Elegant Dishes and Unrefined Truths: A Culinary Search for Identity in Eighteenth Century Britain

By the eighteenth century, French food had been clearly established as the most popular type of cuisine in Great Britain. Most professional chefs had been trained in the French tradition and it therefore never fully disappeared from British cookbooks.¹ There was however, a shift in how French recipes were represented by authors in the eighteenth century especially as political propaganda used food as an example of the inferiority of the French. Within cookbook introductions and commentary included with recipes we see an equation of French food with expense and extravagance, qualities opposed to traditional British values of frugality and economy. There was also a modification of French techniques, anglicizing recipes even if a French title remained. Published cookbooks generally targeted Britain’s middle classes, and thus express a paradox that existed between loyalty to fashion and loyalty to the nation. The cookbook industry targeted audiences that were forced to confront their desire for fashionable displays of wealth and sophistication and their economic obligation toward British patriotism.

Although cookbooks were theoretically available to anyone in Great Britain, they were clearly marketed toward an audience that was made up of the “middling sort.”² The introductions


² Cookbooks were sold in many public venues, including inns, pubs, bookstores, china shops, etc. Although most were printed and sold in London, many were sold throughout England, in places like Berwick upon Tweed, Newcastle upon Tyne, and Doncaster. Still others were printed and sold in Dublin or Edinburgh. The price was rarely printed on the title page, presumably different sellers could negotiate their own profit margins, but prices that we have available generally show a range between 2 and 6 shillings, and most were at the low end of the range.
were written for “ladies” and “gentlemen,” terms that became associated with a specific type of attitude, wealth, and sophistication rather than family history. Successful merchants, lawyers, doctors, and other professionals within Great Britain were increasingly using the word “gentleman” to describe a style of manners and affectations that were not necessarily inherited, but consciously adopted. This included clothing, social activities, and manners, attributes that one did not need to be born with but could develop over time. Along the same lines, wives of these men were identifying as “ladies,” which was marked by the ability to hire household staff and manage them, create a sophisticated atmosphere within their family home. Of course, the varied nature of the “middling sort” also included families without enough money to employ an array of domestic servants, forcing these women to adapt a more involved role in household chores. Authors recognized this variety in their introductions and appealed to all levels of this middle class, touting the need for a book of instruction to create the most elegant atmosphere possible, on whatever budget available. During a time where Britain and France were both contenders for “imperial and commercial primacy,” the nature of this “elegance” included characteristics that were traditionally British and were apart from the British conception of the French household as foreign and extravagant nature.  

The middling class, those most intimately connected with the economic success of Great Britain, was using cookbooks as a tool to emulate a social ideal, while still supporting the supremacy of Great Britain over France. 

During the eighteenth century, the economic competition between Britain and France exploded as each nation pursued colonies to augment their economic expansion. The idea of “world power” included both military strength and commercial profit, increasing the level of competition between Britain and France. Furthermore, commerce and war went hand in hand as both countries utilized their military strength to get ahead commercially, fighting for the

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dominance of trade routes as well as colonies that would provide profitable new markets. Regardless of who reigned supreme during the eighteenth century, economic competition remained at the center of British-French conflict; “trade was power.” Military exploits were interconnected with commercial ones as both Britain and France used their armies and navies to protect merchants on trade routes with known foreign competition. In political terms, wartime efforts were largely funded and supported by the middle class. “Customs and excise taxes together supplied over 60 per cent of government revenue” and “just under 40 per cent of the cost of the American war came…from merchants, financiers, businessmen and women, and even minor shopkeepers and traders” in the form of long-term loans. In addition to financial support, the British navy relied on the merchant class for military support as it was continuously supplied with soldiers who had extensive naval experience due to their economic exploits.

