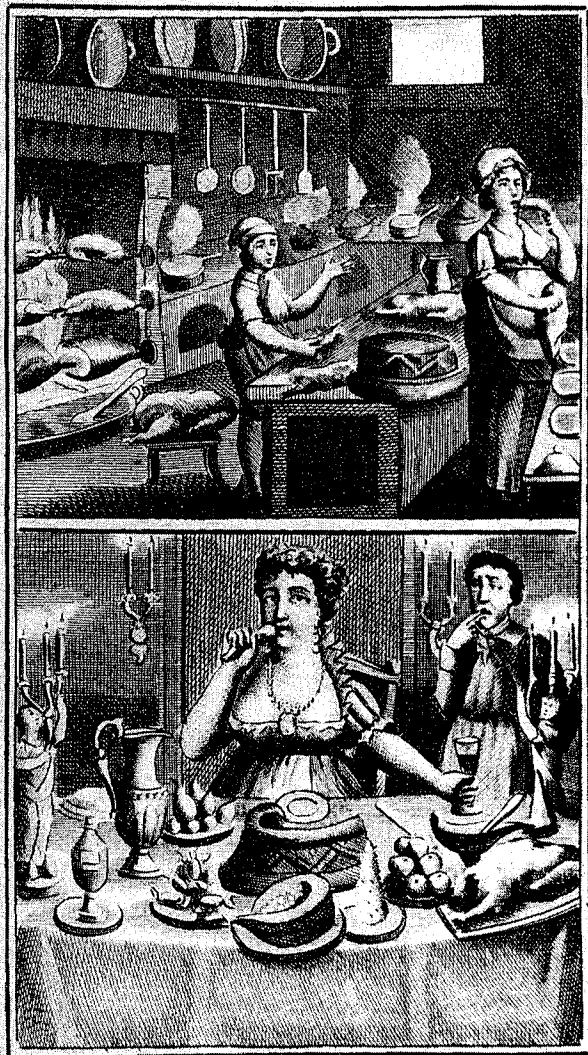


98

Petits Propos  
Culinaires 5





*Le Rôt sans pareil  
ou le délice des Gastronomes.*

Frontispiece from *Le Partfait Cuisinier ou Le Bréviaire des Gourmands*.  
A.T. Raimbault, Paris, 2nd edition, 1811.

## Petits Propos Culinaires 5

Essays and notes on food cookery and cookery books



Prospect Books May 1980

## KERIPIK TEMPE DAN TERI

500 g (1 lb) *tempe*  
250g (½ lb) *ikan teri (ikan bilis)*  
5 shallots  
3 cloves garlic  
1 tsp ground ginger  
1 tsp chilli powder (or 1 tsp *sambal ulek*)\*  
salt  
vegetable oil

### for the marinade

1 cup tamarind water  
2 cloves garlic (crushed)  
1 tsp salt

Slice the tempe slab into thin pieces, then cut these into tiny squares. Put the crushed garlic and salt into the tamarind water, and marinade the tempe for 30 minutes. Discard the heads of the ikan teri. Peel and slice the shallots and garlic.

Drain the tempe and dry the pieces with kitchen paper. Heat the oil in a wok and deep fry the tempe until crisp and golden brown. Don't try to fry all the tempe at once; do it little by little, keeping the pieces you have fried warm – wrapped in absorbent paper. When you have finished frying the tempe, start frying the ikan teri, stirring continuously until crisp. This will take about 2 minutes. Drain and keep warm. Discard the oil you have used for frying the teri, and put 2 tablespoonfuls new oil into the wok. Fry the sliced shallots and garlic until slightly coloured, add some salt. Stir for a few seconds and put in the tempe and ikan teri. Continue stirring for a few more seconds. This dish can be served hot, to be eaten with rice. When cool it can be stored in an airtight jar. This keripik will stay crisp for several days.

\* One-ounce jars of *sambal ulek* can be bought ready-made in many large foodshops or delicatessens. London readers may like to know that larger jars, containing about 1 lb, can be bought from Ganesha, 6 Park Walk, London SW10.

## COOKERY BOOKS: A CABINET OF RARE DEVICES AND CONCEITS

Lynette Hunter

Any literary study of cookery books comes up against the fact that they exist primarily to communicate information and opinion, not as literary objects in themselves. As such they set out to persuade the reader; and whether it be of the culinary value of a recipe, the efficiency of method or simplicity of organization, they are concerned with persuasive presentation, or as it used to be called, rhetoric. It is of particular interest that during the period when cookery books first established themselves in the mid-seventeenth century, rhetoric itself was undergoing a significant change, largely as a result of advances in scientific learning. Despite the concurrent development of cookery books with scientific texts, for the better part of a hundred years they resisted the stylised presentation and language of science. The results are most apparent in the diversification of genre in cookery writing which is not found in scientific literature; but they also led to a pursuit of different modes of logic than the rational, and the establishing of a rhetoric that included the general public yet satisfied great technicians. For us the importance lies in the generation of a body of eighteenth century recipes which provides the foundation of modern English cookery.

The general questions discussed here are why cookery books retained a vital and active rhetoric far into the eighteenth century, why did it erode and what can we learn from both the retention and erosion. To examine the situation I turned my attention to a focal point in the study of rhetoric: the 1660's, the Restoration and the founding of the Royal Society. At this time, in contrast to scientific texts, cookery books are firmly diversified into several genres: the text book of formal instruction, the gentlewoman's handbook and the study of dietetic or medical information to name the three main areas. Each genre presents and persuades in a different manner. To assess why the diversification exists, it is helpful to look at the rhetoric of the period.

