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SEMIOTICS OF FOOD: POSTMILLENNIAL MEDIA – DISCOURSES WHERE GLOBAL AND INTERNATIONAL MEET NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL

Academic textbook

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The academic textbook is intended for university students of cultural studies, media and communication studies, food studies and philology. It is focused on an analysis of food representation in 21st century mediated discourses. The theoretical and methodological approaches used in the textbook are based on semiotics and the author foregrounds content analysis and discourse analysis while reflecting on recent debates about the interactions of globalisation, internationalisation, nationalisation, regionalisation, and localisation of foodways.

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INTRODUCTION

"The discovery of a new dish
does more for the happiness of
the human race than the discovery of a star."
Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin

'Food sells' – a simple statement that appears repeatedly in modern marketing handbooks and manuals but which has also begun to appear more recently in academia. And while experts on publicity and advertising have begun to admit that they it may come to replace the formerly dominant slogan 'Sex sells', scholars still need to come to terms with the growing interest in food studies at universities. The acceptance of the situation in American universities, where, as one of the leading voices in food studies Warren J. Belasco has pointed out, "[s]students-undergraduates and postgraduates alike-love to study food, and their market demand encourages an increasing supply of instructors, books, courses" [Belasco 2015: x] is gradually becoming more established in Europe and Asia and has created the basis for serious food scholarship.

Over the last 30 years, the multidisciplinary character of food studies has produced interesting, attractive, and stimulating research which have been reflected in the intriguing topics of students' theses, several series' of books from prestigious publishing houses, new interdisciplinary journals, regularly international conferences, and academic websites for new generations of food researchers. All of these academic efforts prove that both the spectrum of food studies' interests and the depth of the research into these topics have grown immensely. Credit must also be given here to various types of food media that have

contributed to a large degree to the popularisation of food in the contexts of its preparation and consumption.

In the last decade numerous scholars have directed their attention to aspects of their disciplines that are connected to the globalisation and internationalisation of food as well as the more recent trends of the nationalisation, regionalisation and localisation of food – tendencies which are obviously elements of somewhat contradictory paradigms. Humanities and social sciences scholars study the ways in which these tendencies confront each other in the production, distribution, consumption and representation of food using historic, political, sociological, and cultural studies perspectives, all of which can offer valuable insights into the relationships between food and identity. And once again, the role which the media in general and of food media in particular play in these processes cannot be underestimated.

Some of the most visible results of these research endeavours can be found in the following academic publications of the past five years: *Food, National Identity and Nationalism: From Everyday to Global Politics* (Ichijo, Ranta, 2015), *A Taste of Power: Food and American Identities* (Vester, 2015), *The Globalization of Asian Cuisines* (Farrer ed., 2015), *Ethnic American Food Today: A Cultural Encyclopedia* (Long ed., 2015), *Food and the City: Histories of Culture and Cultivation* (Imbert ed., 2015), *Food and Power in Hawai'i: Visions of Food Democracy*:*Food in Asia and the Pacific* (Kimura, Suryanata eds., 2016), *Japan's Cuisines: Food, Place and Identity* (Rath, 2016), *How Canadians Communicate VI: Food Promotion, Consumption, and Controversy* (Elliott ed., 2016), *Urban Foodways and Communication: Ethnographic Studies in Intangible Cultural Food Heritages around the World* (Lum, Le Vayer eds., 2016), *The Immigrant Kitchen: Food, Ethnicity, and Diaspora* (Halloran, 2016), *Globalized Fruit, Local Entrepreneurs: How One Banana-Exporting Country Achieved Worldwide Reach* (Southgate, Roberts, 2016), *Fast Food Globalization in the Provincial Philippines* (Matejowsky,

2017), *Good Food, Strong Communities: Promoting Social Justice through Local and Regional Food Systems* (Ventura, Bailkey eds., 2017), *Steeped in Heritage: The Racial Politics of South African Rooibos Tea* (Ives, 2017), *Knowing Where It Comes from: Labeling Traditional Foods to Compete in a Global Market* (Parasecoli, 2017), *Representing Italy through Food* (Naccarato, Nowak, Eckert eds., 2017), *Eating Traditional Food: Politics, Identity and Practices* (Sebastia ed., 2017), *Postcolonialism, Indigeneity and Struggles for Food Sovereignty: Alternative Food Networks in the Subaltern World* (Wilson ed., 2017), *Making Local Food Work: The Challenges and Opportunities of Today's Small Farmers* (Janssen, 2017), *Authentic Italian: The Real Story of Italy's Food and Its People* (Maio, 2018), *Global Jewish Foodways: A History* (Diner, Cinotto eds., 2018), *How the Shopping Cart Explains Global Consumerism* (Warnes, 2018), *Devouring Japan: Global Perspectives on Japanese Culinary Identity* (Stalker ed., 2018), *Nourishing the Nation: Food as National Identity in Catalonia* (Johannes, 2019), *Traveling with Sugar: Chronicles of a Global Epidemic* (Moran-Thomas, 2019), *Global Meat: Social and Environmental Consequences of the Expanding Meat Industry* (Winders, Ransom, 2019), *Global Food Security: What Matters?* (Zhou, 2019), *Culinary Nationalism in Asia* (King ed., 2019), *Counter-Cola: A Multinational History of the Global Corporation* (Ciafone, 2019), *The Emergence of National Food: The Dynamics of Food and Nationalism* (Ichijo, Johannes, Ranta eds., 2019), *The Globalization of Wine* (Inglis, Almila, 2020), *Black Food Matters: Racial Justice in the Wake of Food Justice* (Garth, Reese, 2020), *Feeding the Hungry: Advocacy and Blame in the Global Fight against Hunger* (Jurkovich, 2020), *Identity and Ideology in Digital Food Discourse* (Tovares, Gordon eds., 2020), *Canadian Culinary Imaginations* (Boyd, Barenscott, 2020), *Fields of Gold: Financing the Global Land Rush* (Fairbairn, 2020), *The Fruits of Empire: Art, Food, and the Politics of Race in the Age of American Expansion* (Klein,

2020), *Sameness in Diversity: Food and Globalization in Modern America* (Jayasanker, 2020), *The Rise of Food Charity in Europe* (Lambie-Mumford, Silvasti eds., 2020), and in many other publications.

This academic textbook is designed for university students and can be used in courses about or related to food, media, communication, social institutions within study programmes of philology, cultural studies, media and communication studies and food studies. It summarises the main trends and tendencies in the intersections of cultural studies, media studies and food studies as they stand at the end of the second decade of the 21st century. Semiotics serves as the foundation for the content and discourse analyses of the representations of food in contemporary mediated discourses. The individual chapters of the textbook attempt to address and analyse food and its identity-formation and identity-representation potential and its position as the most visible mediated phenomenon in the context of globalisation, internalisation, nationalisation, regionalisation and localisation.

Each chapter contains a glossary of concepts necessary for an understanding of the theoretical and methodological foundations of individual themes, a theoretical background that serves as an essential reading section with an overview of the theme, a sample analysis of a text that exemplifies the theme, study questions which allows students to develop the theme further through discussion, analysis or additional reading, and a bibliography divided into the works cited in the chapter and a section with recommendations for further reading.

In the first chapter, 'What is Food Studies?', the rise and development of food studies as a discipline and its emergence into the scholarship of the humanities are outlined.

The second chapter, 'Why is there so much food in media?', provides the cultural, social and technological contexts for the explanation of the extensive food mediation.

The third chapter, 'Who needs new media literacy?', is centred on the contextualisation of changing and emerging paradigms of the new

millennium and the tendencies of globalisation, internationalisation or transnationalisation, nationalisation, regionalisation, and localisation.

Chapter Four, 'Where do consumers eat?', analyses the consumer behaviour and consumer food-related practices from a hypermodern perspective.

The fifth and final chapter, 'Which food seasons media the most?', considers how the digimodernist characteristics of foodways contribute to contemporary mediation of food.

The research used in this textbook has been partially supported by VEGAProject 1/0447/20 *The Global and the Local in Postmillennial Anglophone Literatures, Cultures and Media,* granted by the Ministry of Education, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic.

The author is a research collaborator in the University of the Balearic Islands' Research Group in British and Comparative Cultural Studies (BRICCS).

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CHAPTER ONE
WHAT IS FOOD STUDIES?

"The shared meal elevates eating
from a mechanical process of fuelling the body
to a ritual of family and community,
from the mere animal biology to an act of culture."
Michael Pollan

Glossary of concepts

COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Communication studies is a discipline that studies "the effects of the mass media on large populations" [Montgomery 2019: 19]. In the USA it focuses on public opinion research, political communication, and advertising, while in Europe it has been more concerned with signification, representation, meaning and ideology [Ibid.].

CONSUMER CULTURE

Consumer culture is a form of material culture. It is enabled by the market that creates a relationship between the consumer and the goods or services the consumer consumes. "[C]onsumer culture represents one of the primary arenas in which elements of social change are played out in everyday life <…> People's relationship to consumer culture is meaningful and reflects, and potentially reproduces, particular values and forms of status" [Kravets et al.2018: xi].

CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analysis is a research method of social science. It aims to determine the presence of certain patterns, words, themes or concepts within text – written, visual, oral. Content analysis can be both quantitative (focused on counting and measuring) and qualitative

(focused on interpreting and understanding) and researchers use it to uncover the messages, purposes and effects of the content [cf. Pettey et al. 2018].

CULTURE

Culture is according to Raymond Williams "one of the two or three most complex words in the English language" [Williams 1983: 87]. "In the social sciences, particularly in anthropology, it means the whole way of life of a people, taken to include not only material artefacts, whether for ornament or practical use, but also myth, rituals, kinship systems and culinary practices" [Montgomery 2019: 28].

CULTURAL STUDIES

Cultural studies is an interdisciplinary scholarship of the ways in which culture creates and transforms individual experiences, everyday life, social relations and power. Cultural studies draws on methods and theories from literary studies, sociology, communications studies, history, cultural anthropology, and economics [cf. Grossberg 2010; Storey 1996].

DISCOURSE

In a narrower sense, discourse is "the organisation and patterning of language beyond and between sentences (or utterances)" [Montgomery 2019: 37]. It is the verbal interchange of ideas, i.e. a conceptual generalisation of conversation, connected speech or writing. In the understanding of contemporary social scientists, discourse is used as a more general term for the entireprocess of making sense [Ibid.: 38]. It is a mode of organising knowledge, ideas, or experience that is rooted in language and its specific contexts.