The middle class, which included successful merchants and craftsmen, often used food as a way to imitate the upper classes while still retaining unique characteristics and values. In general, the middling sort was fiercely loyal to Great Britain since their livelihood depended on British primacy in an ongoing Anglo-French controversy. A sentiment expressed by Sidney Mintz in 1993, that “the food of the poor is known as ‘simple and honest fare,’” while “the food of the affluent is…tainted by foreignness,” was especially true in Britain as the middle class was more likely to depend on the traditional English qualities of practicality and economy. These values were not associated with foreign cuisine, as many published cookbooks were quick to

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4 Isabelle and Robert Tombs, That Sweet Enemy: The French and the British from the Sun King to the Present (London: William Heinemann, 2006), 112. Religion also played a role in the issues between Britain and France. Both That Sweet Enemy and Colley’s Britons (11-55) discuss the role of religion in developing national identities in each country. However, for the purposes of this project, I focused on the commercial aspects of the competition because this reflected more in the analysis of British cookbooks during the eighteenth century. Cookbooks rarely, if ever, remarked on religion.  
5 Tombs, That Sweet Enemy, 64-65.  
point out. Martha Bradley’s cookbook included recipes that she called “the most Elegant, yet least Expensive,” such as “A Fricassee of Artichoak Bottoms,” a technique that was traditionally French but anglicized to save expense. This particular recipe of Bradley’s consisted of stewing artichoke bottoms in cream and butter, a departure from the traditional definition of fricassee which referred to frying meat in oil at a low temperatures to keep it white. Other expressions of frugality include one by Charlotte Mason in 1773 who assured her readers that her receipts were “by no means expensive;” another by Mary Cole in 1788 reminding her readers that “the most frugal and least complicated dishes, are generally the most excellent;” and Maria Rundell in 1816 who wrote that “every one [sic] is to live as he can afford,” providing entertainment suitable to the host’s station and fortune. As these examples show, frugality was one quality that never went out of style.

Early French and British cookbooks published during the seventeenth century focused on the art of nouvelle cuisine, the French system of cooking, manners, and food ritual. These early books were primarily used to discuss new ideas within the very small community of professional chefs. However, in eighteenth century Britain, cookbooks began to shift from covering primarily French cuisine to focusing more on traditional British cooking. Authors began to profess experience in the “English art of cooking,” rather than France’s nouvelle cuisine, developing a brand of cookery that was specifically English. This was a way for authors to take an anti-French stance during a time when promoting English cuisine over French may have been opposing the current fashion. Hannah Glasse in 1747 was the first to overtly state her negative opinions of

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7 Martha Bradley, *The British Housewife: or, the Cook, Housekeeper’s and Gardiner’s Companion* (London, 1760), 2; 183.
French cuisine in a published cookbook, although she still included a number of French recipes. She criticized Englishmen who hired French cooks, telling them that they were paying for “French tricks,” and gave several examples in her introduction of how French recipes were much more expensive than English ones.\(^\text{10}\) Criticizing French cuisine was an obvious way to show national loyalty, although many authors chose a more subtle position through a decrease in the inclusion of French recipes in their books. British cookbooks written before 1700 had a prominence of recipes with French names and techniques. This was a result of two things: first, French cuisine dominated the courts in England and was considered the most fashionable sort of cookery; second, these cookbooks were still written primarily by male chefs who were either French or who had trained under French culinary masters. After the turn of the century, the number of French recipes in English cookbooks declined as women began to dominate the cookbook industry. Their experience as housewives and housekeepers affected the content of the books and assisted in associating British cuisine with patriotism. As things heated up on a political and military stage between France and England, English subjects began boasting of their “Englishness,” moving away from French cuisine and reverting back to traditional English recipes. Political commentary used food as an example of Britain’s commercial and military superiority over the French in cartoons and pamphlets. English food was “warmly nourishing and sustaining,” which Britons believed was clearly superior to the extravagant, complicated, and insubstantial French cuisine.\(^\text{11}\)

Animosity toward the French and their food was often dependent on the professional background of the stated author, and background in the eighteenth century was heavily

\(^\text{10}\) Hannah Glasse, *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* (London, 1747), ii.

