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Food Citizenship:
Civilizing Future Humanity

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As a species, we find ourselves confronted with an epochal choice. Either we take the step to a new level of (human self-)understanding so that we learn to function according to a good life of all. Or we risk our extinction in a dystopian future. Everybody knows that we must reinvent human civilization before it is too late. Which is, of course, an anthropocenic challenge without precedent. This is why I believe we are living in the most critical moment of all human history.

In the following I experimentalize with some crucial ingredients for an effective remedy—a gastrosophic elixir, something that experts also call "food citizenship." I prepare this recipe using three ingredients. Before connecting with each other over good meals and in good company, (1) we ought to learn more about social and philosophical horizons and the reasons why this simple connection to the world can heal the crisis caused by our fast food civilization. As we will see, better than the artificial superintelligence of a transhumanist future, humans can rely on their unique capacity to use sustainable, healthy, delicious, and fair food choices in order to save humane life on this planet. This can be successful, but only (2) if global civil society focuses its political agenda on the global food crisis and on nourishing a societal change from consumerism to food citizenship. Finally (3), a new civilization that chooses "true humanity" (Immanuel Kant) as its social DNA would be based on the civilizing superpower of living anthropoethically well on the common good of good meals in good company. Adopting this manner of thinking and developing a gastrosophical "taste for civilization" (Flammang 2009) accesses the cultural repertoire of ethical eating (Johnston *et al.* 2011, Lemke 2016).

The civilizing power of food citizenship has been outside the purview of most political studies (partly because women have traditionally been

in charge of everything that is related to food, which means that it is usually neglected in favor of more male-centric activities). It also seems to be outside the bounds of so-called "real" politics (professional official governing, nation-building, decision making, and voting). It is commonly presumed that food is private, not public—and marginal to civil life.

My argument here, however, is that food is constitutive of democratic politics and even more so in regard to humanity's future. In his first book, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989), the well-known German philosopher Jürgen Habermas underlined the centrality of conversation to civic life during early modern times, and he praised bourgeois coffeehouses for functioning as public spheres for the free communication they encouraged. He elucidated a convivial, or at least a "talk-centric," deliberative theory of civil society. My argument intends to reformulate this approach by focusing on food citizenship (simultaneously, my contribution to this volume is designed to serve as a follow-up to a related piece I prepared earlier this year; Lemke 2016).

1. Explosion of superintelligence

Be it ecological, climatic, social, or demographic—the world is facing multifold symptoms of catastrophe and dystopia, and we are heading toward the general breakdown of "Western" civilization. However, there is always—many times every day for almost every human being—the possibility to take a marvelous means and remedy like food and use it as a terrestrial media[1] that connects us with a possible good life beyond consumer capitalism and its witless "fast-food society" (Schlosser 2002, Lemke 2014, Smith 2016).

1 In order to understand this correctly, we should consider the internet of food as a man-earth interface in a "nova terra," which was created by the civilization that originated during the present-day Anthropocene. With nova terra, I consciously allude to cosmopolitan sustainability ethics like the "terra madre" of the Slow Food Movement or the "Pachamama" arguments of the Buen Vivir philosophy of postcolonial/postmarxist indigenism (Petrini 2012, Acosta 2014).

Facing this crisis and those practical alternatives, I believe that the new ethics of a "convivial" or "good food civilization" belong to the most powerful forces of societal transition, as they both activate civil society and gastrosophically civilize humanity. We need the new narrative of a "gastrosophic society" or "humanity" to confront the dystopian future of highly virulent posthumanism with a neohumanistic alternative. According to posthumanists like the bestselling philosopher Nick Bostrom, "the essential problem of our time" is that machine brains could surpass human brains in regard to general intelligence. Confronted with the dawning prospect of such an "explosion of artificial intelligence," the fate of our species and the future of (post-)humanity will depend on whether we can solve the "superintelligence control problem."[2]

My concern is not to analyze posthumanism or to flatly reject it as extravagant but surely disastrous futurism. Observing this fashionable and much debated prophetic narrative critically, I am choosing an entirely different—neohumanist—manner of solving the essential problems of our time and of exploring a manageable (and desirable) future for us humans as beings living on planet Earth. What in fact evokes the fundamental confrontation between posthumanist philosophy and neohumanist thinking (and neohumanist "civilizing," as we will see shortly) is both sides' absolutely antagonistic programming and their mind hacking of "our problem"—meaning the civilizational trajectory that must be assumed in order to solve the problem.

