

A Philosophical Reading of Brillat-Savarin's *The Physiology of Taste*

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Belley
Département de l'Ain
en région
Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes



BRILLAT-SAVARIN



Pétrir 500 grammes de farine avec 10 grammes de sel fin , 50 grammes de sucre et 25 grammes de levure de boulanger diluée dans 250 grammes de lait,
. Ajouter 5 à 6 oeufs en pétrissant,
. Lorsque la pâte se détache (souple et corsée), ajouter 170 grammes de beurre en pommade,
. Pétrir de nouveau,
. Laisser une première pousse,
. Rompre et garnir les moules. Laisser une deuxième pousse,
. Enfourner à four chaud +200°C (25 à 30 minutes) selon la taille des moules,
. Démouler à la sortie du four et tremper tiède dans un sirop au rhum,
. Egoutter, lustrer au nappage blond,
. Dresser et garnir l'intérieur de crème chantilly ou pâtissière.

Sirop :
. 500 grammes d'eau,
. 250 grammes de sucre,
. 1 gousse de vanille coupée et grattée,
. Rhum selon le goût.



Poddle (Basket)







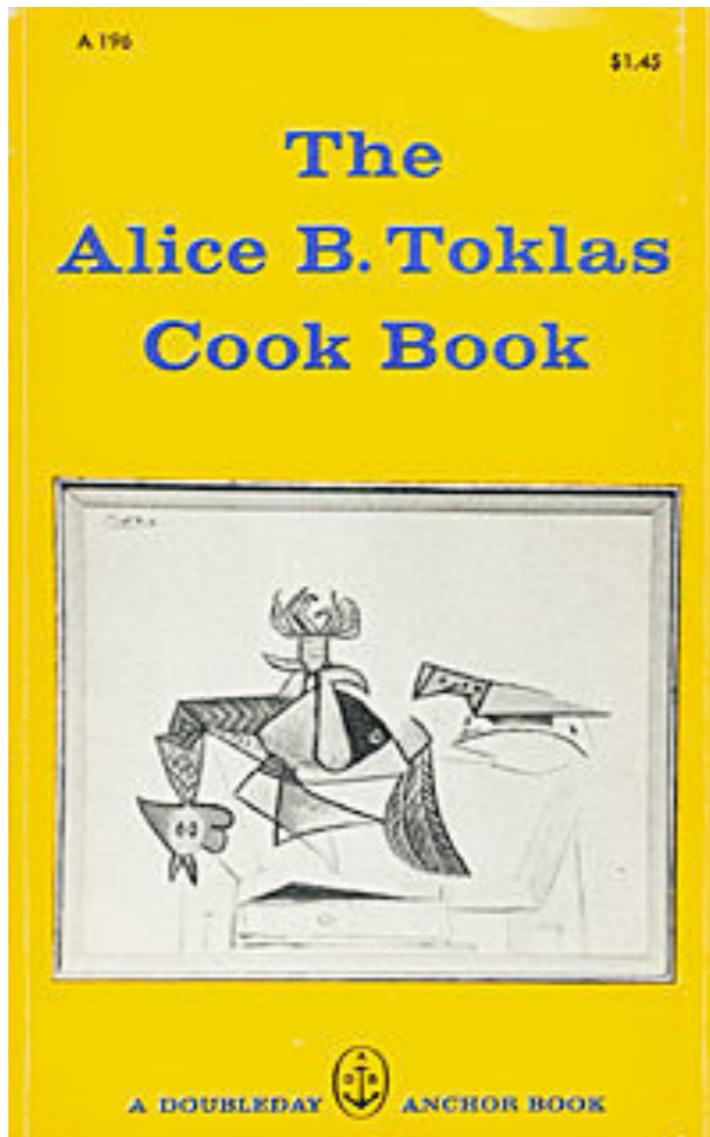
Tender Buttons

OBJECTS - FOOD
ROOMS

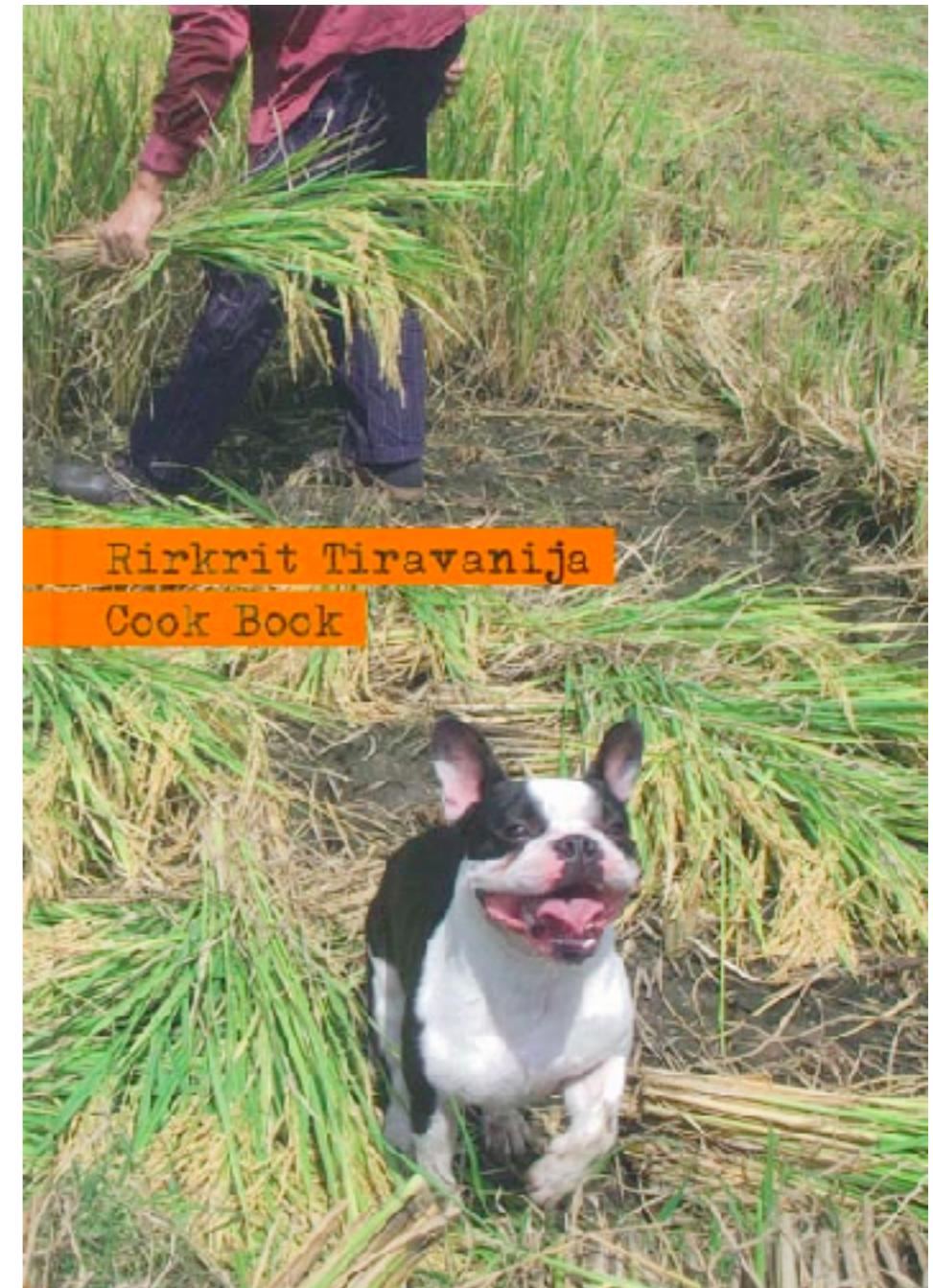


GERTRUDE STEIN

1914



1954



2010

30-370

ENCYCLOPÉDIE, OU DICTIONNAIRE RAISONNÉ DES SCIENCES, DES ARTS ET DES MÉTIERS,

PAR UNE SOCIÉTÉ DE GENS DE LETTRES.

Mis en ordre & publié par M. DIDEROT, de l'Académie Royale des Sciences & des Belles-Lettres de Prusse ; & quant à la PARTIE MATHÉMATIQUE, par M. D'ALEMBERT, de l'Académie Royale des Sciences de Paris, de celle de Prusse, & de la Société Royale de Londres.

*Tantum scitis iam tu quoque pollet,
Tantum de medio summis accessis honoris ! HORAT.*

TOME PREMIER.



A PARIS,
Chez { BRIASSON, rue Saint-Jacques, à la Science.
DAVID Lainé, rue Saint-Jacques, à la Plume d'or.
LE BRETON, Imprimeur ordinaire du Roi, rue de la Huchette.
DURAND, rue Saint-Jacques, à Saint-Laudy, & au Griffon.

