Redeeming Proper Taste: Food as an Emblem of Luxury in Eighteenth Century England

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Abstract

Food: the universal language. As a platform upon which people express their worldviews, food is the most important basic ingredient to both life and social progress. Elegance, gluttony, moderation, and excess are nowhere more evident than at the dinner table; such applications are evidence of the power of food to unite and destroy entire communities. And logic suggests that because food is necessary for survival, the human condition is, in part, reflected in taste. What a person craves is an indication of that person's identity.

But the connection between the aesthetic and economic significance of food is most obvious in eighteenth century England, where the socialization of people in more urban communities prompted culinary reform and radically re-defined taste. Dramatic economic changes introduced England to an overwhelming variety of foreign goods—most of which were foodstuffs or goods necessary for serving food. And from the responses of social critics like Alexander Pope, Alexander Hume, Samuel Johnson, and Tobias Smollett, we see the evidence of a new public identity reflected most clearly in food choices. For this reason, we cannot dismiss the critical study of food, especially during this most revolutionary period of culinary and social history.

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Introduction: An Informal Invitation: Food as an Emblem of Luxury

"Cookery means the knowledge of Medea and of Circe and of Helen and of the Queen of Sheba. It means the knowledge of all herbs and fruits and balms and spices, and all that is healing and sweet in the fields and groves and savoury in meats. It means carefulness and inventiveness and willingness and readiness of appliances. It means the economy of your grandmothers and the science of the modern chemist; it means much testing and no wasting; it means English thoroughness and French art and Arabian hospitality; and, in fine, it means that you are to be perfectly and always ladies—loaf givers."

—John Ruskin

The essence of a culture's moral, political, and intellectual choices is nowhere more concentrated than in its diet. The old adage, "you are what you eat," should therefore read, "you are what you eat, and so is everyone else" because food has a rippling effect that not only defines social classes, but also characterizes history. As food is among the most basic human needs for survival, it can be considered a controlling factor of humanity and, in a sense, a regulator of human language. For example, the word "companion" literally means "together with bread." The ancient Egyptians named their pyramids after their bread making process, which produced "stacks of moulds" in "the shape of an inverted pyramid" (Toussaint-Samat 224). Religions touted bread as "the staff of life," claiming that those who were sanctified could partake in bread. The poor were sometimes hired as "sin-eaters," charged with sitting "by the corpse [and] eating bread and salt" in an effort to rescue the one deceased from purgatory (Colquhoun 3). Bread, along with ale, was the commodity first regulated by sumptuary laws in England in 1266. And bread was the cause of the Peasant Revolts in the years following the Black Death. When the Lords of Manors began charging their servants to use the ovens to bake bread, the servants

rebelled. Yet this story of bread offers just a glimpse of the power of food. With the introduction of spices to England in the 13ᵗʰ century, culinary inventiveness reached a new height and food, more than ever before, was praised as the most generous giver of pleasure. By changing the language of politics, romance, gender, religion, and, most notably, taste, food was becoming an emblem of luxury.

Food domesticates human beings, forcing them to become innovative and to evolve in order to acquire more. And this need for "more," while innate, is the root of gluttony. Seeking new methods for acquiring food, then, human beings invented necessary weapons and tools for harvesting from trees and from the ground, which led to stronger organization of daily life and, eventually, specialization. The establishment of society then led to civilization, which "brought with it the idea of cookery: the intentional preparation of foods in the traditional manner of a particular social or ethnic group" (Toussaint-Samat 3). In more civilized people groups like the Anglo-Saxons, food became both a safeguard against foreigners as well as a way of practicing tradition. In giant mead halls, men would gather for a feast, using their spoons as spears for meat—the word "spoon," originally "spon" in Old English, means "splinter of wood," and is different from the current understanding of spoon (Colquhoun 36). Early on, and perhaps because of the climate, the English people became known for quadruped meat and root vegetables. And as we will see in chapter two, the trade of such foodstuffs worked to create national boundaries between England and France.

As much as food was a unifying agent of people groups, it was (and still is) guilty of separating gender and social class. From the masculine noun "cok," the Old English word for "cook," we know that only men were considered capable of such work during Pre-modern period. Royal feasts in England were lavish displays of foods like "pandemaine," or wheat bread and

"manchet," the most expensive white bread (Colquhoun 49), and men who gorged on "great

pastry castles … surrounded by green sward with pheasants, partridges and doves, all cooked and

edible but painted to look as if alive" were seated at the enormous "tables" according to their

rank in society (Spencer 67). In the sixth century, Anthimus wrote *On the Observance of Foods*,

which was a letter addressed to King Theuderic and which detailed the diet of a nobleman.

Illiterate peasants did not have access to Anthimus' knowledge about the benefits of Arabian

cooking methods—"the breasts and wings of fowl should be eaten, never the hinder parts"—and

would have suffered pottages and "suet puddings stuffed into stomach linings" (Spencer 28). The

unfortunate realities of civilization are the national and social distinctions; even still, all of these

interactions with food are indications of the development—both physically and socially—of

human society. Perhaps this is why Spencer points out that food substantially "reflects

everything, it is a microcosm of what is shaping the world at the time" (9).

As our discussion here focuses on luxury and its expression in food, this work

emphasizes social interaction and the stimulation of progress as culinary practices became more

varied and more complex. The establishment of the East India Company in 1600 under Queen

Elizabeth I strengthened the English trade alliances with other nations and worked to establish

England as a dominant figure in culinary reform. Merchants who invested in the company

became wealthy almost overnight and began re-investing their profits in more goods. The actual

value of these goods was unimportant to the merchants who were largely concerned with mass

variety rather than quality of goods. If it was foreign, it was a luxury. Spices carried on East

India Company ships made their way into wealthy English kitchens, and as the lower classes

envied all things "haute," some spices eventually made their way into peasants' kitchens. At the

end of the seventeenth century, food was among the strongest and most explicit reflections of

social rank.

By the dawn of the eighteenth century, food had become not just a product to be consumed, but a topic to be discussed. In a sense, food moved to the front burner of social criticism. Social behavior was clearly reflected by food; likewise, food choices were clearly reflected by social behavior. Unable to escape the eminent influence of food on the economy, commerce, and public conduct, the English people redefined their taste for luxury to include foodstuffs. Sugar, spices, beef, and teas appeared regularly on tables of the wealthy. A reclassification of food groups began, and for the first time, people began distinguishing "sweet" from "savory" foods, which reorganized the courses served during a meal (Flandrin 362-63). The wealthy began taking their supper later in the day so as to avoid eating at the same time as their servants. As the elite sought to further separate themselves from both the emerging middle class and the ever-present poor, their preferences—particularly those pertaining to food—redefined luxury. The appearance of luxurious items in early English novels as well as in other major works of the period is evidence that luxury was no longer just "a refinement in the gratification of the senses," as Alexander Hume claimed, but was also "an incentive to the expansion of commerce" (Berg and Eger 12). Furthermore, the laughable but condemnable hypocrisy—the propensity to contradict speech with action—of certain characters in early English novels is evidence of the public's growing fascination with luxurious goods and the way in which they were rapidly re-defining social behavior. In short, this new movement of culinary, luxury goods into and through the markets of eighteenth century England gave way to indulgence, a vice practiced by all but overtly manifested by the elite.

As the purpose of this project is to explore food as the primary emblem of luxury, I approach both the history and the literature from an empirical stance. That is, in order to properly

understand the relationship between the dramatic economic and social changes taking place

during the eighteenth century, we need only to discuss the implications of our observations. Thus,

while many cultural studies projects approach their subject matter in service to a particular

political agenda, the ideas expressed here are evidence-based.

Chapter 1: Invitation Accepted: Introducing Luxury to Eighteenth Century England

Tell me what you eat, I'll tell you who you are.

–Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin

Until trade introduced such dainty pleasures as lemons, pomegranates, currants, figs, and dates, the Anglo-Saxon diet had relied heavily on meat, fish, and game, most of which were prepared without regard for food as an art form since England's plate was already filled with war and chaos. But, after the Viking and Norman invasions, the English diet, heavy-laden with salted meats, stews, and pottages was introduced to the sweetness of southern Europe's exotic fruits. In addition, the spice trade with the eastern world introduced a new economic system to all of Europe in the 12th century; but with regard to England, a new political and social system would eventually form as well. Most explicitly, the trade of such foreign goods as spices, fruits, sugar, and coffee, would eventually become the most obvious reflections of social status as indulgence in these foodstuffs consumed the English elite. From the beginnings of the spice trade in the mid-thirteenth century, the public esteem of food was refined alongside a series of social changes that superimposed social implications over food's religious and economic significance, which, unfortunately, welcomed gluttony and excess.

In order to properly situate food in a social context, however, we must first discuss the political decisions that became a principle ingredient of the English culinary revolution. The European attempt to dominate the Seven Seas and all other lands was driven by "the search for spices—as much as gold and silver— … and thus changed the course of history" (Flandrin 313). This sort of quest epitomizes the root of the relationship between food and power, particularly in England. And the trend of indulgence in finer foods debuted with these first trades between the Eastern world and Europe in the mid-thirteenth century. It was by importing exotic goods such as

sugar, spices, tea, and coffee from Eastern lands while also purchasing exotic fruits from southern Europe that the reigning political authorities of England established trade relationships with other nations. Sarah Paston-Williams explains in *The Art of Dining: A History of Cooking and Eating* that in the thirteenth century "bitter oranges of the Seville type, lemons and pomegranates were cultivated" in England as a result of establishing "trade with southern Europe … From the end of the 14th century, however, the shipments became more frequent, carried in from Spain or Portugal, or on Italian spice ships" (35). In addition to the citrus staples, "the melon, introduced from France, and the tomato, or 'apple of love' because of its supposed aphrodisiac quality, which was brought back from Mexico," along with other various "exotic fruits," were transplanted by English explorers (Paston-Williams 101).

This increasing interest in agricultural development suggests the growing popularity of foreign goods and the budding interest on the part of the English in culinary refinement. Particularly, the English people lusted after all things French—even their *cuisine*, which is not surprising, since it was through the sea ports in France that the English first traded with the Arab world (Toussaint-Samat 554). What was French was recognized by the English as being of high culture. Not surprisingly, then, so many of the ingredients now considered standard in English recipes were originally imports and so many of the recipes we see in early recipe collections like *The Forme of the Cury* (1390) were composed of French dishes to be served to the court of England's King Richard II.

As England built trade relationships, the political significance of food overtook that of silks and other goods. In true English fashion, the changes that spices introduced to foods were first adopted and then, as Dorothy Hartley terms it, "naturalised" (v). And when England's alliance with France was strengthened during these early middle ages, the social behavior of the

French, otherwise referred to as "gastronomical chauvinism" (Wheaton), seeped into that of the English people. In the process, the ruling class in England, who began attaching political and social strings to food, encouraged gluttony. It would follow then, as Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger note, that the first English sumptuary laws concerned "food and excess in meeting bodily satisfaction" (8). Obviously, the power of food was compelling enough to incite invasions into foreign lands. As expansion spread westward so did trade, and the English people quickly discovered the relationship between food and political progress.

New foods were the most notably reported and memorable discovery of expeditions, having affected the explorers so much so that the men transplanted them. Since these explorers were members of either the wealthy or courtly circles, food also reflected social class, even in these early days of the spice trade. Those who were wealthy had the luxury of enjoying foreign foods like sugar, which was "synonymous with prosperity" (Toussaint-Samat 554). Because it was used for more than just cooking—in coffee, tea, and chocolate also—and because it created an entirely new branch of foods—confections—sugar revolutionized the way food was used and therefore is a primary example of the trade's rippling effect. Considering all imported goods, "sugar, from Brazil, the Azores, the Canary Islands and later, Cuba and Jamaica, was destined to have the greatest effect on … eating habits. From the 13th century sugar began to replace honey as the standard sweetener, in wealthy households at least" (Paston-Williams 36). But before sugar made its way into English fare, the French incorporated this "white salt" into their cooking in the thirteenth century, letting its "enchanting perfume" (Toussaint-Samat 552,554) linger along the trade routes between the two nations.

France's geographic location and climate already allowed for citrus and semi-tropical fruits; so, when paired with the sweetness of sugar cane, an explosion of new dishes were baked,

boiled, blended, broiled, or even kneaded before being presented at the table. To further explain, Barbara Ketcham Wheaton notes, "Although sugar had been known and used, very sparingly, in ancient times, chiefly for medical purposes, it was rare … until commercial contact with Islamic culture in the Mediterranean world increased" (19), a growth that dramatically improved trade alliances. These alliances improved the "production and distribution systems" that were already "flexible enough to absorb an enormous increase in demand for goods" (Berg 67). As a way to preserve fruits in the winter months, as well as curing otherwise bland foods like hams, pork roasts, mutton, and some legumes, sugar swept its way through many dishes. This is not surprising since "world sugar production shows the most remarkable upward production curve of any major food on the world market" (Mintz xxi). However, we will focus here on sugar's impact on French cooking as a necessary ingredient for France's status as the leading culinary influence on all of Europe during the medieval period, but most particularly on Britain.

It was the economic and political benefit of importing sugar that most appealed to the French. The wider availability of sugar in France thus served as a sort of inspiration to French chefs. As Wheaton indicates, "The increasing supply of sugar available for making preserves and other sweets encouraged the development of sugar-cooking techniques" (28). Puff pastries filled with compotes and jams, and the "smaller relatives" of pies, namely "turnovers, pastries, and little fried crusts" (Wheaton 118), were "sweet pastries and confections [that] would have been a welcome change from the usual mixtures, and the combination of expense and pleasure virtually guaranteed acceptability" (Wheaton 41), even by the English. In another account, the popularity of sugar grew in tandem with the importation of beverages like coffee, chocolate, and tea, which were all sweetened with sugar: "In other words, the sharp rise in sugar consumption was linked to the success of these colonial beverages across the continent … By the seventeenth century the

growth of sugar consumption had led to the establishment of vast sugar plantations in tropical countries colonized by Europeans" (Flandrin 360). All of these new culinary inventions worked in combination with the economic stimulus provided by sugar. As a result, the "*market* for sugar" rapidly increased as its sales eclipsed those of "coffee, cacao (chocolate), indigo, tobacco, and so on … and outlasted them" (Mintz xx). And, as economic benefit and political power feed each other, France's influence in global affairs expanded.

Sugar, in effect, dominated the market and thereby affected all social circles as it strengthened the divisions between classes. By one account, sugar contributed to the dissociating "structural processes" that "served not only to permit social emulation but positively to promote it" and was, most importantly, "one reason for increasing demands made upon the skill of the cook in making food more palatable" as well as "the invention and elaboration of an endless variety of ever more refined and delicate dishes" (Mennell 326-27). Moreover, discussions about sugar seeped into medical circles and dominated debates over cures for the plague, indigestion, and headaches. Not surprisingly, then, sugar's "healing properties" (Wheaton 19) created a stronger demand for the imported good during the periods of increased famine and illness as a byproduct of the Hundred Years' War. Whatever the reason for sugar's domination—economical, social, or medial, it contributed significant improvements to the culinary world that would undoubtedly see their full fruition in the industrial processes of canning and bottling.

