Feeling vs. Being like a Domestic Goddess: Cookbooks and Lifestyle Choices

Lotta Airila
MA Thesis
University of Turku
School of Languages and Translation Studies
Department of English; English Philology
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Tämä pro gradu -tutkielma tarkastelee, miten keittokirjat muovaavat pääasiassa naispuolista lukijakuntaansa. Tärkein kysymys, johon tutkielmassa on etsitty vastausta on, että onko naisilla, menneiden sukupolvien taisteltua vuosikymmeniä tasa-arvon puolesta, oikeus valita viettää aikaa keittiössä ja oikeasti nauttiakin siitä.

Kahtena päälähteenä tutkielmassa on käytetty brittiläisen Nigella Lawsonin keittokirjoja *How to Eat* ja *How to be a Domestic Goddess*. Näiden kirjojen analysoinnin ja muiden lähteiden avulla tutkielmassa on käsitelty ruuanlaiton ja leipomisen nautittavuutta ja sitä onko se ylipäätään sallittua vai syntistä. Lawson on julkaissut urallaan sitten vuoden 1998 yhteensä yhdeksän keittokirjaa, joiden lisäksi kirjojen tueksi on tehty useita televisiosarjoja. *How to Eat* on yleispätevä opas hyvän ruuan nautintoihin ja periaatteisiin, *How to be a Domestic Goddess* taas sisältää lähinnä leivontareseptejä. Nämä kaksi kirjaa ovat Lawsonin ensimmäiset keittokirjat.

Nigella Lawsonin keittokirjat eivät ole vain reseptikokelmia eivätkä reseptit vain aineisosalistoja ja valmistusohjeita. Lawsonin kirjoja voi lukea kirjallisuutena eikä vain reseptien takia. Lawson viittaa usein naisen asemaan ja yrittää vakuuttaa lukijoitaan ruuanlaiton ja leipomisen nautittavuudesta.

ASIASANAT ruuanlaitto, ruoanlaitto, kokki, tasa-arvo, naisen asema, keittiö, keittokirja, resepti, Nigella Lawson, synti

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this thesis I look at the way coookbooks shape their, mainly female, readers. One of the key questions I have studied is do women, after decades of fighting for equal rights, have the right now to choose to be in the kitchen *and* enjoy it? Is it acceptable for women to enjoy making cakes? Is food more than mere fuel for the body? As my two primary sources I have used Nigella Lawson's books *How to Eat* and *How to be a Domestic Goddess*. The appreviations I have used in the text are HTE for *How to Eat* and HTBADG for *How to be a Domestic Goddess*. I am mostly referring to the books by their appreviated names and not their author to make it more clear which book I am referring to.

Nigella Lawson is a British cookbook writer and celebrity chef who claims not to be a chef, as she is not a professionally trained chef, but a cook. Lawson started her career with food by writing restaurant reviews and columns for different magazines and newspapers. The daughter of a former Conservative Member of Parliament and Chancellor of the Exchequer in Margaret Thatcher's government, Nigel Lawson, Baron Lawson of Blaby, and his first wife Vanessa (née Salmon), a socialite and heiress to the J. Lyons and Co. fortune has since 1998 published nine cookbooks. HTE and HTBADG were the first two to be published.

Lawson's cookbooks are not merely collections of recipes but contain a lot of other text too. She has an introduction for most of her recipes. In the introductions she gives credits to people and recipes that have inspired her or other background knowledge about the cooking methods involved or the ingredients used. For Lawson recipes are not merely lists of ingredients and directions for cooking but a lot more. By elaborating her recipes and giving background information and memories connected to the the recipes, Lawson makes cookbooks literature to be enjoyed also as reading material and not merely through the dishes and bakes one can create with the recipes they provide.

Very often Lawson refers to women's place in today's society and their place in the home. Even more often Lawson writes about taking pleasure in cooking,

baking and eating. For Lawson cooking and baking are not an obligation but something to be enjoyed. Lawson attempts to bring that idea of pleasure over obligation to her readers by telling them it is more about *feeling like* a domestic goddess than about *being* one.

Through analysis of Lawson's two books and other sources I look at how women, cooking and baking, eating and taking pleasure in both preparing the food and eating it are portrayed and talked about. It seems that in the 21st century women are finally free to choose to be in the kitchen or not to be there but it is not as straigt-forward as this. When previous generations of women have fought to get away from the stove, do women today have the right to choose to be in the kitchen? And even more, enjoy it?

2. The definition and the evolution of the recipe and the cookbook

Most of us know what a recipe usually looks like and what cookbooks are like, even if they have never had the need or the urge to use them. For some they are part of their daily routines, for others source material for special occasions, for others pure entertainment in addition to their practical side – for some all of this and more. As Lawson puts it: “a recipe can be a prompt to action, a reminder of possibilities” (HTE, 107). It need not be followed to the letter but can be if the user so wishes. In this chapter I look at the history and evolution of the cookbook as well as that of the recipe and the definition of the two concepts in the past and the present.

Goldstein (2005, 58) claims that “a recipe presents itself as fully realized in its practicality, and seeks no other rhetorical sphere than that of process analysis.” In Goldstein's view, recipes are more instructional in nature than something to be read for enjoyment. He continues: “Yet a recipe is also a performance, by both the writer and the reader-participant.” A recipe needs an audience, someone to take part in realizing it to its full potential. Recipes do exist on their own but they are meant to be used, to be utilized to create something new. In that respect they are very much like plays: one can read a play merely for the the fun of it but its full potential is only revealed once it is acted out on a stage. Recipes are very similar, they need their audience and participants to fully come to life. As Goldstein (2005, 59) puts it: “Recipe generally distinguishes between the writer and the reader-performer, with empasis falling on the second category.” The user of the recipe reads it and then performs certain things to make the dish.

Recipes can also be seen as mere blueprints that a (skilled) cook or baker can use as a base for improvisation. As Lawson (HTE, 135) states “Far too much cooking now is about the tyranny of the recipe on the one hand and the absence of slowly acquired experience on the other.” People are interested in cooking or willing to show off but do not necessarily have the patience to acquire the basic skills needed to perform recipes or to cook and bake completely without them. Many recipes (or their writers) expect certain level of

knowledge about how "things work" from their users and do not necessarily explain everything and every step in a textbook sort of way. As Lawson writes in *How to Eat*:

> Cooking is not about just joining the dots, following one recipe slavishly and then moving on to the next. It's about developing an understanding of food, a sense of assurance in the kitchen, about the simple desire to make yourself something to eat. And in cooking, as in writing, you must please yourself to please others. Strangely it can take enormous confidence to trust your own palate, follow your own instincts. Without habit, which itself is just trial and error, this can be harder than following the most elaborate of recipes. But it's what works, what's important. (HTE, viii)

Cooking is very much about finding your own style of doing things and getting to be confident in your skills and about your tastebuds. As Lawson puts it:

> But that's what you should do when cooking: you draw on your own tastes and adapt according to your personality. I wouldn't suggest substituting like for unlike, or not paying respect to the natural lie of a dish, but lemon, vinegar, oil, schmoil: don't get het up. (HTE, 153)

Golstein (2005, 59) points out that the recipes in *Martha Stewart Living* (magazine) expect a lot from their readers / users in that all "extraneous words are trimmed, and explanations are standardized and contracted into the smallest space possible". Goldstein admits this is normal for magazine editing but does not quite see why the editors have chosen to use such imperative language which strikes "a tone both tyrannical and vacuous". This is very different, I find, from the kind of language Lawson uses both in her books and on her television shows.

Recipes are everywhere, not just in cookbooks but in different kinds of magazines, newspapers, the internet and its various websites and blogs dedicated to the cause, television, films, novels, free leaflets, tea towels... And not just recipes: *food* is everywhere. Parasecoli writes about the pervasiveness of food:

> Food is pervasive. The social, economic, and even politacal relevance cannot be ignored. Ingestion and incorporation constitute a fundamental component of our connection with reality and the world outside our body. Food influences our lives as a relevant marker of power, cultural capital, class, gender, ethnic, and religious identities. It has become the object of a wide and ever-growing corpus of studies and analysis, from marketing to history, from nutrition to anthropology. (Parasecoli 2008, 2).

We are constantly told how to eat, where to eat, who to eat with, what to eat and what not to eat. Food – that is: eating, recipes and talking and writing about

food as well as taking pictures of food – has become a veritable trend. As Floyd and Forster write “they [recipes] are also persistently drawn into cultural debates around health and purity, about lifestyle and individualism, and into definitions of the national past, present and future” (Floyd & Forster 2003, 1). Recipes may be simple or they may be elaborate but they most certainly carry a lot of weight with them.

A recipe is not always merely an instruction on how to prepare a dish, although it can seem to be so, but “besides being a narrative in itself, (it) offers us other stories too: of family sagas and community records, of historical and cultural moments or changes, and also personal histories and narratives of self” (Floyd & Forster 2003, 2). Nigella Lawson’s *How to Eat* is, I feel, a good example of this:

> With food, authenticity is not the same thing as originality; indeed they are often at odds. So while much is my own here – insofar as anything can be – many of the recipes included are derived from other writers. From the outset I wanted this book to be, in part, an anthology of the food I love eating and a way of paying my respects to the foodwriters I've loved reading. (HTE, ix-x).

Lawson continues:

> The easiest way to learn how to cook is by watching; and bearing that in mind I have tried more to talk you through a recipe than bark out instructions. As much as possible, I have wanted to make you feel that I'm there with you, in the kitchen, as you cook. The book that follows is the conversation we might be having. (HTE, x)

In a world where everything seems to have already been seen and experienced, it is difficult to come up with something genuinely new. It could be argued it is not necessarily always even important. Lawson writes, in the foreword to Joe Dolce’s Italian Cheesecake:

> I have become a bit of a bore. I can’t hear anyone talk about a delicious something or other someone in their family cooks without asking for the recipe. This is the cheesecake my friend Joe Dolce told me his grandmother, Edith Guerino, always used to make. (HTBADG, 161)

New recipes are published daily in different media but exactly how new and/or original are they? Referring to her Seaweed and Noodle Salad, Lawson (HTE, 427) writes “This is not an authentic dish, in so far as I didn't get it from any Japanese source, just from the happy ransacking of my own larder.” Continuing about her Thai-flavoured Mussels, Lawson specifies “I have called these 'Thai-

flavoured' rather than 'Thai' because they enamate directly from my kitchen, and I am not Thai and have never even been to Thailand. So this dish is authentic, but in the sense that it is authentically how I cook it" (HTE, 430).

Writing about vegetable dishes that can be cooked in advance, Lawson gives the recipe for ratatouille, relying on the memory of how her mother used to make it as well as the instructions given by the legendary Elizabeth David:

> I couldn't remember exactly how my mother made ratatouille and didn't know if I used 2 courgettes or 3, or how many minutes I fried them. Pinpoint accuracy disappears with recipes you do often, but somehow I felt even more at a loss in transcribing this one from memory. (HTE, 115)

Referring to her Chicken with rice and egg and lemon sauce Lawson (HTE, 402-403) writes "This is the food of my childhood, a taste that roots me in my past. When my brother, Dominic, and Rosa got married, this is what he asked me and my sisters to cook him the night before. For us, this is the most significant kitchen supper." Recipes that make food taste the way we remember it tasting from our childhood make the kind of food many of us want to eat, if not daily then for a nostalgia trip. Foodtastes and customs might have changed but there is certainly something comforting about going back to memories brought back by tastes.

Goldstein (2005, 58) points out that recipes are indeed often inherited, handed down from one generation to the next: "Its [recipe's] author is seen as ancillary to a larger historical progression, usually encapsulated in the phrase 'handing down'. As Lawson (HTBADG, 346) writes "This is another recipe that comes from the movingly hand-scrawled book that) belonged to Hettie's mother, Soot." Recipes become loved and used I claim not only because they are good but because they remind us of the people who used to cook from them.

Neuhaus has studied the evolution of the cookbook in modern America and claims that by the 1940s cookbooks had become "instruction manuals for every aspect of cooking the meal, from choosing the food at the market to setting the table for dinner" (Neuhaus 2003, 28). Many cookbooks, I feel, fall in the category of instructional cookbooks, even though there are some that can be considered less instructional and more inspirational in that they do not provide their users recipes or cooking instructions, at least not in the most traditional

form one might expect from a cookbook. Cookbooks can also be sources of "sensuous arousal and vicarious pleasure" (Dennis 2008, 2). Of the sensual and pleasure-evoking side of cookbooks in more detail later – let us now look at the history of the cookbook.

The relevancy of studying cookbooks could be argued. Cookbooks, however, have been with us for quite some time – longer than many of the other forms of literature so closely studied these days. Dennis (2008, 2) tells us that the first written recipes that have been discovered were written on ancient Egyptian baked clay tablets. In the excavations of Pompeii, rough recipes scrawled on fireplace lintels were found. Cookbooks have been truly popular and widespread since the sixteenth century – the same time as graphics and illustrations, which today play such an important part of most cookbooks, started to be used as more than merely for decorational purposes. Cookbooks, alongside Bibles, became the first mass-produced books when printing was invented. As producing cookbooks became easier, they also started to become more specialised (*ibid*.).

Seeing as cookbooks have such a long history, it is no wonder that cookbook writers today seem to have such a compelling need to come up with something original. As Lawson (HTE, 377) writes about making runny, baked custard: "I doubted it would work because it seemed to me that if it was such a good idea someone would have come up with it before. But it did work; evidently I am either lazier or more fearful than other foodwriters, or both."

Beetham (2010, 16) suggests that during the period between roughly 1860 and 1900 the recipe book transformed into what we now understand it to be and at the same time its importance as a popular print was established. Although the history of the recipe book or the cookbook is tied in with the general history of the mass production of printed material and the general history of urbanisation, industrialisation and mass literacy that all started in the 1860s, the recipe book still has its own unique history and story to tell, reminds Beetham (*ibid.*).

Books of 'receipts' were first geared towards a wider audience of both men and women but as it became more customary to buy in certain products ready-made (such as beer or varnish), the audience changed into more exclusively female,

claims Beetham (2010, 16). The evolution or development of the recipe book was not, however, this straightforward, reminds Beetham. Recipes were embedded in different kinds of household maintenance books that became increasingly popular in the 19th century. Recipes were, even then, everywhere. They were published on their own and in magazines, almanacs and diaries.

