

**TRACKING THE HISTORY OF RESTAURANTS THROUGH THE ART OF PAINTING**  
*Resim Sanatıyla Restoran Tarihinin İzinde*

\*Defne AKDENİZ



**ABSTRACT**

The aim of this paper is to track the evolution of restaurants through history and art. While doing this, the paper first provides historical information about traditional eating places in Ancient and Medieval times before the evolution of modern restaurants. Humble dining places in history such as inns, taverns, coffee houses are examined in detail with their representations in art. Then the study draws on the evolution of Parisian restaurants. Since the origin of the modern-day restaurants is mostly cited as Paris, this paper emphasizes the depictions of Parisian restaurants in art. After this part, the study comes up with possible explanations of the reasons why restaurants evolved mainly in Paris. The following part focuses on the characteristics of new restaurants which differentiated them from early eating establishments. In every part paintings best reflecting the restaurants of that era are used in order to support the theoretical framework. Additionally one of the consequences of today's modern restaurant which is the intersection of public and private spheres of individuals is analyzed through Van Gogh's depictions of Parisian restaurants and Edward Hopper's diner representations.

**Keywords:** History of Restaurants, Taverns, Cafés, Parisian Restaurants, Art of Painting.

**ÖZET**

Bu çalışmanın amacı restoranların tarih boyunca geçirdiği değişimin izini sürmektir. Çalışma bu amacına ulaşmak için öncelikle Antik ve Orta Çağ'ın geleneksel yeme-içme mekanlarına dair tarihsel bilgi sunmuştur. Han, taverna ve kahvehane gibi mütevazı yeme-içme mekanları ve bu yerleri konu eden resim sanatı örnekleri hakkında ayrıntılı bilgi veren çalışma, daha sonra günümüzün modern restoranlarının başlangıç noktası olarak kabul gören Paris restoranlarının oluşumuna yönelmiştir. Restoranların neden özellikle Paris'te değişim geçirdiğine dair bazı açıklamalarda bulunduktan sonra çalışma, Paris restoranlarının yeni özelliklerine yer vermiştir. Çalışma bahsedilen tüm aşamalarda tarihi metinlere başvurmuş ve restoranların konu edildiği resim sanatı örneklerinin içerik çözümlemesini yapmıştır. Genellikle bireylerin bir araya gelmesi ve sosyalleşmesini sağlayan mekanlar olarak bilinen restoranların, Van Gogh ve Edward Hopper'ın bazı resimlerinde kamusal alanda bireysel yalnızlığı tasvir ettiği görülmüş ve kamusal ve bireysel alanların kesişimi üzerine bir tartışmayla çalışmaya son verilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Restoran Tarihi, Taverna, Kahvehane, Paris Restoranları, Resim Sanatı

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\*ORCID: 0000-0001-8572-5483

Email:

defneakdeniz@comu.edu.tr



## INTRODUCTION

Dining out is not something new. Throughout the history many forms of dining establishments were seen. Today restaurants which have become the most common places of eating in public, had their origins from the taverns, inns, *traiteurs* (cookshops or cook-caterers), and boarding houses of earlier times. Also food stalls and street vendors had provided food for urban population for centuries. At those times those establishments served for people who did not have cooking facilities, who are less well off, and for the travelers who were in search for food. The meals at those places were served at a fixed time with little or no choice of alternatives. It was not possible to order special food or eat at a specific time of one's own choosing. People ate what they could get from the communal dish served at a certain time. The meal which is called '*table d'hote*' was eaten at a common table. Generally the diners were a regular crowd of people (workers, local artists, old friends) and they knew where to sit at the table. The price of the meal was for a head at the table. The payment was not for the dishes ordered or eaten (Bendiner, 2004: 146; Crowther, 2013: 183; Kiefer, 2002: 58; Spang, 2007: 27)

Despite the local residents who gathered together in those eating houses and enjoyed communal friendship and gossip, those places were intimidating for strangers. Outsiders would be quoted higher prices than regulars and those led them to complain about being exploited. Many visitors complained about the rudeness of the regular diners, the terrible taste of food, the same food being served every day, and the low quality of food either because of improper cooking or poor storage conditions (Kiefer, 2002: 59; Spang, 2007: 26-27). For example in 1763 while trying to recover in an Italian health center, an English novelist Tobias Smollett stated that the food in French diners destroyed his healthy-being (Spang, 2007:26).

Before restaurants came into being, the dining places were dissatisfactory and even intolerable for foreign travelers and invalids. Especially for nobles the sickly diners of Old Regime in France had nothing to serve. The novelty's expectations for delicacy and meals with exceptional quality were not met by the existing eateries. So the time was ripe for new eating places offering new luxuriousness of food and environment- there were more people travelling, there was a need for more access to food away from home, dietary health was of public interest, the wealthy had a taste for sophisticated food and place (Bendiner, 2004: 146; Crowther, 2013: 183).

