Full citation:

**Tominc, Ana (2022): Food and Cooking on Early Television in Europe: An Introduction, in: Tominc, Ana (ed.): Food and Cooking on early Television in Europe. Impact on Postwar Foodways. London, New York: Routledge.**

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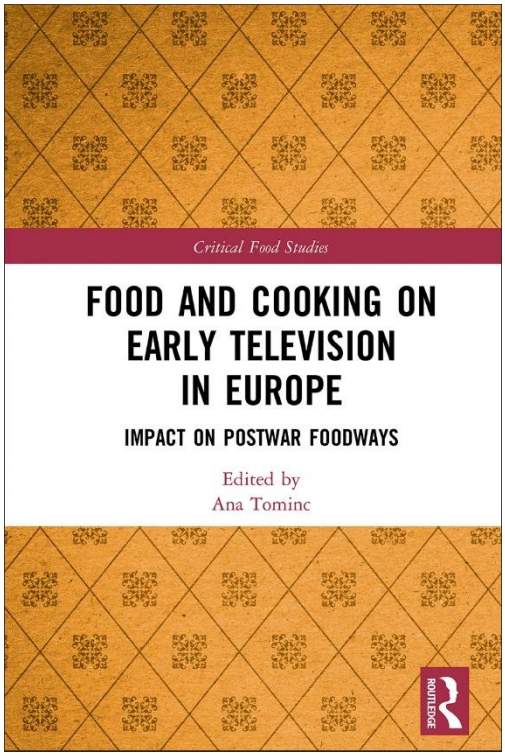

Chapter 1:

# Food and Cooking on Early Television in Europe: An Introduction

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## Introducing Food on Early Television

Food has been part of television from its beginnings; as this new technology attracted audiences in ever increasing numbers in the first two decades after the Second World War, food appeared on screens in a number of genres, and in various quantities and contexts in the majority of European (and many non-European) countries. From actors and chefs, such as Fanny Cradock in the UK, Raymond Oliver in France and Clemens Wilmenrod in Germany who cooked on European TV screens in the 1950s and 1960s, to the culinary travels of Soldati in the north of Italy and various food adverts – including product placements – that promoted the growing European post-war industry and its developments, food-related programmes educated and entertained audiences from early on. This is perhaps not surprising; food resonates at the core of our being since, to paraphrase Brillat-Savarin's classic phrase, we are what we eat, quite literally. Without food, we cannot exist; on the most basic level, we have to incorporate it daily in order to sustain ourselves. Through food, we also *become*, on a more symbolic level; while human beings as an omnivorous species can eat almost anything, not everything makes it to our plates. As Lévi-Strauss (1962 /1964, p. 89) remarks in Totemism, for food to be seen as "good to eat" (*bon à manger*), it first needs to be "good to think (with)" (*bon à penser*) since before food can nourish our bodies, it needs to nourish our minds. Through the symbolic aspects of food, then, we give food meanings that identify us as individuals and as a community and that make food – as a cultural and social phenomenon – edible to us (Fischler, 1988; Belasco, 2002; Murcott, 2019).

Instruction on how to cook and everything that surrounds it has throughout history always followed new technologies that enable different, more efficient ways of communicating. Mennell (1985, p. 65) notes that cookbooks were one of the first books to be printed following the invention of printing in the late 15$^{th}$ century, with the much-praised German *Kuchenmeisterei* (published in

Nuremberg in 1485) among the very first. Similarly, cooking instruction appeared on the radio even before the so-called "Golden Age of Radio" between the late 1920s and the beginning of the Second World War (Briggs, 1965). As Lyon and Ross (2016) find, Constance Peel, the pre-First World War author of many cookbooks and household manuals, was the first regular radio presenter of cookery talks, with her kitchen conversations appearing as a regular part of the newly established 'Women's Hour' from 1923 onwards (see also Andrews, 2012, for a broader focus on women, home and the radio). Cooking instruction appeared on radio in the US, Germany and Australia at a similar time (e.g. Johnson, 1981; Lacey, 1996; Cooke, 2016) although, as in the UK, culinary instruction was but one of the food programmes that women could listen to on the radio. In the US, it was the longest running and the most successful of all, cementing the fame of a cultural icon, such as the legendary brand name Betty Crocker (Getz Rouse, 1978; Shapiro 2004; Murray, 2015).

