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# A Cultural Field in the Making: Gastronomy in 19th-Century France[1]

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The gastronomic field in 19th-century France is taken as a model for the analysis of cultural fields as characteristically modern phenomena. The antecedents of the field are located in a new economic, institutional, and ideological context. But its foundations are laid by a spectrum of gastronomic writings (journalism, cookbooks, protosociological essays, political philosophy, and literary works) that proposed an expansive, nationalizing culinary discourse. It is this discourse that secured the autonomy of the field, determined its operative features, and was largely responsible for the distinctive position of this cultural field.

## CULTURAL FIELDS

Although it has been applied to many enterprises, the concept of "field" has proved especially fruitful for the analysis of intellectual and cultural activities. Elaborated in its specifically sociological usage by Pierre Bourdieu ([1966] 1969), "field" designates the state of a cultural enterprise when the relevant productive and consumption activities achieve a certain (always relative) degree of independence from direct external constraints (i.e., those of state and church for the arts in premodern Europe). As a "particular social universe endowed with particular institutions and obeying specific laws," a field translates external economic or political phenomena into its own terms for its own use or, rather, for the use of its occupants (Bourdieu 1993, pp. 163–75). To the extent that the norms governing conduct, the values inducing behavior, and the rewards determining produc-

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tion operate according to field-specific standards, a field is self-regulating, self-validating, and self-perpetuating.

Thinking in terms of cultural fields modifies our understanding of cultural enterprises. Against the functional divisions that tend to be drawn for such activity, a field constructs a social universe in which all participants are at once producers and consumers caught in a complex web of social, political, economic, and cultural relations that they themselves have in part woven and continue to weave. Against unilinear, univocal approaches that focus on discrete structures, historical incident, or individual producers and products, the complex, dynamic configuration of social and cultural relations proposed by a cultural field offers a model that can do justice to the many and diverse modes of cultural participation on the part of a broad range of individuals, institutions, and ideas. The foundations of the cultural field are laid by neither the singular cultural product nor the producer but by a spectrum of products and practices that displays the workings of the field as a whole.

Cultural fields have an advantage over encompassing sectors like politics or the economy in that they focus our attention on tangible products and identifiable pursuits. A sustained concentration on cultural fields—their internal disposition as well as their external relations—stocks the sociological arsenal with the kind of controlled studies that integrate empirical, historical evidence into a conceptual framework. The more circumscribed the field, the more solid the ground for sociological scrutiny. It is not surprising, then, to find that the most successful studies work with the specifics of a given sphere of cultural production: the "literary field" proposes a delimited space for investigation; a vast, necessarily imprecise construct like the "field of power" invites speculation.[2] The more limited focus facilitates situating the field as a historical entity as well as a sociological concept. The analysis below also demonstrates that this particularity of focus also furnishes useful analytical distinctions between the related but distinct notions of "field," "culture," and "world"—all of which have been invoked in contemporary sociological discussions, particularly, although not exclusively, for the arts.

A sharper use of the concept of "cultural field" and the power to focus inquiry go far to account for the specifically sociological interest of gas-

[2] The difference is evident in Bourdieu's own work. See, in addition to the suggestive discussion of the journalistic field in *On Television* ([1996] 1998), the extensive empirical examination of *Homo academicus* ([1984] 1988) and the grounded interpretation in *The Rules of Art* ([1992] 1996). Typically, Bourdieu's analyses navigate between more and less closely defined fields (*The Field of Cultural Production* [1993, chap. 5]). Alain Viala's examination of the 17th-century literary field in France (1984) works so well precisely because it scrupulously centers on readily observable cultural products and practices.

tronomy in 19th-century France. As a relatively delimited cultural enterprise, the pursuit of culinary excellence that we call gastronomy enables us to address a number of problems that plague discussions of cultural fields. Most notably, it speaks to the sticky issue of antecedents. For, however good an idea we may have about how certain fields operate, we know rather less about how they got to be fields.[3] It is true that any search for "causes" or even "origins" is doomed to fail. Yet, the question must be put: At what point do structures and sensibilities, institutions and ideologies, practices and practitioners cohere to "make" the configuration that we designate a cultural field? To this question, gastronomy proposes some answers. For, although the culinary arts in the West can be traced to the Greeks and especially the Romans, gastronomy as a modern social phenomenon was instituted in early 19th-century France. It was then, I argue, that the culinary arts moved into public space and acquired a public consciousness that justifies identification as a "gastronomic field."

Gastronomy turns out to be a happy choice. On the one hand, it speaks to the broad controversy over the meanings of modernity, and, on the other, it addresses an issue that is unavoidable in almost any discussion of 19th-century French society, namely, the real or supposed effects of the Revolution of 1789. In what sense can a given cultural venture be considered "modern"? If debates over modernity and modernization, as well as assertions about cultural fields, tend to assume that the visibly changed and changing society of the 19th century favored the separation of cultural enterprises into relatively distinct and autonomous domains, it is not at all clear how this transformation occurred. To evoke literature for a moment, in what ways does the Republic of Letters—a term that recurs regularly in 18th-century French intellectual life as a designation for networks of writers and thinkers—differ from the literary field of the 19th? For the culinary arts, how is 19th-century gastronomy "modern," or distinct from elite culinary practices in the 17th and 18th centuries?

If the paradox of eating, as Simmel ([1910] 1994) pointed out in a quirky but suggestive piece, is that this physiological activity shared by every human being should give rise to such extraordinary social differentiation,

[3] Bourdieu's own empirical analyses tend to map the field as constituted. They mostly draw the larger societal and intellectual consequences in order to identify the mechanisms and the logic by which the field reproduces itself. *Homo academicus* (1988) begins with the postwar university field and gives relatively little consideration to the conditions out of which the field emerged. Although the subtitle of *The Rules of Art—Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*—indicates the goal of tracking the emergence of the literary field in mid-19th-century France, the title betrays the theoretical scope. Moreover, the emphasis falls on the structure and logic of the literary field and its evolution in the last half of the century rather than on the conditions out of which the field emerged in the first half.

it is clear that modern gastronomy enriched the social order by exacerbating those distinctions. Gastronomy constructed its modernity through an expansive culinary discourse and, more specifically, through texts. Gastronomic texts were key agents in the socialization of individual desire and the redefinition of appetite in collective terms. The "second-order" culinary consumption of textual appreciation was as crucial for the construction of the gastronomic field as it was (and is) for its operation. Such writings extended the gastronomic public or "taste community" well beyond immediate producers and consumers. Diners, thus converted into readers, became full-fledged participants in the gastronomic field. The public sustained the gastronomic field, and the field determined the public. As with the performing arts, writing about food presupposes a different order of consumption inasmuch as the cultural product in question is at one remove from the base product—the work performed, seen, or heard and, in this instance, the food prepared and consumed. These culinary texts of indirection were indispensable for the gastronomic field because they stabilized the ephemeral culinary product within a network of nonculinary discourse and because they redefined the culinary as broadly cultural. Texts, both instrumental and intellectual, are therefore critical in making food what Mauss (1967, p. 1) identified as a "total social phenomenon"—an activity so pervasive in society that, directly or indirectly, it points to and derives from every kind of social institution (religious, legal, and moral) and every type of social phenomenon (political, economic, and aesthetic). That food so penetrates the social fabric is the work of many factors. But pride of place surely goes to these texts and writings. To turn singular food events into a veritable cultural configuration, to transform a physiological need into an intellectual phenomenon, dictates powerful vehicles of formalization and diffusion. The gastronomic writings that proliferated over the 19th century supplied the mechanisms that brought the culinary arts into modern times.

In France, reflections on modernity further necessitate coming to terms with the Revolution of 1789. What responsibility for the institution of a recognizably modern social and cultural order can be ascribed to the many and varied phenomena associated with the Revolution and its immediate consequences?—the abolition of the monarchy, the elimination of traditional economic constraints on commerce, the foreign wars and domestic political turmoil, to list only the most obvious elements.[4] Given that the

[4] At the very least, 19th-century France was the site of considerable turbulence. From 1789 to 1871, there were three monarchies, three republics, and two empires; three revolutions (1789, 1830, 1848), one coup d'état (1851), and one insurrection (the socialist Commune of 1871). Napoleon I's defeat at Waterloo in 1815 ended almost a quarter century of war and put France under occupation; Napoleon III's devastating defeat

theoretical model of the cultural field in no way demands that all fields have the same degree of coherence or follow the same logic, the connections of cultural fields to both modernity and the Revolution argue for comparative analysis, across fields as across societies. The sociological issue then becomes the identification of those factors that distinguish gastronomy in France as a historical phenomenon and as a cultural practice. To what degree is this field anchored in, and therefore definable in terms of, distinctive cultural traditions and particular historical circumstances?

The gastronomic field took shape in two major phases: emergence over the first half of the 19th century, consolidation thereafter. The resulting cultural formation carried "French cuisine" well beyond a circumscribed repertoire of culinary products to comprehend the practices and products, values and behavior, rules and norms, institutions and ideas that are attendant upon the preparation and consumption of food in this particular social setting. The gastronomic field turned a culinary product into a cultural one. This cuisine became "French" as it had not been in the 17th and 18th centuries when the culinary arts were associated with the court and the aristocracy, not the nation. Culinary institutions and texts in the 19th century effectively transformed the patently class-based culinary product and practices of the ancien régime into a prime touchstone of national identity.[5] The consequent identificatory power of cuisine as a fundamental attribute of "Frenchness" and the high rank of the gastronomic field in the hierarchy of cultural fields in France are a function of the strength, the extent, and the multiple and prestigious associations of the gastronomic field, notably its many and varied affiliations with the literary field.

Five structural factors signal the transformation of gastronomy into the gastronomic field. First, new social and cultural conditions stimulated production, sustained broad social participation, and encouraged a general cultural enthusiasm for the product in question. Second, specific sites came to be dedicated to cultural production and consumption. Third, the institution of standards and models of authority ensured an acute critical consciousness that focused and checked yet also legitimated the expressions of cultural excitement. Fourth, subfields generated by continued expansion of the field assured the simultaneous concord and conflict of the parties involved, the consonance and dissonance of new positions and

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by the Prussians in 1870 after a mere six weeks of military engagement led to a second occupation by enemy troops as well as significant loss of territory (Alsace-Lorraine).

[5] Arguably, only the culinary class changed, with the bourgeoisie replacing the aristocracy. But the (self-)identification of the bourgeoisie with the nation in this as in other cultural and political concerns effaced the class connotations of cuisine and implanted patriotic ones through the kinds of discourse discussed below. See also Ory (1992).

alliances. The resulting interlocking networks of individuals and institutions forged links with adjacent fields, and it is these linkages that were largely responsible for the social prestige of gastronomy.

As the formulation of these field qualities suggests, I conceive of gastronomy in 19th-century France as something of a template for the analysis of cultural fields more generally. Its lessons reach well beyond the kitchen and the dining table. Certainly, to appreciate a cultural field in the making is to grasp the concept and its use in a more rigorous way, but to do so raises an intriguing problem. To actually see a cultural field in the making requires a delicate conjunction of historical and sociological recognition. The emerging historical phenomenon and social structure must be apprehended, in a word, simultaneously.

The discussion below begins by locating the foundations of the gastronomic field in France in the complexity and the confluence of institutions, traditions, attitudes, events, and ideas. A second section then deals with the articulation of these phenomena in what I have termed culinary discourse. Without such a discourse, I argue, there can be no cultural field. The sociologist, then, must pay careful attention to the specific terms of the discourse. A third section and conclusion assess the validity of the gastronomic field as an analytic category by considering it against other related cultural fields. We shall find here that the vitality of this particular cultural field depends absolutely on its relations to other fields.

