

# Culinary Works Come in Three Ontological Flavours

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## ABSTRACT

When investigating the nature of culinary works, it is easy to take for granted that they all share the same ontology. This paper argues that, on the contrary, the ontology of culinary works is really threefold. Some culinary works are edible concrete particulars, or dishes, as many of us may first assume. But others are types, or multiply realisable abstract entities. And, while some of these types are determined by one recipe, others are rather chased after by their indefinitely many recipes. So, there are really three kinds of culinary works; only those belonging to one of the three are edible per se; and, each kind has a very different relationship to recipes. Indeed, it is very doubtful that culinary works consisting in edible concrete particulars are suitable to have one or more recipes: by exploring what are the requirements for being a recipe, the paper also examines under what necessary conditions there is a recipe for preparing a culinary work qua concrete particular.

Aim of this paper is to bring philosophy to bear on some fundamental questions about culinary works: What is a culinary work? What is its ontological status? What does it consist in?

A first response is that a culinary work is a product of human activity that is ready to be eaten up. Such a definition would exclude from the domain of culinary works the products of *animal non-human activity* that are ready to be eaten up: for example, the cooked sweet potatoes that chimpanzees produce by actively placing raw sweet potatoes in a cooking device to transform them, as in an experiment which was part of a study aimed to show that not only do chimpanzees differentiate and prefer cooked to raw foods, but also that they comprehend the transformation of raw food that occurs when cooking, project this causal understanding to new contexts, and choose to pay temporal costs to acquire cooked foods (Warneken and Rosati, 2015). One option is to extend the

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definition in order to cover chimpanzees' cooked food, for example by saying that a culinary work is a product of intelligent, goal-directed activity that is ready to be eaten up. It is uncertain, however, whether we would ever accept to drop the presumption that the requirement "that is ready to be eaten up" must be interpreted as "that is ready to be eaten up by a human being".

The definition has the virtue of admitting as culinary works raw food preparations. In fact it seems wrong to demand that for something to be a culinary work it is necessary that it has undergone a cooking process involving the application of heat, or that it contains at least one ingredient that has undergone such a process. Most satisfyingly, not only marinated food (where marination is taken as an alternative to the application of heat) but also mere raw food preparations, such as steak tartare and coleslaw, can be admitted as culinary works.

Nonetheless the definition would *prima facie* exclude wild blackberries from culinary works, because they are not the product of any kind of goal-directed activity. One could try to solve the problem by saying that also gathering some edible stuff, putting it in a bowl and serving it up can jointly (and perhaps singularly) count as *preparing* it, hence making it the *product* of some intelligent and goal-directed activity.<sup>1</sup> After all, in many (other)<sup>2</sup> art forms we have become familiar with acknowledging the simple act of gathering a mere item, moving it to another place (like a concert hall, a page of a book of poems, an art gallery, a museum) and offering it to the relevant perceptual attention of the public as a kind of transformation that can be sufficient to make it become a musical, literary, sculptural, installation or performance work. More generally, in many art forms there are such things as *Zero Degree works of art*:

*Zero Degree work of art*: A work of art<sup>3</sup> that we can imagine to have started to exist merely in virtue of a performative utterance by the artist ("Let *this* be my work of art!"), and is therefore materially constituted only by one item, or a group of items in certain relations, that previously existed as such, possessed

<sup>1</sup> Indeed the mere harvesting wild food like wild blackberries actually is akin to some kind of preparation as it is, arguably, a matter of applying a selection function to a manifold of berries, not merely picking berries – hence it is a goal-driven activity. This might even be considered as some kind of proto-recipe. I thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this interpretation.

<sup>2</sup> The question whether cooking is, always or on some occasions, art, is beyond the scope of the present paper.

<sup>3</sup> Or, if a form of art is two-stage, an individual *instantiation* of a singular work of art.

all and only the physical properties possessed now by the work of art, and have undergone no material transformation by the artist (Bacchini, 2020).

Not every work of art belonging to the kind “readymade” or “found object” is a Zero Degree work of art. For example, while Tracey Emin’s sculpture *My Bed* (1998) is, Marcel Duchamp’s *Fountain* (1917) – perhaps the world’s most famous readymade – is not, since the ordinary object it consists in *has* been relevantly physically transformed by adding a signature on it. Note that, should we consider also the act of gathering and moving an item as a case of physically transforming it by affecting its locative or contextual properties, then those works of art that started to exist *also* thanks to their being gathered and moved to some particular place, rather than *only* in virtue of an artist’s fiat, cannot be considered as Zero Degree works of art.

Now, we can look at wild blackberries and raspberries that are gathered, put in a bowl and served – and *even* at those that are still on the plant along sunny roadways, fences, and in overgrown meadows, provided that they are hit by a performative utterance by someone momentarily acting as a cook (“Let *this* be my dish!”) – as a Zero Degree fully-fledged culinary work.<sup>4</sup> Of course, the person momentarily acting as a cook and producing the relevant *fiat* can be one and the same individual as the person that eats, or plans to eat, the culinary work.

According to the definition, then, all culinary works are edible concrete particulars, or equivalently, all culinary works are dishes – at least if we follow Borghini’s proposal that anything that is ready for someone to be eaten up is a dish. Borghini (2015, 722) convincingly advocates such a “permissive understanding of dishes”, in consideration of the insurmountability of the problem of finding “a reasonable principled manner of drawing a distinction [...] between what is ready to be eaten and is a dish, and what is ready to be eaten and is not a dish.”

But considering all culinary works to be edible concrete particulars, or dishes, cannot be right. Some culinary works clearly are not edible concrete particulars.

<sup>4</sup> I assume that it is possible for something that is not a *work of art* to be a Zero Degree *work*. Hence there can be such things as ‘Zero Degree culinary works’ also in case culinary works are not (always) works of art.

1. A first kind of culinary works: types determined by their recipe

Generally speaking and independently of any specific art form or human activity, each singular creative work has to reside in the item, whether it be abstract or concrete, that has resulted from the very same individual mental act or sum of individual mental acts (not necessarily performed by a single person) that are to be deemed causally responsible<sup>5</sup> for whatever amount of creativity, originality and innovativeness we acknowledge to that work.