Beetham has studied the works of several bibliographers and has come to the conclusion that "between 1875 and the end of the century not only did the format of the cookery book become settled but also publishers came to realise the value of this form of print commodity". Beetham names *Beeton's Book of Household Management*, first published in 1861, as the most important book in the development of the recipe book (2010, 17). It seems Beeton had as much a ingenious publication machinery behind the book as writers today – they even sold advertisement space for each of Beeton's volymes (Beetham 2010, 22). Beetham (*ibid*.) points out that Beeton's book were very much instructional, didactic in nature. Their aim was to teach domestic management systematically. More about the different natures of the cookbook will follow shortly.

Beetham (2010, 22) confesses there is, however, no way of knowing how and to what extent Beeton's books were read, giving as an example the 1906 volyme she inherited from her own grandmother – the book had barely been opened, let alone used in the kitchen. Beetham (*ibid.*) points out that Victorians believed that reading can bring about cultural anxieties: "Reading is like eating in that in both the barriers between inside and outside are crossed." Although cookbooks generally would have probably seem to be exempt from concerns regarding reading (especially that of women), Beetham suggests that cookery books, like novels, deal "with more than matters of 'taste'", also with "fantasy and desire at a number of levels": "The fantasy here was of the truly domestic and therefore desirable woman whose husband and children are kept safe in the circle of the home" (Beetham 2010, 29). Cookbooks created the domestic ideal that many readers felt they should pursue. Beeton and her contemporaries really started what in a century would become a billion dollar / euro business and create national and worldwide fame and visibility for dozens and dozens (maybe even hundreds?) of chefs, cooks, cookbook writers, bloggers, magazine writers and

the like. Cookbooks still continue to create the domestic ideal and their readers still continue to pursue it, whether they do it knowingly or not.

Lawson writes in *How to Eat* about cooking in advance and how to make the perfect roast duck, referring to the first known cookbook:

> Apicius – he of the first cookery book – likewise instructed his readers: 'lavas, ornas et in ola elixabis cum acqua, sale et aneto dimidia coctura'. Admittedly, even if the suggested boiling the duck in water (with dill as well as salt) until half-cooked, the second half's cooking would not be exactly by roasting; it would have been more like pot-roasting. Nevertheless, it reminds us pointedly that there is nothing new in cooking. That's if it's to taste good. (HTE, 100)

Simply put, a cookbook usually contains recipes and very often also pictures of the dishes for which it offers recipes and/or cooking methods involved to create those dishes. Dennis (2008, 1-2) reminds us that it is important to note that a cookbook is not just simply a collection of recipes but much more. Cookbooks carry a subtext, a context and also a latent set of assumptions about their audience.

Cookbooks are more than they seem to be on the surface. They can be, Dennis (2008, 1-2) continues, didactic, informative, boasting, instructional, patriotic, or propagandist and can act as ideological advertisements, economic guides or aids to social mobility. In my opinion school home economics or cooking textbooks are one of the most obvious examples among didactic and informative cookbooks. They are also very much instructional in form. It could be argued that at least at some point they can also have been propagandist or to have acted as ideological advertisements or economic guides, perhaps even as aids to social mobility. Even today we see cookbooks published that certainly carry an agenda – maybe not a political or a social one in an obvious way but perhaps that of educating people about veganism, raw food or growing their own vegetables and making homemade skin masks and other concoctions.

Known among her readers and viewers for her vast collection of cookbooks, Lawson gives an example of cookbooks not being just for cooking, writing about one of her favourite cookbooks, Anna del Conte's *Entertaining All'Italiana*:

> I have several copies of this book: one in the kitchen, where, eccentrically perhaps, I tend not to keep my cookery books; one in my study, where all books on food notionally live (in practice they are dotted on floors, in lavatories,

> throughout the house); and one in the bedroom, for late-night soothing reading and midnight-feast fantasising. (HTE, 89)

Lawson admits: “You don’t read cookery books just for culinary instruction – I don’t – but also for comment, for history, for talk” (HTE, 93). Cookbooks can be obtained merely for the fun of it. Shopping for them can bring the same kind of pleasure as any other form of shopping. In *How to Eat* Lawson writes:

> Sometimes when I’ve gone out for dinner and get back when the shops are still open in the States, I phone Kitchen Arts & Letters in New York and ask what interesting books they’ve got in at the moment. My alcohol-induced long-distance phone call becomes very expensive: the mere recital of the credit card number and boxloads of books arrive – the memory suppressed, a surprise – some weeks later. (HTE, 257)

Cookbooks can be, if not a direct source for a recipe, then a source of inspiration as Lawson (HTE, 223) writes, referring to Anna Thomas’s *From Anna’s Kitchen*: “I could take so many recipes from it here, since I so often cook, if not exactly from it, then inspired by it (which is more telling).” Having read dozens, if not hundreds, of cookbooks it is sometimes difficult to know where the idea for a certain dish came from to one's mind. Sometimes recipes amalgamate into a new whole. For some dishes you always turn to the same recipe and follow it to the letter, for others you try and perfect it every time, perhaps combining elements from many recipes and add your own touches. And, as Lawson (HTE, 218) points out: “We all have our own fallback dishes: recipes we know so well that we don’t even consider them recipes any more.”

Many people continue to feel that food is something that should be shared with other people. A connection can be seen in the root of the word recipe, “-- the Latin word *recipere*, meaning both to give and to receive, reminds us that the instructions that appear to tie down the form of a dish to be shared exist in a perpetual state of exchange.” (Floyd & Forster 2003, 6) By following recipes and cooking for others we are in constant state of exchange – between the recipe and its interpreter as well as the cook and the ones that eat the food.

Goldstein (2005, 59) writes that recipes generally distinguish “between the writer and the reader-performer, with emphasis falling on the second category”. Goldstein (*ibid.*) gives Martha Stewart as an example that elides the distinction in that “she both authors and performs”. He claims that Martha shows her readers and viewers ‘how to do it’ properly with an authorial voice that strikes “a

tone both tyrannical and vacuous" (Goldstein 2005, 59-60). Goldstein goes to state that for Martha the recipes "are to be produced for the pleasure of others, which in turn means they are meant to conform to a simulation of what pleasure might consist in". He claims that the recipes and instructions Martha gives in her magazines and television shows teach their audience "to substitute self-expression with its corporate simulation: how to replace you with 'you'".

Recipes and cookbooks have changed over time because their target audiences have changed too. Or is it the other way round? To what extent do cookbooks shape their target audiences? Floyd & Forster (2003, 2) write that recipes are open to "subjective intervention and interpretation" by the reader-participant who in a conversation with the recipe makes personal connections to the recipe and its cultural background. In more detail about cookbooks and lifestyle choices later.

Cookbooks have also acted as a way for women to carry on their legacy to future generations. Floyd and Forster's claim that literary scholars have found cookery books "a form available for women's creative expression" (2003, 5) can at first sound like a very "un-feminist thing" to say but what they actually mean is that recipes have been an opportunity for women to record their cultural heritage and to pass it on to future generations. Many of the private recipe collections were never meant for the public eye but as personal notes of the tried and tested recipes that the collector and her family enjoyed, collected perhaps so that they could be passed on to future generations.

Nigella Lawson's cookbooks are a good example of collections of inherited (family) recipes. In a foreword to Flora's Famous Courgette Cake in *How to Be a Domestic Goddess* she writes about how she loves being given people's own or family recipes. She writes: "I like to credit any recipe given to me, not only out of sense of propriety, but because it makes it all the more interesting. Recipes don't, like Aphrodite, spring fully formed from their author's forehead: to give their provenance is a pleasure and more besides – it's where food and social history merge" (HTBADG, 18). Writing about Seville orange curd tart, Lawson gives a good example of how recipes evolve when people make them their own:

> I ate this at Alastair Little's Lancaster road restaurant, just after it opened, one February when the Seville oranges were in the shops, and couldn't believe how transcendentally good it was. The recipe is from Francesca Melman, who was the sous-chef there and, at the time of writing, is chef at Tom Conran's pub-restaurant, The Cow, in Westbourne Grove. She describes it as a mixture of Adam Robinson's Seville orange curd from the Brackenbury (served, I think, with shortbread, and you could do the same here, forgoing the pastry case, but then to have enough you'd have to double to quantities) and the lemon tart from the River Café. I have introduced some muscovado sugar, which gives off a pleasurable hint of toffee-ish marmalade. I sometimes make a sweet pastry, sometimes a plain shortcrust case for this. The sweet pastry is more delicate somehow, but there really is something to be said for using a plain, unfancy non-sweet pastry the better to set off the deeply toned curd. (HTE, 271)

A dish need not be nursery food or result in a nostalgia trip merely because it is something one's grandmother used to cook, reminds Lawson (HTE, 244) writing about Poires Belle Hélène (poached pears served with chocolate and coffee sauce and decorated with crystallised violets). Referring to "lunch, tentatively outside, for 8" Lawson writes: -- this is the perfect lunch: not too filling and not a parody of a picnic to be eaten under those cloudless pre-First World War skies of nostalgic collective memory" (HTE, 250). Then, describing her love of rhubarb, Lawson writes "It isn't nostalgia that drives me – such puddings, such ingredients, were not part of my childhood – or a kitsch longing for the retro-culinary repertoire. It's the taste, the smell, the soft, fragrant, bulky stickiness of this that seduces" (HTE, 257).

Not all recipes need to be of one's own family tradition to evoke nostalgic memories, as Lawson writes: "I love Scandinavian food, perhaps because I spent a lot of time in Norway as a child (taken by an adored au pair, Sissel) --" (HTE, 268). Lawson continues, writing about jam tarts:

> Another old-fashioned nursery delicacy, which in truth I can't remember even having when I was a child, but am drawn to for the same sentimental reason my own children are: it evokes not the real but the super-real; the world of picture books and nursery rhymes. So you could say that we have a literary taste for them. (HTE, 499)

It is like reading Enid Blyton's *The Famous Five* and wanting to eat crumpets and treacle tart that are necessarily nowhere near one's own culinary heritage but still manage to evoke sentiments and memories. Recipes act as vessels of memories, whether they have been experienced personally or through novels or films. They create kinship between people of different cultural backgrounds, ages and other possible groupings. The food past generations have served their children is partly the same that children today eat but also partly very different.

Children in different countries might eat the same kind of food (for example pizza, pasta, sushi etc. that have become popular in many parts of the world and are necessarily no longer regarded as exotic) rather than the same kind of food their grandparents ate as children.

Lawson has a strong opinion about teaching children to eat well and passionately and to trust their palates:

> Just as snobbery is in some sense about social insecurity, so food snobbery is really an indication of how frightened and insecure people are about food. They feel that they need to be told what they should like because they have never learnt to trust their own palates. This is why it is crucial to eat well, eat passionately, as a child. Love of food should be something we take in with our mother's milk, not a complicated body of knowledge amassed from the colour supplements in our twenties and thirties. What's good to eat isn't an orthodoxy. But if we don't eat well young, we don't have much to build on. Foundations are everything. (HTE, 451)

Children can be taught to eat different kinds of food and to enjoy food, not to use it merely as fuel. Even adults claim they do not like something when in fact they have never even tried it. How can one learn to try new food and be open to new tastes if it is not encouraged from an early age? I suspect it is possible but certainly not easy.

Writing about biscuit making, Lawson refers again to heritage and history:

> Biscuits are one of the first things we learn to cook when we're little – or at least roll and stamp out, get the feel of, which is just as important – and there seems to be a sense in which we're recapturing some remembered, no doubt idealized, past whenever we make them in adulthood; they still feel like playing. (HTBADG, 47)

In the foreword to her Fudge recipe, Lawson (HTBADG, 228) refers again to her childhood: "I think fudge was one of the first sweet things I made as a child (we never went in for cakes much as a family) and I still love it". She admits to liking chocolate fudge too, but the real kind of fudge – "buttery, vanilla-flavoured and teeth-achingly sweet" – is the kind that brings back childhood memories (*ibid.*). Then, referring to Soot's Flapjacks, Lawson writes:

> Flapjacks are such old-fashioned, comforting things, the sort of food you should make from a mother's recipe. My mother, however, didn't go in for this sort of cooking. Hettie, who has been a reassuring and calming spirit throughout our

> work on this book, luckily had a mother, Soot, who did. This is the recipe we took out of the handwritten book Hettie inherited from her. (HTBADG, 232)

Cooking together with children, letting them do the tasks they are cabable of doing and not minding if it takes some time, is a good way to introduce them to new flavours and cooking in general. If children are not introduced to new flavours and general opennes towards food, an interest in food and cooking is a natural result.

Referring to her Red cabbage cooked in the Viennese fashion, Lawson (HTE, 313) writes: “I seem to remember, though, my mother always used brown sugar, and a rich treacly one at that. And I had no idea that the culinary style this invoked was Viennese, but I rather love the idea: it certainly adds charm.” Most of us have dishes we remember from our childhood. Some of them might be made following a certain recipe every time and the stories behind might be very interesting. They might be merely cut-outs from old magazines that have sustained time or they might have been handed down from an older relative or a friend. Recipes pass on more than merely lists of ingredients and instructions on how to make the dish.

In *How to Eat* Lawson refers to her late sister Thomasina and the meals they shared together:

> Together, we ate bowlfuls of chicken broth with leeks and boiled potatoes; roast chicken and leeks in white sauce with boiled potatoes; spaghettini with tomato sauce and lots of fresh basil on top. On the evening of her arrival, at the beginning of any weekend she stayed with me, we always shared taramasalata with warm pitta, with, alongside on the table, a plate of hot crisp grilled bacon and a bunch of spring onions. (HTE, 149)

Memories, not always very clear, of meals shared together can last a lifetime. Lawson, in the foreword for her Chicken with morels (HTE, 150) writes: “I have feeling, which memory doesn't actually ratify, that my mother or grandmother must have cooked something similar. Anyway this is what I do.” Writing about London Cheesecake, Lawson refers to her family heritage “My paternal grandmother instructed me in the art of adding the final layer of sour cream, sugar and vanilla: and it’s true, it does complete it” (HTBADG, 159). We are influenced culinarily by our surroundings, whether we want it or not and whether we aknowledge it or not. We can of course make changes into our diets and

eating habits when we have a choice but the basics come from home and might be difficult to change.

In the foreword to her Espresso cupcakes, Lawson again refers to her heritage:

> You don't need to make the cappuccino cupcakes, opposite, to have with these, but they do look, and taste, wonderful together. They are on the edge of what my paternal grandfather, and my mother after him, used to condemn as landscape cookery, but I just couldn't help myself. (HTBADG, 198)

and again she notes: "I add ground almonds because my mother did, and so it's the taste I know –" (HTBADG, 257). Familiar tastes bring as much memories back to one's mind as smells and other sensory provokers.