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Discourse analysis is a qualitative research method for studying written or spoken language in relation to its social context. It aims to understand how language is used in real life situations and itis used inboth the humanities and social sciences [cf. Montgomery 2019: 37-39]. Discourse analysis is sometimes defined as the analysis of

language ‘beyond the sentence’. Among the objects of discourse analysis are discourse, writing, conversation and communicative events, and discourse analysis aims to reveal the socio-psychological characteristics of a person –as a speaker or writer – rather than the structure of the text itself [cf. Tannen et al. 2015].

FOODWAYS

The term ‘foodways’ is defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as “the eating habits and culinary practices of a people, region, or historical period” [https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/foodways]. In the humanities and social sciences, foodways are the cultural, social, and economic practices relating to the production and consumption of food and they meet at the crossroads of the perspectives of culture, traditions, and history.

MEDIA STUDIES

Media (mass media) studies is a discipline that deals with the content, history, and effects of various types of media. It embraces the analysis of a range of content industries and also technologies – newspapers, magazines, books, films, radio and television broadcasting, the Internet, etc. [cf. Jackson et al. 2015: 130-137].

REPRESENTATION

Representation is “the use of signs to stand in for and take the place of something else; a sign, image, symbol, statement or text that stands in place of some other aspect of reality so as to make it present” [Montgomery 2019: 106]. Representation therefore means the use of language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully to other people. Media representations are the ways in which the media portrays particular groups, communities, experiences, ideas, or topics from a particular ideological or value perspective.

SEMIOTICS of MASS MEDIA

Semiotics is an interdisciplinary study of signs and sign-using behaviour [https://www.britannica.com/science/semiotics]. The study of mass media semiotics “can help understand how cultural meanings

are encoded into media texts (programs, spectacles, and so on), reflecting specific interpretive emphases that link into meaning systems present in contemporary media culture <…> The power of the semiotic approach lies in the way it interweaves insights and findings from cognate fields in order to unravel the codes present in media representations" [Danesi 2015: 485].

Theoretical background

In 1985 when the *Association for the Study of Food and Society* [https://www.food-culture.org/] was established in the USA, few scholars in the social sciences, humanities or arts believed that food was a serious object of scholarship. However, a topic that was once considered to belong within the academic territories of medicine, biology, chemistry, geography, agriculture, economics has gradually moved into the research focus of sociology, psychology, history, anthropology, philosophy, political science, media and communication studies, cultural studies, literary studies and linguistics, and it has acquired its own status as an independent academic discipline, Food Studies. The research into food that started on the American continent brought its seeds to Europe and Australia first and since then has spread to the educational and research institutions in Asia and Africa.

21st century Food Studies has continued to enjoy rapid growth and has also developed an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary character through its study of foodways. The efforts of the Association for the Study of Food and Society have been joined by other professional academic associations, for instance the *Food Studies Research Network* which was founded in 2011 "to explore new possibilities for sustainable food production and human nutrition, and associated impacts of food systems on culture" [https://food-studies.com/]. Originally concentrating exclusively on the agricultural sector, the *Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society* (AFHVS), a professional

organisation established in 1987, expanded its research interests in the new millennium into “the cross-disciplinary study of food, agriculture, and health, as well as an opportunity for examining the values that underlie various visions of food and agricultural systems. From a base of philosophers, sociologists, and anthropologists, AFHVS has grown to include scientists, scholars, and practitioners in areas ranging from agricultural production and social science to nutrition policy and the humanities” [https://afhvs.wildapricot.org/].

Currently, Food Studies is often centred around individual universities; for example, the Technological University in Dublin, Ireland offers an MA programme in Gastronomy and Food Studies that covers a multidisciplinary perspective of the history, society and practices of food, including the global cultural history of food, food in the media, Irish food and food consumer culture. Another example from the British Isles is the University of London’s MA programme in the Anthropology of Food, a result of the outcomes of the interdisciplinary research of the *Food Study Centre* [https://www.soas.ac.uk/foodstudies/]. Furthermore, the Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh, Scotland offers an MSc. degree in Gastronomy which allows students to engage with the broad range of issues connected with food, provenance, diet, health and nutrition, and to analyse food culture more deeply within the contexts of anthropology, sociology, environmental issues, sustainability, politics and communications [https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/postgraduate-study/2020-postgraduate-courses/msc-gastronomy/].

The continental *European Institute for the History and Cultures of Food* based in France is also connected with the University of Tours and publishes its own multilingual scientific journal *Food and History* [http://iehca.eu/]. The Italian institutions of Palazzo Rucellai in Florence, the Umbra Institute in Perugia, the University of Gastronomic Sciences in Pollenzo, together with Gustolab

International offer degree programmes in food production and consumption, food and media, advertising, science and nutrition, new technologies, and the history of food in global national, regional and local perspectives. In Belgium, a centre of food research is located at the Free University in Brussels.

Numerous academic publishers have turned their spotlight onto Food Studies and we can find books on food and culture frequently published by Columbia University Press, University Press of Mississippi, University of Nebraska Press, University of California Press, University of Illinois Press, MIT Press, Bloomsbury Academic, Rowman and Littlefield, Berg, Earthscan, Routledge, Prospect, and Equinox Publishing. These publications range from food encyclopaedias and readers, through essays on food and culture, gastronomic travel guides, down to culinary specials, and retro recipe books.

The wide spectrum of Food Studies publications is ample evidence of the transformation of this relatively new academic field and the dynamically growing range of elements and perspectives under scrutiny. The books which we may place under the heading of Food Studies all show how the meanings of food can move within different areas of society, define the disciplines of scholars who study these meanings, examine the theories and methodologies they use in their individual approaches and determine the applications which they have in social life.

We may agree with Peter Jackson that food has the potential to serve as a powerful lens through which we can examine wider changes in society – whether at the level of the family, household orthat of the community [cf. Jackson 2009]. Food practices are part of larger practices in the everyday lives of both individuals and also of social groups. While food consumption is a matter that belongs to the private domain, it also overlaps with the transformation of eating habits, trends

in culinary industries, economic and political changes, and technological innovation in the public sphere. Thus any study of food also serves as a means forthe study of culture.

Sample analysis

The text below is a transcript of a speech given by David Cameronat Borough Market in central London on 1 December 2006 titled 'Why food matters' in which he launched the *Slow Food UK* organisation.

Source:
[https://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/599928]

Over the last year I've tried to broaden our political debate. People don't always think about things in terms of government departments and the traditional political agenda. So it's important to talk about what really matters to people in their daily lives, about our society's sense of general well-being. That's why I'm so pleased to have this opportunity today to talk about food. How we produce it. How we cook it. How we eat it. But above all about our attitude to food in this country. I think it's time for an honest debate about the culture of food in Britain, because it matters in so many different ways.

WHY FOOD MATTERS

Food matters to public health, with the impact of rising obesity on the NHS. It matters in education, with the impact of sugary food and drink on children's behaviour and attentiveness. It matters in our family and community lives, as microwave 'meals for one' replace cooked meals around the table with family or friends. It matters to our countryside as small local producers struggle to compete with large multinationals. And it matters greatly to the environment – not least because of the carbon emissions that come from air-freighting food around the world.

RESPECT FOR FOOD

So for all these reasons I think it's incredibly important for us to take food seriously. But that's precisely the problem with the food culture in Britain today. London may be home to some of the world's best restaurants, but as a nation we just don't respect food enough. Too often, we treat it like fuel, shovelling any old food down, any time, any place, anywhere. Instead of valuing fresh, quality food, carefully prepared, the kind of food culture you see in other European countries, we've created a junk food society. Some people say that junk food is at least cheap food. But in truth, it's a false economy. There's a price to be paid for it - in our health, our environment, and our culture. And in any case, it's simply not true to say that fresh, quality food is more expensive than pre-packaged, processed products. But while it doesn't cost more money, it sometimes takes more time. And I think it's important to make time for good food…which is why I'm so delighted to be celebrating the work of the Slow Food Movement today…and the inspirational leadership of Carlo. You've shown that we have the power to take control of the food we eat, and change our food culture.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Because this is above all a cultural issue, it's not something that politicians can deal with just by passing laws and launching initiatives. Food is not just a state responsibility – it's a social responsibility. So today I'd like to touch on some of the ways in which I think our society can do more to create a culture which respects food. There's a role for business, there's a role for government – and perhaps most importantly, there's a role for each of us as individuals.

BUSINESS

Big food businesses, whether producers or retailers, come in for a lot of criticism. Marketing over-processed products, high in fat, salt and sugar, and low in real food content. Insisting on blemish-free fruit and vegetables so that mountains of perfectly good produce are wasted.

Breaking the link between the food we eat and the natural world. Of course, food businesses can argue that all they're doing is meeting consumer demand. That's why consumer pressure is such a powerful force for change. But food businesses have the opportunity, and, I would argue, the social responsibility, not just to follow, but to lead. Many are already doing so, in imaginative ways, whether it's Waitrose encouraging its customers to buy so-called "ugly" fruit and vegetables. Bisto encouraging families to cook and eat a meal together one evening a week through its "Aah Night" marketing campaign or media companies like the Independent on Sunday with its Sunday Lunch campaign to encourage families to eat proper food together at least once a week. I believe passionately that business can be a powerful force for good in tackling many of the biggest issues we face and that is certainly the case when it comes to food.

GOVERNMENT

But government has an important role to play too in shaping our food culture. In our last election campaign, we promised to ensure honest labelling of food to support farmers' markets and local food projects and to insist that all publicly procured food carries the Little Red Tractor Mark that stands for British food with high animal welfare and production standards.But for me, this is just the start. Our Policy Review will be looking in detail at a number of important areas connected with our food culture. Addressing the severe problem of access to fresh, healthy, high quality food in many neighbourhoods. Examining what more can be done to follow through on Jamie Oliver's magnificent campaign on school food.Investigating ways to improve cooking skills, knowledge of food and the basic principles of nutrition. And considering any further measures necessary to control the marketing of food to children not just television advertising, but texts, promotions and sponsorship. Perhaps to some people's surprise, the Conservative Party conference this year voted for further restrictions on marketing to children.It's an interesting sign of how attitudes are changing.