Considering all of this, England's imitation attempts seem natural; yet, its political, economic, and social structure would produce vastly different results from its participation in the spice trade. Knowing that the English diet once prominently revolved around a particular calendar of religious observances justifies why laws set forth by the ruling powers (ultimately controlled by the Catholic Church) strictly regulated the use of spices when they came to

England. It was their foreignness rather than their utility for cooking that made these goods "spices" (Flandrin 315). Naturally, then, regulation was necessary to maintain political and economic boundaries. A committee of spice inspectors was established during the fourteenth century in order to control the buying and selling of certain seasonings and spices, especially since the popularity of meat preservatives like onions and garlic might have tempted people to sell rancid or stale goods. Jack C. Drummond refers to this committee as "the *Grossarii*, from which our name grocer is thought to be derived" (37). Because these men were "empowered to confiscate on behalf of the City authorities any consignments considered to be of bad quality or adulterated," they received a sizeable compensation (Drummond 37). As such, this committee can be likened to a sort of health inspector—a very primitive version. The committee was well understood to have social and economic power over the trade business, and, interestingly enough, they were not only inspectors, but they also took responsibility to balance the distribution of spices so that no one person, regardless of income, could dominate the use or selling of a particular spice. Even so, spices continued to disguise rancid meat pies for vending, and vinegar was praised as the savior of tainted meat (Drummond 36-37); those who could afford such seasonings prospered, even if only a little. Furthermore, these butcher's imitation meats are—metaphorically—precursors to the emergence of the bourgeoisie class in the eighteenth century which would embody the idea that imitation is equally valuable as the original. Spices for the butchers made their meats *almost* good. Imitation for the bourgeoisie people made them *almost* wealthy.

That the ruling political power was also the head of the Church during the Renaissance period meant that the spice trade was organized, executed, and regulated by the same powers controlling both religious and civic behavior. Therefore, during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and

seventeenth centuries, spice trade increasingly infiltrated all levels of society albeit in various ways. Spencer points out that during the fifteenth century, a meal was a social event for the Lord (and his guests) of a manor house, but it was considered to be a wage for the employees. If one's work was judged sufficient, one could eat (82). Following England's break from Rome in the sixteenth century, William Harris (1546-1602) records the variety consumed by the nobility: "Tthere is no daie in manner that passeth over their heads, wherein they have not onelie beefe, mutton, veale, lambe, porke, conie, capon, pig, or so many of these as the season yeeldeth" (qtd. in Spencer 119). This menu contrasts that of the poor, who dined on simple, inexpensive grains like barley and oats, which could be purchased at the market. The fruits of the land were reserved for the Lord of the estate. In the seventeenth century, the English Civil War did give the middle classes stronger control over market demand, but the "court-granted monopolies" over spices and other industry prevented the lower classes from gaining any significant control. Again, the poor only had access to the remains of the wealthy. So, prior to the eighteenth century, the control over available resources resulted in covetousness and starvation for the poor and gluttony and excess for the wealthy. In the middle, the working class waffled between the desire for goods and the reality of financial limitations. The imbalance—spiritual and social—brought about by the spice trade was most evident at the dinner table.

It was during the seventeenth century that the perspective of food began its most dramatic shift towards becoming a social emblem as the English people revered less and less the authority of either James I or his successor, his son Charles I. As the people opposed the ruling authorities, so they rejected the dietary regulations imposed by that authority. However, religious dietary rules still required abstinence from food on certain days, consumption of particular foods at particular times, and even preparing of foods by special processes. And the fact that one's

spiritual condition was reflected by his or her food choices is noteworthy in an age when the

significance of food extended beyond the material world: "food practices—fasting and

feasting—were at the very heart of the Christian tradition" (Bynum 139). However, these ideas

of "fullness" would be later corrupted so much so that gluttony would replace moderation and

the neoclassical aesthetics of balance and moderation in taste would become a trademark

argument against vanity and excess. Dr. Bernard Mandeville would be the initial proponent

against vanity, arguing that it reflected "purely instrumental attempts to satisfy pride through the

promotion of one's status" (qtd. in Hundert 31), which supports Spencer's claim that these

"heathen tastes" illustrate the changing social attitudes (76). The people were trading spiritual

fulfillment for self-fulfillment; whereas once it was the Lord who sustained or "filled" the soul,

now it was foreign or "worldly" goods. Such a dangerous substitution diverted attention from

God and placed it on the world, emphasizing commercial impact over spiritual standing. So,

when the meaning of "commerce" gradually shifted from that which pertains to social behavior

towards that which pertains to economic behavior—the acquisition of goods (Clark x), the result

was an imbalanced approach in the proper understanding of aesthetics, which ultimately affected

moral behavior (see the discussion of Pope in chapter 3). It was the compelling attraction to

foreign foods and the hasty adoption of foreign culinary practices—namely those of France—

that were increasingly popular in the few centuries leading up to the eighteenth century and that

undoubtedly resulted in the more public expressions of gluttony.

Eventually, the discussion of luxury centered on "the advantages of trade and the more

cosmopolitan development of the senses" (Berg and Eger 9), and an interest in buying more food

than necessary, eating too much, and spending more money on foodstuffs than necessary were all

of moral concern during the Wars of the Three Kingdoms—a period of economic distress and

frequent political uprisings resulting from the English attempt to control all land (and thus, agriculture) in Great Britain. So, people's "gorging and vomiting, luxuriating in food until food and body were almost synonymous" (Bynum 139), while seemingly despicable, reflect an attempt to develop "good" taste by indulging in all tastes. However, such participation in over-indulgence led only to "bad" taste since, as it may well be observed, it shifted the emphasis from the food to the one eating the food. This kind of "social exchange and consumption of good food" (Wheaton 41) served to re-define public manners—social advantage supplanted moral behavior—and consequently inspired further innovation in food preparation techniques.

So, by adopting the culinary practices of the French, the English people also developed a class system expressed most apparently through food. But, as with all things England adopted, they applied the principle of "more" to their social codes. Excess eventually consumed the whole of English society, particularly in the eighteenth century and not surprisingly since, as Basil Willey explains in his *Eighteenth Century Background*, the social mentality emphasized "a God who loved abundance and variety better than happiness or progress, and a universe whose 'goodness' consisted in its containing the greatest possible range of phenomena" (48). Considering this mindset, William Harrison's *Description of England* sensibly communicates the progressively more impressive role of food:

> In number of dishes and change of meat, the nobility of England (whose cooks are for the most part musical-headed Frenchmen and strangers) do most exceed, sith there is no day in manner that passeth over their heads wherein they have not only beef, mutton, veal, lamb, kid, pork, cony, capon, pic, or so many of these as the season yieldeth, but also some portion of the red or fallow deer. (126)

A spread of not only different meats, but different cuts of meats as well showered the tables and

filled the dishes serving the wealthy who considered the consumption of a variety of meats as a spiritual homage to the Creator. The idea was that the greater consumption and the more prolific gluttony becomes, the more spiritual the people must be. Perhaps it was the corruption of the Crown—still the religious and political authority—that promoted this idea. Such a twisted understanding of sacrifice (here, of as many animals as necessary for the sake of satisfaction) praised the butcher of domestic beasts rather than the Creator. And these toxic seeds of vanity and pride are perhaps why satire would become such a useful tool for rejecting man's indulgence. Ben Rogers argues that it was the English butcher who would eventually become a "stock character of late eighteenth-century satirical art" and who became "a leading emblem of Englishness" (125). For the English people, food determined fame, and not the reverse; they made superstars of food which further explains their social priorities and appetite for distinguishing themselves from other European nations (Chapter two further illustrates this developing nationalism as an influence of economic stimulation in England).

Perhaps it was the political unrest as a result of the union of the crowns early in the seventeenth century and anxious hunger for change so evident in writings like William Harrison's *Description of England* that compelled England to first welcome, adopt, and then claim as its own foreign goods. Perhaps it was the newly prosperous tycoons, ignorant of how to efficiently utilize their enormous profits from the spice trade, who incited a social grumbling on the part of those less fortunate. Perhaps it was, as Stephen Mennell suggests, the shoddy English attempts to imitate France's "changing social figuration, changing patterns of social contest, the changing arts of the cook, and the civilizing of appetite" (327) that compelled the English to imitate the French. Whatever the reason, Spencer boldly points out that England, under the Stuart reign, was an increasingly divided country and, therefore, "before 1640 the English ruling class

aped Spanish, French, and Italian fashions and ideas, for it was sympathetic in every way, including its cooking, to Catholic Europe" (134). Spencer's claims situate the English culinary trends in history and also provide support for England's abuse of "luxury" in the eighteenth century. What France did in the seventeenth century, the English magnified in the eighteenth century. In every way, through cooking most particularly, they piggybacked France's seventeenth century fascination with the fête (Wheaton 1), trading the restraint touted by religion for the pleasure provided by luxury.

Those who prospered from the spice trade or from these new meat vending businesses were those who purchased large country estates which created a new form of social networking. As these country estates quickly became popular, social gatherings and dinner parties were instrumental in the circulation of new culinary ideas. Particularly, the influx of French cooks into the homes of these wealthier Whig party-affiliates introduced a lighter fare to their diet (Paston-Williams 71) and revolutionized *hors d'oeuvres* served to guests of these estates. Delicate flavors made possible by the various spices as well as sauces (whether savory or sweet) accompanied the standard meats, fish, or game, lightening the heaviness and making the meal more palatable. A noteworthy resource with regard to the cultural effects of these developing flavors, *A Culinary History of Food*, mentions a "study of cookbooks" from the period which reveals "a great deal of culinary innovation, not only in the choice of ingredients (such as legumes, fruits, dairy products, and beef) but also in seasonings … The new sauces were said to be more 'delicate' and more respectful of the intrinsic flavors of other ingredients" (Flandrin 362). However, this marriage of "new" and "delicate" would become a catalyst for the growing debates over luxury in the eighteenth century as these terms were coined by both the truly wealthy and the *almost* wealthy.

Not only did these country estates create a new way to exchange culinary ideas, but we

can also better understand the social class separations from the dairy products they produced. Because "an increase in arable farming and in the number and size of estates meant more employment" (Drummond 92), more people were available to tend to cows which quickly became a principle source of both meat and dairy. However, Drummond keenly observes that although everyone benefited from the more steady employment of animals on these country estates, the wealthy enjoyed the meat while the poor only benefited from the milk: "It is clear … that butter was often eaten with bread and cheese by the poorer people; by the wealthy classes it was used almost exclusively for cooking" as an additional flavoring to meat (105). Further still, as another source mentions, "bread consumption by the elite decreased in the early modern period … As elite consumption of bread and other cereal based foods declined and popular consumption rose, not only did the status of meat and fish change, but so did that of legumes" (Flandrin 361). The boundaries between social classes, then, were made increasingly obvious by food.

For example, spicing foods came to be a symbol of social status as cookery books were published for and circulated among the affluent. Publications like *The Queens Closet Opened* (1655), which featured the favorite recipes of Charles I's wife, Henrietta Maria (Spencer 143), and *The Accomplished Lady's Delight* (1675), which featured "directions for dressing all sorts of Flesh fowl and Fish" (Spencer 144), were circulated among the wealthier classes. More cookery books created a higher demand for spices in the markets. But what is more noteworthy than the fact that the spices were more readily available is the motivation of the people in lower classes to *use* the spices to mimic a wealthier social class. For example, pease pottage, a standard mix of dried peas flavored with "coriander seed, onion, mint, parsley, winter savory, and marjoram" became a standard dish of the peasant classes after it was first desired by Lord Lumley—

employer of Robert May, who was a cook in the kitchens of Royalist nobility (Spencer 141-42).

Ironically, though, the dish was famous only after it was circulated among the masses. In this

respect, the English people were further weaving imitation into the very fabric of their entire

social structure. So to serve heavily spiced game and fish to guests was more of an attempt to

flaunt (or give the allusion of) wealth than of studying gastronomic possibilities and also

contributed to a widely accepted social methodology concerning English food in the eighteenth

century:

> There was something like a code that made a meal noble or poor and that this
>
> code was not a personal one but rather one known and shared by most people. The
>
> idea that the rich and poor were meant to eat in very different ways may seem
>
> more or less senseless to us today, but in the late Middle Ages and the
>
> Renaissance the idea was grounded in a set of theories that were believed to be
>
> objective. (Grieco 307)

This mentality contributed to the growing display of over-indulgence, since it promoted

abundance for some while creating a desire in others to imitate prosperous people. On one hand,

cooks were seemingly so enamored by the vast array of available spices that dishes sometimes

became too flavorful and, thus, flavorless. As the printing press had not yet introduced the world

to cookbooks and written recipes, these illiterate cooks relied on instinct and imprecise

measurements (Wheaton 18). On the other hand, these unlettered cooks used spices to their

culinary advantage. It seems largely obvious, then, that spicing became a "status symbol"

(Paston-Williams 36), and those who consistently used spices in their cooking were considered

to be more innovative. Hence, we see the very primitive beginnings of recognizing the position

of "chef" as a notable and distinguished profession, as well as the root of attraction to employing

French chefs as servants of luxury in wealthy English households. Though the English people had now begun to develop their own culinary guidelines, they could not escape the genius of French cooking, the leading culinary power during the seventeenth century. It was by employing French chefs that the French style and manners of cooking most effectively influenced and revolutionized English cooking.

Although country estates were located in between towns and developing urban areas, their agricultural products contributed to the urbanization of towns and also contributed to the developing English nationalism. One account records the spreading influence of butter:

> There is evidence that the consumption of butter by the working people of the towns increased steadily during the seventeenth century. A great deal more cheese was also eaten. This is not surprising, because there was a very large increase in the number of milch cows as a result of the big estates … The farmers found it paid them to make butter or cheese to sell to the nearby towns. (Drummond 105)

Drummond's ideas not only reflect the commercialization of products from these country estates, but also hint at the social class distinctions that began on the estates. That it was the "working people" who used butter suggests that they were following the trend of the estate workers. That the products from the estates were circulated among the towns suggests that the estates bolstered economic development. Put together, these ideas about food choices prove that food carried significant social implications which contributed to a developing English "nationalism." Berg and Eger point out the origin of this changing English mentality which is, predictably, French. (See the discussion of Glasse in chapter two and the discussion of domesticity in chapter 4). Melon and Montesquieu, both French political essayists, "devoted chapters of their treatises on political economy and government to luxury. They distinguished its meaning as a subject of

moral discourse from that of political economy" (Berg and Eger 11), a division that reflected

Mandeville's conclusions that both men and women alike were "by nature self-interested,

pleasure-seeking and vain, and they seek luxuries to fulfil these psychological attributes" (10). In

his *Fable of the Bees* (1723 and 1728), Mandeville argues that luxury "increases Avarice and

Rapine" which supports Hundert's conclusion that "opulent societies" are "driven by excess

rather than moderation" to create "opportunities for consumption and display" (qtd. in Hundert

32). In order to fulfill the fashionable desire for consumption, *change* exchanged its associations

with moral behavior for those of economic progress, a dangerous trade that proved Mandeville's

theory that moral behavior was itself a fashionable trend (Hundert 32). (See chapter 4 for further

elaboration of Mandeville's ideas). But perhaps these imitation efforts were not all in vain; this

obsession with luxury became a defining characteristic of "Englishness."

Food, along with a developing national identity, inspired a new cultural perspective of

happiness. During the latter half of the seventeenth century, writings like John Forster's

Englands Happiness Increased, or a Sure and Easie Remedy against all succeeding Dear Years;

by A Plantation of the Roots called Potatoes (1664) explores an emotional attachment to food:

good food brings happiness. But too much good food leads to gluttony; the most apparently

"happy" were the well-situated political figures. One record of royal behavior describes how

"[t]he four-course feasts with fifty or so different dishes, full of fantasy, music, and gastronomic

invention, dedicated to display at its most splendid and grandiose, flourished. Surely no nobility

since ancient Rome had lived and eaten with such excessive indulgence?" (Spencer 76). The

very idea of *variety* here suggests that those who were cultured in culinary techniques—or, those

who hired the esteemed French chef—were most happy. That these kinds of indulgences were

recorded as impressive further implies that such behavior was justifiable. Hence, as de Vries

concludes, "in the seventeenth century, the old arguments about the moral and social dangers of luxury came to be joined by new political ones" (44). As the erudite more frequently discussed the benefits of certain foods, the availability of recipes as a result of the printing press "led to alterations in styles and practices that refined the art of cooking" so much so that it even permeated dining at the court ceremony level (Wheaton 27). The attachment of variety to happiness further spliced social ranks by restricting happiness to the elite only. In a broader sense, this attachment to food would become the cornerstone subject of the debate over indulgence in the next one hundred years.