Talking about Christmas-morning muffins and creating one's own family Christmas traditions in *How to be a Domestic Goddess* Lawson writes:

> I do think that part of creating a family life is establishing those shared rituals, as important as getting out the same old familiar box of decorations for the tree each year. Now, it's true that children are too excited about their presents to take a lively interest in breakfast on Christmas Day, but consider making these all the same: there's something so warmly reassuring in knowing that soon this cinnamon-sweet smell of baking and oranges will come to signify Christmas morning to them. (HTBADG, 277)

I argue that with this statement among many other similar ones, Lawson suggests that a mother can create, with little effort if you read the rest of the recipe, a warmly welcoming and homey feeling for her family without compromising her own status in any way. One does not have to work hard to create an atmosphere (or a dish). She writes about her family's Christmas traditions:

> Christmas Day itself is, in my view, non-negotiable. It's fashionable to decry the traditional lunch as boring and turkey as dry but I love it all, and on 26 December start longing for next year's lunch. My great-grandmother was so keen on Christmas lunch, and felt it was such a waste to eat it only once a year, that she had a second one each Midsummer's Day. (HTE, 55)

Some recipes resonate tradition and heritage, even if not one's own. Writing about Finnish rye bread in Lawson says "I'm not Finnish, and yet I warm to this loaf as if I were brought up on it" (HTBADG, 299).

To sum all this up, I suggest that one of the main ways recipes function is to create memories and a sense of kinship. Recipes pass on information and habits from one generation to the next. Some family recipes are brought out only for special occasions, others are enjoyed almost weekly. Recipes and taste memories are as important, it could be argued, as other forms of memory sharing, such as photographs. Food is not merely about staying alive, it is also about pleasure. Food is "part of the civilised context in which we live in", writes Lawson (HTE, 137) and it is hard to argue with such a statement. Food is not just fuel, it is so much more.

3. COOKBOOKS AND LIFESTYLE CHOICES

The real change in the way people, Americans in particular, claims Neuheus (2003, 27), spent money and “bought manufactured items not only out of need but also for the pleasure of purchasing” began after the First World War. New products, such as refridgerators, the spread of utilities, such as electricity and gas, and the growing number of supermarkets changed the ways people not only shopped for food but how they prepared their food (*ibid.*). Cookbooks followed suit, of course, entering the modern age and taking into account modern kitchen technonologies (Neuhaus 2003, 28).

As Lawson writes, “The Great Culinary Reneissance we hear so much about has done many things – given us extra virgin olive oil, better restaurants and gastroporn – but it hasn't taught us how to cook.” She continues “Food and cookery have become more than respectable: they are fashionable” (HTE, 4). Cookbooks are not just about recipes and cooking instructions or about the sub-text messages they carry. They have become veritable status symbols for some people. Magee (2007, 2) writes about cookbooks becoming objects of fetishistic adoration. They are browsed through, admired, read, enjoyed as much as or more than they are used for cooking. People collect cookbooks, Nigella Lawson gives her followers a good example to follow with her vast collection of cookbooks covering two long walls of her home. Cookbooks have become coffee-table books just as much as travel, gardening or interior design books. They are must-haves, best sellers.

It could be argued that the ‘how to cook’ of past cookbook writers and television chefs has changed into ‘how to live’ of today’s chefs, writers and television food personalities. Domestic life is more about lifestyle and choices than of constant labour. Neuhaus (2003, 1) claims that “[A]uthors often infuse their pages with instructions on the best way to live one's life – how to shop, lose weight, feed children, combat depression, protect the environment, expand one's horizons, and make a house a home.” Cookbooks then, Neuhaus continues, give recipes not only for food but for living and through them many things such as food and its preparation, kitchen labour and even gender, class and race can be studied (*ibid.*). Gallegos (2005, 99) is of the same opinion: “Cookbooks facilitate the

production of a moral self as 'good' cook, 'good' parent and 'good' spouse. They also facilitate the production of 'good' citizen by providing standards through which pluralism can be explored.”

As mentioned before, food in all its forms and connections has become trendy. As Magee (2007, 2) writes, “Cookbooks may then become aspirational rather than utilitarian texts”. Readers aspire to be as good as the writers and the photographers and as good as others interested in the same things. They share their recipes and photos online and try to achieve not merely a good meal but also the perfect photo of the perfect dish to be shared not just with those perhaps around the table but also on Facebook, Pinterest, blogs and other social media.

Tonner, in looking at why people choose the cookbooks they choose, claims that cookbook writers today not only are “representations of contemporary culinary culture” but also “create aspirational cultural narratives” (Tonner 2008). People’s choice of cookbooks does not merely show what kind of cooking interests them but also shows their “attitudes towards food and cooking and how this becomes outwardly manifest through their choices of cookbooks” (*ibid.*). Cookbooks (and food), it could be claimed, both create and showcase one’s identity simultaneously. Nigella Lawson (HTBADG, 183) writes about her choice of alcohol in cooking and baking and how it reflects her palate:

> Since *How to Eat* was awash with Marsala, I have tried to limit its inclusion here. Nevertheless, the one true thing about ourselves is our palate, and so you will see it included here and there to add resiny depth to whipped creams or a mascarpone filling, in the same way I often reach for the smoky intensity of a slug of muscat.

People watch cooking shows, just as they read (or browse) cookbooks because they give them pleasure, not necessarily to get new recipes to try at home. Adema (2000, 113) writes about Food Network (the first, and at least at the time of her writing, the only TV-channel devoted solely to food and entertaining) and how food television combines “the pleasures of watching someone else cook and eat; the emulsion of entertainment and cooking; the jumbling of traditional gender roles; and ambivalence toward cultural standards of body, consumption, and health”. She goes on to suggest that in a venue that was traditionally associated with maternal security, television today, with its celebrity chefs adds

sexual innuendoes to the mix. Food Network and food television in general has, she states, very "little to do with food as nutrition and survival, and everything to do with pleasure" (Adema 2000, 115). Beetham (2010, 29) puts it this way: "Cooking and reading alike offer us the fantasy of a transformed nature, since for the recipe writer as for the cook, 'everything that passes under her hands is changed and assumes new forms'." We come again back to the statement made before: recipes only come fully to life when their readers use them to create dishes.

Tonner interviewed a group of home cooks and found out, among other things, that, maybe somewhat surprisingly, still today young cooks look more to family than their friends for influence in their cooking (Tonner 2008). As Lawson writes:

> But it is possible to have a family lunch which dispenses, in any literal sense, with family (not that this is necessarily desirable). In the past, connections were familial; the boundaries were of blood. Today, people get their sense of extended family from their friends. (HTE, 276)

Another finding of Tonner's was, however, that most of the people interviewed had a desire to cook better than their parents, which, Tonner argues, suggests a desire to cook more creatively (Tonner 2008). Tonner goes on to suggest that although some of the family recipes are lost and not handed down from one generation to the next, the "desire to find their own way and build their own cooking skill and legacy" has been ignited (*ibid.*). Lawson argues that in order to learn to cook and appreciate food, "First, you have to know how to do certain things, things that years ago it was taken for granted would be learned at home" (HTE, 7). She says she herself learned some of the basics with her mother but not all of them. She too has had to learn the "lazy confidence, that instinct" in cooking of knowing "whether I want to use red or white wine, of what will happen if I add anchovies or bacon" (*ibid.*). Referring to her Golden root-vegetable couscous with chorizo, Lawson writes:

> Each time I do this I use different vegetables in differing quantities, but if that sort of permissiveness makes you feel unsafe, then follow this recipe word for word the first time and then gradually, as you do it and redo it, you will find you loosen up. Don't think less of yourself for following orders to the letter. It takes time to learn when you can make free with a recipe and when it's bet to rein in the improvisatory spirit. Most of my mistakes have been as a result of fiddling about with a recipe the first time I've cooked it, rather than doing it as written, and then next time seeing where I could improve or change or develop it. (HTE, 226)

To gain the confidence and skill to improvise and fiddle about with recipes, one needs a bit of practice first. Knowing the basics and how things work will give the opportunity to trust one's instincts more.

Lawson writes: “Since most women don't have lives now whereby we're plunged into three family meals a day from the age of nineteen, we're not forced to learn how to cook from the ground up. I don't complain” (HTE, 135). Today many women have a choice: they can decide to cook or not. It is not necessarily assumed that if you are a woman, you do the cooking in your family. Of course many families still follow traditional gender roles but times are changing, have been for quite some time, and with television and other forms of media showing us male cooks and chefs it is bound to make a difference.

I feel that Tonner’s research backs up the idea that people do not purchase cookbooks merely because they want to cook new food but because they find pleasure in reading the books or just browsing through them (Tonner 2008). Cookbooks with their glossy pictures and interesting tales behind the recipes (some offer more of this than others) attract people’s attention as a form of literature to enjoy and not just because they can offer their readers new recipes or cooking instructions. Referring to Norma MacMillan’s *In a Shaker Kitchen*, Lawson writes: “a book I curl up with and read in a metaphorical fug of home-baking after another stressed-out urban day. Reading recipes for chicken pot pie and maple wheaten loaves is a wonderful antidote to modern life” (HTE, 301). In Lawson’s own books, there are no recipes that are included just as recipes – there is a reason for every recipe to be included in the volumes, a story runs through the books from introductions to the recipes from more introductions to more recipes.

Bell and Hollows (2005, 5) write that ”a feeling of belonging to society, and living within structured social relations, is replaced by a world in which, it is claimed, experience is no longer collective but individualized.” In a world such as this, consumer goods change from having a use value to having a sign value. Our identities are constructed in a world that has lost any “real” meaning (*ibid.*). As Bell and Hollows suggest, individuals are no longer constrained by traditional hierarchies but have instead increasing freedom to construct lifestyles through

stylized consumer goods. Food, cooking and eating can be used to construct, and display a particular lifestyle (Ashley *et al.* 2004, 183).

Gallegos (2005, 99-100) points out that the word taste has two meanings when it comes to food, cooking and eating. Firstly, the more obvious, *how* things change – are they sweet, bitter, sour and so on. Secondly, taste "denotes a socio-culturally linked concept, where to have 'good taste' is a sign of distinction". Gallegos continues, referring to Kant: "In other words, taste provides a bridge between the public and private and - - between global and local". Cookbooks then, claims Gallegos (2005, 101), "provide the social stratification, knowledges and experiences for a contextual framework in which taste can perform." This framework, says Gallegos, evolves over time: "By following the evolution of cookbooks, we find that they are technologies that shape how we see ourselves and where we place ourselves in the world both individually and collectively" (Gallegos 2005, 109). Cookbooks offer recipes for life but do not, Gallegos (2005, 110) continues, "resolve the tension between public and private, local and global, risk and pleasure, universal and particular" although they do "provide a space where these tensions can be tested; a space where the Kantian harmony of imagination and understanding can be played out".

Lifestyle no longer is merely a matter of tradition and heritage but one of choice. Writing about proper, traditional Sunday lunch, Lawson remarks:

> Proper Sunday lunch is everything contemporary cooking is not. Meat-heavy, hostile to innovation, resolutely formalised, it is as much ritual as meal, and an almost extinct ritual at that. Contemporary trends, it is true, have hastened a reappraisal of traditional cooking. But neither nostalgia for nursery foods nor an interest in ponderous culinary Victoriana is what Sunday lunch – Sunday dinner – is all about. It doesn't change, is impervious to considerations of health or fashion; it is about solidity, the family, the home. (HTE, 275)

Lawson (*ibid.*) goes on to tell that before having a family of her own, she promised herself to provide such a home for her offspring "that made a reassuring, all-comers-welcome tradition of Sunday lunch". She admits "[I]t hasn't materialised quite yet". The reason she offers is quite understandable: "few of my generation lead meat-and-two-veg lives any more. We are generally more mobile, the weekend is no longer home-bound". Continuing on the same topic a few pages later (HTE, 327) Lawson writes: "Of course I don't expect

anyone to eat this sort of food every Sunday without fail – no one's telling you you can't have pasta, for God's sake – but the particular focus Sunday lunch offers is worth exploiting." Lawson is quite right about a proper, traditional, British Sunday lunch being far from what she describes followingly:

> [t]he sort of cooking anyway that finds favour now: the relaxed, let's throw this with that and come up with something simple and picturesquely rustic approach will not put a joint, Yorkshire pudding and roast potatoes on the table. To cook a decent Sunday lunch needs discipline and strict timekeeping. (HTE, 327)

Bell and Hollows (2005, 7) also argue that those who are unable to compete in the class struggle of making a distinction with their lifestyle choices can find themselves "subject to symbolic violence" as they are positioned as vulgar or common and therefore "illegitimate in their tastes". It sometimes seems that preferring to have a glass of milk with your meal instead of a glass of fine red wine is seen as illegitimate and vulgar. Today, I feel, you are supposed to have a more cultured and sophisticated approach to everything ranging from interior design to the clothes you wear, and also food. As Scholes (2011, 47) writes, "People buy and read cookery books and watch the TV shows of the likes of Nigella and Jamie as much as a way of buying into the lifestyles depicted therein as to salivate over the food being cooked." The lifestyle depicted in the television shows and the books show a happy chef cooking delicious dishes to family and friends who gather to share the meal at a beautiful home, garden or other venue, all looking healthy and good.

Bell and Hollows (2005, 12-13), writing about expertise in relation to lifestyle media, mention that lifestyle television shows such as *What not to wear* and *You are what you eat* teach the participants as well as the audience at home that taste can indeed be acquired. Bell and Hollows (2005, 46) continue pointing out that cooking programmes foremost show the presenter and his/her lifestyle which the viewers can emulate a bit trough following the recipes and purchasing the presenter's products. I would suggest the same applies to cookbooks and Lawson is no exception to this.

Bell and Hollows (*ibid.*) point out that Lawson, along with Kylie Kwong and Jamie Oliver, is one of the only television chefs that take their viewers (and readers) into their own domestic lives – however much staged they may be. I

find this has changed in the almost decade since Bell and Hollows' book was published as it seems more and more television chefs are seen cooking at home – Gordon Ramsay comes to mind first. Goldstein (2005, 59) points out that for Martha Stewart the rooms she is shot in her television shows are “laboratories of domestic decorousness” and makes the viewer (or reader) see their “own kitchen as a potentially utopian space, perennially new and full of elegant devices” and him/herself “as a consummate performer with time on one's hands”.

