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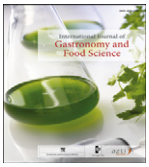

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# On the idea of novelty in cuisine
## A brief historical insight

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**Abstract**

The search of novelty in cuisine is not run in every culture: this one gets a history, which starts in France, during the 17th century. This research made cuisine evolved extensively in the entire West and changed chefs' status. The Nouvelle Cuisine, during the 1970s, changed the deal to lead to the globalized cuisine of today.
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*Keywords:* Cuisine; Novelty; Newness; Autonomy; Artist-cook; Globalization; Nouvelle Cuisine

> New cooking every year;
> Because every year tastes change;
> And new kickshaws every day;
> So you must be a chemist, Justine.[1]

For many centuries now, it would seem that no one has ever proclaimed any true novelty in cooking. The books, which are still around from long ago are, in a certain way, a testament: for decades, even centuries, they have been used without any apparent change. However, one should not fully trust these first impressions; the same title may often be used to cover many variants: thus there has been change, but it is as if no one should know. At the same time, ethnic or popular cooking, which are based on tradition, are actually known to integrate new products or techniques often coming from afar: an example is products from the New World, which overall have not been easily accepted unless they resembled other products, indigenous and already well known, and thus were able to substitute for them. Yet in the Western world, and elsewhere for a certain portion of the population, it seems that cuisine today should reinvent itself without end. Among those 'in the know', when one broaches the subject, one often has the impression that it was Gault and Millau who invented the principle with their 10 Commandments of Nouvelle Cuisine (New Cuisine) in 1973. And yet this idea has a much longer history, in fact appearing in the middle of the 17th century in France during the reign of Louis XIV. However, the reference to Gault and Millau, or more precisely to Nouvelle Cuisine, is not totally wrong. Effectively, as we will see, that did mark a shift: there was a before and an after.

But, really, what is novelty in cooking? The question can, in fact, be approached from two sides: from the point of view of the practitioner, he who produces, or from the point of view of the eater, he who consumes. The first would be about technique and the second about society and culture. Clearly, each contains a number of sub-categories, and each can interact with the other, often but not always in a synchronized way: sometimes, it is the technical aspect, which prevails and introduces novelty to the consumer; other times it is the opposite, new behaviors lead to the evolution of new techniques.

To better understand the phenomenon, it is necessary to perform a quick survey of the history of novelty in cooking from both points of view. Effectively, if the history of recipes and of cuisine in general is well documented for a number of years, whether in the short term (the appearance of written

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[1] Verse from the end of the 18th century cited, without specifying author or origin, by Wheaton (1984).

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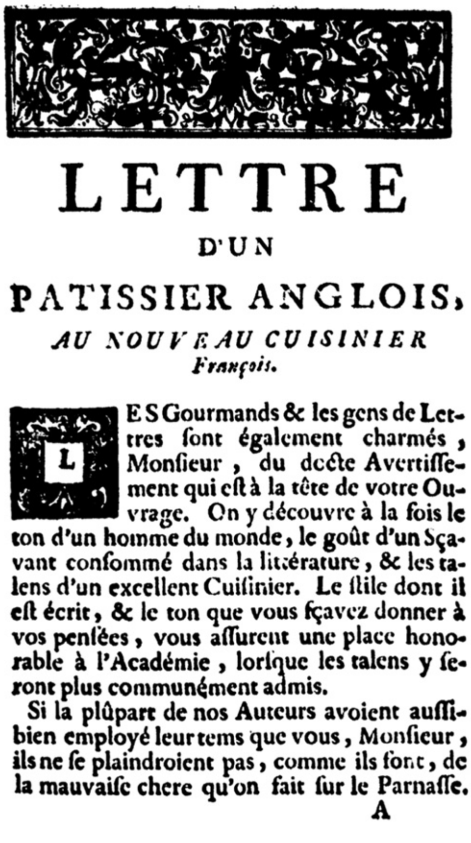
recipes) or in the long term (the evolution of cooking), the social and interpersonal context in which these recipes and techniques fit is much less known. But, both from the point of view of the cook and of his public, it is not less important. We can then tackle the transformations of the last half century, which have caused a radical evolution in the concept of novelty. Keeping everything in proportion, the theory developed by Thomas Kühn for the history of science provides a useful tool for thinking about cuisine. According to Kühn, 'normal' science, that which, at a given moment, is the norm for the scientific world, becomes no longer acceptable and in order to progress it is necessary to look for a new value system (or paradigm) in which to place the world. We can apply this to the two histories of cooking and look for these break points.

Additionally, the phenomenon of *Haute Cuisine* (High Cuisine) was born in France and French cooking has been the reference for a long time. The first two parts of this article will cover these ideas, up to and including *Nouvelle Cuisine* or New Cuisine; they will be dedicated to the development of the idea of novelty in this country, France, which has had a major role despite sometimes being reticent. In England, protests against French cuisine will always remain alive (Mennell, 1987), in Italy at the end of the 19th century, Artusi tried to give that country a national cuisine (Capatti and Massimo, 2002); in both cases, it was actually the concept of *Haute Cuisine*, which was contested and we will see how it was in France that this concept truly evolved. The last part of the article will cover global developments in *Haute Cuisine* from this transitional period onwards.



