ORDERING DINNER:
VICTORIAN CELEBRATORY DOMESTIC DINING IN LONDON

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Doctor of Philosophy
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by

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ABSTRACT

In the first chapter an explicitly comparative approach is selected to examine changing biases in Victorian middle-class values and attitudes through their domestic dinner-parties. Cultural Theory, derived from social anthropology, with an anthropological emphasis on the significance of commensality is integral to this thesis. The contemporary sources are principally didactic works and Marion Sambourne’s (1851-1914) *Diary* and *Menu Notebook*.

Chapter II investigates French and English culinary history to analyse then compare French system and English eclecticism as the foundation for the adoption or rejection of culinary styles amongst Victorian dinner-givers. In chapter III elaborate Victorian dinner-party cuisine is contrasted with daily dinners and nursery food. Chapter IV takes consommé as a core dinner component to define the various dining constituencies by their choices of quality in cooking method, ingredients and presentation. Chapter V assesses a nineteenth-century tendency to stigmatise kitchen work among middle-range dinner-givers. Changes in technology and labour are demonstrated as integral to the resultant cuisine.

Chapters VI and VII follow changes in service style from service à la Française to service à la Russe which reflected a paradigm shift in social organisation. English service à la Russe made the table a stage to display glass, china, plate, linen, fruit and flowers. This is then discussed in chapter VIII as an iconography of moral and social values to be adopted or rejected by different constituencies.

Chapters IX and X are not only concerned with male/female divisions of responsibility as providers and participants, but also in the hierarchic and individualist contexts of dining practice and etiquette. Locality, furnishings, domestic space, etiquette, smoking, wine, male dining and servants’ status are related through a discussion of boundaries: physical, conceptual and behavioural. These bring together the strands of classification that are used as a comparative method of deconstructing a move from established hierarchy to greater individualism among Victorian dinner-giving constituencies in London.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Victorian Domestic Dining: Choosing an approach

R. J. Cruikshank, in *The Roaring Century 1846-1946*, describes middle-class Victorian dinner parties as “their supreme social expression – the flourish of the peacock tail.”¹

Similarly Leonore Davidoff, in *The Best Circles*, notes the decline in public amusements and its replacement; domestic dining, when “…dinner became the apotheosis of the social day.”² Davidoff’s study describes the etiquette that underpinned emerging dining circles, processes that reflected the values and attitudes of a new class society.

*Cassell’s Household Guide* of 1869-71 states:

> English Society has been termed “dinner giving society.” And certain it is that it is especially the custom in England for friends to cement their intimacy by partaking of the social meal at each others houses.³

In this work, dinner, as an ‘important’ [sic] social event, is taken as the paradigm of a new form of social organisation, thus reflecting Harold Perkin’s work in *The Origins of Modern English Society*. Perkin sees the Industrial Revolution as more than the introduction of new industrial techniques. He identifies it as “a social revolution with social causes and a social process, as well as profound social effects”.⁴ Perkin’s emphasis is on the growth of a new social structure from vertical interest groups to a horizontal class based society.⁵

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⁵ Harold Perkin, 1986, op. cit, p. x.
This thesis treats changes in the use of food and entertainment as socially determined, so that such a change as alterations in the style of dining from à la Francaise to à la Russe is taken to be more than it appeared. It was not simply a new way to serve a meal, and deserves more than the usual popular single factor explanation for its appearance, such as a growing taste for hot dinners. Instead, the intention is to look at changes at the table as reflecting changes in social organisation. Eating together as a powerful symbolic act is an anthropological truism. Davidoff quotes Lady St Helier (1909), who notes that attempts by some diners to replace dinner with other less resource taxing entertainments are for the most part unsuccessful. Food, which is taken several times a day, reiterates identity in respect of others. Domestic dinner-giving was an important part of the social devices that defined identity within the diverse constituencies of the new social order.

Allied with Davidoff's statement is Mary Douglas and Jonathan Gross's analysis of celebratory eating as a hierarchy of food consumption that articulates with the graduated intimacy of relationships. Victorian dinner-giving was a multi-faceted social event involving choices governing cuisine, labour, decor and the use of domestic space. These choices were not free-floating but overtly articulated with socially derived values and attitudes specific to the actors' cosmology. Dinner was not only understood as culinary display but as a demonstration of control over the whole range of goods and services that made up the total act of dinner-giving.

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6 At à la Francaise dinners when ideally served, the food would not have been cold. Spirit lamps and frequent changes of hot plates kept food warm. À la Russe dinners also depended on efficient service and if co-ordination between kitchen and dining room was not ideal or if the waiters were too few or slow, a dinner could be served as cold as the worst service à la Française. The whole issue surrounding expectations of hot food calls on a variety of sources. 'Hot and Hot' certainly was a slogan associated with eating houses. Cooked food served warm, rather than hot, is customary in Mediterranean cuisines where the climate is not hot in all seasons. Hot food is a culturally based taste rather than a necessity as it is not an important addition to calorific value.

7 Leonore Davidoff, op cit, 1986, p. 109 quoting Lady St Helier, Memories of Fifty Years, 1909.

Victorian popular social categorisations, such as those of Henry Mayhew and Thomas Hay Escott, in defining the actor’s status to themselves, may in turn, serve as a basis for new interpretations. This combination of changing social organisation combined with changes in commensality suggested using Cultural Theory, originating in the work of the anthropologist Mary Douglas, since as an approach it offers analysis that is social, dynamic and implicitly comparative. It is for these reasons that I have selected an anthropological method usually applied to living societies to examine the past. It may be taking the much-quoted: “The past is another country, they do things differently,” to an all too logical conclusion. For similar reasons: other historians and anthropologists, such as Bernard S. Cohn, have also used anthropological methods, though not necessarily Cultural Theory, for historical studies. Peter Burke sees the use of sociology and history as complementary: “It is only by comparing it with others that we can discover in what respects a given society is unique.” Cultural Theory has been similarly used by N. A. Rupke and M. Rudwick in studying diverse approaches to geological research among nineteenth-century amateur and professional geologists.

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11 Cultural Theory is now increasingly coming to be referred to as the Theory of Cultural Complexity. In this work it is referred to as Cultural Theory.
AN ACCOUNT OF CULTURAL THEORY

Before defining Cultural Theory it is useful to say what it is not, so that the argument can be followed with conventional expectations dispelled. The usual rejecting responses to Cultural Theory are that it is a static, functionally derived model which does not accommodate social change,\(^{18}\) and it is often confused with psychological typing.\(^{19}\) It is neither, but it is also necessary to understand that the four, or possibly five, archetypal cultures discussed below represent extreme positions, and by definition, although the cultural categories themselves must be both exclusive and exhaustive, individuals operating and negotiating within them are not locked into a particular culture – their position alters with their social situation. Thus for example an individual can simultaneously occupy different social situations when moving within different contexts. In studying a changing society I would argue that it is necessary to use such a flexible model rather than be confined by the relative rigidities of a class-based analysis.\(^{20}\)

Mary Douglas’s first publication on Cultural Theory as a form of analysis applicable to all societies including complex western society, Cultural Bias, was published as an occasional paper by the RAI in 1978,\(^{21}\) and since then has been further developed by Mary Douglas and her followers. By the time Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky produced Cultural Theory in 1990, they were able to list over eighty books and papers

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18 Michael Thompson, Richard Ellis and Aaron Wildavsky, Cultural Theory, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1990, p. 3. These authors attribute the abuse of functionalism to attaching functions to whole societies rather than to constituent ways of life.

19 Michiel Schwartz and Michael Thompson, Divided We Stand: redefining politics, technology and social choice, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, 1990, p. 68. Swartz and Thompson note Douglas’s “great entrepreneurial achievement has been to disregard this separation [of the individual from society] and to treat the individual not as ‘an isolated psycho-physiological entity’ whose individuality actually comes from involvement with others”.

20 Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky, op. cit, p. 273.

using Cultural Theory in a wide range of fields including history. Since 1990 considerably more work has been published.

THE TWO DIMENSIONS AND THE FOUR CULTURAL ARCHETYPES

The theory’s starting point derives from two continua which denote the two fundamental dimensions of social organisation.

The Dimension of Classification: Grid, describes how the members of a culture are classified, loosely or tightly, and whether they are subject to or are relatively free from rules; whether their actions, for instance, are constrained by rules derived from gender and age, which are particularly evident in, say, caste societies, or whether roles are relatively fluid and negotiable, as in the competitive industrial west.

The Dimension of Incorporation: Group, measures the degree to which a group incorporates its members by, for instance, the use of group rituals, as among the members of an officers’ mess, or whether individualism counts for more than the interests of the group.

Taken together, Grid and Group denote the effectiveness with which a culture is able to demarcate and impose controls on a culture’s use of space, time, objects, resources, labour and information.

22 Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky, op. cit, Bibliography of Cultural Theory, pp. 277-82.
Figure 1: The two dimensions and the four archetypal cultures

These two dimensions, when assembled as a 2 x 2 matrix, form Cultural Theory’s four archetypal cultural categories. Each culture offers a distinct view of the world and a congruent set of appropriate behaviours, each associated with a cohesive ‘cluster’ of values and attitudes, a cosmology, which justifies both behaviour and the prevailing social organisation, and which directly derive from the two continua. Values and attitudes that are held by the members of cultures are not therefore ‘free-floating’, but directly relate to their forms of social organisation. There is a congruence in these choices, as demonstrated for instance in Schwarz and Thompson’s table of the four political cultures below. As can be seen, these cosmologies are not psychologically determined, but essentially arise from the social situations of their actors. Nevertheless, to state a platitude, an individual’s psychological make-up can obviously influence his/her social choice.


24 To deny any psychological element in any social situation can be argued as unsustainable, but to use psychological typing for a nineteenth-century social study is also, I consider, unsustainable, as we cannot know the whole individual. But by considering the wider social situation, a less isolated interpretation may be revealed.
The following elements are to be found as constituents of the two continua (see Figure 2). Grid, or classification, incorporates high or low strengths of personal autonomy, insulation from others, reciprocity among the actors, and competition between them. These categories are self-explanatory.

Group strengths are sustained or weakened by differing proportions of frequency, mutuality, scope and boundary.25 Frequency defines face-to-face interaction; in this study a typical example is of a regularly meeting dining club.26 Mutuality defines a mutually shared network of interaction, such as a dining circle. Scope is applicable to the “range of areas of social life which fall under the aegis of the group”.27 Boundary is necessarily intrinsic to all groups, for without boundary whether defined by the members or by others, they lose definition and identity, although the strength of the boundary can vary.

26 ‘The Sublime Society of Beefsteaks’, see the final chapter (VII).
27 Gerald Mars, 1994, op. cit, p. 27.
THE FOUR CULTURES

Not to begin with culture A – Individualism – may appear illogical. But as C (hierarchy) was the dominant cultural bias in Victorian London, and because hierarchs’ ideals are those propounded in many of the household books aimed at those of middle income, I will begin with C.

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29 Naming the biases A, B, C and D has been subject to several changes. Some have used names that had direct references to the study in hand. This avoids what might be considered emotive value judgements. When the same names are used in other contexts, however, they may have other connotations. This may seem too close to Humpty Dumpty’s rule (Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There*, this edition, Macmillan, London, 1872, p. 124: “When I use a word... it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less.”) but regardless of name, position in relation to the two continua should dominate over nomenclature. I have tried to keep esoteric vocabulary to a minimum, but ‘high grid’ and ‘low grid’ in relation to imposed constraint and lack of constraint, as demonstrated in Cultural Theory, are retained and used as a concise way to describe a social situation.
C - **Hierarchy.** Hierarchy is high on the continuum of classification and high also on the continuum of group strength. Space, time, individuals and artefacts are all stratified and placed at their appropriate grade in a hierarchy. Every aspect of life has its place in a hierarchical view of the world. “A place for everything, and everything in its place,” is a guiding text. Long time spans are coherent to hierarchy since hierarchic groups typically exist longer than the individuals they comprise. Long time spans are sustained through vesting value in the past, gradual adaptation in the present and incorporating the next generation to an ascribed place at the base of the group with a view to progressing, with time, up the hierarchy. In such a context individualism is necessarily secondary to group needs.

In hierarchies, by definition stratified groups with strong boundaries, disputes can be dealt with through established procedures; there is a ‘chain of command’. To sustain this structure attendant ritual and sacrifice are inherent. Where sanctions will not be strong enough, or the transgression is too great to retain the culprit within the group, and to maintain group standards, he or she is cast out: the interests of the group are greater than those of the individual. The black sheep of the family who becomes a ‘remittance man’ somewhere in the Empire is a typical example. He is sent money to keep him away from contaminating the group. Punishment in hierarchies is not capricious. Rules and responsibilities are vested in ascribed offices so that exile, for instance, as in the example, is the outcome of set procedures. The use of hierarchical rhetoric in an hierarchically biased society is often reflected in its other cultural biases.

Hierarchy, through its tight rule-bound structure and its emphasis on precedent, readily offers a rhetoric of virtue and authority that was evident in the overarching institutions of Victorian society such as government, the law and the church, and that was mirrored in lesser institutions which assumed authority in their own fields, such as the Royal Academy. By reflecting the values of greater hierarchies, the President of the Royal Academy, Frederick Leighton, for instance, was rewarded with a knighthood and
finally a peerage by the Queen, as head of the greater hierarchy. Hierarchic
organisation, as an ideal was also set as an example for domestic organisation.

D – Dissenting Enclaves. The egalitarian structure of dissenting enclaves is low on
classification but high on the measurement of group. They are egalitarian because
rejecting classification involves the rejection of authority both internally and externally.
As they have no hierarchy there are therefore no authorised procedures to apply
sanctions within the group. Fission is their typical solution to inter-group disputes:
those who transgress are thrown outside the boundary; those inside are defined as pure,
and those outside as polluted and polluting. Dissenting enclaves, therefore, maintain
their cohesion by emphasising their boundary, that is, they enhance their internal group
identity by focusing externally upon the faults of individualists and hierarchists.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood could, in some aspects of their lives, be considered
such a group: they rejected all art and artists who did not conform to their views of the
function and craft of painting. Dissenting enclaves frequently splinter, either to re-form
in new groups or to divide off individually into exile as fickle isolates (B). Dissenting
enclaves are for the most part not included in this work for they were not found within
regular dining circles. Strict vegetarians and total abstainers, for instance, who
belonged to same belief groups would have had to make compromises in most dining
circles. There are no suggestions in the literature that those who could not face the sight
of meat or alcoholic drink at table were to be specially catered to when among regular
diners. Their influence can be seen among the less extreme in moves towards ‘moderate
drinking’.

A – Individualism. The cosmology of individualists which is epitomised by
entrepreneurs, is that of the ‘unconstrained’ for they are neither constrained by their
place in a hierarchy nor do they have to withstand pressures to group conformity. In
their transactions they are competitive; for in their milieu roles are not preset. They build
and operate within networks to achieve their ends. By assuming and often superseding
elite modes, individualists aim either to promote themselves into the elite circles of established hierarchies or to enhance their network with demonstrations of their success to other individualists. Victorian individualists gave the most recherché dinners, fashionable beyond the constraints of hierarchy or egalitarianism, which could reveal their ‘arriviste’ tendencies. To give these recherché dinners required an individualist to push others further up grid. It was their staffs who performed all the tasks that made a dinner. These servants followed hierarchic rules to achieve the high standard that competitive networking demands. They might, if the individualist had the resources, have comprised a maintained hierarchy, whereas his guests were invited strategically for the individualist host’s advancement either socially or commercially. Recherché dinners and ostentatious decor were overt demonstrations of power over resources without regard to future needs, as the impression is of a continuing ability to buy more.

For individualists, precedents and tradition are rejected: the past is merely another resource to be plundered, and being unbound by group influences individualists have short time spans: their concerns are with the present.

If a Victorian individualist’s resources were limited, food could be sent in from caterers, who may also have used a network of hired butlers and footmen, as in ‘A Little Dinner at Timmins’s’.30 The description of the Veneerings in Our Mutual Friend31 also gives a satirical view of a similar dinner. The guests are described as being “as new as the newly delivered furniture”. They are an assorted group, hardly known to the hosts or each other. By choosing these guests, the host is attempting to enhance his social standing. Similarly, Du Maurier’s Sir Gorgius Midas32 is the archetypical freebooting individualist. Individualists are an easy constituency to pillory

32 Du Maurier’s cartooned arriviste host Sir Gorgius Midas’ name is a double classical allusion implying love of gold and ignoble values. Midas, King of Phrigia, requested the gods that everything he touched turned to gold; this included his food. He also misjudged a contest between Apollo and Pan, favouring Pan. As punishment for poor judgement Apollo gave Midas ass’s ears. ‘Gorgius’ as forename makes this character’s arriviste tendencies even more apparent to any Punch readers unacquainted with classical allusion.
when the overarching bias is set by hierarchy, for individualists are outsiders and break hierarchical rules.

The individualist of limited resources will maximise the visibility of his resources where this is strategically appropriate. If there is no visible advantage however, and resources are short, he may dine, in private, on bread and cheese. Resources cannot be seen as only financial, but include space, time, objects and labour. Resources among hierarchs are, in contrast, classified, conserved and appropriately allotted.

Individualists will readily steal hierarchic rhetoric in exercising capricious power over others. But a rhetoric of hierarchy without its inherent in-built checks and balances, is tyrannical.33 Whereas hierarchic rules are built up over time and derive from establishing procedures and concerns to adequately cope with the unexpected, individualists are unbounded by grid and fit their strategy to the present. Those who are subject to their authority are in turn constrained.

**B – Fickle Isolates.** Fickle isolates are highly classified. They are therefore bound by rules, but do not have the support of a group. They have little autonomy. The single maid-of-all-work who was employed by the largest number of smaller servant-employing households during the nineteenth century, is the most striking example; she was bound by the rules of others. Households typified by the Pooters in George and Weedon Grossmith’s *Diary of a Nobody*.34 If they were capricious in their commands and made her work long hours, her life was further constrained, for she could not spend time with other servants. She was obliged to eat alone for she was not incorporated into the daily life of the family. She merely supplied its service needs, existing outside their social boundary and with no other servants with whom she could interact. Because other servants were absent they could not offer support or moderate her behaviour with imposed rules. Fickle isolates are susceptible to novel influence

from any source. In this work, which concerns a commensal event among a
constituency which was above the single servant employing category, these isolated
servants are not a central concern.

Dissension from hierarchic values with constraints of isolation can be applied to
employers as justifiably as their servants. Habitually dining apart from either
networkers or hierarchic groups, yet constrained by factors that are other than the
economic poverty of maids-of-all-work, defines these isolated employers as high grid
and low group. An extreme example of an isolate employer is Dickens's lonely Miss
Havisham, sitting in her decaying wedding dress in a room with its symbolically
decomposing wedding cake. Hers is a choice of lifestyle that both excluded her from
the social round and made unusual demands on her servants.

The Autonomous Centre. A position of total withdrawal from all constraints may
not be viable, but movement towards autonomy can be effected from all the
constituencies. The autonomous centre is therefore postulated by some cultural
theorists as the fifth culture, with neither the constraints of grid nor group. The
autonomous centre often adopts the protective coloration of one of the other four
cultures (see Figure 2). Miss Havisham might, by some cultural theorists, be placed in
this position.

Those cultural theorists who argue against the autonomous centre postulate a second
isolate element in culture B. These comprise the self-selected who prefer to be
constrained by limited resources, whether social or financial, as a strategy to avoid the
constraints of the other constituencies.

illustration by Marcus Stone shows a young-looking Miss Havisham, facing p. 51; description
of her decayed bridal dress, p. 53.
36 Michael Thompson, Richard Ellis and Aaron Wildavsky, op. cit, pp. 5-11. Hermits, the fifth
category, the autonomous centre, is suggested as a position that rejects social control or the
exercise of control over others.
For the purposes of this work, the autonomous centre comprises those inclined to withdraw from the restraints of reciprocal dining, but, as the diagram can be viewed as a field, their position can be charted as nearer or farther from the centre (see Figures 1 and 2).

**THE DIAGONALS: MICROCHANGES**

Cultures cannot operate in isolation from one another. There are natural alliances and oppositions to be found along the two diagonals, A–C and B–D (see Figure 4.) One of these (A–C) is stable and can survive over considerable periods of time; the other (B–D) is unstable and short-lived.

The Stable Diagonal. The two most viable cosmologies are the hierarchs (C) and the individualists (A). What they have in common is an interest in goods and the laws that protect goods, but the strategies of their incumbents differ.

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37 Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky, op. cit, pp. 75-81. By ‘reaching beyond dualist theories’ Thompson, gives twelve kinds of microchanges in social organisation, from which these diagonals are derived.
Hierarchs plan their use of resources over time, making adaptations as these prove necessary, and they benefit from established procedures to give rewards and inflict penalties on their members. Systems of social control are developed in the interest of the group and its continuance, while the past history of the group is typically used to justify present actions and plan for the future.

Individualists, operating in unstructured networks, are enabled to make quick decisions since they are neither restrained by precedent nor inhibited by group pressures. They can therefore adapt quickly to changing circumstances. They may be sustained during reverses in fortune by the valuable goods they have acquired.

The two cultures A and C, therefore, have a symbiotic relationship. New ideas and fashions promoted by individualists are available to be modified by hierarchs, since hierarchs need a degree of innovation to remain viable. In their turn, individualists use the more stable organisation of the hierarchs to service and validate their activities. A hierarchy of servants can be pushed up grid by an individualist who needs their support as vital to his networking activities. Individualists also require the hierarchs' control over material and social rewards to enhance and consolidate their status. The arriviste needs his knighthood to go with the land he has bought. He needs status derived and validated by a predominantly hierarchical culture to further his advancement. I will return to the place of the predominating culture later.

The Unstable Diagonal. This is the diagonal of the two most unstable cultures, the fickle isolates – B, and the dissenting enclaves – D, who are also linked symbiotically. Both negate the acquisition of goods, so that neither is sustainable in a stable form. Fickle isolates are constantly pushed up-grid by others so cannot formulate a strategy for obtaining and retaining goods. Neither do they have group support. Dissenting enclaves reject the constraints of both the hierarchs and the entrepreneurs, and therefore reject the mechanisms to retain or allocate goods over time.
Dissenting enclaves sometimes effect what cohesion they can by following charismatic leaders. Whether or not they do this, they retain a monopoly of virtue within their boundary. Charismatic leaders may act as moral entrepreneurs who will survive until this culture's inherent instability ejects them beyond the boundary. Frequently such groups splinter over unresolvable conflicts.

Such a moral entrepreneur may help the group to 'capture' fickle isolates, for example, as evangelists distributing religious tracts to isolated maids-of-all-work. In their turn, the lonely domestic maid, with little freedom to join in many of a sect's activities, has no group to sustain her in her new belief, and is as likely to move to a new set of values and beliefs when given the opportunity. These capturing cosmologies thus tend to have no lasting power over their captives – in the end fickle isolates are fatalists. Whether enclavists are able to retain isolates or not, they need them as victims to justify their opposition to the activities of both individualists and hierarchists who they accuse of their exploitation.

HIERARCHY AND DYNAMISM – THE DOMINANT CULTURE AMONG OTHER CULTURES

The governing institutions of Victorian London were predominantly hierarchical though as Mary Douglas has observed, "The four cultures are particularly present in any city." Formal power was vested in their organisation, from the monarchy to local government. Hospitals, prisons, the police and organisations for administering an expanding city were, and are, predominantly hierarchical. In the private sphere, businesses as they specialised and expanded also became more hierarchical. As the cosmology of hierarchy justified the Victorians' preferred way of structuring organisations, it would therefore be more accurate to set Cultural Theory's five cosmologies within the greater culture of hierarchs (see Figure 3).

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38 Mary Douglas, 1992, op. cit, pp. 106-7. Although Douglas also notes that there is a dominating bias of, sometimes, two constituencies.
It must be noted that for one culture to exist, all other cultures are necessary to a greater or lesser degree, not least because the members of cultures define themselves by their opposition to other ways of life, ‘by what we are not, as well as by what we are’. This has been termed ‘the requisite variety condition’, that all must be present for each to exist.

C needs A to supply innovation and thus ensure adaptation to its changing circumstances. C also needs B as a ‘place of exile’, as a warning to hierarchy’s rank and file. B is the quadrant of sacrifice ‘pour encourager les autres’.\footnote{Voltaire, \textit{Candide}, on the execution of Admiral Byng.}

D needs both C and A as negative sources of identity against which they can justify tightening their own boundary. At the same time B offers D a potential source of new members from whom it may evangelistically recruit.

A needs the hierarchy C to organise the protection of its property by, for instance, sustaining the rules of contract as well as for validating the positions of its successful
aspirants. A also needs the availability of B to be pushed up grid in order to achieve its goals. As may supply moral entrepreneurs for recruiting Bs on behalf of D groupings.

B is a place of exile for rejected or failed members of A, C and D. Its members can be subject to control by any of the other three.

Those in the autonomous centre try, as previously stated, to escape the constraints of all of the four major cosmologies.

There is no equilibrium. Dynamism is built into this model since all cultures compete with each other to control resources, to manipulate rhetoric, and to influence events. In addition, they are subject to periodic changes of alliance. As hierarchy was the dominant Victorian culture, however, it is this rhetoric that was often invoked as justification for policies and behaviours. Hierarchies however are not homogeneous. Alternative sources of power are integral to the structure of true hierarchies. Hierarchies without an alternative structured power base, a place for dissent, move towards tyranny and their inherent collapse or reorganisation has been well noted.40 In great households, for instance, responsibility for food and drink was vested in a hierarchy of servants who represented a considerable source of countervailing power and whose head, the maitre d'hôtel or butler, not only took orders from his employer but also gave advice. Butlers also represented needs from the lowerarchy to the top of the hierarchy while also exercising the appropriate hierarchic power of reward and punishment to the lowerarchy.

CULTURAL CONSISTENCY WITHIN CONSTITUENCIES

A growing body of work has amassed cross-cultural support to demonstrate the essentially consistent aspects of cosmologies, as can be seen from Michiel Schwarz and Michael Thompson’s table: The four political cultures.41 This demonstrates the cultural

41 Michiel Schwarz and Michael Thompson, Divided We Stand, Redefining Politics, Technology and Social Choice, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, 1990, pp. 66-7.
consistencies of the four constituencies. Examples here have been selected for their relevance to this study:

**The Four Political Cultures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hierarchical C</th>
<th>Egalitarian D</th>
<th>Individualistic A</th>
<th>Fatalistic B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preferred way of organizing</td>
<td>Nested bounded group</td>
<td>Egalitarian bounded group</td>
<td>Ego-focused network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationality</td>
<td>Procedural</td>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Substantive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View of resources</td>
<td>Scarce</td>
<td>Depleting</td>
<td>Abundant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope of knowledge</td>
<td>Almost complete and organized</td>
<td>Imperfect but holistic</td>
<td>Sufficient and timely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social context</td>
<td>Positive group/positive grid</td>
<td>Positive group/negative grid</td>
<td>Negative group/negative grid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired systems properties</td>
<td>Controllability (through inherent orderliness)</td>
<td>Sustainability (through inherent fragility)</td>
<td>Exploitability (through inherent fluidity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural bias</td>
<td>Ritualism and sacrifice</td>
<td>Fundamentalism/millenarianism</td>
<td>Pragmatic materialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of time</td>
<td>Balanced distinction between short and long term</td>
<td>Long term dominates short term</td>
<td>Short term dominates long term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to institutions</td>
<td>Correct procedures and discriminated statuses are supported for own sake. <em>Loyalty.</em></td>
<td>Collective moral fervour and affirmation of shared opposition to outside world. <em>Voice.</em></td>
<td>Only if profitable to the individual. Of not, then <em>exit.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mixed Regimes**

Neither households nor formal organisations can usually be defined as entirely of one cultural regime. Archetypical households that can be identified as following a single cosmology are unusual and can rarely continue in the same mode over time. This does

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42 Ibid.
not, however, deny the presence of a dominating cosmology to which the whole subscribes. In the hierarchically-biased dining circles discussed in this work, male entrepreneurial activity as appropriate to individualism frequently occurred outside the house. Although the Kensington artists and other professionals such as the surgeon Sir Henry Thompson carried out some of their work at home, such as painting and seeing some patients, networking activities were facilitated by clubs and work places such as, in the case of Linley Sambourne, the offices of *Punch*. Within a household, servants can either be incorporated through hierarchy, or upgridded by individualists’ demands on their time and labour.

**FURTHER THEORETICAL SOURCES**

Cultural Theory is particularly useful when analysing the preparation, serving and eating of meals, whether in a contemporary context, as in a study of urban and suburban dining in London,\(^43\) or the dinners of a century earlier, as in this study. Cultural Theory is an incorporating analysis which, as will be shown, articulates with such work as Pierre Bourdieu’s work on classification of taste in 1980s France. Bourdieu’s *Distinction* reveals the roles of financial and symbolic capital. These were made overt in the values and attitudes expressed in writings on domestic taste in dining circles in the second half of the nineteenth century.\(^44\) Victor Turner’s concept of communitas also articulates well with Cultural Theory in describing movement between structured and unstructured time as emphasising an informality which confirmed the formal norm.\(^45\) So too does his work defining rites of reversal.\(^46\)

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Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Sociology*\(^{47}\) classifies societies, but as Stanislav Andreski points out, his classification is without causation. Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky, in *Cultural Theory*, note that his approach to societal evolution is concerned with the *development* of social relations, whereas functional analysis is concerned with relationships between patterns of behaviour at a single point in time. As a further development of functionalism, Cultural Theory charts social interactions over time. It is dynamic. This dynamism is achieved by moving from previous two-fold functional models originating in the nineteenth century, such as Durkheim's organic and mechanistic categories\(^{48}\) and Tönnies's *Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft*,\(^{49}\) which by definition only offer movement between two fixed points. Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky, however, using Cultural Theory's categories, give examples of twelve possible kinds of social constituency derived from the combinations of different alliances and oppositions of the different cultures.\(^{50}\)

Thorstein Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class*\(^{51}\) is directly applicable to dinner-giving constituencies in so far as he notes the importance of ostentatious demonstrated consumerism. His concept of conspicuous consumption has been absorbed almost as an undifferentiated truism.\(^{52}\) Cultural Theory identifies and locates conspicuous consumption as an individualist strategy.

It might be argued that a study of the social dimensions of dining is concerned with triviality. Raphael Samuel, when defining social history, points to the dangers of 'domesticating the subject matter of history' and of the need for 'a greater degree of

\(^{47}\) Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), *Principles of Sociology*, 3 vols, 1876-96.


\(^{50}\) Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky, op. cit, pp. 75-7.


\(^{52}\) Thorstein Veblen, 1959, op. cit.
disturbance' for it to fulfil its full potential. His Marxist and therefore anti-functionalist stance, which Marxists interpret as static, may be seen as conflicting with Cultural Theory. But it is argued, Cultural Theory, taking account of change as it does, is readily employed in dynamic analysis.

Richard Ellis states his case as a social scientist who applies social science to history: "I prefer to conceive of history as the field upon which theory is tested, created, refined, reformulated, confirmed and rejected. Good history makes for more powerful theories, and more powerful theories enhance our understanding of the past as well as our ability to predict the future.'53

It might be asked if hierarchy is any more than High Toryism, or individuality anything other than entrepreneurial freebooting. Both, with their recurring conflicts of interest, are well documented in nineteenth-century history. History also offers plentiful examples of the adherents of sects and the existence of constrained isolates. Cultural Theory, however, is more than description with ascription, as has been shown, with its inherent dynamism and shifts in alliances between its different cultural constituencies.

Using a label like 'conservative' is to trade on assumptions. Historians can override this by using terms contemporary with the material, such as 'High Tory' which at once reveals a set of beliefs and behaviours in a set context. But it does not reveal any wider aspects of the labelled group or their cosmology comparatively with others. Similarly historians' contextualism as a purist argument for retaining the concepts of a society considered only within the context of that society, is criticised by Richard J. Ellis in The Case for Cultural Theory: Reply to Friedman.54 Contextualism can be considered as having some of the problems of 'disparate ethnographies', although sheer mass of detail and knowledge of the period may make fine historical ethnography, as is also claimed by ethnographers of contemporary societies. By excluding a mechanism for

53 Richard J. Ellis, op. cit, p. 98.
comparison, however, material is fortified against criticism from comparative comment. It is not that cross-cultural comparison is exact in detail, but Cultural Theory can at least raise questions about the exclusively or universality of human experiences. When, in this work, comparing the siting of rooms in traditional Turkish households with those in nineteenth-century London households, it is not to say they are the same but that there are notable similarities in classification and in the nature of their boundary that highlight the nature of divisions of gender and rank with values and attitudes to nature that directly relate to culinary elaboration.55

Juliet Gardner notes the current diversity of approaches to history and the unlikelihood of finding a single path.56 Diversity of approaches can be an ever-present temptation, and rather than take such a path, this thesis is directed towards diverse aspects of a single phenomenon, Victorian celebratory domestic dining in London. This work deals with its culinary, technical, decorative and social aspects. The choice of an anthropological approach requires reference to both written sources and to artefacts as manifestations of contemporary taste. Its implicit challenge is to trace cultural consistency and thereby deviation from the formal and informal rules of dining within the various constituencies. It is possible to assemble facts and views solely from contemporary Victorian texts on dining.

This thesis analyses social change and in particular the decline in power of a social constituency which was replaced and became manifest in a new kind of commensality. By following well known theory such as the rise in conspicuous consumption,57 material could have been gathered and augmented predicated on changes in nineteenth century styles of consumption as a chronological account. The task attempted here, however, is to decode the cultural meaning of change as shown by domestic dinner-

55 See chapter IX on Domestic space.
57 Thorstein Veblen, op. cit.
giving and the paraphernalia attached to such an event. For this work Cultural Theory seemed ideal.

By taking one stance, one necessarily rejects others. Norbert Elias, in *The Civilising Process*, rejects nineteenth-century models of development such as Spencer’s, and offers a Euro-centric progression based on diffusion from elite practice. Elias’s work remains as a discrete argument, although to make comparisons with other times and places is often still considered to be outside the usual historian’s approach.

Comparison with other cultures could be considered ahistorical. Followers of Elias such as Stephen Mennell took his developmental stance and applied it to culinary taste as a way of accounting for differences in French and English cuisine. Elias’s work on the diffusion from a court elite of ‘civilised’ behaviour is the basis for Mennell’s explanation of differences in English and French culinary taste. Mennell cites the lack of a great court in England, unlike France, as responsible for the lack of an English haute cuisine. In taking a developmental path, Mennell draws a contentious conclusion, citing the ‘decapitation’ of nineteenth-century English elite cuisine by emulation of a French court based haute cuisine. Mennell’s approach is thus founded on diffusion and social emulation. Mennell, Murcote and van Otterloo, in *The Sociology of Food, Eating, Diet and Culture*, comment on Roland Barthes’ deconstruction of the contemporary meaning and social functions of decorative French women’s magazine cookery in *Elle*. Barthes is noted as not defining this 1950s culinary style as “completing its trickle down the social hierarchy before becoming extinct”. Eric Hobsbawm, in *Mass Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914*, not only notes the existence of a derivative bourgeois material culture based on aristocratic originals during a period of ‘bourgeois snobbery’

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but also a later rise of an autochthonous lower-class sub-culture which owed nothing to models from higher social classes. Hobsbawm gives the Tango culture of Buenos Aires as an example. Similarly costume fashion history offers evidence that denies the supposition of an exact 'trickle down' theory as in the recurring of styles. 1980s street fashion can be seen as a move in the reverse direction – from lower social levels to higher.

By applying Cultural Theory to a historical subject, the aim is to interpret the meanings and justifications for change in their social context, rather than attempting to attribute it to developmental tendencies. This argument may appear as advocating history with its own history removed. In applying Cultural Theory, however, the relationship of the actors to their own either 'real' or 'perceived' pasts is related to their current cosmology. Jack Goody describes an elite broader than the court as enjoying a haute cuisine in Sung period China, 960-1279. From Chinese history there are recurring contradictory examples of independent haute cuisines that are freed from court influence. Jacques Gernet, in Daily Life in China on the Eve of the Mongol Invasion, 1250-1276, for instance, describes a rich merchant class and their lifestyle in relation to other sectors of society. These merchants too were entirely separate from the court but nonetheless they enjoyed a sophisticated cuisine. Frederick Mote notes a diversity of

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63 Designers such as Vivienne Westwood were originally part of 1980s London Street fashion, before taking the style into haute couture.

64 Mary Douglas, Thought Styles, critical essays on good taste, Sage Publications, London, 1996, p. 57. Douglas argues against social movement upwards with the supression of those below. By selecting a simple up/down concept with no lateral groupings or alliances there are, therefore: "no competing solidarities".

65 Richard J. Ellis, op. cit, p. 99.


sources for fine cuisine such as a thriving restaurant cuisine in Hangchow in the twelfth century, and he notes also that Ming officials’ wives were fine cooks.68

By understanding the presence or absence of hierarchy, the presence of system – the degree that the organisation of a process is formalised and controlled, and its different constituents graded and classified – can be more rigorously examined. Food systems and their associated ways of life are likely to be consistent with other systems in a society. William Reddy, writing on the system of grading and categorisation of cloth in eighteenth-century France, for instance, relates how that particularly rigid system broke down just before 1789,69 when some systems were temporarily dislocated through revolution. But France was soon to reassert system in many activities through the imposition of the Napoleonic code, an all-embracing system. There remains in France constituencies that consistently put a high value on such systems. In 1996, elite dress designing and making, for instance, an associated and similar craft to cloth manufacture, maintains rules for garments carrying the description ‘Haute Couturier’. The number of ‘petits mains’70 (seamstresses) to be employed and the amount of hand stitching each garment must comprise are both carefully defined. It is this bias towards strong classification, an inherent aspect of hierarchy, that I argue is also the foundation of the French culinary system.

CUISINE: DIVERSE APPROACHES

Anthropological approaches to cuisine can be said to be dominated by Claude Levi-Strauss’s The Raw and the Cooked,71 but, as Jack Goody has noted in Cooking, Class and Cuisine, his work is directly based on the study of structures, linguistic, ritual and

70 ‘Petits mains’, literally translated as little hands, a nice label for lowerarchs in the hierarchy of fine garment production, whereas seamstress is merely a job description without implied rank.
art as homologies rather than as ‘thick’ description. Goody warns that the task of evaluating the structure of a meal and its associated behaviours lies in empirical validation that “rests the burden of proof with the proposer”. With this warning in mind, what could be described as purely symbolic aspects of food-taking are not addressed here. For this study the aim is to produce ‘thick’ description in order to deduce justifications of the actors’ cultural biases. Douglas and Nicod’s work on deciphering meals is an example of such ethnographic analysis that is applicable to this work.

Food history studies are at the periphery of several disciplines and so food history falls into several categories. For the most part food history does not engage directly with social science with the exception of Mennell’s All Manner of Food as discussed above. Otherwise food history falls into categories such as economic history, that is dealing with supply and distribution, as in Roger Scola’s Feeding the Victorian City, a study of food supply in Manchester, or Sidney W. Mintz’s work on sugar and the slave trade, Sweetness and Power. As sources, some works on diet were used for reference, but their concern with nutrition is mostly not relevant to celebratory dining. Examples include J. C. Drummond and Anne Wilbraham’s The Englishman’s Food which covers five centuries, and John Burnett’s Plenty and Want, A Social History

73 Jack Goody, op. cit, p. 32.
of Diet in England from 1815. Nutritional history is well represented in collections produced from the continuing Historians and Nutritionists seminar founded by John Yudkin at Queen Elizabeth, later Kings College, London. These include: Our Changing Fare, Two Hundred Years Of British Food Habits, The Making of the Modern British Diet, and Food, Diet and Economic Change, Past and Present.

Chronology, as the sole basis of organising material in foodways, is a common criterion governing their selection. C. Anne Wilson's Food in Britain, offering an account of foodways and a bibliography, is a chronology on foodstuffs and dishes from the Stone Age to the end of the eighteenth century with a short note on later changes. Anne Wilson has also edited what can be seen as a companion series of collected papers from the Leeds Symposium on Food History and Traditions. The first, in 1986, was on Tudor and Stuart Banqueting, and since 1990 the series has continued on different aspects of culinary history in Britain including a collection of papers on Victorian meals. Victorian foodways have also been the subject of a wide ranging collection of material in Sarah Freeman's Mutton and Oysters: the Victorians and their Food.

Eclectic collections selected on the basis of themes are common in the treatment of foodways of the past. For the most part these are essentially atheoretical in their


83 C. Anne Wilson, Food in Britain, from the Stone Age to recent times, Constable, London, 1973.

84 C. Anne Wilson, editor, illustrated by Peter Brears, Banqueting Stuffe, The Fare and Social Background of the Tudor and Stuart Banquet, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1991.

85 C. Anne Wilson, editor, Luncheon, Nuncheon and Other Meals, Eating with the Victorians, Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd, Far Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucestershire, 1994.

orientation. A rich and wide ranging source of papers on food history and cookery are published in *Petits Propos Culinaires*, which has now issued 53 tri-monthly numbers. The Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery also publishes papers given at the annual Symposium each year on chosen, but widely interpreted themes, such as *Taste*. In 1989, following these annual symposia, a group of London-based researchers launched a cross-disciplinary seminar on food culture and history. It produced its first volume of papers in 1993. Papers on foodways from the past can also be found in Hans J. Teuteberg's collection of European subjects from the 1989 Munster conference. To add even further to the diversity of approaches to studies of past foodways, his introduction is based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, a much criticised psychologistic, chronocentric and ethnocentric theory popular in some market research.

There is a division among some culinary historians between culinary history as literature and literature as a source for practical investigation of an ephemeral craft-based practice. It is possible to study culinary literature without culinary 'contamination'. Library research alone and library research with practical investigation are two approaches found in modern history studies, reflecting typically hierarchic and individualistic biases. The literature can be studied as a cultural form with no reference to its practical purpose. Analysis applied to culinary style derived from the rhetoric can convincingly be argued within its own boundaries, as is demonstrated in S. M. Pennell's paper 'Deciphering Culinary Allusion and Illusion' in Robert May's *Extra*

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*Ordinary Pye.*92 T. Sarah Peterson’s *Acquired Taste*93 is similarly focused on purely literary sources without interpretations of the craft of contemporary culinary practice. This can lead to what culinary historians might consider to be a superficially watertight case for interpreting past cuisines. For this thesis it was essential to use the work of historians who not only used the literature but who had also worked on craft aspects of cuisine, such as Terence Scully’s work on medieval cookery94 and Barbara K. Wheaton’s *Savouring the Past*95 which examines the role of culinary practice and cookery books. Wheaton notes changes in French cuisine not as a literary construct, but as sources for culinary practice and from that is able to show the true extent of change. Similarly Philip and Mary Hyman’s article on Vincent La Chapelle,96 is also based on both textual and culinary analysis, whilst Peter Brears’ work on *Tudor Britain*97 includes not only ingredients and methods, but culinary organisation and tableware in great houses.

To understand the rôle of cookery in the past, this craft must be weighed against the concept of cookery as a book-dominated expertise rather than as a learned craft passed on from one practitioner to another. Books are one of the material remains of this transient craft but frequently the synthesis between rhetoric and practice, particularly among middle and upper middle households was unsustainable.


In seeking original sources for this work, English eighteenth- and especially nineteenth-century household and cookery books were found to be so numerous that there are substantial bibliographies. As well as the classic *Gastronomic Bibliography* by Katherine Golden Bitting, Prospect Books produced a useful but unfortunately uncompleted series of bibliographies. For French sources, the main classics, both of haute and bourgeois cuisine, were particularly useful. They offered not only a bias towards eclecticism that ran against noted hierarchic tendencies, but the more notable were translated or used as source material and incorporated into English works.

In the present, histories of food and food habits are produced to serve a wide range of constituencies. Among the more eclectic is Margaret Visser's collection of diverse material in *The Rituals of Dinner*. Other twentieth-century histories of cuisine cover enormous time and geographic spans, and in doing so follow their Victorian precedent, Alexis Soyer and his 'ghost' in *The Pantropheon*. Culinary history offers these writers a marvellous source of unattributable anecdotes. Food with its potent but implied messages of class and gender is frequently considered not a subject for serious attention, and culinary history is


consequently often relegated to validating past female domestic work for present readers of ‘pillow’ cookery.

In this work, food choices are focused on those from the diary and menu notebook of Marion Sambourne (1851-1914), and the diary of her husband the *Punch* cartoonist Linley Sambourne (1844-1910). The case for relying on Marion Sambourne’s *Diary* and *Menu Notebook* are that there are no other personal accounts of middle-league London dinners that I have been able to find. The Sambourne accounts concern dinners that were actually cooked and eaten in a house that still retains most of its original furnishings. The *Menu Notebook* also records the dinners they attended as well as gave, noting what was eaten and what was admired by Marion Sambourne.

It may be argued that the nineteenth-century deluge of books on cookery is more useful for a quantitative survey of tastes in dinner cuisine. They are useful in as far as they show the range and biases of cookery writers who wrote for their particular readerships. These works also give an idea of fashion, with the leading chefs demonstrating the latest cuisine. But books were written as guides; they were not tailored to the particular circumstances of each occasion. Giving a dinner is led by many considerations, as anyone who has provided a meal for friends will know. Marion Sambourne’s dinners were a personal record of real dinners in their physical and social context. There was no hidden agenda of a public to be taught or impressed, as with printed works.

Work on the diaries is supported by Shirley Nicholson’s book *A Victorian Household*103 using material from the Sambourne diaries. Unfortunately, access to the diary and notebook was limited by the management at 18 Stafford Terrace, the Sambourne’s carefully preserved Kensington house. As I finished changes were in progress which will allow better access. There is more work to be done on reciprocity in and beyond the Sambournes’ dining circle. A second set of manuscript diaries, those

of Sir Henry Thompson, were unable to be traced in spite of following up all the conventional sources as well as tracing a relative.

The prime nineteenth-century published sources are household works and specialist books for the appropriate specialist fields such as recipes, servants, childcare, etiquette, taste and fashion in decor. Many of these are more than plain instruction; they include a range of useful comment. It has been possible to find contemporary works on all aspects of dining.

Novels represent an ambiguous source of data. Patricia Branca, in *Silent Sisterhood, Middle Class Women in the Victorian Home* makes the case for using material written for households, rather than novels, as novelists were primarily story-tellers. She supports this view with Peter Laslett’s caution against novels as sources, as the outcome can be a view of the exceptional subsequently to be believed as quite normal. In *Silver Fork Society*, Alison Adburgham notes that Theodore Hook included several dinners in his novels as he considered key moments of social interaction occurred at and around dinner. But, as in Benjamin Disraeli’s novels, these portrayals of elite dining are too inclined to flattery for use as substantial social comment. Authors such as W. M. Thackeray, Charles Dickens and Anthony Trollope not only knew the world of London dining, in which they were active participants, but incorporated experience of various dining circles as critical social comment to augment their narratives.

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Punch\textsuperscript{107} is a useful source as it appears to have been addressing a middle range, predominantly male readership, those at the centre of the dining circles. Punch is also useful as a source of literal evidence with illustrations showing detail that give social location to cartoons.\textsuperscript{108} Its satirical writing and cartoons supported the biases of its readers with comment that drew the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. Jokes reinforced class and national boundaries by making fools of proletarians and foreigners and also by reversing readers' expectations, such as the parlour-maid who speaks better French than her employer. Many Punch jokes, particularly George Du Maurier's later cartoons, from about 1880 to 1895,\textsuperscript{109} support Sigmund Freud's theory on subjects feared as subjects for humour.\textsuperscript{110} Freud's work is often dismissed as inappropriate in the late twentieth century. In this case, as he was a late nineteenth-century practitioner in Vienna, a city where tensions between hierarchy and individualism were especially evident, his perceptions have perhaps greater potency than for those who might regard them as inappropriate for clinical use today.

THE GENERAL ECONOMIC CLIMATE AND MICRO-CLIMATES

Emulation and identity were recurrent themes in the many didactic works on dining that purported to define the appropriate demonstrations of economic and symbolic capital.\textsuperscript{111} These works attempted to direct readers to their appropriate or desired place on the social map. An implication that can be drawn from this literature is of taking dining constituencies onward with fashion and upwards with increasing economic

\textsuperscript{107} Punch or the London Charivari, was published in London from July 1841 for the rest of the period under discussion and beyond.

\textsuperscript{108} Linley Sambourne hired costumes and took photographs to capture true representations in his cartoons. Sambourne's photograph collection is kept at 18 Stafford Terrace.


power. This was not entirely the case, for in such a time of change there was much financial insecurity. During the period there were two major slumps. The first was in the 1840s just before dining à la Russe had, according to didactic literature, become popular. One writer describes it as fashionable during the London season of 1829.\textsuperscript{112} The second slump was in the 1890s, when gas cookery was being suggested as suitable for ‘ladies’ whereas cookery had previously usually been the business of servants.

The fact that advice on economical strategies for dinner-givers was offered consistently throughout this period suggests a more constant need than that focused solely during slumps. Advice for keeping up appearances that involved making the most of labour, time and resources was a recurrent theme. Social emulation of either rank or fashion based on stretching resources for maximum return is, I would suggest, a limited argument that applied only to certain constituencies.

‘SCENERY AND PROPS’ FOR DINING: TABLEWARE AND FURNISHINGS

Class is an obvious Victorian subdivision, but superseding class, as will be argued, are cultural biases of varying cosmologies and a diversity of affiliations that define taste in the use of resources. For this work the contemporary literature on dining and domestic decor supports a view of goods, as unspoken texts and decor and tableware as integral to dining; they were the ultimate expression of exclusive domestic consumption.

Asa Briggs’ \textit{Victorian Things}\textsuperscript{113} does not primarily address the social meaning of the ‘things’ under discussion but it is not his major concern to anchor them in social contexts, although he quotes from Douglas and Isherwood’s \textit{The World of Goods}: “Unless we appreciate how they [goods] are used to constitute an intelligible universe, we will never know how to resolve the contradictions of economic life.”\textsuperscript{114}


\textsuperscript{114} Asa Briggs, 1988, op. cit, p. 31.
A more analytic use of Douglas and Isherwood's approach can be found in Craig Clunas's *Superfluous Things*, a work on material culture in early modern China, where he refers to Chinese literature relating to aesthetic judgement. Clunas's work on Ming connoisseurship derives mainly from Wen Zeheng's *Treatise on Superfluous Things*, compiled 1615-20, part of a tradition of the literature of connoisseurship. Clunas's approach refers to both Douglas and Isherwood's *World of Goods*, and to Bourdieu's *Distinction*. He discusses late Ming connoisseurship by taking the core of Bourdieu's method, "the importance of paying close attention to the precise forms of cultural practice within a given situation". Clunas also quotes Bourdieu: "Social identity lies in difference, and difference is asserted against what is closest, which represents the greatest threat." Clunas reveals the nuances of taste that supported the ideals of connoisseurs, particularly in relation to rejected styles. In his analysis of Ming luxury culture, he concludes that such nuances were the basis for "one of the key areas of discourse which operated on its social fabric in a period of change."

If the use of texts on taste is to hold good for a culture more distant, although its artefacts still exist, surely this approach is ideal for such an age of classification as the Victorian period when the social meaning of things can be considered integral to interpreting social interaction? Donald J. Olsen and Gertrude Himmelfarb both quote from George Augustus Sala's *Gaslight and Daylight*: "Subdivision, classification and elaboration are certainly distinguishing characteristics of the present era of

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117 Craig Clunas, op. cit, p. 73

118 Craig Clunas, op. cit, p. 170

civilisation.” Herbert Muthesius also comments on the specialist cutlery found on English dinner tables in comparison with that on equivalent German tables.

The comparative relating of goods to their social use and meaning in different contexts is familiar to archaeologists. In literate societies the place of the written word as evidence, is paramount. With its elite associations of scholarship and law, it offers the ultimate historical record. But everyday life was, and is, carried out with the aid of artefacts and within and around buildings. Choices in the selection of artefacts is not random, but is made as part of a whole ‘way of life’. If, among these artefacts are to be included those connected with cuisine and its technology and the use of domestic space and architecture, then it can be argued that a complete reliance on the contemporary literature is inadequate. I would argue that without some experience of the qualitative differences between, say, Victorian silver and electro-plate, or the various grades of glass and ceramic, then it is harder to deconstruct the iconography of material goods and their value to the actors.

Pictures and cartoons to support the thesis have been selected on the following grounds: direct comment on social attitudes with their examples of dress and furnishings, pictures of things that may be less familiar, like table arrangements and kitchen equipment, but less tableware and furniture as the range is so wide and there are many easily seen examples.

EXCLUSIONS AND DIVISIONS

Activities such as male dining, post-prandial drinking and smoking, the female social role in ‘at home’ afternoons and post-prandial drawing-room conversation, all


reinforced social identity. Examination of such activities, however, can also reveal the place of ‘the dog that did not bark’, of examining what and why something does not happen. Such questions as why children were excluded from dinner, reveals their place within the household and consistencies in the rules that governed all the household’s meals.

For diners to consume ostentatiously, there must be those who are excluded. Dining was supported by a labour force to which participant consumption was denied. Therefore although outside the house a majority were excluded they were not as demonstrably so excluded as were servants waiting at table. Employing liveried butlers and footmen was the ultimate personification of power over supply and consumption, as was employing a higher status ‘professional’ cook to produce the dinner.

As reciprocal dining was an important means of sustaining and enlarging interaction between various dining circles, each with their own criteria for inclusion and exclusion, this work can be seen as a deconstruction of the dynamic that kept dining at its pivotal place in Victorian upper middle class social life. Such diverse themes as cuisine, labour, the serving of meals, artifacts and place, all of which were integral to this overt reciprocity, are set out in the following chapters.

To return to Raphael Samuel’s caveat, the need for “a greater degree of social disturbance”, for social history to fulfil its full potential, but this time taking a more literal interpretation. When working on a subject that was solely an elite activity, in this case that of an upper middle class, the comparative physical comfort and detail of the actors’ world may be seen as a record of trivialities. It was the power of these trivialities, however, that had meaning to the actors and also for our attempts to understand the exercise of power in this domestic ritual for both those who were included and those excluded.

In deconstructing dinner I can only hope that this subtext is revealed as implicit to the account: nothing arrived on these exclusive dining tables without the support of quantities of labour, from the digging of china clay to washing up of the plates after dinner, with the myriad tasks between.
Chapter II

French Influences on English Cuisine, 
the Eighteenth Century as 
the Victorian Diners' Culinary Past

THE ERRATIC INFLUENCE OF FRENCH CUISINE IN ENGLAND

For Victorian diners, French cuisine held a special meaning. The grandest households had French chefs; the French word *recherche* \(^1\) was frequently used to describe grand cookery or *haute cuisine*. There were those, like Eliza Acton,\(^2\) whose references to French methods referred to bourgeois cookery, but for the most part and in most usage, French cuisine for the Victorians meant French *haute cuisine*, as it had in earlier periods in England. This chapter relates how French culinary influence migrated to England to be a mark of fashion, rather than an integrated system serving a relatively static hierarchy.

French culinary influence, as has been widely documented by C. Anne Wilson,\(^3\) Anne Willan,\(^4\) Barbara K. Wheaton,\(^5\) Jennifer Stead,\(^6\) Stephen Mennell\(^7\) and others was not a new fashion, but a recurring theme at least from the beginning of the eighteenth century.

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century. It frequently involved the taking of fragments of French culinary methods, or recipe titles and recipes and then adapting and Anglicising them. But examples of French influence on English cuisine go back much farther, at least as far as the Norman invasion of 1066. Up to and including the Tudor period, England and France shared a cuisine in common with the royal and noble households of France. C. Anne Wilson traces a range of recipes common to France and England. She found that “moreover, these dishes are to be found in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century cookery books not only of France, but also of England. And the recipes still have titles in common (if allowance is made for inconsistencies in mediaeval spelling) and usually at least some common ingredients or a shared method of preparation.”

The French influence was seen at the Tudor and Stuart courts. Harrison’s description of England 1577-87 refers to “the nobility” (whose cooks are for the most part musical-headed Frenchmen and strangers). Henry VIII had a French cook, Pierre, who is named in the household records. By the seventeenth century, French culinary influence was also coming to be disseminated in print. Sir Hugh Platt’s Delights for Ladies has recipes described as being “after the French fashion”. When James II came to the throne in 1685, the Royal Household’s account books are listed in the following order: “Claude Forment 1st Master Cook", presumably, from the name, a Frenchman, and “Patrick Lambe 2nd Master Cook". It was Patrick Lambe who wrote Royal Cookery; or the Complete Court-Cook. In 1617 John Murrel’s A New

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8 C. Anne Wilson, Petits Propos Culinaires, 2, op. cit, pp. 10-17.
10 Royal Household Records – Henry VIII, as quoted by Simon Thurley, Curator, Hampton Court Palace.
13 Patrick Lambe, Royal Cookery or the Complete Court-Cook, Abel Roper, London, 1710.
Book of Cookery appeared... “all set forth according to the now new English and French Fashion”.14

Robert May, wrote what is considered a particularly significant work, published in 1671, The Accomplisht Cook.15 He had, when ten years old in 1598, been sent for five years to the household of ‘a noble peer and’16 first President of Paris to learn his trade.

Anne Willan, who was the Principal of The Cordon Bleu cookery school in Paris, a writer with real understanding of technique who has written various cookery books, says of May’s work, that “May had a unique sense of what was expected of an English cook”.17 By this phrase, she meant that May had ignored the most significant changes in French practice that had been codified by La Varenne in 1651.18 The difference between the two approaches is that English cooking followed a “strictly functional approach” as opposed to the French “who were happy to spend hours perfecting the smallest detail and developing a special vocabulary”.19

At this point the question of the rôle of French cookery in England should be further defined. So far it is clear there were French cooks in England. There were also books with recipes that were derived from French dishes, and finally there was a key book which was in translation from the French within two years of its publication in 1651: La Varenne’s Le Cuisinier François. It was translated or “Englished” in 1653 by J.G.D. as The French Cook.20

16 Robert May, The Accomplisht Cook, or the Art and Mystery of Cookery, a facsimile of the 1685 edition, with foreword, introduction and glossary supplied by Alan Davidson, Marcus Bell and Tom Jaine, Prospect Books, Blackawton, Totnes, Devon, 1994, p. 13.
17 Anne Willan, op. cit, p. 68.
19 Anne Willan, op. cit, p. 68.
LA VARENNE: COMPLEXITY AND COMPLEMENTARITY

The importance of La Varenne is defined by Barbara K. Wheaton who cites *Cuisinier François* as the key work which set in place the system that was the foundation for developing French *haute cuisine*. She comments, “He [La Varenne] enjoys the distinction of having published the first great French cookbook and of having set the tone for the *Grand Siècle* of cooking that followed.”

La Varenne’s system was founded on the making of basic mixtures – fonds. Barbara Wheaton writes: “this nascent system, which may be called modular, gives the cook an array of basic components on which to draw, while leaving freedom to make adjustments to the needs and possibilities of the moment. In the *Cuisinier François* the basic mixtures include bouillon, laisons, farces and herb and spice mixtures.” She notes that his recipe for a roux (of pork fat and flour) is the earliest she has found.

La Varenne’s system for a repertoire of dishes was intrinsic to the elaboration of meals. A meal served in the *à la Française* style, with all the dishes on the table, could automatically offer the visibility of complexity on a large scale, but to do so it needed a great variety of dishes. Complexity, as defined by Mary Douglas in *Food and the Social Order*, is not an alternative definition of elaborate cuisine, but a socially defined system of culinary differentiation. Complexity is a measure of grid in food-taking, marking rank, time, place and festival. Examples of complexity based on a simple repertoire were the repetitive annual and weekly meals in Victorian workhouses where rule-bound food-taking identified rank, time, place and rare festivity to the destitute and others. Within a limited repertoire, high and low complexity define each food event. Similarly the French court and other great French households’ system of

23 Roux, nowadays more familiar as a mixture of butter and flour, with the addition of a liquid was and is basic to making both brown and white sauces. These sauces often masked ingredients in a way that came to be identified with French cuisine, particularly by xenophobic English critics.
complementarity was ideally suited to marking grid. These great households were not
only sustained by this high grid culinary system, but further ranking was achieved by
separate repertoires of meat and fast-day dishes with their appropriate matching fonds,
while at the same time, such dishes needed to be within an understood canon of
comparable taste. In a hierarchy, such as the French court of Louis XIV at Versailles,
everybody and everything, including the dishes served, had to have a definable and
ranked status. If the cuisine had adopted new and experimental foods without any
understood links to the existing cuisine and which lacked basic and shared tastes to hold
them in common, the essential unifying element of a commensal and hierarchic meal
would have been negated.

La Varenne’s system was also about what I term ‘the complementarity principle’, by
which all raw materials are seen to fit into an overall pattern of dishes. Each ingredient
had a place in the sum total of a named dish, and thus each dish had a status derived
from its ingredients and took its place as part of a holistic system. In doing so, it
mirrored the hierarchic structure of the court it served.

This system eliminated waste and indeed the economical use of resources is part of the
language of hierarchies.25 La Varenne’s systematic complementarity was integral to the
serving of large meals to the court. In doing so, it organised disparate elements into a
holistic hierarchic system.

Many of the Victorian households of upper middle range dinner givers were not true
hierarchies. They may have used the language of hierarchy, but they were individualists
who up-gridded their labour and resources to give French style dinners, so that the
continuous complementarity employed by hierarchs had no meaning. Individualists’
dinners were spasmodic exercises in maximum effect rather than a routine event that
was part of a sustainable system. In 1824, Beauvilliers, whose father had cooked for
the French court, made direct comparison in the book he wrote for the English market

25 To misunderstand this economical system as parsimony disregards its function as part of
hierarchic craft skill, and as an element of social control and socialisation.
between waste in the English “middling and lower ranks” – the emergent Individualist
diners – and “the management observed for the [French] king’s table, and [where] the
care with which it is conducted is astonishing.”

As with food, so with furniture: the same recursive principles found in food are echoed
in court furniture which has, for us, the advantage of a less ephemeral existence. A
range of court furniture was made in Bhul, which was brass and foil-backed tortoise-
shell, gilt wood or wood covered in silver. These techniques in craftsmanship mirrored
the craftsmanship in cooking, in that it too used similar recurring outlines, patterns and
motifs. Thus the system that La Varenne describes as unifying ‘fonds’ has various
ingredients that can be incorporated to make a variety of dishes. As culinary innovation
was unified by the ‘fonds’, so Bhul similarly employed complementarity by cutting the
tortoise-shell and brass so that the design had the appearance of negative and positive: it
employed the same elegant economy as was evident in the cuisine. Thus poultry
trimmings could be used to make a fond (consommé) such as rumstec27 or they could
be incorporated with a fond as part of a dish. In this way all meat had a place in the
larger overall structure of an ongoing sequence of meals, and cooking was fully
congruent with the hierarchic principle that treated time as extending from the past
through the present and into the future. Cuisine, in reflecting the social structure it
serves, reiterates the cosmology of which it is an integral part.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: ENGLISH ECLECTICISM IN
THE FACE OF FRENCH INNOVATION, CLASSICISM AND
CHAUVINISM

Many cook books throughout the eighteenth century were titled or subtitled as
comprising both English and French cuisine.28 References in their texts to French

26 Antoine B. Beauvilliers, The Art of French Cookery, Longman, Hurst Rees, Orme, Brown and
27 M. A. Careme (1784-1835), French Cookery, translated by William Hall, John Murray, London,
1836, p. 3.
28 See Virginia MacLean, A Short Title Catalogue of Household Books and Cookery Books
dishes, however, treated them as optional extras to a core English repertoire. These books not only negated the French contribution to English cuisine but in their abstraction of particular dishes they also negated the French hierarchic ideal of a complementary and holistic system. French dishes were often called 'kickshaws' a corruption of *quelques choses*, or 'somethings'. Dr Johnson's two definitions of kickshaw in his *Dictionary* are: (1) “something uncommon fantastical or ridiculous” and (2) “a dish so changed in cooking to be scarcely recognisable”.29 *Quelques choses* were not new. Robert May in 1660 also referred to kickshaws.30

No complex system of cuisine took hold in England through the eighteenth century as it did in France. There is a frequently quoted observation by Joseph Addison:

> They [the French] admit of nothing to their tables in its natural form, or without some disguise...

> 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. That which stood before me I took to be a roasted Porcupine, however did not care for asking questions; and have since been informed, that it was only a larded Turkey. I afterwards passed my eye over several Hashes, which I do not know the names of to this day; and hearing that they were Delicacies, did not think fit to meddle with them...

> I was now in great hunger and confusion, when, methought, I smelled the agreeable savour of Roast-beef, but could not tell from which dish it arose, though 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. I had recourse to it more than once, and could not see, without some indignation, that substantial

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30 Robert May, op. cit, title page.
English dish banished in so ignominious a manner, to make way for French kickshaws.31

Stephen Mennel notes this piece as a typical example of English prejudice against French food, which was written in 1709 when England was at war with France. It is an anthropological truism that food is invariably used as a basis for distinguishing the ‘otherness’ of others. Here it is used to contrast the natural uncorrupted English against the ‘unnatural’ French, seen as artificial and dissembling.

Roast sirloin and other plain dishes were favoured in England as potent symbols; the concrete representations of ideal values. Plain food epitomised English honesty, stability and shared fellowship. A shared roast formed the apex of this symbolic structure; carved at the table, it not only emphasised collective eating but also confirmed a collective and shared identity.32

This theme of the plain ‘honest’ food of England was located in the English countryside and was in its turn opposed to the dishonest, dissembling dishes of the town. The countryside was where fine classical mansions were built.33 To eat plain foods – honest and natural dishes – was in keeping with a received classical ideal and its links to the fundamental values of the countryside. These tensions between artifice and nature, town and country, were a theme that recurrent throughout the eighteenth century.34 The

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34 As far as can be ascertained, at this period they did not cook from Apicus. But Apicus was translated into English by Queen Anne’s physician, Martin Lister, in 1705. The revival of such a foreign taste would have been unlikely as the revival of the classical was used to justify the present. William King (1650-1729) wrote a satire on this work in the manner of Horace’s Art of Poetry. Lister’s translation was privately printed twice, amounting to 220 copies, Virginia MacLean, op. cit, p. 4.
ultimate source of such dissimulation was the treacherous French, and French food is frequently referred to in this light throughout the century.35

Barbara Wheaton describes “the mid-eighteenth-century [French] cook [as] commanding a range of working methods that was unrivalled in Europe.”36 It was this French skill that produced ‘made dishes’ which were highly esteemed in France where what might be called trompe le bouche was considered a triumph of craftsmanship as was the art of trompe l’oeil. An anecdote quoted by a French cook illustrates the pride in artifice of a chef who was so skilled that he was able to serve shredded gloves in a sauce which was much appreciated by his master.37 This would have been seen by the English as yet another example of French pride in deception.

Reference has been made to Addison’s satirical comments on French food, with its specific praise for an opposing view of English food. Addison’s view of food is congruent with his reputation as a well-known Latin scholar who furthermore had a particular interest in Horace. Horace in his time had also used food as a vehicle for satire, as Nicola Hudson has shown.38 In doing so, he too contrasted the plain food of an imaginary countryside against dinner-party cuisine in Rome: the simple country life as the ideal and the city as a place of corruption and vice.

As a rule… on a working day I would never eat any more than a shank of smoked ham and a plate of greens. But if friends arrived whom I hadn’t seen for a long time, or a neighbour dropped in for a friendly visit on a wet day when there was nothing to


37 Typical of a group of recurring anecdotes about food which are symbolic of personal and national characteristics.

do, we used to celebrate, not with fish sent out from the town, but a chicken or kid,
followed by dessert – raisins taken down from the rafters with nuts and figs.39

When cuisines move from one culture to another they have to accommodate to new and
often quite different values from those in their original setting. What seems to have
happened after a century of increased French culinary influence was that the English
approach stayed essentially eclectic although French cooks had cooked in England over
a long period. French cooks and French system were frequently portrayed as
fashionable extras although French influence was to be found in most cookery books.
French cuisine, in the way it was known in France, where taste and culinary knowledge
were part of a system, could not easily be integrated into low grid constituencies whose
cuisine comprised such core items as roast and boiled meats, puddings and vegetables.
Chauvinism, validated by selective classicism, reinforced the boundary against a
culinary system which was seen as intrinsically a part of French culture where a
relatively static hierarchy was able to keep competitive fashion within a bounded
system.

FRENCH COOKS IN ENGLAND IN THE EIGHTEENTH
CENTURY

The earlier tradition of cooking by French cooks for great English households
continued throughout the eighteenth century. The following examples show how their
employers manipulated French cuisine. French cooks and French confectioners added a
fashionable element to their dinners. In doing so, however, they bent the French system
to their English needs rather than accommodating these to the totality of the French
culinary system.

Among those recorded as having French chefs were the Earl of Chesterfield whose cook, Vincent La Chapelle, was the author of *The Modern Cook* published in 1733, and in the 1740s the Duke of Newcastle who employed Monsieur Clouet. In 1754 the Duke of Newcastle lost Monsieur Clouet (whom he had nicknamed 'Cloe') to Lord Albemarle, the British Ambassador in Paris. The Duke, feeling perhaps that an obligation was due to him, wrote to Albemarle asking his help in finding a replacement. His letter showed that he knew what he liked. The replacement, he wrote, had to have the separate skills of an all-rounder who would not only have to be able to roast, and to cook but to be a pastry-cook as well. These were all specialist skills in France. He liked "little hors d'oeuvres or light entrées", "plain simple dishes" and he revealed a taste for what could be termed French mid-century nouvelle cuisine that seemed to match well with contemporary English taste. He also asserted that he did not like "strong soups", "disguised entrées and entremets" [sic].

Albemarle succeeded in obtaining a cook, but his efforts were not fully appreciated. The Duke wrote back to him:

I own I like the man extremely, his temper and disposition. But I can't say that his qualities as a cook are quite what I wish... his *plats* don't seem to please here; and are not just what I like. They are generally composed of a variety of things, and are not the light dishes and clear sauces which Cloe excell'd in. They are unintelligible or des grosses pièces, accommodées de leu façon. Les *plats legers* are, I suppose, out of fashion. In short, it is not what carries authority with it and what would make people ashamed to disapprove."

The Duke was not easily accommodated, and he wrote to Lord Albemarle yet again, in 1754, making a further request for renewed efforts in finding a really good French cook from a great French household. In what appears to be a bout of hyperbolic

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40 Vincent La Chapelle, *The Modern Cook*, London, 1733, 3 vols, sold by Nicholas Prevost London. Four further editions; two in 1736, then 1744 and 1751.
42 Romney Sedgwick, op. cit, p. 309.
43 Romney Sedgwick, op. cit, p. 317.
exasperation, he asserts: “This town swarms with them [French cooks] and there is scarce a young boy, or even a country gentleman, who has not his French cook.”

This outburst suggests that French cooks were common, but of what quality is difficult to determine apart from the fact they could not have been of the standard required, or the correspondence between Newcastle and Albemarle would not have gone on for a year – even allowing that the Duke needed a man with more than one skill.

Lord Fairfax followed a somewhat different path by adding the French element as an extra to the end of dinner: he bought in prepared confectionery from a French confectioner. An elaborate additional course of French confectionery gave dinners added complexity which could be ‘bolted on’ as an extra component. In the seventeenth century, in great houses in England, it had been women who had made sweets, creams, jellies, tarts, biscuits and conserves for a distinct and separate course, that was eaten away from the main dinner in small exclusive groups. In the eighteenth century, French confectionery could also be bought in England, and was served as a dessert to give dinners greater elaboration. Bought-in confectionery was expensive but it had the advantage of not impinging on the physical resources of a household on the odd occasions when extra elaboration was required. A little French grandeur could be purchased for the elevation of a single event.

The work done by Peter Brown to reconstruct a dinner in York in 1763 shows how Lord Fairfax’s special dessert was added for the occasion to celebrate moving into his

44 Romney Sedgwick, op. cit, p. 311
45 Romney Sedgwick, op. cit, p. 314
46 The French Guilds’ rules forbade cooks trained in one skill to practise others in which they were not qualified. English rules allowed any trade to be followed after apprenticeship.
new house. The dessert by a French patissier who had set up shop in York to supply
"all sorts of dry and wett sweetmeats [made by M.] Seguin, confectioner from Paris".49

For this dessert, the expense in time, labour and skill, such as was required, for
instance, to colour marzipan fruit to look as realistic as possible, was immediately
apparent to the diners. Lord Fairfax was charged fifteen guineas for five pyramids of
Wett and Dry Sweetmeats including the use and breakage of goods, suggesting that
they were sent out with their necessary supports on china or glass dishes.

THE DISSEMINATION OF FRENCH CUISINE IN
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

The Duke of Newcastle’s cook, Clouet, had as his assistant William Verral, who later
became landlord of the White Hart Inn at Lewes (Sussex). Cooking was then an
important part of the work of an inn. In 1759 Verral published a cookery book50 based
on what he had learned from Clouet, in which he aimed to teach French methods and
French recipes to the English. Though Verral is the only example, at this period, of an
English assistant who wrote of what he had learned from a named French master, we
can nonetheless assume that other assistants were influenced and spread French
culinary practice.

In Verral’s preface he says, “Your broth and gravy for your soups and sauces should
be the first thing in hand.”51 His recipes begin with instructions for making soup in the
French manner, that is, with a foundation broth. He says, “Take care this is well done;
‘tis this, as tis by your aqua fontana in the apothecary’s shop, scarce any thing can be

49 Peter Brown, op. cit., notes 30 & 31, p. 38.
50 William Verral, The Cooke’s Paradise, being William Verral’s Complete System of Cookery,
done and finished well without it." His instructions for making broth are followed by his first soup recipe: *Clear Gravy Veal for Soup.* Throughout his accounts Verral reveals his difficulties in teaching the local English squirearchy and their servants how to cook in the French manner in the absence of a standardised and systematised hierarchy in their kitchens.

The number of cookery books produced in France as in England increased during the eighteenth century, and several were translated into English. Among the most famous were, in 1702, François Massialot’s *The Court and Country Cook*, in 1733, Vincent La Chapelle’s *Modern Cook*, in 1767, Menon’s *The Art of Modern Cookery Displayed* and in 1769 *The Professed Cook* by B. Clermont.

Throughout the eighteenth century, French influence was further disseminated by plagiarism. Hannah Glasse’s recipes, 1747, have been analysed by Jennifer Stead. She found that 263 recipes out of 972 could be directly attributed to other writers, among them La Chapelle and Massialot. Hannah Glasse is, of course, famous for her book’s introduction denouncing male French cooks. Many of her dishes, however, have French names despite manifestly anti-French comments throughout the text.

In spite of her Chauvinism, however, Hannah Glasse’s stated aim was to improve the standard of cooking among young women servants, and her French recipes continued the French influence. By incorporating recipes into English cooking rather than taking on the complete French system, she increased its repertoire without changing its

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52 William Verral, op. cit, p. 36. Aqua fon tana: Latin – spring water. Verral gives an example from another craft, apothecaries, for a readership who did not understand the French system of fonds. Soyer (Alexis Soyer, *The Modern Housewife*, first published 1849, Simpkin, Marshall and Co., London, 1856, p. 88) was similarly to employ grammar as an analogy to solve the same dilemma, nearly a century later when describing the repertoire of French sauces. The lack of comprehension of the French system in England, after so many French cooks had worked in England and so many works had been translated, will be discussed in Chapter III on cuisine for nineteenth-century diners.

53 William Verral, op. cit, p. 37.


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structure. Her book remained in print and was republished over a long period from 1747 to 1843. An unusual book, in that the recipes are all attributed to their sources, was Mary Cole’s *The Ladies Complete Guide or Cookery in all its Branches* published at the end of the century in 1799. The eclectic English way she cooked is evident in the way many of the recipes are given several authors.

For the wealthier eighteenth-century host, French cuisine could either be used to create the whole meal necessarily cooked by a French cook, or some eclectic additions that involved French methods and recipes. These could be incorporated into the English repertoire with or without varying degrees of re-interpretation. By the end of the century, French influence had brought processes and recipes, such as the making of roux – the fat and flour foundation to sauces – and methods for making boullion that expanded the culinary repertoire but did not essentially alter the English approach to cooking.

56 Virginia Maclean, op. cit, p. 60.

A Satirical print of the Duke of Newcastle and M. de St. Clouet, 1745: "This satirical print shows Thomas Pelham-Holles, Duke of Newcastle 1693-1768, during the time he was Secretary of State, 1724-54, with his French cook, M. de St Clouet, nicknamed "Cloe". The Duke exclaims, "O! Cloe if you leave me I shall be starv'd by G-d", while "Cloe", the cook, protests "Bégar, me can no relish dis dam' Englis proclamation!" The subject of the cartoon is the 1745 proclamation against Papists. Of culinary interest, is the underlining of French influence on kitchen design in the satirist's drawing. This quintessential well equipped kitchen includes a small French sauté pan on the brick charcoal stove on the back wall. If the drawing had been set in a typical English kitchen the central item would have been a fireplace with a generous fire and English joints of meat. In this cartoon the rather French styled fireplace has a few small birds roasting instead of the large joints typical of English dinners. French culinary references are further emphasized by the bill of fare of the table, which is a combination of satirical items and typical French dishes: "Soupe à la Reigne, Carpe Chaubour, Grande de Quales, Woodcocks Braines, Nul of Partridges, Carpes Tongues and Popes Eyes".

Here the cook is putting a rib of beef on the spit to roast before a roaring fire. As in the previous satirical print a charcoal stove is shown with a sauté pan leaning against it and casserole dishes stewing on top. The patriotic ballad below compares a 'typical' French diet of soup maigre, ragout and fricassees, while a character in the drawing adds 'Flagy garlick', with the 'roast beef of old England'.

When Frenchmen eat nothing but Soupe & Ragout,
On I'm friended in roasts, Tarteaux corn.
Both can our lean-hearted nation satisfy;
But now our heart is drench'd, we're become
Of our Standard, and it is tamed by corn.
Our Browsers will forever discard it for canvas.

In these Days our Generals, we're Dying,
And when we went, a fight would never win away.
As the late Exp. of Toulon in the B-y.
Our Soupe Maigre.

To use our Soupe Maigre, &
Our Signet of France,
To use our Soupe Maigre, &
Our Soupe Maigre.

To frame our Soupe Maigre, with Ragout, &c. which,
As the Standard in the Gauls' Conduct,
Show'd Commerce increased, when furnished with Stone.
Our Soupe Maigre.

To use our Soupe Maigre, it is.
And when we were in port, could give Blom for Blom.
Our Soupe Maigre.

And in this thing, Basta; &c. our Soupe Maigre there.
And preserve our Roast Beef of Old England.
Guineas, Leaves, &c. soups, and Ragout.
Chapter III

Individualist Interpretations of French Cuisine
and the Place of Traditional Taste

Part I of The Dinner Cuisine

NATURE REFLECTED

If to remark upon the food at dinners was a well-known Victorian faux pas, then this serves to emphasise what a socially precarious subject, in this time of fast change, food was for both diners and dinner-givers. Mrs Humphry, in *Manners for Men* (1897), advises: “The viands must never be chosen as a topic [of conversation] for either blame or praise.”¹ By examining culinary changes in dinner-party cuisine during the period, it can be shown that there was a shift from the eighteenth-century bias towards ‘the natural’ to a de-naturing of dishes in the nineteenth; xenophobic male opprobrium was directed towards de-natured “French dishes”² in the eighteenth century. By the end of the nineteenth, a special feminised domestic dinner-party cuisine composed almost entirely of de-natured dishes³ had been established. Processed ingredients or arrangements of ingredients in forms conforming to easily recognised formulas were presented as icons representing this celebratory cuisine.


2  ‘French dishes’ or ‘Made Dishes’ were terms used in eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century cookery books for composite dishes that were based on French ‘fonds’ or foundation mixtures. Fricaseys and Ragoos, are typical examples and can be found in Hannah Glasse, *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy*, fifth edition, published by the author, London, 1747. This facsimile edition, Prospect Books, London, 1983, pp. 14-5.

The rise of private dinner parties involved home-bound women in a circumscribed circle of reciprocity. For the most part, with the establishment of new residential areas, men and women who dined had separate conjugal roles. The cuisine reflected these social changes. Culinary choice and presentation continued to be the hostess's responsibility, but they had less control over food preparation. The new etiquette of gentility divorced them from domestic tasks, particularly those which were contaminating as being too close to nature. Handling food in its raw state defined cooking as outside the bounds of gentility. Recurrent images of 'ladies' portray them instructing their cooks in their own sitting-room, a situation that provided a rich field for *Punch* cartoons. Corresponding below-stairs cartoons show rare visits by mistresses to their kitchens to be surprised by some unauthorised activity.

As dinner cuisine was the material expression of feminine separation from contamination by the natural, food had to be de-natured, that is, served in forms that concealed its natural origins. Marion Sambourne's taste reflected this trend. The particular dishes she most admired when dining in other houses, almost always included labour intensive arrangements of ingredients. These she described in her menu notebook, a typical example being an arrangement of hard boiled egg caviar and anchovy. Later examples of this style can be found in Mrs Marshall and Mrs de Salis dinner-party cookery.

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6 In chapter V there are accounts of a limited return to cookery for 'ladies' either in separate hygienic kitchens, or in the downstairs kitchen using gas stoves instead of the coal fired range.

7 See illustrations following chapter V: George Cruikshank's *Sentimental Novel Reading Cook*.

8 Genteel dinner-giving women did not handle raw produce. This is further discussed in chapter V and in the final chapter.


Feminisation of the cuisine was given further impetus by removing serving dishes from the table. With the introduction of service à la Russe, these were replaced by centre-pieces of flowers and fruit which were considered more fashionable icons of refinement for the dinner table. Dishes of meat and fish, particularly in their natural forms, both when they came to table and in the ruined state that resulted after guests had helped themselves were not considered to be refined. Roast joints would, therefore, look particularly primitive. Red meat was considered closer to nature and therefore an especially 'male' food. Carving during the period just before the change to dining à la Russe is portrayed as a male attribute. There is, repeated in several books, a picture of an unskilled man carving and causing a refined lady to hold up her handkerchief to shield herself from gravy splashes. She emanates an air of offended refinement.

The roast continued to be a central feature of all dinner menus throughout the period. Therefore, it had to be tamed; it had to be feminised. The roast was feminised in two ways. It could either be decorated as disparagingly described by Edward Ricket of a tongue he was expected to carve and which was decorated with spinach and runnunculus carved from carrot and turnip. Thomas Walker, who was equally appalled by what he


12 Mrs de Salis (Harriet Anne de Salis), *Cookery à la Mode*. The first of a series, *Savouries à la Mode*, Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1886, with further books in the series brought together in *À la Mode Cookery*, 1902.


14 For example, The Sublime Society of Beefsteaks, 1735-1867, was an exclusively male club where the staple dish was grilled steak. See final chapter.


16 Edward Ricket, *The Gentleman’s Table Guide and Table Companion to the Art of Dining and Drinking with Table Habits and Curiosus Dishes of the Various Nations &c. &c., With Practical Recipes for Wine Cups, American Drinks, Punches, Cordials, Recherché Bills of Fare*, Frederick Warne & Co., London, 1873, p. 47.
considered to be superfluous garnish, described it as barbaric. In his journal, *The Original*, he wrote:

> There is one female failing in respect to dinners... and that is a very inconvenient love of garnish and flowers, either natural or cut in turnips and carrots, and stuck on dishes, so as to greatly impede carving and helping.

These comments were separated by over thirty years, Walker having first been published in 1835. The second and more radical feminisation came with service à la Russe, which removed the roast from the table to the sideboard.

The whole trend in style of dishes served during the period was to remove food from the natural and to serve it in a decorative and innovative style within a bounded form. Ideas of liminality, the inside representing culture and the outside as nature, were intrinsic to dining rules, both explicitly and implicitly. The actor's manner of participation in the dinner and the settings in which they took place were reflected in culinary icons that were specific to dinner cuisine.

In this chapter, culinary styles and standards are traced, with Marion Sambourne and her circle's dinner menus being prime examples. The boundary of the 'civilised' as exemplified by the dinner cuisine is placed in context by describing the contrasting diet of nursery children's food: a similarly rule-bound cuisine which served to socialise children by distancing them from nature. In this case a diet eaten in the same household, by its separate repertoire, served to emphasise the special status of dinner-party food.

17 Thomas Walker, *Aristology or the Art of Dining*, first published 1835, this edition edited by Sir Henry Cole under his pseudonym, Felix Summerly, George Bell, London, 1881. This was not the only male arbiter of taste's work to be reissued in the last quarter of the century: Abraham Hayward's *The Art of Dining*, 1852, was published again in 1899, which suggests the views expressed still had some relevance.


19 See chapter VII for descriptions of service à la Russe.


58
By implication, the exclusivity of the dinner cuisine emphasised the select status of the diners.

The popularity of private dinner-giving grew with the rise of a new class-based society. A growing bias to liberal individuality competed with hierarchy and, as Cultural Theory would forecast, such individualism sought to personalise its own taste, against the established traditions of hierarchy. In doing so, it simultaneously emulated some aspects of the upper hierarch's established status. In matters of cuisine this was represented by an individualistic reinterpretation of French hierarchic taste but with the retention of such symbolically important items as roasts.

It was not that there had been a lack of entrepreneuriality and individualism prior to the Industrial Revolution. Alan MacFarlane refers to a continuous climate of individualism in England. He cites a freedom of operation allowed to the *nouveaux riches* in England as early as the fourteenth century and compares it to the situation on the Continent where witchcraft was used coercively to eliminate individual economic differences.\(^\text{21}\) MacFarlane's view, as an anthropologist and historian, deviates from current historical convention. Fast economic expansion during most of the nineteenth century led to a great rise in English individualism. One of the ways this was expressed by Victorian diners was through the presentation of cuisine, more as edible decor than traditional substance, as was customary for hierarchic dinners.

This new strategic dining was to increase the breadth of interpretation of French *haute cuisine* as it was defined by Antonin Carême (1783-1833), even to the grandest league of dinner-givers. Carême, through his books and contemporary reputation, was considered the greatest exponent of French *haute cuisine*.\(^\text{22}\) An entrepreneurial

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\(^{22}\) See section below 'Haute cuisine and English gastronomic knowledge'.
Frenchman, Alexis Soyer (1809-1858) was this style’s most flamboyant exponent. Among lesser dining leagues, individualist interpretations of French cuisine owed more to ideas of elaborate presentation that became progressively more divorced from the French culinary system of complementarity. This elaborated style was largely facilitated by buying in services and with the use of manufactured foodstuffs, such as bottled gelatine. These perversions of French culinary practice were continually challenged by an opposing cognoscenti who understood true French cuisine. It was expressed in the 1850s by such arbiters of taste as Abraham Hayward and, in bourgeois cookery, by the cookery writer Eliza Acton, and, at the end of the century, by Sir Henry Thompson.

New modes of dining did not eliminate the old ways altogether. Among some of the more hierarchic dinner-givers food was still produced in the English eclectic tradition of Hannah Glasse whose book, originally published in 1746, was continuously reprinted until 1843. These adherents to the old ways of dining were more likely to be found in areas away from urban centres.

The cultural bias of those who gave dinners in London was along the stable diagonal between hierarchs and individualists. Individualist bias was strongest among upper middle-class strategic dinner-givers who manipulated space, time, objects, information, resources and labour to produce dinners which gave most social credit for least investment. When resources did not stretch to the employment of cooks of required skills, they resorted to ready-made foods or bought in services. The cultural bias of those who gave dinners in London was along the stable diagonal between hierarchs and individualists. Individualist bias was strongest among upper middle-class strategic dinner-givers who manipulated space, time, objects, information, resources and labour to produce dinners which gave most social credit for least investment. When resources did not stretch to the employment of cooks of required skills, they resorted to ready-made foods or bought in services.

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23 Alexis Soyer’s entrepreneurialism is not only evident in his books, but is further recounted posthumously by his secretaries, F. Voland and J. R. Warren in Memoirs of Alexis Soyer, W. Kent & Co., London, 1859.


skill or to purchase the best produce, then cheating was effected to achieve the appearance of a dinner that was grander than resources allowed.

Cheating was an early example of another and typical individualistic device: public extravagance and private parsimony, or hourglassing. Strategic dinner cuisine was sharply differentiated from diners' everyday food. Prince Pückler-Muskau, when travelling in England and writing home to Germany, advised against calling unexpectedly at English country houses, as when they are not entertaining, their "dinners will be very economical".

CONTEMPORARY COMMENT

This conflict between content and presentation was frequently a subject for comment among arbiters of taste, as A. V. Kirwan wrote in *Host and Guest* in 1864. It was a recurring theme throughout the period.

Why, however, it will be asked, should persons of a couple or three thousand a year give so pretentious and costly a dinner? Because everyone in England tries to ape the class two or three degrees above him in point of rank and fortune, in style of living, and manner of receiving his friends. Thus it is that a plain gentleman of moderate fortune, or a professional man making a couple of thousands a year, having dined with a peer of £50,000 a year in Grosvenor Square or Belgravia, seeks when he himself next gives a dinner to imitate the style of the marquis, earl or lord lieutenant of a county with whom he has come into social contact.

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28 'Hourglassing' — term used by Michael Thompson in relation to contemporary individualist households' private economy and public show (personal communication).


Other similarly opinioned critics included, Thomas Walker, Abraham Hayward, ‘G. V., W. B. Jerrold, Elim d’Avigdor and W. M. Thackeray. These critics could be considered as anticipating Thorstein Veblen’s concept of conspicuous consumption.

Recipe books often gave views on appropriate dining but the point of view of recipe-writers was not necessarily that of critics or arbiters of taste. Recipe-writers were apt either to try to persuade their readers to take up the latest fashion or to beg them to dine within their means and not try to emulate the rich. Sometimes they were split between both hierarchs and individualists in their advice, as they attempted to reconcile the dual needs of two constituencies. Kirwan, following his earlier comment on social emulation, also considered it good practice to use outside services of confectioners to enhance a dinner menu. (See below.)

The rôle of arbiters was to set appropriate standards for their readers in a time of changing fashion. Etiquette books bordered on this area but their prime function was to teach how to behave at dinner. Intrinsic to their instruction were descriptions of ideal dinners of the time: How to Dine, published in 1879, for instance, describes “a

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32 Abraham Hayward, op. cit.
33 G. V., Dinners and Dinner Parties, or the Absurdities of Artificial Life, for the author by Chapman and Hall, London, 1862.
34 William Blanchard Jerrold (pseud. ‘Fin-Bec’, 1826-84), The Epicure’s Year Book and Table Companion, Bradbury Evans & Co., London; The Book of Menus, Grant & Co., London, 1876; The Dinner Bell, 1868, 1869 and 1878; Cupboard Papers, Chatto and Windus, London, 1881; also Knife and Fork, a short-lived journal, 1871.
38 Kirwan, op. cit, p. 193.
39 Ward and Lock’s How to Dine, or the Etiquette of the Dinner Table, Ward, Lock & Tyler, London, 1879.
fashionable dinner-party”. Otherwise detailed descriptions of actual dinners are few.

Mrs Samboume, one of the few private commentators on food in this period, in her unpublished *Menu Notebook*, lists the menus of dinners she gave and dinners she ate at other houses during the period 1877-83. Sometimes she remarked on the food itself – particularly if it had extra decorative qualities.\(^{40}\) In the following section the manuscript sources are the *Diary* and *Menu Notebook* of Marion Sambourne, 1851-1914.

**MARION SAMBOURNE’S *MENU NOTEBOOK AND DIARY*: CULINARY ICONS AS DINNER-PARTY FOOD**

Marion Sambourne’s *Diary* and *Menu Notebook*, as personal accounts of middle-league London dinners, are about dinners that were actually cooked and eaten, in a house that retains most of its original furnishings. The *Menu Notebook* also records reciprocal dinners, noting what was eaten and what was admired by Marion Sambourne.

It may be argued that the deluge of books on cookery is more useful for a quantitative survey of tastes in dinner cuisine. They are useful in as far as they show the range and biases of cookery writers who wrote with their particular readerships in mind. They also gave an idea of fashion, with the leading chefs demonstrating the latest cuisine. But books were written as guides; they were not tailored to the particular circumstances of each occasion. Giving a dinner is led by many considerations, as anyone who has provided a meal for friends will know. Mrs Sambourne’s dinners were a personal record of real dinners in their physical and social context. There was no hidden agenda of a public to be taught or impressed, as with printed works.

The implications from manipulating space, time, objects, resources, information and labour in modern suburban households\(^{41}\) resulted in greatly differing ways of cooking.

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\(^{40}\) Marion Sambourne, *Menu Notebook*.

and eating, with little reference to cookery books. To understand the role of cookery in the past this craft must be weighed against the concept of cookery as a book-dominated expertise, rather than as a learned craft passed on from one practitioner to another. Books are one of the few material remains of this transient craft and therefore are likely to be given more weight than past practice justifies.

Dinners were constructed by a combination of strategies to fulfil the demands of a particular circle of reciprocal dinner-givers. Marion Sambourne’s record is as near as can be got to London dinners as they were, rather than as they should have been as demonstrated in recipe books or as they were often satirised or glorified in literature.

As can be seen from Mrs Sambourne’s Menu Notebook, a most important aspect of cuisine was its iconography. This involved the processing of food into dinner dishes and included the following elements: manifest labour intensity, food de-natured and set in a new form; an expansion of the repertoire through rearrangement of familiar ingredients and the introduction of new exotic items, that is items new to that particular circle of diners. This role of devising dinners at home belonged to women who composed dinner menus, more than to men whose experience of dinner cuisine was wider since they also dined in clubs, taverns and restaurants.

The Menu Notebook also includes friends’ recipes and she records their menus with descriptions and sketches of the more visually novel items. This novelty always consisted of de-natured foods and the fashionable arrangement of ingredients. She also kept a record of her own dinners.

Since Marion Sambourne moved in a joint hierarchic and individualist league, her entertaining needed to express novelty, but novelty within bounds. Recipes taken from other dinners given within their dining circle ensured that the appropriate degree of innovation was incorporated into the menu. In contrast, the circles in which Linley
Samboume moved had a more individualist bias, as did those of some of their guests.\textsuperscript{42} The Samboumes' dinner-giving cuisine therefore had to reflect these biases. This meant that it was important not to repeat a whole menu for the same guests. Individuality essentially demands novelty and innovation, though single items did recur, as can be seen from the consommés listed later in this chapter.

Achieving a given degree of novelty or fashion depends on the resources and labour employed to obtain the required degree of individualist effect. How far Mrs Samboume used her own cook to produce the whole dinner, bought ready-made dishes or employed extra labour during the \textit{Menu Notebook} years is not possible to check. It is clear from her later \textit{Diary} that later in her life she used an extra cook to help produce her dinners.\textsuperscript{43}

Marion Sambourne's \textit{Menu Notebook} reiterates the two most important visual messages intrinsic to fashionable food: first it had to make labour intensity manifest and second it had to remove ingredients from the natural and set them in new forms. It can be seen that some aspects of these requirements were new to Marion Sambourne and her circle. Their repertoire was widened by rearranging familiar ingredients in new combinations, not as in the French system by using fonds (basic mixtures) but by the strategic use of purchased aids. Gelatine was certainly one of the most popular of the new manufactured aids used for this purpose. These techniques allowed a basic repertoire to be expanded by the rearrangement of familiar ingredients in unfamiliar patterns.

These iconographic messages, which contributed to making a fashionable dinner, are recurring themes in the \textit{Menu Notebook}. Marion Sambourne's descriptions of dishes almost always include novel ways of 'dishing up' food. Almost all the dinner menus

\textsuperscript{42} Their dining networks included some of the artists who lived nearby. This is discussed in the final chapter.

\textsuperscript{43} As noted for the all male dinner in the final chapter.
from other houses are written with the only comments reserved for the arrangement of ingredients. Even what would seem to be a simple dish, veal cutlets at Mrs Broughton’s dinner,44 are described visually: “Veal cutlets carefully cut and fried, a long slice of hard boiled egg on it.” There was no mention of flavour. Mrs Stone’s Russian salad is given a complete description, as previously, for reconstructing the dish, again without any comments on the flavour of the mayonnaise or aspic. The Sambournes dined at the Stones on 21st March 1881, where the salad was served separately after the roast:

Aspic border and in centre squares of the following vegetables as above. Carrots, turnips, beetroot, new potatoes, olives, anchovies, anchovies cut very fine all mixed with a small quantity of thin mayonnaise or sharp sauce in the centre of aspic.45

Marion Sambourne’s *Menu Notebook* has this recipe for aspic jelly:

1 oz. Nelson’s Gelatine, 1 pint stock or water, 1/4 pint sherry (or not), thyme, bay, 2 sticks celery, 12 peppercorns, whites and shells of 2 large eggs. Wrought iron or copper saucepan best. Cloth must be perfectly clean, straining boiling water through cloth twice, cool on ice.

It had become easier to make jellies at home with the availability of manufactured, bottled gelatine. Jelly as a versatile ingredient became the embodiment of the new culinary ideal. Its glassy walls could be moulded in a great variety of shapes; it could be brightly coloured with manufactured food colouring, and added ingredients could be incorporated into forms far removed from the natural. Aspic could transform the unacceptably natural shapes of offal, for example, and make them not only acceptable but genteel. Auguste Kettner, however, had a poor opinion of English aspic as compared to the French. Writing in 1877, he noted:

> But the cookery books, with scarcely an exception, give one single recipe for savoury jelly, and they call it aspic, though it does not contain a particle of aspic in it. What aspic is will be explained in its proper place. Here it must be enough to point out that, be it as it may, it is absurd to use this one precious jelly with a false name.

44 Mr Broughton’s Dinner, 25th June 1883, *Menu Notebook.*

45 Mrs Stone’s menu and recipe for Russian salad in the *Menu Notebook.* Mrs Stone was the wife of Marcus Stone, the artist. See final chapter.
morning, noon, and night, and all year through, with fish, flesh, and fowl, in season and out of season.\textsuperscript{46}

Kettner goes on to criticise Francatelli for his elaborate aspic recipe which he includes in each of fifty-six dishes for a summer ball supper for six hundred people. Kettner's simple aspic for everyday use was made from calves' feet and pot herbs with a little sherry or Marsala, some tarragon vinegar, which had been boiled with ravigote herbs and finally clarified with egg white and strained through a jelly bag.\textsuperscript{47}

From the late 1880s, both Mrs Marshall and Mrs de Salis devised dishes for individual eclectic taste among the expanding dinner-giving constituencies. Those who had a cook who could produce fairly simple aspic creations with the aid of gelatine and colouring could make novelties such as Mrs Marshall's "Little Swans with Luxette". These individually moulded aspic cream 'swans' were filled with Marshall's branded 'pate' and as in the following recipe are served on a "bed of chopped aspic jelly".\textsuperscript{48} Mrs de Salis's \textit{Entrees à la Mode} included "Lobster à la Newmarket", a creation in aspic comprising two moulded jockey caps on a green 'field'. There is no part of the lobster visible; all that is natural is banished, and the ingredients are reconstituted into icons coloured, for individual aggrandisement, in the owner's racing colours.\textsuperscript{49} In the same mode as Soyer's eclectic edifices had celebrated Ibrahim Pasha, so personalised heraldry in aspic\textsuperscript{50} was integrated into lesser diners' repertoire.

