

***À TABLE: THE IMPACTS OF GLOBALIZATION ON FRENCH  
CUISINE***

An Honors Fellows Thesis

by

NIKKI LEIGH GARVEY

Submitted to the Honors Programs Office  
Texas A&M University  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the designation as

HONORS UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOW

April 2010

Major: International Studies  
History

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## ABSTRACT

*À Table*: The Impacts of Globalization on French Cuisine. (April 2010)

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Cuisine is an important aspect of the French culture that has been developing for centuries. It is internationally known and considered by some to be the best in the world. However, as a result of globalization, the increasingly interconnectedness of the world, la cuisine has been affected both positively and negatively. On one hand, the French are witnessing rapidly increasing obesity rates across the country as they are turning to places like McDonald's instead of the more refined and truly French options available to them. In addition, wine consumption rates have decreased within the country, while, at the same time, there has been an increase in cases of binge-drinking and underage drinking. However, it has encouraged famous French chefs to become more innovative in order to maintain competitiveness with up and coming chefs from other parts of the world. Advances in technology have also aided in the ability of using fresh, new ingredients that are not grown locally. It has also allowed for considerable cultural exchange. Overall, effects of globalization have created changes within the French culture that are affecting people all over the world.

## **DEDICATION**

*À la famille Biboud*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my family for pushing me to do my best in everything I try to accomplish. They have been a great support system for me and I would not have made it to this point without them. In particular, I would like to thank my Mother, Donna. She has been my go-to person for all problems big or small and basically my rock.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

According to French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, French cuisine is “*la meilleure gastronomie du monde*” [the best gastronomy in the world]<sup>1</sup> (Merle, 2008). Through hundreds of highly rated restaurants, both within France and around the world, an internationally recognized French style of dining has reached all cultures. French traditions such as the use of only fresh ingredients, perfectly refined regional specialties, not to mention their famous wines and cheeses, have been known to make stomachs everywhere growl in longing. The reputation of French cuisine has inspired many to come study in world-renowned kitchens like those at the *Cordon Bleu* cooking school, at which famed American cook Julia Child learned her craft. This influence has been able leave such a lasting impression, in part, because of the phenomenon of globalization.

Globalization affects all aspects of culture from music to clothes to mannerisms and of course, traditions of national cuisine. Technological advances, such as commercial airplanes and the Internet, have allowed people and ideas to travel long distances at more affordable prices and at faster rates. Accordingly, many people have decided to immigrate or simply travel to foreign countries, where they can learn from and observe other cultures and possibly integrate parts of them, such as techniques for completing a

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This thesis follows the style of *French Cultural Studies*.

<sup>1</sup> All translations were performed by the author.



task, into their own. This cultural exchange sometimes flows in the opposite direction as well. Over time, the greater public may adopt the cultural practices and rituals of foreigners and, as a result, we are moving toward a global society, where neither distance nor location prevents a person from participating in a given culture. The implications of this have been both positive and negative. For example, curious American tourists, who travel to Western Europe hoping to find something completely different from that in the United States, are surprised to find American companies, such as McDonald's and Starbucks, are just as prevalent abroad as they are at home. However, globalization may also have positive implications because it allows the people of the world to share significant advances in both technology and stylistic techniques. Nevertheless, globalization is a very real phenomenon that has had very real implications on culture.

While spending a semester in France during my undergraduate career, I was able to observe some of the implications of globalization first hand. The most easily identified foreign influence was that of the United States. The French teenagers and young adults I observed were often seen wearing products from American companies such as Abercrombie & Fitch, a favorite of my host sister. The popularity of American movies, television shows and music were also striking, but the most disheartening evidence of American influence would have to have been the presence of American-style restaurants, particularly in Paris. Since in France, "*la cuisine, c'est de la culture,*" [the cuisine is the culture] (Merle, 2008) I was quite disappointed. Here I had come all this way to

experience some of the best of what France had to offer in the area of cuisine, and there was evidence of my own nation staring me in the face.<sup>2</sup> I was witnessing actual examples of globalization, something I had studied many times and in many classes. American pop culture had come into France and left a stain, particularly on *la cuisine*. McDonald's France can boast over 1,000 restaurants and "*plus d'un million de consommateurs chaque jour dans ses restaurants*," [more than a million consumers each day in their restaurants] (Guay, 2009). Since this concept interested me, I became determined to learn more about the implications of globalization.

Because of its distinct cultural affinity, French cuisine<sup>3</sup> provides an excellent case study for considering globalization. *La cuisine* has had a long tradition and developed into something truly French. As noted French gastronome Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin explained, "*Les animaux se repaissent; l'homme mange; l'homme d'esprit seul sait manger.*" [Animals feed, humans eat, but only those with refined tastes know how to dine.] (Petit-Laurent, 1999). The French cherish their culinary traditions, but in spite of that, some of the once treasured aspects of it have been on the decline in recent years as a result of outside influences and new nations are coming to the forefront. Social problems such as obesity and alcoholism have also emerged within the population. In response, the French have garnered a significant amount of national support in favor of keeping the cuisine pure and regaining its status as truly world-renowned. Changes to

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<sup>2</sup> This is not to say that Americans are the only nation whose influence has affected French culture, it was just the most easily identifiable to me, being an American myself. Other cultures were also identifiable, but will be discussed in greater detail in later sections.

<sup>3</sup> By cuisine, I refer to not only the specific recipes but also various culinary techniques and individual day-to-day practices involving food and drink.

this aspect of their culture affect the entire nation, not only popular Michelin guide three-starred chefs like Guy Savoy, who explains that France has

*une ‘culture gastronomique’ à laquelle ne participent pas seulement les grands restaurants, mais aussi charcutiers, boulangers, fromagers, vignerons, confiseurs...”* [a ‘gastronomic culture’ within which the big restaurants are not the only participants, but also butchers, bakers, cheese makers, wine growers, confectioners...] (Merle, 2008)

French cuisine has become an important symbol of French culture and identity and its decline represents a loss of something treasured by all those who have experienced it.

## CHAPTER II

### WHAT IS FRENCH CUISINE?

*“Dis-moi ce que tu manges, je te dirai ce que tu es.”*

[Tell me what you eat and I will tell you who you are.]

- Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, *Physiologie du goût* (Petit-Laurent, 1999)

This old adage only begins to explain the importance of *la cuisine* within the French culture. Their traditions date back centuries and provide a strong basis for the claims that French cuisine out ranks all others. Regional specialties create a significant amount of diversity throughout the nation, which, according to some, cannot be matched. In addition, the hours spent together around a table profess to the social importance of an everyday event. Each of these things has helped shape French cuisine and defines its status as a cultural icon.

#### **A brief historical overview**

Although French cuisine has become the standard against which all other national cuisines are compared, it has not developed without some foreign interference. One of the earliest notable influences was Italian in flavor. Catherine de Médicis (1519-89), who married French King Henry II in the sixteenth century, brought along with her Italian chefs and their culinary techniques. In Enlightenment philosopher Dennis Diderot's *Encyclopédie* (published in the 1750s) it is explained that

The Italians inherited the art of cookery from the Romans; it was they who introduced fine food to the French... During the reign of Henry II, cooks from beyond the Alps came and settled in France and we are eternally indebted to this motley band that served at Catherine de Medici's court... The French, finely attuned to the flavors that should dominate each dish, quickly surpassed their masters who were soon forgotten. From that moment on... they could pride themselves in the knowledge that the taste of their cuisine had surpassed that of all others... ('Food and Cuisine in France', 2003)

From this excerpt it is apparent that to the French, their reign as supreme in the culinary arts began centuries ago. Although the beginning is often attributed to Catherine de Medici's arrival, there is evidence that early forms of cookbooks were produced and popularized in France in the fourteenth century ('Food and Cuisine in France', 2003). Innovations in cuisine continued as France moved out of the Middle Ages and in the late 1600s, King Louis XIV and his lavish tables gave dining a more refined quality. He commissioned

about 100,000 cookery books...[which] codified the new art of cooking in the French style...us[ing] butter and cream, white meats, and tender fruits and vegetables, but excluding the excess use of spices and sweet and sour flavors...[which] were attached to medieval culinary traditions. (Pitte, 2002: 35)

The provisions he outlined have served as the basis for what are now common French practices. In the seventeenth century, the French also adopted some techniques used in their colonies and by their European neighbors. Coffee, tea, sugar cane and chocolate

were all introduced into the French gastronomy at this time. However, these influences came slowly and some dishes, such as hollandaise sauce (see Appendix A) and crème Chantilly have remained practically unchanged since their creation three hundred years ago (Pitte, 2002: 35).

