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GASTRO-COSMOPOLITANISM AND THE RESTAURANT IN LATE VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN LONDON*

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ABSTRACT. *This article argues that the restaurant offers a useful site for mapping patterns of transnational and global exchange within late Victorian and Edwardian London. The dramatic expansion of public eating in this period was met in part by foreign-born entrepreneurs, and wait and kitchen staff drawn from a genuinely international labour market. Londoners and visitors to the metropolis were exposed to a variety of new, often hybrid, culinary cultures, which call into question simplistic binaries between Britain and the world beyond. The simultaneous presence in London's restaurant scene of French menus, Indian dishes, Italian cooks, German waiters, and Chinese and American diners reveals the complexity of the relationship between populations and places. London's 'gastro-cosmopolitan' culture reveals not merely the extent to which Britain's imperial metropolis was exposed to transnational forces, but that these influences were genuinely global and not confined to Britain's formal empire. London's cosmopolitan dining culture suggests that historians might be advised to move beyond the tropes of danger and anxiety when discussing late nineteenth-century London, and do more to acknowledge a range of responses – attraction and pleasure included – which more accurately reflected the metropolitan experience.*

I

'The cosmopolitan character of London is generally known, but perhaps indifferently realised', *Chambers's Journal* observed in an essay fittingly entitled 'Our city of nations' in 1891.[1] This survey of London's immigrant populations,

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[1] 'Our city of nations', *Chambers's Journal*, 8, 394 (1891), p. 453.

and their respective subcultures, paid particular attention to shops, stalls, and social clubs, but also included a brief, exoticized, description of an Italian restaurant, with its 'strange oozing cake'.[2] The tantalizing reference to public eating in 'Our city of nations', and its explicit linkage to the notion of London as a cosmopolitan city, offers a useful point of entry into a broader appreciation of the significance of the restaurant in the history of the late Victorian and Edwardian metropolis. This article argues that the restaurant serves as a critical, yet undervalued, site on which to explore the relationship between British metropolitan culture and the wider world. It offers new insights into the way transnational and global cultural exchange operated, and suggests the necessity of complicating, and qualifying, how cosmopolitanism in *fin de siècle* London has been understood by scholars.

By inserting food into the cultural and social history of London in this period, we can recast our understanding of the history of London, and modern Britain more broadly, in a number of ways. First, it is necessary to appreciate that not merely was Britain's imperial metropolis exposed to transnational cultural and economic forces, but that these influences were genuinely global, and not merely confined to Britain's formal empire. Second, the cosmopolitan culture surrounding public eating reveals that cultural difference existed not merely at a discursive level in the metropolitan imaginary, but was also materially grounded. Third, London's cosmopolitan food culture reveals that encountering the cultural 'other' was as likely to be associated with positive, as with negative, connotations. The experience of the restaurant suggests that historians may do well to move beyond tropes of danger and anxiety and do more to acknowledge countervailing forces of attraction and pleasure that were also central to the metropolitan experience.

Historians have become increasingly aware of how integral food cultures are to a globalized understanding of history,[3] not least in their relationship to other transnational forces, such as slavery, diaspora, and immigration.[4] In addition to transnational histories of the spice trade[5] and studies of specific food and drug commodities, such as chocolate and tobacco,[6] there also exist scholarly studies of the history of food cultures framed in a more national context, a large popular literature on the history of eating (dealing with both national and transnational issues), and biographies of culinary

[2] Ibid., p. 454.

[3] For an encyclopaedic, transnational typology, see Kenneth F. Kiple and Kriemhild Coneè Ornelas, eds., *The Cambridge world history of food* (2 vols., Cambridge, 2000).

[4] On slavery, diaspora, and food migrations, e.g. Judith A. Carney, *Black rice: the African origins of rice cultivation in the Americas* (Cambridge, MA, 2001); on immigration and ethnic food, e.g. Hasia R. Diner, *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish foodways in the age of migration* (Cambridge, MA, 2001).

[5] E.g. Paul Freedman, *Out of the east: spices and the medieval imagination* (New Haven, CT, 2009).

[6] E.g. Marcy Norton, *Sacred gifts, profane pleasures: a history of tobacco and chocolate in the Atlantic world* (Ithaca, NY, and London, 2010).

innovators.[7] However, for all this interest in the history of food, there has been surprisingly little sustained attention given to the subject of public eating, especially the restaurant as a site of social practice and cultural formation.[8]

Indeed, by stressing the global dimension to public eating in London in this period, this article aligns itself with those engaged in writing the history of modern Britain who have insisted on the need to think beyond the nation.[9] While many of the works that would seem to embody this agenda have dealt with (largely if not exclusively) imperial stories, there has also been a growing emphasis on placing British history in an international framework that is not restricted to the parameters of formal empire.[10] What follows is a contribution to this growing literature on British history that goes not merely beyond the nation, but beyond the imperial turn. It deploys the notion of what can be termed 'gastro-cosmopolitanism' to reveal the complex ways in which the global and the local interrelated in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century metropolis. Critically, this term encompasses not merely the food on the diner's plate, but also the broader context of the dining experience featuring an international cast of caterers and diners.

To the extent that there is a historiographical convention about the history of food in modern Britain, it is that Britain remained in a state of culinary impoverishment and insularity for a long dark age that extended to Britain's belated (and sometimes awkward) embrace of foreign food in the closing decades of the twentieth century. Those historians who have recently drawn attention to the more international and heterogeneous dimension to British eating habits (and its value as an index of the broader impact on Britain's national identity or the presence in metropolitan society of minority ethnic and social cultures) offer an essentially post-1945 story.[11] This is even true of Panikos Panayi's *Spicing up Britain*, which, while nominally beginning in 1850, is essentially concerned with what the author terms the post-war culinary revolution, with the period before the First World War characterized merely as

[7] On the national context, see Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, *Accounting for taste: the triumph of French cuisine* (Chicago, IL, 2004); Amy B. Trubek, *Haute cuisine: how the French invented the culinary profession* (Philadelphia, PA, 2000). A key popular study is Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Food: a history* (London, 2001). Concerning one important chef, see Ruth Cowen, *Relish: the extraordinary life of Alexis Soyer, Victorian celebrity chef* (London, 2008).

[8] Even Rebecca Spang's *The invention of the restaurant: Paris and modern gastronomic culture* (Cambridge, MA, 2000) is largely a study of the relationship between the discursive practices of public eating and the wider political culture of revolutionary France.

[9] See Antoinette Burton, 'Who needs the nation? interrogating "British" history', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 10 (1997), pp. 227–48; Paul Gilroy, *The black Atlantic: modernity and double consciousness* (Cambridge, MA, 1993).

[10] See, for instance, Mrinalini Sinha, *Specters of mother India: the global restructuring of an empire* (Durham, NC, 2006); Susan D. Pennybacker, *From Scottsboro to Munich: race and political culture in 1930s Britain* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford, 2009); Antoinette Burton, *The postcolonial careers of Santha Rama Rau* (Durham, NC, 2007).

[11] See Elizabeth Buettner, '"Going for an Indian": south Asian restaurants and the limits of multiculturalism in Britain', *Journal of Modern History*, 80 (2008), pp. 865–901.

'the first ripples of change'.[12] This whig view of British food history rests, to some extent, on assumptions about nineteenth-century cuisine that have rarely been tested. A sustained study of food cultures in the century before the First World War is notable by its absence in the historical literature. Mrs Beeton's *Book of household management* has attracted considerable interest, but beyond that there is a whole world of eating that requires scholarly attention.[13] The history of food in this period is a space that has been abdicated by academic scholars in favour of studies dominated by aficionados and anecdote.[14] The restaurant, in particular, has remained untreated by both food historians and, with some notable recent exceptions, those contributing to the extensive literature on late Victorian and Edwardian metropolitan culture.[15] This article offers an extended historical study of the restaurant, revealing the complexity and diversity of London's culinary culture, a heterogeneity that is particularly evident when the definition of a 'restaurant' is extended beyond 'fine dining' or the most well-known emporiums of eating, to the more humble eating house.[16] There is also much to be gained from extending the focus beyond the areas most usually associated with public eating, notably the theatre district of the West End or Bohemian Soho, to include the City of London, the East End, and the inner suburbs.

II

Given that London's staggering population growth in the second half of the nineteenth century was accompanied by an enlargement of the physical size of the metropolis, and a concomitant increase in the distance between places of residence and places of employment, public eating became an important aspect of the urban economy.[17] Records show that this rising population was accompanied by an increase in the number of restaurants.[18] In part, this

[12] See Panikos Panayi, *Spicing up Britain: the multicultural history of British food* (London, 2008).

[13] Margaret Beetham, 'Good taste and sweet ordering: dining with Mrs Beeton', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 36 (2008), pp. 391–406.

[14] E.g. Richard Tames, *Feeding London: a taste of history* (London, 2003).

[15] An exception is John Burnett, *England eats out: a social history of eating out in England from 1830 to the present* (Edinburgh, 2004). More recent studies have confined their discussion of the restaurant to a single chapter: Rachel Rich, *Bourgeois consumption: food, space and identity in London and Paris, 1850–1914* (Manchester, 2011), and Judith R. Walkowitz, *Nights out: life in cosmopolitan London* (New Haven, CT, 2012). Moreover, the latter's discussion focuses on the Italian restaurant only, and mainly during the interwar years.

