WRITING IN THE KITCHEN, READING AT THE TABLE: GENDER, NATION, AND CULINARY TEXTS IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY FRANCE

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This dissertation demonstrates how texts about food uniquely reinforce and challenge French identities in light of increased migration and Europeanization after the mid-1990s. Maintaining that food texts, in responding to eating through language, reveal the biases of a society that have become "naturalized" through the process of consumption, "Writing in the Kitchen, Reading at the Table" argues that gendered and racialized hierarchies persist in contemporary France due to their active reinforcement in food discourse. Through close readings of four different genres published between 2000-2015—Muriel Barbery's novel *Une gourmandise* (2000), Guillaume Long's graphic novel *À boire et à manger* (2009-), the masculine cooking magazine *BEEF!* (2014-), and Léonora Miano's memoir *Soulfood équatoriale* (2009)—this research identifies repeated efforts to classify individuals based on skin color, to sexualize female hunger, and to effeminize foreign men, all under the guise of promoting national inclusivity through food. Such analyses collectively suggest that food discourse is not only instrumental in structuring the relationship between gastronomy and the French national imaginary; food language also masks the continued organization of French universalist-styled policies along racial and gendered borderlines. Merging theories of the nation, literary studies, gender studies, and visual/media studies, "Writing in the Kitchen, Reading at the Table" examines the under-researched but critical role of discourse, consumption, and the body in cultural politics, calling for increased attention to food language in the conceptualization of twenty-first century French citizenship.

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PREFACE

The writing of this dissertation has been a journey of tastes and considerations, as personal as it has been intellectual. Because of this, I would like to thank my parents, Jay and Peggy, for Pennsylvania cornfields, our family dinner table, and years of encouragement.

Lynn Palermo, for showing me that the question is greater than the answer.

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INTRODUCTION: TASTING NOTES. THE FRENCH GASTRONOMIC MEAL IN THE POPULAR IMAGINARY

After the terrorist attacks that killed 130 people in Paris, France, on November 13, 2015, the French responded with an appeal to national solidarity that was expressed with a curious theme: food. The initiative "Tous au bistrot!" ("Everyone to the bistro!"), launched by Parisian chefs, took place only four days following the attack with the aim of encouraging communal loyalty and the collective expression of healing.[1] The translation of the rant by British-American humorist John Oliver—who asserted that terrorists would never win in a war of culture against the nation of fine wine and cheese—was reprinted online in *Slate.fr*, *HuffingtonPost.fr*, and the student section of the national French newspaper, *Le Figaro.*[2] But it was the cover of the Paris-based satirical weekly *Charlie Hebdo* that made international news, itself having been the target of terrorist attacks in January 2015.[3] Blood red, the cover features an image of a French citizen riddled with bullets. Holding an open champagne bottle in his right hand, the figure tips his head

[1] Boris Coridan, "Les restaurateurs se mobilisent pour que Paris reste une fête," *LeMonde.fr*, last modified November 17, 2015, http://www.lemonde.fr/m-actu/article/2015/11/17/les-restaurateurs-se-mobilisent-pour-que-paris-reste-une-fete_4811891_4497186.html.

[2] An excerpt of this broadcast, subtitled in French, received nearly 17,500 views on YouTube. "Après les attentats de Paris, John Oliver répond avec humour," uploaded by TheUnknown.fr, accessed March 14, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2wFy8a8FFI.

[3] For an American interpretation of *Charlie Hebdo's* cover, see Justin Wm. Moyer, "Charlie Hebdo's Cover Spotlights Paris Attacks: 'F—k Them. We Have Champagne!'", *WashingtonPost.com*, last modified November 18, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/11/18/charlie-hebdos-new-cover-spotlights-paris-attacks-f-k-them-we-have-champagne/?utm_term=.16fbfd0712da.

back as he drinks from a glass in his left. The champagne gushes out of the citizen's wounds even faster than he can drink, sustaining his life as he continues dancing and celebrating his body's inability to be overcome. What should have been mortal wounds are maintained by this quintessential French beverage, which counters the physiological and psychological attack on his life. The caption "Ils ont les armes. On les emmerde, on a le champagne!" (They have guns. Fuck them. We have champagne!) proclaims victory over the terrorists by establishing a hierarchy between violence and celebration, between bullets and *bulles*, and solidifies the boundary between this citizen, representative of the universal "on" (we), and France's othered enemies: "ils" (they).

Despite the fact that the man is drinking alone in the frame, his consumption of champagne constructs an image of a national community. Implying the participation of others around him (one rarely, if ever, drinks champagne alone), the man enjoys the support of both a physical community and an ideological one, whose appreciation for champagne simultaneously signifies a respect for *terroir* and the security of French national space. The man's body, emptied out from substance, is reconstituted as the universalist national body, defined as both white and male. Additionally, and more polemically, the binary between "us" and "them" places "Frenchness" in opposition to groups who abstain from alcohol, suggesting that the French imaginary leaves little room for French Muslims, especially those of non-European descent. Nevertheless, the broad appeal of this ideology—France as celebration, as whiteness, and as the ability to recast the attack as a moment of strength—is displayed in this image's sustained evocation in a moment of national crisis and its worldwide circulation in the media.[4]

[4] A brief Google search confirms news articles regarding the cover in German, Spanish, Italian, and Korean, among other languages.

This image encapsulates this dissertation's central themes: namely, the range of texts about food, from magazine covers to traditional novels, that are deployed in the service of national identity in twenty-first century France, and how these various texts and textualities negotiate national identity in light of current international politics. As the image above makes clear, contemporary texts about food in France are far from neutral discourses. Instead, they imply judgments regarding not only how French bodies are to be fed but also how the national body should be constituted. Despite shifting French demographics, including a rise in net immigration and emigration, food texts published in France continue to associate the French national body with whiteness and allusions to a shared European history.[5] Similarly, over the last several decades, the categories of gender and sexuality have been central to social and political discussions about how universalism should be framed; in food texts, these conversations continue to play out, with the female body alternating between more submissive roles—including hypersexualization and domesticity—than are now considered acceptable in most social discourse. Given the inherent vulnerability of the body in the act of eating, as well as the close relationship between "eating" and a "sense of self," texts about food capture the endurance of identitarian debates that may otherwise give the appearance of being diminished, if not resolved.

In this dissertation, I argue through four case studies that food texts are highly political, structured by and responding to dominant ideologies of eating and being. Through the interplay between language, image, and the food itself, such texts reveal social biases that may be otherwise overlooked due to the seeming "naturalness" of feeding oneself and others. In

[5] Chantal Brutel, "L'analyse des flux migratoires entre la France et l'étranger entre 2006 et 2013: Un accroissement des mobilités," *INSEE*, last modified October 13, 2015, https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/1521331.

particular, this dissertation determines that culinary discourse clusters around the contested site of the body, revealing the particularities of how gender, sexuality, and race are constructed and experienced in relationship to the French nation. Despite broad attempts on the part of the government and private organizations to increase *parité* in politics and in the workplace, address racism, diminish violence against marginalized communities, and foster a sense of national unity, food texts demonstrate the pervasiveness of gender binaries, especially in terms of consumption, and the erasure of non-white, non-European experiences in mainland France. More optimistically, the same texts also chart the emergence of counter-discourses through food and language that include resistance to gender discrimination and the reclaiming of racist discourses. As these food texts draw from lived experience, they hold implications beyond the dinner table, clarifying the "sticking points" in the French imaginary that undermine egalitarian efforts in daily life and public policy, and encouraging social change through personal and collective culinary acts.

The contradictions of France's culinary culture are often hidden by its national image and international reputation, which is frequently defined by collective eating, communal celebration, and cultural exchange. For example, the 2010 inscription of the French gastronomic meal on UNESCO's intangible world heritage list was accompanied by marketing materials that declared that 95% of the French find collective meals to be "an essential part of their shared heritage and cultural identity."[6] An online YouTube video regarding the meal's candidacy underscored the importance of communal participation in this heritage, defining the gastronomic meal as a

[6] The statistic is likely drawn from a July 2009 survey performed by the Ministère de l'agriculture et de la pêche (Ministry of Agriculture and Fishing), reported in Thierry Mathé, Gabriel Tavoularis, and Thomas Pilorin, "La gastronomie s'inscrit dans la continuité du modèle alimentaire français," *Crédoc: Cahier de recherche* 267 (December 2009): 104, PDF file, http://www.credoc.fr/pdf/Rech/C267.pdf.

"social custom that ritualizes being together."[7] This claim to universalized unity—open all "tous les âges…toutes les conditions…tous les pays" (all ages, all social statuses, all countries), as French gastronome Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin famously claimed—is supported by texts about food, with the very genres of gastronomic journalism, culinary treatises, and cultural commentary being developed by French writers in the nineteenth century.[8] Both in food and in text, the French claim to culinary mastery strengthens images of national conviviality and social harmony, reinforcing images of France as the epitome of republican universalism as well as Western culture.

Yet these discourses tend to mask the fact that shared meals, even those that integrate non-native foods and practices, do not necessarily lead to social harmony. On the contrary, spaces in which the biological act of feeding oneself and others is enacted, including home and professional kitchens, chart the enduring inequalities experienced by women and others not clearly represented by gendered or racialized binaries. In 1980, Michel de Certeau critiqued the fact that "ce soient en France encore *les femmes* qui s'acquittent en général du travail quotidien de faire-la-cuisine" (in general in France, it's still *women* who carry out the daily work of cooking food); in 2006, French women ages 20-74 still spent four times more time on food preparation and dishwashing than men.[9] In the public sphere, French women made up 37.2% of

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[7] "The Gastronomic Meal of the French," uploaded by UNESCO, last modified November 8, 2010, 0:28-42, https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=33&v=6nKBBb72J4k.
[8] Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, "Aphorismes," *Physiologie du goût* (Paris: Gabriel de Gonet, 1848), Project Gutenberg, http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22741/22741-h/22741-h.htm. For more on the development of gastronomic literature, see Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, "A Cultural Field in the Making: Gastronomy in 19th-century France," *American Journal of Sociology* 104, no. 3 (November 1998): 611.
[9] Michel de Certeau, Luce Girard, and Pierre Mayol, *L'invention du quotidien*, vol. 2, *Habiter, cuisiner* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 213. Emphasis in the original. For more on gendered divisions of labor, see "How Is the Time of Women and Men Distributed in Europe?" *Statistics in Focus:*

"cuisiniers et aides de cuisine" (cooks and cook assistants) in 2011, but held only 16 out of 609 Michelin stars in 2015.[10] Regarding race, as North African couscous has gained increasing recognition as one of France's favorite national dishes, violence against Muslims has risen, not fallen.[11] The capacity of food to maintain or mask social inequalities necessitates a close reading that exposes the inner workings of cuisine as a textual symbol in order to reclaim its potential use as an agent of equality, as the UNESCO proponents have claimed.[12]

Populations and Social Conditions, last modified April 2006, PDF file, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3433488/5438881/KS-NK-06-004-EN.PDF/7af4b8e8-1d40-478c-8410-e41204e0b29c.

[10] "La répartition des hommes et des femmes par métier: Une baisse de la ségrégation," *Dares Analyses* 79 (December 2013): 12, PDF file, http://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/2013-079.pdf. The *Guide Michelin* was uncritical in lauding these statistics as evidence of female advancement in the field. "Guide MICHELIN 2015: Les femmes chefs étoilées de France," Michelin Restaurants, last modified January 17, 2017, https://restaurant.michelin.fr/magazine/actualites/guide-michelin-2015-les-femmes-chefs-etoilees-de-france.

[11] Regarding couscous, see "Les plats préférés des Français (2011)," *Kantar TNS*, last modified October 21, 2011, https://www.tns-sofres.com/publications/les-plats-preferes-des-francais-2011. Amina Béji-Bécheur, Nacima Ourahmoune, and Nil Özçağlar-Toulouse point to couscous's availability in "traditional, canned, frozen, and microwaveable forms," incorporation into "the latest codes of contemporary consumption, including organic, fair trade, prepackaged," visibility in "canteens, restaurants, cafés, markets, and catered," and use in all social occasions as evidence of the dish's thorough integration into French culture. "The Polysemic Meanings of Couscous Consumption in France," *Journal of Consumer Behaviour* 13 (2014): 197. Contrast this acceptance to Jacques Toubon's study on racial violence, explained in "Les jeunes noirs ou arabes ont 20% plus de chances d'être contrôlés par la police," *L'obs*, last modified January 20, 2017, https://www.nouvelobs.com/societe/20170120.OBS4115/les-jeunes-noirs-ou-arabes-ont-20-fois-plus-de-chances-d-etre-controles-par-la-police.html. See also Annie Glasser, "New French Report Shows Rise in Attacks on Muslims, Sustained Targeting of Jews," *Human Rights First*, last modified May 6, 2016, https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/blog/new-french-report-shows-rise-attacks-muslims-sustained-targeting-jews; and "Racist Incidents Down in France but Assaults Rise," *RFI*, last modified February 1, 2018, http://en.rfi.fr/20180201-france-racist-incidents.

[12] As Jacques Derrida reminds, eating is a continual reminder of the instability of subject/object positions. "On Eating Well," in *Points… Interviews, 1974*-1994, trans. Peter Connor and Avital Ronell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 283.

Such an analysis is especially timely, given the sociopolitical events of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries that have called into question French security in relationship to economic and political trends. From the 1960s onward, fears of Americanization and globalization drove debates surrounding cultural imports from the supermarket model to fast food.[13] Anxieties regarding the safety of international agriculture came to a head with the mad cow epidemic in the 1990s, with France refusing to lift a six-year ban on British beef until ordered to do so by the European Court of Justice.[14] Today, rising statistics of individuals eating lunch at one's desk, rather than with colleagues, or of declining time spent at the dinner table provoke a flurry of discussions regarding French values.[15] Even recent data indicating falling bread consumption has been met with the reassurance that less time to go to the bakery, not disintegrating food ethics, is to blame.[16] In many of these cases, dialogues surrounding foodstuffs and practices from "elsewhere" center on their potential to import physical illnesses as

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[13] For more on supermarket culture, see Michel-Édouard Leclerc, *La fonde des caddies: Vers une nouvelle société de consommation* (Paris: Plon, 1994). For an overview on the fast-food debate, see Wayne Northcutt, "José Bové vs. McDonald's: The Making of a National Hero in the French Anti-Globalization Movement," *Western Society for French History* 31 (2003): 326-28. On the French fry itself, see Maryann Tebben, "French fries et identité française: La frite et les fries en tant qu'objets littéraires et culturels," in *La Pomme de Terre de la Renaissance au XXIe siècle* (Tours: Presses universitaires François Rabelais, 2011), 231-44.

[14] See John Laurenson, "Could France Learn to Love British Beef?" *BBC.com*, last modified May 16, 2012, http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-17925152. For a complete analysis of food scares, see Susanne Freidberg, *French Beans and Food Scares: Culture and Commerce in an Anxious Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[15] "Un Français sur trois ne mange plus à table: ce que ce changement dit de notre art de vivre," *LCI.fr*, last modified February 7, 2017, https://www.lci.fr/societe/un-francais-sur-trois-ne-mange-plus-a-table-ce-que-ce-changement-dit-de-notre-art-de-vivre-2025084.html.

[16] "La baguette reste le produit phare de notre modèle alimentaire" (The baguette is still the core product of our alimentary model). Guillaume Errand, "Pourquoi les Français consomment moins de pain," *LeFigaro.fr*, last modified March 15, 2014, http://www.lefigaro.fr/conso/2014/03/15/05007-20140315ARTFIG00126-pourquoi-les-francais-consomment-moins-de-pain.php.

well as moral decay, prompting nostalgia and counter-movements that call for a return to "home-grown" foods and ideologies.

Non-culinary crises also brought to light shifting demographics and disenchantments that challenged assumptions regarding the stability of French identity. The collapse of the French colonial empire after World War II triggered new waves of immigration and an unprecedented questioning of who was to be considered French. The *banlieue* riots of 1995 and 2005, as well as the terrorist attacks of 2015 and 2016, opened nationwide dialogues about legal and illegal immigration, embodied in the mainstreaming of France's far-right party, the National Front, during the 2017 presidential election. The predominance of the question "C'est quoi être Français?" (What does it mean to be French?) in popular discourse was reinforced by its headlining *Le Figaro* in 2010, *L'Express* in 2015, and *HuffingtonPost.fr* in 2017.[17] Attempts to respond to this question varied between amassing collective opinion, such as the controversial 2009 debate on national identity launched by former Minister of Immigration and National Identity, Éric Besson, and appeals to literature, including *Le Monde*'s 2016 collection of essays from Montesquieu to Edgar Morin.[18] Such campaigns indicate the enduring value placed on the literary to determine the national in the French popular imaginary.

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[17] Astrid de Larminat, "Qu'est-ce qu'être français?" *LeFigaro.fr*, last modified January 28, 2010, http://www.lefigaro.fr/livres/2010/01/28/03005-20100128ARTFIG00488-qu-est-ce-qu-etre-francais-.php; Christian Makarian, "Qu'est-ce qu'être français?" *L'Express.fr*, last modified June 26, 2015, https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/qu-est-ce-qu-etre-francais_1693031.html; Jessica Dubois, "C'est quoi être Français? La réponse des philosophes," *HuffingtonPost.fr*, last modified April 22, 2017, https://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2017/04/22/cest-quoi-etre-francais-la-reponse-des-philosophes_a_22047964/.

[18] "Besson relance le débat sur l'identité nationale," *LeMonde.fr*, last modified October 26, 2009, http://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2009/10/25/besson-relance-le-debat-sur-l-identite-nationale_1258628_823448.html. See also *Être français: Les grands textes de Montesquieu à Edgar Morin. Les nouveaux défis*, *Le Monde: Hors-Série* (March 2016).

As if to exemplify this tradition, these debates on identity corresponded to a spike in food texts, visible in both publication statistics and the emergence of new textual forms. The French food publication industry doubled in revenue between 2005 and 2010.[19] Cookbook publications increased threefold between 2000 and 2012.[20] In 2014, 1,760 new books about food were published, as opposed to 607 in 2012.[21] In addition to traditional food "literature" came the development of food-themed media (with the creation of the cooking channel *Cuisine TV* in 2001), public festivals (including the state-funded *Fête de la gastronomie*, established in 2011), and the 2013 naming of the cities of Dijon, Lyon, Paris-Rungis, and Tours as France's "Cités de la gastronomie" (Cities of Gastronomy).[22] Exemplifying Stuart Hall's reminder that "identity [is] a 'production,' which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation," these "texts," whether written or performative, aim to negotiate a present French identity through its relationship to a longstanding culinary heritage.[23]

This dissertation builds on a lengthy tradition in France in which food is used as a textual medium to discuss or debate national identity. In French literature, food metaphors and symbolism are omnipresent, serving as a call-to-arms in the Middle Ages, as a manner of detailing personal habits in the Renaissance, and as a strategy for charting European relations during the Enlightenment.[24] Defining court culture, *fêtes* and food trends contributed to France's

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[19] Sidonie Naulin, *Des mots à la bouche: Le journalisme gastronomique en France* (Tours: Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, 2017), 7.
[20] Françoise Hache-Bissette, "L'évolution du livre de cuisine: Du livre pratique au beau-livre," *Le temps des medias* 24 (2015): 100.
[21] Naulin, *Des mots à la bouche*, 7.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference,* ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), 222.
[24] For example, Honorat Bovet's 1398 *Apparicion maistre Jehan de Meun* employed food metaphors to express the author's concern regarding the nation's weakening defenses against

domestic as well as international image throughout the whole of the Ancien Régime, with James Brown indicating that the Revolution itself began, in part, in response to this overconsumption.[25] In 1825, Brillat-Savarin claimed that foreigners' insatiable appetites for French cuisine had helped to extricate the nation from its Napoleonic-era war debts, laying claim to *gourmandise* as a French concept: the combination of "l'élégance athénienne, le luxe romain, et la délicatesse française" (Athenian elegance, Roman luxury, and French delicacy).[26] While initially limited to France, the Michelin Guides quickly became the international standard for judging culinary excellence; in 1957, Roland Barthes remarked that steak, *frites*, and wine figured among the French mythologies of national pride.[27] In many of these cases, food in French literary history reinforces themes of reasoned temperance, collective enjoyment, and openness to global culinary

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foreign Islamic invaders. See Sylvia Grove, "Bread without Onions: Winning the Crusades through French Cuisine in Honorat Bovet's 1398 *The Apparition of Master Jean de Meun (L'apparicion maistre Jehan de Meun*)," in *Food and Feast in Premodern Outlaw Tales*, eds. Melissa Ridley Elmes and Kristin Bovaird-Abbo (London: Routledge, Forthcoming). See Montaigne's comments on how he dines in comparison to the Germans and the Italians in "De l'expérience," *Essais, Livre III* (Paris: GF Flammarion, 1979), 294-95. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 1761 novel *Julie, ou la nouvelle Hélöise* classified the temperaments of European nations by the foods that their citizens consumed. *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse*, vol. 2 (Paris: Gallimard, 1993), 68.

[25] For more about trendiness of hot chocolate into French court culture, consider Susan Terrio, *Crafting the Culture and History of French Chocolate* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). For champagne and coffee, see Joan Dejean, *The Essence of Style: How the French Invented High Fashion, Fine Food, Chic Cafés, Style, Sophistication, and Glamour* (New York: Free Press, 2005), 133-60. For James Brown's analysis of the intersecting relationship between French literature and gastronomy, see *Fictional Meals and their Function in the French Novel, 1789-1848* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1984).

[26] Brillat-Savarin, "Pouvoir de la gourmandise," *Physiologie du goût*.

[27] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1957), 69-74, PDF file, https://monoskop.org/images/9/9b/Barthes_Roland_Mythologies_1957.pdf.

trends—as long as the foreign foods are properly assembled on a French plate and integrated into France's universalist ideal.[28]

Previous critical approaches to French food culture have ranged from historical to sociological.[29] In the early 2000s, cultural historians, including Rebecca Spang about the restaurant and Joan Dejean about *haute culture* (including *haute cuisine*), linked Western culinary practices with a distinctly French history, outlining the construction of global perspectives on French practice.[30] Yet interestingly, most discussions of French "identity" in relationship to cooking and eating—whether personal or national—have been sociological, rather than literary.[31] Notable exceptions (in the French context) include Michel Jeanneret's landmark *Des mets et des mots: Banquets et propos de table à la Renaissance* (1987) and Allen S. Weiss's

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[28] Brillat-Savarin admits that while other countries are renown for particular products—such as Middle Eastern coffee and Italian Parmesan—France is reputed for the dishes composed from these ingredients (i.e., *potage* and salad). Brillat-Savarin, "Le gastronome chez le restaurateur," "Pot-au-feu, potage, etc.," "Industrie gastronomique des émigrés," *Physiologie du goût.*

[29] Fundamental historical texts include Stephen Mennell, *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Oxford, UK: B. Blackwell, 1985). See also Jean-Louis Flandrin, *Arranging the Meal: A History of Table Service in France*, trans. Julie E. Johnson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007) and D. Eleanor Scully and Terence Scully, *Early French Cooking: Sources, History, Original Recipes, and Modern Adaptations* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1995).

[30] Rebecca Spang, *The Invention of the Restaurant: Paris and Modern Gastronomic Culture* (Cambridge, MS: Harvard University Press, 2000); Joan Dejean, *The Essence of Style: How the French Invented High Fashion, Fine Food, Chic Cafés, Style, Sophistication, and Glamour* (New York: Free Press, 2005). For French culinary history, see Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson's *Accounting for Taste: The Triumph of French Cuisine* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004).

[31] For example, consider Claude Fischler's fundamental article "Food, Self, and Identity," *Social Science Information* 27 (1988): 275-93. On home life, see De Certeau, Girard, and Mayol, *L'invention du quotidien*. For agricultural space, see Amy Trubek, *The Taste of Place: A Cultural Journey into Terroir* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008). On eating behaviors, see Jean-Pierre Poulain, *Sociologies de l'alimentation* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2002).

Feast and Folly: Cuisine, Intoxication, and the Poetics of the Sublime (2002).[32] In the Francophone context, Valérie Loichot's *The Tropics Bite Back: Culinary Coups in Caribbean Literature* (2013) raised the possibility of food symbolism as resistance to discriminatory discourses, as did Djeri Githire's *Cannibal Writes: Eating Others in Caribbean and Indian Ocean Women's Writing* (2014) and Nicole Simek's *Hunger and Irony in the French Caribbean* (2016).[33] While thorough, these works have mostly focused on the impact of food literature as classically defined—especially the novel—on the French imaginary. Additionally, these texts have tended to treat racism, sexism, and nationalism as separate discussions despite their intertwining, central nature to how life in mainland France is constructed.

In contrast, my dissertation takes a wide angle on food texts in contemporary France with the goal of understanding the collective impact of gastronomic literature on the daily experience of a variety of French subjects. Through this approach, I respond to the widening definition of what constitutes food texts in contemporary France while highlighting the interplay between these genres. Uniting multiple textual forms—a novel, a memoir, a magazine, and a graphic novel—into a single object of study allows them to enter into dialogue with one another as they would in public and private spaces: on newsstands, in the *métro*, on coffee tables, and on the

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[32] Many classical literary analyses of food emerged during the 1980s, often in article-length form. Examples include Lilian R. Furst, "The Role of Food in *Madame Bovary*," *Orbis Litterarum* 34, no. 1 (January 1979): 53-65; Susan Harrow, "Food, Mud, and Blood: The Material Narrative of Zola's *La Débâcle*," *Dalhousie French Studies* 76 (Fall 2006): 51-61; and S. K. Wertz, "Taste and Food in Rousseau's *Julie, or the New Heloise*," *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 47, no. 3 (Fall 2013): 24-35. See also *Écriture du repas. Fragments d'un discours gastronomique*, Karin Becker and Olivier Leplatre, eds. (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2007).

[33] Special journal issues include Betram M. Gordon and Erica J. Peters, eds., "Food and France: What Food Studies Can Teach Us about History," *French Historical Studies* 38, no. 2 (April 2015) and Sylvie Durmelat, ed., "Food and the French Empire," *French Cultural Studies* 26, no. 2 (May 2015).

kitchen counter.[34] This "case studies" approach allows for the pinpointing of which aspects of race, gender, and nation are particularly contested in their repetition across genres. Furthermore, I choose not to distinguish between French and Francophone writers, given that the identitarian boundaries between "French" and "Francophone" are increasingly merged in modern French life: as Étienne Balibar puts it, "*more and more individuals are not classifiable*…living across the fictional boundaries of communities."[35] The choice to address texts written by individuals of European and non-European heritages in the same dissertation permits an analysis that renders visible the multiplicity of viewpoints on France's universalist model of citizenship.

Given its centrality to this dissertation as well as to French notions of national belonging, the relationship between republican universalism, race, and gender merits a brief detour. Until the early 2000s, gender and race were classed, in French thought, among an individual's "particular traits" (including religion, political affiliation, etc.) that were taken as secondary to the "abstract" and "universal" traits of French citizenship. The *parité* movement of the late 1990s resulted in legal requirements regarding female representation in politics, which essentially redefined the universal by sexing it along the gender binary, as Joan Wallach Scott has noted.[36] While establishing a place for women in the political sphere, this social and legal move did not result in the privileging, or "marking," of other particular categories in legal discourse. Rather,

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[34] A few edited volumes and special journal issues value this intertextual, cultural studies approach, including Lawrence R. Schehr and Allen S. Weiss's *French Food: On the Table, On the Page, and in French Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2001) and Philippe C. Dubois and Michael Garval, eds., "Beyond Gastronomy," *Contemporary French Civilization* 42, no. 3-4 (2017).

[35] Étienne Balibar, "Ambiguous Universality," in *Politics and the Other Scene*, trans. Christine Jones, James Swenson, and Chris Turner (New York: Verso, 2002), 152. Emphasis in the original.

[36] Joan Wallach Scott, *Parité!: Sexual Equality and the Crisis of French Universalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 1-5.

parité efforts in France aimed to clarify the nature of the abstract individual by "unmarking" it more clearly. As Todd Reeser and Lewis Seifert point out, this French perspective on citizenship complicates efforts to examine the nature of both traditionally-unmarked categories—including whiteness, masculinity, and heterosexuality—as well as other categories that appear to be more "visible," including race and ethnicity.[37] The 2013 removal of the very term "race" from French legislation speaks to the enduring preference in French culture to abstract the individual rather than to draw the nature of her particularities into focus, all in efforts to ensure equality before the law.

Following the call of Sébastien Chauvin and Alexandre Jaunait to probe the constructedness of all categories, in this dissertation I intend to expose the production of the invisibility, or the "unmarkedness," of whiteness, masculinity, and heterosexuality as much as the visibility, or "markedness," of blackness, femininity, and queerness in the French national model.[38] Indeed, all categories are addressed across the dissertation's four case studies, which collectively posit that inclusion and exclusion are still negotiated along gendered and racialized borderlines despite political and social efforts to the contrary. Given food's ability to "naturalize" social expectations, especially those that govern the body, food acts in these four case studies model how social hierarchies are created while simultaneously indicating how they can be resisted or overturned. If food is inherently political, as these texts show, this dissertation makes the case that contemporary French politics should also incorporate the culinary. Both individual

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[37] Todd W. Reeser and Lewis C. Seifert, "Introduction: Marking French and Francophone Masculinities," in *Entre Hommes: French and Francophone Masculinities in Culture and Theory*, eds. Todd W. Reeser and Lewis C. Seifert (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), 18-20.

[38] Sébastien Chauvin and Alexandre Jaunait, "Intersectionnalité contre l'intersection," *Raisons politiques* 58, no. 2 (2015): 61.

and state-run social justice efforts could benefit by considering food not just as a cultural heritage but also as a series of choices that actively influence individuals' and groups' expectations regarding gender norms, racial differences, and class hierarchies—choices that could be reshaped to combat institutional racism, sexism, and poverty within France's universalist imaginary.

In addition to their publication in the time frame beginning with the new millennium and ending with the 2016 terrorist attack in Nice, the four texts analyzed in this dissertation were selected due to their engagement with many of the political issues that the defined France during this period. In particular, these texts address the role of institutions in daily life, the visibility of immigrants in the public sphere, *parité* in the workplace and at home, and the rise of Islamic extremism, all through how the texts' characters cook and eat. Permitting discussions that link these political questions with French cultural histories, each text also innovates on a traditional gastronomic genre, including food criticism, cookbooks, cooking magazines, novels, memoirs, and *bandes desinées*. In addition, demonstrating the impact of these texts on daily French life, each text boasts a national, if not international, circulation that bridges public and private spaces, often extending beyond the scope of the original publications in the form of marketing materials, online forums, authorial interviews, and social media campaigns. Of these texts, I have included two by women of non-European descent to ensure the discussion of "marked" experiences in Hexagonal France; the "unmarkedness" of two other texts, written or edited by European men, is equally interrogated. In addition to representing the predominance of the visual in modern culture, the choice to incorporate image-based texts, including a gastronomic magazine and a *bande dessinée*, permits the identification of the meta-linguistic hierarchies that underpin France's official universalist model of citizenship. Rather than calling for an erasure of the

categories of difference in order to create a white-bread image of equality, this dissertation suggests that negotiations of identity can take place through the creative processes of cooking and writing, following Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe who postulate that true universalism must stem from the constant reshaping of the forces of difference.[39]

This dissertation is organized into four chapters, each one, in focusing on a specific case study, also focuses on a different gastronomic genre. Opening with the experience of a white male narrator and closing with that of a black female, these chapters outline the continuities and ruptures between differential experiences of Frenchness, successively interrogating whiteness, masculinity, the gaze on the other, blackness, and femininity. This organization—from "unmarked" to "marked"—permits a visualization of the heightened and intersectional tensions of race and gender in contemporary France.

Chapter 1, "Language and Liberty: Food Critics, the Field of Gastronomy, and the Freedom to Taste," calls into question the fundamental relationship between words and taste in Muriel Barbery's 2000 novel, *Une gourmandise*. Revealing language to structure the relationship between individuals and the collective, *Une gourmandise* establishes this dissertation's framework for relating the individual acts of eating and reading with the collective ideologies of national being. Extending Pierre Bourdieu's cultural fields into the realm of gastronomy, this chapter argues that an individual's enjoyment of food is a pre-verbal sensation that immediately becomes coded by sociopolitical expectations when expressed in language. A close reading of *Une gourmandise* demonstrates this phenomenon through the main character of a wealthy food critic, who desperately wishes to remember a prized food memory before he dies. Countering the

[39] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 2001), 184-85.

perception that tastes are individually determined, Barbery's novel indicates the effect of language on two categories of individuals commonly believed to be exempt from social determinism: food critics and white men. This revelation not only lays the foundation for this dissertation's approach to the constructedness of race and gender, including whiteness and masculinity; it also argues that the "naturalness" of taste is highly politicized through language. Paying homage to the main character's attempt to escape his cultural field by determining what he *really* wants to eat, the subtitle of this chapter, "Dessert," destabilizes the order of the classic gastronomic meal and elevates a light, sweet, and "feminized" course—the role of words—to a central subject of inquiry.

Extending the role of language to its impact on the daily experience of cooking and eating, Chapter 2 on *À boire et à manger*, a series of culinary comics by Guillaume Long (2009-), examines the French cookbook industry after 2010 and its attempts to strengthen national unity through the "creation" of proficient home cooks. This act of unification takes place not only through the teaching of proper culinary techniques—usually reserved for trained elite—but also in the demonstration of ideals regarding bodily gesture, demeanor, and bearing. The chapter "Comics in the Kitchen: *L'art de vivre* and the French National Body" extends Chapter 1's emphasis on language to the body itself, exploring which elements of gender and race are negotiable through cooking. While Long's culinary lessons encourage the transgression of the gender binary through fluid and occasionally deconstructed depictions of the body, his frequent relegation of foreign cooks to the literary margins of his texts limits the participation of French immigrants in the national sphere. Lebanese cooks, with dark skin and accented French, are particularly excluded from "cooking Frenchness," even in a scene that claims to give them voice regarding their culinary traditions. Set in contrast to Long's gender fluidity, this exclusive

depiction of Frenchness indicates the vexed place that race holds in the French imaginary. In addition, it exposes how inclusive acts, discourses, and images can still communicate discriminatory messages. This chapter's subtitle, "Aux champs" (Into the Fields), gestures to the importance of seasonality and *terroir* in the construction of French identity; it simultaneously raises the question of the extent to which foreigners are welcomed onto French soil both in Long and in France more broadly.

Chapter 3, "Defining 'Men with Good Taste': Masculinity and Consumption in France's New Food-lifestyle Magazine," responds to Chapter 2 through *BEEF!*, a male culinary magazine released in France in 2014. Displaying the reverse phenomenon of Chapter 2—in which race is deployed to support a gender binary, rather than the other way around—Chapter 3 underscores the frequency with which gender and race work in tandem in service of a national identity. This chapter's analysis takes place in light of *BEEF!*'s contradictory marketing claims: first, that gender norms should be reversed through the kitchen in order to re-establish male hegemony (men are threatened by women's attainment of high-paying jobs), and second, that all genders are equally capable in the kitchen (both domestic harmony and male independence stems from strengthening men's culinary competence). Despite its insistence to flatten the distinction between male and female foodwork, *BEEF!*'s images and text nevertheless construct a leisure-based, gaze-oriented approach to home cooking that entrenches, not eases, the gender binary. This analysis of *BEEF!* both provides an example of how masculinity is constructed through language in light of Chapter 1's explanation of how this process is masked; it also showcases how foreigners, women, and children are "effeminized" through similar processes that accentuate their physical appetites. While acknowledging the perceived centrality of meat and men in the French national imaginary, the chapter's subtitle, "Plat principal" (Main Dish), calls

this mythology into question through the chapter's placement after the analysis entitled "Dessert."

Chapter 4 provides a model for overturning these hierarchies through an analysis of Léonora Miano's *Soulfood équatoriale* (2009), a culinary memoir about France and Cameroon. While the first three chapters of this dissertation have clarified the tensions implicit in the dominant gaze on marginalized subjects—whether in race or gender—in mainland France, the dissertation closes by giving voice to French citizens of non-European descent who question the construction of the nation itself. This chapter "Eating (Out)ward: Culinary Afropea as a Literary Theory and Identitarian Model" argues that an "Afropean" approach to food—one that draws equally from African and European cultures—permits the transcendence of binaries, both racial and otherwise, in a postcolonial society. Merging favorite foods, culinary histories, and childhood memories, Miano speaks directly to the unvoiced limits of French universalism and demonstrates how to broaden the concept through remixing and reorganizing manners of being and eating. Responding to the previous chapters, *Soulfood* displays the French language (Chapter 1) to be a flexible symbol in its integration of local Cameroonian dialects and creation of a uniquely Franco-African discourse; *Soulfood* also addresses place (Chapter 2) in relationship to nationhood, redefining it as a mental *terroir* based on one's responsibility to others. Leaving gender unaddressed (Chapter 3), *Soulfood* demonstrates femininity as an unmarked category, equal in value to other iterations of race, gender, and sexuality. The detailing of recipes and the inclusion of personal narration grounds this memoir's overturning of European hierarchies in lived practice, resisting its classification as a utopian narrative. The text's subtitle, "De l'eau" (From Water), highlights the chapter's theoretical, literary, and culinary undercurrents, redefining French identity as collectivity through continual movement.

CHAPTER 1: DESSERT. LANGUAGE AND LIBERTY: FOOD CRITICS, THE FIELD OF GASTRONOMY, AND THE FREEDOM TO TASTE IN MURIEL BARBERY'S *UNE GOURMANDISE*

In September 2017, chef Sébastien Bras became the first chef of a three-starred restaurant to request his omission from future editions of the Michelin Guide.[1] Having headed Le Suquet in Laguiole for ten years, which had received its consummate star in 1999, Bras confessed that a reputation based on Michelin prestige was no longer the point. Reassuring clients and colleagues that rankings from the Michelin Guide remained "un Graal gastronomique" (a Holy Grail of cuisine) and "pas une prison" (not a prison), Bras explained that they nevertheless remained "synonyme de pression" (synonymous with pressure):

> J'ai accepté [cette pression]. Mais aujourd'hui, je veux regarder le présent autrement; ouvrir un nouveau chapitre. Quand le Michelin devient davantage un frein qu'un moteur, il est temps de passer à autre chose.[2]

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[1] "Aveyron. Sous 'pression,' le chef trois étoiles veut sortir du guide Michelin," *Ouest-France.fr*, last modified September 20, 2017, https://www.ouest-france.fr/economie/hotellerie/restauration/aveyron-sous-pression-le-chef-trois-etoiles-veut-sortir-du-guide-michelin-5259417.

[2] Sébastien Bras, "Il ne veut plus être dans le Michelin. Le chef étoilé Sébastien Bras s'explique," interview by François Grégoire, *OuestFrance.fr*, last modified September 20, 2017, https://www.ouest-france.fr/le-mag/cuisine/gastronomie-sebastien-bras-quand-le-michelin-devient-un-frein-5259461.

(I accepted [this pressure]. But now, I would like to see the present differently, begin a new chapter. When the Michelin [Guide] becomes more of a brake than a motor, it is time to move on to something else.)

With this declaration, aptly framed with an automobile metaphor, Bras joined a growing list of Michelin dissenters, including Alain Senderens, Joël Robuchon, and, most recently, Jérôme Borchot, who renounced their stars for reasons ranging from finances to health.[3] Such criticism appears to indicate attempts on the part of chefs to separate their food from the guide's discursive and symbolic power by generating alternative discussions that value creative liberty over institutionalized taste criteria.[4] This negotiation of which foods are considered good also manifests a potential shift in the cultural field of gastronomy in twenty-first century France: a move away from guides, long-valued as culinary authorities, to an individualized experience of food and taste. However, in transferring the Michelin Guide's judgment of value to an anti-guide discourse, these chefs nevertheless reproduce the relationship between food and language through the production of new texts, both oral and written, that circulate in the media.[5]

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[3] "Ces chefs qui ont 'rendu' leurs étoiles Michelin," *Atabula*, last modified September 20, 2017, https://www.atabula.com/2017/09/20/chefs-ont-rendu-leurs-etoiles-michelin/. See also Ghizlaine Badri, "Le chef Jérôme Brochot renonce à son étoile au Guide Michelin," *LeFigaro.fr*, last modified November 21, 2017, http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2017/11/21/01016-20171121ARTFIG00352-le-chef-jerome-brochot-renonce-a-son-etoile-au-guide-michelin.php.

[4] Christel Lane, "Taste Makers in the 'Fine-Dining' Restaurant Industry: The Attribution of Aesthetic and Economic Value by Gastronomic Guides," *Poetics* 41 (2013): 350-51. SciVerse ScienceDirect.

[5] Bras made national and international headlines, including write-ups in *The New York Times* and *The Guardian*, for at least five months following his request (from September 2017 to February 2018).

Scholars including Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson argue that the contemporary experience of taste is highly dependent on language.[6] For Ferguson, the rise of gastronomy as a cultural practice in the nineteenth century hinged upon the translation of taste into words, which converted the material and individual practice of eating into a shared set of cultural symbols.[7] As such, she argues, the development of gastronomic writing—which broadened in the nineteenth century to include novels, cultural commentary, and journalism in addition to cookbooks and gastronomic treatises—were indispensable to the growth of gastronomy as a cultural field.[8] While Stephen Mennell has argued that the emergence of such texts functioned to democratize taste by rendering the standards of *haute cuisine* accessible to increasingly broader audiences, others have argued that such texts actually solidified the boundaries of cultural hierarchies, especially those of class.[9] As Josée Johnston and Shyron Baumann showed in 2014, American "foodie" culture defined distinction as an omnivorous interest in high-brow and low-brow cuisines; yet food writing systematically detached these dishes from discussions of poverty, cultural appropriation, or income inequality.[10] In short, despite repeated attempts to assert the individuality of chefs and eaters in twenty-first century Western contexts, linguistic and cultural processes appear to continually reinscribe existing power structures to the detriment of personal taste and, at times, social justice.

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[6] See also Sidonie Naulin, *Des mots à la bouche: Le journalisme gastronomique en France* (Tours: Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, 2017), 10.
[7] Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, "A Cultural Field in the Making: Gastronomy in 19th-century France," *American Journal of Sociology* 104, no. 3 (November 1998): 610.
[8] Ibid., 601-2.
[9] Stephen Mennell, "Of Gastronomes and Guides," in *The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink,* ed. Carolyn Korsmeyer (Oxford: Berge, 2005), 239.
[10] Josée Johnston and Shyon Baumann, *Foodies: Democracy and Distinction in the Gourmet Foodscape,* 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 158-69.

