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THE FOOD ISSUE

Guest Editor

Lauren Rabinovitz

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On the cover: Neighborhood children scavenging food. Food insecurity and safety remained one of Hull-House's enduring concerns. Citation: *Hull House—Children, undated*. Hull-House Photograph Collection, JAMC_0000_0096_0114, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Illinois at Chicago.

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Articles

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Introduction

Lauren Rabinovitz

> "By studying what Americans have been eating since the colonial era, we are further enlightened to the conflicting ways in which Americans have chosen to define themselves, their culture, their beliefs, and the changes those definitions have undergone over time. Understanding the American diet is the first step toward grasping the larger truths, the complex American narratives that have long been swept under the table, and the evolving answers to the question: What does it mean to be American?"
>
> —Jennifer Jensen Wallach, *How America Eats: A Social History of U.S. Food and Culture*[1]

The time is right for a special issue of *American Studies* on "Food in America." Scholarship on food studies in an American context and in an interdisciplinarily-framed set of approaches has been growing in both published volumes and in professional meetings.[2] Interest in food studies is at an all-time high, and the research field may be said to be "coming of age" in relationship to American Studies. Indeed, the writing on food politics alone is overwhelming. But such contemporary "foodie" issues as social concerns over agribusiness, nutrition and disease in America, environmentalism, and the future of food practices are also proceeding in conversation with scholars who are increasingly studying food practices and American history as definitive ways to understand evolving American identities.

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The history of food studies and its relationship to American Studies is relatively recent. It has deep roots, however, in the intertwining of approaches from anthropology, geography, science studies, and history.[3] Most important to the establishment of ongoing American Studies interventions into food studies were works that examined American food habits as ethnic histories that evolve over time through contact with other American groups. For example, Donna Gabaccia's *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (1998), Harvey Levenstein's *Revolution at the Table: The Transformation of the American Diet* (2003), and Hasia R. Diner's *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration* (2001) all set the stage for understanding how diet and food practices undergird ethnic identity, assimilation, and resistance to assimilation.[4] Indeed, as Warren Belasco noted in 2006, even such common expressions about American identity as "the melting pot" or "the mixing bowl" evoke food metaphors and practices in relationship to issues of immigration, diversity and multiculturalism, and assimilation.[5]

Recent titles build upon this foundation. *The Larder: Food Studies Methods from the American South* (2013), edited by Elizabeth Engelhardt, John Edge, and Ted Ownby asserts that regional, gendered, and racial identities may be understood through the lens of food practices and practitioners.[6] Marcie Cohen Ferris furthers this line of thought in *The Edible South: The Power of Food and the Making of an American Region* (2014) where food as "cuisine and commodity" has shaped the struggles and identities of the antebellum Plantation South through to civil rights protests at lunch counters of the 1960s.[7] Likewise, Psyche Williams-Forson's *Building Houses out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, and Power* (2006) and Rebecca Sharpless' *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens: Domestic Workers in the South,1865-1960* (2010) are part of a growing number of titles examining African American identity and its relationship to food practices.[8] In their hands, it is not just ethnic cuisines that are important for understanding identity but the entire domestic front of food production and preparation. The logical outcome of their scholarship is the 2015 collection of essays edited by Jennifer Jensen Wallach with essays by both Williams-Forson and Sharpless, *Dethroning the Deceitful Pork Chop: Rethinking African American Foodways from Slavery to Obama*, a volume that demonstrates how food practices in the hands of African Americans have served as a mode of cultural resistance.[9]

Carolyn de la Peña's *Empty Pleasures: The Story of Artificial Sweeteners from Saccharin to Splenda* (2010) tackles another integral angle to contemporary food studies, as she explores the relationships among chemical companies, pharmaceutical firms, and consumers for the ways that food – even in the shape of sweeteners – becomes a complex technology put to cultural use.[10] Jennifer Jensen Wallach's *How America Eats: A Social History of U.S. Food and Culture* (2013) is the logical outgrowth of approaches like de la Peña's and the interest in minority cultures in its intertwining of ethnic histories with the impact of industrial technologies on American food practices.[11]

I cite this bibliography to call attention to the fact that food studies is evolving from a fledgling field to one of maturity. There is a critical mass of scholars working on the subject, and they understand the relationship of food to American identity not only through ethnic studies but through relationships to histories of technology, domesticity in general, and contemporary issues and problems. Food serves as a lens through which larger questions of American identities, assimilationist practices, and resistance to assimilation are served.

Food studies research also often relies on undervalued and underused archives of materials, especially cookbooks, but also housekeeping manuals, menus, and food and appliance advertising and trade publications. Food studies frequently requires scholars to consider these materials as cultural artifacts and design methods for their interpretation as historical evidence.[12] In addition, food studies research often expands upon approaches and methods associated with more traditional objects of cultural study – literature, visual arts, popular culture – in order to shed light on previously unexamined aspects and cultural politics of artistic production.[13] Food studies has the potential to be valuable not only to those who practice scholarship in food studies but to anyone in American Studies interested in the expansion of the field's research materials and methods.

This volume addresses the range of approaches to food studies in American culture and to the heterogeneity of the subject itself. It begins with an essay, "Gathering Around Hull-House Dining Tables," by Carrie Helms Tippen and Sarah Robbins, that tackles head-on the tradition of linking food to the history of ethnic identities by overturning the idea that the early twentieth century emergent social work movement used cooking and food consumption only to promote immigrant assimilation and to discourage ethnic identities. Through examination of Hull-House scrapbooks, photographs, and bulletin board clippings as well as through period memoirs, the authors portray a much more complex picture of an evolving settlement house food culture that actually encouraged constructive, even multicultural relationships.

In this volume are also three essays representative of new interdisciplinary approaches to food's meanings in literature, art, and popular culture in the U.S. Stephanie Tsank's "The Ideal Observer Meets the Ideal Consumer: Realism, Domestic Science, and Immigrant Foodways in Willa Cather's *My* Ántonia (1918)" links Cather's depiction of immigrant foodways to the ideologies of rising contemporary movements in both American literary realism and in home economics, and she effectively demonstrates how Cather articulates the tensions surrounding the nativist values associated with each of these movements. "Sugar Babies: Confections of American Childhood in Vik Muniz's *Sugar Children* and Kara Walker's *Marvelous Sugar Baby,*" by Tashima Thomas, takes up sugar sculptures of black children that address a violent history of sugar production, colonization, and the hyper-sexualization and consumption of black bodies. Emily J. H. Contois's "Welcome to Flavortown: Guy Fieri's Populist American Food Culture" turns to popular culture and the rise of the Food Network star for an analysis of how food figures into a specifically 21st century mass-mediated

ideologization about American identity that utilizes themes and tropes of rebelliousness, populist nostalgia, democratic definitions of taste, and multiculturalism.

Again building on a foundation of earlier American Studies food scholarship, "Free Food, Free Space: People's Stews and the Spatial Identity Politics of People's Parks," by Kera Lovell, picks up on Warren Belasco's 1989 discussion of the relationship between food consumption and the culture-changing politics of the late 1960s counterculture movement.[14] Lovell uses both archival materials and interviews to examine the potluck meals (people's stews) collaborated upon in people's parks as a demonstration of how food preparation and consumption were key rich, exemplary markers of the experience of cultural resistance.

Two articles in this volume also focus on food politics within contemporary social politics, addressing the entire matter of food itself as an important vehicle implicated in controversies of modern social justice. "Zombification, Social Death, and the Slaughterhouse: U.S. Industrial Practices of Livestock Slaughter," by S. Marek Muller, and "The Post-Incarceration Kitchen: Food-Based Community Organizing and Employment After Imprisonment," by Elissa Underwood Marek, speak more directly to two different ways that the business of food is conducted within a larger political sphere. Muller's article tackles how both animals and laborers are de-valued and produced at the site of the slaughterhouse as disposable entities, using the trope of the "zombie" to show how this is rhetorically and psychologically achieved. The author ultimately argues for the need for justice for both humans and animals. Marek's essay on the post-incarceration kitchen also addresses a contemporary social injustice – the entire network of punitive practices regarding incarceration and the ways they serve as the State's means of oppression of minorities. Marek examines the phenomenon of food businesses that employ former prisoners, individuals whose criminal histories often preclude most employment possibilities, as a means of resistance against state practices. Using public policy regulations, employer documents, and interviews with owners and employees, Marek demonstrates how food entrepreneurship can exemplify progressive politics for creating change.

Thus, the articles contained within this volume run the gamut of histories of how food preparation and consumption practices shaped American identities in the past to food imagery as a carrier for national ideological assertions and anxieties to the centrality of food manufacturing and businesses as sites for important American institutional practices intertwined with the modern corporate state. More importantly, perhaps, these food-driven essays represent the best of American Studies traditions of addressing lives and conditions of the underrepresented, of understanding American identities through a lens that draws out social markers of difference, and of imaginatively using an array of cultural artifacts, public and archival records, and interviews and direct observations. Throughout, despite the heterogeneity of the articles' topics and time frames, this volume takes food seriously as a subject for cultural analysis and for its centrality in mediating social, cultural, political, and economic processes in both

the American past and present. As a whole, therefore, the food issue of *American Studies* is more than the sum of its parts: it represents the way an emergent research field in American Studies illuminates relevant questions to democracy today and to taking a stand on those questions.

Notes

1. Jennifer Jensen Wallach, *How America Eats: A Social History of U.S. Food and Culture* (Plymouth, UK: Rowman and Littlefield, 2013), back cover.

2. Food panels regularly occur at the American Studies Association annual meeting, and at least 19 American Studies programs now offer courses on food in America (University of Iowa, University of Minnesota, University of Texas at Austin, Brandeis University, Brown University, Yale University, University of Oklahoma, University of Southern Florida, SUNY-Buffalo, Rutgers University, University of Maryland-Baltimore County, University of Maryland-College Park, Miami University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of Washington-Tacoma, University of Wyoming, Stanford University, University of California-Berkeley, and University of California-Davis).

3. It is important to note, however, the groundbreaking work of American Studies scholar Warren Belasco in the 1980s in identifying the relationship of the politics of American foodways in *Appetite for Change: How the Counterculture Took on the Food Industry* (NY: Pantheon Books, 1989) as central to sweeping cultural and political change.

4. Donna Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Harvey Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table: The Transformation of the American Diet* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2003); and Hasia R. Diner, *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

5. Warren Belasco, *Meals to Come: A History of the Future of Food* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 20-21. In fact, building upon both the work of Gabaccia and Belasco, Camille Bégin's *Taste of the Nation: The New Deal Search for America's Food* (Champaign-Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016) studies Depression-era food writing and the use of the "melting pot" metaphor as a means of social expression and oppression.

6. Elizabeth Engelhardt, John Edge, and Ted Ownby, eds. *The Larder: Food Studies Methods from the American South* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2013).

7. Marcie Cohen Ferris, *The Edible South: The Power of Food and the Making of an American Region* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

8. Psyche Williams-Forson, *Building Houses out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, and Power* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Rebecca Sharpless, *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens: Domestic Workers in the South, 1865-1960* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

9. Jennifer Jensen Wallach, ed. *Dethroning the Deceitful Pork Chop: Rethinking African American Foodways from Slavery to Obama* (Fayetteville, AK: University of Arkansas Press, 2015).

10. Carolyn de la Peña, *Empty Pleasures: The Story of Artificial Sweeteners from Saccharin to Splenda* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

11. Jensen Wallach, *How America Eats.*

12. In this regard, some model studies are Janet Theophano's *Eat My Words: Reading Women's Lives Through the Cookbooks They* Wrote (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Jessamyn Neuhaus's *Manly Meals and Mom's Home Cooking: Cookbooks and Gender in Modern* America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Katharina Vester's *A Taste of Power: Food and American Identities* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015); and Megan Elias's *Food on the Page: Cookbooks and American Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017).

13. A number of recent titles take on the project of examining literary examples and genres for depictions of foods and food practices as indexes to larger cultural frameworks of such things as domesticity, empire, environmentalism, scientific and medical reception, and social or national identities and memories; see: Amy Tigner and Allison Carruth, *Literature and Food Studies* (NY: Routledge, 2018); Allison Carruth, *Global Appetites: American Power and the Literature of Food* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

Books that tackle the equally broad subject of food in popular culture (and particularly in the mass media) include: Fabio Parasecoli, *Bite Me: Food in Popular Culture* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2008); Kathleen Lebesco and Peter Naccarato, eds. *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Food and Popular Culture* (NY and London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018); Sherrie A. Inness, ed. *Kitchen Culture in America: Popular Representations of Food, Gender, and Race* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

14. Belasco, *Appetite for Change*.

Gathering around Hull-House Dining Tables

Sarah Robbins and Carrie Helms Tippen

Hilda Satt Polacheck, who had immigrated to America in 1893, could hardly wait to return to her former Halsted Street neighborhood to attend the fortieth-anniversary festivities for Hull-House in 1929. What drew Polacheck and so many others back to the settlement, even if, as in her case, they no longer lived in Chicago? Certainly, the personal magnet was Jane Addams. As Polacheck reported in her memoir, *I Came a Stranger*,

> Jane Addams moved among the great and the humble just as any mother would when her far-flung children returned to the old home for a reunion. She knew everybody's name. She asked after children of the former children who had come to Hull-House years ago as bewildered, uprooted little immigrants. . . . I felt that all the people who had come to that reunion were her family.[1]

For Polacheck, writing about this occasion years later, the anniversary dinner presented the central image affirming this feeling of domestic community: "I will never forget how [Addams] seated me at her table in the dining room. I know that many celebrities sat around that table that night, but I only remember Jane Addams at the head of the table, carving a roast, as if she were serving a family."[2] Polacheck's recollections were unabashedly romanticized, but this

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episode in her memoir positions shared foodways at the heart of the settlement's identity. Addams, too, returns often to food in her own memoir, *Twenty Years at Hull-House*, both as a symbol to represent the work of the settlement and as a literal intervention tool for solving problems such as hunger, nutrition, and labor in the lives of immigrant women, children, and families living nearby. Indeed, while still a student at Rockford College, years before cofounding Hull-House with Ellen Gates Starr, Addams was already using the "breadgivers" metaphor to envision women's positively gendered social leadership, including in a commencement address invoking that analogy to frame her entire talk.[3] Starting with a portrait of her father as a miller, the memoir repeatedly references bread, bread making, and bread sharing.

Idealized memories like Polacheck's and Addams's own descriptions of Hull-House programs through "food giving" language certainly offer one appealing window into settlement aspirations, but they form only a part of the picture of actual foodways at Hull-House. Settlement archives record a host of daily food-centered and food-supported activities from cooking classes to club meeting refreshments. While Polacheck's memoir places Addams at the head of the table in her role as Hull-House leader, the archival materials such as scrapbook clippings, yearbook stories, bulletin accounts, and photographs show that settlement residents and immigrant neighbors, over time, increasingly shared authority over food instruction and food-supported programming. Neither of the women's memoirs focuses primarily on food, but when read in the context of the Hull-House archive, their food-centered scenes take on additional significance, pointing to a purposeful food culture at the settlement.

