Translating the grande dame of gastronomy

Theory and practice of translating M.F.K. Fisher's *The Gastronomical Me*

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Introduction

"For what is food? It is not only a collection of products that can be used for statistical or nutritional studies. It is also, and at the same time, a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usages, situations, and behavior." - Roland Barthes (21)

When Mary Frances Kennedy Fisher published her first work, *Serve it Forth* (1937), she introduced the United States to the genre of gastronomic writing. In a time many Americans saw food as little more than a way to refuel the body, she began to write about eating, hunger and desire. This was not customary, especially not for a woman. Indeed, M.F.K. Fisher's first publisher assumed, probably led by her androgynous name, she had to be a man.

As a child, Mary Frances was taught by her grandmother that food was not something to be enjoyed. Her grandmother believed that "the plainer a dish was, the better it was for you" and that the more you suffer while eating was "a way to prove your innate worth as a Christian" (Zimmerman 20). Luckily, this did not stop Mary Frances from taking pleasure in food. She could not understand why anything that made her so happy could be forbidden by God. When Mary Frances travelled to France in her early twenties, she was able to freely indulge in all the pleasures of food. In France people celebrated the meal and it became the place where she was inspired to write about food.

Fisher is mostly famous for her gastronomic works. Although her primary subject matter, her work is not just about food. She uses food as a metaphor to express her desires and transformations. Moreover, the act of eating is connected to social, cultural, economic and political aspects of life. Fisher was aware of this and chose food to be the lens through which she looked at the world. Her culinary metaphors are examples of how food can be a "system of communication" (Barthes 21). The term "food writer" seems to be a bit narrow, since she is not just describing meals and ingredients. She is talking about love, friendship, life and death, all within the familiar context of food.

Exactly this metaphoric language is an interesting problem when translating the gastronomic works of M.F.K. Fisher. Food and eating are overlaid with multiple connotations. A translator needs to be aware of this and has to find out to what extent these connotations are the same in the target culture. There are, however, a great deal more elements to Fisher's style that can cause problems for a translator. A translation will benefit from a thorough analysis of these problems and therefore I will try to find answers to the following question:

What problems does a translator have to overcome when translating M.F.K. Fisher's The Gastronomical Me *and what are the possible and most desirable means to solving those problems?*

This thesis consists of two parts. The first one is theoretic and will begin with a chapter describing the author and the content of her work. Furthermore, I will try to place her work in a genre, discuss its reception and, in doing so, give a brief description of the American food culture in the twentieth century.

In the second chapter I will try to determine the problems a translator is most likely to face and what solutions he or she can choose from to overcome these problems. For this I will use the classification as formulated by Christiane Nord in "Tekstanalyse en de moeilijkheidsgraad van een vertaling". Since I expect most of the translation problems to be of stylistic nature, I will discuss the text-specific translation problems in a separate chapter, chapter three. For the analysis of her style I will make use of the model presented by Mick Short and Geoffrey Leech in *Style in Fiction*. The fourth chapter will be devoted to the problem specific but not limited to gastronomic literature, the translation of food imagery.

Next, it is time to put theory into practice. This will be the second part of this thesis. Here I will present my translations of a few excerpts from *The Gastronomical Me,* accompanied by footnotes in which I will comment on the choices I made.

I hope this thesis will proof that a thorough analysis makes for a better and more consistent translation and helps translators in making well-considered choices. Furthermore, I hope to gain a little insight in the problems surrounding the translation of food imagery and show M.F.K. Fisher is more than just a food writer.

Part one

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Theory

1. The Gastronomical Me

1.1. Author

Mary Frances Kennedy Fisher (1908-1992) was born in Albion, Michigan and raised in Whittier, California. When the Kennedys first came to Whittier, a conservative Quaker town, nobody thought the Episcopal family would stay long. However, Mary Frances' father bought the local newspaper and the family would remain to live in Whittier for years. Their religion prevented them from really becoming part of the community. Early in her life, Mary Frances already learned to observe others, while remaining at a distance, and developed a discerning eye (Isaacs 1-2).

Together with her parents and three younger siblings, Mary Frances grew up in a house bought by her grandmother Holbrook (Zimmerman 13). Her grandmother was of great influence. She had fled Ireland during the potato famine and to her food was something purely nutritional. One was not supposed to take pleasure in it. Food, according to her, should be plain and simple. The plainer a dish was, the more you must suffer while eating it and the more you could prove your "innate worth as a Christian" (Zimmerman 20). In her case, eating was religion and restraint. Enjoying food was a devilish pleasure. Luckily, Mary Frances learned that food could be more than sustenance. This started when a woman called Aunt Gwen, though not a relation, started to work as the family's cook and made meals full of flavour and colour. After aunt Gwen there was another cook, called Ora. Mary Frances describes how Ora "loved to cook the way some people love to pray or dance or fight" (25). Grandmother Holbrook obviously hated Ora. She even claimed she was unable to eat Ora's dishes, because they were too exotic, too unknown. She was suspicious of the delight Ora took in food. Ora's stay with the Kennedys ended abruptly. She had sliced her own mother into several pieces with her sharp French knife and then killed herself. The police reported the knife remained flawless (26). Naturally, the crime strengthened Grandmother Holbrook's belief that a flavourful bite could inspire terrible behaviour.

Mary Frances meets her first husband, Alfred Young Fisher, at the University of California. They marry when she is twenty-one and together they move to Dijon in France. Al received a graduate fellowship and Mary Frances chooses to study art at the University of Dijon. In France, Mary Frances sees how people are able to truly enjoy food and have respect for it. She describes how a simple ingredient such as the potato is elevated to being a course all by itself:

I felt a secret justification swell in me, a pride such as I've seldom known since, because all my life, it seemed, I had been wondering rebelliously about potatoes. I didn't care for them much … [but] I felt that they could be good, if they were cooked respectfully. (GM 394-395)

Over the next three years, M.F.K. Fisher becomes fluent in French and learns a great deal about regional French cuisine. She does not consider herself a writer yet, but the letters she sends to her parents already show great promise.

Although her permanent home was California, Fisher spent many years abroad. She wrote her first book, *Serve it Forth (*1937), in her early twenties during her first years in France. It is a collection of essays on the cultural, social, historical, geographical and literary relevance of food (Markos 31). Because the book was so unlike other books written by women on the subject of cooking, many critics assumed it was written by a man (MFKFisher.com).

Together with her second husband, Dillwyn Parish, she owned a vineyard in Switzerland. Following his death in 1941, Fisher returns to California and wrote *How to Cook a Wolf* (1942). The book was a response to the food shortages in World War II and is a type of how-to guide that explains how you can nourish yourself in times of "physical and emotional scarcity" (Markos 46). Another year later, in 1943, *The Gastronomical Me* was published. This is generally considered to be her best work. By using food and hunger as metaphors, she looks back on her life, her relation with Dillwyn and the effects of his death (Markos 51).

Fisher is mostly known for her gastronomic writing and her translation of Brillat-Savarin's *The Physiology of Taste* (1825), a humorous masterpiece on eating and French manners. However, she also wrote poetry, screenplays, children's literature and novels. Nevertheless, her gastronomic essays are considered to be the best of her work (Isaacs 4-5). The core of it is collected in *The Art of Eating* (1954) and consists of *Serve it Forth, Consider the Oyster, How to Cook a Wolf, The Gastronomical Me* and *An Alphabet for Gourmets*.

Fisher was an independent, bold woman. After divorcing Donald Friede, her third husband, she raised her two daughters by herself. She received various literary prizes, including the lifetime achievement award from the James Beard-Foundation. In 1991 she was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. She has written over twenty-three books and hundreds of articles. Her work has been widely translated and republished (Isaacs 6-9).

1.2. Content

The Gastronomical Me, M.F.K. Fisher's fourth book, was published in 1943. It is a collection of personal memoirs. The memoirs, written in first-person narrative, are based on her own life, but they are fictionalized (Isaacs 5). She creates a self-portrait by describing the development of her palate. In "The Measure of My Powers 1929-1930", for instance, her new culinary experiences in Paris seem to parallel her new sexual experiences (Campbell 183).

The hot chocolate and the rich croissants were the most delicious things, there in bed with the Seine flowing past me and pigeons wheeling around the gray Palace mansards that I had ever eaten.

They were really the first things I had tasted since we were married…tasted to remember. They were a part of the warmth and excitement of that hotel room, with Paris waiting. (GM 393)

1.2.1. Themes

There are a few recurring themes in *The Gastronomical Me*. I will briefly mention the most important ones.

Identity

To write about food, for Fisher, is to write about the self as well. In her foreword to *An Alphabet for Gourmets*, she describes it as follows:

It is apparently impossible for me to say anything about gastronomy […] without involving myself in what might be called side issues – might be, that is, by anyone who does not believe, as do I, that it is futile to consider hunger as a thing separate from people who are hungry. (An Alphabet for Gourmets 575)

Especially in *The Gastronomical Me,* food has an autobiographical significance. She creates a life by writing down and elaborating on her food memories. A very early memory, for instance, is a simple meal she shared with her sister and father. She recalls all the delicious details and the moment she realized that food is a beautiful thing to be shared with other people and not just a "thrice daily necessity" (GM 358). In a later memory, she recalls her first dinner in France and how little she knew about food and wine. Her personal growth seems to go together with that of her palate. At the age of thirty-five, for instance, her 'taste', in the broadest sense of the word, has matured:

My hungers altered: I knew better what and how to eat, just as I knew better how I loved other people, and even why. (GM 510)

America – Europe

Much of Fisher's sense of self has to do with being an American in a foreign country. Especially during her first years in France, she sees herself as the ignorant American. On other occasions, however, she defends herself and her country, especially when it comes to etiquette. She remembers being invited to a formal luncheon and being allowed to sit next to a very important scholar because she "had gradually erased the firm impression among the faculty wives that all Yankee women either got tight in public on strange cocktails or spat in the drawing room" (GM 429-30). On the one hand she is struggling to become familiar with French ways, but on the other she defends her American identity.

Dillwyn's death

A big part of *The Gastronomical Me* is a contemplation of Dillwyn's death. He suffered from Buerger's disease and committed suicide. In the book, she calls Dillwyn "Chexbres", after a little French village where the two owned a cottage. When Fisher writes the book, two years have passed since his death and the passing of time enables her to realize what the tragedy had done to her. She remembers, for instance, how she desperately tries to find some kind of nourishment on a trip to Mexico immediately after Dillwyn's death:

People thought I was in a state of shock at the dying…I ate, with a rapt voluptuous concentration which had little to do with bodily hunger, but seemed to nourish some other part of me…sometimes I would go to the best restaurant I knew about, and order dishes and good wines as if I were a guest of myself, to be treated with infinite courtesy. (GM 536)

Hunger

In a way, the entire *The Gastronomical Me* is about hunger. Hunger for assimilation, hunger for love, and the physical hunger for good food. The last one often symbolises all the other hungers. To the question why she writes about hunger, and not wars or love or the struggle for power and security the way others do, Fisher answers: "There is a communion of more than our bodies when bread is broken and wine drunk" (GM 353). To her, our need for love, security and food are all part of each other (GM 353).

1.3. Genre

People who eat carefully and really enjoy it, often also like to talk, write and read about the experience of it. In the introduction to *The Art of Eating,* Clifton Fadiman writes:

A man who is careful with his palate is not likely to be careless with his paragraphs […] A good book about food informs us of matters with which we are to be concerned all our lives. Sight and hearing lose their edge, the muscles soften, even the most gallant of our glands at last surrenders. But the palate may persist in glory almost to the very end […] The ability to enjoy eating, like the ability to enjoy a fine art, is not a matter of inborn talent alone, but of training, memory and comparison. Time works for the palate faithfully and fee-lessly. (The Art of Eating vi)

Over the past ten years, writing about food has become extremely popular. 'Foodies' write entire blogs about their experiences and 'food writing' is even offered as a special writing course at cookery schools and universities. The variety of culinary writing now available ranges from food magazines, restaurant reviews and avant-garde cookbooks to the works of Fisher and the memoirs of Calvin Trillin and novelist Jim Harrison (Markos 10).

Markos identifies two main traditions within the whole of culinary writing. The first one is that of popular culinary publications such as food magazines, columns and restaurant reviews. The second one, which is considered to be the more literary one, is the culinary memoir. According to Markos, Fisher is the one who created the genre of the culinary memoir in the United States (10).

Although Fisher was quite a pioneer in gastronomic literature, she did write in a certain tradition. First I will elaborate on this tradition. Next I will pick one element of this tradition which I think fits *The Gastronomical Me* best: the culinary memoir.

1.3.1. Gastronomic literature

Stephen Menell, culinary historian, defines the genre of gastronomic literature as a "genre in which some writing is mainly historical in slant, some mainly concerned to define what is correct in good taste, some more practically concerned to provide a critical assessment of the eating-places of the day" (qtd. in Markos 26). According to him, a gastronomic essay can be "a brew of history, myth and history serving in myth", and include "nostalgic evocation of memorable meals" (qtd. in Markos 26). Gastronomic literature is often informative as well as humorous and reflective. The writings that try to define what is good taste may sometimes even be considered elitist or condescending. What gastronomic works have in common though, is that they almost always portray universal hungers or a form of human appetite (Markos 27). Because the definition of gastronomic literature is quite broad, it can be applied to various forms of food representations in literature.

The genre of gastronomic literature is traditionally dominated by male and mainly French writers. In nineteenth-century France, there were already two categories when it came to food writing: cookbooks, for the professional chef, and gastronomic literature. The last category was a male authored genre that focused on "the palate's education as an essential component of self-knowledge" (Markos 5). The most famous example of this genre is *The Physiology of Taste: or Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy*, by the nineteenth-century French lawyer and gastronome Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin. It was first published in 1825 and since then has never been out of print. The book is a collection of historical and philosophical essays, recipes and anecdotes on the pleasures of the table. Part of its success, is the fact that it is written with an incredible wit. Fisher considered Brillat-Savarin to be the master of gastronomic writing and translated the French classic into English. Her translation, which she provided with personal commentary on the end of every chapter, is still highly praised. It shows her fondness and admiration for "the Professor".

In his book, Brillat-Savarin links food with identity. He uttered the famous words: "Tell me what you eat and I shall tell you what you are" (Brillat-Savarin 3). Inspired by Brillat-Savarin and other French food writers, Fisher steps into the genre of gastronomic literature herself. She

adopts the focus on the act of eating and desire that had been mainly reserved for male food writers. In her case, however, the focus is on female desire. By revising the French tradition and incorporating this female desire, she creates a new genre and introduces a new way for female writers to express themselves (Markos 11).

Before Fisher picks up the genre of gastronomic literature, most female 'food writers' in America wrote in the domestic sphere. They collected and recorded their recipes in what later became the first American cookbooks. These cookbooks were not written for literary or social reasons or for the expression of physical desires, but out of necessity. They were mostly personal journals and not intended for publication. However, these cookbooks can be considered to be the precursors to the culinary memoir (Markos 27). According to Janet Theophano, a culinary historian who wrote a book about the relation between cookbooks and autobiography, cookbooks tell personal stories: "women inscribe themselves in their recipe texts as testimonies to their existence. After years of daily use, a cookbook becomes a memoir, a diary – a record of a life" (Theophano 121). These women can be considered gastronomic memoirists, since they wrote about their past, present and future in the idiom of food (Theophano 121).

In the 18th and 19th century, more women became literate, and an increasing number started to write down recipes and useful tips and reflections in the form of cookbooks. In 1796, the first American cookbook was published, American Cookery by Amelia Simmons. It contained authentic colonial recipes and personal notes from the author (Markos 28). In a way, cookbooks like this were already culinary memoirs: "self-conscious or not, recording everyday acts of cookery is an act of autobiographical writing and self-representation" (Theophano 121).

1.3.2. The culinary memoir

Markos defines the culinary memoir as "an extended meditation on the food experience, relying on personal experiences, memory, and metaphor to portray the multiple levels of significance of an event" (Markos 10). Food is a recurring theme, but it does not control the memoir. It is used as a framework to express the writer's memory of a certain time or event.

The number of people discussing the self by writing about their culinary experiences is growing. Both men and women now use the culinary memoir as a medium to express their appetites and desires. According to Markos, however, men tend to focus more on the physical act of eating, often boasting about their culinary adventures, while women seem to be more introspective and reflective and refer to physical as well as emotional and sexual appetites (Markos 11). Contemporary female culinary memoirists who are indebted to Fisher include Jeanette Ferrary and Rutch Reichl (Markos 64). Examples of male food memoirists are A.J. Liebling, Calvin Trillin and Jim Harrison. Fisher once wrote that men's "approach to gastronomy is basically sexual" (*An Alphabet For Gourmets* 584). Indeed, Liebling uses the juicy descriptions

of his exuberant meals to talk about his Parisian escapades (Markos 66). For him, "the primary requisite for writing about food is good appetite" (Liebling 3-4).

Markos' and Fisher's assumption that culinary memoirs of male food writers tend to be less complex is, obviously, not true. In her article about food metaphors in postcolonial life writing, Rosilía Baena gives plenty examples of male authors who use food as a multi-layered trope. She mentions, for instance, Fred Wah (*Diamond Grill*) and Austin Clarke (*Pig Tails 'n Breadfruit*). Both writers employ culinary language and turn the notion of food into "a metonym of the elaboration of culture and identity" (Baena Introduction). Their use of food imagery and their descriptions of preparing and eating food invite the reader to not just read and learn about 'exotic' food, but to read between the lines and see how the authors use food to record the world and situate themselves (Baena Introduction).

Fisher's *The Gastronomical Me* is a collection of memoirs. Memoirs, however, always rely on the memory of the author and are therefore subject to authorial embellishment (Markos 51). The authors reinterpret the past in the light of the present. That is why the relation between past and present in autobiographical texts is one of significance, rather than of chronology. According to Baena, this explains why metaphor often is the dominant trope in autobiographical texts, since they can "simultaneously illustrate processes of self-knowledge and the act of self-representation" (Baena 1). According to her biographer Joan Reardon, Fisher indeed writes about herself "as she wanted others to know her" (Reardon xiii). Reardon also states that Fisher "embroiders the facts to the point where what she ends up with is virtually fiction" (Reardon xii). For her, writing these memoirs was a way to gain control over reality. Although *The Gastronomical Me* is considered Fisher's most personal work, it is in no way free from fictionalizations. In *How To Cook A Wolf*, her philosophy on what is fact and what is fiction becomes very clear when she recalls that "The best talker I ever heard once said to me, 'Never ruin a good story by sticking to the truth'" (198). Just as she liked to spice up her food, she liked to spice up her stories.

Although Fisher writes in a tradition of gastronomic literature, she made it her own. James Beard notes how Fisher is able to write "about fleeting tastes and feasts vividly, excitingly, sensuously and exquisitely" (qtd. in Markos 29). Not only did Fisher inspire others to write passionately about the pleasures of the table, she also employed the culinary memoir as way to talk about the self. According to Anne Zimerman, who wrote the recently published biography *An Extravagant Hunger: the Passionate Years of M.F.K. Fisher*, the food writing world would have been very different without Fisher. She defined the standard for an entire genre (Leahy 12).

1.4. Reception

In his introduction to *The Art of Eating* in 1953, W.H. Auden states that he could not think of anyone in the United States who wrote better prose than M.F.K. Fisher and that, had she chosen a subject other than food, she would have been much more appreciated by the American audience (Markos 33). Indeed, when Fisher started to write about food in the 1930's and 40's, her work did not really catch on. For hundreds of years, Americans regarded food mainly as a way to refuel the body. Food had even negative connotations, such as guilt or sin (Markos 9). This attitude towards food was the result of a variety of historical circumstances, which I will address later. In the second halve of the twentieth century, this attitude began to change. People started to view food with less anxiety. They began to recognise the social significance of food and its ability to connect groups of people. In this chapter, I will give a description of the developments within the American food culture and how these influenced the reception of Fisher's gastronomic works. First I will discuss the American attitude to food up to the late 1950's. In doing so, it will become clear into what cultural atmosphere M.F.K. Fisher's pioneering works were published. Secondly, I will elaborate on the 'Fisher revival' that paralleled the gastronomic revolution during the second halve of the twentieth century.

1.4.1. Food and Culture in America up to 1960

Hodgepodge

Since Colonial times, America has known a vast variety of culinary traditions. Immigrants from all over the world brought with them their own ways of producing and eating food. Culture, food and identity are intrinsically linked together. According to Donna Gabaccia, who has studied the U.S. immigration, it is even nearly impossible to gain full insight into the social history of America if you do not also study the history of the eating habits of its diverse people (Markos 14).

America has not always been very open to unfamiliar cooking habits. Anglo-American colonists long held on to the heavy, somewhat flavourless British cuisine. Many colonists would even rather go hungry than adopt some of the native eating habits. It took more than two hundred years for America to lose some of its conservatism. Only in the 20th century have things started to change and have Americans become less resistant of strange eating habits. Although British cuisine dominated in Colonial times, regional cuisines started to form as well, because product availability differed from place to place. Furthermore, colonists were forced to adopt some of the native cooking practices when there was a shortage of food. Cuisines became even more regional specific when ethnic cuisines, such as Spanish an African, gradually became an essential part of general colonists' cooking habits.

In search of a national cuisine

American eating habits of today, although threatened by mass production, standardized food products, and national chain restaurants, still contain traditional and regional elements. It goes without saying that the complex history of American eating habits makes it impossible to speak of a unified, 'typical' American cuisine (Markos 15). In the nineteenth century, however, Americans seemed to have on thing in common: an abundance of nutritional products. This abundance led to a kind of indifference to food. People tended to eat their meals as fast as they could and then move on to something else (Levenstein 8). They did not live to eat, but ate to live. According to Markos, this habit of thoughtless eating "resulted from the widespread opinion that eating was an inconvenience" (16). She also notes that this mindset still exists today.

Although mass immigrations of the nineteenth century influenced regional cooking, people continued to be resistant of strange eating habits. They feared that they "posed a threat to national unity" (Markos 16). Immigrants were often encouraged to become 'American' and one way to do this was to let them abandon their own cooking and switch over to the mainly Anglo-Saxon eating habits in America. Developments such as 'domestic science' and 'home economics' tried to determine a national cuisine and were aimed at "limiting, or even turning back, the tide of cross-over foods and eating customs" (Gabaccia 125). Furthermore, domestic science and informational pamphlets were brought into action to inform people about what food they should eat and how much of it, purely to follow strict nutritional guidelines (Markos 17). It was not important whether people enjoyed their food or not, since it was "viewed as little more than a source of fuel, and the time spent 'refuelling' was not valued or enjoyed. Eating was a measured, monotonous, and hurried task, devoid of pleasure" (Markos 17).

Even the government tried to define and promote a national cuisine with its America Eats Project, which began in 1938 (Markos 18). People thought a national cuisine would benefit national unity. The fact was, however, that exactly this range of eating habits gave American cuisine its unique character. Indeed, all attempts to identify a unified American cuisine failed, since immigrants held on to their own culinary traditions, whether to try to maintain a part of their identity or for religious reasons: "[t]o abandon immigrant food traditions for the food of Americans was to abandon community, family and religion" (Gabaccia 54). There is one exception of non-British cooking that early Americans did not reject: French cuisine. It is important to note, however, that this was mainly because French food signified status and prestige. The attention to French food was not because of the food itself, but because it symbolised higher social class and money (Markos 19).

During World War I, Americans were forced to turn to the immigrants and learn from them how to cope with the food shortages. The same goes for the Depression era. The lack of food during these years kept the American attitude to food being merely a way to refuel the body

alive. It strengthened the negative connotations of food and prevented Americans to regard it as a source of pleasure. However, World War I and the Depression Era also made Americans more accepting of ethnic foods. Gradually, 'un-American' foods were 'Americanized' and became 'American'. Demand for them increased and large corporations started to buy the local producers, which eventually resulted in these foods losing their authenticity (Markos 21-22).

Around 1930, foods in canned or frozen form became more widely available. Furthermore, technology made it possible to synthetically create flavours. These inventions cut productions costs and boosted mass production. Customers could always rely on receiving the exact same product. As a result, America became even further separated from natural and authentic products. Their palates became used to artificial flavours and lost the ability to discern real ones (Markos 23).

The American housewife

When after World War II soldiers returned to America, women were encouraged by the government and food companies to welcome their men back by offering them wholesome meals in a safe and homely environment. Women, food and love were bound together. According to Katherine Parkin, "food advertisers promoted the belief that food preparation was a gender-specific activity and that women should cook to express their love" (qtd. in Markos 24). She also states that ads rarely showed women taking pleasure in eating. Food was nutrition, and that was what women provided. Ads for frozen and canned foods showed how using these products decreased time spent in the kitchen, so that women could have more time for other things. The implicit message of these ads, however, was that using these products would make women more desirable. They would have more time for other 'domestic obligations'. The quicker a women could prepare a meal, the better. Enjoying the actual meal in the company of others was made of little or no importance (Markos 25).

The historical outline above shows which moments and ideas contributed to the American attitude to food. Enjoying the act of eating is not a fundamental part of American culture, whereas in more tradition-bound countries, such as Italy and France, cooking and eating customs define a national identity. M.F.K. Fisher can be considered a very bold woman and ahead of her time for publishing her books about food and female desire in a cultural atmosphere that tried to deemphasise exactly these aspects.

