

What do we waste when we
waste food?

Cinzia Scaffidi - Conegliano TV, March 14th 2019

Cinzia Scaffidi

MANGIA

* *come* *

PARLI

Com'è cambiato il vocabolario del cibo



Slow Food Editore

PREFAZIONE DI
TULLIO DE MAURO

SPRECO

Spreco non c'era.

Non era il benvenuto. «Peccato» era il giudizio corrente, quando se ne aveva notizia. In casa nessuno lo faceva entrare. Nemmeno nelle fattorie c'era posto per lui.

Poi si è intrufolato di nascosto, camuffandosi un po'. L'abbiamo visto tardissimo, quando ormai era in casa nostra, comodo come se fosse a casa sua.

Lui è arrivato innanzitutto nei campi e sui pescherecci. Tutto quello che non si prevede di poter vendere agevolmente, incanalandolo nei percorsi della **standardizzazione**, viene buttato via, ributtato in mare, lasciato nei campi oppure trasformato in compost.

Poi è passato alle linee di trasformazione, a quelle del packaging, e infine a quelle della distribuzione: scaffali sempre pieni, a qualunque ora del giorno e in qualunque giorno dell'anno, questa è la regola. Quindi si ricomincia da capo: produrre produrre produrre, senza sapere chi, quanto e cosa comprerà. Lo spreco è compreso nel prezzo, perché il sistema senza spreco non funziona. Non è un incidente di percorso: è funzionale al sistema della produzione alimentare industriale e della grande distribuzione organizzata. Qualche volta, al limite, si può spostare: promozioni, sottocosto, 3x2 hanno lo scopo di farci portare a casa più di quello che ci serve, e a quel punto il problema diventa nostro.

Così abbiamo imparato a sprecare. C'era sempre qualche buona scusa per buttare via quello che avevamo comprato senza pensare a quando, se e come l'avremmo mangiato. La scusa migliore era che era scaduto, come se allo scoccare della data fatidica lo yogurt o il tonno o il formaggio o l'olio si trasformassero in scorie radioattive; se invece era verdura era appassita, se era frutta era troppo matura, se erano dolci dovevamo dimagrire... Qualche resistenza in più ce l'abbiamo avuta sul pane, per un po' abbiamo provato a trasformarlo in pangrattato, ma se ne accumulava troppo, e comunque il pangrattato si trova già pronto al supermercato, perché "sprecare tempo"?

Il risultato è che oggi si spreca circa un terzo del cibo prodotto. E, naturalmente, si sprecano con esso l'energia, il tempo, l'acqua, le risorse che sono servite per produrlo, più tutte quelle che serviranno per smaltirlo. Si spreca, peraltro, anche un sacco di roba non nostra. Si sprecano il futuro e il benessere degli altri,

MANGIA COME PARLI

oltre ai nostri. Si sprecano le loro possibilità di riscatto. Si spreca il pianeta, e nessuno ha titolo per farlo.

Quando poi però ragioniamo sul futuro, e sui nove miliardi che saremo nel 2050, la prima cosa che ci viene in mente è che dobbiamo produrre di più. Ma se già oggi stiamo producendo un terzo in più di ciò che consumiamo, come possiamo pensare di risolvere il problema della fame, con due miliardi di persone in più, senza ammettere che è il sistema che, in senso proprio e figurato, fa acqua da tutte le parti?

L'agricoltura familiare, quella che sfama le persone, non spreca; i mercati degli agricoltori non sprecano, le vendite dirette non sprecano, l'autoproduzione non spreca. Politiche alimentari che proteggano il diritto alla sovranità alimentare e siano orientate alla sostenibilità non sprecherebbero.

STANDARDIZZAZIONE

È una parola irrimediabilmente brutta, spigolosa e cacofonica, con un che di minaccioso nel suono. Sembra di sentire un serpente a sonagli in avvicinamento.

Eppure ci abbiamo messo pochissimo ad accoglierla come una di famiglia, nonostante la nostra cultura millenaria di artigiani e arti che ci rendevano così fieri quando di una qualsiasi produzione potevamo dire «non c'è un pezzo uguale all'altro».

