

# Food Porn

THE VERY IDEA OF *FOOD PORN* is contentious. Academics presumably like the term because it attracts more readers than less sexy topics (pun intended), while the general public uses the term broadly to describe mouthwatering images in magazines, on TV, or online.<sup>1</sup> A certain shock value can account for its popularity with both groups. But people who actually work with food generally ignore the label and focus instead on their jobs. Is the term *food porn*, then, simply a creation of commentators on the sidelines? Why does it have such continuing appeal? And what does it actually mean?

Although he did not specifically use the term, Roland Barthes discussed what is essentially *food porn* in his 1957 collection, *Mythologies*. Commenting on the food-related content in *Elle* magazine that offers fantasy to those who cannot afford to cook such meals, he writes: “[C]ooking according to *Elle* is meant for the eye alone, since sight is a genteel sense.”<sup>2</sup> The actual words *food porn* first appeared in 1979, when Michael Jacobson, cofounder of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, opposed healthy and unhealthy foods—“Right Stuff” and “Food Porn”—in the Center’s newsletter, *Nutrition Action Healthletter*.<sup>3</sup> Jacobson later explained that he “coined the term to connote a food that was so sensationally out of bounds of what a food should be that it deserved to be considered pornographic.”<sup>4</sup> It is not known whether he knew of journalist Alexander Cockburn’s 1977 use of the term *gastro-porn* in the *New York Review of Books*:

Now it cannot escape attention that there are curious parallels between manuals on sexual techniques and manuals on the preparation of food; the same studious emphasis on leisurely technique, the same apostrophes to the ultimate, heavenly delights. True *gastro-porn* heightens the excitement and also the sense of the unattainable by proffering colored photographs of various completed recipes.<sup>5</sup>

For some reason, the term *food porn* took off, while *gastro-porn* never did. Today, *food porn* generally evokes the unattainable: cooks will never achieve the results shown in

certain cookbooks, magazines, or television shows, nor will they ever master the techniques. In fact, portrayals of food have been so transformed by food styling, lighting, and the actions of comely media stars that food does seem increasingly out of reach to the average cook or consumer.<sup>6</sup> As with sex porn, we enjoy watching what we ourselves presumably cannot do.

Critic Richard Magee points to a performative dimension in food that also links it with sex: “Food, when removed from the kitchen, becomes divorced from its nutritive or taste qualities and enters a realm where surface appearance is all-important. The interest here is in creating a graphic simulation of real food that is beyond anything that the home cook could produce.”<sup>7</sup> By involving visceral, essential, and “fleshy” elements, this performative aspect invites obvious and usually facile comparisons with sex<sup>8</sup>—as do the many food-show hosts, usually women, who lick their fingers or use sensual terms to describe what they are doing. A second level of comparisons also exists. Cockburn writes about “culinary pastoralism” vis-à-vis “gastro-porn,” while Magee pits Martha Stewart’s “food Puritanism” against Nigella Lawson’s “food porn.”<sup>9</sup>

It is difficult to move beyond such rhetorical play. But the tenth anniversary edition of *Gastronomica* offers an appropriate occasion to reexamine the meaning of *food porn*. The forum presented here grew out of a meeting of *Menu in the Media*, a working group funded by New York University’s Institute for Public Knowledge that studies the culture of cooking from both academic and practitioner perspectives. Our original discussion was led by Frederick Kaufman and Alan Madison; here, other academics and chefs contribute to the conversation.

—Anne E. McBride

**Anne E. McBride:** *Is there such a thing as food porn?*

**Will Goldfarb:** No. It’s a meaningless, artificial term. Porn is a replacement for sex, while food is a consumable item.





Except for the fact that they're both on television I don't see the two as related. It's all about delivery systems. The Food Network makes food look pretty so that consumers will go out and buy a blender. But you don't watch porn to buy the mattress on which the actors are having sex. Sex is not consumable in the same way. Where porn is a substitute for the real thing, food television is not a substitute for food. People complain that TV and magazines make food sexy to sell it, but where exactly is the porn in food television? What is the act? Because I don't understand what the term means, for me it doesn't exist.