Numerous scholars have already cast Hull-House as a cultural contact zone where encounters across divisions of class, gender, race, ethnicity, and belief were strategically engineered as a part of the institutional mission and practice, seeking to balance impulses of assimilation with diversity. Though longstanding critiques of the settlement's social hierarchies continue to remind us that such Progressive Era endeavors were never fully egalitarian,[4] recent work by public historians at the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum (JAHHM) and in more traditional scholarly print publications have sought to balance critique of the settlement's shortcomings with updated recognition of its most democratic impulses and its (proto)feminist tendencies.[5] When we bring food studies scholarship into this scholarly conversation, we gain a useful lens for highlighting the complexities of social relations at the settlement, especially those between the privileged, college-educated, white women residents and their immigrant women counterparts from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Sharing food is especially interesting as a social ritual that often aspires to equality by bringing diverse individuals into a common bonding experience with room for all at the (literal and symbolic) table. Yet, the metaphor of "the Table" also connotes a fraught social space where inequities and exclusions are brought into relief. The ability of food rituals to bind and to divide (sometimes simultaneously) makes food practice an appropriate site to examine critically how the settlement's

Figure 1: A family from the Hull-House neighborhood at table. Domestic Science and the Settlement Movement both aimed at solving food insecurity for the urban poor and working classes,but differed on the value of ethnic food traditions. Citation: *Hull House—Neighborhood and People—Interiors, undated*. Hull-House Photograph Collection, JAMC_0000_0219_0311, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Illinois at Chicago.

pedagogical vision intersected with its lived experience in cross-cultural encounters. If Hull-House's food practices were not always as egalitarian as suggested by Polacheck's nostalgic sketch, what could be called a food-supported settlement pedagogy did progress, over the decades of Addams's leadership, from a philanthropic stance, dispensing safe and nutritious food and information, toward an increasing intercultural reciprocity, sharing responsibility for creating and distributing culinary knowledge in community.

Negotiating Pressures of Assimilation and Distinction with Food

Our analysis here will track shifts in the settlement's food pedagogy that are illustrated empirically in the archive by curricular content and associated discourse's move away from programs like the New England Kitchen (NEK), as we will explain below. But we also draw on current theoretical frameworks for studying food practices as ideological and paradoxical. Thus, even as we recognize Hull-House's many successes in bridging cultures through food-centered activism, as Polacheck feels so powerfully at that reunion dinner when she eats

a freshly carved roast while sitting alongside "celebrities," we acknowledge the limits of that commensality. As Lisa Heldke, a scholar of philosophy and food, argues, "Food may be a wonderful way to begin creating a connection between Us and Them—but no such connection is instantaneous, and even the flexible, interactive, welcoming medium of food cannot make it so."[6] Eating together is not enough to build a community; *people* have the agency in these exchanges, so careful attention and deliberate action are required for positive outcomes. The archive shows evidence of such attention and deliberation in food-centered activities, and the other activities of the settlement, from the Labor Museum to the Hull-House Players, support and extend the connections begun at the table. Shared meals alone are not evidence of successful community building. While shared meals have the potential to minimize differences, food practices are also important rituals in building individual identity and distinction. Sociologists Josée Johnston and Shyon Baumann suggest that contemporary foodies embrace "political dimensions of food practice" whereby eaters can use their tastes and consumer power to claim positive citizenship. Simultaneously, however, their analysis shows that foodies can use the same activities for exclusionary purposes, to "draw the boundaries between worthy and unworthy culture."[7] The same activity—choosing what to eat—can have complex meanings in life and in literature, far more complex than the seemingly straightforward metaphor of "the Table" and the platitudes of "breaking bread" would suggest.

While performances around food sharing can foster a strong sense of community, we should not overstate food's ability to erase divisions. As food studies scholar and sociologist Alice Julier explains, a shared meal is "paradoxically" an "individual material act of consumption" and "part of a much larger pattern of sociable events."[8] To eat together can promote community, but the concrete and literal acts of biting, chewing, and digesting are strictly individual. There are limits to the power of commensality; what groups really share—often unequally—are experiences, rituals, and ideologies. Hierarchical distinctions remain—between who is a cultural insider and who is an outsider, who serves and who is served, who labors and who benefits from labor, who sits at the head and who sits at the foot of a table.

Let us revisit Polacheck's memory of the anniversary dinner as a case in point. While Polacheck reports feeling like family at the anniversary meal, rituals of distinction like carving the meat designate Addams as hostess, separate from her guests even as they are welcomed into community. As anthropologist E.N. Anderson observes, acts of eating are simultaneously acts of solidarity *and* separation.[9] Food rituals can build intimacy within a community, but those same rituals separate that unique community from others. Though the feelings of solidarity and separation may last only for the space of a meal, there are consequences to social and cultural identities when individuals move between, within, and across food communities. Those consequences are especially relevant for the immigrant neighbors at Hull-House who faced the challenge of negotiating pressures between embracing assimilation and affirming cultural

distinctiveness. In Hull-House activities, neighbors are asked to identify at various times with their ethnic communities, the multiethnic community of Hull-House, and the dominant middle-class, white community that called for their assimilation into white-dominated American culture. Even within the most diversity-welcoming contexts of Hull-House foodways, when ethnic differences were affirmed in such cultural markers as a cooking class specifically designated for "Italian girls only,"[10] there were forces simultaneously calling for participants to assimilate within the overriding culture represented by the white, well-to-do residents. To join that very cooking class, for instance, one needed to pay an enrollment fee, however modest, and follow a curriculum situated within an education program controlled by Anglo-American college-educated women.

Jane Addams and the Hull-House residents of her own social class navigated this tension, too. They recognized that neighbors could benefit materially from the cultural capital garnered through knowledge of "American" culture, including WASP foodways. But they increasingly realized that the traditional knowledge and social accomplishments of immigrant communities—including culinary ones—were valuable and worth preservation. Therefore, Addams and her resident colleagues embraced learning they themselves gained from the cultural resources of their neighbors, whether through a Hull-House theatre performance of Greek drama or through the political acumen working-class organizers brought to labor issues. So too, food-centered activities of Hull-House eventually provided all community members with interactive opportunities to reconfigure their individual and group identities through a community-building pedagogy of shared authority around food practices. Thus, both the individual self-fashioning of Addams and Polacheck around Hull-House foodways and the more collaborative, if admittedly sometimes vexed, process of communal self-definition for the settlement enacted a shared enterprise seeking democratic expression at dining tables.

Understanding that the entanglements of shared food practices are further knotted by the unique tensions and identity negotiations at Hull-House, our portrait of food practices there identifies complications in cross-cultural food encounters to illustrate that food, in itself, does not create meaningful social relationships by its mere presence. Rather, writings by community members like Polacheck and Addams herself highlight Hull-House settlement leaders' growing attention to multifaceted identity differences and to building sustained cross-cultural relationships through food encounters. Specifically, as Addams's views on collaborative pedagogy developed, the role of settlement food changed accordingly. Spaces for food production and consumption shifted along with food-related approaches for promoting sociability, solidarity, and political agency across class and ethnic borders. This evolution progressed unevenly, however, and was experienced differently by different community members. To illustrate, throughout this essay we call upon remembrances from Polacheck's self-descriptions as "a Hull-House Girl" (according to her

book's subtitle) to supplement more official records in the archive, including texts crafted by Addams herself. Using this dialogic approach highlights the recurring tensions between aspirational ideals of democratic hospitality that resisted assimilation and the limits inherent in any culture-making enterprise. Nonetheless, encouraged by French philosopher Michel de Certeau's suggestions for claiming agency within constrained spaces, we aim to recover positive aspects of Hull-House's foodways-based learning legacies.[11] Rather than seeing food memories recorded in memoir texts as sentimental or "mere" nostalgia, on the one hand, or viewing settlement foodways as hopelessly caught up in misguided, upper-middle-class do-gooder moves to acculturate immigrants, on the other, we instead aim here for a more complex interpretation of Hull-House foodways.[12] The triangulation of memory writing by Polacheck and Addams with contemporary newspaper accounts and artifacts from the settlement's own records of teaching and social programs allows us to generate a more nuanced and polyvocal history of foodways at Hull-House.

Welcoming Immigrants

Hilda Satt Polacheck (at that point Hilda Satt, before her marriage) started participating in Hull-House activities in 1900—an ideal time to affiliate with the settlement. Founded in 1889, Hull-House, by the dawn of the new century, had already extended its physical footprint through ambitious construction projects and had greatly expanded its programming for (and with) immigrant neighbors. A suburb when Charles Hull had built his home in the 1850s, the neighborhood was fully urbanized by the time Hull-House became a settlement. Addams would make the project famous as a quintessentially American enterprise through magazine articles, books like *Twenty Years at Hull-House*, and speeches all over the world.

Hull-House's expansion in the new century included refining its clubs and classes content in line with the maturing vision of its cofounders, Addams and Ellen Gates Starr. Following the lead of the Toynbee Hall London settlement that had inspired Addams in the first place, Hull-House did initially take a hierarchical, philanthropic approach. Yet, from the start, Addams would emphasize distinctions between that English settlement and her more collaborative, reciprocal goals. As early as 1893, in two essays for *Philanthropy and Social Progress*, Addams acknowledged the "humanitarian" aims of Hull-House but also insisted, in her "Subjective Necessity" chapter, that the American settlement was providing at least as many benefits to the college-educated "residents" as to the neighborhood's immigrants. Likewise, in the companion essay, "The Objective Value of a Social Settlement," she stressed that immigrants coming to Hull-House did so for "social intercourse" more than charity.[13]

Hull-House also worked to build bridges between diverse ethnic communities, connecting immigrants who otherwise would have been unlikely to come together, as Polacheck would note on her first visit, for an evening party.

She was stunned to find attendees "from Russia, Poland, Italy, Germany, Ireland, England, and many other lands," and even more surprised to find "no one seemed to care where they had come from, or what religion they professed, or what clothes they wore, or what they thought." Indeed, by the time Polacheck joined the settlement's programs, Hull-House was a veritable microcosm of diversity. As bulletins and yearbooks now held in the Hull-House Collection at the University of Illinois at Chicago, attest, clubs and classes pitched to multiple niche audiences of ethnic groups were complemented by broader community-building resources such as guest speakers, theatre performances, and social services ranging from a kindergarten to a public bathhouse. No wonder Polacheck reports that she "spent most of [her] evenings" there for over a decade.[14]

Kitchen as Site of Assimilation

The evolution of Hull-House's food-based programming was far from linear, instead progressing unevenly toward a democratic vision that, her *Twenty Years* memoir aside, was never fully achieved in Addams's lifetime. Nonetheless, we can point to milestones evident in the memoirs under review here, as well as in the foodways-related archive, that demonstrate aspirations to find a balance between acculturation and cultural distinctiveness. One of those turning points involved the partial rejection of what had been eager adoption of the NEK movement's dictates. In the shift between Addams's original enthusiasm over the NEK and her settlement's purposeful reconfiguration of its practices, we find a parallel to the broader evolution of Hull-House pedagogy from benevolent, hierarchical engagement with immigrant neighbors to more collaborative relations.

Addams's shifts in attitude toward the NEK model, as we will outline in more detail below, developed within the context of a maturing pedagogy at the settlement. Though race and ethnicity are categories central to intercultural work, in this case gender and social class were also crucial factors.[15] Gender roles shaped both the early tendency of Addams's settlement toward a domestically inflected benevolence and its shift toward reciprocal learning. Hull-House, as an adaptation of London's Toynbee Hall, was in a poor urban neighborhood where most college-educated city dwellers would have hesitated to "settle." Gender differences between the two settlements, though, promoted differing pedagogical practices.[16] Toynbee's residents (with the exception of Canon Samuel Barnett's wife Henrietta) were college men. In contrast, Hull-House was populated primarily by college-educated *women* who lived cooperatively there and sought to support the working-class neighborhood by teaching classes, making art and literary culture available, and providing opportunities for social activities. Hull-House's gendered identity organically shaped its social justice projects—from opening a kindergarten to founding Chicago's first outdoor playground to addressing challenges to urban food health and safety. Methodologically, though Addams and her colleagues moved relatively quickly to adopt research-based program development consistent with prompts from their Toynbee mentors,[17] the American

Figure 2: Neighborhood children scavenging food. Food insecurity and safety remained one of Hull-House's enduring concerns. Citation: *Hull House—Children, undated*. Hull-House Photograph Collection, JAMC_0000_0096_0114, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Illinois at Chicago.

settlement's residents being mainly women encouraged them to blend hard data-gathering strategies drawn from the new social sciences with practices grounded in womanly traditions of community service.

Consistently, Addams's bestselling *Twenty Years* memoir situated the foodways within the gendered pedagogy of Hull-House. In that text and in other reports on her cultural work, Addams continued to draw on and to extend the "breadgivers" metaphor that she and her classmates at Rockford College had embraced as emblematic of their hopes for enacting women's social leadership.[18] Along those lines, Addams depicted herself as discovering her mission for Hull-House's founding from observing the hungry poor of London's East End.

> [W]e saw two huge masses of ill-clad people clamoring around two hucksters' carts. They were bidding their far-

> things and ha'pennies for a vegetable held up by the auctioneer, which he at last scornfully flung, with a gibe for its cheapness, to the successful bidder . . . [who] had bidden in a cabbage, and when it struck his hand, he instantly sat down on the curb, tore it with his teeth, and hastily devoured it, unwashed and uncooked as it was.[19]

Addams's portrait of the starving man signaled both a figurative and a literal commitment that the Chicago settlement would make to the immigrant poor, offering food—intellectual and spiritual—as well as addressing other basic physical needs. Her recurring use of food tropes throughout the memoir also indicated that these needs were, in fact, interrelated. Furthermore, this language branded the settlement's efforts to feed—and "feed"—its neighbors as gendered, linked to expectations for middle-class women's social leadership. This was a pragmatic strategy using cooking as a means of enhancing the lived experiences of various city dwellers. The tradition of women reformers focusing on the kitchen as a rightful domain of influence was already well established by Addams's day, with forerunners such as Catharine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe's advice books having planted a womanly flag for leadership there.[20] Addams and her colleagues embraced this sanctioned role to further their cause.

Significantly, though, they adjusted strategies as they learned more about their neighbors. Addams's self-critical assessment of her food-related teaching illustrates the responsive nature of Hull-House community education for and with immigrants. For instance, Addams looked back in *Twenty Years* on two efforts to intervene in problematic food practices in the neighborhood—the NEK and the Coffee House—and drew pointed distinctions between them. Although both arose from a pattern that would continue throughout Addams's settlement leadership—beginning with study of a problem and moving to experimenting with how to address it—her contrasting descriptions of these two ventures underscore how a growing appreciation of immigrant neighbors' own foodways changed the settlement's food-based strategies.