## FOUNDATIONS OF THE GASTRONOMIC FIELD

Taken as the systematic, socially valorized pursuit of culinary creativity, gastronomy began with the 19th century, and it began in France. The very term came into public view in 1801,[6] followed by *gastronome* two years later to designate a new social status of the consumer of elaborately prepared fine food.[7] Like any new social practice, gastronomy drew on a

[6] The standard reference is to the quite dreadful poem of 1801, "La Gastronomie, ou l'Homme des champs à table" (Gastronomy, or the man of the fields at table) by Joseph de Berchoux. But since a term appears in print well after it has been in circulation, Berchoux is undoubtedly more of a scribe than an inventor. What is important is the role that gastronomy and its derivatives came to play in very short order to designate a practice that was perceived as new. Following Elias ([1939] 1994, pt. I) in taking words as sociocultural indicators and seeing dictionaries as repositories of convention, I note that although the French have officially been gourmands since the 14th century and modern gourmets since the 18th, not until the 19th did they became gastronomes. Gastronomie first appeared in French in 1623 as a translation from the Greek of the (lost) poem of the Epicurean philosopher and culinary sage, Archestratus (Athenaeus 1969, 1:445–47, 2:237). Here, as elsewhere, all translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

[7] The gastronome was invariably male. Beyond the fact that men held the purse strings and haute cuisine was a very expensive pursuit, the public culinary sphere was inhos-

nexus of social, economic, and cultural conditions. It shaped to its own ends the standard exemplar of cultural communication linking supplies, producers, and consumers in a set of common understandings. For gastronomy, this model translates into: first, abundant, various, and readily available foodstuffs; second, a cadre of experienced producers (chefs) in a culturally specific site (the restaurant), both of which are supported by knowledgeable, affluent consumers (diners); and third, a secular cultural (culinary) tradition.[8] All of these elements—the food, the people and places, the attitudes and ideas—came together in early 19th-century France with a force hitherto unknown and, indeed, unsuspected.

## Foods

Paris has long been known for its profusion of foodstuffs and range of food providers—from butchers and caterers to pastry makers and cabaret owners—all of which prompted an appreciative Venetian ambassador in 1577 to report that "Paris has in abundance everything that can be desired." With food coming "from every country . . . everything seems to fall from heaven" (cited in Revel 1979, pp. 150–51). Two centuries later, the great urban ethnographer Louis-Sébastien Mercier showed a city even more intensely involved in satisfying the gustatory needs and desires of its inhabitants with an estimated 1,200 cooks at diners' beck and call ([1788] 1994, 1:1011). Even so, the gastronomic level of 19th-century Paris was unmistakably of a different order, fueled, as it was, by more and more wealthy people as well as more and more varied foods brought faster from further away.

In Europe as a whole, the 18th century saw the end of the cyclical famines that had regularly ravaged the continent for centuries and had been such a part of everyday life. In response to demographic pressures, production increased as the expansion of the transportation system trans-

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pitable to women: chefs as well as gastronomes were male. The host whose duties Grimod de la Reynière spelled out with such care could only be male. Moreover, as with other urban spaces (shops, parks, public transport, and above all, the street), its inherent promiscuity gave the restaurant an uncertain moral status that effectively excluded upper- and middle-class women. At the most extreme, the gastronome dined alone. Certain of these writings are both misanthropic and misogynist. See, for one example, the "Discours d'un vrai gourmand: Avantages de la bonne chère sur les femmes" (Discourse of a true gourmand: Advantages of good food over women) (Grimod de la Reynière 1984, 2:128–34).

[8] Cf. the preconditions identified by Chang (1977) and Freeman (1977) for the appearance of a Chinese cuisine in the 12th century. Although these analyses are framed in terms of a culinary *product*—Chinese cuisine—like most commentary, they construct "cuisine" comprehensively, as a set of structured culinary *practices* and *texts* uniting producer and consumer, which I term "gastronomy."

formed agriculture from a subsistence to a commercial enterprise geared to an increasingly broad market (Teuteberg and Flandrin 1997, pp. 725–26). Specifically for France, with the end of the food shortages of the immediate revolutionary period and despite the British naval blockade, the early century proved a period of alimentary abundance, certainly for the urban elites responsible for making gastronomy a distinctive social practice. The great chef, Antonin Carême was especially sensitive to the deleterious effects of the "great revolutionary torment" on the "progress of our [culinary] art" for 10 years or so and breathed an audible sigh of relief over the far more favorable conditions in the following years ([1815] 1841, 1:xxxii). As observers of the urban scene never tired of pointing out, every country now had its national foods in Paris, with the result that the adventurous diner could take a trip around the world without leaving the table (Briffault 1846, pp. 180–81). When Brillat-Savarin observed with evident pride that a Parisian meal could easily be a "cosmopolitan whole" ([1826] 1839, p. 329), this acute observer of culinary mores meant what he said. In support of the claim that foods came from all over, the 16th-century visitor to Paris gave a list of the French provinces; 19th-century claimants were talking instead about Europe, Africa, America, and Asia.

## Restaurants: Producers and Consumers in Public Space

The haute cuisine of the ancien régime served the court and the Parisian aristocracy, but modern culinary creativity centered in the restaurant. Although the restaurant antedated 1789—the first urban establishment by that name dates from 1765—the Revolution set the restaurant on its modern course of development. By doing away with all restrictions on which establishments could serve what foods in what form, the abolition of the guilds spurred culinary competition and prompted a number of former chefs to the now-exiled members of the aristocracy to put their culinary talents in the service of a general elite public (as opposed to a private patron). The restaurants they opened became a notable feature of the urban landscape. Finally, the demise of the monarchy and the court ended the partition of political, commercial, and cultural life between Versailles and Paris, which henceforth was concentrated entirely in the capital. Politicians and businessmen, journalists, writers, and artists flocked to the city and to its restaurants. It was not simply the dramatic increase in population—Paris doubled in size between 1800 and 1850—that was so important a condition for the gastronomic field. The fluid population of largely middle-class transients moving in and out and around the city stimulated the development of eating establishments of many sorts; the hundred or so restaurants found in Paris in the late 18th century increased by a factor of six during the empire and by the 1820s numbered over 3,000

(Pitte 1997, p. 773). As Brillat-Savarin recognized at the time, competition became intense once it became clear that "a single well prepared stew could make its inventor's fortune." As a result, self-interest "fired every imagination and set every cook to work" (1839, p. 324).

That competition was vertical as well as horizontal; the range of restaurants—the consequent economic, social, and culinary stratification that they solidified—was as important a factor in setting up the gastronomic field as the production of haute cuisine in a select few of them. For the observer who regarded gastronomy as the one social force left untouched by "successive upheavals of civilization" (*Code gourmand* 1827, preface), there were several others who were clear that it was part and parcel of a new regime—political, social, and economic. Gourmandise, like elections, had moved from the "summits" of society to its "lowest classes," with the result that the social division that really counted in contemporary France was the one drawn between cooks and diners (Périgord 1825, p. 12). The restaurateurs who made their market niche further down the culinary scale may not have been numbered among the "artists" and the "heroes of gastronomy," but their contribution to the social order was seen as every bit as important (Brillat-Savarin 1839, pp. 324–26).[9]

The diners who rushed to the Parisian "temples of gastronomy" in the new century were certainly as affluent as the aristocrats who had sustained the haute cuisine of the ancien régime. But the gastronomic elite of the early 19th century was socially far more mixed than their predecessors and, to judge by the directives of the nascent culinary journalism, markedly more insecure. Like the renowned connoisseur and consummate courtier-politician Talleyrand, some carried over their *savoir vivre* from the old to the new regime;[10] others, no doubt the majority, had the wealth

[9] The connection between gastronomy and suffrage became something of a cliché, both phenomena taken as signs of modern times and of the democratization of French society. It is worth noting that both practices remained confined to elites. At the time these works were written, during the Bourbon Restoration (1815–30), the right to vote was determined by the amount and kind of taxes paid and enfranchised approximately 1% of the adult male population. The July Monarchy (1830–48) expanded the voting base to some 8% of the population without altering the basic system. But, just as political life actively involved many nonvoters, notably impecunious scholars and intellectuals, so too gastronomy touched a public that did not dine in the great restaurants (see the discussion of Balzac, below). In both cases, the striking development of publishing and journalism was a primary factor in this general cultural diffusion. There were, of course, other populations—untouched by either restaurants or the texts that talked about them—about whom few culinary journalists talked. Briffault (1846, chap. 5) stands out with even his minimal attention to hunger and to "People Who Do Not Dine," from unemployed workers to prisoners.

[10] The political opportunism of Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord (1754–1838) was only slightly more notorious than his love of fine food, allegedly leading a political opponent to remark that the only master Talleyrand never betrayed was Brie cheese

but sorely lacked the savoir faire. These were the opulent arrivistes addressed by the culinary journalist Alexandre Balthazar Laurent Grimod de la Reynière, whose detailed instructions on how to be a proper guest as well as a correct host aimed at translating the aristocratic culinary culture of the ancien régime for the use of a new public ([1808] 1983). However, the public restaurant, not the private gathering, was the primary vehicle institutionalizing gastronomy as a social and cultural practice in early 19th-century France. Even the eating societies that served as important points of culinary encounter met in restaurants where gastronomy was not simply on view but open to all comers. By relocating culinary creativity and fine dining from private homes into public space, the restaurant offered an ideal, semipublic venue for the display and affirmation of status in a bounded space that simultaneously defined nondiners as nonelite and marked all diners as members of the elite.[11] In this manner, competition among diners drove the competition among restaurants.

The participatory disposition of the restaurant contrasted sharply with the imposing banquet spectacles of the ancien régime, where the king dined alone in full view of the court. The differences between these two culinary modes are by no means trivial. Whereas the banquet makes use of elaborate, often multitiered culinary creations to manipulate space in the service of a communal spectacle, the restaurant regulates time to effect intimacy. The individual dish offers little scope for the spectacular creation, but it favors the singularization of presentation. The public setting depended upon not only new culinary standards but also a different conception of the meal. Courses were no longer served French style, *à la française*—where many different dishes for a single course are laid out on the table at the same time—but in the simpler, modern style, *à la russe* (it was the supposed innovation of the Russian ambassador during the 1810–11 season)—where a single dish is served for each course to all diners. Against the dramatic display of the traditional French service that so clearly suited the hierarchical arrangement of the ancien régime banquet—where one's place at table largely determined which dish one actually ate—its adaptability to variable numbers of individual diners made service à la russe a perfect system for the restaurant. Despite the persistence of elaborate banquets for ceremonial occasions like the paradigmati-

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(Guy 1962, p. 119). Carême, who was Talleyrand's chef for a time, categorically affirmed his gastronomic supremacy (1833, 1:xiii–xvi).

[11] Boundary-setting mechanisms identified by Goblot (1967) as defining for the French bourgeoisie include the *baccalauréat* degree and its various means (Latin references, e.g.) and the sober formal dress for elite men. Dining out in elegant restaurants was another sign with which the elite distinguished itself from nonelites and upheld group solidarity. More generally on culinary stratification, see Bourdieu (1984, pp. 177–99).

cally extravagant dinner in 1900 for more than 22,000 French mayors (over twice the number of soldiers served by Carême at a similar occasion during the Restoration), the select restaurant gradually relegated the banquet to an even more exceptional, and evidently ceremonial, occurrence. By virtue of this placement of gastronomy in the public sphere, the restaurant anchored the gastronomic field in a fixed institutional basis.

## A Secular Culinary Tradition

The final piece in the foundation of the gastronomic field was a secular culinary tradition that offered both institutions and individuals a common intellectual base. Culinary conceptual autonomy presupposed the consideration of food for its own sake and the ideological subordination of religious, symbolic, or medical concerns to the gustatory, however imperfect the separation of the culinary from the symbolic and the medicinal might actually be (Flandrin 1997*b*). For even though religious interdictions and directives are fundamental to a great many cuisines, they do not in themselves constitute a cuisine. There is no Jewish or Christian or Muslim cuisine; there are, instead, many culinary traditions that negotiate dietary restrictions and ambient cultures and agricultures to construct a given set of culinary practices. For the largely Catholic consumers in France, the process of liberation from the extraterrestrial and the extragustatory entailed diverting attention from the negative associations of gustatory pleasure. First among these was gluttony (*gourmandise*), classified by the Church as one of the seven deadly sins.[12] Criticism from secular quarters invoked sobriety as well as the physical and moral health of both individuals and the social order. In 18th-century France the *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences des arts et des métiers* ([1751–80] 1966) joined gluttony to a second deadly sin in its definition of *cuisine* as "the lust for good food" (4:537) and *gourmandise* as the "refined and disordered love of good food" (7:754). Such "experiments in sensuality" denature food, which is transformed into "flattering poisons" that "destroy one's constitution and shorten life" (4:537–39). Following a tradition found in writings as divergent as the Old Testament, Plato, and Herodotus, the authors of the *Encyclopédie* articles conjured up lurid descriptions of the excesses of the late Greeks and decadent Romans to make the point that any thing or practice that reaches beyond nature is not only useless but noxious and

[12] The other six are avarice, anger, envy, pride, lust, and sloth (*avarice, colère, envie, orgueil, luxure, paresse*). The seven sins were codified in the 6th century as deadly or, as French has it, "capital" sins, since these dispositions (rather than acts) were at "the head of," and therefore responsible for, a multiplicity of sinful acts (anger, for example, leading to murder).

is as destructive of political character as of individual integrity. Gourmandise, it ruled, is considered a merit in countries "where luxury and vanity reign [and] . . . vices are elevated as virtues" (7:753–54). From an individual sin, gourmandise became a social vice, its spread in society a conspicuous sign of the flagrant corruption of the body politic.