Encouraged by royal figures like Louis XIV in France and, of course, sweeping through English kitchens more frequently at the turn of the eighteenth century, such culinary innovation would be simultaneously the instigator of and defense against the bourgeoisie class in later decades. Paston-Williams explains this process of culinary infiltration, surmising that the return of the Stuart monarchy to the English throne in 1660 was the link between France and England. The English elite made the French cooking style fashionable following the return from exile in France of Charles II and James, Duke of York by employing French cooks and by sending English cooks to France for culinary training (163). Upon their return, the English cooks shared French recipes, whether personally or via menu served at social functions and, with the help of the printing press, the recipes for these foods were circulated from wealthy estate to wealthy estate. These new culinary delicacies were "ablaze with colour, and a table crammed with dishes at a feast would have looked like a stained glass window or the bejeweled robe of a monarch" (Spencer 76). Again, that food came to be evidence of wealth is a seemingly natural development considering the process by which foods garnished with "cockscombs, artichokes, and truffles," seasoned with "herbs and orange peel," or sauced with blancmange, "made from veal chicken,

and milk, flavored with lemon rind, almonds, and sweetened with sugar" (Wheaton 117) moved from French to English tables. It follows, then, that "in the upper reaches of society at any rate, there was a great deal of culinary innovation, not only in the choice of ingredients (such as legumes, fruits, dairy products, and beef) but also in seasonings … The new sauces were said to be more 'delicate' and more respectful of the intrinsic flavors of other ingredients" (Flandrin 362). This new interpretation of luxury is, perhaps, the motivation behind publishing cookbooks of all sorts that would overtake the upper echelon during the following century (Chapter two discusses this process in further detail).

Interestingly enough, various French terms for gluttony were adopted into the English language and applied to various English social classes. In the seventeenth century, the term *gourmandise*, French in origin, "became a synonym for gluttony, whereas *friandise*, or the love of food and the art of recognizing it, became a refinement of the civilized individual" (Flandrin and Montinari 364). So, when the wealthier Englishmen began hiring French cooks, the English culinary language underwent a reform alongside the cooking style. After all, all things foreign in England eventually become "'naturalised English'" (Hartley v). Not surprisingly, then, the public acceptance of excess and indulgence was increasingly firmer and was increasingly "English" at the close of the period. (We have already noted the differences in social structure between England and France). Eventually, the French term *gourmand*, which continues to refer to those who over-indulge in food, gave way to more elegant terms such as *gourmet* and *gastronome* (Flandrin 364-65).

As they became more readily accepted and expressed in society, these terms are the foundational example of what we now refer to as the "psychosociology of food" (Barthes 25). But first, the idea of gluttony is evident in Barthes' discussion of this growing "nutritional

consciousness:"

> We might almost say that this "polysemia" of food characterizes modernity; in the
>
> past, only festive occasions were signalized by food in any positive and organized
>
> manner. But today, work also has its own kind of food (on the level of a sign, that
>
> is): energy giving and light food is experienced as the very sign of, rather than
>
> only a help toward, participation in the modern life … On the level of institutions,
>
> there is also the business lunch, a very different kind of thing, which has become
>
> commercialized in the form of special menus … Hence, the business lunch
>
> emphasizes the gastronomic, and under certain circumstances traditional, value of
>
> the dishes served and uses this value to stimulate the euphoria needed to facilitate
>
> the transaction of business. (25)

Barthes' comments reflect the development of a labeling trend that, in the eighteenth century,

exposes the dual function of food as both a signifier of and a tool used to achieve a particular

social position. Also, that people more readily noticed and exposed gluttonous behavior over the

course of the eighteenth century is precisely why its social acceptance in the following centuries

indicated and even contributed to the development of the self. In other words, what one eats is

indicative of his or her circumstance, thus, a manifestation of the self as it was coming to be

understood in the modern age. Therefore, the more elegant the food, the more elegant the one

eating that food. As Grieco notes, "These distinctions through food, whereby the upper classes

were meant to eat more 'refined' foods, leaving coarser foodstuffs to the lower classes, were

commonplace. Some late medieval treatises on the nobility examined this problem and reminded

their readers that the 'superiority' of the more refined part of the society was due, at least in part,

to the way in which they ate" (307). As such treatises became more frequently circulated and

published, the eighteenth century English people would not need to be "reminded" that food reflects social status; it was already evident in every level of society. Rather, they would need to be reminded of proper social behavior with regard to limiting intake.

The spice trade intimately revolutionized not only food, but the world through food. As the sustaining agent of life, food is universally necessary. However, variety is a luxury, and when spices introduced assortment—of meats, breads, pastries, sauces, etc.—food became a telltale sign of social status and movement between classes was suddenly an economic possibility. If one ate well, one must be wealthy. Pretense gladly gave way to indulgence in the eighteenth century, and the debate over proper taste—that being a taste for moderation rather than for gluttony— moved to a central position in every public circle. As Berg puts it, "Social commentators had long seen the passion for material goods, and especially for luxuries, as one of the corrupting forces in society; but they also perceived luxury as a vice with public benefits" (22). Perhaps this is why Willey refers to the affinity of indulgence as a reflection of the soul of man. What was once a practice of truth—food as an indication of spirituality—was twisted to become a practice of vice, thus of the depraved state of mankind: "Whereas for the seventeenth century 'Truth' seemed to be the key-word, this time it is 'Nature'" (Willey v). Nevertheless, the remarkable improvements to the culinary world as a result of the spice trade were the beginnings of a global economy with England rising to the highest power during the next century. The positive influence of variety would eventually incite the Industrial Revolution, a period of revolutionary inventions from which we still benefit. Most importantly, these culinary changes created very visible and public social divisions unlike any other in the market. Food was well on its way to becoming the primary subject of social criticism, it was becoming memorable enough to be included as the most popular object of art, and it was becoming the largest contributor to social

division. Thanks to the French, primarily, the table was set for luxury in the eighteenth century.

Chapter 2: Un Aperitif: Understanding the Economic Context of Luxury in Eighteenth

Century Works

'But civilised man cannot live without cooks'

Owen Meredith

What is so fascinating about food is that it is unmistakably important to survival, but we tend to abuse it by indulging, by over-stimulating our senses in effort to gratify our cravings. In so doing, we sell ourselves to desire, using food as a payment. However, the vanities associated with food are rooted in the discourse of luxury that so publicly preoccupied writers, politicians, and social elitists during the eighteenth century. Particularly, the rise of the middling classes contributed greatly to the debate over what constituted a luxury good since they were the largest consumers of new luxury goods. Berg and Eger explain that during the eighteenth century luxury "came to include production, trade and the civilizing impact of superfluous commodities" (7). Namely, food became a central subject of this kind of new luxury, arousing pleasure and satisfaction for some in spite of the moral and social anxieties for others. Ironically, treatises on proper taste (as seen in the discussion of Pope, Johnson, and Hartley in chapter 2) were frequently circulated among the socializing elite who were spending much time in newly erected coffee houses and clubs, the very locations where indulgent behavior was welcomed. As we will see, a new leisure and new luxury occupied the social elite, and the social and economic structure of England was forced to assimilate these new conveniences. In the process, an English nationalism took firm root during the eighteenth century even while gluttony and excess moved to the forefront of this century-long debate over luxury as both vice and virtue.

As English noblemen began associating luxury with taste, the attachment of luxury to tangible goods grew stronger and trickled down through all social classes, triggering a need to

redefine luxury. Because the power of the lower classes in England had a stronger influence on the cultural changes taking place during the eighteenth century than the elite, Werner Sombart was right: "the other courts of Europe had either no significance in the cultural life of their countries, or they were mere slavish copies of the French court. This is particularly true with regard to the English court," even in the eighteenth century (4). And, as Stephen Mennell explains, the discussion of luxury intensified as "good taste" was associated with the behavior of the "courts and their associated elites" (108). Luxury, Sombart points out, was connected to good taste by way of "refinement," which referred to "that degree of elegance which surpasses the prevailing standards of luxury in goods" (60). Previous understandings of refinement focused on intellectual knowledge, thereby restricting the opportunity for refinement to the wealthier English people who could afford an education. However, this new association between tangible goods and refinement made luxury a possibility even for the unlearned. So, if the *opportunity* for luxury was available to all English people, then what was considered a luxury good needed clarification. At the forefront of this discussion of what Jan de Vries refers to as "New Luxury" is the addiction to "comfort and enjoyment," which is a substantial departure from Old Luxury— that which described "grandeur or exquisite refinement" (43). Old Luxury was a prevailing presence mostly in France. New luxury goods were in high demand, consuming the markets of English towns like London and Bath. The gluttonous appetites of the English people for both food and economic power encouraged the national pride of England and also worked to differentiate English fare from French fare.

In order to understand the full effect of this cultured nationalism in spite of such strong efforts at imitation, we must first consider the structural differences in economic classes between England and France. Whereas in England, the nobility and gentry maintained bureaucratic

authority following major periods of political unrest, an increased power of the French crown was the result of such unrest in France (Mennell 118). The power over trade in England, then, was not relegated to strictly the nobility and royalty as it was in France; in England, a population explosion contributed to the rising middle class which eventually became the strongest supporting force of indulgence. What was once "the embodiment of high culture" and "an essential prop upholding the established order" (de Vries 41), luxury—and, on some level, refinement—was available to all, regardless of economic situation. Therefore, what the aristocracy did, so the lower class attempted to do. For this reason, and as we will see later in this chapter, the luxury debate supported an English nationalism as it infiltrated all social circles in England, regardless of wealth.

French fare was therefore less attractive to the English people who began developing their own cooking style as an indication of national, and thus cultural boundaries. French cuisine in in the early eighteenth century still looked to La Varenne's *Le Cuisinier Francois* (1651) for proper cooking methods and techniques, particularly with regard to stocks and sauces. English fare was largely simple, avoiding accompaniments to the main dish. The English people were not yet aware that the "role [of sauces] is to point up, to prolong, or to complement the taste of the food it accompanies, or to contrast with it, or to give variety to its mode of presentation" (Child qtd. in Trubek 13-14). But the English aristocracy was aware that the French were refined, and in effort to refine their otherwise simple tastes, sought to adopt refined cooking practices while still attempting to cultivate an English nationalism.

In effort to replicate the refined French cooking style, members of the English elite began producing cookbooks and circulating them among the wealthy estates at dinner parties. These English Courtly cookbooks not only suggest that the food of France became the food of England,

but also that French was the language of refined culinary practices. As the English adopted

French methods, however, they naturalized them by modifying the ingredients, usually

emphasizing the use of cream over citrus flavorings. Even still, French recipes and the French

culinary language were absorbed by wealthy English kitchens as a way to refine taste. Perhaps

this is why Patrick Lamb's *Royal Cookery* (1710) contains "recipes and bills of fare [with]

somewhat mangled French terminology—bisque, alamode, fricassees, turkey ragoo'd, a

terreyne—and his very first recipe, for Soupe Santé, is given in two variants, 'French Way,

English Way'" (Mennell 94). Other courtly English cookbooks, namely Robert Smith's *Court

Cookery* (1723) and Charles Carter's *The Complete Practical Cook* (1730) reflect an attempt of

the English elite to simply reproduce French food in England. Directed to other "chefs," these

cookbooks included distinctly French recipes for reductions, "either stock or natural juices, over

a high heat in order to concentrate its flavor" as well as recipes for a glaze, which typically

"coat[s] large pieces of meat, fowl, game or fish" (Trubek 16). The French emphasized a grand

appearance of food and attended to detail in order to highlight the most important flavors in a

dish. Furthermore, French feasts "were not merely entertainments and celebrations—they were a

means of asserting social rank and power" (Mennell 58). So when the English elite adopted

French fare, they also adopted the French perspective of such fare. The need to distinguish their

social status through food, then, consumed the members of the aristocracy while it aggravated

the middling classes who also felt that they too deserved the opportunity to refine their tastes.

Considering the increasingly popular demand for refinement in England, the so-called

"industrious" class also began producing cookery books of its own. But unlike cookery books

circulated among the wealthy—full of attempts to re-create French fare—these new cookery

books featured English food prepared in an English way. In an effort to disassociate taste from

social status, middle-class ladies like Hannah Glasse and Elizabeth Raffald turned out pages full of common, yet gourmet food, and their credibility among the members of the working classes increased the popularity of their publications. Glasse's publication, however, penetrated the social structure of England most forcibly and must therefore be further detailed. These recipes, "which far [exceed] anything of the kind ever yet published" (Glasse), mimicked those of the French, who were universally considered "more proficient in cookery" and who "had some sort of claim to culinary superiority" (Trubek 59). Such a paradox—that an English commoner had the capability of not only imitating, but replicating the ideas of French royalty—was remarkable and revolutionary, for it helped to establish an "Englishness" that infiltrated society at every level. Her imitation efforts were twofold: on a national level, she imitated French cooking and on a social level, she imitated a nobleman's dinner. The very title of Glasse's work—*The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy (1747)*—suggests that housewives of both the peasant and developing bourgeois class could not only participate in cookery, but the *art* of cookery. As art was generally relegated to learned gentlemen and gentlewomen of a more elite status, the juxtaposition of *art* and *plain* suggests a changing perception of aesthetics in England. The "dignity achieved by the culinary arts" was available to the "artistically accomplished amateur or dilettante" whose emergence is noteworthy "in periods when a nobility [was] losing its original social functions" (Mennell 115-16). For example, Glasse addresses "every Servant who can but read" not "in the high, polite Stile" but "in their own Way" and with encouragement for good food at minimal cost so as to avoid the mistake of the so-called "great Cooks": the "odd Jumble of Things as would quite spoil a good Dish" (i). Her comments indicate the shift in social behavior that provided a platform for the debate over what constituted a luxury item. By appealing to and attracting the rising middle class, Glasse's work argued for an equal opportunity

for all to indulge in this new luxury.

Yet the irony of piggy-backing on the feats of another nation in an effort to establish a national identity remains because the French were the leading culinary force and Glasse could not escape including obviously French dishes—albeit in a "plain" and "easy" way. She claims that "every Body knows, that understands Cooking, that Half a pound is full enough or more than need be used" but that, in the same recipe, in France, a cook will "use six Pounds of Butter to fry twelve Eggs," thereby making it 'French' (ii). She includes three ways to prepare brisket, one of which is specifically entitled, "To Stew a Rump of Beef, or the Briscuit, the French Way":

> Take a Rump of Beef, put it into a little Pot that will hold it, cover it with Water, put on the Cover, let it stew an Hour, but if a Briscuit two Hours; skim it clean, then slash the Meat with a Knife to let out the Gravy, put in a little beaten Pepper, some Salt, four Cloves, with two or three large Blades of Mace beat fine, fix Onions sliced, and half a Pint of Red Wine; cover it close, let it stew an Hour, then put in two Spoonfuls of Capers or Astertion Buds pickled, or Broom Buds, chop them, two Spoonfuls of Vinegar and two of Verjuice; boil fix Cabbage Lettuces in Water, then put them in the Pot, put in a Pint of good Gravy, let all stew together for Half an Hour, skim all the Fat off, lay the Meat into the Dish, and pour the rest over it, have ready some Pieces of Bread cut three Corner ways, and fry'd crisp, stick them about the Meat, and garnish with them. When you put in the Cabbage, put with it a good Piece of Butter rolled in Flour. (22)

The English version of this recipe keeps all of the fat, and uses battered, fried turnips rather than boiled cabbage. Also, the English dish toasts the bread to use it as a layering agent in the dish. These subtle differences, along with the absence of capers, pickled astertion buds, and broom

buds, actually represent a remarkable diversion from the French recipe and the beginnings of this English nationalism. Another pair of recipes is entitled "To French a Hind Saddle of Mutton" and "Another French Way, call'd, St. Menehout" (24-25). In yet another meat dish, she omits explicit French references, yet entitles the recipe "Cutlets à la Maintenon. A very good Dish" (25). Glasse follows the same format for several meats and vegetable dishes, separating the English way from the French way, garnishing the French dishes with lemon as if that is the sole distinction between the two.