\textsuperscript{46} E. S. Dallas, \textit{Kettner's Book of the Table}, first published in 1877. This edition Centaur Press Ltd, London, 1968, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{47} E. S. Dallas, op. cit, pp. 46-8. Dallas not only includes a recipe but also some derivations of the name 'aspic'.

\textsuperscript{48} Mrs Marshall, op. cit, pp. 207-8. Not only was the Luxette and gelatine supplied by Marshall's but also the tin moulds for swans and other novel shapes, p. 31 from the advertisements at the back of the 1899 edition. See illustrations.

\textsuperscript{49} Mrs (Harriet Anne) de Salis, \textit{Entrees à la Mode}, Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1887, p. 25. See colour plate illustrated.

There is no source given for Marion Sambourne’s aspic recipe, but it certainly has all the aspects of quick visual effect over taste. To say taste was optional would, at this level, be to overstate the case for the visual, but the emphasis strongly contrasts with French-influenced authors such as Dallas and Kettner. Marion Sambourne’s menus did occasionally include other comments, typically Mrs Broughton’s of 25th June 1883, commenting upon a salad of strawberries and oranges with cream as “very good”. The menu begins with a description of ‘Salad Orientale’:

Tomatoes cut in half, centre taken out, capers, carrots, onions and beetroots, potato and a little anchovie cut in small squares and mixed with mayonnaise. Top replaced raising in centre. Very pretty dish.”

This entry appears two years after the entry for Mrs Stone’s Russian salad, but the fashion continued in the same mode though in a more novel form. Ordinary vegetables and anchovies are cut in a uniform shape; diced, and then incorporated into a sauce and set within a bounded outer wall of aspic for the Russian salad, and of tomato in the second recipe. These are perfect examples of ingredients that have been denatured – none of the ingredients retain their natural form, except the tomatoes and even they are transformed from a fruit to a receptacle.

This style of cuisine perfectly gives, and intends to give, an impression of high labour intensity, that is, it demonstrates the exercise of control over labour. But it also suggests a view of nature as subservient to culture. In doing so, it conforms to the hierarchic view of nature as subject to discipline and order. Individualists, on the other hand, disregard the natural for its own sake, seeing nature as benign, and therefore resilient. Nature for them is perceived as a subservient resource, a supplier of material for innovation.

51 Marion Sambourne, Menu Notebook.
52 Marion Sambourne, Menu Notebook.
As well as recording the menus of meals she enjoyed as a guest, Mrs Sambourne also recorded her own celebratory dinners in the *Menu Notebook* and the *Diary*. The couple’s daily menus are recorded in the *Diary*. This is presented as a list of items that began with breakfast, sometimes seem to have included lunch, and concluded with dinner. It is not easy to disaggregate these with complete certainty, but it is abundantly clear their daily food would have been designated as ‘plain’, in Victorian terms, when contrasted with their celebratory dinner menus. The differences in complexity are striking. Dinner-party food had more than double the number of courses and comprised elaborate items that never appeared on daily menus: oysters, soles with mussel sauce, aspic, coxcombs, Russian salad, anchovies, stuffed olives and shredded salmon. This is a typical menu from the menu book:

*Dinner of 8, 27th March/2nd May, Sunday, 1881*

- Oysters Lemon etc.
- Julienne Soup
- Soles with Mussel Sauce
- Aspic of Prawns
- Pigeons with Coxcombs
- Saddle of Mutton
- New Potatoes and Salad Jelly
- Haricots Verts
- Russian Salad [Mrs Stone’s recipe, adopted]
- Coffee (?) Custard, Devonshire Cream
- Fruit Salad
- Anchovies and Onions
- Stuffed Olives, Shredded Salmon

This contrasts with a typical daily menu. On 28th April 1881, from the *Diary*, the daily menu ran:

- Bacon, Marmalade (breakfast).

Leg of mutton, rice, stewed rhubarb (lunch)
Boiled rabbit, potatoes, cold mutton and salad, blanc mange, cream cheese (dinner)

This was a typical daily menu as written in the Diary but never in the Menu Notebook.

Except for roasts and salad, ordinary daily adult food had nothing in common with dinner-party food. It was almost as distinct from dinner-party food as was nursery food. Unlike nursery food, however, daily adult food could have its typical blandness augmented with mustards, bottled sauces and relishes.

MAKING CULINARY CHOICES

Daily adult dinners had three strands of meaning: first as comfortably predictable food that belongs to the diners' culinary past. Gronow comments on the predictable cuisine at dinners earlier in the century.55 Second, serving a traditional repertoire reaffirms the diners' identity in the family hierarchy. Third, a shared commonplace reflects familiar strands by making references to the diners' past, thus using an essentially hierarchic device to reinforce contemporary family hierarchy. On a more individualistic level it can be seen as the manifestation of the private economy and public show that Prince Pückler-Müssau56 had found when visiting country houses earlier in the century.

This style of 'hourglassing' was not a feature of comparable households in Paris at the same period. French professionals' dinners, which were more consistent with daily dining, were held up as examples to follow by some arbiters of taste, such as W. B. Jerrold (Fin-Bec).57 Kirwan describes the typical menu at a small dinner given for four or six people by an eminent lawyer, doctor or publisher:


56 Prince Pückler-Müssau, op. cit, p. 34.

57 W. B. Jerrold ('Fin-Bec'), The Cupboard Papers.
A good soup, a good fish plain or dressed, a good rôti and a couple of side dishes, all of which are excellent in their way, with a salmi of game and a couple of entremets quite perfect of their kind, and this at an expense of little more than half of what an English dinner costs.

He adds that there is plenty, but it is all eaten. This implies that such a French dinner contains no superfluous show, as demonstrated at typically individualist dinners in England. Dinner-giving was entirely different in France; for in spite of many political disturbances the traditional social hierarchy was more static than their London equivalents at this time (1864). So, as might be expected, setting French dinners as an example to diners in an entirely different social setting does not appear to have had much effect on London dinner-givers. Contemporary books and menus, as might be expected, do not therefore usually promote this particular French style.

The extensive and consistent use of highly processed, that is, ‘unnatural’ ingredients to construct culinary icons, underlines the cultural consistency of Victorian upper middle class dining, as shown by the Sambournes and their circle. It illustrates how food was treated and regarded by those who chose and ate it, though albeit this is derived from a small sample.

There is a scarcity of private dining records. Menu cards are corroborative, although they were not illustrated. Unfortunately they are often divorced from their context and unlike menus for public dinners were incomplete on such details as dates and addresses. Cookery books also give examples of this cuisine, particularly at the end of the century with illustrations in such books as Mrs Marshall’s and Mrs de Salis which were written especially for dinner-givers. But by the time that domestic dinner

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58 A. V. Kirwan, 1864, op. cit., p. 69.
60 Mrs de Salis, À la Mode Cookery, Longmans Green & Co., London, 1902, has colour plates, particularly of some of the more elaborate recipes.
parties had become a convention, the arrangement of dishes in these books can often be seen as superseding the quality of the cuisine.

**MRS MARSHALL, THE DINNER-GIVERS’ ENTREPRENEUR**

Mrs Marshall not only ran a cookery school but she produced various products which were aids to producing the icons that filled the dinner menu. One of her favourites, which constantly occurs in her recipes is ‘coralline pepper’. The more expensive lobster coral could, she claimed, be imitated by ‘coralline pepper’ – “being the most brilliant red colour it can be used for decoration in place of lobster coral”. It was also given other attributes: “It facilitates digestion... not much hotter than fine ordinary pepper... use alone as a Curry Powder...” The list continues and finishes: “it supplies a great want,”61 suggesting an ideal product for ‘hourglassing’ individualists. Mrs Marshall also sold colourings, flavoured essences and Luxette, a patent paté, of mostly undisclosed ingredients, but which was reputed to include anchovy.62 These products all offered short cuts to the visual enhancement of a complete dinner menu.

Mrs Marshall emphasised the elaborated presentation of such simple recipes as marinated fillet of herring on toast. Her chosen brand was ‘Kruger’s Fillets’ – a product validated by their place in her recherché cookery book.63 The only cooking required was in making the toast and warming the herrings which were then sprinkled with Coralline pepper, heated in the oven for five minutes and placed on the buttered toast. These were then decorated with parsley and lobster coral and cut into strips two-and-a-

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61 Mrs Marshall, op. cit, p. 41.

62 *Mrs Marshall’s Larger Cookery Book*, c. 1899, op. cit, has Luxette included as an ingredient in at least 34 recipes.

63 Gerald Mars and Valerie Mars, 1993, p.54, Validated commercial products are, as I found in the modern suburban study, an important element in the choice of products for public consumption, such as branded drinks: Gordon’s Gin &c. which was offered by brand rather than simply as ‘gin’ to guests.
half or three inches long. Her recipe concludes with specific 'dishing up' instructions:
“Dish up en couronne on a dish paper on a hot dish.”

'Dishing up', as can be deduced, was an important skill. In a private letter, a cook is especially recommended because, “she dishes up well and neatly.” Presentation then, was the unifying reference point for dinner cuisine and was consistently manifest in print where the iconography symbolised refinement and liminality. Food, as the examples show, had to be de-natured and enclosed within physical boundaries, as was the domestic space in which the dinner-party took place. Culinary icons were consistent in expressing this cosmology. Division of private space, exclusion of children, who through their unpredictable behaviour personified nature untamed, and an ideal of strong rules about etiquette were all conceptual boundaries that were manifest in culinary iconography.

RESOURCES FOR DINNER-GIVERS

There was a considerable range in the quality of food from pastry-shops and caterers that was available to dinner-givers. There were many other sources of ready-prepared foods in London, such as street-stalls and cookshops. John Walton notes the rise of fried fish shops from the 1850s and 1860s, but as these cookshops and stalls were associated with workers and the poor, they were not validated for dinner-givers by

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64 Mrs Marshall’s Larger Cookery Book, 1899, op. cit., p. 45. (See illustration at the end of chapter IV.)
65 Private letter of recommendation for a cook from 32 Ebury St., London SW, to Alice Lucas, 46 Gloucester Square, London, W., 5th June 1880.
66 See final chapter on Domestic Space.
67 Children’s meals are further discussed later in this chapter.
68 See examples referred to above from Mrs de Salis, Entrées à la Mode, and Mrs Marshall’s ‘Moulded Swans with Luxette’.
hierarchic didacts. Dinner-givers were constrained by the skills and knowledge of the labour they could employ, whether these were their own cooks or extra cooks brought in for specific occasions. A similar variability applied to brought-in goods, such as entrées, or a complete dinner cooked by caterers. Some dinners produced by caterers were very elaborate. Money spent in this area was poised between what was meant to be a visible service and what was supposed to be invisible to the guests. Using caterers in this way was, for the new individualist dinner-givers, a strategic device that covered the lack of an organised permanent kitchen hierarchy. Support could be bought in at strategic points of insufficiency such as supplying the more demanding pastry-work and other dishes which needed greater skill than the resources of permanent kitchen staff could produce. Individualists used the caterers' hierarchy to satisfy their own inability to produce the elaborate cuisine that required a kitchen brigade.

In works of comment and advice on dinner-giving, views on employing outside services veered from the very critical – suggesting deception by the hosts who gave dinners beyond their usual resources and where strategic devices were primarily to impress, to Kirwan’s advice which saw it as prudent:

I would therefore suggest that in establishments where there are not first rate assistants, and a sufficient number of them, patties and all kinds of pastries, jellies, ices &c, should be procured from the confectioner. There are many first rate confectioners who undertake this duty, such as Gunter, Grange, Bridgeman, Ward and others…


71 Periodically caterers went bankrupt and their assets were sold and their records lost, as in the case of Searcy, a firm of caterers established in the 1850s, related to me by the latest Mr Searcy. Caterers were required to hold a wide range of equipment for hire during the social season. The outlay for each event in labour and raw materials required prompt payment of accounts. In addition, ‘inventory shrinkage’, i.e. pilferage, was a constant problem. Gronow comments on the gloomy faces of caterers at the end of the social season in London.

72 A. V. Kirwan, op. cit, p. 193.
Long menus served in under-resourced households where plain dinners were usually eaten suggest that Kirwan’s advice was taken.

**RECIPE BOOKS: THE MIDDLE RANGE**

Records of how food was cooked and the ingredients used are set down in a large number of contemporary cookery books. These books are not only the work of leading chefs, such as Carême, Ude, Beauvilliers, Francatelli, Soyer et al. A great variety were produced also by a range of male and female cooks. Men and women who were not cooks, but followed the strong didactic and reforming fashion of the time, also contributed to the field. An example of this style was Dr John Henry Walsh, assisted by a Committee of Ladies, who, if they followed the prevailing fashion, did not actually have much practical experience of cookery. Later the Society of Arts, in 1873 (before the National school was founded in South Kensington) sent to the members of its Committee for Cooking a memorandum with “a request for suggestions on the treatment of the following articles:— 1. Toast making, 2. Muffins,” followed by the rest

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74 Louis Eustache Ude, *The French Cook, or the Art of Cookery Developed in all its Branches*, Cox and Baylis, London, 1813.


78 Dr John Henry Walsh FRCS (1810-88), surgeon and sports writer, editor of *The Coursing Calendar* from 1856 and *The Field* from 1857. *A Manual of Domestic Economy Suited to Families Spending from £100 to £1000 a Year*, first published by G. Routledge & Co., 1856. This was then revised in 1874, *For Families Spending £150 to £1500 a Year*. It was last issued in 1890. He also write *The Economical Housekeeper*, 1857, and *The British Cookery Book*, but his major work was concerned with sporting guns. D.N.B: Vol. LIx, 1899, pp. 217-8.
of a list of assorted plain cookery.\textsuperscript{79} Cooking is not best ordered by committees. Not surprisingly, the result of these ventures was not good.

English culinary tradition was epitomised by Hannah Glasse\textsuperscript{80} and Mrs Rundle\textsuperscript{81} who wrote at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Although Mrs Rundle was writing sixty years later than Mrs Glasse, their recipes were in the same tradition: an English cuisine which included dishes of French origin but without overt use of the French system. There are recipes in Mrs Rundle for stock, soups, \textit{à la mode} beef and other basic French dishes. Whether cooks worked systematically when using these recipes is questionable. Her approach to taste was more flexible and open to individualism than might have been expected in France.

\begin{quote}
The different tastes of people require more or less of the flavour of spices, salt, garlic, butter, &c. which can never be ordered by general rules; and if the cook has not a good taste, and attention to that of her employers, not all the ingredients which nature and art can furnish, will give exquisite flavour to her dishes.\textsuperscript{82}
\end{quote}

In a time of fast social change, such as continued for most of the nineteenth century, it was possible for a range of varied tastes to coexist and not surprisingly there was therefore a diversity of approaches to cookery. This resulted in several eccentric and idiosyncratic publications that catered to specific audiences. The best known early example of this approach was Dr Kitchiner's \textit{Cook's Oracle}.\textsuperscript{83} His approach to cookery was entirely idiosyncratic and is written from a strong viewpoint directed more towards

\textsuperscript{79} \textit{Journal of the Society of Arts}, January 10 1873, p. 121.
\textsuperscript{80} Hannah Glasse, \textit{The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy}, first published by the author, London, 1747.
\textsuperscript{81} Mrs Rundle (Maria Elizabeth Rundle), \textit{A New System of Domestic Cookery}, John Murray, London, 1807. Still in print in 1886.
\textsuperscript{82} Mrs Rundle, 1809, op. cit, p. xlii.
\textsuperscript{83} Dr William Kitchiner, \textit{Apicius Redevivus, or, The Cook's Oracle}, S. Bagster, London, 1817. Dr William Kitchiner MD (1775?-1827). Described in the DNB, 1892, Vol. XXXI, pp. 231-232, as "Miscellaneous Writer". His subjects: telescopes and opera glasses, making a will, health, a collection of patriotic and sea songs, etc. Today he is known for \textit{The Cook’s Oracle}, and, to a lesser extent, \textit{The Housekeeper’s Oracle}, Whittaker Teacher and Co., London, 1829, published posthumously. Kitchiner took gastronomy seriously. His views were and are considered a mixture of both sense and eccentricity.
male arbiters than women. There were a few other unusual early nineteenth-century books, but for the most part the French-English controversy continued. An advocate of French cookery was an anonymous physician, who wrote in 1825 of: “many years resident on the continent”, and issued a book of “French domestic cookery combining economy with elegance”. He says that in the previous thirty years the only book “of merit” published in England was Ude’s, and that was for the rich, not the bourgeoisie. He cites English prejudice against French cuisine, and goes on to say:

Contrary conclusions having been arrived at by the other nations of Europe, all of which follow the system of French cookery much nearer than John Bull, whose gastric propensities are still so far confined to the favourite fare of his ancestors, as to prefer the ponderous solidarity of British roast beef and plum pudding, to the almost boundless variety of dishes contrived by the ingenuity of French cooks.84

In this book the advantages of “the French culinary system” are listed as numbered qualities from one to four, variety, economy, health and “practical facility” with variety given pride of place. The need for variety is intrinsic to individualistic strategic dinner-giving whereas variety was not called for by those who gave the dinners at which Captain Gronow attended. In 1860 Gronow remembered the cuisine of his youth: “wonderfully solid, hot and stimulating… The French or side dishes consisted of very mild but very abortive attempts at continental cooking.”85

This anonymous physician sets out the proper way of making and using stocks and cooking pot-au-feu in the French manner. He explains how the beef “answers three purposes: 1st, as a soup; 2ndly, as a dish of bouilli and vegetables; and 3rdly, for a reserve of stock.” He names three basic fonds: “Stock or first broth, consommé or jelly broth, blond or veal gravy”. He makes clear that to cook in the French way a number of items must always be ready for use: “dried herbs, preserved vegetables and fruits, bay leaves, onions, shallots, eggs, bacon and anchovies.” He advises leaving out garlic

85 Capt. Gronow, op. cit, pp. 45-6.
unless the cook knows that her employers like it. Garlic was often equated with a French peasant taste whereas the author’s choice of dishes is directed especially to “families hitherto unaccustomed to French cuisine”.86

As with other books in Victorian England, cookery books were produced in greater quantity and in greater variety than ever before.87 It is possible to discern a hierarchy of prestige among them, with the great chefs’ major works at the top being referred to by authors lower in the hierarchy when writing for the upper middle- and middle-classes. At the base of the hierarchy came books for the working classes and the poor.

Francatelli88 and Soyer89 wrote books for all classes.

As the city (London, in this case) contains all cultures,90 there were cookery books for all the constituencies. These were manifest by tastes that ranged from traditional food through to haute cuisine and pseudo-French cuisine. Vegetarian, specialist and Jewish Kosher dissenting minorities all had their own books promulgating particular methods, special national cuisines and ingredients.91 Other specialist books were often based on individualist notions, such as Maigre Cookery,92 derived from continental fast-day dishes but promoted to diversify culinary taste in England. Similarly books for dinner-

89 Alexis Soyer, The Poor Man’s Regenerator, 1846; A Shilling Cookery for the People, 1854.
givers do not suggest any of the unusual animal foods promoted by acclimatisation societies.93

How far these more specialist cuisines had any direct influence on the food served at London dinner parties is doubtful. Although individualist in their quest for innovation, London's dinner-givers were set within an overall culture of hierarchs where innovation was bounded by conventions derived from the regular hierarchy of dining leagues of which they were a part. Taste, in the broad sense, was essentially bounded by considerations of the appropriate.94

The key works that major chefs wrote were meant to be used in substantial establishments. They could also be used by gastronomes who required esoteric knowledge when ordering a dinner. Soyer was catering to this sector with his list: "How everything should be in cookery."95 Dubois similarly addresses the amphytrion, the host who selects a dinner.96 Middle-range writers are popularly represented by Mrs Beeton whose Household Management was serialised, then issued as a book which sold 60,000 copies in the first year and 640,000 to 1898.97 It also had a life of new editions longer than that of its author, Isabella Beeton, who died in 1865 aged 28. After

93 Christopher Lever, They Dined on Eland, Quiller Press, London, 1992, pp. 33, 44-7. The Acclimatisation Society of the United Kingdom was founded in 1860. This society had its first annual dinner at Willis's Rooms, King Street, St James's, on 12th July 1862. The menu ranged from some dishes that were considered quite unpalatable to slightly unusual variations on conventional meats and vegetables. An account of the dinner was given in The Field, 19th July 1862.


96 Amphytrion is defined simply as an 'Host' by C. Herman Senn, in his Dictionary of Foods and Culinary Encyclopaedia, Ward, Lock & Co. Ltd, London, 1919, p. 8. Dubois gives it extra meaning by suggesting it also implies 'gourmet' in his Cosmopolitan Cookery. Amphytrions are further discussed in the last chapter.

its first edition, the book was revised in 1869 and later editions had more illustrations. Mrs Beeton's book borrowed from many others, among them Webster,⁹⁸ who wrote a comprehensive household encyclopaedia, and Eliza Acton who wrote *Modern Cookery for Private Families.*⁹⁹

How far were recipe books used by dinner-givers and their cooks? What resources did they need? To cook a dinner of the appropriate elaboration for the style admired and imitated by Marion Sambourne required a cook with a sufficient repertoire of techniques, plus additional labour necessary to process the food. The 1892 edition of 'Mrs Beeton' advises: "Cut your coat according to your cloth. We should say, choose your dinner according to your cook."¹⁰⁰ For an example from Mrs Sambourne's *Menu Notebook* of the work required for one dish: 'Mrs Stone's Russian Salad', vegetables had to be cleaned, cut up and cooked; mayonnaise or sharp sauce made; aspic prepared, and then the complete dish assembled.¹⁰¹

How far cookery books were pillow books for the mistress, rather than practical manuals for the cooks, is difficult to establish. A large part of dinner-party food may not have been cooked by the regular cook but by another cook with a more elaborate repertoire. The Sambournes' plain daily diet does not appear to relate to the celebratory one. Mrs Sambourne is attributed with owning a cookery book by "Cre-Fydd" (a pseudonym, Welsh for 'griffin', who is described as a resident of Kensington, as were the Sambournes). It is a book that includes "twelve bills of fare for dinner parties" but none of the Sambourne menus in the *Menu Notebook* has any of the items listed in

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⁹⁸ Thomas Webster FGS (1773-1844), geologist and architect, Professor of Geology at University College London, 1842. Webster was assisted by the late Mrs Parkes, author of *Domestic Duties, an Encyclopedia of Domestic Economy*, Longman, Green and Longmans, London, 1844, final edition 1861.


¹⁰¹ Marion Sambourne's *Menu Notebook*, op. cit.
these menus. Dinner-party food was more likely to be dictated by the cook's repertoire and by what could be obtained from outside suppliers which was of the appropriate quality and price.

Then, it might be asked, what were cook books for? Each book was directed at a constituency of readers. Mrs Acton, whose French-influenced, practical, systematic approach made an excellent source book for the plagiarists, was writing for a diminishing skilled group, who worked in their own kitchens. In 1844, Thomas Webster and Mrs Parkes remarked on "the instruction of young cooks":

Young servants have not in the present day so much practical instruction from their mistresses, as was the case in former times, when ladies, except those of the highest rank, superintended and assisted in the preparation for well served tables.

The rush to gentility was in direct conflict with participation in food preparation by those employing cooks. In contrast, Mrs Beeton wrote for genteel aspiration and was extremely successful. She wrote for the new servant-employing women. The recipes are moderately time-consuming, but not excessively so when compared to haute cuisine. Pseudo recherché dishes could be achieved without the required resources needed for orthodox French methods.

Elaboration is expressed in these works through the way food was presented. Mrs Beeton's Christmas pudding, for instance, was cooked in a fluted mould, contrasting with Mrs Acton's which was in traditional round style. Mrs Beeton's

102 Cre-Fydd's Family Fare: the young housewife's daily assistant, Simpkin, Marshall & Co., London, first published 1864. The copy at 18 Stafford Terrace is the 1874 edition, the year of the Sambourne's marriage, but it is inscribed with Marion Sambourne's mother's name, Mrs Spencer Herepath (Mary Anne, 1822-95), p. CXI-C.XIV.


'Open jelly with whipped cream'\textsuperscript{106} has the comment in brackets under the title: "(a very pretty dish)". It is made up of a decoratively moulded jelly – flavoured "in any way that may be preferred", with an open centre filled with sweetened, sherry-flavoured cream. Jelly of two colours,\textsuperscript{107} to our eyes an equally elaborate dish, but not described as "very pretty", suggests the fashion for the natural cream contained within a shape was, for celebratory cuisine, a favourite theme. Mrs Acton also used jelly moulds – including the complex Belgrave mould with tubular inserts – but her instructions emphasise French methods which produce more delicate jellies.\textsuperscript{108} Her jelly would have a similar appearance to Mrs Beeton's "Jelly of two colours".

Mrs Beeton's readers were certainly intended to give dinners. There are dinner menus for up to "thirty persons".\textsuperscript{109} There are also daily menus. The contrast is the same as that between the Sambournes' plain daily dinners and their more elaborate dinner parties. Below are typical examples of both styles of Beeton menus. Although written nearly twenty years before, differences between celebratory and daily menus are apparent.

\textbf{1912.–DINNER FOR 8 PERSONS (February)}\textsuperscript{110}

\textbf{First Course.}

Mock Turtle Soup.

Fillets of Turbot à la Crème. Fried Filleted Soles and Anchovy Sauce.

\textbf{Entrees.}

Larded Fillets of Rabbits. Tendrons de Veau with Purée of Tomatoes.

\textbf{Second Course.}


\textsuperscript{106} Isabella Beeton, 1861, op. cit, p. 731, No. 1453.
\textsuperscript{107} Isabella Beeton, 1861, op. cit, p. 725, No. 1441.
\textsuperscript{108} Isabella Beeton, 1861, op. cit, p. 725, No. 1441.
\textsuperscript{109} Eliza Acton, 1855, op. cit, pp. 468-9.
\textsuperscript{110} Mrs Beeton, 1861, op. cit, p. 915.
Third Course.
Roast Pigeons or Larks.

Dessert and Ices.

and below, for comparison, “plain family dinners” for a week in the same month:

PLAIN FAMILY DINNERS FOR FEBRUARY


Monday.—1. Fried soles, plain melted butter, and potatoes. 2. Cold roast beef, mashed potatoes. 3. The remains of plum-pudding cut in slices, warmed, and served with sifted sugar sprinkled over it. Cheese.

Tuesday.—1. The remains of ox-tail soup from Sunday. 2. Pork cutlets with tomato sauce; hashed beef. 3. Rolled jam pudding. Cheese.

Wednesday.—1. Boiled haddock and plain melted butter. 2. Rump-steak pudding, potatoes, greens. 3. Arrowroot, blancmange, garnished with jam.

Thursday.—1. Boiled leg of pork, greens, potatoes, pease pudding. 2. Apple fritters, sweet macaroni.

Friday.—1. Pea-soup made with liquor that the pork was boiled in. 2. Cold pork, mashed potatoes. 3. Baked rice pudding.

Saturday.—1. Broiled herrings and mustard sauce. 2. Haricot mutton. 3. Macaroni, either served as a sweet pudding or with cheese.

A pinnacle of individualist elaboration was reached at the end of the century with Mrs Marshall’s and Mrs de Salis’ books, which were written largely for dinner-givers. Every dish achieves some degree of intricacy, through process or arrangement, to give an appropriate degree of elaboration to fulfil the designation ‘recherché dinner dishes’.

Individualist dinner-givers had another pressing need, catered to by a stream of literature which sustained their need for continuous innovation. How far dinner-givers actually made use of unusual works, such as those on distant foreign cuisines and

111 Mrs Beeton, 1861, op. cit, p. 917.
extensive reference books is difficult to tell. Foreign tastes were beyond the experience of nearly all English diners. An example of such ‘exotic’ cookery was Turabi Efendi’s *Turkish Cookery Book*, published in London in 1862. Cassells produced *A Dictionary of Cookery* which claimed to contain “over nine thousand recipes”. Choice could be almost infinite in theory, but how much relevance such quantity had for choosing a dinner is questionable. Both Cassells’ book and books on distant cuisines would have been an invaluable source of esoteric knowledge for those who required a substitute for practical skills when ordering a dinner, as exemplified in the earlier books of Webster and Beeton.

From comparing Sambourne dinner menus with Cre-Fydd’s book, it is apparent that recipes were certainly taken from friends as they had been experienced by Mrs Sambourne and selection also probably rested on the cook’s capabilities and the cost and availability of raw materials.

English involvement in India suggests Indian cuisines as a most likely choice for incorporation in dinner menus. English women who ran households in India employed native cooks, and it might therefore be considered that Indian recipes would make up their dinner menus. Authentic native Indian cuisines, however, were not usually part of the culinary repertoire among the ex-patriot community in India or in England, although there were some few who did eat authentic curries. *Kettner’s Book of the Table* (1877) opens the entry on curry with: “There are few dishes which it is so difficult to get well done as a curry.”

In India an Anglo-Indian cuisine is recorded in such cookery books as *The Madras Cookery Book for the People* by ‘An Old Lady Resident’, published by Higginbotham.

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in Madras in 1874, and four years later by the same publisher, *Culinary Jottings for Madras* by Colonel Arthur Robert Kenny-Herbert under the pseudonym ‘Wyvern’. In the fifth edition of 1885 he remarks that “…the best curry in the world would never be permitted to appear at a *petite diner* composed by a good disciple of the new regime”. *Dainty Dishes for Indian Tables* (1879) only included European dishes in its first edition but added two chapters on Indian curries and pilaus [sic] to the second edition in 1881. This menu for a dinner-party in India is typical of a selection given:

- Partridge Soup
- Soles Fried in Oil
- Aspic Fillets of Chicken and Game
- Lamb Cutlets with Cucumbers
- Stewed Beef with Macaroni and Tomato Sauce
- Teal with Christopher North’s Own Sauce
- Spinach Purée with Cream
- Grilled Mushrooms
- Charlotte of Apples
- Orange and Cream Jelly
- Cream Cheese, Devilled Biscuits, Mâitre d’hôtel Butter, Dessert

In England there was a limited but recurring range of imported Anglo-Indian recipes which included mulligatawny soup, curries, kedgeree and chutneys. Some recipes were closer to their Indian origins than others, and several dishes given by travellers and ex-patriots appear in the 1855 edition of Acton’s *Modern Cookery*, in the section on ‘Foreign and Jewish Cookery’. Among them are kedgeree, as an “Indian

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117 *Dainty Dishes for Indian Tables*, W. Newman, Madras, 1879, 1881.
118 *Dainty Dishes for Indian Tables*, op. cit, p. 423.
119 ‘Kitchri’, ‘mulligatawny’, ‘pilaw’ and ‘chutney’ were all both cooked and spelled with many variations.
120 Eliza Acton, 1855, op. cit, pp. 605-22.
breakfast dish”, curries and a “Real Indian Pilaw”.¹²¹ Two mulligatawny soups are included in the chapter on soups. Beeton has a recipe for Indian curry powder founded on Dr Kitchener’s [sic] recipe.¹²²

As in India, except for mulligatawny soup which appears on Beeton’s January dinner for eight,¹²³ these recipes were not part of middle-range dinner-party repertoire. Curry is often given as a useful disguise for leftovers to be eaten at family meals. *What to do with Cold Mutton* includes a recipe for curried mutton,¹²⁴ and ‘Cre-Fydd’ has a recipe for ‘Curried Boiled Mutton’.¹²⁵

By rejecting native cuisine, and in the face of considerable difficulties, these colonial wives sustained their identity and defended the boundary against Indian influences. This exclusion of Indian cuisine, especially for dinner parties, was particularly notable after it was more customary for women to join their husbands in India. Previously, men living without households run by English women do not appear to have drawn this culinary boundary, and had eaten Indian food. In India a greater freedom for men, with a contrasting constraint on women in the house, was reflected in the style of dinner-party food as it was in England (see chapter IX).

**OUTSIDERS AND DISSENTING MINORITIES**

There were of course those who did not participate in strategic or more hierarchic dining, whether from personal choice or social exclusion. As far as can be found, there is no evidence of the serving of vegetarian or special diets at strategic or hierarchic dinner parties. None of the books with dinner menus suggests that vegetarianism or invalid dishes might be incorporated in their regular menus. There was an extensive

¹²¹ Eliza Acton, 1855, op. cit, pp. 613-4.
¹²² Isabella Beeton, 1861, op. cit, p. 215.
¹²³ Isabella Beeton, 1861, op. cit, p. 911.
¹²⁵ ‘Cre-Fydd’, 1866, op. cit, p. 257.
medical literature on digestive disorders, and many cook books had sections on
invalid recipes which emphasised food that was easy to digest. It must be presumed,
however, given the wide acceptance of digestive disorder, that the range of dishes,
whether served à la Française or à la Russe, allowed an element of choice.

In addition to cookery books for different strata in the new class-based society, there
were specialist books for dinner-givers who were outside the mainstream of dinner-
giving. The Vegetarian Society was founded in 1847 in England. They had their own
cookery books, including one, Recipes for Forty Vegetarian Dinners. But, like other
bounded minority constituencies, vegetarian or Jewish kosher menus do not occur in
mainstream books. An exception is Eliza Acton’s Modern Cookery, which has a section
of Jewish and foreign recipes. Stricter adherents among these groups were separated
from mainstream dining by their proscribed diets, but this did not inhibit their mirroring
the fashion of mainstream dinner-giving within the strictures of their rules. ‘A Lady’ in
The Jewish Manual (1846) suggests that the ethnic dish, Commean, a slow-cooked
composite casserole, “is not a very seemly dish for table”. Its humble origins would
have been revealed in its ‘natural’ state. The introduction describes the book as
containing as well as traditional Jewish recipes, “plain English dishes; and also such
French ones as are now in general use at all refined modern tables”.

126 Stephen Mennell, ‘Indigestion in the Nineteenth Century, Aspects of English Taste and
with the Cause and Cure of Indigestion, from 1820, in various editions to the end of the century,
also Sir Henry Thompson’s Food and Feeding, Frederick Warne, London, 1880. Also see
illustrations for ‘Melton Dinner Pills’ advertisement.

127 Albert Broadbent, FSS FRIS, Recipes for Forty Vegetarian Dinners, The Vegetarian Society,
Stockport, 1900. The work includes recipes for seven dinners by Hon. Mrs. F. J. Bruce.

128 Eliza Acton, 1855, op. cit, pp. 605-22.

129 ‘A Lady’ (Judith Montefiore), The Jewish Manual, originally published by T. & W. Boone

130 ‘A Lady’, (Judith Montefiore), op. cit, p. ii.
A kosher cookery book of 1875\textsuperscript{131} has menus for dinner parties which are composed in exactly the same fashion as mainstream dinners. The Vegetarian Society’s dinner\textsuperscript{132} at its inaugural meeting also followed the conventions of mainstream dinners. These exclusive dinner cuisines enjoyed by small, dissenting minorities were as separate from the experience of middle-range domestic dinner cuisine as they were separate from the French cuisine of the elite. Diners could be separated by their access to taste and quality in cuisine as much as by ideological prescription. In the next section, Victorian \textit{haute cuisine} is examined. Fashion set by the upper echelons of an over-arching hierarchy influenced the cuisine of all of its subordinate cultures. \textit{Haute cuisine} offered ideas of labour intensity and elaboration as examples for lesser leagues and dissenting minorities to re-create in their own style.

\textbf{HAUTE CUISINE AND ENGLISH GASTRONOMIC KNOWLEDGE}

How far French cuisine in nineteenth-century England was truly French, even when cooked by French chefs, is an open question. Even if they wished to replicate French cuisine exactly, they could not do so irrespective of the lack of French system already referred to; native raw materials were different in both taste and texture, and livestock and vegetable varieties and methods of farming and horticulture were different in England and France. In addition, the tastes of English employers varied depending on whether their preferences were cosmopolitan or insular, and by how far their French cooks adapted the cuisine to English taste. Not surprisingly, therefore, it is a culinary truism that transplanted cuisines cannot ever be the same in another country.

The foundations of nineteenth-century French cuisine were established by M. A. (Antonin) Carême (1783-1833). He was seen as a culinary colossus not only in his

\textsuperscript{131} Mrs J. Atretel (Stella Atretel), \textit{An Easy and Economical Book of Jewish Cookery upon Strictly Orthodox Principles}, P. Valentine, London, 1875, pp. 169–73.

native France but also in England where his influence was continuous until the end of the nineteenth century. Nineteenth-century developments were founded on Carême’s codification of *haute cuisine*. Not until the end of the century was *haute cuisine* further reformed, by Georges Auguste Escoffier (1847-1935), who in his turn said, when justifying new methods for ‘modern demands’: “The fundamental principles of science which we owe to Carême... will last as long as cooking itself.” (1907)\(^{133}\)

Carême cooked in England for the Prince of Wales at Brighton for eight months from 1816 to 1817, but his widest influence was through his books. He took the progress in *haute cuisine* of the eighteenth century, developed them yet further and set a standard in taste. One typical example was his reform of a classic fond, bouillon, by using roast fowl to give it a lighter taste. It was also due to the combination of his skills as both patissier and cuisinier that he was able to rise to new heights of elaboration.\(^{134}\) Among his pupils in Paris was Francatelli (1805-1876), who cooked for Queen Victoria, for the aristocracy and at several London clubs. Francatelli’s recipes included composite dishes such as *Chartreuse* and *croustades*.\(^{135}\) Abraham Hayward, an arbiter of Victorian

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135 Charles Elmé Francatelli, *The Cook’s Guide and Butler’s Assistant*, Richard Bentley and Son, London, this edition 1884. A glossary provides definitions for some culinary terms, e.g.:

“Chartreuse à la Parisienne – an ornamental entrée or side-dish, composed chiefly of quenelle forcemeat, the interior being garnished with ragouts, scallops etc.” p. 498.

“Croustades, pâtes-chauds, tourtes, timbale – various ornamental pie cases made either of paste or prepared rice.” p. 498.

Francatelli’s ‘croustade of larkes’, p. 204, includes eighteen larks, boned and stuffed, with garnishes in an ‘urn’ carved from a stale loaf, then deep fried in lard.
gastronomic taste, quotes Lady Morgan’s account of a dinner cooked by Carême for the Baron de Rothschild in France in 1831:

To do justice to the science and research of a dinner so served would require a knowledge of the art equal to that which produced it; its character, however, was that it was in season, – that it was up to its time, – that it was in the spirit of the age, – that there was no perruque in its composition, no trace of the wisdom of our ancestors in a single dish – no high-spiced sauces, no dark-brown gravies, no flavour of cayenne and allspice, no tincture of catsup and walnut pickle, no visible agency of those vulgar elements of cooking of the good old times, fire and water. Distillations of the most delicate viands, extracted in silver dews, with chemical precision –

‘On tepid clouds of rising steam’ – formed the fond of all. EVERY MEAT PRESENTED ITS OWN NATURAL AROMA – EVERY VEGETABLE ITS OWN SHADE OF VERDURE.

(Morgan, 1831: II, 416-17)\(^{136}\)

Carême beautifully illustrated many of his dishes in his books in which his drawings of pièces montées do not appear food-like: they are more akin to architectural drawings and set stratospheric standards for any who tried to imitate the originals. For English dinner-givers this exquisite visual food was a marvellous foundation for their new elaborated cuisine. Although food as art has a long history in Europe, Carême brought the tradition forward into the nineteenth century. His techniques provided the basis on which a new iconography of the dinner-table was founded.

All these terms which here apply to elite dishes were later, by the time Francatelli’s pupil, C. Herman Senn, wrote his Dictionary of Foods and Culinary Encyclopedia, Ward Lock & Co. Ltd, London, 1919, p. 57, to describe croustades as “shapes of bread fried, or baked paste crusts, used for serving delicate fish, game...” Typically this is an example of what was originally a grand piece reduced. Mrs Marshall’s croustades for middle-range dinner owed more to Senn than Francatelli or Carême’s haute cuisine. Mrs Marshall’s croustades are for individual serving. A sweetbread ‘croustardé’ is made from 5 hollowed out deep fried rounds of bread (p. 580) and some smoked haddock filled croustardes are in small pastry cases (p. 590), from the Revised Edition of Mrs A. B. Marshall’s Cookery Book, Marshall’s School of Cookery, and Ward, Lock & Co., London, c. 1920?

Carême’s elaborate dishes and grand pièces montées were a springboard for such later edifices of individualism as Soyer’s “Hundred Guinea Dish”. This he created for a dinner given to Prince Albert when he inaugurated the plan for the 1851 Great Exhibition. The later work of Soyer, that most entrepreneurial of Victorian chefs, was sometimes described as vulgar, but his work nonetheless owed much of its inspiration and technical expertise to Carême.

Carême may not have had in England the connoisseurs to whom he was accustomed, as corroborated by Ude’s view of some of his own clients, it can be understood how Soyer, as an adaptable individualist, was able to succeed, and why Carême, as an archetypal hierarchist, should have left England.

Hayward put Ude “at the head” of the best cooks in England and like Carême, he faced a similar problem. His book contains a tirade against gastronomic ignorance. At the end of his address to cooks, Ude says:

I have frequently met with young men who pretend to high birth and scientific knowledge, and who are yet unable to judge of anything in cookery beyond boiled chicken and parsley and butter. Never mind. Do as I have done. Do not be frightened by their repulsive manners. You will find, as I have done, some good judges that will advocate your cause, and perseverance in right principles will give to a man of your profession the rank of an artist.


139 Abraham Hayward, 1883, op. cit, p. 73.

HOW FRENCH INFLUENCE WAS PROMOTED WITH AN INDIVIDUALIST BIAS

Francatelli can be said to be the English chef who continued Carême's approach and techniques. He had worked under Carême in Paris. Francatelli's *The Modern Cook* has detailed instructions on the techniques on which French cuisine was based. The *Dictionary of National Biography* of 1889 describes him as "having advanced culinary art to unprecedented perfection in this country".

It is difficult to assess Francatelli's real impact. He certainly held important posts having worked for Queen Victoria, and also for aristocrats, hotels and clubs. He wrote three books, but lacked one important quality which was essential when trying to interest his public in French cuisine: his approach was consistent with the hierarchic French system. There was little compromise in his instructions, for he hardly engaged with the current entrepreneurial bias. Hayward praised Francatelli's dinners at Chesterfield House as, "the admiration of the gastronomic world of London". Soyer, he admits, is: "a very clever man, of inventive genius and inexhaustible resource; but his execution is hardly on a par with his conception."

It was Alexis Soyer (1809-1858), a French cook, and at the same time a dynamic innovator, who related to a wider public. He used the French system as an essentially subservient resource from which to launch his highly regarded culinary works. Soyer was the entrepreneurial head of his kitchen brigade. It is the combined individualist/hierarchic diagonal that invariably makes innovation succeed. Successful creative individuals in kitchens as elsewhere, do not work alone; they depend on disciplined hierarchies to carry out their plans. Soyer catered to his clients' needs at the

143 *Dictionary of National Biography*, op. cit, p. 163.
144 Abraham Hayward, 1883, op. cit, pp. 75-77.
Reform Club, where he was appointed their first chef in 1837, and where he worked until 1850. A break-away club from the established clubs, the Reform required no religious affiliation. Membership was wide enough to admit such powerful individualists of humble origin as Joseph Paxton, the gardener turned designer of the Crystal Palace for the Great Exhibition of 1851.

Soyer understood his employers. The way he adapted the cuisine for the expression of their needs can be understood when examining his famous dish: *Cotelettes de Mouton à la Reform*. It was the development of a way of cooking lamb or mutton cutlets in egg and breadcrumb which appears in John Farley’s *The London Art of Cookery*. Farley was the landlord of the London Tavern, which had itself been a meeting place for radicals from 1769. Soyer took this item from the repertoire of a tavern that was in many ways the predecessor of the Reform, reproduced the basic idea with a more elaborate and decorative garnish, and served it plated in a more fashionable mode. At the same time as giving the members something new, he had taken a familiar dish from the traditional male ‘Messmate’ repertoire. Soyer’s genius was to understand the degree of innovation appropriate for his employers. His culinary exploits were perfect journalist’s copy; they gave the wider public a pinnacle of elaboration against which they could measure their own place.

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147 Valerie Mars and Gerald Mars, ‘Classifying Cuisines: Epicures, Isolates, Messmates and Cultists’ in *Proceedings of Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 1984 & 1985*, Cookery: Science, Lore and Books, Prospect Books Ltd, London, 1986. In this article ‘Messmate’ was chosen to describe hierarchic diners as their collective dinners were structured to unify the group. ‘Good fellowship’ is a quality emphasised as against individualists’ competitive dining. A dish taken from John Farley’s repertoire at the London Tavern has all the associations of good fellowship from a shared past. This theme of male commensal groups is returned to in the final chapter in ‘From Beefsteaks to Octaves’.
In a country where there were no shared tastes in *haute cuisine*, as Beauvilliers had commented,\(^{148}\) then the only ways a chef’s work could be discussed were in the areas of spectacle, plenty and organisation. These were fields in which Soyer excelled. When he did write, he began his first book, *The Gastronomic Regenerator*, with two pages of “How everything should be in cooking.” Many of these were ideal points for employers who did not know much about how dishes should appear in colour and texture.\(^{149}\)

*The Times* reviewed Francatelli’s *Modern Cook* and Soyer’s *Gastronomic Regenerator* together. It was Soyer’s book that was the easier subject as it contained plenty to entertain a non-gastronomically educated public.

The two bulky and important volumes before us are characteristic of the distinguished artists to whom we owe them. Written, the one by a Frenchman, the other by an Englishman (for Mr. Francatelli, in spite of his name, boasts of an Anglican origin), they differ greatly in form, although in substance, as far as the uninitiated may judge, they are equally excellent. *The Modern Cook* enters upon his task in a grave and business-like fashion, never tempted into digression, never moved into metaphor, ever keeping in view his main object, which, we are proud to say, is eminently patriotic [Soyer used metaphor and simile to convey his points to his readers], for he seeks to elevate the character and position of the English Cook, and to produce a work creditable to the gastronomic knowledge of the nation. *The Gastronomic Regenerator* is a different personage. He can afford to garnish his prose with the flowers of fancy, as his material dishes are crowned with *croustades* and *atelettes*; he handles with equal ability the quill of Pegasus and the larding-needle, and records with the former the achievements of the latter, in a strain of enthusiasm and heroic sensibility that are not to be surpassed even in the odes of a poet laureate. We confess at the outset that there is much to marvel at in the recondite pages of *the Regenerator*, but there is nothing to admire more than his matchless modesty, his courteous urbanity, his devotion to the fair sex, and his occasional touching and highly imaginative digressions.\(^{150}\)


It continues with the more sensational aspects of ‘The Dinner Lucullusien à la Sampayo’, a dinner for a group of gastronomes in May 1846 which Soyer tells us cost four guineas per head. For this sensational dinner his most noted dish was truffles stuffed with small birds.

"An ortolan," said Alexis Soyer, pondering on the difficult and self-appointed task, "an ortolan can hardly be truffled, but I will undertake that a truffle shall be ortolaned." 151

Soyer was an accomplished showman, and this ruse of putting ortolans inside truffles was more like a conjuring trick than classic *haute cuisine.* These ortolans were to have been served at the Dinner ‘à la Sampayo’. They were ordered from Paris but did not arrive in time. This hardly seems to have mattered to the writer: the anecdote was too good to be left out. Another individualistic strategy for this dinner was salmon brought by train at the last moment, from the Severn, to be cooked at once. Time, for individualists, is a manipulable resource, to be employed to maximum advantage.

At seven o’clock the live Severn salmon were brought to me, they having just arrived direct from Gloucester, and were boiled immediately, being just ten minutes before the dinner was placed upon the table, and were eaten in their greatest possible perfection.

Soyer’s dinners were in many aspects comparable to Petronius Arbiter’s fictional satire, *Tremalchio’s Feast,* which displays many similar entrepreneurial elements. As a review in *Blackwoods Magazine* noted, 152 one of the surprise dishes at Tremalchio’s Feast was eggs with unexpected contents. These eggs were difficult to open and, without knowing what they contained, separated those with esoteric knowledge from outsiders. 153 Both Soyer and Tremalchio’s cooks demonstrated originality in culinary

151 F. Volant and J. R. Warren, op. cit, pp. 91-5.
skills and obtaining delicacies from a distance. Food specially provided from a distance demonstrated the overt exercise of power over both resources and time.

*The Morning Post* describes and praises a dinner at the Reform to honour Egypt’s ruler, Ibrahim Pasha, on 3rd July 1846, and singles out Soyer’s *Crème d’Égypte à l’Ibrahim Pasha*, a spectacular confection which incorporated the portrait of the honoured Egyptian guest’s father on a pyramid of meringue. Reviewers loved Soyer’s entrepreneurial exploits. The taste of the cuisine has no place in their descriptions – there were no gastronomic reference points for readers, for few of them had a repertoire of gastronomic knowledge. Dining was becoming more popular, but for a large section of the diners, particularly those without access to tables at the clubs and of rich or good bourgeoise cuisine in the French style, there was no common gastronomic standard.

The generality of middle-range diners came for the most part from a culinary past which derived from and related to everyday plain dinners. There were few who had been brought up with French cuisine, either in childhood or when young adults. Ude not only noted among some aristocratic young men an aggressive chauvinism as a defence against lack of gastronomic knowledge, but also:

>a national prejudice which exists against French cookery; and many a young man comes to this employment from school with his taste already settled, and remains a long time in a kitchen before he will attempt to taste anything that he has not been accustomed to; if he does not like cookery himself, he never can be a good cook.

Nursery children, as discussed below, were one of the groups excluded from dining and who ate a separate diet.


155 Louis Eustace Ude, *The French Cook*, Ebers and Co., London, 1841, p. XLII. This later edition of *The French Cook*, in ‘Advice to Cooks’ Ude gives a more experienced view of working in England than had been included in previous editions. There were ten editions by 1828.

156 Louis Eustace Ude, op. cit, p. XLV.
ABSENT DINERS – THE CHILDREN

Dinner-party food was essentially exclusive. It had to exclude both those outside the household and those within it who were not of appropriate status. Inside the household, servants and children had to eat separate food, in separate rooms, at separate times, according to a separate body of rules. It was the excluded, particularly within the household, who served to reinforce the exclusivity of the dinner-givers and their guests.

In the following section it is shown how innovative mid-eighteenth-century ideas about children's food were subsumed into typically Victorian cosmologies. Both authoritarian and the more naturalistic didactic works used food to reinforce their social divisions.

From the mid-eighteenth century nature was frequently equated with purity, and culture seen as essentially corrupting. The more elaborate, luxurious and 'less natural' the food, the more was it seen as corrupting and unsuitable for children. As the nineteenth century progressed this view shifted, with nature increasingly seen as subject to man’s control and subjugation. Children’s food similarly became the vehicle in its turn for their control and exclusion from the adult dinner table. Subtle changes in emphasis was to move justification from proscribed 'luxury' to concerns that supported social exclusion.

Ideas of food suitable for the Victorian nursery were epitomised in the ideas of Dr William Cadogan, in his influential essay on the nursing and management of children, which he sent to the governors of Thomas Coram’s Foundling Hospital in 1747. Although the hospital’s main purpose was to rescue and rear foundlings, this charitable foundation also pioneered new attitudes to child-care, and it used Dr Cadogan’s essay to promote this aim. They published it, a year later, in 1748. This is what Cadogan wrote about children’s food:
There are many faults in the quality of their food: it is not simple enough, their papps, panados, gruels are generally enriched with sugar, spice and sometimes a drop of wine; neither of which they ought ever to taste. Our bodies never want them; they are what luxury only has introduced to the destruction of the wealth of mankind. It is not enough that their food be simple, it should be also light. Several people I find are mistaken in their notions of what is light; and fancy most kinds of pastry, pudding, and custards &c. are light, that is light of digestion.157

This concept of luxury, of a man-made artificiality associated with mischief, was opposed to ideas of nature associated with virtue. Equating culture with mischief was made explicit in The Young Woman's Guide to Virtue, Economy and Happiness (1825) whose author approvingly quotes J. J. Rousseau (1712-78):

> Everything is perfect as it comes out of the hands of God; but everything degenerates in the hands of man.158

The Young Woman's Guide also admiringly quotes Dr Cadogan, and a follower of his, Dr Buchan, whose own book on child-rearing incorporated Cadogan's essay. The Young Woman's Guide has instructions that are consistent with their views:

> In feeding children be sure not to cram them with unnatural mixtures," [and as the child grows,] "the bill of fare may be gradually enlarged, provided always that it consists of an innocent variety"... "You must be careful to feed your charge at stated and regular periods; perhaps three times a day is sufficient.159

Emphasis was on natural foods to be taken within a structure, but was not specific as to exact details.

The theme of the child as conforming to a natural ideal continued with Mrs Pullan (1856) who, following the educational ideas of Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852), who

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157 William Cadogan, An Essay upon the Nursing and the Management of Children from their Birth to Three Years of Age, F. Roberts, London, 1748, p. 3.
159 John Armstrong, op. cit, p. 89.
wrote a book about his specially devised educational toys.\textsuperscript{160} Though ideas of the
natural continued in their original form, not everyone’s ideas changed with the new
fashion. Froebel used natural examples. Toys were to be used in a ‘\textit{kindergarten}’ and
Mrs Pullan expands the horticultural metaphor into a whole paragraph:\textsuperscript{161} first the wild
rose is transplanted to the garden and then cultivated into a damask rose. She continues;
“the rose [however] cannot be made to produce plums” – that is, children cannot be
trained against their nature. Her views on food are similarly consistent with those of
Cadogan when she says, “The food of young children can never be too simple.”
Sudden changes however, were to be avoided though occasional treats were allowed.
Didactic literature, as far as a non medical readership concerned was addressed to
Mothers and nursery nurses.

An exception was Herbert Spencer’s paper on Physical Education where he discusses
children’s diet and which first appeared in the \textit{British Quarterly Review} in April
1859.\textsuperscript{162} Spencer was best known for his contribution to social science which parallels
biological examples with human needs. It was as an eminent social scientist that he
addressed a male readership whom he condemned for taking more interest in the
nutritional needs of livestock than of their own children by leaving this important matter
to women. “Mammas who have been taught little but languages, music, and
accomplishments, aided by nurses full of antiquated prejudices.”\textsuperscript{163}

Spencer’s argument has two major strands. He advocates research on children’s dietary
needs for achieving well developed physical and intellectual powers. There are
examples of his own conclusions derived from comparing cows and horses. Spencer

\begin{flushright}
160 Friedrich Froebel, (1782-1852), \textit{The Education of Man}, 1826, translated into English 1886. He
advocated the \textit{kindergarten} as the setting for educating the child through play. A \textit{kindergarten}
movement was first established in Switzerland after 1832.


162 Herbert Spencer, \textit{Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical}, Williams and Norgate, Edinburgh,

163 Herbert Spencer, op. cit, p. 146.
\end{flushright}
then compares horses fed on a mixed diet compared to those on grass. For humans he compares the diet of Englishmen with vegetarian Hindus, and he made predictable conclusions following his views on quadrupeds. It followed therefore that a mixed diet was advocated for children. Children, he concludes should have a "more nutritive" diet than adults. This advice was contrary to the popular hierarchic view that higher status food such as meat was appropriate for the elite, and lower status food such as bread was appropriate for those of lower social status.

Mothers and governesses are castigated by Spencer for arbitrarily regulating children’s appetite. A logical extension to this argument was that children should regulate their own appetites. He argues that excesses “are usually the consequences of the restrictive system they seem to justify.” Spencer notes that two important nutritional items are missing from a balanced diet denying children fruit and sweets. He seems to be suggesting a child governed the nursery table but he does not take the argument to its logical conclusion: time and place are not suggested as areas for further autonomy in food taking, instead he advises following Dr Andrew Combe (1797-1847) by incorporating fruit and sweets into meals.164 A varied diet with the child’s natural appetite as the regulator and eaten at the usual meal times was all he promulgated. This, however, was too unregulated for didactic writers whose rhetoric expressed the prevailing hierarchic bias; they did not incorporate his ideas in their instructions.

Spencer’s new didactic mode took the same dietary directions as Dr Cadogan and gave them new justifications re-cast in the authoritarian attitudes with which Victorian child-rearing is usually associated. Dr Pye Henry Chavasse was the most note-worthy and long-published of these authoritarians. His book of questions and answers went through fourteen editions, the last in 1885. It was directed at mothers of every station.

Overt mention of ‘station’ was not made in earlier books – the readership could be taken

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164 Herbert Spencer, op. cit., p. 151. Dr Andrew Combe’s best known work is *Physiology Applied to Health and Education*, 1834. His brother George Combe (1788-1858) promoted and wrote on phrenology.
as implicit. Books such as his, produced for an ever widening audience, included an increasing number of didactic works in which professional or upper class authors instructed those of lower social status, or simply the uninformed. In *Advice to Mothers on the Management of Their Offspring*, children were now to be ‘managed’ and no longer called ‘children’ but ‘offspring’ which negated them as individuals.

*Cassells Domestic Dictionary* (1877/9), under the heading *Children, rearing and food of*, begins: “We know that food does for the body what fuel does for the steam engine,” and just as the observance of mechanistic and hierarchic routines were required to keep the wheels of industry running, so the same principles were now brought to bear on the care of children. Roses and plums are superseded by engines. The individualistic roses and plums however, were to receive some drastic pruning.

In the new class society, both hierarchy and classification were jointly at the core of a new social organisation. This change to an emphasis on new ways of working and domestic organisation was to produce an authoritarian rhetoric in attitudes to child-rearing. Indeed, the tone of Pye Henry Chavasse’s answers appear to owe more to a vengeful deity than the gentle authority of a Dr Cadogan. To the question, “Have you any objection to pork for a change?”, Dr Chavasse insists: “I have the greatest objection to it. It is a rich, gross, and therefore unwholesome food for the delicate stomachs of children.” When asked about sweets and cakes, Chavasse reaches an apoplectic climax: “I consider them so much slow poison. Such things cloy and weaken the

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165 Dr Pye Henry Chavasse, *Advice to Mothers on the Management of Their Offspring*, fourteen editions, the last in 1885.


167 Mrs Fry, ‘The Good Nurse’, used engines as a paradigm for the body as early as 1828. But in keeping with the earlier mode, nature has the ascendancy over mechanics: “The human frame is a machine, complex in its formation; and the operations of nature on it, as it reflects its mechanical laws, are often rendered dark and obscure by the mists of ignorance and prejudice.” p. 326.

stomach and thereby take away the appetite and thus debilitate the frame. If the child is never allowed to eat such things, he will consider dry bread a luxury.”

Forbidding sweets and cakes was a constant theme of the more authoritarian bias in later literature and represented control over personal choice. Why were they held in such opprobrium? Eating, for the middle- and upper-class Victorian child, took place only in the nursery at prescribed times. Their food was eaten within the constraining structure of an ordered meal, at the table, whereas promiscuous eating would have given the child some autonomy, and emphasised his individuality, particularly as sweets were often bought with pocket money. Casual snacking on the other hand, was associated with children who spent time on the streets where they could buy food from the many stalls and walking vendors. This denial of autonomy to nursery children effectively emphasised their class exclusivity.

Henry Mayhew, in London Labour and the London Poor, writes:

"Men and women, and most especially boys, purchase their meals day after day in the streets. The coffee-stall supplies a warm breakfast; shell fish of many kinds tempt to a luncheon; hot-eels or pea soup, flanked by a potato 'all hot', serve for a dinner; and cakes and tarts, or nuts or oranges, with many varieties of pastry, confectionery, and fruit, woo to indulgence in a dessert; while for supper there is a sandwich, a meat pudding, or a 'trotter'."

This rather arch setting out of street food, selected as a gentleman selects dinner from a caterer, was the work of a journalist writing for middle-class readers. Further on, where he lists the more substantial items sold, he says more realistically that it is from these that the "street poor find a mid-day or midnight meal." In a long list of street food and drink, over fifty items are named; among them many sorts of sweets, cakes and pastries, all of which were forbidden to nursery children. Social division was

169 Pye Henry Chavasse, op. cit, p. 80.

thereby reinforced through the enforcement of structured eating habits: nursery children had to be separated from promiscuous outdoor eaters.

All of Dr Chavasse’s answers are in the same tone of unflagging command, which were perfectly consistent with a view of earthly hierarchical authority. These naturally reflected the values of a perceived heavenly authority, also constructed on the same principle. Durkheim 172 has argued that temporal morality is reinforced by religious belief. Chavasse’s tone was consistent with the current religious revival, the growing numbers of non-conformists and the movement to counter apostasy, whose beginning was marked by John Keble’s Oxford sermon on ‘national apostasy’ of 1833.173

This revival of Protestantism and the growth of non-conformism gave a new emphasis to original sin. Children, who were ‘naturally’ full of original sin, could not now be nurtured like growing plants, but had to be disciplined until they were purged of sin; changed from the natural state and fit to be incorporated into man-made culture. Only then were they able to leave the nursery and later, at the appropriate age, could progress to the school-room. Finally, on reaching maturity, they were qualified to join adults in the dining room where they often continued to eat a plain, but less prescribed, diet with elaborate dishes reserved for dinner parties. The plain daily adult diet could, as previously noted, be augmented with bottled sauces to add the forbidden piquancy to plain dishes. A formal dinner-party was, then, the most inaccessible meal of all to nursery children.

In this context of expunging original sin, any tendency to untamed behaviour, therefore, had to be eradicated before children could be allowed to eat with adults in the

171 Henry Mayhew, op. cit, p. 117.
172 Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of The Religious Life, first published in English 1915.
dining room. Not surprisingly, Dr Chavasse’s comment about children finding dry
bread a luxury falls into place.

Children had nursemaids well before the nineteenth century, but the new household
management advocated such strong hierarchic dining that it effectively removed children
from an interactive family life. To maintain this newly required separating hierarchy,
however, required a household with the resources to support a cook, housemaids and a
nurse. Mrs Beeton writes of nurseries where “the mother is too much occupied to do
more than pay a daily visit”.174 Her distant relationship to child-rearing parallels her
similar distance from food preparation. Both involve minimum contact – daily visits to
the nursery equating with daily interaction with the cook. Both food, in its uncooked
state, and children are closer to nature than was consistent with the ideal of Victorian
feminine gentility. In distancing herself from lower status tasks, the lady of the house
was operating on the same principles as the factory or business manager. Increasing
division of labour was the principle on which both roles were predicated: the mistress
managed the house; the master, the factory or office.

An unusual book was Mrs Warren’s How I Managed My Children from Infancy to
Marriage, 1865,175 based on personal experience of her own child-rearing. She gave
her children the same dishes she had had as a child, but made sure they were ‘properly
cooked’, unlike the food she was given when young. Mrs Warren is unique in referring
to her own childhood; none of the other authors ever referred to their own pasts, which
is consistent with a view of childhood as a stage of untamed immaturity best forgotten
where children should not be valued for their thoughts and opinions. It is also
consistent with an individualistic view of a period of dynamic change, where the past
tends to be seen as irrelevant to concerns of the present.

174 Isabella Beeton, 1861, op. cit, p. 1014.
175 Mrs Eliza Warren, How I Managed My Children from Infancy to Marriage, Houlston & Wright,
London, 1865, p. 34.
By the end of the century, Ward and Lock's *Home Book: a Domestic Encyclopaedia* had an extensive section on ‘Children and What to do With Them’, with a complete chapter on children’s diet. Paragraphs have titles as follows: ‘Errors in Diet’; ‘Stimulating Food’; ‘Cooking for Children’; ‘Eating Between Meals’; ‘Punctual Meals’; ‘Waste Not; Meat for Children’; ‘Proper Vegetables’; ‘Efficacy of Salt’; ‘Suppers’; ‘Dessert’.176 Such detailed coverage of every aspect of childhood feeding illustrates the lengths to which social control through eating could be exercised. The logical extension of this control over nature was the use of purgatives, which also features in many of the books on child-care. Victorian choices of purgative methods are, however, outside the bounds of this chapter.

As might be surmised, there was reaction to so much control. The Arts and Crafts movement represented such a reaction against the controls of industry, embodying as it did a return to natural forms and individual craftsmanship. In keeping with its contents, the title page of W. B. Drummond’s *The Child: his Nature and Nurture* (1901), which is similarly conceived with a reduction in control and an increase in individualism, is appropriately illustrated by a woodcut of foliage and calligraphy in typical Arts and Crafts style.

Drummond’s ideas do not represent a complete revival of Cadogan’s, but they do represent the view that children have likes and dislikes, which should be taken into account; an echo of the linked values of individualism and nature as idealised freedom. Drummond could be said to have been influenced more by Herbert Spencer, than Cadogan, as he advises sweetmeats with meals.

The childish love of ‘goodies’ should be met by including a fair amount of sweet things in the diet, especially in the form of cooked fruit such as stewed or roasted apples, or stewed prunes, or ripe fruit such as grapes, oranges or pears. Sweetmeats are best allowed in addition to meals. Chocolate is one of the best forms. The late Dr.


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Milner Fothergill used to recommend toffee when made at home with the best sugar and butter. So made it is not merely a ‘goodie’ but an excellent article of diet, supplying both sugar and fat.177

As for compelling children to eat everything on their plate, as insisted upon by ‘the waste-not school’, his views were moderate: “while children should be encouraged to eat the fat with their meat, they should not be compelled to consume greasy articles of diet.”178 Like Cadogan however, he too asserts that ‘tasty’ articles should not be allowed, “if for no other reason than they are apt to make the children discontented with the plain and wholesome food with which they are perfectly satisfied so long as they have never had anything else.”179

Drummond’s stricture on the tasty, though at first appearance similar to Cadogan’s, has a rationale sustained more by the need to keep children separated from adult diners than with their dietary needs. He gives no dietetic reason for advocating plain foods.

By the beginning of the new century there was some relaxation in authoritarian attitudes to the young, but nursery children were still separated by rules about food, and when, where and how it was to be eaten. Writers still opposed the practice of bringing children down from the nursery to join adults for dessert in the dining room. The alleged harmful effects of sweet-eating was used to justify the exclusion of such unpredictable creatures at the highly structured and constrained Victorian dinner-party. In Ward and Lock’s Home Book, the author writes:

It is common practice with many parents to give their children permission to ask for and obtain what they like of the dessert from their own table, the children coming down from their nursery for this purpose. This is a cruel kindness. The simple, well-cooked, and much enjoyed dinner they may have had is quite marred by this after loading of rich things. But as children should not be called upon to see food they cannot help coveting, without being allowed to eat of it, some other time should be

178 W. B. Drummond, op. cit, p. 49.
179 W. B. Drummond, op. cit, p. 50.
chosen for their appearance downstairs than the dessert hour, or else strict supervision as to what they do eat should be exercised.\textsuperscript{180}

\textit{The Handbook of Carving} (1848) is even more emphatic: “If you have children, never introduce them after dinner unless particularly asked for, and then avoid it if possible.”\textsuperscript{181} Children were considered as out of place at dessert as they were at afternoon calls. Leonore Davidoff, when outlining rules for making afternoon calls as set out in Victorian etiquette manuals, found that neither dogs nor children were to be taken to call.\textsuperscript{182} Dogs and children are classified together – both being regarded as unpredictable. In keeping with an authoritarian view of nature, their living and eating was separated, therefore, from the rest of the adult family.

Plain food equated with a proximity to nature was no longer mentioned after about 1830. Later justifications emphasised instead that it was healthier for children to eat plain food although there were many variations in the details of suggested diets.

Victorian directions on child-care did not, for the most part, offer a complete diet for children. They were unsystematic in their advice, which had many variations. Their consistency, however, lay in a universal proscription of well-flavoured foods and elaborate dishes that basically followed Cadogan’s advice. This list from a sample of books, shows some of the many variations in the prescription of a suitable diet for children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Recommended</th>
<th>Proscribed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Cadogan</td>
<td>Simplicity.</td>
<td>Luxury.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{The Young Woman’s Guide}</td>
<td>Meat in proportion to bread and wholesome vegetables; mellow fruit, raw, stewed or baked; roots of all sorts and all kitchen garden produce; milk.</td>
<td>Spices, seasoning, pastry, butter, unripe fruit, fermented liquors, tea.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{180} Ward and Lock’s Home Book, op. cit, p. 441.

\textsuperscript{181} The Handbook of Carving, George Routledge & Co., London, 1848, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{182} Leonore Davidoff, \textit{The Best Circles}, Cresset Library, Century Hutchinson, London, 1986, p. 44.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author and Title</th>
<th>Meal Suggestion</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Fry, <em>The Good Nurse</em></td>
<td>Milk, water, barley water, milk-porridge for breakfast, toast, water, bread, cake with preserved fruit, bread-cake, souchong tea with milk – moderately sweetened.</td>
<td>Bread and butter. Not as good as bread-cake with caraway seeds rather than currants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pye Henry Chavasse, <em>Advice to Mothers</em>, 1839</td>
<td>New potatoes, toast, water, home-made bread 2/3 days old, butter in moderation, grilled mutton chop, lightly boiled egg.</td>
<td>Pork, veal, salt and boiled beef, old potatoes, beer and wine, cakes, sweetened baker’s bread.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Pullan, 1856</td>
<td>Cannot be too simple.</td>
<td>No sudden changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Warren, <em>How I Managed My Children from Infancy to Marriage</em></td>
<td>Rice pudding with nutmeg and milk on the weekly ‘diet’ day; boiled mutton with gravy; stock, meat, onion and turnips with separate boiled potatoes; boiled onions once a week (to remove worms); chives with bread and butter; roast meat; fish; milk and water flavoured with tea; bread and butter with watercress and chives; fruit; apples raw or roasted.</td>
<td>Meat and fish not to be eaten at the same meal; only one relish; chives, fruit etc. with tea-time bread and butter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Drummond, <em>The Child, his Nature and Nurture</em>, 1901</td>
<td>Diet light, varied and palatable; sweet things – stewed fruit, apples, prunes, grapes, oranges, pears; animal food twice a day; milk; meat once a day; fat, cream, butter, chocolate, home-made toffee.</td>
<td>Jam and jelly in moderation on bread and butter; all ‘tasty’ articles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What emerges here is one overarching theme: the importance for all the authors of plain food. Some allowed sweets but none ever recommended spiced or flavoured food. The justifications varied, as did other rules about eating but the Victorian child was never to enjoy tasty food, whether in an authoritarian or more naturalistically-orientated household. A diet originally recommended in the middle of the eighteenth century as
explicitly congruent to the child's perceived proximity to nature, was used in the
nineteenth in an entirely different manner: to enforce nursery children's social
separation in the strict hierarchy of the Victorian household and through their place
within it, to the world outside. The case for believing that proscriptions were enforced
is largely from personal anecdotes. Such strictures as: "bread and butter or bread and
jam, but never both"¹⁸³ are not easily forgotten in later life. Dinner parties were thus
defined as much by those excluded from them as by those included. Similarly the two
cuisines were as materially distinct as the participants were socially separated.

INTEGRAL AND ADDITIONAL FLAVOURS

As has been discussed when examining Marion Sambourne's *Menu Notebook*, the
form food took was the point most usually remarked upon. This did not altogether
exclude flavour and seasoning but the tradition for plain, everyday food is well
recorded. What is not recorded was how extensive the use of pickles and bottled sauces
became. Anne Wilson notes that the two notable commercial sauces at the end of the
eighteenth century were Harveys' and Lazenbys'.¹⁸⁴ Before these, soy sauces and
catsups¹⁸⁵ had been imported by the East India trade.¹⁸⁶ Webster and Mrs Parkes in
1844 note the importance of storing sauces, essences, vinegars and catsups "... under
this head is an almost endless variety of flavouring ingredients, many of which, in the
present state of English cookery, are almost indispensible."¹⁸⁷ There was also in
England a long and continuing tradition of home-made pickles. Although these possible

¹⁸³ Nathaniel S. Lucas (1878-1967), remembering his home life as a child at 46 Gloucester Sq., W.
¹⁸⁴ C. Anne Wilson, *Food and Drink in Britain, from the Stone Age to Recent Times*, Constable,
¹⁸⁵ Catsups, i.e. ketchups. C. Herman Senn, *Dictionary of Foods and Culinary Encyclopedia*, Ward
Lock and Co., London, c. 1909, p. 98: "Ketchup, Catsup... word[s] derived from Chinese
Kwaitchup."
¹⁸⁶ C. Anne Wilson, op. cit, p. 295.
¹⁸⁷ Thomas Webster and Mrs Parkes, op. cit, p. 904.
additions to the table are not mentioned by Marion Sambourne, it does not mean they did not exist: routine is unremarkable.

Production of branded bottled sauces grew with the rest of commercial food production. Soyer had his recipes reproduced by Crosse and Blackwell. Soyer’s sauces appeared in distinctive decorative bottles which, in one product, fulfilled three functions: the bottles themselves added to the iconography of the table – if the diners could not eat the great cook’s food, then his name could at least grace their tables; the contents of the bottle could add a piquancy that their domestic cuisine may have lacked. And finally, using this named product, their taste was validated by Soyer. They could therefore, hold at least one culinary taste in common with grander diners. As nowadays, in the London suburbs, branded goods which have a reputation derived from their source unify their consumers in a shared taste. So bottled sauces with Soyer’s name on them may have had the same function. Brand names become validated by the approval of an appropriate constituency.

Further inferences can be drawn from Soyer’s bottled sauces. He made both Ladies’ and Gentlemen’s Sauces, but neither he nor anyone else made children’s sauces as far as can be found. Bottled sauces were too strongly flavoured, and had therefore to be proscribed. Production of a Ladies’ Sauce suggests that strong sauces were for male consumption. As it has been impossible to trace the ingredients of Soyer’s sauces an example from France may give some idea of appropriate male and female taste. Bornibus’ Parisian mustard factory, established in 1858, where M. Bornibus produced Dijon Mustard also produced a ‘Moutarde Des Dames’. They still produce their ladies’ mustard but it is now described as ‘Moutarde Douce Aromatisée à l’Estragon’. It is essentially what in England was known in the 1960s and before, as the popular darker

188 Nineteenth-century regulations did not require ingredients to be put on bottle labels and unfortunately when Crosse and Blackwell were taken over and their Soho shop closed their archive was destroyed, so the basis for gender difference is difficult to define. See illustrations for Soyer’s individualistic bottle design.

coloured version of French mustard. It is interesting to compare the two versions that Bornibus still produce: their Dijon mustard is the male version, whereas in the feminine version tarragon is substituted for the ‘hot’ element in the Dijon recipe.\footnote{190} Alexander Dumas, in his advertisement written for Bornibus, and reproduced in his \textit{Grand Dictionnaire de Cuisine}:

\begin{quote}
The fact is, Sir, that since a lady’s palate is more delicate than a man’s, the ordinary mustard of Dijon is too strong and too pungent for the ladies, so much so that M. Bornibus has invented a separate mustard for them.\footnote{191}
\end{quote}

The strength of flavour in dinner-party food is difficult to assess, but Marion Sambourne lists some dishes where flavour is part of the description:

At Mrs Stones, 21st March 1881: Piquant sauce (greenish), with salmon.\footnote{192} At the Messels, 28th March 1882: Salmon piquant yellow sauce, whitebait devilled.\footnote{193} Mrs Blocks’, June 1881: Soles with rich tomato sauce, slight anchovie and garlic flavouring.\footnote{194} Mrs Stones’, 23rd February 1882: Salmon with sauce ravigote, green cream sauce with minutest pickles chopped up in it. The chaudrard of half-pigeons glazed and stuffed tasted of garlic. German salad was made up of chopped vegetables, caviar, anchovies, oil, vinegar, salt and pepper.\footnote{195}

It is also difficult to say with any certainty, except where strongly-flavoured ingredients are mentioned, how strongly flavoured were other dishes served at dinner parties.

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{190}{Rosamond Man and Robin Weir, \textit{The Compleat Mustard}, Constable, 1988, p. 42. I also was given further information by Mme Helene Boutet at the factory: 60, Boulevard de la Villette, Paris. A bottle for Farrow’s Ladies’ Sauce was found by Robin Wier (personal communication).}
\item \footnote{191}{Dumas on Food, Recipes and Anecdotes from the Classic \textit{Grand Dictionnaire de Cuisine}, translated by Alan and Jane Davidson, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987, p. 188. Alexander Dumas’ \textit{Dictionnaire} was published posthumously in 1873.}
\item \footnote{192}{Marion Sambourne’s \textit{Menu Notebook}, 21st March 1881.}
\item \footnote{193}{Marion Sambourne’s \textit{Menu Notebook}, 28th March 1882.}
\item \footnote{194}{Marion Sambourne’s \textit{Menu Notebook}, 11th June 1881.}
\item \footnote{195}{Marion Sambourne’s \textit{Menu Notebook}, 23rd February 1882.}
\end{itemize}
Seasoning and added flavours, such as Mrs Marshall's coralline pepper, may have been a common way to add piquancy to dinner-party food. Since dinner-party menus were different from daily menus, it is reasonable to guess that the flavouring of dinner-party food would have been consistent with the more piquant dishes noted.

Recipe books' recommendations do not always have much relevance to the way food is actually cooked. A free approach to seasoning, as suggested by A. B. Beuavillier's comment on a lack of tastes held in common as discussed earlier, portrays an individualistic approach to the flavour of dinner-party cuisine.

It was the entrepreneurial exploits of Soyer and the illustrated high-status cookery books he wrote which related cuisine to spectacle and to the elaborate presentation which contributed to fashionable ideas of dinner cuisine. This elaborate presentation of food was as separate from everyday dinners as resources could devise. Elaborated cuisine became the fashionable way to dine. The new nineteenth-century way of dining adapted celebratory meals which had formed a component of the cycle of dinners within integrated groups of friends and relations within a more hierarchic mode towards a greater emphasis on an individualistic cuisine. This change in dining was gradual rather than abrupt as is further explored in the following chapters on changing serving styles from à la Française to à la Russe.

**HAUTE CUISINE AND ‘PEASANT’ DISHES**

In *Cosmopolitan Cookery*, Urbain Dubois incorporates a range of dishes from diverse sources into the repertoire of haute cuisine. This book was not written for the English
market but was translated in 1870. Dubois was a French chef and French cuisine has a long tradition of importing dishes from foreign cuisines and transforming and integrating them into their system of complementarity. (See chapter II.) A typical example is Carême’s *Soles à la Calcutta* where the ‘Indian’ components, saffron and cayenne-flavoured sauce, are impressionistic, rather than the reproduction of an alien cuisine. Carême, as an artist, portrays a country by his interpretation of its flavours.

Soyer, when on his way to the Crimea in 1856 to improve army hospital cookery, attended a Turkish banquet. He was greatly impressed with the cuisine and subsequently wrote a letter to *The Times* in which he suggests: “... all their principal dishes, might, with the best advantage, be adopted and Frenchified and Anglicised.”

Selected recipes that were perceived as being too exotic had to be captured and translated into known repertoires. Similarly there has been a long European tradition, certainly from the sixteenth century, of taking exotic objects like coconut shells, and translating them with silver or gilt mounts. Later, Chinese wares were incorporated into rococo interior decoration. It can be seen as an indication of a strong hierarchic bias that, like exotic objects, cuisines also had to be brought within the boundary to conform to hierarchic classification.

Urbain Dubois also took traditional peasant and bourgeoise dishes and translated them into *haute cuisine*. In their original state they were too close to their social origins, and therefore had to be re-worked and removed from nature before they could take their

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198 M. A. Carême, op. cit, p. 75.
200 Chinese porcelain decorated Queen Anne (1702-14) bureau bookcases, in the Schloss Nymphenburgh, Munich, 1664-1758. Chinese porcelain there is an example of Chinese wares incorporated into rococo panelling.
place in the canon of *haute cuisine*. As an example his English ‘rissoles’ were processed and transformed beyond recognition. Dubois’ rustic dishes were essentially nature-tamed, in the same way that the formal flowerbeds of Victorian gardens were nature tamed: they represented the triumph of man’s control over nature.

*Cosmopolitan Cookery* may have been used solely as an addition to the repertoire of *haute cuisine* but may also have been used as a way of serving dishes from the culinary past of socially mobile ‘rootless cosmopolitans’. As continental travel became more popular, there was good reason for food eaten abroad to be incorporated into the repertoire, since to incorporate experience from abroad is an archetypal individualist strategy. Both ‘long ago’ and ‘far away’ are typical areas for individualists to exploit.

In 1845, *A Handbook of Foreign Cookery, Principally French, German and Danish, Intended as a Supplement to all English Cookery Books* suggests: “Travelling on the continent, particularly in France and Germany, [is] now so general and no longer confined to the wealthier classes, has proved a powerful antidote to a few English prejudices.”

Cuisine from earlier periods was not, as far as can be found, reproduced by the Victorians. It was more usually incorporated as esoteric knowledge in books on gastronomy. Soyer’s *Pantropheon* was a history of cuisine from the earliest times to the perfection of his own contemporary creations, which includes his famous *Hundred

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203 London was of course a centre for cosmopolitan wealth. Not all households sprang from the English eighteenth century tradition, but came instead from diverse corners of Europe. Dubois’ cosmopolitan cookery was as diverse in its sources.

204 *A Handbook of Foreign Cookery, Principally French, German and Danish, Intended as a Supplement to all English Cookery Books*, translated by Amalia V. Kocheim, John Murray, London, 1845, Preface.
This individualist’s history was not written by Soyer but, as Michael McKirdy found, by another Frenchman, Adolphe Duhart-Fauvet, who claimed to have been cheated by Soyer’s taking for himself credit for the historical part of the work. This is a nice example of one individualist using the work of another, whom he had constrained, for his own ends.

AN ELUSIVE HIERARCHY SUPERSEDED BY INDIVIDUALIST STRATEGIES

This chapter, the first of two on the dinner cuisine, has attempted to identify the fragmented culinary constituencies that thrived with the growth of Victorian individualism. Marion Sambourne’s *Menu Notebook* revealed how this taste for culinary icons became established within a circle of dinner-givers and how, at the end of the century, these individualistic icons were enshrined in the work of Mrs Marshall to become, in their turn, part of English traditional dining. Mrs de Salis in her preface to the 1892 edition of *Entrées à la Mode* boasts that many of her recipes are entirely original. She then gives a summation of the current fashion:

*The rage for novelty in *plats* for the table is so great that to produce appetising dishes has become quite a fine art, as it is a *sine qua non* that the eye as well as the palate should be satisfied.*

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Chapter IV

Consommé: a Paradigm for Victorian Dinner Party Cuisine

Part II of The Dinner Cuisine

By the end of the century a formal dinner menu frequently began with a clear soup which was often called a consommé, though the term ‘clear soup’ could more accurately be said to cover a wider range of quality. Consommé is described in Larousse Gastronomique as “meat stock which has been enriched, concentrated and clarified”. Consommé is offered as a paradigm to show how a core dish from the French system was translated and adapted into the very different repertoires of Victorian dinner-givers.

By taking consommé or clear soup as a subject for examination, it is possible to follow a soup which was or should have been made from a fond that was a core item of the French repertoire. Consommé became a popular soup for formal dinners because it could be made in varying qualities with a wide range of possible garnishes. In this way it can act as a paradigm for the Victorian way of cooking dinner party food. In its most recherché form, consommé was a recipe that required expensive raw materials, skill and time to make. At this level it was a material demonstration of wealth and gourmet taste for an elite. Consommé was, also, one of the few dishes from the recherché repertoire that could be reproduced by those lower down in the hierarchy whilst still retaining every appearance of the ideal, without the finesse. It was therefore easily taken up by those who were the lesser followers of culinary fashion. They took it and made it part of the conventional formal menu, where it has stayed. The author of Party-Giving on Every Scale, comments:

Soup of a dark mahogany brown, the result of high colouring, attained by the free use of Yorkshire Relish, Worcestershire Sauce, or burnt sugar, and not in any way due to the strength of the stock employed, with particles of fat floating here and there on the surface, and atoms of a stringy substance doing duty for vegetables, are too often presented under the title of clear soup, Julienne, Jardinière, or Printanière, and the like, whereas the genuine article, the real thing the *consommé claire* is, when made by a good cook, of a light golden shade, with a delicate aroma of fresh vegetables about it, brightly clear and free from every scintillation of fat.2

Consommé thus became an ideal dish for both hierarchists and individualists in an age of changing fashion.

**STOCK AND CLEAR SOUP – THEIR ORIGINS**

The making of stock was no novelty in the nineteenth century. Every cook who has ever slowly cooked meat and vegetables in water produces a sort of stock. Good meat stocks, the basis of a system of fonds, were codified in France in 1651 as discussed in the previous chapter.3 At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Antonin Carême, as noted earlier, further reformed the making of stock and consommé. He produced more delicate consommés by using roast fowl. Eugène Herbodeau, in his 1956 introduction to Escoffier’s *Guide to Modern Cookery*, first published in 1907 (after Escoffier had retired), says, “Monsieur Escoffier’s own recipes were frequently inspired by those of the old master chef’s”, and among these he mentioned Carême.4 Francatelli worked under Carême in Paris. Charles Herman Senn,5 who was a culinary educationalist and...

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2 Anonymous Author of *Manners and Tone of Good Society* and *The Management of Servants: Party-Giving on Every Scale or the Cost of Entertainments with the Fashionable Modes of Arrangement*, Frederick Warne and Co., London, c. 1890, pp. 179-80.


prolific writer, in his turn worked for Francatelli. *Haute cuisine* was, in the nineteenth century, as it had been in the previous century, dominated by French chefs. It was fashionable for those households who aspired to the best, to have a Frenchman in charge of the kitchen. Abraham Hayward gives a list of the best known French cooks working in England.6

**THE MAKING OF TOP-QUALITY CONSOMMÉ**

Chefs at the top of the culinary pyramid in England followed the standard set in France for producing stocks and clear soups. Nonetheless, recipes transported from one country to another can still have problems in the supply of their appropriate raw materials. There were problems as far as beef for the production of stock was concerned. Carême, at the beginning of the period, remarks that beef is killed younger in England, observing that: “It lacks the impressiveness of our own.”7 Escoffier, at the end of the century, explains the significance of this for the making of consommé:

> The quality of the meat goes a long way towards settling the quality of the consommé. In order that the latter be perfect, it is essential that the meat used should be that of comparatively old animals whose flesh is well set and rich in flavour. This is *sine qua non*, and the lack of meat coming from old animals in England accounts for the difficulty attaching to the making of a good consommé and savoury sauces in this country.8

Expertise in dealing with raw materials held fewer problems for those French-trained chefs in England because the system of complementarity was flexible enough to incorporate a degree of adaptation and innovation. Francatelli, in *The Cook’s Guide*, writes:

> It aught never to be lost sight of, that good stocks, broths, gravies and essences of meat, are an essential basis to culinary compositions, especially when it is desirable

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to attain any degree of perfection in the various preparations required for the
production of a *recherche* dinner.  

*The Cook’s Guide*, however, was directed at higher-class households with access to
good-quality ingredients. At middle-class levels with lesser resources, the production of
good stocks and clear soups became much less predictable, since it tended to be
dominated by pressures towards economy rather than an emphasis on high culinary
standards. Without the French system, pressure to ad hoc economy was essentially an
individualistic strategy to extract the most from the least. Without the benefit of a
hierarchic system, celebratory food was not readily incorporated into a rolling system of
complementarity. As the century proceeded and dining became more popular for the
middle and lower dining leagues, this balance between economy and culinary taste was
tipped further in favour of economy.

Eliza Acton’s *Modern Cookery* attempted to incorporate French system into English
bourgeois cookery while incorporating innovation. Elizabeth David describes Eliza
Acton as:

> The first English writer to go into the minutest of detail in her recipes and who first
> used the concise and uniform system of setting them out.  

Not only were her instructions systematic, but they were also progressive enough to
have included in her second edition, as early as 1855, Baron Liebig’s recipe for ‘Extract
of Beef or Very Strong Plain Beef Gravy Soup’. Having lived in France, Miss Acton
was concerned with ways of achieving a balance between the palatable and the

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9 C. E. Francatelli, *The Modern Cook: a practical guide to the culinary art in all its branches*,

10 Elizabeth David, ‘Isabella Beeton and Her Book’, first published in *The Spectator*, 21st October
1960, reproduced in *An Omelette and a Glass of Wine*, Book Club Associates/Dorling

11 Eliza Acton, *Eliza Acton, Modern Cookery for Private Families*, second edition, Longman,
Brown, Green and Longmans, London, this facsimilie of this 1855 edition, Elek Books Ltd.,
economical, whereas Mrs Beeton's book,\textsuperscript{12} published eight years later, is a book of 'household management'. It is essentially a work of graded classification. There is a section on the chemical properties of stock, which appears plagiarised from an unnamed source, as does much of the material in her book.

Mrs Beeton gives eight numbered hints for making stock. This was essentially for employers with the fashionable lack of practical cooking experience. It offered them esoteric knowledge – chemistry and numbered teaching instructions – that allowed them to reinforce their authority over the cook. Classification, and hierarchy as its derivative, are further reinforced by there being recipes for three qualities of stock: "rich strong stock", "medium stock" and "economical stock".\textsuperscript{13}

These two authors' very different approaches to the preparation of stocks and consommés are at the core of what happened to cooking as the century progressed. The primary concern of Eliza Acton with culinary standards made way for Isabella Beeton and her followers. They used Miss Acton's systematic approach divorced from her practical experience to emphasise hierarchy, classification and esoteric knowledge. This legitimised the distancing role of housewives as domestic managers. This and their search for economy are recurring themes in the move to upgrid that gained pace during the rest of the century.

**ECONOMY AND HIERARCHY: THE FRENCH STOCKPOT**

France, as the treasury of all that was good and expert in cooking, was a recurrent theme that was not limited to *haute cuisine*. Other French examples were held up to English readers, with an emphasis on the duality of economy and quality. These were from modest French households, the bourgeoisie and poor French women who kept a


\textsuperscript{13} Mrs Isabella Beeton, op. cit, pp. 2, 32-56.
stock pot and made *pot-au-feu*. Cookery authors and critics often commented on the theme of economical achievement.

Eliza Acton began her chapter on soups with:

> The art of preparing good, wholesome, palatable soups, *without great expense*, which is so well understood in France, and in other countries where they form part of the daily food of all classes of people, has hitherto been very much neglected in England.¹⁴

Again, emphasising the quality of the cuisine, in a footnote, she says:

> The inability of servants to prepare delicately and well, even a little broth, suited to an invalid is often painfully evident in cases of illness, not only in common English life, but where the cookery is supposed to be of a superior order.¹⁵

The ideal of France as the treasury of all that was good in stock-making certainly persisted to the end of the century but their system of complementarity never seems to have become established in England at levels below that of *haute cuisine*. It is reasonable to assume that Miss Acton’s footnote still held good at the end of the century, for in 1898 Sir Henry Thompson observed:

> How different is the result of intelligent cookery as we find it exemplified in the simple national soup of France. Here the appetising odours of fresh meat and vegetables are discerned with pleasure, the moment a *pot-au-feu* enters the room.¹⁶

Both Francatelli and Soyer wrote books for differing strata of society, including books for the poor. This example may not seem directly relevant to the dining leagues under discussion, but for a hierarchy to exist, there must be ways of defining the leagues below the actors, as well as those above, so that the hierarchy may be complete. In Soyer’s *Charitable Cookery* there is this revealing comment about cooking food for the poor:

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¹⁴ Eliza Acton, op. cit, pp. 1-2.
¹⁵ Eliza Acton, op. cit, p. 2, footnote.
It will be perceived that I have omitted all kinds of spice except in those dishes which are intended expressly for them, as I consider they only flatter the appetite and irritate the stomach and make it crave for more food; my object being not to create an appetite but to satisfy it.17

It was not only through its basic ingredients that a soup was given a qualitative distinction, but through lack of flavourings this difference in status was given added emphasis. Here was a rationalisation used for the poor that had, as in the case of nursery children, been used to justify separation.

THE MANAGING OF ECONOMICAL SOUP-MAKING

The concept of the French pot which 'transformed dross into gold' was an idea that was to fit neatly into the theme of 'Waste not, want not' cookery, whose intention was that anything left over could be put in the stock pot. The household manual written by Dr Walsh and a Committee of Ladies18 for families with incomes of £100-£1000 a year was an example of advice directed towards extensive controls over kitchen staff. It was a book of what appears to be untried theory. Rules could be made for all eventualities: there was no room for the unmanageable or, even worse, the unpredictable. This formalisation of rules substituted for the mistress of the house lacking both knowledge of what went on in the kitchen and on how tasks were accomplished there, whether by orthodox or unorthodox methods. And as there was a shortage of good cooks, there was little hope of an improvement in the general level of expertise.

For dinner-givers who had to make resources stretch beyond their means, the making of stock and clear soup was an ideal dish for economy. Major L. in his Pytchley Book of Refined Cookery, calls the recherché stockpot “the butcher’s greatest friend, but the master’s most expensive luxury”.19 He does give directions for making real stock, but

his especial contribution is a light and miserly vegetable stock, with the addition of Liebig’s *Extract of Meat*.\(^{20}\) In a footnote to his comment on the stockpot, he says that he “does not mean to convey the idea that all trimmings, rough parts *etc.* should not be carefully preserved and stewed down”.\(^{21}\) This is typical of the stockpot as an extra waste bucket. Walsh’s instructions are even more extreme:

> Upon the management of this department depends, in great measure, the degree of economy or waste going on in any establishment. It will always happen, and especially in large families, that there are refuse bones and pieces of meat, which are left either in the dish or in the plates. Every scrap of these should be collected together, with any odds and ends of all kinds of animal food, such as heads and necks of poultry, trimmings of meat, &c. If these are not approved of for the house, they will, at all events, afford good useful soup for the poor, who will many of them be grateful for the broth or soup produced from them. Besides these, the boilings of all meat should be saved, and the strength increased by adding bones, scraps, &c. The liquor from salt-meat is too salt, and part only must be mixed with more boilings or water to form the foundation for all sorts of soups, gravies, &c.; the liquid thus furnished being on this account called by the name, ‘stock’.\(^{22}\)

If the household or occasion was large and a commensurate quantity of meat was used, then there may have been enough trimmings of the right quality and freshness. A traditional piece of French complementarity was advocated by Carême on occasions when “In large dinners it is usual to mark off a consommé with the trimmings of fowls... It serves to moisten entrées or entremets of vegetables ... and also for clarifying the large sauces.” The contrast is stark when imagining the liquid produced from the parsimonious scraps advocated by Walsh. Managing the economy of her kitchen from a distance however, permitted and encouraged the mistress to impose ever more rules, often unrealistic impositions like banishing the waste bucket altogether: all

\(^{20}\) Major James Henry Landon, op. cit, p. 105.

\(^{21}\) Major James Henry Landon, op. cit, p. 4.

\(^{22}\) J. H. Walsh, op. cit, p. 473.
waste had to be recycled.\textsuperscript{23} This was perhaps the most extreme example of economy. These economical kitchens owed more to individualistic tyranny – that is, the use of labour without the mediating and countervailing rules of hierarchy.\textsuperscript{24} Labour in these tyrannised kitchens was usually found in the smaller households. Here workloads expanded under the employers’ individualistic demands without opposing powers found in true hierarchies where senior staff head an alternative power base.

\textbf{MANUFACTURED AND HOME-MADE FLAVOURS AND COLOURING}

Not only was there a wide range of instructions for making stock and clear soups of varying qualities, but colourings were a common device for making soup look better than it was. In recipe books, there were two frequently advised ways of making clear soup look browner: the first was to use burnt sugar – caramel. This the cook makes and stores to use as appropriate. The second method was to put onions in the oven with sugar and butter. They were baked until “black through, but not burnt crisp”. These aids were recommended by “Cre-Fydd”, who adds that the onions “also impart a good flavour”.\textsuperscript{25} If the consomme was weak, colouring and burnt onion were the only way to achieve a correct appearance without using home-made meat essence. “Cre-Fydd’s” black onions were a crude version of a much better colour- and flavour-enhancer, \textit{des ognons brulés}, which were made in France. Eliza Action notes that these could “be procured in London at many good foreign warehouses”. She also gives a home-made version: “Onions freed from their outer skin, dried gradually to a deep brown in a slow oven, and flattened like Norfolk biffins” are “extremely useful for heightening the colour and flavour of broths and gravies”.\textsuperscript{26} Mrs Acton’s onions are prepared for both

\textsuperscript{24} See chapter I.
\textsuperscript{26} Eliza Acton, op. cit, p. 5.
colour and flavour; Cre-Fydd's would give strong colour and a burnt flavour. Escoffier is reputed to have called this dark colouring “monkey’s blood”.

**TINNED SOUPS AND EXTRACTUM CARNIS**

For dinner-givers, the convenience provided by manufactured foods does not appear to have been a prime consideration. Although some commercial products were recommended by a few writers they do not seem to have been of major importance. These products were necessarily uniformly produced, in direct opposition to an ideal of craft-produced cuisine. Eustace Ude reiterated the ideal of a cook as artist and craftsman. Exact measurement was not usually included in the rhetoric of haute cuisine.

> Cookery cannot be done like pharmacy: the pharmacist is obliged to weigh every ingredient that he employs, as he does not like to taste it; the cook, on the contrary, must taste often, as the reduction increases the flavour. It would be blind work, indeed, without tasting: the very best soups or entrées in which you have omitted to put salt are entirely without flavour; seasoning is in cookery what chords are in music; the best instrument, in the hand of the best professor, without its being in tune, is insipid.27

As most dinner-givers aspired to provide a cuisine that appeared to reflect these ideals, replication of any obvious commercial flavour was to be avoided. Therefore a demonstration of the application of scientific methods as in commercial products was to be avoided. Food manufacturing requires a rigorous application of scientific method also for the consistent replication of commercial recipes. We do not compare the taste of one can of Campbells' tomato soup with another, for it is their clone-like qualities that were the basis for Andy Warhol’s visual comment.

It has not so far been possible to tell whether cost, resistance to innovation or the unreliability of tinned soups meant that none of the cookery books consulted suggested using tinned soup until as late as 1894. There is a heading ‘Tinned Soups’ among the

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other recipes in Cassell’s New Universal Cookery Book. It mentions nineteen varieties of tinned soup which includes Turtle, Mock Turtle, and Julienne. Prices ranged from eightpence to one shilling a pint tin. The authors suggested that some be diluted with stock: “a little added thickening”, seasoning and a spoonful of wine were all recommended as improvements.