Fortunately for the development of French cuisine, these negative judgments of delectable pleasures were offset by strong countervailing pressures from the monarchy and the court, and it was these demands that set the course of fine French cooking. In France, as at many other European courts, public dining rituals elaborated spectacular displays of status and power that reinforced attachment to ruler and court through the manipulation of social distance and spatial proximity (Elias 1983, chap. 3; Wheaton 1983, chap. 7). When Voltaire equated superfluity with necessity in his poem, "Le Mondain" (The man of the world, 1736), and defined excess as utility ("anything superfluous—a real necessity"), he spoke to and for this elite around the court, which indulged in phenomenal luxuriance in many domains—precisely the milieus against which the *Encyclopédie* inveighed so zealously. Even cookbooks joined these culinary polemics. In 1739, the *Lettre d'un pâtissier anglois au Nouveau Cuisinier Francois* (Letter of an English pastry maker to the new French cook) took a stand against the arid intellectualism and the frenetic luxury that took food and consumers away from the primal simplicity of the past. The very next year saw the response: *L'Apologie des Modernes ou réponses du Cuisinier Francois, . . . à un pâtissier anglois* (Defense of the moderns or responses of the French cook), which applies to cuisine the Enlightenment discourse on science (Girard 1977, p. 519; Flandrin, Hyman, and Hyman 1983; Hyman and Hyman 1997).

This discord between indulgence and restraint had not been resolved a century later. However, the terms of the debate had altered considerably, and they had done so because gastronomy had changed the rules of the game. For a privileged witness, we may take the monumental dictionary-encyclopedia of Pierre Larousse (1866–79): *gourmand* and *gourmandise* received two columns of discussion; *gastronomie* was allotted more than four. More significant still was the moral positioning of gastronomy. Next to *gastrolâtrie* ("the passion for good food pushed to a sort of cult . . . incompatible with generosity" [8:1065]; and *gastromanie* ("love of good food pushed to excess" [8:1066–67]), *gastronomie* came across as a model of discipline, control, and moderation. Even though *gourmand* retained many of its pejorative implications, designating an individual "who eats eagerly and to excess," there were no negative connotations for the *gastronome,* who "loves, [and] . . . knows how to appreciate good food." Consequently, "No one blushes to be a gastronome any more," Larousse declared with his habitual assurance, "but at no price would one

want to pass for a gourmand or a drunk" (8:1397). Because gastronomy was both a science and an art, the gastronome could even be considered something of a philosopher-diner, the antithesis, in any case, of the unreflective eater whose lack of self-control led to the gluttony reproved by the Church and castigated by the *Encyclopédie:* "The gourmand only knows how to ingest; the gastronome moves from effects to causes, analyzes, discusses, searches, pursues the useful and the agreeable, the beautiful and the good." This modern construction of culinary fervor sloughed off negative connotations onto the gourmand, the glutton (*glouton* or *goinfre*), or the *gastrolâtre* (someone who "makes a god of his stomach"), thereby securing for the gastronome the lofty position of high priest for this new cult.[13] It is important to recognize that this new distinction between the gourmand and the gastronome, the glutton and the connoisseur, had everything to do with an articulated knowledge that every keen observer would recognize. But such powers of observation could be sharpened only through close acquaintance with the emerging body of culinary texts.

The encyclopedia commentary of Larousse suggests the sea change in attitudes about culinary consumption that made it possible to assume, rather than argue, the social significance of gastronomy, an assumption that was itself a prime indicator of "field effects"—the behavioral and expressive repercussions of a cultural practice that had achieved the independence imputable to a field. Yet, neither the social and cultural conditions that generated the new institutions and beliefs nor the new actors and sites devoted to the culinary arts sufficed to create a cultural field. The endogenous standards and models of authority that allow social reproduction, the multiplying subfields and interlocking networks that define the positions and determine what is at stake in the field, the social presence that originates in links to other cultural fields—these field characteristics assume and depend upon a different kind of support.

To move cuisine out of the kitchen and off the dining table—that is, to carry culinary practices from the sphere of immediate material produc-

[13] The paradigmatic recasting of vice as virtue and redefining sin as socially useful comes in a novel by the immensely popular writer Eugène Sue. *Gourmandise* is one in the series of *The Seven Deadly Sins,* which was written before and during the Revolution of 1848. Sue's demonstration of the social utility of all the deadly sins accords gluttony (gourmandise) the pivotal role. All eight nephews and nieces of the hero are engaged in food production (pastry maker, fish monger, grocer, bread maker, game supplier, butcher, wine merchant, and captain of a merchant vessel with the emblematic name of *Gastronome,* who imports foodstuffs from the colonies). The reformist socialist author set up a profit sharing scheme, not unlike those proposed in other of his novels, and assembled all the "sinful" and "sinning" protagonists of the first six novels for a joyous repast at the end of *Gourmandise,* conviviality reinforcing the positive functions of this erstwhile social sin.

tion and consumption into the broader cultural arena—compelled diffusion, and diffusion demanded a cultural product of a different order. The inherently ephemeral, irremediably private nature of the material culinary product places severe limits on the cultural currency of the culinary arts; food, after all, must be destroyed to be consumed, and, in purely alimentary terms, consumption is strictly individual. Because the material product itself cannot be diffused, culinary practices and products must have an intellectual form that can be put into general cultural circulation. To the extent that cuisine depends on oral transmission, its status as a general cultural artifact and practice remains precarious. The words and texts of an expansive culinary discourse, not the dishes and meals of a circumscribed and confined culinary practice, fixed the culinary product and gave it an existence beyond the sphere of immediate culinary production. Accordingly, the gastronomic field is structured by the distinction between the material product—the foodstuff, the dish, or the meal—and the critical, intellectual, or aesthetic by-products that discuss, review, and debate the original product.[14] The relentless intellectuality of the one is as necessary to the gastronomic field as the insistent materiality of the other. In a paradigm of what cooking is all about, culinary discourse transformed the material into the intellectual, the imaginative, the symbolic, and the aesthetic. The cultural construct that we know today as French cuisine was largely the accomplishment of this discourse, and it was this discourse, secured in texts, that consolidated the gastronomic field.

## CULINARY DISCOURSE

Culinary discourse did not, of course, originate either in the 19th century or in France. Western Europe can boast of cookbooks from the 14th century, as well as all kinds of writings concerned with food—literary works, scientific and medical treatises, ethnographic observations, and scholarly ventures, such as the translations of the mammoth work by the Greek

[14] This distinction situates cuisine at the opposite end of the production-criticism continuum from literature—where the original product (the literary work) and the critical interpretation make use of the same vehicle—words. In this respect, cuisine, like music, is a performative art. As such, it depends on words for its social survival—recipes (scores) that make it possible to reproduce the original. (Of course, one can question whether the original product is the recipe on the page or the dish on the table.) On this continuum, the plastic arts lie somewhere between the literary and the performing arts, because, although there is a disjuncture between the medium of creation-production and the idiom of criticism, there is a tangible, more or less durable product. The overlap of (creative) writers and critics has a good deal to do with the intellectuality possible in writing. From this point of view, cuisine represents the intellectualization of a sensual, material product—food.

culinary reporter-sage, Athenaeus (1557 and 1612 into Latin; 1680 and 1789 into French). In culinary affairs as in so many others, the 17th century is the turning point. Although France earlier lagged behind other European countries in the production of cookbooks, beginning in the mid-17th century a spate of cookbooks thrust cuisine into the public arena and set off the first episode in the debate replayed by every generation since over the merits of "old" (in this instance, largely medieval culinary practices) versus the "new" and "modern."

Clearly, the 19th century built upon the legacy of the ancien régime. Just as clearly, it was a new era. The new element in early 19th-century France was the particular configuration of culinary discourse, the multiplication of culinary genres, and the sheer volume of apposite writing, with the whole very much a function of the rapidly expanding publishing and journalistic market. The paradigmatic texts ranged from Grimod de la Reynière's *Almanach des Gourmands* (The gourmands' almanac) in 1803 to Carême's summum three decades later, *L'Art de la cuisine française au dix-neuvième siècle* (The art of French cuisine in the 19th century). Although writing anchors every cultural field, the transitory nature of culinary products renders the gastronomic field absolutely dependent on a textual base. For language allows sharing what is at once the most assertively individual and yet, arguably, the most dramatically social of our acts—eating. If words turned food into culinary texts, these texts inserted gastronomy into a field. They set the culinary agenda and instituted the cultural debates that defined the gastronomic field as well as the logic that determined relations within this field.

Five genres of gastronomic writing laid the foundations for the gastronomic field. The "professional" genres that contributed most obviously and directly to the formation of the gastronomic field were: the gastronomic journalism of Alexandre Balthazar Laurent Grimod de la Reynière (1758–1838); the culinary treatises of Antonin Carême (1784–1833); and the cultural commentary and protosociology of Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (1755–1826). These three authors were witnesses to, even as they were agents of, the modernizing gastronomic society. Each aimed to systematize culinary knowledge; each contributed to the formalization and, hence, the very definition of modern French cuisine. But the professionals did not operate alone. Indeed, it would seem to be characteristic of cultural fields generally, as it certainly is of the gastronomic field in early 19th-century France, that the larger social impact of the field is importantly a function of extraprofessional participation and noninstrumental writings. The greater the association of nonspecialists, the more numerous the connections to other cultural fields and to society at large and the greater the social impact. It is precisely this kind of indirect participation that points to the fourth and fifth genres of gastronomic writings, the political philoso-

phy of Charles Fourier (1772–1837) and the novels of Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850).[15] These five exemplary works, taken together, hold a key to the understanding of the place occupied by the gastronomic field among French cultural fields and within French society. Defining gastronomy as a practice and establishing the genres of culinary writing, professional and nonprofessional writings together established the textual archive of the gastronomic field in France.

## Grimod de la Reynière

Grimod de la Reynière was the first gastronomic journalist. Known before the Revolution for outrageous culinary extravagances, he made use of his extensive knowledge to enlighten 19th-century elites, most of whom he thought woefully ignorant of the most elementary gastronomic practices. Grimod put the culinary conscience of the ancien régime at the service of the new in an era of acute social and culinary change. His assessments of culinary establishments (restaurants, food suppliers, stores, and products) and practices ([1803–12] 1984, vol. 8) aimed at ordering a culinary world turned topsy-turvy (1983, p. xxxi; 1978, pp. 311–16). The new gastronome was not to the manners born but a self-made man in need of instruction. It was Grimod who assumed responsibility for the culinary "catechism" (the term he used for his *Manuel des Amphitryons* [Manual for hosts], 1808). If the fine art of carving had been lost in the "revolutionary torment," Grimod would rectify the situation. He argued that a host who did not know how to carve was every bit as shameful as an owner of a magnificent library who did not know how to read (1983, pp. xxxiii–xxxv, 3). In a proposal that would be taken up by many others in various forms and working from the assumption that gastronomic science had advanced by leaps and bounds, Grimod advocated the creation of still more culinary institutions, including professorships in the lycées (1983, p. xxxii), various

[15] It is not by chance that gastronomy owes its existence to founding fathers, and this despite the "natural," "logical," and traditionally dominant associations of women with food and feeding. But those associations concern the domestic order, whereas gastronomy occupied the public domain. Furthermore, in statements similar to those made relative to artistic activity, women were deemed incapable of culinary creativity. They were "slaves to routine," as a not atypical remark at the time asserted. If a man "hadn't grabbed a hold of the frying pan, [culinary] art would have stayed where it was, and we would still be eating Esau's lentils and Homer's roastbeef" (Périgord 1825, p. 121). Carême, for his part, characterized modern cuisine as both "virile and elegant" (1841, dedication, 1:xxviii). On the whole, the professionalization of the culinary arts over the 19th century excluded women in the most public, upper reaches, an exclusion that is still apparent in upscale French-oriented restaurants today, in France and elsewhere (see Mennell 1985, pp. 201–4; Cooper 1998; Ferguson and Zukin 1998).

gastronomic societies, and an elaborate system of what he called "legitimations"—whereby product samples were sent for evaluation to "tasting juries" composed of "professors in the art of Gourmandise" (1984, 1:xvii, 2: xix–xx, 3:xxx, 4:vi–vii). Grimod's gastronomic enterprise was an immediate and enormous success, with 22,000 copies of the *Almanach* sold in several editions over the four years following publication. "Thanks to the progress of knowledge and philosophy," Grimod declared in the *Journal des Gourmands et des Belles* of 1806, undoubtedly thinking of his own contributions, "gourmandise . . . has become an art" (1806, 1:23).

