

THE LANGUAGE OF MAGIC IN  
JEAN-BAPTISTE-SIMÉON CHARDIN'S FOOD STILL LIFES

Hyejin Lee

A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department  
of Art.

Chapel Hill  
2011

Approved by:  
Dr. Mary Sheriff  
Dr. Carol Magee  
Dr. Eduardo Douglas

© 2011  
Hyejin Lee  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

## ABSTRACT

HYEJIN LEE: The Language of Magic in Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin's Food Still  
Lifes  
(Under the direction of Dr. Mary Sheriff)

In this thesis, I interpret Chardin's still lifes of fresh fruit and baked goods from the 1750s and 1760s as statements on the art of painting. In doing so, I propose a new approach to still life paintings as works of art that merit attention not only for their display of the artist's pictorial technique but also for the cultural and aesthetic significance of their subject matters. I explore the implications of eighteenth-century art critics' evocation of magic in their praise of Chardin's still lifes through close visual analysis of these paintings and investigations of *nouvelle cuisine* and eighteenth-century aesthetic theories. The painted objects and technique in these works closely correspond to the eighteenth-century concept of natural magic as creating extraordinary effects through an intense study of nature. As artificial constructions, these works and the *nouvelle cuisine* they evoke also visualize the contemporary notion of truth in illusion.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Exploring the magic in Chardin's still lifes was an immensely enjoyable and rewarding experience. But without the help and support of the following individuals, it would not have been so. I first thank Dr. Mary Sheriff, whose unending enthusiasm and invaluable insight have made this research possible even from across the Atlantic. It is such an incredible blessing to be working with the greatest adviser one could wish for. I am also deeply indebted to my two readers, Dr. Carol Magee and Dr. Eduardo Douglas, not only for their thoughtful comments but also for their generosity and patience. To the fabulous ladies of the thesis seminar, my wonderful colleagues at the UNC Department of Art, and my friends elsewhere, I express sincere gratitude for their constant encouragement. Most importantly, I thank Mom, Dad, and Wootae for their unwavering faith in me. My family, my magicians—for they have taught me the true magic of optimism.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	vi
----------------------------	----

### Section

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
II.	MAGIC IN THE CRITICAL DISCOURSE.....	8
	Meaning of Magic in Eighteenth-Century France.....	9
	Meaning of Magic in Criticism of Chardin's Paintings.....	13
III.	MAGIC IN FOOD.....	24
	Rustic Simplicity of the <i>Nouvelle Cuisine</i> .....	25
	Artificial Refinement of the <i>Nouvelle Cuisine</i> .....	32
IV.	MAGIC IN PAINTING.....	37
	Magical Illusion and the Figurative Magic.....	38
	Illusory Magic and the Literal Non-Magic.....	50
V.	CONCLUSION.....	53
	ILLUSTRATIONS.....	56
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	67

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1	Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, <i>Jar of Olives</i> , 1760.....	56
Fig. 2	Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, <i>The Brioche</i> , 1763.....	57
Fig. 3	Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, <i>Grapes and Pomegranates</i> , 1763.....	58
Fig. 4	Painted decoration on the porcelain jar (detail) <i>Jar of Olives</i> .....	59
Fig. 5	Painted decoration on the porcelain jug (detail) <i>Grapes and Pomegranates</i> .....	60
Fig. 6	Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, <i>Jar of Apricots</i> , 1756.....	61
Fig. 7	Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, <i>Platter of Peaches with Walnuts, Knife and Wine Glass</i> , 1768.....	62
Fig. 8	Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, <i>The Butler's Table</i> , 1763.....	63
Fig. 9	François Boucher, <i>Are They Thinking about the Grapes?</i> 1747.....	64
Fig. 10	François Boucher, <i>Autumn Pastoral</i> , 1749.....	65
Fig. 11	François Boucher, <i>Pastoral Scene</i> , early 1730s.....	66

## I. INTRODUCTION

In 1728, Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin (1699-1779) entered the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculptures. Presenting *The Ray* and *The Buffet* as his *morceaux de reception*, the former pupil of Pierre Jacques Cazes (1676-1754) and Noël Nicolas Coypel (1690-1734) was admitted as both an *agréé* and a *reçu* on 25 September with the title of “a painter with a talent in animals and fruits.”<sup>1</sup> Despite his initial reputation as a painter of still lifes, soon after entering the Académie, Chardin attempted to raise his work in the academic hierarchy of genres by painting images of bourgeois households. Although his genre paintings enjoyed considerable popularity among critics and collectors, in 1748 the painter eventually returned to still lifes, the genre for which he was best known and most celebrated. From that date until the end of his career, Chardin’s prolific still life production met with great critical acclaim.

Painted in 1760 and exhibited at the Salon in 1763, *Jar of Olives* (Fig. 1) is an excellent example of the numerous works that received lavish critical praise during this second phase of Chardin’s still life production. Along with a glass jar of preserved olives, the celebrated painting depicts various edible objects and their containers, tightly arranged on a stone table. Arranged from left to right across the painting we see a pâté with a knife on a cutting board, a Seville orange, two glasses of red wine, pears and

---

<sup>1</sup>“Peintre dans le talent des animaux et des fruits.” Pierre Rosenberg, *Chardin* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1979), 63. This and the subsequent translations are by the author unless otherwise noted.

plums in a ceramic plate, two pieces cut from a block of biscuit, and a Meissen porcelain sugar bowl.

Although the numerous objects strewn across the stone table give an impression of an artless arrangement, the painting's composition reveals a sense of stability based on careful organization. The diagonal connecting the left corner of the cutting board and the upper left corner of the pâté meets with another diagonal touching the top of the olive jar and upper right tip of the porcelain bowl. The knife under the pâté and the contour of the foreshortened biscuit block reinforce the two diagonals. The intersection of the two diagonals, slightly to the right of the central vertical axis of the painting, marks the tip of the triangular composition. Neatly contained within this triangular zone are the still life objects that form a band just below the central horizontal axis of the painting. The objects and the stone table share roughly the same height and comprise the lower half of the canvas.

This zone immediately below the central horizontal axis demonstrates a variety of warm-toned colors, from the subdued yellow of the pears to the deep burgundy of the wine. The use of varied tonalities of colors parallels the display of a wide range of textures. The thick and dimpled skin of the Seville orange with its ridges distinctly contrasts with the smooth and shiny surface of the wine glasses with their streaks of reflected light. The thick transparency of the green-tinted glass of the olive jar also sets off the opaque hardness of the porcelain bowl. The artist accentuates the contrasts among the various textures with his use of brushstrokes and the white highlights that represent the light bouncing off the surfaces. While smooth materials are depicted with blended brushstrokes, rough textures display layers of thick paint one on top of another. The fuzzy

neutral tone of the background provides an ultimate contrast to the still life objects, drawing the attention to the variety in the colors and textures of the objects.

Among all the still life paintings Chardin produced, *Jar of Olives* received the most elaborate praise by one of the most vocal and influential art critics at the time—Denis Diderot (1713-1784). Here is Diderot’s glowing description of this work:

This porcelain vase is really made of porcelain; these olives are separated from the eye by the water in which they float; these biscuits need only be picked up and eaten, this Seville orange opened and squeezed, this glass of wine drunk, this fruit peeled and this pâté sliced ... Oh Chardin! The colours crushed on your palette are not white, red or black pigment; they are the very substance of the objects. They are the air and the light that you take up with the tip of your brush and apply to the canvas ... This magic defies understanding.<sup>2</sup>

Diderot interprets the pictorial imitation through which the painted objects simulate the visual effects of physical objects as a magical phenomenon. Chardin mixes the “very substance of the objects” on his palette and spreads the magical concoction over his canvas to create a work that crosses the boundary between representation and reality. Just as a magician picks up his wand to cast a spell, Chardin picks up his brush, dips it into the magical substance ground on his palette, and uses the brush to form an image that seems real. Diderot is not the only critic to use the language of magic to describe Chardin’s works. Indeed, other art critics writing on Chardin’s art often call him a “great magician” whose works had an enchanting effect on their beholders.

Modern art historians have taken notice of the language of magic with which eighteenth-century art critics refer to Chardin’s still lifes. In a catalogue published for the 2008 exhibition, *The Magic of Things: Still-Life Painting 1500-1800*, Jochen Sander’s entry on Chardin’s *The Wicker Basket with Wild Strawberries* takes the excerpt from

---

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in Pierre Rosenberg and Renaud Temperini, *Chardin*, trans. Caroline Beamish (London: Prestel, 2000), 288.

Diderot's praise of *Jar of Olives* quoted above and interprets it primarily as a positive evaluation of the artist's technique: "The spell the objects cast over the viewer is no longer derived from their potential to convey a deeper underlying meaning. In Chardin's works the magic of things is captured by his incomparable painterly skills."<sup>3</sup> Sander pushes the technical reading of the magical language to the extent of denying any "deeper underlying meaning" to Chardin's works. Devoid of any significance beyond the plane of artistic technique, the magical still life paintings serve as a means through which the artist displays his painterly skills through mimesis.

Furthermore, social anthropologist Alfred Gell posits an intimate relationship between technology and enchantment in artworks. In his essay, "The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology," Gell argues that the viewer's realization that he or she cannot emulate the magical process by which the work was created accounts for the enchantment or the magic of art.<sup>4</sup> In other words, a work of art is enchanting when the viewer cannot imagine creating that artwork by him- or herself. Therefore, technical mastery in an artwork is essential in determining its magic. From this perspective, then, the magical power that eighteenth-century critics ascribe to Chardin's works stems mainly from the artist's technical sophistication.

The heavy emphasis on technique in magical art, while justified by the necessity of analyzing the visual and formal elements of Chardin's works, forces Chardin's still

---

<sup>3</sup>Jochen Sander, "Wicker Basket with Wild Strawberries," in *The Magic of Things: Still-Life Painting 1500-1800*, ed. Jochen Sander (Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2008), 360.

<sup>4</sup>Alfred Gell, "The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology," in *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics*, ed. Jeremy Coote and Anthony Shelton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 40-66.

lives into a vacuum, treating them as merely mimetic representations of the external world without any social or cultural meanings. Interpreting his works solely through the lens of artistic technique is also based on the assumption that a display of technical prowess through mimesis must be the artist's primary objective. However, is it possible to understand the language of magic in the critical discourse of Chardin's food still life paintings in terms other than artistic technique? Do Chardin's fresh fruit and baked goods hold any "deeper underlying meaning"? What alternative interpretations of the language of magic and of Chardin's paintings can we obtain by locating his works in the cultural fabric of mid-eighteenth-century France?

In light of these questions, I argue that such a critical language not only describes the enchanting effect of Chardin's pictorial technique, but also reflects the cultural valence of the painted food items. The magical terms refer to both the technique and subject matter in Chardin's still lifes. The magical effect of Chardin's paintings contains another layer of meaning as imitation and illusion were thought to be at the heart of the magic of art in the period art theory. Examining these key concepts in the broad cultural discourses on art reveals that, far from being merely mimetic copies of still life objects, Chardin's works make nuanced references to the crucial terms of dominant aesthetic debates.

To propose an alternate understanding that combines investigations of both technique and cultural meaning in Chardin's still lifes, I begin with an overview of the period's critical debate surrounding Chardin's paintings and close visual analyses of the selected works in Section II. More specifically, I discuss the terms related to magic and enchantment that appear in the period criticism of Chardin's art. I then consider writings

of various critics and commentators, including Denis Diderot, Charles-Nicolas Cochin, and others. In addition to the correspondence between the critical terms and the visual elements to which they refer, I contextualize the multiple dimensions of the concept of magic as it was understood in France in the eighteenth century. To examine the period meanings of these crucial terms and their implications for art theory and critical discourse, I explore various entries in the *Encyclopédie* and *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* as primary sources.

In Section III, I delve into the food items painted in Chardin's works, exploring the fruit and baked goods' importance in the rise of the *nouvelle cuisine*. Period recipe books and treatises on food and cookery form the main body of evidence, opening up a discussion of the magical and transformative qualities inscribed in the specific food items associated with the *nouvelle cuisine*. References to food and cuisine in period novels and in paintings by other artists also help investigate the cultural valence of eating practices. While examining the *nouvelle cuisine*'s evocation of rustic simplicity as a health-inducing virtue, I also investigate the highly constructed artifice of the new cookery.

In Section IV, I connect the theme of artifice and disguise with the dominant art theory of the eighteenth century. I argue that the relationship between magic and artifice discussed in terms of culinary arts finds resonance in the period theory on illusion and the art of painting. This correlation between the dominant culinary trend and art theory allows me to interpret Chardin's food still life paintings as statements on the art of painting, as pictorial summations of the aesthetic debate that informed the magical interpretation of those works. To build a picture of the aesthetic debate on illusion and



magic during the eighteenth century, the section consults the writings of various theoreticians, such as Abbé Du Bos, Roger de Piles, and Denis Diderot.

