorado of *tequila*. Esquire magazine wasn't kidding in 2009 or 2010 when they named Tommy's Mexican as one of the best bars in America, better yet, the world! After enjoying 6 pitchers of *margaritas* here, I'm beginning to understand why. To begin, the location on Geary street, a couple doors down from the famous Tong Kiang dimsum restaurant, lies this ultra small family run restaurant that is Tommy's. Outside you see not a living soul, walk through the doors, and you're greeted by Tommy, his wife Elmy, their son Julio, their beautiful niece, and a restaurant full of people. Now on to the bar. This bar is small, but like I've said in reviews before, never judge a book by its cover, this bar packs a punch! The first thing you'll notice are 3 bartenders reaming limes as if their lives depended on it. Well, they pretty much do as the patrons and diners are eagerly waiting for what some would call the best *margaritas* on the planet. Prepared simply with 3 ingredients: fresh lime juice that's squeezed to order, 100%

pure agave *tequila*, and ice. This masterpiece is then poured back and forth between 2 pitchers in order to combine and aerate the mixture. Before serving, each *margarita* is tasted to ensure proper taste/punch ratio....now don't you go asking for a stiff *margarita*. Julio, Tommy's son, explained to us, if we want a stiff *margarita*, just order a shot of any of his tequilas on the side. That way you experience a great *margarita*, and enjoy the purity of 100% agave. A new tradition has begun. SF trips can't be complete without a stop to this magical place. If you like *tequila*, pay this Tommy's a visit. If you like *margaritas*, pay this place a visit. If you want to brag to people telling them you went to one of the best bars in the world, and possibly, making it that much easier to "seal the deal", just freaking come here." (Michael N, 2/27/2001. 33 friends, 25 reviews, Westminster, *Yelp*).

When I met Julio, he had decided to produce his own artisanal *tequila*. He explained that doing so would give him more control over the quality of the final product: from growing the plant to the product's commercialization. He planned to open his own *tequila* distillery in Jalisco on September 9th, 2009 (9/9/09). Julio wanted to create his personal quasi-object to contaminate other bodies. He explained that his new product would be a tribute to his wife's grandfather, who, he claims, introduced *tequilana azul*¹² to Jalisco. Julio presented his prospective product to me as an upcoming revolution in the *tequila* world. First he planned to conquer Mexico, then Russia, and afterwards the U.S. and China. He was expecting 2,000 visitors from more than 50 countries at his factory's launch. He planned to name this new quasi-object *L&J*, where "L" stands for Lidia, Julio's wife, and "J" stands for Julio. Like his father Tomás's decision to name his restaurant after himself, or a version of himself, Julio's decision to name his personal brand of *tequila* after himself and his wife speaks to his immense passion for *tequila*'s creation and commoditization. And indeed, Tarde's description of creators' passionate interests being "inebriated with the hope of winning, the pride of life and the thirst of power" (Tarde in Latour and Lépinay 2009: 24; emphasis added) seem particularly apt in the context of an enterprising *tequila* manufacturer.

Due to numerous complications the new *tequila* did not appear in the market on the expected date; the venture's original date was 8/8/08, then 9/09/09. Nevertheless, Julio remained optimistic about finally starting his revolution in 2011 – although the death of Tomás in the early part of the year further complicated his plans. Nonetheless, multiple products carrying Tommy's name are still affecting bodies and enacting quasi-objects. For instance, Julio is contaminating bodies outside of his restaurant by means of *Tommy's Ultimate Margarita Mix*: "When you cannot come to Tommy's always make your *margaritas* using Tommy's Nectar of the Gods so you don't miss all the delicious flavors that 100% agave tequilas have to offer."¹³ *Tommy's Ultimate Margarita Mix* is the synthesis of Julio's training process in the cosmology of *tequila*; he again associates *tequila* and divine spirits, although this time *tequila* is the food that gods consume rather than half their composition.

Tommy's, the first Mayan-Yucatecan restaurant in, San Francisco did not set out to be a regional-Mex restaurant. However, *Tommy's* eventually had to coordinate with consumers' knowledge of and desire for Yucatecan foods, and became a partially regional-Mex restaurant. Years later, when the place became ever more famous for its *margaritas* and *tequila*, consumers forget about the regional food offered in the restaurant. Currently, in most of the reviews provided in *Yelp*, consumers evaluate the restaurant as Mexican, not as Yucatecan or

Mayan. However, *Tommy's* functioned as model for other Mayan-Yucatecan restaurants that opened in San Francisco in later years. Why did an imperfect or incomplete token become a model? Tarde might answer by observing that doing the opposite of what the model does is itself a form of repetition (1903).

In the 1990's, thousands of people from Oxnard, Tomas Bermejo's hometown, migrated to San Francisco. This population movement brought new workers and potential customers to *Tommy's*; however, Yucatecan migrants in San Francisco did not identify with the food offered at the restaurant and they did not become regular consumers. As alternative to *Tommy's*, some Yucatecan migrants developed a different approach to commoditizing Mayan/Yucatecan food in the Bay area: instead of selling watered-down Yucatecan food and *Margaritas* at a restaurant mainly visited by U.S. consumer, they opened home-based restaurants to sell Yucatecan foods to the Mayan community in diaspora. These foods functioned as potent signs in the reproduction of the Mayan ethnicity abroad.

5.2 HOME-BASED RESTAURANTS: TRACING SOCIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN OBJECTS, CONSUMERS AND SELLERS

Starting in the 1990's, indigenous people from Yucatán began migrating in considerable numbers to the United States. In San Francisco, people from the municipality of Oxnard quickly became the most populous community among the growing Yucatecan migrant population. Many of these migrants found employment in restaurants, in part through the networks established by former *Tommy's* workers.

Over the course of their careers, some migrants have learned how to manage a restaurant, rising from being dishwashers to kitchen managers. Others invested their earnings in small food-related business ventures in San Francisco. That was the case of Mary, who, having worked for years in Cozumel, Quintana Roo, migrated to San Francisco in 1998. Mary's original plan was to work as a migrant for two years in order to establish a fruit shop in the state of Quintana Roo to help her family. Instead of following her initial dream, she brought her parents and some of her brothers to the U.S. after some months.

During her first months in the U.S., Mary earned a living by caring for the children of other Yucatecan migrants. She then found a job at *Salsa*, a Mexican *taquería* in San Francisco.¹⁴ Some time later, one of Mary's brothers asked her to make some *tamales* for his friends:

"I was working double shifts. I had my free days on Mondays and Tuesdays. One of those days one of my brothers told me, 'Mary', he told me, 'make *tamales*.' 'No,' I told him. 'I will help you, I will take all my friends.' One day we made almost 250 *tamales*. And since he is very well known, he is very popular, he told me, and he says, 'Ok.' I made the *tamales*. One, two hours later he started to call all his friends, 'You know, my sister made *tamales*.' One, two hours later we had no more *tamales*, all sold out." (Mary 2008, personal interview. Author's translation).

Other migrants from Oxnard trying to increase household incomes and make ends meet have established home-based food-related businesses. Some of these entrepreneurs try to find consumers in the streets. They look for them on the busiest corners, outside of metro and bus

stations, or at their workplaces or houses. Others prefer to bring clients to their houses, as Mary did: phone calls made by Mary's brother announcing the availability of *tamales* were enough to construct a passionate network of consumers who craved *tamales* with a Yucatecan flavor.

After the initial passionate networks were enacted, consumers started to specifically look for people selling Yucatecan food. They would call them, requesting particular food products:

"So you call there, 'So, what did you prepare today?' 'Well, there are *panuchos*, there is *cochinilla* and *relleno negro*.' 'Ah ok, give me three orders of *relleno negro*. I will arrive at two to pick it up.' Or they make *tamales*. And there is a car wash where there are so many Yucatecan workers that a lot of sellers arrive there to offer their products.'" (Nora 2008, personal interview. Author's translation).

After her first experience with the commercialization of *tamales*, Mary decided to sell Yucatecan food on a regular basis from her apartment. At that time, she was sharing a studio apartment with four other people – her brother and three friends. Instead of paying extra for the use of space, she offered free food to her roommates. Since business went well from the beginning, she decided to quit her other jobs and work full time in the new enterprise.

At the time, Mary's parents Javier and Jacinta were also running an in-house restaurant. According to people from the community, it was one of the first Mayan-Yucatecan home-based restaurants in San Francisco. They opened around the turn of the millennium. Juan, a member of the student project *El Pueblo Maya* (The Mayan People, or the Mayan Town)¹⁵ remembers they used to have their meetings at Mary's parents' house restaurant. Javier, Mary's father and one of the home-based restaurant's cooks, helped the student group in different ways. Later, Juan and Javier became part of *Asociacion Mayab*, the primary community organization for Maya/Yucatecan migrants in San Francisco.¹⁶ Soon that organization's meetings also started to be held at Javier and Jacinta's home-based restaurant. Eventually, Javier and Jacinta's home-based restaurant became a political center for the Mayan population in San Francisco. They even held meetings with government representatives from the state of Yucatán at Javier and Jacinta's.

After some years of running their profitable enterprise Javier and Jacinta returned to Yucatán and opened their own business there. Juan laments this fact. He thinks Javier was a very important member for *Mayab*:

"The presence of Javier was very important because he was somebody very traditional, as we say. He knows all the traditions and the dates and knows when we cannot do things and when we can do things. What kind of things we have to do and when we have to do them. He grew up in the countryside, in a little house outside the city." (Juan 2008, personal interview. Author's translation).

Javier's knowledge about the Mayan traditions, and his involvement with Mayan civil organizations in San Francisco transformed the home-based business into a community center where Mayan migrants living in California discussed trans-national politics. After Javier

and Jacinta's home-based restaurant closed, migrants' political meetings were held in other Mayan-Yucatecan restaurants that offered their space for communication events.

Mary's home-based restaurant can be considered a repetition of her parents' entrepreneurial adventure. However, she did not ask her parents for help with her business. Indeed, there was tension within the family and she preferred to work by herself. At the beginning, Mary's menu was limited because she had not learned how to cook Yucatecan food when she was young:

"I did not want to be like a person in Mexico, making food, washing, with children It was not for me, no. I saw how people suffered, left by their husbands, they had no money to eat, nothing, it was not for me." (Mary 2008, personal interview. Author's translation).

However, she learned how to prepare various Yucatecan dishes while living in San Francisco during telephone conversation with her aunt in Yucatán. Carlos, Mary's husband asserts that she learnt how to cook Yucatecan food by following a method of visualization and mimicking:

"You visualize it. I have done it. You visualize everything. You draw an imaginary screen. Like you the food in Mexico and that image exist...because you draw yourself the image, this screen that she is explaining to you. Is like if you are seeing your uncle and you see how she is making the food and you mimicking her. You mimic her and she used to talk with her by phone, you have the screen." (Carlos 2008, personal interview).

Through phone calls to her aunt, in other words, and with the assistance of information communication technologies, Mary was trained in the traditions of Yucatecan cuisine and started enacting those foods in San Francisco: "We used to sell *cochinita pibil*, *pollo pibil*, *tamales*, *panuchos*, *mondongo*, *chimole*" (Mary 2008, personal interview). Mary's culinary skills quickly became famous among Mayan migrants:

"I know Yucatecan food and to be honest, the way she makes *mondongo*... I have eaten it in different places and it is not right, I do not like it there. I come here and I love this *menudo*, this *mondongo*." (Gabriel 2008, personal interview. Author's translation).

What makes Mary's *mondongo* so special? In her accounting of learning to cook, Mary explains that she learned how to prepare Yucatecan food because she had "the heart, will and love to make it" (Mary 2008, personal interview). From Mary's point of view, her passion allowed her to learn how to cook. When Gabriel says Mary's *mondongo* is the best he has had in San Francisco, Mary and her *mondongo* are enacted as a quasi-object. For Gabriel, Mary is the only one who knows how to achieve the right flavor: Mary's subjectivity merges with *mondongo's* materiality.

Mary's first employee was Carlos, one of her ex-coworkers from *Salsa*. A year and a half after Mary quit *Salsa*, they ran into each other at Mary's front door, when Carlos was looking for one of his friends. They soon started dating, but – per Mary's request – they would only meet after 9:00 pm once the restaurant in her home was closed. At the beginning Carlos did

not understand the reason for their late dates, but he agreed anyway:

“She never told me, she told me little by little. At the time I had two jobs. In my free days I used to help her. In the morning I used to help her. If I was free in the afternoon I used to help her as well. So we got together and began to relate more. One day we were talking and she asked me, ‘What do you think about quitting one of your jobs and helping me here?’ She told me there were more people coming, and their friends. ‘Help me here,’ ‘Ok.’ I quit one job in the morning to help her. But I always maintained my job in the afternoon. I never quit. And that is how we started.” (Carlos 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).

Mary’s home-based restaurant became popular within the Yucatecan community. Migrants of different ethnic backgrounds would also visit her place. Her most regular customers were the workers of businesses close to San Francisco’s Mission District (commonly called *La Misión*). For instance, a group of co-workers used to come together to eat “at Mary’s”:

“My first clients worked at Gus’ restaurant. There were some seven people. They used to come every Sunday to my home. But the kitchen was small. The room was small but we managed to fit well. These were the main clients. Then I had a friend who painted cars in the Cap. There were some fifteen people. I used to make food for them. They were from Puebla, some Chinese people, one looked Arab, and they used to come to eat.” (Mary 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).

On his free days, Héctor, the waiter from *Tommy’s* I talked about earlier, would meet his cousins in *La Misión*. They would go out to eat and talk about life. When I asked him if they also used to visit home-based restaurants he got quite confused. He does not call those places restaurants. Instead, he identifies them by the name of the enterprise’s owner: for example, *donde Mary* (at Mary’s). Most of the Mayan migrants in San Francisco refer to these “clandestine restaurants” (another term in the community for home-based restaurants) by using the name of the owner – *donde* Carla, *con* (with) doña Celia, with Don Irvin.

This naming system does not point to the appropriation of an object or service, as in the case of *Tommy’s* restaurant. Instead, the utterances *donde* or *con* reveal social relations between objects, services, clients and sellers. These informal names are given to home-based restaurants by the clients, rather than imposed by the owners. To eat *donde* or *con* someone does not simply mean to go eat at that person’s house. It also reveals some of the qualities attached to the object, the service and the seller.

Some qualities relate to the seller’s life story. Meanwhile, the seller is imbued with some of the object’s qualities; subjects-objects or quasi-subjects are produced in dynamic interactions authorized by consumers:

“[Doña Jacinta] became almost an obligatory point of passage for all Yucatecans because the *señora* used to cook very well. Very well and very economically. She became like a mother for all the Yucatecans....What Mary has is that she is very charismatic and she has many friends in the community. Maybe more than anyone else.” (Carlos 2008, personal interview. Authors’ translation).

From Juan's point of view, Doña Jacinta is "like a mother," her husband is a "very traditional person," and Mary is "very charismatic." Moreover, these moral qualities are imprinted in the foods Doña Jacinta and Mary sell in their home-based restaurants. Those qualities helped make their food special, at least for Juan.

The official language spoken *donde Mary* was Maya. Customers knew they would meet their compatriots there, and it was possible to get information about the Yucatecan-Mayan community either by talking to other people or by reading the signs attached to the walls. Eating *donde Mary* was also cheaper than going to a formally established restaurant: in 2007, a meal and a beverage cost 7 dollars, several dollars less than at a formal restaurant.

Ricardo remembers that the decoration at Mary's home-based restaurant included depictions of a Mayan-Yucatecan landscape: "There was a photo of the pyramids. A woman from Yucatán. They were dancing *jarana*,¹⁷ as they say. There was everything." Mary remembers she "had little spheres hanging from the ceiling... the walls were covered with fake dollars... posters of *Chichen Itza*, *Uxmal*, the pyramids." She got the posters from contacts at the *Asociacion Mayab*. The director of the organization at that time recalled that Yucatecan state government authorities brought the posters on one of their official visits to the Mayan community in California: "They brought some very beautiful posters to promote tourism, to promote archeological sites. They gave us some. They gave us a lot. We still have some in the office from five years ago. They gave us tons of posters" (Juan 2008, personal interview. Author's translation).

Those posters were meant to promote tourism to Yucatán. However, as it happened, the traveling landscape objects ended up in Yucatecan-Mayan restaurants and in the houses of Mayan migrants in San Francisco. Instead of attracting foreign people to Yucatán, the posters have been used as potent signs of the Mayan ethnicity. Most of the Mayan migrants in the U.S. have not been to the places depicted in the posters. Nevertheless, they feel as if they are part of these places; the posters became potent signs from a virtual place, actualized as lived space in San Francisco. Contrary to the cases of the Tex-Mex and Cal-Mex restaurants most recently established in the Netherlands, in the Mayan-Yucatecan restaurant from San Francisco the *scape* is actualizing the land of the Mayan migrants in diaspora:

"It is like that because we are getting the Mexican government posters about the great indigenous past. But what is beautiful is that here it is present. They realize that because the gringos ask, 'Where do you come from?' You say, 'Cancun, close to Cancun.' He has been there, he has seen the beautiful Caribbean Sea. He has realized that the towns are beautiful, he has been to Yucatán as well, so he knows that those places are so beautiful. 'Oh, they are using the language from the pyramids as well!' It is very exciting for them." (Nora 2008, personal interview. Author's translation).

In its heyday, the home-based restaurant known as *donde Mary* stretched across four apartments in a building mainly inhabited by Mayan migrants. Mary and her partner Carloss even thought about modifying the building in order to join the different apartments and improve their facilities. The owner of the place tacitly allowed Mary to sell food in the apartments, but he did not want her make any modification to the building. After Mary threatened to leave the apartments if she could not make a hole in the wall to connect them, he changed his mind:

“She told me, ‘Let’s make a hole, a door and put more tables there.’ ‘No,’ I said to her, ‘how do you do that?’ ‘Yes, lets talk to the owner.’ Do you think the owner will let you make a hole in his house?...So you could open the cabinet and there was a wall but on the other side there was another cabinet and we did it like that. We closed the cabinets and there was nothing.” (Carlos 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).

Donde Mary eventually closed down after a fire in the building which started after some of the building’s inhabitants threw a party. Instead of finding a new apartment where they could continue their informal, home-based restaurant, Mary and her husband decided to open a formal restaurant.

According to Juan, there were eight home-based restaurants in San Francisco in 2007. Although all those places are repetitions of the business model that opposed *Tommy’s* restaurant by reverse mimicry (repetition by opposing the model), they differentiate between themselves due to the particular moral qualities that consumers attach to each home-based restaurant and owner. Some of those places have already closed down; others relocated due to administrative problems with local authorities. To visit those places it is necessary to be part of the Mayan community or to be related to them through work, friendship or other type of relationship. Someone has to connect you to the quasi-object; otherwise you are excluded from the passionate network.

5.3 MAYAN AND YUCATECAN RESTAURANTS: HIDING AND SHOWING IDEAS, DREAMS AND VISUALIZATIONS

In the 21st century Mayan-Yucatecan restaurants began to appear in different areas of the San Francisco Bay area. To some extent, these restaurants are repetitions of the home-based restaurants. What changes is the business model. Most of these restaurants were established in San Francisco’s Mission District. The clientele at these foodscapes is more ethnically diverse than the customers at the home-based restaurants. For some of the U.S. consumers who visit such places it is clear that Mayan-Yucatecan cuisine is different from the Mexican one:

“The plates we ate were so special. So different from the Mexican plates offered by other restaurants. After that experience I could not imagine ourselves eating regular Mexican food.” (Merav 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).

The first Mayan restaurant established in San Francisco was *Lol Tun*,¹⁸ which opened around 2001 and closed in 2007. The owners were from Oxnard. The restaurant was located in the neighborhood of La Misión. The Mayan migrant community used to identify the place with the name of one of its owners. In this case, the consumers were the ones who attached the object to the person and not vice versa, as was the case at *Tommy’s*. The owners of *Lol Tun* were always open to help the Mayan community in San Francisco, either with money, or lending the space for community events. Some Mayan civil organizations used to hold their meeting in this place.



106. Restaurante *Lol Tun*¹⁹

The eight reviews written about *Lol Tun* on *Yelp* gave the place three and a half out of five stars. Most of the reviews posted in *Yelp* agree with two facts: the food was cheap and the music was loud:

“I’m giving this place an overall of 3, even though the food itself deserves 5 stars. The reasons for this are simple: we walked in on Saturday, myself and three friends, and were the only customers in the joint; a few friends of the solitary waitress sat at the little bar by the kitchen entrance. The waitress glared at us and then sauntered over to give us menus. She then walked back to the counter, and turned on the music at full blast. So loud you could hear it down the street. The speakers? Oh yeah, they were literally a foot from our ears. She didn’t get the message when she came back to get our order and none of us could hear her and she couldn’t hear us. We had to pantomime our orders, pointing at things on the menu. We asked twice if she’d turn it down, and she pointedly ignored us; I put on earplugs and we moved across the restaurant. The food was great. The ceviche was especially tasty. Too bad they don’t have Mexican coke. I’d definitely go back if the music wasn’t on.” (Moses H. 7/23/2007, 87 friends, 236 reviews, *Yelp*).

“While it’s not the greatest mexican food in the mission -- it’s definitely one of the cheapest. The food is good -- especially the empanadas and *tacos* -- both of which are 2\$ or less a piece. I understand the music can be too loud and times but i think it just adds to the atmosphere! Late and night when i walk by, the restaurant is closed but you can see the owners and their friends dancing around the jukebox -- i don’t think it gets anymore authentic than that.” (Devin K. 5/21/2007, 2 friends, 5 reviews, *Yelp*).

Why the music was so loud and the food so cheap at *Lol Tun*? It was because the restaurant’s main source of income came from drugs the owners sold, not from the Mayan-Yucatecan food they used to offer. The music was kept loud so that the workers could make their transactions in secret. Undercover officers who went there to buy some meth-*Panuchos* and cocaine-*Poc-Chuc* eventually arrested the owner and a waiter:

“Somewhat amazingly, on the very day that the two allegedly made their sale to undercover officers — and 3.8 pounds of heroin, five ounces of crystal meth and an ounce of coke with a street value of \$170,000 were seized on the premises — a law enforcement official told us that the restaurant was still cranking out *tacos*, *burritos* and ceviche, just like any other Mexican

“joint.” “I will tell you that at the time we made our purchase, it was sparse in terms of customers. But there were a few,” said XXXX of the San Mateo County Narcotics Task Force. And that begs the question — if you’re sitting on \$170,000 worth of drugs, why are you going to worry about making a few \$5 *burritos*? XXXX postulates that while the beans, cheese and *salsa* may have belonged to XXXX outright, the drugs didn’t. “These are the middle men, like the guy who sells you a used car. They’re not making the million bucks. They get their cut, I don’t know how much. But it’s a way to make some extra money,” he said. Finally, in a humorous note, according to the Web site *CleanScores* the restaurant pulled an unimpressive 75 on its last health inspection — with no “major violations.”²⁰

Migrants from Oxnard were not really that surprised when the police closed down *Lol Tun* and arrested the owners; their reputation was well known within the community in San Francisco and back home in Yucatán. Some even knew or suspected that something unusual was going on at the restaurant. Nevertheless, they did not care about this fact. They visited *Lol Tun* because they considered the owners to be nice people. Good parties were held at the restaurant, and the food was tasty. In other words, *Lol Tun* was a fluid quasi-object for the Mayan consumers; they managed to attach joyful affections to its body – including communitarian nostalgia and solidarity – while remaining detached from the sadness implied by involvement in the drug business. Fortunately, this particular business model has not been repeated among the Mayan-Yucatecan restaurants in San Francisco.

The second Mayan-Yucatecan restaurant established in San Francisco was called *Mi Lindo Yucatán* and was opened by Ricardo, an immigrant from Morelos, Mexico.²¹ Ricardo migrated to the U.S. in the beginning of the 1980’s when he was 16 years old. He first found a job in the San Joaquin Valley as an agricultural worker; after some time, he moved back to Mexico City where he worked at a factory. In 1986 he migrated to San Francisco and started working in Mexican restaurants in La Misión. He became a legal U.S. resident thanks to 1986’s Simpson-Rodino Immigration Reform and Control law (commonly known as IRCA) which legalized millions of undocumented workers in the United States. Like most migrants employed in restaurants, Ricardo started as a janitor, then as a dishwasher, a waiter; he then started to help in the kitchen and finally got the opportunity to cook. At the beginning of the 1990’s he was recommended to a Thai woman who was looking for someone with experience to help her open a Mexican restaurant. Ricardo became the general manager of the place:

“She wanted to open... a Thai woman wanted to open a Mexican *taquería*. So she needed someone to teach her. I had experience working at the *taquería* from 18th (street), so they recommend me to her. And I managed very well. I managed very well.” (Ricardo 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).

Ricardo worked as the manager of *Carmen’s Taquería* for four years. After the Thai woman sold the place to other Asian entrepreneurs, he moved to another Mexican restaurant. After sharing all his knowledge with the new workers, he decided to quit because, he explained, somehow he knew that was expected. The new owners recommended him to another Asian entrepreneur who was about to open an “international” restaurant in Berkeley. Ricardo was put in charge of the Mexican section. Within a few years, he had become the manager at

four restaurants owned by the same group of entrepreneurs. When he suddenly lost his job because the restaurants were sold, Ricardo realized that he had acquired the skills necessary to start a career as an entrepreneur. For instance,

“How to manage a business, how to keep it alive, where to ask for a permit. I learned a lot from him. Suddenly this man sold all the places. He told me he was about to sell all the places. He let me know of his plans to sell the business. He has a business in Anaheim, in Los Angeles.” (Ricardo 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).

After that experience Ricardo went to work for a delivery company for a few years, but he and his former boss remained friends. Some years later, Ricardo bought *Carmen Express*, a little *taquería* in downtown San Francisco, from him. And in 2002, the Thai woman who he used to work for offered to sell him a Thai restaurant in La Misión. The restaurant was located close to the Mayan community. He bought the place and changed it into a Mayan-Yucatecan restaurant, finally accomplishing a dreams initially triggered by his affection (*af-fectio*) for the Yucatecan food:

“I always, always, always, always wanted to open a Yucatecan restaurant...because I used to live with a woman from Yucatán...for a year and a half, more less. So, I used to like her food a lot and I used to say, ‘Why not make something? One day I will make it.’ That was indeed the plan. It was not an offer someone made to me. It was something I wanted to make. So, I used to have the *taquería* and then I found the [Thai] woman again. But I was waiting for a place close to the Yucatecan community.” (Ricardo 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).

On September 16, 2002 Ricardo opened the restaurant he had dreamed about since living with a Yucatecan woman. He loved the food his partner prepared, and he was sure other people would like to be affected (*af-fectio*) by this type of food as well. However, he did not know how to prepare it. So he called Pedro, a Yucatecan migrant who, years before, had become the godfather to one of Ricardo’s children.²² Pedro also had a lot of experience working at restaurants, and they became business partners. Pedro helped Ricardo to develop the Mayan-Yucatecan menu. Since Ricardo was a U.S. citizen, he was in charge of the business’s legal issues. The pair asked family and friends traveling to Yucatán to bring certain ingredients back with them to San Francisco.

In his business model, Ricardo followed the same strategy that the Thai woman had followed years before to open her Mexican restaurant: he looked for someone who knew how to enact the desirable quasi-object. Ricardo explains:

“So I called my buddy from Yucatán. And I asked him if he could help me to cook. I told him, ‘Come, I have a business they are offering me.’ He said, ‘Well, and what if instead of only helping you, we become partners and open the place together?’ So we opened. And after six months, since his family used to work here and my family used to work here... and well, since it is a family restaurant we had a good business because we did not pay too much salary. A customer came and told me, ‘You know what, I have a friend who cannot manage his restaurant any more. He would like to sell it to you.’...We went to take a look at the place and we liked it. It is on 24th

(street) between Castro and Diamond. The name of the place is also *Mi Lindo Yucatán* but it is the number two.” (Ricardo 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).



107. Table at *Mi Lindo Yucatán I*, 2008

Amazingly enough, *Mi Lindo Yucatán* managed to expand Ricardo’s desire just eight months after its establishment. The new restaurant was opened on May 5, 2003, in Noe Valley, an area manly inhabited by Anglo residents of San Francisco.

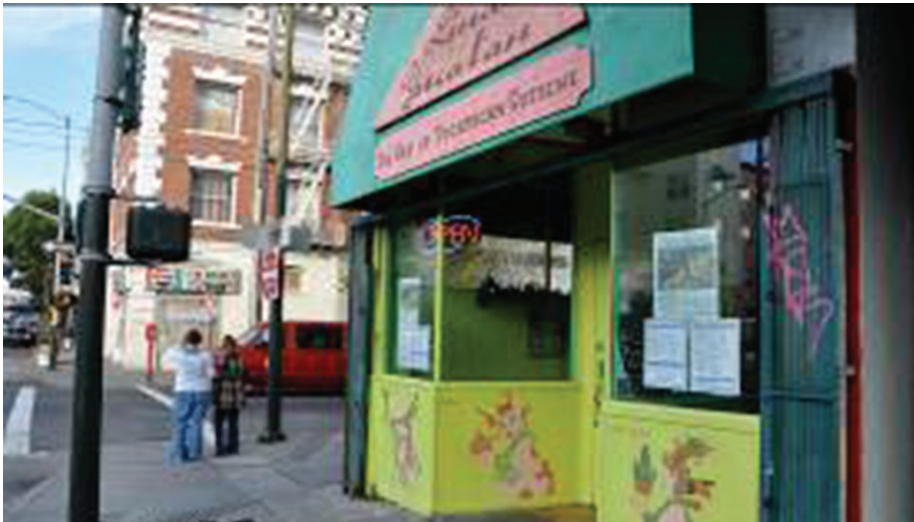
“The idea was very good, you know why? Because when we opened the local one, here in San Francisco, there were no Yucatecan restaurants. We were the first to open one ..., the restaurant I opened. Because, it can be said I opened the restaurant in the sense that I developed the menu of Yucatecan food. Everything we used to sell in the restaurant was 100% Yucatecan. Only Yucatecan food. Only Yucatecan snacks because the restaurant was established in La Misión, and there are only Latin people there, only Yucatecan people. He had that idea (Ricardo) and it was very good because it was an amazing success.” (Pedro 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).

Pedro considers *Mi Lindo Yucatán* to be the first Yucatecan restaurant established in San Francisco. However, Pedro’s claim is not totally right. What is true is that at the time they opened, there were no other Yucatecan restaurants formally established in San Francisco. Pedro also argues that he was the one who opened *Mi Lindo Yucatán*, because he – and not Ricardo – developed the menu. From Pedro’s point of view, the fact that the restaurant was the materialization of Ricardo’s affections (*affectio*) and dream was not important, nor does the fact that the enterprise required the use of Ricardo’s U.S. citizenship for administrative purposes. Who deserves the credit for establishing the *first* Yucatecan restaurant in San Francisco? Both of them: without the attachment of Pedro’s knowledge and Ricardo’s passions and citizenship, the restaurant would not have been enacted.

A friend of Ricardo’s – an artist from Mexico City who now lives in San Francisco – decorated the restaurants. The artist showed Pedro and Ricardo books about the ancient Maya, who selected images they considered to be the most representative of the Mayan culture and nature. The first restaurant, *Mi Lindo Yucatán*, ended up with a design that fully immersed consumers in a Mayan-Yucatecan landscape. There was no way out of the enacted reality: even in the bathroom, consumers were trapped in a pre-Hispanic city hidden in the forest. The second restaurant, *Mi Lindo Yucatán II*, is more sparing in its use of Mayan-Yucatecan

signs. Instead of profusely displaying pre-Hispanic icons, the second restaurant depicted a modern Maya foodscape. Whereas *Mi Lindo Yucatán* I presented itself as a restaurant specializing in Yucatecan cuisine, *Mi Lindo Yucatán* II promotes itself as a restaurant specializing in Mayan cuisine. In practical terms, the restaurants offered the same cuisine under slightly different names. However, in the first restaurant, the Yucatecan foodscape was attached to entities from an archaized landscape, whereas the Mayan foodscape was attached to entities dwelling in a modern one; pre-Hispanic Yucatecans and modern Mayas dwelling in San Francisco.