As the in-between the wars decades saw the rapid development of technology that supported producing and broadcasting television pictures around the world during the 1920s and 1930s, with British, German, French and Soviet broadcasters transmitting the first programmes from the late 1930s onwards (Hickethier, 2008, pp. 71-2), food again made it as one of the staples of early technological advances. By mobilizing images, Wolton (1990, p.11, all translations mine) writes, "this category so undervalued in Western thought for more than twenty centuries /…/ [television] makes us dream and makes us forget," but it also enables identification of both individual and collective selves by selecting, repurposing and shaping, that is, representing, food and our relationship with it. Unlike cookbooks, magazines and radio before, television rescued the ability to hear what to do *and* at the same time see how to do it from the constraints of the written text that required not only an ability to read, but also the sufficient knowledge to *imagine* in the absence of demonstration how food and the cooking processes could and indeed, should, look like. As an oral medium, television presented an advantage because it foregrounded oral, rather than literary modes, bringing forward a range of dialects, tastes and possible practices that had previously been hidden in the hegemonic tradition of the West that foregrounded the written over the oral (Fiske and Hartley, 1978, p. 125). As far as seeing new things was concerned, television was truly an "extension of ourselves" (McLuhan, 1964/2008) since more than ever before, a presenter showing the audience in front of the screens a new dish, a new ingredient or a new procedure could be viewed by the masses in their own homes, without the need to schedule anything, or go anywhere.

Often defined loosely to allow for variation in the national contexts in which national televisions were first established, the term "early television" generally describes the two decades following the Second World War when the majority of the European nations established their television broadcast networks, mostly through the 1950s and 1960s (Hickethier, 2008, p. 56). Research into early popular television, as Corner (1991) categorises programming other than 'serious' genres, such as drama, had, despite methodological restraints of early television work, attracted considerable scholarly attention, especially in the last two decades as part of studies into both Western and Eastern European television history. Holmes' (2008) seminal study into television culture in Britain in the 1950s, for example, focuses on various entertainment genres on both public service BBC and commercial ITV. She examines various ways in which popular entertainment tried to meet both the ideals of public service and their audience's tastes and expectations. Early television programmes from socialist European countries have recently also received more attention from media studies experts. In her recent book, "TV socialism", Imre (2016), for the first time, explores similarities in various genres of early socialist TV, including those considered popular, such as soap operas and game shows. Mihelj and Huxtable (2018, p. 7), while also focusing primarily on socialist television, specifically foreground a comparative aspect of media research that "situates socialist television trajectories vis-à-vis their counterparts around the globe". In all these studies, any cooking-related programme has often been framed and discussed as part of daily programming for women and researched from the perspective of the audience and daily TV programme angle; the food itself is rarely, if ever, mentioned (although see, for example, Irwin, 2013).

From the perspective of food studies, within which this volume is largely situated, the existing scholarship on early food programming is skewed towards the English-speaking world (UK, US, Canada, Australia) and France, areas where food studies as a discipline largely started to develop (other early centres being in Belgium and in Italy). Collins' (2009) pioneering book on "The evolution of television cooking shows" in the US, for example, maps out how cooking shows evolved from the 1940s onwards in the US. In this, she shows how cooking shows evolved from radio food broadcasting to television, culminating in the rise to fame of personalities, such as, most famously, Julia Child, who cooked on US television from 1962 onwards (see also Miller, 2002). Cohen (2015) and especially Roger (2016) in his monograph "*La cuisine en spectacle. L*es *émissions de recettes à la télévision (1953-2012)"*, similarly, follow the development of cooking shows on French television from 1953 onwards, when the genre was first presented on television in France. From the first TV cooking programme, *Recettes de Mr X*, presented by the actor Georges

Adet, and then the chef Raymond Oliver who cooked on French television from 1954 onwards, Roger traces the development of the genre up to now. Other studies focus on specific personalities or shows, and provide an analysis of the chefs' celebrity, the construction of identity markers, such as gender and class, or they provide biographies of the chefs concerned. Moseley (2008), thus, analyses the British cook Marguerite Patten and her construction of femininity and Geddes (2019) presents Fanny Cradock's biography, focusing on Cradock as a celebrity. Bonner (2009) focuses on Kerr's multi-platforming in Australia and Polan (2010) writes about James Beard in the US. Only scattered scholarship exists for other locations, for example, in Europe, Weinreb (2011) discusses the chef Wilmenrod in West Germany, Becker (2010) compares Wilmenrod's show in West Germany to Drummer's in East Germany (GDR) (see also Schmeltz, 2018, for early culinary television in Germany), Tominc (2015) provides an overview of food on television in socialist Yugoslavia, Ericksson (2016) looks at cooking shows on early Swedish television and very recently, Callegari and Perna (2020) analyse Soldati's "search for authenticity in food and wine" in Italian food documentaries of the 1960s and 1970s. Elsewhere, Wei and Martin (2015) provide insights into Taiwan while Pite (2013) and Eduardo de Lazzari (2006) focus on Argentina, where Doña Petrona ruled the culinary scene of 20th century Argentina, on and off-air, much like Julia Child in the US. These are some examples of analyses of non-European, non-English early culinary television.

