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Domesticating Cuisine: Food and Aesthetics on American Television

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# Domesticating Cuisine

## Food and Aesthetics on American Television

MOVIES TOOK US AWAY. We left home to see movies. In movies we saw open spaces and big cities, foreign countries and other times. We saw the crowd and the close-up. We met strangers and crooks and cops and prostitutes. We saw rich guys and poor women. They often married each other. Movies were about mobility, spatial and social. The cultural historian Warren Susman has noted that the chase was the central motif in movies. Men chasing men; cowboys after Indians; white men after black; Anglos pursuing ethnic mobsters; cops hunting robbers; men pursuing women—on horseback, on trains, under open skies, and in dark cities.<sup>1</sup>

Television brought us back home after World War II. Money spent on motion picture admissions peaked in 1944.<sup>2</sup> “By 1960, almost 90 percent of American households had at least one [TV] receiver, with the average person watching approximately five hours of television each day.”<sup>3</sup> We stayed home to watch television,<sup>4</sup> and television reintroduced us to the family.<sup>5</sup> TV families proliferated, from *I Love Lucy*’s low-density domesticity, to the deluge of *The Adventures of Ozzie & Harriet* (1952–1966); *Make Room for Daddy* (1953–1964); *Father Knows Best* (1954–1960); *Leave It to Beaver* (1957–1963); *The Beverly Hillbillies* (1962–1971); *The Brady Bunch* (1969–1974); *All in the Family* (1971–1979); *Sanford and Son* (1972–1977); *The Waltons* (1972–1981); and so on.<sup>6</sup>

Television even brought the movies home. Michael Kammen notes that, in a 1971 Harris poll, 66 percent of Americans indicated a preference for watching films *on television* over going to the movie house.<sup>7</sup> He continues, “A Roper poll of more than 2,000 persons in 1977 found only 21% very interested in movie-going and 36% not very or not at all interested. The remaining 43% felt moderately interested.”

Television also brought us the situation comedy—the sitcom. That is an appropriate contraction, as it is the end of motion. Everything on television is basically a sitcom or an anti-sitcom. When *Survivor* or *CSI* takes us out for a swim or a stroll, we know it is going to end badly. It could kill us, or we might have to eat weird things. It is better to stay home.

Raymond Williams characterized such televisuality as the dream of “mobile privatization.”<sup>8</sup>

On returning home, we discovered the adventures hidden therein. Situation comedies happen in the living room and the bedroom. *Friends* sat around and eavesdropped on each other’s sex lives. With the end of *Cheers* (1993), we even abandoned the neighborhood bar. *Seinfeld* rarely left home. Ray Romano is always home. Doug never gets out in the *King of Queens*. When he does leave, it is obvious he is

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faking it. Audiences are so averse to mobility in this genre and producers are so attuned to the profitability of one-room shows that the use of a rocking machine to simulate a UPS van—Doug’s TV job—works. Frontiers are within ourselves and our families, not without. Psychology always trumps sociology in these shows. Only cartoon characters step out anymore. Neighborhoods are visible in *The Simpsons*, *King of the Hill*, and *Sponge Bob*.

While the living room and the bedroom became the preferred spaces for the new medium, the kitchen remained out of sight. The success of Julia Child’s 1963 show *The French Chef* hinged on returning us to the hearth, and she kept us there for more than a decade.<sup>9</sup> This was cuisine in



"1950's FAMILY WATCHING TELEVISION" COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION (356-P8-58-9015)

the kitchen, quite distinct from cooking at the hearth. Julia (I will use her first name because that is how she is known) would be crucial to the domestication of cuisine in at least three ways—making American what was French, bringing into the home what was usually cooked in the restaurant,<sup>10</sup> and normalizing what was extraordinary.<sup>11</sup> She insisted that a dish such as boned, stuffed duck in a pastry crust could be made in the home kitchen. "Most people think," she complained, "this is the kind of impossible thing only a chef could do, but it is quite within the range of even the modest cook, if supplied with good directions such as ours."<sup>12</sup>

This essay is an attempt to think through food on American television. Among food studies scholars there

appears to be a bifurcated attitude toward food on television. On the one hand, we have veneration for Julia Child and her kind of TV. On the other, there is disdain for Emeril Lagasse and his ilk and dismissal of it all, especially Rachael Ray, as nothing more than food porn.<sup>13</sup> But is *food porn* the most productive way of conceptualizing what is happening on TV?

In attempting to answer this question I will momentarily invert the virtues and rhetorically accentuate the difference between the two kinds of food TV. To do that we will need first to reimagine what might happen if we looked at Julia Child critically. What concepts need to be deployed, and to what effect? Then, what might be the virtues of Emeril Lagasse, Bobby Flay, Al Roker, and the Iron Chefs? My

motivations here are threefold. First, heuristics; that is, if there is a way of thinking, it must be worth inverting it as an analytical device. Second, I do watch food tv and enjoy some programs more than others, hence it can't just be food porn, can it? Third, I hope to think productively about the relations among genre, gender, generation, and the performative medium.

## Displaying Domesticity

Julia was surrounded by the spectacle of domesticity, and she appropriated it. *The French Chef*, first broadcast on WGBH Boston on February 11, 1963, was preceded by the television families already mentioned and followed by other family dramas such as *Good Times* (1974–1979), *Little House on the Prairie* (1974–1983), *Family Ties* (1982–1989), *The Cosby Show* (1984–1992), *Dynasty* (1981–1989), and *Married with Children* (1987–1997). Julia was in tune with the cult of domesticity enveloping her.<sup>14</sup>

Julia's own romance and then marriage to Paul Child, an older spy working in exotic locales, was put to good use in the story of the husband with an exciting career tamed by the hearth. She gave it all up to cook at home, while her husband played the convivial mate, who retired from his own thrilling vocation to become her set designer, companion, and de facto manager. Julia loved telling those tales, and everyone else loved them, too.<sup>15</sup>

For instance, almost every article in the commemorative issue of *Gastronomica*, published in 2005 on the anniversary of Julia's death, refers repeatedly—even incessantly—to her husband, Paul.<sup>16</sup> The issue begins with love poems from him and ends with a picture of them in a bathtub overflowing with bubbles.<sup>17</sup> Such a paean to domesticity may be inevitable in the context of their long partnership, her fierce devotion to him sharpened by her conservative father's rejection of her artsy husband as a "pinko," and her husband's role as her handler and protector. Yet I suspect that her producers were aware that referents to her husband worked well in tempering her insouciance, particularly at a time of generalized feminine unruliness associated with the second wave of feminism in the 1960s.

The writer Alex Prud'homme even melds husband and wife into one collective voice of *Pulia* (*Paul plus Julia*),<sup>18</sup> which is particularly startling since Julia was a singular, opinionated, and strong-willed woman. Yet this blending may be unavoidable, given that Paul was essential to Julia, and people who knew Julia and Paul argue that theirs was an exemplary and love-filled marriage, which did last a lifetime.<sup>19</sup> Perhaps Julia has as much to teach us about com-

panionship as she does cooking. Nevertheless, it is her domesticity that we are drawn to.