Pierre Bourdieu's theories of power and social organization explain, in part, the power mechanisms that structure food texts and restaurant criticism. An analysis of such criticism in relationship to taste and distinction in modern France is timely given the concurrent "informalization" of Western culture that suggests that status boundaries are weakening. Johnston and Baumann agree: "With *haute cuisine* in decline, and a greater interest in rustic, authentic foods, and filling, hearty fare associated with working people…it might appear that the age of food snobbery and status-seeking is in retreat."[11] In contrast, this chapter demonstrates that the multiplication of food discourse in twenty-first century France indicates increasing attempts to articulate the tension between distinction/democracy and self/collectivity, providing evidence of the endurance of social expectations that complicate an individual's ability to nourish herself—and to be.[12]

Published in 2000, Muriel Barbery's novel *Une gourmandise* (*Gourmet Rhapsody*) argues against Pierre Bourdieu's insistence that language both constructs social systems and permits criticism of them, especially in regards to the judgment of physical taste.[13] Instead, Barbery establishes the individual body as the most accurate judge of personal preference, whose individual experience of gustatory pleasure must remain separate from language in order to remain "unadulterated" by exterior cultural influences. This assertion constructs "true" or "authentic" taste, defined as an affective personal preference, as inherently ineffable; however, it

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[11] Ibid., 33.

[12] For statistics on the increase in cookbook publications, see Françoise Hache-Bissette, "L'évolution du livre de cuisine: Du livre pratique au beau-livre," *Le temps des medias* 24 (2015): 100. For food in the media and books about food in general, see Naulin, *Des mots à la bouche*, 7.

[13] This time period could also be notable due to other, non-textual forms of resistance to classic *haute cuisine*, such as Alain Passard's choice to remove red meat from the menu of his three-star restaurant l'Arpège in 2000. See Marie-Léandre Gomez and Isabelle Bounty, "The Emergence of an Influential Practice: Food for Thought," *Organization Studies* 32, no. 7 (2011): 921-40.

also bars the individual from using language to critique the current relationship between taste and distinction. While Bourdieu hints at the possibility of collective agency in opposition to social structures, the novel only accords individual agency to the central character who dies at the moment of remembering his deepest gastronomic desire. This threefold inability—to articulate a rebellion against socially-constructed fields, to speak one's intimate preferences, and to act upon them—reveals that the gastronomic field inherently functions as constraint. In this chapter, I argue that Barbery's novel not only raises the question of gustatory liberty in relationship to language but demonstrates the impossibility of truly experiencing one's personal preferences.

Set in contemporary France, the novel follows the last forty-eight hours of an unnamed narrator as he aspires to separate his personal tastes from broader social judgments of culinary value. More specifically, this narrator is self-proclaimed "le plus grand critique gastronomique du monde" (the greatest food critic in the world) who actively contributed to setting the standards for taste throughout his adult life.[14] Triggered due to his eminent heart failure, the critic's final wish to remember a flavor that he had once loved stems from his fear that socially-constructed tastes have distanced him from his real reason for living. Language is shown to be highly subjective and deeply suspect throughout chapters alternating between the narrator's blissful childhood and the hostile reflections of those who surround his deathbed. Opposing body to language, the novel structures true taste as a sensation, a pre-verbal preference, of which only the individual can be aware. Such an approach to taste not only overturns assumptions of the neutrality of the gastronomic writer; it also denies the individualism of the inherently-personal act of eating.

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[14] Muriel Barbery, *Une gourmandise* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), 12. For the title and subsequent passages in English, I am indebted to Alison Anderson's 2009 translation of the novel (*Gourmet Rhapsody*, Europa Editions) unless otherwise noted.

This chapter will begin with an evaluation of food writing, especially restaurant criticism, in relationship to Pierre Bourdieu's theories on taste, discourse, practice, and power. Despite popular belief in the food critic's objectivity regarding taste, Bourdieu's theories reveal that the critic produces his own subservience in relationship to the cultural field that he simultaneously delineates. While agency is possible within Bourdieuian thought, a close reading of Barbery's novel displays that the gastronomic field holds particular limits for the subject due to the interlocking relationship between language and the body. While the food critic manages to temporarily "escape" the bounds of language through the memory of difficult-to-describe foodstuffs, his death at the moment of his understanding—of language as constraint, of his own personal cravings—functions both as the novel's truest moment of agency as well as its deepest reinforcement of cultural taste norms. In detailing the inner workings of the gastronomic field, unexamined in Bourdieu's research, *Une gourmandise* demonstrates that social standards regarding taste endure due to the operation of language itself: the inherent ineffability of personal taste silences attempts to challenge dominant discourses.

1.1 THEORIZING FOOD WRITING

The relationship between food and words is often linguistically rendered in French through the onomatopoeic coupling of "les mets" (dishes) and "les mots" (words).[15] This linguistic harmony

[15] Popular examples include the restaurant "Les mets et les mots" in la Charité-sur-Loire, opened in 2017; the 2013 episode "Les mets et les mots" of the radio broadcast *On va déguster* (France Inter); or the food and storytelling blog https://www.desmetsetdesmots.net by Laura M—. Scholarly examples include Michel Jeanneret's 1987 landmark *Des mets et des mots: Banquets et propos de table à la Renaissance* (Librairie José Corti).

evokes its conceptual relationship, bridging the Cartesian gap between body/nature/consumption and mind/culture/reflection. For Deborah Lupton, the mouth is a "potent symbol of both consumption and its control, combining in the one site sensuality/nature (the tongue and the taste buds) with rationality/culture (the organ of speech).[16] Michel Jeanneret opens his study on Renaissance banquets by pointing out that "*saveur* et *savoir*" (taste and knowledge) have the same linguistic origin.[17] While Jeanneret hints at the complexity of asserting this relationship in modern society—"nous l'avions oublié" (we had forgotten it)—these perspectives maintain that the *experience* of the body remains indispensable from the *expression* of that experience, whether oral or written.[18]

Discourse and the body are also bridged in Bourdieuian theory. Conceptualizing the *champs*, or fields, in which agents engage in a struggle for legitimacy, Bourdieu explains that constructed judgments of cultural value are key to maintaining the rule of dominant subjects.[19] These subjects rule through their ability to grant or remove legitimacy from other subjects, with legitimacy being defined by Bourdieu as "une institution, ou une action, ou un usage" (an institution, action, or usage) that is simultaneously dominant yet "méconnu comme tel, c'est-à-dire tacitement reconnu" (not recognized as such, that is to say, which is tacitly accepted).[20] Through the production, consumption, or acquisition of cultural products, individuals attempt to

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[16] Deborah Lupton, *Food, the Body and the Self* (London, Sage Publications, 1996), 18.
[17] The same parallel can be seen between *le sens* (common sense) and *les sens* (the five senses). Michel Jeanneret, *Des mets et des mots: Banquets et propos de table à la Renaissance* (Paris: Librairie José Corti, 1987), 9, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k3326597r/.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Pierre Bourdieu defines the field of cultural production as "the system of objective relationships between agents or institutions and…the site of struggle for the monopoly of the power to consecrate, in which the value of works…and belief in that value are continuously generated." "The Production of Belief: Contribution to an Economy of Symbolic Goods," trans. Richard Nice, *Media, Culture, and Society* 2, no. 3 (1980): 265.
[20] Pierre Bourdieu, *Questions de sociologie* (Paris: Minuit, 1984), 110.

increase their metaphorical currency, or *capital*, in relationship to other social agents. One's success in this arena relies heavily on an individual's social dispositions, known as her *habitus*.[21] Denying the duality of the body and mind, Bourdieu claims that the habitus is inscribed on the body, which internalizes social meanings and permits immediate practice.[22] Bodily gestures—including eating—contribute to the reproduction of social systems. As Toril Moi points out, critique and change in Bourdieuian theory are inherently related to language, emerging through what Bourdieu calls an "objective crisis" that brings the "undiscussed into discussion, the unformulated into formulation."[23]

As a figurative concept, taste for Bourdieu encompasses a variety of cultural products, not just food. Extending Bourdieu into the realm of *haute cuisine*, Johnston and Baumann define gastronomy as a "fluid discursive field where the legitimacy of food production and consumption methods are negotiated."[24] Marie-Léandre Gomez and Isabelle Bouty clarify, "It is the space made up of agents and organizations engaged in the world of elite restaurants: the gourmet restaurants themselves, their employees and clients, food critics and journalists, specialized journals, suppliers and contractors, some cooking schools, and, last but not least, guidebooks."[25]

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[21] "A system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a *matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions*." Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of* Practice, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 82-83, https://books.google.com/books/about/Equisse_D_une_Théorie_de_la_Pratique.html?id=WvhSEMrNWHAC. Emphasis in the original.

[22] Gomez and Bouty, "The Emergence of an Influential Practice: Food for Thought," 925.

[23] Toril Moi, "Appropriating Bourdieu: Feminist Theory and Pierre Bourdieu's Sociology of Culture," *New Literary History* 22, no. 4 (October 1991): 1027. See also Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of a Practice,* 168.

[24] Josée Johnston and Shyon Baumann, "Democracy verses Distinction: A Study of Omnivorousness in Gourmet Food Writing," *American Journal of Sociology* 113, no. 1 (July 2007): 171.

[25] Gomez and Bouty, "The Emergence of an Influential Practice," 927.

Tasked with contributing to and maintaining the seeming "naturalness" of these structures, food critics are often rewarded with high cultural and, occasionally, economic capital. While popular belief maintains that the food critic operates in isolation and possesses an infinite knowledge of her cultural field, in reality her work is highly collaborative and subjective.[26] When taken together, the food critic's work both perpetuates and masks a collective definition of taste that is relative to one's social positioning and reproduced through the body and discourse.[27]

While Moi argues that crisis and critical discourse hold the potential to rupture and reshape systems of power, *Une gourmandise* calls attention to how pure human taste—defined as an essential, individual experience—complicates attempts at agency. Given that alternate critical discourses most often emerge through collective validation, this process is inherently oppositional to individual culinary experiences that, as Barbery shows, must remain outside of language in order to truly represent one's desires. The ability to access pure taste, outside of language, becomes possible for the food critic only in the liminal space between life/death and language/bodily sensation. This possibility just before death confirms the inherent impossibility of experiencing personal taste within contemporary culture.

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[26] Sidonie Naulin's extensive study on French food journalism confirms a high rate of corroboration not only between restaurants selected for review but also between the reviews themselves. *Des mots à la bouche*, 200-17. Similarly, Christel Lane's analysis of Michelin guides displays that the restaurant reviews do not merely influence consumers; they also shape the creative patterns of chefs. "Taste Makers in the 'Fine-Dining' Restaurant Industry," 345.

[27] For Bourdieu's explanation of the bodily gestures of eating, see *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (London: Routledge, 2010), 188-91.

1.2 *UNE GOURMANDISE*'S PHILOSOPHIES ON HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

Despite its success—translated into twelve languages, declared the Meilleur Livre de Littérature Gourmande (Best Book of Gourmet Literature) in 2000, and winner of the prix Bacchus BSN in 2001—*Une gourmandise* is not the novel for which Muriel Barbery is the most well known.[28] Published in 2006, Barbery's second novel, *L'élégance du hérisson* (*The Elegance of the Hedgehog*), received much more international (although not necessarily critical) attention.[29] Taking up the voice of Renée, the food critic's concierge, *L'élégance* appeared in over thirty languages, was made into a film in 2009 (*Le hérisson*, directed by Mona Achache), and had sold six million copies by 2015.[30] While skyrocketing Barbery's status as a pop literature icon, such successes risk obscuring *Une gourmandise*'s unique cultural criticism.[31] The vast majority of interviews with the author mention *Une gourmandise* only in relationship to *L'élégance,* although both are aptly defined by *Le Figaro* as a "satire sociale à l'humour tendre" (social satire with tender humor) that draws readers in by bridging body and mind: "bouche à l'oreille" (mouth to the ear).[32] This under-appreciation of *Une gourmandise*, in spite of Barbery's training as a philosopher, parallels the under-valuing of personal tastes within a collective society.

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[28] For a brief biography, see "Muriel Barbery," Bablelio.com, accessed September 28, 2017, https://www.babelio.com/auteur/Muriel-Barbery/3240.
[29] This text is often misread as pure food imagery. See Penelope, "*Une gourmandise* de Muriel Barbery," *Fauteuses de trouble: libertés agitées féminités*, last modified April 15, 2011, http://www.fauteusesdetrouble.fr/2011/04/une-gourmandise-de-muriel-barbery/.
[30] John Lichfield, "Muriel Barbery: Reclusive Writer of *The Elegance of the Hedgehog* Returns after Eight-year Hibernation with New Children's Tale *The Life of Elves*," *The Independent*, last modified March 17, 2015, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/muriel-barbery-reclusive-writer-of-the-elegance-of-the-hedgehog-returns-after-eight-year-hibernation-10114581.html.
[31] "Muriel Barbery," *LeFigaro.fr*, accessed December 6, 2017, http://evene.lefigaro.fr/celebre/biographie/muriel-barbery-22943.php.
[32] Ibid.

1.2.1 Food Discourse, Capital, and Power

Une gourmandise's exploration of the relationship between taste and language is channeled through the character of the white, male food critic, whose influence on social tastes—in part eased by his unmarked category—is rewarded by massive amounts of economic capital: "argent, beaucoup d'argent" (money, lots of money).[33] While *Une gourmandise* does not give him a name, indicating his dominance of the field by only referring to him by the pronouns "je" (I) or "lui" (him), *L'élégance du hérisson* reveals him to be Pierre Athens, infamous for his brutal distain of the poor: "un oligarque de la pire espèce" (an oligarch of the worst sort).[34] Extremely well-known to the point of being feared, Pierre directly impacts the French culinary landscape through his relationship with the media.[35] In contrast to the *Guide Michelin*, whose editorial independence, salaried staffers, and anonymous reviewers are believed, as Lane has found,[36] to safeguard the review's objectivity, Pierre's power is heightened by his visibility:

> Quand je prenais possession de la table, c'était en monarque. Nous étions les rois, les soleils de ces quelques heures de festin qui décideraient de leur avenir, qui dessineraient

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[33] Barbery, *Une gourmandise*, 63.
[34] Muriel Barbery, *L'élégance du hérisson* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006), 19, PDF file, http://asma.benamor.free.fr/gestiondoc/Documents/l_y_ly_gance_du_hy_risson.pdf. For quotes in English of *L'élégance*, I draw from Alison Anderson's 2008 translation (Europa Editions) unless stated otherwise.
[35] Similar language in the international press has been used to describe François Simon, considered France's premier restaurant critic until his retirement in 2013. See Sidonie Naulin's analysis of his influence in *Des mots à la bouche*, 265-77. See also Elisabeth Dumas-Franck's "Could This Be the Most Feared Food Critic in the World?" *Departures.com*, last modified March 30, 2010, https://www.departures.com/lifestyle/food/could-be-most-feared-food-critic-world.
[36] Lane, "Taste Makers in the 'Fine-Dining' Restaurant Industry," 349.

l'horizon tragiquement proche ou délicieusement lointain et radieux, de leurs espoirs de chefs.[37]

(When I took possession of the table, it was as supreme monarch. We were kings, the suns of those few hours of banqueting, who would determine their futures and describe their horizons—tragically limited or mouth-wateringly distant and radiant—as chefs.)

Described in *Ancien Régime* metaphors, this "puissance sans frein" (unbridled power) over space and time, wielded by an unnamed "nous" (we), shows the high value accorded to food language in contemporary French society.[38] While the illusions to royalty indicate the "undemocraticness" of this power and the possibility of popular revolt against it, none of the other agents in the story—including chefs, other writers, or Pierre's family—challenge Pierre over the course of the novel, indicating both the rigidity of Pierre's place in the gastronomic field and the potential benefits that others receive by remaining subservient.

Pierre's status is confirmed by those in concurrent fields who have been affected by his profession as a food critic. Built around chapters with alternating narrators, the structure of the novel allows for supplemental characters to detail their relationship with Pierre, which contributes to structure his dominance despite some characters' obvious bitterness and pain. The voices range from his personal life (two of his three children, a nephew, a granddaughter, his wife, and two lovers) to his professional life (an apprentice food critic, his personal doctor) and some lower-class acquaintances (his concierge, his housekeeper, and a neighborhood beggar). Pushing the bounds of subjectivity, the narration also gives voice to inanimate objects and

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[37] Barbery, *Une gourmandise*, 11.

[38] Pierre is not the first to allude to royalty to describe his power. The prolific twentieth-century writer Curnonsky (né Maurice Edmond Sailland) was dubbed the "Prince des gastronomes" (Prince of Gastronomy) by a referendum organized by *Le bon gîte et la bonne table.* Mennell, "Of Gastronomes and Guides," 243.

animals, including a bust of Venus in Pierre's study and Pierre's cat Rick. While many of the characters wish to reclaim ownership of their position in relationship to Pierre, their inability or unwillingness to challenge him reinforces the interlocking relationship between his social, cultural, and economic capital as a food critic.

Une gourmandise's secondary characters are united in their acknowledgement of Pierre's command of material and cultural resources, which results in their own material or psychological subordination. However, divided unevenly along the lines of family/acquaintance, these perspectives make up two categories—those who struggle to free themselves from Pierre's control, often defined in relationship to his writing, and those who willingly prostate themselves before him in order to benefit from his cultural influence. The theme of oppression is particularly present among his children. Pierre's daughter Laura describes him as "un homme brutal. Brutal dans ses gestes, dans sa façon dominatrice de se saisir des objets, dans son rire satisfait, dans son regard de rapace; jamais je ne l'ai vu se *détendre*" (a brutal man. Brutal in his gestures, in the dominating way he had of grabbing hold of things, his smug laugh, his raptor's gaze. I never saw him *relax*).[39] For several characters, Pierre's writing—showcasing how the gastronomic field can influence concurrent fields—symbolizes his mistreatment of them to the point of emotional abuse. Pierre's son Jean points out that he and his siblings are "rien d'autre que ton œuvre" (nothing more than your own creation), poorly cooked and "noyés dans une mauvaise sauce" (drowned…in a stinking gravy).[40] Meanwhile, Pierre's favorite nephew Paul, who abhors him in secret, questions whether it was too late to renounce the role of brown-noser that his uncle had

[39] Barbery, *Une gourmandise*, 22. Emphasis in original.
[40] Ibid., 51.

"écrit tout spécialement pour lui" (written especially for him).[41] Only Paul, who suggests that he should attempt to resolve his dispute with his cousin Jean, and Pierre's eldest daughter Clémence, who is completely omitted from the novel, hint at the possibility of agency.

When reflecting on Pierre's death, many of the characters blame his wealth for perpetuating his dominance over others. Having been earned through writing, Pierre's money stands in opposition to the face-to-face interactions that many characters crave. Jean, for one, wishes a swift death upon his father because "au moins, on aura ton fric, à défaut d'avoir eu ta faveur" (at least then we'll have your money, even if we'll never have your favor).[42] However, money is not solely responsible for Pierre's disinterest in his family, as pointed out by his housekeeper Violette. Reflecting on the family's trajectory from middle to upper class, Violette notes that money enhanced Pierre's detachment from his wife Anna—made visible in a lack of language, "à revenir sans demander de nouvelles" (coming back and never asking for any news)—but that these characteristics had been in their relationship "depuis le début" (right from the start).[43] As seen in Pierre's life, the interdependence between economic and cultural capital rewards a troubling hierarchy that values writing about food over interpersonal relationships. But what it masks may be more important: Pierre's dominance even over himself and his personal desires, which have become impossible for him to access, voice, or understand. The silencing of Pierre's family because of his power represents on a social scale what the novel next plays out on the individual level: Pierre's understanding that his own tastes have been modified by the cultural field that surrounds him.

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[41] Ibid., 158. I diverge from Anderson's translation, "created specially for them," as it communicates less forcefully the parallel between Pierre's physical and metaphorical writing.
[42] Ibid., 50.
[43] Ibid., 63.

1.2.2 Body, the Senses, and Subjectivity

In contrast to his power, structured by his creation and distribution of cultural capital, Pierre's impending death locks him within his own body. While Bourdieu views the body as the medium that incorporates the habitus, on his deathbed Pierre is denied access to communication and gesture, too weak to speak or move. As Pierre's illness renders him unable to produce new discourses about the social value of objects, his status is instead regenerated by those who surround his deathbed, who evoke and restructure his power through their memories. Meanwhile, readers are given firsthand access to Pierre's private thoughts through his stream-of-consciousness musings which reveal his doubt in the social system that has both maintained and been maintained by him.

Representing familial love but also artistic passion, Pierre's terminal illness, an "insuffisance de cœur" (an insufficient heart), symbolically bridges body and mind.[44] However, upon reflecting on his diagnosis, he notes that the relationship had been almost impossible to discover in others in his professional life: "J'ai tant reproché aux autres de manquer [de cœur] dans leur cuisine, dans leur art, que je n'ai jamais pensé que c'était peut-être à moi qu'il faisait défaut" (So often have I reproached others for a lack of heart in their cuisine, in their art, that never for a moment did I think that I might be the one lacking therein).[45] Implying authentic ambition, this comment hints that other social agents are also struggling to assert their creativity and individuality within the confines of *haute cuisine*, succumbing instead to the constraints of the gastronomic field. Additionally, through the physical and metaphorical meaning of the word

[44] Ibid., 13. I veer from Alison Anderson's translation, "cardiac insufficiency," which clouds the potential multiple interpretations of the phrase.
[45] Ibid.

coeur (heart), Barbery hints at the novel's theme that such a struggle could be experienced differently in the mind and in the body.

As a crisis experienced within his own body, Pierre is either unable or unwilling to express his broader concerns to his family. While briefly acknowledging his disdain for his children and his love for his wife Anna due to her high cultural currency, one of his prized "beaux objects" (beautiful objects), Pierre is uninterested in them as he dies.[46] Instead, the quest for the unknown taste—following Moi's definition of the "crisis" that leads to social change—represents the pursuit of the reason why Pierre has lived.[47] Describing this taste in the novel's opening chapter as one that could transcend his profession as a food writer—"une saveur d'enfance, ou d'adolescence, un mets originel et merveilleux avant toute vocation critique, avant tout désir et toute prétention à dire mon plaisir de manger" (a flavor from childhood or adolescence, an original, marvelous dish that predates my vocation as a critic, before I had any desire or pretension to expound on my pleasure in eating)—Pierre indicates that the gastronomic field constrains individual experiences through its reliance on language and discourse.[48]

Pierre's quest for a forgotten flavor draws together his memories of the cuisines of four countries (France, Morocco, Japan, and the United States), multiple time periods (his early childhood to his early career), and high-brow and low-brow foods (ranging from homemade orange sorbet to American diner toast). Evidencing the characteristics of what Johnston and Baumann have called the "culinary omnivore," this range of foods confirms Pierre's status as a

[46] Barbery, *Une gourmandise*, 19.
[47] Moi, "Appropriating Bourdieu," 1027.
[48] Barbery, *Une gourmandise*, 13.

high-class "foodie" in modern French culture.[49] Meanwhile, the disparate places and times evoked through Pierre's memory are unified through his bodily experience of pleasure, which diverges from Bourdieu's interpretation of the body as the encapsulation of social structures. The novel's highly evocative passages about food—in which Barbery takes up the pen of Pierre and impressively lives up to his reputation as a gastronomic writer—use the senses to evoke beauty and awe. Even when lying motionless on his deathbed with his eyes closed (as those around him continually reconstitute his social presence), Pierre's five senses are explored through memory, providing a foundation for understanding his individual experience of taste. Reacting his first smell of whisky, Pierre exclaims, "Quelle explosion musclée, abrupte, sèche et fruitée à la fois, comme une décharge d'adrénaline…condensé gazeux de falaises sensorielles" (Such a muscular, abrupt explosion, dry and fruity at the same time, like a charge of adrenaline…a gaseous concentration of sensorial precipices).[50] The memory of a tomato is evoked through its texture running over the mouth: "La résistance de la peau tendue, juste un peu, juste assez, le fondant des tissues, de cette liqueur pépineuse qui s'écoule au coin des lèvres et qu'on essuie sans crainte d'en tacher ses doigts" (The resistance of the skin—slightly taut, just enough; the luscious yield of the tissues, their seed-filled liqueur oozing to the corners of one's lips, and that one wipes away without any fear of staining one's fingers).[51] Reveling in the senses and rejecting social

[49] Johnston and Baumann, *Foodies*, 33. While their research defines this concept in Anglophone contexts, parallel trends, including the *Omnivore* publications and festivals established in 2003, confirm similar patterns of value in modern-day France. See "Omnivore," accessed March 8, 2018, https://www.omnivore.com/page/omnivore/.
[50] Barbery, *Une gourmandise*, 136.
[51] Ibid., 61.

norms of clean faces and hands, Pierre indicates that the body figures heavily in his personal experience of taste, which lies in opposition to cultural definitions of propriety.[52]

Throughout the novel, the senses become increasingly associated with the countryside, whether rural France or the Moroccan coast. Juxtaposed to city life, the experiences expound upon an outlook of modern society that is Rousseauian in nature. Corresponding to the initial development of *haute cuisine* in eighteenth-century France, Rousseau's writings are useful for a detour here, as they shed light on the historicity of attempts to articulate the relationship between personal preferences and collective judgments of taste. For Rousseau, taste was a highly subjective experience that originated in nature and was easily corrupted by society.[53] Rejecting heavy dishes and expensive ingredients, Rousseau preferred dishes from the countryside—ones that were local, seasonal, and simple—in order to better connect man to his natural state.[54] While Pierre never mentions Rousseau directly in his deathbed monologues, Pierre also believes the senses to be most honed through nature, which sharpens one's understanding of the world. During his childhood summers at his Aunt Marthe's country home, Pierre's interaction with nature accorded him his most treasured life lessons, as seen by the high use of imagery and the superlative in the following passage:

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[52] For a brief history of how the senses have been perceived in relationship to the body, see Robert Jütte, *A History of the Senses: From Antiquity to Cyberspace*, trans. James Lynn (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 58-59.

[53] Rousseau believed tastes preferences to be intrinsically linked to one's gender, calling an overlap of tastes "une marque presque infaillible du mélange désordonné des sexes" (an almost infallible mark of a disorderly mingling of the sexes). *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse*, Vol. 2 (Paris: Gallimard, 1993), 67–8.

[54] S. K. Wertz, "Taste and Food in Rousseau's *Julie, or the New Heloise*," *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 47, no. 3 (Fall 2013): 27-29.

> Mon cœur y aura chanté ses plus fervents cantiques, mon œil y aura appris les secrets du regard, mon goût les saveurs du gibier et du potager et mon nez l'élégance des parfums.[55]
>
> (It was there that my heart has sung its most fervent hymns, that my eyes learned the secrets of looking, my taste buds the flavor of game and of the vegetable garden, and my nose the elegance of fragrances.)

Again paralleling Rousseau, Pierre opposes this relationship to the city, which gradually clouded his understanding of nature as well as of himself. Each week, upon returning home, the young Pierre is forced "réintégr[er] l'asphalte" (to reintegrate into the asphalt) and forget "toujours un peu plus que je suis né pour les arbres" (a little bit more that I was born for trees).[56] This forced distancing of Pierre from his desires demonstrates what Rousseau would call corruption by society and what Bourdieu would call integration into a social field—one that shapes individual desires into tools for gaining power in a given context.

But there is evidence in *Une gourmandise* that some individuals never make this transition out of nature. Namely, these are individuals who have shunned traditional French education, especially a formal understanding of language, escaping what Bourdieu believes to be—as Moi summaries—"one of the principal agents of symbolic violence in modern democracies."[57] Most strikingly, these are also the characters that cook the best in Pierre's memory and those who maintain the strongest relationship with the natural world. His Aunt Marthe was "fruste, presque analphabète" (course, almost illiterate) but "savait d'instinct" (knew

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[55] Barbery, *Une gourmandise*, 54.
[56] Ibid. I embellish on Anderson's translation, "find myself once again on the asphalt," which I find much less evocative than Barbery's original.
[57] Moi, "Appropriating Bourdieu," 1023.

instinctively) when a tomato was perfectly ripe.[58] When sharing a simple meal with a group of rustic countrymen in Normandy, Pierre remarks upon, even to the point of admiration, "la truculence de leur parler, brutal en sa syntaxe débraillée mais chaleureux en son authenticité juvénile" (the truculence of my hosts' language: the syntax may have been brutally sloppy, but it was oh so warm in its juvenile authenticity).[59] These characters' ability to cook well—one may even call it their "heart"—seems to hinge precisely upon their lack of interest or ability in "correctly" engaging with French. Through their "improper" language skills, these characters resist the impact of the social inequalities that formal education reproduces. In existing outside of standard linguistic codes, these characters' ability to taste has also remained outside of discursive-constructed fields, allowing them to more accurately understand their individual gustatory desires. While Bourdieu would argue that these characters remain bound by less dominant fields that correspond to rural habitus, Pierre's memories of these characters suggest otherwise, emphasizing their frequent transgression and subordination of mealtime conventions.[60]

A rare extended conversation with Pierre during a gastronomic master class teases out this inverse relationship between personal taste and formal education, indicating its centrality to Barbery's novel. As recounted by an apprentice named Georges, the master class was designed to teach aspiring food critics how to use language to describe a meal. Unimpressed by the other participants, Pierre turns his attention to Georges and discovers that they both associate orange sorbet with their grandmothers. Despite the fact that Pierre's grandmother did not fall within the

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[58] Barbery, *Une gourmandise*, 55, 59.
[59] Ibid., 103.
[60] Examples could include Pierre's grandfather, who grilled strong-smelling fish despite the fact that the house would smell for days, or the woman in Normandy who served Pierre a few asparagus tips while acknowledging that it wasn't a sufficient hors d'oeuvre. Ibid., 45, 101.

social bounds of language or gender—she was heavyset and had a mustache—she nevertheless cooked food that overtook Pierre's body with the kind of "véritable désir [qui] vous hypnotise, s'empare de votre âme entière" (true desire [that] hypnotizes you and takes hold of your entire soul).[61] In contrast, George's grandmother cooked, served food, and demanded that guests dine in silence, forcing the internalization of the experience of pleasure. Upon hearing this, Pierre suggests that both women bypassed dominant culture through their ignorance, perhaps willful, of formal linguistic codes, producing an authentic, individualized culinary experience. Regarding his own grandmother,

> …c'est à sa bonne humeur et à sa sensualité méridionales que j'ai toujours attribué la réussite et la magie de cette cuisine où j'identifiais le débonnaire et le savoureux. J'ai même pensé parfois que c'étaient sa bêtise, son peu d'éducation et de culture qui faisaient d'elle une cuisinière accomplie, en libérant pour la chère toute l'énergie qui n'alimentait pas l'esprit.[62]
>
> (…I have always attributed the success and magic of her good-natured, tasty cooking to her good humor and southern sensuality. I even thought at times that it was her stupidity and lack of education and culture that made her accomplished cook, and that all the energy which did not nourish her mind was free to nourish her fair).

Juxtaposing formal education to the ability to cook well, Pierre separates the pleasures of the body from the reflection of the mind. The rarity of this point of view within the food critic profession is shown in that Pierre—to the jealousy of the other apprentices—invites Georges to continue the dialogue after the immediate meal, sparking decades of friendship between the two.

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[61] Ibid., 44, 35.
[62] Ibid., 36.

Georges' own dissatisfaction with the trajectory of his own career within the gastronomic field, which he reflects upon after hearing of Pierre's illness, can be read as a reinforcement of Pierre's own concern of how his work as a critic had distanced himself from his own pleasure. As he had begun to do in life, on his deathbed Pierre denies the neutrality of the pairing of food and language, suggesting that culinary discourse contributes to the construction of social hierarchies that elongate individuals from their personal desires.

1.2.3 Authenticity and the Space between Language

While the production of culinary language, imagined to be the linguistic incarnation of an objective truth, had been the center of Pierre's profession, *Une gourmandise* increasingly brings language itself into suspicion, questioning its ability to accurately represent reality. While none of the characters openly lie—Anna knows about Pierre's other lovers, Jean knows that Pierre hates his children—the characters frequently acknowledge that words fashion reality to the speaker's or writer's advantage, often masking or subordinating objective facts. Commenting generally on the functioning of language, Pierre acknowledges that words are magicians that shape the past: "changent la face de la réalité en l'embellissant du droit de devenir mémorable" (change the face of reality by adorning it with the right to become memorable).[63] Regarding food, Georges points out that "l'art de dire" (the art of speaking) can supplant "celui de la dégustation" (the art of tasting).[64] Pierre's daughter Laura experiences a double betrayal by language when her own words remind her of her father's, causing her to understand that language about food can replace the meal itself:

[63] Ibid., 104.
[64] Ibid., 33.

> Comme lui je décortique la succession des sensations, comme lui je les enrobe d'adjectifs, je les distends, je les dilate sur la distance d'une phrase, d'une mélodie verbale, et je ne laisse plus subsister de la pâture passée des mots de prestidigitateur, qui font croire au lecteur qu'il a mangé comme nous.[65]
>
> (Just like him, I dissect each sensation in succession; like him, I cloak them with adjectives, dilate them, stretch them over the length of a sentence, or a verbal melody, and I let nothing of the actual food remain, only these magicians words, which will make the readers believe that they have been eating as we did.)

For food critics, as for Bourdieu, discourse is more important than the object itself—"le verbe et non la viande" (the verb, not the meat)—which is problematic for many of *Une gourmandise*'s characters.[66] These comments indicate that language about food changes not only the present but also the past, clarifying the intensity of Pierre's quest for authenticity while calling it into question at the same time.

Despite the fact that replacing food with words had been the center of Pierre's profession, his deathbed memories indicate his desire to escape the constraints of discourse. As the novel progresses, Pierre increasingly prizes memories of food that, due to their intermediary nature, appear to exist outside of language. Commenting on his first taste of sushi, Pierre describes the substance, in being "ni matière ni eau" (neither matter nor water), as being able to "résiste au

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[65] Ibid., 24-25.

[66] Ibid., 104. When reviewing Peter Naccarto and Kathleen Lebesco's 2012 *Culinary Capital*, Jane Fajans points out, "Culinary practice is not sufficient for culinary capital; it may not even be necessary." Review of *Culinary Capital* by Peter Naccarato and Kathleen LeBesco, *American Ethnologist: Journal of the American Ethnological Society* 41, no. 1 (February 2014): 227.

néant" (stand up to the void).[67] Toast grilled with butter at an American diner gains a spiritual quality by being "ni éponge ni pain mais à mi-chemin entre les deux" (neither sponge nor bread but something in between).[68] Childhood memories of eating a Moroccan bread known as *kesra* involve no language; instead, the family ate "tout consciencieusement et en silence" (consciously and in silence), which allowed them to better understand themselves: "Ce n'est plus ni pain, ni mie, ni gâteau que nous mastiquons alors, c'est un semblant de nous-mêmes, de ce que doit être le goût de nos tissus intimes, que nous pétrissons ainsi" (It is no longer bread, nor dough, nor cake that we are masticating; it is something like our own self, what our own secret tissues must taste like).[69] Through this secular and cannibalistic-like communion, Pierre's family becomes able to comprehend "une vérité supérieure, décisive entre toutes" (a higher, all-decisive truth).[70] In recalling foods that express the space between language, the ailing Pierre becomes able to access a deep, ineffable sense of peace, confirming the tension between language and "authentic" desire: "un inexprimable bien-être" (an inexpressible sense of well-being).[71] This affect, placed in opposition to its linguistic expression, continues to unravel the relationship between taste and language that had been so central to Pierre's career.

The acknowledgement of this antithetical relationship between personal taste and collective language inverts Pierre's understanding of his life work, causing him to question what had been his responsibility to others. Like the intermediary foods that had brought him joy,

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[67] Barbery, *Une gourmandise*, 72. The translation is my own. While lyrical, Anderson's "prevent…from evaporating into nothingness" communicates less powerfully the sushi's intermediary positioning.
[68] Ibid., 123.
[69] Ibid., 92. Anderson's translation "in silence, consciously" offsets the parallelism between silence and thought indicated in Barbery's original.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.

Pierre suggests that his role as a food writer was to have been an intermediary between the two theoretical poles of food and language: "Peut-être est-ce là le ressort de ma vocation, entre le dire et le manger (Perhaps those are the inner workings of my vocation, between what is said, and what is eaten).[72] However, given the intense individuality of the experience of taste, it is questionable whether or not Pierre could have restructured the field while within it—a fact that is reinforced by Barbery's depiction of Pierre's previous attempts to gain agency within his social context through his gaze.

1.2.4 The Gaze and Resistance

Bourdieu has been criticized for his lack of precision on strategies of resistance and field exit.[73] Given his premise that actions within a field, whether in favor of the field's dynamics or in opposition to them, tend to reinforce the field's structure, even language against the field reinscribes dominant power structures in Bourdieuian theory. Regarding resistance, Bourdieu calls instead for a heightened awareness of the inner workings of power and social positioning, expressed, among other ways, through the metaphor of the gaze. While, for Bourdieu, the physical gaze can be embodied and cultivated to express one's habitus, the metaphorical gaze unifies the body and mind and provides a manner of perceiving the powers that structure the social world. A rupture from the self-evident, claims Bourdieu,

> …demands a *conversion of one's gaze*…The task is to produce, if not a 'new person,' then at least a 'new gaze,' *a sociological eye.* And this cannot be done without a genuine

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[72] Ibid., 104.
[73] An example of such criticism is found in Ming-Cheng Miriam Lo, "Conceptualizing 'Unrecognized Cultural Currency': Bourdieu and Everyday Resistance among the Dominated," *Theory and Society* 44, no. 2 (March 2015): 126-35.

> conversion, a *metanoia,* a mental revolution, a transformation of one's whole vision of the world.[74]

In *Une gourmandise,* characters' reflection on Pierre's gaze provides a complementary understanding of his dissatisfaction with the cultural fields that he has helped to establish. Indicating the importance according to metaphorical rather than physical taste, Pierre is most frequently defined by his eyes, not his palate.[75] Georges calls Pierre a "génie vivant à la plume immortelle et aux prunelles de braise" (living genius with his immortal pen and ember-like pupils).[76] Oftentimes Pierre's gaze replaces his words, commanding silence, disapproval, or, more rarely, interest.[77] While children and family members, representative of the educated class, are terrorized before Pierre's eyes, characters that exist outside of educated society, including animals, inanimate objects, and domestic help, are welcoming of Pierre's gaze and able to reflect upon its meaning.

Unaffected by Pierre's scorn, these characters are the most capable of observing Pierre's misdirection in relationship to himself and his tastes. The bust of Venus in Pierre's study in particular points out that Pierre looks but does not see. Explaining that Pierre only believes that she exists when he turns on the lamp above her shoulders, Venus adds,

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[74] Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc J. D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 251. Emphasis in the original.
[75] As explained by Moi, competence within a social field may have very little relationship to the actual tasks an agent is called upon to perform. "Appropriating Bourdieu," 1024.
[76] Barbery, *Une gourmandise,* 34. I have slightly modified Anderson's "fiery gaze," preferring the reference to hot coals in the original French.
[77] See Laura's memory: "Ses yeux…m'inspectaient vraiment pour la première fois depuis des années" (His eyes…were actually inspecting me for the first time in years). Lotte also described her grandfather's ability to shoot her a "regard méchant, *vraiment* méchant" (nasty look, a *really* nasty look). Ibid., 25, 96. Emphasis in the original.

> Tels sont pour lui les êtres de chair et de sang qui traversent sa vie, absents à sa mémoire quand il leur tourne le dos, et lorsqu'ils rentrent de nouveau dans le champs de sa perception, présents d'une présence qu'il ne comprend pas. Eux aussi, il les regarde sans les voir…[78]
>
> (This is the way it is for him with the flesh and blood creatures who cross his path in life; they are absent from memory when he turns his back on them, and, when once again they enter the field of his perception, they offer him a presence he cannot grasp. He looks at them, too, without seeing them…)

Using herself as a metaphor for Pierre's lack of interest in his family, Venus blames his inability to understand others on "un voile invisible qui entrave son jugement" (an invisible veil that hinders his judgment).[79] Defining this veil as his own "raideur d'autocrate éperdu" (rigidity…of the distraught autocrat), Venus interprets Pierre's social positioning as the antecedent to his "liberté" (freedom) and calls for his death: "Meurs, vieil homme. Il n'y ni paix ni place pour toi dans cette vie" (Die, old man. There is no peace and there is no place for you in this life).[80] While several of the characters appear to be hopeful about a transformation of their relationship with Pierre, Venus is the first to suggest that death is the only escape from the fields that Pierre has constructed.

While Venus denies Pierre's awareness of his inauthenticity in relationship to himself, other characters interpret his gaze as expressing various degrees of consciousness about the confining potential of his career in language. After commenting on how Pierre maintains eye contact when really listening, Pierre's housekeeper Violette speculates that he is uncomfortable

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[78] Ibid., 106.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid., 106-7.

with “tous ces gens de la haute qu’il fréquente” (all those upper crust sorts he hangs around with): “On voit bien qu’il est content de leur plaire, de les épater, de les gaver, de les regarder l’écouter, mais il ne les aime pas; ce n’est pas son monde” (You can tell he’s glad he can please them and impress them, stuff them full of food and watch them listening to him, but he doesn’t like them; it’s not his world).[81] Gégène, the beggar at the corner of Pierre’s street, also reads Pierre’s gaze as indicative of his wish to escape his own social context. Despite believing Pierre to be among “des brutes, des vrais salauds” (the brutes, the real bastards) that stare him down as they walk past, Gégène nevertheless claims to sense a connection between Pierre and himself: “Crève, mon gars…de tout l’argent que tu ne m’as pas donné…mais ce n’est pas moi qui m’en réjouirai. Toi et moi, on est faits de la même étoffe” (Go ahead and die, mate…from all the money you never gave me…but I sure won’t be throwing up a cheer. We’re made of the same cloth, you and I).[82] Through their positioning outside of dominant cultural fields, a fact continually evoked through their “misuse” of the French language, these characters claim to be able to perceive Pierre’s discontent with the high society that he had helped to create. Confirming the oppositional relationship between language and self-understanding, these anecdotes contextualize Pierre’s growing disenchantment with his professional life. Given that the novel charts no attempts on the part of Pierre to resist these fields prior to his illness, these scenes also document Pierre’s initial failure in challenging his mindset and worldview, what Bourdieu calls “the conversion of thought, the revolution of the gaze.”[83] This unwillingness to change prior to the crisis of his heart attack confirms the benefit Pierre had gained from his social positioning, enhanced by his “unmarked” status as white and male. Pierre’s final choice—

[81] Ibid., 65.
[82] Ibid., 86.
[83] Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, 251-52.

to remember and request his deepest desired taste despite its nonexistent social value—functions as an exchange of cultural capital for personal capital: a form of resistance on an individual level. However, in choosing to not share this experience, Pierre leaves the gastronomic field unchallenged, perpetuating the "naturalization" of class-based tastes as well as racial and gendered hierarchies.