These insights into early food television are precious, as we start to discover how – and whether at all – food on early television evolved in countries on the periphery of the field of attention of both anglophone and francophone television and food studies. Research into these is rare, especially from the perspective of food studies, in particular, because the history of food television often misses out on what is deemed the larger and often more visible preoccupations of the disciplines that meet at its core: for food history, the emphasis has rather been primarily on written, rather than audio-visual, genres and resources. These have their many challenges, as historians of early television are quick to point out: from the lack of recordings before the mid-1950s when much broadcasting was live, to existing recordings being re-recorded over, or later lost or misplaced (Jacobs, 2000; Holmes, 2008; O'Dwyer, 2008). Because of this, as Caughie (1991, pp. 24-5) reminds us, it is characteristic of early TV work that "there is a long chain of missing links", which as a consequence "makes the recovery of the history of the early television form and style an archaeological, rather than a strictly historical procedure." For mainstream television historians, food as a distinct and niche topic does not spark the interest required, because outside of the

discipline's larger units and concepts of interest, such as the domestic programme, television commercial, documentary or children's programme in which food often appears, scholars of early television rarely focus on food. One example is Bonner (2009) who comes to discussion of early food programming as a way to demonstrate the functioning of early multi-platforming in relation to contemporary concepts in media studies, such as in her case, that of media convergence (Jenkins, 2006).

**Aims of this Volume**

This volume aims, then, first and foremost, to provide space for a focus on the representation of food and cooking on early television in Europe through critical examination of the role of food programming on European early television and its impact on the food habits and identities of the various European audiences. It does so regardless of the political system in which different Europeans found themselves after the war: from Portugal under the dictator Salazar to the capitalist, welfare-oriented states of Britain, France, Italy, and the Netherlands, to the non-aligned socialist Yugoslavia, and finally, the communist Czechoslovakia and East Germany, this volume foregrounds the similarities and differences in food programming as seen on television in these eight European countries. Setting aside the usual divisions of post-war Europe, here understood as the period until roughly the end of the 1960s, it presents the reader with a number of chapters that speak of the variety of modernities that European populations participated in the development of after the War. In doing so, the chapters show how similar television programmes related to food across Europe really were, and how differences in perceptions of gender, religion and secularism, nation, expertise and celebrity played out through food programmes, speaking of early television programming choices as well as reflecting on the requirements of the audience at home.

The case studies presented also offer insights into shifts in ideas about food, and the impact these might have had on the changing food habits of populations across Europe, including the transformations in European culinary identities at a time of fundamental social, political and economic shifts. The effects of these were certainly highly dependent on context since, as we can see from the chapters presented in this volume, some cooking shows had significant impacts on their respective national culinary cultures, while others merely supported what seemed to be larger trends in post-war food transformations. In some cases, as **Müller** (Chapter 4) finds for the Netherlands, TV cooking shows generally supported developments in Dutch culinary transformations without explicitly leading them, although television was at the same time

instrumental in introducing "more diverse international and regional traditions in programmes about cooking". Through a programme that was a collaboration between various European broadcasters, a range of different "national" dishes from across Europe were introduced to the Dutch audience that were,

> "on the one hand, meant to illustrate the Europeanness of broadcasting, at the same time it reproduced the idea of national cuisines in a rather stereotypical fashion."

Through ordinary television, such as most food television is, Bonner (2003, p. 99) notes, an understanding of ourselves and our relationship with technology lies, because such television "establishes a picture of the ordinary, the everyday, the normal." Television's role in foregrounding the mundane aspects of our lives, such as food, has been unprecedented: the products and services of popular TV in particular have a "prime role in identity formation and its fine-tuning, but also in the production of the ordinary, civilised individual" (Bonner, 2003, p. 15). Turnock (2008, p. 6, emph. orig.) argues that the expansion of television in the decades after the War

> "*produced* social and cultural change because it established television, its institutions, practices, programmes, technologies and socio-cultural relations as an increasingly significant cultural form that had the *power to promote change* and *define social experience*."

Television had the power to change people's lives as much as a result of the medium's existence as such, as well as because of what they saw on it. The arrival of the TV set into their living rooms through the 1950s and specifically the 1960s coincided with the post-war shift towards more private, family-focused leisure that found, as in the case of the British working classes, its more intimate centre at home rather than in the community (Hobsbawn, 1994). Across Europe, television impacted people's everyday lives in other ways: for some, it meant a disruption of their pre-television routines, such as farm work, as they had to adjust working patterns to the TV schedule, feeling guilty "because there was so much to do in or around the house" (Pušnik, 2010, p. 240).