## Carême

Grimod de la Reynière laid down the law for consumers and dealt exclusively with the "theory" of gastronomy—he bragged that he had never put on an apron, and, in any event, only individuals having the misfortune to live outside Paris stood in any need of recipes (1806, p. 107). Antonin Carême, on the other hand, legislated for the professional practitioner.[16] Acknowledged by contemporaries and later generations alike as what he proclaimed himself to be, namely, the founder of modern French cuisine, Carême had an immense influence. His systematic examination of the bases of French cuisine, first, of pastry in all its permutations (which covered savories along with sweets), and then all of French cuisine, from soups to sauces via fish, stuffings, bouillons, roasts, and game, provided the methodological basis for the subsequent expansion of the profession later in the century. Unlike Grimod de la Reynière, who overtly took his cues from an ancien régime that he viewed with considerable nostalgia, Carême disdainfully dismissed the old cuisine in favor of the new—"19th-century French cuisine will remain the model for culinary art" (1833, vol. 2, pt. 4, p. 13). All extant cookbooks and treatises on cooking—"these sorry books" ([1822] 1842, 1:5)—were to be jettisoned in favor of his totally original synthesis; his was "the honor and the merit" of giving "our great cuisine" the treatment that it deserved, and what is more, he had not "borrowed anything from anybody" ([1828] 1986, p. 20). Cuisine aspired

[16] As he repeatedly stressed, Carême's works were not simply collections of recipes but culinary treatises. But they are much more than that, especially as Carême very much fancied himself a writer, even while lamenting his untutored style (1841, 1:xi). Not only is virtually every recipe preceded and followed by observations, anecdotes, and sundry remarks, each volume contains inordinately ambitious disquisitions of a more general order, a lengthy "Preliminary Discourse," a "Parallel of Old and Modern Cuisine," a "Philosophical History of Cuisine from the discovery of fire to the present," "Aphorisms, Thoughts, and Maxims," "How Napoleon Ate in Exile on St. Helena," "A Critical Review of the Grand Balls of 1811–1812," and similar commentary.

to the status of both a science and an art, and Carême's goal was to turn those gastronomic aspirations into culinary practice.[17]

Carême very explicitly addressed a modern, newly expanded public, which his works were designed to expand further still. He rested his case for the general utility of his work on the fact that even women could profit by the volumes to instruct their cooks at home (the directive gives an idea of the bourgeois nature of that public). Accordingly, he simplified the meal—four courses for a formal dinner instead of the usual eight—and he pared down the banquets from those of his ancien régime predecessors, giving more space per person and placing fewer and smaller serving platters on the table, and so on (cf. the foldouts of table setups; 1842, vol. 2). Ever mindful of expense for this broader audience, Carême defended himself against accusations of excess, coming back again and again to the practicality of his cuisine. Even the early works on pastry made a great point that these semiarchitectural confections were "easy to make," however implausible it may seem to any nonprofessional reader. His great valedictory treatise began with a discussion of the humble beef stew (*pot au feu*), disdained by 18th-century and modern authors alike even though, as Carême carefully pointed out, it furnished the principal source of nutriments for the working classes. The *pot au feu* is, moreover, where the sauces, and therefore modern French cuisine, begin. It was this "19th-century spirit of analysis" (1833, 1:lxvi) that led him to a chemical analysis of what actually happens when the housewife puts the stew pot on the fire (1833, 1:3–4).

Yet Carême also harked back to an earlier era. He made his reputation working in the houses of the great, not in restaurants, and was very proud of his relationships with his illustrious patrons (notably, Talleyrand, Tsar Alexander I of Russia, the Prince Regent of Britain, and Baron Rothschild), which earned him the sobriquet "the chef of kings, and the king of chefs." For Carême as for Grimod de la Reynière, the ideal gastronomic couple was the gastronome and the chef: "The man born to wealth

[17] Although French cookbooks had for some time urged cooks to forswear the strong spices of medieval cooking (ginger, coriander, cinnamon, allspice) (Flandrin, Hyman, and Hyman 1983), it was Carême who most decisively and emphatically replaced these with herbs (thyme, basil, savory, bay leaf, parsley, chervil, tarragon) and plants (garlic, shallots, onions) (Carême 1833, 1:lxi-lxiv). A description by an English visitor to the Rothschild household where Carême was in charge gives an idea of this new, simplified yet complex, and self-consciously modern cuisine as it appeared on the table: "Its character was that it was in season, . . . up to its time, . . . in the spirit of the age, . . . no trace of the wisdom of our ancestors in a single dish; no high-spiced sauces, no dark brown gravies, no flavour of cayenne and allspice, no tincture of catsup and walnut pickle, no visible agency of those vulgar elements of cooking, of the good old times, fire and water. . . . Every meat presented its own natural aroma, every vegetable its own shade of verdure" (Morgan 1831, 2:415–16).

lives to eat, and supports the art of the chef." Correspondingly, he had only contempt for the "rich miser [who] eats to live" (1833, 2:v, vi–vii). The great era of gastronomy was not the period he was writing for in the 1820s but the empire in the first decade of the century, with its great patrons and its opulent "extras"—extraordinary, spectacular banquets, including one for 10,000 soldiers under tents along the Champs-Élysées—the menus of which he gives in nostalgic detail (1842, chap. 13). Not surprisingly, he was highly critical of the modern service à la russe that works so well in restaurants and is so ill-suited to banquets: "Our French service is more elegant and more sumptuous . . . the very model of culinary art" (1842, 2:151).

Carême's dual culinary allegiance meant first of all that he had an extraordinarily sharp sense of his own worth, in the kitchen and on the printed page. He went on at length about the long nights spent experimenting with different dishes, the hours in the Royal (then Imperial, then Royal) Library researching culinary achievements from earlier eras, the killing hours buried in coal-burning kitchens to the great detriment of his health, the expenditure of his own moneys in the service of gastronomy, the lack of culinary appreciation on the part of the French in contrast to foreigners, and so on. Many of these statements sound like nothing so much as the ideal-typical romantic creator lamenting his sacrifices in the name of art or science. Yet, this exalted sense of self went along with, and was set against, an equally strong sense of placement vis-à-vis the culinary past, its present, and its future. A prodigious knowledge of culinary traditions grounded Carême's insistence on his place as the creator of modern French cuisine. Virtually all of his works contain more or less extensive comparisons between traditional and modern culinary methods, and one even presents a "Philosophical History of Cuisine" (1833). All the works explicitly addressed his *confrères,* his practicing culinary contemporaries, of whom three receive book dedications.[18] Carême was ever mindful of training subsequent generations of chefs; in the work that was the culmination of his career, *L'Art de la cuisine française au dix-neuvième siècle,* a section of "Remarks and Observations about the Young" advised young

[18] Carême's game was rather more complicated because the chefs and steward (maître d'hôtel) to whom he dedicated his works were carefully situated with respect to their elite employers: M. Mueller (*Le Pâtissier pittoresque*) was the chief steward for the Russian Tsar; M. Boucher (*Le Pâtissier royal*), the steward for Talleyrand's household; the Robert brothers (*Le Maître d'hôtel français*), chefs who had worked in the most illustrious houses in Paris and Europe. Not until *L'Art de la cuisine française au dix-neuvième siècle* (1833) did Carême, who remained extremely conscious of his humble origins, feel secure enough to dedicate his work directly to his patron (and even then the dedication was at one remove, since the dedicatee was Madame Rothschild).

chefs who must make their reputations in culinarily less favored times than the glory days of the empire.

Carême envisaged a systematically organized profession, with "cook-offs" and examinations for the best chef, the best dish, and so forth. Here again, Carême bridged the old system and the new. These culinary competitions were aimed at regulating market competition. First, the imposition of professional standards adapted to market conditions the guarantee of artisanal quality once afforded by the strict regulations of the guilds. Further, by publicizing both professional standards and the winning professionals, these instances of culinary certification made a strong bid to control the market. As any winner of such an award today will testify, this kind of highly public professional certification possesses significant market value. With such institutional mechanisms connecting practitioners around a common set of experiences, techniques, and values and to the public, Carême's contribution was essential to the formation of the gastronomic field. The subsequent development of professional cooking in the latter half of the 19th century would not have been possible without his example and his works, the rules he laid down, the techniques he explicated, and the ideal of the creative chef that he embodied.

## Brillat-Savarin

From Grimod de la Reynière and Carême to Brillat-Savarin, gastronomy was converted from a practice and a technique to a topic of general discussion and analysis beyond those directly concerned with material production and consumption. For although Brillat-Savarin wrote about food, it was, precisely, all the talk about food by a wonderful witty conversationalist that immediately made his *Physiology of Taste* (1826) the totemic gastronomic text that it remains today. To the culinary paradigm of chef-diner, Brillat-Savarin added the reader, the consumer for whom the cultural, rather than the material product, is the primary concern. Unlike the journalist, who addresses customers, clients, and diners, or the chef, who targets practitioners of the culinary arts, the commentator-analyst reaches to these indirect consumers—the readers whose culinary consumption is indirect because it is noninstrumental.[19] The kind of culinary

[19] Instrumentality can be (re)defined by the reader's circumstances. Gillet (1993) argues that cookbooks constitute true gastronomic literature and that recipes not only can but should be read as an exercise in literary gourmandise. Changes in culinary as well as reading conditions similarly affect instrumentality. Medieval recipes, e.g., mean little to us today, even if we could procure the exact ingredients, while, at the other end of the spectrum, the complexity and technicity of the professional cooking Carême initiated make it all but impossible for nonprofessionals to give his recipes anything but a noninstrumental reading. And what reading should we give to a work

commentary practiced by Brillat-Savarin and generations of his disciples places gastronomy within the larger intellectual and social universe. For Grimod de la Reynière and Carême, the culinary text was chiefly instrumental, a means to the primary end of producing or consuming what anthropologists term the "food event," that is, the dish or the meal. For Brillat-Savarin, the text was its own end, a status hardly altered by the few recipes included in the work. The often-noted stylistic qualities of the *Physiology of Taste*—the anecdotal mode, the witty tone, the language play—give this work an almost palpable literary aura. Even so, and however important this style for the immediate and continuing success of this work, the decisive literary connections were determined less by individual achievement than the nature of the work, which places the *Physiology of Taste* with more clearly literary-intellectual genres within the larger culinary discourse.

More decidedly than Grimod de la Reynière or even Carême, Brillat-Savarin conceived of gastronomy as a distinctly modern social practice. His admission that a fear of falling behind the times had prompted him to undertake the study illustrates the degree to which he equated gastronomy with modernity, an intellectual enterprise representative of a contemporary body of knowledge and a nontraditional, analytical attitude toward food. The many anecdotes and witticisms should not obscure the claims this work made to theoretical, historical, and even scientific understanding. The subtitle—*Meditations on Transcendent Gastronomy—an Up-to-Date Theoretical and Historical Work*—confirms that these bonds were not incidental and singular but structural and generic. Brillat-Savarin's assertion was doubly encyclopedic since gastronomy is both comprehensive and foundational, drawing as it does on the natural sciences—physics, chemistry, physiology—and on learning of every sort, including cuisine, commerce, political economy, and medicine. The youngest science was born when the chemist, the scholar, and the political economist took cuisine out of the kitchen into the laboratory and the library. Never again could food be confused with either a sin or a mere bodily function. Like Grimod de la Reynière and Carême, Brillat-Savarin took considerable pains to distinguish gourmandise from gluttony. It was "the passionate, reasoned and habitual preference for objects that flatter taste," just as gastronomy was "the reasoned knowledge of everything that concerns man and nourishment." A mental activity dealing with the senses, gastronomy relied on refined sensuality but even more on intelligence: "Animals fill themselves; man eats; the intelligent man alone knows how to eat" (Brillat-Savarin 1839, pp. 63, 317, 65).