It feels that people today aspire to showcase their identities through what they possess and what they do. Travelling to exotic places or cooking exotic dishes is part of this trend. It is more imporant, to many people, to showcase their lives to others than to merely enjoy life to its fullest. Cooking has, for some, become an art, a way to impress others on social media, parties and other social gatherings. People spend time searching for exotic recipes and ingredients – some to merely enjoy it all, others to impress. As Magee (2007, 2) writes: “Cookbooks and food magazines present a gastronomic world far removed from the world of many readers where we may find recipes requiring esoteric and exotic ingredients not likely to be found in the average kitchen.” Lawson (HTE, 5) writes in the same vein: “Cooking has become too much of a device by which to impress people rather than simply to feed them pleasurably.” I want to argue, however, that for many people, the real “foodies”, the simple pleasure of creating a new dish is more imporant than the opportunity to show it to thers. Showing one's creations to others, for example on Facebook or Instagram, is, however, almost as important a part of trying a new recipe than the actual coooking and eating. The process starts from the recipe and ends in the picture and the comments and “likes” it gets. Food is a hobby and a way of life.

3.1 Celebrity chefs as role models

There are numerous food related shows on television today, and even whole networks dedicated just for programming related to food. Programmes ranging from cooking competitions to food travel and everything in between have huge audiences and prime time slots on major channels worldwide. Television chefs have become part of our everyday lives – some real celebrities among singers,

actors and other people in the spotlight of the media. As Scholes (2011, 45) notes: “These chefs have become so much a part of our everyday lives that we refer to them companiably by their first names - - without any fear that whoever we're talking to won't know who we mean”. This chapter deals with the topic of television cooking shows as well as celebrity chefs.

Just what makes food television so popular? A big part of the viewing pleasure is the personality, that of the celebrity chef. As Adema (2000, 17) writes “food television is not about eating: It is about watching food and being entertained by the personality. -- being a couch potato, a consumer of food television, becomes more pleasurable than actually cooking and eating”. Writing about Emeril Lagasse, one of Food Network’s most popular chefs, Adema suggests that because the chef is a combination of “female directed sexual appeal and male-directed machismo” he appeals to both genders. He is the dream man of many women, writes Adema: passionate about what he does, entertaining, cooking for his audience at the studio and at home and speaking directly at them (2000, 18). It has not always been like this. Scholes (2011, 47), referring to Delia Smith, points out: “These shows were about communicating the basic skills needed to prepare the dishes, they weren’t about Delia the woman and the lifestyle she led”. For Delia's shows, cooking and food were essential, not showcasing herself or her lifestyle. Scholes (idib.) continues: “Delia's 'how to cook' has given way to Nigella and Jamie's 'how to live'. We are not told only what to cook and how but also how to *live*.” As Bell and Hollows (2005, 15; emphasis original) remark: “lifestyle experts function like personal shoppers rather than schoolteachers, advising us on consumer choices – *interpreting* the lifestyle landscape for us rather than dictating how to live” in that they make expertise and knowledge about cooking accessible for all and inclusive of all.

Cooking is not merely about producing food that keeps one alive but about creating a certain kind of lifestyle to please oneself and others. Adema notes:

> Increased availability of gourmet food items and gadgets at grocery stores and kitchen boutiques further facilitates familiarity of gourmet foods and cooking techniques among consumers. Emeril and other television chefs are empowering people to speak the languages of cooking and cuisine. Yet, food television shows that demystify traditionally elite foodways are threatening the social hierarchy in which food serves as cultural capital. (Adema 2000, 19)

We are also offered countles byproducts of the cookbook and celebrity chef phenomemon in the form of pots and pans and other cooking equipment. As Scholes (2011, 47) writes: “The idea of cookery as entertainment, not sustenance, is closely tied up with the utilization of the TV celebrity chef as brand.” A brand is created around the persona of the chef and that is further exploited or used to make money with equipment, books, cooking tours and so on. Celebrity chefs go on tours, signing books or giving cooking demonstrations in much the same way as rock stars go on tours. People buy tickets to see them cook, to perform. People also follow them through media and social media.

In *How to Eat* Lawson writes: “The rule – if rule there can ever be – is the same rule that applies in any form of cooking: be honest; cook what you want to eat, not what you want to be seen eating” (HTE, 276) and “No cooking should ever be undertaken with the single and vulgar aim of impressing anyone “ (HTE, 236). Lawson writes about the same thing earlier in the same book, *How to Eat*, stating that:

> Even in culinary terms alone there are grounds for satisfaction. Real cooking, if it is to have any authenticity, any integrity, has to be part of how you are a function of your personality, your temperament. There's too much culinary ventroloquism about it as it is: cooking for yourself is a way of countering that. It's how you're going to find your own voice. One of the greatest hindrances to enjoying cooking is that tense-necked desire to impress others. (HTE, 134)

For Lawson it is all about food: how it tastes and what she wants to eat, not what she wants to be seen eating. Lawson is usually not one to follow trends in her cooking and recipes but to create them. Writing about her Ham in Coca-Cola, Lawson (HTE, 324) points out: “In an age which solemnly tells you that cooking can produce food only as good as the ingredients that are provided (that’s the whole history of French cuisine dispatched then), there is something robustly cheering about this dish.” For making good food, Lawson suggest, you do not necessarily need the finest of ingredients: “I cannot urge you to try this strongly enough. The first time I tried it, it was out of amused interest. I’d heard, and read, about this culinary tradition from the deep South, but wasn’t expecting it, in all honesty, to be *good*. It is: I’m converted” (HTE, 325). Although Lawson here points out one does not need the finest of ingredients to produce sublime food, she writes in the foreword to her Chocolate-pistachio cake in *How to be a Domestic Goddess*: “This is a straightforward cake to make, though an

expensive one. While I know that pistachios cost more than other nuts, I can’t help but prefer them, especially here” (HTBADG, 174). Pistachios are not, however, used merely for show but because they are better than other nuts for the said recipe.

Ashley *et al.* (2004, 64) refer to the French sosiologist Pierre Bourdieu who wrote about tastes and preferences of different classes in France in the 1960s. Bourdieu discovered that economic inequalities do not alone explain for differences in food taste and practices of different social classes. They are, in fact, “also a product of class-based cultural dispositions which, although a product of economic experiences, are not simply reducidble to them”. People of highger social classes and standing seem to, according to Ashley *et al.* (*ibid.*) prefer lighter food such as fish and vegetables (over fish and chips, for example) and do not want to be seen over-eating. This is quite different from Lawson's philosophy of (usually) abundant dishes. Ashley *et al.* (2004, 66) also point out that the kind of food people eat and serve is not merely related to cultural and economic capital but can also be used to demonstrate and generate social capital. The example they provide is middle-class women seeking a more abstract approach to cooking and using cooking and food as a means of sociability among family but also to relate with friends from the same social standing. I suggest the same kinds of results could be found by studying people nowadays. People of lower social standing might be more inclided to merely feed themselves and their families whereas people with perhaps more money or time (or interest – more important than the other two in my opinion) might be more interested in making more varied dishes, perhaps try exotic ingredients and dishes and search for new recipes to try. As Ashley *et al.* sum up Bourdieu: “everyday food practices do not simply 'express' a class identity but also produce and reproduce class identities” (2004, 67).

Writing about using the freezer to its best advantage in *How to Eat*, Lawson somewhat amusingly starts her list of frozen must-haves with raw tiger prawns before going into undoubtedly more obvious examples such as bread (HTE, 78). She goes on to remind her readers that “defrosted strawberries take on the texture of soft, cold slugs” and advices them to “[R]emove them from the

packets of mixed fruits, and chuck them out" (HTE, 79). In a world where millions of people are starving and vice versa millions of people are over-eating, it sounds a bit too risky to advice people to throw away perfectly healthy food just because it is not to at its best defrosted. She does, however, continue to suggest readers freeze "leftover wine after dinner parties - - to use for cooking later on" as well as egg-whites: "I've got so many frozen my freezer is beginning to look like a sperm bank" (*ibid.*). She also advises readers not to throw away parmesan rinds but to freeze them "to use whenever you make a minestrone or other soup which would benefit from that smoky, salty depth of flavouring" (*ibid.*). Lawson also suggests keeping the liquid used for boiling ham to make pea soup, risotto or something else later. She does, however, warn her readers not to put it in the fridge but use the freezer instead:

> [p]our the stock (in labelled quantities) into containers or plastic bags and put them in the freezer. Don't stick it in the fridge with the intention of doing something or other with it over the next few days. You won't and you'll end up throwing it away, which would be too much of a waste for me to bear even of your behalf. (HTE, 235-236)

Also, advising readers on store cupboard items Lawson warns them not to get carried away:

> The chances are that you will end up with a larder full of stale pulses. It's not that this food goes off, necessarily, but it becomes less good to eat. It's comforting to know that you've got a bag of chick peas, but you must be strict with yourself and use it, not just keep it there for some rainy day when you fondly think you'll stay in and cook *pasta e ceci*. After a few years, they won't be dried, they'll be fossilised – and tasteless. (HTE, 80)

Stocking up the freezer and the cupboards should be planned, not just buying random things to fill them up. Stored items should also be used, not merely stored. Lawson confesses to having thoughts of stocking a freezer turning her into an efficient domestic angel:

> I lived for years without a freezer without ever minding very much. Certainly this allowed me the luxury of dreaming of all the good things I would cook and put by should I ever own one: I imagined with pleasure the efficient domestic angel I would then become. (HTE, 75)

A full freezer and well-stocked cupboards can be a good thing but they can also turn into graveyards for unused produce and foodstuffs.

Writing about trifles, Lawson again refers to the fine line between too much and not enough:

> When I say proper I mean proper: lots of sponge, lots of jam, lots of custard and lots of cream. This is not a timid construction, nor should it be. Of course, the ingredients must be good, but you don't wanto to end up with a trifle so upmarket it's inappropriately, posturingly elegant. A degree of vulgarity is requisite. (HTE, 123)

Good ingredients are enough, one does not need to use money excessively in places where it is not needed to make a good dish. She goes on to suggest using trifle sponges "but for those who cannot countenance such an unchic thing" she suggests brioche or challah "sliced; indeed, loaf-shaped supermarket brioche or challah, which have a denser crumb than the boulangerie-edition or *echt* article, are both perfect here" (*ibid.*, italics original).

Ashley *et al.* (2004, 59) have explored how what and how we eat do not merely express our individual tastes but also relate to class cultures and identities. They go on to claim that people's individual preferences for certain amounts, qualities and types of food are often indicative "of the moral and cultural worth of different social groups' lifestyles" (Ashley et al 2004, 62). Once again, the choices are not merely about the nutritional values indicative of social or cultural differences, but also about moral and aesthetic values of food. Ashley et al (*ibid*.) claim that some tastes are considered more legitimate than others. My take is that this can be seen for example in a constantly growing appreciation of organic, free-range and locally produced foodstuffs. All food writers today seem to make a point of using free-range eggs, for example, and Nigella Lawson is no exception: "Not everything in my kitchen is organic, but it seems to be going that way. Eggs, I've already mentioned: though make sure the box says organic and free-range – or better still, Martin Pitt, see page 506 – as free-range alone doesn't signify anything very edifying" (HTE, 82-83). Talking about pork, Lawson writes:

> There's no point in cooking pork at all, if you are going to buy a lean yet flabby supermarket joint. The meat will be tasteless and dry and the fat limp and wet and you won't stand a chance in hell of making any half-way decent crackling. For crackling you need the pigs to roam about, so that their hides get tough and their meat flavoursome. (HTE, 311)

Continuing on the same theme, Lawson writes: "I don't want to eat some miserable fowl raised on fish pellets in squalor somewhere. The French free-rage corn-fed birds can provide wonderful stock, as I've found, can poussins (see page 11)" (HTE 94). Later in the same book, Lawson (HTE, 349) writes

about marinating chicken in buttermilk to stop the flesh from drying and turning stringy: “Althought I would advise getting a proper free-range chicken, this method will work miracles on inferior supermarket birds.”

Adema (2000, 19) claims that as people’s lives have become increasingly busy and time has become a commodity, having time to cook, let alone bake, especially more elaborate meals for family and friends, has become “a positive indicator of social and economic status”. Adema (2000,9) goes on to suggest that because in people’s lives today there is a veritable lack of time (due to work, hobbies, children, entertainment in its various shapes and forms etc.), cooking at home has an elevated significance as a commodity and as a symbol. Being able to afford the time to cook (not necessarily just affording the ingredients) is valued. Food is not merely nutrition but a symbol of much more. In *How to be a Domestic Goddess* Lawson writes:

> I love hanging around the kitchen with the children, stirring mixtures, licking out bowls, baking fairy cakes or cutting out and icing biscuits. But it’s also incredibly important to me that that doesn’t usurp everyday cooking; I like them with me in the kitchen helping – or not, as the case may be – with ordinary lunch or tea, not just on-side for kiddie cuisine. In fact, even though I’m lucky enough to work at home, I’m hopelessly negligent and never actually do much with my children other than cook. (HTBADG, 209)

Getting the children involved in the process of making food not only gives one chance to spend time with them doing something otherwise productive at the same time but also teaches children to respect ingredients and the process of making food as well as teaching then some cooking techniques.

Lawson (HTE, 178) refers to women working outside home which means there is “no one to spend all afternoon making tonight’s supper”. She goes on by stating that

> No one would want, after a long day in the office, to come back and start on some elaborate culinary masterpiece. Cooking can be relaxing (although it’s interesting that it’s men rather than women who tend more often to cite its therapeutic properties), but not if you are already exhausted. And since working day seems to get even longer, why would you want to be cooking a meal which isn’t going to be ready for 2½ hours? (*ibid.*)

Lawson (*ibid.*) continues by listing certain points one should not forget when attempting to cook something good, simple and fast. She points out that it is not always the speed of cooking that is what saves one after a long, exhausting day

at the office (although she does admit to not working in an office herself) but the ease of cooking and the effortlessness. Restaurant cooking has to be quick, Lawson remarks, but at home the need for speed may only cause more stress for the cook. Referring to a proper, traditional, British Sunday lunch, Lawson (HTE, 327) writes: “For food like this, more than any other sort, is what cooking at home rather than eating in a restaurant is all about.” It is the feeling of being able to produce a good piece of meat, Yorkshire puddings, roast potatoes, gravy and pudding yourself that gives as much satisfaction as the eating of the said meal.

Lawson (HTE, 178) points out that not everyone needs to cook: “If you hate cooking, don’t do it”. Instead, she suggests buying food that does not need to be cooked, such as picnic food, cold food, trimmed vegetables and packaged salads. She does, however, write about the last two “pandering to laziness and inviting extravagance on a ludicrous scale” but says to “be grateful for them”. “No one has to make themselves miserable over cooking”, she writes and, on the following pages, continues by giving plentiful ideas and recipes for easy, effortless cooking. In the introduction to her Chocolate raspberry pudding cake (HTE, 351) Lawson writes “This is so easy to make (a little light stirring, that's all) that it's almost more work to type out the instructions than to make the cake itself.” Lawson suggest dispensing with cooking the last course: “No French person would consider apologising for buying something from a good pâtisserie and neither should you” (HTE, 185). She does continue, however, to remind her readers to never pretend something bought is home-made (*ibid*.).