**Krishnendu Ray:** I am skeptical, because I find that *food porn* is used primarily by writers to condemn cooking-related entertainment on television and in magazines. It is mostly used to attack beautiful food in the name of good food. What makes me doubly skeptical is the easy, un-interrogated consensus it has generated among so many graduate students. It reminds me of the old exaggerated critique of mass culture.<sup>10</sup> Once you call something pornographic, you bring down moral opprobrium on it. You poison the topic and stop the discussion from going any further. But the issue is worth pursuing. Instead of *food porn*

we could borrow more productive and subtle categories from studies of visual culture.<sup>11</sup>

**Alan Madison:** The use of *food porn* to describe professionally photographed food in magazines and on TV demonstrates a lack of understanding of what *pornography* is, how it is produced, and for what purpose; it dilutes the meaning and seriousness of the word pornography. In our society half-naked, airbrushed, pristinely photographed models appear on billboards to sell everything from socks to suits—is this “fashion porn”? We use images of female soccer players wearing only their sports bras, with looks of ecstasy on their faces, and of male basketball players wearing short shorts to sell everything from sneakers to Viagra—is this “sports porn”? The use of sexy, highly stylized images and pictures as advertisements is the bread and butter of advertising and marketing. How do any of these differ from the highly stylized, cleanly lit images of food TV or food advertising? If the “food porn” advocates want to say that our society as a whole is pornographic, I would go along with that. But to single out food for this pejorative is disingenuous and hypocritical, since the use of such a charged word as *porn* is just intended to attract interest.

**Chris Cosentino:** The idea of food as porn has been around since the days of the ancient Romans. There were huge feasts with vomitoria so diners could go back and gorge some more. It was about opulence and decadence: oysters and bee pollen are great old examples. When you look at things now, we're not far from associating eating with the Seven Deadly Sins. Using words such as *luscious*, *unctuous*, *creamy*, and *decadent* to describe food brings to mind the so-called sins of gluttony and lust. I think about food differently. For me it's the immediacy of experiencing the food itself. There's not all that much difference between lusting over a person or over food.

**Frederick Kaufman:** When a culturally conservative venue such as the *New York Times* casually categorizes *Julie and Julia* as "food porn," we know there's something out there.

**AEM:** How do you define food porn?

**FK:** Since *food porn* has become a cultural term taken for granted by bloggers and mainstream media alike, its origins have rarely been revisited. The term's staying power has a fair bit to do with the edginess and controversy that continue to encircle the idiom. We may never be able to nail down a precise definition of *pornography*, but like sex porn, we know *food porn* when we see it. There was wisdom in the Supreme Court's 1964 "Community Standards" ruling, which created a metric for the term pornography through cultural reception, a tactic that could henceforth locate all manner of porn within historical frames. Food porn gained its initial linguistic traction in the 1980s and accelerated throughout the 1990s and 2000s to attain its present vaunted status. Why did the idea of *food porn* emerge at this particular time, and why did it persist despite the explosion and fragmentation of food media? As with most neologisms, the story has as much to do with the cross-disciplinary influence of politics and technology as with whisking and frying. One could just as easily place the credit or blame for *food porn* on the Internet and Jenna Jameson as on Giada De Laurentiis and her mozzarella, raspberry, and brown sugar panini. Indeed, it was only a matter of time before a desire as essential and physical as food would be co-opted by capitalism's most profitable avenues of distribution and sales. And as most students of history understand, slippage of definitional terms becomes particularly acute during periods of political and social crisis, periods in which decadence, sonorescence, and the collapse of previous orders are widely perceived—all of which marked the American landscape from which *food porn* emerged.

**KR:** I don't define it, but from what others have argued it seems reasonable to assume that *food porn* means the following: (a) it is porn when you don't do it but watch other people do it; (b) there is something unattainable about the food pictured in magazines or cooked on TV shows; (c) there is no pedagogical value to it; (d) it hides the hard work and dirty dishes behind cooking; (e) there is something indecent about playing with food when there is so much hunger in the world.

I think there is some value in all these criticisms, but the term *food porn* closes off discussion rather than opening them up to closer inspection. For instance, take the critique that porn is when you watch it but don't do it. There is some merit to arguing that we lose something of our culture when we don't practice it. Culture is not only about representation but also about doing it. We practice culture, and it takes a lot of practice. This tactile, embodied conception of culture is a useful corrective to culture understood primarily as representation or artifact.