1.4.2. A Fisher revival

Gastronomic Revolution

Over the past few decades, food has become incredibly popular in Europe. Especially Great Britain, a country one would perhaps not immediately connect with gastronomy, is focused on food. A great many TV shows, such as *Masterchef; Ready, Steady, Cook; Saturday Kitchen* and *Who is the Chef,* are on television daily or weekly in the UK. *Masterchef* has even become one of the most successful TV shows and the format is copied all over the world, from Australia and the U.S. to India, Peru and Indonesia. There seems to be no end to the list of British celebrity chefs such as Nigella Lawson, Jamie Oliver, Rick Stein, Gordon Ramsey, Michel Roux and Heston Blumenthal. It is interesting to see that more and more of these shows connect food to British culture and history. Examples of these shows are *The Great British Food Revival, The Great British Bake Off* and *The Great British Menu.* These shows are not just about food, but also about British culture and identity. In *The Great British Food Revival*, for instance, renowned chefs campaign to bring back some of the traditional British produce. Shows like this prove that food is part of a country's heritage. The British cooking fever seems also to have spread to the Netherlands. Dutch bookshops devote entire sections to cookbooks of, mainly British, celebrity chefs and many cookery shows are now broadcast here or turned into Dutch versions. Furthermore, more and more people in Holland are writing and reading food magazines and blogs.

In America, food has become extremely popular as well, but according to Ruth Reichl, the American attitude to food remained virtually unaltered until the late 1950's and 1960's. Only by the seventies things started to change: "A fledging food movement had formed […] and the world was finally catching up to Mary Frances. Suddenly food writers were important, and M.F.K. Fisher, who had been focusing on human hungers for half a century, was thrust into the limelight" (Ruth Reichl ix-xi).

The impact of Fisher's writings paralleled the gastronomic revolution. Her works reached a small audience in the 1940's and 1950's, and a slightly bigger one in the 1960's, when her work was also published in several magazines, such as *Gourmet* and *The Atlantic Monthly.* People immediately recognised her literary talent. *The Gastronomical Me,* for instance, was received with favourable reviews. In *Book Week,* for example, S.I. Hayakawa wrote that "[t]here is deft and witty writing in this book – witty not in the sense of funny, but in the sense of sharply perspective". He also stated the book had "a prevailing sense of tragedy – death and the intimation of death against which one fortifies oneself by grasping at the sharp, sensuous joys of food and love". In *The New Yorker,* Clifton Fadiman wrote the book was "sadder, older, and less charming than *Serve it Forth.* It makes more evident than ever the fact that Mrs. Fisher was born to write novels and it's about time she did". And in the *Weekly Book Review* Sheila Shibbon wrote that "[o]ne may disagree with an occasional passage in *The Gastronomical Me,* but I can imagine

not two opinions about Mrs. Fisher's style. The brilliance, the bite, the flexibleness that distinguished *Serve it Forth* are apparent in this latest work, which also marks an increase in the author's technical virtuosity" (all quotes from Reardon 161). This last review shows that although people praised Fisher's literary talent, they did not always know what to do with her personal expressions of love and appetite. In his introduction to the 1954 edition of *The Art of Eating,* Clifton Fadiman indeed describes how, for Americans, the relation between literature, food, love and nurturance not in any way came natural:

We Americans […] do not as a rule take gladly to the literature of gastronomy. Perhaps a native puritanism is at fault. Though things are on the mend, we still plump ice cream into carbonic acid gas, rank steak and potatoes just below the Constitution, and contrive the cafeteria. How explain such things except as forms of self-punishment, stern reproofs of the rampant flesh? And, by the same token, to judge from its small audience, we must feel something vaguely licentious or censorable about the literature of food. (The Art of Eating V)

Fadiman was right to say that things were on the mend, because in the 1960's, the American attitude to food rapidly began to change. With her TV show *The French Chef* and her very successful cookbook *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, Julia Child introduced America to French cuisine (Markos 35). Finally, America seemed ready to approach food in a different manner, less with anxiety and more with pleasure, and this meant that an audience was waiting for Fisher and her culinary works (Markos 35).

The American attitude to food was to change even further when in 1971 Alice Waters opened her restaurant, Chez Panisse, in Berkely, California. This restaurant, which is still very famous, draws its inspiration from French and Italian cuisine. For Waters, good food is all about local and fresh products. She shares Fisher's philosophy that, when eating, all five senses should be part of the experience. Waters was definitely influenced by the works of Fisher, she even wrote that her writings should be "required reading for every cook" and that it "defines in a sensual and beautiful way the vital relationship between food and culture" (*An Extravagant Hunger* back flap*).* Markos notes that, although Fisher's writings did not directly initiate a gastronomic revolution, her works "unquestionably defined and reinforced the evolving attitudes toward food in the United States, and undoubtedly influenced both Child and Waters" (Markos 36).

Fisher rediscovered

Around 1990, America seemed to have lost its fear of food and finally regarded it as something to be enjoyed. Fisher's work became more popular than ever before. All of her earlier gastronomic works that were originally published before 1950, *Serve it Forth, Consider the*

Oyster, How to Cook a Wolf, The Gastronomical Me, often considered to be her masterpiece, and *An Alphabet for Gourmets*, were reprinted separately as well as together in a new edition of *The Art of Eating*. From that time onwards, Fisher is described as a "food icon" and "the grand dame of gastronomy" (Lazar x). In his introduction to *Conversations with M.F.K. Fisher,* published in 1992, Lazar describes how people sometimes forget her extraordinary writing talent and are more interested in constructing an image of her being a kind of cult figure, a sage or even prophet (xiii). Fisher herself seems to be annoyed by this too and does not take herself that seriously: "I'm becoming marbelized […] Some people write that I have influenced them greatly. I think I could say that about a lot of people, too. Whoever wrote the alphabet influenced me enormously" (Fisher qtd. in Lazar xiii). In *Publisher's Weekly* she says that she "get[s] pretty peeved about being called things like 'past mistress of gastronomical pornography' and so on. I believe in living fully, as long as we seem to be meant to live at all" (Fisher qtd. in Lazar xiv).

Public figures such as Alice Waters, Julia Child, James Beard and Ruth Reichl, all influenced by Fisher's writing, revolutionized American dining. In doing so, Fisher became a food authority (Markos 37). Shortly before her death in June 1992, Barbara Wornum, a film maker from California, released "M.F.K", a documentary on Fisher's life. Wornum followed Fisher for four years and called her "the most poetic voice of the working woman in the 20th century" (qtd. in O'Neill 7). After her death, the Fisher revival continued. Other countries started to pick up her writings. Three of her gastronomic works were translated into Dutch: *With Bold Knife and Fork* ("*Met mes en vork*"), in 1997, *An Alphabet for Gourmets* ("*Een gastronomisch alfabet*"), in 1998 and very recently *Consider the Oyster* ("*Hoe een parel te maken: over de oester*"), in 2009. Wim Meij wrote in his review of the Dutch translation of *An Alphabet for Gourmets* that Fisher turned writing of food into an art. He was surprised to find her works not in the cookery section of the bookshop, but amidst the novels (Meij 1-2). Despite the fact that her works often contain quite a number of recipes, her works are mostly not considered cookery books, and rightly so, but as culinary literature (Erik 1). However, the Dutch reviews seem to focus on her ability to make her reader's mouths water. They primarily regard her as a food writer, while American reviews acknowledge she is more than that, stating, for example, she "left a precious legacy: a guide to the art of living" (Berstein 3) and that her "personal essays about food created a genre" (O'Neill 1). Her gastronomic writings have been translated into other languages too. In the early nineties a few of them were translated into Spanish and later, from the year 2000 and onwards, they were also translated into Chinese, Italian and Polish. Very recently, in 2011, a German translation of *The Art of Eating* was published. Oddly enough, *Serve it Forth* and *Consider the Oyster* were translated into Japanese as early as in 1986 (Worldcat.org).

2. Translation Problems

Translation is tricky and by no means straightforward. It is never a question of just rendering words from one language into another. Words are never just words. They are always symbols of things, and not the things themselves (Newmark 93). Every word has its place in a giant web of meanings, connotations and ideas. Therefore, words are connected to each other. The way words are connected, however, differs from one language to another. This is because language is always part of a culture. For instance, one culture may have negative connotations with the word 'food', such as guilt and sin, while in other cultures, words like love, warmth and family spring to mind. When translating a text, it is important a translator is not only aware of linguistic differences between the two languages, but also of the cultural and pragmatic differences. Moreover, a translator has to be able to notice the aspects that are specific to the text that has to be translated, such as the style in which it is written. All these elements can cause problems for a translator.

Being aware of what problems a translator might face when translating a certain text, can help him or her making well-considered decisions. In this chapter, I will try to determine what problems a translator is most likely to face when translating Fisher's *The Gastronomical Me* and what solutions he or she can choose from. Furthermore, I will try to indicate the most suitable option. All problems are taken from the excerpts that will be translated in the second part of this thesis. I will use the classification as formulated by Christiane Nord in "Tekstanalyse en de moeilijkheidsgraad van een vertaling" ("Text analysis and the level of difficulty of a translation", translation mine). In her article, she distinguishes four different categories: pragmatic, culture specific, language pair specific and text specific translation problems (Nord 147). According to Nord, the choices you make in the first category, the pragmatic translation problems, will give direction to the way you handle problems in the other three categories. The first three categories will be discussed in this chapter. The fourth category, the text specific translation problems, mainly concern style and will be dealt with in a separate chapter, chapter three. The main and most interesting problem when translating a gastronomic work of M.F.K. Fisher, however, is food imagery. Since food and culture are deeply connected to each other, the translation of food imagery will probably bring about quite a few interesting problems. Therefore, the fourth chapter will be entirely devoted to the translation of food imagery.

Before addressing the different translation problems, it is necessary to formulate a translation brief. Otherwise it would be difficult to make any statements about which solutions fit best. I have chosen the translation brief as stated in the Dutch model agreement for literary translations:

The translator commits him- or herself to deliver a translation which is faithful in content and style, written in impeccable Dutch and made directly from the original work. (GAU 1)

An agreement like this will influence the decisions of a translator, but it does not immediately tell him or her what to do. The problem is the word 'faithful'. When is a translator faithful to the original text? Translating the exact words, does not necessarily make for a faithful translation when the result is a stiff and rigid text. In my eyes, a translator does more justice to the original when the translation is a good text in itself too. Sometimes this means a translator has to take a few steps away from the original words in order to maintain its style, flow and rhythm. Indeed, sometimes a translator has to change something to make it the same.

2.1 Pragmatic translation problems

Pragmatic translation problems arise from differences in the communicative situations of the source and target text. In case of a translation of *The Gastronomical Me* into Dutch, this means the difference between America around 1943 and the Netherlands in 2012.

2.1.1. Different attitudes to food

In the previous chapter, I have already discussed the atmosphere in America when *The Gastronomical Me* was published. Food was not a fundamental part of American culture. It had long been associated with guilt and sin and was not regarded something one should enjoy. Not surprisingly, *The Gastronomical Me,* in which Fisher, a woman no less, talks about the pleasures of the table and even links this to her own personal desires, did not really catch on. People did not know how to relate to her expressions of hunger and appetite (Markos 35). If we compare this American food attitude in the 1940's to the role food plays in modern Holland, the situation almost seem to be the opposite. In Holland, food, cooking and eating, is now extremely popular and linking food to pleasure is completely natural. Furthermore, it is now accepted for a woman to talk about her desires. Many female writers have followed Fisher's example and use describing the act of eating as a way to express themselves (Markos 64). In the 1940's, Fisher's gastronomic works were a reaction to the American repression of physical pleasure. Today, however, and this goes for Holland as well as America, her attitude to food being a source of pleasure can be considered mainstream.

The effect *The Gastronomical Me* had on the American reader in the 1940's is very different from the effect a translation will have on a Dutch reader in 2012. The Dutch audience would not consider Fisher's work shocking or hard to relate to. Although the backgrounds of the target and source text readers are very different, I do not expect this will pose many problems for the translation. There is absolutely no need to reduce this difference, just as there is no need

to rub out the differences in time and place. A reader of a translation of *The Gastronomical Me,* wants to read an American classic from 1943, and not a Dutch book translated to modern times.

2.1.2. Current climate towards culinary literature in the Netherlands

Food and cooking are now incredibly popular in Holland. Not only is the popularity visible on TV, but also in bookshops. Compared to twenty years ago, the cookery book section significantly expanded. The larger part consists of books by national and international celebrity chefs. However, there are also a number of books that are a mix between a cookery book and another genre. Dutch celebrity chef Ramon Beuk, for instance, has recently published *Terug naar mijn Roti* (*Back To My Roti,* translation mine), a personal and culinary discovery of his motherland, sprinkled with recipes. Another example is Ilja Gort's *Ik slurp dus ik ben* (*I Slurp Therefore I Am*, translation mine), a book where the Francophile Gort shows how one should not only slurp and enjoy wine, but also life itself. By describing French food and restaurants, he paints a vivid picture of French culture. Also Dutch writer and columnist Silvia Witteman has published a type of cookery book, called *Koken met Silvia Witteman* (*Cooking with Silvia Witteman*, translation mine). It is a combination of short stories and recipes. Each recipe follows from a special memory or experience. A very recent example is Paul de Leeuw's cooking biography *K Hebjelief, En Trek* (*I'm In Love With You, And Hungry*, translation mine). Here, the famous Dutch comedian looks back on his life by describing the most important moments and remembering what food he ate with it. It is a combination of a cookery book and an autobiography. Although *The Gastronomical Me* does not contain any recipes, De Leeuw's and Fisher's books follow the same assumption. They both link food to memory and the formation of their identity. Dutch bookshops place the works of Paul de Leeuw and Ramon Beuk, books that both indeed contain recipes, under the genre of cookery books. Ilja Gort's *I Slurp Therefore I Am* and other similar books from his pen mostly fall into sections such as 'Food and Drink' (bol.com). Some of them, however, such as *Leven als Gort in Frankrijk* (*Living like Gort in France*, translation mine) are considered to be non-fiction literature (selexyz.nl). The trend for Fisher's culinary works, which often but not always contain recipes, is that in most bookshops they fall under the entries 'Food and Drink' and 'essays'. The same is true for the Dutch translations. These too are labelled as books within the subject of 'Food and Drink' or 'Gastronomy'. I expect a Dutch translation of *The Gastronomical Me* would fall in the same category. There may always be exceptions, since literary critic Wim Meij found the translation of Fisher's *An Alphabet For Gourmets* not in the cookery section of his bookshop, but amidst the novels. In my opinion, there are two reasons why a book such as *The Gastronomical Me* is not likely to fall in the category of literature. The first one is that people tend to associate it with the non-literary genre of cookery books. Indeed, there are plenty of cookery books that aspire to be more than that by adding entertaining

introductions. This often results in books that are fun to read, but have no literary quality. Fisher's culinary works, however, are of a different standard. The second reason is that literature is often associated with fiction. This idea, however, has changed over the past few years. The genre of non-fiction has become increasingly popular in the Netherlands since the mid-nineties. Authors, critics, society and literary funds are paying more attention to the literary merits of non-fictional works. New terms such as *creative non-fiction* and *literary non-fiction* are coined to recognize that non-fiction can have literary qualities too (Van Schagen 4-5). Genres similar to and overlapping gastronomic literature, such as memoirs, journalism, essays and travel writing are growing in status. If this development continues, a Dutch translation of *The Gastronomical Me* might fall into this new category and be called literary non-fiction.

2.2. Culture specific translation problems

When a text is translated from one culture into another, problems may arise that would not occur between two other cultures. These culture specific translation problems are the result of differences in the norms and conventions of the source and target culture. In the case of a translation of *The Gastronomical Me*, this will mainly concern the cultural differences between America and Holland. A large part of the book, however, takes place in France and Switzerland, so differences between these two cultures and Dutch culture may also cause some difficulties.

2.2.1. Gastronomic terminology

A book with food as it central paradigm, obviously contains some gastronomic terminology. Since *The Gastronomical Me* does not include recipes, I do not need to discuss the most common translation problem: the conversion of measurements and temperatures. Although the translation of recipes has an endless list of translation problems, the task of the translator is very clear: a reader has to able to execute the recipe. This means terms have to be exact, unambiguous and not cause any confusion. When translating a historic cookery book, the task of a translator becomes a little bit more complicated. According to Henja Schneider, a Dutch translator of cookery books, names of ingredients in a historic text are part of the time and culture in which it was written. She states that modernizing or translating names towards the target culture affects the historicity and atmosphere of the original (Schneider 3).

Although a culinary memoir and not a cookery book, *The Gastronomical Me* has to be approached in a similar way. The French names of products or dishes in Fisher's memories of her time in France, for instance, are part of the *couleur locale*. They give the English text a French touch and character. For example, Fisher talks, about the *vin du maison, glacé* fruits (GM 400-402), and *hors d'oeuvres* (476). A translator should not translate these words into Dutch, firstly because they create a French atmosphere and secondly because the source text already presents

them as foreign words. Fisher finds a way to use them without affecting the readability of the text. She does this by mostly using French words that exist in English too, such as *pâté.* Readers are also able to understand the meaning of less familiar French words, such as perhaps *truite au bleu* (479), because of the playful way she uses them. It is virtually always possible to extract the meaning from the context. Therefore, a translator can just leave the words as they are and, in doing so, maintain the French atmosphere.

When Fisher recalls childhood memories, she often mentions traditional American products or preparation methods. In "The Measure of My Powers 1912" (GM 354-355), for instance, Fisher recalls how her grandmother used to 'skim' off the foam of a spitting kettle of strawberry jam and how she, as a young girl, was sometimes allowed to stir the pots and pans her grandmother used when she 'canned' the summer fruits. Skimming and canning are specific preparation methods and have to be translated accurately. Other words that describe a preparation method are *fry, simmer, drain* and *broil.* Although the exact translation of these words is not as crucial as in a recipe, a translator still has to choose the right word. In a book with gastronomy as a central theme, a translator cannot afford to make any mistakes in the gastronomic terms.

Secondary sources, such as gastronomic encyclopaedias and culinary dictionaries can help to determine the correct translation. Very useful is probably Liesbeth Spreeuwenberg's *Culinary Dictionary English-Dutch,* published in 2004. For the Dutch culinary world, the book was a treasury of information, for it was not only a collection of 9000 gastronomic terms, but also consisted of an appendix with lemma's concerning kitchen utensils and conversion charts with British, American and Dutch measurements, weights and temperatures (Verhoeven- van Raamsdonk 1).

2.2.2. Culture specific elements

It is clear that Fisher uses quite a few French words in order to create a French atmosphere. Not only does she use the French names of ingredients, but also French names of restaurants, such as *Aux Trois Faisans*, and French terms of address, such as *Madame* and *Monsieur*. Other examples are *place, diner de luxe au prix fixe, raison d'être, eaux-de-vie, Maître d'hôtel* and *sommelier*. The Dutch reader, however, is also unfamiliar with the elements specific to American culture. Examples of these American cultural elements are words like *lug-boxes, screened porch,* and *Gibson girls*.

Although it is important that both the American and the French atmosphere are preserved as much as possible, it is also important to produce an understandable translation. In his article "Cultuurspecifieke elementen in vertalingen" ("Culture Specific Elements in Translation", translation mine), Javier Franco Aixelá lists a few strategies a translator can choose

from when translating culture specific elements or CSE's. The strategies are divided into two main categories: preservation and replacement (Aixelá 200-203). Since the main direction of the translation is already quite clear, preserving all CSE's where possible, it is unnecessary to list all the different strategies. Furthermore, the strategy for the French words is very simple. These words were already exotic elements in the source text. Furthermore, Dutch people are probably now more familiar with them than the American audience in the 1940's. Since Fisher finds a way to use the words without affecting the readability of the text, they can be maintained as they are in a translation.

Translating the American CSE's is perhaps a little more difficult. These are elements the American audience is familiar with, but that are not part of Dutch culture. Since most of the excerpts chosen for translation take place in France, they only contain a few American CSE's. The general strategy for these CSE's is not to turn them into typically Dutch concepts (naturalization), but to replace the term with a slightly more general one (limited universalization) or to add something to the text that explains the CSE, without distracting the readers (intratextual explanations). Most CSE's, however, can be maintained as they are (repetition) (Aixelá 200-203). Take, for example, the *Gibson girls.* Modern Dutch readers might perhaps not be familiar with what a *Gibson girl* represents. Therefore, a translator might find it necessary to replace the concept with a more modern one or to add a little information. Replacing the *Gibson girls* with a more modern equivalent, however, is not a good strategy, for these prints are part of the setting and time in which *The Gastronomical Me* was written. Adding explanatory words would be a more understandable option. The Gibson girl, in Victorian times, was the personification of American "feminine beauty, limited independence and personal fulfilment" (Webster 5) all of which also seems to apply to Fisher herself. Furthermore, the typically American prints representing American beauty hang on the wall of a restaurant in France. This might refer to Fisher being an American beauty in France too. Moreover, these prints of the ideal woman with ample bosom and bottom are considered to be early pin-ups (Webster 3). This might allude to the sexual undertone of the excerpt. Although a translator should be aware of double layers and connotations, he or she should not interpret the source text, since spelling out allusions destroys the ambiguity of a text. In my opinion, it is best to, apart from italicizing, preserve the term as it is. Furthermore, *The Gastronomical Me* is full of ambiguities and phrases and scenes that can be explained in multiple ways. All of this adds to the mystery of the book.

2.3. Language pair specific translation problems

These problems are the result of structural differences between the source and target language. The most common example for the language pair English-Dutch is the translation of 'you'. Other issues are the translation of forms of address and proverbs, expressions and idiom.

2.3.1. You

The translation of a simple word like 'you', can prove to be quite difficult. The English language only has one option where Dutch has three: 'jij', 'jullie' and 'u'. In some cases, 'you' can even mean 'men'. A translator has to make a well-considered decision, because the translation can significantly influence the tone and register of the text. Since most of *The Gastronomical Me* is written in first-person narrative, there are only a few instances where a translator has to decide whether the formal 'u' or the informal 'jij' is the most suitable option. In the chosen excerpts, the most occur when Fisher is having lunch by herself in a small restaurant. The conversation is between her and a young waitress. The tone of the waitress seems very polite: "Perhaps Madame would care to start with the pickled herring?" (GM 477). Underneath this polite form, however, is sometimes a less polite tone: "But first a good slice of Monsieur Paul's *pâté.* Oh, yes, oh yes, you will be very sorry if you miss this. It is rich, but appetizing, and not at all too heavy. Just this one morsel!" (478). The waitress may seem polite on the surface, but in fact she forces Fisher to eat all that is put in front of her. A translator can achieve a similar effect by making the waitress seem incredibly polite and, therefore, letting her address Fisher with 'Madame' and 'u'. Fisher herself, of course, respects the etiquette of a restaurant and, in spite of the somewhat obtrusive waitress, remains very polite. In a translation, the most suitable option is to let her address the waitress with 'u' as well.

2.3.2. Terms of address

In her memories of France, Fisher uses French terms address: 'Madame' and 'Monsieur'. This way, she creates a French atmosphere. A translator can just copy the terms to keep this atmosphere intact. In her childhood memories, set in the 1910's, Fisher talks about 'Father', 'Mother' and 'Grandmother'. To contribute to this setting, a translator should choose names that sound old-fashioned, such as 'vader', 'moeder' and 'grootmoeder'. Since these words, in Dutch, are already quite marked, it is unnecessary to spell them with a capital letter.

2.3.3. Proverbs, expressions and idiom

The Gastronomical Me contains a few proverbs and expressions. Examples are: 'what you don't know won't hurt you', 'burned their fingers', 'toward the light' and 'ran a race with it' Most of

them are easily translated, since they have a Dutch equivalent. However, a translator should be aware that some have a deeper meaning. For instance, when Fisher describes how a waiter gives her and Al a "silent little push toward the light" (GM 399), she refers to the figurative light, because that very evening they are both about to 'see the light', that is, truly understand what food is all about. Since the same expression exists in Dutch ('het licht zien'), a translator can keep both the literal and the figurative meaning intact. The same is true when Fisher talks about how she and Dillwyn "ran a kind of race" (486) with their incredibly fertile soil at Le Pâquis, their home in Switzerland. It is important to maintain this expression, since it symbolizes how they are trying to fight Dillwyn's disease and are, in fact, running a race with time and his coming death. Perhaps I can do something with 'een race tegen de klok' or the word 'wedloop'.

Fisher uses a great deal fixed expressions or idioms such as 'in their prime', 'bursting with life', and 'flash of the knife'. These expressions come very natural and give her text a certain flow. A translator can maintain this by choosing expressions that are equally natural for a Dutch reader and translate, for instance, 'bursting with life' into 'overlopen van energie'. This is, however, not always possible. If this is the case, I prefer the more natural translation, even if this means the translation will differ a little from the source text.

2.4. Text specific translation problems

These are problems inherent to the source text. Most of these problems have to do with style and will be discussed in the next chapter. Here, I will only mention the problem of the different settings, Fisher's fluent sentences and the culinary aspect of the text.

2.4.1. Setting

The Gastronomical Me consists of memories ranging from Fisher's childhood (around 1910) to Dillwyn's death in the early 1940's. Although the language in the book does not come across as being terribly old-fashioned, a translator should not forget that it is written in another era. The most important thing is to not use words that are too modern and prefer words that fit the time in which the text was written. With this, I do not mean using old-fashioned Dutch words, but rather implicitly creating the feeling of that time. This can be done by maintaining a polite tone, writing 'vader' and 'moeder' instead of 'papa' and 'mama,' and using words that have a little bit of an older feel, such as 'ijverig', 'echter' and 'akelig'. The background of Fisher's memories in France, Switzerland and America, will maintain itself if a translator keeps the exotic elements intact.

2.4.2. Fluency

Fisher's sentences are generally very fluent. She mostly tends to make long sentences describing detail after detail, using a great deal of adjectives. Take for example the following sentence:

In spite of any Late Victorian ascetism, though, the hot kitchen sent out tantalizing clouds, and the fruit on the porch lay rotting in its crates, or readied for the pots and the wooden spoons, in fair glowing piles upon the juice-stained tables (GM 355).

