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**Letters
to the
Editor**

Phi Kappa Phi Forum publishes appropriately written letters to the editor every issue when submitted. Such letters should be 150-300 words in length.

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A Note from the Editor



James P. Kaetz

IN THIS ISSUE

The biggest problem we have had with this issue is that we cannot read it without getting hungry. The number of yeast products in our offices has risen steadily, and the candy basket in our reception area (for visitors, of course) has been refilled several times as we have read and edited these articles. In short, we have had a lovely time with this issue, in spite of the extra pounds that it has inspired.

The idea for the issue actually started out as a sort of inside joke. We often talked about doing an issue on food because we decided that part of our research would be to travel to distant places to sample exotic cuisines — as if that would actually happen! But the idea persisted, and the more we thought of it, the more we warmed to the possibility. After all, what is more basic to continued existence than food? Also, doing something on food and culture seemed somehow so life-affirming, especially after issues on crime and terrorism. So we hope that you enjoy these essays as much as we did, and please do not blame us if your stomach begins to rumble as you read.

Rebecca Sharpless opens the issue with a discussion of food, food preparation, and gender in the South. Professor Sharpless looks at rural versus urban cooking, cooking as a livelihood, and asks the question of whether in the increasingly urban and cosmopolitan South, southern cooking is dying. For all our sakes, we hope not.

Next, Deborah Madison explores the burgeoning phenomenon of farmers' markets. Once uncommon, in the past few years such markets have opened all over the country. What they offer is twofold. To most consumers, they offer the chance to buy fresh food directly from the people who produced it — a rare experience in this supermarket age. To the farmers, they offer extra income that might just spell the difference between survival and oblivion. Such markets thus are winning propositions for all.

Corrie Norman then tells us how her students explored religion by learning about the foodways of a religion. She chose food as a way to gain insight because she wanted her students at Converse College (a women's college) to gain some insight into the woman's role in religions in which the contributions of women are often obscured because the clerics are usually men. Norman's class assignment turns out to be a powerful educational experience for her students, one that expands their views and their circle of friends at the same time.

Richard Pillsbury discusses what our modern restaurant culture is doing to the traditional family celebration. He argues that too often some milestone (a graduation, an important birthday, or some other rite of passage) is celebrated not with a family meal prepared at home, but by dining out. While this practice has its advantages, in particular for those who have to do the cooking and cleaning, Pillsbury maintains that it robs us of important family connections and memories.

Marcie Cohen Ferris returns us to southern cooking (those who think we might have weighted this too heavily toward the South, please note where our offices are located), but with a twist, as she looks at southern Jewish foodways. Ferris discusses what it is like to be both Jewish and southern, especially when it comes to adapting traditional foods to the occasional limitations of the region.

Finally, Jean-Robert Pitte looks at the way traditional French cuisine, a cuisine that originated in antiquity and began to develop most notably in the seventeenth century, has become "globalized" through the *nouvelle cuisine* movement, possibly to the point that it is no longer really French. As he says, "The gastronomic experience is one of the engines of tourism in France, but what interest would there be in visiting Paris if the contents of the dinner plate were the same in the United States or in Singapore?"

APPRECIATIONS

A special thank you goes to Professor John T. Edge, director of the Southern Foodways Alliance at the University of Mississippi, for his suggestions about possible authors for this issue. He was a big help with ideas and names.

NEW COLUMNISTS NEEDED

Please be sure to note the call for new columnists on page 7 in this issue. We would love to have a large pool of possible writers from which to choose, so send in your materials and writing samples as soon as possible.

Enjoy the issue! And please pass the doughnuts.

FORTHCOMING ISSUES

Fall 2002

BIG SPACE/LITTLE SPACE

Winter 2003

CANCER RESEARCH



Forum on Education & Academics

Terry Palardy

An American Issue

Toward the end of the French and Indian War, George III became the British monarch, inheriting not only an empire that spanned the globe, but also the responsibility of paying an enormous debt incurred in that Seven Years' War. Unwilling to further risk the rebellious wrath of his European subjects who, for years, had been paying high taxes, George turned to his American colonies for increased revenue, imposed the presence of ten thousand British soldiers and all the related costs of maintaining such troops, and followed that with a series of unwelcome taxes, leaving for all time a bitter taste for taxation in these colonies. The long, expensive war that had extended to four continents had begun, after all, in the Americans' own back yard.

The United States today is facing an economic challenge that encompasses increased military costs, rising public-safety expenses, and the continuing expectation that each generation will enjoy a standard of living that equals or exceeds that of preceding generations. But with increases in personal income slowing, and with an overall tightening of personal spending, voters in many states willingly elect governors who promise to lower taxes at the state level, despite tax decreases already enacted at the federal level, leaving the burden of funding public services to the local tax base. Educational expenses, increasingly reliant on local real-estate taxes, are, after all, costs incurred in the taxpayers' own backyard.

Educators operate under difficult constraints: an effort to increase local revenues is met with local resistance; seeking higher state and federal contributions incurs widely organized resistance. Allocating taxes to meet escalating costs is somehow seen as wasteful spending. Year after year, school districts go before local taxpayers and ask for funding as a child might approach a parent for an allowance. Some needs are met; many are not.

American parents, dedicated to securing that quality standard of

living for their children, readily acknowledge the importance of education. Often, parents seek ways to "be involved" in their local education system, as they hear constantly that such involvement is the best route toward ensuring that their children will be successful. Early in the year, parents will ask their child's teacher, "How can I help?" They are sincere. They are not, however, always aware of what might really be needed.

School personnel have an opportunity and an obligation to clarify what schools need from parents and from other volunteers in the local community: a strong, well-defended budget that logically, predictably, and annually increases to keep pace with inflation, with increased enrollments and expanding, mandated curriculum requirements, and with ordinary maintenance expenses. Each day staff members witness the effects of reduced services created by level-funded budgets: less direct supervision of children before and after the academic day, larger classes that limit student/teacher interactions, and aging buildings that require repairs so extensive that ordinary cleaning is a lower priority. Schools know of crowded bus routes that start children's days with a harried tone and of double-run buses that leave children waiting in a limbo between the classroom and the home.

Volunteers usually envision themselves working side-by-side with the teachers, enriching small groups, having meaningful conversations with students. Parents willingly offer this type of support to teachers, and teachers extend themselves in giving parents room for such experiences, often providing their volunteers with coaching, materials, and organized space as well — in effect, adding responsibilities to the teacher's role rather than reducing the myriad tasks that limit the teacher's energy and attention with the students. Yet, those with large classes welcome this offer for in-classroom assistance. While the parent occupies a number of students, teachers can, on occasion, more closely observe students, record their progress, adjust their own perceptions, and respond to individual questions. This volunteerism gives the illusion of improving student/teacher ratios. It does not, however, provide for consistency or for smaller classes; it may, in fact, harm efforts in that direction, leading parents, and the community at large, to believe that the budget shortfalls are being addressed by volunteerism, when they are not.

To address the larger picture, we can invite volunteers from the community to help in varied ways within our schools. Beyond providing a presence in the classroom, volunteers are needed in the school library to shelve books, dust, disinfect washable surfaces, supervise students waiting for late buses, and offer after-school assistance with homework. They are needed in the school office to welcome visitors, sign late passes, make photocopies, and yes, dust and clean counters and equipment. They are needed in the corridors and the cafeteria during busy lunch periods to encourage good food choices and to reinforce order and responsible behaviors. They are needed as shoppers to purchase and/or to donate specific supplies for school and classroom activities. They are needed on the playgrounds to offer a moment of quiet conversation to children or to monitor an active sports activity. They are needed on buses and on busy street corners where school children cross. They are needed in high schools to share career expectations and to model participatory citizenship.

(continued on page 7)

Forum on
Business & **Economics**
Charles K. Davis



How Did We Get into This MESS? The Auditing Dilemma

The collapse of ENRON is rattling a lot of cages, perhaps most notably within the auditing profession. With worldwide revenues for 2001 at \$9.34 billion, Arthur Andersen has always been one of the most highly respected public-accounting firms. But Andersen's apparent failure to audit ENRON effectively is deeply troubling, to put it mildly. The apparent conflicts of interest implied by Andersen's huge consulting contracts with many of its audit clients (including ENRON) and the obvious failure of government regulators to act in any meaningful way have been equally distressing. The plight of the audit profession is summed up in a recent issue of *BusinessWeek* (1/28/02): "Can You Trust *Anybody* Anymore?"

Auditing, on both practitioner and academic levels, has been a concern of mine for a long time. Having spent several years in one of the biggest accounting firms and having participated in many audit and consulting engagements with that firm, I am quite familiar with the attitudes and the culture of such organizations. My doctoral dissertation dealt with an aspect of information-systems auditing. I was a Certified Information-Systems Auditor (CISA) for many years and served as Director of Research at the international level for a premier information-systems auditing professional organization as well. The ENRON debacle and what it has exposed within the audit profession concerns everyone in the profession very much.

My assessment is that the validity of the audit process in large modern organizations has been systematically

and seriously eroded by the intersection of two powerful forces: the established culture of the audit firms and the profound complexity and proliferation of information technology (IT) within the organizations that they audit. This intersection has given rise to fundamental problems in the ways that audits are conducted. Until ENRON, the audit profession has been able to keep these issues mostly below the surface. ENRON seems to have behaved badly for a long time, and Andersen may well have done the same, but the issues here are far broader than the possible failure of one or a few Andersen audit partners to control themselves, or their underlings, when faced with the ENRON situation. The Andersen-ENRON axis provides an excellent frame of reference within which to address more fundamental issues.

HIRING THE BEST, THE BRIGHTEST, AND THE INEXPERIENCED

If you want to understand the culture of the big auditing firms, look at their hiring and promotion practices. Primarily, they hire young, relatively inexperienced people who have been academically very successful. They generally prefer newly minted MBAs with about two years of business experience before getting the MBA degree. The large CPA firms that do the auditing for most of corporate America are *very* prestigious. These rich and sophisticated organizations are peopled by highly polished, smooth operators. Young potential employees are most often dazzled by

the fancy office environment and professional ambience. Add to this the widely held belief that a stint in one of these firms early in one's career is a highly desirable step up the corporate ladder, and it is not surprising that the CPA firms tend to get the best and the brightest new hires coming out of the best business schools. Of course, entry-level positions in other fields often pay much better than in public accounting, but salary can be less of a motivator for these kinds of new graduates when given the opportunity to join such firms.

Once hired, most employees stay only a few years and then move on. They do the accounting, consulting, and auditing grunt work while accumulating the professional experience required to get a CPA, or maybe CISA certification. In fact, that is how the whole system is set up: Work for a firm such as Andersen for a few years, get your CPA, and move on to ENRON into a corporate accounting career (for example). That is simply the usual way of things in public accounting; it is either up or out. And there is very little room at the top, where the firm's partners reside, so it is mostly out.

Now, let's recap this: Take personable, young, smart, but inexperienced people who are accustomed to succeeding and who want very much to continue succeeding; overwhelm them with what is to them a high-status position in a very prestigious firm. And put them into a competitive environment that places a premium on learning how to be a top professional in one's field. Work them hard and indoctrinate them into assimilating the firm's viewpoints, manners, and ways of conducting business. They will believe, mostly unquestioningly because they have only limited experience to draw upon, that what they are doing in their work is the proper way to do that kind of work. It surely must be, because the firm has always been so very successful, right? Not only that, but if a young auditor eventually begins to question observed practices (like shredding what one would think are important documents), there is an offsetting sense that working for any big audit firm is really only a stepping stone to a longer-term career somewhere else. From the perspective of this short-timer mentality, there is no benefit in

rocking the boat by raising difficult questions unnecessarily and risking upsetting anyone at the firm. After all, one may need a reference for the next job or the one after that.

The result of this approach is a very strong, insular culture in which being a true professional means fitting into the audit firm's strict methods of operating and conforming in virtually every way. A dangerous kind of groupthink tends to form that is unchallenged, isolated, self-reinforcing, and self-aggrandizing. At its core, this system is very arrogant and ruthlessly self-assured. No kidding; I once was told almost gleefully by a senior audit partner at a large firm that he fired a fellow for coming to an important meeting wearing short socks, the kind that do not cover the calf up to the knee. The skin and hair on his leg showed when he sat in the presence of clients. He clearly did not fit the image after that.

THE AUDITING PROCESS

Auditing is an old and honored profession whose established and ongoing credibility is essential for the trading of publicly held corporate securities and stocks. It is a crucial linchpin in the worldwide capitalist economic system. Investors simply must be able to rely on the judgments of audit professionals when contemplating potential economic opportunities. Establishing and maintaining such trust is fundamental for the successful audit firm and for the audit profession as a whole. Achieving and sustaining the appearance of high ethical standards among professional auditors is paramount.

U.S. corporations whose stocks are publicly traded are required by the SEC to be audited annually. But the process of conducting an audit for a large client is complicated. To do their jobs effectively, the auditors must amass and assimilate huge volumes of data across large and complex business organizations. This process is done within the context of an "audit engagement," which is a project with a finite duration and a targeted conclusion. Audit fees, paid by those being audited, accrue to the successful completion of such audit projects. It becomes obvious fairly quickly that

the best way for an auditing firm to audit efficiently is to review the same core of clients year after year and thereby accumulate an understanding of each client's business situation over extended periods. Therefore, the audit process is cyclical, based upon long-term, presumably arms-length relationships, with audit reviews scheduled annually to essentially supplement and update the audit firm's basis of financial information about its established client base. (Of course, the audit firm will add new clients if it can, but it is the ongoing client base that is the cash cow for the business.) Out of this process, an audit letter is generally provided to each client each year identifying any problems encountered in that client's audit and attesting that the client has met the standard of conforming to generally accepted accounting procedures in its accounting practices. And that makes the SEC (and by implication, the investors) happy.

Financial audits are performed annually and consist of two key parts, a *financial audit* and an *information systems audit*. The financial audit involves reviewing the client's books and determining that everything is in order. This is what a client has always expected a CPA firm to do for them. But, there is more to an audit today than an old-fashioned green-eyeshade review of the books. If an audit firm is to certify that a client is, in fact, following generally accepted accounting procedures, then the audit firm must also look at the client's computers, networks, and any related procedures.

It is certainly the case that most of the information that the financial auditor wants to examine in a modern corporation is actually buried deep in the client's computers and servers. Financial auditors can, of course, "audit around the computer," as was common practice in the early days of computing, but that is an increasingly unsatisfactory and risky approach as computers and networks continue to proliferate into every corner of every organization and become ubiquitous within and across every business's financial systems. So the information systems audit is a key part of every annual audit. It is important to verify that the client's systems environment is both properly managed and effectively controlled to

ensure that someone is not somehow cooking the books inside the computers.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND AUDIT COMPLEXITY

So, then, what happened to Andersen at ENRON? I think that we are looking at a crisis in organizational culture that may permeate the audit profession. As is the case for all the big accounting firms, Andersen's pedigree includes a long and distinguished history. Since 1913, it has for most of its existence been a firm run by accountants, according to rules formulated by accountants, and both immediately and ultimately responsible to accountants. All the key players in the world of an auditing firm have been accountants, and those players, if they worked hard enough and crossfooted enough accounts, could manage the whole process very effectively beneath their green eyeshades.

But, computers have changed everything, not so much at first but relentlessly and by now completely. In a profession such as auditing, where credibility, reliability, and trust are paramount for successfully conducting business, the introduction of the computer into the mix has been devastating for the culture of financial audit teams. Financial auditors are the CPAs (and CPAs in training) who exercise the preponderance of power in audit firms, but they are no longer able to work hard enough to be as certain as formerly that they are correct in their opinions. The core problem for them is the information technology itself that permeates every aspect of the organization. Complex computing, networking, and data architectures frequently limit access to needed data and can often obscure the meanings of the data that is actually extracted during a given audit.

Auditing "through the computer" is not necessarily the answer either. The complexity of the technology clouds everything. Having just technical expertise is seldom sufficient to conduct an effective information-system (IS) audit in a complex processing environment. When it comes to IT, every company plans, organizes,

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Forum on Science & Technology



Daniel Berger

What is “Scientific Literacy”?

The way science is taught, both in classrooms and in the popular literature, leads laypeople — not to mention some scientists — to think that “the scientific method” is infallible. This leads to blind acceptance of anything labeled “science”; it is the source of much silliness in fields such as sociology and economics, consumed by “physics envy” and desperate to have the legitimacy of science. In a logical culmination, *Skeptic* editor Michael Schirmer hailed “scientism” as the true religion in the June 2002 *Scientific American*.

On the other hand, the fact that some things are not so well known as others has led to cynicism on the part of many. If we do not care to believe something, we do not have to, and “evidence” that contradicts us is a social construct that can be blithely ignored. This attitude is found across the political spectrum — from the right, where global climate change, which is almost certainly human-caused, is routinely dismissed — to the left, where the huge health and nutritional benefits of pesticides and fertilizers are ignored because of the relatively minor risks.

The truth, as is often the case, is more complex. Many things that science tells us are perfectly true; other things are more tentative. How is the layperson to tell the difference? One way may be a more realistic knowledge of how science operates.

Science does not work by a “method,” in which observation, hypothesis, and experiment follow each other in lockstep. Each branch of science has its own way of working, which may have little relationship to the “scientific method” inflicted on countless middle-school students and

displayed at science fairs throughout the country. The complex mathematical analysis beloved of physicists is useless in synthetic chemistry; field biology is almost devoid of experiment, while molecular biology is essentially experimental chemistry and uses similar methods in its day-to-day operations.

Michael Polanyi proposed a fruitful model of the way science really works. Anyone who has worked on a thousand-piece jigsaw puzzle has an inkling of it; now imagine a million-piece puzzle, with different groups of people working on different sections, and for which we do not know the pattern in advance. Some areas of the puzzle will advance faster than others, because the pattern is more obvious there; often groups will turn out to be working with pieces that seem useless, but actually belong to another area of the puzzle. Pieces that are impossible to fit, that may seem to belong elsewhere, will suddenly find their places when surrounding pieces have been found. The pattern of a particular portion may seem clear, only to be overturned when more pieces are fitted into place.

Henry Bauer offers an analysis of the reliability of scientific pronouncements that I think is true. He distinguishes among four levels of knowledge.