However, her recipes for fast dinners suggest that food was becoming more of a publicly social event. Dedicating her longest chapter to meals for the working, "industrious" family, "For a Fast-Dinner, a Number of good Dishes, which you may make use of for a Table at any other Time," Glasse details several "soops," broiled fish—to be served as a first course, she claims,— and hasty-puddings, pastries, and "ragoos," most of which are fried in animal lard with large amounts of butter. Ironically, these simple recipes were popular in clubs and became the undercurrent of British nationalism. In these public places, food became a social equalizing agent as dining in public quickly became a popular leisure activity among the wealthy; consequently, food became an even stronger agent of commercial luxury. Leisure time was also redefined to include dining out which, it must also be noted, afforded a new perspective of food as a means of establishing a more public, and therefore more influential identity.

The creation of public venues endorsed the imitation efforts of the upwardly mobile middling-class patrons. In these places, up-and-coming men "seeking their fortune, or if not that, then an escape from the beckoning poverty of declining trades or the stifling expectations of traditional professions, might meet contacts and find friends and lodgings in clubs [and] societies" (Berg 218). New trends—frocks made of Indian cloths, suits of the finest cotton, capes made of

Chinese silks—changed the discourse regarding luxury as people paraded outfits imported from foreign nations in an effort to appear wealthy in front of their fellow socialites. The intermingling of businessmen with shopkeepers and pedlars promoted trade and created inter-class alliances that were otherwise not likely to form. The circulation of goods, therefore, can be said to begin at the dinner table.

It was also in these coffee houses and clubs where the works of men like David Hume, a philosopher of the eighteenth century who wrote extensively on the concept of luxury and what constitutes a luxury, were circulated. For Hume, luxury was a means by which all of England could prosper; he argued simply for its advantages without regard to the moral concerns it triggers. As Berg and Eger mention in their discussion of the great debate over luxury, "Hume separated out 'philosophical' from economic questions. Luxury was a 'refinement in the gratification of the sense', and an incentive to the expansion of commerce" (12). Even though Hume's publication of *Essay 1: Of Commerce* and *Essay 2: Of Refinement in the Arts* touted luxury as a positive gain—a polishing of public social behavior and activity, he was not alone in his convictions that "politeness and civility, refinement and polish were the beneficial forces and effects of luxury" (Berg and Eger 18). Alexander Gerard, who wrote an *Essay on Taste* (1756), would agree with Hume's ideas that luxury was beneficial to commerce and that its economic advantages outweigh its moral disadvantages. However appealing was luxurious expenditure, maintaining social class boundaries was largely more challenging to determine as the population explosion of the eighteenth century continued to transform London.

Particularly, the middle class grew substantially over the course of the eighteenth century and contributed to the urbanization of major cities like London and Bath. Urbanization stimulated the economy by centralizing trade and encouraging specialization of food products. In

short, the population explosion was the reason why the opportunity for luxury goods became available for all social classes. This new paradigm—luxury as a benefit to the whole of society—reconstructed the social agenda of the English elite who were more frequently dining out while encouraging the progress of the servant class. The localization of social activity contributed to the establishment of coffee houses and clubs where people were noticed, as well as where working chefs became famous. Spencer notes that the advantage of this more "open society" during the Interregnum is that these kinds of public places gave the English people "centers of intellectual debate, visited by writers, scholars, wits, and politicians" (146). With such a positive commercial impact, it can be argued that the conversation of luxury worked to unify England in urban areas rather than further segregate social classes.

Nevertheless, these ideas of luxury were also reflected in the various taxes and sumptuary laws enacted over the course of the century. The social struggles characteristic of the eighteenth century were affected by taxes on salt, a basic, but essential ingredient for cooking. Salt was not only a preservative for food and necessary to diet but, according to Toussaint-Samat, "salt was bound to be a temptation to those who lacked it and an instrument of blackmail in the hands of those who did not" (466). It was the Church—and thus, the ruling power—who generally housed salt-pans and salt-works while the poor reaped little, if any, benefit from the commercialization of salt. Less than twenty years after Glasse first published *The Art of Cookery*, Lord Robert Clive of Plassey, founder of the Exclusive Company—an arm of the East India Company—imposed a substantial but short lived tax that, although repealed two years later in 1767, would spearhead multiple attempts by various Salt Lords for the remainder of the century. In 1780, Warren Hastings devised a system from which "the nobles, clergy and prominent citizens of the towns known as *franc-salé*, free of the salt tax, benefited by immunity" and from which "the peasants

were the first to suffer … in view of their needs" (Toussaint-Samat 468). The power over salt,

then, determined the power over people. As Trubek asserts, it is not the goods themselves that

are luxurious, but the methods by which one may both control and obtain such goods that makes

them luxurious: "Scholars who have focused on capitalism as an economic system … have

concentrated on ownership of the means of production and access to economic capital as the

major dividing force between the [gentry] and working classes" (86). These ideas mirror the

thoughts of Hume and his contemporaries concerning the national economic benefits of luxury.

However, these divisions between classes were surely part of the rising nationalism, as they were

part of the necessary assimilation process that commercialized luxury goods in order to benefit

the national economy. In this light, it follows that the publicizing of luxury afforded an equal

opportunity for all, which created a new level of equality that attempted, albeit in vain, to

minimize the vast economic chasm between rich and poor. Even more, this rising nationalism

contributed significantly to the firm establishment of the bourgeois class which would, less than

one century later, become the largest employer of French chefs—nearly five thousand by 1890

(Trubek 52). If an English nationalism was encouraged by the negative results of vice, and the

economic circumstance of England improved, then surely there was some benefit. Perhaps that is

why Annie Richardson calls luxury a "necessary vice" (121). Ironically, the more food became a

luxury good, the more people indulged in it. And the more people indulged in food, the more it

promoted trade and the stronger the economy of England became. From this logic, we can see

that the temptations to indulge are harder to overcome in light of its national benefit.

While the establishment of coffee house and clubs was briefly mentioned earlier in

conjunction with Glasse's and Hume's works, no attention was given to the development of new

social identities for the employees of these new venues. At issue was the debate over whether the

cooks in these public kitchens could establish their profession, "or whether it [was] better characterized as a trade, manual labor, or artisanal craft" (Trubek 88). The cause of such controversy was the vague definition of *profession*. Some argued that "the term 'profession' could signify any 'calling, vocation, known employment,' and in fact the term 'mechanical professions' was frequently used to characterize what would be now understood as skilled labor" (Trubek 90). Others, as Trubek further notes, argued that "the occupations which became those that fit the widely understood definition of profession … were those known … as the 'liberal' occupations" (90) which required, as W.J. Reader observes, "the education of a gentleman, and not of a trader or an artisan" (qtd. in Trubek 90). As a cook generally had little formal education, his occupation was not largely considered a profession. However, the innovation and expertise required for such an occupation gave way to new dishes that were served to those sustaining such "'liberal' occupations" (Trubek 90). The nobility effectively raised the social status of cooks by praising their expertise, but a cook was never so skilled as to be considered a learned man.

While these cooks struggled to gain recognition for their services, they transformed recipes, marking the eighteenth century as a period of departure from French-style cooking. Perhaps it was the developing nationalism that inspired new dishes. Perhaps it was the unfortunate state of the East India Company that required new measures (frequent conflicts with Parliament regarding funding, as well as conflicts with France and India led to instability and uncertainty regarding the future of the trade organization). Regardless, over the course of the eighteenth century, as Mennell notes, the cooks inspired a very "English" style of cooking:

> They show the rise of a butter-based cookery—butter, like other dairy produce, had not been greatly associated with the aristocratic cooking of the Middle Ages. Gradually too, fat-based sauces were displacing the acidic ones based on vinegar

or verjuice which had been widely used before. There was also a gradual trend

away from the use of the old strongly flavoured exotic spices, and an increased

reliance on common herbs, especially parsley and thyme. (72-73)

These revisions seemingly suggest an establishment of an English culinary aesthetic—where

variety of dishes eclipses foreign influence. That the most often used herbs were "common"

further alludes to the leveling of social classes. Even more significant is the idea that these new

foods were the product of a failed attempt by the East India Company to maintain working

relations with natives in other countries. Unfortunately, because "the colonists who actually went

out were the idle sprigs of the aristocracy," their vanity of being explorers prevented them from

successfully building the trade business and, "errors and foolishness, ill-judged operations and

clumsy initiatives, negligence and irresponsibility left the company facing a debt of 50 million

livres" by the end of 1714 (Toussaint-Samat 510). Whatever the reason for this new English-

style cooking, the public absorbed the benefits offered by these new tastes and luxuries.

As these chefs attempted to establish a social identity, they produced a slew of cookbooks

featuring an extensive variety of foods with "common" ingredients. Circulated among the masses,

these publications, with revised recipes and extensive preparatory notes were a major

contribution to the national English identity. Mennell claims that these new foods had a stronger

transforming effect than we might first consider: "Even more clearly than the recipes themselves,

the prefaces to these books show clearly for the first time that people were conscious of changes

taking place in culinary taste. The authors vitriolically denounced their predecessors and rivals,

proclaiming the superior elegance and modishness of their own recipes" (73). Not only were

these cooks—now calling themselves 'chefs'—energizing the national identity, but these

publications were proof of their "gentlemanly" status. Prior to the eighteenth century, cookbooks

were reserved for the leisure of the wealthy who could afford the required ingredients and who were literate. Yet, the printing press, which promoted wide-spread literacy, in combination with the new variety of dishes available in more public places, awarded these chefs a distinguished position in social circles. Their expertise did not rely on classical, formal education but on experience and experimentation. So, since "the wall that separates chefs from other professions is the nature of their knowledge" (Trubek 89), they were nonetheless worthy of public esteem.

Glasse's publication, along with the development of coffee houses and clubs, illustrates England's initial absorption of indulgence as a socially acceptable behavior. According to Spencer, it was the combination of these cookery books and public venues that "almost immediately became a stimulus to fantasy" (136). This change in social behavior is also reflected in the words of Charles Davenant, who wrote at the beginning of the eighteenth century, "There is no country in the world where the inferior rank of men are better clothed, and fed, and more at ease than in this Kingdom" (qtd. in Spencer 136). There was also no other place where dining in public was understood as a habit of respectable gentlemen. In taverns, "the eating-places and centres of social life" gentlemen enjoyed the 'ordinaries'—fixed price menus—of chefs like John Farley or Richard Briggs while discussing the latest political or economic happenings (Mennell 137). Perhaps then, Roland P. Desalleurs' comments in 1739 regarding the ennoblement of dinner among the middling and upper classes is an accurate observation: "…our passions, our inclinations, the times and good taste constantly refined with luxury have taught us to make supper into a ceremonious business" (qtd. in Mennell 121). Entangled by desire and social privilege, the English elite used food to showcase their refining tastes for all to see.

On the other hand, these kinds of economic developments—coffee houses, clubs, and cookery books—did serve to unify the English people through food as a symbol of national

distinction. In this light, Lisa Wood explains the "conceptual use of food" as ultimately "fulfill[ing] a political function by defining the boundaries between nations through the identification of foreignness" (616). In particular, "the latest news and gossip" was circulated in places like Buttons, Tom's Coffee House, or Will's Coffee House and such locales became centers of "discussion groups and reading libraries" patronized by men like Pope, Swift, Dryden, Addison, and Steele (Spencer 147). But in this process of naturalizing their food, the English people traded the virtues of balance and restraint for the vices of excess and indulgence. It makes sense, then, that during the latter half of the century, social critics supported proper moral behavior rather than economic advantages.

For example, developing urban trade areas in England allowed the English people to experience the styles and goods of other nations without leaving their own. Luxury goods, as they were more widely circulated, became defining features of some English cities like Bath, which was particularly charming and became the premier center of luxury in England during the eighteenth century. Although the historical significance of Bath is its prime location on the direct trade routes between England and Ireland, in the eighteenth century Bath was "where the latest trend-setting designs and products were to be found" (Berg 210). As a city overflowing with luxury goods, Bath was a leader in creating this new luxury. How true, then, that Bath offered goods that were "the best of [their] kind—even Bath buns were superior to all other buns!" (Hartley 410). The most famous buns—the Sally Lun buns—were "an infernal trouble to make, taking from sunrise to sunset to 'raise'," then were "made gold on top with the beaten yolks of eggs, and split hot and embosomed in clouds of cream" (Hartley 512). Such baked goods were indulgences of the wealthy who had leisure enough to travel to Bath. Furthermore, the markets in Bath sold the "finest beef from the mountains" and "great flagons of cider" alongside "the richest

cream" and the newest trinkets like "junket rennets" (drinking cups) to both travelers and locals (Hartley 410). Expenses for travelers were upwards of £60,000 a year for sleeping accommodations alone, and the fact that 12,000 "visitors descended on [Bath] each season in the middle of the century" (Berg 210) is remarkable during a time when transportation was generally limited to horse or foot. As a center for the exchange of luxury goods, Bath created, promoted, and delighted in trade and travel, both of which worked to promote indulgence.

A desire for indulgence also contributed to specialization in craftsmanship and trade businesses, for it created a need for larger areas to display food and more utensils with which to consume the abundance of new dishes. The eighteenth century witnessed the invention of products like the "platt," the first "genuine dining *table*" (Hartley 404), which, unlike medieval dining boards, "accommodates itself, and changes size to fit the guests" (Hartley 406). As these tables were certainly expensive (made of Spanish mahogany), only the wealthy could afford them. Finally, food had a platform to be displayed and to be admired—an official emblem of luxury. But larger, more significant tables required special utensils for serving since the food was no longer within arm's reach. It is interesting to note, however, that the metal knives, forks, and spoons—most of which came from Birmingham or Sheffield, the capitals of "Britain's consumer goods production" (Berg 213)—moved from these new tables to those of the bourgeoisie. The little trinkets and accoutrements were most often purchased by the middling classes who attempted, even in small ways, to imitate their wealthier counterparts. Thus, the influx of chinaware and serving ware grew exponentially by the end of the eighteenth century: "Orders for any one ship in the 1720s usually included 1,000-2,000 each of plates, cups and saucers, and soup plates and bowls; by the early 1770s the Company order for a season included 80,000 single plates and 87,000 small teacups and saucers" (Berg 73). As a wider variety of goods

circulated, the acquisition of such "small items of silverware" propelled a more acute awareness of "image" as well as improved the national economy (Berg 226). Based on these increases in trade, we can see how indulgence became more and more popular as people became more and more social. It is hard to imagine, then, how a nation could not benefit from luxury.

In this light, the eighteenth century commercialization of goods can be said to have created a more civilized England. The urbanization of towns created a need for systems and programs by which to regulate social behavior. Members of every social class intermingled in public places which worked to establish a distinctive national English identity. Summarizing Norbert Elias' *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners and Power and Civility*, Trubek says that these kinds of "changes in culinary sensibility can be traced to an overall shift in [English] cultural values toward the notion of civility; social class was indicated by social refinement" (7). Yet, as de Vries points out, this addiction to luxury "remains associated with ruinous expense and moral questions. It would not impress us so much if these dangerous associations were absent" (43). The attraction of goods provided comfort that on one hand encouraged a refinement in taste, but on the other hand, contradicted the restraint associated with elegance. John Crowley connects this idea of comfort with food: "Physical comfort—self-conscious satisfaction with the relationship between one's body and its immediate physical environment—was an innovative aspect of [the] eighteenth-century" (135). If the table was set with "tea equipages, tureens and cruets, and matching sets of articles, as well as small items from snuff boxes and locks to orange strainers and bottle tickets" (Berg 162)—all eighteenth century inventions—host and guests alike would be said to have enjoyed a *comfort*able meal. As it was more frequently used in conversation and applied to luxury goods, *comfort* actually created opportunity, and opportunity generated economic profit. Berg was right, then: "By the later

eighteenth century anything was possible" (163).