1.2.5 The Spirituality of Self-Awareness

Pierre's recall of his forgotten flavor—a small, round, sugar-crusted pastry known as a *chouquette*—affirms the intrinsic relationship between personal taste and the body. Remembered when Pierre is unspeaking and lying still, this memory also confirms the opposition between language and personal desire. Too weak to speak, Pierre begins instead to cry: "Je marmonne frénétiquement quelques mots incompréhensibles à mon entourage, je pleure, je ris en même temps" (I mumble frenetically a few words incomprehensible to those around me, I am weeping and laughing at the same time).[84] After drawing a few deep breathes, Pierre requests the pastries with difficulty, wondering if the speech act will cause his heart to fail. While indicating his literal demise, Pierre's fear of speaking reinforces the novel's theme that discourse may eradicate personal tastes.

As Rousseau would have predicted, Pierre's deepest desire is in opposition to the *haute cuisine* that he had lauded all his life. Pierre panics at Anna's suggestion that the *chouquettes* be purchased from Lenôtre, a high-end pastry chain, specifying that he wants soggy supermarket pastries—"des choux dans un sac en plastique chez Leclerc" (*choux* in a plastic bag from

[84] Barbery, *Une gourmandise*, 159.

Leclerc)—instead.[85] Underscoring the oppositional relationship between personal tastes and collective society, Pierre senses that he as an individual is forgotten as his family mobilizes to get him the dessert; he is forced to throw a pillow on the floor to be heard a second time. But diverging from Rousseau, Pierre craves a sweet, industrially-processed food, a desire that defines authentic tastes strictly in terms of bodily pleasure.[86] Pierre's reasoning is exclusively based on his own experience and memory: supermarket *chouquettes* better connects him to the hunger of his teenaged years, which had been experienced through the body and outside of language: "affamé comme on peut l'être à cet âge, sans discernement, sauvagement" (famished the way one often is at that age, without discernment, quite wildly).[87] Upon recalling this memory of bodily pleasure, Pierre experiences an affective sense of peace that confirms the "authenticity" of his final wish: "une quiétude que je me rappelle seulement aujourd'hui" (a tranquility that I recall only today).[88]

Pierre's inability or unwillingness to explain the nature of his death wish to his family safeguards his personal tastes from social corruption, expressed in their potential confusion or scorn. However, in not communicating its logic, Pierre allows the gastronomic field to remain intact, perpetuating it as he had done so in his lifetime. Underscoring the inability of the dominant culture to "see" their own agency, those who surround Pierre's bedside watch in horror at his delight. Paul finds Pierre's request to be a pitiful "condamnation de sa science, dénonciation de ses engagements" (a condemnation of his science and a denunciation of

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[85] Ibid., 161.
[86] Rousseau would have found a man's taste for sugar to be a sign of his unnatural relationship with women. *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse*, 67-68.
[87] Barbery, *Une gourmandise*, 163.
[88] Ibid.

everything he once stood for).[89] Even Pierre knows that his anticipation must appear distasteful to others: "Je sais que je dois avoir l'air de ce que je suis, au fond: un homme mûr à l'agonie, retombé en enfance au seuil de sa vie" (I know I must look like what I am, basically: a mature man on his deathbed, who has lapsed into infancy as he prepares to depart from his life).[90] While Pierre is convinced that he can somewhat communicate the intensity of his death wish through his gaze—the first time in the novel that he mentions his own eyes, which he infuses with "toute la force de mon désir et de mon désespoir" (all the strength of my desire and despair)—the family's collective repulsion reconstitutes their ensnarement in Pierre's cultural empire.[91] This contrast between Pierre's desire and the family's disgust reinforces the fact that individual tastes must remain an intensely personal affair, even as their unvoiced nature perpetuates the gastronomic field.

Despite Pierre's certainty that Paul in particular understood his gaze—"je le sens, je le sais" (I sense it, I know it)—the intense spirituality of his reflections on personal taste cast doubt on the possibility that true understanding exists outside of the liminal space between life and death.[92] Like sushi, toast grilled with butter, and *kesra* bread, supermarket *chouquettes* inspire Pierre due to their intermediary nature. While his profession as a food critic had reinforced the necessity of stark moral delineations between "good" and "not good"—not unlike the contrast between a *chouquette*'s firm pastry and soft cream: "l'importance capitale de la frontière en matière de chou à la crème" (the capital importance of borders where *choux à la crème* are concerned)—Pierre craves industrially-produced *choux* because their sogginess collapses the

[89] Ibid., 156.
[90] Ibid., 158.
[91] Ibid., 161.
[92] Ibid.

distinction between food and body.[93] This intimacy between food, mouth, teeth, and tongue renders language unnecessary, transgresses the boundaries of the body and inviting full hedonistic pleasure. Pierre's experience of tasting the *chouquettes* evokes sexual delight, opposing language to the joyful union of food and body:

> On a beaucoup écrit sur la première bouchée, la deuxième et la troisième. On a dit beaucoup de choses justes à ce sujet. Toutes sont vraies. Mais elles n'atteignent pas, et de très loin, l'ineffable de cette sensation-là, de l'effleurement puis du broyage de la pâte humide dans une bouche devenue orgasmique…La chouquette adhérait aux muqueuses les plus intimes de mon palais, sa mollesse sensuelle épousait mes joues…[94]
>
> (Much has been written about the first bite, the second, and the third. Many worthy things have been professed on the subject. All are true. But they do not attain, far from it, the ineffable nature of that sensation, of lightly touching then gradually crushing the moist batter in a mouth that has become orgasmic…The *chouquette* clung to the most secret membranes of my palate, its sensual softness embraced my cheeks…)

Highlighting the bodily experience of taste and touch, Pierre's abandon to the *chouquette* not only transgresses moral codes about the body's impermeability; it also inverts the hierarchy of moral and immoral pleasure embedded in the novel's title, *gourmandise*.[95] Elevating the self and the body to the center of human experience, Pierre raises the pursuit of individual tastes to a moral imperative.

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[93] Ibid., 164.
[94] Ibid.
[95] For the cultural evolution of the meaning of this taste, see Florent Quellier's *Une gourmandise: Histoire d'un péché capital* (Paris, Armand Colin, 2010). See also Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin's frustration that "gourmandise" was very poorly portrayed in nineteenth-century dictionaries. "De la gourmandise," *Physiologie du goût* (Paris: Gabriel de Gonet, 1848), Project Gutenberg, http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22741/22741-h/22741-h.htm.

However, Pierre's increasing use of spiritual metaphors to explain this affective unity raises the question of whether personal taste is accessible in life.[96] Defining God as an intense understanding of self, body, and desire, Pierre points out that this spirituality is under constant threat of being usurped by others' desires. His first "religious" experience in childhood is contrasted with the lack of understanding that has defined most of his adult life:

> Dans l'union quasi mystique de ma langue avec ces chouquettes de supermarché, à la pâte industrielle et au sucre devenu mélasse, j'ai atteint Dieu. Depuis, je l'ai perdu et sacrifié à des désirs glorieux qui n'étaient pas les miens et qui, au crépuscule de ma vie, ont bien failli encore me le dérober.[97]
>
> (In the almost mystical union between my tongue and these supermarket *chouquettes*, with their industrial batter and their treacly sugar, I attained God. Since then, I have lost him, sacrificed him to the glorious desires which were not mine and which, in the twilight of my life, have very nearly succeeded in concealing him from me again.)

In contrast to the difficulty of attaining God, Pierre lauds personal pleasure, defined as self-centeredness and self-sufficiency:

> Dieu, c'est-à-dire le plaisir brut, sans partage, celui qui part du noyau de nous-mêmes qui n'a égard qu'à notre propre jouissance et y revient de même; Dieu, c'est-à-dire cette

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[96] Michel Foucault raises similar questions about the relationship between pleasure and death, as explained to an interviewer in 1982. "I think that pleasure is a very difficult behavior. It's not as simple as that…to enjoy one's self. And I must say that's my dream. I would like and I hope I'll die of an overdose…of pleasure of any kind. Because I think it's really difficult, and I always have the feeling that I do not feel *the* pleasure, the complete total pleasure, and, for me, it's related to death…Because I think that the kind of pleasure I would consider as *the* pleasure…would be so deep, so intense, so overwhelming that I couldn't survive it. I would die." Qtd. in James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (Cambridge, MS: Harvard University Press, 1993), 306, https://books.google.com/books?isbn=0674001575.

[97] Barbery, *Une gourmandise*, 165.

région mystérieuse de notre intimité où nous sommes entièrement à nous-même dans l'apothéose d'un désir authentique et d'un plaisir sans mélange.[98]

God, that is to say, raw, unequivocal pleasure, the pleasure which stems from our innermost core, cares for nothing other than our own delight, and returns to it in like fashion; God—that is, that mysterious region in our most secret self with which we are completely in tune in the apotheosis of authentic desire and unadulterated pleasure.)

Bridging God and the self, the consumption of *chouquettes* can be read as a secular transubstantiation. In the act of ingesting, the pastry not only becomes the eating subject; it also permits a spiritual fulfillment more substantial than physical nourishment.[99]

The fact that Pierre passes away before the arrival of the *chouquettes* to his bedside reinforces this final transition away from language and the body, highlighting instead a state of consciousness or awareness. Locating meaning not in eating or living but in understanding, Pierre declares: "La question ce n'est pas de manger, ce n'est pas de vivre, mais de savoir pourquoi" (The question is not one of eating, nor is it one of living; the question is knowing why).[100] His (and the novel's) final words function simultaneously as a Christ-like declaration of completion, a benediction to life itself, and an acceptance of Pierre's limitations as a subject: "Au nom du père, du fils et de la chouquette, amen. Je meurs" (In the name of the father, the son, and the *chouquette,* amen. I die).[101] The finality of this declaration is held in tension with the

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[98] Ibid.

[99] Elevating pastries to the level of authentic truth, Pierre parallels a comment made earlier in the novel about *cornes de gazelle* (*gazelle horns*): "Elles ne sont appréciables dans toute leur subtilité que lorsque nous ne les mangeons pas pour apaiser la faim" (They can only be appreciated to the full extent of their subtlety when they are not eaten to assuage our hunger). Ibid., 30.

[100] Ibid., 165-66.

[101] Ibid., 166.

illusiveness of taste, which suggests but evades the possibility of a gustatory afterlife. The conclusion of this novel is therefore a rare portrait of an individual's understanding of his personal taste in the exact moment between life and death, between language and body, in which true individual consciousness becomes possible. The passage into death, rather than death itself, is shown to offer the greatest possibilities for resistance to social fields.

1.3 CONCLUSION

Pierre is undeniably frustrated regarding the social constraints that separate individuals from their personal preferences. Upon realizing his own agency at the point of death, he exclaims, regarding the living:

> Comment peut-on à ce point se trahir soi-même? Quelle corruption plus profonde encore que celle du pouvoir nous conduit ainsi à renier l'évidence de notre plaisir, à honnir ce que nous avons aimé, à déformer à ce point notre goût?[102]
>
> (How can one betray oneself to such a degree? What corruption greater even than power can lead us to thus deny the proof of pleasure, to hold in contempt that which we have loved, to defile our own taste to such a degree?)

This "corruption" is partially explained through Pierre Bourdieu's theories, which, when applied to the gastronomic field, display that the maintenance of power depends on the interlocking relationship between body, language, and taste. In framing death as the release from social constraints, *Une gourmandise* constructs life as the opposite: a series of power struggles that

[102] Ibid., 163.

continually defer unadulterated self-understanding. Taste in *Une gourmandise* could therefore be read as a type of gastronomic social contract in which individual agency is partially relinquished to permit eating in a social context—or, in the case of France, the construction of a national identity.[103] Within the context of national identity, the shared experience of language and food is thus essential to the construction of France's gastronomic legacy. However, as *Une gourmandise* displays, this identity, whether national or local, is constructed at the expense of individuals, who are unequally positioned in concurrent fields of privilege and power. While confirming the far-reaching impact of food language in the construction of interpersonal relationships—a process that is favorably framed in most French discourse—*Une gourmandise* poses the subtle question: At whose expense are these structures maintained?

[103] Collective eating remains especially valued in modern-day France, although the practice of collective dining is on the decline. For an analysis of this subject in popular discourse, see Chloé Pilorget-Rezzouk, "Manger seul au resto: honteux et tabou. Pourtant on peut adorer ça," *L'Obs.com*, last modified January 4, 2018, https://www.nouvelobs.com/rue89/nos-vies-intimes/20180103.OBS0097/manger-seul-au-resto-honteux-et-tabou-pourtant-on-peut-adorer-ca.html.

CHAPTER 2: AUX CHAMPS. COMICS IN THE KITCHEN: THE FRENCH NATIONAL BODY IN GUILLAUME LONG'S *À BOIRE ET À MANGER*

When François Pierre La Varenne published his cookbook *Le cuisinier françois* (*The French Chef*) in 1561, it was the first new cookbook—not just a medieval reprint—to be published in France in over a century.[1] Containing cross-references, indexes, and the basis for many classic French dishes that endure today, *Le cuisinier* was not only fundamental in its content; it was also revolutionary in its organization.[2] Designed to teach cooking techniques in addition to recipes, La Varenne's cookbook framed French cuisine as a unified medium that could be deployed for the benefit of the national good. In a series of prefaces, La Varenne describes his writing about food as a service akin to military heroism, predicting that Paris's culinary expertise could serve as a model for the rest of Europe and—if properly wielded—encourage international peace.[3]

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[1] Joan Dejean, *The Essence of Style: How the French Invented High Fashion, Fine Food, Chic Cafés, Style, Sophistication, and Glamour* (New York: Free Press, 2005), 109.
[2] Ibid., 111.
[3] After calling France a country "emportant l'honneur par dessus toutes les autres Nations du monde, de la civilité, courtoisie, & bien séance en toutes sortes de conversation" (among all the world's nations, first in honor, in civility, in courtliness, in propriety in all sorts of relations), La Varenne predicts that France's culinary expertise will inspire the world: "…les autres Nations pourront bien être piquées du désir de se rendre conformes à celle qui excellant en toutes les rencontres de la vie, ne peut pas ignorer le moyen de la conserver contente & paisible, par l'usage des choses qui la maintiennent & la font subsister" (…the other nations may well be bitten by the desire to fall in line with that one which, excelling in every one of life's events, must surely know how to keep it happy and peaceful by the use of those things that maintain it and make it endure). "Le libraire au lecteur," *Le cuisinier françois,* (Paris: P. David, 1651), http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k114423k/f12.image. For the translation, see Pierre François

But as readers and chefs were limited categories in the early modern era, so was participation in *Le cuisinier*'s vision for the nation. As Joan Dejean points out, *Le cuisinier françois* only addresses *cuisiniers* (cooks), "never admitting the possibility of a *cuisinière* (female cook)."[4] Similarly, most seminal cookbooks published during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries were aimed at professional chefs, rarely home cooks.[5] This dichotomy between male/professional and female/domestic—equally implying class and racial hierarchies—would endure throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries despite Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin's 1825 insistence that "le plaisir de la table est de tous les âges, de toutes les conditions, de tous les pays et de tous les jours" (the pleasures of the table belong to all times and ages, to all social statuses, to all countries, and to every day).[6]

The popularization of cookbooks that brought the professional chef into the home kitchen would emerge *en masse* from the 1980s onwards, roughly corresponding to attempts to integrate *haute* and popular cultures under French Ministry of Culture Jack Lang (1981-86).[7] Titles such as Paul Bocuse's *Bocuse dans votre cuisine* (*Bocuse in Your Kitchen*, 1982) and Joël Robuchon's *Ma cuisine pour vous* (*My Cooking for You*, 1986) appeared to promise that home cooks, through

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La Varenne, *La Varenne's Cookery*, trans. Terence Scully (Los Angeles, Prospect Books, 2006), 28.

[4] Dejean, *The Essence of Style*, 109.

[5] Classic cookbooks that link professional kitchens with a national agenda include Marie-Antoine Carême's *L'art de la cuisine française* (*The Art of French Cuisine,* 1833-34) and Auguste Escoffier's *La guide culinaire. Aide-mémoire de cuisine pratique (The Culinary Guide: Tips for Practical Cooking*, 1903*)*. The first major home cookbook written by a woman, for women, was Ginette Mathiot's *Je sais cuisinier* (I Know How to Cook, 1932).

[6] Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, "Aphorismes," *Physiologie du goût* (Paris: Gabriel de Gonet, 1848), Project Gutenberg, http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22741/22741-h/22741-h.htm.

[7] For a full analysis of these efforts, see David L. Looseley, *The Politics of Fun: Cultural Policy and Debate in Contemporary France* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1995). Notable precursors that attempted to bridge the home/*haute* divide include the recipe magazine *Le pot-au-feu* (1893-1956), whose cover featured the silhouette of a male chef guiding the female home cook.

professional guidance, would be able to elevate their own meals to a national standard, and, in doing so, participate in upholding France's international culinary reputation.

However, enduring demands for easy-to-follow cookbooks in contemporary France indicate the failure of such cookbooks in bridging the *haute*/home divide. While driven in part by shifting consumer behaviors, including the rise in dual-income households, the trend towards "simple" cookbooks post 2014—emerging just after the 2015-2016 terrorist attacks in Paris and Nice—points to renewed efforts to engage home cooks in the stabilization of a national identity. Most notably, Jean-François Mallet's 2015 *Simplissime: Le livre de cuisine le + facile du monde* (*Simple: The Easiest Cookbook in the World*), featuring more photography than text, sold 250,000 copies in the first five months of its release, followed by at least fifteen additional themed editions.[8] Capitalizing on this trend, other "easy" texts from celebrity chefs include *Michalak trop facile!* (Ducasse, 2015) and *Jean-François Piège pour tous: Recettes super faciles pour faire aussi bien que le chef* (Hachette, 2016). Each of these cookbooks claims to increase the home cook's expertise through minimal time and effort.[9]

Illustrator Guillaume Long, most known for his comics series *À boire et à manger* (*Eating and Drinking*, 2009-), remains doubtful that these new cookbooks will live up to their

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[8] Colette Monsat, "Jean-François Mallet, le chef qui réinvente le livre de cuisine," *LeFigaro.fr*, last modified April 4, 2016, http://www.lefigaro.fr/gastronomie/2016/04/02/30005-20160402ARTFIG00007-jean-francois-mallet-la-cuisine-s-est-mondialisee-meme-en-france-au-quotidien.php. Copycats include *Cuisine super facile* (Marabout, 2016) and *La cuisine pour les nullissimes* (First, 2016). See also Christel Brion, "Pourquoi l'édition est (toujours) accro aux livres de cuisine," *O: Le cahier de tendances de L'obs*, last modified January 10, 2017, http://o.nouvelobs.com/food/20170110.OBS3650/pourquoi-l-edition-est-toujours-accro-aux-livres-de-cuisine.html.

[9] "Des recettes pour tous les jours et tous les goûts, rapides et originales pour faire de vous un chef!" (Quick and easy everyday recipes for all tastes that will turn you into a chef!). Product description for *Jean-François Piège pour tous*, accessed February 8, 2018, https://livre.fnac.com/a9838402/Jean-Francois-Piege-Jean-Francois-Piege-pour-tous.

promise to bridge the professional/domestic divide, and, consequently, to grant home cooks access to France's culinary legacy. Rather than an issue of function, Long finds that the problem with contemporary cookbooks is a question of form: specifically, the inclusion of retouched food photography. For Long, such "magnifiques photos" (magnificent photos) are a major source of reader discouragement, metaphorically "castrating" those who fail to meet the image's standard.[10] To such cookbooks, Long juxtaposes his own hand-drawn recipes, which appeal to readers through their intimacy and informality. In a 2015 interview for France Inter, Long summarized his work as follows: "Quand je dessine des courgettes, les gens peuvent se dire: 'ça c'est dans mes cordes'" (When I draw zucchinis, people can say to themselves, "I have those in my veins").[11]

In such statements, Long sets forth two assertions: first, that drawn comic images of food are the most accessible form of image, capable of transgressing not only the boundaries of home and *haute* cuisine but also potentially those of gender, race, and class. Second, given cooking's longstanding relationship with French national identity, Long equally argues for the integrality of drawn images in a universalist performance of Frenchness. In his comics, many of Long's recipes indeed succeed in broadening not only what French cuisine *is* (the integration of cosmopolitan dishes) but also *who* is empowered to cook (men as well as women). However, in unequally representing non-European foods and characters, Long's recipes exclude non-native French speakers from full participation in a French heritage, raising questions about the limits of French gastronomy as a democratic tool.

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[10] Anne Douhaire, "BD – Guillaume Long: 'Les livres de cuisine sont castrateurs'" (includes interview excerpts), *France Inter*, audio file, last modified June 25, 2015, https://www.franceinter.fr/humour/bd-guillaume-long-les-livres-de-cuisine-sont-castrateurs. Similar sentiments were echoed in a personal interview on May 23, 2016.
[11] Ibid.

While the growth of comics about food—what I'm calling "culinary comics"—has been widely remarked by popular sources, little scholarly work has been done to explore the intersection of both in the French context.[12] Given France's strong relationship to both comic (low-brow) and gastronomic (high-brow) traditions, French culinary comics hold the potential to reinforce traditional nationalistic rhetoric while simultaneously undermining assumptions about taste, class, and race. This chapter probes the tensions that arise when French comics and cookbooks are overlain in three of Long's albums: *À boire et à manger* (*Eating and Drinking*, 2012), *À boire et à manger: Les pieds dans le plat* (*Eating and Drinking: The Hard Truth*, 2012), and *À boire et à manger: Du pain sur la planche* (*Eating and Drinking: Some Work to Do*, 2015).[13]

To contextualize Long's work in this chapter, I will begin by outlining the role of images in French cooking manuals from the invention of the printing press to the twenty-first century. I will then compare these images to the comic (*bande dessinée*) tradition in France and display the relationship between comics, cuisine, and France's national imaginary. Next, I will show how Long's ability to draw from both comic and cookbook traditions positions him as a sort of culinary superhero that encourages readers' engagement with his cooking methods as well as with his performance of Frenchness. Finally, I will explore the French identity that Long models

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[12] Popular sources include Gilles Médioni, "Quand la BD passe en cuisine," *L'express*, last modified March 19, 2015, https://www.lexpress.fr/culture/livre/quand-la-bd-passe-en-cuisine_1662479.html. Notable scholarly exceptions include (in the French context) Jennifer Howell, "Vietnamese Foodways and Viet Kieu Postmemory in Clément Baloup's Graphic Narratives," *European Comic Art* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 25-51; and (in gender studies and masculinity) Fabio Parasecoli, "Gluttonous Crimes: *Chew*, Comic Books, and the Ingestion of Masculinity," *Women's Studies International Forum* 44 (2014): 236-46.

[13] *À boire et à manger chez Sonia Ezgulian* (*Eating and Drinking with Sonia Ezgulian*) was published in 2017, but it is omitted from this chapter's analysis due to its divergence from the first three albums in organization and tone.

in order to question the extent to which it casts off the *haute*/home, male/female divide and succeeds in "democratizing" the act of cooking (i.e., rendering it accessible to a greater number of readers). On the one hand, Long's intimate narrative voice increases the text's applicability across gendered boundaries, which encourages interpretations of cooking that also transgress class. On the other hand, Long's construction of space squares "French cooking" with a strict racial hierarchy between blackness and whiteness. Portraying non-European foreigners as uncommitted to French *terroir*, *À boire et à manger* implies their equal disloyalty to French space. Restructuring rather than undermining the hierarchies underpinning food and French identity, Long exchanges gender equality for racial inequality, revealing the enduring prejudices embedded in the notion of "French gastronomy."

2.1 NATIONAL MYTHS IN COMICS AND CUISINE

While comics and cuisine are both acknowledged as French traditions, their textual relation is more frequently viewed as parallel, not interrelated.[14] In his 2013 introduction of a special edition of the journal *Marges: Revue d'art contemporain* (*Margins: Review of Contemporary*

[14] Museums and public events—such as the Cité internationale de la bande dessinée et de l'image (The International Center of Comics and Images, originally, the Centre national de la bande dessinée et de l'image), inaugurated in 1990, and the four-day Festival international de la bande dessinée d'Angoulême (International Comics Festival of Angoulême), established in 1972— institutionalize the national character of the French-language comic tradition. See Hugh Starkey, "Is the BD 'à bout de souffle'?" *FCS* 1, no. 2 (1990): 101, and Laurence Grove, "*Bande dessinée* Studies," *French Studies: A Quarterly Review* 68, no. 1 (January 2014): 84. The national interest in comics can be seen in print statistics: in 2015, comics composed 10% of the French publishing industry both "en valeur et en volume" (in value and volume). "Repères statistiques sur le marché de la bande dessinée," *Syndicat national de l'édition*, last modified March 17, 2017, http://www.sne.fr/secteur_edit/bande-dessinee-2/.

Art), Jérôme Glicenstein lists the *bande dessinée* and cuisine (along with video games, rock music, and the circus arts) as distinct forms of expression, among those "les plus éloignées de la culture au sens classique du terme" (the furthest from the idea of culture in the classical sense) that the French state worked to valorize after the 1980s.[15] While Laurence Grove reminds that both cuisine and comics had temporarily vied for the status of "the ninth art" in France in the 1950s, he points out that the two remain separate in artistic and intellectual imaginaries due to their discrepant associations with high/low culture. "Although one might compare the concepts behind *Nouvelle Cuisine* with those of the *Nouveau Roman* or the *Nouvelle Vague*," Grove writes, "it is significant that French cooking has become a way of life recognized for its quality worldwide, whereas the *bande dessinée*…is less often tasted beyond its place of creation."[16]

Yet cookbooks and comics are not without significant overlaps in style. Illustrations—whether sketches or engravings—have been present in French cookbooks since the onset of printing.[17] Providing horticultural, medicinal, or cultural guidance, such images, as Béatrice Fink has shown, display the relationship between the parts of a cookbook and the work as a whole.[18] Step-by-step techniques, read from left to right, closely resemble comic images, as both rely on space to represent the progression of time.[19] Even the Bayeux Tapestry, proposed by Scott

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[15] Jérôme Glicenstein, "Éditorial," *Marges: Revue d'art contemporain* 16 (2013): 5-7, http://journals.openedition.org/marges/245.
[16] Laurence Grove, *Comics in French: The European Bande Dessinée in Context* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 54, 56.
[17] Françoise Hache-Bissette, "L'évolution du livre de cuisine: Du livre pratique au beau-livre," *Le temps des medias* 24 (2015): 105.
[18] Béatrice Fink, "Lecture iconographique des livres de cuisine français des Lumières," *Papilles* 31 (March 1996): 92.
[19] Hillary Chute, "Comics as Literature? Reading Graphic Narrative," *PMLA* 123, no. 2 (March 2008): 456.

McCloud as the earliest precursor of European comics, outlines a recipe: the preparation of manchet bread for William the Conqueror's first meal in England.[20]

Color printing greatly shaped the cookbook industry in the second half of the twentieth century, and a third shift took place when food photography began to function as an independent industry. As Françoise Hache-Bissette explains, such photography transformed the cookbook from a "livre pratique" (practical manual) into a "beau-livre" (coffee table book) in which "l'image est…considérée comme indispensable" (the image is considered to be indispensable).[21] Many of these new cookbooks emphasize the gaze rather than culinary participation.[22] By 2012, counter discourses to food photography had begun to emerge in the form of alternate culinary texts: in 2013, the singer Kumisolo released *Bon appétons*, a CD cookbook set to music; and in 2015, *Les cahiers de Delphine* (*Delphine's Notebooks*) began emailing free illustrated recipes to subscribers.[23]

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[20] William Sitwell describes manchet bread as "leavened loaves made with refined stoneground flour." *A History of Food in 100 Recipes* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2013), 39.
[21] Reflecting the rising tendency of viewing food as a visual medium, the Festival international de la photographie culinaire (International Festival of Culinary Photography) was organized in 2009. Additionally, publishing houses are increasingly recruiting professional photographers for food styling. Hache-Bissette, "L'évolution du livre de cuisine," 105, 112, 106.
[22] Fink confirms that even in 1996, "Les illustrations du manuel d'aujourd'hui sont presque exclusivement une *mimesis*, un excitant visuel du palais qui récupère…le désir de bouche au niveau des yeux. En somme, il s'agit d'une transposition imagée du mets en devenir" (Illustrations of cookbooks today are almost exclusively a *mimesis*, a visual stimulant of the palate that corroborates…the desires of the mouth with those of the eyes). Fink, "Lecture iconographique," 92.
[23] In France, digital medias edge out traditional cookbooks as reference sources. A 2016 survey found that 46% of home cooks discover new recipes on the Internet whereas 38% prefer cookbooks. Ten percent are inspired by cooking shows like *Top Chef* and *MasterChef*. "Les Français et la cuisine," *Observatoire de la vie quotidienne des Français*, last modified October 8, 2016, http://www.bva.fr/data/sondage/sondage_fiche/1911/fichier_observatoire_de_la_vie_quotidienne_des_francais_-_2016_-_vague_9_-_les_francais_et_la_cuisine4739a.pdf.

Graphic novel cookbooks and culinary memoirs appeared during the same time frame, largely inspired by the 2005 translation of Jiro Taniguchi's 1997 *Kodoku no gurume* (*The Solitary Gourmet*) into French. While too numerous to list here, notable culinary comics published after 2000 include glimpses into the lives of esteemed chefs, historical commentary, original thrillers, and translations of Japanese culinary manga.[24] Not only do such French texts overlay the dual national traditions of comics and cuisine; many also appear to bridge the professional and the personal, giving readers access to the ideologies associated with both.

Like the cookbook, French-language comics are frequently invested in the construction and maintenance of the French nation.[25] Through themes, plots, and characters, this nation is often gendered as masculine, defining France by its creativity and ingenuity in the face of adversity.[26] However, rather than relying on professional expertise as many cookbooks do, *bandes dessinées* emphasize the role of everyday, unlikely heroes in the upholding of justice. For example, as Ann Miller explains, René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo's *Astérix le gaulois* (*Asterix the Gaul*, from 1961) continues to function as "the mythology of Frenchness" due to its flawed but fearless characters who nevertheless overcome threats to national security.[27] Characters like

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[24] Examples of recently-published culinary *BD*s include Christophe Blain's *En cuisine avec Alain Passard* (*In the Kitchen with Alain Passard*, 2011); Matthieu Burniat's adaptation of Marcel Rouff's 1924 *La vie et la passion de Dodin-Bouffant* (*The Life and Passion of a Passionate Epicure*, 2014); Alexis Laumaillé's 2015 *Folle Cuisine* (*Kitchen Insanity*); and Shin Kibayashi's series *Les gouttes de dieu* (*Drops of God*, from 2004).

[25] See Ann Miller's chapters on national and postcolonial identities in *Reading Bande Dessinée: Critical Approaches to French-language Comic Strip* (Bristol, UK: Intellect, 2007), 151-78. See also Joel E. Vessels, *Drawing France: French Comics and the Republic* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2010).

[26] Miller, *Reading Bande Dessinée*, 182.

[27] Interpretations of the series are as varied as representing resistance to the German invasion, symbolizing the Algerian War, and pushing back against globalization. Ibid., 154-55.

Astérix not only personify an idea of France, argues Laurence Grove; they function as national symbols in their relatability.[28]

Foretelling Long's critique of cookbooks, Scott McCloud argued in 1993 that comics offer a greater degree of reader participation than photography does. In particular, he claimed that sketched images, by way of reducing the visual to its essential details, can broaden the range of personal associations that the images evoke.[29] Additionally, as Hillary Chute points out, the gap between comic frames, known as the gutter, functions as an empty space onto which the reader must project causality. Because of these two characteristics—drawn images and gutters—comics require "a substantial degree of reader participation for narrative interpretation, even fostering a kind of interpretive 'intimacy.'"[30] Blending verbal and visual modes of representation, the comic form thus invites readers' everyday engagement with the text as well as with its embedded national ideologies.[31] Comics about cuisine only heighten the stakes of these ideologies by putting their potential contradictions into dialogue.

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[28] Laurence Grove, "The Idea of France in 'Comics' Old and New," *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies* 17, no. 2 (2013): 188.
[29] Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (New York: Kitchen Sink Press, 1993), 30, 36.
[30] Chute, "Comics as Literature?" 460. Parallels with reader-response theory could also be made, such as with Wolfgang Iser's definition of "gaps." See Wolfgang Iser, "Interaction between Text and Reader," in *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation,* eds. Susan Rubin Suleiman and Inge Crosman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 106.
[31] Hillary Chute and Marianna DeKoven, "Introduction: Graphic Narrative," *Modern Fiction Studies* 52, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 767.

2.2 INTRODUCING GUILLAUME LONG'S *À BOIRE ET À MANGER*

Marketed as the counterpoint to photography-driven cookbooks, Guillaume Long's culinary comics first emerged in the form of a blog on *LeMonde.fr* in 2009.[32] He published the first volume of *À boire et à manger* (*Eating and Drinking*) in January 2012, which was followed by three more albums of the same title (November 2012, May 2015, and May 2017) that together sold more than 50,000 copies.[33] Like many popular artists and amateur culinary bloggists, Long enjoys a large Internet following that includes over 16,000 likes on Facebook and almost 5,300 followers on Twitter.[34] His choice to personally respond to many comments received over social media blurs the boundary between artist/reader and lived/drawn realities. Meanwhile, Long has also gained national visibility, appearing on local and national television and radio (including *BFMTV, France Inter*, and *Radio France*) with illustrations featured in publications such as *Elle, L'Express, Le Monde*, and *Madame Figaro*).[35] This contrast between personal accessibility and

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[32] Educated at the École des Beaux-Arts in Saint-Étienne, Long received the Töpffer prize in 2003 for his album *Les sardines sont cuites* (*The Sardines Are Cooked,* Vertige Graphic), published the same year. Guillaume Long, *À boire et à manger* (Paris: Gallimard, 2012), Back Cover Flap.

[33] Drawn from Long's estimate of the sales of his first three volumes, as calculated during the May 2016 interview. Other food texts by Long include his original *Comme un poisson dans l'huile* (*Like A Fish in Oil,* Vertige Graphic, 2004) and illustrations for Ophélie Neiman's *Boissons et séduction* (*Drinks and Seduction*, Delcour, 2014) and Jean Alessandrini's *Mystère et chocolat* (*Mystery and Chocolate*, Bayard Jeunesse, 2017).

[34] As of February 5, 2018.

[35] Originally published in *Elle* the week after the November 2015 terrorist attacks, Long's illustration of a Doug Larson quote—"Ne mettez jamais en doute le courage des Français, ce sont eux qui ont découvert que les escargots étaient comestibles" (Never doubt the courage of the French. They were ones who discovered that snails were edible)—was featured on France 2's weekly show *On n'est pas couché* (*We're Not Asleep*). Laurent Ruquier, "Les dessins," in *On n'est pas couché,* November 21, 2015, video excerpt of TV broadcast, 0:07, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGmiwcXSFlc.

national visibility, compounded by his friendship with chefs such as Sonia Ezgulien, gives credence to Long's objective to bridge the *haute*/home divide for his readers.

Hybrid in genre—blog/comic/cookbook, available in both digital and print forms—Long's comics include much multi-faceted content, including illustrated anecdotes of recipes, travel narratives, product reviews, historical contexts, and guides, that range from how to use fresh herbs to the best way to stock a kitchen. The majority of the tales are viewed from the perspective of a fictional character named Guillaume Long who doubles as the text's narrator. In a personal interview on May 23, 2016, Long confirmed that his goals for *À boire et à manger* all hinge on increasing the agency of the home cook by way of Long's personal experience:

> Quand j'ai commencé *À boire et à manger*, la plus importante—j'ai écrit sur une feuille, une phrase: avec mon travail, j'ai envie de montrer aux gens que bien manger, c'est quelque chose d'important, et que la bonne nouvelle, la meilleure façon de bien manger, c'est de se faire à manger. Parce que c'est la façon la plus simple. Et la troisième bonne nouvelle, c'est que si j'arrive à faire des recettes dont je parle, à priori, n'importe qui peut les faire.
>
> (When I began *Eating and Drinking,* the most important thing—I wrote it down on a piece of paper, a sentence: With my work, I want to show people that eating well is very important, and the good news is that the best way to eat well is to cook for yourself. Because that's the easiest way to go about it. And the third good thing is that if I am able to make the recipes that I've written about, then anyone can do it.)

Choosing to not attribute the importance of "eating well" to any broader ideology—environmental consciousness, personal health, Slow Food, etc.—Long's motivation appears to approach that of a general ethical assertion: to eat well is to *be* well, in the broadest sense of the

term. But to eat well in France, one inherently reinforces her commitment to the performance of a French lifestyle and a reenactment of her heritage. Being able to feed oneself well in France is to personally assert and reinforce one's identity as a French citizen. Participating in this ideology implies a willingness to engage in its historical roots, including its contextual framing with whiteness and masculinity, but Long denies that his comic discriminates on the basis of race, class, or gender. In the same interview, Long reiterated that his goal was to extend cooking to all readers without bias: "démocratiser la cuisine mais aussi la littérature" (democratizing cooking but also literature).[36]

2.3 TEXTUAL HYBRIDITY AND THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF TASTE

For Long, "democratizing" cuisine through his text implies a broadening of his readership and an evocation of their heightened participation in his text. This process is first modeled by deconstructing class-based hierarchies of taste, which—as famously explored by Pierre Bourdieu (see my Chapter 1)—indicate a society's standards of value as defined by its ruling class. While nineteenth century gastronomes attempted to increase bourgeois participation in high-class

[36] Multiple contemporary French chefs praise the form of the *bande dessinée* for increasing reader engagement in the culinary process. Master chocolatier Jacques Genin asserts that comics' effectiveness is founded in one's childhood: "C'est par elle que je suis venu à la lecture, je ne connais pas mieux pour toucher les gens" (Because I learned to read by reading comics, I don't know a better way to reach people). Chef Yves Camdeborde attributes comics' culinary success to its lack of photography: "Quand on feuillette un recueil de cuisine, on regarde surtout les photos. Avec une bédé, je suis sûr que les jeunes vont aussi lire les textes et pointer ce que je cherche à transmettre" (When you flip through a cookbook, you normally look at the pictures. But I'm sure that with a comic, young people will also read the text and pick up on what I'm trying to say). Médioni, "Quand la BD passe en cuisine."

cuisine, the accessibility of this cuisine still was frequently limited.[37] Similarly, in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, "gastronomy" would not be given its own national festival until 2011—lagging well behind other state-created *fêtes* aimed at "democratizing" culture, including those celebrating music (initiated in 1982), technology (1985), and cinema (1985).[38]

In opposition to this history, culinary comics encourage readers' individualized interpretations of eating and reading through the guidance of the artist as chef. In the case of Guillaume Long**,** *À boire et à manger*'s hybridity of genre, character, and form enhances readers' potential engagement with the text by encouraging them to cook outside of taste hierarchies—a challenge that takes up the institutions of class as well as gender.

2.3.1 Genre and Original Creative Expression

À boire et à manger first invites reader participation by blurring the lines between comics, the cookbook, and classic French literature—namely, the forms of the novel and the memoir. While acknowledging his indebtedness to these genres, Long's choice to cast them aside indicates their association with the taste hierarchies that he aims to deconstruct.[39] The centrality of hybridity to the text's democratization of cuisine is evidenced in the first volume of *À boire et à manger*, which situates Long's work at the intersection of French cookbooks, comics, and novels. Drawn

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[37] Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson notes that "gastronomy" and "suffrage" emerged as parallel political phenomena. *Accounting for Taste: The Triumph of French Cuisine* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 87.
[38] Looseley, *The Politics of Fun*, 121-22, 131, 162; "Qu'est-ce que la Fête de la Gastronomie?" accessed February 13, 2018, https://www.economie.gouv.fr/fete-gastronomie/presentation-fg.
[39] According to Long in the May 23 interview, *À boire et à manger* is "un livre qui parle de cuisine mais qui n'est pas un livre de cuisine" (not a cookbook, but, rather, a book that talks about food and cooking). Long also disagrees that he is an artist, arguing, "J'écris des bouquins…des livres tout simples. Pour moi, la bande dessinée, ça peut être juste une forme d'écriture" (I write books…just books. For me, comics are just a particular kind of writing).

with no frames, heightening the sense of fluidity between genres and within space, the scene features Long's character at a desk as he attempts to determine his comic's title. Among the crossed-out suggestions are phrases that recall the cookbook form: "Moi & la cuisine" (Food and Me); "La cuisine facile" (Easy Meals); and "L'après Ginette Mathiot" (Post Ginette Mathiot). Next, Long's character evokes and denies parallels between his work and that of established French *bande dessinée* authors, a step that distinguishes his original contributions to the comic form.[40] The scene culminates when Long's character appears to find inspiration after having positioned himself among canonical literary authors: "Diderot a fait son encyclopédie…Balzac *La comédie humaine*…Werber, son truc avec les fourmis" (Diderot wrote his encyclopedia…Balzac, *The Human Comedy*…Werber, that thing with the ants).[41] Yelling, "Et voilà!" Long's character produces the dramatic title *Mémoires culinaires d'un jeune homme de son temps* (*The Culinary Memoirs of a Young Man of His Time*).[42] But this title is also rejected, and Long opts for a simpler presentation of his project's major elements: x *Boire x Manger* (drinking, eating).

Long's implication that his work could hold its own among the literary greats—as well as his subsequent rejection of this notion—legitimizes his authority while carving out a space for

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[40] "Si encore j'étais Enki Bilal®…ou alors Christophe Blain®…Genre: Les 100 meilleures recettes de Blain®. Les Cakes de Hergé®." (If only, once again, I were Enki Bilal®. Or Christophe Blain®. [I want to write something] like *The 100 Best Recipes of Blain®. Hergé's Cakes®*). Guillaume Long, *À boire et à manger* (Paris: Gallimard, 2012), 3.

[41] Long is, of course, referencing Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné, des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (*Encyclopedia, or Classified Dictionary of the Sciences, Arts, and Trades*, 1751-1772). He is also alluding to Honoré de Balzac's series *La comédie humaine* (*The Human Comedy*, 1829-1847) and Bernard Werber's *Les fourmis* (*Empire of the Ants*, 1991).