The NEK emerged within the larger culture of the home economics movement that had been launched by Catharine Beecher and her sister Harriet Beecher Stowe in such writings on enlightened housekeeping as *The American Woman's Home* (1869).[21] As former JAHHM director Lisa Lee has pointed out, major leaders in the NEK enterprise, including Ellen Swallow Richards and Mary Hinman Abel, began in the late 1880s in Boston to promote a scientific approach to food preparation, nutrition, and sanitation. Richards was a college-educated chemist with a Vassar degree who carried out careful studies of water quality in Massachusetts, introduced the term "ecology" into Americans' vocabulary, and published a number of books promoting scientific approaches to cooking.[22] Addams reports in *Twenty Years* that a Hull-House representative was sent to Boston "for a training under Mrs. Richards" in order to establish a public kitchen on that model at the settlement.[23] As Lee further explains, how-

ever, Addams and her colleagues realized before long that a rigid application of the NEK model was not in tune with Hull-House's inclusive ethos.[24]

The NEK, Addams explained in *Twenty Years*, did address a serious food issue facing the urban neighborhood: food safety. It was this dimension of the NEK agenda that most drew Addams and her resident colleagues to the NEK framework. Two Hull-House residents were tasked by the USDA and the Department of Labor to study Chicago immigrants' diets. This research revealed that women living in the neighborhood were paid so little and worked such long hours that they could not afford the time or the expense required to cook nutritious family meals. Instead, they often "bought from the nearest grocery the canned goods that could be most quickly heated, or gave a few pennies to the children with which they might secure a lunch from a neighboring candy shop."[25] Accordingly, as one contemporary newspaper reported, opening the NEK in August 1893 represented a potentially worthy step in gendered "philanthropy"—more "good work being done among the working people of the West Side by the ladies of Hull House," with the "ladies" term in this published feature story a significant class marker.[26]

As additional newspaper accounts of the public kitchen emphasized, Chicago social leaders viewed this new settlement project as an enlightened blend of philanthropy with science: "Hull-House Kitchen Opened: Standard Dishes Made According to Scientific Rules," one headline touted.[27] Hull-House's public kitchen aimed to provide nutritious food at low cost through devices such as the Aladdin oven and simple menus of soups, roasted meats, and breads.[28] Given their research, Addams and her resident colleagues imagined that the public kitchen would strategically employ "scientific training and careful supervision," teaching the poor how to save money, labor, and time while preserving the nutrient value of meats and vegetables.[29]

Historian Delores Hayden notes that home economics and social work "channeled the energies of many newly educated American women into the reform projects of the Progressive Era." At the forefront of these two movements in the 1890s were Richards and Addams; both aimed, Hayden suggests, to establish "collective or cooperative services" to meet the needs of the urban tenement dweller whose time and space resources were scarce.[30] And, in the view of the domestic science movement, nutritious food was also key to moral living. That is, long before the emergence of an academic field focused on food practices as ideological,[31] nineteenth-century domestic science leaders self-consciously positioned foodways as values oriented and thus as potential agents of social change/control. In that context, food writer Laura Schenone argues that movement leaders aimed to reform working-class women's kitchens as a step in broader social reform:

> Through proper cooking, women could encourage better health and better morality. They could prevent infants from dying. . . . They could prevent greedy desires in their husbands

> and sons. They could end alcoholism. They could help their families gain upward mobility, higher status, and more comfort by securing appropriate table manners and etiquette.[32]

Stressing the role of rhetoric in this ongoing enterprise, Elizabeth Engelhardt notes how related discourse "often vilified immigrant, ethnic, and regional foodways, in favor of a bland, northeastern, WASP-ish food tradition."[33]

As contemporary press coverage of the Hull-House public kitchen's launch demonstrates, the settlement was implicated, at this stage, in the ideology that food practices had the most ameliorative impact when aligned with the dominant culture's management of the working classes. One newspaper account pasted in Addams's scrapbook shows the Hull-House cofounder herself was, initially, an enthusiastic spokesperson:

> Miss Jane Addams addressed the ladies [local social leaders at the NEK opening] at some length, using charts when she explained the methods of scientific cooking. Her remarks referring to the kitchen enterprise were substantially as follows: "It is a part of the new philanthropy to recognize that the social question is largely a question of the stomach: temperance workers are coming to feel that they cannot make headway if they ignore the importance of proper nutrition for the body, for with monotonous food is apt to go whisky to whip up the digestion. Mission workers of all kinds are coming to feel that their weak point is the commissariat."[34]

If Addams's linkage of temperance goals, the NEK, and philanthropy seems surprising today, it would not have been in 1893, when leaders such as Frances Willard and Eliza Stewart advocated the elimination of alcohol to address such persistent ills as domestic abuse of women and children, as well as financial woes within families victimized by drunken husbands. However, as Addams and her resident colleagues came to know the richness of their neighborhood's diverse cultural heritages better, through a whole array of shared social practices, the settlement leaders' view of food practices shifted. In her *Twenty Years* memoir, when revisiting the NEK project, Addams would poke fun at her own failure to recognize how ethnic differences in taste came into play in neighbors' reactions to the NEK's original bill of fare. So, she reports, one neighborhood woman "frankly confessed, that the [public kitchen's] food was certainly nutritious," but not in line with "what she'd ruther" eat.[35] In contrast to the NEK, which encouraged assimilation both to New England cuisine and to its associated moral values, Addams's *Twenty Years* reflections on eventual shifts in Hull-House food practices would tout the Coffee House's more varied and responsive menu and milieu.

Figure 3: Young women in a cooking class. Domestic Science continued to influence cooking instruction at Hull-House, even as the work of the Coffee House moved toward more social and community-oriented goals. Citation: *Hull House—Cooking Classes, undated.* Hull-House Photograph Collection, JAMC_0000_0117_0140, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Illinois at Chicago.

We must read Addams's account here with awareness of rhetorical posturing, however. She regularly set up before/after and at-first-naïve/later-enlightened discursive structures in her speeches and writings to characterize a progression in thinking behind Hull-House programs. Furthermore, the settlement archive shows that the public kitchen and the Coffee House actually continued to be closely associated with each other operationally. That is, accounts appearing in the *Hull-House Yearbook* with only slight changes in wording over the years echoed Addams's characterization of the Coffee House as highly popular in drawing customers to its sociable in-house atmosphere, yet still reported that the meal delivery service of the NEK-aligned public kitchen continued over the years, with "every noon many orders of soup and coffee and hot meat sandwiches . . . carried out into the neighboring factories."[36] Meanwhile, though the Coffee House and its associated lunch-serving cafeteria diverged from the domestic science principles of the NEK, those practices remained at work elsewhere in Hull-House programming, such as some of the cooking classes.

Overall, texts in the settlement archive indicate that, however much Addams and her colleagues moved away from the NEK model, Hull-House continued to approach neighborhood foodways from a position of morality

management. For example, even as she launched into a critique of the public kitchen as mistaken practice, Addams reasserted the settlement's resistance to alcohol consumption and its favoring of, instead, different forms of "soft drink," whether "grape juice" or "soda water." She intoned: "[S]o far as drinks were concerned[,] we never became a rival to the saloon, nor indeed did any one imagine that we were trying to do so."[37] In setting this barrier against alcoholic beverages at the settlement, Addams reaffirms links between foodways practices and expressions of morality as central to the Hull-House mission. She also asserts the kind of determined management of others' social habits that has led some scholars to critique her praxis as hopelessly biased. Recognizing those limitations in her approach, particularly the confidence with which she claims the right to prohibit alcohol, requires us to note that she is withholding a valued element of meals as then enjoyed in some immigrant homes and other food-oriented establishments in the neighborhood, not just the "saloons" she references so negatively. However, her stance is also notable for its alignment with nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century views on temperance as a means of protecting women and children from the domestic abuse then associated with heavy consumption of alcohol.

Safe Food as Shared Agenda

Despite Jane Addams's *Twenty Years* portrayal of Hull-House as turning away from domestic science, some periodical accounts in her day—as well as reports within the settlement's in-house publications—point to ways that the "helping" stance behind the NEK project did have positive outgrowths for the neighborhood's food economics. In this regard, we should note that the pullback from the NEK focused on *what* to eat, not *how* to address such social justice issues as food safety or equitable access to healthy options. Even after discarding some of its original efforts, the public kitchen continued pragmatic interventions such as cooperative purchases of coal for cooking and of bulk food that lowered families' costs.[38] One enterprise involved sales, during the summer months, of ice and milk to neighborhood consumers—a program cofacilitated by the *Chicago Tribune*, the Chicago Milk Commission, and the settlement. A 1904 *Hull-House Bulletin* article characterized this ongoing initiative, which also provided "instruction . . . as to the care of the milk after it was taken home," as especially beneficial for invalids and children and much appreciated by the neighborhood.[39]

Recovering the history of partnerships like the safe milk program and cooperative bulk food buying reminds us that the reluctance to embrace menus that Addams and her colleagues encountered in the original public kitchen involved factors beyond stubborn determination to avoid new foods. Historian and foodways scholar Donna Gabaccia describes the impulse of immigrant communities to resist assimilation into the dominant culture's foodways through what she calls "culinary conservatism." Gabaccia notes that culinary conservatism may

be the result of "culinary pride" in ethnic traditions, a mandate of religion, or an attempt to capture a "feeling of mastery" over one aspect of daily life amid the turmoil of learning to live in a new country. And, she argues, resistance to new foodways may even be a necessity due to scarce financial resources.[40]

In that vein, even before becoming active in the Hull-House community, Polacheck and her widowed mother could have given Addams a telling example of how immigrants' culinary conservatism, as Gabaccia's research suggests, could be bound up in a complex web of factors. While desperately seeking employment in the 1890s, young Hilda Satt had few sources of solace beyond family time. Yet, the emotional support associated with home foodways was fraught with a related awareness of "food scarcity" and the need for "frugal meals." Within their constrained economic context, the Satt family favored foods from their pre-American life. Said Polacheck:

> Mother would cook a wonderful meal of calf's liver, gravy, and mashed potatoes. She would cook this several times a week. I soon discovered when she bought a few pounds of meat, the butcher would give her a calf's liver free. . . . [A]t that time calf's liver was considered only fit for dogs and cats. But my wise mother had learned in Poland, long before the word "vitamins" was heard, that liver was one of the best foods.[41]

Polacheck's anecdote highlights several reasons why Hull-House's neighbors might choose familiar foods over NEK-type fare. Her memory situated calf's liver as an important part of the family's diet, a comforting, predictable presence, something from Poland to savor in their new US home. She further pitted the language of the domestic science movement ("vitamins") against the culinary knowledge of community ("my wise mother"). Thus, Polacheck's mother seemed to know what American butchers and domestic scientists at that time did not: calf's liver is nutritious. Yet, the working-class author also suggested that the family's economic circumstances encouraged them to rely on cheaper cuts of meat.

Nonetheless, Polacheck's pride in her mother's food ingenuity did not obscure this immigrant writer's awareness of food safety concerns facing many recent immigrants in their crowded urban neighborhoods. When she enrolled later in a writing class at Hull-House, she chose for her first assignment to address this topic—and, as Polacheck's daughter and memoir editor Dena Epstein has reported, this composition is the only one of her mother's early writings to have been saved.

Its argument shows that we should not equate immigrants' resistance to "scientific" lessons about foodways with a failure to recognize health issues. The story—entitled "The Ghetto Market"—is a full three pages long in its printed version for *I Came a Stranger*. The essay presents highly negative descriptions of food wares in nearby markets, beginning with an unsanitary poul-

try shop. The composition then visits a crowded stand with fish "kept on the window sills" where the uncooked items often slip into the mud. The speaker also indignantly describes cakes drawing flies at another stall and a fruit stand where the "prunes, raisins, nuts" and more were "uncovered except for the flies." The essay closes with rhetorical questions:

> Cannot the poultry shop, fish stall and cake stand be kept off the street, free from the dust and flies? Why should this class of people who work harder than any other be compelled to eat inferior food when they might be supplied with good food for the same money? Are there not plenty of men employed in building houses, ice boxes and various appliances for keeping provisions? Yet these people eat food sold on the street under the filthiest conditions.[42]

Lest we assume this story represented not her own views but a performance of middle-class values to please the teacher, we can point to parallel examples elsewhere in Polacheck's memoir, such as anecdotes in which she forcefully praised Addams for promoting safer food practices—including disposal of waste. Recalled the immigrant author later: "Where there were alleys in back of the houses, these alleys were filled with large wooden boxes where garbage and horse manure were dumped. In most cases these boxes did not have covers and were breeding places for flies and rats." Noting that Addams's efforts to engage the city health department in the problem proved unsuccessful at first, Polacheck commended her mentor for eventually securing appointment as "garbage inspector for the ward," a political victory securing better health for the whole neighborhood.[43]

For this sanitation project, and for a related study of links between a rise in typhoid cases and ineffective garbage services, Addams and Polacheck each credited the Hull-House Woman's Club, whose membership included both residents and neighbors. Thus, in "Women's Conscience and Social Amelioration," Addams described how club members divided their ward into segments and spent months gathering data to document how the city's refuse department was failing to pick up garbage. Club members juxtaposed those findings with disease reports and then used that data to campaign for enhanced sanitation service. So too, when celebrating this project's assault on food waste as a health hazard, Polacheck dubbed the cross-class, cross-ethnic Woman's Club "a real venture in democracy" by virtue of its ongoing collaborations.[44]

These matching assessments alert us to avoid dichotomizing middle-class and working-class views of food safety. Through their cross-class partnership, settlement women from different social groups proactively addressed shared food-oriented concerns, with their collaboration reinforced through their meetings' community-building refreshments, sometimes hosted by one of the more well-to-do members, sometimes prepared by one of the settlement's cooking clubs.

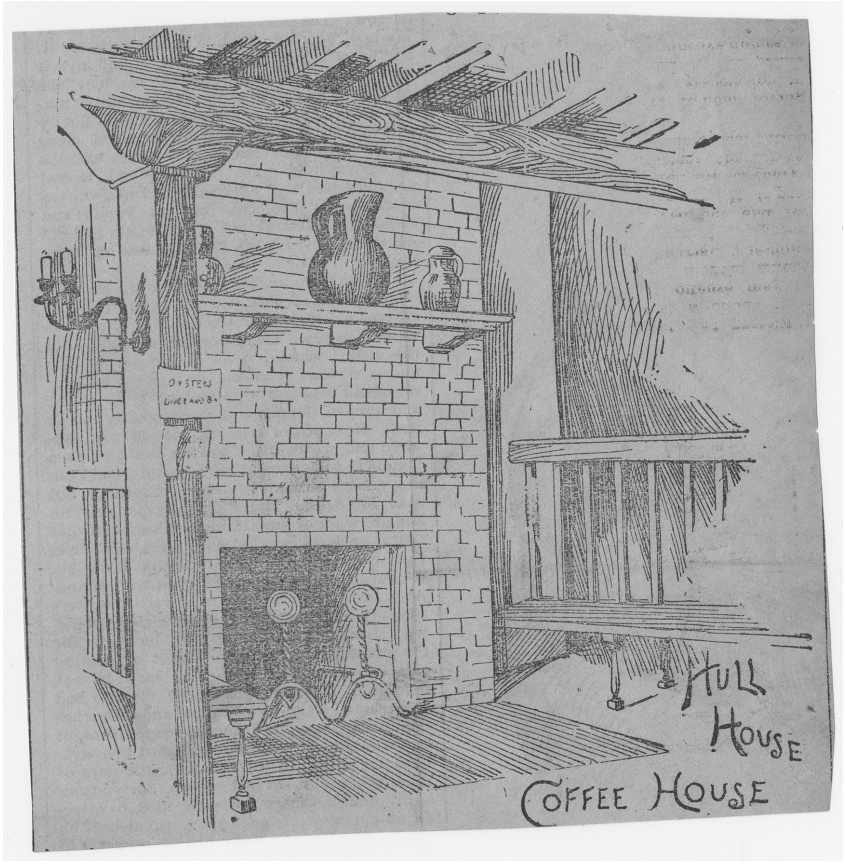

Figure 4: Artist's rendering of the Coffee House fireplace. As a welcoming social space, the Coffee House encouraged cross-class and cross-cultural encounters over food. Citation: Unsigned line drawing from a newspaper article in the Hull-House clippings scrapbook, volume 1, box 71, folder 506. Jane Addams Memorial Collection. HHC_0071_506B_P49_1.

Clubs and Coffee House Community Building

Parallel to the reading clubs that began with residents like Ellen Gates Starr teaching the literary texts they had studied in college, but which grew more open to neighborly leadership. Food-based activities at Hull-House became more reciprocal and less hierarchical, more social and less scientific, more pragmatic and less moralistic. Literary study at Hull-House metamorphosed to a more diverse local canon, including theatrics in multiple languages and aesthetic traditions; so too, shared foodways become purposefully intercultural,

a potential site for resisting straightforward assimilation through a commitment to diversity and inclusiveness.

Similarly, the Labor Museum, founded by Addams in part to highlight and honor the knowledge of older-generation immigrants in the neighborhood, demonstrated Addams's rising commitment to cross-cultural exchange. On Saturday nights, Labor Museum hosts (who today would likely be called "community curators") presented ethnic handicrafts, including milling wheat, to blended audiences of neighbors, settlement residents, and visitors. In promoting knowledge and practices from outside middle-class Anglo-America, the Labor Museum embodied reciprocal learning. The Coffee House played a related role.