[16] For the purposes of definition, this article also includes, under the rubric of 'restaurant', the dining rooms of hotels that catered to both residents and non-residents.

[17] Ben Weinreb and Christopher Hibbert, eds., *The London encyclopaedia* (London, 1983), p. 614.

[18] A conservative estimate of dining rooms alone, calculated by the author on the basis of entries in selected issues of the annually published *London post office directory*, would be as follows: 106 in 1840; 302 in 1850; 358 in 1860; 403 in 1870; 440 in 1880; 587 in 1890; 882 in

increased demand was met by institutions that were self-consciously 'English' in terms of their character and cuisine. The chop house extolled the virtues of a 'homely character' where customers could be supplied with 'huge joints of cold roast and boiled meat, bread and half a pint of porter or mild ale in a pewter tankard'.[19] A number of renowned chop houses were still thriving at the end of the century, namely Baker's, Simpson's, the George and Vulture, the Cock, and the Cheshire Cheese, all in the City or its immediate vicinity, while further afield were Stone's (in the West End), the Star and Garter (in Chelsea and Richmond), and the Ship (in Greenwich), but there were also countless others that attracted less attention.

However, the elegiac and nostalgic tone that characterized references to chop houses in *fin de siècle* journalism or guide books attests to their increasingly anachronistic, not to say moribund, status. Caught between a remote past and a marginalized present, the chop house had a precarious existence in what was a rapidly changing urban landscape, inspiring in some 'the feeling of regret we naturally have when we notice the disappearance of a familiar landmark which, by long years' acquaintance, we have learned to venerate, and indeed love'.[20] There were also numerous modest establishments that served fare that probably had limited foreign influence in either derivation or execution, and some actively promoted a nativist public image. For example, at Galt's in Cheapside, one reviewer was pleased to report that 'everything about the place is English. No foreign meat enters its portals... The manager, Mr Arthur Lane, is an Englishman, the chef-de-cuisine is also an Englishman, and the young ladies who wait upon customers with such civility and attention are all of English birth.'[21] However, the emphasis on policing the boundaries of the culinary nation was not entirely effective here, since the specialism of the restaurant was turtle soup, prepared from live creatures imported by the proprietor from the West Indies. Unimpeachably 'English' dishes such as scrambled eggs on toast, steak and kidney pudding, and gooseberry tart were also prominent in the menus of the Lyons's restaurants that played such an important role in servicing London's burgeoning white-collar work force. However, the quintessential Englishness of Lyons's establishments obscured the fact that the company was founded by an extended family of émigré German Jews.[22]

1900; 1,186 in 1910. However, these figures most certainly underestimate the total, and some contemporaries confidently asserted the number to be much higher. One writer for the *Chambers's Journal* estimated as early as 1837 that there were roughly 1,500 dining rooms in the metropolis, 'and that is certainly under rather than above the mark'. 'London eating houses', *Chambers's Journal*, 282 (1837), p. 174.

[19] Clipping, 'Mitchell's restaurant', *City Press*, 2 Apr. 1887; clipping, *City Press*, 9 Jan. 1897, Norman Collection, London Guildhall Library (LGL).

[20] Clipping, 'Baker's chop house', *City Press*, 1891, Norman Collection, LGL.

[21] Clipping, 'Turtle soup for the million: a new Cheapside enterprise', *City Press*, Nov. 1903, Norman Collection, LGL.

[22] Of the founders of the company in 1887, Isidore and Montague Gluckstein were the sons of Samuel Gluckstein, a German Jew who arrived in England in 1841, while Barnett Salmon

The decline of the chop house had, as its corollary, the rise of a new, more heterogeneous (and, as will be seen, more international) dining culture in London. As one observer asserted in 1891, it was 'the modern restaurant, with its gaudy adornments and French dishes' which had 'practically sent to the wall the comfortable and cosy taverns which only a few years since flourished and prospered in our midst'.[23] In fact, the new culture of public eating at the end of the century encompassed a much broader range of restaurant types than the genre identified here.

This rising demand for public eating establishments was created by a diverse set of consumers. A critical component was the expanding middle class, not merely numerically larger than previously (nationally, their numbers grew from 12·5 per cent in 1851 to 25 per cent in 1901), but now possessing considerable disposable income, at a time when the cost of basic foodstuffs fell and most bourgeois households devoted an average of only 10 per cent of their income to rent.[24] There were also suggestive press references in the 1890s to the difficulty of finding suitably qualified household cooks, which may also have contributed to an increasing influx of middle-class diners into restaurants in London.[25] This is not to say that public eating in London was confined to the affluent middle classes. There were also countless shop assistants, students, clerks, and other office workers whose tastes extended beyond 'the quickly procured "bun and milk" [which] is both unappetising and insufficient' to include more exotic items.[26] There were also particular niche constituencies, including theatre-goers and those connected to the theatrical trade, including actors, critics, playwrights, designers, and composers, who frequented late-night establishments largely because they had no other eating options after curtain call. In addition, restaurants in London hosted a number of visitors from outside the metropolitan area, not merely men on business from other parts of Britain, but also a growing number of visitors from overseas.

In Nathaniel Newnham-Davis's popular guide, *Dinners and diners*, published in 1899, references abound to fellow diners drawn from across the globe.

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and Joseph Lyons were London Jews. See Peter Bird, *The first food empire: a history of J. Lyons & Co.* (Chichester, 2000). There were obviously Jewish-owned restaurants with a more pronounced Jewish cultural inflection, notably those serving Kosher food. However, this did not preclude them from attracting a clientele that was less exclusive. For example, noted restaurant reviewer Nathaniel Newnham-Davis dined at the Kosher restaurant in the City, Goldstein's, and there are also references to Kosher restaurants that served German dishes with a view to attracting both Jewish and non-Jewish diners. See Nathaniel Newnham-Davis, *Dinners and diners: where and how to dine in London* (London, 1899); 'Hotel news', *Caterer*, 15 Feb. 1895, p. 53.

[23] 'Baker's chop house', *City Press*, 1891, Norman Collection, LGL.

[24] John Benson, *The rise of consumer society in Britain, 1880–1980* (New York, NY, 1994), p. 25.

[25] Mary Harrison, 'Cookery as a business', *Nineteenth Century*, 34 (1893), pp. 110–20; 'Catering for householders', *Caterer*, 15 Oct. 1894, p. 428; 'British cooks', *St. James's Gazette*, 28 Nov. 1898, p. 4; 'Are we to be cookless?', *Caterer*, 15 Dec. 1898, p. 606.

[26] Press cuttings, 'A new quick lunch restaurant', 12 Mar. 1904, Restaurant Files, box Q-S, Bishopsgate Library, London.

His fellow diners included 'at least one American actress' at Epitaux's in the Haymarket, 'two gentlemen, who from their speech were Australian' in the restaurant of the Berkeley Hotel in Piccadilly, as well as a party of South African stockbrokers and an 'Indian prince, the first swallow of the dusky, jewelled flight that comes each summer to our shores' at the Savoy in the Strand.[27] Even allowing for journalistic embellishment, Newnham-Davis's observations underline the need to avoid simplistic alignments between dinners and diners in terms of their respective geographic origins, as will be seen.

There were also myriad ways in which diners experienced restaurants, whether in the company of a suitor or a spouse, at a family celebration, alone or with colleagues during a break from the law courts, businesses, banks, the Stock Exchange, or parliament. One aspect of restaurant culture was the promotion of a form of male homosociability that was also apparent in the consolidation of the gentleman's club. However, while many restaurants maintained a largely male clientele, women also become an important element in London dining. Some took their meals at women's only dining rooms within mixed restaurants (and, less commonly, in women's only restaurants), but many others dined with male relatives and friends.[28] The study of diners and dining can provide insight into a range of issues that can contribute to a broader understanding of metropolitan culture at the end of the nineteenth century, highlighting new forms of heterosociability, changing gender roles, and the significance of performance as a rubric that encompassed both theatre and social life. There might also be value in applying a historical methodology to sociological studies of public eating in the more contemporary world.[29] However, the focus here is on the way that the restaurant registers the complexity of global and local identities at the turn of the century.

Among London's burgeoning population was a rising number of continental immigrants who brought with them new food customs and foods, a type of 'portable property'.[30] In the period of Italian and German unification, immigrants from these two countries became a more visible presence in London, their appearance and customs the subject of widespread interest. For some contemporaries, the distinctiveness of these newly arrived immigrants was not merely apparent to the eye and ear, but also the nose. Soho's Italian community was singled out for specific attention by journalist and epicurean George Augustus Sala who observed in 1859 that the smell of

[27] Newnham-Davis, *Dinners and diners*, pp. 330, 164, 77, 76.

[28] On the growing acceptability of female dining, see Clement Scott, *How they dined us in 1860 and how they dine us now* (London, c. 1900).