Frontier science is that which working scientists are doing. It is often speculative, requires leaps of the imagination, and may not “work” at all. This is the sort of thing that is reported at scientific meetings, though normally all but hardcore theorists are reporting on what they (or a student) actually observed. Whether a reported result is anomalous, incorrectly obtained, or wildly misinterpreted is typi-

cally not established at this level, and fascinating arguments may develop.

Observations and ideas from the frontier are written up and sent off to scientific journals. The journals solicit the comments of other scientists, who may reject the article, suggest improvements, or point out other work that has not been taken into account. Once an article has passed “peer review,” it is published and becomes part of the *primary literature*.

At least 60 percent of the primary literature will vanish without a trace; other scientists will have neither the time nor the interest to follow it up. And the reliability of the remainder is not proven; the only thing established by the process of peer review is that there are no obvious errors and that the work seems respectable to a few other scientists.

Review articles, which collect and interpret the work of other scientists, form the *secondary literature*. The material in the secondary literature has been found useful or interesting by a recognized expert in a particular sub-field, and so its general reliability is higher than that of the primary literature. But the amount of material collected in any particular review is usually so great that the author(s) cannot possibly have reproduced it all, and some material may still turn out to be erroneous.

Textbook science, especially that in introductory textbooks, is almost certainly correct. Although some primary-literature results may find their way into textbooks prematurely, the observations or “facts” described in textbooks are typically reliable; the interpretations may be less so. Because textbooks have many more reviewers than has the primary or secondary literature, the material presented there is close to representing a universal scientific consensus.

In some ways I agree with the conventional idea of scientific literacy: a command of textbook science. There are certainly facts that any citizen should know; for example, “perpetual motion machines don’t work.” The essence and power of science are that it can muster a strong consensus within itself for a large number of statements that describe bits of the world. The orbits of the planets, the chemical

reactivity and composition of lye and vinegar, the rate that an object accelerates in a gravitational field, the anatomy of the Guernsey cow are all universally agreed upon, as are many other things.

Facts known by the citizen should be in the area of *textbook* science rather than in the primary literature. Laypeople — which comprise not only lawyers and bricklayers but also working scientists from other specialties — are not qualified to tell which primary literature is likely to stand the test of time, or even what is or is not well-supported. Nevertheless, “popular science” books and periodicals typically present primary literature or even the frontier opinions of one particular scientist, though the better ones make their sources clear. The reading public drinks it in as if it were all as well-confirmed as the First Law of Thermodynamics.

Therefore, it is also important for the layperson to understand how science works at the frontier, and how the scientific filter takes frontier speculation and condenses it into reliable knowledge. Such knowledge would minimize the conflation of frontier science with textbook science. On the one hand, blind faith in science would be lessened; on the other, fewer people would be dismissive of established knowledge because they would understand what it is and how it got there.

Perhaps the most important skill for the layperson is to be able to tell whether some particular claim conflicts with textbook science. Unfortunately, most laypeople do not know enough of the large body of established fact that allows working scientists to distinguish between frontier science and balderdash. While *caveat emptor* is the rule, a few things should be recognized.

The “science news” reported breathlessly in newspaper and magazine science columns should be listened to — typically it is the work of reputable researchers — but it may prove to be false. (If you read about the same thing several years later, from a number of reputable science writers, it is more likely to be true.) A good science reporter will tell you where the information came from. If it was reported at a scientific meeting, it is probably less reliable than if it

appeared in a scientific journal; if it appeared in a scientific journal, it is probably more reliable but certainly less dependable than if it appears in an introductory textbook for college science majors.

In short, it is more important for laypeople to understand where information labeled “science” comes from, and the relative reliability of the different sources, than for them to be passively stuffed with science trivia.



Dan Berger is a professor of chemistry at Bluffton College. Like any other teacher, Dan likes to answer questions. Send e-mail requests for column topics to bergerd@bluffton.edu.

(continued from page 3)

These willing folks are most needed, though, in public. We need, in chorus with our own, their voices in town meetings, their votes in the ballot box, and their participation on finance committees as often as on school committees. We need their letters in local papers. We need their presence in our statehouses, and their messages sent to Washington. Having spent real time in the classrooms and corridors, in the libraries, offices, and cafeterias, they can better advocate for funding the comprehensive needs of all of our schools. They might feel better about taxation *with* representation, taxation that they are actively soliciting, rather than passively experiencing. By raising the revenues that will responsibly provide for the next generation's needs, they will make a larger difference, one that extends well beyond their own backyard.



Terry Palardy is currently a middle school teacher in Massachusetts. Mrs. Palardy has taught elementary, special education, and graduate school classes. Her e-mail address is tepalardy@aol.com.

Call for New Columnists

Phi Kappa Phi Forum is once again looking for new columnists to contribute their experiences and opinions to the magazine. Our current columnists will soon be completing their three-year terms, and we would like to begin receiving materials from members interested in serving the Society and in replacing them for the next three-year term.

We will be selecting two writers for each of the following columns:

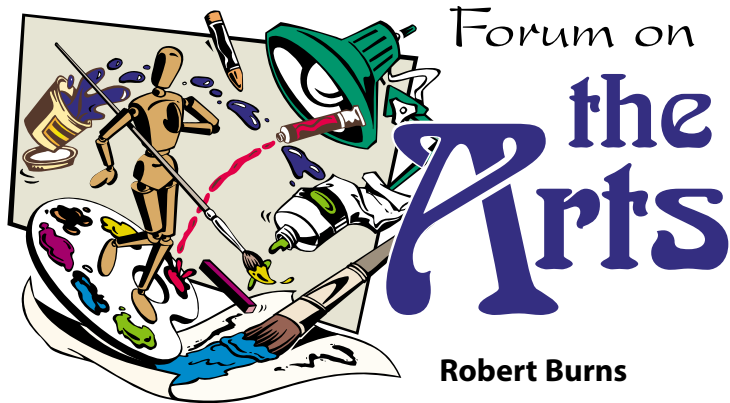
-  Education and Academics
-  Business and Economics
-  Science and Technology
-  The Arts

If you are selected, you will be responsible for two brief columns per year, in alternating issues. The first set of new columnists will appear in the Spring 2003 issue.

You must be an active-status (have paid your membership dues) Phi Kappa Phi member to be considered. Please send a cover letter, résumé/vita, and two writing samples to:

Columnist Search
Phi Kappa Phi Forum
 129 Quad Center, Mell Street
 Auburn University, AL
 36849-5306

Specify which column you would like to write, and apply for only one of the positions. **Deadline for receiving your materials is November 1, 2002.** Selections will be made by December 1.



Love Match

Of all the culture wars of the past century, none has been more persistent and deeply divisive than the battle between architecture and the visual arts. Increasingly the battleground has been the art museum, whose traditional role as the preserver and exhibitor of art has in recent years been dramatically expanded to incorporate new symbolic, civic, and economic goals. These changes have had the effect of making “art” more accessible to the general public. And it has been architecture in hyper-drive, rather than the art exhibited within, that has fueled this transformation. The struggle for ascendance started early. In the aftermath of World War I, architect Walter Gropius called for an end to “salon art” in his *Bauhaus Manifesto*. Gropius, who was to lead the revolutionary German design school, declared that the “ultimate aim of all visual arts is the complete building! To embellish buildings was once the noblest function of the fine arts; they were the indispensable components of great architecture.”

In the midst of a fertile and feverish period of visual experimentation and discovery, visual artists of that time could hardly have found Gropius’s view anything but demeaning. Even at the Bauhaus, where a “design science” was being created to serve the social agenda of the school, original visual explorations by Kandinsky, van Doesburg, Klee, and others flourished, independently of architectural applications. Their work, together with slightly earlier *avant garde* movements such as cubism, futurism, purism, and others, set in

motion a powerful, nearly irresistible art culture in which the painter, sculptor, and graphic artist were set free from historical conventions, formal rules, and social purpose. Self-expression and autonomy were prized above all else. Within this culture, the practical and functional considerations of architecture could be seen as severely constraining and creatively erosive.

While the more traditional museums were not initially eager to exhibit the new experimental art, new museums of modern (or contemporary) art were built specifically to display and promote the shocking new works. In the middle of the twentieth century, these new museums were conceived of as bland, inexpressive containers, reflecting the preferences of the artists themselves and museum curators for a mute architecture in which the artistic works could be experienced as autonomous objects in dematerialized space. New York’s Museum of Modern Art (1937) provided the prototype, perfectly matching the goals of its founders and clientele. As a result, architecture was cast in a supporting role. (Advantage: artists!)

A new chapter in the art wars opened in the late 1950s. Frank Lloyd Wright’s astonishing Guggenheim Museum (1960) challenged the contemporary art culture’s preferences for the unarticulated box. The Guggenheim’s gently spiraling ramp encircling the lofty, skylit atrium offered an unprecedented and remarkably plastic space to view the “non-objective art” for which it was designed. Nevertheless, when Wright’s design was first unveiled, the reaction from artists and

their patrons was noisy and hostile. This antagonism between artists and the architecture of the Guggenheim persisted for decades. But, as Robert McCarter has observed, “Wright, of course, has had the last word in this debate, and today not only is his museum enormously popular with the public, but his design is credited by many artists with engendering profound reinterpretations of the perceived boundaries and bonds between painting, sculpture and architecture.”

If Wright’s Guggenheim convincingly demonstrated that the architectural qualities of a museum can create an enhanced inner life and a vibrant public life as well, drawing viewers to art works that they might otherwise have ignored, its lessons were not immediately grasped. The design of most new museums continued to hold to the conventional model of reticence and sterility. Louis Kahn’s Kimbell Art Museum (1972) in Fort Worth, Piano and Roger’s Centre Pompidou (1977) in Paris, and James Stirling’s Neue Staatsgalerie (1984) in Stuttgart are notable exceptions.

Recently, two audacious museum projects — the new Guggenheim (1997) in Bilbao, Spain, and the Quadracci Pavilion addition (2001) to the Milwaukee Art Museum — have resoundingly tipped the odds in this longstanding contest in architecture’s favor. Both are visually complex and arresting, expensively constructed, and unqualified crowd-pleasers. Indeed, they were both conceived and constructed with the intention of becoming civic superbldings that would garner critical acclaim and, not incidentally, draw hordes of well-heeled visitors. In the public excitement over the new museums, the art works they house have hardly been noticed. (Advantage: architects!)

The Bilbao Guggenheim, the work of American architecture’s latest genius, Frank Gehry, has proved to be an unprecedented success. It opened to ecstatic reviews from critics and architects and brought 1.4 million visitors to this economically depressed industrial city in northern Spain in its first year. One critic claims that “Bilbao will not only go down as one of the most complex formal inventions of our time, it will stand as a monument to the productive capaci-

ties at our disposal if an architect, such as Gehry, puts them to imaginative use.” (For readers who have not seen this building, I will say that it resembles nothing you have seen before and is nearly indescribable. The epitome of so-called “blob architecture,” the museum can be seen as a collection of undulating, sensuous surfaces covered in shimmering silver titanium tiles freely inserted into a rusty traditional urban landscape. The result is truly astonishing.)

The May 1999 issue of *Architectural Record* points out that the spectacular success of Gehry’s museum has led other cities and regions to seek out celebrity architects to design new museums to lure tourism. This phenomenon is termed by *Record* the “Bilbao Effect.”

One such example is the addition to the Milwaukee Art Museum, which was only slightly less extravagant and

intriguing than its inspiration. Designed by the Spanish architect-engineer Santiago Calatrava, whose dramatic cable-supported bridges were introduced in Barcelona and elsewhere, the new pavilion has been described as an “extensive essay in kinetic architecture, sporting a 217-foot *brise-soleil* (solar-screen), set atop the museum’s glass-sheathed reception area, that opens like the wings of a great bird.” The returns are not yet in, but it could just be what America’s nineteenth-largest city needs to overcome its blue-collar image and make it a real tourist destination.

Though I harbor reservations about the designs of the two museums described above, I recommend that we all travel to Milwaukee and Bilbao as soon as possible to see for ourselves. Let’s also experience the paintings and sculpture that they contain so lovingly. And most importantly,

let’s declare an end to the war between art and architecture. Just as important works of art are essential expressions of civilization, the buildings that provide great places for that art, while they may also serve the goals of commerce, are equally significant expressions of our cultural aspirations.



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The Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain designed by Frank Gehry. Photo by Frank Harmon, FAIA.



Rebecca Sharpless

Traditional Southern Cooking – Not Gone with the Wind

Noble Hall, Auburn, AL. Photo by Laura J. Kloberg.

Heaping platters of fried chicken. Piles of steaming biscuits. Gorgeous red tomatoes, sliced and unadorned. Gallons of sweetened iced tea. Chess pie, yellow with egg yolks and dusted with nutmeg. These are some of the images that come to mind when people think of southern food. No other regional American cuisine is as distinctive, a blend of African and English foodways with plenty of homegrown goodness thrown in.

The American South has long been a complicated place. It is an area of the world where tense race relations long created difficulty; where white women were confined by a gender ideology that expected them to be ladies and little else; where the relentless post-Civil War poverty of the region created class divisions between the prosperous few and the numerous poor, black and white. More southerners lived on farms than in towns until the 1960s, creating a rural milieu. For most of the time since the settlement of Jamestown, the region has stood apart from the rest of the United States.

A major part of southern distinctiveness has been its cuisine. In addition to the foods mentioned above, a typical repertoire might also include peach cobbler, greens, corn bread, and sweet potatoes. Still other people would add subregional specialties such as seafood gumbo, Brunswick stew, and pork barbecue to their definition. Resisting homogenization, southern food has even spread into other parts of the nation as the South's people emptied the rural areas in search of better economic opportunities. The common notion is that southerners eat better than anyone else; nostalgia has obscured the fact

that in the past a sharecropping family might subsist on corn bread and beans for weeks at a time. American popular culture, furthermore, has reinforced the stereotype of the jolly fat African American cook, delighted to spend her days over a wood stove creating delicacies for her white folks.

In other ways, conversely, the South has been just like other societies. As with women in all other regions of the United States, almost all southern women, black and white, traditionally spent most of their time thinking about food for their families — or the lack thereof. In the days before refrigeration and mechanization, a woman could spend all of her time concentrating on meal preparation, and it did not matter where she lived. Yet in the South, a mixture of regional ingredients combined with the culture to produce a remarkable cuisine.

FOOD PREPARATION AS “WOMEN’S WORK”

In most societies throughout human history, people have maintained a strict division of labor by sex, and food preparation has almost always fallen into the realm of women. Men have traditionally participated by hunting meat and raising cereal crops. This distinction held true for southern Americans and was firmly in place by the early nineteenth century. Men provided the raw provisions of corn, hog meat, and syrup, and then turned their attention to the cash crop, which in most areas was cotton, tobacco, or rice. Women tended the livestock and brought variety to their families' diets by raising vegetables and fruits, and many women worked hard to store this



Mural by J.E. Johnson ©1999 on the wall of 'Market One' on Highland Avenue in Atlanta, GA. Photo by Laura J. Kloberg.

produce for the lean times. Even in small towns women maintained their rural ways, raising chickens and even cows and keeping gardens. In large urban areas, such as Dallas and Atlanta, livestock roamed

the streets well into the twentieth century. But, far more than their rural counterparts, urban women in the South were consumers rather than producers. By the late nineteenth century, it was the women who made the trips to the neighborhood grocery store or ordered the daily supplies over the telephone. Urban men, gone from the home to bring in cash income, seldom shopped for the family.



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Once the supplies of meat and ground grain reached the dwelling place, women had almost the sole responsibility for their preservation, maintenance, and preparation. The exceptions to this rule were the feasts, when men gathered outside in public spaces to cook meals for large crowds. They hunted squirrels and made huge tubs of Brunswick stew or killed pigs for a barbecue pit dug into the ground, all part of community celebrations.

To the women, then, fell the task of providing two or three meals for their families, day in and day out. For rural women, the situation was particularly challenging, for almost everything their families ate

had to be either raised at home or bought with credit, awaiting an influx of cash from the next fall's harvest. Because of the climate and the poverty of the rural South, the basic diet had three parts: corn, pork, and syrup. Fresh vegetables might last only through midsummer, and fresh fruit was a luxury that depended on whether one's family had access to peach, pear, or plum trees. In lean times, particularly in the dead of winter and in the late summer before harvest, women exercised their creativity and ingenuity in finding things for their families to eat. After World War I, canning techniques became more widespread, and rural people could enjoy the bounty of the harvest much longer. So precious were canned goods that some rural women tithed them to their churches.

RURAL VERSUS URBAN

Most rural women began their day long before daylight, making biscuits for the family members who would be in the fields by first light. The biscuits might consist of wheat flour, either store-bought or milled from one's own wheat, lard from a pig killed the previous fall, and milk either from one's own or a neighbor's cow. Most rural women mastered the art of cooking on a wood stove. The cook might fry bacon, from the same pig, and make a pot of coffee from beans bought at the store. The jelly for the biscuits could come from a nearby plum tree or from wild grapes gathered on a fencerow. And the butter, if the weather was not too warm, was in all likelihood churned from the same milk that went into the biscuits. As soon as the breakfast

dishes were washed, usually with water from a nearby well or a pump, the woman began thinking about the midday meal, commonly known as dinner. It might consist of a chicken that still had been running around the yard after breakfast, cooked with dumplings or into a pie, or fried if the family was feeling prosperous enough to have meat without “stretching” it. In the springtime, there might be fresh vegetables, briefly. The bread would be made hot and fresh, either more biscuits or a batch of corn bread from corn grown on the place and ground at a neighborhood mill. There might be a dessert, a fruit cobbler or pie, sometimes a cake if the cook had the necessary ingredients and the patience to coax it from the wood-burning oven. The evening meal, called supper, would often be simpler, possibly consisting of corn bread crumbled into glasses of buttermilk.

For city women who did not work outside the home, the meals might be roughly the same in composition, but the way these women acquired their food and the means that they had of cooking were dramatically different from those of many of their sisters on the farm. Some city women had gardens and kept chickens and cows to provide their own products. More of them, however, bought eggs and produce at nearby grocery stores. And the range of products available to town women was significantly larger than that available to rural women. After the late nineteenth century, a resident of any crossroads town with railroad service could have exotic goods at her disposal: cheddar cheese from Wisconsin, canned sardines from California, grape drink from the Welch company, fresh oysters from the Gulf of Mexico. Urban families enjoyed gas stoves and refrigerators at much higher rates than did their rural counterparts. For families with money to spend on their diets, the possibilities were broad. For poor families, real want existed, because they could no longer grow as much of their sustenance and were forced to spend precious cash on food.