Translating a sentence like the one above into Dutch can prove to be difficult. Dutch generally needs more words in order to say the same as in English. This does not mean the Dutch translation is necessarily less fluent or less pleasant to read. In order to maintain the fluency in Dutch, a translator needs to spread the information over the entire sentence. The fluency of a sentence has more to do with its structure, coherence and the order in which the information is given than with its length.

According to Lawrence Venuti, it is exactly this aspect of fluency that determines the Anglo-American translation culture (Munday 144). It is the general tendency to translate toward the reader ('domestication'). Readers of translations should not notice they are reading a translation. Therefore, translations need to have a fluent and transparent style and translators need to be invisible. Venuti, however, reacts against 'domesticating' translations and favours a more 'foreignizing' approach. In his opinion, translations should not be assimilated to the ideological and linguistic norms of the target culture but, instead, introduce it to a different way of thinking. In other words, the foreign identity of the source text should be highlighted and not minimized. In its most extreme form, a strategy Venuti calls 'resistancy', a translation should be non-fluent and estranging (Munday 145).

Venuti's foreignizing method might sound straight forward, but in fact it is quite problematic. For instance, is a foreignizing translation able to bring across cultural differences if it's style is non-fluent? Furthermore, the degree of foreignization depends on the cultural and linguistic values in the target culture and how much they differ from the source culture. Moreover, foreignization and domestication are relative and subjective terms (Munday 145). In my opinion, linguistic domestication (fluency) and ideological foreignization do not necessarily rule each other out. Since the translation brief calls for a translation that is written in impeccable Dutch, the style of the translation will have to be fluent. However, this does not mean other foreign cultural elements have to be assimilated to Dutch culture. As said, CSE's will not be translated into Dutch concepts, but preserved as much as possible.

2.4.3. Culinary aspects of the text

The Gastronomical Me belongs to the genre of culinary literature or, more precise, the culinary memoire. This culinary aspect is specific to this text and it brings its own set of translation problems. These problems do not only concern the translation of gastronomic terminology, but also the translation of food imagery. Within Translation Studies, a reasonable amount of research has been done on the aspect of food in non-literary texts. Most of these studies focus on technical problems, such as the translation of recipes (Teixeira 2004, 2008, 2009 and Haberland 2010) or the translation of menu's (Grammenidis 2008 and Mu 2010). Other studies are dedicated to the translation of terminology, such as wine terminology and metaphors (Normand 1999, Anderson 2000 and Demaecker 2007), the terminology of food texture (Daniel & Roudot 2007) or culinary terminology in general (Lange 1996). There is one study that focuses more on how translations of cookery books and other food related texts can influence a country's food culture and cultural identity (Chiaro 2008).

When it comes to the translation of literature, most studies only describe the translation of food and drink when examining the translation of CSE's (Waegemans 1995 and Rodríques Espinoza 2005). It seems though, that the interest for food in literature as being more than a CSE is growing. Helen T. Frank (2009), for instance, has studied the meaning of food in *Paddington Helps Out*. She shows how food serves as a cultural sign and is an essential part of Paddington's 'Englishness'. His attitude to food represents his cultural identity (Frank 2). Furthermore, in 2004, the University of Trieste has published Masiola Rosini's *La traduzione è servita: ovvero food for thought* (*The Translation Is Served: or Food For Thought)*. It is an incredible collection of translation examples of more than a hundred texts from ancient to modern times and in several source languages. What the texts have in common is that they all describe food or have food as a central theme. The examples are drawn from cookbooks and menus, but also from literature, fables and travel literature and range from the Bible to Dickens, Proust, Eco, Mann and Swift. Rosini deals with the translation problems and strategies and shows how in translations often the symbolic and connotative meaning of food disappears. In her conclusion she states there is a "polarity of sensibilities" (Federici 232) . On the one hand there is Mediterranean Catholic culture and on the other there is Nordic or Anglo-American Protestant culture. The contrast between these two cultures becomes clear when Rosini says that 'we' (that is Italian and therefore the Mediterranean culture) have no expressions such as "God sends the meat, the Devil sends the cook" and that "we will never see a dish of spaghetti or a pizza on a tomb, in children's literature" (Rosini quoted in Federici 232). Lastly, there recently has been interest in the translation of food imagery in James Joyce's *Ulysses.* Both Wawrzycka (2010) and Mihálycsa (2010) have examined the translation problems and strategies in Polish, Russian, Czech, Hungarian and Romanian translations, focusing on the 'Sandwich passage'. They show how in

that passage, food can portray a character, but also can have religious and sexual meaning (Wawrzycka 179 and Mihálycsa 155-165). Considering the amount of research on food imagery in literature, one would perhaps expect a little more attention for the translation of this literary device. In chapter four of this thesis, a chapter entirely devoted to food imagery in literature, I will try to formulate the possible translation problems and most suitable strategies. Because of the limited amount of literature, I will also base these formulations on my own expectations and experiences.

3. Stylistic analysis

As stated in the translation brief, a literary translation should not only be faithful in content, but also in style. Before a translator can write a text that is faithful in style to the original, he or she needs to be aware of what exactly this style is. Therefore, this chapter will be a thorough analysis of Fisher's style of writing in *The Gastronomical Me*. When analysing the style of a literary text, it is impossible to describe each and every element of it. Moreover, a list of stylistic elements does not necessarily reflect the text's style. To give me something to hold on to, I will use the method as described by Mike Short and Geoffrey Leech in Style and Fiction (60-93). They divide the different stylistic elements into four groups: lexical categories, grammatical categories, figures of speech and context and cohesion. I will discuss each group in this order and concentrate on the elements relevant for translation. As the title of their book points out, this is a method for describing style in fiction. Although *The Gastronomical Me* is a collection of memoirs and often considered to be nonfiction, wrongly so in my opinion, I do not think this a problem. The purpose of the method is to describe a style and not to determine what is fiction or not. Furthermore, nonfictional texts can have just as many literary qualities as fictional ones. Since the attention for the literary qualities of nonfictional texts is growing, the line between fiction and nonfiction is becoming more unclear. Fiction can be based on true events just as nonfiction can have fictionalized elements. Moreover, what is true for one person does not have to be true for another. Texts are never entirely truthful, since there always is an element of personal interpretation. They can only be presented as true (Schagen 4). That is why, in my opinion, it is unnecessary to make a distinction between fiction and nonfiction when it comes to the literary qualities of a text.

3.1. Translating style

In his article "Alles verandert altijd (en blijft ook hetzelfde)" (Everything changes, (and also stays the same), translation mine), Cees Koster tries to define the term 'style' in a way that is relevant for the discussion of style as a technical translation problem. As a starting point, he takes Short and Leech's vision of style. According to them, style is all about choices. When writing a text, an author has the opportunity to choose from an array of words and grammatical constructions, as well as the opportunity to obey or deviate from the language rules, norms and conventions.

Secondly, they state that each text simultaneously operates at three levels. The first one, the interpersonal level, is about the relationship between the language sender and the language receiver. Both assume the other uses a language that fits the situation. On ideational level, language is used to create an image of a (fictional) world for the receiver (reader of the text). The textual level is about the linguistic organization of words and meanings on the other two levels (Koster 4). The choices an author makes on these three levels, determines meaning.

Exactly by distinguishing between these three levels, it is possible to focus on which stylistic effects work on which level. It enables us to examine style in smaller textual areas. According to Koster, it is almost impossible to speak of "the style of a text" in a general way, because the style over a text as a whole is hardly ever uniform, but instead consists of a series of stylistic effects.

Just like style is always part of a text or utterance and not an intrinsic part of a language, a translation too is not made of a language, but of a text (Koster 6). A similar comparison can be made between an author and a translator. An author has to choose from a variety of options in his or her language to achieve a certain literary or aesthetic effect. A translator, then, has to choose from all the different possibilities in the target language to convey the intention of the source text and to create an effect that is similar to the one in the source text. The translator's choices are mostly determined by the translation tradition in which he or she is working and the corresponding views on translation, and by his or her interpretation of the text (Koster 6). The true translation problem, according to Koster, is the finding of the literary devices in the target language to create a certain effect. The translation problem does not lie in the devices or in the effects themselves, but in the relation between the two on all three functional levels (Koster 6).

As said, style is not a uniformity throughout a complete text but made up of a series of stylistic effects. I will now discuss the effects that make Fisher's style and the translation problems these might cause. Furthermore, I will indicate what I think are the most suitable solution. I will focus on the excerpts that I have chosen to translate in the second part of this thesis. My goal is to give a broad overview of the main elements of Fisher's style, which in turn will help me to be faithful in style to the original.

3.2. Lexical categories

The lexical categories contain questions on word level. Short and Leech point out that each text has its own set of features that make it stand out and that these features are not necessarily important in other texts by the same or by a different author (Short and Leech 60). Furthermore, it is important to think of the text as a whole and to become aware of what the linguistic details mean for the entire text.

3.2.1. Vocabulary and register

The vocabulary in *The Gastronomical Me* is not very complex. Every now and then Fisher uses a Latinate term (*solicitously, obliquely*), but mostly she writes in relatively simple words. This does not mean her prose is not well written. In fact, it is very fluent. Her seemingly effortless capability of handling language and her large vocabulary make her texts a pleasure to read. On the one hand her vocabulary can be typed as colloquial, since the narrator speaks in an informal way. She seems to write very personal. On the other hand, however, it is also possible to call it formal, because what really is going on in her private life remains unclear. For instance, she

never explicitly speaks of her marital problems with Al or the moment of Dillwyn's death. Readers can feel her pain and grief, but she never directly mentions it: "While writing intimately, she doggedly eclipses the facts of her personal life. She is consummately 'truthful', yet a puzzling mysticism pervades her work" (Hawes 86).

3.2.2. Adjectives

Adjectives are incredibly frequent in *The Gastronomical Me.* They often refer to one of the five senses. For someone who can deeply enjoy food like Fisher, it is only natural that not only her taste buds, but all her senses are wide-open. Consider, for example, the following sentences:
- "[A]nd I, sometimes permitted and more often not, put my finger into the cooling froth and licked it. *Warm* and *sweet* and *odorous*" (GM 355). Here the adjectives refer to touch, taste and smell.
- "[S]ome were *hot*, some *cold*. The wine was *light* and *cool*. The room, *warm* and agreeable empty under the rushing sound of the stream, became smaller as I grew used to it" (478). Again, Fisher focuses on her senses by describing what she tastes and how it feels. Most of these adjectives are not difficult to translate, but sometimes things can be a little less straightforward. When Fisher describes how the evenings in Vevey were "softly *warm*" (484), it would sound unnatural to translate it into "[waren] de avonden zachtwarm. It is also unnecessary, since the Dutch word "zacht" in relation to evening already has the semantic meaning of "warm" in it. Therefore, the phrase can be simply translated into "[waren] de avonden zacht".

Other examples of phrases with adjectives that refer to the senses are *opulent fragrance, tantalizing clouds* (smell); *warm evenings, hot kitchen* (touch); *grayish-pink fuzz, dark cupboard, big dark kitchen, big gold letters, round light, dark staircase, white dinner coat and his white topknot* (sight). Striking is Fisher's use of light and dark. When she and Al, for instance, have their first meal in Dijon, a "round light" burns over the doorway, they are pushed "toward the light" and have to climb up a "dark staircase" (399-400). Fisher uses this imagery to emphasise the fact that she and Al now have unlocked the door to a world that is completely new to them. A virgin territory: "We felt as if we had seen the far shores of another world. We were drunk with the land breeze that blew from it, and the sure knowledge that it lay waiting for us" (402).

Fisher also uses adjectives referring to sound, such as *a noisy dark staircase, things sitting […] so richly quiet on the shelves* and *sleepy silence*. She often opposes silence against noise. In her memories of her time with Dillwyn, the silence seems to signify the calm before the storm; his death. Fisher, for instance, describes how she canned fruits and vegetables during their time together in Switzerland and filled their cellars with it. The sight of "all the things sitting there so richly quiet on the shelves" (485), gives her a feeling of contentment. It is an attempt to protect herself from not only physical but also emotional hunger. To maintain the

peaceful character of the cellars, a translator should not only notice the word “quiet”, but also the fact Fisher emphasizes the peacefulness by saying the cans are not just lying on the shelves, but are “sitting” on them. Another opposition, one that often goes together with silence and noise, is that of quiet against bustle or haste. Fisher, for instance, opposes her rushing grandmother during her “violently active cannings” against her quiet, almost invisible self: “with Grandmother directing operations, they all worked in a harried muteness…stir, sweat, hurry”, “I stirred the pots a little now and then, silent and making myself as small as possible” (355). Another example is the hurrying young waitress against the silent, slowly eating and occasionally nodding Fisher who’s only companion in the restaurant is a purring cat (476-479):

The door banged open, and my girl came in again, less discreet this time. She hurried toward me. “Madame, The wine! Before Monsieur Paul can go on –“Her eyes watched my face, which I perversely kept rather glum.
“I think," I said ponderously, daring her to interrupt me, "I think that today, since I am in Burgundy and about to eat a trout," and here I hoped she noticed that I did not mention hors d'oeuvres, *"I think I shall drink a bottle of Chablis 1929* – not *Chablis Village 1929."*(GM 476)

3.2.3. Verbs

A great deal of verbs refers to the senses too. In the following sentence, the verbs are part of the sensory imagery: "[A]s the Savoy Alps *blackened* above the water […] the first summer lights of Evian […] *winked* red at us (385). Other verbs bring auditory imagery, such as s*pitting kettle, sizzling plate* and *banged open*. A translator should try to maintain the auditory and sensory imagery. Sometimes, however, it is not possible to use the Dutch verb in the same way. This is the case in the example of the blackening Alps. It is impossible to turn the word “zwart” or “donker” into a verb and translate it into, for instance, “de Alpen donkerden”. The best solution is to find a noun or adjective that can be turned into a verb. A good option is to use the verb “kleuren” and translate the phrase into “terwijl de Alpen van de Savoye donkerder kleurden boven het water”.

3.2.4. Adverbs

Fisher makes frequent use of manner adverbs. Already in the excerpt of "Define This Word”, about Fisher having lunch on her own with the nervous waitress (476-479), are more than ten occurrences: *ponderously, deftly, politely, obliquely, neatly, darkly, weakly, willy-nilly, timidly, delicately*, and *excitedly*. The translation of most of these adverbs will not pose major problems. In the following sentence, however, Fisher uses the adverb “darkly”. The restaurant with the nervous waitress is quite gloomy and many words emphasize the somewhat dark and almost gothic atmosphere. When she describes how the plates “lay steaming up” at her, “darkly and

infinitely appetizing", the word "darkly" not only refers to colour, but also to darkness in a more gloomy, mysterious and sinister sense. A translator has to choose a translation that refers to both aspects of the word "darkly". Both Dutch words "donker" and "duister" refer to literal darkness as well as gloominess. "Donker", however, is the better option, since it is more implicit. Translating "darkly" into "duister" will immediately push the reader into one direction, whereas "donker" is a little more ambiguous.

3.2.5. General

Fisher often does not give the broader outlines of an event, but instead focuses on the smaller details and, in doing so, sketches vivid pictures of significant moments in her life:

The girl rushed in, with flat baking dishes piled up her arms on napkins, like the plates of a Japanese juggler. She slid them off neatly in two rows on to the table, where they lay steaming up at me, darkly and infinitely appetizing. (GM 146)

Evidently, Fisher's language is very descriptive. Not only does she give detailed descriptions of the meals she eats, but also of, for instance, facial expressions and other nonverbal communication: "For a second her whole face blazed with joy, and then subsided into a trained mask" (477).

Often it seems Fisher is talking about minor events. These events, however, almost always symbolize greater things. Her and Dillwyn's attempts to keep up with the fertile soil, her and Al's first real dinner in Dijon, her memory of her stern grandmother who regarded cooking a bitter heavy business, are memories of defining moments in her life.

Fisher exploits the associative meanings of words. The most frequent example is the word *hunger*, which, as mentioned earlier, not only refers to physical, but also to emotional and sexual hunger. Fisher creates a net of words around *hunger* that can have multiple meanings, such as contentment, excitement, ecstatic, gloating, to satisfy or to please. Double meanings may be obvious, but the way Fisher uses them is never cheap or vulgar. The translation of the verb "to satisfy" can sometimes be difficult. The Dutch word "bevredigen" very soon has a sexual connotation, whereas the English verb "to satisfy" is a little more ambiguous. Take, for example, the moment when Fisher describes how her choice of wine, "somehow satisfied" (476) the waitress. In a literal translation such as "op één of andere geheime en onbegrijpelijk manier had mijn antwoord haar bevredigd" the sexual undertone is very apparent. It would be better to slightly change the formulation and make the undertone a little more implicit. A good option would be to use the Dutch idiom of "een bevredigend antwoord" and translate the phrase into "op één of andere […] manier had ik blijkbaar een bevredigend antwoord gegeven".

3.3. Grammatical categories

An author can use the structure, length and complexity of sentences to emphasise what he or she is trying to convey. Since each language has its own set of grammatical rules, this may cause problems for a translator. Distinctive grammatical features of a certain text may not be possible to recreate in another language if it goes against the grammatical norms.

3.3.1. Sentence structure

The stories and memories in *The Gastronomical Me* are written in retrospect and most of the book is written in the simple past. Although Fisher sometimes uses long sentences, the structure can be quite simple. Take, for instance, the following sentence:

All I knew then about the actual procedure was that we had delightful picnic meals while Grandmother and Mother and the cook worked with a kind of drugged concentration in our big dark kitchen, and were tired and cross and at the same time oddly triumphant in their race against summer heat and the processes of rot. (GM 354).

The sentence is long, but structurally not difficult to follow. A reader does not have to remember syntactic information and use it later on in the sentence. What strikes one most, is the frequent use of the co-ordinator *and.* This seems to be a typical element of Fisher's style. Sometimes it is as if the narrator writes down her memories just as they appear in her head at that moment, detail after detail. The same happens in the following example, where Fisher recalls the interior and atmosphere of a French restaurant. It is almost as if she is walking through it in her head:

The noisy dark staircase; the big glass case with dead fish and lobsters and mushrooms and grapes piled on the ice; the toilet with its swinging door and men laughing and buttoning their trousers and picking their teeth; the long hall past the kitchens and small dining rooms and Ribaudot's office; then the dining room…I grew to know them as well as I know my own house now, but then they were unlike any restaurant we had ever been in. (GM 400).

A translator can maintain this spontaneous character by keeping the enumerations as they are and also simply use the word "en" to connect the phrases. Sentences like this should be easy to read, but a translator should not try to tidy them up. They need to be spontaneous and not perfect. Apart from these enumerations, that are quite simple to follow, Fisher also likes to interrupt her sentences with parenthetical phrases in the form of subordinate clauses. Again, she gives the illusion she is writing down her memories just as they occur in her mind. As if pieces of information spontaneously pop up in her head and need to be inserted. Take for instance the following, quite extreme example: "With us, for the first years of my life, there was a series, every summer, of short but violently active cannings" (354). She sets out to say something simple, but

along the way finds it necessary to add various bits of information. A similar thing happens in the following paragraph:

When we left, before the war came, it was hard to give up all the bottles of liqueurs and eaux-de-vie, *not yet ripe enough to taste, harder than anything except the bottles in the wine cellar, some still resting from their trips from Burgundy, and all our own wine made from the little yellow grapes of our vineyard for the two years past…* (GM 486).

The adding of information seems to fit Fisher's style and character. She is a person able to enjoy what some might consider the small things in life. To her, however, these are the greatest. Furthermore, the details add to the symbolism of the paragraph. On a deeper level, the paragraph preludes Fisher having to give up her beloved Dillwyn who suffered from Buerger's disease. This idea is strengthened by phrases such as "before the war came" (Dillwyn's death) and "eaux-de-vie" (literally "waters of life"). Furthermore, Fisher and Dillwyn's time together was short and their love was still growing ("not yet ripe enough to taste"). For two years they had stocked their cellar with wine they brought from Burgundy or made themselves, but all had to be given up. A translator has to be aware of how the details add to the symbolism of a paragraph or memory. The simple phrase "before the war came", for example has to be translated in such a way that it can both refer to the actual war and to the couple's personal war against Dillwyn's disease and death. An idiomatic translation such as "voordat de oorlog uitbrak", does not work here, because it explicitly refers to the real war. Therefore, it is better to choose a translation that is a little more ambiguous, such as "voordat het oorlog werd".

3.3.2. Sentence length

Fisher's use of parenthetical phrases gives her text a spontaneous and sometimes even dreamy character. When she thinks back to good times and moons over fond memories, she often ends with one or two very short sentences, almost fragments. As a result, the emphasis is exactly on these short sentences. This is the case when she remembers how her grandmother used to skim the jams in the hot kitchen:

Grandmother, saving always, stood like a sacrificial priestess in the steam, "skimming" into a thick white saucer, and I, sometimes permitted and more often not, put my finger into the cooling froth and licked it. Warm and sweet and odorous. I loved it, then. (GM 355)

When reading the sentences in your head or out loud, you become aware that Fisher is working toward a climax in the first sentence. This sentence starts off quite calm, but the tension grows when she delays the climax by interrupting the sentence with "sometimes permitted and more

often not". There is a feeling of suspense, resulting into a pause after "licked it". This way, the emphasis is on "Warm and sweet and odorous". The emphasis is even intensified by the fact the sentence begins with a stressed syllable. Because there is no indication of time in this sentence – Fisher does not write "It *was* warm and sweet and odorous" – the fragment suggests she is back in the hot, steamy kitchen again and is able to taste the cooling froth at that very moment. The next short sentence, "I loved it, then", takes her back to reality. A translator can achieve a similar effect by maintaining the structure of the first long sentence. This means letting it interrupt by "soms met toestemming en veel vaker zonder" and end with "en likte". Furthermore, the following sentence should also begin with a stressed syllable: "Warm en zoet en geurig".

There are quite a few other instances where Fisher abruptly ends a musing sentence with a very short one. For example, when she describes the French restaurant where she and Al had their first dinner in Dijon:

The room was so intimate and yet so reassuringly impersonal, and the people were so delightfully absorbed in themselves and their plates, and the waiter was so nice.

He came back. (GM 401)

In the first sentence, Fisher's thoughts wonder off and as a result the sentence has no real ending. It almost disappears into nothingness. The next sentence, however, brings her back to the story she was initially telling. Alternating musing, long sentences with short, direct ones like this is a frequent element of Fisher's style.

3.3.3. Adjective – noun combinations

Fisher makes frequent use of adjectives. Consider, for example the following sentence from "The Measure of My Powers 1912":

Crates and baskets and lug-boxes of fruits ***bought in their prime and at their cheapest*** *would lie waiting with* ***opulent*** *fragrance on the* ***screened*** *porch, and a* ***whole*** *battery of* ***enamelled*** *pots and ladles and* ***wide-mouthed*** *funnels would appear from some* ***dark*** *cupboard*. (GM 354).

The sentence contains seven adjectives or adjectival phrases. Other examples from that text are drugged concentration, juice-stained tables and dogged if unconscious martyrdom. The way Fisher combines adjectives and nouns may prove difficult to translate. Take, for instance, the phrase "Grandmother and Mother and the cook worked with a kind of drugged concentration" (354). Translating the last two words into "gedrogeerde concentratie" would sound odd and strained. This is mainly because Dutch language is not used to giving abstract concepts (concentration) animate qualities (drugged). A translator could maintain the phrase and present

the literal translation as a poetic expression. In most cases, however, he or she would need to make the expression more concrete and translate drugged concentration into, for instance, "concentratieroes" or "roes van concentratie".

3.4. Figures of speech

In this category fall all the features that in some way stand out from standard language or deviate from the linguistic code (Short and Leech 63).

3.4.1. Climax

As discussed earlier, Fisher sometimes works toward a climax. Not only does she do this over a few sentences or in a paragraph, but also in an entire chapter. For instance, in the chapter where she enjoys a seemingly endless dinner all by herself, the scene grows more and more intense as Fisher eats her way through the different courses that all lead up the climax of the lunch: the trout. The fanaticism and urgency of the waitress grows as the service of the trout draws near. The sexuality of the scene is apparent. Not only does it ring through the waitress' constant asking of "Madame is pleased?", but also in phrases such as "The girl wet her lips delicately", "her face grew tense", "her full lips drooping until I nodded a satisfied yes", "a look of ecstatic worry" and all the sighing and breathing heavily (476-479). It all culminates in the serving of the trout:

The girl wet her lips delicately, and then started as if she had been pin-struck.

"But the trout! My god, the trout!" She grabbed the bucket, and her voice grew higher and more rushed. (GM 478)

Here, the phrases "wet her lips delicately" and "her voice grew higher and more rushed" all harmonize with the sexual image of the scene. This creating of couplings and connecting food experiences to sexual experiences, is a typical element of Fisher's style (Derwin 5-8). In order to maintain the ambiguity of the words and expressions with a sexual connotation, a translator should choose from a certain net of words that are appropriate for the situation in the restaurant, but also have that sexual undertone. Since the sexual undertone is very apparent in this particular story, this must be the same in a translation. A translator should not try to hide or neutralize this aspect, nor should he or she make it more explicit than it already is in the source text. Some words in the source text, however, have a milder effect than their Dutch equivalent. I have already mentioned a problem with the verb "to satisfy". A similar thing happens in the sentence "I nodded a satisfied yes". Translating it into a sentence with the verb "bevredigd", would not only be grammatically challenging – "ik gaf een bevredigd knikje" does not sound natural -, it would also be to extreme. It is better to choose a Dutch word that is, just as in the

original, slightly more neutral in tone than “bevredigen”, but also open to a sexual reading “ik gaf een tevreden knikje”.