Yet the danger of endless possibilities remains the lack of restraint. Although Malachi Postlethwayt argued "in his dissertation 'Of Arts and Manufactories' … that the superior progress of the nation depended on a superior degree of consumption" (Berg 99), such indulgences, however stimulating, were satisfied by immoral behaviors like gluttony. As the definition of comfort merged with that of luxury, it lost its old affiliations with "moral, emotional, spiritual, and political support in difficult circumstances" (Crowley 135) and became affiliated with accessories. In this light, goods like serving ware were prized for their ability to make eating easier and more comfortable, thereby welcoming indulgence. Over the course of the eighteenth century, inventories of luxury goods in households included mostly those items associated with serving or eating a meal. More food required more silverware. Likewise, more silverware suggested that more food should be served and also suggested easier consumption. Since consumption was tied to comfort through economic profit, these items, as Mandeville had claimed in *The Fable of the Bees* (1714), were the very items that made "[l]ife more *comfortable*" (qtd. in Crowley 136). Restraint, then, was hidden behind "all the other utensils of [the] kitchen, all the furniture of [the] table, the knives and forks, the earthen or pewter plates upon which" people could "[serve] up and [divide]" their "victuals, bread, [and] beer" (Smith qtd. in Crowley 136).

The fascination with these new copper, silver, and pewter items spread among the aristocracy who assumed that an elaborate display of food on the dinner table would always impress a guest of the estate. In *The Tatler*, no. 148, 21 March 1709, Joseph Addison scorns the "false delicates" who made dinner into a showcase of dishes:

They are not to approve any thing that is agreeable to ordinary palates; and

nothing is to gratify their Senses, but what would offend those of their Inferiors.

I remember I was last summer invited to a friend's house, who is a great admirer of the *French* cookery, and (as the Phrase is) *eats well*. At our sitting down, I found the table covered with a great variety of unknown dishes. I was mightily at a loss to learn what they were, and therefore did not know where to help myself … I smelled the agreeable savour of Roast-beef, but could not tell from which dish it arose, thought I did not but question that it lay disguised in one of them. Upon turning my head, I saw a noble Sirloin on the side-table, smoking in the most delicious manner." (Addison)

While Addison's raillery confirms the Anglicizing of French food, it more importantly mocks the attempt of the wealthy to impress by merely showcasing a feast. That there was more than one meat served, as well as an abundance of foreign dishes, is proof that wealthy English *tables* served vanity and excess rather than moderation and prudence.

Also, the development of *good* taste was relegated to the acquisition of "things," which inspired a new kind of pleasure. The pleasure once derived from moral goodness was replaced by indecorous behaviors like gluttony, an unfortunate trade that conflicts with Addison's point in *The Spectator*, No. 409, 19 June 1712 that the natural human taste for pleasure must be reformed by conversing with and learning from those who have cultivated a true sense of wit and critical reading skill. His metaphorical parallel between consuming (reading) good writing and consuming good food would have appealed to his audience—the modern consumer, and he even extends his reasoning by noting that "this metaphor may not have been so general in all Tongues, had there not been a very great Conformity between that Mental Taste … and that Sensitive Taste … Accordingly we find, there are many different Degrees of Refinement in the intellectual

Faculty, as in the Sense, which is marked out by this common Denomination" (*The Spectator*,

No. 409). Because "the modern consumer … substitute[d] illusory for real stimuli, and

depend[ed] therefore on a never ending stream of new products to sustain the illusions" (de Vries

43), the possibility of developing bad taste in light of innovation and economic progress was

bound by gluttony; thus, Addison likens good mental taste with "that Sensitive Taste which gives

us a Relish of every different Flavour that affects the Palate" (*The Spectator*, No. 409). Too

many trinkets and too many choices inhibit one's ability to sensitively refine the natural taste for

pleasure.

Nonetheless, moral concerns about the behavior associated with bad taste were ultimately

hidden in the shadows of the economic progress encouraged by gluttony. Kitchens on both

country estates and in urban towns were adorned with silverware, copperware, and chinaware,

most with a surplus of table settings (Berg). The associations of surplus with comfort and

comfort with food created an addiction for luxury that revolutionized English cooking. And

economic progress provided by these luxury goods is the underlying reason for Daniel Defoe's

comment in 1731: "tis for these your markets are kept open late on Saturday nights; because they

usually receive their week's wages late … these are the life of our whole commerce …" (qtd. in

Berg and Eger 14). As the vocabulary of luxury changed, so did the behavior of indulgence.

Likewise, as indulgent behavior depended upon the innovation of new goods and new concepts

like clubs and coffee houses, luxury was a social force of economic progress.

Paradoxically, luxury benefitted and destroyed the economy of commerce during the

eighteenth century. Commerce, as Clark mentions, initially referred to social interaction and the

treatment of one's fellow man (x). However, the meaning of commerce progressed towards

purely economic benefit (for more detailed implications of this shift, see chapter 4). And as the

gratification of the senses was lead by the middling classes who were less educated and less refined, a mutation of luxury unfortunately worked to promote the indulgence and excess so characteristic of the period. For example, the development of public sales and pawnshops as a result of poor credit among the working classes weakened the actual value of luxury goods, which in turn created a higher demand. Laurence Fontaine also points out that debt repayment "depended on social status: the higher you were in society, the more time played in your favour and against your creditor" (95). The acquisition of silverware, chinaware, and other luxury goods, then, contributed to financial debt and in turn, "those without social status—the majority—all those who had no property on which to secure their loans, would have access to credit … only by pawning their possessions" (Fontaine 95). The second-hand shops existed as a result of over-indulgence. And the patrons of these shops were the plebeian and bourgeois classes. According to John Styles, pawnshops and public sales "flourished precisely because they provided opportunities and legitimizing excuses to participate in attractive forms of commercialized consumption" (105). The critique of social behavior by learned writers and those closely associated with luxury goods, then, is not surprising. Gluttony was more public, but still just as repulsive to those arguing for moderation and balance. Excess was widely available in shops and markets but still just as unnecessary.

As the English people witnessed a culinary revolution during the eighteenth century, the opportunity for comfort became more easily accessible to all. Alongside this shift was a changing perspective of what sustained the economy. Driven by a desire for and the subsequent acquisition of luxury goods, the English people traded their ability to develop good taste for a surplus of goods. The emphasis upon advantage and social influence emerged alongside the establishment of coffee houses and clubs, which were also locales for the circulation of social

critiques. By the turn of the century, the economic advances as a result of an equal *opportunity*

for luxury goods had left a distinctly English taste in their aftermath.

Chapter 3: Set the Table! Evidence of New Luxury that Reflects the Social Class Division

Is it the case, that the people with the best tables, who serve the

most delicate foods, are healthier and live longer than others?

No. The opposite is true.

~Jacques-Jean Bruhier

The literature of the eighteenth century serves as evidence of the refashioning of food as

an emblem of luxury most importantly because noteworthy writers of the period attended to the

debate—explicitly or implicitly—over luxury goods. The concept of "good taste" was largely

redefined as a by-product of luxury as writers disputed the importance of Nature in an

increasingly man-made industrial world. And Voltaire's attempt to define "luxury" in his

Dictionnaire Philosophique (1764) actually complicated the language used to describe luxury

since his definition asserted that luxury was both economically beneficial and morally

scandalous. On one hand, Voltaire contends, "it is not in human nature for all the rich men of a

country to renounce through virtue procuring for themselves for money the enjoyments of

pleasure or vanity" (202). On the other hand, he ironically points out that "a robber must never

eat the dinner he has taken, or wear the coat he has pilfered, or adorn himself with the ring he has

filched. He should throw all that, people say, in the river, so as to live like an honest man"

(Voltaire 200). This latter hostility toward luxury corresponds to the arguments of Alexander

Pope, Samuel Johnson, and David Hartley, all of whom advocated restraint and strict moral

behavior as weapons against the immorality associated with indulgence. (As a contrast, see the

discussion of Hume's ideas in the previous chapter). For other period authors like Henry Fielding

and Tobias Smollett, the growing public obsession over establishing and maintaining social

status was a laughable impropriety which they openly mocked in their narratives. Although they

challenged the advantages of luxury, all of these men indulged in the debate that consumed the literature of the eighteenth century.

In order to contextualize the argument for proper moral behavior, however, we must first attend to the controversy over the social status of cooks, which was propagated by the "troublesome estrangement in critical conceptions of the creative process" (Mack 169). The cooks in public kitchens vied for prestige as culinary inventors by claiming that their trade was, in fact, not a trade at all but a learned skill equal to that of intellectual pursuits and thus claimed to be equals with men of influence. However, the problem of equating cooking (manual labor) with wit (intellectual inventiveness) is that the definition of "wit," as Mack claims, tilted "increasingly to the side of decorum" and was unfortunately "reckoned the exclusionary badge of a leisure caste" (169). Wit, then, lost its association with intellect and was socialized as an attribute of a person's social standing rather than a person's skill. Considering this public redefinition of "wit" to be a moral degradation, Pope, along with four of his friends—John Arbuthnot, John Gay, Thomas Parnell, and Jonathan Swift—created the Scriblerus Club as a mockery of the "men in elegant cloaks—pillars of establishment" who spent their time nonchalantly spouting off "innumerable lampoons, libels, burlesques, blasphemies, and other *jeux d'esprit*" (Mack 234). Even so, the club members met in the same coffee houses of which these fools were frequent patrons; they could not escape the fruits of luxury altogether.

In opposition to those endorsing luxury as economically beneficial, Pope championed the benefits of moderation as he mocked the indulgences of the socially mobile patrons of coffee houses and clubs. Indulgence did generate a more public socialization, but as Pope argued in his *Essay on Man* (1733), moderation generated moral prosperity, which was more beneficial to the welfare of humanity than even the most advantageous social interaction. That he would dedicate

an entire epistle as a way of rightly defining "happiness," then, is fitting in light of the overwhelming public defense of indulgence as a means for economic prosperity. Although Pope's work can be wholly characterized by the neoclassical aesthetic principles of balance, order, and restraint, it was the *Essay* that most concerned man's proper perspective with regard to Nature, himself, society, and happiness. The *Essay* examines "human motivation" (Mack 530) and candidly exposes the dangers of man's submission to vice as "a ruling passion" (Pope). That man was gorging himself on food then, as the *Essay* illustrates, was more of a submission to a psychological and ethical vice than an economic virtue.

The development of Pope's ideas about moderation extends to the lingering economic distress as a result of the Jacobite rebellion and, following that, the Anglo-Spanish War (1727-29). By the time of the *Essay*'s publication in 1733, half of the population was comprised of servant and peasant classes, both of which remained in eternal debt and impoverishment as a result of the political unrest (Spencer 136). As these consumers were collectively the largest contributor to the trade market, they worked more insistently to *appear* as if the war had not affected their £40 annual income (Berg 208). Social behavior was no longer determined by income but by taste and refinement. Therefore, "currants, red herrings, salmon, [and] lobsters," which were all foodstuffs "owned by different monopolies" (Spencer 135), became less important than the "variety of cheaper materials accessible to all levels of society" (Berg 206). This shift in the value of luxury goods illustrates the claim that desire, in the eighteenth century, united the moral and physical domains (Willey 137). Rather than luxury reflecting physical income only, it reflected also the *appearance* of social influence. So because members of the middling classes were not accustomed to true wealth, their imitation attempts lent to indecorous behavior and failed attempts to achieve an influential social position. Therefore, indulgence

could not be economically beneficial.

Pope's use of the Great Chain of Being reflects Willey's ideas concerning the moral and physical realms which not only impacted the social hierarchy of England, but also led to the creation of an animal hierarchy. Aquinas had presented the Great Chain as a ladder upon which man—by his moral decisions—could either ascend toward God or descend toward depravity. That man has a choice—somewhat—about his position on the ladder was Aquinas' novel contribution to a system previously viewed as fixed. Historian Arthur O. Lovejoy surmises, "it was in the eighteenth century that the conception of the universe as a Chain of Being, and the principles which underlay this conception—plenitude, continuity, gradation—attained their widest diffusion and acceptance" (183). These ideas were unified through indulgence because the opportunity for indulgence was available to all, regardless of social status, and Pope considered such behavior to be morally depraved simply because it shifts man's perspective from God to himself. In so doing, man ignores his proper position on the chain. Pope's comments about Aquinas' "ladder," then, disturbed the accepted understanding of social classes by claiming that man's "knowledge [is] measured to his state and place" (1:71). And mocking the aristocracy, Pope wonders, "Shall he alone, whom rational we call, / be pleased with nothing, if not blessed with all?" (1: 188-89). This raillery suggests that social status, in part, still determined diet as wealthier people—"rational" people—were in a sense required to indulge as a way of demonstrating their happiness and their rank in society. Pope's use of the ladder also suggests that the wealthy ate animals whose position on the chain was closer to heaven, more clearly demonstrating that this idea of the Great Chain is much less about being and more about social distinction. So the wealthy ate only the noblest animals of each of the four rungs of the ladder—earth, water, air, and fire. Grieco's illustrations of the first three rungs (the "fire" rung

included mythical animals only) offer proof of the distinctively different dinner tables among the classes: first, unlike root vegetables, which were harvested from within the ground and were thus appropriate for lower classes, fruit was harvested from high branches, and was thus considered superior to all other plants classified as "earth" elements. Because dolphins and whales could move freely and sometimes leaped from water into air, they dominated the "water" rung of the ladder and were thus hunted and served to nobility while crustaceans and shellfish—which were smaller and could not move as freely, if at all—were consumed by lower classes. Chickens and capons were the premiere animals of the "air" because they were "obviously aerial animals" and, unlike birds that live near water (a lower rung on the ladder), were reserved for wealthy guests of honor and noble banquets (308-10). The diet of the noble Englishman, according to Drummond, was rich in game, because, "fowl [was] considered the food, par excellence, for the rich and mighty of the earth who, it was thought, needed to eat birds precisely to keep their intelligence and sensibility more alert" (qtd. in Grieco 311). Also, whereas fowl—considered a "heavenly" dish—was reserved for prestigious guests of honor, the remains of beef were offered to the servant class. Whereas a nobleman avoided an excessive amount of grains on his dinner table, the peasant's table was set with only grains (Flandrin 356). Not surprisingly, then, at the close of the eighteenth century, the purpose of the meal for the wealthy "was to please the palate of the gourmet and redound to the glory of the household" (Flandrin 371). In order to do so, foreign delicacies became necessary because they were considered "heavenly." Importing foreign goods excited a heightened sense of criticism, namely in the increased production of cookbooks over the course of the eighteenth century, and helped to further define luxury goods, for the recipes of the wealthy used different spices and cuts of meat garnished with any variety of sauce. In terms of reflecting social status, then, people became what they ate.

This relationship between food and identity is also evident in the language of luxury that, in part, redefined pleasure by way of food. In 1755, Dr. Samuel Johnson published *A Dictionary of the English Language*, in which he defined "luxury" as "voluptuousness; addictedness to pleasure. *Milton*. Lust; lewdness. *Shak.* Luxuriance; exuberance. *Bacon*. Delicious fare. *Addison*" (575). Though his definition includes the progression of the word over time, it is Johnson's inclusion of Joseph Addison's version—the most current understanding—that addresses the moral dangers of gluttony. "Luxuriousness" was defined by Johnson as "Delighting in the pleasures of the table," which is a considerable change from Shakespeare's earlier definition of "lustful; libidinous" (575). Significantly, it was the new pleasures afforded by food (see the discussion of sugar in chapter 1 and landed estates in chapter 2) that created new meanings for luxury, and these new pleasures, as they consumed the wealthy, were adopted by the lower classes—the bourgeoisie in particular. Financial limitations due to smaller incomes permitted the bourgeoisie some luxury, but not true wealth, and as it was the largest social class in England during the second half of the eighteenth century (Berg 212), it had the most influential impact on the development of social behavior.

