From Sweetness to McDonald's: How Do We Manufacture (the Meaning of) Foods?

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"The wealth of societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails appears as an 'immense collection of commodities'; the individual commodity appears in its elementary form. Our investigation therefore begins with the analysis of the commodity".

In opening Capital with the world of commodities, Marx implicitly raises some intriguing questions over whether such a starting point is appropriate in unravelling the nature of capitalism in general and of its political economy in particular. Drawing on the classical distinction between use value and (exchange) value, Marx's attention rapidly turns to value relations, with an essence determined by socially necessary labour time, a monetary form adopted in exchange. On this basis, not least through the notion of commodity fetishism, Marx reveals the extent to which value relations are expressed in forms, market relations, that do not directly reveal the processes, structures, powers, conflicts and tendencies on which they depend. In particular, relations between producers are expressed as relations between things.

One way of interpreting the three Volumes of Capital is as an unfolding of the relationship between use value and exchange value with which they begin. Volume 1 is predominantly concerned with how (surplus) value is produced, Volume 2 with how it is circulated, and Volume 3 with how it is distributed.[1] With minor if significant exceptions – concerning generic use values such as means of production and means of consumption, the use value of labour power, the use values of money – this is an account of the relationship between value and exchange value, how the latter is the more complex and concrete expression of the relations that connection the two great spheres of production and exchange, Fine and Leopold (1993, Chapter 19). But what of use value?

Its more than apparent neglect has opened Marxian political economy up to at least two types of criticism. The first, heavily associated with neoclassical orthodoxy, associates the absence of use value as indicating a one-sided (and erroneous) emphasis upon supply with no account of its intersection with demand that is to be filled out by a theory based on marginal utility. Remarkably, though, this critique is itself based upon a vacuous theory of use values themselves, one that is reduced to unspecified material properties of goods that satisfy otherwise unspecified sources of preference that are attached to anonymous individuals with the most vulgar of motives and the unwavering commitment of machines, Fine and Leopold (1993, Chapter 4) and Fine (2002, Chapter 7). Postmodernism, on the other hand, has emphasised the role of the subject in construing the variable meaning, and hence use value, of objects. Taken to extreme, the use value of a commodity can float free from its material properties. It is the interpreted sign value that matters, and value as such and its associated relations are rendered analytically redundant.

The purpose of this contribution is to address the relationship between use value and (exchange) value, not by rejecting Marx's political economy but by building upon it. The first step in doing so is to extend the notion of commodity fetishism or how it has been traditionally interpreted in terms of the concealment of production relations. Rather, and it is a very simple and obvious point, the commodity as such, once it has reached and passed the point of sale, bears little, if not none, of the "history" that has brought it to the market. In other words, the relations that are concealed by the commodity form go far beyond those of narrowly conceived production. What was its country of origin, what quality of materials were used, what technology, were decent wages and working conditions involved, etc? The fact that consumers want to know about their products – and these are not immediate - whether for the quality of consumption itself or for broader ethical or political reasons, reveals the fetishism that surrounds the use value as well as the exchange value of commodities. Just as commodities do not reveal whether they are the product of wage labour or not, so they do not reveal other aspects of their use value. Indeed, consumer campaigns around child labour, the environment, political boycotts, and so on, depend upon bringing those aspects of use value to the attention of consumers in the hope of countervailing action.[2]

Having established that use value is itself fetishised, the question arises of what is the substance of the fetish and how is it, or commodity use value more generally, determined – just as religious fetishism as such cannot tell us the details of what sort of god we get to believe in (or not) and why. The next step in my argument is to insist that the relationship between the material and cultural properties of a commodity is not one of independence. To do so, I draw upon the powerful argument put forward by Haug (1986) that also suggests, implicitly, that the priority that Marx's analysis gives to value as opposed to use value relations is well-founded. Haug argues that, as it evolves, capitalist commodity production transforms the nature of the commodity. What he has in mind, in particular, is that the quality of the commodity is undermined in part, for example, by loss of craft skills and in part by substitution of inferior inputs. Thus, the nature of the use value produced is changed, thereby opening up what might be termed a gap between the commodity as it is and as it has been perceived.

How is that gap to be closed together with sale? Of course, one answer is to reduce price in conformity with reduced quality and consumer perception. But Haug puts forward the notion of aesthetic illusion as an alternative. He argues that the diminished quality of the use value can be compensated for by the use of sexuality through advertising. The commodity's use value is enhanced by endowing it with a sexual content. As a result, its use value changes in two directions, a loss of material quality in some sense but a gain of an element in the view of the consumer.