In an interview with Julia, Sharon Hudgins asked: "I'd like to ask something about your husband. You credit him with introducing you to French food. Does he also cook?" Julia responded: "Well, he could, but he doesn't. He's guinea pig number one, for my cooking. I wouldn't have done anything without him, because he was always very encouraging. He's wonderfully helpful, when we're giving parties, washing dishes, setting the table. He's just a very nice, helpful man."<sup>20</sup> That sounds like a proper middle-class division of domestic labor. Julia's biographer Noël Riley Fitch declares, "Julia would learn a recipe at her Cordon Blue class in the morning and then go back to the apartment to make love to her husband and prepare lunch."<sup>21</sup> A perfect wife! Without being cynical, I can see how Julia's domesticity was front-stage in the success of her show, especially at a time of contentious femininity. After all, Julia turned her own home into a studio—literally turning domesticity inside out.

Domesticity was so important in the media precisely because its mythology was being challenged by the feminist movement and the experience of real women, especially middle-class women, who had gone out for wage work during World War II and were never reconciled to being sent home. This was not the first time some anxiety was expressed about women's role in the larger culture through our attitude toward cooking. In 1924, as Samantha Barbas has shown, the National Restaurant Association urged its members to transform their image from "greasy spoons" to sources of "home cooking" so that they could attract a middle-class female audience.<sup>22</sup> It was necessary to broaden the appeal of restaurants beyond the stereotype of watering holes for men—upper-class men in places such as Delmonico's and working-class men in most eateries. When Prohibition became the law of the land in 1919, it was imperative for restaurants to attract a heterosocial clientele. Although driven by economic logic, restaurants also provided some recompense to the moral panic surrounding women's suffrage (which also came in 1919). The caricature of the flapper, focused on clothes and clubs and inattentive toward her children, cooking, or the household, was the rearguard response to the civic acknowledgment of women.

Barbas elaborates how the restaurant industry invented the whole apparatus that associated restaurants with "home cooking" by means of menus, soft lighting, quiet, and cleanliness, to attract both women and middle-class men disappointed by their wives' cooking. The Schrafft's restaurant chain, for instance, offered "old-style home cooking...the

kind of food [patrons] ought to get in the home, but don't." The chain also advertised "women cooks only," while others promoted their breads, dinners, and desserts as "entirely woman made."<sup>23</sup> That was done both to distinguish the advertised restaurants from others employing disreputable male "hash slingers" and to assure men that there were women out there who were fulfilling their gender roles. Four decades later, as feminism reemerged in the 1960s, Julia Child would provide recompense for similar anxieties about a woman's place, and she would do it even more successfully, precisely because of an even more powerful medium.

Julia, of course, did a lot of other things, such as demystify French cooking, which is another way of saying that she made cooking accessible to middle-class American women; she normalized it—"French cooking from the American supermarket," as *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* promised in its preface.<sup>24</sup> Julia's power came from domesticating the French and their fundamentally foreign and classy (in the American imagination) food with its myth, aura, and exoticism. "She demystified the quiche and made *salad niçoise* with canned tuna; she made crêpes, soufflés, croissants, and French bread possible for ordinary folks. She was a goddess of the people," declares Daphne Derven.<sup>25</sup> Julia insisted to her French collaborator Simone Beck (Simca) that the taste of French food derived not from some magic of the French soil or character but from good ingredients in season, cooked with solid techniques applied with care, patience, and love.<sup>26</sup> It was mere technique, she claimed. Referring to a conversation between the French gastronome Curnonsky and some of her French collaborators, Julia wrote to her friend Avis De Voto:

They were talking about Beurre Blanc, and how it was a mystery, and only a few people could do it, and how it could be made with white shallots from Lorraine and over a wood fire. Pho. But that is so damned typical...making a damned mystery out of perfectly simple things just to puff themselves up. I didn't say anything as, being a foreigner, I don't know anything anyway. This dogmatism in France is enraging (that is really about my only criticism, otherwise I adore them).<sup>27</sup>

Techniques could be mastered at home, she promised. And she delivered. *Mastering* notes: "[T]he excellence of French cooking, and of good cooking in general, is due more to cooking techniques than to anything else."<sup>28</sup> She saw French cooking "as a kind of intelligent design, fundamental procedures that could be applied to all the cuisines of the world."<sup>29</sup> Julia's French cooking was, of course, a particular kind of French cooking, neither haute nor peasant cooking, but a provincial middle-class cuisine that was

infused with a sort of idyllic domestic middleliness so central to the modern nation, the home of our homes.<sup>30</sup>

Julia also undermined the incessant misogyny of the professional kitchen without directly confronting it. She did so simply by becoming a powerful female TV chef. She made sure that she was not misread as a feminist by vaguely suggesting that men generally make better cooks.<sup>31</sup> Her complex positioning regarding gender and feminism may be a mere function of her generational location—it is useful to recall Alice Julier's reminder that Gloria Steinem and Betty Friedan graduated from Smith College about twenty years *after* Julia.<sup>32</sup> Julia's world *preceded* the second wave of feminism. That is why, perhaps, she could have the courage (or the audacity) to blame women for much of the bad cooking around her. As a progressive figure, Julia was the only one who could get away with saying that it was entirely up to the family to broaden a child's palate, especially the mother. "But if you're going to have a stupid mother who just doesn't want to do anything but dump some sort of awful frozen dinner on them, I think that's the family's fault."<sup>33</sup> In contrast, by 1977 Betty Friedan had to justify her interest in cooking by assuring us, "I am considering making soup from scratch next summer....No, I am not announcing public defection from the women's movement."<sup>34</sup> Much had changed by the time of second-wave feminism, when many progressive women did recoil from cooking.

Julia was a transitional figure, a woman and a misfit who was "too tall, too big-boned and too outspoken" to be considered a proper woman.<sup>35</sup> In Susan Stamberg's words, she was "ungainly, big, kind of loud, thoroughly professional, really smart"—the kind of woman feminism would eventually appropriate, but disconcerting in the movement's early years.<sup>36</sup> Most important, Julia brought to her audience an innovative mode of domestication without excessive femininity. As an intermediary figure between the old and the new feminism, she would become the epitome of the TV chef, which in itself is an intermediate position between the home cook and the restaurant chef.

## The Performative Platform

Julia did not invent the genre of the TV chef, but she did come to dominate it. Others had cooked on TV before, such as James Beard, Dionne Lucas, and Graham Kerr, but none had established the genre as Julia did. Julia was aware of her strengths in front of the TV cameras and the reach of that particular medium. She was conscious of the fact that cooking on American television had surpassed the scope of the French mass media by the mid-1960s. In her interview with



Sharon Hudgins, Julia compared the “primitive, baby-type cooking” that one could find on French media to food on American TV, which was “the most complicated *homard à l’américaine*, soufflé de Homard Plaza Athénée, and all of the great French dishes.”<sup>37</sup>

Rejecting collaboration on a proposed third volume of *Mastering*, she wrote to Simca: “Volume III? I have no desire to get into another big book like Volume II for a long time to come, if ever. Too much work. I can do nothing else, and I am really anxious to get back again into TV teaching, and out of this little room with the typewriter.”<sup>38</sup> She did get out of that little room and invented a new stage for the American chef. Jill Norman, who acquired the rights to *Mastering* for Penguin UK, notes that “Julia was a good cook but not a great one.... Yet, on television, her eloquence about French food and her direct performance of cooking brought ‘cuisine’ into the realm of the possible for millions. For that alone she is a culinary heroine.”<sup>39</sup>

Julia’s distinctive talent was the mastery of the medium, and through this medium, she brought the chef home and put him in a dress.<sup>40</sup> Jacques Pépin, who worked with Julia on TV for over a decade, notes that “Julia was expert at playing to the camera, and even though she sometimes said something that sounded as though she had just thought of it at the last moment, she had often planned it in advance.”<sup>41</sup> Almost everyone who worked with her draws attention to her affinity for TV. Pépin continues: “I learned something. I wanted to pack too much into the shows, and she made me realize that television was entertainment and that if you want to impart a message and teach people, you have to do it in a way that is light, amusing, and as much fun as possible.”<sup>42</sup> Anne Willan called her a born performer.<sup>43</sup> Another TV cook, Franco Romagnoli, notes that Julia taught him much about the medium, such as, “Audiences abhor silence... so whatever you do keep talking!”<sup>44</sup> Julia healed the chasm that French men had created between women and cuisine. She opened the kitchen door and invited the camera in. It hasn’t left since.