“When we opened the first restaurant my buddy told me, I told him, ‘Let’s do something to depict the Yucatecan spirit, let’s paint the tables with something,’ and he told me, ‘I have a friend who paints.’ We went to see him and he has a lot of magazines, books about the Mayas and the Aztecs, everything. He has a gallery. More than anything, he does Mexican paintings. So we were there and we chose the ones that we liked and so on. When we opened this restaurant... there were only paintings of the D.F., only images of the Zocalo... only photos of this artist, this painter who depicted a lot of that, Diego Rivera. He had a lot of paintings by him, but mainly landscapes from Mexico, that is because the name of the place was Mexico City. So I said to him, ‘If we are going to have the name *Mi Lindo Yucatán*, we cannot have these photos,’ so we talked to him.” (Pedro 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).



108. *Mi Lindo Yucatán* I, façade, 2008



109. *Mi Lindo Yucatán I*, bathroom, 2008



110. *Mi Lindo Yucatán II*, façade, 2008



111. *Mi Lindo Yucatán II*, interior, 2008



112. *Mi Lindo Yucatán I*, 2008



113. *Mi Lindo Yucatán II*, The art of Mayan cuisine

The partnership between Ricardo and Pedro ended only a few months after they opened *Mi Lindo Yucatán II*. They both explained that the partnership did not function as expected due to different working habits. They did not agree about the role each member of their families had to play in the restaurant. They also had some arguments about how to deal with holidays. To avoid irreconcilable conflicts, they decided to end the partnership. To decide which business belonged to whom they simply flipped a coin; Ricardo got *Mi Lindo Yucatán I*, and Pedro got the repetition.

At first the two *Mi Lindo Yucatán* restaurants offered the same Yucatecan-Mayan food. However, after the partnership between Ricardo and Pedro was dissolved, Pedro adapted *Mi Lindo Yucatán II*'s menu with the aim of generating agreement with Anglo consumers. Some dishes were removed, some were invented and other tweaked to match local tastes:

“When I opened this place, I started only with Yucatecan food. But you know, Anglo-Saxons do not like to eat fried food or this type of dishes. So I realized the business did not function as well it should have in comparison with the other restaurant in the 15th and Valencia. Because there, Yucatecan people like to eat a *cochinilla*. I do not know if you know what a *cochinilla* is, but it is with its fat, the skin and everything. But Anglo-Saxons do not like their meat with fat, without this, without that. So I started to make modifications to the menu. I started to take out fried dishes, to take out fat, to take out this and I started to make a mix. Now if you see my menu, it is mainly... there is Yucatecan food but not 100%. I am obliged to do it this way because the place where I am established, here 90% is Anglo-Saxon and 10% Latin American.” (Pedro 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).

While Pedro was forced to make adjustments in his Yucatecan menu in order to satisfy the tastes of the new clients, Ricardo kept his as consistent as possible in order to satisfy the tastes of the Yucatecan community. The latter case demanded preservation, the former innovation. Ricardo did everything possible to keep enacting Yucatecan dishes the same way as before. However, after the partnership dissolved, the authenticity of *Mi Lindo Yucatán I* was questioned: the fact that Ricardo was not Yucatecan contaminated the morality of his quasi-object. Some Yucatecan consumers thought that only Yucatecans could enact the full qualities of the desired quasi-object. Ethnicity became a significant actor in the relation. Pe-

dro also questioned the qualities of the quasi-object enacted by his former business partner. From his point of view, it is important to be Yucatecan in order to prepare good Yucatecan food; without this moral quality, the virtual entity never gets actualized:

“He told me (a Yucatecan consumer), ‘How is it possible that you are not Yucatecan but you own a Yucatecan restaurant?’ I answered him, ‘What is the difference? There are French people who own Italian restaurants. There are Americans who own French restaurants. There are Chinese people who own *taquerías*. There are Chinese people who own Yucatecan restaurants, so why can’t a Mexican own a Yucatecan restaurant?’” (Ricardo 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).

Pedro believed that *Mi Lindo Yucatán II* was having problems getting new clients because some people believed that both restaurants belonged to the same owner. He also thought that the quality of the food *Mi Lindo Yucatán I* was offering adversely affected (*affectio*) the reputation of *Mi Lindo Yucatán II*. Nevertheless, he did not want to change the name of his business because of an agreement he had made with his former partner: the one who first closed down or changed the name of his restaurant lost the right to use it again. As the immortal question asks, what’s in a name?

“I would not like to change the name. If I want I can change the name and sell international food, Yucatecan, Mexican, French, Italian, everything, a mix. I can do it because I have experience in those cuisines. I have been working in many restaurants. I have a lot of experience in kitchen, but I do not want to do it because, how to say? I put a lot of effort to win that, I have to, I have to see what to do with it. Do not let it sink. Do not say no. That is not for me. As if I had not... as if I had not suffered to own the name of that restaurant.” (Pedro 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).

How to be the same and also different? How to transform a copy into an original? Pedro decided to oppose the imitative ray of *Mi Lindo Yucatán I* by enacting a modern Mayan restaurant in San Francisco. In his translation, Pedro adapted some ancient Mayan dishes and invented new ones. The restaurant’s menu was dynamic, including four different categories of foods: 1) dishes always included in his menu. 2) Foods enacted only when all the ingredients were seasonally available. 3) Dishes made only when a family member or friend had brought certain ingredients from Yucatán to San Francisco. 4) Dishes prepared only on special occasions.

Some of the U.S. consumers who visited *Mi Lindo Yucatán II* acknowledged the particularities of the food offered at the restaurant. In one review posted on *Yelp*, a passionate consumer tried to train U.S. bodies in the particularities of regional-Mex food:

“This is not a taqueria, so don’t order that same tired stuff and expect the same thing you would get at say, [taquerias] Cancun or Farolito. Just like all latinos don’t know each other, all mexican restaurants don’t replace each other. Don’t be such a white girl/guy. Anyway, poc chuc (big giant serving of grilled pork w/ rice and beans and *guacamole*) and a serving of platanos, which does

not come with sour cream, but instead this fantastic shredded queso is probably the best dinner money can buy up here in Whitey Noe Valley. Also: stop making life decisions based on astrology. It's not real. It's my Yelp mission to educate you on this. Also: I do know more than you and my sassiness/strange self confidence is one of my endearing traits, so I don't care that you're annoyed that I'm telling you that you are wrong.” (Maria D. 1/19/2007, 321 friends, 997 reviews).

In the case of the special dishes offered at *Mi Lindo Yucatán II*, Pedro argues that the fact that they are not always present on the menu makes them more desirable. He wants to make consumers beg for them in their future visit:

“Well, one of those things that a lot of people like a lot and is in fact mine and very popular, well it is very popular when I make it, nevertheless I do not want to put it on the menu because I do not want, how to say? I do not want people get tired of it. I want that when I make it people say, ‘Oh, he is making it again!’ or, ‘This is very delicious.’” (Pedro 2008, personal interview. Author's translation).

Pedro believes in the existence of a “special hand” that makes a dish taste different depending on who prepares it. With his special hand, Pedro particularizes the quasi-object on an intimate level:

“You are a Yucatecan man and you know how to prepare food, you are a Yucatecan woman and you know how to prepare food, I am a Yucatecan man and I know how to prepare food and we say ‘Let's make a Yucatecan dish,’ for example a *cochinita*. I take my ingredients, the same, and you take the same ingredients. I assure you that none of us will achieve the same taste, I do not know why, I do not know why.” (Pedro 2008, personal interview. Author's translation).

Pedro has baptized some of his inventions with names coming from the Mayan mythology. Such is the case of his *Aluxes*²³ dressed with *sikil-pak*²⁴:

“Aluxes are the same thing as, what is the name of that? It is that Asian product, it is used for making wontons, you know right? Little *tortillas* made out of wheat that are very much used in the Chinese restaurants to make the wonton soup.... But I had an idea and said, ‘I will put cheese inside, cilantro, jalapenos, I will make them like little *empanadas*, that is because they are deep fried.’ So I had the idea to call them Aluxes. Maybe the name will call people's attention because ‘aluxe’ is a name, it is something that exists in Yucatán, do you know what an aluxe is? Aluxe is a figure the Mayan used to have, like gnomes, you can say, and they exist to this day. This is not a fairytale, aluxes exist. A lot of people meet them in caves and *cenotes*²⁵ They are little figures like this, they have little faces, ears. But people say they are alive. I have never seen one but as a Yucatecan and because of the books I have read and what my grandparents have told me... People say they become alive at night, sometimes they do bad things, sometimes they are good.” (Pedro 2008, personal interview. Author's translation).

Pedro's subconscious has also played an important role in the innovation of his Mayan food-
scape: some of the inspiration to innovate the cuisine of his ancestors comes from to him in

his dreams. After he dreams up a dish, he offers it as a special for a couple of days. If consumers, like it he introduces it into the menu. If they do not, the new dish returns to the realm of the virtual:

“I am not sure if you are going to believe this. Sometimes I dream of food. Honestly, I dream about food. I do not know if you believe it but I have said it before. When someone asks me, ‘How did you invent that?’ I dream of it, and that’s it. When I wake up I remember my dream and I write down what I somehow dreamed about or something like that and I make it in practice.” (Pedro 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).

Dishes that originate in Pedro’s dreams can be regarded as affects (*affectus*) that encountered Pedro’s mind before affecting his body and becoming actualized in the form of food. He dreams of dishes that do not exist, and the next day he makes them real. The practical consequences of Pedro’s dreams – the meaning of his dreams as potent or impotent signs – are found in the affections (*affectio*) they trigger when imprinted onto consumers’ bodies and minds (*affectus* and *affectio*).

Both *Mi Lindo Yucatán* I and II have already closed. Both Ricardo and Pedro failed to contaminate their passions to other bodies after their entrepreneurial partnership ended. When they were working together, it was easier to deal with issues related to the management of the places; one of them knew how to prepare the Yucatecan food, the other knew how to administer the business. Members of both families were working in the restaurants without getting a salary. After the separation, the collective resources used in the business model were detached. Neither Ricardo nor Pedro were able to run a restaurant without the other. The restaurants could not withstand the recent downturn in the U.S. economy, so neither Pedro nor Ricardo won their implicit bet to be the only owner of a restaurant name *Mi Lindo Yucatán*.

After *Mi Lindo Yucatán*, other Mayan-Yucatecan restaurants opened in San Francisco. In 2008, there were five in La Misión. Whereas some of those restaurants are mere repetition, others are opposition. In the expansion of the market for Mayan-Yucatecan food in San Francisco, some interesting inter-ethnic partnerships have been formed. Nowadays, not only Mexican people are involved in those entrepreneurial societies. Italians, Salvadorians and Vietnamese are also active participants. As a result, the Mayan-Yucatecan foodscape has developed many hybrid adaptations at the level of business management. An interesting case of this process is found in the restaurant *Yucatasia*. Vietnamese entrepreneurs own and manage this Mayan-Yucatecan foodscape. Mayan migrants work as waiters and preparing the food. At *Yucatasia*, the bodies belonging to two global geographies from opposite hemispheres fuse in one foodscape established in San Francisco.



114. Yucatasia restaurant, San Francisco²⁶

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I explored the translation of the Mexican landscape into Mayan-Yucatecan foodscapes established in San Francisco, California. I use of the concept of quasi-object and quasi-subject to analyze the entanglement of passions and objects in entrepreneurial projects. I argue that those assemblages are enacted through the mediation of potent signs, where material relations help to establish social passions and vice versa.

In the case of *Tommy's*, the object-personal naming phenomenon involved a process of colonization by imposing idiosyncratic human qualities on an object. Naming a restaurant after its owner reveals the existence of a personal passion: a Mayan-Yucatecan immigrant who wanted to detach himself from Tomas and attach to Tommy. On the one hand *Tommy* became a quasi-object enacted in the form of a restaurant; on the other hand, *Tommy's* became a quasi-subject imprinted with intimate passions.

By contrast, in the case of the home-based restaurants, calling them by the name of their owners does not point to the appropriation of the object-service, as in the case of *Tommy's* restaurant. Instead, the utterances "*donde*" or "*con*" reveal social relations between object-services, clients and sellers. The informal names that are given to these places by the clients reveal some of the qualities they attach to the object, the service and the seller. Some of the home-based restaurants are attached to qualities related to the seller's life-story and the particular taste of the foods they prepare. At the same time, the seller is embellished with some of the qualities of the object. Both subjects and objects are produced in dynamic interactions authorized by consumers.

In the third section, I proposed that actors attach and detach from quasi-objects in relation to particular desires. This is a dynamic interaction in which some qualities of the quasi-objects are hidden and other revealed. In the case of *Lol Tun*, the first formally established restaurant for the Mayan community in San Francisco, consumers' beliefs were attached to joyful affections – community solidarity – and detached from the sadness implied by the drug dealing. In the case of *Mi Lindo Yucatán* I argued that actors make use of the qualities attached to other actors to become attached to a particular object and enact the desirable quasi-

object: a Thai woman using a Mexican to enact a *taquería*, a Mexican using a Yucatecan to enact a Mayan restaurant. Both actors thought that they were unable to enact the quasi-object because they lacked a certain inherent quality: the Mayan-Yucatecan ethnicity. However, this inherent quality is only enacted through its particular relationship to certain objects: ethnicity is produced in a dynamic interaction with quasi-objects. Pedro acknowledges this fact. For him, it is not enough to be a Mayan and believe in *aluxes* in order to cook good Mayan food: you also need to have dreams and a special hand to actualize the quasi-objects and stabilize your passions.

Even considering all the cases presented in the different sections of this chapter, it is hard to trace a straight line through the expansion of the Mayan-Yucatecan foodscapes in San Francisco. As explained in the first section, *Tommy's* was the first Yucatecan who established a restaurant in San Francisco. However, *Tommy's* was not meant to be a Mayan-Yucatecan restaurant. It eventually became one, but only partially, and only after some U.S. consumers asked for those dishes. Since Yucatecan migrants did not feel attracted by *Tommy's* foodscape, other Mayan migrants developed an opposite business model to commoditize Yucatecan food in the Bay area. Following Tarde (1903), I argue that *Tommy's* functioned as a model for the Mayan-Yucatecan home-based restaurants because doing the opposite of what the model does (intentionally or not) is in itself a form of repetition.

The same type of indirect relationship can be traced between the home-based and the formally established Mayan-Yucatecan restaurants that opened decades later. To some extent, the later ones are repetitions of the earlier ones. What changed was the business model. Among the constellation of the formally established Mayan-Yucatecan restaurants, it is possible to encounter repetitions and oppositions; however, the Mayan foodscape in San Francisco still lacks radical adaptation, such as in the cases of the Tex-Mex and the Cal-Mex foodscapes. Another prominent difference among those foodscapes is found at the level of scenographies. Whereas in the cases of the Tex-Mex and the Cal-Mex foodscapes it is possible to appreciate a process of detachment from the land (flying *tomatillos*, flying bean bodies, aircapes, etc.), in the case of the Mayan-Yucatecan foodscape the relation with the land has become more accentuated. Whereas *Tommy's* restaurant lacks of material signs related to the Yucatecan lands, *Mi Lindo Yucatán* I's scenography promoted full immersion into a pre-Hispanic Mayan landscape.

NOTES

- 1 Yucatán is a state in the southeastern part of Mexico. San Francisco has the largest community of Yucatecan migrants in the United States.
- 2 http://www.tommystequila.com/index.php?option=com_weblinks&view=category&id=3&Itemid=10
Accessed: 17/06/2011
- 3 Due to the cyclical nature of Mexican migration to the U.S., such names have been also adopted in Mexico. In Oxtucab, Yucatán some migrants have opened restaurants with such names, where they offer “international” food. For example *Nazario's Kitchen* “specialized” in French, Italian and American food. Field notes. January 2009.

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- 4 In 2008 a worker from the restaurant indicated that the informal debt system still functioned. However, the wages and working conditions had improved significantly.
- 5 <http://www.yelp.com/biz/tommys-mexican-restaurant-san-francisco-2>. Accessed: 12/09/2011.
- 6 Julio on the left and Tomas Bermejo in the middle: <http://4bars.com.au/web/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/tommys1-453x302.jpg>. Accessed: 06/05/2011
- 7 <http://www.tommystequila.com/>. Accessed: 13/09/2011
- 8 <http://www.tommystequila.com/>. Accessed: 12/09/2011
- 9 http://blogs.sfweekly.com/foodie/2011/05/triumvirate_rum_retail_sale_da.php. Accessed: 3/12/2011
- 10 Yucafranciscan: Name given by a community leader to Yucatecan migrants that have grown up in San Francisco.
- 11 A Gift from the Goddess Paying Reverence to *Tequila* and Mezcal by Rachel Barron - photography by Janjaap Dekker. <http://www.elandar.com/back/fall00/stories/tequila.htm>. Accessed: 06/05/2011
- 12 *Tequilana Azul*: The agave used to make the best *tequila*. It has been cultivated in so many places that no wild population has been determined as native to the area. From http://www.desert-tropicals.com/Plants/Agavaceae/Agave_tequilana.html. Accessed: 15/09/2011
- 13 <http://www.tommystequila.com/>. Accessed: 12/09/2011
- 14 Taqueria: Restaurant where the main food offered is *tacos*.
- 15 El pueblo Maya: "En el City College en aquella epoca se formó un grupo que se llamaba El pueblo maya y San Francisco City College [...] Que fue este grupo estudiantil que se formo para hacer este pequeño estudio que Anne Whiteside ayudó a llevar a cabo (Carlos 2008, personal interview). *At City College at that time, a student group called el Pueblo Maya formed...it was that student group which formed to do the little study that Anne Whiteside helped carry out.*
- 16 *Asociación Mayab* is a community organization formed by Mayan migrants in San Francisco in 2002 to help the people in Yucatán affected by Hurricane Isidore. In recent years, *Mayab* has become the most important organization among Mayan migrants in San Francisco. <http://www.asociacionmayab.org/index.html>. Accessed: 13/09/2011
- 17 *Jarana*: the traditional dance of Yucatán.
- 18 Lol-Tun is the name of an enormous cavern close to Oxxutzcab. The place used to be inhabited by the early Mayas, and is nowadays an important tourist destination in Yucatán.
- 19 *Eskenzi, Joe* (2007) "San Francisco Drug Bust: Meth Tacos, Mmmm. Crack Chorizo and Meth Menudo, Right Here in S.F", In *Sanfrancisco Weekly*. http://blogs.sfweekly.com/thesnitch/2007/08/san_francisco_drug_bust_meth_t.php, 14/09/2007
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 A state in the center of Mexico.
- 22 Pedro baptized Ricardo's child.
- 23 *Aluxes*: Mayan gnomes.
- 24 *Sikil-pak*: Sikilpak mean pumpkin seeds and tomato [...] So you put it in the oven. It gets the taste from the oven. So you smash it. You make it powder [...] In Yucatán is very famous when you go to a cantina [...] They drink a beer and they get some snacks, that is what they get, tostadas, the name of that is sikilpal (Pedro 2008, personal interview).
- 25 *Cenote*: deep natural pit resulting from the collapse of limestone bedrock that exposes groundwater underneath. In: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cenote>. Accessed: 15/09/2011
- 26 Yucatasia restaurant, San Francisco: <http://www.gotime.com/sf/places/87927-Yucatasia-Mission-San-Francisco>. Accessed: 21/10/2011

CHAPTER 6

MEX-MEX: BETWEEN THE RURAL WORLD AND THE FOLKLORIC CITY

In this chapter I explore the translation of the Mex-Mex foodscape in Amsterdam and Madrid. I argue that in their processes of translation, entrepreneurs selected internal models of the nation created by Mexican intellectuals, artists and politicians between 1920 and 1940 (Pérez 2007) during the constitution of the Mexican national landscape. As Pérez notes:

“The invention of a stereotypical Mexico derived from a translation for the tourist and the foreign consumer, mainly from the United States, who was different from him (the Mexican). From this point of view, the creation and construction of the Mexican national stereotypes can be seen more like a process of ‘north-Americanization’ than of Mexicanization.” (Pérez 2007: 298).

The potent signs used in the enactment of the Mex-Mex foodscape stand in opposition to the ones used by the Tex-Mex and Cal-Mex foodscapes. However, they serve the same end: to affect foreign consumers and generate profit by using stereotyped Mexican bodies.

The restaurants from the *Grupo Anderson’s*, or Andersons’ Group, are the quintessential example of how this process of “North Americanization” modulated the constitution of what has become to be known as the Mex-Mex foodscape in Amsterdam and Madrid. In the first section of this chapter I take a brief detour through the history of the Anderson’s Group. I then focus on the website of *El Tenedor 2.0* to explore the constitution of the metrological chains of *Sí Señor’s*, one of the restaurants in the Andersons’ Group. Next, I explain how this business model has been repeated, opposed and adapted in Amsterdam and Madrid.

6.1 THE ANDERSON’S GROUP: A UNIVERSITY FOR MEX-MEX ENTREPRENEURS

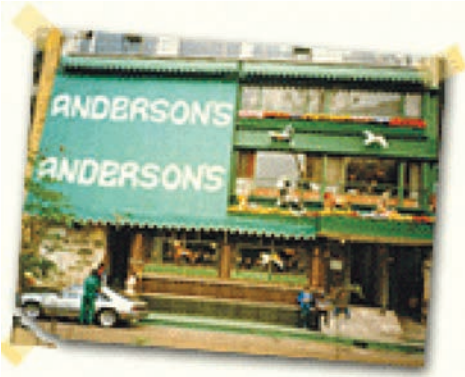
The first restaurant of the Anderson’s Group was established in Mexico City 1968. After the Second World War, hotels were built along Paseo de la Reforma and the Zona Rosa neighborhood became attractive to foreign tourists. Elegant houses from the time of Porfirio Díaz’s dictatorship were transformed into boutiques, businesses, luxurious restaurants and exclusive nightclubs:

“When Carlos Anderson opened his first full scale restaurant in 1968 he immediately caused a controversy with his innovative restaurant style that would eventually become a tradition. In the posh district of Mexico City known as the Zona Rosa, elegant diners and chic eateries were the norm and Carlos Anderson’s tried to refine the upscale dining experience, right down to his tuxedo and necktie requisite.”¹

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Carlos Anderson and his friend Charlie – his business partner in this entrepreneurial adventure – transformed the dining experience into a party. The ambience of his restaurant was very relaxed:

“[Carlos] began to chat idly with patrons and drumming up business from the street, which at the time was unheard of for a restaurant manager to do. Although the other local businesses thought of this as an outrage, Mexico City patrons reacted instantly to this avant-garde way of customer service.”²



115. Anderson's restaurant, Mexico City³



116. Anderson's mandiles (share-holding managers)⁴



117. Carlos and Charlie⁵

The same freedom was offered to consumers who were invited to relax and “...be free to do as they please as they are entertained by their surroundings – dancing on chairs, comical skit performances, singing and more.”⁶ Waiters and the rest of the workers followed a similar behavior: “Starchy, snobbish waiters had no place here, but were replaced by fun-loving, Ivy League young men, who were well educated and had a terrific sense of humor, which they shared with the guests.”⁷

After some years, the Anderson's Group started a process of expansion to different Mexican tourist destinations such as Cancún. The same relaxed, informal, and fun atmosphere was reproduced in these new locations, and tourists from the U.S. happily accepted the business

model. Soon, the Anderson's Group restaurants became the predominant model for the Mexican dining experience: a party ambience, informal behavior and silly shows.



118. Enacting Mexican bodies. *Carlos and Charlie's*, Cancun,⁸ 119. Surfing in the Mexican landscape. *Carlos and Charlies*, Playa del Carmen⁹

The Anderson's Group eventually expanded into other countries, particularly the United States, Brazil and Spain. In 2010 the Anderson's Group chain consisted of more than 100 restaurants. In Madrid, *El Cuchi* and *Sí Señor* were the tokens of this business model.



119. Slavin, *El Cuchi* Madrid in the 2000s¹⁰



120. Restaurante *El Cuchi*. Famous for who they didn't feed. Richard Morley, Madrid, 2009¹¹

El Cuchi was established in 1985 in downtown Madrid, although it closed in 2008. Jorge started working at *El Cuchi* in 1989:

“Great Mexican food in this busy place where ‘Hemingway never ate’ – a dig at all the bars around the Plaza which say that Hemingway did eat there! Novelties include having your bread placed not on the table but in a basket above your head and a waitress who walks around the restaurant serving shots from a ‘holster’!”¹²

With restaurants like those of the Anderson’s Group highlighting their anti-patrimonies and publicizing their irreverent approach to customer service, it is no wonder that many consumers in U.S. and Europe consider Mexican restaurants to be the perfect place to break social rules by enacting a foreign body. In their very acts of consumption, people can and do express rebellious attitudes against the status quo. And in such cases the body is used as symbol of rebellion.

The Anderson’s Group pays a lot of attention to the composition of their staff: “Do not confuse *Carlos ‘N Charlie’s* (a restaurant from the Anderson’s Group) with big business, for this is a family business. We’re a family here, explains Barry Shaw, we do not hire managers, we raise them.”¹³ They also recently developed a program called *Anderson’s University*, and Anderson’s *Al Ojo del Amo* Program (Under the Master’s Eye) has helped many Mexican migrants in Spain who started as waiters move up in the business and eventually become entrepreneurs. These business owners learned the Anderson’s business model by working at the Group’s restaurants. The informal atmosphere of the restaurants also allowed them to meet people who later became their business partners:

“The use of the term *mandil* (apron), which refers to share-holding managers, started around this time (1960]. Carlos would invariably leave the kitchen, wearing his apron, or *mandil*, to visit tables, greeting and chatting with guests. The *mandil* became a symbol of status and achievement, eventually worn only by those who managed the restaurant. “*Mandiles*” relate well to their clientele – people who more often than not come from the same background – and of course, the “*Al Ojo del Amo*” system was so successful that many guests in turn became partners or “*mandiles*.” The concept of working shareholders or “*mandiles*” is classic Anderson genius, and, today, the term is an industry standard.”¹⁴

Currently, many Mexican restaurants in Madrid are owned by inter-ethnic entrepreneurial partnerships composed of Mexicans and Spanish people. These Spanish people met their business partners while visiting Mexican restaurants as consumers; Mexican waiters and chefs created business alliances with Spanish consumers; all of them became *mandiles* (lit., aprons; here it refers to the Anderson’s Group term for managers) who actualized the restaurant managing system *al ojo del amo* – under the master’s eye. In other words, an important percentage of the restaurants established in Madrid can be considered as repetitions of the Andersons’ Group Mexican dining experience.

Ernesto, a Mexican entrepreneur who has opened three Mexican restaurants in Madrid with his family, believes many factors promoted the boom of the Mexican restaurants in Madrid: among them, the end of Franco’s dictatorship, the World Cup being held in Mexico,

agreements between Spanish and Mexican universities, the establishment of *El Cuchi* and *Sí Señor*, Spain's economy, and the change from the *peseta* to the Euro:

Why do you think *El Cuchi* and *Sí Señor* formed so many entrepreneurs?

"It was the time, it was a series of circumstances. One, it was after [19]86. Before '86, Spanish people didn't know anything about Mexico. There were no relations... Franco passed away in '75, [foreign] relations were opened again in '77... [and] in '86 Spain goes to the World Cup [in Mexico] and they make a big show, a big display planned during the months before. I was working at the embassy at that time. It was massive, and all that opened the market, the prices went down, *Aeromexico*¹⁵ started to fly to Spain, the *Complutense* [a university in Madrid] and the UNAM [the Mexican National Autonomous University] made some really big agreements. At that time, Spain was a really unknown land. I studied at *La Salle* (a private university), my title was from UNAM. To know that it was so cheap to come and study for so little money was something very attractive. For Mexican students to come to Spain, at that time it was so easy to come here... Prices were so cheap, so cheap, so cheap. We all came from a certain academic level and [had] certain acquisitive power. We all went to work to the best Mexican restaurant at that epoch, *El Cuchi*... we all started at *El Cuchi*. Two years later they opened *Sí Señor*, some of us stayed in *El Cuchi*, others went to *Sí Señor*. Jorge moved there, Jorge opened *La Mordida*. Ulises, who was the manager of the *Sí Señor* opened a haute cuisine Mexican restaurant called *Los Delirios*, first *La Malquerida*, then he left *La Malquerida* and opened *Los Delirios*, which didn't work. The restaurant did not work, and then he went to Cancún and opened some restaurants. He moved there with Héctor another friend from *El Cuchi* and *Sí Señor*. A tall guy who became partner with El Greñas and opened *La Panza*" (Ernesto 2009, personal interview. Author's translation).

Ernesto is correct that many factors contributed to the boom of the Mexican restaurants in Madrid. He is also correct that the Anderson's Group restaurants played an important role in the constitution of the market: by 2010, more than 74 Mexican restaurants had opened in Madrid since Ventura Rocha first opened *El Charro*, but *Sí Señor*, a Mex-Mex restaurant from the Anderson's Group, had constructed the longest metrological chain among consumers in the website *El Tenedor*.



122. Mexican dog and peasants. *Sí Señor*, Madrid



123. Folkloric Mexican bodies. *Sí Señor*, Madrid ¹⁶

6.2 EL TENEDOR: QUANTIFYING PASSION AT SÍ SEÑOR'S

El Tenedor (*eltenedor.es*; *tenedor* means fork)¹⁷ is a website that, like *Yelp.com* and *Iens.nl*, allows consumers to make restaurant reservations online and get discounts. Customers can also rate restaurants by evaluating their experiences along the following criteria: 1) food, 2) ambience, 3) quality/price, 4) service, 5) cleanliness, and 6) liveliness. Reviewers on *El Tenedor* can also leave longer written reviews. Consumers select the kind of restaurant they are looking for by selecting certain characteristics on the website, after which they are redirected to a page where restaurants that match their selections are displayed. A photo and basic information about the place, including the type of food, price, and the number of comments left by previous consumers is displayed. When the consumer selects a restaurant, a page with more detailed information appears. On this new page, the consumer can navigate through other users' profiles and read the restaurant reviews they have posted. Consumers achieve the following ranks depending on how many reviews they have posted to *El Tenedor*: 1) Adventurer: only one review posted. On their way to earning the rank of Explorer. 2) Explorer: Between 2 and 4 reviews posted. Getting familiar with the subject. 3) Conqueror: Between 5 and 9 reviews posted. Learning the art. 4) Gourmet king: 10 or more reviews posted. Expert!

Let me explain how I navigated through the site in order to find Mexican restaurants in Madrid. First, I selected the category "Mexican restaurants" in "Madrid", and 18 restaurant options were displayed. These restaurants were hierarchically organized according to consumers' quantified rankings. The restaurant with the most comments by consumers is *Sí Señor*, from the Anderson's Group. Forty-five consumers have ranked this restaurant as the second best in the category "Mexican restaurants in Madrid," with an average score of 7.4 out of 10 points. This ranking is also represented in a visual form as a bit more than three-and-a-half yellow stars out of a possible five. When I clicked on the picture of the restaurant, I was redirected to another page where six pictures are displayed in a loop. On the bottom of the photos, five windows are offered to the consumers. 1) File, 2) Opinions, 3) Map, 4) Pictures, 5) Additional information. In the window 1) File, a description of the restaurant written by its owners was displayed in a block of written text. The chef's suggestions are also offered. On the left side of the page a more detailed view of the 45 consumers' quantification work is shown. These rankings are divided into six categories: 1) Kitchen, 2) Ambience, 3) Quality/price, 4) Service, 5) Cleanliness, and 6) Animation level. The first 6 categories are measured by colored stars, but the sign used to measure the sixth category is different. Six blue columns increasing in size from left to right compose this sign. At the bottom of this quantitative chart, two signs announce that *Sí Señor* has won *El Tenedor's* award in this category twice.

When I clicked on the window 2) Opinion, the consumer's statistics that in the previous window were displayed in the left side now occupy the center of the page, under the bottom of the restaurant's pictures. There is also a link that provides detailed information about how the evaluation process is done. Three facts in particular caught my attention:

1. The system is connected to *Sí Señor's* computer system in such an efficient way that only consumers who made their reservations at the restaurant via the *El Tenedor* web page are able to rank their experience at the restaurant. Furthermore, when the con-

sumer arrives at the restaurant, his or her identity is already established. The restaurant's computer already knows the client's name, his or her credit card number, and maybe other private details.

2. The web page has the right to edit the comments left by consumers. If customers leave comments offensive to the restaurant they are not published.
3. It is possible for a consumer to choose a restaurant just by following some one else's beliefs and passions. By searching for the nickname of a consumer who has left comments on the web page, one is able to track his or her pattern of consumption, preferences, opinions and main passions.