Through food television, audiences educated themselves about fashionable tastes as well as appropriate use of new household products that European industries in many countries were starting to produce, particularly from the 1960s onwards, as television spoke to its audience as if reflecting their selves, their desires, tastes and experiences, while at the same time suggesting ways in which these selves should, and indeed, could, be perceived and understood. Apart from offering a window onto the tastes and lifestyles that allowed Europeans of all walks of life to strive for self-improvement (de Solier 2005; Bell and Hollows, 2006; Lewis, 2008; Naccarato and LeBesco,

2012), food television also provided a narrative for self- identification in terms of the nation as it introduced dishes that "we" eat, while also allowing "us" to get to know the "other", in particular, as the rapid changes in the post-war decades defined our contemporary national (culinary) mythologies, and what was understood as traditional and authentic (e.g. Barthes, 1957/1972). Ultimately, it also affected gender roles, as it either reconfirmed women's role as a homemaker or introduced novel gender patterns that transcended the previous divisions. In many cases, watching food on television was simply entertaining, as chefs and presenters sometimes struggled with new cooking equipment, lack of water in studios and unpredictable ovens.

Food made it on television because its purpose, not only to educate the audience about the new products, ways of cooking and eating, but also to fill the programming schedules with content that was easy to produce and easy to watch: food and cooking was an entertaining, light kind of content that was not too politically problematic, a concern many politicians had with early television programmes in countries, regardless of their political orientation. In this sense, early food television influenced food television today, as television chefs, such as the British Philip Harben might have provided "a model for later celebrity chefs," which had much to do with both his brand and his style, the entertaining formats in which he performed and, as Mennell observes, his repertoire of dishes that satisfied the curiosity both for the international and newly developed foods and the products of 1950s Britain (Ashley *et al*., 2004, p. 173). **Geddes** (Chapter 2) explores in more detail the celebrity personae of these first British television chefs, including Harben, who purposefully built his 'trademark' on a controversial dress code, such as a butcher's apron "tied high over his 'substantial' stomach on screen, with a grey shirt and paisley-patterned tie." This presented him as an approachable person who was able to explain things in a down-to-earth manner, and, unlike Boulestin before him, whose cooking repertoire was generally French, Harben initially cooked British dishes focusing on lower class tastes, in particular during years of rationing, and built his brand through the promotion of cookware under the Harbenware brand. All of these features continue as part of food television today, therefore justifying further the need for analyses of early television food programmes. In Corner's (2003, p. 275) words, as an "enriched sense of 'then' produces, in its differences and commonalities combined, a stronger and more imaginative sense of 'now'", then an understanding of early food television provides not only a basis for appreciation of contemporary food media, including gender and other identities, but also for the European culinary identity – individually as well as collectively – that informs and shapes who we are as Europeans today. It is in this, as yet unoccupied, space of food television history that this volume aims to make

a contribution.

## The Significance of Early Food Television in post-war Europe: Food in between 'Inform, Educate and Entertain'

European media and Europeans themselves, as Mihelj and Huxtable (2018) suggest, participated in the varying development of modernity in the decades after the war that brought the European population together despite their many differences. In the first decades after the Second World War, Europeans saw a number of changes that directly affected their everyday lives, from the introduction of Welfare State provision that resulted in a fairer distribution of food, agrarian reforms, increased trade and production of white goods that helped women with household work, such as the vacuum cleaner and the cooker. In many European countries, however, this period of development and modernization was preceded by or worked in parallel to periods of food shortages in many countries, especially in Britain, where food rationing ended only in 1954, and in the communist countries, where this was largely a result of failed agriculture reforms and rigid ideological positions. On the other hand, by the mid-1950s, France was looking for markets to export its food surpluses (Judt, 2007).

The availability of new technology in the kitchen meant that for women, their everyday role started to change, even if in various ways and at different speeds across Europe. Even though labour-saving appliances that were meant to help women with their work in the home at the same time also meant that the expectation for women to carry out housework on their own increased (Highman, 2012, p. 145). At the same time, they also started to embrace work outside of the home, resulting in spending more time in work, both paid and unpaid (at home) and with less time for leisure. The ideas reported by the media and the advertising industry around what it was to be a woman were often also conflicting. Speaking for 1960s France, Poulain (2002/2017, p. 30) reports that "there was an emphasis on the need to reduce the time devoted to food and to speed up the cooking process; at the same time, there was an evident commitment to taking note of new nutritional requirements." In this web of conflicting advice, it was women who were expected to negotiate the ever-increasing demands of modern life: incorporating more pre-prepared food into daily lives in order to save time in cooking, while at the same time following scientific advice for what was deemed a nutritious meal.

In this process, television was an important source of information. Hartley (1999, p. 106) suggests that while "[t]he fridge allowed women as producers to become women as consumers," the television "trained them in this role" because it contributed to a new understanding of home, happiness, and family, and in particular, the productive consumption of goods. As people's living standards increased and more and more households were able to acquire their own television sets through the 1960s, food television started to match the pre-war importance of cookbooks and radio as sources of information (Mennell, Murcott and van Otterloo, 1992), although other sources – women's newspapers, cookbooks and advertising – remained influential. The audiences were often fascinated with television as a new medium in itself, and shows involving food and cooking became a familiar genre that both educated and entertained in ways other food media could not.