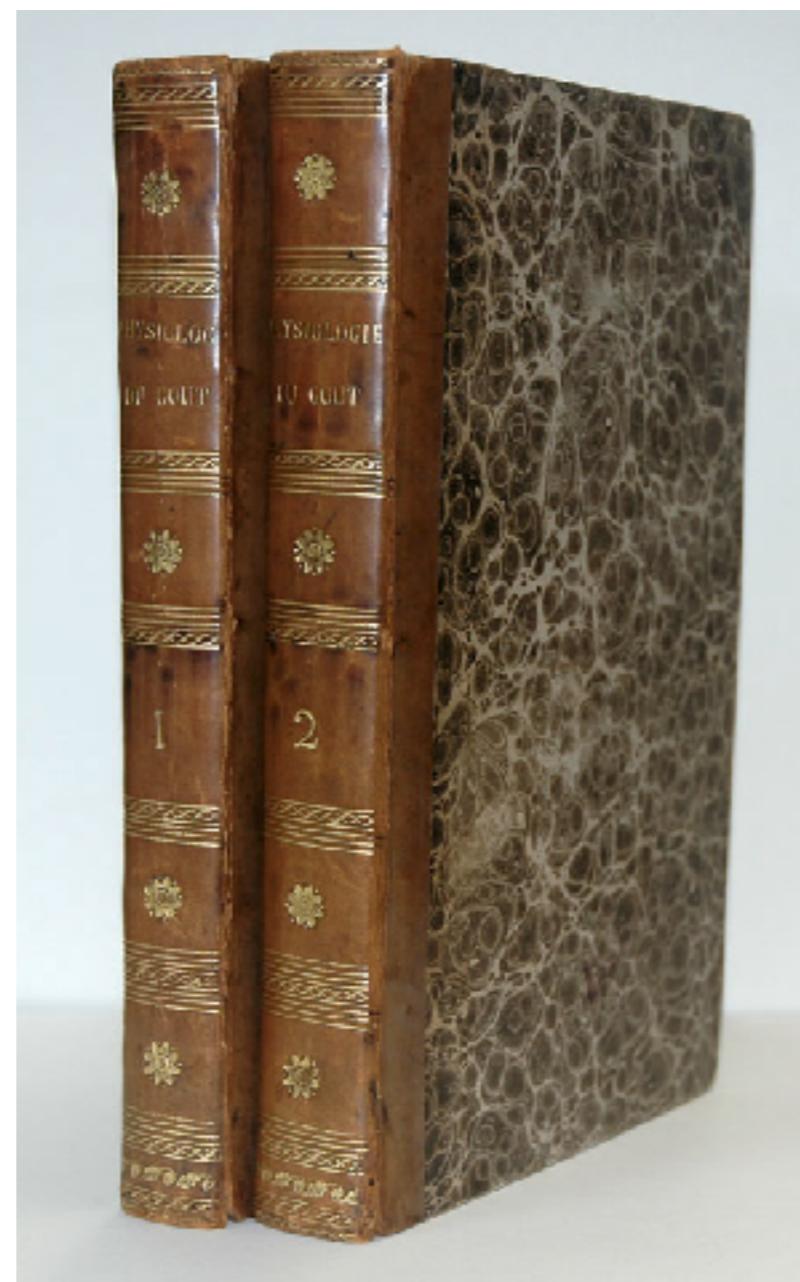
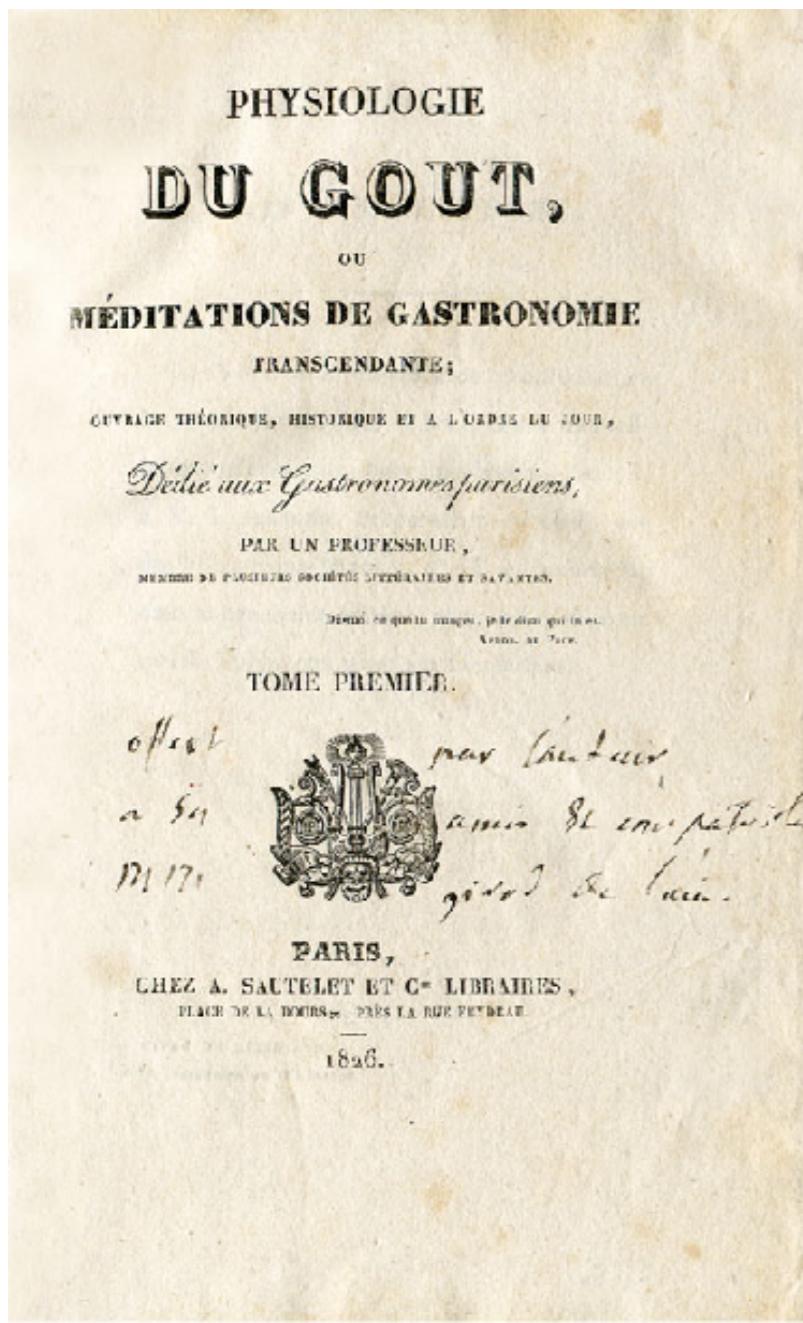