Returning to the description of the previous window – Opinion – I encountered different ways to filter consumers' opinions. There were comments left by 45 adventures, 5 explorers and 2 Gourmet kings. 20 reviewers had evaluated lunch and 32 had commented on their dinner experiences. 8 had gone to the restaurant for romantic reasons, 34 with friends, 7 with family, 2 because of business reasons and 1 alone. 17 of them were men and 35 women. In the coming paragraphs I present the profile of Laura V. a consumer who has earned the explorer's rank on *El Tenedor's* web page.

Laura V. went to the restaurant *Sí Señor* with friends on April 25, 2010. She ranked the place with 9.8 points out of 10, and left the following comment:

“Although it was Sunday and there were no Mariachis, we had a lot of fun. Our waiter's service excellent. The food was very good and the cocktails so good that we felt like having more.”¹⁸

Laura's profile reveals her previous patterns of consumption. Clicking on her profile I was redirected to a page with detailed reviews of other restaurants that she has visited. Her profile tells us that she had recently gone to *La Leyenda del Agave*, a Mexican restaurant opened by an ex-worker from *Sí Señor*. On that occasion she ranked this place with 9.5 points out of 10. She left the following comment:

“We had a great time. The food was delicious. The service was very friendly. The only [bad thing] is that although the *mariachi* were very close to us, the songs were too quiet because of the noise made by people.”¹⁹

Laura's post tells us that, for her, *mariachis* play an important role in the creation of the right atmosphere inside Mexican restaurants. From her point of view, music is one of the most significant modalities among the different sign systems that relate to the creation of the right atmosphere in a Mexican restaurant. Maybe some of the consumers who share Laura's passion for *mariachis* will be affected by her comments. Maybe others who do not like music or noisy places will avoid visiting those restaurants.

Although the high level of interactivity on *El Tenedor's* website means users are able to provide comments about their consumption experiences, hypertextuality is constrained since consumers cannot upload photos or videos – a common feature on other restaurant websites. The fact that *El Tenedor's* web page has the right to edit consumers' comments also violates

the principle of polyphony that allegedly distinguishes Web 2.0 websites. Nevertheless, the quantified evaluations made by consumers are never edited. Why is the qualitative written text subject to editing, but not the quantitative reviews? Why the personal bad opinions are not censured when they are expressed by numbers and visual signs but omitted when consumers make use of words considered offensive? I believe that this phenomenon is related to the fear that some companies have about the possibility that consumers could take full control over Web 2.0 pages. If that were to happen, *El Tenedor's* business model might not function; if consumers write a lot of bad comments about restaurants, the restaurants could end their financial relationship and online booking service with the company. Indeed, *El Tenedor* is not an open Web 2.0 site that allows the free creation of hypertextual connections; in point of fact, it relies on centralized control to maintain the trust of its true clients – the restaurants.

6.3 LA MORDIDA: THE RISE OF FOLKLORIC MEX-MEX FOODSCAPES IN MADRID

“We’ve missed you,” said the bartender who served me: a tall glass with lemon; the same cup of rum that I had left on the bar a year ago Monday. After paying for two rounds (three, counting the one in the bathroom), I reacquired my seat, between la condesa and Julio, my founder’s card at the roundest round table at Nicanor’s Café.” Joaquín Sabina, *El café de Nicanor* (Author’s translation).

In the 1970’s, Joaquín Sabina, a Spanish student who was constantly in trouble for opposing the Franco regime, went into self-exile in London. In London, Sabina started to write songs and sing at local bars. In 1975 he performed at a local bar called *Mexicano-Taverna* in the presence of George Harrison, who was celebrating his birthday. The ex-Beatle gave Sabina a five-pound note as tip, which Sabina still keeps to this day. After Franco’s death in 1975, Sabina returned to Spain and started a career as a singer-songwriter. In 1987, by then a well-known singer and successful performer, he also started an entrepreneurial career. Together with the musicians Claudín and Sauquillo, Sabina opened a pub called *Elígeme* (Pick Me) in Madrid’s Malasaña neighborhood. In the 1980’s, Sabina was a regular customer at *El Café de Belén*, where artists from the counter-cultural “movida madrileña” movement including Pedro Almodóvar, José Coronado, Miguel Bosé, Antonio Gasset, Javier Marías, and Juan Echénoze would meet and enjoy the freedom of Spain’s post-dictatorial society. Sabina met the artist Julio Sánchez at *El Café de Belén*, and at the beginning of the 1990’s the two friends decided to buy *El Café de Belén*, or *El Café de Nicanor*, as it was eventually called in Sabina’s song.

Julio Sánchez became a stakeholder in different theme restaurants, such as the bar *La Gloria*, which he opened jointly with the Spanish fashion designer Antonio Alvarado. Following this example, *El Café de Belén* was transformed into a Mexican-themed restaurant. Honorio Vaquero, who has been the manager of *El Café de Belén* since 1987 and who is actually Nicanor from Sabina’s famous song, remembers that *El Café de Belén* entered a crisis after

the Olympic games in Barcelona and Sevilla's World's Fair of 1992, when a major European currency crisis led to the devaluation of the peseta. The economic downturn drastically affected (*affectus*) the service industry and *El Café de Belen* was not an exception. According to Honorio, that crisis wiped out the legendary *Café de Belen* and gave rise to *La Mordida*, which opened in place of *El Café de Belen* in the mid-1990's. On *La Mordida*'s website, Julio explains how the idea for the new restaurant emerged:

"Pátzcuaro-Michoacán, spring of 1996. After some tacos al pastor where Hemeterio Pérez, and under the effects of some *mezcales* "LA MORDIDA" was born. It was one of those "happy moments" that used to occur while going on tour with my friend Joaquín Sabina in this country that we love so much, México, when, after the delicatessen that we had been eating on the plaza and in the middle of absurd metaphysical discussions raised by the spirits of maguey (I prefer not to go into detail), we had an almost divine vision, at least so it appeared to us; we had to take to our faraway land those dishes that we so much love to taste from the Aztec lands, and we had to do it with the greatest fidelity and authenticity possible. That is the way everything began. It was an ambitious goal but luckily we had good connections in D.F.²⁰, our partner and friend, the *chilango*²¹ René Escalante joined the Project, happily coordinating the best team of cooks."²² (Author's translation).

In Julio's narrative, enjoying alcohol and food in the streets of Mexico is a point of departure for Julio Sánchez and Joaquín Sabina's entrepreneurial project. There was no rational plan; instead, the idea emerged from metaphysical discussions in which even the spirits of *maguey* participated as an actor in a passionate network. After this mystical experience Sabina and Sánchez decided to mimic the dishes that they loved to taste in the "Aztec lands" in Spain: they wanted to affect (*affectus*) other bodies the way theirs were affected (*affectio*) by Mexican substances. Sabina is a lover of the Mexican landscape. He has written songs about his Mexican romances. He even wrote a song with Subcomandante Marcos, leader of the Zapatista movement in Chiapas.²³ In other words, *La Mordida* was to be a translation of Sabina's affections (*affectio*) triggered by his multiple encounters with the Mexican landscape.

Curiously enough, in the origin myth presented on *La Mordida*'s website, Julio, Sabina's partner, states that it was in the spring of 1996 that the revelation appeared to their minds. But on *Myspace*²⁴ Julio states that they decided to change *El Café* to *La Mordida* in 1995, the same year that Sabina met the Mexican Jorge Marín, alias *El Greñas*, in Madrid:

"One day in 1995 when I was walking in the neighborhood of Tirso de Molina I met Joaquin Sabina²⁵, who turned out to be my neighbor. I invited him to the restaurant and that is how our good friendship started. Sometimes we used to go out to party or drink together. During the time of the (economic) crisis I had decided to return to Mexico, but Joaquin asked me not to, and he became my partner to establish a Mexican restaurant."²⁶ (Author's translation).

Jorge's narrative diverges from Julio's and Honorio's. From his point of view, *La Mordida* came into being due to the fact that he was planning to return to Mexico because of some personal crisis, and Sabina asked him to stay in Madrid and open a Mexican restaurant.

Jorge took Sabina to *El Cuchi* after their fortuitous encounter; Sabina then introduced

Jorge to Julio and Honorio. Afterwards, the group formed a partnership to transform *El Café de Belén* into *La Mordida*, combining Julio's experience in theme restaurants, Jorge's knowledge as a Mexican and a waiter, and Sabina's fame to launch their new entrepreneurial project. Although Sabina never directly participated in the business's administration, the restaurant became known colloquially as *El Mexicano de Sabina* – Sabina's Mexican Restaurant.

La Mordida repeated many of *El Cuchi's* and *Sí Señor's* elements, particularly those related to the establishment's decor, the party ambience and the staff's openness with customers. *La Mordida's* foodscape enacts a Mexico where everything is possible. Honorio identifies *La Mordida's* food concept as Mex-Mex. It is unclear if it was Honorio or Jorge who invented the term Mex-Mex for this food concept – each one claims it was his own idea. However, what is interesting is that nowadays many Mexican restaurants in Madrid and Amsterdam are marketed as Mex-Mex.

Honorio insists that Mexican restaurants have a very special appeal; their ambience reproduces some of the affections (*afectio*) that has been attached to the Mexican bodies:

“Here we sell more than food, we sell *desmadre* (rowdiness), we sell good ambience, happiness. When people come to a Mexican restaurant they come to have fun. They do not only eat, they come to have fun, they come to a restaurant concept that is not like the Spanish one where you only eat, no, you come to a Mexican restaurant, the people come in another mode, they come with a predisposition to have fun, to laugh, to joke with the chili, to drink *margaritas*, to get out of here not very well, this is the appeal of the Mexican restaurant.” (Honorio 2009, personal interview. Author's translation).

Even the polysemy used in the name of the restaurant points to some of the affections (*afectio*) associated with this Mexican foodscape:

“When we were choosing among friends the name of the place out of a long list of names, the decision was taken collectively: “LA MORDIDA²⁷” – it is a very popular word in Mexico that has very interesting romantic and gastronomic connotations. Taking as inspiration from the name, we created the logo: a suggestive woman's mouth biting a chili in a sensual way. A chili that hides an ambiguity that affects the subconscious living of unforgettable memories in the person who watches it.”²⁸ (Author's translation).



124. A Catrina, the wrestler “Blue Demon” and a naked Mexican woman enact the Mexican-ready-for-consumers body²⁹

ated by Mexican and Spanish artists. *La Mordida*'s foodscape can be seen as the implosion of multiple Mexican landscapes. For instance, one distinctive entity at one of the *Mordidas* is a massive reproduction of the stone statue of Quetzalcoatl,³¹ which hangs upside-down from the roof. The body of the pre-Hispanic entity is outlined by neon lights. Some of the Latin American waiters at the restaurant have baptized this modern Quetzalcoatl as *la mascota del lugar* (the restaurant's pet).



126. Quetzalcoatl, the mascota from La Mordida, 2008

Skeletons and *catrinas* are another important icon at *La Mordida* and other Mex-Mex restaurants in Madrid. One afternoon when I was at the Segovia branch of *La Mordida* with a friend from Manchester, U.K., she said, “I want to ask you about the skeletons. Why do you (presumably, Mexicans) have so many skeletons everywhere?” She found the skeletons quite scary. From her point of view to have skeletons in a restaurant’s decoration of the restaurant was over the top. Many of the consumers I met during my field research also characterized the skeletons as a constitutive body of the Mexican landscape. Yet most of them did not understand why Mexicans make so much reference to death. As Bartra explains in *La Jaula de la Melancholia* (*The Cage of Melancholy*; 2005), death belongs to an older time and is not welcome in the modern world. The skeletons at *La Mordida* eat and drink although they do not have organs; they are forever immersed in the Mexican landscape and from there they acquire the power (*puissance*) to affect the bodies who relate to them.



127. *The living death*, La Mordida, 2008

Another icon that unifies all the designs is Sabina. In every *Mordida* there is a painting of Sabina in a central place. Sometimes he appears dressed as a Mexican revolutionary, other times he appears as a famous Spanish singer surrounded by numerous Mexican icons. Every time a public figure visits one of the *Mordidas*, they are asked to pose in front of the paintings where prominent figures from the Mexican landscape are depicted. Afterwards, their pictures are hung on the walls. In this way *La Mordida*'s foodscape is constantly updated.



128. Sabina on the left and Julio on the right side in *La Mordida* de Belén, 129. Sabina enacting the Mexican body in *La Mordida* de Larra.

From Rene's point of view, *La Mordida*'s foodscape is full of stereotyped Mexican bodies, but at least it is more honest than other Mexican restaurants where signs associated with the low social classes of the urban Mexico are depicted. He is specifically referring to *La Panza es Primero* (The Belly is First), a successful chain of Mexican restaurants in Madrid owned by Jorge Marín, *El Greñas* – the ex-partner of *La Mordida*. The foodscape of *La Panza es Primero* resembles a Mexican wrestling ring. Julio believes that Jorge is not a true aficionado of Mexican wrestling; nevertheless, he uses these signs because they easily produce economic earnings due to their power (*puissance*) to affect (*affectus*) consumers. In another one of his restaurants, *Barriga Llena* (Full Belly), Jorge has hung a *vocho* (Volkswagen Beetle) on the wall. These cars used to be the taxis in Mexico City. Jorge brought this car and many other icons associated to the lower classes from Mexico City in order to enact Mexican urban foodscapes in Madrid.



130. “A falta de cadillac el popular vocho” (“Since we don’t have Cadillacs, the people’s vocho”), *Barriga Llena* restaurant (Full Belly) Madrid³², 131. Wrestlers in *La Panza es Primero* (The Belly is First), Madrid³³

Many of *Las Mordida*’s ex workers have also opened their own Mexican restaurants in Madrid. In most of these restaurants, aesthetic lines similar to *La Mordida* are followed. The ambience of the foodscape is also similar – a Mexico where everything is permitted. *Andale Güey*³⁴, *Las Mañanitas*³⁵ and *El Chaparrito* are other repetitions of this foodscape.



132. El chavo, the pelado in *Andale Güey*, Madrid

Although the following quotation seems to be taken from Tarde’s *The Laws of Imitation* (1903), it in fact comes from Honorio:

“They mimicked everything. This is something that we cannot avoid because they mimic what functions. We had created something that is like that, when it functions people start mimicking. From McDonald’s came Burger King, or, I don’t know...But they are always going to be mimics. They will never be able to say ‘we were the first.’ We were the first in creating a place, a name, and then hundreds came.” (Honorio 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

Is it possible for a restaurant to affirm that they were the first ones in translating a food concept? In my opinion, this is a discussion with no end. In the process of translation, models became repetitions. However, there are no direct translations. Every process of translation implies the opposition of some elements and as a consequence the adaptation of the model; at the end of the day it is impossible to distinguish among models and repetitions.

6.4 EL CHAPARRITO: QUOTATIONS OF THE MEX-MEX FOODSCAPE IN MADRID

Paulino and César are two Peruvian friends who migrated to Madrid in the 1990's. They were born in the same rural town in central Peru, and Paulino's parents cared for César because he was abandoned. At the age of 11, Paulino moved from the countryside to Lima to work and continue his studies. When he was 19 years old he got married. In Lima, Paulino learned how to repair shoes. After working for many years in a shoe workshop, he decided to start his own business repairing shoes in the street. He eventually managed to establish several informal workshops. Paulino's parents eventually asked him to help César who had decided to move to Lima as well. Since Paulino considered César to be part of his family, he gave César a workshop for himself. After working at the workshop for three years, César told Paulino that he wanted to migrate to Spain. Paulino supported César's plan and gave him the address of a friend who was living in Madrid.

In Madrid, César found work as a waiter at *La Mordida*. Six years later, César came back to Peru on vacation. At that time, Paulino was going through a tough time. He had split up with his wife, and the local authorities had closed all his informal workshops. César suggested that Paulino also migrate to Spain. Paulino did so, and within a year he was living in Madrid. Once there, Paulino worked for some months at a shoe workshop and in construction. After some time, he got a job as a dishwasher at one of the *Mordidas*, where Juan, an acquaintance of César's, was already working. Juan was born in the same town as César and Paulino. He had studied economics in Lima, but did not finish his degree. Juan migrated to Madrid in 2000. He also worked in construction for some months before getting a job at *La Mordida*. After some years, Juan became the chef at one of the Mex-Mex *Mordidas*. Paulino and Juan remember that ever since he started to work in *La Mordida*, a common topic of discussion among them was a plan to establish their own Mexican restaurant.

At *La Mordida* Paulino learned how to prepare Mexican food. Honorio was his teacher. After working at *La Mordida* for six years, Paulino decided to open his own Mexican restaurant with César and Juan. According to Paulino, at the beginning they wanted to become partners with *La Mordida*, but were not able to make a good agreement with Julio and Honorio.

During my interviews with Paulino, César and Juan used the word "risk" many times. They wanted to risk some money, but in a safe way, which is why they first tried to become partners of *La Mordida*. Since that proved to be impossible they opened *El Chaparrito* (The Short Guy). Since they did not want to risk their investment, *El Chaparrito* became an intentional repetition of *La Mordida*. They followed the same aesthetic lines and offered the same menu as *La Mordida*: "If I know how to prepare all the foods from *La Mordida*, why would

I not have success?” (Juan 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

When I asked César why they did not open a Peruvian restaurant, he explained that they did not have experience with this type of food, but they knew how to manage a Mexican restaurant because they had worked in different positions at *La Mordida* for many years. Like Honorio, Juan and Paulino argue they know how to cook Mexican food even better than some Mexicans. But they are modest enough to recognize that for sure there are some Mexicans who prepare better Peruvian food than they do.



133. Plato Chiapas (Chiapas dish), *La Mordida* 2009



134. Tinga de Guajolote (turkey) and plato vegetariano (vegetarian dish) in *El Chaparrito* 1, 2008

El Chaparrito opened in February 2006 in downtown Madrid. The restaurant’s owners signed a 15-year contract with the owner of the premises. Since the location was a Spanish restaurant before they took over the space, it was easy to start operating; the licenses to sell food and alcohol were in order. The three contacted a Spanish broker who helped them to register the new business and follow the local regulations. Since Juan had studied economics in Peru, and Paulino owned several shoe workshops in Lima, it was not so difficult for the Peruvian partners to administrate the business.

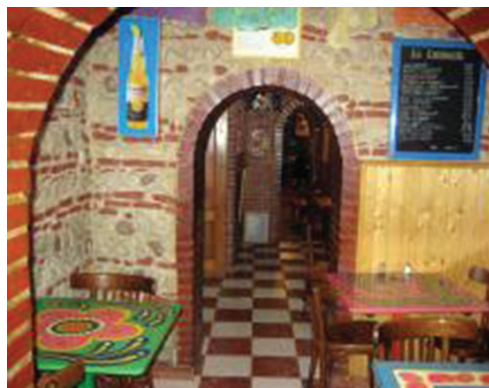


135. *El Chapulín Colorado* (The red grasshopper)
next to the main door at *El Chaparrito*, Madrid, 2011

In 2010, *El Chaparrito* made a repetition of itself. The second restaurant was also established in downtown Madrid, and is bigger than the first. The decoration in the new place is more prominent: “Mexican places use attention-getting colors to make it more attractive” (Juan 2010, personal interview. Author’s translation). The decoration of the *Chaparritos* was done by Andrés Collado, a Mexican artist who migrated to Spain searching for new opportunities in his carrier. Once in Madrid,

“Andrés started to offer his services to paint the walls of Mexican restaurant with typical motives from his country and little by little he found him a place. Maybe he used to spend a couple of months in finishing the work, but he used to earn enough money to continue working in his personal art.”³⁶

Andrés also participated in the decoration of the *Mordidas* and other Mexican restaurants in Madrid. Typically, the owners of the restaurants that Andrés decorates suggest a topic, and he executes it. Most of the time he paints peasant bodies dwelling in rural Mexico or bodies ascribed to lower social classes in contemporary Mexican cities: “Color and happiness are present in our restaurants, images and pre-Hispanic pieces. A complete decoration and music to make you feel like in Mexico.” (Author’s translation)³⁷ Many Mexicans have played an active role in the enactment of *El Chaparrito* scenography. They provide advice about what the potent signs of the Mexican nations are: “A Mexican gives us advice...we got the ideas from Mexican friend. We put together the ideas and made a conclusion” (Juan 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation). The combination of all those icons helps enact the Mex-Mex foodscape, a concept which tries differentiate itself from other Mex-foodscape genres in order to generate economic earnings.



136. First *Chaparrito*, 2008



137. Second *Chaparrito*, 2010

The decoration of *El Chaparrito* differs from *La Mordida* because of its prolific inclusion of Mexican folkloric bodies that became famous in Latin America during the golden age of the Mexican cinema. As I explained in the second chapter, Mexican cinema and other cultural industries developed after the Second World War and were widely accepted in Latin American countries. Technological devices of the era played an important role in the spreading of those imitative rays. Mexican television series like *El Chavo del 8* have become also very popular in Latin America. Paulino, César and Juan were affected (*affectio*) by those folkloric body types, and they reproduce them in the decoration of *El Chaparrito*. The potent signs dwelling in *El Chaparrito*'s foodscape are some of the internal models of the nation created by Mexican intellectuals, artists and politicians between 1920 and 1940 (Pérez 2007). The music at *El Chaparrito* also belongs to the same chronotope. Pedro Infante, Jorge Negrete and other artists interpreting songs from an idyllic, idealized Western Mexican way of life dominate this foodscape. On weekends, live *mariachis* perform the Mexican body at *El Chaparrito*.

Some of the decorations from the first *Chaparrito* used to belong to another Mexican foodscape in Madrid. After that restaurant closed, the Peruvian partners bought some of the potent signs, in order to add to the decoration of their restaurant. Workers have also played an active role in the decoration of the place. Many of *El Chaparrito*'s workers have been Mexicans studying in Madrid. When they go to Mexico for holidays, or family or friends visit them in Madrid, potent signs from the Mexican landscape travel with them and become a part of the *El Chaparrito* foodscape; flags, maps, sombreros have all been introduced:

“The decoration was brought from Mexico...As I explained to you we have met a lot of people from Mexico. They are our friends. They go to Mexico or their families come and they ask us if we need something from Mexico. We say to them, ‘we need something for decoration, so they bring it to us. For example, all the mariachi hats have been brought directly from there. Because for example, just one month after we opened the distributor from *Cuesta*³⁸ went to Mexico and asked us if we needed something” (Juan 2011, personal interview. Author's translation).

Consumers contribute to the restaurant's scenography by leaving notes in the bathrooms. Brands and distributors also make themselves present in the foodscape by offering free fur-

niture and decorative signs. Technological devices have also helped to translate the Mexican landscape into this place. For example, Juan explained that they downloaded the photography of the Subcomandante Marcos from the internet. When I asked why they included the image of Marcos in the restaurant's scenography, he explained that Marcos was an important sign because "the Mexican revolution catches a lot of attention, the epoch of Zapata, the topic of Marcos...He did a lot for the Mexican revolution and I think almost everybody in the world knows him." (Juan 2008, personal interview. Author's translation). It is worth noting that Subcomandante Marcos had nothing to do with what is normally understood to be 'the Mexican Revolution,' but was in fact the spokesperson for the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas in the 1990's.



138. Marcos at *El Chaparrito*, 2008

On the last visit I made to *El Chaparrito* I in 2011, a new element had been added to the scenography: a mural of the canals in *Xochimilco*,³⁹ a neighborhood in Mexico City. The colorful boats used to traverse the canals often have women's names. Nevertheless, at *El Chaparrito* the tradition has changed: the boats in the mural were given the names of the restaurant's owners and some of their family members. Prominent bodies from the Mexican landscape are traveling in a boat close to them. Although Paulino, César and Juan have never been to Mexico, they have become part of its national landscape by imprinting their names and bodies on one of its potent signs.



139. Paulino, César, Juan and their relatives enacting a virtual trip in the Mexican landscape. *El Chaparrito*, 2011

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140. El Chavo del 8, Frida, Luis Miguel, Cantinflas, Zapata, Salma Hayek and El Santo traveling in Xochimilco, *El Chaparrito*, 2011

Since the restaurants are in downtown Madrid, most of the consumers are tourists. In recent times, to visit a Mexican restaurant in Madrid has become a kind of tourist attraction. Some tourists believe that Mexican and Spanish people share bodies and affections (*affectio*). Mexicans students and Latin American migrants living in Madrid also visit the restaurant. Indeed, the workers at *El Chaparrito* argue that Mexicans are the most difficult customers: “The pickiest clients are Mexicans. The way they relate to the waiters is quite tiresome.” Additionally, the fact that the customers come from Mexico’s middle and upper social classes means that they frequently behave petulantly with the waiters of those places. Instead of politely asking for service they give orders and demand the waiter’s attention many times during their meal. Paulino, César and Juan have also gotten many complaints from Mexican consumers. Most of the times they are trying to make them feel bad about their ethnicity, essentially demanding ‘why is a Peruvian like you selling Mexican food?’ The Peruvian partners have found the same attitude among Mexicans who try to get jobs at the restaurant. They often only work for a couple of weeks before quitting: “The Mexican students do not know how to work and most of the time they do not have a work permit.” As a result, most of the workers in Madrid’s Mexican restaurants are from other Latin American countries. They have the correct legal status and working permits. The few Mexicans with work permits are usually employed as waiters. In this way, they contribute with their performances to enact the Mexican foodscape. The rest of the Latin American workers stay in the kitchen.

Like at *La Mordida*, some of the Mexican products offered at *El Chaparrito* are locally produced. “There is a man who has a field and he grows *epazote*, *chile*, *tomatillo*, *huitlacoche*, *nopales*. His name is José. He does it only in certain seasons.” This person is the same that distributes natural products to *La Mordida* and other Mexican restaurants in Madrid.

At *El Chaparrito* I noticed for the first time that some consumers call *mezcal*⁴⁰ “the drink with the worm.” Somehow the worm itself has become a potent sign that defines the identity of the drink: “You know *mezcal*? The *mezcal* with a worm. Before they used to export it but since half a year they are not exporting it anymore. The enterprise that sold it to us said that is because food safety reasons because of the worm” (Juan 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation). When consumers ask for the drink with the worm, the waiters show them an old

bottle from before the ban. Since the establishment of this prohibition, the sale of *mezcal* in *El Chaparrito* decreased noticeably. With the exclusion of the worm, *mezcal* has lost some of its identity, and *El Chaparrito* has lost some of its clients.⁴¹

As explained above, most of the dishes offered at *El Chaparrito* are similar to the ones offered in *La Mordida* and other Mex-Mex restaurants: *cochinilla pibil*, *tinga*, *pollo con mole*, *chiles en nogada*, *tacos al pastor* and *quesadilla de huitlacoche* are prominent dishes. A unique dish offered at *El Chaparrito* is the *enchiladas nacas*, “a mix of ingredients which use a mix of different sauces and made with chicken, because tourists like this meat a lot” (Juan 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation). *Enchiladas nacas* is a dish created for tourists who probably do not know what *naco* (or *nacas*) means: it is a derogatory term used by middle and high social classes in Mexico to refer to people from lower social classes, and means something like vulgar, nasty, or mischievous. At *El Chaparrito*, this affection is attached to a dish that does not exist in Mexico. However the new dish creates joy among Latin Americans who know what the word means due to its prolific use in movies, soap operas and other television programs that the Mexican industries have socialized in the Latin American countries.

By using potent Mexican signs that have been socialized in Latin America, *El Chaparrito* manages to differentiate itself from the *La Mordida* foodscape. However, both foodscapes belongs to the same constellation. *El Chaparrito* and the other Mex-Mex restaurants in Madrid are vibrations of the Carlos Anderson’s passion and the Anderson’s Group desire for expansion.

6.5 LOS PILONES: REPETITIONS OF THE MEX-MEX FOODSCAPE IN HOLLAND

Héctor and Pedro established *Los Pilonés* in 2001. At the age of 20, Héctor migrated from Mexico to Madrid. After working in different places, he got a job at *Sí Señor*, where he acquired the nickname of *El Pilón*.⁴² In Madrid, Héctor met a Dutch woman who eventually became his wife. The couple moved to Mexico, and then to Amsterdam. At that time, Héctor and his wife were already dreaming of opening a Mexican restaurant.

After arriving in the Netherlands Héctor started taking courses in the *horeca*⁴³ industry and searching for a place to establish their restaurant. When he found a location close to the tourist neighborhood of the Leidseplein in Amsterdam, Héctor called his brother Pedro, who was studying in the U.S. to become a chef. Héctor invited Pedro to become a part of the partnership. He suggested they create the first Mex-Mex restaurant in Holland. Héctor’s wife’s nationality and knowledge of the language facilitated the administration of the new enterprise. A company in Germany was contacted for the acquisition of the Mexican food products. Antonio Medina, a Mexican artist who lives in Spain, was in charge of the decoration. Antonio has also participated in the decoration of many Mex-Mex restaurants in Madrid. After a couple of months, a plain white coffeehouse was transformed into a colorful restaurant where all the surfaces were treated as faces of the Mexican nation.



141. *Los Pilonos* before and after⁴⁴

In the summer of 2001 *Los Pilonos* opened in the Kerkstraat, a street close to the Leidseplein in Amsterdam. Juan, another brother, traveled to the Netherlands for the restaurant's opening. Héctor asked him to stay in the Netherlands and help in *Los Pilonos* for a few months. Juan remembers that the beginning of the business was difficult because at that time Dutch people did not know about the Mex-Mex food concept:

“At a certain point I decided to come back and help to develop the concept. Starting was very difficult because it was something new, a new concept in Holland. Dutch people do not even know about what *mole* is, *cochinita Pibil*, *tinga poblana*. They used to be quite afraid. They used to sit, being afraid, and asked for *fajitas* or *burritos*. The typical Tex-Mex. So little by little we did publicity, face to face.” (Juan 2008, personal interview. Author's translation).

After working for half a year at *Los Pilonos* Juan went back to Mexico in order to finish his studies in marketing and public relations. At that time, their sister, who was living in Marbella, Spain, moved to Amsterdam to help the family business. She stayed there for a short period; when Juan finished his studies he moved back the Netherlands to work full time with his brothers.

Since the beginning of the business, *Los Pilonos* has employed Mexican-Dutch workers. Juan believes they can offer better service since they know both cultures. While most of the bicultural workers are in management positions at the restaurant, Spanish people or Dutch women who speak Spanish work as waiters. Everybody in the restaurant speaks Spanish; everybody knows how to enact the Mexican body. Ivan, a biracial man working as a manager at *Los Pilonos* describes Mexican consumers in the following way:

“Mexicans are very demanding when they order ...Mexicans are like ‘can you bring me a little lemon please? Ah and a little napkin please! Ah by the way, do you have some beans on the side? So, that is so difficult because some times you have a lot of work and you have 10 tables and all the bar plus the terrace and you are only working with three girls.” (Ivan 2008, personal interview. Author's translation).

The menu at *Los Pilonos* specializes in a variety of *tacos*, *enchiladas* and regional foods. The main dishes offered in the place are *tinga poblana*, *cochinita pibil*, *tiras a la mexicana* and *pollo con mole*. *Los Pilonos* is the only Mexican restaurant in Amsterdam offering *quesadillas de cuilacoche*:⁴⁵

“100% Mexican concept. Since we started we said to ourselves ‘it has to be a concept 100% Mexican. Mex-Mex. Because otherwise we do the same than before. The same that they have been doing in the U.S. In the U.S. and Mexico.” (Juan 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).

Juan says that they have to be really careful when translating the Mex-Mex concept to the Netherlands. He believes that the concept is easier to translate to Spain because the food traditions are quite similar, but Dutch consumers are uncomfortable with strong flavors and spices. Therefore, the workers at *Los Pilonos* must provide advice to inexperienced consumers about the qualities of certain foods and their possible reaction when they relate with their bodies. Sometimes, waiters even deny certain foods to consumers who ask for them. Providing an example, Juan explained that if a consumer asks for chicken with *mole* at night, the waiter must explain the risk of eating a heavy dish with a lot of spices – in their experience, some consumers cannot handle it. They also try to make consumers aware of the danger of combining certain foods in order to prevent sad experiences when relating with Mexican food. There are even some dishes that are served exclusively to Mexicans. That is the case of pork *carnitas*, which are made out of pork parts like belly, nose, or skin that would seem to be inedible for non-Mexicans.