In 1896/7 the National Training School Official Cookery Handbook gave the price of ingredients for approximately two quarts of home-made clear soup as three shillings and fourpence three-farthings, not allowing for labour. Cooks were still required to open tins, heat the contents, and make small adjustments. As a cook was a fixed cost, the extra expense of tinned soup would not have been very attractive to economical householders. Only tinned turtle soup – an undoubted luxury – brought a soup not usually made at home into the kitchen. It was available in London, like other luxuries, from professional caterers. Kirwan, in 1864, writes: “Real turtle soup is seldom made in private houses unless of the highest distinction.” He names hotels: The Waterloo in Liverpool and The Bush in Bristol in 1840, and City taverns as suppliers as also was the caterer Gunters, who sold it in jars imported from the West Indies and Brazil. On Crosse and Blackwell’s price list (1884), thirty soups were listed. One dozen tins of turtle soup cost 24 shillings.

Manufactured soup is harder to place in the pattern of dining in London. Who used these products has not, so far, been discovered. Those who wished to take foodstuffs abroad to Europe and to the Empire would have found canned soup useful. The English

28 ‘Mock turtle’ soup was usually made from a calf’s head and calves’ feet as a basis for the stock. In Lewis Carrol’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, John Tenniel illustrates the Mock Turtle with a calf’s head, tail and feet, turtleshell and flippers, Macmillan and Co., London, 1875, pp. 141, 150.
abroad certainly used manufactured goods from home. The Army and Navy Stores\textsuperscript{33} had a catalogue specifically for those serving overseas. In Rome two shops supplied English groceries to the expatriate colony.\textsuperscript{34}

Other aids that could have been used in soup-making were essences of meat (though these may have been meant for invalids). Under the separate heading ‘Extractum Carnis’ in Crosse and Blackwell’s list is their own brand and that of Liebig’s Meat Co. They came in six sizes: a dozen one-ounce pots cost eight shillings. In \textit{The Pytchley Book of Refined Cookery},\textsuperscript{35} the author “particularly draws attention to his consommé which is really excellent”, and contains Liebig’s Extract. He knows some prejudice exists against using it, but hopes anyone who buys his book will try it.

In 1870, the Liebig Company brought out its own cookery book, written by the famous German middle range cookery writer, Henriette Davidis.\textsuperscript{36} In 1893, the Liebig Company followed this with an English cookery book, but with the same German illustrations and written by Mrs H. M. Young. Although not as well known as Henriette Davidis, she wrote several cookery books.\textsuperscript{37} Mrs Young’s recipe for clear gravy soup is a recipe for the usual clear soup with the addition of Liebig Company’s Extract – a teaspoon to two-and-a-half quarts of stock. It cannot have made any noticeable difference, as the main substantial traditional ingredient is two and a half pounds of beef.\textsuperscript{38}

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{34}] Fanny Lewald, \textit{The Italians at Home}, translated by Countess d’Avigdor, Thomas Cautley, London, 1848, p. 239. The author is remembering Italy in 1845-6.
\item[\textsuperscript{35}] Major James Henry Landon, op. cit, p. 3.
\item[\textsuperscript{36}] Henriette Davidis. Most famous work, \textit{Practisches Kochbuch}, first edition, Velhagen & Klasing, Bielefeld, 1851, still in print in 1927.
\end{itemize}
THE TENSIONS BETWEEN EXTRAVAGANCE AND
RESTRAINT

Basic stocks and the consommés derived from them serve, therefore, to define a
total number of aspects of cookery for formal domestic dinners. Consommé reiterates the
social location of these dinners in the ‘leagues’ of dinner-givers. It underlines the
dilemmas of dinner-giving in that layer below the wealthy. Money could purchase
excellence, but lesser qualities had to be congruent with other aspects of the dinner-
giver’s lifestyle if they were to conform with the hierarchic ideal. Soup is emblematic.
Good taste lies in choice of the appropriate.39

The best quality consommé set an ideal standard. Those who knew the best could share
their acceptance of high standards in cuisine: they were the elite who gave recherché
dinners. Those excluded from such dinners could never gain such knowledge.40

A correlation between the quality of a consommé and the status of the dinner was,
however, only one aspect of its overall rating. In addition, and most importantly, there
was also the technical reason that consommé was one of the most easily imitated dishes,
in that something that was hardly more than coloured water and marsala or
Worcestershire Sauce could also masquerade as consommé. The serving of consommé
was, therefore, a fashion accessible to all dinner-givers, whereas the prevailing
standard of haute cuisine was not easily achieved. More complex ‘made dishes’, such
as a “chartreuse”41 for instance, could not be so easily imitated, and Eliza Acton advises

39 Valerie Mars and Gerald Mars, 'Taste and Etiquette in the Victorian Household', in Taste,
1988, p. 149.
This edition 1910, pp. 144-57. Thompson classifies an ascending hierarchy from pot au feu to
consommé made to Jules Gouffé’s recipe. Jules Gouffé, The Royal Cookery Book, translated and
adapted by Alphonse Gouffé, Sampson Low, London, 1889. Alphonse Gouffé was head pastry
cook to the Queen.
'Small chartreuses of lamb sweetbreads', p. 273.
against her readers attempting a "timbale".42 It was not appropriate to their resources.

Like much of the professional French cook’s repertoire, it required both technical expertise, an extensive batterie de cuisine, fonds and sufficient assistants.

When a new culinary fashion has been discarded by the innovative individualists and it moves across the stable continuum to be taken up by the hierarchists,43 consommé is again the ideal vehicle to demonstrate the importance of bounded innovation. This is effected by the use of added garnishes which reinforce the status differences so important to hierarchists. It can do this without incurring the flamboyant expense of the individualists such as their serving of labour-intensive consommé with an addition from the repertoire of haute cuisine, such as quenelles.44 Quenelles were fine forcemeat balls, which required skill, time and good ingredients. An anonymous lady writes of quenelles in 1861: “They are still introduced into every good dinner.”45 For the hierarchists, however, consommé could have a series of lesser garnishes. These might still demonstrate an appropriate degree of slight innovation that allowed them room to manoeuvre, whilst still retaining them in their appropriate league. Quenelles, on the other hand, were quite out of Mrs Sambourne’s league, whereas Julienne (fine vegetable slivers) were well within it. This is evident in the following table, taken from Marion Sambourne’s menus in her Menu Notebook.

As can be seen in the chart constructed from Mrs Sambourne’s Menu Notebook, all the garnishes for consommé are either vegetable or egg. Egg garnishes were either poached46 or made into Little Custards.47 An oyster as a soup garnish only appears

42 Eliza Acton, op. cit, p. 390, in her glossary, p. xxvi: ‘Timbale – a sort of pie made in a mould.’
43 See chapter I.
44 Urbain Dubois, op. cit, Recipe No. 8 ‘Consommé with quenelles’, p. 5.
46 Marion Sambourne, op. cit, pp. 64 & 67.
47 Marion Sambourne, op. cit, p. 68.
Once. (They were more usually served with lemon, brown bread and butter.)

Custards and tarragon leaves must have been a novelty as they merited small drawings. Novelty in a dish was frequently expressed by Mrs Sambourne in drawings showing how the ingredients were arranged. Only once does Mrs Sambourne make any comment about the quality of the consommé itself at any of the dinners she attended.

A tenuous conclusion is that on this occasion it seemed to be above the usual standard.

**TYPES OF SOUP FROM MARION SAMBOURNE'S MENU AND RECIPE NOTEBOOK, 1877-83**

This is not a complete list, in as far as it has not been possible to check through all the diaries. It is certainly a list of those dinners she felt worth recording in the *Menu Notebook*, which only runs from 1877 to 1883.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Dinners Out</th>
<th>Dinners at Home (Stafford Terrace)</th>
<th>Clear Soup Type</th>
<th>Cream or Thick Soup</th>
<th>No Soup</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23 Apr 1877</td>
<td>Mrs Burrand</td>
<td>With chopped spinach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 May 1877</td>
<td>Mrs Bergheim</td>
<td>Spring soup</td>
<td>One other?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Jul 1877</td>
<td>Mrs Stone</td>
<td>Spring soup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Dec 1879</td>
<td>Mrs Fildes</td>
<td>Cress soup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Dec 1879</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Julienne soup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Jan 1878</td>
<td>Mrs Stone</td>
<td>Spring soup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Feb ?</td>
<td>Mama's</td>
<td>Julienne soup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Mar 1878</td>
<td>Mrs Blackburn</td>
<td>Soup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Apr 1878</td>
<td>Mama's</td>
<td>Oxtail soup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Jan ?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Clear soup</td>
<td>Oysters, brown bread and butter first</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

48 Marion Sambourne, op. cit., pp. 56 & 83.

49 Mrs Sambourne's *Menu Notebook*, p. 161.
9 Feb 1879  Yes  Soup aux oeufs

? 1881  Yes  Clear soup

4 Mar 1879  Yes  Artichoke soup

9 Mar?  Yes  Soup with eggs

? Mrs Stone

1 Jan 1880  Yes  Soup

18 Jan 1880  Yes  Spring soup

22 Jan 1880  Yes  Artichoke soup

? Mrs Fildes

27 Jan?  Mrs Stone  Clear soup

1 Feb?  Yes  Clear soup

5 Feb?  Yes  Clear soup

? Mrs Fildes

11 Apr 1880  Yes  Clear soup

13 Jun 1880  Yes  Spring soup

? Mrs Arthur Petos  Julienne soup

18 Jun 1880  Yes  Soup

20 Jun 1880  Yes  Soup

?  Yes  Julienne soup

26 Jun 1880  Yes  Pea soup (recipe p. 116)

Kippered salmon, capers, chervil, bread and butter

Lobster soup (bisque)

Cold lobster first

1st course before soup

1st course peppered cods roe, capers, bread and butter
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Hostess</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Jul 1880</td>
<td>Mrs Stone</td>
<td>Soup bonne femme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Nov 1880</td>
<td>Mrs Fildes</td>
<td>Soup bonne femme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Nov 1880</td>
<td>Mrs Twiss</td>
<td>Clear soup with tarragon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Nov 1880</td>
<td>Harold Petos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Jun 1881</td>
<td>Mrs Black</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Feb ?</td>
<td>Mrs Stone</td>
<td>Clear soup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Mar 1882</td>
<td>Mrs Messel</td>
<td>Clear soup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Apr ?</td>
<td>Mrs Barlow</td>
<td>Clear soup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 May 1882</td>
<td>Mrs Dickens</td>
<td>Clear soup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 May 1882</td>
<td>Miss Elmond</td>
<td>Clear soup (very good)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Jun 1882</td>
<td>Mrs Teiger</td>
<td>Clear soup with asparagus and beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Jun 1882</td>
<td>Mrs Hensman</td>
<td>Clear soup with little custards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Nov 1882</td>
<td>Mrs Eynsham</td>
<td>Clear soup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Jan 1883</td>
<td>Mrs Tweedie</td>
<td>Clear soup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Jan 1883</td>
<td>Mrs Hunter</td>
<td>Clear soup with an oyster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Feb 1883</td>
<td>Mrs Stone</td>
<td>Clear soup with watercress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Jun 1883</td>
<td>Mrs Broughton</td>
<td>Soup Salade orientale (very pretty dish)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This chart, as can be seen, includes both the dinners Mrs Sambourne went to and those she gave. She records nineteen dinners in the period which were served at home and soup was served at all of them.
Mrs Sambourne’s list of soups can be categorised as follows: there were six clear soups comprising two julienne soups, two spring soups, two with egg garnish, and three cream soups, two artichoke and one pea. (There is a recipe for pea soup in the Menu Notebook.) Four of the entries are just designated “soup”. It is tempting to assume that these were also clear soups, since this was the most usual type and therefore less worthy of comment. When the list is considered as a whole, it is immediately apparent that Mrs Sambourne’s choices fall within a limited repertoire.

The dinners to which she went, however, were more innovative than those she gave. There were twenty-nine of these: three did not serve soup at all, five had an hors d’oeuvre before the soup, and two soups were unnamed. Again it is uncertain whether they were clear soups.

Six, possibly seven, garnished clear soups were served. The ambiguous seventh was oxtail soup, but there is no way of telling whether it was thick or clear. Clear soups had the following garnishes: two julienne, two spring, and one each of asparagus and beans, tarragon leaves, little custards, chopped spinach, an oyster, and one with a watercress sprig. The cream soups comprised: one lobster bisque, one bisque (it is not stated if it was lobster), two bonne femme (a vegetable soup), and one cress. This last-named could have been a clear soup with a cress garnish.

By this chart, it is possible to see that ‘clear soups’, i.e. consommé, are far and away the favourite, and that variations on this basic theme are achieved by adding different garnishes. Spring soup has chopped vegetables in it; julienne contains shredded vegetables, and other innovations include the addition of an egg or a sprig of cress. But these are essentially limited innovations, and none of the garnishes is expensive in time, labour or produce. Truffles, “the diamonds of the kitchen”, like quenelles, have no place: they belong in a higher league. One dinner to which Marion Sambourne went, 

50 Auguste Escoffier, to whom this comment is attributed, but I have been unable to trace the text.
did however, feature truffles in an entrée. At Mrs H. Dickens, on 13th May 1882, she had an entrée of sweetbreads and truffles, which she described as “delicious”. This may have been a higher league dinner than that to which she was normally accustomed. So far I have found no evidence that truffles ever appeared on her own menus.

In addition to having *Cre-Fydd’s Family Fare*, Mrs Sambourne also collected recipes from her friends. There were six such recipes for soups in the *Menu Notebook*, only one of them for a clear soup – a mutton stock, with added colour and a finely shredded cucumber garnish. As it was coloured, it looked like consommé, an economical trick, while another, tomato soup, used clear stock. Several recipes in the *Menu Notebook* are called after their donors: ‘Nelly’s Jelly’ and Lucas Pudding. Validation of recipes through their sources is a process that locates the dinner-giver’s repertoire in the appropriate league.

The ‘Little Custards’ for consommé are found again, some time later, in the National Training School for Cookery’s teaching manual. By then the ‘Little Custards’ had slipped from fashion into lower leagues, where they were part of cookery teachers’ repertoire for teaching by rote.

Consommé, in this dining league, was not a vehicle for extravagance. The same basic consommé was the ideal unifying base for adding variation. Its use, as here, however, put a limit on innovation. Surprise and extravagance are the strategies of individualistic hosts, and are not the way of bounded and stratified dinner-givers.

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51 Mrs Sambourne’s *Menu Notebook and Diary*, 1882.
52 *Cre-Fydd*, op. cit., see part I, footnotes.
53 A jelly using 1/6 bottle of marsala for making 3 quarts of jelly, plus citric acid, racket gelatine and essence of lemon.
54 Lucas pudding: a decorated jelly with whipped cream in the centre. (See in part I Isabella Beeton’s ‘Open Jelly with Whipped Cream’ Isabella Beeton, 1861, op. cit., p. 731, No. 1453. Lucas pudding was not included in any of the dinner menus. It has been suggested by the artist, Horatio Lucas’ great-niece, Honor Marsden, that the recipe was from his wife, Isabel Davigdor, sister of Eliz Davigdor, author of *Dinners and Dishes* (1885).
Cre-Fydd’s *Family Fare* gives recipes for a beef stock and a white stock. The author, in a footnote, says, “Two fresh truffles will be found to be a great improvement to both stocks.” Truffles were not a usual addition to stock.56 The function of unrealistic suggestions for the general user of a cookery book then, as now, was to make recipes seem of a grander style than was likely to be used by the reader. It put the reader, by association, into a higher league. This was an aspect of the individuality that continually permeated the hierarchical order in middle-class Victorian recipe books. *Mrs Beeton’s Book of Household Management* is a typical example of this genre.

**CONSOMMÉ – ITS PLACE ENSHRINED**

Ways of presenting ersatz consommé, by the use of colouring and flavourings, as described earlier by the author of *Party Giving on Every Scale*, that is with methods other than the addition of more concentrated stock, were taken up by lower leagues of individualists. These, as later to be discussed, were those who dined à la Russe before it was quite appropriate to their league. Ersatz consommé was invaluable for a menu of set courses, required for impression management.57

In Anthony Trollope’s *Miss MacKenzie*,58 there is the description of just such use of consommé. The cook is agitated because the soup is both greasy, and has been placed on the table before the guests are called. Trollope writes: “That the soup should be cold, everybody no doubt expected. It was clear soup, made chiefly of marsala, and purchased from the pastry cook’s in Store Street.”59 Marsala did not have a very good

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56 Cre-Fydd, 1866, op. cit, p. 1.
59 As residential areas like Kensington were becoming fashionable, with new estates such as the Phillimore being developed at this time, Bloomsbury was losing its previous prestige. Store Street is off Gower Street. See chapter IX – The House, where location is discussed.
reputation then; it was a poor man’s sherry. Trollope, in his novels, sets out his views on various aspects of dining to make points about status and innovation. 

Mrs A. B. Marshall begins her cookery book in traditional style with stocks and sauces. She then clearly differentiates between how the best stocks are made, and average economical versions. Mrs Marshall then gives a final coup de grace to any pretension to adopting the French system at the middle levels by incorporating her own branded products as short-cuts to give maximum show for least investment. This appeal to fashionable aspiration was perfectly made by her advertisement for ‘Consommé Sildeen’. The illustrated ‘heroine’ is dressed in a medieval-style dress favoured by the Arts & Crafts movement. She inhales the aroma of the soup from two large steaming bowls set on a medieval-style table. Behind the table there is a Gothic door marked School of Cookery. There is a recipe for a traditional consommé in Mrs Marshall’s book, but which consommé she recommended to her pupils is not made clear. The recipe does not have the same promotion as is in the advertisement: “Be sure you get it.” In a booklet of bills of fare taught at her cookery school in Mortimer Street in June 1890, three consommés are listed for 11th June.

CONSOMMÉ AND CULTURAL BIAS

Later, in the last quarter of the century, and certainly by the 1890s when dining à la Russe had become the accepted way of giving a dinner, the place of consommé at the head of the menu was then part of the set, hierarchical way of dining. Escoffier has

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60 Punch, October 25, 1856, p. 161. “Marsala, by jingo!” – a cartoon of the disappointed burglar who finds marsala instead of sherry. See section on wine and illustrations in the final chapter.


63 Marshall’s School of Cookery, Specimens of daily bills of fare, being those given during June 1890, 30 & 32 Mortimer Street, Cavendish Sq., London W.
ninety-two recipes for consommé 64 Clear soup, as has been seen, was ideal for both hierarchic dining and for individualists.

Consommé, it has been shown, offers a paradigm that well illustrates areas of tension in the preparation and serving of a widely-used soup. It can be seen how subtle differences in the making of consommé as well as crude imitations, all had their place in the dining and cooking strategies used by both hierarchs and individualists. By the end of the nineteenth century, and well into the next, consommé had become the preferred soup to be served at all formal dinners.

Anne de Sallis' à la mode dishes, followed the tradition of haute cuisine in their treatment of ingredients and elaborate presentation but at middle level these creations were comparable to kitsch novelties rather than elaborate haute cuisine. This inappropriate elaboration was disliked by critics such as "Fi Bee", (W. B. Jerrold) and Henry Cole. Mrs de Sallis's *Entrees à la Mode*, 1887, p.25, includes "Lobster à la Newmarket", a creation in aspic comprising two moulded jockey caps on a green 'field' of chopped jelly. There is no part of the lobster visible; all that is natural is banished, and the ingredients are reconstituted into icons coloured, for individual aggrandisement, in the owner's racing colours. Sharing the picture are three fish and aspic moulds of two of crab and one of trout but as with the lobster there is no visible sign of the named ingredients.

A copy diagram from Marion Sambourne's *Menu Notebook* of the dish of egg, caviar and anchovy, served at Mrs Messel's Dinner on 28th March, 1882.
A display of Antonin Carême's complex decorative transformations of ingredients for dinner dishes can be seen as following classic styles. The architectural designs were reserved for his grand decorative sugar works and directly refer to his belief in this work was artistically comparable in rank to architecture. *Le Maître d'Hotel Français*, Paris, 1822.
Alexis Soyer's dishes for display have an eclectic vulgarity that brought him both attention and criticism. Compare these two designs with Carême or Francatelli's classic work. 'Wild Boar a la Troyenne' pierced with 'arrows is not a reference to a porcine S. Sebastian, but Soyer's recreation of an antique Roman dish. Note the kitsch miniature piglets. The 'Extravagance Culinaire a la Alderman', also known as the Hundred Guinea dish, incorporates turtle's heads with hatalets in their mouths plus all the extravagant ingredients that made up the stated cost. These dishes were given as illustrations of contemporary achievement in Soyer's final chapter of *The Pan trophon*, or, *History of Food, and its preparation from the earliest ages of the world*. Simpkin Marshall, London, 1853, pp. 406-407.
A Cure and aid for indigestion: Melton Dinner pills C. 1860 and Mrs Marshall's 'Coralline Pepper'. 'Coralline pepper' is not only advertised as an aid to digestion but served as a substitute for the more expensive lobster coral. She claimed, "being the most brilliant red colour it can be used for decoration in place of lobster coral". It was also given other attributes: "not much hotter than fine ordinary pepper use alone as a Curry Powder..." Mrs Marshall, op. cit., Advertising pages, p. 23.

INDIGESTION

Indigestion is brought on by an occasional overloading of the stomach, a too frequent indulgence in animal food or spirituous liquors, want of pure air and exercise, sudden transitions from heat to cold, depressing mental emotions—as fear and grief, longcontinued anxiety, fatigue, etc. The followings are some of the most prominent symptoms of indigestion:

A want of, or an inordinate appetite, which is not appeased after a full meal, the sensation of hunger sometimes continuing; also, stitches after meals; Headache, Giddiness, Flatulence, Acidity, or Heartburn; drowsiness, dimness, and occasional temporary loss of sight; Pains in the Chest, Back, and Liver (with high-colored urine), also in the region of the liver, frequently extending to the right shoulder; a dull, heavy pain at the pit of the stomach after eating; diminution of the eyes; Reactions on the Face and other parts of the Body; the sleep disturbed by frightful dreams; a disagreeable taste in the mouth on first waking, with nausea and vomiting of a clear liquor; toothache, pain on one side of the Face, and very often swelling of the face and ankles. If these unpleasant sensations are allowed to continue, and nothing is done to stay the progress of the disease, the symptoms above enumerated assume a more aggravated form, and others still more distressing come on; such as COSTIVENESS (the great cause of piles); violent Palpitations of the Heart; a short dry cough, and difficulty of breathing; extreme Languor and LSASITUDE; a great depression of spirits, with fear of death, or impending evil—in one word, hypochondriasis.

The great desideratum in effecting a cure of this distressing malady is to obtain a medicine which will first free the bowels from any unhealthy accumulation, and then improve the tone and energy of the stomach, thus assisting nature to digest the food, and converting it into nutritious matter for the nourishment of the whole system. For the attainment of these objects the MELTON DINNER PILLS have been found eminently successful. They are prepared only by

W. H. YOUNG, Chemist, &c.,
And Sold Wholesale and Retail at his Establishment,
35, Baker Street, Portman Square, London, W.

In Boxes, at 1s. 1d. & 2s. 9d. each.

Sold by HANNAY & Co., 63, OXFORD STREET.

NOTICE.—MARSHALL'S CORALLINE PEPPER

Mrs. A. B. Marshall begs to notify that the NEW REGISTERED LABEL (Trade Mark) as hereunder will be on every red box containing a bottle of this now celebrated article. None other is genuine.
Charles Elme Francatelli’s classically designed ‘Ham with Aspic Jelly’, from The Cook’s Guide and Butler’s Assistant, Richard Bentley & Son, London, 1864.

Mrs Marshall’s Marinaded Fillets of Herring on Toast, translated as: Filets de Harengs marinées sur Croûtes. Mrs Marshall emphasised the elaborated presentation of such simple recipes as marinated fillet of herring on toast. Her chosen brand was ‘Kruger’s Fillets’ – a product validated by their place in her recherché cookery book. The only cooking required was in making the toast and warming the herrings which were then sprinkled with ‘Coralline pepper’, heated in the oven for five minutes and placed on the buttered toast. These were then decorated with parsley and lobster coral and cut into strips two-and-a-half or three inches long. Her recipe concludes with specific ‘dishing up’ instructions: ‘Dish up en couronne on a dish paper on a hot dish.’ from Mrs Marshall’s Larger Cookery Book, 1899, p. 45.
**Jelly of two colours:** Isabella Beeton, *Beeton’s Book of Household Management*, S. O. Beeton, London, 1861, op. cit., p. 725, No. 1-441. To our eyes an equally elaborate dish, but not described as “very pretty”, suggests the fashion for the natural cream contained within a shape was, for celebratory cuisine, a favourite theme.

**Isabella Beeton’s Open Jelly** with whipped cream has the comment in brackets under the title: “(a very pretty dish)”. It is made up of a decoratively moulded jelly – flavoured “in any way that may be preferred”, with an open centre filled with sweetend, sherry-flavoured cream. Isabella Beeton, *Beeton’s Book of Household Management*, S. O. Beeton, London, 1861, p. 731, No. 1453. ‘Lucas Jelly’ in Marion Sambourne’s *Menu Notebook* is in the same form.

**Eliza Acton’s Pudding traditionally spherical Christmas pudding**

Acton’s pudding is traditionally shaped and even when she gives a tin mould as an alternative shape, it is still quite plain. *Modern Cookery for Private Families*, 1855 edition, p. 417

Elaboration is expressed in these works through the way food was presented. Mrs Beeton’s Christmas pudding, was cooked in a fluted mould, Isabella Beeton (editor), *Beeton’s Book of Household Management*, S. O. Beeton, London, 1861, see reproduced coloured plate puddings from Beeton’s 1880 edition.
Mrs. Marshall’s ‘Consomme Sildeen’.
Mrs. Marshall then gives a final coup de grace to any pretension to adopting the French system at the middle levels by incorporating her own branded products as short-cuts to give maximum show for least investment. This appeal to fashionable aspiration was perfectly made by her advertisement for ‘Consomme Sildeen’. The illustrated ‘heroine’ is dressed in a medieval-style dress favoured by the Arts & Crafts movement. She inhales the aroma of the soup from two large steaming bowls set on a medieval-style table. Behind the table there is a Gothic door marked School of Cookery. From Mrs Marshall’s Larger Cookery Book, Marshall’s School of Cookery, London, c.1899 and the catalogue.

“Soyer’s Sauces” “(One expressly for the Ladies and the other for the Gentlemen)” This distinctive bottle is described in a quotation selected from The Sun, 2nd May 1848, as “a most elegant specimen of ‘art manufacture’” Quotation and illustration from end papers: Alexis Soyer, The Modern Housewife or Menagere, Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1850.
Nursery Meals. In both these cartoons from 1865 nursery diet is exemplified by plain bread and butter and forbidden sweets. In these cartoons children sit in their ‘high chairs’ imitating polite adult eating at table. From Punch, February 25, 1865 and below, May, 27 1865.
Felix Urbain Dubois's *Chartreuse of Pigeons* from *Cosmopolitan Cookery*, English edition, Longmans & Co., 1870, page 347, is typically served in a form that reveals no overt visual reference to its main ingredient, pigeon. The table was embellished with highly processed ingredients made with high skilled labour intensity. These complex presentations, typical of nineteenth century haute cuisine follow in the medieval, renaissance and early eighteenth century tradition of pastry as an elaborate container with its accompanying tradition of entertaining 'surprises'.

Felix Urbain Dubois's 'Brandade' of salted cod Montpellier Fashion from *Cosmopolitan Cookery*, English edition, Longmans & Co., London, 1870, page 131. Like the *Chartreuse of Pigeons* this 'Brandade' is also typical of similar elaboration, but in this case a traditional French dish, made from salt cod, which ordinarily requires highly processed ingredients, is additionally given a more elaborate presentation, thus disassociating the diners from the stigma of consuming actual 'peasant food' while enabling them to enjoy this traditional dish.
Isabella Beeton's *Book of Household Management, Entirely New Edition*, Ward, Lock, & Co., 1880. The second of these two colour plates includes both simple and elaborate dinner and supper dishes.
Isabella Beeton's Book of Household Management, Entirely New Edition, Ward, Lock, & Co., 1880. These two colour plates show elaborately presented recipes which include a 'chartreuse' and a 'timbale', dishes usually only produced in kitchens with French trained cooks. There are no recipes in the text for the most elaborate dishes shown suggesting that like etiquette texts for elite dining, these plates were for readers' admiration and only as emulation when ordered from a caterer.
Isabella Beeton's *Book of Household Management, Entirely New Edition*, Ward, Lock, Bowden, & Co., 1892. These six plates from this posthumous edition show a range of dishes for a variety of dinner styles. "Fish" includes fashionable dinner party dishes such as Turbot, rolled fillets of sole, oysters and lobster, but this was more usually typical dish for ball suppers. Cod's head and shoulders and smelts had been fashionable from the beginning of the century. The heaped whitebait is shown in the same style as at Greenwich.
Isabella Beeton’s *Book of Household Management, Entirely New Edition*, Ward, Lock, Bowden, & Co. 1892. These six plates from this posthumous edition show a range of dishes for a variety of dinner styles. “Joints and Entrees” includes popular joints as sirloin of beef, haunch of mutton, saddle of mutton and fore quarter of lamb. Calf’s head which had been fashionable from the previous the century and was not usually to be found on London dinner party menus. Cutlets and peas is finished with paper cutlet frills.
Isabella Beeton's *Book of Household Management, Entirely New Edition*, Ward, Lock, Bowden, & Co., 1892. These six plates from this posthumous edition show a range of dishes for a variety of dinner styles. "Poultry and Game" although garnished with parsley it is naturalistically presented, as shown in examples with retained heads and claws.
Isabella Beeton’s *Book of Household Management, Entirely New Edition*, Ward, Lock, Bowden, & Co., 1892. These six plates from this posthumous edition show a range of dishes for a variety of dinner styles. “Vegetables” includes a simple but carefully arranged salad in a white china lined wood and silver salad bowl. The other carefully ordered ungarished vegetables are shown in dishes that like the salad bowl were typical middle range table wares.
Isabella Beeton's *Book of Household Management, Entirely New Edition*, Ward, Lock, Bowden, & Co., 1892. These six plates from this posthumous edition show a range of dishes for a variety of dinner styles. "Jellies Creams and Sweet Dishes" includes dishes that would have been incorporated into the central dessert arrangement of fruit and flowers that decorated an à la Russe table.
'Salmon en Fete' An extreme example of Mrs de Salis’ Kitsch food decor, like Mrs Marshall she includes a small moulded swan, in this instance perched on top of a salmon. From Mrs de Salis, *A la Mode Cookery*, Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1902.

*Mrs Marshall’s “Little Swans with Luxette”* These individually moulded aspic cream ‘swans’ were filled with Marshall’s Luxette, a branded paté of unnamed fish and other undisclosed ingredients, but it was reputed to include anchovy. The swans are served on a “bed of chopped aspic jelly” pp. 207-8. Not only was the Luxette and gelatine supplied by Marshall’s but also the tin moulds for swans, and can be seen among the advertisements at the back of the 1899 edition, p. 31, see illustrations for chapter IV both the moulds and Luxette were supplied from Mrs Marshall’s catalogue. This was a prime example like the Kruger’s herring fillets below of commercial products incorporated into the dinner-party dishes. These products as with Marshall’s’ Consomme Sildeen and Coralline Pepper, were for making short cuts to achieve the required elaboration.
Chapter V

Providing Profusion for Above-Stairs from Poverty Below: Kitchens Equipped for Dinner Parties

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter kitchens are not examined in detail. As cuisines change kitchen equipment is discarded. As kitchens in upper middle-class London houses have continued to be used, they have, since the end of the nineteenth century been subject to many changes in both labour and technology. As uses and needs of functional rooms are subject to change, so there have been more alterations to kitchens than necessary in decorative public rooms. A style can more easily be preserved in sitting and dining rooms, while allowing for a degree of change in lifestyle. The Sambourne’s house in Kensington still retains most of its original furnishings in the public areas, although the house had been lived in continuously before being donated to the Victorian Society in 1978. But the kitchen was not preserved.¹

A recent fashion for preserving kitchens is usually more partial reconstruction than conservation of complete kitchens, with their original equipment. Nonetheless attitudes regarding cookery as low status work can still be argued as a continuing English tradition influencing the marginalising of kitchen conservation. When kitchens are so preserved and exhibited, the arrangement of utensils often owes more to the romanticising food pages of women’s magazines than the actual layout of utensils in a working kitchen.² Regarding the kitchen either as a stigmatised area or a place for

¹ The kitchen at 18 Stafford Terrace has been converted into a caretaker’s flat.
² This style is particularly noticeable in some National Trust properties as can be seen in their photographic library.
gentle feminisation were two prevalent attitudes represented among the constituencies of upper middle-class dinner givers in the nineteenth century.

In this chapter emphasis is on what might be described as the most important piece of equipment in any kitchen, the heat source. During the century there was an increasing choice of ranges, stoves and fuels. By following changes in these technologies either by their adoption or rejection among different constituencies the place of the kitchen can be seen in relation to dinner-givers and their dinner party cuisines.

CULINARY TRADITIONS AND THEIR TECHNOLOGIES

COAL

Producing a dinner that was more elaborate than a daily dinner not only obviously depended on the quality of materials and the cook's skill, but on the kitchen itself and how well it was equipped for the task. Contemporary illustrations, especially those in *Punch*, show middle-class kitchens as sparsely furnished and equipped. Only when a male French cook is portrayed is his kitchen shown as furnished with all he required to produce the elaborate food that justified his higher wages. These were what Charles Selby described as "large establishments where money is no object". In 1860 he notes their ideal modern equipment as comprising steam ranges, hot plates and charcoal stoves, whereas his humbler reader is presumed to have an old-fashioned range. By this he possibly meant an open range or an early simpler version of the closed range. Ranges included the English open fire which was good for roasting meat, poultry and game, while steaks and chops could also be grilled before it. The fire too could be used for frying.

Innovation was not readily introduced: kitchens in the houses of middle to upper middle-class dinner-givers do not, for the most part, seem to have been equipped with the latest improvements. Two exceptional large kitchens with published plans, which

therefore were available to a wider public, were John Nash's Kitchen at the Royal Pavilion, Brighton\(^4\) (1826) and Alexis Soyer's design for the Reform Club Kitchens (1841).\(^5\) These two individualistic designers will be discussed later.

The impetus for innovation during this time of fast technical and social change was not entirely what might have been expected. To note that cooking techniques are integral to the style of cuisine produced, and therefore to the heat sources and equipment used, might seem an obvious comment, but this was an important factor in the choice of kitchen ranges, stoves and other kitchen equipment.

Differences between French and English cuisines in relation to London dining have been discussed earlier. How kitchens were equipped reveals some underlying influences on culinary choice. For a country at the forefront of new technologies, it is useful to be able to relate how traditional methods of cooking frequently dominated and negated the choice of new technology. This applied both to the English repertoire and the French as adopted by the English.

To highlight the differences between English and French kitchens, it is helpful to refer back to the previous century, since their different cooking traditions are not only founded on different methods of preparing ingredients, but also used different equipment to cook them. By examining William Verrall's descriptions of kitchens in 1759,\(^6\) it is possible to follow the style from which nineteenth-century middle-class cookery evolved. Verrall, as noted earlier, had been assistant to Thomas Pelham-Holles, Duke of Newcastle's (1693-1768), French cook, M. de St. Clouet. After

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4 John Nash, *The Royal Pavilion at Brighton*, Ackerman, London, 1827. The kitchens are shown in some detail, both as uncoloured and aquatinted plates. There is also a cross-section of the whole length of the Pavilion, so the place of the kitchens can be related to the whole building. See illustration.


Verrall left the Duke’s kitchen he returned to the White Hart Inn, Lewes, succeeding his father as landlord.

As Verrall understood local cooking and had also learnt the French system, he was well aware of the contrasts. He set about educating the local gentry and their staff in ways of preparing food in the French manner. In his book, *The Cook’s Paradise* (1759), which he subtitles *A Complete System of Cookery*, he acknowledges his debt to Clouet whom he describes as “his friend and patron”. Verrall, in his preface, relates his difficulties in teaching the local gentry and their servants the French approach to cookery. He records how he finds ill-equipped kitchens which go unnoticed by their plain-eating country owners, for although their kitchen arrangements and tastes reveal them as material for satire, the purpose of the work is basically didactic. Through his description of the current technology, Verrall thus reveals important differences between contemporary French and English approaches to cookery. He recommends charcoal stoves which were ideal for cooking sauces and the composite dishes that were integral to French cuisine, whereas cooking in front of and over an open fire was the basic English style, extending through the social classes from cottagers to many of the middling gentry.

To make didactic points, Verrall uses the device of an enquiring elderly gentleman who interrupts him while he is writing his book: “What is meant by apparatus?” he asks at the beginning, so opening a dialogue upon how a gentleman’s kitchen should be equipped. This gentleman then comments that he only eats a mutton chop and therefore has no need of any changes to his kitchen. Verrall was well aware of the ambivalent position of French cookery, particularly among landed Tory gentry, and persuades him nonetheless that his country house needs an appropriately furnished kitchen. When the kitchen is subsequently equipped Verrall goes to inspect it.

His visit offers an opportunity to discuss the usual smaller country house kitchen, where he notes familiar equipment in place. These comprised a typically limited *batterie*

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7 William Verrall, op. cit, p. 28.
de cuisine as he had found in another of his visits to a local kitchen with only "one poor solitary stew pan" and a frying-pan "as black as my hat". This gentleman's kitchen is little better equipped; it has skewers and spits, a "basting-ladle" to pour fat from the tray under the roasting meat over the joints, and a "drudging-box". This last item was a perforated box for sprinkling flour over roasting meat shortly before it was ready, thus giving it a crisp finish. Verrall, however, sees no "jack". These were devices powered, often by clockwork or hot air from the fire's chimney, which drove rotating fins geared to spits, that turned meat at a constant rate in front of the fire. Verrall then notices that there are also no "stoves" and asks if they are in the old fashioned place, the back kitchen. His gentleman pupil asks him what he means by stoves. "Why, Sir, little round machines of iron fix'd in brickwork about three feet from the ground, where charcoal is always burnt on all occasions in the cooking way."8 The pupil protests that the maid can manage perfectly well by doing all the cooking in the hearth over a coal or wood fire. Verrall then notes the inadequacy of the fireplace which he describes as having, to save fuel, been "reduced to about the size of a salt box". Fireplaces were equipped with adjustable iron 'cheeks' to vary the size of the grate.

Even more popular than roasting were boiling and simmering, the most basic cooking methods, which were common to all households. Suspended over the fire from an adjustable hook or "holdfast" was a cauldron for cooking such staples as oat or peas porridge, or to hold boiling water in which separate items cooked. These included traditional puddings tied in a cloth, known as bag puddings, also meat, fresh or salted, and vegetables kept together in a string bag. This, among the rural poor, was the traditional way of cooking, and it was from this tradition that much of the female domestic labour came that staffed London kitchens in the next century. Pamela Horn

describes the origins of female servants and their poverty-stricken rural experience before they came to London.9

On stewing – gentle cooking over a low heat – Eliza Acton points out the difficulty in adjusting the heat on common English cooking stoves. She notes the French method of using charcoal stoves, whilst advocating a traditional English style of slow charcoal cookery – hearth cookery – which was often ignored. Hearth cookery was to be found in the kitchens of good houses and she advises cooks: “always have these which are excellent for simmering”. It was in great houses, however, that French culinary methods were most influential, whether directly as cooked by French cooks, or as plagiarised from France in English books.

Daily dinners, such as those eaten by the Sambournes, as discussed in Chapter III, on cuisine, were still, more than a century after Verrall, largely based on the “roast and boiled” tradition, which had been cooked on open fires. Preferences for this limited English repertoire of roast and boiled cookery are emphasized by the loss of slow hearth cooking techniques required for composite French dishes, as described by Mrs Acton.10 She also advises on a range of techniques including the best way to broil [grill] and fry, with drawings of appropriate equipment. This again tends to confirm that well-equipped kitchens were not the norm. A following section on ‘Baking and Oven Cookery’ begins: “The improved construction of the ovens connected with all modern stoves gives great facility at the present day for home baking.”11

To make roasting more efficient, Mrs Acton recommends tin roasters to cook meat in front of the range. These were tin screens that reflected a more even heat. Her instructions are not only detailed and practical but she recommended both traditional

11 Eliza Acton, op. cit, p. 178.
French methods of slow cookery and more modern innovations such as steam. Eliza Acton’s approach to new technology as the means to achieve better results was an important milestone in improving English approaches to cuisine.

David J. Everleigh traces the iron kitchen range with movable cheeks from the beginning of the eighteenth century. The French and English styles that Verrall describes including the range, continued, however well into the middle of the next century. By the end of the eighteenth century ovens and hot water boilers were built into kitchen range design, and a patent for closed ranges, which were more economical to run, was taken out by George Bodley of Exeter in 1802. This was a cast iron range with an enclosed oven that had been developed from the open range of the 1770s with its fireplace and adjacent oven. The closed range was designed with its coals exposed at the centre of the front elevation, so joints could continue to be roasted in front of an open fire. James Jennings in 1837 notes the improvements in boilers, ovens, and hot closets, and observes that hot plates were now made of thinner iron and therefore did not crack. By the time the Sambourne moved into 18 Stafford Terrace, in about 1875, these ranges, or kitcheners as they came to be called, were considered standard equipment in London kitchens.

Throughout the nineteenth century, traditional ‘roast and boiled’ dinners continued to be central to ‘plain cooking’ for middling daily dining. And since there were no culinary changes there was no perceived need to change the equipment. Using French charcoal stoves for high status French cuisine seems also to have continued well into the nineteenth century. Easily regulated gas stoves, which would have been ideal replacements for charcoal stoves, were not widely used until its last decade. This yet

13 James Jennings, Two Thousand and Five Hundred Practical Recipes in Family Cookery, Sherwood, Gilbert and Piper, London, 1837, p. LXIII.
further emphasises the continued absence of French culinary system in middle-range kitchens.

The most usual French addition to kitcheners and later gas stoves was the *bain marie*. This was a rectangular hot water bath installed on top of the stove in which stood saucepans to keep sauces hot without boiling and thus spoiling them. Dinners à la Russe required a succession of sauces and gravies to be available for each course, whatever eclectic cuisine was followed. An integral *bain marie*, or an improvised version, was therefore necessary.

Since closed ranges had devices to cover or expose the fire, so roasting and broiling could still be done according to the same techniques as Verrall’s country gentry had employed. Clockwork bottle jacks to turn a single roast were first manufactured by John Linwood of Birmingham in the 1790s and, like smoke jacks that powered spits, could take several pieces of meat. They continued in use throughout the nineteenth century.

Apart from a cook’s choosing to use charcoal there was no economic pressure for charcoal use and production; coal was relatively cheap in London. By 1844 Webster commented on the use of charcoal stewing stoves which “are less employed in London kitchens on a large scale than they were formerly, being in great measure superseded by the hot plates,” but he does note that the best cooks still preferred charcoal, “the heat being more mild and easily regulated.”

Closed cast iron ranges are more economical than open ranges as less heat escapes.

Many such stoves were described as having been constructed according to Count


Rumford’s concepts, for economy and efficiency, although they were made entirely of cast iron rather than heat-retaining brick.\textsuperscript{18} Rumford’s stove was designed with several separate fires. Mrs Parkes, in 1825, describes a stove without naming it, that appears to be Rumford’s cooking stove and roaster.\textsuperscript{19} It was however too alien in style to be adopted in England. Thomas Webster, who described a wide range of cooking apparatus, writes of Rumford’s stove using coal at Munich and also at the Royal Institution in 1800. He notes that a great number had been made by various London tradesmen but as they were no longer manufactured, suggests referring to Rumford’s essays for further information.\textsuperscript{20} Rumford was a little more successful with his economically designed roaster. Webster describes this also as designed in 1790\textsuperscript{21} for the Military Academy in Munich, but this seems also to have had problems. W. Mattieu Williams describes how the ventilating system became overheated and would have melted if it were installed in the ordinary English fireplace because of the cook’s “indulging in her favourite pastime of wasting coal.”\textsuperscript{22} Rumford had, however, designed the roaster to be installed in a separate economical fireplace.

In 1869, Frederick Edwards Jnr, in spite of others’ previous failures, attempted to have Rumford’s stove adopted in a modified form, more suited to combat domestic consumers’ prejudice and inertia, which he believed was responsible for the public previously ignoring it.\textsuperscript{23} Edwards’ modifications seem to have been no more successful.

\textsuperscript{22} W. Mattieu Williams FCS, \textit{The Chemistry of Cooking}, Chatto and Windus, London, 1885, p. 75.
than earlier attempts at introducing Rumford’s stoves. Subsequent household and cookery books did not, as far as I can find, promote these stoves in their texts or as advertisements in their end papers.

Despite this apparent lack of interest, Mr Hopkins of Greek Street is attributed as selling over two hundred Rumford roasters and others also made them, but by 1882, when Williams was giving the Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce’s Cantor Lectures on ‘The Scientific Basis of Cookery’, he was unable to find a single Rumford roaster for the exhibition of “apparatus and appliances used for cooking purposes” that accompanied his lectures. Williams judged smaller joints to be better cooked in the roaster than in front of an open fire. He attributed the prejudice against meat baked in a closed oven as founded on the practice of poorer families taking their meat to be roasted in the local baker’s oven. As the oven cooled after the bread had been baked, the meat would have cooked too slowly and could not compare with meat roasted in front of a brisk fire or in the hot roaster. He also believed that the stronger aromas of some meats would taint more delicate meats in the same oven.

CLOSED RANGES OR KITCHENERs

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the closed cast iron range had been developed, and David J. Everleigh notes that some of Rumford’s principles had been incorporated into them. A central fire, open at the front for roasting, had its heat directed on either side through a series of flues to heat ovens. It also had a hot-water cistern and hot plates on top, with an additional hot plate over the fire itself. These

24 W. Mattieu Williams FCS, Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce’s 1882 Cantor Lectures on ‘The Scientific Basis of Cookery’, Journal of the Society of Arts, December 28th 1883, Vol. 32. These lectures were also published as The Chemistry of Cooking, Chatto and Windus, London, 1885, p. 75.
27 David Everleigh, op. cit, p. 23.
kitcheners, as closed ranges were later named, remained the most usual way to cook in most London households and institutions, at least until the 1890s when gas began to become popular.

Not all kitcheners were easily adjusted. Heat was regulated through flues by dampers and a chimney register, which if not well designed and kept soot free, made regulation difficult. Mrs Acton noted that one common cause of badly cooked food was the fault of extravagant servants who insisted on a large fire instead of a more economical use of fuel. For better results she advises less fuel and more time. “In a vast number of English kitchens the cooking fails from the hurried manner in which it is conducted.” Lady Barker instructed her students at the National School to keep “a small bright fire” all day long so that a cook could immediately respond to any order from above stairs. This meant constant attention as small amounts of coal had frequently to be added.

Kitchen ranges were designed to burn low-grade coal which, although cheap, was difficult to keep alight, particularly if adulterated. Lighting stoves in the morning in damp, cold basement kitchens often caused problems. Once lit, the temptation to maintain a blazing fire must have been considerable, particularly as the standard dress of women servants was thin printed cotton, with probably only a petticoat underneath and a cotton apron over it. Added to this was an increasing pressure to deliver meals to time, and if the fire was too low or went out, both cooking and hot water failed.

Some writers, such as Mrs Haweis, emphasised the importance of comfortable working conditions in the kitchen: “The comfort of the cook and en revanche [in return] of the whole household lies in the kitchen range.” But there was often a great bias towards economy below stairs. When young kitchen maids were without sufficient experience to manage the often unreliable ranges, it would have been easier as well as more

28 Eliza Acton, op. cit, p. 167.
comfortable for them to keep a larger fire than was appropriate for all cooking. Their lack of relevant experience may well have derived from economic changes in the lives of the rural poor post 1815, since the domestic experience of young servants as noted, was largely limited to country cottages. Previously they had lived in the farmhouse where they would have learnt the skills required in a larger household. As William Cobbett had observed, the rush to refinement was as evident in the country as in the town. For the farmer and his wife to dine without the company of farm servants reflected the ways of higher status gentry.\textsuperscript{31} K. D. M. Snell suggests that from the early nineteenth century domestic service in London was one of the few poorly paid jobs open to single women who could not find work in the country.\textsuperscript{32}

Cottages did not always have cast iron ranges, but often only small fires set in large fireplaces.\textsuperscript{33} In the countryside where fuel had to be gathered by cottagers it was used sparingly, particularly after the enclosures of common land. These small fires were just right for a slowly boiling cauldron, a traditional country way to cook. In his \emph{Shilling Cookery for the People}, Soyer, as late as 1855, remarked on the supremacy of the three-legged pot in cottage cookery, regardless of the technical advances of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{34}


\textsuperscript{32} K. D. M. Snell, op. cit, p. 58. Also quoted from A. Young, \textit{A Farmer's Letters to the People of England}, 1767, pp. 353-4: "Young men and women in the country fix their eye on London as the last stage of their hope... The number of young women that fly there is incredible." p. 38.


\textsuperscript{34} Alexis Soyer, \textit{Shilling Cookery for the People}, Routledge, London, 1855, p. 38. Soyer offers a version of the French national dish – \textit{pot au feu}. "I cannot expect that this truly national soup of France can be made to perfection, or with so much care as in that country, therefore I have simplified it and shall call it \textit{The French Cottage Pot au Feu}, or French soup." Mrs Acton also advocated \textit{pot au feu} as a basic economical dish, but these disregarded pieces of advice aimed at changing eating and cooking custom would not have been adopted on the advice of individualistic didacts, as is proved repeatedly in our own time. See chapters III and IV on cuisine.
Ranges varied in quality but 'The Leamington', which won an award at the 1851 Exhibition, was recommended in household books including Isabella Beeton's. Alison Ravetz notes this validated choice. A later kitchener, 'The Eagle' was also recommended by both Mrs Haweis and Mrs Humphry as "the best", and is advertised in Mrs Humphry's book and in *The Table* as boasting "52 First Prize Medals" as well as endorsements from two distinguished owners. Like Mrs Beeton, Mrs Humphry also selected a range that had been validated by Exhibition Medals and in this case too by owners' testimonials. Among the larger kitchens 'The Eagle' had been installed at Charlecote Park, Warwickshire, where it still stands.

Since many London houses were rented, landlords saw no advantage in installing good quality kitcheners where little interest was likely to have been taken by cook-employing tenants. Mrs Humphry calls her imaginary archetypical bad stove: "A Landlord". She advises tenants to buy a portable stove that could readily be moved when they left. Typical of these were American stoves, which as the name suggests were first manufactured in the U.S. but were later made in Britain. Installing a portable stove meant that there was no need for any brickwork. All that was required was for a metal flue to be put up the chimney.

**COOKING A DINNER: HOW A KITCHENER WAS USED**

An example of how a kitchener would have been used for a dinner party is shown by examination of a typical menu from Marion Sambourne's Notebook:

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38 *The Table*, Vol. XXX, No. 752, 3rd November 1900, London, front cover. *The Table* was published by Mrs Marshall, but there is no attribution.

39 Mrs Humphry, 1893, op. cit.p. 30.

40 Mrs Humphry, op. cit, p. 30.

41 Marion Sambourne, *Menu Notebook*. This menu is also entered in her diary 27th March 1881.
Dinner of 8, March 27th, Sunday 1881

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dish</th>
<th>Cooking Required</th>
<th>Uncooked Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Oysters and lemon</td>
<td>No cooking was required.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Julienne soup</td>
<td>Slow cooking on the edge of a hot plate the day before to make stock and then reheating on a hot plate to clear the next day. Then again before serving. Cre-Fydd recommends cooking the Julienne[ne] vegetables separately.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Soles with mussel sauce</td>
<td>Two or three processes on the hot plate at medium heat.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Aspic of prawns</td>
<td>In Mrs Sambourne’s notebook a recipe for Aspic Jelly is made with either a pint of stock or water with the addition of an optional 1/4 pint of sherry, some herbs and spices and an ounce of ‘Nelson’s Gelatine’, the whole then cleared with two large egg whites and shells. The prawns would have been boiled when caught. A saucepan on the hot plate was only required once for the simplest version of this aspic. If stock was used it may well have been the same base as was used for the consommé. Cre-Fydd’s book has a more complex aspic that, like the consommé, requires its first cooking the day before the dinner.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pigeons with coxcombs</td>
<td>Probably slowly cooked in a saucepan placed on the side of the hot plate. They would have been cooked before the stove was made hot for roasting, and could have been kept hot in a bain marie.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Saddle of mutton</td>
<td>Roasted in front of the open fire suspended from a bottle jack.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. New potatoes and salad</td>
<td>Boiled in a saucepan on the hot plate.</td>
<td>No cooking required for the salad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Coffee Savoy with Devonshire cream</td>
<td>Cre-Fydd’s Savoy pudding was baked for half an hour in a quick oven and then finished off for five minutes with a beaten egg white topping in the same hot oven. This would have been in accord with the hot stove required for roasting the saddle of mutton.</td>
<td>No cooking required for the cream.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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42 Cre-Fydd, *The Young Housewife’s Daily Assistant*, Simpkin Marshall and Co., London, 1866, p. 3. This is an earlier edition than the copy reputed to have belonged to Mrs Sambourne (1874) and kept at the house by the Victorian Society. That copy is inscribed “Mrs Spencer Herepath, 5th Dec. 1874”. Mrs Herepath was Marion Sambourne’s mother.
9. Fruit salad No cooking.
10. Anchovies No cooking.
11. Onions No cooking.
12. Stuffed olives No cooking.

In spite of what appears to be a complex menu that would require much work at the kitchener, it can, when deconstructed, be understood as requiring relatively few processes on the range. These dinners were produced by planning a menu with limited elaboration specifically to take account of the constraints imposed by kitcheners. The greatest constraint was daily cleaning and re-fuelling. In addition, extra weekly brushing out of the flues was required, as well as the daily problem of re-lighting them every morning. As this was of little direct concern to employers, there was little impetus to change to gas unless ignition failed, and there was therefore no breakfast and no hot water. Though gas was more expensive than coal pro rata, using gas was less wasteful since there was no need to keep it continuously burning.

STEAM

Steam had been installed in 1818\(^43\) for the Prince Regent by John Nash\(^44\) in Brighton Pavilion’s innovative kitchen. For the most consistent results, cooks ideally need not only good raw materials but also supplies of well regulated heat, cold, light and water. These ideals as set out in this kitchen did not appear to be manifest in the many new upper middle-class houses built during the rest of the century. The Pavilion’s kitchens were designed to provide the best that the latest technology allowed. Unusually they were remarkable enough to be shown to guests who could admire their many innovations. How innovation progressed and influenced upper middle range kitchens in the circles of London dinner givers is problematic. From what evidence there is, it


\(^{44}\) John Nash (1752–1835) for the Prince Regent at Brighton Pavilion, op. cit. The title page runs as follows:

The Royal Pavilion at Brighton published by command of and dedicated to the King by his Majesty’s [George IV’s] dutiful servant, John Nash. Ackerman (London) 1826.
seems that in the country at the centre of the Industrial Revolution, for the most part innovation was largely excluded from the domestic kitchen. In assessing the adoption of innovation in the domestic kitchen, Webster quotes Count Rumford:

Cooks in general are averse to all new inventions; and this is not surprising, and aught by no means to be imputed to them as a fault. Accustomed to work with their own tools, they naturally feel awkward and embarrassed when others are put in their hands: and to this we may add, that there is always a degree of humiliation felt by those who, after having been considered themselves, and considered by others, as masters of their profession, are required to learn anything new, or to do any thing in any other manner than that in which they have been accustomed to do it, and in the performance of it they have acquired praise.45

He adds, however, that those “with a good understanding can be persuaded”.

At Brighton the new steam heating included a hot table on which prepared dishes could be finished and set out before being taken to the dining room. James Jennings in Two Thousand Five Hundred Practical Recipes in Family Cookery (1825), comments on the contemporary state of steam in the kitchen: “Steam that most powerful of all the agents of Nature, now largely contributes to the operations of cookery, but unfortunately it is not yet so generally employed as it might advantageously be.”46 In fact he notes that it is seldom used except in large kitchens and he gives Greenwich Hospital as an example. Webster, like Eliza Acton who was also an enthusiast for steam, describes cooking by steam as “one of the greatest advances which have been made in the culinary art”.47

Eliza Acton in 1856 saw the advantages of steam cookery for use in smaller domestic kitchens. She describes the basic process of steaming:

46 James Jennings, Two Thousand Five Hundred Practical Recipes in Family Cookery, Sherwood, Gilbert and Piper, London, 1825, p. I.XIII.
The application of steam to culinary purposes is becoming very general in our kitchens at the present day, especially of large establishments, many of which are furnished with apparatus for its use, so admirably constructed and so complete that the process may be conducted on an extensive scale with very slight trouble to the cook.48

She describes further advantages of steaming compared to boiling, suggests that steaming is tried out on a small scale, and illustrates this with what, for many, must have been an unfamiliar utensil, a stove-top steamer. She observes that the result is to many perfectly satisfactory, but also notes that "There is a difference of opinion among first rate cooks." Beeton shows two stoves with incorporated steam pipes, but her text includes more history than relevant to current cookery techniques.49 Walsh shows stoves installed adjacent to the kitchener which were both steamers and a source of hot water.50

CHARCOAL

Charcoal was the emblematic French culinary fuel but slow burning charcoal produces toxic amounts of both carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide.51 Carême imbued his vocation with an implied martyrdom: 'It is the burning charcoal that kills us.'52 Fumes were extra dangerous when ventilation was shut down to keep the kitchen draught-free during 'dishing up'. At Brighton, Nash had installed hoods which gave ventilation above the charcoal stoves, and in eighteenth-century kitchens they had often been installed near a window. When French cooks worked in England they usually had charcoal stoves installed in their kitchens as shown in the satirical print53 of the Duke of

48 Eliza Acton, op. cit, p. 172. Also see illustration.
49 Isabella Beeton, 1861, op. cit, p. 27.
51 Carbon monoxide settles near the ground but carbon dioxide displaces oxygen contributing to the danger for those standing at a charcoal stove.
52 Antonin Carême, L'Art de la cuisine Française, published by the author, Paris, 1833, pp. XX-XXI.
Newcastle and M. de St. Clouet, the archetypical French cook, in his kitchen. Even Soyer at his most innovative still included charcoal stoves in his kitchen at the Reform Club, although he also had a more easily regulated and less poisonous gas stove.

There were many English cookery books that included French recipes but these did not usually specify on what type of stove they were best cooked. One of the authors who wished to introduce French bourgeois methods was ‘An English Physician’ whose *French Domestic Cookery with Economy and Elegance adapted to the use of Families of Moderate Fortune* (1825) recommends a portable stove. It was made “under the author’s superintendence, by Mr Benham of Edward Street, Cavendish Square”, who also sold them. These stoves were fuelled by “a few pennyworths of charcoal or coke” and were for a household without a stewing stove or for when the kitchen fire was not wanted for roasting.\(^5^4\) He saw no reason to light the kitchen fire, but this suggests either a scant knowledge of day-to-day work in an English kitchen or that he chose to ignore this.

David Bogue, in 1846, published the most popular nineteenth-century French bourgeois cookery book, *La Cuisinier de la Campagne et de la Ville; ou Nouvelle Cuisine Economique*,\(^5^5\) anonymously translated as, *French Domestic Cookery, Combining Elegance with Economy*.\(^5^6\) From its current French edition, he included descriptions and diagrams of Harel’s economical charcoal-burning stove and his roasting and pastry oven. This stove was completely different to English stoves which were made of cast iron. Harel’s stove was instead constructed of wood and plaster with a terracotta oven. The translator suggests importing this and other French equipment. It is the only reference to installing Harel’s stove I have found. It was made for the French bourgeois repertoire where *pot au feu*, as discussed in chapters II and III on

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\(^5^4\) An English Physician, *French Domestic Cookery with Economy and Elegance adapted to the use of Families of Moderate Fortune*, Thomas Boys, London, 1825, p. VI.

\(^5^5\) *La Cuisinier de la Campagne et de la Ville; ou Nouvelle Cuisine Economique*, Audot, Paris, 1846.

\(^5^6\) *French Domestic Cookery, Combining Elegance with Economy*, David Bogue, London, 1846.
cuisine, and not roast mutton or beef, was the core dish. This stove was fuelled by an economical use of charcoal, the traditional French fuel, and was made of traditional French materials. It was designed to cook in the French bourgeois manner, with an emphasis on slow cookery, whereas the English cast iron closed ranges, although not always as easily regulated as charcoal, were essentially designed for a basic repertoire of roasting, grilling, boiling and baking.

**GAS**

A new source of power, coal gas was used as street lighting in London from as early as 1807 and demonstrated as a heat source for cookery from 1804. Then Frederick Winsor had demonstrated cooking by gas at his displays showing its versatility at the Lyceum Theatre. Yet in spite of Winsor’s missionary zeal there was no general enthusiasm for gas for domestic cookery. Nonetheless, gas could be considered to be a greater innovation than the kitchener. The heat was more easily regulated, and it precluded any need to learn fire lighting and regulating skills. But not until the last decade of the century was it used in London on any great scale.

John Conrad Cooke’s book, *Cookery and Confectionery* (1824) has an illustration entitled ‘Gas Kitchen’, but unfortunately without any accompanying comment. It comprises a brick platform, much like a charcoal stove, but without openings on top. On this platform are branched pipes with trivets to support the saucepans which are also shown in the drawing. John Timbs (1801-1875) refers back to Cooke on gas in *Hints for the Table* (1859), while James Jennings, in his *Two Thousand Five Hundred Practical Recipes in Family Cookery* (1837), described:

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57 Terracotta as a material suitable for burning is ancient. Material evidence can be found in Roman oil lamps which were often terra-cotta and charcoal burners as illustrated in sixteenth-century Dutch genre pictures.


60 John Timbs, *Hints for the Table*, Kent & Co. (Late Bogue), London, 1859, p. 17.
A very singular and important one [innovation] has been suggested in the form of an apparatus for cooking by gas-flame. This is esteemed admirably applicable to cooking wild fowl and exquisite morceaux of gourmanderie, but it is not constructed for the purposes of cooking generally.  

Webster has an illustration of a gas roasting cylinder which would fit this description, that Ravetz dates from about 1825. Jennings quotes Mr Loudon speaking about a time “not far distant when cooking by gas will become common in all towns where gas lighting is employed”. He also quotes an American, John Barlow, who says that in America they roast, boil and bake by gas, where it is known for a household to leave the Sunday joint to roast, go to church and later return for dinner. Jennings recommends an article by Rickett in *The New Monthly Magazine* on cooking and heating by gas. In this article, the early less practical attempts of Winsor, Mr Hicks and Mr Mallet in Dublin are noted, but Mr Rickett’s designs for both a heating stove and cooking stove are regarded as demonstrably practical. Rickett’s cooking stove has different compartments for boiling, baking, stewing and roasting.

The *Illustrated London News* commenting on the 1851 Exhibition notes, “For culinary purposes, the use of gas is daily increasing, and Mr Defries has carried off the Palm for stoves destined for its use.” The writer is not convinced about how economical it is for roasting, but concludes that: “We feel bound to state that some of our first practical men

63 John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843), reforming horticulturalist, agriculturalist, landscape gardener, writer and publisher. He was author of many works on these subjects and also *The Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture*, 1882.
64 James Jennings, 1837, op. cit, p. LX.V.
65 James Jennings, 1837, op. cit, p. L.XVI.
66 *New Monthly Magazine and Literary Magazine*, Part the Second, 1835, Henry Colburn, London (June 1835). p. 257. This article is anonymous, but Jennings attributes it to Rickett, thus making it more self-promotion than validated opinion.
[sic] have the highest opinion of gas ranges.”67 John Walsh, in 1857, also recommends Defries gas stoves as he does in the next edition (1874).68

In March 1853, J. O. N. Rutter gave a paper to the Society of Arts ‘On warming ventilating and cooking by gas’, but hardly mentioned gas cookery. A following comment by a Mr Meade notes: “A great prejudice would have to be overcome, on the grounds of smell.”69

Thomas Webster’s Encyclopedia of Domestic Economy of 1844 set out technical innovations as well as traditional technologies in heat, light and all else that applied to households, but as for gas cookery, he described it as:

> Among the novelties in the culinary art is the use of coal gas for producing the necessary heat. Some persons have been so sanguine as to suppose that this employment of gas may soon do away altogether with the necessity of open fires in our kitchens, – a hasty opinion evidently founded upon a very superficial and imperfect acquaintance with the business of an ordinary kitchen.70

Early problems that gas presented were that it was more expensive in direct comparison to coal, and was not entirely safe. The combustibility of leaks or taps left open un-ignited, had to be understood by those who used it. A further limitation to the adoption of gas stoves was the lack of a good design that catered to the cook’s needs. Mrs Beeton commented that “Gas-cooking can scarcely now be considered a novelty… [Then, adding a discouraging note.] There are, we think many objections to this mode of cooking, more especially when applied to small domestic establishments.”71 Soyer,

67 The Illustrated London News Supplement, 24th May 1851. Gas was not included in the display at Crystal Palace, but exhibited at the Polytechnic Institution, as noted in A History of Technology, edited by Charles Singer et al, Vol. IV, The Industrial Revolution, c. 1750 to c. 1850, Oxford, 1958, p.388.


69 Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, 18th March 1863, Mr Meade’s Comment, p. 196.


who was ready to reappraise and re-design almost every part of the kitchen, also installed and marketed his own design for an improved gas stove. Instead of the gas flame having to be switched from one part of the stove to another as on other models, Soyer’s stove directed easily regulated flame to all the burners. How far Soyer was truly the designer in detail and whether it would be more accurate to describe him as one who selected and promoted the work of others is not always easy to ascertain. Sala’s memorial note implies less invention and more promotion of his products. But whether in this context he actually invented the stove is a side issue. Soyer’s contribution was to apply appropriate innovation to cookery. A. A. Croll, in his paper on ‘The Domestic Uses of Gas’ in the 1847/48 bound papers of the Royal Society of Arts, praised both gas, as “unrivalled” for constant adjustable heat, and Soyer: “It is well known that it is with gas that the great achievements of M. Soyer are accomplished at the Reform Club.”

Mattieu William’s lectures in 1882 had been accompanied by ‘An exhibition of gas and other stoves and various apparatus and appliances used for cooking purposes’, while William Sugg, a gas engineer and manufacturer, remarked in The Domestic Uses of Coal Gas, as late as 1884, that, “[As he had] been for many year accustomed to eat food cooked entirely by gas, it is a matter of some surprise that it has not been much more extensively adopted by the general public.”

Hermann Muthesius, at the end of the century, noted that although “an English Kitchen without a gas stove is unthinkable nowadays, even though it is a makeshift or

72 George Augustus Sala on Alexis Soyer: “That there may have been a slight spice of the poseur in his composition it would be idle to deny; but his foible in this direction was a perfectly harmless one, and it was more than compensated by the real talent of the man, by his great capacity for organisation, and by manliness, simplicity, and uprightness of his character.”


73 A. A. Croll, Royal Society of Arts, Bound Papers, 1847-8, pp. 656-7.

74 W. Mattieu William’s lectures were accompanied by ‘An exhibition of gas and other stoves and various apparatus and appliances used for cooking purposes’, Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, 30th Nov. 1883, Vol. 32, p. 20. William Mattieu William (1826-92).

temporary expedient, since, while fully recognising the advantages of the newcomer, the public is unwilling to break finally with ancient custom." Walsh shows, in his 1879 edition of *A Manual of Domestic Economy*, a design by Defries for a gas stove with a coal grate attached. It was intended for winter use.

‘Ancient custom’ still, however, centred around roasting. Muthesius also notes that the ovens in German gas stoves are not constructed like their English counterparts. In English ovens the joint was suspended from a hook in the oven roof with gas flames set in a circle round the floor to roast the meat simultaneously on all sides to simulate traditional style bottle jack roasting. A problem for cooks who changed from cooking in front of an open fire was that they could no longer watch the meat as it cooked.

Sugg, quoting a famous French maxim that cooks are trained and roasters are born, manufactured and sold an open gas roaster with luminous gas jets which was as close in appearance to an open fire as was possible. At the same time he also sold a closed, cylindrical, but well ventilated roaster, not dissimilar to Rumford’s design, in which meat turned on a horizontal spit over luminous gas jets. In a later model, illustrated by his wife, Marie Jenny Sugg, in her *The Art of Cooking by Gas* (1890), glass windows have been incorporated into the design to overcome problems of visibility. The open roaster seems to have been dropped from Sugg’s range of gas cooking devices by 1890, as it is not illustrated in his wife’s book. Nor does Hannah M. Young’s 1888 *Domestic Cookery With Special Reference to Cooking by Gas* mention

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78 Hermann Muthesius, op. cit, p. 98.


any equipment other than a gas stove.\footnote{81} She also had family connections with manufacturing, being the daughter of Cornelius Young, a manufacturer of gas stoves in Warrington, Lancashire.

All Sugg's stoves were powered by luminous flame which, as he notes, was a feature of the stoves of the pioneers of gas cookery, James Sharp, William King and Ebenezer Goddard.\footnote{82} This flame was the same as that in gas lights in which gas was burnt without the addition of air with the added disadvantage of producing a carbon depositing flame. Robert Bunsen (1811-1899), in about 1840,\footnote{83} had invented his burner which mixed gas with air to produce a hotter flame and more economical combustion. Rutter, in 1853, still believed that hotter flame was obtained from "bright full combustion and not with the blue flame."\footnote{84} Sugg also claimed that after "twenty six years of earnest work"\footnote{85} devoted to the domestic uses of gas, he still preferred this type of flame. Sugg, who was possibly aware that it was already becoming in its turn, obsolescent, notes that he is: "distinctly partisan [and] thinks it only fair to say that the advocates of the mixed air and gas, or atmospheric burner system, are numerous, are well supported in their views, and have achieved good results with their [gas] kitcheners."\footnote{86} Mrs Sugg notes that the National School had installed stoves with white luminous flame.\footnote{87}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[81] Hannah M. Young (1858-1949), Domestic Cookery With Special Reference to Cooking by Gas, H. M. Young, Manchester, 1888. She was the daughter of Cornelius Young, a manufacturer of gas stoves in Warrington, Lancashire. Valerie Mars, 'Much Pleasure and Profit, Hannah M. Young (1858-1949), Culinary Entrepreneur', Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery, 1996, Proceedings, Cooks and Other People, Prospect Books, Blackawton, Totnes, Devon, pp. 199-204.
\item[82] William T. Sugg, 1884, op. cit, p. 112.
\item[85] William T. Sugg, 1884, op. cit, p. V.
\item[86] William T. Sugg, 1884, op. cit, p. 130.
\item[87] Marie Jenny Sugg, 1890, op. cit, p. 6.
\end{footnotes}
A factor that helped to popularise gas stoves in London at the end of the century is often ascribed to their availability for hire as well as purchase. Stirling Everard, in his *History of the Gas Light and Coke Company*, states that 36,600 of all designs were supplied on hire in 1896, suggesting that this arrangement included all classes. For those who lived in rented property it must have been especially convenient.

**ADOPTING A NEW TYPE OF STOVE: ONE FURTHER OBSTACLE**

Hard domestic labour at the coal kitchener contrasted with genteel gas cookery. When a gas stove was installed in the servants' kitchen, it made less work and therefore created a dilemma. For while refinement was expressed upstairs by an overt rejection of strenuous physical work it was in visible contrast to the work transferred to those of lower status below stairs. Coal-fired ranges involved not only the daily chores of lighting and cleaning but also required polishing with 'black lead' – graphite. Jenny Sugg advises against 'black leading' gas cookers as it was easy to accidentally block the holes in the burners. In The National Training School for Cookery’s book, with its high grid numbered instructions, black leading for gas is retained, but while noting: “We must be careful not to stop up the gas holes with black lead.” In the revised edition of 1899, ten years after Jenny Sugg’s book, instructions for cleaning both open and closed ranges was followed by similarly intensive instructions for gas stoves. There are fifteen instructions for an open range, seven for a closed one, and eight for gas. This equated gas stoves with coal stoves as a source of control, an overt creation of servants’ hard work. It should be noted that there are no references in either Sugg or...

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89 The National Training School opened in 1874, after meetings and fund raising initiated by a committee of the Society of Arts, chaired by The Hon E. F. Leverson-Gower, but the impetus came from Sir Henry Cole.

the National's instructions of the need for more cleaning for luminous flame gas stoves which they used. Gas and air flame stoves were easier to keep clean.

Control over kitchen resources was then, another way power could be demonstrated by employers. This not only applied to such constraints as servants' diet, but also to kitchen equipment and quantity of fuel supplied. Coal was also supplied in various qualities, low quality coal being harder to ignite and use, whereas gas could be controlled by a tap located in a locked box.91 Mrs C. S. Peel (1898) recommended installing a gas or oil stove in addition to an 'Eagle' range with a proviso for which typically, she gives no justification: “The only rule which must then be observed is that the cook shall not use the gas stove and the range at the same time.”92 Both these economies can be seen as demonstrations of control rather than being related to function.

**OIL STOVES**

These were recommended as “the best substitute”93 where there was no gas supply, but did not apply to areas of London relevant to this work.

**ELECTRICITY**

Although cooking with electricity was performed during the last decade of the century it could not be compared to gas since an efficient and economical electric cooker had not yet been devised.94 Electric cooking equipment appears to have been more usually marketed as single devices for use ‘above stairs’. Hampton and Sons of Pall Mall have a page in their 1894 catalogue titled ‘Latest Electric light Novelties’, which included a

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‘Fan for cooling Dining and Ball Rooms’ and ‘The Electric Rapid Cooking Apparatus’, a neo-Georgian styled double saucepan on a decorative tripod.95

An electric saucepan, kettle and griller illustrate R. E. Crompton’s paper read to the Society of Arts in 1895. There is also a single hot plate, but he sees problems of contact between the uneven bases of cooking utensils and the plate which led him to the conclusion that building the heat source into a utensil was a better solution. Crompton also describes the benefit of electric ovens. The advantage is a consistently uniform result: “When these skilled cooks use electrical apparatus for the first time they almost invariably say — a child could learn the ways of this oven in a few hours and produce as good results with it, with absolute certainty, as I could with an ordinary oven after I had known it and learnt its ways for years.”96 Crompton was a pioneering electrical engineer,97 and in promoting his equipment decries the waste of heat with coal kitcheners and then claims that electric ovens are even more economical than gas ovens as they need no ventilation. Victorian books that were directed at dinner-givers do not mention cooking by electricity; only Mrs de Salis gives an idea of the possible use of electrical kitchen equipment with the inclusion of an electric whisk in a list of assorted kitchen gadgets.98

SOYER’S KITCHEN DESIGN: ADMIRE AND IGNORED

Although ranges and stoves are at the core of culinary style, cold storage, water supply and the organisation of space, also contribute to a kitchen’s range and capacity. Soyer’s kitchen designs are given as an example of an ideal. Soyer’s designs are a prime

95 Stephen Calloway, The Victorian Catalogue of Household Furnishings, a title that adds an introduction to unnumbered pages from Designs for Furniture and Decorations for Complete House Furnishing by Hampton and Sons of Pall Mall and Cockspur Street, 1894 catalogue, this edition Studio Editions Ltd., London, 1894.
97 Rookes Evylen Bell Crompton (1845-1940) had manufactured dynamos and installed electric light in the Royal Courts of Justice in 1881. He also encouraged the installation of domestic electric lighting in London, and was made President of the Institute of Electrical Engineers in 1895.
example of Victorian individualist innovation harnessing a hierarchy of personnel allied to ranked processes of production. To be adopted, technical changes have to cohere with the social situation in which they are set.99 His kitchen innovations did not cohere with the social organisation of middle-class kitchens. This can be seen when comparing his plan for a domestic kitchen with advice in contemporary household books for middle- and upper middle-class dinner-givers.

Soyer’s ideas often ran ahead of his ability to execute them. As an example, he wrote a description of his ‘kitchen at home’. A lady once went to see Soyer’s ‘kitchen at home’ at his lodgings, but unfortunately this kitchen only existed on paper!100 In the memoirs of Soyer’s secretaries, F. Volant and J. R. Warren recount how Soyer, in a quick-thinking instant, said his ‘kitchen at home’ was in the country and of course it would not be suitable for an attractive young woman to visit a widower who lived alone!101 The fact that Soyer’s ‘kitchen at home’ was a fiction is not irrelevant. He equipped his domestic kitchen in The Modern Housewife with a coal range to his own design. This range stood in the centre of the kitchen, which was an unusual situation in England but commonplace in France and Germany. This design does not seem to have been copied. It was, like Rumford’s design, too alien to English custom and kitchen organisation to be acceptable.

Large commercial kitchens like Soyer’s at the Reform Club served institutions related to the new industrial organisation. In many ways they could be equated with goals similar to those of industrial production: efficiently produced cuisine made for prestige, an example being the flamboyant Egyptian banquet he produced for Reform Club.

99 George M. Foster, Traditional Cultures and the Impact of Technological Change, first published 1961. This edition Harper Row, New York and London, 1965. Ch. 5 & 6 discuss ‘Cultural and Social Barriers to Change’. Foster defines the place of the values and attitudes held in diverse cultures and how these factors contribute to the acceptance or rejection of imported innovation.


members. A commercial kitchen’s scale does not, however, easily reduce to the
domestic. Some innovations, however, did eventually transfer to domestic kitchens,
such as gas kitcheners, but not to any extent until the end of the century.

French cuisine as catered to by Soyer’s designs was not then easily replicated in
middle-class domestic kitchens. As women of this class were expected to disassociate
themselves from their kitchens, they were not inclined to introduce innovation since
there could be no visible prestige in installing Soyer’s designs. Household books do
not suggest visits to friends’ kitchens to admire new equipment. On the contrary, these
women were hardly expected to visit their own kitchens.

Soyer’s Reform Club design was planned for the efficient use of time as integral to the
hierarchic process of producing meals on a large scale, whereas household works
suggested putting a clock on the wall and thereby impressing the cook and kitchen maid
with the need for punctuality. This was yet another demonstration of control, the
upgridding of lone workers who were outside the hierarchic organisation of larger
kitchens. (Perceptions of time will be further considered in relation to space in the final
chapter.)

In higher status kitchens ‘professed’ woman cooks and male cooks would, as the head
of a hierarchy of kitchen servants, have been in position to demand kitchen equipment
to produce the recherche cuisine that their expensive employment justified. Among
upper middle dinner-givers such as the Sambournes, the expectations of their circle of
reciprocal diners would not justify this extra expenditure. As demonstrated earlier and
below, their dinners were relatively simple in the techniques employed in comparison

103 Domestic Bliss (The Dinner Party): Boy: “Oh! If you please M. Cook’s very sorry, M._ but could
she speak to you for a moment?” This caption is below a cartoon of a dismayed hostess, in a
drawing room full of guests, being summoned by a page. Punch, Vol. 13, July- December 1847,
p. 34. See illustration.
with elaborate haute cuisine as defined by Gouffé, Francatelli or Dubois – the three chefs named as the epitome of haute cuisines by ‘Fin-Bec’.  

In his introduction to the published designs for the kitchen at the Reform Club, Soyer says they were admired by those who were taken on guided tours which he often conducted himself. These kitchens were as innovative as those at the Brighton Pavilion. From these designs he claims to have been given many commissions to design private kitchens. But he gives no names. It is not known if he planned any grand private kitchens. His influence at the middle-class level certainly seems to have been nil.

Soyer’s specially designed fire for roasting had a large surface area to cook meat and a shallow depth for fuel, so no heat was wasted. The kitchen also included all other currently available heat sources: steam heat, bain maries, kitcheners, charcoal stoves and a gas stove. Food was kept fresh in special larders and ice boxes. A meat safe with fine wire mesh walls was fitted with counter-weighted doors which shut as soon as meat had been removed, so the time that contents were unprotected was minimised. Fish for the day’s menu were set out on a marble slab constantly cooled with cold water from a cistern above. Vegetables were stored in a series of slate boxes with wooden fronts designed both for freshness and easy visibility.

Soyer’s kitchen was well supplied with both hot and cold water. Space was allocated to every process. The ‘boucherie’, for instance, was not excessively large as he observed that: “One cannot help noticing that in spite of the moderate size of this room everything is contrived with the utmost convenience, perfect ventilation, and with due economy.”

Ice-filled drawers on castors were made to hold the most perishable dishes. Large quantities of American ice from Lake Wenham had been imported into London from

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1845. It had previously to be bought from the country where it was harvested in winter, from flooded fields and then kept in subterranean ice houses until required. When it came to serving meals, Soyer had a hot counter from which dishes were collected by the waiters.

Soyer’s ‘kitchen at home’ had many of the innovations of his Reform kitchen as can be seen by comparing the two keyed designs illustrated.

**KEEPING DINNER COOKERY BELOW STAIRS: SOYER’S MAGIC STOVE**

This efficient spirit stove was demonstrated by Soyer at the Parthenon in Athens\(^\text{106}\) and at a display on a dining room table in London,\(^\text{107}\) but not at dinner anywhere. After the introduction of dining demi-Russe, serving food from the table was limited to carving by the host but no longer by other diners, as had been common at à la Française dinners.\(^\text{108}\) Not only did cooking at the table have no place, cooking anywhere other than in the kitchen was contrary to the careful structure of the new way of dining. Cooking that did not take place in a kitchen could be associated with those confined to one room through poverty who were obliged to use the fireplace as they were presumed to lack access to a kitchen.\(^\text{109}\) Small amounts of simple cookery could be done with a trivet in any room with a fireplace. These small adjustable metal platforms were either attached to the front bars of a fire or were free-standing in the fireplace. Invalids, another group prevented from joining the diners, could have their special invalid food kept warm or similarly cooked in front of a bedroom fire.


\(^{107}\) L. Volant and J. R. Warren, op. cit, p. 62.

\(^{108}\) See chapter VI.

\(^{109}\) John Barrell, *The Dark Side of Landscape*, op. cit, pp. 96-7. Barrell selects George Moreland’s self portrait in his bleak attic studio with his man Gibbs frying sausages over the fire (c. 1802-3). It is a picture that emphasises his militant low-life identification.
At dinner parties there was no prestige attached to dining room cooking. 'A place for everything and everything in its place' as a statement of classification applied not only to objects, but to people and activities. Just as cookery was excluded from the dining room, so similarly were children also excluded (see chapter III). At this formal occasion, cooking was confined to its appropriate place, the kitchen, and delegated to the appropriate staff, cooks and kitchen maids. Women who continued to be overtly involved in cooking their own formal dinners were the exception rather than the rule. There were writers who urged women to take more interest in cookery but the greater success of Mrs Beeton's book and its imitators over Mrs Acton's approach, underlines the existing tendency. Dining with its formalised and bounded rules of service was sacrosanct. Well defined divisions of labour and confirmation of roles underpinned the whole process of dinner production and consumption.

Nor did cooking at the dinner table easily fit within the strictures of time that were integral to the structure of dining à la Russe. Service à la Russe bought a uniformity to dining that gave it an egalitarian structure during a time of rising competition (see chapter V). Table cookery would have transformed dinner into a comparatively unstructured event. And diners who cook their own food inevitably work to their own timing. Unstructured time is typically low grid, and would have been out of place in a structure that reflected the overarching rhetoric of hierarchy.

An example of essentially low grid, unstructured and individualistic cooking for oneself became popular at steak fondu dinner parties during the 1960s boom when there was a particularly strong move down grid. Diners cooked their own morsel of steak to taste in a pot of hot oil, after which they then further personalized their meat by choosing their own garnishes from a range of mustards and pickles. Contemporary with this domestic style was one of commercially demonstrated service. Restaurants used a spirit stove, similar to Soyer's 'Magic Stove' beside the diner's table where waiters cooked personalised flambé dishes for each diner, thus emphasising individual power and taste. But unlike domestic individualism, here there was an emphasis on service. As nothing
approaching this style of individualism was seen at Victorian dinners, it can be noted
that moves towards such overt individualism were inhibited by the strong prevailing
bias towards hierarchy.

COOKING THEIR OWN DINNERS: A GENTEEEL
FEMINISATION OF THE KITCHEN

Mrs Acton's kitchen was designed for women who cooked and supervised their
servants in the kitchen. All her advice concerns the strictly functional. It was Mrs
Acton's Modern Cookery,\textsuperscript{110} one of four works recommended by the anonymous
author, G. V., of Dinners and Dinner-Parties, who advised eating dinners that were
cooked by "the lady of the mansion". She expands this by saying, "You need not be
under the apprehension of poison," and in a margin note, "The lady that looks after the
cuisine - a superior being."\textsuperscript{111} Another book G. V. recommends was Kitchiner's
Cook's Oracle.\textsuperscript{112} Like Kitchiner she expresses strong individualistic opinions. She
also recommended two books written by professional cooks: Francatelli's Modern
Cook\textsuperscript{113} and Viart's Le Cuisinier Royal.\textsuperscript{114} These works are about the practical
application of technique. Although they could be considered the antithesis of Beeton's
genteel aspiration,\textsuperscript{115} the author still follows the fashionable trend of designating the
kitchen as a stigmatised area.

110 Eliza Acton, Modern Cookery, first published 1845.
111 G. V., Dinners and Dinner-Parties, or the absurdities of Artificial Life, Chapman and Hall,
London, enlarged second edition, 1862, with additional subtitle, p. 47.
112 William Kitchiner, Apicius Rededivus or Cook's Oracle, first published 1817.
113 C. E. Francatelli, The Modern Cook, first published 1845.
114 A. Viard's work was first published in 1806 in Paris as Le Cuisinier Imperial. Later there were
changes of title to accord with the current political climate. Collaborators also changed, as did the
author's name, from Viard to Viart in 1852 3 when the title was La Cuisinier National de la Ville
et de la Campane (ex la Cuisinier Royal). See Katherine Golden Bitting, Gastronomic
Bibliography, San Francisco, 1939, p. 478 and Georges Vicaire, Bibliographie Gastronomique,
Chez P. Rouquette et Fils, Editeurs, Paris, 1890.
115 Isabella Beeton, Beeton's Household Management, as weekly instalments from 1859 to 1861, as a
supplement to The English Women's Domestic Magazine. Her book was published as a complete
volume in 1861. Both magazine and the complete volume were published by her husband, S. O.
Beeton, London.
Kitchens were typically situated either far away from the dining room down winding corridors, or in the basement, and were solely the domain of servants. Mrs Humphry, in 1884, states that servants should have their own tableware, “quite apart from those used by the family” so as to avoid breakages. But as the servants also handle upstairs china, this does not seem entirely convincing.

G.V.’s *Dinners and Dinner-Parties* instructs employers to impress on kitchen servants the importance of cleanliness. They are to be given nail brushes. “The smallest particle of dirt changes the character of a dish, and the very touch of an unhealthy person will taint any joint of meat.” This author solves her kitchen dilemma by not using this stigmatised area at all, but designs a small refined and innovative ‘Model Kitchen’ (see illustration) which is situated next to the dining room. (A discussion of domestic space is in the final chapter.)

Gas was the chosen fuel for this kitchen; it was ideal for genteel cookery, particularly when compared to the amount of coal soot and waste attributed to coal-fired ranges. “All is delicately clean, the stew-pans bright and the porcelain saucepans as clean as tea cups.” Not only was the fuel clean but the equipment, which looked delicate, was easy to keep clean.

Mary Douglas, when discussing pollution in *Purity and Danger*, gives B. Harper’s example of Havik Brahmin rules on pollution. These high-grid rules concern degrees of purity. When a person of the highest state of purity has contact with someone of the middle state of purity, the higher when polluted can only rid themselves of this pollution by bathing. In Havik society, degrees of purity are ascribed through caste.

118 G.V., *Dinners and Dinner Parties*, 1862, op. cit, p. 53.
119 G.V., *Dinners and Dinner Parties*, 1862, op. cit, p. 50. A footnote adds: Dresden porcelain saucepans were imported by agents Messrs Powell of the Whitefriars Glass Works, p. 51.
Food that has in any way been changed from its natural state, even by as small an intervention as cutting, is defiled and cannot be accepted by a higher-caste member. The Havik also have a taboo concerning saliva, not only the fear of pollution from other's saliva but by their own. Saliva is to be kept within the internal boundary of the body, so drinks are poured into the mouth without contact with the cup. 121

This example from high-grid Indian society is selected by Mary Douglas "to argue that our ideas of dirt also express symbolic systems, and that the difference between pollution behaviour in one part of the world and another is only a matter of detail." 122

In the context of this work, when considering the un-codified rules of a high-grid constituency, Victorian upper middle-class households, their taboos and ascription of roles, in relation to household tasks, compare closely with Havik. The Havik, it can be argued, are closer to this high-grid constituency than many of those ethnically or chronologically nearer.

Earlier in *Dinners and Dinner Parties*, the author gives an account of extreme contamination in the kitchen: a servant who vomits into a cooking pot. 123 Other authors do not even approach such tabooed possibilities, although fear of contamination through dirt is tackled within a great body of cleaning instructions. This anonymous lady regards her low-status kitchen staff and those of other households as agents of pollution. Servants have not the refinement to exclude dirt from food and cooking utensils, or even to remove it from themselves, as in the case of dirty fingernails or, as in the example, of incontinence with bodily fluids. Those above stairs are portrayed by G.V., that is if they are of the correct social status, without any of these polluting habits. But, as might be expected with an author who draws such strong boundaries, she also defines who is of the correct social status with whom it is appropriate to dine.

121 Mary Douglas, op. cit, p. 33; B. Harper, op. cit, p. 156.
122 Mary Douglas, op. cit, p. 35.
As with the high-caste Havik, G.V.'s dinner-party food is ideally prepared by one of the same 'caste'. She has her special kitchen, and advises: "Never accept an invitation where you have a suspicion that the dinner is to be cooked by the woman that cleans the street-door steps."¹²⁴

Doorways are a universal marker of the boundary between the contaminating outside and the sacrosanct interior.¹²⁵ Boots and shoes bring the outside inside, as mud and dust through the doorway. Contact with dirt, particularly that from feet, is an example of pollution from outside. 'Boots' in the large Victorian household cleaned the footwear.¹²⁶ It was the low status task of a young page, whereas valets and ladies' maids who cared for the rest of the clothes were high-status workers. Ideas of boundary will be expanded in the final chapter.

The author of Dinners and Dinner Parties not only advises that food should be cooked by one of the same status as the guests but her cooking equipment is especially hygienic for this above-stairs kitchen. All this is in keeping with her notions of contamination, on which she writes: "Never admit a suspect person into your kitchen. There is an electricity in the human body which communicates with all bodies."¹²⁷ This is not unlike indirect contamination among the Havik. A Havik who touches a rope or bamboo at the same time it is touched by an untouchable while they are both working in the garden, can be contaminated by such contact. Similarly the Havik can be contaminated by walking on the same straw ground covering as an untouchable.¹²⁸

Pollution through the medium of an intervening material was as potent to the Victorian

¹²⁴ G.V., Dinners and Dinner Parties, op. cit, p. 43.
¹²⁵ T. Selwyn, 'The Order of Men and the Order of Things: an examination of food transactions in an Indian village', International Journal of the Sociology of Law, 1980, 8, Academic Press, London, pp. 297-317. There are many anthropological studies demonstrating the symbolic values of doorways in defining boundary. In Selwyn's study of the preparation and distribution of food in an Indian village, Singhara, Pradesh State, Hindu caste rules are made concrete by the passage of raw and cooked foods, to and from the centre of a Brahman house. Caste members, raw and cooked foodstuffs are admitted or refused entry through appropriate doorways to a series of ranked areas.
¹²⁶ "Boots" was the most junior office in the hierarchy of the Beefsteak Club. See From 'Beefsteaks to Octaves' in the final chapter.
¹²⁷ G.V., Dinners and Dinner Parties, op. cit, p. 53.
¹²⁸ Mary Douglas, Purity and Danger, op. cit, p. 34.
employer who insisted on separate tableware for servants as it is for the Havik. The author's servants' kitchen is not equipped as hygienically as her especial upstairs kitchen.

Slovenly servants and kitchen insects both appear in *Punch* and in the Mayhew brothers' satire, *The Greatest Plague of Life*. Again, as referred to earlier in relation to Freud's opinion on jokes, subjects chosen often included the lifting of inhibition, in this case contamination from dirt and disorder below stairs.

The *Dinners and Dinner Parties* kitchen has a complete gas stove with a roasting oven. The author claims: "The advantages of using gas for cooking purposes in preference to any other kind of fuel are so obvious as scarcely to require enumeration," a point easily understood in the 1990s, but from its lack of popularity in 1862 was probably not as obvious as she states. Nonetheless she subsequently does enumerate the advantages of gas. None of her four recommended books, however, mentions gas cookery, but she does allude to Soyer's experiments at Greenwich Hospital, when comparing the cost of gas to coal for cooking meat. Soyer found that meat cooked by gas lost nearly half as much weight as that cooked by a coal-fired range. Economy is a recurring theme in detailing the advantages of gas.

Gentility is again associated with gas cookery in Mrs Warren's *My Lady Help and What She Taught Me* (1877), a household book written as narrative. The 'Lady Help' is a chemist's orphan who has fallen on hard times, and is employed as a cook. She

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129 *Punch*, Vol. 23, 1852, p. 26. 'Horrible Incident in Real Life' shows the master in search of some late supper in a kitchen full of cockroaches.


132 G.V., *Dinners and Dinner Parties*, op. cit, p. 58, 'Gas stove by Mr T. Phillips, Skinner Street, Snow Hill.' See illustrations. The stove and boiler illustrated are almost identical to those in the end papers of Alexis Soyer's *Shilling Cookery for the People*, Routledge, London, 1855, pp. 12-13, 'Smith and Phillips, Skinner Street, 55 Snow Hill'. See illustrations.

has to reassure her new employer that she really wants to take up such an un-ladylike post, although she is saved from too much hard or ‘dirty’ work by an ideal charwoman and a gas stove.

A gas stove designed especially for ladies, "The Lady’s Own", is illustrated in Mrs Sugg’s The Art of Cooking by Gas (1890). Although it has functions comparable to other models made by Sugg, the author compares it to ‘The Criterion’ in the Sugg range of stoves. The illustration, however, shows it with added decorative styling. It was for “ladies who choose to take an active share in the cooking done in the house,” and was suitable for both “plain” or “elaborate” cookery.134 By 1898 Mrs de Salis is advocating a gas stove as:

...essential to almost every kitchen, however small, even if only a small Fletcher’s patent gas twin burner is used as it is much more convenient to cook all the dainty little dishes with, especially for the use of gentlewomen, who are, I am delighted to see, beginning to turn their hands to a better class of cookery... Few gentlewomen would, I think, be without some kind of gas stove in their kitchens if only they knew of its great convenience.

Gas is again stated to be superior as as it is clean and labour-saving. In Mrs de Salis’ own kitchen she has both an Eagle Range and a gas stove. Gas is preferred when she “is making a dish of haute cuisine,”135 since gas is ideal as it is even more easily regulated than charcoal.

Decor, as Mrs Salis observed, had no place in the upper middle-class kitchen until it was once again considered, in some circles, as an accomplishment to be able to cook. Mrs Panton, whose readers were more likely to spend some time in the kitchen as they had not the resources to buy in services either as labour or prepared food, are recommended Steel and Garland’s Kitcheners - “some of the most picturesque” - for they had “blue-tiled backs.”136 As well as some practical advantages for her modest

134 Marie Jenny Sugg, op cit. p. 22.
genteeul households, she chooses a stove with attractive tiles. By bringing decoration to a strictly functional area, aesthetic qualities previously confined to rooms above stairs are introduced into a tabooed area thus slightly blurring the previously impervious boundary. Muthesius compares English kitchens to their German equivalents:

In general, the appearance of the English kitchen is never other than that of a working room. The English are not interested in arrays of copper vessels and fine crockery, or in show or comfort of any kind in the kitchen. In particular the kitchens of middle-class and lower middle-class houses contrast sharply with those of small and medium sized houses in Germany, for the German housewife regards the kitchen as her concern and arranges it lovingly throughout, whereas in England, as we have said, even middle-class housewives never cross the threshold of the kitchen. The kitchen is therefore left to the cook, who, such is the casual relationship between employer and employee that exists today, sees no reason to do anything in particular to adorn it.\(^\text{137}\)

A romantic version of a middling German kitchen, rich in baroque embellishments, is shown on the cover of Liebig's German recipe book. The housewife is shown working in the kitchen with her maid.\(^\text{138}\)

In the last decade of the century, Mrs Marshall gave classes for both ladies and their cooks.\(^\text{139}\) The National School had been opened in 1874.\(^\text{140}\) Their cookery was taught incorporating scientific theory to give authority to this newly expanding area of education. Some of those taught at the National were qualified to teach cookery in schools. Lady Barker, as the first 'superintendent', wrote *First Lessons in The

\(^{137}\) Hermann Muthesius, op. cit, p. 98.
\(^{139}\) Marshall’s School of Cookery was established on the premises of an earlier cookery school at 30 Mortimer Street, London in 1883.
\(^{140}\) The National School of Cookery, South Kensington, 1874. This school not only taught ladies and their cooks but also had a wider brief to improve cookery nationwide via the training of school teachers.
Principles of Cookery,\textsuperscript{141} which, with its appropriate science, principally the nutritional values of various foods, made it a subject suitable for review in Nature. They praise the work and quote her view that it is not only important for women to have this education; she hopes that the school will, in future, also teach boys to cook.\textsuperscript{142} To make cookery a ‘fit’ educational subject, the emphasis of her lectures is on the composition of a nourishing diet with economy. Food is to combine “economy with palatableness”.\textsuperscript{143}

CONSERVATION

Before the general availability of ice, perishable foods were not as much of a problem as might be imagined since basement larders were cool for most of the year and many foods were delivered to houses on a daily basis. On the other hand, as with Thackeray’s account of ices having to be delivered at the last moment, this lack of ice could be the cause of some anxiety. Thackeray makes the point that serving ices without the means to keep them frozen was attempting the pretentious.\textsuperscript{144} Keeping food cool was made easier in Liverpool, London and other large cities and towns from the middle of the century when imported ice became available. American ice was first imported in 1844.\textsuperscript{145} Blocks were then delivered for use in wooden chests with a metal lining. A block of ice stood on a rack with a drip tray below, and the food was stacked around it.\textsuperscript{146} Elizabeth David notes the beginning of ice manufacture in London in 1870 by the Sherryton Ice Co. at Blackfriars, but most ice was still imported, although ice now

\begin{footnotes}
\item[141] Lady (Mary Anne) Barker, \textit{First Lessons in The Principles of Cookery}, Macmillan and Co., London, first published 1874. \textit{First Principles}, 1886 edition, p. 49. In this context her aim was for young people to cook even a little rather than agreeing with John Ruskin in his \textit{Fors Clavigera} where “every girl at the proper age should learn to cook exquisitely,” p. 49. Whereas Lady Barker sets what was essentially ‘domestic science’ as the dominant discipline, although it was not so labelled.
\item[142] Nature, August 13th 1874, p. 283.
\item[143] Lady Barker, 1886, op. cit, p. 7.
\item[146] Sylvia Beamon and Susan Roaf, op. cit, pp. 44-5.
\end{footnotes}
came from Norway rather than from America. The main London ice merchant from the
1870s was Carlo Gatti who began trading in 1852.147

BATTERIE DE CUISINE

Whose kitchen was it? Questions of territory will be dealt with in more detail in the final
chapter, but the attribution of ‘authority’ over equipment is relevant to its choice and to
adopting innovation. Equipping the domestic kitchen raised some dilemmas for the
employer who rarely visited and knew little about what to buy. Shops published lists of
kitchen equipment for the various classes of kitchen, but it was their business to sell.
Mrs Panton advises, when she selects ‘Whiteley’s List’, that, “No one requires, I
think, all that he considers necessary, and a little weeding should be done from even his
smallest list.” There were four lists for different sized houses.148 Some authors who
were professional cooks included long comprehensive lists. Frederick Bishop has a
well illustrated list which includes such specialist items as a “gum paste board” for
moulded crests to place on raised pies.149 Authors of household books often included
lists they composed themselves or copies of trade lists,150 but labour-saving devices
and gadgets are not usually included in these lists. Some later books include them as
advertisements among the end papers or make recommendations, as in Mrs de Salis’ list
of gadgets. Among the more popular gadgets were mincers, or meat choppers as they
were called. Mrs de Salis, in her list of gadgets, recommended the ‘Enterprise meat
chopper’.151 The de Salis and Marshall style of cuisine required highly processed food
for which meat choppers would have speeded preparation.