[29] See Alan Warde and Lydia Martens, *Eating out: social differentiation, consumption and pleasure* (Cambridge, 2000); Derek J. Oddy, *From plain fare to fusion food: British diet from the 1890s to the 1990s* (London, 2003).

[30] John Plotz, *Portable property: Victorian culture on the move* (Princeton, NJ, 2008), pp. xiv–xv, 5–7.

cookery from its various boarding houses, cook-shops, and eating houses was 'very marked'.[31]

Some observers insisted that these places were just for foreigners: 'The London foreign population has its own restaurants', said trade newspaper the *Hotel*'s 'Looker on' in 1895.[32] The 'Looker on' added that there was an exclusivity both around these foreign restaurants and the more established ones. 'It is a common remark that the restaurants of London are in the hands of foreigners, but strangely enough foreigners resident in London do not patronize to any great extent those restaurants which the average Londoner regards with the most favour.'[33] Instead, he added, the foreign diner went to those 'unpretentious' restaurants where they 'hide themselves away' and where 'the cooking is just as good and everything is just as nice and clean, but the charges are only about a fourth of those the poor deluded native has to pay'.[34] But even this testimony to ethnic exclusivity and segregation was unsustainable. The 'Looker on' himself allowed for the possibility that these dining experiences were available to a broader swathe of London's population when he teasingly (and tantalizingly) said that 'the very names and whereabouts [of these smaller places] are known only to very few Londoners. Should you desire to make the acquaintance of the interior of one of these warm, cosy, cheerful, animated little café restaurants you will need a guide'. He added coyly, 'on another occasion I may tell you more about them'.[35] Even without naming names, the restaurants to which he referred served as a demonstration of the panoply of urban life and occupied an important place in the metropolitan imaginary at a discursive level, enticing readers to find their own 'foreign' London by letting their taste buds lead the way.

Gastro-cosmopolitanism existed as an element within patterns of consumption, whether directly or in the domain of the imaginative or vicarious, but it also characterized the domain of production. Certainly some contemporaries testified to the apparent dominance of foreign restaurants. In 1889, the *British Journal of Catering* asserted: 'strip the United Kingdom of all its foreigners, and our kitchens and bakers' shops would be next to empty', while a few years later the *Hotel* insisted: 'if we rule out these foreign houses then London catering is a wilderness indeed'.[36] Establishing the numbers of any type of restaurant in London in this period can be challenging; there is an inevitable lack of precision about quantifying institutions that were subject to transformation or bankruptcy. However, qualitative evidence from the trade press and census materials reveals roughly the extent of restaurants serving foreign food, and no

[31] George Augustus Sala, *Gaslight and daylight* (London, 1859), p. 181.
[32] 'The looker on', *Hotel*, 16 Oct. 1895, p. 17.
[33] Ibid. [34] Ibid. [35] Ibid.
[36] 'Cookery and food exhibitions', *British Journal of Catering*, 1 Mar. 1889, p. 17; 'Sunday refreshments', *Hotel*, 21 Aug. 1895, p. 13.

less significantly, the number of foreign-born individuals involved in their production.

Several notable restaurants in London were owned and managed by entrepreneurs born overseas. Establishments whose proprietors were foreign-born included Carlo Gatti's café-restaurant near Charing Cross (Gatti was Italian-Swiss), Kettner's in Soho (founded by Frenchman Auguste Kettner, formerly chef to Napoleon III), and the Café Royal in Regent Street (established by Frenchman Daniel Nicols).[37] In addition, there were more obscure establishments, such as the Florence Restaurant near Shaftesbury Avenue owned by the Italian L. Azario, the King's Cross Restaurant founded by the Italian-Swiss brothers Louis and Peter Reggiori, and the German-owned Wenzel's in Tottenham Court Road.[38] While Italians, Italian-Swiss, French, and Germans were most prominent, there were owners who arrived from more distant ports, notably Australian caterers Felix Spiers and Christopher Pond whose empire encompassed both chain restaurants and ultimately the stately Criterion in Piccadilly.[39] There were also countless restaurants where the owners' surnames suggest they may have been foreign born, but in the absence of additional evidence, such identifications can only be speculative.[40]

Those who worked in kitchens and dining rooms were similarly polyglot. In 1885, for instance, another trade newspaper, the *Caterer* estimated that there were 7,000 German waiters in London, as well as 4,500 'others of various foreign nationalities', of whom the Swiss were considered to be the largest single subgroup.[41] In 1891, the same publication calculated that there were approximately 2,000 Italian cooks and waiters earning 'respectable incomes' in London.[42] Considering that, according to the census of that year, the number of Italians in the capital was approximately 5,138 and the number of Germans, 26,920, it seems obvious that a high proportion (possibly as high as 40 per cent of Italians and 25 per cent of Germans) of both national groups were engaged

[37] Peter Barber and Peter Jacomelli, *Continental taste: Ticinese emigrants and their café-restaurants in Britain, 1847–1987* (London, 1997); Felicity Kinross, *Coffee and ices: the story of Carlo Gatti in London* (London, 1991); 'A dinner at Kettner's', *Caterer*, 15 Feb. 1898, pp. 64–6; 'The Café Royal and its creator', *Caterer*, 15 June 1896, p. 253; 'The Café Royal and its founder', *Caterer*, 15 Feb. 1898, p. 74.

[38] Brochure, *The Florence Restaurant* (London, 1902), box 91.15, Hotels, Cafes, and Restaurants, Bishopsgate Library, London; 'The development of the Swiss café in London: a visit to Reggiori's restaurants', *Caterer*, 16 Aug. 1897, p. 434; 'The King's Cross Restaurant', *Caterer*, 16 Feb. 1891, p. 69; 'A dinner at Wenzel's', *Caterer*, 15 June 1892, p. 225.

[39] 'Spiers and Pond's Silver Grill at Ludgate Station', press cuttings, 6 Jan. 1866, Restaurant Files, box C-F, Bishopsgate Library, London; 'The genesis of Spiers and Pond', 15 Apr. 1898, *Caterer*, p. 188.

[40] For example, the proprietors of the Walbrook Grand Café Restaurant were identified as F. Giordano and A. Casiraghi. Handbill, Walbrook Café, c. 1880, LGL.

[41] 'On the wing', *Caterer*, 15 May 1885, p. 119. Some other estimates suggest that the total number of foreign waiters in the capital was even higher, one authority offering a figure of 17,000. See 'Notes and notions', *Hotel Review*, Nov. 1886, p. 132.

[42] *Caterer*, 15 Apr. 1891, p. 153.

in the trade in some form.[43] Over the next two decades, the number of foreign waiters who found their 'calling' in London's 'many new restaurants' swelled to approximately 30,000, according to a 1911 inquiry conducted by the Apprenticeship and Skilled Employment Association of London.[44]

There were certainly a sufficient number of foreign waiters in London to justify the establishment of a number of collective organizations that sought to maintain and enhance their welfare. A contributor to the periodical *Good Words* in 1892 observed that there were 'some half-dozen clubs or unions with employment registries attached, and these clubs have established relations with employers, to whom they guarantee the character of the servants they supply'.[45] For instance, the large community of German waiters in London led to the creation of a branch of the German Waiters' Union (Deutscher Kellner-Bund), an organization with headquarters in Leipzig, and with fifty chapters in various European towns and cities. The London branch, which sought to promote 'the moral and material elevation of its members', not merely provided a relief fund and employment office, but also a property at 84 Charlotte Street in Fitzroy Square that in 1885 had a clubhouse and twenty-two beds for lodgers.[46] Twenty-five years later, on this very site, resided the International Chefs and Waiters Society, an amalgamation of the Austrian Hotel Employees Society and the late Chefs' Society.[47]

In addition to those international workers fortunate enough to be represented by voluntary, philanthropic, and union organizations, there were undoubtedly large numbers of foreign restaurant workers (particularly women, and those employed in institutions not specializing in food from their ancestral home) whose existence is only betrayed by anecdotal evidence or fleeting, not to say obscure, references in the print media. For example, in 1886, a Mr Thomas Frederick Marshall, a self-described 'countryman' from Headley in Hampshire, on returning home from business in London, shared with the readers of the short-lived, but wonderfully named, the *Coffee Tavern Gazette and Journal of Food Thrift*, his recommendations for dining in the West End. He singled out for particular praise the Star, a 'coffee-tavern' (a temperance alternative to the traditional tavern) in Wigmore Street, where he not merely commended the attentiveness and hospitality of the owner but also praised, in passing, his host's 'Greek cook; her pastry is delicious'.[48]

[43] Lucio Sponza, *Italian immigrants in nineteenth-century Britain: realities and images* (Leicester, 1988), 13; Panikos Panayi, *German immigrants in Britain during the nineteenth century, 1815–1914* (Oxford, Berg, 1995), p. 97.

[44] Miss Kim Medly and E. Lesser, *An inquiry into the waiter's calling* (London, 1911), p. 4.

[45] C. H. D'E. Leppington, 'Work and wages in hotels and restaurants', *Good Words*, 33 (1892), p. 756.

[46] *Hotel Review*, June 1886, p. 52; 'Hotel notes and trade news', *Tourist and Traveller and Hotel Review*, Dec. 1885, p. 304.