In order to create joyful relations among consumers *Los Pilonos* tries to offer a balance between preservation and adaptation. When translating the Mex-Mex foodscape, *adiectio* and *detractio*⁴⁶ (Van Gorp 2004) are common practices; whereas certain animal body parts are deleted from the national dishes, forms and colors are added:

“For example, when I serve the *Cochinita Pibil* they get impressed. They say ‘wow! how are you offering red pork with purple onion over lettuce and beans with *totopos* and *guacamole*!’ So you play with all the colors and they say ‘wow!’ every time I serve something like this they say ‘wow!’” (Juan 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).



142. Table at *Los Pilonos*, Kerkstraat, 2009

Some Dutch consumers who have traveled in Mexico insist that the Mexican food offered at *Los Pilonos* is adapted to Dutch tastes. Marcos, a college student who studied for a semester in Mexico City claims that *Los Pilonos's* foods is similar to the dishes offered in restaurants in the Zona Rosa, the tourist neighborhood in Mexico city where the first restaurant from the Anderson's Group was established. Marcos explained to me that some days before traveling to Mexico, his girlfriend took him to a Mexican restaurant in Amsterdam. When he came back, his father took him to a Mexican restaurant as well. Both times the central topic of conversation was Mexico: the first time a virtual Mexico, the second time an actual one.

U.S. consumers show contradictory attitudes towards *Los Pilonos's* dishes. Some of them believe those foods are not Mexican. Ivan remembers that one time a consumer from San Francisco was quite disappointed about his green veggie enchiladas. On the other hand, some U.S. consumers have been really pleased with their food. Therefore, Ivan thinks that taste is formed in relation to ethnicity and that personal experiences also matters:

“Oh yes, they think they know because they are from California or Texas, yes. I remember, a couple of weeks in the Jordaan a couple, a gay man from San Francisco asked for to green veggie enchiladas. They were a gay couple and the friend started ‘Ah excuse me this is not Mexican food’, they had not even tried the dish, they had not even tried it, ‘those are not green enchiladas!’ and I was like: he was telling me ‘there is no taste in it! Are there vegetables in it?’ ...and at the same time I had a table outside, and these people thought that because they were from San Francisco they knew about Mexican food, and this gay guy wanted to teach me about Mexican food. Also once two people from the U.S asked me for chicken with mole or something like that and they were from Texas, ‘Ah what a tasty food! oh my god, the best Mexican food ever! It is even better than in Texas’ here with the mole and almost an orgasm at the table.” (Ivan 2008, personal interview. Author's translation).

It is understandable that some U.S consumers get sad and others experience joy with *Los Pilonos* food. First of all, the sad consumers asked for an entity from the Cal-Mex foodscape. The dish does not exist in *Los Pilonos*; nevertheless, the chef agreed to prepare green veggie enchiladas in order to fulfill their desire. The result did not match the consumer's expectations, and triggered sadness. Other consumers managed to experience joy because they respected the Mex-Mex dishes offered on the menu. They did not compare the *pollo con mole* with dishes from the Tex-Mex or the Cal-Mex foodscape. For the first type of consumers “Mexican food” is a close concept, for the latter it is an open grammar: Some consumes like to experiment, other do not like surprises:

Cpoticha says:

“... And this is my point: We Americans from Out West grew up with our own standard for Mexican food, which most places in Northern Europe just don't do. And while *Los Pilonos* is a welcome treat for their *tomatillo* and *salsa mexicana*, it's kind of pricey and maybe a bit too ‘authentic’ (i.e. really Mexican) for what we gringos crave: Lots and lots of beans and rice and spicy salsa for about a fiver. The gold standard is the giant, cheap *burrito*; the staple of San Francisco's Mission district. *Fajitas* and *flautas* and *mole* can wait and in line until Amsterdam gets the *burrito* right.” (September 3rd, 2010 at 15:43)⁴⁷

Ivan argues that it is hard for some consumers to know what they want; therefore, the job of the waiter is to help them to make the right decisions in order to have a joyful experience. In order to create agreement with consumers, Ivan works with what he calls mimicry. To him, mimic means to be sympathetic with consumers, to jump into their bodies and understand them from inside:

“You have to know what they want, ‘what do you want? Do you want beef, chicken or fish? ‘I want beef’, Ok, do you want it spicy or not? And in this way you make the menu, it is like a tetris...if you are working in a restaurant you are selling. You are trying to please the people and make them to consume, at the end of the day this is a business. The point is to make them leave the restaurant with a nice feeling and at the same time make money for the business.” (Ivan 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).

In 2009 *Los Pilones* repeated itself. The second *Pilones* was established in the Jordaan, a trendy neighborhood in Amsterdam mainly inhabited by young people. The new *Pilones* is a modernized version (Van Gorp 2004: 66) of the first one.⁴⁸ This strategy of translation helped adapt *Los Pilones* for the trendier neighborhood. Juan and Ivan assert that the Kerkstraat *Los Pilones* is more for tourists and Mexicans and the Jordaan *Los Pilones* is more for Dutch people and foreigners living in the Netherlands. The former is close to a folkloric cantina; the latter is a chic restaurant. People visit the Kerkstraat location in groups; they have fun together and drink a lot of *margaritas*. On weekends, people gather there before going to party. In the Jordaan most of the consumers are couples or little groups. They visit the restaurant for intimate talks, and the consumption of alcohol is moderate. In the Kerkstraat consumers enact a Mexican body full of excesses, while in the Jordaan consumers continue being themselves while eating Mexican food.

“The people who arrive at the Jordaan are more from the center. They are more Dutch. They are more demanding. They have more etiquette...there we offer more service. You have to be more attentive. You have to talk more with people. Is it about good manners. Mimic thoughts or whatever if you want to have a good night. Here [in Kerkstraat] it is more debauchery. Here the music is louder. At nights the place is full. There is a long bar. People drink more.” (Ivan 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).

Those opposite practices of consumption are not merely related to consumers’ ethnicity. They are also triggered by the power of the aesthetics (Thrift 2010) and its capacity to expand (*puissance*) or fix (*pouvoir*) consumer’s bodies. Whereas the scenography of the first *Pilones* enacts a baroque Mexican foodscape full of excess, the scenography of the second pilones is more sober. The former is a quotation of the Mex-Mex foodscapes in Madrid – *El Cuchi*, *Sí Señor*, *La Mordida*, et cetera – while the latter is its modern adaptation in Amsterdam:

“Amsterdam is a grey city, a grey city. You enter here and it is full of colors. That catches the attention of consumers. The happiness of the Mexican. The colors. The shouts. All this type of things catches the attention of Dutch people” (Juan 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).



143. Los Pilonos, Kerkstraat, 2009



144. Los Pilonos, the Jordaan, 2009

The two *Pilonos* coordinate as parts of the same body through repetitive use of materials and potent signs: the “Mexican pink” color, an image of the *Santo*, a Mexican wrestler, and the Virgin of Guadalupe: “The Virgin of Guadalupe that we have here is also there. It is the same concept but different” (Juan 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation). As can be seen in the top left corner of the photo on the left below, a Dutch flag is displayed on top of the Chapultepec castle. One of Mexico’s most important national myths took place in this castle: during a battle between Mexico and the U.S., a teenager jumped with the Mexican flag from the roof of the castle in order to protect the nation. In this painting the Netherlands has conquered the Mexican castle, and as an extension the whole nation. In the first *Pilonos* a little reproduction of *El Santo*, the most famous Mexican wrestler, occupies the central place in the long bar, in the second *Pilonos*, *El Santo* is a giant imprinted on one of the walls.



145. Virgin of Guadalupe and el Santo at *Los Pilonos* Kerkstraat, 2008



146. *El Santo* at *Los Pilonos* Kerkstraat, 2008



147. *El Santo* at *Los Pilonos* the Jordaan⁴⁹

Waiters help consumers interact with the sceneography. They introduce foreigners to the folkloric Mexican bodies. They make up stories for them. That is a part of what Ivan calls mimicry. To mimic is to help consumers to choose the right foods or to improvise a storytelling in order to immerse them into a Mexican semiotic reality:

“I am like that. Sometimes I see the consumers watching wrestling and I tell them a story. I do the same with the *tequila*. I love the *tequila*. I like to sell in this way and not only be seated. I like to show them the bottles and tell them stories. No, well the virgin is very present there. It is like two meters high. So the blue demon is smaller if you compare them. Here we have the Santo but in a little version. You talk with them about the Santo and the Blue Demon from the old times. Or you explain what a *posada*⁵⁰ or a *piñata*⁵¹ is, about a birthday, a dinner or a *taco al pastor*. Because I love and miss *tacos al pastor*, so you tell about that to the people, ‘well when I was a child I used to love *tacos al pastor*.’” (Ivan 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).

Héctor, the oldest brother, developed the general concept depicted in the scenography of both *Pilones*. Pedro and Juan have helped him to make certain decisions. Antonio Medina, a Mexican painter who lives in Spain, has been in charge of the concept's execution. As mentioned above, Andres has decorated several other Mex-Mex restaurants,⁵² many of which also make use of Mexican bodies dwelling in similar landscapes. The potent signs shared among all those places prompt their coordination. They are similar but different:

“He has been working in a lot in restaurants. He has to re-make the past of Mexico. He has been working in restaurants like *Sí Señor* from the *Carlo's and Charlies* chain and things like that. Everything is a story. All details in the restaurant have a story. Like the door, if you look carefully at the stickers the logo is with two little devils. That was Héctor's idea. Since Juan came there are three.” (Ivan 2008, personal interview. Author's translation).

The use of local or intimate signs creates difference among the Mex-Mex foodcapes. In the case of the *Los Pilones* in Kerkstraat, Rembrandt and Van Gogh share a common landscape with Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. They are depicted in front of a Pre-Hispanic city. Rembrandt is drinking a Heineken, Van Gogh a *Margarita* and Rivera a Corona:



148. Rembrandt, Rivera, Frida Kahlo and Van Gogh at *Los Pilones*, Kerkstraat, Amsterdam, 2008

One symbol that particularly caught my attention at *Los Pilones* is a painting on one of the tables of Subcomandante Marcos. This symbol has been also reproduced in many other Mex-Mex foodscapes in Madrid. In those places, Subcomandante Marcos has become “typical” rather than political: “No, those are typical things. It is something that is recognized by everybody. It does not have any extra meaning. Are we supporting the EZLN for example? No, [the image] is something typical” (Ivan 2009, personal interview. Author's translation).



149. Subcomandante Marcos at *Los Pilones*, Kerkstraat, Amsterdam, 2008

Contemporary folkloric bodies from the Mexican landscape also visit *Los Pilones*: Mexicans playing on Dutch football teams, rock and pop musicians, artists and TV actors. These types of bodies commonly leave artifacts that symbolize their presence in the foodscape: t-shirts, photos, instruments. On special occasions *Los Pilones* has created artifacts to venerate a particular body. That is the case of the Molotov⁵³ and Jaguares⁵⁴ tables: “We have the table of Molotov. When they made a presentation here we made a table for them so they would feel like a part of us” (Juan 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation). When these popular bodies visit Holland, they often use *Los Pilones* as an office. As a result, the restaurant becomes a natural extension of the Mexican landscape.⁵⁵ The presence of those bodies and the artifacts they leave in the restaurant update the chronotope of the foodscape. Mexican consumers are the ones who get most excited by such updates because they recognize these bodies from contemporary Mexico. They feel joy about being part of a place that was occupied by those bodies: “...then there are Mexicans and they see the bottle of Saúl Hernández:⁵⁶ ‘Excuse us but it is Saúl’s bottle, we cannot sell it’, ‘Ah, it is Saúl’s! He was here?’ (Juan 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation). Most Dutch and foreign consumers do not really care about those updates; they only recognize Mexican bodies dwelling in archaic chronotopes.



150. Los Jaguares table, *Los Pilones*, Kerkstraat



151. Molotov table, *Los Pilones*, Kerkstraat

One time I visited *Los Pilonos* at the Kerkstraat with Anne, a Dutch friend, and her 10 year old son Paul. As soon as we entered to the restaurant Paul asked me, ‘Hey Max, do Mexican restaurants in Mexico looks like this one?’ When I asked him, ‘What do you think?’ He answered me right away, ‘No!’ To him, the difference between Mexico and the representation of Mexico was clear. Anne did not question the scenography of the place; instead, she asked me, ‘Is this real Mexican food?’ For Anne, the representation was natural and the food artificial; her son had exactly the opposite appreciation. For previous generations representations of the Mexican landscape are replicas, while for the new ones they are simulacra. Whereas former generations are skeptical about objects, later ones doubt representations. While landscape objects did not used to travel easily, they are nowadays everywhere.

In 2009 the *Los Pilonos* foodscape translated itself into an alcohol spirit. *Tequila Los Pilonos* is offered at some shops and restaurants in downtown Amsterdam. In 2010, *Los Pilonos* started to produce its own spicy chili sauce. Those products are a re-semiotization of the foodscape. With them, consumers can enact the Mex-Mex body at home.



152. Los Pilonos tequila⁵⁷



153. Los Pilonos Salsa⁵⁸

6.6 CONCLUSIONS

After delving into the history of the Anderson's Group and exploring how the restaurant *Sí Señor* constituted metrological chains on *El Tenedor's* website, I analyzed three foodscapes that have taken the rural and urban landscape of Mexico as the source text for making the translations. I explained how Sabina's and Julio's affections for the Mexican landscape and the knowledge of a Mexican migrant who used to work for a restaurant of the Anderson's Group in Madrid formed an entrepreneurial society able to contaminate many bodies with their passions through the *La Mordida* foodscape. The enacted foodscape has become known as Mex-Mex.

The Mex-Mex foodscape was born in Mexican tourist destinations like the Zona Rosa and beaches like Cancún and Los Cabos. This foodscape concept was not developed by Mexican for Mexicans; instead, Mexicans developed the concept for people from abroad. The tastes,

forms and aesthetic lines of these foodscapes are translations of the Mexican landscape that emerged after the Second World War in order to attract tourists to the nation: The Mex-Mex foodscape responds to the “North Americanization” of the national landscape (Pérez 2007). The entities dwelling in these foodscapes belong to multiple chronotopes. An abundance of icons and bright colors characterizes the Mex-Mex scenographies. Common themes among these foodscapes include the rural world and the city; the folkloric and the hegemonic Mexico.

After some years this new genre of the Mexican foodscape was taken as a model by many former workers at *La Mordida* who have since established their own restaurants in Madrid. Nevertheless, *La Mordida* is itself a repetition of Carlos Anderson’s passion and the Anderson’s Group desire for expansion, as is *Los Pilonos* in Amsterdam. Therefore I argue that all of those foodscapes belongs to the same constellation. In this collective process of translation it is difficult to discern which are the models and which are the repetitions. In recent years there have been some oppositions among the Mex-Mex foodscapes, such as the case of *Los Pilonos* Kerkstraat in Amsterdam, but not radical innovations. Using the potent signs associated with this genre many Mexican entrepreneurs have opposed the Tex-Mex and Cal-Mex foodscapes in Amsterdam and Madrid in order to create difference among the Mex-foodscapes and generate economic earnings.

NOTES

- 1 <http://www.cncaustin.com/history.html>. Accessed: 16 July 2010
- 2 <http://www.carlosandcharlies.com/about/index.htm>. Accessed: 16 July 2010
- 3 Anderson’s restaurant, Mexico City: http://www.grupoandersons.com/MMX_Content.asp?Cnt=WA_History. Accessed: 05/11/2011
- 4 Anderson’s mandiles: *Ibid*. Accessed: 05/11/2011
- 5 Carlos y Charlie: Op cit. Accessed: 05/11/2011
- 6 <http://www.carlosandcharlies.com/about/index.htm>. Accessed: 16 July 2010
- 7 http://www.grupoandersons.com/MMX_Content.asp?Cnt=WA_History. Accessed: 16 July 2010
- 8 <http://www.studentcity.com/destinations/spring-break-cancun/meal-plans/>
- 9 El Cuchi Madrid: <http://www.gentereal.com/espana/madrid/madrid/lugares/catp/comerybeber/cath/mexicana>
- 10 El Cuchi restaurant in 1987, Barbara Slavin: <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/30785328>. Accessed: 05/11/2011
- 11 Restaurante El Cuchi. Famous for who they didn’t feed. Richard Morley : <http://aviewofmadrid.blogspot.com/2009/06/grub-for-guiris-beginners-guide-to-not.html>
- 12 *Ibid*.
- 13 <http://www.cncaustin.com/history.html>. Accessed: 03/05/2011
- 14 http://www.grupoandersons.com/MMX_Content.asp?Cnt=WA_History. Accessed: 03/05/2011
- 15 Aeromexico: Mexican air company.
- 16 Si Señor: http://madrid.salir.com/si_senor/fotos/89033. Accessed: 10/11/11
- 17 El Tenedor: http://www.eltenedor.es/w/restaurant/restaurant_search.php?id_city=22&id_speciality=101&is_search=1. Accessed 14/09/2011

- 18 http://www.eltenedor.es/las-opiniones-de/Lucia-V-/4i_319101.html. Accessed 30 November 2010
- 19 In http://www.eltenedor.es/las-opiniones-de/Lucia-V-/4i_319101.html. Accessed 30/11/2010
- 20 D.F: Federal District, Mexico.
- 21 Chilango: Resident of D.F.
- 22 <http://www.lamordida.com/>. Accessed: 04/09/2009
- 23 Subcomandante Marcos: sub-commander of the Mexican guerrilla EZLN (Zapatista Army for the National Liberation).
- 24 <http://www.myspace.com/juliosanchezmartinez>. Accessed: 31/10/2011
- 25 Jorge Marin used to work at an Anderson's Group restaurant in Cancun before migrating to Spain. This experience helped him to get a job at *El Cuchi* and then at *Sí Señor*: his experience as waiter at an Anderson's Group restaurant matched well with the Mexican migrants who worked at *El Cuchi* and *Sí Señor*: Traditionally, most Mexican migrants in Spain are middle class, well-educated young people. Not all of them have terrific senses of humor, but their Spanish is often enough to catch the attention of Spanish people.
- 26 Para Jorge Marin La Panza es Primero y el negocio tambien: http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi_0199-6336174/Para-Jorge-Mar-n-la.html. Accessed: 20/05/2011
- 27 "La Mordida" means "the bite," but it is the colloquial term in Mexico for a bribe.
- 28 <http://www.myspace.com/juliosanchezmartinez>. Accessed: 31/10/2011
- 29 Catrina, Blue demon and Mexican naked woman to enact the Mexican ready for consumers body <http://aviewofmadrid.blogspot.com/2009/06/grub-for-guiris-beginners-guide-to-not.html>. Accessed: 5/11/2011
- 30 By the way, Rene was not a chef either. He is a photographer who migrated to Spain to develop his artistic career; he became an entrepreneur a few years later.
- 31 Quetzalcoatl: Pre-Hispanic god, . Double entity conformed by the union of snake and bird.
- 32 <http://www.fotolog.com/caritzacg/63877938>. Accessed: 13/05/2011
- 33 http://madrid.salir.com/la_panza_es_primero_malasana. Accessed: 13/05/2011
- 34 <http://andresdelcollado.blogspot.com/2007/12/restaurante-ndale-guey.html>. Accessed: 11/09/2011
- 35 <http://www.mananitas.com/>. Accessed: 11/09/2011
- 36 Prat, Monica, 2010, Andrés Collado, respirando puro arte, 01 October 2010. <http://www.toumai.es/noticias/una-vida-entre-6m/5107-andres-collado-respirando-puro-arte>. Accessed: 02/08/2011
- 37 <http://www.elchaparrito.com/>. Accessed: 16/09/2011
- 38 Cuesta: Mexican food distributor in Madrid.
- 39 *Xochimilco*: Canals form Mexico City.
- 40 Mezcal: Drink made out of *agave*. It differentiates from *tequila* because *Tequila* has been trough one more process of distillation. No necesariamente: no todos los tequilas se destilan dos (o más veces); además, hay mezcales que se destilan dos (o más) veces.... La diferencia es que el *Tequila* es mezcal de... *Tequila* (y áreas de denominación de origen). In a sense *Tequila* is a *Mezcal*.
- 41 In the Netherlands some people think that eating mezcal worms can produce a hallucinatory experience, which explains why some people have strong aversions towards the product and others actively seek it out.
- 42 Pilón: extra product or gift commonly given after buying in the street markets from Mexico.
- 43 Horeca: Hostel-Restaurant-Cafe (Hospitality) Industry.
- 44 www.lospilones.com. Accessed? 16/11/2011
- 45 <http://www.lospilones.com>
- 46 "Translation is a substitution operation in which the text processing takes place on the level of expression, that is to say between two language systems (Genette talks about "*transposition linguistique*"; 1982, 238), but con-

sequently also often on the level of content; *adiectio* and *detractio* tend to try and compensate for each other as gain and loss while the repetition transformation can also play an important role. Translation is thus a meta-text par excellence that is to say a text which ‘responds’ to an existing text in another language” (Van Gorp 2004, 64).

47 <http://www.dutchgrub.com/>. Accessed: 09/09/2011

48 Van Gorp argues that “Common types of adaptations are the thematic *updating* and *relocating* in time and place or *modernization*” (Van Gorp 2004: 66).

49 Photo* Santo at *Los Pilones* the Jourdaan.

50 Posada: Religious party celebrated every day for the 12 days before Jesus born in the 24th of December.

51 Piñata: a papier-mache sculpture covered with colors and filled with fruit and candy. It is a main artifact used in the celebration of Posadas and birthdays. In its traditional star-shape, it symbolizes the seven deadly sins.

52 <http://www.kreative.es/>.

53 Molotov: Rock-rap band from Mexico.

54 Jaguares: Rock-pop band from Mexico.

55 The same phenomenon happens with the restaurant *La Panza es primero* in Madrid.

56 Saul Hernández: Singer of Los Jaguares.

57 Los Pilones *tequila*: <http://tyodickerson.com/wordpress/?paged=2>. Accessed: 31/11/2011

58 Los Pilones *Salsa*: <http://mx.globedia.com/restaurante-pilones-amsterdam>. Accessed: 31/10/2011

CHAPTER 7

“REAL”-MEX: TRADITIONAL TORTAS, MEXICAN HAUTE CUISINE AND MODERN TAQUERÍAS IN MADRID

In this chapter I explore Mexican restaurants that have tried to gain independence from the Mex-Mex foodscape in Madrid. The owners of these restaurants argue that the Mex-Mex restaurants are full of stereotyped bodies, so they seek to be more truthful to the source text by translating diverse bodies dwelling in what they call the real landscapes of Mexico. With their practices of translation, they aim to modernize the chronotope of the Mex-Mex foodscape. These entrepreneurs have created opposition to the Mex-Mex genre in order to innovate in the Mexican foodscape.

In the first section I explore the case of the *D.F. Bar*. This restaurant specializes in Mexican *tortas* (sandwiches). A university student from Mexico City translated signs associated to his life to enact this traditional foodscape. In the second section I present the case of *El Chile Verde*. In the beginning, *El Chile Verde* focused on enacting of what the owner of the place identifies as Mexican *haute cuisine*. Nevertheless, since the place did not achieve the desired coordination with consumers, the owner eventually fused Mexican food first with the Spanish and later with the Dominican foodscape. The last case I explore in this chapter is the restaurant *Tepic*. *Tepic* enacts a modern *taquería*. According to its owners, this foodscape could be translated back to Mexico City and placed in the Zona Rosa, the exclusive neighborhood in Mexico City where Carlos Anderson opened his first restaurant back in the 1960s.

7.1 D.F. BAR: TRADITIONAL TORTAS

“[It’s] clear that this is a *tortería* and although I know I have some things that are not from a *tortería* I want to make clear that this *tortería* sells *tortas* basically. And that is what we sell most, firstly *tortas*, secondly *tortas*. My focus is *tortería*.” (Octavio 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation. Author’s translation).

D.F. Bar opened in downtown Madrid in 2009. Octavio, its owner, was born in Mexico City. In 2006 he migrated to Madrid with his wife; his wife’s family is from Israel and they wanted to settle somewhere in between Mexico and Israel. In Mexico, Octavio had worked as a radio broadcaster. After arriving in Madrid he worked in a marketing agency and a *Starbucks* cafe. Octavio recalled that some months after he arrived in Madrid, he and his wife visited a kebab restaurant in downtown Madrid on a friend’s recommendation. He liked the place and the simplicity of the concept. It was there that the idea of opening his own business started to emerge:

“... at that time I did not know anything, no business plan, no *tortería*, only an idea. When I was looking for a location I mentioned the idea to the same friend and she recommended that I ask if the people from the kebab place would like to sell it. We got together, she asked, and they decided to sell it.” (Octavio 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

At the beginning, Octavio’s desire was to open a *taquería*. However, at that time it was almost impossible to buy corn *tortillas* in Madrid, so he decided to establish a *tortería* instead:

“I [was] clear I wanted to have a food business. And I started to look for possibilities. I thought about the possibility of opening a *taquería* but I thought it was more difficult because of the [lack of] *tortillas*. Nowadays it is not difficult anymore because there are some *tortillerías*. I opened a *tortería* because I thought it was easy to open a *tortería* anywhere in the world. You find bread and beans almost in all the world.” (Octavio 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

Since it is not possible to find *bolillos* or *teleras* in Spain to make Mexican *tortas*, Octavio had to find bread similar to the original version. After many tries, he found the *mollete andaluz*:

“You have to try, try and try everywhere. I looked everywhere. You call the bread distributors. They use a lot of frozen bread here. So you call them and tell them what you want, what are you going to use the bread for, and they bring you samples, I talked with many bakeries and I looked for the most convenient, the most similar until I found it.” (Octavio 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

The *mollete andaluz* is similar to the bread used in Mexico to make *tortas*, but it is not an entirely truthful repetition. Octavio explains that the *mollete andaluz* has less flavour and is softer than he would like. In order to achieve a more marked equivalence, he puts the bread in the oven again after it has been baked to ensure that it achieves the *doradito* [golden, crusty] quality that characterizes the Mexican bread used for *tortas*.

Octavio, a proud *chilango*, named his *tortería* *D.F. Bar* primarily because of his passion for Mexico City¹. He also wanted to have a short name which would be easy to remember, and “a name that talked about Mexico.... that talked about Mexico City, and the shortest name that came to my mind, the most synthetic, was *D.F. Bar*.” Octavio believes that short names are easy to remember. In fact, the first name he thought of for his restaurant was *La Tortuga Chilanga* (The Chilango Tortoise), but he realized it was long and confusing, and that in Madrid many people did not know what *chilango* meant: “I did some research. For some people, it sounded like *chile*. And the people said to me, [don’t name it] *tortuga*,² because it sounded as if it was a place where workers are very slow” (Octavio 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).

Octavio tried to establish the restaurant’s identity by putting the words *Tortería Mexicana* / *Super Bocatas*³ at the bottom of his logo. Since *bocatas* are Spanish sandwiches that share an essential form – the expression plane – with Mexican *tortas*, Octavio employed this parallel as a strategy to achieve equivalence between the food concepts. This was important because in Spain, the word *torta* refers to something different than in Mexico:

“[a *torta*] is flatter and wider, it can be salty, it can be sweet. And it is not a *torta* (sandwich). What they have in mind when you say *torta* is not what we call *torta*... Sure sure, with ‘*tortería Mexicana*’ and under ‘super bocatas’, I am already saying to the people what it is all about. I am not saying they are better... I am only saying, they are super *bocatas* and are different from what you normally eat.” (Octavio 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).



154. D.F. Bar. Tortería Mexicana / Super bocatas. Madrid⁴

Octavio argues that *D.F. Bar* is not a restaurant but a *tortería*. From his point of view, a *tortería*’s ambience is more informal than a restaurant’s. He wants consumers to feel comfortable at his establishment. The informal character of *D.F. Bar* helps Octavio lower his operating expenses because he does not need to hire a lot of waiters. This is not only a simplification of the Mexican foodscape but also of his management:

“...When people come I am making *tortas*. I give them the menu, other times I ask them to look at the blackboard for it. I write down the order in the computer and that is it. This is the system, it is not a restaurant.” (Octavio 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).

Most of the consumers at *D.F. Bar* are Spanish and Mexican, although some customers come from the U.S. and other European countries. Although Octavio tries to use the logo to explain the concept behind *D.F. Bar*, it is quite difficult for Spanish consumers to understand. Many ask for popular dishes from the Mexican foodscape:

“They ask for enchiladas, *tacos*, some people ask if we have *quesadillas*. They ask if we sell *tacos*, if we sell *quesadillas*. Someone even ask me if we sell Mexican *tostadas*. And I said no, this is a *tortería*. They ask me for *mole*, and the same person for *tacos*.” (Octavio 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

After consumers try *tortas*, some of them ask Octavio if he invented the dish. To them *tortas* is a novelty from the Mexican foodscape, while in Mexico *tortas* are a ubiquitous part of the daily gastronomic repertoire.

Every time a Spanish customer enters *D.F. Bar*, Octavio or the waiter asks them “Have you ever been here? Do you know what a *torta* is?” Octavio’s description of a *torta cubana* is as follows: “it is bread, a *mollete andaluz*. You cut it in half. One side has refried beans, the other, mayonnaise, avocado, onion, tomato and melted cheese. And the main ingredient in this case is the *milanesa*, which is a breaded filet, Frankfurt sausage and ham” (Octavio 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation). Sometimes Octavio has to show the bread to the clients so they manage to generate an agreement. As can be appreciated from his description of the *torta cubana*, Octavio makes comparisons and equivalences between Mexican and Spanish food, which helps Spanish consumers understand the translated concept. Equivalences help consumers feel safe. If the explanation is not clear enough, consumers ask if it is corn bread, or if it is like a *kebab*. By making comparisons and equivalences, waiters and clients try to establish the identity of the entity.

Some Spanish consumers do not like spicy food, so waiters always ask if they want chiles on their *tortas*:

“I think that more than 60% want to try the *picante* [spicy condiments] and only 40% do not. I make a *chipotle* sauce that is not that spicy, and I have some *jalapeños* that are not that spicy, so people can try them. Some people say that they do not want to have chiles at all. Why do they go to a Mexican restaurant then?” (Octavio 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

Most of the Spanish consumers agree that the mix of ingredients gives Mexican *tortas* their special flavour. They particularly like the taste of the avocado. Yet some Spanish people that have been in Mexico before do not necessarily agree with Octavio’s translations at first:

“A Spaniard who was in Mexico before came [to *D.F. Bar*], and he told me that he has been in Mexico for I don’t know how long and that he did not eat *tortas* there. That this was not related to Mexico. He asked me, why this is Mexican, if this is a *bocadillo*⁵. ‘What is from Mexico in there?’ He said that and then he tried them and then he said, ‘yes, it is totally Mexican’. For him the concept of *bocadillo* was bread with something inside. That is a *bocadillo*. When he realized that it was not bread with [one] thing inside, but with many things inside, he said, ‘Of course this is Mexican. A lot of flavours, a lot of textures’, so he understood.” (Octavio 2008, personal interview. Author’s translation).

The first time I went to *D.F. Bar* I asked for a meal that included French fries, a *torta*, and a soda. For the fries, I could choose between the *chidas*, the *fresas* or the *güeras* fries. In Mexico City slang, *chida* means cool, *fresa* means snob, and *güera* means blonde girl. At *D.F. Bar*, *fresas* fries are served without chiles, and the *güeras* fries come with melted cheese, but in Mexico City you would never find fries with such a name. Nevertheless, there is a *taco* called the *gringas*, a slang term for “foreign White girls.” A Mexico City restaurant owner explained that he came up with the name because some *gringas* who used to eat at his restaurant kept asking for *tacos al pastor* with cheese. That combination was not common, but he would prepare the dish especially for them. He eventually started to offer the specialty to more customers, and it suddenly became well accepted: you can now find the *tacos* known as *gringas* in many restaurants throughout Mexico.