Poco per volta l'abbiamo lasciata entrare in ogni fase della produzione del nostro cibo: inizialmente inventavamo macchi-

What's wrong with food waste?

Why do we condemn it?

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What is sustainability about?

Or:

what we really asking when we ask if
something is sustainable?

«Is it sustainable?»

means:

«How long can it last?»

Then, the answer to the question
What is sustainability about?

is: **TIME**

Sustainability is a matter of time

But the classic economy, on which
our way of production is based says:

TIME IS MONEY

What does it mean?

TIME IS MONEY

is always said

to highlight that we should not waste time, as time is one of the voices of production cost.

We have to pay the workers, and we calculate HOW MUCH we pay based on HOW LONG they work

TIME IS MONEY

Therefore the capitalistic system is very much focused on shortening the TIME needed for production

CAPITALISTIC SYSTEM CANNOT WAIT

- FOR FRUIT TO BE RIPE
(transportation...)
- FOR SOIL TO RIGENERATE FERTILITY
(fertilizers...)
- FOR CHICKENS TO BE ADULT
(genetics)
- FOR COWS TO GIVE BIRTH FOLLOWING THEIR NATURAL CYCLES
(genetics)
(and so on...)

HOW WE DESCRIBE CAPITALISTIC (INDUSTRIAL) PRODUCTION?

FINANCIAL CAPITAL----- LABOUR

PRODUCT
to sell at a

PRICE which includes a surplus TO INCREASE

CAPITAL

IS THERE ANYTHING MISSING?

FINANCIAL CAPITAL----- LABOUR

PRODUCT
to sell at a

PRICE which includes a surplus TO INCREASE

CAPITAL

YES!!

FINANCIAL AND NATURAL CAPITALS----- LABOUR

PRODUCT
to sell at a

PRICE which includes a surplus TO INCREASE

FINANCIAL CAPITAL

YES!!

FINANCIAL **AND NATURAL** CAPITALS----- LABOUR

PRODUCT
to sell at a

PRICE which includes a surplus TO INCREASE

FINANCIAL CAPITAL
AND WHAT ABOUT THE NATURAL ONE?

...AND WHAT ABOUT THE NATURAL ONE?

THE ANSWER COULD BE:

WHO CARES?

THE POINT IS THAT RE-CONSIDERING THE
PRODUCTIVE SYSTEM IN ORDER TO TAKE INTO
ACCOUNT THE NATURAL CAPITAL
WOULD MEAN

CHANGING COMPLETELY ITS WAY TO USE TIME

And here we are,
in front of the two main ways to approach to

- production
- science
- politics
- economics
- ecology
- relationships

the reductionists or the complex approach

REDUCTIONISM

Productive systems have a spontaneous vocation to decompose reality into many smaller realities in order to seek possibilities for profit in each of them. The same trend can be observed in the productive modes of scientific knowledge, which is increasingly based on the rigid specialisation of disciplines in a way that allows us to penetrate even the tiniest mechanisms of nature without being able to reconnect them in a sound, consistent context. In this way, we move further and further from the systemic vision of things indispensable to learn how to prevent many of the problems of the global system we are living in. We consolidate a disconnected knowledge unable to express the complexity of a large part of reality. But there is another, no less important consequence: **the presumption that who owns the knowledge also has the faculty to decide in total autonomy both its developments and its uses.** (CARLO MODONESI, IL GENE INVADENTE)

COMPLEXITY

It is to Philip Anderson that we owe the opening of the debate: “**The reductionist hypothesis does not by any means imply a ‘constructionist’ one: the ability to reduce everything to simple fundamental laws does not imply the ability to start from those laws and reconstruct the universe**” (Anderson, 1972: 393). If everything obeys simple fundamental laws, Anderson argues, then only the scientists who study something really fundamental can deal with those laws; in practical terms, that would mean a few astro-physicists, a few particle physicists, a few logicians and not many others. But this doesn't work because, “the constructionist hypothesis breaks down when confronted with the twin difficulties of scale and complexity”.