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like *The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book*? Should the celebrated hashish fudge really be attempted?

The second component of Brillat-Savarin's analysis is properly sociological. In effect, the *Physiology of Taste* suggested a model for a sociology of taste as this 18th-century philosophe metamorphosed into a sociologist, subjecting the "pleasure of the table" to its ever-changing social contexts.[20] Brillat-Savarin elevated gastronomy to the rank of a science and justified what he called "social gourmandise" by its exceptional social utility. The *Physiology of Taste* offers a few menus from sumptuous and more modest meals, describes some dishes, and even gives some recipes. But Brillat-Savarin indulged comparatively little in the vice that plagues food writing of every era, namely, the rehashing of gustatory memories. It was not simply the variety of French cuisine that marked the *Physiology of Taste* as a sociological enterprise but the correlations that Brillat-Savarin established between the social and culinary attributes of taste. Gastronomy, as Brillat-Savarin argued the case, was the science that explored those relations. Clearly, as well, it was a social science that examined even as it joined a more general discourse on class and class distinctions. Taste taken in this very specific sense became another powerful marker of class as gastronomy came to define individual appetite in collective terms.

The science of gastronomy had such a formidable task because the social diffusion of gourmandise did not eliminate so much as it complicated the gastronomic hierarchy. If there are individuals whom nature has "predestined" to be gourmands and whose very physiognomy betrays their predilection, more interesting to Brillat-Savarin are those figures destined to assess social positions and professions in terms of their penchant for gourmandise: financiers, doctors, men of letters, and the pious (*les dévots*) head the list (1839, pp. 176–85). Brillat-Savarin further devised a series of "gastronomic tests" calibrated to income, with menus ranging from five courses for a 5,000-franc income, six courses including truffled turkey for diners in the 15,000-franc income bracket, to the nine courses of extravagant, complex dishes appropriate for those with an income of 30,000 francs and over (1839, pp. 188–89). A necessary but not sufficient factor, money could not be construed as in any way a cause of taste preferences. It was, rather, an indicator of "gastronomic class," which intersected with social class, to be sure, although not nearly so neatly as it had under the ancien régime. Brillat-Savarin prudently avoided ranking the financier's fare "better." In keeping with the neutralizing language of science, the evalua-

[20] The *Physiology of Taste* seems to have been the first work to exploit *physiologie* as a sociological as opposed to biological or medical concept. In the decade that followed, the *physiologie* came to refer to a short essay of 4–10 pages published in a small and usually illustrated volume, which purported to identify the characteristic social types, institutions, or accoutrements and behavior of modern society (Ferguson 1994, p. 82–90).

tions of the the *Physiology of Taste* were those of the "dynamometer," which registered increasing force as one ascended the social ladder. The dishes able to test the gastronomic faculties of the stolid bourgeois *rentier* would not be regarded as worthy of examination by the "select few" invited by a banker or governmental minister. With its own hierarchy and its variable standards, the world of gastronomy reproduced the contradictions and the ambiguities of postrevolutionary society—Brillat-Savarin noted a dinner that assembled gourmands of the fourth (highest) class (1839, p. 193).

To be sure, the *Physiology of Taste* did not take full account of that public world. Brillat-Savarin found the restaurant, which his "philosophical" history of cuisine placed among the "latest refinements," so new in the 1820s and so different an institution that no one had thought about it enough. With only one "Meditation" devoted to "Restaurateurs," Brillat-Savarin did not really take up the challenge. Yet he was both disconcerted and intrigued. On the one hand, the restaurant was an element of democratization; on the other, restaurants catering to solitary diners fostered an excessive individualism possibly destructive of the social fabric (1839, pp. 318–24). In any event, and however significant a social phenomenon the restaurant might be, the private gathering supplied the model of sociability for the *Physiology of Taste.* Grimod de la Reynière's work had already made it clear that this world too had been greatly altered by the increased circulation of individuals and their culinary habits, the availability of goods and services, and the culinary pluralism that the restaurant represents. By virtue of its interpretation of cuisine as a collective enterprise, defined by the consumers rather than the producers and governed by the social as opposed to the alimentary situation, the *Physiology of Taste* placed cuisine squarely in the public domain. In Brillat-Savarin's work, the science of human nourishment—gastronomy—became something more—a science of society.

## The Nationalization of French Cuisine

The texts of this gastronomy also served as a vehicle for a distinctively French culinary nationalism. If French and foreigner alike have long considered cuisine quintessentially French, the explanation lies importantly in an expansionist culinary discourse that relentlessly associates (good) food and France, and has done so for some three or four centuries. From the 16th century onward, European cuisines generally were moving in their separate directions, away from the commonalities of earlier culinary modes (Flandrin 1997*a*). The Venetian ambassador in 1577 was not alone in remarking on the singularity of French foodways. Then too, many of the cookbooks that began to appear in the mid–17th century made a point

of the "Frenchness" of their cuisine. But in virtually all of these instances, "French" was not a geographical but a social reference, and French cuisine was French by virtue of the court and the aristocracy. Cookbook writers invariably vaunted their elite connections—in titles like *Les Soupers de la cour* (Suppers at court; 1755) and in flowery dedications to noble patrons. Works expressly destined for the bourgeoisie, like the *Cuisinier roïal et bourgeois* (The royal and bourgeois cook; 1691) or the phenomenally successful *La Cuisinière bourgeoise* (The [female] bourgeois cook; 1746), proposed simplifications of the courtly models (Mennell 1985, pp. 80–83), but those models remained in force. This aristocratic model also supplied the basis for the first truly international cuisine, carried by French chefs and cookbooks to court kitchens throughout Europe. Just as European aristocracy in the 17th and 18th centuries spoke and wrote French, so too it "ate French" and relegated native culinary traditions to the status of poor relations.[21] The culinary writers of 19th-century France found themselves in the enviable, and unique, position of working within a celebrated indigenous culinary tradition. The increasing centralization of French society and the attendant concentration of French cultural institutions—conditions matched nowhere else in Europe—further reinforced these associations between the nation and elite cuisine. Of course, France also had nonelite, regional cuisines, but other countries had only such cuisines (which is why Carême, like many of his ancien régime predecessors, was called to cook abroad).

Like the other nationalisms that flourished in the 19th century, French culinary nationalism drew on texts. That "French cuisine" was itself the product of texts has led some to deny the very possibility of a national cuisine. Because, for these critics, a cuisine is product based, it can only be local (Mintz 1996, chap. 7), which makes "French cuisine" little more than an intellectualized Parisian artifice totally dependent upon "true," regional cuisines.[22] Such statements tend to confuse the plurality of culi-

[21] Mennell (1985, chap. 5, pp. 102–33) argues that the distinctive culinary practices of the English gentry and prosperous farmers, which had no equivalent in France, were "decapitated" when the urban aristocracy adopted French culinary models beginning in the late 17th century. French professional cuisine developed from this courtly and later urban model; English professionals, including more women, evolved out of the more domestic culinary practices associated with more modest households and the countryside.

[22] Jean-François Revel (1979, chap. 8) similarly denies the possibility of a national cuisine but for different reasons. The opposite of essentially conservative, traditional regional cuisines is an "international" cuisine defined by techniques and methods and rooted in the search for originality. While these categories make sense from a strictly culinary point of view, they elide the culinary nationalism that identifies a particular culinary configuration as "French." On the complex process by which fries ("french fries") became the "alimentary sign of Frenchness" and the sequence that transformed

nary practices with the critical coherence of a culinary tradition. As a formalized set of culinary practices, any cuisine is necessarily the product of a culinary discourse, and, to reach beyond the confines of the originating group, that discourse needs texts. Even regional cuisines relied on texts to be constituted as such; as self-consciously formulated culinary codes, regional cuisines in France were themselves products of culinary writings as early as *Le Cuisinier gascon* (The gascony cook; 1740) but diffused more widely beginning, once again, in the 19th century (Csergo 1997). The textual reliance of a national French cuisine finds confirmation in the rise of national cuisines in late 19th-century Italy (Camporesi [1989] 1993) and 20th-century India (Appadurai 1988) where the absence of a prestigious indigenous culinary model ensured the dominance of regional or foreign identifications until countered by a significant text or set of texts.[23]

The gastronomical writings of Grimod de la Reynière, Câreme, and Brillat-Savarin, along with those of their many critics and disciples, gave the requisite textual basis to a specific set of culinary practices. These writings became, as they had not been theretofore, identified with the country as a whole. The generalization of interest in gastronomy, attested in many quarters and acknowledged by all three authors, supplied a public eager for such materials. These three "professionals"—the journalist, the chef, the sociologist—invested cuisine in France with a force, a value, and a presence that have long been considered characteristic of French foodways. In effect, the culinary discourse in which they engaged "nationalized" French cuisine, and it did so by imposing the standards and arrogating the authority that would henceforth define positions in the gastronomic field.

The authoritative tone of so many of these writers has much to do with the continual jockeying for position in the emergent gastronomic field. Culinary discourse, in fact, offers a perfect illustration of symbolic violence, nowhere more vividly or with greater impact than in France. The very term "gastronomy"—from *gastro* (stomach) and *nomos* (law)—signaled the importance of rules and regulations in this culinary construction. (Carême made much of standardizing the orthography for menus [1841, 1:lvii–lxxxix].) There was no brooking dissent with Grimod de la Reynière

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Camembert cheese from a clearly regional product into one recognized by the French themselves as "French," see respectively, Barthes ([1957] 1972) and Boisard (1992).

[23] For Italian cuisine, the text was Pellegrino Artusi's *La Scienza in cucina et l'arte di mangiar bene—Manuale pratico per le famiglie* (The art of eating well; 1891), which, in Camporesi's argument (1993, pp. 113–52), created a code of national identification that did more for national unification than Manzoni's great epic novel, *I promessi sposi* (The betrothed). That certain dishes (corn polenta, potato gnocchi, spaghetti with tomato sauce) came to enjoy a national status was due importantly to Artusi's textual promotion.

or Carême or any number of their epigones. To be sure, recipes, most particularly written ones, must be authoritative; at the very least, every recipe implies a culinary authority. But recipes were not alone in adopting a legislative mode. Other components of French culinary discourse had just as many, if different, pretensions to authority. Witness the great proliferation of texts that supplied the codes by which gastronomy was regulated and lived. The *Code Gourmand* of 1827 trumpeted itself as a *Complete Manual of Gastronomy, containing the laws, rules, applications and examples of the art of living well;* it was followed by *The French Gastronome, or the art of living well,* written by "the former Authors of the *Journal des Gourmands*" (among whom was Grimod de la Reynière). This work was in turn succeeded by the *Perpetual Almanach of Gourmands, containing Le Code gourmand* with its *applications, rules and meditations of transcendent gastronomy* (the reprise of Brillat's subtitle making its particular bid for authority).