### RHETORIC

The art of persuasion is concerned with three things: the speaker, his words and his audience. Until the end of the sixteenth century the work itself had always been made up of the way one orders the argument in order to persuade and the manner of putting the words together to express this order. The two aspects are inseparable in practise, but are often analysed alone as logic and grammar. But seventeenth century

England finds itself adjudicating a stand-off between Logic and Rhetoric, by which they meant rational logic and ornamentation. The influence of a sixteenth century teacher called Ramus is usually held responsible for the idea that logic and rhetoric are two different things altogether.<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested that since rhetoric is concerned with a popular audience, but the culture of the middle ages had no popular audience to debate with, Ramus viewed medieval rhetoric and found it without any substantial basis. On the other hand, when he looked at medieval scholastic endeavours he found abundant evidence of reason and logic. He concluded that logic belonged to the learned discourse of scholars, and rhetoric to the merely eloquent persuasion of the populace.<sup>2</sup>

Tied into this was a current of anti-Ciceronian feeling amongst scholars. There was a sense that they needed to turn away from ornamentation and stylistic device towards a plainer, more rational style. Francis Bacon did much to combine the anti-Ciceronian sentiments with Ramus's teaching. He understood logic to be indifferent, to provide exact and truthful analysis for learned discourse; whereas rhetoric was concerned and involved, its reason was based on popular opinion and spoke for a popular audience.<sup>3</sup>

### LOGIC, GRAMMAR AND THE ROYAL SOCIETY

Lying beneath the development was the adoption of rational logic as the main way of ordering learned thoughts. Earlier modes of logic had severe limitations. Many proved insufficient to clarify causality, and the predominant theological system of correspondences between all things often set up misleading analogies. Because rational logic progresses from step to step in a linear manner, a clear direct line of cause and effect can be expressed. This is an invaluable mode of investigation, but it has its own limitations. The very step by step clarity makes necessary the, albeit judicious, discarding of a great deal of potentially relevant material; the conclusions of the logic are then used to back up another line of rationalisation, and the discarded material is very rarely re-examined. The process results in an increasing number of conclusions being taken as unexamined assumptions. It leads to the delusion that logic can be, as Bacon thought, indifferent, truthful and exact, and ironically it narrows the field of inquiry with each new step.

When the Royal Society formed itself in 1660, its members supported Bacon's ideas on rational, analytical logic, and on individual experimentation and observation rather than debate and discussion with a general public. Thomas Sprat, the first President, went even further to comment on the potential exactitude and absolute purity of language and grammar. He referred to the degenerate ornamentation of rhetoric and urged members of the Society 'to return back to the primitive purity, and

shortness, when man delivered so many *things* almost in an equal number of words',<sup>4</sup> when men could speak without ambiguity and had no need for metaphor. An in their desire for a new simplicity they were supported by the growing fundamentalism of religion.

The call to a single rational logic and absolutist grammar may explain the absence of diverse genres and the presence of significant startling exceptions,<sup>5</sup> in the scientific texts of the next two centuries. They simply took it too far. Within a century scientists, amateur though they were, could no longer easily communicate with a general public. Their enclosed logic created an entirely separate world so self-sufficient that it grew in danger of divorcing itself from the world it had originally set out to study.

### COOKERY BOOKS: A CONTRAST

In contrast, cookery books which are similar manuals of instruction, information and opinion did resist this development. Why? The most probable reasons are pragmatic. Sixteenth and seventeenth century cookery books were written not just by 'learned' men, but also by gentlemen with little pretence to learning, by artisans of the craft and by women. Further, they were written for a largely national and more popular audience. As such they avoided the international standardisation of information in the format and language of Latin. Several genres of cookbooks were intended not only to instruct but to delight through their conceits, devices and wit. It is also important that while cookery was often allied with medicine and the related sciences of chemistry, biology and anatomy, these sciences were not much dominated by the Royal Society and did not come into their own until the nineteenth century.

As the eighteenth century progresses, cookery books do take over the idea of causal progress, of experiment and observation. But they do so gradually and without becoming restricted by rational logic. They retain many of the older modes of ordering such as commonplace, dialogue, formulaic verse and analogy. Despite the limitations these logics have, their combination with each other and with rational systems alerts the reader to the need for constant personal evaluation. Unlike physical and mathematical scientific writing, cookery books develop from a highly formulaic, rhythmic and repetitive structure, often in verse. And they were primarily concerned with a popular audience: they had to be accessible and ensured that they were so through the use of commonplace,<sup>6</sup> avoidance of jargon and the employment of dialectical logic often in the form of analogies referring to everyday experience.

A brief look at early cookery books indicated many of these features. The *Forme of Cury* presumed to be from the cook(s) of Richard II, is highly repetitive in vocabulary and employs a balanced paratactic struc-

ture, stringing instructions together with 'and' 'and' 'and'. There is the appalling verse of the fifteenth century *Liber Cure Cocorum*, probably used to aid memory. Another memory structure, far more sophisticated, is based on Wynken de Worde's brilliant terms for carving<sup>7</sup> which continue to be used right on through to Hannah Glasse in the eighteenth century. They carry with them a force of poetic alliteration and rhythm that John Murrell in 1617 recognises and is seemingly captivated by in his introduction to a chapter on carving:

sauce that Capon, spoile that Hen, fruth that Chicken, unbrace that Mallard: unlace that Cony, dismember that Herne, display that Crane, disfigure that Peacock . . .<sup>8</sup>

The emphasis of these books is primarily on teaching. During the sixteenth century there arises a genre devoted to information and discussion of dietetic matters, and by the turn to the seventeenth century we find the first of the increasingly prevalent genre which uses the analogy of the Closet or Cabinet: *The Treasure of Commodious Conceites*, and *Hidden Secrets*, *The Good Housewives Cabinet* (1584).

