

Disputing Taste: the Culinary Arts, Ferran Adrià, and Documenta 12

Until recently, the culinary arts have never philosophically been considered a “high art” in the history of both aesthetics and the arts.¹ Such beliefs are still prevalent in today’s art world, as was seen when matters of taste were disputed over the course of *Documenta 12*—a quinquennial international art exhibition held in Germany—when in 2007, chef Ferran Adrià was invited to participate not as a chef, but as an artist. In the show, Adrià featured his world famous restaurant, *elBulli*, as *Pavilion G*, where his “‘artwork’ was a dinner every night [...] for two people, [who were] selected at random during the 100-day run of the exhibition, and sent off [to elBulli] with airfares and a voucher.”² The selection of Adrià and his cuisine proved to be issues of much discussion and debate over the course of Documenta for a variety of reasons, primarily stemming from the misconception that food cannot inspire the same type of critical thought as the fine arts, and as such, is a subject unfit for the art-historical discourse.³

This paper will address the scholarly criticisms of Pavilion G, some of which philosophically argue against the artistic worthiness of the culinary arts. Specific dishes—or

¹ Though this paper will not directly address this issue, it is nevertheless interesting to note that the gustatory use of food has been dismissed and neglected in the study of aesthetics (which was initially developed as a means to study how one’s bodily senses perceived and interpreted the world) even though it provokes the use of several of one’s senses (as opposed to merely sight for painting or hearing for music, each of which is only making use of one of the senses). For more on the controversy surrounding the gustatory use of food in the arts, see (among many others): St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (1265-73), Ia 2ae 27, 1; Georg W. F. Hegel, *Introduction to Aesthetics* (1820), translated by T.M. Knox (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1977), 38-39; D. W. Prall, *Aesthetic Judgment* (New York, N.Y.: Thomas Y. Crowell C., 1929), 57-75; Monroe Beardsley, *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis, I.N.: Hackett, 1987), 98-99, 111; and Elizabeth Telfer, *Food for Thought: Philosophy and Food* (London, U.K.: Routledge, 1996).

² Joanna Pitman, “Yum, Yum: Love the Mousse. But is it Art?” *Spectator Magazine* vol. 310, no. 9437 (July 11, 2009): 16, accessed December 28 2013, <http://www.spectator.co.uk/features/3755658/yum-yum-love-the-mousse-but-is-it-art/>.

³ For more on the Documenta controversy, see: John Carlin, “If the World’s Greatest Chef Cooked for a Living, he’d Starve,” *Observer Food Monthly* vol. 69 (December 17, 2006): 40-5, accessed October 22, 2013, <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/foodmonthly/futureoffood/story/0,,1969713,00.html>; and Jay McInerney, “It was Delicious while it Lasted,” *Vanity Fair Magazine* vol. 52, no. 10 (October, 2010): 170-5, accessed October 22, 2013, <http://www.vanityfair.com/culture/features/2010/10/el-bulli-201010>; and Graham Keeley, “Is Food Art? El Bulli Chef Creates a Stir,” *Independent*, May 16, 2007, sec. Europe, p. 19; and Anton Vidokle, “Art without Artists?” *e-flux* vol. 16 (May, 2010): 1-9, accessed October 22, 2013, http://worker01.e-flux.com/pdf/article_136.pdf.

“tasting sensations” as some prefer to call them—offered at Pavilion G will be used as examples, in order to keep my research grounded within the original artistic context in which they were featured at Documenta.⁴ To demonstrate the artistic worthiness of the culinary arts, Immanuel Kant’s notion of genius and the first *four moments* from his *Critique of Judgment* will be discussed—where he establishes a set of stringently objective criteria used to designate beautiful art—to justify that Adrià’s creations are products of artistic genius, and can therefore be objects of both good gustatory and aesthetic taste, ultimately proving that matters of taste can be disputed. Kant’s rhetoric will be used to counter his own argument, and attest to the many similarities shared between the culinary and visual arts. By making use of the philosopher’s text, I hope to lend further credibility to my argument by demonstrating that established aesthetic theory is applicable to Adrià’s practice, and as such, his body of work can be approached the same way one would use such texts in an artistic context.