INDIVIDUALS

And in the end, that is what will bring about lasting cultural change – individual attitudes and behaviour. Our social responsibility is also our personal responsibility. Taking time to appreciate food. Buying food locally to support small shops and suppliers. Cooking and preparing proper meals. However busy we are, wherever we live and whatever our income, it's possible to do some of these things, some of the time. Food is one of the great pleasures in my life, and I always try to make time for it. I grow vegetables. I try to buy good food. And I always cook Sunday lunch for my family and friends. None of us is perfect, and I won't pretend that my family and I don't cave in to the temptations of junk food every now and again. But all of us have a part to play in helping to turn our junk food society into a good food society. It's ironic that some of the worst aspects of our food culture come from advances in technology that have helped transform our world for the better. But technology should be the servant of humanity – not our master. Technological progress gives us the opportunity to remove those aspects of life that are painful and difficult and to create greater opportunities for leisure. To focus less on economic survival and more on the quality of our lives. To put it another way, less on GDP and more on GWB – our general well-being. To do that we need time. Yet, despite growing prosperity, many of us seem to lack time in our own lives, time for ourselves, time for family, time for community. And so much of the destruction that we wreak on the environment is because of man's desire to find more time. More speed. More labour-saving. More money-making, to afford more ways of beating the clock and conserving our energy for the things that matter. Sadly, it doesn't always work. We're so busy saving time that we often don't get round to using it for the good things in life. It's time to change that. Let's teach the next generation some of the things that this generation has forgotten.If we do, we'll be

investing in the future well-being of our society in a way that will pay great dividends for decades to come. And if we can all make a contribution to improving our food culture if we can all encourage each other to respect food more then we'll be doing our society a massive favour.

This speech by David Cameron, the then leader of the Conservative Party in the UK, in which he launched the *Slow Food UK* charity organisation at Borough Market in central London on 1 December 2006 is an example of the presence of food in both public and private domains. The elements of food addressed by David Cameron in this speech represent the entire spectrum of Food Studies concerns in the 21st century, proving that food in the new millennium has not only become an object of fascination but has entered all spheres of life, including the practices of highest representatives of political parties.

David Cameron invites UK citizens to transform their junk food society into a good food society. Beginning with broadening political debates into the sphere of food in people's daily lives, and including the importance of food production,preparation, and consumption, Cameron analyses the culture of food in Britain through the following categories: why food matters (obesity, children's behaviour, small local producers competing with multinationals, the environment); the need to respect food (disrespect for food, junk food); and social responsibility (the role of business, of government, and of individuals). Additionally, by blaming technological progress for the worst aspects of the British food culture, he prompts UK citizens to focus more on the quality of theirlives and general well-being.

Study questions

1. Compare the concepts of food culture offered in Michael Pollan's quote at the beginning of the chapter and those in David Cameron's speech. Identify individual common features and differing elements.

2. Read David Cameron's speech and identify the aspects of food in the text that are linked to the following concepts: communication, consumer culture, cultural representation, ideology, individual, kinship, mass media, message, new technologies.

3. Find professional associations, research groups, and universities that deal with / conduct research / offer programmes in Food Studies in Slovakia and other Central and Eastern European countries. What are their Food Studies domains? How do their share their scholarship?

4. Find and analyse British and Slovak political parties' manifestos, election campaign materials published online, public speeches of British and Slovak politicians and government representatives. Do they contain food or food-related issues? What are the contexts in which food is represented in these materials? Compare the representation of food in these materials in the UK and Slovakia.

5. Read one of the texts written by Michael Pollan, a professor of journalism at the University of California at Berkeley, USA, listed in the Further Reading section below, and prepare a presentation of his more complex concept of food culture as presented in the chosen publication for the class.

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CHAPTER TWO
WHY IS THERE SO MUCH FOOD IN MEDIA?

"No one who cooks, cooks alone.
Even at her most solitary, a cook in the kitchen
is surrounded by generations of cooks past,
the advice and menus of cooks present,
the wisdom of cookbook writers."
Laurie Colwin

Glossary of concepts

COMMODIFICATION

According to the online Cambridge Dictionary, commodification means "that something is treated or considered as a commodity (i.e. a product that can be bought and sold)" [https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/commodification]. Commodification is the act of taking an original form of something and commercialising it, i.e. the transformation of goods, services, ideas, people into objects of trade. Examples of this include the products of pop culture, subcultures or food.

CONSTRUCTION in MEDIA

Every media product is a construct. The media do not reflect/mirror reality or elements of reality. They use fragments of reality and produce a construct – for example, a news item, an article in a newspaper, an advertisement or a film. Media products may appear to be natural, actual or objective, but they are the result of a complex process of construction by professionals, such as journalists, editors, marketing experts or designers, and they reflect the ideologies, value

systems, attitudes, and interpretations of those involved in the process of the construction of the mediated reality.

COUNTER CULTURE

Counter culture (also counterculture and counter-culture) is "[a] social movement whose belief systems and norms are defined in opposition to those of mainstream society" [Montgomery 2019: 25]. The most visible examples of the 20th century counter cultures are the Beat Generation in the USA, the globalised movement of the 1960s associated with the hippie subculture, or the punk subculture of the 1970s and 1980s.

CULTURAL MANNERISM

Cultural norms and manners are the habits of culture and society and a member of a group or society can establish their identity and membership in the group through following or respecting them. They are used and/or applied in both public and private spheres and represent various social boundaries, such as class, gender or ethnicity. They incorporate the historic, social and cultural human experiences of various social groups and their codes of behaviour.

CULTURAL NEGOTIATION

The meaning of a media text is negotiated – found in the interaction of an individual with a media text – by audiences in a particular culture or society. Each individual decodes meaning based on various factors, such as age, class, family background, education, religion, gender or racial attitudes. As a result, two individuals can find two entirely different meanings of the messages encoded in the same media text.

FOOD JOURNALISM

Food journalism can be described as a form of special interest journalism that focuses on aspects of gastronomy, for example food production, preparation, consumption and representation. It includes, among others, print and online newspaper articles dedicated to food, newspaper food supplements, food magazines, and the production of

hybrid genres dedicated to food, such as food-focused travel guides or travel documentaries.

POWER

In sociology and media studies power is conceptualised as control, as "the capacity of actors or institutions to influence and constrain the behaviour, attitudes, and options of others even in spite of their resistance" [Montgomery 2019: 96]. The power of media in the 21st century society rests in the fact that media provides audiences withaccess to information and entertainment; they shape an individual's perception and understanding of the surrounding world and influence audiences' behaviour.

SIGNIFICATION

Signification is "[t]he act or process of signifying by means of signs or other symbol systems" [Montgomery 2019: 115]; in order to make and convey meaning, a sign system, for instance a language, is used.Signifying practices can be described as meaning-making activities in which individuals produce/construct or read/interpret texts.

SOCIAL CATEGORY

The online Sociology Dictionary defines a social category as "[a] group of people, places, and things that have commonalities" [https://sociologydictionary.org/social-category/]. These groups share similar characteristics and a sense of unity, such as women, students, nation states or historical monuments. In cultural studies the most visible social categories include the following: age, sex, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality and religious affiliation.

SOCIAL COMMENTARY

Social commentary is a reflection on issues in a society. Its aim is to critically evaluate selected aspects of social life, often with the aim of promoting or implementing social change. In 21st century media, social commentaries appear in various forms, such as an editorial in a newspaper, a report in TV news programme or a blog on Internet.

Theoretical background

Media plays a particularly significant role in the process of shaping a common way of life in postmillennial society. While societies in the past were largely dependent on face-to-face communication, the interaction of individuals in the 21st century is to a large extent performed via media. As has already beenstated above, contemporary media allows people to gain access to information and entertainment, and it can also enable individuals to join in with the everyday practices of others.

The understanding of the concept of mass media has undergone considerable change over the past 30 years, because we no longer see masses of people all watching the same main evening television news programme as it is broadcast on one of the two available television channels – an example of the one-to-many communication model which was typical of 20th century mass media. Mass audiences have become subdivided into smaller groups of consumers of much more diversified media content, and this has led individual media outlets to attempt to fulfil individual consumers' expectations by, for instance, allowing them to choose the films they want to watch from the extensive range available on a content platform (e.g. Netflix), demonstrating the one-to-one model of communication which has become more standard in 21st century media.

The rapidly developing and extensively differentiated new technologies have brought about a change in the classification of mass media types. In the 1960s, Marshall McLuhan had divided media forms into *hot* (high definition) and *cool* (low definition) categories, in which the hot media of print, photographs, radio and cinema were characterised by a more limited degree of involvement of audiences in the processes of signification and interpretation of meaning, and the cool media of cartoons, television, and telecommunications which were dependent on a much higher level of participation on the part of the

audiences [McLuhan 1991]. In the 21st century media environment, however, this categorization has lost much of its foundation. The technological advances have changed the character and functioning options of individual media in many ways, and therefore the division of (mass) media into *old* formats, primarily represented by print (newspapers, magazines, books), radio,broadcast television and cinema, and the *new* forms of the Internet, computerand mobile technologies based media, seems to be more appropriate forthe present circumstances.

If, in Marshall McLuhan's famous phrase [Ibid.], the medium is the message, in present-day culture food itself is a medium. Eoin Devereux argues that "food is a critical medium in the construction of social meanings and relations" [Devereux 2006: 15]. The author developsthis idea further, stating that "[t]he media also construct sociocultural meanings in particular ways, reproducing dominant and other social norms, beliefs, ideologies, discourses, and values in their representations, and influencing the audience who use media representation as a powerful source to understand meanings in the world around them" [Ibid.].

The complexity of the relationship of food and media is evident. Food media contributes considerably to the enhancement of the social and cultural existence of audiences. Recent research has revealed that food media types that previously focused on food itself, such as published recipes, nowadays deal with multifaceted representations of food's sociocultural meanings. The aspects of identity and lifestyle have been foregrounded to prove that food has become more of a medium than a message itself.

Media and food interact in individuals' everyday practices. People's practices of the representation of food in the media converge with their practices of the interpretation of mediated food. These range from using a new recipe from a celebrity chef's cookbook which they have purchased online, reading about the latest health food trends in a local newspaper, through watching cooking contests on television, to

writing a food blog on the Internet and buying a new set of fashionable cutlery. These practices combine mediation and consumption in a complex behaviour that is only possible thanks to the expanding choice of content and the wide-ranging forms of food media.