LETTRE

D'UN

PATISSIER ANGLOIS,

*AU NOUVEAU CUISINIER*
*François.*

LES Gourmands & les gens de Lettres ſont également charmés, Monſieur, du docte Avertiſſement qui eſt à la tête de votre Ouvrage. On y découvre à la fois le ton d'un homme du monde, le goût d'un Sçavant conſommé dans la littérature, & les talens d'un excellent Cuiſinier. Le ſtile dont il eſt écrit, & le ton que vous ſçavez donner à vos penſées, vous aſſurent une place honorable à l'Académie, lorſque les talens y ſeront plus communément admis.

Si la plûpart de nos Auteurs avoient auſſi-bien employé leur tems que vous, Monſieur, ils ne ſe plaindroient pas, comme ils font, de la mauvaiſe chere qu'on fait ſur le Parnaſſe.

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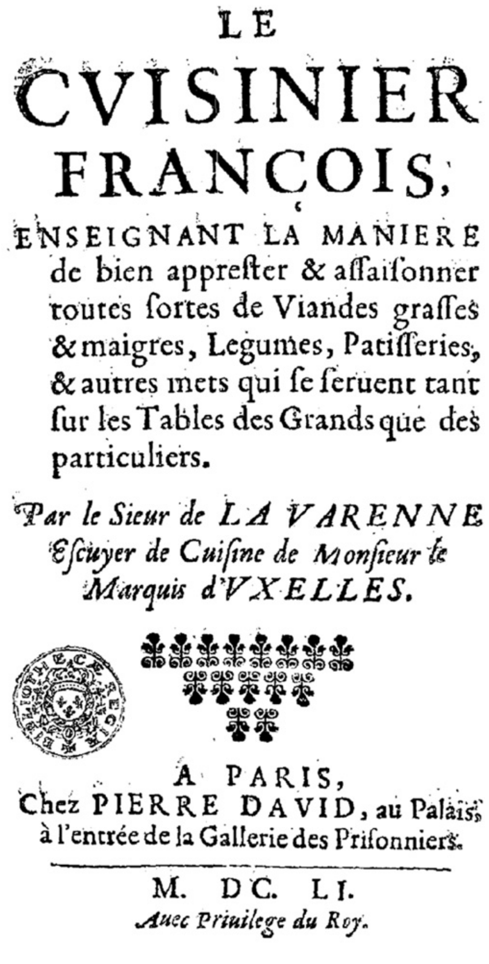
## An idea not as new as all that…

### First appearances

In the West, the idea of *Haute Cuisine*, that is to say a cuisine radically different in principle from 'home cooking' and not simply a 'richer' version of it, was born when two apparently unrelated events occurred. One was the ambitions of Louis XIV who, after a period of revolt in which the nobility took advantage of the young king, wanted to bring them back into line, and the second was the publication in 1651 by François La Varenne of *Cuisinier François* (The French Cook), the first book on French cooking to appear in several decades. The coming to power of Louis XIV, and the politics put in place with the help of his minister Colbert to divert the nobility, was a pivotal moment in a general quest for novelty. Briefly, this was part of a strategy of distinction imposed by the king on the Court of Versailles, which put in place a double rivalry. The first at the heart of the aristocracy itself, and the second between them and the middle class (Elias, 1969; Mennell, 1987); these pushed a society still living in a universe based on tradition (Tarde, 1890) into the universe of fashion (in a grand sense).

The other pivotal event or, more exactly, that which was going to give the means to satisfy the demand for novelty as applied to cuisine, was the publication of 'Le Cuisinier François. This work by La Varenne confirmed, in effect, not only unexpected changes in a diet followed by the French since the Renaissance, but also claims to originality. It put forth the idea of national identity so well – the works in circulation before its publication were mostly translations or adaptations from Italian – in that the appropriateness of the recipes were to the tastes of the day in the best society (he was the 'squire of cooking' for the Marquis of Uxelles). He also advocated the search for 'natural' flavor – a feature that would serve as a link throughout the long history of French cooking – by recommending the abandonment of spices and their replacement by indigenous aromatic plants, the use of thick and rich sauces flavored differently than previously used acidic ones, the progressive separation of sweet and savoury, and a new interest in vegetables. On the other hand, he was a chef and not a head-waiter as had been the Italians, and it is notable also that it was one of the first times that a chef had attained such power (Sabban and Serventi, 1998). Last but not least, his book was organized in a different way: for the first time recipes were separated by service but also discriminating between 'fat days' and 'lean days' and also times of Lent. This new arrangement allowed him to understand that in many different recipes there are identical sequences, and the isolation of these allowed the construction of root or base recipes. This was the beginning of the 'modular' concept (Fink, 1995) in French *Haute Cuisine,* which became a characteristic of Western *Haute Cuisine* in general, and allowed an almost infinite regeneration of recipes and the production of a sort of machine to produce novelty, which cooks through Escoffier have not ceased to try and perfect. This process allowed variations, and they were vast; it also allowed the assimilation of foreign styles of cooking, giving a tool to 'read' and assimilate and adapt them to one's own style of production, also to technological innovations, to the evolution of production of heat and cold, to the transport revolution, to the advances in science and in medicine. As Jean François Revel said in *Un festin en paroles* (A Feast in Words), 'Great cuisine is by definition open cuisine, the opposite of cooking blocked by a regional attitude. *The first is condemned to invent, to search for the new*,[2] the second is condemned to conserve, for better and for worse, what has been put out over the centuries.'