Despite the varied contexts in which national televisions operated in Europe, the European national television services, both Eastern and Western, emphasised the style of television which relied on the idea of a public, nationally owned and independent broadcaster (Eckert, 1965, cited in Hickethier, 2008, p. 76). In European post-war television, more than its US cousin, public broadcasting generally followed a "cultural-pedagogic logic" that emphasised the values of education, information and entertainment, the services seeing themselves as a source of improvement of people's knowledge and elevation of their tastes (Brants and de Bens, 2000, p. 16). This is not what the audiences always wanted, however, so there was a constant friction between entertainment – and for the audiences more popular – and educational programmes (Mihelj, 2012).

Food and cooking on television has, as a topic, found itself in between these two ideas of what a TV programme was supposed to do from the beginning, and this played out in various parts of Europe in different ways. The idea that cooking instruction has more to do with an ability to act and entertain than it has with the ability to cook was particularly true in Britain, where food appeared on television first, initially with Philip Harben as we have discussed above, and then with Fanny Cradock who was given an opportunity to teach and entertain on screen after Harben's eclipse, a role at which she excelled (Geddes, 2019). Like Harben, Cradock was a master of product advertising in her shows, as she promoted everything from appliances to foods. In Italy, on the other hand, a popular actress, Ave Ninchi, cooked on television impersonating a housewife from 1974 onwards. Dressed in simple clothes, with an apron on top, she cooked on the Italian RAI, accompanied by a culinary critic, Veronelli, who was to elevate the show from a mere educational programme for housewives, to a more taste-shaping and entertaining experience (Buscemi, 2014).

This differentiation between the aims to 'educate' and 'entertain' was particularly strong in socialist Europe, where education featured particularly strongly and food programming was more clearly oriented towards education in style, taste and also presentation of skills. It is likely that this had much to do with the emphasis on education, rather than entertainment, in early television programming in these countries, where, as Imre (2016, p. 41) writes for Hungary, television was initially perceived as "a classroom" so that "every programme was imbued with the intention to educate." Cooking education, then, was seen as something that had to be done by someone who knew how to do it *properly*, rather than a housewife, as was the case in Italy, or an actor. As the chapters in this volume demonstrate (see Nilgen, Franc and Tominc), chefs who could cook and talk, in all cases male, were brought in from state-run restaurants, to share their knowledge on screens: to educate, to improve and to modernise. In Yugoslavia, as **Tominc** (Chapter 8) shows, the chef's professional knowledge was communicated not only through his skill, but also his uniform – the white chef's uniform with the *toque blanche*, the iconic tall hat that signifies a professionally trained chef. In order to know what to do with all the new ingredients that started to appear in the markets all around Yugoslavia in the 1960s, one had to listen to someone whose business was food, rather than performance, even though the chef was expected nonetheless to navigate around the sometimes-awkward silences of early television production or the lack of water in the studio. The idea, however, wasn't as much entertainment as education that was to elevate, modernise, and improve people's cooking skills and their tastes. Nevertheless, it is hard to say, of course, to what extent the audience nevertheless found these shows entertaining since, as Holmes (2008, p. 30) reminds us, making a point that is also true for perceptions of what *is* an entertaining programme, "programmes from the 1950s do not necessarily look 'popular' to us in the same way as television programmes might do today." But even if audience responses were initially partly shaped by critical, often hegemonic, discourses, Holmes (2008, p. 31) notes that from early on audiences made their own judgements, so that with time, television had to give way to more and more entertainment programming, including on socialist television.

Even if it became quickly clear that audiences were interested more in being entertained than they were in being culturally elevated (Mihelj, 2012, p. 17), food programming was never far removed from education in taste, be it presented in the form of education or entertainment (de Solier, 2005). This tension between education for distinction and popularization that is inherent in lifestyle media, was evident in cooking shows from early on as they communicated what were both the acceptable

and unacceptable tastes of their times (Bell and Hollows, 2005, p. 11). **Nilgen** (Chapter 7), for example, demonstrates how in East Germany food television educated its audience in what were the new, acceptable ways of thinking about food and health, as it introduced the scientific discourse of nutritionism that, as in Yugoslavia, supported and propagated the socialist variant of modernity striving for progress via, among other ways, the management of people's bodies. This ideology, which had been (and still is) the dominant paradigm of nutrition science in Europe and the US since the nineteenth century, foregrounds speaking about food in terms of "calories", "carbohydrates" and "fats" downplaying the contextual (cultural, social) background of food (Scrinis, 2013). Through the promotion of fish, the show aimed to promote a low-calorie diet, although, despite all efforts, this proved to be unsuccessful, since, as Nilgen writes, "the audience and readers seemed to hold on to their rather heavy traditional cuisine."

