

## ***“Losing it: food and loss during the COVID-19 pandemic”***

Pola Sofia Schiavone

*COVID and the loss of the senses. Representations in film and literature.*

As the crisis resulting from the outbreak of COVID-19 develops, we find ourselves in a new scenario that is transforming, where limitations to movement and confinement are creating new rules. This article deals with that that has been ejected or pushed out from the new scheme.

Anosmia and dysgeusia (the sudden lack of smell and taste) constitute one of the most frequent reported symptoms of people with a mild case of COVID. In most cases the senses are recovered some weeks after, but some seem to be permanent.

Taste is a complex notion. On the material aspect, smell and taste establish the basic bond that we create with food. They are also the main indicators of quality and safety. On the symbolic aspect, taste defines social status and cultural belonging.

This article aims to explore the effect of loss of smell and taste caused by COVID-19, on the person's relationship to food, to society and to themselves. This loss is analyzed in narrative fiction (literature and film) that allows us to observe the creativity of human language, portraying scenarios and situations as potential answers and solutions to real issues.

Firstly, I consider the *confinement of the self*. The lack of taste and smell materialize a physical distance between the individual and the food, trapped in their own body without experiencing food fully.

Secondly, I concentrate on the disrupted bond of identification between individuals and the food system. This point considers also the social relations affected by this loss.

Carina Mansey

*Reflections on COVID-19, Loss and London's Fine Dining Industry*

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, England's fine dining industry has encountered many problems. Government policy that had been created to limit the spread of the virus meant that restaurants had to close their doors to the public and, for some, losses were cut and the closures were permanent. While the English government did put in place loan schemes for businesses and a furlough scheme for the staff that they employed, neither initiative has proved adequate for all restaurants.

The English capital, London, has been hit harder than many areas of the UK. As Edmonds posited, restaurants in central London are heavily reliant on tourism and “old clientele” (2020). The reliance on gastro tourists, in a world where many people have lost the legal right

to travel, coupled with hidebound traditionalism, has added to their vulnerability. Yet, some fine dining establishments have sought to modify their business models in order to confront the “new normal”.

In this panel discussion, I will further explore the detrimental impact that COVID-19 has had on London’s fine dining industry, while looking at the theme of loss in relation to finance and business. For this to be achieved, I will analyse parliamentary records, established statistical data, restaurant websites and relevant press content. It is hoped that this will produce a clearer understanding of what has happened, what may continue to happen, and what might happen after the “new normal” ceases to either be “new” or “normal”.

Ana Rosa Santos

### *Heritarization in times of crisis*

Food is an important part of local cultural heritages, and the valorization of regional cuisines and ingredients become a means of protecting certain identity traits and attaching it to a territorial dimension. This identity-territoriality of foodstuffs is the basis of heritagization processes - which can be understood as the process of making “public statements of food heritage and cultures” (Soares, 2014, p.20). Two distinct logics permeate these processes: a political-cultural logic and a mercantile one (Contreras & Ribas, 2018). While the former corresponds to the need to protect or recover the elements at risk of disappearance (for example, the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage established in 2003 by Unesco), the latter is inclined to convert assets into commodities. The most noteworthy example of commercial logic is the European labelling as geographical indications of origin.

The COVID-19 crisis has deeply impacted practices, patterns of consumption and even the relation that people establish with their own food. What about the heritarization processes? Have they changed during the pandemic?

This paper intends to address these questions and discuss the dynamics of heritage and losses in a period of crisis, comparing yearly the processes of Food heritagization before and during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic through documentary research in public databases - the European Commission’s DOOR (Database of Origin & Registration) and eAmbrosia (the EU wine and spirits geographical indications register) -, followed by a content analysis and interpretation of the data.