It is illuminating to contrast the Coffee House's social approach with the domestic science–based moral inculcation. At its core, domestic science was depersonalized, and Hull-House built its model of social change on personal relationships. Lisa Yun Lee, former director of the Jane Addams JAHHM, has written about the significance of Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr learning to appreciate ethnic foods favored by the neighbors they were inviting to settlement activities. For instance, drawing from the archive of Hull-House's grocery purchases ledger, Lee and the JAHHM staff identified residents' purchases of ingredients for Italian foods from nearby "Bragno e Mustari, importers and wholesalers" as an example of the founders seeking "'common intercourse' with their neighbors" through food-based "conviviality."[45] Additionally, by accepting informal cooking lessons from Italian neighbors, Addams and Starr established a precedent for the ethnic food classes that would increasingly claim space among settlement courses.[46]

Reciprocal cultural exchange—not only around foodways but also across Hull-House's community education programs—increased at the settlement over time as Addams and her colleagues still affiliated their work with the new social sciences, but through a more humanistic framework. One overarching approach Hull-House used to foster collaborative learning was through clubs, where shared foodways joined with other brands of what Addams would call "the attempt to socialize democracy."[47] In an 1896 letter to open the first issue of the *Hull-House Bulletin*—a publication advertising and documenting club activities and other events—Addams argued that the chief purpose of club life was to develop empathy, understanding, and meaningful relationships: "at a settlement each member should learn to know other characters, thoughts and feelings. It has been said that 'the cultivation of social life and manners . . . brings men together, makes them feel the need of one another, be considerate to one another, understand one another.'"[48] Though clubs reported to Addams on record keeping and costs, most groups were organized, led, and dues-funded by neighbors. In the archive of club activities, we see members forming sustained relationships while emphasizing reciprocal cultural exchange, including through food.

One long-running club operated at the intersection of foodways, collaborative learning, and cross-cultural relationships. The Friendly Club appears

to have formed in 1898 as an urban gardening club, with the group cultivating plots in vacant lots at 12th Street and 44th Avenue.[49] The Friendly Club's members were interested in food from the garden to the table, and the club held food-supported social events, like the ice cream supper following the first meeting of the year in 1903, and hosted lectures on "simple agriculture," including "bees" and "the growth of flowers."[50] According to a *Yearbook* entry from 1916, a by-then updated version of the Friendly Club appears to have given up urban gardening as a mission, focusing instead on social activities for whole families, including music, games, dancing—and dinners. The 1916 *Yearbook* brags that the club "attendance is always large and the membership includes twelve nationalities. In this connection, it is interesting to note that absolute harmony prevails and that the members live up to their name, The Friendly Club."[51]

In light of its purposeful diversity, we should examine the Club's main annual event, beginning in 1910: a turkey dinner served in the Coffee House each New Year's Eve. Whatever the rest of the meal looked like, in such a proudly multiethnic club this celebration around a signature American dish is striking. The turkey centerpiece may have acted to equalize the field, placing no one of the twelve nationalities at the center of the club's premier activity. That is, the Friendly Club may have foregrounded turkey for the same reasons that Addams and Starr learned to eat and cook macaroni, as a public declaration of solidarity. Additionally, Club members may have seen this menu as a way of declaring hyphenated selves, maintaining an ethnic affiliation while also adopting an American one. Through foodways, these Hull-House neighbors struck a balance between forming a new community and safeguarding their original ones.

Similarly, Hilda Satt Polacheck's description of her own leadership of the Ariadne Club underscored links between collaborative learning—bound up with intellectual and cultural uplift—and food-supported social experiences that strengthened community. For Polacheck, both elements in the Ariadne Club were crucial. Her memoir enthusiastically catalogues books that club members selected to read, including *David Copperfield, Ivanhoe*, and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—which she deemed particularly memorable not only for introducing members to American blacks' painful historical experiences but also, indirectly, for raising questions within the group about "racial hatreds in Poland, Germany, and Russia." Alongside these studious occasions, meanwhile, the club was equally committed to being "an outlet for recreation" for its youthful members.[52]

According to Addams's *Twenty Years* best seller and the *Hull-House Bulletin* and *Yearbook*, the social needs of groups like the Ariadne Club were reliably addressed through the ever-welcoming Coffee House. In both the clubs and the Coffee House, the settlement fostered a flexible cross-cultural environment, where shared growth of many kinds became possible for both individual patrons and larger groups. Thus, the 1906-1907 *Yearbook* reported on the Coffee House's regular convening of customers from diverse backgrounds:

Figure 5: A scene from the Coffee House. This public restaurant space played an important role in the social life of Hull-House residents and neighbors. Citation: *Hull House—Coffee Shop, undated*. Hull-House Photograph Collection, JAMC_0000_0115_2517, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Illinois at Chicago.

> Business men from the adjacent factories and schoolteachers from the nearest public schools use it constantly. Every evening students and Club members meet together in little groups or hold their reunions and social banquets there, as organizations from all parts of the town occasionally do. The Chicago Ethical Society hold their monthly banquets and meetings in the Coffee House, and various alumni associations and professional organizations find it a convenient place for meeting. It is used constantly by the social clubs in connection with their party refreshments and banquets and it is also a great convenience to the residents of Hull-House, the directors of clubs and teachers of evening classes.[53]

Whereas the NEK attempted to solve problems of nutrition through a top-down model of assimilation to scientific American foodways, the Coffee House

promoted cross-cultural exchange with ethnic food preferences valued as one sign of shared agency. In a telling comment on the shift in authority represented by many groups coming together, Addams's memoir asserted that the Coffee House "performed a mission of its own," becoming "a social center" for the settlement and the larger community.[54] So popular was the Coffee House, in fact, its original space had to be expanded to accommodate its burgeoning clientele. The Hull-House archives contain many photographs and drawings of the space as it grew and changed.

Foodways and Power Differentials

However compelling recurring descriptions of the inclusive Coffee House patronage may be, we should not lose sight of the power differentials that remained in force within the settlement's management of foodways, even in this vibrant intercultural space. In Addams's own day, these power differences resided in part within the economic structures that enabled the settlement as a whole to thrive, both materially and programmatically. Like the Labor Museum, the Coffee House would not have been possible without resources that Addams, working from her position of economic privilege, could marshal. Thus, Lisa Lee has explained, "Addams borrowed money from Mary Rozet Smith's father to start the Hull-House Coffee House, which was established in July 1, 1893" and overseen by "Julia Lathrop, a Hull-House resident." Regarding Lathrop as the original Coffee House manager, Lee has offered up an appealing portrait of "one of the foremost advocates for the health and well-being of mothers and children," who was "also known as a fabulous cook" making "delicious omelets and brown butter oysters at midnight for the other residents."[55] On one hand, Lee saluted Lathrop's administrative leadership. On the other, Lee served up a vivid picture of a domesticated chef, creator of tasty late-night meals beloved by the settlement's residents.[56]

Submerged within this appealing anecdote, however, is another vital point. If Lathrop had full access to the Coffee House kitchen at midnight, the same could not be said for Hull-House's neighbors. Being a resident, especially one of Addams's close friends, had its privileges. And among those privileges, as a flip side to cooking a late-night meal in the Coffee House kitchen, was having earlier evening meals *prepared for and served to* residents nightly in the settlement dining hall. While the public dining hall of the Coffee House transformed over time into a space that recognized the multiple meanings of food to neighbors, Hull-House remained a house with private spaces only accessible by residents. A list of those gathering together to share news of their busy daytime work reads like a "who's who" of the Progressive Era, with luminaries like John Dewey and Upton Sinclair joining table talk with Hull-House women Florence Kelley, Alice Hamilton, and Lathrop, as well as an ever-expanding array of internationally renowned guests. Polacheck's commentary, at the start of this article, on being breathlessly honored to join Addams's own table, reflects her

awareness of this dining table's star power—a social hierarchy that she, for one, is disinclined to critique. To their credit, the curators of the JAHHM took on this power differential in an award-winning exhibit managed by Heather Radke. "Unfinished Business: 21st-Century Home Economics" spotlighted Hull-House women influential in the domestic science movement, including Helen Stuart Campbell and Caroline Hunt. The exhibit also celebrated such multidimensional settlement foodways leaders as Ida Foster Cronk, described on an exhibit label as "Hull-House Coffee Shop Manager // Restauranteur // Kitchen Design Innovator." Yet another goal of this project involved honoring housekeeper Mary Keyser, who, as Radke indicated, "shouldered the work of domestic life so that other residents could do a wide range of work that made Hull-House a crucial space for democracy."[57] It is important to remember that each occasion of commensality is perhaps built on the labor of individuals who do not share the same access to the table.

Addams herself had made at least one attempt to undo social distinctions associated with who made versus who was served food intended for the larger community of Hull-House. As she recounts in an oft-cited episode of her *Twenty Years* memoir, she took a pilgrimage-like journey to Russia to meet Tolstoy, whom she admired as much for his humanitarian kinship with local peasants as for his authorship. Seeing him work in the fields and eat "only porridge and black bread" along with peasants with whom he had worked, Addams returned to Chicago determined to enact the settlement's bread-making task literally. Once back at Hull-House, however, Addams realized that "the whole scheme seemed to me as utterly preposterous as it doubtless was. The half dozen people invariably waiting to see me after breakfast, the piles of letters to be opened and answered, the demand of actual and pressing human wants—were these all to be pushed aside and asked to wait while I saved my soul by two hours' work at baking bread?"[58] While Addams recognized that the unearned privileges of class and whiteness may have created inequalities between herself and the neighbors of Hull-House, taking on the symbolic labor of breaking bread was more effective at self-aggrandizing than alleviating any material burden of "actual and pressing human wants." Addams concludes that while the labor of bread baking may be duplicated by many, her work as settlement house leader could not. After all, labor saving and labor sharing were central tenets of the home economics movement—including the NEK and the Coffee House. "Lighting one fire instead of fifty," a familiar slogan of domestic science, necessarily freed 49 women to do some other kind of valuable work rather than tend the fire.[59]

Shared Foodways as Social Equalizers

Even if some might fault Addams for giving up on her literal bread making, Polacheck's memoir shows that immigrant neighbors could still find signs of egalitarian foodways within an overarching culture of communal welcome at the settlement. As noted earlier, Polacheck's own sustained connection to Hull-

Figure 6: Addams serving soup to Hull-House Residents. The Hull-House dining room table served many great luminaries of the Progressive Era, but the table – and the activities of such luminaries – were made possible by the often-invisible service of support staff. Citation: *Hull-House Residents, undated.* Hull-House Photograph Collection, JAMC_0000_0310_3691, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Illinois at Chicago.

House developed starting in 1900 through the Labor Museum and the Coffee House. Explaining that her choice to "walk over to Hull-House three blocks from where I lived" on Halsted wound up marking "the beginning of a new life for me," she characterized her initial conversation with Jane Addams as representative of the settlement leader's welcoming approach. When Addams, greeting her in the reception room, asked if she would like "to join a club or a class," this young neighbor confessed to uncertainty. So Addams escorted the then-hesitant visitor—who had spent all day in factory work—to the Labor Museum. After introducing Polacheck to museum director Mary Hill, Addams left the two to become acquainted. Not long afterwards, Polacheck became one of the docents.[60]

Collaboration in the museum seeded a friendship between Hill and Polacheck—one reinforced, according to *I Came a Stranger*, when "Miss Hill" issued the first invitation her protégée had ever received "to dinner . . . outside of my home." Recalling her hesitation, Polacheck confessed that this much-welcome moment was also a trial, one she struggled to explain to her mentor:

"'Oh, I want to come, . . . but I have never eaten anyplace else and maybe I would not know how to act.'" Hill's reassuring response ("'You don't have to act. . . . Just eat the way you eat at home.'") led to Polacheck's appearing at "the appointed evening," dressed in "a clean cotton dress and my hair in perfect order." As they sat together "at a small, black, square table" in the Coffee House, Polacheck couldn't help noticing that the table "had no tablecloth," whereas her "mother always used a tablecloth when we had company." If the Coffee House setting was surprising in its informality, the menu turned out to be a bit stress inducing. She hesitated to accept Mary Hill's offer of "a lamb chop," because the meat might not be kosher. "So," said Polacheck, looking back, "I asked her if I could have eggs." Describing the "very nice mushroom omelet" they both then ordered, this story of Polacheck's first experience dining out—made possible, after all, by Hull-House—presented one more admission of concern: not yet knowing the English word for "mushrooms," her proposal of an egg dish inadvertently generated a new worry, that this then-mysterious ingredient also might not be kosher. She boldly ate it anyway.[61]

In this remembrance of cross-class, cross-ethnic connections over a Coffee House meal, Polacheck blended nostalgia similar to her portrait of the dining table at the fortieth-anniversary reunion meal with a more candid admission of the power differentials that made Hill's invitation both appealing and challenging. Meanwhile, by also referencing Hill's sensitive efforts to address her young guest's concerns, Polacheck's anecdote exemplified how Hull-House community members from different backgrounds could strive, together, to accommodate each other when seeking solidarity through shared foodways. In that vein, Gabaccia argues that "crossing cultural boundaries" by eating can enable an "exploration and accommodation" of the Other. And though this inevitably leads to some loss of one's original identity, the mixing of diverse foodways can be a creative force, encouraging innovation and preservation at the same time.[62]

Overall, while it's important not to overcredit Addams and her colleagues when revisiting the archive of Hull-House foodways, it's equally essential to allow a chronicle like Polacheck's—especially when read alongside Addams's own memoir—to give the settlement its due, as in the example of the young immigrant's first Coffee House meal. And lest we assume that her experiences of food culture there to be unique, she weaves into her memoir several striking accounts of how the expansive hospitality represented in the Coffee House was extended to others as well, in line with the settlement's core values.

One of these episodes indirectly claims, for Addams, a strong awareness of class hierarchies and a determination to resist them through sociable food practice:

> I remember one day the daughter of a wealthy family had come to Hull-House to help in the reception room, and an old shabby woman came in and asked for Miss Addams. Looking down at the poor woman, the young lady started to tell

Figure 7: Ellen Gates Starr, her bookbinding pupil Peter Verburg, and Jane Addams having tea in the bookbindery in the Hull-House Labor Museum. The serving and sharing of tea can be read as an act of cross-class and cross-cultural solidarity. Citation: *Hull House—Personalities—Starr, Ellen Gates, undated.* Hull-House Photograph Collection, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Illinois at Chicago.

> her that Miss Addams was busy and could not be disturbed, just as Miss Addams was coming down the stairs. She quickly told the young lady that perhaps she had better go home. Then she took the old woman by the arm and said she was just going to have a cup of tea and would she join her.[63]

Polacheck's portrait of Addams here emerges through veneration of the contrast between the settlement leader's hospitable stance and the unenlightened behavior of the "daughter of a wealthy family." Addams's offer of tea underscores this contrast while also asserting the potential for shared foodways to reach across—even if not eradicate—class lines. Figure 7 below shows Addams and Starr sharing tea with Peter Verburg, a student and neighbor, crossing lines of gender, as well, in this purposeful act. Though some dining spaces of Hull-House remained private and accessible only to the privileged residents, the public spaces created by club activities facilitated purposeful exchanges of

food and drink that brought residents and neighbors into social interactions that elided differences in class, ethnicity, and gender, even if only temporarily.

Hilda Polacheck would return to this symbol of social tea drinking as embodiment of the settlement's intercultural bridge building in a commentary on the Woman's Club's regular use of tea and cake. Polacheck emphasized to her readers that this club's membership included "most of the residents," a notable number of upper-class Chicago social leaders (like "Mrs. Joseph T. Bowen, who was perhaps the larger single contributor to Hull House"), as well as working-class neighbors like herself. Celebrating the range of ethnic as well as class diversity within the group, Polacheck also touted their use of collaborative foodways to bond, noting how the neighborhood's immigrant women, in particular, gained special solace from this ritual:

> The Hull-House Woman's Club . . . brought together women from all over the world. Once a week the women could leave their dreary homes and commune with other women and enjoy the hospitality of a cup of tea and a piece of cake. A cup of tea and a piece of cake may be trite things to most of us. But to sit down and have a cup of tea that you did not have to brew yourself and a piece of cake that you did not have to bake was an event in the lives of the women of South Halsted Street.[64]

In our own highly charged political moment, we find that engagement with the cultural resources in the archive of Hull-House food practices can be especially productive. As in Addams's day, we hear intense debates about the place of immigrants in our national community. If Addams's assumption, early in the settlement's history, that members of the dominant culture needed to save immigrants from themselves by promoting assimilation represented a less offensive stance than that of many nativist screeds of that time, she deserves even more credit for moving past her initial views. Her shift to a more collaborative stance that embraced inclusiveness over assimilation may never have fully achieved the idealized vision of reciprocal learning to which her soaring language repeatedly aspired. Yet, the settlement did embrace foodways to celebrate diversity. In establishing and nurturing shared spaces and practices for cross-cultural food practices like the Coffee House and the Woman's Club, Hull-House developed a model for intercultural connections adaptable to today's challenging context. We would do well to resist assumptions that the presence of food alone creates community. The occasions of cross-cultural eating described here served not merely as symbols of solidarity but also as opportunities for dialogue and collaboration on solutions to shared problems. Instead, we should take the learning legacies of Hull-House to heart, recognizing that all food encounters are imbricated in a complex web of identities and that careful attention to these complexities is essential to fostering reciprocal communities of shared authority.