The telling point in Haug's account is to establish a connection, in principle, between conditions of production (the tendency to product degradation with accumulation of capital) and a corresponding shift in the aesthetic quality of the product. Nonetheless, there are weaknesses in his approach in practice. The first is that his analysis is too specific. On the one hand, changes in production associated with capitalist accumulation do not necessarily take the form of product degradation for whatever reason. Indeed, with exceptions, it seems more likely that the qualities of products are enhanced over time with the superior technologies associated with capitalist development. This is most obvious with new technology and the rapidly decreasing prices and equally rapidly rising quality of many electronic products. In addition, products change in a variety of ways, in association with changing production conditions in pursuit of profitability, that are not readily reducible simply to change, up or down, of quality.

On the other hand, advertising and other means of endowing commodities with an aesthetic content are not reducible to sexuality alone as all sorts of other aesthetic properties are deployed in advertising in order to promote marketability. Indeed, sexuality itself, and the image of women more generally, have a wide range of different elements. So, if a gap between the commodity as it is and the commodity as it perceived is opened up by a change in production, it can be closed again by an aesthetic illusion that has nothing to do with sexuality. Advertising can even be used to play upon the cause of the gap, by claiming as good as home-made despite factory production or, reflecting the previous claim, as at the forefront of technology.

In short, whilst Haug correctly points to a gap to be closed by an aesthetic illusion, how that gap may be opened and how it may be closed ranges far beyond the considerations that he himself puts forward. But, second, there is a more fundamental issue raised by his analysis. For it is solely concerned with how an aesthetic illusion serves to close the gap created by shifting conditions of production. This, however, leaves open the determination and reproduction of the initial aesthetic properties of the commodity. Use values do not begin with no aesthetic content and gain it by way of compensation for material changes. But nor can existing aesthetic content simply be taken for granted. Rather, it is a matter of examining how the material and aesthetic content of use values are materially and culturally reproduced, or transformed, in conjunction with one another.

How can this be done? Previously, I have argued that, for the purposes of examining consumption, it is appropriate to unravel what I terms the system of provision associated with each commodity or group of commodities, as in the food system, the housing system, the energy system, and so on, Fine and Leopold (2003) and Fine (2002). Commodities are brought to the market and taken from it for consumption through an integral chain of processes and structures that reflect the generalities of capitalist society but equally commodity and socially and historically specific outcomes. To a large extent, from the production side, this has been recognised in the notion of mass or Fordist production. This, however, suffers from the pitfall of constructing an ideal type of production and product, and of the system of provision to which it might be attached – as if the laws of capitalist production inevitably lead to particular forms of design, distribution, retailing and consumer culture. That this is not the case is brought out by critical consideration of the global commodity chain, GCC, literature and the earlier food complex/regime literature. Admittedly, the GCC begins with a duality of chains, whether buyer or producer driven depending on whether large-scale multinational retailers or suppliers are dominant. But, as the literature has progressed, it turns up empirical counterexamples to these two ideal types, leading to others and so on. It is better to accept that the way in which production and sale are united is not subject to a fixed set of designs. Nor, however, is this to accept that anything that does not conform to Fordist mass production is evidence of a shift towards that other, highly flexible, ideal-type of flexible-specialisation, Scranton (1998) as discussed in Fine (2002, Chapter 5).[3]

By the same token, the (global) food regime literature - that preceded the rise of "globalisation"- also put the idea of a number of standard forms of provision, albeit potentially varying over time and place. During the 1990s though, its confidence and status has been shattered, not only by the need to qualify in light of gathering empirical counterexamples but also because of the coming to prominence of a range of "new" issues that undermined the approach. These range over the role of bio-technology, food health and safety, consumer resistance and culture, and the emergence of organic and alternative foods. The diversity and complexity with which these issues relate to one another has swung the literature to the opposite extreme, leading to a denial of any systematic patterns in provision, and desperate searches for alternative methodologies that often lead the strength of the approach, its political economy, to be compromised if not abandoned.[4]

In contrast, the systems of provision approach continues to hold to the view that commodities are subject to the laws of capitalist production in view of their attachment to the pursuit of profitability, but the forms taken by this in the organisation of production, and through to sale, is far from fixed and differs from commodity to commodity. It follows that whatever the relationship between the material organisation of a system of provision and the cultural attributes of the use values that it produces for consumption, it cannot be based on a fixed ideal of the material (whether it be tendency to degradation or otherwise). But what of the cultural content of the commodity itself – how is this related to the material system of provision, and to wider cultural influences such as gender, class, nationality?

