CULINARY CIVILIZATION: THE REPRESENTATION OF FOOD CULTURE IN FORD MADOX FORD, GERTRUDE STEIN AND VIRGINIA WOOLF

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis addresses the literary representation of food in the period from 1900 through 1945 in the work of Ford Madox Ford, Gertrude Stein and Virginia Woolf. Taking up nineteenth-century fascinations with sensual and aesthetic taste, these authors explore the implications of food preparation and consumption in Britain, America and France. They use representations of everyday culinary practices as a way to examine articulations of anxiety about the state of civilization, a fear that is amplified and altered by both World Wars. The thesis approaches the question of the significance of food to literary modernism in two ways. The first is a theoretical analysis of modernist ways of thinking about the dialectic between the concepts of civilization and barbarism. The second is grounded in material history, establishing the contexts and conditions of food culture in the first half of the twentieth century. Drawing on sociological thinking from Norbert Elias's conception of the civilizing process and Pierre Bourdieu's theory of distinction, and using a combined methodology of close reading, biographical and historical analysis, I show that food acts as a lens for these authors' ideas about civil society and modernity.

My original contribution to knowledge is threefold. The first is my interpretation of 'culinary Impressionism' as an extension and repositioning of current scholarly thinking about Ford's literary Impressionism. The second is my reading of Stein's and Toklas's jointly-authored cookbook draft as evidence of their collaboration. This forms the crux of my argument about Stein adapting domestic culinary techniques into her other writing. The third is in my chapter on Virginia Woolf. My original archival research shows that in *A Room of One's Own* Woolf's representation of the financial and culinary difference between men's and women's dining in colleges at the University of Cambridge is justified and the material inequality was in fact worse than previously understood. I argue that the disparity in institutional food intensifies Woolf's later reimagining of the term 'civilization' in *Three Guineas*. While drawing on the work of modernist studies scholars on modernism and the everyday, civilization, and food, my project is unique in demonstrating that food reflects modernist conceptions of civilization and barbarism. My thesis contributes to the understanding of transatlantic aesthetics and gendered productions of modernism by illuminating the centrality of agriculture, cookery, domestic work and institutional dining to modernist authors.

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Many conferences served to crystalize my ideas. I presented parts of my Woolf chapter at the 2016 and 2017 annual International Virginia Woolf Conferences and received supportive suggestions from Christine Froula and Alice Staveley, among others. I also presented a part of my Ford chapter at the Historical Modernisms Symposium in 2016 where conversations with Finn Fordham and Laura Marcus assisted me in deepening my reading of certain passages.

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INTRODUCTION: THE TASTE OF CIVILIZATION: MODERNISM AND FOOD

> When we meet in the flesh we speak with the same accent; use knives and forks in the same way; expect maids to cook dinner and wash up after dinner; and can talk during dinner without much difficulty about politics and people; war and peace; barbarism and civilization.
>
> – Virginia Woolf[1]

In the twentieth century, changes to food were a major part of British and American technological and social developments. All pointed towards swiftness and urbanization. The speeding up of agricultural and processed food production led to the proliferation of cafés and restaurants in cities. This also correlated with the increased number of women working, walking, driving and shopping in towns, the decline of the family meal eaten at home, and, in Britain, the Victorian tradition of tea-time. All of these changed the way British and American individuals and writers related to food. Modernist writers found that these changes in food preparation and consumption provided an opportunity to reflect on society, memory, identity, history and authorial creativity.

Using a combined methodology of close reading, cultural theory, historiography and biography, this thesis explores the life and work of three authors whose writing about food illuminates their conceptions of civilization and barbarism. For Ford Madox Ford (1873-1939), Gertrude Stein (1874-1946) and Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), representations of food provide an occasion to consider how the culinary arts of peacetime (the privations of both World Wars strained the food supply in Britain, America and France) influence and shape early twentieth-century attitudes. Examining

[1] Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* in *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas*, ed. Morag Shiach (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 155. Hereafter cited as *Three Guineas*.

works by Ford, Stein and Woolf, I show that time and again it is food—its growing, preparing, serving and eating— that shapes their discussions about civilization and barbarism in relation to nationhood, domesticity, aesthetics and gender in England, France and America.

In this introduction, I briefly outline the contributions of my four chapters and I explore the critical and theoretical background for my argument as it spreads across them. Examining definitions of civilization and barbarism through the lens of history and sociology I show how these concepts are interlinked with food behaviours and associations. For the German sociologist Norbert Elias, the regulation of the body is the basis for the discussion of civilization. Elias's *The Civilizing Process* describes how 'manners' books from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century transform the rules for bodily habits in society. Charting the development of manners provides the link for food, the body, and our understanding of the operations of social norms and behaviours over time.

A related idea, of modernist primitivism, derives in part from modernist ideas about expression and authenticity, and also from anthropological studies. Primitivism as an aesthetic movement strives for access to the state of 'primitive' man and all the liberating potential of that unrestricted state. It manifests itself in breaking social taboos against the transgression of boundaries and arrangement of the body: who sees it, what is done with it, and what it consumes. Mary Douglas's anthropological work, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, explores what is put away or kept out from the body and the home, for the sake of social nicety or hygiene. Douglas argues that the rejection or re-ordering of dirt or 'matter out of place' is actually a

creative act, noting the ambiguities and overlaps between the sacred and profane, the clean and the unhygienic, with regards to dietary laws practiced by different 'primitive' communities.[2] This positive aesthetic reorganization is part of the establishment of the culture of primitive societies. Whether in reference to primitive societies or in modernist representations of primitivism in the adoption of tribal art and sculpture, the body's boundaries also play a role in the modernist conception of civilization and eating.

Finally, I will look briefly at how the concept of nationhood is an intrinsic part of my discussion about culinary civilization in Ford, Stein and Woolf's work. Food and national character are connected with ideas of technological and sociological progress. Food helps Ford, Stein, and Woolf to form their notions of civilization with regards to industrialism, agriculture, domesticity, education and gender.

The introduction is followed by my first chapter, 'Cultures of Food and Eating', which establishes the contextual background of food culture and food history in early twentieth-century England, France and America. The remaining three chapters are divided by author and theme: 'Culinary Impressionism: Ford Madox Ford, Civilization, Agrarianism and Cookery', 'Serving the meals: Gertrude Stein and Domesticity' and 'Apples and Kitchens: The Aesthetics and Politics of Modern Dining in Virginia Woolf'. I have chosen to focus on Ford, Stein and Woolf because their work demonstrates three different and productive ways of thinking about food and modernism in relation to twentieth century conceptions of civilization, culture and society. Each of my three authors is concerned with the historicity of food and its social effects. Over time, they represent that generation of modernist figures who embody the

[2] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* [1966] (New York: Routledge, 2001), 36.

evolution from the Victorian period into the twentieth century. Like many modernist writers, they grew up at the end of the nineteenth century, and 'were very aware of themselves as "transitional"', being in-between centuries and the periods which encompass such diverse movements as Aestheticism, Decadence and Modernism.[3]

Of the three authors, Ford is most embedded in the practice of agriculture and cookery. He grew his own produce and cooked his own food whenever he could. He correlated this culinary labour with his literary power. Ford is also the most explicitly transnational in his culinary and political outlook. An Englishman of German heritage who idealized, and lived in, France and America, Ford identifies more with French culinary practices than those of the English. He lambasts the model of restrained, upper-middle-class English masculinity symbolized in the undercooked English roast beef dishes which feature in *The Good Soldier* and the *Parade's End* tetralogy. Yet personal, communal and national redemption can be found through instances of sharing food during the war. His passion for local produce is also the foundation for the idea of a shared culture of food as it is transported around the world on what Ford saw as a modern version of the Great Trade Route.

Stein never cooked herself, but observed her hired cooks, and helped her partner Alice B. Toklas in sketching out an early draft, titled 'We Eat', of what later became the *Alice B. Toklas Cookbook* (published in 1954, eight years after Stein's death). Through her writing about cooks and servants in *Three Lives*, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* and *Everybody's Autobiography*, Stein uses domestic cookery to reframe her own modernist authority. For Stein, traditional roles of cooks and servants played a pivotal

[3] 'Introduction', Laura Marcus, Michèle Mendelssohn and Kirsten Shepherd-Barr, eds. *Late Victorian into Modern* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 3.

role in the ostensible civilization of her countries of residence and she adapts the language of cookery into her writing about nations, history and art.

Woolf, too, considers the aesthetic, social and political associations of cooking and eating and its impact on women. In 'Sketch of the Past', she looks back at the tea-time serving rituals she participated in during her Victorian childhood. She considers how this reserved behaviour crystallized itself in some of her early writing, aspects of which remain with her throughout her life. Food politics emerge in Woolf's discussion of the role of private and institutional meals in establishing commensality or the exclusion of women from participating fully in society in *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas*, leading to her understanding that food is a part of what 'civilization' means for women.

In addition, these authors also demonstrate a diversity of forms through which they represent food, from Ford's literary and culinary Impressionism to Woolf's narrative interiority and literary still lifes to Stein's abstract poetry and experiments with unreliable narrative autobiography.[4] These authors' representations of cooking, dining, of meals eaten by people of all classes, whether at home with friends and family or alone on a bus, are all crucial scenes in the development of twentieth-century modernist experimentation with interiority, impressionism and abstraction.

My original contribution to knowledge is threefold, found within my chapters on Ford, Stein and Woolf. I demonstrate how Ford's literary Impressionism can be seen in a different light, through his technique of what I call 'culinary Impressionism', which amplifies the role of food in Ford's writing. Ford's Impressionism, a subjective attempt

[4] The *OED* notes that the plural of still life is still lifes. 'Still life', *Oxford English Dictionary* online. 5 December 2017.

to capture sensations and impressions as they occur, is made synesthetic, incorporating fragments of recipes, memories of meals, and is used throughout his work. With literary analysis and biographical reading I show how Ford's culinary Impressionism is based on both practical and idealistic theories of cookery, agriculture and story-telling. In the case of Stein, I draw critical attention to her collaborative participation in culinary writing in an almost entirely overlooked unpublished cookbook draft, 'We Eat,' written with Toklas. Thirdly, for Woolf, I have carried out archival research which shows that the inequality of institutional food at a men's and a women's college at the University of Cambridge was even worse than previously suspected. I use this material to argue that Woolf employs her derogatory description of this food in *A Room of One's Own* to provoke women into critiquing the culinary and practical conditions of their education.

Many other modernist and avant-garde authors, such as F. T. Marinetti, James Joyce, Katherine Mansfield, D. H. Lawrence, Ezra Pound, George Orwell, H.G. Wells and T. S. Eliot, also write about food, but because their work on food either does not address questions of civilization and barbarism or does so only tangentially, I do not discuss them in detail here.

The literary history of food is intertwined with and reflective of the cultural history of food because food is an expression of culture. Literature, culture and food intersect in discussions of taste and this is particularly heightened in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As Denise Gigante remarks:

> All the major Enlightenment philosophers of taste were involved in the civilizing process of sublimating the tasteful essence of selfhood from its own matter and motions, appetites and aversion, passions and physical sensibilities. Above all, what the culture of taste energetically resisted was the idea that human beings were

> propelled not by natural cravings for virtue, beauty, and truth, but by appetites that could not be civilized or distinguished from those of brutes.[5]

Gigante believes that nineteenth-century literature represents the point when widespread middle-class consumerism led to an overturning of 'the philosophical hierarchy of the senses, and even philosophy itself, through a self-conscious mode of expression that takes place through the consumer objects—food, clothes, china—that fill the pages of Victorian fiction'.[6] Themes of appetite and consumption dominate literary food studies, and Ford, Stein and Woolf also see food as defining social patterns.

In the relatively new field of food studies, the popular surge in commodity histories[7] and recent critical work on what has been termed 'critical eating studies' in literature touches on the relation or subjection of the body to the dominant culture. Kyla Tompkins invented this term, which she argues contains a dark underside:

> [C]ritical eating studies theorizes a flexible and circular relation between the self and the social world in order to imagine a dialogic in which we—reader and text, self and other, animal and human—recognize our bodies as vulnerable to each other in ways that are terrible—that is full of terror—and, at other times, politically productive. [8]

In nineteenth-century America, which was undergoing challenges to conceptions of national and racial identity, literary representations of eating dissolve social, biological and racial boundaries, as Tompkins argues. Jennifer Fleissner, in a close reading of Henry James's 1898 novella *In the Cage*, argues that James, traditionally considered to be more interested in aesthetic taste than food, can show us 'ways in which the two forms of taste [the bodily and the aesthetic] interact rather than opposing

[5] Denise Gigante, *Taste: A Literary History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 2-3.
[6] Gigante, 161.
[7] Bruce Robbins notes the trend of single-subject, popular and academic 'Commodity Histories' often making hyperbolic claims for the importance of a single foodstuff like sugar, salt or garlic. Bruce Robbins, 'Commodity Histories', *PMLA* 120 (2005), 454-463.
[8] Kyla Tompkins, *Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the 19th Century* (New York: NYU Press, 2013), 3.

one another'. James, in 'transforming more valorized human activities—most notably, art itself—into instances of gustation', creates opportunities for exploring both the aesthetic and the body's need for eating.[9] These critical works are specifically relevant to the sociology and aesthetics of the nineteenth century. But they have a bearing on my thesis, since Ford, Stein and Woolf inherited and drew on nineteenth-century ideologies in their twentieth-century work. Aspects of these arguments about the body and food will be relevant to later discussions about culture and the body in relation to modernism.

Within modernist studies, food and modernist form has also been addressed in recent work by Alison Carruth on American food and power, Aimee Gaston on Katherine Mansfield, Scott McCracken on Dorothy Richardson and tea-rooms, and Sandra Gilbert's broader overview of the history of food in literature, which contains a section on modernism.[10] Maria Christou's recent monograph *Eating Otherwise: the Philosophy of Food in Twentieth-Century Literature* (2017) considers the philosophical equivalent of culinary determinism, asking how being and subjectivity are related to the food one eats, and whether the conception of being can be rooted in the material reality of food in modernism and post-modernism. My work differs from these, in that, although I do address food and identity through specific national and sociological histories, I also show how a broader, transatlantic understanding of food's role developed for these representative modernists. The subject of food involves their making

[9] Jennifer L. Fleissner, 'Henry James's Art of Eating', *ELH* 75 (2008), 28.
[10] Allison Carruth, *Global Appetites: American Power and the Literature of Food* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), Aimee Gaston, 'Katherine Mansfield's Literary Snack', *Journal of New Zealand Literature* 31.2 (2013), 163-182; Scott McCracken, *Masculinities, Modernist Fiction and the Urban Public Sphere* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); Sandra Gilbert, *The Culinary Imagination* (New York: W.W. Norton: 2014). Lisa Angelella's unpublished doctoral dissertation, 'Alimentary Modernism' (University of Iowa, 2009), argues that food moments and scenes present a theory of subjectivity in modernism.

connections between subjective experience, and the agricultural, domestic and gendered aspects of modern life as represented in their written work.

Critics such as Liesl Olson and Bryony Randall have included food in their discussions of the ordinary and the everyday, as part of their appreciation of daily time and narrative temporality in Joyce's, Woolf's and Stein's work.[11] While there has recently been some focus on the relationship of modernism to civilization, there remains a gap in the literature discussing food with regards to this subject. Lucy McDiarmid's *Saving Civilization: Yeats, Eliot and Auden Between the Wars* (1984), Brian Shaffer's *The Blinding Torch: Modern British Fiction and the Discourse of Civilization* (1993), and Christine Froula's *Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Avant-Garde: War, Civilization, Modernity* (2005) all centre on modernism's representation of, and vision for, civilization. Hazel Hutchison's *The War That Used Up Words: American Writers and the First World War* (2015), and Mark Greif's *The Age of the Crisis of Man* (2015) examine the sense of decline of civilization in American attitudes to the First World War and the late interwar and post-Second World War period. However, these works have not examined the political and aesthetic implications of agriculture, domesticity, aesthetics, gender and food in relation to modernist conceptions of civilization. Some of my arguments will draw on the work of these critics, as well as the established tradition of thinking about food that lies in anthropology and cultural studies.

[11] Michael Sheringham's work on the quotidian surveys a wide range of theoretical approaches to this concept: *Everyday Life: Theories and Practice from Surrealism to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). Liesl Olson, in *Modernism and the Ordinary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) and Bryony Randall in *Modernism, Daily Time and Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), both argue for the centrality of ordinary or everyday experience in modernist fiction. Michael Sayeau considers ordinariness as part of the 'anti-evental' turn of narrative in modernist fiction: 'In resisting the event, [modernist writers] brought to mimetic light forms of time that were in various ways becoming culturally prevalent during their periods of composition'. Michael Sayeau, *Against the Event: The Everyday and Evolution of Modernist Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 36.

Going beyond this in my study of modernism and food, this thesis will make an original contribution to modernist studies in considering the twentieth-century aesthetic, sociological and political conceptions of civilization, barbarism and primitivism through the lens of food.

Civilization, barbarism and history

There is no objective way to define civilization and barbarism; they are terms shaped and affected by other sociological and aesthetic ideas of the time. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, European philosophers and historians began to doubt the received Hegelian idea of Western history as a continually developing line of progress. In philosophy, history and anthropology the idea of the cyclical progress and regress of societies over time was making headway. Following Nietzsche's argument that history was cyclical and violence inevitable, the German historian Oswald Spengler contended in *The Decline of the West* that civilizations progressed or declined in a pre-determined set of cycles.[12] Spengler's ideas were further developed and popularized by the British historian Arnold Toynbee in *A Study of History* (1934-9), which predicted the imminent end of Western civilization, a powerfully suggestive idea that appeared to many to be confirmed by the rise of fascism across Europe.[13] The interwar period in America saw a similar development in reaction against American pragmatism and progressivism. The influx of refugees from Nazi persecution and the publication of works like Lewis

[12] Spengler's *The Decline of the West* was published in German in 1918 and published in English in 1926-8.

[13] It is also relevant to note the rise of popular interest in archaeological research and discoveries of different civilizations in the Middle East in the period 1900-1914 and the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb in 1922 by English archaeologist Howard Carter. Several books chart modernism's interest in classical civilization including Diana Collecott, *H.D. and Sapphic Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Theodore Koulouris, *Hellenism and Loss in the Work of Virginia Woolf,* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011); Katarina Stergiopolou, *Towards a Modernist Hellenism: Ezra Pound, H.D., and the Translation of Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

Mumford's *Renewal of Life* series, beginning with *Technics and Civilization* (1934), stimulated consideration of the moral outcomes of the current state of political and technological development.

In early twentieth-century Europe and America, many of the discussions about civilization, barbarism and primitivism are connected by questions about rules governing behaviour and the body. Elias's *The Civilizing Process* shows how throughout western European history, the body has gradually been eliminated from polite discussion and behaviours. According to Elias, bodily habits become the signifiers of status within human society and self-constraint of the body is the utmost indicator of social prestige. The physical impulses to smell and touch are transmuted into pleasure from seeing:

> It has been shown elsewhere how the use of the sense of smell, the tendency to sniff at food or other things, has come to be restricted as something animal-like. […] In a similar way to the ear, and perhaps even more so, [the eye] has become a mediator of pleasure, precisely because the direct satisfaction of the desire for pleasure has been hemmed in by a multitude of barriers and prohibitions. [14]

The body is a central subject for the twentieth century and authors repeatedly use the body's relationship with food as a means of coming to terms with its destructive and creative powers. Outside of Ford, Stein and Woolf, this is also seen in Knut Hamsun's expression of the agony of malnutrition in *Hunger* to the emphasis on physical violence and efficiency in F. T. Marinetti's *Futurist Cookbook* to the consumption of Marcel Proust's memory-triggering madeleine in *In Search of Lost Time.* In these works too food stimulates perceptions of the world in physical and aesthetic terms.

The term civilization is used most often in this thesis to refer to an idealized vision of how it is believed a group of people should or do live in any given period of

[14] Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process, vol. I: The History of Manners*, trans. Edmund Jephcott [1939] (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 171.

time. This vision is subjective and depends on the perspective of the dominant social group. Etymologically, as Raymond Williams points out, this definition of civilization is based on Enlightenment ideas about human progress: encompassing both the 'sense of historical process' and celebrating 'the associated sense of modernity: an achieved condition of refinement and order'.[15] Civilization is thus defined both by positive attributes, and also by what it is not: the rudeness and chaos associated with barbarism. Barbarism, too, is defined by what it is not: it is uncivilized. In this sense barbarism is understood within anthropological contexts to relate to the sociological and technological progression of developing societies; barbarism is perceived as a more advanced stage than savagery. Williams notes that 'in 1871 the American Lewis Morgan, a pioneer in linguistic studies of kinship, influentially defined three stages as exemplified in the title of his work: *Ancient Society; or Researches in the Line of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization'*.[16]

For writers in the early twentieth century, barbarism encapsulated both an internal, psychological threat—the barbaric element that exists within all of us—and the external threat posed to society by political forces seeking to destroy the world order. Freud wrote that 'The inclination to aggression is an original, self-subsisting instinctual disposition in man, and […] it constitutes the greatest impediment to civilization'.[17] Yet as Maria Boletsi argues, there are potentially generative aspects to the powerful, primal terms barbarism and barbarians, reading them as 'carry[ing] a performative force with a

[15] Raymond Williams, 'Civilization', *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Revised Edition (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 58.
[16] Williams, 'Anthropology', *Keywords*, 39.
[17] Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* [1930] (New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 1961), 69.

transgressive potential'. [18] Nietzsche saw the potential barbarians of the twentieth century as 'a stronger species' than European men (whom he compares to 'intelligent slave animals'), 'capable of the greatest severity towards themselves' and possessing enormous will power.[19]

Walter Benjamin's aphorism that 'there is no document of civilization that is not also a document of barbarism' has become a commonplace of modernist thinking about history and legacies.[20] The modernist interpretation of history tends to subvert historical greatness, uncovering the abuses of power and agonies and labour that contribute to great things. Yet, as Brett Nielson argues, Benjamin could only make this observation from his specifically modern perspective. Barbarism disrupts narratives of progress and 'generates a different set of fantasies, involving not projections of origin or closure but anxieties of violence and social upheaval'.[21] These anxieties are best represented in the incoherence of barbarism itself. Neilson notes the etymology of barbarism is derived from 'the ancient Greek βαρβαρος, meaning foreign, or literally "stuttering", a name given by the Greeks to express the sound of foreign languages'.[22] Edith Hall writes:

> The Greek term *barbaros*, by the fifth century used both as a noun and an adjective, was ironically oriental in origin, and formed by reduplicative onomatopoeia. Originally it was simply an adjective representing the sound of incomprehensible speech.[23]

[18] Maria Boletsi, *Barbarism and its Discontents* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 3.
[19] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1968), 458, 459.
[20] Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the philosophy of history' [1940], *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zorn (London: Pimlico, 1999), 248.
[21] Brett Neilson, 'Barbarism/Modernity: Notes on Barbarism', *Textual Practice* Vol.13 (1999), 3.
[22] Neilson, 6.
[23] Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition Through Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford Classical Monographs, 1989), 4.

Hall also notes the emphasis on the barbarian as other: 'There are similar words in several early oriental languages, especially the Babylonian-Sumerian *barbaru*, 'foreigner'.[24] Both Ford and Woolf were well aware of the political threat to civilization, as they understood it, in the 1930s and 1940s. It became all the more urgent to discuss civilization and its principles which were under threat from, as Leonard Woolf put it in the title of his 1939 book on the state of western civilization, *Barbarians Within and Without*.[25]

In aesthetics, the rise of primitivism in European art, embraced by Gauguin, Matisse and Picasso among others, spread across the arts into music, dance, drama and literature. The modernist interest in primitivism is intrinsically linked to twentieth-century anthropological studies. And in some cases, modernists conceptualize the more anthropological term 'primitive' as interchangeable with 'barbaric', with its associations of the danger of consumption of raw meat, or even of human sacrifice.

In modernist aesthetics, primitivism draws attention to the body through the distortion and nakedness associated with African tribal art. However, many modernists were interested in accessing the primitive as a form of original expression that might provide some return to a primal aesthetic or state of being, inspired by and incorporating images of the human form and daily life from Africa and the Caribbean. Audiences at the first Post-Impressionist exhibition in London 1910 were struck by the anti-realist, abstract nature of some of this art. A riot broke out in the horrified audience at the 1913 Paris premiere of Igor Stravinsky's ballet *The Rite of Spring* with choreography by

[24] Hall, 4, note 5.
[25] This is the title of the work published in America by Harcourt Brace & Co. The British title, published by Left Book Club, Victor Gollancz in the same year as *Barbarians at the Gate*.

Vaslav Nijinsky, which depicted scenes of tribal rituals, concluding with a young girl dancing herself to death. Yet anthropology and sociology's identification of food as deeply interconnected with human culture from the earliest moments of hunting, gathering and cooking in human history is relevant to modernist interpretations of 'primitive' life and art.

Defining civilization

Like barbarism, the problem with being civilized is that it depends on the perspective of the observer. Elias's 'The History of Manners,' the first volume of *The Civilizing Process*, begins with a differentiation between two common meanings of 'civilization', the first a kind of cataloguing of 'a wide variety of facts: from the level of technology, to the type of manners, to the development of scientific knowledge, to religious ideas and customs' in different societies. [26] The second meaning is thornier, and, as Elias implies, is weighted with the sense of superiority of Western civilizations (in the sense of objectively categorized societies) to other more 'primitive' ones:

> But when one examines what the general function of the concept of civilization really is […] one starts with a very simple discovery: this concept expresses the self-consciousness of the West. One could even say: the national consciousness. It sums up everything in which Western society of the last two or three centuries believes itself superior to earlier societies or 'more primitive' contemporary ones. By this term Western society seeks to describe what constitutes its special character and what it is proud of: the level of *its* technology, the nature of *its* manners, the development of *its* scientific knowledge or view of the world, and much more.[27]

Thus 'civilization', in the modernist period, is an especially difficult term to pin down because it was a term in transition. It is not always clear which usage is intended and even if one usage is intended, another may be understood. The very self-awareness that

[26] Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 5. Emphasis Elias's.
[27] Elias, 5.

comes from education and sociality is often a characteristic of being 'civilized' in Elias's view.

In any discussion of civilization, barbarism and primitivism there is an underlying dichotomy of 'us' versus 'them'; the hierarchical understanding that 'our' civilization is the 'best' civilization, as the French historian Lucien Febvre's essay, '*Civilisation*: Evolution of a Word and a Group of Ideas', suggests. Febvre writes: 'when we are talking about the progress, failures, greatness and weakness of civilization we do have a value judgment in mind'. The judgment is that our civilization 'is in itself something great and beautiful […] better, both morally and materially speaking, than anything outside it—savagery, barbarity, or semi-civilization'.[28] Christine Froula calls this second, value-oriented judgment, 'ethnocentric'.[29] Froula argues that 'Bloomsbury registers a convergence of ethnocentric self-critique with the ethnographic recognition of civilizations plural'.[30] The constant blurring between the ethnographic and the ethnocentric aspects makes discussion of the usage of the term difficult, particularly in regard to food, which is often found at the convergence of descriptive social acts and moral judgments about the type, preparation and consumption of food.

The hierarchies of taste

Discussions about civilized and barbaric behaviour describe the regulation of the body's interaction with the world. For the philosopher Merleau-Ponty, who calls into question the Cartesian duality of body and mind in the *Phenomenology of Perception*

[28] Lucien Febvre, '*Civilisation*: Evolution of a Word and a Group of Ideas' in *A New Kind of History: From the Writings of Febvre*, ed. Peter Burke, trans. K. Folca (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), 220.
[29] Christine Froula, *Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Avant-Garde: War, Civilization, Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 327, footnote 7.
[30] Froula, 328.

(1945), it is through the body that humans encounter knowledge and the world. The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu would agree. Bourdieu argued that a hierarchy of taste serves merely to reinforce class hierarchies; all distinctions contain value judgements meant to differentiate between classes, and ultimately erase the body. As he writes in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement* [sic] *of Taste,* it is essential to return to the body's consumption of food:

> One cannot fully understand cultural practices unless 'culture', in the restricted, sense of ordinary usage, is brought back into 'culture' in the anthropological sense, and the elaborate taste for the most refined objects is reconnected with the elementary taste for the flavours of food.[31]

Like 'culture', taste must also be brought back to the body in order to understand it. Both in the gustatory sense and in the aesthetic sense, taste requires the ability to deploy one's education and judgment about the most ordinary, everyday things, exercising sensibility and sensation. Both kinds of tastes also become internalized and repeated throughout class and cultural distinctions. Gustatory taste also involves another level of subjectivity in the more intimate sensations of consumption. To pay attention to the physical processes of the taste buds and the nose inhaling scents requires sensitivity: the payoff is experiencing a complexity of flavours and textures. Yet physical taste draws on the aesthetic realm as well because humans do not all taste and smell with the same degree of sensitivity and discernment—this leads to the art of gastronomy and to the gourmand who practices this art. Gourmands acquire cultural distinction, but gustatory taste requires only ingredients and a discerning palate.

[31] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 1.

In eighteenth-century France, following the upheaval of the Revolution, there followed a transformation of taste. With the development of restaurants and eating outside of the home that was to spread to Britain and the United States also came the rise of gastronomy. One of the most celebrated French gourmands and scholars of gastronomy, Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (1755-1826), a lawyer by profession, describes the sensations of taste and explores definitions of *gourmandism* in his celebrated collection of anecdotes and musings, *Physiologie du gout*, or in English: *The Physiology of Taste: or Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy* (1825). For Brillat-Savarin, *gourmandism* 'unites an Attic elegance with Roman luxury and French subtlety': it 'is an impassioned, considered, and habitual preference for whatever pleases the taste' and 'is the enemy of overindulgence'.[32] Brillat-Savarin witnessed the shift in French culinary culture. As Bill Buford puts it, in between the 1754 birth of Antoine Beauvilliers, the inventor of the restaurant, and the 1833 publication of one of the most influential books of French cookery, Antonin Carême's *L'Art de la cuisine française*, 'there was Brillat, tasting, making notes, reading, attending chemistry lectures, reflecting, trying to make sense of it all'.[33]

Brillat-Savarin is also a notable figure in the life of Stein and Toklas, who enjoyed their vacations in Belley, a small town in southeastern France that was his birthplace. In an anecdote from *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, Toklas and Stein find their hotel in Belley so pleasant that they decide against joining the Picassos at Antibes as originally planned:

[32] Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, *The Physiology of Taste: or Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy*, trans. and ed. by M.F.K. Fisher (New York: Everyman, 2009), 155.
[33] Bill Buford, Introduction, *The Physiology of Taste*, x.

> In the meanwhile the Picassos wanted to know what had become of us. We replied that we were in Belley. We found that Belley was the birthplace of Brillat–Savarin. We now in Bilignin are enjoying using the furniture from the house in Brillat–Savarin which house belongs to the owner of this house.[34]

Brillat–Savarin was a local hero in Belley: he also served as its mayor for a time. In September 1927, a monument to him was erected in the town. Stein facetiously wrote of this event to Carl Van Vechten:

> I do wish you would come over and see us [*sic*] do come we are putting up a bust for Brillat Savarin [*sic*] on the 15 of September you could just make it, it is a nice little town Belley almost as nice as New York and quite as peaceful.[35]

They liked Belley so much that they secured a lease on a house in 1929. Though they moved away to the Bugey in 1939, traces of Brillat-Savarin remained in their lives. In 1943, Stein and Toklas considered translating a manuscript cookbook by Lucien Tendret, who was the nephew of Brillat-Savarin and the author of *La Table au Pays de Brillat-Savarin* (1882), although the project was dropped because it was impractical. According to Toklas: 'The recipes are exciting to read but are not useful even today'.[36] Thus it is highly likely that Toklas at least was familiar with Brillat-Savarin's work, as well as with many other significant French cookbooks. Toklas reports in her *Cook Book* that every Christmas Stein would give her a major cookbook, even during the Second World War: 'When all communication with Paris was forbidden, the 1,479 pages of

[34] Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (London: Penguin, 2001), 241. Hereafter cited as *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*.
[35] Gertrude Stein to Carl Van Vechten, 11 August 1927, *The Letters of Gertrude Stein and Carl Van Vechten 1913-1946*, ed. Edward Burns (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 152. Burns notes that the bust was put up on 11 September 1927, note 1, 153.
[36] Alice B. Toklas, *The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book* (London: Brilliance Books, 1983), 215-16. Hereafter cited as Toklas, *Cook Book*.

Montagne's and Salle's *The Great Book of the Kitchen* passed across the line with more intelligence than is usually credited to inanimate objects'.[37]

Brillat-Savarin's book is full of diverse writings, from the famous aphorism, 'tell me what you eat, and I shall tell you what you are' to the less well-known, but more vivid, 'A dinner which ends without cheese is like a beautiful woman with only one eye'.[38] In his 'Analysis of the Sensation of Tasting', Brillat-Savarin describes the physiological elements of taste, from 'the direct sensation' 'produced from the immediate operations of the organs of the mouth' to the 'complete sensation': 'which arises when the food leaves its original position, passes to the back of the mouth, and attacks the whole organ with its taste and aroma' and the 'reflective sensation' 'which one's spirit forms from the impressions which have been transmitted to it by the mouth'.[39] He goes on to reflect synesthetically:

> Taste can be double, and even multiple, in succession, so that in a single mouthful a second and sometimes a third sensation can be realized; they fade gradually, and are called aftertaste, perfume, or aroma. It is the same way as, when a basic note is sounded, an attentive ear distinguishes in it one or more series of other consonant tones, whose number has not yet been correctly estimated.[40]

Ford was also very familiar with Brillat-Savarin, citing the latter's perfect meal in his memoir *Return to Yesterday* (1931) as consisting of a small slice of *turbot au gratin*, bread and butter and a glass of sherry. Brillat-Savarin's cross-sensory description in *The Physiology of Taste* prefigures Ford's more complex metaphor of tasting resembling fugal music, which appeared in his posthumously-published article in American *Vogue*,

[37] Toklas, *Cook Book*, 215.
[38] Brillat-Savarin, 15-16.
[39] Brillat-Savarin, 50.
[40] Brillat-Savarin, 51-2.

'Dinner with Turbot' (1939), where Brillat-Savarin's ideal meal appears again. In his article Ford also perceives flavours as variations of a single theme that are played over each other, overlapping and layering their tones, leading to that transcendent feeling of pleasure evoked both by beautiful music and food.

While affect and pleasure are dominant themes in discussions of taste, it is clear that both in the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries an attentive, descriptive focus on taste has links to Ford's literary Impressionism and to the philosophical method of phenomenology. Philosophy, from Descartes to Hume to Kant, dominates taste discourse because it evaluates how humans perceive their various senses and encounters with the world. Thus Brillat-Savarin's aphorism, 'tell me what you eat and I'll tell you what you are' is explicitly linked to a Cartesian interpretation of the world through subjective reflection, 'I think therefore I am'. Phenomenology, originating with Edmund Husserl, can be summarized as a method to describe phenomena, bracketing out the emotional and sentimental associations of objects, and focusing purely on sensation in order to better understand experience. This can clearly be practised on any food object and phenomenology's precision can be linked to attentiveness to taste, texture, smell, temperature and so on in Ford's and Brillat-Savarin's writing.

Jessie Matz also sees some overlapping elements between phenomenology and Impressionism that are relevant to my discussion of Ford's culinary Impressionism in its connections to memory. Matz articulates the association between the two methods:

> Impressionism seeks generally to suggest atmosphere and mood; it subordinates plot, fixes moments, fragments form, and intensifies affective response; it fuses subject and object, finds truth in appearances, and evokes the dynamic feeling – the 'flow, energy, vibrancy' – of life itself. Comparing these powers to aspects of the philosophies of William James, Henri Bergson, and Edmund Husserl, critics have called Impressionism a literary phenomenology, attributing to it the advent

> of modernism, the *nouveau roman*, and ultimately the style we read most often today.[41]

Though he believes Impressionist writers like James, Conrad and Woolf and philosophers like Merleau-Ponty and Husserl 'share the mediatory impulse summed up in the impression', Matz rejects the idea that Impressionism can be somehow be equated with phenomenology. He argues, 'the Impressionist writer […] could never aspire to transcend error in the manner of his or philosophical counterpart', but also views phenomenology's distinction between subject and the world with ambivalence.[42] What is relevant here is that Ford's and Woolf's approach to taste can be categorized by that same ambivalence about the objectivity of the body's sensory apparatus and the development of taste as an aesthetic category. Because phenomenology lets us down in this instance, Norbert Elias's and Pierre Bourdieu's sociological work on 'the civilizing process' and on French notions of 'distinction' are more relevant to my study in the context of the exchange of culture between three countries, especially because Britain and the United States borrow their idea of high culture and sophisticated cuisine so readily from France in the modern period. Ford and Stein lived in and loved France and French food, and Woolf, often visiting France, also sent her cook Nellie to learn French cooking from the celebrity chef Marcel Boulestin when he set up courses in Fortnum and Mason's department store in London.[43]

In Britain, French cuisine served as a cultural marker both for aesthetic taste and ostentation, playing a large part in the evolution of social snobbery in upholding the

[41] Jesse Matz, *Literary Impressionism and Modernist Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 14.
[42] Matz, 27.
[43] Alison Light, *Mrs Woolf and the Servants* (London: Penguin, 2008), 174.

importance of aesthetic tradition. As Gigante writes: 'ostentation was the sign of the snob, and in the Victorian novel snobs abound'. [44] She chronicles the reversal of the term's etymology in the nineteenth century – where it moved from meaning, originally, a socially inferior person, to a middle-class person who looks down on those seen as inferior: 'this semantic inversion is epitomized in the middle-class snob of the nineteenth-century novel, who pretends to a higher social status, or apes a more sophisticated taste, than he or she can economically afford'.[45] These anxieties then led to competitive material consumption and display and the writing of cookbooks and guidebooks aimed at those in the middle classes competing in the new social framework of dinner parties and servants. Gigante sees this competition in the dinner parties in Thackeray's 1848 novel *Book of Snobs* and Dickens's 1865 *Our Mutual Friend*.[46] Gigante captures the delicate balance between consumption and anxiety about ignorance and display in matters of taste in Victorian Britain:

> The *ancient regime* of taste based on the aristocratic *je ne sais quoi* of French neoclassicism, and adapted to the British discourse of taste by way of the connoisseur, transforms into its antithetical horizon: the benighted don't-know-don't-care philistinism of Victorian England. In the nineteenth-century aesthetic of snobbery, in other words, the auratic *je ne sais quoi* of the aesthetic connoisseur yields to the truly befuddled condition of the middle-class snob. Taste had always been an appropriate metaphor for a kind of subjective pleasure that does not submit to objective laws, and in the end these Dickensian snobs find that it cannot be packaged, exchanged, or bought. Taste is ever on the wind from middle-class consumers of the nineteenth-century novel, who cling to the language of the commodity as their best means of self-expression. In a sea of unbounded consumption, they not only do not know what genuinely counts as tasteful: they don't even know that they don't know. As a result, they adopt the only solution left, which is snobbery.[47]

[44] Gigante, 176.
[45] Gigante, 176.
[46] Gigate, 177.
[47] Gigante, 180.

This ignorance and panicked snobbery is part of the nineteenth-century legacy of taste and history that Ford, Stein and Woolf inherit, sometimes upholding and internalizing traditional ideas, sometimes lampooning these in their work. Often they venture into new realms of culinary and aesthetic literary experimentation by paying attention to the body's encounters with food in domestic spaces and in the world in ways that are affected by changing social and technological norms.

All three authors embrace the connection between a person's taste in food and his or her place in the social hierarchy in slightly different ways. For Ford, food is undoubtedly imbued with cultural capital, but also with national, moral, creative and even spiritual capital. It is such a potent factor in one's life that the way it is sourced, locally and humanely, and the way it is cooked, with knowledge and proper seasoning, will affect the life of the individual who consumes it. Ford makes this point again and again across his fiction and memoirs. Stein is equally invested in tradition and social hierarchy in the sense Bourdieu describes. Woolf, however, has more of a sense of how the hierarchical inscription of taste in the body serves to demarcate gender differences. And the hierarchies that determine what is civilized are often internalized and taken for granted. Joseph Litvak writes about distinction and sophistication, the sister of 'civilized' behaviour, in which the darker underside is often missed:

> The problem with the concept of distinction is that it is too distinguished, too responsive to the dignity of privilege, and not responsive enough to its risks. To the degree that, as Bourdieu insists, privilege signifies distance from nature, its social elevation simultaneously implies a certain sexual abasement, the indignity embodied, suffered, enjoyed, by those who violate nature's laws. To the degree, in other words, that privilege both estranges and makes strange, *every* gourmet is a strange gourmet […] The experience of the socially exceptional is marked not

> merely by the honors of distinction but by the vicissitudes of sophistication, its delicious lows as well as its powerful highs.[48]

The processes of aesthetic taste and the body's sense of taste, as Litvak goes on to explore, are both about internalizing and consuming things and ideas. What Litvak calls 'the question of the mouth', is the problem of looking for empirical truth in the body:

> Every student of contemporary theory knows, [that] however, the body is not necessarily the best place to look for unproblematic, irrefutable truth. What it permits instead, is the elaboration of the often surprising, half-submerged logic of the senses implicit in the notion of the aesthetic itself.[49]

Litvak finds Hume and Kant are unhelpful on the question of why gustatory taste is the 'metaphor for aesthetic judgement', instead turning to Brillat-Savarin on the machinations of the mouth in consuming and tasting. The mechanics of biting, chewing, salivating and swallowing lead to a hierarchical distinction between the consumer and what is consumed. And there is inherent violence to both: 'the implicit cannibalism of sophistication'. The bodies 'not just of those lesser animals that ordinarily pass for, or end up as, food, but – symbolically at least – of other consumers' are ingested.[50] In other words, in order to have *good* taste, one not only rejects the bad, but also consumes the ideology of the good, internalizing the rules, inscribing them within the body. Thus sophistication and what is considered civilized are intrinsically connected both with desire and with snobbery and the emphasis on classification and tradition. These are issues that Ford, Stein and Woolf both embrace and reject in different ways, either knowingly or unknowingly.

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[48] Joseph Litvak, *Strange Gourmets: Sophistication, Theory, and the Novel* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997), 6.
[49] Litvak, 8.
[50] Litvak, 9.

Litvak's reading of the gourmet as queer, indulging in the extremes of sensual passions, 'delicious lows as well as its powerful highs' describes Woolf's *Orlando* perfectly. Woolf is aware of the cultural capital of culinary sophistication, as Mrs Ramsay's *boeuf en daube* demonstrates in *To the Lighthouse*, but Woolf is also uneasy about what this sophistication says about gender. With regards to Stein, Litvak's reading of Bourdieu is also helpful, because Stein perfectly embodied this duality: although as a lesbian living with her partner she defied social convention, she was also deeply invested in hierarchical social roles and a conservative view of tradition and nation in her work.

Barbarism and Primitivism: a 'savage' aesthetics of the body

The aesthetic movement of 'primitivism' sought to convey emotions from tribal art across other arts, to return to the ideals and naturalism of the idea of Rousseau's 'noble savage', a generalized version of primitive man as exhibiting mankind's best pre-civilized qualities. One of the reasons primitivism seemed to appeal to modernist artists and thinkers, then, is that it brings attention back to the body, which, while always a subject for visual art, was something to be avoided in fiction. D. H. Lawrence's bold exploration of masculine and feminine sexuality in *Women in Love* and other works exemplifies this. Daniel Albright writes that in 'Modernist Primitivism' the body as represented in the African sculpture, as seen in *Women in Love*, 'is the source of wonder, and yet is intimate with dung and pus'. [51] Albright identifies the 'copresence of sexual desire and sexual anxiety' in Lawrence, which takes us back to Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents* and to Elias's *The Civilizing Process*, which both argue that civilizations

[51] Daniel Albright, *Putting Modernism Together: Literature, Music, and Painting, 1872-1927* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), 135.

create a tension between what the society expects of individuals and what they themselves would like to do. The self-restraint with which individuals act is a sign of their 'civility'. Modernist primitivism challenges this definition of civility that denies knowledge of the body's appetites, both sexual and culinary.

But the body's appetites present many challenges in society. Taken to the extreme, allowing the body to be totally unregulated would tacitly condone violence, and violent appetites like cannibalism. Cannibalism is also considered to be an occasional attribute of 'primitive' man. The idea of the 'noble savage' is countered with real, racist, and metaphorical conceptions of cannibalism. Hegel thought that cannibalism represented a kind of materialist view of humanity. He argued it demonstrated the barbaric qualities of so-called African cannibals.[52] Yet the argument that all humans contain aspects of barbarism within themselves is a dominant theme in Sigmund Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents*. To consider the body as a kind of food is one of the ultimate taboos, reaching its ultimate conclusion with humanity's destruction of itself, a parallel that Conrad makes in *Heart of Darkness*.

This fear of society's capacity to consume itself, to be the cause of its own demise, is also relevant to writing about crises in civilization in the interwar period. Woolf explores this anxiety about humans becoming meat and the threat of self-destruction through Rhoda's visions in *The Waves*. Stein explores the self-destructive instincts of oppressed immigrant cooks and servants in *Three Lives* and her French Indo-Chinese cook in her short story, 'Butter Will Melt'. For Ford, after his traumatic experience of the First World War, he finds that cookery leads to the stimulation of his

[52] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: The Colonial Press, 1900), 95.

creative impulses. Later in the 1930s he argues in several works that a better diet might help moderate some of the violent urges rising across the world.

Culinary nations

The English and American relationship to their own food and their shifting perspectives on French cuisine inform the work of Ford, Stein and Woolf. Ford and Woolf both reflect on themes related to primitivism. But it is more strongly associated with Stein, influenced by her friendship with Picasso, whose collection of African masks inspired his painting. Ford, Stein and Woolf do not align their work with any specific modernist 'movement' or a sole nation. Their thoughts on nationhood and transatlanticism, and on French influence on British and American culture all colour their approach to writing about food. Ford uses digressive Impressionism to demonstrate that French cookery is generative of creativity for him and that food is the cultural commodity that could unite the world in the 1930s, as it did when it was transported along the Great Trade Route in ancient times. Stein sees French and American cookery and domestic service as playing pivotal cultural roles in historical cycles of civilizations. And Woolf confronts gender dynamics in the relationship between food and British society, taking an extra-national view of women's roles in civilization.

While Ford recognized America's dominance in the world, he would disagree with this statement as far as it referred to industrial agriculture, arguing instead for the usefulness of the Small Producer, for each person or community to have their own small truck garden. When Ford visited American farms along the East Coast and the South in the 1930s, several factors had set into motion America's pride in its industrial production of food. His small-producer theory is rooted in a Jeffersonian ideal of the

yeoman farmer in America as well as in the English simple life, and the Ruskinian and Morrisian ideals of coming closer to the products of one's labour. However, in his travels around America in the midst of the Depression Ford's theory is revised into a critique of the agricultural giants that make food too expensive for the farmers of their own land to buy, forcing them to purchase frozen or processed, tinned foods, often from agricultural-company-owned shops.

Before the 1929 stock market crash, the rise of industrial processing and the popularity of thinking about nutrition and vitamins, America's economic dominance placed food at the centre of many cultural, national and political debates. Allison Carruth's *Global Appetites: American Power and the Literature of Food* identifies in twentieth-century American literature a charting of 'the political and economic power that has accrued to those who control the world food supply' which becomes 'an indicator of global power writ large'.[53] In 1925 Calvin Coolidge addressed the American Farm Bureau Federation, reminding his audience of connections between the American founding fathers and farming: 'the strength and character and greatness of America has been furnished by the strength and character and greatness of its agriculture'. [54] While the expansion of the interwar period brought technological change, American values did not necessarily progress at the same pace. In their monumental study, *Middletown* (1929), Robert and Helen Lynd emphasize American conservatism and stubbornness with regards to the real problem of social change, and yet their readiness to adapt to technological shifts in material goods:

[53] Allison Carruth, *Global Appetites: American Power and the Literature of Food* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 4.
[54] Calvin Coolidge, 'Address Before the Annual Convention of the American Farm Bureau Federation', Chicago, Ill., December 7, 1925, Library of Congress American Memory Website. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/amrlm.ms09>Accessed 5 December 2017.

> A citizen has one foot on the relatively solid ground of established institutional habits and the other fast to an escalator erratically moving in several directions at a bewildering variety of speeds.[55]

In the immediate aftermath of the First World War, in reaction to the expansion of urban cities of the North, the American South saw the return to a Jeffersonian ideology of conservative agrarianism as an attempt to reclaim a cultural heritage. Ford became friendly with the literary part of this movement, which manifested in the group of poets based at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee known as the Fugitives. They included Allen Tate, John Crowe Ransom, Donald Davidson and Robert Penn Warren. Ford was good friends with Tate and his wife Caroline Gordon, visiting them at their home in Tennessee. After the dissolution of the Fugitives, the four poets later joined the Southern Agrarians and they published an anti-industrial, anti-materialist political work entitled *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition* (1930). The essays in the collection, while written in the tradition of Ruskin and Carlyle, uphold the ante-bellum South as an ideal, but they ignore the historical fact that the South largely managed to balance leisure and profit through the system of slavery. Davidson later wrote that the collection's aim was 'the cause of civilized society, as we have known it in the Western World, against the new barbarism of science and technology controlled and directed by the modern power state'.[56] While the Agrarian view of civilization and barbarism is different from Ford's, it is against this background that he explored the plight of small truck farmers who could hardly afford to eat. Their produce was legally

[55] Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in American Culture* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929), 498.

[56] Donald Davidson, *Southern Writers in the Modern World* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1958), 45.

bound to be sold to industrial conglomerates which would then sell the food back to regional towns at an increased price.

As an expatriate American, Gertrude Stein was able to take control of her creative identity, drawing on American tropes of independence and adventure while also adapting and admiring traditional French conservative social traditions. Stein's construction of her authorial identity as a genius on par with Picasso and Matisse also emerges from and contains elements of domesticity. Stein's long partnership with Toklas and many years of friendship with and observation of her cooks from America and France led her to adopt some facets of domesticity and cookery in her writing and persona, culminating in the co-authored draft of a cookbook with Toklas.

Stein's lecture tour to America in 1934-5 is set against the same industrial background as Ford's writing and led her to compare French and American food. Stein delights in the novelty of processed American sliced bread and canned fruit cocktail. After thirty years of eating almost exclusively French food in Paris and the French countryside, Stein whole-heartedly embraced American economic expansion, associating American food with national character.

Stein's sense of her identity is also grounded in the support she received from her servants of many nationalities who influence or appear in her writing. Although Toklas cooked American food for Stein, their French, Swiss and also French Indo-Chinese cooks would prepare their national dishes or variations on them. However, Stein's approach to history, race and politics was troubling. As I will further outline in my chapter on Stein, she maintained a friendship with the Vichy government official

Bernard Faÿ and supported some parts of the Vichy government during the Second World War.

In her polemical work, *Three Guineas*, Virginia Woolf reflects on the request of an English gentleman inquiring what should be done to avert war. In the quotation that serves as an epigraph to this introduction, Woolf considers what she and the gentleman have in common. She decides that, belonging to the same class, they use their dinner utensils the same way and they both discuss 'politics and people; war and peace; barbarism and civilization' at the dinner table.[57] Yet, as I will show in my chapter on Woolf, though they discuss the same subjects at the dinner table, their paths to their educated discussion and what is on their plates may not be the same. After establishing these commonalities, Woolf addresses the question of money spent on educating women with the phrase, 'Arthur's Education Fund'. This is a reference to money spent on the titular son in Thackeray's novel *Pendennis*—the pot of money that has gone, over the centuries, into educating the sons of educated men and not their daughters, depriving the latter of countless opportunities afforded to the former over the centuries. Woolf's point, then, is that it is *uncivilized* to deny women's equality of opportunity as a matter of course. And this uncivilized behaviour opens a broad gulf between herself and her correspondent. Thus Woolf's initial use of the term 'civilization', and its implicit antonym, barbarism, gestures towards an ideal that does not yet exist in reality.

Understanding the role of food in these modernist approaches to thinking about civilized society has been until now critically neglected. My thesis demonstrates the central role that food plays for these three authors' expansive conceptions of civilization,

[57] Woolf, *Three Guineas*, 154-5.

barbarism and primitivism. Examining this underexplored connection enriches our knowledge of modernism to encompass a broader cultural understanding of the body, domesticity, gender, and the moral and philosophical implications these aspects play nationally and internationally. Throughout my thesis I show that it is the smaller, private sphere – of the home kitchen and garden, of relationships between mistresses and servants, between families and friends – that helps these authors consider the implications of food in the wider public sphere, in educational and national institutions and in the politics of consumption.

CHAPTER I: CULTURES OF FOOD AND EATING

> Today as a nation we cook better than we cooked before 1914, and that in spite of the lack of material from which we suffered during the war years. […] There is nothing to be ashamed of in economy, and there is everything to be ashamed of in waste.
>
> – Dorothy Peel[58]

> Nothing gives a greater feeling of well-being than the security of a closet filled with home-canned foods, jellies, jams, pickles, and the delicious little tit-bits one cannot buy. What greater sense of luxury than strawberries on New Year's Day; what greater joy than a jellied cherry salad in February; what more delicious addition to the winter meal than home-canned peaches or canned grapes.
>
> – Ida Bailey Allen[59]

> French cooking is not, as some English people seem to think, complicated, rich and expensive. They must not judge it by the *table d'hôte* dinners they may have eaten, either in France or in England, where nondescript dishes boast of pretentious names, and where there is always a white sauce for the fish and a brown one for the meat. This represents only hotel cooking at its worst. Chemistry should be avoided in the home kitchen. In any case, hotel food, even when good, does not represent French cooking.
>
> […] It is the cooking of the French bourgeois family, whose favourite proverb is, '*on ne mange bien que chez soi*', and its great merits are excellence, simplicity and cheapness.
>
> –X. Marcel Bouleston[60]

In this section I will establish the contextual background of food culture and food history in early twentieth century England, France and America necessary to understand how Ford, Stein and Woolf think about food from a material and literary position. Using cookery books, sociological and historical texts, I document some of the relevant changes to food production, preparation and eating practices in these three countries. As Jeffery Pilcher has written, cookery books and their associated cultures 'serve to construct and reinforce a canon of proper dishes' and both exclude certain individuals

[58] Dorothy Peel, *The Daily Mail Cookery Book*, ed. Dorothy Peel (London: Associated Newspapers, Ltd, 1919), iv.
[59] Ida Bailey Allen, *Ida Bailey Allen's Modern Cook Book* (New York: Garden City Publishing, 1924), 818.
[60] X. Marcel Boulestin, *Simple French Cooking for English Homes* (London: William Heinemann, 1923), v.

and incorporate others into, and establish, communities.[61] However, Pilcher's outline is necessarily limited because cooking and eating are embodied, practical experiences that change daily – and cookbooks, sociology and history alone cannot entirely capture that mutability. In addition, all three countries I examine contain regional variations for taste and income which it has not been possible to cover in detail. With these exceptions in mind I will aim to paint a picture of food history and culture as far as the work of Ford, Stein and Woolf is concerned, covering the general topics of what people ate, how they ate it, and how it was grown/manufactured and prepared for consumption.