This paper aims to provide a detailed and an exploratory examination of restaurants' evolution throughout the history. The history of restaurants is not a new theme but the literature on the subject is usually history oriented. There are only a few studies that use visual evidences such as paintings to enrich the subject. However the paintings of eating places are great visual sources to support or to question the ample literature. Thus, this study aims to track the evolution of restaurants in a different way to vary the approaches used to explain the context. While both focusing on the events that occurred changes in the form of eateries and restaurant themed paintings, this study investigates the evolution of restaurants with a new perspective which combines history and art.

In order to achieve its aim, this article will investigate the evolution of restaurants and mostly the ones in Paris since it is widely cited as the birthplace of restaurant. This study



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will benefit the art of painting to track the footsteps of restaurants in history. While doing it the author combines the art of painting with food history and uses the representations of restaurants by painters as visual sources for two main reasons. First, paintings of eating establishments cannot be fully understood merely by the title of the establishment depicted. Because the distinction among various kinds of food establishments was not perfectly clear throughout the history especially after the weakening of medieval guilds' authority. Medieval guilds strictly classified food vendors and separated their fares and services distinctively. The rules of the guild prevented baker from selling sandwiches or the butcher from selling bread. The elimination of guild rules combined with the new ideas of equality led the way for the food vendors to act more free in their fares and services. In time the specifics of food vendors became blurred: the distinction among bars, inns, cafés, bistros, brasseries, etc. was obscure. For example, an eating establishment might expand its food offerings in time. In addition, within a category of same kind of eating establishment, broader associations of different specifics could exist. Two different cafés in the same city might serve different products and services. Thus when looking at paintings of eating places, history, the kind of food available and the specific class of people catered needs to be considered. Secondly, the author believes that reading the history of restaurants through art has a great potential to enrich the existing literature on this topic. The history of restaurants has been widely studied by many scholars but only a few of them (Bendiner, 2004) benefitted paintings that depicted restaurants as visual resources.

## **EARLY FORMS OF RESTAURANTS**

Today the restaurant is such a natural part of our modern daily lives and it has almost become banal. But their existence in historic process was something evolutionary. Restaurants came into being mainly in Paris, France. But the early form of restaurants existed long before the French Revolution in different parts of the world.

Throughout the history restaurants that offered individual service and pricing such like today's restaurants, existed in China even before the Mongol Invasion (around 1127-1279). Those eating establishments had almost all the elements necessary for a modern restaurant. They gave customers the possibility to choose their seat and to choose their food from a menu. Customers were able to order many varieties of food: hot, cold, tepid, raw, chilled, roasted, grilled etc. The city of Hangchow in China was a perfect environment to open a restaurant in China. With about a million of population Hangchow was the largest city in the world. As being a luxurious and wealthy city, it was the center of elegance just like Paris was for Europe 500 years later. The commerce flowing to the city and the lively street activities proliferated the development of restaurants. Teahouses and taverns were common eating and drinking establishments. The taverns in China sold food as well as drinks. The food served was limited (e.g., shrimp pie, silkworm pie, pork or mutton pie) but it was listed on a menu and handed to customers. Customers are asked what they want from the menu. In addition there were different types of restaurants ( i.e., low priced restaurants serving noodles with fish and meat, restaurants serving to Muslims which omit pork, dog, and snails from the menu) (Kiefer, 2002: 61-64).

### **Taverns**

Before restaurants the taverns were very common in Western World. The history of taverns can be dated back to antiquity. In ancient Rome taverns (*'taberna'* in Latin) were urban



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hosteliers. Taverns served hot meal for lower classes – townspeople and travelers. Tavern's daily dishes were announced through signs or paintings on the interior walls. Meals were taken sitting down and wine was drunk either in its natural state or diluted with water. In



Figure 1: Marten van Cleve I, Kitchen Scene, 1565, Verona, Castelvechio.

Christian times they were considered dangerous locales that led citizens and especially monks to perdition. Both in antiquity and medieval times taverns were considered as humble and sordid places where gambling and prostitution were hosted. Despite their bad reputation, taverns in medieval times became places for socializing, relaxation, amusement and exchanging ideas. In the 16th and 17th centuries the taverns were used as frequent settings for genre scenes in the art of painting, especially by Flemish artists. Tavern scenes often represented as places of socializing and ill repute (Malaguzzi, 2008: 80).

In Marten van Cleve I's '*Kitchen Scene*' the tavern is represented at the background of the painting while a kitchen scene with excessive food and various figures occupied in different tasks are depicted in the foreground. In the background, in the upper center sits a party of people eating and merry making around a table. In the center of the painting, one man grabs a waitress and tries to make advantage of her. This scene no doubt illustrates the salacious atmosphere of taverns which had been considered as sickly dispute and sordid places since antiquity.





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The humble atmosphere of taverns is evidently visible in Jan Steen's 'Revelry at an Inn' (Figure 2). Jan Steen who is renowned for his works reflecting the simple happy daily life of Dutch people in 17<sup>th</sup> century, depicted taverns as low and licentious places where people could enjoy themselves without constraints. The peasants eating sausages, drinking beer (the most popular beverage in taverns), playing musical instruments, singing and dancing emphasize the informal atmosphere of Flemish taverns.