COOKING AS A LIVELIHOOD

A large number of southern women, however, could not devote as much time to their families’ meals as they might have liked. Domestic service was the most common employment for African American women. While few families could afford a servant who did nothing but cook for them, many white

families hired African American women to perform various tasks for them, and those tasks often included cooking. In an ironic twist, African American women left their own homes to provide comforts in the homes of others.

The myth of the African American cook is complex, with many aspects. White people have recalled with nostalgia the excellent cooking of expert African American cooks. Much of this nostalgia harks back to the days of slavery, when a cook could be compelled to stay in the service of one family and learn their likes and dislikes. After emancipation, however, the records seem to indicate that African American cooks changed employers frequently. Working as a domestic servant had definite

For a number of African American women, cooking was a creative outlet, and they enjoyed some status among other domestic servants (as well as slightly higher wages). For others, it was a difficult, demanding task, with less-than-sympathetic employers and significant time pressures.

drawbacks, and cooking was not excluded from those liabilities. The hours were long and the work grueling, standing on one’s feet over a hot stove, working to please appetites as individual as snowflakes.

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others, it was a difficult, demanding task, with less-than-sympathetic employers and with significant time pressures. A particular source of conflict between cooks and mistresses was the practice of “toting,” in which cooks took leftover food home to their families. While the cooks may have welcomed the extra food, many of them resented the so-called service pan when it was used as a substitute for higher wages. African American cooks epitomized the difficulties of twentieth-century race relations. They were intimate enough with the families to prepare the sustenance for their bodies but were often considered social inferiors by their employers.

While southern white women largely subscribed to the mythology of the southern lady, most of the time the tradition of this languid creature was observed in the breach. Rural women performed substantial amounts of field work, and migrants into urban areas worked long hours in the region’s textile

mills. Both field labor and factory work flew in the face of social convention. Far more acceptable to Southern society were the white women who cooked for wages. They did this in two primary ways: as keepers of boardinghouses and as proprietors of small establishments such as tearooms.

Boardinghouses were a part of the urban landscape from the colonial period. In a boardinghouse, lodgers paid money for a room to sleep in and at least one meal a day. Some boardinghouses were large affairs, with as many as fifteen or twenty people living on the premises and taking their meals there. Often the boarders were transients such as salesmen or railroad workers, but sometimes they were newlywed couples, getting their start, or even families with very young children. Managing such an establishment was a full-time job, and often these boardinghouse managers hired African American cooks to assist them. More common, however, were the women who rented out one or two rooms in their home and cooked for the occupants. By using available space and her cooking skills, a woman could remain safely within the confines of her home and still bring in valuable income.

By the early twentieth century, a few enterprising women had honed their business skills as well as their cookery and had opened commercial establishments such as tearooms. A number of these were notably successful. Jennie Benedict, for example, was a fixture in Louisville for many years. Supporting her entire family on her earnings, she catered to the cream of Louisville society and eventually bought an estate known as Dream Acre. She developed a cucumber-based sandwich dressing which is still known as “Benedictine spread.” Even active commerce was acceptable if a woman was using her cooking skills to earn the money.

THE DEATH OF SOUTHERN COOKING

Some southern cultural historians argue that the distinctiveness of southern culture is dying, homogenizing along with television. The same might be argued for southern food, suffocating under the weight of national chain restaurants. Certainly, most southern women do not cook as their grandmothers did — at least not most of the time. Southerners eat pizza and pad thai and curry just like Americans from all other regions. But at holiday time, in particular, southerners return to their roots. They churn out divinity fudge and pralines just as their mothers did. They cook green beans with salt pork and sweet potatoes in every possible permutation.

Such cooking is fraught with memory, nostalgia, and emotion. Permit me to close with a personal

Mamie Frierson’s Dressing

2 turkey necks

3 white onions

1 bunch celery

Double corn bread recipe from the *Joy of Cooking* or any good corn bread recipe that is coarse (not cakelike) and salty (not sweet)

2 cans of biscuits (20 biscuits total)

salt

black pepper

sage (preferably freshly ground)

Two days before:

In a dutch oven, bring to a boil about twelve cups of water and the turkey necks, and simmer until the necks are tender, at least an hour. Remove the necks; set aside for other uses or discard. Refrigerate the stock; skim the fat if desired.

Bake the corn bread and the biscuits. Set aside.

One day before:

Crumble the corn bread and shred the biscuits. Set aside.

Finely chop the onion and celery. In a dutch oven, boil with about twelve cups of water, adding more water if necessary, until it is reduced to a fine mush (in our family, we refer to it as sludge), at least an hour.

In a very large bowl, combine the crumbled corn bread, the shredded biscuits, the turkey stock, and the onion-celery sludge. Add some salt, black pepper, and sage. Start tasting. Keep adding salt, black pepper, and sage until it suits. (Don’t be shy about tasting; everything in the dish is already cooked. This is an annual ritual for my husband and niece Jennifer.) Turn into a buttered 11 x 13 baking pan. Cover with aluminum foil and refrigerate.

On the day of the meal:

Heat, covered, at 350 degrees for about an hour, or until warm in the middle. Remove foil and bake another half hour or so, until a crust forms on the top.

Serves twelve generously. Be very careful with the leftovers, as this dish spoils easily.

anecdote. A couple of Christmases ago, my mother tasted the corn-bread dressing that I had prepared and announced that it tasted just like my grandmother's. Never mind the fact that my grandmother has been dead for more than fifty years. By taking her recipe and working carefully, modifying it over the years, I managed to achieve a taste that matched my mother's memory of her mother's dressing, and the praise was the highest accolade that my mother could ever give.

The primary ingredients of corn-bread dressing are two staples of traditional southern cooking: corn bread and biscuits, crumbled, liberally seasoned with salt, pepper, sage, onion, celery, and saturated with rich turkey stock. It is a good bit of trouble to fix, too much for an ordinary meal. My mother once quarreled with my newlywed Yankee sister-in-law over what constituted "proper" dressing — or, as my sister-in-law defiantly called it, "stuffing." I do not know how often my grandmother fixed it. I think my mother, who was a new bride when her mother died, got the recipe from her older sister. But it is my grandmother's recipe, and that carries enormous weight with Mother and probably with me as well.

Dying at an early age, my grandmother has achieved an elevated status among her daughters, and a few recipes are about all they have left from her. The dressing was important enough to my mother that she retains the memory of how she thinks it used to taste. Instructions on how to achieve that taste were passed from sister to sister to daughter. And so, now, in the new millennium, the youngest granddaughter is reproducing the taste that meant so much so long ago, and taking some pride in doing it successfully.


As long as such strong feelings exist, southern cooking will too. Even as we embrace spring rolls and tabbouleh, we occasionally eat the foods of our ancestors. And we remember.



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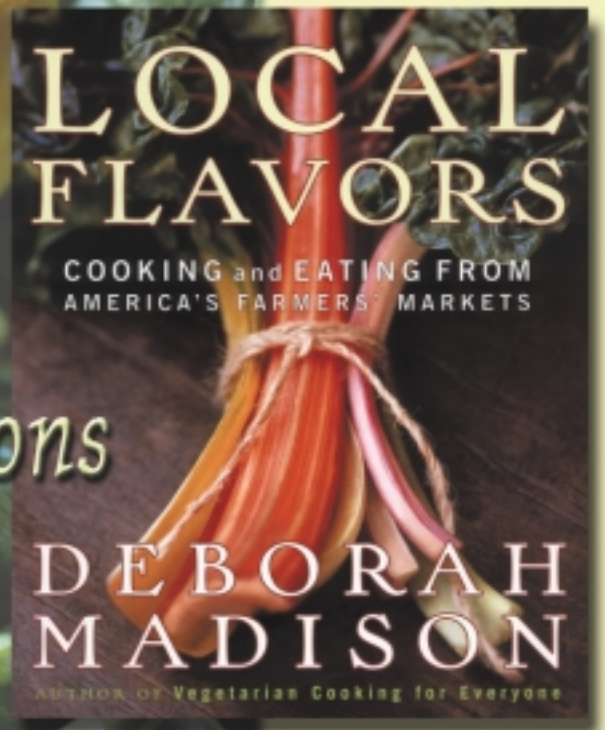
Photo by Laura J. Kloberg.





Deborah Madison

Farmers' Markets: Making Big Connections



“In an ideal world, we would buy direct.” This message, proclaimed on a billboard, caught my attention because this is exactly what I believe and have attempted to make a reality. While my concern is about food and culture and not Indian jewelry, as the ad suggested, the issues are essentially the same. The billboard assumed, of course, that achieving this ideal would probably not be possible, in which case, the store mentioned on the billboard would do. There you would get the stuff, but like shopping at the supermarket, you would have little knowledge of or connection to the person who made it.

DISCONNECTION AND REPETITION

Since the building of the transcontinental railroads, the invention of the refrigerator car, and the supermarket, all of which evolved in the late 1800s, our direct connection to those who produce our food has been steadily eroding. Indeed, ignorance about our nourishment is so deep today that it is no longer unusual to hear children as old as ten and twelve say that food comes from the grocery store. If anything typifies our food culture today, I would say that, more than fast food, it is our lack of connection to what we eat. No store, from the gourmet/health food store to the poor urban supermarket, is inclined or able to tell us beyond a rough guess where our food comes from.

A second large feature on the cultural landscape is the numbing repetition of foodstuffs in a country that is made up of wonderfully unique geographical, historical, and ethnic pockets. While brilliant horti-

culturists such as Luther Burbank worked to increase the choices we might find among edible plants, the principles of mass marketing argue for less choice; it is simply easier to manage. Although today's supermarkets draw from the farms and fields of the world to present us with a broad range of foods to eat, when it comes to the unique qualities that exist within each particular variety, we are greatly impoverished. The Red Delicious and Granny Smith stand in for some eight hundred still-existing apple varieties; California Early and California Late represent garlic as a whole, but there are hundreds of other varieties, each with its special virtue. And this is true for every fruit and vegetable we encounter. Even the most mundane seed catalog offers more choice to the home gardener than can be found at the supermarket, and those catalogs that are devoted to the wealth of plant diversity that still exists offer a simply dazzling number of choices.

THE DIVERSITY OF FARMERS' MARKETS

Does it matter that we know where our food comes from and that we keep our plant heritage a living part of our food culture? One way to answer this is to imagine living in a world where the connection to the food we eat is vividly articulated. We need not look to some idyllic spot in Europe, but only as far as our local farmers' market. Here lies an invitation to a different kind of food culture, one that is based on connection in its broadest sense.

As a cook, my first choice for ingredients has long been the farmers' market, but their growing

presence suggests that they offer far more than produce. Today we have nearly 3,000 of them; twenty-five years ago there were but a handful. Besides being sources of fine food, farmers' markets have become the new village green, the plaza, the town square, the place where everyone gets to know one another. "Markets make a small town out of big one," a Colorado shopper tells me. "I think the main thing the farmers' market does is make us more of a community," states a market manager in Utah. "The market brings a lot of people together who would never cross paths otherwise," another customer points out. It is one of the few places with a healthy environment of diversity in both plants (many varieties) and people (different races, different backgrounds). "Food is a true celebration of diversity," Richard McCarthy, of the Crescent City Farmers' Market in New Orleans, enthuses. "Whether you come from up town, downtown, or back of town, your life is involved with food."

In the monotonous corporate landscape that dominates our view, farmers' markets stand out: no two are exactly alike. Your market might be only two years old, or it might be one hundred and fifty. It might consist of six farmers meeting in a parking lot, or there might be a hundred farmers under a roof. One vendor harvests unusual varieties of persimmons from her backyard, while another has fifty acres of field crops in the next county. Heaps of Asian vegetables, farmstead cheeses, organic meats, and vegetables that are "root ugly or bring-a-tear-to-your-eye beautiful," as one southern chef put it, may grace your market tables, while at a tiny, start-up market there may be little else than overgrown zucchini, tomatoes, and corn. But I have found, after visiting more than one hundred markets, that regardless of size, age, or location, all markets have something worth seeking out, some treasure to be discovered.

But whether certified or not, that intention, that the person selling the food grew it or lives in the family that did, is what lies behind the spirit of a true farmers' market. Whether the selling takes place in a market setting, a roadside farm-stand, or from the back of a pickup in a parking lot does not matter. That the seller is also the grower does.

And markets do not stay static. As with any business, they evolve — they need to — and conversations among customers, managers, and farmers are often what change a market's shape over time. A friend who has been telling me about her market in Des Moines for the past four years had little to report at first. "But this year," she writes, "farmers are offering Yukon Gold and fingerling potatoes, little squashes instead of gigantic ones, exotic eggplants, Asian greens and bitter greens, heirloom tomatoes, and now we're seeing our first Iowa goat cheese, Iowa-grown bison, and fresh eggs!" Something is happening here!

Further, farmers' markets provide a way of revitalizing regional foods that are in danger of disappearing. Here is where you can find those foods that truly typify an area — wild rice, roasted green chiles, Rocky Ford cantaloupes, Creole cream cheese, wild huckleberries, Guajillo honey, green peanuts — foods that have their roots in culture and geography.

What these foods say is that we have a culinary tradition worth preserving. Regional consciousness surfaces whenever we can see what makes our place different from another's, and regional differences are what make life interesting for all of us, not uniformity.

Markets themselves are different in how they are run and what they offer. Some markets struggle to keep going, while others receive support from their

local governments. But all take a lot of effort, and often many hours of volunteer work and donations of money as well. (If that does not seem odd, ask yourself, when was the last time you volunteered at your supermarket.) In addition to selling food, many markets offer a variety of activities — music, cooking demonstrations, produce tastings, master-gardener talks, even massages — while others are pretty bare bones. “No espresso. No frills. Just food and lots of it,” says one New Mexican farmer of his market. Some states, such as California, certify their farmers’ markets, which ensures that the food sold is grown on the farm whose name hangs above it. Most do not, at least yet. But whether certified or not, that intention, that the person selling the food grew it or lives in the family that did, is what lies behind the spirit of a true farmers’ market. Whether the selling takes place in a market setting, at a roadside farmstand, or from the back of a pickup in a parking lot does not matter. That the seller is also the grower does. And you can tell who real farmers are. They are the ones who look connected to what they are selling. They are the ones who can answer your questions. And they often look tired. Most often they are older, too, for the average age of the family farmer, which is ever rising, is now around fifty-seven, an age at which many other people are retiring.

This recent emergence of farmers’ markets began in California about twenty-five years ago, with an act that allowed farmers to sell directly to the consumer. What they sold were those fruits and vegetables that were too small, oddly shaped, or otherwise lacking some measure of visual perfection established by the agricultural industry. Many were happy to buy these perfectly edible failures. So what if a pepper is a little crooked, or an onion is on the small size or super large? There’s a use for everything, and this screening for some idea of perfection not only wastes a great deal of food, but closes our minds to the real nature of food. The farmers’ market has many treasures that tease our imagination. This is where you will find that tiny cauliflower or Delicata squash perfect for a child, eggplants with noses and three-legged carrots, huge Chinese radishes with rosy pink flesh, heirloom potatoes and tomatoes, wild greens that are wildly nutritious, a juicy ripe peach that needs nothing to complete it. Here food is an adventure.

THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT FARMERS’ MARKETS

In a sector grim with stories of farm failures, farmers’ markets are the good news in agriculture, a place where bad news usually prevails. They are where family farmers have a chance to make a living. In fact, they may well be the best if not the only

hope there is for the family farm. But while farmers’ markets provide real incomes to family farmers, the idea of direct marketing has taken on other meanings for consumers, who find great value in having a connection with the farmer. A shopper who grew up on a farm in Wisconsin expressed what others have told me in every market I have visited when he said, “Although I know the value and taste of food you’ve raised yourself, I think I value the exchange with the growers, even more.” Farmers’ markets are about the only places left in our lives where we can interact with someone who makes something we use. It is hard to imagine what is more vital or intimate than the food we consume, for it becomes our health, our pleasure, our nourishment, who we are, in fact. Today it is farmers who are providing the fragile connection that binds us in a meaningful way to our own humanity. In this sense, they are selling far more than tomatoes.

Direct marketing means that a shopper can look the farmer in the eye, ask a question, or express appreciation for work well done. It means that we can trust our food sources, for we can visit them as well as know the people who actually grow the vegetables and the fruit, raise the chickens, milk the goats, and make the cheese. And they make it possible to sit down to dinner and put a face and a name to everything we are eating, as well as the flowers, the preserves, and even the candles and the tea. Knowing who produced what is on our tables is one of the most extraordinary experiences a diner can have in twenty-first-century America, one that leads us to discover that our lives are inextricably connected to others. The feeling that comes from eating such a meal is better than any amount of gourmet finesse, although that needn’t be excluded. In fact, they may well be one and the same. To me they are. Eating well is about finding the source, then cooking from it, however simply, rather than relying on fine imports from afar, no matter how exotic they may be.

FOOD VALUE

Many people still think that the farmers’ market is where you go for cheap food, and sometimes there are bargains to be found. But we would do better to think of the farmers’ market as the place where we go for food whose value is high — if it is truly local and truly seasonal, quite likely raised by sound, sustainable methods and by someone who might become our friend. This is where you can be assured that your food is not genetically modified or irradiated. The chicken, meat, and eggs you find will not have been produced on environmentally damaging factory farms, fed antibiotics, or hormones. This



Photo collage by Laura J. Kloberg.

is the food that is the antidote to the food ills that are so commonly discussed but without a solution in mind. This is food that tastes so good that little has to be done to it in the kitchen. And even though its higher price comes closer to reflecting the true cost of growing good food, it still does not necessarily cover the cost. Most farmers I have met have full-time jobs elsewhere, a spouse who does, or some other way of supplementing their farming activities. Farming, for many, is about as lucrative as writing poetry. But some are really succeeding at it, too.

As a response to our fast-food culture, farmers' markets are about slowing down and taking time to enjoy choosing our food, cooking, and eating it. There you will not find children nagging their mothers for candy. You will not find people rushing through their shopping as if it were an odious task. The market will smell good. You will run into friends, share recipes, or make plans to share a meal with someone you have met there. You will have an opportunity to taste foods that you have never tasted before, or to ask a farmer a question you have long been meaning to ask. And children, those so-called recalcitrant consumers of vegetables, can become good eaters when they see the connection among the farmer, the food they eat, and its inherent goodness. They will not know it, but they are learning good eating habits by developing a taste for truly wholesome food when they are young. This new knowledge will inform their food choices and affect their health over a lifetime.