M. DCC. LI
AVEC APPROBATION ET PRIVILEGE DU ROY.

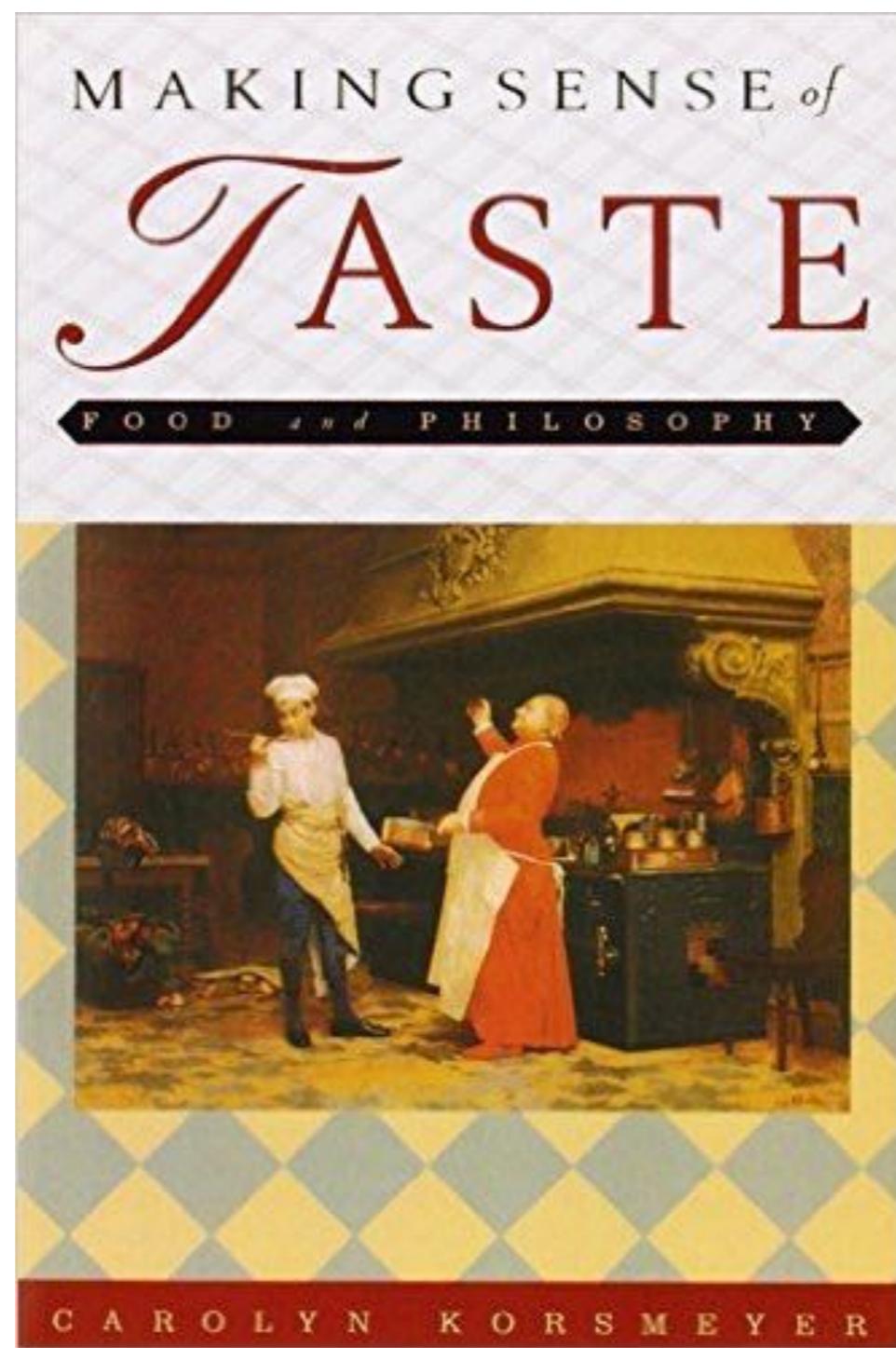


JEAN ANTHELME BRILLAT-SAVARIN
Physiologie du goût, ou Méditations de gastronomie transcendante; ouvrage théorique, historique et à l'ordre du jour, dédié aux Gastronomes parisiens, par un professeur, membre de plusieurs sociétés littéraires et savants

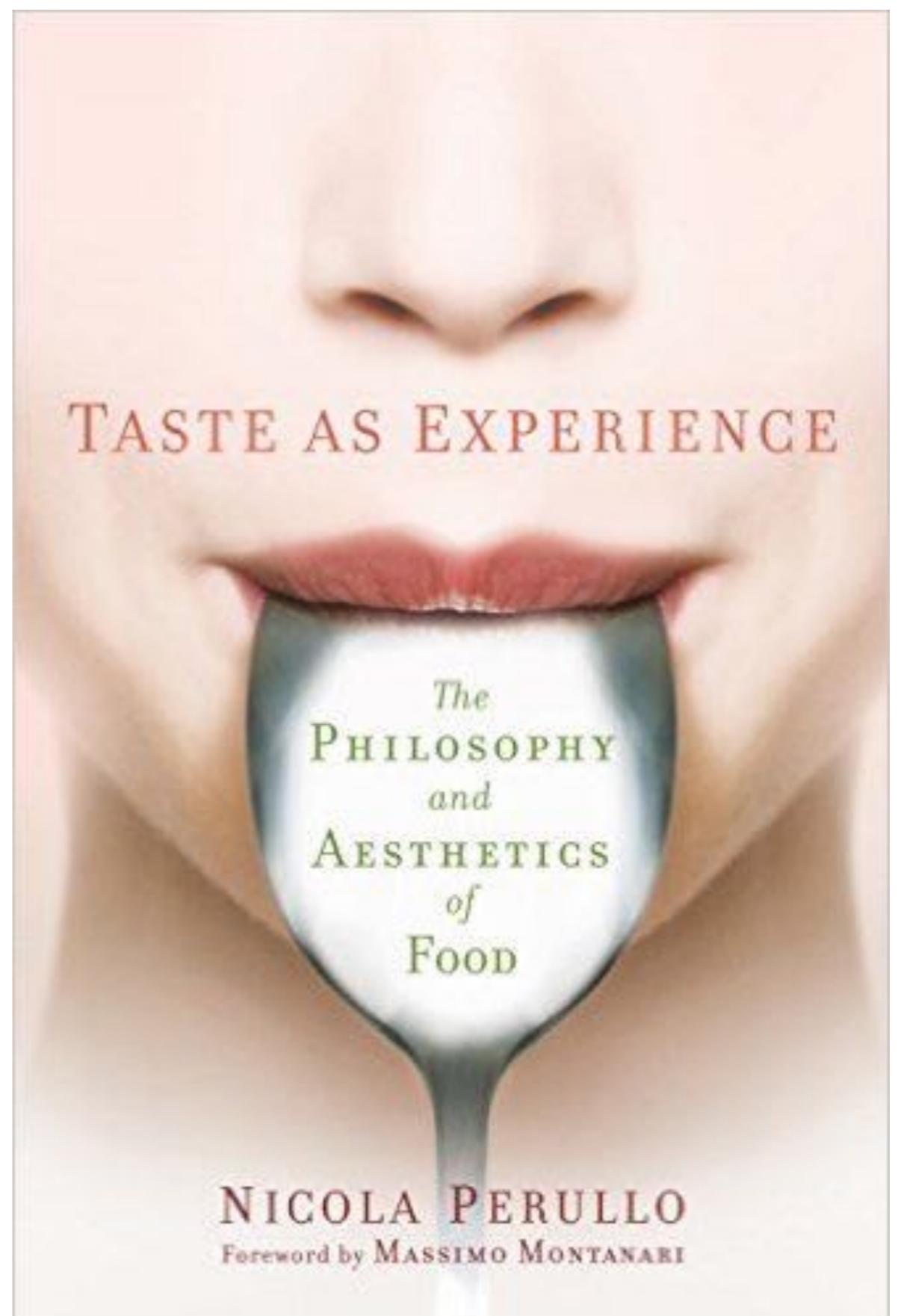
1825



Gustatory Aesthetics



«Puts the pleasure of food at the center of human experience. It shows how the sense of taste informs our preferences for and relationship to nature, pushes us toward ethical practices of consumption, and impresses upon us the importance of aesthetics. Eating is often dismissed as a necessary aspect of survival, and our personal enjoyment of food is considered a quirk. Nicola Perullo sees food as the only portion of the world we take in on a daily basis, constituting our first and most significant encounter with the earth. For Perullo, taste is value and wisdom. It cannot be reduced to mere chemical or cultural factors but embodies the quality and quantity of our earthly experience .»