Figure 2: Jan Steen, Revelry at an Inn, 1674, Louvre, Paris.

### Coffee Houses

In addition to taverns, coffee houses were another early form of today's restaurants. Coffee houses and cafés existed in Arabia and Persia in the fifteenth century, and also in the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century earlier than restaurants. After coffee came to Europe from Middle East and Ottoman Empire (i.e., the Levant), the cafés came into being in Europe. Some claim that the first café is opened in Oxford in 1650. Some others state that there was a café in Venice in 1640 (Malaguzzi, 2008: 82). In 1643, a 'Levantine' attempted to open a café in Paris, but it did not succeed. Later in 1672, the first successful boutique where people could buy and consume coffee (we can call it a café) had been opened in Paris St. Germain by an Armenian named Pascal. Cafés served mainly coffee, tea and hot chocolate. In time they started to serve liqueurs, sorbets, confitures, eaux de senteur, fruits confits and ice (Kiefer, 2002: 60). By the middle of the eighteenth century, cafés were centers of social activity. In that era coffee houses in England evolved into exclusive aristocratic clubs where gentlemen met to drink and talk. Literary and political discussions attracted students, scholars, revolutionaries, informers and agitators. These cafés had many characteristics of modern restaurants such as individual tables, orders, and checks, and some owners of cafés posted prices. The only thing missing was food service



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(Kiefer, 2002: 61). Cafés were middle class places in nineteenth-century, unlike the aristocratic salons of ancient regime. When social classes began to mix in post-Napoleonic times, coffeehouses were frequented by all sorts of people and gradually became a political instrument, an ideal place for unofficial news to circulate. In European cafés, liberals and young members of the bourgeoisie with revolutionary ideas met to discuss politics, literature, and art (Malaguzzi, 2008: 82).



Figure 3: Ludwig Passini, Artists at the Caffé Greco in Rome, ca. 1850, Hamburg, Kuntshalle.

Cafés in nineteenth-century were also meeting places for intellectuals and artists (Malaguzzi, 2002: 83). Around 1850 Ludwig Passini painted a group of artists in a Roman haunt called Caffé Greco (Figure 3). It was one of the first cafés in Rome and it still exists today. It was a popular meeting place for artists. On the right side of the painting the artists with formal dress are depicted while taking their coffee, rather than a full-course meal. On the bar, there are biscuits and sweets that show the availability of more edibles in cafés of that period. The café mainly serves the dark beverage of coffee which became very fashionable in Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. But the wine and liquor bottles decorating the café's walls and shelves reveal that the café sold as much wine and alcohol as it did coffee. In addition the wine bottles show that in that period wine was no longer made solely by





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peasants for house consumption but also produced and bottled by new commercial wineries (Bendiner, 2004: 154; Malaguzzi, 200: 83).

From the middle of nineteenth century onward, the cafés of Paris became the capital of luxury and entertainment. They turned into haunts of pleasure loving places for the cosmopolitan elites. New categories or names of cafés such as *café-chantant* and *café-concert* that are night life oriented, started to proliferate in Paris. By the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century cafés were available to all including the down-and-outs and the alcoholics of the seductive city (Malaguzzi, 2002: 84). In a painting by a French painter Edouard Manet (Figure 4), the contemporary Parisian life in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century is depicted. The setting of the painting is a café-concert where the customers were entertained through music and dance. In the foreground of the composition two figures cover the big portion of the composition. A man with a blue dress smokes his pipe while watching the dancers and the musicians. A humble waitress carries two bottles of beers with her left hand and takes another with the right hand. She looks like something unexpected happens at a different direction. At the background the musicians with their instruments and a dancer were depicted. The painting portrayed a moment of a broad mix of people in a café-concert in 19<sup>th</sup> century gathered together for pleasure.



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Figure 4: Edouard Manet, A corner of the Café-Concert, ca. 1877-78, London, National Gallery.

As seen the examples above, through the evolution of restaurants, there were many sorts of establishments offering food and beverage. These were bars, taverns, inns, *traiteurs*, cafés, coffee houses, tea rooms, brasseries, bistros, food stalls, osterias etc. The distinction between them is not distinct yet blurred. But why are there so many types and names of early restaurants? The reason dates back to Medieval guilds formed by tradesmen to protect their common interests. The guilds of food vendors in Middle Ages separated eating houses and the kind of food available into distinct groups. Through the guilds, the vendors who sold cooked food from those who sold raw food were separated. Or vendors who sold in the street and who sold indoors, who sold drink and who sold solid food, who sold pork products and who sold other meats, etc. were also separated. The distinction kept one group of vendor from interfering another's interests. This strictly identified group of food trades has its consequences even today. For example, in some cities of Germany, wine bars and beer halls are distinctively separate. Beer halls do not sell wine and vice-versa (Bendiner, 2004: 152-153).