Notes

1. Hilda Satt Polacheck, *I Came a Stranger: The Story of a Hull-House Girl*, ed. Dena J. Polacheck Epstein (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 167.

2. Polacheck, *I Came,* 167. Polacheck began her autobiography in 1953. When she died in 1967, the narrative remained unpublished. Her daughter and eventual editor Dena Epstein reports that publishers had "rejected the manuscript" with comments such as "'Who wants to read about an obscure woman like you?'" (*I Came*, "Afterword," 179). Epstein synthesized the many drafts her mother had produced over the years (*I Came,* 180), ensuring that "the only known description of Hull-House written by a woman from the neighborhood" reached publication (*I Came,* 179).

3. See Sarah Robbins, "Rereading the History of Nineteenth-Century Women's Higher Education: A Reexamination of Jane Addams' Rockford Education as Preparation for her *Twenty Years at Hull-House* Teaching," *Journal of the Midwest History of Education Society*, 21 (1994): 27-46.

4. Erik Schneiderhan provides a helpful survey of publications on Addams and the settlement as passing through multiple stages, beginning with treatments casting her as a heroine but then moving into a persistent phase of critique of Hull-House and its leader as patronizing and committed to race-based and class-distinctive hierarchies. See Erik Schneiderhan, "Pragmatism and Empirical Sociology: The Case of Jane Addams and Hull-House, 1889-1895," *Theory and Society* 40 (2011): 589-617.

5. Appreciative studies of Addams's civic leadership and democratic vision include both biographies and analyses of Hull-House as a site of (proto-)feminist collaboration. See Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Jane Addams and the Dream of American Democracy* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); Louise W. Knight, *Citizen: Jane Addams and the Struggle for Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Victoria Bissell Brown, *The Education of Jane Addams* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003); and Maurice Hamington, *Embodied Care: Jane Addams, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Feminist Ethics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004).

6. Lisa Heldke, *Exotic Appetites: Ruminations of a Food Adventurer* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2003), 177. James Watson and Melissa Caldwell similarly remind us in *The Cultural Politics of Food Eating* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 1, that food practices operate "in a complex field of relationships, expectations, and choices that are contested, negotiated, and often unequal."

7. Josée Johnston and Shyon Baumann, *Foodies: Democracy and Distinction in the Gourmet Foodscape* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), 4.

8. Alice P. Julier, *Eating Together: Food, Friendship, and Inequality* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 5.

9. E.N. Anderson, *Everyone Eats: Understanding Food and Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 125.

10. *Hull-House Bulletin,* 1.2 (February 1896): 2. Hull House Collection, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Illinois at Chicago. Further citations to the scrapbooks, as well as to Hull-House bulletins and yearbooks, reference the same collection, as we will note via an HHC designation.

11. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. y Steven Rendall. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), ix, xxii, 40, 115, 176. For a framework envisioning progression from studying historical cases of intercultural exchange to doing civic engagement work today, see Sarah Ruffing Robbins, *Learning Legacies: Archive to Action through Women's Cross-Cultural Teaching* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017). The chapter on Hull-House's learning legacies includes analyses of collaborative practices carried out among women associated with the settlement in Addams's day and the influence of that legacy on cultural stewards, such as a writing collaborative associated with UIC's English Department and the staff at the Jane Addams Hull House Museum.

12. Barbara Sicherman underscores a parallel tendency in treatments of Hull-House literacy programs to overemphasize the early book clubs sponsored by Ellen Gates Starr and Jane Addams as signs of the settlement's imposing white canonical material on immigrant learners. See "Hull-House as a Cultural Space," *Well-Read Lives: How Books Inspired a Generation of American Women* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 165-92. As a counterpoint to oversimplified critiques, we can invoke Polacheck, who relishes remembering her own studies of Shakespeare plays with *Poetry Magazine* editor Harriet Monroe (*I Came*, 76).

13. Jane Addams, "The Objective Value of a Social Settlement," in *Philanthropy and Social Progress*, ed. Professor Henry C. Addams (New York: Thomas Y Crowell, 1893), 33. Addams would later incorporate updated versions of her two essays into her bestselling account of the settlement, *Twenty Years at Hull-House, with autobiographical notes* (New York: Macmillan, 1910).

14. Polacheck, *I Came*, 52, 67.

15. Though gendered analyses now often invoke the concept of "intersectionality" to highlight the complex interplay among the multiple facets of identity and associated differing life experiences that any one woman would have, we avoid applying a term here that, on the one hand, would not have been available to Addams and her colleagues in her day and that, on the other,

has had a special role to play in scholarly work focused on black/womanist experiences versus in broader multiethnic and multiracial settings like Hull-House. See more from Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity, and Violence Against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review*, 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241–1300, and D. Carbado, K. Crenshaw, V. Mays, and B. Tomlinson, "INTERSECTIONALITY: Mapping the Movements of a Theory," *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, 10, no. 2 (2013): 303-312.

16. On the role that Addams's decades-long friendship with Henrietta Barnett played in both women's settlement leadership, see Sarah Ruffing Robbins, "Sustaining Gendered Philanthropy through Transatlantic Friendship: Jane Addams, Henrietta Barnett and Writing for Reciprocal Mentoring," in *Poverty, Giving, and the Culture of Altruism: Transatlantic Philanthropy 1850-1920*, ed. Frank Christianson and Leslee Thorne-Murphy (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017), 211-35.

17. Addams, *Twenty Years*, 292.

18. For examples, see in *Twenty Years*, 21, 103, 163, 191, 253. Bread is the organizing and recurring metaphor for Addams's *Peace and Bread in Time of War* (New York: Macmillan, 1922).

19. *Twenty Years*, 57.

20. Catharine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe argued in *The American Woman's Home: Or, Principles of Domestic Science* (New York: J.B. Ford and Company, 1869), 13, that treating domestic work as a science and teaching it through the institutions of power (education and publishing) would "render each department of woman's true profession as much desired and respected as are the most honored professions of men." However, as Laura Schenone points out in *A Thousand Years Over a Hot Stove* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003), 123, Beecher "never had a home of her own and probably did not cook much herself." Like Addams and Hull-House residents, Beecher and Stowe also depended on working-class housekeepers to free them up for writing and other professional work.

21. For discussion of how Stowe incorporated the ideology of home economics into a number of her post-Civil War novels, see Lisa Watt Macfarlane, "The New England Kitchen Goes Uptown: Domestic Displacements in Harriet Beecher Stowe's New York," *The New England Quarterly*, 64.2 (June 1991): 272-91.

22. Lisa Yun Lee, "Hungry for Peace: Jane Addams and the Hull-House Museum's Contemporary Struggle for Food Justice." *Peace & Change*, 36.1 (January 2011): 69.

23. *Twenty Years*, 130. Also known as the "Rumford Kitchen," the NEK was featured at the 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago, but the residents of Hull-House had already been familiar with Richards and Abel's project for a few years through the community of home economics and Richards' visits to Hull-House. The representative sent to Boston was Annie Lathrop. See Diane Dillon, "Hull-House Experiments with the New England Kitchen and Develops Programs in Homemaking," *Urban Experience in Chicago: Hull-House and Its Neighborhoods, 1889-1963,* http://hullhouse.uic.edu/hull/urbanexp/main.cgi?file=new/show_doc.ptt&doc=10&chap=35

24. Lee, "Hungry," 70.

25. *Twenty Years*, 129.

26. *Scrapbook Volume 1: clippings 1889–1894* (August 24, 1893): 58. HHC.

27. *Scrapbook Volume 1: clippings 1889–1894* (August 24, 1893): 58. HHC.

28. See Mary Abel Hinman and Ellen H. Richards. *The Story of the New England Kitchen*: *A Study in Social Economics* (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill, 1893). See also Dolores Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution*: *A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods and Cities* (Boston, MA: The MIT Press, 1982), 148.

29. *Twenty Years*, 130.

30. Hayden, Grand Domestic Revolution, 151, 153. Illustrating the ongoing focus on domestic science at the settlement, multiple issues of the *Hull-House Bulletin* from 1896 show that a twelve-week course on "Chemistry of Food" was being regularly offered. *Hull-House Bulletin* 1.4 (April 1896): 2. HHC.

31. See Heldke, "Exotic Appetites," 2003; Johnston and Baumann, *Foodies*, 2010; Julier, *Eating Together*, 2013; and Anderson, *Everyone Eats*, 2005. In "Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption," Roland Barthes stresses that foodways represent a building block of culture: "as soon as the basic needs [for nutrition] are satisfied" in a civilization, food becomes more important as a "protocol," "sign," "situation," or "institution" than as mere caloric intake. In *Food and Culture: A Reader*, ed. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik (New York: Routledge, 2013), 24.

32. Schenone, *Hot Stove,* 113.

33. Elizabeth S.D. Engelhardt. *A Mess of Greens: Southern Gender & Southern Food.* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 55.

34. Addams subscribed to a clipping service that sent her copies of periodical stories about Hull-House. Her margin notes in the scrapbooks where these accounts are pasted only occasionally provide citations. This scrapbook clipping, dated August 24, 1893, comes from a newspaper article entitled "Hull House Kitchen Opened." *Scrapbook Volume 1: clippings 1889-1894*: 58. HHC.

35. *Twenty Years*, 131.

36. This quotation comes from an unsigned "Coffee House" article, *Hull-House Yearbook, 1906-07*, 40. Accounts giving virtually the same information, often with the same wording (since yearbooks often reused past typesetting) include these: *Yearbook* 1910, 43; *Yearbook* 1913, 46; *Yearbook*, 1916, 50. HHC.
37. *Twenty Years*, 132.
38. "Plans for the Poor." *Scrapbook Volume 1: clippings 1889-1894*, 58. HHC. An article pasted in Addams's scrapbook of clippings, "What Hull House Really Is," praises the settlement in such terms: "It's . . . going to leaven the whole lump of the Nineteenth Ward . . . . [T]he father has a hot lunch of soup and rolls delivered to the factory at noon for 10 cents, the older girls are being fitted for domestic service in the cooking school. . . . When the tired mother comes back from her scrubbing she buys a pot of beans or a quart of Irish stew and good bread at the New England kitchen and takes it home piping hot. Her husband brings a bushel of coal from the Hull House co-operative yard." *Scrapbook Vol 3: clippings and publications*, 1895-1897 (April 28, 1895), 3. HHC.
39. "Ice and Milk," *Hull-House Bulletin* 6.1 (Autumn 1904): 20. HHC.
40. Donna R. Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 37, 40, 45, 48.
41. Polacheck, *I Came*, 61.
42. Polacheck, 79-80.
43. Polacheck, 71.
44. Polacheck, 101.
45. Lee, "Hungry," 68.
46. See Shannon Jackson, *Lines of Activity: Performance, Historiography, Hull-House Domesticity* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 55-56.
47. *Twenty Years,* 453.
48. *Bulletin,* 1.1, 1. HHC.
49. *Bulletin*, 5.1, 11. HHC.
50. *Bulletin*, 6.1, 11; 6.2, 14-15; 7.1, 4. HHC.
51. *Yearbook*, 1916, 38. HHC.
52. Polacheck, *I Came*, 94-95.
53. *Yearbook,* 1906, 40-41. HHC.
54. *Twenty Years*, 132; see also *Bulletin* 4.4, 16. HHC.
55. Lee, "Hungry," 70-71. Mary Rozet Smith became one of Hull-House's major financial supporters. She was also Addams's life partner. Though early biographers hesitated to address their bond directly, another of Lisa Lee's contributions to the JAHHM was an exhibit inviting visitors to consider how best to convey the depth of their relationship. See Lisa Yun Lee, "Peering into the Bedroom: Restorative Justice at the Jane Addams Hull House Museum" in *The Routledge Companion to Museum Ethics*, ed. Janet Marstine (New York: Routledge, 2011), 174-87.
56. For Addams's own portrait of Lathrop (in *My Friend, Julia Lathrop*) as a shadow autobiography, see Chapter Three of Robbins, *Learning Legacies*, cited above.
57. Heather Radke, "Unfinished Business," *Museum Magazine* (May/June 2013): 86.
58. *Twenty Years*, 272, 276.
59. Lee, "Hungry," 71.
60. Polacheck, *I Came*, 63.
61. Ibid., 66.
62. Gabaccia, *What We Eat*, 225, 230.
63. *I Came*, 75.
64. Ibid., 100-101.

The Ideal Observer Meets The Ideal Consumer: Realism, Domestic Science, and Immigrant Foodways in Willa Cather's *My Ántonia* (1918)

Stephanie Tsank

> I have never found any intellectual excitement any more intense than I used to feel when I spent a morning with one of those old [immigrant] women at her baking or butter making. . . . I always felt as if they told me so much more than they said—as if I had actually got inside another person's skin
>
> Willa Cather, *Philadelphia Record*[1]

In Cather's 1913 interview—the first full-length interview of her literary career—she cites what was for her the inspiration for much of her early fiction: immigrants and their distinct ethnic, cultural, and culinary identities. Yet she also reveals a potentially problematic desire to own and consume the immigrant body and experience. Cather, who grew up in Nebraska in the 1880s and befriended nearby immigrants from Bohemia and Scandinavia, wrote them into her Great Plains trilogy, beginning with *O Pioneers!* in 1913 and ending with *My Ántonia* in 1918—a coming-of-age tale for white, native-born narrator Jim Burden and an exploration of his relationship with Ántonia Shimerda, his Bohemian immigrant neighbor. Cather's quotation is notable: it celebrates immigrants in the act of culinary creation, especially during a time when anxieties about mass immigration had reached their peak in the United States. At the same time, Cather's position in this scenario—she is, after all, white, middle class, and "native"—is one of authority and perhaps even possessiveness, espe-

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cially given her stated desire to inhabit the bodies of immigrants. When Cather reports that immigrant women reveal much more than they say, how does she know? How does observing immigrant women cook stimulate Cather intellectually? Does Cather's appreciation of immigrant culture and culinary aesthetics, in fact, tenuously cross over into an act of ownership?

These questions gesture toward the larger sociocultural atmosphere of the turn of the century to which Cather's work inevitably responded and was shaped. More specifically, reading food in *My Ántonia* helps illuminate the parallel traditions of literary realism and domestic science, two movements that enforced ethnographic containment and monitored consumption under the guise of promoting democratic principles and national unification. In this article, I will show how *My Ántonia* responds to and encapsulates these overlapping ideologies in two ways through its representation of immigrant foodways and scenes of eating. First, I argue, Cather supports the construction of the ideal observer by fixating on "foreign" foods through Jim Burden's narration and characterizes immigrants for the benefit of a white middle-class readership, both of which subtly perpetuate nativist ideologies. Second, food scenes in the narrative push against the concept of the ideal consumer by offering up more expansive ways to conceptualize identity through one's culinary practices and relationship to consumption.

