Contents

Food and Markets

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(Re)creating the Irish Farmers Market

Darina Allen

This year's Jane Grigson Memorial Lecture, the traditional Friday night opening event at the Symposium sponsored by the Jane Grigson Trust, was delivered by Darina Allen, the legendary Irish chef, author, television personality and founder of the Ballymaloe Cookery School.

Thank you – it is such an honour to be invited to deliver the Jane Grigson Memorial Lecture. We so loved Jane and regularly cooked from her books at Ballymaloe House and carefully collected her articles from the *Observer Food Magazine* every week. In fact my husband's Christmas present to me in 1971 was a copy of the newly published *Good Things*. I was thrilled and must have cooked everything in that book from cover to cover. I had a clear image of what I imagined Jane would look like from M.J. Mott's drawings and was amazed when I eventually met the much more cuddly real life version.

I still remember the intense excitement when Myrtle Allen came into the kitchens *circa* 1990 to tell us young cooks that Jane and her husband Geoffrey had booked in to Ballymaloe House; I think she was doing research for her cookbook *The Observer Guide to British Cookery*. We put her *Terrine aux Herbes* on the menu and a buttery *Gâteau Pithiviers* on the sweet trolley. She was so sweet and complimentary and pronounced our puff pastry to be much more delicious than hers. Then she confessed that she always had a problem with her pastry and asked whether I could give her a lesson – can you imagine! She returned several times, taught a two-and-a-half-day course at the Ballymaloe Cooking School and just before her untimely passing came with Sophie to a surprise party at Kinoith. How fortunate was I that our paths crossed in life.

Now onto the topic of this lecture – 'Food & Markets'.

The revival of the Irish Farmers Market began in San Francisco of all the unlikely places. I was staying with a friend, Mary Risley who owns the Tante Marie Cookery School. Mary was tremendously excited about a new farmers market that had opened in a parking lot at the other side of town which she insisted we must see, but I had been travelling for over twenty hours and wasn't in the least enthusiastic, nor did I have any intention of being up at 7.30 a.m. However, Mary is even bossier than I am, so she traipsed me across town to see this 'new' market. I've seen lots of markets in France, Italy and Spain, but this was quite unlike any I'd seen before: the stalls were, well, different, so utterly Californian – chic and edgy – and the stall holders were also quite different. Many had been doctors, dentists, lawyers in their 'last life' but had made a lifestyle decision to move to California with the dream of self-sufficiency. Some grew herbs, vegetables and beautiful fruit and flowers; others kept farmyard chickens and

The Emperor's Plate: Marketing Leftovers in Nineteenth-Century Paris

Janet Beizer

The stuff of imperial banquets and the fare of the lower classes are extreme concepts not usually considered together.[1] And yet they come together in a practice through which food circulated wildly across socio-economic, cultural and imaginary borders over the course of the long nineteenth century.[2] It was not impossible during this period for beggars to eat like the Emperor – or the King or the President of the Republic or the Rothschilds, depending on the year and the milieu – because they might be consuming the very scraps cleared from such privileged tables.[3]

The practice of clearing leftovers from the grand tables of palaces, ministries, embassies and fine restaurants and reselling them to the less privileged as *regrat* or *rogatons* (the most common umbrella terms), *bijoux* and *arlequins* (slang subterms) was common in the nineteenth century and had a special place – a quite literal space – in the market. In the renovated space of the Baltard-redesigned Halles in central Paris, the triage and recomposition of leftovers was done behind the scenes, below ground.[4] In subterranean passages removed from the light of day the remains could be prepared for marketing to the public in a painstakingly refurbished state: the almost intact morsels salvaged for resale at premium second-hand prices, the gristly half-devoured bits re-plated and artfully sauced, recomposed in more or less attractive collages priced accordingly. From here they would be sent up to the pavilion stalls devoted to this specific kind of commerce.[5]

The alimentary history of the underfed is only now being resurrected, piecemeal, thanks to a handful of contemporary historians and their sources in chronicles and novels of the period, many of which are little read or even forgotten (and generally out of print) today. We know a fair amount about the rise of haute cuisine in post-revolutionary France, but the poor left few recipes, and their fare was of little interest to most period chroniclers of gastronomy and fine restauration.[6] It is precisely this gap – of interest, of knowledge, of discourse and, of course, most concretely, of substance – that separated high tables and low (or no) tables, but that also, paradoxically, was responsible for connecting them and for putting into socio-economic circulation a vast array of objects of consumption.