In contrast to artificial intelligence philosophers who, for example, fo-

2 "Inside your cranium is the thing that does the reading. This thing, the human brain, has some capabilities that the brains of other animals lack. It is to these capabilities that we owe our dominant position on the planet. Other animals have stronger muscles and sharper claws, but we have cleverer brains. Our modest advantage in general intelligence has led us to develop language, technology, and complex social organization. The advantage has compounded over time, as each generation has built on the achievements of its predecessors. If some day we build machine brains that surpass human brains in general intelligence, then this new superintelligence could become very powerful. And, as the fate of the gorillas now depends more on us humans than on the gorillas themselves, so the fate of our species would depend on the actions of the machine intelligence. We do have one advantage: we get to build the stuff. In principle, we could build a kind of superintelligence that would protect human values." (Bostrom 2014, p. V)

cus single-mindedly on the ethical control of machine intelligence and its superpowers, neohumanist philosophers who use gastrosophical methods identify the global food crisis as one of the most decisive threats to the future of human existence and anthropoethical survival and consider finding a solution to be one of the most essential tasks of the human race. To my mind, the global food crisis is humanity's greatest challenge: its solution should be considered the most important issue philosophical ethics has ever faced. Simultaneously, the conceptual invention and the practical adventure of a "good food society" or a convivial civilization is both the first, and (if it fails) possibly the final task of neohumanist anthropoethics. Only if homines sapiens rigorously strive to adopt this common ethical enterprise they will have a chance of surviving on planet Earth, and to forget about a stupid, certainly impossible, transhumanist exodus to Mars or any other virtual future involving an extraterrestrial cosmic civilization based on non-human (or posthuman) intelligence.

An anthropoethical problematization of our consumer capitalist civilization should not prioritize the "superintelligence control problem" (Bostrom 2014); quite the opposite, it must focus intensively and with all existing rigor on the destructive effects of a human-like *hyperimprudence explosion.* What is exploding here and what the world—a world of hunger and obesity, of refined savor and taste illiteracy, of culinary pleasure and misery, a world of marvelous meals and junk food—is experiencing has been repeatedly described by critics and humanist of all kinds as a problem relating to the present global food system. A system whose unsustainability destroys nature, whose brutality tortures animals, whose injustices exploit laborers and humiliates people's dignity, a system whose insipidity degrades the wisdom of homo sapiens, and whose unhealthiness causes suffering and death. You must agree that it is unnecessary to continue listing these depressing problematic dimensions, effects, and hyperimprudent trajectories of the current fast-food civilization (Singer and Mason 2006, Lemke 2012).

What is more important: while posthumanist philosophy successfully and—because its story will not have a happy end—also wastefully wanders in the computational maze of potential control technologies that

might be able to install "human values" and a perfect ethical algorithm into a seed AI, neohumanist gastrosophy already publicizes functioning mems and practices of new-food ethics (Pollan 2010, Lemke 2016). Without knowing what gastrosophic wisdom and what good food for all means or causes, posthumans—either machines or anthropotechnological replicas of our species—will lack a true understanding of human values and ethical ideals. Instead of getting lost in the (ultimately deficient) creation of an artificial superintelligence and a transhuman future where cyborgs control what we humans are and what we will think and do, an anthropoethic humanitas can easily acquire almost all superpowers and all technological, particularly culinary, intelligence for solving the crisis of civilization just by means of sustainable, healthy, delicious, and fair food choices. From a gastrosophical perspective, the recently discovered existence and nutritional efficiency of "superfoods" is simply another scientific proof of the superpowers that certain foods—foodways, food shapes, food cultures—provide for humans (Wolfe 2009).