3.4.2. Phonological schemes

Fisher makes use of sound effects to reinforce the meaning of certain words. This is, for instance, the case in her use of onomatopoeic verbs, such as in “a *spitting* kettle” (354), “the door *banged* open” (476), “She *slid* [the plates] off neatly” (476), “a *sizzling* plate” and “the *rushing* sound of the stream”(478). If a translator wants to maintain this, he or she has to come up with a Dutch word that has the same effect and translate, for instance, *banged* with *knalde* or *sloeg*.

Perhaps a more subtle example of how Fisher uses sound to reinforce the meaning of words is the following phrase: “and when I went down into the coolne*ss* and *s*aw all the thing*s* *s*itting there *s*o ri*ch*ly quiet on the *sh*elve*s* […]” (485). Here, the ‘s’, ‘sh’ and ‘ch’ sounds reflect the meaning of the quiet atmosphere and the calming effect of the full cellars compared to her grandmothers harried cannings. A similar thing happens in “the ru*sh*ing *s*ound of the *s*tream” (478).

Other frequent elements of Fisher’s style are alliteration and assonance. Examples of alliteration are *sleepy silence, decadent delightful night, shy sunlight* and *companion cat.* An example of assonance can be find in the following phrase “[it] was for our fr*e*sh ign*o*r*a*nce, a c*o*nst*a*nt refr*e*shm*e*nt" (401). Other examples of assonance are “bl*urred* legendary w*ord*s (400)”, “*ex*iting and *ex*hausting” (486) and “Ribaudot was so *famous* […] for his *fabulous* wine” (400). There are also examples of consonance such as in “ro*c*o*c*o *c*urli*c*ue” (400). Here, the repetition of c’s links the words together, making the curlicue even more rococo and rococo even more curlier. Through her use of alliteration and assonance, Fisher creates connections between words and their meaning. It would be preferable to maintain sound effects like these in translation. Sometimes they appear naturally in the translation too. This is the case with the rococo curlicue, which can perfectly be translated in to “rococo krul”. Most of the times, however, this is not the case and a translator needs to try and find another way to create a similar effect. A solution that often works is to use alliteration when it is difficult to create a natural assonance and use assonance, if possible, when recreating alliteration is problematic. This way, a translator still uses a sound effect, albeit a different one, to connect words and their meaning.

Because of Fisher’s frequent use of ‘and’, many sentences have a constant and ongoing rhythm. If she suddenly interrupts this rhythm with a short sentence, this sentence really stands out. Take, for instance, the following paragraph:

I canned tomatoes and beans and vegetable juices, and many kind of pickles and catsups more for the fun than because we wanted them, and plums and peaches and all the fruits. I made a few jams, for company, and several big jars of brandied things. I was lucky; nothing spoiled, everything was good. (GM 485-486)

Alternating her long sentences with a sudden short one is not the only way Fisher interrupts the sometimes on-going rhythm of her sentences. She creates a similar effect by using one-syllable words with an open vowel. These words slow the sentence down. Furthermore, the duration of the vowel emphasizes the word and often corresponds to its meaning. This is the case in the following sentence: "But that night the kind ghosts of Lucullus and Brillat-Savarin as well as Rabelais and a hundred others stepped in to *ease* our adventurous bellies and *soothe* our tongues"(401). The calming effect of the sound of the two words corresponds to their semantic meaning. A similar thing happens when Fisher talks about how, when she was a child, there were all kinds of periods throughout the year that disrupted normal life: "Many of them seem odd or foolish to me now, but probably the *whole staid rhythm* lent a kind of rich excitement to the housebound flight of time" (354). The juxtaposed, stressed, one-syllable words with open vowels ('whole' and 'staid') change the cadence and turn this part of the sentence into an almost rigid rhythm, corresponding to the semantic meaning of 'staid'. It is difficult to maintain this in Dutch, since it is hard to find one-syllable adjectives with the correct meaning. Another way to stress the meaning of the words, instead of using rhythm, is using alliteration and translate the phrase into, for instance, "het gehele rigide ritme". It is also possible to use the expression "rechttoe, rechtaan", since this has alliteration as well as a clear rhythm. However, if maintaining a phonological scheme like this leads to strained or artificial sentences in the target text, a translator should leave it out and focus on the semantic meaning of the words. It is more important to maintain the flowing style than to desperately hold on to a phonological scheme.

3.4.3. Similes

Fisher makes frequent use of similes and quasi similes. Examples are aplenty:

- *"And there were other periods, **almost like** festivals in that they disrupted normal life" (354)*
- *"But we felt **as if** we had seen the far shores of another world. We were drunk with the land breeze that blew from it, and the sure knowledge that it lay waiting for us."(402)*
- *"The girl rushed in, with flat baking dishes piled up her arms on napkins, **like** the plates of a Japanese juggler." (476)*
- *"Grandmother, saving always, stood **like** a sacrificial priestess in the steam" (355)*
- *"Then she poured an inch of wine in a glass, turned her back to me **like** a priest taking Communion, and drank it down." (477)*

Except for the first one, all of these examples have to do with gastronomy. Fisher's choice of similes represents her notion of food. The second one, for instance, which is in the last paragraph of the story of Fisher and Al's first meal in Dijon, suggests how food can be a discovery and can feel like liberation. By comparing waiting a table to a Japanese juggler in the third example, Fisher turns the job into an art. In the fourth example, food is linked to religion and in the fifth it even becomes sacred.

3.4.4. Metaphors

Chapter four of this thesis will be devoted to food imagery on a broader, textual level. Here, I will only focus on metaphors on word level. Fisher makes very frequent use of these metaphors in *The Gastronomical Me*. In "The Measure of My Powers 1912", a story of less than two pages, there are already around ten instances. Examples are *spitting kettle, wide-mouthed funnels, housebound flight of time* and *joyfully stern bowing to duty.* These are personifying metaphors, since Fisher gives inanimate objects or concepts human qualities. Other personifications that occur in the excerpts that are to be translated are *shy stupid meal, avid curiosity, adventurous bellies, amused nostalgia* and *the first summer lights […] winked red at us.* Examples of animising metaphors, where inanimate objects or concepts are given animate qualities, are *her whole face blazed with joy […] and subsided into a trained mask, her face grew tense and did not loosen, violently fertile terraces* and *wrapped in a sleepy silence.* As said, the English language is, compared to Dutch, more tolerating when it comes to giving animate qualities to inanimate objects or concepts. A translator cannot apply one strategy for all of these examples, but must look at each problem separately and decide whether the metaphor can be maintained in Dutch or if he or she needs to change the construction. Especially personifications of abstract concepts, such as in "[I] thought with *amused nostalgia* of […]", are almost impossible to maintain in Dutch. Although *amused nostalgia* is a creation of the author and not a typical English expression, readers would not take umbrage over it. However, the literal translation *geamuseerde nostalgie* in a Dutch translation would probably raise some eyebrows. If a translator feels this is the case, he or she should come up with a construction that conveys the same meaning, such as *vol nostalgie dacht ik geamuseerd terug aan*… The danger of a strategy like this, however, is that poetic expressions are lost in translation. In my opinion, a translator should be bold and maintain metaphors where possible. The *shy sunlight,* for instance can be perfectly translated into *het schuchtere schijnsel van de zon*.

3.4.5. Irony and humour

Fisher's tone can sometimes be quite ironic. She has a humorous approach to food and manners and does not care for proper forms. Instead, she mocks her own ignorance. This happens when she and Al order the vin du maison in a restaurant famous for its fabulous wine: "As far as I

know, we were the only people who ever ordered that: Ribaudot was so famous for his Burgundian cellar that everyone who came there knew just what fabulous wine to command" (400). A little earlier she already poked fun at "some kind of cocktail which we never ordered and never saw anyone else drink either" (400). Although the meal in this restaurant was a very important one for her, she does not take everything too seriously. This corresponds to her dryly way of describing the interior of the restaurant: "There were a couple of large misty oil paintings, the kind that nobody needs to look at, of Autumn or perhaps Spring landscapes" (400). A translator should try to find a similar indifferent, casual tone and translate "some kind of cocktail" into "een of andere cocktail" and "the kind that nobody needs to look at" into, for instance, "van het soort waar niemand echt naar hoeft te kijken"

In the fragment where Fisher is eating a monstrous meal by herself in the little restaurant, the humour is in the exaggeration, especially in the urgency of the young waitress. To her, her job is serious business. Indeed, it is not just a job. It is her duty to take care of the customer the best she can and, more importantly, do the food of Monsieur Paul, the chef, justice.

3.4.6. Hyperbole

Exaggerations and hyperboles are typical aspects of Fisher's style in *The Gastronomical Me*. There is an abundance of expressions such as "[W]e ate the biggest as well as the most exciting, meal that either of us had ever had", "I know that never sine have I eaten so much" (401), "They were truly unlike any others, truly the best I had ever eaten" (477), "I had never tasted such delicate savory morsels" and "[I] had never, indeed, tasted such and unctuous and exciting *pâté*" (478). Fisher is constantly proclaiming that each meal, each bite, is better than the last. It does not matter if this is true or if she really means it. It is true for that moment and that is what is important. Her sincerity is almost endearing, for she is truly enjoying each meal as much as she can and is, indeed, "living fully" (Fisher qtd. in Lazar xiv). The hyperboles are easily maintained in translation and will not pose any problems.

3.4.7. Other

Fisher often combines adverbs, adjectives and nouns in an unexpected manner. This can result in unusual lexical collocations. Examples are *violently active cannings, joyfully stern bowing to duty, harried muteness, ecstatic worry* and *violently fertile terraces.* The words interact with each other. "Violently" gives the "active cannings" and the "fertile terraces" a negative connotation. This is exactly how Fisher experiences them. To her, both are quite frightening, especially the fertile terraces, which she and Dillwyn are desperately trying to keep up with. Words also seem to contradict each other, since how can a stern bowing to duty be joyfully? The same goes for *ecstatic worry* and *harried muteness*. It is not always easy to find a suitable translation for these combinations of words. Translating, for instance, "violently fertile terraces" into "gewelddadig

vruchtbare terrassen" is not a very fluent solution. Some words lend themselves better to be used in a combination. For instance, "vreselijk vruchtbare terrassen" already sounds much better. In my opinion, it is desirable to slightly alter the semantic meaning of the source text if this contributes to the fluency of the translation.

Fisher sometimes repeats a certain sentence structure throughout a paragraph. Take for instance her description of the Ribaudot restaurant:

There were either nine or eleven tables in it, to hold four people, and one round one in the corner for six or eight. There were a couple of large misty oil paintings [...] And there were three large mirrors. (GM 400)

The same happens with the repetition of sentences beginning with "I" and beginning with "And". These elements are easily maintained in a translation.

One element that has not yet been discussed properly is Fisher's tone. It varies from story to story and from one moment to another. At times, it can be full of irony, but it can also be quite solemn. This is, for instance, the case when she describes how she and Al, after their first dinner in Dijon, felt like they had "seen the far shores of another world" and "were drunk with the land breeze that blew from it, and the sure knowledge that it lay waiting" for them (402). When Fisher describes how she experiences the act of eating, her tone can also be very sensual and decadent. Most of the time, however, she creates incredibly lively tales. By often beginning sentences with "But" and "And" and using expressions such as "a kind of" and "something like" give her prose a spontaneous, informal and unaffected character. She exaggerates and intensifies events in her life, she spices them up. For her, it is a way to give her life meaning. She never directly analyses her personality or her actions, but rather stages her inner life. This sometimes gives her writing a theatrical touch. If Fisher indeed passionately writes about a gastronomic experience, a translator should not neutralize her expressions but keep them just as lively.

3.5. Context and cohesion

By context, Short and Leech mean the external relations of the text, such as the relation between author and reader. By cohesion, they mean the internal relations. In other words, the way different parts of a text are internally connected. This can be on sentence as well as on textual level.

3.5.1. The relation between the narrator and the author

The Gastronomical Me is written in first-person narrative. Although the book is a collection of memoirs, it is not completely autobiographical. It was not Fisher's goal to write down her life exactly how it had happened to her, but to give meaning to important events and to gain control. Therefore, the relation between author and reader is not one of the author simply describing her life and an audience reading this, but of an author expressing her personal desires and developments. Indeed, there is an interesting relation between Fisher the author and Fisher the narrator in the book. Although it seems the narrator in *The Gastronomical Me* is very truthful and open, she never explicitly talks about her most personal issues, such as her marital problems with Al or the moment of Dillwyn's death. She only mentions these things indirectly and subtly expresses her pain and grief (Reardon 157). As a result, the 'real' Fisher remains a mysterious person. The narrator can never be completely identified with the author, since the author is always in control of what the narrator does and does not tell.

3.5.2. Pattern

Fisher's stories in *The Gastronomical Me* tend to follow a pattern. Take, for instance, "The Measure of My Powers 1912", where she begins with an interesting anecdote ("the grayish-pink fuzz my grandmother skimmed from a spitting kettle of strawberry jam"), next, draws a generalisation ("Women in those days made much more of a ritual of their household duties than they do now") and then starts to tell a story of her past (the "violently active cannings"). According to Reardon, a similar thing happens in "The Measure of My Powers 1919", where she, after an anecdote of a daughter rejecting her mother's sensuous cooking, "comments on children's eating habits, and then tells the story of her family's cook Ora" (Reardon 156).

3.6. Conclusion

Before a translator can be faithful in style to the original text, he or she needs to know what stylistic elements constitute this style. A thorough analysis can help a translator to see and understand the author's stylistic choices. By being aware of the stylistic elements, a translator can try to maintain them as much as possible. The text's flow and form, however, should never suffer from this.

4. The translation of food imagery in *The Gastronomical Me*

Those…from whom nature has withheld the legacy of taste, have long faces, and long eyes and noses, whatever their height there is something elongated in their proportions. Their hair is dark and unglossy, and they are never plump; it was they who invented trousers.

(The Physiology of Taste, 115)

The first thing we taste is the milk from our mother's breasts. It is an intimate moment of love and affection. It gives a sense of security. When we are older, our parents give us solid food. They might even chew it first and then give it to us. These first associations with food and eating are very powerful. Immediately, food becomes a source of pleasure and associated with love and nurturance (Ackerman 129).

Food is a necessity of human life. Throughout history, every culture of every era has given special meaning to the act of eating and as a result, food has become heavily laden with connotations and symbolism. Food can be a sign of commemoration, credited with supernatural powers, be eaten symbolically or as part of a ritual. Horseradish eaten at a Seder, for instance, symbolizes for Jews the tears that were shed by their ancestors when they worked as slaves in Egypt. For Christians, wine and bread symbolize the body and blood of Christ and in ancient Egypt, onions symbolized the layered universe (Ackerman 127).

This symbolic meaning of food will be the main subject of this chapter. I will show how food can be a body of images and describe the origin of various symbolic meanings and connotations. Furthermore, I will show how food can be used as a literary device. Next, I will describe the way Fisher uses food as a metaphoric language in *The Gastronomical Me* and how this can pose a problem for a translator. The goal of this chapter is to gain insight in the problems of the translation of her food imagery and to formulate possible solutions.

4.1. Food: a body of images

In 1961, Roland Barthes published the article 'Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption'. In this article, he explains how food can signify different cultures, situations and identities. He claims food is not just food, but "a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usages, situations, and behavior" (Barthes 21). The food we eat makes a statement. Bread, for instance, is not just bread. An ordinary loaf signifies day-to-day life, but *pain de mie* signifies a special occasion or party (Barthes 22). Similarly, brown bread nowadays signifies refinement, while for a very long time white bread was regarded the posher one. Socrates spoke of whole wheat being "pig food". Also the Romans preferred white bread (Kaufman XV). All the

way up to the Industrial Revolution, when white flour could be mass produced, brown bread was considered to be the bread for the poor.

Barthes recognises how food, just as clothes, is a cultural signifier. The units in 'the system of food' are mostly not the products themselves, but their taste, preparation and use. Coffee, for instance, signifies 'a break'. Furthermore, an interview with different social groups suggested that upper classes prefer "bitter substances, irregular materials, and light perfumes", whereas lower classes said they prefer "sweet chocolates, smooth materials [and] strong perfumes" (Barthes 22).

According to Barthes, scholars had been overlooking the significance of food. It seems, however, this has changed over the past few decades. The interest for food began with anthropologists studying food in different cultures in the nineteen thirties. Around the nineteen eighties, other fields also started to show interest in the meaning of food. Now, a multitude of scholarly disciplines, such as cultural history, sociology, philosophy, gender studies and literary criticism, examine the significance of food (Counihan and Van Esterik 1-2).

4.2. The symbolism of food

Food and eating are heavily laden with connotations and meanings. Food and women seem almost to be one, since not only food is associated with women and the female body, but the female body, in turn, is also depicted as food. Furthermore, food is nurturance and food is love, but – just like women - food is also associated with temptation, lust and sex. Food is hunger and suffering, but at the same time satisfaction and pleasure. Food can be part of a religious ritual, but for true food fanatics, eating in itself can be a religious experience (cf. Ackerman 1990, Bevan 1988, Counihan and Van Esterik 1997 and Bynum 2008). All these different meanings seem to contradict each other. Exactly in the contradiction, however, the meanings become one. The following quote shows Fisher was fully aware of this:

It seems to me that our three basic needs, for food and security and love, are so mixed and mingled and entwined that we cannot straightly think of one without the others. So it happens that when I write of hunger, I am really writing about love and the hunger for it, and warmth and the love of it and the hunger for it…and then the warmth and richness and fine reality of hunger satisfied…and it is all one. (GM 353).

The way writers use food symbolism and imagery, depends on the food connotations of a specific time, place and society. Therefore, writing about symbolism in literature must also involve writing about the cultural and historical aspects of it. Although food connotations have changed over time, some seem to be rooted in our society. First and foremost, food has always been a social act. People usually tend to not eat alone, but to share their meals with people that

are close to them, such as family and friends. A simple act like sharing bread can welcome a stranger in the group. According to Ackerman, who wrote the famous *A Natural History of the Senses* (1990), offering food to a friend is a symbolic act, a gesture that says: "This food will nourish your body as I will nourish your soul" (Ackerman 128). Furthermore, women and food have always had a special relationship. Women provide a human being's first nourishment and are in that act immediately associated with food, love and nurturance. Indeed, throughout history, women are regarded to represent the physical part of human nature (Bynum 150). As a result, both food and women also symbolize lust, temptation and sensuality.

Lastly, food has always been associated with religious rites. Christians, Muslims, Jews but also Buddhists and Hindu's feast on holy days and fast as an act of mourning, reflection or penance. Already in medieval Europe, food was more than mere nutrition. According to medievalist Caroline Walker Bynum, food practices were in those days "at the very heart of the Christian tradition" (Bynum 139). Christians were required by church law to fast on the appointed days and to receive communion at least once a year. Food-related behaviour defined the life of a Christian (Bynum 139). Moreover, the central Christian ritual, Holy Communion, was and still is the sharing of a meal. Bread and wine symbolize the body and blood of Christ. Indeed, many Christians thought it truly was Christ. For medieval Christians, food was "the most basic and literal way of encountering God" (Bynum 138-139).

In conclusion, food carries various complex meanings. In the next chapter it will become clear how writers and novelists have utilized these meanings and connotations in their writings.

4.3. Food as a literary device

There is a natural relationship between eating and the word. In the former, one uses the mouth to experience and taste what goes in. In the latter, one uses the mouth to produce the words and language to describe it. In the second halve of the twentieth century, the relation between food and literature acquired a resonance and became a central subject of study within literary theory. More and more scholars noted how food could be "a rich symbolic alphabet through its diversity of colour, texture, smell and taste; its ability to be elaborated and combined in infinite ways; and its immersion in norms of manners in cuisine" (Counihan and Van Esterik 2). In 1984, James W. Brown wrote a book called *Fictional Meals and their Function in the French Novel* and in 1987, the journal *Dalhousie French Studies* devoted an entire number to "Littérature et Nourriture" (Bevan 3). A year later, in 1988, *Literary Gastronomy* was published, a collection of essays on the relation between food and literature.

The studies show that food has already been used as a symbol in literature for centuries and that part of these old ideas and connotations around food still exist in our culture today. Furthermore, they point out that especially women have used food imagery in their writings as a form of self-expression. Moreover, they reveal how food imagery in literature can say a great

deal about the cultural norms and ideas of the time in which it was written. I will now discuss the main themes in which food imagery occurs in literature:

4.3.1. Food and women

There are countless ways in which food and women can and have been related to each other. We drink our first food from our mother's breasts. In this act of nurturance, food becomes associated with feelings of love and safety. In Christianity, however, the relationship between food and women has not always been a positive one. In the Bible, it was Eve who first took from the forbidden tree. The eating of the forbidden fruits forever linked food to women, temptation and sin (Bender 317). Moreover, both food and women became devilish temptations that had to be resisted. Medieval Christian society focused on women being virtuous and in the life of a truly virtuous woman, there was no place for bodily pleasures of any kind. Enjoying food was even considered dangerous (Bynum 146-148).

A very early literary example in which women are compared to food is the Song of Songs. It is written in Hebrew somewhere between the tenth and sixth century BC (New Bible in Dutch 917). Christian theologians have long regarded the song to symbolize the relationship between Christ and the Church or interpreted it as an allegory describing the intimate relationship of the soul to God and Christ. However, one cannot deny the fact that it is also and very much a song that celebrates love between man and woman. It is an incredibly poetic text in which women, nature, food and love are all associated with each other. The woman's temples are compared to "a piece of pomegranate" and her love is called sweeter than wine. The man describes the body of the woman using the imagery of taste and smell:

Let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine,
The fragrance of your breath like apples,
And the roof of your mouth like the best wine.
(Song of Solomon 7)

The woman also presents herself as food and talks about giving the man spiced wine and the juice of her pomegranate (Song of Solomon 8). Furthermore, she also describes the man in terms of food: "Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods; So is my beloved among the sons; I sat down in his shade with great delight; And his fruit was sweet to my taste" (Song of Solomon 2). Sweet smells and tastes, ripe fruits and fragrant vines, everything symbolizes the love between the man and the woman. Both indulge in each other's sweet fruits (Song of Solomon 2).

The phenomenon of describing women in terms of food also exists in other cultures. In Africa, for instance, a woman's breasts are compared to "fibrous plantains" and her stomach to a watermelon (Patnaik 59). Furthermore, it is of all time. In the Elizabethan era, for example, a

woman's cheeks were compared to ripening peaches almost ad nauseam, just as her lips were virtually always described as red cherries and her complexion as whipped cream. Later, in the 17th and 18th century, poets took it a step further and not only praised and sang to the cherry lips and plump breasts, but also buried their teeth in them. Depicting women as food and food as women has always been a very frequent metaphor (Patnaik 59-63).

In the twentieth century, feminists started to protest against the depiction of women as purely an edible commodity and viewed it as sexist. Indeed, the metaphor suggests women have no core or essence and are a matter that can be consumed (Patnaik 65). In modern literature, some female writers have chosen to take the age-old comparison in their own hands and use it in their advantage. In Margaret Atwood's *The Edible Woman* (1969), for instance, the anorexic Marian makes a cake in the shape of herself and serves it to her boyfriend Peter. The cake is how she feels he perceives her and how she perceives herself: nothing more than an appetizing cake for him to consume. To Peter she says: "I've made you a substitute, something you'll like much better. This is what you really wanted all along, isn't it? I'll get you a fork" (Atwood, qtd. in Bender 320). Peter refuses to eat from the cake. Marian, however, suddenly feels hungry again and starts to eat the cake herself, symbolizing she will now take control over her own life.

4.3.2. Food and hunger

Fisher was not the first to discover that eating and hungering are one. In the medieval writings of, for instance, Catherine of Siena (d. 1380) and Catherine of Genoa (d. 1510), eating and hungering already had the same meaning. Catherine of Siena wrote: "one eats but is never full, desires but is never satiated" (Bynum 144). For these women, however, hungering, or rather fasting, was a religious experience and a way to come closer to God. Fasting meant suffering, and suffering meant redemption (Bynum 150). The following quote shows how for Catherine of Siena hungering indeed becomes Christ's suffering on the cross:

And then the soul becomes drunk. And after it…has reached the place [of the teaching of the crucified Christ] and drunk to the full, it tastes the food of patience, the odor of virtue, and such a desire to bear the cross that is does not seem that it could ever be satiated...And then the soul becomes like a drunken man; the more he drinks, the more he wants to drink; the more it bears the cross the more it wants to bear it. And the pains are its refreshment and the tears which it has shed for the memory of the blood are its drink. And the sighs are its food. (Catherine of Siena, qtd. in Bynum 144-145)

According to Bynum, women were far more drawn to using food imagery in their writings than men. She lists a great deal of stories in which, for instance, the wafer turns into honey or meat in the mouth of a woman and states that "food becomes such a pervasive concern that it provides

both a literary and a psychological unity to the woman's way of seeing the world" (Bynum 141). Other famous examples of female writers who used food motifs in their prose and poetry are Hadwijch, Mechtild of Magdeburg, Elisabeth of Hungary and Mary of Oignies (Bynum 145). Bynum explains why especially women emphasised Christ's physicality and his suffering body being food. Medieval society considered women to be symbolizing the physical part of human nature. Female writers liked to use this notion, because it associated them with the humanity of Christ. They found it easy to identify themselves with a God who used his own body to feed his children, a God that, just like women, represented flesh, food, humanity and nurturance (Bynum 150).

4.3.3. Food and lust

Very close to the relation between food and women is the relation between food and sensuality. Both are a source of pleasure. In medieval times, food was considered dangerous because it excited lust. Mary of Oignies, for instance, was so afraid of enjoying food that she prayed Christ would make her unable to taste (Bynum 146-148). Later, in the 17th century, the erotic poetry of the Restoration Poets also focused on the relation between food and lust. Patnaik calls their poetry "an erotic-cum-gastronomical duet between man and women"(59).

