

source of energy in movements of political and legal reform” (p. 7). Indignation, according to Niezen, implies that injustices are not just experienced as issues of illegality, but as deeply felt moral offenses. But translating and communicating a community’s sense of indignation and injustice into action, especially in the dizzying world of ICTs and other global media, is a daunting process, as suggested by the Cree examples. Perhaps the most compelling contribution is the last essay, in which Niezen carefully distinguishes between the assumptions, motivations, methods, and truth claims of the “therapeutic history” promoted by indigenous activists and the “critical history” deployed by most scholars. The contradictions between these two historical approaches pose difficult predicaments for both scholars and activists sympathetic to the need for the self-affirmation and political struggles for justice of indigenous peoples.

In sum, *The Rediscovered Self* will be of interest to scholars of indigenous peoples, social movements, politics, and broader questions of epistemology, representation, and method.

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Susan Pinkard, *A Revolution in Taste: The Rise of French Cuisine, 1650–1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 317 pp.

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The “revolution” narrated by Susan Pinkard is that which launched a new way of thinking about, and in part of doing, cookery between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This “revolution,” or “mutation,” as Jean-Louis Flandrin, the first scholar of gastronomic history, called it, developed alongside changes in social customs, philosophy, and political orientation. One of the merits of this fine book is the skillful tracing of these interdependencies, as it leads readers through aristocratic courts (first and foremost Louis XIV’s Versailles) and urban salons in search of the sites where the new ideas developed. Pinkard stresses it was not at Versailles, as usually imagined, but rather in the salons of the Parisian upper crust over just a few decades (p. 83) that the canon of the ancien régime was upended, and “taste,” fine manners, and “the acquisition of knowledge” (84) overtook the privileges of lineage.

Pinkard argues “the dinner or supper party,” a new convivial and gastronomic institution of Parisian elites, was the locus of French nouvelle cuisine’s elaboration (87). The long rectangular tables traditional in aristocratic households, excellent for signaling hierarchies and distance between guests, lost favor along with the many servants proffering food and drink to the eaters seated along one side only in order to better see the spectacle of the food before them, a spectacle of which they were themselves part. The new table was smaller, round or square. It erased differences and ceremonies, substituting conversation for spectacle, removing servants to ease exchanges between guests,

simplifying menus, and reducing the number and complexity of dishes. This new table favored intimacy, reflection, and debate. Around such tables grew the critical spirit that prepared the events of 1789. Thus the “revolution of taste” of the book’s title accompanied real social and political revolution.

By clever mining of the large historiography on this subject, and by lining up ideas and facts tidily, Pinkard clarifies the nature of this “revolution.” Her point of departure is the medieval and early modern gastronomic aesthetic, characterized by a penchant for artifice, the idea of cooking as the art of manipulation and re-creation. This aesthetic was related to cultural diffidence toward nature, considered to require correction, improvement, and perfection by philosophers, scientists, and dieticians. This outlook accompanied culinary practices aimed at hiding, or at least modifying “natural” properties and flavors. Around 1650 all this was called into question and for the first time the notion that a “natural” flavor could be good and should be respected arose (the idea was not wholly new, but had never been enunciated so self-consciously and programmatically). Nicolas de Bonnefons’ 1654 phrase, apparently innocuous, in fact was revolutionary: “Food should taste like what it is” (62). Several generations of cooks, from Massialot to Marin and Menon, developed the insight into a concept of cooking whose object was no longer to modify a food’s nature, but to appreciate it, using soft or fatty sauces, or to extract its essence through almost alchemical processes, the origin of the famous “*fonds de cuisine*,” foundation of modern French cooking. Rousseau’s philosophy, and its recognition in Nature of absolute good, came to support and even justify the new gastronomic doctrine. It was a triumph of simplicity and authenticity, as Pinkard explains in her last chapters, where she also hastily alludes to the new culture of wine based on terror that arose in France at the same time.

Medical thought further bolstered this change. Abandoning the Hippocratic-Galenic tradition allowed new theories to flourish, like George Cheyne’s “iatromechanics” where theories of “juices” that govern and nourish the body supported the culinary fashion for broths, extracts, and concentrated sauces. Pinkard’s insistence on these coincidences is methodologically significant, a contradiction of Flandrin’s celebrated thesis on the eighteenth-century “divorce” between gastronomy and dietetics. More probably culinary experimentation and scientific-medical experimentations went hand in hand, for each period and culture has its own distinctive gastronomy and dietetics.

This scheme works well applied to the “discourses” elaborated around food. I am less certain there is such tidy correspondence between “discourses” and “practices,” or chefs’ techniques. For instance, from Massialot on, the identification and classification of certain basic procedures became French cuisine’s winning card. Yet exactly “the omnipresence of basic preparations could cause everything to taste the same” (156). This accusation, turned on Massialot by his enemies, actually repeated clichés from the polemic against the

“ancients” and their unnatural cuisine. Similarly, Marin, the most unwavering theorist of natural cuisine, sought foods’ “quintessence” through their “deconstruction” (161). It is true that the rich sauces created by French cooks of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries often exalted the “natural” flavor of foods while the acidulous sauces of medieval and Renaissance times tended to modify flavors (108), but traditional sauces were placed next to foods, while modern ones were slathered over them, intensifying their capacity to intrude. The tendency to cover “natural” flavors through elaborate procedures, more complex than anything imagined by pre-modern cooking, paradoxically accompanied the celebration of the “natural” in writers like Massialot. It triumphed in the recipes of Antonin Carême, true codifier of French cooking around 1800, before Escoffier’s rise. Given these trends, the same that guaranteed French cuisine’s success over the past two hundred years, it is hard to see “naturalness” and “simplicity,” key ideals promoted by the philosopher-cooks of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, prevailing as basic tenets in the French gastronomic tradition. When another *nouvelle cuisine* emerged in the latter 1900s, its bywords were still simplicity, sobriety, and authenticity, against the artifices and complication of “traditional French cookery.” Since the themes are the same after two centuries, one wonders whether any “revolution” really took place, except in words.

Pinkard is aware of these contradictions. She subtly suggests that precisely the ongoing dialogue between two levels of cooking, the “artificial” and the “natural,” lent such great interest to the gastronomical debate in France and created such excellent culinary results. I am left with the impression that in the whole affair “discourses” had more weight than “practices,” to the point of influencing historians’ evaluations of the latter. But I do not wish to deny the importance of ideas in human history. After all, without Enlightenment thought, there might have been no French Revolution.

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Jacqueline Van Gent. *Magic, Body, and the Self in Eighteenth-Century Sweden*. Leiden: Brill, 2009, vii, 228 pp.

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The rich historiography of witchcraft and magic persecutions offers a wide range of methodological approaches. Often, trial testimonies become sources for analyzing the peculiarities of popular religiosity, the attitudes of secular and spiritual authorities towards popular culture, and various gender issues, among other things. Since the history of the European “witch craze” has been analyzed in detail, it is hard to imagine new advances in the field. Nevertheless, Jacqueline Van Gent’s book, based on more than eight hundred witchcraft cases of the Appellate Court of Göta, is a welcome addition to the