We subsequently have added restaurant kitchens to TV shows—without much success, so far, as in Rocco de Spirito’s *The Restaurant* (the jury is still out on Gordon Ramsay’s *Hell’s Kitchen*)—and the theatrical kitchens of *Iron Chef* and *Emeril Live*. It has always been the ambition of broadcasting companies to turn the home into the primary site of spectatorship, but it is only with *Emeril Live* and *Iron Chef* that the kitchen has entered the sports arena (a space invented at the turn of the nineteenth century in the American context). The difference between Julia’s show and these more recent hits on the Food Network becomes

evident in their respective architecture. Emeril performs in an auditorium. Julia performed in a kitchen and talked to the camera as a confidante. Her cooking was supposed to be replicated at home. Cooking on public television, such as Jacques Pépin’s *Fast Food My Way*, continues to be cast in the same mold.

But the intimate domestic space within which Julia operated has become inadequate to the ambition of chefs. Julia was the first to have a substantial and sustained public audience for home cooking, but the audience itself was mostly invisible and inaudible on her show—that is, there was no direct link between her studio spectators and her television viewers. This allowed greater privacy to the home audience, so they could do what they pleased with Julia’s suggestions, without being coerced into modeling their behavior after the studio audience, which tells us precisely where to laugh and when to cheer in a show such as *Emeril Live*. Mostly, we are too busy cheering to do any real cooking.

As chefs have climbed farther in their professional aspirations, so has the performative platform. That is why some TV chefs have come to inhabit the theater. Theaters are perfect spaces to announce the arrival of a new profession, and this is where public cooking is today, with its insecure claim on professionalization. But theaters eventually turn out to be too loud and too dramatic, as surgeons learned in due course, and they evoke the grandiloquence of the carnival barker.<sup>45</sup> Professionals ultimately have to abandon the proscenium and develop a muted, somber, and serious posture if their work is to become professionalized. Otherwise, they have to retain the sound and the fury of the dramatic persona, much like a rock star.

## Conspicuous Production or Food Porn?

The work of spectacular cooking has become fashionable today, and television has much to do with this fashion. As a medium, TV is better suited to displaying work than are print or aural media. It was TV, after all, with Julia’s help, that returned cuisine to the domestic kitchen. In 1974 Edward Schmitt, then vice president of McDonald’s, could challenge us: “How many restaurants are there in the United States where you can look into the food facilities and preparation area.”<sup>46</sup> Today, such facilities are everywhere, especially at high-end restaurants. The National Restaurant Association notes that “the display kitchen has evolved into much more than just center stage. It has become a highly tuned merchandising system that plays to the core values of the clientele. Today, people want to see the kitchen.”<sup>47</sup>



Above: *Julia Child on the set of The French Chef.*

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From his famous study of hagiographic biographies in the *Saturday Evening Post*, Leo Lowenthal concluded that American culture had traveled from celebrating heroes of production to heroes of consumption, such as movie stars and other celebrities, profiled not for their work but for their private personality quirks and their hobbies.<sup>48</sup> Today, we are going back not to the drones of mass production but to the stylists of luxury handcrafted items and designer commodities, on the one hand, and to clearly masculine workers like policemen and firefighters, on the other, especially after September 11, 2001. Television cooking often brings the two together.

Firefighters, football players, cheerleaders, and fishermen are the typical guests on *Emeril Live*. Working-class masculinity is deeply encoded into his program. "He is a blue-collar guy fixing blue-ribbon food," writes Pauline Adema, who further asserts that Emeril's working-class patois, difficulty

with complex, multisyllabic words, and self-deprecation in the form of "This ain't rocket science, y'a know!" underline his performance as a regular guy.<sup>49</sup> His display kitchen is the set on which a certain kind of masculinity is performed, almost as a caricature, precisely because the turf is recognizably feminine, in terms of both the kitchen and the cooking show (at least since Julia). The absurd masculinity of some of these cooking shows actually serves as a reminder of their feminine pedigree. And some of that schoolboy swagger is precisely the campy charm of *Iron Chef*, which is why I think *Iron Chef America* does not work as well (the problem with the latter also being the excision of the exotic, both in terms of the ingredients and the locale).

Wolfgang Puck—the chef to the stars and the star of the chefs—has made a ritual out of the open kitchen. The theatrical lighting and exhibition kitchen further the celebrity aspirations of Puck, who, after all, is most interested in feeding the stars. According to his designer, Adam Tihany, “From...everywhere you could see the kitchen. The kitchen was very integral...full-size wall, and Wolfgang as a persona...in front of the wall, creating this dynamic and exciting relationship between chef and customers. It was a huge PR stunt. You needed a certain kind of person to do it.”<sup>50</sup> Reality melds into movies as the chef and his clientele orbit around each other, followed by the spotlight.

Even as celebrity-driven chefs take over the airwaves, gastronomy has emerged as a cultural field worthy of some attention in the United States.<sup>51</sup> That is one reason why we are buying all those cookbooks we never cook from, watching so much food tv, reading nonfiction about food, and devouring restaurant reviews for places we will never visit. And that is why we are studying food in the academy. We are beginning to do what the French have done for about two hundred years—that is, not only talk about food but talk about talking about food, as Gertrude Stein wrote long ago.<sup>52</sup>

Observing the flurry of cookbooks produced in the early 1970s, Raymond Sokolov warned: “Something must be radically wrong with a country that will not buy novels but will gobble up cookbooks of almost any kind. Americans, the moral seems to be, can neither read nor cook.”<sup>53</sup> Others have misread all this talking and watching as *food porn*—when we imagine cooking and eating while watching others actually do it.

When it comes to food tv, that accusation is accurate in a number of ways. First, we spend a lot more time watching people cook than we do cooking—or at least that is the allegation. Molly O'Neill, the former *New York Times* food writer, defines the problem: “In general, entertainment, rather than news and consumer education, has been the focus of food stories for nearly a decade. Food porn—prose and recipes so removed from real life that they cannot be used except as vicarious experience—has reigned.”<sup>54</sup> The venerable Alexander Cockburn of the *Nation* perhaps originated the term *food porn* in 1977 when he noted that there is something unattainable about those pictures of perfect dishes that generate insatiable desire; he called them “pornographic.”<sup>55</sup> Second, the production values in porn flicks and food tv are very similar: we never get out of the darn room; dark places need illumination; “organic material needs fondling.”<sup>56</sup> Frederick Kaufman, who has developed the comparison between sex porn and gastroporn, notes: “Like sex porn, gastroporn addresses the most basic human needs

and functions, idealizing and degrading them at the same time.” He quotes Barbara Nitke, an established porn still photographer: “You watch porn saying, Yes, I could do that. You dream that you’re there, but you know you couldn’t. The guy you’re watching on the screen, his sex life is effortless. He didn’t have to negotiate, entertain her, take her out to dinner. He walked in with the pizza. She was waiting and eager and hot for him.”<sup>57</sup>

Referring to artful food photography in *Gourmet* magazine, which could also work for television, Carolyn Voight notes that in gastroporn “the plates and dishes are always full, never half eaten. The tablecloth is without spots, the glasses glisten fully with beverages, and the view of the kitchen is never the one after the party with stacks of plates, pots in need of washing, muck on the floor and an overflowing garbage can that needs taking out.”<sup>58</sup> No matter how much the camera brings us into the kitchen, we never see the filthy floors, the dish-washing area, the grease pit, or the bloodied butcher’s block. Kaufman writes that “unlike home cooking, tv cooking builds to an unending succession of physical ecstasies, never a pile of dirty dishes.”<sup>59</sup> Though these critics are right, there is something excessive about their criticism.