In what follows I will look beyond the already richly preserved corpus of gastronomy as it was codified in nineteenth-century Paris, to the other extreme, the commerce in leftovers, and more specifically, one subgenre: the plate of recomposed table scraps, *l'arlequin*. However, by way of introduction to this trafficking, I must

Markets for Mercenaries: Supplying Armies in Sixteenth-Century Germany

Volker Bach

Food markets are so ubiquitous across the world that it is easy to think of them as something natural, an automatic product of human civilization that will emerge spontaneously. In fact, they require a great deal of organization and effort to create and are very rarely self-organized. This is often forgotten in their study because so much of the physical and social infrastructure that underpins them is invisible, woven into the fabric of the communities they serve, and thus simply assumed as given. In sixteenth-century Germany, a new form of warfare created a situation in which large-scale food markets needed to be created almost from scratch. With military writers becoming aware of the scale of this challenge, we have a larger body of source material surviving than is usual with such quotidian concerns. This paper is an effort to reconstruct what these markets looked like and what herculean efforts were required to bring them into being.

New armies

In the late fifteenth century, the economics of warfare in Germany changed. Tracing the details of this shift goes beyond the scope of this article, but at the end of it stood a system of mercenary armies based entirely on cash payments. Each individual soldier was under contract either to a mercenary commander or directly to the belligerent government, providing his own weapons and equipment and meeting all necessary outlays from his pay. This was specifically stipulated by the imperial diet of 1507 with the formula *'Sold, Cost unnd Schaden'* (pay, maintenance and damage).[1] Thus, the principal – usually a government or a military entrepreneur – was, at least in theory, entirely absolved from the responsibility of providing equipment, food and shelter for his troops as long as he kept paying them.

Pay was generous, by contemporary standards. A common footsoldier would receive four Rhenish guilders a month, with surcharges if he provided equipment or skills beyond the ordinary. The rate for particularly experienced or well-equipped men was double pay (*doppelsöldner*). Cavalrymen and gunners, too, received multiples of the monthly base rate. Contemporary accounts of how troops were recruited suggest that negotiations on this count could be noisy and protracted, and fraud was common. Infantry troops, *landsknechte*, were also known to negotiate for extra pay before battles or assaults, arguing that such risks were not covered by the base rate. This should not surprise anyone who ever dealt with contractors of any kind, and given their complete

Are Free Markets Bad for Good Food?

Julian Baggini

When discussing the rights and wrongs of food production, it's often obvious from the factual content of what is claimed whether it is supposed to be good or bad. Sometimes, however, a statement intended as positive can be read as entirely negative without a single letter or comma being moved. I came across a wonderful example of this recently: 'What a glorious thing the hamburger is. It combines meat, grains, cheese, and vegetables into a simple, delicious package for quick and enjoyable consumption. It seems so easy, yet the efficient production of the hamburger, in all its details, is of infinite complexity. Only the coordinative powers of a market economy could possibly produce it'.[1]

'Only the coordinative powers of a market economy could possibly produce it.' Depending on whether you think the mass-produced hamburger sits at the zenith or nadir of Western civilisation, this statement by Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr, president and founder of the Ludwig von Mises Institute, could serve either as a vindication or a condemnation of the market economy.

For many of those interested in and passionate about good food, it might obviously appear to be a condemnation. The hamburger exemplifies how the free market leads to dietary disaster. A free market leads to a race to the bottom, where suppliers compete to provide the cheapest version of whatever product they have to sell. In the case of food that has three main results.

First, maximizing yield on the raw ingredients. That means intensive arable agriculture, fuelled by synthetic inputs such as fertilizer and pesticide. It also means intensive meat, egg and dairy production, with animals crammed into feedlots rather than grazing or roaming on open fields with plenty of space.

Second, maximizing margins on food products. That means economies of scale, choosing mechanized mass-production over artisanal production. It also means using the most easily produced ingredients available, such as corn syrup, soy beans, mechanically recovered meat and palm oil, all derived from the cheapest raw materials.

Third, squeezing producers by buying and selling foodstuffs as commodities on open markets. Instead of negotiating fair prices directly with producers, farmers have to take their products to market, where the price is set by the logic of supply and demand, or sign take-it-or-leave-it contracts with large customers, such as supermarkets, who will use their huge buying power to drive the hardest bargain possible.

Take these three factors together and it seems free markets work to maximize profit at the expense of quality, sustainability, fairness to producers and good conditions for