**AM:** Pornography has nothing to do with the enhancement and increased valuation of image and action and everything to do with the devaluation of the image and the actions it depicts. Porn is designed to subordinate by pictures or words, not to elevate or deify. Porn's images are graphic, not stylized; real, not enhanced. Pornography does not idealize sex—quite the opposite, it diminishes it. Sex porn contains no art, and the making of it contains little, if any, craft. It is the cheaply made, documentary recording of straightforward actions. Its point is to leave as little to the imagination as possible, so that one can easily insert oneself into the scene for the ultimate purpose of self-gratification. If there were an accurate definition for *food porn* it would not be chefs on food TV creating delicious dinners, or recipes in food magazines augmented with sumptuous close-up photography. Instead, *food porn* would be the grainy, shaky, documentary images of slaughterhouses, behind-the-scenes fast-food workers spitting in their products, or dangerous chemicals being poured on farmland. Such documentary evidence of food-product degradation is the closest imagery to "food porn" and, just like regular porn, some want to outlaw these images—in this case, the food industry. If *food porn* did exist, the analogous shot to the all important "cum shot" in sex porn would be to graphically show the end result of eating—defecating—not the process of making a perfectly roasted chicken.

**CC:** To me, *food porn* is the ability of food to elicit a positive and euphoric reaction, as well as to make others covet what

you are eating. It encompasses everything. It's not just in magazines or on television—it's also the experience of dining.

**WG:** I don't have a definition for *food porn* since it doesn't exist.

**AEM:** *How useful a metaphor is porn as applied to food?*

**CC:** Not a great one, though it definitely gets people's attention. Sort of like rubbernecking at a highway accident: It makes people stop and look. If the term *porn* brings people to food, I don't care what it means. The more we can get people to pay attention to food, the more changes are going to be made to the food system. Every day I send out pictures of food that I cook. These pictures might change people's perception of what food is and send them to a farmer's market, but some viewers might find my pictures of raw meat offensive. The word *porn* is just risky enough to make some people look, but it will make others turn away.

**WG:** The term *porn* is unrelated to food, since it traditionally applies to flesh vending rather than the high art of customer nourishing. Alan's comments about the low grade of porn production undermine any similarity even further—it's about sex, stupid, not high-production value. Making food for a purpose other than pure nourishment is usually done solely for art, which is why people will pay one hundred dollars for a fancy restaurant and two dollars for McDonald's, when both have the same calories.

**FK:** As a trope, *food porn* can tell us a great deal about who we are and the culture in which we live, even if it doesn't tell us very much about the enduring qualities of food. Pornography's cultural explosion can be traced to the advent of the personal computer and subsequent reign of the Web, which enabled a new perception of privacy and new horizons of alienation. At the same time, porn as a cultural artifact gained legitimacy through identity politics (which emphasized personal experience over larger moral and social codes), body and gender theory (which emphasized physical difference as a form of empowerment), and an economic climate in which anything deemed attractive could be relentlessly repositioned and commodified as a luxury item—all the better to be consumed by the young urban professional. The years of the yuppie coincided with the years of the foodie, and many of the same cultural fetishes apply to both. The subsequent Bush years and post-9/11 politics ushered in a national post-traumatic stress disorder that has swung between poles of aggression and

passivity, worship and withdrawal, dialectics that ironically serve the purposes of both nesting and porn.

**AEM:** *Then why do you think the term food porn is so widely used?*

**WG:** Because sex sells. Articles that mention sex are an instant hit. When I was at Duke, my sociology professor changed the name of his "Consumer Marketing" class to "Consuming Passions"; enrollment quadrupled. It's like throwing around the term *molecular gastronomy* without digging any deeper into what it really means. The term *food porn* has no meaning in any context in which it's used, but it has become a sound bite for everyone. It's just sexier.

**AM:** I personally don't think the term is widely used. It is used by a slight sliver of academia to describe the use of idealized images of food in its marketing, and often it is used facetiously by those who create that marketing.

However, in the spirit of this discussion, the short answer is: money. The term *food porn* is provocative and is used in print to help sell articles. Sex sells, and to attach a sexual connotation to any article attracts more eyeballs, thereby yielding more money for the publisher. Some use *food porn* in their title for the same reason that some women's magazines always have the word orgasm on the cover: to attract readers. In the future, we will see more sensationally glib food articles like *The Chicken Holocaust*, *Terrorist Farmers*, *The New Racism: Brown and White Eggs*, *White Chocolate Slavery*, and *The Foie Gras Abortion*.