### THE CLOSET OR CABINET ANALOGY

To account for the dominance of this genre I would suggest first the negative reason that the other two both became so specialised that they lost a wider audience. The books of formal instruction already had a limited audience that narrowed further as more people were forced into doing their own cooking for economic reasons, and both wanted and needed a less stringent culinary education. Those books concerned with dietary matters became more theoretical and eventually fell foul of the strictures that were to alienate scientific writing from its public. The dominant genre of the Art of Cookery and the Complete Housewife during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries arose out of the less specialised compendia of remedies and receipts, often written for women and usually entitled with images such as 'Treasure' or 'Delight'. The most frequent and evocative analogies used were of the 'Cabinet' and the 'Closet'; it is on this basis that I have called the genre the Closet/Cabinet genre.<sup>9</sup>

For more positive reasons leading towards the dominance of this genre, we need to note that the primary persuasive device of the sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century was analogy. God's great 'chain of being' from stones to angels, was a complex structure of correspondences and analogies.<sup>10</sup> Everything contained within itself a microcosmic analogy of the macrocosmic universe — one strong if rather obvious image being constructed on man's body. The use of the Closet/Cabinet image for cookbooks can be traced both to the idea of secrecy, of re-

vealing the mystery and secrets of God's world and to the increasing number of books that were written by and for women. A closet was a small room, often a pantry and hence its connection with recipes, but also a bedroom or a retiring room where one could be sure of privacy, intimacy and secrecy.<sup>11</sup> As such the closet becomes an analogy for all the secret information and private understanding possessed by an individual. The best known examples of this probably being *The Closet of Sir Kenelme Digbie, Knight, Opened* (1668) or the compendious *The Queen's Closet Opened* (1655).

The connection between women and the closet image is also strong, and provides the link with the image of the Cabinet. Indeed Hannah Wolley combines the two in the title to her book: *The Queen-like Closet, or Rich Cabinet stored with all manner of Rare Receipts* (1674). The 'cabinet' analogy builds upon the function of storing private information: hence its connection with 'closet'. It also refers to the Cabinet of Mary: Mary the mother as the cabinet for the jewel, Christ. Released from this analogy are a number of features; the connection between Christ in the womb, the sacred mysteries of herbal remedy and cookery in the cabinet, and earthly knowledge of these areas in women. It is interesting to note the related analogy of the private and enclosed garden, and the womb. From the Old Testament onwards the garden of herbal remedies and resuscitation has been associated with women and their healing powers. George Herbert, writing in the 1630's thought it a fit duty for a clergyman's wife to distribute herbal remedies in the parish.<sup>12</sup> There are throughout the undertones of sexual knowledge and magic, both deriving simply from a profane interpretation of the conflation of the Closet with its privacy and secrecy and the Cabinet with its womb and its sacred mysteries. Witchcraft is not far from the horizon of the receipts of cookery books; and we still have the remedies of our old wive's tales.<sup>13</sup>

The result of this analogy is a highly complex relationship between God and the individual. The Closet/Cabinet when opened is a revelation of divine mysteries but at the same time is necessarily a revelation of the individual through his or her expression of these mysteries. The analogy thus pervades the structure and the subject. The familiar organization of these books into the three parts of herbal remedies, toiletries and household needs, and recipes is an indication of their interdependence. Each one contributes in an analogical way, that is with a similar function but different manner, to the care of the body, and ultimately to the care of the universe.<sup>14</sup> The writers usually provide recipes contributed by many other people. The receipts yield an interdependent body of knowledge, parallel to the interdependent society of man, so that the inclusion of other people's recipes becomes a way of expressing that

society. On a practical level the inclusion of diagrams for the serving of dishes indicates a similar relationship between prepared foods. Unlike modern western practice the dishes were served at the same time, often being placed in significant relationship to each other. Until the mid-seventeenth century and in general until much later, there were at the most only two courses.

The analogical ordering of the books provides for a discussion of the possible or probable combinations of foods. It does not insist on a straight line through the preferred selection. On an abstract level, it would be presuming to state an explanation for God-given mysteries if it did. The result generates several relationships which both reader and eater make themselves. It actively involves the 'audience' in the process of creation. On the other hand it often leads to disorganization, and careless attention to detail. It is this potential confusion that the scientists of the seventeenth century were concerned about; and to examine why cookery books resisted scientific structure and language I would like to concentrate on works published roughly within twenty years of the founding of the Royal Society in 1660.

### CHANGES AT THE END OF THE 17TH CENTURY

As cookery books get influenced by the same forces that were initiating a drive to clarity in the Royal Society, there arise some very odd combinations and tensions in the writing: some of which are unnecessarily clumsy, as for instance Sir Thomas Mayerne's *Archimagus Anglo-Gallicus* (1658). The title carries the promise of magical art, yet the address states the serious purpose of finding a sound philosophic basis for eating; the contents are indexed and at one point called 'experiments', but overall are badly organized and obscure. In contrast *The Queen's Closet Opened* states in its address to the reader of Part One that the herbal remedies are rather 'Experiments than Receipts',<sup>15</sup> and benefit from a precision of measurement and clarity of style that the Royal Society would have envied. It is not surprising to find Bacon listed as a contributor. However, in the third part of the same book which presents recipes, the rhetoric is radically different. There is a great variety of style, suggesting that the recipes were contributed by different authors, less precision, and a fair amount of personal comment. We should also note the order of presentation which in common with earlier seventeenth century books moved from medical remedies, through household receipts to recipes.