Another important innovation, which occurred in the late 1700s, was the development of the restaurant, inspired in part by the forerunner of an English tavern. This marked the first time when a patron was supplied an individual hot portion, which could be custom ordered, and given a place in which to consume his or her food. Variations on this, which involved one or the other of these practices, had existed, but this marked the first time in which they were combined to create the culinary experience that is commonly associated with dining outside of the home. According to David Fromkin (2001: 73), “the rise of the Paris restaurants paralleled the rise of France’s reputation as the home of great food.” This development and the subsequent decline of the aristocracy aided in the spread of French gastronomy. When aristocrats were forced to abandon lives of luxury, their highly trained chefs found themselves out of work and began cooking in restaurants throughout the French kingdom. Hence, their skills and recipes were able to reach a greater population than before. More innovations followed including a division of labor in the kitchen, which allowed for faster preparation of meals. Terms such as *saucier* and *rôtisseur*, which designate that specific person’s task in the assembly line format of preparing a dish in a formal kitchen, also originated in France at this time. These terms are still used today and highlight France’s continued influence on the formal kitchen.

Despite the fall of the aristocracy, dining in restaurants remained reserved for the most part to wealthy, while the rural poor continued to eat less refined fare until the invention of the automobile, which opened up the French countryside. This invention provided restaurants further opportunities for success, as chefs were able to move out of the big cities of Paris and Lyon and into rural France, where they could operate more cost-effectively and had access to fresh produce daily. This development also enhanced the popularity of regional cuisine because chefs used the region's signature dishes and techniques in their cooking. Tourists, both from Great Britain and the United States, also contributed to the success of restaurants as they enjoyed French cuisine while on vacations in the sunny French Riviera (Fromkin, 2001: 74). Their accounts of these experiences also helped to promote French cuisine's highly esteemed international reputation.

After the Second World War, France began a period of decolonization, during which many former colonists immigrated to France. As a result of the presence of these immigrants, exotic restaurants began to open, particularly in Paris. The French enjoyed these new culinary experiences, but tended to avoid mixing the flavors of foreign cuisines with their own, for the time being. However, effects of immigration have significantly impacted French cuisine. For example, evidence of Turkish immigration can be seen through the prevalence of kebab shops. The kebab is traditionally a type of sandwich made of lamb meat stuffed into either Turkish bread or pita bread with onions, lettuce, tomatoes, sauce and is sometimes served with fries. This sandwich has become

very popular among the French people and according to a study by the Gira Cabinet Council, 250 million kebabs a year are consumed within the nation (Ennahar, 2009). However, these restaurants are a far cry from the typical French dining experience. Kebab-snacks, as the venues are called, are characterized by large counters, behind which stands one or two people, a self-service drink refrigerator, and sparse or simple decorations. Nadine, a patron of a ‘kebaber’ in the suburbs of Paris explains that, “The kebab-snack has a friendly side, traditional, and near the neighborhood that are not found at all in the traditional fast-food chain where the atmosphere is quite cold despite the trendy décor,” (Ennahar, 2009). She is drawn to the restaurant because of its foreign aesthetic; it is different from other forms of dining and therefore exciting. It is also significant that Nadine chooses this style of dining over her nation’s traditional fare.

As new ideas were coming in, great French chefs were also traveling around the world. They brought back new techniques, products and methods of presentation, which they used in their own cooking. This led to a new phase known as *Nouvelle Cuisine* [New Cuisine]. Some elements of *Nouvelle Cuisine* include the use of steaming, crunchy vegetables, raw fish, the use of soy in whipped butters, and the Japanese style of presentation. In particular, Japanese style emphasizes a clean look that uses colors and shapes to create an artistic effect on the plate because they believe that this enhances the overall dining experience (Symons, 2010). Other factors such as health concerns, weight issues and the reintroduction of “humble products” like potatoes resulted from both Northern European and American influences (Pitte, 2002: 36). Although *Nouvelle*



*Cuisine* represents a time when the French explored the cuisines of the world, it still retained some of its original flair through continued use of butter rich sauces which create that mouth-watering French flavor. Nevertheless, influences from around the globe are clearly present throughout the history of the cuisine's development.

On the whole, French cuisine is considered to be superior for several reasons. Its long history has created an aura of appreciation simply based on the wisdom it exudes. It has also proved to possess a certain amount of vitality in that chefs feel an obligation to continually improve upon the work of those who came before them. It was a French chef, Auguste Escoffier, who was the first to become internationally recognized for the craft. In France, a person's relationship with food encompasses far more than mere nourishment. The fact that the term *cuisine* is used to describe any national food that has reached the realm of refined dining, is a French word also implies a certain amount of prestige. Overall, "no other cuisine has had such a sustained influence on the cooking of its neighbors, nor can any other claim to have exerted as universal an impact on professional cooks around the world, as that which developed in France" ('Food and Cuisine in France', 2003). The French model is the original and in its attempt to adapt to new challenges, like globalization, it has changed over time. Some have claimed that this has resulted in a decline in the quality of French cuisine, but the French tradition has several things that other nations lack, such as their delicious regional specialties that define each area of the nation. As chef Guy Savoy explains,

*La France est le seul pays où on a une telle diversité et de telles possibilités de transformation des produits des artisans de la terre et de la mer.*[France is the only country to have such diversity and such possibilities for transforming the artisanal products of the land and of the sea.] ('Cuisine: Sommes-nous Les Meilleurs Du Monde?', 2008)

As long as these regional specialties continue to exist, France will always be able to offer some of the delicious cuisine for which it is known.

### **Regional specialties**

The abundance of regional specialties is one of the things that make the French culinary tradition unique. As Ester Laushway (2001: 29) describes, "Each region, each city, even the tiniest village grows some prize produce or makes a local delicacy, usually steeped in tradition, so that any tour of France can be a culinary odyssey, with memorable meals acting as milestones along the way." A person could travel the country sampling a new dish from each region without ever becoming bored or eating the same thing prepared exactly the same way. The French love to use seasonal fruits and vegetables and cater to the climate of the region. For example, heavier dishes like *gratin dauphinois* are made in the higher altitudes of the Rhône-Alpes region, whereas fresh fish are a common staple in the Mediterranean French Riviera.

In an article titled "Food tour of France: a culinary odyssey," Laushway divides the nation into several regions, including Paris as a separate entity. She describes the types

of food prepared in each region and some of the specific ingredients used in that area. For example, in the west, there is a tradition of using fresh seafood, particularly lobster or salmon. This is also the region that produces the famed Camembert cheese of Normandy, which is initially soft and crumbly but becomes creamier as it ages. The southeast is home to the city of Lyon, which rivals Paris for gastronomical capital of France. This region also boasts a wonderful tradition of home-style cooking and various “stick-to-your-rib dishes” that compliment the chilly climate (Laushway, 2001: 32-33). Although Paris has never developed distinct regional specialties, the best of each region can be found in a single location as some of the finest chefs in the world combine the best culinary techniques of the nation.

In the southern part of the country lies the region of Provence, which has attracted tourists for centuries because of its warm and sunny climate. It even inspired the Peter Mayle book, *A Year in Provence* (1991), in which he chronicles his life after moving to a vineyard in southern France. Provence is home to beautiful fields of lavender that spread across the hillsides. This region also claims a number of other herbs and spices that give the food of this region certain flair, which cannot be found elsewhere. *Herbes de Provence* is a mixture that includes thyme, rosemary, marjoram, savory, oregano, tarragon, and sometimes lavender (Jones, 2007: 43). Some of the region’s signature dishes include *ratatouille*, *pistou*, and *salade niçoise*. *Bouillabaisse*, a fish stew, is also a popular choice from the region.

The protection of these regional specialties can sometimes cause considerable controversy. For example, the eastern part of the country, which shares a border with Germany, is known for its production of various types of sausage and heavier dishes. It is also the birthplace of *foie gras*, a delicacy made from duck or goose liver. In fact, 83% of the world's *foie gras* is produced in France and more than 90% is consumed there (Ganley, 2005). *Foie gras* has been the source of recent debate, however, because of the means used to produce the fatty livers necessary for the dish. Some groups are claiming that force-feeding these animals is inhumane and should not be allowed to continue, however, the dish and its means of production have been defended by the national government. As France considered some changes to its agricultural policy, an amendment to the bill was approved sans opposition that declares the dish to be “part of the cultural and gastronomic patrimony, protected in France” (Ganley, 2005). This is just one example of French pride in their regional specialties and the lengths to which they will go to ensure their survival.

France is also home to numerous fresh air markets in which fresh produce can be consumed or purchased a few yards from where it was grown. For example, when I was in Nice, a beautiful city in the region of Provence, there was a lovely open-air market in which several stands had been established that offered various types of products native to the region. The vendors sold all different types of fruits, vegetables, nuts, flowers, and olive oil, all of which were produced in the area surrounding the city. Local artists would also situate themselves near the markets so that they could sell their works while

creating their next masterpiece. Upon entering the market, one would be greeted by an enticing aroma of lavender combined with the smell of fresh fruit that would not only draw in tourists of the popular vacation destination, but natives as well. These markets are important not only to the culture, but also to the individuals working in them, who depend on them for their livelihood.