[42] Long's hypothetical title could be said to evoke Frédéric Beigbeder's 1990 *Mémoires d'un jeune homme dérangé* (*Memoirs of a Deranged Young Man*) which possibly drew from Tristan Bernard's 1900 text of the same title and Simone de Beauvoir's 1958 *Mémoires d'une jeune fille rangée* (*Memoires of a Dutiful Daughter*). Long, *À boire et à manger*, 3-4.

his new genre. Moreover, choosing a title composed only of the verbs "eating" and "drinking" strips his approach from any sense of culinary or socioeconomic bias, reinforcing his objective to extend good cooking to a broader number of subjects. In essentializing the acts of eating and drinking, Long gives the impression of divorcing his work from taste and national hierarchies while opening his subject to the potential unifying force of the body.

Evidencing its unique tension in relation to *À boire et à manger*, classic French novels are evoked across Long's volumes, but they are often gestured to in response to perceived culinary or literary failures. These scenes indicate the inherent risk of deviating from traditional literary forms while hinting at the benefit of pursuing personal taste, both artistic and gustatory. In Volume 1, the scene "Sous l'étiquette" (Under the Lid) opens with an allusion to Marcel Proust's 1913 *Du côté de chez Swann* (*Swann's Way*) to describe a character's ignorance of a recipe printed on a jar of artichoke hearts: "Longtemps, vous vous êtes couché de bonne heure…Longtemps, vous avez commis une erreur (For a long time, you used to go to bed early…For a long time, you have made a mistake).[43] This evocation of and deviation from Proust's study of memory and bourgeois society indicates a twofold rejection on the part of Long: first, of using food to evoke the past rather than inspire the present, and second, of the novel's ability to truly shape popular experience.

Other allusions to classic French literature complicate the choice to deviate from classic literary forms. In Volume 3, when Long's antagonist, the fictional editor Monsieur Gallimard, complains that *À boire et à manger* brings in less money than the works of J. M. G. Le Clézio and Marguerite Yourcenar, the allusion to Jean-Paul Sartre's 1938 novel *La nausée* (*Nausea*) hints at the difficulty of self-definition in the face of institutionally-controlled art. After

[43] Ibid., 68.

complaining that Long wants to take a break from working, Monsieur Gallimard screams, "Me faire ça à moi, l'éditeur historique de Jean-Paul Sartre! Putain! J'ai la nausée" ([I can't believe you'd] do this to me, the historic publisher of Jean-Paul Sartre! Damn! I feel sick).[44] This personification of the publishing house's attitudes toward contemporary writers reveals the exact attitudes that Long wishes to overturn.[45] Frequently drawing Monsieur Gallimard's intrusion into scenes that are averse to his presence, Long evokes existential nausea—the encroachment of institutions on an artist's free will—to communicate the parallel hierarchies that structure culinary accessibility. By concluding this scene in direct contradiction to Monsieur Gallimard's wishes—a crowd in the street singing Tonton David's 1990 "Peuples du monde" (People of the World)—Long indicates that his text will succeed in valorizing popular culture and raising home cooking to a new national standard.

2.3.2 Character and Reader Participation

In addition to revealing *À boire et à manger*'s creative agenda through the blending of genres, Guillaume Long himself blurs the boundaries of character, which evokes the empathy of an imagined reader and integrates this reader into his text. Tripling as fictional character, author, and narrative voice, Long is the series' most frequently reoccurring persona. Like the author, the character of Long is in his thirties, is named Guillaume, was born in Geneva, and is a

[44] Among other accomplishments, Le Clézio won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2008; in 1980, Yourcenar became the first woman elected to the *Académie française.* Readers familiar with the French publishing industry will recognize the allusion to the Gallimard publishing house in the name of Long's fictional editor. *À boire et à manger: Du pain sur la planche* (Paris: Gallimard, 2015), 16.

[45] For an overview of the relationship between contemporary writers and those from the 1930s to the late 1950s, see Paul Webster, "The French Connection," *The Guardian*, last modified July 28, 2000, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2000/jul/29/internationalwriting.paulwebster.

professional artist.[46] More specifically, Long's character is the author of a series entitled *À boire et à manger* whose success occasionally causes him to grapple with the meaning of institutional praise.[47] Both the artist and the character enjoy parallel creative processes and suffer from similar problems: each volume's "carnets de voyage" (travel journals) are reproduced "tel quel" (as they are) from Long-as-author's personal diaries, and the confusion as to whether Long-as-character is a restaurant critic or a journalist underscores the hybrid nature of Long's real-life work.[48]

As a hybrid character, Guillaume Long insists on readers' participation in his text's meaning-making. Addressing the reader directly, Long-as-author asks that his audience fill in his artistic gaps with their imagination: "Imaginer ici un cheval super bien dessiné" (imagine a super well-drawn horse here).[49] In other scenes, Long requires readers' interpretation of his role as author and character. When drawn, Long-as-character resembles the author with a slight build, glasses, and five o'clock shadow. However, the picture accompanying Long's biography depicts him as both author and character, wearing a long-sleeved red shirt and holding a red stockpot drawn with a cartoon face over his head (Figure 1).[50] Drawing the eye to Long's hands rather than to his face, the photograph reminds readers of Long's omnipresence in his text as the artist; yet, as the cartoon face on the stockpot averts its gaze, the photograph underscores the Long's

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[46] Long, *À boire et à manger: Du pain*, 45, 3, 55.
[47] Ibid., 65-69.
[48] Ibid., 35.
[49] Ibid., 73, 109, 36, 55, 57.
[50] Guillaume Long, "À propos de moi," *À boire et à manger: Le blog de Guillaume Long, illustrateur*, accessed August 24, 2017, http://long.blog.lemonde.fr/a-propos-de-moi/.

simultaneous fictionality.[51] This image's construction of the simultaneous proximity and distance between Long-as-character and Long-as-author multiplies readers' possible interpretations of him, both intensifying the text's credibility and its intimacy.[52]

Figure 1: Guillaume Long's author portrait.

Source: "À propos de moi," *À boire et à manger,* accessed August 31, 2017, http://long.blog.lemonde.fr/files/2009/09/Portrait.jpg.

[51] Hillary Chute and Marianna DeKoven call hand-drawn images and text a mark of the artist's body and part of "the rich extra-semantic information a reader receives." "Introduction: Graphic Narrative," 767.

[52] In the anecdote "Le beurre de sardines" (Sardine Butter), a friend named Olivier, representative of the reader, appeals both to his personal relationship with Long-as-character and to Long-as-author's culinary authority when requesting the preparation of Long's famous sardine butter. Long, *À boire et à manger: Du pain*, 73.

Blurring the relationship between Long-as-author and Long-as-character, *À boire et à manger* opens a space in which readers can become cooks and cooks can become readers.[53] While Monsieur Gallimard frequently claims that Long has forgotten about his readers, the text indicates otherwise, displaying reading and cooking—both involving the process of meaning-making—to be closely-related actions.[54] When making mini mango *tartes tatin* (upside-down tarts), Long advises, "Préchauffez votre four à 200°C avant toute chose. Même avant de lire ce qui suit, hein ? Un four chaud, ça sert toujours, de toute façon" (Preheat your oven to 400°F before anything else. Even before reading further, ok? A hot oven is always useful).[55] In this example, turning on the oven is framed as the logical extension of reading, which shows the complementary relationship between the two. In other instances, Long deliberately complicates the act of reading with the implication that iconographic tricks can train readers to become better cooks. In Volume 3, a base recipe for muffins requires "300 g de farine (ou 250 g + 50 g de poudre qui fait plaisir)" (300 grams of flour [or 250 grams plus 50 grams of whatever powder makes you happy]). Playing on the double meaning of "poudre" (powder) in French, three small piles are drawn in the bottom right corner of the last frame of the page, labeled "amandes, noisettes, coke" (almond, hazelnut, cocaine).[56] Relying on the eye's movement from left to right as well as from top to bottom, the reading of this frame requires the reader's careful attention. Slowing the pace of reading, Long heightens readers' ability to *see*, a skill that is equally essential in cooking.

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[53] Fink agrees, explaining that the "lecteur/spectateur" (reader/viewer) of a cookbook, whether a culinary professional or otherwise, is an "auteur lui-même" (author himself). Fink, "Lecture iconographique," 92.
[54] Long, *À boire et à manger: Du pain*, 70.
[55] Ibid., 100.
[56] Ibid., 15.

Having tested readers' skills as both cooks and readers, *À boire et à manger* models the creative process of cooking by collapsing additional distinctions between food and text. Foodstuffs are personified and developed as characters, heightening reader recall of culinary techniques.[57] Long's hand-drawn words also occasionally "become" food, toeing the metaphysical line between *les mets* (food) and *les mots* (words).[58] Additionally, the text's awareness of its physicality encourages its use by the reader as an ingredient: volumes cross-reference each other, and each volume's "indispensable fiche pratique détachable" (essential detachable guide) appears as props in the following volumes.[59] Central to *À boire et à manger*'s meaning-making, the shifting relationship between character, ingredient, and text models Long's perspective on cooking, which he described in the May 23 interview as a process of making ingredients "discuter entre eux" (discuss among themselves). Describing cooking in literary terms not only allows Long to explain cooking to readers in a new way; this perspective also defines readers as textually-engaged characters whose attention to detail holds to the potential to reform their interest in home cooking.

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[57] For example, chanting eggs in Volume 1 teach readers the proper timing for making hard- and soft-boiled eggs; potatoes in Volume 3 debate the appropriateness of their starch content for making a *gratin dauphinois* (Dauphinoise potatoes). Long, *À boire et à manger*, 92; Long, *À boire et à manger: Du pain*, 99.

[58] Titles for specific recipes are frequently drawn with the ingredients that the recipes require, such as the cross-sections of beef bones that replace the "o's" in the hand-drawn title "Os à moelle" (Bone Marrow). Long, *À boire et à manger: Du pain*, 27.

[59] In Volume 3, a reference to Long's failure to eat at a Burger King in Stockholm is made with the note, "Voir ABAM 2. Vous devriez déjà l'avoir acheté" (See Volume 2. You should have already purchased it). Volume 1's "Mini guide pour reconnaitre le poisson quand il a pas la forme du poisson et ainsi pouvoir épater son poissonnier" (Mini guide for identifying fish when they don't actually look like fish so that you're able to impress your fishmonger) empowers the main character of "L'arrêt chez le poissonnier" (A Stop at the Fishmonger) two volumes later. Long, *À boire et à manger: Du pain*, 34, 13.

2.3.3 Taste and Subjectivity

Having established the link between food and text, the actual recipes in *À boire et à manger* encourage readers to explore what is desirable to their own palate. Rather than bringing *haute cuisine* into the home space, which would simply reinscribe class hierarchies into the domestic sphere, *À boire et à manger*'s recipes emphasize taste and cooking as subjective experiences. Unlike Muriel Barbery's *Une gourmandise* (see my Chapter 1), these experiences are able to be understood and acted upon. Despite parallels to traditional cookbooks, including the alphabetized index at the end of each volume, *À boire et à manger* distinguishes its approach—similar to that of the comic form—by its emphasis on methodological fluidity:

> Vous ne trouverez pas dans ces pages des dosages précis, des temps de cuisson à la minute et des thermostats à tout va, mais des expérimentations, des anecdotes, des chroniques culinaires, bref… *à boire et à manger*.[60]
>
> (In these pages, you will not find specific measurements, cooking times down to the minute, or oven settings left and right; instead, you will find trial and error, anecdotes, culinary histories—in short, everything about *eating and drinking*).

Rather than specific measurements, *À boire et à manger* promotes dishes that are executed with an attentiveness to the shifting needs of people, place, and time. Underscoring the blurred line between comics, cookbooks, and fiction, almost every recipe is framed by an anecdote ranging

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[60] Long, *À boire et à manger,* Front Cover Flap. This open-ended approach to cooking is reiterated through Long's lack of interest in baking: "Je n'ai jamais été très doué pour les pâtisseries…je suis plus salé que sucré, et puis, les proportions, les thermostats, les temps précis, c'est pas mon truc" (I was never very good at baking…I prefer savory food over sweets, and anyway, proportions, temperatures, specific baking times are not really my thing). Long, *À boire et à manger: Du pain,* 94.

from autobiographical childhood memories to short stories.[61] Recipes are adjusted for social setting and season, as specific and hypothetical as "3 recettes qui en jettent" (Three Classy Recipes) for the day you win the lottery or as fictional as what to cook during the apocalypse.[62] In each case, the hyperbolic nature of the contexts encourages readers to tailor recipes to their own expectations, whether real or imaginative.

Long's attentiveness to individual ingredients also requires readers' active choices in how the recipe should unfold. In a divergence from traditional cookbook methodology—one that Long points to in order to emphasize reader ownership of the cooking process—quantities of necessary ingredients are often estimated in addition to the amount of people that the dish will serve: "Pour, mettons, quatre personnes" (For, let's say, four people).[63] Obvious ingredients needed to execute a dish are listed but mocked; for a "Parmentier de chou-fleur et son agrume" (Shepherd's Pie with Cauliflower and Citrus), the first ingredient is "un chou-fleur, donc" (a cauliflower, duh).[64] In each case, the images and text require the reader to view the recipe as an active set of recommendations that must be situated within the context of ingredient availability, social setting, and communal appetites—in short, in one's daily life.

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[61] Long, "Le poisson d'avril," "À votre santé!", *À boire et à manger*, 19, 113.
[62] Long, *À boire et à manger: Du pain*, 144-47, 150-51.
[63] Ibid., 98. In the May 23 interview, Long explained that his recipes were designed to appeal to readers' logical interpretation of their context: "…à chaque fois que je mets une recette [dans *À boire et à manger*], je m'adresse plutôt au bon sens du lecteur. Par exemple, si je dis qu'on va faire un gratin de thon, voilà, dans n'importe quel livre de recette, il y a, okay, pour quatre, vous prenez votre thon, un kilo de pommes de terre. Mais je dis, pour quatre, vous prenez à peu près un kilo de pommes de terre, mais si vous avez envie de mettre un kilo et demi, [vas-y]. Tu vois, c'est votre recette…C'est pareil pour le temps de cuisson, pour les choses comme ça." (Each time I include a recipe [in *Eating and Drinking*], I appeal to the reader's common sense. For example, if I say that we're going to make a tuna casserole, most cookbooks would say, okay, for four people, get some tuna and two pounds of potatoes. But I say, for four people, you should have about two pounds of potatoes, but if you want to put in two and a half pounds, [go for it]. It's your recipe…It's the same approach for cooking times and everything like that).
[64] Long, *À boire et à manger: Du pain*, 92.

In comparison to the other anecdotes in *À boire et à manger*, the recipes are especially open-ended. Containing a higher frequency of visual gaps, gutters, and creative devices, the recipes blur food, text, and character in order to evoke readers' participation in assembling—or "cooking"—the text's meaning. In the recipes, movement represents the passage of time, as shown in a recipe for *gratin dauphinois* (Dauphinoise Potatoes). In it, a five-image sequence read from left to right of an unpeeled potato, a potato peeler, a peeled potato, three water droplets yelling "Vite!" (Quick!), and a clean potato illustrates how to "épluchez les pommes de terre et rincez-les très brièvement" (peel the potatoes and rinse them very briefly).[65] While the arrow is a metonym usually used to show characters' "speed or trajectory," as Ann Miller explains, in *À boire et à manger* the arrow most frequently indicates the movement of ingredients between containers.[66] Underscoring the importance of visual attentiveness when cooking food, many recipes also depict angles not accessible to the human eye, including cross-sections of pots to display ratios of water to pasta.[67] Readers' auditory awareness is engaged; whereas Miller points out that onomatopoeic effects are not usually enclosed in speech bubbles, dishes in *À boire et à manger* "talk out" the sound of their own cooking.[68] When describing the preparation of a "Crumble aux pommes" (Apple Crumble), Long specifies that readers should listen for "frchfchftt!" when dropping the apples into a hot buttered pan and should hear "schhuuu" when the apples are ready.[69] Similar specifications reinforce readers' reliance on sight over cooking times. In the recipe above, after instructing readers to let the crumbles "dorer entre vingt et trente minutes en surveillant" (bake between twenty and thirty minutes while watching closely), four

[65] Ibid., 98.
[66] Miller, *Reading Bande Dessinée*, 78.
[67] Long, *À boire et à manger: Du pain*, 99.
[68] Miller, *Reading Bande Dessinée*, 98.
[69] Long, *À boire et à manger: Du pain*, 89.

ramekins are drawn with crumbles varying from light yellow to black with the following labels: "Non. Presque. Oui. Trop tard" (No. Almost. Yes. Too late).[70] Using techniques that allow the sense of sight to, as McCloud indicates, "speak for all five," Long overlays the act of reading with the act of cooking in order to train readers in both.[71] Additionally, Long exercises the reader's body: in each of the examples above, the reader is the implied participant, present not only in the meaning-making but also in the stirring, gazing, and listening to the food being cooked.

À boire et à manger's multi-leveled hybridity—as fiction, cookbook, and comics; of Guillaume Long as narrator, author, and character; and recipes as visual, auditory, and participatory—requires careful attention in order to create the text's culinary and cultural meaning. Showing cooking and reading to be complementary processes through the collapsing of the boundaries of food, reader, and character, *À boire et à manger* gives the appearance of democratizing taste by encouraging the performance of individual choices.

2.4 RECIPES FOR GENDER AND NATION

Like democracy itself, the appeal to democratic cooking risks being unequally distributed across the French nation (see my Chapter 4). In the May 23 interview, Long agreed that his simultaneous role as author and character deepens his ability to connect with his readers—but hinted that his relatability hinges on his subject position as a man:

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[70] Ibid.
[71] McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, 120.

> C'est une forme que j'utilise beaucoup pour *À boire et à manger*, cette idée que je suis dans une littérature qui s'adresse à quelqu'un…[C'est] une histoire d'un mec qui raconte une histoire. C'est moi qui vais raconter cette fiction…Moi, il y a toujours le côté « Attention, c'est Guillaume Long qui est en train de vous raconter quelque chose ». Mais ça participe aussi…au côté de « Je suis avec vous et je suis au même niveau que vous » et…« si j'arrive à faire ce que je fais, vous allez y arriver aussi ».
>
> (It's a form that I use a lot in *Eating and Drinking*, the idea that I'm participating in a literature that addresses someone directly…[It's] the story of a guy who is telling a story. Specifically, it's me who's going to tell you that story…In my work, there's always the side of, "Hey, Guillaume Long is telling you something." But that also adds to the sense of "I'm with you, we're both at the same level," and…"If I [Guillaume Long] can do this, so can you.")

Evoking an image of textual democracy in which reader and author merge, Long invites readers' identification with his fluidity as author and character. As such, instructing the reader in gesture and consumption through the model of his own experiences remains indispensable with shaping readers' gender expression. While this reverse integration of readers into the text heightens readers' involvement in its anti-institutional bent, the process may mask the way that the disregard of class and gender participates in the maintenance of racial hierarchies for the sake of the nation. On the one hand, following the hybridity of genre, character, and form, *À boire et à manger* encourages readers' hybrid interpretations of cooking that transgress gendered borderlines. But on the other hand, readers' high identification with Long-as-character compounds the effect of Long's domineering relationship to national space and occasional

skepticism of non-European "others." The result is a text that reiterates the exclusivity of French *terroir* and, by extension, limits Frenchness to the fixed bounds of white European histories.

2.4.1 Textual Bodies

Due to Long's omnipresence in his own text as author, character, and narrator, the text's primary relationship is between the reader and Long himself. Not only does Long speak directly to (or about) his readers, reducing the perceived distance between him and them—"vous qui me lisez en ce moment même" (you who are reading me at this exact moment)—Long's corporal deconstruction, combined with readers' encouragement to physically engage in his text through the act of cooking, heightens their potential identification with Long as a physical body.[72] Like Long's author photograph, the sketches in Long's travel journals occasionally reduce him to the body parts necessary to communicate a particular action or feeling, such as with only one arm and a face when sipping strong coffee in Budapest or as eyes, chin, and detached hands (no mouth) to display his nervousness in a hole-in-the-wall Chinese restaurant.[73] Read in light of the recipes' encouragement that readers physically engage with the cooking process, Long's porous textual presence equally opens itself up to readers' self-identification, permitting them to enter his body and engage with his "every man" experiences.

The reader's embodiment of Long is indispensable from an evocation of his gender and sexuality. As a character, Long is a heterosexual white male, dating a woman named Nancy in

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[72] Long, *À boire et à manger: Du pain*, 104. Especially in Volume 1, shorter recipes are drawn as a series of speech bubbles coming from the mouth of Long's character, illustrating his direct address to his readers. See *À boire et à manger*, 66, 73.
[73] Ibid., 40, 77.

Volume 1, and cracking jokes tinged with adolescent humor.[74] However, drawn with narrow shoulders and scrawny arms, Long's bodily experience of masculinity fluctuates according to circumstance. While dominating and confident when interacting with his readers in the kitchen, Long's exchanges with other characters frequently take a submissive, even childish, tone.[75] With Long's swimming buddy and chef friend Nouvel Ami (New Friend), Long talks so much about food that his body exhibits a variety of stereotypical feminine (and occasionally homoamorous) gestures, including erratic driving, refusing to exert himself at the gym, and encroaching on his friend's personal space in the locker room shower. In the scene "Cuire en un tour de main" (Cooked in No Time at All), Nouvel Ami offers to give Long a few pointers about cooking red meat—a foodstuff central to the masculine imaginary (see my Chapter 3)—in exchange for his silence, which juxtaposes Nouvel Ami's taciturn masculinity with Long's loquaciousness. At home, Long reestablishes his masculinity in relation to Nancy by asking for a steak and explaining that he and Nouvel Ami had entered into the "non-verbal" of masculine friendship.[76] Capable of communicating meat and masculinity to Nancy, Long becomes equally able to re-establish his culinary authority before the reader. Valorizing culinary dialogue, Long approaches the intellectual characteristics of what Josée Johnston, Alexandra Rodney, and Phillipa Chong call the "gastrosexual": a "relatively gender-transgressive, yet masculine persona type" that

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[74] Volume 3's "Rions un peu chez le poissonnier" (Let's Laugh a Little at the Fishmonger's) features a giggling man asking the fishmonger about the visual quality, freshness, and preparedness of his "raie" (meaning both "ray," a type of fish, and "butt crack" in French). *À boire et à manger: Du pain*, 13.

[75] When teaching readers how to make "beurre de sardines" (sardine-infused butter), Long's character interrupts his own dialogue to ask readers what kind of canned fish he should open. After answering his own question—"Sardines"—he praises, "Bravo à ceux qui suivent" (Good job to those of you who were paying attention). In contrast, when afraid of professional pressures, he asks his friend in tiny text if he minds if Long "[fait] pipi" (pees) when swimming in the ocean. Ibid., 72, 69.

[76] Long, *À boire et à manger*, 71.

"builds on the category of the 'metrosexual.'"[77] Rather than calling his masculinity into question, Long's ability to play with his gender strengthens his subject position as a man in the feminine space of the home kitchen.

This fluid masculinity extends to Long's body, which is occasionally rendered effeminate by his hunger and his lack of physical strength.[78] Long's character is frequently afraid of being overpowered by other men and by circumstance, whether by the drug addicts populating the Chinese restaurant or by the necessity of having to eat for a living.[79] In contrast, his corporeal engagement with the reader—sometimes even his consumption by the reader—is generally welcomed. Occasionally describing himself as food, including his "Autoportrait chinois gastronomique" (Self Portrait in Food) in which Long claims to be as approachable as a tomato and as versatile as milk, Long encourages his readers' conscious consumption of—even entrance into—his feminized body.[80] Paralleling Umberto Eco's requirement that the comic superhero be "consumable" while remaining "unconsumed," Long blurs the line between his masculinity and femininity as well as homosexual and heterosexual desire.[81] Masculine and effeminate, dominating the reader and being dominated by him, Long heightens his encouragement of the reader's hybrid embodiment of cooking and eating by transgressing gendered and sexual

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[77] Josée Johnston, Alexandra Rodney, and Phillipa Chong, "Making Change in the Kitchen? A Study of Celebrity Cookbooks, Culinary Personas, and Inequality," *Poetics* 47 (2014): 16.
[78] In "Tenir le cap" (Stay on Course), hunger transforms Long into a dizzy, salivating, and crazed figure that scares children. Long, *À boire et à manger*, 88.
[79] These scenes evoke childishness, compounding Long's anti-masculinity; for example, in the Chinese restaurant, Long asks that his mother not witness his fear: "Maman, arrête de lire cette histoire, s'il te plait" (Mommy, please stop reading this story). Ibid., 76.
[80] Carole Adams points out that fruits and vegetables are associated with "passive" or "feminine" foods in human history. *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (New York: Continuum, 1990), 26-7. "Conscious consumption" could be defined as Long's belief that his tastes are his own, not those of an authority. Long, *À boire et à manger*: *Du pain*, 3-4, 68.
[81] Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 111.

borderlines through food. While this process "democratizes" the experience of reading and cooking across the gender spectrum, Long's heterosexual masculinity remains the model that permits these transgressions. Despite the text's success in challenging the relationship between taste and class through the rejection of classic literary and culinary models, *À boire et à manger* reinscribes power structures by relying on a male voice to model the interplay between gender and cuisine.[82] We will see a similar pattern in regards to race in the context of the nation.

2.4.2 Shaping Bodies and Defining Space

Situated in the French-language traditions of cookbooks and comics, *À boire et à manger* redefines readers' participation in cooking, emphasizing the fluidity of food—and, to a limited extent, gender—according to circumstance, place, and time. But given *À boire et à manger*'s hybridity, the elements that remain stable in the text, read in their repetition across multiple volumes, indicate the non-negotiable elements of how French identities should be performed. These elements involve the construction of a national body through the geographical space of France and its relationship to taste, what Amy Trubek has called the "goût du terroir" (taste of terroir).[83]

In *À boire et à manger*, the importance of *terroir* is underscored by the text's nature-based organization of space and time. Resembling Grimod de la Reynière's *Almanach des*

[82] While Long-as-author personally doesn't have access to his readership statistics, he revealed in the May 23 interview that he considers his readers to be "plutôt femme…entre 20-45 ans" (mostly women…between 20-45), based on who attends his book signings and comments on his Facebook page.

[83] Meaning "land," *terroir* also indicates the belief that the taste of French food is intimately related to the physical landscape where it was grown. Amy Trubek argues that *terroir* resembles a national mythology in its pervasiveness in French history and thought. *Taste of Place: A Cultural Journey into Terroir* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 18.

Gourmands (*The Gourmand's Almanac*, 1803-1812), the recipes and anecdotes of the first three volumes of *À boire et à manger* are organized by season, beginning with Spring and concluding with Winter. The emphasis on seasonality is underscored by its associated foodstuffs. In Volume 3, Long narrates, "J'aime bien l'automne…on y trouve encore les légumes de l'été ainsi que les courges, les champignons, les choux. Et les pommes" (I love fall…You can still find summer vegetables, but you can also get squash, mushrooms, cabbages, and apples).[84] The only full-page images in Volumes 1-3 depict Long's character alone in nature, satisfying his hunger with seasonal produce to his heart's content. While Long admits some economic and social limitations to cooking and eating seasonally—perhaps acknowledging the difficulty of transcending class barriers through his comics—he nevertheless depicts himself as collecting firewood and going fishing.[85] In contrast, out-of-season produce—that which transgresses the "natural" boundaries of space and time—is negatively, almost harshly, viewed. For example, Long calls canned peas "mal absolu" (absolute evil) because they dishonor the taste of peas in the spring.[86] The deception of the grocery store—also expressed through Long's body in a detailed but unfulfilled sexual fantasy with a female shopper—uses the female body as a stand-in for eating strawberries in winter, both which fall short of their promise and heighten Long's physical frustration.[87] This scene of false promise is juxtaposed to *À boire et à manger*'s indication that seasonal produce

[84] Long, *À boire et à manger: Du pain*, 87.
[85] Ibid., 90-91, 83.
[86] Ibid., 4.
[87] Ibid., 139-40.

will always satisfy.[88] Tightly linking seasonal produce with images of the land, *À boire et à manger* underscores the importance of *terroir* in nourishing the French national body.

But like the literary devices in Long's recipes, France's borderlines in *À boire et à manger* are porous and occasionally transgressed. While implying the symbolic or ethical importance of seasonal, French-grown food for French citizens, the text—like Brillat-Savarin's *Physiologie du goût* (*Physiology of Taste*)—also promotes the French consumption of excellent ingredients that are grown or prepared abroad. In "La meilleure salade du monde" (The Best Salad in the World), Long bows before an enormous Sardinian tomato, murmuring, "Dévotion. Humilité. Abandon. Prosternation" (Devotion. Humility. Letting go. Prostration). Even the fictional governmental officials that make their appearance in this scene are unable to deny Long the pleasure of foreign tastes.[89] Traveling into French-speaking areas beyond the mainland further tests the limitations of one's relationship to foreign foods and identities; Long's childhood memory of eating lobster in Corsica is drawn in a vintage graphics style to underscore his physical and psychological distance from home.[90]

While experiences within the home country are marked by bounty, safety, and serenity, voyages outside of France are portrayed with a different use of color and space from Long's other scenes. This visual juxtaposition is paralleled by a shift in tone that reinforces France as the space where French subjects belong. While Long explained in the May 23 interview that the

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[88] In "Légumes anciens et oubliés" (Ancient Forgotten Vegetables), the scene immediately preceding that of the supermarket, a guide to winter vegetables includes the "capucine tubéreuse" (mashua), a supposed aphrodisiac. Ibid., 136-38.

[89] Similarly, while returning home from a trip to Italy, Long ponders the inferiority of French coffee and pasta, wondering if the ingredients change when they cross the border. Meanwhile, an Italian man at a rest stop across the highway asks himself the same questions about Italian bread. Long, *À boire et à manger*, 62-63, 110.

[90] Long, *À boire et à manger: Du pain*, 74.

decision to print his travel journals on gray paper and without color was his editor's choice, these frameless stories nevertheless flatten the distinctions between the "foreign" places he visits—ranging from Stockholm (Volume 2) to a "Trou Normand" (Middle of Nowhere, Normandy, Volume 3)—and place them in opposition to the richly-colored, seasonal space of France.[91] The reoccurring theme of Long's fear of flying underscores the physical threat of leaving home; once abroad, Long's consumption of unfamiliar food and drink occasionally causes him to become a risk to himself and others. Getting unexpectedly drunk on *orujo* in Madrid, Long blacks out, drains his bank account, and makes himself a target for the international police.[92] Further juxtaposing France to foreign spaces, the travel journals mostly feature restaurants instead of home cooking. While frequently delicious, good food abroad also remains elusive. In Budapest, the reoccurring depiction of "La Promesse" (The Promise) of local cuisine and "La Réalité" (The Reality) of cheap tourist food highlights the potential culinary—and, by extension, physiological and psychological—depravation of leaving French soil.[93] In threatening the health of the French traveler, restaurant food from abroad stages a subtle assault to French well-being.

2.4.3 Language, Local Foods, and Non-European Others

While *À boire et à manger* only hints at—and does not insist upon—birthplace as a prerequisite for French identity, its emphasis on French language and the appreciation of regional foods renders "Frenchness" inaccessible for some of the text's foreign characters. In the scene "Une

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[91] Additionally, the "carnets de voyage" (travel journals) are placed between, not within, the seasons in *À boire et à manger*'s organization, indicating the inability of foreign spaces to fulfill the French relationship between seasonality, *terroir*, and the body.
[92] Long, *À boire et à manger: Du pain*, 38-61.
[93] Long, *À boire et à manger*, 41, 43, 49-50.

salade cosmopolite," Long asks, "Quel plat peut se vanter de rassembler un indien, un grec, un espagnol, et un marocain?" The question is accompanied by an image of the aforementioned foreigners wearing chef's whites and crowded in a kitchen. Frozen in fear, the group listens to the threats of an unseen manager who states that he will refuse to grant their request for identity cards if they don't cater to every need of the evening clients—who happen to be officials of the French state. The subjugation of this group, displayed visually in their tight, cage-like framing, is compounded linguistically when the only man who responds answers in Spanish. Further silencing the foreigners by reducing them to food, Long laughs the image off, responding that he hadn't been thinking of real people; instead, he had been imagining a watermelon salad with curry and feta. While, in other scenes, Long promotes the role of the French state in protecting French artists and artisans, this scene uses food to deny the protection of non-French-speaking nationals (Figure 2).[94] Following Brillat-Savarin, among others, Long appears to suggest that the French are renowned for their ability to compose original dishes from foreign ingredients; yet, this cosmopolitan composition takes place at the expense of the individuals whose heritage the foods represents.

[94] The discussion of the French state and independent artists is taken up in "Un vieux rêve" (An Old Dream); meanwhile, the scene "À la rigueur" (In a Pinch) suggests that the government should raise the minimum wage to make good food accessible to all social classes. The reoccurring fictional association named N.C.E.C.D.B.A.L.M.M.Q.E.F.P.E.D, or "Navets, Céleris, Épinards, Choux de Bruxelles et Autres Légumes Maudits mais Qui En Fait Peuvent Être Délicieux" provides public service announcements that "Turnips, Celery, Spinach, Brussels Sprouts, and Other Wretched Vegetables…Can Actually Be Delicious." Long, *À boire et à manger: Du pain*, 29-30, 20-23, 142-43.

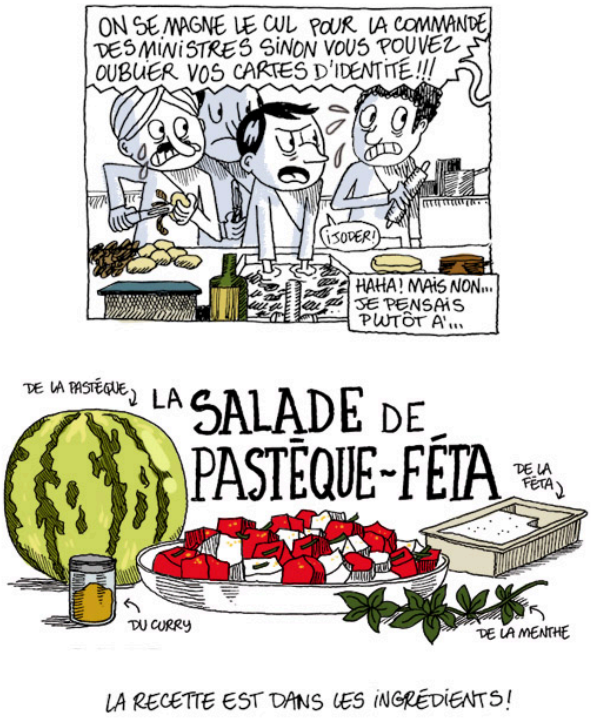

Figure 2: "Une salade cosmopolite" (A Cosmopolitan Salad).

Source: Guillaume Long, "Une salade de saison (2)," *À boire et à manger*, accessed September 5, 2017, http://long.blog.lemonde.fr/2010/08/07/une-salade-de-saison-2/.

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In addition to one's access to the dominant language, the ability to appreciate regional specialties is suggested as a prerequisite for "French" identity. However, foreigners in *À boire et à manger* are portrayed as less committed to French cuisine than French-born citizens.[95] Through French dishes' association with their *terroir*, this depiction hints that non-French speakers may

[95] At an international cider competition, Long claims multiple regional (from Upper Savoy and St. Étienne) and national (Swiss and Italian) identities in order to gain free samples. He is only denied when he tries to pass for Italian where French is not spoken. Long, *À boire et à manger: Du pain*, 116.

not be equally committed to the defense of the French national space. While non-European cooks (and readers) make their appearance in Long's texts, the scenes featuring them are frequently fraught with tension, highlighting their complex relationship to the French imaginary. This tension emerges most frequently in scenes featuring the reoccurring character of Jean-Kévin, depicted as a white French teen. In the interview published by France Inter, Long explained that Jean-Kévin's role in *À boire et à manger* is to "massacrer" (massacre) foreign recipes that "tout le monde croit savoir bien faire," like tabouli with semolina or spaghetti carbonara with cream. After having committed the common mistake, in each scene Jean-Kévin is corrected, somewhat violently, by the country whose dish is represented. Described by Long as the "concentré de tous mes préjugés sur les adolescents" (embodiment of all my prejudices about teenagers), Jean-Kévin masks the international taste hierarchies in which he is entangled due to his own "foreignness" in age and clothing style.[96]

The difference in anxieties about European and non-European foreigners becomes evident when comparing *À boire et à manger*'s respective treatment of the Italians and the Lebanese. In both cases, Jean-Kévin opens his scenes by announcing that he is going to teach what is later revealed to be the French interpretation of a foreign recipe. In contrast to Long's openness to gender fluidity, Jean-Kévin's teaching is overdosed with homo- and heteroerotic expressions of his masculinity, including friendly grabs of his male friends' genitals (known as "chat-bites") and references to Angelina Jolie's breasts.[97]

After incorrectly preparing both dishes, Jean-Kévin is kidnapped by a fictional foreign institution: the B.C.C. (Bureau de Contrôle de la Carbonara), in the case of the Italians, or the

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[96] Douhaire, "BD – Guillaume Long: 'Les livres de cuisine sont castrateurs.'"
[97] Long, *À boire et à manger: Du pain*, 76-77.

D.T.L. (Défense du Taboulé Libanais, in the case of the Lebanese. In both instances, Jean-Kévin is forcibly taken hostage, detained in a windowless room, and interrogated on his misunderstandings. After asking his abductors whether or not he will be dismembered, Jean-Kévin is released with instructions for the "authentic" recipe given by a grandmother figure, an elderly female cook. Both scenes conclude with Jean-Kévin discussing how he should share the experiences on social media.[98]

While both scenes overturn misconceptions about the preparation of foreign foods, they marginalize the foreigners whose cuisine is represented. The greater perceived threat posed by non-European foreigners to the French imaginary can be viewed when juxtaposing the two frames that depict Jean-Kévin's kidnappings. In Volume 2, Jean-Kévin welcomes the Italians at his front door, delighted as he misunderstands the B.C.C. as the B.B.C. (British Broadcasting Company). In the second frame—in which the largest text references the completed motion of a sack being thrown over his head—Jean-Kévin protests, his shock represented by three beads of sweat (Figure 3). Given that the act of abduction took place between the frames, the reader is just as surprised as Jean-Kévin, who asks, "Mais c'est quoi ce plan?" (But what's this plan?)[99]

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[98] Ibid., 78-79, 82; Guillaume Long, "Le procès de Jean-Kévin," *À boire et à manger: Le blog de Guillaume Long, illustrateur,* last modified February 8, 2011, http://long.blog.lemonde.fr/2011/02/08/le-proces-de-jean-kevin/.

[99] Guillaume Long, "Les pates carbo' de Jean-Kévin!!!", *À boire et à manger: Le blog de Guillaume Long, illustrateur,* last modified February 1, 2011, http://long.blog.lemonde.fr/2011/02/01/les-pates-carbo-de-jean-kevin/.

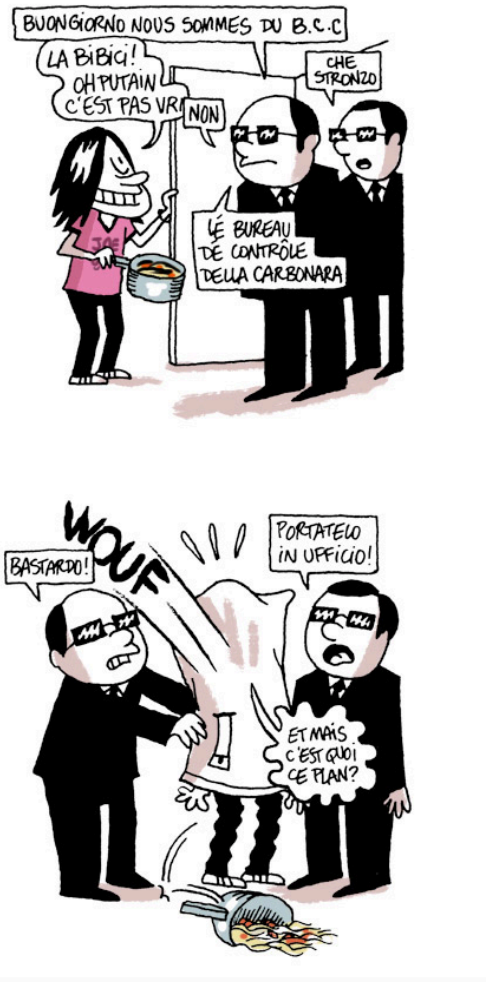

Figure 3: "Les pates carbo' de Jean-Kévin!!!" (Jean-Kévin's Carbonara!!!)

Source: Guillaume Long, "Les pates carbo' de Jean-Kévin!!!", *À boire et à manger: Le blog de Guillaume Long, illustrateur,* last modified February 1, 2011, http://long.blog.lemonde.fr/2011/02/01/les-pates-carbo-de-jean-kevin/. Used with permission from Guillaume Long.

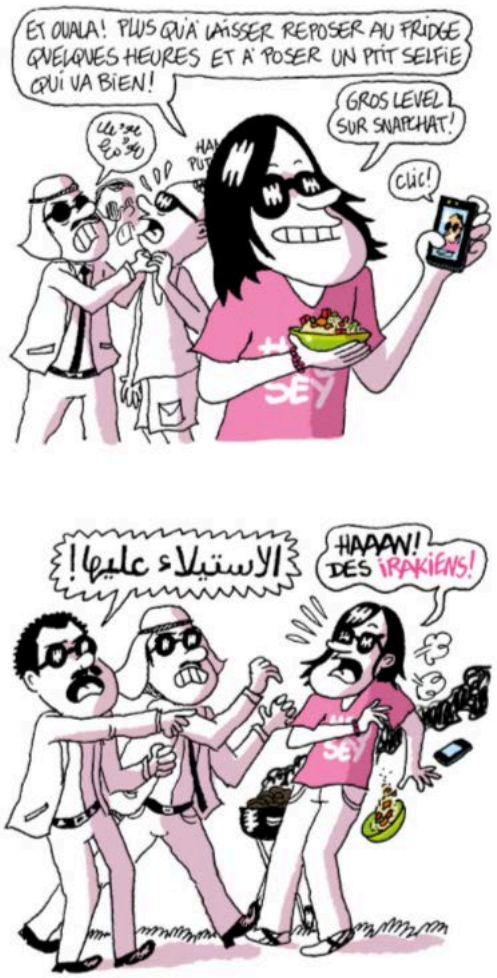

Figure 4: "Le taboulé de Jean-Kévin!!!" (Jean-Kévin's Tabouli!!!)