O’Neill suggests that the new fancy cookbooks (and by implication cooking shows on the Food Network) are pornographic because the “prose and recipes [are] so removed from real life that they cannot be used except as vicarious experience.” Earlier in her essay, she announces her real aspiration in the following way: “For more than twenty years I tried to tease the extraordinary from the mundane, and to use the familiar—the sprig of basil, the bottle of olive oil—to usher readers into social, geographic, and cultural worlds where they otherwise might not go.”<sup>60</sup> That is vicarious, too. So what makes one kind of vicarious experience pedagogic and another pornographic?

Perhaps, it is the willingness to do the hard work that distinguishes the two. Fair enough. But is making food to eat and feed others the only legitimate form of working with food? If so, what does that make of academics and food writers? And what does it make of performance artists who use food? Should we restrict food to a narrow range of functions when we do not expect the same with shelter or clothing or a whole lot of other essential needs?

Perhaps there is something about food, which is both so essential to life and still unavailable to so many (about a billion people are estimated to be hungry today),<sup>61</sup> that makes any playfulness, any degree of aestheticization, open to the charge of excess and moral decay. Yet we don’t generally critique architects for being excessive in a similar vein, although



shelter is essential, too, and unavailable to many. The Chrysler Building—which I can see from my window right now—is rarely called pornographic, although its form, which is celebrated, is barely necessary to its function, and many, many people in the world are bereft of the minimum of shelter.

I think it is the movement of cooking from domestic work and invisible craft to art, design, and discourse that is giving us so much trouble. In particular, some of us are reacting to the very techniques that make such aestheticization and discursivity possible, by giving durable form—pictures and words—to what is ephemeral. The very visibility of something that was mundane, trivial, and habitual is somewhat embarrassing. The source of discomfort for some may be the dissolving boundary between the life world and the art world. Does everything need to be aestheticized—even cookery?! But when with the revolution in printing we moved from cooking as an expression of bodily memory to cookbooks, we let loose a process that eventually brought us here. Having gotten here, must we now confine a cookbook to a functional treatise? Should cooking on TV be judged *only* by the reliability of the recipes and not, say, by its aesthetic potential as drama, melodrama, or even farce?

Western philosophers have long denied aesthetic legitimacy to taste in particular—i.e., the tongue—while talking about taste in general. Aesthetics was born as a discursive field against literal taste in the eighteenth century and was set in stone in nineteenth-century Europe.<sup>62</sup> For G.W.F. Hegel the five fine arts are poetry, music, painting, sculpture, and architecture, which manifest the Absolute Spirit becoming conscious of itself.<sup>63</sup> Natural beauty is not art, no matter how beautiful, because it has no consciousness. Similarly, literal taste is unconscious, subjective, and too intimate to allow for any discursive elaboration. “Philosophers saved beauty from relativism by showing how it must differ from literal taste qualities,” argues Carolyn Korsmeyer.<sup>64</sup> With the aid of Nelson Goodman’s *Languages of Art*, Korsmeyer makes the case for the aesthetic potential of food as a fecund symbolic system where it can denote, represent, and exemplify a whole range of expressions, just like any other art form.<sup>65</sup> She insists that food does mean something more than itself—that is, it addresses more than the question “was it good to eat?”

Yet Korsmeyer is not willing to concede that food can be fine art. For that we must go to the postmodern scholar Allen S. Weiss and his book *Feast and Folly*. Weiss draws attention to a minority position within Western aesthetics that allows for the definition of food as art. He begins with a ringing call to arms that makes Korsmeyer’s argument appear timid. Using Marcel Rouff’s words in his 1924 *La Vie et la passion de Dodin-Bouffant, gourmet*, Weiss tries to

place the notable geniuses of cuisine next to Raphael and Beethoven. That is no problem, he contends, because the gastronomic arts, like other arts, contain a philosophy, a psychology, and an ethics and, hence, embody the superior essence of humanity.<sup>66</sup> Weiss’s method is twofold.

First, he makes his argument by illuminating certain hidden corners of the Western aesthetic tradition that did consider cuisine to be an art form. For instance, he asserts without apology that Francesco Colonna’s Italian Renaissance fantasy the *Hypnerotomachia poliphili* (The Strife of Love in a Dream, 1499) is “a distant yet distinct precursor to the postmodern sensibility” about the aesthetic possibility of cuisine. Weiss excavates what was repressed and denigrated in Western philosophy, seeking points of breakdown, rupture, and nonsense. He gives us back the openings in the original moment of modernism—let us say around 1850—when aesthetics *should* have included cuisine. In Antonin Carême’s *pièce montée* he finds a reprise of the great *divertissements de Versailles* that combined cuisine, architecture, garden layouts, and pyrotechnics, promising a total work of art and performance that was torn asunder by the Enlightenment aesthetic. Furthermore, the “aesthetics of intoxication from Baudelaire through Nietzsche covertly transformed aesthetic standards and artistic forms, inaugurating a new discursive modality for cuisine that is yet to be fully theorized.”<sup>67</sup>

What critics see as new and indecent on the Food Network is, in fact, a return to something very old—the medieval and early modern banquet—and here Weiss is in the company of Barbara Wheaton. In *Savoring the Past* Wheaton notes that, in the edible allegorical tableaux that were medieval banquets, visual effects, rarity of ingredients, opulence, and sequence of events were more important than the dishes, ingredients, preparation techniques, or flavors.<sup>68</sup> “Indeed, flavor might even be compromised,” adds Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “for the sake of appearance. These were monumental events, viewed from a distance by crowds of people over many hours. Flavor cannot be witnessed. Appearance can. Flavor is momentary. Appearance endures. The operating principle, ‘for show,’ required that appearance dominate, as did the emphasis on a legible (edible) visual language of emblems and signs. This was, one might say, a cuisine of signs, a world made edible.”<sup>69</sup> Note how much this sounds like the food on TV as critiqued by Cockburn, Voight, and Kaufman. Of course, in the context of scarcity, necessity, and inequality, the moral critique of waste, opulence, and mere show can be leveled at both medieval banquets and postmodern television shows, but does this distinguish food TV from the media’s coverage of the rest of our lives, such as in housing, clothing, or health care?

## The Food Network: Expanding Reach

Year	Households Reached by Food Network Rounded to the Nearest 100,000	Total Households Rounded to 1,000	Percentage of Households Covered
1995	13,000,000	98,990,000 <i>Statistical Abstract</i>	13.13%
1996	17,500,000	99,627,000	17.57%
1997	25,000,000	101,018,000	24.75%
1998	31,700,000	102,528,000	30.92%
1999	42,400,000	103,874,000	40.82%
2000	54,100,000	104,705,000	51.67%
2001	69,300,000	108,209,000	64.04%
2002	77,300,000	109,297,000	70.72%
2003	83,000,000	111,278,000	74.59%
2004	86,000,000	112,000,000	76.79%
2005	88,000,000	111,090,617 <i>American Community Survey 2005</i>	79.21%
2006	91,000,000	113,290,000 <i>Projected in Current Population Report</i>	80.32%

In 1993 the Providence Journal Company launched Television Food Network, which was taken over by the media company E.W. Scripps in December 1997. By the end of 1995, it was estimated to reach about 13 million American households. Today it reaches an estimated 91 million households. SOURCE: Unless otherwise stated, from annual reports of the E.W. Scripps Company.