Sir Kenelm Digbie's closet is arranged in the reverse order, from recipes to remedies. The very small number of medical and herbal remedies indicates his belief, as a scientist, that they belonged to a different discipline. Indeed, as the dietary genre becomes more scientific towards the

end of the century, the number of medical remedies in cookery books is drastically reduced. Digbie's style is a model of the best from both rational and analogical ordering. He provides exact measurements, clear comparisons, empirical proofs and many explanations. Yet he does so in a metaphorical manner, often using personal references to anchor the empirical and not avoiding the need for personal judgment. In commenting on a recipe from a Mr. Masillon at Liège he notes:

I have been informed from Liege, that a Pot of the Countrey holdeth 48 Ounces of Apothecary's measure; which I judge to be a Pottle according to London measure, or two Wine-quarts.<sup>16</sup>

His closet reads as if it were a family group within which he was walking, yet the nature of his comments is technical and inquiring.<sup>17</sup>

With Hannah Wolley we move to a different manner of balance. Her prefaces spell out a relationship between the mysteries of God and Nature and a woman's social duty. She intimates the power of the Closet/Cabinet image in reference to those people who blame her for 'divulging these Secrets',<sup>18</sup> yet she does so for the combined reasons of being commended for her Love and Charity, and to help those gentlemen 'impoverished by the late Calamities' of Wars, Plague and Fire. God is less of a mystery for Mrs. Wolley; and while she is grateful for the natural bounty he provides, she insists on the individual development of taste and reason to choose from it. The presentation of recipes is precise and straightforward, even in one instance, significantly a herbal remedy, with a list of ingredients. Yet she continually refers outwards to the reader, saying for example 'Thus you may do with any other Herbs whatsoever' (5) or 'any person who is ingenious, you may leave out some, and put in others at pleasure' (327). Although there is much basic information in the book, the reader is constantly alerted to the need for a personal interpretation and application.

The concept of an individual responsibility to judge and choose in order to present personal taste, is very different from that of the individual in relationship with God, presenting the varied mysteries of the divine. Mrs. Wolley's transitional movement away from the latter indicates a general trend in cookery books towards the taste or artistry in, and the instruction in specific knowledge of cookery. As early as 1654 James Cooper entitled his satire on the Cabinet analogy *The Art of Cookery Refined and Augmented*. In fact his address to the 'rationall' lady reader is startling in its explicit understanding of a profane interpretation of the analogy:

if any thing displeases you, it will be to see so many uncommon and undeflour'd Receipts prostituted to the publique view, which perchance you will think might have been plac'd better among the paper secrets in a few of your Cabinets.<sup>19</sup>



A more overtly transitional work is William Rabisha's *The Whole Body of Cookery Dissected* (1661) whose title conveniently indicates the rational onslaught on analogy in the dissection of the image of the Body. A further combination is that of his precise teaching 'Methodically, Artificially', with the dedication to five honourable ladies in descending order of social station, to whom are attributed the recipes of the book in a similarly descending value. A duchess was likely to provide a better recipe for custard than a gentlewoman.<sup>20</sup> The address to the reader is again conveniently entitled 'Art and Myserie of Cooking', and contains a radical juxtaposition of divergent aims. While he speaks of cooking as allied to the wholeness of the world and its secret knowledge, he does not think of revealing the knowledge but of enlightening the obscurity and conveying factual information. Stylistically the combination results in a division between poetry and analogy in the preface, and clarity and tabulation in the recipes, which becomes another dominant feature of the genre.

One of the most important examples for the English of the new genre of art and instruction in cookery, was French: La Varenne. He wrote *Le Cuisinier Français* which was published in English in 1653 and widely read, specifically to teach the ignorant and correct the misguided: which he proceeds to do in a fresh and vital manner. Significantly he begins by lecturing the reader on 'les vicieuses qualités des viandes' and on the need for more precision and clarity in cookery as in chemistry. He foretells the dismissiveness of his scientific counterparts by immediately dismissing them. The format of the book consists of lists of courses followed by discussion; and the recipes themselves are a judicious blend of precise instruction and personal suggestion. Apart from the fact that it follows the seasonal and analogical presentation of courses customary at the time, the combination of analytical and dialectical is a model that foreshadows the structure of all the major English cookery books that profess to teach, which means most of the works after 1680.

Following close on *Le Cuisinier Français* is the French-trained Robert May's *The Accomplisht Cook, or the Art and Mystery of Cooking*.<sup>21</sup> May's work is an extraordinary amalgam of the trends of the period. The poem of the frontispiece speaks of both the 'Ark' with 'Nature's plentie', and his subtitle refers to the 'Art' of cookery and the 'easy and perfect Method' with which he shall reveal it. The combination of the idea of divine secrets yet human mastery is followed up in the Preface, where May says that in:

this book, as in a Closet, is contained all such secrets as relate to Preserving . . . and such rare varieties as they are most concerned in the best husbandry and housewifery . . .