In this, social class also plays a role in the promotion of taste, since food television as lifestyle television acted as the cultural intermediary of tastes that needed to be embraced, and those that needed to be abandoned: it suggested what choices of foods, what manners, and ways of thinking were considered legitimate middle class ideological positions, and therefore containing cultural, or more specifically, culinary capital (for this, see Naccarato and LeBesco, 2012). Through this lens, food as a signifier of taste is a marker of social status because it is through taste and the practice of lifestyle that we communicate to others our habitus, an internalised principle that generates "objectively classifiable judgements and the system of classification /…/ of these [= others and ours] practices" (Bourdieu, 1979/1984, p. 170). As such, taste is

> "the source of the system of distinctive features which cannot fail to be perceived as a systematic expression of a particular class of conditions of existence, i.e. as a distinctive lifestyle, by anyone who possesses practical knowledge of the relationships between the distinctive signs and positions in the distributions." (ibid., p. 175).

In showing food on screen, television from its beginnings answers not only our core needs related to sustenance but also that of identification: through instruction in the aesthetics of food and eating, it informed audiences in matters of taste, and how to use their taste in food in order to signal social distinction.

**Food Genres on Early Television**

Although television may appear to present its programmes as "the natural way of seeing the world," (Fiske and Hartley, 1978, p. 17) their content is mediated in specific, culturally conditioned ways,

organised through genres. Genres, however, do not come into existence 'ready-made' (Sydney-Smith, 2002, cited in Holmes, 2008, p. 8). Early (or traditional/classic, as some food scholars call these early food genres (e.g. Nacaratto and LeBesco, 2012, p. 42) forms of television rely on a use of the medium where visual information is transmitted simply, as 'zero-degree style'. Theoreticians of this process understand this to be not a self-consciously stylised process: rather, it is the result of capturing live studio shows and reporting outdoor events where the camera, as in the case of TV cooking shows or travelogues, gave the television viewer the perspective of a spectator at the live event (Caldwell, 1995; Butler, 2010). Often, these programmes expand considerably beyond the limits of the television screen itself as the TV material related to these shows is repurposed for other platforms, a process that has today proliferated with so-called media convergence to allow for media content to be available on various platforms, to various audiences and on demand (Jenkins, 2006). Cookbooks and recipes in magazines have always existed as a complementary resource for those watching cooking at home – indeed, these are today often the only material available that offers us insight into what people were actually watching on live television at the time –, although unlike today, when the primary concern of multi-purposing is commercial, "books appeared as a service to viewers", for reasons such as bad television signals, inability to take notes fast or at all, and providing publicity for the programme itself (Bonner, 2003, p. 356).

Culinary instruction as the core of food television itself has generally changed little, as the cooking show is, relatively speaking, a stable genre (Giuliani, 2003), consisting of an instruction to perform a certain action with an expected outcome, thus transferring knowledge from one person to others.[1] As such, the television recipe has its roots in an off-air (public) or cooking school demonstration, and indeed, in the most basic and most intimate settings, at home, where for centuries, women and (in some cases) also men learnt how to prepare food by copying other people in their immediate surroundings. In this environment, expertise in cooking was essential; on television this practice of knowledge transmission becomes mediatised and expertise diluted so that the role of an expert colluded with that of a media entertainer, the presenter sometimes turned into a celebrity. This consideration has been at the core of early food television too as production teams across Europe took different views as to who the presenters of food programmes should be, and with this, how the cooking shows should communicate: whether via a real housewife, a real (male) chef, an actor impersonating one of these, or a home economist (a scientist).

[1] Nikki Strange (1998), for example, observed that despite the considerable shifts in the style of cookery programmes through the 1990s, the cookery-educative element – mostly present in classical TV cooking shows – remains central.

In many Western countries, such as France, where the first French cooking programme, *Les Recettes de M. X*, appeared on RTF in 1953, this consideration was of particular importance since the actor presenting the recipes "must incarnate a personality that all the members of the television committee see as cheerful and not too serious" (Roger, 2016, p. 18, translations mine). The 'not too serious' part of the consideration had to do with the view that cooking on television should be presented "with a certain theatricality" while the show should be seen as a "cultivated pleasure" rather than a professional pursuit (ibid.). As a result, the first cooking show on French TV was presented by a comedian, Georges Adet, who presented simple and fast cooking suitable for single people. Following heavy critique of his performance by the audience, Raymond Oliver, a professional chef, was approached next, although the decision was clearly entangled in considerations of his ability to "explain what he does" (ibid., p. 24), so it was soon decided that a professional chef should be accompanied by an already familiar female TV presenter, Catherine Langeais. As a pair they satisfied the audience's desire to learn the art of cuisine, and their success, for the first time in France, turned a professional chef into an icon of popular culture (ibid., p. 27).