The medieval idea that overindulgence in food leads to sexual lust and abstinence to chastity persisted in the Victorian era. Young girls were warned for the dangers of gluttony: "The glutton's mouth may remind us of cod-fish - never of kisses". On the other hand, a woman with "a rosebud mouth was expected to have an 'ethereal appetite'" (Brumberg 169). Appetite was linked to sexuality and regarded a lack of self-restraint. As a result, eating, or rather the lack of it, became for women a way to create a desirable image of themselves. The ideal Victorian woman was not only able to restrain herself from gluttony, but she should also be as far removed as possible from all the 'bodily indelicacies' that food and eating implied. Constipation, for instance, became desirable and some women proudly stated that "the calls of Nature upon them averaged but one or two demands per week" (qtd. in Brumberg 168).

Novels of that time reflect the Victorian relation to food and lust. In George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876), for instance, it becomes clear how eating is a trope for sexuality. She describes how a group of young gentlemen have dinner together and tell each other stories about the "epicurism of the ladies, who had somehow been reported to show a revolting masculine judgment in venison" (Eliot 85). Another example is Elizabeth Gaskell's *Cranford* (1853). In this novel, the ladies of the town leave the dining table and "indulge in sucking oranges" in the privacy of their own rooms (Gaskell 53). Eating was so connected to sexual lust, that it was considered indecent to even see a woman eating. Furthermore, a true lady would not care for taste and smell, which were considered to be the lower senses, but only for sight and hearing,

the higher ones. Moreover, a thin body symbolized "rejection of all carnal appetites" (Brumberg 170).

Today, food and eroticism are still very much linked. Despite all the attempts of the past centuries to suppress the appetite for both food and sex, people now write and talk about it without any shame. The curvaceous TV-chef Nigella Lawson, for instance, talks about her cooking in terms of pleasure and satisfaction and refers to herself as a domestic goddess. Not only female, but also male TV-chefs working in the kitchen are sometimes given an erotic touch. The sight of a man carefully kneading bread or rubbing in a piece of meat with oil speaks to the senses. Indeed, in modern literature, both men and women use the imagery of food to talk about sexual pleasures. In, for instance, "Gift of an Apple" (1938), Tennessee Williams describes how a young boy receives an apple from a woman and eats is:

The hard red skin popped open, the sweet juice squirted out and his teeth sank into the firm white meat of the apple […] He licked the outside of his lips and felt them curving into a sensuous smile. The pulp dissolved in his mouth. He tried not swallowing it. Make it last longer, he thought. (Williams, qtd. in Patnaik 64)

Relating food to sex and pleasure is also a typical element in *The Gastronomical Me* When Fisher, for instance, describes her new gastronomic experiences in her first months in Paris, - the hot chocolate and the rich croissants - she is also talking about her new sexual experiences: "They were really the first things I had tasted since we were married…tasted to remember. They were a part of the warmth and excitement of that hotel room, with Paris waiting" (GM 393).

4.3.4. The dinner party

The dinner party often provides an excellent opportunity to portray the personality of the characters, their relationships and social status. For example, in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814), Fanny's suitor comes to have dinner with her family. She is very concerned her sister might display her tendency to eat "without restraint" (Brumberg 169). In Alfred Kazin's *Expensive People* (1968), following Brillat-Savarin's saying that you are what you eat, the characters are completely described in alimentary terms:

Father…liked steaks with mushroom sauce, steaks with garlic, steaks on boards, and steaks pierced through their bloody hearts on silver sticks, only one kind of potato (mashed) and lots of cheap doughy bread, and sweet, ghastly sweet, little pickles – baby midget gherkins he'd eat by the handful, chomping and chopping his way with his big teeth. (Kazin, qtd. in Bender 328).

The dinner party can also take the form of a religious ceremony. This is the case in, for instance, Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* (1927). Mrs Ramsay, one of the main characters,

delights in her role as the 'priest'. She takes place at the head of the table and hands out the food to her guests. The plates, described as "white circles", become like Hosts or mandalas (Knapp 29). The whole dinner takes the form of a religious ritual. It is even possible to divide the scene into a prelude (the preparation of the meal), followed by the congregation (her family and friends) taking communion (the sharing of the meal) and ending with everybody returning to their normal lives (Knapp 30).

Fisher also gives food and eating a religious touch in *The Gastronomical Me.* The dinner is often a ceremony that unites people in body and soul. Furthermore, in contrast to the writings of medieval Christians, where eating is a means to an end (coming closer to God), eating for Fisher is almost a religious experience on its own. She often talks solemnly about her gastronomic experiences:

I ate slowly, knowing that I should not be as hungry as I ought to be for the trout, but knowing too that I had never tasted such delicate savory morsels. Some were hot, some cold. The wine was light and cool. The room, warm and agreeably empty under the rushing sound of the stream, became smaller as I grew used to it" (GM 477-478).

4.3.5. Conclusion

The way people view food in a certain time or culture speaks volumes about the way they view life. It is the ultimate symbol. For centuries, enjoying food was considered dangerous and a devilish pleasure. People, especially women, were advised to restrain themselves and not give in to any form of physical pleasure. Victorians believed that the more a woman distanced herself from appetite and eating, the more virtuous she was. Nowadays, as a result of the secularisation, the negative value has been lifted. Today, people eat and drink to celebrate life. They want to be free. What is more, the division of roles between men and women has changed. In most Western countries, there is not such a strict line between the two anymore. Men now buy and cook food too. Moreover, for medieval Christianity, fasting was a religious experience. Not in eating, but in hungering and suffering they could come closer to God. Nowadays, the act of eating for many people is a meaningful experience in itself and living is all about drinking in as much as possible of life's flavours, tastes and experiences.

It seems Fisher's *The Gastronomical Me* finds is written on the turn of a different attitude to food. In her book, she abandons the Victorian view her grandmother held so very high and becomes one of the first American female writers to openly refer to food as a source of pleasure. Before looking at Fisher's use of food imagery in greater detail and discussing the translation problems, I will first look at the research that has already been done on the translation of food imagery and the translation of metaphor in general.

4.4. Translating food imagery

Although a considerable amount of research has been done on food imagery in literature, there so far has been little attention for the translation of this literary device. Probably the most extensive examination is Masiola Rosini's *La traduzione è servita: ovvero food for thought* (*The Translation Is Served: or Food For Thought)*, published by the University of Trieste in 2004. Another study is Helen T. Frank's article (2009) about the meaning of food in *Paddington Helps Out,* in which she shows how food can serve as a cultural sign and how it represents Paddington's 'Englishness'. The article compares the original (1960) to a new French translation, *Paddington se débrouille,* from 2002. The study reveals that, as a result of a general neutralisation of CSE's and a reduction of food references, Paddington has become less English in the French translation (Frank 33). Two other recent studies, Wawrzycka (2010) and Mihálycsa (2010), focus on the translation of the 'Sandwich passage' in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. They describe how Polish, Russian, Czech, Hungarian and Romanian translators have dealt with the translation of the sexual and religious connotations of food and the relationship of the characters in the novel to food. In most examples, the tension is between two aspects. On the one hand there is the effect of the original, that is the various connotations, associations and wordplays. On the other, there is the linguistic meaning of the original words. Some translations keep the linguistic meaning in tact but loose the effect, while others try to retain the effect by altering the exact words and utilising the possibilities of the target language (Mihálycs 152-153, Wawrzycka 181).

In *The Gastronomical Me,* however, Fisher uses the imagery of food in a different way. In the documentary "M.F.K", writer Douglas Bauer captures the essence of her writing when he states that she indeed uses food as metaphor: "[S]he talks about the way people live and the way people think and the way people hunger in more than one definition of that word through food and their description of their relationship to food" (Bauer). Furthermore, *The Gastronomical Me* shows how Fisher, by listening to her hungers and understanding them, also learns to understand herself: "[i]nfused with hunger for warmth and love and hunger satisfied, *The Gastronomical Me* illuminates how sensual pleasures construct and nourish female identity" (McLean 85). Fisher takes food and all it represents into her own hands and, with it, creates a personal idiom to express her intimate feelings and hungers.

Since little research has been done on the translation of food imagery, I will try to shed some theoretic light on it by discussing a few aspects of the translation of metaphors in general. Next, I will look at a few fragments of *The Gastronomical Me* and analyse Fisher's use of food imagery, their translation problems and possible solutions.

4.4.1. The translation of metaphors

Within Translation Studies, the translation of metaphors is traditionally discussed from a source-oriented point of view. Dagut (1976) and Newmark (1981), for instance, analyse the various ways in which source-text metaphors can be translated into metaphors in the target-text. Often, these target-text metaphors were then labelled 'good' or 'bad', depending on the way the features of the source-metaphor, such as meaning, constituents and metaphoricity, were replaced (Toury 81). Gideon Toury, however, takes on a different approach. In his article "Constituting a Method for Descriptive Studies" (1995), he uses metaphor translation to exemplify the differences between a prospective (source-oriented) and a retrospective (target-oriented) view to translation (Toury 81). According to him, source-oriented scholars have listed quite a few replacement strategies, but virtually all can be reduced to the following three categories:

1) metaphor *into* 'same' metaphor
2) metaphor *into* 'different' metaphor
3) metaphor *into* non-metaphor
(Toury 82).

Furthermore, Toury points out that within the source-oriented approach one option is often neglected: 4) metaphor *into* 0. That is, "complete omission, leaving no trace in the target text" (Toury 82). In his opinion, this is the result of a prescriptive or normative attitude. Although the omission of a metaphor does occur in actual translations, source-oriented scholars obviously not regard it a legitimate strategy. Toury, proceeding from evidence in target texts, lists another two alternatives for metaphor translation as they occur in actual translations:

5) non-metaphor *into* metaphor
6) 0 *into* metaphor ("addition […] with no linguistic motivation in the source text)
(Toury 83).

By adding these two options, Toury widens the scope of the study of metaphor translation. They enable him to include metaphors in the target-text that do not have an equivalent in the source-text. This helps to account for the translation strategy of compensation (an omission in one place is compensated by an addition in another), a strategy that, without the addition of the last two categories, would be impossible to detect (83).

Toury uses the combination of a source and a target-oriented approach to metaphor translation to be able to describe all translation phenomenon in source-texts as well as in target-

texts. His method is part of the descriptive branch of translation studies. In this thesis, however, the addition of the last three categories mostly serves as a way to complete the traditional list of available strategies for metaphor translation. Now it is time to see if these strategies help the translation of Fisher's food imagery.

4.4.2. "The Measure of My Powers 1912"

The Gastronomical Me is a testimony of Fisher's belief that how you eat and handle food, says a great deal about how you approach life. Opening all your senses and truly tasting a good bite of food, means you are also able to truly taste all other delights in life. Suppressing your appetites, however, is for Fisher a sign of disrespect for the body (McLean 75). The contrast becomes clear when she compares the American and French treatment of the potato. She recalls how during her childhood in America, potatoes were "mashed, baked, boiled" and that she felt "it was shameful […] and stupid too, to reduce a potentially important food to such a menial position…and to take time every day to cook it, doggedly, with perfunctory compulsion" (395). Fisher believes that the way you treat your food says how you treat yourself. That is why, for her, reducing the potato to a "menial position" is a "shameful" thing to do, since it reduces the people who eat it to the same menial status.

"The Measure Of My Powers 1912" is the first story in *The Gastronomical Me* as well as Fisher's first food-related memory. The memory makes a meaningful starting point for all the others. It shows how Fisher already at young age did not understand why women could not enjoy eating. It immediately reveals that Fisher reacts against her grandmother, the embodiment of the Victorian fear of food and appetite, and does not want to be associated with her ideas. In other words, the memory serves to illustrate Fisher was different. This becomes clear in Fisher's telling descriptions of her grandmother and her cooking habits and her descriptions of how this made her feel. On the one hand there is her grandmother, who considered cooking to be "a bitter heavy business". When making jam, for instance, she worked together with her daughter and the cook in "a harried muteness...stir, sweat, hurry". Furthermore, grandmother tolerated no "foolish chitchat" in her kitchen, but instead stood "like a sacrificial priestess in the steam" (355). Fisher's description of the jam-making process illustrates the cultural idea that it was a woman's duty to focus on feeding others and not the self and that a woman should become accustomed to sacrificing her own hungers and desires (McLean 74). On the other hand there is Fisher herself. She grows up to be the opposite of this Late Victorian ideal and celebrates her appetite. Reacting to her grandmother is the first sign of this.

For a translator, it is important to be aware of the contrast between the descriptions of the cooking habits in this story and the way Fisher experiences food and eating as an adult, especially during her life in France and Switzerland. Her descriptions in this story of her

childhood are filled with negative words, portraying cooking as an obligatory, serious business, devoid of any pleasure. Consider, for example, the following phrases:

DUTY, SACRIFICE	- dogged if unconscious martyrdom
	- joyfully stern bowing to duty typical of religious women
	- sacrificial priestess in the steam
HARD WORK, HASTE,	- violently active cannings
SERIOUS BUSINESS	- drugged concentration [...] tired and cross
	- harried muteness...stir, sweat, hurry.
	- bitter heavy business
	- no nonsense [...] no foolish chitchat

All these words and phrases are part of the same negative net of words. They are part of the same translation unit (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995). In the target text, they need to capture the same serious and negative atmosphere. When describing the ritual of "the household duties" of her childhood, Fisher uses, for stance, the word "martyrdom": "[...] it was indistinguishable from a dogged if unconscious martyrdom" (354). A translator should maintain the power and force of such a word an translate it into, for example, “martelgang". Furthermore, he or she should keep the hurried aspect of phrases such as "short but violently active cannings" and "they all worked in a harried muteness...stir, sweat, hurry". It can be difficult to translate a phrase such as "violently active cannings" into a fluent Dutch phrase. Firstly because of the sequence "violently active" and, secondly, because the verb "to can" is used as a noun here. Since the translation of the first two words (the adverb and the adjective) depends on the translation of the noun ("cannings"), it is best to start with finding a solution for “cannings". In Dutch, it is possible to turn a verb into a noun by letting it precede by "het". For example, "het inblikken" or "het inmaken". The complete phrase would become "het gewelddadig actieve inmaken". This, however, is not only far from a fluent solution, but also difficult to fit in the rest of the sentence. To make a phrase fluent in Dutch, a translator often needs to make it a little more concrete. An option is to add a word that is an actual noun. In this phrase, the word "ijver" or "vlijt" really fits the situation. Indeed, a good translation for "cannings" would be "inmaakijver" or "inmaakvlijt". Not only is it more expressive, but it also incorporates the meaning of the word "active". Doing so, a translator would, in terms of Toury's strategies, translate this metaphor into a slightly different metaphor. Now a translator has to find a solution for "violently". In Dutch, it does not sound natural to combine the word "inmaakijver" with "gewelddadige". This is because Dutch is less tolerant of personifications. Instead of the personifying "gewelddadige", a solution is to

choose an adjective that is a little less animate, such as "woeste" or "wilde". Again, this slightly alters the original metaphor. The result, however, is a fluent translation of the seemingly simple phrase "violently active cannings": "woeste inmaakijver".

Other phrases in this story, such as "joyfully stern bowing to duty", seem to portray the Victorian ideal. A translator should find a solution that has the same Victorian atmosphere. He or she can accomplish this by choosing words that have a little bit of an older, perhaps (as Dutch people would call it) Calvinistic feel to them and translate "joyfully" into, for instance, "heuglijk" or "blijmoedig".

Fisher's characterization of her grandmother simultaneously says something about herself. Indeed, writers that employ food imagery often use their descriptions of food and cooking processes to situate themselves (Baena Introduction). In this story, Fisher is using the contrast between her and her grandmother to create an image of herself, an identity completely different from her grandmother. In the translation, therefore, the phrases describing her grandmother need to be the exact opposite of how Fisher will grow up to experience food and eating. Furthermore, the translation should maintain the significant contrast between Fisher's hurried grandmother and her silent little self, who thought it was "a pity" that the jam making process was such a serious and bitter business and that "[s]uch a beautifully smelly task should be fun" (355). Fisher ends the story by describing how she, mostly without permission, loved to put her finger "into the cooling froth" and lick it (355). Again, Fisher's addition "mostly without permission" is a way of showing how enjoying food was forbidden, but that she, in spite of everything, opposed her grandmother and took pleasure in licking the cooling froth from her fingers.

4.4.3. "The Measure Of My Powers 1929-1930"

In *The Gastronomical Me,* eating is very much linked to communion. In the Foreword, Fisher explains that "[t]here is a communion of more than our bodies when bread is broken and wine drunk" (353). Sharing a meal with a loved one and sharing the pleasure, can unite people with their whole being. Furthermore, pleasures of eating are often an implicit metaphor for intimacy. The more intimately involved Fisher is with a lover, the more evocative are her gastronomic experiences. Quite often her descriptions of the meals she eats in a given period of time directly reflect her level of romantic passion. When she and Al are newly-weds, she recalls how the "hot chocolate and rich croissants" were "the most delicious things". In "The Measure Of My Powers 1929-1930", she describes their first meal in Dijon on their one month anniversary.

The couple's arrival at the restaurant is quite mysterious. First they have to enter a "dim little café", where they have to show a scribbled note, which they received from the lady who lives next door, to the man behind the bar. Silently he leads them to a "bare beautiful courtyard" where a "round light" burns over a doorway. The man laughs, gives the couple "a silent little

push toward the light" and disappears (399). All these details give their arrival at the restaurant a mysterious character. Everything happens in silence, except from a few laughs from the barman. The reader feels Fisher and Al are about to enter a very special place.

When Fisher writes about the satisfaction of a hunger for food, she is often also writing about the joy of being in love (McLean 85) . Since Fisher describes the dinner in this story in passionate terms, this suggests her relation with Al, at that time, was probably equally passionate. Similarly, when she is unable to enjoy food, this means something is wrong. For a translator, descriptions of meals that may have a double layer are not necessarily problematic. Take for instance the following paragraph:

[W]e ate the biggest, as well as the most exciting, meal that either of us had ever had [...] Everything [...] was so new, so wonderfully cooked that what might have been with sated palates a gluttonous orgy was, for our fresh ignorance, a constant refreshment (GM 401).

If a translator does not neutralize hyperbolic expressions such as "biggest", "most exciting" and "so new, so wonderfully cooked", this description of the meal will most likely remain equally passionate in a Dutch translation. However, a translator should create a translation that, just as the original, is not only describing the meal, but also could be about Fisher's relationship with Al. By taking this description of the dinner as a metaphor for Fisher's "new" and "fresh" love for Al, one might state that a translator turns this metaphor into the same metaphor if he or she is able to maintain all the connotations. This can be done by choosing words from a net of words that can be used in relation to culinary as well as sexual hunger and satisfaction. The words in this paragraph that possibly have a sexual connotation are "exciting", "sated" and "orgy". As for the translation of the last two, a translator can hardly go wrong. By choosing the Dutch equivalents "verzadigde" and "orgie", all connotations are maintained. A translator can also easily maintain the sexual connotation of “exciting” by translating it into "opwindende". Any other translation will not do. The word "spannende", for instance, would neutralize Fisher's passionate description. Other options, such as ”prikkelende” or “stimulerende”, however, would be far too specific and concrete. The perfect and most obvious solution is the ambiguous word "opwindende".

Very often, Fisher gains new knowledge about herself while she is eating. When she ate the potato soufflé in France, she realised that the simplest thing could become amazing if treated with care and respect (394-395). When she ate Al’s tamale pie, she could not hide her true feelings anymore and realised she had to face the fact Al was unable to feed her hungers (353). When she ate the round peach pie with her sister and father, she became aware of the significance of sharing food (358). The more she learns about food and her personal tastes and hungers, the more she learns about herself. When she is thirty-five, her taste for food and life as

a whole has matured: “My hungers altered: I knew better what and how to eat, just as I knew better how I loved other people, and even why” (510). The dinner in the restaurant in Dijon in “The Measure Of My Powers 1929-1930” is another one of these moments where Fisher learns something new through the act of eating and tasting. Her descriptions of her and her husband reveal that they, at that time, only knew little about French food and restaurants. She writes, for instance, how they were “bemazed innocents” and “really very timid”. Furthermore, she writes how they “were lost” when looking at the strange words on the big menus and that the first meal they ordered was "a shy stupid one" (399-401). During the dinner, Fisher remembers to feel “a steady avid curiosity”. She ends her memory with describing how she and Al felt as if they just had made a life changing discovery: “[W]e felt as if we had seen the far shores of another world” (402).

First of all, a translator should notice how phrases such as “bemazed innocents", “really very timid”, “were lost”, “a shy stupid one”, “a steady avid curiosity” and "fresh ignorance" are all connected to each other and part of the same translation unit. Although they are spread out over the whole story, they do not stand on their own. They are all part of the picture that Fisher is trying to paint of her and Al, a picture of the couple being not only newcomers to French cooking, but also being newlyweds and novices to love and marriage. When translating these phrases, a translator should choose words that fit this picture. Take, for example, the phrase “fresh ignorance”. An option would be to translate it into “frisse onwetendheid”, since the Dutch word “fris” is often used in relation to something that is new and original. In combination with “onwetendheid”, however, this sense of the word “fris” does not seem to work. Perhaps this is because it is also part of the word “onwetendheid”, resulting in a somewhat confusing repetition of meaning. A better option is to use a word that means fresh, but also makes sense in combination with “onwetendheid”. A good solution, therefore, is “onbevangen”. Not only does this create a nice alliteration, but is also fits the picture of the innocent, ignorant and timid couple.

Not only phrases that directly describe Fisher, Al or the meal are part of this picture. The "*bare* beautiful courtyard" the two have to cross before entering the little restaurant, for instance, also refers to the couple’s ignorance. A translator might be inclined to translate “bare” into “sober”, which is a perfectly fine translation, especially in combination with “binnenplaats". “Sober", however, does not carry the meaning of “naked", “empty” or “blank”. A better option, therefore, would be a word such as “kaal”, since it can describe the empty courtyard as well as Fisher and Al's innocence. The last phrase of the memory shows how Fisher and Al’s first dinner in Dijon has changed their lives:

[W]e felt as if we had seen the far shores of another world. We were drunk with the land breeze that blew from it, and the sure knowledge that it lay waiting for us (GM 402).

The two are no longer completely ignorant. They have tasted from a new way of life, but also know that they only had a little bite.

4.4.4. "Define This Word"

Fisher does not hide the relation between food and seduction and sensuality in *The Gastronomical Me.* This is very much the case in "Define This Word", a story about Fisher stranding in a small French restaurant all by herself. In this chapter, a young waitress seduces Fisher into eating the most incredible and most satisfying dishes. Fisher's pleasure in eating the food and the waitress' pleasure in serving and seeing Fisher enjoying it, creates a special bond between the two. This bond, however, is strangely sexual. Fisher, for instance, notices the waitress' "odd pale voluptuous mouth" and how she gloats "ferociously". Furthermore, the waitress "wets her lips delicately" as Fisher tastes the "unctuous and exciting *pâté*" (475-478). Although the allusions are quite apparent, a translator should be aware of them and, more importantly, choose the right tone in a translation. Take, for instance, how Fisher describes the waitress to look "with ferocious gloating" while she is busy eating the *pâté.* The word "gloating" should be translated into a word that, just as the English one, has a sexual connotation. Good options, therefore, would be "begeerte" or "wellust". Since "met wellust naar iets kijken" is a standard expression, the most fluent option would be "wellust", especially because it, in combination with the translation of ferocious into "woeste", creates a nice alliteration. "Define This Word" is full of words and phrases that have sexual allusions and connotations. One that occurs several times is the waitress asking Fisher if she is "satisfied" or "pleased". I have already discussed a few of these instances in chapter three. Other examples are "she wet her lips delicately", "her voice grew higher and more rushed" and "unctuous and exciting *pâté*". All these phrases are part of the sexual undertone in this story. Again, to maintain the ambiguity of these words and expressions, a translator should choose from a certain net of words that can describe food or that are, sometimes with a little bit of imagination, appropriate to be used in a restaurant, but that also have that sexual undertone. Since in this story the sexual undertone is very apparent, a translator should not try to hide it, nor should it be made more explicit than it already is in the source text. As said before, the word "exciting" in "unctuous and exciting *pâté*", can be easily translated into "opwindend", since this word has a sexual connotation in Dutch too. The word "unctuous", however, is slightly more difficult. Literally it means "oily" or "greasy", but in relation to food, it often is used to describe a soft and smooth consistency. A translator should find the word Dutch people would use to describe soft and smooth food. I think the perfect word for this is "smeuïg".

In this story, the sensual even becomes a little bit sadistic (Cooper 14). Fisher is forced by the waitress, whom she earlier describes as "a medieval woman possessed by the devil" (474), to eat all the dishes that are put in front of her. The waitress dominates Fisher. She stands

over her and watches her eat with her “eyes like X-rays” and Fisher can only obey. By the time the cheese is served, Fisher does not even protest anymore: “[I] ate it doggedly, like a slave” (481). The sadistic touch is also apparent when the waitress describes how Chef Monsieur Paul prepares his *truite au bleu:* “[a]ny trout is glad, truly glad, to be prepared by Monsieur Paul. His little gills are pinched, with one flash of the knife he is empty, and then he curls in agony in the *bouillon* and all is over” (479) (Cooper 14). In this sentence, especially the phrase "he curls in agony" is ambiguous, since it is not just agony, but also pleasure (for the trout is "truly glad") that makes him curl. Furthermore, the curling also refers to Fisher's own experience in that restaurant, since her dinner is agony and pleasure too. A translator can maintain both these aspects by choosing the Dutch verb "kronkelen", since this verb can be used in relation to pain as well as to pleasure: it is possible to say "kronkelen van genot" and "kronkelen van de pijn".