Brillat-Savarin's main contributions

1. The use of sub-genres in philosophical writing
2. References to key philosophical concepts
3. The creation of a philosophical field: gastronomy
4. The claim for a link between desire, absence and writing
5. The claim of philosophical proximity between the tongue, the palate and language

6. The claim for the centrality of the body in philosophical accounts

7. The recuperation of the platonic link between desire, the philosophical symposium, *Eros* and pleasure

8. Anonymity

9. The identification of the diner's role as a constitutive element of gastronomic creativity

10. The first account of the restaurant as a gastronomic institution: a place of democratization of an aesthetic practice

1. The use of sub-genres in philosophical writing

Aphorisms

- I. “L’Univers n'est rien que par la vie, et tout ce qui vit se nourrit”

“The Universe is nothing without the things that live in it, and everything that lives, eats”

- II. “Les animaux se repaissent; l'homme mange; l'homme d'esprit seul sait manger”

“Animals feed themselves; men eat; but only wise men know the art of eating”

- IV. (The well-known) “Dis-moi ce que tu manges, je te dirai qui tu es”

“Tell me what you eat, and I shall tell you what you are”

- VI. “La gourmandise est un acte de notre jugement, par lequel nous accordons la préférence aux choses qui sont agréables au goût sur celles qui n'ont pas cette qualité.”

“Good living [*gourmandise*] is an act of intelligence, by which we choose things which have an agreeable taste rather than those which do not”

1. The use of sub-genres in philosophical writing

1.2. *Meditations*

- 1. Meditations on the Aesthetics of the Non-metaphorical Taste

Among which Meditation I : «Des sens» / « On the senses » and Méditation II : «Du goût» / « On taste » are particularly notable.

- 2. Meditations on the Aesthetics of Gastronomy

Particularly notable are Meditation III : «De la gastronomie» / « On Gastronomy », Méditation XII : « Des gourmands » / « On Gourmands » and Méditation XIV « Du plaisir à table » « On the pleasures of the table »

- 3. Meditations on the Physiology of Taste

Particularly notable are Meditation XX : « De la influence de la diète sur le repos, le sommeil et les songes» /« The influence of diet upon repose, sleep and dreams » and Meditation XXVI: « De la mort » / « On Death »

- 4. Meditations devoted to cooking

Among which Meditation XXVII : «Histoire philosophique de la cuisine » / « Philosophical history of cooking » is particularly notable.

1. The use of sub-genres in philosophical writing

1.3. *Variétés*





THÉÂTRE DES VARIÉTÉS SUR LE BOULEVARD MONTMARTRE.

2. References to Key Philosophical Concepts

2. 1. Ironic References

- A. To Descartes: *Meditations* (*Méditations*)
- B. To Kant: *Transcendent* (*Transcendental*)
- C. To Kant: Prolegomena (Prolegomènes)

2. 2. Approximative or Anticipatory References

- A. Voltaire: taste in its non-metaphorical use
- B. Jacourt, Balzac: the physiology of taste
- C. Voltaire, Hume, Kant: taste as a faculty of discernment and reflection
- D. Hume: sentier perspicacity
- E. Kant: disinterestedness
- F. Hegel: aesthetics as philosophy of art (gastronomy)
- G. Fourier: Conviviality
- H. Égalité, Fraternité, liberté

3. The creation of a philosophical field

“B.S: understood very well that as subject of discourse food was a sort of grid (of topic, the classical rhetorician would have said), through which one could successfully pass all the sciences that we today call social and human. His book tends toward the encyclopaedic, even if he only made a vague outline of it. In other words, discourse is empowered to attack food from several angles: it is, in short, a total social fact around which a variety of metalanguages can be gathered: physiology, chemistry, geography, history, economics, sociology and poiitics (today we would add the symbolic). For BS, it is this encyclopaedism –this “humanism”– which covers the term gastronomy: “Gastronomy is the knowledge of everything related to man in so far as he nourishes himself”. This scientific opening clearly corresponds to what BS himself was in his own life: he was essentially a polymorphous subject –jurist, diplomat, musician, man of the world, well known both abroad and in the provinces; food was not a mania for him, but rather a **sort of universal operator of discourse**”.

