Through the diversity of its approaches and the richness of its conclusions, the recent field of food studies has demonstrated the validity of such a panoptic approach, which places food – as an anthropological datum, as a social construct, as an aesthetic phenomenon – at the core of a network of enquiries that draw on ecology, sociology, anthropology, history, the culinary arts and other disciplines. From ancient *symposia* to the post-Covid resurgence of dinner theatres, food is everywhere, in time and space, in the theatre: on stage, of course, as a prop, a plot element, or a protagonist in its own right, but also behind the scenes, in the audience, in the sociability of the troupe and its rituals. Conversely, theatre is ubiquitous: in our ritualization of meals, from the *'mise en place'* to the service, to the conversations that take place over dinner, as demonstrated by the recent hit film *The Menu* (2022). The meal is a theatrical machine. So, in the wake of some stimulating recent works in English that offered a wide international perspective (for instance: Dorothy Chansky (ed.), *Food and Theatre on the World Stage* (Routledge, 2015), L. Piatti-Farnell, D. Lee Brien (eds), *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Food* (Routledge, 2018), Amy Tigner, and Allison Carruth, *Literature and Food Studies* (Routledge, 2018) or French works that focussed on 20th and 21st century (with an issue of *Jeu, Nourriture en scène* (2015) and Athéna-Hélène Stourna, *La cuisine à la scène, Boire et manger au théâtre du XXe siècle* (PUR, 2011), it is time to devote an issue to the interaction between food from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth century.

Evoking food as well as its antagonist counterpart, hunger, requires a multifaceted approach to understanding the role, consumption of, and craving for food both on and offstage from the Renaissance to the Belle-Époque. This includes examining its preparation and presence in theatres, its representation and idealisation, its associated rituals and etiquette, and exploring interrelated topics such as dietary habits, weight, and body. How is food or hunger portrayed on stage? To what extent does food reflect ingrained socialising habits and leisure activities, and highlight trendy dishes or new products in the market? How
do playwrights and actors utilise food or the absence of it through verbal expressions, characters, or stage actions?

Such a broad topic necessitates exploring various intertwined aspects, including dramatic art and poetics, which showcase the significance of consumables in plot development and their essential role in both tragic and comic actions. Offering poisoned cups, swallowing the poison; or offering one's children as a meal or even a lover's heart to one's spouse is part of the theatre of terror in tragedy. The last supper signifies the culmination of Don Juan's deceitful behaviour. Food can be a means of seduction in love affairs. Monsieur Jourdain organises a banquet worthy of a wedding for Dorimène. Harpagon, on the other hand, prefers to avoid any expenses. Gluttonous or gourmand servant characters in European theatre such as El Gracioso, Arlequin, or Sganarelle entertain audiences by stealing food or being heavily intoxicated. Thus, food often serves as an opportunity to create comic effects but also innuendos: a "young pullet, tender, and fat to the fingertips" metaphorically portrays a young woman who gradually transforms into a piece of meat.

During the nineteenth century, the bourgeois dining room emerges as an alternative to the traditional living room or "salon" inherited from classical comedy. In celebrations and social gatherings, the art of tableware (art de la table) plays a significant role. Servants bring food while guests dine on stage. Lively conversations about the food add a realistic and authentic touch to the stage. However, naturalism is not far behind with its meat trays which contribute to the development of modern staging. The portrayal of courses and meals on stage raises questions about the staging of food, the types of food depicted, and the contextual significance of specific dishes. In certain circumstances, luxury items like expensive wines are not only staged but also consumed on stage, as evidenced by the bills from the Comédie-Française in the eighteenth century. Food sometimes permeates the entire stage design: a palace can be "made" of "sugar, candy canes, and candy fruits", showcasing new culinary fashion trends influenced by imported goods.

Consumables could be found in playhouses as early as the seventeenth century. The cabarets in Montmartre welcomed spectators who could indulge in drinks, and consume female performers simultaneously. Further exploration of historical aspects related to the suppliers who worked with or around playhouses, such as caterers, pastry chefs, or restaurateurs, can provide insights into the geography of food in the city and theatrical life. This becomes particularly relevant as the nineteenth century marks a transition to a consumer society. This also raises questions about the actors' daily diet and consumer habits. How do their indulgences impact their weight? Actors putting on weight are mocked such as the "fat Aricie" entering on stage to perform Phèdre by Jean Racine in 1677. In addition, the fortunes amassed by renowned actors whose fame is made by the press and voraciously devoured by theatre worshippers, are in stark contrast with struggling travelling troupes that often face starvation and disillusions. At the end of the spectrum, elderly actors, who have fallen into oblivion and have barely enough to drink and eat, dream of their past glorious days or crave a successful comeback. Be they rich or poor, theatre remains presented as their main spiritual and earthly sustenance.