**HOW DOES ALL THIS DEAL WITH FOOD
WASTE?**

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Complexity is,
using the biologist Henry Altan's words:

- not
- “an invocation to justify a lack of explanations”
- but
- “an subject of study, per se, and of sistematic research”.

A system is called :

- linear when it aims to the final task without considering the outputs, thus without using them (waste)
- Integrated when the outputs of a production become resources (inputs) for another or energy for....
 - a subsequent phase
 - restarting the productive cycle
 - side phase of the production, meaning another one, non strictly needed by the first, but still possible, just thanks to the output.

First difference: singular and plural

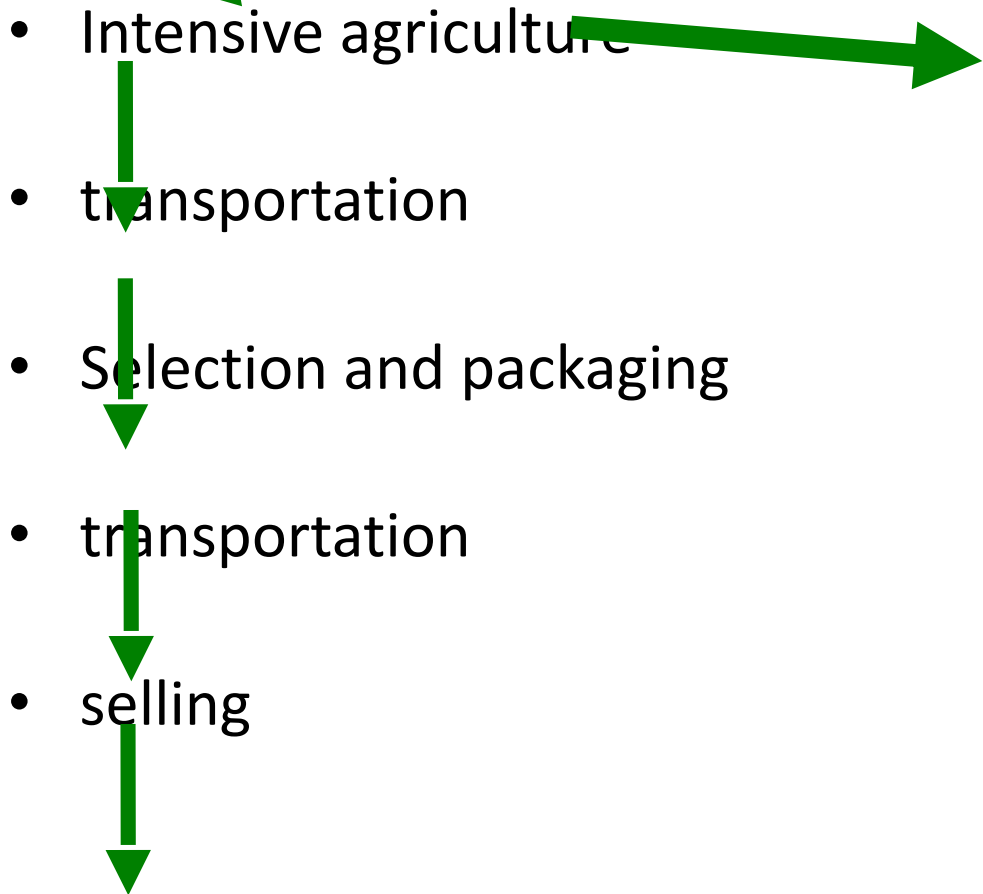
- Usually when we mention them we use
 - Plural for local markets
 - Singular for the large scale retail

- Plurality is complex and flexible
- Uniformity is simple but rigid

Linear production systems comes from
a reductionist way of thinking

- **In the linearity of the large scale retail, the provider is an agricultural system which produces huge and uniform quantities.**
- And also this agricultural system comes from the reductionism

Energetic inputs
(water, electricity, chemical agents, feeds, fuels)



sustainability

- In this process there have been inputs and outputs, but they have always crystallized in their initial role. They haven't become anything else for anybody else.

network

- Two lines in the large scale retail:
 - producing, transporting, selling;
 - buying, transporting, consuming.