Food media incorporates food in all of its complexity, dealing with aspects of its production, preparation and consumption while uncovering the facets of its functioning in the contexts of power, representation and commodification. The constant presence and representation of food in media have granted food an extremely high visibility, but at the same time food has fadedinto a phenomenon which goes almost unnoticed in people's lives. 21st century consumers are used to watching cooking as one of the background activities in morning television shows, they no longer pay attention to the many food commercials played on commercial radio, they watch food vlogs about the new restaurant in town online while posting photographs of the meals on their tables taken with their mobile phones onto their social network accounts. Food media occupy such an everyday role in people' lives that it often blends into the background.

Although food media has infiltrated into people's daily routines, it still determines and shapes consumers' identities. Images of food preparation and consumption not only evoke emotions related to people's experiences but they also convey important information about social and cultural categories. Individuals consciously or subconsciously engage in the food discourse of values, social norms, ideologies, and the beliefs of individuals and social groups. Media consumption finds its manifestation in theirown lifestyles and can potentially shape their identities. By subscribing to the ideas, themes, models of behaviour which are observed in food media, audiences subscribe to a wide array of value systems, social statuses and aspirations, religious affiliations, and cultural belongings. The mediated reality of fascinating food-related activities finds its potential representation in the formation of individuals' real identities. The social

commentaries incorporated in food media genres can potentially link to consumers' social reality and their everyday cultural experiences in the complex process of food media signification.

Bruce Pietrykowski develops the idea about the signification of food originally formulated by Roland Barthes [cf. Barthes 2008] by claiming that the "production and consumption of food involves choices that have significant consequences for individuals, communities, and the environment" [Pietrykowski 2004: 311]. As was suggested above, the signification of food is by no means limited to the food itself – to the ingredients, tools and techniques of cooking. The signifying practices of food media embody national, regional and local affiliations, inherited value systems, and social aspirations. The more complex the discourse of food media, the larger the potential for social and cultural transformation.

In 21st century food media, mediated foodways have become part of the pleasurable experiences of individuals of various social categories. One may agree with Qian Gong's claim that "[m]essages about how to prepare, cook, and consume food and how it correlates with certain aspirational lifestyle are magnified through multiple media platforms" [Jackson et al. 2015: 131].

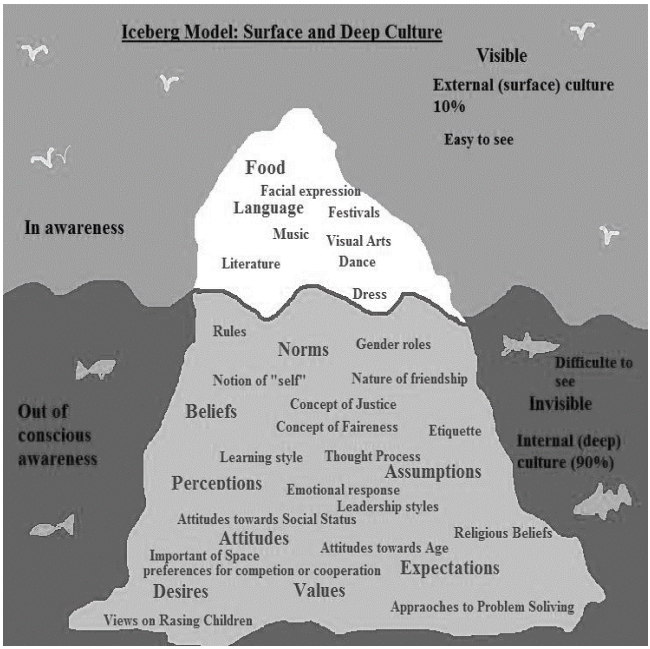
Readers can enjoy the many cookbooks, food-related travel guides and food memoirs which are available in all bookstores in hundreds of variations. Health-conscious individuals use advice in diet books they can buy from e-shops. Both print and online newspapers are full of food-related articles and even the most serious newspapers now include food supplements. *Millennials* enjoy browsing through dozens of food magazines, while the older media consumers of *Generation X* and *Generation Y* listen to and watch food programmes on radio and television, and the most elderly people spend their time watching 24-hour television channels. Millennials and the representatives of *Generation Alpha* can find almost unlimited quantities of food content on online Internet platforms and they contribute to its growth through their own materials which they post on social media. Regardless of

their age and food-related interests, all these members of society are exposed to a constant flow of food advertisements and commercials. By annexing all spheres of human existence and entering all media formats, food has found its readers, listeners, viewers, and new media consumers across all age, social, ethnic, national and interest groups.

Sample analysis

Culture has been compared to various phenomena. In 1976, Edward T. Hall developed the iceberg analogy of culture [Hall 1976]. The figure below is one of many graphic representations of Edward T. Hall's model.

Source:
https://image.slidesharecdn.com/culturalawareness-160527101912/95/cultural-awareness-14-638.jpg?cb=1464344381



Elements of culture which are clearly visible, such as food or clothes, are represented by the upper portion of the iceberg. Elements which are not so obvious, such as the reasons why someone eats or dresses the way they do, are represented by the much larger portion of the iceberg which lies below the surface of the water. According to Hall's analogy, food is an item of culture which belongs to the visible, surface part of the iceberg and thus represents many more categories or aspectsof culture that are hidden in the submerged level of the iceberg [Hall 1976]. In developing the iceberg analogy of culture, Hall suggests that there are features of culture which one can see openly and which appear above the sea level; for example, food, music, language, arts, festivals, literature, holiday customs, flags, games and dress. These features can be called behaviours, i.e. words and actions which are apparent. Those which remain hidden below the surface, not observable directly, represent a more numerous group and can be described as interpretations of how values are reflected in daily practices (for example, values, beliefs, norms, customs, traditions, rules, perceptions, roles and status).

The features which we can see above the surface are only a manifestation of the complex attitudes and values, or formative factors, situated below the surface [Ibid.]. In order to understand what is visible, it is necessary to study the elements underneath. So, if one wonders why there is suddenly such a frequent focus on food and why food has been so extensively mediated in both old and new media from the beginning of the 21st century, we should analysethe changes which have occurred in the private and public spheres, new phenomena which have appeared in the power relations within a given food culture, aspects of transformation in the home and family, and a variety of new identities within the categories of class, gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and others. Mediated food and cooking convey the economic, social, political and aesthetic meanings of their practitioners (agents) in societies signifying individual or collective identities. These are studied

usingvarious methodologies which reveal the complexity of the relationships between culinary practices and individuals' identities.

Study questions

1. What are the relationships between individual items of culture in Edward T. Hall's model that are placed 'above the surface' level? Give specific examples and provide detailed explanations of the relationship between an item of food and all individual aspects and categories located below the surface.

2. Find information about the periods and characteristics of individual generations beginning with the *Generation X* to *Generation Alpha*. Identify which generation you belong to and explain which of the characteristics you embody based on your media consumption habits.

3. How does the media which you consume represent 21st century social reality? In what ways does the media you are a regular consumer of address your needs, expectations and interests?

4. Choose one particular food media product and analyse the complex processes of its construction, signification, interpretation and commodification in detail.

5. Analyse the aspects of identity mentioned in the quotation at the beginning of this chapter. Do any of these aspects correspond with any of the facets of your own identity?

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CHAPTER THREE
WHO NEEDS NEW MEDIA LITERACY?

"Food is everything we are.
It's an extension of nationalist feeling,
ethnic feeling, your personal history,
your province, your region, your tribe, your grandma.
It's inseparable from those from the get-go."
Anthony Bourdain

Glossary of concepts

COMMUNITY

Community is "[a] group of persons bound in any particular instance by a selective combination of shared values, common purpose, ties of kinship, shared goods, shared rituals and/or locale" [Montgomery 2019: 20]. Communities are based on a common location, such as a neighbourhood, village or town; on a common identity, such as an ethnic group or subculture; or on a common organisation, such as the family, an association or virtual community. They may range from very small units, as in the case of the family, to extremely large entities, for example an international association.

CULTURAL CAPITAL

Cultural capital is "[t]he power that accrues to individuals and groups on the basis of the knowledge they hold and the cultural resources they are able to access by virtue of their position within society <…> Perhaps the simplest and most direct form of cultural capital is level of education as expressed in the attainment of particular qualification" [Montgomery 2019: 27].

CULTURAL RITUAL

Ritual is defined by the online Cambridge Dictionary as "a set of fixed actions and sometimes words performed regularly, especially as part of a ceremony" [https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/ritual]. Cultural rituals in the 21st century refer to ceremonies which people perform in both private and public, such as weddings, funerals, religious practices, coronations or inaugurations (of a rector, president, etc.). They are passed from one generation to the next and they are rather resistant to change because they are symbolic in nature.

EATER-TAINMENT

Eater-tainment (also eatertainment or eater tainment) is a form of activity or event that provides pleasure and delight through experiences involving food. Food consumption may occur before, during, or after other activities, for example a music performance with dinner and drinks during the show, or a cinema viewing that allows the audience to consume meals and beverages during the performance. The concept emerged in the 2000s when consumers started showing a preference for experiences over products.

ENCODING and DECODING

Encoding is "[t]he process whereby information from a source is transformed into signs, characters, symbols or other forms of representation for the purposes of communication. The reverse process, whereby signs or symbols are transformed into meanings or information interpretable by a receiver, is known as decoding" [Montgomery 2019: 42]. Stuart Hall stresses that audiences actively decode, i.e. interpret, meaning [cf. Hall 1980].

FOODIE

A foodie (also known as a gourmet or gastronome) is an individual who is deeply interested in food, or for whom food is a hobby rather than a mere biological need, and who actively enjoys food for pleasure. The term was used for the first time in 1980s but it has enjoyed more

frequent usage since 2000 [cf. Barr, Levy 1984, Getz et al. 2015, Johnston, Baumann 2014].

FOOD PORN

Food porn is an extensive visualisation of food in media through food images; for example, images of food in food advertisements and commercials, in cooking magazines, chef shows on television, online food blogs, mobile phone applications or social media platforms. It is often stylised, ornate, aesthetically appealing, and can involve provocative representations of food and drink visualised through photography, designed graphics, and other means [cf. Rousseau 2014].