But Johnson's *Dictionary* was preceded by a treatise that was undoubtedly one of the most exhaustive critiques of moral behavior with regard to anything prompted by luxury. In conjunction with Pope and in opposition to Hume's limited explanation of human Nature, David Hartley, who "was both necessitarian and Christian, materialist and religious," published his *Observations on Man* (1749), which studied man in relation to "the principle of the Association of Ideas" (Willey 137). Hartley's work alludes to the more objective understanding of man with regard to the social world and also reflects Pope's ideas concerning man's proper position relative to the Universe. Furthermore, that Hartley's observations were published just two years

following Glasse's publication shows how quickly the naturalizing process was shifting the focus from Anglicizing foreign goods to defining an Englishman's behavior.

Consulting works like John Gay's *Dissertation Concerning the Fundamental Principles of Virtue or Morality* (1731), Hartley connects virtuous behavior with happiness, concluding that "Our Passions of Affections can be no more than Aggregates of simple Ideas united by Association" (qtd. in Willey 143). Our ideas about virtue are, according to Hartley, what determine our ability to experience pleasure and happiness. Yet, Hartley's concern—and, this was the prevailing moral concern of those opposed to luxury—was that people "associate pleasure with the wrong objects" (Willey 143), thereby deceiving themselves by appearance. This was the problem with the bourgeoisie. As Trubek says, "Entertaining grandly was part of this … world. Dinner parties and restaurant rendezvous created the social arena needed to exhibit glamour and status" (60), or the *appearance* of them. So although indulgence stimulated and improved the economic condition of England, it tempted people to immorality through what Hartley calls the "Pleasures of Sense" most often aroused by food which "itself was of great consequence" (Trubek 60). Hartley makes clear that "he who would obtain the Maximum of the sensible Pleasures, even those of Taste, must not give himself up to them; but restrain them, and make them subject to Benevolence, Piety, and the Moral Sense" (qtd. in Willey 145). If restraint harnesses over-indulgence and actually allows for greater pleasure, then man should avoid gluttonous behavior. Without regard to Hartley's ideas, however, gross indulgence of food attracted the masses and inspired a "constellation of new bourgeoisie activities," all of which contributed to a greater emphasis on *appearance* rather than reality (Trubek 53).

As adamantly as Pope, Johnson, and Hartley argued the immorality of luxury, they could not escape the boom in trade that contributed to the development of cities that were, for the most

part, comprised of middle-class merchants and shopkeepers. This dilemma pervaded the social

attitudes evident in the eighteenth century and gave way to Saint-Lambert's expression of

'luxe'—as it consumed society—in Diderot and d'Alembert's *L'Encyclopédie (1751-64)*:

"Without an abundance of luxuries, men of all ranks believe themselves to be poor" (qtd. in

Fontaine 90). With such a mentality, then, we can understand why "new goods" like "eating and

drinking utensils" were purchased most often by members of the working class (Berg 219). As

the small gadgets were, on the whole, much less expensive than cloth or furniture, they were

more affordable for the masses and created an opportunity for all—regardless of wealth—to

indulge. In order to maintain the appearance of wealth, then, new customs like breakfast and

drinking tea were introduced among the working class as ways to utilize these new utensils.

Significantly, "by 1760 a breakfast of toast and rolls and tea was entrenched in middling circles"

(Berg 229). Berg also mentions that these socialites "sold to each other through distinctive

conversational style" in the "coffee houses and clubs where eating, drinking, and discussion took

place" simultaneously (233). Urbanization allowed for a more frequent, and therefore less formal,

interaction. At the same time, this urbanization allowed for a greater emphasis on behavior,

which men like Pope, Johnson, and Hartley both observed and criticized.

However, in order to fully understand the effect that food had on public behavior in

towns, we must first consider the dramatic influence of roast beef—the most important English

agricultural product of the century—upon the theater. Thespians recognized that the growth of

urban areas and the social exaltation of butchers in those more populated areas had contributed to

the affinity for roast beef as a symbol of Englishness, and they used this developing nationalism

to their advantage on the stage. Turning out plays like *The Englishman in Paris* (1753) and *The

Englishman Return'd From Paris* (1756), both of which use food to chronicle the development

of a young Englishman's general taste, the actors mocked the indecorous behavior inspired by

French fare (Rogers 75). And when the Haymarket theater, the Queen's theater, replaced spoken

plays (English plays) with foreign operas, patriotic men like Henry Fielding and John Gay

denounced it as being corrupt (Rogers 73). In an effort to cultivate an English patriotism,

pantomime and Italian opera were scorned by a handful of thespians who championed "serious,

manly English theatre" as well as "the virtues of roast beef" (Rogers 72).

Also using food as a way to mock the indulgences of the English upper classes which

were recognized as consuming all things French, the theater productions of these patriots hailed

sensibility as the proper English way. *The Frenchman in London* (1734), was originally a French

play and featured Jack Roastbeef, "a terse, no-nonsense merchant" whose behavior epitomized

the degeneration of English liberty into decadence (Rogers 74-75). Henry Fielding's *The Grub-*

Street Opera (1731) also mocks the increasingly indecorous English behavior and is the origin of

the timeless English anthem "The Roast Beef of Old England." Significantly, the ballad worked

to unify all English people of all social classes through food. That he recognized food as the

central unifying element of both nation and rank was perhaps what made him the finest

playwright of his time (Rogers 76). Using food to distinguish England from all other nations, the

ballad claims in the last stanza, "Then, Britons, from all nice dainties refrain, / Which effeminate

Italy, France, and Spain / And mighty roast beef shall command on the main / Oh the roast beef

of England / and Old England's roast beef!" By uniting the English people in music, Fielding's

ballad was a bridge between nationalism and social status since, unlike other European nations

whose social and political structure did not as easily allow an intermingling of social classes,

roast beef linked together the people of England—in public, at least.

Members of the Sublime Society of Beefsteaks made a patriotic anthem of Fielding's

song at their regular meetings held in the painting room—a backstage room reserved for the theater managers and playwrights. Meetings of the Beef-Steak Clubb, comprised of the esteemed patrons of the Drury Lane Theater, were nothing more than an evening of grilled steaks and story-telling, and were thus criticized as being full of empty-headed fools. Perhaps this is why Pope, in *The Dunciad*, explicitly mocked John Rich, one of the founders of the Sublime Society of Beefsteaks, for his hand in defiling the English theater, a supposedly refined social locale (Rogers 80). The club badge was "a small gold gridiron or grill, 'hung about the neck on a green Silk Ribbon'" (Rogers 79), an emblem which marks a serious shift in the use of food as paraphernalia. Roast beef was redefined as a form of luxury and it became most popularly associated with social clubs. Serving only beef accompanied by "manly" foods such as "baked potatoes, onions, beetroots and toasted cheese," the Beefsteak club was an exclusive group of no more than twenty-four members, most of which were the "quintessential, patriotic 'Freeborn Englishmen'" (Rogers 83). Interestingly enough, these men chose the most common foodstuff available in England—beef—as their acclaimed mascot.

By the mid-eighteenth century, these clubs had spread to several of London's most prestigious theaters and even to other cities like Cambridge. These social gatherings—existing by and large because of food—mark the beginnings of supper clubs (on a more familiar level) and also are precursors of the country club (on a more prestigious level). It is true, then, that Fielding's song was not just confined to the theater, but spread throughout the kitchens of England, inevitably becoming for the English people a "culinary national anthem" (Rogers 79).

However bold Fielding's attempt to unify England was, a further segregation of social classes occurred as these clubs became more and more exclusionary. By the end of the eighteenth century, a man's social influence was associated with his participation in one of the

thousands of Beefsteak clubs. Accordingly, whatever regalia—all with food images—he wore

reflected his role in the club duties. The president was adorned with a "Beefeater's hat and plume

hanging on the back of his chair" and led the meeting with "one of the club's official beef

anthems," whereas "'Boots', always the newest member, had to serve as the 'fag of the

brotherhood'," wore no regalia, and was responsible only for "bringing the steaks individually

from the spit to the diner and pouring the wine" (Rogers 84-85). Interestingly enough, while

'Boots' was considered a gentleman in larger social circles, he was relegated to the status of his

own servants in these elite clubs, and such illustrations are evidence of food's intimate

connection with social status.

Not only did Fielding's lyrics spread throughout England, but his most exemplary work

of fiction, *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling* (1749), was an instant success among the

social public because it too used food to illustrate the addiction of English people to luxury

goods and social status. However, whereas "The Old Roast Beef of England" is a mockery of the

collective attempt of English people to imitate other nations, Fielding's novel criticizes the

friction among social classes in England. The poor attempted to appear wealthy by acquiring

cheap imitations of luxury goods while the wealthy lavished themselves with an abundance of

luxury in effort to distinguish themselves. However, all parties were subject to the temptations of

gluttony that directly resulted from indulgence in luxury goods. Fielding uses substantial

references to food as evidence of such hypocritical behavior which, though it reflects England's

reforming social structure, becomes almost laughable. For example, whereas the narrator invites

the reader to sit and dine with him as he unfolds the journey of the baby orphan boy who

suddenly appears upon the bed of the prominent social figure, Squire Allworthy—whose very

name suggests importance and influence—Fielding is actually reinforcing, albeit softly, the

explicitly corrupt behavior of the wealthy, the very people most likely to read the novel. The discouraging social truths of such a story are lightened, almost erased, because the narrator recounts the events over a dinner feast, and the eighteenth century aristocrats were the only people enjoying a feast; all others survived on millet grains in porridge. In this respect, the novel appears to be presented with gentility and politesse; yet, Fielding's voice in the novel is forthright and direct in asserting that the corruption of social behavior is directly linked to food.

By associating his characters with particular luxury foods, Fielding illustrates the irony of the English people's preoccupation with luxury goods. For example, chapter five of *Tom Jones* begins, "Jones this Day ate a pretty good Dinner for a sick Man, that is to say, the larger Half of a Shoulder of Mutton. In the Afternoon he received an Invitation from Mrs. Miller to drink Tea" (757), and following is a comment on the emotional implications of their meeting. Ironically, mutton was generally reserved for the lower class, and tea was a newly formed habit among only the wealthy. Fielding's description of Jones' meal juxtaposed with his late afternoon tea is actually a contrast between Jones' presumed social status—poor—and his true rank—wealthy. In another instance, Black George is introduced to the reader over dinner. As the narrator recounts, "The Dinner Hour being arrived, *Black George* carried her up a Pullet…*George* was a great Favourite with his master, and his Employment was in Concerns of the highest Nature" (841). Pullet, or a young hen, was considered to be part of the third segment in the Great Chain of Being, and was thus, appropriate for any banquet with important guests (Grieco 310). Significantly, here the narrator elevates Black George's status just by mentioning what was served at dinner.

The novel also mocks the changing perception of refinement, which had already gripped the well-to-do social circles by the mid-eighteenth century and was becoming evident even in

lower social classes. Chapter one begins with a description of the current condition of taste, which, as the narrator suggests, is refined in public, rather than private settings. That food was associated with aesthetic taste, then, is why "[m]en who pay for what they eat, will insist on gratifying their palates, however nice and whimsical these may prove; and if every Thing is not agreeable to their Taste, will challenge a Right to censure, to abuse, and to d—n their Dinner without Controul" (Fielding 32). This use of food to show the dependence of taste upon money is precisely what distorted a proper view of refinement because it equated food with economic status: if one was wealthy, one was refined and, therefore, had better taste. The narrator further emphasizes food's socially divisive potential in his description of a "good" presentation:

> The same Animal which hath the Honour to have some part of his Flesh eaten at the Table of a Duke, may perhaps be degraded in another Part, and some of his Limbs gibbeted, as it were, in the vilest Stall in Town. Where then lies the Difference between the Food of the Nobleman and the Porter, if both are at Dinner on the same Ox or Calf, but in the seasoning, the dressing, the garnishing, and the setting forth. Hence the one provokes and incites the most languid Appetite, and the other turns and palls that which is the sharpest and keenest. (33)

The meat itself, then, is considered worthy of a noble palate only when it is trimmed with luxuries—spices, sauces—and presented well. Here, Fielding mocks the popular emphasis on *appearance*, which was, by the mid-eighteenth century, of greater importance than truth.

In another instance, while Jones is recovering from a recent quarrel, his hunger overcomes him, and when he politely explains that he "must have something to eat, and it is almost indifferent to [him] what," his Landlady suggests a "cold Buttock and Carrot," foods fit for lower class (414). Yet when Jones asks her to fry the meat, she gladly obliges his request

because "she loved money so much, that she hated every Thing which had the Semblance of Poverty" (414). That the meat was fried made it at least *appear* to be a delicacy. Other similar events pervade the novel and are evidence that *Tom Jones*, as Martin C. Battestin notes, is "firmly rooted in the soil of contemporary life" (xv), illustrating—albeit laughably—the degeneration of proper refinement in eighteenth century England.

Whereas Fielding's work concerns social behavior as it relates to morality, Tobias Smollett's work examines the natural world as a necessary environment for good moral behavior. As a critique of developing urban centers of trade and of the aristocratic class, Smollett's ideas regarding extravagance are reminiscent of Hartley's critique of appearance; urban aristocrats are the ones whom Smollett calls "insensible" in *The Expeditions of Humphry Clinker* (1760). The contrast between urban life—the social, public life—and country life—the natural, simple life— is evident in the Bramble family's travels. Matt Bramble, the novel's central character, comments on the general obsession with luxury in Bath, a spa town and center of trade for luxury goods: "Every upstart of fortune … presents himself at Bath … men of low birth, and no breeding, have found themselves suddenly translated into a state of affluence, unknown to former ages; and no wonder that their brains should be intoxicated with pride, vanity, and presumption" (50-51). Smollett's critical voice here condemns the new luxury and the people whose sense of moderation it has ruined. As an argument for simplicity, *Humphry Clinker* demonstrates Michael McKeon's ideas that "the allure of upward mobility" during the eighteenth century "engendered a crisis of conspicuous consumption in which everyone apes their betters" (58). In the novel, Matt abhors the "fashionable company at Bath," those people who "have neither understanding nor judgment, nor the least idea of propriety and decorum: and seem to enjoy nothing so much as an opportunity of insulting their betters" (51). Matt also

laments the urbanization that swallows the simplicity of the countryside as he points out the

corruption, evident in indulgence, which crowded the streets of epicurean cities like Bath:

> What I left open fields, producing hay and corn, I now find covered with streets,
>
> and squares, and palaces, and churches ... The tide of luxury has swept all the
>
> inhabitants from the open country—The poorest 'squire, as well as the richest
>
> peer, must have his house in town, and make a figure with an extraordinary
>
> number of domestics. (119)

Smollett's voice is here evident, criticizing not only the environment in which gluttony remains

unrestrained but also the changing behavior of the English people. More and more, the emphasis

on comfort and appearance eclipsed the benefit of moderation and control, leaving in its shadow

a contorted view of appropriateness.

Smollett's argument that the virtuous and happy life is one lived in the countryside marks

a substantial departure from the common perspective that in urban centers, the availability of

luxury goods is what generated happiness. And pleasure, for Smollett, can only be experienced

in natural settings, where order and balance exist in harmony with man. In the city, new luxury—

man made products—promotes vanity and destroys this harmony, leaving man "a victim of the

chaotic environment which *he*, however, has created" (Duncan 521). Although urbanites

consumed by luxury idealized the country for its tranquility, they could not fully experience it

because their deeply-rooted attachments to this new luxury had warped their understanding of

virtue and happiness. The "rural life," then, is praised for its "simplicity" which "renders [one]

subject to the control of reason and good nature" (Duncan 520); the city life is complicated by

vanity, which "most effectually perverts the faculties of the "understanding" (Smollett 340-41).