4. The claim for a link between desire, absence and writing

« The intended object of a sign is called a referant. Whenever I speak of food, I give out (linguistic) signs which refer to a particular aliment or to an alimentary quality. The implications of this banal situation are poorly understood when the intended object of nature is a desirable object. This is clearly the case with the Physiology of Taste. BS speaks and I desire that about which he speaks (especially if I have appetite). Because the desire it arouses is an apparently simple one, the gastronomic utterance presents the power of language in all its ambiguity : the sign calls forth the delights of its referent at the very moment it traces its absence (which we know very well is what every word does, **every since Mallarmé spoke of the flower « absent of every bouquet »**. Language creates and excludes. Hence, the gastronomic style raises for us a whole series of questions: what does it mean to represent ? to figure ? to project ? to say something ? What does it mean to desire ? **What does it mean to desire and to speak at the same time? »**

sens génésique

Med. I

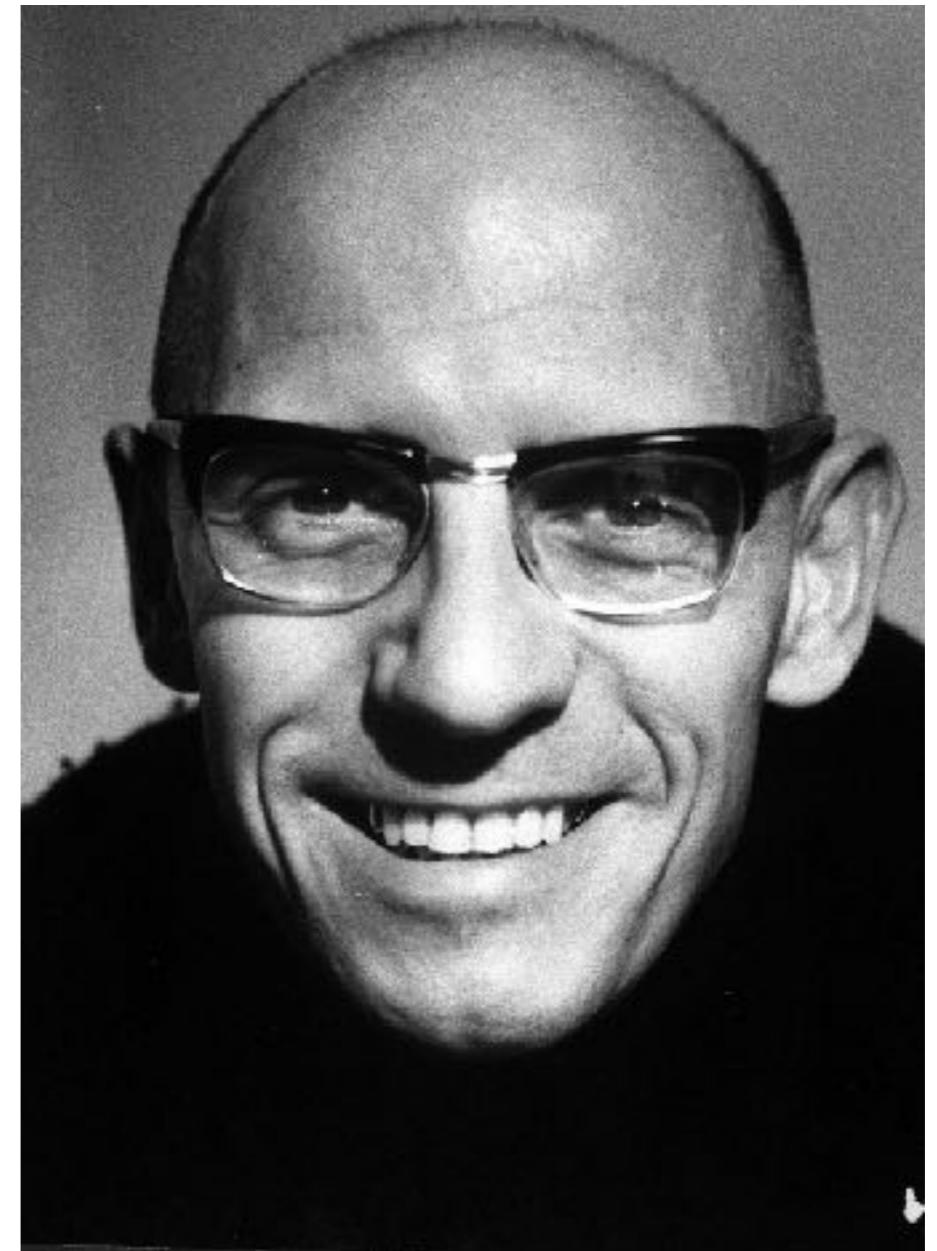
« B.s. book is, from beginning to end, a «proper study [of humanity], **for it is desire which distinguishes man.** This antropological basis gives a paradoxical cast to *The Physiology of Taste* : for what is expressed through the felicities of its style, the worldly tone of its anecdotes and the trifling grace of its description, is the great adventure of desire ».