Source: Guillaume Long, "Le taboulé de Jean-Kévin!!!", *À boire et à manger: Le blog de Guillaume Long, illustrateur,* last modified September 20, 2014, http://long.blog.lemonde.fr/2014/09/20/le-taboule-de-jean-kevin/. Used with permission from Guillaume Long.

While the Italian kidnappers ultimately recognize that their abduction of Jean-Kévin was a "mise en scène" (dramatization) and a bit too much, the Lebanese kidnappers are non-apologetic in their references to terror and violence. In Volume 3, the Lebanese D.T.L. approach Jean-Kévin from behind, first strangling his friend—depicted as a black man in the print text, the

only man of color other than the D.T.L. in the volume—while Jean-Kévin smiles for a selfie at the front of the frame, defenseless and unaware. Viewing this scene from the position of the camera, the reader assumes the sense of physical danger that Jean-Kévin cannot see. In the second frame, the largest text is one abductor's yell, "الاستيلاء عليها" ("Grab him!"), whose menacing volume is emphasized by the speech bubble's jagged edges. Jean-Kévin's panic at the sight of the men's outstretched arms and pointed fingers is depicted in four sweat beads, his open mouth, and his step backwards. In this scene, the act of abduction is unrepresented, leaving its particular violence to be imagined by the reader within the context of Jean-Kévin's incorrect identification of the Lebanese as Iraqis (Figure 4).[100]

The unequal representation of the Italians and the Lebanese is underscored by the depiction of their spoken French, whose relative proximity to a native accent indicates the level of their potential integration into mainstream French culture. While both sets of foreigners speak with an accent represented by Long's writing of their vowels—"je" (I) becomes "jé" for the Italians and "ji" for the Lebanese—the writing of the Lebanese accent problematically blurs Arabic-speaking spaces. In the comments section of Long's blog, readers of Lebanese descent fiercely critiqued Long for having transcribed the Lebanese accent as a Maghrebi one. In the print version of Volume 3, which came out a year after the blog, Long left the accent unchanged and defended this choice in a footnote, explaining that a Maghrebi accent had simply been more transcribable. Supported by many of his readers, this argument confirms the social acceptability in contemporary France of erasing origin and cultural nuance in the consideration of Arabic speakers, rendering them indistinguishable from one another in a French imaginary.

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[100] Long, *À boire et à manger: Du pain*, 77.

The misuse of language and place extends into and after the interrogation scenes. While both sets of abductors restrain Jean-Kévin in a secret location where it is "inutile de crier" (pointless to yell for help), only during the Lebanese kidnapping does Jean-Kévin demand to know how far he has traveled: "On a pris l'avion, c'est ça?" (So did we come here by plane?).[101] After asserting his rights as a French citizen—"Chez moi, j'ai des droits civiques et tout!!" (In my country, we have civil rights and everything!!)—Jean-Kévin's abductor corrects, "On est en France, pour information" (We're in France, for your information).[102] While the Italian abduction concludes with Jean-Kévin being dropped off along the side of the road with his abductors yelling, "Sans rancune, hein!" (No hard feelings, okay?) and driving off into the distance—presumably, back to Italy—the Lebanese abductors remain in France. After sharing a meal of tabouli with his kidnappers, Jean-Kévin lies to the reader that he lived for a period of time in Lebanon, which he incorrectly describes as if it were North Africa. His monologue is interrupted by his former abductor calling his name, who is revealed in the following frame to be the owner of a Lebanese specialty shop and Jean-Kévin's downstairs neighbor.[103] While scene concludes with Jean-Kévin being asked to come help prepare *chich taouk* as he had aided with the tabouli—a gesture indicating the possibility of culinary collaboration between France and Lebanon—Jean-Kévin's cry, "Han putaain!" (Oh fuck!) expresses the readers' confusion about where non-European foreigners belong.[104] Given the importance of cooking regional dishes as a prerequisite for French identity, the abductor's insistence on cooking Lebanese food on French soil subtly calls her "Frenchness" into question as well as the nature of her relationship to Jean-

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[101] Ibid., 78.
[102] Ibid., 79.
[103] Long, "Le procès de Jean-Kévin"; Long, *À boire et à manger: Du pain*, 82.
[104] Long, *À boire et à manger: Du pain*, 82.

Kévin, who alternatively sexualizes and submits to her. Residing in France yet foreign to it, the Lebanese abductors ultimately fail to convert Jean-Kévin to their culinary practices. At the end of the scene, he returns to eating supermarket tabouli despite the fact that, in Volume 2, he reaffirmed his masculinity and gained more female attention when following the Italians' recommendation to prepare carbonara without cream.[105]

The implications of these contradictory representations were not lost on some of Long's readers. In the comments section of Long's blog, responses to the Italian abduction ranged from pure amusement to friendly debates on pasta.[106] For the Lebanese abduction, posted on October 14, 2014, discourse extended—with readers participating in the blurring of Arabic-speaking spaces and their association with Islamic extremism—to the appropriateness of this humor in light of the September 23 beheading of French hostage Hervé Gourdel in Algeria.[107] Responding to Long's inaccurate use of accents as well as his misuse of place, a reader named D. expressed his concern that such texts perpetuate the misunderstanding of non-European immigrants:

> Bravo! Pour vos premiers personnages issus d'une minorité visible depuis au moins deux ans, et peut-être depuis l'ouverture du blog, vous avez fait des gens avec un accent à couper au couteau! Je vous donne un bon point racisme. Et ce n'est pas comparable à l'accent italien de vos personnages italiens. J'ai toujours eu le sentiment, dans vos histoires d'italiens, que c'étaient des gens de passage ou bien que l'histoire se passait là-bas. Là, clairement, [les personnages libanais] ont un magasin ici, ce sont des immigrés.

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[105] Ibid.; Long, "Le procès de Jean-Kévin."
[106] Long, "Le procès de Jean-Kévin."
[107] Long frequently explained that the parallel was "tout à fait par hasard" (a pure coincidence). Douhaire, "BD – Guillaume Long: 'Les livres de cuisine sont castrateurs.'"

> La plupart des immigrés libanais en France sont ici depuis au moins 30 ans. Mais non, ce ne sont toujours pas des Français dans votre esprit.[108]
>
> (Congratulations! You gave a thick accent to your first visibly-minority characters in at least two years, maybe even since the beginning of your blog. One point for racism. And it's not at all the same as the accent of your Italian characters. In your stories about Italians, I always had the sense that they were people who were only visiting even if the story took place in Italy. Here, clearly, [the Lebanese characters] have a store; they're immigrants. The majority of Lebanese immigrants have been in France for at least thirty years. But in your mind, they're still not French.)

When Long personally responded to D. that his comment—which concludes by asking whether other artists, writers, and politicians of Lebanese descent were permitted to integrate into French society—was "rigolo" (funny), sparking a broad defense of Long's intentions by other readers, D. responded, "Pour un mâle blanc hétérosexuel, forcément les [sic] discrimination c'est rigolo" (For a white heterosexual male, certainly, discrimination is funny).[109]

Despite Long's insistence in the May 23 interview that a lack of education was a nation's first defense against the fear of otherness, the choice to differently depict European and non-European foreigners reveals an ignorance of his text's own prejudices. D.'s assertion that a "petit 'goût traditionnel' de racisme" (little taste of traditional racism) could be found in the Lebanese abduction ultimately falls on deaf ears, and with it, readers' acknowledgement that *À boire et à*

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[108] D., October 14, 2014, at 8:48pm, comment on Guillaume Long, "Un taboulé ancestral," *À boire et à manger: Le blog de Guillaume Long, illustrateur*, http://long.blog.lemonde.fr/2014/10/14/un-taboule-ancestral/.
[109] D., October 15, 2014, at 2:07pm, comment on Long, "Un taboulé ancestral."

manger perpetuates an understanding of Frenchness that remains impenetrable to non-French languages, tastes, and experiences.[110]

2.5 CONCLUSION

In France as well as elsewhere, cookbooks have been heavily invested in the creation and maintenance of national identity. While many French writers, including nineteenth century gastronomes like Brillat-Savarin, wished to make French food more accessible to a broader public, cookbook forms—including the twenty-first century emphasis on food photography—tend to reinscribe hierarchies between high-brow/low-brow culture through the home kitchen. Culinary comics, an emerging hybrid genre, draw simultaneously from French culinary and comic traditions while creating new textual opportunities for resisting hierarchies of class, gender, and race through the acts of cooking and reading.

While Guillaume Long's *À boire et à manger* succeeds, to a certain extent, in using the drawn image to engage individuals across the spectrums of gender and class, these goals hinge upon the strengthening of racial divides among the readers. Long's goal to "démocratiser la cuisine" fails to extend to non-white populations born beyond French borders; instead, his divergence from gendered and *haute*/home binaries stabilizes the nation in opposition to these foreigners. With the stated goal of extending sociopolitical participation to a broader number of individuals through cooking, Long's texts remind that democratic objectives often mask their

[110] D., October 15, 2014, at 9:53pm, comment on Long, "Un taboulé ancestral."

reliance on the delineation between participants who are eligible to receive rights and those who aren’t. Culinary democracy, like the nation, remains limited.

CHAPTER 3: PLAT PRINCIPAL. DEFINING "MEN WITH GOOD TASTE": MASCULINITY AND CONSUMPTION IN FRANCE'S NEW FOOD-LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE[1]

When the first edition of French quarterly *BEEF!* hit French newsstands on March 27, 2014, the magazine was already at the center of a national controversy.[2] Marketed as "le premier magazine en univers Homme-Lifestyle" (the first cooking-and-lifestyle magazine in the universe for men), *BEEF!*'s recipes, reviews of gourmet products, and how-to articles originally appeared to promote the equal participation of men in the traditionally female domain of home cooking.[3] However, after a provocative prerelease editorial in which editor-in-chief Alexandre Zalewski accused women of, among other insults, being too prissy to debone meat and of abandoning the kitchen for high-paying jobs, French media went up in arms.[4] Journalist Émile Laystary accused

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[1] A version of this article was published under the title "Defining 'Men with Good Taste': Constructions of Masculinity, Consumption, and the Culinary in France's New Food-Lifestyle Magazine for Menm," in *Food Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 6, no. 3 (June 2016): 27-39.
[2] *BEEF!* has been published and distributed in Germany by Gruner + Jahr since October 2009. The license to publish in France was held by Ceol Presse from April 2014 to December 2015, after which it was revoked due to Ceol Presse's insolvency proceedings. Publishing company La Financière de Loisirs re-released *BEEF!* in France in October 2016 under the direction of Alice Malhberg. A Spanish-language version of the magazine was licensed to Muy Interesante in September 2015.
[3] Alexandre Zalewski, *Communiqué de presse*, accessed April 9, 2014, http://web-engage.augure.com/pub/attachment/307959/05181217177280813944637 79825-agencesource.com/CP%20BEEF!.pdf?id=1143159.
[4] "…comme cette manie toute féminine de faire désosser les morceaux de viande chez le boucher, comme [on] fait écailler un poisson…La gent féminine a décidé de prendre le pouvoir,

the editorial of being "truffé de clichés sexistes" (riddled with sexist clichés) and displaying "au mieux, d'un humour douteux" (questionable humor, at best).[5] Other major media chains followed suit, publishing articles with titles such as "*BEEF!*: Le magazine carnivore interdit aux femmes" (*BEEF!*: The Carnivorous Magazine Forbidden to Women), "*BEEF!*: Nouveau magazine culinaire ou boucherie sexiste?" (*BEEF!*: New Culinary Magazine or Sexist Butchery?), and the seemingly definitive response by *Le Monde*, France's second-largest daily newspaper: "Ni les aliments ni la cuisine n'ont de sexe" (Neither Ingredients Nor Cuisine Have a Sex).[6]

Curiously, despite the hype, the debate surrounding *BEEF!* fell silent after the release of the first issue. In a televised interview on BFMTV Paris in early July 2014, Zalewski reported that the magazine had received "un accueil assez chaleureux" (a rather warm welcome).[7] When asked by the newscaster why a culinary magazine was needed for men in particular—a question framed with the suggestion, "L'approche n'est pas la même?" (Is it because the male approach [to cooking] is different?")—Zalewski responded, "Non, non, ce n'est pas trop ça" (No, no, it's not really that), despite the fact that his prerelease editorial had argued the contrary just a few

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au point que l'on trouve aujourd'hui des femmes à la tête de multinationaux de la high-tech et même de l'automobile. Grand bien leur fasse." Zalewski, *Communiqué de presse.*

[5] Émile Laystary, "*Beef!*: Nouveau magazine culinaire ou boucherie sexiste?" *ACRIMED*, last modified March 12, 2014, http://www.acrimed.org/article4287.html.

[6] See Christel Brion, "Beef: Le magazine carnivore interdit aux femmes," *O: Le cahier de tendances de L'Obs*, last modified March 26, 2014, http://obsession.nouvelobs.com/food/20140325.OBS1191/beef-le-magazine-carnivore-interdit-aux-femmes.html; Laystary, "*Beef!*"; and Alex Miles, interview by Aude Lasjaunias, *LeMonde.fr*, "'Ni les aliments ni la cuisine n'ont de sexe,'" last modified updated March 28, 2014, http://www.lemonde.fr/m-styles/article/2014/03/28/ni-les-aliments-ni-la-cuisine-n-ont-de-sexe_4391636_4497319.html.

[7] Alexandre Zalewski, interview by Guillaume Paul, *Rendez-vous du jour*, BFMTV Paris, July 10, 2014, http://bfmbusiness.bfmtv.com/mediaplayer/video/le-rendez-vous-du-jour-alexandre-zalewski-dans-paris-est-a-vous-1007-153298.html.

months prior: “en cuisine, hommes et femmes n’abordent pas les choses de la même manière” (in the kitchen, men and women do not approach things in the same way).[8] In the magazine’s second edition released in July 2014, Zalewski wrote that the editorial team had been astonished to have been accused of sexism and cited the “formidable accueil” (warm welcome) that the magazine had received from both men and women as proof that cooking, of all things, “n’est pas sujet à polémiques” (is not subject to controversy).[9]

However, a close reading of the magazine displays that both the writing and the performance of cooking are highly politicized acts. In the seven issues of the magazine published by Ceol Presse under the direction of Alexandre Zalewski, beginning in April 2014 and ending in December 2015, *BEEF!*’s constant contradictions in language, target audience, and definitions of consumption construct a limited version of white, heteronormative, upper middle-class French masculinity that is reliant on the gender binary for its validity. In addition to lauding the superiority of this particular masculinity over other versions of manliness and, of course, of femininity as a whole, this masculinity is also predicated on the continued purchase of *BEEF!* in order to resolve its internal inconsistencies. Promoting the cultivation of a man’s cultural appreciation of food—his “taste” in the concept of fine cuisine—rather than honing his cooking skills, *BEEF!* reinforces a man’s role as a consumer of food and female bodies while simultaneously emphasizing the “masculine-ness” of public visibility over the “feminine-ness” of domestic labor. As a consumer item with an average of 15,000 copies distributed quarterly in Paris and the provinces over the course of twenty months, *BEEF!* circulated regularly in public

[8] Zalewski, *Communiqué de presse*.
[9] Zalewski, ed. “À dévorer,” *BEEF!*, July-September 2014, 3.

and private French spaces, marketing the standards of this exclusive masculinity on a national level.

As argued in Chapters 1 and 2, the standardization and exportation of a national French cuisine helped to solidify the ideologies of *terroir* and citizenship that contributed to the myth of the modern French nation. *BEEF!* sheds light on the different ways that men and women are historically associated with this legacy by providing examples of how gender roles are written and cooked into being. Drawing from five of the seven issues of the magazine—issues 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6, published from April 2014 to September 2015—this chapter examines how *BEEF!* solidifies the gender binary despite its insistence to the contrary, providing detailed examples of how food practices and visual discourse constitute and entrench conceptions of gender in contemporary France. The reification of the gender binary in *BEEF!* through reiterations of traditional conceptions of labor, mind, body, and gaze evidences a French masculinity under threat in its constant reliance upon notions of "otherness" in order to constitute its unity.

To contextualize *BEEF!* in relation to its male French readership, I begin this chapter by briefly outlining the history of meat, gender, and nation that frames contemporary French imaginaries. Despite *BEEF!*'s claim to surpass this context and flatten the distinction between types of gendered labor, I continue by arguing that the magazine promotes an equipment-based, leisure-determined relationship with cooking that is framed specifically for men, entrenching the magazine's reliance on and perpetuation of the gender binary. By analyzing the magazine's advertisements and photography, I next suggest that this masculine relationship to cooking is especially constructed on a scopophilic interaction with food as well as woman, resulting in the defining of "taste" as an exclusive, upper middle-class, intellectual quality. Sexualizing female bodies with appetites and effeminizing non-French men, *BEEF!* overlays the traditional

opposition between mind/body with the binaries of French/non-French, upper-class/lower-class, and men/women. As such, it constructs an exclusive normative model of masculinity based on class, gender, and nation, using the forum of a magazine to perpetuate these ideologies through the repetition of the purchase.

3.1 MASCULINITY, MEAT, AND THE MEDIA

BEEF!'s choice to market masculinity through food and domestic food labor takes up a series of historically charged symbols and practices that construct and perpetuate definitions of gender and power. Carole Counihan and Steven Kaplan explain that men have traditionally demonstrated their power in the kitchen by controlling the type and the amount of food purchased whereas women have wielded the most power in meal planning and cooking.[10] Transhistorically and cross-culturally, the symbolism of individual foodstuffs has also been deeply gendered. Carol Adams' *The Sexual Politics of Meat* argues that, across cultures and time, meat has univocally functioned as a marker of privilege in terms of class as well as gender, whereas "second-class foods," like fruits and vegetables, have denoted women and children, history's "second-class citizens."[11] Such gendered categories continue to influence modern eating patterns; Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 1761 novel, *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse*, famously

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[10] Carole M. Counihan, "Introduction—Food and Gender: Identity and Power," *Food and Gender: Identity and Power*, eds. Carole M. Counihan and Steven L. Kaplan (Australia: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998), 4.

[11] As a class example, Adams compares the meat consumed by the European aristocracy with the laborer's diet of complex carbohydrates. To explain gender distinctions, she cites starvation statistics in cultures in which women are obligated to serve meat to men before serving themselves. *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (New York: Continuum, 1990), 26-7.

insisted that women should consume "le laitage et le sucre" (dairy products and sugar) to emphasize their "innocence et…douceur" (innocence and softness), while men required strong flavors and liquors to complement their "vie active et laborieuse" (active and laborious life).[12] Exactly two hundred years later, Roland Barthes would acknowledge that stereotypes perpetuate behavior, explaining that some men refrain from eating foods that have been culturally labeled feminine because these foods provoke "un sentiment d'infériorité" (a feeling of inferiority).[13] Regarding beef in particular, Barthes' famed essay "Le biftek et les frites" (Steak and Fries) implies that, for France, steak is not only a national myth—it is also a masculine one, symbolizing "la chair même du combattant français" (the very lifeblood of the French combatant), a statement that indicates the dialectical, mutually constitutive nature of both gender and nation.[14]

Like national identity, gender is often defined by its inherent instability and its reliance on practice, discourse, and representation for its reproduction.[15] The "unmarked" category of the masculine—usually perceived to be in opposition to the "marked" category of the feminine—is especially worthy of inquiry given that attempts to maintain its cohesiveness are linked to the upholding of hegemonic power structures (see Chapter 1). Within this context, *BEEF!* demonstrates the creation of a masculinity that is valued for its culturedness—"pour les hommes

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[12] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse,* Vol. 2 (Paris: Gallimard, 1993), 67-8.
[13] Roland Barthes, "Pour une psycho-sociologie de l'alimentation contemporaine," *Annales. Économies, sociétés, civilisations* 16, no. 5 (1961): 984, http://www.persee.fr/doc/ahess_0395-2649_1961_num_16_5_420772.
[14] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil: 1957), 74.
[15] For example, C. J. Pascoe and Tristan Bridges define the social constructionist perspective of masculinity as an emphasis on the "varying definitions" of gender, as well as the "role of individuals in contesting and enforcing these definitions, the patterning of masculinity, the role of various social institutions in sustaining and organizing masculinity, and the ways in which power is reproduced, embodied, and contested." See *Exploring Masculinities: Identity, Inequality, Continuity, and Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 3-4.

qui ont du goût" (for men who have good taste)—perhaps in response to recent sentiments that frame white heteronormative masculinity as under attack by women, gay men, and immigrants.[16] The importance of "shoring up" this masculinity is evidenced by its reproduction through a magazine, a medium that doubles its ideology in image and text and is regularly distributed to a national readership.

BEEF!'s title evokes a French masculine history as "le cœur de la viande" (the heart of the meat), drawing it into popular culture with an English title written in all capital letters and followed by an exclamation point.[17] While not fully overthrowing the gender binary, at first glance *BEEF!* at least succeeds in troubling the division between the social roles historically ascribed to men and women. On French newsstands, the magazine stands out: a thick, matte tome of 172 pages with a lightly textured, boldly colored cover. In the hands, the magazine, priced at a hefty 7,50€ (about $8.40), feels more like a luxury item than a spontaneous spend.[18] Originally inspired by *Men's Health* and *GQ*, as explained by former editor-in-chief Alexandre Zalewski in an interview on May 9, 2016, German parent company Gruner + Jahr created *BEEF!*

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[16] Éric Zemmour claims that, in French society, "Un homme…n'est plus fait de tous les hommes mais…vaut moins que toutes les femmes" (A man is no longer comprised of all men but is valued less than all women). *Le premier sexe* (Paris: Denoël, 2006), 9. For popular perspectives into this debate, especially in relationship to women, see Valérie Charolles, "Un déclin très masculin," *LeMonde.fr.*, last modified June 21, 2014, http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2014/06/21/un-declin-tres-masculin_4442682_3232.html. See also Hanna Rosin, "Le déclin masculin n'a rien d'un mythe," *Slate.fr*, last modified November 19, 2012, http://www.slate.fr/story/62953/declin-masculin.

[17] Barthes, *Mythologies*, 72. Following the lead of the German edition of the magazine, and in line with the marketing of other products aimed at the upper middle class, *BEEF!*'s use of English indicates carefree enthusiasm. See Elizabeth Martin, "Mixing English in French Advertising," *World Englishes* 21, no. 3 (2002): 375-402.

[18] In comparison, the July 2014 French edition of *Men's Health* cost 3.90€ (about $4.35), and the April-May 2014 issue of the restaurant guide *Gault & Millau* cost 8.90€ (about $10). Upon the 2016 re-release of *BEEF!* by Financière de Loisirs, the price of *BEEF!* rose by 61% to 12.90€ (about $13.75).

because the culinary market needed "quelque chose qui s'adresse aux hommes" (something aimed at men).

Featuring meat, music, and muscle, a handful of the magazine's articles make appeals to dominant Western conceptions of white, upper middle-class masculinity. In the magazine's second issue (July-September 2014), articles include tips on grilling ground beef, veal, lamb, goat, and octopus; readers are taught how to make cocktails that are manly enough for a motorcycle gang; and one entire feature is dedicated to what sauces look like when poured on a loudspeaker cranked at full volume.[19] The magazine also goes beyond these masculine stereotypes to include a full page of tasting notes on a selection of rosé wines, nine recipes for ice cream, and a review of a Smeg mixer.[20] In 2005, Fabio Parasecoli identified short sentences and urgent appeals as part of the masculine language characteristic of three American male fitness magazines,[21] but such terms exist only in the titles of *BEEF!*'s articles, which are occasionally enhanced by the use of English.[22] Hinting at multiple masculinities rather than a pure gender binary, the French journalist Amandine Flament actually described *BEEF!* as "ce

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[19] "Chérie, j'ai fait une boulette"; "À la vôtre!"; "Des basses, des basses, encore des basses…," *BEEF!*, July-September 2014, 30-40, 70-7, 110-8.
[20] "À Déguster"; "Suck It!"; "À Convoiter," *BEEF!*, July-September 2014, 12, 150-61, 6. The French edition of *Men's Health* for the same month featured articles entitled "Hot Sex: Ce qu'elles veulent entendre au lit" (Hot Sex: What Women Want to Hear in Bed); "La coupe du monde en 32 bières" (The World Cup in 32 Beers); and "Votre été au top: Affûté et sexy en six semaines" (Your Summer at the Top: Cut and Sexy in Six Weeks).
[21] Fabio Parasecoli, "Feeding Feeding Hard Bodies: Food and Masculinities in Men's Fitness Magazines," in *Food and Culture: A Reader*, eds. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik (New York: Routledge, 2013: 284-98.
[22] Examples in Issue 2 include "Des Obus au Barbecue" (Barbeque Bombshell) and "Rock n'Cocktails." *BEEF!*, July-September 2014, Front Cover.

masculin pour le moins viril" (masculinity for the less manly),[23] and Zalewski agreed that his magazine was "le reflet d'une société en mouvement vers la parité" (reflection of a society moving toward gender parity).[24] In other words, *BEEF!* merges stereotypical definitions of masculinity with attempts to bridge the gap between the genders, but both actions rely on the squaring of "good taste" with the upper middle class.

Despite the magazine's insistence that shared food work equalizes the playing field between men and women, the magazine does not necessarily appeal to male and female readers in the same way, indicating the endurance of a gender binary. After interviewing thirty American "foodies" in 2008, Kate Cairns, Josée Johnston, and Shyon Baumann concluded that despite the "prevalence of discourse" in popular culture promoting gender equality as well as the acceptability of male and female "foodies," men and women still cook at home for different reasons with "women continu[ing] to do the majority of the food work."[25] While women often link cooking with the labor, obligation, and love associated with the family, Cairns, Johnston, and Baumann discovered that American men associated cooking with a sense of leisure in the private sphere (such as grilling for guests) or with the professionalism of the public domain (such as being the executive chef of a high end restaurant).[26] These authors summarize that even though men have become increasingly involved in domestic food work in many Western contexts, "dominant gendered discourses continue to influence how these practices are

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[23] Amandine Flament, "Alexandre Zalewski présente *BEEF!* magazine," SAY*WHO*, last modified March 18, 2014, http://www.saywho.fr/intimes/187./alexandre-zalewski-presente-beef-magazine.
[24] Zalewski, qtd. in Flament.
[25] Kate Cairns, Josée Johnston, and Shyon Baumann, "Caring about Food: Doing Gender in the Foodie Kitchen," in *Gender and Society* 24, no. 5 (October 2010): 593.
[26] Ibid., 591-2.

understood."[27] Central to French national identity, these approaches to cooking reveal that masculinities remain an exclusive category of power and value despite popular campaigns for gender equality.

3.2 CREATING *BEEF!*'S IDEAL MASCULINITY

Despite *BEEF!*'s claim to be gender neutral, the magazine's promotion of a particular idealized masculinity can be read through which features, photographs, and advertisements are included in the magazine as well as which ones are not. While popular French literature associates food memoirs with women and their coming-of-age—including Amélie Nothomb's *La biographie de la faim* (*Biography of Hunger*, 2004) and Maryse Condé's *Victoire, saveurs, et mots* (*Victoire: My Mother's Mother*, 2008)—*BEEF!* includes no such appeals to childhood, nostalgia, or the home. Echoing the point of Cairns, Johnston, and Baumann that men cook predominantly in the public domain, *BEEF!*'s features focus overwhelmingly on the public sphere, including profiles of professional chefs (such as the Michelin-starred Thierry Marx), explanations of professional techniques (such as how to slice aged ham), and analyses of professional crafts (including the building of high-end stoves).[28] These articles share the subjects' freedom of choice and high skill set, both of which are considered so "naturally possessed" that the subjects' professional training is left unexplained. Meanwhile, very few of Issue 2's fifty recipes are designed to nourish a family, presumably at home: only one four-course spread includes the balance of starch, meat,

[27] Cairns, Johnston, and Baumann, "Caring about Food," 594.
[28] "Marx de fabrique"; "Haute coupure"; "La cuisine de château," *BEEF!*, July-September 2014, 24-9, 132-5, 162-71.

and vegetables that Anne Murcott has defined as a "proper meal."[29] By contrasting the magazine's contents against these "feminine" discourses of nostalgia, nourishment, and the domestic sphere, *BEEF!* reinforces the traditional gender binary by separating male cooking from the "female" notions of family, home, and love.

Despite the fact that *BEEF!*'s tagline classifies the magazine as "Pour les hommes qui ont du goût" (for men who have good taste), *BEEF!*'s implied readership—the standard to which all readers are encouraged to aspire—remains surprisingly unclear. As indicated by both the cover price and the review of a 4,785€ (about $5,300) wine refrigerator by Leibherr, *BEEF!*'s implied readers are members of the upper middle class—or, at least, individuals who are encouraged to imagine class mobility. The technicality of the recipes generally assumes that the reader is also a cook who is already capable of seasoning to taste, selecting cuts of meat, and wielding a knife. For example, one recipe for Stuffed Leg of Lamb with Chervil Salsa instructs readers to "retirer les os du gigot d'agneau, couper la viande de sorte qu'elle soit plate" (remove the bones from the leg and cut the meat so that it lies flat) without providing any explanation as to how the deboning should be performed.[30] Privileged, educated, and professional, *BEEF!*'s implied readership could thus be said to include professional chefs as well as niche farmers, artisans, and craftsmen.

However, Zalewski provided a more contradictory vision of his target audience in his interview with BFMTV Paris. After assuring the newscaster that "[le magazine] n'est pas interdit aux femmes, on est bien d'accord" (we can all agree that this magazine is not forbidden to women), Zalewski described *BEEF!*'s readership first as "les hommes qui aiment cuisiner" (men

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[29] Anne Murcott, "'It's a Pleasure to Cook for Him': Food, Mealtimes, and Gender in Some South Wales Households," in *Gender in Cross-cultural Perspective*, eds. Caroline B. Brettel and Carolyn F. Sargent (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000), 111.
[30] "Lamb Art," *BEEF!*, July-September 2014, 58.

who like to cook). A few seconds later, he removed gender from his comment and clarified that *BEEF!* was made to attract skeptics: "des gens qui n'ont pas trop l'habitude d'aller dans la cuisine" (people who aren't really used to entering the kitchen). Finally, he concluded, "On essaie d'attirer vraiment le novice qui ne connaît rien du tout, qui n'a pas du tout envie de cuisiner. On essaie de lui dire que…c'est quand même pas mal d'aller aux fourneaux…on peut même s'amuser, s'éclater" (We really try to attract the novice who knows nothing at all, who has no idea how to cook. We are trying to tell him that it's not so bad in front of a stove…He [might] even enjoy himself and have a good time).[31] When the newscaster held up the magazine and asked, "Ce n'est pas un magazine d'initié… ?" (So this is not a magazine for cooking professionals…?), Zalewski admitted that there were some technical parts, but he pointed to the magazine's four-course centerfold—which breaks down the preparation of each course with a timetable and photos—as evidence that *BEEF!* could be used as a tool for teaching.[32] In other words, the magazine holds the potential to appeal to (or be referenced by) both cooking professionals and cooking novices due to its construction of an overarching, shared masculinity based on a shared relationship with food.

While the contrast between the magazine's content and Zalewski's descriptions could indicate the broad appeal of the magazine, the lack of clarity regarding the implied reader is a productive marketing move—both facts which were confirmed to me by Zalewski in the May 2016 interview. First, by aligning an unseasoned audience with the magazine's apparent professionalism, *BEEF!* is able to safeguard the masculinity of its readers, allowing men, as Parasecoli states, "to express feelings and connect with memories that otherwise would not be

[31] Zalewski, interview by Guillaume Paul.
[32] Ibid.

acceptable."[33] Additionally, the magazine provides the ability for novice male readers—for whom cooking is a choice rather than a necessity—to completely bypass the instruction of women, entirely segregating male home cooking from what their wives and mothers do.[34]

Finally, and somewhat contradictorily, the confusion over the magazine's implied readership reveals that *BEEF!* may not be about the act of cooking at all. Pitching recipes beyond the skill level of the average reader, *BEEF!*'s contents become stand-ins for masculine competency. What is actually cooked up in the magazine is less about beverages and burgers than it is about what it means to be a particular type of white, heteronormative, upper middle-class French man. The definition of this masculinity can be read through the products and intellectual material that the magazine promotes. Pointing out that the magazine was introduced because of the enormous market possibilities with food,[35] and, as explained to me, "on avait marre des magazines de cuisine féminins" (everyone was sick of female cooking magazines), Zalewski confirms that masculinity was a brand that *BEEF!* was seeking to sell.

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[33] Fabio Parasecoli, *Bite Me: Food in Popular Culture* (Oxford: Berg, 2008), 29.
[34] Writing on the German edition of *BEEF!*, Kris Wilton asserts that "BEEF! is careful to differentiate men's cooking from what their wives and girlfriends do. [German editor-in-chief] Jan Spielhagen writes in his editor's letter that the magazine 'goes into detail and offers more than "easy pasta recipes your kids will love." Because we don't want it to be easy; we want it to be hard…Because children have nothing to do with men's cooking. We want to know more about the pressure in the espresso machine, how bison are fed, the sharpness of Japanese knives, the global fish market…the new Porsche-design kitchen and and and.'" "Cooking Made Manly: The New German Magazine *BEEF!*", *Slate.com*, last modified January 20, 2010, http://www.slate.com/articles/double_x/doublex/2010/01/cooking_made_manly.html.
[35] Zalewski, interview by Guillaume Paul.

3.2.1 Cooking as Resistance and the New Masculine Hierarchy

The maintenance of cultural and political hegemony through masculinity is closely related to the control of economic power. Within *BEEF!*, disposable income provides a manner for masculinity to be purchased. At times, *BEEF!*'s neoliberal goals are layered beneath trends that laud *terroir* and a "return" to simplicity, including the ideals of sustainable, local food production and "whole animal" butchery. In Issue 2, a review of the website *www.mon-producteur.com* advocates the importance of buying directly from farmers; a similar review of the website *www.foodraising.com* praises community engagement in food-related start-ups.[36] One of Zalewski's favorite articles appears in Issue 4 and spends 42 pages explaining how to butcher an entire cow along with recipes for all the parts.[37] In an interview with Protéines, Zalewski aligned the magazine's local, sustainable focus—including the valuing of animals alongside of men (although not necessarily women)—with larger cultural trends, asserting his belief that future generations will promote "le retour aux valeurs sûres et aux produits de bases…issus d'une agriculture locale et raisonnée" (the return to key values and staple products…and the encouragement of their sustainable and local production).[38]

Despite its laudability, this particular framing of community-based and local food speaks to a masculinity of privilege while separating the ideology from the labor required for the ideal to function. Even regarding the article on butchering, in the May 2016 interview, Zalewski asserted

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[36] "À repérer," *BEEF!*, July-September 2014, 8.
[37] This article is framed as a carnivore's response to how animals should be treated given Article 1 of the European Treaty of Fundamental rights, "La dignité de l'homme est inviolable." "La dignité de l'homme est inviolable. Et celui de l'animal?", *BEEF!*, January-March 2015, 55-97.
[38] Protéines, "3 questions à Alexandre Zalewski, rédacteur en chef de BEEF," *It's Wonderfood*, last modified October 8, 2014, 2014. http://itswonderfood.fr/2014/10/08/3-questions-a-alexandre-zalewski-redacteur-en-chef-de-beef/.

that it was for education, not practice: “C’est ridicule. Quel lecteur s’achèterait une carcasse de bœuf?” (That’s ridiculous. What reader would buy himself a beef carcass?) In order to assert his social awareness, *BEEF!*’s reader is neither asked to modify his shopping behavior nor leave his armchair. Instead, he is encouraged to perform labor on his smartphone by means of his wallet. Despite the physical labor required to bake, butcher, and brew highlighted in many of *BEEF!*’s feature stories—more on this below—the readers of *BEEF!* are permitted to decouple body and mind through the assertion of a relationship with food that is more symbolic than tangible. The real labor required to construct *BEEF!*’s masculinity is performed by other groups in non-French spaces; *BEEF!*’s readers simply (and literally) have to buy in.

This contradiction, in addition to the reversal between male/public and female/private, is rendered both possible and desirable due to the manner that *BEEF!* conceives of dominant French culture. Wishing to pioneer frontiers beyond the limits of culinary acceptability, *BEEF!* promotes itself as superior to mainstream culture, and it does so by advocating the consumption of foods rejected by most of Western society. In Issue 2, a positive review is given to the cookbook *Tout Manger de A à Z* (*Eat Everything from A to Z*) which explains how to cook vegetables in their entirety, including peels, leaves, and roots.[39] Additionally, an entire section of the magazine is dedicated to the cooking of animal feet, which are—as the article proudly points out—usually considered in the West to be “sous-produits de l’abattage” (byproducts of slaughter).[40] Several of the recipes toe the line between the acceptable and the abject by blurring the distinction between human and animal subjects; for example, a paragraph on turkey feet warns, “Lors de l’achat, précisez bien que vous voulez manger les pieds et qu’ils ne sont pas

[39] “À lire,” *BEEF!*, July-September 2014, 18.
[40] “À cuisiner,” *BEEF!*, July-September 2014, 19.

pour votre chien; sinon, on risque de vous donner des pieds séchés" (When buying the feet, specify that you want to eat them, not your dog. If you don't explain this, your butcher may give you a dried-up pair).[41] The multiple-issue series on offal includes explanations of the preparation of the sweetbreads (Issue 1), stomachs (Issue 5), and tongues (Issue 6) of beef, lamb, pig, veal, and more.

Rather than being fully abject, this assertion of the culinary to the extreme hints at *BEEF!*'s recognition of multiple masculinities—as long as they exist in a hierarchy based on class and intellect. Writing on punk cuisine, Dylan Clark asserts that desiring the culturally unprocessed—or that which is "closer to its wild, organic, uncultured state"—can be viewed as resistance to oppressive social norms, which could include certain versions of masculinity.[42] Given the increasing failure of blue-collar "mâle, macho" definitions of masculinity to apply to men whose labor is distanced from their body—including Zalewski himself, as admitted in the May 2016 interview—the promotion of foodstuffs considered abject in the West but less so in the East indicate *BEEF!'s* selective openness to masculinities previously considered to be subordinate. Detailing how to prepare rooster crest and why one should taste all five flavors of dried crickets and worms sold by *jiminis.com*, *BEEF!* aligns itself—at least temporarily—with Asian culinary traditions, a culture that the West has long branded as effeminate.[43] This original move has two implications. First, by rejecting that which is either physically or symbolically processed through advertising and packaging, the consumption of symbolically "raw" foodstuffs offers a "superior" alternative to certain mainstream French masculinities—one in which the

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[41] "Tout le monde debout!" *BEEF!*, July-September 2014, 20.
[42] Dylan Clark, "The Raw and the Rotten: Punk Cuisine," in *Food and Culture: A Reader*, eds. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik (New York: Routledge, 2013), 232.
[43] "À croquer," *BEEF!*, April-June 2014, 10.

"intrepid foodie" takes up the image of the male explorer and labor but as a psychological quality, an approach that stabilizes the male-female binary. In other words, not only are *BEEF!*'s implied readers "man" enough to eat insects; they also subscribe to a masculinity that both assumes and rejects the dominant Western standards that define it. In this masculinity, reading a professional magazine counts as professionalism, and mentally engaging with food activism counts as a rejection of mass-marketed standards of taste.

3.2.2 Consuming with the Eyes, Devouring with the Mind

In modern English, as well as modern French, the noun "taste" indicates a physical sense as well as an intellectual preference. Despite the magazine's appeal that readers "veulent renouer avec le vrai goût des choses" (revive the real taste of things), the play on the word "goût"—paralleling Pierre Bourdieu's extensive exploration on the subject (Chapter 1)—is mostly metaphorical and rarely gustatory, defining taste as an intellectual quality limited to upper-class definitions of legitimacy and value.[44] Subscribing to a hierarchy of the senses, *BEEF!* is willing to challenge what is considered desirable for men to *taste* but refuses to contest what is desirable for men to *see*: animal fluids. In an article dedicated to recipes for ground meat in Issue 2, the opening photo—a two-page spread of a pristine mountain of ground beef on a cold flat top griddle—displays no blood, oil, or grease. In the photographs that follow, depicting cooked lamb patties with cinnamon and smoked fish patties with dill, liquid never mars the griddle's cooking surface.[45] Many of the patties glisten with fat, suggesting that they have recently been cooked, but the photographs' erasure of a greasy griddle distances the reader from the natural state of the

[44] Zalewski, *Communiqué de presse.*
[45] "Chérie, j'ai fait une boulette," *BEEF!*, July-September 2014, 30-40.

meat as well as from the cooking process. In contrast to Claude Lévi-Strauss's "Le triangle culinaire" (The Culinary Triangle) that opposes cooking/elaboration/culture to rotten/unelaborated/nature, this article awkwardly positions cultured masculinity between the "elaboration" performed by physical labor and the "un-elaboration" performed by the gaze.[46]

The article "Lamb Art" highlights the role of the gaze in *BEEF!*'s masculinity by

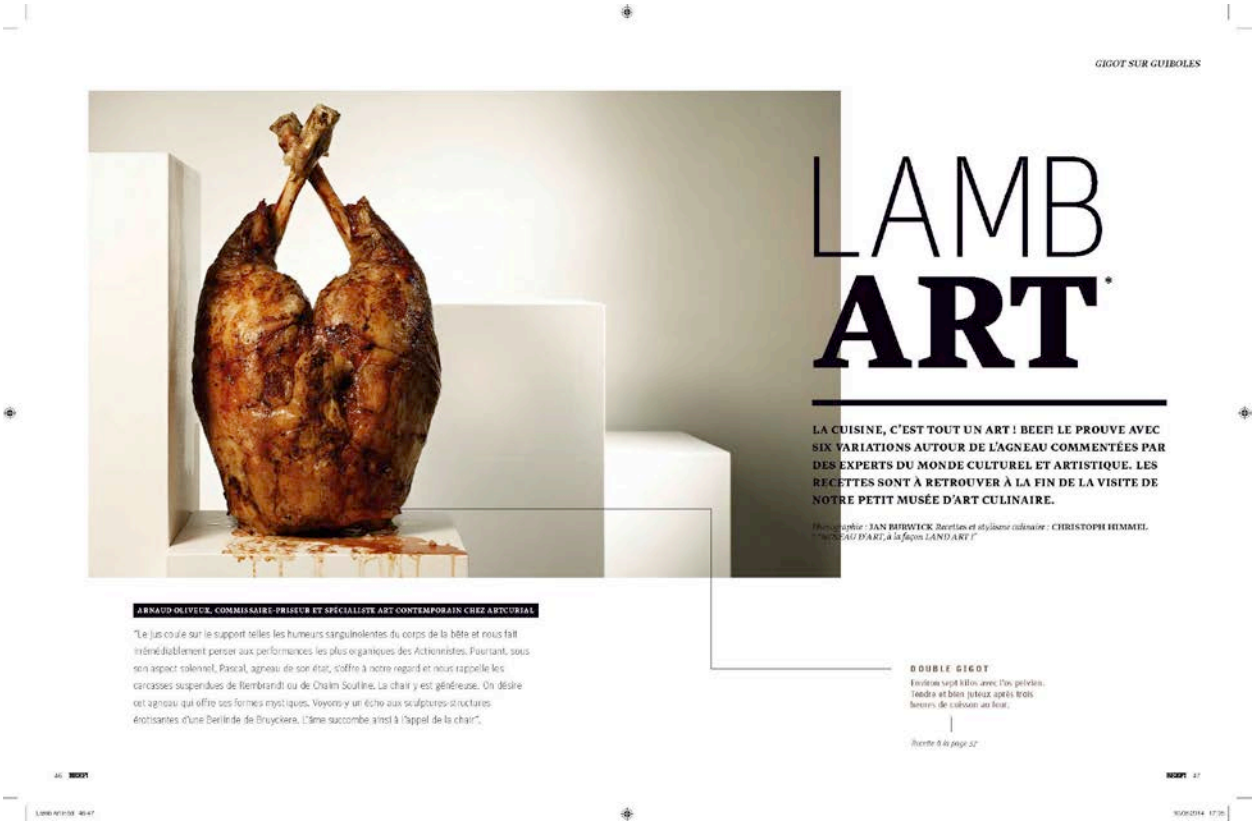

Figure 5: "Lamb Art."