The consciously authoritative tone of such works is as unmistakable as it is significant. Although Brillat-Savarin published the *Physiology of Taste* anonymously, the title page proclaims the author's status as a "Professor" and "Member of several learned societies." Analysis in this work is inextricably tied to prescription. The off-hand, humorous tone of the work belies the imperious manner of the precepts and principles. The dichotomy was intentional; the use of "I" and "me," Brillat-Savarin explained, supposes a "confabulation" with the reader, who is free to "examine, discuss, and even laugh." But when he comes armed with the "redoubtable *we,*" it is a lecture, and the reader must submit. "I am, Sir, oracle," the authorial persona warned, citing *The Merchant of Venice* in a comical yet firm directive. "And, when I open my lips, let no dog bark!" (1839, p. 36). So too, Carême passed over no opportunity to cite his right to readers' consideration, the many and spectacular successes, the eminent personages for whom he had worked, the breadth of his experience and extent of his research, and the utility of his innovations and method.[24]

All commentators agreed that the culinary arts were French, so much so that it is not too much to speak of a culinary nationalism. Grimod de la Reynière announced that he would not regret all the care (and heart-

[24] That authority might be contested. The gastronome and the chef were touted as the ideal culinary couple, but the relationship was fraught with tension from competing demands due most particularly to the chef's ambiguous and fairly untenable position as simultaneously an artist and an artisan. Each of these roles assumes a different relationship with a patron/consumer/client. Cf. a contemporary "defense" of gastronomes against the "aberrations of [an innovative artist's] delirious imagination" that railed against the absence of a "culinary law" that could "contain the culinary art within its true boundaries . . . and would put . . . a brake on the propagation of doctrines pernicious to gastronomy" (Périgord 1825, p. 4).

burn) that went into the *Almanach des Gourmands* if "the national glory in all aspects of alimentary art" progressed because of it (1984, 2:xx–xxi). Carême simply pronounced France "the motherland of anyone who entertains guests; its cuisine and wines are the triumph of gastronomy and it is the only country for good food" (1986, p. i; 1833, 2:i). In an earlier work, he boasted that "this absolutely new Treatise . . . will give new luster to our national cuisine" (1841, dedication), and in another, he boldly asserted that he had already refuted all the "ridiculous books that are a disgrace to our great national cuisine" (1842, 1:5). The work he had in mind, quite unfairly given the date of its publication, was the cookbook that first associated France with a cuisine—*Le Cuisinier françois* of 1651. The oxymoronic pretensions of a contemporary's cookbook entitled the *Universal English Chef* had Carême so beside himself that he proposed a cook-off, it being a foregone conclusion that French chefs would win any culinary contest (1841, 1:xvi).

Not that French cuisine lived in splendid isolation. Indeed, its "genius" lay in the strength of its capacity to assimilate foreign elements. Although French cuisine was "indisputably the first in the world," as Grimod de la Reynière recalled in 1806, it could become richer still by drawing on foreign foods. But appropriation also meant transformation, which is to say, "Frenchification." French cuisine would incorporate exotic foods "by perfecting them" (1984, 3:295 n. 1). Some 20 years later, Brillat-Savarin had recourse to this same notion of acclimation to illustrate the relationship of French cuisine to foods, seasonings, and drinks "of foreign preparation" (1839, pp. 316–17). For many, "French" was equated with "classic." The publication of English and German cookbooks in the 1820s sent a conservative culinary critic into great (mock) diatribes against the "Romantic" cuisine that paid no attention to the rules of culinary Classicism. The vogue for English literature was one thing in this period of dramatic clashes between Romantics and Classics in print and on the stage, but, for the author of the *New Almanach for Gourmands,* food was a truly serious affair. Protesting vehemently against the wholesale importation of dishes that "at great expense produce a dubious taste and nausea," this commentator enjoined the French to make judicious choices in English cuisine no less than in English literature. If roast beef and boiled potatoes did no harm to (French) gastronomic sensibilities, plum pudding, salt beef, and mutton soups—"bizarre preparations unsuitable for either our health or our climate"—should be left to those whose "ironclad palates" were accustomed to such fare, just as all the garlic-laden dishes from the south of France should remain where they belonged (Périgord 1825, pp. 104–8).

Reminiscent of the "theory" of climates traceable to Montesquieu and, in literary studies, to Mme de Staël, this understanding of cuisine in terms of national tradition and temperamental suitability asserts what was im-

plied in the more serious, more "professional" works by the founding fathers of the gastronomic field: the culinary nationalism, even chauvinism, that would become inextricably allied with French cuisine. The constitution of a gastronomic field depended upon a redefinition of haute cuisine as a national cuisine. To be sure, the haute or grande cuisine of the ancien régime had been considered "French"—witness the claims, which Carême felt obliged to refute, of the 17th-century cookbook, *The French Chef.* Moreover, any number of commentators from the 17th century onward affirmed the intrinsic, virtually "natural" affinities between France and fine food. But the "nationalization" of this cuisine occurred in the 19th century when an overtly class culinary model turned into a national cultural phenomenon. Although the resulting culinary product was still class based, the class had shifted to include an extended gastronomic elite for the consumption of the material product and a still larger gastronomic public for reading culinary texts.

Nowhere were the rules of culinary conduct more highly and more authoritatively codified than in 19th-century France, inspired at least in part by dismay over evident social change. It is hardly surprising that foreign models of cooking should have aroused anxiety about culinary disorder. "Soon," one writer intoned after reporting a spate of works purporting to introduce English and German cooking to the French, "all the aberrations of an art which has no limits and acknowledges no rule will be transplanted here" (Périgord 1825, p. 106). Just so, the author of the *Code Gourmand* called for a "fixed and immutable code" to contain the excesses of the almost libidinous Gastronomy, "the queen of the world" (1827, prologue). Another critic asserted that "cooking, like the drama . . . ought to follow Aristotle's rules" (*Almanach perpétuel des Gourmands contenant Le Code Gourmand, et des applications, règles et méditations de gastronomie transcendante* 1830, p. 106). On the other hand, the assimilationist "genius" ascribed ever more emphatically to French cuisine not only legitimated, it virtually demanded a broad spectrum of sources to enrich native components. However, borrowing would take place strictly on French terms and in accordance with preexisting national norms and precepts.

In this manner, culinary discourse constructed a paradigm for the cultivation of a self-consciously national identity, a wonderful illustration of the cultural work of nation building so characteristic of 19th-century Europe. French cuisine was one more "invented tradition" (Hobsbawm 1983) that shored up a national identity. Cuisine and gastronomy were part of a more general process of cultural nationalization through the imposition on the periphery of the values, the norms, and even the language of the center (Weber 1976), an ideal choice for a new and somewhat shaky republican regime seeking to elide political conflict by promoting emblems to unify the country rather than divide it (Nora 1996–98). Assimilationist

by nature, French cuisine subsumed all the others in a perfect synecdoche of France. If regional products and dishes continued to play a vital role in national culinary construction, they did so as subordinate parts of an incomparably greater whole.[25]

The vehicle of this synecdoche, the link between part and whole, between region and country, is found in the expansive culinary discourse of the 19th century. This connection explains why the ties between the literary and the gastronomical are not accidental but a constitutive feature of the gastronomic field. Cuisine in France became fully French by virtue of the discourse that incorporated food practice into a socioculinary tradition and a gastronomic code. The culinary discourse elaborated in early 19th-century France created a substantially new, and almost infinitely extendible, set of gastronomic consumers—readers. The French cuisine secured in these many gastronomical writings could be consumed far more readily on the page than at the table. Because capacities for intellectual ingestion far exceed the physiological capacities of the most voracious appetite and most determined glutton, the public for culinary texts is potentially immense. It was this public, which overlapped to a variable degree with actual diners, that provided the most solid foundation for the gastronomic field, determined the positions staked out in that field, and permitted, even demanded, discussion, commentary, and criticism. But allowing repeated "consumption" of the same meal or food, writing and reading neutralize the orality of food. Just as writing fixes speech, so too it stabilizes food. Culinary discourse controls consumption, which it transforms into an intellectual activity. Virtually all the definitions of gastronomy stress this intellectual displacement, often citing Brillat-Savarin's definition of gastronomy as the "reasoned knowledge" of everything to do with what we eat (1839, p. 65).

[25] The synecdochal perspective, the perennial dialogue between center and periphery, between haute cuisine and popular cuisines, between intellectualized cuisine and product-based regional cuisines, is revealed with particular clarity in the introduction to a novel that introduced the paradigmatic gastronome, Dodin-Bouffant (conceived as a homage to Brillat-Savarin). The author admits hesitating to publish a work on an apparently frivolous topic so soon after the immense suffering sustained in the Great War of 1914–18. But should he neglect one of the "oldest and most essential of French traditions?" "A quiche lorraine . . . or a Marseillaise bouillabaisse . . . or a potato gratin from Savoy has all the refined richness of France, all its spirit and wit, its gaiety . . . the seriousness hidden beneath its charm, . . . its malice and its gravity, . . . the full soul of its fertile, cultivated rich earth, of which its aromatic cream sauces, snowy poultry, delicate vegetables, juicy fruits, savory beef and frank, supple and ardent wines, are the blessed manifestations" (Ruoff [1924] 1994, pp. 12–13). (Ruoff also coauthored a massive, multivolume culinary history of the French provinces.) On Proust's hymn to French culinary sensibility in *À la recherche du temps perdu,* see Ferguson (in press).

## Fourier

Culinary discourse also explains the gastronomic associations specific to a modernizing French society. Beyond the texts directly concerned with the culinary production and consumption—the works of Grimod de la Reynière, Carême, and Brillat-Savarin—are those that analyze and dramatize food as a total social phenomenon. The philosophical writings of Fourier and the novels of Balzac offer excellent examples. More emphatically than any other text at the time, and by its very utopianism, the social order imagined by the utopian philosopher Charles Fourier (1772–1837) demonstrates how food works as a total social phenomenon to mold institutions no less than individual behavior.[26] Fourier based his philosophical system on the social utility of pleasure, specifically, the principle of attraction, the two most powerful principles of which are sex and food, or in his terms, love and gourmandise. No more than sex was gourmandise an individual matter. Fourier constructed an entire social system to turn these individual pleasures to social account.[27]

Yet even as Fourier set his work apart from the ambient gastronomic discourse, he invoked many of the same themes and principles—the scientific nature of gastronomy, the importance of culinary judges and juries, the crucial distinction between gastronomy and gluttony, the social utility of gastronomy in a time of rising economic prosperity. In every case, Fourier took the precept outside the contemporary social order (which he derisively referred to as "Civilization," in contradistinction to the projected social order that he called "Harmony"). Gastronomes, writers as well as practitioners, and even the best among them like Grimod, produced nothing better than "gastro-asininities" (*gastro-âneries*) (1966–68, 6:255, n. 1). Even Fourier's cousin Brillat-Savarin was no better than any other so-

[26] The irregular publishing history of Fourier's work makes his contribution to culinary discourse more conjectural than for the others. Although his first work appeared in 1808 (*Théorie des quatre mouvements et des destinées générales*), his last remained in manuscript until 1967 (*Le Nouveaux monde amoureux*). But Fourier's ideas were known well before the (fragmentary) edition brought out by his disciples in the mid-1840s (Beecher 1986).

[27] In the vast majority of gastronomic writing, the parallels with sexual activity are irresistible and seldom resisted. It is not by chance that collectivities so assiduously regulate the one and the other to keep the direct sensuality of the individual from disrupting the social order. Second-order consumption also looms large for both. In this as in other domains, Fourier's writing is conspicuous for its mixture of tones and genres, all of which add up to what can be fairly characterized as controlled delirium designed to convey the fundamental attraction of a new social order predicated on neither justice nor equality but happiness. "The events resulting from this Order will give you, not the objects of your desires, but a happiness infinitely superior to all your desires" (1966–68, 1:170).

called gastronome ignorant of the higher or combined gastronomy, which Fourier baptized *gastrosophy* (8:283) and in which he found "a profound and sublime theory of social equilibrium" (4:130), "the principal mechanism of the equilibrium of the passions" (6:258), and one of the two primary bases of the new social order. The higher gastronomy occupied such an important place in Harmony because it presided over the development of the senses rather than their repression. Fourier premised his entire system on material abundance, which alone could guarantee spiritual abundance (e.g., happiness) (1:77). Contemporary society was based on differential scarcity, whereas the increased production of harmony would spread abundance throughout society. (Fourier broke fractiously with Saint-Simon on just this issue.) The emphasis on plenty led Fourier to define his new culinary order against gastronomy as civilization understood the practice. The moderation preached in 19th-century gastronomic circles was anathema: "A hundred thousand philosophers eat only to keep their passions under control." His view that moderation is a "travesty of nature" (6:255–56) led him to place all activities in Harmony under the twin signs of profusion and the absence of moderation: prodigious appetites will necessitate five meals plus two snacks a day, men will be seven feet tall, easy digestion will make children strong, and life expectancy will be 144 (1:180, n. 1).