It is not so much that Weiss makes a considered, judicious argument against the full weight of the Western philosophical tradition (as Korsmeyer does). Instead, he guts the Western canon of that which enables him to exemplify his assertion that cuisine is art. He then changes the direction of his attack. Rather than arguing that an alternative aesthetic was faintly visible despite the emerging consensus against cuisine as art in eighteenth-century philosophy, Weiss contends that the Enlightenment concord has disintegrated. The new post-modern aesthetic promises “the disappearance of the boundaries between the arts, the breakdown of the border between art and craft, the questioning of classic hierarchies of form and taste, and the expansion of what constitutes the aesthetic field.”<sup>70</sup> If fashion can become a fine art today, why not cooking?<sup>71</sup> Why is the vicarious consumption of food pornographic, while the vicarious consumption of couture is, well, just fashion?

In fact, cuisine has a lot in common with haute couture. Cuisine happens when food enters the fashion cycle, where its fluctuations are described, debated, contested, predicted, and awaited in magazines, on television, on the Web. Couture happens when clothing abandons the realm of traditional practice and enters the sphere of conscious change, which brings with it obsession, waste, and playfulness. It is unarguably a function of abundance—a little like carving pumpkins on Halloween instead of eating them. Cuisine is to cooking what fashion is to clothing—superfluous and beautiful—where formal characteristics trump function. Of course, the boundaries between necessity and superfluity change with changing times and places. In their extremes they can be easily identified, even if they are difficult to extricate since even the most minimal and functional of meals (and clothing) have an aesthetic

dimension. On the other hand, even the most flamboyant of banquets have a nutritional and a social function. The chef is to the cook what the fashion designer is to the seamstress.

Even if we find Weiss’s enthusiasm for cuisine misplaced, I think it is time to listen to his, Korsmeyer’s, and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s argument that to work with food can be more than cooking it and eating it. Although both cooking and eating are important and must be valued as such against the tyranny of discourse, to dismiss the visual, performative delight people take in watching cooking as “porn” is, I think, narrow-minded and misguided. We have to begin the discussion by conceding an aesthetic dimension to food—beyond literal taste—and only then can we decide whether what we see on TV is good, bad, or ugly.

Furthermore, there is, I think, hidden in the term *food porn* a sense of embarrassment that while others, like the French, do food, Americans do food porn. I don’t see the difference, other than a shift in the medium—pictures (still, colored, and moving) instead of words. As this essay suggests, this is an important difference that upends old hierarchies of distinction, but it does not assume that the French were ever cooking more often than they were talking about it.<sup>72</sup> In fact, as far as Julia was concerned, the truth was the obverse: “We know very few French people who enjoy cooking at all...when they’re going to have anyone for dinner—they either take them out or they go to the *charcuterie* and get something.”<sup>73</sup>

Marshall McLuhan—that erratic sage of our age—noted that each medium works with a different ratio among the senses, which creates new forms of awareness.<sup>74</sup> Television is the medium of the nonliterate, and thus, it is perfectly suited to cooking, both in terms of production codes and social

codes.<sup>75</sup> Cooking is mostly about the body doing stuff that is unarticulated; cooking has been the social responsibility of the subaltern, who have higher rates of illiteracy. All the literate, sequential, lineal cookbooks and aural recipes on radio could not compete with the instantaneously embodied images on our TVs. Television has allowed cooking to be born as a public image, different from a book or a radio show. McLuhan predicted that long ago when he wrote: “In audile-tactile Europe TV has intensified the visual sense, spurring them toward American styles of packaging and dressing. In America, the intensely visual culture, TV has opened the doors of audile-tactile perception to the non-visual world of spoken languages and food and the plastic arts.”<sup>76</sup> Until television, we were unable to capture cooking in distance transmission. Now we can see it. The television age is “the age of consciousness of the unconscious.”<sup>77</sup> What lay hidden in the inarticulate language of our limbs has been exposed to light.

Yet I do not want to overdo the argument. There is a long history of the imperious reach of the visual. It is the primacy of the visual that has given us unblemished but inedible tomatoes, waxed but mushy produce, robust but unripe fruits, and polite but unaromatic food. The visual is also distancing—away from the body and, hence, objective and analytical—while the aural, tactile, and palatal improve with proximity and intimacy, and thus they are held to be compromised by subjectivity. Constance Classen, Deane Curtin, Lisa Heldke, David Howes, Carolyn Korsmeyer, and Anthony Synnott, among others, have elaborated how, in the Western philosophical tradition, sight triumphed over the other senses.<sup>78</sup> Hegel noted the progressive evolution of human society from the mouth to the eye, eventually transcending the body.<sup>79</sup>

I would also concede that much of food-as-art on TV is quite bad. Thus, *pornographic* is, perhaps, a good enough rhetorical stick to beat it up with. But the term is inaccurate in that most of food TV is really syrupy sentimentalism about domestic bliss rather than pointless sex. The charge is also excessive because it represses all the other aesthetic potentialities of cooking.

Our real problem may be with seeing and watching something that used to be intimate. Television outs what had become a private ritual, at least for the middle class. It was not only home cooking but the production of spectacular food that was hidden in the bowels of the invisible kitchen, as we find in George Orwell’s *Down and Out in Paris and London* (from which Erving Goffman used the moment when the server swings through the kitchen door as the quintessential illustration of backstage and

front-stage).<sup>80</sup> Now, both domestic cookery and spectacular cooking have come out of the confines of the kitchen. Thus, everything is cuisine because cuisine happens when cooking leaves the kitchen.<sup>81</sup> In the past that transformation could happen only by means of the print media, such as Gault-Millau and Michelin, with their burdens of literacy. Now it can happen by means of the moving image, which does not require the stringency of literacy and is hence much more democratic, at least potentially. What was merely uttered is now outered, to use McLuhan’s aphorism.<sup>82</sup>

Now that we can see what the body does on TV, is bodily knowledge and experience valorized, or is it still bracketed with the primitive, the backward, the inarticulate, and the subjective—hence not a realm of legitimate knowledge? I am not sure, because all the talk about food porn gives me pause. Yet I think we are on our way to being able to engage intellectually and aesthetically with the corporeality of the body and the desperate ephemerality of its needs thanks to the ubiquity of the body doing stuff on TV.

## Domesticating Cuisine: An Alternative Way of Reading Food TV

By the end of the twentieth century, as TV families limped along, televisual cooking, almost as compensation, was repeatedly and successfully staged in what appeared to be the household kitchen, jazzed up with expensive props from convection ovens and six-burner stove tops to copper pots and pans. The pretense continued. The programming, especially on daytime Food Network, is replete with faux domesticity—*Paula’s Homecooking*, *The Barefoot Contessa*, *Semi-Homemade Cooking with Sandra Lee*, *Everyday Italian*, *Easy Entertaining with Michael Chiarello*, and numerous others, all of which are staged in kitchens marked with domesticity: the quite private space, the cinched lace curtains, the warm woodwork and trim, the glimpse of the backyard, a table set for two, a small sink, etc. The template is hardly pornographic.