LE
CVISINIER
FRANÇOIS,
ENSEIGNANT LA MANIERE
de bien appreſter & aſſaiſonner
toutes ſortes de Viandes graſſes
& maigres, Legumes, Patiſſeries,
& autres mets qui ſe ſeruent tant
ſur les Tables des Grands que des
particuliers.

Par le Sieur de LA VARENNE
Eſcuyer de Cuiſine de Monſieur le
Marquis d'VXELLES.

A PARIS,
Chez PIERRE DAVID, au Palais,
à l'entrée de la Gallerie des Priſonniers.

M. DC. LI.
Auec Priuilege du Roy.

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### *"New cuisines"?*

That is what the successors of La Varenne understood, and although it was judged passé by the following generation, they continued along the same path, in a way strengthening the principles and sometimes accusing each other of plagiarism (Wheaton, 1984). For example, a chef known only by the initials L.S.R. who virulently decried the old-fashioned ways in *L'Art de bien traiter* (The Art of Fine Catering) decried the same as those changed in the work by La Varenne, or Massialot whose *Cuisinier Roïal et Bourgeois* (Royal and Middle Class Chef) attempted to be the first encyclopedia of cooking where articles were arranged alphabetically. With the death of Louis XIV, the entire society felt the need to breathe and the court itself was liberated from the burden of strict protocol. Everyone had a desire for less formality and more lightheartedness: it was the triumph of 'little meals', which came to be valued in cuisine, in conversation, and even in debauchery. The years 1730–1740 were rich in first time publications all of which, in their titles or in their prefaces, proclaimed novelty or modernity:

> 'Repeated and concurrent editions fought each other for public favor: 1739, simultaneous appearance of *Les Dons de Comus* (The Gifts from Comus) by François Marin and *Nouveau traité de la cuisine* (New Agreement for Cooking) by Menon. In 1742, there were two editions of this last book, plus two of *Nouvelle Cuisine* (New Cuisine) [a supplement to New Agreement for Cooking]. François Marin launched a counter-attack with *Suite des Dons des Comus* (Following the Gifts from Comus); Massialot re-edited New Royal and Middle Class Chef, and Vincent La Chapelle produced a five volume series entitled, *Le Cuisinier moderne* (The Modern Cook). It was an auspicious period for the gastronomy reader!' (Girard, 1977)

In the world of fine dining, the first half of the 18th century lived under the curse of what contemporaries and cooks themselves considered 'New Cuisine', which required a radical simplification of old ways and the adoption of a scientific approach—the sort of 'chemistry', which is spoken about in the preface of The Gifts from Comus. This tendency, together with new concerns about diet and a better understanding of the digestive mechanisms, allowed the chapter on bases to propose reductions to 'roux' (the mix of butter and flour used to thicken a sauce) thus sanctioning the success of the 'quintessential' and of the 'restaurants' (feeding), and this mix would give its name to the institution born in 1763—the restaurant. On the other hand, throughout the entire century attention was given to the question of luxury and to the social mobility of the middle class, and this would result in a simplification and widespread diffusion of fine cuisine. Also, in a general way, the cooking of the century would be embodied by *La cuisinière bourgeoise* (The Middle Class Cook), a best seller attributed to Menon, published in 1746, and read by people who were, socially, far from middle class (Girard, 1977).

### *The triumph of the middle class*

The Revolution itself seemed not to have cut the appetite for novelty (Mercier, 1989). In the years that followed, restaurants would experience a phenomenal boom; at the very beginning of the Empire, Grimod de La Reynière 'invented' restaurant review and the gastronomy press. At his demise, Carême would become the most sought after cook in Europe, initiating the publication of fundamental works, which gave rules to cooking that lasted for the rest of the century and beyond.

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[2] Italicized by us.

The development of the restaurant and the birth of the food critic promoted the production of novelty in cooking: it established and legitimated a direct rivalry among cooks – instead of the former competition between patrons – and increasing the population of diners. Thus these two new institutions encouraged both cooks to innovate to outperform each other, and the public to be more demanding. The 'system' put in place by Carême and disseminated by his work had an important auxiliary result: by seeing cuisine as entirely combinatorial it streamlined the work involved, pushing the movement initiated by La Varenne 150 years earlier to its limit. In this system, a dish is composed of three elements: the main ingredient (usually meat or fish, but also possibly a vegetable or why not a base sauce?), its side dish – what Carême called 'trimming' – and, to finish, a sauce. This last was conceived following the same principle: with few exceptions, a base sauce, always based on roux, an 'essential extract', which is reduced so that it flavors the sauce and makes it correspond to the main dish, and a solid garnish; these 3 elements could vary independently. This technique allowed indefinite multiplication of sauces thus giving classic French cooking its very character. Also, certain elements could be prepared in advance and finished at the last minute, the sauces and the garnishes in particular: cooking became a sort of game of constructing with unlimited variability and a streamlined work in which the last part could be very quickly executed. Doing so, Carême gave the restaurant the technical means it needed, although for him the only real cuisine would always come from cooking in a private home. The restaurant and the critic, however, took cuisine out of private houses and made it public, thus encouraging the tendency to simplify as already seen in the century before. The continuing movement from French style service to Russian style service[3] accelerated this, in particular by encouraging the progressive abandon, acquired from Carême, of decorative cuisine—an abandonment, which Escoffier completed definitively at the end of the century, following the enterprising work of his teacher, Urbain Dubois, who was himself a disciple of Carême. Escoffier would put the finishing touches on the work of his professional 'grandfather' by pushing his logic to its very limits, particularly in the realm of sauces. Also, he applied this to reforming the work of the kitchen, adopting a 'Taylorist' approach (dividing tasks, specialization, pyramidal organization) in order to better respond to the demands of cooking itself and to those of the restaurant. More rigorous management, abandon of the superfluous, economy, streamlined work, etc. we have definitely entered the middle class industrial age: its philosophy molded cooking as it did everything else, and meals were also made to live in this age because it is in this century that the agro-food industry was born, that to which the greatest names in cooking would bring their support.