The creation of this dish was not only an intersemiotic translation between qualities attached to consumers’ bodies and a food dish; its creation was also the translation of a face-to-face interaction. However, that aspect of the story is lost, as some restaurants now promote the dish with generic images of blond women – not the specific women whose requests led to the development of the dish. A particular type of body, blonde, foreign, female, now qualifies as the identity of the dish. A similar phenomenon has happen with the fries from *D.F. Bar*. There were no specific *chida*, *fresa* or *güera* consumers coming to his restaurant and asking him to prepare their fries in particular ways. Nevertheless, he decided to use those names because he believes that bodies and potatoes share affects: *chidas*, *fresas* or *güeras* fries are quasi-objects enacted by Octavio with the aim of affecting consumers’ bodies in Madrid. Consumers who know the meaning of the words not only engage with those dishes but also with some qualities attached to certain bodies in the Mexican *socius*.

On my first visit to *D.F. Bar* I got the *chidas* fries with my meal. I did not ask for them, I just got them. The waiter decided to give me this variant not because she thought I was a cool man, but because she assumed that as a Mexican I would want my fries served with chiles. The waitress was an Argentinean woman who had just started working at the restaurant. I noticed that she made the same assumption with other Mexican consumers who asked for fries. Nevertheless, when consumers were from Spain or somewhere else, she would ask them which kind of fries they wanted. When I asked her how she knew I was Mexican, she told me that she could tell from my accent. In this situation, my Mexican accent became a relevant actant in the restaurant networks, and led her to prepare my meal in a particular way because she assumed that chiles are one of my affections.

In trying to recognize the correct affections of their customers’ bodies, waiters make hypotheses about them. If they do it well, they satisfy consumers’ bodies. If they do it wrong, there is no pleasure. Most of the waiters I met in my field research insisted that they are able to recognize consumers’ affections. Some times they only look as far as consumers’ nationality or ethnicity; other times they take into consideration the customer’s gender, age, type of body, quantity of people, dress code, time, the reason for them to be in the restaurant, etc.

Nevertheless, some consumers do not want to be framed; instead, they frame the restaurant beforehand. On one occasion when I was at the *D.F. Bar*, two Spanish men in their 40’s came in. The waitress went through the same ritual as with other Spanish customers: “have you been here before? Do you know what a *torta* is?” These two did not let her finish, however – they already know what they wanted. They tried to order two orders of *fajitas*, two *margaritas* and some *nachos*. The waitress explained that *D.F. Bar* was a *tortería* and did not serve *fajitas*. They appeared really disappointed, and said ‘then this is not a Mexican restaurant!’ She agreed with them and said, ‘yes, this is not a Mexican restaurant, it’s a Mexican *tortería*’. The consumers seemed confused, and one asked, ‘so what do *torterías* sell?’ After the waitress explained to them again what *tortas* are, the same man said, ‘no, no, only bring us *margaritas* and *nachos*... you do sell *margaritas* and *nachos*, right?’ The waitress answered affirmatively and went away. After she left, one of the Spanish people insisted to the other that this was not a Mexican restaurant, and he apologized for the “inconvenience.” It was his first time there, and he did not expect to find a ‘Mexican restaurant’ where the only products offered were *tortas* and some side dishes. He then promised to take his friend to *La*

Mordida or La Panza es Primero.

This consumer has fixed his belief in the Mex-Mex restaurants. To him, only those restaurants were truly “Mexican.” Like this customer, consumers form frames of what a Mexican restaurant is. If the frame is broken, they can become sad because the object they encountered (in this case, *tortas*) do not match their idealized image (in this case, Mexican food represented by *fajitas*). Alternatively, they can become happy because their idealized image gets expanded by its encounter with a marvellous new object.

According to Octavio, the owner of *D.F. Bar*; the fact that he sells fries, *nachos* and *margaritas* at his *tortería* – items not typically available at *torterías* in Mexico – does not reduce the establishment’s authenticity. Instead, he is adapting the concept of a *tortería* in order to coordinate with the taste and culinary practices of his consumers:

“See, I put *margaritas* here [on the menu] because people love them. So, since a few years ago Mexican food is in fashion, and there are a lot of Mexican restaurants, as you can see. Among the things they like most are *margaritas* and *nachos*, which are more Tex-Mex. [So] I put *nachos* here [on the menu]. In Mexico, it would be a sin to have a *tortería* [serve] *nachos*, first because *torterías* sell *tortas*, sodas and *aguas frescas* if you are lucky. And if you are very lucky, *tepache*. But normally, [it’s] *tortas* [and] sodas [but] no beer. But here, it is something else, here I adapted the *torta*. It is like a *torta*, but...I made it a meal with soda or beer and fries. In Mexico, it is unthinkable to eat fries with a *torta*, but for the taste of the Spanish people, fries are everywhere. So there is a menu of French fries, *torta* and soda or beer...I do not care about the *Margaritas*. It is because this place has a bar licence. I have to take advantage of that. People like to drink.” (Octavio 2009, personal interview).

Although Octavio has translated only one entity from the Mexican foodscape, the symbols that he uses for its commoditization belong to multiple chronotopes. In his foodscape, every symbol has a history that authorizes its presence. Octavio and his wife wanted to decorate the place with a lot of iconography related to Mexico City. Nevertheless they did not want to construct a kitschy scenography such as the ones depicted in the Mex-Mex foodscapes described in previous chapters. From his point of view, those are low affections related to ignorant bodies:

“They are too much, they are more kitsch. It is a superficial Mexico, a new fashion from some years back. To represent Mexico with wrestlers, with images that – from my point of view – is not the real Mexico...[or] at least not the Mexico I know and the one I want to depict, the one that I want to make people know. The one that I want to make people know is this one [his restaurant]. There are wrestlers in almost all of [the other ones]. A lot of kitsch, a lot from a Mexico City that I have not seen. I have not seen [restaurants] without that excess of superficiality. Here, they wanted to be alternative [so] they skip the mariachi and the *charro’s sombrero* to something that is not related to tradition. And, well, we are not only mariachis, but we are neither only wrestlers. We do not live with wrestlers...So there is some culture in Mexico...which is this kitschy culture, people who like *Café Tacuba*⁶ [for being] the most Mexican ever, the tequila boom, the renewed form of *cantinas*⁷, but not because they feel that it is something traditional. *Tequila* became famous in Mexico when the gringos and the English told us that *tequila* was a marvel. Some 20 years ago, to drink *tequila* was for *nacos*. To drink *Victoria* beer was for construction workers.

But in the US, France, England, they started to drink tequila because the gringos started to make good quality *tequila* and then they said, ok, if the gringos like it, and people from England like it, then it is not for nacos: ‘I can also drink *tequila*’, and that was the *tequila* boom. And it was the boom from a badly understood nationality. It is the *tequila*, the images from the cantina, *mezcal* is becoming fashionable, the *pulque* I do not know...” (Octavio 2009, personal interview).

The restaurant’s color scheme was the first sign that Octavio and his wife chose for *D.F. Bar*: they selected yellow and blue because they like them, not because they thought they were particularly representative of Mexico City. Karen Davidoff, a Mexican student who works for a company specializing in the construction of scenographies in Madrid, helped decorate the *tortería*. She painted the tables and walls:

“Those tables were painted by Karen, a girl who works here in the afternoons. She, she worked making scenographies. She works for a scenography production house here, so she likes to make these kinds of drawings, and she works with acrylics, with paintings. We thought first we wanted to [decorate] the tables with *papel picado*,⁸...and put some polyester on top of them, but the technique did not work. So we thought about illustrations, she had some ideas, I had others, and we found what we wanted. We did not really know, but... we discovered it [along] the way, fortuitously.” (Octavio 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

The enactment of the translated foodscape at *D.F. Bar* was a collective process of invention and creativity. In the beginning Octavio, his wife and Karen did not know what they wanted, but in the process of developing the restaurant they formed a foodscape. Taking pieces from everywhere, they constructed a plot that can be coherently read by its creators. Some of the translated symbols were signs that became attached to Octavio’s body when he was a college student. Although some of those signs are related to his personal, intimate experiences, he believes they are also representative of the Mexican *socius*: to understand the *social*, we have to pay attention to individual passions.

Many of the symbols hanging on the walls at *D.F. Bar* are images downloaded from the Internet. Others have been gifts from friends and customers. In the following quotations, Octavio explains why he chose each of the signs dwelling in *D.F. Bar*. We are going to take a trip as if we were sitting inside the restaurant, watching the street. We start with the photos hanging on the right wall, then the back one, and afterwards the left side. I finish this trip with Octavio’s explanations about some of the icons Karen painted on the tables. In the next few pages I use long quotations, in order to fully appreciate how Octavio reads and relates with the plot depicted in his foodscape:

The logo of UNAM [the National Autonomous University of Mexico]:



155. UNAM⁹

“Because I studied at CCH [College of Science and Humanities] at UNAM ...I began my university studies and although I did not finish my bachelor’s degree at UNAM I felt like I was a part of it. Because, more than the university it is also the representation of (all of) Latin America. I like the part ‘from Mexico to Patagonia’. Latin America is America Latina. And in the bottom there is a representation of Tenochtitlan, the symbol of Tenochtitlan.” (Octavio 2009, personal interview).

Note that in this case, the use of a symbol is related to Octavio’s life biography. He studied at UNAM and feels like a part of this institution. But Octavio also chose this symbol because of its textual dimension: storytelling emerges from the symbol of the national university.

The Mexico City (D.F.) metro:



156. Metro, Mexico City¹⁰

“...To me it is very typical, very urban, very Mexico City. It is the classic orange from Mexico City. I wanted to show scenes of Mexico City.” (Octavio 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation). Mexico City is the only city in Mexico with a subway, and the subway cars are painted a

distinctive orange. So in Octavio’s opinion, orange is the colour of urban modernity.

A photo by the Casasola brothers:



157. Zapata and Villa. The Casasola brothers¹¹

“It is Zapata and Villa when they are sitting in the presidential chair. It is Villa and his delegation. So for me this is also something very representative of the Mexican history.” (Octavio 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

For Octavio this photo is the essence of the Mexican Revolution. In his description he is very detailed about the actors, the chronotope, and the value of this icon for Mexican history.

The image of a *Catrina*:



158. The *Catrina*¹²

“It is also a representation of the political, social and cultural life of Mexico. In this case represented by Rivera, but also by Posadas, Jose Guadalupe Posadas. The *Catrina*, the *Catrina* at the centre of everything, as a representation of this society. I like this image.” (Octavio 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

For Octavio the idea of “living death” holds Mexico together. Without this potent sign, the country would fall to pieces. In his view, the *Catrina* is the most social entity from Mexico.

The Pumas symbol:



159. PUMAS. UNAM¹³

“The Pumas symbol, because I like it. I like the Pumas symbol of UNAM’s football team. I do not like football at all. I do not like football. I never watch it. I watch it when the Mexican selection plays in the World Cup, sometimes. But I like the Puma.” (Octavio 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

In the case of the Pumas symbol, Octavio developed affection for the aesthetics of the sign, not with its textual dimension.

The image of Tenochtitlan:



160. Tenochtitlan¹⁴

“...Mexico, *Tenochtitlan* before the conquest. It is for people to look at. To the Spanish people, I can tell a bit how, how we have an idea of what Mexico City looked like before the Spanish arrived. And some people are very interested in that.” (Octavio 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

Octavio wanted to create a dialogue with Spanish consumers at his Mexican *tortería*. With this image, he is to some extent demanding a reaction from them; “this was our paradise before you arrived.”

The papel amate::



161. Papel amate¹⁵

“The *amate* was a gift. A friend of us give it to us, a Mexican friend told us, “I have something for your bar.” We liked it and we hung it. Actually, this comes from Amatlan, but I do not know where she bought it. But it is a Mexican image.” (Octavio 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

The *amate* arrived in Octavio’s foodscape as a gift, not as an element of the plot he developed. But he could not deny its inclusion in the decoration of the place, for that would mean the exclusion of his friend.

Frida in Xochimilco:



162. Frida¹⁶

“Well, [this image] is Frida in *Xochimilco*. From my point of view, it is an unknown image of Frida. It is a very beautiful photo. And it is a representation that is... more of *Xochimilco* than of Frida, to be honest.” (Octavio 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

At *El Chaparrito*, Frida is also in *Xochimilco* travelling with Paulino, César and Juan. At *D.F. Bar* she is alone in an “unknown” picture that Octavio actually does not really like. He cares more about the depicted landscape than the well-known body inhabiting it.

Photo of a *torta*:



163. D.F. Bar. Torta¹⁷

“[This is] a photo of a *torta* so that people who do not know what it is can find out...before getting the menus where there is a real photo, I had this to tell people that this is what a real *torta* looks like. For them to know what it is about.” (Octavio 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

This static image helps stabilize, at least for a moment, the notion of the thing that consumers will introduce into their bodies. After reading the menu and hearing the explanation of *tortas* provided by the waiters, this picture helps consumers discover qualities that cannot be described through spoken or written language.

Spencer Tunick photo of Mexico City:



164. Naked Zocalo¹⁸

“This is a photo taken by someone from Spencer Tunick’s photo in downtown Mexico City. With 18, 20,000 naked people, I do not know how many were there. And I like the image a lot, because it is the image of a... Mexico City that...a lot of us did not imagine. Honestly, when they said that Tunick was going to Mexico, I said, let’s see how many people will get naked...And it is amazing that there was such a huge quantity of people who wanted to get naked! And all the ones who could not find a place there because the applications were full, and there were people who wanted to get naked. To me, it is something amazing in the mentality of the Mexicans. A society that is so conservative in discourse, but suddenly they said, yes, let’s get naked downtown! It is a photo that represents the openness of the Mexicans.” (Octavio 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

Have you explained this photo to customers as well?

“Yes, [to them] as well. Most of the times they ask for the names. Because the names of some people who were there are written there, so we asked, we said to them, we have a photo and we would like to put the names and they said, yes, sure.” It is real people. People who live in Mexico. Well, [but] you cannot see anybody there. It is a mass [of people]. People come and see and ask themselves, what is that?” (Octavio 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

Octavio explained that the intention of inscribing names over the amorphous mass of bodies is to make it human. The names provide this body with some organs “to humanize it, to make it human, because I imagine the photo is a naked mass, yes, but this mass is made out of people. This mass is composed of people and it is people that we know.”

What is represented on the tables?



165. D.F. Bar. Table 1



166. D.F. Bar. Table 2



167. *D.F. Bar*. Table 3. Photos taken by Octavio Eguiluz

“Daily life of Mexico, and more pre-Hispanic Mexico, traditional Mexico. There is a *nopal*, which to me is very Mexican. There is an *ocelote*, a Mayan *ocelote*, but ok, they were also in the Aztec culture. A maguey with flowers. The symbol of Mexico Tenochtitlan. Although it also represents a nopal, it is much more than that. Afterwards there is a *lagartija*¹⁹. To me, personally, the *lagartija* represents biodiversity. In Mexico, we are the first, I believe, the country with the most biodiversity in reptiles and insects. Then the *calavera*²⁰, *la muerte*, *la muerte* with painted eyes and more, so a very Mexican death. And the *chapulin*²¹ from Chapultepec.” (Octavio 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).



168. Musicians from the band El Gran Silencio at *D.F. Bar*²²

After making a general exploration of some of the signs imprinted in different materials in this foodscape, it becomes clear that some entities are translated after a deep reflexion, while others were introduced by coincidence. Some signs are a part of intimate experiences; others are the icons of the Mexican nation.

Octavio can read the plot as a coherent whole; nevertheless, consumers can only relate with some of its fragments. In my visits to *D.F. Bar*, I overheard other Mexican consumers providing detailed explanations to their friends about the signs depicted in the restaurant.

These Mexican consumers used the foodscape’s signs to socialize with their foreign friends. Like Octavio, they sometimes related to them in an intimate way, while other times they only explained their textual dimensions. But by showing their expertise in these signs, they became more Mexican. The picture that most often catches consumers’ attention is the one with the amorphous mass. When relating with this picture, it is common for Mexicans to proudly exclaim, “I have a friend who was there!”

One day when I visited *D.F. Bar*, a Mexican man explained to his Spanish friend that what was hanging on one of the walls was a handicraft made by indigenous people in Mexico. Then he explained that there was a poster of Mexico *Tenochtitlan*, which was the Aztec capital before the Spanish arrived. At one point during the conversation, he went to the men’s room; after coming back, he mentioned to his friend that he liked the pictures that were displayed there. This experience points to the fact that some consumers are very conscious about the images that are displayed in the foodscapes.

At *D.F. Bar*, it is possible to hear music from Mexican radio stations. Sometimes consumers are fully immersed in the Mexican foodscape, eating *tortas*, when they suddenly realize that something weird has happened to reality: it is seven hours earlier, the temperature is higher or lower than expected, and the broadcasters speak with a weird accent:

“I play radio stations from Mexico. Maybe in Mexico I would not listen to this music all the time. Maybe I would listen to other music, other stations. But I want to make it as if you really go into a *tortería* in Mexico. The closest [thing] to an experience of a *tortería* in Mexico. It will never be the same because we are in Madrid, but, ok, people love it. At first they do not realize but when they hear the advertisements and they hear the time, they look at the station and say, ‘that is Mexican music, that is Mexican radio, and what is it?’ They love it, they love it, they really feel like [they are] in Mexico, the time, the temperature. For example they are talking about today or yesterday. They were saying, today in Mexico is so warm. We will be at 29 [degrees] and here 29 [degrees] is heaven. When you are at 29 [degrees] you say, nice it is not so hot, yesterday was 40 something [degrees].”(Octavio 2009, personal interview).

Octavio wants to make people in Madrid feel as if they really were in a Mexico City *tortería*. In order to enact this semiotic reality, he makes interesting use of the sound modality of his foodscape. While eating *tortas*, consumers travel into the soundscape of Mexico City. When they realize that the soundscape does not match with the landscape outdoors, they get confused and excited. Suddenly two semiotic realities are crashing in their heads!

D.F. Bar has brought innovation to the Mex-foodscapes in Spain by opposing the Mex-Mex foodscape: Octavio uses signs that he believes belong to the real Mexico, and not the stereotypical one. Instead of selling dishes associated with Mex-Mex cuisines, he focuses on *tortas*. However, in order to sell *tortas*, he also has to offer foods associated with the Tex-Mex cuisine (*nachos* and *margaritas*), otherwise some consumers would not accept his translation. In order to achieve coordination, he has to create hybridization between his intimate affective signs and the social potent signs from other Mex-foodscapes.

7.2. EL CHILE VERDE: MEXICAN HAUTE CUISINE



169. El Chile Verde. Mexican haute cuisine²³

El Pimiento Verde (The Green Pepper) is a chain of four Basque restaurants in Madrid. The chain's owner, Carlos, is from San Sebastián, Spain. Carlos loves Mexican music and has a particular affection for *mariachis*. In 2003, he met Amalia, the owner of *El Rincón de Frida*, a Mexican restaurant she opened in Madrid in 2005 with three Mexican friends. Unfortunately, *El Rincón de Frida* soon went bankrupt. Some years later, Amalia started working at *El Pimiento Verde* as a waitress, then in the kitchen. She eventually transformed a restaurant from the chain into a Mexican restaurant: *El Chile Verde*.

Amalia migrated from Mexico to Spain in 1995 after she finished her studies in computer engineering. She wanted to travel in Europe, but did not have enough money to do it. So she decided to start her adventure by working for a while in Spain. As soon as she arrived in Madrid, Amalia started to work at different Mexican restaurants. She claims that her career in the restaurant business started as a mere coincidence. One day, she met a woman outside a public phone in Madrid. When the woman realized that Amalia was from Mexico, she offered her a job at *Malpaso*, a Mexican restaurant. She explained to Amalia that it was a new restaurant and they were looking for a waiter; she could not take the job so maybe Amalia would be interested in it. Amalia accepted the offer and started to work at *Malpaso* as a waitress. In her free time she would help in the kitchen. Amalia says that she learned to cook Mexican food there. After one year she decided to change jobs and switched to working at another Mexican restaurant.

Amalia's second job was at *Cantina Mariachi*. She started as a chef, and was initially the only Mexican working there. She learned how to manage the kitchen and expanded her knowledge about Mexican food. Amalia believes that the fact that she is a Mexican and knows which were the right flavors helped her to reproduce and create new Mexican dishes. After working at *Cantina Mexicana* for a year, she moved to *Tequila Sal Limon* and then to *La Taquería del Alamillo*. The experience she acquired in those restaurants helped her to acquire enough knowledge to run her own Mexican restaurant: "I learned techniques there. I have learned different specialties. I have learned different techniques. I have implemented those techniques to Mexican food. By techniques, I mean how to organize a kitchen, how to prepare a dish, how to save a dish" (Amalia 2009, personal interview).

According to Amalia, *El Rincón de Frida* went bankrupt because of administrative problems, not because of the quality of the food. Since two of the investors were living in Mexico, it was hard to deal with the business's accounting. When the restaurant went into crisis she started to also work at *El Cuchi*, in order to earn extra income and make ends meet. Neverthe-

less, she did not succeed and *El Rincón de Frida* closed down.

Amalia started to work at *El Pimiento Verde* as a waitress in 2007. She also learned how to cook Basque food. Since the dishes were well received by consumers, Carlos allowed Amalia to transform one of his Basque restaurants into a Mexican one. In order to maintain coordination between the Basque chain and the Mexican restaurant, the new place was baptized as *El Chile Verde* (The Green Chile). The restaurant’s decoration is more subdued than the colorful and exuberant decoration of the Mex-Mex restaurants established in Madrid. In the words of a Spanish consumer, “of all the Mexican restaurants in Madrid this is probably the most comfortable. Its decoration is more toned-down in comparison to the rest of the Mexican restaurants in the city. That fact makes the place more sophisticated, perfect for going out to have dinner with (your partner)” (*Yelp*. Nacho M. Madrid. 7/04/2011)²⁴:



170. *El Chile Verde*, façade. Madrid²⁵



171. *El Chile Verde*, main room I, Madrid, 2009



172. *El Chile Verde*, main room II, Madrid, 2009



173. *El Chile Verde*, bar room, Madrid, 2009

Amalia remembers that when she started to work in Mexican restaurants it was not easy to prepare authentic Mexican food because the main ingredients were not available. Therefore it was necessary to make deletions, substitutions and adaptations in recipes. Nevertheless,

after the turn of the millennium more distributors of Mexican food products started to appear in Spain. Nowadays it is not necessary to connect multiple networks from three continents in order to prepare a *tamal*, as Ventura Rocha used to do in the middle of the 20th century. Today, all the ingredients necessary to make a *tamal* can be acquired with a couple of phone calls or computer clicks, so Amalia argues that differentiation among Mexican restaurants is created by taste:

“My restaurant differs from the rest due to taste. I try to give the right taste...I have many clients who try *mole* in other places and then here. They like the taste from here because you have to know how to prepare it. Nowadays you can find all the ingredients in Spain, but you have to know how to prepare them in order to achieve the right taste.” (Amalia 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

From Amalia’s point of view, the only way to achieve the correct taste for Mexican food in Spain is through a long process of training the palate. She remembers that when she first arrived in Spain, the food seemed tasteless:

Your palate is very strong, but when time passes your palate gets soft. So that is when you are able to enjoy the food from here...The organism gets more sensitive when it is not used to eat spices...You get accustomed to certain foods. After I arrived here I started to try many foods, to experiment, to learn. I liked those flavors!” (Amalia 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

Somehow Amalia acquired a new palate after arriving in Spain. Her taste world expanded. As Latour argues, to have a body is to learn how to be affected: “body parts are progressively acquired at the same time that ‘world counter-parts’ are being registered in new ways” (Latour 2002: 1). In order to be a good chef, it is important to have a palate trained and able to recognize gustatory subtleties and diverse tastes:

“It is very important to get used to the flavors from here. When you get used to the flavors of here, when you learn about the food from here, your palate changes, you identify more. It is at that point when you manage to achieve the right taste of the Mexican food in Spain. Because I make the food as it is. I do not miss any flavor. I put all the spices. I bring them from Mexico. The only difference is that I put less quantity. So the dish, you can taste the right flavor of the Mexican dish but it is not that spicy and it is not that sweet either but it is the right taste.” (Amalia 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

At *El Chile Verde* Amalia tried to offer what she calls Mexican *haute cuisine*. Her main dishes were *mole*, which she prepared from scratch, and *chiles en nogada*. Although both dishes are distinguished parts of the Mexican national foodscape, it is not common to find *mole* made from scratch or *chiles en nogada* in the Mex-Mex restaurants of Madrid or Amsterdam. Offering these special dishes made *El Chile Verde* a distinctive Mexican foodscape in Madrid, and in Amalia’s words, a “real” Mexican restaurant that offered Mexican *haute cuisine*.

Chiles en Nogada and *mole* emerged during the colonial period. There is no information on how *chiles en nogada* were adopted as a part of the national cuisine which emerged after independence from Spain. Nevertheless, it is possible to argue that the dish’s aesthetic qualities contributed to its adoption. The green chile, white cream and red pomegranate seeds are an iconic relation to the colors of the Mexican flag. The official historical explanation claims that in the Mexican flag the green stands for the valleys, the white for the pure snow of the mountains, and the red for the blood of the national warriors. *Chiles en nogada* are a quintessential example of how the national discourse developed different strategies in order to relate particular foods to idealized environments, translating national landscapes into foodscapes. In this case, some icons of the national landscape were translated into a flag that functioned as a model in future enactments. When the national landscape was translated into a foodscape, *chiles en nogada*’s ingredients began to function as repetitions of the national icons.



174. Mexican’ flag ²⁶



175. Chile en nogada ²⁷

Amalia also used to offer salads not found in other Mexican restaurants in Madrid: the *ensalada Huatulco* and the *ensalada Acapulco*. Both dishes were served on plates with blue patterns that reflected a quality of the landscape associated with those Mexican beaches.

“In the last review they did of my restaurant they said that this was one of the best Mexican restaurants in Madrid. What the critic said was that in Madrid they do not like spicy [food]. My plates are very good but they are not spicy. There are some restaurants that have extra spicy sauces. I sometimes offer spicy sauces to the clients. If they like spice, and they miss it, they can put it.” (Amalia 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

Although Amalia made some minor modifications – deletions, to be more precise – in her Mexican food in order to generate agreements with Spanish consumers, she did not achieve the coordination she expected. Instead of ordering the Mexican gourmet dishes she offered, customers would ask for dishes like *fajitas* or *nachos* which are commonly offered in Mex-Mex and Tex-Mex restaurants. Other clients used to miss the spiciness and force of the Mexican food. To them, her dishes were simple domestications.

Since the new business was not generating a profit, Carlos proposed that Amalia take charge of the restaurant's management, cover all the related expenses, and pay him monthly rent. She accepted the offer and tried different strategies to attract new clients into her foodscape. She increased the restaurant's advertising, decreased the prices, and started to experiment with new dishes with fancy names. She also introduced a Mexican-Spanish menu at lunchtime. In this way she tried to create agreements with the Spanish workers from the neighborhood.

"There are not too many Mexican restaurants offering more than the classical dishes from the Mexican kitchen. Therefore I like to offer them more of what we have. Fusions are good. Mexican food is fusion food: for example, in the menu I have the *huitlacoche* croquettes and croquettes with mushrooms and *chipotle*. It is the classical way of making the Spanish croquettes but with some spice. Lasagna with *flor de calabaza*... There is also allure in the name of the dish. You have to give an excellent name to an excellent dish. Maybe fusion sounds so exotic, but actually it is a mix of culinary techniques and products and raw food from different places." (Amalia 2009, personal interview. Author's translation).

At one point at *El Chile Verde* it was possible to eat a Spanish or Mexican dish as an appetizer and a Spanish-Mexican fusion dish as the main course. For Amalia, names and forms were very important to create agreements with Spanish consumers:



176. *Revuelto con nachos*. Mexican-Spanish fusion plates at *El Chile Verde*. Madrid, 2009, 177. *Ternera empanada*. Mexican-Spanish fusion plates at *El Chile Verde*. Madrid, 2009

Despite her revisions, Amalia's new business model did not succeed. When she was not able to pay Carlos the rent, he decided to change administration. Samuel, a Dominican immigrant who worked as a waiter at the restaurant, came to know about Carlos' plans and asked him if he could run the restaurant. Carlos agreed, and Samuel replaced Amalia. Samuel insists that when he started to manage *El Chile Verde*, he did not have the intention of firing Amalia. In fact, one year before the crisis broke he suggested to Amalia that they become business partners, but she did not accept. In the new business model, he wanted Amalia to keep working at the restaurant because he did not know how to prepare Mexican food. However, Amalia

did not accept and instead took down her foodscape: she removed most of the decorations and took the recipes and all the information regarding the administration of the place with her when she left. Fortunately, one of the cooks decided to keep working there, but she did not know the secrets of the main dishes like the *mole* and the *chiles en nogada* because Amalia was the one who used to prepare the foodscape’s main dishes.

Samuel started to read about Mexican food in books and on the Internet. He also contacted other Mexicans in order to re-enact some of Amalia’s dishes. It was one of the restaurant’s ex-workers who managed to reproduce Amalia’s *mole* and *chiles en nogada*. Samuel now claims that he prepares those dishes even better than Amalia.

Samuel arrived in Madrid from the Dominican Republic in 2006. He enrolled in a course on how to be a waiter in Santo Domingo before moving to Spain because his wife told him that it was easy to find a job as a waiter in Spain at that time. Once in Madrid, his first job was in a Spanish restaurant. He worked there only for a month. Then he found a job as a waiter at *El Chile Verde* where he replaced a Mexican woman. Since he arrived in Madrid with only a residence permit, the owner of *El Chile Verde* helped him to get his work permit.

Samuel remembers that he tried Mexican food for the first time at *El Chile Verde*. Instead of getting a softer palate as Amalia did, he got a stronger one. In both cases, their bodies’ ability to register new flavors came through an informal training process:

“At the beginning everything was so spicy. When I arrived everything was spicy. The *mole* was spicy, the *chipotle* sauce was spicy...because the palate was not accustomed to spiciness, I found everything spicy. There are foods that, if you put a lot of spice, what you feel is the spiciness, not the flavor...I used to eat, but the spicy [stuff] I would put aside. I used to eat only what was not spicy. Little by little I got accustomed. I started to try the dishes. Nowadays the *chipotle* sauce that I did not eat is my favorite. Now I take some sauce from the restaurant home. Now I eat the *enchiladas*. The *mole*. Now when people ask me if it is spicy I answer them ‘no at all.’” (Samuel 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

At *El Chile Verde* Samuel learned about the form, taste and history of Mexican food. His body was trained and he learned to become affected in a joyful way by Mexican dishes. He remembers that in his first days at work, there were no differences. Everything was spicy, the dishes had no name, and the colors and forms were indistinguishable. Nevertheless, since Samuel only had a short amount of time to prove that he was qualified for the job, he hurried to learn. He made some mistakes, but after a few days he was already explaining to the clients the qualities of Mexican food.

In the beginning, Samuel would only give advice about the dishes that Amalia asked him to recommend. At that time he did not really have intimate preferences. Later, when his palate was trained, he started to recommend dishes that had affected him in a joyful way. Consumers actively contributed to training Samuel’s palate by making him choose between plates; dubious consumers commonly asked “What do you like the most, *cochinita pibil* or *chiles en nogada*? Which one do you recommend for me?” Eventually, consumers at *El Chile Verde* started eating according to Samuel’s passions.

Samuel takes into account multiple factors in order to make suggestions to consumers. First, he measures the size of the body: single persons, couples, group, woman, man or child:

“In the physical [evaluation], you can realize if the client is able to eat one or two chilies. It depends, it depends. After some time, you know the clients. How much can a client eat? If they can eat a lot or not...I normally describe the size of the chili, I always suggest they ask for something more if I know that it is not going to be enough.” (Samuel 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

After the first framing, Samuel tries to understand how the body behaves: a body that is there for seducing behaves different than one that tries to do business or to celebrate. He also takes into account the customers’ ethnicity:

“People from Italy, France and England always eat *enchiladas*. The menu has changed a lot. The chicken is universal. Everybody likes it. So they always go for the chicken *enchilada*...For Spanish people *tacos*, *mole* and *alambre*. Always *guacamole*. *Nachos* are more for young people.” (Samuel 2009, personal interview. Author’s translation).

Samuel has also learned how to describe the qualities of the food in order to make it more attractive. For example, when Amalia was managing the restaurant, an appetizer on *El Chile Verde*’s menu was called “*guacamole con totopos*,” but the same appetizer on the menu at the bar was named “*guacamole con nachos*.” Since he realized that consumers felt more attracted to the latter dish, he decided to present the dish with the same name in both places. When Samuel asked Amalia why she had two names for the same dish, she answered that it was for the sake of variation. In his interaction with clients, Samuel has also learned how to read the dishes after consumers finish eating; he pays attention to what is left over and what is fully consumed.