Having been referred to not only as an artist, but also “[an] inventor, scientist, designer, philosopher and stage director,” Adrià was the executive chef and co-owner of “the world’s most creative restaurant,”⁵ the renowned elBulli, located along the Spanish Mediterranean coast just outside of Barcelona.⁶ Praised for its stellar food and excellent dining experience, a dinner at elBulli “[involved] all the senses, it [engaged] the mind, and [was] also, at times, a strangely emotional experience.”⁷ The style of cooking which has become synonymous with such cuisine has typically—albeit mistakenly—been referred to as *molecular gastronomy*, a style of avant-garde cooking known for its scientific application of chemistry and physics as a means of

⁴ Ferran Adrià, *Documenting Documenta*, written and directed by David Pujol, aired December, 2011 (Girona, Spain: Visual13, 2011): 7:20, digital, accessed February 8, 2014,

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pdo_p4t5dIs&feature=youtu.be, quoting Richard Hamilton.

⁵ Adrian Searle, “Should I Eat it or Frame it?” *Guardian*, September 14, 2008, p. 4, accessed November 1, 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2008/sep/15/foodanddrink.restaurants>.

⁶ Carlin, “If the World’s Greatest Chef Cooked for a Living, he’d Starve,” 40.

⁷ Searle, “Should I Eat it or Frame it?” 5.

restructuring and recreating food. Such a label, however, does not represent any specific genre of cuisine, since “all cooking is molecular, [...] in the sense that it involves altering the molecular structure of various substances, usually through the application of heat.”⁸ So in theory, all cooking is really *molecular gastronomy*. Chefs who study this genre are more aptly known as those who practice *modernist cuisine*, with the leading proponent of this movement being Adrià.⁹

In the early 1990s, the Catalan chef understood this cooking style’s potential of furthering the culinary arts and adopted it as his own.¹⁰ Through his use of seemingly futuristic ingredients and cooking equipment, he sought to enchant his guests’ palates, as well as to induce emotional reactions and stimulate all of the bodily senses,¹¹ including “[the] sense of disbelief.”¹² Over the course of his career, Adrià’s never-ending quest to find the anatomy of the perfect bite continually baffled his guests’ expectations of what cookery, or indeed food, could be. Having stated that he “wanted to make people think and reflect,”¹³ his restructuring of food was “a conscious attempt to break up all the conventions that [the diner had] assimilated. [His guest

⁸ Colman Andrews, *Ferran: the Inside Story of el Bulli and the Man who Reinvented Food* (New York, N.Y.: Gotham Books, 2010), 176; and Gerry Dawes, “Over the Foaming Wave,” *Food Arts* (September, 2008): 73-4, accessed November 1, 2013, <http://www.foodarts.com/people/food-artist/1189/over-the-foaming-wave>.

⁹ For more on Molecular Gastronomy as a culinary discipline, see: Hervé This, “Food for Tomorrow? How the Scientific Discipline of Molecular Gastronomy Could Change the Way we Eat,” *EMBO Reports* vol. 7, no. 11 (2006): 1062-6, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/sj.embor.7400850>, and “Molecular Dishes and Exploring Culinary ‘Precisions’: The Two Issues of Molecular Gastronomy,” *British Journal of Nutrition* vol. 93, supplement S1 (April, 2005): S139-46, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1079/BJN20041352>, and “Molecular Gastronomy is a Scientific Discipline, and Note by Note Cuisine is the Next Culinary Trend,” *Flavour* vol. 2, no. 1 (2013): 1-8, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/2044-7248-2-1>; Sophia Roosth, “Of Foams and Formalisms: Scientific Expertise and Craft Practice in Molecular Gastronomy,” *American Anthropologist* vol. 115, no. 1 (March, 2013): 4-16, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1433.2012.01531.x>; Jaime Friel Blanck, “Molecular Gastronomy: Overview of a Controversial Food Science Discipline,” *Journal of Agricultural & Food Nutrition* vol. 8, no. 3 (2007): 77-85, http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J108v08n03_07; Davide Cassi, “Science and Cooking: the Era of Molecular Cuisine,” *EMBO Reports* vol. 12, no. 3 (March, 2011): 191-6, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/embor.2011.18>; and Grace Yek and Kurt Struwe, “Deconstructing Molecular Gastronomy,” *Food Technology* vol. 62, no. 6 (June, 2008): 34-43, accessed October 31, 2013, <http://www.smsu.edu/academics/programs/culinology/news/0608featgastronomy.pdf>.