[47] 'The International Chefs and Waiters Society', *Restaurant*, May 1910, p. 225.

[48] 'Correspondence', *Coffee Tavern Gazette and Journal of Food Thrift*, 24 Apr. 1886, p. 28.

In a few rare cases, it is possible to gain a more detailed account of the lives of foreign-born restaurant staff in London. In his memoirs published in 1960, Mario Gallati (by this point celebrity proprietor of the Caprice) described how, having worked as a child waiter in restaurants in Milan and Nice, he went to London in 1905 as a waiter at the Savoy Restaurant. Interestingly (in a further testimony to the international nature of the restaurant labour market), Gallati had intended a brief stay in London to learn English and 'to study the methods in British restaurants and hotels' before continuing on to the United States, at that point considered 'the land of opportunity for would-be restaurateurs'.[49] However, Gallati changed his plans after falling in love with a 'vivacious... amber-eyed girl named Josephine' who lived adjacent to his boarding house on Charlotte Street which catered specifically for Italians who had just arrived in London.[50] After holding positions at the Hotel Cecil, Russell Hotel, and the Queen's restaurant, Gallati returned to Italy in 1909 to satisfy the requirements of military service, at the end of which he went to work as a waiter in Paris, 'the very fountain-head of the art of the *cuisine*'.[51] In a letter written to Josephine in 1911, which has survived among his unpublished papers, he described his plans to leave Paris for Monte Carlo where he intended to work as a chef, but his fear that she might marry another suitor motivated his speedy return to London where he became *chef de rang* (or head waiter) at the fashionable Monico, in Shaftesbury Avenue.[52] He then moved to Romano's on the Strand where he worked under fellow countryman Luigi Naintre whom Gallati dubbed 'the Toscanini of restaurateurs'.[53] As Gallati hopscotched across Europe in pursuit of new job opportunities, he accumulated experience and knowledge in one place that might serve the advancement of his career in another. Gallati initially hoped that success in London might further his ambitions in the United States, while later on he was convinced that familiarity with Paris and French cuisine would serve him well as an aspiring head waiter, and eventually proprietor, in London. Gallati's story reminds us that London was merely one node in a broader interconnecting network of cultural entrepôts, one which relied on both an international labour market and a culture of peer recognition between London's restaurants and hotels and their equivalents both on the continent and in the United States.

Foreign-born proprietors and staff were perceived to be noticeable enough in the catering trade that their presence sometimes provoked a nativist backlash. In April 1900, a Charing Cross Road Italian restaurant keeper and two of his wait staff were convicted of conducting their premises 'in a disorderly manner'. The presiding magistrate took the opportunity to launch an extended tirade against 'low Italians and other foreigners' who used the restaurant business as a

[49] Mario Gallati, *Mario of the Caprice: the autobiography of a restaurateur* (London, 1960), p. 36.
[50] Ibid., p. 35.
[51] Ibid., p. 44.
[52] Letter from Mario Gallati to Giuseppina Frasca, 24 Oct. 1911, WBA, 896/24, City of Westminster Archives Centre, London.
[53] Gallati, *Mario of the Caprice*, p. 45.

cover for 'illegitimate and despicable' activities. Moreover, he claimed that 'case after case of exactly the same sort, carried on in the same way, by the same sort of people, came before him' on a regular basis, and, while fining the defendant in this particular case, made clear that his preference would be to use more punitive sanctions in future.[54]

However, what provoked the greatest anxieties was the apparent threat posed to British workers concerned with protecting their place in the labour market. These pressures led to the creation of specific workers' unions, particularly for waiters, like the Central Waiters' Union in 1886, the English Hotel, Restaurant, Club and Tavern Servants' Union in 1889, and the more overtly politicized Amalgamated Waiters' Society organized in 1896 by an individual with the ironically German-sounding name of Paul Vogel.[55] The latter's aim was not only to standardize pay and work hours, which foreign workers were seen to undermine and adversely distort, but also 'to combat the powerful German Waiters' Union, and thus allow Britishers to hold their own'.[56] The Amalgamated Waiters' Society extended its autarchic protestations beyond the restaurant kitchen and dining room, to indict foreign-born proprietors and managers as an integral part of a broader conspiracy against the English waiter. It claimed it was 'quite a common practice' for foreign owners and managers to employ exclusively their own countrymen, indignantly referencing the case of a German manager who discharged all his British wait staff from a City restaurant and replaced them with Germans.[57] Whether such exclusionary practices existed in reality, as opposed to in the fevered imagination of English nativists, is difficult to establish, although other testimony suggests that the German and Austrian restaurants 'in the little colony off Tottenham-court Road' served as informal employment agencies for their countrymen.[58] It is also possible that national-ethnic conflicts were further sharpened by the issue of skill. The 1911 Apprenticeship and Skilled Employment Association of London report on the 'waiter's calling' asserted that, while domestic waiters appeared satisfied with the status of casual labourers, foreign-born ones saw their work as skilled, not surprisingly given their commitment to achieving a facility with foreign languages, and the undertaking of apprenticeships that might last over two years and take place in many different countries, as Mario Gallati's story shows.[59]

[54] 'Disreputable restaurant keepers', *Daily News*, 11 Apr. 1900, p. 9.

[55] 'Gastronomic items', *Caterer*, 15 July 1886, p. 198; *British Journal of Catering*, 1 Dec. 1889, p. 10; *Caterer*, 15 May 1894, p. 206; 'The waiters' column', *Caterer*, 16 Nov. 1896, p. 555. The Amalgamated Waiters' Society's mouthpiece was the *Waiters' Record*, founded in 1900.

[56] 'The waiters' column', *Caterer*, 15 June 1896, p. 304.

[57] As reported in 'Caterer's notebook', *Caterer*, 15 Apr. 1899, p. 148. For more extensive statements made by the Amalgamated Waiters' Society, see *Waiters' Record* (Feb. 1900–Sept. 1914).

[58] Clipping, 'Foreign London at dinner: the resorts of our permanent visitors', 1897, Norman Collection, LGL.

[59] Medly and Lesser, *An inquiry*, pp. 4–6.

While campaigns to restrict foreign waiters were tainted by a distinct xenophobia, they also – conversely – provide testimony not merely to their notable presence, but also their indispensability, in London. According to the trade press, the 'English Robert' (slang for English waiters) failed to compete with the foreign waiter because, in this 'age of travel', the latter 'are linguists ... and generally converse in four or five languages, whereas English waiters ... can seldom speak any language but their own'.[60] Crowded out by the 'constantly increasing influx of Germans, Poles and other foreigners', one correspondent for the *Caterer* noted that many English waiters sought refuge in New York restaurants where they were highly rated, thus revealing that, in the trade's international labour market, London acted as a site of departure as well as a site of arrival.[61] The anti-alien sentiment directed at foreign-born proprietors, managers, and waiters inevitably manifested itself at times when national and ethnic differences were being sharpened more generally, for example in the build up to the 1905 Aliens Act and at the outbreak of the First World War. However, while the emerging unionization of restaurant workers was undoubtedly entangled in the discourses of nativism, the dominant opinion expressed in the trade press was that the presence of foreign waiters and proprietors in London's restaurant scene was an inevitable and understandable manifestation of a transnational labour market, which, in turn, reflected a continued (if increasingly strained) commitment to the internationalist principles of free trade.[62]

Londoners' exposure to new culinary cultures was not confined to continental Europe, nor to groups with a numerically significant diasporic population. Newnham-Davis, reviewing the menu offerings at Romano's, an Italian-owned and managed restaurant with a generally continental menu, made intriguing reference to both 'a ground nut soup, the one delicacy that Nigeria has added to the cookery book' and 'a Malay curry cooked as it is cooked in Malaya and served in the Malay fashion, with sambals and with shining Malayan shell spoons for the rice'.[63] Chinese food was also undoubtedly present in the capital but it remained relatively insignificant prior to the emergence of Chinatown in the 1950s. In 1913, the *Times* claimed there were thirty Chinese shops and restaurants adjacent to opium dens in the East End, but the particularly transient nature of London's Chinese population (linked as it was to the shipping industry) makes this estimate speculative.[64] The trade journal, the *Restaurant*, reported in the same period the existence of a Chinese

[60] 'Notes and notions', *Hotel Review*, Nov. 1886, p. 132.

[61] 'Catering notes', *Caterer*, 15 Mar. 1893, p. 111.

[62] See, for instance, *Hotel Review*, Nov. 1886, p. 132; *Restaurant*, Aug. 1909, p. 6; and the following references in the *Caterer*: 16 Nov. 1885, p. 307, 15 Aug. 1893, p. 354, and 15 June 1896, p. 304 – all of which admitted to the superiority of the continental training of waiters, especially in Germany and Switzerland.

[63] Nathaniel Newnham-Davis, *Gourmet's guide to London* (London, 1914), p. 109.