The association of Escoffier with César Ritz would bring the creation and organization of establishments around the world, giving French cuisine an aura and an influence never before attained. The symbol of this might be *Les Dîners d'Épicure* (The Dinners of Epicurus), a meal organized all over the world in 1911 and 1912 in which many thousands of guests had *the same meal at the same time*, thanks to the modern wonders of telephone, telegraph and the *Guide culinaire* (Culinary Guide), the reference work of the Master. Additionally, Escoffier was well acquainted with the consequences of the changes to daily life, which arrived in the Second Empire, thanks to the particularly strong progress in science and industry during this period, and he advocated a parallel evolution for cooking such that it would adapt to modern rhythms (Escoffier, 1985, 1902). The system had now been perfected and the influence of French cooking was felt (nearly) all around the world, and this put a close to the period: to survive, cooking would have to face a paradigm change, and abandon the Carême principle for sauces, which generate each other, and all-purpose bases.

## *Protest*

Yet even before the first world war, this cuisine was brought back in two completely different ways: the 'futurists', embodied by among others the poet Guillaume Apollinaire and the cook Jules Maincave (Berghaus, 2001), and the 'regionalists'; two movements directly resulting from the transportation revolution. Effectively, for both groups the world was much smaller. The avant-garde or futurists took relativistic stance (much like the press of the times, which often compared futuristic cuisine with foreign, even exotic, cuisine discovered thanks to worldwide exhibitions): Why do these rules here mean any more than whatever random association may by chance appear in our thoughts? The regionalists searched for roots, rather mythic to say the truth (Assouly, 2004), and the most part profiting to hold reactionary talks. If the transportation revolution of the 19th century jolted ways of life and transformed cuisine, in particular by providing access to new products and allowing personal mobility, the arrival of the automobile accelerated the process. It offered travellers (the fortunate) a never before known autonomy and profoundly changed the relationship between country and city, favoring the acculturation of the former in the ways of cooking among other areas (Bertho-Lavenir, 1999). Local cuisine, usually country-style cooking, became ‘regional’, often at the cost of folk clichés. Once again, the Carêmian miracle occurred: ‘reading’ foreign cuisine had been allowed, ‘normalizing’ the most backwards French country cuisine to bring technique and rationality was now allowed; in return, these cooking styles revived classic cuisine, offering it a fresh breath and pushing it away from being prim and stuffy. This came at the right time: the ‘Great War’ had hit hard at the wallets of the middle class, even if the Parisian temples of great cuisine were not about to close their doors, only a simpler cuisine could personify ‘modernity’ and thus be welcomed. The modernist tendency did not have the same luck: the war-time death of Jules Maincave (whose proposals were premonitory) and the elitist character of the inner circle of the avant-garde, kept this group anecdotal during this period. Thus, despite the activism of authors like Paul Reboux and a few other isolated voices, their postulates did not know any success until much later.

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[3] French service is that which was practised in the court and by the aristocracy, both in France and also in many European countries where a similar style was followed from the 17th to the mid-19th centuries. Standardized during the reign of Louis XIV, it followed the example of earlier services but took on a social and political dimension. Meals were composed of a succession of services, which were themselves made up of an important number of different dishes, and were proportional to the number of guests and organized according to a complex hierarchy. From one service to the next, dishes fit each other, occupying the same hierarchical and strategic place on the table. The 'plan de table' (Table plan) did not mean what it does today (seating plan), the placement of guests around the table; instead it meant the placement of the different dishes. However, the sense of social hierarchy was such that just by seeing the dishes, everyone would know which place to take.

Russian service is that which is still practiced today at official meals, dishes are successively presented to all guests and everyone eats the same thing as their neighbor at the same time.

French service put more emphasis on the spatial dimension of a meal, Russian service puts the emphasis on the temporal dimension: the former is synchronic and the latter diachronic (Flandrin, 2002; Flandrin and Montanari, 1996).