While culinary instruction was the most common context for food to appear in, as this volume demonstrates, food featured on television also in other contexts, most notably in advertising, as European food industries increasingly aimed to influence consumers' purchasing habits through television, both directly and as part of various shows (Chandler, 2008). As in TV ads, distinct shorter pieces of television programmes, where the latest foods and equipment available on the market were promoted through moving images, playful language and music with the aim of building memorable brands, the use of specific products in TV cooking shows had the added advantage of authoritative recommendation that offered security in the knowledge that a trusted – and famous – person had used the same products too. This kind of product placement, as the practice is known in modern marketing, was of course not new, although, as with cooking instruction, promotion through television spoke to audiences in ways that had previously been unimaginable: they could not only see the product in question, but they could now understand how it should be used. Even though the master of this practice was certainly Fanny Cradock (Geddes, 2019), chapters in this volume (e.g. Charlesworth, Geddes, Franc) demonstrate how this practice worked not only in the European (capitalist) West, but also in the socialist East as various products, such as flour and gas cookers, were displayed and recommended to audiences as part of cooking shows. **Franc** (Chapter 9) demonstrates convincingly how such shows worked on Czech television

in the 1960s, even if, as he claims, this promotion "was not aimed at forcing people into irrational spending through manipulative means" as in the West; rather, "it was rather expected to act as an advisor to consumers and a guide to new market offerings." The three-minute shows, aired around the daily news TV slot, and including a number of high-profile restaurant chefs, actors and singers, effectively functioned as a mode of advertising in collaboration with the state network of grocery shops, Pramen, that had a say in what is being cooked and by whom. Apart from some familiar and less familiar ingredients that the show introduced to the audience, it promoted domestic industry's new food products, as it created a "combination of the highest level of luxury with down-to-earth everydayness" which, as Franc stresses, "was an ordinary part of the lifestyle of the then Czechoslovakia". It is not that audiences in Czechoslovakia and across Europe could always afford these products introduced by television – although increasingly, this was becoming possible for many – but they could certainly participate in what Campbell (1987, p. 92) refers to as "imaginative hedonism", that is, the enjoyment of products and services as they are represented, rather than used, thus daydreaming themselves into tastes and styles of life that they saw in the media.

Perhaps the least researched of all instances of food on early television, if at all, is the documenting of food practices, including reporting and travelogue, as part of a more general programme, such as a home economics programme. This includes instances where events were broadcast purely for the benefit of informing audiences at home of events and trends that had been happening across the country. A programme that offered information on the many new products and how to use them aired on Slovene (Yugoslav) television from the mid-1960s; in it, the many questions a "modern" consumer could have were answered, from the installation of radiators and cleaning of carpets, to the making of jams and use of juice makers, reflecting the availability of the products and the growing Yugoslav industry. News of special, food related events were broadcast in the early years too:

> "[p]laces that acted as centres of modernisation, such as schools and hotels, became popular venues for reporting about new (or simply newsworthy) food-related practices: a culinary exhibition of Hospitality School and Hotel /…/, and a reporting about community work, such as youth organisation cooking courses" (Tominc, 2015, p. 31).

Similarly, for the purposes of preserving knowledge of, and subsequently, educating audiences at home about the traditions of other parts of a nation that was still in the process of imagining itself as one, programmes such as these, for the first time showed how other places and people looked, behaved and spoke, allowing for the unification and identification of the audience with specific

ideas of the nation concerned (de Leeuw, 2008). In Italy, the 1960s documentary series *Linea contro linea*, included food in several of its episodes. Perhaps the most well-known is the one from 1967, featuring *sora* Lella, the famous Italian actress, cook, and restaurateur, as she visits the *Campo de' Fiori* market in Rome, looking for fresh produce for her dish. Later, we see her preparing chicken with peppers (*Pollo con i peperoni*), a typical Roman dish, as she explains to the interviewer the importance of quality ingredients in cooking (Tata, 2020). In this vein, the suggestion of the media theoretician McLuhan (1964/2008, pp. 343-344) that "the TV image has exerted a unifying synthetic force" certainly proved correct as food television helped build a sense of oneness as a nation, a consideration for which television was well placed.

In this volume, **Buscemi and Comunian** (Chapter 6) present the case of Soldati's gastronomic travels in the north of Italy through a travelogue. Here, the presenter "travels, meets people, and learns (or relearns) to cook cuisines of the host destination" (Hollows and Bell, 2007, p. 27) while at the same time offering his/her own distinct perspective on what he/she finds and cooks, even educating the audience in the etiquette of 'proper' dining. But if in the Anglophone context scholars first think of Keith Floyd when discussing the travelogue – he "famously took the camera out of the kitchen studio and into whichever exotic location he /…/ happened to be cooking in" (Rousseau, 2012, p. xvi) – Soldati and his travels in the Po valley on the 1950s RAI does exactly what Floyd did years later as he documented the "changing face of Italian food," searching for the "genuine" Italy as he negotiated the conflicting processes of increasing industrialization and tradition:

> "In Turin itself, Soldati sees *grissini* breadsticks made by hand, and visits one of Italy's oldest and grandest restaurants. /…/Back in the studio, he introduces a countess in twin-set and pearls who demonstrates how to make a fondue topped with truffle shavings" (Dickie, 2007, p. 306).