After Samuel started managing *El Chile Verde*, he made another modification to the menu based on his experience as a waiter at the restaurant. He transformed *El Chile Verde* into a more Latino restaurant. Samuel contends that Latinos eat more than Spanish people when they go out, especially if they are partying. During the week he offers Mexican food on the menu, and every day he offers a Spanish/Mexican lunch menu for the neighborhood workers. On Sundays, he also prepares Dominican dishes. The place is now running well thanks to the fusion he has made by innovatively opposing Mexican, Spanish and Dominican foodscapes. In this case again, something that in the first instance attempted to be a “Real”-Mex foodscape became a hybrid translation. In this case, “Real”-Mex was no more than an ephemeral translation that did not succeeded in achieving coordination.

7.3 TEPIC: A MODERN TAQUERÍA

“In the heard of Chueca, the most cosmopolitan and modern neighborhood of Madrid, you can find Tepic. In our *Taquería* you can enjoy a new concept of Mexican restaurant. Delicious, fun, and accessible. Come eat with your friends, enjoy your dinner in company, share the Experience of living the most urban Mexico hand by hand with Tepic, the “Urban Mex Restaurant” of Madrid”²⁸.

Tepic is both the name of a city in western Mexico and a restaurant in Chueca, a trendy gay-friendly neighborhood in downtown Madrid. The restaurant *Tepic* was established in 2009. The icons used in its design enact a modern urban Mex foodscape. In this case, the depicted landscape has shifted from rural to urban Mexico. The owners of the restaurant aver that *Tepic* is a real Mexican restaurant. To them, this is not the translation of an urban restaurant from Mexico City, but one that could be found in the Zona Rosa, the exclusive neighborhood in Mexico City where the first restaurant from the Anderson’s Group was established. Indeed, since the place opened several entrepreneurs have asked the owners of *Tepic* to translate the concept back to Mexico City.

Tepic’s owners are two Spanish and two Mexican men in their 30’s. Although none of them are from Tepic, they chose the name of this city for their restaurant because they thought the word sounded chic. The fact that they chose this word not for its Mexican-ness but for its chicness highlights the importance the owners place on the sign’s extra-textual dimension. To them, the sound of the utterance is more important than the word’s meaning. In the restaurant’s logo, the meaning of the word is suggested by the use of other three signs: the word “Mex,” a chile, and the Mexican pink color that is used to fill their shape.²⁹ The fact that the logo and its colors are imprinted on many bodies and objects in the foodscape enables coordination among the most disparate entities.





179. *Tepic's* menu



180. *Tepic's* uniform. 2009

The restaurant was mainly designed by the Spanish partners. Since they are industrial designers, they were also in charge of the decoration of the restaurant. The scenography of this place differs from other Mexican restaurants in Madrid, Amsterdam and San Francisco. Instead of a traditional, popular and raw Mexico, the decorations evoke a modern, minimalistic and sophisticated one. The walls are painted white and Mexican pink. The division and continuity of the space is achieved with crystals and textures. The floor is artificial dark brown wood. The light is soft and well directed. The restaurant is divided into three rooms; each has its own theme. The first room is a reception area where consumers can drink cocktails while waiting to be seated. The tables are brown and tall. One wall of this room displays a Warhollean pop version of the traditional Mexico City VW taxis. In the photo, the little green beetle is massively reproduced and painted in pastel colors: the Mexican taxi is not a taxi anymore, but a piece of pop art. The value resides in the extra-textual re-signification more than in its previous existence as a quotidian object of transportation. In this case, the agglomeration of taxis does not disturb one as do real traffic jams, something that anyone who has spent time in Mexico City will have experienced. Instead, the vehicular concentration is used to highlight the aesthetic dimensions of the object. As one of the owners of *Tepic* restaurant pointed out, “what I like so much of this photo is that the taxis are a popular symbol of Mexico City, but here they look so modern.” In his perspective, this is a modern Mexico, not a stereotypical one:



181. *Tepic's* taxi photo

A square hole in one of the first room’s walls allows visitors to see into the next room. This continuity-division is embellished with crystals and cactuses. The second room is bigger than the first one. The tables are white, short and square. Their form allows the space to be managed according to the quantity and fluency of clients; from individual tables for couples to a communal table for 20 clients. One of the walls of this room displays a wall-to-wall picture of the interior of a subway car from Mexico City. A young man sits in the bottom left-hand corner of the photo; a sticker with *Tepic*’s logo appears above him. With this artifact, the restaurant’s space and the Mexico City subway’s space merge. The edited photo erases the bracketing between the physical and the virtual space. Contrary to what happens with the photo in the first room, this dispositive allows consumers to virtually share two spaces separated by thousands of kilometers; they are eating in Madrid and traveling in the Mexico City metro. Consumers often take photos of themselves interacting with the photograph in order to perform a virtual voyage between both spaces. Customers at the restaurant in Madrid embody subway travelers in Mexico City.



182. *Tepic* restaurant

The third room is white. The tables are brown, short and square. The restaurant’s bar is located in this room. On one of the walls is a corner-to-corner black and white photo of the face of a Mexican peasant. He has a friendly smile and wears a *sombrero*. Instead of looking at the restaurant’s customers, the peasant directs his eyes towards nowhere. This is an affective-image *par excellence*. The face makes us wonder what the peasant is thinking about, feeling, wondering. This thinking or reflexive face is produced by the power of a foreign affection: “...we are before a reflexive or reflecting face as long as the features remain grouped under the domination of a thought which is fixed or terrible, but immutable and without becoming, in a way eternal” (Deleuze 1983: 89-90). Our wondering peasant is trapped inside a chronotope where he does not belong; he exists in the liminal space between the rural and the urban world.



183. *Tepic* metro. 2009



184. *Tepic* restaurant. Peasant. 2009

Although *Tepic* is an urban “Real”-Mex restaurant, the icons depicted in the scenography do not belong exclusively to an urban landscape. This is not a purely urban landscape. Even a sophisticated, modern, urban Mexican restaurant has to depict some icons from the backwards-traditional rural Mexico; otherwise, consumers will not recognize the translation. The magnificent metro and the Warhollean taxis could be things from any modern city. They are Deleuzian affective-images without actualization and belong to what Deleuze called any-space-whatever (1983). Indeed, without the cactuses and the Mexican peasant, *Tepic* would look more like a sushi bar than a Mexican restaurant.

In the coming paragraphs I will describe one of my days working at *Tepic* during 2009 in order to explore some of the non-representational performances (Thrift 1999) of workers and consumers enacting Mexican bodies in *Tepic*. It is necessary to make a reservation in advance to eat dinner at *Tepic* on a weekend night. The nights are divided into two seatings. Consumers choose if they want to eat between 20:00 and 22:00, or 22:30 and 00:30 when the restaurant closes. Tadeo, *Tepic*’s manager, organizes the space and the workers’ roles in advance of the customers’ arrival. Every weekend he generates an organizational map with the help of a computer. On this map he divides the space, assigns the workers, and indicates consumers’ preferences. The tables are organized in relation to the number of people who have made a reservation for that night. Big groups are placed in the second room, while couples eat in the third one.

Tadeo meets with the staff to explain their roles for the night. The waiters are divided according to their experience. The most highly trained ones work in the second room attending big groups. The rest are distributed between the first and the third room. On the night in question, the chef encourages the waiters to promote *tacos al pastor* during the weekend because they have prepared a lot of meat to make them. If *tacos al pastor* are not sold out during the weekend, the product is going to start losing its quality, and the restaurant's earnings may be affected. Nevertheless, waiters do not really care about the problems that this overabundance means for the kitchen, or about the potential decrease in the business's profits. Rather, the waiters care about what they eat everyday in the restaurant; they eat for free in the restaurant so they know that if they do not sell enough *tacos al pastor* during the weekend, they will be eating them all week long. Therefore, the waiters put an extra effort into convincing customers to order *tacos al pastor*. For instance, they will argue that “authentic” Mexican bodies are fed with these particular *tacos*. However, it may happen that next week, the waiters will insist that “real” Mexican bodies are fed with a different kind of *taco*. In this dynamic between the waiters and the consumers, authenticity is constructed and performed in the making.

Most of the waiters are young men from different states of Mexico. There is also a waiter from Peru. One day when we were eating before work, one of the Mexican waiters taught the Peruvian worker how to make *tacos*. Suddenly we were involved in a discussion about how to make *tacos*. A couple of waiters from Mexico City argued that a *taco* has to be closed on the bottom to prevent the food from falling out of the *taco*. The rest of us disagreed: for us, *tacos* are not closed on the bottom. The Peruvian waiter was confused. How was it possible that Mexicans do agree on how to make *tacos*? To him, we were all the same; we should all perform the Mexican body in the same way. He did not understand that class and regional differences had an impact on the way a *taco* is made.

When I realized that there was polysemy in the making of a *taco*, I started to ask the other waiters to tell me how they explain dishes to consumers. In this case the same phenomenon happened. Every one of them used different discursive and performative resources to explain the qualities of the same entity. But they did not create the performance only in relation to their personal knowledge and experiences with the dish; they also considered the consumer's identity. They described the dish in completely different ways depending on the personal characteristics of each client. The same dish can have multiple discursive identities; nevertheless, its material form is consistent. The abundant discourses which define the entities' identity complicates the establishment of its signified-signifier relation inside the scenario. They are entities with multiple identities and heteroglossia is their language.

Every waiter has to dress in Tepic's uniform: black shoes, black pants and white t-shirts with the *Tepic* symbol. Once everyone's particular role is assigned, we clean our work places and organize the silverware and menus on the tables. The sauce for the tables is put into little containers and placed in waiters' service carts. This cart also contains napkins, silverware and containers of different spices. When everything is ready, we all wait for the consumer-spectators.

The show starts a few minutes before 8:00 pm. On this night, I was told to help Ramiro, a Mexican worker, wait on diners in the second room. The first consumers arrive before the expected time. The manager asks them to wait in the first room while we prepare their table.

It is a group of six Spanish girls celebrating a birthday. They are dressed in party motifs, including colorful plastic necklaces and cartoon hats. Ramiro welcomes the girls. He introduces himself and after some minutes he approaches again to take the order. He asks me to enter the drink order into the restaurant's computer system: six *margaritas*, one of them without alcohol. I face the first problem of the night, how to ask the computer for a *margarita* without alcohol? The system does not allow making such a requirement, so the manager explains that I have to enter the order for six *margaritas* and then give the specifications to the bartender. When I ask for this special requirement, he makes a face and tells me that a *margarita* without alcohol is not a *margarita*, but flavored water. Nevertheless, he prepares it. All the *margaritas* look the same but one does not have alcohol. The waiter tells me which one is the different one so I do not confuse the order. In practical terms, the impossibility of distinguishing between the real *margaritas* and the fake one – differentiating the symptom from the reality – affords the girls the possibility of performing the Mexican body together by introducing the same substance into their bodies. From my point of view, the fact that a consumer asked for a *margarita* without alcohol points out the active dramaturgical role acquired by the spectator (De Marinis, 1984); she embodies the Mexican body by use of a fake sign.

While I was waiting for the *margaritas*, Ramiro was taking the order. He explained to the girls how the menu is divided; which dishes are good to be ordered as starters and which ones as main courses. He explained what every dish consists of, the main ingredients, and the shape and size of each portion. He advises the girls about the specialties of the house and which are the dishes that he strongly recommends for that night. Following the chef's urging, Ramiro convinces the girls to order *tacos al pastor* as their main course. Ramiro enters the order into the computer and asks me to tell the cooks in the kitchen which plates have to be ready first and several other specifications of the order. At this point I start to wonder what is the point of having a computerized system that does not accept special requirements.

The same dynamic is reproduced with the rest of the clients. Nevertheless, every performance made by Ramiro is different. He adapts his performance to the profile of every consumer-spectator. For example, with a group of young Mexicans, he does not explain what a *taco al pastor* is, but he points out the authenticity of the product comparing it with the *tacos* that are sold at night in the streets of Mexico City. He does not give that particular speech to everyone because some consumers might find the idea of ordering something that is eaten during the night in the streets of Mexico City disgusting, or they may not understand the relevance of such an argument.

With one particular group of consumers Ramiro takes an extra time to show them how to enact the Mexican body. The group consists of two Spanish couples. He teaches them how a *taco* has to be picked up, how to open and close it to put the sauce in and not let the meat fall, the correct position of the hand when the *taco* is directed to the mouth: in short, how the *taco* should be introduced into the body. He does this performance with the help of the towel that he uses to clean the tables. Ramiro makes the towel enact the role of a *tortilla*. He opens the towel and with the fingers of his right hand he mimics the affordance of a virtual spoon that he uses to put some virtual sauce into the virtual *taco*. After closing the towel-*taco*, Ramiro introduces the virtual entity into his body. He argues that this is the right way of eating *tacos*. Nevertheless, the Spanish consumers do not seem to be convinced by his performance, and

after Ramiro leaves their table they continue eating their *tacos* with forks and knives. For them, the idea of eating *tacos* with their hands as Mexican do is inconceivable. They also drink many shots of *tequila* with salt and lemon, which hardly ever happens in Mexico.

Later on, a client arrives alone at the restaurant. He has no reservation but since a couple has already left the restaurant the unexpected consumer is welcome. He is a young Indian man with an English accent. Ramiro asked me to take care of his table. I ask him what he would like to drink; however, he takes advantage of my presence to place his entire order. He has not even looked at the menu but he knows what he wants. He asked me for a chicken *burrito* and a *margarita*. When I said to him that we do not sell *burritos* he gets really disappointed. Then he asks me for some *fajitas*, but I answer again that we do not sell this kind of food. This time he gets quite upset and with an ironic laugh he tells me ‘this is not a Mexican restaurant’. He argues that all Mexican restaurants in London, where he comes from, sell these dishes. I encourage him to order something else, something from the “real” Mexico, but he is quite upset and asks me only for some *nachos* with *guacamole*. For this consumer, Mexican food is composed only by these two dishes, and he believes it is ridiculous that we do not offer them. How can it be possible to enact the Mexican body without this food? He does not want to know, and after finishing his *margarita* he leaves the restaurant.

By now, it is 10:00 pm and some consumers have not left yet the restaurant. We have removed the plates from their tables and brought them their bills. The manager turns off the music and raises the lights, trying to make them understand that they have to leave the restaurant. At 10:15, he politely asks the last customers to go to the first room where they can continue drinking *margaritas* if they feel like staying at the restaurant. We hurry to clean all the tables and rearrange the space for the next round of consumers who will start arriving soon; the show must go on!



185. Traveling in the Mex-foodscapes, *Tepic*, Madrid, 2009

7.4 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter I explored a series of foodscapes that have tried to differentiate from the Mex-Mex foodscape in Madrid by means of opposite practices: a traditional *tortería*, a Mexican *haute cuisine* restaurant and a modern *taquería*. The owners of those places argue that their foodscapes are translations from the real Mexico. While some clients have agreed with those adaptations, others get quite upset with the innovations. For some consumers it is hard to detach from the bodies dwelling in other Mex-foodscapes. The “Real”-Mex foodscapes have tried to be more truthful to the source text by translating a diversity of bodies dwelling in the modern landscapes of Mexico; either the urban landscape from Mexico City or the rural landscapes associated with Mexican *haute cuisine*. Nevertheless, it has been hard for them to achieve coordination without referring to other signs dwelling in the Mex-Mex or Tex-Mex foodscapes. In some cases they have tried to create innovations and seduce consumers by hybridizing foodscapes from other nations, like the Mexican-Spanish-Dominican fusion from *El Chile Verde*. What was initially supposed to be a “Real”-Mex foodscape became a hybrid translation. The “Real”-Mex foodscape is not an autonomous genre of Mex-foodscape, as are the other cases explored in this thesis. The “Real”-Mex foodscape still is in the making.

In the third section of this chapter I explained how managers put a lot of effort into planning the performative space and the selection of workers’ roles in order to control the scenario and coordinate the performances of the consumers that visit their restaurants. The vast meshwork extended through the space of those artificial environments is controlled by managers in order to promote the correct performance of workers and allowing the embodiment of Mexican bodies by consumers. Nevertheless, although managers pre-determine the use of space and workers’ roles, in practice, every worker makes a particular appropriation of the space and enacts the assigned roles in idiosyncratic ways. Waiters explain and present to consumers the form and taste of Mexican foods in polysemic, personalized ways. They engage with consumers’ bodies in order to seduce them by introducing certain Mexican foods to their bodies. It is common that consumers ask for advice. In such cases, waiters consider different circumstances before making a suggestion, e.g. gender, age, ethnicity, number of people and the reason why the customers are visiting the foodscape. Waiters’ origins and experience also play an important role when they guess what form and taste best matches consumers’ expectations; waiters try to create ecstasy going in and out of their own to consumers’ bodies, but they also want to get a good tip or eat well everyday. They are consequently compelled to make good performances in order to create joy for themselves and consumers’ bodies.

NOTES

1 D.F., short for *Distrito Federal*, is a common nickname for Mexico City.

2 Tortuga: literally means turtle, but in the slang of Mexico City the word means a *torta*.

- 3 Bocatas: Spanish-style sandwiches, made on small baguettes (as opposed to the round shape of the Mexican torta).
- 4 *Yelp. D.F. Bar*: http://www.yelp.es/biz_photos/FMvaOCUba2dIDKtKkLXT-g?select=0MLMXeODtD4c8ZhyTAqYyw. Accessed: 14/09/2011
- 5 Another term for Spanish-style sandwiches made on small baguettes.
- 6 *Café Tacuba*: Rock band from Mexico City.
- 7 *Cantina*: Bars commonly associated with working class patrons.
- 8 *Papel Picado*: Traditional Mexican handcraft made out of colorful paper where the artisan makes little holes to produce figures.
- 9 UNAM: <http://www.noticias0.com/acreditan-carrera-de-artes-visuales-de-la-unam/>. Accessed: 14/09/2011
- 10 *Metro*: <http://www.revistamilmesetas.com/la-filosofia-en-el-metro-del-df>. Accessed: 14/09/2011
- 11 Zapata and Villa. The Casasola brothers: <http://www.tecnomania.mx/2010/07/agustin-victor-casasola-fotografo-de-la.html>. Accessed: 14/09/2011
- 12 The catrina: <http://vivemexicoparaelmundo.blogspot.com/2010/11/font-face-font-family-cambriap.html>. Accessed: 01/11/2011
- 13 PUMAS. UNAM: http://www.nunet.com.mx/nunet/articulo/mostrar_articulo_t/pumas-unam/1361/. Accessed: 14/09/2011
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- 20 Calavera: Skeletons.
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- 23 El Chile Verde. Mexican *haute cuisine*: http://www.oportunista.com/restaurante/el-chile-verde_u1273. Accessed: 14/09/2011.
- 24 *Yelp. El chile verde*. <http://www.yelp.es/biz/el-chile-verde-madrid/>. Accessed: 14/09/2011
- 25 *El Chile Verde*. Madrid: <http://www.mesalibre.com/mostrarImagen.php?i=138012>. Accessed: 14/09/2011
- 26 Bandera de Mexico: http://www.guiascostarica.com/mitos/bandera_mexico.htm. Accessed: 14/09/2011
- 27 Chile en nogada: <http://www.recetasgratis.net/Receta-de-El-inmortal-chile-nogada-receta-20871.html>. Accessed: 14/09/2011
- 28 Translation of the Spanish welcome text presented in the first Windows of Tepic’s restaurant web page: <http://www.tepic.es/>. Accessed: 14/11/2011
- 29 The myth of the Mexican Pink: In 1951 the Mexican designer Valdiosera traveled to New York “to promote Mexico’s progress through tourism, with a new collection in which color predominated bougainvillea the international press questioned him about the origin of color and pink Valdiosera replied that that was intrinsic to the Mexican culture, popular toys, costumes of the Indians, Mexican candies and architecture, everything is painted in that tone ... Then a reporter said “... so it is a Mexican Pink.” Thereafter or fuchsia bougainvillea that color became Rosa Mexicano, a color that became part of national identity and summarized the nature of idiosyncrasy and culturally diverse, full of light and energy.” In: <http://desdejalisco.blogspot.com/2010/10/mujeres-en-rosa-mexicano.html>. Accessed: 01/11/2011

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I began by developing a theoretical framework in which humans, objects and signs are actively translated in the enactment of affective foodscapes. I proposed this approach as alternative to theoretical perspectives mired in essentialist conceptions of society (e.g. only humans are social, or the social is a consequence of macro structures superimposed on actors' practices) and culture (e.g. the existence of authentic values and pristine traditions). I argued that these perspectives base their analysis on spurious dichotomies and alleged divides (micro-macro, social-cultural, cultural-natural) which are too often proclaimed to be the results of western modernity (Latour 2005, 2007) and which pre-frame actors.

In order to analyze the pragmatic consequences of the hybrid relations constituted among humans, objects and signs, I framed my research in terms of the following concepts: affect and affection, potent and impotent signs, quasi-subjects and quasi-objects, intersemiotic translation and dominant, landscape and foodscape. I drew on these concepts to empirically explore Tarde's laws of imitation in the study of an economy that bases its reproduction on the expansion of desires and the fixation of beliefs through an endless process of repetition, opposition and adaptation. This approach allowed me to elucidate how different entanglements of human, objects and signs have promoted the emergence and translation of Mexican foodscapes in Amsterdam, Madrid and San Francisco. In the coming sections I present the main findings derived from this approach.

8.1 THE HISTORIC TRANSLATION OF THE INNER AND OUTER BODY TYPES OF THE MEXICAN NATION

Finding 1: The repetition, opposition and adaptation of bodies and affections associated with the Mexican landscape and the U.S. desert promoted the formation of inner and outer body types to define the identity of the Mexican nation. Both types of bodies emerged from the attachment of entities belonging to the different ontological regimes into which the western modernity divided the world (nature versus culture). However, in the formation of modern landscape representations, these bodies were purified and put at the service of nations and the capitalist *locus*. This purification allowed the potent signs used by entrepreneurs to enact Mex-foodscapes to emerge.

In the second chapter I explore the intersemiotic translation of Mexican landscapes into foodscapes from a historical perspective. I argued that most of the translated signs originated from what Cosgrove (2006) identified as the modern landscape idea. This phenomenon is closely related to the constitution of modern nations. In the translations, bodies inhabiting open landscapes are detached from their fluid life lines and attached to the closed frame of national landscape representations. This process implies the assignment of new affections to emergent relations (Spinoza 2010 [1677]). Likewise, the creation of a new repertory of affec-

tions for the bodies occupying the landscape of the nation implies an important work of what Hitchcock calls *ImagiNation* (2003).

Mexican intellectuals, artists, entrepreneurs and politicians played an important role in constituting the nation's inner types. The national landscape was formed as a superior individual capable of affecting all the bodies dwelling inside the nation's borders. Mexican landscape representations created sadness among some of the bodies that have been detached from their fluid lines of life (Ingold 2008[b]) in order to become part of the harmonic whole of the nation (Cosgrove 2006). Nevertheless, this process also created joy for bodies that took political or economic control over the national landscape and its related affections. In its political dimension it has helped to shape the inner face of the Mexican nation, promoting a collective identity among citizens. In its economic dimension, the inner face of the Mexican national landscape promoted its commoditization by making the *Mexican fiesta* (Pérez 2007), one of the main products of the nation.

After the Second World War, some of the Mexican body types were assembled together with the specific aim of commoditizing the national landscape in the United States. To promote the nation's different geographies, the tourist industry added multiple regional body types to the Mexican *fiesta* (Pérez 2007). Mexico's bucolic nature was promoted as an idyllic paradise in which to enjoy a Mexican *siesta*. The invention of this stereotypical Mexico responded to the desire of foreign consumers to travel into the exotic lands of a "backwards" nation. However, bodies do not live on *siestas* and *fiestas* alone; they must also eat. The diversification of Mexican tourist destinations promoted the emergence and commoditization of regional cuisines (Pilcher 1998: 203). The national foodscape consequently became more inclusive, but at the same time created new exclusions: a relatively few number of products became representative of large and heterogeneous regions.

The constitution of Mexico's outer body types stems from the conquest of the *Wild West* and different interventions by the U.S. military into Mexican territory. These invasions had important consequences for the modulation of affections attached to the Mexican nation's bodies (Nericcio 2007). In the 19th century, "Manifest Destiny" did not extend the light of western modernity to the lands on the other side of the *Rio Bravo*.²⁷⁷ However, it did conquer Mexican bodies by defining their affections in relation to specific landscapes.

Starting at the beginning of the 20th century these conquered bodies were socialized throughout the U.S. by the mass media (Nericcio 2007). The dissemination of these body types had important political and economic consequences. For example, they prompted the constitution of relations among U.S. politicians and citizens who fixed the power of the Mexican bodies by attaching them to particular affections: the image of the sleeping Mexican stands in stark opposition to the industrious American. Another result of this dissemination was the production of important economic earnings for industries that took advantage of the relation Mexican-body/affection/landscape. The food industry in particular benefitted from this relation; foods that once belonged to Mexican bodies started to be massively commoditized as part of the U.S. landscape. The iconography of the conquered desert (Mitchell 2002) was used to characterize the identity of the Mex-food products. Foods were assembled together with Mexican bodies, affections and landscapes foods and commoditized as *quasi-objects*. The same phenomenon can be observed with foods that have been marketed and sold

as part of the *Mexican fiesta*: quasi-objects which aim to affect consumers' bodies and minds by taking them on trips to imaginary lands. The inner and outer body types of the Mexican nation have been repeated, opposed and adapted many times, and given rise to multiple configurations of Mex-foodscapes.

Repetitive signs that have been translated from the Mexican landscape into commoditized foodscapes are potent signs. They are part of the dominant that distinguishes the Mexican landscape abroad. They have the power to create agreements with the consumers and enact passionate networks. Entrepreneurs cannot ignore these signs; if they do their foodscapes will not be recognized as part of the Mexican constellation.

8.2 FINDINGS DERIVED FROM THE CASES STUDIES

Finding 2: Entrepreneurs' desires and beliefs are expanded through the translation of their intimate affective signs into potent signs. Some entrepreneurs translate affective signs that were attached to their bodies as dwellers and travelers of the Mexican landscape, the Texan desert and the Californian beach to the Mex-foodscapes in their restaurants. Entrepreneurs' belief in the power of such affective signs is tested in encounters with consumers' bodies. When the affective signs are able to generate joyful relations among consumers, entrepreneur's desires expand and their affective signs became potent ones able to affect more bodies. In such cases, the same signs are then translated into other Mex-foodscapes by other entrepreneurs who also discover the power of their affective signs or copied by entrepreneurs who do not wanted to risk failure in their translation and their financial investment. In most cases, entrepreneurs who have only had indirect contact with the Mexican landscape, the Texan desert and the Californian beach made the latter type of translation.

Yet landscapes are not only representations: they are also a living phenomenon. Entrepreneurs translate signs from both landscape representations and from those landscapes they have been dwelling in. Nevertheless, the power of the affective signs that entrepreneurs use to differentiate their foodscapes from others has to be proven in every process of translation. These affective signs function as potent or impotent signs capable of constituting joyful or sad relations with consumers. They have the power to enact or destroy passionate networks. If consumers experience joy, economic earnings will be generated. If they experience sadness, the signs have to change or the entrepreneur will go broke.

In the empirical chapters I explored different types of translations created by entrepreneurs who own Mexican restaurants in Madrid, Amsterdam, and San Francisco. Some entrepreneurs developed intimate affections with the signs they commoditize; others only use them because of their power to relate in a joyful way with consumers – their use is more instrumental and less emotional. The translations made by the former type of entrepreneurs tend to be more faithful to the source text. The translations of the latter type tend to promote radical innovation in the target text. Some entrepreneurs want to affect the largest number of bodies with the same affections that affected them; others make creative assemblages of landscape representations.

Finding 3: The combination of entrepreneur's intimate affective signs with the potent signs of the modern Mexican and U.S. landscape representations has led to the emergence of different aesthetic styles. These aesthetic styles characterize the identity of the various genres into which the Mex-foodscapes have unfolded through the imposition of particular dominants: Tex-Mex, Cal-Mex, Mex-Mex, regional-Mex and "Real"-Mex. By using similar signs in a repetitive manner, Mexican foodscapes are positioned as parts of the same constellation; by using different ones, they are distinguished as individual stars. The creative combination of repetition, opposition and adaptation leads to an endless process of translation and innovation.

In the empirical chapters I explored five Mex-foodscape genres that differ from each other through the use of certain aesthetic styles associated with specific landscapes. The different genres into which I classified the Mex-foodscapes are not standardized translations, so it is unproductive to specify the specific signs that characterize each genre. Any attempt to create a detailed list of signs with the purpose of establishing a closed classification scheme will be soon surpassed, due to entrepreneurs' active practices of translation. However, in many cases the same potent signs are translated among different genres; I therefore noted the most prominent aesthetic lines followed in the translations. I also explored how multiple foods, bodies, landscapes and affections are assembled by entrepreneurs following particular dominants with the aim of providing some coherence to the translation.

Finding 4: Every aesthetic style of the Mex-foodscapes has a particular affective force which is sensed by consumers' bodies and minds when they dwell in the restaurants. In such encounters, consumers evaluate and then, eventually, accept or reject the dominants imposed by entrepreneurs. In practice the dominants are negotiated between diverse actors who come together in the restaurants. The dominants which define the identity of Mex-foodscapes adapt to fulfill the translation's requirement: to become a potent sign capable of affecting the largest number of bodies and generate economic earnings.

Mexican restaurants and their aesthetics affect both citizens dwelling in urban landscapes and consumers dealing with signs of Mexican landscapes. From one moment to the next, a citizen walking in the streets of Amsterdam, Madrid or San Francisco can become a consumer inside a Texan desert or a Californian beach, a Mexican town or a pre-Hispanic temple. In the economy of passions there are multiple ways to be affected by entities belonging to diverse chronotopes.

When consumers go into a restaurant they experience the encounter of a landscape representation with their own intimate experiences. Sometimes these customers have dwelt in Mexican and U.S. landscapes; other times they have related to them only through representations. In any event, these previous experiences determine how consumers evaluate Mex-foodscapes. For example, when consumers from the U.S. visit Mexican restaurants in Amsterdam or Madrid, they commonly evaluate the translation by referring to previous experiences with Mexican food in the U.S. Indeed, U.S. citizens living or traveling in Amsterdam and Madrid in many cases appropriate Mexican foodscapes as extensions of their home landscapes. They may even discuss the politics of their country with compatriots they meet in Mexican restaurants. If they have lived in Texas or California, they feel especially authorized

to criticize the translation. On other occasions, if they feel homesick, a visit to a Mexican restaurant can be enough to again feel attached to their homeland.

In the following paragraphs I review the Mex-foodscapes I explored in this thesis in order to provide empirical examples of the four findings presented so far.

In chapter three I explored the translation of the Tex-Mex foodscape in Amsterdam and Madrid. Most of the iconography that characterizes those restaurants belongs to the conquered lands of the arid, empty, southwestern U.S. desert. In 1957, the first Tex-Mex restaurant, *El Charro*, was established in Madrid. In his translation, Ventura, a Mexican-American born in Texas, intended to commoditize foods that affected him in childhood. His father's *tamales* found a privileged place in his foodscape. Ventura established the first Mexican restaurant in Madrid by using signs from the Mexican landscape: colorful carpets, pre-Hispanic motifs and *charros'* bodies. However, this foodscape was not accepted by Spanish consumers, nor by the U.S. military living in Spain at that time. For Spanish people, the name of the restaurant was misleading: for them, *charros* are Spanish Navarros, not Mexican horsemen. For the U.S. military, the pre-Hispanic bodies did not say much about Mexico; they were not recognizable inhabitants of the Texan desert. Therefore Ventura had to add numerous bodies to his foodscape in order to create agreements with consumers. A few years after the restaurant's opening, Ventura assembled a variety of the inner and outer types of the Mexican bodies to qualify his foodscape, but mainly featured bodies inhabiting the Texan desert. He also changed the foods he used to offer in his first translation, since Spanish consumers did not initially want to eat food made with corn. The menu therefore expanded from Ventura's intimate foods to food from Texas and different regions of Mexico. However, his father's *tamales* always occupied a central place on the menu, regardless of whether or not consumers accepted them. For Ventura, what mattered was to be close to the object of his affection.