When someone as intelligent as Nick Bostrom fantasizes poetically that eventually "the bouillon cubes of discrete human-like intellects will melt into an algorithmic soup" (Bostrom 2014, p. 211), then let us enhance our fading gustatory consciousness and let us transcend day-by-day humanity's fast-food civilization and its dystopia. When over the next few decades more thousands of millions human beings – human brains and human-like intelligences - wish to dwell happily on planet Earth, let us hold on to true humanity and let us nourish this very real and down-to-earth intelligence explosion simply by civilizing our society accordingly. A global revolution in the sphere of human consciousness and civility (which can also be called sociality or conviviality) will change for the better. Maintaining this possible future in mind, it wouldn't be wrong to say: we must bring all our human resourcefulness to bear on this solution.

2. Civil society and food movement

Who are the heroes of the urgent revolution and the evolutionary transi-

tion of human food? To answer this question, at least in a rough sense, I restrict myself to focusing on two superpowers of the culinary intelligence explosion.[3] The first one, the bouillon cube of the discrete, human-like food citizen, is embodied in any activity of daily ethical eating. Food citizenship connects to the concept of "Earth democracy" (Shiva 2006, Renting 2012) and the cosmopolitan agenda of "food sovereignty" (Whitman 2010, Choplin 2011). Before we consider this do-it-yourself superfood, I will focus on the second superpower: the civilizing societies of civil society's bottom-up, self-organizing non-governmental initiatives, groups, or institutions that melt into the planetary food movement soup (Lemke 2012).

In recent decades, the destructive functioning of advanced global capitalism as well as the legitimacy crisis of the representative democratic oligarchy have nurtured new social movements in various countries. The rhizomatic movements advanced by this planetary alliance of citizens are also known as the "global civil society" (Salamon 2004). Usually, the notion of civil society denotes activities performed by voluntary, non-profit, and non-party political organizations or initiatives that manifest the interests and will of citizens regarding the common good. Its actors operate on the meso level of societal politics, which is mostly associated with the macro level (state government, corporate economy) or the micro scale (the individual behavior and habituated customs of every citizen as a human being).

At the end of the last millennium, a remarkable thing happened. On November 30, 1999 some 70,000 protesters, union members, environmentalists, indigenous peoples, peace- and human-rights activists, feminists, agriculturalists, and others took to the streets of Seattle to fight for the rights of the disenfranchised and for the rebuilding of local economies, demanding a restoration of democracy, an end to corporate "cannibalism" (Ziegler 2015), and respect for the needs of all humans and other living things. The process of building a new politics and a new

3 My intention here is obviously to hack current neuro-rhetorics and AI philosophies like those of Nick Bostrom's *Superintelligence* and transhuman futurists alike in order to reprogram the normative kernel and the design of its ideology.

cosmopolitan consciousness of an "emphatic civilization" was set in motion (Rifkin 2010). This symbolic demonstration expressed a united opposition to the world-trade organization (WTO) and its oligarchic neoliberal war against "the 99 Percent Movement" (Holt-Giménez and Patel 2009, Gould-Wartofsky 2015). Some called this powerful insurrection "the protest of the century" or simply the "Battle of Seattle."

The massive riot played a major role in bringing WTO negotiations to a standstill. This planetary citizen alliance also focused world attention on an epic struggle between two divergent social forces contesting the future course of humanity. Millions of socially intelligent human beings began waking up and more and more of them began to "occupy" consumer capitalism, expanding and melding together their enclaves of civility (van Gelder 2011, Hoffmann 2012). For instance, David Kortens, the author of the international bestseller *When Corporations Rule the World* and *The Post-Corporate World: Life After Capitalism* and books like *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community* and *Globalizing Civil Society*, rejoiced: "It is a powerful testimony to the reality and power of humanity's spiritual nature that millions of people all around the world are waking up from the cultural trance into which they have been lulled by capitalism's relentless siren song of material indulgence." (Kortens 2000, p. 17)