For example, for any possible painting John has painted, we can always fully identify the pictorial work we are in front of with the concrete particular consisting in oil on canvas produced by John, because we can deem whatever amount of creativity we ascribe to the work as the effect of the same mental acts by John that brought into existence that concrete particular. The situation is quite different if John is (satisfyingly well) playing the *Goldberg Variations*. In the latter case, we cannot identify the musical work we are listening to with the concrete particular consisting in the complex sound event John is causing to take place, because we do not want to say that John's mind – which is causally responsible for bringing about the particular sound event we are auditorily perceiving – is at the same time causally responsible for all of the creativity and ingeniousness we ascribe to the musical work we are making experience of. It would be a mistake to attribute the genius contained in the *Goldberg Variations* to John. Accordingly, we do consider classical music as a two-stage art, where two-stage arts are those in which there is a distinction between the completion of a work of art and its occurrence as an item for aesthetic perception (Goodman, 1968). (Painting, on the other hand, is usually seen as a one-stage art.) When John plays the *Goldberg Variations*, he only deserves credit for producing a faithful and exciting new occurrence of the work, while J.S. Bach has all of the merit of producing the work itself. So the musical work cannot consist in the concrete particular that John is producing now; nor can it consist in any of the concrete particulars that J.S. Bach produced between 1741 (the year of composition of the *Goldberg Variations*) and 1750 (the year of his death) by playing the *Goldberg Variations* himself, or in all of them – because in this case the musical work would have ceased to exist in 1750 at the latest. Rather, the

<sup>5</sup> From now on, when talking of *the mental events (or the mental acts) that are causally responsible of X*, I will always intend 'the mental events, or the events or obtaining states of affairs that ground them, that are causally responsible of X'.

musical work still exists, and consists in a type, that is, a multiply realisable abstract entity.<sup>6</sup>

Now imagine that John works as a prep person in one of McDonald's restaurants. I order a *Big Mac*, and he prepares one for me. Again, we cannot identify the culinary work I am having an experience of with the concrete particular produced by John, because the mental events in John's mind that are causally responsible for the production of the concrete particular consisting in the stuff I am chewing are in no way causally responsible for the amount of ingeniousness we ascribe to the culinary work. Indeed John deserves no credit, or no blame, for producing the *Big Mac* as a culinary work. Because the *Big Mac* was invented in 1967 by Jim Delligatti, the local operator of several McDonald's in the American state of Pennsylvania, the *Big Mac* as a culinary work has existed since 1967 and, just like the *Goldberg Variations*, consists in a type, that is, a multiply realisable abstract entity.

Just like the type that the *Goldberg Variations* consist in is specified by the original musical score drawn up by J.S. Bach in 1741, it seems that the type that the *Big Mac* consists in is specified by the original recipe drawn up by Jim Delligatti in 1967. One may object that, in contrast to the *Goldberg Variations* type, the *Big Mac* type is not determined exclusively by the recipe/score, because if the staff at one of Burger King restaurants executes the recipe getting the ingredients from the same suppliers and using the same kind of machinery, nonetheless they cannot succeed in preparing a *Big Mac*. The idea is that it is constitutive for any instance of a *Big Mac* to be prepared in one of McDonald's restaurants, or at least with the approval of McDonald's Corp., just like it is constitutive for a US one dollar bill to be printed by the United States Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

There are two possible answers. The first answer concedes that being prepared in one of McDonald's restaurants is constitutive for any instance of a *Big Mac*, and states that *this* constitutive property is simply to be included in the recipe that determines the work, just as any other constitutive characteristic.<sup>7</sup> The second answer points out that it is not true that the staff at one of Burger King restaurants cannot succeed in preparing a *Big Mac* as a culinary work. If

<sup>6</sup> See Kivy (1983; 1987) and Dodd (2007). Like Thomasson (2005), I advocate the thesis that the type the *Goldberg Variations* consists in was brought into existence by J.S. Bach in 1741. For the rival position that such works of art neither come into nor go out of existence, see e.g. Wolterstorff (1980, 88–89).

<sup>7</sup> See last paragraph.

they meticulously execute Jim Delligatti’s recipe, they certainly do. Rather, they may be not legally entitled to call it ‘*Big Mac*’, because McDonald’s Corp. retains the copyright to the trademark ‘*Big Mac*’. This is not even true in Europe, where the Spain-based EU Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) ruled in 2019 that other companies as well as McDonald’s are allowed to use the ‘*Big Mac*’ name in the EU.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the analogy with the Federal Reserve notes is inappropriate, because while if the Federal Reserve starts printing and putting into circulation a new series of larger size orange banknotes featuring the portrait of Marty Feldman and declares that they are US one dollar bills, then *they are* US one dollar bills, by contrast if McDonald’s Corp. starts serving a sandwich consisting of five cooked patties of bean curd placed inside a sliced roll of short pastry and declares that it is a *Big Mac*, despite all, the new sandwich is not a *Big Mac*. According to the second answer, then, upon deeper inspection we must deny that being prepared in one of McDonald’s restaurants is constitutive for any instance of a *Big Mac*. In any case, we can conclude that the recipe is work-determinative, because it fixes all the constitutive properties of the culinary work.

At least in the *Big Mac* case, then, the culinary work is not the edible concrete particular. It rather is an abstract entity expressed by a recipe. As a consequence, the general thesis according to which all culinary works are edible concrete particulars, or dishes, cannot be right. Nor can be right the definition that a culinary work is a product of intelligent, goal-directed activity that is ready to be eaten up.<sup>9</sup>

As a possible solution, one may suggest now that all culinary works – just like the *Big Mac* – are types, or multiply realisable abstract entities, that are specified by a recipe.<sup>10</sup> It is easy to agree that plenty of culinary works corroborate this

<sup>8</sup> Reuters (2019).

<sup>9</sup> Here we can see why we need to admit such things as culinary works into our ontology along with dishes and recipes. The *Big Mac* – intended as the entity to which we can only attribute the ingeniousness and originality we are aesthetically appreciating while we are eating a concrete particular *Big Mac* – is neither a dish nor a recipe. Of course we can decide to name such entities as we like. I take it natural to baptise them ‘culinary works’.

<sup>10</sup> Not necessarily on the part of an institutional entity.

position: *Nutella*, *Mars*, *Simmenthal*, *Sachertorte*,<sup>11</sup> *Fettuccine Alfredo*<sup>12</sup> and *Uovo in raviolo “San Domenico”*,<sup>13</sup> just to mention the first that come to mind. An obvious shortcoming of this position is that some culinary works – say, the *Eggs with Coca-Cola and Marsala* I disappointingly prepared four years ago – just appear once in the history of human cooking, hence do not look like multiply realisable abstract entities; moreover, since no recipe of them is ever written down or even recorded in anyone’s mind, it is hard to claim that they consist in something that is specified by a recipe. It is possible to reply, however, that a culinary work that just appeared once so far can nonetheless be considered

<sup>11</sup> Many people concur that the authentic *Sachertorte* can only be prepared by the Sacher Hotel in Vienna, which owns the right to the phrase ‘the original Sachertorte’ after decades (1938–1963) of intense legal war with the Demel bakery focusing, among other things, on the exact nature of ingredients and preparation (e.g. the number of layers of jam in the middle of the cake). Sacher Hotel claims to closely follow the original recipe of Franz Sacher (1832) later perfected by his son Eduard while working at the Demel bakery, where it was first served. Sacher Hotel produces about 400,000 cakes per year, shipping them all over the world and selling them exclusively at the Vienna and Salzburg locations of the Hotel Sacher, at Cafe Sacher branches in Innsbruck and Graz, at the Sacher Shop in Bolzano, and in the Duty Free area of Vienna airport. On their website they offer an “approximate recipe”, clarifying that “this is only an approximation of the original recipe, which of course must remain a tightly-kept secret” (Sacher Hotel, 2020)

<sup>12</sup> According to family accounts, Alfredo Di Lelio invented this dish in 1907 or 1908 to get her wife to eat something healthy and nutrient after she had given birth to their son and had lost her appetite. Then he started serving it in the restaurant located in piazza Rosa, Rome, Italy, where he worked and which was run by his mother Angelina. Piazza Rosa disappeared in 1910 following the construction of the Galleria Colonna, and the restaurant was forced to close. Today two different Roman restaurants compete for being the custodian of the authentic recipe of *Fettuccine Alfredo*, that includes the right technique of the final creaming: *Alfredo alla Scrofa*, which is the closest continuer (Nozick 1981) of the restaurant *Alfredo* operated by Alfredo di Lelio on the via della Scrofa in central Rome from 1914 until 1943 when it was sold to two of his waiters – from where *Fettuccine Alfredo*’s fame spread worldwide – and *Il vero Alfredo (“The true Alfredo”)*, which is the closest continuer of the restaurant *Il vero Alfredo* opened in piazza Augusto Imperatore, Rome, by Alfredo Di Lelio himself and his son Armando in 1950 and run until the present day by his descendants (Coleman 2009; Tibollo 2019; Alfredo alla Scrofa 2020; Il vero Alfredo 2020).