Though the two World Wars played a significant role in changing each nation's food and the perceptions of it due to shortages and rationing, I will largely focus on the early twentieth century in periods outside of the wars. I begin by outlining some of the general technological and sociological changes that Western countries have in common, focusing on aesthetics, class, commerce and empire before shifting the discussion to the food habits and changes of individual nations. For the national examples, first I turn to England to consider what is pertinent to Ford and Woolf. Here I focus on changes to the domestic sphere and national attitudes to beef and French cuisine. Second, I will look at American attitudes to agriculture and processed foods relevant to Stein, who revisited her home country in the 1930s, and Ford, who spent much of the last decade of his life in the United States. Thirdly, I will look at France, where both Ford and Stein lived for many years. This section will be primarily based on Anglophone sources because Ford and Stein necessitate an Anglo-American interpretation of French food. I will also consider how French culture and French food are significant contributing elements to

[61] Jeffrey Pilcher, 'Cultural Histories of Food', Jeffrey Pilcher, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Food History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 47.

British and American modernism's interpretation of aesthetic, social and political events.

General changes

The population in Britain rose from twenty-three million in 1830 to forty million in 1914 and the urban centres of London and New York accounted for much of the population density, with over a million people living in each.[62] Each country competed for dominance in different ways. Although the British Empire was enormous, covering a fifth of the earth's population and a quarter of its landmass by 1920, American industrial agriculture was on the rise, and France was still considered the centre of Western culture. Rachel Laudan sees population expansion as a factor in the rise of culinary determinism, a belief that the strength and character of a country's population were determined by their diet. This in turn fuelled 'Western imperial expansion' through the increase in agricultural production in Britain and America. Discussions on food and national character, imperialism and expansion are found throughout Ford, Stein and Woolf's work, and I will examine these ideas further later in the thesis.

Food culture influenced ideas of aesthetic taste, moving between Europe, Britain and America. A passage drawing parallels between French chocolate-making and good writing from Edith Wharton's *The Writing of Fiction* exemplifies the longstanding parallels writers and artists have made between culinary artistry and aesthetic style:

> A well-known French confectioner in New York was once asked why his chocolate, good as it was, was not equal to that made in Paris. He replied: 'Because, on account of the expense, we cannot *work it over* as many times as the French confectioner can.' Other homely analogies confirm the lesson: the seemingly simplest sauces are those that have been most cunningly combined

[62] Rachel Laudan, *Cuisine and Empire: Cooking in World History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 249-250. Hereafter cited as Laudan.

> and then most completely blent, the simplest-looking dresses those that require most study to design.[63]

Alexandra Harris argues that in 1930s and 1940s Europe the aesthetic 'purist theories' of the European avant-garde in art and architecture trickle down into theories about life and food that are picked up by modernist writers.[64] In England, Harris perceives a return to simplicity which branches off in two directions – one is influenced by the efficiency of the Futurists and vitamin-promoters who wish, like H. G. Wells, that a day's nutrition could be consumed in the form of little vitamin pellets[65] – and the other embraced a nostalgic return to 'English' cookery, roast beef and potatoes.

Earlier in Britain, the rise of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century vegetarianism coincided with the radical socialist movements championed by thinkers such as William Godwin, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and later George Bernard Shaw, Edward Carpenter and others who mistrusted the capitalist ethos and worried about the expansion of the human population and exploitation of animals and natural resources.

Godwin's social-anarchist argument was that a vegetarian diet would help solve some of the impending problems of over-population. Warren Belasco summarizes Godwin's idea as a 'radical redistribution of income and power [that] would produce a healthier, more equitable food system'.[66] Godwin's son-in-law Shelley's writing on society and diet also converted many nineteenth-century thinkers to vegetarianism and socialism. Shelley wrote two essays on vegetarianism: *A Vindication of Natural Diet*

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[63] Edith Wharton, *The Writing of Fiction* (London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), 53-5.
[64] Alexandra Harris, *Romantic Moderns: English Writers, Artists and the Imagination from Virginia Woolf to John Piper* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2010), 116.
[65] Ford Madox Ford, 'Dinner with Turbot' *Vogue* 94.6 (NY) (September 15, 1939), 104.
[66] Warren Belasco, 'Food and Social Movements', *The Oxford Handbook of Food History*, Jeffrey Pilcher, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 481-498

(revised as one of the notes to *Queen Mab*) and *On the Vegetable System of Diet*, which was unpublished. *On the Vegetable System of Diet* attacks the cruel treatment of animals raised for meat, who 'are called into existence by human artifice that they may drag out a short and miserable existence of slavery and disease, that their bodies may be mutilated, their social feelings outraged'.[67] Timothy Morton argues that Shelley's embrace of vegetarianism 'refashioned taste, in revolt against what he conceived to be the hierarchical powers which controlled consumption, production and culture. The revolt in taste delineated new relationships between bodies and their environments'.[68] Morton stresses how bodies and behaviours are embroiled in codes of belief and language:

> Consider the rhetorical power of a language in which revolution could be linked to revulsion: if at the sight of tyrannical cruelty or tyrannical gluttony, one's very tastes rebelled. Such powers would be associated with that capacity to *naturalize* certain ethical norms.[69]

The force of Shelley's ethics influenced many thinkers after him, including Henry Salt, a humanitarian anti-animal cruelty campaigner, and Shaw, a founding Fabian, who converted to vegetarianism after reading Shelley. Shelley also provided an important stimulus for Edward Carpenter, a socialist simple life campaigner and advocate of free love.[70]

Crowded cities and the plight of the poor led campaigners to promote a vegetarian diet. Though already in use, the term was officially coined in 1847 by the

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[67] Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'A Vindication of Natural Diet', *The Prose Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 155.
[68] Timothy Morton, *Shelley and the Revolution in Taste: the Body and the Natural World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1.
[69] Morton, 2.
[70] Colin Spencer, *The Heretic's Feast: A History of Vegetarianism* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1995), 279.

Vegetarian Society. The Vegetarian Society was partially comprised of Bible Christian fundamentalists, who were disciples of Swedenborg, and regarded meat-eating as the source of evil. This movement spread to Germany and America.[71] In New England, Transcendentalism espoused self-reliance and the cooperative labour of the land that formed the thinking behind Bronson Alcott's commune at Fruitlands and the utopian Brook Farm experiment, which Nathaniel Hawthorne would fictionalize in *The Blithedale Romance* (1852).

At the same time, a radical socialist, atheist, anti-vaccination and free-love movement promoted vegetarianism in Britain in the nineteenth century. Simple-life movements, as they were known, encompassed an ascetic and back-to-the-land lifestyle, with followers often living together in communes. Like the practitioners of Ruskin- and Morris-inspired Arts and Crafts movements, they wore simple, often hand-made clothing like medieval smocks. They ate bread, dried fruit and nuts, often wore sandals and otherwise under-dressed in order to be closer to nature. Carpenter was a champion of this movement. Raised in a middle-class family, he had become an emblem of middle-class respectability with a curate at St Edmund's, Cambridge. Although he realized he was homosexual while an undergraduate, it was not until reading Walt Whitman that he determined to live a more true, fulfilling life, and he moved to a smallholding with his working-class partner, George Merrill. Among other works, he wrote *Towards Democracy* (1883), which presents a vision of a pastoral England that has abandoned its industrial pursuits and social hierarchies.

[71] Spencer, 252-3.

Ford Madox Ford joined Limpsfield, a Fabian and simple life community in 1898. Edward and Constance Garnett were already living there, and they brought Joseph Conrad to meet Ford in his cottage, introducing a life-changing relationship for Ford.[72] Though it was not a strictly enforced colony in the sense that some practiced simple life habits and some did not, its inhabitants largely were interested in socialism. Ford went on to satirize and fictionalize them in *The Simple Life Limited*. He describes Limpsfield in his memoir *Return to Yesterday* as 'the extra-urban headquarters of the Fabian society […] Its members then wore beards, queer, useful or homespun clothes and boots and talked Gas and Water socialism. They were the Advanced'.[73] In the matter of dress, Ford was once rebuked by a resident for wearing a cloth golfing cap. He recalls he was told:

> My cap 'stuck out.' I was requested to abandon it. These things may seem trivial but they make England what she is today. Mr Shaw, Lord Ollivier [*sic*],[74] Mr Sidney Webb, all wore beards and homespuns and Stetson hats and now govern England. Local residents were requested to imitate them.[75]

Some vegetarians also followed the scientific advancements with regards to vitamins as preventative measures against diseases like scurvy and rickets which were discovered in the first half of the twentieth century. The 1929 Nobel Prize for Medicine was awarded to the Dutch scientist Christiaan Eijkman for the discovery of what became known as Vitamin B1, which helps prevent muscular atrophy and paralysis, and the British scientist Sir Frederick Hopkins for the discovery of 'the growth-stimulating

[72] Max Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life*, vol. I: *The World Before the War*, 100.
[73] Ford Madox Ford, *Return to Yesterday: Reminiscences 1894-1914* (Manchester: Carcanet: 1999), 31. Hereafter cited as *Return to Yesterday*.
[74] 'Lord Ollivier' [*sic*] is almost certainly Sidney Olivier (uncle to Laurence) and a Fabian and Labour MP who became Governor of Jamaica and Secretary of State for India.
[75] Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, 32.

vitamins'.[76] Ford's friend H. G. Wells also gave considerable thought to the possibilities for human nutrition in an over-populated world. Wells imagined strange possibilities in *The Food of the Gods and How it Came to Earth* (1904), a dystopian vision of nutritional supplements designed to create large agricultural stock, instead creating gigantic human children who become ostracized. Wells also, according to Ford, championed the idea of nutritional pellets (the idea of which Ford abhorred) that would help maintain humanity without abusing the world's remaining ecological resources. Though Wells wrote about eating frequently, the problem of indigestion and pills that could remedy it also concerned him. The time he spent working as a chemist's assistant as a young man influenced his writing of *Tono-Bungay*, as he records in his *Experiments in Autobiography*. Peter Kemp notes that Wells also fills *Tono-Bungay* with 'vaguely medical commodities— "Mother Shipton's Soothing Syrup", "Cracknell's Ferric Wine", "Sorber's Food", "Decorticated Health-Bread"' which are advertised to a gullible public.[77] Unlike the utilitarian and futuristic Wells, Ford despised the English habit of taking pills for every twinge of indigestion, having Christopher Tietjens in *Parade's End* refer to England as 'the land of pills'[78]. Ford's tastes are generally Francophilic and he is interested in the complexity and freshness of flavours, but he is not generally a food snob. Although he proselytized about local food and of the value of ingredients like fresh garlic, he constantly told his readers to 'eat what you like'.[79] Thus the changes in

[76] 'The Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 1929', *Nobelprize.org.* Nobel Media AB 2014. 9 Dec 2016. <http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/medicine/laureates/1929/>
[77] Peter Kemp, *H. G. Wells and the Culminating Ape: Biological Imperatives and Imaginative Obsessions* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 55.
[78] Ford Madox Ford, *Parade's End: Some Do Not . . .*, ed. Max Saunders (Manchester: Carcanet, 2010), 135.
[79] Ford Madox Ford, 'FOOD: The World on a Flabby Diet', *Forum and Century* (April 1938) 246. This idea is also repeated in Ford's 'O Hygeia!', *Harper's Monthly Magazine* (May 1928*)*,'Rough Cookery',

diet embraced by some throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century reflect several different outlooks, from ideological movements to scientific advancements and commercial and crack-pot exploitation of fears about health and nutrition.

Social class and the extent of a country's agricultural imports and output often determined what and how people ate in England, France and America. In the early twentieth century in these three countries it was a common complaint among upper-middle-class households that it was difficult to find and keep servants. In America, the number of female domestic servants fell between 1910 and 1920, from 1,830,000 to 1,400,00, but rose again in 1930 to 2 million. David Katzman attributes this growth to increased immigration and urbanization, but he too comments that 'nearly all observers and analysts of the time agreed that the number of domestics was limited not by the demand, but by the inadequacy of the supply'.[80] In her 1954 *Cook Book*, Alice B. Toklas reflects on many of her favourite cooks from over 45 years of living in France, but prefaces her praise with the caveat: 'Unfortunately there have been too many unsatisfactory ones, and too many of the satisfactory ones did not stay long'.[81] Alison Light notes that the conditions for domestic service in early twentieth century Britain varied so broadly that it is difficult to generalize about the experience. However, the observations of Mary Davies of *The Housewife's What's What* (1904) are telling. She writes that in Britain, 'very many people complain that they can't get servants, and when

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New York Herald Tribune Magazine (29 July 1928); and in the travelogue *New York is Not America* (1927).

[80] David M. Katzman, *Seven Days a Week: Women and Domestic Service in Industrializing America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 46.

[81] Toklas, *Cook Book*, 169.

they do come they won't stay. Certainly far more girls go to mills, factories etc., for work because they have their evenings and Sundays free'.[82]

With factory and shop work came some leisure time and a modicum of domestic independence (the ability to live in one's own home rather than an employer's) for the working classes, particularly for women, and this rankled some. The difficulty of hiring and keeping domestic servants affected the middle and upper classes in their ability to project their own social prestige. As Light writes, even 'the wretched maid-of-all-work was evidence of her employers' respectability, of aspirations to gentility, if not of their actual wealth'.[83]

Another of the major social changes related to eating out in early twentieth-century America was Prohibition—the eighteenth amendment to the constitution that banned the production and sale of alcohol in 1920. Paul Freedman argues that it led to the decline of restaurants that depended on the sale of alcoholic beverages to make significant profits.[84] In their place, cafés, coffeehouses and cafeterias proliferated, along with speakeasies, although these were in existence well before 1920.[85]

Dining Out

In the wider Western world, twentieth-century dining out was largely influenced by gender and was accessible only to those who could afford it. In Paris, men and women ate in restaurants together, but in England and America mixed dining was not always considered respectable in the nineteenth century. There were only special 'ladies' rooms in hotels or large department stores for women dining out while shopping or

[82] Mary Davies, *The Housewife's What's What: A Hold-All of Useful Information for the House* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1904), 275-6.
[83] Light, *Mrs. Woolf and the Servants* (London: Penguin, 2008), 2
[84] Freedman, 'Restaurants', 265.
[85] 'Speakeasy', *OED Online*. Accessed 10 December 2016.

travelling. From the 1890s onwards, women were more commonly allowed in restaurants in America.[86] However in the twentieth century, the increased number of women in the workforce in the cities, and therefore, also the increased number of women who needed somewhere to eat on their lunch breaks, helped make cafés and tea shops like those run by the Aerated Bread Company and J. Lyons in Britain more popular. Although these catering shops developed in the late nineteenth century, they expanded greatly in the early twentieth. By 1909, the J. Lyons London flagship dining rooms at the Trocadero seated up to 1,200 diners, but it was usurped as the biggest by the Corner House in Coventry Street which could hold 2000 guests.[87]

With regards to class, eating out at lunch and sometimes for breakfast was necessary for some working class men in England but a rare luxury for their wives. As public dining in England had generally been restricted to men in public houses, gentleman's clubs, and the early French restaurants, Scott McCracken has shown that tea rooms for working women or women doing their shopping in the West End of London provided an important refuge away from the masculine public houses.[88]

Industrialization

The twentieth century reinforced and expanded upon recent changes in food production, transit, and knowledge. Rachel Laudan identifies beef and wheat products (mainly bread) as the primary example of middle class or 'middling' Anglo cuisine

[86] Paul Freedman, 'Restaurants', Paul Freedman, et al. eds, *Food in Time and Place: The American Historical Association Companion to Food History*, (Oakland: University of California Press, 2014), 265-6.
[87] John Burnett, *England Eats Out: 1830-Present* (London: Pearson, 2004), 157.
[88] See Scott McCracken, 'Embodying the New Woman: Dorothy Richardson, Work and the London Café', in *Body Matters: Feminism, Textuality, Corporeality*, ed. Avril Horner and Angela Keane (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 58-71, and 'From Performance to Public Sphere: the Production of Modernist Masculinities', *Textual Practice* 15 *(*2001*),* 47-65.

which became the basis for the cuisine in Britain, the United States, all of northern Europe and many of the industrialized countries in 1920.[89] Outside of fresh foods, the urban, salaried middle classes in Britain and America, who were dependent on their jobs for income, purchased a variety of cheap and industrially produced foods including 'crackers and cookies, candy, sugar, canned goods, Worcestershire sauce, curry powder, cocoa, coffee, tea, and beer', which were available around the world.[90] Condiments were especially indispensible to city-dwellers without access to a range of fresh food. Ford wrote in a 1937 article, 'In Praise of Garlic' published in New York *Harper's Bazaar,* that in a pinch his readers could consider using Worcestershire sauce and/or curry powder to replace garlic in recipes.

This globalization of industrial food applied to meat and wheat products as well. Factory canning was prevalent in the nineteenth century and with the advent of refrigeration in the late nineteenth century, centralized slaughterhouses with production or 'dis-assembly'-line butchering appeared in England and America. Chicago was infamous for its slaughterhouses, the appalling labour and sanitary conditions of which Upton Sinclair described in his 1906 novel, *The Jungle*. Refrigerated railway cars took the fresh, chilled meat off to far-away places. For wheat, factory roller mills, which created refined flour by crushing grains and sifting out the resulting white flour over and over again, cropped up throughout Europe and America. Industrialized baking was more prevalent in America than elsewhere in the 1920s. Soft, mechanically-sliced bread became so popular that, when America entered the Second World War and bread slicing

[89] Laudan, 305.
[90] Laudan, 305.

machines were banned in an effort to save steel, the public protested and the government relented by lifting the ban.[91]

While food production and processing changed, so did the scientific and public understanding: knowledge grew about protein, freshness and vitamins. Discussions of how to prepare meat and cook vegetables so as best to preserve their effectiveness can be found in cookbooks of the period. Florence White's 1932 cookbook, *Good Things in Britain*, provides a recipe for 'the right way to cook cabbage' in which White describes in scientific language how 'rapid brief cooking at a comparatively high temperature preserves the value of the fugitive delicate vitamin C contained in any vegetable far better than slower cooking at a lower heat' citing a '*Report on the Present State of Knowledge of Accessory Food Factors [Vitamins]*, compiled by a committee appointed jointly by the Lister Institute and Medical Research Council, (1927)'.[92]

Britain and the home

In her much-cited essay 'Character in Fiction', Virginia Woolf identified the changes in the life of the British Georgian cook in England as representative of British modernity in the year 1910. She imagined the Georgian cook as having evolved from her Victorian predecessor, who lived like a 'leviathan' in a dark basement kitchen, to becoming 'a creature of sunshine and fresh air' spending her time largely 'in the drawing room'.[93] With this characterization Woolf identified several crucial points in which modern life changed, from the architecture of the home to the presence of a domestic servant. As Victoria Rosner has noted, rooms in Victorian-built London houses

[91] Laudan, 335.
[92] Florence White, *Good Things in England* [1932], (London: Futura Publications Ltd, 1974), 209.
[93] Virginia Woolf, 'Character in Fiction', *Collected Essays*, Vol. 3, ed. Andrew McNeillie (London: The Hogarth Press, 1988), 422-3. Hereafter cited as 'Character in Fiction'.

like the ones Woolf lived in 'were designated by gender, by class, by function'.[94] The positioning of the kitchen in a dark, stuffy, basement, where servants sometimes also had their sitting room (as did Woolf's family servants at 22 Hyde Park Gate) separated the employer's family from the location of the production and preparation of their food. Directing the food arrangements and pouring the tea fell to the mistress of the house. In her unfinished memoir, 'Sketch of the Past', Woolf sees her father's study as the 'the brain of the house', but her mother's tea table as 'the heart, the centre'.[95] Rosner interprets Julia Stephen as being the 'supreme authority in the house [...] because she embodies it, and family life, in the tradition of the Victorian domestic angel'.[96] But the work that Julia Stephen did, like much of the servants' work, would also go unseen, unrecognized and unpaid.

An important distinguishing factor of Woolf's essay is that she assumes that her readers are of the servant-hiring upper middle classes. This would mean that many of her readers, male or female, would not cook themselves. Rather, the mistress of a house would direct another woman to do this work for them. Still, many women of this class were, to some extent, involved in food preparation or cleaning of their houses. As Woolf observes, this was the case for Jane Carlyle, the wife of Thomas Carlyle. In Woolf's words, Jane Carlyle spent her time fulfilling 'the horrible domestic tradition which made it seemly for a woman of genius to spend her time chasing beetles, scouring saucepans, instead of writing books'.[97] Though of course if Jane Carlyle did not clean, the task would have fallen upon another woman. Woolf was aware of her own social snobbery

[94] Victoria Rosner, *Modernism and the Architecture of Private Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 63.
[95] Woolf, 'Sketch of the Past' in *Moments of Being*, ed. Jeanne Schulkind (London: Pimlico, 2002), 118.
[96] Rosner, 71. Hereafter cited as 'Sketch of the Past'.
[97] 'Character in Fiction', 422.

and her recognition of the gendered aspects of housekeeping and the expectations of a wife of any class other than the aristocracy are astute.[98] Throughout her autobiographical writing Woolf refers to the staggering amount of labour required to maintain Victorian and Edwardian houses. The Georgian house, with electricity, perhaps a gas stove, and more fresh air throughout, brought welcome relief to any remaining servants and the mistresses directing them.

Changes to the newly built British kitchen layout, furniture and equipment (also common in America) were extensive at the turn of the century, as they became more specialized for cooking. Factories did most of the required processing and preserving which meant kitchens could be given over more to cookery. By 1900, most private urban kitchens had water, gas lights and by 1901, a third of British city households had convenient, instantly-hot gas ovens.[99] *The Daily Mail Cookery Book* of 1919 exhorts its readers to move away from the dark, stuffy, easily dirtied Victorian kitchens to create the kitchens 'of the future' with an emphasis on hygiene. The modern kitchen is recommended to have walls 'of some material which permits of their being washed down by a hose, the floor being very slightly slanted, and furnished with a gutter to take off the water'.[100] It recommends open shelving in the larder and 'no corners, no dark places, no boxed in sinks and cupboards reaching down to the floor. In the ideal kitchen

[98] Woolf critiques her own prejudices in 'Am I a Snob?' in *Moments of Being*, ed. Jeanne Schulkind. A major critical work on Woolf's snobbery is John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice Among the Literary Intelligentsia 1880-1939* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1992). Carey argues that 'the principle around which modernist literature and culture fashioned themselves was the exclusion of the masses, the removal of their literacy, the denial of their humanity', 21. Carey criticizes writers like Woolf, Orwell, Eliot, Betjeman and Graham Greene for their depictions of working classes and, in relation to food, for making 'tinned food' a 'mass symbol because it offends against what the intellectual designates as nature: it is mechanical and soulless', 21.
[99] Laudan, 262.
[100] Peel, 1.

and larder dirt, flies, mice and beetles will never feel at home.'[101] Jane Carlyle would have had an easier time with this layout. This cookbook, in a nod to post-First World War rationing, also includes several sections on conserving gas and electricity. It recommends cooking with insulated cooking boxes, one-pot cooking with casseroles and chafing dishes, 'using up the pieces', and using 'every atom of food left from a meal'.[102]

British diet, industrialization and beef

Due to the removal of British tariffs on sugar in 1874, and the increasingly industrial food-processing, tea, sugar and white bread became far more affordable and were thus available to the lower middle classes, and even the working poor, at the beginning of the twentieth century.[103] Institutional food in Britain got a revamping during the First World War. Rationing, introduced among civilians in 1918, provided adequate and relatively equal distribution of nutrition from sugar through to meat, butter and margarine. The government's interest in greater civilian productivity with relation to ammunitions factories led to the increase of factory canteens. In 1916, an official publication by the England Canteen Committee, *Feeding the Munition Worker*, described the concept and the benefits:

1. There is now an overpowering body of evidence and experience which proves that productive output in regard to quality, amount, and speed is largely dependent upon the physical efficiency and health of the worker. In its turn, such physical fitness **is dependent upon nutrition**, the purpose of which is to secure the proper development, growth, and energy of the human body.
2. The human body calls for a constant supply of food, first for its growth, for the building up of its tissues and for repair, and secondly, as fuel for the production of heat and energy. **Both requirements are indispensable** and

[101] Peel, 2.
[102] Peel, 36.
[103] Laudan, 276.

absolutely necessary. You cannot get health, work, and a reasonable output apart from good nourishing food. [...]

3. What is the **necessary diet for the worker?** Broadly, the answer is a dietary containing: —

a sufficient quantity of nutritive material
in proper proportions,
suitably mixed.
Easily digestible,
appetising, and attractive and
Obtainable at a low cost.[104]

The intended audience of this pamphlet is clearly the factory owner or manager. It is attempting to persuade them to spend the money and time to construct canteens, and the pamphlet goes on to explain where the government will provide financial and practical assistance. But the language is also indicative of contemporary general attitudes towards food and production of labour. Take the sentence, 'You cannot get health, work, and a reasonable output apart from good nourishing food', which loosely correlates to the final sentence in Woolf's statement:

> The human frame being what it is, heart, body and brain all mixed together, and not contained in separate compartments as they will be no doubt in another million years, a good dinner is of great importance to good talk. One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well.[105]

The factory canteen is relevant to Woolf's discussion of women's nutrition as well because women, the primary workforce left behind while men fought in the First World War, were some of the primary beneficiaries of these canteens and the thinking behind them.

[104] The Canteen Committee of the Central Control Board (Liquor Traffic), *Feeding the Munition Worker* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1916) (reprinted 1917), 3-4. Emphasis in the original.
[105] Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (London: Hogarth, 1929), 17-18. Hereafter cited as *A Room of One's Own*.

Despite the rationing of wartime, in the postwar years, the cheapness and ease of procuring sugar, white bread and margarine affected the diet of the working class and the very poor in northern industrial towns, and often led to malnutrition, as George Orwell documented in *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937). John Burnett's *Plenty and Want* sums up the interwar years in Britain:

> General standards of health improved though, significantly, less quickly in the 1930s than in the 1920s or 1940s. It is not impossible that at a time of national anxiety and international tension governmental departments felt under pressure to produce an optimistic picture and to play down the unpalatable. […] For most people the inter-war years were years of wider food choice, better health, and improved nutrition: for a minority—and in some years and some regions, a large minority—the progress was so frail, and started from so low a base, that it could easily revert to conditions of hunger, disease and misery not seen since the turn of the century.[106]

By contrast, for the middle, upper-middle and aristocratic classes, French cookery was considered the height of sophistication. The fashion for French cooking became increasingly popular in London in the 1920s. In Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, which captures the perspective of her Victorian parents, Mrs Ramsay's family recipe for *boeuf en daube* underlines the superiority of French cookery and the practice of looking down on English cooking in English middle classes. Mrs Ramsay demonstrates her class status by her affinity with French culture in her mildly satirical tirade against English cooks, which reads as a list of 'what not to do':

> Of course it was French. What passes for cookery in England is an abomination (they agreed). It is putting cabbages in water. It is roasting meat till it is like leather. It is cutting off the delicious skins of vegetables.[107]

[106] John Burnett, *Plenty and Want: A Social History of Food in England from 1815 to the Present Day* (London: Routledge, 1989) (revised edition), 286-7.
[107] Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 82.

Mrs Ramsay shows off her cultural capital, her knowledge of what is fashionable and nutritious. This is also notable because in using the word 'delicious' Mrs Ramsay's reveals not only her cultural taste, but also her appetite. Nicola Humble, in *The Feminine Middlebrow Novel, 1920s to 1950s* (2001), argues that changing standards of living for the upper middle classes during the war years led to 'traditional bourgeois values [giving] way under the exigencies of economic privation to a casualness that is virtually bohemian'.[108] Humble sees Woolf's Mrs Ramsay as demonstrating her worldly and bohemian sophistication by displaying her *boeuf en daube* prepared by the cook from Mrs Ramsay's grandmother's recipe as 'both a foreign and peasant dish' in which 'the bohemian is intimately associated with bourgeois domesticity'.[109]

Marcel Boulestin, whose Restaurant Français opened in London in 1925 and who was popular in Bloomsbury circles, taught French cookery courses at the Fortnum and Mason department store in London. Alison Light notes that Boulestin 'wrote columns for the national press and was the first cook - in 1937 – to give "culinary demonstrations" on British television'.[110] Light speculates that Boulestin was also 'probably the source of the *boeuf en daube* […] Boulestin has two recipes for this beef stew in his 1925 cookbook, *A Second Helping or More Dishes for English Homes*, so perhaps [Woolf's cook] Nellie, who took lessons with him, cooked it for the Woolfs'.[111]

Despite the upper class preference for French food, among the middle classes there was still a strong tradition of English cookery in the first half of the twentieth century. Victorian standards of English dining were slightly modified for the chophouses

[108] Nicola Humble, *The Feminine Middlebrow Novel, 1920s to 1950s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 132.
[109] Humble, 140.
[110] Alison Light, 341.
[111] Light, 174-5.

and tea-rooms of the City of London, and for institutional food in Oxbridge colleges, but the home cooking of the middle classes relied on beef and mutton for roast dinners. This is exemplified in the endurance of the 'roast beef of old England' and the longevity of Victorian cookbooks by Eliza Acton and Mrs Isabella Beeton well into the twentieth century and even today. Kathryn Hughes notes that *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management* (first published in 1861 and continually reissued afterwards) began as Mrs Beeton's contributions to the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, run by her husband Sam. But by 1923 it became more of a compendium of recipes and advice from other sources. At the same time, there was a revival of interest in Mrs Beeton, the person, 'as part of a more general urge among intellectuals to sort, sift, and weigh just what they had inherited from their parents' generation'. This revisionary spirit possibly led Lytton Strachey to consider Mrs Beeton as a potential, though unrealized, subject for his *Eminent Victorians*, while Wyndham Lewis 'produced an eight-line humorous playlet on Mrs Beeton for the *Daily Mail* in 1924 and J. B. Priestley published his essay "A Beetonian Reverie"' in 1923.[112]

For Mrs Beeton, as for many Britons, beef is a traditional symbol of Englishness. Beef is and was a beloved food in both English and French culture (and many more cultures). But the English associate particular characteristics with their own beef, as opposed to French beef. Beeton includes an anecdotal passage on 'French Beef' that illustrates with witty *hauteur* the prejudices of each country against the other:

> It has been all but universally admitted, that the beef of France is greatly inferior in quality to that of England, owing to the inferiority of pasture. […] Mr. Lewis, in his 'Physiology of Common Life,' has thus revived the story of the beef-eating son of France:— 'A Frenchman was one day blandly remonstrating against the

[112] Kathryn Hughes, *The Short Life and Long Times of Mrs Beeton* (London: Harper Perennial, 2006), 399.

> supercilious scorn expressed by Englishmen for the beef of France, which he, for his part, did not find so inferior to that of England. "I have been two times in England," he remarked, "but I nevère find the bif so supérieur to ours. I find it vary conveenient that they bring it you on leetle pieces of stick, for one penny: but I do not find the bif supérieur." On hearing this, the Englishman, red with astonishment, exclaimed, "Good heavens, sir! you have been eating cat's meat."' No, M. Curmer, we are ready to acknowledge the superiority of your cookery, but we have long since made up our minds as to the inferiority of your raw material.[113]

The mock French accent derides Gallic superiority, although elsewhere in the book there are many French recipes. The tension between what foods can really be claimed as 'English', and the close link between French and English foods, runs throughout Beeton's book and represents the general English attitude towards the French.

Steak is another contested national dish. Roland Barthes, in *Mythologies*, considers the universal popularity in France of 'Steak and chips':

> Like wine, steak is in France a basic element, nationalized even more than socialized. […]
>
> Moreover, it is a French possession (circumscribed today, it is true, by the invasion of American steaks). […] Being part of the nation, it follows the index of patriotic values: it helps them to rise in wartime, it is the very flesh of the French soldier, the inalienable property which cannot go over to the enemy except by treason.[114]

Thus it is not unusual for some of the same foods to be claimed by different nations and cultures as representative of unique national characteristics. Barthes sees steak as a 'patriotic' food and it is likely many Americans do as well. Its distinctiveness depends on the cultural contexts in which it is consumed.

Gertrude Stein's reconceptualization of 'Roastbeef' in *Tender Buttons* goes in the opposite direction, moving away from specificity and the national towards

[113] Isabella Beeton, *The Book of Household Management* (London: S. O. Beeton, 1861), 302.
[114] Roland Barthes, 'Steak and Chips,' *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Noonday Press, 1991), 63.

generality. By abstracting the food from its usual linguistic descriptors, Stein aims for a new kind of meaning. 'Roastbeef' seems to evoke all possible circumstances and experiences, from the life of the cow to the cooking and eating:

> The sooner there is jerking, the sooner freshness is tender, the sooner the round it is not round the sooner it is withdrawn in cutting, the sooner the measure means service, the sooner there is chinking, the sooner there is sadder than salad, the sooner there is none do her, the sooner there is no choice, the sooner there is a gloom freer, the same sooner and more sooner, this is no error in hurry and in pressure and in opposition to reconsideration.[115]

The 'jerking' and 'cutting' may both evoke the slaughter and the eventual eating, with the 'round' roast 'withdraw[ing]' as it is eaten. The 'chinking' suggests knives and forks moving against plates, and the repetition of 'the sooner' in short phrases evokes the repetitive movement of chewing when read out loud, which could comically mimic both the rumination of a cow and the chewing of a diner.

American diet and agriculture

Different dynamics define the culinary situation in America, which was characterized by the tension between a push towards commercialized agriculture and a desire to return to a more Jeffersonian agrarian past. Kathryn Cornell Dolan argues that nineteenth-century writers 'warned of potential agricultural consequences of the nation's expansionist and industrializing actions' and would lead to America's status as a global power.[116] On behalf of the commercialized agriculture, Calvin Coolidge spoke to the American Farm Bureau Federation in 1925, praising American agriculture as a great enterprise. In contrast, Ford Madox Ford's vision of the 'small producer' in Europe and America as a symbol of civilization recalls Thomas Jefferson's yeoman farmer as an

[115] Gertrude Stein, from 'Food', *Tender Buttons*, in *The Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein*, ed. Carl Van Vechten (New York: Vintage, 1990), 481.
[116] Kathryn Cornell Dolan, *Beyond the Fruited Plain: Food and Agriculture in U.S. Literature, 1850-1905* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 13.

emblem of morality and America's independent spirit in *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785). These tensions appear at many levels. On industrial farms, labourers protested that, on their wages, they could not afford to buy back the food they grew for corporations. At the same time, statesmen and businesses approached agriculture with a model of American corporate power. They gained government contracts to provide food for the Allied war effort, an agricultural/governmental alliance that made the United States the biggest exporter of food in the world by 1945. As Allison Carruth has argued, twentieth-century American national and international power is intrinsically tied to food production, often at the expense of its independent farmers and labourers.[117]

Class is important to understanding what Americans ate in the first half of the twentieth century. American middle-class kitchens in the 1920s onwards, like British kitchens, also reflected a new emphasis on sanitation, with tile floors, freestanding sinks, refrigerators and, from the 1910s onwards, gas and electric cooking ranges.[118]

Food historian Gabriella Petrick has shown that, in contrast to Britain, canned foods were consumed more often by the affluent than by the working classes or the poor.[119] American meat, bread, fruit and vegetables were industrially processed and shipped far and wide. But Petrick has shown, by looking at the United States Department of Agriculture report on *Consumption of Food in the United States 1909-1948*, that although the consumption of canned foods increased in this period, the *per capita* consumption of fresh fruit, vegetables and milk is higher than that of processed

[117] Allison Carruth, *Global Appetites: American Power and the Literature of Food* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 10.
[118] Andrew Smith, ed., 'Kitchens: 1800-Present', *The Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 345-6.
[119] Gabriella Petrick, 'The Means of Production', *The Oxford Handbook of Food History*, ed. Jeffrey Pilcher (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 267.

versions across all levels of income.[120] Only 'tomatoes, corn, peas, canned soups (after 1935), peaches, and pineapple' were popular and it was possible to attribute this to the short seasonal availability of the fruit.[121] Pineapple, available only in the tropics, became a middle-class commodity by the early 1910s, when the enterprising James D. Dole set up plantations and canneries in Hawaii and ran an advertising campaign from 1908-1912 in New York to promote the newly available fruit.[122] In a section on 'How to Use Canned Foods', *Ida Bailey Allen's Modern Cook Book* (1937) refers to canned food as a luxury and with a certain amount of pride in the labour of preserving one's own food:

> No matter whether canning is done at home or whether canned foods are purchased, they contribute to the menu a variety, and at the same time the luxury of out-of-season goods. As a matter of fact, home-canned foods represent a considerable saving of money. By purchasing the various foods for canning in their particular seasons, they may be obtained at bottom prices when they are in their prime.[123]

The availability and proliferation of fresh, canned and processed fruit correlates with what Gertrude Stein noted as the contemporary style of 'American food' when she visited the United States for a lecture tour in 1934-5. In a newspaper article she wrote reflecting on her American visit, she described an abundance of both in restaurants:

> In the old days a girl might have found herself ordering a succession of sweets, now they might begin with tomato juice and follow by a salad and then a water ice, or a man begins with cranberry juice and ham and eggs and then a fruit salad.[124]

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[120] Petrick, 270.
[121] Petrick, 269.
[122] Jayeeta Sharma, 'Food and Empire', *The Oxford Handbook of Food History*, ed Jeffrey Pilcher (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 247.
[123] Ida Bailey Allen, *Ida Bailey Allen's Modern Cook Book* (New York: Garden City Publishing, 1924), 853.
[124] Gertrude Stein, 'Gertrude Stein Finds American Food Moist, But Likes it, After Living 31 Years in France', *The Washington Post (1923-1954)*, 14 April 1935, 2. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/150850004?accountid=13042>.

Though most of what Stein describes here is fresh, the tomato and cranberry juices would have been processed. She is right that many customers would have ordered tomato juice. Available since 1929, it was a recent commercial success because previously it was so difficult to make and chefs struggled to juice tomatoes adequately. It only became widely consumed after the discovery that industrial processing similar to churning ice cream could give it a consistent, smooth texture.[125]

American agricultural idealism

Ford Madox Ford's *Great Trade Route* (1937) argues fervently for the cultural and nutritional benefits of being a small 'producer' or farmer rather than a mass producer. Along the way, Ford scatters anecdotes describing the temperaments of different regions across the world. Ford defines the ancient Route used by spice merchants as something broadly ideological: 'To me, in the first place, it means a frame of mind to which, unless we return, our Occidental civilization is doomed'.[126] Ford also considers America part of the Great Route of the twentieth century. In his journey down from the mid-Atlantic region to the South, stopping to view truck farms and industrial agriculture, he documents the commerce and capitalism involved in American food production.

Ford visits a few truck farms in northern New Jersey, which lives up to its moniker 'the Garden State'. The farms are so close to New York City that they were 'under the shadow of Equitable spire', the Empire State building. Ford writes:

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[125] Andrew Smith, ed.,'Blood Mary and Virgin Mary', *The Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink*, 55.
[126] Ford Madox Ford, *Great Trade Route* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1937), 39. Hereafter cited as *Great Trade Route*.

> It is astonishing in what small plots at the passing of the car the lines of lettuce and beets whirl round over a great surface of that flat, hardly rolling land. There is here a considerable population of quite Small Producers who all work themselves at their intensive cultivation on an acre or so, their sons and daughters coming back from their universities for the weekends and jumping straight off their push-bikes to dig or hoe or gather . . . or milk or feed or pluck chickens. With them no one can compete. They also have customers and to spare who will not look at cold-stored vegetables and, if customers are to seek seasonally, they consume their own produce.[127]

But Ford does note that refrigerator trucks from big 'utility company-owned farms in the South' come up to Newark, New Jersey, undercutting the farmers' markets so much that 'the local farmers had to take much of their produce away unsold'.[128] This tension between industrialization and the suffering of smaller and poorer farmers, particularly in the middle of the Depression, defines the American interwar period.

French cuisine

The French reactions to twentieth-century technological innovations to cooking were mixed. Alice B. Toklas, who lived in Paris and the French countryside for more than fifty years, writes in her *Cook Book* in 1954, that the French often resisted innovation in the kitchen:

> The French are indifferent to these new discoveries of ours, to the exact science that American cooking has become, to our time- and labour-saving devices. Nor do they like the food that issues from our modern kitchens. They say it is either too imaginative or too exotic. One may say of the French what was said of their Bourbon kings: they learn nothing, they forget nothing. [129]

Emphasizing tradition and ritual, Edith Wharton wrote: 'Everything connected with dinner-giving has an almost sacramental importance in France'.[130]

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[127] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 185-6.
[128] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 186.
[129] Toklas, 4.
[130] Edith Wharton, *French Ways and Their Meanings* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1919), 22.

Many, in France and around the world, considered France to be the centre of European cuisine. It had set the standard for global elite cuisine from the eighteenth century. The beginning of the twentieth century was no exception and was known as the 'Age of Escoffier', after Auguste Escoffier, whose 1903 *Le Guide culinaire* is a classic French cookery book reflecting the standard of his work at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel. He went on to publish a home cookbook, *Ma Cuisine* (1934). French restaurants appeared in cities around the world from the mid-nineteenth century – most notably the eight Delmonico's restaurants in New York and the Ritz in London. In 1920, French cuisine was still the dominant cuisine of the elite, while the foods of the middle and working classes became the national cuisines, based around beef and wheat.[131]

With the focus on maintaining standards and traditions, French cuisine in Paris adopts variations from regional cuisines. Celebrated regional dishes include the *cassoulet de castlenaudary* from the former Languedoc region and the Provençal *bouillabaisse* beloved by Ford and described in his many works about France including *A Mirror to France* (1926) and *Provence* (1935). But Ford saw that idealism about French agriculture had to be tempered with reality. He saw American influence taking hold in French farming practices after he had an unpleasant experience when he considered buying farmland himself. After remarking in *Great Trade Route* that he did not wish to complain that vegetables can only be bought from 'chain-stores' in Clarksville, Tennessee, where he was staying as a guest of Allen Tate, Ford goes on to say he does feel justified in complaining about France because 'France is enamoured of American methods just now':

[131] Laudan, 305.

> The French chain-store that has rights over the property in the Île de la Barthelasse in the Rhône that I thought of buying had the right to stipulate that I should grow fourteen acres of peas . . . and then they could refuse the crop except at any price they chose to give. . . .The Tates here had last year three acres of peas below this porch. The chain-store—one of three or four which was the only available purchaser—offered them something derisory—a cent a pound—for their crop. Shucked! So they fed them to the hogs. . . . You can't buy country ham in that little town. . . .You have to take chemical-cured ham from Illinois. . . . And the truck comes from chain-store-owned farms in New Jersey . . . Am I mad? . . . It does not seem right. . . .[132]

Ford is indignant about these changes in the United States and France. By contrast, Toklas, who thinks 'The French are indifferent to these new discoveries of ours', does not even realize they have occurred in France.

Ford, Stein and Woolf's tastes are transnational, drawing on aesthetic and culinary inspiration from all three countries. From Ford's deep immersion in French and American cuisine and agricultural methods, to Stein and Toklas's interest in Brillat-Savarin's legacy in Belley and Stein's re-awakened delight in American food, to Woolf's representation of French food and reflections on gender discrepancies in food served in Cambridge, these cross-national perspectives build up each author's idea of culture and civilization.

All three are also affected by the social and technological changes that occur in culinary practices in these countries. For instance, the chafing dish makes it possible for young people to eat on their own, savouring their independence, and France soon adopts the spread of industrialized agricultural methods previously perceived as American. The changes in dining out, in the design and materials of domestic kitchens, in the interlinking of production, transportation and knowledge, all contribute to the sense of

[132] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 376.

modernity with which Ford, Stein and Woolf viewed their contemporary cultural and culinary landscapes. All three authors draw on both historical and contemporary references to food, often privileging French cuisine and culture, and this historicity imbues their arguments about culture and civilization.

CHAPTER II: CULINARY IMPRESSIONISM: FORD MADOX FORD, CIVILIZATION, AGRARIANISM AND COOKERY

'Civilized man—man who must live in great cities—cannot do without condiments,' Ford Madox Ford declares at the opening of his late essay, 'In Praise of Garlic'.[133] The article was published in New York *Harper's Bazaar* magazine in 1937. In the 1930s—the final decade of his life—Ford produced a significant amount of life-writing that engaged with food and the ethical, historical and cultural makeup of civilization and his part in its formation and transmission around the world. In this decade he published his memoirs, *Return to Yesterday* (1931), *It Was the Nightingale* (1933), and the autobiographical travel narratives, *Provence* (1935) and *Great Trade Route* (1937) among other works. *Great Trade Route* is a particularly good example and it examines the circulation of culture alongside Ford's accounts of his travels through France and the United States in the 1930s. It advances his theory about the development of western civilization through the transmission of goods and knowledge from east to west.

Though Ford settled in Provence, he continued travelling around the United States and Europe almost until the very end of his life. Ford was a great cook, epicure and gardener and was sensitive to the expense and difficulty of procuring fresh food in cities across America and Britain in the twentieth century. He was particularly concerned about the perils of not eating enough fresh foods, while also acknowledging that the majority of the population in western countries in the 1930s could afford only

[133] Ford Madox Ford, 'In Praise of Garlic', *Harper's Bazaar* (New York) (August 1937), 104. Hereafter, 'Garlic'.

processed foods. He argued for access for fresh produce and meat when available, and greater regulation over methods of processing food, linking access to these things with the health and optimism of a nation's citizens. Ford's commitment to cookery and sustainable local agriculture made its way into his literary aesthetic and his understanding of food and agriculture contribute to his vision of modernity and the future.

At a time when other modernist writers used formal innovations to move towards abstraction, Ford's literary-culinary innovations grounded his writing in the material and practical world. He was a specialist in cookery concerned with improving the skills of his readers and their understanding of food's importance to culture as well as to heath. In the essay 'In Praise of Garlic', like others written for American and British magazines and newspapers throughout the 1920s and 30s, Ford connects his theoretical and material interests by providing his readers with recipes and instructions on how best to eat garlic alongside a history of its importance to civilizations. He considers 'some principles of the use of condiments':

> The first of these should be that they should enhance not disguise the flavour of your meats. When you eat the almost divine meats of a great French chef, you never know how his sauces are compounded. You notice that they make the meat incomparably delicious and your tongue, savoring it, catches faintly the flavor of one herb after another fugitively: literally, as the ear half-catches the phrases of a fugue of Bach.[134]

Ford's multi-sensory imagination takes flight in that synesthetic last line, connecting physical taste with layered musical structures and pleasurable experience, drawing on his considerable musical knowledge. In his useful and poetic exploration of condiments, Ford provides an example of 'culinary Impressionism'. I use 'culinary

[134] Ford, 'Garlic', 126.

Impressionism' to suggest a bridge between the written work of literary Impressionism and the gastronomic work of Ford's cooking, cookery-writing and life-writing. His technique attempts to capture the sensory, cultural and aesthetic aspects of food and its role in human interactions, as rooted in Ford's personal experience. Ford's culinary historicizing, improvising and allusions to recipes in his work allow him to push the sensory aspects of literary Impressionism further into the realm of the material. The literary work results from the preparation and consumption of real meals, as well as from his literary-historical imagination.

In this chapter, I explore a variety of Ford's writing for autobiographical and fictional moments of culinary Impressionism. I explain this technique and how it develops alongside his agrarian idealism and his theory of the small producer. In pursuit of this argument, I look at his memoirs *Ancient Lights and Certain New Reflections* and *It Was the Nightingale* and his satirical utopian novel *The Simple Life Limited*. This culinary Impressionist framework also informs Ford's representation of character in the major fictional works, *The Good Soldier* and the *Parade's End* tetralogy. Agrarian and culinary Impressionist impulses come together in his late travel and memoir writings, *Provence* and *Great Trade Route* and in a few late essays.

While culinary Impressionism is a literary technique, it is also a frame of mind. The technique allows Ford to draw on cookery and agricultural metaphors as well as to think more deeply about the senses. With this technique Ford demonstrates what he sees as the gastronomic dimensions of subjective experience that allows him to describe culture in more detail. This attentive focus to physical sensation saturates his thinking about national character, cities and the origins of civilizations. English masculinity,

which he probes in his fiction, is epitomized in the undercooked roast beef that recurs as an image throughout *The Good Soldier* and *Parade's End*. The city, bristling with people, leads to a kind of polishing, or refining of taste, and with this, a development of a specific culture. *Great Trade Route*, which moves spices, people, and ideas around the world, is the epitome of modernist engagement with food as a lens for thinking about what civilization represents: access to knowledge, nutrition, and aesthetic and physical pleasure. This idea of civilization is threatened by the political barbarism of 1930s fascist movements and Ford urges his readers to resist them. Ford's writing is sensory and practical, generically experimental and yet still accessible to wide audiences interested in literature, history and cookery. With this link between culture, creativity and food, Ford reflects the changing concerns of modernity and his own writing.

Variations on Impressionism

The cross-disciplinary nature of Ford's Impressionism encompasses a range of sensory and historical perceptions. As Max Saunders writes, Ford 'proclaimed himself an impressionist figure from an early stage, and became literary impressionism's most prolific exponent'.[135] Time and the capturing of the instant 'impression' as part of perceptual reality is one aspect of Ford's literary Impressionism, which is related to, but not defined by, the corresponding movement in visual art, as practiced by Claude Monet and others. Ford was continuing a literary tradition in English that derived from Walter Pater and Arthur Symons, and later, Henry James and Joseph Conrad. Literary Impressionism works to render perceptual sensations into text, unmoulded by ideological or sociological frameworks. Between 1913 and 1914, Ford published three

[135] Max Saunders, *Self Impression: Life-Writing, Autobiografiction, and the Forms of Modern Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 267.

reflections on Impressionism, culminating in his longer essay 'On Impressionism', published in *Poetry and Drama* magazine (June and December 1914).

In 'On Impressionism', Ford emphasizes multiplicity, uncertainty and the malleability of time. Impressionism evokes memory while also representing the process of remembering:

> Indeed, I suppose that Impressionism exists to render those queer effects of real life that are like so many views seen through bright glass—through glass so bright that whilst you perceive through it a landscape or a backyard, you are aware that, on its surface, it reflects a face of a person back at you. For the whole of life is really like that; we are almost always in one place with our minds somewhere quite other.[136]

An impression, then, is always a liminal thing, both a window and a mirror, to a different time and a different place. Ford is almost never direct, his anecdotes are interwoven rather than told linearly, and his nonfiction writing is full of apparent contradictions as he tells and retells similar stories across different genres. It is difficult to pinpoint an exact moment of transformation in his work in which his Impressionism veers towards the culinary, although there are glimpses of 'culinary' Impressionism in the early work. He considers medieval feasts in his Renaissance historical fiction, the *Fifth Queen* Trilogy (1906-1908), vegetarianism and back-to-the-land communities in his 1911 satire *The Simple Life Limited*, and elsewhere. Yet in his post-war works, there is a striking difference in the enumeration of ingredients and attention paid to the practice of cookery and its aesthetic link to literary Impressionism. The meta-dreaminess that Ford describes as being 'almost always in one place with our minds somewhere quite other' is indicative of his 'rhizomatic' style, a term that is employed by Gilles

[136] Ford Madox Ford, 'On Impressionism' in *The Good Soldier*, ed. Max Saunders (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 203. Hereafter, 'On Impressionism'.

Deleuze and Félix Guattari to describe a non-hierarchical, interconnected, multiple, and self-regenerating model of culture. This image is particularly apt for Ford. The rhizome, a tuber or bulb plant with an intersecting root system, such as an onion, can remake itself: 'a rhizome may be broken, shattered at a given spot, but it will start again on one of its old lines, or on new lines'.[137] The rhizome as an image has a strong resonance for culinary Impressionism, and for Ford's personal life, as I will explore in relation to his post-war memoir, *It Was the Nightingale*. And the concept of 'starting again' links to the writing and re-writing that literary Impressionism necessitates in capturing multiple perspectives, stopping and starting with pauses, ellipses and breaks.

'Starting again' is also connected to Ford's historical perspective. Ford's fragmentary memory was long, and often inaccurate, and he experienced memory-loss after suffering a concussion in the First World War. The processes of his remembering link to modernism's writing of history. In *Making History New: Modernism and Historical Narrative* (2015), Seamus O'Malley argues that modernism is profoundly invested in remaking history: 'Modernism, while appearing to be most stylistically distant from what we commonly think of as a historical mode of writing, may actually possess an aesthetic that ushers it closest to actual processes of the construction of history'.[138] For O'Malley, Ford's writing about history 'always involves repetition, rewriting, and returning' and also re-inventing memory. [139] On the subject of memory and forgetting, O'Malley cites Theodore Adorno's epistolary response to Walter Benjamin's essay 'On Some Motifs in Baudelaire' to discuss the Fordian power of

[137] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, Eleventh printing [1987](Minneapolis and London, University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 9.
[138] Seamus O'Malley, *Making History New: Modernism and Historical Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 45.
[139] O'Malley, 45.

forgetting in *Parade's End*. Benjamin's essay explores the concept of *mémoire involontaire*, the rush of memories that comes flooding back to Proust's narrator at the taste of a madeleine in *In Search of Lost Time*. Adorno replies that it is the 'forgetting' that makes this possible, going on to ask: 'Is it not the case that the real task here is to bring the entire opposition between sensory experience and experience proper into relation with a dialectical theory of forgetting?'[140] In so far as Ford's re-writing of the same experience is about the management of forgetting and memory, his culinary Impressionism encompasses this dialectic as well.