Finally, other intangible benefits and delights come from the market and have to do with the food that we find there. Colors, pattern, charm, fragrance, flavor, and variety inspire us to cook our best, but with the greatest ease. It is inspiring, and that makes all the difference. I know of absolutely no one who goes to the market with a list and comes home with just what was on it; no one who does not spend every penny she or he brought. (An extra bonus is that all that extra food purchased keeps extremely well, since it has not been stored, iced, or shipped.)

We get a lot for the dollars we spend at the farmers' market. We find many threads there that when combined, weave the fabric of a connected, civilized life where the production of good and nourishing food coincides with healthy communities, and where money spent stays in those communities, enriching them. It is where there is a give and take between independence and cooperation, urban and rural life. Here is a flourishing platform for diversity, a sense of security and connection to our landscape and our neighbors. Lastly, the market is a rich source of joy — something just as rare perhaps as the quality of food that we find there. Participating in my farmers' market has been the key to becoming more deeply at home where I live, which is not the place I come from, as is true with so many of us. The farmers' market, and all that happens there, is the vital new face of our food culture.



Chef and cookbook author Deborah Madison is the author of six books, including the best-selling *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone* (Broadway, 1997) and *The Greens Cookbook* (Bantam, 1986, Broadway, 2001). Her latest book is *Local Flavors, Cooking and Eating from America's Farmers' Markets* (Broadway, 2002). She lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she has long been involved with her local farmers' market. This article is drawn in part from the introduction to *Local Flavors*.



Photo by Laura J. Kloberg.

“I began to follow the scent, like a child drawn to a candy store.” That’s how April Nelson described the beginning of her research. Along with having an amazing voice that she is training as a music major, April has a keen sense of smell, which helped her find her intended destination in a Charlotte strip mall one blustery January afternoon. She was on the trail of food stores catering to Muslims. The scent she described was the sweet-sharp aroma of spices. Once inside A.J. Indo-Pak Grocery, April approached Jagtar Singh. Although she had prepared a number of questions ahead of time, her nose got the best of her. “What’s that smell?” came out of her mouth first. She got a smile and an education in return.

April could have learned about Islam without a trip to Charlotte, a little over an hour’s drive from Converse College in Spartanburg, South Carolina. In fact, she had already listened to me drone on about it in class. But April and her classmates learned the most about Islam and other religious traditions through experiences such as her encounter with Jagtar and his spices. She got a vivid sense of the richness of Islam that a lecture could not impart.

During the past year, approximately seventy-five Converse students have learned to see, smell, touch, and taste how humans in a variety of religious contexts find meaning through food. Some, like April, have done so as researchers with the Harvard Pluralism Project. Converse students have been documenting new immigrant religious traditions in the Charlotte area as part of this nationwide project. We chose to focus particularly on foodways. Other students participated in an interdisciplinary course entitled, “Gender, Food, and Meaning” as part of Converse’s Honors

Program. Along with consuming hefty portions of theory, sacred texts, and literary homages to food, they have eaten in Hindu Temples and Jewish homes, and have learned how to cook exotic dishes and perform the Zen Tea ceremony. Still others have been guests at class feasts, or have contributed to a research project on food and college women. And some have gone along just for the ride and a break from the Dining Hall.

I have been host, chief cook, and potwasher for this progressive meal. M.F.K. Fisher once remarked that she wrote about food because she was “hungry.” Most of us are, for one reason or another. My students, who come largely from evangelical Protestant backgrounds, know this. What I hope to do as a religious studies professor is to heighten their awareness of it, to train their palates in a sense. I want to help them understand how the rumblings of stomachs and hearts might be related. I want to help them get a taste for the depths of flavor that religions across time and cultures express. I want them to become aware of the bountiful variety of religious expression that exists in the United States today. And, I hope that through getting a taste for the food that feeds the hunger of others, they may come to appreciate how it can be hearty sustenance just as their own traditional fare is for them.

April began with the smell of spice. The color of green tea, the sound of falafel frying, and the feel of dough drew in other students. Through food, all the students took in (literally!) things about religion that are difficult to get across in the abstractions of the classroom. What follows is a taste of what they savored.



Jagtar Singh and April Nelson at the A.J. Indo-Pak Grocery.

RELIGION IS MORE THAN BELIEF

April, who comes from a Bible-centered tradition, was very impressed when Jagtar showed her the sources of Islamic beliefs about food in the Koran. She soon learned that Islam, like her form of Christianity, is a tradition suspicious of empty forms and rites, but that it also means submission to Allah through practice as well as belief. Many of the spices she smelled are used to season the halal (permitted) meats carried by Jagtar's store. Muslims, like Jews, follow strict butchering practices that reinforce the links among cleanliness, holiness, and healthiness. "You can see the difference," Jagtar told April. "There is no blood in our meat. Blood is sacred; we do not consume it." The next time April visited her neighborhood market, she took a look in the meat department and observed, "I never noticed how much blood our meat has in it before." She had learned one of the key aspects of many religions: holiness is "wholeness" of life. How and what one eats can be just as important as how one thinks.

RELIGION IS EXPERIENCED IN THE BODY

In an act of solidarity with the Muslim community that she was researching, Heather Barclay decided to keep the Ramadan fast, which means not eating from sunrise to sunset during this holy month. Heather, a superb student with extraordinary energy, found this practice ultimately too challenging: "I was exhausted from rising so early to take my only meal of the day. I was dying for something to eat by lunchtime. Not being able to drink was really tough. I couldn't understand how Muslims go about their regular activities." Heather decided to investigate further. She interviewed Seema Azad, a twenty-year resident of Charlotte from Pakistan, who explained how Muslim children gradually learn to fast. "They are not forced," she said, "But they come to want to do it because we all do. It becomes second nature, and our bodies learn to handle it." As she and Heather talked one afternoon in the middle of Ramadan, a delicious stew simmered away on Seema's stove. This would be her family's fast-breaking meal after prayers at sundown. "The aroma was overwhelming, and I just had to ask how she could stand to cook and fast at the same time," Heather recalled. "The only thing that bothers me," Seema told her, "is that I can't taste the food as I cook. But that also reminds me of the significance of Ramadan. It's the time I can't fuss over the stew all afternoon. I just have to let it go and concentrate on God. The smell reminds me."

SYMBOL, RITUAL, AND MYTH ARE THE VEHICLES OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

A first-year student named Liz faced a personal dilemma on her first research visit to a Hindu temple. During the ceremony she was observing, fruit was offered by worshippers to the deities. Feeding the gods is a central act of Hindu devotion. The gods, Hindus believe, accept and sanctify the food. Devotees then eat the sacred leftovers or prasadam. When Liz, a born-again Christian, was offered a banana used in the ritual by an elderly Hindu woman, she wondered, "Would eating it be betraying Christ?"

While coming from a religion that sees its own sacred meal purely as a memorial symbol, Liz still intuited something about food's ability to transmit the holy. In religious studies, we say that symbols point beyond themselves to

transcendent reality. A Hindu student explained to Liz how the images of deities point to something that cannot be fully expressed by any image. Lovely statues and bananas are part of the language through which humans communicate with the divine through sacred stories (myths) and actions (rituals).

The power of symbol, myth, and ritual is often difficult to get across to Protestant students, who have come to understand approaching the divine as the unmediated right of individuals anytime, anywhere. Symbolic food can be a particularly vivid eye-opener for students encountering unfamiliar traditions. Why didn't her participation in other aspects of Hindu worship, such as handclapping to the rhythm of the hymns, bother Liz? It took a banana that she understood to be more than a banana to do that.

From the forbidden fruit of Eden to the world cooked into existence by Brahmin, food myths are ubiquitous but vary widely. Even within traditions, individual experience of ritual is both different from and the same as every other experience of it. This dynamic makes religion live for the devotees. They experience it with a long line of ancestors and in their own bodies. As students watched members of the Cambodian Buddhist Temple place rice offerings in their monks' begging bowls, the connections between past and present, ancestors and the living, the transcendent and the fleeting, came home to them. Southeast Asian Buddhists feed their monks to gain spiritual merit for themselves and their ancestors. As Tina Ya, a medical administrator and cultural mediator for the Cambodian community explained, "When I put rice in the monk's bowl, I think about my mother. It brings her honor."

Students noticed that the monks' bowls were made of plastic. Thus an ancient ritual has been adapted to modern convenience. Most of the traditional Cambodian fare was prepared by older women. Students giggled, however, as they noticed younger Cambodians placing a Burger King bag on the rice table. As the students, at first timidly but soon with gusto, feasted with the community, one remarked, "I wonder if this will survive here? I mean, the younger people aren't cooking. They eat fast food like us."

RELIGION INVOLVES COMMUNITY

Everywhere students went, they encountered similar issues. They learned that food is a major way of reestablishing community in a new place. When students first visited the Charlotte Jain community, they did not expect food to be a significant factor. Jains are strict vegetarians who avoid any eating that involves killing plants and animals. What students discovered, however, is the importance of the monthly meals shared by the Jains. Families take turns hosting the meals, with obvious pride in the beautiful array of dishes. "It is difficult to eat outside our homes because of our diet," Mr. Doshi explained. "Here, we eat in community; we are not alone."

Ashante Thompson discovered that another Hindu community was ensuring its survival by having a monthly meal cooked by its youth. Adults taught the teenagers how to make traditional Indian foods associated with special religious occasions. A Jain mother told Victoria Smith that she had taught her three sons, now grown professional men, to cook traditional dishes, "so they will remember."



Women at the Spartanburg Cambodian Buddhist Temple place rice in monks' begging bowls.



Jain women serve the monthly community meal: homemade chutneys, vegetable curry, rice, and sweetened curd.

RELIGION ISN'T ALWAYS IN CHURCH

To investigate religion and food, students had to get out of halls of worship. In kitchens and dining rooms, students saw facets of religion that they would have missed otherwise. They remarked repeatedly on how eating made homes into sacred spaces. One student observed as she returned from Sabbath dinner with a Jewish family, “That was a dinner and a worship service at the same time.”

WOMEN ARE POWERFUL RELIGIOUS AGENTS

Typically, students visiting a community would be approached by male leaders who would show them around and tell them about the religion in terms that they thought the students could understand — in other words, what they believe. Women’s participation, and other significant aspects, might go unnoticed. One of the reasons we examined food is that Converse is a women’s college; we wanted a focus that would help us get to know women.

Students learned that women are often the religious experts when it comes to ritual foodways. While April was impressed with Jagtar’s knowledge of the Koran, she found it amusing that he “didn’t know a thing” about how to make the holiday foods he loved. “That’s typical,” she remarked to the class, as others nodded. The next day, April got an e-mail from Jagtar. He had consulted several female relatives and had sent recipes that they had given him.

Students also learned of the complexities that food creates for women in religious communities. Young professional women do not have the time to make the dishes their mothers once prepared. Some resent the pressure to keep up labor-intensive traditions, but feel guilty if they do not. Others compromise by devising shortcuts or sharing “women’s” tasks with their spouses. Seema reflected on this problem: “I’d like to write down some recipes for our daughters. But we must start with simple things. Biryani, for example, our rice dish, is too complicated and takes too long. They would get discouraged.”

RELIGION PLUS FOOD CAN BE A RECIPE FOR COMMON GROUND

Liz decided that sharing the food of another faith might be the best way to live out her own faith. “I finally decided that Jesus would want me to be polite, so I took it.” That’s how she resolved her dilemma with the banana.

Encountering religious diversity often raises difficult questions for students such as Liz, who belong

to traditions which teach that other religions are false paths. Her southern Christianity, however, also taught her the importance of hospitality and politeness. Liz and other students were awed by the generosity shown them in the communities that they visited. They were treated as special guests in houses of worship and invited for meals in homes. Many of the people they encountered came from cultures in which the savoring of fellowship over food has not become a lost art. Meals gave them time to get to know people. As they were fed by others and ate with them, they became connected to them.

In her journal, Quinn described her initial encounter with the neo-pagan group that she was researching:

At first I felt very uncomfortable. People continued arriving, and everyone was carrying some type of food. The priestess said that food is a large part of their community. It is a way they get together to have fellowship with one another. I know that my family never gets together unless there is food involved. As I watched everyone interact, I noticed how much they reminded me of a family. We all use food to bring us together in fellowship. When they offered me something to drink, it was sweet. After that, I was fine.

Food also serves as a way to relate when difference cannot be overcome. Heather’s favorite memory is that of being taught to make chapati by Hindu grandmothers. “They couldn’t speak English and I couldn’t speak Hindi, but we communicated with our hands as they taught me to roll the dough. I learned that this is how they taught little girls in India. I could tell they enjoyed it; it reminded them of happy times. It reminded me of learning from my grandmother.”



Women roll chapati for a festival meal at the Spartanburg Hindu Temple.

Young professional women do not have the time to make the dishes their mothers once prepared. Some resent the pressure to keep up labor-intensive traditions, but feel guilty if they do not. Others compromise by devising shortcuts or sharing “women’s” tasks with their spouses.

In many ways, students tasted the connections between the foreign and the familiar. As part of our research, I asked students to investigate the foodways of their own religious communities. Anna came to see her church’s potlucks as food rituals. “We always have a lot of potato dishes,” she related. “I just took this for granted until I read our church cookbook. It seems that many years ago, the church had a supper, and everyone brought potatoes. Now it’s a tradition, going back to that time.”

As students came to know religions new to them through food, they began to experience their own traditions anew. One student commented, “I understand more about the Lord’s Supper now that I know how important food is in other religions.” Some students even learned to cook their own traditions’ dishes. Understanding religion through food helped students appreciate difference, but it also helped them become aware of how much all of us hungry people share. April concluded her report, “The next time I was in my grocery store, I caught a whiff of something familiar. I smiled. It was that smell again. I’d just never noticed it before.”



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DAEDALUS’ DAUGHTER

My father and I both fly at night.
He takes off from a waterbed
moored at the edge of the lake,
while I, a land-locked second-story sleeper,
rise and skim the night air
thirty miles away.

He soars high, agile and air-borne,
— bursting out of formation —
while I hover below ceilings
rise through doorways
swim just above the details of the day.

And tho’ we’ve never met
on these nocturnal trips
we each recognized at once
the joy the other recalled:
the muscles in the arms drawing down
as the torso rises aloft, pulling away, coasting,
veering with the will of the body.

In these solitary flights, not buoyed
by mite-bitten feathers,
castoffs of a better bird,
but borne up entirely — and only —
by the arched frame of imagination
we leave behind the ideograms of our lives
the sculpted rooms, gardens, and roads:
seen from above,
a labyrinth.

ANNE C. COON

Anne C. Coon teaches courses in literature and creative writing at Rochester Institute of Technology. Her poetry has appeared in *Northeast Corridor*, *Proteus*, *The Lyric*, and the anthology *Literature: Reading Fiction, Poetry, Drama and the Essay* (McGraw Hill). She is past president of the RIT Phi Kappa Phi chapter.



Richard Pillsbury

Thoroughly Modern Dining: A Look at America's Changing Celebration Dinner

The restaurant was packed. The maître d' scurried up, nodded while making a sign of ten minutes, and flowed off with a waiting group toward the already packed tables in the back of the restaurant. Sunday night was obviously a big night here. A group of eight came through the door laughing and talking; they greeted the newly returned maître d' by name, made a joke with one of the passing waiters, and then had a hurried conversation with a hostess that included a lot of head shaking and hand waving. The room was organized mayhem. Thirty-five or so white-covered tables were jammed into a space big enough for twenty-five. On the other hand, the dessert case looked luscious, and the pasta flowing from the kitchen stirred fond memories of great meals in the past. Clearly the food would be worth the wait, however long it took.

It was not a good experience. We were first seated at a corner table for four and then ignored for a time. A senior waiter finally approached to ask in broken English if we could move to another table toward the center of the restaurant. We agreed, and our table was transformed into a table for eight before we were even settled at the new table. Ignored again, I finally calmed my fuming wife by having us moved from the center of the melee to another table along the side of the room, though we clearly were not going to be served anytime soon at that location either.

Menus eventually arrived with yet another waiter, who obsequiously apologized for our wait and then managed to look as if he were trying to hide his disappointment at our order of a half carafe of house

white. The wine appeared in short order; he didn't. Finally he returned, and we ordered too much food. It was a celebration dinner for us as well — the crowning dinner for a great vacation.

There were plenty of people to watch as we waited. And waited. The table behind us was filled by a family group of twelve with ages ranging from grandpa to the youngest grandson who must have had his first communion that day. Five courses and a cake with a candle came as we still waited for the remainder of our meal. A teenage daughter brought mom to a birthday dinner on our other side. Their pizza came, their coffee came, and their requisite cake with candle came as we waited. A young couple in love replaced them, and finally the waiter took pity and our second plates arrived.

We were strangers, tourists in “a place where everybody knows your name.” It was to be expected that the regulars would get the greater attention. It was also a local holiday with many large families sitting around long tables celebrating their children's first communions and baptisms. They were loud. They were having a good time. These were special dinners, not at home, but at the Capri Restaurant in town. The food was good. The wine was good. The company was good. They were here to have a good time. They came. They all went. Our coffee finally arrived.

Brooklyn, Baltimore, or Sarasota? No, this was a dinner in Busto Arsizio, a blue-collar suburb of Milan, Italy. Dining out to celebrate special occasions is not just a new American custom; it is becoming the norm throughout the developed world. The

issues that have accompanied these changes seem to have diffused around the world as well.

Special foods and special occasions seemingly have been synonymous from the beginning of time. The ranking cook in the household — mom, grandma, auntie, or spouse — got out the pots and prepared the honoree's favorite foods. The household gathered around the groaning board, and the family created a special time to remember the occasion for all the year and maybe a lifetime.

One learned one's place in the family and in the fabric of their community during those occasions. The foods served were always special. My mother prepared my favorite cake on my birthday and artfully left out some of the ingredients on her only written record so that she would be the only one who could ever create this special thing for her son. My wife's mother, possibly less purposefully deceptive, recorded her favorite pasta recipe as: First, cover the table with a mound of flour

REPLACING THE FAMILY DINNER

This is the stuff of our individual pasts that gives us a sense of belonging and being a part of something larger than ourselves. Sharing those times at home in the United States, indeed apparently everywhere, is increasingly being replaced with a trip to the nearest nice restaurant. The good part is that mom does not have to spend the day or days preparing the food and can enjoy the event with the same relaxed ease as others. The downside is that mom no longer plays the role of the dispenser of personalized love and attention. The food served is not created by love, but by some commissary fifty miles down the road. You say that you cannot taste that, and your mom was not that great a cook. Perhaps, but it was not the taste that you remember; it was the love and effort that went into it which created an event that became an indelible image in your mind — indelible, not because the food itself was special, but indelible because of the people who were present and the contextual setting.