Literary realism and domestic science, both of which emerged in the 1870s, defined themselves by an emphasis on accuracy through an adherence to verisimilitude in the former and to scientific principles in the latter. While realism participated in the trend of describing immigrants, or the lower classes, for a primarily white, middle-class readership and frequently relied on detached observation as a narrative method, the domestic scientists emphasized pragmatism and culinary homogeneity through the promotion of a carefully proscribed diet and advocated for a utilitarian, nutrition-centered approach to the act of consumption. Both movements sought to demarcate the boundaries of what should constitute the ideal American citizen and in doing so enforced a hierarchy of belonging and difference. Tracing the trajectory of literary realism alongside the ideological imperatives of the domestic scientists reveals both movements' participation in the construction of nationalism and nativism and, by proxy, highlights overlapping preoccupations about narrative and biological consumption. In other words, reading both movements together reveals an ongoing and interwoven anxiety about both *what* and *how* people read and ate. These anxieties helped shape what defined the ideal citizen and how that citizen functioned in society to ensure a carefully cultivated homogeneity that could then feed into a fixed and powerful national identity. Together, these two movements—both of which had lasting impacts well into the twentieth century—worked to shape the ideal citizen: the realist by shaping the ideal observer and the domestic scientist by presenting the ideal consumer.

Realism, championed by William Dean Howells, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* from 1871 to 1881, emerged in a post–Civil War America riddled with

concerns about class structure, mass immigration, and racial purity. Realism's ideological and narrative techniques, as espoused by Howells, worked to soothe the fears of a fractured nation hoping to reconcile itself as whole. In 1891, Howells wrote in *Criticism and Fiction*—a treatise that, according to Michael Davitt Bell, made him "the most influential proponent of realism in America"[2]—that "realism is nothing more and nothing less than the truthful treatment of material."[3] Railing against previous decades' preoccupation with sentimentalism and romance, Howells defined the ideal literary form as free of needless aesthetics and fanciful plot structure and instead as a vessel to faithfully depict everyday "reality" through the perspective of an impartial author aiming to accurately represent the world around them. This narrative lens was in part a means of controlling the relationship between subject and observer and, more so, of filtering the construction of the observed through a careful, discerning eye. Ensuring this relationship helped to safeguard a national body preoccupied with the threat of immigrant insurgence—a national body fixed in its status as native, elite, and white—despite Howells's positioning of realism as "democracy in literature."[4]

The domestic science movement—initiated by a group of white, middle-class women who believed in the necessity of incorporating scientific principles into the homes of white, middle-class families—was similarly preoccupied with national identity and the principles of containment. The opening of the Boston Cooking School in 1879, founded by the Women's Educational Association of Boston, and the women who ran and taught at the institution over generations, such as Mary J. Lincoln, Fannie Farmer, and Maria Parloa, were instrumental in shaping the way that women comported themselves in the kitchen and in the home. At the heart of the movement, which began in the Northeast and quickly spread throughout the country, was the notion that women could maintain social order in the household and thus prepare their families to contribute to the nation's progress. Furthermore, many of the women who participated in the domestic science movement found it a pleasant and more appropriate alternative to participating in other types of reform movements, such as sanitation, abolition, and political corruption. This suggests that domestic science was itself a type of ideological reform and reinforces the notion that domestic scientists believed that, according to Laura Shapiro, "if they could reform American eating habits, they could reform Americans."[5]

Indeed, Cather's suggestion in 1913 that she could get inside the skins of immigrant women through the simple act of observing them in the act of cooking brings up a whole host of tensions, from questions about intersubjectivity to the relationship between high and low culture, native versus immigrant, and so on. But perhaps less obvious is the way in which Cather's quotation reveals how the act of storytelling intersects with the act of cooking and how the stories—and cuisines—we craft and consume simultaneously construct reality and shape our perceptions of the world.

Containing the Mind

> We lose our first keen relish for literature just as we lose it for ice-cream and confectionary. The taste grows older, wiser, and more subdued.
>
> Cather, "William Dean Howells"[6]

In Cather's 1895 review of Howells's *My Literary Passions*, several things stand out: her comparison between reading and eating, her identification of both literature and food as sensory objects from which to derive pleasure, and her mention of sweets. Cather's commentary is unsurprising given the pervasiveness of the "reading/eating" metaphor in mid-nineteenth-century guidebooks and periodicals. As Cree LaFavour points out, "The pleasure of a novel that is difficult to put down was akin to the sweets that women and children gobbled as they turned the pages in a kind of rapturous self-indulgence."[7] In other words, in the mid-nineteenth century, the pleasures of reading and eating were dually perceived as dangerous activities; when left uncontrolled, they were thought to threaten the physical and mental health of white, middle-class women and, by proxy, the health of their families and the nation. These restrictive attitudes about consumption persisted into the later decades of the century as both the realists and the domestic scientists sought to refashion the American body on individual and national scales by attempting to control how the public consumed the world around them.

Howells's many critical treatises and editorials set precise boundaries for what should ideally make up a cohesive and valuable American literature in addition to carving out a distinct relationship between writer, subject, and style (or lack thereof). In part a reaction to the idleness and frivolousness he associated with romance, Howells sought to reformulate reading as a productive exercise by reshaping the content of the ideal literary text and the lens through which it was filtered. Influenced by new technologies of reproduction and an increased social focus on observation and exactness, as Daniel Borus notes, realists "took to empirical observation with unprecedented enthusiasm,"[8] using these techniques to construct the ideal observer—a detached yet "truthful" narrator aiming to further the nation's democratic project by depicting life "as is." Howells expounds on these ideals in *Criticism and Fiction* (1891), urging new writers and artists to rely entirely on the authority of their own senses and observations rather than idealizing and attempting to imitate the literary works of already established writers.[9]

Howells further frames the act of writing as a moral imperative—albeit one that is carefully controlled by individuals who have been granted authority by the publishing industry to dispense their views. According to Amy Kaplan, realists not only sought to determine the ideal text but also, through their writing, attempted to re-create their social environment. Writers' imperatives to re-create their surroundings stemmed from anxieties about perceived social

problems and major changes in society, such as rapid industrialization, mass immigration, and the subtle shifting of social classes. Although Howells' efforts to reformulate literature appeared inclusive, as he hoped that realism would provide a platform for writers to extend representation to formerly obscured communities, realist texts primarily served to comfort a white, middle-class readership anxious about the rapid insurgence of nonwhite immigrants into American society.[10]

Howells and Cather shared a preoccupation with how readers consumed literature in that they were skeptical of leisure reading and popular fiction, the latter of which boomed in the late nineteenth-century literary marketplace. Cather did not want *My Ántonia* to be published in paperback or to be optioned for film, as she considered consumers of these mediums to be of a "lower social and cultural class."[11] Instead, Cather actively fought her first publisher, Houghton Mifflin, to continue to publish hardback copies of her book, which only a certain class of individuals could afford. Howells, similarly, was opposed to the mindless consumption of literature that romance seemed to breed; as Kaplan explains, "Howells viewed reading as a productive exercise, and promoted literary engagement as hard work as opposed to "idle consumption." In his treatises, Howells suggested that the result of this specific type of reading—that which undergirded realism's ideological mission—would be a democratic society in which all the nation's people could finally achieve proper representation. Ultimately, however, the narrative structure characteristic of realism worked primarily to confirm the classist, nativist, and ethnographically secure identity of the group to which the author wrote and typically belonged.

Containing the Body

The domestic scientists' approach to consumption promoted a similarly restrictive path for eaters and consumers under the guise of national unification and progress. In developing a scientific, nutrition-based agenda that centered on an ideology of containment—containing ingredients, recipes, and one's emotional response to eating—the domestic scientists aimed to contain and, perhaps, remake the body by determining what entered it and how. Propelled by exactitude in measurement and procedure, recipe design for the domestic scientists was about composure and control; for example, it was common for cooking school courses and cookbooks to instruct women to arrange the ingredients of a salad—and other types of dishes—within acceptable physical boundaries, such as walled in by four crackers or stuffed into the peel of a banana. These types of recipes promoted eating as an act of practical nourishment rather than a process of enjoyment and gustatory pleasure; in other words, nutrition trumped taste. Paralleling Howells's preoccupation with romance as a breeding ground for dangerously idle consumption, so too did the domestic scientists push against the notion of eating simply for pleasure and without proper regard to scientific principles and nutritional value.

Katharina Vester asserts that "food advice in cookbooks and magazines has traditionally told readers not only how to eat well, but how to be Americans, how to be members of the middle class, how to perform as heterosexual men and women."[12] Indeed, cookbooks written by prominent members of the domestic science movement in the late nineteenth century, such as Mary J. Lincoln and her successor Fannie Farmer, subtly reinforce traditional gender roles and heteronormativity, aspire to shape national identity through the family unit, and assume that readers already belong to or aspire to belong to the middle class. Lincoln's *Mrs. Lincoln's Boston Cook Book: What to Do And What Not to Do in Cooking*, first published in 1884, is a comprehensive, detailed, and restrictive account of what to do in the kitchen. In her preface, Lincoln claims that she will teach homemakers "just *how* to hold your bowl and spoon, to use your hands, to regulate your stove, to wash your dishes; and just *how not* to fall into the errors into which so many have stumbled before you."[13] The emphases on "how" and "how not" and the addition of "just" highlight the precision and specificity offered by the cookbook and predicted by its title.

Farmer's revision of Lincoln's cookbook, *The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book* (1896), is, like its predecessor, over 500 pages long. Strikingly, Farmer's table of contents is much more exhaustive, where recipes with the same ingredients are listed with slight alterations, such as "Scrambled Eggs," followed by "Scrambled Eggs with Tomato Sauce," followed by "Scrambled Eggs with Anchovy Toast."[14] Other foods are partitioned via cooking methods with minor variations, such as "Plain Lobster," "Fried Lobster," "Buttered Lobster," "Scalloped Lobster," "Curried Lobster," and so on.[15] Farmer's cookbook also includes guidelines for basic tasks; for example, a recipe for "Dry Toast" requires the cutting of stale bread into "one-fourth inch slices" and the browning of the bread over coals. Farmer then writes, "Toast may be buttered at table or before sending to table,"[16] accounting for each possible movement that the cook makes. Finally, Chapter 38, titled "Helpful Hints to the Young Housekeeper," not only lists tips for the kitchen, such as "To Chop Parsley" or "To Cream Butter," but also provides instructions for household chores, such as "To Remove White Spots from Furniture" and "To Wash Mirrors and Windows,"[17] thereby pairing cooking techniques with other domestic practices.

Farmer, who took Lincoln's place as head of the Boston Cooking School in 1896, marked a slight departure from the rigidity and dryness of previous approaches, routinely describing dishes as "'tasty,' 'delicious,' 'appetizing,' and very often 'delightful.'"[18] Yet, despite Farmer's updated approach to consumption as a potentially pleasurable enterprise, Farmer's cooking instructions leave little to the imagination and rely entirely on precision, measurement, and the application of scientific principles to culinary preparations. Each action—from slicing toast to washing mirrors—is planned and decided in advance by the directive of the cookbook to suggest how best to maintain order and expediency in the home.

Shapiro explains the domestic scientists' philosophy as this: "If the home were made a more businesslike place, if husbands were fed and children raised according to scientific principles, if purity and fresh air reached every corner of the house—then, at last, the nation's homes would be adequate to nurture its greatness."[19] Put differently, if women cut their toast slices in fourths as Farmer recommended to ensure that their husbands and children consumed precise ingredients in precise quantities for proper nourishment, perhaps families would be better prepared to continue to uphold the uniformly "correct" ideals of family and nation. Having been properly fed, these "ideal" citizens would then be prepared to continue to serve as model individuals upholding a model nation.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, the domestic science movement developed into what is now known as home economics. The first wave of home economists was influential in shaping America's developing consumer culture and were simultaneously preoccupied with preserving nineteenth-century ideas about morality. Carolyn M. Goldstein writes that despite variations among individual teachers and intended audiences, "the quantifiable aspects of foods and their constituent parts took precedence over taste and pleasure for most home economists."[20] Once again, emphasis remained on utility over pleasure, on use value versus cultural affect. Likewise, the imperative of the domestic scientists and home economists to consume more efficiently and uniformly was supported by advancements in industrialization and food production that occurred throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries on a national scale. The expansion of railway networks, improvements in refrigeration technology, and the corporatization of food production all contributed to a more centralized and homogenized cuisine. Unsurprisingly, many food reformers valued processed ingredients because of their supposed superior cleanliness and uniformity in both packaging and taste.[21]

The domestic scientists believed that what and how you ate would determine your social environment and encouraged the process of Americanization by extending cooking classes to immigrants and shaping ideas about proper diet in schools. In fact, women reformers counted on the desire of immigrant children to conform to their surroundings and used food as a means of supporting this transition.[22] Later, during World War I, home economists collaborated with governmental agencies to pursue an agenda of "rational consumption," which helped to reduce the ingestion of specific foods—for example, wheat, meat, and sugar—to aid in wartime conservation. The home economists' success on this front was an ideological triumph, as it helped further link food consumption to patriotism, which, according to Goldstein, was "part of a larger mission to shape the culture of the emerging middle class through a focus on the standard of living of individual homes and families."[23]

These examples illustrate that both home economists and domestic scientists were fueled by the desire to monitor and control consumption as a means of structuring individual identities as well as the family unit. In promoting a nutrition-based relationship to food—one that did not support culturally diverse

cuisines and eating habits—these groups simultaneously championed assimilation and Americanization. Ultimately, by controlling consumption, one of the most fundamental aspects of human existence, the domestic scientists and early home economists suggested that those who did not conform to specific diets could be barred from participating in the nation's progress. The imperatives of realism as espoused by Howells hinged on similar principles of containment through the practices of narrative and social control. Howells's restructuring of the process of reading as a productive, democratic endeavor meant that some readers would have been inevitably considered "undemocratic" based on their decision to consume literature in "unproductive" ways. Ultimately, Howells's reformulation of American literature not only aimed to change the way that individuals consumed literature but also sought to refashion the American body by writing a new body into being. Cather, of course, was not immune to either of these literary and culinary developments.

The Ideal Observer

> That she was eventually to be called a classicist, a Jamesian sophisticate, and the reserved stylist of The Novel Démeublé, may be one of the great jokes of literary criticism. The young Willa Cather . . . was primarily a romantic and a primitive.
>
> Bernice Slote, *The Kingdom of Art*[24]

Slote is not alone in her confident classification of Cather within a specific mode or genre; others have attempted to position Cather as a modernist, seeing in her style a certain element of "radicalness" or pairing her with writers such as Virginia Woolf.[25] Yet others, such as John J. Murphy and Janis P. Stout, have sought in Cather's oeuvre examples of her employment of realism, arguing for the presence of a Howellsian "antiliterary" strain or noting the depth of her "visual accuracy" and investment in depicting everyday life, respectively. Nonetheless, despite attempts at classification, many critics have also noted the futility of containing Cather's aesthetic to any one genre; an examination of her nonfiction and fiction writings, at the very least, makes abundantly clear that Cather's critical proclamations and novelistic endeavors were not always in line.[26]

In this article, I do not attempt to categorize Cather within any particular mode or genre; however, I argue for the value of reading Cather *in relation* to genre, specifically realism. In her monograph *Reading for Realism*, Nancy Glazener quotes June Howard, who reminds us that "genre inevitably enters into every work but no work is contained by genre."[27] Howard's credo is useful for thinking about Cather's expansive oeuvre—a text like *My Ántonia*, for example, is testament to the fact that a novel can engage with the genre conventions of its day without being defined by them. At once a pastoral ode, a nostalgic and spontaneous outpouring of emotional energy, yet also an incisive commen-

tary about immigrant displacement and an inevitable meditation on narrative authority, *My Ántonia* seems precisely to elude such attempts at containment.