dependent upon the gender norms that existed in Great Britain at the time. Although historians often assume that cooking was always women’s work, this was not the case. While the running of a household had historically been left to women, i.e. the responsibility of ensuring that families were fed and homes were kept in order, the art and science of cookery was originally explored by men. Both men and women worked as cooks in a “professional” capacity, however women were rarely members of professional communities. Instead women were most often referred to as housekeepers or “cooks” while the terms “professed cooks” or “principal cooks” were reserved for men. In a 1723 publication, *The Cook’s and Confectioner’s Dictionary*, author John Nott told readers that his recipes were approved by “the most celebrated Cooks, Confectioners, &c… and many private and accomplish’d Housewives [sic].” What distinguished a housewife as accomplished is not stated, yet Nott clearly believed in separating out the housewives from the “celebrated cooks.” The title of “professed” or “principle cook” was meant to imply superiority, although it really only defined a difference based on gender. John Perkins, in *The Lady’s Assistant*, defined a “cook” as “that servant in whose department is the care of the kitchen in general” and repeatedly refers to the cook with pronouns like “her” and “she.”

For men, the gaining of a title was directly related to the guild system that existed in Britain and as he moved through the various levels of apprenticeship and mastership he gained new titles. For women, the trajectory of her career was dictated by societal rules regarding

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12 In this case, ‘professional’ dictates the exchanging of a service, the preparation of food, for a wage. This covers people employed in a variety of culinary professions such as private cook for a wealthy household, housekeeper, or a cook in a public place such as a tavern or inn.


14 John Perkins, *Every Woman Her Own House Keeper; or the Ladies’ Library* (London, 1796), 320.

15 The food guilds of France and Britain were very similar. After the Louis XIV’s Edict of Fontainbleau in France, which dictated the expulsion of Protestants from France, many skilled craftsmen immigrated to Britain. In addition, the ‘Grand Tour’ also contributed to the dissemination of French cuisine in Britain. British travelers to France were incredibly common and brought back with them an appreciation for the French style of cooking. This resulted in
femininity. Women were expected to learn from other women in their family, including how to cook, manage a household, and the proper etiquette for any social occasion that may arise. This specifics of a feminine education would depend on the social status of the woman in question but most women learned each of these to some degree. For male authors, the cookbook evolved from a book of ideas exchanged between the great masters to a published manual for amateurs. Although men originally dominated the published cookbook industry, they were eventually pushed out by female authors who proved to be more marketable toward an audience of housewives and female domestic servants. Without consumption statistics about the cookbooks we have no way of knowing whether a male-authored or female-authored book sold the most copies. However, we can infer certain things from the number of editions certain books went through. According to the information available, female-authored texts went through an average of six editions while male-authored texts only went through an average of three.  

In general, female-authored texts were more anti-French while male-authored texts were either overt in their appreciation of French cuisine or were at least less vocal about their dislike of it. As nouvelle cuisine was at the height of fashion at court and amongst aristocratic families during the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, the use of the term “fashion” was used consistently to refer to French food and the accompanying system of manners, service à la francaise. William Verral repeatedly listed recipes in the “fashion” of his patron, Monsier de St. Clouet, a French cook who worked for the Duke of Newcastle and under whom Verral studied. His use of the word “fashion” was associated with the French cook and he never used the term

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16 Some books written by female authors, such as those by Eliza Smith and Hannah Glasse had at least twenty editions and some only had one edition, like those written by Martha Bradley and Mary Cole. At the same time, John Farley’s cookbook had twelve editions, the most of the male-authored texts.
“elegant,” a reflection, perhaps, of his appreciation for French cuisine rather than a preference of British food. John Thacker, an author who repeatedly stated his preference for English over French food, used the term fashion in association with “Bisques and Olios” which were dishes that came from France and Spain. He writes, “Bisques and Olios were much in Fashion formerly, but are not so now,” and the statement, “I shall give you an Account of an Olio, but, in my Opinion a good English Hotch-potch is better” showed his preference for English recipes. While the association is subtle, Thacker seems to equate foreign and “fashion,” referring to fashion in a negative way. The use of the word “fashion” was used to represent either a social trend or, in referring to a process, it was used to denote a specific identifier to particular recipes. Very often the phrases “French fashion” or “Dutch fashion” were attached to recipes to distinguish the background. When discussing social trends in the latter half of the eighteenth century, authors refrained from using the word “fashion” to describe something that was considered to be under British tradition rather than French. “Fashion” came to mean something that required ostentatious displays and large sums of money. Elegance, on the other hand, was British sophistication without wasting money.