## II. MAGIC IN THE CRITICAL DISCOURSE

Charles-Nicholas Cochin le fils (1715-1790), a well-known engraver and the secretary of the Académie, praises Chardin as “the painter who in his time best understood the magical harmony of painting.”<sup>1</sup> Champions of Chardin during and after the middle decades of the eighteenth century very frequently referred to the artist as a pictorial magician whose works enchant both connoisseurs and the larger public.<sup>2</sup> For example, in his elaborate praise of Chardin’s *Jar of Olives* (Fig. 1) from 1760, Diderot describes the painting as a work of magic that “defies understanding.”<sup>3</sup> The frequent metaphorical use of magic and its related terms in the critical discussion of Chardin’s paintings suggests that such a language had very specific cultural and social meanings in relation to the art of painting. What was it about *Jar of Olives* and other food still lifes by Chardin that the artist’s contemporaries saw as magical? What did magic mean in the context of pictorial art, and which elements of Chardin’s works elicited such descriptions?

---

<sup>1</sup> “[C]e peintre a été celui de son siècle qui a le mieux entendu l’accord magique du tableau.” From Cochin’s receipt to Augustin-Louis Belle for the sale of an unspecified work, “Billet de C.-N. Cochin a M. Belle le fils,” 1790, in *Chardin*, edited by Georges Wildenstein (Paris: Les Beaux-Arts, 1933), 51.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to Diderot and Cochin, Antoine Renou, Baillet de Saint-Julien, and Gautier d’Agoty, along with anonymous writers in the *Mercure de France* and *Année littéraire* use the language of magic to describe Chardin’s art.

<sup>3</sup> Denis Diderot, “Salon de 1763,” in *Essai sur la peinture: Salons de 1759, 1761, 1763* (Paris: Hermann, 1984), 220.

## Meaning of Magic in Eighteenth-Century France

The latter half of the eighteenth century is generally conceived as the pinnacle of the French Enlightenment with its major proponents striving to dispel unfounded superstitions and beliefs in magic in favor of logical and scientific modes of thought. Indeed, Voltaire's characterization of magic as "an impossible thing [in which] we have believed in all of time" succinctly summarizes Enlightenment *philosophes'* stance against magic as an outmoded and irrational falsehood to be eradicated.<sup>4</sup> However, the Enlightenment philosophy by no means banished the widespread beliefs in the supernatural and the magical. Popularly sought after in the cities and countryside, while at odds with the *philosophes'* emphasis on rationalism, magic proved a fertile topic of discussion for numerous writers.

Although the general attitude of the *philosophes* toward magic is one of undeniable disapproval, enlightenment thinkers saw magic as a dualistic entity. The *Encyclopédie*, the ultimate emblem of what we may call the Enlightenment crusade against superstition, first defines magic as "the occult art or science, which teaches how to do things that are beyond human powers" and explores the concept in both its positive and negative nature for the sake of objectivity.<sup>5</sup> The anonymous author of the entry

---

<sup>4</sup>"Qu'est-ce que la magie? ... c'est la chose impossible; aussi a-t-on cru à la magie dans tous les temps"; Voltaire, *La philosophie de l'Histoire, par feu l'abbé Bazin* (Amsterdam: Changuion, 1765), 162, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k57060758> (accessed 23 January 2011).

<sup>5</sup>I borrow the term "Enlightenment crusade" from Roy Porter's "Witchcraft and Magic in Enlightenment, Romantic and Liberal Thought" in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 191-273; *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, s.v. "Magie," trans. Steve Harris, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0000.730> (accessed 4 February 2011).

considers magic in three distinct categories—the divine, the supernatural, and the natural. The first category, divine magic manifests God’s will in the form of religious and spiritual miracles. For its basis in God’s awesome powers, this branch of magic serves as the foundation of the Church’s doctrine. Indeed, on this point, La Mothe Le Vayer states in *L’Instruction de Monseigneur le Dauphin* that one “cannot be Christian and doubt ... the magical art.”<sup>6</sup> Although the author of the *Encyclopédie* suggests that the verity of divine magic can be doubted, he betrays his skepticism by casting the subject outside the realm of human comprehensibility.<sup>7</sup>

In contrast to divine magic, which depends entirely on godly powers for its operation, supernatural magic is always performed by human beings. Also referred to as black magic, this kind of magic “always takes offense [and] leads to pride, ignorance and the rejection of science.”<sup>8</sup> The various forms of its practice include spells, necromancy, incantations, and cabals. Although they did not completely agree on divine magic, *philosophes* did stand in a united front against black magic as they defined the purpose of

---

<sup>6</sup>“[O]n ne peut pas être Chrétien & douter ... de l’art Magique.” François de La Mothe Le Vayer, *Oeuvres de François de La Mothe Le Vayer*, vol. 1 (Dresden: M. Groell, 1756-1759), 355, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k50> (accessed 23 January 2011).

<sup>7</sup>Although generally characterized as opponents of the Church’s doctrine, *philosophes* were divided in their opinion of divine magic. Some believed that scriptures verified the existence of divine magic. On this point, Augustin Calmet states: “Magic is not a chimera, nor a being of reason, since we cannot take any certain argument for or against the reality of magic, nor of the opinion of pretentious spirits who deny it because they judge *a propos* and because contrary proofs do not appear demonstrative to them.” In *Traité sur les apparitions des esprits et sur les vampires ou les revenants de Hongrie, de Moravie, etc.* (Paris: Debure l’aîné, 1751), 53, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k68179p> (accessed 23 January 2011).

<sup>8</sup>“[C]ette *magie* noire qui se prend toujours en mauvaise part, que produisent l’orgueil, l’ignorance & le manque de Philosophie.” “Magie,” *Encyclopédie*.

their philosophical enterprise as “disabus[ing] humanity of these imaginary humiliations.”<sup>9</sup>

While Enlightenment thinkers felt most strongly and wrote most profusely about supernatural magic, what is more relevant in relation to the critical discussion of Chardin is the third category, natural magic. Also known as white magic, natural magic denotes “in-depth study of nature and the amazing secrets that we find there,” according to the *Encyclopédie*.<sup>10</sup> Admitting the study of natural phenomena to a distinct category of magic effectively assigns marvelous and wondrous qualities to various studies of nature, such as physics, medicine, and mechanics. Furthermore, learning from nature to perfect one’s craft can also be construed as engaging in natural magic.

The fourth edition of the *Dictionnaire de l’Académie française*, published in 1762, offers another dimension to the definition of natural magic. An art that “produces effects that appear supernatural and marvelous by secret and unknown operations,” natural magic also refers to any act of achieving extraordinary results through natural means without relying on the tools of black magic.<sup>11</sup> Intrinsic to this facet of natural magic is the idea that one person’s extraordinary deed must be incomprehensible to others. In other words, the process through which a magician achieves his or her marvelous effects should be hidden away from plain view. In this sense, natural magic

---

<sup>9</sup> “[C]’est le dernier effort de la Philosophie d’avoir enfin desabusé l’humanité de ces humiliantes chimères.” “Magie,” *Encyclopédie*.

<sup>10</sup> “Par la *magie* naturelle, on entend l’étude un peu approfondie de la nature, les admirables secrets qu’on y découvre.” “Magie,” *Encyclopédie*.

<sup>11</sup> “Un art qui par des opérations secrettes & inconnues au vulgaire, produit des effets qui paroissent surnaturels & merveilleux.” *Dictionnaire de l’Académie française*, 4th ed., s.v. “Magie,” <http://artflx.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/dicos/pubdico1look.pl?strippedhw=magic> (accessed 4 February 2011).

can be conceived as a human enactment and imitation of the “amazing secrets” of natural processes that are known only to the magician. Diderot lends support to this idea as he succinctly states that natural magic “can do invisibly all things that nature does visibly.”<sup>12</sup>

The entry in the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* applies this idea of natural magic to the concept of illusion. In the last part of the short entry, the dictionary explains that magic can also describe “illusion born out of the arts of imitation.” Illustrating the possible use of this sense of natural magic, the entry includes the following: “What is then the magic of this picture? I believe myself transported in the place that it represents.”<sup>13</sup> As visible in this example, pictorial illusion—a magical one, that is—imitates nature so faithfully that it leads one to transcend his or her existence and enter the space within the picture. Seen in light of the imitative nature of natural magic, illusion is a product of white magic par excellence, a perfect example of an extraordinary effect achieved with natural means that enchants because of its secretive process of creation.

The *Encyclopédie* entry on magic also comments on a facet of natural magic closely related to illusion. The long list of natural studies as applications of white magic includes a category called “eloquence.” The author explains: “Because it [eloquence] is for the knowledge of nature and the inspiration which it fires the human spirit in particular, the great masters are due for the impact which they had on their students, the

---

<sup>12</sup>“[La magie naturelle] peut faire invisiblement tout ce que la nature fait visiblement.” Denis Diderot, *Oeuvres de Denis Diderot, publiées sur les manuscrits de l'auteur*, vol. 7 (Paris: Deterville, 1800), 378-379, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k2060815/f1> (accessed 23 January 2011).

<sup>13</sup>“Quelle est donc la magie de ce tableau? Je me crois transporté dans le lieu qu'il représente.” “Magie,” *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*.

passions which they have excited in them and the tears they have drawn from them.”<sup>14</sup>

This is another dimension of natural magic. Not only with its mysterious and supernatural results but also with its power to move emotions and to kindle passions does natural magic perform marvelous deeds. As seen in the definitions in the *Encyclopédie* and *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, natural magic is a production of supernatural effects through natural and human methods that display three characteristics. The first is natural magic's foundation in the study of nature. Unveiling the mysteries of nature and applying the resulting knowledge to one's craft can be considered magical. The second aspect of natural magic refers to a faithful imitation of nature's secrets to achieve wondrous effects. The art of illusion is an example of natural magic that highlights its imitative function. The third property is the power of natural magic to affect the emotions and passions of its audience. Seen in light of these dimensions, the art of painting, as a form of eloquence with illusion as one of its objectives, can be seen as a form of natural magic. Therefore, a painting that creates an illusion and touches the emotions of the viewer is a work of magic. A painter who creates such a work is a magician.

#### Meaning of Magic in Criticism of Chardin's Paintings

It is precisely in the sense of these various nuances of the concept of magic that eighteenth-century critics employ the language of magic in their discussion of Chardin's still lifes. Rather than using the term as a vague reference to the marvelous effects of his paintings, critical writings on Chardin refer specifically to one or more of the multiple

---

<sup>14</sup>“[C]ar c'est à la connoissance de la nature & de l'esprit humain en particulier & des ressorts qui le remuent, que les grands maîtres sont redevables de l'impression qu'ils font sur leurs auditeurs, des passions qu'ils excitent chez eux, des larmes qu'ils leur arrachent, &c. &c. &c.” “Magie,” *Encyclopédie*.

dimensions of magic. The magical effect in Chardin's canvases, in turn, is attributed to specific facets of the artist's professional methods and technique, especially color.

While calling Chardin "the greatest magician we have ever had" in his commentary on the state of French painting, Denis Diderot puts great emphasis on the natural quality of the artist's works, making his evocation of natural magic explicit.<sup>15</sup> To Diderot, if Chardin is a great magician, his works are "nature itself," and his painted objects are "of truth that fools the eyes."<sup>16</sup> This vivid evocation of nature, in turn, demands a natural, untrained gaze: "To look at the pictures of other artists, it seems that I need different eyes; to view those of Chardin, I need only to keep the eyes that nature has given me and use them well."<sup>17</sup> Because Chardin's canvases depict nature so directly, the viewers do not need to subject their perception to artistic conventions and visual training in order to discern the natural truth in his works.

The artist himself advocates this direct observation of nature. Chardin's emphasis on the absolute necessity of learning from nature, rather than from artistic traditions, appears repeatedly in critical commentaries on him. Diderot quotes the painter's lamenting statement on the lack of the study of nature in contemporary art education:

[After] having spent entire days and even nights, by lamplight, in front of an immobile, inanimate nature, we're presented with living nature, and suddenly the work of all the preceding years seems reduced to nothing; it's as though one were taking up the chalk for the first time. The eye must be taught to look at nature; and

---

<sup>15</sup>Denis Diderot, "The Salon of 1767" in *Diderot on Art*, ed. John Goodman, trans. John Goodman, vol. 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 297.

<sup>16</sup>"... d'une vérité à tromper les yeux." Diderot, "Salon de 1763," 219.

<sup>17</sup>"Pour regarder les tableaux des autres, il semble que j'aie besoin de me faire des yeux; pour voir ceux de Chardin, je n'ai qu'à garder les yeux que la nature m'a donnés, et m'en bien servir." Diderot, "Salon de 1763," 219.



many are those who've never seen it and never will! It's the bane of our existence.<sup>18</sup>

Attributing many failed artistic careers to the lack of interest in looking at nature, Chardin discredits the efficacy of the conventional method of copying after canonical examples as it produces artists who are incapable of representing nature on their own. To the artist, the current state of artistic education has deviated so far from natural studies that students have to "be taught to look at nature."