[64] 'Chinatown in London', *Times*, 25 Nov. 1913, p. 6.

restaurant close to Piccadilly Circus patronized by 'students sent over by the Chinese Government to learn our ways', who, in a possible acknowledgement of the cultural diversity of London's diners that will be discussed at more length below, offered recommendations from the menu to those unfamiliar with Chinese dishes not merely in English, but also in German and French.[65] However, Londoners were more likely to have been exposed to Chinese food through temporary exhibitions, such as the Health Exhibition of 1884, that featured pastiche eating houses supposedly from China (and Japan), than through the restaurant dining room.[66]

It was Indian food that was to be, in the late nineteenth century as indeed it is today, one of the most significant non-indigenous cuisines in the metropolis. One reason for this was, as the *Caterer* explained in 1891, that 'the civil service of our great Eastern dependencies is ever expanding, and it must ever be that a perpetually growing population of persons having Indian tastes in matters gastronomic must be located in London'.[67] The Bombay Parsi journalist and social reformer Behramji Malabari also observed this growing taste for Indian food, noting a couple of years later that 'Indian dishes, rice and curry ... with chutneys and condiments, are struggling into favour', largely because diplomats, former administrators, Indian visitors, students, and anyone curious about all things Eastern – and there were many – craved Indian dishes.[68] Newnham-Davis, who, prior to becoming a journalist and gourmand, had been an army-intelligence officer in Simla, was inevitably alert to the presence of both people and dishes originating from the subcontinent. In *Dinners and diners*, he introduces 'the Nabob', an uncle who had also served in 'the gorgeous East'. When the Nabob asserted that 'there is no good curry to be had outside the portals of his club, the East India', Newnham-Davis retorted by insisting that he himself had 'eaten good curry at the Criterion, where a sable gentleman is charged with its preparation'.[69] At the Hotel Cecil, Newnham-Davis and his uncle, having summoned the curry cook 'clothed in white samite, and with his turban neatly rolled' to their table where he was put through an examination about his art, in Hindustani, then proceeded to dine on 'a genuine Indian curry' and 'chutnees galore'.[70]

There are references in the pages of the *Caterer* in this period to at least twenty individual establishments that offered Indian fare. For instance, in 1885, it was

[65] 'China in London', *Restaurant*, Sept. 1911, p. 343.

[66] Even this exposure to 'Chinese' food was possibly somewhat limited, given that one contemporary observer asserted that the food served at the exhibition's Chinese restaurant (the work of a French chef who was formerly resident in Beijing) was more reminiscent of that served in Paris than that found in China. See J. A. G. Roberts, *China to Chinatown: Chinese food in the West* (London, 2002), pp. 142–4.

[67] 'Wanted, an Anglo-Indian restaurant for London', *Caterer*, 15 June 1891, p. 211.

[68] Behramji M. Malabari, *The Indian eye on English life; or, rambles of a pilgrim reformer* (London, 1893), p. 45.

[69] Newnham-Davis, *Dinners and diners*, p. 59.

[70] Ibid., pp. 61, 63.

reported that a former chef on one of the P and O steamers, Mr Hewitt, who had founded the Falcon Restaurant in Fetter Lane, near the Strand, offered Indian and Malay curries which were considered sufficiently fiery to 'revive the dead'.[71] In the following year, readers were informed that 'Indian curries are now a standing dish' at the Crown Hotel in Leicester Square owned by Mr R. Banks.[72] Interestingly, a handbill relating to this institution has survived, which declared that its restaurant 'serves a real Indian curry', and that the chef was advised by Mr Friday, 'the G[reat]t. Madras authority on Curry' who was also scheduled to give lectures and practical demonstrations at the Cookery and Food Exhibition at the Royal Aquarium that winter.[73] Also in 1886, a correspondent who described himself as 'an Old Indian traveller' wrote to the *Caterer*, telling its readers that the best house in London for an Indian curry was Purssell's in Finch-lane, Cornhill, in the City 'where an Indian cook is kept to prepare them'.[74] A decade later, when the kitchens of the St James's Hall Restaurant were under the direction of chef M. C. Brezzo and his assistant Mr Pugh, there was a specialized section devoted to Indian cookery that was under the charge of M. Futymed of Calcutta.[75] A few years later, the *Caterer* reported that Mrs Turner's Indian restaurant in Hammersmith, 'much frequented by native Indian students in London', not merely served diners on site but was also willing to send 'a complete Indian dinner ... kept warm in baskets' to any address that could be reached 'by means of the District Railway or the "Twopenny Tube"'.[76] Given that many of these establishments had non-Indian proprietors or Anglicized names, it is possible that the full extent of the presence of Indian food in London's restaurants may be even more considerable than suggested here. Even the unimpeachably English name of the Falstaff Restaurant, in Eastcheap, did not preclude the serving of 'excellent Indian curries', and even the provision of punkahs in the dining room.[77]

The preparation of such dishes obviously required both the provision of ingredients in the metropolitan vicinity and a broader global supply chain. This was facilitated by joint-stock companies, such as the London and India Docks Joint Committee, which responded to the rising demand for cheap food imports, particularly meat, by expanding its holding capacity. In 1894, for instance, it was reported that while the company had twenty-one large storage chambers at the Victoria Docks fitted with refrigerators for nearly a quarter of a

[71] 'Chops and changes', *Caterer*, 16 Feb. 1885, p. 41.

[72] 'Chops and changes', *Caterer*, 15 Apr. 1886, p. 112.

[73] Handbill, 'Curry, curry, curry: R. Banks', 1886, Evanion Collection #6443, British Library (BL); 'The cookery exhibitions', *Caterer*, 15 Nov. 1886, p. 326.

[74] *Caterer*, 15 Mar. 1886, p. 71. More speculatively, there is an intriguing reference to Indian curry being served in a metropolitan railway refreshment room. See 'The curried dishes of the Indian empire', *Caterer*, 15 Jan. 1887, p. 4.

[75] 'St. James's Hall Restaurant', *Caterer*, 15 June 1897, p. 332.

[76] 'Indian cookery in London', *Caterer*, 15 Dec. 1900, p. 661.

[77] 'Chops and changes', *Caterer*, 15 Feb. 1892, p. 60.

million carcasses imported from Australia, New Zealand, and South America, more space was needed and the company was to build more 'extensive chambers' in Smithfield market.[78] If Smithfield served as the main market for meat, restaurants were able to obtain fish from Billingsgate, and fruit and vegetables from Covent Garden, all of which opened at roughly five o'clock in the morning. It was the business of the restaurant chef to take detailed notes of his stock and 'calculate his next day's requirements' before sending out his buyer to these markets. 'The buying is most responsible work', observed the *Caterer* in 1891, adding that 'no doubt the ideal buyer is the proprietor or manager himself' who can be trusted to know the prices of things and the people with whom he trades, but 'he can hardly be in the market at 5 or 6 a.m., and looking after his waiters and cooks . . . till past midnight' the night before, so he usually sends a subordinate.[79]

In cases where goods were procured from other sources, they sometimes came from individual dealers like D. R. Evans and Co., in Farringdon Street, which, originally founded as a general grocers in the eighteenth century, supplied the restaurant and hotel community exclusively, owing to the rapid development of this sector. By importing directly from producers in France, Italy, and America, the firm claimed to 'offer large consumers many special advantages by avoiding intermediate profits, their long experience and extensive business connection giving them facilities for close buying in the best markets'.[80]

There were also specialized dealers that traded in one commodity only. For instance, the Adelphi Hotel Company Ltd sold West Indian turtle meat, a delicacy that gained popularity and attracted other importers like T. K. Bellis of Jeffrey Square, in the City, whose firm contracted the Mexican Gulf Fisheries to catch shipments of turtles that arrived in London every fourteen days by steamer.[81] Similarly, Indian food importer Messrs Veeraswamy and Co., which later became the official caterer for the Indian Pavilion at the 1924 British Empire Exhibition at Wembley and then a restaurant (it still survives today), sold foodstuffs to caterers from a depot at 234 Rye Lane in Peckham.[82] Its most popular item, 'Nizam Madras Curry Powder', was said to be 'piquant without being fiery'. As an added bonus for customers, the firm advertised in the trade journal, the *Chef*, in 1896, that it was 'willing to send a thoroughly experienced curry cook to any hotel, club or restaurant in order to show the best modes of preparing a real Indian curry'.[83] While Veeraswamy's curry may have been in high demand, its shop was not the only one to sell this spice mixture. Some years earlier, the *Caterer* noted that a shop on Brompton Road in Knightsbridge

[78] 'Cold storage of meat in London', *Caterer*, 15 Sept. 1894, p. 384.
[79] 'Restaurant marketing', *Caterer*, 15 Apr. 1891, p. 150.
[80] 'Odds and ends', *Caterer*, 15 July 1895, p. 328.
[81] 'Live turtle!', *Hotel Review*, Feb. 1887, p. 22; 'Real turtle', *Caterer*, 15 June 1898, p. xl.
[82] Lizzie Collingham, *Curry: a biography* (London, 2005), pp. 153–4; 'A good Indian curry', *Chef*, 18 July 1896, p. 10.
[83] 'A good Indian curry', *Chef*, 18 July 1896, p. 10.