Julia had so dominated the genre of domestic chef that today the most successful TV shows on food—that is, those that are most talked about, not the ones listed above—are all anti-Julia shows. They are spectacular, antidomestic, and antipedagogic. In particular, there are two kinds of exceptions to the theater of domesticity.

In shows such as *Emeril Live* and *Iron Chef*, the props, the lighting, the attire, and the audience evoke a theater, as discussed above: here is cooking as unabashed performance. As Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has written, to perform is

to do, that is, to execute. To perform is to behave appropriately. To perform is also to show.<sup>83</sup> It is in this third aspect of performance that food events tend toward the spectacular. The point is no longer replication within a domestic kitchen but the show itself, from the exotic ingredients and cuisine of *Iron Chef* to the “Bam!” and “Kicking it up a notch” of *Emeril Live*. Thus, whenever Emeril mentions garlic or pork fat or alcohol or some large cut of meat (with lots of fat), the audience is cued to cheer boisterously. About a decade ago one commentator noted that “cooking shows have been notoriously bland offerings during the past few years, but the brash New Orleans chef Emeril Lagasse has arrived to bring on the spice. Spirited and prone to free-association, he is a kind of Frank Sinatra of cooking show hosts, a kitchen-bound swinger.”<sup>84</sup> And Thomas Matthews of *Wine Spectator* was right on the mark when he noted that Emeril was “less of a professor in a classroom than a preacher in a gospel tabernacle.”<sup>85</sup> Indeed, Emeril’s style and self-confidence are *ex cathedra*—a monumentalism emanating from the bishop’s chair, that other site of hypermasculinity.

There is another kind of counterpoint to the cloying domesticity of food television since Julia, and that is by way of the tour. There are two kinds of tours, the national tour in search of tradition and familiarity and the exotic tour in search of difference. Rachael Ray’s *Forty Dollars a Day* is one version of the national tour (she began traveling abroad only in her more recent shows); *Roker on the Road*, another. In one typical thirty-minute episode in 2005, Roker covered kringle—a danish—from Larsen’s Bakery in Racine, Wisconsin, conch fritters from Alabama Jack’s, located in “an outpost in Florida,” southern fried chicken on waffles from Amy Ruth’s in Harlem, New York, and pepperoni roll from the Country Club Bakery in Fairmont, West Virginia, where “each and every one of them are made by hand.” The conceit is the American as a tourist in his own country, weaving the nation together through his travels and consumption of local, often “handmade” foods. The local could be regional icons such as New England clam chowder or native restaurants that are inevitably suggested by “locals”—a word that appears to be the most important one for Rachael Ray’s show.

Another version of this romance with the local is the barbecue, America’s response to *terroir* (both are idealized and naturalized), which seems to be the perpetual theme for Bobby Flay and Al Roker. Yet no matter how much they travel, Ray, Flay, and Roker are enacting domesticity at another level: the nation. Their travels thread together a national community “that is regionally differentiated and paradoxically unified by a shared heritage.”<sup>86</sup>

Then there are people who only travel abroad—like Anthony Bourdain in *The Cook’s Tour*. His stance is that of an educator, most closely recalling Julia’s pedagogic posture, but that is where the similarity ends.<sup>87</sup> This is not the first time the ideology of domesticity has been countered by mobility. *Gourmet*, from 1941 onwards, specialized in such adventures. “Taste enhances place” and “place enhances taste” was the complementary duality of the magazine’s credo. It is notable that in 1994 the ratio of editorial pages dedicated to travel to those addressing food was 530 to 567.<sup>88</sup> As Jonathan Raban has suggested, “Traveling always entails infidelity.”<sup>89</sup> So when Rachael Ray travels on forty dollars a day, she may not be involved in a feminist act, but she is undermining her references to the boyfriend (recently turned husband) and other such anchors of home. She is on the road, and he is left behind—something Julia rarely did.

Compared with Rachael Ray, Bourdain is doing worse—he never mentions his wife. His writing is not only a retort to Juliaesque domesticity but also a mirror image of the somber masculinity of the “professional chef,” played with swagger and sardonic irony. His act is as much a caricature of masculinity as is Emeril’s. Bourdain’s conceit is a modernist celebration of the bad boy, a rock star mocking himself. As one of the more thoughtful students at the Culinary Institute of America, Christopher Fotta, puts it:

Anthony Bourdain’s book [*Kitchen Confidential*] is the antidote to the CIA. In fact it is almost anti-everything that we are taught here. It is the opposite of the code of professionalism that is drilled into our psyche from the first time we set foot on campus. It highlights a subculture in the cooking industry that is seldom discussed in our sacred Roth Hall. It is the world of machismo, locker-room minded, substance-abused, foul-mouthed cooks that steal anything they can and screw every available waitress in the dry storage area. This is the entry-level, humble beginnings of our glorious profession....I wholeheartedly agree with his sentiment that “the professional kitchen is the last refuge of the misfit.”<sup>90</sup>

Bourdain says he was attracted to cooking because “the cooks *ruled*.” He writes, “I spent most of my waking hours drinking, smoking pot, scheming, and doing my best to amuse, outrage, impress and penetrate anyone silly enough to find me entertaining. I was—to be frank—a spoiled, miserable, narcissistic, self-destructive and thoughtless young lout, badly in need of a good ass-kicking.”<sup>91</sup> Bourdain can carry on with this “junkie Byron” attitude because he does not carry the burdens of class.

He shreds the aura around professional cooking, which appropriates a different posture—a proper, upwardly mobile, gentlemanly ethos—in contrast to his affinity for working-



class masculinity. Both scripts are far from Julia's, but the blue-collar foul-mouthed screed is the more extreme counterpoint both in terms of class and gender. Bourdain predictably appropriates it, but his attitude is not born of the class he hopes to mimic, which is evident from his literary self-confidence. He writes:

Generally speaking, American cooks—meaning, born in the USA, possibly school-trained, culinarily sophisticated types who know before you show them what *monter au beurre* means and how to make a béarnaise sauce—are a lazy, undisciplined and, worst of all, high-maintenance lot, annoyingly opinionated, possessed of egos requiring constant stroking and tune-ups, and, as members of a privileged and wealthy population, unused to the kind of “disrespect” a busy chef is inclined to dish out.<sup>92</sup>

Bourdain can even slip into some class and race sentimentality when he writes that “the Ecuadorian, Mexican, Dominican and Salvadorian cooks I’ve worked with over the years make most CIA-educated white boys look like clumsy, sniveling little punks.”<sup>93</sup> That from a Vassar-educated and CIA-trained white boy!

Bourdain’s language here exquisitely mimics the rhetoric of journeymen printers at the end of the nineteenth century who, with the introduction of the Linotype and the birth of publishing corporations, felt a serious threat to their working-class masculinity. It is at this time that “male printers expressed even greater concern and antagonism toward boys than toward women who worked in the industry.”<sup>94</sup>

With Bourdain we see the other face of TV cooking, the gesture of denial against domesticity and upwardly mobile gentlemen-boys tied to the apron strings of well-bred women, which is the world Julia came to occupy. The most popular shows—*Emeril Live*, *Rachael Ray*, and *Iron Chef*—are basically contra-Julia, postdomestic shows, reactions against the hegemonic model of *The French Chef*. They strike a chord because, ever since Julia, we have been stuck in the TV kitchen and put in a dress. That is why Bourdain wrote, in *Kitchen Confidential*, that he wouldn’t be caught dead on the Food Network. Of course, even the best of us are eventually domesticated. In fact, Bourdain’s discovery of foreign food in *The Cook’s Tour* is another iteration of domestic cuisine, albeit in opposition.