Taken together with Diderot's statement that Chardin's art does not require trained eyes of its viewers, Chardin's staunch support for the study of nature presents a paradoxical perception of the importance of nature in production and consumption of art. While artists have to be taught and trained not to rely entirely on artistic canons and to go out to nature for their inspirations, their resulting works directly evoke the natural world that even the most untrained eyes can observe. This central paradox at the heart of the magical nature of Chardin's art, which points to the broader relationship between nature and artifice in the art of painting, is a subject that will be discussed in greater detail in Section IV. To return to the subject of focused studies of nature for artists, Chardin's insistence on personal and extensive study of nature as the basis of his art strongly resonates with the first property of natural magic. By immersing himself in the living nature, an artist gains access to the secrets of nature and builds his own visual language with which to render the external world, becoming a practitioner of natural magic.

---

<sup>18</sup>“Après avoir séché des journées et passé des nuits à la lampe, devant la nature immobile et inanimée, on nous présente la nature vivant; et tout à coup le travail de toutes les années précédents semble se réduire à rien: on ne fut pas plus emprunté la première fois qu'on prit le crayon. Il faut apprendre à l'oeil à regarder la nature; et combien ne l'ont jamais vue et ne la verront jamais! C'est le supplice de notre vie.” Diderot, “The Salon of 1765” in *Diderot on Art*, vol. 1, 4-5.

Reading Chardin's works as "magical" corresponds also to the imitative aspect of natural magic. Because critics discuss the artist's imitation in great detail, the technique and effect of illusion seem to be the element in Chardin's still lifes with the most readily visible connection to the concept of magic. The illusory effect of the still life paintings is so great that the equation of the artist's paintings to nature itself, as we have seen in Diderot's words, is quite commonplace in eighteenth-century art criticism. Now, before launching into the discussion of illusion in Chardin's works, what the term "illusion" signifies in this thesis needs to be clarified. To twenty-first-century viewers whose daily lives are flooded with photographic images, the use of words such as "illusion" and "truth" to describe the visual effect of Chardin's works may appear strange. However, eighteenth-century critics attributed the illusory quality of Chardin's paintings to specific formal elements, such as color and brushwork. In other words, how close an image resembles reality in the modern photographic sense was not the criterion of illusion in the eighteenth century. Rather, how an artist utilized a certain set of visual techniques constituted the illusory effect in his or her works. What follows in the rest of this section is an attempt to explore illusion as it was understood by the eighteenth-century critics and to investigate its relationship to specific formal elements in Chardin's works, as well as to the broader cultural conception of magic.

One of the most evocative praises of Chardin's illusion appears in an article in *Mercure de France* from October 1767:

The illusion is so striking that we believe we are seeing in these pictures a mirror of nature, or nature in a mirror. The art of treating the objects in a manner that they produce a sense of great mass in both light and shadow that one mirrors the other and that their colors communicate their nuances is supremely understood

here. We can say that the judicious author arranges and observes nature well and that he knows how to read, judge, and imitate.<sup>19</sup>

This particular passage complicates the aforementioned equation of art and nature in Chardin's still lifes by introducing illusion as the fulcrum between the two. Through illusion, or the extraordinary experience of confusing an imitation for the imitated, the viewer can see not only nature in art as if looking through a mirror but also the mirror itself and become aware of the art-ness of painting. In other words, the viewer constantly shifts back and forth between being deceived by imitation and being aware of the fact of such deception. Marian Hobson calls this type of illusion "bipolar," as the viewer oscillates between seeing the nature in the mirror and seeing the mirror of nature.<sup>20</sup> The effect of illusion is so powerful that it suspends the viewer between the two states of involvement and awareness and induces the feeling of amazement and enchantment.<sup>21</sup> While the technique of illusion enables the viewer to occupy this space of overlap, a bipolar perception oscillating between deception and awareness of deception, in turn, intensifies the effect of illusion, further increasing its marvel. Therefore, illusion and bipolar perception constantly enable each another. It should also be noted that it is not

---

<sup>19</sup>“L’illusion est si frappante qu’on croit voir dans ces tableaux le miroir de la nature, ou, ce qui revient au même, la nature dans un miroir. L’art de disposer les objets de manière qu’ils produisent de grandes masses de jours et d’ombres qui se mirent les unes dans les autres et que leurs couleurs se communiquent leurs nuances y est supérieurement entendu. On peut dire que l’auteur judicieux arrange et voit bien la nature, qu’il sait la lire, la juger et l’imiter en tout.” *Mercur de France*, October 1767, in *Chardin*, ed. Georges Wildenstein (Paris: Les Beaux-Arts, 1933), 118.

<sup>20</sup>Marian Hobson, *The Object of Art: The Theory of Illusion in Eighteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 47. This “bipolar” mode of illusion and its effect of enchantment is a subject more extensively discussed in Section IV.

<sup>21</sup>Hobson, *Object of Art*, 50.

just any imitation-induced illusion, but Chardin's specifically that triggers this magical process. The painter who "knows how to read, judge, and imitate" produces magical illusion through his meticulous study and imitation of nature. Therefore, the two aspects of natural magic coalesce into the art of illusion in Chardin's still lifes; illusion, imitation, and magic mutually enforce each other.

This excerpt also reveals two elements of Chardin's technique of illusion that are central to the creation of a magical effect. The first is the colors that "communicate their [the painted objects'] nuances." As Chardin was widely recognized as the best colorist in France at the time, his use of colors was seen as the aspect of his painterly skill that contributed most to the effect of magical illusion. An anonymous writer in the 1757 *Année Littéraire* reports: "We are infinitely satisfied by the pictures of the celebrated M. Chardin; it is not at all colors that we see on the palette of this painter, these are true tones and tints."<sup>22</sup> Gautier d'Agoty in *Observations périodiques sur la physique* also writes: "If we think about color, M. Chardin is superior. [His pictures have] a transparency of color that enlivens everything that his brush touches."<sup>23</sup> Chardin's colors are no mere colors, but are true essences of the objects depicted. They also serve as magical agents through which inanimate objects come to life.

---

<sup>22</sup>"On est infiniment satisfait des tableaux du célèbre M. Chardin; ce ne sont point les couleurs qu'on voit sur la palette des peintres, ce sont des tons et des teintes vrais." *Année Littéraire* 1757, in *Chardin*, ed. Georges Wildenstein (Paris: Les Beaux-Arts, 1933), 99

<sup>23</sup>"Si on considère la couleur, M. Chardin est supérieur. Ses tableaux [ont] une transparence de couleur qui vivifie tout ce que touché son pinceau." Gautier d'Agoty, *Observations périodiques sur la physique*, 1757, in *Chardin*, ed. Georges Wildenstein (Paris: Les Beaux-Arts, 1933), 99.

How does Chardin actually achieve this vitalizing effect with his colors? The artist juxtaposes several different color groups in each of his canvases to maximize the chromatic intensity of each object. For example, *The Brioche* (Fig. 2), created in 1763, displays four different color zones in its composition. The first on the left hand side of the painting displays lighter pastel tones with its porcelain container and two peaches. The middle is occupied by the gorgeously risen brioche and biscuits that are both rendered in warm earth-tone colors with varying shades of yellow, tan, and brown. Contrasting this neutral center zone are the deeply saturated colors of the vinegar jar and cherries, both quietly radiating with intense red hues. The last color group, the sprig of orange blossom buds and leaves sticking out of the brioche, displays the only cool colors in the composition. The wide range of green and yellow shades on the leaves alternate one after another and simulates the visual effect of light bouncing off multiple facets of a leaf, while the white buds of the orange blossoms intensify this vibrant juxtaposition of colors. All of these colorful objects are set against a grayish background that is not uniformly painted, but instead displays swathes of various neutral tones to mirror the throbbing effect of the colors in the rest of the composition.

Chardin also employs chromatic symmetry in his compositions. *Grapes and Pomegranates* (Fig. 3) from 1763 is an excellent example that demonstrates this strategy. The central axis of the canvas is indicated by the bright white of the lidded porcelain jug and the transparent light green of the grapes spilling over the ledge of the table. Marking the two ends of the composition are the shades of red in the pomegranates on the left and the wine in the glasses on the right. The light yellow of the pomegranate pulp is mirrored in the ivory handle of the knife sticking out from below the grapes on the right side of the

composition. In the middle of the composition between the two red ends is the alternating sequence of light green and deep, dark purple of the grapes and pear that creates an impression that these fruits are woven together in a twisting pattern. The orange rind of the pomegranate and the blue and red peels of the plums on the right help the colors transition from this alternating sequence to the lateral ends of the composition. While juxtapositions of colors create pulsating vibrancy that leads the eye from one object to another, the similar colors that mirror each other across the central axis give a sense of balance and harmony to the entire painting.

In addition to the animating power of color, Chardin's canvases display an effect of illusion that is unique to his application of paint. While unequivocally praising his use of color, many critics note the puzzling quality of the illusion created by the paint handling. Diderot, in his description of *Jar of Olives* (Fig. 1) comments on this mysterious effect with a sense of astonishment:

This magic defies understanding. The thick layers of colour are applied one on top of the other and the effect breathes out from below. At other times the effect is like a vapour breathed lightly on to the canvas; elsewhere a delicate foam has been scattered on to it ... Approach the painting and everything blurs, flattens out and vanishes; step back and everything comes together again and reappears.<sup>24</sup>

This “mysterious magic that only this clever man [Chardin] can explain” produces an illusory image only at a certain distance away from the painting.<sup>25</sup> The looseness of the

---

<sup>24</sup>“On n’entend rien à cette magie. Ce sont des couches épaisses de couleur, appliquées les unes sur les autres, et don’t l’effet transpire de dessous en dessus. D’autres fois on dirait que c’est une vapeur qu’on a soufflé sur la toile; ailleurs, une écume légère qu’on y a jetée ... Approchez-vous, tout se brouille, s’aplatit et disparaît. Eloignez-vous, tout se crée et se reproduit.” Diderot, “Salon de 1763,” 219.

<sup>25</sup>*Année Littéraire*, 1767, in *Chardin*, ed. Georges Wildenstein (Paris: Les Beaux-Arts, 1933), 118.

brushstrokes is best demonstrated in the details of painted decoration on porcelain objects. These porcelain containers appear in multiple works by Chardin and are always rendered not in precise, minute details, but with paint that only faintly suggests their appearance. For example, the detail of the porcelain bowl in *Jar of Olives* (Fig. 4) shows two small windows above and on the left of the handle of the bowl so loosely rendered that one cannot make out what exactly is painted. Similarly, the lidded jug in the detail of *Grapes and Pomegranates* (Fig. 5) gives only a hint of the floral decoration and plainly reveals the artist's brushstrokes on its pale surface. As a result, the viewer becomes more aware of the painted decoration as he or she moves farther away from the painting until it again becomes impossible to discern.

This mysterious effect of illusion achieved by Chardin's brushwork, especially its elusive and incomprehensible quality, evokes the concept of the *je ne sais quoi* that was central to the eighteenth-century aesthetics. Translating literally to "I do not know what," the *je ne sais quoi* refers to the indescribable quality in a work of art that comprises its grace. While a merely beautiful work of art displays perfect unity and harmony according to rules and conventions, a graceful work possesses both beauty and an indefinably attractive quality that carries the work to perfection.<sup>26</sup> And this inexplicable grace is "so delicate and imperceptible that it escapes the most penetrating and subtle intelligence"

---

<sup>26</sup>André Félibien, *Conversations on the Lives and Works of the Most Excellent Ancient and Modern Painters*, in *Art in Theory 1648-1815: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison, Paul Wood, and Jason Gaiger, trans. Jonathan Murphy (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000), 221.

and is known only to the artist.<sup>27</sup> The magic that “defies understanding” by anyone other than Chardin himself corresponds to the *je ne sais quoi* that pushes art beyond the level of beauty and brings it closer to perfection through grace. The loose brushwork that only hints and evokes the objects without fully disclosing the surface details contributes to Chardin’s mysterious and magical effect through the evocation of the concept of the *je ne sais quoi*.

In addition to the imitative mystery based on close observation of nature, Chardin’s paintings of various food items resonate with the moving power of natural magic. Just as eloquence as a form of natural magic excites passions in its audience, the depictions of food in Chardin’s canvases kindle desires in their viewers. The following poem by M. de Camburat written for *L’Exposition du Louvre faite en l’année M DCC LXIX* expresses the still lifes’ stimulation of bodily senses:

Do you see the different fruits  
That this basket holds?  
Of their tender peel, the softness, the brilliance,  
The seductive naïveté  
The vivid freshness, mouth-watering,  
In the eye combines taste, touch, and odor.<sup>28</sup>

The paintings of food induce a similar reaction in Diderot when he states that “it [Chardin’s art] is always nature and truth; you would like to take the bottle by the neck, if

---

<sup>27</sup>Dominique Bouhours, *The Conversations of Aristo and Eugene*, in *Art in Theory 1648-1815: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison, Paul Wood, and Jason Gaiger, trans. Donald Schier (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000), 228.