Source: Jan Burwick, Photographer. BEEF!, July-September 2014, 46-7.

Used with permission from Gruner + Jahr.

[46] Claude Lévi-Strauss, "Le triangle culinaire," *Le nouvel observateur* (November-December 2009): 14, Accessed August 2, 2016, https://fr.scribd.com/doc/218389091/Levi-Strauss-C-Le-triangle-culinaire.

including cooked meat—prepared off-camera and without the reader's participation—with natural juices that pour out in profusion (Figure 5). Interestingly, in addition to removing the reader from the act of cooking, this article also fully severs him from the act of eating. The article's opening statement, that "la cuisine, c'est tout un art!" (cooking is an art), introduces a series of photographs in which six variations of lamb ribs, legs, hawk, shoulder, and crown are literally arranged in a museum.[47] Depicted in the public sphere and completely removed from any indications of meal preparation (diagrams, cutting boards, step-by-step photographs, or chef's hands) or mealtime (serving platters, serving utensils, extended hands, and place settings), such photographs imply that the male relationship to the culinary is about neither cooking nor eating.[48] Instead, *BEEF!*'s consumption is performed by the eyes as well as by the mind.

Despite the tasting notes provided for the seven rosé wines and twenty-five international cheeses in Issue 2, *BEEF!* places the highest emphasis on the enjoyment of food by the gaze.[49] The magazine's photography prioritizes the representation of food in visually stunning circumstances over edible ones, such as the abstract images of brightly colored sauces reacting to 21.2 to 37.4 hertz sound waves (Figure 6). Accompanying the article on aged hams in the same issue are photographs of the slices arranged in intricate patterns and shot in macro. The photographs of the international cheeses use contrasting lighting to emphasize the texture of the rinds.[50] In an article entitled "Opération Dessert Storm" in Issue 4, six dessert cocktails were

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[47] "Lamb Art," *BEEF!*, July-September 2014, 47.
[48] For images that imply family mealtimes, consider the regional culinary magazine *Cuisine d'ici* or the nationally-distributed *Marmiton.*
[49] "À déguster"; "L'épreuve de maturité," *BEEF!*, July-September 2014, 12, 137-49.
[50] "Des basses, des basses, encore des basses…"; "Des cuisses en or"; "L'épreuve de maturité," *BEEF!*, July-September 2014, 110-8, 120-31, 137-49.

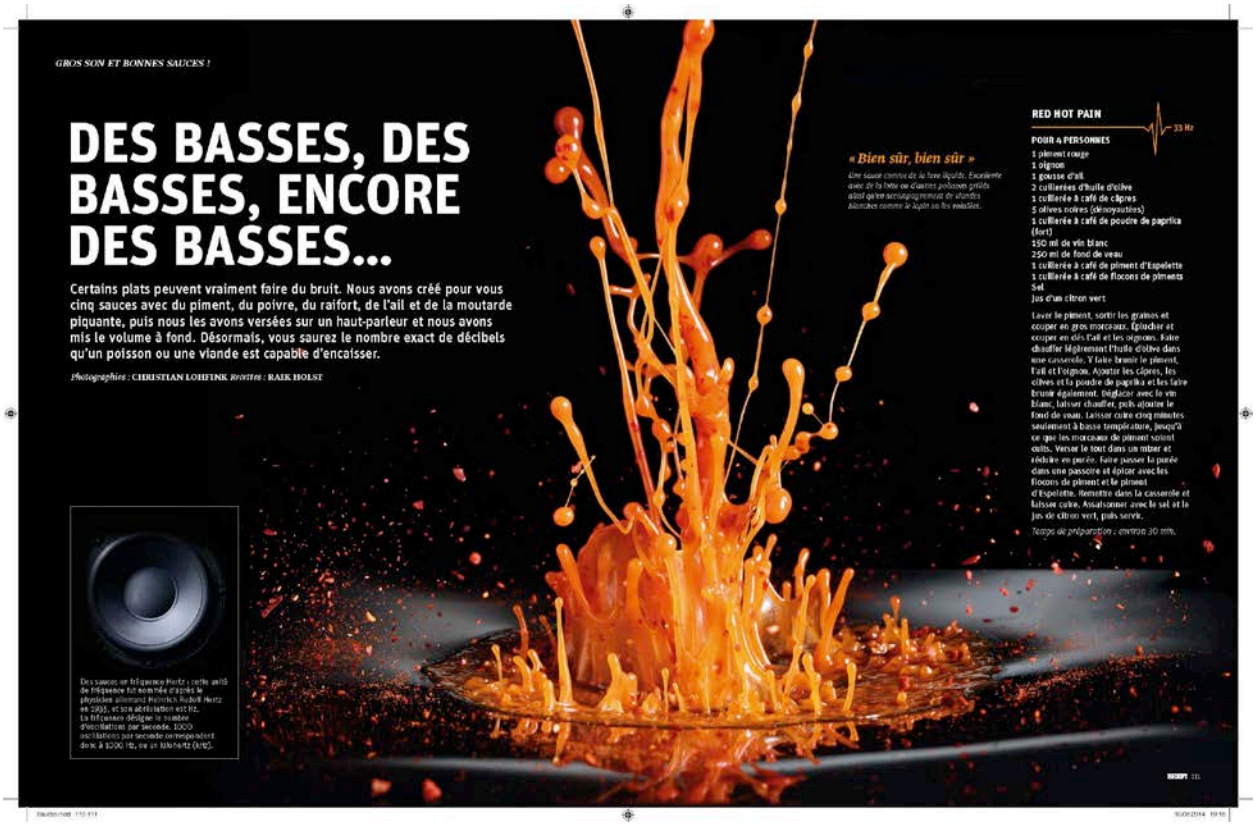

Figure 6: "Des basses, rien que des basses": Recipe for "Red Hot Pain."

Source: Christian Lohfink, Photographer. BEEF!, July-September 2014, 110-1.

Used with permission from Gruner + Jahr.

photographed at the moment that they were apparently shot with a sniper's rifle.[51] Rather than playing up the masculine association with violence, the article avoids the words "pistolet," "fusil," "bombe," or "guerre" (rifle, gun, bomb, war), choosing to appropriate war as creativity ("L'histoire doit être réécrite" [History must be rewritten]); mixing, swirling, and power ("cette tempête du dessert" [this dessert storm]); and the peace of good drink ("Que la paix soit avec

[51] "Opération Dessert Storm, *BEEF!*, January-March 2015, 160-70.

vous!" [Peace be with you!]).[52] When Zalewski suggested to BFMTV that food photography was one of the magazine's distinguishing points, he was stating both an artistic fact and a masculine ideal.[53] Following Aristotle, who claimed the superiority of sight (*visus*) over all the senses and classified taste (*gustus*) and touch (*tactus*) as the least important, *BEEF!* genders this hierarchy in order to claim that real men—in their engagement with the print form of a magazine as well as the manner of consumption that it represents—privilege the pleasure of the eyes over the pleasure of the mouth.[54]

In the May 2016 interview, Zalewski argued that the photographs were designed to entice the skeptical male reader into engaging with a magazine about food. Referencing the photos of the droplets of sauce, Zalewski insisted that such images could actually make a man cook.

> [La photo] n'est pas de rendre accessible, c'est de donner envie. Pour moi, c'est plus de la curiosité. Quand tu vois ces photos de sauce qui sautent…tu arrêtes pour regarder la photo, et du coup, tu as la recette. Si tu as la même photo de ta sauce dans cette assiette…tu as moins envie de le faire.
>
> (The photos aren't to make the magazine accessible, they're for generating interest. For me, the images are more about curiosity. When you see these photos of exploding sauces, you stop to look at the photo, and right there, you have the recipe. If you had the same photo of your sauce on a plate, you'd be less interested in making it.)

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[52] Ibid., 170.
[53] "Quelque chose qui est assez présent dans le magazine, c'est les photos. On [traite] le sujet d'une manière un petit peu différente de ce qu'on a l'habitude de voir dans les magazines culinaires, et une grande place [est] accordée à la photographie…," Zalewski, interview by Guillaume Paul.
[54] Robert Jütte, *A History of the Senses: From Antiquity to Cyberspace*, trans. James Lynn (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 63.

However, immediately after asserting that curiosity could lead to action—a statement which, in only being framed in terms of interest, underscores the continued focus on male readers—Zalewski hinted that the relationship between the acts of reading and cooking was not always linear. When explaining in the May 2016 interview that "tu peux être tellement attiré par le visuel que tu vas avoir envie d'aller un peu plus loin, et au moins lire…" (you can be so engaged by the visual that you want to go a bit further, and at least read…)," he corrected himself to continue, "tu vas tout de suite lire la légende. La légende, c'est la recette" (you're going to immediately read the caption. The caption is the recipe). Evidently, the magazine's relationship to actual food preparation is less clear than the former editor would like to believe. Later in the interview, when describing the magazine's images and their role in marketing, Zalewski twice repeated the phrase "tu as gagné" (you have won): once when describing the act of reading, again when describing the act of cooking, further indicating the slippage between the magazine's stated and definitive goals. Through the use of abstract food images,

> …tu as un peu gagné parce que tu as commencé à faire lire le lecteur, tu as commencé à lui faire lire une recette, si après, vu qu'il y a tous les ingrédients et il voit qu'il n'y a pas autant que ça, c'est jouable, et ça prend dix minutes, bah…tu as gagné. Si ton but est de lui faire faire le plat, tu as gagné.
>
> (…you have won a little because you've made the reader begin to read, you've made him begin to read a recipe, and if afterwards, since there are all the ingredients and the reader sees that it's not as bad as he thought, it's doable, and it takes ten minutes…you've won. If your goal is to make him make a dish, you've won.)

Unlike the cooking magazines whose stated goal is to make a reader cook, perhaps for others—for example, the cover of the Spring 2014 issue of *Cuisine d'ici* exclaims, "88 recettes à

partager" (88 recipes to share)—*BEEF!*'s goals are much more complex. Neither fully instructional nor fully indicative of the food's consumption, *BEEF!*'s photography distances the magazine from traditionally female perspectives and anchors its ideal masculinity in the visual.

The popularity of food photography is increasing in France, with events like *Le festival international de la photographie culinaire* and photographers like Pierre Javelle and Akiko Ida of the miniature food series *Minimiam* exploring food's creative—not necessarily edible—potential.[55] However, in the context of a culinary magazine meant to sell masculinity, such images take on a quality of scopophilia, affirming an individual's masculinity by his ability to control the object of his gaze. While this process—in which a subject is rendered powerful by transforming another subject into an object—is often erotic, it is not necessarily only so. Laura Mulvey argues that scopophilia can also be crucial in one's own (gendered) subject formation. Applying Jacques Lacan's mirror stage to the cinema screen, Mulvey argues, "An image…constitutes the matrix of the imaginary, of recognition/misrecognition and identification, and hence of the first articulation of the 'I,' of subjectivity."[56] In other words, viewers—and, in our case, readers—use media to negotiate the process of identification and distinction, often along the gender binary.

While Mulvey discusses a "screen surrogate," an individual that causes the spectator to "identif[y] with the main male protagonist" and onto which he projects his likeness, *BEEF!* offers surprisingly few portraits of the upper middle-class male readership implied by

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[55] See "Miammiam," accessed April 25, 2018, http://minimiam.com/fr/.
[56] Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings,* eds. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 836.

Zalewski.[57] In contrast to the magazine's flashy photography designed to captivate the viewing interest of the target audience, the vast majority (42 of 56) of the full-page, non-advertisement photographs of men in the five issues consulted for this chapter depict men in the act of preparing food. Unlike many of *BEEF!*'s readers, for whom engaging with food preparation is optional, these men—pressing copper pots in the Buyer factory or tending to cows in

Figure 7: "Sous le soleil de Mexico!"

Source: Frank Bauer, Photographer. *BEEF!*, July-September 2014, 60-1.

Used with permission from Gruner + Jahr.

[57] Ibid., 838.

Normandy—are individuals for whom labor is a financial obligation.[58] Additionally, nearly half of the 42 images depicting male labor are of non-French men, captured in the act of chopping agave hearts for mescal in Mexico or butchering a lamb to commemorate the Feast of the Sacrifice in Morocco (Figure 7).[59] Highlighting the strength and agility of the male body by frequently framing the labor performed next to fire or machinery and preferring close-up shots where the workers' hands are smudged with oil or dirt, these images offer a masculine ideal that corresponds little to the imagined reader's reality.[60] Following the magazine's suggestion that food is to be consumed through the gaze only, the visual performance of blue-collar and non-French workers is isolated to the page. The reader is permitted to look and encouraged not to engage.

To be used for gazing only, these images manifest the potential slippage between "screen surrogate" and sexual desire. Often not interviewed and even more frequently left unnamed, the featured French and non-French laborers represent the ideal of the muscular, stoic male body while simultaneously being rendered feminine, subjected to the reader's gaze. Constructing a fantasy blending *who to idolize* and *who to desire*, these full-page images of the male body are quietly disciplined by *BEEF!*'s full-page advertisements that suggest who a reader *should be* by modeling what *he should buy*. Only eight of advertisements in the five issues include images of men, several of whom are performing domestic tasks: welcoming a wife home in an ad on kitchen design, holding a knife over a cutting board (while glaring at the camera) for an ad for

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[58] "Le bruit des casseroles," *BEEF!*, July-September 2015, 120; "Du gras!" *BEEF!*, April-June 2014, 166.
[59] "Sous le soleil de Mexico!" *BEEF!* July-September 2014, 60-61; "Grand Dieu!" *BEEF!*, April-June 2015, 90.
[60] "Fondu de cocottes," *BEEF!*, January-March 2015, 134; "Un couteau dans le coeur," *BEEF!*, April-June 2014, 23; "Le serment," *BEEF!*, April-June 2014, 126.

boeuf-lovers.com.[61] In an ad for the German appliance company Miele, the man assumes the role of the nurturing, loving mother; he is depicted in a bathrobe holding a baby in pink pajamas, looking at her serenely as he warms up a bottle of formula in a microwave oven (Figure 8). Above his head, the caption reads, "Quel que soit le moment du jour…ou de la nuit: Miele, le complice des moments importants de votre vie!" (Whatever time of day…or night: Miele, the

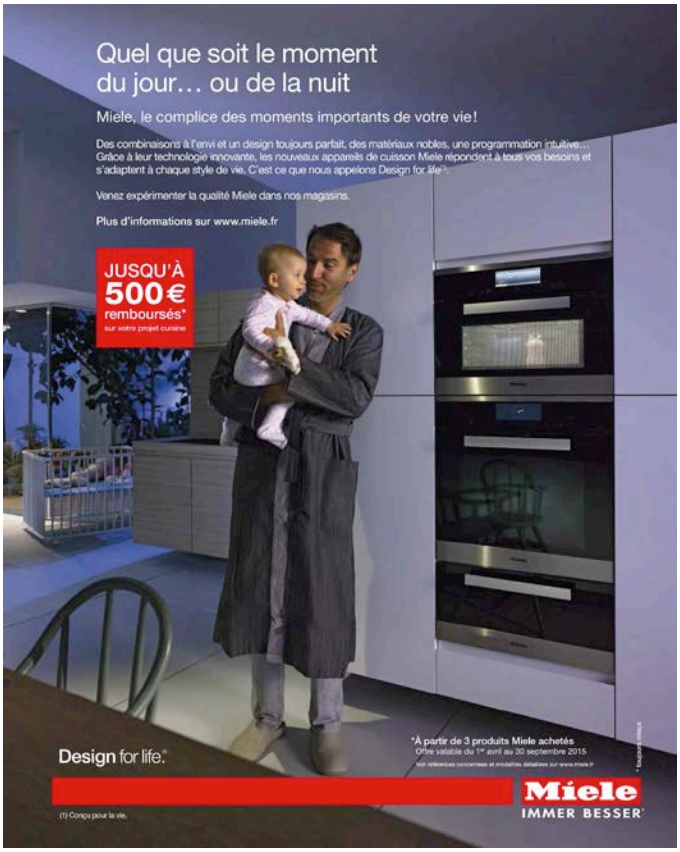

Figure 8: "Quel que soit le moment du jour…ou de la nuit!"

Source: Advertisement for Meile. *BEEF!*, April-June 2015, 7.

Used with permission from Gruner + Jahr.

[61] "Design for life," *BEEF!*, April-June 2014, 19; "Envie d'un plan cru près de chez vous?", *BEEF!*, July-September 2015, 7.

partner for the important moments of your life!). The remainder of the ads in the magazines feature foodstuffs (such as Heineken beer or Tabasco), objects (gas grills from Somagic), and services (including the online butcher *carredeboeuf.com*)—but no male figures.[62]

The split between the goals of the magazine and the goals of its advertisements gestures at the potentially uneasy relationship that modern French men may have with the shifting roles of men, women, and home life. Only an advertisement in Issue 4 (January-March 2015) for Nordic travel company Nord Espaces suggests a different resolution. Featuring two white, nude, middle-aged men in a sauna—one whose gaze is averted, one in the act of talking—the image reads, "Le plus célèbre boisson des pays nordiques: VODKA. Absolument inefficace contre le froid: NORD ESPACES" (The most famous beverage of the Nordic countries: VODKA. Absolutely ineffective against the cold: NORD ESPACES). To the right of the company's phone number, a caption reads, "Tentez autre chose…" ([At]tempt something else) in red script. In this advertisement, the trips to a variety of Nordic countries, indicated only by their flags in the top left corner of the page, are less marketed than the enactment of "new" desire. The contrast between the Nordic cold, the travel company's inability to provide warmth, and the suggestion that warmth could be generated between two men isolates homoerotic desire as a possible alternative to French heteronormative space, made acceptable in its temporary enactment in the non-space of foreign travel. The riskiness of this model to French homonormative masculinity is evident in that the ad appears in *BEEF!* only once and doesn't appear to be available online; after Issue 4, the company Nord Espaces does not advertise in *BEEF!* again.

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[62] "Heineken: open your world"; "Inimitable depuis 1868"; "Somagic: Créateur de saveurs"; "Carrédeboeuf.com," *BEEF!*, July-September 2014, Back Cover, 15, 9, 109.

3.3 BODIES, GENDER, AND HUNGER

BEEF! is a magazine in which food, bodies, and products are consumed by the eyes in order to structure normative white upper middle-class domesticity. The emphasis on the consumption by the gaze (over the consumption of the mouth) is further enhanced by the fact that male consumption is rarely framed in terms of eating. According to five issues of the magazine consulted for this chapter, only women, children, and incapacitated—and thus feminized—men

Figure 9: "À la vôtre!"

Source: Frank Egel, Photographer. BEEF!, July-September 2014, 70.

Used with permission from Gruner + Jahr.

experience hunger and consume food. In Issue 2, for example, sipping a cocktail is as close as it gets to even being photographed next to the tools of consumption, including plates, utensils, napkins, and tables (Figure 9).[63] Only two articles use the consumption of food as their central focus: "Petits monstres" (Little Monsters), an article about pasta sauces featuring images of blond boys stained with spaghetti sauce (Figure 10); and "Suck It," an article (with a title in

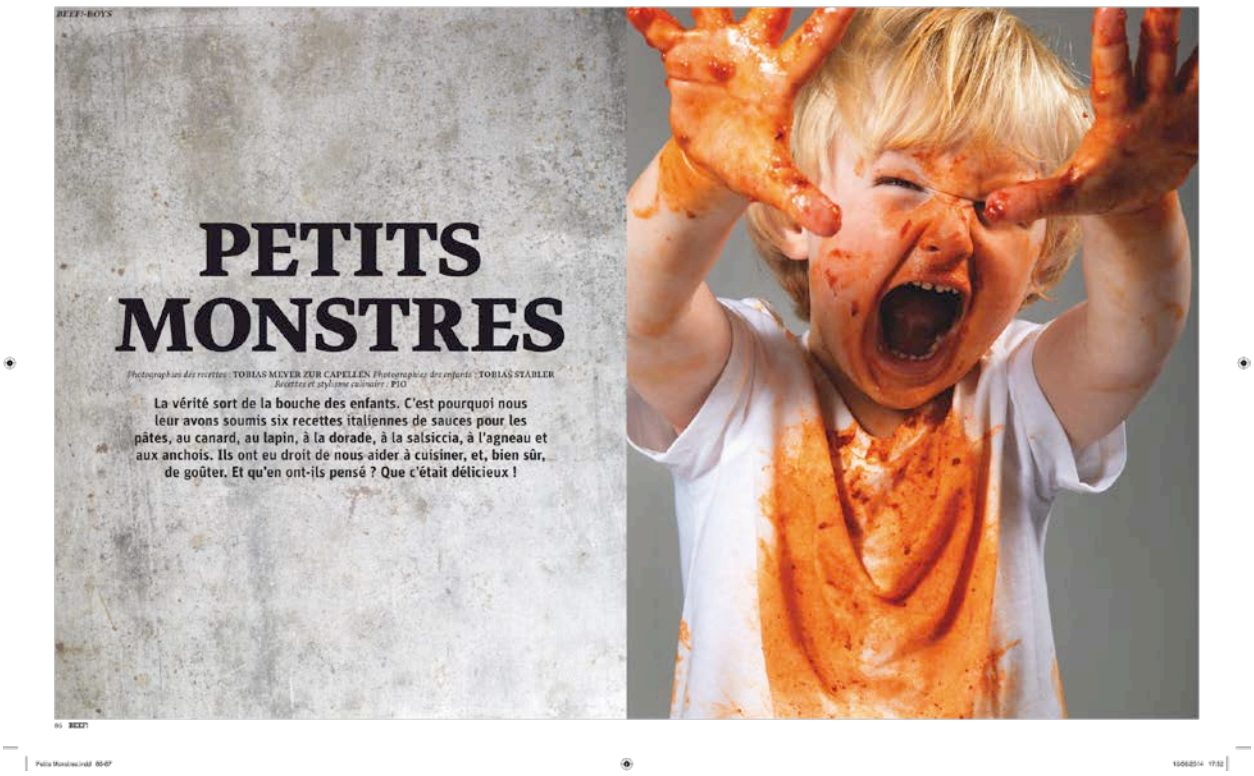

Figure 10: "Petits monstres."

Source: Tobias Stäbler, Photographer. BEEF!, July-September 2014, 87.

Used with permission from Gruner + Jahr.

[63] "À la vôtre!", *BEEF!*, July-September 2014, 70-7.

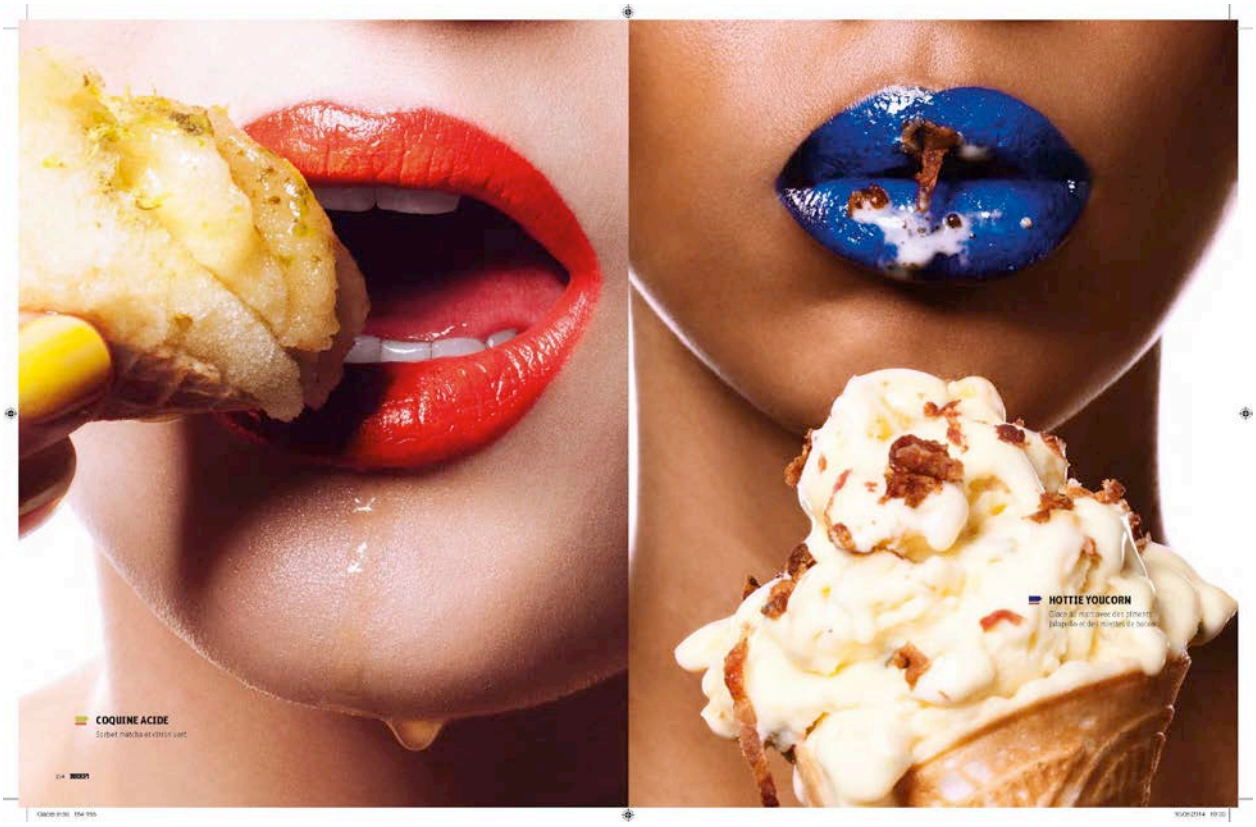

Figure 11: "Suck It!"

Source: Mierswa & Klyska, Photographers. BEEF!, July-September 2014, 154-5.

Used with permission from Gruner + Jahr.

English!) about ice cream that includes nine full-page photographs of sorbet dapped on highly painted female lips (Figure 11).[64] Both sets of images emphasize the voracious appetite of their consumers, evoked first by the stained hands, T-shirts, and grimacing faces of the children; and second by the women's open mouths and the melting ice cream that smears their lips. The

[64] "Petits monstres"; "Suck it," *BEEF!*, July-September 2014, 86-97, 151-61.

repetition of the children's cry "On a faim, on a faim, on a faim!" (We're hungry, we're hungry, we're hungry!) underscores the intensity of this bodily emotion.[65]

Heightened by the sensuality of the "Suck It!" article, both sets of images ascribe to and reinforce a belief in the dualism of mind and body as well as the gender binary. Introduced in the Greek philosophic tradition and solidified in the seventeenth century by René Descartes, the personification of this duality took several forms—master/slave under Plato, male/female under Francis Bacon—that justified the definitions of dominance and transcendence, including the relationship between the genders. As summarized by Susan Bordo, the major contributions of these philosophies to Western thought include both the promotion of the "construction of the body as something apart from the true self (whether conceived as soul, mind, spirit, will, creativity, freedom…)" and "as undermining the best efforts of that self."[66] As women are fundamentally linked to their bodies through the act of childbirth, this dualism tends to link women with the "lower bodily drives" such as sexuality and hunger, "embodying appetites and desires that weigh down men in their attempt to achieve freedom from materiality."[67] In *BEEF!*, this tradition is revived in the images that that limit depictions of women to those displaying hunger as both sexual and infantile. When juxtaposed with the images of the laboring man, the photography of *BEEF!* indicates a tradition in which the gender binary is deeply entrenched rather than resolved.

In *BEEF!*, the only article that depicts men eating takes place when the subjects' reason has been blurred by alcohol. This association harkens back to the Christian tradition of the

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[65] Ibid., 94.
[66] Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 3.
[67] Parasecoli, "Feeding," 296.

Middle Ages and the Renaissance that claimed the relationship between gluttony and alcoholism, as both—in the words of Thomas Aquinas—were "desires" made "inordinate through the leaving [of] the order of reason."[68] In contrast to the 42 images depicting male labor in *BEEF!*, only two photographs in the context of the article "Casa Nostra" (Issue 6) (one comprising two full pages, one ¼ of a page) display the consumption of food.[69] As part of a special on Italy that explains the fabrication of Parmesan cheese and six recipes for pesto, "Casa Nostra" opens by describing an illegal tavern in a mafia-run neighborhood in Palermo. Describing the male locals that meet at this tavern to "boi[re] plus que de raison" (drink excessively), the article also emphasizes their appetites: "Et si on leur met deux sacs d'abats sur la table, vous pouvez être sûrs que ceux-ci seront vides dans cinq minutes" (and if you place two bags of offal on the table, you can be sure that they will be empty in five minutes).[70] Paralleling the passive voice of this statement that suggests the men's lack of ownership of their animal-like, ravenous hunger, the article's opening photo is of a fisherman named Silvio gnawing at an unidentifiable piece of meat and staring at the camera with red-rimmed eyes. Rather than evoking a relationship with the French readership, the description of Silvio—who used to run a successful business but for whom "il n'en avait pas assez, il s'est détourné du droit chemin" (it wasn't enough, so he turned away from the straight and narrow)—includes a strong moral claim against his choices. Today, the excesses of his behaviors haunt him and his masculinity: "Ses finances sont de toute façon foutues et il est à

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[68] Susan Hill, "'The Ooze of Gluttony': Attitudes toward Food, Eating, and Excess in the Middle Ages," in *The Seven Deadly Sins: From Communities to Individuals,* ed. Richard Newhauser (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2007), 66-8; Thomas Aquinas, "Question 148: Gluttony," *Summa Theologica of Saint Thomas Aquinas,* trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: R. & T. Washbourne, 1917), last modified 2008, accessed August 17, 2016, http://www.newadvent.org/summa/3148.htm.
[69] "Petits monstres," *BEEF!,* July-September 2015, 8607, 94.
[70] "Casta Nostra," *BEEF!,* August-September 2015, 86.

nouveau célibataire, mais il se console dans son bar, à l'aide de spécialités siciliennes et de vin: deux à trois litres par jour" (His finances are damned, he's once again single, but he consoles himself in his bar with the help of Sicilian specialties and some wine: two to three liters per day).[71] Incapable of reflecting rationally on why his life has hit rock bottom—"Silvio préfère ne pas en parler" (Silvio prefers not to talk about it)—Silvio and the other men eat, drink, and succumb to their bodies. Over the course of the interview, one man's speech "est devenue lourde et pâteuse" (became heavy and slurred), and another shouted insults "un peu trop fort" (a little too loudly).[72]

Despite being members of the mafia, a group considered by some to be the ultimate expression of "macho" masculinity, and sharing the *BEEF!* readers' love for offal, the men of "Casa Nostra" represent the opposite of who *BEEF!* readers are to be. Rather than being upheld as a masculinity to emulate or desire, the men are painted as antagonists whose way of life is to be shunned. In contrast to the value placed on male professionalism and labor in *BEEF!*'s images, this article, told uncharacteristically in the second person, informs the reader that he should not relate to these senseless appetites: "En fait, tu ne devrais pas être ici…tu n'es pas chez toi ici" (In fact, you should not be here…you're not at home here).[73] The use of the word "devrais" (should) constructs the social and moral boundaries that separate *BEEF!* readers from the subjects of the story. Both causing and reflecting the lack of the masculinity that *BEEF!* promotes—especially in terms of aspiring upper middle-class wealth—the eagerness to eat in the context of this magazine represents the Italian subjects' difference from the French readership as well as their failure as men. Doubly reinforced by the magazine's images and language, the

[71] Ibid., 87.
[72] Ibid., 95.
[73] Ibid., 89.

message of this article toes the line between opinion and propaganda in its construction of a hierarchy of masculinities based in opposition to non-French men.

3.4 HIERARCHY OF THE SENSES

Promoting the intellectual consumption of ideas over than the consumption of food, *BEEF!* argues that masculinity should replace the physical "senses" with the intellectual notion of "sense." Meanwhile, women—onto which male readers project the experience of hunger—are mapped onto foods of desire, both of which—women and food—are framed as immoral fantasies to be passively and privately consumed at a man's will. Issue 6's article on hard cider entitled "À croquer" (Good enough to eat) features three two-page images of a topless white nude wearing white lace panties and holding a bright red apple.[74] In two out of the three images, she is covering her breasts with her hands or elbows; in all three images, she is viewed horizontally as if lying down. Beneath the caption, "La Pomme d'Ève" (Eve's Apple), the opening paragraph references a popular TV show, merging image, sin, and desire: "'Nous désirons ce que nous voyons le plus souvent,' disait Hannibal Lector. 'Nous désirons ce que nous voyons, sentons et touchons,' ajoutons-nous" ("We want what we see most often," said Hannibal Lector. "We desire what we see, smell, and touch," we add).[75] By neither mentioning apples nor cider nor the female body in these opening sentences, the paragraph flattens the distinction between them and implies that they are available for similar treatment at the hand of the reader. Slightly rearranging Aristotle by promoting *sight* as the most valued sense while ignoring the role of both *taste* and

[74] "À croquer," *BEEF!*, July-September 2015, 144-51.
[75] Ibid., 145.

sound, BEEF! subtly underlines the reader's symbolic consumption of these images while literally denying the woman a voice.

Portraying the female body as "passive, vulnerable, and inherently 'rapeable,'" to use Nicola Henry and Anastasia Powell's words, such representations of women are rarely only symbolic; instead, they heighten the dominance of the male gaze and justify the potential of physical consummation.[76] Far from promoting abstinence from food and sex, *BEEF!*'s promotion of an intellectual, visual appreciation of women and food appears to heighten the pleasure of the physical consumption of both. The cover of Issue 6 features an image of seven grilled sausages over which is centered the double entendre, "Péché de chair" (sin of the flesh), implying sexual lust. Indicating the consummation of gustatory and sexual appetites, the cover of Issue 1 personifies a raw hunk of beef with the main cover line: "Le cri de la bonne viande: Grillez-moi!" (The cry of good meat: Grill me!). The ads of the online butcher *www.boucherie-dynamique.com* use female bodies to sell their to-your-door meat delivery service, including a woman in a bikini leaning against a delivery box in Issue 6 and literally sucking a piece of beef in Issue 5 above the caption, "Ça vous tente?" (Does this tempt you?).[77] In such ads, the delivery of meat represents the delivery of the female body, who consents if the reader chooses to pay.

In *BEEF!*, the consummation of appetites is private and personal. In contrast to the fragmented representations of food-as-art, the single four-course "proper meal" per issue promoted by *BEEF!* is meticulously explained in the magazine's centerfold, so "hidden" that

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[76] Nicola Henry and Anastasia Powell, "The Dark Side of the Virtual World: Towards a Digital Sexual Ethics," in *Preventing Sexual Violence: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Overcoming a Rape Culture*, ed. Nicola Henry and Anastasia Powell (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 86.

[77] "Boucherie dynamique," *BEEF!*, July-September 2015, 109; "Boucherie dynamique," *BEEF!*, April-June 2015, 41.

each issue's spread includes a small arrow and the instructions, "Déplier ici" (unfold here). Mimicking *Playboy,* published in France from 1973 to 2014, and *Lui,* rereleased in 2013, the centerfold's occasional mention of its ability to help the reader "épater [les] invités" (wow the guests) is contrasted by the lack of the recipes' precision of how many people the meals are to serve.[78] Depicted with up to ten images per page, these five-page centerfolds go to great pains to hide the instructions for opening oysters, deboning a leg of lamb, and plating salads away from the eyes.[79] Whether the meal is to be shared is unclear; Ulla Majoube of *lexpress.fr* goes as far as to suggest that the centerfold, at "un mètre de long," is too unwieldy to actually be consulted in the average kitchen.[80] Complicating the male experience of hunger, *BEEF!* neither fully denies nor satisfies; rather, the magazine offers itself as the resolution of its own inconsistencies.

Replacing the physical consumption of food and bodies with the symbolic consumption of the magazine, *BEEF!* resolves and perpetuates its own contradictions. Through the very purchase of the magazine—whether or not its cooking tips are put into practice—French men become able to "show their refinement and their taste, a nostalgic connection with the past, or just the will to display expensive objects."[81] *BEEF!* subscribers were frequently encouraged to post photos of themselves on social media with the magazine when the newest edition was released, a type of participation that occasionally functioned to personify the magazine as a couch side companion or a coffee shop partner. More frequently, however, were photographs in which *BEEF!* readers feigned their physical consumption of the magazine. Merging the act of

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[78] "Le quatre porte bonheur," *BEEF!*, April-June 2014, 107.
[79] "Mets-toi au vert!" *BEEF!*, April-June 2015, 104; "Le quatre porte bonheur," *BEEF!*, April-June 2014, 103-4.
[80] Ulla Majoube et Pascale Leray, "Le magazine *BEEF!*, ça va pas du tout," *Lexpress.fr* video, 1:40, last modified March 27, 2014, http://www.lexpress.fr/styles/saveurs/video-le-magazine-beef-ca-va-pas-du-tout_1503785.html.
[81] Parasecoli, *Bite Me*, 32.

reading with the act of eating, such photographs display that the loyalty of readers to *BEEF!* encompassed both body and mind. Encouraging readers to inscribe to BEEF!'s masculinity through a physical subscription of magazine, *BEEF!*'s effectiveness lay in its emphasis on performance—although not necessarily of cooking. Instead, in the May 2016 interview, Alexandre Zalewski underlined the importance of the possession and the purchase: readers were "fiers de l'avoir, fiers de l'acheter" (proud to have it, proud to buy it). As extensions of the self, the magazine's ideology moved beyond just the discourse and images, promoting a masculinity to be bought and refreshed in regular, monthly intervals.

3.5 CONCLUSION

From clothing to tools, products that are marketed to maintain the gender binary—and, by extension, the hegemonic social order—are far from new. However, as a culinary magazine, *BEEF!* offered the specific promise of (re)defining the gender binary through a specific French cultural practice and one's investment in this construction on regular, monthly intervals. Rather than collapsing the social distinction between men and women based on shared labor, *BEEF!* entrenches the binary through the regular performance of the purchase, appealing to individuals of privilege—especially in gender, but also in class and even national origin—for whom cooking is an option rather than an obligation. In this magazine, this privilege is expressed intellectually rather than physically, indicating a hierarchy of masculinities predicated on a reasoned, classed awareness of food and women as art and culture. The potential fluidity indicated in this idealized masculinity—not always Western, not always heteronormative—comes at the expense of femininity as well as individuals of non-French origin, which are almost entirely excluded in the

magazine from the bounds of intellect and reason. Both represented as consuming food and as food/body/object, women in *BEEF!* exist only to juxtapose men as a consuming subject. Despite advancements in parité in politics and in the workplace, this magazine charts the endurance of gender binaries at the heart of the French national model, highlighting the benefit for men if they choose to maintain them.

CHAPTER 4: DE L'EAU. EATING (OUT)WARD: CUILNARY AFROPEA AS A LITERARY THEORY AND IDENTITARIAN MODEL IN LÉONORA MIANO'S *SOULFOOD ÉQUATORIALE*

In 2009, Cameroonian-French writer Léonora Miano published a memoir-like collection of recipes and short stories entitled *Soulfood équatoriale* (*Equatorial Soul Food*). Shortly afterwards, the French edition of the magazine *Elle* featured her in a special article entitled "Viva Africa!" alongside three other female Parisian "foodistas": chef Rougui Dia, born in Senegal; coffee roaster Sara Elamu, a native of Ethiopia; and *Le Grand Magasin* radio host Aline Afanoukaé, originally from Togo. Written to demystify "les délices du continent noir" (the delights of the dark continent) for a "perplexe" French audience—meaning white and European-born, the article creates divisions along racial lines as much as it claims to encourage a multicultural dialogue over food.[1] Through descriptions of the interviewees' favorite utensils, recipes, and Parisian markets, the article foregrounds the exoticism of the women and their food: the four are alternatively described as "douce" and "ravissante" (gentle; ravishing), speaking

[1] A similar tone is taken when describing Creole food to a European French readership in a 2008 article: "Compliquée, la cuisine des îles? Pas du tout. Avec Suzy Palatin, auteure du *Meilleur des Antilles*, on achète des ingrédients au supermarché du coin pour préparer des recettes simplissimes" (Is island food complicated? Not at all. With Suzy Palatin, author of *The Best of the Antilles*, you will be able to buy ingredients from your local supermarket in order to prepare super simple recipes). Rachida Rubinstein, "La food créole, c'est facile," *Elle.fr*, last modified April 30, 2008, http://www.elle.fr/Elle-a-Table/Les-dossiers-de-la-redaction/Vie-privee-Cuisine/LA-FOOD-CREOLE-C-EST-FACILE-606698.

with a voice that is "rauque" and "basse" (husky; deep), and serving as gatekeepers to a magical, musical cuisine that "rime dans le frigo" (rhymes in the fridge). Segregating politics from *piment* (pepper), the excerpt on Léonora Miano declares that a fundamental difference exists between *Soulfood équatoriale* and Miano's other literary works, stating almost with relief that "longtemps abonnée aux récits sombres sur l'Afrique, Miano change de l'atmosphère" (long adhered to dark tales about Africa, Miano changes her tone).[2]

Despite its seeming lightheartedness, the article is cut through with the politics of language, representation, and transnational identities of contemporary France. Twentieth and twenty-first century writers and intellectuals have frequently acknowledged the complexity of naming and representing the postcolonial experience in language—especially the language of the former colonizer.[3] According to Miano, the very term "Français" remains inherently white, constructing the exclusion and subordination of the European-born children of African and Caribbean immigrants: "À mon arrivée en France au début des années 1990…la majorité des Noirs nés dans l'Hexagone n'avaient pas, eux-mêmes, trouvé de nom à se donner…Pour eux, *Français* était synonyme de *Blanc*" (Upon my arrival in France in the early 1990s…the majority of Blacks born in France hadn't found a name to give themselves…For them, *French* was a synonym for *White*).[4] In the half-century since the collapse of the French colonial empire, black European subjects—not only affected by the duality of male/female (see my Chapters 2-3) but also caught geographically and socially between Europe/Africa, colonizer/colonized, civilized/uncivilized, white/black, light/dark, and good/evil, expressed by Paul Gilroy's term

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[2] Danièle Gerkens. "Viva Africa!," *Elle.fr*, last modified June 4, 2009, http://www.elle.fr/Elle-a-Table/Les-dossiers-de-la-redaction/Dossier-de-la-redac/VIVA-AFRICA-!-900391.
[3] Franz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1995), 13.
[4] Léonora Miano, *Habiter la frontière* (Paris: L'arche, 2012), 81. Emphasis in the original.