Certainly, Cather's own writing was not immune to the literary techniques and philosophies associated with realism. As some critics have argued, even though Cather openly protests realism in her well-known aesthetic treatise "The Novel Démeublé" (1922), certain works of hers display an adherence to realist and, in other cases, naturalist principles.[28] Indeed, despite Cather's critical attitude toward realism in her early years and throughout her life, the contradictions of her relationship to realism are evident and at times ironic.[29] For example, Cather confidently states in the same treatise, "One does not wish the egg one eats for breakfast, or the morning paper, to be made of the stuff of immortality."[30] Here, leveling a critique of Howellsian realism, Cather argues that one's breakfast must not be treated as though it automatically has some sort of political or social meaning simply because it represents the life of ordinary people.[31] Yet what Cather's own inevitably limited and privileged Western perspective misses and what Cather scholarship has not yet fully explored is that Cather does immortalize the egg; or, rather, in the case of *My Ántonia*, she immortalizes the mushroom and the melon. Cather often depicts foods that are ordinary for immigrants as though they are extraordinary, imbuing them, for the benefit of her white, middle-class readership, with sensual and sensationalistic affect.

Inherent in Howells's approach is a rejection of "literariness," or the elaborate crafting of material to fit a specified literary mold. Cather's narrator, Jim Burden, follows Howells's recommendation by enacting the opposite of literariness—his manuscript is not carefully crafted or influenced by any other outside source; it is, rather, an outpouring of emotion via observation and firsthand experience. Moreover, because of Jim's white male authority, the novel itself is established as a physical manuscript that essentially seals within its pages a record of early Nebraskan pioneer life.[32] Although some critics have attempted to classify *My Ántonia* as romance due to its narrative structure, I contend that Jim's method of composition and the way that he approaches his subject are in fact reminiscent of Howells's stipulations in his early realist treatises, and Jim's ability to create such a manuscript is tied to the ease with which he can move about the world, in contrast to Ántonia and the novel's other immigrants.[33] Although Jim is hugely shaped by his experiences with Ántonia and the other immigrant homesteaders, his narration is also steeped in the convenience of observation brought on by assured distance. Jim is the "ideal" observer in that he is impacted by Ántonia's presence, but he has the option to withdraw from her gaze at any time and, in fact, does for several decades. Even though there exist scenes where immigrant identities and experiences are foregrounded, Jim's narrative authority remains front and center in *My Ántonia*'s content and construction.

Despite the novel's attempt to illustrate a pluralist society where different cultures can exist comfortably alongside one another without the threat of assimilation, *My Ántonia* precisely overlooks moments of culinary appropriation

made inevitable by its hierarchical narrative framework.[34] The "foreign" foods introduced in the novel are strange and overly sensual in the eyes of narrator Jim, Cather's openly stated likeness, and this is an acceptable constant in the world of the novel, even when Jim openly lays claim to other groups' cultural products.[35] Thus, the narrative structure of the novel and Cather's treatment of food in this sense echoes the ideology espoused by Howellsian realism, in which class divisions are reinforced under the guise of democratic representation. Ultimately, neither Jim nor Cather can shed the authority of narration and transcend his or her subject-position, and Jim's romanticizing of Ántonia's person and culture—and, in turn, his dismissal of her when she does not cohere to his imagined ideal—suggests the drawbacks of an unexamined pluralistic view, such as the elision of structural inequality in favor of embracing and, in some cases, overemphasizing "difference."

The Emotional Consumer

While specific foods in part serve to identify and romanticize immigrant characters for a privileged readership, thereby stratifying the two, Cather also recognizes culinary engagement as a crucial aspect of identity. Many of Cather's nonfiction and fiction writings both explicitly and implicitly oppose the ideological and sensory limitations imagined for the American public body by the domestic scientists, early home economists, and the imperatives to standardize, mass-produce, and package. Cather states in a 1921 speech, "The Americanization committee worker who persuades an old Bohemian housewife that it is better for her to feed her family out of tin cans instead of cooking them a steaming goose for dinner is committing a crime against art."[36] "Art is a matter of enjoyment through the five senses," Cather proclaimed, also in 1921. "Esthetic appreciation begins with the enjoyment of the morning bath. It should include all the activities of life. There is real art in cooking a roast just right, so that it is brown and dripping and odorous and 'saignant.'"[37] Throughout her life, Cather vocally opposed those who suggested that immigrants discard their traditional eating habits in favor of a homogenized, Americanized cuisine.[38] This was not only an insult to the quality of immigrant foodways but also, according to Cather, an insult to the free expression of artistic agency. By categorizing cooking as an art form, Cather divorces it from the scientific rigidity and nutritional pragmatism promoted by the domestic scientists and early home economists.[39]

Examining Cather's use of food scenes and food imagery alongside narrative structure in *My Ántonia* brings into sharp focus the novel's relationship to the principles of realism. Although the foods that Cather describes are typical for the immigrants who consume them regularly or are integral to their cultural identity, the foods themselves—and thus the immigrants—are routinely positioned as exotic and at times subhuman. Further, ingesting these foods and participating in immigrants' food practices serve as a means of imaginative arousal for Jim as he builds his own identity in relation to his environment. In

these scenarios, specific foods—like the immigrants themselves—are utilized as a platform for Jim's exploration of self. However, Cather does allow food scenes to be emotionally generative and less restrictive than would have been supported by food reformers' obsession with measurement and nutrition. These food scenes involve both native and immigrant characters and thus constitute less a statement about the significance of immigrant foodways—although Cather certainly valued them—and more a commentary on the capability of the culinary to function as art and meaningfully shape identity. For certain characters, cooking functions as an impetus for storytelling and the preservation of cultural memory; for others, consumption serves as a catalyst for creativity and even as an outlet for grief. Throughout her fiction and especially in *My Ántonia*, Cather attaches to food an intensity, an individuality, and an emotive quality that openly opposes the ideology of the domestic scientists and early home economists, both of whom sought to align eating habits with a particularly rigid conception of individual and national identity.

On Mushrooms and Melons

Jim helps to foreground, very early on, Cather's ongoing tendency to pair consumption and creativity. Having agreed to record their memories of Ántonia, both Jim and the preface's unnamed narrator meet to share the results of their efforts. Although the narrator returns empty-handed, Jim has composed a full manuscript. Before relinquishing his work to the narrator, Jim recounts his writing process: "'Notes? I didn't make any.' He drank all his tea at once and put down the cup. 'I didn't arrange or rearrange. I simply wrote down what of herself and myself and other people Ántonia's name recalls to me. I suppose it hasn't any form. It hasn't any title, either.'"[40] Jim's act of consumption, where he drinks his tea "all at once," announces the novel's propensity toward pairing emotion and creative production with ingestion, or the smells and textures of both everyday and "exotic" foods. Jim's composition strategy in this scene aligns with the unmediated, antiliterary, and "true" depiction of life sought after by the realists, just as it reinforces the novel's aesthetic scaffolding, in which food and drink share a kinship with art and creation that proves especially revelatory for the cultural landscape that Cather constructs.

In *My Ántonia*, the pairing of food and creativity suggests a revision of contemporaneous ideas about the importance of policing one's sensory reactions and experiences. Jim's hurried act of consumption mirrors his chaotic emotional state and internal confusion about his place in the world. Cather depicts Jim as a man ideologically lodged between his past and his future, unsure of how to proceed, needing to procure meaning in the feverish artistic recounting of his relationship to his childhood immigrant friend. Jim's wealthy wife, described as "handsome, energetic, executive," is a product of a materialistic, ordered, precise society; in fact, she seems to be a manifestation of the ideology promoted by the domestic scientists.[41] However, Jim's imbibing of tea, his cre-

ation of the manuscript, and the reality of his unhappy marriage all suggest that he is suspicious of—and perhaps even prepared to distance himself from—the restrictive ideologies surrounding the production of the "ideal" citizen. Ultimately, the novel's preface makes clear that Ántonia, her Bohemian family, the Norwegians, the Russians, and other immigrants in the novel have had a profound impact on Jim's maturation and imagination. As Jim ideologically mines his past through the manuscript he presents to readers, the novel highlights alternative ways of conceptualizing personhood and American identity through a widening of what it means to exist as a sensory being in one's surroundings.

However, despite immigrants' formative influence on Jim's identity and their integral role in introducing him to a varied cultural landscape, *My Antonia*'s narrative necessitates Jim's appropriation of certain foods at the expense of immigrant characters, specifically Mrs. Shimerda, the Russians, and at one point Ántonia herself. In other words, Jim is unable to distance himself from his own subject-position as "ideal observer," unconcerned with the power that his narrative authority naturally brings. Despite Cather's useful expanding of what kinds of relationships individuals can form with food, immigrant characters are routinely positioned as odd or foreign precisely through culinary characterization. Jim and his family are often dubious of the Shimerdas' culinary practices, ranging from storing food to table manners, and the narrative remains uncritical in these moments. In fact, although the narrative does occasionally, if subtly, question Jim's judgment, it does not do so in moments where he engages with food, which suggests that Jim's authority is *most often* exerted in moments of culinary appropriation of foreign foods at the expense of the immigrants themselves.

In one example, Jim recalls that he and his family were "horrified" at how Mrs. Shimerda stored and made bread and devotes an entire paragraph to a description of her unusual and unsanitary practices. Jim writes, "She mixed her dough, we discovered, in an old tin peck-measure. . . . When she took the paste out to bake it, she left smears of dough sticking to the sides of the measure . . . and let this residue ferment."[42] Jim's use of the word "discovered" highlights the unpleasantness of the scenario, as though it is something gruesomely happened on. The tone of the paragraph is one of distaste and mild annoyance, which is a quality exhibited in other areas of the novel when Jim refers to the Shimerdas' culinary practices, effectively identifying them as foreign via their unusual eating and cooking habits. Elsewhere, the Burdens contemplate the fact that the Shimerdas are hunting and eating prairie dogs, to which Jim's grandmother responds with "alarm."[43] Jake, the Burdens' farmhand, who delivers the news, "grinned and said [the prairie dogs] belonged to the rat family."[44] Although it is evident the Shimerdas are resorting to such measures due to struggle and poverty, the Burdens cast a distinct shadow of disapproval in how the Bohemian family has chosen to deal with their circumstances.

Jim and his family easily dismiss Mrs. Shimerda, whom Jim at one point

calls "a conceited, boastful old thing,"[45] yet Jim uses a Bohemian food item gifted by Mrs. Shimerda to expand his horizons and sensory experiences. In one of the more memorable scenes in the novel, Mrs. Shimerda gifts Mrs. Burden a small packet of dried Bohemian mushrooms, hoping to extend a taste of her homeland to her American neighbors. Jim's grandmother reacts by stating that because she cannot pinpoint the origin or nature of the food, she is afraid of it. She then discards the package by throwing it into the stove. Jim, on the other hand, decides to try the dried mushrooms; he ingests a small dried chip, though with reserve. Jim then identifies the taste of the mushrooms as an unforgettable sensation, speculating, "They had been gathered, probably, in some deep Bohemian forest."[46] In this scene, Jim uses the mushrooms to open his mind; they transport him to a completely different location and render him worldlier through their sensory power. Jim is willing to use the mushrooms for his own purposes—to grow creatively and expand his imagination—but he is not willing to acknowledge Mrs. Shimerda's role in this expansion. Meanwhile, the narrative lingers on this moment and uses the mushrooms as a springboard for emotional affect, entirely uncritical of Jim's reaction. In this sense, Jim's narrative authority remains unquestioned as he mines the mushrooms for creative and spiritual meaning while pushing Mrs. Shimerda's experiences and reality aside.

The narrative also features two Russian homesteaders—Peter and Pavel—who have been exiled from their home country for the impossible act of feeding a bridal party to wild wolves. Peter, consistently referred to as "Rooshian Peter," is described as having taken on the physical characteristics of a melon: "his rosy face, with its snub nose, set in this fleece, was like a melon among its leaves."[47] The men's food habits are similarly described as odd; they hoard food in their home, and they extend too much care to the cow they own that supplies them with dairy. At one point, Jim and Ántonia participate in a melon feast—a popular food item in Russia with a storied history—in which Peter stands over the melons "brandishing a butcher knife."[48] This scene is both thrilling and surreal. Jim's participation in Peter's melon feast allows him to vicariously experience the danger associated with the tale of the Russians' daring escape from wild wolves in their home country without having to confront the impossibility of their status as exiles. Ultimately, Peter and Pavel's story ends in tragedy as Pavel succumbs to illness and Peter is left to wander the earth alone. Jim's participation in the melon feast and Cather's construction of this scene emphasize the thrill and strangeness of the experience while eliding the pain of the Russians' demise. As with the Bohemian mushrooms, Jim uses "ethnic" foods dear to the Russians to stoke his imagination and, by proxy, structure his own identity.

At the same time, as she does by pairing Jim's tea drinking with his creative burst, Cather uses the Russians to establish a connection between consumption and emotion, in the process pushing against the boundaries set by the domestic scientists and home economists about what it meant to eat in terms

of content and quantity. For Peter especially, the act of consumption is an act of burying grief in one's own bodily functions, as the emotions accompanying extreme grief unapologetically produce the conditions for overeating. In one of the reader's final encounters with the Russians, Peter is pictured burying his grief at Pavel's death in the ritual act of consuming a large quantity of melons. Cather writes, "After all his furniture and his cook-stove and pots and pans had been hauled off by the purchasers, when [Peter's] house was stripped and bare, he sat down on the floor with his clasp-knife and ate all the melons that he had put away for winter."[49] Peter is found "with a dripping beard, surrounded by heaps of melon rinds."[50] Peter relies on the melons to satiate his emotional needs, as their mystical healing properties help soothe the pain of Pavel's death. Cather presents to the reader an alternative view of consumption than that which was widely understood as "proper." In the novel, consumption—even overconsumption—is presented as a viable way of confronting or subsuming grief, just as in Jim's case consumption is a viable method for working out one's conflicting emotions.

Cather continues to reinforce links between food and creativity, memory, and emotion in the latter parts of the narrative, when the Burdens move into town and Ántonia begins to work as a "hired girl" for the Harlings, the Norwegian family next door. Multiple scenes positively establish the significance of food's emotional potency and its generative value, thereby forging an important link between consumption and identity. On a spontaneous outing in the prairie involving Jim, Ántonia, and three of the other "hired girls" (Lena, Tiny, and Anna), the girls reminisce about their parents' and grandparents' experiences with immigration. Tiny reveals that "'My old folks . . . have put in twenty acres of rye. It seems like my mother ain't been so homesick, ever since father's raised rye flower for her.'"[51] Meanwhile, Anna remarks, "'[My grandmother]'s forgot about this country, and thinks she's home in Norway. She keeps asking mother to take her down to the waterside and the fish market. She craves fish all the time. Whenever I go home I take her canned salmon and mackerel.'"[52] Tiny and Anna's observations point to the obvious connection between food and memory—how the tastes, smells, textures, and appearances of specific foods can comfort and nourish not just the body but also the mind, even when, in the case of Anna's grandmother, one might be in the presence of an ailing mind. In these scenes especially, ingesting food is ingesting culture—albeit sometimes a mass-produced version of culture. It is also a necessary means of self-preservation. Here, Cather presents alternative ways of conceptualizing the importance of ingestion and one's relationship to food: it isn't simply a pragmatic exercise but, rather, an emotional one.

Strikingly, Ántonia becomes an exemplar of the immigrant women that Cather so admired during her own childhood in Red Cloud, Nebraska, specifically through the act of food preparation. Jim recalls, "While we sat in the kitchen waiting for the cookies to bake or the taffy to cool, Nina [Harling] used to coax Ántonia to tell her stories—about the calf that broke its leg, or how Yulka

saved her little turkeys from drowning in the freshet, or about old Christmases and weddings in Bohemia."[53] Cather depicts a unique creative process—a window to culture and memory inspired by the act of culinary creation—which is in many ways emblematic of her own youth. Cather purposefully compares the act of cooking to the act of storytelling, both as practices that are necessary to the preservation and reaffirmation of culture, history, and heritage. Thus, Cather highlights both cooking and storytelling as valuable components of a healthy and vibrant society and, in the process, reaffirms the relationship between eating and emotion.