¹⁰ Andrews, *Ferran*, 175-7; and Friel Blanck, “Molecular Gastronomy,” 82.

¹¹ Yek and Struwe, “Deconstructing Molecular Gastronomy,” 36.

¹² Arthur Lubow, “A Laboratory of Taste,” *New York Times Magazine*, August 10, 2003, p. 38, accessed October 31, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/10/magazine/a-laboratory-of-taste.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>; and Yek and Struwe, “Deconstructing Molecular Gastronomy,” 36.

¹³ Susie Rushton, “Bullì for Him: Ferran Adrià on why he’s the World’s Greatest Chef,” *Independent*, October 25, 2007, p. 2, accessed October 24, 2013, <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/food-and-drink/features/bullì-for-him-ferran-adrià-on-why-hes-the-worlds-greatest-chef-395311.html>.

thought] a certain food was going to taste like this, and then it turned out to taste like something else [...] - it was an attack against [the diner's] wishes and expectations.”¹⁴ The visual presentation of Adrià’s creations forced his guests to rely on preconceived notions as to what that dish would taste like; and it was not until physically interacting with the food that the diner came to the realization that its taste or texture was not what the mind had made it out to be. Adrià’s familiarity with this genre of avant-garde cuisine, coupled with his deliberate control of the human senses, allowed him to psychologically and aesthetically alter the act of eating.

The philosophical basis for his genre of cuisine is what he refers to as *culinary deconstruction*,¹⁵ which “involves the breaking down of familiar dishes into their constituent parts, changing the physical identity of at least some of those parts, and then reassembling the pieces in new ways, so that the dishes take on different forms while retaining sensory connections with their [original] models.”¹⁶ A fitting example of Adrià’s deconstructivist approach was his *Dashi Jelly with Miso Caviar* [fig. 1], in which he dismantled a staple Japanese dish into its most basic elements, and then interpretively reconstructed it back into its initial form, thereby differentiating it from the original composition but still preserving its essence. Such boldly inventive dishes have been described and hailed by critics as “playful, amazing, and frightening,” and earned Adrià the reputation for providing his diners with an ability to approach food intellectually.¹⁷ Due in part to such dishes, some considered a dinner at elBulli to be comparable to the aesthetic experiences that are felt in certain works of art, and that his creations confronted the diner with exploring the outermost boundaries of taste.¹⁸ An unquestionable

¹⁴ Todoli and Hamilton, *Food for Thought, Thought for Food*, 238, quoting Bice Curiger.

¹⁵ Christine Toomey, “A Feast of Engineering,” *Sunday Times*, March 28, 2010, sec. ST, p. 47.

¹⁶ Andrews, *Ferran*, 26.

¹⁷ Rushton, “Bulli for Him.”

¹⁸ Charlotte Birnbaum, “Alimentary School: Charlotte Birnbaum on Ferran Adrià and Futurist Cooking,” *Artforum International* vol. 48, no. 2 (October, 2009): 112.

amount of artistic creativity was involved in conceiving of such dishes, and led several critics to claim that “the most radical of Adrià’s culinary experiments have come as close to serious contemporary art as cooking ever has,”¹⁹ as this was a form of cooking which “addresse[d] itself to our intelligence.”²⁰

The pervasiveness of such comments resulted in Adrià being asked to participate in Documenta 12, a “sort of art world Olympics” held in Kassel, Germany.²¹ The show’s director and head curator, Roger Buergel, explained that he included Adrià because he believed that “to create a new cooking technique was as complicated and challenging as painting a great picture. [...] The work [Adrià] does [is] a new artistic discipline, [he] shows that cuisine should be a new art form.”²² Since he would be featured as an artist—and not as a chef—alongside other internationally established artists, Adrià and Buergel brought the debate of food’s viability as an artistic medium to the forefront of the art world.