For Martha Stewart, argues Goldstein (2005, 61) having her favourite tomato to ripen in exactly seventy-two days as it always has, since she started gardening, is the return of classical georgic “as the cosy antidote to modern speed”. The garden goes by its own rhythm and the gardener’s labour has to slow itself down to match that rhythm. It is, he claims, a ‘step back’ into the natural world. However, as Goldstein (*ibid.*) points out, the reverse is also true: “natural beauty achieves existence through human desire” – the tomato has to ripen in exactly 72 days to answer Martha’s (and ours) demands and expectations. It is her favourite tomato but it is thoroughly reproducible every year. Growing tomatoes

is a step back to a slower pace of life, a luxury, but not so rare it cannot be obtained again and again.

Baking, especially with yeast, can also be seen as a step back to a slower pace of life, a luxury if you will. Lawson writes: “My way of baking bread is designed to make it fit more easily into the sort of lives we lead. It can be very hard to find time to leave the dough to rise for a couple of hours, and then another hour, and then bake it” (HTBADG, 294). Her solution is to let the dough rise overnight and bake it in the morning which, she admits, “still means that this is more likely to be undertaken as a weekend or holiday activity, but not exclusively so” (*ibid.*). With just a bit of effort and planning, anyone can bake bread, no matter how busy a life they lead. Referring to her German plum tart, Lawson assures her readers that making it is easy and not time-consuming at all although the end-result does not convey that:

> You could easily make the dough in the morning, sit it in the fridge for a slow rise all day and then, with relative lack of effort, get this finished once you’ve got back from work, even if it’s quite late. And the one thing it doesn’t taste like is a hastily knocked-up little something. (HTBADG, 316)

By planning ahead and using the right techniques and recipes it is possible to create an illusion of slaving away at the stove.

Georgic poetry has, since its inception, blended moral and political concerns in a didactic framework – a classic example of this is Virgil’s *Georgics* which is a four-part poem about farming and animal husbandry. *Georgics* was written between 37 and 30 BCE. The poem provides farming advice but at the same time serves as “allegories for the labour or human relationships: cultivation teaches culture” (Goldstein 2005, 47). Goldstein goes on to say that Benjamin Franklin, in the late 18th century, fused together georgic with “a quintessentially American ideology of self-improvement through hard work”. Goldstein suggests that the heir of Franklinian georgic in today’s America is Martha Stewart. Through hard work, Stewart has managed to build a communications empire. Through her TV-show, magazines, books and website, Stewart shows her readers and viewers how to live and, as Goldstein (2005, 50) claims, “proposes a georgic of the commodified American subject”.

Considering how the recipe and the georgic differ and how they are similar, the biggest difference is perhaps, as Goldstein (2005, 58) states, that they “function according to radically different paradigms”. Goldstein (*ibid*.) continues: “Georgic, eminently and imminently allegorical, is always verging into metaphor and symbol. In georgic, the author’s self-positing is crucial to the text’s reception.” A recipe, on the other hand, is fully realized in its practicality “and seeks no other rhetorical sphere than that of process analysis.” Writing about the difference of authors between recipes and georgic poetry, Goldstein (*ibid.*) points out that the author of a recipe “is seens as ancillary to a larger historical progression, usually encapsulated in the phrase 'handing down'”. Recipe is, as Goldstein continues, “also a performance, by both the writer and the reader-participant”. Recipes should, then, be evaluated in terms of performative aspects. For Martha Stewart recipes are certainly for perfomance.

Adema suggests that “knowing and using the language of cuisine, including exercising one’s educated palate, separates those with cultural capital from ordinary eaters. As more people become familiar with gourmet foods, flavors, and preparation techniques, the value of gourmet food and cooking as cultural capital decreases” (Adema 2009, 9). As Lawson (HTE, 93) writes: “There are certain words which immediately make people feel the recipe they are reading is not for them. Stock, pestle and mortar, double-boiler are just some such. And stock is, I think, the most terror-laden.” It could be claimed that television shows such as MasterChef (where ordinary people compete creating what could essentially be labelled as gourmet food) are prodigy of this direction which cooking practices are taking. People feel they are able to produce restaurant level food at home. Lawson (HTE, 239) remarks “But this is partly because we have all been too much influenced by restaurant preparation. If a dish looks homely, well then, that’s how it should be when eaten at home.” They follow cooking shows on television, hunt for the more exotic and hard-to-get ingredients and gadgets and read cookbooks. Lawson feels that the so-called Great Culinary Revolution went about the wrong way: it started in restaurants when it should have started in homes.

> Cooking is best learned at your own stove: you learn by watching and by doing. - - The freat chefs of France and Italy learn about food at home: what they do

> later, in the restaurants that make them famous, is use what they have learnt. They build on it, they start elaborating. They take home cooking to the restaurant, not the restaurant school of cookery to the home. Inverting the process is like learning a vocabulary without any grammar. (HTE, 4)

Later in the same book, *How to Eat,* Lawson points out that she wants her home cooked food "to be less messed around with. Sprinkling with parsley is one thing, sculpture is quite another. My grandfather – and mother after him – used to speak disparagingly about landscape cookery" (HTE, 103). Even if people are made to feel they are able to produce restaurant level food at home, is that really necessary?

Adema (2009, 9) claims that Emeril Lagasse "literally and linguistically deconstructs what have traditionally been elite foodways" and makes cooking enjoyable and fun and above all, accessible. My claim is that the same applies to Nigella Lawson. Some of her recipes stem from her upper-class background and part-Jewish heritage but by demystifying the techniques as well as the ingredients, that for many of her readers are not familiar, she makes them accessible to all. In *How to Eat,* Lawson writes about cooking in general stating "It is difficult to be good at something you aren't really interested in" (HTE, 87). She also suggests readers to "Get over economic constraints by buying ingredients you can afford rather than making do with inferior versions of expensive produce" (*ibid.*). Writing about soups that need to be made in advance for them to taste best, Lawson refers to consommé, trying perhaps to make it more accessible for her readers: "There is for most people, a ring of bon viveur – the Frenchified works of Fanny and Johnnie – about the word consommé: it conjures up a world of napkin-arranged gentility and brisk effortfulness. Well, then, call it *brodo*" (HTE, 92). Martha Stewart, on the other hand, as described by Bransdon (2006, 48) is quite the opposite to Lagasse and Lawson: "There is no want here, but there is, always, careful attention to what things cost and what quantities it is appropriate to buy. The Martha world – is never an extravagant one."

Referring to dinner parties and how cumbersome they can be to carry out, Lawson writes:

> Yet people still think they should be following the old culinary agenda: they feel it is incumbent on them not so much to cook as to slave, to strive, to sweat, to

> *perform*. Life doesn't have to be like that. As far as I'm concerned, moreover, it shouldn't be like that. I find formality constraining. I don't like fancy, arranged napkins and I don't like fancy, arranged foods. (HTE, 330; italics original)

Adema (2000, 20) suggests that by empowering people to feel they are able to expand their food traditions, perhaps to more elite ways, Emeril Lagasse hooks his viewers "more completely into the culture of consumption". The ways in which this is carried out include not giving any precise amounts for ingredients or times for cooking on television. The viewers are encouraged to buy his books or search for the recipes on Food Network's website – or to visit one of his numerous restaurants.

Lawson writes about bistro specialities of the 1960s and 1970s such as prawn cocktail, Black Forest gâteau, coq au vin and duck à l'orange, coming back to culinary fashion: "I have nothing against this in principle: it if tastes good, eat it. Fashionableness – ironic or otherwise – should not count against a food any more than its unfashionableness" (HTE, 195). Merely because something is out of fashion does not mean one should avoid cooking or eating it. Fashions come and go and one should not feel ashamed of liking something that does not happen to be the most elite or up-to-date dish or food.

Christmas is, if anything, above all about consumption these days and there does not seem to be a better way to celebrate it than food and eating. "—the truth is that we don't have to plough our way through seasonal cakes and chocolates and nuts and pies. We feel we have an excuse, and so we plunge into an orgy of over-indulgence which is utterly unnecessary, and which makes us feel both guilty and resentful at the same time" (HTE, 55). One example of a recipe that might be considered elite is Lawson's Christmas Crème Brûlée (HTBADG, 287) with "3-4 sheets edible gold leaf, optional". In the foreword to this recipe Lawson writes: "I don't need to tell you how beautiful this is: you can see. It's extravagant, certainly, but it's meant to be. And it feels like a treat, breaking through that gilt-tortoiseshell crust to the voluptuous depths of egg-nog-scented cream beneath." Pictured left, the dessert looks, indeed, beautiful, moreish, extravagant and elite. Not everyone would think of using edible gold leaves in cooking but, as Adema above claims, cookbook writers and chefs today empower people to expand their food traditions, even to more elite ways.

What is important, however, according to Lawson who writes about *nouvelle cuisine* and its “most ludicrous excesses” is being able to “--distinguish between what is fashionable and good and what is fashionable and bad” (HTE, 6).

Writing about seasonal produce, Lawson refers to purple-sprouting broccoli (HTE, 49): “Purple-sprouting broccoli is avoided by those who think good food has to be fancy. Clearly they don’t deserve it.” For something to be good, it does not necessarily need to be fancy or expensive, too. Enjoying good, real flavours is enough. Lawson continues (HTE, 50), writing about asparagus, “English asparagus is expensive in restaurants and easy to cook well at home.” You do not need to be a chef nor do you have to pay one to enjoy good, even somewhat elite food. Writing about white truffles (HTE, 54) Lawson confesses “No greedy person’s mention of foods in season could ignore the white truffle. I don’t really understand the fuss about black truffles, but a white truffle – called by Rossini the Mozart of funghi – is something else. And you don’t do anything to it. You just shave it.” She continues: “And although expensive, so much less so, unbelievably less so, than eating it in a restaurant.” One is able, with little effort and not even a whole lot of money, to create good food at home without being a trained chef or wearing oneself out in the process. Nor do you need to be rich and live in a manor: “You don’t need to have a vast estate with elderflowers springing lacily to flower from that avenue lining the drive; just pick them roadside whenever you see them” (HTE, 50).

Writing about dinner parties, Lawson admits her own aversion to them but goes on to write:

> That’s not to say that I feel everything should be artfully casual: this-is-just-something-I’ve-thrown-together school of cookery can be just as pretentious. What I feel passionately is that home food is home food, even when you invite people to eat it with you. I shouldn’t be laboriously executed, daintily arranged, individually portioned. It’s relaxed, expansive, authentic: it should reflect your personality not your aspirations. Professional chefs have to innovate, to elaborate, to impress the paying customer. But the home cook is under no such constraints. (HTE, 330)

Writing about buying food, Lawson (HTE, 215) states “Good food doesn’t have to be difficult to cook, and it certainly doesn’t need to be difficult to buy. But you must know what you’re after.” She goes on to point out that one should never worry about what their guests will think of them: “Just think of the food. What will

taste good?”. Serving a good Saturday lunch to friends does not necessarily mean cooking everything – or anything – as Lawson (HTE, 490) writes: “Really, risotto does not entail terrific drudgery: I don't know why people think it does. It means you've got to stand by the stove stirring for about 20 minutes, but I find it rather calming.” Many people seem to find the time to sit around browsing Facebook – why is it so difficult to find the time to cook?

Writing about Templefood in a chapter about low fat food, Lawson (HTE, 423) writes “Not all the recipes that follow are time-consuming but I feel they come more into the category of thought-about cooking than the let's-just-throw-this-into-the-pan mode of food preparation.” Planning ahead and taking advantage of good-quality produce can make all the difference in preparing meals, even for parties but certainly for every-day life.

Many chefs today (Adema 2000, 20 gives Emeril Lagasse as an example) encourage their viewers and/or readers to cook, to eat, and to be together more. The symbolic power of food, claims Adema (2000, 20), is reinforced as a result. Cooking for one’s family and sitting down together to eat is considered as quality time – eating is not just a daily burden something that is done to stay alive. However, despite the abundance of male chefs on television and print, the domestic kitchen seems to remain women’s terrain. Adema (*ibid.*) continues by stating that part of food television’s ambiguity is the fact that it sends mixed messages: it blurs gender and spatial boundaries and at the same time reinforces traditional roles and expectations. Men are encouraged to cook and they outnumber women in restaurant kitchens but it is still the women who mainly cook at home, claims Adema (*ibid.*).

4. Cookbooks and feminism

4.1 Feeling like a domestic goddess – domesticity as a forbidden pleasure

Joanne Hollows has studied the relationship between feminism, post-feminism and popular culture (domesticity, cooking and food in particular) and has become "increasingly aware that debates about post-feminism and 'new' femininities" that she was exploring "had very little to say on the domestic" (Hollows 2006, 98). Hollows (*ibid.*) continues: "I appear to know a fair number of feminist-influenced women in academia in their thirties and early fourties who have a secret fantasy of giving up their careers in order to bake cakes, tend the garden, knit or do home improvements". Is it wrong to feel this way, after all the struggle to achieve gender equality? Can women today even be seen leaving home "when they've never been there"? asks Hollows (2006, 104). She reminds us that today's generation of 30 and 40 something women "have grown up in conditions that are both shaped by second-wave feminism, and which are also the product of a time that is historically post-second-wave feminism" (*ibid.*). Hollows is also interested in why these kinds of fantasies have remained hidden in academic studies when it has been fine to study other popular culture phenomena such as "'Buffy the Vampire Slayer', designer clothing and *Pretty Woman*" (2006, 98).

As Hollows (*ibid.*) puts it, domestic tasks need not necessarily be experienced as domestic labour. They continue to be done by women (mostly), even feminists. Phenomena such as domesticity and the suburban home are, however, things feminism assiociated as the 'other' and thus "needed to be kept at a distance", claims Hollows (2006, 101). There were differences between attitudes in the UK, where socialist/Marxist-feminism was the usual theoretical backdrop, and the US where things were a bit more complex. On the one had there were feminist scholars in the 1960s such as Betty Friedan who basically told women to get a grip and "commit to the masculine world of work" but on the other hand, radical feminists were more sceptical "of this embrace of masculine values" and did not make such a clear-cut rejection of the home in their thinking (Hollows 2006, 101-102).