"double consciousness"—have systematically been denied access to French national identity as well as to a unique identity of their own.[5] Both indicative and symptomatic of the inherent limits of the official policies of republican universalism that define French understandings of citizenship and belonging, articles such as "Viva Africa" reinforce stereotypes that claim whiteness as the norm, this time through the appropriation—one might say the re-colonization—of "foreign" cuisine.

Born in 1973 in Douala, Cameroon, Léonora Miano writes in order to explain, critique, defend, and valorize the individual and collective experiences of European subjects of African descent, especially women. Miano published her first novel *L'intérieur de la nuit* (*The Dark Heart of the Night*) in 2005 and has since published over a dozen texts in a variety of genres, collecting almost as many literary awards.[6] Critics frequently foreground the relationship between her social criticism and originality in style, especially her integration of music and text as "un moyen de quête identitaire" (a medium for searching for identity).[7] Less frequently noted is Miano's integration of food and text to express individual and collective identities, model resistance to Eurocentric narratives, and decouple the French language from whiteness. In contrast to Franz Fanon, who listed hunger among the reasons why the black man should

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[5] Paul Gilroy borrows this term from W. E. B. Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903)—who was possibly inspired by Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit*—to indicate a heightened awareness of others' gaze and the falling short of true self-consciousness. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MS: Harvard University Press, 1995), 1.
[6] "Léonora Miano," accessed December 22, 2016, https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Léonora_Miano.
[7] Music in Miano's work ranges from a simple "facteur de poétisation" (manner of rendering [the text] more poetic) to finishing each chapter with a list of songs that create its "Ambiance sonore" (as in *Blues pour Élise,* 2010). See Paul Kana Nguetse, "Écriture romanesque, musique et (re)construction identitaire dans 'Tel des astres éteints' de Léonora Miano," *MondesFrancophones.com,* accessed September 14, 2016, http://mondesfrancophones.com/espaces/creolisations/ecriture-romanesque-musique-et-reconstruction-identitaire-dans-tels-des-astres-eteints-de-leonora-miano/.

mobilize against his exploitation, Miano views cooking and eating as symbolic practices that challenge systems of oppression.[8] Using the immediacy and physicality of food to subvert dominant French hierarchies, Miano's texts—especially *Soulfood équatoriale*—could be said to represent Fanon's call for "une altérité de rupture, de lutte, de combat" (a different kind of rupture, struggle, and combat).[9]

As this dissertation has shown, food and language—as physical needs and symbolic systems—chart the contestedness of civility/value, self, and otherness.[10] *Soulfood équatoriale* responds to these tensions in contemporary France by exploring the possibilities and limitations of food as a transnational symbol, a language within itself. Commenting on the historical, sociopolitical, and cultural ties between sub-Saharan Africa and mainland France, the dishes and memories examined in *Soulfood équatoriale* foreground the culinary reciprocity of France and Cameroon while exposing the difficulty of racial equality within official French universalist models. Both by representing Afro-European identities and proposing possibilities for new heritages, *Soulfood équatoriale* "bites back" against exclusionary definitions of "Frenchness" through the same set of symbols used above to segregate Africa from Europe: food.

This chapter examines the content and organization of *Soulfood équatoriale* to reveal how Miano's writing of food embodies her identity theory of Afropea, a worldview that seeks both to identify the limitations and to expand the boundaries of classic French universalism. By promoting foods and experiences that draw equally from African and European cultures, Afropea destabilizes European exclusionism and challenges the fixity of the concept of the nation. A

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[8] Fanon, *Peau noire*, 182.
[9] Ibid., 180.
[10] Claude Fischler, "Food, Self, and Identity," *Social Science Information* 27, no. 2 (1988): 275-93, PDF File; Pierre Bourdieu, *La distinction: Critique sociale du jugement* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1979), ii.

short story collection, cookbook, and memoir, *Soulfood équatoriale* resists proposing a collectivity based only on the valorization of individual experiences, known as the theoretical "particular"; instead, it suggests the widening of the universal through constant interrelationship, fluidity, and change. Through the text's undercurrent of water as ingredient and landscape, *Soulfood équitoriale* also addresses the limitations of Afropea as a world vision that accounts for personal choice, holding equal implications for the gender and sexuality.

To contextualize Afropea's critique of the nation, this chapter begins by outlining how French universalism frames the social and ideological contexts that limit expressions of race and citizenship in twentieth and twenty-first century France. Tracing Léonora Miano's engagement with racism—and, to a lesser degree, sexism—through literature and food, I place her in dialogue with previous postcolonial thinkers to underscore Afropea's emphasis on ideological movement as a method of transcending existing power structures. Through an analysis of *Soulfood équatoriale*'s figurative language, word choice, and allusions, I then demonstrate how the text identifies and challenges the boundaries of universalism through food, first, by validating Cameroonian society and establishing Miano's authority as a cultural critic; second, by deconstructing the concepts of space and time that underpin the perceived authority of the European nation-state; and third, by proposing a new relationship between community and place. My conclusion explores the importance of Afropea's limitations to French identity as well as to this dissertation through the text's metaphor of water.

4.1 FOUNDATIONS FOR AFROPEA: COMPLEXITIES OF UNIVERSALISM

At once representing Europe and Africa, "Afropea" signifies a hybrid identity that challenges the stability of national space and questions the ability of "Europe" as a concept to speak for its citizens of color. Casting doubt on the theoretical neutrality of the term "French," "Afropea" equally probes the notion of republican universalism that has undergirded the French state since the Revolution. Based on the belief that the nation transcends the individual "particular," universalism opposes the voicing of racial and religious singularities in public policy on the grounds that identifying them creates discrimination and weakens the national body.[11] However, despite this ideal, "Frenchness" remains a synonym for whiteness in popular discourse and lived experience. Answers received in response to *Libération*'s 2015 question "C'est quoi être noir(e) en France, au quotidien?" (What does it mean to be black in daily life in France?), distributed through email and on Twitter with the hashtag, #TuSaisQueTesNoirEnFranceQuand (#YouKnowYoureBlackInFranceWhen), summarized the experience as follows: "Être noir en France, c'est toujours avoir à s'excuser pour sa couleur" (Being black in France means always having to apologize for your color).[12] In early January 2016, the Institut National d'Études Démographiques (INED) (National Institute of Demographic Studies) discovered in a survey of 22,000 subjects that over 70% of naturalized citizens of sub-Saharan origin do not believe they are considered to be French, with over half of their French-born children feeling the same.[13] The

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[11] Maxime Cervulle, "The Uses of Universalism. 'Diversity Statistics' and the Race Issue in Contemporary France," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 17, no. 2 (2014): 119-21.
[12] Elsa Maudet, "Être noir en France, c'est toujours avoir à s'excuser pour sa couleur," *Libération,* last modified July 3, 2015, http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2015/07/03/etre-noir-en-france-c-est-toujours-avoir-a-s-excuser-pour-sa-couleur_1341783.
[13] Cris Beauchemin, interview by Laurine Benjebria, "Immigration: Pourquoi ils se sentent Français mais ne sont pas perçus comme tels," *Europe 1: Le Jdd*, last modified January 13, 2016,

same study noted similar sentiments among almost a quarter of individuals born in the Départements d'Outre-Mer and residing in mainland France.[14] Giving voice to Afro-European and Euro-Caribbean experiences, "Afropea" attempts to respond to sentiments of exclusion—cutting across age, gender, and geographical origin—that potentially resonate in as many as 5.5 million individuals who self-designate as "noir(e)" or "métis(se)" in mainland France and its overseas departments.[15]

Historically, the naming of the experience of non-European citizens has been fraught with anxiety in France. The politics of language—who is silenced, who may speak, how difference is represented—are central to the marginalization of formerly-colonized French subjects.[16] In some cases, this double bind is perpetuated by literal gaps in language that preclude the expression of non-white European identities. According to Allison Crumly Deventer and Dominic Thomas, the nonexistence of language with which to express the shared experiences of discrimination actually widens the binaries of "self" and "other," given that "one finds little consensus over such labels as African French, French African, Black French, Blacks, Franco-Congolese, Franco-Senegalese, Franco-Cameroonian, etc."[17] Moreover, as outlined by diasporic scholar Paul Gilroy, attempts to bridge the binaries, either by "occupying the space

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http://www.lejdd.fr/Societe/Immigration-pourquoi-ils-se-sentent-Francais-mais-ne-sont-pas-percus-comme-tels-768263.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Nicki Hitchcott and Dominic Thomas, "Introduction: Francophone Afropeans," in *Francophone Afropean Literatures*, eds. Nicki Hichcott and Dominic Thomas (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014), 5.

[16] Binyavanga Wainaina, "How to Write about Africa," *Granta,* accessed September 6, 2016, https://granta.com/how-to-write-about-africa/.

[17] Dominic Thomas and Allison Crumly Deventer, "Afro-European Studies: Emerging Fields and New Directions," in *Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture: A Companion to Comparative Literature,* eds. Ali Behdad and Dominic Thomas (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 339.

between them or trying to demonstrate their continuity [have] been viewed as provocative and even oppositional acts of political insubordination."[18] At its most extreme, the taboo-like complexity of communicating the particularities of black identity in contemporary France resembles the systematic attempts of colonial powers to repress the collective uprising of their subjects by controlling their access to the colonizer's language.

Universalist-styled policies are central to the difficulty of validating the experience of non-white French citizens, but adjusting the nation's relationship to universalism is perceived as undermining the authority of those who have historically benefitted from their position of privilege.[19] In his *Emancipation(s),* Ernesto Laclau outlined the historical tensions between Western notions of the universal and the particular, underscoring the difficulty—but not the impossibility—of resolving the two. Specifically, Laclau states that colonialism and racial dominance were justified as a result of the Enlightenment, which embodied the source of universal knowledge within the white European male (see my Chapter 1). Consequently, by the nineteenth century, white Christian "European culture was a particular one, and at the same time [considered to be] the expression—no longer the incarnation—of universal human essence."[20] In contemporary France, whose universalism carries these historical traces, critics argue that France's so-called "color-blind" policies remain inherently pro-Christian and pro-white. These critics gesture to multiple politicians as examples, including the far-right 2017 presidential candidate Marine Le Pen, who have interwoven Christianity, Frenchness, and whiteness to

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[18] Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 1.
[19] Most specific is Article 8 of a 1978 bill on "informatique et libertés" (computing and public freedom) which classifies an individual's racial/ethnic origins (along with her religion, political affiliation, and sexuality) as subjectively experienced and thus subject to state protection. Cervulle, "The Uses of Universalism," 119-21.
[20] Ernesto Laclau, *Emanicpation(s)* (London: Verso, 1996), 23.

varying degrees in their political platforms.[21] In the face of these intertwining historical, philosophical, and political factors that maintain what Laclau describes as the "*essential* inequality between the objective positions of social agents," the concept of "Afropea" challenges the exclusivity of the European experience by proposing a reconsideration of the labels of *nation*, *colonizer*, and *colonized*. [22]

4.2 LÉONORA MIANO'S AFROPEA

In response to the dismissal of the non-white particular within French language and politics, Léonora Miano's novels and essays, including *Soulfood équatoriale*, voice and validate the experiences of blackness in mainland France and in its former colonies.[23] As a resident of France since 1991 and a naturalized French citizen since 2008, Miano writes with the goal of making visible black European particulars to a white French-speaking audience, pushing back against the erasure of non-white European experiences.[24] Among Miano's primary aims since her first novel

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[21] In 2009, former President Nicolas Sarkozy went as far as to assert that modern French identity was indispensable from its intellectual Christian origins: "[I]l n'y a pas un seul homme, pas une seule femme qui ne reconnaisse dans les Cathédrales une expression de ce génie français auquel il a le sentiment de participer…On est Français parce que l'on regarde la Chrétienté et les Lumières comme deux versants d'une même civilisation dont on se sent l'héritier." (There is not a single man or woman who does not recognize in the cathedrals an expression of the French ingenuity that also defines him…We are French because we consider Christianity and the Enlightenment to be two poles of a shared heritage.) Maxence Trinquet. *ABCD'R du Sarkozysme: Nicolas Sarkozy en 26 discours* (Paris: Books on Demand, 2015), 60.
[22] Laclau, *Emancipation(s)*, 25. Emphasis in the original.
[23] Doris Lê, "Léonora Miano, un auteur qui derange," *SlateAfrique.fr*, last modified April 5, 2012, http://www.slateafrique.com/83491/leonora-miano-un-auteur-qui-derange-cameroun.
[24] Pap Ndiaye's "paradoxe minoritaire" (minority paradox) describes the contrast between the hypervisibility of blacks as individuals despite their invisibility in contemporary France as a social group. *La condition noire: Essai sur une minorité française* (Paris: Gallimard, 2008), 21.

L'intérieur de la nuit (*The Dark Heart of the Night*) in 2005, this objective, she explains, is specific to the decade following the 2007 election of former President Nicolas Sarkozy, whose campaign and political platform has been described as "une dynamique de légitimation du racisme" (a dynamic aimed at legitimizing racism).[25] Responding *in* French to France's marginalization of black Europeans *through* language, Miano—as did Aimé Césaire in *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (*Notebook of a Return to the Native Land,* 1939) and *Discours sur le colonialisme* (*Discourse on Colonialism*, 1950)—responds directly to the former colonizer by refashioning the tools of her exclusion and subordination. In the introduction of her 2016 *L'impératif transgressif* (*The Necessity of Transgression*), Miano agrees that the self-understanding denied through the past experience of colonization can be restored through an engagement with language itself: "À travers des réflexions prenant appui sur la littérature, la langue ou l'écriture de l'histoire, c'est à la réhabilitation de la conscience de soi au sud du Sahara que j'espère contribuer" (Through reflections on literature, language, and the writing of history, I hope to contribute to the rehabilitation of self-awareness in sub-Saharan Africa).[26]

This "réhabilitation de la conscience de soi" is embodied in the term "Afropea" as an identity theory and a worldview: one with implications for both white and non-white Europeans. While unmentioned in *Soulfood équatoriale*, the concept heavily influences the text's underlying artistic and culinary themes as well as its critique of nationhood and the French social and political sphere. Afropea was originally used to describe the blending of African and European music traditions, specifically those of the Afro-pop group Zap Mama and their 1993 album

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[25] Philippe Bolopion, "La France accusée à l'ONU de 'légitimer le racisme,'" *LeMonde.fr*, last modified November 7, 2007, http://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2007/11/09/la-france-accusee-a-l-onu-de-legitimer-le-racisme_976425_3210.html. See also Lê, "Léonora Miano," last modified April 5, 2012.

[26] Léonora Miano, *L'impératif transgressif* (Paris: L'arche, 2016), 7.

Adventures in Afropea I. Miano is credited as the first writer to employ the term in literature, publishing *Afropean Soul et autres nouvelles* (*Afropean Soul and Other Stories*) in 2008 and *Blues pour Élise: Séquences afropéennes I* (*Blues for Elise: Afropean Series I*) in 2010.[27] On its most basic level, the term describes individuals who identify as "un Européen d'ascendance africain" (a European of African descent), but it also indicates the particular complexities of these individuals' relationship to geographic space.[28] Rather than transcending international borderlines to valorize a common black identity in culture and politics, as was desired by the *négritude* and *pan-Africanism* movements of the 1930s and 1960s; implying the upper-class commodification of black culture, as indicated by the contested term *Afropolitan*; or looking toward Africa to shape her own future, as Felwine Sarr advocates in her 2016 *Afrotopia*, Afropea gives name to the plurality of the physical and cultural movements between the European mainland and the African motherland.[29]

Moving beyond postcolonial studies' emphasis on the relationship between the former colonizer and the formerly colonized, Afropea interprets identity as diasporic and transcending notions of nationhood defined by history and geography. According to Miano, the nation as an identity model "ne fonctionne que rarement sur le mode inclusif" (only rarely functions as inclusive); in direct contrast, she positions Afropea as a unique heritage characterized by immateriality and equality:

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[27] Ibid.
[28] Léonora Miano, *Afropean soul et autres nouvelles* (Paris: Flammarion, 2008), 53.
[29] Wachira Kigotho, "Pan-Africans versus Afropolitans—An Identity Crisis?" *UniversityWorldNews.com*, last modified April 30, 2016, http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20160429165418809; Emma Dabiri, "Why I'm Not An Afropolitan," *AfricaIsACountry.com*, last modified January 21, 2014, http://africasacountry.com/2014/01/why-im-not-an-afropolitan/; Felwine Sarr, *Afrotopia (*Paris: Philippe Rey, 2016), 14.

> …un lieu immatériel, intérieur, où les traditions, les mémoires, les cultures dont ils sont dépositaires, s'épousent, chacune ayant la même valeur. *Afropea*, c'est, en France, le terroir mental que se donnent ceux qui ne peuvent faire valoir *la souche* française. C'est la légitimité identitaire arrachée.[30]
>
> (… an immaterial, interior place in which the traditions, memories, and cultures that define it merge together, each one having equal value. In France, Afropea is the mental *terroir* that those of non-European origin give themselves. It's the legitimization of an uprooted identity.)

In transforming *terroir* into a psychological concept, Miano confirms that French citizens of non-European origins have struggled to be granted a place not only on French soil but in French culinary practice (see my Chapter 2). Rejecting this exclusion, Afropea calls out the existence and the inadequacy of postcolonial binaries.[31]

Specific to the French literary context—and taken up through food in *Soulfood équatoriale*—is Afropea's critique of republican universalism. This critique is similar to the political philosophy outlined by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* which argues that the contemporary "discourse of the universal [maintains an] implicit assumption of a privileged point of access to 'the truth,' which can be reached only by a limited number of subjects."[32] Rejecting the two opposing poles of theoretical equivalences—the first in which the ideal of "equality" erases differential identities and paves the way for totalitarianism, and the second in which "difference" equates to liberty, despite its inequalities—Laclau and

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[30] Miano, *Habiter la frontière*, 85-6.
[31] Sabrina Brancato, "Afro-European Literature(s): A New Discursive Category?" *Research in African Literatures* 39, no. 3 (Fall 2008), 2.
[32] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 2001), 191.

Mouffe outline the foundations for what they call "democratic equivalence."[33] As a social contract, this notion does not simply "establish an 'alliance' between given interests, but modifies the very identity of the forces engaging in that alliance."[34] Radical democracy thus is understood not as a static utopian harmony but as the constant renegotiation of the forces that hold "liberty" and "equality" in tension.[35]

Unlike many previous movements, Afropea's emphasis on immateriality and fluidity allows it to avoid some pitfalls of theoretical idealism. Most importantly, Afropea resists the reversal of the binaries that maintain the very power structures that construct race and origin as differential.[36] Instead, Afropea implies a solidarity that is potentially open to both Europeans and Africans regardless of race and gender. Acknowledging what Sabrina Brancato calls the "reciprocal embeddedness" of African and European history, culture, and politics, Afropea remains open to naming the experience of any individual attempting to "identify [herself]…in relation to the transnational, diasporic space that is black Europe."[37] Afropea also refuses to frame itself as the ultimate answer to race relations, exemplifying instead the philosophy that power will always be constituted by its "discursive exterior."[38] As a non-place within a constant state of renegotiation, Afropea mirrors Laclau and Mouffe's definition of "total equivalence"—their definition of the tension that maintains radical democracy.[39]

Through her novels and short stories that highlight the experiences of black men and women from a variety of economic classes and geographical origins, Miano engages with what

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[33] Ibid., 174.
[34] Ibid., 183-4.
[35] Ibid., 184, 188.
[36] Laclau, *Emancipation(s)*, 29.
[37] Brancato, "Afro-European Literature(s)," 2. See also Hitchcott and Thomas, "Introduction," 4.
[38] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 154.
[39] Ibid., 184.

Laclau and Mouffe would describe as the question of "democratic rights," those "which can only be exercised collectively, and which suppose the existence of equal rights for others."[40] In *Soulfood équatoriale,* at least three sets of collective rights are put forward through food. First, as a text published in mainland France, *Soulfood équatoriale* grants marginalized subjects the right to *vocalization;* that is, the right to articulate their particular experiences as transnational and intersectional citizens. Second, in contrast to these subjects' hyper-visibility as symbols of otherness, *Soulfood équatoriale* uses food practices to assert their right to *visibility* as particular individuals. Third, in questioning the foundations of history and geography that underpin republican universalism, *Soulfood équatoriale* promotes the right of marginalized subjects *to be valued* within mainstream French culture. Laclau describes these goals, like democracy itself, as an "always receding horizon"; but as pointed out by Hitchcott and Thomas, Afropea has always welcomed the "ambivalence and contradictions" that arise within the negotiation of meaning.[41] Itself the very definition of transition and the antithesis of conclusion, Afropea as expressed in *Soulfood équatoriale* focuses on the political, social, and cultural processes of giving voice to the multiple layers of the human experience.

4.3 BEYOND POSTCOLONIALITY: CULINARY AFROPEA IN FRENCH LITERATURE

While not exclusive to literature, the concept of Afropea holds specific implications for the intersection of text, language, and national space. Given the blurring of national borderlines

[40] Ibid., 184-5.
[41] Laclau, *Emancipation(s),* 35. See also Hitchcott and Thomas, "Introduction," 7.

within postcolonial Europe, Miano's Afropea—as a concept unattached to a specific geographic place—follows diasporic theorist Ato Quayson in questioning literature's assumed relationship to a national identity, and, consequently, the relationship of that literature to space and time. Arguing that the traditional relationship between nation and geography no longer reflects the sociological realities and creative processes of increasing percentages of the global population, Quayson himself "interrogate[s] the assumption of the nation-state as the privileged horizon for literary history" and implies that a reconception of republican universalism should take place by way of the literature produced in former colonial territories.[42]

As a literary concept, Afropea has been defined as the way in which "francophone African writers explore and articulate their complex relationship with European society, culture, and history."[43] By way of Quayson, it is possible to understand Afropean literature as a critique not only of the European nation but also of the concepts of time and space on which European sovereignty relies.[44] Rejecting the methodological nationalism that underlies most postcolonial literary studies, Afropean literatures become able to untangle the relationship between other themes, including nostalgia, place, and genealogical accounting.[45] Reserving those questions for new contexts, Afropean literatures liberate the author and her characters to create new emotional spaces, fashion new lineages, and reorganize definitions of power in relationship to European and African realities.

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[42] Ato Quayson, "Postcolonialism and the Diasporic Imaginary," in *A Companion to Diaspora and Transnationalism*, eds. Ato Quayson and Girish Daswani (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2013), 140.
[43] Hitchcott and Thomas, "Introduction," 5.
[44] Quayson, "Postcolonialism and the Diasporic Imaginary," 144.
[45] Ibid., 140, 144, 148-51.

Based on the notions of (re)creation and self-expression, Afropea is transferrable to other cultural mediums that transcend national borderlines and interrogate belonging, including cooking and eating.[46] The physical act of consuming food holds the potential to challenge Afro-European relations in two ways. Moving from the outside to the inside of the body, eating is not only a reminder of the slipperiness of subject/object positions, as Jacques Derrida points out in the interview "Eating Well"; it is also an ingestion that lays bare the intersection of body and culture.[47] Specific to France, where the notion that race is subjectively experienced complicates the voicing of discrimination, the consumption of non-European dishes legitimizes a dialogue about raced and sexed bodies.[48] This chapter defines "culinary Afropea" as the exploration of food as the point of contact between body, race, and space: the examination of food as a "shifting signifier" in which the relationship between the bodies that represent the continents of Europe and Africa is renegotiated through the creative process of cooking.[49]

In the reclaiming of discourse, Afropea aims to construct an immaterial space in which all particular experiences are valued within the widening sphere of the universal. Within this context, "culinary Afropea" explores food's ability to challenge the traditional boundaries of geography, history, and nationhood in order to valorize an increasingly multicultural Europe. Not merely so-called fusion cuisine—a term that implies an upper middle-class clientele consuming

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[46] The phrase "cuisine afropéenne" is gaining traction in culinary circles, used to describe "la New Soul Food à la française." Catherine Lasserre, "New soul food, Afrik'n fusion, Dieuveil Malonga: Quand la (nouvelle) cuisine africaine s'éveille," *Académie du goût*, last modified January 20, 2016, https://www.academiedugout.fr/articles/quand-la-nouvelle-cuisine-africaine-seveille_2983.

[47] Jacques Derrida, "On Eating Well," in *Points… Interviews, 1974*-1994, trans. Peter Connor and Avital Ronell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 283.

[48] Ndiaye, *La condition*, 41.

[49] See Valerie Loichot, *The Tropics Bite Back: Culinary Coups in Caribbean Literature (*Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), xxxii.

foreign-inspired food—the dishes and discourse representing culinary Afropea redefine the language and power dynamics of national identity in order to articulate new modes of expression and exchange. Neither reversing the power hierarchy of race by allowing slaves "to eat at the master's table," to borrow from Fanon; nor rendering food a static symbol, culinary Afropea is the process by which eating and cooking allows individuals—as explained by Ziauddin Sardar in the 2008 introduction of an English translation of *Peau noire, masques blancs*—to "be oneself with the multiplicities, systems, and contradictions of one's own ways of being, doing, and knowing.[50]

Miano's work—including the 2008 short story "Depuis la première heure" (From the First Hour) and the 2010 novel *Blues pour Élise*—is rich with scenes of cooking, eating, and sharing food.[51] Many of these scenes are politically significant, indicating the ability or inability to access memory, communicate experience, or express the self within the sociopolitical climate of contemporary France. But Miano's writing also establishes the resistance through food that is taken up by *Soulfood équatoriale.* Through the repetition of the phrase "qu'on" (that one)—coincidentally rhyming with the pejorative term "con" (asshole)—in her 2012 prose poem "Égalité" (Equality), Miano asserts that individual citizens perpetuate the marginalization of non-white Europeans through routine behaviors: "Je ne veux plus qu'on m'aime Qu'on me sourie Qu'on m'invite au restaurant Qu'on me tienne la porte…Je ne veux plus qu'on m'aime si je ne suis pas dans les livres d'Histoire dans les livres tout court" (I no longer want to be liked To be smiled at To be invited to restaurants To have the door held open for me…I no longer want to be

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[50] Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks,* trans. Charles Lam Markmann (Sidmouth, England: Pluto Press, 2008), vii.
[51] Miano, *Afropean soul*, 32-3; Léonora Miano, *Blues pour Elise* (Paris: Plon, 2010), 19.

liked if I am not in History books if I am not in any books at all).[52] The poem culminates in a rejection of actions involving wine, steak, and cheese, viewed to be among the foundations of French national identity (see my Chapter 3): "Je ne veux plus qu'on trinque Qu'on se taille une bavette Qu'on se fasse une raclette Ni rien" (I no longer want to toast before drinking To carve a steak To make a *raclette* Nothing at all). These phrases assert not only that food practices fundamental to traditional notions of "Frenchness" have contributed to Miano's marginalization as a naturalized French subject; they also ask who the "con" is: the citizens who deliberately participate in the structures of exclusion or those who are ignorant of the structures themselves. Miano questions whether the acceptance of French culture through eating—the process of literally ingesting a belief system into the physical and political body—equates to relinquishing one's right to *visibility* and *value*, as had been her experience: "J'en ai soupé de la fraternité sans égalité" (I've eaten fraternity without equality).[53] Declaring her self-removal from these structures, Miano invites her readers to do the same, implying that a reformulation of French national identity must originate in individual citizens' initiatives—starting with symbols as basic as food—to reformulate the universalist policies by which French nationhood is conceived.

4.4 *SOULFOOD ÉQUATORIALE* AS AN AFROPEAN MODEL

Soulfood équatoriale appeared in 2009 as part of the series "Exquis d'écrivains" (Divine Tastes of Writers) collected by NiL Éditions and published from 2007 to 2010. Described as authors' "autoportrait[s] en gourmandise" (self portrait[s] through the love of food), each text employs

[52] Léonora Miano, *Écrits pour la parole* (Paris: L'arche, 2012), 51.
[53] Ibid.

food as a platform for explaining the writers' childhoods, politics, lovers, and daily lives.[54] Google Books styles *Soulfood équatoriale* as a text "d'une grande densité" (of great density) rich with "langage gourmand" (food-based language); NiL's catalogue explains that it "restitue les saveurs et les atmosphères d'une Afrique loin des clichés" (reconstitutes the tastes and atmospheres of an Africa beyond clichés). Described by Miano in English as "a collection of creative nonfiction" and "my only book really…about Cameroon," *Soulfood équatoriale* mixes local legend, culinary secrets, fictional tales, and Miano's childhood memories in order to engage a European-born reader with the culture of Cameroon and, by extension, Miano's vision of Afropea.[55] To this end, *Soulfood équatoriale* uses food first to render credible a Cameroonian worldview; second, to disrupt the Eurocentric notions of time and space that constitute the French nation; and third, to model the "collective identity in movement" that Laclau and Mouffe articulate. Surprisingly, Miano concludes her text with a non-food: water. As a substance necessary but largely unremarked in all stages of the cooking process, water runs through *Soulfood équatoriale* as a reminder of the possibilities and limitations of transnational subjectivities. Showing the elusiveness of Afropea through a liquid, Miano reminds her readers of their individual responsibility to engage with otherness.

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[54] "Les 'Exquis d'écrivains' est une nouvelle collection," *LeMonde.fr*, last modified February 15, 2007, http://www.lemonde.fr/livres/article/2007/02/15/les-exquis-d-ecrivains-est-une-nouvelle-collection_867698_3260.html.

[55] This explanation of *Soulfood équatoriale* accompanied Miano's harsh critique of the University of Nebraska's 2010 translation of *L'intérieur de la nuit,* which she called "misleading" and "full of lies." M.A. Orthofer, "The US Edition of *Dark Heart of the Night*," *The Literary Saloon: The Literary Weblog at the Complete Review*, last modified March 18, 2010, http://www.complete-review.com/saloon/archive/201003b.htm#rb4.

4.4.1 Afropea as Cultures of "La même valeur": Valorizing the Cameroonian Particular

Aiming to valorize the particular as experienced by non-European French, all of *Soulfood équatoriale*'s thirteen chapters take place primarily in Cameroon: six chapters using the first person "je" (I), two chapters addressing the reader as "vous" (you) three fictional stories, and two chapters explaining Cameroonian culture. As a text written by a Cameroonian native, *Soulfood équatoriale* uses food to educate the European-born audience about the differing perspectives between themselves and French-speaking Africans—even when these perspectives are multiple, interwoven, and at times contradictory. Mixed into tips on how to prepare local fish and to understand the taste profiles of national stews are explanations of the English etymologies of dish names, such as *kingué* (coming from "king") and *pepe soup* (meaning "pepper").[56] Suggestions for how to cook *beignets* and *ndolé* blend into the narration of rainy days and marriage proposals. Miano's childhood functions as a backdrop for broader cultural traditions, including catching grasshoppers, preparing *mwanja*, and butchering a house-raised goat once a year.

Through figurative language appealing to a French reader, *Soulfood équatoriale* explains the logic behind Cameroonian food practices in order to establish the text's credibility on Cameroonian culture and to pave the way for broader social critiques. When describing the omelets cooked on street corners in Douala, Miano appeals, by way of a simile, to readers' familiarity with the French crêpe: "[Il faut] être capable de retourner l'omelette—oui, oui, comme une crêpe—en l'air sans la faire tomber dans la poussière rouge des rues (One must be able to flip the omelet—yes, just like a crepe—in the air without letting it fall into the red dust of

[56] Léonora Miano, *Soulfood équatoriale* (Paris: NiL, 2009), 54, 89.

the streets).[57] Similarly, when describing a woman selling *mwanja moto* fish on a canvas sheet spread over the muddy street side, Miano imagines the French reaction to the dirt and evokes the collective Cameroonian opinion to defend her demeanor: "[Le sol boueux] n'était un problème ni pour elle, ni pour les piétons, ni pour les véhicules de toutes sortes qui passaient dans les parages" ([The muddy soil] is not a problem for her, for the pedestrians, or for the various kinds of vehicles driving by).[58] Further justifying the woman's choices, Miano continues by explaining the symbolism of her blue-marine clothing—she's a widow—and her stoic gaze, which is indicative of her solid upbringing. Bridging worldviews in order to translate Cameroonian food practices into European contexts, Miano begins to construct the legitimacy of the non-European particular.

Cameroon's relationship to modernity and technology requires no interpretation for the French reader, yet it reoccurs to mark points of similarity and contestation between Africa and Europe. Countering the image of African provincialism—"huge herds of animals and tall, thin people who are starving," as parodied by Binyavanga Wainaina—Miano encourages her readers to use a mixer when cooking *ndolé* despite the valued tradition of crushing peanuts by hand.[59] Miano also admits that, as a child, she refused to eat *mwanja moto* fish, choosing instead to listen to Western music: "Les adolescentes en route pour le magasin de disques où elles trouveront de quoi se connecter avec la modernité ne s'embarrassent pas du poids de petits poissons" (Teen girls on their way to the record store with the hope of engaging with modernity don't weigh themselves down with little fish).[60] Faced with the changing landscape of modern food

[57] Ibid., 17.
[58] Ibid., 55.
[59] Ibid., 65.
[60] Ibid., 56.

cultivation, production, and consumption, Africa, as well as Europe, is concerned about the disappearance of culinary traditions: in the kitchen, Cameroonian grandmothers, like French ones, mistrust the "*femmes d'aujourd'hui,* comme elles disent, qui n'ont aucune tenue et qui ne savent rien faire" (*women of today,* as they say, who have no manners and don't know how to do anything).[61] Appealing to the shared desires and concerns evoked by modern life, Miano underscores the innate similarity between French and Cameroonian societies—a similarity that hints at the capacity for mutual value and understanding.

However, *Soulfood équatoriale* is far from a mere guidebook to Cameroonian culture; as such, the text refuses to construct itself on mere appeals to the French reader for its legitimacy. In engaging French understandings of food and technology in order to assert the validity of the Cameroonian particular, the text also avoids attempts to erase the division between African and European experiences. Despite Miano's harsh critique of binaries—especially of nation and gender as seen in her 2012 prose poem "Binarité" (Binarism)—the contrast between Cameroonian-born writer and European-born reader reifies a productive relationship between self and other.[62] Among other examples, this binary is visible in the inherent relationship between people, geographic space, and certain foodstuffs like avocados, papayas, mangos, and grilled corn that, according to Miano, should only be consumed in Cameroon. In the chapter "Mwanja," Miano explains that because the taste of the foods above "est liée à l'atmosphère particulière des berges du Wouri…C'est dans leur milieu naturel qu'il faut les découvrir, et comprendre en les goûtant ce que sont les gens qui s'en nourrissent" (is linked to the particular

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[61] Ibid., 83. Emphasis in the original.
[62] "Le pays dit: Noire ou Française Le pays dit qu'on ne peut être que Noire ou Française" (The country says: Black woman or French woman The country says you can only be either a Black Woman or a French Woman). Miano, *Écrits*, 73.

atmosphere of the riverbanks of the Wouri…It's in their natural climate that one must discover them and understand the nature of the people who are nourished by them).[63] By indicating that certain foodstuffs are exclusively linked to the citizens, climate, and landscapes that constitute Cameroon as a national space, Miano indicates that she agrees with the French understanding of *terroir* and the respect for place that it implies.[64]

The binary between French and Cameroonian foodstuffs extends to the taste preferences of those who consume particular foods, as seen in the chapter "Jazz." Within the chapter—an explanation of Cameroonian music and sandwiches—the pronoun "nous" (we) evokes the Cameroonian particular; in contrast, "on" (one, we) indicates the tastes of non-Cameroonians and European tourists. When describing street-corner omelets, Miano remarks, "Nous [les Camerounais] n'aimons les œufs que parfaitement cuits" (We [Cameroonians] only like eggs that are perfectly cooked) but "on [d'autres personnes] peut également garnir le pain d'un amas de résidus carnés de toutes sortes…" (One [other people] can also garnish the bread with heaps of meat scraps of all kinds…).[65] Despite the dish's accessibility—cheap and prepared on street corners—to both Cameroonian and non-Cameroonian diners, the physical taste preferences between the patrons are visual, ingestible, and embodied. Following Pierre Bourdieu's suggestion that such taste differences draw from and construct oppositional standards of social value, this comment about eggs can translate into a commentary on the differences between

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[63] Miano, *Soulfood*, 56.
[64] Another critique of the mass production of raw ingredients can be found in the example of prepackaged *ndole* leaves, which Miano criticizes because the real character of the ingredients cannot be seen. "L'emballage porte la mention, mais cela ne garantit rien. Il n'y a pas de contrôles" (The packaging is marked *ndole*, but that doesn't guarantee anything. There aren't any regulations). Ibid., 65-66.
[65] Ibid., 17.

Cameroonian and European culture. Challenging the French claim to culinary—and, by extension, cultural—authority, Miano labels the Cameroonian-cooked eggs as "parfait" (perfect).

Despite having underscored the geographical and gastronomic differences between France and Cameroon, Miano is comfortable subverting her own explanations by explaining that not all distinctions follow national borderlines. Shortly after the contrast is built between "nous" and "on" in the chapter "Jazz," Miano creates a secondary binary between the terms "nous" (us) and "ceux qui" (those who). Through the use of a plural demonstrative pronoun followed by a variety of qualifiers, Miano indicates that difference is more of a mental state than a fixed geographical, or—given that "Europe" often implies whiteness and "Africa," blackness—racial quality. This difference, she argues, is largely due to unfair stereotyping and exploitation:

> Le Cameroun n'est pas une destination touristique. Pas un pays carte postale. Pas l'image de l'Afrique qui fait rêver ceux qui rêvent encore d'Afrique. Ceux qui connaissent ce pays y vont pour les affaires. Des activités allant de l'exploitation des bois précieux au tourisme sexuel.[66]
>
> (Cameroon is not a tourist destination. Not a country on a postcard. Not the image of Africa that makes those who still dream about Africa, dream. Those who know the country go there on business. Activities ranging from the exploitation of precious woods to sexual tourism.)

Rather than solidifying the Cameroonian/French binary, Miano pluralizes the multitude of experiences by directing her criticism to "ceux qui" adhere to dehumanizing stereotypes and "ceux qui" mistreat bodies and land for their own gain.

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[66] Ibid., 18.

Returning to the pronoun "on" which, just a few paragraphs earlier, implied the taste preferences of non-Cameroonian tourists, Miano further complicates her own assertions by remaining open to the possibility that even Cameroonians could be among "ceux qui" have participated in marginalizing the Cameroonian experience. After addressing the individuals above, Miano writes:

> Pour le reste, on ne connaît pas les Camerounais. À peine se souvient-on de leurs Lions indomptables, de la religion du football qui les produisait par dizaines, il y a encore quelques années. On ignore combien ils sont inventifs et clairvoyants.[67]
>
> (No one else knows the Cameroonian people. They barely remember their Lions, which no one could submit several years ago, the religion of soccer that produced star players by the dozens. No one knows how inventive and clear-sighted the Cameroonians really are.)

Like the runny eggs that remain available to be ordered by a Cameroonian despite the fact that the majority of her countrymen would choose otherwise, the paragraph above remains open to interpretation. While primarily critiquing the European devalorization of African culture, the pronoun "on" also blurs definitions of ignorance, gesturing toward the difficulties faced by modern Cameroonians in expressing their cultural validity within dominant Western frameworks. In contrast to the homogenizing effects of capitalism and globalization—processes that reduce an individuals' worth to her production of products—Miano asserts that the intrinsic value of the Cameroonian particular can be found in foods grown and consumed locally. At the same time, Miano also suggests that the Cameroon of her childhood has increasingly become a

[67] Ibid.

perspective on life rather than a physical space, establishing a parallel with the future-oriented Afropea and justifying her eventual use of Cameroon as an Afropean model.

Within the paragraph above, Miano defines Cameroonians as “ils” (they) rather than “nous” (us), removing herself from her definition of her fellow citizens. The result of this self-exclusion is a two-fold valorization of literature as an Afropean process. First, despite the emphasis in *Soulfood équatoriale* on Miano’s role in interpreting Cameroonian culture for a French reader, the pronoun shift indicates that Miano is not the sole voice of the Cameroonian particular. Underscoring plurality, the pronoun “ils” (they) valorizes the singular and collective experiences of Cameroon’s 23 million citizens, including those living in France. Second, the removal of Miano from the center of “all” Cameroonian experience valorizes the literary process that is represented by her text. Comprised of both fiction and nonfiction, *Soulfood* becomes a process by which Cameroon’s “inventive” and “clear-sighted” culture asserts its authority through a multiplicity of voices.

In translating Cameroonian culture for the French reader through food-based figurative language and shifting pronouns, Miano not only draws parallels between the French and Cameroon particular in order to assert the validity of Cameroonian culture within a European literary framework; she also establishes the text’s authority for its later criticisms of the continued dominance of European definitions of visibility and value. At the same time, as the process of marginalization does not take place strictly along national borderlines, Miano suggests that it should not be resolved in the same way. Blurring definitions of “French” and “Cameroon,” Miano lays the foundation for a variety of critiques, including nationhood as a physical space and European history as a worldview.