Everywhere, civic engagement is working for social transformation and the bottom-up creation of a planetary civilization comprised of strong and vital civilizing societies. The global civil society interacts cooperatively with all autonomous living systems and seeks to maximize the opportunity for each individual to fully and freely develop their human potential in service to common wellbeing: thus, civil society differs in every dimension from the consumer capitalist society, whose inhuman indulgence is collapsing. As a matter of fact, numerous cosmopolitan groups congregate around food issues. The growing public concern over food and the increased awareness that food practices must change profoundly result—at least partly and in a piecemeal fashion —from pressure by civil society (Wilkins 2005). Matters of food ethics are central within cosmopolitical gatherings like the World Social Forum,

where tens of thousands of people from different global civil societies exchange their experience and intelligence. This new gastrosophical self-understanding has successfully created a new discourse on good food by blending the diverse civil flavors and ethical ingredients of related social movements (animal rights, the environment, climate, seeds, land property, water, workers' rights, gender, education, the food industry, etc.) into one common that creates an unsatisfied appetite for change.

The savvy density of this burgeoning food movement is evidenced by its intensive involvement in almost all of the civilizational problems and anthropocenic trajectories the world suffers (Holt-Giménez 2011): the environmental movement (Greenpeace), animal-rights movement (PETA), human-rights movement (Food First), third-world development movement (Bread for the World), peace and social justice movement (Food not Bombs), small peasants/farmers organizations (La Via Campesina), food climate movement, consumer rights and citizen movement (Slow Food), right-to-the-city movement (Transition Town), and the world-leading chefs movement (MAD)—just to list a few of the most well-known activities. The million-fold forces of the global-civil society are involved in all food-related problems and offer alternatives that transcend a hyperimprudent system.

The young and rumbling, yet vaguely visible, global "food movement" (Pollan 2010) initiates forms of opposition, protest, and publicizes a possible "other world." This is the case when growing dissatisfaction with legal institutions provokes resistance such as land occupations ("Reclaim the Fields") or political-protest campaigns, such as "Fed-up with Big Agribusiness."[4] Some groups aim to raise awareness about consumerism and its destructive consequences, focusing on the large amounts of food waste inherent in modern food-retail and consumption patterns (Stuart 2009). Radical critics of the scatterbrained, throw-away society have begun to recycle the "waste" from supermarkets, and activities like "dumpster diving" and movements like "freeganism" are expressions of this creative intelligence (Barnard 2016). Freeganism combines concepts of free and shared food with animal rights and literally transhuman,

4 Available from: http://www.wir-haben-es-satt.de/start/home/

compassion-driven veganism.[5] Freegan activities relating to civil society use food as a public political statement to denounce indisposed or unequal access to common goods and possible (hand-on) sources of human wellbeing.

For instance, *Food Not Bombs*, an international movement that involves sharing free vegan or vegetarian food in over 1,000 cities over the world to protest against war, poverty, and environmental destruction, has expressed a commitment to the fact that reasonable food is not a privilege but a human right. Other groups, like the German movement *Tafel* (i.e. "table"), donate products removed from supermarket shelves prior to their expiry date to marginalized people (a conventional humanitarian action that is often considered ambivalent as it might foster social exclusion instead of battling it).

In recent years, new types of co-producer or consumer–producer cooperation in food networks have emerged in which citizens play a participatory role in operations, and this clearly transcends conventional (passive convenience) supermarket consumerism. Examples include consumer co-ops and solidarity groups buying local and organic food from community-supported agriculture—this originated from the *Seikatsu Club Consumer's Cooperative* of Japanese housewives in 1965, which made short food-supply chains and local food systems a reality (Evanoff 1998). Those "civic food networks" (Renting *et al.* 2012), building on the diversity of initiatives, prove that the role of civil society as a governance mechanism for an alternative world has increased in significance compared to capitalist market-driven agribusiness and state regulations.

5 A radical, upgraded version of "full-fleshed" freeganism is advocated by veganarchism (Brian 1997). Schematically speaking, "vegan humanism" (Taureck 2015) would be classified as the opposite extreme to posthumanism. Although wisely placing food in the normative center of its notion of humanism, veganism resembles a counterpiece. This is not only because it claims to be a transhuman extension of anthropoethics (of course by encompassing non-human animals and not machines), but that it turns out to be inhuman because it reduces humanist ethics to total indifference regarding what we eat and do – with the only exception that we should not eat and use products of animal nature. However, a gastrosophically founded neohumanism retains our humanity in such a way that it wants us to use—or to rebuild—human intelligence for the sake of maximum diversity and ethical pleasures in food citizenship.