FOODSCAPE

"[F]oodscapes can be defined as physical, organizational and sociocultural spaces in which clients/guests encounter meals, food and food-related issues including health messages [Mikkelsen 2011: 209]. In general, foodscapes are places in which an individual or a social group obtains, prepares, consumes, and discusses food. Foodscapes can be physical or media spaces.

FRAMING in MEDIA

Framing is the procedure of selecting, focusing, and presenting material in the process of the construction of a media product. "The basis of framing theory is that the media focuses attention on certain events and then places them within a field of meaning. In essence, framing theory suggests that how something is presented to the audience (called 'the frame') influences the choices people make about how to process that information. Frames are abstractions that work to organize or structure message meaning" [https://masscommtheory.com/theory-overviews/framing-theory/].

INTERMEDIALITY

"Intermediality refers to the interconnectedness of modern media of communication. As means of expression and exchange, different media refer to and depend on oneanother, both explicitly and implicitly; they interact as elements of various communicative strategies; and they

are constituents of a wider social and cultural environment" [Jensen 2016: 1]. Intermediality may concern a combination of different modes of media discourse, for example the visual and musical mode in a food commercial; it can also refer to an amalgamation of various types of media in a single final output, for example the use of print and electronic media in a food festival; and it can also describe the interrelation between media and institutions, such as the convergence of old and new media in an online newspaper.

INTERTEXTUALITY

Intertextuality is explained by Martin Montgomery as "[t]he interrelationships between a text and other texts" [Montgomery 2019: 66]. He provides some basic examples of intertextuality, including: parody, reported speech, quotations. According to Julia Kristeva [cf. Moi 1986], every text exists in a creative interplay with other texts. Intertextuality in a media text may be explained as the use of one media text, or its part, in another media text; in the most simplified and reduced form, intertextuality means that one text carries a reference to another text. For instance, a film about the life of a famous restaurant owner can contain a reference to a cookbook, or an advertisement for crockery and cutlery may include a photo of a celebrity chef, etc.

Theoretical background

Media literacy as defined in the last decade of the 20th century [cf. Meyrowitz 1998] did not incorporate the newly emerging and rapidly developing technologies that have since played such a crucial role in re-drawing media landscapes, both in terms of the media products themselves and their consumers. The economic, social, and technological changes have resulted not only in the rise of new media forms such as,for example, Internet based interactive computer games and social media platforms, but they have also caused many changes in the expectations and behaviour of media consumers. New media have

offered new communication platforms for consumers; they have exposed individuals to modified or entirely new media genres; and they have presented new food narratives in both original and new media discourses.

The dominant cultural paradigms of the first two decades of the 21st century have attempted to encompass all of the above mentioned changes and trends and their materialisation in the contemporary media discourses, the latter of which is particularly relevant in terms of cultural and media studies. *Metamodernism* [cf. Rudrum, Stavris 2015], and more specifically *hypermodernism* [cf. Lipovetsky 2005] and *digimodernism* [cf. Kirby 2009], together with *omnivisibility* [cf. Král 2015], *intermediality* [cf. Jensen 2016] and *visualisation* [cf. Rose 2016, Thurlow 2020], are the primary cultural paradigms which, when their significance is fully understood, can lead us towards the introduction of a *new media literacy*.

Postmillennial individuals are constantly exposed to an avalanche of both old and new media products and almost unlimited choices, and they must therefore be able to select and critically evaluate the media messages that surround them. The new media literacy concentrates on media products whose messages are mediated through new digital media channels and which represent various interactive media products and platforms carrying social media networks. And, of course, many of these media products contain a significant portion of food narratives.

According to Gunther Kress, postmillennial individuals need to be new media literate in four traits: the first is social, and it can be characterised by a gradual disappearance of relevant social framings. The second trait is related to the knowledge economy and reflects the evolving demands for information. The third, the communicational trait, focuses on new users and new modes of representation, while the fourth trait is technological and emphases the characteristics of new digital media [Kress 2003: 10].

In 21st century media we can see the development of the totalising *visualisation* processes of food as a cultural element within the postmillennial communicative environment. The visualisation of food should be perceived in the broader context of the visualisation of the image of the individual, an issue which is associated both with the general process of the visualisation of culture and everyday life that has emerged due to technical innovations. Many researchers claim that the central problem of the first two decades of the new millennium is that the visualisation of a person is closely associated with the visualisation of the everyday practices of a postmillennial individual which are themselves the result of technological innovations performed in virtual digital discourses.

Visual semiotic research perspectives of the 21st century embrace visual images as cultural products and see individuals as consumers of these images; experts study how culture influences the practices of visual communication and how visual communication changes cultural practices [cf. Rose 2016]. In both old and new media, food signifies in the construction and representation of social meanings and relations.

The *visual signification* that dominates all postmillennial media discourses places the sociocultural meanings of food above food itself. Identity and lifestyle visual images become more important than the visualisation of food content, and thus the social meanings of food are constructed, presented and represented as self-expressive identities and lifestyles.

Visual discourses of contemporary media communicate, magnify, transmit, and multiply messages carrying food signs of various orders - icons, indexes and symbols but also those of myth and cultural heritage that participate in the formation of the self-image of postmillennial individuals. Food travel documentaries, raw food activist videos, celebrity chef cooking shows, tweets, selfies, food vlogs and other formats all represent new visual food discourses which are gradually coming to replace old food media types. The role of visualisation,

visual communication modes and the multimodality of visual representation all underline the complexity of the approaches used in the analysis of the digital media discourses.

The original and more strictly physiological functions and physical characteristics of food are overwhelmed by its symbolic meaning and social significance, and thus when examining food one has to encompass concepts such as social status, behaviour, everyday practices, emotions, but also the seemingly contradictory trends of the globalisation, internationalisation, nationalisation, regionalisation, and localisation of food as signifiers of cultural identities.

Large media conglomerates in the 21st century are able to reach consumers on a global scale and they operate on a transnational basis. By owning media companies on more than one continent and across different market segments they can respond to the needs of their consumers in different countries and fulfil the expectations of audiences which number in the millions. Due to the possibilities offered by modern digital electronic technologies, the global/translational/ international media can overcome differences in space and time and enable communication and the sharing of content between consumers in Marshall McLuhan's 'global village' [cf. McLuhan 1991].

The globalised media is predominantly based in the USA and Western Europe, and thus the majority of globalised media communication is performed in a West → East direction. Because so much global media content is produced in the USA, the process of cultural globalisation is often paralleled with the process of Americanisation, and in the sphere of food this is represented by the concepts of 'McDonaldization' [cf. Ritzer 1998] and 'Cocacolonization' [cf. Hannerz 1992], both of which involve elements of homogenisation.

Until the end of the 19th century the overwhelming majority of food was produced, exchanged, and consumed on a local basis, but, since the end of WWII, food has gradually developed into a global

commodity. Due to the development of international air transportation, food can travel easily between countries and continents, and modern communication technologies allow food representations to be transmitted through new media much faster than the food itself can be transported. Richard Milne summarises this trend by suggesting that "in talking about food, globalisation is accused of eroding the diversity of local consumption cultures, imposing a standardized, 'place-less' cuisine" [Jackson et al. 2015: 121].

The localisation of food is placed on the other pole of the spectrum and advocates local food for its variety, quality, preservation of heritage and uniqueness. The food localisation tendency is primarily characterised through the support of local food-related economies, promotion of reduced environmental burdens, a focus on local agriculture and the higher sustainability of smaller local producers, and the quest for the preservation of food traditions within local social relations.

Resent research into food has also stressed the need to study the relationship between nationalism and food. The editors of the publication *The Emergence of National Food* [Ichijo et al. 2020: 1] claim that "'food and nationalism' axis, as a paradigm of analysis, is an exceptionally useful one through which to investigate the world we live in. This is because it enables us to investigate politics – who gets what, when, and how – from the everyday level to the national and global ones" [Ibid.].

The concept of the regionalisation of food can be placed somewhere between nationalisation and localisation, and its context is often linked to tourism and regional development. Aspects such as the conflict of urban vs. rural, supply and transport issues, the seasonality of production, and food waste are among the most typical subjects of the investigation and analysis of regional policies concerning food.

It is obvious that while food crosses the landscapes of the locality, region or nation to achieve an international/transnational and global

significance, food can also serve as a demarcation phenomenon defining the boundaries of the locality, region and nation.

Sample analysis

Food blogs are an example of a new form of media discourse that bears characteristics of all 21st century cultural paradigms and trends. The text below is taken from the *WV (Weird Vegetables)* food blog site run by Katrina Dodson (alias kale daikon). The blog has been active for more than thirteen years and boasts almost 300 articles on 'weird' vegetables. [http://weirdvegetables.blogspot.com/]. The author quotes from the opening chapter of *Jitterbug Perfume* by Tom Robbins [cf. Robbins 1984].

Source:
http://weirdvegetables.blogspot.com/2008/11/passion-of-beet.html

Tuesday, November 11, 2008

The Passion of the Beet
by kale daikon

The world of beets is shadowed and labyrinthine, rooted in the secret, craggy corners of earthy hearts. Does eating them help channel the inky passions that course through our animal bodies and release them into the light of day? Or do they merely worm their way into our souls to stain our guilty consciences even further with their knowing tint?

Here is a beet salad with hazelnuts that I made for my sister while visiting her in Los Angeles in August. I used the beet recipe from the Zuni Cafe Cookbook I wrote about in an earlier post, in which I ended up with Lady Macbeth fingers.

It is hard not to feel unsettled when handling wine-dark beets. It seems I am not alone in this sentiment. Below, I share with you the opening chapter of Tom Robbins' Jitterbug Perfume. It will irrevocably change the way you think about beets. It may also cause you to reconsider radishes, tomatoes, turnips, cherries, and carrots. Bon appetit:

TODAY'S SPECIAL

The beet is the most intense of vegetables. The radish, admittedly, is more feverish, but the fire of the radish is a cold fire, the fire of discontent not of passion. Tomatoes are lusty enough, yet there runs through tomatoes an undercurrent of frivolity. Beets are deadly serious.

Slavic peoples get their physical characteristics from potatoes, their smoldering inquietude from radishes, their seriousness from beets.