This corruption of good morals as a result of little contact with Nature is vividly reminiscent of

what Pope argues in his *Essay*: "The general order, since the whole began, / Is kept by Nature …

/ … / All in exact proportion to the state" (1:172-73, 84). Unlike the urban, man-made world, the

natural world is what endows man with the ability to restrain his indulgences so that he may

desire what is good.

From another perspective, Smollett argues against the quality of foodstuffs circulated in

cities. For example, the trade of milk in urban centers illustrates—albeit disgustingly—the

negligence of the masses:

> … carried through the streets in open pails, exposed to foul rinsings discharged
>
> from doors and windows, spittle, snot, and tobacco quids, from food passengers;
>
> overflowings from mud carts, spatterings from coach wheels dirt and trash
>
> chucked into it by rogueish boys for the joke's sake; the spewing of infants who
>
> have slabbered in the tin measure, which is thrown back in that condition among
>
> the milk, for the benefit of the next customer; and finally, the vermin that drops
>
> from the rags of the nasty drab that vends this prescious mixture, under the
>
> respectable denomination of milkmaid. (121)

Matt's description of the milk, here, is an indication of the weakening standards of taste in urban,

socialized areas. Freshness was no longer considered a necessary quality for a product to be

considered good. The livelihood of a city did not depend upon the foodstuffs themselves, but on

the consumption of them. And because Smollett rejected over-consumption, he championed the

country life as one that promotes moderation by emphasizing a higher food quality over a larger

quantity.

Although a Frenchman, Jean-Jacques Rousseau also contested luxury's hand in

urbanizing society, claiming that the vanity associated with luxury complicated and even

inhibited the development of the self; thus, his ideas not only greatly influenced English writers and thinkers, but are relevant to our discussion here. His critiques of social behavior in *Inequality* (1754) and *The Social Contract* (1762) blend Hartley's emphasis on appearance with Fielding's critique of refinement, all in the context of—as in *Humphry Clinker*—the city. Trade in urban areas, Rousseau argues, is dangerous for the consumer because it introduces them to variety: "Choice gives freedom, and freedom exposes one to moral dilemmas" (de Vries 50). The varied spices and other luxury goods circulated in the markets, then, could be said to enslave the consumer to choice, since these products "were seen to be desired more for their aesthetic effects and power to compel admiration than for the actual material needs they satisfied" (Hundert 31). Here, the emphasis on appearance exposes the dangers of indulgence in such luxury goods. Perhaps the fact that the English people willingly enslaved themselves is why Gilly Lehmann claims that "solid English fare and solid English morals go together" (75). Rousseau agreed that loose morality was becoming far too easily accepted by those indulging in the pleasures of the market and argued in *The Social Contract* that "the mere impulse of appetite is slavery" (Rousseau 28). Unlike Mandeville, who claimed that luxury strengthens society (see chapter 2), Rousseau argued that commercial luxury ultimately weakens society because it devalues human existence. In *A Discourse on Inequality*, a greater variety of luxury goods and a wider circulation of such goods ultimately "completes the evil that societies began" because "the sociable man" depends upon the "opinion of others" as he constructs "the sentiment of his existence" (199, 179). Thus, man loses his ability to construct a personal identity and exists only as a social construct.

Rousseau also condemned public life because it swallowed the behaviors of private life by arousing a desire to emulate the socially mobile whose goods were constantly on display. The availability of luxury goods in the public, then, can be said to have created artificial men and

women by way of desire. Rousseau, by attributing this false identity to the goods themselves,

exposed this "symbolic power" of luxury goods: they "have as one of their greatest powers the

self-endorsement of their possessors" (Hundert 36). As an illustration, those who owned stocks

in sugar companies were recognized as "masters of the mills" (Toussaint-Samat 552). By all

accounts, these men were considered elite since sugar dominated the trade market. In a larger

context, as "cane sugar syrup had become an international currency" (Toussaint-Samat 559),

these men had become internationally influential as a result of sugar. Rousseau explained that

luxury goods like sugar "had come to acquire the symbolic power to shape the self-

understanding of the private man behind the public mask" (Hundert 36). Social emulation, for

Rousseau, was the cause of the decline in morality among a people consumed by luxury.

Obviously, luxury was not entirely beneficial. Over-indulgence roused concerns about

moral behavior in public settings which pervaded the literature of the period. Pope, Johnson, and

Hartley defended the marriage of morality with society, claiming that "social order is a reflection

or symbol of moral order, and moral sentiment and social behavior … constitute morality. They

are in reality an inseparable unity, so that the description of one is the description of the other"

(Duncan 520). Likewise, Fielding criticized the addiction to the appearance of wealth that so

heartily consumed all social classes. Insisting that Nature was an environment more well fit for

good moral development, both Smollett and Rousseau opposed the development of urban centers

and the economic prosperity that supposedly thrived in such vile places. The declamation of

luxury evident in the works of these writers boldly attacked the perspective of those who

championed the economic advantages and, by the end of the eighteenth century, worked to

change the language of luxury.

Chapter 4: Please Stay for Coffee: The Commercial Impact of Luxury in the Eighteenth Century

Taste is not the noblest of the senses, but it is the most necessary ...

without taste, man cannot live for long, but he can live

without the other senses.

—César de Rochefort

As the concept of "good taste" became more objective, culinary language inevitably blended with the expanding language of luxury. Metaphors for taste were applied to objects of luxury in other realms such as fine art and literature, which reinforced the dependency of social behavior on food. Furthermore, by the end of the eighteenth century, critical language used in reference to the creative process had become almost synonymous with the language of gastronomy. Similar principles were applied to art and literature: good art is good, regardless of whether or not the observer judges it so; likewise, good writing is good, regardless of the reader's taste. This merger of ideas regarding food and the high arts revolutionized the language of taste among a people who were less interested in dietetics—the study of the physical effects of food—and more interested in food as a new theme of commerce. With regard to food, "the quality of a dish is an intrinsic property of the dish itself, independent of the temperament of the person who eats it. From now on, each dish was held to be objectively good or bad, and this was all that mattered" (Flandrin 431).

In order to understand this massive cultural shift in language use, however, we must first explore the context in which culinary terms were first circulated. Historically, the language of food existed primarily in medical circles and was applied to the physical effects on the body. Dating to either the twelfth or thirteenth century, Magninus of Milan's *Regimen sanitatis* argues

that "condiments make food more delectable to the taste and therefore more digestible. For what is more delectable is better for digestion. Condiments add nutritional value and correct for harmful properties" (qtd. in Flandrin 320). Because it was considered the "most perfectly 'balanced'" spice (Colquhoun 28), sugar was a remedy for any ailment, and as early as the fourteenth century, "rose- and violet-scented sugars were … considered to be helpful in curing the common cold" (Spencer 91). Other blends of sugars included conserves—mixtures of preserved fruit with sugar— that were made into small candies and served in teaspoons to the sick (Spencer 91). When one was sick, one would eat candy. In addition, in the earliest record of female hair waxing, caramel—decanted sugar—was used as "a depilatory for harem ladies" in the Arab world (Toussaint-Samat 554). With regard to beef, the staple food of England, "seasoning in such a way as to correct the natural deficiencies of the meat was accepted over seasoning for the sake of flavor (Flandrin 422). Dietary guides also record the "hottest, spiciest sauces" as accompaniments for the "'coldest' and 'crudest' meats" because such condiments were thought to stimulate a more efficient digestion of an otherwise indigestible food. Likewise, "*jance*, a mixture of white wine, cider vinegar, and ginger, along with cloves and burnt rather than white bread" was served with chicken because the heat of the ginger and the cider vinegar was believed to balance the "coldness" of the meat (Flandrin 323). And Joseph Duchesne, a French physician, recorded in the seventeenth century that salt is both "hot and dry by nature, hence its virtues are cleansing, dissolutive, purgative, constrictive, and astringent," particularly when applied to meat (qtd. in Flandrin 318). Sugar, salt, and other spices, as natural preservatives for food, were also considered to be natural preservatives of human life.

Yet the most obvious expansion of the language of food is reflected in the annals of sailors and explorers who were, during the eighteenth century, considered the carriers of taste.

Ship inventories show an increased supply of compotes and acidic foods, both of which were assumed to be the remedy for any illness. As recorded in the April 1769 journal of Joseph Banks, a naturalist aboard an English exploration ship, a reaction to 'Sower crout,' caused a rash inside his mouth. To remedy his pain, he drank lemon juice "according to Dr Holmes method," and to his surprise, "in less than a week [his] gums became firm as ever" (Spencer 222-23). In another account, Captain James Cook required that a two-year supply of "marmalade of carrots" be included in the *Resolution* and *Adventure* ships' provisions, since it, "mix'd with Water, taken now and then will prevent the Scurvey," and "will even cure [the Scurvey] if constantly taken" (Spencer 221). Significantly, these accounts confirm the growing dependence upon food as the preventer of death. But indulgence in such "medicines" was considered a cure and a weapon against disease by the socially mobile and came to be understood and accepted as a necessary vice, appropriate for such a "modern citizen," regardless of what the doctor recommended.

During the eighteenth century, this shift in the perspective of food was stimulated by criticism of indulgent behavior. That the masses were increasingly applying salt and sugar to their food was not surprising considering the strong dependence upon food as the preservation of life. Perhaps this is why Father Labat, a well-known French critic, scorned the over-consumption of saffron during one of his many excursions to England: "They use it in all their sauces, stews, and [meat] pastry. They insist that it is cordial, pectoral, anodyne, alexiterous, aperitive, and somniferous and that it fortifies the memory and cures colds and bitterness of the bile … They [sic] so many fine things about it that I would bore the reader if I tried to include them all" (qtd. in Flandrin 423). Such criticism of additives suggests that the English taste was becoming less about flavor and more about functionality. The emphasis on the food itself dwindled as the emphasis on the *use* of food spread among all social classes. So what was one manifest only in

conversations regarding dietary regulations, the language of food was more frequently applied to discussions of taste in general, which expanded its influence on social behavior.

Although dietary guidelines advocated restraint in consumption even into the eighteenth century, the definition of taste moved away from the physical towards the aesthetic, and the English people—particularly the wealthy—ignored dietetics in an effort to maximize pleasure. Father Labat's criticism of consumption, then, is not only directed toward the overuse of saffron as a preventive or healing measure, but as an indication of the moral condition of the English people. Too many—aristocrats and bourgeoisie alike—had subscribed to Mandeville's view of luxury, which "had effectively dissolved the moral and theological connotations of the term" by touting the pleasures of indulgence. Specifically, Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees* (1723) broke "the chains of ordinary language in the minds of educated persons" through his description of "the modern citizen as above all a consumer" (Hundert 37). Explaining that it is not the goods themselves, but the circulation of the goods that benefits the economy, Mandeville praises the commerce brought about by indulgence in frivolous luxury goods:

> Such were the Blessings of that State;
>
> Their Crimes conspir'd to make them Great:
>
> (F.) And Virtue, who from Politicks
>
> Had learn'd a Thousand Cunning Tricks,
>
> Was, by their happy Influence,
>
> Made Friends with Vice: And ever since,
>
> (G.) The worst of all the Multitude
>
> Did something for the Common Good. (ll. 151-58)

To be sure, the modern citizen was a consumer with a taste for luxury. Variety was fashionable

and therefore justified indulgence to the extent that the eighteenth century socialites ignored the conventional wisdom of the dietetics. The greater consumption, the greater became one's influence in modern circles. After all, "Luxury is, in some sort, the Destroyer of Sloth and Idleness. The sumptuous Man would soon see the End of his Riches, if he did not endeavour to preserve them, or to acquire more; and he is, by so much the more engaged, to perform the Duties of Society" (Melon 256). Mandeville's ideas, while lacking moral implications, As a result of the increasing consumption, then, the broadening concept of taste strengthened the economy of England, and Mandeville's suggestion that indulgence promotes the "common good" of man took root among all social classes.

Because progress was linked to consumption via the trade of goods, economic advancement required a substantial increase in consumerism. While this idea seems largely familiar to our current economy, it was revolutionary for England during the eighteenth century. The language of progress expanded to include a refinement in taste that manifested most clearly in urban marketplaces, and Mandeville connected this progress to an increased consumption by way of corrupt moral behavior:

> (N.) Envy it self, and Vanity,
>
> Were Ministers of Industry;
>
> Their darling Folly, Fickleness,
>
> In Diet, Furniture and Dress,
>
> That strange ridic'lous Vice, was made
>
> The very Wheel that turn'd the Trade. (ll. 180-85)

The wealth of a nation, for Mandeville, was rooted in the human desire for pleasure, which was ultimately found in luxury goods. As a result of the increased trade of goods like "silver salt and

pepper pots, sugar shakers, gravy jugs with hot-water compartments and coasters for holding

decanters … delicate silver teaspoons, sugar tongs or nips and tea strainers" (Colquhoun 187) in

these urban markets, the national welfare of England improved. The language of luxury, then, as

The Fable of the Bees suggests, revolved around the circulation of trinkets used to make a meal

more enjoyable:

> Thus Vice nurs'd Ingenuity,
>
> Which join'd with Time and Industry,
>
> Had carry'd Life's Conveniencies,
>
> (O.) It's real Pleasures, Comforts, Ease,
>
> (P.) To such a Height, the very Poor
>
> Liv'd better than the Rich before,
>
> And nothing could be added more. (ll. 196-202)

Mandeville's connection here between industry and convenience suggests that urban markets

were a feeding ground for luxury. Furthermore, that Mandeville relegates the "Conveniences" to

all of life—a universal relegation—as opposed to a particular social class—a specific

relegation—implies that "Ingenuity" is a benefit for all people. His ideas propose a radical

revision of indulgence by suggesting that it equalizes all social classes while strengthening a

nation's power and improving its economy.

In addition to advocating an increase in consumerism, Mandeville connected the

development of industry to the creation of jobs. Luxury created an opportunity by which it

"Employ'd a Million of the Poor, / (M.) And odious Pride a Million more" (ll. 178-79).

Mandeville's ideas are applicable to the burgeoning oyster business, for example, which not only

created manual labor jobs for the lower classes but also served a new delicacy, raw oysters, to

the wealthy. By the end of the century, the clubs of London were serving oyster "pudding," adding oysters to "steak and kidney pie," and even serving "pickled oysters" to their patrons. The English middling classes also readily adopted (and naturalized) oyster recipes in *La cuisiniere bourgeoisie* (1774). Served in "ragoûts to eat with various kinds of meat, such as chickens, fattened pullets, pigeons, wild duck, etc." (Menon 229). As they were served alongside these ragoûts, potatoes are another example of this expansion of the workforce, even in urban areas. Considered to be "an accommodating crop" because of its versatility and ease of both cultivation and storage, the potato became a lucrative product for both countrymen and city men. Potato soup was served to the masses as an alternative to bread during the grain famine of the late 1760's and was quickly considered "greatly superior to the usual food of the common people" (Toussaint-Samat 717). Potatoes adapted to a variety of soils and spaces, and for this reason, quickly rose in popularity despite the aversion of the aristocracy to such a "common" food. Even Antoine-Augueste Parmentier, a veteran of the Seven Years' War, supported the tuber, claiming that "there [is] nothing like the potato for lining the stomach," and dedicating his time to endorsing its cultivation and production in the food industry during the latter half of the eighteenth century (Toussaint-Samat 717). Farmers in the country and bakers in the city eventually heeded Parmentier's recommendations and, in the 1772 edition of *Encyclopédie,* a proposal for an industrial mill used to make potato bread appeared, which suggests that the potato was being tossed around as a product capable of mass-production. The potato became a luxury good simply because it became an economically beneficial good—both for country and city dwellers. So the greater the consumption of foods like oysters and potatoes, the more luxury embraced consumerism. By the end of the century, indulgence had largely lost its negative connotations in light of the tremendous expansion of commercial business.