Moreover, food citizenship is reshaping the relationship between daily purchasing decisions and the market as well as with public institutions by means of a moralization or civilization of food economy and society. The contemporary Left rely on the state and the market to organize their codes of ethical values, but what they really need is civil society—friendship networks, voluntary associations, spontaneous groups, mutual help, solidaristic ties, and bottom-up initiatives—not to act as a substitute for the state or the market, but to transform them.

Citizens' actions in relation to food should be understood as expressions of agency shaped by daily activism, for instance by civic prosumer engagements that represent shared goals at community level and embody a gradual shift from passive private consumption to economic models based on mutuality and communality. To reinstate ethical trajectories into economy would result in an "ethical foodscape," of which emerging food citizenship forms a part (Goodman *et al.* 2010). To an increasing urban population living in cities (80% by 2050), food is a mediator of relations within the societal web and assists connectivity; it is not simply a ready-made commodity or a mere material nutrient. Thus, how we produce and share food has an important bearing on the anthropoethical future of citizenship and convivial humanity. The increasing tendency towards civic engagement over food has taken the form of a grass-roots movement (literally), an example of which is the grow-it-yourself initiative known as urban agriculture. In countless cities and metropolises of the Global North and South, urbanites are beginning to change their lifestyles by becoming part-time farmers and local-food lovers. Some growers appear to be primarily interested in inner self-fulfillment, emotionally reconnecting with nature, and meeting other like-minded people.

Nonetheless, their actions, like drops in the ocean of betterment, contribute to changing the overall food system. Many individual and collective experiences appear to be opportunities for unskilled citizens to regain knowledge about food growing and civilizational transformation. From the perspective of societal change, they represent the civilizing enhancement of unique capacities. For instance, in the United States, civic engagement through urban agriculture is particularly mushrooming in

the food deserts of inner cities (Ladner 2011, Cockrall-King 2012). Here, community gardens in the form of beautiful futurist foodscapes are important for guaranteeing a supply of valuable sustenance that represents local resilience, a role that also applies to many initiatives in the countries of the Global South (Zeeuw and Drechsel 2015).

However, empowerment through citizens' engagement in food growing and local-land cultivation is not in all cases related to gradual self-sufficiency in supply. In most European cases of urban gardening, subsistence remains a secondary motivation. Similarly, in Japan, the Tanada system of collective rice-terrace cultivation appears to be more of a socio-cultural activity than a source of staple foods (Moreno-Peñaranda 2011). In various cities, community gardens have become popular sites for the social integration of different groups, e.g., in the context of neighborhood gardens, intergenerational gardens, or intercultural gardens. Social integration or cooperation is a strong motivation but, in reclaiming public space and the "right to the city," autonomous community gardens also enforce political power.

Along similar lines, several initiatives aim to provide access to land to those who wish to grow food and do not have land (especially residents of urban areas). Examples include *Selbsternte* ("self harvest") in Germany and Austria, *Landshare* in the UK, *Terre de liens* ("land of connections") in France, and *Toma la Tierra* ("take the land") in Spain. Some offer their services free-of-charge or as community services (like Landshare), while others are more business-oriented and closer to direct-marketing or prosumer-event schemes (like Selbsternte). Others consider themselves to be political movements (like Terre de liens and Toma la Tierra), and have a clear agenda linked to futuristic debates on de-growth and reclaiming the commons (Helfrich 2012).

One might argue that gardening within the utopian tradition focuses on the garden's significance as a site of refuge and even of political resignation, i.e., it is escapist or compensatory. Apparently, if we are to rely on contemporary community garden movements, we ought to reevaluate this trope in tune with an alternative understanding of the grow-your-own movement and gardens as sites for collective actions relating to resistance and resurrection (see Anke Haarmann in this volume, re-

flecting our project "Keimzelle" in Hamburg, St. Pauli). Learning to see and to explore this new universe—and "pluriverse" (Escobar)—of human agency, which food's agentive potential provides for the neohuman intelligence explosion, we might realize that the food citizenship movement could become the most powerful civil societal movement of our time. If humans change their culinary existence, huge-scale economic and social change will occur. That is to say, no other civilizational activity is comparable with the global impact of Good Food. No other social movement burgeons the same superpower in regard to healing the many wounds created by our fast-food civilization.