<sup>28</sup>De Camburat, *L’Exposition du Louvre faite en l’année M DCC LXIX*, 1769, in *Chardin*, ed. Georges Wildenstein (Paris: Les Beaux-Arts, 1933), 122.



you are thirsty; the peaches and grapes awaken your appetite and call your hand.”<sup>29</sup> It is not only vision that Chardin’s images stimulate. The images of fresh fruit, baked goods, and drinks awaken the other senses in a visceral manner. The passions aroused by the images are so great that Diderot is prompted to imagine himself grabbing and partaking of the objects painted on the canvases. This power to animate desires and passion directly correlates with the third property of natural magic related to eloquence. With their imitation of appetizing food items, Chardin’s still lifes embody the essence of magic in all of its nuances.

Chardin’s approach to and technique for depicting nature in his still lifes bear several parallels with the specific dimensions of the eighteenth-century concept of magic. As a result, rather than vaguely referring to the effect of his paintings, the language of natural magic used in the critical discussion of the artist’s still lifes evokes particular facets of natural magic as an act of producing supernatural effects through natural means. The correspondence to multiple dimensions of magic, in turn, highlights specific aspects of Chardin’s technique, especially his use of color and brushwork. In addition to the discussion of the magical quality in the technique of Chardin’s still lifes, an exploration of the painted food items and their cultural valence in the middle decades of the eighteenth century reveals yet another set of parallels between magic and Chardin’s art.

---

<sup>29</sup>Denis Diderot, “Salon de 1759,” in *Essai sur la peinture: Salons de 1759, 1761, 1763* (Paris: Hermann, 1984), 97.

### III. MAGIC IN FOOD

If Chardin's technique in handling paint and color to create illusory effects is considered magical by the eighteenth-century critics, the painted food items in his still lifes also embody certain characteristics of natural magic. Deciphering the magic in these painted fruit and baked goods helps gain a multivalent understanding of the language of magic featured so frequently in the criticism of Chardin's works. For example, when one considers the magic of both the technique and the subject matter of Chardin's still lifes, critical assessment of his works in passages such as the following from Diderot's Salon critique of 1767 assumes a multidimensional quality:

[Chardin's] compositions ... have a coloristic vigor, an overall harmony, a liveliness and truth, beautiful massing, a handling so magical as to induce despair, and an energy in their disposition and arrangement that's incredible ... there's no confusion, no artificiality, no distracting flickering effects; the eye is always diverted, because calm and serenity are everywhere. One stops in front of a Chardin as if by instinct, just as a traveler exhausted by his trip tends to sit down, almost without noticing it, in a place that's green, quiet, well watered, shady, and cool.<sup>1</sup>

At a cursory glance, this excerpt may appear one of many that praise the artist's skill with pictorial illusion. After all, Diderot does set up this commentary with technical terms, such as "coloristic vigor" and "beautiful massing," creating an impression that this elaborate paragraph refers primarily to the formal elements of Chardin's works. Indeed, the "distracting flickering effects" refers to *papillotage*, the technique of "reverberating

---

<sup>1</sup>Diderot, "The Salon of 1767," 86.

light and surface intricacy,” which characterized Rococo paintings.<sup>2</sup> However, the lack of the *papillotage* in the Chardin’s canvases and the refreshing experience that they offer to the viewers are precisely the traits attributed to the painted fruits and desserts, the hallmarks of a new wave of cookery called the *nouvelle cuisine* or *cuisine moderne*.<sup>3</sup> An exploration of the emergence and popularity of the *nouvelle cuisine* in France in the middle decades of the eighteenth century reveals another layer in the language of magic in the critical discourse surrounding Chardin’s food still lifes.

#### Rustic Simplicity of the *Nouvelle cuisine*

Although Chardin established his reputation as a painter of still lifes from the very beginning of his career, he focused on animals and kitchen utensils and did not paint fruit, desserts, and beverages in separate canvases until the latter half of the eighteenth century. Before his return to still life paintings, Chardin often included pieces of meat and hunted game along with vegetables and fruits in his works. However, the works created in the 1750s and 1760s often depict fruit, desserts, and refreshing beverages by themselves, constituting an independent subgenre in Chardin’s oeuvre. In fact, an isolated treatment of these food items is a novel approach to still life paintings as Chardin’s predecessors and contemporaries in the genre, such as Jean-Baptiste Oudry and Alexandre-François Desportes, almost always include the same objects with flowers or hunted game. The fresh fruit featured independently in Chardin’s works include apples, cherries, plums, currants, strawberries, peaches, grapes, pomegranates, pears, apricots,

---

<sup>2</sup>Melissa Hyde, *Making Up the Rococo: François Boucher and His Critics* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2006), 94.

<sup>3</sup>For the sake of simplicity and clarity, this thesis refers to the new cookery by the first appellation.

oranges, and melons. While most of these fruits are shown fresh with their peels on, certain fruits appear in the form of preserves, as seen in the preserved apricots in *Jar of Apricots* (Fig. 6). In addition to fruit, Chardin also frequently includes nuts, such as walnuts and chestnuts, either in their shells or cracked open as seen in *Platter of Peaches with Walnuts, Knife, and Wine Glass* (Fig. 7). Baked goods also feature prominently in these still life works. For example, *Jar of Olives* (Fig. 1) and *The Butler's Table* (Fig. 8) both feature pâtés on cutting boards with knives stuck underneath them. *The Brioche* (Fig. 2) dedicates the center of its composition to the impressively risen bread decorated with a sprig of orange buds. Biscuit, both in blocks and in cut pieces, appear in *Jar of Olives* (Fig. 1) and in *Jar of Apricots* (Fig. 6).

I propose that these painted food items occur in isolation from other typical objects, such as hunted game or floral arrangements reflects a change in the significance of these categories of food in French cookery. The rise in the popularity of these food items, indeed, corresponded to the emergence of a particular culinary trend in mid-century France called the *nouvelle cuisine*. The development of this new cookery began with the publication of Massialot's cookbook, *Le cuisinier roïal et bourgeois*, in 1691. Systemizing cooking processes into several master recipes for basic mixtures and sauces that can be modified with various ingredients, Massialot's cookbook revolutionized French cuisine, which had previously been perceived as an extremely complicated and impenetrable practice.<sup>4</sup> After the introduction of this methodical approach to cooking, which breaks down a complex dish into the sum of its parts, the art of cooking began to

---

<sup>4</sup>Susan Pinkard, *A Revolution in Taste: The Rise of French Cuisine, 1650-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 136.

take shape as a topic worthy of serious debate and experimentation in the early decades of the eighteenth century.<sup>5</sup> This surge of interest in cooking led to a sudden increase in the number of recipe books and culinary treatises from the late 1730s to the late 1760s.<sup>6</sup>

Following the reorganization of cookery as a methodical and scientific activity came a major push to simplify French cuisine in the culinary discourse of the middle decades of the eighteenth century, giving birth to the *nouvelle cuisine*. The 1760s, the decade during which Chardin paints food still lifes with the greatest concentration, coincides with the beginning of public distribution of *nouvelle cuisine* dishes in the first incarnations of restaurants in Paris.<sup>7</sup> This new style of cooking emphasized the healthful effects of fresh and local ingredients as the most important aspect of alimentation. While meats, such as beef, veal, pork, and chickens, continued to enjoy prominent appearance in the *nouvelle cuisine* style, rare games and exotic birds were used less frequently than they had been in medieval French cooking. Meanwhile, fresh vegetables, herbs, and fruits became infinitely more popular in the *nouvelle cuisine* cookbooks. The emphasis on freshness in food also led to the serious discouragement of reliance on sugar, spices, and

---

<sup>5</sup>Pinkard, *A Revolution in Taste*, 141.

<sup>6</sup>For a list of the major cookbooks and treatises on cookery published at this time, see Philip and Mary Hyman's "Printing the Kitchen: French Cookbooks, 1480-1800," in *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*, ed. Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 394-402. A few of the most influential recipe books include: Marin's *Les Dons de Comus* (1739); Menon's *Le Nouveau Traité de cuisine* (1739); *Le Cuisinier gascon* by an anonymous author (1740); and Menon's *La Cuisinière Bourgeoise* (1746).

<sup>7</sup>The name for restaurant, in fact, derives from the restorative bouillon that was the central emblem of the *nouvelle cuisine* that I discuss later in this section. For a more in-depth investigation of the emergence of restaurants, see Rebecca L. Spang, *The Invention of the Restaurant: Paris and Modern Gastronomic Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

other types of seasoning. Without using copious amounts of additives for artificially enhancing tastes, the *nouvelle cuisine* encouraged cooks to let the natural tastes of fresh ingredients shine through in their dishes.

On the natural simplicity of the *nouvelle cuisine*, the authors of *Les Dons de Comus*, another influential cooking treatise published in 1739, state:

The modern cuisine, established on the fundamentals of the ancients, with less encumbrances, less display, and as much variety, is simpler, cleaner, and perhaps even wiser. The ancient cuisine was very complicated and of extraordinary detail. Modern cuisine is a kind of chemistry. The science of a cook today consists of breaking down, digesting, and extracting quintessence of foods, of extracting nourishing and light juices, of mixing them and combining them together in a fashion that nothing dominates while everything can be tasted, giving the kind of union that painters give to colors and rendering them homogeneously so that the different tastes result only in a fine and piquant taste and, if I dare say, a harmony of all the tastes brought together.<sup>8</sup>

The simplified art of cooking advocated by the *nouvelle cuisine* was a scientific and systematic approach to building harmonious combinations of flavors without the complexity and heavy seasoning of medieval cuisine. The ideal of well-blended tastes based on a close study and an innovative synthesis of individual flavors as the hallmark of the *nouvelle cuisine* strongly resonates with the investigation of the natural world as one of the principal bases of natural magic. The direct correlation between gustatory harmony of cooking and coloristic union of painting also suggests the magical undercurrent in the discussion of the *nouvelle cuisine*. Like Chardin's still lifes, which successfully harmonize colors by themselves combining elements of nature, *nouvelle*

---

<sup>8</sup>Pierre Brumoy and Gillaume-Hyacinthe Bougeant, "Avertissement," in *Les Dons de Comus ou Les délices de la table*, in *Les liaisons savoureuses: Réflexions et pratiques culinaires au XVIIIe Siècle*, ed. Beatrice Fink (Saint-Etienne, France: L'Université de Saint-Etienne, 1995), 29.

*cuisine* dishes utilizing fresh, natural ingredients that unite flavors in ingenious permutations could be seen as bearing parallels with the period concept of magic.

While the *nouvelle cuisine*'s emphasis on natural taste can be seen as a parallel development along with mid-century aesthetic ideals, it also pointed to the cult of sensible eating. More specifically, the notion of good eating at this time co-opted the cultural currency of the myth of rustic simplicity. The impulse to return to the natural, pre-civilized past or to emulate the simple lifestyle of peasants is manifest in this article on "cuisine" in the *Encyclopédie*:

Dairy products, honey, fruits of the earth, vegetables seasoned with salt, bread baked in the embers provided nourishment to the first peoples of the world. They used the natural goodness [*bienfaits de la nature*] without other refinement, and they were only stronger, more robust, and less exposed to diseases. The meats in soup, grilled, roasted, or the fish cooked in water followed; they were eaten in moderation, health did not suffer one bit, temperance prevailed, only appetite determined the times and number of meals.<sup>9</sup>

Louis Jaucourt, the author of this entry, contrasts the diet of the "first peoples of the world" based on the *bienfaits de la nature* to the old-fashioned cuisine with its over-refinement and unnecessary complexities. It is as if Jaucourt took all of the principal ingredients of the *nouvelle cuisine*, which are the main features depicted in Chardin's canvases, to argue for their salubrious quality in contrast to the corrupting influence of medieval cookery. This is not to argue for Chardin's direct and intentional connection to the *nouvelle cuisine*, but to discern a parallel development in both Chardin's art and the culinary trend and its response to the broader cultural concerns. Eighteenth-century critics, therefore, could have viewed Chardin's paintings with these associations in mind.

---

<sup>9</sup>Louis Jaucourt, *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, s.v. "Cuisine (Art mécanique)," trans. Sean Takats, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=did;cc=did;rgn=main;view=text;idno=did2222.0000.075> (accessed 5 December 2010).

Jaucourt also suggests that the healthful effects of a “natural” cuisine include not only physical strength, but also “temperance” and other moral virtues. Therefore, the *nouvelle cuisine* with its chief ingredients replicating those of the “first peoples of the world” was characterized as wholesome for both the physical and mental health of the French.