The term “elegant” was increasingly found to represent the ideal that British households should be striving for and was often found in close association to frugality. Sarah Harrison’s *The House-keeper’s Pocket Book* from 1733 included “instructions for preparing and dressing everything suitable for an Elegant Entertainment,” ensuring that her recipes united “Frugality unto Elegance in Eating.” For the middling classes, elegance was an important step in creating the sophisticated lifestyles that they aspired to live. In a world that was becoming increasingly globalized as nations sent their feelers into every corner of the globe, new opportunities for

18 Harrison, *The House-keeper’s Pocket Book*, i; vii.
economic gain were created. This meant that it was easier than ever to create a lifestyle that epitomized that of Britain’s nobility, the ultimate expression of a life of wealth and ease.

Although the world’s economy offered Britain’s middle class more chances to amass small fortunes, they were not easy to come by. For the housewives of eighteenth century Britain, frugality and elegance were necessary siblings in running a sophisticated household. One author professed that her bills of fare were “designed to fit out an Entertainment in an Elegant Manner, and at a Small Expence” while another published a book that “[provided] the cheapest and most elegant set of Dishes in the various Departments of Cookery.”

John Perkins assured his readers that “frugality and elegance were our constant conductors” in the compilation of recipes for *Every Woman Her Own Housekeeper.* Mrs. Frazer was even careful to avoid the use of the term “fashion,” instead telling her readers that the recipes included are “presently in vogue” and that she was careful to “reconcile simplicity with elegance, and variety with economy.”

Similarly, Alexander Hunter used a synonym for the word “fashion,” telling readers meat should be prepared according to the “modern costume [sic],” but dished up in an “elegant manner.” Furthermore, the use of the word “elegant” was almost always used on the title page, which would attract attention immediately. This suggests that authors used it as a prominent marketing tool, especially because the text from title pages was often used in advertisements in local newspapers. An advertisement for a new edition of Sarah Harrison’s *The House-Keeper’s*

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20 Perkins, *Every Woman Her Own Housekeeper*, iv.
22 Hunter, *Culina Famularis Medicina*, 262.
Pocket Book appeared in London newspaper in 1775, and included the phrase “elegant Entertainment.”

Aside from these subtle references to the differences between “fashionable” and “elegant” taste, some authors were very overt about their feelings toward the French and nouvelle cuisine. The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy, by Hannah Glasse, was first published in 1747, and tensions between the British and French were very high in the Americas and Europe. These tensions were clear in Glasse’s book as she expressed her dislike of French extravagance through examples of how the French wasted money and time. Anne Willan describes Glasse’s pro-British sentiment in a clear and concise way, writing that “Mrs. Glasse…had her finger on the pulse of the nation, and her rhetoric was stridently anti-French, in tune with the debate about the debilitating qualities of French cuisine – with all its physical, financial, and even social costs.”

She wrote about French chefs in Britain who cooked meals with the most expensive ingredients possible, a testament to the “blind Folly of this Age, that [gentlemen] would rather be impos’d on by a French Booby, than give Encouragement to a good English cook.” Chapter III was titled “Read this Chapter and you will find how expensive a French Cook’s Sauce is.” This is one of the first reflections of the paradox of using French recipes while still maintaining a sense of British loyalty. Although fashion dictated the necessity of serving French dishes, Glasse clearly criticized those who made recipes with traditional French methods. Several other sections of the cookbook also gesture to this by listing a recipe both in the French way and in the English way. For example, in Chapter II, “Made-Dishes,” she

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24 London Evening Post, December 27, 1775.
26 Glasse, The Art of Cookery, 2.
27 Ibid, 53.
28 Ibid, 2; 22.
lists a recipe titled “To stew a Rump of beef,” followed by another called “To stew a rump of Beef the French Way.” Another example, one that appears in a later edition, is “To make white bread, after the London way” followed by “To make French bread.” Glasse also anticipated possible criticism that she could ensue using French names for recipes, telling her readers that “whether they be call’d by a French, Dutch or English name, so they are good and done with as little Expence as the Dish will allow of.” As Kate Coloquon phrases it, although Glasse did include recipes that were labeled with French techniques, these recipes were still “suffused with a very ‘British’ kind of cooking.”