Despite never having dined at elBulli, the *Guardian*’s art critic, Jonathan Jones, stated that Adrià’s dishes could never attain the status of “high art” because they lacked the capacity to stimulate the viewer’s mind and encourage the type of critical reflection which arises from viewing fine arts.²³ Jones stated that:

In some banal way, it’s easy to say that food is art. What’s more interesting is to ask whether it can be serious art: can it move us; change the way we see the world; make us think about profound matters? [...] Art is of the mind; it is ethereal. Everything it gives

¹⁹ Blake Gopnik, “Palate vs. Palette: Avant-Garde Cuisine as Contemporary Art,” *Washington Post*, September 23, 2009, sec. Food, p. E01, accessed December 28, 2013, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2009-09-23/opinions/36798315_1_art-critic-elbulli-documenta.

²⁰ Jean-Paul Jouary and Ferran Adrià, *Ferran Adrià and elBulli: the Art, the Philosophy, the Gastronomy*, (London, U.K.: André Deutsch, 2013), 85.

²¹ Carlin, “If the World’s Greatest Chef Cooked for a Living, he’d Starve,” 48.

²² Ibid.

²³ Jonathan Jones, “Food for Thought: Why Cuisine or Couture can never Equal Great Art,” *Guardian Online*, April 21, 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2011/apr/21/food-fashion-art-cuisine-couture>.

us it gives to our brains. Food fails to be serious art because it is trapped in the physical world.²⁴

The core of Jones's criticism appears to derive from that of Kant's rhetoric found in his *Critique of Judgment*, in which he established an objective philosophical foundation for making judgments on beauty, or equivalently, judgments on taste. Kant's argument would not allow for Adrià's dishes to qualify as objects of beauty, and he stipulated that, even before they could be considered as such, beautiful art could only be created by a genius who possesses the characteristics of *originality, exemplarity, inexplicability, and naturality*.²⁵

Kant described originality as a feature that emphasized creativity and innovation as opposed to imitation.²⁶ While such a notion might seem impossible given that nearly all dishes are variations and interpretations of one another, Adrià took the idea of originality to heart and structured his entire culinary philosophy around it. He once overheard a chef being asked what "creativity" meant, to which the response was: "creativity means not copying;" a response Adrià claimed to have "brought about a change in approach in our cooking [at elBulli], [...]" and was the cut-off point between 're-creation' and a firm decision to become involved in creativity."²⁷ From then on, Adrià strove to create dishes that had never before been seen or tasted, effectively deviating from the traditional culinary path.²⁸ This was visible to such an extent, that one

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 2nd ed. translated by J. H. Bernard (New York, N.Y.: Hafner Publishing Co., 1961), 150-1. While Adrià has been referred to as a genius (Andrews, *Ferran*, 13, and 29-30), in the context of this paper, I will use this word strictly in its Kantian sense, devoid of any contemporary connotations and problems associated with labeling someone as such, from this point onward.

²⁶ The person exhibiting this trait must not copy and be "entirely opposed to the *spirit of imitation*"; Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 151.

²⁷ Andrews, *Ferran*, 112-3, and McInerney, "It was Delicious while it Lasted," 172. Additionally, this idea that "creativity means not copying," is one that is "central to the modernist preoccupation with newness, rather than postmodern notions of simulation (Baudrillard, *Simulations*, 1983) and pastiche (Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, 1984)," further attesting to Adrià's quest for originality; see: Isabelle de Solier, "Liquid Nitrogen Pistachios: Molecular Gastronomy, elBulli and Foodies," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* vol. 13, no. 2 (2010): 160, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1367549409352275>.