Sensible eating of the *nouvelle cuisine* was not a phenomenon exclusive to recipe books. It was a topic of vivacious debate among physicians and philosophers, among whom Jean-Jacques Rousseau was the most notable. Advocating taste as the sense with the most direct influence on human cognition, Rousseau examined the dichotomy between natural and socially acquired taste during the education of a child in his treatise on education, *Emile*. Similar to Jaucourt’s discussion of the foods of the “first peoples of the world,” Rousseau argues for the naturalness and purity of certain ingredients:

Our first food is milk. We get accustomed to strong flavors only by degrees; at first they are repugnant to us. Fruits, vegetables, herbs, and finally some meats grilled without seasoning and without salt constituted the feasts of the first men ... In sum, the simpler our tastes, the more universal they are.<sup>10</sup>

A taste for uncooked or unseasoned food marks the first people’s state of innocence in contrast to the modern fondness for “adulterated” foodstuffs that use seasoning to make them appear to be better than they are.<sup>11</sup> In other words, the artifice in heavily seasoned food, or the dishes of the cookery preceding the *nouvelle cuisine*, indicates the physical and moral corruption of its consumers. To counteract the artifice of the previous cuisine, Rousseau proposes the diet of the peasants as the form of cookery that has best preserved the lifestyle of the first people. Rousseau argues that French peasants eat more fresh fruits

---

<sup>10</sup>Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, or On Education*, trans. Allan Bloom (Lebanon, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2010), 294.

<sup>11</sup> Spang, *Invention of the Restaurant*, 39.



and vegetable than do wealthy city dwellers and are consequently healthier and more resilient to diseases, and he recommends seasonal vegetables, fruits, bread, pastry, eggs, and dairy products as the ideal diet for the entire French population.<sup>12</sup> Following such a diet would purify French cuisine into a more natural state that closely imitates the cookery of the primitive man.

As in the case of Jaucourt's entry in the *Encyclopédie*, Rousseau's approach to food assumes that food exerts a direct and considerable influence on the physical and mental composition of an individual and a society. The purer and more natural ingredients' ability to bring French society back to the state of physical robustness and spiritual innocence reflects its fundamental premise resting on the power of food to cause certain emotional or moral states in people. This power to move and change people evokes the property of magic that is related to the art of eloquence, the ability to stimulate and manipulate passions. By prominently featuring the fresh ingredients celebrated by the champions of the *nouvelle cuisine*, Chardin not only taps into the cultural significance of the new wave of culinary thought, but also expresses a broader cultural concern for natural taste and its effect on the physical and mental health of the nation. His representations of the chief ingredients of a simpler and more natural cuisine also correspond to the romanticization of peasant living, portraying the supposedly rustic diet of fresh fruits and vegetable as a symbol of wholesome and an uncontaminated counterpoint to the corruption of urban life. In addition, the artist's depiction of powerful food evokes another dimension of magic as the painted food objects were thought to possess a magical power to shape the emotions and passions of the eaters.

---

<sup>12</sup>Rousseau, *Emile*, 329; Pinkard, *A Revolution in Taste*, 196.

### Artificial Refinement of the *Nouvelle cuisine*

Despite the strong emphasis on the simplicity of the new cookery, the *nouvelle cuisine* in reality was hardly the style of cooking that it promised to be. Far from an emulation of the simple and natural diet of the peasants, *nouvelle cuisine* dishes were highly constructed productions that required an inordinate amount of time, capital, and labor. For one thing, fresh fruits, vegetables, and baked desserts did not appear in the real diet of the peasants in the eighteenth-century France. The fruit depicted in Chardin's canvases, which Barbara Ketcham Wheaton calls "landowners' produce," were mostly harvested from fruit-bearing trees and shrubs cultivated in privately owned orchards with specialized labor.<sup>13</sup> Even if fruits were produced for public markets, they were sold primarily to aristocratic and bourgeois households in urban centers, rather than to rural peasants, because of their high prices.<sup>14</sup> Although rural peasants were romanticized as those who retained the ways of the first people who feasted on bounties of nature, they, in fact, largely depended on cereal, such as rye, barley, oats, buckwheat, and maize, in the form of bread and porridge. The peasants also frequently suffered from rickets, scurvy, and other nutrient deficiency diseases.<sup>15</sup> Rarely were the foodstuffs labeled as simple and rustic actually available to peasants. Therefore, when Rousseau declares himself a lover of simple meals consisting of "dairy products, eggs, herbs, cheese, [and] whole wheat

---

<sup>13</sup>Barbara Ketcham Wheaton, *Savoring the Past: The French Kitchen and Table from 1300 to 1789* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), 126.

<sup>14</sup>Daniel Roche, *A History of Everyday Things: The Birth of Consumption in France, 1600-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 232.

<sup>15</sup>Olwen H. Hufton, *The Poor of Eighteenth-Century France 1750-1789* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 44-45.

bread,” he taps into the moral superiority of a simple lifestyle and the fashion for the *nouvelle cuisine* while simultaneously marking himself as a bourgeois eater who could afford those items denied to the peasantry.<sup>16</sup>

The romanticization of peasants and the ultimate artifice of the *nouvelle cuisine* are visualized in the works of another prominent painter of the mid-eighteenth century—François Boucher. In several of the pastoral paintings for which he was both loved and hated, Boucher depicts carefree and amorous youths clad in fashionable dresses feeding fresh fruit to each other. In *Are They Thinking about the Grape?* (Fig. 9), the youthful couple exchanges gazes as the girl feeds one to the boy from her basket overflowing with luscious grapes. In *Autumn Pastoral* from 1749 (Fig. 10), the gender role seen in the previous painting reverses as the boy sits above his mistress and puts a small bunch of grapes into her mouth. The *Pastoral Scene* at the State Hermitage Museum (Fig. 11) depicts a couple about to drink wine with their arms interlocked and their gazes fixed in a daze, sitting atop a rock above a picnic of grapes and peaches. While the inclusion of these food items in Boucher’s pastorals speaks to their intimate connection to the ideal of romanticized rusticity, it also highlights the artificiality that these objects came to represent in their connection to the *nouvelle cuisine*. Just as the purported peasants depicted in Boucher’s canvases are pure confections, the grapes and peaches that these pastoral youths partake of manifest the artifice of the cookery with which they were associated.

---

<sup>16</sup>Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions and Correspondence, Including the Letters to Malesherbes*, trans. Christopher Kelly (Lebanon, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 1995), 60.

If the *nouvelle cuisine* did not live up to its promises as the actual diet of the peasantry, it also diverged from its stated nature because of the complete lack of simplicity in its cooking procedures. A perfect example of the extreme complexity of the *nouvelle cuisine* is the *restaurant*, or a soup made solely from meat juices, which was widely known as one of the most representative dishes of the new cookery. The *restaurant* became a staple in recipe books of mid-century *nouvelle cuisine* as it was believed to restore the fatigued spirits of those who grew weak-chested from oversensitivity, a disorder specific to the leisured elites.<sup>17</sup> As the central emblem of the *nouvelle cuisine*, along with fresh fruit and pastries, the *restaurant* putatively symbolized the purity and simplicity of the new cookery. However, a period recipe reveals that the process of creating a cup of *restaurant* was a far cry from simple as it was esteemed. Massialot's recipe for the *restaurant* in *Le Cuisinier roïal et bourgeois* explains the painstaking process:

Take a good tin cooking pot; a good round or slice of beef, a round of mutton, a round of veal, a capon, four pigeons, two partridges, all rolled up well, and the big pieces of meat beaten. Put them in your pot, with some pieces of onions, some roots of parsnip and parsley; and season with all kinds of fine herbs and a little salt ... With some strong paper, seal all of the air that could enter your pot ... It is necessary to have another large pot, where one can put this pot; there needs to be some water that boils with hay so that the other pot does not turn and move at all. This pot must therefore boil continuously in water that has been sealed tightly, around five or six hours. After it is necessary to uncover and pass all of the juice that the meat has produced and degrease it well.<sup>18</sup>

The pure essence of the six different kinds of very expensive meat, produced with the help of steam alone, takes five or six hours to cook. The resultant broth is daintily served

---

<sup>17</sup>Spang, *Invention of the Restaurant*, 38.

<sup>18</sup>François Massialot, *Le Cuisinier roïal et bourgeois* (1691; repr., Limoges: René Dessagne, 1986), 386.

up in a small demitasse to be taken in a single serving, making the long and laborious process of its production virtually unknown to its consumer. As demonstrated in the example of the *restaurant*, while the *nouvelle cuisine* dishes put up an appearance of deceptive simplicity in their final guise, their creation certainly involved a considerable investment of money, time, and labor that thoroughly betrays their putatively rustic straightforwardness.

The complete lack of simplicity in the *nouvelle cuisine* did not go unnoticed by eighteenth-century writers. The glaring contradiction between the new cookery's extreme artifice and refinement and its putative status as the diet for simple, rural folks became a target of vehement criticism in culinary discourse. Written as a satirical response to the hugely influential *Les Dons de Comus*, the author of "Lettre d'un pâtissier anglois" takes issue precisely with this self-contradicting nature of the *nouvelle cuisine*:

The choice of meats has become so useless by the cleverness of our cooks. They know so well how to extract quintessence of everything that nothing dominates and that one cannot distinguish by taste or by eye if he is eating meat or fish. The great art of the *nouvelle cuisine* is giving fish the taste of meat, and to meat the taste of fish, and giving vegetables absolutely no taste. It is to the imitation of this delicate refinement that our able authors [of *Les Dons de Comus*] have also the art of disguising all genres ... Such is the taste of the century.<sup>19</sup>

The flavors of the *nouvelle cuisine* are so complicated and artificial that, contrary to its ideals of natural, wholesome food, its dishes lose all traces of their original ingredients. This artifice ultimately renders the choice of ingredients utterly purposeless as all foods lose their innate flavors and are made to taste of something completely different. Rather than bringing out all of the tastes evenly, the *nouvelle cuisine* cooking methods suppress

---

<sup>19</sup>"Lettre d'un pâtissier anglois au nouveau cuisinier françois avec un extrait du Craftsman," in *Lettre d'un pâtissier anglois, et autres contributions à une polémique gastronomique du XVIIIème siècle*, ed. Stephen Mennell (Exeter, England: University of Exeter, 1981), 16.

all natural flavors and impose an artificial one. The anonymous author of *Lettre d'un pâtissier anglois* also laments that this technique of ultimate artifice, or making one thing appear as though it is another, is the “taste of the century” that is affecting all genres of eloquence across disciplines. As we shall see in the next section, the tension between the ideal of natural taste and the reality of artifice becomes a topic of passionate debate among theoreticians and critics of art.

While the *nouvelle cuisine* failed to live up to its promises of a rustic and simplified diet for the aristocrats and bourgeois households, it was recognized for its remarkable technique in displacing and disguising flavors without the heavy use of spices. Regardless of the charges of its critics, creating completely new flavors with ingredients that were considered unrefined and wholesome demonstrates a property of magic—producing extraordinary effects with natural means. Seen together with its emphasis on studying the flavors of natural ingredients and combining them for harmonious tastes, the *nouvelle cuisine* cooking methods can be considered as something of a magical nature with both positive and negative consequences. The fresh fruits and baked desserts featured in Chardin’s still lifes, enjoying new emphasis and prominence along with the increased popularity of the *nouvelle cuisine* in the mid-century, gain magical associations by virtue of their evocation and representation of the new cookery.

#### IV. MAGIC IN PAINTING

The *nouvelle cuisine* as a cookery that fully utilizes the purified essence of natural ingredients struck the right chord for the mid-eighteenth-century aristocratic and bourgeois cult of rustic simplicity. Its technique of inventing well-blended combinations of flavors after a close study of each ingredient mirrored the period conception of natural magic as an act of creating wondrous effects after thorough investigations of nature's secrets. The rustic simplicity of the *nouvelle cuisine*, which supposedly brought out the natural goodness of each ingredient without relying on spices and artificial stimulants, also corresponded to the refreshing lack of "distracting flickering effects" in Chardin's food still lifes. These similarities in the development of the *nouvelle cuisine* and the critical reception of Chardin's canvases highlight the underlying notion of natural magic in all three of its major aspects—study and utilization of nature's bounty; mysterious process of imitating nature; and moving effect that changes the passions and emotions of its targeted audience. As the depicted fresh fruits, beverages, and baked goods were representative of the new cookery, both the visual technique and subject matter of Chardin's food still lifes from the 1750s and 1760s reflect the properties of natural magic. Therefore, Chardin's critics who evoke the concept of magic in their praises of the artist refer not only to the remarkable illusions in his canvases, but also to the transformative quality of the painted objects.

While the evocations of magic connect the critical discussions of the artist's technique with the culinary discourse surrounding his subject matter, it also makes an

intimate association with the aesthetic theories vigorously debated among French artists and theoreticians throughout the eighteenth century. The properties of natural magic embedded in the critical language of the praises of Chardin's works and the *nouvelle cuisine* resonate strongly with the theoretical writings on the function and purpose of art. Tracing the undercurrent of magic in art theory of the eighteenth century makes possible the interpretation of Chardin's food still lifes not only as mimetic representations of nature but also as statements on imitation, on the art of painting itself.