Seldom have the culinary and the social order been more explicitly or more visibly tied and of greater moment than in Fourier's vision. Like Grimod, Brillat, and Carême, Fourier worked to transcend the gross materiality of food, and, like them too, he was maniacally concerned with detail. But where they defined gastronomy in terms of art and science, he made it the stuff of economics, philosophy, and politics. His gastronomical political economy endowed the proverbial land of milk and honey with an elaborate, complex social organization grounded in a visionary social science. What makes this culinary utopia more than a curiosity is what it reveals about the emergent gastronomic field in 19th-century France. More than any other culinary text, Fourier's writings intellectualized gastronomy, and they did so by making connections to established intellectual enterprises of unimpeachable legitimacy—philosophy and political science, or what in 19th-century France were called the "moral and political sciences." Today, we would certainly add sociology, like gastronomy an intellectual innovation of the early 19th century.

## Balzac

As Fourier carved out a place for philosophy and the social sciences in the gastronomic field, Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850) set up the literary

relations.[28] Balzac built on a long tradition of literary culinary commentary that, in French literature alone, dated from at least Rabelais and Montaigne in the 16th century. The undoing by unbridled appetite(s) had been standard comic fare from the Greeks (cf. Athenaeus 1969). Balzac's perspective differed from that of his predecessors because it was resolutely and self-consciously modern. He boasted of being the "Secretary" to French society (1976–81, 1:11), and certainly one of the striking contributions of Balzac's novels—one greatly appreciated by Marx and lavishly praised by Engels—is the dramatic ethnography of the nascent industrial capitalism of postrevolutionary France. Balzac used the realist novel to define contemporary French society, and, in that definition, food and feeding loomed large. Balzac's characters eat a good deal, and, more important still, Balzac attaches great significance to the consumption of food as a social and psychological indicator. What visitor to Paris does not identify with Lucien de Rubempré, when he decides to "initiate himself in the pleasures of Paris" at a restaurant where a single dinner eats up the 50 francs that would have lasted him a month at home in the provinces. Small wonder that the impecunious young man soon finds his way to the Latin Quarter and a menu at 18 *sous* (1976–81, 5:271, 292, 294–95). Balzac understood, as Grimod, Câreme, and Brillat-Savarin did not, the significance of the restaurant as a privileged location of gastronomic and other modernity—a semipublic, semiprivate urban space of dubious moral and variable culinary quality. He also showed the degree to which the restaurant acted as something of a safety valve for the increasingly regulated mores of bourgeois society (Aron [1973] 1975).

Dinners and diners turn up all over Balzac's work. But cuisine is more than a strong marker of distinction. In Balzac's last, and darkest, novel, *Cousin Pons* (1846), gastronomy became the stuff of tragedy, a "bourgeois tragedy," as Balzac called the genre in another setting, "with neither poison or dagger or blood but . . . crueler than all the calamities in the house of Atreus" (1976–81, 3:1148). This novel made gastronomy an actor like money, an agent of the dramas, particularly of the tragedies, on which Balzac constructed his modern society. Gastrolatry is the good-hearted, hapless Pons's tragic flaw, his sin gourmandise. Balzac modernized that sin and brought the punishment up to date. Pons is not set upon by divine retribution but by identifiable social forces, specifically, avaricious relatives who defraud him of an incomparable collection of antiques. Like the fine collection of antiques that he has amassed with such loving care,

[28] A generation younger than the other founding gastronomic fathers, Balzac knew their work well. His gastronomic credentials include a *Gastronomic Physiology* (1830), the entry on Brillat-Savarin in the *Biographie Michaud* (1835), and the *New Theory of Lunch* (1830) (1938, 2:43–47, 62–63, 671–76).

Pons's worship of fine food expresses his fine artistic nature and offers compensation for personal disappointments.[29]

In giving gourmandise tragic dimensions, Balzac broke with a philosophical tradition that restricted expression of the baser senses—touch, smell, and especially taste—to base-born characters and to the baser genre of comedy. Balzac's reinterpretation of the literary mode for such expression expanded and strengthened the connections between literature and gastronomy and, hence, between the gastronomic and the literary fields. Even as Balzac was positioning himself and his work in the emerging literary field, he was also, if less obviously and less consciously, defining a position in the nascent gastronomic field. The same work addressed both fields, albeit differently. In the one—the literary field toward which Balzac directed his strategies—the literary work supplied the primary cultural product, and reading that work constituted the primary cultural consumption. In the other—the gastronomic field—those same novels were part of a second-order consumption. Reading is an indirect culinary practice, and reading literary or intellectual works is the most indirect of all, furthest on the continuum from the instrumentality of cookbooks and similarly directive texts.

## Straddling Fields

Such intersections between continuously shifting cultural fields are not only possible, they are all but inevitable. A given individual may be central to one field and peripheral to another, may change subjective stance toward and objective position in one but not the other, and so on. Other things being equal, the more fields in which an individual occupies a position, and the more central those positions, the more symbolic power or capital at that person's disposal. A "cultural career" is made of the trajectories followed over a lifetime. Exploiting the opportunities offered by this sort of "cultural mobility" is what Balzac did so magnificently. The literary field was not simply the sociological context in which he occupied a position and in which he maneuvered. It also furnished him with a subject: Balzac was not only an actor in the nascent literary field of 19th-century

[29] "For him celibacy was less a preference than a necessity. Gourmandise, the sin of virtuous monks, opened her arms to him, and he threw himself into them as he had thrown himself into the adoration of art. . . . For him good food and Bric-a-Brac were substitutes for a woman" (1976–81, 7:495). Balzac continues, reproving Brillat-Savarin for not placing enough importance on "the real pleasure" to be had at table. "Digestion, by using human forces, constitutes an inner battle which, for gastrolaters, is the equivalent of the greatest climaxes (*jouissances*) of love." Even more completely than his collection, Pons's gourmandise satisfies the desire for the total merger with the desired object.

France; this author was also, and in some of his greatest works, an ethnographer of that field.

However, as the metaphor implies, straddling fields is possible only to the degree that the fields themselves intersect. Balzac's position in, and analysis of, the gastronomic field was a function of just such a field intersection. Although it is possible to occupy positions in noncontiguous, even unconnected fields, a high degree of intersection tends to be characteristic of cultural fields. Such convergence is especially notable in modern French society, where the long-term concentration of cultural institutions and activities in Paris favors the intersection of cultural fields as well as the interaction of individuals. Field intersection more generally is promoted by the common educational training received in the elite secondary school, which is another factor behind the conspicuous ties between the literary and political fields in France (Clark 1979).

The associations between the gastronomic field and the literary field are vital to the situation of cuisine among French cultural products and to the position of the gastronomic field in the hierarchy of cultural fields. Although the second-order consumption of this "literary gastronomy" places it on the outer reaches of the gastronomic field, this textual consumption is a crucial element in the diffusion of the values and the traditions that govern the field. The literary work effects the ultimate transcendence of the material and transformation of the sensual. This work of transformation points to the decisive distinction between cuisine and gastronomy and their respective functions in the gastronomic field. Cuisine, or culinary codes, concerns production; its injunctions are largely instrumental, its practice more or less site-specific. Gastronomy, on the other hand, is a code that pertains to consumption; it is grounded in primarily gratuitous, that is, noninstrumental, discourse. Each of these cultural products operates within the gastronomic field; each is a necessary component of the cultural consciousness characteristic of that field. For the gastronomic field to come into existence, cuisine had to connect with gastronomy, and culinary production had to be linked to culinary diffusion. It did so through texts that also made connections to other cultural fields—literature especially prominent among them.

## OTHER CULTURES, OTHER FIELDS

Considering gastronomy as a cultural field brings a number of long-standing questions into sharper focus. The development of the gastronomic field from the mid–19th century in France points to the processes that moved the field from beginnings to consolidation. The subsequent professionalization of cooking beginning in the 1880s worked off the continued expansion of restaurants, particularly in the great hotels catering to the nascent

tourist industry that acted as important training grounds for cadres of French chefs; at the end of a long career that began in the 1870s, the highly influential Auguste Escoffier boasted that he had sent some 2,000 French chefs from his kitchens all over the world (1985, p. 193). The automobile turned increasing numbers of diners into culinary tourists, and, beginning in the 1930s, the Michelin restaurant ratings established a national geography that at the same time set up a hierarchy of French cuisine. Professionalization brought further proliferation of texts, specialized journals, newspapers, and reviews, which address the domestic cook, the professional chef, and also, increasingly, readers for whom cooking is akin to a spectator sport. New media such as radio and television (and latterly the Internet) are today integral parts of, and active actors in, the gastronomic field.

The evolution of the gastronomic field in France impels us to reconsider the supposed disappearance of cultural singularity in an increasingly global economy. For foodways in France, the "McDonaldization" of food production (by no means entirely imputable to American corporations) and the continuing changes effected by the European Economic Community have raised fears of a possible loss, or at the very least a significant weakening, of distinctive cultural identities. Such fears are by no means new—witness the negative reception given German and English cookbooks in the 1820s or a 1924 warning that "France would no longer be France" when a French meal was no different from repasts elsewhere (Ruoff 1994, p. 13).[30] But the extent and strength of the field, with its extensive organization, its range of institutions, the values and beliefs those institutions perpetuate, and the self-consciousness that characterizes the field as a whole, lead us to posit the cultural field as a site of resistance to the (real or perceived) eradication of cultural difference. The more tightly organized the field and the greater its reach, the greater its autonomy and ability to perpetuate its core values. At the same time, the broader cultural resonance of the field, and therefore its capacity for cul-

[30] Rick Fantasia (1995) demonstrates that such fears are not without foundation in the France of the late 20th century, given the inroads of fast food and, more important, changes in the eating patterns of the French (fewer women at home to prepare a full-scale lunch, commuting distances that make in-house canteens more practicable for employee as well as employer, different, "modern" foodways more attuned to culinary pluralism). Perhaps the most striking of his findings is the clear distinction drawn by the adolescents interviewed between fast food and traditional forms of restauration, notably the café, distinctions based on the very different types of sociability seen as appropriate to each: where fast food represents a rejection of the traditional French culinary norms of the adult world and a quick "American" fix, the café remains important as a place to drink and to talk much as it has been for a century and more. Fischler (1990, pp. 212–17; 1997) places these debates within an international context, noting that loss of cultural identity is a concern in Spain and Italy as well as France.

tural resistance, is importantly dependent upon connections to other cultural fields and other institutions. In other words, a cultural field owes its singular position to a particular configuration relating the part to the whole, the field to the larger society, in which the larger social ties both temper and enhance the autonomy of the field. Complete independence of a field from its larger context can make no sense; it would be the cultural equivalent of solitary confinement. Isolation would nullify any larger impact as surely and as effectively as direct control by institutions.

Besides the great advantage of locating French culinary practices in a specific socioculinary setting, taking gastronomy as a field makes it possible to identify what is French about food in France. Although it may be commonly agreed, and not by the French alone, that gastronomy is somehow "innately" French, only in the 19th century, however important the ancien régime contribution, can one identify anything resembling a national culinary discourse. Of course, assigning gastronomy to the French "character" or unique geography or exceptional climate begs the question, all the more so since most of the institutions, ideologies, and practices that express these character traits originated, again, only in the 19th century. For, if culinary creativity in France was highly visible in the ancien régime and elite consumption singularly conspicuous, the gastronomic field, like a number of other cultural fields, arose in postrevolutionary France. These fields defined and were defined by publics that were larger, more expansive, and more heterogeneous than their prerevolutionary counterparts. In fixing these culinary practices in a circumscribed space, the gastronomic field allows us to distinguish between what is distinctively French and what is more generally modern about these culinary practices, what French cuisine and French culinary practices share with other cuisines, as well as the elements that set French foodways apart.

The concept of the gastronomic field allows us, for example, to make better sense of the connections between French and Chinese cuisine. The high degree of codification of the rules governing both culinary production and consumption clarifies, and justifies, the comparison and sets both against the regional cuisines in each country. Chinese and French elite cuisines build on strong, prestigious elite culinary traditions originally tied to a central government and an urban elite. Both, as well, were sustained by a significant textuality (Freeman 1977), and, in China as in France, visible cultural enthusiasm is tempered, channeled, and contained by authoritative culinary and gastronomic codes. Aside from the actual techniques of preparation and cooking (which are, indeed, very different), Chinese cuisine differs most importantly from the French in its evident philosophical overlay (Chang 1977). By contrast, French cuisine emerged out of a resolutely "secular" environment. In more recent times, against the continued support of the French government for various culinary ini-

tiatives—the Chambre syndicale de la haute cuisine française, the École nationale, and Centre national des arts culinaires founded in 1985, the Web sites, the classes that teach very young school children how to taste, the culinary competitions such as the Meilleur Ouvrier de France for different categories of cuisine, the commercial manifestations such as the Salon du chocolat, and so on—the policies of the Communist regime that did so much to destroy elite institutions in China greatly affected culinary practices by interrupting the course of culinary tradition and thwarting the practice of gastronomy (cf. Wenfu 1988). Such close, direct political control, even if less stringent than in the recent past, makes it unlikely that a gastronomic field in the full sense of the term could be identified in present-day China.