One prominent response has been to appeal to the notion of a circuit of culture, deriving from du Gay et al (1996). This incorporates the important insight that the origins of influence on the cultural content of commodities are multiple, and derive from each and every aspect connected to the provisioning of the commodity (and not just advertising and the material nature of the commodity). There has been a view, of which the so-called omnivore's paradox is a leading and early example, that consumer knowledge of commodities is diminished by the removal of their production from their immediate physical orbit – products are produced and traded from afar with consumers having little knowledge of them.[5] Accordingly, specifically as omnivores, humans can eat anything but can have no knowledge of what they do eat. A moment's reflection, however, reveals that this is simply false. Our sources of knowledge about commodities in general, and of food in particular, are multifarious. It is arguable that today's school child knows more about the nature of foods (vitamins, etc) despite their distant origins, than earlier direct producers!

But what is the nature and what are the origins of that knowledge? Rather than a circuit of culture as organising principle, with its hints of occasional if repeated influence from a variety of sources, my own approach is to suggest that each system of provision also generates its own integral cultural system. The cultural system derives content from each and every material aspect of the system of provision, although it does so in ways that are not rigidly predetermined. This is to move from the material structures and processes that condition the cultural system attached to commodities to the nature of that culture itself. In part, this is because consumers are not passive recipients of the culture attached to commodities (or anything else for that matter) but are what might be termed reflexive. But to coin a phrase, they are not reflexive in circumstances chosen by themselves. The most immediate, if not exclusive, external determinant of that reflexivity is the system of provision itself. But, clearly, it cannot dictate how consumers reflect upon what they consume although its agents are usually determined to exercise an influence in pursuit of successful sales. Further, consumers engage in a variety of practices around consumption that are not necessarily reducible to consumption itself, as in family meals, display, emulation and distinction, and so on, Warde (2005). Thus, the provisioning of a commodity is not the sole determinant of its attributes, those that make up its aesthetic content, illusory or otherwise.

In this vein, I have argued that the cultural systems attached to commodities are characterised by 6Cs. The culture of consumption is Contextual, Construed, Chaotic, Constructed, Contradictory and Conflictual. It is contextual because the meaning of the commodity varies by time, place, consumer and circumstance. As such, it is open to construal by the consumer who does not simply respond passively to its content. Nor is the meaning of consumption to the consumer simply a matter of logical reason and response. Rather it is subject to a jumble of influences that are not necessary coherent with respect to one another for a single commodity let alone across two or more. This is because of the numerous sources of the culture from which consumption derives its meaning, out of which it is constructed. These themselves depend upon contradictory tendencies within society itself, as in the imperatives both to eat and to diet that attend the food system for example. And the meaning and culture of consumption is contested, with conflict not only over who gets to consume what but also over how this should be interpreted.

This is a desperately short account of a framework with which to approach the commodity culture attached to consumption. Possibly one of the earliest contributions to its understanding, forging a connection between the material circumstances of provision and the meaning to the consumer is Sidney Mintz's (1985) classic study of Sweetness and Power. That the rise of sugar consumption should be based on slavery is not revealed in the sweetness of the commodity. But nor can it be entirely concealed, alongside its lingering effects on how today's sugar systems are organised, Fine et al (1996). How do contemporary commodities compare, with US imperialism to the fore in terms of its globally branded goods, ranging from Coca-Cola imperialism to Barbie Doll gender and racial stereotyping?

Consider McDonald's hamburger. It would appear to represent the epitome of globalisation and Americanisation in all respects. It is mass produced and standardised, and a highly prominent symbol of what has become the American way of life, in the lead of (40% of the market) and leading the fast food sector (spawning any number of imitations). As Stillman (2003, p. 107) reports:[6]

> McDonald's grew from a single hamburger stand to an American institution in just a few decades. Today, McDonald's has more than 30,000 outlets world-wide, serves more than 40 million customers per day, and does $40 billion in annual sales, making it by far the largest single selling restaurant chain in the world.