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Nevertheless, in time the distinction between various food establishments became blurred. With the fall of guilds, food vendors expanded their food offerings. For example brasseries were originally serving mainly beer. Today they serve substantial food as well as other alcohols. Or inns originally offered rooms for sleeping as well as meals. But in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century there were numerous inns lacking sleeping facilities. Today the differentiating names for eating facilities still continue. The list is very long: bar, bistro, brasserie, brewhouse, beer garden, beer hall, brew pub, café, chophouse, cucina, deli, diner, eatery, eats, establishment, family dining, fine dining, gastro pub, house, hut, grill, grille, kitchen, lounge, pub, quick eats, restaurant, ristorante (Italian for restaurant), roadhouse, steakhouse, tavern, taqueria. But these names do not always specify the kind of fare and services available in the restaurant. A café and a restaurant can serve very similar food and service. Most of the time the category name signifies the social class of clientele, the architecture of the establishment, the clientele's social class, the operating hours, etc (Bendiner, 2004: 153).

### **THE EVOLUTION OF PARISIAN RESTAURANTS**

As stated before Paris is often regarded as the birthplace of modern restaurants that we know today. But Parisian restaurants with innovative chefs, lavish meals, and luxurious interior design did not emerge suddenly. Their formation took almost two decades (18th and 19th centuries) and was subject to many political, economic, social and cultural factors taking place in French history.

The standard literature about the origin of the modern restaurants tells that the restaurants were invented in Paris in the 1760s and began to serve “*restaurants*”, a broth or bouillon made from boiled meat. At first a restaurant was not a place to eat but it was a restorative liquid or food. Those were places designed not to eat but to sip restorative broths and meant to give strength to the sick people. The meat was broken down after a prolonged boiling process and served always hot to weak-chested or fashionably delicate Parisians. Because the food was “*restaurant*”, the place was called “*restaurateur*” (Bendiner, 2004: 145; Spang, 2007). Brillant-Savarin (2009) describes a restaurateur as ‘*anyone whose business consists in offering to the public a repast which is always ready, and whose dishes are served in set portions at set prices, on the order of those people who wish to eat them.*’

The ample literature believes that in 1765 a Parisian street vendor known as A. Boulanger started the first known restaurant in history. Boulanger provided the nourishing broth to his customers to restore their health. On the front sign of his restaurant it was written “*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*” which is quoted from Bible of Matthew 11:28 (Gürsoy, 2014: 169). His way of promoting his restaurant was parallel with both religious values and people's desire for restoration. An advertisement for a restaurant in the journal *L'Avantcourer* (The Forerunner) in 1767 emphasized the restorative effect of a restaurant and noted that ‘*Those who suffer from weak and delicate chests, and whose diets therefore do not usually include an evening meal, will be delighted to find a public place where they can go have a consommé without offending their sense of delicacy, as one might have a bavaroise (tea in a carafe, sweetened with herbal syrup) in a café while enjoying the pleasures of society.*’

In 1769, one of the twelve food caterers of the king called Mathurin Roze de Chantoiseau, wrote the first *Almanac* in Paris which compiled a catalogue of Parisian tradesmen in



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alphabetical order. *Almanac general (Almanach général)*, an anonymous directory of the most important wholesalers, merchants, bankers, courtiers, artists, and artisans in France, appeared regularly during the 1770s and 1780s and its first edition listed the first ‘restaurants (*Le Restaurateur*)’ under the category of ‘*Caterer, Innkeepers, and Hoteliers*’ which included 700 business. The almanac also credited a “M. Roze” (himself) as the first ‘*restaurateur*’ and the inventor of the first ‘*restaurant*’. Chantoiseau also mentioned ‘Roze’s’ (himself) restaurant in Saint Honoré Street as a place serving excellently delicious and healthy broths in other parts of the almanac (Spang, 2007: 39-41; Symons, 2013: 252 ).

The first restaurateurs of Paris took advantage of the privileged and high status holder class of the Old Regime. The comfort-minded, wealthy and aristocratic clientele of the new restaurants benefited the personal service and the delicacy of the fare new restaurants to display their power and royalty. In the later 18<sup>th</sup> century, the restaurants became temples of art, luxury, sophistication and skill in addition to their aristocratic overtones (Bendiner, 2004: 149, Spang, 2007: 43, Symons, 2013: 252). Both the ‘restaurant’ as an healthy output of nouvelle cuisine and the new characteristics of the ‘restaurant’ – private service, menu, flexible meal times, etc.- perfectly and easily matched with its clientele in search for being fascinated by modernity and innovations of 18<sup>th</sup> century (Spang, 2007: 44).