### Magical Illusion and the Figurative Magic

The author of "Lettre d'un pâtissier anglois," whose satiric description of the *nouvelle cuisine* I quote at the end of the preceding section, criticizes the ultimate artifice and deception of the *nouvelle cuisine*. The author posits the "great art" of the *nouvelle cuisine* that gives "fish the taste of meat, and to meat the taste of fish" as an antithesis to the cookery's self-promoted image as the most simple and natural way to cook and eat. While praised as a cooking method based on natural ingredients, the *nouvelle cuisine*, was condemned for its technique of disguise that elaborately manipulates natural ingredients to create artificial flavors with no trace of the natural state of the individual components.

Chardin's still lifes, too, were discussed in terms of the magical quality of their deception, but in a quite different manner. Critics of Chardin's art perceived his deception and disguise as an enhancement to the natural truth of his art, rather than a hindrance or impediment to the artist's depiction of truth. Diderot's passage on Chardin in his Salon critique of 1763 illuminates this cooperative relationship between deception and truth:



There are, at the Salon, several small pictures of Chardin: They represent almost all fruits with accessories of a meal ... The objects exist outside the canvas and are of a truth that fools the eyes ... it is you or me that Chardin will deceive when he wishes.<sup>1</sup>

“Of a truth that fools the eyes.” This enigmatic phrase elicits several questions on the nature of truth. How can a truthful thing fool the eye? How does truth deceive? The dichotomy between truth and deception, similar to the one set up in the critique against the *nouvelle cuisine*, renders Diderot’s praise of Chardin hyperbolic. The very notion of deceitful truth, indeed, needs to be unpacked with an exploration of what truth meant for Diderot and to his eighteenth-century audience.

The deceptive nature of truth in the context of pictorial art is a topic extensively investigated by Roger de Piles (1635-1709), a seventeenth-century French theoretician who wrote numerous treatises on the art of painting. Although not a key figure while alive, De Piles was hugely influential throughout the eighteenth century. Although most of his works were published in the latter half of the seventeenth century, de Piles’ books on art theory, such as *Dialogue sur le coloris* (1673) and *Cours de Peinture par principes* (1708), were continually republished and read widely by artists, amateurs, critics, and theoreticians throughout the eighteenth century. Roger de Piles understands pictorial art primarily as a visual phenomenon.<sup>2</sup> While he certainly does not deny the moral and instructive role of art that traditional academic theory heavily emphasized, de Piles

---

<sup>1</sup>“Il y a au Salon plusieurs petits tableaux de Chardin; ils représentent presque tous des fruits avec les accessoires d’un repas ... Les objets sont hors de la toile et d’une vérité à tromper les yeux ... Mais C’est vous, c’est moi que Charidn trompera, quand il voudra.” Diderot, “Salon de 1763,” 219.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas Puttfarken, *Roger de Piles’ Theory of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), ix.

considers the visual technique and effect as the two most important aspects of a painting. Among the visual aspects of a painting, de Piles singles out imitation as the primary feature that defines the purpose of painting: “The essence and definition of painting is imitation of visible objects by the way of design and colors.”<sup>3</sup> Before it instructs moral lessons or pleases with beauties, painting must appeal to the sight of the viewer by imitating the natural world with design and color.<sup>4</sup> Imitation, in short, is the defining essence of the art of painting.

It follows to ask why de Piles is so concerned with the notion of imitation. What exactly is the function of imitation in a work of art? And how is imitation related to deception and truth? De Piles’s emphasis on imitation is based on its association with truth in painting. It is through imitation that a painting reproduces the look of natural things truthfully. On this point, the theoretician states:

It must be premised, with regard to imitation in painting, that though the natural object is true, and the feigned object in the picture, the latter is, nevertheless, called true, when it is a perfect imitation of the former. It is this truth in painting, then, that I shall attempt to uncover in order to show its value and necessity.<sup>5</sup>

Simply put, a painting that perfectly imitates nature’s truth can be called truthful.

Therefore, both the imitated and the imitation can be considered truthful. However, one

---

<sup>3</sup>Roger De Piles, *Cours de peinture par principes* (Paris: Charles-Antoine Jombert, 1766), 3, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5814705x> (accessed 23 February 2011).

<sup>4</sup>De Piles is also the chief exponent of the colorists in the *Poussinistes* and *Rubenistes* debate in the seventeenth-century academic theory.

<sup>5</sup>“[Il] est bon de savoir en passant que dans l’imitation en fait de Peinture, il y a à observer que bien que l’objet naturel soit vrai et que l’objet qui est dans le tableau ne soit que feint, celui-ci néanmoins est appelée vrai quand il imite parfaitement le caractère de son modele. C’est donc ce vrai en Peinture que je tâcherai de découvrir pour en faire voir le prix & la nécessité.” De Piles, *Cours de peinture par principes*, 24.

would be mistaken to assume that the truths referred to in this statement are one and the same. While the imitated and the imitation are both truthful, their truths are of different kinds. On the one hand, de Piles posits “natural objects” as the first source of truth. As objects being imitated in a picture, these “natural objects” are incontestably true. The truth of the “natural objects” is that of the original of an imitation. On the other hand, the second source of pictorial truth are the “feigned objects,” the imitation painted on canvas. Unlike “natural” things that just *are* true, these “feigned” things are *called* true. In other words, the painted imitation becomes truthful when it is judged and labeled as such. This difference reveals a fundamental contrast between the imitated and the imitation and between the truths that the two produce: The former is intrinsically true by virtue of nature’s truth, while the latter is nominally true due to its representation of what appears to be “natural” in “natural objects.”<sup>6</sup> What interests de Piles as the more important kind of truth is the second type, the nominal and representational truth of imitation based on appearance and form. Rather than a one-to-one correspondence between “natural objects” and “feigned objects,” the latter’s reference to the appearance of the former—the imitation of the look of “natural objects”—comprises the imitative truth. In other words, illusion as the effect of imitating the visual form of “natural objects” lies at the heart of truth in painting.

The heavy emphasis de Piles places on representational truth through perfect imitation establishes an intricate relationship between nature and artifice. Because

---

<sup>6</sup>Here, I paraphrase Jacqueline Lichtenstein’s interpretation of De Piles’ notions in truth in painting as expounded in Chapter 7 “On Truth in Painting; or, The Various Applications of Cosmetics” in *The Eloquence of Color: Rhetoric and Painting in the French Classical Age* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 169-195.

illusion, or imitation of the appearance of “natural objects,” is more important for truth in painting than the mere equation between nature and its imitation, artifice enjoys a place of prominence in de Piles’s theory. Artifice is absolutely necessary for truth in pictorial art as effects of illusion are ultimately created by artificial references to the look of “natural objects.” This need for and importance of artifice for truth in painting leads de Piles to state:

[An artist] that aims at copying her [nature] simply as she is, and without Artifice, shall always produce something poor and of a very mean manner. [Perfect imitation] is an act of wonderful ingenuity which renders the painted objects truer (if one may so say) than the true ones themselves.<sup>7</sup>

Artifice enables the artist to imitate the look of the “natural objects” with invention. The resulting imitations are “truer than the true ones themselves.” The repeated use of the word “true” in its various shades of signification complicates the meaning of this statement. However, based on the discussion of the “natural” and the “feigned” and the truths the two types of objects manifest, one can interpret this statement as an extension of de Piles’s argument on truth in painting: Painted imitation achieves more pictorial truth through artifice, and this imitative truth can exceed nature’s truth, which is inherent in the “natural objects” being imitated. In other words, artifice produces a greater degree of representational truth than a rote replication of “natural objects” ever can. It is through artifice that illusion achieves truth in painting.

Ultimately, this pursuit of imitative truth through artifice takes deception as its end goal. The greatest effect of the representational truth produced through perfect

---

<sup>7</sup>Roger de Piles, “Dialogue upon Colouring,” in *Art in Theory 1648-1815: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison, Paul Wood, and Jason Gaiger, trans. John Ozell, (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000), 192.

imitation and artifice is fooling the eye (*tromper les yeux*), visually tricking the viewer into seeing something that is not there: “Painting is nothing but speciousness [que la Peinture n’est qu’un fard], that it is its essence to deceive, and the greatest deceiver in that art is the greatest painter ... Since the end of painting is not so much to convince the mind as to cheat the eye.”<sup>8</sup> The highest aspiration for a work of art is to deceive. With artifice and the representational truth it allows, perfect imitation makes the viewer’s eye believe in illusion. It is precisely in this sense that imitative truth can fool the eyes.

In great paintings, the effect of deception is so intense that they attract the viewer both visually and physically:

True painting, therefore, is such as not only surprises, but, as it were, calls to us; and has so powerful an effect, that we cannot help coming near it, as if it had something to tell us. And we no sooner approach it, but we are entertained, not only with *fine choice*, with the *novelty* of the things it represents, ... with ingenious inventions, and with allegories, to give us the pleasure of employing our parts, either in discovering the meaning, or criticising the obscurity of them; but also with that *true and faithful imitation*, which attracted us at first sight, and afterwards lets us into all the particulars of the piece.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup>De Piles, “Dialogue upon Colouring,” 192. The 1711 translation by John Ozells translates “fard” as “speciousness”; more accurate, although they certainly do not entirely communicate the meaning of “fard,” may be “paint,” “artifice,” or “deception.” For the intimate connection between “fard” and the theory of art during the eighteenth century, see Melissa Hyde’s *Making Up the Rococo: François Boucher and His Critics* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2006).

<sup>9</sup>“La veritable Peinture est donc celle qui nous appelle (pour ainsi dire) en nous surprenant: & ce n’est que par la force de l’effet qu’elle produit, que nous ne pouvons nous empêcher d’en approcher, comme si elle avoit quelque chose à nous dire. Et quand nous sommes auprès d’elle, nous trouvons que non-seulement elle nous divertit par le beau choix, & par la nouveauté des choses qu’elle nous présente ... par les inventions ingénieuses, & par les allegories dont nous nous faisons un plaisir de trouver le sens, ou d’eux critique l’obscurité; mais encore par l’imitation vraie & fidele qui nous a attirés d’abord, qui nous instruit dans le detail des parties de la Peinture.” De Piles, *Cours de peinture par principes*, 2-3.

Perfect imitation first catches the eyes of the viewer and draws him or her to the painting. As if it is an animate being, it stimulates the interest and passions of the viewer. Imitative truth seduces and deceives the viewer by illusion that fools the eyes. Deception, in turn, enhances the truthfulness of the imitation. This mutual relationship between deception and pictorial truth animates perfect imitation.

A complex network of the “natural” and the “feigned,” of artifice and imitation, and of deception and illusion characterizes Roger de Piles’s theory on the truth in painting. Then, how does this matrix of aesthetic concepts relate to the notions of natural magic? And how may an understanding of this relationship between the imitative truth and natural magic affect the reading of critical discussion of Chardin’s still lifes? First, imitation can be seen as a common denominator shared between natural magic and truth in painting. The centrality of imitation in pictorial illusion mirrors the imitative function of natural magic. Imitation in natural magic and pictorial art also shares a common ground in their artificiality. Closely reproducing the look and effects of nature creates an artificial, man-made product, not nature itself.

The cult of rustic simplicity manifest in the *nouvelle cuisine* and Chardin’s still lifes exemplifies the centrality of imitation and artifice in natural magic and pictorial art. While appealing to the aristocratic and bourgeois taste for simple cookery that fully utilizes the natural goodness of fresh produce and baked goods, the *nouvelle cuisine* was perceived and criticized as a culinary system based on total artifice. Its proponents saw it as a cookery that sought to imitate the tastes of natural ingredients. Its critics interpreted its dishes as over-complicated confections. The painted food items in Chardin’s still lifes,

by their representation of the *nouvelle cuisine*, came to signify both the natural goodness and constructed artifice of the cookery.

If the “feigned objects” of Chardin’s still lifes convey the concept of artifice in their association with the *nouvelle cuisine*, the manner in which Chardin imitates them also evokes the same idea. Chardin’s paintings of fruits and baked goods, too, were celebrated for pictorial simplicity and close affinity to nature itself. But a close look at these paintings reveals the pictorial markers that indicate their artificial status. First, the composition of these works display deliberate and careful arrangement of still life objects. Almost all of the works reproduced in the illustrations, especially *Jar of Olives* (Fig. 1), *The Brioche* (Fig. 2), *Grapes and Pomegranates* (Fig. 3), and *Platter of Peaches with Walnuts, Knife, and Wine Glass* (Fig. 7), demonstrate triangular compositions. The horizontal bases of these pyramidal structures are marked by the ridge of the tables. The vertices are indicated by the highest point of the tallest object in the composition. In addition to creating a sense of solidity and balance, these triangular compositions point to the artist’s deliberate arrangement of the still life objects and the painting’s status as an ultimately artificial creation. Similarly the carefully coordinated color schemes in these works also highlight their artificiality. The pulsating chromatic effect achieved through a series of contrasts and juxtapositions, as discussed in Section II, suggests the engagement of the artist’s coloristic technique and invention, which successfully visualize the imitational truth in painting. In addition, the loose brushwork that creates a curious effect of illusion at a certain distance also denotes the hand of the artist. These technical markers of artifice in Chardin’s still lifes suggests that these works can be considered

truthful because they are artificial imitations of nature that manifest the concept of truth in painting based on illusion and deception.