However: the proof of the pudding is the eating. It is not sufficient to demonstrate and to fight for social justice, a world free of hunger, a globe full of food sovereignty, and community gardens. We must act accordingly, i.e. eat and live gastrosophically. Global civil society must revive and properly feed our wrecked civilization from below.

3. Food civility as true humanity

A best-practice example of moving from consumer to food citizen, of becoming an ethically enhanced neohumanist, leads us all the way back to the philosophical heart—and the gastrosophical hearth—of the 18th century's Enlightenment movement. This origin of cosmopolitan citizenship is not usually mentioned in civil society studies, which is due to the fact that most scholars, like ordinary people, are ignorant of food and gastrosophical superintelligence (McKinley 2015, Smith 2016).

Here, at the dawn of a modern civil society, a superbrain and a superpalate have awoken *a posteriori* to practical reason; it is Immanuel Kant, one of the brightest brains in human history, who claimed: "The good living which still seems to harmonize best with virtue is a good meal in good company (and if possible with alternating companions)." He added to this the following: "There is no situation in which sensibility (Sinnlichkeit) and understanding (Verstand), united in enjoyment (Genuss), can be as long continued and as often repeated with satisfaction as a good meal in good company (gutes Mahl in guter Gesellschaft)."

For Kant, the dinning society, *die Tischgesellschaft*, is part of the "highest ethicophysical good," and in fact is the "ultimate experience" for us as humanly gifted beings (Melville 2004, Cohn 2008, Lemke 2016, p. 292-311). This is simply because through good food enjoyed together with some friends or like-minded citizens (contrasting with the views of most communitarians, who see bourgeois families as foundational to society), or "humans of good taste" (Kant), we practice the anthropoethic art of living together commonly or convivially and thereby obtain the highest good. The famous thinker taught his fellows: "The way of thinking that unites well-being with virtue in socializing defines humanity" (Kant 1974, p. 143). Apart from the other potential activities involved in ethically good living, when we live day-to-day in such a way[6] we fully activate the civilizing superpowers of "true humanity," which Kant conceptualized as the naturally given practical wisdom of our species. Only we humans are capable of cultivating this specific cosmic endowment simply by enjoying good meals in good company, at least as much as our culinary existence and our gastrosophical intelligence are concerned.

The human custom (gr. *ethos*, lat. *mores*, German *Sitte*) to sit together peacefully and joyfully over tasty food is an extraordinary phenomenon that occurs across the entire world. This practical wisdom (*sophia, sapientia, Weisheit*) does not rely on pure brain volume or cognitive or computational capacities. Instead of the mind or mere self-consciousness, civil or convivial intelligence and thoughtfulness is required, which marks the specific difference between our species and other creatures. The special—and in its own right, artificial—skill (gr. *techne*) of producing, sharing, and enjoying perfectly made humane food with others has a civilizing effect on our social evolution and cultural life.

We must include the praxis or absence of common meals (as essential to our daily life) in our understanding of "civil society" because it plays a major role in building a society that is either civil or lacking in civility. As Kant realized, the eating society is at the heart of civil society rather than apart from it. This conditio humana is revealed by a contemporary

6 Implying that—contradictory to the moral design of a categorical imperative—*not every single* action and act of eating must be in accordance with this ethical praxis.

concern about the crisis, the decline, and the disintegration of daily conviviality that could function as the highest good of civilized moral life.

When humans gather together to eat and drink, they share experiences with each other in the fashion of civil society, as this requires consideration so that everyone receives their fair share as well as consideration in regard to achieving the common good of all (or at least of those all who are taking part). Companions become better able to show politeness towards other people: The words "politeness" and "politics" both originate from the Greek word for "city" (*polis*) and the interaction of citizens (*polites*). The ethical importance in politics of using polite interaction when engaging in deliberative talking and civil speech was most famously noted by the Greek philosopher Aristotle (Rhetoric). The dynamics of civilized behavior in cities are the same as those for common meals: polishing otherness, sociality, teaching, learning codes, and rituals (talking, enjoying) that are acceptable to others.