Significantly, within intellectual circles, McDonald's has come to signify not only contemporary consumption but contemporary society, with the appearance and continuing debate of Ritzer's (1993) The McDonaldization of Society. His view is based upon the Weberian idea that McDonald's incorporates the efficiency, predictability, calculability and control associated with modernisation and, within the realm of consumption, both globalisation and homogenisation.

But matters are not so simple. For, it is apparent that despite its global presence, McDonald's has to adapt to local circumstances. As Turner (2003, p. 146) puts it:

> There is considerable ethnographic evidence that McDonald's outlets have adjusted to local circumstances by incorporating local cuisines and values into their customer services. The success of global McDonald's has been to organize and present itself as a local company, where it specifically aims to incorporate local taste and local dishes – the curry potato pie from Hong Kong, the Singapore Loverburger (grilled chicken, honey, and mustard sauce), and the Teriyaki burger (sausage patty) and the Tukbul burger with cheese for the Korean market.

But, despite such glocalised variations, McDonald's has been favourably received not only in Australia with its supposed egalitarianism extending to (dumbed-down) eating habits, but also in Russia despite its traditional hostility and, recently, at least ambiguity towards western culture. This is because of compatibility with Fordist methods of provision, its egalitarianism, and yet the quality (and luxury expense) of the food compared to local fare, Turner (2003, pp. 146/7). Further, in the Australian context, as elsewhere, McDonald's is at the forefront of forging modernisation more generally and establishing itself socially and ideologically, p. 148:

> The company had an important impact on services in Australia, where it led the way in modernizing work practices, corporate culture, and philanthropy. Their business strategy involved the development of community and educational links through Rotary clubs and churches. McDonald's successfully survived much local criticism against American cultural imperialism and developed educational programs that have been addressed to kindergartens and schools. McDonald's built playgrounds and distributed toys. Through the development of McHappy Day, it donates generously to hospitals and charities.

Much the same can be said, with local variation, of McDonald's impact in Asia.

Such developments fit easily into the framework of glocalisation. The term, though, has little to commend it analytically because it more or less accommodates anything other than 100% homogenisation. It does point to local variation, or heterogeneity as opposed to homogeneity, possibly by appeal to other metaphors such as hybridisation and creolisation. This, however, has the failing of appearing to treat the global and the local symmetrically, with no initial sensitivity to differences in power and process. This is so much so that Ram (2004, p. 27) has gone to the extreme of suggesting that the global captures structural determinants, merely tolerating the local at the symbolic level. He "proposes looking at the relations between the global and the local as a composite of the structural and symbolic levels, a composite in which the structural inherently appropriates the symbolic but without explicitly suppressing it". Indeed, drawing on his own local study, on which more later, he closes:

> Such fetishism of commodities is epitomized by the example of McDonald's in Israel – just one more case in the general drift towards planetary commodification and instrumentalization, accompanied by a proliferation of symbolic identities and by cultural fragmentation, in the structurally post-Fordist and symbolically postmodern era of global capitalism. This is what is meant by glocommodification – global commodification combining structural uniformity with symbolic diversity.

Is it, however, questionable whether it is appropriate to assign the structural to the global and the symbolic to the local unless this comes true by definition and approach, framing the general as structural and the specific as local?

Consider, for example, the displacement of traditional British fish and chips, not by McDonald's but by chicken tikka masala, CTM, as most favoured takeaway food. Material factors in this should not be ignored, not least changes in the relative prices of fish (even for an island economy) and mass produced chicken, and the nature of labour and property markets for (Asian) immigrants. On a broader scale is the experience of foreign foods through overseas holidays and attempts to forge a multicultural Britain. Thus, the structure of provision of CTM reflects the structures, tendencies, powers and conflicts of contemporary capitalism, globalisation and even glocalisation if you will. But the outcome is not one that is reducible to a simple dualism between the structurally all-powerful global and the locally tolerated symbolic. Moreover, the latter is itself subject to the 6Cs. CTM is a culinary invention to satisfy UK tastes and circumstances and has only limited connections to its supposed origins in Indian cuisine. Even to raise this, however, is to engage in the culture of authenticity, whereby upper class tastes and interests are substituted for more common fare. Does CTM signify a British national identity embracing multiculturalism, alongside "Minarets for the exotic touch, pub-style velour seats for recognisable comfort"?[7] And, by the same token, when it comes to young Punjabis in Southall overtly consuming McDonald's and Coca-Cola, this has as much to do with resistance to "specific religious prohibitions and parental restrictions rather than being representative of some broader notion of 'Americanization'", Jackson (2005).