²⁸ "[Adrià] had the inspiration and the innate ability to reimagine the most basic culinary processes, expanding the vocabulary of the kitchen beyond our wildest imaginations"; Andrews, *Ferran*, 25.

biographer noted: “so as not to copy others, Adrià no longer copies himself, [...]. The signature tune of this legendary restaurant is not [...] the dishes previously served but, on the contrary, the deliberate absence of everything that was presented beforehand.”²⁹

Kant additionally required that a genius’ originality be an exemplary model for others, and in being so, would further the arts by stimulating others into conceiving their own ideas.³⁰ From the outset of his popularity, Adrià became a source of inspiration to all younger chefs.³¹ The seventy-five members of the elBulli staff—many of whom were unpaid interns—came from around the globe to apprentice under Adrià for six-months to try and learn what they could from him; which testifies to the chef’s ability to be seen as an exemplary model for other cooks to be motivated by.³² Further bolstering such a notion is the number of world-class chefs that are elBulli alumni; not only have many of them gone on to open their own successful restaurants around the globe, but six out of the ten world’s best restaurants are currently run by Adrià’s former students. And although he closed the restaurant in 2011 to pursue other paths of creativity, his legacy lives on and continues to influence the culinary world.

Kant further said that a genius must not be able to scientifically explain the thought process behind creating beautiful art, nor can it be explained or taught to others so that they may think similarly.³³ Essentially, the formation of a genius’ ideas must be inexplicable, and it is what

²⁹ Jouary and Adrià, *Ferran Adrià and elBulli*, 79.

³⁰ The products of genius “must be models, i.e. exemplary; and they consequently ought not to spring from imitation, but must serve as a standard or rule of judgment for others”; Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 150-1.

³¹ “Hailed as a genius and a prophet by fellow chefs, worshipped (if often misunderstood) by critics and lay diners alike, imitated and paid homage to in restaurant kitchens all over the world, Ferran Adrià is easily the most influential serious chef of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Quite simply, he has changed the game”; Andrews, *Ferran*, 13. Also, see: Hillary Dixler, “Has Ferran Adrià had a ‘Catastrophic Effect on the Younger Generation of Chefs?’” *Eater* (July 12, 2013), accessed January 4, 2014, <http://eater.com/archives/2013/07/12/has-elBulli-had-a-catastrophic-effect-on-the-younger-generation-of-chefs-1.php#more>.

³² For more on the lifestyles of elBulli’s interns, see: Lisa Abend, *The Sorcerer’s Apprentices: A Season at ElBulli* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2011).

³³ A genius “cannot describe or indicate scientifically how it brings about its products, but it gives the rule just as nature does. Hence the author of a product for which he is indebted to his genius does not himself know how

differentiates the ideas of a lay-person from those of a genius; for, while the average person might be able to describe how the work of art was conceived, the genius possesses such a rare relationship between the mental and imaginative faculties that the thought process cannot be explicated.³⁴ Though Adrià could scientifically illustrate the dish itself, it is difficult to explain how he came up with the conceptual bases for dishes, such as *Dashi Jelly and Miso Caviar*, a dish which had never been invented in the history of the culinary arts, and prompts one to ask: how did the chef conceive of it, and how does one think of creating a new identity for an ingredient? Throughout his career, Adrià had the opportunity to see many ingredients used in a variety of manners, and was somehow able to synthesize these pieces of information and combine their compelling features to concoct his own signature creations.³⁵ While the chef's influences can be ascertained, the process as to how he envisions his ideas remains baffling.

Finally, Kant argued that the medium of genius is governed by the rules of nature, referring to an abstract concept of some unknown, but innate characteristic.³⁶ Essentially, the imaginative and cognitive faculties which work together to spur the genius' thought process are controlled by a rare, intangible, and natural quality.³⁷ Adrià did exemplify such a trait, as he was able to produce ideas—which no chef prior to him had been able to think of—that were

he has come by his Ideas; and he has not the power to devise the like at pleasure or in accordance with a plan, and to communicate it to others in precepts that will enable them to produce similar products"; Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 151.