The next time you share a meal with friends or family, keep in mind that at that very moment your humanity (Menschlichkeit) is partaking in an artistic ritual that is unknown to any other natural animal or artificial superintelligence. The biological and cultural evolution of humanization becomes possible only by gathering around a hearth to prepare (cooking, crafting, creating, flavoring), share, and taste—all-in-all humane—food.

A *vita activa* of truly good taste, i.e., homo sapiens as opposed to homo economicus or robo sapiens, involves the democratic habits of sharing, mutuality, free speech, common thinking, and the satisfaction of hunger to cultivate true humanity. Only human beings are capable of creating this civilizing praxis — which we do every single day through joy and indulgence in an attempt to make our world as good as it can be. By becoming an essential activity of everyday well-living and practical wisdom, the civility involved in a good meal in good company also normalizes civilizing behavior in all related human affairs and interactions.

If we—as single citizens and as a world community—really want to solve the crisis caused by the fast-food civilization and save the planet Earth as the home of an athropoethically Good Life For All, good meals

in good company will function as the DNA of society, programming our social intelligence and capability to cooperate, share, and form the common good. Given that it is beneficial to know the meaning of true humanity and the anthropoethic blueprint of human virtuousness, of experiencing common good and enjoying wellbeing on a daily basis — from now on keep the following in mind: whatever might be important for and constitutive of a Utopia, a daily, good meal in good company ought to be part—and at the center—of it. Its civilizing energy works as the pulsing heart and the nourishing hearth of almost all human goodness. Why? Because its powers supply us with real human experiences and human values that could save the Earth and its terrestrial humanity.

Using food to experience true humanity in terms of convivial civility reinforces the original meaning of the concept. *Civility* originates from the word *civilis*, which in Latin means *citizen.* However, civility formerly denoted much more than simply being a citizen who participates in political activities in democratic life (protesting, voting, governing), which is the usual definition of *civic engagement.* The origin of civility, however, is in the sociality or conviviality of dining. There is nothing more democratic and polis-like than preparing and sharing meals with others. The eminent German sociologist Norbert Elias traced the modern "process of civilization" to table activities, which he claimed form the habitual basis and matrix of Western society.[7] Supported philosophically by Erasmus' humanism of "civilized table manners," the outstanding merit of Elias's work is that it demonstrated the extent to which modern civilizations rely on the historic transformation of humans (from their previous status as feudal peasants) into city dwellers and national citizens and the power of their civilizing food habits.

In reconstructing this (still ongoing) process, Elias of course did not refer to the gastrosophical dimension of Kantian anthropology. Whereas Kant's ethics of civility places conviviality at its anthropoethical center,

7 It has been argued (Post 2010) that Barack Obama, in his capacity as (former) President of the United States of America, demonstrates perfect and exemplary civility. Unfortunately the world has not seen Obama practice model food citizenship, as Kant did via his good daily meals that he shared with good friends, which showed his fellow man the qualities that true humanity demands.

its prevailing (culturally hegemonic) civilized table manners and food choices prepared a social foundation for modern capitalism and its fast-food lifestyle (Flammang 2009). Nonetheless, the alternative food citizenship and gastrosophic counterculture that Kant theoretically taught and which he personally practiced became well known to his fellows as the "Kantian convivial society." At present, his ethos of enjoying good meals in good company—true humanity—is mushrooming in many cities across the globe.

We should, however, be critical of Kant and his individual approach to realizing true humanity: his food activism remained rather basic—no gardening, no cooking, no dish washing, no participation in the various affairs of the food movement of his time.[8] While contemporaries of the 18th century's civil society, particularly Jean-Jacques Rousseau and William Godwin, had already fought for social justice and good food for all, for animals rights and the human right to culinary joy or gender issues regarding home cooking, Kant limited his food ethics strictly to the "civilized happiness" of enjoying common meals.