These practices are indicative of the importance of France's culinary tradition to the people. As Jacinthe Bessière (1998: 28-29) explains, "The cooking traditions of a specific area reveal the character of the society and mentality of its members. These traditions are an obvious legacy of those who lived before us..." The French, who value history and tradition as evidenced by the presence of hundreds and hundreds of museums, apply that same affinity for history to their love of cuisine. Although their cuisine has developed over time, the traditions of the past are not forgotten. One such tradition, the use of fresh, locally grown produce in everyday cooking, highlights the importance of quality even when dining at home. In fact, many of the signature products, such as Camembert from Normandy or mustard from Dijon, have specific labels that denote their origin and ensure the quality of the product (Bessière, 1998: 25). There is also a desire to protect the producers of these products so that their wonderful products are not lost, which is why President Sarkozy proposed a new policy that would protect agricultural producers during his presidency of the EU in 2008 (Bremner, 2008). Also, in 1990, the government created a National Council of Culinary Arts, which has attempted to ensure the longevity of French cuisine by educating schoolchildren, establishing a

program to protect and promote local specialties and traditional French products, and by creating a survey of regional dishes to ensure their continued production (Wells, 1995). These efforts denote the centrality of French cuisine to the culture as a whole and showcase the importance of keeping it pure, which is why the effects of globalization on cuisine and culinary practices can be so detrimental. For example, the French are known for enjoying long, luxurious meals, a practice that is rapidly declining as a result of foreign influences.

### **French meals**

The French generally eat several times a day. The morning meal is referred to as *le petit déjeuner*. This usually consists of tea, *café au lait* or hot chocolate (for children) and a slice or two of bread spread with jam, butter, or even Nutella, a tasty chocolate-hazelnut mixture. The French drink their morning beverage out of a wide rimmed bowl that is designed to accommodate dipping their bread. In recent years, cold cereals of both French and imported brands have grown in popularity as breakfast items. Later in the mid-morning adults will enjoy *un petit café* to revive them. It is typically taken without milk and therefore not considered to contain much nutritional value. Fresh-brewed black coffee can also be found in vending machines at many high schools, rest stops and other businesses (Abramson, 2006: 107). The next meal is *le déjeuner* and typically occurs between noon and two o'clock. The length of this, and most meals emphasizes the importance of socialization in French society. Traditionally, businesses close during this time to allow for some relaxation during the workday. As a result of this long break

however, work and school days extend into the late afternoon (Abramson, 2006: 108). After school, children look forward to their *goûter*, or snack. This can be many different things but is typically something sweet and serves the purpose of satisfying the children until it is time for dinner. During the week, *le dîner* is often an abbreviated version of the several course meals that may occur on the weekends to accommodate busier schedules. For example, during the week one might have an *entrée* of a salad made of fresh greens with a homemade Dijon-vinaigrette followed by a *plat principal* [the main dish] of some sort of meat or pasta. My host mom made excellent Quiche Lorraine or *gratin dauphinois*, a creamy potato dish that is native to the area of Grenoble in which we lived (see Appendix A). A glass of wine might also accompany the meal, which would finish by either cheese or a simple dessert of a piece of fruit or plain yogurt with added sugar.

Typically, a weekend meal is more representative of the older traditions because more time is spent on its preparation; however, a meal in a restaurant can also compare. First consider the tradition within the home. The typical meal begins with an *aperitif*, an alcoholic beverage for those of age. At my host family's residence, particularly if we were celebrating something like a birthday, they would serve champagne. Next for an *entrée*, my host mother would often serve a salad with her homemade mixture of Dijon mustard and balsamic vinaigrette that has a good kick to it and one Saturday, when the whole family came together, she served homemade *steak tartare* as the *plat principal*. This turned out to be one of my favorite dishes, although it was a bit startling at first because it consists of raw calf meat that is specially prepared with a raw egg and some

other flavor additives, like onions or various spices. During these two courses, whether during the week or on the weekend, fresh-baked bread is placed on the table and either a piece may be torn off or the loaf sliced. The next course will be *le fromage* at which time a plate of several different types of cheese from the different regions of France may be passed around for guests to sample with or without bread. Finally the meal will conclude with a sweet dessert like a *gâteau chocolat* baked from scratch, which may be enjoyed right away or after the guests have had some time to digest their food. Meals at home provide an excellent venue for promoting the value of dining together as dishes are passed around the table and people will help to serve one another bread or beverages.

Restaurants on the other hand tend to be more individualized. For example, one of my favorite meals in Lyon began with a glass of *kir*, a mixture of *crème de cassis* and white wine. At that same restaurant, I had my first *salade lyonnaise*, which consists of lettuce and endives, hot *lardons* [bacon], croutons, all topped with a poached egg and a Dijon vinaigrette dressing. That was considered my *entrée*, and for the *plat principal* I chose *cuisses de grenouille* [frogs' legs], which had been flavored with a delightfully spiced breading. However, my friends, who had joined me that afternoon, both ordered completely different *entrées* and *plat principaux* because we all wanted to sample a different delicacy from that region. Nevertheless, we all finished our meals with personal-sized chocolate *crème brûlées*. This particular meal in Lyon, which consisted of a *salade lyonnaise*, *cuisses de grenouille*, and *crème brûlée* is an example of a *menu prix fixe*, where one price is paid for a choice among an several *entrées*, *plats principal* and



*desserts*. In this instance, the price was about 16€ (\$22). *Les menus prix fixe* are common among all types of restaurants and are typically less expensive than purchasing items off the menu *à la carte*.

Although these practices can still be observed in France today, the effects of globalization have caused a few small changes. For example, some of the cereals now consumed at breakfast are American brands promoted through American advertising. Also, the changes in business practices required to compete on a global market have necessitated the need for longer work hours and less time for a long lunch. In general, busier schedules have affected the evening meal during the week as mentioned above. “In fact, the average French meal, which 25 years ago lasted 88 minutes, is just 38 minutes today,” (Sciolino, 2006). The French can now be found eating in front of the television or even alone, something that would have been unheard of a few decades ago. A poll was taken in January 2010 of 1,345 readers of the French magazine *Madame Figaro* and 2,061 readers of the BBC’s culinary magazine, *Olive*. The results claimed that the British are actually spending more time on meals than the French. 72% of the British cook at home each day compared with only 59% of the French and while they are in the kitchen, 50% of the British respondents spend more than thirty minutes cooking while only 27% of the French do. In addition, the French eat out three times per month on average compared to twice a month for the British. While these results may be perceived as shocking given France’s high regard for its cuisine, one person responded to the findings by explaining that “*Le temps passé dans la cuisine n’exprime en aucune*

*cas le talent culinaire encore moins la culture de goût*” [The time spent in the kitchen does not in any case explain culinary talent let alone cultural flavor] (Agence France Presse, 2010). Despite current trends, the design of these meals, typical choices in food and their emphasis on the social aspect of a meal make these dining experiences distinctly French and culturally significant. As Jean-Robert Pitte, head of the project to protect French cuisine through UNESCO’s Intangible Heritage program, explains, “Ninety-nine percent of the French think it’s an essential part of our culture, even if people don’t take as much time to cook,” (Passariello and Gauthier-Villars, 2010: A16). However, this lack of time to cook has led some to reach for quick fixes like fast food.

## CHAPTER III

### FAST FOOD IN FRANCE

It is not uncommon to go into a French restaurant and leave three hours later after having enjoyed several courses of food and drink. This happened to me several times and the time passes much more quickly than would be expected. It also allows the patron to enjoy each course and eat it slowly. This sharply contrasts the typical American dining experience in which servers are focused on their next tip and a quick turnover. In France a service charge is included in the bill, so the time spent around the table is typically much longer. This can become a hassle if you are in a hurry, which was not an issue a few years ago when the typical French person was allowed two hours for lunch and many chose to go home during that time. However, as a result of globalization and more demanding business practices, a need arose for a quicker way to grab a meal on the go. In France, this could mean grabbing a sandwich *à emporter* at the shop down the street or going to one of the fast food restaurants that are popping up all over the nation.

#### **Why turn to fast food?**

The French economy has been notably sluggish since the 1980s and as a result, the need for an affordable means of eating out created a market for a fast food in France. Rick Fantasia (1995: 205) explains that various social factors have also affected French eating habits. He lists five major factors including “less emphasis on family mealtimes... the expansion of the *journée continue*... and increased urban traffic congestion.”

Traditionally, in France there was much focus on family meal times. This was not limited only to the late evening meal, but also included lunch because French workers were allotted enough time to go home during their lunch breaks. The “*journée continue*” that Fantasia describes refers to a movement away from this practice and toward a shorter lunch break which requires workers to stay closer to their place of business and facilitates the need for quick meals. Increased urbanization also dissuades workers from going home mid-day because of the time it would take to make the journey. This lack of time has also prevented some working wives from making their daily rounds to the butcher, baker and local market to buy fresh ingredients for the day’s meals. Instead of visiting each of these shops individually, *supermarchés* such as the French Carrefour (similar in design to the Wal-Mart Corporation in the United States) provide a one-stop shop for people on the go. These social changes, which have created the need for a fast-food industry, have made it all too easy for globalization to affect French cuisine and French eating habits.

