

# Social Stomach: Performative Food Prototypes

Denisa KERA<sup>a,1</sup> and Marc TUTERS<sup>b,2</sup>

<sup>a</sup>*National University of Singapore*

<sup>b</sup>*University of Amsterdam*

**Abstract.** “Social Stomach” is a series of social, textual and “performative” or diogenetic prototypes [1] that rethink the relation between food and technology and experiment with future metabolic exchanges that are biological, technological and political at the same time. Eating in this project represents the ultimate form of “cosmopolitics” [2], an ideal ground for design experiments with temporary assemblages of heterogeneous actors and forces that define society immersed in emerging technologies and changing scientific paradigms. From global supply chains to bodily metabolic exchanges eating involves political, technological, biological but also social acts that cut across various scales and form complex systems of relations and interdependencies. American fast food soliloquies, communal and family organized meals, the street-food culture of Singaporean “hawker” stalls, European restaurant enclaves for small elites and community pubs represent the complex relation between technological, political and economic systems involved in eating. These eating practices and systems are changing nowadays with the rise of social media, new scientific knowledge related to food and health but also global issues surrounding food security and justice. By studying niche communities organized around novel food and eating practices but also hacked, DIY tools for cooking, we can understand and rethink further what is at stake in today’s food politics and how to define our social stomach. .

**Keywords.** Food, ANT, DIY, DNA, genomics, cosmopolitics, design fiction

*Now, while I am not out now to be taken up as  
unintentionally recommending **the Silkebjorg tyronodynamon machine for  
the more economical helixtrolysis of these amboadipates** until  
I can find space to look into it myself a little more closely first  
I shall go on with my decisions after having shown to you in  
good time how both **products of our social stomach** (the excellent  
Dr Burroman, I noticed by the way from his emended food  
theory, has been carefully digesting the very wholesome criticism  
I helped him to in my princeps edition which is all so munch  
to the cud) are mutuearly polarised the incompatabilily of any  
delusional acting as ambivalent to the fixation of his pivotis.  
James Joyce, Finnegans Wake, Book 1, Episode 6, p. 163 [3]*

---

<sup>1</sup> Denisa Kera: Assistant Professor, National University of Singapore, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, AS6/3, 11 Computing Drive, 117416 Singapore; E-mail: denisa@nus.edu.sg.

<sup>2</sup> Marc Turters: Lecturer, University of Amsterdam, Media Studies, Turfdragsterpad 9, 1012 XT, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; E-mail: mtuters@gmail.com.

## References

- [1] D. Kirby, "The Future is Now: Diegetic Prototypes and the Role of Popular Films in Generating Real-world Technological Development", in *Social Studies of Science*, February 2010 vol. 40 no. 1 41-70c, <http://sss.sagepub.com/content/40/1/41.short>
- [2] B. Latour, *Politics of nature: how to bring the sciences into democracy*, Harvard University Press, 2005.
- [3] J. Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, Viking Press, 1982.
- [4] J. P. Anderson, *Joyce's Finnegans Wake: The Curse of Kabbalah*, Volume 3, Universal Publishers, 2008.
- [5] W. Y. Tindall, *A reader's guide to Finnegans Wake*, Syracuse University Press, 1996.
- [6] Ibid.
- [7] Ibid.
- [8] B. Latour, *Politics of nature: how to bring the sciences into democracy*, Harvard University Press, 2005.
- [9] J. Potter, *Cooking for Geeks*, O'Reilly, 2010.
- [10] Fallen Fruit <http://www.fallenfruit.org/>
- [11] DIYgenomics <http://www.diygenomics.org/>
- [12] M. Nestle, *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health*, University of California Press, 2007.
- [13] LOHAS <http://www.lohas.com/>
- [14] Quantified self <http://quantifiedself.com/>
- [15] Product ontology <http://www.productontology.org/>
- [16] G. Harman, *Prince of Networks: Bruno Latour and Metaphysics*, re:press, 2009.
- [17] N. Marres, "No Issue, No Public: Democratic Deficits after the Displacement of Politics." PhD dissertation, Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis, 2009.
- [18] B. Latour, *Politics of nature: how to bring the sciences into democracy*, Harvard University Press, 2005.
- [19] M. Hardt, A. Negri, *Empire*. Harvard University Press, 2000.
- [20] M. Atwood, *The Year of The Flood*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2010.
- [21] P. Bacigalupi, *The Windup Girl*, Night Shade Books, 2010.
- [22] C. Coff, D. Barling, M. Korthals & T. Nielsen (Eds.) *Ethical Traceability and Communicating Food*. The International Library of Environmental, Agricultural and Food Ethics, vol. 15, Springer-Verlag, 2008.
- [23] D. Goleman, *Ecological Intelligence: The Hidden Impacts of What We Buy*. Crown Business, 2010.
- [24] M. Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*, Penguin, 2006.
- [25] Human Microbiome Project <http://commonfund.nih.gov/hmp/>
- [26] Sourcedmap <http://www.sourcedmap.org/>
- [27] GoodGuides <http://www.goodguides.com.au/>
- [28] 23andme <https://www.23andme.com/>
- [29] B. R. Myers, "The Moral Crusade Against Foodies: Gluttony dressed up as foodie-ism is still gluttony", *Atlantic Monthly Magazine*, March 11, 2011
- [30] S. Brand, *Whole Earth Discipline: An Ecopragmatist Manifesto*, Viking Adult, 2009.
- [31] A. Bourdain, *Kitchen Confidential: Adventures in the Culinary Underbelly*, Harper Perennial, 2001
- [32] M. Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*, Penguin, 2006.
- [33] Guerrilla gardening <http://www.guerrillagardening.org/>
- [34] P. Singer & J. Mason, *The Ethics of What We Eat: Why Our Food Choices Matter*, Rodale Books, 2007
- [35] S. Katz, *Wild Fermentation: The Flavor, Nutrition, and Craft of Live-Culture Foods*, Chelsea Green Publishing, 2003
- [36] D. Kera, "Bionetworking over DNA and biosocial interfaces: Connecting policy and design", *Genomics, Society and Policy Journal*, Volume 6, No. 1. Online <http://www.hss.ed.ac.uk/genomics/V6N1/Keraabstract.html> [15 April 2011].
- [37] GenePartner <http://genepartner.com/>
- [38] DNA Tribes <http://www.dnatribes.com/>
- [39] J. Rod, D. Kera, "From agency and subjectivity to animism: phenomenological and Science Technology Studies (STS) approach to design of large techno-social systems", *Digital Creativity*, Volume 21, Issue 1, 2010, Pages 70 – 76.