During the French Revolution in 1789 the revolutionaries and the counter-revolutionaries both enjoyed and attacked restaurants. The revolutionaries accused restaurants of breaking up the tradition of common meals and revolutionary solidarity as a consequence. Restaurants flourished after the terror of the revolution as a result of many changes. First, a gastronomic revolution occurred due to the unemployed cooks of Old Regime. These cooks found themselves unemployed when their aristocratic or royal patrons were put in prison or sent to guillotine. They either found jobs as restaurateurs in Paris or they set up their own establishments where they could keep on improving themselves and satisfying their customers. They brought Parisians a new way of dining with delicate cutlery, china, and linen tablecloths. The former aristocratic way of dining became available to all changing French society. Second, as mentioned before the monopoly of the food guilds was swept away. That resulted with the liberalization of food vendors. Many food vendors started to vary their food offerings. Lastly, after the revolution a New Penal Code of 1791 came into force. The new code strictly forbade stealing from a restaurant. The penalties for crimes stealing from hosts, servants, and guests were doubled and this offered restaurants good protection against theft (Kiefer, 2002: 62; Malaguzzi, 2008: 85).

After the revolution, the reign of terror began in 1793 with a declaration by Robespierre. During the Terror thousands of people accused of being enemies of the state and around 17.000 people were executed by guillotine. During terror period, restaurants became meeting places for aristocrats precisely due to the discretion they offered (Malaguzzi, 2008: 85). However their privacy and intimacy were often seen as a menace to decent society since fraternal street banquets in public places empowered the revolutionary effort (Bendiner, 2004: 146). The coup against Robespierre in 1794 ended the militant phase of the revolution. Naturally the end of terror led to an era of extravagance, frivolity, and fun (Kiefer, 2002: 62). In 1799, Napoleon seized the control of the government. In the Napoleonic era (1799-1815) restaurants were depoliticized and became the venues for gastronomic pleasures and enjoyment. According to Brillant-Savarin, during the Napoleonic period restaurants were democratic institutions rather than aristocratic places.



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Thus, the new restaurants of 19<sup>th</sup> century permitted all those with sufficient funds to sample the finest cookery, not only to the elite of the previous century's society (Bendiner, 2004: 146). By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were almost 2.000 restaurants in Paris. That is to say that out of the ashes of the revolution emerged the modern restaurant in Paris and Paris became the dining capital of the world (Civitello, 2008: 192-193; Kiefer, 2002: 62).

Between the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was a beautiful era for restaurants. Paris became a highly frivolous, optimistic and carefree capital of France. The entertaining character of the city was encouraged by the advancement in transportation systems. Railways, metro and eventually automobiles brought citizens great ease of transportation and comfort. As a consequence luxury tourism grew and eating out was no longer a necessity but an art. During this period Art Nouveau, spread through Europe especially France in architecture, furniture, and decoration. Parisian restaurants of that era showed the characteristics of Art Nouveau style which are carved wood and ceramics, with mirrors and glass paintings. Figures 5, 6, 7, and 8 are some representations of Parisian restaurants that reflect the new way of dining.



Figure 5: Kiseleva (Chernaya), Elena Andreevna, In a Restaurant, Paris, 1911, State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



Figure 6: Maurice Milliere, An Elegant Lady in the Famous Paris Restaurant, Vatel, 1905



Figure 7: Melissa Jane Sturgeon, La Fin D'une Liaison, La Fermette Marbeuf,



Figure 8: Henri Gervex, An Evening of Prizes at the Armenonville Pavilion, 1905.





## **WHY DID RESTAURANTS EVOLVE MAINLY IN FRANCE?**

As mentioned before, restaurants did not originate only in Paris (Kiefer, 2002:64). There were many restaurant-like eating establishments all around the world throughout the history. In China, Japan, Latin America, Middle-East, Italy, England, Vienna various foods and drinks were offered in various places such as a *maqui* (a room or a separate place of a house in which owners serve food) in Maghreb, a *brauerei* (beer house) in Germany, Austria and Alsace, a *bodega* (small wine house) serving *tapas* in Spain, a *pub* in England or a *tavern* in Greece (Pitte, 2008: 88-90). Despite the lively restaurant culture around the world, Paris undeniable became the center of gastronomic scene especially after the French Revolution.

The majority of the literature believes that the modern restaurants evolved mainly in Paris because of the rising '*nouvelle cuisine*'. As stated previously in this study, during Middle Ages and Renaissance medicine and food became highly connected. Many people studied medicine together with high interest in healthy eating. New approaches in medicine emphasized the importance of health, cleanliness and purity of food to be eaten. The contemporary ideal way to live was accepted as a simpler life and purer food. The elites of this period became obsessed with health issues and healthy eating. In parallel with the ongoing medical trends, the early restaurants in France during this period, positioned themselves as '*houses of health*' in the market. A '*restaurant*' was a healthy and a restorative bouillon and the first owners of those establishments emphasized the health-related aspects of their businesses. Those restaurants offered their elite clientele a nouvelle cuisine consisting of orange-flavored rice-creams, fresh eggs, fruits in season, as well as bouillons. Such fare of restorative broths was lighter and more digestive than the food (spiced sausages or dense *pates*) offered in the traditional restaurants of the Old Regime in France. The '*restaurant*' with a prolonged cooking process in which meat was broken down with many herbs and served hot in small portions was appealing to the new approach to cooking and food presentation of *nouvelle cuisine* that was characterized by lighter, more delicate dishes and an increased emphasis on presentation.