The beet is the melancholy vegetable, the one most willing to suffer. You can't squeeze blood out of a turnip . . .

The beet is the murderer returned to the scene of the crime. The beet is what happens when the cherry finishes with the carrot. The beet is the ancient ancestor of the autumn moon, bearded, buried, all but fossilized; the dark green sails of the grounded moon-boat stitched with veins of primordial plasma; the kite string that once connected the moon to the Earth now a muddy whisker drilling desperately for rubies.

The beet was Rasputin's favorite vegetable. You could see it in his eyes.

In Europe there is grown widely a large beet they call the mangel-wurzel. Perhaps it is mangel-wurzel that we see in Rasputin. Certainly there is mangel-wurzel in the music of Wagner, although it is another composer whose name begins, B-e-e-t—.

Of course, there are white beets, beets that ooze sugar water instead of blood, but it is the red beet with which we are concerned; the variety that blushes and swells like a hemorrhoid, a hemorrhoid for which there is no cure. (Actually, there is one remedy: commission a

potter to make you a ceramic asshole – and when you aren't sitting on it, you can use it as a bowl for borscht.)

An old Ukrainian proverb warns, "A tale that begins with a beet will end with the devil".

That is a risk we have to take.

The text of the blog post is written by a foodie and is accompanied by two photographs taken and posted by the author. The blog also contains three comments, which can be defined as intermediality characteristics. The photographs represent the food porn aspect of the new media genre as well as the visualisation paradigm of the postmillennial era. The food blog bears all of the characteristics of a digimodernist and hypermodernist media text and serves as an example of eater-tainment for new media consumers.

The use of a literary text in the form of part of a novel written by Tom Robbins and other references to works of literature confirm the high level of intertextuality within the genre. The meanings that are encoded in the written and visual mode of the text are marked by the author's membership of a food community and show some of the author's cultural rituals. In order to decode the text, the reader requires not only a common knowledge of literary works but also information about the history and culinary traditions of several Slavic nations and some European regional specificities.

Study questions

1. Identify and discuss in detail all of the examples of postmillennial paradigms and trends that are represented in the food blog above. Choose two more blog posts by the author and uncover whether the author uses the same semiotic modes in the construction of the blogs.

2. How can you relate the quotation at the beginning of the chapter to the postmillennial paradigms analysed in the theoretical background

section of the chapter? What other meanings that are not listed among the paradigms are encoded in the quotation?

3. Find visual representations of 'McDonaldization' and 'Cocacolonization' – one from the Western and one from the Eastern European cultural contexts, and discuss the specific features of visualisation applied in the selected examples.

4. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of globalisation and localisation on the basis of specific examples taken from your own local cultural context. Choose food-related products or services to exemplify both trends.

5. Choose two regional food elements that belong to your own food discourse and explain their historic and contemporary representations in your own food community.

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CHAPTER FOUR
WHERE DO CONSUMERS EAT?

"I think preparing food and feeding people
brings nourishment not only to our bodies but to our spirits.
Feeding people is a way of loving them, in the same way
that feeding ourselves is a way of honoring
our own createdness and fragility."
Shauna Niequist

Glossary of concepts

COMFORT FOOD

While definitions of comfort food differ in their individual aspects, they all share notions of well-being, memory, home and emotions. The online Cambridge Dictionary says that comfort food is "the type of food that people eat when they are sad or worried, often sweet food or food that people ate as children" [https://dictionary.cambridge.org/ dictionary/ english/comfort-food]. Comfort food is intended to provide consolation and it usually has a nostalgic and sentimental value for the consumer whose well-being is at the centre of attention.

CULTURAL PRACTICE

Cultural studies deal with manifestations of cultural practices as the traditional and customary practices of particular cultural and social groups; these groups can be determined on the basis of ethnicity, class, gender, subculture, or others. The most visible examples of cultural practices are, for instance, religious practices, culinary practices, medical practices, childcare practices or artistic practices. The context of the research has more recently been linked to the spheres of the preservation of cultural practices, the rights of

cultural practices, and changes in cultural practices in the age of globalisation.

EATING DISORDER

According to the American Psychiatric Association, eating disorders are defined as "illnesses in which the people experience severe disturbances in their eating behaviours and related thoughts and emotions. People with eating disorders typically become pre-occupied with food and their body weight" [https://www.psychiatry.org/]. These eating disorders are linked to an obsession with food, body weight or body shape and they can often result in serious damage to sufferers' health and may occasionally be fatal. The food-related symptoms include restriction of food intake, food binges or purging. The most common eating disorders are anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and pica. [cf. https://www.healthline. com/nutrition/ common-eating-disorders].

EVERYDAY PRACTICE

Everyday practices (also known as practices of everyday life) are characterised by Michel de Certeau as routine practices of ordinary people in the 'arts of doing' [cf. de Certeau 1984]. He lists among them practices such as walking, talking, reading, dwelling, and cooking.

FAST FOOD

Fast food, in contrast to slow food, is defined by the online Cambridge Dictionary as "hot food such as hamburgers that is quick to cook or is already cooked and is therefore served very quickly in a restaurant" [https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/fast-food]. Fast food is typically characterised by its mass industrial production intended for quick mass consumption, and it was originally developed for travellers, commuters, and workers whose occupations did not allow them sufficient time to eat properly prepared and carefully served meals. Fast food is prepared from pre-cooked, pre-heated, and frozen components that are assembled and packaged for take-away purposes.

FOOD PRACTICE

Food practices are defined by Michael Symons as all types of activity in which food is involved [cf. Symons 1994]. These various activities include elementary food practices such as preparation, distribution and consumption, but can also involve more complex ones, for instance, food sharing or activities performed after consumption such as cleaning up. Many authors agree that food practices are integral components of everyday practices and cultural practices, because they offer a platform for social interaction, the exercise of social relationships and cultural rituals.

PRIVATE SPHERE

The private sphere is viewed as the opposite to the public sphere. Jurgen Habermas characterises the private sphere as the "domain of one's life in which one works for oneself. In that domain, people work, exchange goods, and maintain their families; it is therefore, in that sense, separate from the rest of society" [Habermas 1989: 78]. This means that people in the private sphere are relatively autonomous and largely free of authority and institutional and governmental interventions. The most typical examples of the private sphere are home and family. Media participate to a large extentin the crossing or removal of boundaries between the private and public spheres.

PUBLIC SPHERE

Martin Montgomery delineates the public sphere as "[a] social discursive space in which members of civil society can engage in identifying and discussing common areas of concern that form public opinion and that can relate to political action" [Montgomery 2019: 101]. Both the formation of public opinion and public discussions require that the general public has access to the legal and social framework of the state. Media play a significant role in the public communication between the state and the citizens in the public space.

SLOW FOOD

The Collins Online English Dictionary defines slow food as "food that has been prepared with care, using high-quality local and seasonal ingredients" [https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/slow-food]. The oldest promoter of slow food as the local food prepared using traditional cooking is Slow Food, an international organisation originally founded in Italy in 1986 by Carlo Petrini [https://www.slowfood.com/]. Slow food is placed in contrast to fast food, stressing quality rather than quantity, the advantages of regional and local cuisines, sustainable farming and the importance of local businesses.

SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Daniel I. Rubenstein and Dustin R. Rubenstein explain that social behaviour is composed of arrays of consistent social relationships that are produced in social systems or social organisations [cf. Rubenstein, Rubenstein 2013]. Social behaviour characterises the interactions that occur among individuals, and when individuals interact, social relationships develop and are thus relevant to the current situation. Social behaviour has been influenced by new electronic media which have allowed people to practice new and more complex forms of social behaviour, such as pro-social behaviour or aggressive behaviour.

Theoretical background

The practices of hypermodern individuals, whether everyday practices, cultural practices or food practices, are performed as mediated practices in the 21st century. The constant demand of hyperconsumers for new products and services that are able to satisfy their lifestyle requirements can be materialised not only through shopping malls and internet shopping platforms but also through lifestyle media.

Gilles Lipovetsky's concept of the society of fashion [cf. Lipovetsky 2005] depicts a society which experiences the replacement of everyday activities in a real space by hypermodern digital practices in media spaces. Digimodernist individuals [cf. Kirby 2009] have moved their food practices into lifestyle magazines; they share their favourite meals via mobile phone applications and their food narratives on food blogs. Their food stories are visualised in the selfies and food porn images they upload onto their social network accounts and it is not the hyperindividuals themselves but their media representations that tell and re-tell the food narratives in the digital space.

The domestic culinary experiences of hyperindividual consumers are enriched by digimodernist media practices such as travelling to exotic destination with famous chefs and sharing taste experiences with them in a mediated space, or enjoying the heritage practices of food consumption by reading about famous Viking cuisine on a food historian's foodblog. The quest for longevity associated with healthy eating is reinforced by purchases of diet cookbooks and reading online sources about eating disorders. So, it is possible to claim that most of the food and food-related features are consumed in the mediated discourses of postmillennial media.

The hypermodern individual consumes mediated narratives of all possible varieties of food, and thus the practices of slow food, fast food, and comfort food all blend together; traditional food with exotic food, cooked food withraw food, vegetarian and vegan food with meatarian food. All of this intermixing brings an assortment of uniqueness and authenticity into a hyperindividual's food cultural capital, a rich mix of local, regional, national, international, and global foodscapes.

The increasing quantity and variety of mediated food practices reach into all levels of both private and public spheres. Celebrity chefs on YouTube influence individual consumer's food practices more than medical specialists; politicians search for inspirations for their health

campaigns in the mediated food practices of food activists or food bloggers (cf. David Cameron's case analysed above), and governments are prompted to take the social media campaigns of famous chefs more seriously; for example, Jamie Oliver's successful anti-sugar campaign in 2016 led the British government to introduce a higher tax on sugary drinks in 2018 [cf. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-sugar/britains-sugar-tax-on-soft-drinks-comes-into-effect-dUSKCN1HD1K2?feedType=RSS&feed Name=healthNews].