The First World War represented a major point of rupture in Ford's life, from which he rebuilt his personal life and his creative powers. After the war, in the processing of his multiple personal crises in the midst of the international crisis, his writing seems to find its regeneration in the culinary and, as I will show, in the 'rhizomatic'. Ford improvises personal anecdotes and cookery writing without recipes, making connections between seemingly unrelated things, probing his memory and his powers of renewal. His evocation of recipes at different points in his writing allows him to take part in the transmission of culture he believes is necessary in the forming of civilizations. While his writing had always capitalized on the liminal sense in literary Impressionism of being in more than one place at once, I argue that culinary Impressionism emerges in Ford's post-war process of forming a bridge between his written work and his culinary labours. Both literary and culinary Impressionism are produced from the same creative impulse that provides surface lightness and emotional

[140] Adorno and Benjamin, *The Complete Correspondence, 1928–1940* ed. Henri Lonitz, trans. Nicholas Walker (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 320, cited in O'Malley, 139.

depth to his writing, allowing his work to address contemporary concerns and to draw on his memory and a huge wealth of historical and alimentary knowledge.

It is one of the tenets of modernist studies that modernist works address the representation of time and the present moment and modernist writers wrestle with how the past flows into the present.[141] Kevin Dettmar cites the temporality of 'life, London, this moment in June' of Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, the philosophy of time of Henri Bergson, Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* and Eliot's essay on 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' as all exploring the way the past infiltrates the present.[142] Equally as vital in modernist work is the Impressionist technique of representing the sensations of the present moment. In attempting to define literary Impressionism, Jesse Matz argues there is a 'totalizing' impulse, a quest for 'perceptual totality': 'to get in the impression not just sense perception but sense that is thought, appearances that are real, suspicions that are true and parts that are whole—this was the "total" aspiration of the Impressionist writer'.[143] Matz goes on to argue, however, that:

> [P]erceptual moments are never simply or exclusively perceptual; rather, they come associated with sociocultural 'moments' – with the distinctions of social life. […] If the impression promised totality, it does so against the will of distinctions dividing high from low, male from female, civilized from savage—distinctions at least as dear as perceptual unity.[144]

This non-hierarchical resistance to distinctions that nevertheless acknowledges them is also relevant to Ford's 'culinary' Impressionism. The perceptual and sociocultural

[141] Recent critical works on the function of the everyday and the ordinary in modernism include Bryony Randall, *Modernism Daily Time and Everyday Life* (2007), Liesl Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary* (2009) and Michael Sayeau, *Against the Event: the Everyday and the Evolution of Literary Modernism* (2013).
[142] David Bradshaw and Kevin J. H. Dettmar, eds., *A Companion to Modernist Literature and Culture* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 1.
[143] Jesse Matz, *Literary Impressionism and Modernist Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1.
[144] Matz, 2.

moments Matz describes can be located in Ford's anecdotes in his memoirs about cooking beloved meals at crucial moments in his life, and in his fluctuating political beliefs in Toryism and his eventual horror at the rise of fascism, in his love of medieval France, and his conception of the development of culture across geographies and time.

Civilization and barbarism

With each allusion to a recipe or the significance of a spice like garlic, or of Provençal cookery's Roman origins, Ford builds up his theory of civilization, cookery and antiquity. For Ford, civilization consists of the productive, collaborative, communal cultural experience. Because food brings people together, this positive experience of civilization is easily found in cities and often in restaurants. In his fiction and nonfiction writing about food and civilization, Ford considers how the social dining experience is emblematic of modernity. In his semi-fictional memoir, *Ancient Lights and Certain New Reflections* (1911), Ford compares modern dining in restaurants with the decline in English authorial creativity and with the state of modern urban society. The titular 'Ancient light' is a legal term for a window that has a 'right' to light, and cannot be blocked by the erection of new buildings. It is in this way that he considers his literary ancestors, whose influence he has inherited as a gift and a burden. In restaurants, he says: 'We have to be tidier and more urbane, but on the other hand we cannot so tyrannically exact of the cook that the dishes shall be impeccable. We are democratized.'[145] Ford concludes the book by saying that a modern, urban writer takes fewer risks, and that as urbanites we are civilized and equalized:

[145] Ford (as Ford Madox Hueffer), *Ancient Lights and Certain New Reflections* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1911), 260. Hereafter: *Ancient Lights*.

> We are civilized—used to living in a city; we are polite, fitted to live in a πόλις; we are polished by the constant rubbing up against each other, all we millions and millions who stream backwards and forwards all the day and half the night. We could not live if we had rough edges; we could not ever get so much as into a motor 'bus if we tried to push in out of our turn. We are Demos. [146]

Shifting between the Greek *polis* and English urbane 'polish', Ford suggests the loss of individuality in the modern city and modern *Demos*. The same goes for the restaurant food that loses its finesse because of greater demand for production over quality. Thus Ford represents food as part of the evolution of modern life, and as a way of reading the past, present and future. When Ford discusses food, it appears not only as an emblem for identity and class, it represents creativity, pleasure and civilization, a word repeated throughout his post-First World War work. Ford's thinking about European identity and food is linked to the history of France, and of Provence in particular, as a cultural and agricultural ideal, an ideal he draws on throughout his travel writing.

But the word 'civilized' also brings to mind its opposite, 'barbaric,' another word in the cultural consciousness in Europe of post-First World War and the late 1930s, when Ford was writing about France. In *Great Trade Route*, the counterpoint to education and individualism of civilization is barbarism in the form of Nazism and American corporate and agricultural greed. Also in *Great Trade Route*, Ford describes the ancient merchants who passed on their knowledge of spices, tool-making and preservation as they travelled west, which is juxtaposed with the corrupt vision of education in the person of a Nazi Professor on a secretly Nazi-owned boat to America on which Ford is travelling.[147] In response to the crisis Ford witnesses, he envisions the Great Route as a utopian past (and future) through which the continued passing on of

[146] Ford, *Ancient Lights*, 290.
[147] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 52.

knowledge and culture throughout the world, and the continued vitality of the small producer, could allow the human race to flourish without going to war or dying of starvation.

Ford was prescient in his thinking, not only about the political problems that were to come, but also in his approach to food and history. It is useful to juxtapose the historicism of Ford's 1937 position with historian Rachel Laudan's *Cuisine and Empire: Cooking in World History* (2013), which considers the history and relationships between empires and adaption or dispersal of their cuisines, or cooked food culture. She demonstrates the link between 'the most widely consumed cuisines' and 'the largest and most powerful political units'.[148] In particular, beef is associated with the expansion of the British Empire and Europe. Along with processed wheat, beef became more accessible to the middle classes during the industrialization of the nineteenth century.[149] The 'bread-and-beef' diet was in direct contrast to Ford's idea of the Great Trade Route, when culinary determinism, or the belief that the British diet had influenced its abilities to increase its population and territory, became widespread. 'Japanese, Mexican, Brazilian, Italian, Indian, and Chinese elites' adopted the British diet in hopes of emulating its empire, and Laudan argues that 'the debates between those promoting modern bread-and-beef cuisines and those arguing for the retention of traditional cuisines were central to modernization worldwide in the late nineteenth century'.[150] Ford would have witnessed this reversal of the East to West route, and was reacting against it:

[148] Rachel Laudan, *Cuisine and Empire: Cooking in World History*, 5.
[149] Laudan, 248.
[150] Laudan, 252.

against the modernization of the existing rural parts of what he understands to be the Great Route, and against what he saw as an unfortunately limited diet.

Ford's approach to food is intimately connected to both the biographical details of his life and his philosophy of humanity's cultural evolution. He was a prolific memoirist, and stories from his life are woven throughout his writings about travel, culture and food. His interest in France and French food, and in the origins of 'civilization', can be traced to a search for a sense of home. Growing up in England to a German father and English mother, the legacy of his 'peculiarly English' pre-Raphaelite grandfather Ford Madox Brown had given him a feeling of displacement.[151] As Ford writes in *Provence* (1935), 'in all my always migratory life no place outside Provence has ever really seemed a home to me though all my life I have been moving along parts of that same track [the Great Route], resting for five days, or a month, or six, and then moving on and on again'.[152] Ford changed his name from the Germanic Ford Hermann Hueffer to a more English Ford Madox Hueffer in 1915, and then to Ford Madox Ford 1919. As we will see in his semi-fictional autobiographical writing, Ford is adept at making himself *at home* in many places, but he always likes to have access to French food.[153] Even his death was framed by French food. Before his death in Deauville, France in 1939, Ford was in ill health, but continued writing, teaching and touring around America. Ford wrote to his London publisher Stanley Unwin: 'My doctor here has come to the conclusion that I shall never be ten years younger until I shall have

[151] Saunders, *Ford Madox Ford*, Vol. 2, 39.
[152] Ford, *Provence: From Minstrels to the Machine* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2009), 18. Hereafter *Provence*.
[153] Hermione Lee has written that Ford was 'homeless, but knowing what home is; looking at home through alien eyes; always running in a separate direction'. Hermione Lee, '"In Separate Directions:" Ford Madox Ford's French Network' in *Ford Madox Ford, France and Provence* (New York: Rodopi, 2011), 54.

consumed nothing but French cooking for at least four months'.[154] Hoping French food might help him recover, he set off for France with the partner of his final years, the Brooklyn-born painter Janice Biala, but he died after a period of illness in Normandy. At his funeral, Biala placed a *bouquet garni* of herbs in his grave.

Utopias past, present and future

Ford's semi-fictional works of memoir, travel and culture explore the state of western civilization, asking readers to reflect on the fate of the individual alongside the fate of the earth. To Ford, a civilized world takes the cultivation of the earth and the raising of vegetables and livestock into consideration. In this way, Ford's books can be framed within the theoretical context of a long line of thinkers from John Ruskin and William Morris to H.G. Wells and D. H. Lawrence. Jonathan Bate identifies the modern problem of valuing the progress of technology over nature as 'The ecological form of the dialectic of Enlightenment': 'Enlightenment's instrumentalization of nature frees mankind from the tyranny of nature (disease, famine), but its disenchantment of nature licenses the destruction of nature and hence of mankind'.[155] Ford is deeply concerned with this dichotomy, for although he was not against city living, he believes that small farming and appreciation of the local is the only way civilization can continue without being destroyed. Ford asks his readers to think about the earth in a literary and practical context with an 'attunement to both words and the world'.[156] Ford is enamoured of the Provençal landscape, of spices, birdsong and growing his own produce and these things contribute to the production of his best writing. Ford often links his literary creativity

[154] Ford, quoted in Saunders, Vol. 2, 547.
[155] Jonathan Bate, *The Song of the Earth* (London: Picador, 2000), 78.
[156] Bate, 23.

with his ability to grow vegetables or cook dinner, and in these ways he demonstrated his connection to society and to the earth.

In his later works, Ford is concerned with the problems of what will happen to a world and its literature, in which the food is entirely managed by giant agriculture firms that eradicate local production. From the Carcassone of Provence that John Dowell dreams of in *The Good Soldier,* to Ford's rural life in his aptly named 'Red Ford' cottage in *It was the Nightingale* and the cottage in Sussex where Tietjens and Valentine live in *Last Post*, to Ford's calls for a return to the life of the small producer in *Great Trade Route,* living off the land is a repeated ideal. Ford is concerned with the idea that, as Greg Garrard puts it: 'environmental problems require analysis in cultural as well as scientific terms, because they are the outcome of an interaction between ecological knowledge of nature and its cultural inflection'.[157] This is also an economic concern, linked to Ruskin and Morris's socialist anti-industrialism and call for the individual's rights to produce work.

Throughout *Great Trade Route,* Ford takes an interest in the small farmers of America. 'Our theme—the theme of this book', he writes, 'is that, if you could get rid of wars, national barriers, patriotisms, politicians, and written constitutions, you might, at the hands of the Small Producer, experience a return to a real Golden Age'.[158] But, among other reasons, this Golden Age is not possible because of the dominance of agriculture as an industry. In the penultimate section of the book, Ford has a vision of what the future of farming in the American South might look like:

[157] Greg Garrard, *Ecocriticism* (London: Routledge, 2004), 15.
[158] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 298.

> It is growing darker, and darker. I can hardly see my audience. I have figured it out that if erosion of the soil of this continent goes on as fast as it is going not only will all the great power dams be silted up for good but there will only remain—in fifty years—one arable acre per head of the population. . . . In the South! . . . [159]

Imagining erosion, less arable land, and the possibility of a dystopian future where the great farms are diminished and food and power are limited, Ford understands with great foresight the real consequences of the giant agricultural firms. Immediately following this Ford relates the story of a Yorkshire famine. He compares the poverty and land destruction in the American South to a famine in Yorkshire that killed all but nineteen of the speakers of a certain dialect. In drawing this comparison between the decreasing amount of arable land in the American South and the near extinction of a particular Yorkshire village, Ford anticipates the kind of famine that global warming scientists warn of today.

Ford's sympathetic interest in agriculture extends to the humane treatment of animals and he links this with the treatment of humanity. In a passage from *Return to Yesterday* (1931), Ford relates an anecdote which culminates in his frustration with the inefficiencies of British governmental bureaucracy during his attempts to get a bill passed for humane animal slaughtering. Ford follows the example of a friend who had managed to change laws in Belgium and Germany. He describes the English slaughterhouse industry as completely unregulated and envisions this cruelty as having a negative effect on the people nearest it:

> In that country [England] the great majority of slaughter houses had no supervision of any sort. In one village in which I was interested the village butcher's shop abutted on the village infant school. Beasts were slaughtered by the butcher in his yard beneath the eyes of the school children who sat on the

[159] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 383.

> wall above. My attention was called to this—and to the whole horrible matter—by hearing a number of little girls crying in the playground when I passed. They were crying because they were too little to climb up the wall.
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> […] But that children who in after life will normally have at their mercy generation on generation of dumb beasts bred for human food—that such children should from an early age be taught to find enjoyment in the sight of animal suffering…that seems to me a terrible thought.[160]

While we expect the children to cry because of the slaughter, the twist is that they want to see the spectacle. Ford's critique of animal husbandry practices links the inhumane methods of slaughter to a state of mind that promotes a cruelty in Europe's next generation. This argument will later be developed in *Great Trade Route*, where the state of mind of civilization is of utmost importance when all over Europe people are threatened with butchery and extermination.

Ford's preference for European agricultural methods is preceded by other Francophiles like Edith Wharton, Henry James and others who agreed that the French mode of living represents the pinnacle of civilization. In Wharton's writing, there is a sense that the French circumspection and consideration will be necessary to prevent disaster from descending on humanity. Ford fears for the fate of the world without methods of humane animal husbandry, and he believes that caring for the environment is an integral part of being civilized. Driving small farmers from their land and into poverty in America and the manner of slaughtering animals in England were not considered by Ford to be civilized.

The individual in an agrarian utopia: *The Simple Life Limited* and *Ancient Lights*

In 1911, Ford published two works which complement each other: *The Simple Life Limited*, a satire on the Fabian community of Limpsfield where Ford lived for a year

[160] Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, 211-12.

in 1898 with his wife Elsie Martindale, and a memoir, *Ancient Lights and Certain New Reflections*. What the two works have in common with each other, and with Ford's other work, is the worry that utopian communes and artistic legacies suppress individuality. In each of these works food is used to show how Ford differs from his predecessors in his social ideas. However, there is political ambiguity about the merits of utopianism with regards to the potential for leading to successful small farming. Though he had always been interested in the soil, Ford had not yet fully developed his full belief in self-sufficient small farming in these earlier works (that would come during his period of recovery after the First World War). But from early on his reflections on agrarianism are important to the development of his culinary Impressionism, because of its emphasis on the parallel between small, local farming, and creative productivity.

In *Ancient Lights,* Ford contrasts the art and towering personas of the Pre-Raphaelite 'Ancient Lights', or the great artists and thinkers of the 1870s and 1880s, with what he sees as the dearth of present day artists. Ford raises the issue of his inheritance of this legacy from 'those terrible and forbidding things—the Victorian great figures' of 'Carlyle, of Mr. Ruskin, of Mr. Holman Hunt, of Mr. Browning, or of the gentleman who built the Crystal Palace'.[161] Ford turns away from Ruskin and Morris's socialist visions to his own agrarian and individualist ideal, but is heavily indebted to them. Ruskin, who understood 'value' to be both an economic and moral term, founded the St George's Company (later known as the Guild of St George), a utopian feudal society. He directed attention to the inequality created by the Victorian *laissez-faire*

[161] Ford, *Ancient Lights*, xi.

economic mode of competition with the ringing statement 'there is no wealth but life'.[162] However, Ruskin was more paternalistic than socialist, hoping, for instance, that even 'on the poorest farm of the St George's Company, the servants shall have white and brown sugar of the best—or none.'[163] Though its aims were very broad, the Guild of St George had only a few specific successes, including gifting a mill to spinners on the Isle of Man to help them sustain their industry. In general the Guild did not succeed in bringing to fruition most of its agricultural experiments with waste land.[164]

In contrast to Ruskin's inefficient Guild, the colony of Luscombe Green in Ford's *The Simple Life Limited* becomes profitable to its manager, Horatio Gubb, who has a turnover of about three hundred pounds a year. Ford published *The Simple Life Limited* under the *nom de plume* 'Daniel Chaucer', and it captures some of the dramas of the people living at Limpsfield at the time, including the Garnetts and his one time collaborator Joseph Conrad. Mr Parmont, a critic based on Edward Garnett, remarks that the 'Colony is coming to smash' because 'it couldn't have the essentials of goodness in it or it wouldn't have paid. And if you come to look at it philosophically it's a collection of Individualists organised along Communistic lines.' And that it 'pays dividends to make your mouth water'.[165]

Part of a greater movement of alternative living like that embraced by Godwin, Shelley, and Shaw, *The Simple Life Limited* also closely echoes the comedy of

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[162] John Ruskin, *Unto This Last*: *Four Essays on the First Principles of Political Economy* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1872), 125.
[163] John Ruskin, *Fors Clavigera*, 'Letter 48: The Advent Collect', *Selected Writings*, ed. Dinah Birch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 221-222.
[164] Jeffrey L. Spear, *Dreams of an English Eden: Ruskin and His Tradition in Social Criticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 196.
[165] Ford (as Daniel Chaucer), *The Simple Life Limited* (London: John Lane, 1911), 214. Hereafter: *Simple Life Limited.*

undertaking medieval activities and dress found in William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890). Morris first encountered Ruskin's work while at Oxford and would develop Ruskin's legacy into a dream of full-fledged socialist utopia in his novel. The novel describes a revolution in the twentieth century, in which social class as well as notions of wealth, economic competition and industrialism are abolished while medieval craftsmanship, husbandry and happiness thrive. After this revolution, destruction of commercialism and new building up of the country's resources 'the world was being brought to its second birth' in a modern medieval period.[166] Ford overtly satirizes Morris via the lifestyle of the inhabitants of Limpsfield (including Ford himself and Elsie, while they lived there) who wear medieval smocks and bucket-shaped hats, eat only vegetables, and wear sandals in an attempt to abandon modern conventions.

Another example of a comic simple lifer appears in *Ancient Lights*. Ford lightly mocks 'Comrade P-----', a learned scholar who ate only nuts and refused to wear clothes. He would 'walk into the [British Museum] Reading Room attired only in a blanket, which he would hand to the cloak room attendant, asking for a check in return'.[167] The man is unfortunately not then allowed in the British Museum. He could equally fit into *The Simple Life Limited*. The diet of the followers of Simon Bransdon are like that of 'Comrade P----'. When Hamnet and Ophelia, characters not unlike their Shakespearean predecessors, first appear in the book, they announce: 'We have neither of us tasted flesh meat or alcohol in our lives and we are compiling a book called "Health Resides in Sandals"'.[168] Brandson, as their leader, writes tracts like '"Whoso

[166] William Morris, *News from Nowhere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 135.
[167] Ford, *Ancient Lights*, 124.
[168] Ford, *Simple Life Limited*, 17.

eateth of his fellow creature, though it be but a chicken, wrings the angels' bosoms"', but hypocritically continues to eat meat and drink whiskey heartily.[169] While the colonists eat 'nuts, cheese, sour milk and wholemeal biscuits', Mr Bransdon has 'morning eggs and bacon'.[170] The narrator describes him as 'the only flesh-eater of the colony, but then wasn't he, figuratively speaking at least, the father of them all?'.[171] Ford ridicules the colony's attempts at simplicity while living in the unhygienic, rat-infested conditions of Frog's Cottages.

Remembering his own simple life experiences, Ford expressed ambivalence. In *Ancient Lights*, he claimed not to know what his views were, but possessed a chameleon-like ability to change his mind in order both to blend in and to tease others:

> I must, personally, have had three separate sets of political opinions. To irritate my relatives, who advocated advanced thought, I dimly remember that I professed myself a Tory. Amongst the bourgeoisie whom it was my inherited duty to *épater* I passed for a dangerous anarchist. In general speech, manner and appearance I must have resembled a socialist of the Morris group. I don't know what I was: I don't know what I am.[172]

When he does take the simple life seriously, Ford's argument is that it should be, but does not in practice turn out to be, a method of sustaining of aesthetic individualism as well as agrarianism. *The Simple Life Limited's* protagonist is Hamnet, an allusion to both the name of Shakespeare's son and the character of Hamlet. Hamnet goes from being a follower of Simon Bransdon, to becoming an 'individualist' thinker who rejects the corruption of the colony that is developed by Bransdon and Hamnet's father, Horatio.

[169] Ford, *Simple Life Limited*, 26.
[170] Ford, *Simple Life Limited*, 50.
[171] Ford, *Simple Life Limited*, 50.
[172] Ford, *Ancient Lights*, 120-1.

Horatio, also Shakespearean, is the character most closely based on Ford himself, and is the least likable as the vain business manager of the colony.

The issue of suburbia as opposed to real countryside and agrarian work is also central to the book. Hamnet finally returns to find his relatives all living in new cottages in Luscombe Green and his father is interested in expanding them further into an even more profitable garden city suburb. The colony is not self-sustainable via agriculture or medieval methods of weaving and must continually be infused with cash to survive. The faux-countryside appeal of a 'Garden city' directed to the moral and social designs of its investors is a chief object of satire. When a mad Russian spy, also called Brandetski, burns the colony to the ground, and Horatio transfers the old colony to, and becomes Director of, the East Croydon Garden City Ltd., Hamnet is the sole person who continues to live the simple life in practice. He explains his position to a group of people who demand to know what 'the Simple Life really is': 'You just sit in the sun and the birds and beetles and things come and climb all over you'.[173] To his half-sister Ophelia he says:

> Don't you see? That's the Simple Life, to know the life you like and to have the courage to lead it. You don't want to organise: you don't want to make it the Simple Life Limited: you just want to go ahead. If you think about Life it isn't Life. If you think about the sort of man to model yourself on, you aren't a man. You're a trained rat.[174]

Hamnet is a poet-like, hermit figure, whose position in life is unsustainable for most. The life Hamnet leads is also utopian in that it is impossible to be part of any society living in such an extreme way; he has to be a hermit. But he does no damage, and he thinks for himself, against the grain of the group, pointing out the flaws in their method.

[173] Ford, *Simple Life Limited*, 382.
[174] Ford, *Simple Life Limited*, 384.

Hamnet is the 'no man' living 'no life' in the utopian 'nowhere' but he provides a necessary counter to the pretence of the claims for the Simple Life colony.

Just as Ford wants to 'belong to a nation of Small Producers, with some local, but no national feeling at all', he wishes education to have that same boundary-less expansiveness to travel freely around the world.[175] The 'frame of mind' that is Ford's understanding of the Great Route is illustrated in its educating effects:

> What is certain is that our civilization—I am not talking of our ability to evolve and make others work machines—our civilization was born on the Great Route and, in so far as our civilization has beauties and virtues, it derives them from the Merchants and their pupils.[176]

The utopia Ford's books suggest is also a nowhere, as he alludes to Morris and those impossible sheaves of wheat in the title of his final chapter of *Great Trade Route*, 'To Nowhere'. It would be too much to hope for every individualist to be a good person. However in Ford's thinking, a civilization must prize education and the free flow of thought as well as trade. In writing about Ford's time at the *English Review* in the early 1900s, Nathan Waddell has argued Ford was one of 'certain early modernist writers' who had the aim of 'providing their readers with a means of more effectively grasping (and thereby perhaps in time resolving) the contradictions of the social conditions by which they were, at the outset of the twentieth century, encircled'.[177] Ford always embraces contradictions, and though he satirizes the various social ideals of the colony of Limpsfield in *The Simple Life Limited*, as a satire it is also an homage, and fond remembrance of a certain period of his life. Ford's Impressionism enables him to

[175] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 86.
[176] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 39, 40.
[177] Nathan Waddell, *Modernist Nowheres: Politics and Utopia in Early Modernist Writing, 1900-1920* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 6

include contradictory thoughts and thus a more incisive presentation of modernity. Ford also shows us that we can learn from the mistakes of such utopian representations, and that there is no harm in dreaming up new utopian ideals, as Hamnet does. Modern life, with its many contradictions, requires continual improvements.

Cities, Impressionism and the aesthetics of contradiction

The ideals Ford satirizes in *The Simple Life Limited* are not those of real agrarian, pastoral living. The real life Limpsfield and the fictional Luscombe Green colony and East Croydon Garden City Ltd were suburbs of London, providing neither the solitude of living far away from the hubbub nor the stimulation of the city. Cities prove to be a difficult subject for Ford because they allow for the free flow of people and ideas, which is linked with the free trade of goods such as food—but their existence necessitates commodifying food and putting more distance between it and the diner. But crucially, cities are the location for the interchange, hence his mixed praise and contradictions.

While he fears that 'utopian' Garden Cities may suppress individualism, Ford also worries that in cities we indulge in individualism perhaps too much, for 'rushing about as we do in huge crowds, we have no time for any solidarity':

> [A]nd at it as we are all day and half the night we have no time for reflection. Yet it is only of reflection that ideas are born, and it is only by self-sacrifice and by self-sacrifice again that the arts can flourish.[178]

Max Saunders points to the division in Ford's thoughts about the city, citing early Ford in 1898 as 'regard[ing] the great city with horror' and then writing in 1915

[178] Ford, *Ancient Lights*, 231.

that 'modern life is almost inevitably urban life'.[179] What Ford is looking for in a place to live is a balance between the manic rushed energy of cities and the sluggishness of the suburbs. Ford may focus better in a solitary environment, but his mercurial literary style 'flourishes' in the freedom and energy of cities. The ideal for living is closer to a state of flow that Ford enjoys himself when working: feeling focused and individual, but part of a community, participating in chance encounters and the exchange of ideas while eating lunch with another person. In *New York is Not America* (1927) Ford writes that what he loves about cities generally is the constant bumping in to people:

> [F]or me the charm of New York lies in, she is a centre because of, the immense number of human contacts that she offers you. I have pointed out that the attraction of Paris—which city I do not like—is that I seldom go out to lunch from my studio, along a few yards of Boulevard, without meeting someone, attractive in one way or another, with whom to consume that frugal meal. It is almost the same with New York. Indeed here I meet almost the same people. And that, in the end, is the great pleasure of life. [180]

He wanders like a *flâneur* in search of his lunch companions. While praising New York, Ford claims not to like Paris, but in the same breath describes how meeting people for lunch spontaneously, both in Paris and New York, is 'the great pleasure of life'. His contradictory claim of disliking Paris mirrors the act of his own walking in the city: first he will walk in one direction, and then another. [181] Thus by contradiction Ford proceeds to represent cities. And through Impressionism, which embraces contradictions, Ford

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[179] Max Saunders, 'Ford, The City, Impressionism and Modernism' in *Ford Madox Ford and the City*, ed. Sara Haslam (Amsterdam: Rodopoi, 2005), 67.
[180] Ford, *New York is Not America* (London: Duckworth, 1927), 118-19.
[181] Nick Freeman points out that Ford's questionable truthfulness and contradictions are part of Ford's debt to Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde and others: 'Ford's attitudes are not simply those of an inveterate (self-) deceiver. They should instead be seen as an aspect of the English *avant garde's* suspicion of Victorian empiricism, a reaction that drew upon Paterian relativity, impressionism, and Wilde's witty rejections of the distinction between truth and falsehood'. Nick Freeman, '"Not Accuracy" but "Suggestiveness": Impressionism in *The Soul of London*' in *Ford Madox Ford and the City*, ed. Sara Haslam (Amsterdam: Rodopoi, 2005), 27.

incorporates multiple perceptions, perspectives, ideas, and timeframes in order to best 'render' consciousness.

Incorporation is part of the city's main function, and Ford explores this idea through contemplation of the strata of cities, the people in them, the food being eaten, and a metaphor of digestion. His recurring theme of 'civilization' is about creating the best possible life. 'Civilization' is also in many respects the situation where people congregate to produce and exchange materials and ideas: the city. The city's accumulation of people, places and objects sets the modern backdrop for Ford's urban Impressionism, with its focus on light, mirroring and perception.

Light and shadow, refraction, mirroring and filtering are all aspects of Impressionism, and of modern city life with its many lights and reflective surfaces. The person in the reflection is the writer: Ford's Impressionism reveals his personality much the way the city reflects the individual. Ford writes in *The Soul of London* (1905) that he 'renders' the city with 'effects of light' and 'atmosphere':

> And, with its 'atmosphere' whatever it is, with its 'character' whatever it may be, with the odd touches that go to make up familiarity and the home-feeling, the shape of its policemen's helmets, the cachet of its shop fronts, effects of light cast by steel lamps on the fog, on house fronts, on front garden trees, on park railings, all these little things going towards its atmosphere and character, that jumping-off place will remain for him, as it were, a glass through which he will afterwards view, a standard by which he will afterwards measure, the London that yet remains no one's.[182]

London is 'a glass' that is made up of these many things that it both reflects and absorbs, yet still it is elusive. The sense of transparency and mystery is enhanced when Ford refers to painting techniques, which go beyond a kind of literary rendition of a Monet

[182] Ford Madox Ford [as Ford Herman Hueffer], *The Soul of London* in *England and The English*, ed. Sara Haslam (Manchester: Carcanet, 2003), 7.

painting. While Ford denies the usefulness of these techniques because the city is simply too big to capture, he manages both to articulate the impossibility of concretely representing the city and yet still give us a practical sense of its largeness:

> But the last thing that, even then, he will get is any picture, any impression of London as a whole, any idea to carry about with him –of a city, in a plain, dominated by a great building, bounded by a horizon, brought into composition by mists, great shadows, great clouds or a bright and stippled foreground.[183]

Ford grasps after the edges of his vision with his circumlocutions; his anecdotes expand considerably. The unfolding, winding nature of his prose about cities finds its correlative in the metaphor of the human digestive system. Digestion and consumption prove to be a useful comparison for Ford in thinking about city streets, culture, character and individuality.

Cafés and digestion

Ford's metaphor of digestion, consumption and its connection to the city is part of a rich tradition of describing a city as a body and all its functions. From the clamorous mouths of the *vox populi* in Shakespeare's Roman plays to Cloacina, goddess of the sewers, in John Gay's 'Trivia,' the city's human and architectural networks have often been compared to the systems of the body. Nietzsche too, conceived of a correlation between the impressions of a city-dweller, the metaphor of digestion and modernity:

> [t]he abundance of disparate impressions greater than ever: cosmopolitanism in foods, literatures, newspapers, forms, tastes, even landscapes. The tempo of this influx *prestissimo*; the impressions erase each other; one instinctively resists taking in anything, taking anything deeply, to 'digest' anything; a weakening of the power to digest results from this. A kind of adaptation to this flood of impressions takes place: men unlearn spontaneous action, they merely react to

[183] Ford, *Soul of London*, 9.

> stimuli outside. They spend their strength partly in assimilating things, partly in defence, partly in opposition.[184]

This metaphor of digestion is the first step in the artistic processing of Impressionist reflections. Though Nietzsche's rendering of these modern sensations stresses their overwhelming nature, as a flood that erases previous impressions and weakens the ability to process them, for Ford, digestion is fully possible if one stays in the moment.

In thinking about the city as comparable to the body, the city feels less isolating: the city is humanized and the processes of individual digestion and the city's systems coincide. This is an instance in which the metaphor of consumption serves as a lens for the modernist understanding of civilization and barbarism. The earlier example of Ford's comparison of the Greek word *polis*, meaning city, citizenship and body of citizens, with the 'polishing' that comes from being among crowds, is a pleasant sensation, and it leads to a refining or civilizing of the individual from exposure to diversity of the crowds. This crowding leads to compression and processing, a metaphor in which sensory impressionism and the understanding of history come together.

Digestion appears throughout Ford's representations of London, from *The Soul of London,* part of his 1905 trilogy of books, *England and the English*, to later comments on the city in his works on travelling the world. Sara Haslam explores Ford's concept of 'urban energy' in *The Soul of London* which she points out is 'the product of London's assimilation or "digestion", of its visitors from many lands' and also closely linked with futurity and 'the Modern', a term Ford gives this energy.[185] She goes so far as to read in

[184] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power,* ed. Walter Kaufmann, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1968), 41.
[185] Sara Haslam, 'Introduction' in *Ford Madox Ford and the City*, ed. Sara Haslam (Amsterdam: Rodopoi, 2005), 12.

this energy 'an anticipatory dash of futurism in his fulsome prose' and 'the locus of a force for progressive challenge and change'.[186] While Ford certainly appreciates the energy of the city, I would argue that over time his comparison of the city's assimilation and digestion point to a slower, more cumulative pace of change. Years later, in *Provence*, Ford writes again of digestion and London. He describes the London arts scene as being located in a few *'bistros'* and *'garottes'* between Charlotte Street and Percy Street. He sees this intersection as having the characteristics of a Parisian *place*, but with less momentum:

> It is, in short, this *place*, the heart of the Arts for London—but what a tiny heart; in a breast of what squalor, feebly pulsing to send how thin a trickle of the faint silver blood of civilization through the flaccid veins of this enormous city. Like a vast narcoticised body thrown across the valley of the Thames and from there into what soiled remotenesses! . . . A flaccid jelly of a body with organs of assimilation, of some sort of digestion, of some sort of circulation, of some sort of consciousness, ninety miles across by sixty, and, with a heart the size of a hen's egg, for all salvation.[187]

London as a drugged body that assimilates and absorbs civilization itself is certainly different from the London of 1905 described in *The Soul of London*. Thus London's absorption of all its people and artists is not necessarily a fast-paced and healthy process: Ford is critical of its comparative lack of appreciation for the arts.

In contrast, dining, thinking and digestion converge in Ford's love of Parisian café culture, where the arts are celebrated. 'The constant rubbing up against each other' that Ford decries in *Ancient Lights* is a vital part of artistic collaboration that occurs in cafés, those centres of intellectual discourse. Like eighteenth-century English coffeehouses, which were symbols of a new bourgeois society of exchange and trade of

[186] Haslam, 12.
[187] Ford, *Provence*, 147.

ideas and commodities, celebrated by publications like the *Spectator*, Parisian cafés proved to be modern places of cultural exchange. In 'A Paris Letter' (1939) written for an American audience, Ford praises the urbanity of Paris and its appreciation for painters, writers and philosophers and others who gather in cafés to discuss and argue. Ford calls Paris 'the centre of our Mediterranean civilization' for its reverence for art.[188] He glories in the fact that at the Deux Magots café, history is being made by artists of the present:

> Into these staider scarlet plush benches Derain, and Picasso and Latapie and Tsara and Marchard and score of others, with the usual parasitic huddle of picture dealers and agents and buyers and lawyers and bankers and politicians of cabinet rank, are all, at the aperitif hour, so closely wedged that you have to have the qualities of a Rugby half back if ever you are to get in there.[189]

This passage captures the sense of physical and intellectual closeness, and how the consumption of drinks and processing of ideas, lead to the production of art and culture. The café bristles with genius and great names whom the city respects and will remember.

When comparing Paris and London, Ford laments the dearth of cafés in London. The opening of *Provence* takes place in London, where Ford has taken his American partner Janice Biala for the first time. The London sky is riddled with portentous aeroplane advertisements that 'we should not sleep unless we wore ONE WAY PANTS; that we were starved and should lie awake all night unless we CRAMMED OURSELVES with CRAM'S MALTO', like the skywriting advertisement for toffee in

[188] Ford, 'A Paris Letter', *Kenyon Review*, Vol. 1, 1 (Winter 1939), 18. Hereafter: 'A Paris Letter'.
[189] Ford, 'A Paris Letter', 18-19.

Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* in London of the 1920s.[190] The advertisements in the sky call attention to the commercialization of the city, but the language of the advertisements also overtly refer to digestion and bodily functions. The indignity of this projection of internal processes onto the city skies touches on the idea of how the city makes everything public, turning the inside out, exposing the vulnerable parts. When Biala asks if they can find a café to sketch her impressions in and she is told there are none, she replies, 'But if London does not provide *cafés* for her artists how can she expect to have any art? . . . Or any letters? Or any civilisation? Or any anything?'.[191] London's enterprising spirit has mostly prevented the inclusion of cafés and public spaces in which thinkers may exchange ideas. Ford responds as narrator: 'I was considering the new sound. It is very difficult to explain the fine shades of London to the alien and it was twenty-odd years since I had been there for anything like keeps. . . .'[192] Ford is as frustrated as Biala with London's apparent lack of respect for the artist community. They are listening to and reading, not ideas, but the buzzing skywriting advertisements.

In addition to thinking of the city as absorbing people, Ford also thinks about the food that is consumed in the context of a city. Good digestion is necessary for the social encounters of city life, which brings us back to his essay 'In Praise of Garlic' and Ford's practical advice. For though he advocates garlic so strongly that he writes 'you must then consume a reasonable amount of garlic in your life if your physical and, still more,

[190] Ford, *Provence*, 24.
[191] Ford, *Provence*, 24.
[192] Ford, *Provence*, 24-5.

mental health are to be satisfactory', he then concludes that it shouldn't be eaten when one will be in close proximity to other people:

> But don't eat dishes highly flavoured with it, even cooked, just before you are going to a dance, a party or the play. And if you are kind, don't even give it to any guests you have who are, as the saying is, going on after your meal. It does no harm to be on the safe side.[193]

He fears garlic may be less digestible than he promises, but although garlic might not be appropriate for those who are going dancing afterwards, it is not a decadent food. Ford considers it to be medicinally desirable as well as delicious. However, it also seems to be possible to 'school' one's digestion into assimilating garlic. In *Provence*, Ford relates an anecdote of a London mannequin, or model, who loved garlic and 'had schooled her organs to assimilate, not to protest against, the sacred herb' by making herself *poulet béarnaise*, which contains ½ pound of garlic per chicken:

> As do—as *must*—all good cooks, she used quantities of that bulb. It occurred to me at once that this was London and her work was social. Garlic is all very well on the bridge between Beaucaire and Tarascon or in the arena at Nîmes amongst sixteen thousand civilized beings. . . . But in an *atelier de couture* in the neighbourhood of Hanover Square! . . . The lady answered mysteriously: No: there is no objection if only you take enough and train your organs to the assimilation. The perfume of *allium officinale* attends only on those timorous creatures who have not the courage as it were to wallow in that vegetable.[194]

Here is another instance of food as a lens for Ford's thinking about civilization. Ford's interest in the mannequin's success in 'train[ing] [her] organs to the assimilation' is also about learning to be civilized through care of the body, and harks back to Ford's adoration of all things French. The civilization of eating and digesting garlic, like other cultural norms, Ford seems to say, is something that can be acquired. The woman is, for Ford, not just a *mannequin*, but a model for civilization, city life and perhaps, in her

[193] Ford, 'Garlic', 129.
[194] Ford, *Provence*, 145.

persistence, a model for the artist, too. If we think in Bourdieu's hierarchical terms of class and culture being inscribed in the body, it is a revelation then, that this woman is able to re-train her organs to consume the food she desires without unpleasant consequences.

Ford's interest in training one's organs is about self-education, open-mindedness and the prevention of nationalist fervour. As he argues in 'In Praise of Garlic', *Provence* and *Great Trade Route*, those who are open to new foods can be open to other cultures, and thus continue the development of civilization more peaceably. But what if it was not possible to retrain the organs? His philosophy of the origins of war as being rooted in indigestion states that if individuals have access to spices to help with their digestion, they will live their life in a civilized way: 'All that it is today safe to say is that the civilized races are those that use spices and cook their food, barbarism being denoted by the eating of barely singed meat or matter out of tins'.[195] There is also an element of class snobbery here. The poorest people living in cities who could only afford to eat from tins, Ford's accusation of barbarism here appears unjust and out of character. In *Great Trade Route*, Ford does sympathize with the conditions of city living that prevent access to fresh foods: 'You cannot get food as fresh as it should be in a city—unless you grow mustard and cress in a soup-tureen or raise chickens in your refrigerator'.[196] Growing small plants in his apartment in a 'soup-tureen' is his solution. And although he says that 'Eating dead peas out of a can is a dullness that adds to the slatternly indifference of the mass-worker; eating your own live peas twenty minutes off the vine is a mental stimulant' he cannot offer a solution for those who cannot get regular access

[195] Ford, *Provence*, 163.
[196] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 251-2.

to fresh peas.[197] Just as the transport of spices from east to west also entailed the destruction of many people and lands in the imperial fight for access to these spices-cum-commodities, Ford's implicit rejection of those who cannot afford to 'civilize' themselves according to his standards is a difficult posture to accept.

Mirrored Impressions and 'finish'

Ford's 1926 book on the country he was living in at the time, *A Mirror to France*, reads as part travel-guide, part love-letter to his favourite country and culture. Throughout his non-fiction and his fiction, France (and Provence, specifically) is for Ford a model for humanity's survival: French origins, arts and culture, cooking, agriculture and landscape represent the pinnacle of human achievement. Thus 'our former civilisation of chivalries, learnings, arts, crafts, mysteries, abstract thought, frugalities and individualisms' all derive 'from the shores of the Counts of Toulouse'.[198] For Ford, the French have created an environment where a man can sustain himself with small farming and manage a creative life, although he does recognize industrialism creeping in in the 1930s even in Provence, via share-cropping by which 'the chain-stores make great progress every day'. [199]

Ford is interested in France's celebration of the arts, attention to details and manners, fitness and finish. When he proposes his theory that culture or 'civilization' came to the North through the Northern plundering of the Southern countries, and tells us with joy that he has finally returned to this Southern country, he is claiming a stake for himself in its cultural legacy. In his poetic detailing of specific instances of a 'love of

[197] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 252.
[198] Ford Madox Ford, *A Mirror to France* (London: Duckworth, 1926), 10.
[199] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 376.

"finish"', his joy in particular meals and economic and domestic behaviours, Ford completes his literary and actual pilgrimage to his spiritual and physical home:

> The care with which a parcel is done up in one of the large bazaars of the street running along the quays in Boulogne; the care with which an omelette, a salad and a slice of ham will be served to you in any roadside inn near Beauvais; […] the care with which on the quays in Marseilles the cook will apportion the exact ingredients of his *bouillabaisse*: all these things are symbols of, and in exact apostolic succession from, the little bas-reliefs of David and Goliath, that are as exactly proportioned, as decorative and as impressionist as any Japanese work, on the portals of the Cathedrals of St Gilles on the border of the Camargue near Aigues-Mortes.[200]

The 'finish' of the careful parcels and delicious foods is a part of a deliberate way of living that honours custom and history, and are important components of Ford's idea of civilization. This passage echoes Edith Wharton's language in *French Ways and Their Meaning* (1919) in its praise of French civilization stretching back through the ages. Although Wharton and Ford did not move in the same circles in Paris, Ford's and Wharton's language in praise of their favourite country closely resembles the other's.[201] Wharton, who lived in Paris from the 1910s-20s, explained France to Americans as a kind of ancient society that had been perfecting 'civilisation' for the rest of humanity:

> The French are the most human of the human race, the most completely detached from the lingering spell of the ancient shadowy world in which trees and animals talked to each other, and began the education of the fumbling beast that was to deviate into Man. They have used their longer experience and their keener senses for the joy and enlightenment of the races still agrope for self-expression. The faults of France are the faults inherent in an old and excessively self-contained civilisation; her qualities are its qualities; and the most profitable way of trying to interpret French ways and their meaning is to see how this long inheritance may benefit a people which is still, intellectually and artistically, in search of itself.[202]

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[200] Ford, *A Mirror to France*, 31-2.
[201] Hermione Lee, 'Ford Madox Ford's French Network' in *Ford Madox Ford, France and Provence* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), 52.
[202] Edith Wharton, *French Ways and Their Meanings* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1919), x-xi.

The feeling of authenticity and importance that comes from 'long inheritance' plays to American anxieties about blue-bloodedness and lineage. Like Wharton, Ford is drawn by the integration of this history and culture into every day French life. French ways are also seen as crucial to the creative process.

The French medievalism of chivalry, courtly love and troubadour poetry are the precursors to the 'finish' of twentieth-century French culture. Ford fears his own Anglo-Saxon culture is losing touch with France. He links the landscape of Southern France with its olive trees, lavender and rosemary with the literary heritage of the troubadours and the chivalric tradition:

> The *chose donnée* then of this book is: that chivalric generosity, frugality, pure thought and the arts are the first requisites of a Civilisation – and the only requisites of a Civilisation; and then that such traces of chivalric generosity, frugality, pure thought and the arts as our pre-war, European civilisation of white races could exhibit came to us from the district of Southern France on the shores of the Mediterranean where flourished the Counts of Toulouse, olive trees, the mistral, the Romance Tradition, Bertran de Born, the Courts of Love and the only really amiable Heresy of which I know.[203]

The 'generosity, frugality, pure thought and the arts' of old France is continued by Ford in his writing, as well as by the people of France, who show their love of the produce of the land by selecting their produce carefully and frugally in markets, and preparing the foods or instructing their preparation with care.[204]

Ford's philosophy of the interconnection between the earth, a simple life and the creative spirit is also drawn from the trope of the wandering troubadour. Ford and Ezra Pound were both captivated by the literary legacy of the Provençal troubadours, Pound completing a 1912 walking tour of Provence, which would provide inspiration for his

[203] Ford, *A Mirror to France*, 14-15.
[204] Ford, *A Mirror to France*, 228.

Cantos. However, the literary appeal of the troubadours goes beyond that of romance and Courtly Love; Ford sees 'the extreme simplicity and the domestic imagery of the Provençal poets' as being 'in the realm of pure poetry, infinitely above the poets of their ages'.[205] Ford's embrace of domesticity and close observation of the landscape and geography reveal his deep knowledge of the literary and cultural history of France. Ford expresses his love for Provence in his description of those perfect conditions in which thought and the arts can thrive in France. Provence is his utopia:

> Let us, then, sit here and imagine a world in which reign only Thought and the Arts. The air is exactly flesh-heat and still; as far as Corsica there is no sail upon the Mediterranean; round us those ceaseless whisperers, the olive trees, and those incomparable sieves of the wind, the tufts of rosemary, thyme and lavender, are for once silent, and a flat rock with another for a back makes an admirable seat.[206]

The landscape and its fruits (the olive trees and the spices) are the foundations for this country that celebrates 'Thought and the Arts'. Ford's position on the vista, reflecting on how history has shaped that country and what the future may bring, prefigures his vision of the future of civilization that later explores in *Provence* and *Great Trade Route*.

Shallot skins and scum in *It Was the Nightingale*

After being demobilised from service in the First World War, the domestic acts of cooking and keeping a house in France began to heal Ford, who had served as an officer in the Welch regiment. Though he started out writing pro-French propaganda, he enlisted in the war 1915 and fought in the battle of the Somme, suffering a concussion when a shell exploded near him, and he lost his memory for three weeks. He also fought at Ypres Salient and his lungs were damaged by both pneumonia and probable exposure

[205] Ford, *Provence*, 70-1.
[206] Ford, *A Mirror to France*, 268.

to poison gas. [207] Though Ford was sent back to England, finishing out the war attached to the Staff of the Welch regiment, he felt unable to write for a long time afterwards. Several relationships were causing him difficulty: his early first marriage to Elsie Martindale had broken down, and his subsequent involvement with several different women caused him distress. While on leave he met the painter Stella Bowen with whom he set up house and memorializes in his semi-fictional memoir *It Was the Nightingale* (1933) which covers the years after the war.

In this memoir Ford transforms an absurd, bathetic moment of frustration into a moment of creative triumph through his cooking. Ford describes moving to the aptly named 'Red Ford', a ramshackle cottage in Sussex in which he soon hopes to be living with Bowen in 1919. He arrives at the cottage in penury and exhausted, with a few domestic and culinary items, hoping to find his creative energy again:

> I had my bed and my canvas table up very quickly, and then had to face my mutton-neck and shallots. Here there came in the ridiculous omen. It was when I confronted my shallots. A shallot is perhaps the best of all the onion tribe: but shallots are very small things: scores of them lay under my nose. I touched the frontiers of dismay where it borders on the slough of despair. I was at the lowest ebb of my life. It would take me hours and the last of my strength to skin those bulbs. I could not tackle that job.[208]

Ford's overwhelming exhaustion nevertheless underlines the bathos of this scene, identifying the shallots as 'the ridiculous omen'. The pact he makes with himself is

[207] Saunders, Vol. 2, 2 and 23. Though Ford's earlier biographer Arthur Mizener doubted that Ford had experienced a poison gas attack, Saunders writes: 'There is no reason to doubt that Ford experienced gas attacks. He varied the story later, telling a marvelous tale about how his lungs were ruined by gas inadvertently released form his portmanteau in a hotel bedroom while on leave in Paris (he had been packing when the gas attack began!) It may have been true: he certainly collapsed while in Paris in September. Perhaps a whiff of gas from his case brought back memories from the Front which overpowered him. Or perhaps it was the way he explained to himself the familiar phenomenon of the breakdown occurring not at the time of maximum strain, but as soon as the strain is relaxed'. Saunders, Vol. 2, 23.

[208] Ford Madox Ford, *It Was the Nightingale* (Manchester: Carcanet: 2007), 94-5. Hereafter cited as *Nightingale*.

based on an earlier self-deprecating metaphor of a dung beetle rolling its pile of dung up a mountain. That he would feel overwhelmed to the point of despair by the prospect of peeling a number of tiny shallots is comic and believable. The 'slough of despair' refers to John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) and the allegorical 'Slough of Despond', a muddy bog which is covered with the 'scum and filth' of sin:

> This miry Slough is such a place as cannot be mended; it is the descent whither the scum and filth that attends conviction for sin doth continually run; and therefore is it called the Slough of Despond: for still as the sinner is awakened about his lost condition, there ariseth in his soul many fears, and doubts, and discouraging apprehensions, which all of them get together, and settle in this place […][209]

Ford's play on the 'Slough of Despond' is an example of what John Coyle describes as 'one of Ford's most subtle effects' which 'involves the diffusion of apparently casual idiom so as to contribute to a texture of metaphorically rich motifs'.[210] Here it allows Ford to set off his darker feelings about his life after the war against the comedy of the overwhelming pile of shallots. His self-sufficiency, let alone his identity as a writer and an excellent cook, is in question. If he cannot peel tiny shallots, how will he face human relationships and the discipline of writing? He wants country life to become his pastoral paradise as a small farmer, but this first evening shows him how the difficulty of managing a rural existence has its similarities with the difficulty of creating art. The resolution comes with a realization that he can at least rely on his culinary knowledge:

> Cooking is an art, the first of whose canons is that all stewed meats must first be braised in butter or olive oil, according as your cooking is *au beurre* or *à l'huile*. (The French call the process *rissoler*.) The second canon is that a portion at least

[209] John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, ed. Roger Sharrock (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), 46
[210] John Coyle, 'Introduction', Ford, *Nightingale*, xi.

> of your onion matter—onions, garlic, shallots, chives even—must be browned too.[211]

These canons of cooking that he calls on are ritualistic, drawing on his superstition and alluding to his love of the medieval. Sin and transgression haunt the passage—through the reference to Bunyan, and also in Ford's hinting at thoughts of suicide earlier in the passage. Ford is quick to recite his knowledge of the rules he intends to follow and they are similar to his approach to writing and his love of discussing technique. As he writes in an early chapter, 'It is singular how Letters, for me, will come creeping in. I had intended to make this a chapter generally about farming […]'[212] The metaphor of transformation is apparent in the creative metamorphosis from the traumatised soldier and failed author into a cook, a small farmer with an anecdote to write about, thereby gaining the power to create again. Reinvigorating himself as a writer is central to the memoir, and Ford compares himself to Proust as being a 'historian of his own time'.[213] While explaining his reasons for leaving London and his state of dejection about his writing, Ford weaves into his memoir-narrative the story of his creative regeneration, one which spurs the writing of *Parade's End*.

However, a further kind of Impressionism is at work here: Ford possibly blends several memories into one cooking scene. Saunders points out that Ford described a different dinner in a letter to Bowen that first evening: of 'fried chicken and beans and oranges' for dinner, suggesting that the shallot story 'is a retrospective invention'.[214] But Ford may have amalgamated his experience of his first few nights in Red Ford cottage.

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[211] Ford, *Nightingale*, 95.
[212] Ford, *Nightingale*, 17.
[213] Ford, *Nightingale*, 180.
[214] Saunders, Vol. 2, 64.

Saunders writes that this story presents an opportunity for Ford to exercise his creative powers, finding relief in the new abode, cooking for himself, with the anticipation of his future with Stella Bowen:

> Its impressionistic energy in reimagining the meal, and cooking up an entire story from his new ingredients, is the proof of his having come back, renewed as a writer of fiction.[215]

The moment is clearly significant because Ford had earlier told of this story in a July 1928 piece for the *New York Herald Tribune Magazine*, 'Rough Cookery'. Saunders indicates the inconsistencies in details here too – Ford has beef bones instead of mutton neck. In this earlier version, however, the emotional thrust is similar to the memoir and it emphasizes the importance of this moment to Ford after the war. Waiting for the pot that he calls 'the first stock pot of that era of reconstruction' to boil 'constituted the most depressed period of my life'. In this article, the moment of triumph over despair is also comically portrayed. Ford solves his shallot-peeling problem by dropping them directly into the pot, skins and all. The miracle occurs when skimming off the 'scum' of the soup, to see the onions underneath:

> [B]ut that vanished as soon as the soup was ready. . . . […] When I came with the tin cup that was part of my officer's kit, to skim the fat that had risen to the top of the soup, all the shallot-skins had risen with that scum and there were the bulbs themselves (I believe that, strictly speaking, an onion is not a bulb but a rhizome) floating tenderly below.[216]

The 'scum' here also alludes to the same Bunyan passage on the Slough of Despond: 'it is the descent whither the scum and filth that attends conviction for sin doth continually

[215] Saunders, Vol. 2, 64.
[216] Ford, 'Rough Cookery,' *New York Herald Tribune Magazine* (29 July 1928), 18-19, 23. Ellipsis in brackets are mine, unbracketed ellipses are Ford's.
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run'.[217] All throughout the comedy of Ford's bet with himself is the darker undertone of fear: about the past, arising from his experience in the First World War, and about the future life he is about to undertake with Stella Bowen in common-law marriage.