In addition to the economic reasons listed above, fast food has been popularized through the youth’s interest in the product. In the early 1970s, a rebellious young post-WWII generation was drawn away from the ideals of their parents and became intrigued by the American aesthetic provided by McDonald’s, in particular. For them, fast food represented a departure from the ways in which their parents experienced dining. When asked, some French adolescents explained that the “minimal contact with adults was viewed as one of the most positive features of going to a fast food restaurant” (Fantasia,

1995: 223). As such, McDonald's and other restaurants like it represent a sense of freedom and independence for the youth. They enjoy the sharp contrast with the traditional formal meals typically enjoyed by the French because they can eat "by hand," "the tables are not set" and there are "no precise meal times" (Fantasia, 1995: 223). In a more traditional French restaurant all of these formalities are strictly observed and one generally orders several courses as opposed to the *à la carte* menu provided by fast food joints. Other adolescents seemed to enjoy the American atmosphere because it was noisy and they could "talk loud and nobody minds" (Fantasia, 1995: 223).

The appeal of the American culture as proliferated through this restaurant had a significant impact on the success of the industry. This exemplifies the impact of globalization. The French youth learned of America practices as they appeared in their own country and then began to incorporate them into their daily lives. As time passed, fast food became more common and other chains, like Burger King or Quick have also enjoyed success. This is not, however, to make the claim that traditional forms of eating are completely *passé* nor to argue that French youth prefer this type of restaurant exclusively. It is merely to present evidence that this type of eating has grown in popularity as a result of a foreign company moving into the country and becoming accepted to a certain degree by the culture, as proven through its monetary success. This specific example of globalization is evident throughout the country and has been enjoyed by many, however as Bernard Ramouneda a chef of *Le Florida* explains,

*Dans un monde qui se globalise, il faut qu'il y ait des choses qui restent. La cuisine fait partie de notre culture, on ne va pas tous manger des cheese-burgers avec des saloperies dedans. [In a globalizing world, it is necessary that certain things remain the same. Cuisine is a part of our culture; one cannot always eat cheeseburgers full of worthless crap.] ('Cuisine: Sommes-nous Les Meilleurs Du Monde?', 2008)*

And yet, the French are turning to *le burger* at alarming rates.

### **McDonaldization**

When it comes to fast food and globalization, the American original always comes to mind. Of course, McDonald's restaurants, referred to as McDo (pronounced mac-dough), can be found throughout the country, even on the Champs-Élysées and more recently across from the Louvre museum. McDonald's alone can boast "1,161 restaurants dans 859 communes" and "1.7 million de repas [sont] servis chaque jour en France" [1,161 restaurants in 859 cities and 1.7 million meals are served each day in France] (McDonald's France, 2010). "The McDonald's on the famed Champs-Elysees Avenue is the most profitable in the world" according to the chain's executive Jim Skinner (Ganley, 2009). This is in part because the French, although they may visit the restaurant less often, consume more food during each visit, according to the Vice-President of the French division, Eric Gravier and they expect their success to continue.

*Après avoir vu ses ventes progresser de plus de 11% en 2008 à 3.3 milliards d'euros, la filiale française table sur environ +10% en 2009. [After seeing their*

sales progress by over 11 percent in 2008 to 3.3 billion Euros, the French franchise is banking on an increase of over 10 percent in 2009] (Guay, 2009)

Financially, McDonald's has met with considerable success, however this did not come without some adaptations from the original American model and a continual struggle to appeal to the French population.

Various aesthetic changes were made from the American original to accommodate French tastes and preferences.

*Ce pays n'a pas de tradition de fast-food et les barrières étaient difficiles à franchir. Nous nous sommes adaptés en développant des restaurants plus haut de gamme,* [This country does not have a tradition of fast food and the barriers were difficult to cross. We are adapting by developing restaurants that are more upscale] (Guay, 2009)

explained the CEO Jean-Pierre Petit. In fact, much of the early success of McDonald's can be attributed to a man named Dennis Hennequin. Hennequin became president of McDonald's France early in its inception and made some significant decisions that have impacted the chain's longevity and success. Among the most obvious of the choices he made include the design of eight different architectural models from which franchise owners could choose (See Appendix B). "Stripped of the fluorescent lights, white tiles, and red and yellow plastic booth of the original American import, many French outlets now feature leather upholstery, wood floors and fireplaces" (Willging, 2008: 209). This

change in aesthetic has created an atmosphere that is familiar to the French because it is similar to their more traditional dining experiences.

Along this same line, they also chose to incorporate several items of a more traditional fare on their everyday menu. In addition to the Coca-Cola products that have long been associated with the American chain, beer is served in the French restaurants. They have made salads, fresh fruit and nutritional information available to their customers. Despite this, “*Ils ne représentent que 15 à 20% de nos ventes car l’essentiel se fait toujours sur des produits classiques mais ils sont très importants en terme d’image,*” [They only represent about 15-20% of our sales because the bulk is always made up of our classic products, but it is very important in terms of our image.] (Guay, 2009) clarifies Petit. McDonald’s France has gone even further to include their versions of French food such as the ‘Croque McDo,’ which is the McDonald’s adaptation of a French *croque monsieur* (See Appendix B for image). According to the McDonald’s website, the Croque McDo is

*Le plus craquant des croques. Un croque monsieur tout rond composé de deux tranches d’emmental fondu, une tranche de jambon cuit supérieur, le tout dans un pain toasté.* [The most irresistible of *croques*. A round *croque monsieur* composed of two slices of melted Emmental cheese, a slice of ham cooked to perfection, all on toasted bread.] (McDonald’s France, 2010)

Perhaps the most drastic change from the American-style restaurant occurred in October 2009 when they were testing the incorporation of table service to accommodate an older



clientele in about a dozen restaurants (Guay, 2009). This change is evidence of cultural mixing. American McDonald's is adapting its aesthetic to appeal to the French population, while still providing them with an American experience and tastes.

### **GMOs**

However, not everyone appreciates this foreign influence and one of the major concerns of farmers in particular is the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). GMO refers to an advance in technology has allowed food producers to genetically alter a good to increase its production. José Bové, a leader of several protests against this practice, claims that "GMOs are just a way of privatizing agriculture, a way of keeping farmers from having control over their own seeds- it's a way to make agriculture as profitable as possible" ('A World Struggle Is Underway', 2001). He disputes the notion that GMOs are preventing much of the world from starvation by claiming "There is more than enough land to feed everyone...Not to mention hundreds and hundreds of acres of uncultivated land owned by the wealthy, while the poor have no access to the soil" ('A World Struggle Is Underway', 2001). Bové and those who agree with him have also expressed considerable concern about this practice because of the possible side effects on the health of those who ingest them. However, despite this, it is a practice has been used widely throughout the United States. In 1989, "the European Union, supported by France, [banned] the import of hormone treated beef, which [made] up almost 90 percent of US beef production" (Willging, 2008: 201). Because McDonald's is an American corporation, the use of this type of beef in their products was a common practice. In

1999, this practice was brought to the attention of the French population in a very public incident involving Bové. A number of sheep farmers, led by Bové, vandalized a McDonald's that was still under construction in Millau, France in response to the imposition of a 100 percent tariff the United States had placed "on a number of luxury food items from France and Italy especially...to pressure the EU into accepting hormone-treated beef" (Willging, 2008: 202). In an interview Bové explains that the event "was not anti-American, it was anti-malbouffe," ('A World Struggle Is Underway', 2001) a term that literally translates to 'bad-eating' and is commonly associated with junk food. *Le malbouffe* represents the opposite of everything associated with traditional French cuisine. According to Bové, "The poorest of the poor eat at McDonald's...It's not a model of high class culture, not by a long shot. It represents the worst of the malbouffe" ('A World Struggle Is Underway', 2001). Others have shared his opinions and the 1999 protest was widely publicized, particularly because it resulted in Bové's arrest. In response to this negative publicity, McDonald's France made some significant changes to its image in order to regain the favor of its French clientele.

After the incident, the leaders of McDonald's France embarked on a campaign that would ensure the public of the quality of the food sold at their local McDonald's. One of these tactics involved an impressive display at the annual *Salon International de l'Agriculture* in Paris a few years ago. The company used brightly colored signs to attract attention to their use of French produce and meats. It sent the message that though the chain was American, the product was French. In fact, by 2001 "McDonald's France

was sourcing 75% of its ingredients domestically,” a fact that was ignored by farmers as they openly applauded Bové’s efforts (Steinberger, 2009). Nevertheless, these efforts, on both the part of the farmers in encouraging the use of locally grown products and McDonald’s acquiescence to this request, show that some negative effects of globalization can be curbed if the public expresses enough concern. This event also highlights one positive effect of globalization as well. Given France’s sluggish economy, McDonald’s provided a place for local farmers to do business and a cheap place to dine. This could explain the paradox between the French government’s attempts at keeping globalization away from their beloved cuisine and the fact that they allowed a tax break for diners at restaurants classified as ‘take out restaurants.’ At McDonald’s the *TVA* [value-added tax] is only 5.5% as opposed to 19.6% at other traditional French restaurants like cafes and brasseries (Steinberger, 2009). This has caused some concern among the French people who feel that it is promoting the wrong idea by encouraging diners to frequent a cheap alternative as opposed to something that is truly French. The way in which to handle the effects of globalization continues to be a source of debate for the French government.