It is food media that instructs hypermodern individuals what is good for them, where to buy food, how to prepare it, and how to enjoy it. Food is cooked in virtual kitchens, recipes for healthy meals are Tweeted, and food porn images are posted on Instagram. The sheer quantity of food practices which individuals consume in food media is much greater than the amount of food practices which people engage in within their real space. Recent food media research has revealed how the mediation of food practices extends into various foodscapes. Experts on nutrition study the influence of television on people's diet [cf. Pope et al. 2015]; food documentaries are analysed by public health scholars [cf. Shugart 2016]; economists analyse fair trade campaigns in different media [cf. Goodman 2010]; and the media impact on the changes of social categories is the focus of sociological research [cf. Jackson 2009].

Sample analysis

Academic discussion about the importance of food as a personal and social identity marker is not a new phenomenon. The authors of the texts quoted below identify Friedrich Nietzsche's work *Ecce Homo: How To Become What You Are* [cf. Nietzsche 2019], the final original book written by the philosopher in 1888, as one of the most important sources for understanding the processes of self-image-forming in philosophical and cultural studies.

Source (courtesy of the authors):
Dorofeev, D., Tomaščíková, S. Nietzsche's Self-Image-Forming and its Representation in the Postmillennial Media. Unpublished paper. 2020.

<…> One of the central problems of the beginning of the 21st century is that of the *visual image of a person*, an issue which is associated both with the general process of the visualisation of culture and everyday life that has occurred due to technical innovations, primarily the establishment of the virtual world through the spread of the Internet, and with key trends in the evolution of philosophical and anthropological ideas about human beings. It is precisely in the current time that the problem of forming the image of a person, including the potential of the various forms of contemporary media through which it is performed, has become central.

<...> Having discovered the central significance of the everyday dimension of human existence, Nietzsche began to consider the human as an integral, phenomenal, sensually perceived, aesthetic (given that the Greek term 'aesthesis' in fact means sensually perceived and perceptible) image formed by a person as a result of a different orientation of this existence. Of course, such a fundamental philosophical and anthropological *elevation* of the concept of "image" was influenced by the fundamentally *anti-idealistic* principles of Nietzsche's philosophy and worldview as a whole, but it is also necessary to recognisethe innovative nature of this rethinking of the foundations of ancient Greek culture and philosophy. One recognizes here the concept of *"self-care" (epimeleia),* which for ancient philosophers was the principle of self-formation by a person of his/her *aesthetic* image, which is in turn a manifestation of his/her *ethical* life. And although Nietzsche himself, as far as one can determine, did not study the concept of "self-care" separately, as an expert on ancient Greek culture he was undoubtedly aware of its potential, and we can reasonably suggest that it was Nietzsche who was the first to reveal its

central significance and relevance for modern-day philosophy, around a century before Michel Foucault turned to this concept and made it one of the cornerstones of his work at the beginning of the 1980s. Nietzsche addressed the problem of *human self-image-forming*, i.e. the formation of an individual's image through a system of particularly significant regulatory practices and the organisation of the individual's daily life.

<…> In *Ecce Homo*, an autobiographical confession and even partially the testament, Friedrich Nietzsche presents an aesthetic-*physiological* (or medical) understanding of the human image as the result of his self-organisation of the cores of his daily life, an understanding taken from his own personal life experience. He presents, in all its fundamental nature, the doctrine of self-image-formation <…> and allows one to diagnose what is central to physiological self-image-forming – *food, living environment, climate, and relaxation.*

As a true physiologist, Friedrich Nietzsche could not help but start with *food* – after all, it is food that first of all determines the quality of digestion, a process to which the philosopher attached particular importance. One needs to eat correctly in a physiological sense, with the full knowledge and understanding of the direct influence of what a person eats on what the person is. Nietzsche seems to have accepted fully the position that "*man is what he eats*" (*Der Mensch ist, was er isst*). Since a person needs to eat every day, this procedure cannot have a direct impact on the formation of the image of a person "from the inside", and the invisibility of this process must be contrasted with a consciously critical attitude towards oneself and one's body in this aspect.

Eating and drinking are not only and not so much a necessary condition for maintaining life, but a means (which may differ depending on their characteristics) of forming a worldview, a value

system, value and aesthetic preferences, expressed and defended principles, and the internal and external image of a person. Given this effect of food on a person, one cannot but approach nutrition from the point of view of a specific physiological expediency, unique to each individual. The "low" culture of nutrition (meaning that it is not aesthetic, but rather physiologically justified) appears here as the focus of reality, displacing the "high" culture of "ideals" and "spirit". Moreover, cuisine determines the ethos not only of the individual person, but of the whole nation: Friedrich Nietzsche himself saw the origin of the *German spirit* in German cuisine and the upset stomachs which it brought about.

<…> Friedrich Nietzsche, who himself suffered from stomach problems throughout his life, admits that at the beginning of his involvement in German culture, a culture which placed a greater premium on idealism than reality, he failed to understand the importance of nutrition for an unacceptably long time, an error which affected his principles: for example, the cuisine of Leipzig did not allow him to recognise and accept his own "will-to-life" although he later came to believe that the cuisine of Piedmont was the best cuisine *for himself*. Unlike Immanuel Kant, who loved long symposium dinners in the company of close friends and acquaintances, Friedrich Nietzsche preferred hearty but fairly quick lunches alone. Alcoholic drinks were almost entirely excluded from the philosopher's gastronomic diet, as was coffee; strong tea was allowed only in the morning, with spring water sufficing for the rest of the day. All of these habits were the result of experienced self-knowledge and physiological self-image-forming; as he wrote, "One needs to *know* the size of one's stomach".

<...> In addition to nutrition, a physiologically examined lifestyle is determined by an individual's *living environment* and its *climate*. While the question of the method, mode and quality of nutrition is

largely determined by the individual himself/herself, the living environment is much less dependent on one's own choice. An individual person is attached to the place of residence from birth and onward throughout their life by a variety of mechanisms – kin-biographical, family, socio-cultural, economic, psychological, etc. – and, naturally, it can be very difficult to break from these factors for various reasons. However, for Friedrich Nietzsche, single-handedly in life, medical factors, albeit understood very broadly and fundamentally, philosophically and anthropologically, are the determining factors in choosing a place to live – "Nobody is so constituted as to be able to live everywhere and anywhere; and he who has great duties to perform, which lay claim to all his strength, has, in this respect, a very limited choice. The influence of climate upon the bodily functions, affecting their acceleration or retardation, extends so far, that a blunder in the choice of locality and climate is able not only to alienate a man from his actual duty, but also to withhold it from him altogether, so that he never even comes face to face with it".

<…> Finally, the third part of physiological self-image-forming is the choice of the best way in which *to relax*. This is the most important part of life for any person connected with creative and productive activities; it is not just a necessary break but is part of a holistic lifestyle determined by physiological "self-care" <…> Relaxation cannot be random, arbitrary or chaotic because it is in fact the beginning of a cycle of active self-affirmation, "work". If reading allows one to "walk around other people's sciences and other people's souls," then it can be regarded as a kind of *openness of spirit* in which it *initiates* new impulses, meanings, horizons that allow it to express itself with renewed vigour. As in many other respects, Friedrich Nietzsche gave priority here to French authors, from Michel de Montaigne and Moliere to Stendhal and Guy de Maupassant. Nor was

music forgotten here as a form of relaxation, including the works of Richard Wagner, Frederik Chopin, Gioachino Rossini (Friedrich Nietzsche also ranked his friend Peter Gast and his opera *The Lion of Venice* in this group) <...>.

As one can see, Friedrich Nietzsche's *modelling* of one's image by these components – living environment, climate, food, and relaxation – constitutes a clearly conscious and experience-tested system of everyday life practices that even allows an individual not so much to shape oneself (which was characteristic of ancient self-care), but rather to *hold and reveal oneself*.

In *Ecce Homo*, Friedrich Nietzsche demonstrates the key importance of self-image-forming focusing in detail on the formation of the self through the conscious and authentic use of food practices, living environment, climate and modes of relaxation. All of these components, especially those of food, are central mechanisms in the formation of the visual image of individuals in contemporary media, focusing not on a critical self-evaluation but instead on an aggressively approved image.

Postmillennial 21st century media offer countless examples of representations of Friedrich Nietzsche's self-image-forming based on the everyday practices of the essential components of food, living environment, climate and relaxation. In both the old media of the press, film, radio and television and the new media of the Internet and mobile phone applications, it is food that occupies the central position while intertwining the other three elements, i.e. living environment (represented by location and household), climate and relaxation (most visibly in an individual's lifestyle). Created and then mediated visual images of food convey the economic, social, political and aesthetic meanings of the individuals who participate in the everyday practices of eating, dwelling, and enjoying relaxation activities.

Study questions

1. Find examples of genres of food media in 21st century media discourses that embody Friedrich Nietzsche's four components of self-image-forming. Which specific food practices, everyday practices, cultural practices, or mediated practices can be identified in your examples?

2. How are food narratives commodified and how does their extensive commodification contribute to the profitability of the media industry in the 21st century?

3. Discuss the multi-layered character of food, its various functions, symbolic meanings and social contexts in relation to the formation of the identity of a postmillennial individual.

4. Describe your most frequent personal everyday practices, cultural practices and media practices that are linked with food. Identify their potential in your own identity formation and self-image-forming.

5. Discuss which everyday practices, cultural practices, and mediated practices directly linked to food practices and consumer culture have a significant representation in the environmental issues of the 21st century.

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CHAPTER FIVE
WHICH FOOD SEASONS MEDIA THE MOST?

"Food is a gift and should be treated reverentially
– romanced and ritualized and seasoned with memory."
Chris Bohjalian

Glossary of concepts

CULTURES of TASTE

In Peter Jackson's definition "[t]aste is constructed, commodified, cultivated and contested in contemporary food systems, a quality of both consumers and producers" [Jackson et al. 2015: 214]. Its original physiological concept was supplemented in the late 1970s by aesthetic connotations, and more recent research in social sciences reveals that "[t]astes of food vary between and within countries and societies" <…> and taste has a significant role "in expressing and reproducing social distinctions" [Ibid.: 215].

DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

The importance of digital connectivity – an infrastructure encompassing digital networks, identifying and locating systems, mobile devices, applications, and Internet – has grown during the COVID-19 pandemic. Digital connectivity has gradually been replacing physical infrastructure; it has enabled both economic and social inclusion and may serve as a tool for economic recovery and growth. On the other hand, it is clear that many issues of institutional, legal, and controlling frameworks of digital connectivity remain unresolved.