Levity and poignancy coexist here in Ford's little digression about the correct classification of the onion. Those tender rhizomes floating below the surface are the culinary equivalent of his creativity coming back in force, revealing his sympathetic dependency on cooking. It is a victory for his recently healed memory that he can identify the onions as rhizomes. The interconnected, rooted and layered nature of rhizomes also represent the arrival of culinary Impressionism to his writing, making unexpected juxtapositions with his practical knowledge of the classification of the onions or shallots, revealing literary parallels with Bunyan, imbuing his food with memory and emotion. The good omen of the separated shallot-skins prevents Ford from giving up as a writer (with a hint at giving up life altogether) and represents him shedding his old life and starting anew. Additionally, in this passage, unlike his later description in *It Was the Nightingale*, the skins are specifically described as having been caught up in the scum and fat from the boiled beef bones (in the later memoir, mutton neck) that flavour the water and turn it from plain water into bouillon broth. The metaphor of transformation is apparent again, not only in the shedding of the skins and skimming off of the scum, but in creative metamorphosis. Ford changes from a traumatized soldier and failed author into a cook, and a small farmer, with an anecdote to write about, thereby gaining the power to create again.

[217] Bunyan, 46.

Emotional eating: relationships, character and food in *The Good Soldier* and the *Parade's End* tetralogy

Ford's rhizomatic memory and the mirror-effect of literary and culinary Impressionism join the gaps between reality and fiction in *The Good Soldier* and *Parade's End*. Ford's Impressionist method has the effect of intensifying and multiplying characters' perceptions and representations of food, rather than lessening them. One of the themes sustained throughout Ford's writing is that certain kinds of food lead to the development of moral and national character: it is a kind of culinary determinism.

In particular, the recurring motif of roast beef throughout his work stands in for ideas about English identity. Roast beef, though obviously a dish enjoyed by many countries, had long been associated with 'Englishness' and English national pride, as evidenced in the eighteenth-century patriotic ballad 'The Roast Beef of Old England' and William Hogarth's 1748 painting, *O, the Roast Beef of Old England ('The Gate of Calais')*, representing an English beef joint that is carried through a crowd of emaciated French soldiers.

Ford's *Parade's End* tetralogy, *Some Do Not . . .* (1924), *No More Parades* (1925), *A Man Could Stand Up –* (1926) and *Last Post* (1928), treats the theme of the decline of Englishness in before and after the First World War with a delicate brush, often using food as an illustrative metaphor. The novels chronicle the emotional trials of the reserved Tory statistician Christopher Tietjens, heir to Groby Great house, a Yorkshire ancestral home. Tietjens's marriage to Sylvia, a malicious femme fatale, is failing before Tietjens falls in love with the suffragette Valentine Wannop, but is further complicated by his war service. In this context, rich, difficult-to-digest English food is

equated with the corruption of the sensuous and decadent ladies Edith Ethel Duchemin and Sylvia Tietjens, and simpler, but well-prepared food is associated with the clean-cut, boyish and unpretentious Valentine Wannop. But the relationship between food, character and love is not merely a contrast between excess and asceticism for Ford. In *The Good Soldier* and *Parade's End* Ford employs representations of meals symbolically to describe elements of character. But he also includes epiphanic scenes or moments of rapture for characters consuming food and reflecting on the cookery or labour of their preparation. Those moments form part of Ford's representation of culinary Impressionism. They are formative moments, experiences of intense attention, akin to Virginia Woolf's 'moments of being'. Whether the experience is falling in love, as when Tietjens first consumes Valentine Wannop's cooking in *Parade's End*, or when Ford is delighted to be able to begin planting peas again in Provence after his long journey in *Great Trade Route*, these moments originate from feeling a close connection with the food being cooked and eaten. These moments are part of what Ford argues, in his later work on France, that civilization at its best can produce, and represent that intersection between the personal, the practical and the universal.

The Good Soldier, Ford's mercurial testimony to the inconsistencies of human affection, reveals a disconnection between the spiritual and the material worlds of its characters in that food, sex and identity are often conflated to negative effect. In some ways *The Good Soldier* uses food to subvert or cover-up sexual desire, while at the same time using it to establish patterns of identity. John Dowell is the unreliable American

narrator, a self-styled 'Philadelphia gentleman' who imitates his British friends in their choice of food, drink and in longing for sexual partners.[218]

He is a notoriously difficult character to pinpoint. In what he calls at the outset 'the saddest story I ever heard', Dowell shows a notable lack of emotion. After explaining he and his wife visited a spa town annually he tells his readers how to interpret his sedate announcement regarding the current status of his wife: 'You will gather from this statement that one of us had, as the saying is, a "heart", and from the statement that my wife is dead, that she was the sufferer'.[219] His chilly ironic tone at the opening of the story only slightly dissipates, and in the process of telling the story he slowly reveals his unusual traits. Dowell and his wife Florence pair up with the British couple Leonora and Edward Ashburnham while on holiday in the spa town of Nauheim, Germany. Dowell portrays himself as oblivious to Florence's affair with Ashburnham, and as unwitting about her suicide and the unravelling of Ashburnham's pristine exterior while the details of his many affairs are exposed. Dowell is shocked by Ashburnham's suicide and the subsequent madness of his ward Nancy. It is possible this shock could be feigned, but because Dowell is so absorbed with his self-image, it seems more likely that he missed the affairs because he was more concerned with constructing his appearance.

This concern with appearance is also a concern with the narrative style and structure of the story. Nick Hubble argues that Dowell, rather than Ashburnham, is 'the exceptional person because he develops self-awareness and an implicit critique of

[218] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, ed. David Bradshaw (London: Penguin, 2002), 71. Hereafter cited as *The Good Soldier*.
[219] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, 13.

society' and maintains ultimate creative control of his own story as narrator.[220] Dowell is indeed in control of the narrative from the beginning to the end, and so it is unlikely that readers could ever be able to judge whether Dowell experienced growth because we remain at his mercy. Hubble compares Dowell's narrative authority to Freud's 'process of "remembering, repeating and working-through"', which is exactly what we as readers also have to do in order to follow the complex plot of the story.[221]This mirroring of the remembering process between the reader and narrator in turn can be linked to Ford's Impressionism. The refraction, reflection and mirroring of Impressionism, in the attempts to capture life as it really is, work in conjunction with Ford's sly portrayal of a creative unreliable storyteller. Dowell remembers and repeats the story of those around him. Accordingly there is a link between Impressionist narrative technique and the crafting of identity that is emphasized in Dowell's repeating empty phrases about nationhood, food and sex.

The 'implicit critique of society' embodied in Dowell's character can be read in the American Dowell's characterization of English cuisine. Dowell is a perceptive observer, who through choices of food and other indicators of identity follows what Austin Riede calls 'very specific rules of discourse [that] govern and create Englishness'. [222] Through his perceptions and imitations Dowell reveals his preoccupation with the archetypes of the British upper class that hides his deeper physical and sexual insecurities. Dowell believes British social mores are entwined in

[220] Nick Hubble, 'Beyond Mimetic Englishness: Ford's English Trilogy and *The Good Soldier*' in *Ford Madox Ford and Englishness*, International Ford Madox Ford Studies 5, ed. Dennis Brown and Jenny Plastow, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), 159.
[221] Sigmund Freud, quoted in Hubble, 157.
[222] Austin Riede, 'The Decline of English Discourse and the American Invasion in *The Good Soldier* and *Parade's End*' in *Ford Madox Ford and Englishness*, International Ford Madox Ford Studies 5, ed. Dennis Brown and Jenny Plastow (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), 212.

the display of certain likes and dislikes for food, specifically roast beef. Explicating on his idea of 'good people' (for instance, his British 'friends', the Ashburnhams), Dowell pretends to like rare roast beef. The Ashburnhams can be immediately identified by their surface attributes of appearance and dining habits:

> We took for granted that we all liked beef underdone but not too underdone; that both men preferred a good liqueur brandy after lunch; that both women drank a very light Rhine wine qualified with Fachingen water—that sort of thing.[223]

It is only for appearances, though, because then Dowell recants, describing the food as sickening and not to his taste:

> For it is really nauseating, when you detest it, to have to eat every day several slices of thin, tepid, pink india rubber, and it is disagreeable to have to drink brandy when you would prefer to be cheered up by warm, sweet Kümmel. […] And it stirs a little of the faith of your fathers that is deep down within you to have to have it taken for granted that you are an Episcopalian when really you are an old-fashioned Philadelphia Quaker.[224]

It is a fascinating revelation in which Dowell presents himself to his readers as a very slippery character, capable of acknowledging his deception, which seems to arouse some emotion in him. There are also some aspects in which he resembles Ford in this passage. The phrase 'tepid, pink india rubber' is used throughout Ford's work, in fiction and nonfiction, to represent bad food, indigestion, narrow-mindedness and Englishness. That Dowell is never really certain of his identity, or is not willing to correct those who mistake him for something else, contributes to his difficulty in connecting with others. The beef and brandy are associated with a certain class of British-ness, but also with materialism, superficiality and parochialism.

[223] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, 35.
[224] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, 36.

As part of his discussion of identity, Dowell blurs the distinction between consumption and consummation. He might even substitute one for the other. At first it seems Dowell's 'appetites' are solely alimentary. His understanding of human passion is expressed through food; and his anxiety about his level of appetite and patience is related to the possibility that he might not get enough caviar, a noted aphrodisiac, as it is passed around a table:

> I have, of course, had appetites, impatiences . . . Why, sometimes at a table d'hôte, when there would be, say, caviare handed round, I have been absolutely full of impatience for fear that when the dish came to me there should not be a satisfying portion left over by the other guests.[225]

Caviar is a sophisticated food that allows Dowell to show off his good taste in desiring it. Yet it is childish of him to be impatient for his turn at the dish. This combination of stylized sophistication and juvenile behaviour is queer. Dowell is a 'strange gourmet' in Joseph Litvak's sense—his appetites display the privileges of distinction but also the 'vicissitudes of sophistication, its delicious lows as well as its powerful highs'.[226] As we wonder how large a 'satisfying portion' of caviar is, Dowell takes pleasure in telling his readers that he is impatient as he repeats the word.

With the exception of caviar, we do not know specifically which food Dowell really does like. When he describes the tepid beef as nauseating, he does not explicitly say that he prefers it well-done or whether he would have wished a different meat, or fish, or none at all. Feigning desire for the foods that the Ashburnhams like is part of Dowell's self-fashioning as he fails to notice his wife's affair. When he does come

[225] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, 43.
[226] Joseph Litvak, *Strange Gourmets: Sophistication, Theory, and the Novel*, 6.

around to discussing the food that is really to his taste he will not explicitly describe it because it brings him shame:

> I, for instance, am a rather greedy man; I have a taste for good cookery and a watering tooth at the mere sound of the names of certain comestibles. If Florence had discovered this secret of mine I should have found her knowledge of it so unbearable that I never could have supported all the other privations of the régime that she extracted from me. I am bound to say that Florence never discovered this secret.[227]

We wonder what these 'comestibles' are and the withholding of the specific kind of 'good cookery' he enjoys is suspicious. The reference to appetites of lust and physical hunger appears in the phrase 'the certain comestibles' which carried innuendo of secret sexual desire, and are compelling particularly because Dowell 'should have found [Florence's] knowledge of it so unbearable'. The reader never discovers exactly what this secret is. Why, if he delights in them, would he not describe them for his reader? The possibility of sexual repression behind this concealment emphasizes Dowell's insecurities, undercutting the appearance of self-knowledge and reminding readers that while Dowell is in control of the narrative, he has been under a strain to keep it that way.

Musing on sex, Dowell appears both naïve and nihilistic, asking, 'And if everything is so nebulous about a matter so elementary as the morals of sex, what is there to guide us in the more subtle morality of all other personal contacts, associations, and activities? Or are we meant to act on impulse alone? It is all a darkness'.[228] In his prudishness, he goes so far as to allow food to stand in for sex. Dowell remarks of physical consummation:

> That seems to me to be a commonplace and to be therefore a matter needing no comment at all. It is a thing, with all its accidents, that must be taken for granted,

[227] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, 99.
[228] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, 19.

> as, in a novel, or a biography, you take it for granted that the characters have their meals with some regularity.[229]

This bringing together of food and sex is a comic yet disconcerting indicator of Dowell's misreading of situations. Dowell protests too much, instead drawing attention to the scatological parallels by describing sex as 'commonplace', 'with all its accidents' and requiring 'no comment'. The passage suggests digestive regularity with the comparison of taking of meals 'with some regularity'. This is an instance of the odd sense of humour that pervades the work.

In contrast, the conclusion of this passage is serious and even pitiful, underscoring Dowell's profound insecurity. To Dowell, a man's passion is motivated by the desire to be lost within his lover, to find comfort and courage there: 'And that will be the mainspring of his desire for her. We are all so afraid, we are all so alone, we all so need from the outside the assurance of our own worthiness to exist'.[230] As Riede has suggested, it is a source of concern to Dowell that his 'sexual potency' is overshadowed by Ashburnham's impressive masculinity.[231] Thus, to fit in, Dowell assimilates Ashburnham's 'English' behaviour, although not completely accurately. Dowell tries to become more and more like Ashburnham, but in having to take care of the mentally ill Nancy, he ends up with a life more like his marriage to Florence, continually playing the role of caretaker and nurse.

The psychological implications of the setting of *The Good Solider* are also relevant. Saunders notes that although 'Ford was deeply ambivalent about Freudian ideas', Freud had written about psychoanalytic significance of the complex layouts of

[229] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, 97.
[230] Ford, *The Good Soldier*, 97.
[231] Riede, 220.

spas (like the spa in Nauheim where *The Good Soldier* is set). Had he been examined, Dowell might have been diagnosed with 'obsessional neurosis' in Freud's terms.[232] Saunders also cites a caption from the Freud museum in London:

> There are types—obsessional neurotics, in particular, are such people—who have a much more solid relation with space than with time. In other persons, one sees clearly how they transfer their complexes onto other fields, they copy over their affects, for instance, onto localities—as do those who visit watering places.[233]

Saunders sees Dowell as being neurotic in his 'obsessive counting of the paces between the different spaces at Nauheim' and in his relationships. [234] As an obsessional neurotic, Dowell also displaces emotional affect from sex to food just as he displaces his neuroses on to space.

In *Parade's* End, food takes on an even greater emotional and social significance than in *The Good Soldier*. Characters experience emotional release and moments of true intimacy in eating together, or in thinking of loved ones when eating. As in *The Good Soldier*, there are moments of culinary Impressionism, linking food and love with liminal emotions. And in a further continuity from *The Good Soldier*, beef persists as a motif tied to class and nationhood.

The same underdone beef ('pink india-rubber half-cooked cold beef') despised by Dowell appears in *Parade's End*, but serves as an opportunity for Christopher Tietjens to display culinary knowledge, leading to the possibility of carnal. Tietjens dreads the thought of what he will eat at the financially precarious Wannop household early in *Some Do Not . . .*, but the Wannops have cultural capital if not physical capital.

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[232] Max Saunders, 'Introduction', *The Good Soldier* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2012), xxvii-xxviii.
[233] Saunders, 'Introduction', *The Good Soldier*, xxviii.
[234] Saunders, 'Introduction', *The Good Soldier*, xxviii.

Preparing himself for disgust at what he imagines will be underdone beef Tietjens instead finds the meal to be as simply alluring as Valentine Wannop herself. He falls in love with her as he falls in love with her cooking: 'cold lamb, new potatoes and mint-sauce variety, the mint-sauce made with white wine vinegar and as soft as kisses'.[235] Ford's enumeration of the ingredients in the mint-sauce gestures towards both his (Ford's) and Tietjens's applied knowledge of cookery. Valentine is correlated with the lamb in a stereotypical woman-as-meat metaphor in these early days before their relationship develops. But she associates him with meat, too. Valentine has her second impression of Tietjens at the Duchemin breakfast she finds he 'goes with' the food. She describes him as 'large' and 'clumsy-looking' but charming: 'He seemed to go with the ham, the meat-pie, the galatine and even at a pinch with the roses'.[236]

In anticipation of the frustration of Christopher and Valentine's eventual relationship, emotionally-stimulated indigestion haunts the characters in *Parade's End*. The body miscalculates the circulation of food and a mirroring effect is created through reflux and repetition of the partially-digested meal. It is hard for Tietjens to consider eating anything after the lavish Duchemin breakfast served by Edith Ethel, who later treats Christopher almost as badly as his wife Sylvia treats him. However, Christopher's body reacts for him in anticipation of later treachery, and he has trouble digesting the Duchemin breakfast as he walks with Valentine towards her home. The initially delicious galantine (a poached chicken in aspic) 'repeats' itself in the form of heartburn, another apt metaphor, as Tietjens thinks of the mishandling he receives from his gullible

235 Ford Madox Ford, *Parade's End: Some Do Not . . .*, ed. Max Saunders (Manchester: Carcanet, 2010), 145.
236 Ford, *Some Do Not . . .*, 109.

godfather General Campion. The indigestion spurs a tirade against rich food and stands in as a bodily reaction against the hypocritical behaviour of the people around him:

> By Jove, the pistachio nut of that galantine! Repeating! Breakfast gone wrong: gloomy reflections! Thought I could stand anything: digestion of an ostrich...But no! Gloomy reflections: I'm hysterical: like that large-eyed whore! For same reason! Wrong diet and wrong life: diet meant for partridge shooters over the turnips consumed by the sedentary. England the land of pills...*Das Pillen-Land*, the Germans call us. Very properly...And, damn it: outdoor diet: boiled mutton, turnips: sedentary life...and forced up against the filthiness of the world: your nose in it all day long!...Why, hang it, I'm as badly off as she. Sylvia's as bad as Duchemin!...I'd never have thought that...No wonder meat's turned to prussic acid...prime cause of neurasthenia...[237]

The 'repeating' of the galantine is the acid reflux, the body's rejection of what has physically and morally repulsed him. Although a member of the upper classes himself, Tietjens is a moral and aesthetic outsider, defining himself in opposition to the rich food and 'sedentary' life of those who follow fads, taking pills instead of exercising. Austin Riede interprets *Parade's End* as a portrayal of 'the displacement of reticent insular Englishness by a verbose American expansiveness', in the form of the character Mrs. De Bray Pape, who comes to occupy the Tietjens family estate, Groby, and cut down Great Groby Tree in the final novel.[238] However rather than reading the tetralogy solely as a portrait of straightforward decline, Riede also understands Tietjens as being caught in the middle of two eras: 'Tietjens still sees taciturn English existence as an ideal, but he also sees that modernity has made a less perfect discourse necessary'.[239] The 'less perfect' route is the route in which life is simpler, where Tietjens eats the food that agrees with him, and he and Valentine can raise their son in a cottage without the burden

[237] Ford, *Some Do Not . . .*, 134-5. Ellipses Ford's.
[238] Riede, 212.
[239] Riede, 214.

of managing the estate of Groby. Groby will not be forgotten, but it is associated with the old, pre-war life, the feudalism and luxury that are too costly to sustain.

A similar kind of Impressionist, disruptive moment involving food and violence occurs for Christopher when his wife Sylvia throws her lunch plate at him. Her physical, spiritual and emotional extravagance is imaged in what she has thrown, not eaten. Salad dressing and aspic are smeared over him:

> Tietjens had moved slightly as she had thrown: the cutlets and most of the salad leaves had gone over his shoulder. But one, couched, very green leaf was on his shoulder-strap, and the oil and vinegar from the plate--Sylvia knew that she took too much of all condiments--had splashed from the reverse of his tunic to his green staff-badges. She was glad that she had hit him as much as that: it meant that her marksmanship had not been quite rotten. She was glad, too, that she had missed him. She was also supremely indifferent. It had occurred to her to do it and she had done it. Of that she was glad![240]

Silvia's ambivalence and ennui point to her sociopathic tendencies (alluded to elsewhere in *No More Parades* when she recalls whipping a dying bulldog and compares it to her treatment of Christopher).[241] And although 'her marksmanship' is not 'rotten', her character clearly is. This dirtiness points to a moral instability. The condiments that land on Christopher do not defile the very clean and slender Sylvia, but reflect her immorality back at her. When she slanders Christopher and Valentine's reputations, she throws metaphorical slime. The oil and vinegar also evoke revulsion leading to nausea as the galantine did for Tietjens.

The slime has another, perhaps sexual connotation. In Tietjens's failure to react to this slippery mess there is also an allusion to his refusal to give in to Sylvia's sexual advances or to consummate his relationship with Valentine. His stoic nonchalance over

[240] Ford, *Some Do Not . . .*, 194.
[241] Ford, *No More Parades*, ed. Joseph Wiesenfarth (Manchester: Carcanet, 2011), 154.

Sylvia throwing her lunch at him emphasizes an uprightness exaggerated to the point of repression. Ford also discusses the Freudian connotations of oil and vinegar in his memoir *Return to Yesterday*. He describes the various cures at institutions he experienced for an illness that 'was diagnosed as agoraphobia and intense depression' in the period between 1903-1906:

> The Rhineland Kaltwasser-Heilanstalt was the last institution of the sort that I endured. It was a vast, gloomy building, the former palace of a Kurfüst of sorts. I was fed on pork and ice-cream and salad made with lemon juice and white of egg. Oil and vinegar are said to be exciting—sexually.[242]

With the banning of oil and vinegar, the Freudian treatments Ford describes seek to attribute his illness to 'some sexual disorder or other' but as Ford later hints, he gets worse, because the treatments he received practically starve him. His weight falls to 'nine stone two—128lbs'.[243] Sylvia's propensity to take 'too much of all condiments', then can be seen, albeit comically, as gastronomic evidence of her promiscuity.

Later, in *A Man Could Stand Up—*, Tietjens's rescue from drowning in slimy trench mud signals his liberation from restricting attitudes (and soon from the war) and the coming of emotional and physical relief. Released from this repression, he finds himself delighting in food and brought to an epiphany in his feelings for Valentine. After the near-death experience, Christopher is charmed by the aspiring chef Corporal who brings him sandwiches and coffee: 'he liked to think of the blond boy resembling Valentine Wannop dressed all in slim white'.[244] The little soldier Aranjuez also reminds him of Valentine, and when he sees her with her hair cut short when he returns after the war she will appear quite boyish. The boys are clearly stand-ins for Valentine and the

[242] Ford, *Return to Yesterday* (Manchester: Carcanet: 1999), 202, 204.
[243] Ford, *Return to Yesterday*, 204.
[244] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up —*, ed. Sara Haslam (Manchester: Carcanet, 2011), 168-9.

passage serves to contrast Valentine, the boyish, slender young woman, with the mature Sylvia, rich food and excessive condiments. Christopher is generous in his praise of the Corporal, for his sandwiches help him change his mind about Valentine:

> 'Certainly I shall recommend you. You'll get a job all right. I shall never forget your sandwiches.' He would never forget the keen, clean flavour of the sandwiches or the warm generosity of the sweet, be-rummed coffee! In the blue air of that April hill-side. All the objects on that white towel were defined: with iridescent edges. The boy's face, too! Perhaps not physically iridescent. His breath, too, was very easy. Pure air! He was going to write to Valentine Wannop: 'Hold yourself at my disposal. Please. Signed...'[245]

The iridescent sandwiches and thoughts of his plans for Valentine indicate the possibility of new, beautiful life, one where acceptance of love is more important than maintaining a semblance of respectability.

The domestic associations of middle-class English food draw disdain from Tietjens. Christopher had been disgusted by his brother Mark's food and what it represented, exclaiming, 'I loathe your whole beastly buttered toast, mutton-chopped, carpet-slippered, rum-negused comfort as much as I loathe your beastly Riviera-palaced, chauffeured, hydraulic-lifted, hot-house aired beastliness of fornication...'[246] Tietjens also refused to take any money from the inheritance after his father's death which he associated with this way of life. Ultimately, in *The Last Post*, Christopher does find a middle ground of living that wasn't quite 'the empty boards of a cottage, without draperies, fat meats, gummy aphrodisiacs' as a concession to Valentine, who is pregnant.[247] In the house in Sussex, Mark's French partner Marie-Lèonie does the housekeeping for them all (because she does it better and more frugally than Valentine).

[245] Ford, *A Man Could Stand Up —*, 169.
[246] Ford, *Some Do Not . . .*, 266.
[247] Ford, *Some Do Not . . .*, 266.

Christopher fulfils the now silent and paralysed Mark's wish, originally expressed to Valentine with brotherly concern: 'I want Christopher to have a place where he'll be sure of a mutton-chop and an arm-chair by the fire. And someone to be good for him. *You're* good for him. I can see that. I know women!'[248] Mark's final words to Valentine, 'Never thou let thy barnie weep for thy sharp tongue to thy goodman. . . .A good man!. . . . Groby Great Tree is down. . . .', allude to the future life she and Christopher will share with their baby.[249] There is sympathy in Mark's voice in his caution against quarrelling and a regretful reminder that the heavy tree of the feudal home has been cut down, a tree that was dear to Tietjens. Mark's words are a gesture towards the importance of starting a new life, one that accepts weaknesses and strengths, and that does not forget the past.

***Bouillabaisse*: the allure of the Provençal**

Like the shallots floating in the bouillon broth in *It Was the Nightingale*, the hodge-podge of fish, broth and spices that Ford enumerates in his favourite recipe for *bouillabaisse*, which he gives in *Provence* (1935), is also a rich metaphor for writing and place. Local to the Provençal coast, *bouillabaisse* works as a symbol for his writing because it can be so easily altered and added to. Ford's playful mocking of Provençal cooking links to his own mercurial, wandering prose: 'Provence has no regional dishes and the true Provençal has neither the gift, nor the patience nor yet the materials that are necessary for the serious cook'.[250] Genre, too, is flexible for Ford, and he shifts easily between poetry, memoir, fiction and essays. Because its ingredients change according to

[248] Ford, *Some Do Not . . .*, 279.
[249] Ford, *Last Post*, ed. Paul Skinner (Manchester: Carcanet, 2011), 204.
[250] Ford, *Provence*, 33.

what is available, *bouillabaisse* is also a stand-in for an appreciation of the local and the specifics of the region. Ford announces that the purpose of writing *Provence* is 'none other than to induce my readers […] either to settle in the land of Clemence Isaure, St Martha, the Tarasque, […] or at least to model their lives along the lines of the good Provençal and his Edenic-garlic-garden'.[251] With the contribution of local Provençal spices, Ford's *bouillabaisse* provides something of an image of the world held temporarily in harmony, but also one that is constantly in flux.

In the tradition of the medieval Provençal troubadour Bertran de Born, Ford identifies with the more recent poet Joseph d'Arbaud, and the old cowboy speaker who remembers bringing in the bulls, in d'Arbaud's poem '*Rêverie d'un gardian'*.[252] Janice Biala's illustration of a line from the poem, 'the cat, asleep on my knees, is purring' while the cowboy sits in front of the fire, recalls an image from Ford's 1921 prize-winning long poem, 'A House'. Published in 1921 in Chicago's *Poetry* magazine and written while Ford was living with Stella Bown in Red Ford, 'A House' was one of his first creative works after the war. The poem, with its array of domestic and farm characters announcing themselves one after another, reads like the script to a child's pageant or nursery story and yet covers the adult themes of financial troubles with its anticipation of an 'Un-born Son of the House' and future generations. The poem opens with the child-like expressions of the house itself:

> I am the House!
> I resemble
> The drawing of a child

[251] Ford, *Provence*, 20.
[252] Ford, *Provence*, 72.

That draws "just a house." […][253]

Later, the speaker, 'Himself', falls asleep in front of the fire and 'the Cat of the House' exclaims, 'Up onto his knee! I shall sleep in the pink'. When Ford asks in *Provence,* 'isn't there a certain universality expressed in that poem of Arbaud the *félibriste*?' his words apply not only to his translation of Arbaud, but to his own poem: 'The quality of quiet universality may not make for greatness. . . .Who can tell what does? But it is indispensible to poetry. . . which is life eternal'.[254] While Arbaud's poem looks back on the life of the speaker, who says 'My youth has gone as went the swallows', Ford's earlier poem looks forward to the future generations that will come to inhabit the house and when the earth will reclaim it. In this way it anticipates the *Time Passes* section describing the condition of the crumbling house in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927).

The powerful conclusion of 'A House' presents a vision of a time when nature returns the house to rubble, drawing on the 'quiet universality' of the poems of the troubadours:

> But all the other houses of all nations
> Grand or simple, in country or town,
> All, all the houses standing beneath the sky
> Shall have very much the same fate as I!
> They shall see the pressing of generations
> On the heels of generations; […]
> Frosts come; great winds and drought;
> The tiles blow loose; the steps wear out;
> The rain
> Percolates down by the rafter.
> Their youths wear out;
> Until, maybe, they become very gentle and mild.

[253] Ford, 'A House,' *Poetry*: *a Magazine of Verse*, vol. XVII, no. VI, (March 1921) (published as Hueffer), 291-310, 291
[254] Ford, *Provence*, 73.

For certain they shall become very gentle and old,
Having stood too long.
And so, all over again,
The circle comes round:
Over and over again. […][255]

It is clear that the speaker's connection to the land is spiritual. The house and its inhabitants are part of something bigger as the earth and the life cycles eventually take over the materials of the house. This house carries the memories of the generations of its inhabitants, but also bears the force of history and the future.

The theme of human connection (to the earth and with each other) is brought out explicitly throughout *Provence* in relation to xenophobia and civility. The opening anecdote of *Provence* centres around the problem of those who will not open their mind to a new culture to try new food. The story is one of a retired Sheffield merchant who tells Ford he is pursuing his dream of travelling the Great Route, but is sitting glumly in a café in Tarascon drinking only a 'gaseous lemonade'. On Ford's queries as to why he would drink what is essentially 'highly diluted sulphuric acid' he replies, 'You wouldn't have me drink their wines or eat their messy foods!' […] 'Why, I might get to like them and then what would become of me'.[256] Ford characterizes this instance as a 'brilliant exposition of that theory that is at the root of our uncivilisedness'.[257] Ford sets out to counter attitudes like those of the merchant, who is too xenophobic or afraid of the foreign foods to try them. Comically recalling the 'tepid pink india rubber' beef and the culture of English pill-taking ('the land of pills') which Ford ridicules in *The Good Soldier* and *Parade's End*, the man depends on indigestion tablets to get him through his

[255] Ford, 'A House', 309-310.
[256] Ford, *Provence*, 16-17.
[257] Ford, *Provence*, 17.

travels. In every region he eats only the 'tepid pink india rubber that in his home he called underdone roast beef and potatoes boiled in water without so much as a tiny piece of *gros-sel'*.[258] Ford hints that the man's dependence on the 'bilious' tablets could be eliminated with a better, Mediterranean diet, and his linking the 'tepid pink india rubber' beef places him in the middle classes of narrow-minded Englishmen.

As we have seen, indigestion is an important metaphor in *Provence* for the decline of civilisation: 'you may say that the dominant theme is that of our great, noisy and indigestion-sick Anglo-Saxondom which can only be touched by inspiration from the spirit of Provençal Latinity, frugality and tolerance'.[259] Calling *Provence* 'a book about cultural indigestion', Martin Stannard has compared Provence with George Orwell's *Coming Up For Air* (1939):

> Where in Orwell the myth of essential purity and integration is located in sex and Englishness, in Ford we find it in cooking and Provence. But in both it is a rural myth, the simplicity of the countryside and the individual, the small producer, set against the anonymous battalions of the mechanical, rational, functional society, the totalitarians of right or left. And both writers concentrate on food to symbolise how the natural has been silently adulterated.[260]

Though Stannard says that Ford's framing of Provence and cooking as leading to integration is a myth, Ford recognizes the heterogeneity of the myth as it plays out in real life. The emphasis on eating well and responsible food production as part of a wider philosophy of how to live is not a reaction against modernity or the modern city. Cities such as London and New York are still viewed with warmth by Ford in *Provence*, *The Soul of London*, *New York is Not America,* and other works.

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[258] Ford, *Provence,* 22.
[259] Ford, *Provence,* 67.
[260] Martin Stannard, 'Going South for Air: Ford Madox Ford's *Provence'* in *Ford Madox Ford, France and Provence* (New York: Rodopi, 2011), 253-260, 258.

Even more than 'taste' and 'freedom' in Provence, Ford's idealistic vision of civilization is one of an educated world that values the arts and artists of other countries, understanding the place of the artist as a citizen of the world. Ford has a foreboding about where the world will end up if it does not value art and education. It is a theme he will continue to develop in *Great Trade Route.* He imagines the world corrupted by anti-Jewish nationalism as without books, entirely dependent on industrial production and utterly isolated:

> In our oven- gas-, steam-, or oil-heated apartments, fighting in our climates that are unfitted for human life, the endless chills on the liver, nights without sleep and four-in-the-morning horrors, we shall go on getting grosser and ever more gross, further and further away from Latinity and plunging deeper into mass-production, ruin, reaction and massacre. . . . When we have finished burning all Jewish books we shall burn all 'foreign' books, each in his own nation. And then we shall burn all books. It shall be night from Pole to Pole. . . [261]

Ford sees that the natural conclusion of xenophobia is fear of all art and literature, from any culture, as the products of freedom of expression. In Ford's mind, industrial expansion and mass-production are to be avoided, allowing space for the small producer and artists to grow their crops and create their work.

The triumph of the small producer: an argument for an agrarian world culture

Following *Provence, Great Trade Route* (1937) formulates a theory of civilization that deals almost entirely with the economic and cultural argument in favour of the small producer over the mass producer. The spices that were passed along the ancient Great Route are transposed in Ford's modern route to his idea of returning to small land farming as opposed to industrialization and cash farming, which Ford argues, are destroying humanity's capacity to sustain itself. Ford defines the Great Trade Route

[261] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 69.

broadly: ‘To me, in the first place, it means a frame of mind to which, unless we return, our Occidental civilization is doomed’.[262] Along Ford’s passage from Dijon to Antwerp and through the American South and back to Europe, he scatters arguments using food imagery to describe the temperaments of different regions. The book, published in 1937 but begun at least a year before, foretells the coming Second World War with great foreboding. The fighting before the Spanish Civil War has just broken out. The darkness of the Nazi project is underscored when Ford realizes the boat he takes to America is a Nazi ship. He quotes a Nazi professor on board (on his way to lecture on philosophy at Harvard) on what will become a refrain throughout the book:

> …“We shall put up against a wall—and shoot—all Jews, all Catholics, all Communists, all the . . . Ahem!” …The Nazi Professor, slim and dark, speaks in the smoking-room after midnight. . . . “Up against a wall. . . . All that Vermin!”[263]

The only thing that can counteract this dark force, Ford argues, is education and independent thinking, which, as the ancient Great Route demonstrated, can disseminate culture across the world very quickly. It is apparent to Ford that contemporary nationalism has spread across the world at a pace that is difficult to suppress.

Reading Ford’s 1937 essay, ‘In Praise of Garlic’ alongside *Great Trade Route*, we see Ford’s shifting political interests emerge as he becomes aware of the dangers of the rise of European fascism. Both the article and the book bring together several of the main subjects that appear in Ford’s late writing: what it means to be ‘civilized’ historically and in the present, and food’s role in the relationship between the urban, the

[262] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 39.
[263] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 52.

modern and the creative. In his essay, Ford interprets the history of garlic and spices as unexpectedly forming part of the grand narrative of civilizations in the east and west:

> [W]e are the descendants, all of us, of men who fought for spices for their digestion's sake. For thousands of years mere salt was treasured above rubies. Holy Writ is full of eulogies of spices. Athens, that greatest of civilizations, fought the bloodiest of all her wars with Megara, because the Megarians coming to market used to trample down the Athenian garlic fields to make short cuts. The most prolonged and sanguinary of all wars in the East were fought for pepper and saffron. The Dutch still have on their hands in the Spice Islands a war with the native tribes that has lasted already three hundred years—for the possession of nutmeg and clove trees.
>
> So we have bred a race that *must* have condiments—[…][264]

With comic bathos, he also articulates a difficult truth—the ingredients that make up the condiments essential to 'civilized' man are circulated and inherited often only after great violence. And for Ford, in the inter-war period in which he had seen and recovered from the great violence of the First World War and nervously witnessed the escalation of fascism and violence across Europe in the late 1930s, spices offer a way of understanding these crises.

Part of the romance of the Great Route lies in its Golden Age, a time which he saw as producing civilization and learning. 'Merchants in their silks' traded with poorer villagers practical tools like fish-spears and nets as well as luxury items like cloth and 'polished stones, flint and pyrite wheels for making fire come more easily, dried herbs for making infusions, cabinets for holding frail valuables, perfumes and ointments, sweetmeats and dried fruits, young orange- and shade-trees in pots'.[265] In addition to trading, they would also pass on knowledge, 'leav[ing] behind an instructor in the use of the tools they left and in the making and ornamenting of the stuffs and of how most

[264] Ford, 'Garlic', 126.
[265] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 115-16.

fittingly to worship the supreme Principle'.[266] Like William Morris's celebration of the medieval period as a model for future society in *News from Nowhere*, Ford's response to the crisis he witnesses of the spreading desire of humans to destroy each other paradoxically leads to a vision of a utopia. For Ford, the Great Route of history sets the example for the potential future, where the continued passing on of knowledge and culture throughout the world, and the continued vitality of the small producer allow the human race to flourish, preventing war and starvation.

Ford takes his 'small producer' philosophy quite literally. Longing for his vegetable garden in Provence, having recently arrived in America with his new companion Janice Biala in a rundown New York apartment, he rediscovers an 'old grey, cracked soup-tureen'. In this he makes 'an allotment' for 'mustard and cress seeds from the Five and Ten in the Tottenham Court Road, London'.[267] For Ford, this is a kind of New Year's resolution, a sincere demonstration of what makes him happy and which will provide 'mustard-and-cress sandwiches at tea' while he dreams of his larger garden back in France:

> . . . .I am beginning the year as I hope to continue in it. I am a Small Holder again. I am at home again beside my plot of ground. I shall place it on my bedside table so that first thing every morning I shall be able to see how the crop is coming on. . . . Just as, every dawn over there, I wander between my plots of melons and strawberries, and watch the light come in over the Mediterranean, at that other point of the circle of the Great Route. . . .[268]

In this description, Ford links the New York and Provence through an unlikely agricultural connection and makes his broader point of the interconnection of man and earth.

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[266] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 117.
[267] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 89.
[268] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 89.

Ford's tenderness for the mustard and cress sprouts is echoed in the final anecdote of the book. When Ford returns from his journey to his permanent home in Provence with Biala, the first thing he does is go to his his garden, 'with a half-pound packet of dwarf, fast-growing peas' imagining: 'The day after the day after the day after to-morrow I shall see a line of untidy, brilliant green things pushing through this lilac-tinted soil above the tideless sea. There is no greater joy'.[269]

The argument for the small producer is not without its problems. When Ford writes that 'Any form of agricultural life is preferable to any sort of industrialism' he takes the case to its impracticable extreme. He must support himself and his family, and frequently is in debt, so that it would sound insincere for him to say he should not earn money for his art and 'no form of agriculture should be practised for cash—any more than should any form of the arts, or of administration of justice—or even of war'.[270] However this kind of extremity can be seen as part of Ford's duality. Max Saunders has extensively demonstrated this aspect of Ford's character, which encompasses both the wish to include the earth in a general calculation of how human life should be conducted and the individual artist's right to live as he desires. Ford's arguments come from a spirit of generosity, rather than a spirit of imposition. He avoids duplicity because, as he says, he writes what he believes in, not necessarily what he believes readers will purchase:

> I shall probably die of starvation because I do not write books that people like. I do not say that I shall be proud of it. . . . But at least at the moment of dying I shall know that I have not lately taken the bread out of anyone else's mouth.[271]

[269] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 439.
[270] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 370.
[271] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 431.

The starvation he mentions here refers to industry giants running small farmers off their land while the crops that are grown are turned into packaged food the small farmers cannot afford to buy. In his travels across the American South, in Memphis, Tennessee, Ford witnesses an area where his hostess's 'ancestors had grown corn for generations with a profusion that rendered it almost as valueless as the air they breathed'.[272] He goes on to lament that she could only buy the corn which was

> gathered by a great utility corporation, packeted by their machines, swathed by them in cellophane and offered for sale by them in infinitesimal quantities at a price that rendered it a luxury difficult of attainment for moderately circumstanced purchasers. . . .[273]

The philosophy of the small farmer would ensure that an artist would not starve for he could feed his family from the land. But as Ford had seen across the American mid-West and mid-Atlantic states, as long as industrial giants own the land and the crops grown on it, a small farmer will survive only with great difficulty.

Another problematic aspect of Ford's analysis of small farming in America, however, is that, in the late 1920s and 1930s, it was associated with the Agrarian movement. Ford was both charmed and worried by their idea of Southern civilization, which failed to acknowledge the problem of the debt to slavery. Ford's friend Allen Tate published a Stonewall Jackson biography in 1928, subtitling it 'The Good Soldier' in tribute to Ford's novel, then began work on a biography of Jefferson Davis.[274] In 1930 Tate contributed an article to the Southern Agrarian manifesto, *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition*. The Agrarians believed in the economic and cultural

[272] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 352.
[273] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 352.
[274] Brita Lindberg-Seyersted, ed. *A Literary Friendship: Correspondence Between Caroline Gordon and Ford Madox Ford* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), xv.

superiority of 'Agrarian *versus* Industrial' living and called for 'a Southern way of life against what may be called the American or prevailing way'.[275] John Crowe Ransom's contribution, 'Reconstructed but Unregenerate', ignores the South's enormous profits acquired through slavery. He writes: 'Slavery was a feature monstrous enough in theory, but, more often than not, humane in practice; and it is impossible to believe that its abolition alone could have effected any great revolution in society'.[276] Tate's 'Remarks on the Southern Religion' is also a strange rejection of intellectualism and is nostalgic for 'simple' Southern ways.

Ford's association with the Southern Agrarians is troubling. Gene Moore argues that 'Ford's reluctance to confront the legacy of slavery and its aftermath reveals the limits of his understanding of American culture'. Ford remained 'Eurocentric' despite his many American friendships and time spent in the country.[277] Ford was clearly aware of the hypocrisies of the South, but he did not take a defined position against it. He wrote from New York about Tate and Gordon and their friends to Stella Bowen in 1927:

> I am rather buried amongst Southerners here – all the Tates' friends are from Kentucky or Tennessee or Virginia. It is rather queer: because of the Civil War you see American history quite reversed. Lincoln is the villainous bastard […] who ruined the world & Stonewall Jackson the only hero. It is queer & rather ghastly & pathetic, being buried amongst the relics of a lost cause – in a Bloomsbury basement & and hearing that if only Lee had not lost Gettysburg the world wd. be Elysium . . . No industrial system: no Middle West: only kindly & courteous people of pure English blood! . . . of course it is rather like the French royalists – but really queerer and more passionate.[278]

[275] Twelve Southerners, *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition*, ed. Louis Decimus Rubin et al (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1930), xi. Hereafter: *I'll Take My Stand*.
[276] John Crowe Ransom, 'Reconstructed but Unregenerate', *I'll Take My Stand*, 14.
[277] Gene M. Moore, '*Great Trade Route* and the Legacy of Slavery' in Sara Haslam and Seamus O'Malley, eds. *Ford Madox Ford and America* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopoi, 2012), 163.
[278] Ford, cited in Moore, 155.

Though Ford says the Agrarians are 'queer & rather pathetic' here, the reversal of the attitude towards the villains and heroes of the Civil War taken by the Agrarians is also seen in *Great Trade Route*. The shadow of the American Civil War figures largely in *Great Trade Route* as an important comparison to the First World War and one that prefigures the coming Second World War.

Ford's 'apology' for the South is tempered by his thoughts about war in general. In writing about the American Civil War, Ford compares Robert E. Lee's orders that no civilians should be harmed on arriving in Pennsylvania, to Sherman's men burning Columbia and Charleston to the ground. Ford defends Lee's chivalry:

> Lee deserved well of mankind because he observed the laws of war and the dictates of humanity. . . . They are the 'dictates' of humanity, not merely laws or international agreements. Every man in the world is made better by observation of those dictates.[279]

By following the 'dictates' of humanity, Lee becomes linked to Ford's romantic attachment to Provençal medievalism, courtly love and chivalry. Ford continues, again with a foresight that is remarkable, to predict that wiping out whole nations of civilians is not an effective way of winning a war because wars create bitter legacies:

> But, horrible as they are, modern methods of war are not as efficient as all that—and not-quite-stamped-out peoples develop a philoprogenitiveness, a tenacity of purpose, a vindictiveness. . . .A ruthless conqueror may well shiver when he thinks what will be the fate of his grandchildren when, against weapons that minute by minute for a century the Scientist has improved in deadliness, they have to begin again on the war that he has just concluded. . . .'[280]

Ford's prescience and understanding of the deeper complexities of war do not mitigate his support of the conservative Agrarians and their romanticizing of Robert E. Lee, but his readings of human motivations for war are profoundly insightful.

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[279] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 326.
[280] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 327.

Following on from his interpretation of the American Civil War, Ford's understanding of human nature also leads him to confess openly his own prejudice, but he does not apologize for it. Ford's brief address of the bigotry felt in the American South feels like a contradiction to his passionate defense of those being persecuted in Europe by Nazi sympathizers. Early in the book he writes of seeing a black porter at the Pennsylvania Hotel:

> . . . That touch of Africa. . . I wish it had not so immediately greeted us. I am always a little depressed when I see negroes; they spoil even The South for me, with their constant presence. I hate to be reminded of Africa, that mournful continent, protected by an avenging Nemesis that cannot keep her from being despoiled but always pursues her despoilers with dire persecutions and disasters. . . . Do you know what caused the Civil War, the late war, the Punic Wars that for generations ravaged Rome? . . . Spoliations of Africa. And the next war? Every time I think of that continent a shiver goes down my spine—a goose walking over my grave.[281]

While alluding to the shadow of Empire in the 'Spoliations of Africa' as a cause for the contemporary discord, Ford does not acknowledge his own racism here. Although he does recognize it elsewhere, here he manages to blame the continent of Africa for the persecutions brought on it by other countries. Ford does later comment on the atrocity of lynchings in the American South, observing that for African-Americans, 'The shadow of the rope and the flicker of the flame' is a constant terror.[282] In almost the next breath however, Ford seems to excuse a general xenophobia by admitting his own: 'I have in my time gone through agonies in the effort to prevent female members of my family from shaking hands with the most cultivated negro of the United States to-day, on a social occasion . . .'[283] Ford's contradictory statements on race and his inability

[281] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 59.
[282] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 379.
[283] Ford, *Great Trade Route*, 380.

to understand African-American persecution are disturbing and irreconcilable with his vision for a better future for the world.

Ford's difficulties with race and American history are contradictions within his argument for implementing the Small Producer ideal as a possibility for the world's future food production. However, in *Great Trade Route* Ford writes about food, agriculture and his experiences in different places to capture some of the discord of the world at the time, presenting life as it really is, including his own troubling impressions. In a world dominated by mass production, Ford seeks to emphasize the commonalities amongst different cultures. His greater argument is that humanity has more in common than it knows, and has much to learn from its various branches around the globe. The ancient Great Route and the modern one are not all that different. The problems of ancient empires plague present ones. In exposing others' and his own prejudices, Ford gestures towards a future where difference can be embraced, can coexist, rather than be 'put up against a wall'.

If we return to Ford's opening line in the article 'In Praise of Garlic': 'Civilized man—man who must live in great cities—cannot do without condiments' we see that hidden with in it there is also a socio-political aspect to the aesthetics of culinary Impressionism. [284] Ford's jumpy syntax here—performed with dashes rather than commas—says something about the leaps of improvisation and inventiveness necessary to live and cook well in a dense urban environment, without constant access to fresh ingredients. The transformative power of condiments or spices, often brought from a

[284] Ford, 'Garlic', 104.

long distance, is symbolic of everyday exchanges between people in cosmopolitan cities across national cultures.

Like *Great Trade Route*, 'In Praise of Garlic' consists of a melange of personal anecdotes, history, and a lighter note, advocating the health benefits of garlic. Ford's ostensible purpose in the article is to further encourage the open and uninhibited consumption of garlic in America by providing accessible recipes including it. With good humour, he concedes it should really be cooked to avoid offense: 'if you eat large quantities of raw garlic, people who have eaten none will avoid you'.[285]

However, when it comes to describing the practice of using condiments to season food, rather than list his ingredients separately, Ford integrates them with his argument that cooking with herbs is a sign of civilized behaviour, part of the French or European style of cooking. For readers short on time and fresh ingredients, he suggests: 'The three great condiments for unfortunates who are short of time and money are in the first place Worcestershire sauce; then a mixture of Parmesan and Gruyère cheese, grated; and finally curry powder'. He elaborates more fully on Worcestershire sauce:

> Used raw, it is really too harsh for an at all delicate palate. But from a teaspoonful to a tablespoonful added to almost any meat or fish dish according to size will prove a respectable substitute for garlic, on occasions where, say, one is going to a dance and one's dance partners may not have consumed any garlic themselves.'[286]

This is the practical side of Ford. His readers now know exactly how much Worcestershire sauce to add to a dish to season it appropriately. Ford's recipes in the article are not precise—they are imbued with fictional backstories, yet they would work

[285] Ford, 'Garlic', 126.
[286] Ford, 'Garlic', 129.

as meals in practice. One example, for cooking fish with spices, takes off on a culinary Impressionist flight of fancy:

> Thus grilled salmon […] with melted butter and *pommes a l'Anglaise* is very good. But if you make a white sauce and macerate into it a certain quantity of fennel, you will see that salmon and indeed, most other fish except, perhaps, mackerel, are lonely orphans if they have not the fennel to look after them. On the same principle, the best sirloin of beef is widowed without a little horseradish; venison with or without *sauce piquante* is helped by preserved cherries.'[287]

Both pragmatic and whimsical, Ford transforms and personifies his ingredients—fish without sauce become 'lonely orphans' and beef is 'widowed' without horseradish. Ford also assumes a flattering amount of culinary knowledge on behalf of the reader. He mentions '*pommes a l'Anglaise'* without explaining they are *pommes de terre*, potatoes, peeled and cut in oblong shapes and boiled. By merely suggesting dishes instead of providing full recipes with the addition of certain spices or herbs, Ford effects a kind of spontaneity that only cooks who know their ingredients well can manage. This spontaneity reflects the digressive and expansive aspects of Ford's Impressionism where he builds and builds from a single point of interest.

'Dinner with Turbot' is one of the last articles Ford wrote; it was published posthumously in *Vogue* in September 1939. The article moves around the world with anecdotes about food eaten in different countries, stimulated by Ford's vehement reaction to an argument with H. G. Wells. In Ford's telling, 'the greatest shock of my career' was delivered to him when Wells predicted that 'in the Utopian state you would be able to convert the hat-rack from the hall into mutton-chops or pâté de foies gras'. According to Wells, the ultimate 'perfection' would be 'a week's supply of nourishment

[287] Ford, 'Garlic', 126.

[…] in the form of little pellets' that also contained indigestible fiber 'to produce the feeling of distension that forms humanity's chief delight in feeding'.[288] For Ford, this suggestion is appalling: the pellets, the feeding and the distension have distinctly animalistic or even medical associations and they recall his horror of England as the 'land of pills'. To have the pleasure of eating reduced to a weekly intake of pellets is beyond comprehension. Ford instead describes for his readers what he calls 'the real epicureanism': the thrill of eating as a synaesthetic experience. This is an aspect of his own creative process, and a perhaps the fullest, most overt elaboration on culinary Impressionism:

> Real Epicureanism has a quality and a poetry as of fugal music. You eat a tiny portion of each of the seven courses of a dinner, not to arrive at repletion, but to taste certain flavours in sequence and to be moved by the almost infinite trains of association that will arise in your brain as the tongue communicates to it those savours. Those reminiscences may be exceedingly complex and may range half across the globe.[289]

Returning to the metaphor of fugal music that Ford first raised in 'In Praise of Garlic,' Ford emphasizes that eating is not indulgence aimed at fullness, but an aesthetic and creative state, generating 'almost infinite trains of association'. 'Real Epicureanism', with its association with memory and ability to situate its subject in more the one place with synaesthetic tastes, is also about literary creation. It is culinary Impressionism. In 'fugal music', which Ford likens to 'Epicureanism' here as a multivalent experience, a passage or subject is first played by one part then taken up by other parts which build on the subject and interweave with the first part before returning to the original subject. Ford sees the seven courses of a formal dinner (of which he only eats a small portion) as

[288] Ford, 'Dinner with Turbot' *Vogue* 94.6 (NY) (September 15, 1939), 104. Hereafter, 'Turbot'.
[289] Ford, 'Turbot', 104.

imitating this theme-and-variations style of development, also alluding to Walter Pater's maxim that 'all art constantly aspires towards the condition of music' and 'while in all other kinds of art it is possible to distinguish the matter from the form […] yet it is the constant effort of art to obliterate it'.[290] We could extend this to say 'all food aspires to the condition of music', and in the mixing of tastes and textures, through the transformation of cooking, cuisine obliterates its form. Ford's writing, with its repetitions and elaborations across genres, could also be considered 'fugal'. This passage also reads as an extended development of the metaphor first raised in 'In Praise of Garlic', on tasting meat seasoned with condiments properly: 'your tongue, savoring it, catches faintly the flavor of one herb after another fugitively: literally, as the ear half-catches the phrases of a fugue of Bach'.[291] In 'Dinner with Turbot', Ford proceeds to demonstrate these fugal, Impressionist variations as he describes how different meals imaginatively convey him to different countries and different memories. Significantly, the creative state stimulated by dining is both inward looking and outward looking – encompassing personal memories and intersections with other cultures and contemporary politics as the reminiscences take him 'half across the globe'.

In an anecdote about drinking sherry in Spain, the cultural and culinary experience brushes against the political. Ford remembers drinking sherry or *vino da pasto* in a small town on the south coast of Spain, Algeciras. He and his companion wandered about the 'empty, utterly quiet streets of the town' induced by the 'electric'

[290] Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, ed. Adam Phillips (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 86.
[291] Ford, 'Garlic', 126

effect of what he calls the 'dryest of wine dry'.[292] They then travel to Málaga the next day, learning that 'sixteen men had been killed in Algeciras whilst we wandered in those dream solitudes. It was the beginning of the end'.[293] Ford's encounters with the Spanish Civil War here is a subtle reminder that its presence is inseparable from his memory of the sherry.