Referring to Lawson's *How to be a Domestic Goddess*, Hollows writes:

> The book provoked a huge debate in the press about the relationship between feminism, femininity and baking, with Lawson being variously positioned as the pre-feminist housewife, as an anti-feminist Stepford Wife, as the saviour of downshifting middle-class career women, and as both the negative and positive product of post-feminism. (Hollows 2006, 106)

Comments suggested that there needs to be a “choice between feminism and domestic femininity in which feminism could be the only 'rational' response” so that all the struggle was not in vain, claims Hollows (*ibid.*). It seems, though, that Hollows has understood the core message of the book: “rather than prescribing a return home, Lawson offers the opportunity to experience at the level of fantasy what being a domestic goddess would *feel* like” (*ibid.*; emphasis original). As Hollows point out, Lawson does not suggest we need to be superwomen who can whip out a six-course dinner after work but “offers us the experience at the level of fantasy of what other 'retro-femininities' might feel like” (*ibid*.). Baking takes time and women today are under constant “pressure of managing time”, remarks Hollows (*ibid.*). *Wanting* to spend one's time cooking and/or baking or doing other domestic chores has become the modern equivalent of kinky sex acts. No one in their right mind would dare reveal their desires, it seems, in fear of them not being accepted. As Hollows (2006, 107) writes “the desire to experience 'a bit of the (forbidden) other' can be a source of pleasure”.

Hollows (2006, 110) suggests that in their desire for domesticity over modernity, women are in pursuit of the rural. There are “existing dichtomies between public/modernity/masculinity and private/tradition/femininity”, suggests Hollows but goes on to point out that it is not necessarily this straightforward. Indeed, 'going back home', giving up the modern rat race can be seen as adventurous and enviable and the women who dare do it, as “become the new frontierswomen”, suggests Hollows (*ibid*.). Ree Drummond, known as the Pioneer Woman, is a good example of this. She is a highly educated woman who decided to give up her career in the field she had studied and worked for years in order to marry a real-life cowboy and move into the country – ending up one of the most popular cooks on Food Network and the internet.

As Hollows (2006, 112) points out, many women today feel it is completely fine to be able to choose “between feminism and domesticity, between workplace

and family, between paid work and domestic labour". The choice is theirs (and perhaps their partners'). It does not mean they would be subordinate or merely accommodating someone else's expectations about what women should be like and what they should do. As Hollows (2006, 114) puts it: "the meanings of the domestic, and domestic femininites, are contextual and historical and what operetes as a site of subordination for some women may operate as the object of fantasy for others". When women today have so much more choices than earlier generations, they may choose what to some might seem like a willingful settling to subordination.

Bordo (2003, 118) suggests that there is a traditional, going back thousands of years, division of women preparing and men eating food. She points out how at the beginning of the 1992 presidential elections in the US, Hillary Clinton was questioned about her willingness to pursue her own career and not merely stand my her man. What Clinton answered to the reporters soon lead to a cookie recipe competition between herself and Barbara Bush. Clinton said she could have of course "stayed home and baked cookies and had teas" (*ibid*.). To prove she was not only a career woman but a good homemaker too, Clinton produced a cookie recipe to which Bush replied with her own. Bordo is not surprised that the cookie itself became "the symbol and center of the national debate about Hillary Clinton's adequacy as a wife and mother" because, according to her, "[F]ood is equated with maternal and wifely love" (2006, 122).

Neuhaus (2003, 2) claims that cookbooks of the twentieth century very much "mirror the history of middle-class life at the time" and "most vividly demonstrate the way that food preparation and gender seem hopelessly intertwined". Writing about America in particular, Neuhaus reminds the readers that although majority of married American women with children work outside the home they still for the most part carry the responsibility of food planning and preparation. Cookbooks, Neuhaus (*ibid.*) claims, continued "to reinforce the notion that women had inherently domestic natures" despite the middle-class American home being altered by social and technological changes.

"Martha Stewart is a housewife who is not a housewife", claims Brunsdon (2006, 49). Things such as boredom, repetition and frustration that defined the

life of housewifes, if the feminists of the 1970s are to be believed, are not part of the Martha we see in magazines, the internet and television. In her world, claims Brunsdon (*ibid.*), the activies performed are not nearly ever crucial "to the production and reproduction of labour power such as rearing and feeding a family". Martha's tasks are more about the surface appearance, multicultural annual holidays and not so much about every day cooking and baking. As Brunsdon (*ibid.*) puts it, they are not "necessary because of which "their performance is a type of busy feminine leisure within the home". Martha Stewart is, however, according to Goldstein, too much:

> She simply does too much, is in too many places at once, has too tight a grip on perfection to be believable as an individual. Her vast squadron of assistants helps make possible this multiplicity without rendering it any less disorienting. (Goldstein 2005, 53)

In this respect Stewart is very different from Lawson who keeps reminding her readers and viewers of her clumsiness and of the fact that she is not a trained chef by no means. Martha aims, at everything she does and makes, at perfection while Nigella is more down to earth. Therein lies a paradox: Martha is creating every-day efficiency while many of the things Nigella produces are more about pleasure. The difference between the two can most easily be seen in Martha's willingness for a perfect look and Nigella's aim for perfect taste.

In the preface of her "baking bible" *How to Be a Domestic Goddess* Nigella Lawson writes about taking back the kitchen and enjoying the comfort it brings.

> I neither want to confine you to kitchen quarters nor even suggest that it might be desirable. But I do think that many of us have become alienated from the domestic sphere, and that it can actually make us feel better to claim back some of that space, make it comforting rather than frightening. In a way, baking stands both as a useful metaphor for the familial warmth of the kitchen we fondly imagine used to exist, and as a way of reclaiming our lost Eden. This is hardly a culinary matter, of course: but cooking, we know, has a way of cutting through things, and to things, which have nothing to do with the kitchen. This is why it matters. (HTBADG, vii)

Lawson urges her readers not to become domestic goddesses but to feel like one and taking pleasure in cooking and baking:

> The trouble with much modern cooking is not that the food it produces isn't good, but that the mood it induces in the cook is one of skin-of-the-teeth efficiency, all briskness and little pleasure. Sometimes that's the best we can manage, but at other times we don't want to feel like a post-modern, post-feminist, overstretched woman but, rather, a domestic goddess, trailing nutmeggy fumes of baking pie in our languorous wake. (HTBADG, vii)

No matter how time-consuming and opposite of effortless cooking a traditional meal is, Lawson (HTE, 275) suggests “there can be something strangely reassuring about cooking” it: “We are so accustomed to being invited to consider cooking an art that we forget just how rewarding and satisfying it is as pure craft.” Taking pleasure in cooking and baking and taking the time to enjoy both can be a luxury in today's world but it can still be attained and it does not have to be expensive like some other forms of pleasure nor does it have to be as dangerous as some of the hobbies and activities people take on to get a break from their every-day lives. Cooking and baking can also be seen as productive which is not too bad for something that can also be enjoyable.

In *How to Eat* Lawson writes about cooking food in advance to avoid stress and hurriedness and how some foods actually benefit from being cooked in advance.

> That’s why I love this sort of cooking: the rhythms are so reassuring; I no longer feel I’m snatching at food, at life. It’s not exactly that I’m constructing a domestic idyll, but as I work in the kitchen at night, or at the weekend, filling the house with the smells of baking and roasting and filling the fridge with good things to eat, it feels, corny as it sounds, as if I’m making a home. (HTE, 87)

By planning ahead one can avoid stress and still enjoy cooking and baking and provide good meals *and* have time for other things too.

Staying on the subject of cooking food in advance Lawson, referring to cooking in the company of several other women and how it rarely happens anymore, says:

> Still, it’s a pity to lose all of it, never to become immersed in that female kitchen bustle. For me, so much of cooking in advance is tied up with that image, that idea: that’s when cooking feels like the making of provisions, the bolstering up of a life. I don’t see it as a form of subjection (unless the position is a forced one) and I don’t see it as a secondary role, either. Some people hate domesticity, I know. I’m glad I don’t: I love the absorbing satisfactions of the kitchen.” (HTE, 102)

Scholes (2011, 44) does not completely buy into Lawson’s words: “And comfort she does, soothing her readers into a blissful state of contentment, willing them to believe that she is just like them, a working mother and wife juggling the demands of career and home.” Magee’s interpretation is that it is easier and more emotionally satisfying to achieve, as busy modern cooks, the feeling of domestic goddess rather than actually being or striving to be one (Magee 2007,

8). Lawson is of the same opinion: “So what I’m talking about is not *being* a domestic goddess exactly, but *feeling* like one” (HTBADG, vii; emphasis original). Quite the opposite to this kind of thinking is Martha Stewart’s insistence on creating the perfect exterior, surface appearance which, however, is “directed outward and is designed for the appreciation of the gaze of others, while Lawson’s emphasis on the feelings of the cook herself is directed inward and designed for the appreciation of the one doing the cooking” (Magee 2007, 8). Writing about preparing tins for her Molten chocolate babycakes, Lawson refers to feeling competent and good in the kitchen:

> You might think that preparing the tins sounds fiddly, but in fact the job is just demanding enough to make one feel uncharacteristically competent in a *Blue Peter* kind of a way, but not so much that any actual dexterity is required. (HTBADG, 179; emphasis original)

For Nigella it is all about feeling (like a Domestic Goddess) and taste, not about surface appearance and being over efficient. Writing about Christmas food she suggests “Keep it simple, make it fresh. Avoid the slavish overprovision of rich food that turns eating into a burdensome duty rather than a pleasure and turns cooking into an entirely out-of-character exercise” (HTE, 58). The feeling one gets from cooking and baking by following truly tried and tested recipes or having a go at a creation of one’s own is what matters. “Stewart’s surfaces are for the consumption of others while Lawson’s are for the self”, writes Magee (*ibid.*). Referring to what baking and the whole of *How to Be a Domestic Goddess* is about, Lawson writes “feeling good, wafting along in the warm, sweet-smelling air, unwinding, no longer being entirely an office creature; and that’s exactly what I mean by ‘comfort cooking’” (HTBADG, vii). Lawson does, however, in the foreword for Butter cut-out biscuits, write

> It’s not hard to make biscuits that hold their shape well while cooking; it’s not hard to make biscuits that taste good and have a melting, buttery texture: what’s hard is to find a biscuit that does all of these together. This one, by way of a wonderful American book, *The Family Baker*, does: so any time you want to play supermummy in the kitchen, here is where you start. (HTBADG, 212)

Sometimes showing a certain kind of surface appearance might be needed but it does not have to take anything away from the pleasure the task of baking brings nor does it have to be hard or time-consuming. As Lawson describes the assumed difficulty of pastry making, referring to *Dr. Strangelove*:

> On the subject of pastry, I am positively evangelical. Until fairly recently I practised heavy avoidance techniques, hastily, anxiously turning away from any recipe which included pastry, as if the cookbook's pages themselves were burning: I was hot with fear; could feel the flush rise in my panicky cheeks. I take strength from that, and so should you. Because if I can do the culinary equivalent, for me, of Learning to Love the Bomb, so can you. (HTE, 40)

Continuing about the assumed difficulty of pastry making, Lawson (HTE, 245) writes: "People are wrongly daunted by pastry, but there's no point in pretending they aren't. There is something unhelpful about suggesting you get to grips with it at the end a long day's work, but at the weekend you can work calmly."

Along the same theme of "playing supermummy" goes Lawson's mention of school fund-raising events and baking:

> There comes a certain time in your life when you are suddenly required to be a provider of cakes, biscuits and assorted sweetmeats for whatever fund-raising even or fair your children's school goes in for; and there will be many. Of course you don't need to make anything – many parents bring along bought stuff – but it's strange how one batch of home-made cupcakes can assuage a term's guilt at being late for parents' evening. (HTBADG, 235)

With little effort, she assures her readers, one can feel like a supermummy and a domestic goddess, also in the eyes of the beholders. "In the old days, quinces were kept in airing cupboards to perfume the linen, pervading the house with their honeyed but sharp aroma, so you needn't feel bad if you buy a bowlful and then just watch them rot in a kitchen or wherever" (HTE, 53).

According to Gillingham et al., a new form of domesticity, which they call neodomesticity, may indeed be a strategy of resistance. To some it means the demise of feminist struggle. To them the idea that women might want to choose to return to "the very home that our foremothers worked so hard to spring us from" feels like betrayal (2005, 27-28). Lawson writes:

> Making a soufflé is no longer a kitchen requirement for the aspiring hostess; but it's always worth tackling recipes that scare you with the attendant mythologies, just so that you're no longer cramped by that lurking fear. Read carefully and you'll see that absolutely no culinary pyrotechnics are called for. (HTE, 158)

Today, one can choose to tackle a difficult recipe just for the fun of it and for proving oneself they are capable of doing it – not because they are expected to master it.

Brunsdon (2006, 49) claims that Martha Stewart can be seen "to extend the range of feminine concerns, or to represent them in a way that makes them

interesting, challenging and stimulating" - a liberated, chosen domesticity as claimed by Mason and Meyers to whom Brunsdon refers to. To me Lawson's approach to cooking, baking and finding comfort in these tasks is a good example of neodomesticity. It is a matter of choice – no one is making you bake or cook, you do it for your own pleasure not because you are told to do so. To Lawson, baking a cake "isn't a dream; what's more, it isn't even a nightmare" (HTBADG, vii). One is, so to speak, free to bake one's cake and eat it. She, however, writes also "On the whole, I take the line that you do not have to make pudding: the French have always bought their pâtisserie from those who really know how to do it" (HTBADG, 124) but continues:

> But in fact there is a good, lazy reason to cook pudding: unless you go out of your way to choose something complicated, the chances are that the process will not be difficult, and the reward gratifying. Quite apart from that essential sense of private satisfaction, people really do seem far more impressed by a home-made pudding, however simple, than they would be by the most lovingly produced main course. You know I'm not a cook-to-impress kind of a girl, so my point isn't so much that you can luxuriate in the astonished admiration of your friends by cooking pudding, but you can thereby lessen the culinary load all round. (*ibid.*)

Later on in the same book, *How to be a Domestic Goddess*, in the foreword to the Dense chocolate loaf cake, Lawson writes about having the in-laws over for lunch:

> I also think this makes a wonderful pudding, either by itself with ice cream or, as when my in-laws were round for lunch one Sunday, with a bowl of strawberries and a jug of white-chocolate rum custard. The latter is a fussier option, but there are times when that's, perversely, what we want. (HTBADG, 166)

Having the in-laws there to eat is enough reason to go out of one's way, even for the modern woman, suggests Lawson. Nor is Christmas a reason to lose one's sanity: "Christmas is every cook's nightmare. Maybe it isn't helpful to say that it doesn't have to be a nightmare because if anything will increase your dread it is the sense that other people somehow find a complete breeze. They don't" (HTE, 55). She continues: "It is hard not to feel swamped by food and food preparation, and even if you like cooking, Christmas can induce panic and depression" (*ibid.*).