<sup>13</sup> The San Domenico restaurant in Imola is famous for serving *Uovo in raviolo*, a culinary work invented by its chef Nino Bergese at the beginning of the seventies. Current owners are convinced they should own the copyright to the work, which they – as well as the majority of their customers – identify with the original recipe. Since registering the recipe was pointless, however, because “anyone could legally imitate *Uovo in raviolo* by executing a recipe minimally differing from ours”, they decided to register at least the trademark ‘*Uovo in raviolo “San Domenico” con burro di malga, parmigiano dolce e tartufo di stagione*’ “just to discourage imitations” (Cannarella, 2019).

as a multiply realisable, however unwanted, abstract entity; and, that *hapax legomenon* culinary works lacking a recorded recipe can nonetheless be seen as multiply realisable abstract entities whose constitutive properties are fixed by the recipe that their authors had in mind while preparing their unique instance, and/or that they would have written down, communicated or kept in mind if only their experience of that instance had convinced them that the culinary work were worth replicating.

Also if we accept this reply, however, we must reject the thesis that all culinary works are types that are specified by a recipe. Not even such a general thesis can be right. In fact, some culinary works are types that *are not* specified by a recipe. In such cases, the relationship between a recipe and the type that the culinary work consists in is not such that the recipe *determines* the work.

## 2. A second kind of culinary works: types chased after by their recipes

Imagine that John invites me to dinner and wants to prepare *Tagliatelle al ragù*. The culinary work I am going to have an experience of via one of its instances is a type known as *Tagliatelle al ragù*. But John, who is not accustomed to preparing *Tagliatelle al ragù*, goes online and looks for a recipe. He actually finds a lot of them. Some are said to be “the original one”, but even these do differ markedly. For example, some recipes call for making the sauce out of finely chopped fresh unsmoked pancetta and coarsely minced steak; others from ground veal, pork and beef meat. Some require chopped chicken livers; others forcefully demand to make use solely of diced lean brasing hanger or skirt steak. Some call for chopping only one onion together with the carrot and the celery; others opt for garlic. Some prescribe that half a cup of chicken stock is added; others state that 100 ml of whole milk must simmer with the meat before adding the wine (but must it be red, or white?) and the passata. Many other important differences exist concerning the nature and the quantity of the ingredients, as well as the preparation, of both the sauce and the fresh pasta.

Nor can one argue that *there is one* original recipe of *Tagliatelle al ragù*—one that has fallen into oblivion, has been lost, or is simply mingled with all the others. Our incapacity of picking out the authentic recipe of *Tagliatelle al ragù* is not dependent on any epistemic limitation of ours. While the *Big Mac* was invented in 1967 by a particular person, *Tagliatelle al ragù* has no author and no date of birth, and has progressively emerged as a particular kind of things, within certain cultures, as an effect of many factors, among which the historical fact that at some stage a growing number of instances of one or more well-established



culinary works of that time started to evolve out of their models, and the additional historical fact that subsuming a significant proportion of such instances within a new class named ‘*Tagliatelle al ragù*’ revealed cognitively useful for a large number of people. Of course, the more the new category of “*Tagliatelle al ragù*” established itself, the more edible concrete particulars were produced as instances of it. The category is perhaps still evolving, and we cannot say what it is meant to become. In these circumstances, the claim that *Tagliatelle al ragù* is a culinary work whose constitutive properties are fixed by one particular recipe is untenable.

Nor is it a good strategy to argue that the constitutive properties of the work are fixed by all of its alleged recipes, or by a proper subset of them. For a large number of recipes are sold on the web as recipes of *Tagliatelle al ragù* in spite of their suspiciously differing considerably from the majority of the others. And there is no independent authority that can rule where we should stop accepting recipes along a continuum going from those calling for bacon or black pepper up to those demanding to add a sprig of rosemary, a dusting of nutmeg, a bay leaf, chopped ham, parsley, oregano, mushrooms or green peppers. Another dead end is claiming that the constitutive properties of the work are fixed by all and only the directives that are common to all of its alleged recipes, because in this case we could prepare the sauce using no onion, no garlic, and no meat of any kind (a legitimate instance of the work being one where no contingent property is instantiated).

One may try to save the general thesis that all culinary works are types that are determined by a recipe by denying that *Tagliatelle al ragù* is a culinary work: the only culinary works are *Tagliatelle al ragù according to Recipe 1*, *Tagliatelle al ragù according to Recipe 2*, and so on. But this position equivocates about the right specification level at which we must identify the culinary work. It is *Tagliatelle al ragù* that must be put on an equal footing with *Sachertorte* and *Big Mac* – not *Tagliatelle al ragù according to Recipe 1*. To understand why, it is important to consider the result that the vast majority of the recipes of *Tagliatelle al ragù* intend to achieve.

The vast majority of these recipes are not aimed at creating a new culinary work. When internet portal *X* or food influencer *Y* publish a new recipe of *Tagliatelle al ragù*, they just aim to offer to the public a new set of instructions for producing an authentic and tasty instance of *Tagliatelle al ragù*. And, it is commonly agreed that what the readers will produce by executing the recipe is

just an authentic and tasty instance of a well-established pre-existing culinary work.

Let us contrast this situation with the one consisting in there being many different musical scores of *Requiem* on the market. In this case, musical scores are work-determinative, and it is obviously right to deny that *Requiem* is the one musical work which all of the scores are just different sets of instructions for the production of. The only musical works, here, are *Requiem by Verdi*, *Requiem by Dvořák*, *Requiem by Fauré* and so on. And the reason is that we all agree that most of the credit for the originality and inventiveness of the work that we are making experience of when an orchestra is performing *Fauré's Requiem* is due to Gabriel Fauré, and not to the many people that contributed to setting the sections forming the traditional structure of *Requiem*. Furthermore, when Gabriel Fauré or Giuseppe Verdi composed their *Requiem*, they intended to produce a new musical work; they certainly did not mean or believe to simply offer to the faithful a new set of instructions for realising good occurrences of *Requiem*.