### *Towards a revival*

1939: it is war again and very quickly, rationing. This had an influence on not only food but also on cooking, forcing chefs and housewives to reconsider everything, from methods to products (Capatti, 1989). It would be 1951 before the situation fully returned to ‘normal’ for the Michelin Guide, that grand critic of French cuisine, and they re-established 3 star ratings; although ration tickets had already disappeared 3 years ago. Some wished for the return of the ‘good old days’ before the war, others thought the opposite, that a page had been turned in cuisine and elsewhere, and that it was now necessary to adapt to new times. Even André Guillot, who had moved to the restaurant Auberge du Vieux Marly near Paris in 1947, advocated a radically simplified cuisine, yet one grounded in tradition. In this context, Curnonsky, who was the most famous food commentator of the between-the-wars period, the ‘Prince of the Gourmets’ and a harbinger of regionalism, personified this nostalgic tendency with his anthology of recipes entitled *À l'infortune du pot* (For the Ill-fated Cooking Pot), whereas the writer Paul Reboux did the same for the modernists with *Nouveau Savoir-Manger* (The New To Know-To Eat), which followed his *Plats nouveaux!* (New Dishes!) written during the Roaring Twenties. Well before the ‘bistronomie’ of today, the 1950s saw a passion for the bistro, or small casual restaurant, and its lack of pretension both in decoration and in dishes. The grand spots for the classic grand cuisine always had their faithful customers, but other places where the cuisine was more inspired and the presentation less formal began to compete: the modernist spirit of the 1950s was at work, consumerism had begun to show its face and it was time for cooking to follow and to speak to this new category of amateurs. This is the *Nouvelle Cuisine* that Gault and Millau discovered in 1965 at the restaurant of Paul Bocuse, then at the Troisgros brothers' restaurant, before proclaiming their Stone Tablet of Commandments in 1973. The new paradigm that cuisine had searched for more than half a century had been found and we will soon see what it consisted of: a new era had begun.

## Cuisine and its conquest of self-determination

During the three centuries that separate the publication of Le Cuisinier François from the appearance of *Nouvelle Cuisine* 20th century style, we see that the cooking arena has not stopped growing, touching an ever larger public but also integrating more and more products and methods of preparation, and not hesitating to include foreign contributions once reviewed and corrected by the Carêmian system. Chefs knew how to offer thousands of new recipes, yet generally speaking the true evolution of cuisine did not come from them; it came more so from the society, which cuisine aimed to follow. Until *Nouvelle Cuisine*, the overall impression was that, except for a few exceptional chefs with outstanding skills, new recipes were responses to public demands: we had not yet arrived at today's logic of making an offer. During this period, the relationship between chef and eater had not stopped evolving, from dependency (the chef and his patron) to instruction (the chef and his clients) and, finally, the opposite. This evolution has been possible because the way of looking at cuisine had changed during this long period, a change that operates along 3 axes: making cuisine the object of thought, democratizing it, recognizing the autonomy of chefs with regard to the food they prepare and the clients they prepare it for.

### *Cuisine as an object of thought*

Revel (1985) considered the first preface of *Les Dons de Comus*, written by the Jesuit priests Brumoy and Bougeant, to be the foundation of this reflection on cuisine. This was in fact the first writing ‘about’ cuisine, and it was crucially important because it put cuisine into a general movement of thought. However, from the start, La Varenne with his rough analytical approach in Le Cuisinier François and his successors also, all seemed to offer an unexpected Cartesian approach, that which in fact permeated French society in this period (Azouvi, 2002). Their contemporaries made no mistake about it, moreover many were ready to support this, for better or for worse: the discussion appeared many times during the controversy about *Nouvelle Cuisine* of the 1740s. Alain Girard, author of a study on culinary publishing in 18th century, notes, “The work [the second edition of *Les Dons de Comus*] opens with a hymn to science, to Cartesianism, to the philosophical mind [...]. Cuisine is structured by the laws of geometry. And Meusnier followed, 'As guarantors, I have the great Newton, Descartes, Hartroker, Malsiphy, Mussembrock [sic] and the greatest physicists of the world[…]'" (Girard, 1977). The subject can make one smile, only this rational approach could justify the work of French chefs of the time by providing the conditions to develop cooking, recipes simply regenerated themselves. Underlined with a certain treachery known to des Alleurs, is the alleged 'English Pastry Chef' who started a controversy with Meusnier of Querlon, writer of the second preface to *Les Dons de Comus*, by seeming to take for granted that cuisine is assimilated into language:

> "But it is here where one must admire the superior mind of people of high society and the interaction they have with the art of *Nouvelle Cuisine*; because with a few simple materials they are able to give everything that passes through their hands an air of novelty. In *Nouvelle Cuisine*, with a broth, oil, lemon and an essential extract, you make an infinite number of sauces and *ragoûts* and give each a different name. The same thing in fact happens among the people of good taste and of high society." (Alleurs (des), 1739)

Even before the invention of the concept of gastronomy – that which before was known as 'gastrology' [Jaucourt, in *Encyclopédie*] – the 18th century was reflective about cuisine, and in many ways: analytically, but also morally, socially, esthetically and diet-related. From *L'Emile* (The Emile) by Jean-Jacques Rousseau to *L'Encyclopédie* (The Encyclopedia) by d'Alembert and Diderot (1751–1772), from the prefaces of *Les Dons de Comus* to *Cuisine de santé* (Cooking for Health) by Jourdan Lecointre, many works testify to the link between cooking and other great issues of the century: the question of luxury, the esthetic debate, the individual, the emergence of modern science. The new institution of the restaurant, which first appeared in Paris in 1763, put this attitude into practice – first because it acted as the server of a highly nutritious meal presented in a lighthearted way, and second because it responded to the growing demand for individualism – and, for that matter, became the embodiment of *Nouvelle Cuisine* (Spang, 2000).