Adam Smith would later attempt to revise Mandeville's theory to say that it was not just the consumption of luxury that stimulated economic growth, but that the desired goods were meaningless to the overall wealth of England. Smith argues in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) that the vanity is not in the desire for luxury, but that what was considered luxury was, in fact, worthless and therefore should not be desired: "Power and riches appear then to be, what they are, enormous and operose machines contrived to produce a few trifling conveniences" (qtd. in Berg and Eger 22). The unmerited value of convenience is, according to Smith, the cause of indecorous behavior. He argued against superfluity as well, claiming that excessive consumption was not appropriate. The *British Journal* records one dinner event as "'sumptuous,' and 'in the handsomest measure without the least disorder,'" while a contrasting point of view in "A New Ballad" describes the event as being "a riotous, drunken assembly, at which the lord mayor and aldermen foreswore pudding, beef, and custard, and were duly rewarded by the courtiers with 'Royal Cheer' (Lehmann 74). The latter report reflects Smith's view of excess well, claiming that the pomp associated with gluttony devalues the importance of moral behavior. Smith's ideas, however, would not take root in the ideologies of England for nearly another century. Unfortunately, too many people had subscribed to Mandeville's ideas, and the progress of England, by the end of the century, was dependent upon the industry of luxury, which was most evident in the kitchen.

Not only did the trade of luxury goods revolutionize the understanding and support of commerce in the public market places, but it also profoundly influenced the language of domesticity. Whereas women had typically been associated with Lady Allurea Luxury, the "voluptuous woman in chains … accused of all manner of evils," including "Sloth and Idleness … false Pleasures, and the lowest and most unworthy Sensualities" (Eger 190), the eighteenth

century witnessed a transition towards a positive view of women with regard to luxury and progress. Until the publication in 1757 entitled *The Tryal of Lady Allurea Luxury before the Lord Chief-Justice Upright, on an Information for a Conspiracy*, Lady Allurea Luxury was widely understood to embody all vice, and was accused of having "'perverted the whole Order of Nature'" with her sensual temptations (qtd. in Eger 190). However, as the pamphlet was more widely circulated, the language of luxury became less associated with women and more associated with all of humanity. Thus, the perception of women began shifting from one that assumed women to be the cause of corruption to one that believed women to be significant contributors to society. Becoming "both the subject and object of … debates about the relation between commerce and the arts" (Eger 191), women—in particular, their behavior in public—controlled the moral standard of a developing national culture. In so doing, women can be said to have changed the language of commerce.

The publication of Hannah Woolley's *The Gentlewoman's Companion* (1673) marks the beginning of a new breed of woman: a lady of the middle class. Perhaps driven by an ambition to climb the social ladder, women of the middling classes had outdone their social superiors—for the first time in English history—by stirring up what would eventually become national tradition at the dinner table. Serving up "solid, plain 'English' cooking," which consisted of "jowls of salmon, chines of beef, boiled crayfish and legs of mutton" alongside "beautifully done puddings, pies and cakes" (Colquhoun 164), these female cooks not only markedly distinguished themselves as English, but also as a dominant force of change in the social structure of England. They produced cookery books and wrote handbooks for young ladies—of the lower classes—to instruct them on the proper behavior of a lady, and they sold them to "the rising crowd—more Mrs. than Lady" in stores like Mrs. Asburn's shop in London (Colquhoun 200). Notably, *The*

Gentlewoman's Companion was addressed to women who worked for mistresses, not the mistresses themselves; the appellation of "gentlewoman" here suggests that the context surrounding the term was expanding to include more than just learned women. A "gentlewoman" came to be understood as a woman of the city (Davidson and Jaine 278), and when Eliza Smith published *The Compleat Housewife* in 1727, her words were consumed by the middle class ladies of London, the very women who embodied Hume's observation: "They flock into cities; love to receive and communicate knowledge; … their taste in conversation or living … Curiosity allures the wise; vanity the foolish; and pleasure both" (271). Cookery books were a conversation piece, a way of sharing knowledge and literacy while stimulating culinary innovation. For example, a few years before Glasse's *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* (1755), Elizabeth Moxon published *English Housewifery* (1749), which extended Smith's ideas about the proper role of a woman in the household and was circulated primarily outside of London. Moxon's work is evidence that women—even the peasant women employed on country estates—were hungry for refinement. Even more, the cookery book dominated the market so powerfully that when Elizabeth Raffald published *The Experienced English Housekeeper* (1769), she could not have anticipated that Mr. John Farley would completely plagiarize her work in his *The London Art of Cookery* (1783). Regarding the teachings of gentility, Mary Cole published the *Lady's Complete Guide* (1788) as an instructive manual specifically for poorer girls. The title of Cole's work suggests that the term "lady" had expanded to include any woman who desired to refine her manners. Furthermore, that Cole's work was in circulation for more than fifty years suggests that women were increasingly interested in cultivating a lady's taste.

These cookery books also included appendices with necessary domestic wares that every woman should have in her household inventory, which is further evidence of the revolution in

domesticity. Included in the list of basic kitchenware, Woolley suggests porcelain as the standard

tableware. Interestingly enough, porcelain was included in the category of "fine earthenware"

products that, "combined with technology and industrial development," shaped "new qualities of

taste and aesthetics" (Eger 130). What was considered "fine" shifted from that which was foreign

to that which was useful and decorative. So, Woolley explains, raspberries should be served in a

porcelain bowl "between two spoons," lest the dish not attract any attention at all (Colquhoun

176). It must be noted that these porcelain bowls were prized not just for their utility but for their

artistry as well. So called "decorators" were employed by companies like Hartley, Green & Co.,

Wedgwood, and Worcester (Berg 134). Josiah Wedgwood, pioneer of the leading Creamware

company, Wegdwood, "employed about seventy independent designers and modellers from 1770

onwards" who were responsible for decorating each piece (Eger 133). The demand for this brand

of creamware rose dramatically as the circulation of domestic cookery books increased among

the middling classes; Wedgwood understood that the success of his products depended upon the

developing taste of the female cook. Not surprisingly, then, he adapted his manufacturing

processes to fit the demand of the female public: "Innovation was a necessity not an option," he

said (Berg and Eger 133). What was fashionable, then, was what this new breed of lady desired.

The more fashionable table decorations became, the more dramatic was the change in the

food that women served. Food became an adornment of the table, a way of displaying the power

of the kitchen. What became known as "table plateaus," these early versions of centerpieces were

laid out on "long, mirrored panels" and consisted of "swirling patterns of coloured sand or sugar"

that "mimicked grottoes, temples, and follies of the modish landscape park" (Colquhoun 228).

Since "candy" was a large crystal sugar (from Candia), it was more durable for such

presentations and reflected light more brilliantly (Toussaint-Samat 556). The ultimate purpose of

this table décor was to showcase dessert, which had become the latest indulgent trend, particularly among the aspiring female gentry. As an accompaniment to the new trends of coffee and tea, both of which were served as an invitation for guests to stay and socialize at the close of a meal, the sweetness of sugar embodied the English ideal to "feed not the stomach but the palate" (Flandrin 416). What was sweet was considered pleasurable to the palate and was believed to encourage happiness. Not surprisingly then, coffee and tea tripled the amount of sugar used by the English people in the eighteenth century (Toussaint-Samat 559). Specifically, the dramatic increase in consumption "from 8 pounds a head in 1720 to 13 pounds" by 1800, owed to the "lemon creams, orange custards and brandied fruits" that were all pleasantly "scattered along the table" (Colquhoun 229). Not surprisingly, then, when Raffald published the 1780 edition of *The Experienced English Housekeeper*, her success was largely due to her confectionary recipes of "creams, possets, jellies, flummery, lemon cheese cake … and chocolate of the finest sorts" (Raffald qtd. in Spencer 229). As her following grew, Raffald opened her own shop in Manchester, marketing "high-class" culinary concepts as a necessary investment for all women. Perhaps her insightful business sense is what compelled women to repeatedly and willingly overlook the high 6s price of her cookery book. With over thirteen editions of *The Experienced English Housekeeper* in print, Raffald's innovative techniques worked to change, or sweeten the female taste.

So as women became more active in the economy of food, they expanded the economy of luxury. Elizabeth Montagu was considered the creator and embodiment of a "female taste that contributed to the foundation of contemporary moral virtue and literary criticism" (Eger 191). Aware of the power of her gender to control the language of luxury, Montagu constructed a literary salon where she promulgated "the right use of luxury" and kept in "perfect balance" the

ideas of "culture and commerce, intellect and pleasure" (Eger 192). Sophie von la Roche's

comments regarding one of her travels to London reflect Montagu's influence on the changing

economy of luxury in London: she writes that "she was 'struck by the excellent arrangement and

system which the love of gain and the national good taste have combined in producing … to

make known the thousands of inventions and ideas, and spread good taste about'" (qtd. in Berg

and Eger 264). For Montagu, the ostentatious display of wealth was less important than its ability

to create a platform for the discussion and evaluation of luxury's proper role in society. Her

greatest accomplishment, and perhaps what distinguishes her from her bawdy female

contemporaries, was her development of a "bluestocking philosophy," a term referring to "a new

attitude [of] manners and intellect, a greater equality between men and women" (Eger 192). As

such, this club—which was unlike any other club of Augustan London—can be likened to a

pioneer force in the refinement of sensibility. Whereas the wealthy, noble, and formally educated

were generally considered the only sensible ones (thus the reason for the exclusivity of clubs),

the bluestockings admitted members "on merit alone" (Eger 193) to their regular meetings in

coffee houses and in the famous Montagu House in Portman Square, a place "in which political

and social worlds crossed" (Eger 199). Or, more appropriately, this mansion was a luxurious

place where gender and class boundaries were dissolved. Donned with the latest fashionable

imports and furniture, the Montagu House, completed by 1780, was a symbol of both luxury and

equality, and it inspired changes to the code of manners, not the least of which was the

"'promiscuous seating'" of "men and women sitting next to each other rather than at separate

ends of the table" (Culquhoun 227). The success of Montagu's ideals depended upon the social

embrace of the bluestocking philosophy, and in one of her letters to a Mrs. Vesey, one of her

contemporaries, she praises the dissolution of gender boundaries:

We have lived with the wisest, the best, and the most celebrated men of our Times,

and with some of the best, most accomplished, most learned Women of any times.

These things I consider not merely as pleasures transient, but as permanent

blessings; by such Guides and Companions we are set above the low temptations

of Vice and folly, and while they were the instructors of our minds they were the

Guardians of our Virtue. (qtd. in Eger 200)

Montagu's emphasis on gender equality here suggests that men and women are dependent upon each other in order to overcome the lustful spirit that tempts them into indulgence. Like Hume, she touted the economic benefit of luxury, but she used the dissolution of gender boundaries to broaden his perspective, thereby blending together economy and morality.

These ideals supported by both the publication of cookery books and by Montagu and her patrons are, in a larger context, directly linked to the culinary revolution by way of appetite. The eighteenth century witnessed a revolution in taste—through a change in appetite—that spread from the kitchen, to the market, to the taverns and coffee houses, and back to the kitchen again. Whereas "appetite" once referred to the physical hunger one felt, the term came to include aesthetic values as well. Johnson's dictionary entry for "appetite" lists "a natural desire of good," "the desire of sensual pleasure," as well as a "violent longing" all before he mentions "keenness of stomach; hunger" ("Appetite"). If appetite was the cornerstone of the luxury debate—arguably that one's appetite determined one's propensity for indulgence as well as one's moral character—then it was the driving force of England during the eighteenth century: "Food, then, was not merely bodily fuel, but was centrally implicated in the production and reproduction of human morals and social virtues" (Wood 618).

Because the proper nourishment of children was also of concern in the increasingly

domestic spheres, didactic literature helped to instruct the younger sort in the way of a "good appetite." Locke championed good health in his *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), endorsing total body wellness as the beneficial for the development of a child. Although Locke's belief that "a sound mind in a sound body" should be the principle motivation of child-rearing was familiar to the public, Rousseau's connection between food and humanity was more influential in establishing the guidelines for a proper appetite for children. Properly nourished children, for Rousseau, were the key to "'restoring' the benevolence and fellow feeling that existed innately in children, as well as in a hypothetical "golden age" of human society" (Wood 618). Books like Sarah Harrison's *The Housekeeper's Pocket-book and Compleat Family Cook* (1777) were more detailed than their predecessors (see the discussion of other cookery books earlier in this chapter) because they included in them a section on the proper nourishment of children (Wood 619). But, as appetite had expanded to include moral behavior, the proper mental nourishment of children was of concern as well. Other didactic literature included Mary Brunton's *Discipline*, which suggested that "good food …becomes the antidote to the 'poisonous' effects of immoral literature" (Wood 621), and also uses food as a metaphor for the proper consumption of "wholesome" literature (Wood 623). Brunton's arguments about the development of children are parallel to Smollett's ideas concerning the proper restraint of consumption, which was only possible in the domestic setting of a country life. (See the discussion of *The Expeditions of Humphry Clinker* in the previous chapter). Unfortunately, such arguments seemed too rigid and were largely ignored in light of the overwhelming onslaught of luxury goods on display in the city center.

The display of luxury in the city as a result of increase trade worked to redefine "appetite" to include aesthetic taste of goods alongside physical hunger for food. As an illustration, John

Brown's *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of Trade* (1757) connected appetite to

commerce in his methodical progression—in three stages—of trade. Brown attributes the initial

exchange of goods to a desire for "mutual Humanity" and "mutual knowledge" (426). The

second stage affords convenience and "gives Birth to Arts and Sciences" (426). In the first two

stages of trade, the supply of goods remains greater than the appetite for such goods, thereby

protecting one from (to use Pope's terms) the vices of pride and vanity. But, as the third stage

approaches, demand overwhelms supply and causes the "Nature" of the appetite to change,

which "begets Avarice, gross Luxury … together with the general loss of Principle" (Brown 426).

Though presented with a heavier emphasis on the economic behavior of trade, Brown's ideas are

reminiscent of Nicholas Barbon's in *A Discourse of Trade* (1690). With an emphasis on sense

and pleasure—derived goods like coffee, tea, chocolate, and sugar—Barbon claimed, "The

Wants of the Mind are infinite, Man naturally Aspires, and as his Mind is elevated, his Senses

grow more refined, and more capable of Delight; his Desires are inlarged, and his Wants increase

with his Wishes, which is for every thing that is rare, can gratifie his Senses, adorn his Body, and

promote the Ease, Pleasure, and Pomp of Life" (74). In the case of chocolate—"the drink of the

gods"—its aphrodisiac qualities, along with its supposed healing properties, were cause enough

for "those fatigued by any sort of labour" to indulge in it (Toussaint-Samat 578). In the latter half

of the century, recipes for creams incorporate chocolate, which paired so well with "scented

essences like vanilla, bergamot, burnt almonds and coffee" (Colquhoun 229). Chocolate was

never a fundamental necessity for survival, but it became a lucrative business by the turn of the

century because the English people had developed a strong appetite for delight.

　　　　Driven by a redefinition of taste, the English people expanded their language of

commerce and in the process built what Daniel Defoe ridiculed in *The Complete English*

Tradesman (1727) as a community of "prodigious consumption" (249). By the end of the century, appetite had expanded to include more than just food, and social mobility depended more on one's taste than on one's income. Debates over the moral implications of indulgence were held in more public places—like the Montagu House—that did contribute to the overall prosperity of England. So Castel's *Plan for the Improvement of Commerce* (1732) was obviously a success in England: commerce generates industry, which produces a general well being among people (256). The foods that made people happy—sweet foods—became the featured dishes of meals while domesticity became largely redefined with food as the central focus. The circulation of food goods stimulated an increased production of luxury goods, which then stimulated further culinary innovation. Cookery books authored by women introduced the public to a new English taste while also defining a proper appetite—both physical and moral. What to do with food and how to serve food became the defining features of good social behavior; if one failed to serve food in a proper way, one must not be refined. No longer was elegance solely dependent upon wealth, but it was increasingly dependent upon cultivated taste. By the turn of the century, the language of food had grossly revolutionized that of commerce, and people, more than ever before, became what they ate.

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