A similar phenomenon occurred at *La Margarita*, one of the first Mexican restaurants established in Amsterdam. When this foodscape opened in 1981, few signs of the Texan landscape were present in its scenography. In fact, in 1976 Tomas Estes opened *Café Pacífico*, the first Cal-Mex restaurant in Amsterdam, and in the beginning *La Margarita* mimicked Estes' foodscape. For example, both places used to depict a statue of the Virgin Mary in a central place in the main dining rooms. Years later *La Margarita* opposed *Café Pacífico* in order to create differentiation. On a trip to Los Angeles, Alex, *La Margarita's* first owner, was affected by the signs of the Cal-Mex foodscape and he decided to translate them to Amsterdam. In the beginning *La Margarita* offered Cal-Mex and some regional-Mexican foods. However, when the restaurant's management changed some years later, bodies from the Texan foodscape started to populate the place in order to increase earnings.

Although *El Charro* and *La Margarita* can be identified as Tex-Mex foodscapes, those translations are in fact a result of the entanglement of different landscapes and food traditions. Both restaurants adopted the Tex-Mex foodscape as the dominant genre only after a long process of coordination with diverse actors. After this genre proved able to affect consumers in a joyful way, other Tex-Mex restaurants opened in Western Europe. However, in recent years the Tex-Mex foodscape has entered a process of opposition with its own landscape. In this process, the Tex-Mex foodscape is detached from the affections related to the bodies inhabiting those imaginary lands. Nowadays it is possible to find Tex-Mex restaurants that are no

longer identified with fast food or low quality. The icons dwelling in those foodscapes are no longer necessarily Indians, bandits, guns, sensuous women, or sleeping Mexicans. The “new” Tex-Mex offers slow, organic and authentic food. Consider the case of *Tomatillo*, the latest Tex-Mex restaurant established in Amsterdam. In contrast to the rough and raw materials that characterize the decor at *El Charro* and *La Margarita*, most of *Tomatillo*’s furniture is made of smooth synthetic materials. While the logos of *El Charro* and *La Margarita* are quintessential images of Mexican bodies dwelling in a Texan desert, the logo of *Tomatillo* is simply a *tomatillo*. In this case, the *tomatillo* has been deterritorialized from the actual world. In the restaurant’s logo there is no reference to any concrete landscape: the *tomatillo* belongs to the any-space-whatever (Deleuze 1983) in which any kind of actualization can be made. So while *El Charro* and *La Margarita* are repetitions of the Tex-Mex foodscape, *Tomatillo* is a radical opposition that has brought innovation.

In chapter four I analyzed the translations of the Californian and the Mexican Pacific coast landscape to the Cal-Mex restaurants in Amsterdam. Most of the entities dwelling in the Cal-Mex foodscapes come from the idealized lands of California and the Mexican Pacific coast. Nevertheless, some of the iconography used to characterize the identity of these restaurants has been also taken from the U.S. conquered desert and the Mexican *fiesta*. *Cafe Pacifico* was the first Cal-Mex foodscape established in Amsterdam. Tomas Estes, its former owner, did not translate the landscape of a specific nation-state, or even a region from a particular country: instead, he translated a transnational region. *Cafe Pacifico*’s foodscape depicts a portion of the Pacific coast which extends from north of Los Angeles, California (in the U.S.) to Mazatlán (in México). Tomas Estes’ foodscape is the resemblance of the Mexico he experienced in Los Angeles and Mexico before 1976. Estes claims that he has been affected by signs of the Mexican nation since childhood. To him life in Mexico was more real and authentic compared to the U.S. His foodscape was therefore the translation of a landscape he inhabited as a free traveler, tracing many life lines of and letting his body be affected by many signs. Tomas Estes’ foodscape was both the storytelling of the trips he undertook in Mexico and their actualization as as pre-composed plot materialized in *Cafe Pacifico*. Nevertheless, *Cafe Pacifico* is also a quotation of *Hussong’s Cantina*, the primogenitor of the commoditized Mexican *fiesta* in Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico.

When Estes was a teenager, *Hussong’s Cantina* became one of his favorite places to dwell in Mexico. Therefore, many bodies from the Mexican *fiesta* populated *Cafe Pacifico*’s foodscape, and Tomas mimicked *Hussong’s* business model. *Hussong’s Cantina*, established at the end of the 19th century in Ensenada, was the place where the famous *tequila* drink called *margarita* was invented. Tomas specifically reproduced an affection for *tequila* in Europe, and eventually became the official ambassador of *tequila* in Western Europe.

The Taco Shop is one of the latest Mexican foodscapes translated from the Californian landscape to Amsterdam. This restaurant was established in 2008. Kevin, an American expat from Colorado, opened the first *Taco Shop* in 1992 in Copenhagen. A year later he established a second *Taco Shop* in the same city, and in 2007 his son, Logan, established the third *Taco Shop* in Amsterdam. Before the first *Taco Shop* was established in Copenhagen, Kevin worked for a year in different Mexican restaurants in California with the goal of being affected by the Cal-Mex foodscape’s potent signs. He traveled the Pacific coast from north to

south. In his own words, *The Taco Shop* is the best of all the Mexican restaurants where he worked. Kevin made a *collage*, opposing those restaurants and synthesizing them in *The Taco Shop*. This was a process of innovation through opposition, synthesis and adaptation. The resulting foodscape resembles a Cal-Mex restaurant established in a California beach town.

The last Cal-Mex foodscape in Amsterdam I found out about during my field period of research was *My burrito*, which opened in February, 2009. The owner of *My burrito* is Lasa, a Dutch man who used to live in San Francisco where Mexican food and an emphasis on organic/locally produced/animal welfare affected him. After coming back from the U.S., Lasa decided to establish the first Cal-Mex restaurant in Amsterdam which would use only organic and, when possible, locally sourced food products. Despite its Cal-Mex heritage, *My burrito's* flyer and website do not resemble a Californian landscape. Instead, they evoke a kind of *airscape* in which the air has replaced the land. Corn, tomato, wheat and avocados float in an expanse of blue sky balanced with an army of soft cirrus clouds. *My burrito's* foodscape has gained autonomy from the Californian landscape. In this foodscape, food occupies the space of the concept, and the concepts are occupying the space of the food: Cal-Mex food is a territorialized concept, but the food used to prepare the dishes of *My burrito* comes from changing places. The only thing that matters is that they are organic. So while *Cafe Pacifico* and *The Taco Shop* are repetitions of the Cal-Mex foodscape that differentiate themselves from each other due to their selection of signs, *My burrito* reflects the innovation of the Cal-Mex foodscape through its radical opposition to the signs attached to the Californian lands.

The regional-Mex foodscape has mainly developed in California and New York. The Oaxacan foodscape – with Zapotec and Mixtec variations – occupy a privileged place in Los Angeles (Matus 2006), while the Poblano (from the Mexican state of Puebla) foodscape predominates in New York and the Mayan-Yucatecan foodscape is centered in San Francisco. In the chapter six, I explore this latter case. In their processes of translation, owners of Mayan-Yucatecan restaurants have selected multiple signs associated with the Mayan and Yucatecan landscape. However, this translation could not have been actualized before the consolidation of the Mexican landscape. The Mayan-Yucatecan foodscape and its related bodies are fragments of the imaginary landscape of the Mexican nation. The regionalization and archaization of the national landscape chronotope characterizes the regional-Mex genre.

In chapter five I explored the constitution of quasi-objects by paying particular attention to the object-naming phenomenon. In some societies, identifying an object (a product or a service) with the name of its distributor or creator reveals the existence of social relations between objects and humans. In other cases, however, doing so denotes its appropriation. The object-personal naming phenomenon implies a process of colonization by imposing idiosyncratic human qualities over the commoditized objects; to name a product after its owner highlights a passion that prompted its creation.

In the case of *Tommy's*, the first Mayan-Yucatecan restaurant established in San Francisco, Tomás, a Yucatecan migrant, decided to detach himself from his Mayan background and attach himself to an American one by translating his name to Tommy and adhering its new identity on *Tommy's* restaurant. In this process of translation, Tommy the person became a quasi-object enacted in the form of a restaurant and *Tommy's* the restaurant became a quasi-subject imprinted with the intimate passions from Tommy the person. By contrast, in the case

of the Mayan-Yucatecan restaurants in private houses, to identify those places after the name of their owners does not indicate appropriation or colonization of the object-service as in the case of *Tommy's*. Instead, the utterances *donde* (where) or *con* (with) reveal a social relation between object-services, clients and sellers. The informal names given to these places by the clients reveal some of the qualities they attach to the object/service/seller. Consumers attribute human qualities to the home-based restaurants in relation to the life history of the seller and the particularities of the social relations they have. At the same time, the seller is embellished with some of the qualities of the object.

Both subjects and objects are produced in dynamic interactions authorized by consumers. In the case of *Mi Lindo Yucatán*, some actors used qualities attached to other actors to become attached to a particular object and enact the desirable quasi-object. For example, one of the restaurant's owners believed he was not able to fully enact the desirable quasi-object because he lacked the inherent quality of Yucatecan-Mayan ethnicity. However, this quality is enacted through the attachment of human passions to certain objects, given that ethnicity itself is a quasi-object.

The emergence and consolidation of the Mayan-Yucatecan foodscape in San Francisco also has followed the rhythm of an economy based on passion. However, it is incorrect to say that *Tommy's* functioned as model for the Mayan-Yucatecan restaurants that were established in San Francisco since the mid-1990's; their imitative rays have different origins. However, in the case of the house restaurants it is possible to find models that were repeated and afterwards opposed by the formally established Yucatecan-Mayan restaurants. In the case of the Mayan-Yucatecan foodscape, entrepreneurs followed the rhythm of an economy based on opposition to and repetition of business models.

Tommy's foodscape reveals another outgrowth of an economy of passion. *Tommy's* started to offer some Mayan-Yucatecan dishes in the 1970's. However, the place really became famous for its *tequila* bar. Julio, Tommy's son, created the *Blue Agave Tequila Club*. This club is the repetition – with minor adaptations – of a beer club Julio used to visit in Berkeley during his college years. Just like Tomas Estes in Europe, Julio acquired the title of “official ambassador of *tequila*” in the U.S. from the Mexican government. Julio Bermejo and Tomas Estes, with their respective restaurants, bars and *tequila* brands, can be viewed as opposite imitative rays that were entangled by the Mexican government in order to contaminate the passion for *tequila* in the U.S. and Western Europe. However, Julio and Tomas are trying to differentiate themselves from each other in order to freely spread their passion for *tequila* to different latitudes in the world.

In chapter six I explore the translations of Mex-Mex foodscapes. This genre of the Mexican landscape has been notably developed in Madrid. In this process of translation, entrepreneurs mainly selected icons from the Mexican *fiesta* and contemporary popular body types to enact their foodscapes. The restaurants *El Cuchi* and *Si Señor* from the Anderson's Group were prominent models for these translations. Carlos Anderson, the initiator of this entrepreneurial chain, transformed the dining experience into a party. His first restaurant was established in Mexico City's Zona Rosa in 1968. Some years later, the Anderson's Group started expanding to different Mexican tourist destinations such as Cancún, and reproducing the original restaurant's emphasis on a relaxed, informal and fun atmosphere. Tourists from

the U.S. happily accepted the business model, and the restaurants from the Anderson's Group became a model for the Mexican dining experience: a party ambience, informal behavior and silly shows.

In Madrid, *El Cuchi* and *Sí Señor* functioned as “business schools” for several Mexican migrants who worked there before opening their own restaurants in Madrid and Amsterdam. Some of these restaurants are essentially repetitions; others are rhythmic oppositions. Indeed, in this collective process of translation it is difficult to discern which are the models and which are the quotations. Nevertheless, Mex-Mex foodscapes are characterized by the excessive use of signs and a multiplicity of Mexican landscapes unfolding in different chronotopes. All of them share aesthetics of excess and inside these foodscapes it seems that there is no room for one more icon. Every material, including the walls, the ceiling, and the tables, are treated as bodies of the Mexican nation. In these restaurants one encounters the bodies and landscapes most prominently attached to the Mexican *socius* (Deleuze and Guattari [1972] 2011): from the pre-Hispanic Mexico to the modern nation.

La Mordida, the first Mex-Mex restaurant established in Madrid, mimicked many elements from the Anderson's Group restaurants, particularly the ones related to its abundant decoration, the party ambience and the openness with customers. *La Mordida*'s foodscape enacts a folkloric Mexico where everything is possible. *La Mordida*'s decoration also includes many of the signs that affected the owners Sabina and Julio in their trips through Mexico. In keeping with the atmosphere of overabundance at the restaurant, Sabina and Julio affirm that the idea to open a Mexican restaurant in Madrid came to them after a night of excess. The next morning, as they ate breakfast in the streets of a Mexican town, the flavors of the food, the icons from the landscape and the spirits of the *mezcal* colliding in their bodies gave birth to the idea. *La Mordida*'s foodscape – like others described in this project – combines intimate signs with the bodies from the Mexican *fiesta*. Other popular contemporary bodies from Mexico are also included in their translation.

El Chaparrito is another quotation of the Mex-Mex foodscape in Madrid. *El Chaparrito*, which opened in 2006, is owned by three Peruvians who used to work at *La Mordida*. In their translation they followed the same aesthetic lines and offered the same menu as *La Mordida*. They did not want to risk failure in the translation, so they mimicked *La Mordida*'s proven business model. However, the decoration of *El Chaparrito* differs from *La Mordida* because of its prolific inclusion of popular Mexican bodies that became famous in Latin America during the golden age of Mexican cinema. The owners of *El Chaparrito* have never been to Mexico; nevertheless, they have made themselves part of the national landscape by imprinting their bodies and names in potent signs of the Mexican landscape (the small boats which traverse the canals of Xochimilco, a famous part of Mexico City).

Héctor and Pedro established *Los Pilones* in Amsterdam in the year 2001. Héctor used to work at *Sí Señor*, the second Mexican restaurant opened by the Anderson Group in Madrid. I used the sceneography of *Los Pilones* to explore the way entrepreneurs sometimes quote themselves. Héctor, the oldest of the brothers behind the restaurant, developed the general concept depicted in the restaurant's scenography, but it was a Mexican painter living in Spain who carried out the concept. Antonio Medina, the artist who decorated *Los Pilones*, and Andrés Collado – another Mexican painter living in Spain – painted most of the Mex-Mex

restaurants established in Amsterdam and Madrid. The ubiquity of these men's artistic work means that most of the restaurants of the Mex-Mex genre use similar images of Mexican bodies dwelling in similar landscapes. The use of local or intimate signs creates difference among them.

In 2009 *Los Pilonos* quoted itself. A second *Pilonos* was established in a trendy neighborhood in Amsterdam, which is mainly inhabited by young people (the first one catered primarily to tourists). The new *Pilonos* is a modernized version (Van Gorp 2004, 66) of the Mex-Mex foodscape. The decoration of this newer location is more sophisticated: only exclusive bodies of the Mexican landscape have been imprinted on the restaurant's surfaces. Both *Pilonos* coordinate as parts of the same body by repeating some potent signs. The new *Pilonos* is a rhythmic innovation of the Mex-Mex foodscape. Similar to the Tex-Mex *Tomatlillo* and Cal-Mex *My burrito*, the second *Los Pilonos* tried to oppose the aesthetic of excess that characterizes the Mex-Mex foodscapes. However, some potent signs from the Mexican nation still dwell in this foodscape; the innovation has not been as radical as in the cases of the Tex-Mex and Cal-Mex foodscapes.

In chapter seven I explore different Mexican restaurants that have tried to innovate the Mexican foodscape in Madrid by opposing the Mex-Mex foodscape. In their processes of translation, which I refer to as the "Real"-Mex foodscape, they are largely translating urban foodscapes; a *tortería*, a *taquería* and what an entrepreneur identified as Mexican *haute cuisine*. The owners of these places argue that Mex-Mex restaurants are full of stereotyped bodies, so they seek to be more truthful to the source text by translating diverse bodies dwelling in contemporary Mexican landscapes.

Octavio, the owner of *D.F. Bar*, opened the first *tortería* in Madrid. He describes his establishment not as a fancy restaurant, but as a simple *tortería* like the ones in Mexico City. Most of the icons in this foodscape are related to his lines of life as a university student in Mexico City. He knows the origin of every icon he reproduced and the reason why each affective sign became attached to his body.

In the case of *El Chile Verde*, Amalia sought to commoditize Mexican *haute cuisine*. Her star dishes were some of the regional plates from the national foodscape, especially *moles* and *chiles en nogada*. She also created new dishes with fancy names. However her translation did not work, so she created fusions between the Mexican and the Spanish foodscape. Eventually, Samuel, a Dominican immigrant who had worked as a waiter at *El Chile Verde*, became the restaurant's manager. He decided to oppose the Mexican and Spanish foodscape with Dominican cuisine in order to create innovation. The different translation of *El Chile Verde* exemplifies how Mex-foodscapes are hybridizing with other national cuisines in order to create coordination with consumers.

The last case explored in this chapter was *Tepic*. This foodscape is in opposition to *D.F. Bar* and *El Chile Verde*. *Tepic* specializes in *tacos*. An ordinary dish from the Mexican foodscape is embellished with sophisticated decoration in this translation. *Tepic*'s scenography differs from the other Mex-Mex restaurants in Madrid. Instead of a traditional and folkloric Mexico, the place enacts a modern, minimalistic and sophisticated foodscape where popular icons from Mexico City have become modern art.

All these foodscapes have tried to be truthful to the source text by translating a diverse

bodies dwelling in modern landscapes. Nevertheless, it has been hard for them to achieve coordination without making reference to older bodies dwelling in the Mex-Mex and the Tex-Mex foodscapes. It is therefore evident that the “Real”-Mex foodscape is not a consolidated genre, and does not yet possess a clear dominant. Instead, the “Real”-Mex foodscape is an outcome of ongoing market vibrations produced by the repetition, opposition and adaptation of older Mex-foodscape genres. Taken together, the Mex-foodscape genres demonstrate processes of adaptation due to the simplicity of their aesthetic lines.

Finding 5: The repetition, opposition and adaptation of the Mex-foodscapes has entered into a process of innovation in which the commoditization of Mexican food is detached from the Mexican landscape, the Texan desert and the Californian beach. In recent adaptations of the Mex-foodscapes, the inner and outer Mexican body types and their related affections are being replaced by pure foods dwelling in fluid Mex-foodscapes.

The signs imprinted in the first Mex-foodscapes were hard, dark and rough (*El Charro*, *Cafe Pacifico*, *La Mordida*, *Tommy's*), while the more recent iterations favor soft, light and smooth signs (*Tomatillo*, *My burrito*, *Tepic*). The first Mex-foodscapes were constructed with natural materials, while recent ones use synthetic ones. It is consequently possible to talk about an opposition between two general types of Mex-foodscapes. Some of the signs imprinted on the surfaces of newer Mex-foodscapes have become detached from the landscapes where they used to dwell, and gained autonomous power (flying bean bodies, donkeys, vegetables, etc.). These signs have become inhabitants of *fluid* spaces such as air; airborne, they search for new bodies to affect. To a certain extent, the earlier passions for objects, signs and affections attached to the stereotypical Mexican landscape are being replaced by pure foods passions: *burritos*, *tacos* and *quesadillas* that are locally produced and follow rules about animal welfare and organic food.

8.2.1 VIRTUAL AND ACTUAL MEX-FOODSCAPES

Finding 6: New media and technologies, such as Web 2.0 websites, have become privileged spaces for expanding entrepreneurs' desires and fixing consumers' beliefs. The virtual world plays an important role in the constant updating of Mex-foodscapes. Metrological chains are constituted on these websites by the quantification of consumers' passions. However, the virtual world is not always a democratic space constituted by the unencumbered attachment of hypertextual connections. In fact, most of the websites used by consumers choosing a Mex-foodscape to dwell in are controlled by entrepreneurs who profit from the particular shape of the metrological chains.

Most consumers of Mex-foodscapes in San Francisco use *Yelp*, in Amsterdam these consumers use *lens*, and in Madrid they use *El Tenedor* – among other websites – to contaminate other potential customers with their passions. After analyzing how such websites are constituted and the way consumers use them, it becomes clear that service companies and restaurants, not consumers, control the way in which passionate networks are measured and represented. Following De Landa (2000), it is possible to say that this virtual world is closer

to a “hierarchical network” than to an “expanded meshwork.”

There are some websites that are not totally controlled by booking agents, food companies or restaurants. On such websites consumers are free to express anything they wish about the Mex-foodscapes where they have dwelt, and their opinions are barely edited. However, on these websites the battle of passions is played on a different field. In order to oppose sad comments left by consumers, some restaurant owners (and occasionally their friends) post joyful self-reviews about their own restaurants. In such cases it becomes difficult to distinguish who is a consumer and who works for the restaurant; actors’ identities are obscured in virtual space, and economic earnings are generated through disguised means and motives.

Restaurant owners also use websites creatively. For instance, they may manipulate the historical narrative, making instrumental use of certain affective signs. Many restaurants have their own website where the establishment’s history, menu, ambience and overall look are provided. In some cases, restaurant owners also use social networking services such as Facebook, hi5, hyves, Orkut, or Twitter. They try to create buzz via social networking services and captivate consumers into their passionate networks through these viral marketing tools and technologies.

When consumers describe their experiences on interactive websites, they refer to multiple affections which imprinted on their bodies and minds. They describe the qualities of the food, the drinks, the employees and the general atmosphere. Many consumers talk about “authentic” and “fake” representations. Some consumers claim to have suffered crises of representation after being confronted with unexpected signs. The evaluation of the foodscape is often related to previous experiences of consumption, ethnic origins and travel in Mexico and the U.S. When consumers talk about the authenticity or fakeness of Mex-foodscapes, it is because they recognize the existence of different centers, borders and peripheries inside these virtual spaces.

8.2.2 MANAGERS, CHEFS, WAITERS AND CONSUMERS’ ENGAGEMENTS

Finding 7: Managers, chefs and waiters engage with consumer’s bodies in order to attach joyful signs to them and introduce particular foods into their bodies. Manager coordinate among actors in extended networks. Chefs create equivalences among food ingredients, aesthetics and palates in order to enact Mex-foods. Waiters go in and out of their own bodies and consumers’ bodies in order to choose the best food for the occasion. The coordination among the diverse actors that merge in Mex-foodscapes is never completely fixed, but is nearly always produced in the making.

When the virtual space of Mex-foodscapes is actualized, the identities of the actors that fall under its jurisdiction are translated. Consumers, chefs, managers and workers work in tandem to trigger the expected affections. Managers carefully plan the performativity space and assign workers’ roles in order to control the scenario and meet the consumers’ expectations. However, although managers have determined in advance the use of space and the roles of the workers, in practice, every worker makes a personal appropriation of the space

and enacts his or her assigned roles in idiosyncratic ways. Waiters explain and present the form and taste of Mexican foods to consumers in polysemic ways. They engage with consumer's bodies in order to seduce them by introducing certain foods to their bodies.

For their part, when consumers walk into a Mex-foodscape they are aware that they are entering into an atmosphere in which the quotidian production of meaning stops. Consumers expect to be confronted with particular affections. To a certain extent they predispose their performance and the way their bodies must be enacted by the introduction of foreign foods; while managers try to produce coordination among extended networks, consumers get excited when the quotidian production of meaning stops.

Chefs reproduce and create Mex-dishes while dealing with multiple facilitators and restrictions. They conceive of and construct tastes in order to seduce consumers. From the chefs' point of view, if they make exact reproductions of the foods from specific landscapes, consumers will not accept them because their palates are not accustomed to such tastes. Therefore, chefs try to create equivalences among multiple tastes and palates in their translations. Some chefs argue that they are able to make equivalences because they have trained their palates to recognize the right tastes from different landscapes. In other words, to be a good chef is to create coordination between social tastes and intimate palates; the more intimate the translation it is, the more *social* it becomes.

8.3 SOME IMPLICATIONS OF MY ADAPTATION OF TARDE'S ECONOMY OF PASSION

I adapted Tarde's economy of passion to study Mexican restaurants established in Amsterdam, Madrid and San Francisco. As a result, I was able to analyze diverse entanglements of humans' passions, objects and signs that actively participate in the commoditization of Mexican foods outside of Mexico. I drew attention to the hybrid nature of this particular market and the economy in general. Concepts from landscape studies gave me the opportunity to make a number of observations about the origin and translation of objects, signs and human passions that have been attached to the Mexican landscape and translated into the form of foodscapes. Tarde's approach to economics allowed me to highlight entrepreneurs', workers' and consumers' desires and belief in enacting Mexican restaurants. Spinoza's and Deleuze's ideas about affective signs revealed the pragmatic consequences of using signs related to Mexican-ness in the commoditization of food products. I know this is an eclectic approach; however, my object of study was equally eclectic.

In practical terms, my aim was to encourage reflection about the pragmatic consequences of commoditizing food products while relying on the intimate experiences of landscape representations. Following Tardes' laws of imitation, I pointed out the *social* nature of those intimate passions: they do not belong to us alone. Rather, they first crash into other bodies and minds which belong to multiple spaces and times. Most of these passions emerged alongside modern nations and acquired their contemporary forms through processes of commoditization of one thing or another. The resulting commodities reproduced many of the foundations

guiding this political form of social organization: the enveloping and regulation of diverse entities that used to dwell in fluid spaces, and their attachment to stereotypical objects, signs, and affections. The wide variety of Mexican restaurants analyzed in this thesis exemplifies the rhythm followed by this process of contamination. Hopefully, future repetitions and opposition to the existing foodscapes will continue to generate radical adaptations, which lead to the elimination of the belittling, racist, and exploitative objects, images and affections which have historically been used to commoditize Mexican food abroad.

NOTES

- 1 Part of the geographical border between the U.S. and Mexico.

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GLOSSARY OF SPANISH TERMS

Agave (also Maguey): A succulent plant with long, thick, pointed leaves. The agave plant produces a sweet nectar which can be fermented and processed into a variety of alcoholic beverages including *tequila*, *mezcal*, and *pulque*.

Aguas Frescas: Lit., fresh or flavored waters; the term refers to a variety of sweet, non-carbonated beverages which can be made from grated fruits like cantaloupe, watermelon, strawberry, or pineapple; an infusion of hibiscus petals; tamarind paste; or rice milk sweetened with sugar and cinnamon.

Alambre: Grilled chunks of meat and vegetables served on a skewer (alambre literally means “wire”).
Aluxes Spirits from the pre-Hispanic Mayan tradition, still thought to be active in Yucatán.

Amaranto: An ancient grain, ancestor of corn; used in Mexican snacks.

Amate (also papel amate): Paper made from bark. Sold as a handicraft in Puebla and other parts of Mexico.

Axolotl: A subterranean amphibian which lives in the underground lake waters beneath Mexico City, and which does not go through pubescence.

Bistec: Thin slices of grilled steak.

Bocadillo: Term in Spain for a sandwich made on a small baguette, with only one or two ingredients and only a small amount of condiments.

Bocatas: Term in Spain for a sandwich made on a small baguette, with only one or two ingredients and only a small amount of condiments.

Boleros: Romantic Mexican musical style, popularized in the early 20th century.

Bolillos: Small rolls, made from white wheat flour and baked with a crispy crust and a soft inside.

Burritos: A flour *tortilla* wrapped around an assortment of ingredients, which can include beans, rice, cheese, grilled meat or fish, vegetables, avocado, sour cream, and chiles.

Café Tacuba: A Mexican pop-rock band popular in Latin America, the U.S., and Spain.

Calamares Fritos: Fried calamari.

Calavera: Lit., skull; typically, a stylized image of a skull. Can be adorned with flowers, accessories, or other embellishments to indicate the *calavera's* non-morbid nature.

Cantina: A bar, specializing in beer and perhaps *tequila* or *mezcal*. Cantinas are usually quite simple establishments and frequently serve a predominantly male clientele.

Carne Asada: Grilled beef.

Carnitas: Braised pork.

Carnitas con calabacín

y maíz tierno: Braised pork with zucchini and young corn.

Cenotes: Naturally-occurring holes in the earth in which fresh water collects. Found throughout the Yucatán peninsula in southeastern Mexico.

Ceviche: Fish or seafood lightly pickled with lime juice, chiles, and other spices.

Chalupas: Lit., canoe; thick, oval corn patties topped with meat and sauce.

Chapulines: Grasshoppers, which are toasted or fried and eaten in parts of the state of Oaxaca.

Charro Mestizo: Mixed Spanish-Indigenous residents of the central-western region of Mexico, known particularly for their horsemanship.

Chichen Itza: Archaeological site in Yucatán with pyramids and temples built by the Mayans between the 6th and 9th centuries.

Chilango: Colloquial term which refers to people born in Mexico City.

Chilaquiles: Eggs with fried tortillas and sauce.

Chiles en nogada: Peppers stuffed with ground meat and covered with a creamy walnut sauce.

Chile relleno: A green pepper or mild chile filled with cheese and deep fried.

Chili con carne: A stew made from ground meat (usually beef), a tomato-based broth, spices, and sometimes beans.

Chimichanga: Deep-fried *burrito*.

China poblana: The image of a woman dressed in a colorful skirt and white blouse. Comes from the legend of a Chinese (or Asian) slave named Mirra who married and became a nun.

Chipotle: Smoked and preserved chiles. Can also refer to the flavor of the sauce the chiles are preserved in, which is often used to flavor other dishes.

Chocolomo: Yucatecan beef soup.

Chuletas: Pork chops.

Cochinita pibil (also cochinita): Roasted pork flavored with *achiote*, a spice with a distinctively deep orange color. Traditionally, cochinita was made by wrapping a suckling pig in leaves and steaming it in an underground pit. Nowadays it is commonly prepared in the oven.

Comal: Large flat griddle for making *tortillas* or roasting chiles, seeds, or spices.

“Con” or “donde”: Lit., “with” or “where;” the colloquial way to refer to a home-based restaurant (i.e., “con Maria” or “donde Maria” mean “at Maria’s house.”)

Criollos: The Mexico-born offspring of Spanish settlers.

Cuitlacoche (or huitlacoche): A type of parasitic fungus which grows on corn and which is consumed like mushrooms, often in *quesadillas*.

D.F.: The acronym for the Distrito Federal, the Federal District of Mexico City. Commonly used to refer to Mexico City.

Desmadre: Craziness or debauchery.

Donde: See “con.”

Doradito: Toasted to a golden color.

Enchiladas: Corn *tortillas* wrapped around a selection of ingredients such as vegetables, meat, seafood, or cheese, covered in sauce, and baked.

Ensalada Acapulco: Salad named for Acapulco, a resort town on Mexico’s Pacific coast.

Ensalada Huatulco: Salad named for Huatulco, a resort town on Mexico’s Pacific coast.

Epazote: An herb used to flavor Mexican soups, stews, and bean dishes.

Escabeche: A style of pickling vegetables; the marinade used to pickle vegetables; a Yucatecan dish of stewed turkey with pickled red onions.

Estofado: A stew made with chunks of meat, potatoes, and other vegetables.

Fajitas: Strips of grilled meat and/or vegetables, served with *tortillas* and a selection of sauces.

Fiesta: A party.

Filete a la Tampiqueña: See “*carne a la tampiqueña*.”

Flautas: Corn *tortillas* wrapped around small amounts of filling such as ground meat and flash-fried.

Flor de Calabaza: Squash blossom

Frijol con Puerco: Stewed pork with black beans.

Guacamole: Pureed or mashed avocados with lime and salt; may also contain some chile or other flavorings.

Huaraches: Sandals; also refers to a sandal-shaped corn *tortilla* topped with beans, vegetables, meat, cheese, and sauces.

Huevos Rancheros: Fried eggs with *tortillas* and *salsa*.

Huitlacoche: See “*cuitlacoche*”.

Inditos: Disparaging term for indigenous Mexicans; lit., “little Indians.”

Jalapeños: Spicy, crisp green chiles. Can be served pickled or raw.

Jarabe Tapatio: A style of folk dance from the central-western region of Mexico.

Jarana: Style of Yucatecan music and dance, performed by men and women dressed in white. A combination of pre-Hispanic Maya dances and Spanish-influenced rhythms and melodies.

Jarocho: People from the eastern Mexican state of Veracruz.

La Misión: Lit., “The Mission;” used among Spanish-speakers in San Francisco to refer to the Mission district, one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city and the traditional heart of Hispanic culture in the area.