In the final reminiscence, beginning with the sentence 'when you eat a good *cassoulet*, there is no end to what you might see…', Ford creates an Impressionist-amalgam of memory and political and culinary history of England and France, drawing on the work he had done in his books *Provence* and *Great Trade Route*.[294] Ford's musings on the *cassoulet,* a long-stewed dish of beans, pork or goose, tomatoes and cheese, take him to a vision of medieval scenes of the English ravaging France. He sees 'The Black Prince[295] making his *chevauchée* [a medieval raid] down through France, leaving a five-mile wide swath of burning farms behind him', but sparing 'The Inn of the Queen because of its beans, its Périgord pasty, and its claret wine'.[296] The Black Prince's barbaric destruction resonates with contemporary European vulnerability to impending Nazi occupation. Ford's reference of these medieval acts of England ravaging France in 1939 might also distantly allude to national violence in Europe: the *pogroms* occurring in Germany, which Ford was following closely in the news. It also presages his own death and his lasting literary legacy. Ford's final image of the smoke-ravaged medieval 'Inn of the Queen' with 'an immense *cassoulet* still bubbling in its

[292] Ford, 'Turbot', 130.
[293] Ford, 'Turbot', 130.
[294] Ford, 'Turbot', 130.
[295] 'The Black Prince' was Edward of Woodstock (1330-1376), known for his martial victories.
[296] 'Ford, Turbot', 131.

earthenware container….' is a hopeful image.[297] It evokes the longevity of food, and the writing about food, as representative of culture, as something that survives long past the people who create and consume it. Ford's memories of meals, like the long-stewed *cassoulet,* linger on in those ellipses he used, to be repeated in different formations, leaping from cuisine to politics back to cuisine.

Throughout his work, Ford continually describes the past and the origins of the present, telling revised versions of his own history, and the role of food in his return to creativity after the First World War in his memoir-writing. He constructs his culinary Impressionism from his knowledge of cooking and the history of foods and peoples. Ford constructs his theory of civilization from a history of spices travelling the world, an idea that small cash-farming would be a sustainable solution for creative individuals, and from the idea that national and personal character is formed by food.

Concerned as he is with the quiet domestic details of the home, and with creating a home for himself, Ford is greatly interested in how the past has shaped the present, both in a personal and universal sense. Ford's place amongst modernist thinkers who inherited the ideas of Ruskin's 'organic' society and Morris's 'blended claim for Art and Labour' is unique because he does not deny the importance to art of the modern city. With his metaphor of French food and garlic helping digestion, of being open to eating foreign foods, Ford urges humanity to keep an open mind about those from other countries and to distrust the nationalism of Nazism. The idealized literary and historical past of France is explored as something to be imitated in the future in *A Mirror to France, Provence,* and *Great Trade Route,* but the raising of sustainable, local food is

[297] Ford, 'Turbot,' 131.

urgently placed at the centre of all projects for the future. Although *The Good Soldier*'s John Dowell seeks an artificial sense of English identity through the food he eats, he is shown to be insufficient and impotent because he lacks the self-knowledge to eat the food he enjoys and to pursue emotional truth. No children have been born from any of the relationships associated with the unfulfilled narrator who hungers for connection. When in *Parade's End* Christopher Tietjens finally accepts love and creates a life for his future with Valentine and their future son Chrissie, their life promises to be rich without the burden of a great house and feudal land. The symbolic fruit of their labours on a small cottage will be their own as they throw off inherited, archaic traditions. In creating these relationships, Ford demonstrates culinary knowledge on the part of the characters and their author, which leads to deeper understandings of relationships and identity. Ford's agrarianism and culinary Impressionism unite his lived and literary commitment to domestic and culinary ideals. Food is a part of his literary aesthetic.

CHAPTER III: SERVING THE MEALS: GERTRUDE STEIN AND DOMESTICITY

In 1922 Sherwood Anderson published a literary portrait of Gertrude Stein in which he imagines Stein in an American kitchen:

> In the great kitchen of my fanciful world in which, ever since that morning, I have seen Miss Stein standing, there is a most sweet and gracious aroma. Along the walls are many shining pots and pans, and there are innumerable jars of fruits, jellies and preserves. Something is going on in the great room, for Miss Stein is a worker in words with the same loving touch in her strong fingers that was characteristic of the women of the kitchens of the brick houses in the town of my boyhood. She is an American woman of the old sort, one who cares for the handmade goodies and who scorns the factory-made foods, and in her own great kitchen she is making something with her materials, something sweet to the tongue and fragrant to the nostrils.[298]

Anderson's tribute makes a slight nod to Stein's own prose style with long sentences and use of the present tense, gerunds and participles ('I have seen Miss Stein standing, a worker in words with the same loving touch in her strong fingers'). Such features are part of what Stein terms, in her own early writing, the 'continuous present'. That is the term she uses for a style which frequently employs the word 'always' and 'ing'- verbs in gerund and participle forms. Stein explains 'the continuous present' as manifesting itself fully in her long work *The Making of Americans* (1925): 'and there was an inevitable beginning of beginning again and again and again'.[299] Anderson's description presents both Stein and the cook she resembles as creative artists in the imaginary kitchen. Anderson's version of Stein observes the richness of the American kitchen and its processes, translating them into her writing. She represents in her literary

[298] Sherwood Anderson, 'Four American Impressions: Gertrude Stein, Paul Rosenfeld, Ring Lardner, Sinclair Lewis' originally published in *The New Republic* (October 1922), in Linda Simon, ed. *Gertrude Stein Remembered* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 62.
[299] Gertrude Stein, 'Composition as Explanation' in *The Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein*, ed. Carl Van Vechten (New York: Random House, 1990) [1945], 518.

work the material objects of cookery: the 'pots and pans' and jars for preserving fruits. The allusion to the women from Anderson's childhood also places Stein in a Mid-Western American literary and cultural tradition, evoking the fictional women in American pioneer towns, like Willa Cather's character Grandmother Burden in her white-washed, gingerbread-scented kitchen in *My Ántonia* (1918). In some respects Anderson's image is an elision of many people: it suggests Stein the writer, but also her partner Alice B. Toklas, who was a famously good cook. It is also captures Stein's preoccupation with the work of the women and men who cooked for her and who had been cooking for many centuries before. So the cook in the kitchen is another kind of American adventurer with pioneer spirit. This pioneer cook also anticipates the representation of immigrant cooks in Stein's *Three Lives* (1909) and the Indo-Chinese cook that Toklas and Stein employed in their Parisian household, Trac Nguyen, who is mentioned in a short story, in *Everybody's Autobiography* (1937) and in Toklas's *The Alice B. Toklas Cookbook* (1954).[300]

In this chapter, I demonstrate how Stein's literary representations of cooks and the biographical details of her relationship with her cooks offer a mode of thinking about modernist authority, creativity and domesticity. In this sense, I extend and complicate Barbara Will's argument that Stein developed her sense of herself and her genius through a continuing conversational process. For Will, Stein's process of genius and identity formation are 'ongoing, anti-authorial, dialogic' and Stein's perception of her own genius

[300] Trac Nguyen is also imaginatively memorialized in the character of Bình in Monique Truong's 2003 novel, *The Book of Salt*, which is set in Stein and Toklas's Parisian apartment and narrated from Bình's perspective.

> points the way towards a postmodern moment in which Romantic notions of the autonomous artist and of the absolutely original art work have been replaced by pronouncements about "the death of the author" and by new artistic efforts to blur the boundaries between originality and appropriation, invention and collaboration. [301]

I contend that, in addition to her self-representation as a singular, masculine genius affiliated with the work of Picasso and Matisse, Stein locates modernist authority and creativity in the domestic sphere, through conversations and tastings in the kitchen, and through her representations of her cooks. Stein's writing about domesticity, in its break with grammatical rules, evokes a modernist primitivism and childishness, a primitivism that becomes problematic when race is also invoked.[302] Through my biographical research, I show how Stein also demonstrates her interest in cookery through a close observation of, and collaboration with, Toklas (as cook and cookery writer) and their domestic servants. This juxtaposition of the artist and the cook produces a subversion of gendered authorial creativity and a reimagining of the history of women's creative work. Though much of Stein's writing has always been notoriously difficult to read, Stein's place in the canon of difficult modernist texts should be considered in juxtaposition with more ostensibly simple or stereotypically feminine subjects of the domestic sphere. [303] And because difficulty has come to define the modern canon as better

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[301] Barbara Will, *Gertrude Stein, Modernism, and the Problem of "Genius"* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 9.

[302] Gina M. Rosetti reads Stein's short story 'Melanctha' from *Three Lives* as an example of Stein using a racial primitive model as a 'vehicle for escapism and expatriation' in *Imagining the Primitive in Naturalist and Modernist Literature* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2005),157.

[303] Leonard Diepeveen has described the hierarchical valorization of 'difficult' modernist texts such as Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Joyce's *Ulysses* and Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* or *To the Lighthouse* which are seen as emblematic of high modernism. Although their contemporaries and antagonists reacted viscerally to this difficulty, modernist authors such as Robert Frost and Willa Cather that were defined as simple and direct were either removed from the canon, or came to be defined in terms of 'deceptive simplicity'. Their writing appeared to their critics to be simple on the surface, but to their defenders, their texts contained

representing the complexity of real life than ostensibly more simple texts, critics have neglected Stein's domestic and culinary subjects as rooted in her artistic identity.

For Stein, cooking holds a mystical artistic power. The transformative work that domestic cooks perform is an integral part of what Stein conceives of as the history of civilization in France. Stein uses the parallels between the cook and artist in her work to position her own experimental work within the developments of twentieth-century civilization. And, as I will discuss, Stein's conception of civilization is also illustrative of her troubling politics in the 1930s and 1940s. This is evidenced in her friendship with the Vichy government official Bernard Faÿ throughout and after the Second World War, and her support for General Philippe Pétain and translation of his speeches. It is difficult to reconcile these radical differences: Stein embraced domestic imagery as related to creativity and aligned her work with the labour of servants and cooks, while at the same time supporting an authoritarian government. Yet both aspects are true and both tell us different things about Stein as an artist and a complex person. Using biographical and historical analysis alongside close reading to illuminate works like Stein's *Three Lives* (1909), *Tender Buttons* (1914), *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933), *Everybody's Autobiography* (1937) and *Paris France* (1940), I show how the art of the preparation of food presents opportunities for Stein to reflect on creation within the home, through the identity of the cook and the consumer of the food. Additionally, my attention to Stein's and Toklas's critically-neglected unpublished preliminary draft cookbook, 'We Eat', provides an opportunity for reconsideration of the collaborative

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deeper meaning below the surface. Leonard Diepeveen, *The Difficulties of Modernism* (Routledge: New York and London, 2003).

nature of Stein and Toklas's relationship and for what this says about the influence Stein's domestic cooks had on her writing.

Whereas critics such as Richard Bridgman, Lisa Ruddick, Mary Wilson, and others envision Stein's obscure work as encoding the expression of her sexual identity (and its troubling presentation and entanglement in racial politics), it is also possible to read Stein's obscure style as re-inventing the creativity of domestic female characters in her writing. As Randa Dubnick points out, 'the only real relevance of this sexually motivated evasiveness to Stein's style is as a possible impetus for her linguistic innovations'.[304] Positioning myself in between Dubnick and the critics interested in Stein's sexual identity, I see these linguistic innovations pointing particularly to the kinds of intimate domestic work a cook performs—reducing, simplifying, complicating, and making new in a daily and close capacity. I read Stein as affiliating herself as an artist with the creative powers of the female and male cooks in her work and life. By lifting culinary language and figures into both her 'hermetic' texts and her ostensibly less difficult texts, she is able to treat the issues of domestic and authorial creativity with modernist seriousness.[305]

The motif of the cook in Stein's writing is connected to her memories of her American childhood and the food she ate then, her ongoing desire to be 'taken care of', and her exoticizing interest in the ostensibly childish nature of servants and cooks of

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[304] Randa Dubnick, *The Structure of Obscurity: Gertrude Stein, Language, and Cubism* (Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1984), 3.

[305] 'Hermetic' is the term historically used by critics to describe difficulty in Stein's texts. It was used by those who knew and worked with Stein such as Carl Van Vechten, who wrote that *A Novel of Thank You* was one of Stein's 'most hermetic works', cited in Ellen Berry, *Curved Thought and Textual Wandering: Gertrude Stein's Postmodernism* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 70 and Virgil Thompson, cited in *The Letters of Gertrude Stein and Carl Van Vechten*, ed. by Edward Burns (New York and Guilford: Columbia University Press, 1986), 10.

other nationalities and races than her own. Given that so much of Stein's writing is autobiographical, it is useful to consider the circumstances of her life when discussing her writing about domesticity and food. Stein may have been attracted to domestic subjects because to her this kind of work was exotic, not drudgery. She was able to observe while other people took care of these things and cared for her. The opening paragraph of Stein's *Wars I Have Seen* (1945), her account of living through the Second World War, reflects on the feeling of being the youngest child in her family, something she carried throughout her life: 'If that does happen it is not lost all the rest of one's life, there you are you are privileged, nobody can do anything but take care of you'.[306] Stein's acknowledgment of her privilege illustrates her self-awareness, and the phrase 'take care of' swings between domestic duty (take care of these tasks) and love (to take care of, and to care for, an individual, whether a child or an adult partner). However, although Stein's partner Alice B. Toklas cared for Stein in both senses of the term, 'almost to the point of parody',[307] Toklas's more domestic role was fundamental to Stein's creative work. Toklas may have sat with 'the wives of geniuses' rather than the geniuses, but her role in the household was essential to Stein's literary creations.[308] I will discuss their direct collaboration in their joint cookbook draft, 'We Eat,' at the end of this chapter.

As I will show in *Three Lives*, Stein adopts the mask of the cook/servant to represent versions of those who are taken care of, and those who do the care-taking. This

[306] Gertrude Stein, *Wars I Have Seen* (London: B. T. Batsford Limited, 1945), 3.
[307] Janet Malcolm, *Two Lives: Gertrude and Alice* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 28.
[308] 'Before I decided to write this book my twenty-five years with Gertrude Stein, I had often said that I would write, The wives of geniuses I have sat with'. Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 18.

has a corollary in her relationship with Toklas, who was the literal cook in the relationship when their employees were off-duty. In what follows, I read Stein's representation of the mutual creative dependency between cook and baker, for example in 'The Good Anna', as parallel to the collaborative/dependency between Stein and Toklas.

Domesticity and nation, tradition, civilization

In her prose and autobiographical writing from *Three Lives* to *Paris France*, Stein is attracted to and absorbed by domestic service as a traditional profession. She writes with a child's fascination of the preparation and eating of food, the cleaning and running of a house, a house's tenants and their objects. Through this interest in domesticity and the labour of the body she evolves a theory about the importance of the preparation and eating of food to the progressions of civilizations in history. Stein, like Ford Madox Ford, sees the regenerative and stabilizing potential of continuing to write throughout wartime, particularly about food and domestic activities. Stein's motives, however, are different. Rather than fashioning something new, Stein views her effort as a kind of preservation of what she saw as early twentieth century western culture.

In her memoirs Stein discusses the tradition of domestic service in France as filtered through her understanding of transatlantic and European cultural and racial differences and her conservative perspective on France. For Stein, the role of French servants is a crucial aspect of stratified French society and culture. As a class they are inherently unequal to their bourgeois employers, but their status is firm and they command a certain amount of respect, as we will see in the case of Stein's long-time cook, Hélène Lavocat. The unequal yet valued status of French servants differs from the

social isolation and oppression that the German-American immigrant women and black American women experience and represent in Stein's short stories, *Three Lives*.

Stein's perspective is part of a long tradition of American praise for French customs established by writers like Edith Wharton, who considered herself 'an outsider familiar with both races'.[309] Stein, too, saw herself as an interloper who had come to 'really know' France through seeing it through the First World War.[310] Wharton's articulation of a sense of French civic order when observing the towns bordering the Seine river outside of Paris from her motorcar emphasizes the embodied aspect of conservative French social roles:

> Never more vividly than in this Seine country does one feel the amenity of French manners, the long process of social adaptation which has produced so profound and general an intelligence of life. Every one we passed on our way, from the canal-boatman to the white-capped baker's lad, from the *marchande des quatre saisons* to the white dog curled philosophically under her cart, from the pastry-cook putting a fresh plate of *brioches* in his appetising window to the curé's *bonne* who had just come out to drain the lettuce on the curé's doorstep – all these persons (under which designation I specifically include the dog) took their ease or pursued their business with that cheerful activity which proceeds from an intelligent acceptance of given conditions. They each had their established niche in life, the frankly avowed interests and preoccupations of their order, their pride in the smartness of the canal-boat, the seductions of the show-window, the glaze of the *brioches*, the crispness of the lettuce. And this admirable *fitting into the pattern*, which seems almost as if it were a moral outcome of the universal French sense of form, has led the race to the happy, momentous discovery that good manners are a short cut to one's goal, that they lubricate the wheels of life instead of obstructing them.[311]

Wharton emphasizes the hierarchy of the social positions, each in his place, as contributing to this overall sense of 'fitting into the pattern'. From an outsider's perspective, French customs and roles represent a perfected cultural aesthetic where no

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[309] Edith Wharton, *French Ways and Their Meaning* (London: Macmillan, 1919), 17.
[310] Gertrude Stein, *Paris France* (London, B. T. Batsford, Ltd. 1940), 120. Hereafter; *Paris France.*
[311] Edith Wharton, *A Motor Flight Through France:* 'From Rouen to Fontainebleau' in *Edith Wharton Abroad: Selected Travel Writings*, 1888-1920, Sarah Bird Wright, ed. (New York: St Martin's Griffin, 1996), 116-17. Emphasis Wharton's.

one oversteps their rigid class boundary. Although Wharton did live in France for much of her life, this is an idealistic view from a Francophile American expatriate, peering from the confines of her motorcar as the country whizzes by.

Bourdieu's analysis in 'Distinction' of the rigidity of French class differences supports Wharton's vision of the discrete manners and bodily attitudes of the different French vendors, labourers and domestic servants. As Bourdieu writes: 'Taste, a class culture turned into nature, that is *embodied*, helps to shape the class body'.[312] Bourdieu suggests the French body manifests class characteristics. Wharton, too, sees the petty bourgeois or working-class bodies, and even the dog's body, as each fitting into their pre-assigned place and as emblematic of the French emphasis on traditional roles and manners. Like Wharton, Stein's notion of French civilization is inherently conservative in its emphasis on order and positions. Indeed in *Paris France* (1940), Stein emphatically repeats how important tradition is to the French and also to herself. Early on she writes that in France, 'life is tradition and human nature' and later: 'I cannot write too much upon how necessary it is to be completely conservative that is particularly traditional in order to be free'.[313] However, I will argue that Stein, unlike Wharton, in admiring the propriety of her domestic servants and cooks actually goes on to adapt some of their language in her own work in relation to her notions of her modernist authority.

With this ideological emphasis on tradition, it is perhaps not surprising that, despite her radical aesthetics and life, Stein's identity as a Jewish lesbian did not lead

[312] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 10. Emphasis Bourdieu's.
[313] Stein, *Paris France*, 8, 38.

her to espouse progressive politics. Janet Malcolm, Barbara Will and others have investigated Stein's reactionary political positions of the 1930s and 1940s, epitomized in Stein's support for the Vichy government and close friendship with Bernard Faÿ. Faÿ was a French scholar of American literature and history, translator for Stein, and eventual Vichy official responsible for the deportation of several hundred Freemasons. Will shows how during the First World War, both Stein and Faÿ were deeply affected by their experiences of French vulnerability and moved by the victories of General Pétain, who later became head of the Vichy regime. Will argues that for Stein, fear of violence, and deeply entrenched views about traditional France, as opposed to the modern 'decadence' of the twentieth century, motivated her veneration of Pétain, whose speeches she translated. Though Stein's translations of these thirty-two speeches remain unpublished to this day, they include 'those that announced Vichy policy barring Jews and other "foreign elements" from positions of power in the public sphere and those that called for a "hopeful" reconciliation with Nazi forces'.[314] Stein continued working on the translations until January 1943, well after the United States entered the war.

Stein's politics fall within a broader, well-studied trend in modernism, as modernist thinkers from the Futurists to Ezra Pound to Martin Heidegger have championed fascist views. Roger Griffin argues that, although highly contradictory, modernist expressions of revolutionary newness often occur in 'pursuit of the regeneration of history and the inauguration of a new era'.[315] Stein did not obviously or openly promote fascism, but she fits this paradox in her conservative embrace of

[314] Barbara Will, *Unlikely Collaboration: Gertrude Stein, Bernard Faÿ, and the Vichy Dilemma* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 138.
[315] Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a New Beginning Under Mussolini and Hitler* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 9.

traditional France, reinventing and re-imaging its culture, cookery, and way of life in her writing, aligning herself and modernist authority with these aspects.

Grounded in tradition, Stein connects French servants and cooks to herself as an artist and to French and European civilization through her admiration of the art of French cooking. In Stein's view, cooks and servants participate in the national culture, playing their individual roles to contribute to society and French civilization, however problematic their relationships to that ideal may be. Stein privileges social stratification and steadiness, which she finds in France and not in England in the early twentieth century:

> England had the disadvantage of believing in progress, and progress has really nothing to do with civilisation, but France could be civilised without having progress on her mind, she could believe in civilisation in and for itself, and so she was the natural background for this period.[316]

In *Paris France,* Stein further develops the connection between servants, cooking, her own writing and contemporary civilization. She uses cookery as the metaphor for French veneration of the past:

> French cooking is traditional, they give up the past with difficulty in fact they never do give it up and when they have had reforms so called in the seventeenth century and in the nineteenth century, they only accepted it when it became really a fashion in Paris.[317]

She goes on emphasize the traditional aspects of cookery, by telling the history of French cooking. From Catherine de Medici's Italian desserts, to the Austrian import of the croissant in the seventeenth century to Louis XV making his own coffee, Stein sees herself as within a tradition of other literary-culinary predecessors: 'Under Louis-Napoleon the writers and poets became the appreciators and critics of cooking as well as

[316] Stein, *Paris France*, 39.
[317] Stein, *Paris France*, 46.

the financiers and the court, so Dumas wrote a cook-book'.[318] This last point demonstrates how her own appreciation for cookery has precedent in French literary history. Yet she sees the twentieth century and the interwar period as bringing a downfall of French cookery. 'The Americanization of France' brought 'automobiles which kept them from staying at home, cocktails, the worry of spending money […] in short French cooking went out and there were very few houses practically none in Paris where cooking was considered an art'. [319] Stein saw this phenomenon as having impaired contemporary French cookery.

While Stein valued the continuous and historic role of servants and the long tradition of French cookery, it is also surprising that she would tie the image of herself as a creator with domestic servants, considering the significant prejudice against them.[320] National attitudes to servants varied across countries in the beginning of the twentieth century, but there was much discrimination against them in France, England and America. In France, although male domestics were enfranchised in 1848 they could not serve on juries or be elected to town councils until 1930, comparable with the delayed enfranchisement of women in 1944.[321]

Stein may then be unusual in the attention she pays to her domestics. From the 1930s onwards, Stein is interested in how aspects of domestic life, like cooking and

[318] Stein, *Paris France*, 50.
[319] Stein, *Paris France*, 52.
[320] Mary Wilson points out that the term domestic servants applied to both men and women, but throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries many more women than men were servants in Britain, which Wilson has suggested may be tied to a withdrawal of tax on female servants in 1792 while tax on male servants remained from 1777 until 1937. Wilson, *The Labors of Modernism: Domesticity, Servants, and Authorship in Modernist Fiction* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013),13.
[321] Raffaella Sarti, "Freedom and Citizenship? The Legal Status of Servants and Domestic Workers in a Comparative Perspective (16th-21st Centuries)", in Suzy Pasleau and Isabelle Schopp (eds), with Raffaella Sarti, *Proceedings of the Servant Project, Liège, Éditions de l'Université de Liège*, 2005 (but 2006), 5 vols., vol. III, 127-164, 13.

eating, are related to American and French culture, and in a broader way, to civilization. In *Paris France,* Stein further develops the connection between servants, cooking, her own writing and contemporary civilization. She describes the birth of the twentieth century and modern civilization in *Paris France* as arriving with modern art, which her work, like Picasso's and Matisse's, is part of. Like Edith Wharton and Ford Madox Ford, Stein sees France as the locus of civilization and culture in the twentieth century, putting her work at the heart of what makes the twentieth century:

> And therefore France was so important in the period between 1900 and 1939, it was a period when there really was a serious effort made by humanity to be civilized, the world was round and there really were not left any unknown on it and so everybody decided to be civilized.[322]

Relating domesticity to ideas of civilization, Mary Wilson sees domestication as playing into the imperial tradition where women felt they could contribute to the empire through their domestic roles and attempt to 'civilize' the lower classes living in their middle-class homes as workers:

> In the imperial context women's attachment to home—their domestication—was their opportunity to work towards the maintenance of the empire, and also their domestication was a necessary pretext for imperial continuity through the next generation.[323]

Yet Stein's interest in the word 'civilization' is connected to the cycles of history she perceived and her own participation in them as an artist. Stein sees the world and the universe as operating in cycles, or 'revolutions', which she saw as inevitable. In *Everybody's Autobiography*, Stein espouses a kind of nihilistic acceptance of revolutions and the violence they imply:

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[322] Stein, *Paris France*, 38-9.
[323] Wilson, 17.

> Every time we talk about revolutions we know that there is going to be another. After all and that does make me know that when I was frightened when I first knew that civilizations came to an end and cities were buried that it was nothing to frighten because after all the earth is round and do what you like it can only be round and so a civilization must end a mechanical civilization as well as any other.[324]

When in the late 1930s Stein and Toklas were having trouble finding and keeping servants and cooks, she understood the problem as part of one of these cyclical patterns:

> It is undoubtedly a very strange thing that when there is a great deal of unemployment you can never get anybody to do any work. But that is natural enough because if everybody is unemployed everybody loses the habit of work and work like revolutions is a habit it just naturally is.[325]

That Stein sees the daily domestic work of her servants as comparable to political revolutions places domesticity within the context of the progress and destruction of civilizations. In this way Stein connects domestic work and her writing to this idea of cycles of civilizations—if work, habit, and revolutions are natural, then the idea is that everything will turn out fine in the end, despite the possible problematic destruction along the way. Her concerns about civilization, origins, history, tradition, food and culture, are almost all correlated with the daily domestic productivity of cooks and servants.

Other modernists were also drawn to the questions of how the twentieth century came to be and what future the approach of war would bring. W. B. Yeats addresses ideas of cyclical history in which opposing forces of creativity and criticism dominate in alternating cycles in his 1925 and 1937 revisions of his long work *A Vision*. Thomas

[324] Gertrude Stein, *Everybody's Autobiography* (London and Toronto: William Heinemann Ltd, 1938), 102-3.
[325] Stein, *Everybody's Autobiography*, 40-1.

Whitaker has pointed out that Yeats inherited his view from a long-standing English literary tradition:

> Indeed, on every hand Yeats could find descriptions of alternating eras and organic cycles. In Byron's *Childe Harold*, in Shelley's *Hellas*, in Arnold's 'Dover Beach', he could glimpse a disillusioning flux and reflux. On the continent Goethe had declared the sole theme of world history to be the ebb and flow of Belief and Unbelief and the Saint-Simonians had talked of alternating 'organic' and 'critical' epochs. In England Arnold suggested in 'The Function of Criticism' alternating periods of creation and criticism or expansion and consolidation […][326]

The cycles of history are also connected with Stein's interest in the everyday cycles of domestic life.

The need to keep a continuity of daily-ness, of routine and the regular is even more important in wartime for Stein. The daily necessity of continuing with domestic cycles in wartime evokes not just the modernist interest in the ordinary, but also the pleasure of the creative, eventful aspects of domesticity, even when operating with fewer materials. Liesl Olson has written about Stein's need to maintain her daily habits during the Second World War: 'the rationing of food, wine, and tobacco, the dependence on neighbouring farmers, and the closeness of a small community against the threat of impending violence' are all subjects of her war writing, 'dissolving the consequences of the world into the space of the home, and paradoxically work as a way in which itself can be best represented.'[327] Whereas Olson sees this as a continuation of Stein's need for habit and for regularity in her domestic life, I see it as her comprehension of the role of the domestic in the larger picture of 'civilization'.

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[326] Thomas Whitaker, *Swan and Shadow: Yeats's Dialogue with History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964), 29-30.
[327] Liesl Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 101-2, 90.

Like Ford Madox Ford and his writing about Provence, Stein aligns herself with what she calls European 'Latinity', or a continuity between Latin cultures of the past and present. She points out that Frenchness has a 'Latinity' to it- there is something inherently old and European about the French, and their food and culture has acquired and appropriated foods from around Europe: 'To be latin [sic] was to be civilized to be logical and to be fashionable and the French were and they knew it.'[328] Stein uses lower case letters to describe most nationalities, and this tendency deflects the importance of nationality to Stein. France has seemed to seep into her being by virtue of her long tenure there. She sets up the similarities between her French cooks as artists inventing the new and herself, without making them explicit. Through her writing in *Three Lives* and her later autobiographical writing, Stein articulates how domestic life is both a necessity and an art, part of the cycles, or revolutions of civilization, something worth writing about, even celebrating, and certainly worth saving.

'Hélène': the 'supercook'

Throughout her work, Stein returns to the figure of the domestic, the cook, and the *femme de ménage*. These were the people who, with Toklas, kept her home and life running smoothly. Their roles as caretakers and providers of food for individuals and, collectively, for entire countries, captured Stein's imagination. Stein's real life cooks and servants appear throughout her autobiographical writing as artists in their own right, but a few stand out as particularly closely aligned with both Stein and Toklas's creative work and these have been neglected by Stein scholars. Mary Wilson draws attention to the function of domestic labour in modernism and Stein's work. However, in discussing

[328] Stein, *Paris France*, 56.

the American and British historical treatments of servants, Wilson does not mention Stein and Toklas's relationship with their own servants. Wilson bypasses the fact that Stein composed *Three Lives* while living in Paris having taken over the employment of their cook Hélène from her brother Leo.[329] Hélène appears as a vivacious character in several of Stein works, including *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, Everybody's Autobiography, Paris France* and also in Toklas's *Cook Book*. The ongoing presence of Hélène, as well as the other servants that followed her, in Stein's life and writing is a testimony to both the real cooks and the significance of their domestic and culinary labour.

The real Hélène Lavocat, whose surname I have positively identified,[330] worked as Stein and Toklas's cook from 1905 (Toklas writes in the *Cook Book* that Toklas moved in with Stein in 1910) until 1914, when Hélène left because her husband wanted to be cared for full-time. She came back fifteen years later when her husband's business was failing and her son died, in 1929.[331] Before she came back the second time, however, her correspondence with Stein and Toklas reveals they were in touch and friendly throughout this time—Hélène sent Christmas cards, and her thank you notes to Stein and Toklas indicate they sent her presents of cakes.[332]

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[329] Mary Wilson, *The Labors of Modernism: Domesticity, Servants, and Authorship in Modernist Fiction* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).

[330] Hélène's surname is not mentioned in any of the major biographies of Stein or major critical studies. Correspondence with Stein scholars Edward Burns and Leon Katz has led me to the name 'Hélène Lavocat', which I have verified in reading letters from Hélène Lavocat to Stein in the Yale Beinecke collection. Alison Light writes of the difficulty of writing the history of servants when surnames were often not used in correspondence about them, and regards it as an aspect of the 'long history of not noticing or valuing servants, seeing them as functionaries or mere types'. Light, *Mrs Woolf and the Servants*, xvii.

[331] Bruce Kellner, *A Gertrude Stein Companion: Content with the Example* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 201.

[332] One letter, dated 'Paris 23 dècembre 1914', sends Christmas and New Year wishes. She also thanked them for 'le bon gâteau' in letters dated from September and October 1928. Beinecke Rare Book and

Hélène's legendary status as a brilliant cook was known by all the guests at 27 Rue de Fleurus. She had a sense of propriety that endeared many to her. Hélène did not like Matisse's tendency to unexpectedly stay for dinner and intended to insult him by preparing him fried eggs rather than an omelette, which Stein captures in the *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*: 'It takes the same number of eggs and the same amount of butter but it shows less respect, and he will understand'.[333] The French attitude towards *les domestiques* is embodied in Hélène, who resisted Alice Toklas's efforts to learn from her: 'A lady did not cook', Hélène told her.[334] Toklas dedicated an entire chapter to 'Servants in France' in her *Cook Book*, which relates the stories of the procession of servants and cooks who came to work for them, with a generous section on Hélène: 'No one could have accomplished so much with so little effort and in so little time as Hélène did'.[335]

Carl Van Vechten's tribute to Hélène, in his magazine series 'Pastiches et Pistaches', titled Hélène a 'supercook', writing that 'artist cooks are extremely rare':

> Hélène builds complicated dishes with the ease that you and I make letters. Part of her greatness lies in the fact that she abhors cliché and is constantly striving to invent something new. She never fails and she is not afraid to venture into the most difficult realms of this particularly difficult art. She can fashion a chaud-froid as professionally as the chef at Voisin's, and it will be a much more tasty affair than that chef can make. Supreme test of a cook, she can boil potatoes. On those days when Hélène prepares a plain lunch of cottage cheese and boiled potatoes you will fare as well as you would elsewhere on a five-course déjeuner with all the delicacies of the season. You will return again and again to the dish.[336]

Manuscript Library, Yale University, Hélène Lavocat correspondence, The Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas Papers, YCAL MSS 76 Box 114, Folder 2359 (1910-1935).

[333] Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 11.

[334] Toklas, *Cook Book*, 171.

[335] Toklas, *Cook Book*, 171.

[336] Carl Van Vechten, 'An Artist Cook' in 'Pastiches et Pistaches', *The Reviewer*, October 1922, 632 – 638, 636.

In many ways, Van Vechten's portrait of Hélène echoes Sherwood Anderson's portrait of Stein in the kitchen, but as they were both published in October 1922 they appear to have developed simultaneously rather than as a response from one to the other. Still, here, the cook as artist metaphor has an emphasis on simplicity, invention, and apparent effortlessness due to high levels of skill. In this way it can also be read as a compliment to Stein's writing style as well as a tribute to her skilful cook. To read one as a stand-in for the other would be to remove credit from the legendary Hélène, but because of Hélène's continual presence in Stein's autobiographical books, Stein may also have seen parallels between them.

American servants

To Stein French domestic servants represented elements of a family, a nation and a society. Though American domestic servants were stigmatized for their low social status, Stein was not without sympathy for these marginal and 'foreign', often immigrant, figures. She represents them in *Three Lives* (1909) as Lena, Anna, and Melanctha. The simplicity of their work and lives is in question for these women worked very hard and their lives end in lonely, sad deaths. They are complex figures of pathos, rendered in a detached, modern style. Through the representation of individual servants and domestic tasks in *Three Lives* and her later autobiographical writing, Stein explores themes of creative power and powerlessness, self-deprivation, and love in the lives of the working classes, and in recent immigrant populations, in aesthetic rather than political terms. The ostensibly unproductive labour of domestic servants is often reimagined in terms of creativity as Stein adopts culinary language, aligning herself with these figures. The term 'labour' connotes both slave labour and the paid work of the

body. The *Oxford English Dictionary* dates the term as we understand it here to 1662, defining as 'Work (esp. physical work) considered as a resource or commodity, typically when necessary to supply the needs of the community or for the execution of a particular task; the contribution of the worker to production'.[337] Yet, for the definition referring to workers and laborers as a collective force we have to wait until the nineteenth century when it is associated with Marxist ideology, unions and social reform.[338]

American attitudes to domestic servants from the period 1800 – 1920 were deeply troubled. Servants of all races, including black Americans born free, former slaves, Irish and Chinese immigrants, and poor whites from around America were associated with filth and immorality.[339] The profession treated employees miserably. To be a servant of any race was to be considered almost subhuman. Nancy Woloch writes: 'According to a 1911 survey, native-born women disliked servitude mainly because of "pride, social condition, and unwillingness to be called servants"—along with a distaste for competition with new immigrants and blacks.'[340] And in America in the early twentieth century, domestic servants were overwhelmingly female, black or immigrants: 'at the turn of the century, the million women in domestic service—maids, laundresses, cooks, companions, waitresses, and also nurses—were 26 percent native-born, 19 percent daughters of immigrants, 28 percent foreign-born, and 27 percent black.' The hours were also interminable: 'the domestic work week was about 50 percent longer than a week of factory work, with irregular hours and rare days off.'[341]

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[337] 'Labour,' definition 10a. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. Visited 10 May 2015.
[338] 'Labour', definition 10b.
[339] Daniel E. Sutherland, *Americans and their Servants: Domestic Service in the Untied States from 1800 to 1920* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1981).
[340] Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience* (New York: Knopf, 1984), 232.
[341] Woloch, 232.

A compelling autobiographical story from an anonymous woman writing in *Forum and Century* magazine in 1938 describes the hardship of a presumably white woman who became a servant after her husband died. She had a middle-class life and 'after normal school and two years of college' taught until she was married, and then, after her husband's death in 1935, wrote: 'I faced the fact that I must earn a living for myself and daughter or be dependent on relatives—perish the thought!'. Gutsy and indignant, she shared stories of being told 'to remember that you are the servant' while sexually predatory behaviour was foisted upon both herself and her daughter. [342] She was offered such pitiful and exploitative wages and living conditions that many jobs were unbearable. The article's title, a reminder that 'Servants are Humans', sums up her position.

In historical terms, the legacy of slavery haunted the presence of black women in the domestic service profession in America. In the immediate aftermath of the Civil War the rampant illness and destitution that marked the lives of former slaves whose families were broken up by the war led many freedwomen to be categorized as 'dependent' on the state. This stimulated the creation of the Freedmen's Bureau by the Federal Government to assist in the process of instating citizenship rights on freedmen and freedwomen. An unfortunate by-product of the Bureau's efforts was the displacement of black women, children and the elderly in their search for domestic work. As Jim Downs has outlined, freedwomen were often transported without their families from the south to places in need of domestic servants, including Pennsylvania and Baltimore, Maryland, the model for Bridgepoint in Stein's *Three Lives*. However, as Downs puts it,

[342] Anonymous, 'Servants are Humans', *Forum and Century*, March 1938, 165.

> it remains unclear if freedwomen wanted to leave the South and if they wanted to work as domestics. Their dependent status suggested to both well-intentioned reformers and Bureau authorities they could make the decision for formerly enslaved women.[343]

Thus the historical background for characters like Melanctha Herbert and Rose Johnson in Stein's 'Melanctha' would have been a position of emotional and geographical instability, even though they are not themselves servants.

For black women, positions of domestic service were in many cases equivalent to hard labour with twelve- to fifteen-hour workdays and no days off. There was resistance to this situation. As Rebecca Sharpless has outlined, many women wrote letters to New Deal agencies in the 1930s, complaining directly to Eleanor Roosevelt of unfair conditions which required in practice a twenty-four-hour work day for live-in servants.[344] L. G. Huff, a cook from Fort Worth, Texas wrote directly to Eleanor Roosevelt in 1937, pleading that she 'orga[n]ize something that will cause these dear house wives whom we work for to realize we are human even if we are a Black race'.[345] Sharpless notes that a related result of black women domestic's struggle to be heard was a series of interviews through the Federal Writers' Project in 1935 which provided work for writers, historians and others as part of the New Deal, which 'included in both the Former Slave Narratives project and the Folklore project' and are 'among the richest sources of information on African American lives between 1850 and 1930'.[346]

Callousness in post-Civil War racial attitudes also meant that American slavery was even regarded as a golden age of domestic service. The lineage from slavery in

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[343] Jim Downs, *Sick From Freedom: African-American Illness and Suffering during the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012), 134.
[344] Rebecca Sharpless, *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens: Domestic Workers in the South, 1865– 1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 66.
[345] Sharpless, 66.
[346] Sharpless, xviii.

America to domestic service in America was so immediate, that it was possible, in the early twentieth century, for an employer praising a servant to compare him or her to 'an old time, before the war darkey'.[347] This extremely prejudiced and hyper-romanticized account of domestic service is related to the romantic primitivism that Hermione Lee sees in the writing of Stein's contemporary, Willa Cather, as 'part of a quite common mood of retreat from *fin-de-siécle* "decadence" and self-consciousness.'[348] It is explicitly linked to a problematic relationship with Reconstruction in America. These attitudes to servants as the literal and metaphorical descendants of slaves are represented in American works written well into the twentieth century, which primarily draw on caricatures like the 'mammy'-imagery of desexualized, overweight black, care-taker women, which in its lurid stereotyping contrives to remove creative agency and sexual power from the cook.

The 'Mammy' stereotype is apparent in Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind* (1936). The work portrays racist early twentieth-century American attitudes towards domestic servants and slavery and sympathizes with southern antebellum romanticism. Margaret Mitchell's representation of southern racist perceptions includes a grotesque caricature that introduces 'Mammy', emphasizing her loyalty, but rendering her as animal-like and exceptional in her moral rectitude:

> Mammy emerged from the hall, a huge old woman with the small, shrewd eyes of an elephant. She was shining black, pure African, devoted to her last drop of blood to the O'Haras, Ellen's mainstay, the despair of her three daughters, the terror of the other house servants. Mammy was black, but her code of conduct and her sense of pride were as high as or higher than those of her owners.[349]

[347] Sutherland, 7.
[348] Hermione Lee, *Willa Cather: A Life Saved Up* (London: Virago, 1989), 54
[349] Margaret Mitchell, *Gone With the Wind* (1936) (New York: Avon Books, 1964), 25.

This particular passage captures what Kimberly Wallace-Sanders has called 'the troubled marriage of racial and gender essentialism, mythology, and southern nostalgia' in Mammy-imagery. This image is 'at the center of a dynamic interracial debate over constructions of loyalty, maternal devotion and southern memory'.[350] That Mammy was the exception to the rule in Mitchell's passage illustrates this patronizing conception of black slaves as being simultaneously childlike and crafty, tyrannical and proud. Willa Cather's *Sapphira and the Slave Girl* (1940) also represented the antebellum and post-Civil War south from a white perspective. Cather's novel is sympathetic to the title character, an aging, tyrannical Virginian slave-owner, whose gentle husband contemplates giving his mill workers their freedom. An elderly slave, 'Old Jezebel', had been brought from Africa, ostensibly from 'a fierce cannibal people', and claims, on her sickbed, to have a craving for 'a li'l pickaninny's hand'.[351] Lee reads Sapphira's calmness at this remark as evidence that 'the macabre detail reflects on Sapphira's likeness to Jezebel […] but also on the cannibalizing of a whole people.'[352] And while Sapphira can be read as a metaphorical flesh-eater, feeding off the misery of Nancy, the 'slave girl' of the title, the portrayal of Jezebel also panders to white fear of the African 'other'. The vision of the cannibal is both romantic and terrifying, particularly considering that Cather did not find the representation problematic, instead 'congratulating herself on her accuracy over the "darkey" speech in the novel'.[353]

This iconography of black women cooks is not limited to the American south. The other most salient representation of a black woman cook consumed by America is

[350] Kimberly Wallace-Sanders, *Mammy: A Century of Race, Gender, and Southern Memory* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 2.
[351] Willa Cather, *Sapphira and the Slave Girl* (New York: Knopf, 1953), 89.
[352] Lee, *Willa Cather*, 366.
[353] Lee, *Willa Cather*, 365.

that of 'Aunt Jemima', commercially adopted by Quaker Oats as the symbol of black culinary expertise, and represented by an actress at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. As Wallace-Sanders writes: 'Aunt Jemima offered northerners the southern experience of having a mammy without actually participating in slavery'.[354]

The prevalence of these fundamentally racist images makes them the background for any discussion of race and food and they are inextricably bound up with cooking and eating. The women themselves were seen as a kind of consumable good that was dispersed around America. Edith Wharton's autobiography *A Backward Glance* (1934) praised the African-American, hoop-earring and turban-wearing cooks of her childhood, Mary Johnson and Susan Minneman, as artists, exclaiming over their 'corned beef, their boiled turkeys with stewed celery and oyster sauce, their fried chickens, broiled red-heads, corn fritters, stewed tomatoes, rice griddle cakes, strawberry short-cake and vanilla ices'.[355] Yet they are presented as 'exoticised African-American figures' who 'provide the labour in which the white society resides'.[356] The richness of the food and the lavish attention to detail in Wharton's description shows her appreciation of these women despite her prejudice. In a comparable way Stein devotes significant literary attention to the immigrant and black servants and cooks in *Three Lives* and elsewhere in her work, while at the same time demonstrating her bigotry.

Thus the rhetoric of describing servants in America in the early twentieth century is inherently tied to the rhetoric of slavery. It is within this context that Stein's prejudices and linguistic frameworks operate. As David O'Rourke writes, the context

[354] Wallace-Sanders, 4.
[355] Edith Wharton, *A Backward Glance* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1998), 59.
[356] Hermione Lee, *Edith Wharton* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2007), 29.

and rhetoric of the labels 'master' and 'servant' matter because the master/servant dichotomy is of course unequal across historical contexts:

> Masters, especially the colonial masters of the last few centuries, made frequent use of purposefully constructed rhetoric to establish their right to be master. The rhetoric looked to what were presented as the concrete realities of master/servant interactions to support their right, even need, to be master in this concrete setting and over this particular group of servants. This included the construction of social distance between the people within these roles.[357]

The power dynamic between master and servant is embedded in the cultural context and within the language of master or mistress and servant, cook, domestic, themselves. The implications for Stein, because she is an American, born only a few years after the end of the Civil War and the end of slavery, although not from a slave-owning Southern family, is that she carries with her some of the inherent chauvinism and constructed social distance into her perspectives on American servants and to her servants in France.

Ventriloquism and domestic creation in *Three Lives*

Although *Three Lives* explore the context of immigrant domestic servants in American, it has French roots. As has often been noted, Stein was inspired to write the stories in *Three Lives* after beginning to translate '*Un coeur simple*', or 'A Simple Heart', one of Flaubert's *Trois Contes*, or *Three Tales*, which also features a servant protagonist.[358] Like Felicité in Flaubert's story, all three of the women in the stories in *Three Lives* fail to make or sustain any kind of familial connections with people. They either have no family, through death or distance, like 'Melanctha' or Anna in 'The Good Anna', or they are understood by and therefore are detached from their semblance of a

[357] David K. O'Rourke, *Servants, Masters and the Coercion of Labor: Inventing the Rhetoric of Slavery, the Verbal Sanctuaries Which Sustain It, And How it was used to Sanitize American Slavery's History* (New York: Peter Lang, 2016), 4.
[358] Marianne DeKoven, 'Preface,' *Three Lives* and *Q. E. D*, ed. Marianne DeKoven (New York and London: Norton, 2006), ix. Hereafter noted as *Three Lives*.

family, as is the case in 'The Gentle Lena'. The transience of the urban domestic—going from job to job and entirely dependent on the good will of the family employing her—made it difficult to establish permanent relationships and to sustain contact with the servant's family. But the dejection of these women in Stein's work is represented in a flat, detached narrative that tends to render them as more symbolic or allegorical than as fully-fleshed individuals. This tonal and formal strangeness aestheticizes these women's lives set in the fictional city of Bridgeport, based on Baltimore, where Stein lived in a mixed-race neighbourhood while studying medicine at Johns Hopkins University.

Each of the title characters is related to a real person in Stein's life. 'The Good Anna' is based on Lena Lebender, the German-American woman who worked as Stein's Baltimore servant although 'The Gentle Lena' is based on a different German-American immigrant.[359] 'Melanctha' has rather different origins. Based on Stein's only posthumously published autobiographical story of lesbian love, *Q.E.D.*, 'Melanctha' transposes the story of Stein's affair with May Bookstaver in Baltimore into a heterosexual black love story. Stein's character, 'Adele', is transmuted to the doctor Jefferson Campbell, and her lover May is transformed to the 'wandering' protagonist, Melanctha.[360] However, in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, we are told that Stein's portrayal of the characters in 'Melanctha' derives from Stein's medical school experience where she learned to deliver babies in impoverished black neighbourhoods in Baltimore. There she 'noticed the negroes and the places that she afterwards used in the second of the Three Lives [*sic*] stories, Melanctha Herbert'.[361] Stein presents these

[359] DeKoven, 'Preface,' *Three Lives*, x.
[360] 'Preface', *Three Lives*, ix
[361] Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 90.

stories as straightforwardly heterosexual ethnic life stories, but as Werner Sollors has noted, the stories in *Three Lives* differ from the genre of a traditional 'ethnic life story' because they also represent the deaths of their protagonists, veering away from sentimentality.[362] Stein makes the genre of the ethnic life story new by capturing modern lives in a modern, dispassionate, yet sympathetic way.

Stein's relationships with and representations of domestic servants and cooks are problematic and she is sometimes more interested in ventriloquizing stereotypes than in challenging them. Stein's biographer Lucy Daniel writes, of the 'foreign' cooks and servants in Stein's fiction, that their 'marginality seemed to imply to her a certain freedom from conventional lexical, and moral, codes of decorum'.[363] Stein's writing falls prey to the stereotypes of race, ethnicity and class that were characteristic of her contemporaries and her time. In *Three Lives*, and privately in her letters, she used words and phrases that we would now call racist.[364] Werner Sollors has pointed out the term 'racism' did not become a negative one in America until the Second World War, when it became associated with Fascism and words like 'totalitarianism' and 'genocide.'[365] Stein's gross caricature of black characters and culture in 'Melanctha' now present a deeply problematic and divisive critical issue.[366]

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[362] Werner Sollors, *Ethnic Modernism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 19.
[363] Lucy Daniel, *Gertrude Stein* (London: Reaktion Books, 2009), 19.
[364] In 'Melanctha', Rose Johnson is described in explicitly racist and stereotyped terms: 'Rose Johnson was a real black, tall, well built, sullen, stupid, child-like, good looking negress'. Stein, 'Melanctha,' *Three Lives*, 53.
[365] Sollors, 15.
[366] For the argument that these terms are evidence of Stein's racism and that 'the reader loses consciousness of the racism and classism because s/he is encouraged to think only of an aesthetic category, urged to remember that Stein wrote at a specific time, in a particular culture' see Sonia Salívar-Hull, 'Racism in "Melanctha"' in *Three Lives* and *Q.E.D.*, ed. Marianne DeKoven (New York and London: Norton, 2006), 361, 358-367. In the same collection, see also Marianne DeKoven, who argues Stein sexualizes repellent racial stereotypes to liberate both her writing and her own sexuality: 'Race, Sexuality, and Form in "Melanctha"', 402-7. For the viewpoint that the repetition of the phrase 'negro

Attacks on Stein are justified because we must read her in our own time as a racist author. The reason she writes about people this way also extends beyond prejudice. She is interested in the concepts of ventriloquism and masks, which she also experiments with in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. The mask as artifice is a widely practiced aesthetic concept and it is related to modernist primitivism, which draws on ideas of reducing images down to simpler forms. The idea of the exotic African primitive man derived from Enlightenment conceptions of the 'Noble Savage', an image intended as criticism of the dominant society by praising the subordinate one. This image, objectifying while it idealizes, links to the appropriation of the African mask as a mode of expression in modern art. As Michael North has pointed out, the mask is a major modernist theme, for instance in separate poems by Ezra Pound and W. B. Yeats entitled 'Masks', and 'is the embodiment of the variability and indeterminacy of human identity'.[367] For Stein and others modernists like Picasso, the African mask provided an opportunity for racial ventriloquism that was liberating for the artist, even as it displayed 'the deeply contradictory response of Europe to the cultures it was colonizing as the first modernists were born'.[368] The liberating potential of the mask allows for Stein's appropriation of race and class as a means of exploring modern domestic life and love.

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sunshine' could be understood to 'deplete racist language of its traditional weight' in 'Melanctha,' see Werner Sollors, *Ethnic Modernism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 32. Sollors explores the problem with condoning racist terminology while taking into consideration accounts from black American contemporaries of Stein like Richard Wright and Nella Larson who praise Stein's representation of black language in 'Melanctha'. Sollors, 28-30.

[367] Michael North, *The Dialect of Modernism: Race, Language, and Twentieth Century Literature* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 67.

[368] North, 64.

Stein's ventriloquizing through the masks of her German immigrant and black servants draws heavily on stereotypes. Christopher Ricks writes of T. S. Eliot's use of stereotypes, which include crude images, that they, like instinctual judgements, are nearly impossible to avoid. Yet they can be contextualized within the art itself:

> It is true by definition that art, being fine, cannot simply be crude, but it would not follow from this that stereotypes should not have a place in art in their crude state, since there is no reason why the stereotyping should not itself then be 'placed' by the work of art, contemplated with 'a suspicious and interrogating eye' and understood. This would not be the same as making the state of the stereotyping itself uncrude, but would be the provision of an uncrude setting, context, or ethos. This would be to engage something intrinsic not only to the stereotyped character but also to our own ways with stereotypes.[369]

I am not sure that Stein does have 'a suspicious and interrogating eye' but it may be that she provides an uncrude setting or ethos. In looking back on Stein's work it is clear that she intends to employ the mask of the domestic servant to explore the creative element of labour that derives from the repetition of daily tasks. We can see these mirrored in Stein's linguistic repetition in *Three Lives*. Repetition is linked to labour and creativity in the cyclical nature of the working lives of 'The Good Anna' and 'Melanctha' as they go from home to home, or lover to lover. A lack of creativity and labour sadly mark the demise of the exploited Lena of 'The Gentle Lena'. Repetition also captures the psychological reality of human nature: the women in these stories do not learn from their mistakes but repeat them in different variations – they fall for the wrong friends, lovers, employers, and allow themselves to be manipulated.

There is much interest in the labour of the body in these stories. Bodies become worn out when people spend their lives caring for other people and never for

[369] Christopher Ricks, *T. S. Eliot and Prejudice* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), 118-119.

themselves. Stein captures the pathos of these women's lives as servants, whether in their work or in personal relationships. They appear to exist simply to enable other lives to go on. Whether these lives have worth independent of their labour is a question that haunts Stein's writing. Stein's attention to the details of their difficult and often fruitless lives is compelling and strange.