There are no relationships between who produces and who packages, who transports and who sells, who sells and who buys (that is the passage from the first line to the second). There are no exchanges.

Here the network does not exist.

There are many actors who do not communicate among them, not to mention with the consumer.

price

- Production has lower costs because of the large scale, but it is miserably remunerated.
- Price is built along the various passages (selection, transportation, packaging, transportation, trade in a structure which has costs)
- And arrives to the consumer at least four times higher than it was at the beginning.

traceability

- The large scale retail system is based on the brand more than on people, no matter if they are producers or sellers.
- Farmers' markets are characterized first of all for being referred to small scale productions.
- In the small scale there is a form of sustainability, or at least there is a tendency to sustainability, somehow innate in a production which is meant to feed the producer, and not only to be sold.

Small scale production has a correct level of inputs and it is multi-functional

- **Products are mainly linked to local traditions and to the possibility that soil and climate offer: this also moderate the production costs.**
- Many products do no need any packaging.

Not only is important to transform the outputs in inputs

- *It is also and equally important to avoid producing outputs if it is not necessary*
- Because for their production energy is needed and not everythig can be solved recycling
- Not producing is an important step: it is called “pre-production waste”

It is on the social and relational elements that the small scale production sold into the farmers' markets shows all its power in terms of integration and functionality

- John Wilkinson says:
- *Markets are as solid as the social networks that feed them are*
- We add:
- *Social networks are as solid as the markets that feed them are.*

Confidence and reputation

- The social network allows this reaction, without which the market would be as the classical food technologists try to describe it: :
 - - A place where you cannot have certainties
 - - Nor on the quality, nor on the hygiene, nor on the provenience, nor about the fact that the producer really made what he/she's selling

Social relationships

the supermarket system is designed in order to allow to do all the shopping without saying one single word.

- In a farmers' market they talk
- They greet
- They taste, they chat.
- They ask questions and receive answers

In a farmers' market you do not need any musical base to cover the silence.

- But there can be music, as a cultural element, which is part, together with food of that context and that place.

At the Farmers' market people do not communicate only through advertisements and labels.

- At the farmers' market everybody learn something and teach something.
- Small lessons, or courses, can be organized: ricotta can be made, or the hadmade pasta, or salami, or meeting for kids...

In the idea of farmers' markets, together with the element of TIME there is the element of SPACE, meand as PLACE and not as SURFACE.

- It is important that farmers' markets are set into the cities and town
- Markets refer to a specific territory and enrich it with relations and exchanges not only economic.

SPACE AND TIME

- The large scale retail has as its aim saving time and using space.
- Farmers' markets invest in time and needs small space, but it is at surrounding space disposal, like the urban centre which receives benefits – also economic from that revitalized portion of itself, or the rural space, which receives from the marked attention, consideration and of course economic benefits.

Marcello Cini,
“Il supermercato di Prometeo”

- *“to recover thousands of sources of the local flow of creativity, initiative and human activities, makes fertile the fabric of society, building barriers against the flow of global capital which (...) deforms diversity (...) till it is reduced to (...) inequality”.*

So, back to our first question:

What do we waste when we
waste food?

Not only money, but TIME

Not only money, but TIME

together will all what we can fill
time with: knowledge,
relationships...

And...

if wasting food means wasting
Time

and

sustainability is a matter of Time

This is why
wasting food
is a matter
of sustainability

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EXERCISE 1:

what are we wasting when we
throw away

- 100 gr of caviar
- 100 gr of industrial cheese

EXERCISE 2:

what are we wasting when we
throw away

- 100 gr of artisanal cheese
- 100 gr of industrial cheese

EXERCISE 3:

what are we wasting when we
throw away

- 1 liter of bottled water
- 1 liter of local wine

EXERCISE 4:

the HACCP of SUSTAINABILITY
in a food (production, kitchen...)
related process

- critical points (risk)
- actions to prevent