In the foreword to her Christmas chapter in *How to be a Domestic Goddess* Lawson reminds her readers of having the choice to bake or not to bake:

> One of the best things about being an adult is that you can decide which rituals and ceremonies you want to adopt to give shape to your life and which you want to lose because they just constrain you. True, I think it takes more determination to shuck off the habits that you've inherited but don't actually want at Christmas time; it's hard not to feel that the way you always did it when you were a child is the way it should be done. (HTBADG, 247)

One can, indeed, take comfort in baking: "there is something peculiarly relaxing about rubbing the cool, smooth butter through the cool, smooth flour with your fingers: it also makes for a more gratifyingly nubbly crumble –" (HTE, 45). This sort of description is edging towards sexual innuendo from which Lawson's television shows are not too shy about.

Writing about her Gin and tonic jelly in *How to be a Domestic Goddess* (131), Lawson refers to the modern woman's kitchen: "I love jellies and one of the wonderful things about them is that they are so simple to make. This has a definite kick and unarguable elegance: what better food to emanate from the modern woman's kitchen?". Cooking can, once again, be pleasurable but it does not need to be laborious. The same, she suggests, can be applied to her Store-cupboard chocolate-orange cake:

> This is a different sort of chocolate cake: the sort you can make in a few minutes once you get home from work. Hardly any trouble, and you've got a gorgeously aromatic cake either for pudding or just to eat, as supper in its entirety, in front of the television. (HTBADG, 170)

You can make something amazingly glorious and sinful, with little effort and then continue taking pleasure in eating it too. This sort of approach to food is, I suggest, very different from the diet and control concentrated approach so many women's magazines and other forms of media seem to take nowadays.

Of the pleasures and easiness of cake baking, Lawson (HTBADG, 4) writes "I've said it's easy to make a cake, but this doesn't convey the depth of achievement you feel on making one. There's something about seeing such elemental change, that flour, butter, eggs, sugar could become this – and more, that you've brought it about – that's so satisfying. Such simple pleasures are not to be underestimated". This feeling, of cooking and baking being fairly simple and highly enjoyable, is what I think Lawson is trying most to convey to her audience.

Writing in the foreword for Banana Bread (33) in *How to Be a Domestic Goddess*, Lawson refers again to the feeling of domestic goddessy: “This is the first recipe anyone hesitant about baking should try: it’s fabulously easy and fills the kitchen with that aromatic fug which is the natural atmospheric setting for the domestic goddess”. Breakfast pancakes, then, to Lawson’s mind have “domestic goddess stamped all over” them (HTBADG, 74) and “A pie is just what we all know should be emanating from the kitchen of a domestic goddess. Not simply because it is the traditional fare of the kitchen *Koenegin*, but because few things approach it when it comes to including that warm, bolstering sense of honourable satisfaction” (HTBADG, 80). She continues: “But like the first kiss, it’s the first pie that counts: as soon as I’d whipped it out of the oven and sprinkled sugar over it, I felt suffused with heady satisfaction. This was a real pie: the sort that I thought only women with sensible hands habitually wiped briskly on aprons would make. It changed my culinary self-image instantly” (*ibid*.).

In today’s world where many women work outside home but still probably take care of the food shopping and preparation, it is not, if Lawson is to be believed, a measure of one’s domestic goddessness to be able to ladle out impressive dinners after another. She advices her readers to have such items in their store cupboard that they use regularly and know they can make a decent meal out of at times of need.

> You want to be able to cook something in the evening after work without having to go shopping, and you don’t want to have to start thinking about it before you get home. (I always want to think about what I’m going to eat, not in any elaborate organisational way, but because the speculation gives me pleasure. But there are many times when idly, greedily speculating in indeed the most energetic thing I can manage to do in advance. So what I need to know is that I have some food at home that won’t take long to cook and won’t demand too much of me.) (HTE, 81)

One’s level domestic goddessyness and competence is not measured by the ability to cook everything from scratch. Although shopping is not always the easy option, writes Lawson (HTE, 214), it can make life easier and simultaneously provide immense pleasure: “Shopping for food is better than any other form of shopping. There’s no trying-on for a start.” Shopping for food which you are then going to serve to others, either cooked or just de-bagged

and unwrapped, also gives one pleasure “of knowing that you are giving pleasure to others”.

Writing about seducing someone with food, Lawson (HTE, 170) mentions caviar: “And I would be predisposed to respond warmly to anyone who had the cool courage to give me caviar to start. But, of course, I would prefer to buy my own caviar than be given it as part of the trade-off for a wearyingly unwelcome lunge.” She continues (*ibid.*): “And if a girl wants to eat caviar, a girl's got to know how to make blini. Sister, read on.” Even if one could get caviar served to her by someone trying to seduce her with food it is better to buy one's own. And if you are going to buy your own caviar, eating it at home rather than in a restaurant, you should know how to make blini. Merely because blini go well with caviar, not because you are expected to perfect yet another dish to your repertoire.

4.2 Food puritanism vs. Food pornography

Magee claims that at first many of the, as he titles them, food icons that capture our attention can easily be divided into two kitchens: food Puritanism and food pornography (Magee 2007, 1). He continues to note that the distinction is not, however, that easy to make and the two terms collapse into each other because they derive from the “same sets of cultural anxieties and nutritional superstitions” (*ibid.*). As examples of food Puritanism and food pornography Magee gives us Martha Stewart and Nigella Lawson respectively. These two examples can at first seem clear and obvious. But if we look closer into Martha Stewart’s attitude towards all things related to household management (from cooking to decorating to child-care and so on) we find that, as Magee puts it, “Stewart’s Puritanism becomes a sort of pornographic and obsessive fantasy that has as little to do with real pleasures of eating as the other pornography has to do with the real pleasures of sex” (Magee 2007, 1). As has been stated before in this thesis, for Stewart everything she does is more about performance and making things look good than taking actual pleasure in doing things. A comparison to pornography is not far-fetched. As Magee writes:

> Martha Stewart's cookbooks present a world of surfaces, appearances, and rigidly prescribed tropes; the rules of the Puritan serve the elaborate staging and pseudo-erotic stereotypes of the pornographer. Nigella Lawson, on the other hand, poses playfully in the kitchen and the bedroom, suggesting that pleasure is not about adhering to stereotypes and tropes but is about real emotions. (Magee 2007, 8)

Brunsdon (2006, 41), writing about Martha Stewart, claims that before Stewart was indicted and imprisoned for insider dealing she was, because of her perfect domesticity, fascinating. "Cool, blonde, poised, efficient, organized" are the words Brundsdon uses to describe Stewart. Such words have seldomly been used about Nigella Lawson.

It could be argued that Lawson takes as real pleasure in cooking (or baking) as she does in eating her creations. Is this then pornography or real love? Since one of the definitions of food pornography is that the surface appearance is all that is available and all that matters (Magee 2007, 3), it could be argued that since for Lawson the taste of the dish is usually the most important thing, her cooking is indeed not food pornography. For Stewart, on the other hand, surface and what things seem to be is all-important. Magee (*ibid.*) claims that Stewart's need for everything to look picture-perfect at all times seems to signal that clean appearances indicate inner grace. Keeping up the appearances is what matters the most.

As an example of Stewart's obsession for perfect surface appearances Magee gives Stewart's suggestion of providing extra desserts at the dinner table just for show (Magee 2007, 5). Lawson on the other hand is content with making one perfect-tasting dessert. It may also look perfect but for her, the taste is the most important part and she is not afraid to show how much she enjoys tasting the food she has made. Magee also suggests, as evidence of Stewart's Puritanism, that in many ways she establishes inflexible rules about cooking and various other things: "Stewart takes on the persona of the Puritan magistrate handing down official edicts" (Magee 2007, 5). Nigella, I find, is quite the opposite. She may tell you the way she does things (which often is the way her mother or some other "mentor" in her life has done it) but she never claims it is the only, proper way to do things. As Magee writes, for Lawson cooking appeals above all to the sense of taste. Technique is important but only a means to an end: an end product that tastes superb.

Magee (2007, 6) points out how Lawson's appearance conveys the way she cooks and eats, taking pleasure in both: “She literally embodies her conflation of sexuality and the pleasures of eating.” Magee (*ibid*.) continues: “Lawson’s figure fiercely rejects the typical dimensions of the modern feminine ideal: she is not thin but fleshy and curved, indicating a real appreciation of food”. The UK edition of *Feast* has a picture of Lawson’s double pot standing on a wooden counter. The pot, which every true Nigella-fan wants, with its curves, resembles Lawson’s own curvy figure. On the cover of the US version of the book, there is a picture of Lawson smiling widely, wearing a high-necked red sweater and holding a cup of espresso and a cookie. Magee (*ibid.*) also points out another way the covers differ: the UK edition is subtitled “Food that Celebrates Life” and the US “Food to Celebrate Life”. Magee claims that this demonstrates American Puritanical anxieties:

> The UK subtitle suggests that the food itself is an important part of the celebration of life, that the food participates in that celebration, while the US subtitle displaces food from the center of the celebration and forces it into a utilitarian position. In the US, food is means to an end but not an end itself. (Magee 2007, 7)

For Lawson, food is certainly a huge part of a celebration. Celebrations can also be seen as an excuse to cook and bake – not an obligation but a chance to do something one enjoys doing and then having people enjoy the outcome of the said pleasurable act.

5. Conclusions

As stated before, recipes are everywhere. We encounter them not only in cookbooks and cooking-related magazines but also on the internet, on television, in newspapers and so on. Food is talked about constantly. It is being dealt with in terms of recipes but also in terms of taste, price and, perhaps most commonly these days, in terms of healthiness. In this thesis I have dealt with food, recipes, cookbooks, cooking and baking from the perspective of women. I have studied if women, after fighting for equal rights and trying to get out of the kitchen generation after generation for decades, now have the right to choose to be in the kitchen *and* enjoy it.

Nigella Lawson has written about taking pleasure in cooking, baking and eating countless times in her books and other writings. She is of the opinion that it is indeed possible for women to enjoy homely tasks and choose to be in the kitchen. She does not mean, however, that women should feel obligated to become domestic goddesses or slaves to the stove but to freely enjoy cooking and baking if they are something they enjoy doing. If not, she has many suggestions to make life, and cooking and baking, easier for those people.

In this thesis I have studied Lawson's first two cookbooks *How to Eat* and *How to be a Domestic Goddess*. Both the books include several references to taking pleasure in not only cooking and baking but also eating. To be able to enjoy food and trust one's taste and palate, they must be practiced. The same applies to cooking and baking: one must learn the basics to be able to improvise. From there on it is easier to make cooking and baking pleasurable.

Through analysis of Lawson's books and other sources I conclude that it is indeed possible for today's women to enjoy food in all ways: cooking, baking, eating, talking about it, taking pictures of it and reading about it. It is possible to feel like a domestic goddess without going to all the trouble of being one.

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämä pro gradu -tutkielma käsittelee keittokirjoja, ruuanlaittoa, leivontaa ja ylipäätään ruokaa ja siitä nauttimista naisen näkökulmasta. Tutkielman tärkein päämäärä on ollut selvittää onko naisten, aiempien sukupolvien vuosikymmeniä käymien tasa-arvotaisteluiden jälkeen, mahdollista ja luvallista nauttia keittiössä olemisesta. Onko väärin, jos nainen haluaa leipoa kakkuja ja tehdä ruokaa, jos hänen ei olisi pakko niin tehdä? Onko ruoka paljon enemmänkin kuin vain polttoainetta keholle? Saako siitä nauttia?

Päälähteinä tutkielmassa on käytetty brittiläisen keittokirjailijan ja julkkiskokin Nigella Lawsonin kahta ensimmäistä keittokirjaa, *How to Eat* ja *How to be a Domestic Goddess*. Tutkielmassa on viitattu teoksiin lyhenteillä HTE (*How to Eat*) ja HTBADG (*How to be a Domestic Goddess*) sekä tilansäästön että selvyyden vuoksi. HTE on järkälemäinen opas hyvän ruuan nautintoihin ja periaatteisiin kuten sen alaotsikostakin *”Pleasures and Principles of Good Food*” selviää. Teos sisältää lukuisia Lawsonin perusresepteinä pitämiä reseptejä ja perusruuanlaittometodeita. Se on erittäin kattava ja syvällinen opas Lawsonin ruuanlaittofilosofiaan. HTBADG taas sisältää lähinnä leivontareseptejä erilaisiin arkipäivän ja juhlien tarkoituksiin. Molemmat kirjat, samoin kuin kaikki muutkin Lawsonin kirjat, ovat paljon enemmän kuin vain reseptikokoelmia. Kirjoissa on reseptien lisäksi lähes joka reseptiin johdanto, jossa kerrotaan esimerkiksi reseptin alkuperästä tai annetaan vinkkejä sen valmistukseen tai aineisosien hankintaan. Lawsonin kirjoja voikin lukea muutenkin kuin vain reseptien vuoksi – ne ovat täyttä kirjallisuutta ja syväluotaus kirjoittajansa ajattelumaailmaan.

Lawson on vuonna 1998 julkaistun *How to Eat* -kirjan jälkeen julkaissut kahdeksan keittokirjaa, joiden lisäksi hänet on nähty useassa televiosarjassa valmistamassa kirjojensa reseptien mukaista ruokaa ja leivonnaisia. Lawson on Suomessakin jonkin verran tunnettu, mutta Britanniassa hänestä on tullut kaiken kansan tuntema julkisuuden henkilö kuten monesta muustakin kokista nykypäivänä. Lawson korostaa olevansa kotikokki eikä ruuanlaiton ammattilainen siinä mielessä, että hän ei ole kouluttautunut kokiksi.

Lawson mainitsee lukemattomia kertoja kirjoissaan ja muissa teksteissään naisen aseman ja tarkemmin ottaen naisen oikeuden nauttia ruuasta kaikissa sen muodoissa. Lawson on vahvasti sitä mieltä, että nykynaisen on mahdollista ja luvallista nauttia ruuanlaitosta ilman, että siitä pitää kokea syyllisyyttä. Nainen voi tehdä tietoisen valinnan ja *tuntea* itsensä kodinhengettäreksi (käännökseni Lawsonin käyttämälle termille *domestic goddess*), mutta hänen ei tarvitse *olla* sellainen. Lawson ehdottaa teksteissään ja resepteissään monia tapoja luoda hyvää ruokaa, leivonnaisia ja ilmapiiriä kotiin ja keittiöön ilman suurta vaivaa tai tuntien uurastusta keittiön kuumuudessa.