Obviously, words matter, and some are loaded with historical meaning and deep emotion. Words can titillate and offend; when misused, they have the insidious side effect of diluting and perverting the word's historical meaning. Food porn is one such case. It serves to diminish the meaning of pornography and its potential to degrade human sexuality. Although pornography can be harmful to both sexes, by and large it debases women in particular. Using the word porn in connection with food photography desensitizes us to the pejorative meaning of the word and thereby makes sex porn seem not really so bad.

**CC:** Food magazines, with their rich food photography, have become the brown-paper-covered magazines that people used to hide, except now it's okay to be a foodophile. It's okay to indulge and go to this restaurant and eat this food, to gorge oneself on that cheese. There's nothing wrong with that.

**KR:** I am not convinced that the term is widely used, with the exception of some elements of the virtuous literary crowd and those who mimic them. They have this quaint idea that we should learn something from TV, presumably just as we do from books, especially books without lovely pictures. The presumption is that we should work hard at watching, not just have mindless fun. In my judgment, the pedagogical value of any form of commodified culture is suspect. Entertainment on TV reproduces all the problems of popular culture, and few of its promises. Food TV carries the same burdens. So the critique of “food porn” is too narrowly focused on food.

But let me argue the exact opposite of what I have said so far. Let us for a moment assume that most of the coverage of food on American TV is pornographic. Following the critic Don Kulick, in a slightly different context one could argue that if it is pornographic it is a progressive kind of pornography. That’s impossible, right? In pornography the depiction of women’s pleasure has always been more difficult because there are no photogenic equivalents to the erect penis and ejaculation. Hence the so-called “money shot” is almost always about the man; women’s pleasure is

much less convincingly portrayed. Visually, the state of the phallus drives the plot. In *food porn* the position of the phallus as the ultimate source of all pleasure is usurped by food. Hence, if food TV is pornographic, it is much less phallogocentric. Kulick notes that

Luce Irigaray has made much in her writing about the power that a woman’s “two lips” might have to *parler femme* (speak woman) and thereby displace the male phallus from its Freudian throne as the supposed source of all erotic joy. The “two lips” Irigaray refers to are vaginal lips. But maybe we should, instead, consider those other two lips and what they can do. And perhaps those intensely mouthy pleasures of lapping, licking, slurping, and crunching that we see depicted... are some version of *parler femme*—a language of pleasure, power, and supreme disinterest in everything the phallus has to offer.<sup>12</sup>

Think of that the next time you are distracted by Giada De Laurentiis licking her fingers as she greedily swallows some freshly made doughnuts.

**AEM:** *Why does food invite such voyeurism?*



MARILYN MINTER, AMOEBA, 2008. C PRINT. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND SALON 94, NEW YORK.



CC: Because it provokes such a visceral response.

**KR:** I don't think food is particularly prone to voyeurism. Sex is much more compelling, happy families more enticing, murder absolutely gripping; all these things work as entertainment for precisely the same reason. In our culture most of these things—sex, bliss, and death—are expected to be contained within the private realm in some ridiculously ideal world, while in reality they either leak out or we hope to transgress in our dreams. Much of cooking on television is in fact domesticity on display—equivalent to families on display, romance on display, reality on display, order (in cop shows), or dramatic cures (in doctor shows). They are one-dimensional caricatures, useful precisely because of their simplicity, clarity, and idealization. So we dream up these ways to contain sex, happiness, and death, reminding ourselves of our social ideals.

We see more and more cooking on TV as we ourselves cook less and less. But if our problem with cooking shows is that they are voyeuristic, then almost everything on TV is pornographic. Why target cooking shows? Television has allowed cooking to be born as a public image. Marshall McLuhan saw that coming 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>13</sup>

Food on TV and in colorful magazines is also about domesticity as an iteration of nation building. It gives us a way to imagine a collective public by watching cultural practices as deployed across a diverse but unified territory that we call a nation. All those endless barbecue shows are a good way to imagine the extent of the nation and its myriad variety.

But domesticity is not the whole story. There are also contradictory claims of masculinity and professionalization. Food on TV portrays the virtues of professionalization. Even Rachael Ray is defensive when she goes on *Iron Chef*. "I am just a cook, not a chef," she says. Chefs can do stuff I can't. Surgeons can do stuff no healer can. Cops can do stuff that you or I can't. These folks can save the world. So, you see, we must concede our world to the expert, each in his (or her) field. Not because we can do it, but because we can't. So the point of food on TV is not that we can do it—the presumption behind the critique that *food porn* is

mere unproductive, voyeuristic, fun—but that we can't do it. That is the source of its pleasure.