The replacement of the family dinner table by the restaurant has been amazingly swift. The restaurant concept, the establishment of a commercial store for

selling food to be consumed upon the premises as its primary source of revenues, began in eighteenth-century France. It was not until the Industrial Revolution and the parallel rise of cities that the restaurant began to become an important form of retailing. Few women ate in commercial eating establishments before the twentieth century; indeed, women were barred from many kinds of restaurants through the late nineteenth century. The restaurant was a man's world because most early ones were created to serve meals to men who were unable to return home to lunches and other meals. Women were deemed too delicate for these male emporiums, and if one did appear, someone might wonder about her upbringing, though eventually women did begin to be allowed to enter restaurants first as escorted guests and eventually unescorted.

Restaurants rarely hosted family dining through the first half of the twentieth century. "A woman who is unable to prepare a meal for her family must be a poor housekeeper indeed" seemed to be the prevailing opinion of the day. World War II, the invasion of the workplace by women in large numbers, and the move to the rose-covered cottage in suburbia changed all of those concepts. Individuals and families increasingly found themselves too far away from home at mealtime to return there to eat. New forms of restaurants appeared that catered to family dining, especially the quick, economical hamburger and its associated fast food emporium. It is not surprising that

Generation gaps always exist, but in this gender and generation collision the impact was about basic relationships, and those involved were slow to adjust. In my family, for example, if my father and my uncles found themselves in town shopping at lunchtime, they would return home for lunch. If their wives were not at home when they arrived, they would sit there until someone returned to fix them a sandwich and a cup of coffee.

all that McDonald's corporation, with its \$15 billion in annual sales, is the largest purveyor of food in the world.

The transition, of course, was more difficult to live through than to describe. Generation gaps always exist, but in this gender and generation collision the impact was about basic relationships, and



those involved were slow to adjust. In my family, for example, if my father and my uncles found themselves in town shopping at lunchtime, they would return home for lunch. If their wives were not at home when they arrived, they would sit there until someone returned to fix them a sandwich and a cup of coffee. I do not know whether they did not know how to spread peanut butter on a piece of bread or believed that the gender division of labor precluded them from fixing a sandwich. It was women's work, and men did not do it. It was all right to fix breakfast, but it was not all right to fix anything for lunch or dinner. My generation negotiated these issues and may have done some work in the kitchen. It certainly did not pretend it did not know how the can opener works. In sharp contrast to my father's generation, my children often wait to start a shopping expedition so that they can have lunch at the mall or some favorite restaurant conveniently passed on the way to the shopping center.

Increasing numbers of families eat only a meal or two a week together at the dinner table. Differing school times, work times, soccer practice, choir practice, meetings, and a host of competing activities have played havoc with the structure of family dining. Today more than half of every food dollar is spent in a restaurant. While that does not represent half of the meals, as restaurant meals cost more than home-prepared ones, it also does not include home-replacement meals purchased at the grocery store on the way home from the day's activities. Home cooking, that is, actually preparing a meal — not simply opening a box or thawing a tray — has become a luxury, rather than a necessity.

EFFECTS OF THIS CHANGE

This is not to suggest that there is anything wrong with this trend because many homemakers are not great cooks; nor do they care to be. The question really revolves around the issue of the impact of these actions upon family life. For most Americans growing up in the mid-twentieth century, the one time every day that was crucial for almost every kid was to be home at 6 P.M. (or whenever the evening

meal was served) and to be prepared to sit down with the entire family to eat dinner. Today's young families may perceive this as a "Leave it to Beaver," sophomoric concept, but those dinners set an indelible stamp upon family life. Whether dinners were casual and filled with banter or were more serious, family members interconnected each day in such a way that is virtually impossible to purchase. It was an opportunity for parents to try to discover what their children had been up to, to discuss plans and ideas and problems, and most importantly a chance to build bridges that would set the tone of future relationships. How many parents today will later wonder why their relationship with their children is not like that of theirs with their parents?

This does not mean that everyone at those tables saw and heard the same things in the same ways. My older brother continually tells me that we grew up with different parents in the same house. His memories of those times vary widely from mine. It is not important whose memory might be more accurate, or whether either is accurate for that matter. The point is that every single day we did share time together that built a bond between us which lasted a lifetime of living on opposite sides of the nation and leading quite different lives. Will grabbing a hamburger at McDonald's create the same depth of relationships? It is difficult to imagine that it would.

The rise in violence, mind-altering drugs, suicide, mental disorders, and similar "dropping-out" behavior patterns suggests that there is something very wrong with the United States today. Increasing numbers of people are feeling a general ennui about their lives. They have more difficulties in connecting with others. Loneliness is no longer the sole province of the elderly.

It would be too simplistic to suggest that having one's communion dinner at the local restaurant is the underlying cause of that change. Yet, one must wonder what effect it does have on the long-term memory of that event. No one would suggest that it is the sole cause of the ills that inhabit our lives today, but it does reflect a basic change in family life

and our image of our relationships. Will Antonio carry the same sense of family belonging after having his important milestone memorialized at the Capri, as he would carry if he had gathered around the home dinner table with his entire family in a room of mementos of similar passages by those who have gathered on that special day? Will my grandson Trae have the same sense of unconditional love that would come from having his own birthday cake that no one else in the world could have while he is celebrating his sixth birthday at the local pizza parlor playing video games?

Restaurants certainly are not the villains, nor is such a thing suggested. There is something truly special about celebrating one's first love in front of the fireplace at a quiet inn by the seashore. It gives you a sense of peace to have a place that you know you can go to for breakfast each morning, a place where a little repartee with the waitress and chatter with others doing the same thing are a part of your toast and eggs as you get your mind organized on the business of the day away from the pressures and problems of life at home. No, restaurants are not evil. The changes that we see in our lifestyles while using them as celebration vehicles, however, tell us much about the nature of the changing family and maybe even suggests a warning about what may await us later in life.

A few years ago my brother was visiting his children, who now live in another city, for Thanksgiving. He commented

later that they had Thanksgiving dinner at a Mexican restaurant because that was the only place everyone could agree upon that was open. My mind was boggled. We had grown up in an environment where Thanksgiving dinner was the single most important occasion of the entire year. There was a command appearance at Grammy and Papa's, and uncles literally came from across the entire country to be there. The meal consisted of two turkeys, thirty-five to forty relatives, and a day of stories and reaffirmation of pasts and community. It was also a day when each generation spent time together building emotional bridges. The cousins ran wild in the park. The women gathered in the kitchen and brought dinner together and shared their lives. The men washed the dishes and continued their earlier conversations about trout fishing and pheasant hunting, and about camping for months in the Sierra Nevada during their boyhood summers. These were activities and conversations that helped one find a sense of place in ten generations of American experience. Somehow a lunch of enchiladas and beans, even with extra sauce, just does not seem to be likely to achieve these same goals.



Richard Pillsbury writes about American life and food from his home in Folly Beach, South Carolina. He is the author of five books including *From Boarding House to Bistro* and *No Foreign Food*.



DEGAS' LITTLE DANCER

the Joslyn Museum – Omaha, NE

He modeled you in wax and then he kept you
close by, in that dingy Paris flat he rented.
I suppose he wanted, all the while he slept,
to sense you in the room, your leg extended,
the insolent bangs, the hands locked behind.
I wonder if he reached out to caress you,
just to feel the muscled thigh his mind
had lingered over in studio. He dressed you
in real gauze, his fingers tucking the modest
tutu under the hard edge of your bodice.

After he died, they made two plaster casts,
and one of these gave rise to twenty bronzes.
Where were you when they poured that molten mass
into the womb of your negative? Have all your dances
come down to this? Did something of you last?
Or are you reduced to twenty identical stances
begotten on the fixed shape of your absence.

The wax model is now in a private collection.
Heat and handling may have dulled her features,
but the sculptor left a deeper imperfection.
X-rays show an armature beneath her —
wire, old paint brushes, whatever he could find
to keep her upright. When he smoothed her back,
he had to have felt the twisted trash inside
that only he could love, under the wax,
under his thumb — the unmalleable debris
that was somehow at the core of you, Marie.

You were only a “dance rat.” You were reviled
by the art world. You were “ugly,” “crude,” “uneven.”
But look at you now — a fourteen-year-old child
in the permanent collections of museums.
Did any part of you survive, Marie?
Did your pliable womb expand into a die
to stamp out children? Do their bones lie
in little piles now, somewhere under Paris?
The boards of the hard stages had no mercy,
but did your streetwise head preserve your heart
through all those stiff rehearsals of your curtsy
before your body was translated to art?

JEANNE EMMONS

Jeanne Emmons' book of poetry, *Rootbound* (New Rivers Press, 1998), was winner of the Minnesota Voices Project competition in 1997 and was subsequently given a 1998 Pippistrelle Best of the Small Press Award. Her poetry has appeared recently or is forthcoming in *American Scholar*, *Calyx*, *Cimarron Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Cream City Review*, *College English*, and other journals. She is a professor of English at Briar Cliff College and is poetry editor of the *Briar Cliff Review*.

JAMAICA PICTURE

I bought this print as a gift
to myself, to a tithed sequence
of destinies, for I distilled my density
from the fog and my logic from the garden.

Note how the use of the color blue
renders all his love suspect.
See how her eyes are pleading
for greater mercy from the angel on the right
that we cannot see.

Please observe how her opulent hair rests
like their conflict just resolved
and that her hands are sad
with the task of forgiving.

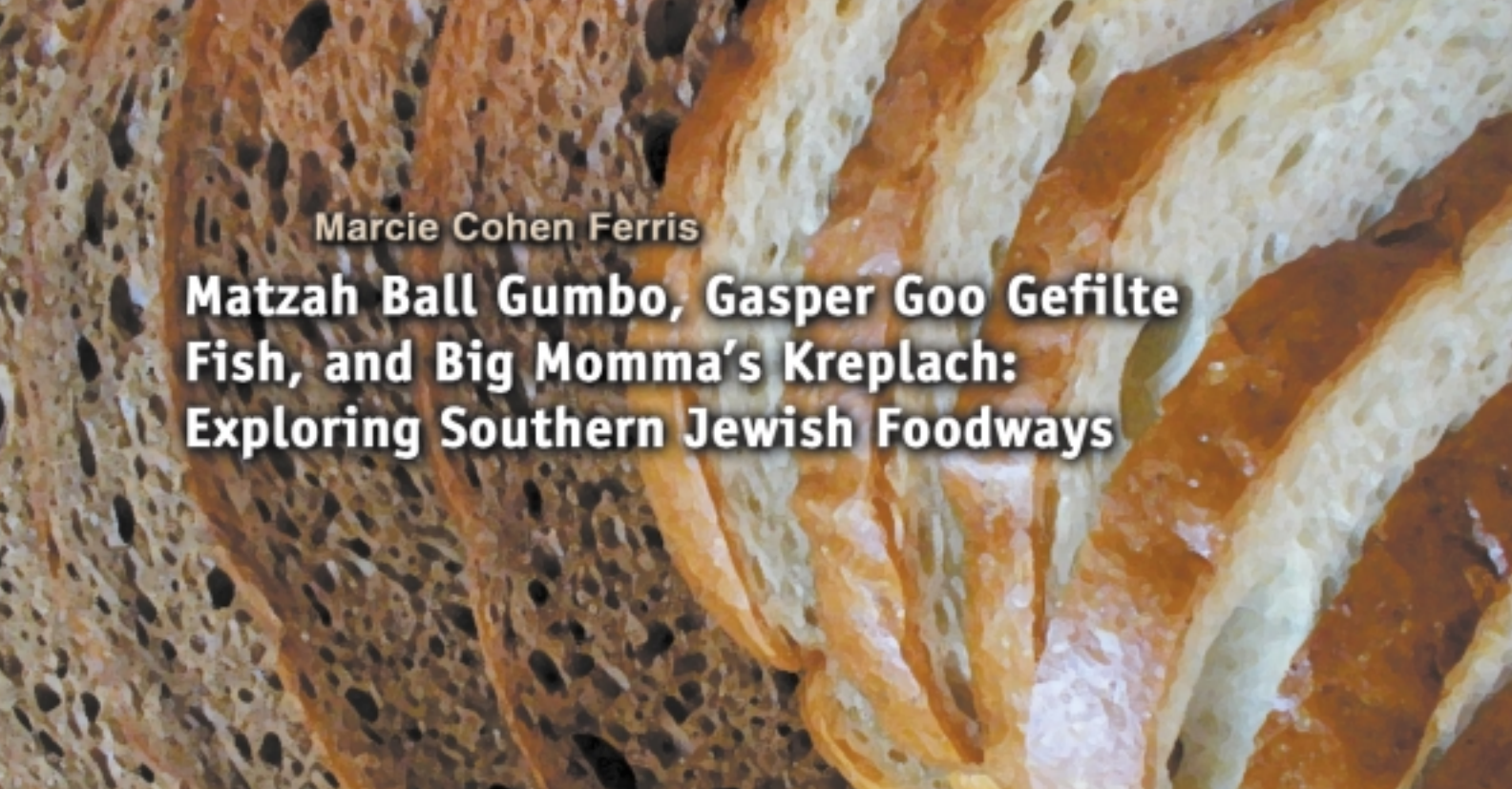
Neither can remember where tulips lie buried.
I don't see the moon in this daytime sky
which is how I know these two will not rest.
And as for that river to the left,
it surely is a journey I would want to know.

The irony of how we will pat strange dogs
whose tails are wagging yet don't hug friends
whose smiles beseech can be seen
in the treatment of color and hue.

But perhaps most intriguing
is the tilt of this print's hang,
and that it has always hung askew
even when I right it,
like it is searching out its own lilt,
as if these are different stars
and they fall to another gravity.

MICHAEL ZACK

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Marcie Cohen Ferris

Matzah Ball Gumbo, Gasper Goo Gefilte Fish, and Big Momma's Kreplach: Exploring Southern Jewish Foodways

At the heart of every conversation about southern Jewish foodways is the “bread problem.” The conversation focuses on the lack of good “Jewish” bagels, chewy rye breads, and cake-like challahs in the South. The problem is less serious today because European-style, crusty breads are baked in cities like Atlanta and Memphis. But in smaller southern cities and towns, Jews find only white bread, iced cookies, cupcakes, frosted layer cakes, and pies. How do southern Jews cope with this situation? What does this bread problem tell us about the Jewish South?

The acceptance of biscuits instead of bagels reveals how southern Jews blend regional foodways with Jewish foodways. Just as generations of Jews in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and central Europe adapted to the foodways of those worlds, southern Jews adapted to the food traditions of their region. While the lack of traditional Jewish breads in the South implies assimilation, it does not reflect a loss of ethnic identity. Southern Jews blend their regional identity both as Jews and as southerners through the foods they eat, the holidays they celebrate, and the products they buy.

Orthodox Jews in the South order bread, kosher meats, and other food products required to follow kashrut, the traditional Jewish dietary laws, and they have done so since the early 1900s. Less observant Jews also use the local bus routes to order Passover supplies, as well as other “Jewish” foods that are unavailable in the rural South. Carolyn Goodman Gold grew up in Elberton, a small town outside of Atlanta, and remembers the weekly arrival of a huge loaf of pumpernickel — her father

Isadore Goodman’s favorite — at the local Greyhound Bus Station. The bread was sent to her family from Gold’s Delicatessen in Atlanta.

There were even less traditional deliveries of “Jewish” food to Jewish southerners. Paul Greenberg of Little Rock, Arkansas, recalls that “Every now and then in the boxes of shoes that my grandfather and my uncle would send to us in Shreveport to fix and sell, they would include a rye bread.” For the majority of southern Jews, however, crusty, dark breads that were once a staple food for their ancestors have faded from memory, and biscuits, rolls, and corn bread are now their breads of choice.

To understand this southern phenomenon, we should consider Mimi Sheraton’s study of the bialy, an onion-filled bagel once popular among Jews in Poland. Sheraton observes that just as the numbers of Jews declined drastically in Poland after the Holocaust, so too did Jewish bread traditions. No Jews meant no bialys. Unlike Poland, however, the southern Jewish population has endured. While bagel shops, Jewish bakeries, and delicatessens are rare in the region, southern Jews maintain a strong ethnic identity through food traditions in their homes and their synagogues. While the region lacks Jewish bakeries, a large Jewish population, and Jewish support organizations — in what Gary Zola describes as a “Jewishly disadvantaged” region — southern Jewish life continues to exist, and in many places it thrives (7).

Zola’s characterization of the Jewish South as “disadvantaged” raises the question of what is an

authentic Jewish life? Are Jews less Jewish when they live in the South? Is the South a “Sahara” of Jewish culture, to borrow a phrase from H. L. Mencken’s description of the region as a cultural and intellectual desert? I believe that southern Jews, like Jews in many other regions of the United States, developed religious identities that enrich our understanding of the American Jewish experience. Most southern Jews do not view themselves as “disadvantaged.” They cherish the regional patterns of their ethnic and religious traditions, and southern Jewish foodways help us understand their identity.

Food choices connect us to our ancestors and their tastes. How do food preferences evolve? Why do we prefer particular textures and flavors? Let us consider these questions as they relate to two southern families’ foodways, one Jewish, one Protestant. On Jewish holidays, my mother’s kitchen in Memphis fills with smells of brisket, roasted chicken, noodle kugel, matzah ball soup, honey cake, and babka, all derived from central- and eastern-European Jewish food traditions. There is always fruit compote in the refrigerator, with carefully peeled sections of fresh grapefruit and oranges; mandel bread in the cookie tin; and “good” bagels saved for the visiting daughter. “Here, don’t eat that one. I’ll finish it. I put one of the good bagels aside for you,” says my mother. On childhood trips north to New London, Connecticut, to visit my mother’s family, we would wake to discover exotic Jewish foods never seen at our home in Arkansas — fat blintzes filled with cottage cheese and topped with sweet fruit sauces, “Jewish” bagels, sweet butter, and fresh cottage cheese.