owned by Mr Friday (whom we encountered previously) sold tinned curries, curry powders, pastes, chutneys, and Indian condiments of all descriptions with the express purpose of 'initiating novices into the art of curry-making', while Mr Edmund's shop in Stonefield Terrace in Islington displayed a special gold medal 'Empress' curry powder which conjured up 'visions of old East Indians at table, and of millionaire nabobs regaling on delicacies of which the West only knows little or nothing'.[84] Where the ingredients needed for exotic dishes were unobtainable, chefs often worked imaginatively to find or devise convincing substitutes. Returning to the Malay curry at Romano's, Newnham-Davis, who clearly regarded himself as an expert (with some possible justification given his former military service in the Straits), commended the restaurant's renowned chef for an act of effective culinary improvisation: 'What substitute M. Ferrario has found for the fresh cocoa-nut pulp which is the foundation of all Malay curries, I do not know.'[85]

The international element in food culture in this period is also evident from contemporary cookbooks. Some of these were authored by well-known chefs and may have informed the dishes served to restaurant diners. Most though were likely to have been used in a predominately domestic context, although one could speculate that some of them found their way into hotel and restaurant kitchens, or that, for diners, exposure to international cuisine at home might have bolstered the enthusiasm for more exotic dishes while eating out. Whatever their intended constituency the titles of books such as *Cosmopolitan cookery* (which included recipes for Russian bear paws and 'Chicken Curry, Indian fashion'), or, more specifically, *Anglo-Indian and oriental cookery* and *Wyvern's Indian cookery book*, suggest that the gastro-cosmopolitanism of the restaurant meal was supported and sustained by a broader culinary infrastructure.[86] It is true that many cookbooks featuring Indian recipes were intended for the Anglo-Indian rather than the British market. However, a review in the *Caterer* of a collection of Wyvern's recipes, while it noted that the book was written 'for the special benefit of Anglo-Indians' and published in London and Madras, also insisted that many of its menus might, 'with certain alterations and modifications, be adapted for home use' by 'caterers and chefs'.[87] Even books with more generic titles, such as Anne Bowman's *The new cookery book* or Eliza Acton's *Modern cookery* contain extensive discussion of not merely English, but 'foreign cookery'.[88] Bowman, in particular, was keen to promote Indian dishes that were as 'authentic' as possible, berating English cooks who persisted in

[84] 'Chops and changes', *Caterer*, 15 Apr. 1887, p. 123; 'Curries, sauces, &c.', *Caterer*, 15 Dec. 1890, p. 487.

[85] Newnham-Davis, *Gourmet's guide*, p. 109.

[86] Urbain Dubois, *Cosmopolitan cookery* (1870; London, 1886); Grace Johnson, *Anglo-Indian and oriental cookery* (London, 1893); Arthur Robert Kenney-Herbert, *Wyvern's Indian cookery book* (1878; London and Madras, 1904).

[87] 'Book notices: *Culinary jottings* by "Wyvern"', *Caterer*, 16 Aug. 1886, p. 242.

[88] Anne Bowman, *The new cookery book: a complete manual of English and foreign cookery on sound principles of taste and science* (1867; London, 1890); Eliza Acton, *Modern cookery* (London, 1845).

adding minced bacon to chicken curry, thereby destroying 'the Oriental character of the dish'.[89] Mrs Beeton's legendary *Household management*, while extolling the virtues of classic English dishes, still found space for more internationally orientated recipes including one for mango chutney that she claimed had been given 'by a native to an English lady, who had long been a resident in India'.[90]

Returning to the restaurant, it is in examining the contents of diners' plates that we are granted the most effective demonstration of how food was able to transcend the binary between Britain and the world beyond. Menus reveal not merely the presence of individual foreign dishes, but also the way the foods of different nations or cultures might be mixed in the course of a meal, on a single plate, or even in a single recipe. A menu from the Grand Hotel in Trafalgar Square in 1897 appeared eager to promote its exotic and cosmopolitan attractions by including in the menu 'huîtres a l'Américaine', 'condé a la West Indienne', and 'bisque a la Norvégienne'.[91] In other restaurants, otherwise conventional menus usually included at least one exotic (not to say obscure) dish, to take two examples also dating from 1897, the 'chaud-froid Algerienne' offered at the Monico or 'timbales de bonnard Américaine, riz Pilau' served at the Savoy.[92] What added to this cultural messiness was that even when the food was genuinely multi-national, French still served as the predominant lingua franca for many eating houses. The menu which was written en français served to complicate the story by inserting into the dining experience an additional cultural formation that reconfigured an already delicate cultural negotiation. In his recollections of his life as a bohemian in the 1880s, journalist George Sims wrote of a dinner at Krehl's in Coleman Street where 'the menu was in French but some of the dishes had the flavour of the Fatherland about them', which was not surprising given that Krehl's was a German restaurant.[93] While Germany's national boundaries became more rigid in this period, its food cultures became ever-more fluid at least in the hands of an Austrian husband and wife team who opened up a German and Austrian delicatessen in Leicester Square that later expanded into a fully fledged restaurant called the Vienna Café in 1895.[94]

These developments were nothing new if the experience of the Peninsulaire Restaurant in Glasshouse Street, off Regent Street, was typical. An 1880 handbill advertised that the house served English, French and Italian cuisine;[95] but a

[89] Bowman, *New cookery book*, p. 345.

[90] Isabella Beeton, *Mrs Beeton's book of household management*, ed. Nicola Humble (1861, Oxford, 2000), p. 124.

[91] Menu, Grand Hotel, Trafalgar Square, 3 Nov. 1897, item #1897–296, Buttolph Menu Collection, New York Public Library (NYPL).

[92] Menu, Monico, 22 July 1897, item #1897–237, NYPL; Menu, Savoy Restaurant, 22 Apr. 1897, item #1897–128, NYPL.

[93] George R. Sims, *My life: sixty years' recollections of bohemian London* (London, 1917), pp. 95–6.

[94] 'The looker on', *Hotel*, 27 Nov. 1895, p. 17.

[95] Handbill, Peninsular [sic] Restaurant, Nov. 1880, Evanion Collection #6639, BL.

menu from the same year revealed an even more complicated story. Its Parisian dinner (for 3*s* 6*d*) included a soup of lobster bisque (with its intimation of East Coast American cuisine), whitebait a la diable, and pomme nouvelle au beurre (two dishes which incorporated staples of English cuisine but which were accorded French language labels). These were followed by poulet au cresson (despite the French appellation, a traditional English dish of roast chicken with watercress), Bavarois au Maraschino (a Bavarian dessert) and, to conclude the dinner, a cheese dish of Camembert along with Turkish coffee. A cheaper dinner (for 2*s*) at the restaurant included a Ris a l'Andalouse (which was an Andalusian refashioning of an Italian risotto with clams), followed by cod in Hollandaise sauce (which would have been familiar to most British diners), an entree of a round of veal a la Duchesse (the provenance and preparation of which is unclear), and a two-stage dessert consisting of French meal fritters or doughnuts followed by a quintessentially English plate of Cheshire cheese.[96] Clearly, dinner at the Peninsulaire in 1880 consisted of integrating the flavours of many nations, rendering cultural hybridity a part and parcel of the meal itself.

Nor was the Peninsulaire unique. At the Holborn Restaurant in 1882, diners had a choice of how they comprehended the menu linguistically (either in French or English), and within the menu they could choose from French-sounding dishes or cultural hybrids like cauliflower in béchamel sauce, which was then followed by a Mediterranean or Levantine desert menu consisting of olives, raisins and almonds, pistachio jelly, or Italian meringue.[97] This cultural mixing occurred at less rarefied eating houses as well, such as an unidentified 'cheap Italian restaurant' where a côtelette Milanese (or veal cutlet dipped in egg and covered with bread crumbs), normally served with a wedge of lemon, was instead served with curry sauce which, according to one writer for the *Caterer*, 'gives it a distinctive excellence'. 'Its crisp breadcrumbs will become slightly moistened by the sauce, but the eggs will hold good against curry and gravy.'[98] Here and elsewhere, the restaurateur and the chef showcased the range of culinary possibilities that the diner might encounter at their restaurant.[99] This might simply have been a case of attracting attention by the range of exotic products on offer. It could also have been that the culinary

[96] Menu, Hotel and Restaurant Peninsulaire, 15 May 1880, Evanion Collection #6672, BL.

[97] Menu, Holborn Restaurant, 1 Apr. 1882, 134.127/1, A3 Box Food and Drink, Ephemera Collection, Museum of London (ML).

[98] 'Catering notes and comments', *Caterer*, 16 Mar. 1885, p. 59.

[99] For other examples of menus (excluding banquets and other private occasions) which advertised hybrid dishes, see 24 Apr. 1901, Hotel Metropole, FF 942–1371, Hotel Metropole Album, City of Westminster Archive; 18 July 1914, Prince's, A3 Box Food and Drink, ML; 20 July 1892 (Gatti's) Adelphi Theatre Restaurant, item #1892–095, NYPL; 22 Apr. 1897, Savoy Restaurant, item #1897–128, NYPL; 22 July 1897, Monico, item 1897–237, NYPL; 11 Nov. 1898, Epitaux's Restaurant, item #1898–305, NYPL; 18 July 1896, Frascati's, item #1896–149, NYPL; 1889, (L. Azario's) Florence Restaurant, Evanion Collection #6798, BL; 1882, Horse Shoe Hotel and Restaurant, Evanion Collection #4234, BL.

traditions being referenced might have been familiar to diners, either because they had experience of travelling abroad through business or leisure, or because the diners themselves were foreign nationals.