The whole description of the restaurant is quite gloomy. There are several elements that give the text a gothic character. The restaurant, for instance, is dark and silent and completely “empty of humans”. There only is a purring cat. Moreover, the waitress, for no reason, seems to be expecting Fisher’s arrival (474). During the comforting dinner, Fisher begins to feel “almost frightened” by the mysterious and invisible Monsieur Paul and his handmaiden. She imagines how “trussed wanderers [are] prepared for his altar by this hermit-priest of gastronomy” (481). The dinner ends with a special cup of coffee, which Fisher drinks “as a suffering man gulps ether, deeply and gratefully” (481). The whole scene suggests pain and pleasure are close together. All the food is very gratifying and Fisher is “very much pleased”, but at the same time she experiences the meal as terribly uncomfortable (474). She is forced by the dominating and possessed waitress to eat. She is trapped in the dark, gloomy restaurant and fears she will end up on Monsieur Paul’s sacrificial altar. For a translator, it is important to use a language that fits the sadistic atmosphere in the restaurant and that can express both pain and pleasure. For example, Fisher describes how the waitress begins to move "as if she had been pin-struck" (478) when she realises it is time to serve the trout. The word "pin-struck” is part of the other dark and agonizing aspects in the story, such as the sacrificial altar, Fisher claiming she ate "doggedly, like a slave" and her description of the waitress being "a woman possessed by the devil". Furthermore, the term "pin-struck" is often used in relation to voodoo, something that matches the sacrificial altar. A translator should find a natural phrase that both captures the sudden movement of the waitress and at the same time fits the dark world of pain and agony. A good option, therefore, would be to use the expression "als een bezetene", since Fisher already has described the waitress as being possessed by the devil.

Often Fisher refers to food in religious terms. This also happens in "Define This World". She describes how the possessed young waitress, when she explains how the chef prepared the sauce of the *truite au bleu,* has on her face the “exalted look of a believer describing a miracle at

Lourdes" (479). Furthermore, when the waitress uncorks a bottle of wine she is described as "a priestess taking communion" (477). By using these terms and idioms, Fisher suggests that for the French waitress, food indeed is religion. A translator can maintain this by using the correct Dutch terms and idioms. "[T]aking communion", for example, should be translated into the Dutch idiom "ter communie gaan".

4.4.5. "The Measure Of My Powers 1936-1939"

In 1932 Fisher and Al run out of money and are forced to move back to California. Their marriage is failing and after a while, Fisher falls in love with Dillwyn Parrish. Fisher describes that during the few years together with Dillwyn, whom she refers to as "Chexbres", she felt "the most fortunate of all women, past sea change and with her hungers fed" (517). "The Measure Of My Powers 1936-1939", shows how, in their short time together, they lived in harmony with nature and with each other. They practiced a life "firmly grounded in the soil, as well as in the body" (McLean 85). Many memories describing these years, express that both Fisher and Dillwyn felt very much alive:

It was the oldest soil either of us had ever touched, and it seemed almost bursting with life […] We grew beautiful salads, a dozen different kinds, and several herbs. There were shallots and onions and garlic […] And all the time we ate what we were growing (GM 486-487).

The larger part of this paragraph, the enumeration of products, is not problematic for a translator. When translating the first sentence, however, a translator needs to be a little more careful and attentive. This incredibly lively earth contrasts to Dillwyn's disease and upcoming death. In a translation, therefore, it is important to maintain the word "life". Although "overlopen van energie", on its own, is a good translation of "bursting with life", it would be better to find a translation with the word "leven" in it. In Dutch, however, a literal translation, "overlopen van leven", is grammatically incomplete. A translator is forced to use a more concrete noun and change "leven" into, for instance, "levenskracht". This is an example of how poetic reasons can lead a translator to not choose the common Dutch equivalent of a certain expression but, in Venuti's terms, favour a linguistically 'foreignizing' strategy.

The soil at Le Pâquis is so full of life, that Fisher and Al feel they cannot keep up with it: "it was alive with insects and little creatures and hundreds kinds of worms waiting to eat what grew in it. We ran a kind of race with it, exciting and exhausting" (486). Indeed, their struggle with the "violently fertile terraces" mirrors how they are trying to keep up with life and try to be one step ahead of Dillwyn's disease. They do not want the fertile soil to win the race. In that respect, "violently" is an interesting choice of words. A positive word, "fertile", is combined with a word with a negative connotation, "violently". A translator should find a Dutch word that can

be used in combination with “vruchtbaar”, and that also has the aspect of violence or force. A literal translation, "gewelddadig vruchtbare terrassen”, however, does not seem to make any sense. Dutch readers would probably find it hard to imagine what it means. Again, the fact Dutch is less tolerant of personifications seems to be the underlying problem. A solution would be to choose another strong, negative word, such as “verschrikkelijk” or “vreselijk”. The latter would work best, not only because of the alliteration, but also because it has the word “vrees” (fear) in it.

Fisher never directly speaks of Dillwyn’s suicide or of her feelings concerning his illness. She expresses her fears and how she struggles with his disease in a different way. When she describes how she canned all the fruit at Le Pâquis and how the sight of the full cellar with “all the things sitting there so richly quiet on the shelves” gave her “a special feeling of contentment […] a reassurance of safety against hunger” (485), she is not just talking about physical hunger, but also about protecting herself from emotional hunger. The sight of the full cellar makes her feel calm, because that she is able to control. The life of her love, however, she cannot. To maintain the calm atmosphere of the cellar, a translator should notice how all the things are "*s*itting there *s*o ri*ch*ly quiet on the *s*helve*s*" (485). As said before, the word "sitting" and the repetition of the 's' 'sh' and 'ch' sounds, gives the phrase a peaceful character. A translator can maintain this by trying to use words that begin with sounds like this too and translate the phrase into, for instance, "en ik [...] al die dingen daar in *s*tilte *z*o rijkelijk op de planken *z*ag *s*taan". The fact that with the phrase “safety against hunger” Fisher not only refers to physical hunger does not necessarily form a translation problem. In Dutch too the word "honger" is ambiguous and can refer to various kinds of hunger. As long as a translator does not specify what hunger Fisher is talking about, the translation will be equally ambiguous.

In "The Measure Of My Powers 1936-1939" there is one mysterious moment where Fisher hints at Dillwyn’s suicide. She describes how one time he “put down his hoe and said loudly, 'By God, I’ll not be dictated to! I'll show you who's boss!'" (486). Here, Dillwyn is, in Fisher's own words, "talking to the earth" (486). Indeed, he does not let the earth win the race, but eventually takes his life in his own hands. It would be good if a translator is aware of what Fisher is hinting at here, but I wonder if this knowledge would result in a different translation. It is not the job of a translator to show he or she is aware of all the possible double layers, but to create a similar ambiguous and mysterious translation. However, it is important a translator is aware of the different layers in order to not close the door on one of them. Only then, he or she can confidently stick to the meaning of the words and simply maintain how Dillwyn firmly addresses the earth: “ik laat me de wet niet voorschrijven! Ik zal eens laten zien wie de baas is!”.

Part two

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Practice

Translation and reflection

This part of the thesis consists of the translation that is based on the theory discussed in the first part. Reflection and commentary on the translation process can be found in the footnotes. They explain the motivation behind the solutions and show how the information of the first part has contributed to the choices I have made.

Since *The Gastronomical Me* consists of a series of short stories about different moments in Fisher's life, I have decided to choose four fragments that all have a character of their own. In each of these fragments, Fisher uses the language of food to describe a different mood and subject. The first one is a memory of her childhood, the second is a moment of culinary and marital bliss, the third is humorous and mysterious story about desire and the last is a bittersweet memory of her brief life with Dillwyn. It is now time to see if and how the analysis has contributed to the translation process of these four very different fragments.

The translation

Het bereik van mijn kunnen, 1912[1]

De eerste smaak die ik me kan herinneren en direct nog een keer wilde proeven is die van het grijs-roze dons dat mijn grootmoeder[2] van een spuwende ketel aardbeienjam afschuimde. Ik was toen denk ik een jaar of vier.

In die tijd maakten vrouwen[3] veel meer een ritueel van hun huishoudelijke taken dan nu. Soms waren ze niet te onderscheiden van een verbeten zij het onbewuste martelgang. Er waren tijden voor Dit, en andere evenzo gezette tijden voor Dat. Er was één vaste week per jaar voor "de naaister[4]". Er was, natuurlijk, de voorjaarsschoonmaak. En er waren andere perioden, bijna een soort feestdagen zoals ze de normale gang van zaken verstoorden, waar ongeacht het weer, de financiën of de gezondheid van het gezin, aan werd vastgehouden.

Veel komen nu vreemd of zelfs absurd op me over, maar waarschijnlijk gaf het gehele rigide ritme een soort intense opwinding aan het aan huis gekluisterde tijdsverloop.

Bij ons was er gedurende de eerste jaren van mijn leven iedere zomer een reeks momenten van korte maar woeste[5] inmaakijver[6]. Kratten en manden en kisten met vruchten gekocht op

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[1] This little title is difficult to translate. Fisher uses it for eleven of the twenty-seven chapters, although each followed by a different year. It refers to the quote on the first page of the book by Santayana: "To be happy you must have taken the measure of your powers, tasted the fruits of your passion, and learned your place in the world". In this context, the phrase "take the measure of your powers" seems to mean that one should discover all the things one is capable of doing. The title here, however, consists only of "the measure of my powers", so without the verb "to take". I was curious about the German translation of this phrase, but I discovered that in the German text this sentence is never translated. Instead, the translator, for each of the eleven stories with this title, made up a new sentence that captured the essence of the story (in this case "Der erste Geschmack"). I have chosen to maintain the title. Not only because it is used so many times, but also because *The Gastronomical Me* is a type of autobiography. The repeated title, "the measure of my powers", followed by a year, suggests a moment of self-reflection. To direct myself toward a fluent solution that captures the essence, instead of a literal, rusty translation, I have first translated the whole phrase "you must have taken the measure of your powers". Options are, "de reikwijdte van je kunnen ontdekken", "Het bereik van je kunnen/krachten aftasten" or "de grenzen van je kunnen opzoeken". Changed into the construction of the title, these would become "de reikwijdte van mijn kunnen", "het bereik van mijn kunnen/krachten" or "de grenzen van mijn kunnen". The first one is not very fluent and the last one sounds a bit negative. Therefore, the best option is "het bereik van mijn kunnen".

[2] Here the word "grootmoeder" is a better option than "oma", because "grootmoeder" sounds a little bit more old-fashioned. It adds to the sense of past. Furthermore, M.F.K. talks about Grandmother and Mother. Choosing grootmoeder will allow for a translation of grootmoeder en moeder.

[3] Here I have changed the order of the words to make the sentence more fluent.

[4] I am not entirely sure what Fisher means here. She probably means there was one set week to sew clothes. I think the best Dutch word to use here is "naaister". I do not understand, however, why she put this between quotation marks. Perhaps a more fluent solution would be "één vaste week per jaar voor naaiwerk".

[5] It does not sound natural to combine a word such as "inmaakijver" with "gewelddadige" in Dutch. This is because Dutch is less tolerant of personifications. Instead of the personifying "gewelddadige", I have chosen an adjective that is a little less animate: "woeste".

[6] In an attempt to create a fluent solution I combined the words "active" and "cannings" and turned the two into one noun: inmaakijver.

hun meest rijpe en goedkope moment lagen dan uitbundig geurend[7] te wachten op de veranda, en vanuit een of andere donkere kast verscheen een hele batterij emaillen potten en pollepels en wijd uitlopende trechters.

Het enige wat ik toen wist van de feitelijke procedure was dat wij heerlijk zaten te picknicken[8] terwijl grootmoeder en moeder en de kok doorwerkten in een soort roes van concentratie[9] in onze grote donkere keuken, en moe waren en chagrijnig en tegelijkertijd merkwaardig triomfantelijk in hun race tegen de zomerhitte en bijbehorende rottingsverschijnselen.

Nu weet ik dat de aardbeien eerst kwamen, meestal voor jam. De zure rode kersen voor de taarten en de donkere voor de confituur kwamen wat later, en daarna kwamen de abrikozen. Van de hele rijpe werd jam gemaakt[10] en de meer stevige dienden simpelweg even “opgezet”[11] te worden. Dat, in de taal van mijn grootmoeder, kwam neer op ze kort te koken met een beetje suiker, en dan te eten als ontbijt of dessert in de winter, die zij zich nog steeds zo voorstelde als de winters in Noord-Iowa.

Ze was een kille vrouw, alsof ze lang gelegen had besloten dat ze zo het beste haar plekje in de hemel kon veiligstellen. Ik heb het gevoel dat mijn vader misschien graag had geholpen bij het inmaken, net zoals ik daarnaar verlangde. Maar grootmoeder, met dat zowat opgewekte strenge plichtsbesef zo typisch voor gelovige vrouwen, liet weten dat helpen in de keuken een bittere, zware aangelegenheid was, verboden zéker voor mannen en doorgaans ook voor kinderen. Soms liet ze me de steeltjes van de kersen trekken, en een keer[12] toen ik bijna negen was roerde ik af en toe een beetje in de pannen, zwijgend, terwijl ik mezelf zo klein mogelijk maakte.

Maar gekkigheid was er sowieso al niet, geen dom gekeuvel. Moeder was nog jong en vaak vrolijk, en de kok ook…en onder grootmoeders supervisie[13] werkten ze allemaal in stilzwijgende

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[7] Instead of literally translating "with opulent fragrance" ("met uitbundige geur"), I have used a more Dutch construction.

[8] Here, I have made a little alteration and turned the phrase "had delightful picnic meals" (literally "heerlijke picknickmaaltijden hadden") into a more natural expression: "heerlijk zaten te picknicken".

[9] A literal translation of "drugged concentration" ("gedrogeerde concentratie) would sound odd in Dutch. Again, an inanimate concept is given animate qualities. I have tried to make it a bit more concrete to make it sound more natural.

[10] In this paragraph, Fisher's descriptions of how certain fruits "were for" a certain product are not very concrete. It is possible to say in Dutch, for instance, "de aardbeien waren voor jam", but repeatedly using this construction makes the paragraph difficult to process and understand. That is why I have chosen to make this instance ("they were for jam if they were really ripe") slightly more concrete: "van de hele rijpe werd jam gemaakt".

[11] I have tried to use a similar vague term as "put up" in the source text.

[12] The source text "one year", but translating this to "een jaar" sounds a bit strange. In Dutch it is more natural to say "een keer". The slight difference in meaning does not matter, since Fisher later writes this happened when she was almost nine.

[13] It found it difficult to translate "with Grandmother directing operations". I wanted the translation to have a similar strict and almost military character. That is why I have chosen for a more free translation that does exactly this.

vaart door[14]...roeren, zweten, aanpoten[15]. Het was jammer. Zo'n schitterend geurend karwei zou leuk moeten zijn, vond ik.

Ondanks enig laat-Victoriaans ascetisme, echter, verspreidde de keuken verleidelijke dampen[16] en lag het fruit op de veranda te rotten in hun kratten, of gereed voor de potten en de houten lepels, in helder gloeiende hopen op de met sap bevlekte tafels. Grootmoeder, die nooit wat weggooide, stond als een offerpriesteres te midden van de stoom, terwijl ze 'afschuimde' in een dikke witte kom, en ik, soms met toestemming en veel vaker zonder, doop mijn vinger in het afkoelende schuim en likte[17]. Warm en zoet en geurig. Ik vond het heerlijk[18], toen.

[14] I found it difficult to put "harried muteness" into Dutch words. I could immediately feel what Fisher means with it, but it was hard to find a natural Dutch solution that captured the right meaning. I have tried to capture the meaning of "muteness" into "stilzwijgend" and the meaning of "harried" into "vaart".
[15] It is not possible to use this sequence of verbs ("stir, sweat, hurry") the same way in a Dutch translation. In Dutch, people would not use the finite verb ("roer, zweet, haast"), but instead say "roeren, zweten, aanpoten".
[16] I have tried to use an active sentence in which it is still the kitchen that sends out the clouds.
[17] The sentence in the source text ends with "and licked it". I have chosen to delete the last word. If the Dutch sentence would end like "doop mijn vinger in het afkoelende schuim en likte hem", it would collapse. Ending with "likte" will keep the suspense a bit longer.
[18] When talking about food, Dutch people do not say "ik hou ervan" when they want to express how much they like it. A translator should use an expression a Dutch man or woman would use in this situation.

Het bereik van mijn kunnen, 1929-1930

We zagen de grote gouden letters, Aux Trois Faisans, boven het schemerige cafeetje. Het zag er allesbehalve veelbelovend uit, maar we gingen naar binnen en lieten het briefje met een paar krabbels van Madame Biarnet's zien aan de man achter de bar. Hij lachte, keek ons nieuwsgierig aan, en nam Al bij de arm, alsof we doofstom waren. Met veel zorg begeleidde hij ons naar buiten een groot, halfrond *place* op, en onder een boog door met aan weerszijden twee laurierbomen in potten. We stonden op een prachtige kale binnenplaats. Een rond licht brandde boven een deurgat.

De man lachte opnieuw, gaf ons allebei een zacht zetje[19] in de richting van het licht, en verdween. Daarna hebben we hem nooit meer gezien, maar ik weet nog hoe verheugd hij was om even zijn kleine café achter te laten en een kennelijk onnozel stel in verbijstering naar boven richting Ribaudot's te leiden. Waarschijnlijk was het nog nooit in hem, een echte Bourgondiër, opkomen dat er iemand op de wereld was die niet precies wist hoe je van een willekeurige plek[20] linea recta naar de beroemde deur moest komen.

Ons eerste diner was nogal bleu[21] en onbeduidend[22], maar al waren we nooit meer teruggegaan en hadden we nooit langzaamaan geleerd hoe eten en wijn besteld dienden te worden, dan zou het nog steeds een van de belangrijkste maaltijden van mijn leven zijn. We waren echt heel verlegen. De lawaaierige donkere trap; de grote glazen bak met op ijs gestapelde dode vissen en kreeften en paddenstoelen en druiven; het toilet met de klapdeur en de lachende mannen die hun broeken dichtknoopten en in hun tanden pulkten; de lange gang naast de keukens en kleine eetkamers en Ribaudot's kantoor; dan de eetzaal...nu is alles zo vertrouwd als mijn eigen huis, maar toen hadden we nog nooit zo'n restaurant gezien. Voorheen stapten we altijd vrijwel direct van de straat op een tafel af, en namen voor lief dat er ergens, discreet weggestopt en verborgen, keukens en kantoren en magazijnen waren. Hier was het andersom, waardoor tegen de tijd dat we de kleine, vierkante eetzaal bereikten, de *raison d'être* van al die

[19] A more literal translation, such as "stil zetje", sounds less natural than "zacht zetje". Furthermore, "zacht" creates a nice alliteration.

[20] I assume in this sentence ("that anyone in the world did not know exactly how to come from any part of it straight to the famous door") "any part of it" refers to "the world". I have tried to find a Dutch expression that is just as vague as the English one. Another option was "van waar dan ook", but this did not fit in the rest of the sentence. The translation into "een willekeurige plek" maintains the random element, but also keeps the sentences fluent and clear.

[21] Although strictly only people can be called "bleu", I thought this was the perfect word to describe the shyness and inexperience of that dinner.

[22] The expression "a shy stupid one" sounds a little bit careless. As if she tries to trivialize the experience. I have tried to capture this by inserting the word "nogal" in the translation.

dampen en al dat licht en geregel en geredder[23], het rustige sobere karakter zowat een anticlimax was.

Er stonden óf negen óf elf tafels, met elk plaats voor vier mensen, en één ronde in de hoek voor zes of acht. Er hing een paar grote, mistige olieverfschilderijen, van het soort waar niemand echt naar hoeft te kijken, herfst- of lentelandschappen of zo[24]. En er hingen drie grote spiegels.

Op die aan het eind van de zaal, tegenover de deur, hing een tweetal kleine borden, het ene raadde een of andere cocktail aan die wij nooit besteld hebben en ook nooit iemand hebben zien drinken, en het andere gaf de prijs per karaf en halve karaf van de rode en witte *vin du maison*. Voor zover ik weet, zijn wij de enige twee die deze ooit hebben besteld: Ribaudot had zijn faam te danken aan zijn Bourgondische kelder waardoor iedereen die er kwam precies wist welke fantastische[25] wijn ze wilden bestellen, zelfs als dit betekende dat ze weken van tevoren al moesten beginnen met sparen. Wij wisten nog te weinig.

Timide liepen we de kamer binnen, en kregen gelukkig de vierde tafel, in een verre hoek, en de bediening van een slanke man met heldere ogen en op zijn voorhoofd zijn uitdunnende haar geboetseerd[26] in een met was opgestreken rococo krul.

Hij heette Charles, zo hoorden we later, en we gingen lange tijd met hem om en hebben veel van hem geleerd. Die eerste avond was hij uiterst aardig tegen ons, maar het was duidelijk dat hij niet veel meer kon doen dan ervoor te zorgen dat we gevoed werden zonder ons al te onwetend te voelen. Zijn gevoel voor tact was groot, en ontroerend. Hij zette de enorme kaarten[27] in onze handen en wees ons twee menu's aan, een van tweeëntwintig en een andere, het *diner de luxe au prix fixe*, van vijfentwintig.

We namen het laatste, uiteraard, hoewel het andere ook heel fantastisch klonk…een reeks in elkaar overlopende legendarische woorden: *paté truffé Charles le Téménaire, poulet en cocette aux Trois Faisans, civet à la mode bourguignonne…*en in acht of negen gangen…

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[23] The expression "geregel en geredder" seems to capture the meaning of "bustle" and "planning" very well, so I have tried to use that here. Since these two words need to be together, I had to change the order of the others ("dampen" and "licht").

[24] The word "perhaps" in "Autumn or perhaps Spring landscapes" denotes a certain nonchalance. I have tried to create a similar indifferent touch by using "of zo".

[25] In the source text the words "famous" and "fabulous" are connected to each other in their assonance. I have tried to maintain this by using "faam" and "fantastische". I could also have chosen "fameuze" instead of "fantastische", but this, in my opinion, would make the phrase sound artificial. Furthermore, it would be a repetition of the same word.

[26] Fisher paints a very vivid picture of this French waiter in a very fluent sentence. I wanted to maintain both of these aspects. In order to do this, I had to change the order of the words. In struggling with keeping the sentence fluent and funny, I found out I needed another verb. Instead of choosing a more neutral verb (leggen, draaien), I chose a verb that suits the rococo description ("geboetseerd").

[27] In the second part of this sentence I am forced to translate "two plans" into "twee menu's". To avoid repetition, I have chosen to translate the "big menus" in the first part into "enorme kaarten".

We hadden geen idee natuurlijk, maar maakten ons niet echt zorgen. De ruimte was zo intiem en had tegelijkertijd zo'n veilige anonieme sfeer[28], en de mensen gingen zo heerlijk op in zichzelf en hun borden, en de ober was zo aardig.

Hij kwam terug. Nu ken ik hem goed genoeg om zeker te weten dat hij ons wel mocht en niet voor schut wilde zetten, dus in plaats van ons het enorme wijnboek[29] in de handen te drukken, zei hij, “Bij Meneer valt denk ik, voor vanavond, een karafje van onze eigen rood wel in de smaak. Het is een eenvoudige, maar erg interessante wijn.[30] En mag ik u een halve karaf wit aanraden als aperitief? Monsieur is het vast met me eens dat dit geenszins verkeerd is bij de eerste gangen…”

Dat was de enige keer dat Charles dit deed, maar ik ben hem er altijd erg dankbaar voor geweest. Een van de beste wijnen, die ik andere mensen wel eens heb zien bestellen uit snobisme of verlegenheid wanneer ze net zo weinig wisten al wij, zou totaal niet aan ons besteed zijn geweest. Charles zette ons op de goede weg, en zag hoe wij gedurende de maanden onder zijn kundige begeleiding leerden welke wijn we wilden en waarom.

Die eerste avond, als ik eraan terugdenk, was onvoorstelbaar. De enige reden waarom we het overleefd hebben was onze jonge leeftijd….en misschien het eeuwige gezegde "wat niet weet, wat niet deert”. We dronken, naast de verbluffende Cocktail Montana, bijna twee liter wijn, en toen koffie, en toen nog een zoete likeur waarvan we de naam hadden geleerd, iets als Grand Marnier of Cointreau. En we aten zowel het grootste als het meest opwindende maal dat we allebei ooit gehad hadden.

Ik herinner me dat het geen moeite kostte om het bij te houden, om een gretige nieuwsgierigheid te blijven voelen. Alles dat naar de tafel werd gebracht was zo nieuw, zo heerlijk klaargemaakt[31], dat wat voor verzadigde smaakpapillen[32] misschien zou lijken op een vraatzuchtig orgie, voor onze onbevangen onwetendheid was als een constante stroom verkwikkende lekkernijen[33].

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[28] To be able to say the room was "veilig anoniem" I had to concretize it and add the word "sfeer".

[29] "Wijnboek" may sound a bit strange, but it is the same in the source text. By calling it a book, the wine-card becomes even more daunting.

[30] Here, I have added the word “wine” to avoid referring to the wine with "hij".

[31] In Dutch the natural thing is not to say something is "heerlijk gekookt" but to say it is heerlijk "bereid" or "klaargemaakt".

[32] The translation of the word "palate" is very difficult. It seems an equivalent is missing in Dutch language. We can say something is "tongstrelend" when it is "pleasing to the palate", but that is about it. We cannot use the word "gehemelte" the same way "palate" is used in the English language or, indeed, say that our "gehemelte" is sated. An option, therefore, would be to translate it with "buiken" or "magen". However, "palates", in this sentence, has to do with taste. That is why I have translated in into "smaakpapillen".