147 Elizabeth David, edited by Jill Norman, Harvest of the Cold Months, The Social History of Ice
department store was opened in Westbourne Grove in 1863.
149 Frederick Bishop, The Illustrated London Cookery Book, London, 1852, p. XXI.
150 A selection of Trade Lists in the following books: Thomas Webster, op. cit, gives an
unclassified, comprehensive list. Mrs Beeton’s 1861 list was from Richard and John Slack in The
Strand was for a family “in the middle class of life,” p. 31.
151 Mrs de Salis, 1898, op. cit, p. 24.
As with all trades’ tools, cooks have always had heir own preferred items, though ordinary domestic cooks do not seem to have moved from post to post with their own knives or other tools. Neither do books on or for servants suggest that cooks came to a post with their own tools. A cook with a repertoire adapted to the needs of a household should know what would be required but where there was a succession of cooks it cannot always have been possible for an inherited set of equipment to have been appropriate. Among low grid employers where resources were stretched, there must have been a temptation to spend more on display above stairs than on invisible resources below. Mrs Panton recommends economy by providing the cook with only six saucepans, but even this meagre provision she describes as “...a most liberal allowance as four might be made to do”.¹⁵² These tyrannical constraints are usually justified in household books with an implied contempt for servants’ capabilities or care. But constraints were imposed and structured into the situation, thereby perpetuating a continuous cycle of blame and neglect. Kitchenware may not have been well cared for; it was nobody’s responsibility – everything belonged to the employer who never used it.

These arrangements, were unlike those in Cosnett’s hierarchic household, where a lowerarchy has authority to request necessary goods to carry out their cookery, which could involve a range from limited traditional repertoire to bounded elaboration. In hierarchies, which by definition operate with long time spans, all the actors are part of a rolling institution that sustains its members’ honour from the past to the present and into the future.

A trend towards individualist gastronomic display among upper middle-class employers, particularly in the last quarter of the century as illustrated by later authors such as Mrs Marshall and Mrs de Salis, required not only skilled cooks, but an expanded batterie. These elaborately presented dishes were required by cohorts of women who, for the most part, knew little of cooking. To make Mrs Marshall’s ‘Little

¹⁵² Mrs Panton, op. cit, pp. 15-6.
Swans with Luxette \(^{153}\) (referred to in chapter III on cuisine) required special moulds to be bought, as it did for other fashionable moulded items. Mrs Marshall supplied these along with the equipment and special ingredients she sold. One or two unspecified moulds are usually included in cookery book lists but such novelties are not included, in even the longest lists intended for high-status kitchens.

**BATTERIE FOR A DINNER PARTY**

In order to get an approximate idea of the utensils required to cook one of Mrs Sambourne's dinners it is possible to extrapolate a tentative list from the Sambourne menu examined earlier. As with the relatively small amount of cooking on the kitchener required for this dinner, the kitchen equipment that was probably used was correspondingly modest. It is also possible that labour saving items like bottled gelatine, (as described in the first table below) and perhaps Liebig's extract or similar flavourings were used when making aspic and consommé. The following calculation is based on the likely ingredients and the conventional contemporary kitchen equipment used for the following dinner:

*Dinner of 8, March 27th, Sunday, 1881*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dish</th>
<th>Utensils required</th>
<th>No utensils required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Oysters and lemon</td>
<td>Requires an oyster knife unless they were opened by the fishmonger, and a knife to cut the lemon.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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2. Julienne soup
If made at home required a **stock pot**, another **large capacity pot** in which to stand the stock and to skim the fat, a **skimmer**, a **strainer** and **muslin** to clear it. **Two cups** to separate egg whites to clear the soup. A mandolin or simply a **vegetable knife** to cut the vegetable julienne strips. In some recipes an **extra saucepan** was required to boil the vegetable strips separately before adding them to the soup which could be heated up to serve in the stock pot.

3. Soles with mussel sauce
A **fish kettle** to poach the soles, a **fish slice** to lift them and a **saucepan** and **wooden spoon** for making the sauce. A **brush** to scrub the mussels, a **container** in which to wash them and a **saucepan** in which to cook them. A **knife** to free them from the shells, presuming again that they were not ready prepared.

4. Aspic of prawns
A **saucepan** to heat the aspic and if it was the same base as the consommé it was ready to pour into a **mould** with the prepared prawns. Prawns were boiled at the coast, a **knife** to peel them may have been required.

5. Pigeons with coxcombs
A **saucepan** to stew them, and a **knife** to prepare any vegetable such as onions that might have been stewed with them, possibly a **knife** to prepare the pigeons.

6. Saddle of mutton
A **bottle jack**, a **roasting screen**, **dripping tray**, **basting spoon** and **flour dredger** plus a **saucepan** and a **wooden spoon** to prepare gravy.

7. New potatoes and salad
A **vegetable brush** and **knife** to clean the vegetables, a **colander** or **salad basket** to drain the salad, a **saucepan** to cook the potatoes and a **colander** to drain them. A **plate** could have been used as a substitute.

8. Coffee Savoy with Devonshire cream
This savoy pudding is based on Cre-Fydd’s Savoy pudding. Grater to grate savoy cakes, **board** and **knife** to cut up candied peel, **jug** to make coffee. **Scales** and **measuring jug** for sugar and milk, **tablespoon** to measure rum, a **whisk** to beat mixture and later the egg whites, **two mixing bowls**, **two small bowls or cups** for the separated eggs, and a **pie dish**.

9. Fruit salad
Only required a **knife** and **mixing bowl**.

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10. Anchovies
   It is possible that the anchovies could have been the unprepared variety and would have to have been soaked in a bowl of milk to remove excess salt and required a knife to trim.

11. Onions
   Served as purchased.

12. Stuffed olives
   Served as purchased.

The batterie for this dinner party, therefore, comprised:

A Minimal list of kitchen utensils deducted from the above menu (dinner of 8, March 27th, Sunday, 1881)

Mixing and straining: two wooden spoons, tablespoon, fork, basting spoon, whisk, fish slice, skimmer, strainer, colander or salad basket, muslin.

Cutting, slicing and grating: oyster knife, small vegetable knife, cook’s knife, mandolin or chopping board, grater-board.

Measuring: scales, measuring jug or standard tin measure.

Bowls: three mixing bowls, two small bowls or cups, mixing bowl, large capacity bowl, crockery stockpot, pie dish, jelly mould, four? kitchen plates, large bowl to wash mussels.

Coffee: bean grinder, jug or coffee pot.

Brushes: one or two brushes to scrub the mussels and vegetables.

Pans: stockpot, fish kettle, four medium-sized saucepans or three and a casserole, bain marie, kettle.

Roasting: bottle jack, roasting screen, dripping tray, flour dredger.

Also required were such standard items as a box or crock for flour, salt and pepper pots, a butter dish, a dripping jar, bread crock, spice box, cloth pot holders and an oven cloth.

This reliance on a relatively modest range of equipment was entirely in keeping with the prevailing bias towards economy in the kitchen. At this level, the kitchen, was, by what evidence it is possible to deduce, as simply equipped as the dining table was elaborately decorative. It is this contrast that was strange to enthusiasts for French bourgeois cookery, as seen in French books like Audot’s, where tableware (discussed later) and
kitchenware all have a modest style that unifies cooking and dining. Audot shows a comprehensive range of kitchenware. In the English translation there is a section on ' Implements and processes little used', for those who were interested in French methods.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed heat sources more than any other aspect of kitchen equipment, not only because the culinary style was predicated on this, but because it highlights the factors that made for adoption or rejection of a new technology, in this case gas. An indication of the social distance between employers and their kitchen staff is made evident by the retention of coal kitchen ranges when gas could have made cookery easier. Not until cookery was adopted by 'gentlewomen' who were unwilling to tolerate the dirt and difficulty of cooking on a kitchener, was gas more generally installed. Spartan kitchens were in keeping with typically low wage, stigmatised domestic work. This was allied with upgridding instructions and pressures for economy in the kitchen. Contrasts between meagre kitchen equipment were even more stark when compared with the relative extravagance of the tableware required for those dining above stairs.

It is a typically individualist strategy to economise in invisible areas while directing resources to publicly visible ones. This strategy was justified with a pseudo-hierarchic rhetoric which imposed parsimonious treatment upon the lowerarchy. Blame for incompetence, such as the recurring ‘blazing fires’ issue, was a typically individualist response. These small-scale households could not call on the delegation of responsibility that was built into a well trained hierarchy.

Small households could, nonetheless, be well run. Such households relied on a paternalistic relationship where staff were not forced up grid with unrealistic expectations. Shirley Nicholson, in her biography of Marion Sambourne, describes this

style of relationship from Mrs Sambourne’s viewpoint. The cook and maids she eventually found stayed for some years. ‘Fin-Bec’ states in 1878, ‘There never was an epoch when less sympathy than exists now between mistresses and their servants. The consequence is there are no thoroughly efficient serving men or women.’ Some household writers such as Mrs Haweis advised a small degree of comfort for the cook and kitchen maid but there was seldom any suggestion of decorative enhancement of kitchen areas when used by staff. Mrs Panton suggests some decorative oil cloth and a tile paper but more as a utilitarian than a decorative choice. Although she does suggest some more attractive designs and colours, these probably were for readers who had chosen a stove with decorative tiles. This, however, was for those who worked in their own kitchens. Mrs Peel (1898) does at least suggest two wicker chairs with cretonne loose covered cushions, Austrian bentwood chairs and that ‘... a good warm rug should be allowed, on condition that it is rolled up and put out of the way while the hard work of the day is being performed.’ This was still in sharp contrast with the decorative profusion upstairs. Domestic space will be discussed further in the final chapter.

159 Mrs Panton, op. cit, p. 13.
160 Mrs C. S. Peel, op. cit, p. 53.
John Nash’s innovative kitchen for the Royal Pavilion, Brighton showing, the central steam heated table with covered finished dishes and serving cloths. On the left charcoal stoves with a hood above to alleviate the effects of toxic fumes. On the right a roasting fire, with spits driven by convection currents in the chimney. On the nearby table a spit is ready with fowls. The end wall holds a batterie of tinned copper pans ranging from stock pots to saucepans and braising pans. Also note the centrally placed clock. Ackerman’s print from John Nash’s designs for The Royal Pavilion at Brighton were produced as a book for George IV: Ackerman, London, 1826.
"This is a curious print, and unique of its kind; it presents on a large scale a coup-d'oeil of the matchless culinary arrangements of the Reform Club, the various offices for which extend over the whole basement of the building. To show them at one glance, the partition-walls are cut away, and a bird's eye view is given of the several kitchens, larders, sculleries, and batterie de cuisine: the different functionaries are all at their posts, and the accomplished chef, Monsieur Soyer, is in the act of pointing out to a favoured visitor the various contrivances suggested by his ingenuity and experience.

"With a plan of the building, there are references to a minute explanatory account of the uses of the multifarious apparatus here exhibited, for the admiration of the scientific gastronome and the envy of rival artists." — Spectator.

Fit 1


Figures 1 to 6.

Fig. 1. Sketch showing the arrangements for cooking provided by Count Rumford in a private establishment at Munich.

a, a, a, body of brickwork, within which are thirteen small fire-places for preparing food when required in thirteen cooking utensils fitting upon the top surface.
b, b, b, &c. the thirteen cooking utensils, some with covers, some without.
c, boiler which receives the surplus heat from the three fire-places nearest to it.
d, d, d, d, "Stoppers" which cover the apertures by which fuel is introduced to four fire-places.
e, e, e, &c. doors by which air is admitted to the fire-places and the ashes are removed.
f, f, f, fire-place with hearth below. A fire was made on the hearth to warm the apartment when necessary.
g, g, shut doors communicating with two of the flues by which the smoke passes away from certain of the fire-places.
h, h, roasting ovens.

Fig. 2. One of Count Rumford's cooking utensils, with its double cover.

Fig. 3. Section of the double cover.

a, small tube for the escape of steam.

Fig. 4. Count Rumford's bottom grate used for burning wood.

Fig. 5. The fire-pot.

Fig. 6. Vertical section, showing

a, portion of the brickwork.
b, utensils for cooking or boiling.
c, bottom grate.
d, ash-pit.
Fig. 14. Count Rumford's double roasting-dish, with iron grating to support the joint.
   a, aperture by which water is introduced.

Fig. 15. Section of double roasting-dish.
   a, hollow space containing water.

Fig. 16. Sketch of Count Rumford's roasting-oven.
   a, double door to prevent waste of heat.
   b, roasting-dish.
   c, c, blow-pipes for giving currents of hot air to the oven.
   d, pipe for the escape of vapor.

Fig. 17. Transverse vertical section, showing the roasting-oven fixed in its place.
   b, roasting-dish.
   c, blow-pipe.
   d, pipe for the escape of vapor
   e, door for introducing fuel.
   f, door for regulating supply of air and removing ashes.

Fig. 18. Sketch of roaster fixed in brickwork.
   a, double door.
   c, c, blow-pipes.
   e, fire door.
   f, ash door.
   g, soot door for cleaning flue.

Count Rumford's roaster. Like his stove, the roaster was also too alien to English cookery. New techniques for roasting would have had to have been learnt by cooks, who were used to roasting on open fires. From Frederick Edwards Jnr., *On the Extravagant Use of Fuel in Cooking Operations with a Short Account of Benjamin, Count Rumford, and his Economical Systems*, Robert Hardwick, London, 1869.
Figures 41 to 43.

Fig. 41. Sketch of an arrangement similar in principle to that shown in Fig. 38, but on a larger scale. In this as in the other, the fire may be used either closed or open at pleasure; no rapid draught to the chimney is permitted, hot metal is dispensed with as much as possible, and glazed tiles are substituted for the purpose of confining the heat and presenting a clean, cheerful, and temperately warm surface in the apartment. On the hot-plate surface various openings are shown, at which cooking utensils protected by double covers on Count Rumford's system can be introduced to be heated on the economical plan of actual immersion in the hot air which passes from the fire. The openings are covered up when not in use.

a, fire door.
b, ash door with regulator.
c, c, ovens for roasting or baking, the doors of which are covered with glazed tiles to confine the heat.
d, d, hot closets for warming plates, &c., heated by the hot air which passes over them. The doors covered with tiles to confine the heat.
e, e, e, &c., covers on the hot-plate over the apertures at which vessels are inserted.
f, f, f, &c., surfaces of glazed tile.

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Description by numerous practitioners as the
"KING OF MINCERS."

Defies reproach with the "The larvae feast on
G的动作, "a perfect tenderiser in the
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Chops Beef, Cold Meat, Raw Meat,
Fruit and Candied Lemons to perfection;
and makes excellent Sauces from
beginning to end.

Is indispensable in every well-ordered
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CASH PRICES

For Family Use

No. 1. £5. 1s. 7d. (8 Lbs.)

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Each Machine supplied with
three Portioned Steel Plates,
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Lunch. Book of valuable Receipts,
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Examples of Defres' Gas stoves including
'C' a gas and coal stove for winter, from
J.H. Walsh, A Manual of Domestic
Economy: suited to families spending from
£150-£1500 a Year. George Routledge and
One of eight pages of kitchen utensils from Frederick Bishop's Illustrated London Cookery. This is a professional cook's list. He includes a mincer, although mincers do not seem to have been widely advertised until the end of the century. It may be a comment on the general unfamiliarity of some of these utensils, but the salamander is printed upside down.
A roaster with a bottle jack. The door is to allow access to baste the joint. *Punch*, 13th January, 1883, page 18.
An American stove, a style of portable stove that did not require permanent installation and was recommended for those in rented houses. — Cassell's Book of the Household, Vol. 2, Special Edition, p. 5, c. 1890.

THE GOLD MEDAL

EAGLE RANGE.

Made with 1, 2 or 3 Ovens.

SOME SPECIAL ADVANTAGES.

Size of fire can be increased or diminished as required (effective working guaranteed).—Iron flues, no bricklayers' work or bad setting.—Can be used either with a close or open fire.—Will roast large joints in front of fire.—Ovens can be heated at top or bottom, making them perfect for bread or pastry.—Powerful boilers for hot water supply.—Economy of fuel soon pays cost of Range.

THE EAGLE RANGE & FOUNDRY CO.

176, REGENT STREET,

AND

58, St. Paul's Churchyard, London.

Write for Catalogue "H" and History of the Cooking Range, POST FREE.

At the end of the century Muthesius selects some typical English kitchen equipment. The bottle-jack and meat screen are similar to those recommended by Eliza Acton, nearly half a century earlier. A typical kitchen range with its integral hot water boiler with an open fire for roasting and grilling was a similarly familiar installation. The gas stove has an oven in which the joint of meat may be hung as it would have been from a bottle-jack. Hermann Muthesius, *Das Englishe Haus* was originally published by Wasmuth, Berlin, in 3 vols., 1904-5, and a second edition 1908-11 from which this slightly abridged version is taken. *The English House*, edited with an introduction by Dennis Sharp and a preface by Julius Posner, translated by Janet Seligman, Crosby Lockwood Staples, Granada Publishing, London, 1979, pages 97 and 99.
Kent's 1808 patent ventilated ice safe. Ice blocks were delivered to customers for placing on a grating-like shelf at the top of the box. This advertisement is of a later date than the original patent. The Lake Wenham Ice Company also sold ice safes.
REFERENCE TO PLAN OF MY KITCHEN AT HOME.

The Kitchen.

a. A dresser with drawers beneath, to deposit sausages and cold meat.
b. A dresser.
c. A broom, for cleaning the kitchen.
d. A basin, for water, placed near the dresser.
e. A table, for the cook and the servants.
f. A window, for light and ventilation.

The Laundry.

A coal range that Alexis Soyer designed for the domestic kitchen. It was designed to be free standing. Alexis Soyer, The Modern Housewife, Simpkin Marshall & Co.

My Kitchen at Home


Soyer's *Phidelphezeion* - gas stove. Soyer followed the fashion for classically derived and hyperbolic words to describe his products. His bottled fruit drink was called *Nectar* and his part plagiarised culinary history book, *The Pantethrion*. This advertisement is from the end papers of an edition of *The Modern Housewife*, Simpkin Marshall & Co.
Sugg's Gas Kitchener, which appears to have been designed to be as near to a coal kitchener as was possible, with a roasting fire and water heating incorporated. This model is not illustrated in his wife's later book. William T. Sugg AICE MRI, Honorary member of the Gas Institute, *The Domestic Uses of Coal Gas*, Walter King, London, 1884, plate 32, to face page 126.

Sugg's Gas Roasting Fire which appears to have been designed to be as similar to a coal fire as was possible. This model, like the kitchener above, is not illustrated in his wife's later book. William T. Sugg AICE MRI, Honorary member of the Gas Institute, *The Domestic Uses of Coal Gas*, Walter King, London, 1884, plate 80, to face page 118.
The utilitarian model on which the Lady's Own was based.


**The Lady's Own Gas Stove**

When compared to The Criterion, this stove has the decorative brackets and legs as the first most noticeable difference. Another modification to The Lady's model was bottom hinged oven doors, unlike The Criterion which has side hinged doors. The advantage of bottom hinged doors being that when removing anything heavy from the oven it was made easier for the lady's cook, as the door could be used as a supporting shelf.

This illustration is from Marie Jenny Sugg's 'The Art of Cooking by Gas', Cassell and Co. Ltd., 1890, page 9.

**Sugg's Parisienne Roaster**

This later version of Sugg's roaster has the addition of glass viewing panels. It is from Marie Jenny Sugg's 'The Art of Cooking by Gas', Cassell and Co. Ltd., 1890, page 8.
THE FESTIVE SEASON.

Tommy (criticising the menu of the coming Feast). "Very good! Tray song! And look here, Old Man! Mind you plenty of Rum into the Baba—Dolly and Molly like it, you know—and so do I!"

Monsieur Cordonbleu (retained for the occasion). "Certaintement, mon ptit ami! But are you and ces Demoiselles got Dine vie de Compagnie?"

Tommy. "Or song! But just ain't we going to sit on the Stairs outside, that 'n all!"

A French cook in a well equipped kitchen. Note the array of cooking ware and the pestle and mortar on the table for preparing fine highly processed mixtures. Punch, 13th January, 1883, page 18.
The anonymous lady's upstairs kitchen with a gas stove flanked by hot water boilers.  

Domestic Steamers
The Electric Rapid Cooking Apparatus* from a page of "Latest Electrical Light Novelties" from Designs for Furniture and Decorations for Complete House Furnishing by Hampton and Sons of Pall Mall and Cockspur Street, 1894 catalogue from Stephen Calloway, The Victorian Catalogue of Household Furnishings, a title that adds an introduction to unnumbered pages from this edition Studio Editions Ltd, London, 1894.

Cooking on the parlour fl
This scene is set in a middle class parlour, with a pillar dining table. In this less classified space than the drawing room and dining room of later social emulation, cooking is plausible, even if not usual.

NOTHING LIKE FORETHOUGHT.

"Wait an instant! I'll tell you, old boy. There's nothing like beginning; what else happened when we are expelled by Captain Cockock, so I learned the whole art of making oxelutton, if bare anything should happen our craft!"

HORRIBLE INCIDENT IN REAL LIFE.

As the Sketcher was going to bed, the Master of the House exults to get a little bit of supper for himself. He can't conceive where the India tea has all kept, and he is almost used to having the black nearest of the kitchen.

[Cockroaches in the Kitchen. A cartoon that had more than a basis of truth, as conditions below stairs could easily lead to infestation by both insects and vermin.
*Punch. Vol 23, 1852, p.26.****]
This romanticised picture of a German housewife and her maid place them in a kitchen that is both decorative and functional with its tiled walls and stove, decorative lamp, chair and shelves. Through the window a rural view adds to the decor, whereas the usual English town and country kitchens usually had a view from a basement or of an obscuring laurel hedge. In contrast Punch drawings portrayed English middle range kitchens as both plain and economically furnished. Hermann Muthesius compares English kitchens to their German equivalent, his observations corroborate the drawings: "In general, the appearance of the English kitchen is never other than that of a working room. The English are not interested in arrays of copper vessels and fine crockery, or in show or comfort of any kind in the kitchen. In particular the kitchens of middle-class and lower middle-class houses contrast sharply with those of small and medium sized houses in Germany, for the German housewife regards the kitchen as her concern and arranges it lovingly throughout, whereas in England, as we have said, even middle-class housewives never cross the threshold of the kitchen. The kitchen is therefore left to the cook, who, such is the casual relationship between employer and employee that exists today, sees no reason to do anything in particular to adorn it. Hermann Muthesius, op. cit., p. 98.

Employers’ fears cartooned by George Cruikshank. Kitchen cats play various blame-worthy games, for without hierarchy in the kitchen blame may fall on the unpredictable cats. Blame from above stairs similarly falls on a neglectful novel reading cook. As in the Punch cartoons these middle range kitchens are shown with a dresser with basic items, a kitchen table, a modest open range, a grill, a pan for boiling meat and vegetables, plus the essential ‘up gridding’ kitchen clock. From: Athol and Henry Mayhew, The Greatest Plague of Life: or, the adventures of a lady in search of a good servant, by one who has been “almost worried to death”, edited by the Brothers Mayhew, illustrated by George Cruikshank, George Routledge and Sons, London, 1847. There was also a late edition published in 1892.
This selection of kitchen-ware for haute cuisine from Charles Elmé, Francatelli’s Cook’s Guide and Housekeeper’s and Butler’s Assistant, Richard Bentley & Son, London, 1853, appears to have been taken from a suppliers’ list. William S. Adams & Son. Page 10 includes a stockpot, a bainmarie, three specialised fish kettles, and pans for specific techniques, such as ‘fricandeau’.
These moulds are illustrated in Charles Elmé Francatelli’s *Cook’s Guide and Housekeeper’s and Butler’s Assistant*. Richard Bentley & Son, London, 1853, and were supplied by William S. Adams & Son. Page 11, item 10 is the two part Belgrave mould, also recommended by Eliza Acton. This selection of traditional decorative shapes contrasts with some of the ‘novelty’ moulds offered by Mrs Marshall.
Mrs Marshall's 'Illustrated Catalogue of Household and Kitchen Requisites' offered a range of goods and ingredients to produce her dinner party cuisine. Among the small moulds are the hinged swan moulds required for "Little Swans with Luxette." Recipes using individual moulds allowed easy service of equal portions a la Russe dinners.
Boy. "Oh! If you please 'm—Cook's very sorry 'm— but could she speak to you a moment?"

Domestic Bliss (The Dinner Party):
Boy. "Oh! If you please 'm, Cook's very sorry, 'm, but could she speak to you for a moment?"
This caption is below a cartoon of a dismayed hostess, in a drawing room full of guests, being summoned by a page to the kitchen. 
Punch, Vol. 13, July, December 1847, p. 34.
A grandfather clock in the kitchen. This cartoon from Punch, Vol. 24, 1853, page 30, 1853, shows a kitchen with a grandfather clock that has been discarded from above stairs. Cheap clocks were usually recommended for the kitchen. Furniture that was out of fashion was often relegated to the servants quarters. Ward and Lock's Home Book, Ward Lock and Co., London, 1880, page 385, under the heading "The Economical Housewife" suggests that an old mahogany table, if it is not wanted, as an even cheaper substitute for the usual deal kitchen table.
**Chapter VI**

**Dining à la Française:**

An Expression of Hierarchic Ideals

Part I of Service à la Française and Service à la Russe as Expressions of Hierarchy and Individualism

**DIVERSE WAYS OF SERVING DINNER**

This chapter discusses changes in the physical arrangements for serving dinner, a meal which became increasingly central to Victorian upper middle-class social life. These changes, I argue, reflected more than a mere change of fashion in table settings with new styles of cutlery, crockery and glass.¹ Altered dining styles involved introducing new table manners and conventions and a whole new choreography for servants.² Changes in culinary fashion were integral to these changes in service. Food and its presentation are, after all, central to a meal’s ‘social identity’. Celebratory dining, then as now, reflects and reaffirms to its actors how they construct their world and how they relate to other guests and servants through a carefully constructed social event.

The new dining reflected and helped to resolve the new tensions of a new age and the shifts in cultural bias that these involved. Where and how changes were manifest incorporated a re-working of old forms of commensality. With the rise of new social constituencies brought about by new ways of working and changing residential patterns, the new class society needed a new way to dine.

¹ See chapter VII.
² See part II and the final chapter.
Dining à la Française\textsuperscript{3} was essentially based on an etiquette of interacting service and mutual obligations among diners fulfilled in an ambience of outward informality which, nonetheless, underpinned an awareness among the diners of rank and precedence. The new style of dinner, à la Russe, was overtly structured with almost the entire onus of service passed to servants. À la Russe was not a fashion that at a certain point superseded the earlier style, but a fashion taken up by some of the many newly emerging constituencies. By the end of the century à la Russe, in some cases with necessary adjustments such as demi-Russe, had become the conventional way to dine.

Initially among grander circles, service à la Russe as a total entity was rarely introduced in a complete form and only later for lesser dining circles. Complete à la Russe required cooks who could adapt their repertoire to the new service, expert waiters who could carve and money to buy sufficient new tableware. Dinner à la Française, as it is named nowadays, was simply how dinner was served until the fashion changed. Peter Brears cites the origin of this style as arising from small scale dining at a table in the centre of the room in the mid-seventeenth century. It succeeded earlier ceremonially attended meals which had in turn followed whole households dining together in the hall.\textsuperscript{4}

John Murrell, in 1638, gives bills of fare for celebratory dinners of two and three courses with a variety of dishes set out on the table.\textsuperscript{5} Martha Bradley, in 1760, refers to the introduction of "French ease"\textsuperscript{6} within the à la Française structure. French ease was a

\textsuperscript{3} In some circles this was referred to as 'à l'Anglaise'. See 'À la Française and à l'Anglaise', below.
\textsuperscript{6} Martha Bradley, \textit{The British Housewife}, printed for S. Crowder and H. Woodgate, London, c. 1760, p. 75.
convention allowing greater informality among the guests and is more fully discussed below. Brears gives the seventeenth century for the beginning of dinners served with one and two courses in an à la Française style.\(^7\)

The speed and degree with which changes were adopted or rejected, as might be expected, were not uniform but could vary according to the demands of particular social situations. Changes from serving dinner à la Française to à la Russe were not in all cases a complete move from one system to another but were more usually continuous sets of smaller changes in style adopted to a greater or lesser degree by various dinner-giving circles.

À la Française was not as static a mode as references to table settings suggest. Table plans show how first and second courses or services were arranged. Usually this was all that was shown concerning the manner of serving dinner in household and recipe books, at least until the 1830s. For dinner-giving households, changes in how dinner was served altered little in the second half of the eighteenth century and for most diners stayed constant until well into the nineteenth century. References to small changes by critics and advisers on etiquette give an idea of the gradual introduction of successive courses. As part of this process of incremental change, the introduction of flowers as table centres and other small adaptations were also part of such gradual change, slight acknowledgements that were merely tokens. They were easily adopted, without incorporating a whole new fashion which would have disturbed entrenched ways.

\(^{7}\) Virginia Maclean, in A Short Catalogue of Household and Cookery Books published in the English Tongue 1701-1800, Prospect Books, London, 1981, dates the book from an advertisement for instalments in the Scots Magazine, vol. 18 (Jan. 1756) and the death of Stanley Crowder in 1766. Henry Woodgate had joined him a short time before. Printed for S. Crowder and H. Woodgate, London, c. 1760. A move to greater informality within the same dining structure. The advantage of "French ease" was that guests were expected to "take care of themselves and one another"; p. 75.

\(^{7}\) Peter Brears, 1994, op. cit. p. 91.
À la Française was suited to adaptation down the social scale as the social bias was towards an informality among diners which was absent from dining à la Russe.

Gradation is essential for all hierarchies to define the place of actors within them. Both dining styles had their advocates and detractors, as with any changes in fashion. In this chapter, as well as tracing the chronology of change, accompanying contemporary criticism will be addressed in relation to its prevailing cultural bias.

**SERVICE À LA FRANÇAISE AS PRACTISED FROM THE MID-EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE TABLE AND SERVING THE MEAL**

The fashionable way to dine was, as any fashion must be, always in a state of change. Without a degree of individualism there is little fashion. Dining à la Française allowed choices of an appropriately elaborate or simple dining style in which the same conventions were followed within the same form. An appropriate level of elaboration was dictated by occasion, social rank and income. Degrees of both elaboration and simplicity, part of an overall hierarchy, allowed one style to be adapted to different social circles and circumstances. Greater diversity of choice in dining styles did not reach a peak until the second half of the nineteenth century.

In recipe and household books of the early nineteenth century, there were suggested arrangements of dishes for the services (courses) and instructions for carving. Most books, however, did not offer further suggestions about the conduct of dinner. Such comments were usually limited to etiquette books for the young and to manuals directed to servants, two groups who would not necessarily know the conventions, unlike housewives who were expected to know the appropriate way to serve a dinner. The pace of social change at this period, had not yet brought about such uncertainty as to make a large readership require didactic household books with precise instructions on dinner-giving.
Exceptionally, Martha Bradley in *The British Housewife*, as early as circa 1760\(^8\) directly addresses these questions in her chapters "of Doing the honors of the table" and "of the Oeconomy of the table". These are offered more as considered opinion than in the didactic tones of mid- and later Victorian recipe and household books, which were written for more diverse and fragmented dining circles. She writes: "This is an article in which fashion prevails more than it aught for reason should be the guide altogether."\(^9\) In spite of the title *British Housewife*, Mrs Bradley adopts with acknowledgement many French methods and ideas and, unlike many contemporary cookery writers, she applauds them:

> For they have the art of preserving good Manners with less ceremony than our ancestors used to do. At the same time we are to observe, that the good old English Custom, though more ceremonious, was more obliging.

> It was our custom to let the Lady of the house help her visiters [sp.]; and this though troublesome to her, was found upon Reason. She was supposed to understand carving perfectly well, and know where the best Bit lay; it also gave her an opportunity of showing with what satisfaction she waited on her friends.\(^10\)

She then goes on to describe what a burden this was when there were many diners:

> "It was almost impossible the Mistress of the House should taste a bit of anything."\(^11\)

The contemporary ideal, 'Reason', was equated with a minimalism that disapproved of 'Luxury', a word that described man-made extravagance. Harold Perkin cites increasing consumer demand combined with social mobility as the basis for eighteenth-century social emulation. Extravagance was judged as inappropriate and 'unnatural', and perjoratively termed 'luxury'.\(^12\) Matched with an idealising of 'nature', 'reason' made any overt or extreme formality inappropriate. In France, Louis XV (1715-1774)

\(^8\) Martha Bradley, op. cit. p.11.
\(^9\) Martha Bradley, op. cit, p. 73.
\(^10\) Martha Bradley, op. cit, p. 73-4.
\(^11\) Martha Bradley, op. cit, p. 74.
and his court acted out these ideals as rural fantasies with *fêtes Champêtres* and informal intimate suppers. This was a particularly innovative period for French cuisine with translations and plagiarised recipes available in English (see chapter II).

This new style of dining may have owed something to the French fashion for intimate suppers, although these, when illustrated in contemporary paintings and prints, look in mood more similar to English seventeenth-century banqueting scenes with their emphasis on exclusive informality. In courtly and aristocratic circles the function of intimate dining was the same as that of earlier banquets: they freed those at the top of hierarchies from the constraints of grand ritual while accelerating intimacy (see *Communitas*, discussed below). Series of French prints during this period often portrayed scenes of rich bourgeois domestic meals, which included dinners and suppers in the same informal and intimate style. A move to greater informality was consistent with current ideas of classical simplicity and with the culinary ideals discussed in chapter II.

**DINING À LA FRANÇAISE: THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF THE MEAL**

Dinner à la Française usually consisted of two services, including one or two removes\(^{13}\) at the beginning of the first service with possibly the addition of a dessert after the second. For the first two services, dishes were laid in a formal pattern that corresponded to a shared and understood set of rules, sometimes so rigidly that Martha Bradley was to remark when comparing the English approach to the French: "We have the John Trot method, in which we go on with perfect Sameness; they [the French] have great variety."\(^{14}\)

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\(^{13}\) 'Removes' were main dishes that replaced others within a service. These dishes were usually placed in front of the host and hostess for them to serve to the guests. Those most familiar to English diners were the soup tureen, which might be replaced by a dish of fish which could require carving. Sometimes fish and soup were served simultaneously from opposite ends of the table. Diners chose either soup or fish. Sometimes soup was 'removed' by fish, to be further 'removed' by a joint of meat or two contrasting joints, one at each end of the table. When the meat was brought in, covers were removed from the already set out vegetable and side dishes.

\(^{14}\) Martha Bradley, op. cit, p. 69. See illustrations.
Bradley describes the common method of placing dishes on a rectangular table as one dish at the top and a corresponding one at the bottom with two pairs of dishes opposite one another along the table’s length. Thomas Cosnett, in his 1824 butlers’ manual, still followed the same principles when directing the placement of dishes: “Let the dishes on each side answer each other.” In England, fashion in the middle of the eighteenth century was for square or rectangular tables, whereas in France round or oval ones were more usual. Mrs Bradley preferred the French style, asserting that arranging dishes in an oval or circle gives greater flexibility than permitted by the requirements of balance within straight lines. In France ovals and curved lines can be seen as a more consistent choice where Baroque and Rococo styles were favoured, whereas, in England a plainer classical line was consistent with straight lines of dishes. Not that examples of classicism were not to be found in France or that Rococo extravagances were absent from England: the chosen table layouts merely reflected dominant biases.

Mrs Bradley describes the French as having an advantage over the English by adopting limitations on variety. “We have larger and smaller [dishes] in great variety, but the difference is irregular. They have three kinds, large, middling and small,” these were allotted particular places on the table. Massialot’s table plans of 1698 show dish sizes as “petits plats, moyens plats [and] grands plats”.

In France there was a greater adherence to the rules of tightly bounded hierarchies, enabling the production of uniformly defined wares. By limiting variety to fit within their more hierarchic system, the French enjoyed a flexibility within a system of complementarity that was congruent with their cuisine (as discussed in the chapter II). English cuisine did not require similar uniformity as it was not organised on the same


16 Martha Bradley, op. cit, p. 200. In France standardised sized plates, as part of a hierarchic approach to kitchen organisation continue, as seen on the underside of a 1990 white porcelain dish marked ‘PLAT MICRO ONDES No. 8’, whereas in England corresponding wares are sold by measurement as sizes are more individualistically determined.

hierarchic principles. Correspondingly English dishes were not made in the same uniform sizes as in France. Both silver and ceramics were more individualistic in England where there were no court factories.

Thirty years earlier than Mrs Bradley, Charles Carter's *The Complete Practical Cook*, (1730) included fine illustrations of exuberant table settings\(^{18}\) which, although symmetrical, followed circular patterns. Carter had had experience of serving his noble employers, “Abroad, as well as at Home”. He had cooked in Flanders, Berlin, the Hague, Hanover, Spain and Portugal. His work was essentially for great households. Was the circular style forgotten or had it just existed at the earlier period only in great houses and palaces? I would suggest that the choice of circular arrangements was dependent on the author’s exposure to cosmopolitan influences. In Mrs Bradley’s case it was France, the centre of European haute cuisine, that was cited as having circular arrangements of dishes. Charles Carter had not worked in France, but French culinary influence permeated the courts of Europe. Carter’s tables were almost contemporary with the print of a large dinner given by Lord Chesterfield in 1736, which was based on straight lines of dishes.\(^{19}\) Although the scale of the two styles may not be considered comparable, the two styles therefore coexisted, and could be seen as a basis for choice appropriate to occasion and status. Great dinners served on long tables necessarily had linear settings.

**CONSTRUCTING THE BILL OF FARE: SETTING THE TABLE FOR SERVICE À LA FRANÇAISE**

In England the top and bottom dishes on a table were usually *removes*, either a tureen of soup and/or a dish of fish that, if large, would require carving. There were possible variations: two soups could be served followed by two fish or just one of either. These dishes were called *removes* for the obvious reason that when they had been consumed

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\(^{19}\) Charles Carter, op. cit. Plate 58 is an example of this style for great dinners. See illustrations.
they were removed to be replaced by one or two other dishes, usually a joint, poultry or game. Either the mistress carved or, if two items required carving, both master and mistress would carve. Other diners helped each other and themselves to vegetables and from other dishes arranged around the table. Clean plates and cutlery were provided during each course by servants as helpings of different dishes were taken. When diners had finished a service, plates and dishes were removed and a second service comprising a fresh arrangement of dishes, clean plates and cutlery was then set out. This second service was not an essential component, nor was dessert which was often reserved only for special occasions. Among the side dishes that comprised this second service were tarts and other sweet dishes so that the dinner of two services had all the essential components that defined it as a dinner without an additional dessert course. Such a basic structure could, of course, still be followed in a single-service dinner. A fuller description is given below, in the section ‘Waiting at Table’.

TUSCAN HIERARCHY: A COMPARATIVE DINING STRUCTURE

Since dinner à la Française was essentially a hierarchic creation, it had to comprise certain basic and conformist elements. Mary Douglas has analysed the structure of meals to define the modern basic everyday dinner and then, in comparison to it, the celebratory meal. Douglas distinguishes a meal as containing a number of elements that define it as such, rather than as a snack, or other small refreshment. She sets it within an overall system of meals:

The smallest, meanest meal metonymically figures the structure of the grandest, and each unit of the grand meal figures again the whole meal – or the meanest meal. The perspective created by these repetitive analogies invests the individual meal with additional meaning.21


Service à la Française was so constructed that all the elements could be contained in one service or, for celebratory occasions, expanded into three services. An example from modern Tuscany shows how an understanding of their celebratory meal illumines understanding of the flexibility inherent in service à la Française. A modern Tuscan dinner is an ideal example of a similar hierarchic meal; first as in the daily menu and then, as I observed it, as a celebratory menu for the Feast of the Assumption. It should help to make clear the principles on which this menu expansion is predicated, before examining service à la Française in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Tuscan dining may seem to be distant in both time and place, but it has the advantage of a familiar cuisine that occurs in a hierarchic structure. The following Tuscan menu is, I argue, the modern structural equivalent of a bill of fare22 as expanded in late eighteenth and nineteenth century dinners à la Française.

THE TUSCAN DINNER

The typical daily dinner:

- One Pasta garnished with a tomato, meat, fish or mushroom sauce, plus grated hard cheese (except for fish) or soup with the same cheese garnish.
- One item of meat, poultry, game or fish.
- Cooked vegetables and/or salad.
- Fresh fruit served whole and unpeeled.
- Wine and/or water.

A feast is larger than a typical daily dinner in the number of courses and dishes served. It too is the ordinary dinner writ large, and, as more dishes are served within each course, some of each of the selection of dishes is served to the diners, thus incorporating them into the greater variety of the feast.

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22 'Bill of fare' was current usage before the fashion for service à la Russe, when French 'menu cards' were placed on the dining table.
The Feast:

- Several appetisers such as local salamis or toasted bread with liver or other savoury spread.
- Several different pastas, particularly hand-made labour-intensive filled pastas.
- A variety of mixed roasted game and other meats and sausages.
- Cooked vegetables and salad.
- Fruit salad.
- Wine and water.
- Vin santo and cantucci.

Feast food is also distinct in that such daily constituents as the pasta and fruit are components subject to more labour-intensive preparation than usual. In the following section these attributes of the expandable and celebratory dinner will be examined in relation to the structure of service à la Française.

MARIA CLUTTERBUCK: CELEBRATION AND THE EXPANDED BILL OF FARE

Lady Maria Clutterbuck, a pseudonym of Catherine Dickens, Charles Dickens' wife, wrote, *What Shall We Have For Dinner? (1852)*, a book of suggested dinners. Her dinners were for two or three people, expanding to twenty. Elaboration was graduated to scale: as the size of the menu was written for increasing numbers, dinners à la Française incorporated more celebratory components. Specific occasions are not defined in her book. The implication must be made that celebratory dining occasions were to be chosen by the reader. Frequency of dinner-giving was not governed by church or secular festivals, as with the Tuscan example, except for Christmas, but more by the demands of reciprocity within the diners' social circle and with the possibility for

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23 Lady Maria Clutterbuck, pseud. Catherine Dickens, *What Shall We Have For Dinner?* Bradbury and Evans, London, 1852.
optional individualistically chosen celebrations. Both the Victorian and Tuscan celebrations are founded on expanded and elaborated menus.

To give some examples from *What Shall We Have For Dinner?* (see below), dinners for two or three are, by comparison with larger menus, distinctly economical. They include that perennial Victorian rechauffé, cold mutton. An anonymous 1863 book, *What to do with the Cold Mutton: a Book of Rechauffés* \(^{24}\) emphasises this recurring dilemma. Leftovers were frequent since roasting was a preferred way to cook meat, and large joints, particularly mutton joints, were substantial. Acton gives 7 to 8 lbs as the weight of a leg of mutton. \(^{25}\) Everyday dinners were often economical, but not solely because Victorian culinary organisation lacked Continental system. The fixed cost of cheap labour, often with limited skills, and an economical attitude to everyday food, was married to an individualistic extravagance reserved for socially rewarding celebratory dinner-giving. These factors contributed to making leftovers a recurring theme for the household's daily dinners. Leftovers could be eaten by the socially excluded, children and servants, but from the evidence of bills of fare this does not seem always to have been so. Pamela Horn found it was common practice for servants to supplement their food by leftovers from meals served in the dining room. \(^{26}\) Some servants' diets were exclusively made up from leftovers. Plain mutton perfectly matched ideas of natural simplicity and a later emphasis on plain food as thought fit for children.

This practice of offering a greater number and variety of dishes at celebratory dinners was opposed by critics. Complaints were made that the move to more ostentatious dining necessarily involved a move to entertain larger numbers at a single dinner.

Critics regretted the consequent rejection of informality and the loss of intimacy this

\(^{24}\) *What to do with the Cold Mutton: a Book of Rechauffés*, Richard Bentley & Son, London, 1863, still in print in 1887. Only about a third of the recipes are for 'leftovers'.


involved. Thomas Walker, whose *Aristology or the Art of Dining* (1835), a much quoted work almost throughout the rest of the century, repeatedly advised small simple dinners rather than large and ostentatious ones.\(^{27}\)

Technically there was no reason why à la Française dinners for larger numbers could not have been served as a limited bill of fare distributed between several dishes of the same item and distributed to all parts of the table. Dinners in 'Lady Clutterbuck's' book followed the standard conventions, as did all the earlier books that included table settings. The number and variety of dishes were always selected in relation to the number of diners: the more celebratory the meal, measured by the number of diners, the greater the variety of dishes, thus giving a hierarchic gradation of rank to the dinner in relation to other dinners. This was one of several ways of ranking a dinner. Others included variations in the rank of raw materials, such as forequarter lamb over mutton, and in some cases the degree of labour intensity in their preparation. Accompanying tableware and attendance added to the sum of elaboration that defined the event. The bills of fare (below) illustrate the relationship of ranking, recipes and numbers of guests.

**BILLS OF FARE FROM WHAT SHALL WE HAVE FOR DINNER?**

For 2–3 persons

- Loin of mutton rechauffé à la Soyer [This menu has no remove of either soup or fish.]
- Mashed and fried potatoes [Possibly another leftover.]
- Beetroot salad
- Cold mince pies (Dec.–Jan.) [A seasonal pastry only to be offered during December and January.]

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Vegetable soup

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27 Thomas Walker, *Aristology or the Art of Dining*, 1835. This edition edited by Felix Summerly (Henry Cole), George Bell and Sons, London, 1881. To give three of many references to ostentatious dining: pp. 8, 42 & 79.

28 Lady Maria Clutterbuck, pseud. Catherine Dickens, 1852, op. cit, p. 1.
Pork cutlets with savoury sauce [Pork was not celebratory food.]
Spinach, mashed and brown potatoes
Bloaters [Bloaters were not celebratory food.]

4–5 persons [The plain dinner, slightly elaborated.]
Roast loin of mutton
Browned potatoes
Salad
Rice blancmange with strawberry jam and cream
Toasted cheese (Dec.–Jan.) [A winter savoury]

Fried Oysters
Haricot mutton and brown potatoes
Roast fowls
Raspberry puffs
Stilton cheese (Dec.–Jan.) [Stilton cheese is at its best at in mid winter]

6–7 persons [Six dishes instead of five.]
Vegetable soup [One remove.]
Roast fillet of veal [Not an everyday joint.]
Boiled knuckle of ham
Greens
Browned potatoes
Apple tart custards (Dec.–Jan.) [A hot pastry served as an alternative to mince pies]

Cod [with] oyster sauce
Mutton stewed with vegetables
French beans
Potatoes
Baked rice pudding
Savoury omelette (Dec.–Jan.) [Another hot savoury]

8–10 persons
Vegetable soup
Fried sole, shrimp sauce [Two removes, soup and fish.]
Roast beef, stuffed

29 Lady Maria Clutterbuck, pseud. Catherine Dickens, 1852, op. cit, p. 16.
31 Lady Maria Clutterbuck, pseud. Catherine Dickens, 1852, op. cit, p. 34.
Minced mutton with bacon
Browned potatoes
Kolecannon
Savoury omelette
Raspberry jam sandwiches

8–10 persons
Mock turtle, hare soup  [Three soup and three fish removes.]
Oxtail soup
Cod's head, oyster sauce
Smelts, soles, shrimp sauce
Stewed eels, oyster sauce
Roast turkey
Sausages
Ham
Sweetbreads
Curried lobster
Haunch of mutton  [A large high-status joint.]
Broccoli
Brown potatoes
Pigeon pie
Oyster patties
Maintenon cutlets
Potatoes, broccoli
Boiled turkey, oyster sauce
Two woodcock, hare, four snipes
Cabinet pudding
Apple tart
Charlotte Russe
Jelly

14, 18 or 20 persons
Asparagus soup, white soup
Boiled salmon, lobster sauce
Filleted soles, shrimp sauce
Patties and pork cutlets  [Patties were a celebratory elaborated dish.]

32 Lady Maria Clutterbuck, pseud. Catherine Dickens, 1852, op. cit, p. 41.
33 Lady Maria Clutterbuck, pseud. Catherine Dickens, 1852, op. cit, p. 43.
Lobster cutlets
Grenadine of Veal
Rabbit curry
Fore-quarter of lamb [Another better cut, lamb rather than mutton.]
Chicken and tongue
Spinach, potatoes, salad
Guinea fowl, pigeons
Lobster salad, asparagus [Lobster salad another celebratory dish and a favourite for ball suppers throughout the rest of the century.]
Cabinet pudding
Punch jelly [Jellies and creams were also special occasion dishes.]
Charlotte Russe
Clear jelly
Italian cream (June–Sept.) [Possibly served iced for the Summer months.]

Elaboration\textsuperscript{34} was augmented by the high-status of the joint served and some of the other ingredients, for example: salmon, guinea fowl, asparagus, lobster, woodcock, to mention a selection.

In contrast, celebratory meals for Yorkshire wool textile workers and their families were based on plenty without the added refinement of variety. Peter Brears describes a typical feast in the first half of the nineteenth century as comprising roast beef and plum pudding. He goes on to quote John Yewdall’s account of the coronation festival held by James Hargreaves, the Leeds clothier in 1827:

\begin{verse}
The table was made, upon which were laid,  
Twenty four plum puddings compact;  
Roast beef and good beer, that old English cheer,  
Were plac’d in their order exact.\textsuperscript{35}
\end{verse}


\textsuperscript{35} Peter Brears, Traditional Food in Yorkshire, John Donald, Edinburgh, 1987, p. 155. The verse from John Yewdale, The Toll Bar, 1827.
The contrast between feast food and the everyday diet among Yorkshire wool textile workers cited by Brears, ranged from a diet that included fresh meat to what was described as ‘the principal diet of the people’ – water gruel (an oatmeal porridge), onion and bacon, eggs, oatcakes and salt butter. Therefore variety, as a necessary component of celebratory meals, was superfluous. Feast food was defined by two items that were not usually available to wool textile workers: plum pudding and roast beef.

Gronow’s remembered dinners given by the early nineteenth-century upper classes and referred to in chapter III can be distinguished from this basic feast by the augmentation of French dishes. The fact that they were not for the most part favoured by the diners is immaterial: their presence gave symbolic elaboration. Good fellowship within a bounded circle was part of the rhetoric of both these hierarchic dinners.

Feasts such as these that are an expansion of the daily meal are particularly relevant in social contexts where there is a predominance of what Max Gluckman terms ‘multi-stranded relationships’. Here each actor has a multiplicity of roles such as domestic, political, economic or ritual, occurring within the same social context. In occupying a particular role, such as mayor, the actor is required to wear special regalia to denote his office, because everyone also knows him as Fred the butcher, and also as son, father, brother, cousin and fast bowler in the cricket team. Ceremonial changes in ritual and dress split off one role from the others. Similarly food is not separate from, but is consistent with, the elaboration that makes up the whole celebration. All the aspects of status and occasion demanded by the decor, place, time and rank of the participants are defined in Mary Douglas and Jonathan Grosse’s *Measurements of Complexity: a system for measuring food events*. Service à la Française was a system that reflected Gluckman’s multi-stranded relationships in its adaptability.


37 Mary Douglas and Jonathan Grosse, op. cit.
JOHN TRUSLER AND THOMAS COSNETT: ETIQUETTE AND INSTRUCTION FOR DINING À LA FRANÇAISE AT THE END OF THE EIGHTEENTH AND THE BEGINNING OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

John Trusler (1735-1820) and Thomas Cosnett both wrote texts describing dinner à la Française. Trusler’s book (1788) was in print for longer than Cosnett’s. It was reissued in 1837 with the author named as ‘Trusler Redivivus, Esquire’ but with its original title, The Honours of the Table.38 Cosnett’s (1824) description of how a dinner à la Française was served is considerably more detailed than Trusler’s, since he was writing as an experienced butler rather than an employer. Cosnett first published The Footman’s Director and Butler’s Rememberancer in 182439 under a pseudonym composed of a Greek prefix and Latin suffix: ‘Onesemus’, which can be translated as ‘Useful’.40

Trusler’s The Honours of the Table or, the Rules for behaviour during meals; with the whole art of carving is an essentially didactic work written by an energetic man of varied experiences. The DNB’s (1899) concise description of him is “eccentric divine, literary compiler, and medical empiric”.41

A need for books on table etiquette is relevant when the constituencies who share meals are changing. Either an established core is invaded by a separate group who need to know the rules, both formal and informal, or social change is on a much greater scale and every constituency experiences some degree of change with a consequently greater

40 I am grateful to the late Colin Haycraft for this translation.
41 John Trusler (1735-1820) was born the son of the proprietor of public tea gardens at Marylebone. He was educated at Westminster School and Mr Fountaine’s fashionable seminary at Marylebone, followed by Emmanuel College Cambridge from whence he graduated in 1757. Two years later he became a priest. In 1762 he went to Leyden to take an MD, but there is no evidence of his having qualified. Added to his educational experiences and serving as a priest in various locations, he attempted to run a school for oratory. He also printed sermons, established a successful printing and book-selling business and wrote several works. DNB, ed. Sydney Lee, Smith, Elder, & Co., London, 1899, vol. LVII, pp. 268-9.
requirement for arbiters of taste and instructive literature. Trusler’s book is addressed to
the young, a traditional group to receive such instruction, for they are entering the
dining circle at the base of the hierarchy. Age was a stated basis for precedence at table,
though this could be mitigated by having added status through an ascribed role, such as
an inherited title. Trusler instructs his readers to scrupulously obey the rules of
precedence. Walking from drawing room to dining room and the subsequent seating at
table was predicated on precedence. Earlier fashion was for women to sit at one end of
the table with precedence from the mistress at the head of the table and female guests in
an ascending hierarchy down either side to where they met the equivalent descending
male hierarchy. Trusler describes going into dinner and being seated:

The mistress of the house requests the lady first in rank, in company, to show the
way to the rest and walk first into the room where the table is served: she then asks
the second in precedence to follow, and after all the ladies are passed, she brings up
the rear herself. The Master of the house does the same with the gentlemen.

When they enter the dining-room each takes his place in the same order, the mistress
of the table sits at the upper-end, those of superior rank next to her, right and left,
those next in rank following, then the gentlemen, and master at the lower end...

Custom, however has lately introduced a new mode of seating. A gentleman and a
lady sitting alternatively round the table, and this for the better convenience of a
lady’s being attended to and served by the gentleman next to her. But not
withstanding this promiscuous seating, the ladies, whether above or below are served
in order, according to their rank or age, and after them the gentleman in the same
manner.42

Much of Trusler’s advice is written as if the reader has no knowledge of a household
that has guests for dinner. Was the book really only required by the young? Or was the
author a man with a sharp commercial sense who was writing for anyone who needed
the information? This was not the only book that Trusler wrote for those new to dining
or, as Mrs Bradley described them, “not so much used to company”.43 The fact that she

42 John Trusler, The Honours O f the Table Rules for Behaviour at Table, published by the author,
London, 1788. p. 3. The 4th edition, 1805, has the same lines on precedence and seating.
43 Martha Bradley, op cit, p. 201.
particularly mentions new diners is a nice indication of an open and mobile society. Another of Trusler’s works, published two years before The Honours of the Table, was The London Adviser and Guide, a book of information for those new to the metropolis. His most overt book of instruction for the socially ambitious was The Way to Be Rich and Respectable, Addressed to Men of Small Fortune.

Trusler’s book was published as etiquette books began to cater to a move down grid: changes from assumed acquaintance with the tastes and status of all the other diners, to the likely incidence of imperfect knowledge of more strategically assembled participants. These books suggested strategies to cover the lack of real intimacy that outsiders to the particular circle lacked. New diners, for instance, are instructed to study the manners and tastes of their hosts and then subsequently to take account of their tastes when inviting them reciprocally.

‘Trusler Redivivus’, Honours of the Table, 1837 edition, gives an idea of the lack of change in the basic structure of the à la Francaise dinner. In the section, ‘Rules for Waiting at Table’, he gives brief directions for employers so that they can understand the basic requirements for waiting at table. These are unchanged from the earlier editions except for a few lines at the beginning on the host’s duty, “...to see that his company is properly attended” and by the omission of genteel gill glasses, which was the only mention of tableware style in the original.

A year earlier, Charles Day’s Hints on Etiquette reflects a far less static view:

Of the etiquette of a dinner party, it is extremely difficult to say anything, because fashions are continually changing, even at the best tables: and what is considered the height of good taste one year, is declared vulgar the next; besides which certain houses and sets have certain customs peculiar to their own clique, and all who do not

46 Trusler Redivivus, 1837, op. cit, p. 17-8.
47 Trusler Redivivus, 1837, op. cit, p. 21.
conform exactly to their methods are looked upon as vulgar persons, ignorant of good breeding.48

This comment on the diversity of fashion is further substantiated by a description of service à la Russe being fashionable as early as 1829,49 when most contemporary books still only included bills of fare set out for service à la Française. It was the standard way to serve a dinner and was to continue in the same style in most books well into the 1850s. What Shall We have for Dinner (1852), as discussed above, typically ignores service à la Russe.50

Thomas Cosnett’s The Footman’s Director and Butler’s Rememberancer gives detailed instruction for serving an à la Française dinner. What it does not reveal are any covert techniques, which by their very nature would not be written but passed on verbally. Among modern hotel waiters gaining advantage over diners is described as ‘getting the jump’.51 It would be naive to assume that these covert techniques did not have as long a history as the many other waiters’ skills that are overtly described in Cosnett’s work.

A typically recurring contemporary complaint about servants was their extraction of ‘vails’ or tips from guests. One diner remarked that it would be cheaper to dine at home after the necessary vails had been given. Captain Gronow commented in his memoirs that when he was a young man about 1815-25 “…if one dined at any of the great houses in London, it was considered absolutely necessary to give a guinea to the butler on leaving the house”. Writing of the present, in 1860, he says, “[the custom] has luckily fallen into disuse.”52 It could be said that extra tipping is often obtained by giving extra service, but this category also includes manipulative techniques that amount

50 Lady Maria Clutterbuck, pseud., Catherine Dickens, op. cit.
Cosnett's text was written as rhetoric for fulfilling the highest hierarchic ideals and is not concerned with 'vails' [tips].

Cosnett was writing as a butler or possibly the higher status house steward butler, instructing footmen. An idea of the status difference between footmen and butlers can be derived from the wage difference in J. J. Hecht's tables of servants' wages at the end of the eighteenth century, that show some butlers were paid nearly double a footman's wage. Status was also given to upper servants by informal rewards, better accommodation, their master's cast-off clothes and some access to resources such as wine and other stores. Because of problems over stock control, the key to the wine cellar often remained with the master, as is made plain by the strategy used by Cosnett to ask the master to get more wine at dessert. An excuse is made to the master to take him out of the room, so he can get more wine without making it overt that the amount allowed for the occasion has run out and more is needed. A butler was not always entrusted with the key to the wine cellar. If extra wine was needed during a meal, he had therefore to employ a strategy that would not embarrass the host or his guests. To be seen to run out of supplies of any kind could have implications of household parsimony, inefficiency, or of guests' intemperance. Imperfect organisation and conduct are contrary to rule-bound hierarchic ideals.

Cosnett's instructions to servants go into the minutest detail concerning the placing of food, drink and artefacts, with an exact choreography for servants to achieve these ends amounting to approximately 22,000 words. His standard of expertise may accordingly have been unrealistic for most households. Cosnett's directions far exceed the more typical basic directions found in Sarah and Samuel Adams' *The Complete Servant*

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55 Thomas Cosnett, op. cit, p. 115.

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(1825), which gives instructions to a whole range of servants. Cosnett’s directions were a counsel of perfection, as he says himself: “It is no easy thing to be able to wait at dinner well and have everything in proper and systematical order.” As it was also a teaching manual for young servants, he includes comments on errors his pupils have made, such as serving a pudding awkwardly so it is “sent tumbling to the floor”. His emphasis is on following the correct routines and not using ad hoc strategies. As waiting today is founded on the same requirements for set routines, the same theme was reiterated by a traditionally trained Italian maitre d’hotel. His term for any discord in the smooth running of his restaurant is “confusion,” an anathema in the context of ideal hierarchic procedure. Cosnett writes: “It is solely the want of method that causes so much confusion.” He methodically sets down his directions to achieve this aim, perfect service.

Cosnett sets the scene in the dining room by first describing how to set out the sideboard, not only in its contribution to efficient service but that it should also have a very pleasing effect on entering the room, “where order and design prevail.” His sideboard arrangements are a distinctly symmetrical, hierarchic design, with a lamp in the centre of a semicircle of glasses and cutlery arranged according to function and size; wine glasses on the left and beer glasses on the right. The side table was to be set ready with cold plates, cheese plates and dessert plates, which were “also to look ornamental”. Samuel and Sarah Adam’s briefer instructions place a bill of fare on the sideboard for the servants’ reference. Menus were not required on the table, but Trusler emphasises that it was the hostess’s duty to tell diners, if it was only to be a

57 Thomas Cosnett, op. cit, p. 81.
58 Thomas Cosnett, op. cit, p. 119.
59 Emilio Lancellotti, Ristorante Lancellotti, Soliera, Modena, 1995, (personal communication).
60 Thomas Cosnett, op. cit, p. 125
61 Thomas Cosnett, op. cit, p. 91.
62 Thomas Cosnett, op. cit, p. 90.
63 Samuel and Sarah Adams, op. cit, p. 128.
single course dinner, and to point out if there was a cold joint or salad on the sideboard. Wines and other drinks on the sideboard were also to be mentioned.\textsuperscript{64}

The table was set with the same attention to detail and order as the sideboard and side table. A knife at each place setting was to be placed with the handle one inch from the edge of the table, with accompanying spoon and fork similarly placed. Flatware and cutlery for carving and serving soup and fish also had their precise positions, crossways, beside where the dishes were to be placed.\textsuperscript{65} Wine could be put on the table for diners to help themselves, though this was optional.

Half an hour before dinner the cook was given notice to dish up while bread was cut, dish warmers lit and plate warmers stood in front of the fire.\textsuperscript{66} Dinner was to be announced at the appointed time in an appropriately modulated tone.\textsuperscript{67}

Before diners entered, first-course dishes were to be put out on the table in a proper line equidistant from one another and at equal distance from the sides and ends of the table.\textsuperscript{68} Dishes for the second course could easily be put out quickly with the same precision as the first course by placing them on the impressions of first-course dishes left in the tablecloth and (underlying)\textsuperscript{69} baize. If the number of second-course dishes was not the same as the first course, the impressions on the tablecloth acted as a guide for an equally precise design.\textsuperscript{70}

The first dish-cover to be taken off after the guests were seated was that of the soup tureen, the first remove. Covers were lifted quickly, so condensation had no time to drip. If there were two soups, they would be placed at the top and bottom of the table.

\textsuperscript{64} John Trusler, \textit{The Honours of the Table. Rules for Behaviour at Table}, printed for the author, London, 4th edition, 1805, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{65} Thomas Cosnett, \textit{op. cit}, p. 85.

\textsuperscript{66} Thomas Cosnett, \textit{op. cit}, p. 93.

\textsuperscript{67} Thomas Cosnett, \textit{op. cit}, p. 97.

\textsuperscript{68} Thomas Cosnett, \textit{op. cit}, p. 110.

\textsuperscript{69} The tablecloth was laid over a baize cloth i.e. thick, woollen cloth, that protected the polished table-top from being marked by condensation from hot dishes; also from spilt food and drink.

\textsuperscript{70} Thomas Cosnett, \textit{op. cit}, p. 94.
Cosnett gives exact directions on how to hold soup, fish and meat plates for the master or mistress who is serving or carving, and then how to offer filled plates to the recipients.\(^{71}\) The master and/or the mistress carved the hot joints, but cold joints were placed on the side table and carved by a butler or footman.\(^{72}\) Cosnett gives directions not only on how footmen should hand sauces and what were termed "the decorments of the table",\(^{73}\) but also vegetables, which were served with meat, but not with fish which was only usually served as a remove. Cucumber was the only vegetable considered appropriate to accompany fish.

Covers of the other first-course dishes were taken off after the removes. Removes were then replaced by the roasts. Footmen gave diners clean plates and cutlery for each remove and ideally for each helping of meat and vegetables. Diners were expected to have only one type of meat and one variety of vegetable on their plate at a time.\(^{74}\) They were not expected to wait to begin eating until the rest of the party was served.\(^{75}\) During services diners were served with drinks as they requested them, and instructions for handling and serving the range of drinks are comprehensive. The list includes instructions for wines, beer, porter, spring water and soda water. Soda water had to be kept cool so that it did not "fly about" and for the same reason the cork was to be drawn away from the table.\(^{76}\) Gauche disasters were to be avoided or the smooth tone of unobtrusive service would have been broken. Extra bread and other needs were similarly to be attended to in the same unobtrusive way – by responding to diners' needs before requests were made.

After the first service was finished, the table was cleared of plates, dishes and detritus. Used plates were stacked in baskets, and dirty cutlery and carving knives cleared in

\(^{71}\) Thomas Cosnett, op. cit, p. 99.
\(^{72}\) Thomas Cosnett, op. cit, p. 134.
\(^{73}\) John Trusler, 1805, op. cit, p. 8.
\(^{74}\) *Etiquette for Gentleman, with Hints in the Art of Conversation*, Charles Tilt, London, 1838, p. 32.
\(^{75}\) *Etiquette for Gentleman, with Hints in the Art of Conversation*, op. cit, p. 31.
\(^{76}\) Thomas Cosnett, op. cit, p. 103.
special trays. The second service was then set out as the first had been but usually
without the removes and was served in the same manner as the first service. Sometimes
this included sweet dishes as well as savoury. After it was finished cheese and salad
were served. It was not called a separate service, but that, in effect, is how it was
served.77

After cheese, finger glasses were set out, then everything on the table was cleared, the
tablecloth removed, the table rubbed down and dessert, with plates, glasses, dessert
cutlery, flatware and decanters of dessert wine, set out. Dessert included fresh and
preserved fruits, jellies, cakes and sweets. Everything else was then removed from the
room except clean plates, glasses and cruets on the side board and side table.78
Footmen were to clear away fast and go, leaving the company to serve themselves.

DESSERT: A CONTINUING TRADITION OF
COMMUNITAS,79 A TIME FOR GOOD FELLOWSHIP

Dessert was more than another service; it was separated from the dinner by a series of
physical and social markers, such as special sets of dessert china80 and an absence of
servants. All that was left of servants' activity was an ever-present reminder of order in
the neat hierarchic ranks of glass and plates arranged on the serving tables. This might
be considered a rather fanciful interpretation of what could be seen as simply the
functional supply of extra glasses and plates. James Williams instructs the young
footman having set out the dessert to "Look carefully over the table to see that nothing
is wanting, and having given a touch at the sideboard to put it in order, leave the
room."81 However, the whole reorganisation of the table and side tables that the butler

77 Thomas Cosnett, op. cit, p. 111.
78 Thomas Cosnett, op. cit, p. 113.
79 Victor W. Turner, The Ritual Process, Structure and Anti-structure, A demonstration of the use
  of Ritual and Symbol as a Key to Understanding Social Structure and Process, Routledge &
80 See chapter VIII, section on dessert.
81 James Williams, The Footman's Guide: containing plain instructions for the footman and butler,
and footmen set out for dessert was, it can be argued, more than functional – it was an assertion of order. The table reverted from its dining state to its ‘natural’ state – that is without a cloth and all reminders of a dinner having taken place were removed, the servants having quietly and quickly left, except for these icons of order that they left behind in the sideboard arrangement. A change of location, e.g. from one physical setting to another, is not necessary to emphasise this separated event if the scene can be transformed by a rearrangement of accoutrements. In a typical modern hierarchic household in the London suburbs, after the evening meal was finished a separate day cloth would be put on the table together with a vase of artificial flowers. These similarly restored the dining area from its mealtime status, so marking a separate time and function for other activities.82

Early nineteenth-century dessert courses still retained for the elite the same freedom from the constraining presence of lower echelons as it had in large Tudor and Jacobean households. Sixteenth and early seventeenth century rituals of seating, serving and eating, including the choice of cuisine and table arrangements, all buttressed established hierarchy. To escape the inhibiting constraints of hierarchic formality, an inner circle at the hierarchy’s peak consolidated its status with exclusive good fellowship by having a separate banqueting course of fruit and sweets taken in another room or, in fine weather, in banqueting houses. These were often architectural fantasies in the gardens or on the roof of the main house.83 Banqueting was therefore completely separated both in style and place from the main dinner. À la Française dessert can be seen as similar to these more mobile banquets.

Moving out of the dining hall into an exclusive place still continues at Oxford and Cambridge colleges’ high tables. These are placed in the same position as Tudor and

83 Jennifer Stead, ‘Bowers of Bliss: The Banqueting Setting’, in Food and Society, Banqueting Stuffs, edited by C. Anne Wilson, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1991, pp. 115-57. Jennifer Stead describes the origins contexts and settings of Tudor banqueting. She makes great emphasis on banquets, from Tudor times devised as separate events and not a part of the dinner.
Jacobean high tables, above and at right angles to the rest of the tables in the body of the hall. The Master, Fellows and their guests move from the high table, after dinner, to the senior common room for coffee. Their position at the top of a hierarchy in a large hall of diners makes their dining closer to that in the earlier great households.

Eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century dining, however, no longer needed to change the location of dessert as the whole bias of the dinner for the company emphasised normative communitas, 'normative' as establishing a standard. Victor Turner defines communitas as anti-structure, the counter-balance to structure.

Dessert, among hierarchic diners à la Française, was what would be termed normative communitas, the result of organising resources. Dessert serves to make a place for normative communitas as a time of relative freedom within a rule-bound structure. Fran Markovitz describes it as "secret... time out of time". It encourages people "to relate to each other without inhibition". Dessert, without the inhibiting presence of servants was then followed by the separation of men and women. Women left the dining room, leaving the men, with the aid of more alcohol, to yet further loss of inhibition and heightened intimacy. The women, who waited in the drawing room, could consolidate over coffee but without the aid of alcohol. Normative communitas is a useful concept here since it differentiates the diner's situation from the generality of good fellowship by locating it as part of an intricate construct that makes dining such an important expression of social ideals.

The recommended time spent apart varies according to the bias of the author, the intended readership and the year of writing. If men wished to spend the rest of the evening on their own, they would, after about 1870, have had to decide on an all-male dinner. These dinners were not always away from home, but could be organised by the

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excluded wives. Linley Sambourne and Sir Henry Thompson\textsuperscript{87} both gave exclusively male dinners at home. Thompson's dinners, due to consistent lionising and their unusual set structure, became well known. (Exclusive male dining is discussed in the final chapter.)

**FORMALITY AND INFORMALITY**

There was an apparent informality implied by service à la Française arising from the interaction required of diners, which was in contrast to the overt formality of the servants. Informality is reserved for the peak of a hierarchy; servants, by following the correct procedures for waiting at table, define the formal structure of the meal. Thomas Cosnett's instructions show a perfectly disciplined choreography of ordered actions governing space, time, objects, resources labour and information, the principal attributes of grid as defined in Cultural Theory.\textsuperscript{88} The informal component, as enacted by the peak of the hierarchy, reinforces its group dimension by emphasising frequency, mutuality, scope and boundary.\textsuperscript{89}

Lower echelons of a hierarchy (the lowerarchy) are expected to act in accordance with formal rules. The top hierarchs, in turn, demonstrate their power by an informal demeanour while subscribing to a strict code of rules such as those concerning punctuality. Trusler advised diners to arrive at least fifteen minutes before dinner.\textsuperscript{90} Kitchiner simply refused admission to late guests.\textsuperscript{91} His extreme rules may have acted more in print as a moral anecdote than as a fashion to be followed. Like many of his rules, they are not found as advice in other later books. His Draconian sanctions are

\textsuperscript{87} Sir Henry Thompson, the physician, gave regular dinners for eight men at the end of the century. See 'From Beefsteaks to Octaves' in the final chapter.

\textsuperscript{88} Gerald Mars and Steve Frosonick, 'Operationalising the Theory of Cultural Complexity, a practical approach to risk perceptions and behaviours', to be published March 1997 in *International Journal of Risk*, Vol. 1, No. 1, ed. Edward Borodowicz. See Fig. 3.


essentially individualistic, and were not in step with the sanctions implied in most etiquette books. The bias of more conventional etiquette books was towards the group values of hierarchy. These books cited unpunctuality as discourteous because the whole company would have to wait for dinner. Arriving punctually was achieved ideally as if it were a natural expectation. Rhetoric emphasised an informality through which diners related to others with whom they reciprocated.

Jean Renoir (1894-1979), the film maker, has some revealing comments to make on later mistaken ideas of a strong hierarchy being stiff and formal in all its actions. One of his intentions when filming *La Grande Illusion* (1937) was as follows:

> I wanted to show French officers as I had known them when I was in the army before and during 1914. Military style has changed much more than we think. The way a soldier or an officer presents himself today is completely different from the way this same soldier or same officer would have presented himself thirty years ago. And the change has not occurred in the direction people think. People think that behaviour was much more rigorous, much stiffer before, but it was the complete opposite. There was a kind of ease that seems to have disappeared. The expression or phrase in the military code on which military instructors put the most emphasis was the expression 'without affectation'.

This quotation offers, I believe, an excellent example of the most likely demeanour within an assured hierarchy and helps to give an idea of the style of actors in similar situations. In 1838, *Etiquette for Gentlemen*’s ‘Ideal Gentleman’ offers this example: “He performs all the ceremonies [at dinner], yet in a style of one who performs no ceremony at all.” When reading comprehensive instructions like Cosnett’s and those in contemporary etiquette books, it is easy to confuse the task or direction to be carried out with a later supposed demeanour that we attribute to the actors. Ideally Cosnett’s dinner was to be served, as if by magic, with few audible commands. This was not only an understood demonstration of power over a stable hierarchy of servants, but it

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also contributed to a resultant style that was “without affectation”, thus creating a relaxed ambience.

If the hierarchy had not had a continuous stability it would have been harder to sustain such expectations as Cosnett’s injunction to “Notice the different ways different persons carve particular joints.”94 This was to note which way round the dish is placed to suit the way an individual preferred to carve. Such knowledge could have been kept as written instructions for a succession of footmen, but a more obvious reading suggests that it was directed to established servants continuously to study their employers’ needs.

It is difficult to quantify the typical servant’s length of service. Hecht, while quoting instances of long service in the previous century, concludes that there was also a great deal of mobility.95 With no ties through place of residence as on large estates, or through personal recommendation which, as Hecht notes, was a frequent method of finding servants, it would be expected that employers and servants would have found it difficult to establish ideal hierarchy.

ENDURING SKILLS FOR DEFINING FORMAL SERVICE

In Gerald Mars and Michael Nicod’s World of Waiters,96 formal styles of waiting such as Cosnett’s are described as “boundary closed”.97 Their example is of the modern first-class hotel business dinner, used as a way to accelerate intimacy between the diners, in contrast to the formality of the waiters. They give examples of some of the waiter’s basic rules including serving from the left and taking dirty plates from the right, as found in Cosnett’s instructions.

94 Thomas Cosnett, op. cit, p. 95.
95 J. J. Hecht, op. cit, p. 82.
97 Gerald Mars and Michael Nicod, op. cit, pp. 56-9.
An exactly comparable choreography still existed at the Dorchester Hotel in London in the 1980s when ‘nouvelle cuisine’ was served ready plated to the diners. The plates with their silver covers were simultaneously placed with the angle of their cover handles in exactly the same position for each diner. The covers were then removed in a coordinated instant by the waiters. All these high-grid requirements serve a similar purpose. The ritual of simultaneously removing covers emphasises an excess of service and the manifest offering of ‘plenty’ whether in quantity or quality, as in the overt labour intensity of nouvelle cuisine. As changes in serving dinner are described through the period of this work, and in subsequent periods, many of Cosnett’s rules still stand. This is because some of the situations do not change, as with diners’ expectations from which side they are to be served. Some change in technicalities, however, may occur, as with removing covers at the Dorchester. In the same way, Cosnett’s footmen simultaneously and formally removed covers from the arrangement of dishes set ready for diners when they were seated. Such techniques and the effects they create recur and serve to reinforce the formal role of the waiter or footman.

*The Footman’s Guide* is written entirely in the didactic rhetoric of hierarchic instruction. In cultures where the cultural bias is hierarchic this is expounded in idealistic terms, with errors used to underline the ideal. Cosnett has a section where his trainee footmen relate disasters they encountered when waiting without his supervision. By first setting out ideal behaviour, mistakes are then shown as disproportionately discordant, thus reinforcing the ideal.

In directing his labour, Cosnett orders space, time, objects and resources to construct his ideal hierarchy. He describes not only how the dining room should be set out but at what times tasks are to be performed. He gives priority to order as essential to serving the ideal dinner, combined with ease of working for the servants, and so organising a well-run evening that adds prestige to the whole household. At the beginning of Cosnett’s instructions, he says how waiting well at dinner gives more satisfaction than any other service a footman or butler can perform. Dinners in the world of hierarchic
ideals were given to cement relationships; they were organised to show a household off to best advantage by a faultless progression through the evening. The sum total was credit to the master and mistress for a well run household offering fine hospitality, and credit to servants for their skills which again reflected back on their employers. Credit and honour in hierarchies are values that are shared, so binding the whole body.

Regimental pride in armies offers a prime example of honour shared. Similarly, poor performance brings shame and dishonour to the whole body.

Etiquette books usually included instructions on how servants were to be spoken to during dinner. These instructions frequently emphasised consideration for the servants while at the same time achieving the effect of enhanced social distance.98 Strategies used to this end included asking for things in a soft voice that emphasised refinement. Cosnett also instructs his footmen to moderate their voices too, in keeping with achieving this refined ambience. This instruction is a standard for the whole period and beyond.99

If householders had behaved as authoritarians without allowing their lowerarchies countervailing powers, they could then have been rightly described as tyrants.100 Tyranny, unlike true hierarchy, is not a long surviving mode. Tyranny was more common in the rhetoric of later Victorian instructions and will be discussed in relation to service à la Russe in the next chapter.

Cosnett’s continual reiteration of the need for order and system are the foundation of all waiting at table. Surprise and originality have no place, although resourcefulness within the system is a valued quality. This anecdote of the carver’s goose that landed in a lady’s lap and being retrieved with decorum: “Madam, I’ll trouble you, for that goose in

99 How to Dine, 1879, p. 44. See quotation in ‘Two Instructive Pocket Books’ below.
your lap.\textsuperscript{101} is an example quoted in more than one book, as would be expected of hierarchs’ jokes.

Cosnett’s instructions were essentially for households with great resources. But this style of service could also work on a modest level without a great number of servants. One servant was a minimum to set out the courses and clear away, but once the table was set everything was to hand as diners carved and helped themselves and each other. Etiquette emphasised the importance of skilled carving, which was necessary to all, regardless of the status of the dinner, but also for occasions when guests could be asked to assist by doing some of the carving. Many cookery books as well as etiquette books had a section on carving. Etiquette books with rules and conventions for the table, were mainly concerned with how to serve fellow guests.

Prince Pückler Muskau gives an account of how, in practice, dining à la Française was conducted in a large household:

The gentlemen lead the ladies into the dining-room, not as in France, by the hand, but by the arm; and here, as there, are emancipated from the necessity of those antiquated bows, which even in some of the best society in Germany are exchanged every time one hands out a lady. On the other hand, there is a most anxious regard to rank, in the midst of all of which the strangest blunders are made as to that of foreigners. I execrated mine to-day, as it brought me to the head of the table, while my friend very cleverly slipped himself in between the pretty sisters. When you enter, you find the whole of the first course on the table, as in France.

After the soup is removed, and the covers are taken off, every man helps the dish before him, and offers some of it to his neighbour. If he wishes for anything else, he must ask across the table, or send a servant for it; – a very troublesome custom, in place of which, some of the most elegant travelled gentlemen have adopted the more convenient German fashion of sending the servants round with the dishes. [German culinary influences, including dinner service had been imported into Russia with

German, Dutch and Swedish cooks by Peter the Great, 1689-1725, and were later to be introduced into France and England as service à la Russe. See chapter VII.

It is not usual to take wine without drinking to another person. When you raise your glass, you look fixedly at the one with whom you are drinking, bow your head, and then drink with great gravity... It is esteemed a civility to challenge anybody in this way to drink; and a messenger is often sent from one end of the table to the other to announce to B— that A— wishes to take wine with him; whereupon each, sometimes with considerable trouble, catches the other’s eye, and goes through the ceremony of the prescribed nod with great formality, looking at the moment very like a Chinese mandarin. (Toasting is further discussed in the final chapter.)

At the conclusion of the second course comes a sort of intermediate dessert of cheese, butter, salad, raw celery, and the like; after which ale, sometimes thirty or forty years old, and so strong that when thrown on the fire it blazes like spirit, is handed out. The table-cloth is then removed: under it, at the best tables, is a finer, upon which the dessert is set. At inferior ones it is placed on the bare polished table. It consists of all sorts of hot-house fruits, which are here of the finest quality, Indian and native preserves, stomachic ginger, confitures, and the like. Clean glasses are set before every guest, and, with the dessert plates and knives and forks, small fringed napkins are laid. Three decanters are usually placed before the master of the house, generally containing claret, port, and sherry, or Madeira. The host pushes these in stands, or in a little silver waggon on wheels, to his neighbour on the left. Every man pours out his own wine, and if a lady sits next him, also helps her; and so on till the circuit is made, when the same process begins again. Glass jugs filled with water happily enable foreigners to temper the brandy which forms so large a component part of English wines. After the dessert is set on, all the servants leave the room; if more is wanted the bell is rung, and the butler alone brings it in. The ladies sit a quarter of an hour longer, during which time sweet wines are sometimes served, and then rise from the table. The man rise at the same time, one opens the door for them, and as soon as they are gone, draw closer together; the host takes the place of the hostess, and the conversation turns upon subjects of local and everyday interest.... Every man is, however, at liberty to follow the ladies... who received us in a ‘salon’ grouped around a large table on which were tea and coffee.


The emphasis on communitas at dinners à la Française made the style adaptable to small-scale dining as the conventions did not proscribe diners helping each other, as later à la Russe was to do. Since giving and sharing food bonds the diners, usual convention was to press guests to eat and drink in quantity so enhancing the degree of bonding. This, however, was modified in those etiquette books which showed a bias towards 'refinement'. Mrs Bradley thought it old-fashioned to press the guests to taste every dish.\footnote{Martha Bradley, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 201.} \textit{Etiquette for Gentlemen} (1838) comments that the country habit of leaving the last portion of a dish suggests that the hosts have not the resources to entertain and need to have 'leftovers' to sustain them later. Among fashionable town diners, any such assumption is considered insulting.\footnote{\textit{Etiquette for Gentlemen, with Hints in the Art of Conversation}, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 36.}

Modern 'Former Soviet' Georgian feasting similarly binds guests through shared excess.\footnote{From personal experience of sharing a meal as an 'honorary man' with Georgians in Ashekelon, 1981.} Food and drink are pressed repeatedly. It is the duty of guests at all-male Georgian feasts to refuse too many helpings and only to consume a refined amount of food, for to suggest that one might be hungry is to lose status by implications of poverty. Among Georgians, who are both competitive and group based, poverty can be equated with shame, since prosperity is predicated on group support. Thus financial poverty is equated with social poverty. Shared excess is reserved for competitive drinking and toasting as the expression of communitas.

Present Georgian parallels with London in the mid-eighteenth century underline the tensions between demands of group and of individual honour. Late eighteenth-century English rhetoric concerning dining was moving from group towards individual honour. In mid, late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century instructions on carving, it was considered crude to heap plates with meat, particularly when serving women.\footnote{John Trusler, 1805, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 4.} This move to individualism was still, however, combined with post-prandial drinking as the
cement of good fellowship. This was an individualism that was viable within an hierarchic structure. Only when individualistic demands superseded those of hierarchy did service à la Russe come to be adopted in a growing range of households.

**DINING WITHOUT SERVANTS**

The effect of labour relations on the serving of dinner is dealt with in greater detail in the literature after 1850 when social changes were faster and more diverse. Even Cosnett differentiates between town (town should be taken to mean London) and country servants: town servants were cited as the more experienced.108 There were usually two stated reasons for doing without or with fewer servants: privacy and economy.

Dumb waiters had been introduced for self-service in the mid-eighteenth century. These were in the same style as the popular tripod tables of the same period and usually comprised three circular trays around a central pillar. Placed near the table, they held all the necessities that would have been handed by a butler, thus enabling diners to serve themselves. Eating a celebratory dinner without servants was not usually suggested, since covert ‘not in front of the servants’ conversation could be reserved for dessert. Kitchiner has his own economical method of dining with fewer servants. He had no place for the role of service at his individualistic dinners. He disliked extravagance, and in his typically individualistic manner suggested:

> Half the trouble of waiting *may be saved* by giving each guest two plates, two knives and forks, two pieces of bread, a spoon, a wine glass and a tumbler and placing the wines and sauces and the *Magazine of Taste &c* as a *dormant* in the centre of the table; one neighbour may help another.109

A dormant was a low platform which stood in the centre of the table on which decorative items, some of which could be edible, were arranged. Kitchiner’s ‘Magazine

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108 Thomas Cosnett, op. cit, p VI.
109 William Kitchiner, op. cit, p. 47.
of Taste' was a wooden cabinet filled with 28 bottles of spices, ketchups and sauces both plain and sweet, a draw with measures, implements and containers for diners to mix sauces to individual taste. I have, so far, never seen or heard of any surviving example of this unique cabinet or seen any reference to it in any other work.

À LA FRANÇAISE AND À L'ANGLAISE: LABELS FOR COSMOPOLITAN ELITES

In cosmopolitan circles dinner à la Française and à l'Anglaise are described as two separate styles, but with only minor differences, such as à l'Anglaise serving turtle soup. If the choice of cuisine reflected predominantly French or English taste, this influenced the choice of service style. À l'Anglaise was a way to differentiate between French or English biased cuisine among a cosmopolitan gourmet elite. Urbain Dubois and Emile Bernard, in La Cuisine Classique, give examples of both menus “svari à l'Anglaise” and “à l a Française”. Their à l'Anglaise menu for twelve conforms to a typically English, if elaborate, dinner. On the the following Dubois menus, to show the structure more clearly, in most cases, I have given only the main ingredient of dishes, but a high degree of elaboration was incorporated into almost every dish.110

The English dinner comprised a first service: two soups, one of which was mutton broth; two fish, salmon and haddock; two rëlèves, lamb and a chicken pie; four entrées, chicken breasts, hare fillets, foie-gras and mutton cutlets. The second service begins with two roasts; ducklings and grouse, with two rëlèves; a fondue and rice croquettes, plus six entremêts,111 sole in aspic, young peas English style, orange jelly, peach pastries, plum pudding, artichoke bottoms and a 'scarlet’ tongue on the sideboard.

110 Urbain Dubois and Emile Bernard, La Cuisine Classique, published by the authors, Paris, 1856, pp. 8-9.

111 Entremêts in medieval feasts referred to entertainments between the courses. Charles Elmé Francatelli, in The Cook’s Guide and Housekeeper’s and Butler’s Assistant, first published 1861, this edition 1884, Richard Bentley & Son, London, p. 488. “Entremêts – or second-course side dishes – consist of four distinct sorts namely: cold entrées, dressed vegetables, scalloped shell fish and lastly, of the infinitely-varied class of sweets...”
Dubois’ à la Française menu for twenty two, is selected, for the most part, from dishes that catered to French taste, slightly altering the dinner’s structure. Two soups are followed by hot hors d’oeuvres, then two réleves, salmon garnished with shrimps and English roast beef, and four entrées, similar to the same section in the à l’Anglaise menu. The second service, as in the English service, begins with two roasts, turkey with foie-gras and barded quails with two flancs (or side dishes): pate de foie-gras and a basket of crayfish. Entremêts were again similar to those on the à l’Anglaise menu with a Charlotte Parisienne instead of plum pudding but there are only four entremêts. These are followed by two more sweet dishes, a Napolitan gateau and an orange croquenbouche which are served as ‘réleves de Rotes’ that is, to replace the roasts.\textsuperscript{112}

References to service à la Russe and to dinner styles as à la Française or à l’Anglaise were only necessary when a new style was introduced. The most marked change in the nineteenth century was the change from serving dinners à la Française or l’Anglaise to à la Russe or demi-Russe. Change was not universal; the à la Française meal, it has been suggested by Laura Mason, still lives on as the North of England’s high tea, with all dishes laid out at once: bread, meat, fish, pastries, sweet dishes and their accompaniments.\textsuperscript{113}

\textbf{FROM À LA FRANÇAISE TO À LA RUSSE}

Service à la Française, as previously discussed, required the host, hostess and guests to do services for one another, to carve, to pass, to serve: intimacy was reiterated through service. This ethos of using practiced skills as a cement for incorporating members within the group explains why there was so much emphasis on acquiring necessary carving skills. A guest might be asked to assist without previous notice. Making punch was also part of the repertoire of, usually male, social graces required for various small

\textsuperscript{112} Urbain Dubois and Emile Bernard, op. cit, pp. 8-9.

gatherings that were part of the à la Française lifestyle. This style, to be successful, depended on a set of values, attitudes and skills held in common by all the diners. These dinners were usually held amongst limited reciprocating groups.

Complete à la Russe, in contrast, removed all elements of service from both hosts and guests. In Cosnett's directions, which were for households at the top of the hierarchy, the trend was towards more services undertaken by servants than was usual lower down the social hierarchy among diners à la Française. More service conveyed 'luxury' with skilled labour deployed to relieve diners of any effort. À la Russe, however, was seen by critics as lesser diners aping wealthier dinner-givers. This was certainly true, but for à la Russe eventually to become the conventional way to give dinners, it had to include more useful functions in its structure than direct imitation of an elite.

The development of à la Russe as a style was, in its early stages, easily adopted in the grandest households. This was because they were already accustomed to a high level of service. It then became a mode for aspirant diners and for adoption or rejection among the growing range of dining circles. À la Russe dining, whether slightly modified into demi-Russe or at its most intricate, was ideally suited to new constituencies within Victorian class society.

Dining à la Française was a fashion that for many dinner-givers changed only slowly into the style of dinner divided into separate courses. From Thackeray's previously discussed comments¹¹⁴ and from the evidence of bills of fare, change to the new fashion was gradual. Complete and radical change among established reciprocating dining circles was, and is, not a usual occurrence, since one set of dinner-givers has to be the innovator and thus break rules of reciprocity with an excessive show of fashionable innovation. As the prevailing culture emphasised an hierarchic bias, radical change would have been entirely inappropriate. As among modern hierarchic suburban

diners, innovation in the choice of menu was limited by the necessity to stay within norms set by the group.\textsuperscript{115}

Twelve DINNERS of Seven and Seven.

FIRST DINNER.

FIRST COURSE.

Stewed Partridge with forced Cabbage.

Fricassee of Chickens.

Tendrons of Veal en Ciboulette.

Soupe a la Julienne,

Pilis Remove.

Mandelot of Eels, a la Dauphine.

Rabbits a la Creme.

Chine an Mutton Broiled.

SECOND COURSE.

Roast Woodcocks.

Feuillansers.

Oysters in Asce.

Apple Pye hot.

Puds au Gratin.

Tartlets.

Roast Pheasants.

This whole volume comprises of elite table settings with their accompanying French influenced bills of fare. The drawing suggests silver dinner-ware which was usual in wealthy households. The baroque design can be seen as integral to French culinary influence. The Modern Method of Regulating and Forming a Table, by several eminent cooks and others acquainted with their art, J. Hughes and S. Crowder, London, 1760, pp. 12-13.
Table-setting for a dinner in May, from M. Bradley, *The British Housewife*, vol. 1, c. 1760.
Frederick Bishop's two 1852 examples of good and bad carving are given to emphasise the continuing importance of this skill for the head of middling households, whereas Bishop also notes that it was no longer a necessary skill in wealthy households where servants carved. Note the subservient parlour-maid and the smirking butler. Frederick Bishop, *The Illustrated London Cookery Book*, London, 1852, pp. 17 & 1.
John Armstrong's table settings for one service dinners. As can be seen from these examples, a single course includes all the dishes that define the meal as dinner, both sweet and savoury, with accompanying sauces. The diagram for January has two soups as 'removes' which would then be replaced at either end of the table by the two roasts shown in the centre. John Armstrong The Young Women's Guide to Virtue, Economy and Happiness, Mackenzie and Dent, Newcastle Upon Tyne, C.1825, opp. p. 48.
DINNER PARTY OF FOURTEEN
Plate I. First Course

1.— Soup
2.— Fish
3.— Vegetables
4.— Melted Butter
5.— Tongue
6.— Chicken
7.— Asparagus
8.— Fish Sauce
9.— Everyone
10.— Wine Glasses
11.— Wine Coolers
12.— Water Caraffs
13.— Brandyladles
14.— Water

No Plates or Wine Coolers are introduced to prevent crowding, they being

The table arrangement for the dessert following the à la Francaise dinner for fourteen diners from James Williams, *The Footman’s Guide: Containing Plain Instructions for the Footman and Butler*, Thomas Dean & Co., London, fourth edition, 1843, plate II.
These selected cartoons are from a slim pamphlet of anti-enqueue. It is entitled "Etiquette: Hints on How to Conduct Oneself in the Society" by X.M.C., illustrated by T. Cowper (pseud). Ackermann & Co., London, 1849. The pages are unnumbered. They illustrate unpunctuality, table manners at an un-French dinner.

Always come late, and so avoid the dull half hour before dinner. It is easy making up for it last time.

After you have attended, if your turn wants you to attend to those of the lady, if there should be two.

Offer the plate sent to you to your neighbor if you wish to be considered well bred.
These selected cartoons are from a slim pocket book of _aunt-erquate_. *Etiquette* Illustrated Hints on How to Conduct Yourself in the Best Society by X.M.C., illustrated by T. Cruikshank (pseud). Ackermann & Co, London 1849; the pages are unnumbered; they include unpunctuality, table manners at an a la Francisco dinner.

Seems are not to be judged
Till you've tasted a bit of bread.

And seeing at an elbow on the table
You can amuse yourself with which you have to little courses by kneading

Be careful when passing your plate to be helped to sing
And besides you horse to the same hand it may
Endanger the next person's nose.

Take wine with everybody who asks you and
If nobody asks you take it when you can
Chapter VII

Service à la Russe: a New Way to Dine

Part II of Service à la Française and Service à la Russe

as Expressions of Hierarchy and Individualism

In this chapter on à la Russe, I detail the many changes that were integral to the new service. Dinner à la Russe became a paradigm for the tensions between established hierarchies and new individualists that were manifest in the way their dinners were served. The degree to which innovation was adopted as appropriate to place and participants was an ever-present source of perceived contamination through errors committed by inappropriate behaviours and choices of style. Fear of errors was reinforced by satire and etiquette manuals. A rhetoric of hierarchic values surrounding precedence and validation was invoked to justify service à la Russe. The structure of the whole event was designed for the suppression of overt competition among individualists in a structure that constrained new diners. By the end of the century, when novelty had lapsed into convention and small parties had adopted the new style, some of the earlier informality was regained.

À la Russe was ideal for strategically intentioned dinner-givers. Larger numbers allowed the addition of more guests to consolidate their networks. Etiquette for strategists is described in The Habits of Good Society (1859), which advises those who "have a large acquaintance and give dinners" to keep a book with the names of guests at each dinner party to prevent "the mistake of asking the same person twice, and bringing precisely the same people together again when their turn comes round."1 This was a realistic combination of strategy with reciprocity inferred.

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Where the role of service was removed from the diners their status was enhanced by the extra service given by butlers and footmen. A description of a grand dinner in *Etiquette for Ladies in Public and Private*, a pocket etiquette book, 1894² (examined further below) offers an ultimate style of service à la Russe where diners are required to do hardly more than eat, behave correctly and converse while adhering to a highly structured set of rules and conventions.

This flight to the genteel was reshaping hostesses’ lives, and was manifest in their withdrawal from all contact with food preparation, cleaning and child-rearing. Stigmatising ‘the natural’, that is, areas considered too close to ‘uncivilised’ origins, contaminated those who aspired to live within ‘civilised’ boundaries. For them any contact with ‘the natural’, such as carving a joint, became stigmatised not only directly by its associations with nature untamed, but also as cooking became a stigmatised task. A logical progression towards greater ‘refinement’ demanded that the onus of serving food should fall to servants. Serving food could be seen as an extension of kitchen work which was carried out entirely by servants.

Thackeray and later Trollope had strong views about changes in dining styles. From their satirical writing, the changes in dining both physical and social are made clear. These included the perceived undermining of communitas following from the removal of personal service from diners to butlers and footmen. The move from tableware appropriate to the status of the household, to plate, china and cuisine that mimicked higher status dinners was also heavily criticised. Dinner could, as satirised in ‘A little Dinner at Timmins’ in *Punch* in 1848,³ be bought in, not just simply as additional cooked dishes and extra servants, but as a whole event. It was attacked as being related neither physically or socially to the dinner-givers’ everyday lifestyle.

³ ‘A Little Dinner at Timmins’s’, *Punch*, Vol. 15, July-Dec, 1848, pp. 33-4. The drawing, especially, suggests this anonymous piece was by W. M. Thackeray.
Increased numbers of strategically invited guests shifted the then onus from a hierarchic reiteration of reciprocal dining to individualistic networking based on male work-based contacts and female card calling and 'at homes'. Such changes that were adopted before full à la Russe became fashionable can be regarded as a paradigm for changes in much of London's upper middle-class social organisation.