In my mother-in-law’s kitchen in Vicksburg, Mississippi, I discover a rich mix of southern foods that reflect African-American, French Creole, and Anglo-American traditions. She serves breakfasts of fried quail, grits, gravy, and biscuits. Her noon dinners feature fried catfish, squash patties, greens, rice, field peas, and corn bread. Her favorite casseroles are “Delta eggplant,” “spinach Madeleine,” and

“chicken tetrazzine.” Desserts are chocolate icebox pie with “lady fingers” and “angel food” made of egg whites, cream, and sugar. Supper is lighter fare, such as ham sandwiches on white bread with fresh sliced tomatoes, canned pickles, and homemade mayonnaise.

Although my Connecticut mother, Huddy Cohen, never prepared the venison and quail specialties of my Mississippi mother-in-law, Shelby Ferris, those dishes are familiar to me because they exist within

From the antebellum South to the present, the foodways of southerners — white and black, Jew and non-Jew — helped unite the region. Some southern Jews argue that they share more with non-Jewish southerners than with Jews who live outside the region, and food is central to their argument. While southern Jews share a common religious heritage with urban Jews in the northeast, they are tied to non-Jewish southerners by fried chicken, corn bread, and field peas.

the world of southern foodways that my family also knew in Arkansas. While my family at times ate fried catfish, and my husband’s family sometimes enjoyed corned beef, these foods clearly stood outside our respective food traditions. The foodways of our two families reveal their complex, multi-layered southern identities. As we eat at these two very different tables with our families, we connect to very different southern places, people, and memories. At each table we bond with a family, a community, and a region shaped by generations of southerners, both native-born and newcomers. Through foodways we intimately experience southern Jewish worlds and their cultural, ethnic, and regional identity. By observing how southern Jews eat, we understand

how they define a religious and cultural experience that is a distinctive part of American Jewish history.

By examining food in the life of southern Jews, from foods prepared in the home and the synagogue to food-related businesses that Jews created and patronized, we discover how Jews bridged southern culture with their Jewish experience. Their businesses include restaurants, grocery stores, caterers, butcher shops, bakeries, fish markets, liquor stores, summer camps, and resorts. The experience of southern Jewish immigrants — their small numbers, their geographic isolation, and their interaction with white and black Protestant culture — profoundly shaped foods that define the southern Jewish experience today. Through the evolution of foodways, what

Charles Camp defines as the “intersection of food and culture,” each generation of southern Jews creates its identity by retaining, blending, or discarding Jewish food traditions (299).

Food both connects and distances Jews from their non-Jewish southern neighbors. From the antebellum South to the present, the foodways of southerners — white and black, Jew and non-Jew — helped unite the region. Some southern Jews argue that they share more with non-Jewish southerners than with Jews who live outside the region, and food is central to their argument. While southern Jews share a common religious heritage with urban Jews in the Northeast, they are tied to non-Jewish southerners by fried chicken, corn bread, and field peas. Fred Miller grew up in Anguilla, a small town in the Mississippi Delta, and explains the complex bond Jews feel toward their southern roots:

I love the South. I can't imagine living anywhere besides the South . . . We believe in our Jewish heritage for sure, but I think there's no one who was born in this area who doesn't feel a real kinship with the South, and with the history of the South. Right or wrong, we are and were part of it (DeWitt).

Stories that Jewish southerners share about their food traditions reveal how they have become a part of southern life, and in that process how they have created a uniquely rich chapter in American Jewish history.

Jewish food events are the foundation of the southern Jewish community. Homecooked meals for visiting rabbis, Shabbat suppers at the Temple, community Passover seders at the synagogue, fried chicken at Jewish summer camp, “Ballyhoo” luncheons, teas, and late-night pizza parties, kosher supplies shipped by train from Memphis to outlying rural Jewish communities, and temple “barbecue” fundraisers are but a few of the many places where southern Jews and food come together. These events are closely connected to women’s experiences because cooking, eating, and serving food is intimately linked to women in their homes and in their synagogues.

Leanne Lipnick Silverblatt of Indianola, Mississippi, describes a gathering of Jewish friends and family at the Delta Jewish Supper Club, begun in the 1970s, which embodies the tradition of Jewish socializing:

We meet sporadically in different towns all over the Delta. Of course the biggest event is the Delta Jewish Open Golf Tournament [An annual benefit in Greenville, MS for the Henry S. Jacobs Camp in Utica, MS.] My parents belonged to the YJPL (the Young Jewish People's League, [c.1940s]). They met every month or so to eat — Jewish couples from all over the Delta belonged (DeWitt).

Contemporary historians describe food-related activity in their studies of the Jewish South. Beth Wenger discusses “southern cooking classes” offered to eastern-European immigrant women by the Atlanta chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women (13). Anny Bloch describes the popular French “Doberge” cake favored by New Orleans Jewish families (105). And Sherry Blanton considers the strawberry socials and treyf oyster suppers of the Anniston, Alabama, Ladies’ Hebrew Benevolent Society (37).

In his study of antebellum Jews in Savannah, Mark Greenberg shows how women controlled the religious practices of their families from their positions in both the kitchen and the marketplace. Folklorist Carolyn Lipson-Walker argues that the union of southern and Jewish culture is nowhere more clear than in foodways events such as southern Jewish weddings where “Jewish delicatessen,” heavily laden buffet tables, and an open bar overwhelm Protestant guests accustomed to wedding cake, nuts, mints, and nonalcoholic punch (174).

To understand the cooking styles and food traditions of southern Jews, we must remember that southern Jewish foodways are like the braided challah. Each strand of its braid represents the distinctive food traditions, flavors, and textures of Anglo-American, African American, and Jewish foodways in the South. Within these braids lie yet more



threads of food traditions, including the French Creole cuisine and those of Germany and Alsace-Lorraine, Eastern Europe, Turkey, and the Isle of Rhodes.

Don Yoder, the “founding father” of foodways scholarship within the field of folklore, explains that “each regional and national cuisine is a culinary hybrid, with diverse historical layers combined into a usable and evidently satisfying structure” (325). Joan Nathan, a leading writer on American Jewish foodways, describes similar layers within the Jewish community. She argues that Jews adapted their foodways to those of the local culture (3). In the South, Jewish women add pecans, fresh tomatoes, okra, butter beans, sweet potatoes, and creole seasonings to their holiday menus and substitute regional specialties such as fried chicken, gumbo, and barbecued beef ribs for the traditional Friday-night roasted chicken.

The degree to which southern Jews embrace the region’s local cuisine while also preserving traditional Jewish foodways reflects their complex construction of southern identity. Food traditions are a key to how Jews become southerners. For centuries a rich regional array of foods mixed with southern Jewish cuisine to create a distinctively rich, delicious experience.



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Photos by Laura J. Kloberg.



Jean-Robert Pitte

French Gastronomy Faced with Globalization

Translated by
Jennifer J. Moody

Gastronomy (good food and good wine) is an essential component of France's culture, her image abroad, and her offerings to tourists. Its influence is based on an ancient moral tradition, surfacing in the Middle Ages, if not in antiquity, which made greediness and even gluttony one of the few licit joys of existence and of sociability. At no moment in history, except in the second half of the twentieth century, did Catholic moralists consider gluttony, which is today a mortal sin, anything more than a venial sin (Pitte, 1991). It is in the fertile soil of lawful pleasures that the French art of eating well and drinking well blossomed. Today, however, this art is confronted with economic and cultural intermingling resulting from globalization.

THE BIRTH OF THE FRENCH GASTRONOMIC MODEL

From the second half of the seventeenth century, especially because of the personal impetus of King Louis XIV, great cuisine and the arts of the table acquired a prestigious status and were a key part of the French cultural model that was destined to cement the French national unity which dazzled all of Europe. These arts expressed the glory and the refinement of the court, just as architecture, town planning, garden design, painting, sculpture, music, fashion, language, poetry, and theater also all did. Seventy-five titles, or about 100,000 cookery books, were printed with the king's approval between 1651 and 1691. They all codified the new art of cooking in the French style, based in particular on the use of butter and cream, white meats, and tender fruits and vegetables, but excluding the excess use of spices and the sweet-and-sour flavors that survived in northern and eastern Europe, where they were attached to medieval culinary traditions (Flandrin et al., 1983). All the courts of Europe recruited French cooks, who were in such great demand that they could name their own salary.

At the end of the *Ancien Régime*, under the Revolution and during the nineteenth century, the great cuisine of the court became popular within the framework of a new institution, the restaurant, a refined place outside of one's home where one could eat well. This institution inspired in part the establishment in England of what would become taverns and clubs (Pitte, 2000 and 2001). About the middle of the nineteenth century, great luxury hotels opened all along the coasts of Europe, at the foot of mountains, in health/spa resorts, and in large cities. César Ritz was one of the inventors of this new way of journeying outside of one's home to take the waters, the sun, the view, and to enjoy the pleasures of life.

The cooking in these palaces was worthy of their comfort and of the services they offered. Auguste Escoffier advised a number of these establishments, in which he officiated wherever needed. He placed hundreds of chefs throughout Europe, in the royal courts, the restaurants, and the hotels, spreading the influence of French cuisine (Escoffier, 1985). Today, most of the cultured inhabitants of the planet, with the exception of the Chinese, continue to believe that France is the one country in the world where one eats the best. This perception is an indisputable success of French cultural communication. We will not discuss here the validity of this almost universally held idea.

OPEN TO THE WORLD: AN ANCIENT TRADITION OF FRENCH GASTRONOMY

Since antiquity, the inhabitants of Gaul and then France had access to foods coming from other regions of Europe, even from other continents (wines from Italy, spices from southern Asia, and cod from the North Atlantic, for example). Through its own evolution, in the seventeenth century the great cuisine of France renounced the massive use of spices, but it adopted the new products born of the great discoveries of the preceding centuries and the first colonization: corn, permitting the fattening of poultry and the development of the fatty livers of ducks and geese; coffee; tea; chocolate; sugar cane; wines of the Mediterranean, of the Atlantic, of South Africa; rum; and so forth. As in the domain of fashion, though, there is no gastronomy without evolution nor without the effect of surprise.

During the eighteenth century, regional cuisines emerged and intermingled in Paris, where they diversified the great cuisine and enriched themselves with new ingredients and new techniques. The restaurant of "Les trois frères provençaux" (the Three Provençal Brothers) opened in Paris in 1786 and became very fashionable during the first Empire. There one was served dishes in olive oil, bouillabaisse from Marseille, brandade (salted cod purée) from Nîmes, anchovies, and other new ingredients. Strange flavors continued to slip into the eating habits of good society: parmesan, soy sauce, vanilla, and so on.

However, evolution of cuisine was relatively slow, and gourmets were never totally disconcerted by what they found on their plates. From La Varenne to Antonin Carême, then to Auguste Escoffier, Fernand Point, Raymond Oliver, and Paul Bocuse, the change came gently, and certain dishes remained almost unchanged three centuries after their inception — for example, hollandaise sauce, hare royale, or sweetened chilled whipped cream (*crème chantilly*).

ACCELERATED INTERMINGLING DURING THE NEW CUISINE PERIOD

After 1945 the regional cuisines were very much in fashion because of the actions of Curnonsky during the interwar period and of a few other great chefs such as Raymond Oliver, who popularized the flavors of the Southwest (fatted duck liver, Armagnac) in his restaurant in the Grand Véfour, the dining hall of Malraux, Cocteau, and Colette, and in his television broadcasts called *The Art and Magic of Cooking*.

The French embrace the exotic restaurants (Chinese, Vietnamese, Arab, Greek) that have opened all over Paris as a result of decolonization and immigration. Professional mobility and increasing leisure time also facilitate this opening up of tastes in all walks of life. But the mixing of tastes of both French and exotic products remains very limited.

The great chefs were invited to Japan (Raymond Oliver was the first in 1964, on the occasion of the Olympic Games), then to Hong Kong and to Singapore. They brought back from these trips products, culinary techniques, and presentations that they then introduced into their own dishes. This was one of the components of the phenomenon known as the *Nouvelle Cuisine* (new cooking) that began about 1968. This new style introduced the use of steaming (Jacques Manière), crunchy vegetables (Michel Guérard), raw fish (the brothers Minchielli), and the introduction of soy in whipped butters (Alain Senderens). Presentations in the Japanese style became widespread because of their vibrant colors, their asymmetrical arrangements that allow vertical piles, the placing of sauces directly onto the plate and under the product rather than covering the food, and so forth.

Other aspects of the *Nouvelle Cuisine* also display foreign influences that can be characterized as neopuritan, coming in part from northern Europe and from the United States: health concerns (conserving vitamins, rejecting marinades, the hanging of meats), weight issues (reduction of the intake of fats), authenticity and visibility (rejection of crusts, pastry-wrapped foods, and disguised foods). Humble products, formerly banished from good restaurants, were rehabilitated and served at the price of rarities: potatoes (mashed or even French fries), bell peppers, carrots, cod, whiting, and ox cheek among others. The Parisian chef Alain Passard even decided in 2000, after the Mad Cow disease crisis, to abandon meats and fish and to no longer serve anything but vegetables, a move that was saluted as a stroke of genius by a unanimously servile press.

The components of these new dishes must not only be visible, but named in the wording on the menu. This practice became a sort of pedantic literature that gave rise to dishes whose names were perfumed with mystery: peach Melba or the chocolate-coated whipped-cream concoction known as “*nègre en chemise*.” Thus, the Violon d’Ingres in Paris has “bass filet encrusted with almonds in an acidulous ravigote sauce with capers”; Michel Bras in Laguiole has his “lobe of duck liver roasted over the embers sprinkled with swollen bladder champion sprouts”; or Alain Chapel in Mionnay offers “dried apricots with a light chocolate mousse and mascarpone cream on

roasted polenta.” Such dishes have provoked the insistent praises of certain critics for the poetry of their litany, and they are by no means the longest titles in the repertory.

This movement, anchored in the millennium culture, is not exempt from contradictions. In reality, the butter-rich sauces were never totally abandoned. Joël Robuchon built a part of his renown on his mashed potatoes containing 50 percent butter! And above all, certain of the new-style chefs have succeeded in creating a surprising effect by playing the “hyper-regional” card, using a majority of local products, including the herbs and wildflowers issuing from a new-age-styled harvest. While tasting certain of Michel Bras’s or Marc Veyrat’s creations, one has the impression of being transformed into a sheep or a cow grazing in a high pasture.

COOKING-FUSION, OR GLOBALIZATION ON THE MOVE

The deconstructing and the provocative character of all aspects of contemporary culture reveal themselves not only in the new novel, the plastic arts, architecture, music, and fashion, but also in cooking. To agreeably surprise the gourmet no longer suffices. It is necessary to rattle all his certainties and to shock him; that is what he asks, at least if he belongs to a certain segment of the population devoted to keeping on top of the latest fashions. As much as possible, chefs must leave the beaten path and abandon the idea that they should be limited to perfecting classic recipes or respecting the taste of exceptional primary ingredients.

The harmony of flavors is no longer appropriate because it is no longer a question of mixing or associating the components on the plate, but rather of juxtaposing them. Certain recipes seem inspired by the style of Marguerite Duras. Diverse ingredients occupy isolated spaces on a vast plate, and the sauce is reduced to a few vague trails of calligraphy in the voids of the porcelain, accompanied by a few carelessly sprinkled grains of salt, pepper, sugar, or cocoa. It is very graphic and therefore photogenic, even if the result does sometimes give the impression of a dirty plate. But in any case, this style is without interest for those who are truly interested in what they are eating and therefore in the synthesis of tastes. Fashionable women’s magazines fight over the privilege of receiving transcendental messages from the chefs who participate in this new genre, as do certain editors of beautiful coffee-table books. The critics are divided. Some fawn over the lesser nobility of this circle of influence, while others simply mock or ignore them. The gastronomic guides

that are, in general, written by multiple authors, give no direction. Such is unfortunately the case with *Michelin*, long reputed and sometimes gently mocked for its classicism without fault and, for some, without imagination.

An entire school of thought in the culinary world rejects, therefore, the heritage of the seventeenth century, revisited by Carême and Escoffier, without any other aim than to destabilize. This school is rehabilitating the medieval flavors such as sweet-sour, salt-sugar, multiple spices, dried fruits, bitter herbs, and both acidic and clear juices, even though it is not at all certain that they are better for the health. The other practice — and this one is of interest to the geographer — consists of mixing the ingredients and culinary preparations originating from all parts of the world, if possible all in the same meal. Mexico, India, China, Japan, the United States, and Australia all find themselves alongside France on the menus of certain restaurants. They are even there in the wines and the mineral waters. The critic of the *Figaroscope*, François Simon, put it nicely when he referred to this jumble of ingredients and styles not simply as a “melting pot” but a “melting popote,” playing on the French word for a homestyle meal (5-11 January 2000).

Alain Ducasse is the current champion of the fused and globalized trend, which is in constant and rapid evolution and is associated with prices that are reaching unequaled heights. The New York and Californian influences are very strong with him (his *glace au malabar* — the “malabar” is a sweet, pink chewing gum for children — and his Coca-Cola chicken served in his restaurant, Spoon, are two examples), and they blend with his more or less sincere concern with rehabilitating Mediterranean cuisine in general, and Italian cuisine in particular. His

perfectly mastered style attracts a wealthy clientele, who are preoccupied with affirming his originality and his apparent disdain of conventions. This is the triumph in cooking of the “bourgeois-bohemian” trend that was carried so well into the milieus of fashion, publicity, and the media (Brooks, 2000). Alain Ducasse more or less directly controls the cooking and the finances of numerous restaurants: a dozen in Paris, about fifteen on the French Riviera, about twenty throughout the rest of France, another ten in Europe, fifteen in the United States, two in

Japan, and one each in Singapore, on the Island of Mauritius, and in New Zealand (Simon, 2000; Sachez and Chayet, 2000).

Patrick Jouin, the young decorator of the room taken in 2000 by Alain Ducasse at the Plaza Athénée in Paris for his three-star restaurant, found the style and words necessary to aptly describe the fused and confused gastronomy of France: “The historical and majestic aspect of the place was far from my universe . . . I therefore tried to slide things around, to shift them around. The master idea came quickly: in effect I had to impoverish the space . . . to wash it of all luxury” (Cauhapé, 2000). “The metallic organza,” intended to hide the crystal chandeliers, reassures the gourmets enamored with simplicity, but does not preclude an autumn menu in November 2000 priced at 1,489 francs (approximately \$215), wines not included. The tables are reserved by an international clientele several months in advance, and the establishment is permanently booked.