4.4.2 Afropea as "Intérieur, Immatériel": Critiquing the Concepts of History, Geography, and Nation

In loosely separating the physical and aesthetic tastes of the two countries—integral notions to French national identity—Miano opens a space for a critique of other ideals fundamental to the French worldview: namely, the republican universalism that shapes France's relationship with its minority populations. For Achille Mbembe, this ideology is not only central to the web of inequalities that define France's colonial history; it also "exacerbate[s] the desire for borders and for separation that has become a cultural feature of France's contemporary moment."[68] Upending the entangled definitions of universalism and the French state as "a soul and a spiritual principal," *Soulfood équitoriale* takes aim at the core of these categories: namely, the definition of the nation itself.[69]

When interpreted as a geographical delineation and a historical codification—as famously explored by Benedict Anderson—the stability of the nation and the ideologies it embodies hinges on the assumption that time is linear and space is stable. Indeed, Étienne Balibar's critique of the foundational myths of national identity calls into question the constructed relationship between "projet et destin" (plan and destiny) and the notion of "un territoire approximativement stable" (a roughly stable territory).[70] *Soulfood équatoriale* exemplifies this critique by implying that European authority is founded on constructed notions of time and space. After recounting the Cameroonian origin story—from "le rivage où naquit le

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[68] Achille Mbembe, "Provincializing France?" *Public Culture* 21, no. 1 (2011): 102.
[69] Ibid., 109.
[70] Etienne Balibar, "La forme nation: histoire et idéologie," in *Race, nation, classe: Les identités ambiguës,* eds. Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (Paris: Éditions la Découverte, 1988), 117-18.

monde" (the river where the world was born)—in the chapter "Gombo," Miano's account of colonization from a Cameroonian perspective reveals the subjectivity of history and geography.[71] Describing the arrival of the Europeans to sub-Saharan Africa, Miano privileges the authority of landscapes—"berges," "eaux" (river banks, waters)—over European dates and kingdoms:

> Certains vinrent sur nos berges, il y a longtemps. Ceux qui fractionnent ainsi la durée disent que c'était au XVe siècle. On dit aussi que ces étrangers étaient des Portugais. Nul ne sait comment ils sont venus au monde, puisqu'ils ne furent pas, comme nous, tirés des eaux primordiales.[72]
>
> (Some people came to our riverbanks a long time ago. Those who cut up time say that it was in the fifteenth century. They also say that these foreigners were Portuguese. Nobody knows how they came into this world, because they were not, like we were, brought forth from the primordial river waters.)

By limiting the European interpretation of time and empire to hearsay on the part of "ceux qui fractionnent" (those who cut up) and "ceux qui…disent" (those who…say), the passage questions the predominance of European models of thought. Contrasted with the all-encompassing question regarding the origin of the Portuguese, "nul ne sait" (nobody knows), *Soulfood équatoriale* privileges variations in perspective rather than divisions along manmade borders. Miano's explanation of Cameroonian history nuances her Afropean ideology to underscore the importance of one's homeland in addition to a specific "terroir mental" (mental *terroir*) defined by the equal value, visibility, and validity of particular experiences.[73]

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[71] Miano, *Soulfood*, 13.
[72] Ibid., 14.
[73] Miano, *Habiter la frontière*, 86.

Destabilizing European notions of geographic space, Miano appropriates the term *appellation*, which is most frequently employed in a French culinary context to refer to *appellation d'origine contrôlée* (A.O.C.) or *appellation d'origine protégée* (A.O.P.). These terms represent France's highly-regulated system of labels linking foodstuffs to the French regions in which they were produced. Typically indicating the fixed relationship between food, state regulation, and rural land—and, by extension, as Amy Trubek has argued, between food and French national identity—*Soulfood équatoriale* uses the same term to highlight movement, change, and, uncertainty.[74] The text reports that the name of the Cameroonian sandwich filling known as *jazz* originated in the spontaneity of Cameroonian city streets: "L'*appellation* se propagea, on ne sait trop comment, dans les rues des villes. C'était une telle évidence" (The *appellation* spread—no one really knows how—in the streets of the cities. It soon became obvious).[75] *Appellation* is also used to describe *Soul food*, a phrase used in Cameroon to indicate a shared place of restoration as well as any dish that "touche et remplit son âme" (touches and fills one's soul).[76] Using the pronoun "nous" to include herself in her definition of her homeland, Miano acknowledges the multicultural influences of the concept that contrast implicitly to the singularity of *terroir*, whether French or Cameroonian: "À l'origine, la *soul food* n'est pas de chez nous. Enfin, pas sous cette *appellation*" (In the beginning, soul food wasn't from here. At least, not under that *appellation*).[77] Both examples of the word *appellation* in *Soulfood équatoriale* emphasize the fluidity of culinary language and a rejection of a fixed relationship between state regulation and rural space. This decoupling of *appellation* from its classic French

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[74] Amy B. Trubek, *Taste of Place: A Cultural Journey into Terroir* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 42.
[75] Miano, *Soulfood*, 18. Emphasis mine.
[76] Ibid., 27.
[77] Ibid, Emphasis mine.

connotations is a challenge to the very heart of French culture, which as Trubek hints, has relied on the interlocking notions of taste, place, and language to justify its stability and superiority.[78]

In contrast to the destabilization of the European relationship between space, time, and nation, *Soulfood équatoriale* explains that the Cameroonian community is founded on the relationship between cooked food and the space of its consumption. Indicating the relationships implicit in the preparation and sale of food, Cameroonian dishes prioritize communities stabilized by verbal and culinary exchanges rather than the apparent arbitrariness of national borderlines. Within this organization, the language of conversation over meals is privileged over the language that names a national space. Unlike France, whose name references its original inhabitants, the Franks, the name "Cameroon" derives from a food: the abundance of crawfish (also translated as mud lobster) in the Wouri River. This name was given and perpetuated by the European colonizers:

> Ils [Les Portugais] vinrent au cours de la saison où notre fleuve, se jetant fièrement dans l'océan qui jamais ne l'engloutit, apportait aux hommes des écrevisses. Il y en avait tant qu'on les voyait à la surface de l'eau. Les étrangers le baptisèrent d'un nom qui l'identifia longtemps pour leurs semblables: Rio dos Camarões. Camarões, qui signifiait crevettes dans leur langage, devint pour eux le nom de notre côte.[79]
>
> (The Portuguese came during the season in which our river, throwing itself proudly into the ocean that never sucked it dry, brought crawfish to men. There were so many that they could be seen from the surface of the water. The foreigners baptized the river with a

[78] Trubek, *Taste of Place*, 19.
[79] Miano, *Soulfood*, 14.

name that identified it long afterwards for their kind: Rio dos Camarões. Camarões, the word that signified shrimp in their language, became for them the name of our coast.)

In response to the Portuguese's disregard of the original inhabitants of Cameroon in their attention to crawfish, the pronouns in this passage indicate that the Cameroonians ("nous") have more in common with the personified river ("notre fleuve") than with the travelers who have chosen to name their country after a crustacean ("eux," "les étrangers," et "leur semblables"). Again hinting at a definition of nationhood, the paragraph locates the underlying stability of the Cameroonian community in the triad of food, geographic space, and people. Meanwhile, the language used to describe space is unstable and varied between individual colonizing powers: "D'autres bouches formèrent ce nom à leur convenance. Camarones. Cameroons. Kamerun. Cameroun" (Other mouths molded this name to their pleasure. Camarones. Cameroons. Kamerun. Cameroun).[80] Showcasing the inconsistency of language in relationship to national space, *Soulfood équatoriale* hints that Cameroonians may be able to reformulate their relationship to the French language by acknowledging the intersection of landscape, people, and food as an expression all of its own.[81] Privileging individual relationships, *Soulfood* provides a subtle critique of globalization by arguing that European perspectives on time and space fail to adequately account for the relationships upon which communities are built.

As if to contrast France's claims to religious *laicïté*, the relationship between religion and national identity remains visible in *Soulfood équatoriale*. Whether as a common set of symbols

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[80] Ibid., 15.

[81] A second example of the relationship between nature, people, and food can be found in the chapter "Collation" (Snack) in which food mingles with the "temps," meaning weather, time, and era: "Tout le monde sait qu'un plat se marie avec une boisson, mais on ne songe pas assez qu'il s'harmonise également avec le temps" (Everyone knows that a dish goes with its drink, but we don't think enough about the fact that it also harmonizes with the weather). Ibid., 23.

or as an overt moderator, shared religious beliefs are often identified as underpinning a community: believers attribute the relationship between cause and effect—Balibar's definition of history—to divine order and justify the establishment of national borders as part of God's will. Yet in *Soulfood équatoriale*, food replaces Christianity in two instances, concluding Miano's all-inclusive critique of the foundations of the European nation. In the chapter "Avocat," a young boy stealing an avocado calls it "pas un vol…que la Bible réprouvait" (not the kind of stealing…that the Bible condemned).[82] Given the predominance of France's Christian heritage, this reference appeals to an underlying historical and ethical similarity between the French reader and the Cameroonian protagonist while questioning the border between moral and immoral behavior. However, when recounting her personal life, Miano becomes more bluntly critical when suggesting that the spirituality of food is superior to Christianity. Remembering her brother's baptism, Miano recounts not a vision from the Holy Ghost but a mystical message received from her favorite dish known as *gari:*

> Tandis que les chants s'élevaient, que le pasteur sermonnait, vous aviez une vision de cette semoule jaune, apparemment croquante, puisque très bien mouillée. Ces crevettes dessus, qui semblaient vous adresser un message.[83]
>
> (As the songs lifted up and the preacher preached, you had a vision of this yellow semolina: crisp on the exterior, very moist on the interior. The shrimp beneath the crust seemed to speak directly to you.)

In contrast to her brother's salvation, Miano finds deeper meaning in the celebratory feast, which she calls the actual moment when "les choses sérieuses commencent" (the serious things

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[82] Ibid., 71.
[83] Ibid., 85.

begin).[84] Like the Cameroonian origin story in which life emerged from the shrimp-filled river, the message addressed to Miano—as well as to the reader, as indicated by the first person "vous" (you)—by a plateful of shrimp is one of unity. Over the course of the chapter, the *gari* brings together a community that transcends age, necessity, and even familiarity; the women are described as "toutes celles qu'on connaît et toutes celles qu'on n'a jamais vues" (all those that one knew and all those that one had never seen).[85]

Through the symbol of food in the examples above, Miano provides an alternative framework to nationhood, which Europeans understand as models of history based on linear notions of time and conceptions of geography defined by conquest. In contrast, *Soulfood équatoriale* understands time as the moment in which one consumes cooked foods with others, and community as the amount of food available to be shared. Standing outside of historical and linguistic models—"Ce que sont les peuples, cela ne s'écrit pas dans les livres, et c'est d'ailleurs sans rapport avec leur production en la matière. La civilisation est surtout dans l'assiette!" (These are the people not written about in books, but it's not because of their lack of authority on the subject. Above all, civilization is on the plate!)—the perspective of the Cameroonian people is shown to be outside of language, and, as such porous and resilient (compare to my Chapter 1).[86] Like Laclau and Mouffe's understanding of "total equivalence," the Cameroonian understanding of community reshapes itself to encompass the needs of the moment. Filling the literary void on Cameroon, *Soulfood équatoriale* not only interprets Cameroonian culture for a European reader; it also underscores the strength of an identity built on the shifting relationship between people, food, and place.

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[84] Ibid., 79.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid., 15.

4.4.3 Afropea as Soulfood: Creating New Culinary Territory

Having challenged the European assumptions regarding space, time, and religion on which national identity is built, *Soulfood équatoriale* uses food to explore Afropea as an alternative social model. Like Derrida's "Eating Well," *Soulfood équatoriale* displays how to "ingest" otherness with a mindfulness of one's own social positioning, enhancing the text's promotion of transnational consciousness. In the chapter "Mwanja," the use of the five senses doubles as a metaphor for increasing one's social and cultural awareness through the body: "On regarde, on sent, on sait" (One looks, one smells, one knows).[87] In the chapter "Avocat," the young boy watches a woman's interaction with her vegetables to determine "quel genre de personne elle était" (what kind of person she was).[88] After explaining the local belief that the personality of Cameroonian women can be known through their technique for making *piment* (homemade pepper sauce), the gender-bending short story "Solo" recounts a woman's request that her suitors prepare her the title dish so that she "connaîtrait" (would know) their intentions.[89] Revealing the fundamental character of strangers, interactions with food in *Soulfood équatoriale* explore otherness and highlight the ability to create relationships that define an immaterial community.

Specifically, Miano's writing about cooking and eating in *Soulfood équatoriale* models an Afropean-like elasticity between French and Cameroonian models of thought. Rather than demanding that the French reader acknowledge the legitimacy of non-Europeans' claims to visibility and value, *Soulfood équatoriale* demonstrates through food that the tension between French and Cameroonian relationships is the very energy that constitutes Afropea as an

[87] Ibid., 57.
[88] Ibid., 73.
[89] Ibid., 42.

alternative nation-state. According to Laclau and Mouffe, radical democracy—the state of equivalence between the rights of all citizens—is, like Afropea, unattached to a specific physical place. Instead, the advancement of this project "forc[es] the myth of a rational and transparent society to recede progressively to the horizon of the social," creating "a 'non-place,' the symbol of its own impossibility."[90] Similar to Michel De Certeau's definition of "espace" (space) as "un croisement de mobiles" (an intersection of movements and motives), Afropea represents the ensemble of African and European cultures held in tension.[91]

In *Soulfood équatoriale,* the chapter "Soul Food" models this phenomenon by displaying the mutual constitution of African and American cultures through cuisine.[92] Further challenging the fixity of space, "Soul Food" centers the locus of culinary creativity in the very movement of people and food beyond arbitrary national borders. Described as "une alimentation mêlant des éléments venus d'Afrique ou d'autres, trouvés sur place ou importés d'Europe" (a type of cuisine blending ingredients from Africa and elsewhere, found locally or imported from Europe), *soul food* in the African-American sense of the word emerged as a legacy of slavery.[93] Through the introduction of African plants and "savoir-faire" to the United States, slaves cooked the mutual reciprocity of African and American cultures into a permanent tradition. As such, Miano argues

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[90] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 191.
[91] Michel de Certeau, *L'invention du quotidien,* Vol 1: *Arts de faire* (Paris, Gallimard, 1990), 173.
[92] In contemporary Paris, the term *soul food* (two words, spelled with both capital and lowercase "s's") has been taken up by several restaurants to indicate African-American food, including the highly popular Mama Jackson Soul Food Restaurant on the Rue du Charenton. In contrast, the food truck "New Soul Food," like culinary Afropea, challenges the fixity of nation and space through its menu options and restaurant model. Claiming to be the "Premier Food-Truck Métissé" (the first mixed-race food truck) serving up "un Melting-Pot culinaire en osmose avec notre société cosmopolite" (a culinary melting pot, an osmosis of our contemporary cosmopolitan society), the food truck serves up dishes that blend the flavors of Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean. "New Soul Food," accessed December 21, 2016, http://newsoulfood.fr.
[93] Miano, *Soulfood*, 28.

that *soul food* attests to the transformative nature of slavery for both cultures: "Puisque la civilisation est, d'après nous, surtout dans l'assiette, il n'est pas exagéré d'affirmer que les États-Unis doivent une partie de ce qu'ils ont de civilisation à cette cuisine imprégnée d'Afrique" (Since, as we see it, civilization is above all on the plate, it's not an exaggeration to say that the United States owes a part of its civilization to this infusion of African cuisine).[94] Far from a denial of the injustice of slavery, the chapter "Soul food" indicates that the blending of African and American cultures should be more widely acknowledged as a historical fact and a contemporary ideal: "La soul food [est] un des tous premiers éléments de métissage entre des peuples appelés à vivre ensemble" (*Soul food* is one of the very first results of the intermixing between people called to live together). In this context, Miano's description of slavery as a "voyage sans retour" (voyage without a return) holds at least three interpretations. On a literal level, it indicates the forced movement of Africans from their homeland; on a symbolic level, the phrase also speaks to the impossibility of returning the resulting food innovations—along with the societies they link—to a contained "national" space. Within the context of *Soulfood équatoriale,* the phrase further argues that colonialism was a "voyage sans retour" for France. The practices of cooking and eating lay bare the mutual reciprocity of the former colonizer and the formerly colonized, demonstrating the potentially-productive tension between the societies.

In contrast to African-American *soul food,* Cameroonian *Soul food* further destabilizes the concepts of place and nation while modeling the interplay between people and ideas. This process is evidenced by the particularity of the term *Soul food* in Doula, where it does not refer to food. Instead, Cameroonian *Soul food* indicates a difficult-to-find space where specific dishes

[94] Ibid.

are served to a diverse clientele.[95] Indicating a Cameroonian *place* rather than an African-American *cuisine*, this meaning is denoted in *Soulfood équatoriale* by the use of the capital letter "S."[96] Paralleling Miano's vision that community be defined as a mentality of inclusion rather than a fixed territory of exclusion, *Soul food* in Douala is at once a psychological mindset and a physical restaurant. Lacking a public address, roof, and door, *Soul food* is permanently open yet only accessible through the deliberate construction of relationships. In order to find *Soul food*, Miano explains that one must trust the authority of the Cameroonian subject:

> Il fallait être invité. Ce qui signifie non pas que quelqu'un vous disait où le rejoindre, mais qu'il vous y emmenait. Être invité *à*—pas *au*, ce n'est pas camerounais—Soul food, c'était un peu se faire remettre les clés du cœur de la ville. Celles de son âme, pourrait-on dire, en réalité.[97]
>
> (You had to be invited. That doesn't mean that someone told you where to meet him, but that he took you there. To be invited to in the sense of *à*—not *au*, the word isn't Cameroonian—*Soul food* was a little bit like being given the keys to the heart of the city. Actually, to those of the city's soul.)

Within the invitation to *Soul food*, vulnerability is experienced both by the subject performing the inviting as well as the individual being invited. Revealing *Soul food* to a stranger—perhaps even a European one—requires confidence and curiosity on the part of both parties as well as a

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[95] Ibid., 32.
[96] Ibid., 31-32.
[97] In French, *à* translates to "to"; *au* signifies "to the." Miano's insistence that the preposition should be "à" strengthens the parallel between *Soul Food* and the fluidity of a city (*à*) rather than the fixity of a café, restaurant, or nation (*au*). Ibid., 32.

willingness to value the other's experience.[98] Paralleling Miano's desire to increase the visibility and value of non-European subjects in contemporary France, the invitation to *Soul food* manifests the processes necessary for these claims to be realized.

Given that the openness of *Soul food* hinges upon the willingness of individuals to mutually trust one another, the physical space of the restaurant is defined by the collapse of classed hierarchies. Appropriating Biblical language including "chemin" (path) and "prochain" (neighbor), Miano explains *Soul Food* in the following terms:

> Soul food était un temple, plus qu'un restaurant. Non pas parce qu'on y prêchait, ce n'était pas le cas. Les paroles prononcées étaient celles de conversations badines, celles des échanges entre les clients et la restauratrice. C'était un temple, parce qu'une fois le chemin trouvé, il était ouvert à tous. Personne ne regardait son prochain de travers.[99]
>
> (Soul food was a temple more than a restaurant. It wasn't because there was preaching there, for that wasn't the case. The words pronounced were those of light-hearted conversations between the clients and the restaurant owner. It was a temple because once the path was found, it was open to all. No one looked at his neighbor with suspicion.)

Like the chapter "Gari" in which equal access to food is at the center of the young Miano's spiritual quest, *Soul food* creates a spiritual community relating the concepts of trust, nourishment, and communion over the acts of cooking and eating. Welcoming the "nantis" (rich people) as well as the "miséreux" (people in poverty) within the hot sunlight that fell, without restraint or discernment, into the room—"tombait tout entier dans la petite pièce" (fell all at once

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[98] Derrida implies a similar vulnerability in the interview "On Eating Well": "…the question is no longer one of knowing if it is 'good' to eat the other or if the other is 'good' to eat, nor of knowing which other. One eats him regardless and lets oneself be eaten by him…' Derrida, "On Eating Well," 282.

[99] Miano, *Soulfood*, 34.

into the little room)—*Soul food* unifies its patrons in nature and gesture: "Tous étaient assis au même endroit, mangeant avec leurs doigts. Le même plat pour tous" (Everyone was seated at the same place, eating with their fingers. The same dish for everyone).[100] In contrast to the exclusivity of European nationhood, the significance of *Soul food* increases as the number of individuals sharing the meal grows. Exemplifying the expansion of the universal through the de-emphasis on economic barriers and physical walls, *Soul food* models a community in which food is a performance of loyalty and multiplicity strengthens the social fabric.

The dish served and consumed at *Soul Food—BH* (*beignets, haricots,* or fried dough and beans)—also derives its significance through the integration with otherness, this time in the form of ingredients. Given that neither white flour nor beans are African in origin, *BH* as a composed dish models "les mouvements des peuples, la migration des aliments" (the movement of peoples, the migration of ingredients).[101] Despite (and because of) the dish's simplicity, the consumption of *BH* resembles a Christian communion. Rather than satisfying physical hunger, *BH* provides spiritual nourishment: "Et quand on les avale, ce n'est pas dans l'estomac qu'ils descendent. Ils vous remplissent l'âme" (And when you swallow them, they don't descend into the stomach: they fill your soul).[102] In contrast to the Christian tradition in which Christ is the bread of life that maintains soul, body, and community, Miano argues that cooked meals shared in a common space construct the foundation of a collectivity—one in which differences are pushed aside as food is introduced into the body.[103]

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[100] Ibid., 33, 34.
[101] Ibid., 35.
[102] Ibid.
[103] "Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty'" (John 6:35, *New International Version*).

Within the chapter "Soul food," Miano underlines the double creative capacity of *BH* and *Soul food* to bring together different groups of people under an expanded understanding of republican universalism. Described as "savoureux et fédérateur" (delicious and unifying), *BH* links the definition of "good taste" and Derrida's "eating well" with the construction of a community that transcends nation as well as class.[104] Using the pronoun "nous" (us) to indicate her simultaneous relationship to Cameroon and to France, Miano reminds her readers of Afropea's emphasis on curiosity and forward-vision: "Dans les *BH*, il y a l'endurance joyeuse de nos peuples. La capacité à fabriquer de la vie avec des petits riens. Le désir de savoir ce que demain apportera. La foi dans la vie" (In the *BH*, there is the joyous endurance of our people. The ability to create life out of little bits of nothing. The desire to know what tomorrow will bring. Faith in life).[105] Through the physical space and sociological model of Cameroonian *Soul food*, Miano encourages readers to break from exclusive national histories in order to focus on a transnational community defined by the process of extending the rights of visibility and value to as many individuals as possible.

Considering Miano's book as a whole, three different interpretations of the title further broaden this process by displaying the text's application beyond Cameroon. Penned with a capital "S" like the Cameroonian restaurant, the title *Soulfood équatoriale* appears to indicate an exclusive focus on Africa. However, as titles are capitalized out of convention and not necessarily an author's stylistics, *Soulfood équatoriale* also implies a reference to the lowercase *soul food*, African-American cuisine. The writing of the title as one word, *Soulfood*, offers a third alternative. Collapsing the space of difference, *Soulfood*, like the non-hyphenated Afropea,

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[104] Miano, *Soulfood*, 36.
[105] Ibid.

implies its accessibility to the three continents that have interpreted its meaning: Africa, Europe, and America.[106] Indicating the horizontal movement around the globe in addition to the former colonial relationship between France and Africa, the modifier *équatoriale* underscores the book's utility across time and space.

4.4.4 Afropea as Water: The Role of Individual Responsibility

In the face of Afropea's aim to broaden the universal through a rethinking of community and nation, *Soulfood équatoriale* preserves its pertinence to contemporary societies by revealing its limitations. Like Laclau and Mouffe's definition of radical democracy, Afropea collapses at the point at which its stability is assumed.[107] Within Miano's text, too, the symbols of Afropea break down at the moment of their crystallization: Cameroonian *Soul food* succumbs to the pressures of the modern city, and the water goddess Ndimsi deliberately hides from human eyes that which "ne doit être vu" (must remain unseen).[108] As a non-food, omnipresent ingredient, and geographical feature, the symbol of water in *Soulfood équatoriale* deepens Miano's exploration of Afropea as an ideal stabilized by its inability to be fully attained.

Integral to both raw and cooked foods in *Soulfood* équatoriale, water represents the source of life in Cameroonian culture as well as the source of inspiration for Miano's story. Omnipresent within the text, water crisscrosses chapters and neighborhood kitchens: it falls from

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[106] Another example that portrays space as fluid can be found in the chapter "Pierre à écraser" (a type of Cameroonian mortar-and-pestle). Cooking in her Parisian kitchen, Miano can "toucher ma terre. Sentir que l'océan qui nous sépare ne sera jamais qu'une fiction" (touch my homeland. Feel that the ocean that separates us will never be anything but a fiction). Rather than a bounded national space, Miano's relationship to her homeland is an internal understanding: "La terre est en moi" (the earth is in me). Ibid., 10.
[107] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 184, 188.
[108] Miano, *Soulfood*, 36-37, 13.

the sky and pours into the Atlantic Ocean; it simmers in *pepe soup* and soaks the grains of *gari*; it rinses the leaves of *ndole* and transforms peanuts from powder to paste.[109] Neither fully ingredient nor fully landscape, water's parallel to Afropea is striking: both exist because of their movement across geographical, social, and culinary borderlines, yet their fluidity constitutes their unattainability. In *Soulfood équatoriale*, water's simultaneous representation of possibility and impossibility is indicated by its evocation of both good and evil in Cameroonian mythology: "Ceux qui croient que l'eau est la première créature du divin et qu'elle est la matrice sans laquelle ils n'existeraient pas, savent qu'elle apporte tout. Le pire et le meilleur" (Those who believe that water is the first creature of the divine and that she is the mistress without whom they would not exist, know that she brings everything. All that is evil, all that is good).[110] For Miano, water's representation and evocation of symbolic extremes is an acknowledgement of the complexity of life itself, which she indicates in her description of water as "la vérité" (truth).[111]

On the one hand, *Soulfood équatoriale* uses the literal fluidity of water to model Afropea as a constantly-evolving, transnational mentality. Unlike food that draws its symbolism from the act of cooking or consumption, water—as unbound to both land and air—evokes a symbolic non-space of possibility, like Cameroonian *Soul food*, in which hierarchies collapse and power is stabilized. Similarly, Miano's writing style transgresses the boundaries of space, time, and even the human body in order to push the bounds of the universal. *Soulfood équatoriale* opens with the chapter "Pierre à écraser" (a type of Cameroonian mortar-and-pestle) in which Miano's favorite grinding stone—which she gathered from the bed of the Wouri River—combines time, space, body, and land to form new understandings of subjectivity and otherness. On a timeless

[109] Ibid., 23, 14, 83, 65.
[110] Ibid., 39.
[111] Ibid., 12.

day described as “des jours comme celui-ci” (days like this one), Miano is physically overwhelmed by a water-based memory from her home country: “une fringale de rivage me prend” (a craving from the shore overtakes me).[112] Cradling the *pierre à écraser*, Miano describes it as a site evoking both meaning and memory: “Tout est dans la forme de la pierre à écraser…Mon âme se repaît de ces souvenirs” (Everything is in the form of the crushing stone…My soul feasts on these memories).[113] Through the preparation of a meal in which individual elements meld to form a new whole—“Le poisson fumé…s’y imprègne de la saveur et du parfum des ingrédients écrasés tout à l’heure, et quelques autres” (The smoked fish…infuses with the taste and smell of the ingredients crushed a moment ago, as well as some others)—Miano’s excursion into her past collapses time as well as space. Despite being physically in her Parisian kitchen, Miano is elsewhere emotionally, a place also described in the present tense: “Me voici à Douala. La nuit est tombée” (Here I am in Douala. Night has fallen).[114] In the chapter, the memories alternate five times between the cooking of *gombo* as a Parisian adult, the anticipation of being served a similar meal as a child in Cameroon, and an explanation of Cameroonian history.[115] The step-by-step addition of smoked fish and live crabs to the dish is interspersed with Miano’s creative doses of personal history and collective memory. Inspired by water to merge ingredients, time, and space through the creative processes of writing and cooking, Miano models Afropea’s potential to blend and reorganize definitions of self and community.

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[112] Ibid., 9.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid., 11.
[115] Ibid., 12.

However, water in *Soulfood équatoriale* also explores the limitations of Afropea. Like Miano's understanding of universalism, water is an unlimited resource as long as it remains in movement: as previously cited, the Wouri River is described as "se jetant fièrement dans l'océan qui jamais ne l'engloutit" (throwing itself proudly into the ocean that never sucked it dry).[116] Bookending Miano's text, water closes *Soulfood équatoriale* with an allegory of the difficulty of creating the very relationships that hold Afropea—along with the radical democracy that it represents—in tension. Told in the third person, the final chapter "Camarões" depicts how the mistrust of others over food weakens oneself and one's community. The chapter follows the main character, Ékambi, as he attempts to determine who has been stealing from his vegetable garden for the past seventeen nights. Discussing his plans for catching the perpetrator, Ékambi reveals two points of tension between him and his community: his hiding of a secret fishing spot from his neighbors and his skepticism regarding the existence of the spirits of the water, the *mbea towe*. When the ravager is discovered to be the spirits themselves, Ékambi is confronted with the fact that his doubts are one and the same: mistrusting others over food is a denial of others' visibility and value—their divinity. Having broken the continuity between man, place, and food, Ékambi is harshly criticized by water itself. The spirit whispers, "*Tu as perdu la foi dans le monde invisible d'où ton existence fut pourtant tirée, comme celle de tous ceux qui vivent sur cette terre*" (*You have lost faith in the invisible world which brought forth your existence, as it did for of all those who live on this earth*).[117] Critiquing modern man's inability to believe in the unseen—including communities broader than individual self—the spirit asks Ékambi to reconsider the interconnectedness of mankind by temporarily ceasing to fish at the river.

[116] Ibid., 14.
[117] Ibid., 100. Italics in the original.

However, Ékambi's response to this request not specified, left open to interpretation. The chapter—and *Soulfood équatoriale*—concludes with Ékambi "adossé à un mur de la case, immobile, les yeux fixant le fleuve" (leaning against the wall of the hut, unmoving, his eyes fixed on the river).[118] The choice to engage with otherness as modeled by Afropea remains delineated by repeated individual choices.

4.5 IRRESOLUTION

In apparent contrast to the text's primary emphasis on food as an Afropean medium, *Soulfood équatoriale* concludes with water in order to display Afropea's dual potential to be either stabilized or disrupted by the sum of a community's choices. As a liquid present in nearly every chapter but rarely referenced before the text's end, water in *Soulfood équatoriale* clarifies the scope and benefit of transnational exchanges while highlighting the ability of individuals to perpetuate and to limit these interactions. Similarly, Derrida's moral obligation to "eat well" also acknowledges that consumption retains its symbolic value only as much as consumers remain vigilant about their intentions.[119] Just as the act of eating can easily regress into the mere fulfillment of a biological need, so is Afropea always threatened by participants' unwillingness to continually challenge its boundaries. *Soulfood équatoriale*'s conclusion is a reminder that Afropea is effective as a worldview inasmuch as its adherents understand that constant self-reflection—not the policing of political or culinary borders—maintains the concept's stability.

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[118] Ibid., 101.
[119] "Responsibility is excessive or it is not a responsibility." Derrida, "Eating Well," 286.

Soulfood équatoriale's thorough reflection on Afro-European relations through food sheds light on the necessity for concrete images and actions like cooking and eating to challenge the "markedness" of black female subjects—as well as the "unmarkedness" of white male subjects—in contemporary France. Specifically, *Soulfood équatoriale* renders visible the theoretical holes in France's official universalist policies and outlines Afropea as an alternative worldview that pushes the boundaries of political and social inclusivity. While the text evokes the specific tensions between France and Cameroon, its ultimate audience remains the reader. Through the use of the informal second person pronoun "tu," the spirits of the water remind the reader that she, along with Ékambi, must take responsibility for continually broadening the scope of the community in which she lives.

CONCLUSION: DIGESTIFS. EATING WITH THE OTHER

Il n'y a rien à comprendre. C'est une pitié de voir une plume pareille se gâcher à force de cécité. Écrire sur une tomate des pages à la narration éblouissante—car Pierre Arthens critique comme on raconte une histoire et cela seul aurait dû en faire un génie—sans jamais *voir* ni *saisir* la tomate est un affligeant morceau de bravoure. Peut-on être aussi doué et aussi aveugle à la présence des choses? me suis-je souvent demandé en le voyant passer devant moi avec son grand nez arrogant. Il semble que oui. Certaines personnes sont incapables de saisir dans ce qu'elles contemplent ce qui en fait la vie et le soufflé intrinsèques et passent une existence entière à discourir sur les hommes comme s'il s'était agi d'automates et sur les choses comme si elles n'avaient point d'âme et se résumaient à ce qui peut en être dit, au gré des inspirations subjectives.[1]

(There is nothing to understand. It is a pity to see such a worthy wordsmith blindly wasting his talent. To write entire pages of dazzling prose about a tomato—for Pierre Arthens reviews food as if he were telling a story, and that alone is enough to make him a genius—without ever *seeing* or *holding* the tomato is a troubling display of virtuosity. I have often wondered, as I watch him go by with his huge arrogant nose: Can one be so

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[1] Muriel Barbery, *L'élégance du hérisson* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006), 19-20, PDF file, http://asma.benamor.free.fr/gestiondoc/Documents/l_y_ly_gance_du_hy_risson.pdf. The translation is drawn from Muriel Barbery, *The Elegance of the Hedgehog*, trans. Alison Anderson (New York: Editions Europa, 2008), 34.

gifted and yet so impervious to the presence of things? It seems one can. Some people are incapable of perceiving in the object of their contemplation the very thing that gives it its intrinsic life and breath, and they spend their entire lives conversing about mankind as if they were robots, and about things as though they have no soul and must be reduced to what can be said about them—all at the whim of their own subjective inspiration.)

This monologue by Renée, the reclusive and cynical concierge who narrates Muriel Barbery's second novel *L'élégance du hérisson* (*The Elegance of the Hedgehog*, 2006), spells out her skepticism regarding the productivity of the relationship between food and text. Renée dismisses Pierre's writing for several reasons: the assumed disconnect between language and lived experience, language's inability to capture the "essence" of life itself, and how language gives personal opinion the air of an "objective" truth. While readers of *Une gourmandise* know this opinion of Pierre to be at least partially inaccurate (his knowledge of tomatoes, in fact, comes from childhood summers in his Aunt Marthe's garden), Renée's questions nevertheless parallel those that have driven this dissertation: What, if anything, can be gained by reading French food writing from a critical perspective? Given food's ability to demonstrate the limits of materiality and the production of the universal, what does language about food bring to light about culture in mainland France? What does it mask?

The four texts analyzed in this dissertation have taken up the productivity of the acts of cooking, writing, reading, and eating to characterize the gendered, racialized, and national identities of twenty-first century France. Given the intensity of the debate over what it means to be French, especially in the context of transforming European relations, shifting expectations about gender and sexuality, and rising immigration and emigration from the 1990s onwards, these texts collectively demonstrate the vexed nature of the body in relationship to modern

French citizenship. The differential construction of the body in regards to gender and race confirms their unequal value in current universalist policies, explaining, through daily acts, how hierarchical social organizations continue to persist despite the philosophy's egalitarian objectives.

Despite the strong support displayed in many of this dissertation's texts that all genders are capable of cooking professionally and at home, men and women are still conceived differently as eating subjects, both in terms of what they eat and how they are "eaten" by others. For example, although Guillaume Long opens up his male body to readers' participation in *À boire et à manger* (2009-), suggesting his support of the "queering" of gender through the acts of cooking and reading, the magazine *BEEF!* (2014-) rigorously entrenches the gender binary at the level of the gazing and consuming body. These case studies collectively indicate that the social construction of the body is less easily modifiable in the public imaginary than are gendered roles and practices, perhaps due to the perceived "essentialism" of the body itself. Targeted to a popular audience, campaigns that use food to advance the notion of bodies as cultural productions could enhance a variety of sociopolitical goals currently being negotiated in popular and political forums: a deconstruction of the divide between "male" and "female" labor, renewed efforts to close the pay gap, reassurance of gay and human rights, and the protection of queer/non-binary genders before the law. More importantly, such campaigns—on posters in the *métro*, in elementary school cafeterias, in food truck branding, to give a few examples—would promote the awareness of food as symbol, which holds the potential to be transformative from the inside of a society out.

This dissertation holds different implications for race, which was "unnamed" in French legislation in 2013. Mapping how inequalities are nevertheless constructed between European

and non-European subjects through images, subtexts, and food practices, this dissertation demonstrates the pervasiveness of the racism that is believed, in French political thought, to stem from language alone. Paralleling *Une gourmandise*'s assertion in Chapter 1 that social conditioning influences even unconscious thought, racial inequalities are visible in nearly every text of this dissertation from Long to Léonora Miano. Together, these texts display that racial distinctions, like those regarding gender, take place at the level of the body, with lighter-skinned individuals, such as *BEEF!*'s Mexicans, being tangentially valued by the French nation because of their labor, and darker-skinned individuals, such as Long's Lebanese, being considered a threat to white male hegemony. Considering the frequent merging of food and black and brown bodies in these texts, this dissertation highlights the constructed subordination—oscillating between desire and domination—of non-European subjects as well as limited opportunities for resistance.[2] Across these four texts, the dark male body exists only in the context of its potential erasure, whether strangled in Long or deconstructed as a prop in *BEEF!*.[3] The greater visibility of North African men, both in these texts and in French society, corresponds to their increased barbarization in images, including *BEEF!*'s photographs of Moroccan men wielding knives and

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[2] In *À boire et à manger*, Jean-Kévin's initial admiration of Lebanese tabouli is inextricable from his interest in his female captor's breasts. At the scene's conclusion, his clear exaggeration about having lived for a short time in Lebanon, "avec des peuplades berbères dans le dessert et tout" (with nomads in the desert and everything), stands in for a conquest narrative that reestablishes his masculine dominance. Guillaume Long, *À boire et à manger: Du pain sur la planche* (Paris: Gallimard, 2015), 76-82. For more on the relationship between domination and desire, see bell hooks, "Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance," in *Black Looks: Race and Representation*, 2nd ed. (Florence, GB: Routledge, 2014), 21-23.

[3] In the article "On en viendra à bout!" (We will overcome!), a pair of black male hands is among the seven diverse bodies featured, each gripping a different burger as if it were feeding the camera. Other hands included are those of a child, an elderly woman with sun-spotted skin, and a woman with long pink nails and jewelry. This article could imply collective participation in the war against the fast food industry, an invitation to engage with each body, or—given the high stylization of the hands—the reduction of them as props in the frame. Alexandre Zalewski, ed., *BEEF!* April-June 2014, 110-21.

covered with blood during the Feast of the Sacrifice.[4] These texts both contribute to and explain the normalization of the violence against dark-skinned men in mainland France; their bodies, as less penetrable and less easily able to be subdued than female bodies, may be viewed as challenges to European security.[5]

To the silencing of discussions of racism in French public policy, this dissertation displays evidence of enduring racial inequalities perpetuated in food texts. Similar to this dissertation's analysis of gender, these inequalities suggest that the ideal of republican universalism, as currently envisioned, does not account for the politics that take place at the bodily level**.** These findings could lead to increased awareness of how race is constructed, especially in images—whether in marketing materials or magazine photography—which could invite counter-discourses that complicate the body in new ways.

As intersectional analyses of gender and race are usually predicated on providing unvoiced subjects with new opportunities to speak, it could have been appropriate to order the chapters of this dissertation in reverse, starting with Miano and ending with Muriel Barbery. This would have produced an analysis that emphasized the limitations of language in cultural production, justifying my research's focus on food itself as text. My reasons for choosing the current order stem from the fact that I am as interested in this topic's practical implications as its theoretical contributions. Mirroring the current Western social order that considers white men, such as Barbery's narrator, before black women, the dissertation's movement from *Une gourmandise* to *Soulfood équatoriale* gradually exposes the arbitrariness of the status quo as well as the potential progression away it. Modeling the culinary and cultural deconstruction of race,

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[4] Alexandre Zalewski, ed., "Grand Dieu!" *BEEF!*, April-June 2015, 84-97.
[5] Regarding the forced submission of black bodies, consider the well-publicized case of Théo, who was raped with a police baton in February 2017, sparking broad protests.

gender, and nation, this organization draws its strength from a clear delineation of the social hierarchy in contemporary France, a delineation of its inequalities, and an exploration of possible solutions. Such an organization creates a reciprocal relationship between the dissertation's first and last chapters, demanding a return to Barbery's *Une gourmandise* upon the conclusion to understand the "normalization" of such hierarchies and how they can be undone.

While *Une gourmandise* doesn't explicitly deal with race, gender, or national identity in their "marked" form, it nevertheless exemplifies the privileges of being perceived as "unmarked," which the dissertation juxtaposes with the marginalization of blackness/foreignness and femininity/queerness in the successive chapters. Pierre Arthens' ability to sidestep the question of *who* he is in the pursuit of an understanding of *which foods* he desires is directly related to his whiteness, masculinity, and wealth. Both within his social circle and in the context of this dissertation, his privileges as an unambiguous universalist subject include not only his freedom to interrogate his experience of power but also the ability to have left these systems unquestioned until convenient. His realization that he too had been a cog in a social system—despite his belief of having mastered the system himself—is accompanied by no sense of responsibility to reshape the status quo for others. Through Pierre's refusal to share his knowledge regarding taste and desire with his family on his deathbed, Chapter 1 models how those in power, while occasionally more capable of effecting social change, often choose to perpetuate the social system for their own benefit, regardless of their belief in its "justness."

In contrast, Chapter 4 on *Soulfood équatoriale* models social responsibility through an "Afropean" vision of identity, which considers disparate places and bodily experiences to be fluid and interrelated concepts. Rather than viewing social judgments as uncontestably determined by hegemonic power structures, as Chapter 1 indicates, Miano suggests that "value"

is regulated by individuals' perpetual questioning of systems of social organizations, a process that can reshape human relationships from the ground up. From an Afropean perspective, agency is not only possible but also required through creative processes like cooking and writing, which dismantle and rearrange the barriers of alterity. However, Afropea remains an ideal toward which to strive; the real choice for French subjects likely lies in the tension between Miano and Barbery, between an aspirational social contract on the one hand and the sociopolitical obstacles that lie in the way of utopianism on the other.

In 2018, as I am completing this dissertation, a variety of international foods—North and Central African, pan-Asian, Lebanese, Italian, and American, among others—fill the supermarket shelves of contemporary France. Their presence speaks to and continually shapes the cooking patterns of professional chefs and home cooks, restaurant diners, and families. These trends are taken up in a variety of media, old and new: cooking shows, podcasts, restaurant reviews, radio features, recipe jingles, pop-up books, and more. While carrying their own baggage as symbols, the predominance of these practices and genres is also a rich opportunity. Social change can begin as easily as with individual consciousness—beginning with the choice of what's for dinner.

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