According to Spang (2007), the transformation of French society led to the nouvelle characteristic of modern restaurants. In her book 'The Evolution of Restaurant' Spang uses restaurants as an example of demonstrating the shift from reality to corporate, from ancient to modern, and the conflicting values of the Old Regime with the disseminating enlightenment ideas and French Revolution. Spang notes that the '*restaurant*' with its delicate cooking and serving techniques differentiated itself from the humble food of ancient France and it became one of the important discussion topics of that period. Many cooks and clients treated restaurants as symbols of rebellion in the French gastronomy. It was easily associated with modernity, artistic innovation, individualism, and change in those hot discussions.

One of the reasons for the rise and excellence of Parisian restaurants is the French Revolution. Restaurants became a place of pleasure and enjoyment, allowed by the authorities since their diversion from interfering in government's business. Dining was no longer a risky business, and instead restaurants had become 'a space of urban sociability', with establishments inclusively catering to all social classes, but following a new model of service and choice (Crowther, 2013; Spang, 2007).



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Another reason for the refinement of French cuisine was the entrance of chefs and kitchen staff of the Old Regime to the Paris labor market. The cooks were employed in the aristocratic houses of Paris. After the revolution they became unemployed so they started working in or setting up public establishments to make a living. Those talented cooks satisfied great number of Parisian customers and a gastronomic revolution got under way (Malaguzzi, 2008: 85).

Lastly, the rise of the restaurants in Paris was seen highly related with the cultural aspects of Parisian society. According to Pitte (2008) the existence of money and leisure, as well as a culture that allows fantasies of luxury and sensual pleasure to flourish allowed Paris to become the gastronomic spark in the world. The power and desire for outward display of the court also contributed Paris to shine in terms of gastronomy. The environment of well-to-do merchants, independent artists, city officials, lawyers, and other categories of urbanites with substantial income was very favorable for the development of fine cooking. Although Paris produced nothing by itself, it was the place where everything was gathered from all over the world. It was the best place where people appreciated good food and knew how to transform those respective qualities of food into the most beneficial form of their senses.

#### **CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW RESTAURANTS**

The earliest restaurants of Paris distinguished themselves from other eating establishments of time. One distinction was their hospital-like function. The dictionaries of Furetière and Trévoux in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century described “restaurant” as a medical term and quoted it as an example of healing food (Spang, 2007: 19). During 18<sup>th</sup> century suffering from weak-chest was a fashionable disease among Europeans, especially women and dietary health was a common interest of public. According to the existing medical approach of that era, food was accepted as one of the key factors influencing both physiology and the mentality of people. People who put extensive effort to thoughts and feelings (i.e. writers, poets, women, the ones living in big cities etc.) were advised to take care of their brain through easy digestion of food. By this way the brain would not get tired with digestion and it could save energy for extensive thinking and feeling. A doctor stated that women involved “stupid entertainment” in too much and while doing that they became the slaves of their bad eating habits- heavy food and alcohol- and sexual desires. These women were advised to use their sensory pleasures to eat healthy food. The remedy recommended for all those “fragile” category of people to maintain their mental strength was to eat light and simple food in small amounts. The restaurants that devoted to serve these hot, light and restorative broths in small cups were compatible with health concerns of people of that era (Spang, 2007: 59-60).

The deep nourishment of new restaurants was not the only change. The new restaurants served food all day at any hour, at the convenience of the diner, rather than at regular mealtimes. For the early restaurants serving the broth was quickly accomplished: however, as restaurants began to sell more sophisticated and large meals this became more difficult, resulting with highly organized kitchens and new cooking styles. In time restaurants became a place for leisure. Many women in Paris frequented restaurants to eat away from home. This was the early indication of women giving a break to one of their domestic duties, the cooking task. Restaurants also served women the opportunity to work and maintain an income often at a low level (Crowther, 2013: 185).



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Another innovation of the new restaurants was the menu. Menus provided a choice for the customers but they were also kind of documents that define the restaurant's identity as a provider of particular dishes and cuisines. For example: in 1880's in France the menus included various ingredients and dishes from all over the France and some parts of Europe. The name of the dishes might indicate the location of the ingredient or the cooking style of



Figure 9 : Nicolas Lavreince, Le Restaurant, 1782

Figure 10: Detail from 'Le Restaurant'

a particular region. Such menu items were oysters from Cancale, ducks from Rouen and *sauce à l'italienne*. By this way, menus enabled cooking terms and knowledge to be out of kitchen and the gastronomy vocabulary to be known by public. Menus also brought standardization of dishes in terms of appearance, aesthetics, tastes and ingredients and that gave rise to building a national French gastronomy and thus a national identity (Crowther, 2013: 189; Spang, 2007).