For most viewers in Italy, this might have been the first time they had seen Turin through moving pictures, heard a different dialect or seen the preparation of foodstuffs unlike those at home. Finally, some shows that included food were different from these mainstream genres altogether, demonstrating how food can be used as a way of looking at their surroundings from a different perspective. Such was the case of the French show *Dim Dam Dom*, featuring on French television in the second half of the 1960s, which presented a range of topics, including food, in a way not seen in other cooking shows: as **Danet** (Chapter 5) claims, although the show offered stylistically a rather formal programme, it also aimed to "offer the audience a poetic, whimsical and sensual way of looking at their surroundings". Following its mission as a public broadcaster and targeting modern women interested in the social trends of the time, French television aimed through this show to raise

awareness of culinary fashions, although, as Danet claims, the show overall "contributed to the promotion of an elitist vision of society," stressing good table manners and the discovery of new tastes and flavours.

**Early Food Television and the Audience**

Apart from surviving letters, it is difficult to know how the audience perceived early television programmes. Holmes (2008, p. 11) says that the "historical nature of reception makes it impossible for us to draw textual conclusions ourselves," because some material cannot even be seen today; in doing research on early television, especially before 1955, we need to rely on secondary sources that allow us to reconstruct what the audiences saw on television at the time and how they reacted to it (see Jacobs, 2000; Thumim, 2004). Apart from the letters, their reactions can be drawn from various written sources that aimed to capture audience responses, although, as scholars of early television point out, these can be problematic, since

> "[p]ress commentary does not represent the responses of the "ordinary" viewer, but it does enable us to tap into some (often fleeting) meanings, associations and concerns which circulated around television when it was still seen as 'new'" (Holmes, 2008, p. 11)

Having said this, television producers were, for various reasons, curious about audience perceptions of the programmes they were being offered from early on, so some insights into what audiences thought of early programmes are available. Through the 1950s and 1960s, the number of households that had access to television or even owned one was increasing, although there were significant differences in countries across Europe, just as there were differences in who the audiences were (Mihelj, 2012).

Some insight into audiences can be seen from the programmes themselves, especially where audiences were involved in the design of a show itself, as is the case with cooking competitions. This is observed in Portugal by **Gomes** (Chapter 10) as she explores a nation-building process, similar to what Soldati was doing in Italy, through the use of a culinary programme on television. Exploring the show *Culinária*, one of the most popular TV shows of the early Portuguese television years, her chapter demonstrates the audience's active engagement in not only the shaping of this show's content, but, the author claims, also in playing "a vital role in the constitution and promotion of a national culinary heritage, becoming a landmark for Portugal's food identity". The show's presenter, the Portuguese culinary icon, Maria de Lourdes Modesto, asked her audience to send in recipes from all

Portuguese regions, following the audience's dissatisfaction with the French recipes presented initially. Although there was also the factor that the political elite, in a non-democratic system, preferred to promote tastes closer to Portuguese "tradition". The audience obliged by sending in thousands of letters, and as a consequence, the show began, from 1961, to create the foundations for what is now considered "authentic" Portuguese cooking.

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, food and cooking programming was often contextualised as part of wider women's programming, so that cooking was integrated into general discussion around household and family matters regardless of the political system in which food television was situated. Differences remained in how women were targeted: in socialist countries, women were actively encouraged to participate in work outside the home, which left them with less time to watch television (Imre, 2016, p. 191), so if they "were addressed by television as an audience at all, they were considered a special demographic who needed targeted political-educational programs, much like factory workers, college students, or the elderly". On screen, too, they existed differently, because the

> "presence of women at work was perhaps the most visible difference between the Western and the state socialist serial, reflecting a socialist vision of gender equality in which the equal presence of women at work was not simply a desideratum, but an achievement" (Mihelj and Huxtable, 2018, p. 172).

Despite the major changes in what it meant to be a woman (and a man) that developed in the 1960s, it was still women who were expected to engage in work inside the home, including cooking, while the female audience was, at the same time, thought of as one homogenous unit, ignoring how "'real' people differ with national, regional and local traditions" (Björkin, 2008, p. 217). While in the case of Portugal, as seen above, this heterogeneity was reflected in the regional diversity of the recipes they sent in, **Charlesworth** (Chapter 3) explores the contradictory views of post-war women and their requirements and expectations in Britain. With reference to the cooking shows of Marguerite Patten and especially the then editor of the women's programmes, Doreen Stevens (1953-1963), she demonstrates the very different senses of "what 'being domestic' meant to women who were able to view [television] at that time" and the ways through which programmes, such as Patten's Cookery Club, addressed their needs through the format of a cooking competition. But unlike Gomes' (Chapter 10) format that united women and their recipes through a competition set in terms of the national culinary experience, Patten's show inspired in women the sense of a collective audience belonging to the show.

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