Many other cookbooks listed French and British recipes side by side for readers to compare, often calling the British recipes “common” or “cheap” to highlight the expense of the French recipe. Elizabeth Cleland’s *A New and Easy Method of Cookery* included a recipe for “Partridges à la Braise,” that implied the complex nature of French recipes. The title was French, with the phrase *à la braise* and was twenty five lines long, twice as long as any other recipe in the chapter. John Farley in 1783 took a page from Glasse’s book and listed “To make French Bread” directly after “To make white bread in the London manner,” allowing readers to compare the two and presumably come to the conclusion that the London manner was the best way.

John Thacker published his cookbook in 1758, two years after the official start of the Seven Years War with Anglo-French tensions at a very high point and he was very upfront about his anti-French sentiments. In fact, he even claimed that many dishes with French names were “invented by the English; and the French Names have been given them to excite Curiosity.”

Although most of his recipes are listed with a French name as well as an English one, his

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introduction told readers that he included them to prove his expertise, but still preferred recipes that were better for an “English stomach” and not “destructive to the English Constitution.”

Thacker tried to stay away from including recipes that were too expensive, telling readers that he wanted to avoid “Dishes a-la-mode de France, as they call them; in which the Mixture of Spices is so great, and the Expence [sic] so extravagant, that it frightens most people from using them.”32 The French dishes that he felt obliged to include, illustrating his many years of experience in the art of cookery, were dissected and used “such Ingredients as are healthful and pleasant to the Stomach.”33 Finally, Thacker’s introduction attacked foreign cooks in general, telling readers that although he had worked with cooks from several different nations, he professed that he had never met “a Foreigner who had so sound and good a Way of working as an old English Cook.”34

Anglo-French tensions did not end with the eighteenth century, as evidenced by the Napoleonic Wars and various other problems between Great Britain and France. For Alexander Hunter, editor of *Culina Famulatrix Medicina* published in 1806, the cuisine of Great Britain was the most admirable, representing a “manly and national character.” In Napoleonic-era British propaganda food was often equated with gendered national characters. The British were portrayed as masculine through the consumption of roasted meats, strong gravies, and hearty puddings while the French were seen as feminine from eating thin soups and escargot. Hunter called roast beef the “pride and glory of this happy island,” warning that if the people of “England discards Roast Beef,” they would lose their identity.35 He consistently listed British recipes and ingredients as superior to those of the French. As editor of the cookbook, Hunter did

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33 Ibid., preface.
34 Ibid., preface.
35 Alexander Hunter, *Culina Famulatrix Medicina; or Recipes in Modern Cookery* (York, 1806), 6.
not actually write any of the recipes included, they were written by “Ignotus,” but included his own personal observations and commentary for nearly every entry. His comments regularly included suggestions on replacing foreign ingredients with English ones, or how French recipes were very complex. The recipe for “A French Soup,” for example, includes an observation that tells us “this is a most excellent tasted soup, but the preparation is attended with a great deal of trouble.” In line with his views on the greatness of roast beef, after the recipe that describes the French way of roasting larks, Hunter says “perhaps it would be an improvement to fill the birds with forcemeat made of beef.”

There were several kinds of French recipes that remained in cookbooks throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Sometimes, an author would explicitly state “the French way” when listing a recipe to denote its origins. Most often however, the author would use phrases that indicated a French technique. The most common were _en daube_, _à la braize_, and _fricassée_. Although these terms were continually included in published cookbooks, even into the nineteenth century, the definitions changed drastically. What these three terms have in common is the tendency for British authors to apply them to recipes that did not follow the original French technique. The terms “daube” “braise” and “fricasey” became mainstream in the world of British cookery, with the definitions and spellings changing over time. Authors frequently adapted them to the availability of ingredients in Great Britain and anglicized the techniques to apply them to other processes. _En daube_ originally meant preparing meat or vegetables in a pot with wine or vinegar to emphasize the flavor, but serving them dry without an accompanying sauce.