The new restaurants characterized themselves with small and private dining rooms and changed the traditional way of common table (and/or room) eating. Restaurants were public places accessible to everybody who can afford to eat. In addition they also had reserved and private places that offered forbidden political dinners. These private rooms also became the venue of risky amorous assignations. After 1760's restaurants were not solely satisfying the appetite for good food but the appetite for love. The restaurants functioned as a meeting point for lovers. Spang shows that restaurants of 18<sup>th</sup> century were quickly associated with sexual liaisons and encounters. The private rooms in restaurants were used for seduction, adulterous assignations and also used by prostitutes to ply their trade (Bendiner, 2004; Spang, 2007). On a print dated to 1782, made out of Nicolas Lavreince's watercolor painting, a couple sits on a sofa in a private room of a restaurant. The woman holds a 'restaurant' in her hand (Figure 9 and 10) and one more is yet to come by the waitress. The lusty nourishment of the bouillon serves as a preliminary to love-making. Upwards position of the man's sword on the left corner, the unbuttoned dresses, the sexual eye-contact and physical closeness of the couple reinforces the erotic scene.





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The erotic aspect of the new restaurants was depicted in Edouard Manet's '*Chez le Père Lathuille*' painting (Figure 11). Manet painted a couple engaged in a lusty conversation. The waiter on the right-back is about to serve the coffee signaling the end of the meal. But the love scene in the foreground does not seem to have been brought to completion. It looks like the young man needs more time to conquer his lady. But the coffee announces the end of the ardent liaison. As seen in Manet's painting the sexual facet of the restaurants has changed in time. Lovers play out their intimacy in broad daylight of a restaurant in front of everyone in Paris unlike private rooms of earlier Parisian restaurants. This is an illustrative example of public privacy of restaurants. Here in this painting restaurant serves as a space in which private life of the couple conjoins public display (Bendiner, 2004: 157).



Figure 11: Edouard Manet, *Chez le Père Lathuille*, 1879, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Tournai.

The new Parisian style- restaurants catered for individuals with separate dishes. They abandoned the idea of early communal dining at a common table. Strangers rarely spoke to each other and certainly did not share tables. That new aspect of new restaurants was initially discomfoting to its clients. It took them a while to feel comfortable. Separate dishes and plates for the individual with no doubt reduced the risk of one not getting





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enough from the big common bowl. But that new characteristic of a restaurant was a disadvantage of restaurants according to Brillant-Savarin. He worried that *solitary dining would strengthen egotism, and accustom an individual to think only of himself*. His point of view was sharing from a communal bowl at a communal table would result with individuals who only serve for themselves and not pass the plate to the neighbors. Thus, the sociability of dining has been lost due to separate plates for the individuals (Crowther, 2013: 186-187).

Further to Brillant-Savarin's concern for the reduced sociability of new restaurants, Malaguzzi and Spang moves that solitary dining discussion to a different point. According to Malaguzzi (2008), restaurants are magical places where public and private are brought together, but it is also a setting where an individual could convey his isolation and his privacy publicly. Spang's concern with the restaurant is similar with Malaguzzi's statement. The intersection of public and private spheres in a restaurant is somehow fascinating and complicated at the same time. The people in a restaurant can isolate themselves either alone or communing in small groups. They display themselves and their privacy in a public setting. They eat with others but they remain separate at the same time. If they wanted to be completely private, they could buy the food, take it away and eat it alone at somewhere else. But they keep on staying in the restaurant and exhibit themselves. Thus Spang names a restaurant as "a publicly private place" that allows "a public display of self-absorption". (Bendiner, 2004: 146; Spang, 2007). A different version of this phenomenon in today's restaurants, people always busy with their smart phones and not talking to each other, is no different than the ongoing discussion. The volunteered isolation of an individual in a public venue, his/her cut off from the others was an appealing scene for many painters in history.



Figure 12: Vincent van Gogh, Interior of a Paris Restaurant (1887), Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo



Figure 13: Vincent van Gogh, Restaurant in Arles, (1888), Private Collection



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In Vincent van Gogh's *'Interior of a Paris Restaurant'* (Figure 12), the tables separated from each other in an empty dining room emphasizes the loneliness of individuals. Empty tables with no food looks like islands of privacy and all the other islands together float on the same empty space. They are very close to each other but very far at the same time without any interaction. In another painting of van Gogh (Figure 13), this time people do appear. However they (working-class people) located distant and unapproachable. The distance between the painter and the eating people is a depiction of van Gogh's separateness from everybody in the scene. Even the communal manner of eating can't avoid the viewer questioning about the term solidarity and its feasibility.