Despite conveying a sense of tonal flatness or of being detached, Stein's portrayal of the women in *Three Lives* evokes beauty in their lives where others, including the women's peers, judge them harshly. All three women have positive and sensitive attributes that are wasted because they have to serve others. Loneliness and isolation pervades all three stories and they each die tragic deaths alone. These women keep homes and relationships running, but Stein acknowledges that much in these women's lives is sacrificed at the expense of these roles. 'The Good Anna' is a frugal and hardworking cook and housekeeper, but allows herself to be taken advantage of. Never able to save enough money, she dies penniless and alone. 'Melanctha' tells the story of a black woman who is not a domestic, but a brilliant intellectual and sensitive lover, who explores her passions instead of her intellect in pursuit of love. She loses control of her life and her relationships, wasting away as she cleans her friend Rose's home without pay. 'The Gentle Lena', beautiful and sensitive but intellectually-limited, seems to merely fade away after multiple childbirths and a series of social manipulations orchestrated by others, including a loveless marriage.

'The Good Anna' is the story in *Three Lives* most interested in food and cookery. The first story in the *Three Lives* trio, it describes the life of a German immigrant servant and cook in Bridgepoint who finds her joy through her work and her propriety,

which resonates with Stein's upholding of tradition: 'Anna always had a firm old world sense of what was the right way to do'.[370] Anna's self-deprivation is damaging, and her romance with Mrs Lehntman, a charismatic widow with financial ambitions, finds her giving more than she gets. Anna is a victim of her circumstances, of the position in the world she is unable to escape. The transience of the domestic life is emphasized when she desperately searches for work after each employer's circumstances change. When finally she is able to run her own boarding house, she cannot bring herself to charge her boarders enough to allow her to hire a second employee to help her run it, and she can hardly allow herself to have an operation she needs. Stein's representation of her death is blunt but articulates what would have been a social reality for many domestic servants: 'the good Anna with her strong, strained, worn-out body died'.[371]

Anna presents food as one of the joys of life, something that keeps families and communities connected, and something worth working for. She notices other characters' love for food. When working for Miss Mary Wadsmith who has two children, Anna 'naturally preferred the boy, for boys love always better to be done for and made comfortable and full of eating.' Later Anna is described as loving 'to work for men, for they could eat so much and with such joy'.[372] Anna's half-brother is a baker who gifts a special 'large, sweet, raisined loaf of cakey bread' to his customers for free on Sundays and holidays.[373] His gesture is a shrewd business move to sustain the loyalty of his customers, but it is also performed with genuine generosity because he goes to every house himself:

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[370] Stein, ''The Good Anna', *Three Lives* and *Q. E. D*, ed. Marianne DeKoven (New York and London: Norton, 2006), 15. Hereafter, 'The Good Anna'.
[371] Stein, 'The Good Anna', 52.
[372] Stein, 'The Good Anna', 16, 2.
[373] Stein, 'The Good Anna', 31.

> At every house with many groans and gasps he would descend his heavy weight out of the wagon, his good featured, black haired, flat, good natured face shining with oily perspiration, with pride in labor and with generous kindness. Up each stoop he hobbled with the help of his big stick, and into the nearest chair in the kitchen or in the parlour, as the fashion of the house demanded, and there he sat and puffed, and then presented to the mistress or the cook the raisined german loaf his boy supplied him.[374]

Again we see a positive representation of an artisan in touch with the products of his labour. It is possible to see a resemblance between this perspiring and warm-natured baker and Sherwood Anderson's vision of Stein as a cook in the kitchen. Stein's baker is an affable and generous creator and businessman. Like Anna, he is kind, but not to the point of over-working himself. The image of the baker here presenting the mistress or the cook with the baked goods accurately captures the fact although some domestic cooks did bake bread and other baked goods were still purchased from professional bakers. Stein's praise for French cooks as exemplary creators upholding French tradition has led me to see a parallel between Stein and the domestic servants she employed. But in this case, Stein's description of the American baker is more like herself than Anna. Anna more resembles Toklas, as the caretaker in the relationship. The interdependence between a cook and a local baker extends the metaphor of the creative domestic artist's network of friends and supporters who sustain their creative work. This was a crucial element of Stein's life and relationships both in her partnership with Toklas and as a *salonnière*.

While the baker is an encouraging character, ultimately the stories of the women in *Three Lives* who die alone and impoverished are bleak. The women have almost no agency in their lives. Mary Wilson argues that because servants might seem like relics of

[374] Stein, 'The Good Anna', 31.

the nineteenth century, modernist texts treat servants with some discomfort as they move in and out of 'threshold' spaces around the house and between houses.[375] Wilson sees the repetition of bodily movement in *Three Lives*, of the servants in and out of houses, as 'hearkening back to the Atlantic crossings of Anna and Lena as well as to the unmentioned but haunting Atlantic passage of Melanctha's African ancestors'.[376] While this might be an overextension of the metaphor, Wilson's argument that the repetition of servants' movements mirrors Stein's linguistic repetition is persuasive. It can be extended to understanding the psychological, emotional and behavioural repetitions for which Stein has sympathy. These are the patterns that keep these servants entrenched within a system that means they can barely sustain themselves, let alone maintain a family or even friendships of their own. For some of these women, cooking and 'caring for' their employers brings them the only joy of their lives.

The 'other' servants: foreignness, desire, the master / servant dynamic

It has been well-established that Stein's writing gave expression to a problematic racial politics as did Toklas's writing in *The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book*. Both of their writing also expresses interest in what is 'foreign', and 'other,' in culture and cookery, using it for various ends in their work. Yet, despite the underlying prejudice against 'foreign' cooks that they portray, the ingenuity of their cookery captivates both Stein and Toklas. Of the eighteen servants Toklas describes in the chapter 'Servants in France' in *The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book*, a few are 'foreign'. There is Maria Entz, who 'was Swiss, with all the Swiss virtues and limitations'.[377] 'The second Jeanne' 'prepared

[375] Wilson, 3.
[376] Wilson, 59.
[377] Toklas, *Cook Book*, 170.

chicken with fresh coconut' which leads Toklas to believe Jeanne is first from Pondicherry, French India, and then from Martinique. Toklas thinks of Jeanne in terms of her sensuality: her 'lovely low voice, her gentle ways and her *cocotte* smile', which somehow infuses her cooking.[378] Then there are the Indo-Chinese cooks, most notably, Trac Nguyen. To Toklas, Trac appears to be an edible vision: 'To see Trac, immaculate in white, slicing in lightning quick strokes vegetables and fruits was an appetiser'.[379] He is also described as 'childish', primitive and tricky. When he leaves the Toklas/Stein household because he is 'restless and wanted a change', Toklas describes his departure as if he were a boy: 'In his pretty childish way he said we wouldn't like any other Indo-Chinese, none of them were nice like he was.'[380]

Toklas's orientalism is explicit and is part of a long history of white thinking about other races in terms of their edible appeal. This thinking asserts superiority by eroticizing and exoticizing the other. Like the images of the 'Mammy' stereotype and the commercial prevalence of Aunt Jemima imagery throughout American media and culture, the descriptions Toklas uses here patronize, orientalise and demean her cooks. bell hooks argues that black and 'colored' bodies are the site of white desire over which they assert 'power and privilege'.[381] Kyla Tompkins asserts that the image of 'the black body as an edible object' is a powerful subjugating force in American literature: 'it is an image that carries the weight of many centuries of forced labor, coercive and violent

[378] Toklas, *Cook Book*, 176.
[379] Toklas, *Cook Book*, 186.
[380] Toklas, *Cook Book*, 187.
[381] bell hooks, 'Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance' (1992) in *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 21-40.

sexual desire, and of ongoing political struggle'.[382] In these passages Toklas also displaces her own otherness onto her foreign cooks. She embraced some aspects of her identity, but rejected others, tending towards chauvinism. A Jewish, lesbian American expat in France, Toklas converted to Catholicism in 1957. In an interview with Roland Duncan in 1952, in answer to the question, 'Was there any sense in your family that you belonged to a cultural or religious minority which set you apart?' Toklas replied: 'Not in the least. On the contrary, we were all good Democrats and believed in our president'.[383] When asked about Stein's possible feeling of 'cultural or religious minority' which 'made her strive towards certain social or cultural objectives', Toklas replied, 'Never. We never had any feeling of minority. We weren't a minority. We represented America'.[384]

Racially charged sexual desire and questions of identity are also carried over into Stein's portrayal of Trac Nguyen. Stein problematically elides his identity with those of other east-Asians. She misspells his name, alternately uses his first or surname, introducing doubt whether he is one person or two. This is another instance of her interest in ventriloquism and the fluidity of identity. Early in *Everybody's Autobiography*, Stein writes:

> We have Chinese servants now and sometimes the name they say they are has nothing to do with what they are they may have borrowed or gambled away their reference and they seem to be there or not there as well with any name and anyway the Oriental, and perhaps a name there is not a name, is invading the Western world. [385]

[382] Kyla Tompkins, *Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the 19th Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 8.
[383] Alice B. Toklas, The Bancroft Library Interview conducted by Roland Duncan in 1952, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2012, 85.
[384] The Bancroft Library Interview with Alice B. Toklas, 88-9.
[385] Stein, *Everybody's Autobiography*, 2.

'And they seem to be there or not there as well with any name' suggests the idea that names may not correlate with the person or thing named or perhaps may correlate to multiple identities. Like Stein's much-cited line, 'a rose is a rose is a rose is a rose' from her 1913 poem 'Sacred Emily' and in other works, repetitions and variations on names can change their sense. And although Stein explicitly states her preference for a French servant, and though she misspells his surname as Nyen, Trac's unstable identity makes him a perfect subject for a story. [386] Stein writes: 'I have just written a story about him [Nguyen] called Butter Will Melt and the Atlantic Monthly [*sic*] thinks it is delectable and if it is it is because it was like his cooking'.[387] The subtle shifts from delectable cooking to appetising appearance to delicious writing also elide the relationships between mistress, cook, lover and creator. Ventriloquism can be erotic and this relationship is also mirrored and enacted between Stein and Toklas.

Stein's 'Butter Will Melt', published in *The Atlantic Monthly* in February 1937, opens like a fairy tale version of Trac's life with 'Once upon a time'. There is an element of exoticising what she calls the 'hindoo chinaman' [*sic*], a pun on Indo-Chinese, but the story is more interested in the cook's creativity, in his apparently unique ability to get butter to melt, which is presented as a natural talent for him, but not so easy for others.[388] The image of melted butter takes on a sensual, playful, mythic quality, like the fairy tale the piece evokes. The sense of the metaphor of 'butter will melt' is reversed and the story is full of contradictions. The aphorism 'butter wouldn't melt' in someone's mouth conveys the meaning that this person is considered cynical

[386] 'We have a Chinese servant now because alas the French servants and their cooking is not what it was', Stein, *Everybody's Autobiography*, 2.
[387] Stein, *Everybody's Autobiography*, 139.
[388] Stein, 'Butter Will Melt', *The Atlantic Monthly* (February 1937), 156.

and cold. The implication here is that Lien (the name Stein replaces Nguyen with) is kind, warm, childlike (like Stein) yet also possessing sexual magnetism. The story's over-simplification and over-generalisation have more to do with the genre of fairy-tale or myth rather than with any deliberate attempt to ignore the fact that Lien is Indo-Chinese. The story goes on to describe how Lien would get drunk and continue to cook perfectly well, explaining 'That made no difference because he could cook and anyway anybody who can cook is sooner or later going to take to drinking, otherwise butter would not melt.'[389] The story closes abruptly with an updating of a fairy-tale ending that recalls the flatness and detached explanations of the deaths of the servants *in Three Lives*:

> And so Lien never became an old man. No hindoo chinaman can, they can have consumption and then they are put in the coffin and that is the end of any hindoo chinaman.
>
> Lien is still living and cooking and drinking and butter does melt in any pan. [390]

The passage generalizes and stereotypes, but the final line creates a positive stereotype. It represents an allegorical cook who melts butter eternally, an ending that celebrates Lien's culinary abilities and his personality. Contradicting death, it uplifts the reader and mythologizes the subject. Stein's fascination with Lien has an orientalising aspect and it also conveys the interest of one artist in another.

It is worth taking a moment to compare Stein with Mark Twain, considering the critical and cultural reception of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) and the novel's simultaneous grappling and complicity with bigoted terms and thinking. As Peter Schmidt has argued, Huck undergoes a 'crisis of whiteness' in his sympathy for

[389] Stein, 'Butter Will Melt', 156.
[390] Stein, 'Butter Will Melt', 157.

and many rejections of Jim. The final chapters of the novel, with Tom Sawyer's manipulative and cruel 'freeing' of the already-free Jim, 'enact doubleness and duplicity in ways that can never be reduced to a single way of interpreting their meaning' and 'they complete the novel's cultural work of making Huck's identity-split representative of the nation's'.[391] The argument that a work is 'of its time' does not exempt the work from retrospective moral judgement. There is always the possibility of a work's complicity in racist views and humour despite, or while undermining, those same views.

By 1937, when 'Butter Will Melt' was written, the trope of the primitive mask in modernist writing was well established, but Stein's aligning her authorial genius with representations of cooks of many nationalities was innovative. Stein compresses into an enigmatic parable the story of a cook who, like the domestic servants in *Three Lives*, fails to maintain any personal relationships and either works or is simply adrift. Another way to read this is that these cooks are singular in their abilities, and if they feel flat and underdeveloped as characters, it is because they have become mythologized, like Stein's vision of herself as a genius. But she is also their opposite, domestically. She lives a stable domestic, partnered life, and they live an untethered, un-domesticated life – which eludes even 'The Gentle Lena' in *Three Lives*, although she is married, because her marriage is loveless and unsympathetic.

Stein's sexual life has interested many scholars. Anna Linzie has explored the sexuality of the master / servant hierarchy between Stein and Toklas, arguing that it is less clearly delineated than a traditional patriarchal structure, but that the 'roles of Stein

[391] Peter Schmidt, 'The "Raftsmen's Passage", Huck's Crisis of Whiteness, And *Huckleberry Finn* In U.S. Literary History', *Arizona Quarterly*. 59: 2 (2003), 35-58, 48 < http://works.swarthmore.edu/fac-english-lit/19 > [Accessed 14 March 2015].

and Toklas are also quite likely to be textual constructs, produced precisely in order to make possible the representation of a lesbian union in acceptable terms'.[392] The servants, then, might stand in for the eroticized versions of Toklas and Stein. If Toklas writes that Trac looks good enough to eat, and Stein wrote that her story about him was as delectable as his cooking, then both through eating and the writing Toklas and Stein express their desire for the servant figure and what that figure produces. They also express desire for their collaborative relationship in which each alternate as servant and master. While Linzie sees the domesticity between Toklas and Stein, represented in *The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book,* as countering the idea of a sadomasochistic relationship, it is also possible to read Stein and Toklas's descriptions of their servants as a displacement of this dynamic. The 'exotic' cookery of the 'exotic' servants evokes pleasure and a mastery that is displaced onto the servants rather than between the lovers. The sensuality of the process of writing is empowering to Toklas and Stein, who separately, revel in the writing about taste as much as its actual practice.

Stein's lecture tour: culinary language and American homes

Stein explores a very different kind of American domesticity, separate from cooks and servants, when she and Toklas return to America for the first time in nearly 30 years in 1934-5 for Stein's American lecture tour. Stein more explicitly adopts for herself the creative powers and knowledge of the cook as she uses this knowledge to weigh up her two countries, France and America. Stein was deeply interested in the culinary and creative national differences she noticed at this time. In 1935, before publishing *Everybody's Autobiography* (1937), Stein published a series of articles about

[392] Anna Linzie, *The True Story of Alice B. Toklas: A Study of Three Autobiographies* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), 175.

her trip in the *New York Herald Tribune*, syndicated to the *Washington Post.* The article I examine here is also partially recreated in *Everybody's Autobiography*, and describes her impressions of contemporary American food and its relationship to American domesticity and national identity.

In the 1935 article, Stein compares the food and customs of her two countries, but she begins with a kind of meditation on the nature of the essence of food despite its variability of ingredients, like an artist considering her materials. The sheer number of items she lists contributes to this sense of the rich possibility of creation and techniques:

> Food always remains the same after all it has to be made of flour and butter and eggs and water and meat and fowls and game and fish and shellfish and vegetables and fruit and you have to eat it raw or you have to eat it cooked and that is all there is about it and everybody changes a lot about what they do eat, I gets to be a cause, of course, there is also salt and pepper and mustard and herbs, and then there are new kinds of fruit, not new kinds of meat and fowl and eggs and butter that is a more difficult matter but new kinds of vegetables and fruit, and then there are oils and vinegar and lemons and sugar, there are quite a lot of new kinds of sugar, and then there is honey and maple sugar and then beside it all being raw or being cooked there is it all being hot or being cold or even perhaps being tepid, and there is milk and cream and chocolate. [393]

Through the sheer verbosity of this passage Stein displays her culinary vocabulary, as if she herself had researched the fundamentals of cooking, and in doing so here implies a parallel with her linguistic creation. This exhaustive, yet non-specific quantity of ingredients and condiments displays her knowledge, if not her practice of what goes into cooking. And though this article is written in a more accessible style with semantic and grammatical integrity, it adopts the noun-focused 'ingredients' list style of the 'Food' section of Stein's *Tender Buttons* for a more productive purpose. An example

[393] Gertrude Stein, 'Gertrude Stein Finds American Food Moist, But Likes it, After Living 31 Years in France', *The Washington Post (1923 – 1954)*, 14 April 1935, 2. Proquest Historical Newspapers. Hereafter cited as 'American Food'.

from the entry for 'Apple' in the 'Food' section of *Tender Buttons* presents a lists of not-entirely edible items, interspersed with phrases like 'a little piece please' in the context of something undergoing a metamorphosis, a 'bake and change sweet is bready', apple pie:

> Apple plum, carpet steak, seed clam, colored wine, calm seen, cold cream, best shake, potato, potato and no no gold work with pet, a green seen is called bake and change sweet is bready, a little piece a little piece please.[394]

The movement from the nonsensical yet playful lists in *Tender Buttons* to the playful, syntactically-legible listing in the article correlates with what Randa Dubnick sees as the marriage in Stein's late writing of her two clear kinds of obscure styles, a participle-based style of prose and a noun-centred, list-based style of poetry. Dubnick reads this as Stein's 'stylistic escape from deepest obscurity' to permit 'both axes of language to become fully operative again', moving from 'enhanced syntax and suppressed vocabulary' in her writing from before 1912, to the style of the poetry of between 1912 and the 1930s, which 'extended vocabulary and supressed syntax'.[395]

This marriage of Stein's two styles in her later prose demonstrates an artistic mastery of her own techniques, and it also points to something more. Because Stein is making a comparison between France and America, it is also possible to see how Stein is using this blended stylistic technique, and the subject of French and American food, to differentiate herself from both countries individually, yet also show the appeal of both. She has mastered an understanding of both countries. She is an American and yet she resides in France, and has adopted the customs of both countries, remarking that 'there are really quite a number of things to make different kinds of things to eat and

[394] Stein, 'Apple,' *Tender Buttons*, 488.
[395] Dubnick, 66.

everybody likes it all very much […] and still always in spite of all the changes the American way is a different way from the French way'.[396] This concept is more fully developed in *Everybody's Autobiography* as a comic comparison of eating between the two countries:

> Eating is a subject and a habit and the country in which one lives needs the kind of eating everybody eats in it. All of our French friends who had been in America had always said that the eating was inedible. Jeanne Cook had said that in all America there were no lettuces and no salads. Now of course there is nothing but, but that after all that is what America needs it needs to do all of it as long as it does it.
>
> Then in the country where we live is a French country where Brillat-Savarin was born and is a country where they talk about eating. Every country talks about eating but in that country they talk about talking about eating. [..] They eat and they talk about eating while they eat and while they are talking about eating they eat.[397]

In making the comparison between the two countries, where the comedy arises in the over-emphasis on the everyday behaviour of eating, she focuses on the atmospheric moisture-content of domestic spaces and how that affects the texture of the food cooked and consumed. Within this comparison she makes a subtler point about American individualism and modern life-style. In France, a nation of gourmets, the country where the gastronomer Brillat-Savarin was born (in the town of Belley where Stein and Toklas vacationed), food is a constant subject of discussion and focal point. She writes that in America 'compared with France the food is moist and as it is moist it is not necessary to drink wine with it indeed wine really does not go with it'.[398] Perhaps because the food in America is moist there is less talking about it. When Stein described the same

[396] Stein, 'American Food', 2.
[397] Stein, *Everybody's Autobiography*, 147-8.
[398] Stein, 'American Food', 2.

experience later in *Everybody's Autobiography*, she ascribes the American preference for this texture as due to the drier, warmer houses:

> The oysters are moist well of course tomato juice and all that is but even American bread certainly hot breads are more moist than French bread.
>
> We liked that moist food. I suppose since American climate and certainly American heated houses are dry food has to be moist. On the contrary in France where there is always lots of humidity food has to be dry.[399]

Though she likes the 'moist food', Stein does not express a preference for either type of domestic climate; she simply implies that each climate leads to a different culinary outcome. From a practical perspective, it is possible that the warmer houses had something to do with a larger presence of radiators established in more American houses from an earlier time, as new houses would be built with radiators.[400] Mechanized industrial processing may also have contributed to the moisture –content in American food, particularly with bread.[401] Despite not articulating a clear preference for either country, the sheer quantity of choice, and the freedom with which food is eaten in America may account for Stein's pleasure:

> The order in which it is eaten well that seems to be a matter to suit the individual eater and that is a terrifying thing to any Frenchman, as order in France is fixed as fixed as anything is existing.[402]

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[399] Stein, *Everybody's Autobiography*, 148-9.
[400] However, radiators were certainly selling in Europe, and the American Radiator Company, founded in 1894, acquired a foundry in France in 1905, and had been manufacturing and selling radiators at a profit in France since then. Mira Wilkins, 'An American Enterprise Abroad: American Radiator Company in Europe, 1895-1914', *The Business History Review* Vol. 43, No. 3 (Autumn, 1969), pp. 326-346
[401] Industrial high-speed roller mills, used in American flour mills since the 1880s, were used in conjunction with blowers that rid flour of bran and germ, creating pure white, but also nearly flavorless flour. More sugar, milk and shortening were added to compensate for the loss of flavor and 'A dense, chewy crust was one of the casualties of these changes, and commercial bread became softer, sweeter, moister, and whiter'. Recipes for bread made at home with industrial flour often included buttermilk or sour milk as well as sugar, producing 'puffiness, a flaccid crumb, and a soft crust, and gives the bread a sweeter taste'. Andrew Smith, ed.,' 'Loss of Taste' and 'Home Bread Making' under 'Bread' in *The Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink*, 64.
[402] Stein, 'American Food', 2.

That more traditional, stratified fixed order, so long venerated by Stein when considering the role of servants, is somewhat overturned by the sheer variety of American food choices. The reference to more humid air in France also appears in the penultimate newspaper article in the series Stein wrote, and here again atmosphere seems to define the individualist spirit that she associates with American food:

> After all anybody is as their land and air is. Anybody is as the sky is low or high, the air heavy or clear, anybody is as there is wind or no wind there. It is that which makes them and the arts they make and the work they do and the way they eat and the way they drink and the way they learn and everything.[403]

Stein complicates her own discussion of what makes a person who they are by revisiting the land and food of her childhood after a long absence. Stein's sense of herself as an American, and as an emigrant, is related to food, drink, land, air, the material of the everyday, domestic life. Suddenly brought back into contact with the materials of the context of her early life, the air, food and drink, it seems to her to be more important than she realized. In the conclusion of her food article, Stein's ongoing reflection on differences in climate and customs between France and America lead to comments on the changed appearance of American houses, but with a new, aerial view:

> I like to think of all these millions of houses each one by itself each one all open each one with the moist food made of good material and each one with the American family inside it really not really afraid of anything in spite of everything in the way of woods and weather and snow and sun and hurricanes and thunder and blizzards and anything. […] There are a great many things I like to look at and I wonder very often if it is not the most natural thing in the world to be an American.

[403] Gertrude Stein, 'American States and Cities and How They Differ from Each Other,' *New York Herald Tribune*, 6 April 1935, 13.

Stein playfully comes down on the side of American domesticity and individualism, asserting her nationhood here. While Edith Wharton looks down on what she sees as the 'childish' American way of living that perceives 'large fortunes' as the sign of a successful life, Stein takes American ways as a fact of life.[404] Possibly some of this simple acceptance comes from national nostalgia. These self-contained domestic units making up the entire American country capture that national fearlessness. The image of the 'millions of houses' alludes to the common trope of the American suburb, which has negative connotations from Edith Wharton to Henry James. The Lynds' 1929 sociological study, *Middletown*, also pointed to the changing modes of living in the suburbs, in which more homes built closer together also had smaller back gardens with little to no produce, and social climbers intent on showing off their new cars, rarely ate at home.[405] The contemporary idea of the suburb is seen in the films of Sam Mendes in *American Beauty* (1999) and his adaption of Richard Yates's 1961 novel, *Revolutionary Road* (2008). Stein's nationalism and domesticity incorporates a vision of herself as an American in France, at home in both countries. The American houses, self-sufficient and efficient, are linked with her own image, which is both American in origin and familiarity, and yet also distant, expatriate, even foreign.

'We Eat': A collaborative cookbook

Alice B. Toklas contributed in many ways to Stein's interest in writing about food and had significant agency in Stein's writing. Stein would write long into the night, and in the morning, Toklas, who saw herself both as Stein's wife and secretary, would

[404] Wharton, *French Ways and their Meaning*, 110.
[405] Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in American Culture* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929).

type up the pages.[406] Toklas is also widely known for publishing the *Alice B. Toklas Cook Book* (1954) after Stein died. Toklas's voice as an authority in culinary and aesthetic matters comes through in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. In that work, Toklas relates the medium of cookery to visual art. Early on, Toklas describes Matisse's approach to painting as employing 'distorted drawing as a dissonance is used in music or as vinegar or lemons are used in cooking or coffee in eggshells to clarify'. Toklas explains it this way because for her this is the most obvious connection: 'I inevitably take my comparisons from the kitchen because I like food and cooking and know something about it'.[407] For Toklas, it is straightforward to make this comparison between cooking and drawing, and Stein continues to deploy this comparative approach throughout her work.

While it is well-known that Stein adopts the telling of Toklas's life-story as a premise for writing her own in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, it is in their cookery writing that Stein and Toklas's collaborative use of Toklas's autobiography has full expression. Their labour overlaps in this respect more than is currently acknowledged by Stein scholars. Belinda Bruner argues that Toklas's culinary skills influenced what Bruner calls Stein's 'somatic intellect' and interest in the body as evidenced in *Tender Buttons*. She also recognizes the literary merit of the *Alice B. Toklas Cookbook*: 'Toklas, however, did not merely influence Stein as Stein constructed her position as genius but created Gertrude Stein, as readers have come to recognize her, by seducing Stein through the realm of the sensual and introducing her to its poetic

[406] Anna Linzie, 175.
[407] Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 46.

possibilities'.[408] However, Bruner, like Anna Linzie and other critics who hope to prove the collaborative nature of Stein and Toklas's relationship have overlooked the subject of their co-authored cookbook draft.

This draft, 'We Eat', is in the Yale University Beinecke Library collection of Stein's papers, and anticipates the eventual *Alice B. Toklas Cook Book*. It is an example of Toklas and Stein's drawing on food writing to create a new work together. The draft cookbook is written as a narrative about Toklas's early life in Stein's voice and handwriting, with additions from Toklas in her own handwriting for the recipes. It is an example of real collaboration between them, providing insight into how Stein's use of Toklas's voice and life-story in her work may influence her writing about food and domestic life elsewhere. Ulla Dydo refers to the work in passing, noting that on its cover (a notebook), the authors have crossed out the initial 'B.' [*sic*] in Toklas's name, perhaps for metrical reasons.[409] If that is so, then this revision of Toklas's name doubly points to the work's possible significance as a literary document and of Toklas's role in creating it. In this respect it is also similar to *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. The restoration of the "B." in the title of Toklas's eventual cookbook publication suggests she would have preferred that version. It is unclear exactly when the draft cookbook is dated, but it is likely to have been written after or around the time of the publication of *Everybody's Autobiography* (1938), where the future Toklas cookbook is mentioned as a germ of an idea, clearly dreamed up between them:

[408] Belinda Bruner, 'A Recipe for Modernism and the Somatic Intellect in *The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book* and Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons*.' *Papers on Language & Literature* Vol. 45 (2009), 412.
[409] Ulla Dydo, *Gertrude Stein: The Language that Rises, 1923-1934*, (Evanston, Il: Northwestern University Press, 2003), 459, footnote 70.

> We wondered what the career of Alice Toklas would be when it began and then it almost began and she decided to write a cook book and if she did it would begin and she will but she has not yet had time, naturally enough who can and of course this she would not let me do for her and with reason.[410]

Stein writes 'of course this she would not let me do for her and with reason', but 'We Eat' is largely written in Stein's handwriting. Although it uses the third-person voice to describe Toklas, it contains autobiographical information about Toklas: the notebook opens with the narrative of a young Toklas's earliest kitchen memories. Unlike the narrative, the recipes included are in Toklas's neater handwriting, contributing to the sense of collaboration. Stein constructs the narrative and leaves a blank space in the notebook for the recipes for where they should be inscribed, though only a few of the blank spaces are in fact filled by Toklas.

The cookbook must certainly be a predecessor for what becomes the *Alice B. Toklas Cook Book*, as some of the same anecdotes and recipes are included in the latter. In the draft 'We Eat,' Stein describes the young Toklas's kitchen memories:

> From then on she did not remember any other cook until she was ten and her mother there was her mother's cook Nora. The kitchen was always in complete disorder but she did marvellous cooking. Naturally Alice Toklas was too young to eat the dinners and lunches she prepared but there were ice-creams. The [nicest?] thing about her was that when she left to marry which was [true?] of all our servants and she married a well [payed?] [*sic*] workman in the [iron?] [church?] and immediately had eight children. Maggie the nurse went to see her and came back to report that her [whole?] home and herself and the eight children were in the same disorder as her kitchen had been and she did no cooking she fed all her family always on tinned food. These were her ice creams […][411]

[410] Stein, *Everybody's Autobiography*, 258.
[411] Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Stein and Toklas, 'We Eat', The Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas Papers. YCAL MSS 76 Manuscript, Box 82, Folder 1494. Also held in the Beinecke Digital Collection. Ellipses and corrections mine.

Toklas does not include the ice-cream recipe in the draft. However, there is a corresponding passage in the 1954 *Toklas Cook Book* which includes a section entitled 'Treasures' where Toklas recounts some of her oldest remembered recipes and kitchen experiences:

> Nora left my mother's kitchen when she was nearly forty years old to marry a well-paid workman and she proceeded to produce five or six children. Maggie, the nurse, would go to see her and on her return would tell the incredible story that Nora who had been such an exquisite cook was now feeding her family, including the youngest born, on canned food. She was a precursor.[412]

Though Toklas condenses Stein's sprawling handwriting and language, the anecdote from her own childhood is essentially the same. Toklas, indicating her disapproval of canned food, also adds the comment about Nora being a 'precursor' to the modern mothers who feed their families on it. The cookbook fragment would develop into Toklas's most famous publication, but the draft allows us to see the working relationship of the two, and how differently the *Toklas Cook Book* would have been written had Stein had total control of the narrative.

There had almost been an earlier collaboration than 'We Eat'. Toklas describes in her *Cook Book* how she and Stein nearly co-translated Lucien Tendret's manuscript cookbook into English when living in Belley. However this project was also abandoned. After Stein's death in 1946 and after Toklas's *Cook Book* was published in 1954, Toklas went on to produce a second collection of recipes, entitled *Aromas and Flavors of Past and Present* (1958). This was produced with collaborator Poppy Cannon who provided annotations for Toklas's recipes. Cannon was food editor of *House Beautiful* and author of *The Can-Opener Cook Book*, making her a surprising choice by the publisher given

[412] Toklas, *Cook Book*, 97.

Toklas's disdain for canned foods, and apparently the two clashed over the use of short-cuts, but completed the book on time after two ten-hour sessions.[413] Toklas also wrote *What is Remembered: An Autobiography*, a memoir of her life with Stein in 1963.

Stein's recognition and representation of the creative debt she owed to the labour of domestic servants repositions the role of American and French women in contributing to civilization. Her troubling politics and prejudices place her in a long line of modernists with questionable or problematic views. But while upholding conservative historical opinions, Stein also experimented with the mask of the servant. And in collaboration with Toklas, Stein makes her contribution to modernity by commanding respect for the traditionally feminine labour of cookery, carving out a place for the servant in the history of civilizations.

[413] Linda Simon, *The Biography of Alice B. Toklas* (New York: Doubleday, 1977), 235-6.

CHAPTER IV: APPLES AND KITCHENS: THE AESTHETICS AND POLITICS OF MODERN DINING IN VIRGINIA WOOLF

> There are 6 apples in the Cézanne picture. What can 6 apples *not* be? I began to wonder. Theres [sic] their relationship to each other, & their colour, & their solidity. […] We carried it into the next room, & Lord! How it showed up the pictures there, as if you put a real stone among sham ones […]. The apples positively got redder & rounder & greener. I suspect some very mysterious quality of potation in that picture.
>
> – Virginia Woolf [414]

In April 1918, Woolf described her experience of viewing Cézanne's still life, *Pommes*, at 46 Gordon Square with Maynard Keynes, Roger Fry and her sister Vanessa Bell. Edgar Degas was the previous owner and Keynes had recently bought the painting for himself in Paris while making acquisitions on behalf of the National Gallery from the sale of Degas's estate. In this diary passage, Woolf evokes what is most powerful about the still life genre: though it captures everyday objects, humble apples, its aesthetic impact is intense. The painting draws attention to the ordinary nature of its subject, underlining the fragility and impermanence of the fruit. Although apples appear to be stable objects, they undergo a slow decay that mirrors the human aging process. Thus, the still life captures just a single, random moment in the 'life' of these apples. In Cézanne's representation, Woolf sees the vividness, lustre and shape of the apples as creating a fluctuating drama. The apples seem to change before her. They 'got redder & rounder & greener'. The 'mysterious quality of potation' ('potation' meaning drink or alcoholic drinking) suggests that the painting creates an impression of inebriation of beauty in the viewer. A looming, shifting mutability is emphasized. Woolf links the beautiful image of Cézanne's seven apples (she miscounts them as six), with a

[414] *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Anne Olivier Bell, 5 vols (London: The Hogarth Press, 1977; repr. London: Penguin, 1979) I, 140-1. Emphasis Woolf's. Ellipses mine.

heightened emotional and psychological state. In doing this she is writing about an aesthetic experience that bridges the ordinary—the apples and the still life genre itself—and the extraordinary, both the visual and physiological effect the painting has on her. It is something she might also describe as a 'moment of being'. In her unpublished memoir 'Sketch of the Past', written between 1939 and 1940, Woolf describes the pleasure of capturing in prose a 'moment of being' as reinforcing a sense of deep connection with the world:

> It is the rapture I get when in writing I seem to be discovering what belongs to what; making a scene come right; making a character come together. From this I reach what I might call a philosophy; at any rate it is a constant idea of mine; that behind the cotton wool is hidden a pattern; that we—I mean all human beings—are connected with this; that the whole world is a work of art; that we are parts of the work of art. [415]

Woolf proposed the term 'cotton wool, this non-being' for the moments of everyday life that did not offer up a transcendent sense of connection and significance:

> Often when I have been writing one of my so-called novels I have been baffled by this same problem; that is, how to describe what I call in my private shorthand – 'non-being'. Every day includes more non-being than being.[416]

Most of an average day was 'non-being', ordinary. Though still lifes can be breathtakingly beautiful, their function is also to capture something ordinary. Liesl Olson argues that Woolf joins the gap between representing ordinariness and the uniqueness of the mind

> by replicating the way in which individuals do the things they always do—repeated acts and habits—because these actions are the fabric of what she calls 'character'. To look inward, as Woolf's characters do, is not to abandon ordinariness or the external world, because inwardness of course is shaped by a

[415] Woolf, 'Sketch of the Past', 85.
[416] Woolf, 'Sketch of the Past', 83.

myriad of external factors.[417]

Olson emphasizes repetition and replication in Woolf's writing—the still life, however, exists as a moment frozen in time that cannot be repeated, and that ephemerality is part of its beauty.

In Woolf's mingling of the aesthetic and the ordinary of 'non-being', the political aspect is not immediately apparent. Yet the political is inherent in the fabric of experience of everyday life that exists within any social and political system. Erich Auerbach writes at the end of 'The Brown Stocking', his essay on *To the Lighthouse*, that Woolf's project is to 'put the emphasis on the random occurrence, to exploit it not in the service of a planned continuity of action but in itself'.[418] Auerbach believes in a unity of human experience that undercuts the surface level of politics: 'It is precisely the random moment which is comparatively independent of the controversial and unstable orders over which men fight and despair; it passes unaffected by them, as daily life'.[419] Following Auerbach, then, still lifes would be largely a-political, and at a surface level they generally are. But in Woolf's writing, in the literary still lifes I will explore, the politics of art for art's sake are investigated, as are class distinctions.

The commonality of daily life is a large part of this chapter's investigation into a unity of food, aesthetics and politics in Woolf's writing.[420] Some of the arguments in my

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[417] Liesl Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 59.
[418] Erich Auerbach, 'The Brown Stocking', *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard. R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 552.
[419] Auerbach, 552.
[420] Bryony Randall in *Modernism, Daily Time and Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) argues for the centrality of everyday experience in modernist fiction and Woolf's work in particular. Randall later argues that Olson's use of the term 'ordinary' cannot invoke the same temporality as 'everyday' does, but I am more interested in the content of ordinary experience rather than its explicit temporality: Bryony Randall, 'Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* and the Everyday', *Literature Interpretation Theory*, Vol. 26 (2015), 190, footnote 7. 36.

chapter on Gertrude Stein's representations of domesticity and transatlantic food are also relevant here. The everyday nature of food as tied to a personal, national and international context that I considered there is extended in my discussion of Woolf. This chapter will explore the mutability, disorder and fragmentation of still life in Woolf's fiction, the social and political injustice of the stark contrast between men's and women's food at Cambridge, and, finally, an explicit marriage of the aesthetic and political in her representation of food.

Earlier critical discussions of Woolf and food have examined political and aesthetic aspects of gender with regards to disordered eating, food preparation and dining within broad cultural histories of Bloomsbury food. Allie Genny provides an incisive feminist reading of eating and gender in *Ravenous Identity: Eating and Eating Distress in Virginia Woolf* (2000). Alison Light has crafted a meticulous history of Woolf's difficult relationships with her cooks in *Mrs Woolf and the Servants: An Intimate History of Domestic Life in Bloomsbury (2008)*. Jans Ondaatje Rolls has collated *The Bloomsbury Cookbook* (2014), a compendium of recipes from actual Bloomsbury cooks like Grace Higgens of Charleston Farmhouse (Vanessa Bell's home in Sussex), as well as invented recipes for dishes from Woolf's novels and Bloomsbury adventures. Sandra Gilbert includes Woolf in her exploration of modernist representations of cooks and kitchens in *The Culinary Imagination* (2014) and a discussion of Woolf's *boeuf en daube* dinner party scene in *To the Lighthouse* is included in Gilbert's *Eating Words: A Norton Anthology of Food Writing* (2015).

Cultural and educational institutions, among others, form the core of civil society. Each institution has ingrained traditions, functions and behaviours. Woolf

challenges some of these traditions and behaviours with regards to aesthetics and gender. Her engagement with artistic movements and educational establishments helps inform her thinking about the visual aesthetics of food and gender inequality. The representation of food in still life painting, from post-Impressionist and Bloomsbury art, helps Woolf consider the nature of abstraction, unity of form, colour and technique. Exposure to these visual styles informs her adoption of conversational and literary still lifes. Women and men also have different experiences within public and private spaces. Food is part of Woolf's discussion of women's domestic responsibilities across class lines and their encounters with men and institutions in public. In politics and education, Woolf realizes women must have equal treatment. She comes to this understanding through her experience of the unequal provision of Cambridge food, which then goes on to establish the foundation of her thinking about how women are often disadvantaged in contributing to society. She calls for a new ideal of civilization, which in order to live up to the modern age, must cease to exclude women. According to Woolf, women themselves should also critique this idea of civilization from the outside, building new institutions that will serve them.

Over three sections, the chapter will examine food aesthetics as well as social-political elements of dining. The first part will examine the painterly engagement with food through literary still life vignettes that occur throughout a whole range of Woolf's writing, but particularly in 'Kew Gardens', *To the Lighthouse*, *The Waves* and *Roger Fry*. The unassuming still life was a recurring modernist form for Bloomsbury painters and writers, and Woolf's thinking about the still life influenced her ideas about aesthetics, emotions, food and other aspects of life. In the earlier novels still life bowls

of fruit and flowers represent moments of aesthetic or emotional intensity, but Woolf does not yet associate them with the gendered and political elements as she begins to do in *The Waves*, later novels and her polemical writing. The chapter's second section will examine the development of the aesthetic and political intersections in *A Room of One's Own*, in which I compare the material conditions of the actual food served and prepared at the Cambridge colleges Woolf visited with their representation in the written work. The final part of this chapter examines how aesthetics and politics collide within the themes of civilization and barbarism that Woolf explores in *The Waves*, *The Years* and *Between the Acts*.

Part I: Literary/culinary still life and Woolf's early fiction

Still lifes were a significant feature of Bloomsbury art in the 1910s and Virginia Woolf would have seen many of the works painted by her sister Vanessa Bell and her contemporaries. In 1914, Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell both painted several still lifes that included food or culinary objects. Vanessa Bell's *Triple Alliance* (1914) represents a lamp, a wine bottle and a siphon on a table. It intervenes in both the political and the domestic spheres through its use of a collage of newspaper articles about the 1912-13 Balkan War. Grace Brockington has argued that Bell perhaps uses collage in tribute to Picasso's *papier collé* method of layering over coloured papers, which Bell would have seen in *The Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition* of 1912.[421] The textures, patterns, bold lines of the table legs and the spacing of the three objects makes this a particularly striking still life, encapsulating domestic, political and international themes.

[421] Grace Brockington, 'A "Lavender Talent" or "The Most Important Woman Painter in Europe"? Reassessing Vanessa Bell', *Art History*, 36.1 (2013), 132.

Other instances of still life include Vanessa Bell's *Tea Things* in 1917 at the Mansard Gallery, Heal's in London. It represents three cups and saucers, a bowl, and other items on a blue mat or surface. She later re-worked it, possibly as a panel, in 1919.[422] The painted panel was later installed over a large mirror in Duncan Grant's bedroom in Charleston Farmhouse, where a copy of it hangs today.

The simplicity of the still life composition makes it ideal for an artist practicing shifts in colour, light and shadow, design, and distortion of form. As a subject, the still life hovers somewhere between the ordinary and the elevated, which is one reason why it was such a compelling subject for the Bloomsbury group. Roger Fry was particularly interested in the form, practicing himself as well as writing about those which appeared in *The Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition* at the Grafton Galleries (which also included works by Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant). He wrote warmly of the painter Jean Marchand, whose 'Still Life with Bananas' (1912) and 'Still Life with Earthenware Jug, Loaf and Strawberries'. Fry considers Marchand's subject 'banal' while still containing extraordinary power.[423]

Duncan Grant painted two early variations on 'The Coffee Pot', a still life with coffee pot, milk pot and glass. One was completed in 1916 and one in 1918. Shortly after, in 1921, Keynes would commission Grant and Bell to paint the cupboards in his Gordon Square house. These included four different still lifes representing food around Europe: including 'English Breakfast' with fried eggs and teapot, 'Italian Breakfast' and 'French Breakfast' with pastries, fruit and coffee, and 'Turkish Breakfast' with coffee

[422] 'Tea Things', Vanessa Bell, Sale 6332, Lot 58, Christie's. [http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/paintings/vanessa-bell-tea-things-5640047-details.aspx]
[423] Roger Fry quoted in Christopher Green, 'Roger Fry's Canon: From African Sculpture to Vlaminck', *Art Made Modern: Roger Fry's Vision*, ed. by Christopher Green (London: Merrell Holberton, 1999), 188.

and the distinctive circular simit bread.[424] These instances of incorporating still life paintings into domestic spaces like the ones they represent provide a context for Woolf's inclusion of literary still lifes within her fictional domestic spaces. The international breakfast still lifes as part of Keynes's rooms are an inherent part of the cosmopolitan and aesthetic nature of Bloomsbury domestic life.[425]

Although the still life was important to modernists, it is considered a 'minor' form, like landscape painting. Both genres allowed artists in the first part of the twentieth century to experiment with form and to diverge from traditional modes of painting. And for Cézanne, the father of modern painting, the still life offered even greater opportunities than the landscape for perceiving and representing ordinary objects such as fruit, eggs, bread, glasses and carafes with geometric shapes and distorted backgrounds. Although Cézanne did paint some portraits, these other genres were more amenable to experimentation. As Sam Hunter has written, 'the process in making a "reconstruction after nature" with all its attendant distortions, would necessarily have been easier when done from the mute and/or inanimate objects of still life'.[426]

While there has been much study of the influence of post-Impressionism in Woolf's writing, there is a need for a closer examination of the still life, particularly in examining the messiness or disorder of the everyday food and accoutrements that are

[424] The painted cupboard doors are held at the King's College, Cambridge archives and are partially reproduced in David Scrase and Peter Croft, *Maynard Keynes: Collector of Pictures, Books, and Manuscripts* (Cambridge: Provost and Scholars of King's College Cambridge, 1983), 28.
[425] Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell holidayed with Maynard Keynes frequently, travelling with him to Greece and Constantinople in 1910 and Tunis and Sicily in 1911. The three spent several weeks in Rome in 1920 'on a gigantic spending spree'. Richard Shone, 'The Picture Collector', in *Essays on John Maynard Keyes*, ed. Milo Keynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 280-289, 282.
[426] Sam Hunter, 'Seurat, Cézanne and the Language of Structure', *Modern Art* (3rd ed) ed. by Sam Hunter, John Jacobus, Daniel Wheeler (New York: Prentice Hall: 2004), 31.

represented.[427] Virginia Woolf's work demonstrates an aesthetic appreciation of food that draws on the formal qualities of still life, represented by the scattered clusters of fruit, bread, utensils, and other foods that appear throughout her novels. Still life bowls of fruit and flowers represent moments of aesthetic or emotional intensity, but they are also fragmented, often stressing the absence of a person. In these works, still life motifs express a dialogue with contemporary modes in visual art as well as Woolf's own stylistic experiments with literary post-Impressionism.

Aesthetics of food in the 1920s and 30s: Art in Cookbooks and Restaurants

The still life is not the only important genre involving the representation of food in the early part of the twentieth century. Broader artistic representations of food became commonplace with the printing of beautiful society cookbooks, like Ruth Lowinsky's *Lovely Food* (1931), a limited edition cookbook of menus with line drawings of abstract, strange table decorations by her husband the artist Thomas Lowinsky. *Lady Sysonby's Cook Book* (1935) featured colour plates of table decorations for each section of the book, such as 'soups', 'fish,' 'meat' by the set designer Oliver Messel. Earlier, and still popular cookbooks like *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management*, included diagrams and illustrations of some recipes, but they were not credited to artists. *The Daily Mail Cookery Book* (1919), which emphasizes continuing wartime economy in post-war Britain, only has an illustrated cover of a woman in a chef's hat cooking at a stove. Marcel Boulestin's *Simple French Cooking for English Homes* (1923) included

[427] See, among others, Claudia Olk, *Virginia Woolf and the Aesthetics of Vision* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2014), Adam Parkes, *A Sense of Shock: The Impact of Impressionism on Modern British and Irish Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), Emily Delgarno, *Virginia Woolf and the Visible World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Jane Goldman, *The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf: Modernism, Post-Impressionism and the Politics of the Visual* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

only a frontispiece. However, it is a beautiful colour wood cut of a cornucopia of fruit, wine, fish and bread by the contemporary artist J. E. Labourer.

The popular press of the 1920s and 1930s also represented food in a way that reflected changing social norms. In the 1930s cartoon depictions of housewives cooking in their evening gowns appear in *Punch* and American *Vogue*, satirizing attempts at elegant dining without cooks. *Punch* of December 1934 includes an illustration of a housewife on the floor in formal clothes with a burning pan in front of her, her husband peering in the kitchen door, with the caption: 'The British Character: Absence of the Gift of Cooking'. American *Vogue*, 1 March 1934 includes an illustration in a cookery article of a woman in evening dress tackling a larger-than-life lobster with a hammer, in almost Surrealist fashion. These representations of food are just a snapshot of the way food was presented and how aesthetic representations of food reflected the changing societal attitudes towards its preparation.

Art and food mingled beyond the private dining room. Aesthetic designs for murals for public dining rooms and restaurants were commissioned from British artists from the 1910s-40s. Murals, traditionally, play a great part in the public life of art in Britain. They were a kind of '*art extraordinaire*, making painters into heroes, viewers into visionaries, and buildings into architecture'.[428] Roger Fry recruited Duncan Grant, Bernard Adeney and Frederick Etchells to work on removable murals for the dining room at Borough Polytechnic in South London (now South Bank University) with different paintings on the theme of 'London on Holiday'. Grant's *Bathing*, with its nude muscular swimmers in Byzantine patterns of water might have offered a refreshing

[428] Clare A. P. Wilson, *Mural Painting in Britain 1840-1940: Image and Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3.

distraction from the dining room. The painting also evokes a primitive modernism already established by Cezanne, Gaugin and Picasso. That the murals were removable is important because their physical impermanence is tied to their aesthetic. Clare Wilson argues that because of the Byzantine style on which they are modelled, they evoke a 'sense of the universal and eternal'.[429] The style enhances the paradox of the murals as '"removable" [which] can be read as integral to their dialogue of transience and permanence'.[430] The muscular bodies in motion suggest health and erotic desire for the consumable body that is part of the context of their placement in a student dining room.

Artists such as Mary Adshead were commissioned to paint murals for Lord Beaverbrook's dining room, a tea room in Bedfordshire (1949). Edward Bawden's 'The English Pub', a cheerfully nationalist tableau of a cyclist traversing the countryside next to a steam train, was in first-class dining rooms of the S.S. Oronsay (1949).[431] Bawden also designed the menu covers and the china.[432]

The conversation of still life in 'Kew Gardens'[433]

As we have seen from her diary entry about Cézanne's *Pommes*, the still life genre provided Woolf with an opportunity to reflect on and experiment with shape, distortion, and colour. To Roger Fry, it is significant that the objects in Cézanne's still lifes are particularly hardy foods like apples. Fry writes of Cézanne:

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[429] Wilson, 287.
[430] Wilson, 287.
[431] Paul Liss, *British Murals and Decorative Painting 1910-1970* (London: The Fine Art Society, 2013).
[432] Douglas Percy Bliss, *Edward Bawden* (Godalming: The Pendomer Press, 1980), 154.
[433] In my Master's dissertation, 'Does Life (Writing) Imitate Art? Still Life Painting and the Bloomsbury Group', completed at King's College London in 2013, I established the idea of the literary still life as parallel to Woolf's conceptions of life-writing in 'Kew Gardens', *To the Lighthouse* and *Roger Fry*. This section further extends my work by showing how Woolf's literary still lifes embrace the everyday and the personal, contributing to her understanding of the aesthetics of food.

> But there, before the still-life, [*sic*] put together not with too ephemeral flowers, but with onions, apples, or other robust and long-enduring fruits, he could pursue till it was exhausted his probing analysis of the chromatic whole.[434]

In addition to lasting longer for the painter, the cheap hardiness and the ordinariness of these objects are part of the charm of a still life—it is an inclusive and transformative genre. The everyday becomes extraordinary in the Cézanne painting—we look upon quotidian apples with fresh eyes; they almost seem to become more themselves when the picture is done well. There is a correlation between the dense, sturdy, stone-like forms of the apples and their ability to glow with colour. The hardiness and the ordinariness of these fruits signal that just about any fruit or vegetable is a fit subject for a still life—it is an inclusive form, crossing social hierarchies to include a range of objects from delicate flowers and expensive pottery, to rustic bread and apples.

Woolf's aesthetic in 'Kew Gardens' (1919 and 1921) resides in her emphasis on the quotidian. And her narrator's more-than-human vision points to the unusual creation of an aural and literary still life in that story.[435] The emphasis in 'Kew Gardens' on the vivacity of the garden – the couple remembering their past loves, an elderly man describing the spirit-world and the set-up for a sèance, the two elderly women chatting, and the path of the snail and the high stepping insect – divergences from the detached solitude of still life, a genre that traditionally excludes the human. Many of the 'conversations' held between the people in 'Kew Gardens' are largely working at cross purposes, full of interruptions or veering off on different tangents, and the 'conversation'

[434] Roger Fry, *Cézanne: A Study of His Development* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1927), 39.
[435] 'Kew Gardens' was originally published privately by the Hogarth Press in 1919 in a limited edition of 150. It was published more widely in 1921 in *Monday or Tuesday* (The Hogarth Press). I will cite the 1921 edition.

between the two elderly women is the most abstracted, the most synesthetic and the most like a still life.

What I call an 'aural still life' is exemplified in the 'very complicated dialogue' of the 'two elderly women of the lower middle class' which appears to be a distorted fragment of conversation, of which we can only hear excerpts from each side:

> 'Nell, Bert, Lot, Cess, Phil, Pa, he says, I says, she says, I says, I says I says—
> 'My Bert, Sis, Bill, Grandad, the old man, sugar,
> Sugar, flour, kippers, greens,
> Sugar, sugar, sugar.'[436]

This passage is not to be taken as capturing the conversation or dialogue verbatim. Rather, it is a representation of a conversation that takes into account the sounds of the gardens and perhaps the distance of these women from the narrator that obscure the sentences. The 'very complicated dialogue' begins more straightforwardly in the first two lines. The burden of understanding has been passed on to the reader, but it is not totally abstracted. In the first part, we are able to deduce that the women are likely gossiping about family members ('Pa', 'My Bert, Sis', 'Granddad', 'the old man'). The repetition of 'he says, I says' mimics actual speech or stuttering that functions as placeholder phrases. They are familiar, common, irritating. But the indented second two lines are more strange. The lines are visually offset on the page, like poetry. The words are food items. They could be a range of things: a grocery list, the ingredients for a meal to be cooked and prepared later. Perhaps they refer to rationed sugar. Alice Staveley notes that sugar is rationed in Britain in 1919; through repetition sugar

[436] Woolf, 'Kew Gardens' in *Monday and Tuesday* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1921), 68-78, 74. Quotation marks in the original.

becomes a possible allusion to the deprivations of war.[437] But these ordinary food words as they are represented here have become unusual, even extraordinary. With each repetition, 'sugar' begins to lose its sense. It is still sugar, but it is different. The sugar, flour, kippers, and greens, inset and isolated from syntactical meaning, cluster together. Indented, these items stand alone from their spoken context just as the food objects in a still life are viewed separately from the humans who put them there.