According to the evidence, by at least 1755 a more common usage of the term was “daube” or

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36 Hunter, _Culina Famulatrix Medicina_, 147.
37 Ibid., 249.
“daubed.” John Farley’s recipe for “Beef à-la-daub” instructed cooks to stew the beef for six hours with garlic, mushrooms, onions, and carrot with brown gravy completely covering it. After the six hours, the cook should skim off the fat and add white wine, vinegar and more vegetables, stewing for another hour. The recipe does not, however, give instructions on how to serve the dish and whether the gravy should be siphoned off the meat and vegetables before serving. Cookbooks from the nineteenth century rarely used the term at all, only applying it to recipes for meat and calling for the meat to be served with the liquid from the pot it was cooked in. Maria Rundell in 1816 included a recipe for “Veal a-la-daube” which was very different from Farley’s in 1783. Instead of stewing the meat and vegetables in gravy with white wine and vinegar, the meat was covered in broth and bacon and simmered in a frying pan for two hours. It was then served with a sorrel-sauce. By the time Rundell published, the term *en daube* had already lost its original meaning.

À la braize was a term that was originally applied to meat dishes and is close to what modern cooks call a “pot-roast.” The term referred to first searing the meat to brown the surface and then placing it in a covered dish with some sort of liquid covering at least two thirds of the product. The dish was then cooked at a very low temperature until the meat was tender and the liquid was generally used in a sauce or gravy to accompany the meat when it was served. E. Taylor’s recipe for “Chickens à la braise” from her 1769 cookbook used this method. She instructed cooks to use a deep stew pan with layers of veal, bacon, and onions underneath the chicken and covered in water. After simmering for an hour, the chicken would be ready to serve

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38 In general, Elizabeth Cleland in *A New and Easy Method of Cookery* used italics to express a recipe that was foreign, for example “White Scots Collops” (62), “To make Dutch Beef” (51), “Tripe the Polish way” (74), “To dress a Pig the French way,” (65) and “To make Bologna Sausages” (68). However, any recipe that uses “daube” in the title does not italicize the word, suggesting that by the time she published in 1755 it was no longer considered a foreign technique. Ex. “To dress Eels à la Daube” (29) and “Beef à la Daube” (49).
40 Rundell, *A New System of Domestic Cookery*, 47.
41 Alan Davidson, ed. *Oxford Companion to Food* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 244.
and the liquid used in a ragoo to accompany the dish.\textsuperscript{42} Rundell’s “Fillet of Mutton braised,” however, instructs cooks to roast the mutton for two hours without any kind of liquid and then serve it over French beans in gravy.\textsuperscript{43} Rundell’s version of “braise” from 1816 shows that the technique had been changed by the turn of the nineteenth century.

A third French technique that was anglicized over time was a method of cooking called \textit{fricassee}, which referred to frying meat, generally chicken, in oil at low temperatures to keep it white instead of browning.\textsuperscript{44} British cookbook authors generally wrote it as “fricasey” and applied to it many types of food beyond chicken, changing the process to either brown the meat rather than keeping it white or excluding frying altogether.\textsuperscript{45} Charlotte Mason in 1773 even included a recipe for “Eggs fricaseed” in her cookbook. The instructions tell readers to hard boil an egg and serve it with a boiled gravy made up of cream, flour, butter, mushrooms, and various herbs and spices. Not only does Mason apply the term \textit{fricassee} to something other than chicken, the instructions include no mention of frying the egg in oil.\textsuperscript{46}

John Thacker anglicized his recipes in a different way in his cookbook published in 1755. All of his recipes were listed with both an English title and a French translation. However, the translations did not always match up exactly to the English title, occasionally including or excluding a regional affiliation. For example, a pea soup recipe is listed as “To make Peas-Soup” and “Potage aux Pois à l’Angloise,” with the French name most directly translating as “Pea Soup the English way.” At the same time, two recipes that include a reference to Devonshire in the