A new step was taken with the invention of food writing and restaurant reviewing, who in fact organized self-reflection. Their appearance allowed a new look at cuisine. Between 1803 and 1812, Grimod de La Reyniere invented both criticism and restaurant guides with *l'Almanach des Gourmands* (The Gourmet's Almanac) and the magazine *Journal des Gourmands et des Belles* (Magazine of Gourmets and Beauties), a manual for how to eat and entertain. If, as Priscilla Ferguson says, after the Revolution he '[put] order in a world that was upside down', he did not in any sense restore the old order, on the contrary it contributed to founding a new culture and opened cooking to new influences. A perspective that Brillat Savarin would broaden in *La Physiologie du Goût* (Physiology of Taste) published in 1825 and in which he described the fundamentals of a new science, gastronomy, 'a knowledge based on reason concerning all that relates man to his nourishment'. As did Ferguson, Brillat put the emphasis on modernity in gastronomy, a true multidisciplinary science. His analytical yet warm approach towards cuisine reflected back on the food itself and allowed evolution with a true dimension of self-reflection.

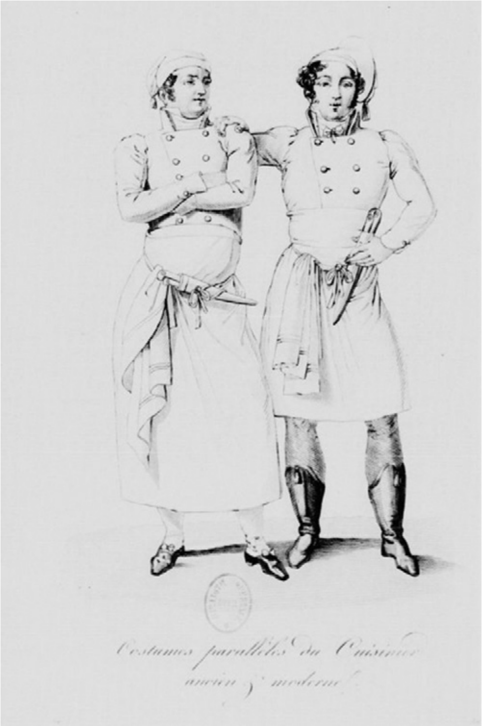
If, to follow the thoughts of Revel, the preface of *Les Dons de Comus* showed the way, it was Grimod and Brillat who began the systematic, reasoned exploration. They put in place the triangular system that is the basis of modern gastronomy; it brings together the chef, the critic (in the grand sense) and the eater through two mediators: the restaurant and the gastronomic discourse. Earlier, things had perhaps been simpler: the chef had only one patron to satisfy but now, thanks to the restaurant and the critics, his clients had indeed multiplied.

But the job of the critic was not a one way track: we immediately think that his role was to give the public information about novelties in cuisine, but he was also the vector for 'bringing information up' from the public to the chef. In fact, the chef had to always listen to his clients. As would be said much later by the designer Raymond Loewy regarding his work, 'most advanced, yet acceptable'.

## *Democratizing cuisine*

The half century after the Revolution was, in the culinary world, the heart of and the witness to a paradigm change similar to that described by Kühn for science. In a short period of time cuisine became accessible not only to the aristocracy but to all (in theory), and the 'system', which allowed this metamorphosis was put in place. That is the trilogy consisting of first, the restaurant; second, the food critic 'invented' by Grimod de La Reynière; and, finally, the 'Carêmian code' a sort of culinary equivalent to the Napoleonic code in the legislative world. Based on the strength of this system and the reverberations it would leave throughout the 19th century, particularly in literature, in France cooking would become a truly cultural endeavor (Ferguson, 2005).

The restaurant, a pure product of Enlightment—this new 'commodity' personified the era as "*La cuisinière bourgeoise*" had done from a practical point of view, yet it also was the herald of another change in cooking, its democratization. The new institution would be an effective tool for the diffusion of culinary themes from the top to the bottom of society. Popular establishments had already existed in Paris from before the Revolution (Meyzie, 2010), but the enormous development and diversification that the restaurant would know throughout the following century would truly accelerate this movement (Aron, 1973). For example in 1856, a butcher named Duval put this idea to use for a completely different clientele when he launched in Paris the concept of *bouillons* ('broths'), some popular restaurants where *pot-au-feu* (boiled beef) and its broth were served first but which proposed very quickly a diversified range of dishes. Cleanliness, hygiene and moderate prices were all brought together in a centralized and integrated production (for instance, the Duval *bouillons* would have their own bakery). The success was immediate and these establishments multiplied and were soon imitated by competitors.



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For more than a century, cooking evolved within this system: if the changes were considerable, they kept to be superficial. The small and large innovations were all a consequence – or an expression – of the always more radical democratization. This allowed Jules Gouffé[4] to state in his book *Livre de cuisine* (Book of cooking) (Gouffé, 1967), 'If it is true that the number of great homes are not as many as before, it is also true that the number of people *who know how to eat* is greatly increased. The overall result is perhaps advantageous, for it is essential to be attentive to the way of cooking and also to the presentation.' Russian service, the invention of international cuisine by Escoffier, the appearance of 'ideological' cuisine in the 20th century and the increasing popularity of the Michelin Guide all participated in this underground movement to make cuisine more accessible both from the cultural and the financial point of view. This meant that for cuisine as for other domains, there was an ever increasing simplification, and this was no doubt a reason for nostalgia and regret, longing for a golden age that now seemed long ago.