**FK:** Voyeurism hinges upon projections of the private and the personal into the public realm. From this perspective, the publication or broadcast of a private activity—be it coitus or cooking—creates structural equivalents. Food porn, like sex porn, like voyeurism, are all measures of alienation, not community. As such, they belong to realms of irreality. Irreality, of course, is attractive to anyone who may be dissatisfied with the daily exigencies of his or her life. Hence the compelling nature of visceral experiences from food and sex to the Weather Channel's blatant exploitation of disastrous storms and floods, all of which can be vicariously consumed through the multifarious screens that have come to dominate our lives.

**WG:** Food is unique within the realm of high art for involving an actual commodity internalized by the consumer—a special relationship that cannot be found in any other expression of personal values. Once an art of survival, food has evolved into a fine art, with a pleasure disproportionate to its nutritional value. Images of naked women nearly having sex can be considered fine art; depending on the style of photography, they are not considered pornography. Why? The only way to argue that point is to make the “What is Art?” argument successfully. By analogy, it is not a stretch to say that there is such a thing as fine art that distinguishes the preparation of food. Therefore I don't understand the notion of voyeurism in food. Just because people like watching other people do things, that doesn't make it voyeurism.

**AM:** Your question assumes that watching food on TV is voyeuristic. That is absurd—that would make watching anything on TV, or in the cinema or theater, voyeuristic. Can't someone watch just to be entertained or educated? If all watching is just tawdry voyeurism, then all performances are nothing more than cheap exhibitionism. This question also shows a complete misunderstanding of the artifice of food television, which does not employ any of the visual styles that imply voyeurism—hidden cameras, poor lighting, shaky cinema vérité camera work, or a single wide-angle view of the action. There is no pretense to make the experience “real” or “documentary”—quite the opposite is necessary to create a successful food show. Most shows are taped with three to seven cameras in proscenium style, sometimes with a full audience; the aspiration is theatrical, to create high drama from the ordinary. Stylistically speaking, creating food television has more in common with

opera than with pornography or voyeurism. In formal visual terms, the invitation is not to watch secretly but to join the community of the audience to celebrate and applaud in public, not to masturbate in private.

If you are mistakenly conflating voyeurism with viewership based on statistics, that just doesn't work. On TV, for example, the “voyeurism” food invites is dwarfed by professional wrestling, non-cooking housewives in New Jersey, singers trying to become idols, and hundreds of other subjects from animated sponges to real-life bounty hunters. An academic looking to make broad cultural critiques based on TV-viewing habits would be better served by watching NASCAR than by watching someone sauté artichokes.

**AEM:** *Does food porn function as a substitute for actual cooking?*

**WG:** There is no question that the act of cooking invites many enthusiasts, some of whom may have little desire to actually cook. So the question is, does being a fan diminish the value of the experience? Is Roger Federer less brilliant because his spectators don't all play tennis? The answer, I hope, is painfully obvious. I still don't know what *food porn* is. But let's say for the sake of argument that it has to do with the presentation of food. There are two kinds of people who watch *food porn*: either they cook or they don't. There is no way that watching food on television will make people cook less. Most of the Food Network shows are designed to encourage people to buy things to cook, so they have the opposite effect from *food porn*'s presumed one—that people watch and don't do. Food on television doesn't take away the desire to cook from those who have it, but it does make people who don't cook want to buy food. It's a net gain, not a net loss. That's why I love food television. The concept of *food porn* exists only for people who don't have any relation to food in preparing, cooking, or serving it—they're only interested in analyzing it. That's the replacement—the replacement of the real with the abstract. The people analyzing the watching of the cooking—that's *food porn*. They are the ones who have replaced the act of cooking with the act of watching.

**FK:** Through interviews with food-media producers, directors, onscreen talent, and Food Network executives, I learned that practitioners of the genre understand food television as the equivalent of an anti-anxiety drug, that cooking on television presents an idealized, alternative reality, and that the more people watch, the less they cook. Rachael Ray goes over beautifully in a sports bar: The men drink beer,

munch chips, and watch the game, while one television over, virtual wife smiles and prepares virtual dinner. Again, the alienation and technological intervention particularize a larger cultural shift in which virtuality has gained ground. And virtuality, in turn, engenders a wide variety of reactions, including this exchange. Our dialogue about *food porn* is a way of reckoning with a perceived threat, which may explain a fair bit of denial.