\textsuperscript{42} Taylor, \textit{The Lady’s, Housewife’s, and Cookmaid’s Assistant}, 49-50.
\textsuperscript{43} Rundell, \textit{A New System of Domestic Cookery}, 71.
\textsuperscript{44} Davidson, \textit{Oxford Companion to Food}, 320; Ken Albala, \textit{Food in Early Modern Europe} (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2003), 96.
\textsuperscript{45} Hannah Glasse, \textit{The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy} (London, 1747). Some examples are: “to make a brown fricasey,” “to fricasey rabbits, lamb, sweet-breads, or tripe,” or “a fricasey of kidney beans.”
\textsuperscript{46} Mason, \textit{The Lady’s Assistant}, 231.
English title do not have the affiliation in the French translation.\textsuperscript{47} In all of the instances of the translations not matching up there is some kind of regional affiliation that did not translate between the two languages, telling us that there were obvious differences in how the British and the French viewed specific dishes.

The eighteenth century also showed a tendency for cookbook authors to move away from a dependence on foreign goods, evidenced by suggestions to replace foreign ingredients with a British equivalent. Alexander Hunter provided his readers with notes for each recipe suggesting changes and improvements to the original recipes written by a cook named Ignotus. Very often, this commentary included suggestions of using a British ingredient rather than a foreign one. His replacement of foreign ingredients did not just include things considered too French, but also indicated a change in the perception of foreign cuisine overall. For example, for almost every recipe that calls for Parmesan cheese Hunter recommends replacing it with “cheese of our own country.” In fact, \textit{Culina Famulatrix Medicina} has four different recipes for “Macaroni,” all originally calling for the use of Parmesan and all containing a note from Hunter telling the reader to replace it with either Cheshire Cheese or a cheese “known by the name of ‘Trent Bank.’”\textsuperscript{48} Hunter apparently felt that British national identity meant cutting out any kind of dependence on foreign goods, instead using British goods first and foremost.

Many other authors frequently recommended the replacement of foreign goods with British ones, like Hunter’s replacement of Parmesan cheese. Authors who also recommended the disuse of Parmesan were William Verral in 1759 and Charlotte Mason in 1773 who both preferred Cheshire Cheese.\textsuperscript{49} This is in comparison to Clermont in 1769 who included ten recipes

\textsuperscript{47} Thacker, \textit{The Art of Cookery}, “To make a Squob Pye as they make it in Devonshire / Paté de Pigeoneaux” on page 127, and “To make Clouted Cream, as it is made in Devonshire / Crème brouillée” on page 136.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 19; 27; 56; 70.
\textsuperscript{49} Verral, \textit{A Complete System of Cookery}, xx.; Mason, \textit{The Lady’s Assistant}, 234.
that called for Parmesan cheese.\textsuperscript{50} Clermont’s recipe for “Macarony Soop,” which calls for Parmesan Cheese, does mention that Cheshire Cheese can be used instead, but in the interest of frugality rather than loyalty to British goods.\textsuperscript{51} Where Hunter routinely refers to “the cheese of our country,” Clermont simply says that Cheshire can be used if you wish to “save Parmesan Cheese” for another use. Mrs. Frazer’s recipe for “A Macaroni Pie” in 1791 includes Parmesan cheese as one of the ingredients but also includes a note that “good double Gloucester cheese” would work just as well as Parmesan.\textsuperscript{52} The publication date may provide us with an explanation as to why some authors chose to recommend a decrease in the dependence on Parmesan. William Verral published in the middle of the Seven Years War, a time when British supremacy over France was the main goal but global interests were also at play. The Seven Years War has occasionally been termed the first “world war” since it played out on an international stage and involved many different European players. Although it was not necessarily Britain against the world, the economic basis for the war suggests that British citizens may have been more inclined to profess patriotic loyalties through an insistence on using home-grown goods. The modern phrase “buy local” is reminiscent of the Britons’ desire to support their home economy rather than continually importing goods from places like Italy or France. Similarly, 1773 marked a tense time for Britain as the government was dealing with backlash from their thirteen American colonies. A resistance to mercantilism by the colonies could have resulted in a Loyalist insistence on the use of British goods in order to set an example for those who wanted free markets, such as Charlotte Mason’s suggestion of replacing parmesan with Cheshire cheese.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{50} Clermont, \textit{The Professed Cook}, 56; 58; 60; 122; 163; 217; 351; 372; 446; 458. These include recipes like “Beef’s palates and Parmesan,” “Omelette with Parmesan-cheese, &c.,” and “Small chitterlings with Parmesan cheese.”