CONCLUSION

This gastronomic pidgin, invented in New York and in Paris, has spread rapidly to all the major European, North American, and Japanese cities. Its success, however, is fragile because one eventually wearies of everything, including continual surprises. The enormous investments of certain chefs and certain chains are therefore risky. Moreover, the consequences on tourism could prove themselves important if the movement should continue and if the phenomenon should spread throughout the world. In effect, the gastronomic experience is one of the engines of tourism in France, but what interest would there be in visiting Paris if the contents of the dinner plates were the same as in the United States or in Singapore?

At the moment when the industrial-agricultural production of many foods is collapsing, a reflection on the relationship between food and identity imposes itself, but not simply to defend the often insincere domain of ethnic foods. The smart thing would be to promote regional specialty foods and drinks that echo their natural and cultural environment and that emanate from quality landscapes; they are agreeable to look at and sample.

In a more general sense, in cultural terms the globalization of cooking offers enhanced opportunities for mutual exchanges and enrichments, but it may also lead to Babel and the inability to communicate from the moment that our unique cultural identities are rejected.



Jean-Robert Pitte teaches historical and cultural geography at the Université de Paris-Sorbonne. His research domain is history of landscape and planning, geography of food and wine, and sensorial perceptions (smellscapes, for example). He has published various books: *History of French Landscape*, *Men and Landscapes of Chestnut-tree*, *French Gastronomy* (translated in English), and *Philippe Lamour, the Father of Land Planning in France*. He is preparing a Bordeaux-Burgundy essay and a world geography of wine.

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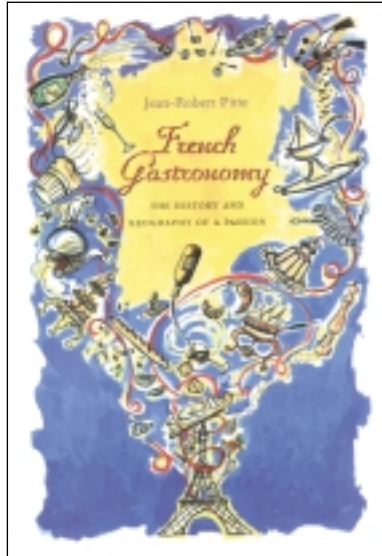




Book Reviews

JEAN-ROBERT PITTE. *French Gastronomy: The History and Geography of a Passion.* Jody Gladding, Translator. Columbia University Press, 2002. 176 pages. \$24.95.

Any francophile is acutely, indeed admiringly, aware that at the heart of the French national consciousness is an appreciation for food and its preparation that perhaps more than any other feature defines this nation. In this brilliant and elegant book, Jean-Robert Pitte, a cultural geographer at the Sorbonne, seeks to answer the question: “Why France?” What is it about the geography, history, and culture of the French people that has made for such a rich culinary tradition? What has made France a country of gourmets and gourmands? And, how is it that the rest of the world has come to regard them as such?



To answer these questions, Pitte, the geographer, turns first to the land and climate of France to consider the influence of place on France’s rich culinary heritage. Here he emphasizes the dynamic interaction of the landscape and the culture of its inhabitants. It is not “natural” that the French achieved culinary greatness; it is, rather, the result of a very specific historical course that began with the Gauls, who placed food at the center of their social and political lives. Geographical and climatological diversity in turn determined that the farmers of the various regions of France would give shape to distinctive and richly diverse provincial traditions.

How did French society respond to the rich culinary possibilities offered by France’s diverse landscape? Positively and in a relatively uninhibited manner. Gourmandism has never really been a sin in France. The Church maintained an ambivalent attitude toward the pleasures of the table, condemning gluttony, praising restraint, and yet the monastic communities produced some of the great wines of France. Not even Protestant austerity could seriously dampen France’s enthusiasm for food, even when juxtaposed with the Catholic Reformation whose position on food and the enjoyment thereof was complex, to say the least. The reformed Catholic church maintained a more or less lenient attitude toward the enjoyment of food as part of the larger enjoyment of existence. Still, gluttony was a sin for the Church, and Pitte concludes that it is no easy task to sort through the relationship between Christian tradition and gourmandism.

Then, factor into this increasingly complex equation the roles of the city, the state, and the individual. City dwellers, especially in Paris, by virtue of their money and more leisured lives, produced a gastronomic culture that siphoned from the countryside its best commodities to circulate in a stimulating urban marketplace of plentitude, quality, and diversity. And beyond Paris lay Versailles, where Louis XIV used the dining table to assist in constructing an absolutist image of the state. According to Pitte, French cooking “. . . only really developed, acquiring a true French personality,

as the political and cultural prestige of its monarchs increased in Europe” (pp. 89–90). Here he relies on the authority Brillat-Savarin: “meals became a means of government” (p. 100). Of course, Louis XIV was a rather notorious glutton, but his enthusiasm for dining stemmed not only from his personal appetites. Louis envisioned food as a means of asserting French originality and refinement and of creating cultural hegemony, just as he sought to centralize his hold on the country and to dominate the European diplomatic scene. It was during his reign that French cuisine assumed its classical form. Forget those oriental spices! In their place, the French chef would substitute shallots, chives, anchovies, and the black truffle. And, what single component does the outside world associate most closely with the classic French way of cooking? La sauce! Under Louis XIV and his

successors, the sauce evolved from its previously tart and thin manifestation to the rich, buttery form that all have come to understand as French. As early as the publication of *Le Cuisinier françois* (1651), we find a recipe for that emblematic dish — asparagus with hollandaise sauce.

The audience for Louis XIV’s legendary meals filed by the king as he dined at Versailles. The audience for France’s culinary innovations occupied tables in the restaurants of Paris, Lyons, and the provincial capitals. Restaurant culture exploded on the scene during the Revolution, as great chefs looked for employment in something other than the aristocratic household. Representatives of the people, boarding in Paris to oversee the destruction of the old regime and the construction of a new one, did not refrain from enjoying the culinary talents of those who had previously served the aristocracy. Restaurants provided a great source of stimulation and inspiration for the chef who had previously served one family and its predictable tastes; in this way the Revolution produced the democratization of the French gastronomic tradition.

In the nineteenth century, the beginnings of tourism saw many of France’s great chefs situated in luxury hotels, where they served not only the wealthy and the French middle class but also foreigners who came to savor a special culinary experience. It was in these establishments that cooking luminaries such as Auguste Escoffier ultimately constructed

an aura around the tradition of French cooking that beckoned to international audiences.

Finally, Pitte takes stock of France's most recent innovation — *nouvelle cuisine*, the success of which he explains partly in terms of its appropriateness to late twentieth-century culture. It “shared in the rehabilitation of the body and the worship of nature, as well as the truth and supremacy of the word” (p. 147). It is a cuisine that is healthful, that allows for things to “taste like what they are,” and empowers through the word, enabling great chefs to pontificate and customers to choose from a “pretentiously worded menu” (p. 151).

Where does France go from here? Pitte strikes terror in the heart of every francophile as he considers the impact of agribusiness on the French way of eating. Not to despair, however, because he concludes on a hopeful, optimistic note, confident that the French will not lose sight of the fact that eating is more than nourishing the body. With the wine industry as his model, he suggests that modern production and preparation of foods can likewise promote quality and variety. And, in this way, food will continue to nourish the soul of France (and the world).



Donna J. Bohanan is professor of history at Auburn University. Her most recent book, *Crown and Nobility in Early Modern France*, was published in 2001 by Palgrave. She is currently working on a book-length project about interior decoration and consumption patterns among the provincial nobles of late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century France.

ROY DOMENICO. *The Regions of Italy: A Reference Guide to History and Culture.* Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 2002. 472 pages. \$65.00. **GINO MOLITERNO,** editor. *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Italian Culture.* London and New York: Routledge, 2000. 704 pages. \$145.00.

Two recent publications provide abundant data about modern Italy. Roy Domenico's 472-page *The Regions of Italy* focuses on the characteristics and qualities of Italy's regions and smaller localities, while Gino Moliterno's 704-page *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Italian Culture* offers the reader up-to-date information about Italian institutions, practices, and social activities since the end of the Second World War.

“From the time people first uttered the word ‘Italia,’ or some variation of it, until this century, Italians have identified more with their own locales than with what we now know as ‘Italy’ (xiii).” So begins the Introduction to *The Regions of Italy: A Reference Guide to History and Culture*. Domenico goes on in the Introduction to sketch a



Phi Kappa Phi Literacy Initiative Survey of Existing Chapter/University Programs

The Literacy Initiative Work Group wants to know what is happening on your campus or with your chapter in terms of literacy programs. Does your college or university sponsor any sort of literacy program as part of a curriculum or in any other way? Is your Phi Kappa Phi chapter involved with its own program or a university program?

We would like to build a list of programs already in place to use as examples that chapters might emulate or that they might in the future become involved with as part of our ongoing exploration of making literacy a national service initiative. Any information that members could share with us would be greatly appreciated.

Please let us know about any existing programs by e-mailing Pat Kaetz, editor of the *Phi Kappa Phi Forum*, at kaetzjp@auburn.edu, or send a message to:

Literacy Initiative
c/o Phi Kappa Phi Forum
129 Quad Center, Mell Street
Auburn University, AL 36849-5306.

brief history of the tumultuous changes that the peninsula has seen over the centuries since ancient Roman times: through the Dark Ages, the high Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Risorgimento, and the twentieth century. Domenico's principal aim in delineating this varied but never dull history is to underscore the continuing vitality of Italy's local and regional institutions and customs, often at the expense of a sense of national identity and cohesiveness.

The book is divided into twenty chapters that mirror the twenty administrative units into which Italy was divided during the period of Risorgimento, or Unification (1830–1870). These regions are Abruzzo, Apulia, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Emilia Romagna, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Lazio, Liguria, Lombardy, Marche, Molise, Piedmont, Sardinia, Sicily, Trentino-Alto Adige, Tuscany, Umbria, Valle d'Aosta, and Veneto. Each chapter begins with a short description of the region's characteristics, economy, cuisine, history, and recent politics, and is followed by subchapters that describe the history and the cultural and artistic importance of the region's most important cities. Smaller and less historically important regions such as Basilicata and Trentino-Alto Adige have only two subchapters each, while regions of greater power and significance have many more; Lombardy, in northern Italy, holds the record with eleven cities highlighted, followed by Tuscany, in central Italy, with ten. A beautiful black-and-white photo essay depicts the most important architectural monuments of the nation's regions. At the end of the book the reader will find useful tools for locating specific data and for clarifying potentially confusing details about Italy: a glossary, a chronology, a bibliography, and a detailed index.

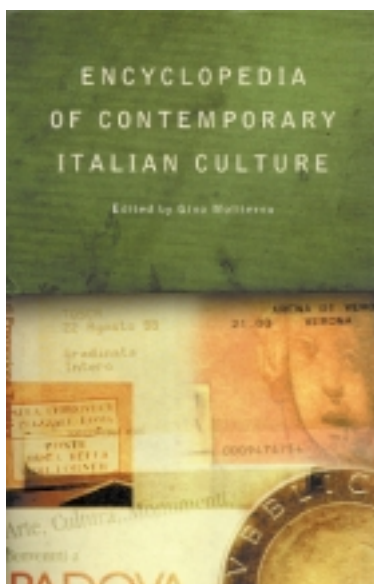
The *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Italian Culture* explores and seeks to elucidate the profound social, economic, and historical transformations that have shaped Italy since the end of the Second World War. As noted in the Introduction, these transformations have occurred neither easily nor painlessly. In the past sixty years, Italy seems to have been in an almost constant state of crisis; to cite just one obvious example, since the inauguration of a republican form of government in 1947, Italy has had approximately one government per year. Yet despite this seeming state of chaos, Italy has thrived economically, socially, and artistically. In short, Italy enjoys considerable international prestige in many areas of achievement. Now as Italy enters the European Union at the beginning of a new millennium, it is entirely

fitting and useful that an encyclopedic reference book such as this should see the light.

General Editor Gino Moliterno of the Australian National University has marshaled the efforts of 104 contributors (from Australia, Canada, France, Italy, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States), all experts in their respective fields of study, to produce a truly impressive volume. More than nine hundred entries address all aspects of Italian life and culture in the First Republic. A Thematic Entry List (under the rubrics Architecture and Design, Cultural Institutions/Phenomena, Economy, Education and Research, Fashion, Film, Food and Drink, History, Intellectual Life, Language, Literature and Criticism, Mass Media and Publishing, Music, Performing Arts, Politics, Religion, Society, Sport, Visual Arts, and Writers) helps orient the reader who wishes to access information on these topics. Interestingly, but not surprisingly, the longest thematic lists concern the arts (for instance, the fine arts, architecture, film, writers). A detailed index at the end of the volume lists all the pages on which an entry is mentioned, including the main entry, which is indicated in bold font.

In this encyclopedia, "culture" is interpreted in the broadest sense "as covering all social activities and institutions and all communicative and symbolic practices which might be considered as forming part of a distinctively Italian 'way of life'" (xi). Thus, the volume offers concise, objective information not only on matters of 'high' culture but also on topics of 'low' culture, such as television and pop culture, which have informed modern Italian identity in profound ways. The editor and the contributors eschew the debate now taking place in academic circles on the definition of culture, especially culture understood "as a unitary phenomenon" (xi). The length of the entries ranges from two-hundred-word sketches to two-thousand-word essays. While each entry stands on its own, internal cross-referencing may help the reader to learn more about related topics.

Both *The Regions of Italy: A Reference Guide to History and Culture* and the *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Italian Culture* will serve as useful tools to the academic and the general reader. Few Western nations have changed so much as Italy has in the past sixty-odd years; it would be a gross misconception to think of Italy only as the cradle of the Renaissance or as the romantic destination of vacationers eager to glide along the canals of Venice in a gondola. Italy is now a robust post-urban society with a host of successes and a plethora of problems. These volumes will help to dispel erroneous notions about Italy and to inform readers about Italy's new realities. While Domenico's volume looks back to the heritage of regional history and identity, Moliterno's book looks forward to the Italy of the new millennium.



V. Louise Katainen, associate professor of Italian and Castanoli Scholar, teaches in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at Auburn University.

FIVE DRUNKEN MANIFESTATIONS OF ZHONG KUI

— mid to late 20th century

Look now, the ripe jungle invites the eye,
Greens furious with shock, scarlet blossom
Of hemorrhage, the snowy egret roosting
In the spare ribs of that dead river tree.
Why does my wife slouch in boredom?

The owner of the commissary says *Pay your account!*
Pay!! Pay!! Pay! he writes in bright mangled words.
My mother, in her old age, sits and waves her toes,
Her square slab of unreflective face living now
With no meaning. *Luck*, she clucks, *luck, luck*.

A spirit sways, hunched like a cat above the gate.
My daughter brings me lemon wedges, ice for my drink,
Parsnips, beef on a blue plate, an ounce of tobacco.
There's a strongbox hidden in the closet, I whisper;
Let it be a mystery rising behind you in the wind.

The bald heads of two Buddhist priests are seen.
My window looks out over the cherry trees.
Desire is a disease, Zhu Guaglie writes, *Only God*
Can grant your wish to live. A pig roots cabbage;
I rise to go and latch the back door by myself.

My son performs ritual music on a shell trumpet.
My daughter brings me a steamer of rice, an egg,
Inside of which a fetal bird. I taste the beginnings
Of bone, the potential heart. From the hayfield,
Grassland plovers rise, flying inside their own hearts.

DANIEL JAMES SUNDAHL

Daniel James Sundahl is Russell Amos Kirk Professor in English and American Studies at Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, Michigan, where he has taught for eighteen years. He has published numerous articles, book reviews, and poems nationally and internationally. He is the author of three books, most recently *The Small Logics*, published by Mellon Poetry Press.

controls, and directs its resources differently within the bounds of accepted practices. The rule of thumb is that when a new technical-systems employee is hired into an IT organization, it will take a year for him or her to learn the organization and organization-specific standards and systems implementations well enough to become effective in his or her new job. Even if a new employee is fully competent technically, it takes time to get up to speed. IT management routinely plans for this kind of lag time in the start-up for new employees. Yet, an IS auditor is expected to achieve equivalent levels of expertise about a client's systems and organization in a couple of weeks (or maybe months when auditing bigger companies). This level must be accomplished during an audit engagement while doing a lot of other tasks as well, and turnover in the audit firms only exacerbates this situation because it disrupts continuity from year to year. If this makes valid IS auditing sound nearly impossible, that is because it probably is.

CORRUPTING THE PROCESS

What actually is an effective IS audit? It is really not so clear-cut as one might think. The distinguished management theorist Peter Drucker distinguishes between "doing things right" and "doing the right things." The former he calls *efficiency* and the latter *effectiveness*. This distinction is important because computer types often find it easier to focus on efficiency at the expense of effectiveness. IS auditors know that the technology is too complex. And, too often, they cannot expect to really understand it. Instead, they reconstitute the audit as a process of going through standardized checklists. (After all, what else can one do if one does not really understand the technology?) It is not too difficult to run through checklists, and maybe identify a few problems, and move on. So, what is considered to be an effective IS audit becomes one in which checklist items have been reviewed efficiently, even if the checklists are out of date or incomplete or just plain wrong. If the checklists are current and address the right set of issues for

a particular client corporation, then this approach can be somewhat fruitful. But this approach is risky (too much form and too little substance), and it is no replacement for the judgment of knowledgeable, experienced technical analysts who really understand the business applications and the technical detail. Another problem is that the technology is changing so fast that the checklists are seldom up to date, and there are almost never any checklists for any of the newest technologies. This situation is difficult because real IS audit effectiveness is surely not the product of going through the motions with checklists. It must be spawned by systematic, careful, thorough, penetrating, and knowledgeable evaluations of the business systems of the target organization for an audit engagement.

The auditors are not dense, but they do need to make a living. I think most of them know that there probably are big holes in the audit process stemming from the client's use of computers. But workers in client organizations are generally happy if the auditors just do their checklists and let them get back to their work. Audit firms are also happy to assume that all is well and glad to have audit fees rolling in with a minimum of hassles. So auditors reduce the cognitive dissonance by avoiding concerns about the process and satisfying themselves that they have successfully completed their auditing duties following the methods and procedures that they can do. Ethics really does not come into play much because the groupthink is that they are doing what they are supposed to be doing as efficiently as possible. If challenged, the IS auditors can cloud the issues by using computer jargon to escape any threat in the same cloud of complexity that originally thwarted them in their efforts to understand a client's systems. As long as everyone views the IS auditors as technical experts, the system runs smoothly, until the audit firm runs into some outfit such as ENRON. Then the entire house of cards comes tumbling down because the audit process has gradually eroded and become inherently unsound.