DIGITAL DIVIDE

The digital divide is the gap between those with access to digital connectivity and those without. The lack of digital connectivity has

been identified as the essential inequality of the 21st century. Digital connectivity varies across countries and across regions in individual countries. Recent statistics show that almost 30 % people of young people in the world have never been online and have thus been left at a disadvantage in terms of their access to information, communication, education and acquisition of skills among other problems. The digital divide has its sub-representations; these include digital divides in terms of age and of gender, and the urban – rural digital divide, etc. [https://www.generationunlimited.org/]

EDUTAINMENT

Edutainment (also known as educational entertainment, edu-tainment) combines two main purposes of media – to educate and to entertain. The origin of the word is connected with Walt Disney's series of short documentary films produced in the mid-20th century entitled *True-Life Adventures* [cf. Moran 2017]. Examples of edutainment can be found in both old media, for example, cartoons, and in new media, for example, interactive educational games.

FOOD ACTIVISM

Counihan and Siniscalchi define food activism as "efforts by people to change the food system across the globe by modifying the way they produce, distribute, and/or consume food" [Counihan, Siniscalchi 2014: 3]. The mass production of food and food sources are in the centre of the growing food activists' concerns, although food activist priorities and practices vary widely, including issues such as the consequences of globalisation, new agricultural processes, food injustice, social movements, food politics, food chains and genetically modified food.

FOOD MEMORY

Peter Jackson claims that "[the] moment, where the taste of particular food sparks off a series of powerful personal memories, has become a common trope in contemporary food studies" [Jackson et al. 2015: 137]. He goes on to explain that "food proves to be an ideal

vehicle for evoking memory, being simultaneously tangible and symbolic, embodied and emotive" [Ibid.].

INFOTAINMENT

Infotainment (also known as informational entertainment, infotainment) is a trend in which efforts to provide information are combined with an attempt to entertain media consumers. Examples of infotainment can be found in the genres of soft news and lifestyle magazines, but they also appear within reality television genres such as docusoaps, and a considerable amount of new media content.

LIFESTYLE

In most common definitions of sociologists, lifestyle is "the distinctive pattern and manner of living that an individual or group uses to meet their biological, economic, emotional, and social needs that typically reflects their attitudes, beliefs, and values; a way of life" [https://sociologydictionary.org/lifestyle/]. It can be characterised as a set of interests, opinions, values, and behaviours of an individual or a group.

NETWORK SOCIETY

Network societies are "online communities that metaphorically congregate around particular issues and interests on an occasional and informal basis" [Montgomery 2019: 84-85]. The author argues that the existence and activity of network societiesare enabledby the Internet and he identifies the most visible examples of network societies as social groups functioning in social media, being involved in instant messaging, writing personal blogs and e-mailing [Ibid. 84].

REALITY TELEVISION

Reality television is defined by Martin Montgomery as "[a] hybrid, generically diverse form that purports to present a slice of life in an unstructured, unscripted, almost naturalistic fashion" [Montgomery 2019: 102-103]. He further specifies that it has become a widespread form of television entertainment and has its roots in documentary and cinéma vérité, reportage, and the realistic novel [Ibid. 103]. Reality

television has numerous sub-genres, such as dating programmes, docu-soap, game-documentaries or make-over programmes.

TABLOIDISATION

Tabloidisation is defined by Martin Montgomery as "[a] process whereby the style and content of tabloid journalism, including news values such as personalisation, sensationalism and prurient populism are considered to be more affecting news output more generally" [Montgomery 2019: 127]. In a broader context, tabloidization is a result of the fierce media competition that started in the 1990s which brought about a transformation of content and form of other genres in order to make them more 'entertaining'.

Theoretical background

As has been stated and exemplified on numerous occasions above, both old and new media forms convey food content in a variety of genres and it is consequently almost impossible to find a medium that does not fall into the category of food media in the 21st century. The attraction of lifestyle content since the 1990s has been enhanced by food in its broadest understanding: tabloidised television news bulletins provide information about food activist campaigns and 'advertise' celebrity chef's new cookbooks and cooking programmes; edutainment genres on radio inform their listeners about healthy diets; quality newspapers cannot resist the commercial pressure of infotainment and they carry regular lifestyle and food supplements; films where food serves as a central trope are produced for both cinema and television; the hybrid genres of reality telivision include chef shows, cooking contests and food travel documentaries; digital connectivity allows the formation of network societies which canvisualise food via food blogs, food vlogs and food selfies, thereby proving by practice all of the features of Alan Kirby's digimodernist characteristics of new food media discourses [cf. Kirby 2009].

Digimodernist media consumers can create, develop, enjoy and mediate their individual, group, local, regional, national, international, and global cultures of taste across all genres of media, and in new digital media in particular they can perform new forms of social interaction. Mediated food content allows them to share their present food experiences as well as their food memories in an almost unlimited range of online foodscapes, so it is possible to agree with Tania Lewis and Michelle Philippov that digimodernist consumers can be said to consume digital food [cf. Lewis, Philippov 2018].

The concept of digital food has recently been studied by economists, sociologists, media and communication scholars and cultural studies experts through the multi-perspectives of new forms of food marketing, the globalisation vs. localisation dichotomy of online food consumption, access to digital connectivity and the digital divides which are related to it, online food activism, the overlapping of digital practices withreal life everyday practices, and the merging of old and new media forms [cf. Dujardin 2011, Lewis 2018, Tovares, Gordon 2020]. Regardless of the academic discipline, they reach the general conclusion that food media, both old and new, are experiencing an enormous growth and are generating massive profits. In an online article published in November 2019 entitled 'People still buy food content: What food media is doing right in finding sustainable models', the author Deanna Tingstates that:

> *Food media is having a moment.*
> *This year, The New York Times' Cooking subscription business passed 250,000 subscribers in less than two years. Bon Appétit's YouTube channel has 4.7 million subscribers. By next year, the majority of Time Out Group's revenues will be driven by its global food hall business. Food52 derives 75% of its revenue from sources other than advertising — and sold a majority stake to The Chernin Group for $83 million.*

While food has universal and enduring appeal, there are lessons in these examples for most media seeking more sustainable models.

[https://digiday.com/media/people-still-buy-food-content-food-media-right-finding-sustainable-models/]

After this introduction, the text of the article provides more detailed data on consumer numbers and the finances involved in food media, and it offers a recipe for how to achieve sustainability in food media development by combining academic and business advice.

This text and many other publications dedicated to food media in the 21st century confirm that food media and their food content develop on the basis of the development of consumer's identity; the identity of the hypermodern and digimodern individual is primarily formed by food media and their developing forms, genres and food content. The complex mechanism of this mediated interaction has been influenced by both geo-political, economic, and social conditions which are both historic and contemporary in nature, as well as by the more recent trends of globalisation, internationalisation, nationalisation, regionalisation and localisation.

Sample analysis

Food studies researchers have also analysed the phenomenon of food memories, placing particular emphasis on the psychological aspects of their importance and strength, their commercial value, their participation in identity-formation processes, and their importance for an individual's food practices. The text quoted below is an extract from a larger 2017 article entitled *Chronicles from the Nuevo South* written by Sandra Gutierrez which exemplifies most of these features.

Source:
https://www.oxfordamerican.org/item/1278-food-memories

<…> One of my dearest friends and my soul sister is Virginia Willis, who is a beloved, Southern author of five books, including the James Beard Award-winning *Lighten Up, Y'all*. Whenever we cross paths in each other's hometowns, we make it a point to cook for one another. We keep it simple, often roasting a chicken or grilling steaks, and we always prepare a recipe that brings back memories of someone we love. For Virginia, this is often a batch of flaky biscuits, rolled and cut by hand.

"Sometimes I feel like I was born in my grandmother's kitchen – it figures so prominently in my memories," Virginia recently shared with me. "Undoubtedly, making buttermilk biscuits is one of my earliest and most favorite cooking memories. She'd roll out the dough and let me punch them out with her aluminium cutter, then let me make a handprint with the scraps of dough. It's the same recipe I use today. Several years ago, I was teaching my godchild Ruby how to make biscuits. I reached to the board and took a nibble of the dough and said, "*This tastes like my childhood."* She took a nibble and looked at me and said, "*Your childhood tastes good!*"

Those of us who have found a vocation in foodways – not just a career – often have a strong emotional connection to food memories. I've spent my adult life trying to comfort others through food because I feel enormous joy while doing it. And it's nourishing for the souls of others.

I've seen a grown man cry over a bowl of corn ice cream with praline sauce; it reminded him of eating caramel corn with his dad at a state fair. I've observed my students recall their grandmothers, mothers, fathers, or someone long gone when tasting a dish I prepared for a class.

There is cathartic power in food memories. They soothe and they strengthen.

Study questions

1. Find examples of genres of food media that bear characteristics of edutainment and analyse these characteristics in detail. Use one example taken from the British cultural context and one from the Slovak food media. Discuss the similarities and differences based on the two different cultural contexts.

2. Select a lifestyle magazine, preferably a Slovak version of some original magazine (for example. a Slovak version of the American *Cosmopolitan*) which contained substantial food-related content and exemplify all of the features of hypermodernism that you can identify in its material. Analyse the representations of globalisation, internationalisation and nationalisation in its material.

3. Choose an example ofa reality television genre produced for British and Slovak media that contain food and heritage content. Find out if they are original or licenced / franchised formats and study the representations of the aspects of regionalisation and localisation. How does the licence / franchise format incorporate regional and local elements into its content?

4. Identify all of the network societies you belong to. Which of them contain food content? How much time do you dedicate to your activity in these network societies? Do you participate in the development of these societies? In what ways? What benefits has membership of these network societies brought you personally?

5. Analyse one of your own food memories connected with childhood, family, friends, traveling or dreams. How can you relate it to one of the quotes below?

"Cooking is all about people. Food is maybe the only universal thing that really has the power to bring everyone together. No matter what culture, everywhere around the world, people eat together."
Guy Fieri

"I don't know what it is about food your mother makes for you, especially when it's something that anyone can make - pancakes, meat loaf, tuna salad - but it carries a certain taste of memory."
Mitch Albom

"Sharing food with another human being is an intimate act that should not be indulged in lightly."
M.F.K. Fisher

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To Igor…

Scientific publication

Tomascikova Slavka

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