In short, the vast majority of recipes of *Tagliatelle al ragù* are just chasing after the type named ‘*Tagliatelle al ragù*’, or to tell it another way, they are trying to hit its centre. They are recipes of a particular culinary work they must adjust to, and that they do not create, set up or determine at all. Originality and innovativeness, which are important qualities for a new culinary work (as well as for a new musical work, irrespective of its falling under the *Requiem* category or not), are rather a flaw for a new respectable recipe of *Tagliatelle al ragù*. So, it seems correct to conclude that normally the culinary work is rather *Tagliatelle al ragù* than *Tagliatelle al ragù according to Recipe 1* and *Tagliatelle al ragù according to Recipe 2*, which are nonetheless types – but types which are rather subtypes of one culinary work than culinary works in their own right. Such subtypes of a culinary work are analogous to the subtypes of a classical musical work created by a constellation of many separate classes of performances very similar each other, such as *Goldberg Variations in the manner of Andrés Schiff* (“parlando”), *Goldberg Variations in the manner of Ekaterina Derzhavina* (“naïve and unassuming”), *Goldberg Variations in the manner of Murray Perahia* (“with a sense of exploration”), and so on. The only difference is that these latest subtypes are clearly *not* determined univocally by a written score, and are rather inductively derived. But both kinds of subtypes are typically not works per se.

True, on particular occasions the type determined by *Tagliatelle al ragù* according to Recipe *n* can become a culinary work in its own respect. From time to time, this may be caused by very different factors. For example, it may happen that the drafter of the recipe is a talented chef that expressly shoots the type ‘*Tagliatelle al ragù*’ on its fringes. Likewise, the type *Goldberg Variations in the manner of Glenn Gould* can be suspected of having become a musical work in its own respect.<sup>14</sup> Yet the vast majority of recipes of a culinary work like *Tagliatelle al ragù* do not end in further culinary works. In any case *Tagliatelle al ragù* would not lose its status as a culinary work.

It is worth noting that, quite symmetrically, also such things like *Pastasciutta*, *Arrosto*, *Brasato* and *Dolce al cucchiaino*, which are supertypes of types that are culinary works, are not culinary works per se.

If what has been said so far elucidates the relationship between culinary works of this second kind and their recipes, something more has to be said about what it is that holds together them as types. What makes the many different instances of *Tagliatelle al ragù* fit under the same category, if not a recipe? The same question can be raised concerning *Tiramisù*, *Coda alla vaccinara*, *Ribollita*, *Risotto alla milanese*, *Gazpacho*, *Quiche lorraine*, *Croque monsieur*, *Pain perdu*, *Moussaka* and all culinary works of the second kind.

The types that these culinary works consist in are the categories referred to by the dish concepts in use in a given food culture,<sup>15</sup> and therefore their fundamental nature and organisation must be elucidated, in a general way, by a theory regarding concepts, their ontological status, their structure and their reference. However, it is important to remark that each category seems determined from its differential relations (Saussure, 2011) to the other categories no less than from a number of properties (so that a dish is a constituent of that category only if it satisfies a sufficient number of these properties).

Certainly, each food culture is characterised at a given time by a different population of dishes. But then each food culture, furthermore, carves out in a certain manner the amorphous continuum of the overall population of dishes, and notably the amorphous continuum of its own population, organizing it in

<sup>14</sup> See Irvin (2013, 5) for a slightly different version of this idea.

<sup>15</sup> Or even in a given food subculture. Although there is no well-known distinction between a food culture and a food subculture, we can easily conceive food cultures as belonging to different levels of a hierarchical chart, so that most if not all food cultures include more specific food cultures as their determinates, or are part of larger ones, or both.

one of indefinitely many ways. The value of each category corresponding to a culinary work of the second kind grows in relation to its external environment within this system. Its extension is dependent on the extensions of other neighbouring categories within the system, so we can say that what holds a type together can be understood by what it is not – by its differences to other types.

Nonetheless the way in which the magma is articulated, or equivalently what Hjelmlev (1943) calls the *form of the content*, rests on real differences, so that each type that a culinary work of the second kind consists in will be characterised from case to case by a critical mass of certain ingredients and preparations, place of production, places in which some ingredients were produced, visual qualities, number and dimensions of parts, pattern in which these parts are arranged and their positions in relation to each other, gustatory and thermal characteristics, consistency, quantity, presentation, container, cutlery context, cook's sanction, ancestry of the executed recipe, and so on. However elusive, the type as a portion of the amorphous continuum sets constraints on aspirant recipes of the work. Unlike for culinary works of the first type, changing the recipe is not necessarily changing the work. A different valid recipe of the same work is just a different set of instructions for realising good, or better than good, tokens of the same type. Valid recipes of one and the same type are potentially infinite in number, just like correct executions of one and the same recipe.

The fact that there are such things as culinary works of this second kind entails that we must reject the thesis according to which all culinary works are types that are specified by a recipe. It might still be true, however, that all culinary works be types: on some occasions the type is specified by a recipe, while on some other occasions it is a cultural unit chased after by the recipes of the work. If this hypothesis were correct, we would be allowed to conclude that cooking is always two-stage. All culinary works being multiply realisable abstract entities, quite surprisingly no culinary work would be edible per se, because only their realisations, or instances, would be material – thereby edible – entities.

Yet also this position cannot be right. It is not the case that all culinary works are types. Some culinary works are concrete edible particulars.

### 3. A third kind of culinary works: concrete particulars

After marrying Lee Krasner in 1945 and moving with her to a new studio in Springs, East Hampton, New York, Jackson Pollock painted many of his most famous paintings between 1947 and 1950, during what is called his 'drip period'.

Pollock's new 'drip' technique was based on his earlier experiments with dripping and splattering paint on ceramic, glass, and canvas on an easel. He used to lay a large canvas on the floor of his studio barn, nearly covering the space. Using house paint, he dripped, poured, and flung pigment from loaded brushes and sticks while dancing around it. The paintings he realised during the drip period are moderately similar to each other, because of the similarity of the productive processes and employed materials. Nobody would doubt, however, that Pollock's works between 1947 and 1950 are the concrete particular paintings named '*Number 1, 1948*', '*Number 5, 1948*', '*Number 8, 1949*', and so on.

Consider the type expressed by whatever set of instructions Pollock invariably followed for painting with his canvases laid out on the studio floor during the drip period. This type *is not a work of art*. Nor is a work of art the type consisting in the cultural unit we can refer to as 'Pollock's dripping-style painting'.

Now, suppose that in 1949 Pollock had produced a series of ninety paintings unusually similar to each other, all named by him '*Number 8, 1949*' and all very similar to the painting we know as '*Number 8, 1949*', which would have simply been the first of the series. I assume that, also in these particular circumstances, we would deem Pollock's works to be the concrete particular paintings. The series would not in itself be considered as a work of art by Pollock. Likewise, we would not rate the type expressed by the set of instructions drawn up and followed by Pollock for the production of all the elements in the series – or the type consisting in the cultural unit '*Number 8, 1949*' – as a work of art by Pollock (nor as a work of art in general). We would rather think it to be a good idea to change the names of the ninety works of art to '*Number 8, 1949<sub>1</sub>*', '*Number 8, 1949<sub>2</sub>*', '*Number 8, 1949<sub>3</sub>*', and so on, up to '*Number 8, 1949<sub>90</sub>*' – in order to make it possible to refer to each distinct work.