In common with the general accessibility of the mode, the book is in-

tended for both 'Master Cooks' and 'young Practitioners'. Here May's structure and prose style also indicate his fusion of current concerns. Despite the long unpunctuated clauses common to earlier writing, he employs an unusual variety of vocabulary and division. He is not as accurate as Sir Kenelm Digbie, someone for whom he had worked and who is one of the dedicatees of the book. However he provides Bills of Fare, carefully separated sections for the dishes, and an alphabetical index. It is perhaps important to note that May was born in 1588 and would have been 72 at the time of publication. Such a length of experience may account for the mixture of styles and logics that gives this book the strength and interest that it has.

An unusual exception closer to the genre of dietetic science is Thomas Cocke's *Kitchin-Physick* (1676). It attempts to combine instruction in knowledge of cooking with the conveying of information about diet, in an accurate but entertaining mode. As many of his rhetorical predecessors he employs a dialogue, that between the Physician, Apothecary and Patient, which discusses rules and directions of diet to prevent sickness. He interrupts his discussion to present an advertisement to the poor concerning a free clinic and reputable drugs, which he then amplifies by further discussion and explanation. Quite apart from the style, at once clear and brisk yet put within a fictional structure, his personal comments are fascinating. He conducts a satirical attack on chemists: an ironic reversal of expectation from cookery books. Further, he gets down to the fundamental inadequacy of the correspondence analogy in the latter half of the seventeenth century.

By 1676 the structure of society has changed to the extent that the rich and honourable can no longer be expected to look after the poor as part of their religious and social duty. There is an intervening body of middle class citizens with no such place in the social macrocosm and no such spiritual or material pressure. Whereas Hannah Wolley was criticised for revealing the secrets of her personal cabinet almost as if it were an invasion of her integrity to do so, but does so anyway to help those in need, Thomas Cocke is criticised for revealing secrets that will help the poor and needy — he is even criticised for making the book too cheap. What is disturbing is the implication that simple scientific writing is socially dangerous: as if it provided the poor with too much knowledge.

In 1692 a similar but more culinary book by Thomas Tryon, *The Good Housewife Made a Doctor*, summarises and underlines the change in many of the earlier concerns. He combines an attention to diet and presentation of remedies and recipes, with a social not spiritual commentary. The differences between rich and poor, town and country, are made to reflect upon each other and enforce a realisation of the rational answers to illness. The preface concludes with an entirely new interpre-

tation of the Cabinet image:

For Nature, lick Truth, is always intire, uniform and agreeable to itself, so that whoever has the right Key, may therewith unlock her Cabinet; whereas the blind Paths of Tradition, Ignorance, Custom and Error, are not only various and interfering, but many times opposite and contradictory to each other.<sup>22</sup>

The key is no longer appreciation of God, and the cabinet is no longer a variety of pieces of knowledge about the sacred mysteries of the world acquired through tradition and familial society. What we have now is an encyclopedia or dictionary containing all the complete and true information of nature, and it is unlocked by science.

#### DEVELOPMENTS IN THE 18TH CENTURY

As the eighteenth century is turned into and progresses the idea of a world of divine correspondence disappears, to be replaced by a society of individuals responsible to themselves and each other, and severed from divine ordering. At the time individual taste and encompassing knowledge take over from the concept of revealing sacred mysteries and generate a new genre. Initially the stress is on the art of cookery but this gradually gives way to the dominance of information. Elizabeth Smith has both art and knowledge in mind when she writes *The Complete Housewife* in 1729. Yet she is still concerned with connecting them to a Christian world view, and her remedies and recipes are intended to aid Christian gentlewomen in helping the poor.

Mrs. Smith's preface is significant for its use of a new historical imagination that finds social explanations for man's social behaviour, but the historical proofs are mainly Biblical references. She suggests that it was a series of experiments over a long tract of time that helped turn cookery into an art; and here art is allied with Taste in a more than figurative manner. Just as individuals have taste so do nations, and the national palate will define a national art of cookery. This is, of course, Mrs. Smith's way of leading to her criticism of the fashion for French chefs and French cuisine. She suggests that there are more appropriate recipes for the English palate yet with admirable sense includes those which she thinks not 'disagreeable to the English palate'. Along with taste she includes instruction and carefully points to the scheme of her text and its attempt to organize. But while the book is clear, and the recipes themselves quite accurate, the whole lacks the interest and verve of the preface.

Elizabeth Smith's work is, however, one of the clearer and more spirited contributions to a large number of books whose title indicate their area of concern: *The Complete Practical Cook*, *The Complete Confectioner* and a plagiarised Hannah Wolley published as *The Complete Gentlewoman*, to name but a few. The shift to a man centred view of

the universe brings with it attempts at encyclopedic knowledge. Similarly the shift moves people from God's mysteries to the authority of man: royalty. A further set of titles indicates the pattern contributing *Court Cookery*, *Royal Cookery* and *The Queen's Royal Cookery*. We also find the completion of the idea of individual creativity in the abundance of the 'Art's' of cookery of this period, 1700 to 1750.

Hannah Glasse and *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* (1741) is the prime example of this interest, yet she too is concerned with instruction. The claim for her recipes is that they are 'all of them useful, and highly genteel and ornamental';<sup>23</sup> she wishes to 'unite elegance with economy'. In this she succeeds not only in her recipes but in her presentation. It is a book of straightforward explanation, with accurate detail and a care of its punctuation that places it firmly within a written not spoken medium. Yet it employs metaphor for clarity, retains the traditional alliterative carving terms, and has a vitality of vocabulary that indicates a constant attention to prose style.

