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A Note From the Editors

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A Note From the Editors

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EDITORIAL

A Note from the Editors

Welcome to the first issue of the *European Journal of Food, Drink, and Society*.

We are two months into 2021 and from this perspective may look forward with some optimism to the coming year with the prospect of a vaccine roll out, challenging as that is in itself. 2020 was a bleak year, frightening and often grim. There were, however, many bright moments for those of us committed to the study and enjoyment of matters relating to food and drink at both local and global levels. It could never have been anticipated just how prescient the chosen topic of “Food and Disruption” for the fifth Biennial Dublin Gastronomy Symposium would be; in the teeth of the sudden national lockdown, the event was rapidly rescheduled to take place online over five days, rather than the usual two days. We think all would agree that while physical proximity was by necessity so sadly absent, none of the tremendous energy and hospitality that has been such a feature of past symposia was lost. Research has been shared, with friendships and connections forged through the years over convivial lunches and coffee breaks and continued long into the night over dinner at the King’s Inns here in Dublin. It was over just such a convivial lunch that the *European Journal of Food, Drink, and Society* had its genesis when Yvonne Desmond and Michelle Share decided that all this energy, zeal, and scholarly research should be captured for the benefit of scholars and enthusiasts everywhere; and so was born the idea of an open-access, peer-reviewed journal, a critical and interdisciplinary space where we could come together to discuss and debate food and drink in our everyday life, whether contemporary, historical or through a literary or scientific lens. Yvonne guided us expertly through the technical minefield of setting up an online journal and from the outset, we have been encouraged by everyone’s interest in our project; this is manifest in the wonderful editorial board supporting us in this venture.

As editors, our aim is that the journal reflects the multitude of disciplines from which the community of food historians and social and cultural researchers draws its strength, both within academia and from the wider research community. We want to be a welcoming space, where contributors will be assured that they will be treated with respect while being held to the highest standards of the double-blind peer review process. Above all, we are committed to open-access scholarship and the benefits that naturally flow from this process. We are grateful that Arrow, the open-access repository provided by Technological University Dublin, affords us the opportunity to bring this journal to a worldwide community.

This first issue, at the start of a new decade, reflects the scope and reach of the food studies community. The researchers at **FoodCult**, a five-year project funded by the European Research Council, introduce us to the methodologies they will be deploying to enable us to understand the fundamentals of everyday diet and the cultural “meaning” of food and drink in early modern Ireland. Making a strong argument for interdisciplinary cooperation across science, technology, and the humanities, this methodology paper delineates “a blue-print for a history-led interdisciplinary approach to early-modern diet, focusing on Ireland as a case study of analysis.” Not only interdisciplinary, as editors we are delighted to host in the EJFDS what is a truly interinstitutional research project drawing on the strengths of researchers from Trinity College Dublin (**Dr Susan Flavin**), University College Dublin (**Dr Meriel McClatchie** and **Dr Ellen O’Carroll**), Durham University (**Professor Janet Montgomery**), Institute of Technology Sligo (**Dr Fiona Beglane**), University of Bristol (**Dr Julie Dunne**), and Maynooth University (**Professor Andrew Parnell**). You can read more about this exciting project here: <https://foodcult.eu>.

Dr Graham Harding brings us into the Victorian era, drawing out the implications that the shift from service à la Française to service à la Russe had on Victorian sociability and the material culture of the Victorian dining table. As Graham observes, “this age of the dinner party represented ‘the great trial’ for aspiring members of Victorian upper and middle class”, a trial that had no small bearing on the early twentieth century switch to entertaining in the more public sphere of the restaurant. A history graduate of Cambridge University, Graham is chair of the Oxford Wine Club and joint founder of the Oxford Wine Forum.

What does food signify? **Dr Igor Cusack** examines this question through two of the novels of the Equatoguinean writer, Donato Ndongo-Bidyogo. In this world described by Ndongo-Bidyogo, olive oil meant emancipation; palm oil signified compulsory labour in the colonial plantations. Such signification lies at the heart of the impact of Spanish colonization upon Equatorial Guinea, where the everyday tensions of boyhood are played out through negotiating the initiating rites of Catholic, colonizer rituals. Boy becomes man, and the reality of living under the rule of the African tyrant, Macías Nguema, is graphically described through how, and what, food is consumed: “palm-nut soup with putrid smoked yellow-fin, peanuts wrapped in banana leaf or some other tropical leaf, a piquant chocolate sauce with manioc, or simply a cocoyam puree or some bananas or ripe plantains ...”.

Anke Klitzing and **Dr Brian Murphy** set out the genesis and history of the Dublin Gastronomy Symposium from the initial engagements at a discussion day hosted, some might say appropriately so, by the National Centre for Franco-Irish Studies in 2011, through to the most recent global and virtual event held in May 2020. We have touched on this above, but for a full understanding of the scope and vision of the Symposium, this is the definitive account.

We noted above the disruption of the format of the Dublin Gastronomy Symposium and Covid-19 but acknowledge that disruption is, and continues to be, a common experience in all aspects of everyday life. In a research note, **Dr Michele Filippo Fontefrancesco**, reflects on the impact of Covid-19 on food festivals in northern Italy. He returns to his longitudinal study of food festivals taking us into the experience of Ravioli festival organisers who fear the long-term impact of the absence of their festival on the social, economic and cultural development of their region.

We are very pleased to have three book reviews for our first issue: the first by **Dr Elaine Mahon** is of Jp McMahon's *The Irish Cookbook*. The second, also centred on food consumption, but with an emphasis on sustainability, is of Gigi Berardi's *FoodWISE: A Whole Systems Guide to Sustainable and Delicious Food Choices* reviewed by **Dr Joseph Hegarty**. For our third book, **Dr Perry Share** illuminates the sociological approach to food studies in his review of *Introducing the sociology of food and eating* by leading sociologist of food and eating Anne Murcott.

It was with great sadness that the wider food community learned of the death of Diarmuid Murphy on the 3rd May 2020. His life is celebrated in the obituary included in this issue.

As editors, we relish the diversity of background and scholarship that the world of food studies presents. These papers are a taster of what is to come in future editions of the Journal.

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