After all, this is exactly the case when Cézanne paints more than twenty *Views of Mont Saint-Victoire* (1885-1906), Van Gogh depicts thirteen *Head of a peasant woman with white cap* (1884-1885) and Monet produces more than one hundred *Water-lilies* (1897-1926). The works are invariably the concrete particulars. Nobody would say that there is a work of art, whose name is 'Portrait of the postman Joseph Roulin' and whose author is Vincent Van Gogh, consisting in one type and instanced five times. And the reason is that in painting we cannot dismiss any property possessed by the concrete particular as

contingent (Goodman, 1968), therefore two very similar paintings – indeed, even two perceptively indistinguishable paintings – are two distinct works of art.

Let us come back to the imaginary series of ninety *Number 8, 1949* paintings. Now suppose that it was not Pollock to paint them. Pollock just did paint the actual *Number 8, 1949* in 1949. A different painter (say, Norman Bluhm) paints the series of ninety paintings later in the nineties. Again, imagine that for some reason each element in the series is destroyed after creation in order to be adequately perceived – suppose, for example, that Bluhm paints each painting in the dark using special varnishes designed to ignite in a few seconds when exposed to light. Finally, imagine that the name given by Bluhm to each element in the series is ‘Dripping of varnish’. I assume that, also adding these three conditions, we would continue to identify the works with the ninety concrete particular paintings rather than with any kind of type.

Now, substitute Gualtiero Marchesi for Norman Bluhm. Marchesi is the first class chef who famously created a dish, *Dripping of fish*, inspired by Pollock’s *Number 8, 1949* – and visually appearing very similar to it – in 2004, using liquid yellow mayonnaise, liquid green mayonnaise of chlorophyll, tomato sauce, black sauce of squid ink, calamari and coquina clams. Marchesi has prepared *Dripping of fish* until his death in 2017.

We can easily interpret Marchesi as having produced from 2004 to 2017 a series of  $n$  concrete particulars, each called ‘Dripping of fish’, just like Bluhm produced in the nineties a series of ninety concrete particulars, each called ‘Dripping of varnish’, in our imaginary situation. Like each element in Bluhm’s series, also each element in Marchesi’s series was destroyed soon after being brought into existence (as we all know, cooking is special in that each concrete particular is usually necessarily destroyed soon after production, either by the one person that has a full experience of it or by natural decay.)

My claim is that, if we identify the pictorial work(s) created by Bluhm with each of the ninety concrete particular paintings he physically produced, we should also identify the culinary work(s) created by Marchesi with each of the  $n$  concrete particular dishes he prepared. In fact, also in the Marchesi case we cannot dismiss any property possessed by each concrete particular as contingent.

We might add one consideration: if culinary works were not doomed to early destruction and could be gustatively experienced by infinitely many people without being dissolved, Marchesi would likely have produced just *Dripping-of-Fish<sub>1</sub>* – or at most a few more variations, as painters happen to do – and then would have moved on (Bacchini, 2018). In this case, it would have been only

natural for us to identify Marchesi's culinary work(s) with the one concrete particular *Dripping of fish*<sub>1</sub>. But now it is more evident that we should identify his culinary work(s) with each of the  $n$  concrete particulars called 'Dripping of fish' that he prepared from 2004 to 2017. In a sense, the reason why he produced the series *Dripping of fish*<sub>1</sub>, *Dripping of fish*<sub>2</sub>, *Dripping of fish*<sub>3</sub>, ..., *Dripping-of-Fish* <sub>$n$</sub> , rather than just *Dripping of fish*<sub>1</sub> is only that the original *Dripping of fish*<sub>1</sub> was destroyed in 2004, when someone ate it, and Marchesi replicated it (or, at least, replicated a previously realised *Dripping of Fish* <sub>$i$</sub>  in the series)<sup>16</sup>  $n-1$  times just to let  $n-1$  persons have an experience as closest as possible to the one of the person who ate *Dripping of fish*<sub>1</sub>.

One major objection to this position is that, even in the case in which culinary works were not doomed to early destruction and Marchesi had had to prepare only *Dripping of fish*<sub>1</sub>, we could still interpret *Dripping of fish* as a culinary work consisting in a type determined by a recipe, that is, as a culinary work of the first kind. In fact, as I pointed out earlier in the paper, even those culinary works that are *hapax legomenon*, and lack a recorded recipe, can nonetheless be seen as multiply realisable abstract entities whose constitutive properties are fixed by the recipe that their authors had in mind while preparing their unique instance, and/or that they could have written down immediately afterwards.

But the real obstacle here is that, irrespective of its being an edible painting literally or merely metaphorically, *Dripping of fish*<sub>1</sub> seems to fully inherit from its model *Number 8, 1949* the metaproperty of being such that none of its properties *as a concrete particular* can be dismissed as contingent. In other words, if you believe that *Number 8, 1949*<sub>2</sub> is a distinct work from *Number 8, 1949*<sub>1</sub> along the imaginary series of ninety *Number 8, 1949* painted by Pollock, and in the same way you believe that *Dripping of varnish*<sub>2</sub> is a distinct work from *Dripping of varnish*<sub>1</sub> along the imaginary series of ninety *Dripping of varnish* painted by Bluhm (note that this is something you would believe also if Pollock and Bluhm had written down detailed sets of instructions for producing *Number 8, 1949* and *Dripping of varnish*, respectively), you must also believe that *Dripping of fish*<sub>2</sub> is a distinct work from *Dripping of fish*<sub>1</sub> along the actual series of  $n$  *Dripping of fish* prepared by Marchesi. This helps us see why it is irrelevant that Marchesi has actually written down a recipe of *Dripping of fish* or not.

<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the constituents of the series can *evolve*, and their evolution is a further reason for identifying the culinary work(s) created by Marchesi with each of them.

True, Marchesi, his customers and food critics have all invariably referred to Marchesi's culinary work as 'Dripping of fish', thus apparently presupposing the culinary work to be a type. But, the expression 'Dripping of fish' printed on the menu of *Il Marchesino* – Marchesi's restaurant in Milan – can be interpreted as meaning "one culinary work by Marchesi, prepared expressly for you, being a new instance of the type 'Dripping of fish'". Similarly, a museum information brochure may emphasise that "you will admire *Dripping of Varnish* by Bluhm", meaning you will contemplate "one pictorial work by Bluhm, prepared expressly for April 28, 1997, being a new instance of the type 'Dripping of varnish'". Here 'Dripping of fish' and 'Dripping of varnish' do denote a type: but this type is not a work itself. It is a class of works consisting in concrete particulars. A gourmet can declare that "in 2015 I ate an authentic Dripping of fish by Marchesi" – and food critics can criticise the "Dripping of fish by Marchesi" – just as people can say to have seen "an authentic Portrait of the postman Joseph Roulin by Van Gogh" and criticise the "dripping-style painting by Pollock".