This model stayed Parisian for a long time whatever the categories. Little by little, however, the towns in the provinces and abroad also had their restaurants and, as we saw, in the time between the wars thanks to the development of the automobile, country places were transformed and their little inns took on the tastes of the city. This reminds us that in more than one way this diffusion also took the form of normalization. While on the other hand, regionalism would accelerate the general move towards democratization: chefs in the countryside, already honored thanks to, among others, the Michelin Guide, which from 1926 became the guide we still know, with its system of stars, were nonetheless in a different financial class than their colleagues in the capital. Their establishments were much less luxurious, even not luxurious at all; they had direct access to local products and practised a much simpler style of cooking without any nostalgia for aristocracy (even if royalty may have been among their clientele). This exchange between Paris and the countryside made cuisine definitively democratic and, for that matter, open to women as evidenced by the appearance of women's gastronomic clubs.

Another important factor in the democratization of cuisine would be the appearance of modern culinary critiques and discourse along with the development of the press and publishing during the 19th century. With the release of "L'Almanach des Gourmands", Grimod clearly had a pedagogical worry: he aimed to bring the new class in power to the same level of refinement as the Old Regime. If the project was at its heart elitist, the fact that it was taken up by the newborn popular press gave Grimod a much wider audience. The daily culinary columns and the specialized publications, professional or for the general public, were becoming more and more numerous. Meanwhile, cuisine in general and the culinary life had important reverberations in the literature, theater, and song of the period and this also increased its audience (Aron, 1973; Ferguson, 2005; Ory, 1998). Finally, publishing was developing and cooking books multiplying and addressing more so the entire population—a phenomenon that had appeared earlier on a much smaller scale with the re-issue of previously successful works, such as "Le Cuisinier François" and "La Cuisinière Bourgeoise".

The development of transportation had been, in a general way, an important means for the diffusion of style. Therefore, democratization followed as soon as the middle of the 18th century, with better roads, and especially in the following one with the power of the steam engine. Trips made easier allowed big exhibitions, and people were confronted with other cultures, other ways of doing things, other products and, little by little, these novelties were adopted. But this was not unique to cooking, which in fact only followed the trend that in this case was a general movement of the society.

## *Free the chefs*

Through the course of three centuries, some chefs had been able to attain a reputation and see their creations become well-known, but most had not been able to escape the level of domestic worker. The thoughts of Gilles Lipovetsky in *L'empire de l'éphémère* (The Empire of the Ephemeral) concerning the status of fashion and its creators could also be perfectly applied to chefs:

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[4] Student of Carême, Jules Gouffé, following the recommendation of Alexandre Dumas and the Baron Brisse, was named in 1867 as chef of the brand new Jockey club.

> "Throughout this long period in the history of style, artisans had been no more than executors at the service of their clients; without the power to take initiative and with no social recognition; with the exception of the '*marchands de mode*' (fashion merchants) of the 18th century, they never succeeded in becoming creative artists. *There was freedom in taste among the elegant class which affirmed the personality of the client, not that of the artisan-producer: the principal of individuality in the aristocratic age had not passed this boundary.*[5] In these conditions, the evolution of style could not be determined by the artisans as they had no autonomy and no real legitimacy; instead, fashion was at least partially based on political logic and the power of nations" (Lipovetsky, 1987)

Up until between the two wars – in the 20th century! – chefs did not have the status of artisan but rather, like the *marchandes de mode*, they had the same status as domestic workers (Drouard, 2005); however certain chefs did achieve the status of creator before others. For instance Carême seemed to have won his independence – he could quit a place that did not please him much or refuse another place, whether his boss was the czar or the crown prince of England – and he even had the chance to chat with the guests of the Baron of Rothschild, who was his employer, but this was indeed unique to this era. The case of Escoffier was as much unusual, even though he was not isolated and, during the century, a certain number had succeeded to become quite (re-)known, thanks to the development of the press and of publishing, which was a big help. Curiously, albeit Escoffier advocated a permanent refashioning of cuisine so as to better follow the evolution of society, the spreading of his style of cooking seemed, in a way, to have paralyzed the imagination of other chefs and it was a rare one who could escape the double stranglehold of the "Culinary Guide" and the regionalist cuisine. A true act of creation was very rare in this era: but maybe this was a sign of the society's overall conservatism? Nevertheless, this reawakening of regional cuisine and the promotion of restaurants, which served it, of which it was already talked, would give a new model to chefs and allow them to find a certain independence: in fact, the chefs in the countryside were generally the owners of their businesses and did not have to answer to others, whereas their Parisian colleagues are under the control of restaurant owners who more or less had taken the place of the old patrons.

This material autonomy became an almost general rule after the 2nd World War: some establishments managed by non-chef owners remained in Paris, and luxurious hotel restaurants had been entirely discredited. The new economic model for food establishments, which continues today, is based on the model of the countryside and bistros: most often a couple manages the place and the man is at the stove while the woman runs the dining room, although of course the opposite can also be true. The use of local markets, also inherited from practices of the provinces, has pushed chefs to be more imaginative and to take liberties with tradition. Certainly the relatively long interruption of the war, more or less a decade, turned habits upside down; the new generation of clients in the *Trente Glorieuses* (the thirty years going from the end of the war to the mid-70s) wished something different: and it was up to the chefs and the food critics to suggest what. We cannot say that the food critic of right after the war shone with his own light: thus it was not to him that we looked for novelty, but more so to the chefs, a few of whom had become rather boisterous and clearly were profiting from the financial independence that so many had achieved. As at the start of the 20th century, difficulties can await those who challenge the status quo, but this time there would be a true result: more and more chefs refused to remain in the limited role that tradition had assigned to them. The social protests of the 1960s, in France and elsewhere, pushed at the last barriers: by freeing themselves of ideas inherited from Escoffier and, through him, from Carême, chefs affirmed their independence and won their autonomy. But this victory had a consequence. Chefs were required now to be creative for any price: the competition started by the invention of the restaurant was now exaggerated and chefs had to distinguish themselves. And, as this happened at the start of the age of communication, a big boost resulted from all the media attention. This was now reminiscent of the situation for fashion in the previous century: the result had come from what was asked for, and then, the result came from what was offered. The client was no longer the king; he had ceded his crown to the chef. All that remained was to formalize this change in paradigm, and that was done by Gault and Millau in 1973 when they published their 10 Commandments of the New French Cuisine. These new principles were not accepted without a lot of tears and grimaces, at the very least, but as pointed out by Jean-François Revel