**CC:** If you don't cook, yes, food TV allows you to live through others' actions, just as porn does. A lot of people want to feel the same passion that chefs do, and TV is the closest way to get to that. Cooking shows are full of fervor, of drive. Others live though our passion for food and experience joy in our meals. For people who don't normally cook, *food porn* is a great substitute.

**AM:** This question, like all of the others, assumes that *food porn* exists. But it doesn't. The implication is that viewing regular, old-fashioned sex porn alone satiates desire, which of course it does not. Porn incites to action and is worthless if it does not. If the metaphor is to be taken to its logical conclusion, *food porn* in itself cannot sate desire; it must inspire to action. So, just as a healthy dose of regular porn might leave you lying in bed trying to catch your breath, one would assume that *food porn* would incite you to breathlessly whip some egg whites until they became a very stiff meringue. ☺

**Chris Cosentino** is executive chef at Incanto and co-creator of Bocalone Salumeria in San Francisco. He was one of the finalist chefs of *The Next Iron Chef* and is now the co-host of *Chefs vs. City*, both on Food Network.

**Will Goldfarb** is the chef-owner of WillPowder and WillEquipped, sources for specialty products and equipment for restaurant and home kitchens. He was nominated for Best Pastry Chef by the James Beard Foundation, and *Pastry Art & Design* named him one of the Ten Best Pastry Chefs in America.

**Frederick Kaufman** is a contributing editor at *Harper's* and a professor of journalism at the City University of New York and the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism. His essay "Debbie Does Salad: The Food Network at the Frontiers of Pornography" (*Harper's* magazine, October 2005) expanded the concept of gastro-porn.

**Alan Madison** has traveled around the world producing and directing food shows for television. He has worked with chefs Emeril Lagasse, Rocco DiSpirito, Jacques Torres, Rick Bayless, Charlie Trotter, Sara Moulton, Rachael Ray, and hundreds of others. Early in his career he worked as a production assistant in the porn industry.

**Krishnendu Ray** is a sociologist and assistant professor of food studies at New York University. He is the author of *The Migrant's Table: Meals and Memories in Bengali-American Households*; his essay "Domesticating Cuisine: Food and Aesthetics on American Television" (*Gastronomica*, Winter 2007) argued against the existence of *food porn*.

#### NOTES

1. An August 2009 search for the term *food porn* on Flickr.com yielded 22,753 results.
2. Roland Barthes, "Ornamental Cookery," *Mythologies* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 78.
3. For example, the July–August 2009 issue of *NAH* featured KFC's Kentucky Grilled Chicken (the grilled alternative to its fried chicken that KFC launched in spring 2009) as "Right Stuff" and Baskin-Robbins's new line of premium sundaes as "Food Porn." See <http://cspinet.org/nah/index.htm>.
4. As told to Bonnie Liebman, director of nutrition at the Center for Science in the Public Interest. E-mail correspondence, May 2009.
5. Alexander Cockburn, "Gastro-Porn," *New York Review of Books*, 8 December 1977, at [www.nybooks.com/articles/8309](http://www.nybooks.com/articles/8309).
6. Molly O'Neill discusses this in "Food Porn," *Columbia Journalism Review*, September–October 2003, 38–45.
7. Richard M. Magee, "Food Puritanism and Food Pornography: The Gourmet Semiotics of Martha and Nigella," *Americana: The Journal of American Popular Culture* 6:2 (Fall 2007), at [www.americanpopularculture.com/journal/articles/fall\\_2007/magee.htm](http://www.americanpopularculture.com/journal/articles/fall_2007/magee.htm).
8. See, for example, Andrew Chan, "La grande bouffe: Cooking Shows as Pornography," *Gastronomica* 3:4 (Fall 2003): 47–53.
9. In the final paragraph of his essay, however, Magee avows that Lawson transcends any simple binary: "She rejects the patriarchal oppression of the kitchen while embracing domestic comforts in the same way that one may embrace the pleasures of sex while turning away from the essential falsity and potential oppression of pornography."
10. Theodor Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception* (New York: Routledge, 2001 [reprint of original 1944 edition]).
11. See, for instance, Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
12. *Fat: The Anthropology of an Obsession*, ed. Don Kulick and Anne Meneley (New York: Penguin, 2005), 92.
13. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: Signet, 1964), 54.