There is, however, one difference that demands an explanation. Many people between 2004 and 2017 have been certain to being eating "an authentic *Dripping of fish* by Marchesi" only because they had just been served in *Il Marchesino* a dish named 'Dripping of fish' that resembled *Number 8, 1949*. They did not judge that it was necessary to verify whether Marchesi in person had prepared their dish. And we may agree with them: they have eaten an authentic *Dripping of fish* by Marchesi also if Marchesi was travelling abroad that week. Similarly, we may concede that, if Marchesi gives me his *Dripping of fish* recipe and I strictly comply with his instructions, I have produced "an authentic *Dripping of fish* by Marchesi" in a sense in which you have not, provided that you have just tried to replicate Marchesi's culinary work by conjecturing the recipe. By contrast, you have not seen an authentic dripping-style painting by Pollock if the painting that you have seen has been painted by a person different from Pollock, regardless of whether this person is an assistant to which Pollock delegated the task or not, and regardless of whether this person complied to a set of instructions written down by Pollock or not.

This difference can be accounted for by conceding that, in the Marchesi case, the concrete particulars *Dripping of fish*<sub>1</sub>, *Dripping of fish*<sub>2</sub>, *Dripping of fish*<sub>3</sub>, ..., *Dripping-of-Fish*<sub>n</sub> are not the only culinary works on the table. They are culinary works. But if Marchesi stated a recipe and communicated it – which he certainly did, at least as a set of instructions given to his staff to make them able to serve *Dripping of fish* in his absence – he also brought into existence one



culinary work of the first kind, which his assistants could genuinely realise without his help.

This move has pros and cons. It give us an explanation of the difference sketched above. It also explains how people can think that they can still have an experience of “an authentic *Dripping of fish* by Marchesi” after his death in 2017. And, by allowing that one and the same concrete particular be a work in itself as well as an instance of a different work, possibly by the same author, it presents itself as a clarification of what happens in certain art forms, like for example in jazz, where one musical performance can be both a musical work per se and a new instance of a previous musical work, like a jazz standard, possibly composed by the same artist who is the author of the performance.

One blind spot of this idea, however, is that there is possibly no reasonable principled manner of drawing the distinction, in jazz as well as in any other art form or human activity, between those performances that are *also* works in themselves and those performances that are *only* instances of a work consisting in a type. We might not doubt that the superlative performance of Keith Jarrett’s trio, recorded on July 2, 1985 in Paris, of *Stella by starlight*, a jazz standard which was originally a popular song composed by Victor Young in 1944, *is* a work of art in itself. But why should not this be true of every performance of Keith Jarrett’s trio? And then, why should not every single performance of every jazz artist or group ever be considered as a work in itself? But if this were the case, we would lose the opportunity to judge that “the town band sent by the municipality is just honestly performing *Stella by starlight*: the only musical work on the table, here, is *Stella by starlight* – the band’s performance not being a work on its own”.

Irvin (2013) has tried to offer three singly necessary and jointly sufficient criteria for a realisation to be a work of art in its own right: (1) the features of the realisation are significantly underdetermined by parameters sanctioned in the underlying work; (2) the realisation makes an aesthetic contribution that is not merely perfunctory; (3) those constructing the realisation appropriately make aesthetic decisions that are not simply mandated by aesthetic values expressed by the artist of the underlying work. True, (1) explains well why jazz, unlike classical music, is a field where it makes sense to ask whether one realisation is a work of art in its own right. But how shall we verify whether (2) and (3) are satisfied?

There may be no problem in considering as culinary works per se also some instances of *Dripping of fish* executed correctly by people different by Marchesi

after Marchesi's original Dripping of fish recipe. But how shall we determine if the realisations possess "aesthetic properties that, either in degree or in kind, go significantly beyond what is required by the parameters"? Or, shall it be sufficient that the persons constructing the realisations do sanction them as works in their own right? What if *all of them* do so? What if every town band sanctions its characterless performance as a work of art in itself?

It seems that we must decide which of two uncomfortable consequences to accept. First, we must concede that each single instance of a culinary work of the first kind – actually also each single instance of a culinary work of the second kind – is a culinary work per se. In particular, also each instance of *Mars*, *Bounty* and *Simmenthal* is a culinary work per se. This is tantamount to permit what may seem an ontological inflation of culinary works. Alternatively, we may acknowledge the status of a culinary work only to those instances that do satisfy some specific requirements. But in this case, the cost may be insurmountable incertitude about which instances are culinary works and which are not. Notably, not every element in the series *Dripping of fish*<sub>1</sub>, *Dripping of fish*<sub>2</sub>, *Dripping of fish*<sub>3</sub>, ..., *Dripping-of-Fish*<sub>n</sub> produced by Marchesi in person possibly satisfies the requirement. For example – supposing we are embracing Irvin's criteria – it is possible that Marchesi produced some elements in the series just perfunctorily executing his own recipe. Who knows?

Even within this scenario, however, we can easily conceive a case in which one single instance of a culinary work of either the first or the second kind is beyond the shadow of a doubt also a culinary work in itself. Imagine, for example, that Marchesi realises *Dripping of fish*<sub>127</sub> by both nonchalantly executing his Dripping of fish recipe *and* feeling intensely inspired by the same aesthetic goals he sincerely attributes to Pollock in his way of painting *Number 8, 1949*. We can conclude that, irrespective of whether we acknowledge 'Dripping of fish' to denote a culinary work consisting in a type or not, there are such things as culinary works consisting in concrete particulars.

If this conclusion is correct, it is not the case that all culinary works are types. Some culinary works are concrete edible particulars. The reasons for considering a concrete particular to be a culinary work in its own respect include but are not limited to its metaphysical and aesthetical resemblance to a pictorial work, as in the Marchesi case. Some may better be comparable to different sorts of concrete particulars none of whose properties we can dismiss as non-constitutive, like for example carved sculptures (like Leslie Vigil's cakes, Duan Jianyu's vegetables shaped like animals as depicted in her series of photographs

*For the sake of arguing* (2013), Gaku's carved fruit and vegetables and Taishi Arimur's instant noodle samurai warriors), works of performance art or jazz performances (like the *Risotto Nino Borgese* by Eugenio Boer as modified by an improvised "twist" by Alberto Gipponi, who was hosted in Boer's restaurant one night in 2018), and works of installation art (like Jennifer Rubell's barbecued ribs, with honey dripping on them from a honey trap mounted to the ceiling at the former Dia Center for the Arts building in Chelsea, surrounded by more food spread among three floors and experienced – also gustatively – by visitors of her *Creation* (2009)). Nor must evidence for considering a concrete particular to be a culinary work in its own respect be only analogical. What is crucial is that we do possess strong and unsurpassed arguments supporting the position that it is impossible to dismiss any of the properties of the concrete particular – or, at least, any from one set of properties making the concrete particular necessarily different from any other – as non-constitutive.