5. The claim of philosophical proximity between the tongue, the palate and language



Antoni Miralda
Lingua de Linguas
2010

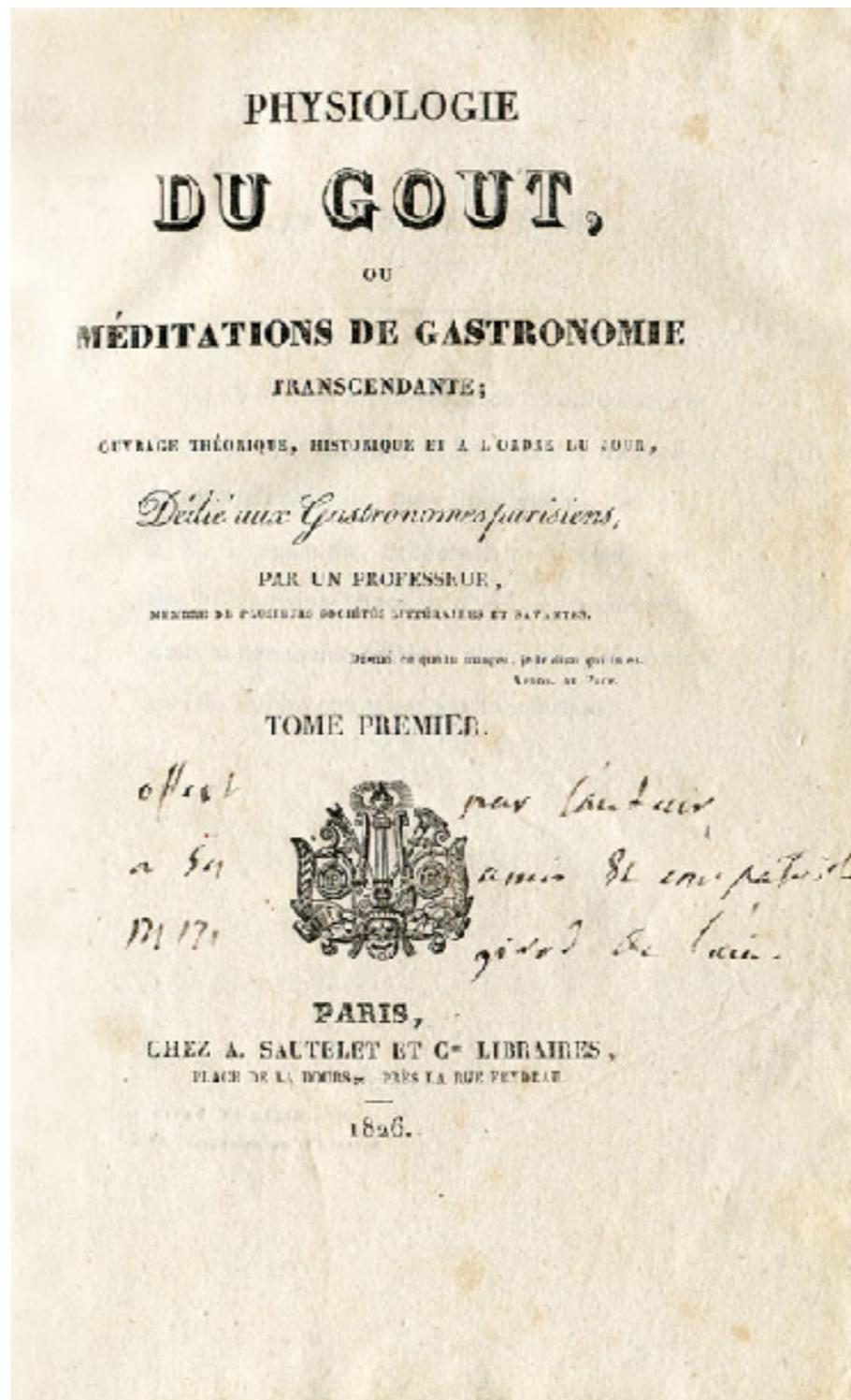
6. The claim for the centrality of the body in philosophical accounts



7. The recuperation of the platonic link between Desire, the philosophical *symposium*, *Eros* and pleasure

- « Oral as language, libidinal as Eros »

8. Anonymity



9. The identification of the diner's role as a constitutive Element of Gastronomic Creativity



Rirkrit Tiravanija
Soup
Grand Palais
2012

10. The first account of the restaurant as a gastronomic institution: a place of democratization of an aesthetic practice

“The encouragement of this new profession, which spread from France all over Europe, is extremely advantageous to everyone, and of great scientific importance”