### **Obesity**

The French Institute of Textiles and Clothing conducted a study from 2003-2005 using 3-D imaging technology, which has the capability of noting 85 different measurements simultaneously. Those between the ages of five and seventy were measured in various locations so that a representative sample of the population was considered. The results

showed that France is getting fatter. The French woman today weighs an average of 137.6 pounds and is about 5'3" tall compared with 133.6 pounds and 5'2½" tall in 1970. The average French male is about 5'7½" tall and weighs about 170.6 pounds today compared to 158.7 pounds standing at 5'6" in 1970 (Doland, 2006). The study attributed possible reasons for the change in weight to diversity, increased access to sports and different eating habits. "Since 1970, France has been inundated with fast food restaurants, and families spend less time together at the dinner table and more time eating in front of the television" (Doland, 2006). Significant weight gain is even more startling among children. In one case an eight-year-old boy who stood at four feet six inches and weighed 95 pounds was counseled by his pediatrician to cut out his morning pastry, oasis soft drinks, and after-school Nutella-on-bread because he was in danger of becoming obese (Sciolino, 2006). However, this little boy is not alone. In his hometown of Roubaix, 51% of the population is overweight or obese, while 42% is the national average (Sciolino, 2006).

Rising rates of obesity, which are not limited to France, can be attributed to a number of factors including restaurant food, which is generally prepared less healthily than would be at home. In particular the heavily processed food found in fast food restaurants is a commonly blamed for rising obesity in the youth who are drawn towards this type of eating. It is also seen as a problem particularly in people of lower classes who choose to eat at fast food restaurants for economic reasons. "The rate is higher, 22%, among those earning less than 900 euros (\$1,343) a month. Among those who made more than 5, 301

euros (\$7,910) a month, the rate was just 6%,” (Wahlgren, 2009). Eating healthily can be expensive and on a tight budget, there is more emphasis placed on eating in general rather than eating well. French nutritionist Mitzi Dulan attributes this problem to other factors. She says, “I would imagine that with this weight gain, they have increased their portion sizes, and people aren’t as active. We all need to eat less and move more,” (Wahlgren, 2009). This rebukes the long believed notion of the “French Paradox,”- the idea that people of France are able to eat creamy and rich foods without severe health problems - because they are not controlling their portions and are moving towards a sedentary lifestyle.

Despite these statistics, France, when considered against other developed nations, is relatively ‘thin,’ however, at its current rates, France could become as obese as those in the United States in 2007, where one in three persons was considered obese. French senator Claude Saunier said,

*À ce rythme, notre pays devrait atteindre le taux d’obésité américain vers 2020, ce qui impliquerait une charge annuelle de 14 milliards d’euros pour la seule assurance maladie. [In this fashion, our country could attain American obesity rates by 2020, which would cause an annual charge of 14 million euros for this malady alone.] (Agence France Presse, 2004)*

In France, the health care system is socialized and a problem of this magnitude could cause significant financial strain on the nation. The government has established an “*Agence nationale de lutte contre l’obésité*,”[National agency to combat obesity]

(Agence France Presse, 2004) which will be financed by a tax on food products to help control this problem. The government has also passed laws that ban soda and snack vending machines in public schools and imposed a 1.5% tax on food advertisements that do not promote healthy eating. For example, advertisers of unhealthy foods must recommend that their targets “*mangez au moins cinq fruits et légumes par jour*” [eat at least five fruits and vegetables a day] (Agence France Presse, 2007) which may be displayed at the bottom of the screen at the end of a television ad like a disclaimer. Only time will tell if these measures are able to curb the effects globalization on France’s weight gain.

## CHAPTER IV

### WINE AND ALCOHOL

In addition to their long tradition of creating fine cuisine, the French have been working in the vineyards for centuries. Originally produced by peasants for personal use, wine is now one of France's biggest exports. Its popularity in part stems from its diversity. France is an ideal place for growing grapes because of the close supplies of water and good soil; as a result, different types of grapes are grown in different regions of the country. France claims thirteen different wine growing regions with thousands of vineyards and Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz grapes all originated in the country (Wine, 2010). In fact, with all of their regional diversity, "France's wines encompass every single one of today's major grape varieties for the New World wines, with the exception of *sangiovese* (which, in any case, is really a fringe variety outside of Italy)" (Ewing-Mulligan and McCarthy, 2003).

The French organize their wine regionally and bottles may be given one of four grades. The most sought after wines usually have the *Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée* or AOC rating. These wines must follow the strictest rules considering methods of growing, localization, grape-variety, and minimum contents of alcohol. In addition these wines are tested to ensure superiority. From there, the quality of the wine decreases to *Appellation d'Origine Vin De Qualité Supérieure* (AOVDQS), followed by *vin de pays* and finally *vin de table*. The rules and regulations on each of the categories after AOC are more and

more lenient, making the quality AOC labeled wine the most desirable. Nonetheless, the last two categories, *vin de pays* and *vin de table*, represent 65-75% of the wine produced in France and are inexpensive enough to be consumed on a regular basis (Terroir-France, 2010). In my experience, it was common for a glass of wine to accompany dinner almost every evening, a practice that highlights the French attitude towards eating and consuming alcohol. Meals represent a time for socialization and relaxation where families or friends can come together over a good meal and drinking wine is a big part of this. A poll for the monthly magazine *L'Histoire* asked readers “Être Français, c’est selon vous d’abord...?” [To be French it is, according to you, most important...?] and the third most popular response, after ‘being born in France’ and ‘speaking French’ was “*Aimer le bon vin*” [to enjoy good wine] (Office National Interprofessionnel Des Fruits, Des Legumes, Des Vins, Et De L'Horticulture, 2009). Wine represents another aspect of the French cultural identity and as such needs to be protected so that it can continue to flourish. Traditionally, the almost daily consumption of wine is meant purely for the pleasure of enjoying a good glass of wine and not for the purposes of becoming intoxicated. According to the *Office National Interprofessionnel des Fruits, des Légumes, des Vins et de l'Horticulture* (2009),

*Accompagnant le plaisir du gastronome, le vin de qualité ajoute à l'impression de fête. Boire du bon vin est un geste festif, convivial et raffiné un acte civilisateur.* [When accompanying the pleasure of a good meal, quality wine adds the impression of festivity. To drink good wine is a festive gesture, friendly and refined, a civilizing act.]



As a result of these beliefs, in years past, the French have not struggled with excessive amounts of alcohol-related social issues. However, this has begun to change as a result of foreign influence and globalization.

### **Changes in consumption**

The legal drinking age varies across the world, and in some cases there are even separate laws for different types of alcoholic beverages. Such is the case in France. According to French law,

*il est interdit de vendre ou d'offrir à des mineurs de moins de 16 ans des boissons alcoolisées, et seuls les vins, bières et cidres peuvent être proposés aux mineurs de 16 à 18 ans.* [It is illegal to sell or offer alcoholic beverages to minors under age sixteen and only wine, beer or ciders can be sold to those between sixteen and eighteen years of age.] (Dryef, 2008)

However, in practice, this law is not always obeyed. The news website, *Rue89*, tested this theory by sending three minors to different locations to see if they could in fact purchase alcohol. The results proved to be very interesting. Each of the three participants met with some success in purchasing different types of alcoholic beverages. The most shocking case was perhaps the twelve-year-old boy who, after attempting his purchase at six places of business, was refused at only two. In the end he was able to purchase two bottles of red wine, one bottle of beer and one can of beer. The next child was a boy of fourteen who also met with similar success in his attempts. He was able to purchase a bottle of vodka, a beer, a bottle of red wine and a mixed drink. Finally, the third

participant was a sixteen-year old female who was able to purchase 4 drinks all made with hard liquor, which is supposed to be illegal until a person is eighteen.

The reactions of the participants and their parents were also recorded but the views were somewhat mixed. The mother of the youngest participant explained that she was not worried that he had been able to purchase the alcohol because she trusts her child. The barman who refused to sell to the youngest participant had this to say,

*Il est trop jeune. Parfois, je leur vends des bouteilles, mais uniquement quand je connais les mômes et que je suis certain que c'est leur parents qui les envoient. Mais je dois faire attention, les flics ne rigolent plus avec ça.* [He is too young. Sometimes, I sell them some bottles, but only when I know their mothers and I am certain that their parents sent them. But, I need to be careful; the police are no longer going to go easy on that.] (Dryef, 2008)

Other vendors had similar responses. They felt that selling alcohol to minors should be illegal but that the law that was being proposed at the time was inadequate. Some of their responses are listed below:

*Je suis pas flic. Je vais pas vérifier des cartes toute la journée.* [I'm not a cop. I won't spend all day checking identity cards.]

*S'ils achètent pas l'alcool ici, ils le trouveront ailleurs. Ou enverront quelqu'un d'autre. C'est assez hypocrite.* [If they don't buy alcohol here, they will find it elsewhere. Or they will send someone else. It's somewhat hypocritical.] (Dryef, 2008)

These vendors gave the general impression that the problem was inevitable and it was not really worth their time to try and control it, nor their responsibility. Another vendor feels that responsibility for controlling alcohol consumption in children rests on their parents. The mother of the fourteen-year-old did express some surprise that the barman would serve her son, even if he looked to be of age. She questions the barman's actions considering the conditions surrounding her son's attempt.