Therefore, culinary works come in three flavours: some are types determined by a recipe, others are types chased after by recipes, and still others are concrete particulars. It is even possible to hold the position that, on some occasions, one and the same dish is a culinary work per se, qua concrete particular, as well as an instance of both a culinary work of the first and the second kind. Take, for example, *Peach Melba*. As he himself tells it, Auguste Escoffier (1846-1935), "the king of chefs and the chef of kings", realised *Peach Melba* in 1894 for Victorian era opera star Nellie Melba.<sup>17</sup> The Australian soprano was in London singing Elsa of Brabant in *Lohengrin* at Covent Garden, and became acquainted with Escoffier. One night she sent Escoffier tickets to her performance. The production featured a beautiful boat in the shape of a swan. The following evening, Escoffier presented Melba with a dessert of fresh white peaches dipped in vanilla syrup and topped by raspberry sauce, served over vanilla ice cream in a silver dish perched atop a swan carved from ice. *This* concrete particular, which Escoffier named "pêches au cygne" ("swan peaches"), is a culinary work per se, because the culinary work he created that night of 1894 unquestionably is a partially edible carved sculpture – and carved sculptures are works qua concrete particulars, none of their properties being dismissible as non-constitutive. Moreover, the culinary work he created that night of 1894 may appear to possess as a constitutive property the contextual property of being created expressly to be savoured by opera star Nellie Melba the very night after

<sup>17</sup> Lasserre (2014).

she sang Elsa of Brabant in *Lohengrin* at Covent Garden while riding in a swan-shaped boat – and only the concrete particular Escoffier assembled that night of 1894 possesses *this* contextual property. However, Escoffier later developed a recipe for *Peach Melba*, which he divulged in many ways. This made *Peach Melba* a culinary work of the first kind. Furthermore, *Peach Melba* enjoyed great popularity and became widely liked: many people started preparing *Peach Melba*, or offering their recipe to prepare it, without worrying about the authentic recipe by Escoffier. In other words, *Peach Melba* also became a culinary work of the second kind. Since the concrete particular Escoffier prepared for Nellie Melba that night of 1894 can be considered as the first instance of *Peach Melba* as a culinary work of both the first and the second kind, we have that *that* concrete particular is a culinary work per se, qua concrete particular, as well as an instance of both one culinary work of the first and another of the second kind.

#### 4. On the requirements for being a recipe

It is worth clarifying which is the relationship between a culinary work qua concrete particular, and a recipe. Typically, a recipe of a *particular* culinary work of the third kind can be at best a set of instructions for producing an accurate copy of it. But, of course, making a copy or a reproduction of a work consisting in a concrete particular is not tantamount to making a new instance of the work, which is not able to be replicated by definition. A recipe, then, can only be of help for producing imitations of the work – not differently from how a recipe for painting *Mona Lisa*, consisting in a set of instructions of the kind “leave deliberately indistinct the corners of the mouth and the corners of the eyes, by letting them merge into a soft shadow”<sup>18</sup>, can only be of help for producing imitations of *Mona Lisa*.

In an unconventional sense of the word ‘recipe’, however, it is possible to give a recipe for preparing a particular culinary work of the third kind. For example, the recipe for preparing *Peach Melba* qua the concrete particular brought into existence by Escoffier that night of 1894 can be intended as a set of instructions of the kind “take Nellie Melba, make her sing Elsa of Brabant in *Lohengrin* at Covent Garden in 1894, and make her send Auguste Escoffier tickets to her performance. The night after the show, take Escoffier, six tender and perfectly ripe white peaches, a litre of very creamy vanilla ice cream and...”. *This* kind of recipe has the capacity to pick out precisely *Peach Melba* as a culinary work of

<sup>18</sup> See Gombrich (1950, 330).

the third kind. In the same sense, we may conceive a recipe consisting in a set of instructions such as “take Leonardo da Vinci in 1503 and make him begin working on a portrait of Lisa del Giocondo...” as a recipe able to let us produce the authentic *Mona Lisa*. But unfortunately these recipes become unexecutable just as they become able to be known and specified. If you renounce the goal of preparing one *particular* culinary work of the third kind, however, and you are content to prepare *whatever* culinary work of the third kind, a feasible, very general recipe is available: “First, set up an edible concrete particular, no matter you have materially or contextually transformed it or not, and regardless of whether you did so by following a recipe or not; then, make it impossible to dismiss as contingent any of its properties— or, at least, any from one set of properties making it necessarily different from any other concrete particular.” The second part of the recipe is perhaps not always easy to execute – but consider that possibly the mere cook’s sanction is always a sufficient condition for achieving the result. Finally, if what you aim to prepare is a culinary work of the third kind belonging to a specific group of works, sometimes there is at least one recipe that is not out of your reach. For example, if you aim for a culinary work of the third kind that is an authentic *Dripping of fish* by Marchesi, consider this recipe: “Take Marchesi after 2004, and make him paint as inspired by Pollock’s *Number 8, 1949* using liquid yellow mayonnaise, liquid green mayonnaise of chlorophyll, tomato sauce, black sauce of squid ink, calamari and coquina clams.” Indeed, many people successfully executed this recipe until 2017, when Marchesi died.

Yet we must decide whether this sort of things are recipes at all. There are compelling reasons for denying them the status of recipes. After all, we may not want to concede that “entering one of McDonald’s restaurants and ordering a *Big Mac*” is a recipe of *Big Mac*. Nor may we want to have to say that there are *two* standard and authentic recipes of *Big Mac*, apparently very different from each other (both created by Jim Delligatti in 1967!). For a thing to be considered a recipe, it seems only necessary – but not sufficient – that it be a set of instructions such that its correct execution ends in a dish, i.e. in an edible concrete particular. A plausible additional requirement is that necessarily the person that executes the recipe is more entitled to be recognised as the cook of the concrete particular that the correct execution of the recipe ends in (though, certainly, not as the author of the culinary work that that concrete particular is a token of) than anyone else.

But, on the other hand, we may consider that several genuine recipes do bring into play specific machines, like microwave ovens, liquidisers, immersion blenders and thermal immersion circulators, entrusting them with important steps in the physical transformation of the ingredients during the preparation of the dish. It seems perfectly acceptable for a recipe to refer to this kind of machines.

True, we must establish which is the authentic content of the recipe. On a strict conception, a specific kind of tool or machine (and, speaking more generally, a specific kind of ingredient, object or circumstance) is constitutive to a recipe whenever it is mentioned in the recipe, arguably because the power of the sanction of the author of a recipe is absolute. By contrast, on a liberal conception, a specific kind of tool or machine is not necessarily constitutive to one recipe even if a reference to it is made in the recipe, because what recipes ultimately prescribe is just a sequence of transformations of certain ingredients. So, two different sets of instructions for the production of a dish are two versions *of the same recipe* whenever they require to transform the same proportions of the same ingredients in the same ways in the same sequence, irrespective of their demanding to use different machines or tools to carry out the same transformative tasks.

Each of the two conceptions has its weak spots. The strict conception unsatisfactorily implies that two sets of instructions for preparing *Tagliatelle al ragù* differing *only* in that the first one requires to chop the onion using a knife handmade in Scarperia, while the second one requires to chop the onion using a knife handmade in Pattada, are two different recipes of *Tagliatelle al ragù*.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, the liberal conception seems not to assign sufficient importance to the author's sanction, making irrelevant all of her choices to prescribe specific tools or machines (or, more generally, to state very exactly what is to be used and how) unless the material transformation it is required to make is commonly intended as tool- or machine-specific.