**SERVING A DINNER À LA RUSSE**

On entering the dining-room, diners would have seen at once that the dinner was to be served à la Russe. Down the middle of the table would be arrangements of candelabra, flowers and dessert, replacing the courses and removes of service à la Française. The table was also set with salt cellars, water carafes and at each place, or between two places, a menu. Menus were usually written in French or a combination of French and English. A place setting usually comprised four wine glasses for wines served with different courses, separate sets of cutlery and flatware for several courses, and a bread roll wrapped in a dinner napkin folded in one of the many fashionable styles.

As there were no dishes on the table, diners could no longer help themselves and each other, as in the previous style, but depended entirely on butlers, footmen or parlour maids to serve them. Carving was usually done by the butler from a sideboard or table. When the host carved or served soup or fish, the service was called by the French term 'demi-Russe', according to 'The G.C.' author of *Round the Table*. He describes it as where the "... two principal dishes are put upon the table and the rest handed round." Although demi-Russe was similar to Cosnett's elite à l'Anglaise service, it was more closely identified with true à la Russe, as the meal was formally structured by a succession of small courses. It was this tighter structure with a change in the onus of service that defined the new styles. All wine was poured by servants, and only in some circles, after all the other dishes had been served, were diners allowed to serve.

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themselves dessert. After dessert, as before, women left for the drawing room and men stayed behind to drink and, at the end of the century, to smoke, before joining them later.

Many subtle variations in how à la Russe was served, insulated diners in their various social circles and defined each as relatively exclusive constituencies. Like à la Française dinners, à la Russe dinners could also vary the number of courses and the choices within them. With à la Russe, however, emphasis was placed on the number of courses rather than on a multiplicity of choices within each course, as with à la Française. The description that follows outlines how dinner à la Russe differed from à la Française, or à l’Anglaise.

HOW THE RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR DINED IN LONDON IN 1857

Charles Pierce, a friend of Alexis Soyer, was maitre d’hotel at the Russian embassy in London when he wrote his *Household Manager* in 1857. He gives this description of the definitive dinner à la Russe. He was writing for grander diners than Mrs Beeton’s readers, who in her chapter on ‘Domestic Servants’ assumed that readers did not employ any male servant above the status of butler. She made no references to house stewards or maitres d’hotel. The following quotations, however, are from Pierce’s description of *Le Diner à la Russe* which gives all the characteristics of later Victorian dining.

A table, in size proportional for the number of guests invited is prepared, leaving scope for taste to display its decoration. The Russians prefer the round table.5

Most English dinners are shown at rectangular tables, as these were easier to expand with additional wooden ‘leaves’ for larger parties. Jupe’s patent expanding circular

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table, patented in 1835, never became commonplace, possibly because it could not expand enough to allow for the increasingly more fashionable larger dinners. Circular tables over eight or possibly ten places, are no longer intimate since their diameters make the distance between opposite diners greater than at a rectangular table. The Sambournes usually dined at an octagonal table which, therefore, limited their number to eight.8

As diners took their places, they saw their prospective dinner written or printed on:

Choicely-printed menus... placed by the plate of each guest.9

Lesser dinner-givers than those of ambassadorial rank bought their cards in assorted styles and wrote the menus themselves.

Pierce advises that:

Natural flowers, either cut, or in roots, are placed in glass, in china, or in silver vases along the centre of the table.10

Suggested floral arrangements ranged from simple vases of flowers to exotic arrangements of palms, ferns, mosses and festoons of flowers and smilax, with dessert placed among the floral arrangements. Nature was taken from outside, either native plants or exotics from distant places reared in hot houses, and turned into table decorations.

As the table was no longer cleared for dessert, slipovers were necessary:

The mode of laying the cloth is, that the lay-overs, or slips, are placed so as to extend no further than a few inches beyond the plate of each guest, and, at the same time, avoid all interference with the dessert.11

7 Capstan table, patented 11th March 1835 by Robert Jupe.
8 Linley Sambourne's Diary, a table plan for 7th June 1894, 18 Stafford Terrace, London W8.
9 Charles Pierce, op. cit, p. 150.
10 Charles Pierce, op. cit, p. 149.
11 Charles Pierce, op. cit, p. 149.
Slipovers allowed easy removal of the slips when dessert was later served, since it was
no longer either fashionable or practical to serve dessert on bare mahogany. Dessert
was integrated into the dinner. Curtailed post prandial drinking, and in this instance,
one at all, banished that consolidating time out of time, communitas. Communitas no
longer had a dominant place among the new strategic diners à la Russe. It was not that
communitas was banished, but that tensions between hierarchy and individualism had
to be resolved with new arrangements of time, place and participants. All-male dinners,
both in clubs and at home for selected groups, transferred communitas away from the
mixed dinner party. All-male dining will be discussed in the final chapter.

Pierce starts his progress through dinner with hors-d’oeuvres:

Fine and rare fruits of various kinds are usually chosen for the dessert, for the pleasure
they afford by their contrasting beauty:

The ornaments, be they with or without a plateau, are, as usual, placed in the
centre of the table, and the dessert is placed symmetrically around them; taste, at
times, prefers that the hors-d’oeuvres be not placed upon the table, but be offered
from the side table; and in such cases less of them in quantity are required.¹²

Hors-d’oeuvres were a particularly Russian item that were also served in England.
Oysters and lemon with brown bread and butter was the simpler version of hors-
d’oeuvres served at a Samboume dinner.¹³ At lesser dinners the number of items
served as hors-d’oeuvres per dinner would be fewer.

The hors-d’oeuvres may be chosen from any of the following, or the like – as, fresh
caviare, anchovies, pickled oysters, Dutch herrings, sardines, pickled tunny, prawns,
lobsters, smoke-dried ham, and smoked salmon.¹⁴ [A similar English delicacy from
Scotland was ‘kippered salmon’.

Thin slices of white and brown bread-and-butter, with dry toast and pats of
butter, should also be in the room.

¹² Charles Pierce, op. cit, p. 150.
¹³ Marion Samboume’s Menu Notebook, 28th January, 1880, p. 62.
¹⁴ Charles Pierce, op. cit, p. 150.
Small liqueur-glasses of Kumel de Riga, Cognac, Absinthe, and the like, are provocatives for the dinner previously to the serving of soups.\textsuperscript{15}

Drinking spirits with hors-d’oeuvres, however, remained an exclusively Russian practice. Neither was anything served in England, before the diners sat at table. A separate table set with zakuski was a fashion brought to Russia by Dutch, German and Swedish cooks employed by Peter the Great. Lesley Chamberlain\textsuperscript{16} states that zakuski was introduced to obed, the movable main meal, as an introductory separate course of cheeses, salads, and open sandwiches which was integrated with Russian pickles, smoked fish and caviar. This was often served in a separate room before moving on to the table where the main meal was to be served in the Russian fashion. Where ingredients were simple, the growing emphasis on, and need for, elaboration was supplemented by the tableware, such as decorative hors-d’oeuvres dishes.

Beautiful specimens of small china, or of glass dishes, can be brought into use to receive the hors-d’oeuvres, and impart at the same time increase of embellishment and ornament to the table.\textsuperscript{17}

Pierce emphasises the importance of table decor and small pieces des resistances. Large pieces of meat or game, which had reached the greatest height of elaboration when executed by Carême, no longer had a place on à la Russe tables. Arrangements of flowers, dessert and elaborate tableware were employed to replace the piece de resistance and the accompanying arrangement of dishes. Thus à la Russe tables gave plenty of scope for Victorian decorative wares.

At large dinners such as this, there were choices in all the courses.

\textbf{THE FIRST COURSE}

The company being seated, and the hors-d’oeuvres having been handed, the soup being in the room, the dinner commences being served from the side table: when the soup having been served, Sherry and Madeira are generally offered with it.

\textsuperscript{15} Charles Pierce, op. cit, p. 150.
\textsuperscript{17} Charles Pierce, op. cit, p. 150.
Should turtle soup be present, the green-fat, lemon, and cayenne should accompany it, and the iced punch, as usual at the dinner à l'Anglaise.¹⁸

Following the soups are the petit pâtés, or hot hors-d’œuvres of any kind; after which the steward, having portioned the fish for handing (which, if cod or turbot, is usually sliced), it is presented to each guest, having at the same time the sauces, potatoes, &c., handed by a servant following.

Sauterne, Grave, Chablis, or Sherry are the usual wines served with the fish.

The relevés of meat are served in the like way as the fish, these being also carved at the side table, and presented in small dishes with gravy, which is followed by their appropriate vegetables.¹⁹

With the relevés, such wines as Chambertin, Bordeaux, or if more suitable, others, to the host’s taste, are partaken of. The entrées next succeed.²⁰

These were sauced dishes of meat, game or poultry, what had been described in the earlier service as side dishes or flancs.

The finest Clarets are offered with them.

If the cold hors-d’œuvres were placed upon the table at the commencement of the dinner, they should by this time be removed.

The roasts, such as game and choice poultry, which have been also carved at the side table, are now served, accompanied by salad, together with the small picked cucumber of Russia.²¹

Champagne, with either punch à la Russe, à la Beaufort, or à la Brunnow, should now be offered; yet, according to the taste of the company, other wines may be chosen, and so throughout the dinner.²²

¹⁸ Charles Pierce, op. cit, p. 151. With the earlier style, turtle soup was seen as an indispensable component at some English dinners, particularly those emblematic feasts given by the Lord Mayor and Livery companies of the City of London. Service à l’Anglaise was often defined by serving turtle soup and punch.

¹⁹ Charles Pierce, op. cit, p. 151. The term relevé described what had previously been called a remove, a large joint of meat or game.

²⁰ Charles Pierce, op. cit, p. 151.

²¹ Charles Pierce, op. cit, p. 150. Russian pickled cucumbers were less likely to appear on English menus à la Russe.

²² Charles Pierce, op. cit, p. 152.
These punches were ices with alcohol, served to refresh the palate and were often part of high status menus but were not served at Marion Sambourne's more modest dinners.

Pierce continues:

The entremets are next offered, and should be served by the beginning with those of vegetables, and terminating with the sweet entremets of pastries, jellies, and the like; 23

Separation and classification were becoming increasingly intrinsic to Victorian domestic organisation, as they were 'ideally' in all other aspects of living and working. These light dishes had previously all been served as one course. Under the new style sweet and savoury dishes were now served separately as two distinct courses.

...with the vegetable entremêts, the Hock or other Rhine wines are offered, – but the sweet entremêts are accompanied by Champagne or other light wines. The hot entremêts are first handed round, then the jellies, then the entremêts glacé, such as poudin à la Nesselrode, &c. &c. &c.

Where there have been no soufflés, the fondus is always served as the last dish, after which, cheese is or is not served, as may be wished; but if served, it is accompanied by Port wine, and occasionally by bottled porter or ale.

The table is now cleared of the plates, glass, salts, lay-overs, &c., and succeeded by the dessert-plates and clean glasses; following which, –

The dessert is drawn forward near to the guests, and presented, beginning with fresh fruits, and followed by compotes, but reserving the sweets and bon-bons to be handed last. 24

A dessert course that was so tightly structured could not be left to the diners to help themselves as previously. Dessert was now subsumed into the tighter structure of dinner.

The ices next are placed upon the table before the host, and served, the steward receiving the same from him, and passing them on by the servants to each guest, accompanied by ice-wafers and liqueur wines, as required by taste.

23 Charles Pierce, op. cit, p. 152.
24 Charles Pierce, op. cit, pp. 152-3.
With the ices, it is usual to offer at least two sorts of liqueur wines for choice. Most of the Russian nobles have the ices handed round, without placing them upon the table; and this is done before serving the dessert, which should likewise be handed to each guest.²⁵

When dinner à la Russe was served in English households, distinctly Russian details were ignored for à la Russe was being transformed into the standard anglicised way dinners were given.

The finger and mouth-glasses, on a plate, are now placed upon the table before each guest... when after their use, the host and guests rise, and assemble in the drawing-room, where they partake of coffee and the usual liqueurs.²⁶

Pierce’s dinner disregards the English custom of men staying to drink in the dining-room and women meanwhile taking coffee in the drawing-room. Pierce’s à la Russe was, as has been shown, only foreign to English practice in small details. Not only was division of gender roles sharply defined, but dining à la Russe was a way to tightly structure a dinner, with rules for the time of dining, the pace of the meal, and how to serve and eat it. This new way of dining begat a torrent of didactic works for every aspect of the event. Etiquette and household books’ instructions read as idealistic views of a new fashion for outsiders, with reference to status symbols often dropped in among the directions.

There emerged a set of rules to be followed from arrival to departure that could only have slight variations between different dining circles. The whole structure of à la Russe dining imposed a formal etiquette that overtly divided those who knew how to dine from the rest. Formal etiquette, therefore, became important since it became necessary to maintain overt social distance. This was reinforced by being served by servants rather than handing food among the party. If a dish was refused, it could not be interpreted as a direct rejection to the dinner-giver: the impersonal service of servants mediated between hosts and guests. This represented the very opposite of the assumed

²⁵ Charles Pierce, op. cit, p. 153.
²⁶ Charles Pierce, op. cit, p. 153.
intimacy of shared conviviality inherent in the structure of service à l’Anglaise or Française. None of the advice in later etiquette books is directed at more experienced diners to assist those “not so much used to company,” as Martha Bradley had written in 1760. This was a more overtly competitive milieu.

Why should an adapted Russian fashion have been taken up when there were no other Russian influences on the way food was cooked or eaten? A. L. Kirwan, the author of *Host and Guest*, comments in 1864 on how much more civilised the Russians became after Peter the Great— that was after 1697:

... and even since 1815, but no sensible Englishman would think of going to Russia to learn to serve a dinner... I spent much time in Russia... somewhat more than thirty years ago and lived a great deal among Russians of wealth and position, but though there was wealth and profusion and a great deal of expenditure at their dinners, there was nothing like elegance or good taste. The earlier Russian cookery of a century ago was adopted from the Dutch and Germans and all that is valuable in the later Russian cookery has been adopted from the French and English kitchens.

Kirwan was creating a false spectre, for dining à la Russe as practised in England only took its name and basic structure from the Russian original, and was considerably adapted to fit English requirements. *The Servants’ Guide* in 1830 includes a traveller’s description which makes clear the structure of à la Russe while describing a distinctly alien cuisine. Similarly, an à la Russe table illustrated in the Russian bourgeois book, Elena Molokhovet’s *A Gift to Young Housewives* (1897 edition), shows a recognisable but distinctly ‘foreign’ à la Russe table setting.

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30 Elena Molokhovet, *A Gift to Young Housewives*, this edition titled *Classic Russian Cookery*, translated and introduced by Joyce Toomre, Indiana University, Bloomington and Indiana, p. 32. *A Gift to Young Housewives* was first published in 1861. This edition translated from the 1897 edition, Podaroh Molodym Khoziaian, St Peterburg. See illustrations.
To set out a chronology of references to dining à la Russe with their accompanying viewpoints and functions, whether as literature, satire, as a spectator's view of exclusive social life, as instruction in household and etiquette books or from critics and arbiters of taste, is to expose a range of many dining circles. To published evidence can also be added the differing views of varying cohorts, \(^{31}\) age 'sets' who were in the same social circle but whose dining modes had been set at the beginning of their adult social life. These variations were more evident among the more hierarchic groups who were less susceptible to adopting new modes than were strategic individualists. For individualists, capturing the latest fashion is always an important aspect in gaining competitive advantage. 'Sir Gorgius Midas', du Maurier's late Victorian host, is not portrayed as a young man but as a middle-aged arriviste striving after the most fashionable extravagance. The parody is sharpened as he is shown dining in an inappropriate style for his cohort. \(^{32}\)

Separate social circles could define themselves by their adoption or part adoption of the new style. Possible permutations of degree, occasion and status of the diners and their guests in the various circles from about 1829 to the end of the century can be charted from both didactic and literary sources, but charting exactly who ate à la Russe, when and with whom, is complex and only found in fragmentary evidence, that is, except in cases of elite households. Linley and Marion Sambourne appear to have been an exception among upper middle range dinner-givers; they noted à la Russe dinners given and attended, sometimes in both their diaries and in Marion Sambourne's Menu Notebook. \(^{33}\)

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31 Cohorts: age sets.
32 George du Maurier, 'Sir Gorgius Midas' 'Pleasant!', *Punch*, February 24th 1883. See illustrations following chapter VI. Among 1990s individualists, such people are similarly derided when slavishly following fashion regardless of 'taste' and are labelled as 'fashion victims'.
33 See also chapters III, IV and V on Cuisine and Kitchens.
A CHRONOLOGY OF DINING À LA RUSSE IN ENGLAND

Charles Pierce offers a source for the origin of the name in England and France. “Service à la Russe derived from the Czars’ mode of dining” and “was first introduced into France and England at the peace of 1814, out of compliment to the Emperor of Russia”. The Victorian necessity to attribute the beginning of à la Russe to 1814 owes more to the Victorian love of classificatory provenance than to the shedding of true light on when and where dinners first began to be served à la Russe. In 1898 Mrs de Salis attributed the introduction of à la Russe to Francatelli. Fifty years previously Charles Pierce in his turn had fixed on an original date some thirty years before, thereby making à la Russe a fashion from the past but still within the dining lifetime of a cohort.

Thus both Pierce and de Salis found it necessary to accede to the hierarchic need for precedence by giving the origin of dinner à la Russe as just prior to a previous generation. To have attempted to ascribe its adoption to an earlier date would have been easy enough by citing Russian origins, but it would have made à la Russe seem too obscure a fashion to validate. Both Pierce and de Salis were essentially entrepreneurs who needed the validation of hierarchy. Eating habits beyond living memory in the nineteenth century and in popular imagination today, have all the obscurity of the food of distant unknown peoples. What was eaten and in what manner beyond living experience was, and is, frequently seen as either nasty or ridiculous or both. A prime example is evident in the often repeated anecdote about the excessive use of spices in the Middle Ages as a disguise for tainted meat.

In their attributions of dining fashion, Pierce and de Salis both chose hierarchic sources: Pierce, a banquet for the Czar Alexander I, and de Salis, Queen Victoria’s cook, Francatelli. Francatelli had in his turn cited his own royal à la Russe menus. Essentially dining à la Russe was validated by both authors through royal precedence.

34 Charles Pierce, op. cit, p. 328.
35 Mrs de Salis (Harriet Anne de Salis), The Art of Cookery, Hutchison & Sons, London, 1898, p. 50.
Individualistic innovators, within a predominantly hierarchic culture frequently refer to hierarchic ideals for validation among a wider constituency.

Pierce’s reference to the first à la Russe dinner in England could well be a dinner given by the Lord Mayor and Corporation of the City of London on 18th June 1814 for the Prince Regent, the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia. In Luke Clennells’ painting of this dinner, diners are seen eating dessert, and a print depicts the main body eating à la Française. However, the distant high table is indiscernible and was possibly served à la Russe but this is difficult to prove. Records of the organising committee do not show directly if this dinner was served à la Russe, but there are indications that it may have been: city merchants loaned their own domestic silver to decorate the tables. Service à la Russe required more display pieces to fill the spaces without dishes which would have covered the table at à la Française dinners.

To fulfil the propagandising function of this occasion, the tables were filled with symbols of plenty since the underlying message of the dinner was to demonstrate the power and wealth of the City of London. At the same time, table decor was an important part of à la Russe dinners. In contrast, letters and minutes concerning a dinner given for the Duke of Wellington on the ninth of the following month, and arranged by the same committee, it are equally economical on detail. They state that this is a dinner of two courses, whereas there is no such reference for the first dinner. Nor, on this second occasion, was there mention of loaned silver, but then the Duke was not a foreign visitor to be impressed by City power.

36 An Account of the Visit of H.R.H. The Prince Regent with their Imperial and Royal Majesties the Emperor of all the Russias and the King of Prussia to the Corporation of the City of London in June 1814. p. 77.
37 An Account of the Visit of H.R.H. The Prince Regent with their Imperial and Royal Majesties the Emperor of all the Russias and the King of Prussia to the Corporation of the City of London in June 1814. p. 53.
The earliest reliable evidence of I have seen for service à la Russe as a fashionable way to dine refers to the London social season of 1829. The Servants’ Guide and Family Manual (4th edition, 1835) states:

In the arrangement of large dinners there has lately been much novelty introduced: the dinners given at the houses of some noblemen during the season of 1829 having been served in the style termed à la Russe, which consists of the dessert being placed on the table at the same time with the first course, forming together four lines of dishes; after the second course is removed, the dessert, which had been previously arranged next the plateau or candelabras in the centre, is now drawn forward, and then occupies the place of the second course. By this method much bustle is avoided during the repast, especially where a large company is assembled, and it has been found decidedly a very superior plan; the appearance of the table is also extremely elegant. On these occasions, the large joints are usually carved at the side-table, and the entrées, as well as the second-course dishes, are handed round.38

Charles Elme Francatelli’s The Cook’s Guide has a bill of fare dated 1841 that has the note “(Served à la Russe),” but like the description in the Servants’ Guide the dinner is still divided into a first and second course:39

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DINNER FOR 24 PERSONS, RUSSIAN STYLE.


Fillets of salmon, à la Ravigotte. [3 Fishes.] Pike, à la Chambord. Turbot, lobster sauce.


2 Of mutton cutlets, à la Soubise. 2 Of partridges with fine-herbs.
2 Of quenelles of fowls with essence.

SECOND COURSE.

Quailes. [3 Roasts.] Capon.
Grouse.


2 Of artichokes, à la Provençale. 2 Of peach-jellies.
2 Of apricot tartlets. 2 Of Russian salads.

Two dinner menus produced by Francatelli when he was Queen Victoria’s cook, although not labelled à la Russe, suggest from the structure that it was served in that style. The menu is composed of: 2 soup, 2 fish, 2 réleves, 6 entrées, 2 roasts, 2 réleves (orange pudding and souffle omelette), 6 entremets, 2 vegetable and 4 sweet. On the buffet were roast beef and roast mutton and boiled round of beef. This is in keeping with service at the Ascot Dinner at Windsor Castle, described below.40 A typical example of Francatelli’s à la Française menu for 12 is: 2 soup, 2 fish, 2 removes, 4 entrées followed by a second course of 2 roasts, 2 removes (sweet) and 6 entremets three savoury and three sweet. In his preface to The Modern Cook, Francatelli cites two advantages to serving dinner in the Russian fashion: fewer dishes are needed for the first course and “the dinner has a better chance of being served hot.”41

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In 1842, Gibbons Merle, in *The Domestic Dictionary and Housekeeper's Manual*, observes:

**Carving.** Although it is very much the custom, in many wealthy families, for the butler to remove the dishes from the table and carve them on the side-board, thus saving trouble to the master or mistress of the house, and time to the guests, the practice is not so general even amongst what are called the higher classes of society that general instructions for carving will be uninteresting to them, to say nothing of the more numerous class.  

Thomas Webster (1773-1844), in *An Encyclopedia of Domestic Economy* (1844), describes dinner parties "where some people who still prefer to have their dinner put upon the table" as 'old fashioned'. Webster was an architect and geologist who was appointed Professor of Geology at University College, London, two years before his death. There is no indication in the *Encyclopedia* which dining style was consistent with the author's own dining circle. Were successive courses simply considered exclusive to an elite, as Gibbons Merle had written two years earlier? In 1845, *The Family Handbook* more typically made no reference to à la Russe or service from the sideboard, in common with most other recipe, household and etiquette books of the time.

In the 1846 English translation of *La Cuisiniere de la Campagne et de la Ville; ou Nouvelle Cuisine Economique*, the most popular nineteenth-century French bourgeois household book, a footnote states that the knife and fork are changed for every dish and that:

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44 *The Family Handbook: (or practical information in domestic economy; including cookery, household management, and all other subjects connected with the health, comfort and expenditure of a family)*, John W. Parker, London, new edition, revised 1845.
In first-rate houses, the removes are handed one after another, and the servants help
the soup at a side table, whence they hand the plates to each guest. The roast-meats,
and large joints, are also carved upon this table, and replaced in the dishes, which are
handed to each guest successively.46

This was essentially à la Russe without the name.

A French author, Madame Emilie Lebour-Fawssett, writing in London in 1890 on
French dinners: “Of late years the diners à la Russe have been very much in fashion;
still, in the best houses, the diners à la Française consisting of three courses... are
considered the best.”47 Abraham Hayward when studying the dining tastes of wealthy
and noble gastronomes in his book, The Art of Dining, in 1852, describes an à la Russe
dinner at Sir J. M. Stanley Errington’s country house where he says it was: “… most
pleasingly and originally put into practice”. He comments, “The service à la Russe
divides the opinions of the best judges,”48 and so Hayward avoids becoming involved
in the controversy that accompanied its introduction.

Another cautious advocate, in 1856, was Felix Urbain Dubois, French chef to the King
of Prussia, some of whose books were translated from their original French editions,
and who with Emile Bernard wrote La Cuisine Classique, 1856.49 In their introduction
they too make a case for service à la Russe on grounds of the food being able to be
served fresh and hot. They do, however, allow for readers who prefer service à la
Française and advise the use of hot cupboards and hot water dishes instead of changing
to à la Russe. In Dubois’ Artistic Cookery (1870), he says, “The adoption of service à
la Russe is now-a-days a settled matter.”50 Dubois, however, was largely addressing
rich cosmopolitan diners, only one group among the insulated range in styles of dinner-

46 French Domestic Cookery, Combining Elegance with Economy, David Bogue, London, 1846,
p. 25. A translation of La Cuisiniere de la Campagne et de la Ville; ou Nouvelle Cuisine
Economique, 1846.
London, 1890, p. 183.
49 Felix Urbain Dubois and Emile Bernard, La Cuisine Classique, published by the authors, Paris,
1856, pp. vii- xi.
giving in England’s new fragmented dinner-giving circles. This exposes the difficulty of attempting to identify a specific year or even a decade for the change to dining à la Russe in England. In 1890, Mme Emilie Lebour-Fawssett was still advising that à la Française dinners were “the most perfect dinners”, although the trend was for à la Russe and demi-Russe, as shown in the following examples.\textsuperscript{51} 1880 could be considered as the generally accepted date for à la Russe to have become the usual way to dine. At the beginning of the 1880s the Sambournes and their circle were certainly giving à la Russe dinner parties.\textsuperscript{52}

J. H. Walsh extends his advice over a considerable range of incomes. The first edition of J. H. Walsh FRCS, \textit{Manual of Domestic Economy Suited to Families Spending £100-£1000 per Year}, in 1857, reiterates the method without the label ‘à la Russe’, suggesting a mere change of style rather than a wholly foreign service with unfortunate connotations. Between 1854 and 1856, the Crimean war had been fought against the Russians:

\begin{quote}
The fashion is now to put little or nothing on the table and never anything beyond the principal side dishes, which latter are handed round in succession by the servants, and not served by the guests.\textsuperscript{53}
\end{quote}

In 1858, \textit{The American Stranger’s Guide to London and Liverpool at Table} describes great dinners given during the London season. Each place setting had a menu, with the table centre filled with flowers and preserved fruits. Again à la Russe is not mentioned by name. This anonymous author goes on to describe a royal banquet: the Ascot dinner in St Georges Hall, Windsor: “The soup, fish, entrées &c., are handed round…” As it was a Royal dinner, when the meal was finished, grace was said and two anthems played. The ladies of all ranks then left for the drawing room and Prince Albert resumed


\textsuperscript{52} Marion Sambourne’s \textit{Diaries and Menu Notebook} from 27th March 1881.

\textsuperscript{53} J. H. Walsh FRCS, \textit{Manual of Domestic Economy Suited to Families Spending £100-£1000 per Year}, London, 1857, p. 240, No. 648 & No.651, on the same page describes how the dinner is served.
his seat for half an hour before joining the Queen, a case of gender before rank, thus setting an order for lesser dinners.

The Habits of Good Society, a handbook of etiquette for ladies and gentlemen, in 1859, promotes à la Russe, while putting it in its context, noting:

“But because the carving of joints, game &c., at a side table, is a foreign custom lately introduced into this country, there are people still found patriotic enough to prefer carving at the dinner table. "I like the good English custom" says one; "I like to see a host dispensing his hospitality himself." and in the country where some hosts prefer meat to manners, it is still retained.”

He reminds the reader that it was the hostess and not the host who previously did the carving.

In a retrospective view, Elim Henry d’Avigdor (1841-95), under the pseudonym ‘Wanderer’, in Dinners and Dishes (1885), looks back on “the dinner parties of the 40s and 50s” as à la Française dinners. Later, in The Habits of Good Society, when discussing dinner in greater detail, the mid to late 1840s are described as the time when:

Great changes have taken place in the arrangements, and as the Russian plan is now adopted in the best houses, and is, at the same time, the most elegant, I shall not stop to speak of any other. The main point is to secure beauty without interfering with conversation.

In 1859, a posthumous edition of Mrs Rundell’s Domestic Cookery continues with bills of fare à la Française, but makes this concession to what could be described as elite à la Française rather than demi-Russe style: “Vegetables are put on the side-table at large

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56 The Habits of Good Society, op. cit, p. 221.
58 The Habits of Good Society, op. cit, p. 309.
dinners, as likewise sauces, and servants bring them round." Isabella Beeton, in the first edition of *The Book of Household Management* (1861), includes both bills of fare and menus for family and à la Russe dinners. The family dinners are not labelled either à l’Anglaise or à la Française and although not named as such, are set out on the table in the traditional manner.

In Beeton’s dinner for eighteen, the first setting has two soups to be removed by four fish dishes followed by a fresh setting of four entrées. These included curried lobster and fillets of duck and peas. Entrées as a separate course were derided by Thackeray as both pretentious and superfluous. This is followed by the second course which comprises three roasts, a ham and leveret pies. A third course began with two roast game removed by iced pudding and cabinet pudding. Also on the table are six other puddings, a lobster salad and a dish of prawns. Dessert and ices followed as the customary dessert course. Although this dinner is set out and not served as an à la Russe dinner, introducing a separate course of entrées could give an impression of adopting a degree of fashionable innovation. These four courses and dessert are presented in the traditional manner, but instead of a dormant, or covering the whole table with dishes, a vase of flowers occupies the table centre. The earlier à la Française style can be seen in a work of 1760 devoted to table settings, *The Modern Method of Regulating and Forming a Table*, where, to give an example, the centre is covered by the removes in the first course and an apple pie in the second.

59 Maria Rundell (1745-1828), *Mrs Rundell's Domestic Cookery*, first published 1810, revised edition with additions 1859, p. 2. Like Isabella Beeton’s book, the author’s name sold a revised work, but unlike Beeton, this was not an edited work from the beginning, but a long enduring recipe collection.


61 Mrs Isabella Beeton, 1861, op. cit, p 937, No. 2038. See illustration.

Mrs Beeton recommends à la Russe if the household’s resources are sufficient. Two menus⁶³ are given as examples but with no further instructions, suggesting that it was unlikely her readers would need to know more, for they could hire all that was needed. ‘A Little Dinner at Timmins’s’ has everything hired: “You can have everything from FUSBY’S – from footmen to salt spoons.”⁶⁴ Mrs Beeton advised against dinners à la Russe in households without sufficient resources, suggesting that her readers, for the most part, were not among the most fashionable:

Dinners à la Russe are scarcely suitable for small establishments; a large number of servants being required to carve and to help the guests; besides there being a necessity for more plates, dishes, knives, forks and spoons than are usually to be found in any other than a very large establishment. Where, however, a service à la Russe is practicable, there is perhaps no mode of serving a dinner so enjoyable as this.⁶⁵

*Punch* published a satirical ballad, ‘The Dinner à la Russe’, in eighteenth-century style, as if written by a rustic, on going to dinner in Belgrave Square. These two verses are typical of the thirteen.⁶⁶

[8] How some clever we reached the dinner-room;
   And there was the table, without e’er a cover,
   But wi’ basons and baskets o’ flowers in bloom.
   A greenery like, a was spread all over!
   Ri too ral loo, &c.

[12] The feller he brought me a plate o’ fish
   As soon as he zeee the soup I’d swallowed.
   The French fricassees, dish arter dish,
   And slices o’ beef and mutton follered.
   Ri too ral loo, &c.

⁶⁵ Isabella Beeton, 1861, p. 955.
⁶⁶ *Punch*, 4th Jan. 1862, p. 10.
Similarly a cartoon, again has rustics but this time as country squires dining in France, with the caption, “Alleroose is it? Well there! I could a swarn it warn’t beef nor mutton.”

Country people and manual working-class groups were frequently the butt of *Punch* jokes. These verses at once make it explicit that à la Russe was the way the height of society now dines and that all but rustics know what it is. Trollope, in *Framley Parsonage*, first published in 1860, has “handing round... [as done in comfort in elite circles but as] a vulgar and intolerable nuisance among us second class gentry”.

Trollope continues with a description of the hired servant as the familiar greengrocer.

A. V. Kirwan was, by 1864, in *Host and Guest*, taking a fairly reactionary stance, but was one of the body of men mostly writing for other men who ate at clubs and at other all-male dinners and for whom reactionary rhetoric had particular meaning. By removing the male role of carving, Kirwan had good reason to oppose service à la Russe. He lists joints as “frequently mangled”, food served lukewarm or cold, an accusation more usually levelled at service à la Française and he considered that dishes served in succession made the meal unnecessarily prolonged. He acknowledged that “at the grand dinners of which I speak the custom has been and still in great degree is, to divide the dinner into several courses, but this is a practice super-inducing trouble profusion and expense.”

William B. Jerrold’s *Epicure's Year Book and Table Companion* of 1868, is for service à la Française for small friendly dinners, in accord with his admiration for modest

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69 Anthony Trollope, op. cit, p. 185.
71 A. V. Kirwan, op. cit, p. 74.
French bourgeois dining. He recommends à la Russe for state banquets,\textsuperscript{72} and gives an order of service for such a banquet:


[The dessert on the cleared table then has its own order.] 1. Cheeses. 2. Fruits. 3. Cakes. 4. Sweetmeats. 5. Ices.\textsuperscript{73}

In 1872, in \textit{Round the Table}, ‘The G.C.’ mentions the compromise which has by the end of the twentieth century become the traditional way to dine – successive courses of one or two dishes with the carving done at table. ‘The G.C.’ gives an appropriate setting: “For dinners properly so called, where people meet to enjoy their food and the society of their friends, the style called by the French demi-Russe” but the author does recommend à la Russe for:

When by the force of circumstance it happens that a score or more people assemble at the same table to dine the least disagreeable way of getting through the ceremony is to serve the dinner à la Russe.\textsuperscript{74}

The 1880, re-edited edition of Mrs Isabella Beeton’s \textit{The Book of Household Management}, gives bills of fare as unaltered from the first edition,\textsuperscript{75} whereas its companion volume, \textit{Ward and Lock’s The Home Book, A Domestic Encyclopedia}, 1880-1881 states: “Not that dinners à la Russe are universal. Menu cards are indispensable,” and follows by describing the structure: 2 soup, 2 fish, 2 entrées, boiled fowl and roast lamb or mutton “handed together,” “followed by quails and ducklings or any other second course dish.” This reference to a second course dish is an à la Française description and, therefore, possibly more familiar to readers even as

\textsuperscript{72} W. B. Jerrold, \textit{Epicure’s Year Book and Table Companion}, Bradbury Evans, London, 1868, p. 44.

\textsuperscript{73} W. B. Jerrold, 1868, op cit, p. 45.

\textsuperscript{74} ‘The G.C.’, \textit{Round the Table}, Horace Cox, London, 1872, p. 11.

late as 1880. These 'second course' dishes were followed by a hot and cold sweet dish in succession and a cheese savoury.76

In the same year, 1880, *Etiquette of Good Society* advises how both à la Française and à la Russe should be presented. For family dinners, dishes with vegetables and sauces are placed on the sideboard and the joints carved at table, although this is not named demi-Russe.77

The 1890 edition of J. R. Walsh's *A Manual of Domestic Economy*, suggests a return to demi-Russe, whereas by 1892 a re-edited edition of Mrs Isabella Beeton's *The Book of Household Management* takes à la Russe down the social scale: "Dinners 'a la Russe', as they used to be called, are now so anglicised and so common that we find them in the houses of people of very moderate incomes, who hire a carver to do what is properly done by a butler." 78

References to dinner à la Russe or demi-Russe were now perceived, for the most part, as unnecessary since it had become the usual way to serve a dinner. By 1893 Mrs Heaton Armstrong, in *The Etiquette of Party Giving with Hints to Host and Guest*, confirms this view: "Now that dinner à la Russe is universal, there is plenty of scope to decorate the table." She continues: "all the coarser elements of a meal are kept out of sight,"79 and the host no longer sat "in solitary grandeur carving for the company" but was free to entertain "the lady by his side."80

80 Mrs Heaton Armstrong, 1893, op. cit, p. 23.
AN INDIVIDUALIST'S STRATEGIES FOR SERVICE À LA RUSSE

As previously shown, Cosnett’s ideal hierarchy has the butler training and socialising his lowerarchy, the footmen, for their role as waiters. They are not taught just a series of routines as for automata but also how to acquire knowledge that will incorporate them into the hierarchy of skilled servants. The anonymous ‘Lady’ whose directions are given below, however, upgrades her servants. Her directions are an exercise in short term expediency, for the butler has no role in relation to the footman. Over control of labour from a single source of power is tyranny and is typically employed by individualists for short-term gain.

For those who wished to give a dinner à la Russe but could not afford enough help, *The Ladies Guide* of 1861 gives a method of using limited staff to maximum advantage.

"There might be a sort of drill exercise as follows:

Whilst guests are being seated, a person outside brings up soup.

Footman receives soup at the door.

Butler serves it out.

Footman hands it.

Both change plates.

Footman takes out soup, and receives fish at door, whilst butler hands wine.

Butler serves out fish.

Footman hands it (plate in one hand, and sauce in the other).

Both change plates.

Footman brings in entree, whilst butler hands wine.

Butler hands entree.

Footman hands vegetables.

Both change plates.

And so on.

The carving of the joint seems the only little difficulty: this must be placed on the table and be carved by the host; should, however, this be thought too much of a return to a departing custom, the delay required to cut eight portions at the side-table
would not prolong the dinner unreasonably: if the society is pleasant, where is the need of hurry?"81

In all but the larger establishments, dinner parties considerably increased the workload of staff. Extra staff, particularly butlers and footmen, were therefore brought in. They were not always butlers and footman by day – re-employed greengrocers were a favourite, and there were frequent jokes about greengrocers as temporary footmen as satirised in Framley Parsonage.82 More traditionally, grooms were sometimes recruited. Punch included at least one greengrocer as footman and several cartoons of grooms waiting at table.83 ‘Cre-Fydd’ recommends in her cookery book (1866): “Respectable waiters and daily cooks are recommended by Bright Woodward Ironmongers, 182 Albion Place, Hyde Park Square.”84

Caterers who bought in whole dinners were often portrayed as producers of à la Russe dinners, the whole event being comparable to having a theatrical production in the dining room. The menu sets out a programme, the plot of which the diners may not have been familiar, thus giving waiters “the jump” as described in the previous section. This upgridding of diners made the event ripe for satire. Punch has a full description of such a fictional dinner, as in the previously mentioned ‘Little Dinner at Timmins’s’.

There were others such as ‘The Social Treadmill’ in 1857, which includes: “plate from the pawnbroker,” the recurring entrées from the pastrycook’s, and waiters from the greengrocers.85

82 Anthony Trollope, 1860, op. cit, p. 185. Greengrocers may have been chosen as temporary footmen because their produce did not contaminate, particularly when compared to other tradesmen such as fishmongers. Hostesses were also more likely to have contact with greengrocers as they often purchased ‘choice’ fruit for dessert.
83 Punch, Greengrocer as waiter cartoon and groom cartoon, ‘Nature will out’, 14th Dec. 1861. See illustrations.
84 ‘Cre-Fydd’, Cre-Fydd’s Family Fare, The Young Housewife’s Daily Assistant, Simpkin, Marshall & Co., London, 1866, p. cliv.
Employing inappropriate workers as waiters, became a constant necessity in circles where extra labour was required for dinners served à la Russe. Using unskilled footmen and butlers, however, was not a new idea, as can be seen from the Willoughby Household orders of 1572:

If any great press of strangers shall be, then three or four of the meanest sort of servants, as namely the slaughterman, the carter and some of the best grooms of the stable, or such like are to be appointed by the usher to attend in t'hall.86

In that case hierarchy was maintained by the Usher's continual supervision. Although additional servants may not frequently have acted as footmen, they were part of the establishment redeployed rather than strangers employed for the evening, as was likely during the Victorian London season. Houses were rented for a few months in different areas according to the market and the fortunes of strategic dinner-givers. In such changeable conditions, servants hired for a single dinner could, in extreme circumstances, change the whole ambience of a dinner from the expression of established hierarchic power where the serving of the meal is immovable, as in Cosnett's ideal household, to precarious social experiments by arriviste dinner-givers. Dickens, Thackeray and Trollope all used new-style arriviste dining as a vehicle for satire. Thackeray's Snobs preceded Dickens' "Bran new Veneerings" in Our Mutual Friend who employ an alienated butler.87 Trollope's Miss Mackenzie dines with her sister-in-law who wishes to impress her. The dinner is served à la Russe under the dictatorial direction of a hired butler who, before the diners enter the room, insists on setting out the plated soup for show instead of serving it hot from a tureen.88

Two views of how the same style was interpreted are given in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's letter to Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton a year after the publication of Trollope's

Miss Mackenzie (1865), where she describes à la Russe dinners “which may be Greek to an inhabitant of Park Lane but very true to the life of Bloomsbury”.89 This is a typical example of the same views as satirised in Punch from 1850, in an excerpt from the series, ‘The Lion Huntress of Belgravia’, being Lady Nimrod’s Journal of the Past Season:

Heard Mr Grimstone the other night telling of some people with whom he had been dining, a kind who are not in society, and of whom, of course, one has never heard. He said that their manners were not unlike ours, that they lived in a very comfortably furnished house; that they had entrées from the confectioner’s, and that kind of thing; and that they had their lions, the absurd creatures, in imitation of us. Some of these people have a great respect for the Peerage, and Grimstone says that at this house, which belongs to a relative of his, they never consider their grand dinners complete without poor Lord Muddlehead to take the lady of the house to dinner.90

Later du Maurier’s ‘Sir Gorgius Midas’ is frequently shown at dinner making social gaffes (see illustrations). These satirical pieces on arriviste dining have a recurring theme: inappropriate behaviour as travesty. Individualist dinners are shown from a hierarchic viewpoint as annihilating established order. At these dinners commensality exists without communitas, rank is used for individual ends, and all the trappings of rank are misappropriated.

TWO INSTRUCTIVE POCKET BOOKS: DEMI-RUSSE IN 1879 AND À LA RUSSE IN 1894

Descriptions of fashionable dinner-parties were written for aspiring diners. These instructions not only idealise ‘perfect’ elite practice but emphasise strong grid in their timing and serving. These selections from instructions for a fashionable dinner-party are written as if this rich and elaborate style of dining was to be generally admired; it


has all the sycophantic symptoms of elite worship. At the grand demi-Russe dinner described below, carving is given a formality in keeping with the rest of the evening. Carving was a potent and symbolic act, with inferences of power and incorporation. This description of the roasts, red meat at his end, and white meat at hers symbolised male and female distinctions.

A FASHIONABLE DINNER PARTY

At a fashionable dinner-party the following were the arrangements. The guests were twenty-four in number.

Punctuality continued to be important, as it had been at the beginning of the century.

...they began to assemble at half-past seven punctually.

They were received in the library.

More usually they were received not in the library but the drawing-room; a status point is made by suggesting a room not possessed by most readers.

Many practices in the new etiquette books were little different from accounts in earlier ones. Much ideal instruction, particularly for servants, was unchanged; the new style of dining demanded technical changes in the service rather than changes in how servants conducted themselves.

...where the host and hostess were standing ready to receive them, introducing those who were strangers to each other. When all had arrived the butler entered, and, going up to the lady of the house, told her, in a low voice, that dinner was served [as Cosnett had directed.]

After the progress into dinner and the preceding courses:

...a saddle or haunch of Welsh mutton was placed at the master's end of the table,

and at the lady's end a boiled turkey.

92 How to Dine, op. cit, p. 44.
93 How to Dine, op. cit, p. 44 (their emphasis).
94 How to Dine, op. cit, p. 44.
These dishes being removed to the side-tables, very thin slices of each were handed round.  

Not to put joints on the table was a dilemma for à la Russe dinner-givers since it removed this highly charged and symbolic icon from the central viewpoint of the diners. In 1890 Dr Walsh says of dinner à la Russe: “The latter is, however, greatly modified, and altered on the Russian model, but still it does not throw the duties of carving on the servant.”

*How to Dine* continues by classifying the serving of each item:

Ham and tongue were then supplied to those who took poultry; and currant jelly to eaters of mutton. Next came the vegetables, handed round on dishes divided into four compartments, each division containing a different sort of vegetable.

Next, two dishes of game were put on - one before the master of the house, and the other before the mistress. The game (which was perfectly well done) [Nothing raw, bloody and close to its natural state was to be seen at such a refined table.] was helped by them and sent round with appropriate sauce to be eaten with the salad. After this, port wine - the Champagne being early in the dinner. Next, the sweets were handed round. With the sweets were frozen fruits - fruits cut up and frozen with *isinglass jelly* (red, in moulds).  

After sweet dishes had been served, gender classification was symbolised in the choice of cheese on offer: masculine again equating with age, colour and strong flavour, and feminine with the new, white and mild.

On a side-table were *Stilton* and *cream cheese.*

The servants do not leave the diners during dessert, as they had previously in the informality of à la Française. Now, a limited informality was a privilege reserved for

95 *How to Dine*, op. cit, p. 47 (their emphasis).
97 *How to Dine*, op. cit, pp. 47-48 (their emphasis).
98 *How to Dine*, op. cit, p. 48 (their emphasis).
the men who were attended only by the most important servant, but spending: "(not more than a quarter of an hour) over the fruit and wine."  

Under the new dining regime, time governed the evening. How different from the earlier style where time was not emphasised. Informal good-fellowship would not have had much opportunity to flourish in a circumspect fifteen minutes.

The pocket book (6.5 x 9.5 cm.) quoted below was written to supply a comparable readership’s need. *Etiquette for Ladies in Public and Private* was published in 1894. This work included a chapter for young women who were new to dinner à la Russe. It shows that the new dining could be set up as a trial of social acceptability.

> An invitation to dinner must always be considered in the light of a compliment, and it is also an acknowledgement that you belong to the same class as your entertainers. Every country has some particular test of this kind, and in England the invitation to dinner is the hallmark of social equality.  

However, in such an entrepreneurial age there must have been a great deal of accidental rule-breaking. But if rules of etiquette could be used ‘in evidence’ for exclusion from established dining circles, they could also allow the *arriviste*, if important enough, as Benvenuto Cellini had been in an earlier age, to be ‘above the laws’. Jerrold, in the 1865 *Epicure’s Year Book* writes: “...guide books will never make ladies or gentlemen. A manual of etiquette in the possession of a diner out is almost a piece de conviction.”

In the chapter entitled ‘The Dinner Party’, the new diner is guided through the whole intricate procedure:

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99 How to Dine, op. cit, p. 49 (their emphasis).


101 William B. Jerrold, *Epicure’s Year Book and Table Companion*, Bradbury Evans, London, 1868, p. 44.
...At large dinner parties there are generally name cards placed in the plate; at small ones the host remains standing at the end of the table until the guests are seated, so that he may show them where to sit.102

Large parties predictably continued as demonstrations of wealth and status. The diner is instructed as if visiting a distant country – an indication of the social distance that could exist.

When you take your seat at the table you will find your serviette folded in some fantastic form upon your plate with your dinner roll inside it. First take off your gloves, put your table napkin on your knees, and place your roll at the left-hand side of your plate. Two large knives and three large forks, and a silver knife and fork for fish, are laid for each person, together with a tablespoon for eating soup with.103

Earlier fish knives and forks were considered déclassé; fish had been eaten with a fork and a piece of bread. Soup spoons were a later innovation, so that changing fashions among different dining circles could create further difficulties for outsiders.

At your right-hand side is a group of glasses – a wide one for champagne, a small one for sherry, and a coloured one for hock.104

This would have caused no difficulties for the diner as the footman knew which glass to fill.

Your dessert-spoon and fork are not placed upon the table until the sweets appear. If salad is served you will have a separate plate (probably in the shape of a crescent); it will be placed at the left side of your plate. Use both plates at once, eating the salad off one and the meat off the other.

The first course to make its appearance now is usually some description of hors-d’oeuvres. Sometimes a few oysters are served, or else a china dish with three partitions is handed round, each partition containing a separate article, such as prawns, olives, or anchovies. You take which you prefer, and eat it on a little plate with a small knife and fork. After this comes soup, then fish, and next the entrées, then meat, fowl, game, and sweets. Help yourself slowly and calmly, and then you are not likely to spill anything upon the cloth. Some young ladies get into the

102 Etiquette for Ladies, in Public and Private, op. cit, p. 60.
103 Etiquette for Ladies, in Public and Private, op. cit, p. 60.
104 Etiquette for Ladies, in Public and Private, op. cit, p. 60.
foolish habit of passing a number of dishes because they are not quite sure how they should be helped. This is a very silly practice, for if they do so they will never learn.\textsuperscript{105}

Since almost all that could be handed by servants was now delegated to them, the result was an ostentatious (and silent) labour-intensivity that considerably reduced interaction between the diners. Social distance buttressed by formal rules thus became integral to à la Russe dinners. Simple rules as to the order in which to use cutlery were not now enough; much more complicated rules relating the utensil to the food offered a further ‘ordeal’ in this social trial by dinner.

All \textit{entrees}, such as patties, or mince, must be eaten with a fork only; but when sweetbreads, cutlets or game enter into the composition of the dish, a knife is of course requisite. Pastry is usually eaten with the fork alone, but a spoon must be used if fruit is in question.\textsuperscript{106}

A silver slice is an example of yet another specialised item that the new dinner-giver had to acquire in order to serve a fashionable dinner. For the most fashion-conscious there were an ever increasing number of types and styles of tableware to acquire.\textsuperscript{107}

When the sweets have been discussed the table is made ready for dessert. The crumbs are removed with a silver slice;\textsuperscript{108}

Drinking different wines was now integrated into the precisely structured courses, instead of having the pace and interaction set by toasting. (See the final chapter’s section on ‘Wine’.)

the wine-glasses are taken away, and three fresh ones (for claret, port, and sherry) placed beside each person;\textsuperscript{109}

At dessert, fruit was classified by the way each category was to be eaten.

\textsuperscript{105} Etiquette for Ladies, in Public and Private, op. cit, pp. 60-1.
\textsuperscript{106} Etiquette for Ladies, in Public and Private, op. cit, p. 61.
\textsuperscript{107} See chapter VI on Tableware.
\textsuperscript{108} Etiquette for Ladies, in Public and Private, op. cit, p. 62.
\textsuperscript{109} Etiquette for Ladies, in Public and Private, op. cit, p. 62.
the fruit, already on the table, is handed round by the servants, after a dessert-plate, containing a finger-glass on a d’oyley, together with a dessert-knife and fork, has been placed before each person. You must remove the finger-bowl from your plate, placing it on the d’oyley on the left side of your plate, a little to the front.

For nearly all kinds of fruit you require the assistance of the dessert-knife.\textsuperscript{110}

To use cutlery when fingers are the rule, immediately suggested the over genteel rather than the ladylike; yet another trap for new diners.

Peaches are eaten with a spoon and fork. Pears, apples, and oranges are peeled and cut into halves and quarters, and eaten with the knife and fork. Pine-apple and melon are treated in much the same manner. The skin of bananas should be stripped off downwards, and the fruit cut into small pieces. Raspberries, gooseberries, and currants are eaten with the fingers.

The same applies to strawberries, except they are taken with cream.\textsuperscript{111}

The strength of rules and formality continues, but contrasts with a luxurious studied carelessness showing that folding napkins for the next meal was not necessary.

When the ladies appear to have finished their dessert, the hostess gives the signal to retire. This she does by bowing to the lady on her husband’s right hand, and rising from her seat. All the ladies then leave the room, the lady of highest rank going first, the unmarried ladies last, the hostess herself bringing up the rear.

Do not fold your table-napkin, but leave it on the chair you have vacated.\textsuperscript{112}

The ladies now repair to the drawing-room, when coffee is handed round to them almost at once. It is usually handed by two servants, the first bringing a tray with hot milk and sugar, the second the coffee. Tea is afterwards served on the arrival of the gentlemen.

Men would already have had their coffee in the dining-room and then have joined the women in the drawing-room, uniting the diners before the evening ended with symbolic hospitality:

\textsuperscript{110} \textit{Etiquette for Ladies, in Public and Private}, op. cit, p. 62.

\textsuperscript{111} \textit{Etiquette for Ladies, in Public and Private}, op. cit, p. 63

\textsuperscript{112} \textit{Etiquette for Ladies, in Public and Private}, op. cit, p. 63
By 1890 à la Russe was considered the standard way to give a dinner. The whole construct imposed overt formal constraints on diners as only previously it had on servants. This was the ideal set out in the etiquette books. But like all ideals, they were set out as conformity for lesser diners. Among small parties of friends who followed the new fashion, life does not appear to have slavishly imitated etiquette books, as shown by comments the Sambournes made in their diaries after dinners they enjoyed. (This is discussed more fully in the final chapter.)

This more elaborate dining style was still an expansion of the everyday menu, as it was in Maria Clutterbuck's repertoire of dinners. When dining à la Russe had become the standard for entertaining, Marion Sambourne, in her diary, notes their everyday dinners as well as celebratory ones. Daily dinners were plain, although prepared by a cook. An ordinary dinner, as on 12th July 1882, comprised “sardines, curried mutton, cold beef, tomato salad, blancmange”. This would probably have been served demi-Russe, whereas dinner parties would mostly have been served à la Russe. Extra labour was hired by the Sambournes for their dinner parties. A dinner for eight served on 2nd May 1882 comprised: “oysters, brown bread and butter, clear soup, salmon, sharp sauce, cucumber, lobster cutlets, chafroid of pigeon, fricandeau of lamb, cauliflowers, new potatoes, asparagus, quails, salad, baba of rhum, compote of fruit, cream, New Forest cheese, anchovies, etc.”

Elaboration was now not only achieved by expanding the number of dishes, type of food and labour intensity of its preparation but by changing the onus of service towards extra servants. Servants from outside a household were most unlikely to be incorporated into domestic hierarchies. In addition, elaborate dinner-party tableware and decoration added further to the contrast between basic everyday dinners and dinner parties.

113 *Etiquette for Ladies, in Public and Private*, op. cit, p. 63.
114 Marion Sambourne, *Diary* as date and p. 157 of the *Menu Notebook*.
CONCLUSION

Service à la Russe's use of space, time, objects, cuisine and labour was governed by a complex etiquette that contained freebooting individualism within an ordered structure. Dining à la Russe, as can be seen, did not have the flexibility, incorporation and mutuality of service à la Française. As à la Russe became the usual way to dine, small dinner parties, like those given by the Sambournes and their circle, seem to have achieved some return to the idealised 'communitas' of à la Française. As these services remained unchanged it can be concluded that they were ideally suited to the new Victorian class society and the subsequent constituencies that demarcated those who dined in their appropriate social circles from those who did not. Service à la Russe and demi-Russe continues to this day in a variety of styles and continues to serve diverse constituencies.
from:
J.H. Walsh, *A manual of domestic economy suited to families spending from £150 to £1500 a year.*

1879

2662. Diners à la Russe.
The annexed plan shows a table set out à la Russe for a party of eighteen, one-half of it being further illustrated in colours opposite page 702.

1. — Central vase of flowers with four china shells grouped round it.
2. . . . 9. — Glass dishes supported by china figures containing fruits, &c.
3. — Candelsbra.
4. . . . 5. — Glass troughs containing cut flowers.
5. . . . 6. — China dishes containing fruit.
6. . . . 7. — Glass water jugs on stands.
7. . . . 8. — Glass goblets.
8. . . . 9. — China dishes containing fruit.
10. . . . 10. — China vases each containing a plant.
11. . . . 11. — Water carafes.
13. . . . 13. — Napkins with bread and knives and forks arranged.
Elena Molokhovets' *Gift to Young Housewives*, 1897 Zakuski Table. The marked folds in the cloth gives the appearance of a French or Dutch seventeenth century illustration of confectionery set out. Again emphasising the distance in time and place of nineteenth century Russian table fashions.

Top: Table set for serving zakuski. Bottom: Table set for a formal dinner. From Molokhovets, 1897.
Sir Gorgius Midas, the *arriviste* host who reoccurs in the later *Punch*, following a long tradition of anti *arriviste* jokes. Note the liveried footman and the oversized candelabra.*Punch*, February, 24th, 1883.
H.R.H. The Prince Regent with their Imperial and Royal Majesties the Emperor of all the Russias and the King of Prussia dining with the Corporation of the City of London. In this picture the top table is covered with gilt tableware, but it is not clear as to whether the service was à la Francaise, with a high degree of service or true à la Russe. In the accompanying print it appears that the diners in the body of the hall are dining à la Francaise. Painting by Luke Clennell, 1781-1840, The Allied Sovereign's Banquet at Guildhall June 18th, 1814. Reproduced by kind permission of the Bridgeman Art Library.
Felix Urban Dubois' and Emile Bernard's à la Russe table setting, although having the same components as its English equivalent, this style is essentially continental with its central baroque style "dormant" supporting dessert and flowers. Even when allowing for there being only one completed drawing of a place setting, it can be seen that each place is bordered by unencumbered space. Contrastingly, English à la Russe settings usually show the whole table covered with tableware and floral decor. From La Cuisine Classique, Paris, 1856.
This 1890 plate is titled 'Modified à la Russe, instead of the more usual 'demi-Russe'. A soup tureen shows that the service of main dishes is from the table. Also note the palm tree without a visible pot for its roots, suggesting that it is either artificial or it is an example of the technique of substituting a central section of a telescope table with boards that converge round a tall palm with the pot standing on the floor. From Dr John Henry Walsh's final edition of *A Manual of Domestic Economy Suited to Families Spending from £150 to £1500 a Year*, George Routledge and Sons, London, 1890. Also see Chapter VI, the section 'Floral Table Decoration and some other Embellishments'.

A cartoon showing country squires dining in France, with the caption, "Alleroose is it? Well there! I could a sworn it warn't beef nor mutton." making the point that only the most unfashionable diners would not know what service à la Russe was by 1863.*Punch*, 26th Sept. 1863, p. 134.
THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF IMPORTANCE.

**Mrs. Brown.** "We are having some friends to dine with us on the Twenty-Fourth, Mr. Green, and want you to come and help to wait at table, as usual."

**The Family Grocer.** "Oh the Twenty-Fourth, Ma'am! I'm sorry to say I'm engaged on the Twenty-Fourth."

**Mrs. Brown.** "Dear me! How unfortunate! We are so accustomed to you, and you know our wait."

**Mr. Green.** "Yes, Ma'am. Couldn't you write and put off your friends till the week after, Ma'am?"

Two cartoons on the theme of temporary footman serving at à la Russe dinners. The earlier 1861 cartoon has the more traditional stable-boy as an extra footman whereas the 1883 cartoon is of a dinner-giver negotiating a booking to wait at table with the familiar butler’s understudy; the greengrocer. *Punch*, December 14th, 1861 and March 4th, 1883.
Isabella Beeton's *Book of Household Management, Entirely New Edition*, Ward, Lock, Bowden, & Co., 1892. 'Dinner Table with Floral Decorations Arranged for 12 Persons' shows a comparatively simply decorated à la Russe table, with rolls in mitre folded table-napkins, plus a dessert that includes the obligatory pineapple and grapes. The china cabinet and other furnishings suggest that this is a suitable table setting for a middle to upper middle-class household.
A dinner-table set for service à la Russe table, with four glasses, a range of cutlery, mitre folded dinner napkins for each diner, water carafes at the table corners and down the centre a grandiose epengne and dessert dishes. From Isabella Beeton’s Book of Household Management, Entirely New Edition. Ward, Lock, Bowden, & Co. 1892, p.1338.
In the same edition as the à la Russe table above is a table setting for high-tea which Laura Mason defines as the à la Francaise dinner, re-named. Laura Mason, 'Everything Stops for Tea', in Luncheon, Nuncheon and other Meals; Eating with the Victorians, edited C. Anne Wilson, Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd, Far Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucestershire, 1994, pp. 83-84. On this table are tea-cups, at each place, glasses, a knife and fork, plate, napkin and bread-roll. Dishes set out on the table appear to include a tongue, two fowls, a moulded sweet dish, with raised pies on the side-table. Isabella Beeton's Book of Household Management, Entirely New Edition, Ward, Lock, Bowden, & Co 1892, p 1439
Chapter VIII

Tableware: ‘Emblems and inferences of higher things’?  

‘MUTE ELOQUENCE’

Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood describe goods as being neutral and their uses as social: “Goods assembled together in ownership make physical, visible statements about the hierarchy of values to which their chooser subscribes.” As an example of the importance of things, they cite their significance to novelists in descriptions of place, quality and atmosphere. Their first example is the description of Miss Gostrey’s home in Paris in the 1880s and 90s from The Ambassadors by Henry James. Her collection of precious objects and textiles are ‘read’ by the hero as clues to deciphering Miss Gostrey’s character. There were at that time more consumer goods in an increasing number of styles and qualities being made available to a larger section of the population than had occurred before. This nineteenth-century explosion of choice was integral to the rise of a new class society and the description of their furnishings and settings played a key role in many Victorian novels. As a source, however, they can be difficult to use since, like dialogue, their function, as stated earlier, is to support the narrative.

1 Shirley Hibberd, Rustic Adornments for Homes of Taste, first published 1856. This edition reproduced from the 1857 edition by Century in association with the National Trust, London, 1887, preface, 1856.


3 ‘Neutral’ could be paraphrased as goods being ‘value free’ when they are without social context, for example, a teacup in an empty desert.


5 Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, op. cit, pp. 5-11, quote from Henry James (1843-1916), The Ambassadors, first published 1903.

6 See chapter I.
Pierre Bourdieu, in his *Distinction, Social Critique on the Judgement of Taste*, examines choices in France in the late 1970s and describes cultural choices in relation to social status. He maps out associations of taste and ideals in relation to class, work, age and gender. The individuals questioned reveal their places on a social map by the measurement of their cultural (symbolic) and economic capital. New esoteric rules on ‘taste’ made overt the exercise of the new ‘symbolic capital’. Bourdieu describes his term as the acquisition of professional knowledge and its subsequent conversion into reputation and status, giving the holder access to office and a position where their opinions carry weight. No such precision as that offered by interviews is possible for Victorian diners but from the remaining physical and written evidence it should be possible to disaggregate the tastes and ideals of some dining constituencies.

Maggie Lane, in *Jane Austen and Food*, compares the lack of description of ‘material’ in Jane Austen’s novels when compared to Charles Dickens’ (1812-70), ‘who builds up the solidarity of his world through detail’. Jane Austen’s (1775-1817) novels concern characters who are set in bounded hierarchies where any differences in lifestyles were commonplaces understood by the reader. Therefore descriptions of domestic surroundings were superfluous. In contrast the characters in Dickens’ novels are often portrayed as the personification of their material world. Associations of character and material goods describe a social geography of the nineteenth-century’s accelerating movement down grid. The contrasting changes in style from Austen to

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8 The use of the word ‘status’ does not here denote prestige, but is used in the sociological sense of the roles occupied by individuals.
10 As Bourdieu’s questionnaire cannot be used in this work, Cultural Theory is used when attempting to locate choice within the various constituencies, but his concepts of economic and symbolic capital define separate constituencies’ taste in the new class society. See Mary Douglas, *Risk and Blame, Essays in Cultural Theory*, Routledge, London, 1992, p. 107. ‘The self as risk-taker’ makes an analysis compatible with Bourdieu’s individual endowments of social and economic capital.
Dickens exactly reflect this move with the overt use of "things as emissaries" as Asa Briggs described them, when adapting a quotation of T. S. Eliot.12

Dickens' descriptions of new things and new people is shown in his introduction to the arriviste Veneerings with a description that gives them a name that matches a description of their furniture: "Everything about the Veneerings was spick and span new, all their furniture was new, all their friends were new, all their servants were new, all their plate was new."13 In the description of their dinner party, their social situation is made manifest through the sum of its material parts.

The excitement and social dangers presented by the range of dinner wares that could be presented to new diners attending a dinner outside their usual circle is captured in etiquette books such as *How to Dine* (1879)14 and *Etiquette for Ladies in Public and Private* (1894).15 Much instruction is taken up with how and in what order to use cutlery and by introducing new items such as crescent-shaped salad plates. Even if readers were never to dine in such splendour they would certainly have acquired knowledge of a fashionable life and possibly be able to introduce selected items, in due course, at their own tables.

As can be seen from a selection of didactic works, different constituencies chose goods that expressed their cosmologies. Among diverse dining circles, choices of tableware, table decoration and food, particularly the forms in which they were presented, can be seen as the expression of their values and attitudes made concrete.

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13 Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, Vol. I, chapter II, pp. 6-18, Chapman and Hall, London, 1865. This edition 1866, p. 6. Their name was more than a superficial jibe, as veneer, a thin section of superior wood that covered a carcass of cheaper timber, was considered as deceptive construction among arbiters of taste. See final chapter.

14 Ward and Lock, *How to Dine*, Ward, Lock & Tyler, London, 1879. This work and the following, *Etiquette for Ladies*, are the subject of more detailed examination in the chapter VII on service à la Russe.

DINING CIRCLES: INSIDE TASTE AND EXCLUDED OTHERS

As capricious advice on both dress fashions and decor was included in women’s magazines, with occasional articles on dinner-giving, it is hardly surprising that similarly capricious advice should have permeated decorative choices for the home. Decorating their homes in the fashionable mixed styles advocated by lady decorators such as Mrs Haweis, who also wrote *The Art of Dress*, did not go unchallenged by male writers such as Charles Locke Eastlake. As with decor, the same opposition to feminised dinners was paralleled by criticism from male Arbiters of taste. Edward Rickett, in his *Gentleman’s Table Guide*, gives a distinctly misogynous view of dining:

> Hence it is that gentlemen ordinarily understand what pertains to dinner-giving so much better than ladies… Gentlemen keep more in view the real ends, whereas ladies think principally of display and ornament, of form and ceremony – not all, for some have excellent notions of taste and comfort.

Dinners, for those on middle- to upper-middle incomes, required more resources than any other regular home entertainment. Dinner-giving also required judgment in the choice and purchasing of associated goods and services. Pressure among the more entrepreneurial conformed to the latest fashions dictated by an entertainment that grew ever more central to maintaining a social network. Not surprisingly, the dilemmas of choice offered a rich field for didactic authors.

Eastlake and Haweis used the past as a storehouse from which they selected periods and styles for furnishings and tableware to counter current popular fashions. Their works addressed an aesthetic elite who in Bourdieu’s terms, valued cultural over economic capital. Later books quote Eastlake as the authority. Eastlake’s views are

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validated for a wider audience by publishers such as Ward and Lock who incorporated a section on Artistic Homes in their *Home Book*.\(^{18}\)

Domestic furnishings and decorative accessories were certainly potent social markers of inclusion and exclusion. In *Punch* cartoons and copy, decor is sometimes a central point for satire, as in a cartoon of 1883 about ostentatious plate. A nobleman remarks on the arriviste’s “twenty thousand pounds’ worth of plate on the table,” and suggests that it might be a target for robbery. The arriviste responds by saying that he thinks the Lord far too honourable to consider such a thing.\(^{19}\) The background of *Punch* cartoons frequently included detailed decor adding further inferences of ‘taste’.

One likely reason for the continuing popularity of domestic dinner-parties is the weight of expression that could be encapsulated in the decor of the Victorian home. It could tell guests so much more than just the clothes the hosts wore when dining out, or their choice of restaurant. The range of possible choices in style and embellishment made of homes an iconography of ideals and aspirations that could not always be expressed verbally. This was particularly so since conversation at dinners, especially where both men and women were present, was bounded by rules of taste and propriety. Many books were written on ideal conversation, and these are discussed in the final chapter.

Repeated warnings were made by didactic writers against social emulation and ostentation. The illustrations, tableware and furnishings that survive, however, show that these stricures must have been be ignored time and again. There would have been no need for such warnings if dinners had been served in surroundings of aesthetic restraint. G.V., the anonymous author of *Dinners and Dinner Parties or the absurdities of artificial life* (1862),\(^{20}\) has social emulation as a major theme and the subject of a chapter: “The Misery of Those who Attempt to Imitate Belgravia.” In the same way, the


\(^{19}\) *Punch*, ‘Pleasant!’ February 24th 1883.

\(^{20}\) G.V., the anonymous author of *Dinners and Dinner Parties or the absurdities of artificial life*, for the author by Chapman Hall, London, 1862, chapter IV.
“Spangle Lacquers” were characters for *Punch* readers to recognise and ridicule, as this excerpt shows:

And generally speaking, a set dinner party is one of the most melancholy examples we can offer of the feudal service by which the givers hold their *caste* in society. Hospitality, which aught to be the primary cause, is triumphed over by jealousy or ostentation. The whole entertainment is an unmitigated series of attempts at rivalry and display: There is a mute eloquence in every cover and claret-jug upon the table, which seems to say 'See in what style we do things here, compared to your own establishment!' 21

Although Charles Pierce wrote as a maitre d’hotel for those at the top of the dinner-giving hierarchy, he still warns against “a house where ostentation is the ruling passion”. 22 Although wealth was not a suitable subject for dinner conversation, elaborate furnishings in a chosen style could display and imply wealth, making the unmentionable manifest.

Boundary was defined to distinguish between good and bad taste, and ‘correct’ goods were selected by Arbiters of taste such as Richard Redgrave, 23 Charles Eastlake 24 and Henry Cole. 25 These major Arbiters’ views were validated by their public offices as

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23 Richard Redgrave (1804-88), landscape painter and painter of genre pictures portraying social injustice and poverty. Redgrave also organised and lectured at the government School of Design from 1847. He was appointed inspector-general for art in 1857. He had been made an associate RA in 1840 but later refused a knighthood, but was awarded a CB and a state pension.

24 Charles Locke Eastlake (1806-1906) was secretary of the Institute of British Architects, 1871-78 then Keeper of the National Gallery. His most well known work was *Hints on Household Taste*, 1868, which went into numerous editions.

25 Felix Summerly was the pseudonym used by Sir Henry Cole (1808-82). His artistic reputation derived from winning a Society of Arts prize (under the name of Felix Summerly) for design of a tea service produced by the Minton Factory. In 1846 he became a member of the Society which put on exhibitions of Art Manufactures in 1847, 1848 and 1849. He not only was elected Chairman of the Society in 1851, but organiser with Prince Albert, of the 1851 Great Exhibition. Cole’s career was from this period integral to designing exhibitions. He was also a prime mover in establishing what was later to be known as the Victoria and Albert Museum. Cole added views not only on dining but also to comments on tableware in *Aristology or the Art of Dining* by Thomas Walker MA, 1835, re-published and edited with notes and a preface by Felix Summerly, George Bell, London 1881 The edition in the Guildhall library, London is inscribed: “Given to Robert Millar, Esq., Second Master of the Company of Cooks from Sir Henry Cole, 28th April 1881.” Cole’s additions are referred to in the final chapter.

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visible symbolic capital. Asa Briggs describes Eastlake in this context as a "taste-maker". John Steegman notes Eastlake's 'revulsion' for the taste of the 1851 Great Exhibition. Similarly Redgrave was critical in his jury report for the design class of the Exhibition that entirely machine-made ornament was "degraded in style and execution" although he did allow that partial machine-made work could be good. Richard Redgrave also wrote an introduction to *A Catalogue of the Museum of Ornamental Art at Marlborough House*, for an exhibition with standard-setting ideals.

Quentin Bell, in his book on the history of the government's Schools of Design, observed that their debate on design and drawing was concerned with artists' views rather than design for manufacture as their objective. This did not accord with Henry Coles' views of an art education to serve industry. Cole, as the organiser of the 1851 Exhibition, could also be considered as a major Arbiter. In 1852 the Schools of Design were re-organised into the Department of Practical Art, with Cole as Principal. A later major arbiter of design for manufactures was Christopher Dresser (1834-1904) whose *Principles of Decorative Design*, 1873, discussed fitness of designs in relation to their function for furnishings and tableware. These diverse views highlight several fissions among these major Arbiters as between fine art, hand craftsmanship, industrial design and choices of style.

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26 These major Arbiters did not all subscribe to the same aesthetic ideals.
31 Quentin Bell, op. cit., p. 253.
These individualist Arbiters were setting out their own agendas in an overarchingly hierarchic society, and they put forward their views as those of authority. Then, as now, they had their constituencies for taking the role of Howard S. Becker's 'rule creating moral entrepreneurs, crusading reformers', enrolling 'acolytes' to the 'true path'.  33 Both hierarchies and sects draw a boundary not only by defining who they are by the goods they select but also by defining what they reject. Mary Douglas *On Not Being Seen Dead: Shopping as Protest*, emphasises the significance of rejected commodities as equally supportive of identity as those selected.  34 Rejection in the face of a growing choice of both authorities and goods was a potent device which was exploited by both major Arbiters and their followers.

Other didacts were lady decorators such as Mrs Haweis and Mrs Loftie. These authors although well known, often through their journalism, did not have the weighty symbolic capital of the major Arbiters who were validated by major roles in hierarchic organisations. Some anonymous authors of general household works such as household encyclopaedias were outside attribution and merely selected and reflected a range of tastes.

Also, indirectly, etiquette books set 'correct' etiquette in relation to 'correct' furnishings and tableware. Goods, understood as expressing a moral value by those who chose and used them therefore needed to conform to the higher authority of the Arbiters. Shirley Hibberd, in his preface to *Rustic Adornments for Homes of Taste*, first published in 1856, states: “Our rooms sparkle with the products of art, and our gardens with the curiosities of nature. Our conversation shapes itself to ennobling themes, and our pleasures take a tone from our improving moral sentiments.”  35


35 Shirley Hibberd, 1856, op. cit, preface.
There is relatively little information on the choices of specific middle-ranking households. China and glass that is frequently used is inclined to get smashed. In an attempt to find out what styles did dominate, advertisements and catalogues of London shops and warehouses were examined. In addition, the familiar styles in tableware that remain today in antique and junk shops and private and museum collections, are also considered. These are typical of what was rejected in the didactic literature, and the lists of disapproved goods in these works therefore give some idea of what was popular.

VALIDATORS AND THE MUSEUM OF ORNAMENTAL ART

This museum was established by the Board of Trade in 1851. Its stated aim was to purchase “such examples of manufacture shown in the Exhibition as would be useful to be preserved for purposes of study”. The catalogue’s introduction is essentially didactic. “General Principles of decorative art” are set out, as are specific sets of numbered Principles of Decorative Art for “Metal Work, Pottery and Plastic Forms generally.” 36 There are also categories for printed fabrics, carpets, and paper hangings.

The introduction concludes with the injunction that:

Every purchase made, whether the article is of great or small value, may have a corresponding effect in encouraging the production, on the one hand, of what is true and beautiful, or, on the other other hand, of that which is false and monstrous; limiting, in the latter case, our enjoyment to an ignorant search after what is merely novel, and forcing the manufacturer and artizan to direct their minds only to satisfying erroneous want. 37

These are moral values for shopping, sets of rules and criteria for the choice or rejection of household goods. But merely to set out the ideal was not considered sufficient. The

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exhibition also included a section showing “Examples of False Principles in Decoration.” These included examples of ‘wrong’ styles in tableware. Ideas of the appropriate had by now moved away from the classical ideal, particularly when applied to tableware.

Another didactic attempt to set order on a pervasive ‘design chaos’ was Owen Jones’ *The Grammar of Ornament*, first issued in 1856. It is a vast illustrated work of design classification. John Steegman notes its key features, such as ignoring major eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century styles such as rococo, Adam or Empire. Nor were there any contemporary designs and: “Only the distant past was invoked as authority.” Geographic and historic distance are favourite validating sources for individualists.

Hierarchies always set out rules to control taste and expenditure. But for societies with a tendency to move down grid, as in nineteenth-century London and Bourdieu’s 1970s France, new rules from hierarchic authorities on fashion and taste can make choices uncertain for individualists. Nineteenth-century London was not as socially homogeneous as to have formalised rules that could be enforced by a single authority. But this did not prevent ideal standards being set out by entrepreneurs of the aesthetic and the moral, whose rhetoric was addressed to their particular constituencies. Looking to a distant past as does Jones, is not done from a hierarchs’ viewpoint, but from an individualist’s using a selection of periods in a pseudo hierarchic mode. Christopher Dresser also derives most of his designs from similar periods and places as Jones, but he takes a further individualistic step by devising new designs with more reference to

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39 Owen Jones (1809-74), *The Grammar of Ornament*, London, 1856. Before this more well known work he had written on rules for colour in *An Attempt to Define the Principles which should regulate the Employment of Colour in the Decorative Arts*, London, 1852. He was superintendent of works for the Great Exhibition, designing some of it himself.
function than had previously been advocated. True hierarchs do not select but rather trace a continuous line from the past through the present to the future. Jones’ and Dresser’s validating past can be seen as acknowledging the overarching hierarchic bias, but it is not of it, for its purpose is to set up new followers. Arbiters such as Jones and Dresser acted as ‘moral entrepreneurs’ preaching new aesthetic rules to new constituencies.

When furnishing, shoppers had to judge, categorise and select goods from the growing quantities of new manufactures and imports. To exercise their role as definers of symbolic capital, Henry Cole and Charles L. Eastlake FRIBA, had to demonstrate their own ‘symbolic capital’. Unfortunately for these didacts, they did not achieve the influence they desired. The numerous dinner-giving constituencies had every reason to be as diverse in their decorative choices as they were in their styles of dining. For them, ‘erroneous want’ was well served by such wholesalers as Silber and Fleming. Very few of the items in their immense catalogues would have been considered appropriate by Eastlake or Cole. Eastlake knew the place in the wider market of the goods of which he approved: “Even when good design does by any chance get into vogue, it is only in demand for a limited time, and makes way for the last novelty which has tickled the fancy of a fashionable few.”

Eastlake is describing goods selected by individualists at the forefront of fashion which are subsequently produced on a larger scale for a wider middle range of consumers. These middle-range hierarchs are then supplied by wholesalers like Silber and Fleming

41 Christopher Dresser, 1873 and 1973, op. cit., p. 41. Fig. 159 is of a teapot that is designed to relate form to function. It is in a style that would be popularly associated with twentieth-century ‘Art Deco’ design.
who, by including them in their catalogue, validate them as part of a body of goods appropriate to middle-class households. These items were frequently modified versions of more fashionable originals. Goods that were produced in small quantities, demonstrating an appearance of marked individuality, would have been inappropriate for middle-range hierarchs. Eastlake’s taste, when unmodified by middle-range suppliers such as Silber and Fleming, was not popular since hierarchy was the dominant cultural bias in which these individualistic Arbiters such as Eastlake competed. It follows that he and others like him were bound to be perpetually disappointed by the greater number of consumers who did not follow their directions and purchase the ‘correct’ goods. Different constituencies also had their own chosen Validators for decor, as they had for the food they served. For example, styles promoted by specialist shops such as Liberty & Co. which opened in 1875 as an oriental warehouse, supplied customers such as the architect Edward Godwin and his circle.

Low grid individualist dinner-givers exist on shifting sands. To reject the unfashionable is as important as embracing the new. Among individualists with limited resources, rejection can be even more significant than acquiring the new. Obvious extravagance can be seen as overt competition and therefore dangerous, whereas statements of rejection can unify diners and assert competitive values. This applied particularly to nineteenth-century Arbiters’ constituents who were unified against the ‘Philistines’. Strongly bounded, low-grid groups use scapegoating and rejection as their principal method of maintaining group solidarity. But among individualists, as low-grid networkers, overt messages given by rejected value-laden artifacts supply a temporary

44 Silber and Fleming Warehousemen and Importers British and Foreign Manufacturers Agents, Wood Street, Bird Court, Philip Lane, Cheapside London, and 40 Rue de Paradis Poissoniere, Paris. Many of these catalogues are undated, possibly to avoid seeming out of fashion when retailers did not have the latest edition, but they begin from 1872, the date attributed to the first and were well established by the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

45 Alison Adburgham, Liberty’s, A Biography of a Shop, Unwin Hyman, London, 1975, pp. 21-2. Edward William Godwin (1833-86), architect. His company, Art Furniture, produced his furniture designs. He also designed textiles, ceramics, wallpapers and interior schemes. Godwin was a leading member of the Aesthetic Movement.
security, damping the overt competition of acquisition. Rejection and satire as demonstrations of cultural capital can thus be used as virtuous substitutes for acquisition with its intrinsic associations of financial capital.

"TASTE AT THE TABLE" 46

Books of advice on tableware followed one of two strands. They either offered invocations from an eclectic past, as in Ward and Lock, or the specific pasts of the Arbiters. Ward and Lock's *Home Book* states: "Very early in the history of mankind was the truth discovered that the succulent may be rendered doubly appetising when served with fit and tasteful accessories." The writer goes cites Jael from Judges 5, 25, who served the enemy captain, Sisera with butter on "a lordly dish". 47 This biblical example is used like a text to justify the use of decorative tableware. Choice based on styles from selected past eras was also favoured by Eastlake and Pugin. But their selection of justifying pasts was highly specific and demonstrated intellectual capital. Undifferentiated decoration from non-specific pasts was a valuable resource for the more eclectic individualists as can be seen in the majority of eclectic Victorian tableware produced. 48

Ward and Lock offer no description of the style of the "lordly dish" to compare with the rich details described by Pugin and Eastlake. *The Home Book* in some sections certainly quotes Eastlake as an authority but is generally more detailed and chooses many articles that Eastlake would not have tolerated, such as their choice of "Indoor flower stands" 49 in a variety of styles that bore no relationship to the consistency of Eastlake's choices. *The Home Book* is a typical example of the pursuit of an eclectic

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47 Ward and Lock, op. cit, p. 299.

48 A twentieth-century example is offered by the comment of a tourist who said she was interested in the local buildings. When about to be asked if she had any preference as to style and period she pre-empted with, "I like old." [Personal communication.]
gentle style which made acknowledgements to current authorities while augmenting their views with inconsistent selections that had the appearance of 'refinement'.

Philippa Glanville also gives an example of Eastlake being selectively recycled in another Ward Lock publication, *Artistic Homes or How to Furnish with Taste.*50 Like dinner-giving, home furnishing as another area of uncertainty was an ideal subject for publishers to re-issue texts in different formats. Ward and Lock’s *Home Book* offers such an example. It had an *Artistic Homes* section incorporated within it (though this is unattributed).

George Elkington, the manufacturer of electro-plate,51 like other producers of decorative wares such as Minton, covered a great range of tastes. Phillipa Glanville notes that Elkington as well as producing novelties, made electrotypes of antique pieces in the South Kensington Museum.52 In spite of the Arbiters’ rulings, these successful manufacturers were all too aware of their public’s taste and catered to the diverse markets on which they depended.

Mrs H. R. Haweis (Mary Eliza), in *The Art of Decoration* describes “A Modern Eclectic Room” as one that should be “furnished on some reasonable system... a real medley directed with taste”. An alternative style is “a room furnished after a given period” which “must have no anachronisms”.53 Both these dictats give the writer plenty of opportunity to exclude:

Thus a modern eclectic room may admit modern Oriental objects in sufficiently small quantities, Indian, Chinese, African, and the like, modern German, Swiss, and Russian carving and casts, Italian mosaics, Doulton ware, Minton’s china and tiles,

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51  See section below on silver and plate.


and all the best efforts of the nineteenth century. But a medley overstepping the
limits of a few hundred years, unless for some very good reason, becomes unpleasant,
because the incongruities are powerful enough to strike even the most ignorant.54

As well as including what is 'correct' then, a prime function of any Arbiter is to
exclude. The classic Roman dining satire, Petronius Arbiter's *Tremalchio's Feast*,55 is
entirely based on the joke of a supposedly naive guest attending a spectacularly
ostentatious dinner and then writing it up as a catalogue of 'bad taste' in the presentation
of food, furnishings and conversation.

The Victorian tendency to a move down grid was away from hierarchs' bounded
ranking and into individual networks. These networks have a shallower time depth and
consequently have no precedence, therefore making 'good taste' for them potentially
both capricious and fugitive. However, how far the iconography of the table as
encapsulated in the display of tableware, food and flowers was understood by all the
participants is open to question. Kitsch items such as straw hats, and butter churns as
butter dishes may have been proscribed by the Arbiters but Elkingtons' silverware
catalogue had several pages of such things. And Silber and Fleming's catalogue has
ceramic wheel barrows and coal scuttle salt cellars with miniature shovels as spoons.56

Thomas Richards' descriptions of kitsch57 emphasise the entrepreneurial use of eclectic
styles. These could be adapted to mass produce objects with popular appeal to
symbolise great institutions or events. He cites as a typical form of kitsch popular
souvenirs commemorating a national event, such as Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.
The acquisition of such objects united a nation that adhered to a common sentiment but
not a common style. Richards' kitsch objects are essentially based on large themes
reduced to domestic trivia.

54 Mrs H. R. Haweis, 1889, op. cit, pp. 206-7.
55 Petronius Arbiter's *Satyricon: Tremalchio's Feast*, AD 66, Petronius Arbiter, *Collected Works*,
There is also, I would suggest, another kitsch, one closer to a popular definition. This describes it as art or literature which is 'tawdry, vulgarised or pretentious usually with a popular or sentimental appeal'.\(^5\)\(^8\) It does not derive from an ideal and can also describe a style in functional wares such as salt cellars. These were not designed to invoke a unifying sentiment like the Jubilee but as a novelty which was incongruent with the rest of the tableware. Wheelbarrow and coal scuttle salts take the inappropriate and by putting replicas of these objects in the 'wrong place', the table, make a categorisation joke. Once having grasped ideas of the appropriate, to introduce the inappropriate confirms, especially to hierarchs, the appropriate by making it the subject of a joke. This was also an ancient individualist's device. Petronius Arbiter remarks on a bronze donkey with panniers filled with black and green olives at Tremalchio's feast.\(^5\)\(^9\) Mrs Haweis writes:

Conventional forms alone are suited to the humble purposes of sugar-basins, butter-dishes and castors. The butter can never taste sweet which is covered by a straw hat, or a kitten. The pepper shaken out of a top-boot though of silver, must spoil one's appetite. Salt should not be dug out of an animal's back, nor sugar picked up by a harlequin's legs.\(^6\)\(^0\)

For Arbiters these novelties were anathema. Matter out of place was not a joke, it was contaminating. Choosing the correct tableware confirmed their possession of the symbolic capital that underwrote their choices, so the choice of kitsch items could only be seen as flawed judgement.

Elaborate tableware which gave diners broad messages such as overt ostentation, or intimations of sanctity implied by Pugin's Gothic-style bread plate with its moral text,\(^6\)\(^1\) gave dinner-givers an iconography that was easily read by their guests. This was particularly so if the dining room was completely Gothicised down to the last detail, as

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\(^{59}\) Petronius Arbiter, op. cit, p. 55.


Pugin intended. A prime example of this was his dining room designed for the Speaker in the Houses of Parliament, which was rebuilt from 1840 to 1867 after the fire of 1834.

The new style of dining was a subject both for instructive and critical writing and included views on tablewares as an integral part of the texts. W.M. Thackeray in *Dinner Giving Snobs*, and *Punch* (1846-1847), satirise social emulation and regret the passing of the earlier more informal style of dining by encapsulating hierarchic order in tableware: “Fate has comfortably appointed gold plate for some, and bidden others contentedly to wear the willow pattern.”62

Plate or silver dinner services had been high status choices at least until the middle of the eighteenth century and for some well into the nineteenth. Although fine porcelain acquired the same status as plate during the eighteenth century, plate had the added attraction of being unbreakable and could be passed from generation to generation. Plate is in keeping with the type of goods that are typical of the stored capital of hierarchies. Such goods gain status with time and represent the husbanding of resources, both reflections of virtue for hierarchies. A current example of a long-lived hierarchy is the Royal Household, one of the few great households who still use plate.

THE WILLOW PATTERN, WHITE PORCELAIN AND OTHER WARES.

Although when Thackeray wrote *The Book of Snobs* (in 1846 and 1847) there were a variety of designs for china dinner services, Willow pattern had been one of the most popular. His observation makes the point that an easily recognised design has value for making a statement.

Classical designs for tableware as produced by Josiah Wedgwood in the eighteenth century were consistent with classical ideals. Similarly Gothic and Art Nouveau styles in the nineteenth century were more than an eclectic choice of a pattern: they too declared ideals and were usually displayed as part of a chosen decorative scheme which included both architecture and furnishings. Similarly a didactic style which had no direct reference to an ideologically based aesthetic was a fashion for French white porcelain. French white could be associated with a taste for French style (which John Steegman describes as Rococo Revival) and was in full swing by 1850. This French revival was an ideal style to express palatial aspirations.

French white porcelain was produced in both fine and lesser qualities. It was a style acceptable to other dining circles, notably advocates of French bourgeois cuisine such as Douglas Jerrold, who, as ‘Fin-Bec’, wrote in reaction against increasing elaboration. By encouraging French bourgeois style, he linked culinary taste with the simplicity advocated by the Arbiters of decorative taste.

Thomas Turner of Caughley first produced Willow Pattern in 1780 as a cobalt blue transfer design based on an oriental pattern. The design was printed on a paper transfer before printing on to a glazed earthenware body. From that date it has been produced continuously. Patricia O’Hara notes that by the end of the nineteenth century it was being manufactured by over fifty firms. In her paper, ‘The Willow Pattern that We Knew: The Victorian Pattern of Blue Willow’, she records a wide range of literature on Willow from 1849 and extending beyond the end of the century. The legend portrayed in the centre of the design was told in The Family Friend (1849) and was also the theme

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64 ‘Fin-Bec’, William Douglas Jerrold, The Cupboard Papers, Chatto and Windus, London, 1881. This work in particular was on the ‘art of living’ but mostly on cooking and eating. Jerrold’s prime examples are taken from continental bourgeois lifestyles. It is a theme also reiterated in several of his other works.

of a Christmas entertainment. Willow, as Thackeray notes in 1847, was not for elite dinner-services. With the growth of greater choice in dinner services the design was relegated to the resort of unfashionable furniture; below stairs, but subsequently revived with the craze for blue and white oriental china collecting in the 1860s and 1870s. Andrew Lang’s *XXXII Ballades in Blue China*, fashionable ‘Aesthetic’ verse, brought literary validation to a previously disregarded design.

Although Willow Pattern was not an oriental product it could be subsumed into the general category of blue and white wares. Mrs Loftie notes the difficulty of finding “pretty cheap dinner-ware.” Willow was both inexpensive and easily available tableware; it was ideal for those with Aesthetic aspiration but without the money to buy expensive oriental wares such as Nankeen.

Unlike patterned wares, white porcelain was ideal for instant classification. In contrast, both colour printed and painted designs needed first to be recognised for their derived source and style before they could be assessed. An aesthetic choice of plain white, on the other hand, stood out as an unambiguous statement of opposition to prevailing fashions of conspicuous patterns and colours. Richard Redgrave, for instance, writing in the *Catalogue of the Museum of Ornamental Art* in 1853, advocated plain tableware

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69 Sir Henry Thompson (1820-1904) made a valuable collection of Nankeen before, he claimed, it was fashionable. A ‘limited edition’ catalogue illustrated by Thompson and James Whistler was produced in 1879, prior to Thompson selling the collection in 1880. Zachary Cope, *The Versatile Victorian*, Harvey & Blythe Ltd, London, 1951, pp. 82-4.
and dismissed designs such as Pugin's Gothic as 'matter out of place' on the dinner table. He saw it as the sacred serving a profane function.70

'Matter out of place' is another way of defining the appropriate by contrast. Pugin's Gothic tableware design was produced by Minton. Unfortunately for Gothic purists, the Minton factory took a more eclectic view of gothic design. For Minton, it had fashionable potential, so they printed Pugin's designs on 'baroque' bodies. 71 The purists were perpetually affronted by the majority's taste for elaborate decoration, by whom their dictats on form, colour and design were continually flouted. Charles Eastlake, for instance, had very precise views on patterned crockery. In his revised edition of hints On Household Taste (1872), he instead recommends a tea service, mustard pots and salt-cellars in "red 'delf' ware" derived from Wedgwood's original product but in this case made by Copeland of Bond Street. They, however, did not sell well, and he observes: "In this and a hundred other instances it is the public taste which is at fault, and manufacturers can hardly be blamed for discontinuing to bring out works of sound art which are caviare to the multitude."72

Eastlake, as an aesthetic entrepreneur, selects pottery from both the Far and Near East, and recommends selected contemporary designs, though he feels unable to recommend a dinner service. Mrs Loftie suggested as an alternative to a complete service that each course might be served on a different set of plates. She describes the china at a dinner where this was done. The soup and fish courses were served on Nankeen, an imported Chinese porcelain, the meat course on willow pattern and the pudding and dessert on "an old oriental". The butler is described as hating this mixture of sets. "He never

70 Were the 'gothic' chamber pots approved by Pugin? Joan Jones, curator, Minton Museum, Stoke-on-Trent tells me that Minton only produced Gothic-style toilet sets after Pugin's death (1852) in 1871, as can be seen in a Minton Factory Pattern Book which includes a chamber pot with handle decorated with gothic trefoil.


72 Charles L. Eastlake, Hints on Household Taste, Longmans, Green and Co., London, third edition, revised 1872, p. 233. 'Caviare to the multitude': a paraphrase of William Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act II, Scene 2, "... pleased not the million; it was caviare to the general."
expected to see master reduced to not having a ‘Christian dinner set’.”73 All the butler’s hierarchic ideals of order and category are overturned by these aesthetic entrepreneurs who raid resources from long ago and far away to make their cultural capital manifest.

Since the butler does not have the authority of his employer in this matter, he invokes the higher authority of religion. ‘Christianity’ offers ultimate confirmation of the correctness of a complete dinner service with its graduated sizes of plates and dishes for their appropriate courses. Dessert, as it was outside the main body of the dinner, was served within another set of rules and therefore entitled to a separate purpose-made service. Hierarchical judgement was not challenged by differentiating between the current variety of patterns. A dinner service has to look like a dinner service rather than a set of disparate acquisitions. Indeed, John Mallet described a dinner service as, “defined by a single acquisitive act which may be expanded over time with matching pieces”.74 The butler’s objection was in fact based on a long-established tradition of using ceramic dinner services. In Europe majolica services had originated in Italy from the sixteenth century, and by the end of the eighteenth century, ceramic was already well established and being made in a wide range of qualities in England, Europe and China.

From the seventeenth century the Chinese made their porcelain in the shapes and designs needed for the respective cuisines of their customers. They supplied dinner plates, tureens, sauce boats and all the china required for European tables. For the Turkish court they supplied large deep round plates for shared eating from the same dish, whereas the Chinese themselves required different shapes and designs for their own cuisine. Their export wares, however, were often made especially to order. A chosen pattern was frequently stipulated, often with the customer’s own heraldic device on each piece. The patterns themselves were easily integrated with current designs in silver and glass as they were often based on European silver originals.

73 Mrs Loftie, 1878, op. cit., p. 111.
At first these designs were a cheap alternative to plate, but Chinoiserie also became a fashion in its own right. So successful were the Chinese at producing saleable styles that their patterns were translated onto English transfer wares. This anglicised chinoiserie was to become as familiar as all the other styles that had been derived from long ago or far away, such as Classical Greek and Roman designs which had been current since the Renaissance, and Indian Chintz patterns such as the Tree of Life which had been current since the eighteenth century. Mrs Loftie’s dinner-giving friends were using Chinese ware in a distinctly individualistic manner, regardless of the tradition of the complete Chinese dinner service.

Although white porcelain was essentially continental, there was an English near equivalent, creamware, but this was not usually selected by the Arbiters. Unadorned plain creamware had been popular in the second half of the previous century but seems to have been almost forgotten by the new advocates of undecorated ware in the nineteenth. Apart from any technical reasons, creamware was possibly associated with eighteenth-century classicism rather than a nineteenth-century association with cosmopolitan, particularly French, taste. White china had cosmopolitan nuances, a cosmopolitan connoisseurship that emphasized free-ranging male experience. It could be seen as distancing men, and occasionally women, from the minutiae of detailed knowledge of patterns and their sources implicit in women’s time spent shopping.

In Thomas Walker’s *Aristology, or the Art of Dining*, first published in 1835, Walker, a bachelor, warns ‘females’ when concerned with dinners, not to

...indulge their taste for ornament... as in the article of dinners it is misplaced... I prefer a service of plain white ware – the French manufacture, I believe, or an imitation of it – to plate or ornamented china. There is a simplicity in white ware, and an appearance of cleanliness and purity, which are to me particularly pleasing, and a due attention in the right direction.  

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75 Thomas Walker, *Aristology, or the Art of Dining*, first published 1835. This edition with a preface and notes by Felix Summerly (Henry Cole), George Bell and Sons, London, 1881, p. 43. The classical ideals of the eighteenth century continued to hold relevance for classically educated men.
This "right direction" was for simplicity in all aspects of dinner-giving. Felix Summerly, the alias of Henry Cole, as a prime mover in the promotion of approved manufactured designs, adds this footnote to Walker's opinion:

ORNAMENTAL POTTERY

... certainly can be examined best on a plate of white china - and all fine food is worth inspection by any man of taste. What pictures are suggested by red mullet; by a cut of five-year-old mutton with the "Popes eye”; by a little snipe; by fine asparagus; by early potatoes; by all fruits! But the picture is all destroyed on a plate on which forms and colours are scrambled over. Real peaches on painted-on pictures of peaches is vile. I have a plate before me with two heads of woodcock at the top of the rim, the tail at the bottom and the wings at the sides – white in the centre – a mad design! It gives me an indigestion, and is only fit to be put in a chamber of horrors. If you will have a pattern, there is nothing so harmless as the fine old blue-and-white porcelain of the willow pattern. -Ed. 76

Walker makes the case for white china on the grounds of simplicity, a view that accords with classical ideas in relation to dining as discussed in chapter II on eighteenth-century cuisine. Summerly describes simply prepared food on a white plate. His images equate the plate with a piece of white paper, and the food as art work. The food described is simply prepared. There is no mention of the French dishes that were incorporated into the system of 'fonds'. 77 Maybe this artistic comparison owes something to French painting. Contemporary French 'genre' paintings certainly imply the favoured styles of white and blue, and plain white, as typical of French bourgeois eating at home and in cafés.