Tutkielman alussa tarkastellaan käsitteiden resepti ja keittokirja kehitystä ja merkitystä. Reseptit ja keittokirjat ovat olleet keskuudessamme ja ihmiskunnan käytössä jo vuosisatoja. Suuren yleisön keskuuteen reseptit alkoivat levitä 1500-luvulla (Dennis 2008, 2). Keittokirjat muovautuivat aikojen saatossa ja kehittyivät sellaisiksi kuin ne nyt tunnemme 1800-luvun viimeisinä vuosikymmeninä teollistumisen ja kaupungistumisen vanavedessä (Beetham 2010, 16).

Yksinkertaisesti ottaen keittokirja on yleensä reseptikokoelma. Usein keittokirjat sisältävät reseptien lisäksi kuvia raaka-aineista, valmiista ruuista tai leivonnaisista sekä useasti myös kirjan kirjoittajasta tai muista ihmisistä, keittiöistä tai muista miljöistä. Keittokirjat ovat, kirjoittaa Dennis (2008, 1-2), kuitenkin paljon muutakin kuin kauniita reseptikokoelmia ja yleensä niillä onkin jonkinlainen ns. taka-ajatus, jota niiden kautta yritetään välittää kirjojen käyttäjille. Keittokirjat voivat olla didaktisia, informatiivisia, ohjeistavia, patrioottisia tai vaikkapa propagandistisia. Esimerkiksi koulun kotitalouskirjat ovat ehdottomasti ainakin didaktisia, informatiivisia ja ohjeistavia, mutta ehkä myös patrioottia ja propagandistisia kun asiaa ajattelee hieman pidemmälle.

Keittokirjat voivat olla sekä reseptin lähde että myös vain inspiraationlähde käyttäjälleen. Vaikka lukija ei seuraisikaan reseptiä kirjaimellisesti, voi hän käyttää sitä inspiraationlähteenä laittaessaan ruokaa tai leipoessaan. Usein, varsinkin kun leipoja tai ruuanlaittaja on vähän kokeneempi ja/tai kokeilunhaluisempi, leivonnaiset ja ruuat ovat myös yhdistelmä useasta eri reseptistä, joista asianharrastaja on saanut vaikutteita omaan keittämiseensä.

Reseptit ja keittokirjat tarvitsevat lukijan ja käyttäjän, joka toteuttaa niiden ohjeistuksia, jotta ne voivat täyttää tarkoituksensa täydellisesti. Keittokirjat ovatkin tavallaan samanlaisia kuin näytelmät: näytelmiä voi lukea ja niistä voi nauttia kirjallisuutena, mutta täyteen loistoonsa ja tarkoitukseensa ne pääsevät teatterin näyttämöllä näyttelijöiden tulkitsemana. Reseptin käyttäjä tulkitsee sen kirjoittajan ajatukset. Tässä suhteessa keittokirjat kirjallisuutena eroavat esimerkiksi romaaneista.

Keittokirjat ovat muuttuneet aikojen kuluessa, aivan samalla tavalla kuin käyttäjänsä ja yhteiskunta ylipäätään. Yksi keittokirjojen tärkeimmistä tehtävistä on aina ollut reseptien ja ruokaperinteiden siirtäminen sukupolvelta toiselle. Perheissä ja suvuissa on perinteisesti kiertänyt, jos ei suoraan reseptit niin ainakin suosikkiruuat, joita on syöty joko arkena tai juhlapyhinä. Lawson jakaa kirjoissaan usein tällaisia perittyjä reseptejä. Ne voivat olla peräisin joko hänen omalta suvultaan tai monista muista eri lähteistä. Lawson mainitsee yleensä aina reseptin johdannossa, jos se on lainattu joltain muulta, vaikka hän olisin tehnyt siihen omia muutoksiaan. Lawson korostaa myös useasti sitä kuinka tärkeää on opettaa lapsia pienestä pitäen arvostamaan ruokaa ja nauttimaan siitä. Vain ottamalla lapset mukaan ruuanlaittoon ja tarjoamalla heille vaihtelevaa ruokaa, voidaan heistä kasvattaa makupalettiinsa luottavia ja ruokaa arvostavia syöjiä ja ruuanlaittajia.

Viime vuosina keittokirjoista on tullut best seller -kirjoja ja keräilykohteita. Ihmiset puhuvat ruuasta, ruuanlaitosta ja resepteistä enemmän kuin koskaan ennen. Ruoka ja reseptit ovat joka puolella. Ruokaa kuvataan ja sosiaalisessa mediassa jaetaan ruokakokemuksia tavalla joka vielä parikymmentä vuotta sitten, saati sitten aiemmin, olisi tuntunut aivan utopistiselta. Ruokakokemusten jakaminen sosiaalisessa mediassa on aiheena liian laaja käsiteltäväksi tässä yhteydessä, mutta voisi osoittautua hedelmälliseksi tutkimusaiheeksi.

Voidaan väittää, että entisajan kokkausopastus (”how to cook”) on nykyaikana muuttunut elämisopastukseksi (”how to live”). Keittokirjailijat sävyttävät kirjojaan reseptien ohessa opastuksella parempaan elämään, aihepiireinä mm. ostosten teko, laihdutus, lasten ravitsemus, masennusta vastaan taistelu, ympäristönsuojelu jne, kirjoittaa Neuhaus (2003, 1). Keittokirjoista voidaankin

tutkia monia muitakin asioita kuin vain reseptejä ja ruuanvalmistustekniikoita. Keittokirjat opastavat lukijoitaan ei vain paremmiksi ruuanlaittajiksi vaan myös paremmiksi vanhemmiksi, puolisoiksi ja kansalaisiksi, väittää Gallegos (2005, 99).

Tonner on tutkinut ihmisten keittokirjavalintoja ja väittää, että se millaisia keittokirjoja ihmiset valitsevat ei kerro vain heidän ruuanlaittomieltymyksistään vaan heijastaa myös heidän asenteitaan ruokaa ja ruuanlaittoa kohtaan, mikä näkyy ulospäin heidän keittokirjavalinnoissaan (Tonner 2008). Voitaisiinkin väittää, että keittokirjat (ja ruoka) sekä luovat että tuovat esille käyttäjänsä identiteettiä.

Mielestäni Tonnerin tutkimustulokset tukevat ajatustani siitä, että ihmiset ostavat keittokirjoja muutenkin kuin vain siksi, että haluavat tehdä uudenlaista ruokaa. Keittokirjoja hankitaan myös siksi, että ihmiset haluavat lukea niitä huvin vuoksi tai vain selailla niitä (Tonner 2008). Väitän, että keittokirjat kauniine kuvineen ja mielenkiintoisine oheiskertomuksineen houkuttelevat ihmisiä kirjallisuudenmuotona eivätkä vain siksi, että ne tarjoavat uusia reseptejä lukijoilleen. Lawsonin kirjat ovat hyvä esimerkki siitä kuinka keittokirjoissa voi olla paljon muutakin kuin vain reseptejä.

Elämäntapa ei ole enää niin pitkälti perittyä ja opittua kuin ennen vaan enenevissä määrin oma valinta. Bell ja Hollows (2005, 7) väittävät myös, että ne jotka eivät onnistu kisaamaan nykyajan luokkataistossa, jossa on tarkoitus tehdä ero muihin omilla elämänvalinnoillaan, voivat löytää itsensä ”symbolisen väkivallan uhreiksi” ja heidän makujaan voidaan pitää vääränlaisina. Tuntuu, että nykypäivänä kaikilla pitäisi olla hienostunut maku kaikessa sisustuksesta vaatteisiin ja ruokaan. Scholes (2011, 47) kirjoittaa kuinka ihmiset ostavat ja lukevat keittokirjoja ja katsovat Nigella Lawsonin ja Jamie Oliverin kaltaisten julkkiskokkien televisio-ohjelmia yhtä paljon saavuttaakseen niissä esitellyn elämäntyylin kuin kuolatakseen niissä valmistettujen ruokien perään. Televisio-ohjelmissa ja kirjoissa esitetään idylliä, jossa iloinen kokki tarjoaa ruokaa perheenjäsenille ja ystäville, jotka ovat kokoontuneet jakamaan aterian kauniiseen kotiin, puutarhaan tai muuhun paikkaan ja kaikki näyttävä terveiltä ja hyviltä. Bell ja Hollows (2005, 46) huomauttavat, kuinka television

kokkausohjelmat tuovat esille erityisesti kokin ja hänen elämäntyylinsä, jota katsojat voivat jäljitellä hieman noudattamalla reseptejä ja ostamalla oheistuotteita. Mielestäni sama pätee keittokirjoihin ja niiden antamaan kuvaan eikä Lawson ole tässä asiassa mikään poikkeus.

Ruuanlaitosta ja leivonnasta on tullut joillekin taidemuoto, elämäntapa ja harrastus, jota esitellään myös muille esimerkiksi sosiaalisessa mediassa. Prosessi alkaa reseptistä ja ainesten hankinnasta ja päättyy Facebookissa tai Instagramissa julkaistuun kuvaan ja siitä saatuihin kommentteihin ja ”tykkäyksiin”. Kuten edellä jo todettiin, ruoka on nykyään esillä joka paikassa. Television ja keittokirjojen kokeista ja kirjoittajista on tullut julkisuuden henkilöitä, jotka ihmiset tuntevat etunimeltä. Erilaisia ruokaan liittyviä televisio-ohjelmia esitetään parhaaseen katseluaikaan ja ne keräävät isoja katsojamääriä. Television kokeista on tullut superjulkkiksia, joita ihmiset seuraavat kaikissa medioissa ja sosiaalisessa mediassa ja jotka rokkitähtien tapaan tekevät kiertueita, joilla ihmiset pääsevät seuraamaan heidän ruuanlaittoshow'taan. *How to Eat* -kirjassaan Lawson kirjoittaa, että ihmisten pitäisi tehdä sellaista ruokaa, jota he haluavat syödä eikä sellaista, jota he haluavat tulla nähdyksi syövän (HTE, 276).

Joanne Hollows on tutkinut feminismin, post-feminismin ja populaarikulttuurin (erityisesti kotielämän, ruuanlaiton ja ruuan) suhteita ja tullut siihen tulokseen, että hänen tutkimillaan post-feminismillä ja 'uusilla naiseuden muodoilla' oli hyvin vähän sanottavaa kotielämästä (Hollows 2006, 98). Hollows (*ibid.*) kertoo tuntevansa useita feminismistä vaikutteita saaneita akateemisia kolmissa- ja nelissäkymmenissään olevia naisia, joilla on salainen fantasia luopua uristaan ja sen sijaan leipoa kakkuja, hoitaa puutarhaa, kutoa tai fiksailla kotiaan. Saavatko naiset tuntea näin ja haluta tällaista kaiken sukupuolten välisen tasa-arvon eteen nähdyn vaivan jälkeen? Hollows (2006, 104) kysyy voidaanko nykynaisten edes nähdä lähtevän kotoa työntekoon, kun he eivät ole koskaan siellä olleetkaan. Hän muistuttaa meitä siitä, että nykypäivän kolmi-nelikymppiset naiset ovat kasvaneet sekä toisen aallon feminismin muovaamassa ilmapiirissä että ovat myös tuotosta ajalta, joka historiallisesti on ollut toisen aallon feminismin jälkeistä aikaa *(ibid.*).

Hollows (*ibid.*) jatkaa, että kotitöitä ei välttämättä tarvitse kokea työnä. Kotityöt kuuluvat yhä suuressa määrin naisille, myös feministeille. Hollows (2006, 101) väittää kuitenkin, että ilmiöt kuten kotityö ja lähiökoti ovat asioita, jotka feminismi koki 'toisena' ja halusi siksi pitää etäisyydellä. Hollows (*ibid.*) muistuttaa kuitenkin, että tässäkin asiassa voitiin nähdä eroa Yhdysvalloissa ja Britanniassa vallalla olleissa feminismin muodoissa. Hollows (2006, 106) viittaa Lawsonin *How to be a Domestic Goddess* -teokseen kirjoittaessaan kuinka se provosoi valtavan keskustelun mediassa feminismin, naiseuden ja leipomisen suhteesta. Keskustelussa Lawsonia pidettiin välillä feminismin aikaa edeltävänä kotirouvana, anti-feministisenä Stepfordin rouvana, elämän kohtuullistamisen (*downshifting*) pelastajana uranaisille ja sekä negatiivisena että positiivisena post-femimismin tuotoksena, väittää Hollows. Hollows kuitenkin on ymmärtänyt Lawsonin kirjan perimmäisen tarkoituksen: saada naiset *tuntemaan* olevansa kodinhengettäriä eikä saada heitä muuttumaan sellaisiksi.

Magee (2007, 1) väittää, että suurin osa ruokaikoneista, jotka saavat osakseen huomiomme, voidaan jakaa helposti kahteen keittiöön: ruokapuritanistit ja ruokapornoilijat. Esimerkkinä ensimmäisestä keittiöstä Magee antaa Martha Stewartin ja toisesta Nigella Lawsonin. Näitä kahta esimerkkiä voidaan ensiajattelemalta pitää itsestäänselvinä, mutta jos tarkastelemme Martha Stewartin asennoitumista kaikkeen kodinhoitoon liittyvään (ruuanlaitosta sisustamiseen ja lastenhoitoon ja niin edelleen), huomaamme, kuten Magee (*ibid.*) sen ilmaisee, että Stewartin puritanismista on tullut pornografista ja pakkomielteenomaista fantasiaa, jolla on hyvin vähän tekemistä todellisen ruuasta saatavan nautinnon kanssa – aivan kuten pornolla on hyvin vähän tekemistä oikean seksistä saatavan nautinnon kanssa. Stewartille kaikki tekeminen on näyttämistä eikä niinkään nauttimista tekemisestä. Vertaus pornoon ei ole kaukaahaettu.

Lawsonin voidaan väittää saavan aitoa nautintoa ruuanlaitosta, leipomisesta ja syömisestä. Onko tämä nautinto sitten pornografista vai aitoa rakkautta? Koska yksi ruokapornografian määritelmistä on se, että ulkopinta on kaikki mitä on saatavilla ja jolla on merkitystä, voidaan väittää että koska Lawsonille ruuan

maulla on suurin merkitys, hänen suhteensa ruokaan ei ole pornografinen. Stewartille taas ulkopinta ja se miltä asiat näyttävät on kaikkein tärkeintä.

Lawsonin kirjojen ja muiden lähteiden analyysin perusteella väitän, että nykynaisten on mahdollista nauttia ruuasta kaikilla tavoin: kokkaamalla, leipomalla, syömällä, puhumalla, valokuvaamalla ja lukemalla. On mahdollista tuntea olevansa kodinhengetär näkemättä vaivaa tullaakseen sellaiseksi oikeasti.