*The Art of Cookery* provided a rich source for both the organisation and recipes of later books. In contrast to their predecessors who happily included recipes from their acquaintances, a repeated comment in the Preface of eighteenth century writers is the distrust of imitation. Yet it is ironic that this distrust, resulting from the insistence of individual uniqueness and experience, led in practice only to many boring and inept copies of better works. The insistence on originality only encouraged conformity.<sup>24</sup> With the change in philosophic and religious attitude also came the dominance of encyclopedic knowledge. The idea that the art of cookery lies in its 'variety'<sup>25</sup> soon changed to a dependance on 'system' and 'plan'.<sup>26</sup>

It is apt that the humorous satire on the main exponents of this theme, *Culina Famulatrix Medicinae* (1806), is a medical commentary on the 'Art of Cookery'.<sup>27</sup> It not only satirises the rather pompous historical imitations of Elizabeth Smith, and the current early evolutionary whisperings in the frontispiece of a pig, entitled 'Transmigration', but also recalls the early hints on the danger of knowledge for the poor. The author's stated intention is to present recipes so that physicians can more accurately diagnose the illnesses of the rich, and operates by satirising a medical and culinary system that caters for them. Significantly, his recipes are radically different in structure from earlier models. They present the two parts of method and observation in an unexpected anticipation of Eliza Acton.<sup>28</sup>

#### STRUCTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC INNOVATIONS IN COOKERY WRITING

With system and plan came the dominance of rational logic. The eigh-



teenth and nineteenth century systems entailed detailed sequential structures, tables of contents, indices, increasingly numerous divisions of the text, and instructions of how and when to serve what course. This parallels the manner of serving food through to the multi-course dinners of the late nineteenth century. The books become more clearly organized, more accurate and more inclusive. But many also became more boring and laboured, losing their talent for judicious selection so necessary for rational logic. Some show a completely schizophrenic style as the writer moves from section to section and becomes more or less interested.<sup>29</sup> In fact individual taste was increasingly viewed with suspicion.<sup>30</sup> Having discarded the authorities of God, King and eventually the aesthetic sense of man himself, the nineteenth century cookery book retreats into the handily present self-sufficient world of technical science.

Hence Mrs. Beeton's claim to provide the 'History of the Origin, Properties, and Uses of All Things'.<sup>31</sup> While the recipes have the advantage of simplicity and are relieved somewhat by the line drawings that accompany the text, they are presented in a stern rather joyless tone. The generalizations on different sections in the text such as 'The Chemistry and Economy of Soup-Making' with its references to 'fibres' and 'cells' (51), are even more off-putting. Mrs. Beeton's quasi-scientific language, stilted shorthand presentation, and unimaginative style are the foundation for increasingly alienating and impersonal works, as the content and order of 'Reasons for Cooking' in a much later revised *Household Management* indicate:

(1) To render mastication easy; (2) to facilitate digestion; (3) to increase the food value; (4) to eliminate any risk of infection from harmful bacteria; (5) to make the food agreeable to the palate and pleasing to the eye.<sup>32</sup>

Well into the eighteenth century cookery books kept their accessibility partly through their continued use of the older devices of homilie, verse and formula, but above all through their constant attention to language. In contrast to scientific language which attempted an absolute expression free from persuasion, cookery writers recognised the inadequacy of language that was, for their purposes, exact. But it turned on them to enclose their investigations within the very terms they had invented, and to restrict discussion to initiates of the jargon. Thomas Cocke's surprising book *Kitchin-Physick* contains a comment on the new scientific language which is remarkably astute for 1676:

I did never fancy *new* affected, and oftentimes non-sensick words for *old* matter . . . But above all things, I hate that sneaking trick with daring, doubtful, and difficult words to confound *sense*, hoping thereby to make them pass for reason.<sup>33</sup>

Cookery writers were not able to so restrict their language. Neither did

they need to, as the clarity and accuracy of the prose or Hannah Wolley indicates. Further, their audience was less eclectic. And perhaps because their subject had to be pleasing to the eye as well as to the palate, they were more aware of the importance of continually reassessed presentation.

## LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Indeed a recurring motif of the prefaces is the analogy between food and language. P. Lamb in *Royal Cookery* (1716) notes the importance of those very prefaces as Bills of Fare to whet the appetite for the recipes to follow.<sup>34</sup> A natural corollary to the analogy is reflected in the parallel concern with the place of French language and French food within cookery books. Sir Thomas Mayerne comments, 'I am no fit Cooke to dresse an Epistle, and to set it forth in the Kickshaw Language, which these Chameleon Times love to feed on',<sup>35</sup> employing the triple pun on 'kickshaw', as a French word 'quelque chose', from which is derived the current name for a small tasty dish, and as such a trifling thing impeding the main business of his book. The real debate on the use of French language and food began at the turn to the eighteenth century with the accession of a series of monarchs with German rather than French connections. To return to Mr. Lamb; he states that his second edition is not only for royalty, but for private gentlemen; and as such has been simplified in language:

But because many of the Receipts are of *French* Invention, we have been obliged to make use of several Words and Expressions of that language, for want of proper Terms in our own to express them by. (A3v-A4)