There are dangers then of descending into dualisms, of reading everything off as homogenised McDonaldization or hybrid McLocalisation. In this respect, in addition, there is also the need to distinguish, as recognised in the literature, between McDonaldization as it applies to McDonald's itself and McDonaldization as a general hypothesis about contemporary capitalism, Smart (1999). It is doubtful whether McDonald's itself as case study conforms to the McDonaldization thesis, let alone stands as an ideal type for wider application.

Such a conclusion is reinforced when account is taken of McCounter-Culture, for McDonaldization has faced both global and local opposition of great diversity, Illouz and John (2003) for some details. Anti-McDonald's day dates from 1985 and is timed, October 16th, to coincide with the UN's World Food Day. From the mid-1990s, the McLibel case has been extraordinarily prominent. It has fed into the opposition to fast food culture that does itself seek to recapture, equally socially constructed notions of, the natural, the craft-produced, the traditional and the local, Stillman (2003, p. 111). As the "organic" food movement, and corresponding consumer culture, becomes globalised, so structures and symbols are turned upside-down, inside-out or whatever, not least as McDonald's itself jumps onto the healthy eating bandwagon.

This raises doubts over posing questions over the extent to which fast food, "has less to do with food than … with the cultural representations of Americanism embodied within it", Fantasia

(1995, p. 229) cited in Ram (2004, p. 12). For, as will be seen by reviewing Ram's own case study of McDonald's Israel, it does have to do both with food[8] and much more than taking a meal of Americanisation. Ram himself points to a number of more complex instances of the rise of the Israeli McDonald's. Local opposition, for example, has been commercially undermined by the allocation of food credits to army recruits that can be used in McDonald's in an attempt to underpin egalitarian access to food in the military. The shift from public to private land in order to allow McDonald's to site satisfactorily has raised issues of restitution to Palestinians from whom land was taken in the first instance for public purposes, p. 18.[9] And the arrival McDonald's has also had the effect of reviving the fortunes of Israel's traditional fast food, the falafel, rather than leading to its demise. This has, though, taken two forms, as fashionable gourmet falafel joints and as "'McDonaldized' standardization", pp. 13/4.

But a fuller, and differently focused, picture is portrayed by the complementary study of Illouz and John (2003). The emergence of McDonald's Israel in 1993 is perceived to have been based upon an earlier shift in the economy from state-sponsored and controlled activity to acceptance of large-scale private and foreign capital. However, the same factors that gave rise to global access strengthened the hand of those pursuing a more liberal and progressive discourse in the form of secular as opposed to orthodox Judaism. It is no accident that the Chief Executive of the newly franchised affiliate should belong to an educated, externally oriented faction of the upper middle class. As a result, the operation of McDonald's is embroiled in local politics in ways that cannot be reduced to simple dualisms, and is even perverse in relation to conventional dissenting views in relation to McDonald's.

In particular, without falling victim to the idea of McDonald's as spearheading a US model of democracy and freedom, opposition rather than conformity to state and religious orthodoxy has in part marked its role. It led a campaign to be allowed to employ Jewish staff on the Sabbath, having been fined for doing so on the basis of outdated legislation (and otherwise being forced to close on Saturdays or employ only non-Jewish staff), pp. 216/7. More generally, no doubt with benefits for lowering the wage bill, McDonald's has an adopted an informal affirmative action programme in its labour relations. As its Chief Executive puts it, quoted on p. 221:

> The adult Arab population makes up … 13% of the general population. And yet, if you look at government offices only 3% to 4% of workers are Arabs. It is the same situation as it was for the American Black people, until the government decided to implement affirmative action. It is the same with women … In our organization, 20% of the workers, including the managers, are Arabs.

Otherwise, the company has defied and undermined orthodoxy in diverse ways, from selling cheeseburgers (in violation of Jewish dietary laws) and not conforming to kosher requirements more generally against the powers of religious authorities; through refusing to open outlets in the Occupied Territories; to pressing successfully for the ability to import potatoes against a traditionally protected Israeli agriculture (through decision by a cabinet that also approved the Oslo agreement).

What are the lessons to be gained from this study? Illouz and John correctly conclude, p. 203:

> Contrary to many proponents of the "hybridization" thesis, which celebrates the "local" and the "particular" as forms of resistance against the foreign threat of global capitalism … it is McDonald's that, through its local franchise owner, has adopted a "resistance" strategy against the ethnic and religious particularism of the Jewish state. The most interesting aspect of McDonald's Israel is that it is an active participant in local struggles over the definition of Israeliness, thus largely confirming the view that globalization generates ruptures and tensions, the nature of which remains to be specified.