³⁴ Ultimately, the inexplicability of ideas is what separates the empirical realm of science from the debatable realm of aesthetics. For example, Louis-Camille Maillard discovered the Maillard reaction (which is the chemical reaction that takes place in food and produces the flavorful, brown crust on the ingredient being cooked; see: L. Robert, J. Labat-Robert, and A.M. Robert, "The Maillard Reaction: From Nutritional Problems to Preventive Medicine," *Pathologie Biologie* vol. 58, no. 3 [June, 2010]: 201, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.patbio.2009.09.004>) in 1912, and while this was a brilliant idea, Maillard could not be considered a genius in the Kantian sense of the term since he was able to clearly explain—to himself and to others—how he arrived at the concept of his scientific discovery. So while Maillard certainly was an intellectual, it is probable that Kant would have refused to refer to him as a genius.

³⁵ Andrews, *Ferran*, 182-3.

³⁶ "Nature by the medium of genius does not prescribe rules to Science, but to Art; and to it only in so far as it is to be beautiful Art"; Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 151.

³⁷ Christian Helmut Wenzel, *An Introduction to Kant's Aesthetics: Core Concepts and Problems* (Malden, M.A.: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 99.

seemingly guided by some greater force, effectively allowing him to add 1846 new dishes to the world's culinary repertoire, thereby demonstrating that he possessed something others did not.³⁸

Now that it has been shown that Adrià exemplifies the four characteristics of a Kantian genius, his creations may now be judged for their beauty. Kant stipulated that the beautiful cannot be an *interested* pleasure, nor possess a *concept* or be *purposive*, it must be *universally valid*, conducive to *free play*, and regarded as an object of *necessary satisfaction*. Within a Kantian framework, it could be speculated that due to food's dietary value, it could not elicit a disinterested pleasure, since eating directly satisfies our body's desire for food when it is hungry.³⁹ But Adrià's dishes could be disinterested since they were not dependent on the viewer having a yearning for them, nor did they produce such a desire.⁴⁰ Furthermore, a judgment of taste did not rest on the capability of Adrià's creations to serve as nutritional sustenance. One Documenta diner noted that "it was not a meal; it was neither dinner or supper, nor was it food, nourishment or sustenance," while another said that it "had nothing to do with fulfilling that primary need."⁴¹ In effect, it was "a gastronomic experience as opposed to a meal,"⁴² such statements serve to testify that judgments in regard to Adrià's dishes were not merely based on his dishes' nourishing capabilities, and as a result could be seen as producing feelings of disinterested pleasure.

And since the caloric necessity was omitted from consideration in Adrià's creations, his food could be seen as having a purposiveness without a purpose, which Kant defined as a

³⁸ Brett Littman, "'Notes' on *Notes on Creativity*: Ferran Adrià and Brett Littman in Conversation," in *Ferran Adrià: Notes on Creativity* (New York, N.Y.: The Drawing Center Press, 2014), 9.

³⁹ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 44.

⁴⁰ Though it could be argued that a customer could long for a specific dish once served at elBulli, thereby producing an interested pleasure, such a craving is ultimately no different than yearning to see a work of art.

⁴¹ Vicente Todoli and Richard Hamilton, eds., *Food for Thought, Thought for Food* (New York, N.Y.: Actar, 2009), 237, quoting Massimiliano Gioni.

⁴² Lynn Houghton, "Roaming Scribe: Ferran Adrià, elBulli and the Art of Food," *Huffington Post U.K.*, July 29, 2013, accessed December 28 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/lynn-houghton/roaming-scribe-ferran-adria-elbulli-and-the-art-of-food_b_3672747.html.