White or white with a gold or coloured border, and blue and white china are, so far as I have discovered, the only styles shown in French Impressionist paintings of café and domestic scenes. Claude Monet’s picture of a prosperous bourgeois domestic lunch, his picnic scene, Le Déjeuner sur l'Herb, and Pierre-Auguste Renoir’s Inn of Mother Anthony all show white china. Blue and white china is also shown in Camile Pissarro’s

76 Thomas Walker, ed. Felix Summerly, op. cit, p. 45.
77 See chapter II: French influences on English cuisine: the Victorian diner’s culinary past.
picture of a maid washing up, as they are on a breakfast table by Monet. This small selection were all painted before 1881 when Summerly wrote his footnote to Walker’s Aristology. There are yet more French paintings of both white and blue and white porcelain in pictures after 1881, such as Edouard Vuillard’s The Salad Bowl which shows a typical French white salad bowl and a stack of white gold-rimmed plates. These are all pictures that include porcelain among other realistic accoutrements of everyday life, unlike Henri Fantin-Latour’s White cup and saucer of 1864, which has no context, but elevates plain white ware as the focus of artist’s attention.

Summerly is in perfect accord with Walker’s plain male-oriented rhetoric of forty-six years earlier, which in itself could be said to derive from the eighteenth-century classical tradition as discussed in chapter III on cuisine. Summerly adds to the argument, however, by using the new Arbiter’s device of not simply choosing ‘the best’, but defining ‘the worst’. Willow pattern is described as the next best choice to plain white. Many patterned dinner services that were produced during the nineteenth century could, in Walker’s terms, have been considered as feminine choices due to the popularity of their eclectic coloured patterns. The London wholesaler, Silber and Fleming’s catalogues from 1872 to 1895 (though most are undated) include several pages of dinner service design in each volume. The majority are coloured patterns in a variety of eclectic styles. Silber and Fleming only supplied plain white in kitchen ware. Although they did have ranges of simple banded and crested dinner ware, these were far outnumbered by multi-coloured eclectic designs.

When comparing this catalogue with surviving examples of middle-range dinner services, the ratio of patterned to plain or banded white is overwhelming. Survival rates for dinner services from the middle range may not be high but the evidence from personal observation does suggest that white dinner services were rare.

Minton and Co. were the most important nineteenth-century English manufacturers. Their range was wide. They not only produced for Pugin but also made Parian ware for Summerly’s Art Manufactures in 1847 and elaborate china based on the most extravagant French eighteenth-century porcelain. In 1849 they engaged their first French designer, Leon Arnoux. Minton also produced many eclectic designs that sold well, and these are the only named china manufacturer in Silber and Fleming’s catalogue. These essentially middle-range wholesalers have their mark on all their other china products, but the prestige of Minton’s mark was obviously worth more than their own. Minton produced wares that satisfied both the artistic circles and an elite taste for the extravagant French palatial styles of those who could buy the best.

‘The G.C.’ in 1872 advises: “In selecting the china and glass have an eye to form first, and to colour and ornament afterwards.” This is in accordance with aims stated in the catalogue of the Museum of Ornamental Art: “Principles of Decorative Art, particularly applicable to Metal Work, Pottery, and Plastic Forms generally.” Its first listed aim reads: “The form should be most carefully adapted to use, being studied for elegance and beauty of line, as well as for capacity, strength, mobility, &c.” ‘The G.C.’ continues: “The most fashionable dinner services are of plain white, with a small fillet of gold and the arms or the crest and motto of the owner painted on the flat rim of the plates and dishes.” White was often monogrammed or embellished with a gold line round the rim. Edward Ricket, in The Gentleman’s Table Guide, similarly recommends “plain white ware” in preference to plate, an unfashionable choice, or decorated china.

79 Paul Atterbury, historical adviser to the Minton Museum, The Story of Minton, Royal Doulton Tableware, Stoke-on-Trent, undated, pp. 9-10.
83 Edward Rickett, op. cit, p. 33.
Some years later, in 1889, a Mrs J. E. Panton, in From Kitchen to Garret, continues to recommend monogrammed white china that could then be bought quite cheaply. Hers is a book based on short articles from the Lady’s Pictorial “for the British matron who begins her life with little money and less experience”. There are tea services to this design in Silber and Fleming, but no dinner services that exactly match the description, although customers can especially order them. As the main aim of a catalogue of this type was to set out the most saleable, it suggests there was little demand for this style of dinner service.

Mrs Loftie, in her book The Dining Room (1878), a work for “inexperienced housekeepers of small income”, chooses blue and white china if it is of a good enough design, and if not then white as the alternative. But she hardly comes to her conclusions so concisely. Her selected goods are always accompanied, like those of the earlier male Arbiters, by descriptions of proscribed goods. Her impoverished individualist readers are instructed how to make their mark as individuals of taste and discrimination as much by what they acquire as what they reject.

So vitiated has become our popular taste, that it is no means unusual to find the furniture and crockery of the kitchen better designed than that of the dining-room. The one has been manufactured to suit a depraved taste and gratify a vulgar thirst for novelty, and is therefore hideous. The kitchen utensils, being made simply for use have retained that simplicity and solidity of form and construction which are the first elements of household art.

Later she comments:

The difficulty of finding pretty cheap dinner-ware is much greater than it aught to be. [There is a dilemma between good design and individualism.] Willow pattern is good enough for anyone, but the best design becomes tiresome when too often repeated.

85 Mrs Loftie, op. cit, p. VII.
86 Mrs Loftie, op. cit, p. 11.
87 Mrs Loftie, op. cit, p. 106.
Alternative blue and white designs on the market are described as “not as good as they might be,” instead she suggests oriental tinted blue ground china and old imported ware. Another alternative she suggests is Danish blue and white porcelain, but this is “not cheap”.

Although Mrs Panton describes the taste for crests and monograms as a “mania... [as] groping after individuality which is an effort in the right direction”.88 George Sala was more critical of the craze for monograms and crests: “In these days every cad can get a crest from a fancy stationer.”89 Individuality was important to Mrs Loftie’s readers, but it had to be the right style of individuality. Her constituency was closer to bounded low-grid than to free-ranging networking entrepreneurs. Their boundary was drawn against shapes, colours and materials that did not conform to their ideals. Truly free-ranging individualists were at the forefront of fashion and not necessarily bound by aesthetic entrepreneurs’ rules of taste. Though sometimes extreme individualists did follow these aesthetic directions, their attachment was capricious and was merely one fashion choice among many.

Plain or white with a gold line and monogram is not only distinctive, but plain white especially was an overt aesthetic rejection of pattern and colour. It would immediately have been so apparent to any diner, however little they knew about the form and quality of material used. To serve food on white porcelain was, in fact, immediately evident as conforming to a dictat on pure form. The security of pure colour and the proscribing of patterns continues. I recently heard an architect dictating that only plain formica is aesthetically correct and that all patterned formicas are in bad taste. This modern example of Arbiter’s taste similarly invokes the safety of iron rules for design, as I describe in the final chapter on domestic furnishings.

88 Mrs Loftie, op. cit, p. 106.
FRENCH BOURGEOIS TABLES: AN ARBITER'S IDEAL

Another style of French-biased elite dining is described in *The Dinner Question* by Charles Selby under the pseudonym 'Tabitha Tickletooth'. In a quoted letter, there is a description of appropriate dining for those lower down the social scale. 'G.H.M.' describes what their dinner is not: “Of course I do not speak to them of 'dinner at 8', ... of 'Sevres china', 'abundance of flowers', 'child with *corbeille* full of grapes', 'French painted moss', 'a rose or bunch of violets by the napkin'...”90 This was the French palatial style that was the epitome of ostentatious elite dining, anathema to Arbiters as much as the many imitations of French grandeur copied lower down the scale.

Since preferences for French white porcelain were expressed by Arbiters who wrote on cuisine, their culinary choices were French or a combination of French and English dishes, as had long been the tradition in England. Their ideal French cuisine was not always 'haute' but showed a preference for the bourgeois. In keeping with this cuisine, white porcelain is promoted as the most appropriate.

Douglas Jerrold as 'Fin-Bec' wrote with great enthusiasm for French bourgeois cuisine and household management which he constantly and disparagingly compared to English styles:

> We have too lavish a display of silver, or, which is worse, electro plate; too many flowers; over-bearing epargnes, overlofty candelabra, a redundancy of glasses and knives and forks—an over bountiful dessert, blocking the perspective of the table.91

Two mid-nineteenth-century French books written for bourgeois readers both emphasised simplicity in setting out the dinner table. The first, *Science du Bien Vivre* by Paul Benet, recommends a basket of flowers and appropriately simple tableware

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rather than "dormants or surtouts" which are for grand households. A second, which was reputed to be the most popular nineteenth-century middle-class cookery book, Louis Eustache Audot's *La Cuisinière de la Campagne et de la Ville*, gives table plans and instructions for two and three service à la Française dinners. It also has a footnote briefly describing service à la Russe and referring readers who wish to know more to see *L'Almanach de Gastronomie*, 1854. A footnote mentions changing fork and knife with each dish, but notes that not everyone does this. As in Benet's previous book, a change of cutlery is advised after the fish course. Audot's emphasis is not on elaborate provision of cutlery or any other tableware, but, as might be expected, there are pages with illustrations of kitchen equipment and the names of two suppliers in Montmartre.

As English Francophiles repeatedly comment, French bourgeoise cookery is essentially about good food rather than impression management. For Benet, dish covers are described as essential for serving food hot, not as "un vain luxe". The implication here is that bourgeoise households did not readily adopt superfluous tableware. In contrast Minton, for example, sold English middle- and upper-middle class diner-givers a variety of tablewares that French bourgeoise households would have rejected as superfluous.

French bourgeoise ideas on setting the table were entirely in keeping with a taste for plain tableware. It was seen as intrinsic to the presentation of dinner where function and decor are integrated. A good dinner with appropriate linen and tableware expresses all the expectations of the meal as described in Audot's *La Cuisinière de la Campagne et de la Ville* (translated anonymously as *French Domestic Cookery* in 1846). In a

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94 Benet, op. cit, p. 109.

95 Audot, 1868, op. cit, p. 85.
French edition of 1868, the only table decoration recommended is such simple embellishment as the placing of salad oil and vinegar flasks and decanters for vin ordinaire and water. Both the meal and the sum of its parts represent a complete statement. The food itself is understood as having commonly held values, and therefore the functional tableware can be enough to confirm a commensality held in common. It was this French integration of cuisine and tableware, both without superfluous embellishment, that epitomised bourgeois dining and that was idealised by Walker and Summerly in their choice of white tableware.

**GLASS**

A great variety of glassware was made by a variety of techniques from England and abroad, many using colour. As with china and porcelain there were rules about the appropriate use of colour, form and decoration. Coloured glass was often ruled out for any wine except hock. Dr Salviati’s Venetian glass was particularly recommended by Eastlake, and this was based on earlier Venetian styles. Salviati Glass was sold at a shop in St James’s Street (see illustrations).

Eastlake devotes a whole chapter to table glass. He negatively equates “fastidiousness” with spotless table-linen as part of the same taste for flawless glass, observing that, “Now it is easy to see that a demand for this sort of perfection, although it may tend to make admirable housemaids and laundresses, does not do much to promote the interests of art.”

Eastlake’s “housemaids and laundresses” function was to clean. Contact with dirt was stigmatizing, as we have seen, and their skills were therefore dismissed by Eastlake for they did not, in his opinion, involve possession of the cultural capital necessary for the selection of “artistic glass”.

Perfect cut-glass, or any other ‘perfect’, that is uniform, glass could not be considered as ‘artistic’ as it was seen to be contaminated by manufacturing processes.


97 Charles Eastlake, op. cit, p. 242.
 Manufactured wares were considered debased when compared to John Ruskin, William Morris and their circle’s idealisation of production through craftsmanship. Eastlake quotes Ruskin’s opinion of modern table glass: “We ought to be ashamed of it.” Eastlake describes the (Venetian) Murano glass-blowers as appearing “to inherit as a kind of birth-right the technical skill in a trade which made their forefathers famous.”

Unfortunately for Eastlake, not all glass imported conformed to his ideal design of plain glass with single colour ornament. These ‘bad’ examples were multi-coloured.99 Ward and Lock’s Home Book, for instance, mentions imitation Venetian glass produced in England, but warns readers that judgement is required in selecting items.100

Eastlake was essentially an aesthetic entrepreneur, taking elements of an idealised craft, Venetian glass-making, and selecting a style, via Dr Salviati, of Venetian glass from the past. Many Renaissance examples of Venetian glass were in exactly the style that Eastlake so admired. Venetian glass had all the qualities that made it ideal for his purpose. It had the provenance of long ago and far away, and being craft-made possessed individual variations and therefore demonstrated a selective discrimination. Hand-made products were considered closer to nature whereas machine-made products, or those with the appearance of exactly measured design such as cut-glass, were seen as the overt triumph of industry over nature. Eastlake was, as an aesthetic entrepreneur, dictating to lesser low-grid networkers the true choices necessary for inclusion among those possessing demonstrated cultural capital.

Eastlake’s followers were not the only constituency emulating a selected taste. Another taste was for elaborate glassware, eclectically styled and made in a variety of qualities. Silver or electro-plate with cut-glass were combined to make elaborate epergnes. These

98 Charles Eastlake, op. cit, p. 253.
99 Charles Eastlake, op. cit, p. 256.
100 Ward and Lock’s Home Book, op. cit, p. 454.

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were sold by Elkington,\textsuperscript{101} Mappin and Webb\textsuperscript{102} as well as by Silber and Fleming and others.

Cut-glass decanters, carafes, celery glasses, custard glasses and drinking glasses, all in the same design, were sold as comprehensive sets. These sets could represent a considerable capital outlay, particularly when bought for twelve or more diners. Unlike plate, they were breakable, although many designs could be replaced singly according to catalogues such as Silber and Fleming's. The overall effect of a table with its full complement of cut-glass set out for an à la Russe dinner was all that social emulators admired and all that was anathema to Eastlake and his followers. Ward and Lock described the effect of cut-glass as "meretricious glitter".\textsuperscript{103}

Mrs Loftie emphasizes the importance of form in design and gives her own examples from long ago and far away as illustrated outline shapes that were appropriate to her economically-challenged readers.\textsuperscript{104} Her choices emphasized the rejection of ranked battalions of cut-glass, and her recommended wine glasses cost only one shilling each.\textsuperscript{105}

Glass was also ideal for another type of categorisation. For those who could not afford the complete range of cut-glass, Mrs Loftie advises that additional moulded glass should not be mixed with cut-glass. Moulded glass certainly looked of lesser quality when put beside real cut-glass, and this suggests that mixing category and quality were of more concern to the author than aesthetic effect. Mixing goods of different qualities would have been against all notions of ordered rank, an hierarchic error.

\textsuperscript{101} Elkington not only manufactured EPNS but had shops. See section below on Silver and Plate.

\textsuperscript{102} Mappin & Webb became a partnership in 1868. They had a factory in Sheffield and an impressive shop in Queen Victoria Street in the City.

\textsuperscript{103} Ward and Lock's Home Book, op. cit, p. 454.

\textsuperscript{104} Mrs Loftie, op. cit, plates opposite pp. 107 & 97.

\textsuperscript{105} Mrs Loftie, op. cit, p. 95.
SILVER AND PLATE

Mrs Parkes in 1825 remarks:

"Plate is so little affected by fashion... Old plate marks ancestral dignity and therefore is not likely to be despised by the generality of its possessors... But whole services are exclusively the appendages of rank and affluence." 106

Whole plate services during the period lost their place as status symbols among all but the most traditional households. New styles in porcelain and china replaced plate dinner plates, but plate for serving-dishes, candelabra, dessert and decorative items were integral to table decor for the rest of the century.

‘Wanderer’ (Elim Henry D’Avigdor), when writing in 1885, recalled the à la Française dinners of twenty years before. Among people in society:

There was at any rate no attempt at unusual display. There was a great show of plate, but if people had family plate, it was at that period the proper thing to display it on tables and side-board. The unfortunate persons who had no grandfathers hired the family plate from the nearest silversmith. 107

‘Wanderer’ concludes his chapter on “Past and Present” dinners by commenting on the change from “tons of massive plate, or of electro [plate], to [the current fashion for] flowers in graceful glasses”.

Contemporary silver was an ideal material for impressive centre pieces and candelabra, as they had been since the seventeenth century. They derived from the French ‘surtout’, a grand combination of candelabra and fruit bowl. 108 Silversmiths in England during the eighteenth century, developed this craft, and much impressive tableware was as a result produced for great households. For both hierarchs, who continued to use silver in the same manner as their predecessors, and individualists who from the beginning of

108 Vincent La Chapelle, The Modern Cook, Thomas Osborne, London, 1736, first plate
the nineteenth century saw its demonstrative potential, silver continued to decorate
 tables in growing profusion.

After 1840, when silver was too expensive for many dinner-givers, electro plate was
seen as an ideal substitute. Even Eastlake succumbed. "The substitution of electro-plate
for real silver is now so common in households where the latter would have been
regarded as a superfluous luxury, that the sternest advocate of true principles in art-
manufacture would scarcely require an apology for its use."109 Purity in design rather
than the material was his priority.

Electro-plate had been patented by George Richards Elkington (1801-1865) in 1840.110
This more versatile and stronger technique replaced Sheffield plate. Sheffield plate was
sheet silver on a copper base, which was less robust than real silver. Sheffield plate
dishes were often, therefore, made with a silver gadrooned rim to make them more
substantial. Elkington with his cousin, Henry Elkington (1810-1852), manufactured a
wide range of electro-plated goods at their Birmingham factory.

Victorian silver, and plate especially, was frequently criticised by Arbiters as a vehicle
for ostentation, that is until it was used for arts and crafts designs, after about 1880.
But these designs never gained popular appeal. Silber and Fleming's catalogues had
almost nothing to please aesthetic entrepreneurs, and were mostly full of the
transgressions of all their principles. Mrs Haweis describes in some detail the many
'faults' of the contemporary silversmiths and their "feverish attempts to be
'showy'".111 Even when they did use a 'Japonese' style it was mixed and transformed
into an amalgam of the domestic and exotic combined into a decorative excess. A typical

109 Charles Eastlake, 1872, op. cit, p. 289.
110 George Richards Elkington is described in the DNB as the 'introducer' rather than the inventor of
electro-plating. The process was developed from the work of several pioneers, but especially that
of John Wright, a Birmingham surgeon. Elkington took out the patent, paying Wright a royalty.
Elkington, in partnership with his cousin, Henry Elkington (1810-52) manufactured and retailed
Co., pp. 240-1.
111 Mrs H. R. Haweis (Mary Eliza, 1852-98), The Art of Decoration, Chatto & Windus, London,
1889, p. 307.
Silber and Fleming example (see the illustrations) is of a tea and coffee service that could have been used after dinner. It was made in either silver or electro-plate, and is described as "richly chased and engraved".\textsuperscript{112} The chosen oriental theme is related to decoration, rather than the basic shape of the pots. It can be identified, in addition to the 'Japonese' birds engraved on the body, with 'malacca' handles and lotus like knobs on the tea and coffee pots. 'Japonese' designs were also a popular decoration for ceramic dessert sets although the bodies chosen for plates and pedestal dishes were in familiar European styles.

Silber and Fleming's tray, on which the tea and coffee set stands, follows an eclectic style. The central engraving in French Louis XVI style comprised a pierced gallery with beading that appears to refer to the Adam Brothers classicism, with a plaque derived from sixteenth-century Italy at its centre. This tray is supported by feet from a Georgian gravy boat and has naturalistic leaf encrusted handles. Such extreme eclecticism in popular decoration offered ideal material from which Arbiters such as Eastlake and his followers could draw their boundaries. For those familiar, not only with the various Arbiters' rules but the stance of traditional hierarchs who used inherited silver and traditional styles, silver and plate was a rich field for interpretation.

Silver or electro-plate were a favourite combination with cut-glass for epergnes to hold fruit and flowers as table centres. They sometimes appeared as single pieces or as part of a set which could include extra dessert dishes and flower vases to be placed along the table. The 1880 edition of Mrs Beeton's \textit{Book of Household Management} has a colour plate of filled dessert dishes that correspond almost exactly to the examples shown in Silber and Fleming's catalogue. Fruit and flowers in ordered plenty with elaboration in glass and silver plate are here brought together and validated for the new diners. Plates in English cookery books showing the arrangement of dessert had been rare before Beeton's later editions.

CUTLERY AND FLATWARE

Cosnett directs his footmen to change cutlery with each change of plate. Plates were changed with each separate helping. At lesser à la Française dinners there were probably fewer changes. Before the expansion of the flatware and cutlery industries and rises in the acquisition of household goods, ownership of quantities of tableware, for those who were not rich was not relevant. The impetus for the change to à la Russe dining is often given as the wish to display quantities of tableware. If the comparison is between a middling style of à la Française and the equivalent à la Russe then this might be justifiable. But the hierarchic principles on which à la Française was organised allowed for elaborate display at great dinners and a descending order of display according to the circumstances of the household. Important table silver and gold plate produced in England in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries hardly suggests tables covered with modest wares. What was not on the table was displayed, as it had been at fifteenth-century banquets, on a sideboard, as D’Avigdor noted in the above description. In England, dining à la Russe is always described with all or most of the cutlery and flatware as set out at each place.

Sheffield plate was not robust enough for flatware, except for a few lightly used items such as grape scissors, cheese scoops and fish slices. But for most flatware electro-plated nickel silver was an ideal substitute for silver. J. Mechi’s 1841 price list carried Sheffield plate and “British plate, or German silver” described as having “a body of real silver plated over the British Plate”. Mechi writes that he is convinced it would not wear out for twenty years and show it was not made of real silver. Their cost was not “one quarter the price of silver”.

114 Mechi, 4 Leadenhall Street, List of Articles, 1841. John Joseph Mechi (1802-80) had opened his first shop in Leadenhall Street in 1828. His most well known product was his ‘Magic razor strop’. He made improvements to lamps, on his farm in Essex made agricultural improvements and was a juror at the 1851 Exhibition. Unfortunately he was involved in the downfall of a bank and died impoverished. DNB, Vol. XXXVII, pp. 200-1.
Fish knives and forks are often associated with dining à la Russe, but direct connection cannot be established. Before matching fish knives and forks were sold together, Mappin Brothers\textsuperscript{115} in 1858 advertised “table knives for eating fish”. These are not listed with matching forks but were patterned to match the rest of the flatware designs listed in the same advertisement.

For hierarchic diners, the new fish eaters had no special ostentatious function. They ate fish with a fork from their traditional set and a piece of bread or a second fork instead of a knife as knives were made of steel and were apt to ‘taint’ fish. These dinner-givers, most probably already possessed sufficient table silver and their hierarchic status was more likely to be diminished than enhanced by using novel cutlery.

When à la Russe had been sufficiently widely adopted by diners who needed to equip themselves for this new style, canteens previously regarded by hierarchs as vulgar novelty became more widely acceptable. By the end of the century comprehensive canteens of both silver and EPNS were sold. Catalogues such as Harrods’ and Mappin and Webb’s showed the wide range of cutlery and flatware they comprised. George Sala defined the age as one of specialisation, with a piece of cutlery for every possible need.\textsuperscript{116}

These canteens made elaborate and matching forks spoons and knives available to an increasing number of households. Like colourful dinner services, also these were anathema to Arbiters of taste. Since Arbiters’ preferred styles referred to the past, Eastlake selected a detail from the South Kensington Museum for a knife handle of damascened steel. He disliked yellowing ivory handles and his other alternatives are shagreen, stained bone or “dark wood studied with flat steel ornaments”. He admired ‘Apostle’ spoons but did not recommend their re-introduction as: “the bowls were wider and more capacious than we require for that infinitesimal portion of soup which

\textsuperscript{115} Mappin Brothers, 67 & 68 King William Street, London, September 1858, p. 21. This combined catalogue and timetable was “presented gratis” to passengers at London Bridge railway station.

is served out to each guest at a modern banquet.” He argued for “the Spirit” of antique
designs in modern tableware. Forks, he considered, looked lighter if they were three
pronged, as they had been in the previous century, rather than four pronged as in the
new canteens.117

Mrs Haweis follows some of Eastlake’s choices in knife handles. She rejects silver
handles as they “are very cold to the touch, hardly pleasant in winter, though they admit
delicate ornaments which please the eye.”118 This ultra sensitivity is similar to
Summerly’s, who had “an indigestion” caused by the plate decorated with a
woodcock.119 Such extreme physical sensibility to tableware equated well with
Gilbert’s satire on aesthetic feelings in Patience.120 It certainly separated these aesthetic
entrepreneurs from ordinary shoppers who chose tableware without exercising the same
fine sensitivity, their physical well-being not being threatened by ‘bad’ design.

TABLE LINEN

Elaborate napkin folding was not new. François Pierre de La Varenne in his Cuisinier
Français of 1664, gives twenty-six ways of folding napkins including making them into
shapes to imitate a melon, a turkey and a turbot. Peter Brears has found when making
these earlier designs, that they correspond exactly with Victorian and Edwardian
designs. ‘The Fan’ from the 1682 book translated from the French (1682) The Perfect
School for Officers of the Mouth, is repeated in several Victorian books but most
exactly in Herman Senn’s The Art of the Table (1911). Victorian napkin shapes

118 Mrs Haweis, 1889, op. cit, p. 317.
120 W. S. Gilbert, Patience; or, Bunthorne’s Bride, first produced in London, April 1887, in First
Series Original Comic Operas, Chappell & Co., Chatto & Windus, London, undated, possibly
1901. (Page nos. per opera.)
included the mitre and the water lily. The decorative possibilities that napkins offered were eagerly taken up by writers on table settings. There was even a book exclusively on the subject that described 110-120 ways that table napkins could be folded.

In a book written for German visitors to the Great Exhibition in 1851 an anonymous author remarks on the manner in which the English set dinner tables and particularly on the linen. His experience is, nonetheless limited to an à la Française style that begins to take on some elements of the later à la Russe such as introducing separately served dishes within the structure of two or three courses.

That the English surpass all other nations in the serving of meals is demonstrated by the manner in which they set a table. Two table-cloths are always laid on top of each other, and each guest receives three or four differently shaped glasses for the several wines to be drunk with the meal. After the fish and meat dishes the first table-cloth is taken away, and the second course is served on the table-cloth beneath. If a third course should follow, then a third cloth will have been provided so that with every serving of new courses the table looks as if it had been freshly laid. After the last course, even the last table-cloth is taken away, and dessert is served directly on the clean, solid mahogany table top, which has been polished to a mirror-like brilliance. The napkins are similarly changed, i.e. one hands in the white napkin with the last table-cloth and one receives with the dessert plate a new smaller coloured cloth which one keeps on the table rather than spreading it across one’s knees like the first.

This description of using layers of cloths was one of several variations. Slips, narrow lengths of cloth, that covered the area from the edge of the table to the edge of the dessert, were used on à la Russe tables. The main cloth was not usually removed for dessert as this would have disarranged complex displays of flowers and dessert.


122 Napkin-folding, a series of fully illustrated original designs, Newton and Eskell, London, 1891.

Table linen was as much a subject for the fashion and dictats of aesthetic entrepreneurs as it was subject to hierarchic rules for using appropriate materials in the appropriate size, folded and correctly presented. Cosnett gives precise directions on how tablecloths are laid and removed with a set routine.\textsuperscript{124} James Williams (1847) similarly gives the rule for laying a cloth: "...the pattern, or family crest or whatever designs may be woven on the cloth, will then, as it always should do, go up the table."\textsuperscript{125}

Eastlake was traditional enough to write: "A well appointed dinner-table is one of the triumphs of an English Housewife’s domestic care," and to rule "that the cloth shall be of fine and snow white damask." Later, Mrs Loftie was still bound to hold some of the same values. Her book on the dining-room is not quite so low-grid as to disregard all hierarchic proprieties of the society within which her readers operated. Linen has to be clean but as with all her recommendations there are a number of proscribed items. She disliked starched napkins "stiffened in order that the butler may torture it into a fantastic shape".\textsuperscript{126} By 1878, \textit{Cassell’s Domestic Dictionary} noted that large table napkins were now fashionable. Large napkins could more easily be folded into complex shapes.\textsuperscript{127} \textit{Cassell’s Book of the Household} (1889)\textsuperscript{128} suggests learning napkin folding with paper before trying to fold linen. Shapes suggested ranged from the comparatively simple ‘arum’ to the complicated ‘plume’ which was meant to look like three feathers on a stand.

Unstarched linen, being closer to its natural state, was admired by individualists who followed Arbiters. Hierarchs, however, advocated starched and shaped linen as taken from its natural origins and transformed. Well starched fine linen napkins, needed

\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{124} Thomas Cosnett, op. cit, p.112.
\item\textsuperscript{125} James Williams, \textit{The Footman’s Guide: Containing Plain Instructions for the Footman and Butler}, Thomas Dean & Co., London, fourth edition, c.1847, p. 52.
\item\textsuperscript{126} Mrs Loftie, op. cit, p. 86.
\item\textsuperscript{128} \textit{Cassell’s Book of the Household}, Cassell and Co., London, 1889, \textit{Folding Dinner-Napkins}, pp. 72-6
\end{enumerate}
skilled laundering and ironing, and when displayed in complex patterns were an overt demonstration of high grid service and economic capital.

Table linen has to be re-processed for each dinner, and although other tableware has to be washed and polished, laundering is comparatively a more complex process. Clean linen can immediately show signs of use, a small drop of wine on a table-cloth or creases in a table-napkin transform linen from pristine ideal to its used state. ‘Dirty’ linen must be discarded, ready for the whole process to start again. It is a continual cycle of pollution and renewal, a routine requiring both time and skill.

Basic styles of napkin-folding, such as the ‘Mitre’ were part of table-laying, and transformed a piece of linen into a formalised shape to conform with the formalised set table. This was an essential part of the butler’s role. Skilled male servants had become both scarcer and at the same time less popular: through their scarcity they were able to wield more authority and demand higher wages beyond the means of many middle-range employers. Punch had a long running series of ‘John Thomas’ cartoons about superior footmen (see the final chapter). Parlour maids were the alternative choice of middle-range households such as the Sambournes. Mrs Loftie’s lower grid approach was in accord with employing parlour maids. They needed fewer formal skills than did footmen. Well trained butlers and footmen had often been trained in large households where they moved up the hierarchy as they acquired new skills.

Elaborate napkin-folding was included in the 1890 edition of Mrs Beeton’s Book of Household Management, where they are shown as part of extremely elaborate table settings. It is not easy to establish who copied these extravagant designs. Was it a pattern book for wealthy individualists? This seems unlikely as the rest of the book is not extravagant. Was it a repertoire from which novelties could be selected? Or in the manner of much contemporary journalism, were these dream table decorations for aspiring dinner-givers?
For aesthetic households Mrs Loftie gives suggestions of alternative materials that could be used as table linen, such as unbleached table cloths with coloured checks to harmonise with the dinner ware. "We prefer a cloth that has not a ghastly white shining glare."\textsuperscript{129} In contrast, the middle range \textit{Cassell's Domestic Dictionary} (1878/9) describes the qualities of good table linen as that it "should look smooth and glossy".\textsuperscript{130} Mrs Loftie's emphasis, however, is on 'natural' low grid\textsuperscript{131} choices of untreated materials. They should be clean but not shiny and, therefore, overtly not declaring conversion from nature to high grid labour intensity. To distance herself and her readers from mainstream shoppers she describes what she rejects:

As a rule, modern table cloth designs are very poor. The larger and more expensive the cloth, the worse, in all probability is the pattern. One we saw lately had on it an attempt to illustrate the history of the Assyrians: the purchaser was presented with a printed Key to the battle-scenes depicted.\textsuperscript{132}

Mrs Loftie rejects any show of economic capital and emphasises rejection by associating expensive goods with 'bad taste' in design. Her rhetoric as a 'moral entrepreneur' gives her readers an exclusivity that can separate them from 'contaminating' expensive table decor. However her own exercising of symbolic capital also recommended raiding the past. Her readers can make their own napkins with embroidery and drawn thread-work in the style of Saint Cuthbert's grave cloths. This also, in its turn, could have been challenged as the use of sacred designs for a profane purpose as Pugin's tableware had been so criticised by Redgrave.\textsuperscript{133} Division is an ever present danger among non hierarchic groups. Stated values and attitudes are

\textsuperscript{129} Mrs Loftie, op. cit, p. 86.


\textsuperscript{131} Michiel Schwarz and Michael Thompson, \textit{Divided We Stand, Redefining Politics, Technology and Social Choice}, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, 1990, pp. 66-7. See "Myths of Nature" in "The Four Political Cultures".

\textsuperscript{132} Mrs Loftie, op. cit, p. 85.

\textsuperscript{133} \textit{A Catalogue of the Museum of Ornamental Art at Marlborough House, Pall Mall}, 1853, op. cit, p. 23.
always open to challenge from other Arbiters and their followers. By 1880, *The Servant's Practical Guide* re-asserts the place of conventional taste:

> Fine white damask table cloths are the correct style of cloth, and nothing has superseded these or is likely to do so: though fantastic and would-be artistic ladies of a certain class affect to describe oddities or novelties as they please to term them... whereas the heart of a man is wedded to the traditional snowy damask table cloth.  

*Cassell's Domestic Dictionary* does not make value judgements on aesthetics; all advice is about quality and what is fashionable. Double damask is preferred to single damask; it was double the price but justified on grounds of wear and appearance. A crest or monogram worked into the material is described as “very usual”. Larger designs were more expensive than small patterns. This information can be understood as advice for buying table cloths and napkins, but it is also incorporates the purchaser into knowledge of graded and ranked goods.

Understanding the meaning of things was, in hierarchic constituencies, a feminine activity associated with shopping. Some of the aesthetic arbiters such as Mrs Loftie and Mrs Panton seem to be writing for women, whereas Eastlake’s book does not deal with small household details that could only be described as belonging to women’s concerns. He sets out opinions but these are distanced from too much detailed practical advice. Selected opinions from Eastlake are quoted in the section on “Artistic Homes” in *Ward and Lock's Home Book* (1880, 1881), described as a companion volume to *Mrs Beeton’s Book of Household Management* and thus acting as a validator to a middle range readership.

**TABLE DEVICES, TECHNICAL INNOVATIONS AND MECHANICAL NOVELTIES**

Some devices, such as spirit lamps and dishes with hot water jackets could be considered as part of the standard equipment of serving a dinner, particularly a dinner à

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la Française. Both Thomas Cosnett and Urbain Dubois recommend a hot water dish to put dishes upon to keep them warm. Cosnett gives advice about spirit lamps for keeping food warm. À la Française, when well resourced, required warmed plates. With the decline of à la Française dinners, spirit lamps and hot water dishes were unnecessary, except for roasts at demi-Russe dinners.

Carving could be aided by Soyer's tendon separator, which is what are now called poultry shears. Again they do not seem to be a commonplace. Apart from Soyer's promotion I have never found any reference to their use at dinner.

Coffee-making could take place at table. There were several devices with a spirit lamp as the heat source. They appear as illustrations in both French and English books and catalogues, but are not mentioned in any of the texts on dinner-giving. Again emphasis was on service, thus making these devices irrelevant.

**FLORAL TABLE DECORATION AND SOME OTHER EMBELLISHMENTS**

Thomas Walker, in *The Original* of 2nd September 1835, when criticising elaborate dining includes large flower arrangements as another hazard.

> At table intercourse is prevented as much as possible by a huge centre-piece of plate and flowers, which cuts off one half the company from the other, and some very awkward mistakes have taken place in consequence, from guests having made personal observations upon those who were actually opposite to them.

Thomas Walker's forthright views were much quoted by other male Arbiters of taste throughout the century. His exaggerations, like many *Punch* jokes, found a chauvinist readership. Flower arrangements among the middle range of dinner-givers were strictly

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women's business. Even if women did nothing in the kitchen, flower arranging and writing menu cards were their genteel contributions towards putting on a dinner.

Shirley Hibberd, in his *Rustic Adornments for Homes of Taste*, includes a chapter on “Floral ornaments for the table and window”: “It would be rather a difficult matter to sum up all the social qualities of flowers. Do we not always feel welcome, when we find a display of flowers on the table.”\(^\text{139}\) He recommends the “Elizabethan vase”\(^\text{140}\) which allows the floral arrangement to be covered with a glass dome to preserve them. The dome can be removed when required. He also recommends the “Pyramidal Bouquet Stand”\(^\text{141}\) which consists of a short pillar topped with a green metal pierced cone to take flower stems. There are none of the special table arrangements that were part of an à la Russe table. Earlier à la Française arrangements often just specified a single vase of flowers in the centre of the table plan. Shirley Hibberd’s warning against too severe and unnatural a symmetry in flower arrangements, was still being quoted twenty-four years later in *Ward and Lock’s Home Book*. Excessive symmetry is described as ‘unnatural’, as plants do not usually grow with an exact symmetry.\(^\text{142}\)

Flowers as ‘captured nature’, whether simply or formally arranged, in hierarchic or individualistic styles, were an expressive table icon. Floral ostentation was cheaper to set out than expensive tableware. Ward and Lock warn their readers:

> To decorate a dinner-table in a manner which conveys to the minds of the guests that a great effort has been made is unwise. Such decoration is in place at a ball supper, or some festivity not of constant occurrence, but it is scarcely suitable to an ordinary dinner party.\(^\text{143}\)

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139 Shirley Hibberd, op. cit, p. 176.
140 Shirley Hibberd, op. cit, p. 179.
141 Shirley Hibberd, op. cit, p. 180.
This is an invocation of hierarchic values to rank celebratory events by having amounts of floral decor appropriate to the occasion. These assertions of hierarchic values are typical of didactic household books for new diners, although at the same time the latest fashion has to be promoted and the old style discarded. Ward and Lock’s advice continues as follows:

For this reason low baskets, vases etc. filled with choice flowers, have a better effect than the elaborate arrangements of small tin troughs forming patterns on the table which were introduced some years back, and were so largely patronised.\(^{144}\)

More ‘natural’ arrangements represent a movement down grid. It is women’s aesthetic discrimination that is appealed to: “It is much to be wished that ladies would acquire the habit of arranging their flowers themselves.” Not only is this a suitable task for them but gardeners are blamed for arrangements that are “too formal” and servants with filling “every vase too full and eliminate every particle of leafage”. The style promoted by the author is in keeping with a new late nineteenth-century move down grid towards the style of Art Nouveau which was composed of free flowing natural forms.

‘The G.C.’s *Round the Table* (1871) also advises “the lady of the house” to arrange the flowers. He suggests that plants rather than cut flowers are more economical. Leaves alone are suggested as an alternative when flowers are not available: “I once saw a stand of this sort set out entirely with leaves of vegetables, and very pretty it looked.”\(^{145}\)

Quality is never unregarded by elite books, and the term “choice” as a description of quality is widely applied, not just to flowers but also to descriptions of expensive dessert fruit. Like “recherché”, it too was a favourite adjective for rare produce or ‘haute cuisine’. To emphasize the hostess’s personal selection, she is advised to choose specimen glasses that hold: “A [single] rosebud, with a leaf and spray of maidenhair,” but these small vases, which were set between two, or in front of each diner in alternating colours, were only advised “when some really good flowers can be

\(^{144}\) Ward and Lock’s *Home Book*, op. cit, No. 1159, p. 654.

afforded”. Specimen vases were used in addition to floral table centres. Individual bunches of violets or single flowers were sometimes placed on each table napkin.\textsuperscript{146}

The number of arrangements depended on the size and shape of the table. The ‘G.C.’ includes usual advice about not making arrangements so tall that they “intervene between the faces of the guests who sit opposite”. Although advice tends towards more natural arrangements, flowers suitable for horizontal or vertical arrangements are listed as being suitable for only one style. There is no place in these instructions for extreme low grid innovation.

D’Avigdor when writing on the place of novelty at the dinner table is particularly critical of some styles in flower arrangements. His ridicule of aestheticism followed Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera, \textit{Patience}, which satirised aesthetic taste as personified by Oscar Wilde, with lines about floral taste.\textsuperscript{147} It had had its first production four years earlier in 1881. Linley Sambourne’s \textit{Punch} caricature of Oscar Wilde actually portrays him as a sunflower in a Persian vase in the approved aesthetic style.\textsuperscript{148}

D’Avigdor comments:

\begin{quote}
Some surprises are unpleasant. The false aestheticism of the past few years, is I believe, gradually dying out... the worship of the sunflower and other affectation of the period have left their mark on our dinners. The lily has not indeed been established as an acknowledged article of diet, but there are still too many houses where very poor floral decorations have been substituted for good and tasteful dishes... Too often however the choice of eccentric flower-glasses, the disposition of sunflowers, and the harmonies of lilies so absorb the attention of the ladies of the house that they have none left for the dinner.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{146} See illustrations.

\textsuperscript{147} W.S. Gilbert, \textit{Patience or Bunthorne’s Bride}, op. cit. “A languid love for lilies does not blight me.” p. 12, and the more well known: “Though the Philistines may jostle, you will rank as an apostle in the high aesthetic hand, If you walk down Piccadilly with a poppy or a lily in your mediaeval hand.” p. 13.

For D’Avigdor, the woman who gains his approval puts “a “specimen glass” containing “a Marshall Niel rose, a gardenia, or some other sweet smelling and lovely flower.”149 Such individualistic arrangements followed entirely different principles to the hierarchical arrangements in William Low’s Table Decoration (1887). Low, as gardener to the Duke of Grafton at Euston Hall, offers arrangements that follow set formulae, uses matching sets of vases and, as the centre-piece, either a silver epergne “of exquisite design” or a silver plant holder. Silver candelabra were set at intervals of three feet or so on a table that was invariably five foot six inches wide but could vary in length according to the number of guests. These arrangements always had of a dish of dessert at the top and bottom of the table, and a number of dishes down the sides chosen to accord with the table’s length, and interspersed with sets of matching flower vases.

Low observes that: “A considerable portion of our success depends upon the chasteness and beauty of our accessories.”150 All arrangements are variations on the same theme. Flowers, plants and fruit are those which are all in season in autumn, presumably when the duke entertained at the estate, and all derive entirely from the estate and the household’s own resources. When Low uses specimen vases they are as part of the design, not as embellishments for individual place settings as D’Avigdor, a conspicuous individualist, advised. Low’s arrangements of dessert, flowers and plants are incorporated into a single and unifying design by curved lines and circles round the bases of dessert dishes and vases made up of swags of leaves, interspersed with single flowers laid flat on the table-cloth. (See illustration at the end of this chapter.)

Another of Low’s arrangements has a thirty-inch palm in a silver plant holder as a centre-piece. This is in sharp contrast to the typical stagey make-do adaptation of a standard palm as a table centre offered in books for new diners. Here the reader is shown how to arrange the top of a palm to stand above the table when the palm pot is

on the floor. By opening a telescoping table and not inserting the central leaf, specially cut boards can be dropped in around the palm stem. The lack of an appropriate-sized plant is then masked by moss and assorted flowers. Other books suggest original designs such as swags of flowers draped from the chandelier. Some revived the plateau, particularly the mirrored plateau, to display fruit and flowers and even introduced table fountains to augment the display. There was plenty of scope for unbounded originality at individualists’ tables, but such style had no place among Low’s designs.

A late Victorian painting by Sir William Orchardson shows a fashionable response to current floral excesses. The picture is of a grand, but intimate dinner; the table is decorated only with two pot plants in china cache pots.

**MENU CARDS**

Ward and Lock’s *Home Book* (1880/81) states: “Now that dinners à la Russe are universal, menu cards are indispensable,” and Charles Selby, as ‘Tabitha Tickletooth’ recommends that menu cards “should be written out in a ladylike hand”. Isabella Beeton’s *Book of Household Management* (1892) includes home-made novelty cards. The designs included: a yacht, an artist’s easel, the Union flag and a slipper, possibly designed to match the ‘Cinderella’s slipper’ napkin shown in the same book.

Menu cards could be produced in an even greater range of styles and qualities than, say, china. George Scharf made a collection of novelty cards from 1869 to 1876. These included cards printed as shells and other novel shapes. There was a range of choice in

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151 Adapting a palm. See illustration of a method for arranging a telescoping table’s leaves around the stem of a palm. See the table setting ‘Modified à la Russe’, an illustration following chapter VII.


154 Charles Selby, op. cit., p. 11.
menu cards: which included paper and print quality. Diverse subjects, included novelties, kitsch, commemorative themes, individually designed and printed cards for particular occasions and crested or monogrammed cards to be filled in by hand. There are plenty of examples of corporate menu cards in ephemera collections, and the occasional private card, but as these are usually without place or date is is difficult to follow the changing fashions in cards. For those who did not use cards, reusable ceramic menus were produced. Liebig issued cards of ‘European Queens’ that were at the same time advertisements, hagiographic notes and menu card combined. Liebig also produced other series which included ‘Soldiers of the Empire’.

**IMAGES OF RESTRAINT AND LUXURY: DESSERT**

Dessert as ‘time out of time’ is discussed in chapter VI on dinner à la Française. As dessert was separated from the rest of the meal, it had its own tableware. For à la Française diners this separation was complete since there was no dessert on the table during dinner. On the other hand, for à la Russe diners, dessert was part of the table display throughout dinner. Dessert could include more than fresh fruit, and it could be augmented with fruit compotes, crystallised fruits, sweets, cakes and biscuits. Sometimes ices were also served at this point.

Natural produce was integral to the decor of the à la Russe table. Dessert was an overt display to be graded on scales of taste and quality. Degrees of unseasonality and rarity were prized, as they had been previously. Growing fruit from Mediterranean and tropical climates in England was a long-established practice. The first pineapple grown

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156 Liebig menu cards, c. 1890, at The Unilever Archive, Port Sunlight, Merseyside. The European Queens series included Queen Victoria, the Queen of Italy, the Empress of Germany, the Queen of the Netherlands and the British Princess Royal.

157 Victor Turner’s ‘Communitas’ as described by Fran Markowitz in *A Community in Spite of Itself: Soviet Jewish Emigrés in New York*, and discussed in chapter VI on dining à la Français.
in England was by Henry Telande in 1726, whilst orangeries were a feature of some
great eighteenth-century houses. Victorians who owned country houses frequently built
hot-houses in which to grow exotic fruit for dessert. They were also able to store fruit
such as grapes through the winter.

These home-grown exotics had great status, for to display such items at a London
dinner party implied the possession of a country house and money enough to employ
skilled gardeners to work in expensively maintained hot-houses. In William Low’s
table designs, the dessert is made from a selection of both temperate and hot-house
fruits. Imported fruit did not have the same cachet, as is plainly stated in Household
Cookery, Carving and Dinner-table Observances, 1855: “The finest and most recherché
kind of fruit is the pineapple - not the imported West Indian, but the home-grown, hot-
house pine.” English hot-house fruits could, it was claimed in The Illustrated
London News of July 1844, reach weights of seven or eight pounds. Smaller
pineapples of about two pounds were imported that year from Eleuthera in the West
Indies by the firm Keeling and Hunt. Their second cargo consisted of 12,000 pines, of
which “two of the finest” were sent to Windsor for royal approval. A letter from
Windsor thanks Keeling and Hunt, assures them that the pines arrived “in perfect order
and have been served at her Majesty’s table.” This unsolicited appearance of small
pineapples at the royal dessert did not, however, make this all too plentiful variety be
sought after in exclusive circles. Imported pineapples would have been unlikely to have
tasted as well as the home-grown variety as they are not fruit that continue to ripen after
picking, unlike, say, bananas. A pocket etiquette book of 1879, describing a

158 A painting of the English School of Charles II being presented with a pineapple by John Rose,
the King’s Gardener, in c. 1677 is now believed not to have been the first English-grown
pineapple, but was one cultivated by Henry Telande referred to in Richard Bradley (1688-1732), A
producing satisfactory hot growing mediums are believed not to have been used before 1726. See
Malcolm Thick, ‘The Supply of Seeds, Plants and Trees to the English Country House Kitchen
Garden and Orchard 1600-1800’ in The Country House Kitchen Garden 1600-1900, edited by C.

159 Household Cookery, Carving, and Dinner-Table Observances, Houlston and Stoneman, London,
1855, p. 42.

160 The Illustrated London News, July 20th 1844, p. 36.
magnificent dessert at a fashionable dinner party for twenty-six, has the centre-piece of each tall china fruit basket filled with “immense pine-apples of hot house growth”.  

Soyer, in *The Modern Housewife*, a book aimed at a middle-range readership, uses the person of Hortense to write a satirical letter on dessert. ‘Hortense’ tells this pineapple story as heard from “a friend”:

’And, talk about pine-apples,’ said he, ’many times I have had the pleasure of meeting with the same, and even as often as twice in less than twelve hours, quite in a different direction, that is, on a dinner-table in the west-end about eight in the evening, and, at midnight, on the supper-table of a civic ball; at dinner being perched on an elevated stand in the centre of a large wide table, so much out of reach that it would almost require a small ladder to get at it...’

In the same vein, another ‘friend’ of ‘Hortense’ intends to write “Memoirs of a Pineapple in London”.

Mismatches between a wish to display the appropriate dessert and operating within a given budget, especially when professionally catered, must have led to many similar incidents. In Mars and Nicod’s study of waiters, it was similarly in the middle range of modern hotels, just as with the middle range of Victorian caterers, that a façade of attempted grandeur was similarly vulnerable to being frequently undermined by lack of resources. These pineapple anecdotes suggest that imported fruit was part of middle-range catering.

Soyer, in one of the letters from ‘Hortense’ to ‘Eloise’, suggested a more manipulative advantage than conspicuous display for serving imported exotic fruit:

In the dessert I generally introduce some new importation, such as bananas, sugar-cane, American lady apples, prickly pears, &c.; these also give a subject for the

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gentlemen to talk about when the ladies have left, as free trade, colonial policy.
&c. 164

Soyer's didactic letter writer was giving advice for an entrepreneurial dinner party. Unlike hierarchic dinners where conversational topics could be expected to spring from easy familiarity, the advice suggests exotic fruit as an aid to ease stilted conversation among diverse and strategically invited diners.

DESSERT CHINA, GLASS AND PLATE – AS CONVERSATION PIECES

Dessert services were not new. Banqueting had preceded dessert as previously discussed. In sixteenth-century banqueting, that exclusive and separate course of fruits and sweets had been eaten off small decorated sets of wooden plates. 165 In the second half of the eighteenth century, fine porcelain dessert services became fashionable. Famous services were first made on the continent, notably by the Sevres and Meissen factories, and in England by Chelsea, Wedgwood and others. These services were often decorated with pictures of botanical, architectural or landscape subjects, and may well have been intended as topics for conversation.

Using pictorial subjects in the design of dessert services was continued throughout the nineteenth century. Soyer, in one of 'Hortense's' letters of advice in The Modern Housewife, discusses a dessert service After the cloth has been removed for dessert, 'Hortense' then suggests that there should be a pause of ten or twenty minutes before the dessert is put out: "This gives an opportunity for my guests to admire the beautiful Sevres dessert plates, containing views of different French chateaux; this of course gives a subject for conversation to those who have visited them." 166 Dessert services were illustrated with various subjects for conversation, such as architectural

165 Peter Brears, 'Rare Conceites and Strange Delights' in C. Anne Wilson, editor, Banqueting Stuffe, The Fare and Social Background of the Tudor and Stuart Banquet, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1991, p. 111.
monuments, botanical drawings, landscapes and sea-scapes. Dessert services showing varieties of ferns were produced at the height of the fern collecting craze which started about 1845. They were offered as an invitation to identify and discuss ferns seen or collected. The fern craze is cited by David Allen as lasting for fifteen years, with 1859 as its last year as fewer publications were then produced. Was the well known author, Shirley Hibberd’s (1869) *The Fern Garden: How to Make Keep and Enjoy it; or, Fern Culture Made Easy* a book for a less fashionable public or had fern growing found certain constituencies? The Sambournes’ dining room window incorporated a Wardian case of ferns. Wardian cases were an economical way to keep plants in sulphurous, sooty cities, suggesting that ferns might have been a good subject for conversation at dessert well beyond 1859.

Unspecific flower and fruit designs, versions of Japanese styles and other design fashions were also produced that could not so directly be turned into competitive conversation pieces.

As might be predicted, Mrs Panton exercises her own aesthetic prowess when recommending a dessert conversation piece. She finds a service at Hewett’s Baker Street Bazaar: “It is Oriental-looking and most uncommon. It has a green ground, and a raised pattern of flowers, butterflies, &c., and looks so good, no one has any idea of its cheapness.” She goes on to tell of a man who was “set up to be a great judge of china” being taken in and seeming not to believe her when she said the plates cost only 2 shillings each.

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168 David Ellison Allen, op. cit, p. 59.

169 David Ellison Allen, op. cit, p. 60.

170 ‘Bay of ferns’ mentioned in the 1877 Inventory of Contents of 18 Stafford Terrace, unpublished. A Wardian case was set in the dining-room window, where it can still be seen.

In the context of the dessert at the end of dinner, the iconographies of different styles reflected the style of the dinner that preceded them. Both Soyer and Panton use the dessert service as a vehicle for individualist competition. Soyer’s choice was for showing off cosmopolitan advantage by those with the money for travel. Panton’s choice was based on exercising educated taste to overcome comparative financial disadvantage. These competitive constituencies of financial and symbolic capital reiterate, in Bourdieu and Douglas’s terms, the actors’ places on their contemporary social maps.

NATURE CONTAINED AND TRANSFORMED: FOOD AND TABLEWARE

A growing diversity in the production of tableware continued to increase throughout the century. Novelty in both style and function expanded in spite of the views of Arbiters like Redgrave who described the pursuit of it in moralising terms. New types and styles of dishes often had important functions for the dinner table because they transformed mundane foods to the rank of the rest of the tableware. Foods that retained their natural form after cooking, or foods that were eaten raw, needed to be transformed and elaborated in keeping with the rest of the tableware. Ingredients for such transformation could be chopped, sliced or carved and then arranged on a dish, or arranged in a new shape, as with moulding in aspic, thus separating them from association with their natural form. The glassy forms produced in aspic merged the visible boundary between edible and inedible table decor.

Specific serving dishes also added elaboration to such ‘natural’ items as cheese or celery. Mrs Beeton shows cheese portioned into cubes with the rind removed and bounded instead by a genteel dish, a cheese-glass. She illustrated the cheese-glass for those who did not know what a cheese-glass looked like, 172 (see illustrations). Increasingly specialised tableware was produced for items that previously shared a

limited range of dishes. Mrs Beeton frequently used ornate tableware to add elaboration where food was relatively simple. Celery, which accompanied cheese and was served as raw stalks, was often put in a tall heavy cut-glass vase of the same design as the rest of the table glass. Although familiar foods in their everyday contexts, cheese and celery had to be enhanced and elaborated to be consistent with a celebratory table. Grandiose containers divorced natural foods from their humble origins, as Dubois’ culinary elaborations had transformed peasant dishes into haute cuisine.

THOMAS COSNETT’S HIGH GRID RULES AND TABLEWARE AS AN AGENT OF TYRANNY

Tableware was part of the household’s publicly visible capital. We have seen that middle-class dinner-givers did not always possess all that was needed for a dinner in all departments but that they could hire everything necessary to put on the most elaborate à la Russe dinner. From the 1870s, however, monogrammed and crested china, glass and plate became more common. This could be justified on grounds that it discouraged pilferage among staff, but it also had the added bonus of making it clear to guests that it could not have been hired just for the evening. Monograms were made to be specific to particular households since they were never composed of a single initial but of two or three letters intertwined.

Households where tableware was kept for dinner parties found that increasingly diverse materials required new cleaning and handling techniques. Tableware in traditional dinner-giving households had well-established hierarchic rules of care, with set routines: separate storage places for plate, glass and china; separate cleaning cloths with order and precedence for all the familiar wares used in the elite à la Française tradition. Cosnett outlines best practice, such as the use of wooden washing up bowls for glass, cloths for each task, a drawer for clean cloths and another for dirty ones. If there are not enough cloths then the master or mistress should be asked for more, “as they cannot know unless they are told.”173 As an archetypal hierarch, Cosnett teaches his footmen

their craft and their responsibilities for the household’s tableware. Since the master and mistress have devolved responsibility for this area they are not expected to know what is needed, but as they are the ultimate authority, footmen have to ask them for supplies.

In Cosnett’s ideal household the symbolic order of the side board at dessert (as discussed in chapter VI on à la Française) was continued in the butler’s pantry, where expertise was the basis of the hierarchic servant’s devolved power. Whereas Bourdieu’s professionals derive their authority from their educational qualifications, Cosnett’s alternative basis of power within the standard ranked household was an authority derived from craft skills. Such hierarchic households were thus sustained by two sources of complementary and countervailing power derived from both office and craft experience.174

In households unable to employ sufficient servants with specific expertise to clean and store the increasing variety and often increased quantity of tableware, employers’ expectations were often disappointed. Blame, therefore, tended to be capricious. Instructions could be given by the employer but, as with cookery, they might well have been unqualified to instruct. There also must have been insufficient expertise, division of labour or time often to fulfil Cosnett’s detailed instructions or those emanating from the growing number of instruction manuals. Inexperienced servants from the country who did not know how to wash fine glass, clean plate or wash ivory-handled knives could easily be blamed for loss and breakages. Punitive employers subtracted the cost of breakages against wages. Texts such as: ‘A place for everything and everything in its place,’ were favourite invocations of order and, like other pious texts, were often tyrannical invocations to direct blame.

Mrs Panton advised:

“Always choose your first sets of china and glass so they can be easily matched. In your first inexperienced housekeeping with the ‘girl who breaks’, disasters will most certainly occur to these, the most brittle of your household wares.”

The “girl who breaks” was, as the text implies, a lone servant receiving too many demands and with no other servant to share duties, responsibilities and blame. All that remained for such kitchen maids was to blame the cat. This is vividly portrayed in the Mayhew Brothers’ *Greatest Plague of Life* (1847), where there is a cartoon by George Cruikshank of kitchen cats; one of them is wilfully breaking china with a hammer.

As well as tableware being measured in quality as appropriate or inappropriate to the household, so it might also be measurable in quantity. A simple à la Française dinner could be served with far fewer changes of plates and cutlery than set out in Cosnett’s high status service. Simplicity, as discussed earlier, was a point emphasised by the rational Dr Kitchener who simply issued his diners with a single knife, spoon and fork for the whole meal.

**NEW CIRCLES AND EXPANDED CHOICES**

This chapter has been mostly concerned with the years after 1851. A rise in diversity of both constituencies and tableware made this a time when the meaning of these goods was changing. Diversity in choices of tableware was reaching a wider public. For many, changing to à la Russe was not only the adoption of a fashionable mode, but was also for new participants who were joining the widening circles of dinner-givers. This is evident in the increasing number and range of books and magazine articles giving detailed instruction on every aspect of dining. Articles in periodicals such as *The Girls’ Own Paper* (1887) instructed a bride on how to give her first dinner party. Giving a dinner was suggested as an alternative to inviting friends to high tea. The cost was one

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175 Ward and Lock’s *Home Book*, op. cit, p. 399.
176 Athol and Henry Mayhew, *The Greatest Plague of Life*: or, the adventures of a lady in search of a good servant. By one who has been “almost worried to death”, edited by the Brothers Mayhew, illustrated by George Cruikshank, George Routledge and Sons, London, 1847. There was another edition published in 1892. See illustration of kitchen cats playing various blame-worthy games.
pound for six courses for eight diners. Excluded from this cost is the suggested table
decoration, a bowl of sprouting wheat that could be planted two weeks previously.\footnote{Phyllis Browne, Author of The Girl's Own Cookery Book: The Bride's First Dinner Party in The Girl's Own Paper, 1st January 1887, Vol. VIII, No. 366, pp. 214-5.}
This dinner was à la Russe in structure, but with an economical menu. Changing from
high tea to dinner also implied that the bride had sufficient tableware.

This widening range of dinner-givers was likely have been influenced in their tableware
choices from a whole range of sources. They may have read works directed at 'correct'
choice, but choice could also derive from shop windows, advertisements, catalogues
and, most importantly, from the choices of others in their circle. There were also
wedding and other gifts, and thus the tastes of others contributed to or imposed on the
completed table. In addition there were inherited goods, which may not always have
been admired by those whose bias was further down grid than the heirloom's previous
owners. The luxury of tableware that was all of a specific chosen style selected from an
ever-growing range of consumer choice, may, therefore, have been a rarer sight than
the literature suggests. To take as an example, the tableware of my own grandparents,
who were married in 1899 and admired the Arts and Crafts movement. In keeping with
Arbiters' taste, their best china was white with a black key pattern on a narrow gold
border, and their everyday china was a blue and white Meissen-styled pattern. But
unfortunately consistency was unsustainable. They used a set of heavily cut diamond
patterned table glass they had been given as a wedding present. Mrs Loftie approved of
early nineteenth-century cut glass, but regarded the glass of the late 1870s as
"unsuccessful."\footnote{Mrs Loftie, The Dining Room, Macmillan and Co., London, 1878. p. 100.} Such eclectic taste exercised at different levels of expenditure may
well have been typical of many dinner tables.

Choices in tableware, whether from the eclectic dinner-giver's point of view or from the
Arbiter's standpoint, in a country with diverse choice based in many cross-cutting
constituencies, must certainly have resulted in an echoing diversity of table

\footnotetext{Mrs Loftie, The Dining Room, Macmillan and Co., London, 1878. p. 100.}
arrangements. In this chapter it has only been possible to set out some of the choices in relation to their cultural biases rather than to be able to find middle-range dinner-givers who left exact details of all that went to make up their completed dinner tables.
A selection of dinner and dessert china from the 1892 edition of Isabella Beeton's *Book of Household Management, Entirely New Edition*, Ward, Lock, Bowden, & Co., p. 1436, shows both crested gold bordered and blue and white dinner plates, but the blue and white is possibly too florid and the scalloped gold and white too feminised for Arbiter's approval. The dessert plates are an eclectic interpretation of Japanese themes. This selection almost identical to those in Silber and Flemming's catalogues.
III. Salviati Table Glass chosen by Charles Eastlake to illustrate his chapter on "Table Glass" in "Hints on Household Taste" 1872. (See page 27)

Specific serving dishes also added elaboration to such 'natural' items as cheese or celery. Mrs Beeton shows cheese portioned into cubes with the rind removed and bounded instead by a genteel dish, a cheese-glass. She illustrated the cheese-glass for those who did not know what a cheese-glass looked like. Isabella Beeton, (editor) *Beeton's Book Household of Management*, S.O.Beeton, London, 1861, p.817.
A selection of table glass from the 1892 edition of Isabella Beeton's *Book of Household Management, Entirely New Edition*, Ward, Lock, Bowden, & Co., p.1438, shows claret jugs, a water carafe, water tumbler, three engraved glasses for claret, champagne and hock, with a selection of coloured hock glasses below. Some of the plain glasses may have been acceptable to the Arbiter of Abode as they are simple shapes and possibly were quite cheap to allow for breakages. Some of the glass shows the slight influence of Salviati glass examples, but no costly heavy cut glass is shown.
No. 5818.—Tea and Coffee Service, heavily silver plated on nickel silver, richly chased and engraved, consisting of 3-pint coffee pot, 1-pint tea pot, gilt-lined sugar basin, and cream jug.

No. 5819.—Salver, heavily silver plated on nickel silver, richly chased and engraved. Length 24 inches. Suitable for presentation.

The above Service can be made in hall-marked sterling silver.

Silber and Fleming’s tray, on which the Japanese style tea and coffee set stands, follows an eclectic style and has a centre engraved in French Louis XVI style, a pierced gallery with beading that appears to refer to the Adam Brothers classicism, a plaque derived from sixteenth century Italy at its centre, feet from a Georgian gravy boat and finally leaf encrusted handles. Such extreme eclecticism in popular decoration offered ideal material against which Arbiters could draw their own boundaries. For those familiar, not only with the various Arbiters’ rules but the stance of traditional hierarchs, who used inherited silver and traditional styles, silver and plate was a rich field for eclectic interpretation for new diners.
These three designs for folded table napkins include the 'Bat' which has a pocket for a single flower or miniature posy, and the pleated 'La Belle Maude'. Well starched and pleated napkins would not have been as functional as more flexible linen, which was possibly one of the reasons why the most popular shape appears to have been the 'Mitre,' which also has an open centre for holding a bread roll. From *Napkin-Folding, a series of fully illustrated original designs*, Newton and Eskell, London, 1891, pp. 27, 35 & 41.
This bright decoration was chosen for a dull November day. Low's intention was to produce a seasonable and a balanced design with no obtruding features. The key to the table plan is as follows: 1) Silver Epergne, 2) Silver Candelabra, 3) 4 White China Vases "furnished with cut flowers". 4) Pineapple, 5) Melon, 6) Pears, 7) Apples, 8) Black Hamburgh Grapes, 9) Muscat of Alexandria Grapes. 10) Cotoneaster forming an outline and enclosing a groundwork of Maidenhair Fern. 11) White Chrysanthemum, Large Flowering, 12) Pink Chrysanthemum, Large Flowering, 13) Yellow Chrysanthemum, Large Flowering, 14) Yellow Cactus Dahlia, Mrs Hawkins, 15) White Cactus Dahlia, Constance, 16) Red Cactus Dahlia, Juarezii on a setting of Passion Flower Foliage. 17) Red Cactus Dahlia, Juarezii on a setting of Lycopodium, 19) Crimson Cactus Dahlia, Cochineal, 20) Jasmin Leaves.
The Liebig Company issued cards of 'European Queens' that were at the same time advertisements, hagiographic notes and menu card combined. The 'European Queens' series included Queen Victoria and the British Princess Royal, (above) also the Queen of Italy, the Empress of Germany, and the Queen of the Netherlands. Liebig also produced other series which included 'Soldiers of the Empire' Liebig menu cards, c. 1890. Reproduced by kind permission of The Unilever Archive, Port Sunlight, Merseyside.
A dessert selection from the 1879/80 edition of Mrs Beeton's *Household Management*, Plate X, shows a selection of dessert dishes similar to those in Silber and Fleming's catalogues. The styles range from a simple flat salver to elaborate stands with putti and swans. Mixed fruits are arranged on two tiers of realistic ferns growing from rococo feet.
An extreme in eclectic table decor. A fountain with a mermaid holding a selection of coloured paper crackers is set over a pool with swans, goldfish and a gondola complete with gondolier. Each place setting, in typical individual style, has a specimen vase filled with a yellow rose. This frontispiece from *The Encyclopedia of Practical Cookery, Volume II*, Edited by Theodore Francis Garrett, L. Upcott Gill, London, 1898.

Chapter IX

The House

Part I of Boundary: Men, Women, Space, Wine and Status

INTRODUCTION

In this and the following chapter, what may seem, at first glance, to be unrelated aspects of dining are brought together. Furnishings, domestic space, locality, etiquette, wine, male dining and servants' status are related through a discussion of boundaries – physical, conceptual and behavioural.

Gender is the archetypical grid classification and in this context is augmented by high grid values of rank, place and time manifest as concrete expressions of separate roles. Gender, is therefore, not only concerned with male/female divisions of responsibility, as in the provision of food and drink, but also in the hierarchic and individualist contexts of dining practice and etiquette. In such contexts, gender cannot be discussed as a sole category for classification. Identity was emphasised not only by gender but reinforced by ranking furnishings, domestic space, locality, wine and all the things that were employed to reinforce status. In a society where the ideal cosmology subscribed to high grid values and attitudes, these were repeatedly challenged by the rising demands of individualism.

KENSINGTON AND KONYA:¹ A COMPARISON OF DOMESTIC SPACE AND GENDER

In what might be seen as a slight digression the aim is to show that dinner was not an isolated interaction. In addition to the equipment required, the role of domestic space

¹ Konya, Anatolia, a fundamentalist Islamic religious centre.
and location were intrinsic to defining, not only the dinner-givers’ values and attitudes, but in reaffirming gender, rank, place and time. This applied to all those who dined as well as to those who were excluded. This short description from Turkey, of domestic space in relation to cuisine, is set out as an archetype.

Konya offers an example of a traditional privatised style where men’s and women’s roles are sharply divided. Women are largely confined to the house with men having additional roles outside. A gender-divided Turkish house can be seen as reflecting a similar plan as a mid-nineteenth century London town house. The Turkish example has women’s quarters on the first floor and the more public room with divans, where men entertain, smoke and drink tea or coffee, on the ground floor. Women’s quarters include their kitchen on the first floor, where food is highly processed and therefore transformed from its natural state. In contrast, men cook in the outside courtyard, in a subterranean tandoor, where they roast whole sheep or goats, almost in their natural state. Outdoors, as a focus for male activity, recurs in many high-grid societies, with indoor activity designated as feminine. When the plan and gender ascription in London houses are considered, the Turkish parallel may seem closer than might be physically apparent. Victorian society did not adopt purdah, but there were informal rules of gender segregation and formally, superior legal power was vested in men, thus reinforcing their informal authority.

Gender and both social and physical boundaries have been demonstrated as recurring themes in the organisation and execution of Victorian dinner parties. In this chapter these two related themes will be further discussed. Ideas of appropriate style in decor will be examined as applied to areas of the house used when giving dinners, and this will be done with particular reference to the Samborunes’ house in Kensington, an area that became a location for successful and respectable artists.

2 The twentieth-century Turkish house I visited was built according to traditional conventions by a member of ‘Friends of the Mevlana’. The Mevlana are the ‘Whirling Dhervishes’, a male religious sect that relate to the ‘outside’ via this intervening group. The host prepared lamb in the traditional manner in a tandoor: a clay oven, in this case, set in an outdoor pit in the courtyard.
Reciprocal domestic dining among increasingly diverse circles enhanced the importance of choice in decorating and furnishing, not only for dining-rooms but all parts of the house that were seen by visitors. Stigmatised areas such as kitchens, were 'back stage' and received little or no attention to their decor. Kitchens, which were below stairs, were outside the bounded area seen by the diners, unlike special 'hygienic' cooking arrangements which were above stairs, as discussed in chapter V. My emphasis here is on the later period, post 1870, as it was with the chapters on tableware and kitchens. The consolidation of social change was expressed in changing physical arrangements for living and in the accompanying didactic writing.

Values and attitudes could be expressed by decor choice as selected for different parts of the house. In not only by what was chosen but with every choice, there was rejection of a wealth of alternatives. Mary Douglas cites, in relation to shopping, that rejected goods are as positive a statement as are selected goods. For the actors, domestic space was usually categorised with decor that defined it by gender ascription, function, occasion and time. The multi-use of domestic space, such as parlours, changed during this period to rooms with specifically ascribed functions.

Furnishings, like table decor, were an ideal vehicle for the expression of values and attitudes of dinner-givers, that could not be overtly stated in dinner conversation. As with tableware, furnishing could also act as an iconography for expressing that which etiquette relegated to the category of 'unspoken thoughts'. Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, in their book on domestic decor (1877) state: "No house is satisfactory unless it bears the impress of home, and this impress must come from within."


4 Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Macmillan and Co., London, this edition 1875, p. 131. Carroll satirically notes a tendency when the Duchess says to Alice: "Everything's got a moral, if only you can find it."

George, in *The Descent of Manners* when citing the upright individual who makes conversation unsullied by profanity, notes: "Social manoeuvres were also moral manoeuvres."\(^6\)

The diversity of qualities and styles available, each with their own advocates and detractors, gave great scope for a scale of taste that ran from overt display to an aesthetic economy. Disregarded and sparsely furnished space was for servants, whose marginal status was emphasised by contrast with the decor in their employers' space. Percy Macquoid, who was a key figure in the revival of interest in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century furniture, found many interesting but unfashionable pieces relegated to servants' quarters.\(^7\)

**TASTE AND RANK: DISPLAYING ECONOMIC AND SYMBOLIC CAPITAL\(^8\)**

Aesthetic conventions that influenced the choice of tableware could also be viewed as consistent with the choice of furnishings. Choice, as can be seen from many works both contemporary and modern, was for the larger part of the century derived from other periods and places, although the resulting styles often bore little resemblance to their original sources.

New materials and methods of construction recreated old styles in keeping with current fashions for grandeur, comfort, and later for 'artistic' furnishings. Typical examples of early Victorian styles were overstuffed dining chairs with deep buttoned upholstery set in Gothic or French Louis XV style frames. Charles Selby's list of furnishings for a

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grand dinner included chairs “with spring seats and spring backs”. New types of furniture were introduced such as the dinner waggon as an addition to the sideboard. Earlier authors, such as Mrs Parkes in 1828, advise: “simplicity with good taste; and when we consider the advantages that attend it, how surprising is it to find it frequently sacrificed to an attempt and often a poor attempt, to vie in splendour with the affluent!”

Mrs Parkes’ furnishing advice accorded with that of other early writers who advised against ostentatious dining such as W. M. Thackeray, Thomas Walker, with his accusations of “barbarism and vulgarity” and many others. These authors were proscribing ostentation on the grounds of inappropriate choice for the lesser dinner-givers, seen as overstepping ascribed hierarchical position by their overt displays of economic capital.

The bias of appropriate choice changed for middle-range dinner-givers from an emphasis that accorded with rules of hierarchy towards the more individualistic values of symbolic capital. Artistic decor and furnishings were derived and further developed from principles set out by post-1851 Arbiters. Particularly after the Great Exhibition, furnishing choice, in the same manner as described in the chapter on tableware, gave choice a moral as well as an aesthetic value, with less of the previous reference to rank: taste, in presenting a setting to receive visitors and guests, had moved down grid. Displays of symbolic capital separated the iconography of the new professionals and middle-range diners from social emulation of wealthy and aristocratic styles.

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By 1898, Dorothy Peel notes that in the past twenty to thirty years a socially wide and growing interest had arisen in "The House Beautiful". She gives credit for this interest to William Morris who "made war upon the peculiar ugliness of Victorian domesticity". She compares the end of the century with the beginning, when the average person was not interested in decor, and was then, she believed, unaware of the influence that good furnishing could have on "health and happiness". She observes: "Every Lady's paper contains its column of furniture correspondence." The home was now firmly central to female social life based on calling and dining, but it was also in part the same for men, among an increasingly diverse range of social circles. Now the presentation of the house, its location and its furnishings could reveal an instant picture which placed the inhabitants in their appropriate place on the social map.

Although Mrs Peel's comment suggests growing interest in decor, it is far harder to deduce how generally social messages were conveyed by actual choices. How far did the practice of renting London houses for a season distort personal choice? Decor, unlike tableware, was less easily changed. Those who had the freedom to select their own decor had a growing diversity of shops, catalogues, professional architects, interior decorators and written advice at their disposal. Much of the most accessible advice was given by what I will call 'Arbiters of Abode' who were often journalists or popularising decorators. They were not, for the most part, original Arbiters but writers who embellished and adapted original Arbiters' concepts. Their role demanded firm didactic views on taste. By reading their advice the formal rules are made clear.

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13 Mrs C. S. Peel (Dorothy Peel), *The New Home*, Archibold Constable & Co., London, 1898, p. IX. This work was based on her articles published in *Woman* during the previous three years.
14 Mrs G. S. Peel, op. cit, p. IX.
15 Mrs G. S. Peel, op. cit, p. X.
16 Arbiters of abode is a term used to differentiate the lesser advisers, usually lady journalist decorators, validating views on decor and related subjects derived from the 'Arbiters of taste' who were the original authorities.
A book sold as a companion to that widely sold work, *Beeton's Household Management*, was *Ward and Lock's Home Book, A Domestic Encyclopaedia*, which included an unrelated assortment of room settings and furnishings. Similarly, from the wide range of furnishings that survive, the new ranges of choice can be seen as overwhelming. This illustrates only too clearly the impossibility of any hierarchical Arbiters' attempting to impose rules of taste on an increasingly diverse society supplied with a widening range of furnishings. The *Museum of Ornamental Art*, made a mission of educating taste in furnishing by attempting to control this expanded range of choice, but how widely these choices conveyed appropriate values and attitudes is difficult to discern. Much advice for the less prosperous dinner-givers was based on economic choice, where choosing a style may well have needed to be within the limited bounds of a modest reciprocating dining circle. Whereas the Sambournes and the more prosperous artists in their circle all owned their houses, it can be seen that as artists, decor was an important part of their identity. Consequently their houses were paraded as an ideal for admiring descriptions in books and journals such as Mrs Haweis's *Beautiful Houses*. The artists' houses she visits are those of Sir Frederick Leighton, William Burges, and C. H. Broughton in Kensington, and Lawrence Alma-Tadema in Regents Park. These artists' decor was being reported for emulation by a new constituency. They lived perceptibly respectable lives and were incorporated

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17 Mrs Isabella Beeton (1836-65) edited by, *Beeton's Book of Household Management*, S. O. Beeton, London, 1861. A book that has been re-edited and reissued continuously to the present day.


20 Mrs Haweis, *Beautiful Houses, Being a Description of Certain Well-Known Artistic Houses*, printed by Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, London, second edition, 1882. These descriptions first appeared in *Queen Magazine*, 1880-81, and were reissued by Mrs Haweis.

21 Mrs Haweis, op cit, p. 1.

22 Mrs Haweis, op cit, p. 13.

23 Mrs Haweis, op cit, p. 45.

24 Mrs Haweis, op cit, p. 23.
into traditionally established organisations like the Royal Academy, as were most Kensington artists. They brought painting into the realm of professional expertise as practised within enviably styled houses. They were thus idealised purveyors of approved artistic values. W. J. Reader, in his work on *Professional Men*, cites H. Byerley Thompson’s (1822-67) division of higher and lower professions, based on whether they led to a Peerage.\textsuperscript{25} Frederick Leighton, as President of the Royal Academy, was knighted in 1878, although he was not made a peer until 1896. That he was considered eligible for a peerage indicates a changes in the social standing of artists.

From the 1870s a new way of defining an appropriate choice in furnishings reflected a bias towards lower grid networks. Simplicity was still admired, but hierarchic rules of choice made according to social position were no longer so directly invoked. Symbolic capital,\textsuperscript{26} as seen in the ‘correct choices’ for ‘Artistic Homes’, became a competitive weapon that could, in theory, be used by all ranks of society. It was, however, usually of less interest to traditional hierarchs and wealthy entrepreneurs. Archetypical hierarchs and individualists were outside the jurisdiction of middle-range Arbiters. Their validation came from different sources.

Hierarchs’ decor referred to their past, using inherited goods but with some new furnishings, often a mixture of old and new as at Charlecote Park, discussed below. Those with a long time-span preferred statements of what Ted Polhemus and Lynn Procter, when describing clothing, define as “anti-fashion”, one of their examples being the Burberry raincoat, still based, with some adaptations, on its original 1911 design. In its 1978 model, it is shown as an example of a hierarchic symbol of “lasting


\textsuperscript{26} Pierre Bordieu, op. cit, p. 291.
Another example they give is Queen Elizabeth II’s coronation robe and regalia with minimal concessions to current fashion and its incorporation of symbols that are associated with historic antecedents. "Anti fashion" values keep furnishings of lasting worth and select decor that reflect the hierarchists’ long time-spans.

Individualists, like hierarchs, were also outside the bounds of these prescriptions for the ‘house beautiful’. New rich entrepreneurs had London mansions that were often built in the style of the great French or Italian palaces, like R. S. Holford’s Dorchester House (1860) in Park Lane, or they transformed the interiors of existing houses, such as the first Lord Rothschild’s 147 and 148 Piccadilly, combined into one palatial building.

These mansions were furnished in a style, noted by Christopher Simon Sykes and known as “Rothschild taste”. It was based on French eighteenth-century palatial furnishings. The Rothschilds’ capital was certainly financial but it was augmented by integrating symbolic capital with collections of ‘Old Master’ paintings and antique furnishings from France. This palatial style originated from an elite who had been lavish in their expenditure on furnishings and works of art. Following revolution and the subsequent changes in style, goods were available for collectors who were, with the typical short time depth of individualists, not only uninhibited by the origins of their collections but also attracted by their splendour and ‘artistic’ worth.

French eighteenth-century veneered furniture was not ideally included among the Arbiters' choices. When writing on whether veneered furniture should be allowed, on the grounds that veneer concealed the underlying structure, Eastlake argues:

If we are to tolerate the marble lining of a brick wall and the practice of silver-plating goods of baser metal – now too universally recognised to be in the light of a deception – I do not see exactly how veneering is to be rejected on 'moral' grounds.31

The Garretts offered this statement to their readers for their 'correct' furniture choice:

It has been asserted that to hide construction is an absolute violation of 'beauty and truth'.32

Mrs Loftie was not so firm, putting the emphasis on financial saving, making use of the current fashion for keeping the table-cloth on for dessert, so:

It does not much matter except on high moral grounds, whether the [table] top is mahogany or deal.33

Modest attempts at home-made furniture, as suggested by Mrs Loftie, carried their own value in virtue, implying thrift and industriousness. Christopher Dresser, the designer, writing as an Arbiter of Taste, stressed the virtue of transforming valueless raw materials such as clay into fine objects. Rather than using precious metals, he argued that precious metals were too easily melted down for their material worth.34 Such an argument had appeal for middle-range diners wishing to display their symbolic rather than economic capital.

30 French eighteenth-century furniture was invariably veneered and augmented with gilded bronze and sometimes porcelain. An antique furniture repairer who worked mostly on English eighteenth-century furniture in 1961 told me that the interior finish of comparable French furniture of the same period was not as well made where it was not seen. He expressed himself in the same way as those who complained of ingredients being covered by deceptive French sauces.


In the chapter on cuisine, cultural consistency was linked to the complementarity of French *fonds* with the same complementarity found in Bhule brass and tortoiseshell furniture.\(^{35}\) English Arbiters’ rejection of French veneer in favour of unconcealed construction was similarly consistent with the contesting of plain English roast versus ‘deceptive’ French dishes that were concealed by sauces.

Henry Cole, as Felix Summerly, in his editorial notes on Thomas Walker’s choice of white china, continues this long English tradition of plain unconcealed food.\(^{36}\) I suspect that these repeatedly linked tastes reveal intrinsic cultural consistencies that extend to other aspects of dining.

The general effect in these new mansions was of an overwhelming splendour that ignored all the strictures of the Arbiters of Taste. Great wealth was unashamedly enjoyed by this constituency. The Rothschilds, as part of the Prince of Wales’ circle, were to a degree incorporated into an alternative hierarchic establishment. The Queen, as the embodiment of the core hierarchy, did not approve of many of the Prince’s circle but she too was eventually entertained by Ferdinand James, Lord Rothschild (1839-98) at Waddesdon Manor\(^{37}\) near Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire on 14th May 1890.\(^{38}\)

Waddesdon was built as a composite French chateau and was a typical example of a newly built mansion designed to re-create a selected noble past. This chosen past had no direct connection either with Rothschild’s own past or with the countryside in which it was set. It was the choice of a connoisseur of French eighteenth-century furnishings and decor. This style of collecting is typically entrepreneurial in the way that a choice is


\(^{35}\) See chapter II on cuisine.


made that has no long relationship with the collector's origins, but belongs to the palaces of other dynasties in other places. The dining-room at Waddesdon was lined with panelling from the Hôtel de Villars in Paris, designed in 1731 by J. B. Leroux and the furniture, tapestries, carpet and mirrors had all been made in France in the eighteenth century while the paintings were well known English, French, Italian and Dutch old masters.  

Palatial mansions of parvenus did not necessarily exclude their owners from elite society. They frequently offered grandeur to an external elite who took them as an appropriate setting in which to be seen. Royal patronage, however, did not inhibit criticism or satirical comment on their decor or entertaining. Parvenus, as referred to earlier, offered great scope for satire to the new middle dining circles concerned to define their own boundaries.  

Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, as Arbiters of Abode, for instance, wrote for those of "moderate means" who lived in "middle class houses... while wishing to live in an atmosphere of refinement and cultivation". In the likely case of their readers not having the means to emulate this style, they are warned against it and so could congratulate themselves on having made a moral choice, so further defending themselves against any invasion of 'bad taste':

...some of our most highly-decorated houses bear a resemblance to museums, a resemblance always to be most strictly avoided. A superabundance of even the choicest ornaments weary the eye and obtrude themselves unpleasantly upon the notice.

Mrs Orrinsmith, for the same readership, reassures them with this statement:

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39 Waddesdon Manor Guide, op. cit, p. 63. Waddesdon in turn has become a monument to several layers of grandiose pasts, as the furnishings have passed from owner to owner, and are collected in a Victorian mansion and now displayed for twentieth-century tourists.

40 Society in London, by a Foreign Resident, Thomas Haysweet Escott, Chatto and Windus, London, fourth edition, 1885, divides society into sets from the highest (royalty) to actors, actresses and artists. In the chapter on some of society's sets he notes a move from society dominated by aristocracy to plutocracy, with some anti-Semitic comments on the Rothschilds' role as patronised by the Prince of Wales, pp. 86-92.

41 Garrett, op. cit, p. 7.

42 Garrett, op. cit, p. 20.
There are plenty of errors in taste to be found in the mansions of the rich, and if
wealth cannot do what we require, neither can intellect without special culture. Thus those with symbolic capital but lacking financial means could, as with tableware,
use aesthetic choice in furnishings to claim superiority. Choice was not based entirely
on aesthetics of style, colour and material: also included in correct choice was an
implied rhetoric of moral rectitude.

'REALITY' AND 'ILLUSION': CHANGING PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING THE 'APPROPRIATE' USE OF DOMESTIC SPACE FOR THE DINNER PARTY

As with furnishings, domestic space was re-defined for these new constituencies with
their new cosmologies. For middle- and lower-range dinner-givers, social emulation
and a move towards the stronger classification of space introduced a new set of
conventions for dining. The middle-class dinner party that imitated the style of grander
dinner parties became increasingly popular from the 1840s. Prior to this, from the
middle of the eighteenth century, the 'middling' sort of household did not always have
a room solely as a dining-room even when dinner was shared with guests. Such
households at that time adapted their parlours by using tables that were easily folded
and made mobile with castors.

A typical parlour dinner is described by Parson Woodforde (1740-1803), the country
parson and diarist, in this excerpt from his diary for January 8th 1764:

I dined at Mr Sandford's [a parson] at Walford with Mr and Mrs Sandford and about
ten of Mr Sandford's children. We had a very elegant dinner, and in a very noble
spacious, parlour...44

43 Mrs Orrinsmith, The Drawing Room: Its Decoration and Furniture. Art at Home, Macmillan,
London, 1877, p. 3.
p. 23, 8th Jan. 1764.
Informality in this earlier period was implicit, as was entertaining in a style appropriate to the dinner-giver's social station. Mr Sandford and his guest dined with the family in the parlour rather than in a dining-room set aside for the sole purpose.

In F. W. Lambert's picture, *The Dinner Locust*, of the 1820s, a couple are shown being served at a small table in front of the fire. There is no sign of the usual dining-room furniture familiar to grander houses of the period, such as sideboards and side tables. In this illustration, decanters and a tray with another dish are left on a small folding tea table, another popular piece of the time. The ideal ambience was to change from an accepted style of dining according to rank, to a new fashion with an accompanying literature that gave overt instruction in strategies for social emulation.

Mid-Victorian formal dining caused the middle classes a dilemma. Their formal dinners were often derived from the style of greater dinner-givers, therefore certain fictions about the use of domestic space had to be invented. Great houses had dining-rooms that were only used for a single purpose, dining. If middle-class dinner-parties were to emulate grand dinners, houses needed to have dining-rooms furnished in an appropriate style: an impressive table to seat the larger number of guests that new dining encouraged and sideboards and side tables from which servants could serve dinner in the new à la Russe style.

This change in dining style had a profound effect on the arrangement of those domestic areas that were used by visitors. There was a move from a functional simplicity, with modest elaboration for celebratory meals, towards a growing emulation of grand dinner-parties in the use of the household's public space. Although new town houses had dining-rooms, their exclusive use as such was more of a fiction than a reality. Mrs

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46 If dinner was to be served à la Français, emulating greater households, sideboard space would also have been required for a larger display of glasses than had been the custom at 'middling' parlour dinners. See chapter VI.

47 See chapter V, part II.
Panton advises her readers to use the dining-room as a morning room, where women wrote letters and did needlework, while also serving as a substitute for a man’s study that could be used after work, for letter-writing. But she does not suggest changing its name so that it more truly matched its function: the label ‘dining-room’ for social use took precedence.

Mrs Loftie, in 1878, understood the strategies necessary to present a drawing-room and a dining-room fit for genteel entertaining. She also makes explicit use of the dining-room as an extra sitting-room, parlour, study or school-room. As this may be the best room in the house, she advises her readers to use instead, a smaller unused ground floor room as a dining-room. Such a room seems unlikely in a full house, but possibly it was a way of equivocating about her ideal choice, a French salle à manger, which in French apartments was usually situated in the hall. This was not possible in England, she conceded, as English houses followed quite different plans.

FURTHER STRATEGIES FOR GENTEEL APPEARANCES

Town houses lacked the broad sweep of the mansions’ grander staircases. As drawing-rooms, where guests assembled before dinner, were usually on the first floor, and dining-rooms were on the ground floor, etiquette directed diners to progress in pairs down these narrow staircases to the dining-room. This attempt at social emulation was seen by some as having a ridiculous aspect, made yet more ridiculous by the fashion for crinolines. Crinolines reached their greatest circumference in the 1850s, at the time when dining was becoming a popular entertainment. *Punch* cartoonists included several sketches showing the difficulties involved.


49 Mrs Loftie, *The Dining Room*, op. cit, pp. 2-3.

The party went down to dinner in order of precedence, as had been the fashion throughout the century. But more was written about precedence towards the end of the century, as social circles became larger and more diverse. Tables of precedence were included for example, in *Mixing in Society* (1869). Sir Bernard Burke’s *The Book Of Precedence* was first published in 1881.

**FURNISHINGS AND DECOR AS MARKERS OF INTIMACY AND PLACE**

Superimposed on choices of style were conventions that governed furniture and decoration as suitable for the ascribed function of the separate rooms. Choices were, particularly after the general introduction of dining-rooms, selected to be consistent with a room’s formally ascribed function rather than how it might be used from day to day. Parlours, as the day room where sitting, reading and eating took place, came to be considered old fashioned. Social emulation among middle-class households introduced dining-rooms, drawing-rooms and morning rooms. Higher up the social scale, specialised entertaining rooms such as smoking and billiard rooms (both male domains) were added among many other public rooms such as libraries, ballrooms, conservatories.

Style choice was allied to a high grid use of space. Halls, dining-rooms and drawing-rooms, despite changes in style, retained strong conventions in the type of furnishings that were held as appropriate for the room’s formally ascribed function. Halls had a certain formal neutrality, while dining-rooms were given a male bias, and drawing-rooms feminised. Dining-rooms in London houses were on the ground floor, usually next to the front door, and drawing-rooms on the first floor, similar to the traditional Turkish pattern, which also situates men closer to the outdoors.


Household management in middle-range houses created further dilemmas for the presentation of a genteel public image. Mansions had both front and back stairs so that servants and the visibility of their work, such as carrying coal, removing dust and dirt, were kept from visitors' view. The same invisibility in middle-range houses could be attempted through tightly structured work schedules. Ideals of refinement in mansions could be sustained with few fictions in the use of space. In houses where spaces were multi-purpose, however, but which had to appear as if only used on social occasions, fictions could be better sustained by measures such as maintaining decor to look clean and unworn. Strategies to maintain these fictions included the use of darker paint below dado rails, which made a more robust ground to take hard wear. Encaustic tiles in terracotta, were of medium shades and so would not be as visibly marked as would a pale floor, and they were easily washed. To keep carpets clean druggets were used; they were advised for use in halls during heavy weather but, as can be seen from Lambert's picture of an everyday dinner, the carpet under the dining table was protected by a drugget.

_The Servants' Practical Guide_ (1880) makes clear implications for those without alternative eating rooms:

> A dining-room with a close dinnerish sort of smell about it is not so provocative to the appetite as is the fresh air of a room that has not been used for eating purposes for some twenty four hours or so.54

**BOUNDARY: THE HOUSE'S FACADE, HALL AND STAIRCASE**

Entering the hall represented only the most marginal admission to a house. The hall was a transient area that was either designated as an outsider's ultimate destination, as for

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those who left visiting cards for the first time, or as an overture to greater interaction as visitors were subsequently received into other reception rooms.

Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman Jr’s *The Decoration of Houses* (1898) was a book for selecting features from palatial architecture for reproduction in contemporary mansions. In it, the outside hall is compared to a public square, suggesting that it can be seen as having such diverse people traversing it, that it was re-categorised as a semi-outdoor space. London town houses did not have the same distinction, but the hall, certainly as an area just beyond the front door, was the most marginal area in which to be received, even though it did act as an introduction to the living rooms. Hall chairs for those who waited were traditionally not upholstered. Visitors who were possibly marginal were thus not immediately incorporated into the interior comfort of the reception rooms. Formal hall decor was particularly notable in the style of the 1850s and 1860s when many stucco town houses were built. Later decorators expressed a move down grid with the introduction of some added comfort.

Boundary was well defined in the London town house. Rhoda and Agnes Garrett mention a fashion for wicker window screens in dining-rooms. In mid-century stucco houses, dining-rooms, like halls, were situated on the ground floor front, easily visible from the street. These screens, the Garretts imply, were chosen by men of the sort who see their house as their castle.

Entrances are potent markers. John Marshall and Ian Willcox describe Victorian halls as decorated to make a boundary between the “sacred home and profane world.” That divisions between inside and outside were well defined is unarguable but I would question the sacred/profane analogy and prefer to substitute nature/civilisation as it offers a more precise distinction of who and what is excluded from, or enters into, the


56 Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, op. cit, p. 28.
hall. The etiquette of entry to various areas is addressed below in the section on etiquette.

CHOOSING A STYLE

Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, in *Suggestions for House Decoration*, ask this question of their readers: "Why do not house decorators create a Victorian style of decoration instead of going back to what they are pleased to call Queen Anne style? Why is their cry still 'Backward Ho!'" They leave the question open, since they adopt this style. Mrs Haweis, who was a more eclectic decorator than the Garretts, was not enthusiastic about "New Queen Anne Style" either, but noted its convenience for:

... the new-made virtuoso, who likes it because it may imply that he could have done the contrary if he had chosen; convenient to those born without taste, for it saves them fiascos; convenient for the impecunious, for it saves them money; convenient to decorators who have crept into notice by good luck not merit, like the clever doctor in Grimm's fairy tale, for it saves them trouble.60

She concludes: "we know it is aesthetic, and let us be aesthetic or we are nothing. But is it pleasurable? Is it beautiful? Is it 'becoming'?"61

Charles L. Eastlake's *Hints on Household Taste* is an example of a work from which the Arbiters of Abode, took their authority. Mrs Haweis, in *The Art of Decoration*, although far more eclectic in her choice of styles than the Garretts, at the same time necessarily has to include strong statements of rejection to reinforce her role as Arbiter. She has a section titled 'Ghastly Ornament' and, when writing on mirrors, 'What not to do'.

58 Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, op. cit, p. 5.
60 Mrs H. R. Haweis, op. cit, p. 51.
61 Mrs H. R. Haweis, op. cit, p. 52.
The Garretts similarly reject white ceilings, glaring wallpaper, gaudy carpets and twisted furniture. They admired the plain brick simplicity of eighteenth-century Bloomsbury and wished it could be substituted for Kensington stucco. Several of the Garretts’ advised adaptations can still be seen in the Sambourne’s house. I have not been able to discover if they ever read Suggestions for House Decoration, but there was nothing particularly original in the advice; the Garretts were making a current fashion accessible to a wider readership than those who read books by innovative architects.

The Sambournes bought 18 Stafford Terrace in 1874. It was part of the Phillimore Estate, a development that had begun in 1850, although their house was not completed until 1871. The half-stuccoed facade was closer in style to the earlier fully-stuccoed houses in Phillimore Gardens than the new fashion for brick in Queen Anne style.

The Garretts gave firm advice to those with original 1850s-style stucco, advising them to paint them in such a way as to “modify these objectionable features”. A front door that “looks like bronze but feels like wood” is to be painted a uniform green or brown, as were area railings. Door furniture is to be changed from cast iron to brass or wrought iron. The Sambourne’s front door had brass furnishings.

Facades could be an overt statement of individuality that declared the owner’s or tenant’s rejection of the old and adherence to a new taste. To Mrs Haweis, facade was so important as a declaration of individuality that she relates how her husband, the Rev. H. R. Haweis, in 1873 painted his own stuccoed house in Welbeck Street “moss-green, relieved by red and black in the reveals of the windows and the balcony”. She is delighted to see the style copied and is particularly pleased when it receives validation.

62 Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, op. cit, p. 10.
63 Shirley Nicholson, op. cit, pp. 21-3.
64 Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, op. cit, p. 35.
65 Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, op. cit, p. 24.
66 Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, op. cit, p. 35. The brass door furniture is still in place.
67 Mrs H. R. Haweis, op. cit, p. 388.
from the artist Alma Tadema who paints his facade in a similar style at Townshend House in Regents Park.\(^{68}\) Mrs Alma Tadema was a friend of Marion Sambourne.

Once inside, the hall and staircase were to undergo radical alteration from the style of the 1850s. Among the features that the Garretts rejected were *trompe l’oeil* marble fireplaces, grained woodwork,\(^{69}\) "cold effect" marble papers,\(^{70}\) and coarse cast iron stair balustrades with "coarsely moulded ornament" picked out in gold.\(^{71}\) Glass in the typical staircase window, with purple, blue and red, bordering a frosted central panel, is also criticised as too strong a contrast of colours.\(^{72}\) The effect they advocate emphasises an "absence of contrast" with "soft colouring" and "toned ceilings".\(^{73}\) As oil lamps and candles give a warmer light than gas, so a colour scheme devised for the former would have appeared particularly harsh in gas light. Dr John Walsh remarks in 1879 (possibly 1874) that domestic gas lighting was becoming "more and more general".\(^{74}\) Soft colouring was favoured by the Garretts, and also admired in houses such as Sir Frederick Leighton’s, visited for *Queen* magazine by Mrs Haweis\(^ {75}\) which were more suited to gas light. Features favoured by the Garretts were halls decorated in shades of green or brown with a darker shade below a dado and paler above.

These schemes were in keeping with the emphasis on natural colours as advocated by William Morris. His fabrics were still printed with natural dyes in the traditional way, although the first artificial dyes had been manufactured in France before 1850. After

\(^{68}\) Mrs H. R. Haweis, op. cit, p. 388.

\(^{69}\) Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, op. cit, p. 17.

\(^{70}\) Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, op. cit, p. 25.

\(^{71}\) Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, op. cit, pp. 25-6.

\(^{72}\) Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, op. cit, p. 25.

\(^{73}\) Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, op. cit, p. 10.

\(^{74}\) John Walsh, *A Manual of Domestic Economy, Suited to Families Spending from £150 to £1500 a Year*, George Routledge & Sons, 1879, p. 125-34. Earlier editions of this revised version in the British Library dating from 1874 were destroyed, so this comment may originate from 1874.