> "Periods of gastronomic change are inevitably periods of gastronomic *controversy*. When there is no controversy, there is no inventiveness, because controversy of course doesn't appear if there is no tension between tradition and innovation, or the other way, between innovation and academic conventions."

And today, not a single person would criticize the new rules given to cuisine. Responding to the vow by Escoffier, that which no doubt would have surprised its actors, cuisine, 'reforms […] all which is not in harmony with the concepts of the time'. A pure product of the 1960s and completely in keeping with the times, *Nouvelle Cuisine* therefore had a worldwide impact (Beaugé, 1999, 2010a,b). Yet, *Nouvelle Cuisine* was perhaps also a Pandora's Box for French cuisine. Proclaiming that there were no more restrictions, it allowed chefs who were trained in its schools but foreigners to contest the system and to develop their own national *Haute Cuisine* (Sheraton, 2004; Discazeaux and Messager, 2008). Throughout the 1980s, these chefs discarded the foundations of their local cuisine, and the chefs that they trained continued this work. Thus a generation was needed for this concept to really bloom, and that happened in the 1990s: today, world cuisine has become multipolar and no longer lives under the French iron rule imposed by Escoffier.

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[5] Italicized by us.

## Cuisine goes global

French cuisine no longer occupies the summit of a pyramid, as it had for so long, and instead is part of a network: as the sociologist Gabriel de Tarde said back in 1890, 'in times when fashion dominates, we are more proud […} of the time than of the country'. Today, favoritism being set aside (though this is not always easy, despite the words of de Tarde), the current state of cuisine and its capacity for innovation take precedence over country of origin. The proof is in the continual circulation of ideas, which shows no attention to national borders. Although cuisine is now multifaceted in many different countries and in different parts of the world, there still exists no small number of common points: a sort of homogenization/differentiation can be observed, which is in fact one of the characteristics of globalization in general. Many of the same trends may be found in Paris and New York, in Barcelona and Copenhagen, in Sydney and London. More than ever, cuisine is affected by fashion, but this also is now globalized. This totally new situation – autonomy of chefs and a global cooking field – translates into a number of phenomena, which are a part of and an influence on the idea of novelty. First what Ferguson (2004) called 'ostentation', which conceals all participating resources by valuing the *person* of the chef rather than his food; second, the ever exacerbated competition among chefs, kept in place by several new institutions such as international gastronomy festivals or awards like the San Pellegrino World's 50 Best Restaurants and in which a certain 'false' novelty[6] can be found; and finally the frenzied consumption of signs, which punish both the chefs and their public and which are also tied to 'false' novelty. These three phenomena work together with the media (in the grand sense) to support diverse and multiple relationships to which we should pay careful attention.

Whatever it may be, the very concept of novelty has today changed: until *Nouvelle Cuisine* it had obeyed to demands. Now it obeys to what is offered: it is the chefs who decide and they impose their fantasies on us. Globalization and new forms of media make sure that this fantasy is immediately known (and copied) from one end of the planet to the other, and that it is very quickly obsolete. At the same time, the loss of the sense of history has made landmarks disappear and thus it is easier and easier to pass off a false novelty as a true one. Regarding the loss of memory, it leads to a dictatorship of the moment in which the very idea of novelty loses all meaning: how can there be novelty when there is no past and no future? All gets reduced to a twinkling, which only serves to maintain the idea of movement.

For more than three centuries the quest for novelty, which appeared in France in the court of Louis XIV, has caused the rapid evolution of *Haute Cuisine*. Much more so than that of traditional cuisines, which could only assimilate changes very slowly as they incorporated them into their heritage. This thirst for the new also became one of the very components of *Haute Cuisine*, working within it to make it evolve and finding original solutions to win over an ever larger public in an ever greater area, a conquest made by Escoffier at the start of the 20th century. If from this period, this cuisine does not seem to create consensus anymore, it took more than half a century – two successive world wars no doubt contributed – to get a new paradigm. And this change was considerable because it radically altered the relationship between the chef and his public. All at once the quest for novelty changed the form, opening other perspectives, which perhaps are made more difficult to discern given all the new methods of communication. Always more information, and today it comes to us from all directions, and it clouds the message and makes interpretation more difficult. And yet, if finding it has become more taxing this does not mean that creation has ceased to exist: it is up to us to look for it, to look outside of appearances, and to look at all the possible forms it may take now and in the future.

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[6] We can define 'false' novelty as something, which only appears new, but which more often is the recycling of an old idea or a simple variation of someone else's original idea.

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