moment when the object of judgment came to the viewer's mind without any specific meaning or role being summoned.⁴³ As the chef's food no longer had an identifiable role as a biological imperative, it was free of concept, as the diner now had to reflect upon Adrià's creations to try and understand what function it now served. It was in searching for these concepts that the minds of Adrià's guests would become engaged in free play. The dishes served at elBulli effectively interacted with the diner's cognitive and imaginative faculties, as was evident in *Dashi Jelly and Miso Caviar*, since it did not provide any definitive visual cues as to its true identity. This *trompe l'oeil*—or *trompe bouche*—initially appeared to be sturgeon caviar; this was achieved not only through the visual appearance of the translucent, dark pearls—which aesthetically mimicked caviar—but also by having placed them in a caviar tin. Resultantly, the diner's mind was playfully tricked into thinking that the dish would taste salty and briny—similar to caviar—but it was not until the pearls were placed into the mouth, bitten into, and savored, that the diner noticed the lack of salty brininess and recognized the caviar to possess unusually fishy and earthy qualities, and understood that it was something other than sturgeon roe. For this dish, the diner had to contemplate and attempt to decipher what the dish was composed of it and how it came together. Involved in this exercise of reflection, the mind had to search for pre-existing models to classify the new flavors or textures; which in turn, required the reshaping of the sensory data associated with it to best fit the mind's already existing concepts to comprehend what it was that was being consumed. The diner's gustatory taste played an essential role in trying to comprehend the dish, since Adrià forced them to actively engage with their rational and imaginative faculties to determine whether or not their dining experience went beyond a mere meal and into a world of pure artistry.

⁴³ Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste: Food and Philosophy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999), 56.

A Kantian argument might dismiss the conclusion drawn from such a judgment, since it appears to be an entirely subjective decision, and therefore could not be an object of necessary satisfaction or of universal validity.⁴⁴ Analyzing the restaurant review industry and its proclamations about the elBulli experience, however, demonstrate that Adrià's creations were capable of laying claim to both terms. As elBulli's restaurant critics were presumably judging disinterestedly—and are ostensibly well versed in matters of taste—in evaluating their experience, they likely used a set of objective criteria and empirical means which permitted them to render their verdict. Considering that Adria continuously earned three Michelin stars from 1997 until the restaurant's closing, and that critics bestowed elBulli with the prestigious title of "World's Best Restaurant" on five separate occasions, show that Adrià's dishes were able to claim at least critical consensus—a version of near universal validity.⁴⁵ In taking their judgment of taste to be universally valid, these reviewers anticipated that everyone *ought* to share their sense of pleasure derived from the meal, thereby indirectly showing that everyone *ought* to find the elBulli experience pleasurable, and of a necessary satisfaction.

In conclusion, I am positing that Adrià possesses the requisite characteristics to be considered a genius according to Kant's criteria from the *Analytic of the Beautiful*, and that the chef's creations should be regarded as beautiful objects since they have been found to meet the requirements of the philosopher's four moments, effectively refuting Jones' criticism. Having stated that he "wanted to make people think and reflect," Adrià was undeniably able to do so and successfully blurred the definitions of what both cookery and food could be.⁴⁶ As the many reviews of elBulli suggested, Adrià's restaurant not only served excellent food paired with

⁴⁴ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 54, 77.

⁴⁵ elBulli, "Prizes and Awards: List of Prizes Awarded to Ferran Adrià, Juli Soler, Albert Adrià y elBulli," 2013, accessed October 22, 2013, <http://www.elbulli.com/premios/index.php?lang=en>.

⁴⁶ Rushton, "Bulli for Him."

exceptional service, but he also succeeded in heightening his guests' dining experiences by getting them to critically think about the concepts behind his creations, thereby truly differentiating and setting himself apart from other restaurants.⁴⁷ Effectively, he forced those who study food in any capacity to re-examine its history as a means of better understanding why and how the culinary arts came to be. Ultimately, it would appear as though Adrià's genre of gastronomy should be held in higher artistic regard, as it is possible to reconcile the discussion concerning the chef's artistic practice within the contemporary art-historical discourse, since it is clear that the experience and dishes offered at Pavilion G were capable of meeting Kant's rigorously objective conditions for being beautiful works of art, and for being of both good aesthetic and gustatory taste.



Figure 1: Dashi Jelly with Miso Caviar, 2007

⁴⁷ Sue Woodward, "World's Best Restaurants 2009 List," *World's 50 Best Restaurants*, 2013, accessed October 22, 2013, <http://www.theworlds50best.com/list/past-lists/2009/>; and elBulli, "Prizes and Awards."

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