\(^{75}\) Mrs Haweis, *Beautiful Houses*, reprinted by the author from her articles for *Queen* magazine, London, 1882.
1850 the artificial dye industry expanded, giving natural dyes a cachet as a ‘craft’
good that were associated with ‘truth and beauty’. Mrs Loftie describes William
Morris’s colours as founded on the ‘scientific rules of harmony’. By equating colour
with musical rules, she is then able to write: “It is in no way connected with the caprices
of fashion.”77 Fashion was seen here as fickle and frivolous, and therefore without
moral worth. Mrs Orrinsmith (1877) praises Thomas Chippendale (1754), but she
also notes that his “originally fine taste” was “led slightly astray” when he followed
fashion and foreign influences with Chinese, French, Gothic and Rococo styles.79

After 1870 the decorative features that were most despised in mid-century decor were
those focused on a past social emulation and a perceived a lack of individuality. Arbiters
of Abode’s advice for facade, hall and staircase followed an individualistic approach.
Mrs Haweis in 1889, when advocating individually painted facades in previously stone-
coloured stucco terraces, does not suggest any unifying element to co-ordinate with the
abutting facades, which may have been in some other colour scheme. She criticises Sir
Charles Lyell’s individual colour taste in choosing a bright blue door, not on the
grounds that it did not coordinate with the rest of the facades.

**DINING-ROOMS: REFORMING “A TERRIBLE SAMENESS”**80

Thomas Walker in 1835 describes the generality of London dining-rooms as “very
tasteless and uninspiring decorated after the barbarian style, rather for display, than
with reference to their use”.81 He disliked distracting ornament and lofty rooms,

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77 Mrs M. J. Loftie, op. cit, p. 13.
78 Thomas Chippendale first published his book of furniture designs, *Gentleman and Cabinet
Makers’ Director*, in 1754.
79 Mrs Orrinsmith, pp. 85 & 86.
81 Thomas Walker, *Aristology or the Art of Dining*, first published 1835. This edition with preface
and notes by Felix Summerly, George Bell and Sons, London, 1881, p. 21.
which he associated with “large parties and overloaded tables,” that he considered as “not favourable to conversation [and] contrary to the principle of concentration”. As an archetypical didactic bachelor, in many aspects of dining he reiterates a dislike of social emulation and in contrast, attaches greater value to communitas. Walker also advises simple improvements such as good lighting, sober wall colours, warm coloured curtains for cold weather and a cool colour for hot weather. Mrs M. J. Loftie, in her book *The Dining-Room* (1878), and also in Macmillan’s Art at Home series, advises against “two great faults – dreariness and overcrowding”.

Dining-room mirrors were seen as vulgar in 1838, but were appropriate in ‘feminine’ rooms such as a “drawing room, boudoir, or even at the top and back of the bed”.

By the time Queen Anne style was fashionable, views on mirrors as unsuitable for dining-rooms seem to have receded far enough to allow a revival of convex mirrors as decor. The Sambournes hung one above the sideboard. Mrs Orrinsmith places a convex mirror in a drawing room.

Rhoda and Agnes Garrett (1877) quote from an unnamed book on furnishing “written many years ago”:

> ‘The dining-room should contain nothing calculated to divert the attention of the guest from the hospitable board of his entertainers’ and we must admit that in the

82 Thomas Walker, op. cit, p. 22.
83 Thomas Walker, op. cit, p. 23.
84 Victor Turner, as discussed earlier in relation to post prandial drinking particularly following dining à la Française. See chapter VI.
85 Thomas Walker, op. cit, p. 23.
88 Mrs Orrinsmith, *The Drawing Room*, p.125.
They misunderstand this paraphrase of Walker’s ideals of simplicity as an enhancer of good fellowship and instead use the quotation as a vehicle to condemn an unrelated earlier, more elaborate style.

Among their listed clichés are red and gold flock paper, walls painted light green, grained woodwork, black finger plates and door handles, black marble chimney pieces, cast iron grates and fire irons “of railway station type”. The latter is an early example of a style appropriate for commercial use and thereby rejected by fashionable individualists since it was used by various social categories in a public place.

Although the Garretts find the usual mahogany telescope dining-table functional, it is considered unattractive, as are curvaceous mahogany sideboards with mirrors and “modern” varnished oak with machine-made Gothic mouldings and carvings. Hermann Muthesius describes telescope tables as frequently found in the average English house in *Das Englische Haus*, a book based on his observations made in England from 1896 to 1903 when he was living in London as an official at the German Embassy. He was a qualified architect with wide international experience, and admired some of the latest developments in British architecture and interior design.

F. Anstey, in *Vice Versa* (1882), gives a satirical view of a colonial produce merchant’s Westbourne Terrace dining-room as: “in the stern outdated style of the Mahogany Age”. It was a room without fashionable distemper in shades of grey or green, without a dado.

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91 Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, op. cit, pp. 26-8. Mrs Loftie also dislikes telescope tables as they are difficult to change the size and recommends small tables that can be joined together when required, op. cit, p. 61. As the households she was writing for would have had possibly only one parlour maid instead of male servants to change heavy oak or mahogany leaves, it was a practical suggestion.
rail with its grained and varnished wood-work, but papered in dark crimson with matching heavy curtains. The furniture was “all carved in the same massive and expensive style of ugliness”. His description of the pompous Paul Bultitude’s dining-room not only uses his taste for 1850s style to establish the character but also remarks on how the fashion that replaced it which seemed “original and artistic” was by then becoming “meaningless and conventional”.93

An 1890 *Punch* cartoon shows a couple visiting a house for rent and rejecting the heavy dining-room furniture as only suitable for those who dine unfashionably early.94 Muthesius, in accord with his taste for later styles, was critical when describing the mid-nineteenth century fashion in dining-rooms as “massive” and “substantial”.95

Mrs Panton, who wrote *From Kitchen to Garret* originally as articles for the *Lady’s Pictorial* (1887-88), emphasises the word ‘suitable’ for her economically stretched readers’ decor, and invokes hierarchic values by instructing them: “to dispassionately regulate our desires by their appropriateness to our standing in the social scale”.96 Although she begins her chapter on the dining-room with this high-grid invocation of rank, she suggests a cheerful colour scheme and that her readers should resist any salesman who wants to sell them dark and dingy dining-room-papers which he calls “appropriate”.97 Her furnishing choices are for the most part eclectic. A range of dining chairs is illustrated giving comfort priority over style, with the most expensive appearing to have a spring seat and back,98 as described earlier in *The Dinner Question*

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95 Hermann Muthesius, op. cit, p. 206.
96 Mrs C. E. Panton, op cit, p. 49.
97 Mrs J. E. Panton, op. cit, p. 56.
98 Mrs J. E. Panton, op. cit, p. 50.
Hampton & Sons’ 1894 catalogue has a range of dining chairs fitting this description.99

A TUDOR HOUSE TRANSFORMED: CONFINING HOSPITALITY AND EXPORTING CHARITY

Dining fashions were changing not only among the middle- and the upper middle-classes. Great households were also changing, often by adapting concepts of grandeur from the past to suit their present needs for new styles of dining. Ideas of the past were adapted not only in newly built mansions but in those following a long tradition like the Lucys at Charlecote Park, Warwickshire, built in 1558 where, between 1829 and 1834, a new and almost bourgeois dining-room was added. This addition was in a pseudo-Tudor style despite Charlecote Park having the original dining area, the Great Hall.

Felicity Heal, referring to William Harrison’s Description of England, described the hospitality dispensed in the Great Hall in 1576 as still in the same mode of commensality that had been dispensed to ‘poor suitors’ and strangers current in medieval households.100 This would still have been the commensal style when Charlecote was built. Felicity Heal notes that the tradition continued during the Civil War by Lady Alice Lucy (died 1649),101 of providing meals for the poor at Charlecote.

Tradition changed. By the time Willement’s dining-room was built in 1834, commensal boundaries were well defined. Charity may have been dispensed but it was exported outside the dining hall or room or even to outside the house. Professor Von Holtzendorff in 1861, when visiting Hardwicke Court, Gloucestershire is told by his hostess Mrs Lloyd Baker that she set aside an hour in the afternoon to receive poor

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women to dispense old clothes and medicines. The clichéd Victorian charitable food-dispensing acts were of ‘nutritious scraps’ taken to the poor, of soup kitchens and the most distanced, residential institutions such as workhouses.

Thomas Willement’s ‘Elizabethan Revival’ dining-room was modelled to conform with nineteenth-century notions of the past. It included a white plaster ceiling studded with strapwork and pendant bosses, antique armorial stained window glass, rich red and blue flocked wallpaper on a gold ground above wood panelling, new barley sugar-legged chairs with matching pillars either side of upholstered back panels, that emphasised comfort rather than any attempt at reproducing Carolean design. Barley twist pillars even support an embroidered fire screen. In 1858, the room was further embellished with a huge sideboard, realistically carved with dead game. Later, in 1877, cheap imitations of carved sideboards were just travesties of craftsmanship so despised by the ‘Art at Home’ writers.

BOURGEOIS EMULATION

Decorative elements from mansions were often selected, modified and scaled down for dining-rooms of lesser diners. Comparing the dining-room in Linley Sambourne’s Kensington house, furnished in the 1870s to early 1880s, the decor can be seen, in part, as a modification of Willement’s designs. The Stafford Terrace windows had stained glass roundels which were in the same style as the Elizabethan glass at Charlecote. To eke out a paucity of family heraldry, Sambourne chose a design incorporating Shakespeare’s fairies, although he did find a related crest, a five pointed

105 Charlecote Park, National Trust Guide, 1992, p. 19. Warwickshire wood-carving was a specialist craft. This piece was made by J. M. Willecox and his assistant, Kendall. A similar sideboard was also installed at Warwick Castle, the seat of the Earl of Warwick. See illustration.
106 Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, op. cit, 1877, p. 49.
star, to put in the window.\textsuperscript{107} There is similarly a dado, where there was panelling at
Charlecote and embossed paper, to imitate plasterwork, on the Kensington ceiling. The
Sambournes chose William Morris wallpaper: a gold design on a black ground which
gives the same rich depth as the paper at Charlecote. The styles diverge a little with the
large fireplace and woodwork at Kensington which supported a collection of blue and
white china that reflected a later fashion for Queen Anne revival architecture and
furnishings.

Choosing appropriate dining-room pictures can be seen as in keeping with the room’s
masculine ascription. Two different styles both retain masculine associations: first
Anstey’s Paul Bultitude had a suitably florid assortment of “those familiar
presentiments of dirty rabbis, fat white horses, bloated goddesses, and misshapen
boors, by masters who, if younger than they assume to be, must have been quite old
enough to know better.”\textsuperscript{108} In the second, as at Charlecote, inherited family portraits
hanging in a dining-room embody the past, thus symbolising hierarchic continuity.

Ancestors’ portraits are a continuing presence at the feast; they may have dined at the
same table as present and future generations will continue to do. As English rules of
inheritance are through the male line, and as women’s property before the Married
Women’s Property Acts of 1870, 1882 and 1893,\textsuperscript{109} was usually incorporated into the
husbands’ assets, this may have been a further possible reason for hanging portraits in
a male designated dining-room.

There are no family portraits in the Sambournes’ dining-room, unlike that of the long-
established Lucys at Charlecote. The most notable picture in the Sambourne dining-
room was a gift from Luke Fildes RA who, with his wife, was part of the Sambournes’

\textsuperscript{107} Eliza Cheadle, \textit{Manners and Modern Society}, Cassell, Petter & Galpin, London, 1872, has a
description of buying spurious heraldry, pp. 23-4.

\textsuperscript{108} F. Anstey, \textit{op. cit}, p. 1.

dining circle. At the end of the century Muthesius notes a feminisation of the dinner table as “more agreeable, more attractive, more feminine, and similarly the whole character of the dining-room has become more refined”.¹¹⁰ This genteel aspect was reinforced by a ventilating system that removed the smell of food and gas lamp fumes. Smell, like dirt, was still a stigmatised aspect of nature to be distanced from refinement. The Sambournes’ dining-room had ventilation holes incorporated into the ceiling rose from which a gas lamp hung.

**DRAWING-ROOM**

The Garretts are overtly high-grid in their choice of decoration, separating rooms by both function and gender.

> It is a generally accepted rule that, as in the dining-room every thing should be heavy and sombre, so the drawing-room should exhibit a light and airy appearance befitting the purpose for which it was ordained... So when the furniture and decorations of this part of the house have to be chosen, the ladies of the house are told that it is now their turn to have their taste consulted.¹¹¹

Muthesius confirms this:

> ...it bears the marks of her preferences: lightness, mobility and elegance, but usually combined with caprice and that love of frippery and knick-knacks by the thousand that characterises the modern English society woman. It has the least style of all the rooms.¹¹²

According to the Garretts, “The drawing-room... is devoted to the lighter occupations of life: to the reception of visitors and to the enjoyment of those moments of post prandial leisure.”¹¹³ Mrs Orrinsmith, in *The Drawing Room*, observes that there was customarily no place for books in drawing-rooms and that “conversation and music are the proper things”. The chief impression gained from books, if present, is that they are

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¹¹⁰ Hermann Muthesius, op. cit, p.206.
¹¹¹ Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, op. cit, p. 28.
¹¹² Hermann Muthesius, op. cit, p. 211.
¹¹³ Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, op. cit, p. 56.
well bound and "cost a good deal". For Mrs Orrinsmith, books were not only
decorative but their "mere titles often suggest conversation". The Garretts suggest a
pale blue colour scheme to sustain "lightness". Drawing-room furniture is to be "lighter
and more ornamental" than dining-room furniture. Again when describing as room that
can be simply converted into a drawing room, Mrs Haweis advised "...that
indescribable 'lady's look'".

All the Arbiters used rejected styles as heuristic devices. Before they set out their ideal
choice, the Garretts' rejected styles are thoroughly described. Among their particularly
scorned features are watered white and gold or sky blue wall paper, rainbow colours
picked out in the cornice, and carpets where the "whole contents of a conservatory have
been upset". Among the "Examples of False Principles in Decoration", part of the
Museum of Ornamental Art (1853), were carpets with colourfully realistic scenes.
Arbiters, such as Redgrave, made rules for rejecting realistic reproductions of flowers
and animals and contributed to a style that, as Anstey suggests, was in its turn
becoming clichéd.

Lady decorators who wrote, were often minutely descriptive when condemning the
'incorrect', as were the Garretts on poorly-made furniture decorated with leaves,
flowers and snakes, "all convulsed with a desire to be sufficiently elegant". Their
book has two chapters, 'Houses as They are' and 'Houses as They might be'. The
Garretts' summation sets a moral as well as a stylistic reason for rejection: "an
inharmonious picture in which fitness and propriety as well as real comfort and

114 Mrs Orrinsmith, op. cit, p. 129.
115 Mrs Haweis, The Art of Housekeeping, A Bridal Garland, A limited edition, No. 76 of 250,
116 Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, op. cit, p. 28.
118 Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, op. cit, p. 28.

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elegance are entirely lost sight of."\textsuperscript{119} Then having described error, the new ideal style is set out.

**TISSOT: THROWING A MENAGE IN THE PUBLIC’S FACE\textsuperscript{120}**

Arbiters of Abode can be seen as choosing comfort with consistent propriety but without any suggestion of sensuality. By comparing paintings that contradict the rhetoric of Arbiters of Abode, I intend to highlight their values and attitudes. James Tissot (1836-1902) moved to London after the siege of Paris in 1870. His portrayal of the ultra-fashionable, with its implications of demimonde caused disapproval, as did Tissot’s pictures of Kathleen Newton (1854-82). Mrs Newton, after a shipboard affair on the way to an arranged marriage in India to an army major, had been divorced, and subsequently had two children, before moving into Tissot’s house in Grove End Road, St John’s Wood.\textsuperscript{121}

Tissot and Mrs Newton’s liaison was public knowledge. When what would now seem a charming picture, of Mrs Newton in *The Hammock*, was exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery, it caused adverse comment and satire in *Punch*, particularly focused on a view of ankle and petticoat. But it was more for the picture’s unmentionable content, of Mrs Newton relaxing in their garden, thus making their relationship public, that evoked such strong reaction. *Punch* suggests that the title should have been ‘The Web’, followed by a new version of ‘The Spider and the Fly’ set in a St John’s Wood Garden.\textsuperscript{122}

Tissot’s portrayal of unacceptable contemporary life was unlike Alma Tadema’s permissible portrayal of ancient Greece with near naked women. This was acceptable

\textsuperscript{119} Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, op. cit, p. 30.

\textsuperscript{120} “Throwing a menage in the public’s face,” with apologies to Whistler’s critic. John Ruskin (1819-1900) in *Fors Clavigera, Letters to Working Men*, Letter lxxix 18th June 1877 (later taken up by the popular press) on *Nocturne in Black* by James Whistler (1834-1903): “I have seen and heard much of cockney impudence before now; but never expected to hear a coxcomb ask two hundred guineas for flinging a pot of of paint in the public’s face.”


because it showed a past unrelated to the present. Besides, Alma Tadema was respectably married, lived in Regents Park, and could be mentioned by Mrs Haweis as having coloured the outside of his house in the same manner as her husband the Rev. Hugh Reginald Haweis.¹²³ No journalists came to admire the arrangement of fur rugs in Grove End Road.

Tissot's *Quiet* (c. 1881)¹²⁴ was in overt opposition to all that the Arbiters of Abode's constrained drawing-room comfort represented. Its sofa is outdoors, in natural surroundings, and is covered by a soft leopard skin. On this sensuous seat sits a pale and demure Mrs Newton¹²⁵ with a book on her lap and some flowers, looking as if they have spontaneously been put in her cleavage. Her straw hat is not worn but on the back of the sofa. Next to her, her little daughter lounges in the fur, with the third occupant, a large dog.

To list some of the features that were in overt opposition to Arbiters of Abode's ideals: it is known who the sitter and her child are and where they are. Wild fur rugs, which featured in several of Tissot's interiors, emphasised sensuality and exotic nature untamed. The girl is not occupied with some improving book or game, but lies sprawling idly in the afternoon heat. The dog, instead of lying correctly at their feet, shares the sofa.

**UNMENTIONABLE ROOMS¹²⁶**

The Garretts, in keeping with other writer/decorators, do not mention WCs in their decorative advice. Lady decorators relegate them into invisibility. A “self closing” baize

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¹²⁴ *Quiet*, c. 1881, private collection, London.

¹²⁵ By this time she appears to have the TB from which she was to die the following year, 1882.

¹²⁶ John Marshall and Ian Wilcox, *The Victorian House*, Sidgwick and Jackson, London, 1886, p. 58. They describe the Victorians' own division of their houses into three main areas: public, private and the unmentionable. This is unattributed to any particular source.
door was intended to eliminate sight sound and smell from the kitchen, but mentioning occurrence of any other smells was beyond propriety.

Drains, unlike WCs, are discussed. Mrs Haweis, in 1889: “Drains are now so fashionable a study that I need say little about them here...” She then gives a genteel method of checking their efficiency by dropping oil of peppermint down the drains and then testing to see if the smell persists. As Mrs Haweis acknowledges that health and safety depend on good drains, she recommends consulting a sanitary inspector. But best of all is to be knowledgeable oneself, with the warning: “There is no bee in the bonnet so tiresome as the sanitation bee and there is no malady so catching.” Mrs Peel, in 1898, writing on 'areas' and dustbins, advises that zinc dust buckets be emptied twice a week and rinsed out occasionally with carbolic disinfectant and water. Vegetable refuse and sink waste were “to be burnt at once”, while the ‘area’ was to be washed down each morning, and the drain flushed with disinfectant “now and again”. “The mistress” should check the area daily. As the area in many town houses was immediately below, and likely to be visible from, the front door, it had to be clean and odour-free.

Such demonstrated hygiene was essential to the presentation of the house as a representation of civilisation without overtly natural invasions. Similarly, the architect Robert Kerr, in *The Gentleman’s House* (1871), a work mostly on mansions, emphasises the importance of planning to avoid “unrefined arrangement”.

127 Mrs Peel, op. cit, p. 59.
130 ‘Areas’ were the paved space in front of the back door where fireplace ashes were sifted and dustbins stood.
131 Mrs Peel, op. cit, p. 58.
132 Mrs Peel, op. cit, p. 55.
133 Mrs Peel, op. cit, p. 57.
discussing “unwelcome odours” from the kitchen, he mentions sharing a sole entrance with trades-people, sounds from scullery and coal-cellar heard in the dining-room or study, and kitchen conversation that can be heard in the drawing-room in the same list of contaminating invasions. Stable smells brought into the dining-room by grooms employed as temporary waiters were also not advised in 1860.

Information on the installation of WCs belonged to special works, separate from books for house design and decoration. William Eassie, who had been an assistant engineer in the Crimea, in 1872, wrote the comprehensive *Healthy Houses, a handbook to the history, defects, and remedies of drainage, ventilation, warming and kindred subjects with estimates for the best systems in use.* He describes current unsatisfactory ventilation and designs for WC pans and cisterns that were unsuccessful as well as his preferred choices, giving an idea of the wide range of WCs that were installed. To combat WC smells inside the house, Eassie describes the most common kind of WC pan with a barrier against smells, the round hopper closet pan, attached to a waste pipe with “an ordinary sigmoidal bend”. There were also pans with mechanical tipping ‘stench traps’, a moving physical barrier against sewage and smell.

Coal tar disinfectants were used to combat infection, but had their own distinctively strong smell. They substituted undesirable smells by olfactorily demonstrating hygienic practice. William Brock notes the development of coal tar, a by-product of coal gas, in conjunction with a market that was ready for disinfectants and hygienic soaps, particularly for combating the smell and contagious infection from raw sewage. Lister

had used phenol, a derivative of coal tar, to combat airborne infection for the first time in a surgical operation, in 1867.\textsuperscript{138}

Eassie describes disinfection as “practised by fits and starts” in summer or when there was an outbreak of infectious disease.\textsuperscript{139} He advises daily household disinfection and ventilation including disinfecting water closet pans.\textsuperscript{140} Similarly \textit{Practical Hints for House Drainage for House owners and others} (1887) recommends WCs to be set against outside walls, well ventilated and “…shut off from other parts of the house by a well ventilated lobby.”\textsuperscript{141} Hermann Muthesius summarised English attitudes to WCs:

> In houses of medium size, this lavatory is probably the only one on the ground floor, though in larger houses there is another, which may be next to the billiard-room or the library. The main lavatory on the first floor is generally considered the preserve of the female members of the household and visitors. It is always very difficult to find the right position in the plan for the lavatory intended for the use of visitors and others and the English are particularly sensitive about this. A lavatory that opens directly out of a hall or landing is unacceptable, it must always be tucked away in an inconspicuous position and access must be through another room. But nor must it be too difficult to find. The prime requirement is that anyone should be able to slip in unobserved. For this reason, a lavatory communicating with a washing-place or cloakroom on the ground floor is always the most convenient and almost the obvious position. A suitable place for the lavatory on the upper floor is next to the bathroom or in a passage-way leading to a staircase or other thoroughfare.\textsuperscript{142}

Kerr had noted, in 1871, that it was not always easy to find positions for WCs that were “…suitable for privacy. The principles of English delicacy are not easily satisfied; no one would wish them, however, to be less fastidious… but if the access be too direct, it is a serious error. For instance small ante-lobbies are always useful.”\textsuperscript{143}

\begin{verbatim}
138 William H. Brock, op. cit, p. 296.
139 William Eassie, op. cit, p. 97.
142 Hermann Muthesius, op. cit, p. 94.
\end{verbatim}
Sambourne’s house, 16 Stafford Terrace, had a WC at the back of the front hall and another on a half-landing on the staircase between the principal bedroom and the drawing room. Although they were not designed entirely in accordance with the ideal as stated by Muthesius, they were placed to sustain gender division within the ritual of entertaining visitors. All areas designated as feminine – drawing-room, upstairs cloakroom and the master bedroom, where women leave their cloaks when dining – were, as in the Turkish example, upstairs, well away from outside, whereas male areas were on the ground floor – the dining-room, with its more masculine decor for post-prandial drinking, a ground-floor WC, and cloakroom if there was space, or a cupboard to hang men’s hats and coats. That the male WC was near to their drinking area might be considered a matter of convenience but it also meant that marginal male callers who were not eligible for admission beyond the hall could also use the WC without intruding further into the house, and certainly not into female-designated territory.

That the kitchens were not near the other female area, unlike the gender-divided Turkish house, would, I suggest, only emphasise their stigmatised status. At Stafford Terrace the servants’ WC was in the basement directly below the ground floor WC. As shown in the previous section on the kitchen, kitchens for ladies were next to the dining-room, in keeping with the Turkish ideal incorporation into the feminised interior.

CHILDREN GROWING UP AND MOVING DOWNSTAIRS TO DINNER

Children lived at the top of town houses and in their earliest years were excluded from adult social events, with the exception of Christmas dinner, this emphasising its role as a rite of reversal.144 Nursery children’s structured mealtimes, referred to earlier, also highlighted their separation from children who were free to participate in street life.

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144 Victor W. Turner, The Ritual Process, Structure and Anti-Structure, A Demonstration of the Use of Ritual and Symbol as a Key to Understanding Social Structure and Process, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, London, 1969, p.177-8: Turner’s rituals of reversal “...reaffirm the hierarchical principle.” As with communitas, as discussed in chapter II, they are rituals that in ‘alternate’ time reaffirm the everyday order of the rest of time.
Nursery children lived in the furthest and most protected place in relation to the outside world; nurseries were on the top, or next to top, floor of most town houses. Similarly in traditional Turkish households young children lived protected lives in the women's quarters.

A child's progress to maturity in the previously discussed context of turning them from a natural state, via an ideally protected and structured upbringing, can not only be seen in terms of commensal events, but also as a progress downstairs. Their earliest appearances when young were spent after tea, with their mother, in the drawing-room, followed when older by joining dining-room luncheon. Ultimately they were incorporated as fully-fledged diners, when young men could join male post-prandial drinking. This paradigm of progression to maturity, traced through movement and meals, ending in adulthood can be defined by full integration within the appropriate social circle.

LOCATION: NEW GEOGRAPHIES

New residential areas for a more fragmented class society developed during the growth in the popularity in dining. Novelists such as Dickens and Trollope augment their character descriptions by setting them in exact locations. Similarly, Anstey's Colonial Produce merchant, Paul Bultitude, lives in a large Westbourne Terrace house in Tyburnia,145 considered an 'arriviste' location, although the author does not state whether he lives at the more fashionable end, nearer to Hyde Park. Both Bayswater and Tyburnia were popular with prosperous Anglo-Jewish families who had been moving there from the City of London since the 1840s.

145 Donald J. Olsen, *The Growth of Victorian London*, B. T. Batsford Ltd, London, 1976, p. 164, gives an account of the rise of Tyburnia from c.1852, an area that ran from the edge of Bayswater to Notting Hill. Tyburn had been a place for publicly hanging criminals. Subsequently it was renamed Marble Arch.
A more precise location was satirised by Wilde when Lady Bracknell describes John Worthing’s house at 149 Belgrave Square as on the “unfashionable side”. Belgravia was the elite area mentioned in the context of emulation in books on dining.

Addresses could also be overtly stigmatised in satire. One of Joseph Hatton’s anecdotes, in 1892, has a “Mrs Tufthunter-Brag” accompanied by a “Mrs Brixton-Bayswater”. Suburban dinner-givers were similarly cartooned by Du Maurier.

**ARTISTIC KENSINGTON: THREE PROMOTING AUTHORS**

Books and articles were written about socially notable men and their houses, not only with architecture and decor revealed for social voyeurism, but also with exact addresses. W. J. Loftie’s book, *Kensington Picturesque and Historical* (1888), has 68 pages of text and pictures out of 277 devoted to “Modern Kensington”. Although this section is called ‘modern’ each location has, where possible, some past aggrandising association included. Loftie notes that Kensington rivals St John’s Wood in the number of artists who live there. Fashionable artists’ houses are illustrated. There is an illustration of Linley Sambourne working in his studio, but he is not mentioned in the text and no location is given for his house. All the other artists mentioned were painters and had larger more fashionably designed houses in more important streets.

“As a Museum of Queen Anne style, Melbury Road is worth a visit.” Not all the artists’ houses, however, were in Queen Anne style.

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147 G.V., *Dinners and Dinner Parties*, Chapman Hall, London, 1862, chapter IV, p. 18: “Misery of those that attempt to imitate Belgravia”.


149 Du Maurier, ‘Annals of a Retired Suburb’: “The Montgomery Joneses celebrate their wedding-day by giving a dinner on an unusually magnificent scale for some of their London friends. Unfortunately, an unexpected change in the weather during the afternoon has made the road up the hill rather heavy, so that the London friends omit to turn up.” *Punch*, January 27th 1883. See illustrations.

Loftie’s local artists include Luke Fildes, G. H. Broughton, C. F. Watts, Sir Frederick Leighton and John Millais. None of them was among the list of subscribers. Most subscribers were untitled and ‘unknown’ Kensington residents, who were registering their presence and by association wished to place themselves as part of this new social location called Kensington. Kensington, as a post-1840 development in what had previously been a largely rural area, could be described as a suburb within Helena Barrett and John Philips’ terms.151

Mrs Haweis, in her book of reproduced articles from Queen magazine, Beautiful Houses, Being a description of certain Well-Known Artistic houses (1882),152 visits and praises an eclectic mixture of decorative styles in the London homes of well-known personalities of the day. The Kensington houses of Sir Frederick Leighton, William Burges, G. H. Broughton are included as were those of other personalities in London and abroad.

Even more cosmopolitan and wide ranging descriptions, from The Pope in Rome to G. A. Sala in Gower Street, are included in Edmund Yates’ Celebrities at Home, 1877-1879,153 which were reprinted from The World. Readers are informed that the view from Sir Frederick Leighton’s house includes studios of such well known artists as Val Princep, Marcus Stone, William Burges, Luke Fildes and the sculptor Hamo Thornycroft.

Illustrations of the artists’ studios add an extra dimension beyond the usual reception rooms. Linley Sambourne, as a draughtsman, was not in the same league as the wealthier painters but is shown, like them, ‘in his studio’154 which can be identified as

151 Helena Barrett and John Phillips, Suburban Style: the British home 1840-1960, p. 9. They emphasize that public transport was an important factor in the development of suburbs. Kensington High Street underground station was opened on 1st October 1868.
154 W. J. Loftie BA FSA, op. cit, p. 251.
one end of the Stafford Terrace drawing room, rather than a separate room. This fiction, like others concerning the public face of domestic space was intrinsic to constructed identity. In the case of the Kensington artists and their wives, not only was identity, by giving dinners at home reinforced by decor, house style and location but in addition, professional identity was also reinforced and offered to a wider public in these books of re-issued magazine articles. These artists' decorative choices displayed as ideals were further reinforced by the advice of the Arbiters of Abode and in the case of Mrs Haweis\textsuperscript{155} incorporated into her voyeuristic journalism.

These three books — *Kensington Picturesque and Historical*, *Beautiful Houses* and *Celebrities at Home*, not only describe their subjects' taste, in varying detail, but their exact locations, thus reinforcing their rank and relationship to each other and to the rest. Kensington, from having no special identity as a residential area after the first building boom in the 1850s, became established by the 1880s as a fashionable artistic neighbourhood. With the arrival of these artists in their new Queen Anne style houses, Kensington was projected as a place of aspiration, as the subscribers of *Kensington Picturesque and Historical* imply. Place, whether inside or outside the house, was defined by what it was and like other ideals by what it aspired to portray, in opposition to what and where it was not. This exclusivity reflected the exclusivity of its dining circles.

8, Melbury Road, Marcus Stone's fashionable Queen Anne style house designed by Richard Norman Shaw, 1875-76. Melbury Road was only a few streets from Linley Sambourne's house. Some of the other Melbury Road artists in were also on reciprocal dining terms with the Sambournes.

Linley Sambourne's house, 18 Stafford Terrace, showing the brick and stucco facade. A Wardian fern case is set in the dining-room window. With lace curtains the view into the interior was obscured. The Garretts noted the fashion for dining-rooms to be defended from view with wicker screens. Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, Suggestions for House Decoration, Macmillan and Co., London, second edition, 1877, p.28. Photograph by kind permission of the Victorian Society and the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.
18 Stafford Terrace. These three photographs show the interior arranged as it is exhibited to the public today. Many of the furnishings and pictures can be traced as to having been chosen by Linley and Marion Sambourne but as the house was lived in by their descendants until it was given to the Victorian Society and the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in 1978 complete reconstruction cannot be achieved. Photographs by kind permission of the Victorian Society and the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

The Hall and typically narrow mid-century style town house staircase. The Men’s WC is situated off the corridor beyond the basement staircase.
The Dining-room at 18 Stafford Terrace.
The Drawing-room at 18 Stafford Terrace, which also served as a studio for Linley Sambourne until room was found on the later unused nursery floor.
A Table at Waddesdon Manor set for dinner a la Russe, with a lavish display of roses as the centre-piece. The dining-room is lined with panelling from the Hôtel de Villars in Paris, designed in 1731 by J. B. Leroux and the furniture, tapestries, carpet and mirrors had all been made in France in the eighteenth century. This photograph was taken in 1897 and is from Baron Ferdinand's Red Book. Reproduced by kind permission of the Alice Trust and the National Trust.
W. Lambert's 1820's painting of The Dinner Locust, shows a couple being served dinner at a small table in front of the fire. There are no signs of the usual dining-room furniture familiar to grander houses of the period, such as sideboards and side tables. In this illustration, decanters and a tray with another dish are left on a small folding tea table, a popular piece of the time. The unwelcome dinner-time visitor has obviously arrived on a non-entertaining day, and as Prince Pückler-Muskau, observed, it was unwise as 'hourglassing' was quite usual in England. (Tour in England, Ireland and France in the Years 1826, 1827, 1828 and 1829, with Remarks on the Manners and Customs of the Inhabitants, and Anecdotes of Distinguished Public Characters in a series of letters by a German Prince). Reproduced by kind permission of Simon Jervis.
The difficulties of social emulation on a typically narrow town house staircase: "The Safest Way of Taking a Lady Downstairs". *Punch*, October 1, 1864, p.140.
Charlecote Park, Warwickshire. View of The Great Hall, 1558, looking North. This large public space would have been used for a variety of purposes by the original household including dining. When compared to the nineteenth-century dining-room changes are highlighted not only of scale but also of an implied upper middle-class, rather than grandiose, exclusivity. Photograph by kind permission of the National Trust.
Charlecote Park, Warwickshire. Thomas Willement's 'Elizabethan Revival' dining-room was modelled to conform with nineteenth-century notions of the past. It included a white plaster ceiling studded with strapwork and pendant bosses, antique armorial stained window glass, rich red and blue flocked wallpaper on a gold ground above wood panelling, new barley sugar-legged chairs with matching pillars either side of upholstered back panels, that emphasised comfort rather than any attempt at reproducing Carolean design. Barley twist pillars even support an embroidered fire screen. 24 chairs were supplied by Thomas Bott in 1837. Compare this privatised nineteenth century dining-room with the public dining space of the original 1558 Great Hall. Charlecote Park, National Trust Guide, 1992, Photos by kind permission of the National Trust.
As part of the 'Flunkeiana' series of cartoons the manservant is ridiculed for arrant snobbishness, while a point is made about ranking residential areas. Punch, 4th July, 1857, p. 10.
Heavy furniture and early dinner rejected as typical of an unfashionable lifestyle. "An Antediluvian Survival", *Punch* May 24th, 1890, p.246,
ANNALS OF A RETIRED SUBURB.

Mrs. Boulthy Smith and her Daughters have been "At Home" to their London Friends every Wednesday Afternoon for the last Seven Years. Last Wednesday some Visitors actually came!

This "at home" cartoon, in this case satirising suburbia, shows callers being announced by a parlour maid. Unlike the first cartoon from the later July number, as this is December the callers are shown into the drawing room in Winter outdoor wear. (Page numbers and dates as above).
FELINE AMENITIES.

"Fair Hostess (who is proud of her popularity), "Yes; I flatter myself there's not a door bell in the whole street that's so often rung as mine!" Fair Visitor. "Well, dear, I had to ring it five times!"

This 1889 Punch cartoon of an “at Home” afternoon, neatly illustrates a drawing room suggesting an fashionable, but not avant garde upper middle class decor. Also shown is the “Fair Visitor” in complete outdoor dress, the earlier male caller is similarly dressed, but has removed his hat which he holds in his lap. The “Fair Hostess” wears a typical afternoon dress with a high neck and long sleeves. (Page nos. and dates as above).
AN INVITATION TO DINNER

Dining has been discussed to show how values and attitudes for the chosen actors were reflected physically in relation to activity, time and place. Degrees of access to more exclusive parts of the house, the layers of clothing removed for different occasions, particularly as applied to women, and the elaboration of shared food taking, all marked out degrees of social intimacy. As Michael Nicod observes, intimacy can be charted as commensal interaction moves from snacks to meals. Nicod measures intimacy through comparing the participants sharing categories of food, such as staples: potato, bread and biscuits as components of what he calls stratified food events.1

As has been discussed, the house was more than just a place to live. Choices involved in location and style demarcated both physical and conceptual boundaries. Degrees of admission into the house, with the ultimate invitation as dinner, were mediated through morning calls and degrees of acquaintance, made by male networked introductions via clubs and professional activities. The middle-range dinner-givers would select their guests from these sources as distinct from those others with whom they had not yet incurred reciprocal obligations, and with whom they hoped to further extend their networks.

Locality offered a basis for reciprocal dining, as can be seen from the growth of Kensington as an area for artists, and the Sambournes' circle included some of these:

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Luke and Fanny Fildes, George Broughton and his wife, Marcus Stone and his wife. But their circle also ranged further through a wider network built up by Linley Sambourne’s work for *Punch*, particularly with F. C. Burnand, the editor from 1880, and Sir John Tenniel who had contributed since 1850 and who had preceded Sambourne as chief artist. For contributors to *Punch*, dining, with its famous weekly dinners, was integral to each issue. Sambourne was also a member of the Garrick Club from 1874, where through his membership he was able to integrate with a wider range of actors, artists and writers.

A less discriminating networking technique is given by Charles Pierce who quotes from *Present State of the Parties*: “In order to reap a few dinners, it is necessary to sow an infinity of visiting cards.”

The length of time a dinner invitation was sent before the dinner depended on the grandeur of the occasion and the circle within which it was sent. *Etiquette for Gentlemen with Hints on the Art of Conversation* (1838) gives from two days to two weeks as usual. During the height of the London Season in 1869, at least three weeks’ notice was advised, while country invitations only needed to be sent ten days before a dinner. Mrs Humphry, in 1897, also gives three weeks as usual but allows for flexibility according to circumstances that ranged from spontaneity to the need to account for the demands of a busy London season which could exceptionally involve

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2 Linley Sambourne, ‘The Mahogany Tree’, a drawing from the Jubilee number showing the *Punch* contributors toasting, after dessert. On the walls hang portraits of famous previous *Punch* editors, writers and artists, *Punch*, July 18th 1891. See illustrations.

3 Information sent by Martin Harvey, secretary of the Garrick Club, 26th October 1995. There is no access to their archive for non members. Linley Sambourne, member 13/4/1874, died 3/8/1910.


six weeks' notice.\textsuperscript{7} Invitations were to be sent in the name of both master and mistress.\textsuperscript{8}

Marion Sambourne would have augmented her and her husband's network through leaving cards and having and attending regular 'at home' afternoons, known as 'morning calls' between three and five p.m.\textsuperscript{9} Leonore Davidoff's account of these conventions of calling, the social rules governing introductions and the function of visiting cards, describes a system that ensured insulation from those below while at the same time developing networks among those in the same league or even allowing entry into a higher one.\textsuperscript{10} These 1869 directions applied to leaving cards and initiating "a first visit of her friend."\textsuperscript{11} A regular 'At Home' afternoon was seen as pretentious for all but an elite at this time, but by the time Marion Sambourne and her circle were making calls in the 1880s, these calls were often on 'At Home' afternoons.

\textbf{LAYERS OF INTIMACY}

After card-leaving rituals had been completed, calling etiquette required that calls were to be made on 'At Home' days. Callers did not, as might be expected, remove their hats and coats, but went to the drawing room with them on, except that men removed and carried their hats. Unless they were intimate friends, visitors were not expected to stay for more than half an hour. The impression was to be of a flying visit, of 'not stopping', for to remove outdoor clothes a more significant invitation was required.

During 'at homes' tea and cake were offered, whereas at lunch, the next rank of invitation, which like 'at homes' was mostly for women, coats and wraps were removed, but never hats. For the ultimate invitation within the visitors' league, dinner,

\textsuperscript{7} Mrs Humphry, \textit{Manners for Women}, first published 1897. This facsimile Pryor Publications, 1993, p. 83.
\textsuperscript{9} \textit{Mixing in Society}, op. cit, p. 81.

\textsuperscript{365}
all outdoor clothes were removed and women’s evening dress revealed their neck and shoulders and they also removed their gloves to eat.\textsuperscript{12} Only at balls and other evening parties which usually included supper, were arms and shoulders exposed, while hats were often replaced by a variety of hair decorations. Such graduated and structured intimacy served to reiterate the exclusivity of domestic dining.

To add a further note on women’s evening dress. Tight lacing, which had become fashionable from the 1840s, induced intercostal breathing, that is, shallow breathing generated by the intercostal muscles between the ribs. The visual effect is a rising and falling of the bust which was further emphasised by boned dresses and corsets. Ted Polhemus and Lyn Proctor describe such styles as “the creation of an erotic frame around exposed parts of the body”.\textsuperscript{13} The ‘normal’ way to breathe is by using the diaphragm, which makes little outwardly discernible movement, and is a mode in accord with accepted ‘modest concealment’, suggesting that physically challenging tight lacing, like other dress extremes, was outside hierarchs’ validated norms and belonged to high fashion. Like all high fashion where there exists an over-archingly hierarchic bias, an extreme fashion, like tight lacing, is not in accord with the slower adaptation of hierarchies. Polhemus and Proctor describe middle class anti-fashion as “nothing in extremes”.\textsuperscript{14}

The bust, as an erogenous zone selected for socially approved visibility, was ideal for display while sitting at table. Seated corseted women personified a need for others to fetch and carry, since at the dinner table they were only expected to converse. Their physical presence, like that of television news readers today, was only visible above the

\textsuperscript{11} Davidoff, op cit, pp. 81-2.

\textsuperscript{12} Arthur Freeling, \textit{The Pocket Book of Etiquette}, Henry Lacy, Liverpool, 1800: “\textit{Ladies do not dine with their gloves on.}” p. 35. Lower down the social scale dining without gloves may have revealed work-worn hands. Similarly in some circles ‘Berlin’ gloves were advised for footmen, particularly when they might not be full-time footmen. Dedicated elite footmen handed dishes with a napkin thus revealing their fine clean hands.


\textsuperscript{14} Ted Polhemus and Lyn Proctor, op. cit, p. 69.
waist. Women news readers have to portray a degree of femininity while at the same time implying a gravitas suited to the importance of the message. Similarly, for respectable dining women, ideas of personal virtue were intrinsic to appearance.

Michael Wentworth notes a disapproval of fashionable women with associations of the French demi-monde. He quotes from a review of James Tissot’s work at The Grosvenor Gallery (1879): 15

The only things that are real are the dresses, and the abominably artificial atmosphere of a certain kind of society, which might be called the Neo-French-English, the essential parts of which are to dress like a French actress, and to care for nothing under or above the sun; energy, truth, brains, heart and life, all disappearing rapidly, and a talented artist revelling in the spectacle and painting the result.

In the same context Wentworth quotes Henry Adams’s reminiscences of English society, which reiterate a view of hierarchic anti-fashion as the ideal, that was sustained until the incorporation of new individualist constituencies: “Fashion was not fashionable in London until the Americans and Jews were let loose.” 16 Many of Du Maurier’s cartoons supported, at best, an ambivalent attitude to these new additions to London society.

Structured dress focused movement on face and hands, which, etiquette books instructed, should ideally be subdued. The voice was also to be well modulated. It certainly would have been ‘breathy’ and small, if a woman was laced tightly enough only to allow intercostal breathing. This new constrained static form emphasised the ostentatious withdrawal from any participation in preparing or serving dinner. Bodily boundaries were now consistent with other domestic boundaries, more firmly drawn. It is worth noting the change from flowing unstructured dresses, which emphasised natural shape and movement, to boned and hooped dresses which confined the body


and emphasised a static form from the mid 1830s. This shift coincided with the move
towards more structured domestic dinner parties. As noted earlier, service à la Russe
was first served during the 1829 London season.

Male clothing from the middle of the 1830s became more sombre, with an emphasis on
black, a colour favoured previously only by professionals, such as clergy and lawyers.
With a growing societal bias towards professionalism, adopting black could be
considered identification with this group.

**NON-DINERS AT A DINNER PARTY**

Children, who did not dine, have already been discussed as personifications of nature
untamed, but they must have, in some households, come down for dessert or there
would not have been repeated advice on stopping the practice. Children were not the
only guests who did not dine but made an appearance. Isabella Beeton has a paragraph
on after-dinner invitations suggesting that they are for busy fashionable people who
wish to make an appearance at two or three parties during the evening. These calls
could be made between nine and twelve o'clock.\(^\text{17}\) How far such visiting was a reality
for the fashionable is difficult to tell. The Sambournes, after dinner on 27th March
1881, were joined by Marion Sambourne's sister Ada and her husband Will [Hamilton
Fletcher], suggesting that post-dinner visiting was less of a fashion but was an
invitation that could be given to intimates without offence. The guests who had dined at
this dinner were: "Mr Blunt, [the actor, Arthur Cecil], Mrs C. Steen, Mr Firth, Mr
Holland, Dr [Morel] and Mrs MacKenzie".\(^\text{18}\) It can be shown from their diaries that the
Sambournes' dinner parties conformed to the usual rules of reciprocal invitations as
found among diners of appropriate rank.\(^\text{19}\)

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\(^{17}\) Mrs Isabella Beeton, 1836-65, (edited by), *Beeton's Book of Household Management*, S. O.

\(^{18}\) Marion Sambourne, *Diary*, 27th March 1881.

\(^{19}\) As my access to the diaries was limited, social networks were not able to be traced.
Changing dining styles were interrelated with alterations in the composition of dinner parties. Single generation dinner parties now emerged which were more in keeping with an excluding networking cohort. "Young people certainly are the ruin of dinner parties," asserted the author of *Mixing in Society* in 1869, a book that favours dining à la Russe as the fashionable choice. Earlier à la Française dining was generationally inclusive, within its circles, and the young were advised to imitate the manners and conversation of their seniors. Rituals of formal hierarchic dining incorporate the youngest and eldest or most senior by ascribing them specific honours and duties (see the Beefsteaks’ Club below).

Guests were chosen for their congeniality in addition to other criteria, as can be seen from Marion Sambourne’s diary. Dining was for many a genuinely popular entertainment, but as with all social interaction, some occasions are likely to have been more successful than others. Linley Sambourne was reputed to have been good company, and in his role as a *Punch* artist was invited to dinners that were in levels above his reciprocal dining orbit. He was, in effect, invited to ‘sing for his supper’, to add a leavening of interest and entertainment in conversation. These higher status dinner-givers could not always be described as ‘lion hunters’ though they compensated in wealth for what they may have lacked in areas such as artistic achievement.

Sambourne frequently dined with men of higher status at their clubs, such as Lord Royston at the Amphytrion Club. They were not on domestic dining terms. Male dining is discussed more fully below under the headings: ‘Aristology for Amphytrions’; ‘Exclusive male dining outside the house: time out, clubs, the City, Blackwall,’

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21 Nathaniel and Emma Montefiore (my great great grandparents) entertained the Sambournes to dinner, 9th July 1893. Marion Sambourne’s diary notes: “v. pleasant dinner at Montefiores,” but they did not, as far as I have found, reciprocate. It may have been an occasion on which they were ‘captured’ for Linley Sambourne’s amusing conversation. The Montefiores lived in considerably grander style than the Sambournes, but would not, as Jews, always have been easily integrated into some elite circles.

22 Linley Sambourne’s manuscript diary, 16th November 1843.
Gravesend and Greenwich'; 'From Beefsteaks to Octaves: a paradigm for a shift from Hierarchy to Individualism'.

**ARISTOLOGY**\(^23\) **FOR AMPHITRYONS**\(^24\)

Books written for men on dining, while often setting out either fashionable or reactionary choices in dining style, frequently reiterated aphorisms and opinions from the past to give dining a justifying rhetoric and sustain it against association with mere gourmandising. Inferences of greed would have debased the diners who aspired to ideals of virtue associated with rank. Social emulation for those who joined male dining circles which were often away from home, could not be directly expressed through domestic decor. Individuals could, however, compete through recourse to exclusive references from a shared canon, such as classical allusions to legendary and historical characters. These could be used to personify gastronomic interests, such as Amphitryon and Lucullus,\(^25\) or they could use these works to find and demonstrate esoteric gastronomic knowledge.

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24 E. Cobham Brewer LLD, *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, new edition, Cassell and Company, London, 1896, p. 44: Molière's "Le veritable Amphitryon est l'Amphitryon ou l'on dine," is the quotation given in this dictionary, followed by the Greek myth of Amphitryon whose likeness Jupiter assumes and gives a banquet. The true Amphitryon returns home and claims the honour of being master of the house. There follows a dispute, but as far as the servants and guests are concerned it is solved by saying: "He who gave the feast was to than the host." It became a favourite reference using both as a direct classical reference and with Molière's quotation. "Amphytrion is used by Brillat-Savarin as a term for a noble host. Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (1755-1825), *Le Physiologie de Goût*, first published 1825, this edition, translated as *The Philosopher in the Kitchen* by Anne Drayton, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1970. Reference to Amphytrion is included in *Kettner's Book of the Table* (1877), a gastronomic glossary and guide, later attributed by Dereck Hudson to E. S. Dallas. As the legend had been revived by Molière as a play, Dallas also quotes Molière's lines that were the foundation for capture by gastronomes. This facsimile edition, preface by Dereck Hudson, Centaur Press, London, 1968, p. 29.

25 E. Cobham Brewer LLD, op. cit, p. 779. Lucullus was reputed to be a rich Roman soldier, 110-57 BC, who put on extravagant feasts. On one occasion a great feast was prepared, but he was the only diner. "Resurrection of Lucullus" is used by Brillat-Savarin as the basis for giving a great entertainment in Paris. Soyer gave his 'Diner Lucullusian à la Sampayo': "...the most recherché dinner I ever dressed," 9 May 1846. Alexis Soyer, *The Gastronomic Regenerator*, Simpkin Marshall and Co., London, ninth edition, 1861, pp. 608-9.
It could be said that for gentlemen, knowledge of wine had greater importance than
gastronomic knowledge, as wine was a male responsibility both at home and outside.
There was a nineteenth-century œuvre of male-oriented books that emphasised male
aspects of dining. Male group exclusivity was intrinsic to a context that emphasised a
high grid separation of roles. Some household and recipe books written for women also
included some of the same views, such as Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin's (1755-1825)
assertion that the number of guests should not be more than twelve, for good
conversation. Mrs Beeton in 1861 already acknowledges that: “We have seen this
varied by saying that the number should never exceed that of the Muses (nine) or fall
below that of the Graces (three).”

These works were written for men who required some gastronomic authority when
ordering a dinner from caterers or servants or in discussion with other, usually male,
diners. *Etiquette for Gentlemen with Hints on the Art of Conversation* (1838) advises:

> If the conversation should turn upon the merits of different dishes, which it probably
> will if the party is composed entirely of men, be careful that you do not praise any
dish which is not on the table.

Menus were included in some works, as they were in some recipe books, like ‘Fin-
Bec’s’ *The Book of Menus*, in 1876. These books would also have been useful for
those who served on Club committees. As William Verrall, and Louis Eustache
Ude had noted, gastronomic knowledge was not always considered a social necessity
among upper-middle class Englishmen, and this was reiterated in anti-French rhetoric.
Some authors reinforce this bias by advising against elaboration, which could either be

26 Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, op. cit, p. 166.
27 Isabella Beeton, op. cit, No. 1886, p. 908.
28 *Etiquette for Gentleman with Hints on the Art of Conversation*, op. cit, p. 35.
pp. 17-29. His introduction is written as a narrative detailing the poor state of culinary
knowledge in his local town, Lewes, Sussex. See chapter II.
III on cuisine.
associated with feminisation or ‘French deception’ (see chapter on cuisine). Much gastronomic knowledge in these books was as applicable to women who organised domestic dining, such as Hayward’s equivocation on adopting à la Russe.32 These topics were sometimes included in cookery and household books, Isabella Beeton’s Beeton’s Book of Household Management being a prime example.33

Two major reference points for these books were Greek and Roman classics as validated by Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin’s (1755-1825) Le Physiologie de Gout.34 They gave gastronomic interests an elevated imprimatur, functioning as validating tags, in the same manner as classical quotation was used. Dr John Doran devotes a whole chapter in Table Traits, With Something on Them to Amphytrion, bizarrely concluding that the legend was of Hindu origin.35 His book, a mass of wandering gastronomic anecdotes, was a useful source for use by those who might need them for any appropriate speech or conversation. An earlier (1838) pocket book with a similarly rich supply of assorted ‘Table Anecdotes’ was John Timbs’ Hints for the Table, or the economy of good living.36 ‘Anecdotes’ was followed, under the heading ‘Laconics’ with a collection of ready quotations in similar vein to this example, from Lord Burleigh: “Gentility is nothing but ancient riches.”37 Using well known references and quotations is a particular trait in hierarchies, for they are the reiterated sentiments held in common over time. The Beefsteaks Club used a Latin ‘tag’ and a quotation from Shakespeare to make a point softly with a joke (see heading: From Beefsteaks to Octaves: a paradigm for a shift from Hierarchy to Individualism). In contrast, the height

32 Abraham Hayward, The Art of Dining, or Gastronomy and Gastronomers, John Murray, first published 1852. This edition 1883, p. 91. As noted in chapter VII on Service à la Russe,
33 Mrs Isabella Beeton (1836-65, editor), Beeton’s Book of Household Management, S. O. Beeton, London, 1861, pp. 905-8. Her section on ‘Dinners and Dining’ is typical of this style.
35 Dr John Doran, Table Traits, With Something on Them, Richard Bentley, London, 1854, ch. 1 on anecdotes on the origin of the Amphytrion legend.
36 John Timbs, Hints for the Table, or the economy of good living, Simpkin Marshall & Co., London, 1838, pp 130-47.
37 John Timbs, Hints for the Table, op. cit, p. 147.
of individualistic wit was epitomised by Oscar Wilde’s topically witty reversals of conventional expectations.

Most of these books did not include recipes, but a recipe book which addresses the section on Bills of Fare to ‘the Amphytrion’ and takes menu choice as between the ‘Amphytrion’ and his cook was Urbain Dubois’ Cosmopolitan Cookery. But as this is a translated book of haute cuisine, it locates menu choice, in a typically French elite style, as part of male connoisseurship.

Not only through his references to Greek and Roman texts, but also as a French authority, Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin’s (1755-1825) Le Physiologie de Goût, produced a book rich in quotable aphorism, anecdote and didactic views. As ‘recherché’ English dinner cuisine was French influenced, Brillat-Savarin could be regarded as an ideal authority.

An English work that was similarly quoted in other male dining books throughout the century was Thomas Walker’s Aristology, or the Art of Dining, written ten years after Le Physiologie de Goût. There seems no direct evidence for Walker’s book to be seen as deriving from Brillat-Savarin. Henry Cole found nothing from the text or from any other source suggesting that Walker had read Le Physiologie de Goût.

Thomas Walker was born in Manchester in 1784, the son of a manufacturer, went to Cambridge and was called to the bar at the Inner Temple by 1812. He subsequently became a Metropolitan Magistrate. In 1835 he both founded and closed a weekly journal, The Original. Twenty-nine issues were published, to be followed by Aristology, or the Art of Dining in the same year, which was compiled from The Original. Walker was forced to give up issuing the journal through the resulting increase in dinner invitations not allowing him time to write. His health was weak, to


39 Thomas Walker, Aristology, or the Art of Dining, first published 1835.
which can be attributed partly his taste for simpler dinners. He died a bachelor, in Brussels on 20th January 1836.40

Having eaten barristers’ dinners was also a qualification shared by Abraham Hayward. In *The Art of Dining, or Gastronomy and Gastronomers* (1852), Hayward quotes both Brillat-Savarin and Walker. Hayward also took Walker’s title, if not his sub-title. Walker’s *The Art of Dining* was reissued with additional editorial notes by Felix Summerly (Henry Cole) in 1881. Cole considered that Walker’s ‘first principles’ should govern all dinners and therefore, “seem well worthy of reproduction at this time.”41

The values and attitudes promulgated by Walker that were to be so often repeated, principally concerned a masculine simplicity of taste enforced with firm authority. Hayward’s *Art of Dining* was also reissued in 1883, without any new editorial comment, but with annotations and additions added by Charles Sayle to the 1899 edition.42 Another lawyer, A. V. Kirwan, in *Host and Guest* (1864), quotes Walker.43 ‘Fin-Bec’, in the November 1871 number of his short-lived journal *Knife and Fork*, says, “the present generation knows little of Walker”.44 He also later quotes him in *The Dinner Bell* (1878), recommending Walker’s ideal dinner with “everything on the table”.45 Previously, in 1874, he had written a short biography of Thomas Walker.46 Others who quote Walker include John Timbs in *Hints for the Table* (1838),47 and

41 Thomas Walker, 1881, op cit, p. V.
44 *Knife and Fork*, edited by ‘Fin-Bec’ (W. Blanchard Jerrold, 1826-84), November 1871, p. 56.
47 John Timbs, *Hints for the Table*, op cit, p. 94.
Club Life of London (1866). He is also mentioned in Lucullus or Palatable Essays of 1878 as a high authority on all matters gastronomic.

Hayward added gourmet opinions as an attribute for elite English male dining. He made a list of the best French cooks employed by English nobility, thus linking two elites, a theme that continues through the book. It was not typical of the genre. The bias of male dinner writing was towards a cuisine that confirmed male identity, while overtly rejecting feminised dishes. Similarly, French haute cuisine could also be rejected on the same grounds of frivolity, whereas French bourgeois cuisine was embraced within a rhetoric that emphasised simplicity, such as proposing pot au feu to replace the roast. Both ‘Fin-Bec’ and Sir Henry Thompson followed this argument in print, although Thompson’s Octave menus were unmistakably ‘haute cuisine’ with no hint of influence from the bourgeois repertoire.

French cuisine was, as it had been previously, important to a more cosmopolitan constituency and some English authors such as Hayward include information and anecdotes on French haute cuisine. Kirwan describes an ideal simple, small dinner given by the professional classes in Paris. Later, ‘Fin-Bec’ (W. Blanchard Jerrold) and others wrote with more emphasis on bourgeois cuisine.

The cosmopolitan aspect of these works was, as might be expected, mostly orientated to widening knowledge of French cuisine. But experience of other countries also fuelled chauvinism, with examples of ‘foreigners’ funny foodways’. A typical story was of a French king having Christmas pudding served to an English ambassador as

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50 Thomas Walker, op cit, p. 18 “...whereas ladies think principally of display and ornament”. Frivolous feminine decor was considered by Walker as superfluous to good dining.

51 ‘Fin-Bec’ (W. Blanchard Jerrold), The Cupboard Papers, London, 1881. ‘Fin-Bec’ the work is a recommendation of French bourgeois cookery as integral to a ‘rational’ middle-class lifestyle.

liquid soup. Edward Ricket's *The Gentleman's Table Guide* emphasised boundary in a list of 'ridiculous' foreign dishes.

For individualists, accounts of meals from abroad gave useful information or assisted those who literally wished to pose as men of the world. Hayward lists Parisian restaurants with recommended dishes and wines. *Wanderer* (Elim D'Avigdor, 1841-95), in *Dinners and Dishes*, provides information on dining in Russia, Romania, Austria, Germany, and various parts of Italy. Similarly Kirwan lists famous foreign liqueurs with their place of origin, commenting, "Few of these are known in England."

The possibilities these books offered, not only for those who wanted information but also for didacts and bores, is not only evident in the rule-setting style of some works, but evident as ready sources of recurring gastronomic anecdotes and aphorisms.

Scientific facts on food and diet were another intellectual recourse for those who wished to be, or show themselves as, knowledgeable about food matters. Sir Henry Thompson's *Food and Feeding,* published from 1880 to 1910, combined dietary advice with promoting French bourgeois cuisine. A more scientific work was Dr Edward Smith's *Food* which had ten editions between 1873 and 1890.

Mahaffey, in *The Art of Conversation,* warns his readers against didactic conversation at dinner. *Punch* and other journals included articles for reactionary opinions on male

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54 *Knife and Fork,* ed. 'Fin-Bec', August 1871, p. 75.
55 Edward Ricket, *The Gentleman's Table Guide and Table Companion to the Art of Dining and Drinking with Table Habits and Curious Dishes of The Various Nations &c. &c., With Practical Recipes for Wine Cups, American Drinks, Punches, Cordials, Recherché Bills of Fare,* Frederick Warne & Co., London, 1878, pp. 72-3.
56 Abraham Hayward, *Art of Dining or Gastronomy and Gastronomers,* John Murray, this edition 1883, pp. 37-44.
58 A. V. Kirwan, op. cit, pp. 245-6.
dining with titles such as 'A Defence of English Dinners', 'Bygone of the Old School'.

CLUBS: EXCLUSIVE MALE DINING OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

A repetitive theme in advising women to produce good dinners at home was to discourage their husbands from dining out. Club dining could be solitary, simply food and drink promptly provided, or it could be a way of dining with those who could not be invited into the home for reasons of incompatibility of their rank or reputation. Club dining was at the core of male networking.

This next example is of networking for specialist knowledge, indispensable to individualists' need for instrumental power. Sir Mountstuart Elphistone Grant Duff's diary records that he lunched at the Devonshire Club with Leonard Montefiore to meet Karl Marx, on 31st January 1879. This unusual trio's meeting underlines the necessary role of a semi-private place, more neutral ground than within the home, to dine, or in this case, lunch. Marx, like many political exiles had settled in London in 1849, where he and his family lived in poverty. Reciprocal social dining, even if it had been possible, was an irrelevance for Marx, as it also was for Montefiore, who had rejected the social round. The Devonshire Club was established as an alternative to the Reform, which was considered to have, over time, lost its radical tone. The

59 Punch, January 22nd 1859, p. 34.

60 'Lady Maria Clutterbuck' pseud. Mrs Charles Dickens, What shall we have for Dinner? Bradbury and Evans, London, first published 1851. This edition 1852, pp. V-VI. Also Etiquette, Social Ethics and Dinner Table Observances, Houlston & Wright, London, 1860, p. 88.

61 Rt Hon Sir Mountstuart Elphistone Grant Duff GCSI, Notes From a Diary 1873-1881, John Murray, London, 1898, pp. 102-6.


63 His parents, Nathaniel and Emma Montefiore, later entertained the Sambournes to dinner, 9th July 1893 (see earlier footnote).
Devonshire was founded by the Marquess of Hartington and presided over by his father after Gladstone’s first ministry, 1868-74.64

Sir Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant Duff (1829-1906) had been under secretary for India in Gladstone’s first ministry. After Oxford he had gone to Germany to learn the language. He was particularly interested in foreign policy and to gain intelligence made a special point of speaking to visiting foreigners in their own language. He also travelled in Russia, Spain and Germany. He was in Darmstadt during the war of 1870.65

Leonard Montefiore (1853-79) had read history at Balliol, under Benjamin Jowett, who had been the first Englishman to champion the work of G. W. F. Hegel.66 Montefiore became an authority on German political thought, but his main interest was social work, and he spent time in the East End at working-men’s clubs rejecting the wealthy lifestyle to which he had been brought up at a country house, Coldeast, near Southampton and at Hyde Park Gardens.

Marx’s views on impending revolution in Russia, as recorded in Duff’s diary, have, with hindsight, a prophetic clarity. Not every club lunch set up among unlikely men could have been quite so interesting, but this does show how flexibility was incorporated into a superficially rigid system. For if hierarchies are to flourish they must also be able to adapt. Clubs were ideal places not only for hierarchists and individualists to meet, but for them to meet isolates and those from low grid bounded groups, to know their views and ideas.

TIME OUT: THE CITY, BLACKWALL, GRAVESEND AND GREENWICH

City livery company and corporation dinners had a reputation for gluttonous feasting. A
gastronomic work, *Knife and Fork*, was written specifically for this constituency by
'Alderman'. Beef and turtle jokes were *Punch* favourites. *Punch*'s "Travels in
London, a Dinner in the City" (1847) has a description of a dinner which included
eating quantities of turtle soup, beef, venison, duck, peas, smelts, salmon: "a dizzy
mist of gluttony". In spite of their reputation for plenty, Henry Cole found them
badly organised and was forced to dine only on green peas, as he wrote to the *Times*
with ideas for their reform on 19th October 1864. He reprinted the letter seventeen
years later as an appendix to his edited edition of Walker's *Art of Dining*, suggesting,
possibly, that little had changed.

'Whitebait dinners' were also popular for all-male dining. John Timbs cites Blackwall,
Greenwich and Gravesend taverns as being well placed at the flood tide for taking
whitebait, a local delicacy eaten straight from the Thames. After being floured and deep
fried in lard over charcoal, these tiny fish were then served up in a white napkin with
accompanying lemon juice, cayenne and brown bread and butter. Timbs gives iced
champagne or punch as the accompanying drinks. By 1853 Hayward describes the
appeal of a Blackwall or Greenwich dinner as: "the trip, the locality, the fresh air, and
perhaps the whitebait". Timbs commented later in 1866 on the changes to the taverns
which had been rebuilt as handsome architectural piles and that, as whitebait was
brought by rail or steamer to London, it could be found at fishmongers and all grades of

67 The Knife and Fork for 1849, Laid by the 'Alderman', Founded on the Culinary Principles
advocated by A. Soyer, Ude, Savarine and Other Celebrated Professors, Hurst, London, 1849.
68 'A Dinner in the City', *Punch*, Vol. 13, July-December 1847, pp. 247-8, reprinted in *Sketches
Co., 1869, pp. 333-41. Also see section below on conversation and illustrations.
taverns. For Hayward, although these fish were fresher at source, the rest of the menu seems not to have appealed to his gourmet taste.\textsuperscript{71}

Not only were these Thames-side dinners exclusively male, but they were held far from usual places of work and residence, thus increasing 'freedom'. Exclusive male dining could be seen as reclaiming curtailed post-prandial drinking time, curtailed with the move to greater individualism. But I would also argue that it was the growth of female domination over domestic dinner-giving that supported exclusive male dining. In turn male dining could sustain an expectation of separate roles by recapturing the dining-room with its male associations for exclusive male dinners.\textsuperscript{72} As the structure of eating à la Russe and its concomitant classification imposed tighter constraints on time, so communitas – 'time out of time' referred to earlier – was in some instructions for dining reduced to fifteen minutes.\textsuperscript{73} Whether it really was this short for most diners is difficult to determine. Kirwan, when comparing English and French mores, notes the French as never separating after dinner, compared to Englishmen sitting for "one hour or so".\textsuperscript{74}

Hayward gives Walker's account of a Blackwall dinner, where he dines on turtle with punch, whitebait with champagne, grouse with claret, apple fritters and jelly, ices and dessert, with one glass of liqueur and coffee. The only other drink permitted by the author is the possibility of one or two bottles of port. "If the master of a feast wishes his party to succeed, he must know how to command, and not let his guests run riot each according to his own wild fancy."\textsuperscript{75} These typically hierarchic rules were ideal for the drawing of boundaries against ever encroaching individualist anarchy. Hayward

\textsuperscript{71} Abraham Hayward, \textit{Art of Dining, or Gastronomy and Gastronomers}, John Murray, this edition 1883, p. 94.

\textsuperscript{72} See male domestic dining, discussed below in: From Beefsteaks to Octaves. Linley Sambourne and Sir Henry Thompson both gave all-male dinners at home.


\textsuperscript{74} A. V. Kirwan, \textit{Host and Guest: a book about dinners, dinner giving, wines and desserts}, Bell and Daldy, London, 1864, p. 71.

\textsuperscript{75} Abraham Hayward, \textit{Art of Dining or Gastronomy and Gastronomers}, John Murray, this edition 1883, pp. 91-2.
quotes Walker's comments on the success of his Blackwall dinner, although one of the guests suggests that it might have been improved by the addition of a course of "flounders water-zoutched" after the turtle. This Walker accepts, but as soon as they have had the liqueurs he orders his guests "out of the room, and the only heresy committed was by one of the guests asking for a glass of bottled porter, which I had not the presence of mind to instantly forbid."76

It is not the draconian rule on which Hayward subsequently comments but on Walker's choice of turtle. Instead, he recommends his own fish menu (in his appendix). He also makes another gourmet point, that as there is grouse it must be after 12th August and by that date whitebait are too large and are "without their characteristic delicacy".77 Nevertheless, Timbs (1866) gives June, July and August as popular months for whitebait dinners.78

These strictures imposed by Walker and Hayward are in direct opposition to the prototype whitebait dinner as portraying the consumption of an uninhibited bounty of food and drink. Excess at whitebait dinners was a subject for Punch79 and also used as an example of bachelor habits in books advising wives to keep their husbands at home with good dinners.80 These popular views of excess relegate these didacts to a possibly more limited constituency. As in many didactic works, hierarchic rhetoric was promulgating an ideal which had less relevance in practice. Social interaction was, and is, not usually dictated by didacts.

76 Abraham Hayward, 1883, op. cit, p. 93.
77 Abraham Hayward, 1883, op. cit, p. 93.
80 Lady Maria Clutterbuck, pseud. Catherine Dickens, *What Shall We Have For Dinner?*, Bradbury and Evans, London, 1852, pp. V-VI.
FROM BEEFSTEAKS TO OCTAVES: A PARADIGM FOR A SHIFT FROM HIERARCHY TO INDIVIDUALISM

To compare the 'Beefsteaks' Club, with the 'Octaves' circle may be considered as not comparing like with like. Nor is it, but it well illustrates the bias of the shift from hierarchy to individualism. Through the decline of an old club and the founding of a new dining circle can be seen a paradigm of social change within male upper middle and elite constituencies.

To define the values and attitudes that underpinned this change, Cultural Theory, as further developed by Gerald Mars in relation to workplace crime, adds to the dimension of grid, attributions of: autonomy, insulation, reciprocity and competition, and to the group dimension: frequency, mutuality, scope and boundary.81 These attributions can be used to define and compare the particular valued qualities of these two dining entities.

The Beefsteaks Club had rules that set a high value on group. This was manifest in the frequency of their interaction since absence without good reason was penalised. Similarly the mutuality of the members' interactions and their boundary as set within the club itself, especially in relation to guests, all served to enhance group strength. Scope assesses the range of members' interactions beyond the club. They appear to have been more coincidental than planned. Therefore there is no indication of intensity. But it is of less importance than frequency, mutuality, and boundary. Attributions of grid were all of low strength in relation to the Beefsteaks, for as a bastion against individualism, autonomy, insulation, reciprocity and competition were anathema. The Octaves, on the other hand, were the epitome of networking individualism. These were autonomous individuals, insulated by comparison with the mutuality of the Beefsteaks. They were individuals whose conversation was competitive. Rather than bonding by a common membership, for them reciprocity through networking was manipulated by the

individual strategies of Sir Henry Thompson rather than the Beefsteaks' bonds reiterated through structured frequency.

Walter Arnold not only relates *The Sublime Society of Beefsteaks*\(^2\) history but by detailing its customs and rules describes the hierarchic devices that sustained it. This was an exclusively male enclave that had all the trappings of hierarchy. Eventually, in the face of an increasing bias towards individualism, Arnold's detailed ethnography reveals how it began to fail and eventually closed in 1867. The club had been founded in 1735 by John Rich, theatre manager at Drury Lane Theatre, with twenty-four members including a rotating president.

In 1838 the Beefsteaks moved to their last clubroom,\(^3\) built in Gothic style, in the roof of the Lyceum Theatre. The walls of its dining-room were hung with portraits of past and present members evoking its historic past and future continuity, a characteristic of all true hierarchies.\(^4\) Meat was visibly grilled and roasted behind a grating in the form of a gridiron, the club badge, with a text, from *Macbeth* re-interpreted above: "If were done, when 'tis done, then t'were well it were done quickly."\(^5\) The catalogue of the sale after closure lists the furnishings that reiterated the rhetoric: among these the President's chair and members' chairs, a president's cap, a bust of John Wilkes\(^6\) (1727-97) who was the first member of Parliament to become a member of the club in 1754, twenty years before eventually taking his seat in the Commons.\(^7\)

Meetings at the club had a strong web of formal and informal rules. Both the menu and the permitted drinks were limited by the club's rules. Beefsteaks were only to be served

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83 Anthony Lejeune, *The Gentlemen’s Clubs of London*, Bracken Books, London, 1979. This edition 1984, pp. 53-7. This was the last clubroom of the original club, before it was re-established in a different form in 1876 as noted by Lejeune. See illustrations.
86 Walter Arnold, op. cit, p. 149.
with baked potatoes, Spanish onions, cold and fried beetroot and chopped eschallot.

After eating as many beefsteaks as they wished, dinner concluded with toasted cheese.

The steaks were thick or thin although not large and were cooked to the taste of each diner. The Beefsteaks’ members traditionally drank their porter from pewter tankards and ate their steaks from pewter plates. They also drank, in addition to porter, port, punch and whisky toddy.

The club membership was drawn from diverse ranks from middling to elite in the outside society. Members united not only through dining together but bonded further by a set of exclusive rituals and rules. They wore a uniform of buff waistcoat and blue coat with gridiron crested buttons bearing the text: “Beef and Liberty”. In addition, they wore a ring with the same crest. The youngest member was always called ‘Boots’, in the outside society Boots being the lowest in the hierarchy of servants. At the meetings Boots had specific duties, such as decanting port when fresh steaks were served. Arnold compares ‘Boots’ to a fag in a public school. Other duties were carried out by officers: the vice president, the bishop and the recorder.

New members were subject to an exclusive set of ridiculing initiation rites. They were blindfolded, and if members committed some slight or imaginary offence they were wrapped in a white sheet as ‘punishment’ and ‘formally’ rebuked as in a case reported by James Hogg: “a very sharp and cutting rebuke, but in a style of ludicrous sublimity, quite indescribable”. The greatest offence was for a member to lose his

87 John Wilkes (1727-97) challenged the issue of warrants for arresting unnamed individuals for an offence, in The North Briton, issue no. 45, 1763.
88 Arnold, op. cit, p. 6.
89 Arnold, op. cit, p. 4.
90 ‘Boots’, discussed in relation to contamination in chapter IV on kitchens.
91 Arnold, op cit, p. 11.
92 Arnold, op cit, p. 9.
93 Arnold, op cit, p. 12.
94 Arnold, op cit, p. 19, quoting James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd from Fraser’s Magazine, July 1833.
temper\textsuperscript{95} for that was to cause dissonance, a mark of overt opposition to the club's ideals of unity within its bounds of time and place.

Anecdotes reinforced the club's ideals. The Duke of Sussex, a member from 1808, when being teased as being the possible thief of another member's chain and seals, sulked but later apologised for inappropriate temper and promised to make amends at the next meeting.\textsuperscript{96} Rules of hierarchic entities always have precedence over any individualist temperament that is destructive of unity. Another member who did not join in the spirit of joking was obliged to send in his resignation.\textsuperscript{97}

Visitors could usually be invited by members, during the season, November to June, to the weekly Saturday meetings, excepting on a few particular occasions, such as the last meeting of the season. But visitors were not to be the butt of jokes or subject to mock punishments. Thus a boundary was defined between inside the club and its members and their to-be-respected guests.\textsuperscript{98} In strong groups, guests serve an important function, for by their exclusion from core activities, they emphasise the group's boundary.

Similarly emphasising the inside/outside dichotomy, a guest from Liverpool was said to have been incredulous when told that a member whose chair had fallen over was a Duke - as indeed he was. Since no-one had helped him up, he had reasoned that all the members must have been tradesmen, and were simply playing a joke about pretended aristocracy. The Beefsteaks spent the rest of the evening acting out this fiction for their own amusement.\textsuperscript{99}

\textit{Etiquette, Social Ethics and Dinner Table Observances} (1860) gives an incident from the club as an example of rank and place. "An individual who filled a gentlemanly

\textsuperscript{95} Arnold, op cit, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{96} Arnold, op cit, p. 12-3.
\textsuperscript{97} Arnold, op cit, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{98} Arnold, op cit, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{99} Arnold, op cit, p. 19.
position in the world and derived an excellent income from some public office,” is a
guest at the Beefsteaks Club where he sits next to a Duke with whom he has a friendly
collection on “general topics of the day”. Subsequently he meets the Duke in the
street and greets him, “Ah, my Lord, how d’ye do!” The Duke is surprised and not
knowing him, is told where they met, to which he replies, “Then Mr Salcombe of the
Treasury, I wish you good morning!”100 If club members who were members of an
outside elite, were wrapped in white sheets and the constraints of their outside status
disregarded they had to be keep these rites of reversal covert.101 They achieved this by
invoking Chatham House rules inside the club and by reinforcing reassertions of their
ascribed rank when they were outside it. Members and their guests were reminded of
this convention by a text above the fireplace, translated from Horace:

Let none beyond this threshold bear away
What friend to friend in confidence may say.

Consumption of food and drink was controlled by rules on time. Grilling continued for
an hour and a half after which the cloth was removed and the cook collected payment
from the members for their food and that of their guests. Drinks could not be re-ordered
after the first quantity, unless by a majority vote and before a set time.

Further entertainment was provided by the club songs. Arnold includes these songs in
his account. One of these, ‘Song of the Day’, written by the son of a founder member,
Theodosius Forrest, who himself was elected in 1763, was sung at every meeting. At
the last chorus, members and visitors joined hands all round.102 The chorus ran:

A joyful theme for Britons free,
Happy in Beef and Liberty.

Arnold described the changes and adaptations the club made over its history with, as
might be expected, the most drastic and least successful being near the closure. The

100 Etiquette, Social Ethics and Dinner Table Observances, Houlston and Wright, London, 1860,
p. 65.
102 Arnold, op cit, p. 46.
dinner hour moved from the original two o’clock, to four in 1808, to six in 1833, to
seven in 1861, and then again in 1866 to a fashionable eight o’clock. Towards the end,
Saturday night was no longer popular, and in 1865 meetings were changed to Friday
nights. With the new railways it was easier for members to live in or go at weekends to
the country.\textsuperscript{103} Arnold had become a member in 1839, and during the remaining
period, membership fell to seventeen, nine of whom lived in the country. During the
last season in 1867 average attendance had dwindled to two per meeting.\textsuperscript{104} On arrival
members would enquire who was there and if not wishing to dine with them they
would strategically leave for more rewarding company at their own more fashionable
clubs.

Not only did attendance drop. When the club had flourished the rules included expelling
unexcused absentees after three succeeding occasions. But these defining rules
themselves came to be seen as irrelevant. The uniform was discarded.\textsuperscript{105} Key
members, such as the treasurer, Henry Frederick Stephenson, who had been elected in
1813, died (in 1838). He was regarded by Arnold as: “a connecting link between past
and present generations”.\textsuperscript{106}

Arnold notes that new members were undisciplined. “Boots would not arrive on time or
carry out duties assiduously... The contagion of insubordination extended even to our
visitors... The elements of intimacy and sociability so patent in the past were wanting in
the present.” Members no longer even rose to respond to toasts.\textsuperscript{107} Toasting was a
major part of the ritual and comprised: ‘Her Majesty and the Royal Family’, ‘The
President’, ‘Toasts to our Deceased Friends who have been members of this society’,

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{6} Arnold, op cit, p. 34.
\bibitem{7} Arnold, op cit, p. 39.
\bibitem{8} Arnold, op cit, p. 33.
\bibitem{9} Arnold, op cit, p. 30.
\bibitem{10} Arnold, op cit, p. 33.
\end{thebibliography}

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and two toasts to the theatre managers, past and present.\textsuperscript{108} In accord with the change in wine drinking at à la Russe dinners, Arnold observes: “Modern refinement objected to our very toasts! And even they for a while were re-modelled.”\textsuperscript{109}

After the Beefsteaks Club’s closure, male communitas was still, nonetheless important. The Beefsteaks’ style of communitas, like regimental post-prandial drinking which aims to unite officers of all ranks, during this ‘time out of time’, united those titled and untitled that made up an elite strata, but rank, necessary to sustain hierarchy, was reasserted afterwards.

Arnold was more perceptive than Edward Ricket in diagnosing reasons for the Beefsteaks’ closure, for Edward Ricket remarks rather ponderously on the formal disbanding of the Beefsteaks Club, but his musings could be said to give an idea of contemporary perceptions of social change, which highlighted a move to more instrumental relationships:

Times and manners have changed... dining is no longer an art combined with eccentricity.

He continues:

Well clubs of this class were merely and simply social; they answered a want; they filled up a gap in society. We perceive now that their importance in that particular sense is passing away. It is worth while to remark upon the difference produced by changes of manners and the passage of time.\textsuperscript{110}

The Beefsteaks, with its existence extended beyond its appropriate time, finally closed in 1867. However, a club was revived with the same name, but not style, in 1876, offering daily lunch and dinner to a small membership.\textsuperscript{111}

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\textsuperscript{108} Arnold, op cit, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{109} Arnold, op cit, p. 36.
\textsuperscript{110} Edward Ricket, op. cit, pp. 90-1.
\textsuperscript{111} Anthony Lejeune, 1984, op. cit, pp. 53-7.
\end{flushleft}
Sir Henry Thompson, the surgeon who gave famous ‘Octave’ dinners at his house in Wimpole Street, looked back to à la Française dining as an ideal of good fellowship. But, as with many historic reconstructions, they are inclined to travesty rather than tradition revived. Thompson was an archetypical networker; his dinners were famous for their selection of well known personalities and in turn his circle became so well known that the Prince of Wales came to a dinner.

Sir Henry Thompson’s ‘Octave’ dinners began in 1872 and continued until the year their founder died, 1904. These were dinners centred round an individual, in his own house, with his choice of guests and with a structure devised by the founder. Thompson had begun by giving politically strategic dinners for twelve or fourteen fellow doctors. He summed them up:

My experience forced me after a time to conclude that although these meetings were useful and indeed necessary, especially to the young and rising man by offering him opportunities of making acquaintance under agreeable conditions with men of standing, the leaders of his profession...112

Thompson, wrote as an unabashed networker. He eventually gave up his medical dinners, where he had found conversation too exclusively medical and the dinners possibly no longer useful. Meanwhile he had started giving dinners with Gérôme the painter for eight men.113 When Octave dinners began there were eight diners including Thompson. Later when expanding the Octave theme he cast his guests as eight musical notes forming the scale of C major with himself as “the staff that retains them or brings them together”.114

Diners sat at a round table, which was helpful when there was a single topic of conversation. Thompson meaningfully headed his menu ‘Allegro Vivace’ to encourage conversation among his selected diners. Edmund Yates, the journalist, in his series

113 Cope, op cit, p. 92.
114 Cope, op cit, p. 93.
Celebrities at Home (1878), gave a hagiographic report of the style of conversation, giving as a particular feature the range of unexpected and plentiful topics expounded on by an equally wide range of diners. These diners did not just speak on their particular interests, and Yates admired their versatility. To achieve this end, he describes Thompson’s individualistic strategy for assembling an ‘Octave’:

Names of guests recorded, arranged, rearranged, shuffled out and dealt like a pack of cards to the end that while people shall be brought together who enjoy each other’s society, the same identical set shall not always meet.115

Thompson liked the old style of taking wine which he did with each diner. He admired pre-à la Russe dinners of fifty years before, dinners that would have been given when he was two years old. Octave dinners were his selective reconstruction of a past serving his present needs. His dinners, like à la Russe dinners, had menu cards, with the Octave theme continued in the list of eight dishes and eight wines described by the author as “a menu of fewer and simpler dishes each, however, to be the best of their kind.”116 With wines to match each course, the service was closer to dining à la Russe than à la Française. This self-conscious, pseudo à la Française dining was an attempt at the recreation of a past of idealised good fellowship but was without hierarchic reciprocity. Instead of old friends as guests with some new diners introduced into the circle, as hierarchs would dine, there was instead an ever-changing cast for each dinner. The Prince of Wales, later George V, attended the three-hundredth dinner, an ultimate capture for such a strategist.117

The menu for the three-hundredth dinner in 1904 listed more than the statutory eight dishes, but it could be deconstructed into eight courses:

Huîtres
Consommé clair

115 Edmund Yates, Celebrities at Home, second series, 1878, p. 27, reprinted from Yates’ journal The World. The series ran from 1877 to 1879.
116 Cope, op cit, p. 93.
Although Thompson supplied eight wines, he abstained, considering alcohol harmful but, as discussed earlier, strategic dinner-giving was not viable without wine. Yates gives 1871 as the year that Thompson became an abstainer. Strategically invited guests participated in a construct of communitas, but for the most part had no overwhelming gulls in rank that would have precluded them from further interaction outside the Octaves. Yates describes his fellow guests as “a celebrated author,” “a famous painter,” “a learned professor,” “a rising barrister,” and “a friend from the United States”. As the Octaves was not built on a select group that met regularly, Beefsteaks’ conventions would not have been viable. It could be said that an exclusive club and a shifting dining circle are not comparable, but they are given as reflecting a pattern in social change.

Both the Beefsteaks and the Octaves thrived as long as successive cohorts shared the same values and attitudes. In the case of the Beefsteaks, as a hierarchic organisation they were more easily able to incorporate new members, whereas the Octaves not only existed within the lifetime of its initiator but it rested merely on fashionable strategic advantage. A newly rising cohort would be as likely to find it irrelevant as those who had closed the Beefsteaks Club.

118 Cope, op cit, p. 94. The spelling errors were typical of English menu French.
119 Yates, op cit, p. 34.
120 Yates, op cit, p. 35.
Sir Robert Hutchison related to Zachary Cope (Thompson’s biographer) in 1950, how he was invited to an Octave dinner in 1903 or 1904. It is described as an event that was past its time. Even allowing for the hagiographic element in Yates’ earlier description, he was writing when it was a current cohort’s ideal. Hutchison was less impressed.

It was rather an orgy – eight of us sat down with Sir H. (there were no ladies, and I think never were) at a round table. I was between Oscar Browning (the Cambridge don) and H. M. Stanley, the explorer, and didn’t find either of them very conversable. Sir H. had an Irish judge (Lord Morris) on his right, who told excellent stories with a delightful brogue.

The eight courses I think were oysters, turtle soup, fish (sole), saddle of mutton, and then – his speciality – ham (? York or Westphalian) said to be cooked in some special way with wine (probably Burgundy), after that game, a sweet (ice pudding) and a savoury; no dessert. The wines were eight in number too – Chablis, sherry, hock, champagne or claret, port or Madeira, and brandy after. Our host had champagne served out of a jug; some of the effervescence had gone off – and it was not iced. The dinner was at eight (part of the octave idea) and lasted till about ten, when we adjourned to a big room at the back where he had quite a good collection of pictures. I suppose there were cigars, but I don’t think Sir H. smoked himself. He was courteous and dignified, but I should never describe him as genial – indeed I thought him rather formidable as in many ways a typical Victorian.121

EXCLUSIVE MALE DINING: RECAPTURING DOMESTIC TERRITORY?

Separate exclusive male dining flourished not only, as is well known, outside the house, but exclusive male dinners at home were also given by married men. Trusler notes that: “If the company consists of gentlemen only, the mistress seldom appears.”122 Their wives did not, on the other hand, hold all-female dinner parties and although ‘at home’ afternoons and luncheons were predominantly female events, they were not exclusively so.

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121 Cope, op cit, p. 97.

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Both Sambourne and Thompson gave exclusively male dinner parties in their own houses. They were both married, but their wives were totally excluded from these dinners. Linley Sambourne gave a dinner for eleven men at home on Tuesday, 11th July 1893, which he writes up with these comments: "a great success", "a very good dinner", "jokes and laughter", "All left by 2 a.m." 123 Marion Sambourne's diary notes that she arranged the table, employed two men waiters, Mrs Birley [to cook] and two girls. She also comments on "peals of laughter". 124

Did exclusive male dinners alter in structure from mixed dining? Did dessert still maintain a greater sense of communitas than the earlier part of the meal? I think the answer must still be yes, as the diners had, by dessert, shared a quantity of food, drink and conversation, and should have been feeling more united in commensality. Servants had been present throughout and now the diners were alone. This is taken from verses in *Punch* (1856) on a Greenwich dinner:

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The board it was cleared, dessert appeared,
The waiters were bade to go;
Of the thing that passed, when the doors were fast,
I speak but what I know. 125
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**SMOKING: A LATE ADDITION TO POST-PRANDIAL DRINKING**

Smoking was not generally encouraged as a habit to emulate. *Hints on Etiquette* (1836) has no place for post-prandial smoking, describing smoking as a low habit, and advises practising it "under certain restrictions". "Smelling of tobacco and smoking in the street are both ungentlemanly, as is visiting cigar divans and billiard rooms." 126 After-dinner smoking was a late addition to male drinking.

123 Linley Sambourne, *Diary*, Tuesday, July 11 1893.
124 Marion Sambourne, *Diary*, Tuesday, July 11 1893.
125 Anon, 'Ye Ghosts of the Innocents' (A Ballad of Blackwall), *Punch*, August 2nd 1856, p. 44.
Andrew Steinmetz, in 1857, notes twelve city brokers dealing in cigars and tobacco, “a prodigious quantity of home made cigars in circulation” but that real Havanas were rare.\textsuperscript{127} He makes no comment on who were the consumers. Cigarettes were imported until Thoridi’s, a Greek manufacturer, started producing them in England in 1860. His firm was later taken over by Wood of London according to \textit{The Smo-King, The Pioneer Periodical of the Smoking World} (1898) which only lasted one issue. Joseph Hatton (1841-1907), the journalist and novelist, was writing \textit{Cigarette Papers for After dinner Smoking}, a weekly medley of reminiscences, stories and interviews, written, like specialist dining literature, for a predominantly male readership. These later references suggest that cigarette-smoking was a later addition to ‘gentlemanly’ evenings. After-dinner smoking was usually portrayed as cigar smoking.

Smoking has a strong and pervasive smell, not only at the time, but afterwards. It lingers in soft furnishings, and smoke can stain paintwork and wallpaper. Like the “dinnerish smell”\textsuperscript{128} referred to earlier, smells were more likely to persist where there was poor ventilation. There were several reasons to economise on fresh air, particularly to keep out the invading winter cold. In hot weather open windows would have let in noise and smell from horses and horse drawn vehicles. In cities open windows let in ‘blacks’, spots of soot deposited from chimneys.

Smoking was only socially acceptable for men, but for ‘ladies’ it was more than another male activity, as it could be interpreted as invading pollution within the boundary of female domestic space. Almost like the scent of tom cats, it too marked male territory. For women, objections to smoke can be seen as symbolic of the ideals of feminine purity.


\textsuperscript{128} \textit{The Servants’ Practical Guide}, by the author of \textit{Manners and Tone of Good Society}, Frederick Warne and Co., London, 1880.
There were also men who disliked smokers, and in some London clubs there was opposition to installing smoking rooms. Women appear to have had power to decide whether smoking could take place in and around the house. Smoking was kept out of the house if there was no special smoking room, and men could smoke in stables or in the kitchen after servants had gone to bed. This itself offers an interesting comment on the exclusion of kitchens from feminised areas of the house. Kitchens in this instance are as permissible for ‘pollution’ as was a place yet closer to ‘nature’, the stables. Women were meant to show, as in the quotation below, an ostentatious sensitivity to tobacco smoke.

Professor Von Holtzendorff shared with his host, Bawick Lloyd Baker an interest in social science. They had just met at the conference on social science that Lloyd Baker had earlier organised in Dublin. After the conference, Von Holtzendorff was invited to stay at Lloyd Baker’s house, Hardwicke Court, in Gloucestershire. Von Holtzendorff was curious about life in an English country house so he was given a guided tour by his hostess. In her exposition she gave the current ‘lady’s’ view of smoking to her German visitor:

You must often have been surprised that we English ladies have such an invincible repugnance to tobacco smoke, but there is no dispensation from our rule of abstinence, except in those rooms which my husband has already pointed out to you.

Germans characteristically were reputed to be keen smokers so that Lloyd Baker on his arrival had shown his guest where he might smoke. Mrs Lloyd Baker, when giving her guest details of how they spent their day, noted that smoking like all other activities was not only allotted a place but also a time. Men did not, at this period, smoke after dinner but after the ladies had retired, at about eleven o’clock. Gentlemen would “…finish


their day’s work in the smoking-room, or enjoy a cigar at the billiard table, if this be not as in some houses, near the drawing room or in the hall close by.”

Even when post-prandial smoking did become fashionable it took place in a male designated space, the dining room, if it was not further banished into a smoking room. The Smokers’ Guide, in 1876, advised for good digestion, deferring smoking for some time after meals. But by 1897, Mrs Humphry, in Manners for Men, states that the host now provided cigars and cigarettes for his guests. G. L. Apperson, in his The Social History of Smoking (1914), comments: “Smoking in the dining room after dinner is now so general that people are apt to forget that this particular development is of no great age.” He then tells of a house where smoking was still banned from the dining room and where, after wine, smoking had to take place elsewhere.

As for women smoking, by 1896 ‘Au Fait’ in Social Observances, has a chapter: ‘Do Society Women Smoke?’ She notes: “The days have gone by when the smell of tobacco smoke was supposed to make a woman feel faint.” Social Observances was written “to exemplify existing rules of etiquette” and with an awareness of an altering social climate it introduces new topics such as ‘The Tide of Change’. Only cigarette-smoking is discussed for women:

Smoking cigarettes after dinner has now become so general, that even in the most orthodox and highly conventional families cigarettes are smoked at dessert in the presence of ladies, who not un-frequently smoke also. This is more particularly the case in country houses; but in town the fashion is followed to a great degree in smart society.

133 Mrs Humphry, Manners for Men, first published 1897. This facsimile Pryor Publications, Whitstable, Kent, 1983, p. 79.
137 ‘Au Fait’, op. cit, p. 163.
Snuff taking had been particularly popular in the previous century, but in the context of post-prandial smoking I only found one reference to taking it in the entirely male context of a rifle corps mess dinner, in *A Pinch of Snuff* (1840).138

**DID THEY EAT AND DRINK A LOT? GENDER IDENTITIES, QUANTITY AND APPETITE**

Gender differences in quantities eaten at dinner did not originate in the nineteenth century. John Trusler, in *The Honours of the Table*, in 1805, writes that a lady should be “rather divine than sensual [and therefore she] should not be served too large a slice of meat nor [should a gentleman] fill her plate too full”.139 But English men were often portrayed as gargantuan eaters, particularly of roast beef. Thomas Rowlandson and other contemporary cartoonists used greedy dining and drinking as recurrent themes on which to make satirical points. Men eating together à la Française were frequently portrayed as consuming vast quantities of meat and drink. William Verrall describes cooking a French-style meal for some fictional country squires who voraciously consume everything sent up.140 *Memoirs of a Stomach*, written by himself, in 1853, comments on John Bull’s gluttony compared to the “more delicate attentions” the stomach received in Paris.141 All-male dining continued to have an element of bonding through sharing large quantities of both food and drink among some groups for the whole of the nineteenth century although a growing tendency towards moderation was noted by Isabella Beeton between 1859 and 1861, who refers to “former times when the bottle circulated freely amongst the [male] guests…” compared to “…the improvements in modern society, and the high example shown to the nation by its most illustrious personages, temperance is, in these happy days, a striking feature in the

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138 Dean Snift of Brazen Nose’ (pseud. B. E. Hill?), *A Pinch of Snuff, composed of curious particulars and original anecdotes of snuff taking*, Robert Tyas, London, 1840, p. 120.


character of a gentleman.” Sir Henry Thompson, compares a heavy drinking country squire of 1800-20 who only had the excitement of hunting with his 1877 moderate drinking equivalent, with his many business, political and other activities.

Wine, as shown, was a necessity, even at the house of an abstainer such as Sir Henry Thompson. The pocket book How to Dine advises those with “conscientious scruples” against serving wine, to entertain only other abstainers, and states that: “The vegetarian who would force his guests to dine on cabbage and onions, is hardly guilty of a greater breach of etiquette than the host who would compel his guests to go without wine.” Thompson was a networker who used the rhetoric of communitas for which purpose wine was considered essential. When dining out an abstainer is advised, after letting his glass be filled once, to accept a toast by only touching the lips with the glass without drinking.

Linley Sambourne also gave at least one all-male dinner where he notes the amount of wine consumed, a fact not usually recorded in either Sambourne diary after their usual dinners. It was Marion Sambourne’s role to order the dinner and pay housekeeping bills, his to buy the wine. These roles are affirmed by Mrs Beeton with the authority of an unattributed quotation from Brillat-Savarin.

As referred to earlier, large city dinners were a favourite subject for Punch. Turtle jokes recur with ‘Alderman Gobble’ as the personification of city gluttony, while

143 Sir Henry Thompson, in Moderate Drinking, Speeches Delivered at a Public Meeting in Exeter Hall 7th February 1877, S. W. Partridge, London, p. 21.
144 How to Dine, or the Etiquette of the Dinner Table, Ward, Lock & Tyler, London, 1879, pp. 27-8.
145 How to Dine, or the Etiquette of the Dinner Table, op. cit, p. 28.
146 Linley Sambourne, Diary, 11th July 1893: “Sherry with soup and 15 bottles of champagne for 11 men.”
147 Isabella Beeton, op. cit, p. 908.
Greenwich was famous for large male dinners, again a *Punch* favourite for jokes on gluttony, drunkenness and male excess.\textsuperscript{149}

Men who did not dine at home, but dined alone in male clubs, appear to have eaten less than they might be expected to when eating and drinking in a group. Similarly, as plain household daily dinners are contrasted with elaborate celebratory dinners in the section on cuisine. Sir Frederick Leighton’s bills for dinner at the Atheneum usually comprised three dishes. A typical bill was: ‘Fried sole’, ‘Cutlets Subise’ and ‘Omelette’, with ‘Champagne’.\textsuperscript{150} He ate before the fashionable dinner hour, eight o’clock, but at six thirty or seven, when he would have left the Royal Academy, of which he was President. At the Atheneum, dinner was still served in 1892 from an early hour, four o’clock, until nine thirty.\textsuperscript{151} Eating early left evenings free for the theatre and other activities, and it is possible that after a comparatively early dinner, Leighton had supper later.