Given this scenario, one could argue that the audit profession has

been very subtly undercut and corrupted by the level of complexity of the underlying information technology that forms the backbone of every modern corporation. It is not a pretty picture. Furthermore, financial auditors have their own considerable audit work to do. They simply cannot be responsible for assessing the technology on the IS side of an audit. They have little choice but to rely upon the judgment of the IS professionals on the audit staff to verify that financial software and systems are reliable, effective, and efficient. This is an integral part of the overall audit. But sound judgment in IS auditing is a function of both relevant technical expertise and a thorough assimilation of the client's systems environment. Increasing technological complexity has made this task increasingly difficult for the IS auditors to do effectively.

Of course, some financial auditors have very good computing skills and some IS auditors are actually CPAs, but these are not the norm. CPA firms hire youngsters with limited experience, and the basic promotion philosophy is up or out. This practice is clearly not a prescription for developing a reservoir of computing and networking talent that can be brought to bear on audit engagements. Not only that, but the better IS auditors with excellent computing skills and understanding tend to be absorbed into IT consulting projects in the management-consulting part of the CPA firms' businesses. So, there is a tendency for the less-qualified IS auditors (who are not assigned to lucrative consulting projects) to be assigned to the actual audit engagements, sort of on-the-job training for future consulting engagements. This practice is simply not a formula for infusing IS auditing with a high likelihood of success.

In reality, financial and IS auditors are two different kinds of people whose views of the world differ importantly. Financial auditors are essentially highly polished accounting professionals, and IS auditors are quirky, nerdy computer jocks at heart. The former thrives on conformity and the latter on nonconformity. Each draws significant expert power from mastering technical expertise in a complex field, one in

the practice of accounting and the other in the application and management of information technologies. Both tend to be overly arrogant. Historically, the financial auditor has dominated, and the IS auditor has been frustrated. Sometimes, I think it is a miracle that they can get along well enough together to conduct audit engagements at all.

But the key issue is this: Because the computer has migrated to center stage in business systems, there has been a kind of erosion of the preeminence of accounting skills in auditing. The IT skills have become at least as important in the overall audit framework. This shift in the importance of IT has undercut the established financial auditing culture of the auditing firms. CPA firms are in a difficult position, and they know it. For example, the accounting industry collectively has significantly increased the educational requirements for CPA certification in recent years, requiring a lot more IT coursework. But it is too little, too late.

All of the old mechanisms that made the financial-audit culture so effective are still in place. The beautiful offices in the best buildings and other trappings of success are there; the highly intelligent, friendly, business-like, polished professional staff is there; the extensive lists of important and impressive clients are still there; and that all-knowing confidence and professional attitude are still there. But it is a house of cards because they do not have the right depth of expertise and mechanisms in place to know whether their judgments are right. It all still looks the same, but I fear that the profession has become hollow at

its core. I think that this is an important reason why (according to *BusinessWeek*) an astounding 723 audited companies have been forced to restate their earnings downward in the past five years. And, of course, there are Waste Management, Sunbeam, and Cendant, all recent glaring audit failures. How tragic! It sure looks like a case of the emperor having no clothes!

CONCLUSION

Because of the complexity and constant churning of the underlying information technology, the old audit-engagement model simply does not make much sense anymore. But the approaches to IS auditing and financial auditing do not have to follow the same annual cyclical pattern. In the IS audit-cycle model described above, in which the audit firm returns annually to reexamine core activities and to review an annually varying assortment of lesser activities, there is a basic assumption of business stability. The accounting structure of the firm is generally consistent with this assumption. But stability does not often exist in the IT arena. The IT function in modern corporations serves as a catalyst, an agent for change, implementing and leveraging new systems technologies to generate competitive advantage in the marketplace. Thus, an auditing system based upon periodically spot-checking various business systems is simply not likely to provide trustworthy results.

I do not know the answer, but I think that a new vision is needed here. There can be no doubt that the audit profession *must* audit informa-

tion technology more effectively. This process needs much more focused attention and careful thought, and soon. A well-grounded, thorough understanding of IT usage in corporations is essential if the investing public is ever going to be able to rely on the results of auditing engagements.

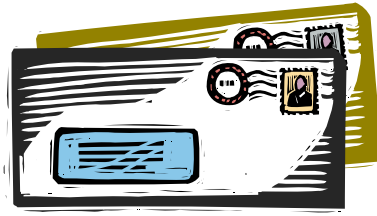
What happened to Andersen at ENRON? What happened to Anderson is the same thing that has happened to all the rest of the audit profession; only Andersen had a client that may not have been operating in good faith (to say the least), and Andersen was unlucky enough to get caught. Modern information technology is simply too complex to audit by conventional means. And we cannot afford to stick our heads into the sand and pretend that the auditing firms can somehow magically attest to the validity of these systems without addressing the smokescreen brought on by ever-increasing IT complexity. I hate to rely on the old, shopworn idea of a paradigm shift, but that is really what is needed here at a fundamental level. Information technology is different from accounting, and it needs to be audited differently and by ethical people with extensive experience and good judgment who also understand computers, software, and networks thoroughly.



Charles K. Davis is a professor in the Cameron School of Business at the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas, and is a past chapter president of Phi Kappa Phi. He has taught previously at the University of Houston and held analyst and management positions with a number of companies.



Letters to the Editor



AMERICA'S DEATH PENALTY: JUST ANOTHER FORM OF VIOLENCE

I was disappointed to read John D. Bessler's article in the Winter 2002 *Forum* ["Crime and Punishment," Vol. 81, No. 1]. His treatise advocating the abolishment of capital punishment was poorly researched and relied heavily on emotional appeals rather than empirical data.

I am in favor of enacting a nationwide moratorium on capital punishment until related deficits in our legal system are addressed. However, aside from a brief mention of these deficits, I find little to agree with in Bessler's article.

Bessler indicts society for its "violence" in using capital punishment. However, it is irrational to fault the state simply because it uses violence. States have a monopoly on violence to protect and bring order to society. The alternative is anarchy or a decentralized power structure — the source of great bloodshed during the Middle Ages. He cites a flawed *New York Times* study to claim that capital punishment does not deter violent crime. Ironically, the study is discredited within the pages of the same issue by Paul H. Rubin ["The Death Penalty and Deterrence"] for its failure to use a multiple regression analysis to control for the many factors leading to criminal violence. He then neglects to review other similar studies, such as the methodologically solid study presented by Rubin, which reveals that the death penalty has a sharp deterrent effect. Most of his article offers only disembodied facts, divorced from meaningful context, without real links to the elements of the problem. For instance, he suggests that executions must be bad things because states ceased to hold them publicly. This is weakly supported with the observation that disorder (such as that created by pickpockets and public drunken-

ness) often broke out at public executions and that past civic leaders have deemed that "corrupted morals" were the result when executions were held publicly. Nowhere is the disorder or the purportedly corrupted morals linked to serious criminal violence.

Phi Kappa Phi is an organization that values high academic standards. I would hope those standards would be applied in its *Forum* as well.

Douglas Abbott
Anchorage, Alaska

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Just a note to thank you for my issue of the *Phi Kappa Phi Forum* on "Crime and Punishment." I found it to be very interesting, informative, thought-provoking, and well researched and argued.

In recognizing and promoting academic excellence, your efforts are paying off. Again, thank you.

Mark L. Shurtleff
Attorney General
State of Utah

TERRORISM

The articles in the spring edition of the *Phi Kappa Phi Forum* ["Terrorism," Vol. 82, No. 2] may be the best collection that the *Forum* has ever published. The commentary by Paul Trout on page 3 ["Demonizing the United States," *Forum* on Education & Academics] raised a question in my mind: "If the leftist academics despise the United States so much, what do they propose should replace the present governmental system of the United States, or alternatively, how should the present system be changed?"

Follow-up articles on this aspect of the subject would be appreciated.

Paul D. Belz
Catonsville, Maryland

The last time I wrote a "fan letter" of praise and congratulations must have been three decades ago — to K. Ross Toole (University of Montana historian) for his book, *The Time Has Come* (if memory serves correctly).

There are some things that simply need to be said, but sadly and inexplicably very few academicians have the (fill in your favorite slang term) to say them! You did, and did so brilliantly in your [Paul Trout] *Phi Kappa Phi Forum* essay, "Demonizing the United States."

My thanks and congratulations to you for having the insight and courage to speak from the vantage point of reason!

Charles F. Gritzner
Brookings, South Dakota

I truly appreciated the Spring 2002 Issue. My family was affected by the terrorists, as were many others; however, our experiences include the military reaction to these cowardly deeds. As a member of the 75th Ranger Regiment at the time the towers were hit, I was deployed to fight al Qaeda in October 2001 during the Ranger Raid in southern Afghanistan. Unfortunately, my tour there was cut short when I was tabbed to escort the bodies of my first two fallen comrades, two Rangers killed on 19 October. Since that time, I have assumed command of a new airborne battalion in Vicenza, Italy, and my brother has since been deployed to Kandahar as a member of the 101st Airborne.

Your issue was on the mark, and I appreciate it.

Lt. Colonel Dominic J. Caraccilo
Vicenza, Italy

A JUST CAUSE, NOT A JUST WAR

Howard Zinn says nations that are "Hmodest are not targets of terrorism" ["A Just Cause, Not a Just War," "Terrorism," Vol. 82, No. 2]. I'm not an expert on any of these individual situations, but haven't such varied nations as Spain, Sri Lanka, Colombia, India, Russia, Italy, and Nigeria

been targets of various forms of terrorist attacks and political assassinations at various times in the last fifty years?

As for why other nations are modest, I'm reminded of Winston Churchill's commentary on Clement Attlee: "A modest man, with much to be modest about."

Paul Conlin
Cromwell, Connecticut

In "A Just Cause, Not a Just War," Howard Zinn states, "There might be situations . . . when a small, focused act of violence against a monstrous, immediate evil would be justified." That time is now. Zinn seems to imply that WWII was a justifiable war because Germany was an aggressive nation expanding its power. This time the expansionist power may not be a nation, but an enemy without borders is still an enemy.

There are alternatives to war. Zinn suggests enlisting the help of other countries to apprehend the terrorists. We did. He suggests negotiations. We did that. We called for the Taliban to turn over bin Laden and then we would not bomb. They rejected an offer to negotiate just the same. He suggests humanitarian aid. We did that too. But it should be noted that often people suffer starvation and disease *because* of the acts of an oppressive regime.

War is sometimes necessary. The war that is being conducted by the United States is far less indiscriminate than Zinn describes. The killing of innocents is not certain at each bombing. Furthermore, bombing military vehicles and arms is not equivalent to flying passenger planes into office buildings filled with innocent civilians. No amount of rationalization or manipulation of words can make them equivalent. Zinn rightly states that destroying al Qaeda may not end all terrorism. That is true, but so much good in this world would not have been achieved had the potential achievers adopted an all or nothing philosophy.

Towards the end of his article, Zinn states, "The modest nations of the world don't face the threat of

terrorism." By examining the evidence, he may discover just the opposite. If we become what he calls a modest nation, we will be threatened all the more. Evil cannot win when good stands against it.

K. Abendroth
Missouri

I recently received the Spring 2002 issue of the *Phi Kappa Phi Forum*. I was extremely offended by the article, "A Just Cause, Not a Just War." I cannot believe that Mr. Zinn would defend those who, if given the opportunity, would not allow him the free speech he currently enjoys. I am already fed up with the one-sided, dishonest reporting on the Israeli-Palestinian issue. This pro-terrorist article was the last straw. I don't know if "Professor" Zinn is just stupid or if he is an al Qaeda-Hamas-Al Fatah supporter. These organizations have pledged the destruction of the United States and Israel. They consider all Jews and Christians enemies and have vowed to destroy those religions. As far as I am concerned, if Mr. Zinn acts like my enemy, talks like my enemy, and supports my enemy, he IS my enemy.

Please do not send me any more copies of your publication until you take a more responsible editorial position. I don't need the high blood pressure and anxiety it causes me. I will remain a lifetime member of Phi Kappa Phi, but I don't want to see any more anti-Americanism, anti-Semitism, and anti-Humanism.

Mark R. Miller

Of your 9/11-theme articles in the spring 2002 issue, the most substantial was Howard Zinn's view on the more proper U.S. response to the 9/11 attack, which gave the only reasoned proper response of a great nation, rather than sanctioning the actual response of self-proclaimed Planet-Earth Emperor Bush I and his Tribunes. Doubtless you will get commentary contrary to Zinn's views; I wanted hereby to record my vote in favor of Zinn.

Louis G. Dooley
Ocala, Florida

Howard Zinn's, "A Just Cause, Not a Just War," is shockingly naive. Terrorism is the ugliest form of cowardice. In an open society such as ours, terrorists of every stripe, from psychopathic megalomaniacs, seek opportunity to create harm and loss without regard to human values.

Mr. Zinn's explanation (apology) selects convenient snippets from history to advise Americans as to his concept of "a modest nation." His article is loaded with twisted facts and generalities that are not applicable. He overlooks the attack on Pearl Harbor or Hitler's all-out war in Europe.

Unfortunately, terrorism is part of the human psyche, whether it is gender abuse or international villainy. It comes from the least expected sources and seeks to atrophy potential victims into compliance.

America has been slow in responding to evil, but I have confidence (as I did in 1942-45) that we will.

Ralph L. Dorff
Tucson, Arizona

In "A Just Cause, Not a Just War," Howard Zinn states that he has never described himself as a pacifist. This is fortunate, as principled advocates of pacifism must remain consistent in their condemnation of war; Zinn's essay contains inconsistencies which render his reprehensible argument both laughable and intellectually dishonest. The most egregious of these may be found in his comments on the Second World War: Zinn criticizes the appeasement of Hitler while condemning the Allies' war against Germany. Although Zinn mischaracterizes the Munich agreement — Sudetenland was under discussion, not Czechoslovakia as a whole — he does see fit to administer a gentle reproof to England and France: granting a homicidal maniac more land was, in Zinn's words, "not wise." His condemnation of the process through which Hitler was removed from power is much more vigorous, however: Zinn compares the attack on Nazi Germany to Operation Rolling Thunder and writes that "the history

of bombing . . . is a history of endless atrocities." We are told that the accidental death of civilians ensures that "bombers cannot be considered innocent" and are, in fact, "committing murder." Hitler was a rather pugnacious chap, but we were wrong to create any unpleasantness for the peaceable citizens of the Reich.

While Zinn's comparison of Nazi Germany with the United States (" . . . today we do not face an expansionist power that demands to be appeased. We ourselves are the expansionist power . . .") is the most odious aspect of his argument, his essay also contains distortions of historical fact. Zinn claims that the United States rejected the possibility of negotiations before the bombing campaign in Yugoslavia: this is, quite simply, a lie. Diplomats strove to achieve a peace settlement at the Rambouillet talks; I fear that Zinn's false assertions may sway readers who have forgotten what actually happened in 1999. Zinn's distasteful political views must be permitted in a free society, but dishonest scholarship cannot be tolerated.

Sam Snyder
St. Louis, Missouri

TERRORISM, THE MASS MEDIA, AND THE EVENTS OF 9-11

In "Terrorism, the Mass Media, and the Events of 9-11" [Spring 2002], Brigitte Nacos writes, "Whether it is the relatively inconsequential arson by an amateurish environmental group or mass destruction by a network of professional terrorists, the perpetrators' media-related goals are the same: attention, recognition, and perhaps even a degree of respectability and legitimacy in their various target publics." The *Forum* drew further attention to this sentence by putting it in a quote box.

Specifically, which environmental "terrorist" group does the author have in mind? Without making that distinction, she classes all environmental groups in the same category as al Qaeda. As both a journalist and a student seeking my second master's degree, this time in Earth Literacy, I find this sentence intel-

lectually and journalistically irresponsible. As a member and active supporter of several highly respected environmental organizations, and as one who volunteers to teach ecology to children, I am deeply offended.

Rebecca Dale
North Lima, Ohio

ON THE ECONOMICS OF TERRORISM

I'm responding to Mr. Brauer's article "On The Economics of Terrorism." If "government must minimize terrorist resources . . . by genuinely addressing whatever true and honest kernel of grievances may underline the acts of terror" [p. 41] and if governments are to blame for feeding terrorism by "foreclosing legal avenues of voicing dissent"[p. 40], then we ought to look at the role of U.S. gov-

ernment policy in creating repressive dictatorships (all over the world, including Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan) because it serves our short-term interest in protecting private corporations in the area, as well as our access to resources (such as oil). It was the U.S. government, for instance, which supported the al Qaeda in Afghanistan's battle with Russia. And it was the U.S. government, through the CIA, which overthrew the elected Prime Minister in Iran (in the 1950s, I believe) after he nationalized their oil refineries.

We really ought to take into consideration the cost of terroristic activities (on both sides) when considering the cost of U.S. dependence on fossil fuels.

Patricia W. Scott
Brainerd, Minnesota

DRAW IN THE SMOKE

*" . . . and gaze at the reflection in the mirror,
As streetlights gaze at drying puddles . . ."*

Joseph Brodsky

Draw in the smoke and with the motion of a finger, shake off the lazy fireflies, which often linger to burn to ash. Cold bathroom lights reveal your flaws, — the bald spot in your hair, the crooked nose . . . Breathe out the smoke, and nothing's to be seen, except the rows of plastic bottles, — blue and green colognes and creams and other useless stuff, which you still use in hopes of luring in true love. The smoky mirror hides your grim reflection, and now, none of your flaws remain . . . Thus streetlights watch with warm affection the puddles blurred by drops of rain.

ANDREY KNELLER

Born in Moscow, Russia, Andrey Kneller was highly influenced by Russian literature and culture. He first began to write poetry when he was just thirteen years old and since then has written more than 350 poems. Fluent in both English and Russian, Andrey also has translated poetry by Alexander Pushkin, Boris Pasternak, Vladimir Vysotsky, and other Russian poets. He attends Brandeis University, and his email is kneller@brandeis.edu.