Woolf seems to me to be creating a still life in dialogue through the voices of the lower middle class women. And this scene is also evidence of Woolf's class snobbery. When members of the Richmond Women's Cooperative Guild requested a copy of her latest book, Woolf did not want them to read this scene, wondering to herself 'Is that to the discredit of Kew Gardens? Perhaps a little'.[438] Though this is evidence of Woolf's class prejudice, Woolf's representation leans towards aesthetic inventiveness. The fragments of women's speech contribute to the overall vision of Kew as a compilation of bits of human and nonhuman vision and sound, beginning to be abstracted and fragmented. The linguistic repetitions and the reference to very ordinary food are crucial to this. The interrupting, repeating chatter of the passage is also faintly reminiscent of another abstract, cubistic text: the 'Food' section of Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons* (1914). Though there is no evidence to link the abstraction in Woolf's passage directly to Stein, the influence of abstract and post-Impressionist painting on the modernist rendition of the incoherence of conversation is clearly there. The

[437] Alice Staveley, 'Conversations at Kew: Reading Woolf's Feminist Narratology,' *Trespassing Boundaries: Virginia Woolf's Short Fiction*, ed. Kathryn N. Benzel and Ruth Hoberman. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 55-6.
[438] Virginia Woolf, 18 June 1919 Diary entry, quoted in Hermione Lee, *Virginia Woolf* (London: Vintage, 1997), 361.

representation of this conversation contributes to the variety of Woolf's diction and vision, and is incorporated as an essential part of 'Kew Gardens'.

The integration of the themes of conversation and still life is clear throughout Woolf's writing career. Laura Marcus has explored Woolf's feelings of 'aesthetic emotion', as expressed in letters to Vanessa Bell, on considering the relationship between literary and visual representation.[439] Marcus notes that Woolf's short stories, like 'Kew Gardens' 'become conduits or vehicles for the collaboration between writer and artist', particularly as Bell wrote to Woolf that she thought her painting, *A Conversation* (1913-16), might possibly work as an illustration to 'Kew Gardens' and that she 'might feel inclined to do the sugar conversation.[440] Even more telling is that in the same letter from Bell to Woolf, Bell begins by describing the turmoil of her domestic life, with a new baby, a large household and domestic help coming and going. Bell says: 'I won't write any more about servants. I'm feeling as if I'd rather do all myself than have these to-dos. Their conversation is more exhausting than that of all the intellectuals in London'.[441] Bell continues later in the letter by addressing Woolf's story directly: 'It's a relief to turn to your story, though some of the conversation—she says, I says, sugar—I know too well!'.[442]

Later in May 1928, Woolf saw *A Conversation* on exhibition again and wonders in another letter to Bell: 'I maintain you are […] a satirist, a conveyer of impressions

[439] Laura Marcus, 'The Short Fiction', *A Companion to Virginia Woolf*, ed. Jessica Berman, (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 33.
[440] Laura Marcus, 'The Short Fiction', 34.
[441] Vanessa Bell to Virginia Woolf, 3 July 1918, *Selected Letters of Vanessa Bell*, ed. Regina Marler (London: Bloomsbury, 1994), 214.
[442] Vanessa Bell to Virginia Woolf, 3 July 1918, 214.

about human life: a short story writer of great wit and able to bring off a situation in a way that rouses envy. I wonder if I could write the *Three Women* in prose'.[443]

The desire to capture the visual in prose is reflected in Roger Fry's meditations on the relationships between visual shapes evident in Cézanne's *Compotier* [*Still life with Compotier*]. Roger Fry describes an abstract, visual exchange, almost like a conversation, between contours and volumes:

> At first sight the volumes and contours declare themselves boldly to the eye. They are of a surprising simplicity, and are clearly apprehended. But the more one looks the more they elude any precise definition. The apparent continuity of the contour is illusory, for it changes in quality throughout each particle of its length. There is no uniformity in the tracing of the smallest curve. By reason of these incessant affirmations and contradictions similar results follow from quite different conditions.[444]

The conversational elements inherent in the phrase 'incessant affirmations and contradictions' that Fry sees in a Cézanne still life are also relevant to Woolf's 1934 pamphlet, 'Walter Sickert: A Conversation'. Woolf begins this essay with the following statement:

> Though talk is a common habit and much enjoyed, those who try to record it are aware that it runs hither and thither, seldom sticks to the point, abounds in exaggeration and inaccuracy, and has frequent stretches of extreme dullness.[445]

As Anthony Uhlmann writes, though the dialogue is an established form within art criticism, Woolf's deliberate evocation of the wandering, even dull, conversation 'allows us to see the kind of hybrid forms that can emerge in the arts'.[446] At one point in

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[443] Woolf to Bell, 12 May 1928, *Letters of Virginia Woolf*, Vol. III, 1923-1928, ed. Nigel Nicholson and Joanne Trautmann (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 498. Cited in Marcus, 'The Short Fiction', 35.
[444] Roger Fry, *Cézanne: A Study of his Development* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 48-9.
[445] Virginia Woolf, 'Walter Sickert: A Conversation,' (London: Hogarth Press, 1934) N.pag. Project Gutenberg Canada eBook. 3 Oct. 2012. Visited 29 June 2017.
[446] Anthony Uhlmann, "Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury Aesthetics," in Maggie Humm, ed. *Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010) 58-73.

the essay, the speakers debating art acknowledge that 'we, like most English people, have been trained not to see but to talk. Yet it may be, they went on, that there is a zone of silence in the middle of every art. The artists themselves live in it'.[447] The 'zone of silence in the middle of every art,' then, is the ineffable nature of visual art.

Another example of Woolf's representation of the tangible quality of variants and classes of speech and its likeness to food objects and emotion appears early in her last novel, *Between the Acts*. Here, Woolf captures the abstract nature of everyday words as spoken by the nurses who are walking up and down the terrace in front of Pointz Hall with the perambulator. Woolf represents their idle talk in an abstract tactile way:

> [T]hey were talking—not shaping pellets of information or handing ideas from one to another, but rolling words, like sweets on their tongues; which as they thinned to transparency, gave off pink, green, and sweetness. This morning that sweetness was: 'How cook had told 'im off about the asparagus; how when she rang I said: how it was a sweet costume with blouse to match;' and that was leading to something about a feller as they walked up and down the terrace rolling sweets, trundling the perambulator.[448]

There is an element of patronizing snobbery here, too. If their words are like sweets, they are superficial and childish, not to be taken seriously. Woolf's representation of their speech reveals her prejudice as she attempts to capture the way it sounds to her.

The art historian E. H. Gombrich wrote:

> That strange precinct we call 'art' is like a hall of mirrors or a whispering gallery. Each form conjures up a thousand memories and after-images. No sooner is an image presented as art than, by this very act, a new frame of reference is created which it cannot escape.[449]

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[447] Uhlmann, 69-70.

[448] I am grateful to Laura Marcus for suggesting the parallel between the 'Kew Gardens' sugar conversation and this conversation in *Between the Acts*. Virginia Woolf, *Between the Acts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 9.

[449] E.H. Gombrich, 'Meditations on a Hobby Horse', *Meditations On a Hobby Horse and Other Essays on the Theory of Art* (London: Phaidon Press, 1963), 11.

In *Between the Acts* Woolf's scene is like a whispering gallery of her previous works, capturing conversation, the quotidian, the visual and the aural. Recalling the sugar speech of the women in 'Kew Gardens', Woolf moves to a new abstraction of words as boiled sweets, balancing this metaphor with snippets of conversation. Yet this scene does much more to integrate the women's speech with the narrative. The analogies of the words as sweets and sweetness, words both as objects and emotional concepts, allow the passage to operate on several levels: as representation, dialogue and meditation. Unlike in 'Kew Gardens' there is no separating off and indenting the women's speech, instead Woolf draws on free indirect discourse to allow the narrator to maintain the nurses' diction within the narrative with the word 'feller', even after the quotation marks are closed. Though there is still class snobbery, Woolf also presents a more integrated, humanist aesthetic than the blocky, cubist still life of 'Kew Gardens', which emphasizes the nonhuman. Woolf's portrayal of this casual conversation conveys both the intimacy of the women's relationship and the distance of the observer from their private conversation. In moving away from the abstract verbal still life to the integrated, fragmented but ultimately unified conversation, we see Woolf's vision as synesthetic and dialogic, drawing on the nonhuman and the still life, but ultimately rejecting it in favour of a hybrid aesthetic genre.

Still life in *To the Lighthouse*

Woolf uses the still life in *To the Lighthouse* (1927) to navigate between different generations of aesthetics and social functions as embodied in the characters of Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe. The still life on Mrs Ramsay's table is a vision of plenty

and fertility. It underscores the engagement of Minta and Paul and is at the heart of this work:

> What had she done with it, Mrs Ramsay wondered, for Rose's arrangement of the grapes and pears, of the horny pink-lined shell, of the bananas, made her think of a trophy fetched from the bottom of the sea, of Neptune's banquet, of the bunch that hands with vine leaves over the shoulder of Bacchus (in some picture), among the leopard skins and the torches lolloping red and gold. . . [450]

But this more eighteenth- or nineteenth-century approach to still life is at odds with the younger generation. In this dinner party scene, both the elegant *boeuf en daube*, a recipe passed down from Mrs Ramsay's mother (and prepared by the servants) and the bowl of fruit on the table provide a framework for negotiating traditions of subjectivity in domestic and artistic space. Mrs Ramsay struggles to maintain the atmosphere of calm elegance at the dinner table she desires while the younger guests quibble.

If Lily is to paint, and live, on her own terms, she must resist Mrs Ramsay's traditional aesthetics of unity which emerge in the bowl of fruit. For Mrs Ramsay, unity is brought about by bringing the couples to dine at her table. The bowl of fruit is the uniting centre of the scene and, to Mrs Ramsay, its dramatic, baroque curves and volumes epitomize aesthetic pleasure and evoke the Victorian adventuring spirit:

> Thus brought up suddenly into the light it seemed possessed of great size and depth, was like a world in which one could take one's staff and climb up hills, she thought, and go down into valleys, and to her pleasure (for it brought them into sympathy momentarily) she saw that Augustus too feasted his eyes on the same plate of fruit, plunged in, broke off a bloom there, a tassel here, and returned, after feasting, to his hive. That was his way of looking, different from hers. But looking together united them. [451]

Augustus, too, is of the older generation, and appreciates the ornate display, 'plung[ing]' in to the bounty like an imperial explorer and also like an ecstatic bee. But Lily

[450] Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1927), 150-51.
[451] Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, 151.

Briscoe's aesthetic perspective is different from Mrs Ramsay's, with more interest in the simpler, abstract forms and colour. Reader attention is divided between the two outlooks of the opposing generations throughout the dinner party: one attempting to engineer the harmony of the entire dinner party and the other struggling to define her own nascent aesthetic vision.

In the same lavish vein as the cornucopia of fruit, Mrs Ramsay's elaborate *boeuf en daube* recipe represents her status as a member of the late nineteenth century upper-middle-classes with her interest in French cookery. The *boeuf en daube* is served by the maid, Marthe, further establishing the family's social respectability. When the narrator describes the presentation of the dish, it is in the context of Mrs Ramsay inferring that Paul and Minta are engaged:

> 'We'—that was enough. She knew from the effort, the rise in his voice to surmount a difficult word that it was the first time that he had said 'we.' 'We' did this, 'we' did that. They'll say that all their lives, she thought, and an exquisite scent of olives and oil and juice rose from the great brown dish as Marthe, with a little flourish took the cover off. The cook had spent three days over that dish. […] And she peered into the dish, with its shiny walls and its confusion of savoury brown and yellow meats, and its bay leaves and its wine, and thought, This will celebrate the occasion […].'[452]

This represents a dual culinary and social success for Mrs Ramsay. As the scent rises from the dish with the mention of the word 'we', so the dish becomes representative of the union. The amalgamation of the different ingredients into the final dish can be read as an analogy for the transformative process of imagination, and for the transformative process of the couple's union, establishing themselves as the inheritors of Mrs Ramsay's domestic traditions.

[452] Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, 155-56.

And although these two young people are not part of her immediate family, they participate in the intimacy and generosity of the Ramsays in the special dinner, sharing their joy amongst the group and transforming its atmosphere from one of disjointed attitudes to a more cohesive pleasure. This is the last scene representing this older aesthetic with the entire group before the 'Time Passes' section begins the process of fragmentation of the family and their traditions and visions.

Still life among the crumbs in *The Waves*

Woolf's approach to unity, absence and loss are further explored in *The Waves* (1931), and are taken to darker psychological depths. Allusions to the still life form appear throughout, presenting readers with moments of intense beauty and solitude as well as moments of disgust. The novel includes several restaurant scenes, all of which are brought together in the scattered breadcrumbs of Bernard's meal, described in his final soliloquy at the end of the novel:

> When I look down from this transcendency, how beautiful are even the crumbled relics of bread! What shapely spirals the peelings of pears make—how thin, and mottled like some sea-bid's egg. Even the forks laid straight side by side appear lucid, logical exact; and the horns of the rolls which we have left are glazed, yellow-plated, hard.[453]

This is a still life of relics: bread crumbs, fruit peels, and stale rolls. Woolf's still lifes have breadth: they encompass the flawed and the worn-out but present them with aesthetic distance. The relics of the pears are like an egg, but also evoke the spiral shape of the golden ratio as do the 'horns' of the rolls that are 'yellow-plated, hard'.

But later in *The Waves*, the distorted, scattered still life becomes an image of revulsion when Bernard is frustrated to find his hat has blown off and he drops his

[453] Woolf, *The Waves* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1931), 318. Hereafter cited as *The Waves*.

walking stick. The connection between bodies, consumption and aesthetics is made clear:

> Lord, how unutterably disgusting life is! What dirty tricks it plays us, one moment free; the next this. Here we are among the breadcrumbs and the stained napkins again. That knife is already congealing with grease. Disorder, sordidity and corruption surround us. We have been taking into our mouths the bodies of dead birds. It is with these greasy crumbs, slobbered over napkins, and little corpses that we have to build.[454]

The line between life and death has been crossed: Bernard acknowledges the dead nature of the still life and of eating, identifying the boundaries of digestion and disgust. Yet from these grotesque fragments, Bernard must build up his sense of self again. Julia Kristeva describes a similar experience in *Powers of Horror* as abjection, remembering her childhood self vomiting up a loathed food in order to create distinction between the self and the abject food: 'I expel *myself*, I spit *myself* out, I abject *myself* within the same motion through which "I" claim to establish *myself*'. [455] For Kristeva, however, the self is created in opposition to, and from the energy created in opposing, the despised food.[456] Bernard embraces the barbaric elements inside him, consuming the corpses anyway. He builds his identity by embracing the savageness he feels within him: the 'old brute, too, the savage, the hairy man who dabbles his fingers in ropes of entrails'.[457] Woolf embraces the corpses and the savage aspects as well by representing them here as part of the process of eating – a recognition of humble origins and mortality.

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[454] Woolf, *The Waves*, 20.
[455] Julia Kristeva, 'Approaching Abjection' (abridged), in *The Portable Kristeva* ed. by Kelly Oliver (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 23. Emphasis Kristeva's.
[456] Vicki Tromanhauser argues that the depiction of the consumption of meat in *The Waves* marks a '"postanthropocentric" shift in Woolf's fiction'. She reads this passage as a moment of discomposure for Bernard amidst his 'summing up' of the entire novel, noting the tone of grief in the mention of the 'bodies of dead birds', where the boundaries of life, death and species are crossed again as 'human and animal come together at the table in unexpected ways'. 'Eating Animals and Becoming Meat In Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 38 (2014), 89.
[457] Woolf, *The Waves*, 317.

Finding life beyond 'pure form' in *Roger Fry*

In her biography of *Roger Fry* (1940), Woolf returns to the role of food in the connections between disorder, absence, and still life articulated in *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*. Fry was both an art critic deeply affected by post-Impressionism and a painter. Woolf's interpretation of Fry's aesthetics of 'pure form' contributes to her biographical vision of him and her own sense that contextual and personal details do matter to art. Fry explains the concept of pure form in his 1912 post-Impressionist exhibition catalogue:

> All art depends upon cutting off the practical responses to sensations of ordinary life, thereby setting free a pure and as it were disembodied functioning of the spirit; but in so far as the artist relies on the associated ideas of the objects which he represents, his work is not completely free and pure, since romantic associations imply at least an imagined practical activity.[458]

Fry thinks of artistic experience as distinctly separate from the everyday, an idea that requires the possibly negative 'disembodied functioning of the spirit'. While Fry believes he is advocating an aesthetic practice, there is a flaw in this line of thinking. He may overlook crucial details when he ignores the material significance of the objects represented and the subjective responses to these associations. As Woolf shows in her biography, Fry applies this intensity and sense of division to nearly all areas of his life, to the point of over-working himself and his relationships.

Though Fry hoped the personal 'practical responses' of the viewer might be suppressed, those responses would help the viewer to be more receptive to the artist's perspective. Woolf would never fully embrace the notion of pure form in art requiring detachment from the material, everyday associations of life. As she writes in 'Sketch of

[458] Roger Fry, 'The French Post Impressionists', in *Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology* ed. Francis Frascina and Charles Harrison (London: Harper and Row, 1982), 91.

the Past', Woolf perceives 'the whole world [as] a work of art; that we are parts of the work of art'.[459]

With the connection between art and life in mind, Woolf creates literary still lifes of her own out of the disordered fragments of Fry's life, while subtly undermining his theory of pure form. How could there be an idealized pure form without associations when his own art and literature were created amongst the movements and materials of life? She describes him in his own creative state of disarray:

> His guests found him writing. He had forgotten the time; he was trying to finish a lecture. But he was delighted to stop writing and to begin to talk. The room was as untidy as ever. Ink-bottles and coffee-cups, proof sheets and paint-brushes were piled on the tables and strewn on the floor.[460]

Woolf creates a literary still life that is teeming with the evidence of Fry's life. His written work is interrupted by conversation and the room is disturbed by a mingling of objects from different aspects of his life. The mess becomes an aesthetic fullness, and in contrast to his theory of pure form, personal and subjective associations make this still life more appealing.

In Woolf's literary still lifes of Fry's living quarters, stillness is an element of absence. Fry's room is empty of people, and the eggs, flowers and still life objects lie abandoned on the table. As with *Jacob's Room*, Woolf looks back on the First World War years from a distance that heightens the sense of Fry's absence from the room:

> It was an untidy room. He cooked there, slept there, painted there and wrote there. There was always a picture on the easel, and on the table an arrangement of flowers or of fruit, of eggs or of onions – some still life that the charwoman was admonished on a placard 'Do not touch'. It was there that he was living in the first months of the war.[461]

[459] Woolf, 'Sketch of the Past', 85.
[460] Woolf, *Roger Fry*, (London: The Hogarth Press, 1940), 269.
[461] Woolf, *Roger Fry*, 201.

The room is clearly a bachelor's studio – an all-in-one creative and living space. While Fry emphasizes separateness, Woolf depicts the inevitable overlap between life and art in his room. In Woolf's writing about Fry's book on Cézanne, Woolf cites Fry:

> But though his analysis is minute, it is not a dissection. Rather it is the bringing together from chaos and disorder of the parts that are necessary to the whole. When at last the apple, the kitchen table, and the bread-knife have come together, it is felt to be a victory for the human spirit over matter. The milk-jug and the ginger-jar are transformed. These common objects are invested with the majesty of mountains and the melody of music. But in all this protracted and difficult business of revelation and reconstruction the critic's own identity has been consumed. Never does he draw attention by irrelevance or display to his own share in the work of reconstruction. [462]

In this process of bringing together the components of a domestic life— 'the apple, the kitchen table, and the bread-knife' or in Fry's case, 'an arrangement of flowers or of fruit, of eggs or of onions'— Woolf uses still life to emphasize an absence through scraps and remnants. Whereas Fry tended towards the cloying metaphors of common objects being 'invested with the majesty of mountains', Woolf manages to take what is valuable from Fry's criticism—the aesthetic focus on everyday objects—but to celebrate them for their commonness and their feeling of being discarded, rather than ignoring that aspect. This image of Fry's life depends on Fry's absence from the room; crucially she could not write of the still lifes of his domestic disorder if he were physically there. His absence from the room in this scene reminds us of his literal absence, too; Woolf can only write this biography because Fry has died. Woolf uses the still life to elevate the scattered food scraps of every day life to the artistic components for a still life that doubles as biography.

[462] Fry quoted in Woolf, *Roger Fry*, 285.

Part II: Caterpillars in the cauliflower, critique in the archives: from domestic to institutional food

In *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf begins constructing her sense of what civilization has to offer women. She particularly addresses the gender imbalances apparent within institutions, like collegiate universities, in their pastoral and alimentary responsibilities to students. This section will depart somewhat from traditional aesthetic considerations in Woolf's writing. It will turn to the political, economic and social implications of food in service of the presentation of archival research on institutional kitchens at the University of Cambridge in the 1920s. Examining the overlaps between institutional and domestic economy, I draw connections between Woolf's aesthetic representation of education and food, and her institutional critique, through the example of the meals Woolf ate during her two lecturing appointments at Cambridge—lightly fictionalized in *A Room of One's Own*. While dining at King's College and Newnham College (disguised as Oxbridge and Fernham), Woolf's observation of dining with fellows and students forms the basis for her analysis of the importance of good quality, well-prepared food, literal and figurative, to literary work. Woolf's open criticism of institutional food at these meals in her honour, as well as her criticism of the institutions themselves, can be understood through a Habermasian lens of critical participation in the 'public sphere'. Woolf's performance is encouraging for other women readers who may join her in thinking critically about institutions. As Laura Marcus has noted, some scholars have criticized Woolf's rhetorical manner in *A Room of One's Own* as being perhaps too understated (as opposed to the open polemic of her later work, *Three Guineas*). I would follow Marcus's argument that:

> Such a judgment overlooks the biting ironies of *A Room of One's Own* and that it might be more fruitful to think of the differences between the two texts as differences in rhetorical strategy and historical and political contexts rather than as those of feminist conviction or confidence.[463]

Woolf's discussion of food in *A Room of One's Own* is directly related to what Marcus calls her 'rhetorical strategy'. Woolf's speaker's admiration for a beautiful lunch at 'Oxbridge' and criticism of a less substantial dinner at 'Fernham' directly violates the social etiquette of not talking about food, let alone criticizing food at a hosted dinner. This criticism of the food is a part of the broader argument about the financial and social costs of education for women, and the money itself, another taboo subject.

Woolf's reflection on the economics of food, and the further details I provide here of the extent of the financial discrepancies at men's and women's colleges, demonstrate how closely Woolf's aesthetic thinking about fiction is tied to social history. I will examine the records of the food that was stocked and served at King's, Newnham, and Girton Colleges in the 1920s, comparing expenditure as preserved in college archives and anecdotes from alumna. I want to ask what these economic and material facts tell us about the politics of food and institutions, and what the implications of the politics do to the aesthetics.[464] In realigning the power of interpreting the culinary financial records with Woolf's representation of her experience, these colleges can be analysed as domestic and institutional economies, where saving and debts impact entire

[463] Laura Marcus, 'Woolf's Feminism and Feminism's Woolf', *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, ed. Susan Sellers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 150.

[464] As Derrida has written, archives themselves are sources of authority and meaning, both securing and concealing their contents according to their keepers' systems. The origin of the word is telling: 'Archive' comes from the Greek "arkheion": a house where magistrates resided and therefore where official documents were filed: 'The archons are first of all the documents' guardians. They do not only ensure the physical security of what is deposited and of the substrate. They are also accorded the hermeneutic right and competence. They have the power to interpret the archives'. Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 2.

generations of women who reside and study in the universities. Food and politics are inherently bound with the history of women's education and writing and Woolf's critique of food in *A Room of One's Own* provides the impetus for women to engage in public criticism of public institutions.

Woolf and the public sphere

While Melba Cuddy-Keane and Anna Snaith have argued for the relevance of the discourse of the public sphere in Woolf's writing, they also concede that ascribing participation in the 'public sphere' to Woolf's work poses some difficulties.[465] And though the definition of the 'public sphere' is contested, it is still a useful model for examining Woolf's representation of food in *A Room of One's Own*. In his 1962 work *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society,* Jürgen Habermas used the term the 'public sphere' to describe the custom of social and political critique that arose in eighteenth century coffeehouses, literary works and the free press in Britain. Largely limited to men, the 'public sphere' provided an opportunity to voice opposition to political and governmental regulations. However, it excluded those who were not part of the bourgeois intelligentsia. Furthermore, Habermas theorizes the decline of the public sphere with the rise of commercial mass media and the rise of passive public consumption in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and sees a falling-off in common social critique of public ideas. Yet

[465] Cuddy-Keane writes that 'even the question of who is counted as participating in the public sphere is dependent on – some might say regulated and controlled by – definitions of what public sphere participation is considered to be'. Melba Cuddy-Keane, 'Virginia Woolf and the Public Sphere' in *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, ed. Susan Sellers, 231. Anna Snaith argues that 'a public/private dichotomy is integral to women's history in that it has worked as a conceptual justification for various practices of patriarchal oppression' and that this is only challenged with the rise of second wave feminism and the idea that 'the personal is political'. Anna Snaith, *Virginia Woolf: Public and Private Negotiations* (London and Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), 9.

the term has been useful for considering women's and oppressed group's voices participating in public debate across the twentieth century.

In an updated response to the reception of his work, Habermas writes that it is possible to see 'a public sphere that functions politically' in the twentieth century, but that it 'requires more than the institutional guarantees of the constitutional state; it also needs the supportive spirit of cultural traditions and patterns of socialization, of the political culture, of a populace accustomed to freedom'.[466] It is because Woolf was a member of 'a populace accustomed to freedom' that she could make the kind of independent critique of civilization she suggests in *Three Guineas*. She asks her readers whether they can imagine themselves as part of a procession of professional, public men, and to consider what it has excluded historically and at what cost. She hopes women will critique the procession and civilization disinterestedly. In *A Room of One's Own*, her criticism is less overt, but nevertheless encourages her readers to join her in noticing and eventually criticizing gendered institutional food hierarchies. Cuddy-Keane argues that for Woolf, 'literary thinking is of public value, and that the task of the writer, writing as an artist, is to incorporate the dynamics and the values of literary language into the discourse of the public sphere'.[467] It is this sense of Woolf as both part of, and encouraging 'a participating discourse among a full range of voices' that stimulates her own and others' social critiques.[468] In *A Room of One's Own* Woolf draws attention to the blurring between domestic, personal and institutional spaces. The symbolic and literal implications of such gendered differences in colleges' dining budgets are made

[466] Jürgen Habermas, 'Further Reflections on the Public Sphere' in Craig Calhoun, ed. *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1992), 421-467, 453.
[467] Cuddy-Keane, 246.
[468] Cuddy-Keane, 246.

explicit and Woolf breaks the social taboo of criticizing the hospitality of the women's colleges. By doing this in a public work she sets an example for a way in which women can join the debate about their education through published literary work.

Institutional food

It will be helpful to consider the institutional aspects of university food as an entry to this discussion of critique because institutional food differs from domestic food in many ways. Domestic food is usually prepared with an individual family in mind. Institutional food often has to serve hundreds. And though she had a mixed experience in her visits to Cambridge, Woolf interacted positively with several social, educational and political institutions throughout her life.

In a productive instance of an institutional relationship, Clara Jones notes that Woolf worked with the Women's Cooperative Guild (WCG) during the First World War in dealing with flour shortages to set up a local Richmond bread shop, in response to local women's complaints that they were having trouble procuring bread.[469] Woolf wrote to the president of the WCG, Margaret Llewelyn Davies, both sympathizing and indicating her participation with the working class women she described: 'We are trying to set up a Bread Shop here; we held a committee to decide about it, at which we all told stories about our house-hold difficulties'.[470] Woolf's use of the first person plural, 'we', involves her in the communal project. Woolf's involvement, or 'activism' with these institutions, as Jones describes it, demonstrates not only her commitment to social causes, but also her productive exchanges with formal institutions and groups of people

[469] Clara Jones, *Virginia Woolf: Ambivalent Activist* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 112-13.
[470] Virginia Woolf, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, 6 vols., II, ed. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann Banks (London: Hogarth press, 1975-80), 152.

on issues relating to domestic economy. This intersection between formal and informal, the institutional and the domestic will be helpful to remember as we consider how Woolf draws on both her rhetorical persuasiveness and her activist experience for the purpose of critiquing institutional food at the Cambridge colleges in *A Room of One's Own*.

Another kind of 'institutional food' is in the background of this discussion: the regulated diet assigned to invalids, the mentally ill and schoolchildren. In the case of mental illness, institutional food crosses the boundaries of physical institutions, entering the domestic space under doctor's orders.[471]The word 'institutionalized' itself is a powerful variant indicating a total loss of independence from the privacy of one's home, far from the euphemism contained in the phrase 'put into a home'. Because of Woolf's lifelong experience with mental illness and trouble with eating, institutional food too became part of her domestic life. When Woolf suffered from breakdowns, she was subject to a regulated diet at home. Her diet was managed first by her half-sister Stella Duckworth, then her sister Vanessa, and finally by her husband Leonard. Leonard cared for Virginia with the help of nurses at home when they were married, avoiding the terrible possibility of an insane asylum. Hermione Lee writes that 'all her doctors recommended rest cures, milk and meat diets for weight gain, fresh air, avoidance of excitement and early nights. All prescribed sedatives like bromides'.[472] In *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), Septimus Smith's low weight is associated with his mental illness and so Dr Holmes recommends bromides and rest away from his wife in a 'home' to gain weight:

[471] Sara Crangle's article discussing Leonard Woolf's recording Virginia Woolf's daily or monthly bodily functions demonstrates the connections between domestic economy and institutional economy and the authoritative power of record keeping: Sara Crangle, 'Out of the Archives: Woolfian Domestic Economies', *Modernism/Modernity*, 23 (2016), 141-176.
[472] Lee, *Virginia Woolf*, 183.

'until a man who went in weighing seven stone six comes out weighing twelve'.[473] Sir William Bradshaw insists that his invalids 'should drink milk in bed'.[474] The unfortunate Septimus is terrified of losing his freedom—and instead of facing institutionalization in one of the 'homes', he throws himself out of his window.

Cambridge food: *Jacob's Room*

Though collegiate universities are very different from care institutions and mental hospitals, they also have paternal and pastoral responsibilities for students and tutors who live in them. There is a thin line between the institutional and the domestic for pupils and fellows residing and dining in college at the common meal, continuing the kind of meal-time traditions that boys would be subject to in boarding schools. At the universities there are other instances of domestic and institutional crossover when men are invited into each other's rooms or students into a don's home.

In *Jacob's Room* (1922), Woolf tells the story of a young man who flits between domestic and institutional surroundings throughout his life. The very title of the novel could refer to any number of institutional or domestic spaces he inhabits. These surroundings, the houses in Cornwall and Scarborough, his Cambridge college rooms and the homes he visits there, are ensconced in their own economies, from professors' wives buying meat and wondering how long it will last, to the tutors and students doling out private hoards of port, wine and cake. Dons host undergraduates in their rooms. Sopwith offers chocolate cake, Cowan port, and the educational conversation continues late into the night, eliding boundaries between personal and institutional for both the

[473] Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1925), 150. Hereafter cited as *Mrs Dalloway*.
[474] Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, 151.

students and their tutors.[475] When Jacob is late to Sunday lunch at the don Mr Plumer's private home, Mr Plumer angrily reflects:

> There can be no excuse for this outrage upon one hour of human life, save the reflection which occurred to Mr Plumer as he carved the mutton, that if no don ever gave a luncheon party, if Sunday after Sunday passed, if men went down, became lawyers, doctors, members of Parliament, business men—if no don ever gave a luncheon party—[476]

What follows if no don ever gave a luncheon party? Although Jacob is late to the lunch, he is 'infernally hungry', and his hostess Mrs Plumer, 'nodding in a peculiar way' to the maid, indicates Jacob may be served a second helping. Unfortunately this generosity will have an effect on the family's future meals: 'She glanced at the mutton. Not much of the leg would be left for luncheon'.[477] Because this meal comes out of their personal finances, Mrs Plumer belongs to the class of wives of educated men who not only economize their household goods, but also curtail their personal development. She is like Jane Carlyle, whose home with Thomas Carlyle Woolf describes as 'not so much a dwelling-place as a battlefield— as the scene of labour, effort and perpetual struggle'.[478] In 'Character in Fiction' Woolf writes of the Carlyles' marriage itself: 'bewail the waste, the futility, for him and for her, of the horrible domestic tradition which made it seemly for a woman of genius to spend her time chasing beetles, scouring saucepans, instead of writing books'.[479] While Mrs Plumer may not be a genius like Jane Carlyle, they are both equally subject to the restrictions of the role of an educated man's wife. There is also a slight resemblance to Lady Bradshaw in *Mrs Dalloway*, who is 'quick to minister

[475] Woolf, *Jacob's Room* (Richmond: Hogarth Press, 1922), 59.
[476] Woolf, *Jacob's Room*, 52.
[477] Woolf, *Jacob's Room*, 53.
[478] Woolf, 'Great Men's Houses', *The London Scene*, ed. Hermione Lee (London: Daunt Books, 2004), 34.
[479] Woolf, 'Character in Fiction', *Collected Essays*, Vol. 3, ed. Andrew McNeillie (London: The Hogarth Press, 1988), 422.

to the craving which lit her husband's eye so oilily for dominion, for power, she cramped, squeezed, pared, pruned, drew back, peeps through'.[480] The ministrations of these wives for their husbands and their projects costs them their energy, creativity, and in the case of Mrs Plumer, the contents of the next day's luncheon. These are the costs of upper-middle-class respectability; the wives of educated men and the daughters of educated men expend their energy on duties as mistress of the house.

Recording the meals: Cambridge food in *A Room of One's Own*

Archival documents reveal the effect of institutional economies on individual women's experiences of education in the past and present. In 1928 Woolf turned her attention to the material and economic realities of the food at the Cambridge colleges of Newnham and Girton, which she visited to deliver her 'Women and Fiction' lectures. These lectures were expanded into *A Room of One's Own* (1929). The conversation about food in this work starts early on with the extended anecdote of an extravagant luncheon at a men's college and a meagre dinner in hall at a women's college. This emphasizes not just the poverty of the legacy of women's literature, but also of women's educational institutions: 'Not a penny could be spared for [...] partridges and wine, beadles and turf, books and cigars, libraries and leisure. To raise bare walls out of the bare earth was the utmost they could do'.[481] Woolf muses on this inequality, and her dark comedy comes through with a passing scientific anecdote:

> I have seen a dairy company measure the effect of ordinary milk and Grade A milk upon the body of a rat. They set two rats in cages side by side, and of the

[480] Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, 153.
[481] Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, 35.

> two one was furtive, timid and small, and the other was glossy, bold and big. Now what food do we feed women as artists upon?[482]

The implicit comparison of women to rats, imprisoned in a laboratory and subject to the whims of scientists, is apt. The implication is that women can free themselves by becoming aware of their constraints and then criticizing them.

The timeline in *A Room of One's Own* has been altered slightly so that the better meal at King's (Oxbridge) comes first. In reality, Woolf visited Newnham College first, on the evening of 20 October 1928 for her dinner and lecture and then had lunch at King's College the following day. She came back to Cambridge with Vita Sackville-West a week later to speak at Girton College (Fernham is a composite of the two women's colleges) but did not dine in hall. For the sake of comparing archives with Woolf's text, I will follow the order of events in *A Room of One's Own*.

The gendered legacy of record-keeping has a significant impact on how we are able to look back on and discuss the food and costs of food at the men's and women's colleges Woolf visited. At King's College archives, the large number of account books and menus dating back to the 1500s (King's College was founded in 1441) are themselves indicative of the amount that has been spent preserving them. At Newnham and Girton, in contrast, the archives, more generally but particularly those regarding food, are characterized by significant gaps. But in what I have been able to compare across the three, there is evidence to suggest that the difference between the wealth of the then men's and women's colleges and the quality of the food at each was even greater than Woolf could have realized.

[482] Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, 80.

It is also worth adding that the kind of cumulative wealth possessed by King's College and its students is what is encapsulated in Woolf's phrase 'Arthur's Education Fund' in the later *Three Guineas*: 'Arthur's Education fund […] Ever since the thirteenth century English families have been paying money into that account'.[483] For women, the fund represents what has been given by their parents only to their brothers. This includes those elements of education that are 'luxuries and trimmings which are, after all, an essential part of education — travel, society, solitude, a lodging apart from the family house — they were paid into it too'.[484] By examining the financial and culinary records available at Cambridge, we see that Woolf's portrait of institutional food is not just a matter of a difference in preparation or presentation, but even of the quality and amount of basic ingredients budgeted per person, from funds that have either existed since the fifteenth century or the nineteenth. So we see the unmistakable differences in eating, living and studying at a men's versus a women's college – a significant point for feminist, as well as material, history.

Oxbridge/King's College

Woolf records her experience of the food at 'Oxbridge' alongside her reflections about the literary legacy that women have built for themselves in the short time they have had access to higher education as well as the state of women's fiction. Woolf's narrator begins by describing a morning of exclusions. Walking among the 'courts and quadrangles of Oxbridge' the morning before her talk, she is scolded by a Beadle for walking on the grass. Then, thinking she will view the manuscript of Milton's 'Lycidas' at the college library she finds that, as a lady unaccompanied by a Fellow and without a

[483] Woolf, *Three Guineas*, 155.
[484] Woolf, *Three Guineas*, 156.

letter of introduction, she is barred from entry.[485] Finally her trials of the morning are ended as they culminate in a now legendary extended anecdote of an extravagant luncheon at Oxbridge:

> […] the lunch on this occasion began with soles, sunk in a deep dish, over which the college cook had spread a counterpane of whitest cream, save that it was branded here and there with brown spots like the spots on the flanks of a doe. After that came the partridges, but if this suggests a couple of bald, brown birds on a plate you are mistaken. The partridges, many and various, came with all their retinue of sauces and salads, the sharp and the sweet, each in its order; their potatoes, thin as coins but not so hard; their sprouts, foliated as rosebuds but more succulent. And no sooner had the roast and its retinue been done with than the silent serving-man, the Beadle himself perhaps in a milder manifestation, set before us, wreathed in napkins, a confection which rose all sugar from the waves. To call it pudding and so relate it to rice and tapioca would be an insult.

Woolf's emphasis here is on the visual aesthetics more than on the physical taste or act of eating, although she does mention the 'sharp and sweet' sauces, and the texture of the sprouts and potatoes. The presentation is essential: the meal as it is described here is so beautiful it is almost dream-like. But the vivid imagery derives from language that is deliberately pompous, exaggerated and openly evoking royalty, wealth and empire. There is subtle critique communicated in occasional acerbic lines emphasizing hierarchy such as 'each in its order'. Woolf's descriptions have the symbolic weight of ornaments in a Renaissance painting of a king: the allusions to deer (animals that frequented both royal parks and the deer park at Peterhouse Cambridge) as well as the 'retinue' of sauces and the potatoes like coins suggest royal advisors and wealth. Even the 'waves' of the meringue nod to British naval superiority. The slight bitterness of her tone at the recognition of the Beadle (who may or may have not removed her from the grass earlier) is almost, but not quite disguised, as she makes the comparison of this elevated dessert

[485] Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, 7-8.

he is serving with an average 'rice' or 'tapioca' pudding, which 'would be an insult', reminding us of the earlier insults of exclusion Woolf suffered. Yet the main physical effect of the meal that Woolf communicates comes in the minutes afterwards, in the moment of repose with wine and cigarettes when looking back on the experience:

> Meanwhile the wineglasses had flushed yellow and flushed crimson; had been emptied; had been filled. And thus by degrees was lit, half-way down the spine, which is the seat of the soul, not that hard little electric light which we call brilliance, as it pops in and out upon our lips, but the more profound, subtle and subterranean glow which is the rich yellow flame of rational intercourse.[486]

The first mention of the body throughout the meal is the tingling in the spine, and the volubility, words popping in and out of lips, stimulated by the intoxicating effect of the wine. This sought-after physical feeling is then translated again to the visual and abstract: the 'rich yellow flame of rational intercourse'. These are the 'civilized' dining conditions Woolf believes are optimal for producing a flow of conversation, thought, and, eventually, literature.

The meal at the men's college, Oxbridge, fell in between the visits to the two women's colleges. It was not held in King's College dining hall. Rather, it was undertaken in the private rooms of George 'Dadie' Rylands at King's. Rylands was a friend of the Woolfs who had briefly worked at the Hogarth Press and then was appointed a Fellow at King's. Quentin Bell writes that when Rylands joined the Press as an assistant in July 1924, 'he and Virginia got on like a house on fire; she teased and questioned him, they chattered together about words and parties and people; when she was working there the basement office was full of gaiety and laughter.[487] However the

[486] Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, 13-14.
[487] Quentin Bell, *Virginia Woolf: A Biography*, 2 vols. (London: Pimlico, 1996), ii.,103

work for Rylands included, among more menial tasks, negotiating sales with booksellers who were sometimes contemptuous. He found the work trying and he left in December for Cambridge and a distinguished career.

Although records at King's indicate that private dining was not uncommon for undergraduates and fellows, this private meal would be better than what would have been on offer in the general hall. However, this private meal at Rylands's expense is still a kind of institutional meal in that it is prepared, delivered and served by college employees in the institutional context – bridging private and public economies.[488]

Few records remain of Woolf's 21 October 1928 lunch with Rylands, but as Hermione Lee writes, 'Dadie would recall the lunch he provided as much less lavish and opulent than her re-creation of it'.[489] He described the lunch to a number of Woolf biographers and scholars, including Quentin Bell, Lee, and others. In an interview in the 1970 BBC Television film *A Night's Darkness. A Day's Sail*, Rylands responds to Woolf's fictional description of the luncheon:

> Well, I'm glad it seemed like that to Virginia – perhaps not so much, I expect, to Leonard. It seemed like that to me, this was glamour and romance. But partridges *various*? I don't think there could be more than one kind of partridge. […] And I hope there were *two* wines. I think it unlikely and there was probably only one.[490]

Rylands re-emphasized his disbelief at the possibility of the partridges being 'various' when Jane Marcus spoke with him at the 65th anniversary of Woolf's lectures at Cambridge:

> The luncheon table was set with Dadie Rylands's valuable collection of china, as then, though no partridges appeared. 'There', he said, 'It was out of that window

[488] Though they are administrative offices now, Rylands's rooms can still be visited upon special request.
[489] Lee, *Virginia Woolf*, 564.
[490] George Rylands, in Joan Russell Noble, ed. *Recollections of Virginia Woolf* (London: Peter Owen Ltd, 1972), 138-144, 144. Ellipsis mine.

> Virginia would have made up seeing the Manx cat'. She was good, he said, 'at not getting things right'. How, he chuckled, could partridges be 'many and various?'[491]

Rylands jokingly doubts Woolf's memory and satirizes her deliberately novelistic description by accusing her of inaccuracy. Though perhaps Rylands did not like to be perceived as too grand or fussy, he confirms that partridge and at least one wine were served, which does represent a contrast with the meals served at Newnham. Woolf's vision of a Manx cat in her post-prandial reverie is evidently a fictional touch. She is writing as a novelist, as well as an essayist, in this semi-fictional work. And she is doing what she says novelists ought to do more, describing food and drink:

> It is part of the novelist's convention not to mention soup and salmon and ducklings, as if soup and salmon and ducklings were of no importance whatsoever, as if nobody ever smoked a cigar or drank a glass of wine.[492]

In fact, her contention that novelists neglect to do this is questionable. Woolf conveniently forgets that there is a long tradition of novelists celebrating meals and describing them in great detail, as Dickens did in *A Christmas Carol* in 1843, or as Proust did in *In Search of Lost Time* in 1922, and as Joyce did in *Ulysses* and in 'The Dead' in his 1914 collection *Dubliners*. Setting aside these predecessors, Woolf emphasizes food in *A Room of One's Own* not only because she believes it is a missing part of the human drama in fiction, but also because it is a civilized part of conversation and education.

The economic and culinary inequality between the men's and women's colleges provides Woolf with an opportunity to discuss the difficulty women face in finding

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[491] Jane Marcus, *Virginia Woolf, Cambridge and* A Room of One's Own*: 'The Proper Upkeep of Names'* (London: Cecil Woolf, 1996), 64.
[492] Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, 13.

supportive intellectual and creative environments. In practical terms, the differences between the colleges are stark. Woolf does not intentionally understate the discrepancies, but my archival research shows that they were even more pronounced than she may have realized.

Unlike the women's colleges, men's colleges operated at a profit. A report from a professional accountant for King's in 1928 suggested that these private meals were less lucrative to the college than the (more efficient) hall dinners, and recommended that because the 'hall dinners and fixed price luncheons provide most of the profits of the Kitchens', 'something might perhaps be done to increase profits by offering inducements to the Undergraduates to take the fixed price Meal in place of the private Luncheon served to rooms, and by closely watching prices charged and quantities served to the private supply meals of all kinds'.[493] The report also provides a snapshot for the year 1928 on overall spending at the college, represented in the table below. The precision of these records, reflected in the neatly typed and bound leather volumes of a London accountant's yearly reports, is a sign of how important the economics of food was to King's College and also the importance that they profit from its sale.

[493]Archive Centre, King's College, Cambridge, King's College Kitchen Department Report on the Accounts for the Year ended 31st August 1928, KCAR/5/19/2.

Number of men in residence: 270		
Item	**Amount in 1928**	**Conversion to 2016 money[494]**
Wines, spirits, liqueurs	£440	£25,366
Beers and cider	£861	£49,636.65
Cigars, cigarettes and tobacco	£462	£26,634.300
Meat	£1410	£81,286.50
Fish	£873	£50,328.45
Poultry and game	£797	£45,947.05
Ham, bacon & tongues	£232	£13,374.80
Sales per head of cooked meals	£22	£1,268.30
Total cost of provisions	£13,724	£791,188.60

Table: Food Costs at King's College, Cambridge, according to the 1928 Kitchen Department Report

Although we know that King's spent £873 on fish and £797 on poultry and game in 1928, there is no menu remaining against which to reference Woolf's description of the fish in cream, the partridges in sauce with salad and dauphinoise potatoes with Brussels sprouts and the meringue that she ate with Rylands. The closest documentation I could find was Rylands's wine bill from the autumn 1928 term, which, equating to about £575 today, was around £100 more expensive in today's money than it had been in the same term the prior year.[495] I can speculate that this could be due to the October 1928 meal. And, while we cannot compare a wine bill with Woolf's description, the amount the Dadie Rylands personally spent on wine in a single term is significantly

[494] Converted using the Bank of England Inflation Calculator tool. The Bank of England, 'Inflation Calculator'. http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/education/Pages/resources/inflationtools/calculator/index1.aspx Accessed 5 December 2017.

[495] Rylands's bill for wine on 28 November 1928 (the closest bill to the date of Woolf's visit) was £10-7-11d (the previous autumn's bill, dated 3 December 1927, was £8-15-5d. Archive Centre, King's College, Cambridge, Senior Wine Account Book 1919-1991, KCAR 5/6/11/2.

more than the approximately £6 (about £345 in today's money) that Girton College spent on wine for the whole college for the entire year of 1925-6.[496]

Newnham College and Girton College

In her diary entry from 27 October 1928, Woolf blends the Newnham and Girton lectures into one, recalling them with a self-deprecating tone: 'I blandly told them to drink wine & have a room of their own'.[497] Despite thinking about the lectures as one, the meal at Fernham, the women's college, is largely based on a dinner Woolf ate in hall at Newnham College. For the sake of comparison, I investigated the state of the records on food and wine.

There are fewer records of the cost of food at Newnham and Girton, but several reflections on the quality of the food, especially in response to Woolf's publication. The food at Newnham had apparently never been particularly good. A Newnham alumna of 1920 remembered:

> The food was not good, it was badly cooked. . . it used to be brought over on trolleys quite a long time before the meal was going to be served, and kept hot, which meant that if it was something that could dry up it did dry up. At any rate it was overcooked and not very nice and often there was not enough.[498]

The literary scholar Elsie Duncan-Jones, who was then a student, recalls the actual dinner with Woolf: 'As I remember it she was nearly an hour late; and dinner in Clough Hall, never a repast for gourmets, suffered considerably. Mrs Woolf also disconcerted us by bringing a husband and so upsetting our seating plan'. Duncan-Jones'

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[496] Archives and Special Collections, Girton College, Cambridge, Domestic Accounts Ledgers, GCAR 5/3/2/1/ 1.
[497] 'Saturday 27 October,' *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Anne Olivier Bell, 5 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1977; repr. London: Penguin, 1979), III, 200.
[498] K.D. McKeag, 'A Corner Room in an Old Hall', *A Newnham Anthology*, ed. Ann Philips (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 144-5.

reaction to Woolf's description of the Fernham dinner in her text was typical: 'Her purpose was, of course, to evoke pity for the poverty of the women's colleges: but at the time it made us, her hosts, decidedly uncomfortable'.[499]Another alumna recalls Woolf and the Newnham literature society taking tea in her room, after 'the famous or infamous dinner, when prunes and custard were eaten and wine was not drunk'.[500]

Woolf emphasizes the basic nature of the Fernham meal with short, abrupt sentences: 'Everybody was assembled in the big dining-room. Dinner was ready. Here was the soup.'[501] She contrasts what is lacking in the meal in comparison with the men's lunch (the china, the quality of the ingredients, the presentation):

> It was a plain gravy soup. There was nothing to stir the fancy in that. One could have seen through the transparent liquid any pattern that there might have been on the plate itself. But there was no pattern. The plate was plain. Next came beef with its attendant greens and potatoes – a homely trinity, suggesting the rumps of cattle in a muddy market, and sprouts curled and yellowed at the edge, and bargaining and cheapening, and women with string bags on Monday morning. There was no reason to complain of human nature's daily food, seeing that the supply was sufficient and coal miners doubtless were sitting down to less.[502]

Woolf deliberately evokes the uglier sides of poor rural market towns to emphasize the stinginess necessitated by the paucity of the women's college's budget. Woolf has been accused many times of snobbery in her judgment of the lower middle or working classes as she writes from a position of class privilege.[503] This is evident in her descriptions of 'bargaining and cheapening, and women with string bags on Monday morning', which prefigures the women looking for bargain remnants of cloth in her 1932 essay 'Oxford

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[499] E. E. Duncan-Jones, 'Mrs Woolf Comes to Dine', *A Newnham Anthology*, ed. Ann Philips (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 172-4.
[500] U. K. N. Stevenson, 'A Room of One's Own', *A Newnham Anthology*, ed. Ann Philips (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 174-5.
[501] Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, 23.
[502] Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, 26-7.
[503] Woolf was aware of this and critiques herself in her paper that she wrote for her friends in the Memoir Club in the 1920s, 'Am I a Snob?'

Street Tide'. The bleak domestic practicalities are pointed out in *A Room of One's Own* to further the contrast with the men's college with its pristine lawns and stern college Beadle. Woolf's discussion on the aesthetics of food is used to make an economic point that puts forward her political argument that men perpetuate a position of power and oppression that is an obstacle for women's personal and professional development.

Throughout *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf references her aunt Lady Barbara Stephen's 1927 *Emily Davies and Girton College* about the founding of Girton College in 1869. From this book Woolf draws the 'room of one's own' metaphor and also notes that fundraising for the college was precarious: 'it was only after a long struggle and with the utmost difficulty that they got thirty thousand pounds together. So obviously we cannot have wine and partridges and servants carrying tin dishes on their head.'[504] When Woolf asks, 'What had our mothers been doing then that they had nothing to leave us?' many of her readers were offended that she had asked the question at all. Like Muriel Bradbrook, who wrote, 'We undergraduates enjoyed Mrs Woolf, but felt her Cambridge was not ours',[505] Woolf's talk also jarred with other Girton alumna. One felt that a room of her own would be beyond her financially when she left Girton. Instead, while at home she would 'elude the vigilance of my parents, […] to write poems on the marble-topped table of a Lyons' or an ABC teashop'.[506]

At Newnham and Girton Colleges either no *professional* accountant's reports exist or they have not survived. But the colleges did keep financial records in their own ways, in Cash Books, and I am able to make some comparisons of the amount spent on

[504] Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, 31.
[505] M. C. Bradbrook, '*That Infidel Place': A Short History of Girton College 1869-1969* (Chatto & Windus, London, 1969; rpr. Oxford: The Alden Press Oxford, 1984), 116.
[506] Kathleen Raine, 'Virginia Woolf at Girton', *The Land Unknown* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1975), 21-3.

food across the colleges. Newnham and Girton were much smaller than King's. Girton admitted about forty to sixty students per academic year in the 1920s, and Newnham between sixty and ninety. At Newnham, where Woolf dined in hall, £6068 (about £349,000 today) was spent on food in 1928, as noted in the Minutes of the House Committee. This is less than half of what was spent at King's, for only about sixty fewer students. In the same committee minutes however, more telling details about service are recorded. On November 1st 1926, the principal, Pernel Strachey, notes in the minutes:

> Miss Dale asked if it would be possible for meat to be carved at, instead of before, dinner, and if gravies could be put on the tables instead of being served on the meat plates by the housekeeper. The steward said that in her opinion it would not be practicable carving for so many while they waited. Gravy put on the tables she thought would not make for easy distribution and would be colder than was agreeable. After some discussion it was agreed to try having gravy on the tables and in one Hall to begin with.[507]

'After some discussion' hints at an argument – people feel strongly about the way their meat is cut and where and how much gravy is served. It appears that the outcome due to compromise was 'colder than agreeable' gravy. Feeding a large number of people at once is difficult and expensive if serving at tables. It requires assembly-line style serving and more servers.