## Gastronomic Fields, Culinary Cultures, and Restaurant Worlds

If China is often compared to France for the refinement and complexity of its cuisine, the United States is more likely to be invoked as its polar opposite. And, although culinary America is a very different and substantially more sophisticated place than it was only a few decades ago, it does not offer the culinary unity or authority requisite for a gastronomic field. There is, in the first place, no cultural product on which to base a field because there is no American cuisine, that is, no culinary configuration identified with the country as a whole.[31] The foodways of Colonial America were either unwritten (Native American), foreign (Dutch, English, or Spanish, depending on settlement patterns) or both (divers African). Strong regional identities yield more or less local, product-based regional cuisines—New England, Tex-Mex, Southern, Cajun. Because these cuisines tend to be identified by dishes (North Carolina versus Texas barbecue, New England versus Manhattan clam chowder), they are susceptible to great variation (chowders alone would take us on a tour around the country). More recently, this distinctive American pluralism has come to include the foodways of newer immigrant groups, a number of which fast-food chains have made an integral part of the American diet (Belasco 1987; Mintz 1996); in Pizza Hut and Taco Bell, McDonald's, Burger King, and Kentucky Fried Chicken, foreigners (Fantasia 1995) as well as Americans find the most visible common element of American foodways. Whatever other culinary unity Americans may have comes not from food but

[31] If there is no American cuisine, there is an identifiable American diet (prevalence of fast food eaten out and prepackaged foods eaten at home, high levels of animal protein, salt, fat, and processed sugars and correspondingly low levels of fresh fruit and vegetables, preference for soda over water). See Mintz (1996, pp. 117–22) along with the warnings issued with disquieting regularity by various health authorities.

a food event: Thanksgiving. The United States may well be the only nation that harks to a meal as foundational event, that is, one of the founding, and perduring, myths of a singular American destiny (Ferguson 1996). Yet, here too, the legendary meal of turkey, pumpkin, and cranberries gives rise to innumerable variations fixed in regional or ethnic custom (sweet potato casserole with marshmallow topping; spaghetti or chili as a side dish), family tradition (mince pie instead of pumpkin), or idiosyncratic modifications.[32] In other words, pluralism wins out even for a food event that is insistently constructed as a defining national occasion.

This cultural pluralism supports, as it is supported by, a relative lack of cultural authority. None of the various national tourist guides (Mobil, AAA) approaches the authority of the *Michelin Guide,* whose annual restaurant ratings in France arouse such great expectation and anxiety on the part of diners and restaurateurs alike. It is symptomatic, and emblematic of American foodways, that the well-received *Zagat* restaurant guides for a number of cities and regions in the United States (and now, Paris) rely on self-selected informants rather than experts. Similarly, in the case of literature, no literary prize awarded in the United States, not the National Book Award, not the Pulitzer, enjoys the authority and the consequent impact on sales of the top literary prizes in France, most notably the Prix Goncourt (Clark 1979; 1987, chap. 1).

Yet, of course, even a society without a cuisine has characteristic foodways, which is to say that it has a culinary culture—a set of identifiable values and representations that have shaped and continue to inform those foodways. A certain degree of (self-)consciousness characterizes contemporary culinary cultures, which is why it can be argued that a French culinary culture emerges prior to the 19th century (Revel 1979; Mennell 1985, chap. 4). What the 19th century added with the establishment of the gastronomic field is the acute consciousness of positions and possibilities for social mobility in a circumscribed social space.

Given that every society has a culinary culture, it falls to the ethnographer to chart that culture and track down indigenous foodways. A culi-

[32] The celebrated chef and cookbook writer James Beard, who did so much to promote American foods, nevertheless proposed a heavily gallicized revisionist meal even as he claimed allegiance to the traditional turkey: along with a stern warning against cranberry (it obliterates the taste of the wine), he recommended serving champagne or vodka with a first course of caviar or smoked salmon, followed by a French red wine for the cheese course and another, sweet wine for the pumpkin pie, the whole topped off with kirsch, framboise, or cognac (1965, p. 323). It is not without import for my overall argument that Thanksgiving, as a national food event, is the product of texts, relayed by a panoply of representations: first, the journal of Edward Winslow that recounted the meal of 1621; and subsequently, the proclamation of 1863 by which Abraham Lincoln declared Thanksgiving a national holiday and the annual presidential declarations since.

nary culture is more comprehensive, less concentrated, less necessarily conflictual than a gastronomic field. It is also not centered on a specific cultural product. French culinary culture includes but reaches well beyond French (haute) cuisine and the gastronomic field. Similarly, American culinary culture comprehends much more than the fast food eateries that are so salient a feature of the American landscape. And where texts are essential to the intellectualization of food and therefore the constitution of the gastronomic field, a culinary culture incorporates a wide range of representations, most of which will not be intellectualized or even written—sayings ("Show me a soldier plate"), anecdotes (George Bush's avowed distaste for broccoli), advertising slogans ("Where's the beef?"), and images from radio, cinema, and television: Popeye's association with spinach is indelibly inscribed in the culinary memories of generations of moviegoing Americans.[33] French culinary culture, too, has been shaped by popular sayings ("Dans le cochon, tout est bon" [Everything in the pig is good to eat]) as well as media representations (François Mitterrand's obituaries made much of the president's food and dining preferences). Whereas visual images lend important support to the gastronomic field, they are absolutely central to the formation of a culinary culture. By the same token, the texts that play the major role for a gastronomic field are less salient in the more broadly based, less focused, more loosely participatory culinary culture.

If the gastronomic field does not make sense either of or for American culinary culture, what account can be made of the America that dines out more and more, not at McDonald's but in restaurants situated at the antipodes of industrialized fast food? What about the America that reminds one suspiciously of France, with its adulation of avant-garde chefs and taste for culinary adventure both close to home and in far-flung places? How do we discuss the urban America in which restaurants have been so signal a factor in the reconfiguration of the cityscape and the practices it generates (Zukin 1991, chap. 7)? A production of culture perspective suggests *restaurant world* as an appropriate model, that is, to adapt the technical definition of *art world,* "the network of people whose cooperative activity . . . produces the kind of [culinary] works that [restaurant] world is noted for" (Becker 1982, p. x). Such cooperative networks can exist only in fairly circumscribed social or geographical settings en-

[33] In 1997, the Jewish Museum in New York City presented a wonderful video exhibit of Jewish food on American television from the 1950s to the present (*Chicken Soup and Wontons*, 1997). Similar shows could undoubtedly be mounted for other "ethnic" cuisines of long standing. Movies such as *Eat-Drink Man-Woman* (Chinese cuisine), *The Big Night* (Italian cuisine), and the iconic film of French cuisine, *Babette's Feast,* are important vehicles of diffusion of elite culinary values and practices.

dowed with mechanisms that promote connection. The sheer size of the United States, the ambient cultural pluralism, the conflicting occupational identifications of chefs and cooks (Fine 1996*a*) dictate that restaurant worlds in the technical, sociological sense are the exception rather than the rule.[34] This restaurant world is structured by a network of high-end restaurants run by self-consciously innovative chef-entrepreneurs. General professional support comes from a number of organizations and periodicals (Dornenburg and Page 1995, pp. 298–304; Cooper 1998, pp. 281–88), but more important for these elite chefs are the elite media representations that diffuse critiques and praise of given restaurants as well as anecdotes about star chefs, who, television at the ready, are likely to turn into media personalities in their own right. Centrifugal economic factors (each restaurant produces a singular cultural product and competes with others in the same market niche) are countered by centripetal social forces generated by close personal and professional connections (Ferguson and Zukin 1998).[35] While the density of these elite restaurants is highest in New York city, the network of chefs is nationwide and, not infrequently, international as well.

Each of these models fits with a larger paradigm of assumptions concerning the relationship of food and society. The *restaurant world* focuses on production of a more or less well-defined culinary product—which, in the case of the fin de siècle American restaurant world, can be characterized as avant-garde, eclectic cuisine. A restaurant world coheres through networks of individuals, whereas a *culinary culture* fixed in practices and values is above all a model of culinary reception or consumption. Finally,

[34] Cf. the striking absence of such a larger connection in the restaurants studied by Gary Fine (1996*b*, pp. 133–37) in a medium-size urban setting (Minneapolis–St. Paul). Fine relates these thin networks to the fragmented economic organization of the restaurant industry (each restaurant producing its own, singular product) and the structures of restaurant kitchens. That this world of restaurants is far from a restaurant world is clear from the speculation of a reader Fine cites about what would be necessary to turn the world of these restaurants into an art world (1996*b*, p. 264). Zukin (1995, chap. 5) confirms this picture in a study of a range of midlevel restaurants in New York City.

[35] As concerns patterns of interaction, a number of New York chefs interviewed (Ferguson and Zukin 1998) mentioned that the irregular hours a chef spends on the job effectively restricts socializing to other chefs, both informally (one chef regularly ended the evening in the kitchen of a competitor-friend two blocks away) and formally, through institutions such as the James Beard Foundation and charitable benefits. Thus, simply in the first week of May 1998 as I was revising this article, four of New York's top chefs prepared a reception to benefit the Frick Collection; the James Beard Awards winners were announced at a benefit dinner; and another dinner to benefit the James Beard Foundation brought together 48 chefs from across the country, all of whom had at one time or another cooked in the famed restaurant of the 1980s, the Quilted Giraffe (it closed in 1992).

a *gastronomic field* is structured importantly by a largely textual discourse that continually (re)negotiates the systemic tensions between production and consumption. The model chosen will depend on the theoretical and intellectual agenda. Culinary culture and the restaurant world take us to food; the gastronomic field points us toward other cultural fields and particularly toward the arts.

## CONCLUSION

The sociological import of gastronomy or cuisine extends well beyond the particular cultural product. Viewing gastronomy as a field refines our understanding of cultural fields as such, their characteristics and their character, how they operate and evolve, the respects in which they are similar and those where they differ, their connections to the larger field of cultural production and the larger society. From the outset, it has been apparent that the nature, or medium, of the cultural product is a fundamental determinant of the structure of both the field and the relations between production and consumption. Unlike the literary field, where the primary and secondary product rely on the same vehicle—writing—but like the musical field, the gastronomic field is structured not simply by the duality of direct production and indirect, critical commentary—the case for any cultural product—but by the radical disjuncture between the material and the intellectual products and the consequent dependence of the field on the written document. The objection is often raised that words "get in the way" of the primary cultural experience (tasting, seeing, reading, listening) (cf. Wolfe 1975), that their intellectualization neutralizes the senses. But, in cultural fields, there is no getting around words. Whatever the deleterious effects on individual appreciation, it is the discourse of criticism and chronicle that must bear most of the weight of the cultural field.

The premium that second-order discourse places on innovation aligns gastronomy with the arts more generally in modern society where the indirect cultural production sustains the more or less stable configuration that renders conflict creative. Wherever one comes down in the debates over cuisine as an aesthetic phenomenon, it is indisputable that cuisine in France warrants classification among the arts by virtue of the attributes shared with other cultural and specifically artistic fields. The simultaneous susceptibility and resistance to change, the drive toward innovation against the force of tradition, aligns gastronomy with other modern arts that occupy fields that are similarly divided or, more accurately, fragmented among multiple production sites, each of which negotiates invention and convention. Every field will have its distinctive networks and strategies, its bastions of traditionalism along with outposts of innovation.

By simultaneously containing and promoting competition, the field generates the inevitable struggles that are the signs of cultural ferment and creativity. For good or for ill, the arts in contemporary society are tightly bound to their apposite cultural fields. Accordingly, the study of culture will do well to look to the concept of the cultural field to elucidate both the mechanics and the range of cultural experience. The gastronomic field is so useful as a particular example precisely because it enables us to talk more concretely and particularly about cultural experiences that are easily lost to sociological study when language and practice are not aligned in theoretical understanding.

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