[33] Here I assume the "constant refreshment" refers to the ongoing stream of food and drinks. Since Dutch people will not have this in mind when they read something like "een constante verkwikking", I had to make the phrase a little more concrete. However, I did not want to lose the meaning of Fisher and Al experiencing all the food as a refreshment. That is why I have also used the word "verkwikkende".

Ik weet dat ik sindsdien nooit meer zoveel gegeten heb. Alleen al de gedachte van een *prix-fixe*-maaltijd, in Frankrijk of waar dan ook, geeft me de rillingen. Maar die avond waren de geesten van Lucullus en Brillat-Savarin en ook Rabelais en wel honderd anderen ons te hulp geschoten om onze avontuurlijke buiken te bedaren en onze tongen te verzachten. We waren immuun, beschermd in een magische gastronomische cirkel[34].

We leerden snel, en riskeerden daarna nooit meer een dergelijke overdaad…maar die avond was het goed.

Ik weet nu niet meer wat we gegeten hebben, maar het was van dat typisch Bourgondische eten, heel machtig, wijnachtig en kruidig[35], met veel donkere sausen en wild vlees en eindigend, dat kan ik wel raden, met een soufflé van kirsch en *fruits glacé*[36], of een vergelijkbaar luchtig toetje[37].

Toen we ten slotte naar huis gingen, om voor het eerst de kleine deur van het slot te draaien en de zigzaggende trap op te klimmen naar onze eigen kamer, slingerden we misschien een beetje. Maar het voelde alsof we de verre kust[38] van een andere wereld hadden gezien. We waren dronken van de landbries die ons tegemoet kwam, en de wetenschap[39] dat hij op ons lag te wachten.

[34] In this sentence the verb "to charm" does not only mean the circle is "betoverd", but also that the people in it are protected. I have tried to maintain both these meanings by using the word "beschermd" and "magisch".
[35] I have moved the phrase “typical of Burgundy” to the front to make the complicated sentence a little more fluent.
[36] In the source text only the word *glacé* is in italics. This is only possible because the word "glacé" is used in English in the same way too. Therefore, English readers would not stumble over it when reading the sentence. In Dutch, however, it is grammatically impossible to do the same: "een kersensoufflé en *glacé* vruchten". The solution is to also put "fruits" in italics and switch the words around to make it French. French *fruits* and Dutch "fruit" are so similar, that Dutch readers will have no problem understanding it.
[37] The word "airy" suggests "trifle" has to refer to the British desert. However, it might also at the same time refer to the soufflé of kirsch being somewhat common and forgettable. Since the first meaning is the most important one and the second already speaks from the text, I have chosen to replace it with a more general term: "toetje". Furthermore, "toetje", as opposed to, for instance, "dessert" has the same common and insignificant feeling as "trifle".
[38] In Dutch, the word "kust" is virtually only used singular.
[39] I have left the word "sure" in "sure knowledge" untranslated. A word combination such as "zekere wetenschap" does not sound natural. To know something for sure is "iets zeker weten", but it is not possible to use this, because the sentence asks for a noun ("drunk with [...] the sure knowledge"). In my opinion, the word "sure" can be left out, since the meaning is already implied in "wetenschap".

Geef een definitie

II

Enkele minuten gingen voorbij. Ik had echt ontzettend honger.

De deur sloeg open, en mijn meisje kwam weer naar binnen, minder discreet dit keer. Ze haastte zich naar me toe.

“Madame, de wijn! Voordat Monsieur Paul verder kan-” Haar ogen inspecteerden mijn gezicht, dat ik expres een beetje nors hield.

“Ik denk,” zei ik gewichtig, en daagde haar uit me te onderbreken, “Ik denk dat ik vandaag, gezien ik in Bourgondië ben en op het punt sta forel te eten,” en hier hoopte ik dat het haar opviel dat ik de *hors-d'oeuvres* verder niet noemde[40], “Ik denk dat ik ga voor een fles Chablis 1929- géén Chablis Village 1929.”

Heel even straalde haar gezicht van vreugde, en zakte toen weg in een geoefend masker. Ik wist dat ik goed had gekozen, dat mijn antwoord op één of andere geheime en onbegrijpelijke manier bevredigend[41] was. Ze knikte beleefd en maakte zich uit de voeten, totdat ze me voor de tweede keer een ongeduldige blik toezond toen ik haar achterna riep, “Goed koud, alstublieft, maar zonder ijs.”

Wat stom van me, dacht ik, om een hele fles te bestellen. Wat stom van me, hier helemaal in mijn eentje en met nog[42] kilometers te lopen voordat ik in Avallon aankom en bij frisse kleren en een bed. Toen moest ik om mezelf lachen, en leunde achterover in mijn stevige stoel met brede zitting, en keek met een half oog naar de tekeningen van *Gibson Girls[43],* de schilderijen van Engelse herbergtaferelen, en afschuwelijke landschappen die op het behang[44] hingen. De kamer was warm; ik kon mijn gezelschapskat[45] onder de varens horen spinnen.

Het meisje stormde binnen, haar armen vol met op elkaar gestapelde ovenschalen op servetten, als de borden van een Japanse jongleur. Sierlijk liet ze de schalen in twee rijen op de tafel glijden, waar ze dampend voor me lagen, donker[46], en oneindig aantrekkelijk.

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[40] In the previous part of this chapter, Fisher explicitly told the waitress she did not want the *hors d'oeuvres*.
[41] Here, I have tried to find a natural way to use the word "bevredigen".
[4242] I have not translated the word "more", because it would complicate the Dutch sentence. In the translation "met nog meer kilometers te lopen", it is unclear to what the word "meer" refers. More than what? Since in the source text the phrase only means Fisher has still quite a long way to go after she finishes her meal, I think it is better to delete the word to avoid misunderstanding.
[43] I have chosen to maintain the Gibson Girls as they are. Any reader that is not familiar with them, can easily make up from the context that they are a type of drawings that hang on the wall.
[44] It would not sound fluent to say that these pictures hang on "behangen muren" or "behangde muren". The solution was to use the noun "behang" and formulate the sentence around that.
[45] I thought it was funny to use the word "gezelschapskat", since it connotes the word "gezelschapsdame".
[46] This whole paragraph has a slightly mysterious character. As if something big is about to happen. The word "darkly" fits this. Not only does it refer to colour, but also to darkness in a more gloomy sense. Both the Dutch words "duister" and "donker" can be used her, but I prefer "donker", since it is a little more ambiguous. "Duister" would push a reader into one reading of the word.

"*Mon Dieu!* Allemaal voor mij?" Ik staarde haar aan. Ze knikte, van haar discretie was nu geen spoor meer en haar bleke gezicht en ogen en lippen waren nu één en al geestdriftige ernst.

Er waren minstens acht borden. Ik voelde me bijna bezwaard, en zat een tijdje slapjes naar de vork en lepel in mijn hand te staren.

"Misschien wil Madame beginnen met de zure haring? Ze zijn niet te vergelijken met andere. Monsieur Paul maakt ze zelf, in zijn eigen azijn en wijn. Ze zijn erg lekker."

Ik prikte[47] twee of drie bruine filets van het bord, en proefde. Ze waren werkelijk niet te vergelijken, werkelijk de beste die ik ooit had gegeten, zacht, pikant, vlezig als verse noten.

Ik realiseerde me dat de serveerster niet langer ademhaalde, en keek omhoog[48]. Zij keek naar mij, of liever gezegd naar een gastronomische röntgenregistratie[49] van de haring in mij, met een gehypnotiseerde, glazige blik in haar ogen.

"Is Madame tevreden?" fluisterde ze zachtjes.

Ik zei ja. Ze slaakte een zucht en schoof een sissende schaal gebakken witlof naar me toe, en verdween.

Ik had een paar bleke[50] groene linzen op mijn bord gelegd, linzen bestrooid met gehakte verse kruiden en waarschijnlijk gemarineerd in dragonazijn en walnootolie, toen ze weer de eetzaal binnenkwam met de fles Chablis in een wijnmand.

"Madame zou de kleine gebakken uien moeten eten nu ze nog warm zijn," merkte ze over haar schouder op terwijl ze de fles in een servet hield en ontkurkte. Ik gehoorzaamde gedwee, en terwijl ik haar gade sloeg at ik er een paar meer dan mijn bedoeling was. Ze waren heerlijk, eerst even geprutteld in een krachtige vleesbouillon, denk ik, en daarna afgegoten en gebakken met wat olijfolie en versgemalen peper.

Ik was gefascineerd door de methode waarop ze de vintage[51] wijn ontkurkte. In plaats van de Bourgondische procedure met oneindige en vaak overdreven voorzorgsmaatregelen tegen het aanraken of kantelen of schudden van de fles, pakte zij het redelijk nonchalant aan, en leek er enkel zorg voor te dragen dat haar handen de koele fles niet aanraakten, waardoor ze hem soms bij de mand en soms in het servet vasthield. De kurk zat erg strak, en even dacht ik dat ze hem zou breken. En dat deed ze; de spanning was van haar gezicht af te lezen, en dit werd niet

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[47] Here I have tried to use a specific verb to describe how Fisher takes some of the filets from the dish. I did not want to turn "dug" into neutral verb. The verbs "opgraven" or "delven" did not really work, because they sounded a little bit too invented and artificial and would, as a result, stand out too much. The verb "prikken" was a good compromise. It also creates alliteration with "proefde".

[48] The words "at her" have disappeared to make a fluent Dutch sentence. There are only two people in that room, so when the text says Fisher looks up, it can only be that she is looking at the waitress. Therefore, in the translation, the meaning of these two words is implied.

[49] I wanted to translate "X-ray" in a short, concise way and not use extra words to describe it. Combining the word "röntgen" with "registratie" allowed for a clear translation and the possibility to use only one word that fits in the sentence.

[50] The word "dull" does not mean "boring" (since they are probably far from boring in taste), but must refer to color here.

[51] "Vintage wijn" is a common term in Holland, so it can be left as it is.

minder totdat ze langzaam de kurk eruit kreeg en de rand had schoongeveegd. Toen schonk ze een bodempje[52] wijn in een glas, draaide haar rug naar me toe als een priester die ter communie gaat, en dronk het op. Eindelijk werd er wat voor mij ingeschonken, en ze bleef met de fles in haar hand en haar volle, pruilende lippen staan totdat ik een tevreden knikje gaf. Toen schoof ze een volgende schaal naar me toe, en vloog zowat de kamer uit.

Ik at langzaam, wetende dat ik niet zo hongerig zou zijn voor de forel als zou moeten, maar tegelijkertijd wetende dat ik nog nooit zulke verfijnde hartige hapjes had geproefd. Sommige waren warm, sommige koud. De wijn was licht en koel. De kamer, warm en aangenaam leeg onder het geluid van de snel stromende rivier, werd kleiner naarmate ik meer gewend raakte.

Mijn meisje stormde weer binnen, op de ene arm droeg ze een volgende rij schalen en aan de andere sleepte een grote emmer mee. Behendig liet ze de schalen op de tafel glijden en ze haalde diep adem terwijl ze de emmer langs de tafelpoot naar beneden liet zakken.

“Uw forel, Madame,” zei ze opgewonden. Ik liet mijn ogen afdalen naar de schittering van de kronkelende vis in het weinige water. “Maar eerst een flinke plak van Monsieur Pauls *pâté.* O jawel, o jawel, u zult er spijt van krijgen als u dit mist. Hij is machtig, maar smakelijk, en geenszins te zwaar[53]. Toe, alleen dit hapje!”

En tegen wil en dank ging ik akkoord met de grote portie die ze opdook[54] uit de terrine. Ik bad om tien keer een doorsnee eetlust en dacht met geamuseerde nostalgie terug aan mijn gebruikelijke lunch van koude melk met fruit terwijl ik wat van de korst afbrak en glad streek met de pastei. Toen vergat ik alles behalve de opwindende, subtiele, decadente smaak in mijn mond.

Ik keek het meisje stralend aan. Ze knikte, maar vroeg uit gewoonte of ik tevreden was. Ik straalde weer, en vroeg, simpelweg om haar te plezieren, “Proef ik niet een klein vleugje *marc,* of misschien cognac?”

“*Márc*, Madame!” En ze beloonde me met de trotse blik van een meester wiens leerling zojuist een teken van onverwachte intelligentie had gegeven. “Monsieur Paul neemt eerst gelijke delen ganzenborst en stukken[55] van het beste varkensvlees, voegt daar een zeker aantal eigelen aan toe, en maalt alles zéér, zeer fijn, dan kruidt hij het af en kookt het geheel voor zo’n drie uur.

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[52] Here I have translated "and inch of wine" into a Dutch expression for describing a little bit of wine (or any drink) in a glass: "bodempje".

[53] The waitress talks in a somewhat formal tone. I have tried to do the same in the Dutch translation by using words such as "geenszins" and "smakelijk".

[54] Instead of neutralizing the meaning of the verb "dug" and translating it into, for instance, "opscheppen", I have tried to translate it into a similarly expressive verb.

[55] If the addition "het beste" was left out, I could have written "gelijke delen ganzeborst en varkensvlees". Now, however, I had to add the words "stukken van", to be able to say "gelijke delen ganzenborst en stukken van het beste varkenslvees".

Máár," ze bracht haar gezicht dichterbij, en keek met woeste wellust[56] naar de *pâté* binnenin me, haar ogen als röntgenstralen[57], "hij houdt nooit op met roeren! Moet je je voorstellen wat een werk dat is – roeren, roeren, zonder te stoppen!"

"Dan maalt hij er een vleugje nootmuskaat in, en voegt dan, zeer nauwkeurig, een glas *marc* toe voor iedere honderd gram *pâté.* En is Madame niet tevreden?"

Weer beaamde ik, ietwat verlegen, dat Madame erg tevreden was, dat Madame inderdaad nog nooit zulke smeuïge en opwindende *pâté* geproefd had. Teder bevochtigde het meisje haar lippen, en schoot toen plots als een bezetene[58] in beweging.

"Maar de forel! Mijn hemel, de forel!" Ze greep naar de emmer, en haar stem klonk steeds hoger en gehaaster.

"Hier is de forel, Madame. U dient hem *au bleu* te eten, en dat moet u nooit doen als u hem niet eerst in leven heeft gezien. Want als de forel al dood was voordat hij in de *court bouillon* geplonsd werd zou hij niet blauw worden. Dus, vanzelfsprekend, dient hij nog te leven."

Dit alles wist ik wel, min of meer, maar ik was gefascineerd door hoe ze geabsorbeerd werd door het kortstondige probleem. Ik voelde me onwetend, en vroeg haar in alle oprechtheid, "Hoe zit dat met de forel? Verwijder je de ingewanden ervoor of erna?"

"Oh, de forel!" klonk het misprijzend. "Iedere forel is verheugd[59], werkelijk verheugd, bereid te worden door Monsieur Paul. Zijn kieuwtjes worden dichtgeknepen, met één haal van het mes is hij leeg, dan kronkelt hij van de pijn in de bouillon[60] en is alles voorbij. En het is het kronkelen dat u moet beoordelen, Madame. Alleen een echte *truite au bleu* kronkelt[61]."

Met een triomfantelijk pufje snelde ze weg met de emmer.

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[56] I have tried to translate the words "ferocious gloating" into similar, ambiguous Dutch words that are open to a possible sexual reading too.

[57] The source text only says "X-rays", which can refer to the beams of light, the photo, as well as to the machine. To make a comprehensible sentence, it was necessary to specify this word. It is obvious Fisher is talking about the rays of light here, so it had to be "röntgenstralen".

[58] It was difficult to find a suitable translation for "as if she had been pin-struck". The whole story of "Define This Word" takes on a certain gothic, almost sadistic touch. Fisher is forced by a possessed waitress to eat everything she puts in front of her. It is pain and pleasure. Later on, Fisher also expresses her fear of ending up on Monsieur Paul's sacrificial altar. The word "pin-struck" seems to be part of all this. The term is often used in relation to voodoo. I wanted to find a translation that captures both the movement of the waitress (she is startled) and refers to the dark world of voodoo and sacrificial altars. A good option would be to use the expression "als een bezetene", since Fisher already has described the waitress as being possessed by the devil earlier.

[59] I have chosen to translate "glad" into "verheugd". It had to be an overstatement for comic effect. Furthermore, it had to be a word that fits the tone of the waitress.

[60] The word "bouillon" is a normal Dutch word. In the source text it is put in italics, but it would be strange to do the same in the Dutch text, since it is not a foreign word.

[61] In this sentence I have turned a negation into a positive statement, because I could not find the right word for "false". In the sentence "Een [...] *truite au bleu* kan niet kronkelen" a words such as "vals", "nep" or "onecht" does not sound natural. More importantly, it is not as strong as the sentence in the source text. I found that turning the sentence into a positive statement and saying that only a real *truite au bleu* has the same power as the original and sounds far more natural.

Het bereik van mijn kunnen, 1936-1939

II

We begonnen met de tuin voor de grond ontdooide, terwijl de Italiaanse metselaars hun vingers brandden aan de koude stenen voor het nieuwe gedeelte van het huis. Alle bedden moesten aangelegd[62] worden in smalle terrassen[63]; zwaar werk in het begin, maar heerlijk om in te werken later, toen de paden aangelegd waren en de kleine lappen grond[64] bijna op schoothoogte lagen, klaar om verzorgd te worden. We begonnen zo gauw we konden[65] met planten, terwijl we doorgingen met het bouwen van muren en het bewerken van de rijke klei, en tegen de tijd dat mijn vader en moeder ons kwamen opzoeken, in ons appartement aan het marktplein in Vevey omdat het huis nog niet klaar was, waren de peulen rijp, en de avonden zacht[66].

We gingen dan vanuit de stad de heuvels in nadat de werklui waren vertrokken, en spreidden ons kleed uit over een tafel onder de appelboom op het terras, tussen het laatste puin van het bouwen. Zo snel als Vader en Chexbres de peultjes konden plukken, hadden Moeder en ik ze gepeld, en dan stoofde ik ze misschien vier of vijf minuten op een klein vuurtje van spaanders in een zware braadschotel, terwijl ik ze rond husselde[67] in boter en hun eigen stoom. We aten ze met kleine koude kippetjes die in Vevey voor ons waren klaargemaakt, en goed brood en de zachte[68] witte wijn van de kust die voor ons lag.

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[62] In translations from English to Dutch, the verb "to make" often has to become more concrete. It sounds more natural to say "alle bedden moesten aangelegd worden" than "alle bedden moesten gemaakt worden".

[63] I have turned an active sentence into a passive. The Dutch active sentences "we moesten alle bedden aanleggen" or "alle bedden moesten we aanleggen" seem to focus on the word "moesten", whereas in the source text, the focus is on "all the beds".

[64] Here it was necessary to add the word "grond". It was also possible to say "kleine grondlappen", or "grondlapjes", but it sounds more natural to say "lappen" when talking about "grond".

[65] I have changed the order of the words to avoid the use of an extra comma. Keeping the words in the original order ("Zo gauw we konden, begonnen we ...") would force me to use a comma between the two finite verbs. The whole sentence would become too fragmented, since there are already quite a few comma's in it.

[66] The source text says "softly warm", but the Dutch "zacht" in relation to the evenings already implies they are pleasantly warm. Rhythmically it is also better to delete the word "warm".

[67] Here I have tried to use a term Dutch people would use to describe this movement: "husselen". To bring the word closer to the meaning of "swirling", I have added the word "rond".

[68] According to VanDale, "thin wine" means "slappe wijn", that is, wine without body. However, I am not sure if Fisher indeed means to say this. She describes everything in very positive terms ("little cold pullets [...] "good bread"). The "thin white wine of the coast that lay about" them must be a positive statement too. Surely it is not a negative remark. I think Fisher just means to say that the wine is "soepel" and easy to drink. Furthermore, "thin" creates a nice alliteration with "white" and "wine". Since Fisher means to say that the wine is not heavy but soft, I have translated it into "zacht".

Het avondbriesje nam in kracht toe over de breedte van het meer, en terwijl boven het water de Alpen van de Savoye donkerder kleurden[69], en het over de rand van het terras veranderde in een tinnen plaat, zagen we hoe de eerste zomerlichten in Evian tot ver beneden richting Genève rood naar ons knipperden. Het was altijd weer[70] moeilijk om weg te gaan. In stilte zetten we onze spullen in de manden, en reden dan met open dak over de smalle bemuurde wegen van de Corniche, totdat we bij een dorpje kwamen waar we weer op een terras konden zitten en bittere koffie dronken in het duister.

Chexbres was een goede tuinman; hij las boeken en experimenteerde graag met nieuwe technieken, maar naast dit alles zat het gevoel voor groei en vruchtbaarheid in zijn vlees en botten. Ik leerde altijd van hem, en twee zomers lang werkten we samen in Le Pâquis.

De boeren in ons dorp, en alle wijnbouwers, verklaarden ons voor gek dat we niet een paar tuinmannen inhuurden en het werk aan hen overlieten, aan tuinmannen die wisten wat ze déden. Ze hingen vaak over de muren naar ons te kijken, riepen soms een suggestie, en het bracht ons in verlegenheid wanneer veel vaker dan niet we anders te werk gingen dan ooit in dat gebied was gedaan, en we een veel beter resultaat hadden op een kleinere ruimte. Het leek bijna alsof we vals speelden, want we waren ook nog eens nieuw en vreemd daar…maar waarom zouden we vijftig tomatenplanten met ingewikkelde staken in de grond stoppen, zoals onze buren ons aanbevolen, wanneer we net zoveel vruchten konden krijgen uit tien planten gepoot op een manier die volgens ons het beste was? Chexbres bestudeerde de wind, de grond en waar de regen vandaan kwam, en hij wist meer over hoe dingen groeien dan de boeren in duizend jaar konden leren, ondanks hun zware geploeter. Het speet hem oprecht.

Onze tuin groeide en groeide, en bijna iedere dag gingen we de heuvel op naar het sanatorium voor arme kinderen met de achterbak van onze kleine groene Fiat volgeladen met verse dingen om te eten.

Ik blikte ook een heleboel in. We hadden drie kelders, en één daarvan vulde ik met prachtige glanzende potten voor de winter. Het was eenvoudig genoeg om in kleine etappes te doen in plaats van het enorme haastige gejaag van mijn grootmoeder, en als ik dan naar beneden ging de koelte in en al die dingen daar in stilte zo rijkelijk op de planken zag staan, gaf me dat een bijzonder gevoel van tevredenheid. Het was een garantie van zekerheid in tijden van honger, heel primitief en bevredigend.

Ik blikte tomaten in en bonen en groentesap, en verschillende soorten pickles en ketchup, meer voor de lol dan omdat we ze echt wilden, en pruimen en perziken en alle vruchten. Ik

[69] It is not possible to turn the Dutch word "donker" or "zwart" into a verb and say that the Alps "donkerden" or "zwarten". A solution was to use the word "kleur" and translate the phrase into "de Alpen van de Savoye donkerder kleurden".

[70] A literal translation of the English sentence, “Het was altijd moeilijk om weg te gaan”, does not convey the right meaning. It seems in the English sentence the meaning of “weer” is implied. That is why I have added this word to the Dutch translation.

maakte er jam van, voor gasten, en zette een aantal dingen in grote potten op brandewijn. Ik was gelukkig[71]; niets ging verloren, alles was goed.

Toen we vertrokken, voordat het oorlog[72] werd, was het moeilijk om afstand te doen van alle flessen likeur en *eaux-de-vie*, nog niet rijp genoeg om te proeven, moeilijker dan wat dan ook, behalve de flessen in de wijnkelder, sommige waren nog aan het bijkomen van hun reis uit Bourgondië, en al onze eigen wijn gemaakt van de kleine gele druiven uit onze wijngaard in de afgelopen twee jaar…

Ondanks de volle planken in de kelder, echter, en onze ritjes naar de kinderen op de heuvel en de manden die we meenamen naar vrienden in Vevey wanneer we lang genoeg konden stoppen met tuinieren om naar beneden te gaan, groeide alles te snel voor ons. Het was de oudste aarde die ieder van ons ooit had aangeraakt, en hij leek wel over te lopen van levenskracht[73], net als dat hij vol zat met insecten en kleine wezentjes en wel honderd soorten wormen, wachtend tot ze konden eten van wat er groeide. Het was alsof we er een wedloop mee hielden, opwindend en uitputtend[74].

Op een dag legde Chexbres zijn hark neer en zei met luidde stem, “Bij God, ik laat me de wet niet voorschrijven! Ik zal eens laten zien wie de baas is!” Hij had het tegen de aarde, en als een volgzame vrouw liep ik langs de vreselijk vruchtbare terrassen met hem mee[75] naar het huis, en luisterde hoe hij belde met het casino in Evian en een tafel reserveerde in de grote eetzaal en een ongelooflijk diner bestelde inclusief de wijn.

Tijdens het omkleden werd ik enigszins tot wanhoop gedreven: mijn nagels waren ruw en vuil, en ik was te dun en veel te bruin voor de jurk die ik wilde dragen, en de hoge hakken voelden vreemd aan mijn voeten.

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[71] This phrase seems to mean two things. Firstly, Fisher expresses she is fortunate: "ze boft maar". Secondly, and more importantly, Fisher expresses that she is happy. For her, this a period preceding the "war" (Chexbres' disease and death) in which nothing was "spoiled" and "everything was good" is one of pure happiness. Since the second one is the more important sense, I have translated the phrase into "ik was gelukkig". Perhaps I have interpreted the phrase too much for the Dutch reader, but I prefer this option over a translation such as "wat had ik een geluk".

[72] In this paragraph Fisher is not only talking about giving up her cellar, but also about giving up her love Chexbres, who suffered from Buerger’s disease. The war, therefore, is not only the real war, but also the fight against his death. The sentence “before the war came” has to be translated in such a way that it can be about the actual war and about Fisher and Chexbres’ own war. An idiomatic translation such as “voordat de oorlog uitbrak”, does not work here, because it explicitly refers to the real war. That is why I have chosen for a translation that is a little more ambiguous.