Similar considerations would appear to apply, for example, in a different way to internationally oriented <u>domestic</u> large-scale capital in apartheid South Africa which both continued to exploit repressive labour market and other conditions whilst also pressing for political reform. As argued elsewhere, Fine (2002, Chapter 2 and 2004b), this is all indicative of the pressing need at most to use the idea of globalisation as an investigative tool. Analytically, it has no purchase as each qualification to the homogenisation thesis, from glocalisation onwards, leads to empirical counterexamples, requiring further qualification. This is so even for the most favoured cases of the globalisation hypothesis, in case of the extremes of finance and culture, neither of which are as fluid, and levelled, as the idea of compression of time and space would suggest. In short, for the culture of consumption as with other issues, the appropriate starting point for analysing "globalisation" is the political economy of capitalism rather than pre-conceived trends portrayed as underlying forces.

Significantly, the food literature has a long tradition of examining consumption from a global perspective. This is so in terms both of the political economy of food and of food (consumer) culture. But there are major differences between the two literatures. One tends to be grand history as in the idea of food regimes and global commodity systems, whereas the other tends to be commodity-specific and ethnographic. Not surprisingly, rarely have the two literatures met, reinforcing the gaps between the study of production and consumption, and between political economy and (material) culture that has marked the period of neo-liberalism and postmodernism. Each of the two approaches has enormous strengths on its own terms but each is equally revealed to be fragile as soon as it confronts broader concerns, of specificity for one, and issues of systemic power and conflict for the other, respectively. The idea of globalisation has thrown these conundrums into relief rather than relieving them.

Footnotes

[1] See Fine (2003) and, more generally, Fine and Saad-Filho (2004).
[2] For greater details for some of the arguments that follow, see Fine (2002 and 2005).
[3] See also Fine (2002, Chapter 6). For a further range of literature illustrating this assessment and implicitly supporting the system or provision approach as a means to address food system's continuing problems, see Dolan and Humphrey (2000), Gibbon (2003), Raynolds (2004), Dolan (2004) and, especially, Sverrisson (2004, p. 18) for its recognition that the idea of GCC has accommodated case studies by being attached to a range of "economic processes as chains or networks", such as markets-as-networks, socio-economic networks, activity chains, small-firm networks, techno-economic networks, global production networks, workflow networks, entrepreneurial networks, network entrepreneurs, and social capital.
[4] Fine (2004a). For a further range of literature that, taken together and unconsciously, supports this assessment and is open to interpretation as leading to the alternative proposed here by way of departure, see Ramamurthy (2000), McKenna and Murray (2002), Thompson and Cowan (2000), Freidberg (2001), Stringer (2000), Burch et al (eds) (1999), Jarosz (1996), and McMichael (1997, 1999 and 2000) across which is to be witnessed loss of confidence in the food regimes approach.
[5] Fischler (1980) for example, and Fine (1998, Chapter 3) for a critique in terms of the "diet paradox".
[6] With well over 300 stores already in each of China and Taiwan, Turner (2003, p. 148). Note McDonald's took a dip around the turn of the millennium, with shares falling from $49 to $22, and all performance indicators falling for three years in a row, with total closure in three countries and 700 outlets world-wide, Stillman (2003, p. 107).
[7] Iqbal Wahhab, founding editor of Tandoori magazine, cited in Jackson (2005) who continues, "Mr Wahhab clearly has his own agenda – moving the curry house upmarket through his own commercial ventures such as the Cinnamon Club in Westminster where CTM is not on the menu – he reached the inevitable conclusion that: 'Eating curry and breaking down racial barriers are two entirely different things'".
[8] Significantly, Illouz and John (2003, p. 221) report that the Israeli McDonald's hamburger is the largest in the world, reflecting that less than half of Israelis can afford to eat there and, as middle-class customers, require a full meal rather than a snack. See also Ram (2004, p. 15).
[9] Note that ownership of prime urban retail property is paramount for McDonald's as part of its system of provision, alongside franchising, cheap casualised workforce, and standardised fare. It is the largest owner of such property in the UK, and bought up the highly successful, and McCounter-Culture, Prêt à Manger, at least in part to extend its holdings and, one suspects, its prospective healthy eating image.

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