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 23.

\textsuperscript{52} Frazer, \textit{The Practice of Cookery}, 103.

\textsuperscript{53} For a more complete discussion of British mercantilist policies in the eighteenth centuries see the article by Steve Pincus. “Rethinking Mercantilism: Political Economy, the British Empire, and the Atlantic World in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” in \textit{The William and Mary Quarterly} 49 (2012): 3-34.
There are three possibilities for why authors chose to replace Parmesan with Cheshire and although cookbooks tell us that this replacement was a fact, there is not enough evidence here to understand all the motives behind why it happened. It could have been that experts in the field of cuisine recognized that Cheshire cheese really did do better in Macaroni recipes than Parmesan. Or, from a practical perspective, the naval warfare during the Seven Years War likely made it extremely difficult to get Parmesan cheese, as merchants were often required to assist with the war and blockades occurred in many ports along the trade routes. Finally, the 1773 replacement by Charlotte Mason could be evidence of an ideological aversion to Parmesan cheese based on patriotic loyalty. Although we do not have enough evidence to support a conclusion about why authors were replacing Parmesan with a cheese made in Great Britain, it popped up in British cookery books at various times throughout this period, interspersed with authors who do not write in alternatives to Parmesan. This means that cooks as a rule did not necessarily think that Parmesan was better or worse than British cheeses and the replacement in cookbooks was probably due to one of the other two possibilities discussed here.

This project answers questions not just about culinary history or food history, but also about the history of identity in eighteenth century Great Britain. Observing how cookbooks evolved over time into a manual of instruction for amateur cooks and housekeepers reveals a gendered perspective. Gender norms and stereotypes in eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain dictated what roles that men and women were allowed to take, based on what society determined was ‘right.’ In the world of cuisine, men were allowed to approach cuisine from a professional stance and were historically the inventors and innovators of food. The original male cookbook authors coming out of France in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were food artists. On the other hand, women could only approach cuisine through the lens of the private sphere. Relegated
to the household due to feminine stereotypes in Great Britain, the women who wanted to establish a professional presence as a cookbook author framed their books within these stereotypes. Drawing on experience as wives, mothers, and housekeepers, female cookbook authors sold themselves as experts in all matters of the household, not just as cooks. Cooking offered women an opportunity to venture into the world of professionals, a realm supposedly dominated by men, yet food also kept women within the stereotype of the home.

Furthermore, cookbooks in the eighteenth century were used to make subtle political statements regarding the difficulty in defining national loyalty. Political fervor was reflected in cookbooks as authors expressed opinions about foreign food during wartime, and most cookbook authors were overtly anti-French. Yet, even with political tension high, there was a certain expectation to include French recipes in these published cookbooks. France had an unmistakable influence on the social atmosphere of Great Britain as French food, clothing, and manners were considered highly fashionable. However, a desire to appear fashionable was affected by political struggles that were anti-French; cookbooks offer a window into this paradox as authors simultaneously included French recipes while criticizing French techniques and cook that used them. While the search for national identity was an ongoing process between 1750 and 1850, it was not necessarily a priority on an individual level. The population was actively trying to grapple with identity issues associated with gender, what was proper for men and women, while collectively projecting an image of a united Britain. As English was touted as the ideal version of “British,” Scots, Irish and Welsh sectors of society were attempting to maintain their own cultural heritage. At the same time, women were trying to gain control over the world of cooking, an area that had traditionally been classified as the private sphere and therefore the place of women, but professionally had been dominated by men. In an age of empire and
revolution, developing a consistent national identity seemed to be the focus as the great European powers lost colonies and gained new ones. At the personal level, however, the priority was discovering one’s place within a globalized world.