[73] It was not possible to say "over te lopen van leven". However, I did want to use the word “leven”, since the passage refers to how the couple tries to fight Chexbres’ disease. Again, I had to find a way to make the word slightly more concrete and chose to translate "life" into "levenskracht".

[74] I have struggled to find a way to maintain alliteration and assonance, but could not find a satisfying solution. The two words ("opwindend" and "uitputtend") now convey the right meaning but I the alliteration is gone. However, they do consist of the same amount of syllables, end with "end" and begin with a preposition.

[75] I wanted to translate "dutiful wife" into "volgzame vrouw", because it conveys exactly the right meaning and creates a nice alliteration. The result, however, was that I could not translate "followed" into "volgde", because that would create a repetition of "volg". That is why I have translated "followed him" into "liep [...] met hem mee".

Maar tegen de tijd dat we over de Haute Corniche naar Lausanne waren gereden, recht de ondergaande zon in, en op weg naar Evian aan een tafeltje op het dek hadden gezeten, gewikkeld in de slaperige stilte die er voor ons gevoel altijd hing op zulke boten, voelde ik me mooier dan mogelijk[76], en wist dat Chexbres in zijn witte smokingjasje[77] en zijn witte kuif hetzelfde had. De maître d'hôtel en de barman en de sommelier beaamden het, toen we bij het casino aankwamen, en het was een overdadige en zalige nacht[78].

Maar toen we Le Pâquis opreden in het eerste schuchtere schijnsel van de zon[79], wierpen we onze stadskleren af en gingen in bad en trokken onze tuinbroeken weer aan, en snelden naar beneden de tuin in. We waren te lang weggeweest.

[76] A more standard expression would be "mooier dan ooit", but Fisher specifically writes "more beautiful than possible" and not "more beautiful than ever", so I followed the source text.
[77] A dinner coat is a formal coat men wear (or wore) to an evening dinner or party. In Dutch, such an evening or dinner jacket is called a "smoking".
[78] At first I translated "night" into "avond", but in the next paragraph Fisher and Chexbres arrive back at Le Pâquis "in the first shy sunlight". Therefore, it had to be "nacht".
[79] I have tried to maintain the alliteration of "shy sunlight" by using the word "schijnsel".

Conclusion

Now it is time to reflect on the process of writing this thesis and to evaluate whether answering the question I set out with helped translating the four excerpts from *The Gastronomical Me*. The question was:

What problems does a translator have to overcome when translating M.F.K. Fisher's The Gastronomical Me *and what are the possible and most desirable means to solving those problems?*

The expectation was that answering this question, in the form of a thorough analysis, would help me to make well-considered choices and would result in a better and more consistent translation. When breaking down a book one loves into a list of small components, one sometimes fears that unravelling and analysing every detail might destroy its beauty. However, the extensive analysis has enabled me to discover and appreciate even more subtleties and mysterious elements in her work than I expected. Furthermore, it helped me to put her style into words and forced me to describe it in concrete terms.

The first chapter offers information about the life of the author, the content of her work and the genre of gastronomic literature. More importantly, it explains the relatively cool reception of *The Gastronomical Me* in the beginning of the twentieth century and the revival of her work in the 1990's. It also explains why Fisher and her culinary writings are considered to be defining for the genre of gastronomic literature in America. The information that *The Gastronomical Me,* a book on the subject of food, written by a woman, was unlike any other book in America, makes it important for a translator to maintain all the aspects that made her book so special and pioneering. Moreover, the information about her private life, such as how she experienced growing up with her austere grandmother and the death of her second husband, has sometimes determined the way I have translated passages that touch on these events in her life.

The second chapter discusses the general translation problems a translator faces when translating *The Gastronomical Me*. Nord's classification enabled me to address these problems in a structural and organized order. All the problems that concern translating style have been discussed in a separate chapter. For this, I have used Short and Leech's model as presented in *Style in Fiction*. Their method has been an incredibly useful tool to discover, understand and really put into words what elements make Fisher's style and how a translator can use this knowledge to create a similar effect in a translation. The fourth and last chapter has been devoted to the main element of her style, the translation of food imagery. A description of the symbolism of food and examples of how food imagery has been used in literature before has shown that food is inextricably bound up with culture and identity. This realisation deepened

my understanding of the interplay between food and Fisher's self in *The Gastronomical Me* even further. Furthermore, I discussed a few theoretic aspects of metaphor translation, as described by Toury (1995).

In the second part of the thesis, I have put the theory into practice. I noticed that having determined my strategies in advance enabled me to make decisions more quickly and with more confidence. Furthermore, my bird's-eye view over the translation problems helped me to be consistent in my choices. The footnotes functioned as the place where I could describe my trains of thought. It is remarkable how spelling out a problem can push you into the right direction and can make you aware of why you prefer one solution over the other.

Looking back on the process of translating Fisher's food imagery, the theory on metaphor translation mostly served to gain a complete overview of the possible translation strategies, including translating metaphors into non-metaphors and the strategy of compensation. In practice, however, my first tendency was to maintain the metaphors where possible. Only if this proved to be difficult, I chose to slightly alter them. Moreover, the description of Fisher's use of food imagery showed that it does not so much take place on word level, but on text level. In virtually all cases, words throughout a paragraph or a complete chapter were connected to each other. These words and phrases, often with a double layer, were part of the same, larger metaphor and part of the same translation unit. Translating these metaphors was not so much about translating the individual words, but about making sure that in the target text, these words were part of the same network. A network equally ambiguous as the one in the source text.

The theory and translation in this thesis concern the interaction between the English and Dutch language and culture. Although this has brought about a fair amount of interesting problems, the four fragments are translated from one Western language and culture into another. The associations and feelings around food Fisher describes were very pioneering in her days, but they are not very different from ours today. For example, many American and Dutch people are aware of the sexual connotation of oysters or asparagus. I expect that translating food imagery from, for instance, an Arabic culture into Dutch would bring about a whole new set of problems and solutions. Arabic texts will describe different products, perhaps lentils or figs, and these products will have their own connotations that, just like hours, probably have been part of Arabic culture for centuries. What should a translator do in cases like these? Should he change the products, subtly wave the connotation into the text or leave the products as they are, at the risk of losing the connotation?

The extensive analysis, determining my strategy in advance and putting into words my motivations behind my choices have definitely helped me during the translation process. Although it is impossible to say a translation is completely finished and that there is no room for

improvement, I am satisfied with the end result. I am convinced that all the preliminary work has made for a better translation. However, I am also aware of the fact that in reality, a translator will almost never have the luxury to spend this much time and thought on a translation. Indeed, it was very enjoyable to become a connoisseur on a subject. Not only did it make me work on the translation with more confidence, but also with more pleasure.

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Appendix: source text excerpts

All excerpts are taken from M.F.K. Fisher's *The Gastronomical Me.* In *The Art of Eating,* Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1954.

The Measure of My Powers, 1912 (354-355)
The Measure of My Powers, 1929-1930, II (399-402)
Define This Word, 1936, II (476-479)
The Measure of My Powers, 1936-1939, II (484-486)

The Measure of My Powers

1912

The first thing I remember tasting and then wanting to taste again is the grayish-pink fuzz my grandmother skimmed from a spitting kettle of strawberry jam. I suppose I was about four.

Women in those days made much more of a ritual of their household duties than they do now. Sometimes it was indistinguishable from a dogged if unconscious martyrdom. There were times for This, and other equally definite times for That. There was one set week a year for "the sewing woman." Of course, there was Spring Cleaning. And there were other periods, almost like festivals in that they disrupted normal life, which were observed no matter what the weather, finances, or health of the family.

Many of them seem odd or even foolish to me now, but probably the whole staid rhythm lent a kind of rich excitement to the housebound flight of time.

With us, for the first years of my life, there was a series, every summer, of short but violently active cannings. Crates and baskets and lug-boxes of fruits bought in their prime and at their cheapest would lie waiting with opulent fragrance on the screened porch, and a whole battery of enameled pots and ladles and wide-mouthed funnels would appear from some dark cupboard.

All I knew then about the actual procedure was that we had delightful picnic meals while Grandmother and Mother and the cook worked with a kind of drugged concentration in our big dark kitchen, and were tired and cross and at the same time oddly triumphant in their race against summer heat and processes of rot.

Now I know that strawberries came first, mostly for jam. Sour red cherries for pies and darker ones for preserves were a little later, and then came the apricots. They were for jam if they were very ripe, and the solid ones were simply "put up." That, in my grandmother's language, meant cooking with little sugar, to eat for breakfast or dessert in the winter which she still thought of in terms of northern Iowa.

She was a grim woman, as if she had decided long ago that she could thus most safely get to Heaven. I have a feeling that my Father might have liked to help with the cannings, just as I longed to. But Grandmother, with that almost joyfully stern bowing to duty typical of religious women, made it clear that helping in the kitchen was a bitter heavy business forbidden certainly to men, and generally to children. Sometimes she let me pull stems off the cherries, and one year when I was almost nine I stirred the pots a little now and then, silent and making myself as small as possible.

But there was no nonsense anyway, no foolish chitchat. Mother was still young and often gay, and the cook too...and with Grandmother directing operations they all worked in a harried muteness...stir, sweat, hurry. It was a pity. Such a beautifully smelly task should be fun, I thought.

In spite of any Late Victorian asceticism, though, the hot kitchen sent out tantalizing clouds, and the fruit on the porch lay rotting in its crates, or readied for the pots and the wooden spoons, in fair glowing piles upon the juice-stained tables. Grandmother, saving always, stood like a sacrificial priestess in the steam, "skimming" into a thick white saucer, and I, sometimes permitted and more often not, put my finger into the cooling froth and licked it. Warm and sweet and odorous. I loved it, then.

The Measure of My Powers

1929-1930

II

[...]

We saw the big gold letters, Aux Trois Faisans, above a dim little café. It looked far from promising, but we went in, and showed Madame Biarnet's scribbled note to the man behind the bar. He laughed, looked curiously at us, and took Al by the arm, as if we were deaf and dumb. He led us solicitously out into the great semi-circular *place*, and trough an arch with to bay trees in tubs on either side. We were in a bare beautiful courtyard. A round light burned over a doorway.

The man laughed again, gave us each a silent little push toward the light, and disappeared. We never saw him after, but I remember how pleased he seemed to be, to leave his own café for a minute and direct such obviously bemazed innocents upstairs to Ribaudot's. Probably it had never occurred to him, a good Burgundian, that anyone in the world did not know exactly how to come from any part of it straight to the famous door.

The first meal we had was a shy stupid one, but even if we had never gone back and never learned gradually how to order food and wine, it would still be among the important ones of my life.

We were really very timid. The noisy dark staircase; the big glass case with dead fish and lobsters and mushrooms and grapes piled on the ice; the toilet with its swinging door and men laughing and buttoning their trousers and picking their teeth; the long hall past the kitchens and small dining rooms and Ribaudot's office; then the dining room . . . I grew to know them as well as I know my own house now, but then they were unlike any restaurant we had ever been in. Always before we had stepped almost from the street to a table, and taken it for granted that somewhere, discreetly hidden and silenced, were kitchens and offices and storage rooms. Here it was reversed, so that by the time we came to the little square dining room, the *raison d'être* of all this light and bustle and steam and planning, its quiet plainness was almost an anticlimax.

There were either nine or eleven tables in it, to hold four people, and one round one in the corner for six or eight. There were a couple of large misty oil paintings, the kind that nobody needs to look at, of Autumn of perhaps Spring landscapes. And there were three large mirrors.

The one at the end of the room, facing the door, had a couple of little signs on it, one recommending some kind of cocktail which we never ordered and never saw anyone else drink either, and the other giving the price by carafe and half-carafe of the red and white *vin du maison.* As far as I know, we were the only people who ever ordered that: Ribaudot was so famous for his Burgundian cellar that everyone who came there knew just what fabulous wine to command, even if it meant saving for weeks beforehand. We did not yet know enough.

We went into the room shyly, and by luck got the fourth table, in a corner at the far end, and the services of a small bright-eyed man with his thinning hair waxed into a roroco curlicue on his forehead.

His name was Charles, we found later, and we knew him for a long time, and learned a great deal from him. That first night he was more than kind to us, but it was obvious that there was little he could do except see that we were fed without feeling too ignorant. His tact was great, and touching. He put the big

menus in our hands and pointed out two plans for us, one at twenty-two francs and the other, the *diner de luxe au prix fixe,* at twenty-five.

We took the latter, of course, although the other was fantastic enough . . . a series of blurred legendary words: *pâte truffé Charles le Téméraire, poulet en cocette aux Trois Faisans, civet à la mode bourguignonne . . .* and in eight or nine courses . . .

We were lost, naturally, but not particularly worried. The room was so intimate and yet so reassuringly impersonal, and the people were so delightfully absorbed in themselves and their plates, and the waiter was so nice.

He came back. Now I know him well enough to be sure that he liked us and did not want to embarrass us, so instead of presenting us with the incredible wine book, he said, "I think that Monsieur will enjoy trying, for tonight, a carafe of our own red. It is simple, but very interesting. And may I suggest a half-carafe of the with for an appetizer? Monsieur will agree that it is not bad at all with the first courses..."

That was the only time Charles ever did that, but I have always blessed him for it. One of the great wines, which I have watched other people order there trough snobbism or timidity when they knew as little as we did, would have been utterly wasted on us. Charles started us out right, and through the months watched us with his certain deft guidance learn to know what wine we wanted and why.

That first night, as I think back on it, was amazing. The only reason we survived it was our youth… and perhaps the old saw that what you don't know won't hurt you. We drank, besides the astounding Cocktail Montana, almost tow litres of wine, and then coffee, and then a little sweet liqueur whose name we had learned, something like Grand Marnier or Cointreau. And we ate the biggest, as well as the most exciting meal that either of us had ever had.

As I remember, it was not difficult to keep on, to feel a steady avid curiosity. Everything that was brought to the table was so new, so wonderfully cooked, that what might have been with sated palates a gluttonous orgy was, for our fresh ignorance, a constant refreshment. I know that never since have I eaten so much. Even the thought of a *prix-fixe* meal, in France or anywhere, makes me shudder now. But that night the kind ghosts of Lucullus and Brillat-Savarin as well as Rabelais and a hundred others stepped in to ease our adventurous bellies, and soothe our tongues. We were immune, safe in a charmed gastronomical circle.

We learned fast, and never again risked such surfeit . . . but that night it was all right.

I don't know now what we ate, but it was the sort of rich winy spiced cuisine that is typical of Burgundy, with many dark sauces and gamy meats and ending, I can guess with a soufflé of kirsch and *glacé* fruits, or some such airy trifle.

We ate slowly and happily, watched over by little Charles, and the wine kept things from being gross and heavy inside us.

When we finally went home, to unlock the little door for the first time and go up the zigzag stairs to our own room, we wove a bit perhaps. But we felt as if we had seen the far shores of another world. We were drunk with the land breeze that blew from it, and the sure knowledge that it lay waiting for us.

Define This Word

1936

II

Several minutes passed. I was really very hungry.

The door banged open, and my girl came in again, less discreet this time. She hurried toward me.

"Madame, the wine! Before Monsieur Paul can go on —" Her eyes watched my face, which I perversely kept rather glum.

"I think," I said ponderously, daring her to interrupt me, "I think that today, since I am in Burgundy and about to eat a trout," and here I hoped that she noticed I did not mention hors d'oeuvres, "I think I shall drink a bottle of Chablis 1929."

For a second her whole face blazed with joy, and then subsided into a trained mask. I knew that I had chosen well, had somehow satisfied her in a secret and incomprehensible way. She nodded politely and scuttled off, only for another second glancing impatiently at me as I called after her, "Well cooled, please, but not iced."

I'm a fool, I thought, to order a whole bottle. I'm a fool, here all alone and with more miles to walk before I reach Avallon and my fresh clothes and a bed. Then I smiled at myself and leaned back in my solid wide-seated chair, looking obliquely at the prints of Gibson girls, English tavern scenes, and hideous countrysides that hung on papered walls. The room was warm; I could hear my companion cat purring under the ferns.

The girl rushed in, with flat baking dishes piled up her arms like the plates of a Japanese juggler. She slid them off neatly in two rows onto the table, where they lay steaming up at me, darkly and infinitely appetizing.

"*Mon Dieu!* All for me?" I peered at her. She nodded, her discretion quite gone now and a look of ecstatic worry on her pale face and eyes and lips.

There were at least eight dishes. I felt almost embarrassed, and sat for a minute looking weakly at the fork and spoon in my hand.

"Perhaps Madame would care to start with the pickled herring? It is not like any other. Monsieur Paul prepares it himself, in his own vinegar and wines. It is very good."

I dug out two or three brown filets from the dish, and tasted. They were truly unlike any others, truly the best I had ever eaten, mild, pungent, meaty as nuts.

I realized the maid had stopped breathing, and looked up at her. She was watching me, or rather a gastronomic x-ray of the herring inside me, with a hypnotized glaze in her eyes.

"Madame is pleased?" she whispered softly.

I said I was. She sighed, and pushed a sizzling plate of broiled endive toward me, and disappeared.

I had put a few dull green lentils on my plate, lentils scattered with minced fresh herbs and probably marinated in tarragon vinegar and walnut oil, when she came into the dining room again with the bottle of Chablis in a wine basket.

“Madame should be eating the little bakes onions while they are hot,” she remarked over her shoulder as she held the bottle in a napkin and uncorked it. I obeyed meekly, and while I watched her I ate several

more than I had meant to. They were delicious, simmered first in strong meat broth, I think, and then drained and broiled with olive oil and new-ground pepper.

I was fascinated by her method of uncorking a vintage wine. Instead of the Burgundian procedure of infinite and often exaggerated precautions against touching or tipping or jarring the bottle, she handled it quite nonchalantly, and seemed to be careful only to keep her hands from the cool bottle itself, holding it sometimes by the basket and sometimes in a napkin. The cork was very tight, and I thought for a minute that she would break it. So did she; her face grew tense, and did not loosen until she had slowly worked out the cork and wiped the lip. Then she poured and inch of wine in a glass, turned her back to me like a priest taking Communion, and drank it down. Finally some was poured for me, and she stood with the bottle in her hand and her full lips drooping until I nodded a satisfied yes. Then she pushed another of the plates toward me, and almost rushed from the room.

I ate slowly, knowing that I should not be as hungry as I ought to be for the trout, but knowing too that I had never tasted such delicate savory morsels. Some were hot, some cold. The wine was light and cool. The room, warm and agreeably empty under the rushing sound of the stream, became smaller as I grew used to it.

My girl hurried in again, with another row of plates up one arm, and a large bucket dragging at the other. She slid the plates deftly on to the table, and drew a deep breath as she let the bucket down against the table leg.

"Your trout, Madame," she said excitedly. I looked down at the gleam of the fish curving through its limited water. "But first a good slice of Monsieur Paul's *pâté.* Oh yes, oh yes, you will be very sorry if you miss this. It is rich, but appetizing, and not at all too heavy. Just this one morsel!"

And willy-nilly I accepted the large gouge she dug from a terrine. I prayed for ten normal appetites and thought with amused nostalgia of my usual lunch of cold milk and fruit as I broke off a crust of bread and patted it smooth with the paste. Then I forgot everything but the exciting faint decadent flavour in my mouth.

I beamed up at the girl. She nodded, but from habit asked if I was satisfied. I beamed again, and asked, simply to please her, "is there not a faint hint of *marc,* or perhaps cognac?"

"*Marc,* Madame!" And she awarded me the proud look of a teacher whose pupil has showed unexpected intelligence. "Monsieur Paul, after he has taken equal parts of goose breast and the finest pork, and broken a certain number of egg yolks into them, and ground the *very,* very fine, cooks all with seasoning for some three hours. *But,"* she pushed her face nearer, and looked with ferocious gloating at the *pâté* inside me, her eyes like X-rays, "he never stops stirring it! Figure to yourself the work of it- stir, stir, never stopping!

"Then he grinds in a suspicion of nutmeg, and then adds, very thoroughly, a glass of *marc* for each hundred grams of *pâté.* And is Madame not pleased?"

Again I agreed, rather timidly, that Madame was much pleased, that Madame had never, indeed, tasted such an unctuous and exciting *pâté.* The girl wet her lips delicately, and then started as if she had been pin-struck.

"But the trout! My God, the trout!" She grabbed the bucket, and her voice grew higher and more rushed.

“Here is the trout, Madame. You are to eat it *au bleu*, and you should never do so if you had not seen it alive. For if the trout were dead when it was plunged into the *court bouillon* it would not turn blue. So, naturally, it must be living.”

I knew all this, more or less, but I was fascinated by her absorption in the momentary problem. I felt quite ignorant, and asked her with sincerity, “What about the trout? Do you take out its guts before or after?”

“Oh, the trout!” She sounded scornful. “Any trout is glad, truly glad, to be prepared by Monsieur Paul. His little gills are pinched, with one flash of the knife he is empty, and then he curls in agony in the *bouillon* and all is over. And it is the curl you must judge, Madame. A false *truite au bleu* cannot curl.”

She panted triumph at me, and hurried out with the bucket.

The Measure of My Powers

1936-1939

II

We started a garden before the ground thawed, while the Italian masons burned their gingers on the cold stones for the new part of the house. We had to make all the beds in small terraces; hard work in the beginning, but wonderful to work in later, when the paths were set and the little patches lay almost waist-high waiting to be cared for. As soon as we could we planted, while we kept on buildings walls and cultivating the rich loam, and by the time my father and mother came to see us, at our apartment down on the Market Square in Vevey because the house was not yet ready, the peas were ripe, and the evenings were softly warm

We would go up the hills from town after the workingmen had left, and spread our supper cloth on a table under the terrace apple tree, among all the last rubble of the building. As fast as Father and Chexbres could pick the peas, Mother and I would shell them, and then on a little fire of shavings I'd cook them perhaps four or five minutes in a heavy casserole, swirling them in butter and their own steam. We'd eat them with little cold pullets cooked for us in Vevey, and good bread and the thin white wine of the coast that lay about us.

The evening breeze would freshen across the long sweep of the lake, and as the Savoy Alps blackened above the water, and it turned to flat pewter over the edge of the terrace, the first summer lights of Evian far down toward Geneva winked red at us. It was always hard to leave. We'd put our things silently into the baskets, and then drive with the top of the car lowered along the narrow walled roads of the Corniche, until we came to a village where we could sit again on a terrace and drink bitter coffee in the darkness.

Chexbres was a fine gardener; he read books and liked to experiment with new ways of doing things, but besides all that he had the feeling of growth and fertility and the seasons in his bones and hid flesh. I learned all the time from him, and we worked together two summers in Le Pâquis.

The peasants of our village, and all the vineyardists, thought we were crazy not to leave such work for hired gardeners, gardeners who *knew*. They used to lean over the walls watching us, occasionally calling suggestions, and it embarrassed us when oftener than not we did things as they had never before been done there in that district, and got much better results for less effort in less space. That seemed almost like cheating, when we were newcomers and foreigners too…but why should we put in fifty tomato plants with elaborate stakes, as our neighbors told us to do, when we could get as much fruit from ten plants put in the way we thought best? Chexbres studied the winds, the soil, the way the rains came, and he knew more about how to grow things than the peasants could have learned in a thousand years, in spite of their cruel toiling. He felt truly apologetic about it.

Our garden grew and grew, and we went almost every day up the hill to the sanatorium for poor children with the back of our little green Fiat filled with fresh things to eat.

I canned often, too. We had three cellars, and I filled one of them with beautiful gleaming jars for the winter. It was simple enough to do in little bits instead of in great harried rushes as my grandmother used to, and when I went down into the coolness and saw all the things sitting there so richly quiet on the

shelves, I had a special feeling of contentment. It was a reassurance of safety against hunger, very primitive and satisfying.

I canned tomatoes and beans and vegetable juices, and many kinds of pickles and catsups more for the fun than because we wanted them, and plums and peaches and all the fruits. I made a few jams, for company, and several big jars of brandied things. I was lucky; nothing spoiled, everything was good.

When we left, before the ware came, it was hard to give up all the bottles of liqueurs and *eaux-de-vie,* not yet ripe enough to taste, harder than anything except the bottles in the wine cellar, some still resting from their trips from Burgundy, and all our own wine made from the little yellow grapes of our vineyard from the two years past…

In spite of the full shelves in the cellar, though, and our trips up the hill for the children and the baskets we took to friends in Vevey whenever we could stop gardening long enough to go down there, things grew too fast for us. It was the oldest soil either of us had ever touched, and it seemed almost bursting with life, just as it was alive with insects and little creatures and a hundred kinds of worms waiting to eat what grew in it. We ran a kind of race with it, exciting and exhausting.

One time Chexbres put down his hoe and said loudly, "By God, I'll not be dictated to! I'll show you who's boss!" He was talking to the earth, and like a dutiful wife I followed him up past the violently fertile terraces to the house, and listened while he telephoned to the Casino at Evian and reserved a table in the main dining room and ordered an astonishing meal and the wines for it.

I despaired somewhat in my dressing: my nails were rough and stained, and I was too thin and much too brown for the dress I wanted to wear, and high heels felt strange on my feet.

But by the time we had driven over the Haute Corniche to Lausanne, right into the setting sun, and had sat at a little deck table on the way to Evian, wrapped in the kind of sleepy silence that those lake-boats always had for us, I felt more beautiful than possible, and knew that Chexbres in his white dinner coat and his white topknot was that way too. The maître d'hôtel and the barman and the sommelier agreed, when we got to the Casino, and it was a decadent delightful night.

But when we drove into Le Pâquis in the first shy sunlight, we shed our city clothes and bathed and put on dungarees again, and hurried down into the garden. We had been away too long.