

VORACIOUS VILLAINS OR HUNGRY HEROES?
DEPICTIONS OF FOOD CRITICS IN
POPULAR MEDIA

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Abstract

In journalism studies, scholars look at visual depictions in film, television, graphic novels, and other media to categorize how journalism works and how journalists interact with the world. This study responds to a call to action to look into media beyond film. In popular fictional visual media across time, close textual analysis of the depiction of food critics shows unique and shared themes, tropes, and story arcs specific to food critics, including violence and anonymity. Depictions of food critics were homogenous regardless of the medium and were shown primarily as older white men with similar dress, attitude, and ethics. These depictions were overwhelmingly negative with few showing food critics doing their job well in a positive light. This thesis combats the neglect of depictions of food critics in journalistic study, as well as showcases the characterizations of food critics that separates them from other journalists and critics.