*...une bière seul en pleine après-midi? Il n'était pas avec des copains, dans une ambiance festive... [a beer all alone in the middle of the afternoon. He wasn't with friends or in a festive atmosphere...]* (Dryef, 2008)

Overall, these responses reflect the general view towards alcohol in France. France is a country where the consumption of alcohol was seen as purely for pleasure and not for the purposes of becoming intoxicated. The parents were not worried about their children's ability to acquire alcohol because they did not expect them to use it inappropriately. This notion however seems to reflect the older generation's views as the younger generation seems to be following the model of certain young American celebrities like Lindsey Lohan, who are given media attention for their many episodes of intoxication. These discrepancies in views towards alcohol could easily be attributed to the effects of globalization. As the younger generation is exposed to American pop culture, for example, they have begun to move away from the traditional values their parents and grandparents hold. The youth will have begun 'binge drinking' on hard liquor instead of moderately enjoying a glass of wine. If this trend continues, it may

possibly lead to greater social problems like alcoholism that have not previously existed in this nation to this extent.

Another concern is that per capita wine consumption within the country has declined in the last few decades. In 1980, the French drank on average 120 liters of wine annually. By 2008 that number had dropped to about 55 liters, according to a study done by the University of Montpellier. The study suggests that the cause of this decline is that young people are not drinking as much wine as their parents. About 50 percent never drink wine and only 10 percent drink it regularly (Macle, 2008). Despite this considerable decline, however, France remains among the world's top overall wine consumers, but the movement towards consuming other alcoholic beverages could pose several problems for France as time progresses, particularly in areas of health. Instead of drinking a small amount daily, this group of people is instead turning towards binge drinking on the weekends, often consuming beer and cocktails because of their availability in nightclubs and bars (Macle, 2008).

Another factor that may have aided in this decline is the hosting of *les open-bars* by brand-name alcohol companies. The concept of this event involves an unlimited amount of alcohol for those who attend and targets those between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five. At these events, attendants receive merchandise bearing the brand's logo, which they wear after the event promoting that particular type of alcohol. In addition, attendants would often participate in binge drinking where they ingest massive amounts

of alcohol in order to become intoxicated as quickly as possible. The images of these parties that were displayed in the French media are reminiscent of a stereotypical ‘out of control’ fraternity party, where all accepted social norms have been completely discarded and chaos is all that remains. Unsurprisingly, these events have become so popular among the younger generation that it has caused concern on the governmental level.

In March 2009, a piece of legislation was being considered that affected the sale and consumption of alcohol throughout the nation. This legislation made *les open-bars* illegal and set criteria for an event to be considered as such. The three criteria included (1) offering unlimited amounts of alcohol for free (2) having a commercial goal in mind and (3) presenting a brand name (Bourget, 2009). The law also prevents the sale of alcohol and tobacco to those under eighteen on Monday and Tuesday nights, the sale of alcoholic beverages at service stations between the hours of 6 P.M. and 8 A.M. However, there is some concern that the ambiguous language of this law will make difficult to actually enforce (Bourget, 2009). Nevertheless, the governmental actions being taken to prevent binge drinking and other alcohol related problems show how serious this problem has become and how globalizing influences can affect not only a nation’s culture but also its health.

## CHAPTER VI

### OTHER IMPLICATIONS OF GLOBALIZATION

Besides the imposition of a fast food culture and the changing practices of alcohol consumption, the implications of globalization on *la cuisine* can be seen in other ways. Not only does it affect the cuisine within France, but also through globalization, French cuisine has spread throughout the world. In addition, there has been a new trend towards fusion foods that combine different types of cuisine in one meal. With all of these changes it is interesting to note the French response, whether it be among *agriculteurs* like the extravagant protest led by José Bové or from a head of the government such as President Sarkozy himself. Nevertheless, globalization is affecting French cuisine and whether these effects are wholly positive or negative remains to be seen.

#### **Cuisine and the world**

In an interview with a writer for the UNESCO *Courrier*, Alain Senderens answered a few questions regarding French cuisine and globalization. He explained that he does agree that

*des courants mondialistes traversent donc la cuisine comme ils traversent tous les autres secteurs de toutes les sociétés.* [Globalizing currents are traveling through cuisine just as they are traveling through other sections of all societies] (‘Alain Senderens: La Cuisine Entre Les Deux Feux’, 2001)

Yet, he denies that one model of food will be used throughout the globe. He does admit that personally he has been greatly inspired by Asian cuisine and was one of the first to use soy sauce in his cooking. In reference to the decline of traditional cuisine, Senderens explains that changing roles of women in French society have increased the necessity for ready-made dishes. He laments the fact that “*la cuisine est passée de la ménagère à l’industrie,*” [the cuisine has passed from the home to industry] (‘Alain Senderens: La Cuisine Entre Les Deux Feux’, 2001) as more and more supermarkets are carrying this type of prepared food. He cites this change in the home as the source of the problem by explaining that future generations will not be exposed to great cuisine like their ancestors were. Instead of turning to good food, they will simply eat anything. In these ways, Senderens portrays globalization negatively. However, on a more positive note, he does express a kindness towards it in reference to resulting new technologies, such as those that allow products to arrive from different countries, almost as fresh as when they were harvested. This honors the French tradition of using fresh products in their cooking while allowing for the possibility of using products that are not grown locally. Senderens seems to view the implications of globalization in both positive and negative ways. He is comfortable with the changes because they have allowed him to be innovative in his craft, but laments the fact that economic difficulties and resulting ready to eat meals have led to a decline in the traditional French cuisine within the country.

Not only is French cuisine affected within the country, but it is also influencing the practices of other cultures, which can be seen through the numerous French restaurants

found across the globe. French cuisine has become synonymous with fine dining and as such has attracted much attention from curious outsiders. This single aspect of the French culture draws in thousands of tourists each year and has been the subject of hundreds of travel journals and thousands of cookbooks, such as Julia Child's *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*.

While living in Paris with her husband in the post-WWII era, Julia Childs studied at the *Cordon Bleu* cooking school where she 'mastered the art.' She enjoyed her experience so much that she co-wrote (along with Simone Beck and Louisette Bertholle) the famous cookbook that taught Americans how to cook like the French in easy language and with familiar ingredients (Child, Bertholle and Beck, 2009). As Child explains, "What I was trying to do was break down the snob appeal. There was the great mystery about it, and you didn't tell people what was going on. What I tried to do was demystify it," (Smith, 2009: 238). Consequently, the recipes are quite lengthy and include suggestions of wines and side dishes that will help to create a complete meal (See Appendix A). Nevertheless, it became a huge success after a review published in *The New York Times* in 1961 by Craig Claiborne, who claimed it was "probably the most comprehensive, laudable, and monumental work on the subject," (Claiborne, 1961: 47). The public must have agreed because by 1974 *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* had sold 1.4 million copies and became one of the century's best-selling cookbooks. (Smith, 2009: 240).



Child has also written a number of other cookbooks but much of her success can be attributed to her cooking show, *The French Chef*, which aired from 1963-73. Accessible during primetime on an educational channel, *The French Chef* gave Child the credibility she needed to become a major sensation in the culinary arts. Although physically unsuited for television, “her honest, folksy manner, and natural charm came through to the television audience,” (Smith, 2009: 238). More recently, her persona returned to the limelight as her life was chronicled in the highly acclaimed box office hit, *Julie and Julia* (2009), in which a Julie Powell cooked her way through *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, while writing an online blog about her experience. Through Child’s personal experiences in France at the *Cordon Bleu*, she was able to gain the tools necessary to bring French cuisine down from its pedestal and into the everyday lives of the American people.

Americans are not the only ones inspired by *la cuisine française*.

*Regardez aussi, ces ‘chefs nés au Japon ou en Argentine, que les noms de Ducasse, de Robuchon, de Bras faisaient fantasmer, qui ont appris leur métier dans l’Hexagone, et qui y ont ouvert leurs propres restaurants, Masashi Igichi à Valence, Maruo Colagreco sur les hauteurs de Menton... [Also consider those chefs born in Japan or Argentina that drool over names like Ducasse, Robuchon and Bras, who learn their craft in France, and who open their own restaurants there, Masashi Igichi in Valence, Maruo Colagreco in the uplands of Menton...]* (‘Cuisine: Sommes-nous Les Meilleurs Du Monde?’, 2008)

These chefs, after learning French traditions, also open restaurants in other parts of the world, including Korea. In a June 2008 edition of *The Korea Herald* an article appeared entitled “French cuisine enjoys a rebirth,” which describes the growing popularity of French cuisine and French style restaurants in Korea. The article claims that Koreans are attracted to “the charm of French cuisine” and the recent increase in wine consumption, particularly French wines, has also generated a significant amount of interest in *la cuisine* (Oh, 2008). Korean-French fusion foods can also be found in the United States. Seattle boasts multiple French-Korean restaurants. One called Qube opened in November of 2006 and featured *prix-fixe* options such as ‘three items done three ways.’ For example, if beef was the item chosen, the patron could receive “sake-braised oxtail with lemongrass, spicy Asian keftah with chickpea salad and a bulgogi brochette marinated with soy and Asian pears,” (Denn, 2006). Korean-born chef Rachel Yang has had some recent attention about her Korean-French combination. Her Seattle restaurant, Joule, features dishes that combine tastes of France, Korea and America. “I learned how to cook in French restaurants but my palette is attuned to different flavors in Korea and Asia, so it was natural to combine everything,” Yang explained (Garcia, 2009). A whole mackerel and smoked tomato puttanesca with daikon salad or spicy beef soup, leeks, daikon and crème fraiche are just a few of the options on Joule’s menu.