A restaurant for Edward Hopper is a scene for alienation similar to van Gogh's interpretation. In his famous painting called *'Nighthawks'* (Figure 14), the individuals are depicted close to each other in a big and bright diner surrounded by an empty and dark city. The figures are physically close but they keep their psychological distance by avoiding eye contact. Yet the coffee plays an ironic role in the painting. The beverage as a symbol of communication, togetherness and warmth this time fails to give and take relaxation. In his painting called *'Automat'* (Figure 15), a similar feeling of loneliness is



Figure 14: Edward Hopper, *Nighthawks* (1941), Art Institute of Chicago



Figure 15: Edward Hopper, *Automat* (1927) Des Moines Art Center, Iowa.

visible. A single woman sitting in an automat (a kind of American fast food restaurant equipped with vending machines with a few employees where employees and customers have no interaction) is painted while having her coffee. The table and the chair are both empty. The woman sits with her coat and hat on. The little radiator by the window does not look capable of heating inside. The woman wears only one of her gloves. Probably she will not stay long. But it seems like no one waits for her but the deep dark night outside only. She looks lost in thoughts. It is hard to imagine how she feels like: afraid, cold, unhappy, disappointed, betrayed?

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Public eating places or today's restaurants are not something completely new. During Roman Empire or in Ancient China there was always a need for public eateries. Throughout the history peasants and farmers who brought their goods to bigger markets mainly in big cities and people who travelled for several days needed a place to sleep, rest, and eat. As a result earliest forms of restaurants such as inns and taverns were born. During





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the medieval ages and the following eras the restaurants took very different forms. This has happened in the forms of bars, taverns, inns, wine houses, beer salons, brasseries, osterias, cafés, coffee houses, tea rooms, restaurants, etc. These various names were sometimes due to legal requirements, or the furniture of the venue, or the social status of the customers, or the type of the food served, or the size of the eatery, etc.

The literature on the history of restaurants is vast. But it is too big and diverse to thoroughly cover. In addition only a few used the very important visual sources such as representations of such places in paintings (Bendiner, 2004; Malaguzzi, 2008). While aiming to contribute to the vast literature on restaurants' history, this paper used depictions of various forms of public eating places in paintings. Through the selected paintings, this paper explains the history of restaurants with a different perspective which is more artistic, systematic and narrow.

The paintings in this study reveal the transformation of restaurants from humble eating places into elegant socializing venues. As seen in the early forms of restaurants (Figures 1 and 2) the restaurant-like places (inns and taverns) were venues of hard labor where the restaurant activities were tough and brutal. In the depictions of such eating places, people preparing the meal look very strong. The work of food preparation does not seem like a pleasant labor. The kitchen equipment also suggests heft and strength. In addition the people who humbly eat and merry make in the painting constructs a rough and inelegant atmosphere. In short, the public eating places were dour and brutal places as depicted in the paintings dating before 17<sup>th</sup> century.

In time many changes occurred in the world: the ban of the medieval guilds, the colonization race of European Empires, etc. As a consequence of the conquest of America, global transportation of foods increased. New foods of the new world became available to Europeans. Coffee, tea and chocolate were being served in public houses and cafés in addition to beer and wine. Passini's "*Artists at the Caffé Greco in Rome*" (Figure 3) exemplifies a Roman café where a group of artists at the right lounge and take coffee.

France especially Paris witnessed the ultimate reformation of restaurants. Due to many reasons (French revolution, unemployed cooks of Old Regime, a French culture that allows fantasies of luxury and sensual pleasure, increase of Art Nouveau style, etc.), the sickly diners of Old Regime in Paris turned into delicate places where people savour the new flavors of rising French gastronomy. Eating in public became an aristocratic way of showing welfare, social status, joy (Figures 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8), and even love making (Figures 9 and 11). Restaurants were not grave-like places any more. In fact they transformed into noble places where delicate decoration and furnishing occupy the canvas. The toilsome and brutal stages of food preparation have been hidden from customers. The paintings of restaurants after 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century lack dour food preparation scenes as the cooking area was separated from the service area. A smooth and calm atmosphere is often depicted in paintings of those eras where well-dressed waiters serve and customers dine in a peaceful harmony.

In short, the dampened tone of the eatery paintings had changed, when eating out was considered as a social activity, and refinement rather than vulgarity reigned dining places. Through the use of restaurant themed paintings, this paper had identified major changes that moved restaurants to a new path. The second challenge of this study was to propose an



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old but less-investigated area that came up with the context of dining out. Throughout the history, restaurants are generally regarded as public gathering places where people come together over food and drink and socialize with others. However the socializing role of restaurants is questionable. For many painters especially for Van Gogh and Edward Hopper restaurants are places to exhibit their habitual taste for scenes of alienation. Empty dining tables of Van Gogh (Figures 12 and 13), look like islands of loneliness floating on an empty space rather than merry making crowds of earlier restaurants. Also non-communicating figures of Edward Hopper (Figures 14 and 15), convey the public loneliness of individuals where the socializing role of restaurants is being questioned. The paintings of such artists expose a potential gastronomic research area to be focused. This paper shows that there is a need to study the so-called socializing role of restaurants as they have sometimes failed to signify the togetherness of individuals. It is crucial for gastronomy researches to examine the restaurants within this social context rather than economic, environmental, or managerial aspects.



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