

There is no way to separate my appreciation of Priscilla Ferguson as an intellectual and as a friend. She understood both the codifying privilege of rules and the creative genius of rule breakers (see: French cuisine), wrote about French intellectuals and social movements without jargon or ideological cant (Pierre Bourdieu, *l'Action française*), and underlined the importance of women culture makers in fields where they were historically devalued (cooks vs. chefs). She loved the refinements of an excellent meal while relishing the symbolic significance of a pot au feu. During years of meeting for lunch at various *bonnes tables* in New York, within the bounds of food allergies and tastes, she humored me by agreeing to eat soba—once—although this meal took place at a soba restaurant owned by Jean-Georges Vongerichten.

I loved listening to Priscilla talk about her food experiences. Recipes, food products, restaurants, and of course the vagaries of tastes were the fields in which she excelled. We first met in the early 1990s on a panel about food at a sociology conference, and we bonded over a love of meals we had eaten in France, which translated almost immediately into a shared ambition to understand the evolution of French cuisine. This led us to collaborate on a research project to compare the careers of French-born and U.S.-born chefs in New York, just when French cuisine's grasp of global hegemony was beginning to loosen and chefs who made their careers outside "the hexagon" were able to retain professional legitimacy. It was also a moment when chefs still stood somewhat hesitantly at the threshold of stardom. Daniel Boulud, David Bouley, Jean-Georges himself: these and other chefs who were written up in the food media but whose celebrity was not yet assured granted us long interviews. To our delight, they also brought us into their restaurant kitchens. Although colleagues assumed we were eating our way through the research, we scrupulously refused to accept anything more than a cup of coffee, well, espresso or, in Priscilla's case, a macchiato. She interviewed Gilbert Le Coze of Le Bernardin before he died and spoke often of that meeting; she was intrigued as well by the careers of women chefs who were just beginning to attract investors and starred reviews.

Priscilla leavened our collaboration with her extensive knowledge of the intertwined histories of French culture and cuisine. That kept us talking throughout our lunches, and we endlessly planned to bring our research up to date by interviewing new generations of chefs. Priscilla received even the wildest ideas with enthusiasm tempered by dry wit. Even if she didn't share some of those ideas, she always offered support.

Alas, our ambitions for collaboration were pushed aside by other work. Priscilla was very much in demand for talks and articles on French cuisine on both sides of the Atlantic. She translated the work of Pierre Bourdieu. She also developed serious expertise in roses and chocolate, material things that fascinated her, I think, as much by their histories and personalities as by their sensuous qualities. Their beauty offered her a permanent puzzle of embodied capital, a study in the sociology of everyday life that she took seriously both inside and outside the classroom.

Priscilla had other competences that I could only admire. When I met her, she jogged and could set up her own computer. She was an accomplished gardener and the first reader her husband, Robert Ferguson, turned to for criticism and advice. She tirelessly cared for him during his last illness. Her generosity and modesty, her ability to speak eloquently in a quiet voice, were rare in this time and will be greatly missed.

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