Dining as early as four was suitable for those who belonged to older cohorts who in their youth had become accustomed to dining earlier, and was also convenient for those who had to travel out of London. Simple dinners eaten alone were often described as comprising, ‘a couple of mutton chops’. Soyer’s club favourite, *Cotelettes de Mouton à la Reform*\textsuperscript{152} was an embellished form created for Reform Club members. Edward Ricket (1873) quotes Walker’s advice against dining alone,\textsuperscript{153} but in an expanding city undergoing fast social change, it was evidently ignored. Like much didactic direction, it did not relate to reality. As with many instructions found in etiquette books, it

\textsuperscript{149} "Horrible Question after a Greenwich Dinner".*Punch*, August 2, 1856, p.44. See illustrations.

\textsuperscript{150} Sir Frederick Leighton, manuscript *Dinner Bill*, Athenaeum, 6.30, 30th December 1891.

\textsuperscript{151} Sir Frederick Leighton, manuscript *Dinner Bill*, Athenaeum, [no time or date given] March, 1892.


\textsuperscript{153} Edward Ricket, *The Gentleman’s Table Guide and Table Companion to the Art of Dining and Drinking with Table Habits and Curious Dishes of The Various Nations &c. &c., With Practical Recipes for Wine Cups, American Drinks, Punches, Cordials, Recherché Bills of Fare*, Frederick Warne & Co., London, 1873, p. 2.
reinforced ideal values and attitudes, particularly group values over those of individual interest.

Like satirised male gluttony, shows of feminine refinement were also illustrated through extremes. *Punch* has a young woman ostentatiously eating little at a ball supper, while earlier at home she had snatched an extra bun from a younger child’s tea tray.154 Kirwan also gives beer, which can have a high calorific value, as a lunch time choice for “those young ladies who exhibit so little appetite for dinner at fashionable tables at eight o’clock”.155 Alice Miles, as a socially marginal but ambitious debutante of seventeen in 1868, quotes her escort to dinner:

‘You are the daintiest little lady possible to meet, I delight in watching the disdainful manner in which you nibble the most recherché dishes, du bout des dents [with the tip of the teeth], and a physiognomist would read a whole character in the way you eat a grape.’156

Etiquette books addressed quantity for those diners who carved and served, as well as for the guests who received their offerings. When giving advice for à la Française diners, *Etiquette for Gentlemen with hints on the Art of Conversation* (1838) stipulates that they should only have one variety of meat and one kind of vegetable on their plate at a time. They may then have their plate changed for a fresh one.157 This advice recurs in both earlier and later books.

When dining à la Française, to those carving, and particularly when helping ladies, were advised not to pile meat high on the plates. Diners were not to take more than one dish at a time. Pressing guests to eat more than they wished was also considered

155 A. V. Kirwan, 1864, p. 263.
157 *Etiquette for Gentlemen with Hints on the Art of Conversation*, op. cit, p. 32.
impolite as it was to insist on them tasting any particular dish.\textsuperscript{158} Instructions for carving repeatedly instructed: “not to help any one to too much at a time.”\textsuperscript{159}

Selby recommends dinner-givers to serve such delicacies as game early, preferably after the fish, before guests are replete with other substantial dishes. Game, a delicacy, might otherwise be returned untouched to the kitchen.\textsuperscript{160} This particularly applied to à la Française dining without menus and also for those who did not understand menu French or the ‘Franglais’ of à la Russe.

When advising young girls, etiquette books make it clear that the whole menu does not have to be eaten, and that this also applied generally. This advice was more necessary when diners were first introduced to dining à la Russe: “On each plate a bill of fare is placed, so that the guests may see what will be handed round, and may be prepared to select, or wait for, whatever dishes they prefer.”\textsuperscript{161} Precise instruction continues: “If you do not wish for soup or fish, decline it with a courteous ‘No, thank you,’ to the servant.”\textsuperscript{162} Small portions seem to have been usual, that is if they were consistent with Charles Eastlake’s “infinitesimal portion of soup which is served out at a modern banquet”.\textsuperscript{163}

Not only were there general rules about acceptance and refusal, but this could apply to particular items, such as \textit{Punch à la Romaine},\textsuperscript{164} a rum-enhanced lemon water-ice, served in goblets between the courses at grand dinners to refresh the palate. The point

\textsuperscript{158} \textit{Family Handbook}, John W. Parker, London, 1845, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{159} Trussler Redivivus Esquire [Thomas Trussler], \textit{The Honours of the Table}, John Symington & Co., Glasgow, Whittaker & Co., London, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{160} Tabitha Tickletooth (Charles Selby), \textit{The Dinner Question, or how to dine economically, combining the rudiments of cookery with useful hints on dinner giving}, Routledge, Warne and Routledge, London, 1860, p. 150.
\textsuperscript{162} \textit{Modern Etiquette in Private and Public}, op cit, pp. 115-7.
in the menu at which it was served could vary, but it was considered unsuitable for young girls.

Elim D'Avigdor ('Wanderer') has a chapter in *Dinners and Dishes* on 'Psychological Considerations', in which he complains that other books on dinners only have categories with especially suitable meals for invalids, children and "those of small means ... Surely there are varieties of tastes, of habits, of ages, of sex, and of circumstances which suggest to the philosophic caterer different modes of treatment."165 William Kitchiner had anticipated D'Avigdor by suggesting that: "Persons who are ambitious of being discreet dinner-givers, keep a register of peculiarities of the Palate and capacity of the appetite of their respective Guests, something after the manner persons are described in a passport, against the name in various columns the quality and quantity of their favourite Dishes and Drinks, &c."166

As D'Avigdor's pseudonym suggests, he had travelled widely and illustrates a sensitivity to the social implications of offering inappropriate dishes.167 To illustrate his point he gives a dinner menu for "Four Hungry Hunting-Men"168 of traditional English dishes, and a more ambitious menu for "Dinner of Twelve Persons of both Sexes, including Epicures, Hungry Men, Sporting Women and Aesthetes".169 For every course there is a choice and, allowing for whole courses to have been rejected by some less robust diners, the menu, possibly, could have pleased them all. It is of interest more as an acknowledgement of current diverse tastes than as a practical suggestion.

Small appetites not only denoted refinement, but also made it clear that the individual was accustomed to plenty and therefore had no need of a hearty meal. Martha Bradley,

167 'Wanderer' (Elim D'Avigdor), op. cit, p. 179.
168 'Wanderer' (Elim D'Avigdor), op. cit, pp. 181-2.
169 'Wanderer' (Elim D'Avigdor), op. cit, p. 179.
169 'Wanderer' (Elim D'Avigdor), op. cit, p. 183.
in about 1760, describes the then outdated fashion for a hostess to press guests to try each dish and to then “eat heartily”. She observes that this was succeeded by a more individual fashion for “a much more reasonable civility” where guests’ consumption was not for comment.170

WINE, A MALE PRESERVE: CHOICE, QUALITY AND QUANTITY

Mrs Beeton does not include any information regarding imported wines to match the menus included in her book. Her only instruction for wines at dinner is Brillat-Savarin’s aphorism: “The order of drinking wine is from the mildest to the most foamy and most perfumed.”171

Marion Sambourne’s menu notes on both her and others’ dinner parties make no mention of any drinks, whereas Linley Sambourne’s diary sometimes contains details of wines served at their dinners, which implies that buying wine was his responsibility. Selecting wines to accompany dinner cuisine was a subject excluded from most cookery books. This was as common before women distanced themselves from cookery as later. The making of home-made wines was, as beer had been, a kitchen-based task, but these were not considered suitable for dinner parties. John Timbs notes a superior raisin wine with a taste like Frontignac which was made by Arthur Aiken, who was secretary to the Society of Arts, and details of it can be found in their Transactions for 1829.172 As ladies abandoned kitchen skills, home wine making lost its place, to be replaced by commercial products. In 1820, the same year Frederick Accum published

his work on adulteration, he wrote *A Treatise on the Art of Making Wine from Native Fruits* as a means of avoiding the evils of bogus wine.

Gooseberry champagne was a subject for derision. A typical joke was that it was a good season for gooseberry champagne when the French grape yield was low. Maguelonne Toussait-Samat notes that *Oidium* fungus destroyed over a quarter of French vineyards in 1852. By 1871 they had recovered but the disastrous phylloxera beetle struck in 1885 when Claude Royer lists sixty-one *departements* as affected.

Wines were a male responsibility for both mixed and single sex dinners although ‘Fin-Bec’ remarks, in keeping with his views on French domestic organisation as more sensible than English rigidity: “The wine cellar is the business of the paterfamilias but mater may know something about it.” Earlier, Thomas Cosnett had made it clear that the master had overall charge of wine but would designate as much authority to his butler as he felt appropriate. Wine could be as subject to tensions between master and butler as kitchen goods could be, between mistress and kitchen servants. Butlers who drank the best wines were a favourite theme for complaint. Deviances were a rich source for cartoon and satire. An influential book on wine that was quoted by other writers was Cyrus Redding’s *Every Man His Own Butler*. Kirwan quotes Redding, as does ‘Fin-Bec’ in *The Dinner Bell*, 1878, and the anonymous author of *Hand-


177 Thomas Cosnett, pseud. ‘Onesemus’, *The Footman’s Director and Butler’s Rememberancer*, sold by J. Hatchard and Sons, 3rd edition, 1824, p. 115.

178 A. V. Kirwan, 1864, p. 325.

Book on Wines, to all who drink them. 1840. Redding’s title, Every Man His Own Butler, must have had an appeal for those who did not either have their own skilled butler or who distrusted their servants.

Redding commented on the lack of attention among middle range of diners who served good wines but paid no attention to matching food and wine. Unusually for a cook, Charles Elmé Francatelli, in The Cook’s Guide and Housekeeper’s and Butler’s Assistant (1862), includes directions for the order in which wines should be drunk at dinner, but on the menus that follow there are no accompanying wines. This division of responsibilities for food and wine in middle range domestic dining was not only gender based but was also found in larger households and clubs, between the high grid demarcation of cooks, and the maître d’hôtel or butler, as indicated by Francatelli’s title.

Wines, during the nineteenth century, were imported from many countries and sold in a complete range of qualities, appropriate to a growing number and range of customers. The way wines were served at dinner changed when dinner service changed from à la Française to à la Russe, but as an area of responsibility it remained, as might be expected, a male preserve. With the growth of service à la Russe, they were served in greater variety at dinner than with service à la Française, since, as discussed, they were usually matched to the many courses that were offered. At some fashionable dinners, this rule was largely ignored and a single wine, often champagne was drunk through most of the dinner. Redding directs: “Never taste more than two kinds of wine at a sitting. Similarly, Major L (1889) advises diners not to mix their wines but

181 Cyrus Redding, Every Man His Own Butler, Whittaker and Co., London, 1839, p. VIII.
182 Charles Elmé Francatelli, The Cook’s Guide and Housekeeper’s and Butler’s Assistant, first published 1862, this issue 1864, pp. 455-60.
183 Cyrus Redding, op. cit, p. 191.
“stick to one wine at dinner, and one small glass of very old Cognac as a chasse.” This was, he believed, how hangovers were to be avoided.\textsuperscript{184}

Mrs Humphry (1897) describes the latest fashion for claret as “the favourite dessert wine, but port is still seen at some tables, and it is usual to offer champagne, as many prefer to drink only one kind of wine throughout the meal... In fact this is becoming quite the fashion in some sets.”\textsuperscript{185}

At dinners à la Française, the way wines were served by the servants, and the etiquette surrounding the taking of wine, particularly the acknowledging of toasts, altered radically with the change to dining à la Russe. Change not only covered the range of drinks offered, but also how they were served. Both beer and punch went out of fashion and wines, water and liqueurs became the usual drinks served with dinner, dessert and coffee. Beer, when it was no longer a general household drink, was sometimes suggested as suitable to drink at lunch.\textsuperscript{186} Beer was thus relegated to lesser meals, thereby emphasising the separation of dinner parties from everyday lunches and dinners. Kirwan, in 1864, observed that: “Ale or beer are rarely, or ever, produced at regular set dinners now-a-days,” but he does list when they were drunk: in private houses “en famille” and by invalids, who drink table beer, ale and stout.\textsuperscript{187} Trollope advises beer or whisky-and-water instead of bad wine at dinner.\textsuperscript{188} Likewise, Major L\texttwiddle{1} (1889) suggests “good beer” or “good cider” if quality wine is considered too expensive.\textsuperscript{189}

Bottled beers such as India pale ale, which had first been produced for export, would have been appropriate to serve at luncheon, unlike draught beer, except in large

\begin{footnotes}
\item[185] Mrs Humphry, (‘Madge’ of ‘Truth’), \textit{Manners for Men}, op. cit, p. 79.
\item[186] A. V. Kirwan, 1864, p. 263.
\item[189] Major L\texttwiddle{1}, op. cit, p. 257.
\end{footnotes}
households where there might be casks. Mrs Humphry in her book *Housekeeping* (1893), dictates that: “Beer is never introduced at dinner parties,” but is frequently drunk when there are no guests.\(^{190}\)

Wine was, as it still is, an ideal vehicle for demonstrating esoteric knowledge that both includes and excludes. As the author of *Hand-Book on Wines* comments on tasting: “It is impossible to lay down certain rules for tasting wines: custom and custom alone, gives the palate that exquisite sense of perception which forms the basis of the art.”\(^{191}\)

Some of the literature on care and types of wine was simply informative, such as a the often quoted Redding’s *Every Man his own Butler* (1839).

Wine buying had several problems for dinner-givers. Advice was given on how to avoid counterfeit wine such as buying at the dockside or preferably finding a trustworthy friendly wine merchant. Experience of good wine, through its cost, added to the exclusivity of taste. John Timbs advises that those requiring real Margaux and Haute Brion would only find it in Bordeaux.\(^{192}\) *The Family Handbook* quotes duty on French wines as too high and consequently as encouraging adulteration,\(^{193}\) but goes to say that “no man can dine without wine… True he may eat a mutton-chop and drink a glass of porter, and say he has made an excellent dinner; but he cannot dine, in the true acceptance of the word, without his wine.”\(^{194}\) Good wine and good food are seen as essentially complementary. Gladstone first reduced this duty in 1860 at first with a uniform reduction to three shillings a gallon and the next year to a sliding scale according to degrees of alcohol, from one shilling per gallon for less than eighteen

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\(^{191}\) *Hand-Book on Wines*, to all who drink them. op. cit, p. 61.

\(^{192}\) John Timbs, *Hints for the Table, or the Economy of Good Living with a few words on Wines*. Kent nd Co., (Late Bogue), London, 1859, p. 100.


\(^{194}\) *The Family Handbook*, op. cit, p. 38.
degrees to two shillings and eleven pence for wines containing forty five degrees.\textsuperscript{195} Simply by reducing the duty, wine was made available to a greater number, but it could not easily increase production of the best French vintages, which were dependent on production from a source limited by area, the grape harvest and the traditional skill of wine-makers. It is only in recent years that acceptable, transportable wines have been scientifically produced on a large scale.

Accum includes the techniques for faking wines in his work on adulteration. He realised that: “It is sufficiently obvious, that few of those commodities, that are the objects of commerce, are adulterated to a greater extent than wine.”\textsuperscript{196} Adulteration, he concluded, was carried out on a large scale whereas poisoned wine was not so common.\textsuperscript{197} John Davies’ \textit{The Innkeeper and Butler’s Guide, or a Directory in Making and Managing of British Wines, Together with managing, colouring and flavouring of Foreign Wines and Spirits} (1808) has recipes for home-made wines and advice to publicans on treatment of imported wines, which includes improving poor and thin red port with cochineal and brandy.\textsuperscript{198} This accords with Redding’s advice on avoiding tavern wine, but it also suggests constituencies of wine drinkers, outside knowledgeable wine circles, who had an entirely different perception of wine flavour from the elite’s taste. John Davies, in his preface, claims time spent in the vineyards of southern France and his directions are given as useful advice rather than cost-cutting covert adulteration. Additional alcohol in the form of brandy was sometimes added to lesser wines as preservative for travel.


\textsuperscript{196} Frederick Accum, \textit{A Treatise on the Adulterations of Food and Culinary Poisons}, op. cit, p. 95.

\textsuperscript{197} Frederick Accum, op cit, p. 98.

Expert opinion could vary. In 1840 Masdeu, from the south of France, is described as having much of the flavour of port but as no substitute.\textsuperscript{199} Redding’s description of Masdeu is more generous, as “of a full and pure character”,\textsuperscript{200} suggesting that it came in several qualities. Similarly, cheap Marsala was a substitute for sherry. A\textit{Punch} cartoon shows a burglar disappointed at finding Marsala in the sideboard instead of sherry.\textsuperscript{201} But Edward Lonsdale Beckwith notes the difference between good Marsala drunk in Italy and that drunk in England.\textsuperscript{202}

Wine adulteration and substitution was and is a recurring problem, but for nineteenth-century diners recognising good wine could be part of a vocabulary of overt exclusivity. To be outside this shared taste was yet another way to stigmatise new diners. Dickens’ Veneerings employ a butler described as “the analytical chemist”\textsuperscript{203} whose title, makes clear to the reader his silent contempt for his employer’s taste in champagne.

Wine was ideal for creating hierarchies of taste, with names and vintages, while at the same time excluding those who did not know the taste of the true vintage and who might therefore buy counterfeit wines. It was often considered preferable to drink reinforced wines such as sherry rather than cheap wines. Redding recommends sherry or bucellas of a “tolerable quality” as safer than bad quality red wine.\textsuperscript{204} Redding also suggests several alternative drinks such as brandy and water in preference to drinking tavern wine at public dinners.\textsuperscript{205}

\textsuperscript{199} \textit{Hand-Book on Wines}, op. cit, p. 33.
\textsuperscript{200} Cyrus Redding, 1839, op. cit, p. 48.
\textsuperscript{201} \textit{Punch}, October 25, 1856, p. 161. See illustrations.
\textsuperscript{204} Cyrus Redding, 1839, op. cit, p. VI.
\textsuperscript{205} Cyrus Redding, 1839, op. cit, p. VII.
"In the matter of wine no mediocrity is tolerable," 'The G.C.' wrote in 1872, and he recommended small beer or even water in preference. He adds, "In the choice of your drinks more than anything else, avoid shams." When summing up, the quality of wine drunk in London, Anthony Trollope, in 1880, wrote: "club wine is, usually 'wholesome' but was not always true to its attribution." In Linley Sambourne's diary for 16th November 1893, he notes, "a very good dinner for the Amphytrion Club" where they drank "splendid wines, La Fitte '64 [and] Brandy 1793," and he stayed until midnight. Trollope found that the best hotels selected good wine as this bolstered their reputation.

As for private dining, Trollope mentions that there were houses where the wine was so bad that it made the drinkers ill, while he also sums up the usual standard:

There are houses at which the wine is brought to you as a necessary adjunct to your dinner, and at which you take what you want simply as a necessary adjunct. At such houses you neither receive nor expect the peculiar pleasure which the lover of the grape receives from good wine. Such are, perhaps, the majority of dinner-giving establishments in London.

G.V. who, in keeping with her views on culinary responsibility, writes in Dinners and Dinner-Parties: "If it should be your good lot to meet with a man who has a wine-cellar and who looks after it himself, be assured he is a man of sense." To emphasise her point there are descriptive tirades against adulteration of beer and wine, with a warning against dining at houses where they are served.

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207 Linley Sambourne, Manuscript diary, 16th November 1893.
210 Anthony Trollope, London Tradesmen, op. cit, p. 78.
212 G.V., Dinners and Dinner-Parties, op cit, pp. 36 & 45.
The hierarchy of wine quality there was correlated with a hierarchy of wine merchants. In accord with a hierarchic wine-dealing elite, the best burgundies and clarets, like Haut-Brion, not only took time to mature but also had, over time, enjoyed a high reputation in England as elite wines. Asa Briggs quotes Samuel Pepys as being greatly pleased by “a sort of French wine called Ho-Bryan”, giving it a long pedigree as an imported wine.213

Trollope, in his *London Tradesmen*, has at the pinnacle of the trade a merchant who dines with his customers to whom he sells excellent but expensive vintages.214 His worst example is of a fraudulent merchant, a French salesman who presumptuously calls at the front door. He sends up an over elaborate card which does not give his trade and on being seen in the hall, tries to sell Trollope his bogus champagne.215 Another doubtful line is taken by a member of Trollope’s club, who suggests a merchant unbeknown to the author, who pays his man at the club a commission. This agent recommended the under-age wines that were offered at what appeared to be bargain prices.216 Trollope finally advises hosts to give fewer dinners if they cannot afford good wine.

Some comments by Charles Pierce (1857) on cost and taste, reveal a utilitarian attitude to wine buying. Pierce calculates the cost as “directly proportional to its immediate effect and inversely proportional to its disagreeable after effects. The flavour, or *bouquet* of wine has only an influence on its price in so far as it is an index to all its effects taken together.”217 Later Pierce remarks on the new fashion for fruity wines “which causes the addition of pernicious elements.”218 For some, like ‘The G.C.’, integrity and quality were all-important. But Trollope’s observations suggest that this

217 Charles Pierce, 1857, op. cit, p. 204.
218 Charles Pierce, 1857, op. cit, p. 205.
was not the norm. As with cuisine, knowledge and experience were not general among diners, for with such diverse dining constituencies, wine like cuisine, could cover a wide range of qualities.

Quantity is hardly mentioned directly, only indirectly with Sir Henry Thompson’s observation on current sobriety compared to diners earlier in the century and jokes about excess at Greenwich and at other all male dinners. *Party-Giving on Every Scale* (c. 1890) attempts a partial estimate of quantity for a dinner. The reader is warned that this could vary, but nonetheless the allowance is half a bottle of champagne per man and one third of a bottle per lady. For eighteen guests four bottles of after-dinner claret and two bottles of sherry are advised. No quantities are given for sherry after soup, only that it is taken round once, neither is there any quantity given for hock, Chablis or Sauterne that usually accompanied the fish course.²¹⁹ It is possibly the case that, like sherry, it was only served in small amounts. As nothing was drunk until after soup this may have subdued the effects of alcohol.

When filled to the appropriate levels, an 1899 claret glass held approximately half the quantity of a modern equivalent domestic glass. Other glasses in the same set: sherry, champagne and hock – were also similarly smaller than their modern equivalents, although at most modern middle-range domestic dinners only one or two different wines are served during dinner, although additional drinks are served before dinner, and sometimes liqueurs and spirits afterwards.

**SHAM AND CHAMPAGNE**

Champagne became both fashionable and popular at dinner. In the thirty years from 1831 to 1861, Kirwan gives the rise in imports from 254,000 gallons to 2,227,000 gallons.²²⁰ Jancis Robinson notes that champagne was first drunk in England in 1662, although imports were not great until the first forty years of the nineteenth century. In

spite of phylloxera having decimated vines in 1890, grape juice was imported into the Champagne region from other areas of France and from Germany, so production could continue to meet demand.\textsuperscript{221}

As with other wines, the style and quality of champagne ranged widely, making it an ideal vehicle for classification and ranking. For Timbs in 1838, the finest, purest of wines was Sillery both dry and still.\textsuperscript{222} Sillery, then Epernay, followed by Rhiems, were the order in which Kirwan, 1864, rates champagnes.\textsuperscript{223} The preferred style of champagne was for crèmants or demi-mousseux over grand mousseux. Thomas Walker concedes that still champagne is a superior wine suited to “talking over matters of state”,\textsuperscript{224} but he did not think that still and effervescent were actually comparable. A grand mousseux champagne could be too near in style to the fizz of gooseberry champagne. Cassell’s Domestic Dictionary has two headings for champagnes, ‘British’ and ‘Foreign’. As French champagne was expensive, the entry notes that it was extensively imitated both in France and England. Timbs states that: “Champagne made from gooseberries has often been mistaken by reputed good judges for the champagne from grapes [sic].”\textsuperscript{225} A later, modified view was that sparkling gooseberry is “very good in its way, but it is not to be compared with the true champagne made from the juice of the grape.”\textsuperscript{226} Good champagne was to be drunk when the body and flavour could be appreciated with less ‘fizz’. Champagne glasses are usually shown in à la Russe table settings as saucer-shaped, which let the effervescence quickly escape. A

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{220} A. V. Kirwan, 1864, op. cit., p. 269. \\
\textsuperscript{222} John Timbs, Hints for the Table or the Economy of Good Living, Simpkin, Marshall & Co., London, 1838, p. 99. \\
\textsuperscript{223} A. V. Kirwan, 1864, p. 341. \\
\textsuperscript{224} Thomas Walker, op cit, p. 78. \\
\textsuperscript{225} John Timbs, Hints for the Table, op. cit, p. 104. \\
\end{flushright}
popular notion was that it should be drunk at once;\textsuperscript{227} possibly advisable if it was gooseberry, as a combination of cold and effervescence may have helped to disguise its origin. ‘The G.C.’ remarks disparagingly on the current fashion for champagne: “When people have friends to dinner they \textit{will} have champagne, and so long as it has the appearance of that sparkling beverage, and can be had cheap enough, they are satisfied.”\textsuperscript{228}

Champagne was served in quantities varying from only one or two glasses to being consumed throughout the whole dinner. Thomas Walker, as on everything else, had firm views on serving sparkling champagne. It was to be put on the table after sherry. Sherry was served after soup. If there were only one or two bottles, the diners should be told. The advantage of serving it early was its exhilarating effect on the guests, with the added advantage that they were inclined to drink less wine during the rest of dinner. He was an enthusiast for champagne’s digestive and stimulating effects when served at the “temperature of cold spring water”.\textsuperscript{229} In Summerly’s (1881) edited work, Walker’s observations are without editorial comment, suggesting a contemporary relevance. Charles Selby (1860) recommends wine as follows for “set dinners”: punch after turtle soup and Madeira, à la Talleyrand after every other soup, burgundy with roasts and claret with grouse, &c. He also recommends, as he says Francatelli does, champagne to the second half of the second course.\textsuperscript{230} This would be when entremets were served. \textit{The Epicure’s Year Book} (1868) lyrically suggests “that Champagne may appear at intervals throughout the banquet, as a sweet air rises again and again throughout an opera.”\textsuperscript{231}

\textsuperscript{227} Cassell’s, op cit, p. 264.
\textsuperscript{229} Thomas Walker MA, \textit{Aristology, or the Art of Dining}, first published 1835. This edition with editorial notes by Felix Summerly (Henry Cole), George Bell & Sons, London, 1881, p. 77.
\textsuperscript{230} Tabitha Tickleton (Charles Selby), op. cit, p. 151.
\textsuperscript{231} \textit{The Epicure’s Year Book}, Bradbury & Evans, London, 1868, p. 45.
INCORPORATING ABSTENTION

Although much of nineteenth-century crusading teetotalism was aimed at the working classes there were also attempts to widen the constituency. *Punch* has a body of cartoons on abstinence in upper-middle and upper-class circles. How abstention was to be treated in dining circles was precisely set out in a pocket etiquette book, Ward and Lock’s *How to Dine or the Etiquette of the Dinner Table* (1879). As wine was integral to the structure of the dinner it could not be ignored:

> Even if you are a total-abstinence man yourself, you will not, if you are really a gentleman, attempt to compel all your guests to be so against their wish. If you are so fanatical that you have what is called ‘conscientious scruples’ against furnishing wine, then you should invite none to dine who are not of your way of thinking.\(^{232}\)

How an abstaining guest could be incorporated and yet not drink, is implied in directions for reluctant ‘toastees’ who acknowledged toasts by taking a glass to the lips without drinking, as sufficient acknowledgement of participation.\(^{233}\) (See the section below on taking wine with à la Française and à l’Anglaise dinners.) This dilemma was real, as can be seen from Sir Henry Thompson’s own abstention and the wines he gave his guests at his Octave dinners – wines that, like the cuisine and the guests, were carefully chosen.

Thompson as a known abstainer was asked to address a meeting targeting dinner-giving constituencies. The meeting had a subtle title: ‘Moderate Drinking’. This audience would not have wished to associate themselves with inebriates needing reform for, as Thompson notes: “They do not drink as their grandfathers did.” In his book of dietary advice, *Food and Feeding* (1880) he is convinced that “habitual use of wine, beer, or spirits is a physiological error, say, for nineteen persons out of twenty,”\(^{234}\) although he allows a glass of “fine pure wine” to be enjoyed occasionally with a particularly choice

\(^{232}\) Ward and Lock’s *How to Dine or the Etiquette of the Dinner Table*, London, 1879, p. 27.

\(^{233}\) *How to Dine, or the Etiquette of the Dinner Table*, Ward, Lock & Tyler, London, 1879, p. 28.

Similarly, this note of snobbery is in keeping with Thompson's views, evident in a chapter on gourmets in *Etiquette, Social Ethics and Dinner-Table Observances*: "Wine! Generous wine! Not as drunkards do we praise the grape, but as sober men delighting in winey flavour."

WITHOUT 'PROVOCATIVES': REJECTING CONTINENTAL PRE-DINNER DRINKING

Drinks were not taken when assembling in the drawing room before dinner. In 1860, a commentator on French and continental dining finds that a servant brings the guests a glass of *vermouth* or *absinthe verte* which is drunk with water, to stimulate the appetite. Edward Ricket (1878) merely writes that Englishmen did not take fortified wines before a meal as foreigners do.

Although some French modes were taken up, the habit of taking fortified wines before dinner does not seem to have been fashionable until after the first world war. Sir Henry Thompson notes the bad practice of drinking a glass of sherry before food, to allay exhaustion: "it injures an empty stomach" and "depraves the palate". For emphasis, later he offers a side note: "Never take wine or spirits before meals," but this was merely consistent with his overall views, as he did not usually advise wine.

Charles Pierce (1857) described the Russian custom: "Small liqueur-glasses of Kümel de Riga, cognac, absinthe, and the like, are provocatives for the dinner previously to the serving of the soup." These were often served with *hors d'oeuvres* at a side table.

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235 Sir Henry Thompson, op. cit, p. 246.
236 *Etiquette, Social Ethics and Dinner-Table Observances*, op. cit, p. 109.
237 Charles Pierce, op. cit, p. 150.
238 *Etiquette for Gentlemen with Hints on the Art of Conversation*, op. cit, p. 111.
242 Charles Pierce, op. cit, p. 150.
before dining à la Russe, or when serving hors d'oeuvres as the first course of an à la Russe dinner, but this was not generally adopted in England.

The question is, when so many French modes were taken up, why were pre-prandial drinks rejected? It suggests that the high grid formality which required punctual arrival, formal introduction and, as shown, an immediate readiness to process in a given order into dinner, over-rode any ideas of starting the evening with unstructured informality. For although guests were meant to arrive within a quarter of an hour this may not have been as perfectly adhered to as etiquette books suggest. If this was the case, it could have made pre-prandial drinking too uneven, as drinks would not have been given at the same moment. For dining à la Française and à la Russe, announcing dinner and processing to the table in order of precedence is usually included in etiquette books.243

See ‘Conversation and Silence: that difficult time before dinner’, below.

**TAKING WINE WITH À LA FRANÇAISE AND À L'ANGLAISE DINNERS**

Cosnett directs that each place should have a glass and glass cooler set out. Further glasses were arranged on the side board. Decanters are placed on the table,244 and, as described in the chapter on à la Française, more glasses, wines, wine coolers and other drinks are put out at tables and sideboards ready to be served as required. In the place setting shown by James Williams in his *Footman’s Guide* of 1847, which follows Cosnett, but is less complete in detail, he shows changing fashion. Place settings, shown in a fine diagram, are beginning to resemble an à la Russe table, with three glasses at each place.245

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Wine drinking when dining à la Française and à l'Anglaise followed a set ritual. Dinners à l'Anglaise traditionally began with turtle soup and its accompaniments including iced punch. At à la Française dinners, wine was not usually served until after the soup was eaten. Then sherry, Madeira, or hock were served. Timbs notes that wines at formal dinners were served more commonly by servants.

Toasting was integral to drinking, and requests for a chosen wine were made to the waiting servants who served them from the supply of glasses on the side tables. Ladies were not invited to 'take wine', until after the soup and fish. In Trussler’s rules for waiting at table, glasses are to be half filled, the explanation being that it prevented spills, but it also allowed moderate intake relative to increasing toast making.

Increasing toasting was integral to building ‘communitas’, as shown in the section From Beefsteaks to Octaves. The Beefsteaks had a long list of toasts whereas Thompson wished to reconstruct an ideal past communitas and so introduced a toast into his dining circle. As late as 1879, How to Dine, although noting it was no longer the custom, nonetheless gives exact instructions on how to take wine, “where the old custom prevails.” A refusal to toast is, predictably, considered bad manners but the recipient had only to touch their lips with the glass without drinking. The ritual formally begins: “Shall I have the pleasure of a glass of wine with you?” and the toaster then hands the bottle to the ‘toastee’ or sends it via the waiter, then fills his own glass, and silent bows are exchanged and the wine taken. As advised in How to Dine, the

246 Charles Pierce, 1857, op. cit, p. 151.
247 J. Timbs, Dinner Table Observances, 1860, op. cit, p. 23.
248 Etiquette, Social Ethics and Dinner Table Observances, op cit, p. 13.
250 Turner, op. cit, p. 129.
251 Arnold, op. cit, p. 36.
252 Cope, op. cit, p. 93.
253 How to Dine, or the Etiquette of the Dinner Table, Ward, Lock & Tyler, London, 1879, p. 28.
‘toastee’ may ask to drink a different wine from the one proposed. In 1869, Mixing in Society observed *en passant* that it is considered very vulgar to say “port wine” or “sherry wine.” This would have been a useful warning for her readers where toasting was still the custom.

In 1839 Redding directed: “Drink only with the eyes,” to ladies, and to gentlemen: “Say: ‘Your health.’” Thackeray, in his Book of Snobs, gives a jollier, if slightly exaggerated version for drinking a spontaneous toast with someone whom he had previously ‘cut’: “FRANK, my boy! I exclaimed, FRANK MARROWFAT, my dear fellow! a glass of wine!... FRANK answered, George, shall it be Hock or Madeira?” And so they select a wine and toast. This suggests that such a toast takes place early in the meal, after the soup and fish, although it could continue throughout the dinner ‘services’. It was the duty of waiting servants to supply the ‘toastee’ s’ choice of wine, but if the waiters were slow, many, like Walker, preferred to have wines standing on the table, which made for greater spontaneity.

As with other aspects of dining styles, different constituencies followed their own rules. Etiquette for Gentlemen, in 1838, compares “the spirit of antique manners”, which emphasised ceremony with: “the spirit of modern manners [which] consists in avoiding all possible appearances of form”. In keeping with this, when taking wine, the diner is advised that it is not necessary to speak, merely to give a simple

254 How to Dine, op cit, p. 29.
256 Redding, op. cit, p. 191.
257 To ‘cut’ an individual was to refuse to acknowledge them in public. See Lewis Carrol, Through the Looking Glass, Macmillan & Co., 1872, p. 205. Alice has just been formally introduced to a leg of mutton who has acknowledged her with a bow. She offers to carve the mutton. “‘Certainly not,’ the Red Queen said, very decidedly: ‘It isn’t etiquette to cut anyone you’ve been introduced to.’”
260 Etiquette for Gentleman with Hints on the Art of Conversation, op. cit, p. 30.
Acknowledgement. This more informal egalitarianism might be considered as less intimate and more suited to the new distance enhancing mode that developed into full dining à la Russe.

Toasting was not random; it followed rules which required the diners to know the rest of the diners and their place in relation to them. Mrs Beeton describes the host's duty to take wine with all the ladies who dine. For this, since the host had to toast the ladies in turn, he had to know their order of precedence. Male guests also had to know who to toast as the dinner progressed. With a growing tendency towards strategic invitations among a growing number of cross cutting dining circles, the practice ended, except among the most traditional. The exclusion of toasting was consistent with the loss of other interactions such as carving and helping others to dishes. *Etiquette, Social Ethics and Dinner-Table Observances*, in 1860, advises: "It is generally considered a mark of good breeding to take the same wine as that which is selected by the person who pays you the compliment; the choice, of course, pertaining to the highest in rank and age." But there is also a tactic for selecting an alternative wine by asking, "Will you permit me to take...?"263

As with changes in the style of dinner from à la Francaise to à la Russe and demi-Russe, arrangements to serve wines were even more prone to differing choices and styles of service. Kirwan, in 1864, dismisses port as "good for the old", and it was also now considered unfashionable to drink Madeira after soup, although he includes it a few pages later with: "a glass of Chablis, Barsac, Sauterne or Bucellus may be taken after the oysters while a glass of old Madeira or sherry follows the soup.” His views on choice also included statements of overt exclusion, such as: "Keeping Burgundy to drink with entremets, sucrés or dessert is a piece of rampant snobbishness..."

261 *Etiquette for Gentleman*, 1838, op. cit, p. 33.
262 Isabella Beeton, op. cit, No. 2190, p. 968.
263 *Etiquette, Social Ethics and Dinner-Table Observances*, op. cit, p. 13.
264 A. V. Kirwan, 1864, p. 362.
worthy of a *nouveau riche*."\(^{265}\) *Etiquette for Gentlemen, with Hints on the Art of Conversation* (1838) observes that champagne is drunk as the dinner ends just before the dessert, either one or two glasses but it is not polite to ask for more.\(^{266}\) This is typically at variance with the diverse advice noted earlier in 'Sham and Champagne'.

Fashions in matching wine and food not only changed with the adoption of à la Russe, but with fashions for a greater selection of wines. *Family Handbook* recommends that wines should vary with the seasons, light for summer, "generous" for winter and at the same time should be further categorised as white with white meats and red with red meats. Further advice advocated light wine for light dishes and stronger wine for more substantial dishes.\(^{267}\) Mary Hooper, in *Little Dinners* (1879), suggests that for summer, claret-cups comprising not more than a third of water, may be served after a glass of sherry with the fish.\(^{268}\)

**STRUCTURE AND INNOVATION: WINE WITH DINNERS À LA RUSSE**

Just as changes in serving food à la Russe emphasised impersonal individuality, so the change to a more structured style for serving wines was also consistent with the new fashion. Bonding through toasting became as unfashionable as helping a neighbour to a dish.

The à la Russe table setting included four clear glasses of differing shapes and sizes at each place. These were classified as sherry, claret, champagne and hock in a coloured glass. Glasses for dessert wines and liqueurs were not set out until the dessert was served. In France in 1844 the arrangement was similar, also comprising four glasses: Madeira, vin ordinaire, Bordeaux and champagne, with glasses for Rhine wine served

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\(^{265}\) A. V. Kirwan, 1864, p. 336.

\(^{266}\) *Etiquette for Gentlemen*, 1838, op. cit. p. 33.


from a tray. Mrs Matthew Clark’s 1884 translation of Baron Brisse’s menu book gives each diner a tumbler and three wine glasses for Madeira, Bordeaux and champagne.  

Charles Pierce’s 1857 definitive description of courses that composed an à la Russe dinner has an accompanying wine list: “Then after soup and hot hors d’oeuvres or petites pâtés, the usual wines with fish, Sauterne, Graves, Chablis or sherry, followed by Chambertin or Bordeaux, or any similar wine to the host’s taste, Entrées are matched with “finest clarets”. A roast is then served with accompanying salad followed by champagne and punch, à la Russe, à la Beaufort or à la Brunnow. These were lemon sorbet ices with added spirit and champagne, the spirit giving the name. With the vegetable entremets that followed, hock or other Rhine wines were served. These were then followed by sweet etremets which required “champagne or other light wines”. If cheese was served as a final dish it was to be accompanied by “port wine and occasionally by bottled porter or ale”.  

Pierce does not mention any separate dessert wines but notes that the Russians hand round ices before dessert while the English serve them after dessert, but that in both cases they are accompanied by “liqueur wines”.  

The Epicures Year Book (1868) advises Chablis with oysters when they are served first at dinner. After soup, vermouth is an addition to the usual sherry and Madeira. Sauterne

270 Baron Brisse, *366 Menus and 12000 Recipes of the Baron Brisse*, translated by Mrs Mathew Clark, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, London, 1884, p. V.  
271 Charles Pierce, op. cit, p. 151.  
273 ‘Etremets’ was sometimes spelt ‘entremets’, as with other examples of incorrect and inconsistent ‘menu French’.  
274 Charles Pierce, op cit, p. 151.  
275 Charles Pierce, op cit, p. 153.
is matched with hors d'oeuvres, but it is not stated if they were hot or cold. Bordeaux and Burgundies are to be served with the relevés and hot and cold entrées. "Château d'Yquem and very light iced Rheinish wines" are served with the sorbets between the cold entrées. With the roasts and the following vegetables some superior Burgundies and Bordeaux are recommended, and sherry re-appears with the sweets, while, as mentioned above, champagne was served at unspecified intervals during dinner. When dessert was served, filled glasses of "white and red Muscat, Constantia, Tokay, &c are carried round." 

Mary Hooper, in Little Diners (1874), advises her readers not to buy cheap substitutes of great wines, but lists and recommends "all wines of a Rheinish character" and also reasonably priced, Sauterne, Chablis and claret. Greek and Hungarian wines are also suggested as dinner wines.

In Our Servants, Their Duties in 1883, sherry is offered to each diner by a footman after soup, as is the champagne followed by the first entrée. No other wines are mentioned until sherry is served with the sweets. This either suggests that they continued to drink champagne or that Bordeaux or Burgundy were standing on the table either in their own bottles on coasters or decanted into claret jugs for the diners to help themselves throughout dinner. Mrs James Eliot advises hosts not to serve the best claret during dinner but to save it for dessert — a practice that earlier Kirwan had condemned as nouveau riche — as "few hosts like to see an expensive wine, such as 'La Rose,' 'Lafite,' or 'Chateau Margaux,' mixed liberally with water, as ladies who drink claret at dinner are in the habit of doing." The à la Russe table was set with water

276 The Epicures Year Book, 1868, p. 45.
277 The Epicures Year Book, 1868, p. 45.
278 The Epicures Year Book, 1868, p. 46.
281 Mrs James Eliot, op cit, p. 158.
283 Mrs James Eliot, op cit, p. 159.
jugs or carafes at accessible intervals, as can be seen (number 11) on Dr Walsh’s “Table plan for Dinners à la Russe”. In France, Benet (1844) advises an equal number of carafes of wine and of water to be put on the table. The wine set out on tables in France was, as ‘Fin-Bec’ notes, *vin ordinaire*, whereas the best wines were taken round by a servant. ‘Fin-Bec’ approved of having *vin ordinaire* to hand.

Some wines that had been drunk at the beginning of the meal were later transferred to dessert. Fashionable advice in 1883 was to serve Madeira, sherry, both ‘brown’ and ‘pale dry’ with the best claret which were to be handed round once and then at dessert, placed on the table in front of the host. At à la Française dinners, Madeira and sherry were often served after soup, and claret with entrées and roasts. If ices were served before dessert, liqueurs were served simultaneously.

Much advice for serving wine underlines a lack of uniform practice, suggesting the existence of diverse dining circles. *Etiquette for Ladies*, following earlier tastes, in 1894, states: “Variety in Wines is indispensable at large Dinners, but at a smaller one fewer kinds would be provided.” *Etiquette for Ladies* conventionally begins with the usual sherry after soup, Sauterne or Chablis with the fish, claret with the entrée. This author continues with champagne for the remainder of the dinner but never with dessert, sherry and claret for dessert, whilst “port is no longer a necessity.”

Accompanying serving instructions are included: Hock, champagne, and Chablis to the table in their original bottles, port and sherry were to be decanted, Burgundy is to be

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286 ‘Fin-Bec’, *The Cupboard Papers*, op. cit. Kirwan, op. cit, p. 336, also referred to in section on Taking Wine with à la Française and à l'Anglaise dinners.
287 Mrs James Eliot, op. cit, p. 159.
288 *Etiquette for Ladies*, 1894, op. cit, p. 68.
289 *Etiquette for Ladies*, op. cit, p. 69.
handed round in a glass claret-jug, and if liqueurs are served, these are to be handed round in small glasses after ices.290

But as the constituencies of à la Russe and demi-Russe dinner-givers expanded, advice on wines could be found that might have surprised an experienced diner. Mrs Humphry, who wrote for 'Truth', conventionally suggests cooling champagne, Sauterne, Rhine and all other white wines, but more surprisingly she advises that claret and Burgundy "should be drunk milk-warm". This is achieved by standing the bottle in hot water to raise its temperature as: "This brings out its body and diminishes any tendency to astringency."291 Major L in 1889, also notes this method and similarly the warming of claret bottles in front of the fire, but his more knowledgeable advice is to keep both bottles and decanters at 70 degrees [F.] for ten hours before dinner and then to decant them as required.292

As shown, wine appreciation and expertise was diverse in quality. Knowledge of wine, as with culinary taste, was inhibited by both lack of money and experience. Wine was mostly, as might be expected for a publicly consumed mind-altering substance, under male control. There are few comments on women's taste or which wines they were expected to drink or abstain from. As with the male/female red/white meat dichotomy discussed earlier, that which seems to have been understood is not made overt.

There is little note of gender differences in wine tastes but the author of an 1840 handbook on wines describes Muscat de Frontignac as "a lady's wine, but for the fair sex [they] should be wary; it is a dangerous friend and mounts swiftly to the brain."293 Women conventionally drank less than men as they did not drink after dinner or have single sex dining where bonding was promoted through consumption of quantities of

290  *Etiquette for Ladies*, op. cit, p. 69.


293  *Hand-Book on Wines, to all who drink them*, op. cit, p. 27.
food and drink. So far I have found no references to women drinking enough to alter their behaviour, but it would have been so deviant as to be excluded from etiquette books.

CONVERSATION AND SILENCE: THAT DIFFICULT TIME BEFORE DINNER

Arriving and waiting for dinner offered the first conversational challenge. Pierce describes it with a phrase "la mauvais quart d'heure", suggesting that the quarter or half hour before dinner was well known as socially awkward. Mrs Beeton describes the hostess's anxiety during the half hour before dinner as a time for worrying about arrangements in which she could not be involved.

The mistress, however, must display no kind of agitation, but show her tact in suggesting light and cheerful subjects of conversation, which may be aided by the introduction of any particular new book, curiosity of art, or article of vertu, which may pleasantly engage the attention of the company.

A later etiquette book suggests putting out albums to interest guests and give them easy subjects for conversation.

Punctuality was considered vital. It is mentioned in almost all etiquette books. The eccentric and extreme Dr Kitchiner went as far as to propose locking the front door when the first course was served, and even had the servant put the front door key on the dinner table for emphasis.

J. P. Mahaffey, in his Principles of the Art of Conversation, a social essay, in 1888, describes the waiting time before dinner as just the moment for a witty man. "Many alter the whole complexion of the party [bonding in sympathy to] thaw the iceness

295 Isabella Beeton, op. cit, No. 34, p. 12.
which so often fetters Anglo-Saxon society."297 This opportunity for an individual to shine contrasts with the following high-grid instruction. The anonymous author of *Etiquette for Gentlemen with Hints on the Art of Conversation* (1838) instructs that when guests had all arrived and been introduced: "If any delay occurs, the conversation should be of the lightest and least exciting kind; mere commonplaces about the weather &c."298 These were conversations that could easily be broken off at the moment the party was to process to dinner. This high grid regard for timing was in accord with the high grid service that Cosnett set as an ideal. He gives exact details of how dinner is to be announced,299 for although the diners are not the overt upholders of grid, nonetheless there are certain points at which their actions must reiterate the hierarchic ideals of an articulated whole. Being ready to move into dinner smoothly, at an exact moment, is an example of integrated hierarchy. A comparable example is of a complete army regiment marching off together.

CONVERSATION: CAREFULLY CHOSEN WORDS?

"The English are not famous for conversation; but it has been proved that if you want them to talk, you must put something substantial into their mouths,"300 so *The Habits of Good Society* remarked when justifying giving dinners. Conversation for its own sake became dominant at dinners where many of the other spontaneous interactions, such as toasting, between diners had been removed. The pattern set by the dinner-givers, their guests, and their relationships to each other during a period of fast social change, may well, in some circles, have inhibited easy conversation. However, to generalise from books for the anomic, as a presumed source for reflecting actual conversation, can be difficult to justify.


298 *Etiquette for Gentlemen with Hints on the Art of Conversation*, op. cit, p. 27.


Advice in a book that must have been written for visitors to the 1851 Exhibition, *London at Table*, includes a note on improving conversation. By proscribing such common denominators as puns, mechanisms for exclusion were established: "In the present day men exist, of the highest acquirements in conversational powers, who make their wit subservient to their higher order of intellect. The professional punster is a bore."301 ‘Fin-Bec’, when comparing French and English conversation, writes: "Among the English middle class, the best-behaviour air of their salons is inexpressibly painful."302

A battery of inhibiting instruction,303 from *Mixing in Society* stresses mostly negative rules that include: affecting a foreign accent and using too many foreign words and expressions, provincialisms, slang, inaccuracies, and gesticulation. This instructor also advises controlling the signs of visible emotion304. These rules are in accord with Judith Rowbotham’s findings in didactic girls’ literature, where refinement and restraint are seen as the true expression of Christian feeling and those who were clumsy, without refinement as visibly lacking inner virtue.305

These extreme didactic texts can be seen as idealising behaviour, either in terms of the unattainably virtuous, as in the girl’s literature, or as genteel behaviour suitable for interaction with a distant social elite. To counter this style of over formal advice, *Etiquette Social Ethics and Dinner Table Observances* suggests dining as an opportunity for social networking and self improvement while at the same time adding the invocation: “Feel that you have a right to be happy.”306

303 *Mixing in Society*, op. cit, pp. 89-100.
304 *Mixing in Society*, op. cit, p. 91.
306 *Etiquette Social Ethics and Dinner Table Observances*, op. cit, p. 12.
Andrew St George’s *The Descent of Manners* investigates the diverse instructions for conversing in differing situations. Contemporary strands of thought are classified by a large didactic literature for topic selection in the appropriate setting. St George quotes Edwin Drew’s advice on the best subjects, avoiding the contentious and recommending history, science, art and literature. This type of advice could, in effect, be a didact’s charter. As in the special books on dining, plenty of serviceable material was offered from a wide variety of books and journals on diverse subjects. *Punch* had a series of verses satirising the sort of conversation that young woman might be subjected to by the partner who escorted her from the drawing room and who sat next to her at dinner.

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Men who take me in-to Dinner. (By a Dinner-Belle.)
No. I – The Over-Cultured Undergraduate.

To quote:

I questioned if Balliol was jolly –
"Your epithet," sighed he, "means noise,
Vile noise! At his age it were folly
To revel with Philistine boys."  307
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*Etiquette Social Ethics and Dinner Table* suggests that for those without aptitude, a store of appropriate general knowledge is to be encouraged. Mrs Orrinsmith’s drawing room book-shelves, referred to earlier, could stand as a prompter for the verbally desperate, much in the same vein as Soyer had advised exotic dessert fruits as a prompt for talk of foreign trade.  308 Profuse decor may also have acted as a resource for conversational gambits.

In *Manners for Men*, Mrs Humphry advises young men that: “However hungry one may be, the duty of keeping up a conversation must not be neglected.” 309 Hierarchic dining with long-lasting interactions over repeated dinners, could allow the luxury of silence, whereas among the most strategic individualists who were busily arranging

307 *Punch*, ‘Men who take me in-to Dinner’ (By a Dinner-Belle), No. I – ‘The Over-Cultured Undergraduate’, Vol. 100, February 28th 1891, p. 105.

new introductions conversation was paramount, contrasting with an earlier male writer
who had advised verbal restraint.\textsuperscript{310} Silence was also a feature noted among the
greedy, if an account of a city dinner in \textit{Punch} is taken as having a basis of truth.\textsuperscript{311}

Although there was instruction on conversation for those who needed it, this does not
really tell us about the usual style of conversation among the various dining
constituencies. J. P. Mahaffey, in \textit{The Principles of The Art of Conversation, a Social
Essay} (1888), does write as someone who understood making conversation and has
thought realistically about the subject. Mahaffey was actually interested in conversation
as a skill that can be taught.\textsuperscript{312} He was professor of Classics at Dublin, where he taught
Oscar Wilde, which may have some tentative connection. However, Wilde, like many
famous wits, was not always entertaining. Marion Sambourne once sat next to him at
dinner and commented on a ‘slow’ evening,\textsuperscript{313} which may also have been a comment
on the listener, whose diary, while being a most useful source for the commonplace,
was not written to amuse.

Mahaffey’s notes on gossip nicely set boundaries both of propriety and the realities of
sustaining relationships, while making amusing conversation. He disliked didacts and
is realistic about any serious philosophical debate not being generally viable in most
circles.\textsuperscript{314}

Conversation centred on professional interests is proscribed by several writers.

Thompson, as described, had abandoned his medical dinner parties on the ground that

\begin{flushright}
311 William Makepeace Thackeray: account and drawing of greedy eating in the city: ‘A Dinner in the
pp. 333-41. Referred to above in the section on the city, Blackwall, Gravesend and Greenwich.
312 J. P. Mahaffey, \textit{The Principles of The Art of Conversation, a Social Essay}, second edition,
313 Marion Sambourne, \textit{Diary}, 22nd May 1887, dinner 7.45 for 8 o’clock at Mrs de la Rue’s.
314 J. P. Mahaffey, op cit, p.110.
\end{flushright}
the conversation was solely medical. 315 Marion Sambourne comments on a club dinner that Linley attends where “[he met] Bar and Stage only”. 316 Although many of the Sambourne dinners included other artists, none recorded in Mrs Sambourne’s note book were exclusively comprised of artists and their wives.

The Sambourne diaries sometimes note whether an evening was entertaining or slow and this is often supported by the time the guests leave. One of their most entertaining evenings was spent at the Bumands. Frank Bumand was editor of *Punch* from 1880 to 1906, and his second wife Rosie had been an actress. After this memorable dinner the Sambournes did not leave until four a.m. Shirley Nicholson lists several references to entertaining times spent with the Bumands with such comments as “Lin & self to Burnands, laughed immensely, all in good spirits.” 317

To capture guests with “a talent to amuse” 318 must have been invaluable for strategic dinner-givers. Social “Nimrods” 319 not only wanted celebrities but also the socially adept to make an evening successful. There was advice available on selecting the right balance of ‘talkers’ and ‘listeners’. Thompson was reputed to have selected his guests with great care as would have been expected of such an overt strategist. 320 Thompson compares his notion of an early nineteenth-century country squire’s conversation centred on limited country interests with his late wide ranging nineteenth-century counterpart. 321 It certainly is in keeping with a move to individualism with which Thompson identifies.

315 Cope, op. cit, p. 92.
319 ‘Lady Nimrod’ a *Punch* character referred to earlier. Nimrod was “A mighty hunter before the Lord”, Gen. x, 9. *Punch* refers to hunting ‘social lions’.
Mahaffey finds between four and eight the best number for group conversation, almost exactly conforming to those often quoted “three virtues [more usually graces] and nine muses”, further advising: “No couples should sit together who likely to lapse into private discourse.”

With strategic dining the verbally unskilled could well have found the conversational challenge greater than in the recurring groups that were a feature of middling hierarchies. A similar example is provided by 1980s suburban hierarchs and their recurring dining circle. These diners, all familiar to each other, shared almost formulaic jokes, in marked contrast to the challenge of originality found among their contemporary individualist networkers.

TURNING TO RIDICULE: DEHUMANISING SERVANTS

Angela P. Cheater, in Social Anthropology, An Alternative Introduction, defines a range of gender categories such as eunuchs and their role in a high grid society in the context of Muslim purdah. In designating domestic space, there is a similarity between Muslim Turkish households and the Victorian households discussed (even though there was no stated role for eunuchs). But comparison with the Turkish context highlights a move in middle range households from employing footmen to a preference for parlour maids. It can be understood as removing ‘dangerous’ males from women alone at home, while their husbands were out. In larger households there could be a greater insulation of male servants from ‘ladies’ through a mediating housekeeper and personal female servants such as ladies’ maids. Although the underlying function of this shift was considered to be unmentionable, there are inferences of achievable control over

parlour maids. Mrs Humphry, in referring to “the conservatism of despotic butlers”, mentions that she prefers parlour maids. By 1893 male servants were not usually employed in middle-range households except on special occasions. For Mrs Humphry, like the Arbiters of Abode, that which their readership could not afford was to be disparaged. From 1851 to 1881 there was a 24% drop in the number of indoor male servants in England to be replaced by parlour maids, as a cheaper alternative. The Sambournes, as a middle-range household, kept a parlour maid, and only employed men to wait at some of their dinner parties.

An early *Punch*, in 1842, gives a rare view of a footman, in the series *Punch’s Valentines*. Two typical verses include such lines as:

For I own I adore thee -- yes, John, by the air  
With which you perambulate Grosvenor Square,  
Thou liveried Cupid, of Venus thou son,  
Thou servant of Hyman -- magnificent John.

also:

And can there be on earth such terrible brutes  
That would set thee to work, love, at cleaning the boots!  
Ah gladly a hessian, or highlow, I’d be,  
If I might not be polish’d, my own one, by thee!

This satire unusually makes footmen, who were often selected for their appearance, overtly virile. Most of the later jokes about footmen’s appearance ridicules them as vain and foolish rather than admitting that they were often attractive young men. 'John Thomas' was not only slang for a flunkey but is also given as slang, from circa 1840,

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328 *Punch*, Volume 2, January to June 1842, unnumbered page circa February 14th.
as an upper class euphemism for the male member. Much subsequent satire was concerned to de-humanise servants of both sexes.

Within this portrayal, the role of male servants was frequently shown as reflecting the male-dominated hierarchic mode above stairs, as can be seen in the cartoons, verses and articles that recur in Punch. Pamela Horn describes male servants during the Victorian period as an essential to the middling’s emulation of the elite. Servants’ wages reflected this division in rank between male and female equivalent duties.

Equivalent satire on women servants did cover some of the same topics as male satire, such as implied role reversal and the recurring themes of vanity, snobbishness and intimidation. Class as a definition, also in some aspects, redefined gender. Parlour maids were addressed by their surnames, whereas among the higher classes only men and schoolboys were addressed by their surnames. Servants were sometimes given more appropriate names that accorded with their role while at the same time minimising any aristocratic, frivolous or flirtatious nuances their original given names might have had.

Dress was designed with the same overt reiteration of status. Suggestions that servants should wear their employers’ discarded clothes disappeared in the period. Maids wore cheap printed calico for morning work and black dresses with white aprons and caps if they were to be seen in the afternoon or evening. In rich or aristocratic households male indoor servants were liveried. This gave rise to some ridiculed colour combinations when arriviste liveries were compared to the liveries of aristocratic dynasties. Dressing employees in ‘silly’ clothes was and is an overt expression of employers’ capricious

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331 Pamela Horn, op. cit, Table 3, p. 148 and Table 4, p. 149. J. Jean Hecht, *The Domestic Servant Class in Eighteenth-Century England*, Routledge, Keegan Paul, London, 1956, pp. 142-9. Male wages were almost inevitably were greater than the female equivalents.

332 *Punch*, housemaid and parlour maid cartoons. The *Punch* series on female servants contemporary with John Thomas jokes was “Servantgalism”. See illustrations.
power. *Mixing in Society*, in 1869 quotes from the ‘Roundabout Papers’ on the fashion for black among employers while “heaping of gold lace, gaudy colours, blooming plushes on honest John Trot, which makes the man absurd in our eyes.” In contrast, dynastic uniforms could be seen as less humiliating since they conformed to expectations of the appropriate by incorporating the wearer into a dynastic hierarchy.

I shall conclude by adding some specific comments on servants, although domestic service has been well documented, particularly by Pamela Horn and Leonore Davidoff. Throughout this work, servants have been referred to in relation to cuisine; the comparative rank of cooks; the kitchen areas in which they worked; changing styles of table service and the work generated by care of the house and its contents. It is worth emphasising that without servants there would have been no dining. Pseudo servantless dinners, as when the mistress cooked upstairs, were hardly more than a token towards their employers’ independence. Servants were still essential for necessary cleaning, laying fires, answering doors, fetching and carrying that were constantly required for any social occasion.

Yet even though servants often lived in the household, they were not of it. Donald Olsen gives an interesting example of servants as a source of perceived contamination. As just one indication, Whitely’s department store in Queensway had a laundry which marked servant’s laundry with special blue labels and packed it separately from that of the rest of the household. Much instruction for employers emphasised exercising strictures on servants’ leisure, by setting sewing tasks for women, limiting hours out of the house, forbidding ‘followers,’ attempting control over diet, to mention a few of many constraints.

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Although some paternalistic relationships were sustained over long periods, this can hardly have been influential in the face of a general decline in the popularity of domestic service. For domestic servants, the demands of the dinner party in addition to their routine work can only have been regarded as an imposition of longer hours of hard work. The provision made for servants in middle-range dinner-giving households compared with the extravagances of these evenings suggests that this emblematic entertainment planted the seeds of its own destruction. As Mrs Humphry comments in 1897: “The development of restaurant life proceeds apace.”

CONCLUSION: PRIVATE SPHERES AND THE WORLD BEYOND

Having, through this work, followed the argument for Cultural Theory as underpinning changes in upper-middle class celebratory dining, it might still be asked if Cultural Theory is any more than description with ascription. I hope to have demonstrated, however, that Cultural Theory, with its socially derived values and attitudes has been effective in locating these within the social dimensions of change and reaction. An overarching, hierarchically organised society formed the framework within which recurring tensions between holders of an established hierarchic ideal drew a boundary against rising individualism. The actors’ values and attitudes have been viewed by following this theme through the diverse aspects of dining. Examination of this single activity has shown how changes in cuisine, serving styles, etiquette, tableware and domestic space were all grounded in and justified by the socially determined values and attitudes of the actors involved. In this conclusion I hope to make some tentative connections between these actors’ private worlds and some of the larger scale social changes that contributed to their ways of dining. It was within this wider environment,

336 Mrs Humphry, Manners for Women, op. cit, p. 116. The domestic dinner party continued but among middle range diners adaptations were and still continue to be made. 1890 is often cited as the beginning of mixed dinner parties in hotels and restaurants, not that for servants, working in hotels, was without difficulties, but it was among an increasing choice of types of work for servants.
this common base, that the members of diverse dining circles constructed their social lives.

It was large scale events, to state a truism, that placed the diners in their particular social situation but their discussion of current affairs was noticeably absent from advice on conversation. Among earlier writers such as Doran, circa 1831,\textsuperscript{337} and Timbs, 1838,\textsuperscript{338} classical and well worked anecdotes were offered as suitable topics for dinner-table conversation, and later etiquette books similarly limited themselves. They never suggested engagement with wider economic or political events. This detachment from the discussion of wider concerns reinforces the validity of Turner’s concept of communitas when applied to dinners, of dinners existing in ‘time out of time’.\textsuperscript{339} Communitas thus appears not only to have applied to male after-dinner drinking and dinners at Greenwich, as discussed above, but also to domestic dinners in the new and protected environment of residential areas such as Kensington. Dinner parties in these relatively closed households was in some degree detached from the wider worlds of work and street life and can be seen as an exclusive celebration of select and privatised networks. Nor do these dinners appear to have celebrated calendrical,\textsuperscript{340} national or even local events. In some elite circles there were political hostesses but the middle-range dinner-parties discussed here can be seen as the creation of entertainments that were largely derived from the actors’ working lives.

New networks were established, but there does not appear to have been an overtly strategic invitation policy at mixed dinners. To an extent these were a consolidation of new occupational and residential groupings. Male strategic dining had better

\begin{itemize}
\item Dr John Doran, 1854, op. cit, first published c. 1831. The whole work is written as a source of esoteric and idiosyncratic opinion on dinning.
\item John Timbs, \textit{Hints for the Table, or the economy of good living}, 1838, op. cit, pp. 130-47.
\item Victor W. Turner, op. cit, 1969, p. 129.
\item Christmas was an exception, but it was celebrated more as a family dinner. Charles Dickens, in \textit{Sketches by Boz}, Chapman and Hall, 1861, ‘A Christmas Dinner’, pp. 205-14, gives his readers a picture of an idealised annual family celebration, which he differentiates from ‘...a mere assemblage of relations got up at a week or two’s notice,’ p. 206. \textit{Sketches by Boz}, was first published in 1836. ‘A Christmas Dinner’ first appeared as ‘Scenes and Characters No. 10, Christmas Festivities’ in \textit{Bell’s Life in London}, London, 27 December 1835.
\end{itemize}
opportunities to flourish at all male club dinners with their wider scope for networking. The Sambournes' artist friends and the editor, Frank Burnand, and their wives shared reciprocal dinners, but there does not appear to have been an overt, career-advancing, networking strategy in their reciprocal dining. The dinner-givers' use of space, time, objects and labour in the everyday use of their domestic space, their usual cuisine and their table decor, markedly contrasted with the transformations they enacted for dinner-parties. The Sambournes' dinner-parties were then essentially private celebrations without reference to calendrical or other outside reference points. Their disengagement from the world beyond is firmly demarcated.

C. Wright Mills notes the difficulties in relating macroscopic changes to molecular detail in sociological studies. By using 'total structures in a comparative way' he gives examples of their validity in providing answers to macro questions as these were employed by scholars such as Marx and Weber. But, as he points out, the ideal is to include both macro and micro observations within a study, so that one level complements and informs the other. Some types of history can more directly relate macro and micro events. As an example, military history, when analysing a great battle, can demonstrate its origins as arising from large-scale economic upheaval. But it could be lost or won, as the result of a small mutiny or a strategic error resting on the personal foibles of a general.

The pace of change at the beginning of the nineteenth century was gathering momentum from a predominantly single economic resource, in this case agriculture, to a more diverse economic base derived from a variety of new sources with massively greater exploitation of raw materials from home and abroad. New industries, new forms of

342 C. Wright Mills, op. cit, p. 554.
343 C. Wright Mills, op. cit, p. 554.
transport and an expanding Empire required greater bureaucracies to service them. And these new forms of micro social organisation generated a whole variety of heterogeneously diverse consumer services required by their new constituencies.

With this growing emphasis on individualism, impetus was given to the individual renegotiation of social relationships and personal fortune and misfortune were not directly or necessarily linked to larger economic movements. Investments and careers were seen to flourish or fail in accord with as variety of separate ventures as there were increasingly diverse sources of income from British and foreign trade and manufactures. Railways and much shipping centred on London. By the 1880s Asa Briggs notes that the total value of London’s trade was greater than that of Liverpool. Reference to the economic slumps of the middle and latter parts of the century, however, was quite absent from contemporary dining literature. Strategies for giving economical dinners had no place in response to even marked economic downturns. A relative social insulation of diners may therefore be inferred from this lack of reference to the general economic climate in books on dining during the deprivations of the ‘Hungry Forties’ and later.

Specific events are not easily linked to changes in commensality among diverse circles. Changes in dining styles can more generally be attributed to the ratchet effect of the rising requirement for individual attributes such as knowledge and competitive endeavour that were integral to new inventions and to the expanded trade that built the Industrial Revolution. To return to Harold Perkin’s definition, referred to in the introduction, where he noted that the Industrial Revolution was more than merely the introduction of new industrial techniques but was “a social revolution with social causes

and a social process, as well as profound social effects”.347 Perkin’s emphasis is on the
growth of a new social structure – from vertical interest groups to a horizontal class
based society.348 Such a society, and London in particular, was further diversified by
the rise of professionalism and became increasingly cosmopolitan as a result of its place
at the centre of commercial activity. If it had not been for new ways of living in the new
residential areas, however, with men working away from home, there would have been
less impetus for change in styles of commensality. This was made possible after 1840
by the great building boom in residential enclaves, the new suburbs, which were served
by new modes of transport. Hansom cabs were introduced in 1834, and omnibuses in
1829. By 1900 Porter gives a total of 3,000 horse-drawn buses and trams.349 The first
overland London railway was opened in 1836, followed in 1863 by an underground
railway.

This study’s examination of a single commensal event might not only appear detached
from the total social structure of the period, but might also appear for the most part as
not engaged with the whole of its actors’ ways of life. It is, however, not that actors
had no wider roles, but that through dining they affirmed an ‘ideal’ identity that
markedly contrasted with their everyday lives. Not only were there contrasts between
dining time and non-dining time but the actors’ place in relation to ranked dining circles,
to each other, to those who provided the goods and services they enjoyed, and to the
many others excluded from them, all reiterated the variety of a new social order.

346 John Burnett, Plenty and Want, A Social History of Diet in England from 1815 to the Present
Scolar Press, London, 1979. The Corn Laws, 1815, which had several amendments, kept the
price of home-produced wheat high, at more than 80s a quarter before foreign wheat could be
imported to relieve the resultant poverty and hunger. The Corn Laws were repealed in 1846.
Burnett doubts if there was surplus wheat available to import from Europe or that the cost of
transport, if it had been imported, would still have kept the price of wheat high.


348 Harold Perkin, 1986, op. cit, p. x.

This shift from agriculture in the eighteenth-century to industry in the nineteenth eroded the long-established unifying factor of vertical but integrated interest groups. Though the nineteenth-century style of organisation and its accompanying rhetoric was predominantly hierarchic, the growth of innovation and the exploitation of Empire and its resources offered an individual dynamic. This inherent tension between hierarchy and individualism had previously been present, but the wide range, speed and quantity of innovation allowed this individualist bias a freer reign.

Roast beef was the eighteenth century’s hierarchic emblematic symbol of agricultural plenty. It reinforced a chauvinist rejection of French cuisine and was fuelled by anti-French feeling generated by the Seven Years War (British/French Colonial war of 1754/55-63), the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars of 1789-1815. Similar examples of culinary chauvinism can be seen in the rejection of the label ‘à la Russe’ during and after the Crimean War, 1854-56 (noted in chapter VII).

While the case for chauvinism was manifest in emblematic roasts, an opposing individualist bias is evident in the eighteenth-century proliferation of French cuisine, manifest both in cookery books and in the growing employment of French cooks. This was paralleled by the expansion in British trade and influence in Europe during the period, with its accompanying interaction of individualist politicians, diplomats, manufacturers and traders. These tensions were also evident amongst the British grand tourists of Europe who comprised not only admirers of continental art and life but also chauvinist young men as typified in Thomas Patch’s caricature of A Punch Party at Hadfield’s Inn, Florence.350

Tensions between chauvinist rhetoric and culinary practice are clearly evident in Hannah Glasse’s anti-French tirade and in her plagiarised French recipes referred to in chapter II. Glasse well reflect this tension between bounded hierarchy and the individualistic pursuit of innovative French cuisine. As European taste followed French style, it was

350 Thomas Patch (1720-82), A Punch Party at Hadfield’s Inn, Florence, at Dunham Massey, National Trust.
French taste, typified by the Duke of Newcastle's choice of a French cook that offers a prime example of this growth of culinary individualism. Opposing nationalist ideals were encapsulated in Addison's chauvinist sentiments\(^{351}\) and reinforced by rising English agricultural prosperity following the revolution in agricultural practice.\(^{352}\) Subsequent enclosure gave added prosperity to landowners and farmers who were frequently caricatured as the consumers of roast beef. During the nineteenth century, this eighteenth-century elite tradition was sustained as French cuisine continued to be reproduced by French cooks or those trained in the French 'fond'-based system. Middle level Victorian individualist diners however, who were without the resources of elite households, responded to a need for elaboration. These middling dining circles, no longer subscribing to an hierarchic system of rank-appropriate dishes that were focused on roast joints of meat overtly marginalised French composite dishes, "Kickshaws"\(^ {353} \).

During the second half of the century, these new diners evolved a new form of elaboration centred on feminised decorative dishes. Roasts in their turn were marginalised, together with their opposing symbolic representations of nature and masculinity. Nature in this context could be seen as encompassing the perception of eighteenth-century agricultural plenty. Plenty was demonstrated by a growth in the average weight of cattle brought to Smithfield market. As J. H. Plumb noted, oxen gained weight from an average of 370 lbs in 1710 to 800 lbs in 1795,\(^ {354} \) and in doing so provided the beef that became the symbol of agricultural plenty. 'Plenty' as


\(^{352}\) Jethro Tull (1674-1741), inventor of the horse-drawn seed-drill (1701) and author of *Horse-Hoeing Husbandry* (1733). Charles, 2nd Viscount Townshend (1674-1738), named 'Turnip' Townshend, for his agricultural improvements, the most notable being the cultivation of mangel-wurzel, a root crop for use as winter cattle fodder. Arthur Marwick dates 1750 as the year by which England had enough grain, meat and dairy produce to allow for an expanding population, *The Illustrated Dictionary of British History*, General Editor, Arthur Marwick, Thames and Hudson, 1980, p. 10.


described by Prince Pückler-Muskau,\textsuperscript{355} was the ideal of generous provision at celebratory tables. It was replaced in the second half of the nineteenth-century by an ideal of elaboration expressed in the description ‘recherché’.\textsuperscript{356} These changes in commensal ideals implied sharing of ‘plenty’ to the new competitive exclusivity of ‘recherché’ cuisine. Similarly the ideal of cooperative interaction among dinners à la Française who shared ‘plenty’ can be contrasted with the competitive leagues of exclusivity among diners à la Russe.

The basis of domestic organisation too, was changed by the Industrial Revolution, but not always in the expected manner, that is, as the recipients of new technology. Such changes as did occur were again the result of changes in social organisation, but innovation was inhibited by the marginal status of kitchens and their staff when mistresses no longer worked in their own kitchens. Rank, division and separation of place, things and people, all attributes of grid, became more pronounced in the rhetoric as the century proceeded. Consistent with this localised up-grid bias, kitchens were, as their situation in town houses suggests, relegated to basements that were cut off from the household above by soundproof doors. This ascribed low status of the staff of middle-range kitchens and of the kitchens in which they worked reiterates the incidence of social pressures that overrode any will to install innovations in middle-range kitchens.

In a country at the forefront of an Industrial Revolution, with a boom in innovation and production, a concomitant revolution might well have been expected in the use of kitchen equipment. Cast iron was an important new material. It was a prime product of


\textsuperscript{356} Volant, F. and Warren, J. R., \textit{Memoirs of Alexis Soyer}, W. Kent & Co., London, 1859. This facsimile edition Cooks Books, Rottingdean, Sussex, 1985, p. 92. Soyer’s comment on the bill of fare of the exclusive “Diner Lucullusien a la Sampayo” for (Osborne?) Sampayo at the Reform Club, on 9th May 1846 was “I beg to present a copy of the bill of fare of the most recherché dinner I ever dressed...”
the Industrial Revolution and it could be said that range design improved during the period. It appeared first in open ranges from the beginning of the eighteenth century and then in closed ranges in the nineteenth century. Yet innovation overall was not linked to an industry like iron casting, as in the case of Rumford’s ‘more economical stove’, which did not succeed even when modified for the English market. Easily used gas cookers too had little success until ladies themselves cooked. Similarly the importation and distribution of ice for kitchen ice boxes can be seen as part of the expansion in trade and transport. Yet though individualists such as Alexis Soyer produced innovative designs for commercial and domestic kitchens, their impact also appears to have been minimal. And despite the Prince of Wales’ tours of his innovative kitchen at Brighton that were followed by Soyer’s kitchen tours at the Reform Club, their enthusiasm for innovation does not appear to have been emulated.

It was, then, the prime importance of the actors’ social values and attitudes in regard to rank, gender, nature and pollution that overrode any major drive to technical innovation in kitchens. Micro social organisation is revealed in this context to have had greater influence on behaviour than macro changes in technical innovation. The change in role among middle-range housewives, from those of the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century who worked and supervised in their kitchens to produce the repertoire for à la Française dinners, to those who later avoided kitchens and cooking, was particularly marked. For the unheeded promoters of innovation like Soyer and Edwards or the manufacturers of gas stoves like Sugg it was difficult, as low-grid individualists, for them to accept the social inhibitions that restricted innovation in domestic kitchens. These considerations, however, did not preclude the innovation of new products and new processes in interior decorations and tableware that were enthusiastically adopted. Their use too did not require the extensive reskilling that would have been required with the introduction of new kinds of stove. There is also the consideration that innovation in the kitchen was not visible to guests in the dining-room.
In contrast, the introduction of electro-plating from 1840 onwards did have a large impact on middle-range dining. Though cutlery and flatware essentially retained their same shapes and functions, they were, in their new glittering format, ideal for display on à la Russe tables. It might be argued that the new service may not have been introduced without a plentiful choice of new cutlery and tableware. I would suggest, however, that the socially-driven need for elaboration might well, in the absence of such artefacts, have been quite adequately expressed by other means. Mary Douglas and Jonathan Gross measure elaboration by the number of additions to meals ("increases in complexity"), that serve to differentiate time, place and occasion. Innovation in table decoration does not, therefore, necessarily depend on the simple availability of manufactured goods, but could, for instance, have been expressed by the selection and arrangement of food or even of flowers to express a need for increased degrees of complexity.357 I would argue that it was not the appearance of artefacts that generated the need but the manufacturers that responded to a socially generated market. Products of the Industrial Revolution were incorporated into dinner-giving, but were not in themselves catalysts for change. That elaboration can derive from a variety of available sources is shown by the individualistic but non-industrial New Guinea Highlanders who give elaborate feasts which are nonetheless prone to constant fashion changes.358 They too use what is available. I suggest it was not new production techniques for tableware that generated new styles of dining, but that new styles and qualities of tablewares offered a vehicle for individualist iconography. Only then did manufacturers find the market they were able to exploit. It was in this way that these products of the Industrial Revolution were incorporated into the new commensality.

New processes in ceramic manufacture, as exemplified in the range of qualities and styles produced by the Minton factory, can be seen as a similarly astute response to the new social divisions. A range of styles and qualities wide enough to cater for those with

economic capital is exemplified by the French styles, such as Minton’s 1855 ‘Vase Rothschild’ which imitated a Sévres vase triangulaire. Similarly, those who valued symbolic capital could select approved goods from Felix Summerley’s range of ‘Art Manufactures’. Yet other constituencies were offered Pugin’s circa 1850 Gothic designs. Minton produced designs for almost the whole range of tastes, and these were based on English and foreign designs from a wide range of periods. These ceramics echoed the individualist requirement to raid ‘long ago and far away’ sources for fashionable styles with interesting provenance that were unlikely to relate to the purchaser’s personal experience or their pasts. A selected style could reflect past grandeur, as with eighteenth-century court styles such as imitations of Sévres porcelain or be derived from oriental styles that referred to imported wares such as Christopher Dresser’s 1870 Japanese style pseudo-cloisonné wares. In London these goods were made accessible through a growth in shops and department stores and better transport. Whether the Great Exhibition of 1851, with its examples of the latest, finest and most elaborate furnishings and tableware, served to give the public a greater appetite for new and more elaborate wares is difficult to know. But as six million people viewed the exhibition it might be reasonable to think that it did encourage consumer choice.

It might be asked that if there was an increasing move to individualism throughout the nineteenth century, why was the new style of dining à la Russe not generally adopted

360 Minton’s museum and factory records reveal the range of variations in produced in both Pugin’s Gothic and Cole’s Art Manufactures, some of which were sanctioned by the designers others were based on the manufacturers’ own commercial judgement.
361 Joan Jones, 1995, op cit. shows some of the wide range of wares produced by Minton, pp. 3-25.
within a shorter timespan? À la Russe dining was introduced as early as 1829, yet for some circles, the retention of à la Française dining was still being advocated as late as 1890. There are two arguments that acted against such conformity. First a bias towards greater individualism is in itself an argument against a cohesive change in fashion. Second, dining circles operated within roughly similar status leagues of age cohorts, and a change in style by one member can set an unwelcome and disruptive challenge to the total cohort membership. Extreme individualist dinner-giving that diverged too far from league norms without implied reciprocity was accordingly a subject for satire. It was not advocated in didactic works or recorded in contemporary accounts of dining. A bias to individualism is, then, an argument against overall uniformity in dining styles, but also, and paradoxically, an argument for localised uniformity.

The place of individualism within an overarching hierarchic structure was reinforced by the ranked exclusivity of dining circles. Diners came either from an established social circle or from new networking opportunities made available through card calling, mostly done by women, in addition to new workplaces and clubs for men. Men, like Linley Sambourne, through their work, were able to dine in more distinguished circles than their wives. Henry Cole (1808-82) frequently dined out without his wife, as she was not ‘in society’. Unaccompanied, Cole was invited to grand and aristocratic dinner parties, the grandest being an invitation from the Prince of Wales in September 1873, to join a small party for the weekend at Sandringham. At home the Coles sometimes

368 Henry Cole, *Diaries*, from Elizabeth Bonynge's © transcribed copy held by The National Art Library at The Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
gave dinners for an appropriate – that is, lesser – circle of friends and relations.\textsuperscript{369}

Hierarchy was reiterated by the cuisine. These elite dinners that Cole attended were often cooked by Frenchmen. At a more modest level the labour intensity required by dinner givers was supported by a supply of women often from the countryside, for household labour, who were escaping agricultural depression as referred to in chapter V. Their tolerance of low wages and oppressive conditions was reinforced by the threat of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act. This Act withdrew the previous outdoor relief that supported the poor in their parishes and instead substituted incarceration in the workhouse. Roy Porter, following Michel Foucault’s approach,\textsuperscript{370} describes the workhouse as “a favoured official weapon for reinforcing social discipline in a metropolis increasingly, vast anonymous and threatening.”\textsuperscript{371}

It might be asked if applying an anthropologically derived theory to the study of cuisine has revealed more about Victorian domestic dinner parties in London than the sum of their parts as is found in contemporary literature. I hope to have demonstrated, however, that Cultural Theory can usefully disaggregate rhetoric from practice and through its application to have more precisely located the values, attitudes and actions that underpinned domestic dining and its place as a symbol of an idealised social order. It has also, it is hoped, revealed the place of dining as the product of major changes in social organisation, and to have shown how it was used by individual households to sustain relative insulation from some of the major economic and social changes of the period. For nineteenth-century celebratory cuisine, in a country that was frequently considered as gastronomically ‘challenged’, food and its cooking, serving and eating are revealed as potent social markers that not only defined the status of separate dining circles but also that of the excluded majority. As Edmund Leach notes in his work on Lévi-Strauss, that we represent ourselves as culture and our food as nature. “Cooking

\textsuperscript{369} Henry Cole, op. cit.


\textsuperscript{371} Roy Porter, 1994, op. cit, p. 248.
is thus universally a means by which Nature is transformed into Culture, and categories of cooking are always peculiarly appropriate for use as symbols of social differentiation.\textsuperscript{372}

\textsuperscript{372} Edmund Leach, \textit{Levi-Strauss}, Fontana Modern Masters, editor Frank Kermode, Fontana Paperbacks, 1985, p. 34.
"The Mahogany Tree" (the table used at Punch's weekly writers' and artists' dinners), Linley Sambourne's drawing for Punch's Jubilee number, July 18, 1891. M. H. Spielmann in his History of "Punch", Cassell and Company, Ltd., 1895, has Sambourne's picture as a frontispiece and lists the diners, F.C. Burnand, the Editor at the head of the table gives the toast, his hand towards the 'statue' of Punch, round the table from Burnands' left: Henry Lucy, E.T. Reed, the late Gilbert Beckett, E. J. Milliken, Sir W. Agnew, the late W. H. Bradbury, George du Maurier, Harry Furniss, R.C. Lehmann, Arthur Beckett, Linley Sambourne and Sir John Tenniel. The portraits and busts along the wall from left to right, Mark Lemon, the first editor, Gilbert Abbott Beckett, with under it, Douglas Jerrold, W.M. Thackeray, Richard Doyle, Thomas Hood, John Leech, Shirley Brooks and Tom Taylor. The portrait on the easel is of the recently dead Charles Keene. This composition celebrating the past, present and future of a hierarchic male group incorporating the dead with the living not only in portraits but as diners.
Boredom for women at a dinner party, is again the theme, as in earlier cartoons, (page nos. and dates as above).
THINGS ONE WOULD RATHER HAVE LEFT UNSAID.

Hostess. "What fun you seem to be having over there, Captain Smiley! I wish you all sat at this end of the table!"

Boredom for women at a dinner party, is again the theme, as in earlier cartoons, (page nos. and dates as above).
American women, were considered in some circles to be among the socially marginal, this is typical of the overt hostility in many cartoons from the 1880’s. *Punch*, June 9, 1883, p.265.
Mrs. Jones. "Oh, I’ve left out the Browns! Must we invite them?"
Jones. "Hang it all, it’s a beastly bore, but I suppose we must!"

Mrs. Brown. "An invitation from the Joneses, love! Must we accept?"
Brown. "Confound it! It’s a ghastly nuisance—but we suppose we must!"

How Friendships are Kept Warm!

Reciprocity as a social obligation:
"A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE," &c.
Sissy. "MAMMA, DOES DEMI-TOILETTE MEAN HALF-DRESSED, LIKE MRS. ROBINS IN WHEN SHE COMES HERE TO DINNER!"

This precocious comment is not especially concerned with deep decollete, but a new fashion for evening dresses with a low cut back. The artist Phil May gives an explanation by adding the picture hanging behind the girl's head. *Punch*, June 25, 1895, p. 310
Du Murier targets foreigners as both over fashionable and ridiculous. Couples are shown processing into dinner down a grand staircase. *Punch*, April 6, 1895, p. 162.
George du Maurier’s cartoon shows guests gathered before dinner, among them Lady Midas. The lengthy text below on class and exclusion is intended to amuse the readers and possibly to make a point.


**MRS. PONSONBY DE TOMPKYNS LOSES HER TEMPER.**

*Mrs. P. de T.*, last new Duchess (graciously unbending). "When I came here before, Madame Gamelon was here; but she wouldn’t sing—she ‘took her hook,’ as Cadbury called it—went away, you know!"

*Mrs. P. de T.*, “Yes; and so did your Grace and Lord Cadbury, in consequence.”

Her Grace. "—just so. Who’s that very funny person talking to Mr. Whatisname—thingummy you know—your clever writing friend from America? Is she a comic singer, and will she sing?"

*Mrs. P. de T.* “No, I don’t think she’ll sing. That very funny person is my friend, Lady Midas.”

Her Grace (who always speaks her mind). "What! and pray, Mrs. Tompkins, are there no ladies left in England, that should be asked here to dine with the wife of a successful sausage-maker?"

*Mrs. P. de T.* “You were asked here to dine with Mr. Whatisname, Duchess—(thingummy, you know)! You yourself asked me to ask you to meet him; and I’m only too glad to have such an opportunity of showing my clever writing friend from America, that there are some ladies still left in England, and very great ladies too.” (Her Grace bow stiffly)—"who can’t even behave as decently as a sausage-maker’s wife! But perhaps your Grace would prefer to—a—a—take your Grace’s hook! Shall I ring and order your carriage?"

[Her Grace reflects that her carriage is gone—loses her head—stammers—dines—apologises, and is quite civil to Lady Midas after dinner.]
A DILEMMA.

Nervous Gentleman (to two Sisters). "I've got to take one of you in to Dinner—A—a—let me see—a—which is the Elder?"

Taking partners in to dinner was a recurrent theme as precedence, an area of tension and uncertainty, made it a rich field for jokes about age, beauty, title, boorishness and ignorance. This cartoon is from *Punch*, July 13th, 1889.
THINGS ONE WOULD RATHER HAVE EXPRESSED DIFFERENTLY.

Jones (nervously conscious that he is interrupting a pleasant tête-à-tête). "A—I'm sorry to say I've been told to take you in to supper, Miss Belman!"

Another *Punch* cartoon, Taking a partner to dinner, March 1st, 1890.
Mr. Pips his Diary.

Saturday, August 18, 1849.—Comes Mr. Gobble, this being his Birthday, to bid me to go dine with him and a Company of some half-dozen of our Acquaintence, off a Whitebait Dinner at Blackwall. So we first to London Bridge, on Foot, walking for an Appetite, and there took Water, and down the River in a Steam-Boat, with great Pleasure, enjoying the Breeze, and the View of the Shipping, and also the Prospect of a good Dinner. Landed at the Pier, and as last as we could to Lovewrore's, where our Table engaged in the large Room. But good Lack! to see the Fullness of the Place, every Table almost crowded with eager Eaters, and Heaps of Whitebait among them, and they with open Mouths and Eyes shovelling Spoonful after Spoonful into their Plates and thence thrusting them five or six at a Time into their Chaps. Then, here and there, a fat Fellow, stopping, out of Breath, to put down his Knife and Fork, and gulp a Goblet of iced Punch, was mighty droll: also to hear others speaking with their Mouths full. But Dinner coming, I cared not to look about me, there being on Table some dozen different Dishes of Fish, whereof the Sight did at first bewilder me, like the Donkey between the Haystacks, not knowing which to choose—Mr. Gobblstone do lament that at a Feast with Plenty of good Things he never was able to eat his Fill of every one. A Dish of Salmon with India-Pickle did please me mightily, also some Eels, spitchcocked, and a stewed Carp, and ate heartily of them with much relish; but did only nibble at the Rest by way of Taste, for I felt exceeding full, and mused I should have Stomach for the Whitebait. But Lack! to see when it came, how Appetite returned, and I did fall to upon it, and drank iced Punch then at the Whitebait again. Pretty, the little Slices of brown Bread and Butter, they did bring us to eat it withal, and truly, with a Squirt of Lemon and Cayenne Pepper, it is delicate Eating. After Whitebait plain, Whitebait devilled made us to eat the more, and drink too, which we did in Champagne and Hook, pledging each other with great Mirth. After the Fish comes a Course of Ducks, and Hancho of Mutton, and divers made Dishes; and then Tarts and Custard and Grouse; and lastly, a Dessert, and I did partake of all as much as I had a Mind to. After Dinner drank Port and when much Joking and rare Stories, and very merry we were. Pretty to look out of Window as we sat, at the Craft and the White Saile in the Sunset on the River. Back in a Railway Carriage shouting and singing, and in a Cab Home, where Dr. Shrap called to see my Wife, for her Vapours. Pretty Discourse with him touching the Epidemic, in telling me that of all Things to bring it on the likeliest was Excess in Food and Drink, which did trouble me, and so with a Draught of Sods and a Dose of Pills to Bed.
Silence was a feature noted among the greedy, if an account of a city dinner, in *Punch* is taken as having a basis of truth. Beef and turtle jokes were also *Punch* favourites. 'Travels in London, a Dinner in the City' (1847) has a description of a dinner which included eating quantities of turtle soup, beef, venison, duck, peas, smelts, salmon: "a dizzy mist of gluttony". 'A Dinner in the City', *Punch*, Vol. 13, July-December 1847, pp. 247-8, reprinted in *Sketches and Travels in London*, in *The Works of William Makepeace Thackeray*, vol. XV, Smith Elder & Co., 1869, pp. 333-41.

Horrible Question after a Greenwich Dinner.

Foot-Boy. "If you please, Sir, Cook told me to ask you what fish you'd like today!"

A typical Greenwich cartoon: "Horrible Question after a Greenwich Dinner". *Punch*, August 2, 1856, p.44.
THE BANQUET AT GUILDHALL—TRUE POLITENESS.

Alderman Gobble. "Now then, Gala! I've quite done. Can I get you any grub?"

Angelina. "Will my darling Edwin grant me Angelina a boon?"

Edwin. "Is there anything on earth her Edwin would not do for his pet?—name the boon, oh, dearest—name it!"

Angelina. "Then, love, let us dine by ourselves to-morrow, let us, oh let us have roast pork, with plenty of sage and onions!"

An early comment on the fashionable frequency of dinner-parties. Pork was not a dinner-party meat. Categorising meats as celebratory or non celebratory was not an exclusively Victorian phenomenon, but is found in many other societies, such as rural Turkey. *Punch* Volume 12, January-June, 1847.
THE LADIES OF THE CREATION;
OR, HOW I WAS CURED OF BEING A STRONG-MINDED WOMAN.

THE DRAWING ROOM

After dinner custom as role reversal: women remain drinking in the dining-room while the men take the women’s role by retiring to the drawing-room. *Punch, Almanack preceding Vol. 24, January-June 1853.
THE DINING ROOM.

Lady of the House. "Now then, Girls! Fill your Glasses! Bumpers! Here's just one Toast which I am sure you will all drink with Pleasure. The Gentlemen!!"
Women are shown leaving for the drawing-room after dessert. The rather arch message implies bereavement in loss of feminine company with the ensuing consolation in post prandial smoking. The scene suggests they will smoke at table rather than in a smoking-room. *Punch*, April 6, 1895, p.162.

"Burglar (who is particular on the subject of Sherry). "MARSALA. BY JINGO!"


"IN VINO VERITAS."

*Customer.* "Please, Sir, I want a Bottle of Shillin' Port."

*Tradesman.* "My dear, we have nothing in Ports as low as a Shilling; but—we've some delicious Damson at 1s., and it's much the same thing."
A cartoon portraying a constant anxiety for employers concerning butlers and their use of the wine cellars as illustrated in Punch, twenty years after Cyrus Redding's much quoted Every Man his Own Butler., 1839.

Marcus Stone's illustration of dinner at the Veneering's house, with the "Analytical Chemist" (or butler) in the background. The table centre is decorated with an extra tall epergne with the obligatory pineapple and grapes. Charles Dickens Our Mutual Friend, Vol. 1, Chapman and Hall, London, this edition, 1866, p. 258.
GRIGSBY GIVES UP LAW AND BECOMES A WINE-MERCHANT.

Scene—His West End Office.

Grigsby: "WHERE DO YOU DINE TO-NIGHT, POMPEY?"

Pompey Bedell Junior: "WITH THE GOVERNOR."

Grigsby: "DON'T TOUCH HIS CHAMPAGNE, OLD MAN! I WARN YOU!"

Pompey Bedell Junior: "HOW ABOUT THE CLARET?"

Grigsby: "CAN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT HIS CLARET. DOESN'T GET IT HERE, YOU KNOW!"

Six of the many cartoons on selecting and consuming wines and Champagne concerned with taste and social rank. In a Journal that was primarily male orientated wine was, as a male concern, a particularly popular subject for cartoons and satire. These selected cartoons repeated themes focussed on both economic and symbolic capital inappropriately assigned on grounds of age or rank (Page numbers and dates as shown).
ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

Paterfamilias (who has come up on a Visit to his eldest "Hope" at St. Bottlenose). "I'm, not a bad Glass of Wine this, for Oxbridge, Fred. What did you give for it!"
Fred (airily). "Oh, Sixty——"

Paterfamilias. "And-Monstrous Extravagant, too! Why, Sir, do you know that I never lay down a Dozen of Port that costs me more than Six-and-Thirty?"
Fred. "Ah, no more should I, Father, if I'd Nine Children to provide for, as you have!"
YOUNG ENGLAND.

Henry. "I say, Charley, where do you Dine to-night?"

Charley. "Aw, Dine with your Brother!"

Henry. "Doors you do—Worst Wine I ever Drunk in my Life!"

Charley. "By Jov, then, you never Dined with my Governor!"
THE NEW SCHOOL.

Uncle (who is rather proud of his Cellar). "Now George, my boy, there's a Glass of Champagne for you—Don't get such stuff at School, Eh! Eh! Eh!"

George. "It's—awfully sweet! Very good sort for Ladies—but I've arrived at a Time of Life, when I confess I like my Wine Dry!" (Sensation).
A CAREFUL MAN.

Host. "Hello! watering my Champagne! Afraid of its getting into your head, I suppose!"

Guest. "No! it's not my head I'm afraid of with your Champagne!"
TRULY CONSCIENTIOUS.

Host (frowns for his cellar). "Good heavens, man! Don't drink that champagne! That's for the children!"
A HOME TRUTH.

Host (sotto voce). "Is this the best Claret, Mary?"

Mary (audibly). "It's the best you've got, Sir!"

This cartoon on wine quality shows a fashionable parlour-maid waiting at dinner. When male servants had been considered as essential to wait at a fashionable dinner, this 'aside' would have been shown as typical of a superior butler. Note the long streamers from the parlour maid's cap and continuing apron ties giving a subservient glamour; an equivalent of a male servant's evening dress. *Punch*, February 2 1895, p.54.
SERVE HIM RIGHT.

SIR. (who, when he is asked to dine at half past six, thinks it fair to come at half past eight.) "HAH! I'M AFRAID YOU'VE BEEN WAITING DINNER FOR ME!"

LADY OF THE HOUSE. "OH DEAR, NO! WE HAVE DINED SOME TIME; WILL YOU TAKE SOME TEA?"

Punch, January 15th, 1859, Punctuality flouted by one of the idle fashionable egotistical young men who feature in many jokes in the first thirty years of Punch and were known as Swells. Partridge in The Penguin Dictionary of Historical Slang gives it as a post 1786 definition of a fashionable man who was all show, not a true gentleman. After 1819 there are references to what became in Punch a a favourite character, an extreme, The Heavy Swell
A typical late Punch cartoon, 26th May 1895, where insulting faux pas express the prohibited for the readers who might think the same thought but may not say it publicly.
Lady of the House. "Oh Thomas! Have the Goodness to take up some Coals into the Nursery!"

Thomas. "H'm! Ma'am! If you ask it as a favour, Ma'am, I don't so much object, but I hope you don't take me for an 'Ousemaid, Ma'am!"

The "Flunkeiana" series of cartoons ridiculed footmen's vanity and rank consciousness, but the tone of "Flunkeiana" contrasts with the early "Valentine" which although satirical, is not dehumanising. These are from 1857, but they were still appearing in 1863/4.
THE FOOTMAN.

They may talk as they will of the feeling that lies
In the flash of the face, or the glance of the eyes;
But, dearest of footmen, I'd rather by halves
Catch a fortunate glimpse of those exquisite calves
Believe me, my footman, my gallant, my bold,
In thy splendid accoutrements glitt'ring with gold,
When deck'd (per parenthesis just let me blush)
In those soft inexpressible things made of plush,
To me thou art quite an Adonis, and more,
For he such a costume as shine never wore.
Oh, turn not away from the tender appeal
Of one who her passion no more can conceal;
For I own I adore thee—yes, John, by the air
With which you perambulate Grosvenor-square,
Thou liveried Cupid, of Venus thou eon,
Thou servant of Hymen—magnificent John.

By return of the post thy decision pray tell,
Am I happy or curs'd!—sweetest, answer the bell.
Oh, what must thy feelings, exalted one, be,
When told by your mistress to bring up the tea?
And can there on earth be such terrible brutes
That would set thee to work, love, at cleaning the boots?
Ah, gladly a hermion, or highbow, I'd be,
If I might but be polish'd, my own one, by thee!
They tell me thou cleanest the knives and the plate—
Oh, had it been kindly permitted by Fate,
I'd change into silver myself pretty soon,
To be leather'd—yes, leather'd by thee as a spoon.
But now fare thee well!—With your ultimate breath
When you answer the door to the knocking of death,
On your conscience, believe me, 'twill terribly dwell,
If now you refuse to attend to the bell.

A Footman as a 'Valentine'. Footmen were frequently employed if they possessed a handsome profile, were six feet tall and had well shaped calves. Most of the later cartoons about footmen ridiculed them as vain and foolish, rather than admitting that they were often attractive young men. Similarly much subsequent satire was concerned to de-humanise servants of both sexes. Punch, Volume 2, January to June 1842, unnumbered page circa February 14th.
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