With both their formal technique and subject matter, Chardin's still life paintings imitate the appearance of "natural objects" with artifice. In addition to the undeniable fact that these works are paintings, not "natural objects" themselves, Chardin's technique makes the fact of the paintings' artificiality plain. This artifice, in turn, prompts the period critics to exalt the imitative truth in his works. Through this delicate interplay between nature and artifice with the mediation of imitation, Chardin's art can be interpreted as a parallel to the concept of natural magic and de Piles's notion of truth in painting.

The second parallel found among art theory, notions of magic, and Chardin's food still lifes is the power to stimulate passions and desires in the audience. As de Piles explains, the ability to call upon the viewers and stir their emotions is the hallmark of illusion created by perfect imitation. That Chardin's paintings of food produced precisely this effect in their viewers has already been established with Diderot's comment that "[in Chardin's art,] you would like to take the bottle by the neck, if you are thirsty; the peaches and grapes awaken your appetite and call your hand."<sup>10</sup> In this evocative statement, Diderot explicitly describes the ability of Chardin's paintings to arouse desire and attract the eye and hands of the viewer. Indeed, Chardin's works stimulate multiple senses to awaken the desires in their viewers. While the colors on these canvases appeal to sight, Chardin communicates the texture of the various objects with his brushwork.

---

<sup>10</sup> "[v]ous prendriez les bouteilles par le goulot, si vous aviez soif; les pêches et les raisins éveillent l'appétit et appellent la main." Diderot, "Salon de 1759," 97.



*The Brioche* (Fig. 2) exemplifies Chardin's use of contrasting textures. There exists an alternating sequence of hard and soft surface with the objects placed around the brioche: The hard objects—the porcelain bowl, biscuits, and vinegar jar—are punctuated by the peaches and cherries that are soft to the touch. The brioche itself conveys the contrasting texture in itself with its firm crust hiding the soft and tender interior. In addition to texture, these objects as food items provoke the senses of taste and smell. Through viewing these fruits, baked goods, and beverages, the viewer can conjure up their tastes and smells in the mind through imagination or memories. Indeed, as M. de Camburat expresses in the poem quoted at the end of Section II, Chardin's still lifes "[combine] taste, touch, and odor" in its imitation.

This power to stimulate the viewer on visual and physical levels is an effect of pictorial illusion championed by another influential theoretician, the Abbé Du Bos (1670-1742). As the primary measure of success for an artist, Du Bos emphasized the emotional impact a painting exerts on its viewer. Printed in 1719, his book *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture* best represents his philosophy on effective art. Beginning with the premise that people prefer to have their minds constantly occupied, Du Bos defines the preliminary function of painting as providing strong and sensible impressions to prevent boredom. Paintings can stir up "those artificial passions within [the audience], by presenting [it] with the imitations of objects capable of exciting real passions."<sup>11</sup> Because their purpose is to excite emotions and passions to keep the audience's mind busy, good artists must choose subject matters that are interesting and engaging; depicting something

---

<sup>11</sup>Abbé Du Bos, *Critical Reflections on Poetry, Painting and Music*, trans. Thomas Nugent, vol. 1 (1748; repr., New York: AMS Press, 1978), 22.

to which people would never pay attention in real life would be to defeat the purpose of creating such a work. Therefore, the choice of subject matter is an important component in fulfilling painting's primary function.

How do paintings of inanimate objects figure in Du Bos's formulation of the stimulating and provocative function of art? Can still lifes have moving powers like those of history paintings that represent human figures engaged in drama? To address these questions, Du Bos states the following:

When we contemplate curiously any pictures of this kind [paintings of inanimate objects], our principal attention is not fixt on the object imitated, but upon the art of the imitator. 'Tis not so much the object, as the artist's abilities, that draws our curiosity; we bestow no more attention on the object imitated in the picture, than we should on that same object in real nature.<sup>12</sup>

Because inanimate objects themselves do not have the power to move the emotions of the viewer, still life paintings attract the curiosity of the viewer and thus successfully prevent ennui with their technique of illusion. When the subject matter fails to excite, only the artist's technical mastery merits the viewer's attention. Therefore, even if rendered with the same level of technical mastery, a depiction of a country feast by Teniers, for example, cannot compete with a history painting by Poussin in its effectiveness in moving the emotions of the viewer.

Chardin's still lifes challenge Du Bos's conception of illusion and pictorial technique as the sole merit of still life paintings. As discussed in the previous section, Chardin's subject matter—fresh fruits, refreshing beverages, and baked desserts—were perceived as agents of change in the psychosomatic composition of an individual. Although inanimate, these food items were attributed with the power to incite certain

---

<sup>12</sup>Du Bos, *Critical Reflections*, vol. 1, 57.

passions or promote morality. Therefore, Chardin's food still lifes are an exception to Du Bos's observation on the uninteresting and uninspiring nature of still lifes. With both their subject matter and technique, works by Chardin stir up emotions, as many critics had noted. The moving ability of Chardin's depictions of food not only meets de Piles and Du Bos's requirement of perfect imitation to excite the passions of the viewer but also surpasses the limits imposed on the category of still life paintings by demonstrating the provocative possibilities of the genre. In addition to its engagement with theories on the function of art, the ability to move and change the viewer's psychosomatic state in Chardin's art also strongly resonates with the emotionally arousing power of eloquence as an application of natural magic. Therefore, the notions of natural magic and the dominant aesthetic theory on pictorial illusion all crystallize in the moving effect of the technique and subject matter of Chardin's still lifes.

Taken together, the several conceptual undercurrents that form the common denominators for the eighteenth-century concept of natural magic, art theory, and Chardin's still lifes all point to illusion as an effect of magic. Illusion that fools the viewer into thinking that he or she sees something that is not there is a supernatural effect achieved through perfect imitation based on a thorough exploration of nature's secrets. With the exceptional ability to fool the eye, creating illusion through painting, then, can be considered a magical act. Indeed, Jean-André Rouquet considers pictorial illusion magical in itself:

Painting, thou charming art, it is thou that deceives our eyes by this magic, which makes us enjoy the presence of objects that are either at too great a distance, or are no more. Long may those glorious painters live, who amuse themselves with

recalling to our memories, some of those happy moments, some of those delightful scenes, which can be continued only in their pictures.<sup>13</sup>

As paintings that are capable of fooling the eyes and striking the passions of their viewers, Chardin's representations of food meticulously exemplify this magic of perfect imitation. Both with their "feigned objects" and the manner in which they are "feigned," the food still lifes of Chardin are pictorial statements on magical illusion.

### Illusory Magic and the Literal Non-Magic

As seen in the quotation from Rouquet, the ultimate pleasure that illusion can yield comes from the feigned presence of objects that are absent in physical reality. Imitative representation of the appearance of absent objects constitutes the magical pleasure in pictorial illusion. This pleasure from being deceived operates on one fundamental premise. The viewer being deceived needs to be aware that the "feigned object" painted on canvas is not the actual "natural object." The viewer needs to realize that the peaches and grapes that Chardin paints are not physically and literally present, that the artist only simulates their presence through imitation. Only after knowing this can the viewer be pleasantly tricked into seeing the "feigned object" as present.

This knowledge required for deception and its resultant pleasure reveals a fundamental tension in the psychological state of the viewer deceived by illusion. In order to be tricked and fooled, the viewer needs to be fully absorbed in the effect of illusion created by the painted imitation. To experience the appetite and thirst awakened by the painted peaches and grapes, the viewer has to be immersed in the illusion.

---

<sup>13</sup>Jean-André Rouquet, *The Present State of the Arts in England* (London: 1755), 20, [http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?action=interpret&docType=ECCOArticles&contentSet=ECCOArticles&bookId=0241500200&type=getFullCitation&tabID=T001&prodId=ECCO&source=library&version=1.0&docLevel=TEXT\\_GRAPHICS&userGroupName=uncbrcr&finalAuth=true](http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?action=interpret&docType=ECCOArticles&contentSet=ECCOArticles&bookId=0241500200&type=getFullCitation&tabID=T001&prodId=ECCO&source=library&version=1.0&docLevel=TEXT_GRAPHICS&userGroupName=uncbrcr&finalAuth=true) (accessed 1 March 2011).

However, to be fooled by simulated presence at all takes an implicit knowledge of the absence of the objects being imitated. And this knowledge that forms the essential condition for deception is predicated on the awareness that the imitation is fundamentally different from the imitated. Therefore, when being deceived by an imitation, the viewer is either absorbed in or aware of the cause of this deception. Marian Hobson calls this model of illusion that induces absorption and awareness “bipolar illusion.” Diderot’s viewer who “would like to take the bottle by the neck” is fully involved in the deception. However, before being deceived and feeling the impulse to reach out for the painted bottle, this viewer needs to be aware that what he is looking at is a simulated presence. In this model of illusion, the viewer constantly oscillates between the two poles of absorption and awareness, “between an imposed naïve reading and an imposed examination of that naïve reading.”<sup>14</sup>

This cognitive slippage that Chardin’s illusion induces in the viewer is parallel to another central tension in his art. Although the eighteenth-century critics have ascribed magical powers to the effect of illusion in Chardin’s works for the reasons that this thesis has explored thus far, it would be foolish for anyone to assume that these paintings were actually created by magic. Although understood as a category of magic, natural magic is a creation of extraordinary effects through human efforts, informed by a persistent study of the laws of nature. Neither nature nor magic creates the effect of illusion in Chardin’s still lifes. It is only the artist’s artifice, the manmade imitation of the appearance of natural world that produces an illusion that fools the eyes. The incomprehensible process

---

<sup>14</sup>Marian Hobson, *The Object of Art: The Theory of Illusion in Eighteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 58. Part One of Hobson’s book provides an intelligent account of the various modes of illusion, imitation, and truth that are central to the eighteenth-century aesthetics.

through which Chardin creates such extraordinary effects constitutes the fundamental basis of the interpretation of his works as magical. Therefore, Chardin's still lifes as exceptional creations of natural magic surprise and please their audience precisely because they are not made by magic. If Chardin's paintings are pictorial statements on magical illusion, they are just as well visualizations of illusory magic, the kind of magic that is not really magic, the kind of magic that undoes itself.

## V. CONCLUSION

The above-quoted excerpts from eighteenth-century art criticism on Chardin's still lifes explicitly state their authors' interest in the technical dimension of the artist's oeuvre. Their direct reference to his palette and brushwork, as well as to the mysterious effect of illusion, indeed highlights the visual impact of Chardin's technique. The sheer abundance of critical praise for the harmony and illusion in Chardin's works more than suffices to prove the critics' admiration for and fascination with the artist's painterly skills.

On the other hand, in these critics' interpretations, the non-technical implication of the notion of Chardin's paintings as works of magic may not be so obvious. When discussion of the artist's skills appears so prominently and with such high frequency in the critical discourse, it is easy to assume that the magical characterization refers primarily to the artist's expertise in rendering inanimate objects. However, this thesis has argued that the "vivid freshness" that awakens all of the senses, the refreshing effect that Diderot likens to a "green, quiet, well watered, shady, and cool" spot for a weary traveler's repose when critics identify in Chardin's canvases, depends also on the cultural meaning of the depicted objects. In addition to describing the artist's technical sophistication in creating illusory effects, the language of magic in eighteenth-century critical discourse surrounding Chardin's food still lifes also refers to the moving power of the objects they depict. As the value of fresh fruits and baked goods and the new cookery

they represent lies in their direct impact on the psychosomatic and moral health of their consumers, the cultural currency of the food items contributes to the magical interpretation of Chardin's canvases. I have shown that this combination of the moving powers of both the visual technique and the subject matter in the artist's works strongly corresponds to the period definition of natural magic as an agent capable of producing supernatural effects through a mysterious imitation of nature. It also closely aligns itself with the eighteenth-century notion of eloquence, that category of powerful human creation that excites passions and desires in its audience. Therefore, the various properties of the technique and subject matter in Chardin's food still lifes evoke multiple dimensions of the notion of magic. Reconstructing the period observation of these properties and their connection to the concept of magic, I have suggested a more nuanced understanding of the language of magic in the criticism on Chardin's paintings.

In addition, through an investigation of the elements of magic in Chardin's canvases and in the *nouvelle cuisine*, I have demonstrated their engagement with the major concepts in aesthetic debates in the eighteenth-century France. Critiques launched against the complexities of the *nouvelle cuisine* closely mirror and highlight the critical references to the deception and illusion in Chardin's works. This set of parallels points to the complex and subtle relationship between artifice and truth that was central to the eighteenth-century debate on the function of art. Finally, the transformative power of both the artist's technique and his subject matter—the former changing paint into the very substance of nature and the latter affecting the passions of their consumers—corresponds with the purpose of art as moving the emotions of its audience and drawing emotional response from it. While the dual nature of magic in Chardin's works satisfies



this emotional requirement of art, it also enables his paintings to transcend the category of still lifes by pleasing with both skill and the subject matter.