Certainly, patrons were drawn to London's dining rooms from a variety of different countries. Some of them went to restaurants where the food was familiar, but others went to prestigious (often West End) restaurants with experimental menus that featured regularly in tourist guidebooks. American visitors became a not insignificant presence in London's dining rooms in this period. If American readers in 1865 might have been dissuaded from travelling to London by a claim in the New York periodical the *Nation* that '[t]here are one or two eating-houses in London which have the air of restaurants, until a fair trial shows the hollowness of their pretensions', in the decades that followed, travel guides to the metropolis intended for American travellers regularly recommended visiting specific restaurants.[100] Charles Eyre Pascoe's *London directory for American travellers*, published in 1874, aimed 'to furnish a concise, reliable, handy, and cheap "directory"' for Americans arriving for the first time. Pascoe's publication was followed a decade later by his *London of today* which had a chapter devoted to dining for those visitors 'without the trusted friend at hand to offer advice'.[101] On arrival in London, American visitors would have encountered advertising materials intended to direct them to a particular eating house. For example, a handbill insisted that 'American travelers sojourning in London' 'should not fail to pay a visit to Overton's splendid Oyster Saloon, opposite Victoria Station' while a pamphlet promoting the Hotel Cecil insisted that in its lounge bar and restaurant 'will be found all the comfort and peculiarities dear to the American traveller'.[102] Significantly, the *Caterer* frequently featured articles appraising the latest developments in restaurant culture in New York, thereby corroborating an ongoing dialogue between Britain and America on the subject of dining.[103]

Less specifically, trade papers like the *International Travellers' Journal* alerted overseas visitors to London to the fact that certain restaurants subscribed to foreign-language newspapers.[104] The proprietor of the Gambrinus in the City advertised that by offering these journals (and continental food), he hoped to make 'his restaurant a place where foreigners in London will feel entirely at home'.[105] Besides advertising, some papers like the *Caterer* reported on a

[100] 'Restaurants and their function', *Nation*, 1 (1865), p. 562.

[101] Charles Eyre Pascoe, *Pascoe's London directory for American travellers* (London, 1874), p. 5; idem, *London of today: an illustrated handbook for the season* (London, 1885), p. 43.

[102] Handbill, Overton's Oyster Saloon, Nov. 1887, Evanion Collection #7068, BL; Brochure, the Hotel Cecil, Strand (London, 1896), box 91.15 Hotels, Cafés and Restaurants, Bishopsgate Library, London.

[103] E.g. Howard Paul, 'How they eat in New York', *Caterer*, 15 Dec. 1888, pp. 470–1; idem, 'At "Delmonico's", New York', *Caterer*, 15 Nov. 1889, pp. 417–18.

[104] For instance, see various establishments listed in 'Noted restaurants and cafes', *International Travellers' Journal*, Jan. 1873, p. 3.

[105] Press cuttings, 9 Apr. 1890, Restaurant Files, box G-L, Bishopsgate Library, London.

'foreign' presence in the restaurant by publishing reports of elaborate dinners like the one in 1889 including members of the Chinese embassy who occupied a private room at the St James's Hall Restaurant, whose cooks were said to be French, Italian, English, and Indian, as we have seen. There, they feasted on 'salmon and whitebait with occasional stewed eels', 'pur et simple', without 'the ordinary sauces and regulation condiments' which 'we English are wont to do'.[106] For this reviewer, whose dining column appeared in the *Caterer* between 1889 and 1890, and then intermittently until 1898, there needed to be an understanding of cuisine, not just food – and this project was internationally grounded. If press reviews, brochures, handbills, and guidebooks aimed to steer foreigners, whether resident or visiting, to London's dining rooms, there is evidence that they were successful. Frederick Leal was moved to write in an essay of 1894 about the restaurant Frascati that '[e]very spoken tongue may be heard here as you thread your way through the labyrinth of little tables in the Grand Salon'.[107]

The presence of transnational diners in London's restaurants should not be represented only in terms of incoming traffic. Britain's global and imperial ties inevitably created a restaurant clientele that travelled backwards and forwards between Britain and other parts of the world, notably those like Newnham-Davis (discussed earlier) engaged in military service or colonial administration. An article in the *Caterer* in 1897 insisted that Indian dishes served in West End establishments had a delicacy and refinement that might lead 'winter tourists in India' to find the curries served there less appetizing than they had done previously.[108] Interestingly, the author of the article located the difference between the taste of curries offered in metropole and colony in an abandonment by the London-based Indian cook of the 'time-honoured simplicity of his condiments and ghee' in favour of an attempted fusion with 'the cultured mysteries' of French cuisine, thereby highlighting the interconnectedness of the transnationalisms which characterized both dinners and diners.[109]

The presence of the foreign waiter (discussed previously) in the dining room obviously added an additional constituent to the already extensive cultural heterogeneity of the restaurant. Here, cultural mixing could just as easily promote cultural confusion. Referring to a dinner at the Gaiety where the menu was in French, one reviewer for the *Caterer* pondered 'it is all very well for me, but how is a plain John Bull to make it out, especially if the waiters, chiefly of foreign nationality, are unable to expound the items satisfactorily?'[110] However, beyond the isolated diner confronted with a French menu, there were still other possible pitfalls. The potential for cultural confusion was even greater when

[106] 'Dining here and there', *Caterer*, 15 Feb. 1889, p. 49.

[107] Frederick Leal, *The Restaurant Frascati* (London, c. 1894), p. 9. The same comment was made in 'The Restaurant Frascati', *Era*, 31 Aug. 1895, p. 16.

[108] 'Caterer's notebook', *Caterer*, 15 Jan. 1897, p. 15.

[109] Ibid.

[110] 'Paris catering notes', *Caterer*, 15 Jan. 1886, p. 10.

diners were drawn from the non-European world, even in those establishments which deliberately sought to create a successful matching of diner and meal. For example, the Japanese painter Yoshio Markino was bewildered when a group of English actors took him to what they termed a 'Samurai dinner' at various London restaurants.[111] Whether the diner left the table satisfied or not, it cannot be denied that his or her experience of public eating was one that could be inscribed with international elements, derived from the meal itself, the staff, and fellow diners. Such encounters encapsulate the complex matrix of cultural formations and identities which lay beneath the apparently simple term, gastro-cosmopolitanism.

III

A survey of London's gastro-cosmopolitan restaurant culture highlights a number of aspects of the way that transnational and global cultural forces operated in late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Britain. At a basic level, it suggests the need for a more extensive synthesis of the studies of the urban metropolis, on the one hand, and immigrant and diasporic populations, on the other. Many of the seminal works that have obliged us to take British history beyond the nation have been, in one sense or the other, studies of diasporic populations.[112] A study of the restaurant in London certainly requires engagement with diasporic communities and narratives, but also demonstrates the necessity of considering not merely the dispersal of diasporic cultures, communities, and individuals but also the points of convergence where multiple diasporas meet, overlap, and interrelate.[113] It is also obvious that culinary cosmopolitanism functioned at all levels of society, and we need to direct attention to more modest eating houses and away from a preoccupation with transnational precursors of the modern 'celebrity chef'. The simultaneous presence in the restaurant scene in London of French menus, Italian cooks, German waiters, and Chinese and American diners reveals the complexity of the relationship between populations and places. The fact that a Greek pastry chef could be found in a coffee tavern (which in this case was an attempt to produce a re-imagining of the traditional English pub but without drink) or that an Italian chef in a continental restaurant sought to create a Malaysian curry (and without one of the key ingredients) all testify to the multi-dimensional

[111] Yoshio Markino, *A Japanese artist in London* (London, 1910), p. 100.

[112] Burton, *Postcolonial careers*; Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*.

[113] Studies of immigrant populations in this period have tended to focus on discrete ethnic or racial groups, and their relationship with the host population, conceived in binary terms, rather than within a more complex trans-diasporic matrix. For example, Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, eds., *The Irish in the Victorian city* (London, 1985); Sponza, *Italian immigrants*; Jeffrey Green, *Black Edwardians: black people in Britain, 1901–1914* (London, 1998); Shompa Lahiri, *Indians in Britain: Anglo-Indian encounters, race and identity, 1800–1930* (London, 2000); cf. David R. Roediger, *The wages of whiteness: race and the making of the American working class* (New York, NY, 2007).

ways in which cultural exchange operated, creating formations that transcend unfeasible distinctions between 'authentic' and 'ersatz' aspects of restaurant culture. At the very least, the presence of these workers and diners highlights the necessity of adopting a transnational rubric that is not confined to the boundaries of Britain's formal empire.