Kant's opportunities to connect himself with fellow humans and dine with "alternating companions" (which he, as we have seen earlier, considered to be essential to true humanity) were minimal due to the limited scope of his social encounters in early liberal society. This has changed; Internet-based social media—thanks to computer technologies and machine algorithms—make it easy to arrange gatherings of varying conviviality. Against the rising tides of xenophobic initiatives like *Cooka-sa* and like-minded civil societies whose hospitality is open to alternating companions of any kind, the traditional privacy of food habits has been modified into an almost public event.

It might seem that the convivial activities organized by Slow Food communities get to the heart of the matter; but, if you look carefully, everywhere on Earth you can now find homo sapiens congregating with-

8 Gastrosophical feminism neither confines women to the kitchen nor proclaims that the quality of our lives is improved when no one is in it. We should, however, draw attention to the social and political costs of the erosion or absence of the civilizing aspects of food and meal rituals. Common foodwork and its convivial enjoyment must be redefined as everyone's responsibility and humanity.

out even knowing each other and simply forming cooking and dining clubs (which should remind us of the historic coffeehouse societies during the Enlightenment movement theorized by Jürgen Habermas). Now, all kinds of convivial clubs are being formed: gourmet, charity-based, recipe-swapping, diet-support, adventurous eating, neighborhood cooking, all-male cooking, all-female cooking, couples cooking together, singles-only, and—most cosmopolitan— refugees' cooking.[9] This is not to ignore arts-based participatory activities, which support the performance of food citizens in various designs (Lemke 2008, Buser 2016).
At such events you can already find gradually existing alternatives and an utopian world—a better world that incorporates the ultimate experience of common-good living—which can solve some of the greatest problems facing present society. Such events anticipate a tomorrow which can spread the civil intelligence of true humanity. These civilizing life-experiences sustain people's sense of an Earth-oriented neohumanism in a world where private life and leisure time are traditionally limited to capitalist consumerism and the fast-food civilization.

Civil societal groups and initiatives are often conspicuously absent in policy discussions and strategic planning relating to good-food habits and the superpowers of civilizing society. Policies ignore food citizenship and civil society's Good Food philosophy—its purposes, how it operates and its contributions to the development of sustainability, justice, health, wisdom, delicacy, conviviality, and humanity. This must be addressed, for instance, by incentivizing and creating spaces for the ex-

9 The Berlin-based civil society group Über den Tellerrad kochen has recently published documentation concerning its refugee cooking club. The editors of *Recipes For a Better Us/Rezepte für ein besseres Wir* (2015) explain: "This book is more than an ordinary recipe book. It's a colorful mix of original, international recipes. It´s more than a collection of experiences of people who are looking for a home in Germany. It is more than the story of people who welcomed their fellow man. It is more than encounters between people from different cultures. It´s the documentation of a society that is growing together. Made possible by you, the book grew from a call that brought people from different cultures together to cook — and it was further supported by all those who wish to consider the issue of asylum from another angle. The experiences of more than 30 cooking encounters, the recipes from all over the world, and the personal stories of the refugees are all summarized in this book. We hope to inspire more people to approach each other, and to cook beyond your horizons."

change of ideas and practices between civil societies and policy-makers. Local food policy councils are certainly among one of the most promising Good Food governance measures in recent years (Moragues-Faus and Morgan 2015).

Participating in these activities generates superpowers that shape a new economy and civilizational trajectories according to "the common-good principle."[10] Let us hope that the anthropoethics of convivial humanity, which Kant, two centuries ago, pursued in trying to connect food with civil society, is an ideal that has finally reached its moment of fruition. It is already an ideal shared by millions of people who enjoy food in unusual ways; not as affirmative and dumb consumers, not even simply as new ethical and cosmopolitan consumers, but above all as superintelligent neohumanists, or to phrase it more poetically, as ordinary cosmopolitan food citizens.

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10 Here, I ascribe an *anthropoethic* meaning to the "common good principle" as defined by transhumanist philosopher Nick Bostrom: "Superintelligence should be developed only for the benefit of all of humanity and in the service of widely shared ethical ideals." (Bostrom 2014, p. 213)

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