<sup>19</sup> Similarly, an advocate of the strict conception should clarify whether she is ready to really accept, as her position requires, that it is possible for a person to offer a *new* recipe of *Peach Melba* just by taking Escoffier's recipe and specifying that the white peaches must be *perfectly ripe* rather than *ripe* – and, in general, by substituting an expression referring to a determinate with an expression referring to one determinate of that determinate. By contrary, it is trivially true that going in the opposite direction and substituting within a recipe of *X* an expression referring to a determinate with an expression referring to one of its determinables is very likely to produce a new recipe, and notably a new recipe that is no longer a recipe of *X*.

Now, consider kinds of machine little by little more complex, more “intelligent”, and able to carry out longer sequences of consecutive transformations to the ingredients. It seems acceptable for a recipe to refer to such machines, too. On the strict conception, recipe authors have full right to prescribe, for example, the use of the Moley robotic kitchen, a cooking robot launched in 2020, capable to mimic human movements and equipped with two mechanical arms driven by twenty engines: resorting to the machine becomes constitutive to the recipe. On the liberal conception, on the other hand, recipe authors are merely entitled to *make reference* to the Moley robotic kitchen; yet what is constitutive to the recipe is only the material transformations that the robot is required to carry out in the recipe, and that arguably can be carried out otherwise, specifically by human agents. In this perspective, “place ingredients *a, b, c, ..., n* on the table, take the Moley robotic kitchen, and ask it to prepare *Tagliatelle al ragù*” is a version of a recipe of *Tagliatelle al ragù*; but in order to determine *which* recipe of *Tagliatelle al ragù* it is a version of, we should rephrase it by precisely and clearly expressing which physical transformations the robot is supposed to carry out. Indeed, “take the Moley robotic kitchen and ask it to prepare *Tagliatelle al ragù*” is just a label for a sealed black box.

Now consider *this* set of instructions for *Tagliatelle al ragù*: “Take the recipe author’s grandmother, nonna Pina, and make her prepare *Tagliatelle al ragù*”. On both the strict and the liberal conception, the author has the right to make reference to her grandmother. As said, while on the strict conception the use of nonna Pina becomes constitutive to the recipe, on the liberal conception it only makes constitutive to the recipe the kinds of transformations carried out by Nonna Pina, and is tantamount to resorting to a living robot making all the work (getting the ingredients included), or – to say it differently – to a sealed black box encompassing the whole preparation of the dish.

We can call the sets of directions for preparing a dish that are limited to the one instruction to make use of what on a liberal conception is a single sealed black box encompassing the whole preparation of the dish as ‘*black box sets of directions*’. The idea of a black box set of directions is the idea of a set of directions demanding the use of a machine, pushed to the extreme.

Now, if black box sets of directions are recipes (or, versions of recipes) at all, then *particular* culinary works of the third kind seem to admit unexecutable recipes (or, on a liberal conception, speakable though unexecutable versions of unfathomable, unattainable and unknowable recipes); and, culinary works of the third kind of a certain category – such as, for example, those that are authentic

*Dripping of fish* by Marchesi – seem to admit recipes (or, versions of recipes) executable on specific circumstances and/or within certain time frames.

Note that, while (a) our decision to opt for the strict or the liberal conception, and (b) our decision to allow black box set of directions as genuine recipes, or version of recipes, do not really affect the nature of the culinary works of the second kind and their relationship with recipes – except that the number of recipes of the same work can grow exponentially – (a) and (b) have an important impact on culinary works of the first kind. In fact, once we possess and correctly understand the original recipe determining a given culinary work of the first kind, on a strict conception we know all we can know about the preparation of a genuine token of that work. By contrast, on a liberal conception we only know one of many versions of the recipe: much epistemological work is left for discovering alternative versions of the same recipe that we may find more convenient, enjoyable or interesting. In particular, the possibility of discovering ways of preparing a token of the culinary work that do not require our directly interacting with the matter it is made of depends on (b). So, (a) and (b) contribute making culinary works of the first kind *epistemologically very open or very close* entities.

It is also worth noting that a quality of a recipe (say, the sanctioned use of a Danish dough whisk) *only* results in a *constitutive* quality of the culinary work that that recipe is a recipe of (in our case, the quality of “having been prepared using a Danish dough whisk”) provided that (1) the culinary work is of the first kind, and (2) we have adhered to the strict conception.

## 5. Conclusions

I have argued that the ontology of culinary works is threefold. Some culinary works are edible concrete particulars, or dishes. But many others are types. Among these, some are types that are specified by a recipe, while others are types independent of any recipe, that are rather chased after by their recipes. So we have three main categories a culinary work can belong to – and, indeed, three very different kinds of relationship a culinary work can entertain with recipes.

Indeed things are even more complicated than this, at least because we can identify a culinary work narrowly or broadly,<sup>20</sup> and, because the concrete

<sup>20</sup> On a narrow view, the spatial boundaries of the culinary work coincide with the edible matter that can be plated up and served, and its properties are limited to the intrinsic, perceivable physical



particulars that culinary works, or their instances, consist in can (sometimes) be events rather than objects, or perhaps better, occurrents rather than continuants (Simons, 2000) – and in this case, we cannot in the strict sense *eat* them, although we can enjoy them by eating the food that they employ for occurring.

So, regardless of the answer we may want to give to the hard question of whether it is – always or just on some occasions – art, cooking emerges from this analysis as an ontologically very peculiar human activity. While painting, literature or classical music have each a relatively simple, single unitary ontology – and many of these ontologies are recurrent in different art forms – the fact that culinary works come in three ontological flavours, so to say, contributes to offer the picture of cooking as a remarkably extraordinary field whose tripartite ontology is impossible to compare to any other.

But this conclusion is completely wrong. One human activity whose ontology is very similar to the threefold ontology of cooking is architecture, for one thing. While some architectural works are types determined by one architectural design (for example, Tom Sandonato and Martin Wehmann's *kitHAUS*), others are types chased after by many different architectural designs (for example, *trullo* – the traditional Apulian dry stone hut with a conical roof), and finally, still others are concrete particulars, or buildings (for example, the church of Saint-Germain-des-Prés in Paris). Moreover, also architectural works can be identified narrowly or broadly, and can (sometimes) be seen as occurrents rather than as continuants (Bacchini, 2018). Rather than thinking of cooking as possessing a unique ontology, then, we should compare it at least to architecture, and perhaps to other art forms or human activities that show an analogous threefold ontology. This raises new questions: what is that cooking and architecture have in common, and that is not shared by sculpture, classical music or theatre? Can we equate recipes with architectural designs? What are the main relevant differences between these two sorts of things? Why, for example, architectural designs seem much less engaged than recipes in specifying an exact sequence of steps that those constructing the building (the architectural counterpart of a dish) are required to follow? Why do most architectural works seem to be concrete particulars – while culinary works of the third kind are those that are less common – and why are most architectural designs sets of instructions to construct *them*? It is evident that we can splendidly explore further the

properties of the edible matter itself. On a broad view, on the contrary, the spatial boundaries of the culinary work can be much more extended than that, and also, the work can possess much more kinds of properties.

metaphysics of culinary works by contrasting cooking with architecture and going in search of differences. At the same time it seems also very useful to compare cooking with art forms or activities that appear to possess an ontology different from its own, in an attempt to highlight the similarities.

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