Lagartija: Lizard.

Léperos: 19th century term for a vulgar man.

Lol Tun: A large subterranean cavern in south-central Yucatán; one of the first Yucatecan restaurants in San Francisco was named after it.

Maguey: See “agave.”

Mandiles: Lit., aprons. Term for manager-owners at restaurants from the Anderson’s Group.

Margarita: Cocktail made from tequila and sweetened

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lime juice.

Mariachis: Strolling musicians and the style of music they play.

Masa: Dough made from ground corn and water.

Mascota: Pet or mascot.

Menudo: Stew made with tripe and other cuts of meat and entrails. Often eaten on the weekends in Mexico.

Mestizos: Mexicans with Spanish and indigenous ancestry.

Mezcal: A type of distilled liquor made from unrefined, fermented agave.

Mixtec, Mixteco: Indigenous community in western Oaxaca, eastern Guerrero, and southeastern Puebla.

Molcajete: Mortar and pestle.

Mole (also mole poblano, pollo con mole): A style of dish based on a thick, savory sauce made from ground roasted chiles, seeds, nuts, chocolate, and spices, and served over chicken or turkey. *Mole poblano* is the particular style from Puebla; *pollo con mole* refers to *mole* served with chicken.

Mollete andaluz: A type of Spanish bread.

Mondongo: Yucatecan version of *menudo*.

Muerte: Lit., death; refers to the stylized images of skulls or skeletons in folkloric art.

Mujeres: Women.

Naco: A derogatory term used by middle and high social classes in Mexico to refer to people from lower social classes; vulgar, nasty, or mischievous.

Nachos: *Tortilla* chips topped with sauce, cheese, chiles, vegetables, and meat, and baked.

Nahuatl: Indigenous community in central Mexico; also, the language spoken by the Aztecs.

Nixtamal: Mixture of dried corn and water with ground limestone. The minerals in limestone soften the tough husks of the corn and make it more digestible. Nixtamal is the intermediate step between dried, harvested corn and *masa*.

Nixtamalization: The process of making *nixtamal*.

Nopales: A type of edible cactus. Commonly refers to its preparation for cooking, which involves removing the thorns and slicing it into thin strips. Often cooked with eggs or prepared as a salad.

Ocelote: Ocelot; Mesoamerican leopard.

Pan común: Simple bread.

Panuchos: Pan-fried corn *tortillas* stuffed with black beans and topped with shredded turkey and vegetables.

Papel amate: See “*amate*.”

Papel picado: Banners of paper flags with intricate designs.

Pelados: Lit., “the bald ones;” term for impoverished peasants who migrated to Mexican cities from rural areas in the early 20th century.

Pescado al horno: Baked fish.

Picante: Spicy. Can refer both to the quality of something and to any sauce or chile added to a dish to increase the level of spiciness.

Pilón: An extra product or gift given after buying something from a stand in a Mexican street markets.

Pimiento Verde: Green pepper.

Piñata: Hollow papier-mache figure covered with colorful tissue paper and filled with candy or other treats. Often used at parties, during which children take turns whacking the piñata with a stick in order to break it and have the candy come raining down on them.

Poc-chuc: Yucatecan-style grilled pork.

Polkanes: Yucatecan-style corn fritters

Pollo con mole: See “*mole*.”

Pollo pibil: Roasted chicken with *achiote*, prepared in a similar fashion as *cochinita pibil*.

Popol Vuh: A sacred pre-Hispanic text containing a creation myth in which men and women are created from corn.

Posada: Part of Mexican Christmas celebrations.

Every night for twelve nights, people gather at a different family’s house to say prayers and commemorate Joseph and Mary’s search for a place to stay on their trip to Bethlehem.

Pozole: A stew made with hominy (large-grained corn), pork or turkey, and red or green chiles.

Pulque: Pre-Hispanic liquor made from agave.

Pumas: The soccer team associated with UNAM, the National Autonomous University of Mexico.

Puntas de filetecon chile colorado: Steak tips with chile.

Quesadillas: A *tortilla* folded over cheese and other fillings and grilled or fried.

Queso ranchero: Lit., “ranchers’ cheese;” any of a number of fresh or unaged cheeses.

Quetzalcoatl: The pre-Hispanic deity whose body was depicted as half bird, half lizard.

Rancheras: Style of Mexican songs, popularized during the middle part of the 20th century.

Relleno negro: Yucatecan dish consisting of a deep black broth made from charred chiles and spices and stewed turkey. Often contains a large meatball made from ground pork wrapped around a hardboiled egg.

Ro Bravo: A river on Mexico’s northern border with the United States. The river marks part of the border between the two countries.

Salmonsada: Flour *tortilla* filled with smoked salmon, cheese, onion and covered with sour cream and *guacamole*. A dish invented at *La Margarita*, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Salsa: Lit., sauce; most commonly refers to a mixture of tomatoes, onions, jalapeños, and cilantro.

El Santo: Lit., “the Saint;” a well-known Mexican wrestler.

Sarape: A cloak or poncho, often woven from colorful woollen thread.

Sikil-pak: Yucatecan sauce made from roasted tomatoes, onions, chiles, and cilantro.

Sombrero: Lit., hat; often refers to a wide-brimmed straw hat.

Sopa de pescado: Fish soup.

Sopa mejicana: Lit., Mexican soup; a soup made from corn meal, tomato, spinach and chicken.

Taco: A corn *tortilla* wrapped around a filling and typically eaten with one’s hands. The *tortilla* can be steamed or quickly grilled (a “soft” *taco*) or flash fried into a U-shape and given a crunchy consistency (a “hard” *taco*).

Tacos al pastor: *Tacos* made with shaved meat, often a combination of beef and pork.

Tamales: Corn patties with sauce and sometimes shredded meat, steamed inside corn husks or banana leaves.

Tapas: Spanish bar snacks.

Taquería: A food establishment specializing in different kinds of *tacos*.

Tehuanas: Women from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Known for their sumptuous jewelry, elaborately embroidered clothing, and merry dispositions.

Teleras: Style of Mexican bread used to make *tortas*.

Tenochtitlan: The pre-Hispanic city that stood where Mexico City is now. Capital of the Mexica (more commonly referred to as the Aztec) empire.

Tepache: Sweet beverage made from pineapple.

Tequilana azul: See “agave.”

Tinga, tinga de guajolote, tinga poblana: A style of preparing ground or shredded meat, including chicken, turkey, pork, or beef, by sauteeing it with tomato, onion, chiles, and spices. *Tinga de guajolote* is tinga made with turkey. Because the dish originated in Puebla, it is sometimes referred to as *tinga poblana* (Pueblan tinga).

Tlacoyos: Thick corn patties stuffed with beans, corn, meat, etc.

Tlatuani: Aztec term for emperor.

Tlayuda: A Zapotec dish from Oaxaca consisting of a large crispy *tortilla* topped with beans, cheese, vegetables, and meat. Sometimes referred to as a “Oaxacan pizza.”

Tomatillo: A small green vegetable which resembles a dry tomato and which grows in a thin husk. Used to make *salsa verde* (green sauce).

Toros: Lit., bulls; refers more generally to the events and activities associated with bullfights.

Torta cubana, torta cubaneza: Lit., “cuban sandwich.” A sandwich with a breaded and fried filet of meat (known as a *milanesa*), slices of ham, and a series of condiments including avocado, beans, and sauces.

Tortas: Mexican sandwiches, served on round buns and consisting of a combination of meats, beans, vegetables, condiments, and sauces.

Tortería: A Mexican sandwich shop.

Tortillas: Thin, round cakes made from ground cornmeal or white flour and cooked on a griddle.

Tortilla chips: Fried and salted pieces of (or miniature) corn *tortillas*.

Tortillerías: *Tortilla* factories.

Tortuga: Tortoise or turtle.

Tostaditas: A crispy *tortilla*, eaten plain as *tortilla*

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chips or topped with chopped meat or seafood and sauce.

Totopos: Large baked or hardened corn *tortillas*, often used for making *tlayudas*.

Uxmal: An archaeological site in Yucatán with temples and pyramids built by the Mayans between the 6th and 9th centuries.

Victoria (Cerveza Victoria): Victoria-brand beer.

Virgin of Guadalupe: An image of the Virgin Mary who appeared to the indigenous Mexican Juan Diego shortly after the Spanish conquest of Mesoamerica. Known as the “Empress of the Americas,” the Virgen of Guadalupe is one of the patron saints of Mexico.

Xochimilco: An area of Mexico City known for its canals and boats.

Yucafranciscan: A term invented by a community leader in San Francisco to refer to young Yucatecan migrants who have been primarily socialized in San Francisco but who continue to speak Maya and Spanish.

Zapotec: An indigenous community in central and eastern Oaxaca.

SUMMARY

AFFECTIVE FOODSCAPES IN AN ECONOMY OF PASSION:

REPETITION, OPPOSITION AND ADAPTATION OF MEXICAN RESTAURANTS IN AMSTERDAM, MADRID AND SAN FRANCISCO

The main goal of this thesis is to analyze how the desire to affect (*affectus*) and be affected by (*affectio*) foreign bodies relates to the commoditization of food products offered in Mexican restaurants in Amsterdam, Madrid and San Francisco. I argue that actors' attachments to passionate networks enable the enactment of diverse Mexican foodscapes. I conceive of foodscapes as intersemiotic translations of landscapes. In these translations, the commoditization of food is based on its relationships with entities dwelling in Mexican and U.S. landscapes. In their efforts to enact affective foodscapes, entrepreneurs arrange such entities under particular themes, genres and chronotopes, provide coherence to the translations, and enable their repetition, opposition and adaptation. The resulting foodscapes have the power (both the *pouvoir* and the *puissance*) to function as potent or impotent signs, capable of constituting or destroying relations among bodies either by fixing beliefs or contaminating new passions.

To understand the process of translation of the Mexican and U.S. landscapes into Mexican foodscapes, in the introductory chapter I argue that much of the literature written about the commoditization of food abroad follows a purely social or purely cultural perspective, in which actors' capacities are assumed to be constrained and their agency is defined in advance. As an alternative to these perspectives, I propose an approach in which society and meaning are constantly evolving through the active interaction of human actors' passions, objects, and signs in the enactment of Mexican foodscapes.

In my analysis I follow the main principles of Tarde's economy of passion – repetition, opposition and adaptation – to trace how the entanglement of human passions, objects and images has led to the emergence and differentiation of Mexican restaurants in Amsterdam, Madrid and San Francisco. However, with the aim of broadening the heuristic scope of this intriguing theory, I also draw on concepts derived from different semiotic and philosophical approaches (affect and affection [*affectus* and *affectio*], quasi-object and quasi-subject, potent and impotent signs, intersemiotic translation and dominant). Following this approach, I explore Tarde's economy of passion in empirical terms.

The central argument derived from this perspective states that entrepreneurs translate signs from the Mexican landscape into commoditized foodscapes materialized in the form of restaurants. This is a creative process of intersemiotic translation (Jakobson 1969; Torop 2000) in which the source text is the Mexican landscape and the target texts are different Mexican restaurants in Amsterdam, Madrid and San Francisco. In order to achieve agreements with consumers, entrepreneurs and workers create equivalences and differences between source and target text. As a result, Mex-foodscapes differ and repeat in every process of translation. By using similar signs in a repetitive manner, Mexican foodscapes position themselves as parts of the same constellation; by using different ones, they distinguish themselves as singular stars. The creative combination of repetition and differentiation leads to an endless process of translation (Tarde 1899; Deleuze 2011 [1968]; Torop 2000; Latour and

Lépinay 2009).

Repetitive signs that have been translated from the Mexican landscape into commoditized foodscapes are potent signs. They are part of the dominant that distinguishes the Mexican landscape abroad. The dominant is “the focusing component of a work of art: it rules, determines, and transforms the remaining components” (Jakobson 1987: 41). Entrepreneurs and workers cannot dismiss those signs because otherwise their foodscapes would not be recognized as part of the Mexican constellation. They have the power to create agreements with the consumers and enact passionated networks. Most of those signs stem from what Cosgrove (2006) has identified as the modern landscape idea. Those signs have a great diversity of origins, but they share a quite limited repertoire of affections (Spinoza 2010 [1677]; Deleuze 1981). They emerged in the 19th century and consolidated in the 20th. Many communication technologies have helped them to travel around the world and produce affections in the bodies where they imprint (Nericcio 2007; Pérez 2007).

However, landscapes are not only representations. Landscapes are also a living phenomenon. In a non-representative fashion landscapes can be described as the ever-growing lines of life traced between organisms and living things, connected by the extension of their bodies (Ingold 2007, 2008). In landscape representations the fluid lines of life have been fragmented into dots, mostly at the service of the national discourse and the capital (*Ibid.*). Entrepreneurs translate signs both from landscapes where they have been dwelling and from landscape representations. Differences among Mexican foodscapes are generated by the encounter of both types of signs. Consumers relate with Mexican foodscapes in the same fashion: when they go into a restaurant they experiment the encounter of a landscape representation with their intimate experiences. Sometimes they have dwelt in Mexican and U.S. landscapes; other times they have related with it only through representations.

The power of the signs that entrepreneurs use in order to differentiate their foodscapes has to be proved in every process of translation. They can function as potent or impotent signs capable of constituting joyful or sad relations with consumers. They have the power to enact or destroy passionate networks. If the consumers experience joy, economic earnings will be generated. If they experience sadness, the signs have to change. The creative combination of the potent signs from the Mexican landscape with the signs used by entrepreneurs in order to differentiate their foodscapes and its encounter with consumers bodies and minds, promotes the constant translation of the dominant that distinguishes Mexican foodscapes.

In the economy of passion explored in this thesis, entrepreneurs’ aim is to create potent signs capable of contaminating the largest number of bodies; consumers’ aim is to experience joy by letting their bodies be affected by the signs of the Mexican foodscapes. I argue that rational oriented actors do not always develop entrepreneurial projects; they can be the realized dreams of those motivated by different sort passions. The owners of the Mexican restaurants analyzed in this thesis desire to create models capable of replication. They seek to contaminate with their passions the broadest possible quantities of bodies. Consumers seek for passion by introducing substances with particular tastes and textures to their bodies. They want to be affected by the signs of the Mexican nation. Following this perspective, the commoditization of food through the diversity of Mex-foodscapes analyzed in this thesis is understood as the translation and coordination of multiple affections, beliefs and passions

(Tarde 1902; Thrift 2004, 2010; Latour and Lépinay 2009).

In light of the considerations I develop in the state of art, and of the concepts I have chosen to follow, I formulate the main research question guiding this thesis as follows:

How do actors attached to passionate networks translate landscapes into affective Mexican foodscapes materialized in restaurants in Amsterdam, Madrid, and San Francisco?

Sub-questions are:

1. How did diverse bodies, affections and environments become historically assembled in the enactment of the Mexican landscape representations which have allowed the repetition, opposition and adaptation of foodscapes in Amsterdam, Madrid and San Francisco?
2. How do entrepreneurs translate their intimate affections, objects and signs associated with the Mexican, Texan and Californian landscape into commoditized, materialized foodscapes in Amsterdam, Madrid and San Francisco?
3. How do chefs, waiters and managers affect consumer's bodies in order to contaminate their passions for a particular foodscape?
4. How do consumers enact or reject the Mexican body when delving into Mexican foodscapes?
5. How does the virtual world actualize the enactment of Mexican foodscapes by expanding entrepreneurs' desires and fixing consumers' beliefs in particular objects and signs?

Chapter two offers a succinct historical exploration which answers the first question raised in this thesis: I describe the production and commoditization of multiple metaphoric bodies that reside in Mexican landscapes. I call these bodies the Corn body, the Wheat body, the Corn-Wheat body, and the Tortilla-Chip body. I argue that some of those landscapes and bodies, and the affections associated with them, have been constituted as dominants of Mexican foodscapes. Those relations are used in the process of commoditization of Mexican foods abroad.

In chapters three, four, five, six and seven I answer the remaining research questions raised in this thesis. Most of these chapters are build on three case studies that illustrate in detail how processes of repetition, opposition and adaptation enact passionate networks. In these empirical chapters I explore the different translations from the Mexican and U.S landscape into foodscapes. I argue that in the process of translation, entrepreneurs select various signs associated with the Mexican landscape idea. They choose from a vast symbol pool the signs they consider capable of affecting consumers' bodies in a joyful way and generating economic earnings. Entrepreneurs arrange all those entities under a specific dominant and its correlated chronotopes in order to provide coherence to the translation. I identify five main genres among those translations: Tex-Mex, Cal-Mex, regional-Mex, Mex-Mex and "Real"-Mex foodscapes.

In the concluding chapter I present seven research findings derived from the analysis of the general tendencies I found in the empirical chapters:

Finding 1: The repetition, opposition and adaptation of bodies and affections associated to the Mexican landscape and the U.S. desert promoted the formation of inner and outer body types to define the identity of the Mexican nation.

Finding 2: Entrepreneurs' desires and believes are expanded through the translation of their intimate affective signs into potent signs.

Finding 3: The combination of entrepreneur's intimate affective signs with the potent signs of the modern Mexican and U.S. landscape representations has promoted the emergence of different aesthetic styles.

Finding 4: Every aesthetic style of the Mex-foodscapes has a particular affective force which is sensed by consumers' bodies and minds when they dwell in the restaurants.

Finding 5: The repetition, opposition and adaptation of the Mex-foodscapes has entered into a process of innovation in which the commoditization of food is detached from the Mexican landscape, the Texan desert and the Californian beach.

Finding 6: New media and technologies, such as Web 2.0 websites, have become privileged spaces for expanding entrepreneurs' desires and fixing consumers' beliefs.

Finding 7: Managers, chefs and waiters engage with consumer's bodies in order to attach joyful signs to them and introduce particular foods into their bodies

RESUMEN

PAISAJES ALIMENTARIOS AFECTIVOS EN UNA ECONOMÍA DE PASIÓN:

REPETICIÓN, OPOSICIÓN Y ADAPTACIÓN DE RESTAURANTES MEXICANOS EN
AMSTERDAM, MADRID Y SAN FRANCISCO

El objetivo central de esta tesis es analizar cómo el deseo por afectar (*affectus*) y ser afectado (*affectio*) por cuerpos foráneos, se relaciona con la comercialización de productos alimentarios ofrecidos en restaurantes mexicanos en Ámsterdam, Madrid y San Francisco. Se argumenta que el apego de los actores a redes pasionales permite la emergencia de diversos paisajes alimentarios mexicanos. Los paisajes alimentarios son concebidos como traducciones intersemióticas de los paisajes geográficos. En estas traducciones, la comercialización de comida se basa en su relación con entidades que habitan en paisajes mexicanos y estadounidenses. En su esfuerzo por hacer emerger paisajes alimentarios afectivos, los empresarios ordenan estas entidades bajo temas, géneros y cronotopías particulares, lo cual provee coherencia a sus traducciones y permite su repetición, aposición y adaptación. Como resultado, los paisajes alimentarios tienen el poder (tanto en su forma de *pouvoir* como de *puissance*) de funcionar como signos potentes o impotentes, capaces de constituir o destruir relaciones entre cuerpos, ya sea fijando creencias o contaminando nuevas pasiones.

Para entender el proceso de traducción de los paisajes mexicanos y estadounidenses a los paisajes alimentarios, en el capítulo introductorio argumento que mucha de la literatura escrita sobre la comercialización de comida extranjera, sigue una perspectiva puramente social o cultural. Estas propuestas asumen que las capacidades de los actores están constreñidas y su agencia es definida por adelantado. Como alternativa propongo una aproximación en la que la sociedad y el significado se encuentran en constante desenvolvimiento a través de la activa interacción de pasiones, objetos y signos que promueven la emergencia de los paisajes alimentarios mexicanos.

En mi análisis sigo los principios básicos de la economía de la pasión de Tarde –repetición, oposición y adaptación– para rastrear como el entrelazamiento de pasiones humanas, objetos e imágenes ha llevado a la emergencia y diferenciación de restaurantes mexicanos en Ámsterdam, Madrid y San Francisco. Empero, con la intención de ampliar la capacidad heurística de esta intrigante teoría, también hago uso de conceptos derivados de diversas perspectivas semióticas y filosóficas (afectar y afección [*affectio* y *affectus*], cuasi-objetos y cuasi-sujetos, dominante, signos potentes e impotentes y traducción intersemiótica). Siguiendo esta aproximación, exploro la economía de la pasión de Tarde en términos empíricos.

El argumento central derivado de esta perspectiva indica que los empresarios trasladan signos del paisaje mexicano a paisajes alimentarios materializados en la forma de restaurantes. Este es un proceso creativo de traducción intersemiótica (Jakopson 1969; Torop 2000). El texto de origen es el paisaje mexicano y el texto de destino son diferentes restaurantes mexicanos en Ámsterdam, Madrid y San Francisco. Con la finalidad de alcanzar acuerdos con los consumidores, los empresarios y trabajadores crean equivalencias y diferencias entre el texto de origen y el texto de destino. Como resultado, los paisajes alimentarios mexicanos

crean diferencia y repetición en casa proceso de traducción. Con el uso de signos similares de forma repetitiva, los paisajes alimentarios mexicanos se posicionan como parte de una misma constelación; con el uso de signos diferentes, se distinguen como estrellas particulares. La combinación creativa de repetición y diferenciación lleva a un proceso infinito de traducción (Tarde 1899; Deleuze 2011 [1968]; Torop 2000; Latour y Lépinay 2009).

Los signos repetitivos que han sido traducidos del paisaje mexicano a los paisajes alimentarios comercializados son signos de potencia. Estos son parte del dominante que distingue al paisaje mexicano en el extranjero. El dominante es “el componente principal de una obra de arte: guía, determina y transforma al resto de sus componentes” (Jakobson 1987: 41). Los empresarios y trabajadores no pueden descartar estos signos porque de otra forma sus paisajes alimentarios no serán reconocidos como parte de la constelación mexicana. Estos signos tienen el poder de crear acuerdos con los consumidores y hacer emerger redes pasionales. La mayoría de estos signos tienen su origen en lo que Cosgrove (2006) ha identificado como la idea moderna del paisaje. Estos signos tienen una gran diversidad de orígenes, pero comparten un repertorio limitado de afecciones (Spinoza 2010 [1677]; Deleuze 1981). Emergieron en el siglo XIX y se consolidaron en el XX. Diversas tecnologías de comunicación les ayudaron a viajar alrededor del mundo para producir afecciones en los cuerpos donde se imprimen (Nericcio 2007; Pérez 2007).

Sin embargo, los paisajes no son sólo representaciones. Los paisajes también son un fenómeno vivo. Desde una perspectiva no representacional los paisajes pueden ser descritos como las siempre crecientes líneas de vida trazadas entre organismos y cosas vivas conectadas por la extensión de sus cuerpos (Ingold 2007, 2008). En las representaciones de paisajes las líneas fluidas de vida han sido fragmentadas en puntos puestos al servicios del discurso nacional y del capital (*Ibid*). Los empresarios traducen signos tanto de los paisajes donde han habitado como de sus representaciones. La diferencia al interior de los paisajes alimentarios mexicanos es generada por el encuentro de ambos tipos de signos. Los consumidores se relacionan con los paisajes alimentarios mexicanos de la misma forma: cuando van a un restaurante experimentan el encuentro de las representaciones paisajísticas con sus experiencias íntimas. Algunas veces han habitado en estos paisajes; en otras ocasiones se han relacionado con estos solamente a través de representaciones.

El poder de los signos que los empresarios usan para diferenciar sus paisajes alimentarios tiene que ser probado en cada traducción. Estos pueden funcionar como signos potentes o impotentes capaces de constituir relaciones agradables o tristes con los consumidores. Si los consumidores experimentan alegría: ganancias económicas serán generadas; si experimentan tristeza: los signos tienen que cambiar. La combinación creativa de los signos de potencia del paisaje mexicano y estadounidense con los signos utilizados por los empresarios con la finalidad de diferenciar sus paisajes alimentarios y su encuentro con los cuerpos y mentes de los consumidores, distingue a los paisajes alimentarios mexicanos.

En la economía de la pasión que se explora en esta tesis, la intención de los empresarios es crear signos capaces de contaminar la mayor cantidad de cuerpos; la intención de los consumidores es experimentar alegría mientras dejan que sus cuerpos sean afectados por los signos del paisaje alimentario mexicano. Los proyectos empresariales no siempre son desarrollados por actores orientados racionalmente; estos pueden ser los sueños realizados de

actores motivados por diferentes pasiones. El deseo de los dueños de los restaurantes mexicanos analizados en esta tesis es crear modelos capaces de ser replicados; buscan contaminar con sus pasiones a la mayor cantidad posible de cuerpos. Los consumidores buscan pasión mediante la introducción de sustancias con texturas y sabores particulares a sus cuerpos; quieren ser afectados por los signos de la nación mexicana. Siguiendo esta perspectiva, la comercialización de comida a través de la diversidad de paisajes alimentarios analizados en esta tesis es entendida como la traducción y coordinación de múltiples afecciones, creencias y pasiones (Tarde 1902; Thrift 2004, 2010; Latour and Lépinay 2009).

A partir de las consideraciones desarrolladas en el estado del arte y los conceptos que elegí seguir, formulé la pregunta central de investigación:

¿Cómo actores ligados a redes pasionales traducen paisajes mexicanos y estadounidenses en paisajes alimentarios afectivos materializados en restaurantes en Ámsterdam, Madrid y San Francisco?

Las preguntas particulares fueron:

1. ¿Cómo la diversidad de cuerpos, afecciones y ambientes que fueron ensamblados históricamente en la emergencia de las representaciones de los paisajes alimentarios mexicanos han permitido la repetición, oposición y adaptación de paisajes alimentarios mexicanos en Ámsterdam, Madrid y San Francisco?
2. ¿Cómo los empresarios traducen afecciones íntimas, objetos y signos asociados al paisaje mexicano, tejano y californiano en paisaje alimentarios comerciales materializados en Ámsterdam, Madrid y San Francisco?
3. ¿Cómo los cocineros, meseros y gerentes afectan el cuerpo de los consumidores con la finalidad de contaminar sus pasiones por un paisaje alimentario particular?
4. ¿Cómo los consumidores adoptan o rechazan el cuerpo mexicano cuando visitan los paisajes alimentarios mexicanos?
5. ¿Cómo el mundo virtual es actualizado en la emergencia de los paisajes alimentarios mexicanos mediante la expansión del deseo de los empresarios y la fijación de la creencia de los consumidores en objetos y signos particulares?

El capítulo dos ofrece una breve exploración histórica que responde a la primera pregunta particular de esta tesis. En este capítulo describo la producción y comercialización de múltiples cuerpos metafóricos que residen en el paisaje alimentario mexicano. He bautizado a estos cuerpos como “el cuerpo de maíz”, “el cuerpo de trigo”, “el cuerpo de maíz-trigo” y “el cuerpo tortilla-chip”. Argumento que algunos de estos paisajes, cuerpos y las afecciones que se les asocian, han sido constituidos como dominantes de los paisajes alimentarios mexicanos. Estas relaciones son utilizadas en el proceso de comercialización de los paisajes alimentarios mexicanos en el extranjero.

En los capítulos tres, cuatro, cinco, seis y siete respondo al resto de las preguntas de esta tesis. La mayoría de estos capítulos fueron contruidos a partir de tres casos de estudios que ilustran a detalle como los procesos de repetición, oposición y adaptación promueven la

emergencia de redes pasionales. En estos capítulos empíricos exploro las diferentes traducciones del paisaje mexicano y estadounidense a paisajes alimentarios mexicanos. Argumento que en el proceso de traducción, los empresarios seleccionan diferentes signos asociados con la idea del paisaje mexicano. Ellos escogen de una vasta piscina simbólica los signos que consideran son capaces de afectar los cuerpos de los consumidores en una forma agradable y generar ganancias económicas. Con la finalidad de proveer de coherencia a sus traducciones, los empresarios organizan a todas estas entidades bajo un dominante específico y sus cronotopías relacionadas. Entre estas traducciones identifiqué cinco géneros principales de paisajes alimentarios mexicanos: Tex-Mex, Cal-Mex, regional-Mex, Mex-Mex y “Real”-Mex.

En el último capítulo presento siete hallazgos derivados del análisis de las tendencias generales descritas en los capítulos empíricos:

Hallazgo 1: La repetición, oposición y adaptación de cuerpos y afecciones asociadas al paisaje mexicano y el desierto estadounidense promovieron la formación de los cuerpos interiores y exteriores utilizados para definir la identidad de la nación mexicana.

Hallazgo 2: Los deseos y creencias de los empresarios son expandidos a través de la traducción de sus afecciones íntimas en signos de potencia.

Hallazgo 3: La combinación de los signos afectivos íntimos de los empresarios con los signos de potencia de la nación mexicana y las representaciones del paisaje estadounidense han promovido la emergencia de diferentes estilos estéticos en los paisajes alimentarios mexicanos.

Hallazgo 4: Cada estilo estético de los paisajes alimentarios mexicanos tiene una fuerza afectiva particular que es sentida por el cuerpo y mente de los consumidores cuando visitan los restaurantes.

Hallazgo 5: La repetición, oposición y adaptación de los paisajes alimentarios mexicanos ha entrado en un proceso de innovación en el que la comercialización de la comida ha sido separada del paisaje mexicano, el desierto tejano y la playa californiana.

Hallazgo 6: Los nuevos medios y tecnologías de comunicación, como la *Web 2.0*, se han convertido en espacios privilegiados para expandir los deseos de los empresarios y fijar las creencias de los consumidores.

Hallazgo 7: Los administradores, cocineros y meseros enlazan sus cuerpos con el de los consumidores con la finalidad de relacionarlos con signos agradables e introducir comida a sus cuerpos.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Maximino Matus Ruiz was born in Mexico in 1977. After living in the Netherlands for a year as an exchange student in 1996, during which time he suffered from tremendous culture shock, he decided to become an anthropologist. He subsequently graduated with honors in 2004 as Social Anthropologist from the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia (ENAH) in Mexico City. For his bachelor's degree thesis project he conducted field research in rural California and México and described the multiple transnational economic strategies used by indigenous Mixtec communities in response to their exclusion from formal economic institutions in Mexico and U.S. His thesis received high honors in a national contest organized by the Colegio de Michoacan (COLMICH) in 2005. In 2006 Matus Ruiz graduated with honors from a master's degree program in Social Anthropology from the Centro de Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (CIESAS-Occidente) in Guadalajara, México. For his master's thesis he did field work in Los Angeles and México in order to study the commoditization of food in Oaxacan restaurants established by Zapotec indigenous migrants in Los Angeles County. After finishing his master degree, Matus Ruiz worked as researcher for a year in an innovation consulting firm in Mexico City and did free-lance field research for various governmental institutions and private companies in México and U.S. From 2006-2009 he participated as a field researcher and analyst for the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies at the University of California San Diego (CCIS-UCSD). In 2008 Matus Ruiz started his PhD in rural Development Sociology at Wageningen University. During his PhD studies he did field research in Amsterdam, Madrid and San Francisco. In 2008 – 2009 he was a visiting researcher at the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMES) at the University of Amsterdam. In 2010 Matus Ruiz moved to Estonia and in 2011 he graduated with honors from the University of Tartu with a master's degree in Semiotics. Between 2006 to 2011 Matus Ruiz taught various courses in transnational migration at ENAH-México. In 2011 he started to work as researcher in Infotec-CONACYT, México.



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Completed Training and Supervision Plan

Name of the course	Department/ Institute	Year	ECTS (=28 hrs)
Project related competences			
Writing PhD research proposal	WUR	2008	6
The Semiotics of Audio- Visual texts	University Utrecht	2008	4
General research related competences			
CERES Orientation Programme	CERES	2008	5
Presentations at RDS advanced seminars	WUR	2008-2011	3
Fellow researcher at the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies. Project title: Modelling Migrant Networks: Yucatecan Migrants in San Francisco, California	CCIS-UCSD	2008-2009	6
Career related competences/personal development			
Presentation Tutorials	CERES	2008	5.5
Methods, techniques and computer tools for qualitative data collection and analysis: Antropac and Atlas	Mansholt	2008	0.8
“Flexible Microeconomic Responses to a Macroeconomic Crisis in Rural México and California”	CERES Summer School, Nijmegen	2009	3
Total (min. 30 ECTS)			33.3