Delving into the cultural valence of the subject matter reveals that, far from being direct copies of reality, Chardin's food still lifes are highly constructed and artificial representations of a group of items that held specific meanings not only for the culinary context but also for the broader aesthetic debates of eighteenth-century France. Furthermore, because of their engagement with notions of art's function and purpose, I interpret Chardin's paintings as statements on picture making, on what it means to create true art. Far from serving as mere windows to the external world, the food still lifes point inward to their own art.

To argue that these still lifes can be seen as statements on art is by no means to equate such an interpretation with the intention of the artist. In this thesis, I have rather demonstrated a new, possible interpretation of these works through a close reading of the critical reception and an in-depth visual analysis. In addition, I have proven that a historical and cultural investigation of the subject matter in still life paintings opens up whole new levels of meanings for us to consider. Perhaps, therein lies the magic of Chardin's food still lifes for us twenty-first-century viewers—a subtle and enchanting reminder never to take for granted the art-ness in art.

## ILLUSTRATIONS



Fig. 1. Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, *Jar of Olives*, 1760. Oil on canvas, 71 x 98 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Photograph courtesy of Erich Lessing Culture and Fine Arts Archive/ART RESOURCE, N.Y. <http://www.artstor.org/> (accessed 23 March 2011).



Fig. 2. Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, *The Brioche*, 1763. Oil on canvas, 47 x 56 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Photograph courtesy of Erich Lessing Culture and Fine Arts Archive/ART RESOURCE, N.Y. <http://www.artstor.org/> (accessed 23 March 2011).





Fig. 3. Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, *Grapes and Pomegranates*, 1763. Oil on canvas, 47 x 57 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Photograph courtesy of Erich Lessing Culture and Fine Arts Archive/ART RESOURCE, N.Y. <http://www.artstor.org/> (accessed 23 March 2011).



Fig. 4. Painted decoration on the porcelain jar (detail), *Jar of Olives*





Fig. 5. Painted decoration on the porcelain jug (detail), *Grapes and Pomegranates*



Fig. 6. Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, *Jar of Apricots*, 1756. Oil on canvas, 57 x 51 cm. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. © Allan T. Kohl, Minneapolis College of Art and Design. <http://www.artstor.org/> (accessed 23 March 2011).





Fig. 7. Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, *Platter of Peaches with Walnuts, Knife, and Wine Glass*, 1768. Oil on canvas, 32.5 x 39.5 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Photograph courtesy of Erich Lessing Culture and Fine Arts Archive/ART RESOURCE, N.Y. <http://www.artstor.org/> (accessed 23 March 2011).





Fig. 8. Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, *The Butler's Table*, 1763. Oil on canvas, 38 x 46 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Photograph courtesy of Erich Lessing Culture and Fine Arts Archive/ART RESOURCE, N.Y. <http://www.artstor.org/> (accessed 23 March 2011).



Fig. 9. François Boucher, *Are They Thinking about the Grapes?* 1747. Oil on canvas, 80.8 x 68.5 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago. © The Art Institute of Chicago. <http://www.artstor.org/> (accessed 23 March 2011).





Fig. 10. François Boucher, *Autumn Pastoral*, 1749. Oil on canvas, 264 x 201 cm. Wallace Collection, London. Photograph courtesy of University of California, San Diego. <http://www.artstor.org/> (accessed 23 March 2011).





Fig. 11. François Boucher, *Pastoral Scene*, early 1730s. Oil on canvas. State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. © State Hermitage Museum.  
<http://www.hermitagemuseum.org/> (accessed 23 March 2011).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Année Littéraire*, 1757. In *Chardin*, edited by Georges Wildenstein, 99. Paris: Les Beaux-Arts, 1933.
- Année Littéraire*, 1767. In *Chardin*, edited by Georges Wildenstein, 118. Paris: Les Beaux-Arts, 1933.
- “Lettre d'un pâtissier anglois au nouveau cuisinier françois avec un extrait du Craftsman,” YEAR. In *Lettre d'un pâtissier anglois, et autres contributions à une polémique gastronomique du XVIIIème siècle*, edited by Stephen Mennell, 12-24. Exeter, England: University of Exeter, 1981.
- Mercur de France*, October 1767. In *Chardin*, edited by Georges Wildenstein, 118. Paris: Les Beaux-Arts, 1933.
- D'Agoty, Gautier. *Observations périodiques sur la physique*. 1757. In *Chardin*, edited by Georges Wildenstein, 99. Paris: Les Beaux-Arts, 1933.
- Arnold, Julie Wegner. *Art Criticism as Narrative: Diderot's Salon de 1767*. New York: P. Lang, 1995.
- Baillet de Saint Julien, Louis Guillaume. *Réflexions sur quelques circonstances présentes contenant deux lettres sur l'exposition des tableaux au Louvre cette année 1748*. 1748. Reprint, Geneva: Minkoff Reprints, 1972.
- Bendiner, Kenneth. *Food in Painting from the Renaissance to the Present*. London: Reaktion, 2004.
- Bouhours, Dominique. *The Conversations of Aristo and Eugene*. In *Art in Theory 1648-1815: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, edited by Charles Harrison, Paul Wood, and Jason Gaiger, translated by Donald Schier. 222-231. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000.
- Brumoy, Pierre, and Gillaume-Hyacinthe Bougeant. “Avertissement.” In *Les Dons de Comus ou Les délices de la table*, in *Les liaisons savoureuses: Réflexions et pratiques culinaires au XVIIIe Siècle*, edited by Beatrice Fink, 26-32. Saint-Etienne, France: L'Université de Saint-Etienne, 1995.
- Bryson, Norman. *Looking at the Overlooked: Four Essays on Still Life Painting*. London: Reaktion Books, 1990.
- Calmet, Augustin. *Traité sur les apparitions des esprits et sur les vampires ou les revenants de Hongrie, de Moravie, etc.* Paris: Debure l'aîné, 1751.  
<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k68179p> (accessed 23 January 2011).

- De Camburat, *L'Exposition du Louvre faite en l'année M DCC LXIX*. 1769. In Chardin, edited by Georges Wildenstein, 122. Paris: Les Beaux-Arts, 1933.
- Cochin, Charles-Nicholas, le fils. "Billet de C.-N. Cochin a M. Belle le fils." 1790. In Chardin, edited by Georges Wildenstein, 51. Paris: Les Beaux-Arts, 1933.
- Diderot, Denis. *Diderot on Art*. Edited and translated by John Goodman. 3 Vols. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.
- . *Essai sur la peinture: Salons de 1759, 1761, 1763*. Paris: Hermann, 1984.
- . *Oeuvres de Denis Diderot, publiées sur les manuscrits de l'auteur*. Vol. 7. Paris: Deterville, 1800. <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k2060815/f1> (accessed 23 January 2011).
- Du Bos, Abbé. *Critical Reflections on Poetry, Painting and Music*. 3 Vols. Translated by Thomas Nugent. 1748. Reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1978.
- Félibien, André. *Conversations on the Lives and Works of the Most Excellent Ancient and Modern Painters*. In *Art in Theory 1648-1815: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, edited by Charles Harrison, Paul Wood, and Jason Gaiger. Translated by Jonathan Murphy. 220-222. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000.
- Ferguson, Priscilla Parkhurst. *Accounting for Taste: The Triumph of French Cuisine*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Flandrin, Jean-Louis. *Arranging the Meal: A History of Table Service in France*. Translated by Julie E. Johnson. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.
- . "Dietary Choices and Culinary Technique, 1500-1800." In *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*, edited by Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari, 403-417. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- Frantz, Pierre, and Elisabeth Lavezzi. *Les Salons de Diderot: théorie et écriture*. Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2008.
- Gell, Alfred. "Technology and Magic." *Anthropology Today* 4 (1988): 6-9.
- . "The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology." In *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics*, edited by Jeremy Coote and Anthony Shelton, 40-66. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Girard, Alain. "Le triomphe de 'La cuisinière bourgeoise'; Livres culinaires, cuisine et société en France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles." *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaines* 24 (1977): 497-523.

- Hobson, Marian. *The Object of Art: The Theory of Illusion in Eighteenth-Century France*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Hufton, Olwen H. *The Poor of Eighteenth-Century France 1750-1789*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974.
- Hyde, Melissa. *Making Up the Rococo: François Boucher and His Critics*. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2006.
- Hyman, Philip, and Mary Hyman. "Printing the Kitchen: French Cookbooks, 1480-1800." In *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*, edited by Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari, 394-402. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- Isherwood, Robert M. "Entertainment in the Parisian Fairs in the Eighteenth Century." *The Journal of Modern History* 53 (1981): 24-48.
- Knight, Gareth. *A History of White Magic*. London: Mowbrays, 1978.
- Korsmeyer, Carolyn. *Making Sense of Taste: Food & Philosophy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.
- Kümin, Beat. "Eating Out before the Restaurant: Dining cultures in Early-Modern Inns." In *Eating Out in Europe: Picnics, Gourmet Dining and Snacks since the Late Eighteenth Century*, edited by Marc Jacobs and Peter Scholliers, 71-87. New York: Berg, 2003.
- De La Mothe Le Vayer, François. *Oeuvres de François de La Mothe Le Vayer*. Vol. 1. Dresden: M. Groell, 1756-1759. <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k50> (accessed 23 January 2011).
- Lichtenstein, Jacqueline. *The Eloquence of Color: Rhetoric and Painting in the French Classical Age*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993.
- Massialot, François. *Le Cuisinier roïal et bourgeois, qui apprend à ordonner toute sorte de Repas, & la meilleure maniere des Ragoûts les plus à la mode & les plus exquis*. 1691. Reprint, Limoges: René Dessagne, 1986.
- Mennell, Stephen. *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996.
- Menon. *Les soupers de la cour, ou, L'art de travailler toutes sortes d'aliments*. 1755. Reprint, Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1978.
- Michel, Marianne Roland. *Chardin*. Translated by Eithne McCarthy. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1996.

- De Piles, Roger. *Abregé de la vie des peintres, avec des reflexions sur leurs ouvrages, et un traité du peintre parfait, de la connoissance des dessins & de l'utilité des estampes*. 1699. Reprint, Hildesheim, Germany: G. Olms, 1969.
- . *Cours de peinture par principes*. Paris: Charles-Antoine Jombert, 1766.  
<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5814705x> (accessed 23 February 2011).
- . "Dialogue upon Colouring." In *Art in Theory 1648-1815: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, edited by Charles Harrison, Paul Wood, and Jason Gaiger. Translated by John Ozell. 185-192. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000.
- Pinkard, Susan. *A Revolution in Taste: The Rise of French Cuisine, 1650-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Pitte, Jean-Robert. "The Rise of the Restaurant." In *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*, edited by Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari, 471-480. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- Porter, Roy. "Witchcraft and Magic in Enlightenment, Romantic and Liberal Thought." In *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, edited by Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark, 191-273. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.
- Puttfarken, Thomas. *Roger de Piles' Theory of Art*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.
- Roche, Daniel. *A History of Everyday Things: The Birth of Consumption in France, 1600-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Rosenberg, Pierre. *Chardin*. Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1979.
- Rouquet, Jean-André. *The Present State of the Arts in England*. London: 1755.  
[http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?action=interpret&docType=ECCOArticles&contentSet=ECCOArticles&bookId=0241500200&type=getFullCitation&tabID=T001&prodId=ECCO&source=library&version=1.0&docLevel=TEXT\\_GRAPHICS&userGroupName=uncbrcr&finalAuth=true](http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?action=interpret&docType=ECCOArticles&contentSet=ECCOArticles&bookId=0241500200&type=getFullCitation&tabID=T001&prodId=ECCO&source=library&version=1.0&docLevel=TEXT_GRAPHICS&userGroupName=uncbrcr&finalAuth=true) (accessed 1 March 2011).
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *The Confessions and Correspondence, Including the Letters to Malesherbes*. Translated by Christopher Kelly. Lebanon, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 1995.
- . *Emile, or On Education*. Translated by Allan Bloom. Lebanon, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2010.



- Sander, Jochen. "Wicker Basket with Wild Strawberries." In *The Magic of Things: Still-Life Painting 1500-1800*, edited by Jochen Sander. 360. Städel Museum: Frankfurt am Main, Germany, in association with Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2008. Exhibition catalog.
- Spang, Rebecca L. *The Invention of the Restaurant: Paris and Modern Gastronomic Culture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Vila, Anne C. *Enlightenment and Pathology: Sensibility in the Literature and Medicine of Eighteenth-Century France*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.
- Voltaire. *La Philosophie de l'Histoire, par feu l'abbé Bazin*. Amsterdam: Changuion, 1765. <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k57060758> (accessed 23 January 2011).
- Weisberg, Gabriel P. *Chardin and the Still-Life Tradition in France*. Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, in association with Indiana University Press, 1979. Exhibition catalog.
- Wheaton, Barbara Ketcham. *Savoring the Past: The French Kitchen and Table from 1300 to 1789*. Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983.
- Willan, Anne. *Great Cooks and Their Recipes from Taillevent to Escoffier*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1977.