While sharing concern for accessibility it also illustrates the ease with which language rot sets in. Mr. Lamb is not trying to find English substitutes. Three years later the enterprising Mr. Hall notes that his recipes are 'even instructive to Servants . . .'.<sup>36</sup> They also manage to do without French and,

the Expressing of them is so easie and instructive, that those who have read it, may go as readily about the thing, as tho' they had actually seen it done before their Eyes . . . (A3)

The reluctance of Elizabeth Smith to include French dishes is reflected in her general note that 'we have to our Disgrace so fondly admired the *French* tongue . . .'. Yet both she and Hannah Glasse use their common-sense, and where a recipe seems undoubtedly French employ its French name, not for pretentious reasons but 'because they are known by those names: and where there is a great variety of dishes, . . . so there must be a great variety of names for them'.<sup>37</sup> Mrs. Glasse is most explicit about

her language:

If I have not wrote in the high polite style, I hope I shall be forgiven; for my intention is to instruct the lower sort, and therefore must treat them in their way. For example, when I bid them lard a fowl, if I bid them lard with large lardoons, they would not know what I meant; but when I say they must lard with little pieces of bacon, they know what I mean. (iii)

The concern carries through to Eliza Acton who asks in 1845, 'why should not *all* classes participate in the benefit derived from nourishment . . .'.<sup>38</sup> It is her intention to write so that her recipes are 'readily comprehended and carried out by any class of learners'. (xxiii)<sup>39</sup>

Eliza Acton is an unusual exception among nineteenth century cookery writers. In common with the pattern of scientific writing, cookery books of this century are remarkably uniform. They appear to have lost the earlier unique attention to language. But also, congruent with the history of science is the emergence of individual, revolutionary writers who break the restrictive rational rhetoric and employ an active and involving style.<sup>40</sup> Despite daunting subtitle references to the reduction 'to a System' and the 'Principles of Baron Liebig', Eliza Acton's presentation of method, ingredients and observations is an original employment of the manner of scientific texts, but with an attention to both rational and other logics.<sup>41</sup> She gives precise, detailed quantities and instructions which are amplified and clarified by examples and discussion of personal experience. The continual qualification and suggestion in her work alerts the reader to read, not merely to look up recipes.<sup>42</sup> Hers is a use of rational analysis and technique but in combination with discussion and analogy that ensures a positive and unrestricted effect.

Acton's style is the result of a highly successful generative rhetoric which has much in common with the seventeenth century tensions between analogical and rational logic. Again, this is not to say that all such works will be creative, but it is apparent that the combination of the logics produces an attention to language and public accessibility, that ensures both artistic and social awareness. Such an awareness has been re-entering the rhetoric of cookery books since the mid-twentieth century, despite a huge majority of technical works. Since it was the generosity of mind combined with judicious choice that was partially responsible for the variety of England's eighteenth century cookery, I would suggest that it is important to maintain the current trend towards active rhetoric if we are to hope for a similar depth and scope in the cookery of the present day.

## FOOTNOTES

1. The Ramist separation between logic and rhetoric has been long discussed. See W. Ong, *Rhetoric, Romance and Technology* (Cornell: Cornell U.P., 1971).
2. W.S. Howells, 'The Arts of Literary Criticism in Renaissance Britain: A Comprehensive View', in *Poetics, Rhetoric, and Logic* (London: Cornell U.P., 1975).
3. *Ibid.*
4. From prose extract in *The Scientific Background, A Prose Anthology*, eds. A.N. Jeffares and M.B. Davies (London, Pitman 1958), p. 22.
5. T.S. Kuhn discusses this phenomenon in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (London: U. of Chicago Press Ltd., 1962).
6. W. Ong speaks of the 'commonplace' as a phrase held in common understanding with other people but used with originality. It was usual to keep books of commonplaces and homilies one particularly liked, so that one could remember and use them, *Rhetoric, Romance and Technology*, p. 257.
7. Wynken de Worde, *Boke of Kervye* (London: 1508).
8. John Murrell, *A new Book of Carving and Sewing* (London: M.F., 1638), p. 151.
9. Most of these and following groups of titles were gathered from A.W. Oxford's *Notes from a Collector's Catalogue* (London: Bumpus, 1909).
10. See A.O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge: Harvard U.P., 1961).
11. We get the expressions 'being closetted' with someone and a 'skeleton in the closet' from the same sense of the private.
12. I am indebted to Helen Wilcox for guidance through much of this material. She provides the reference for George Herbert's observation: *Country Parson* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941), p. 239.
13. Indeed an idea that would benefit from investigation is based on the strong connection of women with herbal knowledge and healing powers. Is the persecution of women as witches in the seventeenth century partially a result of the growing professionalism of medicine, dominated by men, and wishing to preserve its knowledge to itself? A similar situation occurred between doctors and mid-wives at the end of the nineteenth century.
14. Medicine and cookery had continued hand in hand as analogues until the fifteenth century. But during the sixteenth century the surgeons and doctors set up guilds to differentiate themselves from butchers; and in 1617 the apothecaries separated themselves from the grocers. However, significant advances in separation did not occur until the eighteenth century and the complete severance came when apothecaries were given licence to treat patients in 1815.
15. *The Queen's Closet Opened* (London: J.W., 1668), A3v.
16. *The Closet of Sir Kenelm Digbie, Knight, Opened* (London: Phillip Lee Warner, 1910), p. 66.
17. Sir Kenelm Digbie's scientific writing differs little, as the Treatise on the Power of Sympathy shows. The treatise itself is based on analogical logic, manipulating the power of attraction between substances so that the treatment of the one affects the other. Lest one reject this mode of logic too readily, it is well to remember that acupuncture among many other reputable