In particular, the emphasis on empire in transnational histories has risked undervaluing the extent to which continental Europe mattered to contemporaries, in myriad ways. Literary scholars have paid attention to the exchange between British and continental writers in the nineteenth century.[114] Historians, by contrast, have been less inclined to investigate the interrelationship between continental culture and nineteenth-century metropolitan Britain, despite the existence of a number of intriguing sites that would suggest the value of more sustained and synthetic exploration, and to which a study of public dining would be a useful addition.[115] The restaurant also reveals that Britain's relationship to the culture of globalization incorporated not merely the empire and continental Europe but also other parts of the world, notably the United States, China, and Japan.[116]

Gastro-cosmopolitanism in London's restaurants in this period does more than merely highlight the importance of considering globalization in the broadest geographical sense. It also accords with an increasing emphasis on plurality in the study of cosmopolitan culture more broadly in a number of academic disciplines. Sociologists and political theorists concerned with contemporary transnational social, political, and cultural forces have demonstrated an increased preference for the term 'cosmopolitanisms' to describe the range of global interdependencies that they associate with the post-colonial and post-modern condition.[117] Literary scholars have reminded us that in nineteenth-century Britain the term cosmopolitanism had connotations that embraced both the progressive and the pejorative and that the term possessed a 'constitutive ambivalence'.[118] Similarly, historian Judith Walkowitz's study of late-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Soho reveals a double-edged

[114] E.g. Margaret Cohen and Carolyn Dever, eds. *The literary channel: the inter-national invention of the novel* (Princeton, NJ, 2002).

[115] For an example of the rewards to be accrued from this approach, see Emma Winter, 'German fresco painting and the new houses of parliament at Westminster, 1834–1851', *Historical Journal*, 47 (June 2004), pp. 291–329.

[116] There has been extensive attention to the 'Americanization' of British culture, but most of this literature has focused on the twentieth century. See the contributions to the special issue of *Cultural and Social History* 4 (2007). Exceptions would be Judith R. Walkowitz, 'The "vision of Salome": cosmopolitanism and erotic dancing in Central London, 1908–1918', *American Historical Review*, 108 (Apr. 2003), pp. 337–76; Seth Koven, *Slumming: sexual and social politics in Victorian London* (Princeton, NJ, 2004), ch. 3. For China, see Sascha Auerbach, *Race, law, and 'the Chinese puzzle' in imperial Britain* (New York, NY, 2009).

[117] Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, eds., *Cosmopolitics: thinking and feeling beyond the nation* (Minneapolis, MN, 1998).

[118] Tanya Agathocleous and Jason R. Rudy, 'Victorian cosmopolitanisms: introduction', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 38 (2010), p. 389.

cosmopolitanism, an urban space that was 'simultaneously safe and dangerous', characterized by ambivalence and cultural inconsistency.[119] In the section of her study dedicated to the Italian restaurant, Walkowitz emphasizes the association of Soho's catering industry with what she terms 'dangerous cosmopolitanism', citing media exposés 'of adulterated food, prepared in unhygienic settings and served by deracinated foreigners' which constituted an 'alimentary threat to the British body politic'. In fact, press and industry responses to London's restaurants suggests that most contemporary references to public eating tend to be either neutral or are clustered around progressive, rather than negative, associations and connotations of cosmopolitanism.[120]

There is no doubt that negotiating a dining culture characterized by internationalism and hybridity could at times be a trying experience. One cannot but sympathize with the diner whose difficulty in comprehending a French menu was aggravated when he enlisted the assistance of his German waiter, whose grasp of both English and French proved to be inadequate to the task.[121] However, such encounters suggest that the negative connotations of gastro-cosmopolitanism remained largely confined to frustration or irritation rather than fear or pathologization. For those hoping to use the dining experience as an index of anxiety and deracination, an obvious intersection between urban danger and hybrid food culture would be food poisoning. Adulteration and contamination were certainly widespread problems in restaurants in London, and featured not merely in local government sanitation reports but also in court cases that were widely reported in the press. However, restaurants offering non-British foods of varying degrees of hybridity (and those employing non-British staff) were rarely singled out for attention and censure in regard to this issue. If the reports of London's official health inspectors and press coverage are accurate indicators, diners appeared to be at more risk in the traditional English chop house, vegetarian restaurant, or fried fish shop, all of which were regarded as particularly prone to adulterated food and filthy surroundings.[122] By

[119] Walkowitz, *Nights out*, pp. 5–7.

[120] Ibid., p. 102. Support for Walkowitz's claim that journalists, politicians, and fiction writers 'returned again and again' to this motif of 'dangerous cosmopolitanism' is confined to a single article in the *Caterer* from 16 Oct. 1905 and a brief reference to H. G. Wells's 1909 novel, *Tono-Bungay*.

[121] 'Dining experiences in London', *Tourist and Traveller, and Hotel Review*, 1 Jan. 1885, p. 11.

[122] See, for example, the numerous sanitation inspectors' reports collected in the records of the Commissioner of Sewers of the City of London, CLA/006/AD/05, and the London County Council Public Health Department, LCC/Ph/Reg/5, London Metropolitan Archives. For press coverage of specific complaints about the chop house, see *Hotel*, 24 July 1895, pp. 15–16; *Nineteenth Century*, 23, 133 (1888), p. 466. On unhygienic vegetarian restaurants, see *Caterer*, 15 Sept. 1899, p. 427; *Vegetarian*, 31 Mar. 1888, p. 8, and 14 Apr. 1888, p. 8; *Food and Sanitation*, 30 Dec. 1893, p. 410, and 23 Mar. 1893, p. 91. On fried fish shops and sanitary infractions, see *Food and Sanitation*, 27 Mar. 1897, p. 154, 6 Nov. 1897, p. 533, 12 Feb. 1898, p. 702; *Anti-Adulteration Review and Food Journal*, July 1882, p. 284, and Apr. 1893, p. 450.

contrast, some observers specifically singled out foreign restaurants for maintaining the highest standards of hygiene.[123]

Indeed, the largely positive connotations of gastro-cosmopolitanism in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century London suggest that a study of London's dining culture might be aligned with recent interventions in the history of nation and sexuality that emphasize cultural mixing and indeterminacy rather than distance and 'otherness'.[124] Food, like sex, was experienced at the level of the intimate and the material, not merely in the domain of discourse. The cosmopolitanism of public eating was experienced directly and immediately, and if anything, it may have permeated the city's culture to such an extent that it became almost commonplace, or 'indifferently realised' in the words of the writer for *Chambers's Journal* cited at the beginning of this article.

While gastro-cosmopolitanism might have been woven into the fabric of the metropolis, it should not be assumed that London was unique. Given that gastro-cosmopolitanism was a phenomenon that emphasized transnational cultural exchange and the movement of people and commodities, it is very likely that it featured in the cultural fabric of other metropolitan centres. It was certainly true of New York City, where a diverse food culture was rooted in the city's history of immigration and diasporically derived identities.[125] Moreover, London's extensive international culinary culture was contingent and vulnerable. The outbreak of the First World War dealt a not insignificant blow to two of the most important minority groupings associated with foreign owned and staffed restaurants. German waiters, subject to either internment or deportation, effectively disappeared from London's dining rooms in the autumn of 1914, while large numbers of Italians engaged in the restaurant business returned to their homeland and offered their services to Italy's war effort after 1915.[126] The dislocation of world trade and widespread food shortages during the First World War also adversely affected the range of food choices available in the capital. Of course, this diminution of London's international culinary culture ultimately proved not to be fatal. Some scholars have argued that the century since the First World War (and particularly the decades following post-1945 Commonwealth immigration) has seen a culinary revolution in Britain, in which food has served as an index of a broader shift towards

[123] For general comments, see 'The looker on', *Hotel*, 16 Oct. 1895, p. 17; and more specifically, see 'The Café Monico Restaurant', *Anti-Adulteration Review and Food Journal*, May 1883, p. 479; 'Where to dine in London', *Food and Sanitation*, 3 Mar. 1895, p. 72; 'Chinatown in London', *Times*, 25 Nov. 1913, p. 6.

[124] See, for instance, Mica Nava, *Visceral cosmopolitanism: gender, culture and the normalisation of difference* (Oxford and New York, NY, 2007), pp. 3–15.

[125] See, for instance, William Grimes, *Appetite city: a culinary history of New York* (New York, NY, 2009), and Annie Hauck-Lawson and Jonathan Deutsch, eds., *Gastropolis: food and New York City* (New York, NY, 2009). For another comparative perspective, see Mark Swislocki, *Culinary nostalgia: regional food culture and the urban experience in Shanghai* (Stanford, CA, 2009).

[126] Foreign waiters and their position', *Restaurant and Hotel Review*, Sept. 1914, p. 460. See also Gallati, *Mario of the Caprice*.

multi-culturalism.[127] An unfortunate corollary of such narratives has been to downplay, or even entirely disregard, the international character of public eating in late Victorian and Edwardian London, an absence that is all the more striking at a time when the scholarly literature on the *fin de siècle* metropolis (and modern Britain, more generally) has become increasingly attentive to transnational and global forces. In fact, the history of the London restaurant at the turn of the century lends itself to an analysis of cultural formation that registers both broad transnational movements and the more intimate, and embedded, domains of the dining experience and the individual diner.

[127] E.g. Panayi, *Spicing up Britain.*