These examples of French cuisine in Asian countries illustrate the point that people do not have to remain restricted to their own culture, but are able to experiment with others through global movement. People in Korea or Japan are able to experience French

cuisine, without actually going to France because others brought it back to their home country. The Asian chefs and entrepreneurs were not afraid to leave in search of something different as a result of the relative ease of traveling. These particular cases are just two examples of this phenomenon but they also illustrate some important things about French cuisine in particular. The attempt to produce traditional French cuisine in foreign nations highlights an important fact. Globalization is affecting cuisines all over the world. It has encouraged an exchange of ideas in all areas of life, including cooking. As people move around the globe, they find something they enjoy and bring it back to their own country to share with others. New combinations have developed as a result, including fusion foods or *la world-food*.

In an article entitled, *Le monde entier dans l'assiette* [The whole world on one plate], the author describes a new form of cuisine that allows flavors and techniques from several countries to be present in a single dish. This technique has not escaped famous French chefs like Alain Ducasse, who have opened restaurants that incorporate this idea. One Paris restaurant, Latitude 40, incorporates various Mediterranean flavors onto its menu. “*À la carte, on trouve une salade de chipirons sauce merguez, le tout accompagné d’un sauté de fenouil,*” [*À la carte, one finds a salad with baby squid, a spicy sausage sauce all accompanied by sautéed fennel*] (Clerget, 1999). According to the chef, the salad represents Spain, the sauce recalls the Maghreb (North Africa) and the fennel references Provence. Each of the regions represented in one dish is just one example of fusion food, which has become popular in France. In Paris alone, by 1999 over half of the

restaurants known to exist there devoted all of their time to world food. According to the same article mentioned above,

*50% des consommateurs qui choisissent les plats exotiques le font pour le gout, 30% pour varier leur alimentation et 10% pour découvrir des saveurs nouvelles*  
[50% of consumers who chose exotic main courses do so for the taste, 30% to vary their diet and 10% to discover new flavors.] (Clerget, 1999)

There is a considerable amount of interest in foreign flavors in France. In a sense, fusion-foods allow customers to enjoy food from a foreign country without the added expense of traveling there. However, this trend has led chefs to move away from the traditions of the past as they play with new ingredients. It has also allowed for innovation in cooking, but at the expense of more traditional French flavors.

In addition, French chefs, who have built up a considerable amount of clout, are now moving their empires into the global realm. Big names like Alain Ducasse, Joël Robuchon and Jean-Georges Vongerichten are building restaurants anywhere from Tokyo to Las Vegas. Ducasse alone owns twenty-one restaurants throughout the world, a few of which have received the coveted Michelin 3-star rating. The chefs have had to move out of France in part because the clientele in other culinary hot spots are able to pay the staggering prices charged for their *haute cuisine*. In 1995, an average diner could spend \$200-240 at a top restaurant, but times have changed. “When people choose restaurants today, there is only one criterion: the price of the meal,” explains Monique Pivot, director of the monthly Gault-Millau gastronomic review (Wells, 1995). In a

country where the economy has been struggling, paying such high prices is impractical.

Manager of the Michelin three-starred Taillevent, Jean-Claude Vrinat, explains

Our 30 years of glory are over. Frankly, we have had things too easy for the past three decades. But we have to understand that the good days were the exception, not the rule. The French superiority complex is over. Now is the time for people to begin striving again. (Wells, 1995)

This economic downturn has led the French to turn to fast food and its cheap menu prices but it has also necessitated innovation and creativity among French chefs as they attempt to ensure their livelihood. One response is to create more affordable versions of their formal restaurants, in which patrons can actually watch their food being prepared, “sushi-bar style” (Matlack, Rowley and Hall, 2006: 44). This adaptation can be attributed to globalization, specifically Asian influences. According to Chef Robuchon, “there is an exchange of ideas that isn’t possible when you are working only in the kitchen,” (Matlack, Rowley and Hall, 2006: 44). Traveling has allowed him to expand his craft and become more innovative and creative based on what he learned from foreign chefs. These necessary changes to *haute cuisine* have allowed for growth and adaptation of the industry, they have also woken up the country to the serious problem of losing their beloved traditions in cuisine.

### **France responds**

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage program was designed to protect places throughout the world so that they may

be preserved for future generations to enjoy. These sites include places like the Great Barrier Reef, the Egyptian pyramids, and others that belong to the people of the world regardless of their origin. However, UNESCO has also accepted that there is also a “*patrimoine culturel [qui] ne se limite pas à ses seules manifestations tangibles*” [cultural heritage that is not limited to only tangible manifestation of culture] (UNESCO, 2010). As a result, they have created a program to protect what they refer to as the ‘intangible heritage’ of the world. It was under this program that French President Nicolas Sarkozy suggested *la cuisine française* should be listed for protection at the annual *Salon d’Agriculture* in Paris in 2008. This suggestion has been met with very different responses as people debate the necessity of this sort of action and whether or not UNESCO should accept something like this. Even if they did allow French cuisine protection,

*Elle devra admettre que toutes les cuisines, qui sont autant de cultures, sont in fine dignes d’être reconnues patrimoines immatériels* [the organization would have to admit that all cuisines, who are just as much a part of their culture, are in the end worthy of being recognized as intangible heritage]. (Assouly, 2008)

For example, Italian cuisine has had a long cultural heritage as well. If French cuisine were given the protection of intangible heritage, then on what grounds could Italian cuisine, or any other ‘national’ cuisine, be denied? In addition, how can UNESCO provide protection from “*l’influence néfaste de la globalisation sur l’identité de la gastronomie française*” [the harmful influence of globalization on the identity of French

gastronomy] (Assouly, 2008)? What measures can be taken to curb modernization or preserve something that is so intricately connected to daily life?

These questions have sparked a debate about the merits of French cuisine and its place in the world's heritage. For Joël Thiébault, a small farmer who lives outside of Paris “the glory of French gastronomy is in the ever-changing creativity of French chefs, and he is unsure that such a phenomenon can be codified” (Sciolino, 2008). According to Thiébault, one of the things that makes French gastronomy so brilliant is the fact that it is not stagnant and that the chefs associated with it are constantly innovating. French chef, Yannick Delpech of the *Haute-Garonne* region feels that,

*Plutôt que de savoir si notre gastronomie mérite de figurer au patrimoine de l'Humanité, on ferait mieux de s'intéresser à nos véritables problèmes que sont le TVA...*” [Rather than see if our gastronomy merits the status of World Heritage, we would be better off concerning ourselves with our problems like the Value Added Tax] (‘Cuisine: Sommes-nous Les Meilleurs Du Monde?’, 2008)

In his opinion, although French cuisine is important, giving it the UNESCO label is not the most pressing problem, despite the media attention it has received. On the other hand some chefs were strongly in favor of this distinction.

*Qu'est-ce qu'un cuisinier aujourd'hui? Un homme du réel dans un monde virtuel, ça mérite bien une place au patrimoine de l'Humanité,* [What is a chef today? A real man in a virtual world, that alone merits a place among the world's heritage.] (‘Cuisine: Sommes-nous Les Meilleurs Du Monde?’, 2008)

explains Jean-Pierre Saint-Martin of the *Hautes-Pyrénées*. Chef Saint-Martin is of the opinion that those who have preserved the ancient traditions in an ever-changing world needs to be honored and those traditions protected. Michel Trama, another chef, also reminds us that French cuisine

*mérite de retrouver sa place, n'oublions pas qu'elle est à la base de la cuisine internationale.* [merits finding its place (among world heritage), don't forget that French cuisine is the base of international cuisine.] ('Cuisine: Sommes-nous Les Meilleurs Du Monde?', 2008)

Because French cuisine is considered to be the first great cuisine, Trama believes it should be placed among other artifacts of world heritage. The influence French cuisine has had on the world, according to him, gives it a level of prestige with which others cannot compete. Finally, Michel Sarran of Toulouse explained that

*Notre cuisine est magnifique, elle est le reflet d'une grande richesse historique et culturelle, mais n'oublions pas que le plat le plus connu au monde est la pizza.*"  
[Our cuisine is magnificent, it is the reflection of grand and rich history and culture, but don't forget that the dish most known around the world is the pizza.]  
(‘Cuisine: Sommes-nous Les Meilleurs Du Monde?’, 2008)

Although French cuisine has arguably had the greatest influence on the world's culinary culture, there are others who have also left their mark and deserve to be recognized, particularly in reference to the UNESCO project.



## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

French cuisine has become a symbol of pride for the nation. Its regional specialties have inspired a tradition of using fresh ingredients and perfecting recipes. The long meals have created a sense of luxury and highlight the social importance of the eating together. French chefs of the past created the foundation of what it means to create great food that is still respected today. The innovation of the French restaurant and the continued use of the French terminology associated with a formal kitchen are also evidence of the lasting influence France has had on world cuisine. All in all, French cuisine has truly left a mark on the world of fine dining.

However, the implications of globalization have taken their toll on this cultural treasure. Fast food has come in to the country to provide a means of eating for those who are suffering from a stagnant economy. Ready-made meals have replaced formal meals housewives used to spend hours preparing. This, along with other factors, has led to a rise in obesity among the French population that could have disastrous effects over time. Also, abuse of alcoholic beverages has replaced the previous reverence of drinking for pleasure. This could in part be attributed to the popularity of American pop culture and the images portrayed through the media.

Nevertheless, globalization has not completely destroyed French cuisine. The traditions and innovations created by the French continue to exist despite changes in flavors and the introduction of new techniques. New influences allow chefs to become more innovative and the long reign of the French has inspired other cultures to produce chefs with similarly renowned reputations. A few years ago, all of the best chefs in the world would have been French but today, great chefs can be found in Spain, England, the United States, and even Australia. Globalization has allowed French cuisine to extend its reach all over the world. There are those who believe that the reign of France as home to the world's best cuisine is at its end, but there are also those willing to fight for its survival. France is the birthplace of the "culinary heritage that all cooks in the western world share" (Ruhlman, 2007: 20) and as such it will always be somewhere behind the next great innovation in the world of cuisines.

All in all, globalization is affecting the entire world and all aspects of society. Cuisine is just one of the many facets of French culture on which these effects are visible. These changes can be perceived as both positive and negative, but overall represent movement forward as society continues to change at a rapid pace. Whether dining at a fine French restaurant on the Las Vegas strip, or eating at My Wok in Dijon, France, visible implications of globalization on French cuisine can be found on any given day.

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## APPENDIX A

### RECIPES

#### Classic Hollandaise Sauce

##### Ingredients

2 tablespoons white-wine or tarragon vinegar or fresh lemon juice

4 tablespoons boiling water

3 large egg yolks

1/2 cup unsalted butter

1/4 teaspoon cayenne

1/2 teaspoon salt

##### Instructions

Melt the butter and keep it warm.

Heat the vinegar or lemon juice until just warmed. Have small saucepan with boiling water and a measuring tablespoon ready.

Place the top of a double boiler over (not in) hot water. (This means the bottom of the top of the double boiler should not make contact with the water heating in the bottom half of the double boiler.)

Place the egg yolks in the top of a double boiler and whisk until they begin to thicken. Now add 1 tablespoon of the boiling water. Continue to beat the sauce until it begins to thicken. Repeat with the remaining water, one tablespoon at a time, beating the mixture after each addition.

Now add the warmed vinegar or lemon juice. Remove the double boiler from the heat. Beat the sauce briskly with a wire whisk. Continue to beat the mixture as you slowly pour in the melted butter. Add the salt and cayenne and beat the sauce until it is thick.

Serve immediately.

Gourmet Sleuth, Inc. (2000) "Classic Hollandaise Sauce." *GourmetSleuth.com*. 1 November, available at [www.gourmetsleuth.com](http://www.gourmetsleuth.com) (accessed 4 April 2010)

### *Gratin Dauphinois*

(Sliced potatoes baked with milk and browned on top)

<b>Ingrédients</b>	<b>Ingredients</b>
800 g de pommes de terre	~1.7 lbs. potatoes
30 cl de lait entier	~1 ¼ c. whole milk
50 cl de crème fraîche (30 + 20)	~2 c. <i>crème fraîche</i> ( 1 ¼ c. + ¾ c.)
Sel	Salt
Poivre	Pepper
Noix de muscade	Nutmeg
1 grosse noix de beurre	1 large Tbsp of butter
2 gousses d'ail	2 garlic cloves
Phases techniques	Instructions
Préparer tous les ingrédients. Préchauffer votre four à 180° C.	Prepare all the ingredients. Preheat the oven to ~360°F.
Laver, éplucher et émincer les pommes de terre en tranches de 3 mm environ.	Wash, peel and slice the potatoes into about 3 mm slices.
Ne pas les laver après la coupe.	Do not wash them after cutting.
Les disposer dans une casserole avec 30 cl de lait (entier si possible), la crème fraîche, une grosse noix de beurre, ail haché, sel, poivre et muscade au moulin.	Put the slices in a saucepan with the milk, 1 ¼ c. of <i>crème fraîche</i> , butter, minced garlic, salt, pepper and ground nutmeg.
Porter à ébullition puis baisser le feu légèrement et poursuivre la cuisson 8 minutes. Remuer délicatement avec une spatule pour éviter que la préparation attache. Les pommes de terre vont s'enrober d'une crème.	Bring to boiling then lower the heat slowly and continue cooking for 8 minutes. Stir delicately with a spatula to keep the mixture from sticking. The potatoes will be coated in a cream.
Disposer délicatement les pommes de terre dans un plat à gratin. Aplanir la surface et laisser refroidir pour que les goûts se mélangent.	Delicately arrange the potatoes in a large baking dish. Level off the surface and let the mixture cool so that the tastes can mix.
Ajouter à ce moment les 20 cl de crème fraîche épaisse restants.	Next add the rest of the <i>crème fraîche</i>
Enfourner à 180° et laisser cuire une quinzaine de minutes environ (Piquer avec un couteau pour vérifier si les pommes de terre sont cuites) jusqu'à ce que le gratin obtienne une belle surface gratinée. Servir dans le plat de cuisson.	Put it in the oven and let cook for about 15 minutes (Poke with a fork to verify if the potatoes are cooked) until the dish obtains a beautiful browned surface. Serve in the dish in which it was cooked.

'Recette Gratin Dauphinois' (2009), *Meilleurduchef.com*, available at [www.meilleurduchef.com](http://www.meilleurduchef.com) (accessed 5 April 2010)



The following is an excerpt from the recipe for Bœuf Bourguignon (pages 315-317) in *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* (2009) by Julia Childs, Simone Beck and Louisette Bertholle.

*BŒUF BOURGUIGNON*

[Beef Stew in Red Wine, with Bacon, Onions and Mushrooms]

As is the case with most famous dishes, there are more ways than one to arrive at a good *bœuf bourguignon*. Carefully done, and perfectly flavored, it is certainly one of the most delicious beef dishes concocted by man, and can well be the main course for a buffet dinner. Fortunately you can prepare it completely ahead, even a day in advance, and it only gains in flavor when reheated.

VEGETABLE AND WINE SUGGESTIONS

Boiled potatoes are traditionally served with this dish. Buttered noodles or steamed rice may be substituted. If you also wish a green vegetable, buttered peas would be your best choice. Serve with the beef a fairly full-bodied, young red wine, such as Beaujolais, Côtes du Rhône, Bordeaux-St. Émilion, or Burgundy.

*For 6 people*

<b>A 6-ounce chunk of bacon</b>	Remove rind, and cut bacon into <i>lardons</i> (sticks, ¼ inch thick and 1 ½ inches long). Simmer rind and bacon for 10 minutes in 1½ quarts of water. Drain and dry.
	Preheat oven to 450 degrees.
<b>A 9- to 10-inch fireproof casserole 3 inches deep 1Tb olive oil or cooking oil A slotted spoon</b>	Sauté the bacon in the oil over moderate heat for 2 to 3 minutes to brown lightly. Remove to a side dish with a slotted spoon. Set casserole aside. Reheat until fat is almost smoking before you sauté the beef.
<b>3 lbs. lean stewing beef cut into 2-inch cubes (see preceding list of cuts)</b>	Dry the beef in paper towels; it will not brown if it is damp. Sauté it, a few pieces at a time, in the hot oil and bacon fat until nicely browned on all sides. Add it to the bacon.
<b>1 sliced carrot 1 sliced onion</b>	In the same fat, brown the sliced vegetables. Pour out the sautéing fat.
<b>1 tsp salt ¼ tsp pepper 2 Tb flour</b>	Return the beef and bacon to the casserole and toss with the salt and pepper. Then sprinkle on the flour and toss again to coat the beef lightly with the flour. Set casserole uncovered in middle position of preheated oven for 4 minutes. Toss the meat and return to oven for 4 minutes more. (This browns the flour and covers the meat with a light crust.) Remove casserole, and turn oven down to 325 degrees...

## APPENDIX B

### PHOTOGRAPHS



This is one of the designs for the interior of a McDonald's in France.  
(Photo by Didier Delmas- see [www.mcdonalds.fr](http://www.mcdonalds.fr))



This is a picture from an ad for the Croque McDo (see  
[www.mcdonalds.fr](http://www.mcdonalds.fr))

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