- medical practices, is based on the development of analogies between certain parts of the body, where one is treated to cure the other.
18. Hannah Wolley, *The Queen-like Closet* (London: Richard Lowndes, 1675), pp. 340-1.
  19. J. Cooper, *The Art of Cookery* (London: F.G., 1654), A2v.
  20. While the idea is clearly suspect, one should note that a duchess would be able to afford better cooks and better ingredients; and might, for rather different reasons, certainly be able to provide a better recipe.
  21. R. May, *The Accomplisht Cook* (London: R.W., 1660); E. David in *English Bread and Yeast Cookery* (London: Allen Lane, 1977), p. 314, points to May's early training in France.
  22. T. Tryon, *The Good Housewife Made a Doctor* (London: H.N. and T.S., 1962), pref.
  23. H. Glasse, *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* (London: 1790), p. vii.
  24. Elizabeth Raffald not only plagiarises most of Hannah Glasse's recipes, but also the structure and phrasing from the preface. See her discussion of style, of French names and of medical receipts in *The Experienced English Housekeeper* (London: 1769).
  25. T. Hall, *The Queen's Royal Cookery* (London: S. Barker, 1719), A3.
  26. For example, J. Farley, *The London Art of Cooking* (Dublin: Price Sleater, 1783).
  27. A. Hunter, *Culina Famulatrix Medicinae* (York: Wilson and Spencer, 1806).
  28. They also recall the very early combination of instruction on one page and 'table talk' on the other in H. Buttes *Dyets Dry Dinner* (1599).
  29. For example S. Carter relaxes and immensely improves her style as she moves from meat to vegetables in *The Frugal Housewife, or Complete Woman Cook* (London: J. Harris, 1805).
  30. S. Pegge, *The Forme of Cury* (London: J. Nichols, 1780), p. xvii.
  31. *Beeton's Book of Household Management*, ed. Mrs. I. Beeton (London: S.O. Beeton, 1861/ Jonathan Cape, 1968), p. i.
  32. *Mrs Beeton's Household Management* (London: Ward, Lock & Co., 1948), p. 105.
  33. *Supra*, p. 6.
  34. P. Lamb, *Royal Cookery: or, the Compleat Court-Cook* (London: J. Nutt, 1716), A2.
  35. Sir Thomas Mayerne, *Archimagus Anglo-Gallicus* (London: Bedell & Collins, 1658), 2v.
  36. T. Hall, *supra*, p. A3.
  37. H. Glasse, *supra*, p. vi.
  38. *Modern Cookery for Private Families* (London: Elek, 1966), p. xxii.
  39. To return to the revised *Household Management* of 1948, we find that the mid-twentieth century editors have felt obliged by mere social habit to include the French names for all Mrs. Beeton's dishes. The English themselves seem only to have exacerbated their reputation for lack of originality.
  40. See footnote 5.
  41. Elizabeth David gives an excellent criticism of Acton's style in the introduction to *The Best of Eliza Acton* (London: Longmans, 1968).
  42. *Ibid*, p. ccvii.

## KURU YEMİŞÇİ – TURKISH VARIETY AND TASTE

Alice Salmon and Hugo Dunn-Meynell

In Stamboul, the old part of Istanbul below the Golden Horn, the Mısır Çarşısı, or Egyptian Spice Bazaar, is a covered market of small shops selling meat, herbs, spices, reputed aphrodisiacs, and all kinds of commodities from baskets to fly spray. It echoes loudly. From around one corner, the noise is intense; sharp, frightening explosions precede a scooping sound and the clatter of hard objects into something metal. On our first day in Istanbul, we rounded this corner – and gasped with delight: what seemed to be every possibility in the way of dried fruit and nuts was packed into cases of brass and glass, buttressed by fruit-and-nut-filled sacks which pressed from shop into passage. The sacks crowded a weighing machine at the entrance, where spirited boys banged open bags with the jerk of a wrist, scooped up nuts and shot them into the tray of a scale.

The place was besieged by customers. All sorts of strange pods, fronds and unknown edibles hung in clusters from the ceiling, pulling us inside where the owners indicated we could try what we liked. We speak no Turkish, they spoke no English; they smiled, we smiled, tasted what we could – and were so impressed that we returned with an interpreter.

The name of the shop is Malatya Pazari; it is a *kuru yemişçi*, meaning 'nuts and dried fruit store', and a place of astonishing excellence. Neşet Eren, in her book *The Art of Turkish Cooking* (Doubleday, New York, 1969) describes the people of Istanbul as so particular about drinking water that they select it as others do their wine. Of Turkish food, she says, 'variety might catch the imagination but taste is of the essence'. At Malatya Pazari, the variety was prodigious – as was the quality of nuts warm from roasting, with a snap and a concentration of flavour possible only in the freshest state, and of raisins and dried apricots which were sweet and moist without cloying. Whoever writes about Turkish cuisine, an amalgam of Greek, Arab and Ottoman traditions, will stress the deep Turkish instinct and understanding for food and ingredients – an impression conveyed by almost everything we sampled.

The owners of Malatya Pazari are Messieurs Metin and Cetin Palanci, whose grandfather came 140 years ago to Istanbul from Malatya, an eastern market town of turbulent history, formerly part of Lesser Armenia. The Malatya Palancis were growers; the family who remained there became traders like their cousins. The grandfather prospered in Istanbul and expanded his business; his grandsons have three shops, run by eight members of the family – the fourth generation go to university