The proverb "The appetite comes with eating" holds true, but does the enthusiasm for drama and the stage have any limits over time? Audiences yearn for spectacles and possess a fervent appetite for entertainment and theatricality. The theatromania that characterized the eighteenth century and the emergence of boulevard theatres and music-halls which became very popular in the nineteenth century exemplify the interplay between the stage and the dining table.

These themes warrant a more extensive exploration, encompassing not only the French stage but also the broader European theatrical landscape. We welcome comprehensive studies encompassing historical, literary, and sociological perspectives, as well as case studies that unveil new insights and viewpoints on:
1. Consumables as key elements of the plot; characters obsessed with food and/or drinks; or drunk on stage; culinary experts such as cooks and roasters; hungry characters;
2. The reference to food and drinks in dialogues such as expressions in relation to food, metaphors; *chansons à boire* including food and drinks etc.;
3. Stage effects and staging with consumable elements (real or made of *papier mâché*); the use of food as props; the staging of banquets, feasts, suppers; acting drunkenness;
4. Eating on stage: meals and conversations around the table; the limits of propriety; the different rules or etiquettes related to hospitality and the art of entertaining guests; the art of dining across the centuries or in different countries;
5. Eating in the theatre: cabaret practices, eating during the play, audience etiquette, the interval rituals; catering expenses; food and drinks in the auditorium and consumption in the theatre during intermissions or when the play is performed;
6. The suppliers, the geography of cafés, restaurants, rotisseries, delicatessen, and caterers around the theatres, supplying the troupes and serving the spectators;
7. Food and theatre practice: the actor’s meal and diet; the dinner ritual; the actors’ food preferences; dishes named after actors, etc.; the actors’ relationship with consumable items; the impact of their diet on their bodies, for instance, actors gaining weight or looking too frail;
8. Eating the theatre: appetite for drama and compulsive consumption, bulimic audiences; theory and metaphor of appetite and hunger (for instance the hunger of the artist).

**Submission Guidelines:**
- Abstracts should be approximately 250-300 words in length and should be accompanied by a brief biographical note of 50 words.
- Please submit your abstracts to Sabine Chaouche (sabinec@sunway.edu.my) and Clara Edouard (clara.edouard@zuyd.nl) no later than 20/10/2023.
- Notification of acceptance will be sent by 30/10/23.
- The deadline for the submission of 6,000 to 8,000-word articles is 30/03/2024.

We eagerly await your submissions and welcome any inquiries or requests for further information.

**References:**
1 Such as Cleopatra in *Rodogune* (1644/45) by Pierre Corneille.
2 See *Atrée et Tyeste* (1707) by Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon.
3 In *Gabrielle de Vergy* (1777) by Pierre Laurent de Belloy.
4 Madame Jourdain states “je vois ici un banquet à faire noces” (*Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, IV.2).
5 He proclaims: “When there is enough food for eight, there is certainly enough for ten” (*L’Avare*, III.1).
7 “Parbleu, monsieur, si vous aimez la viande coriace, nous vous en donnerons tout votre soul” (“By Jove, sir, if you enjoy tough meat, we will provide you with all you desire.”). Ibid., p. 267, II.2.
8 In Georges Feydeau’s *Chat en poche* (1888), the opening line, "Excellent, this duck!" (“*Excellent, ce canard!*”) sets the tone for the vaudeville.
9 On 19th October 1888, André Antoine boldly places two sheep carcasses on the stage during the performance of *Les Bouchers* by Fernand Icres.
10 For example, the supper scene in *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* required bottles of Champagne and sophisticated courses, costing no less than 60 livres per performance.
11 See: *Le Roi de Cocagne* (1719) by Marc-Antoine Legrand. In the 1770s, in *Le Chevalier français à Turin* (1778) by Claude-Joseph Dorat, the troupe opted to stage a light meal consisting of sweets ("entremets"), fruit, biscuits, macarons, cream, and a chocolate fricassee. The choices made by the actors reflect a form of on-stage gastronomy and a sweet tooth, symbolizing expensive tastes and wealth.
14 In the seventeenth century, Montfleury was ridiculed by Savinien de Cyrano de Bergerac in his satirical letter titled *Contre un gros homme* (*Against a Fat Man*); “You are a miracle, as your roundness causes spectators to mistake you for a rack of veal strolling on its bacon lardons” (“*Vous êtes un miracle, car votre rondeur fait que vos spectateurs vous prennent pour une côte de veau se promenant sur ses lardons*”). Savinien de Cyrano de Bergerac, *Contre un gros homme* (Paris: Charles de Sorcy, 1676), tome 1, letter 10, pp. 129-135.
16 “L’appétit vient en mangeant”.