Bourdain brings us back to the chase—the ethos of movies with which I began this essay—this time in pursuit of authentic, exotic fare, by ranging widely across the globe, yet he does so by keeping us glued to the home entertainment center, allowing us to appreciate anew the dialectic between the home and the world, and the role of the man within it. ☺

## NOTES

Critical comments by Myron Beasley, Kristin Langellier, and Laura Lindenfeld Sher forced me to rethink overly simplistic ideas about gender and the media and introduced me to the performance studies literature. I am indebted to them for their patience in guiding a sociologist through a small portion of their field. A thoughtful critique by Darra Goldstein markedly improved this paper’s focus. A patient audience at the ASFS annual meeting in Boston let me test out some of these ideas in a preliminary form. Thanks to Mimi Fix for drawing my attention to the article by Molly O’Neill. Thanks to Berthys A. Ayide for drawing my attention to the quotation on display kitchens by the National Restaurant Association.

1. Warren I. Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984); and Michael Kammen, *American Culture: American Tastes* (New York: Knopf, 1999), 32–33.

2. US Department of Commerce, *National Income and Product Account Data for 1929–1986*.

3. Lynn Spigel, *Making Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 1. Radio reached a similar saturation point much more slowly but by about the same time as television. Also see Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988).

4. “In 1951 a Gallup poll asked: ‘Which do you enjoy most—radio, television or the movies?’ Radio got 50%, TV 24%, and movies 21%. Late in 1975 a Roper poll of 2,007 Americans...[asked what they were doing *more* of than they used to, and this is how they answered:] Spending time at home 54%[:] Watching television 42%[:] Reading books 34%[:] Entertaining friends in your home 22%[:] Going out to places of public entertainment 16%[:] In terms of public and private spaces, it almost seemed as though the clock had been turned back one hundred years.” Kammen, *American Culture*, 25.

5. The basic ideological frame of middle-class domesticity had been established in the early Victorian era (from 1820 to 1860) in response to industrialization, urbanization, and separation of the public and the private spheres.

6. *TV Guide, Fifty Years of Television* (New York: Crown, 2002).

7. Kammen, *American Culture*, 32–33.

8. Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 78–81.

9. I find Nathalie Jordi’s collation of Julia’s media career the most succinct and useful for my purpose here: *The French Chef*, born in 1963, was broadcast on 104 educational TV stations across the United States by 1966. Julia won an Emmy for it in the same year and made the cover of *Time* magazine. *Time* magazine editorialized: “So good is she that men who have not the slightest intention of going into the kitchen for anything but ice cubes watch her for pure enjoyment,” *Time*, 25 November 1966, 79–87. “In 1967 *Harper’s Bazaar* named her one of the 100 Women of Accomplishment in America. Color shows debuted in October 1970 with ‘Bouillabaisse à la Marseillaise,’ and the first nationally broadcast open-captioned program, which aired on PBS on August 5, 1972, was *The French Chef*. In the end, there were 119 *The French Chef* episodes, although Child went on to film nine other, complementary series, as well as write 12 other cookbooks.” Nathalie Jordi, “‘Our Apprenticeship at the Art of Graceful Living’: American Distinction through French Cooking, 1941–1980” (student thesis, Brown University, 2004), 58.

10. According to Jill Norman, Julia’s model for *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* was “the foundation stone of mid-twentieth-century French bourgeois cooking” published in 1958 and titled *La Cuisine de Madame Ste-Ange*. See Norman, “An Exuberant Style,” *Gastronomica* 5 (2005): no. 3, 97.

11. See Melissa Caldwell’s discussion of domestication in “Domesticating the French Fry: McDonald’s and Consumerism in Moscow,” in James L. Watson and Melissa L. Caldwell, *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 180–196.

12. Quoted in Laura Shapiro, “Sacred Cows and Dreamberries: In Search of the Flavor of France,” *Gastronomica* 5 (2005): no. 3, 59.

13. This other kind of TV is mostly about what is on the Food Network, which was born in 1993 and had reached 87 million American households out of a total of 109 million by 2005. The *Los Angeles Times* staff writer Corie Brown notes that the Food Network’s advertising revenue had soared to \$225 million in 2004 as it began drawing in the much-sought-after car and pharmaceutical ads. Yet “anyone who grew up watching Julia Child,” Brown continues, “knows that public television

was the birthplace of food TV. Now public television stations across the country broadcast more than 71 cooking shows.... There are as much as 11.5 hours of chopping, dicing and baking across major markets." Food programs on public television—such as *Lidia's Italian-American Kitchen*—continue to be popular, often drawing twice the audience of the Food Network's top programs. But the Food Network is the fastest-growing concern in that business. Corrie Brown, "Food Shows Are Making Chefs into Stars," *Los Angeles Times*, 26 July 2004.

14. Here, I am drawing attention to the intertextual relations between Julia Child's program and other programs on television, which can be extended, fruitfully I think, to other media such as radio and print.

15. See Noël Riley Fitch, *Appetite for Life: The Biography of Julia Child* (New York: Doubleday, 1997).

16. *Gastronomica* 5 (2005): no. 3.

17. Some of the poems made me feel like a voyeur, although I must also confess that tears welled up at a number of other places.

18. Alex Prud'homme, "Writing Pulia," *Gastronomica* 5 (2005): no. 3, 23–25.

19. So much so that it was Julia's habit to insist that Paul autograph copies of *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* along with her.

20. Sharon Hudgins, "A Conversation with Julia Child, Spring 1984," *Gastronomica* 5 (2005): no. 3, 104–108.

21. Noël Riley Fitch, "Notre Dame de la Cuisine and the Prince des Gastronomes," *Gastronomica* 5 (2005): no. 3, 73.

22. Samantha Barbas, "Just Like Home: 'Home Cooking' and the Domestication of the American Restaurant," *Gastronomica* 2 (2002): no. 4, 42–52.

23. *Ibid.*, 47–48.

24. See Jordi, "'Our Apprenticeship at the Art of Graceful Living';" Peggy Steiner Ratcheson, "Food and Fashion in United States Society: The Mass-Culturalization of Gourmet-Cookery," (Ph.D. diss., Washington University, 1986); and Shapiro, "Sacred Cows and Dreamberries."

25. Daphne Derven, "Pizza with Julia," *Gastronomica* 5 (2005): no. 3, 86.

26. Quoted in Shapiro, "Sacred Cows and Dreamberries," 56–57, 60.

27. Fitch, "Notre Dame de la Cuisine," 77.

28. Simone Beck, Louisette Bertholle, and Julia Child, *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), vii.

29. Shapiro, "Sacred Cows and Dreamberries," 57.

30. It is a version of French food modeled after the gastronome Curnonsky's monumental twenty-eight-volume encyclopedia of France's regional food, *Le Tour de France gastronomique* (1921–1925), which simultaneously mapped the French national palate and invented gastronomic tourism. See Noël Riley Fitch, "Notre Dame de la Cuisine," 74. For the broader theoretical point about the middle-class of middle-class nationalism, see Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

31. Joan Reardon, M.F.K. Fisher, Julia Child, and Alice Waters: *Celebrating the Pleasures of the Table* (New York: Harmony, 1994).