The menu ledgers at Girton College only exist up until 1903 and Girton's records are sparse, so we have to look at other years as representative of the general attitude towards food. In 1903 the hot luncheon offered at the college would have alternated with roast beef and mutton starting with beef on a Monday and ending with the same on a Friday. In the early 1900s, the dinners always had three courses, beginning with either a soup or fish, followed by a roast meat and vegetables (beef, mutton and often spinach,

[507] College Archives, Newnham College, Cambridge, Minutes of the House Committee 1910-1928, CC/1/7.

carrots, peas, cabbage, French beans, marrows). Pudding was often of the custard and tapioca variety, with tarts and baked or stewed fruit.[508]

A 'Girton Food Committee' suggestion book was started from Lent Term 1939 with comments from the committee. Students could put in requests for changes or make complaints like 'Butter at supper with the bread' (J.C. Thompson). 'More fresh fruit. Apples for breakfast' (M. Penney, seconded by G. Roy). 'Stronger tea and hot water for those who want it' (P Turner).[509] Another common request was for fresher green vegetables, and for the potatoes to be cleaned, possibly rather than having them peeled: 'potatoes scrubbed or scraped' (R. Alexander). Others used the latest terminology: 'We Have Vitamin "C" Deficiency (Anne Cohen). In Michaelmas term 1941, four students asked 'that the caterpillars be removed from the cauliflower before it reaches our plates' (A. Brooks, E.M. Rall, L.S. Vinett, E.J. Wilson). [510] If the treatment of the vegetables was similar to their presentation at Newnham in 1928, Woolf would not have been exaggerating that her 'sprouts [were] curled and yellowed at the edge'.

Considering the reflections on the quality of the everyday food from women at their colleges raises questions about the gendered nature of food and food preparation. In *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf was not critiquing the fellows, the cooks, or the hospitality of the students, as the women at the colleges sometimes believed when reading her work. Rather, she was critiquing the financial histories that allowed such disparity, using food—the missing element of the great drama— to support her point about inequality and its effects on women's lives and sense of their own opportunities.

[508] Archives and Special Collections, Girton College, Cambridge, Menu ledgers 1899-1903, GCAR 5/3/2/4/2 and 3.
[509] Archives and Special Collections, Girton College, Cambridge, Food Suggestion Book 1939-48, GCAS 3/3/16.
[510] Girton Food Suggestion Book 1939-48, GCAS 3/3/16.

The gendered differences in the quality of food in 1928 was felt by some students to have an effect on their education. It required, and received, reform. In the *Newnham College Roll*, a woman wrote, 'In the hopes that a good omelette is likely to lead not only to a good lyric but a good essay we have instituted a Kitchen Committee which, in safeguarding our digestions, helps us to combine high thinking with pleasant rather than plain living'.[511]

Woolf's hope that women would aspire to have a room of their own and £500 a year comes not from a position of luxury and privilege and not from a focused social snobbery. Rather, it stems from a desire for women to have an equal chance for the comfort and security it takes to produce great fiction and art. Woolf's vision informs her approach to literary modernism, affecting the language she uses to describe food, whether that is food prepared and served with the trappings of wealth and empire, served with wine, champagne and cigarettes, or whether it has been procured cheaply from a muddy market with string bags, plainly cooked and served without pomp on plain china, with water to drink.

Part III: Civilization and Barbarism in Modern Dining

There is general consensus that Woolf's writing becomes more overtly critical of society throughout the late 1920s and 30s with the publication of *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas*. While Woolf's nephew Quentin Bell's biography proffers an image of Woolf as an excessively private author isolated from political issues, critics today largely acknowledge Woolf's involvement in politics via her work for adult education,

[511] *Newnham College Roll*, (Printed for private circulation by Fabb & Tyler Ltd., Corn Exchange Street, Cambridge: 1930), 36.

women's suffrage and the Rodmell Labour Party.[512] Anna Snaith argues that any portrayal of Woolf's politics needs to accommodate the public and the private Woolf, taking into consideration that 'her work is full of women trespassing, intruding upon spaces to which women are denied access'.[513] Woolf's work in the 1930s was 'founded on the *continuity* between public and private realms, the oppression found in the public realm being linked to the private'.[514] The representation, production, and consumption of food provides Woolf with a way to engage with the politics of gender, probing new definitions of civilization. In this section, I focus specifically upon portrayals of the civilization and/or barbarism of urban eating in Woolf's work. She represents people at restaurants, either in groups or alone; single young people eating in solitude in their homes; servants preparing meals in basements and serving them to the family that lives above. Through these multifaceted approaches to thinking about food in the twentieth century city, Woolf politicizes the social experience of food, redefining civilization in terms of its gendered and culinary implications.

Bloomsbury definitions of civilization and barbarism

Woolf's writing about urban dining and the gendered experience can be understood through the circulation of contemporary ideas of civilization and barbarism. As we have seen, civilization and mass culture in the 1920s and 1930s were subjects of great critical discussion, and the changing definitions of 'civilization' amongst

[512] For recent work on Woolf's political and social involvement, see Clara Jones, *Virginia Woolf: Ambivalent Activist* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016) and David Bradshaw, 'The socio-political vision of the novels', in Susan Sellers, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Many scholars including Gillian Beer, Karen Levenback, Hermione Lee and others have engaged with Woolf's political outlook.
[513] Anna Snaith, *Virginia Woolf: Public and Private Negotiations* (London: Palgrave, 2000), 11.
[514] Snaith, 13. See also Anna Snaith and Michael Whitworth, *Locating Woolf: The Politics of Space and Place* (London: Palgrave, 2007).

Bloomsbury writers complicate Woolf's own attitudes towards food aesthetics and gender.

Like Elias and Bourdieu, Bloomsbury ideas about civilization are grounded in manners and hierarchies of taste, and they represent some of the complex modernist embracing of its ideals while also containing contradictions regarding problems of prejudice. But to Woolf especially, civilization is also a philosophy about worldliness, democracy and the pursuit of gender equality. Through thinking about what civilization means to Woolf and her contemporaries we can also explore its antithesis, barbarism, and the role both terms play in light of political and social attitudes to food. Christine Froula argues that Bloomsbury worked, 'not to "save" their civilization', but rather for an 'ideal' Europe:

> Bloomsbury carries the Enlightenment struggle for civilization dialectically into the twentieth century in its pacifism and internationalism, its sense of history not as inevitable progress but as an unending fight for a future that is always open and free, and—most tellingly—its address to barbarity *within* Europe and the West.[515]

Clive Bell's essay, *Civilization* (1928) focused on manners and 'pure' art; for Bell, the essence of civilization can be found in the animated debate at a dinner table, knowing the dangers of war are behind him:

> And after the handsome sample of savagery offered us between August 1914 and November 1918, we, nostalgic intellectuals, know that we have returned to the artificial pleasures of a fashionable dinner-party, where we can sit and rail in security against the unheroic quietude of civilized life, with a secret but profound sense of relief.[516]

[515] Christine Froula, *Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Avant-Garde* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), xii.
[516] Clive Bell, *Civilization: An Essay* (London: Harcourt Brace, 1928), 202.

Bell's striking comparison of the war with intellectual dinner table conversation feels glib and naïve, particularly given that it was published the year in which Woolf began writing *A Room of One's Own* and considering the gendered inequalities of the dinner table. John Carey's scathing attack of the elitism inherent in Bell's work sums it up as follows:

> Civilization depends, according to Bell, on the existence of a small group of people of exquisite sensibility, who know how to respond to works of art, and who also have a refined appreciation of sensory delights such as food and wine. Without this 'civilizing élite', standards are bound to fall. Signs of decay are already apparent. 'There are now,' Bell regrets, 'but two or three restaurants in London where it is an unqualified pleasure to dine.'[517]

Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930), translated by Lytton Strachey's cousin James Strachey in 1931 and then published by the Woolfs' Hogarth Press, develops the idea of civilization's necessary repression of the instinctive aggression within all humans as outlined in his earlier *Totem and Taboo* (1913, German, 1918, English) and *The Future of an Illusion* (1927, German, 1928, English).

While Freud wrote of the instinctive and repressed hostility of members of society amidst an increasingly disturbed European scene, Leonard Woolf, in *Imperialism and Civilization* (1928), was thinking of causes and effects. Leonard Woolf examines how imperialism had brought about much of the present European discontent. 'Civilization' is linked with Victorian and modern imperialism and brutal oppression:

> Between 1800 and 1900 Europe passed through a revolution that was both internal and external. The European civilization of feudalism, of monarchy and aristocracy, of privilege, of the horse and the stage-coach and candle-light, a civilization which had its roots far back in the centuries passed away. […] What took its place we now call Western or European civilization, the civilization of

[517] John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice Among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880-1939* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 80.

> democracy and universal suffrage, of the factory and the machine, the railway, motorcar, and aeroplane, the telegraph, telephone, and electric light.[518]

This revolution is presented as a shift with benefits for Europe including the advent of democracy and universal suffrage. But those benefits are also tied to technological innovations: the democracy of the machine age has almost replaced the aristocracy's social imperative. This idealist vision of modern Britain is in tension with its impact elsewhere, particularly the total 'economic exploitation and penetration of Asia, Africa, Australia and South America, and this was the first way in which the inhabitants of those countries felt the impact of the new civilization'.[519] Leonard Woolf's solution, however, is ultimately a kind of radical segregation by nation. He fears that integration is not possible when 'the creation of alien enclaves by immigration must always be an extraordinarily dangerous political experiment'.[520] He continues, 'if in this sense Europe is to be for the Europeans, and America for the Americans, and Australia for the Australians, Asia must be for the Asiatics, and Africa for the Africans'.[521] His attitude derives from Article 22 from the Covenant of the League of Nations, which proposed a paternalistic approach for managing aid for what we would now call developing countries. Leonard's writing on barbarism and civilization would certainly have influenced his wife, and Michèle Barrett has shown concrete evidence that Virginia provided research assistance and took notes on international trade and the British colonies for Leonard's *Empire and Commerce in Africa* (1920).[522]

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[518] Leonard Woolf, *Imperialism and Civilization* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1928), 7.
[519] Leonard Woolf, *Imperialism and Civilization*, 10.
[520] Leonard Woolf, *Imperialism and Civilization*, 134.
[521] Leonard Woolf, *Imperialism and Civilization*, 135.
[522] Michèle Barrett, 'Virginia Woolf's Research for *Empire and Commerce in Africa* (Leonard Woolf, 1920)', *Woolf Studies Annual*, 19 (2013), 83-122.

It is against this background of Bloomsbury thinking that Virginia Woolf makes explicit the link between nation, society, and food in relation to her conception of a particularly gendered idea of civilization. When in *Three Guineas*, Woolf considers the request of an English gentleman inquiring what could be done to stop impending war, she first considers what they have in common. Their status as members of the 'educated class' means they share many social traits, such as 'speak[ing] with the same accent; us[ing] knives and forks in the same way'.[523] Their eating behaviour and dinner topics are representative of their mutual English upper-middle-class background. Their subjects of conversation are a useful indicator of just how prevalent the topics of 'politics and people; war and peace; barbarism and civilization' were, at least among the 'educated class'. It shows how closely these topics, and the upper-middle-class styles of eating and speaking, are correlated with 'civilized' British society of the 1930s.

Later Woolf explicitly interrogates the word 'civilization' itself in her reply to a letter writer who solicits a contribution towards what Woolf terms 'a society to help the daughters of educated men to obtain employment in the professions'.[524] In the course of her reply she considers the education and professions that had only recently become available to women and envisions the men in these professions as crossing Westminster Bridge in a long, decorated procession. She exhorts the letter-writer (and all women) 'to ask ourselves certain questions. […] For we have to ask ourselves, here and now, do we wish to join that procession, or don't we?'[525] Woolf asks her readers to imagine themselves as part of that procession of professional, public men, to consider what it has

[523] Woolf, *Three Guineas*, 154-5.
[524] Woolf, *Three Guineas*, 210.
[525] Woolf, *Three Guineas*, 243.

excluded for all these years and at what cost has it proceeded without women. This is the 'civilization' women find themselves in. Woolf suggests an alternative in the form of a 'Society of Outsiders' so that women may critique the procession and civilization disinterestedly. Woolf clearly addresses the issue of civilization as part of the problem of gender, which manifests itself throughout her writing in issues surrounding access to education and the professions, but also in the preparation, serving and eating of food.

Women and servants

In *The Years* (1937*)* Woolf portrays women from formerly wealthy families existing in near poverty because they are unmarried. Their grimy urban meals are indicative of their low social and economic capital. Sara Pargiter, a spinster, lives on the top floor of a boarding house. She eats undercooked, bleeding mutton in her room from dishes served by a noisy girl. Elsewhere in London, her (also unmarried) cousin Eleanor Pargiter, a former affordable housing campaigner and landlord, dines alone in a dingy restaurant, eating a meal of undercooked fish and stringy chicken in an extract that Woolf cut from the final proof of the novel.[526] The women eat this food because they cannot afford anything better. However, their present, nearly 'barbaric' situations contrast with their 'civilized' childhood life of semi-opulence when they travelled to Europe, cared for by servants and parents. Whereas Ford Madox Ford's work frequently refers to the Englishness of underdone roast beef, the undercooked mutton and fish that Woolf's characters are eating stand in for elements of the British empire that do not serve its citizens well. As Vicki Tromanhauser notes, in *The Waves*, mutton, plentifully

[526] See 'Appendix,' in Woolf, *The Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 414-465.

supplied by New Zealand farmers, is emblematic of Victorian culture.[527] Symbolizing the reach of the British Empire, 'half of the supplies of lamb and mutton' in England were imported from New Zealand.[528] The imported lamb and mutton form part of the arc of Victorian empire where the highest ranking members of society get the best cuts and the women and lower classes make do with lesser cuts or leftovers if they have access to it at all.

The plight of elderly female servants and the working classes are also included in the scope of Woolf's fictional critique of British civilized life. In *The Years*, the servant and cook Crosby, who stayed with the Pargiter family for over forty years, is turned out when the patriarch dies and the house is sold. In what is arguably the emotional centre of the novel, Crosby weeps as she looks over the empty house before moving to a flat in Richmond with her wheezy dog Rover:

> She had known every cupboard, flagstone, chair and table in that large rambling house, not from five or six feet of distance as they had known it—but from her knees, as she scrubbed and polished; she had known every groove, stain, fork, knife, napkin and cupboard. They and their doings had made her entire world. And now she was going off, alone, to a single room at Richmond.[529]

Crosby's solitary mourning for the accoutrements of the dining room as caretaker of the house that has now been sold and of the family that had lived in it for so many generations. Like her old dog whom her future landlords encourage her to euthanize, Crosby is an unwanted member of urban civilization. The family is unaware of the toll it takes on Crosby and does not consider it barbaric to turn an elderly servant out of the home she lived in for more than forty years.

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[527] Tromanhauser, 'Eating Animals and Becoming Meat in *The Waves*', 80.
[528] Colin Spencer, *British Food: An Extraordinary Thousand Years of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 307.
[529] Virginia Woolf, *The Years* (London: The Hogarth, Press, 1937), 232. Hereafter cites as *The Years*.

Woolf considers the plight of the modern servant in regards to changes to society in her celebrated earlier essay 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown'. To Woolf, the Victorian servant is an unknowable figure, preparing food in a dark basement kitchen, while the modern Georgian cook evokes sunshine and air. This shift represents to Woolf one of the hallmarks of modern life, a change in society that affects the life of the cook for the better:

> In life one can see the change, if I may use a homely illustration, in the character of one's cook. The Victorian cook lived like a leviathan in the lower depths, formidable, silent, obscure, inscrutable; the Georgian cook is a creature of sunshine and fresh air; in and out of the drawing-room, now to borrow *The Daily Herald*, now to ask advice about a hat. Do you ask for more solemn instances of the power of the human race to change?[530]

Woolf's flippant tone shows her annoyance with the presence of the Georgian cook, as has been fully explored by Alison Light.[531] But Woolf also uses this example of shifting class roles to make a point about recognizing the source of the labour of the house and kitchen. The label 'creature' captures Woolf's snobbery, but this passage also recognizes the mixed needs of people who live close together in one roof and whose life's circumstances are almost entirely controlled by the changing fashion of the times.

Food and the city

The density of London affected its citizens' dining habits. In 1921, the population of inner London was nearly four and a half million and the city was full of workers in new factories and offices.[532] As in Ford's earlier works, *The Soul of London* and *Ancient Lights*, London restaurants should be understood as part of a larger

[530] Woolf, *Collected Essays*, Vol. 3 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1966), 422-3.
[531] Alison Light, *Mrs Woolf and the Servants* (London: Penguin, 2008).
[532] '1920-1929 | Explore 20th Century London', 20thcenturylondon.org.uk, 2015 <http://www.20thcenturylondon.org.uk/timeline/1920-1929> [accessed 3 October 2015].

economy and system, where produce and meat are imported from around the world as well as the English countryside. In Woolf's version of London, produce and meat are brought from country farm to table. Woolf captures this in her description in *The Years* of the flow of goods to Covent Garden, linking them in their likeness to the 'tribes' of the Middle Eastern deserts considered barbaric at that time:

> All along the silent country roads leading to London carts plodded; the iron reins fixed in the iron hands, for vegetables, fruit, flowers travelled slowly. Heaped high with round crates of cabbage, cherries, carnations, they looked like caravans piled with the goods of tribes migrating in search of water, driven by enemies to seek new pasturage. [533]

This passage is richly descriptive, and the jumbled aesthetic of the piles of fruit and vegetables are a nod to the crowded jumble of people from around the world, or the empire, congregating in London. Here Woolf's allusion to the desert unconsciously evokes Ford's vision of the 'Great Trade Route', the movement of spices and goods from east to west, bringing stories and knowledge with them. Civilization as well as empire was built upon the steady movement of those goods, from country to country and from the rural to the urban.

At the same time as Woolf considered the state of the empire with the flow of goods between countries and cities, there was dissatisfaction among certain writers with the present status of the flow of mass culture from the cities. F. R. Leavis's *Mass Civilization and Minority Culture* (1930), focuses on the 'contamination' of high culture by mass culture in which, as Patrick Collier writes in regards to mass publications, 'influence flows not down from the elite but up from beneath'.[534] For the Woolfs, the political and the cultural come closer and closer together when the masses are

[533] Woolf, *The Years*, 138.
[534] Patrick Collier, *Modernism on Fleet Street* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006), 17.

empowered with political power; as Leavis notes, separation is no longer possible as it had been before the modern machine age.

The 'mass culture' that F. R. Leavis criticized is embodied in the proliferation of eating-houses, teashops and restaurants that grew up in London in the early twentieth century. These establishments and chains were part of a wider consumer culture, and women's ability to dine independently in them was part of a wider acceptance of women's independence in the city. As Rachel Bowlby has demonstrated, the city was opened up to women through shopping, which provided a source of leisure 'like going to a play or visiting a museum [...]. Thus the fantasy world of escape from dull domesticity was also, in another way, a second home'.[535] Purchasing a meal at a restaurant or teashop was part of the same movement. Scott McCracken has shown that the geography of Edwardian London was changed by the emergence of ABC (Aerated Bread Company) and Lyons teashops. These eating-places emerge in the literature of the period, from Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage* to Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*.[536] But for women hoping to find a place to eat in central London, 'consumption is only part of the story' because the highest concentration of ABC teashops was in the City of London, a densely populated working section of London, not a shopping district.[537] Women might use a teashop as a place of refuge to escape unwanted male attention (sometimes unsuccessfully) or to take a break during or at the end of their workday. As opposed to the intimacy of restaurants, teashops had a closer tie to the 'catering business' which

[535] Rachel Bowlby, *Just Looking: Consumer Culture in Dreiser, Gissing and Zola* (New York: Methuen, 1985), 4.
[536] Scott McCracken, 'Voyages by Teashop: An Urban Geography of Modernism', in *Geographies of Modernism*, ed. by Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (London: Palgrave, 2007), 86.
[537] McCracken, 93.

were associated with spectacle and food production on a mass scale because they originated 'with contracts for the late Victorian great exhibitions'.[538]

Woolf uses restaurants as locations for a variety of emotions: quiet solace, isolation, confusion, and exposure to the hostility and indifference of other people dining. Yet they are also scenes of rhythmic energy: they capture the city in a microcosm and allow one to watch the city go by from the relative safety of the restaurant windows. The character of Louis in *The Waves* observes the rhythm of 'motor-cars, vans, motor-omnibuses; and again motor-omnibuses, vans, motor-cars' as they pass the restaurant window which is 'somewhat obscured by steam from a tea-urn' and 'a meat, vapourish smell of beef and mutton'.[539] Although Louis feels overwhelmed by the outside movement— the din inside of people talking and eating so much that he 'cannot therefore concentrate on my dinner'— there is still 'a kind of music, 'like a waltz tune, eddying in and out' to this experience.[540] Again the technology of the modern age confuses the ability of the diner to focus on himself, his dinner and the questions he wishes to ponder. City dining is made up of a tricky amalgamation of civil behaviours and modern situations.

The barbarism of modern dining

From the 'civilization' of the efficient and compressed city it is not far to go to themes of alienation and barbarity in restaurants, as portrayed in *The Years*. The adult Sara and Martin, after spontaneously meeting at St Paul's Cathedral, have a strange lunch in a city chop-house. The place is full of 'city men' eating boiled and roast

[538] McCracken, 88.
[539] Woolf, *The Waves*, 99.
[540] Woolf, *The Waves*, 100.

mutton. The pair are interrupted, the food is bad and Martin is almost cheated by the waiter on his tip. Although the cousins are together they find it difficult to connect: 'Conversation in a restaurant was impossible; it was broken into little fragments. City men in their neat striped suits and bowler hats were brushing past them all the time'.[541] The atmosphere is masculine, crowded and 'smoke mixed with the smell of meat made the air heavy'.[542] In the midst of this, Martin mentions his suffragette sister Rose, who has been imprisoned for throwing a brick at a building. Emphasising their disjointed conversation Sara suddenly exclaims a fragment of a sentence: 'Sitting on a three-legged stool having meat crammed down her throat!'[543] This allusion to the painful force-feeding of hunger-striking suffragettes inserts a shocking element of barbarity to the chophouse scene. The referenced agony of the oppressed woman jars with the everyday rhythms and sounds of the diners.

Saint Paul also looms in the background of this scene. He is not only the namesake of the cathedral from which Sara and Martin have just come, but the representative of the subjugation of women by men as Woolf goes on to say in *Three Guineas*. In that work, Woolf points to the inequality in professions for women as first established by Saint Paul when he states that women cannot be priests. She then goes on to link this oppression of women with the kind of persecution recognized politically and globally:

> And abroad the monster has come more openly to the surface. […] He is interfering now with your liberty; he is dictating how you shall live; he is making distinctions not merely between the sexes, but between the races. You are feeling in your own persons what your mothers felt when they were shut out, when they

[541] Woolf, *The Years*, 248.
[542] Woolf, *The Years*, 250.
[543] Woolf, *The Years*, 250.

> were shut up, because they were women. Now you are being shut out, you are being shut up, because you are Jews, because you are democrats, because of race, because of religion. […] The whole iniquity of dictatorship, whether in Oxford or Cambridge, in Whitehall or Downing Street, against Jews or against women, in England, or in Germany, in Italy or in Spain is now apparent to you.[544]

The plight of the elderly poor of both sexes in the city follows this line of thinking. In *The Years*, Eleanor takes an omnibus home after a dinner party during which a First World War air raid occurred. The bus is quiet, its lights painted blue for safety and the people inside 'looked cadaverous and unreal in the blue light'.[545] She sees an old man eating something 'out of a paper bag'. On catching her staring, he then 'held out for her inspection a hunk of bread on which was laid a slice of cold meat or sausage'.[546] In contrast with the hot meal Eleanor herself has just eaten in her cousin's home, the less fortunate eat a small snack *en route*, possibly their only meal of the day. Unfortunately, it is also an example of the oppression of women, who cannot go outside without being accosted in some way. The scene contains sexual overtones and the insinuated aggression of the man towards Eleanor. In thrusting his sausage out for her inspection, he brings a phallic object close to her, a stand-in for exposing himself. It recalls Rose's experience as a child at the start of the novel, when she goes alone to a shop and a man exposes himself by a lamppost as she passes him. Sadly, the incident becomes a source of shame for Rose. Hermione Lee writes that 'Over and over again in her imaginative world of childhood, there is a moment of fear or shame or panic, the image of a safe, private world being invaded, often with the strong sense of sexual

[544] Woolf, *Three Guineas*, 304.
[545] Woolf, *The Years*, 324.
[546] Woolf, *The Years*, 324.

threat'.[547] This threat also applies to adult women and it obstructs their ability to enjoy their experience of the world.

If eating 'out' in restaurants, teashops and chophouses or at dinner parties is associated with city food, then the process of growing and making food is associated with the country. In *The Waves* the character of Susan best represents this farm-to-table life: growing her own fruits and vegetables, making bread, and even raising lambs for slaughter. While London mutton might be imported from New Zealand, on small farms in the country, everything eaten is raised close at hand. Yet these lambs that Susan will soon eat were warmed in baskets in her kitchen when they were very young. This transition from the familiar, the cosy and the pleasant is shattered when, as we will see in later excerpts from *The Waves*, the living animal is transformed into dead meat.

While there are elements of city restaurants that draw out the predatory and sordid natures of its diners, Woolf particularly links images of raw or undercooked meat with the primitive, the barbaric and the natural. Claude Lévi-Strauss's theory of the raw and the cooked traces the connection between primitive methods of food preparation and the structure of myth and culture. In *The Waves* and *The Years*, characters' attitudes towards consumption of undercooked meat often illuminate aspects of their personalities, but also tie them to ideas of naturalness, order, civilization and brutality.

In a diary entry from 7 October 1918, Woolf expresses her discomfort with dining at Valchera's restaurant in Richmond, outside London:

> We lunched at Valcheras [*sic*], & there looked into the lowest pit of human nature; saw flesh still unmoulded to the shape of humanity—Whether it is the act of eating & drinking that degrades, or whether people who lunch at restaurants

[547] Lee, *Virginia Woolf*, 127.

> are naturally degraded, certainly one can hardly face one's own humanity afterwards.[548]

What Woolf finds 'degrading' about restaurant dining here, making it difficult to 'face one's own humanity afterwards', is the blurring between the bodies of the consumed, the consumer, and fellow consumers. She briefly puzzles through the question herself: is it the 'act of eating & drinking'? While she may be disgusted by the mess of eating: crumbs of bread on the table, bones on the plate, grease on a napkin, there is a physical repulsion to being among other people eating, she sees 'flesh still unmoulded to the shape of humanity'. Eating amongst strangers is unique to restaurant dining. There is a strange mix of anonymity and glimpses into the personal interactions of other diners, making diners simultaneously voyeurs and exhibitionists. During the Second World War, Woolf registers another instance in her diary of her disgust with diners eating in Brighton, describing them as 'fat white slugs:' 'the fat woman had a louche large white muffin face. T'other was slightly grilled. They ate & ate […] Something scented, shoddy, parasitic about them'.[549]

The antagonism and disgust that Woolf feels towards her fellow diners in Richmond and Brighton is thoughtfully reconsidered in the moment of Bernard's soliloquy at the end of *The Waves*. Instead of illustrating the classic boundary between civilization and barbarism in terms of taste and manners, as Clive Bell might have defined it, Woolf portrays Bernard's discovery of the raw materials of his inner self as contrasted with the effete character Neville's delicate dining:

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[548] Virginia Woolf, 7 October 1918, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Anne Olivier Bell, 5 vols (London: The Hogarth Press, 1977; repr. London: Penguin, 1979) I, 199. Hereafter, 'Diary, Vol I'
[549] Woolf, 26 February 1941, *Diary V*, 357.

> There is the old brute, too, the savage, the hairy man who dabbles his fingers in ropes of entrails; and gobbles and belches, whose speech is guttural, visceral—well, he is here. He squats in me. Tonight he has been feasted on quails, salad, and sweetbread. He now holds a glass of fine old brandy in his paw. He brindles, purrs and shoots warm thrills all down my spine as I sip. It is true, he washes his hands before dinner, but they are still hairy. He buttons on trousers and waistcoats, but they contain the same organs. He jibs if I keep him waiting for dinner. He mops and mows perpetually, pointing with his half-idiot gestures of greed and covetousness at what he desires. I assure you, I have great difficulty sometimes in controlling him. That man, the hairy, the ape-like, has contributed his part to my life. He has given a greener glow to green things […][550]

Bernard's eloquent 'summing up' of the story of the seven friends' lives is interrupted by the feelings of the primitive man within him breaking through the 'civilized' surface. This passage reveals a pleasure in the mingling of high and low, the brandy in the paw, eating the entrails or sweetbreads. And what Woolf suggests here is that there is no material difference between high and low, civilized and primitive: 'It is true, he washes his hands before dinner, but they are still hairy'. He cannot change his inner nature. Significantly, Bernard is not an aggressor, and acceptance of his 'ape-like' manner leads to inner peace: 'he has given a greener glow to green things'.

Meat consumption, on the other hand, is sometimes presented by Woolf as a literal metaphor for the aggression and brutality of modern English life. It captures what Julia Kristeva understands as the body as the border between life and death, suggesting that the body 'thrust[s] aside' defilement in order to continue living: 'There, I am at the border of my condition as a living being', she writes.[551] When she asks, 'How can I be without a border?' Kristeva indicates that, as with the rejection of the vile food, it is necessary to defy the mortal condition to assert individuality by thrusting aside the

[550] Woolf, *The Waves*, 317.
[551] 'Approaching Abjection' (abridged), in *The Portable Kristeva* ed. by Kelly Oliver (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 231.

abject fluids of the body and death.[552] Some contact with defilement is a necessary part of life, but it also must be thrust aside in order to continue.

In *The Years*, Sara is repeatedly associated with gory cuts of meat that emphasize the boundaries between life and death, disgust and pleasure. First, as we have seen, there is the undercooked mutton dripping blood in the meal at Sara's flat:

> They sat down and she took the carving knife and made a long incision. A thin trickle of red juice ran out; it was underdone. She looked at it.
> 'Mutton oughtn't to be like that,' she said. 'Beef—but not mutton,'
> They watched the red juice running down into the well of the dish.[553]

Martin and Sara decide to eat it anyway and the plate is 'daubed with gory streaks'.[554] Sara also sees meat in strange places in the city and Martin describes her in terms of food. The line between raw meat and live animal is very fine. At the final dinner party in Delia's house, North describes Milly and Hugh Gibbs as sounding like 'animals in a stall' 'as they trod out the soft steamy straw'.[555] A few moments later North imagines 'Hugh himself—his great hand was on his knee—was bound round with raw beef-steak'.[556]

Rawness, raw meat, and ambivalence about aggression and barbarism are also associated with Rhoda in *The Waves*. Rhoda is full of 'raw' emotion: leaping from feeling to extreme feeling and hypersensitive to people's glances. She also sees past superficial boundaries and the narrative employs metaphors and comparisons with raw meat for how she perceives London. After Percival's death, she walks around London, full of energy and aggression:

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[552] Kristeva, 231.
[553] Woolf, *The Years*, 342.
[554] Woolf, *The Years*, 345.
[555] Woolf, *The Years*, 404.
[556] Woolf, *The Years*, 405.

> Reckless and random the cars race and roar and hunt us to death like bloodhounds. I am alone in a hostile world. The human face is hideous. This is to my liking. I want publicity and violence and to be dashed like a stone on the rocks. I like factory chimneys and cranes and lorries. I like the passing of face and face and face, deformed, indifferent. I am sick of prettiness; I am sick of privacy. I ride rough waters and shall sink with no one to save me'.[557]

Rhoda's self-destructive urges recall the Freudian death drive. Her desire to be 'dashed like a stone on the rocks' and to sink in water foreshadows her suicide. Her sensitivity prevents her from being able to bear contact with ordinary things. She thinks of going to Hampton Court, but decides against it because 'I should stand in a queue and smell sweat, and scent as horrible as sweat; and be hung with other people like a joint of meat among other joints of meat'.[558] Later, in a tram or an omnibus going down Regent Street, Rhoda sees 'people swarm off the pavement, pinching raw meat with thick fingers. The structure is visible. We have made a dwelling-place.'[559] The connection between human death and the casual sight of dead animals enhances the alarm and intense sensitivity of Rhoda's character.

This connection, between the human body and the animal body, between who will eat and who will be eaten, is illuminated in the dinner party in the Hampton Court restaurant that Bernard uses as the setting to define the group of friends in their later years:

> We saw for a moment laid out among us the body of the complete human being whom we have failed to be, but at the same time, cannot forget. All that we might have been we saw; all that we had missed, and we grudged for a moment the other's claim, as children when the cake is cut, the one cake, the only cake, watch their slice diminishing.

[557] Woolf, *The Waves*, 172-3.
[558] Woolf, *The Waves*, 175.
[559] Woolf, *The Waves*, 177.

> However, we had our bottle of wine, and under that seduction lost our enmity, and stopped comparing. And, half-way through dinner, we felt enlarge around itself round us the huge blackness of what is outside us, of what we are not. The wind, the rush of wheels became the roar of time, and we rushed—where? And who were we? We were extinguished for a moment, went out like sparks in burnt paper and the blackness roared.[560]

Woolf evokes both a still life and a death portrait with the image of 'the body of the complete human being whom we have failed to be'. Whereas still life explicitly omits the human figure, representing the fruit, glass or meal that a human has arranged and left behind, the death portrait captures the actual 'remains' of a person. Death portrait is the realization of what is only suggested by the *nature mort*. The 'huge blackness' or nothingness at the end of this passage alludes to Bernard's two dead friends and foreshadows his own death. That 'body of the complete human being' 'laid out' among the group represents not only the ideal self each person did not become, but is also the symbolic receptacle for mourning the loss of that ideal.

Unity and performance in *Between the Acts*

Woolf's final novel, *Between the Acts* (1941), brings together the aesthetic and performative aspects of serving and consuming food across class and gender. These performances highlight the formalities of the strict hierarchical boundaries and gendered divisions of food present throughout Woolf's writing, along with a political awareness of the instability of English identity and European politics at this time. Woolf envisioned the basis for the novel's original title, *Pointz Hall*, as the name of the ancestral family home in April 1938. The novel plays with the possibilities of aesthetics of a communal yet fragmentary, living 'tableau' in the form of village pageant. Set over twenty-four

[560] Woolf, *The Waves*, 303.

hours, from the night before the pageant to the evening meal succeeding it, the novel uses meals to illustrate this theme of fragile, fragmentary community. Miss La Trobe, as the director of the pageant, is the central artist figure in the work. Her assembly of the villagers, landowners, adults and children, each with their own role in the pageant or audience, assemble the pieces of the history of England and the state of England. From the preparation of sandwiches for the young people helping to decorate the barn, to the tea break at the interval of the pageant, and dessert after the pageant on the same day, meals in *Between the Acts* provide opportunities to reflect on the ways members of different genders, age, class and temperament are divided, but also find moments of unified transcendence for some of these separations.

Crossing class boundaries, the cook, Trixie Sands and Lucy Swithin, the widowed elderly sister, of the family patriarch, Bartholomew Oliver, come together to make sandwiches for the young people decorating the barn for the pageant. Mrs Sands and Mrs Swithin are united by their relatively marginal status in the family. The young people gently mock Mrs Swithin, calling her 'Old Flimsy', and her brother thinks her superstitious. Mrs Sands is not considered a great cook; the narrator describes her ambivalently: she 'never dashed off masterpieces, it was true; but then never dropped hairpins in the soup'.[561] However, at work in the kitchen together the two women find a natural rhythm in making sandwiches for the pageant:

> Mrs Sands fetched bread; Mrs Swithin fetched ham. One cut the bread; the other the ham. It was soothing, it was consolidating, this handwork together. The cook's hands cut, cut, cut. Whereas Lucy, holding the loaf, held the knife up. Why's stale bread, she mused, easier to cut than fresh?[562]

[561] Virginia Woolf, *Between the Acts* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1976), 43. Hereafter cited as *Between the Acts*.
[562] Woolf, *Between the Acts*, 43.

For a brief moment in this peaceful scene, there is creative collaboration between these two women of different classes and temperaments. They have a common cause in the preparations of the day for the pageant and status does not need to be asserted. Post-sandwich cutting, however, the hierarchy is reasserted as Mrs Sands is left behind in the kitchen while Mrs Swithin does not even look behind her to see if another maid will follow with the rest:

> 'There!' said Mrs. Swithin, surveying the sandwiches, some neat, some not, 'I'll take 'em to the barn'. As for the lemonade, she assumed, without a flicker of doubt, that Jane the kitchenmaid would follow after.[563]

When Mrs Sands and Mrs Swithin make sandwiches together there is an aesthetic of domestic, culinary creation, much like in *Parade's End* when Tietjens asks for the sandwiches in the trenches that bring him closer to the young soldier, who is a trained chef. But it is a fleeting moment. Mrs Swithin comments on how nicely cut they are and then is done with it, off, and the hierarchy of gentry and servants is re-established as she leaves assuming another maid will follow with the lemonade.

References to barbarism, war and community also permeate the work. The novel is framed by the opening discussion on the important civic issue of building a cesspool on the old Roman road. Mrs Swithin reads the 'Outline of History', 'thinking of rhododendron forests in Piccadilly' and 'barking monsters; the iguanodon, the mammoth, and the mastodon; from whom presumably […] we descend'.[564] Mrs Swithin then confuses one of the servants, 'Grace herself' with 'the leather-covered grunting monster who was about […] to demolish a whole tree in the green steaming

[563] Woolf, *Between the Acts*, 45.
[564] Woolf, *Between the Acts*, 13.

undergrowth of the primeval forest'.[565] When old Bartholomew Oliver covers his face with a newspaper beak and surprises his grandson George by greeting him as a make-believe creature, the distortion of his face terrifies the little boy. Instead of his grandfather, the boy sees 'coming towards him a terrible peaked eyeless monster moving on legs, brandishing arms'.[566] The repeated allusions to monsters and the frightening image here suggest the machinery of war. The insinuation is furthered through mentions of war in newspaper clippings and planes flying overhead later on; these references saturate the novel with the feeling of fear and impending doom.

With war and uncertainty of the future in the backdrop, the pageant confronts the villagers with the history of imperial England. Awkward or incomprehensible moments in the play startle the community back into awareness of themselves as participating in another kind of performance: that of their own lives in the present. They come together comically to eat cake and bad tea at the interval, performing their pleasure and their social roles: '"What delicious tea!" each exclaimed, disgusting though it was, like rust boiled in water, and the cake fly-blown. But they had a duty to society'.[567] People of different classes mill around the barn and find each other, wondering about the meaning of the pageant, absent-mindedly consuming their refreshments, unconsciously acting as part of the pageant by falsely expressing delight at the taste of the awful tea. Their exclamations help prepare them for the bigger role of communal participation in the pageant's conclusion.

[565] Woolf, *Between the Acts*, 13-14.
[566] Woolf, *Between the Acts*, 11.
[567] Woolf, *Between the Acts*, 123.

The pageant's historical narrative leading to the present day, which explicitly involves the audience, is unexpected:

> 'Ourselves . . .' They returned to the programme. But what could she know about ourselves? The Elizabethans yes; the Victorians, perhaps; but ourselves; sitting here on a June day in 1938—it was ridiculous.[568]

Although the audience is tested by the expectation that they are somehow implicated in the pageant, there is still, as the Rev. Streatfield suggests, a sense that 'each is part of the whole'.[569] Though Streatfield is a preposterous object of derision, a 'simplified absurdity', 'a piece of traditional church furniture', after some struggling, he grasps a core truth of the performance: 'we are members one of another. Each is part of the whole'.[570] He continues: 'I speak only as one of the audience, one of ourselves. I caught myself too reflected, as it happened in my own mirror . . .' (Laughter) 'Scraps, orts and fragments! Surely, we should unite?'[571] Streatfield goes on to undercut his moment of insight with a return to the Church fundraising, but even in his halting, bumbling summary, he articulates the significance of the collective, fragmented reflections the audience was distracted and confused by. This is part of Woolf's underlying political *and* aesthetic message: the people are only parts, but they are parts of a whole, a 'we' that is their village community, England, Europe, the world, humanity. Making the connection from the individual to the general unity is the difficulty Miss La Trobe hopes her audience will overcome.

Gendered table manners and aesthetics

[568] Woolf, *Between the Acts*, 208.
[569] Woolf, *Between the Acts*, 224.
[570] Woolf, *Between the Acts*, 221, 222, 224.
[571] Woolf, Between the Acts, 225.

Woolf's 'Sketch of the Past' establishes a connection between the Victorian tea-table manners of her childhood and her twentieth-century writing style:

> We [Virginia and her sister Vanessa] both learnt the rules of the game of Victorian society so thoroughly that we have never forgotten them. We still play the game. It is useful. It has also its beauty, for it is founded upon restraint, sympathy, unselfishness—all civilized qualities. It is helpful in making something seemly out of raw odds and ends. […] But the Victorian manner is perhaps—I am not sure—a disadvantage in writing. When I read my old *Literary Supplement* articles, I lay the blame for their suavity, their politeness, their sidelong approach, to my tea-table training. I see myself not reviewing a book, but handing plates of buns to shy young men and asking them: do they take cream & sugar? On the other hand, the surface manner allows one, as I have found, to slip in things that would be inaudible if one marched straight up and spoke out loud.[572]

The 'game' of Victorian society allows Woolf to produce something 'seemly' out of 'raw' odds and ends. With this metaphor, Woolf combines a sociological-anthropological point about nineteenth-century society and the structure it provided, what it enabled an artist or writer to do. Though her writing has changed, the rules of Victorian behaviour have stayed with Woolf: 'we have never forgotten [the rules]. We still play the game'. She perceives how her contemporary literary production is bound up in thinking about changes in aesthetics, customs and expression. The commonplace, yet mannered act of passing the buns becomes a vehicle for coded messages and thinking about women's bodies, their roles, women's social and intellectual interactions, and what women can think, make and share. We would not have these coded messages, or, Woolf claims, her later writing, without the lingering traces of Victorian rules about how and who should be serving the buns and the tea. They enable the expressive, sidelong style and surface manner that Woolf identifies as Victorian and as also present in her twentieth-century work.

[572] Woolf, 'Sketch of the Past',152.

As the passage from ‘Sketch of the Past’ exemplifies, Woolf finds it difficult to escape the conventions and ideas of her Victorian childhood, but in many ways she has molded them to fit her contemporary craft. Like Ford, who thinks about civilization and barbarism in relation to cultural mythologies through his ideas of the ‘Small Producer’ and the ‘Great Trade Route’ and a long view of history, Woolf’s writing about food, manners, and modernity is historically informed. Throughout Woolf’s writing, her observations of the aesthetics of social aspects of dining, from city restaurants to Cambridge halls, reveal her proximity to and interest in the realities of modern English consumption. From gendered examples of food inequality in *Jacob’s Room*, *A Room of One’s Own,* and *The Years* to researching contemporary political affairs for Leonard Woolf’s writing about civilization and barbarism, Woolf precisely locates her place as a woman in history. Woolf examines what ‘civilization’ offers for women, shines light on the indignity of female old age and poverty even among the upper classes. She also looks at the tension between the Victorian concepts of being civilized from her childhood and the more politicized, contemporary perceptions of civilization and barbarism.

As we have seen from the two women of different classes carefully slicing sandwiches for the pageant in *Between the Acts*, the solitary dining of Eleanor, Crosby and Sara in *The Years*, the cheap cuts of beef and withered potatoes of the women’s colleges in Cambridge, Woolf’s political and aesthetic vision of food is strongly influenced by gender. Women’s bodies, particularly those of fragile, older women were vulnerable to erasure from social consciousness. By representing women whose experiences are more on the fringes of society within her aesthetic experiments with the

still life form, portrayals of communal or solitary dining, and engagement with contemporary politics, Woolf centres women in the social and aesthetic discussions from which they were often excluded.

CONCLUSION: COOKING CIVILIZATION, TASTING MODERNISM

> [T]aste, whatever it may be, is not, after all, the same thing as art. No; it is not art—but it is the atmosphere in which art lives, and outside of which it cannot live. It is the regulating principle of all art, of the art of dress and of manners, and of living in general, as well as of sculpture or music. It is because the French have always been so innately sure of this, that, without burdening themselves with formulas, they have instinctively applied to living the same rules that they applied to artistic creation.
>
> – Edith Wharton[573]

In food, the aesthetic and material conditions of taste coincide and present an opportunity for the analysis of what it means to be 'civilized'. Food, taste and civilization were irresistible notions for American and British modernist writers observant of national cultures and changing social norms. In the quotation above, Edith Wharton's emphasis on tradition, rules and regulation of the atmosphere for the production of art is emblematic of the kind of background against which modernist experimentation took place. As Wharton writes, taste, though difficult to define, influences both the creation of art and the patterns of everyday life. This is all the more compelling considering that literary aesthetic tastes changed through the latter stages of Wharton's life.

Though Wharton disliked modernism and modern American culture, her legacy as an American observer of French and American social mores is felt in modernist discussions of transatlantic culture. Hermione Lee describes how Wharton disapproved of both 'American post-war optimism and the shock of international modernism' because she found modernism 'formulaic' like the 'standardization of modern American

[573] Edith Wharton, *French Ways and Their Meaning* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1919), 40.

life'.[574] To Wharton, the style of modernist texts made them feel unfinished. In a letter from January 1923 Wharton wrote of *Ulysses* that 'until the raw ingredients of a pudding *make* a pudding, I shall never believe that the raw material of sensation & thought can make a work of art without a cook's intervening'.[575] Though she expressed aversion for modernist art and literature, her firm emphasis on manners, tradition and the process of transformation that her culinary metaphor suggests in fact aligns her ideologically, if not aesthetically, with the three writers in my thesis. All three show, in their treatment of food and civilization, a transition between tradition and modernity. Ford Madox Ford, uniting 'sensation and thought' and steeped in the Impressionist techniques of Marcel Proust and Henry James, would go on to make cookery the metaphor for creative work with his culinary Impressionism. Stein drew on the history of domestic service and cookery to reframe her conception of modernist authority. Woolf, recalling her childhood manners while serving at the Victorian tea-table, confronted the lingering trace of a restrained Victorian style in her writing even as she challenged gendered social norms that provided women with food of lesser quality than men.

In this thesis, I have argued that scholars have overlooked the multivalent role of food in the interpretation of domestic and public culture in Ford, Stein, and Woolf's lives and works. All three authors discuss the growing, preparation, serving, and eating of food in order to reconstruct notions of modernist authority in relation to civilized or barbaric behaviour in Britain and America. Drawing on theories of modernism and the everyday, and underlining each author's attention to style and history, I show how

[574] Hermione Lee, *Edith Wharton* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2007), 605.
[575] Edith Wharton to Bernard Berenson, 6 January 1923, qtd in Lee, *Edith Wharton*, 605.

literary modernism is deeply invested in both the practical, ordinary aspects of food, and how the representation of food contributes to an understanding of modernity.

Across the four chapters, I have taken a two-pronged approach to my analysis of the work of Ford, Stein and Woolf. First I have shown how food shapes these authors' understanding of art and society in their interpretations of civilization and barbarism. Norbert Elias's definition of the civilizing process as developing through the history of manners and Pierre Bourdieu's notions of the embodiment of taste within different stratifications of French society are the basis of my analysis of modernist interpretations of culture and society. The second prong of my approach is evident in my first chapter, 'Cultures of Food and Eating', in which I discuss twentieth-century American, British and French food culture and literary history. Each of the remaining three chapters is based on literary, historical and biographical analysis relevant to each author's nationality and country of residence, from the state of early twentieth-century American agriculture, to the history of domestic service in America and France, to the scrutiny of institutional dining at the University of Cambridge. In the work of all three authors there is a fundamental connection between food, modernity, society and the imagination. Each author analyzes a different facet of the personal or domestic sphere to shed light on its implications in his or her creative work and in the wider public sphere.

In the second chapter, 'Culinary Impressionism: Ford Madox Ford, Civilization, Agrarianism and Cookery', I show how Ford's gastronomically-inspired literary technique, culinary Impressionism, extends his mirror-like literary Impressionism into the alimentary realm, as Ford seeks to capture multi-sensations in prose as they occur. 'Culinary Impressionism', as I define it, is the conduit between both Ford's creative

fiction and life-writing and his cooking and cookery-writing. Employing this technique, Ford describes characters in *The Good Soldier* and *Parade's End* tetralogy in a way in which food reveals an aspect of their personality that would otherwise be inexpressible. The references to food and recipes in his non-fiction writing are a conduit for cultural, emotional and sensory impressions. Culinary Impressionism leads Ford to turn to cookery, reflecting on ingredients and preparation, as a metaphor for the stimulation and regeneration of his writing after the trauma of his service in the First World War. He also uses culinary Impressionism to illustrate the ways in which cookery and agriculture facilitate international cultural exchange. It is related to his theory of the Small Producer, the agricultural theory of the benefits of local farming to individual health which he develops from his early fiction, and is fully explored in *Great Trade Route* and other late prose writing.

For Ford, barbarism is represented in the form of the overdependence on exploitative industrial agriculture in America and Western Europe, and is associated with violence and the rise of fascism. Ford's politics were truly international. He wrote in a letter to his teenage daughter Julie in 1935:

> I live about the world with no politics at all except the belief – which I share with Lenin—that the only thing that can save the world is the abolition of all national feelings and the prevailing of the Small Producer – and the Latin tradition of clear-sightedness as to what one means oneself.[576]

Ford believed that the circulation of cultural knowledge, food and spices, such as occurred in ancient times through the Great Trade Route from east to west, offered hope

[576] Ford Madox Ford to Julia Ford, 11 September 1935, *The Letters of Ford Madox Ford*, ed. Richard M. Ludwig (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 238.

to western society if there could be a return to the values of community and small farming.

In ‘Serving the Meals: Gertrude Stein and Domesticity’, I argue that Stein affiliates modernism with domesticity by presenting servants’ preparation of food as a fundamental metaphor for authorial creativity. Stein’s conservative political and social vision, stressing historically traditional domestic roles and routines, allow her to reframe the work of domestic servants as productive and even radical. As problematic as Stein’s politics were, bound up in an imperial worldview, she nevertheless ascribes agency to traditionally marginalized figures like her German-American immigrant cooks in *Three Lives* and a French Indo-Chinese cook in her autobiographical writing. She owes a particular creative debt to her cooks from different stages of her life: Lena Ledbetter, her American cook in Baltimore in the early 1900s; Hélène Lavocat, her French cook of the 1910s and 1920s; and Trac Nguyen, her French Indo-Chinese cook of the 1930s. She adopts their language and cookery techniques in her creative works.

Biographically, my thesis challenges some of the received understandings of Stein positioning herself as a singular, masculine, avant-garde genius. Rather, I argue that she drew on her experiences with her domestic employees and relationship with Toklas to develop a collaborative culinary aesthetic. Stein also navigates the relationship between domesticity and authority through discussions of national character and the cycles of history in her later autobiographical works. I have shown how Stein’s adoption of some of the culinary language and repetitive language associated with domestic work comes to its fullest fruition in the form of her collaborative cookbook project with her

partner Alice B. Toklas, drawing new critical attention to this overlooked co-authored manuscript.

In my final chapter, 'Apples and Kitchens: The Aesthetics and Politics of Modern Dining in Virginia Woolf', I argue that Woolf explores the gendered role of food in everyday life in order to reshape the aesthetics that are part of her 'civilized', Victorian heritage. Through my analysis of the still life genre painted by Bloomsbury artists and the literary still lifes in Woolf's 'Kew Gardens', *To the Lighthouse*, *Roger Fry* and *The Waves*, I show how Woolf develops an abstract aesthetic using food that values the conversational and the personal. Discussions of food are also a part of Woolf's extra-national view of women's social position, helping her to redefine civilization in her fiction and polemical works, *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas*. In a section on institutional food, I have shown that the cost of Cambridge food in 1928 reveals that Woolf's representation of the contrast between men's and women's Cambridge food was probably even more severe than Woolf describes in *A Room of One's Own*. In *Between the Acts*, villagers come together in the realization that even their everyday lives involve performance and small acts of collaboration, bringing together characters across class boundaries. This is demonstrated when they participate in the village play, or when they prepare, serve or consume the refreshments. Food is the vehicle for insights into the performative vision of unity.

I have argued that these authors use aspects of their life and work to consider how the domestic sphere reflects on the wider public sphere. This has implications for modernist studies, food studies, studies of the ordinary and the everyday, gender studies and studies on Ford, Stein and Woolf. My work is in dialogue with Bryony

Randall's *Modernism, Daily Time and Everyday Life* (2007), Liesl Olson's *Modernism and the Ordinary* (2009), Allison Carruth's *Global Appetites: American Power and the Literature of Food* (2013) and Christine Froula's *Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Avant-Garde: War, Civilization, Modernity* (2007), among others. I extend and complicate the arguments in these works about modernist conceptions of domesticity, gender, the everyday and politics by showing how culinary aspects of modernist authority lead to the re-imagining of civilization and barbarism by thinking through food's processes, performances and productions. Beyond modernist studies, my project is in conversation with works in the field of food studies and literature from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, such as Joseph Litvak's *Strange Gourmets: Sophistication, Theory, and the Novel* (1997), Denise Gigante's *Taste: A Literary History* (2005), and Kyla Tompkins's *Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the 19th Century* (2012).

The differences between the British, American and French approaches to food are emblematized in the works of Ford, Stein and Woolf in their descriptions of meat. Though roast beef is a historically contested cultural symbol between French and English cuisine, and is adopted by America as a 'traditional' food, it is also revealing of each author's assumptions about nation, class, gender and authority. It is a recurring image for Ford which he associates with the sickly, undercooked English style of beef. Beef is totally abstracted and reconstituted into associations and concepts by Stein as 'Roastbeef' in *Tender Buttons*. In *A Room of One's Own*, *The Waves* and *The Years*, Woolf explores the gendered divisions in meat-eating experiences, framing as barbaric

the grotesque nature of bodies eating bodies in which the boundaries between self and other are blurred.

The questions I pose investigate how the personal consumption of food and practice of cookery made their way into modernist writing, and how modernists found the culinary to be a productive outlet for reflection on the state of society, culture, domestic life and gender. I show how modernist writing incorporated and responded to technological and social developments in relation to food production and consumption. For instance, Ford and Woolf reject industrial food, but Stein embraces some parts of popular culture and mass-production, recognizing domestic cookery as an everyday creative process and envisioning food as an abstracted, de-familiarized concept in *Tender Buttons.*

My thesis is part of current discussions about modernist responses to the division between high and low culture, the conventions of modern life, and to the relation between civilization, barbarism and primitivism. Although my chosen authors all aim to represent the fleeting moments of modern urban life at different points in their work, they maintain deep affiliations with history, valuing some aspects of cultural tradition and heritage, while discarding or challenging others.

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