32. Alice Julier, "Julia at Smith," *Gastronomica* 5 (2005): no. 3, 45–46.

33. Hudgins, "A Conversation with Julia Child," 107.

34. Betty Friedan, "Cooking with Betty Friedan...Yes, Betty Friedan," *New York Times*, 5 January 1977.

35. Leslie Brenner, *American Appetite: The Coming of Age of a Cuisine* (New York: Avon Books, 1999), 65.

36. Quoted in *Ibid.*, 65.

37. Hudgins, "A Conversation with Julia Child," 107.

38. Quoted in Joan Reardon, "Mastering the Art of French Cooking: A Near Classic or a Near Miss," *Gastronomica* 5 (2005): no. 3, 71.

39. Norman, "An Exuberant Style," 97.

40. Julia's engagement with the specificity of the medium was first visible in the print media in *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* when she strenuously argued for a "serious cookbook" against the advice of her editors at Houghton Mifflin, who eventually rejected the manuscript for being too serious, too difficult, too

much altogether. Laura Shapiro notes that, while Simca "approached each dish food-first," Julia "started with the text" and insisted on its integrity so that the food "remained authentically French" and yet thoroughly practical for Americans. "Sacred Cows and Dreamberries," 56.

41. Jacques Pépin, "My Friend Julia Child," *Gastronomica* 5 (2005): no. 3, 12.

42. *Ibid.*, 10.

43. Anne Willan, "A Born Performer," *Gastronomica* 5 (2005): no. 3, 81.

44. Franco Romagnoli, "La Bella Julia," *Gastronomica* 5 (2005): no. 3, 21.

45. See Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (New York: The Noonday Press, 1957).

46. Quoted in Harvey Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003): 228.

47. David Belman, "Blueprint Special: Renovating Your Restaurant Can Revamp Business," accessed at [www.restaurant.org/rusa/magArticle.cfm?ArticleID=603](http://www.restaurant.org/rusa/magArticle.cfm?ArticleID=603).

48. Leo Lowenthal, "The Triumph of Mass Idols," in *Literature, Popular Culture, and Society*, Lowenthal, ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Pacific Book Publications, 1961).

49. Pauline Adema weaves Emeril's masculinity around his sex appeal: "One female commentator suggested his show is about lust, 'about viewers hungry for the swarthy 37 year old chef who oozes sex appeal as he sweats over his boiling pots.... Here is a man who is cooking for you, looking and speaking to you, and he is passionate and entertaining: This is many women's dream. By exuding female-directed sexual appeal and male-directed machismo, Emeril can appeal to viewers of both genders." Adema, "Vicarious Consumption: Food, Television and the Ambiguity of Modernity," *Journal of American & Comparative Cultures* 23 (2000): no. 3, 117.

50. Quoted in Juliette Rossant, *Super Chef: The Making of the Great Modern Restaurant Empires* (New York: Free Press, 2004): 13.

51. See Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, *Accounting for Taste* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

52. Gertrude Stein, *Everybody's Autobiography* (New York: Random House, 1937), 172.

53. Raymond A. Sokolov, "Cooking by the Book," *New York Times*, 7 December 1975.

54. Molly O'Neill, "Food Porn," *Columbia Journalism Review* 5 (September/October 2003), accessed at [www.cjr.org/issues/2003/5/foodpornoneill.asp](http://www.cjr.org/issues/2003/5/foodpornoneill.asp).

55. Alexander Cockburn, "Gastro-Porn," *New York Review of Books*, 8 December 1977, 15–19.

56. According to Frederick Kaufman and his coconspirator, the porn photographer Barbara Nitke, there are stunning parallels between techniques of lighting to show cooking inside a pot and the ways "to illuminate the crotch, which left to its own devices remains in the dark. As the camera zooms in, Tyler Florence in *Food 911* is spreading the raw chicken breast across the cutting board. Nitke exults, 'That is the quintessential pussy shot. The color of it, the texture of it, the camera lingering lovingly over it.' Finally, as Tyler and the desperate housewife go cheek to cheek and taste the chicken and rice, Nitke chimes in, 'Classic porn style. They're stretching the moment out, the orgasmic moment. In porn they'll take a cum shot and run it in an endless loop.'" Frederick Kaufman, "Debbie Does Salad: The Food Network at the Frontiers of Pornography," *Harper's*, October 2005, 57.

57. *Ibid.*

58. Carolyn Voight, "You Are What You Eat: Contemplations on Civilizing the Palate with *Gourmet*" (master's thesis, McGill University, 1996), 76.

59. Kaufman, "Debbie Does Salad," 56.

60. O'Neill, "Food Porn."

61. Gary Gardner and Brian Halweil, *Underfed and Overfed: The Global Epidemic of Malnutrition* (New York: Worldwatch Institute, 2000), paper no. 150, available at [www.worldwatch.org/pubs/paper/150.html](http://www.worldwatch.org/pubs/paper/150.html).

62. George Dickie, *The Century of Taste: The Philosophical Odyssey of Taste in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

63. G.W.F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, T. M. Knox, trans., 2 vols., (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975).

64. Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste: Food and Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 51.

65. Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art* (New York: Hackett, 1976).
66. Allen S. Weiss, *Feast and Folly: Cuisine, Intoxication, and the Poetics of the Sublime* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002).
67. *Ibid.*, 1, 37.
68. Barbara Ketcham Wheaton, *Savoring the Past: The French Kitchen and Table from 1300 to 1789* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983), 15, 49.
69. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Making Sense of Food in Performance: The Table and the Stage," at [www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/web/ASTRFood.pdf](http://www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/web/ASTRFood.pdf).
70. Weiss, *Feast and Folly*, 10.
71. See Sung Bok Kim, "Is Fashion Art?" *Fashion Theory* 2 (1998): no. 1.
72. See Ferguson, *Accounting for Taste*.
73. Hudgins, "A Conversation with Julia Child," 106.
74. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: Signet, 1964).
75. See John Fiske, *Television Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1987).
76. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 54.
77. *Ibid.*, 56.
78. Deane W. Curtin and Lisa M. Heldke, eds., *Cooking, Eating, Thinking: Transformative Philosophies in Food* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste*; Constance Classen, David Howes, and Anthony Synnott, *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell* (London: Routledge, 1994).
79. See Martin Jay's fascinating argument about the assault on the ocular in twentieth-century French philosophy in *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994).
80. George Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London* (Orlando, FL: Harvest/HBJ Book, 1972); Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday), 121–122.
81. Ferguson, *Accounting for Taste*.
82. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 64.
83. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Playing to the Senses: Food as a Performance Medium," *Performance Research* 4 (1999): no. 1, 1–2.
84. Quoted in Adema, "Vicarious Consumption," 116.
85. Thomas Matthews, "Emeril Live," *Wine Spectator* 24 (1999): no. 7, 42.
86. Niki Strange, "Perform, Educate, Entertain: Ingredients of the Cookery Programme Genre," in *Media Studies: A Reader*, Paul Marris and Sue Thornham, eds. (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 258.
87. In "Food Porn" O'Neill does an excellent job describing how contemporary food writing melded the masculine gourmand with the feminine cook.
88. Voight, "You Are What You Eat," 51, 78–79.
89. Jonathan Raban, *Passage to Juneau: A Sea and Its Meanings* (New York: Vintage, 2000), 36.
90. Christopher Fotta, "A Review of *Kitchen Confidential*" (paper submitted in the CIA course Food and Culture, 2003), 2.
91. Anthony Bourdain, *Kitchen Confidential* (New York: Harper Collins, 2000), 21.
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93. *Ibid.*, 56.
94. Ava Baron, "Acquiring Manly Competence: The Demise of Apprenticeship and the Remasculinization of Printers' Work," in *Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America*, Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffen, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 152–153.