The connections between food and creativity, language, and culture are brought home in the novel's concluding scenes, when Jim, having finally reconnected with Ántonia after decades of estrangement, visits her new family farm in Nebraska. Ántonia Shimerda—now Ántonia Cuzak—is married with many children and owns a sprawling farmland that includes several orchards and abundant livestock. Ántonia's farmland yields cherries, gooseberries, currants, apples, grapes, and contains a rye field, whereas her family's fruit cave holds barrels of dill pickles, chopped pickles, and pickled watermelon rinds. During his visit, Jim slowly becomes acquainted with Ántonia's many children, all of whom have learned Bohemian as their primary language, thereby resisting full assimilation. In these scenes, various foods with their sensory potency—some Euro-ethnic staples and others not—are presented as a gateway to creativity, to mental and physical sustainability. Not unlike Mrs. Shimerda's presentation of the mushrooms to Jim's grandmother, Ántonia, swelling with pride, leads Jim to the family's fruit cave. There, three of Ántonia's young children—Nina, Jan, and Lucie—shyly point out to Jim glass jars and "[trace] on the glass with their finger-tips the outline of the cherries and strawberries and crab-apples within, trying by a blissful expression of countenance to give [him] some idea of their deliciousness."[54] Although the children are otherwise quiet and reserved, in this moment they present to Jim a snippet of their personalities and their cultural inheritance linked to food preservation and preparation, all despite not being able to fully communicate in English. In other words, the fruit within the jars—and perhaps the promise of its gustatory satisfaction—inspires in the children a moment of bravery that allows them to communicate wordlessly with Jim. In this instance, they communicate through food more than they could have possibly communicated through language.

Despite this rather heartwarming scene, Jim also claims ownership of the kolache—a Czech pastry—during his final visit with Ántonia and her family. In this scenario, Antonia's sons attempt to extend to Jim a piece of their cultural and culinary heritage, noting with pride their intimate experiences with the delicious pastry, made with fresh plums, something that Americans "don't have."[55] Jim responds by confidently stating to Leo, one of Ántonia's sons who is skeptical of the exchange, "You think I don't know what *kolaches* are, eh? You're mistaken, young man."[56] Jim goes on to assert that his experience with kolaches far exceeds that of Ántonia's own children, as he consumed them prior

to their birth. In this scenario, Jim adopts a tone of superiority and paternalism that elides the boys' own cultural legacy. Instead of allowing Ántonia's young sons the privilege of extending to a white "foreigner" intimate knowledge of their own culinary heritage, Jim shuts down this moment of cultural exchange by adopting the kolaches as his own. Jim's decision to claim ownership of the kolache strips the boys of the opportunity to share their unique history, and, in the process, Jim claims ownership of Ántonia's culture and cuisine. Meanwhile, the narrative does not critique Jim's arrogance in this scene; in fact, it is the subtle authority inherent in the narrative's hierarchical structure, stratifying the observer and the observed, that makes this scene and its implications possible.

Consumption and Creation: A Dual Conclusion

These are by no means the only scenes in which food appears in *My Ántonia*, but even these instances make clear that Cather closely links the act of consumption and food preparation with creative invention throughout her work. This pairing is significant in that it divorces the act of consumption from rigid, middle-class ideas about nutrition, scientific principles, and, thus, the formulation of a "productive," ordered, national body—one that must inevitably be "native" and white. Thus, characters—both immigrant and American—can achieve belonging and citizenship through reconceived notions of what it means to ingest and consume the surrounding world. At the same time, *My Ántonia* presents a narrator that cannot be divorced from his privileged reality, and neither can Cather herself. Her desire to "get inside the skins" of immigrant women as they cook suggests that Cather—and her novel—are aware of the joys and discoveries to be found in diverse culinary practices and experiences but perhaps signal a slightly less developed understanding of the boundaries that must accompany such desires. *My Ántonia* adopts realism's focus on narrative authority just as it envisions a reality in which such emphasis on productivity and the "ideal" citizen can finally be erased.

Notes

1. Willa Cather, interview with the *Philadelphia Record*, August 10, 1913, quoted in *Willa Cather in Person: Interviews, Speeches, and Letters*, ed. L. Brent Bohlke (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 10.
2. Michael Davitt Bell, *The Problem of American Literary Realism: Studies in the Cultural History of a Literary Idea* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 6.
3. Bell, *The Problem of American Literary Realism*, 73.
4. Bell, *The Problem of American Literary Realism*, 32.
5. Laura Shapiro, *Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1986), 5.
6. Willa Cather, "William Dean Howells," *Nebraska State Journal*, July 14, 1895, quoted in *Cather: Stories, Poems, and Other Writings*, ed. Sharon O'Brien (New York: Library of America, 1992), 892.
7. Cree LaFavour "The Edible Book: White Female Pleasure and Novel Reading," in *Culinary Aesthetics and Practices in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 146.
8. Daniel H. Borus, *Writing Realism: Howells, James, and Norris in the Mass Market* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 4.

9. See William Dean Howells, *Criticism and Fiction* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1892), where he writes that "the time is coming, I hope, when each new author, each new artist, will be considered, not in his proportion to any other author or artist, but in his relation to the human nature, known to us all, which it is his privilege, his high duty, to interpret" (8).

10. Amy Kaplan, *The Social Construction of American Realism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 46.

11. Sharon O'Brien, "Possession and Publication: Willa Cather's Struggle to Save *My Ántonia*," *Studies in the Novel* 45, no. 3 (2013): 466.

12. Katharina Vester, *A Taste of Power: Food and American Identities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 3.

13. Mary J. Lincoln, *Mrs. Lincoln's Boston Cook Book: What to Do and What Not to Do in Cooking* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1884), viii.

14. Fannie Farmer, *The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1896), xi.

15. Farmer, *The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book*, xiv.

16. Farmer, *The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book*, 67.

17. Farmer, *The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book*, 506–7.

18. Shapiro, *Perfection Salad*, 112.

19. Shapiro, *Perfection Salad*, 4.

20. Carolyn M. Goldstein, *Creating Consumers: Home Economists in Twentieth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 41–42.

21. Jennifer Jensen Wallach, *How America Eats: A Social History of U.S. Food and Culture* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 134.

22. Wallach, *How America Eats*, 126–27.

23. Goldstein, *Creating Consumers*, 3.

24. Willa Cather, *The Kingdom of Art: Willa Cather's First Principles and Critical Statements*, ed. Bernice Slote (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), 31.

25. For a useful positioning of Cather as a modernist, see Stephanie Thompson, *Influencing America's Tastes: Realism in the Works of Wharton, Cather & Hurst* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), 126–28.

26. For a discussion of Cather's "antiliterary" strain, see Paul Petrie, "'There Must Be Something Wonderful Coming': Social Purpose and Romantic Idealism in Willa Cather's 'Behind the Singer Tower,'" *American Literary Realism* 33, no. 2 (2001): 110–22. For a discussion of visual accuracy in Cather's work, see Janice P. Stout, "Seeing and Believing: Willa Cather's Realism," *American Literary Realism* 33, no. 2 (2001): 168–80. Despite Stout's interest in finding strands of realism in Cather's work, she points out that "Cather regularly eludes the critical nets in which we seek to capture her" (168).

27. Nancy Glazener, *Reading for Realism: The History of a US Literary Institution, 1850–1910* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 17.

28. More readings of Cather and realism have emerged in recent decades, such as a 2001 special edition of *American Literary Realism* that is entirely devoted to examining the relationship of realism to Cather's body of work. This issue, notes Susan J. Rosowski in her introduction "Willa Cather and American Literary Realism," *American Literary Realism* 33, no. 2, Special Issue: Willa Cather (2001): 95–98, explores Cather's "[engagement] with the literary schools of her time" (97). The essays within it link Cather's journalism career to her relationship with realism and examine the strands of realism in her novels from a structural and aesthetic perspective.

More recently, several scholars have attempted to trace Cather's literary techniques and influences to Howells. In "William to Willa, Courtesy of Sarah: Cather, Jewett, and Howellsian Principles," *American Literary Realism* 38, no. 2 (Winter 2006): 145–59, John J. Murphy makes a compelling argument for Sarah Orne Jewett as a link between Cather and Howells. According to Murphy, Jewett herself was "a product of the *Atlantic Monthly*" (151), where Howells was editor and able to nurture and shape the direction of her work. Thus, Murphy suggests, the fact that Cather was so influenced by Jewett suggests a viable connection between Cather and Howells, especially given that Jewett's recommendations to Cather were often in line with Howells' literary philosophy.

29. See James Woodress, *Willa Cather: Her Life and Art* (New York: Pegasus, 1970), for details about Cather's relationship to Howells and his novels.

30. Willa Cather, "The Novel Démeublé," *The New Republic* 30 (April 12, 1922): 5–6.

31. In "The Novel Démeublé," Cather also argues that the novel has long been "over-furnished" (n.p.) and suggests that to create literature in its ideal form, one must "throw all the furniture out of the window" (n.p.). In other words, Cather opposes the trend of cataloging in fiction, of recording the mundane without meaning—a practice that she sees as unforgivably Howellsian. Yet Cather's treatise also shows that she was preoccupied with realism and its lingering grasp on literary culture. She writes, "There are hopeful signs that some of the younger writers are trying to break away from verisimilitude . . . to interpret imaginatively the material and social investiture of their characters; to present their scene by suggestion rather than enumeration" (n.p.). This excerpt reflects realism's steady grasp: despite Cather's opposition to the characteristics of realism (namely, verisimilitude and enumeration), the fact that she is "hopeful" about young writers "trying" to

evade them suggests a literary future that has not yet broken free of its past.

32. Many contemporaneous reviewers of *My Ántonia*, such as Randolph Bourne, H. L. Mencken, and others, praised the novel for its "realness." As Sharon O'Brien documents in "Possession and Publication," "Reviewers connected Cather's realism with her decision to tell, and tell accurately, the foundational American story of immigration and pioneer renew" (472).

33. See Bernice Slote, *The Kingdom of Art*, and Susan J. Rosowski, *The Voyage Perilous: Willa Cather's Romanticism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), for opposing arguments suggesting that the novel's structure, in which Jim pens the manuscript of *My Ántonia* in a creative burst, suggests a romantic impulse—that of Jim remembering his past, idealizing his (and in some cases Cather's own) youthful interactions with the various immigrant families populating the Nebraskan plains.

34. See Andrew Jewell, "'A Crime against Art': My Ántonia, Food, and Cather's Anti-Americanization Argument," *Willa Cather Newsletter and Review* 54, no. 2 (2010): 72–76. Jewell draws connections between Cather and Randolph Bourne, a prominent pluralist who was active during the early twentieth century. I agree with Jewell's assessment that much of Cather's fiction involving immigrants advocates for a pluralist view in opposition to the melting pot ideology that was extremely popular during the time. However, Jim's position of power as white male narrator and cultural connoisseur remains unexamined by both Jim's self-reflexive narration and the novel's own logic.

35. In her interviews, Cather compares herself to Jim; see Bohlke, *Willa Cather in Person*, 44. Meanwhile, in the "Introduction" to the Penguin edition of *My Ántonia*, John J. Murphy warns against the dangers of conflating Jim and Cather. While I take his point, for the purposes of my argument it is useful to consider Cather's parallels to Jim because I am thinking about how both author and character share many of the same markers of privilege that inform the narrative's structure and how both Jim and Cather appeal to the same audience. Likewise, it is important to note that there are moments where the narrative is critical of Jim's myopic perspective or his limitations, such as in his choice to marry a woman completely unsuited to him.

36. Bohlke, *Willa Cather in Person*, 147.

37. Bohlke, *Willa Cather in Person*, 47.

38. In "'A Crime against Art,'" Jewell elaborates on Cather's response to the domestic science movement's efforts to homogenize American cuisine, focusing on Cather's insertion of new foods into the American literary and cultural landscape. Jewell argues that "by introducing kolache made with home-canned plums to English-language readers, [Cather] forcefully inserts a 'foreign,' handcrafted food and therefore challenges the widespread attempts to homogenize American cuisine" (74). I agree with Jewell's interpretation with the caveat that in *My Ántonia*, Jim's response to the kolache serves as an appropriation of the "foreign" food despite Cather's introduction of it into the culinary scene at large.

39. Certainly, Cather was not alone in her view: as Donna Gabaccia explains in *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), immigrants at the turn of the century tended to resist the culinary homogeneity promoted by the domestic scientists, early home economists, and the corporatization and mass production of food. While some ethnic enclaves succumbed to a more Americanized cuisine, many immigrants were culturally conservative and remained isolated from new developments in food production.

40. Willa Cather, *My Ántonia*, ed. John J. Murphy (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), 6.

41. Jewell extends this argument further in "'A Crime against Art,'" by identifying the public kitchen reformer named Florence Burden, who lived in New York City while Cather was there composing *My Ántonia*, as possible inspiration for Jim's wife (74).

42. Cather, *My Ántonia*, 29.

43. Cather, *My Ántonia*, 58.

44. Cather, *My Ántonia*, 59.

45. Cather, *My Ántonia*, 73.

46. Cather, *My Ántonia*, 65.

47. Cather, *My Ántonia*, 31.

48. Cather, *My Ántonia*, 31.

49. Cather, *My Ántonia*, 50.

50. Cather, *My Ántonia*, 50.

51. Cather, *My Ántonia*, 182.

52. Cather, *My Ántonia*, 182.

53. Cather, *My Ántonia*, 138.

54. Cather, *My Ántonia*, 251–52.

55. Cather, *My Ántonia*, 252.

56. Cather, *My Ántonia*, 252.

The Post-Incarceration Kitchen: Food-Based Community Organizing and Employment after Imprisonment

Elissa Underwood Marek

> The concept is recycle, repurpose, reuse. We've built gardens in the back, so we can teach them sustainable living and growing. The idea that something can grow from something so small. When you see the harvest, you can really reformat your mind. And if all you see is death, you'll reformat that way, too.[1]
>
> Susan Trieschmann, Executive Director, Curt's Café

In September 2013, I completed my first interview in Chicago.[2] Jay was twenty-one at that time. He was living in the city after having spent years in and out of a state boy's home, county jails, and prisons in multiple states. I asked him several questions about his experience with food during his incarceration, and his responses ranged from descriptions of his training and employment in a traditional prison kitchen to memories of eating with friends in the mess hall.[3] Thinking back to that conversation, I remember that despite the stigma and hardship placed on him by his past criminal convictions, most notably securing employment, obtaining decent housing, and accessing healthy and affordable food, his voice and his demeanor reflected hope. He was especially excited to show me the garden and the produce he had helped cultivate at his new place of employment, a nonprofit café that hires and trains young people who have had contact with the criminal justice system.

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The garden that Jay referred to sits in the backyard of Curt's Café, a coffee shop and restaurant in Evanston, Illinois, Chicago's northern suburb. At first glance, its exterior with glass windows and a simple green awning looks similar to other establishments in the city that serve food and provide a space to meet friends for breakfast, coffee, or lunch. Its proximity to Chicago and to the light rail station makes it convenient for people traveling on public transportation and also contributes to its success. Indeed, many of the participants in its training program, including Jay, as well as regular customers, travel from Chicago or other neighboring cities to contribute to and benefit from the "good portions of hope and opportunity"[4] cooked up at the café.

Curt's, which is an acronym that stands for Cultivating Unique Restaurant Training, is a nonprofit organization that provides food service and life skills training, as well as education about healthful, local, and sustainable food options, to youth who have contact with the criminal justice system. Part of the mission of Curt's is to "dine with purpose": enjoy great food and help our community at the same time.[5] After sitting in peace circles with youth in Chicago, founder Susan Trieschmann learned that these young adults from underserved neighborhoods and in prison (ages from fourteen to eighteen) felt that if they had jobs, they wouldn't have participated in activities that led them to the criminal justice system. Based on that experience, she developed this concept to build skill sets among youth so they would be ready to get jobs if they were available. She doesn't require any prior experience; in fact the only requirement is "just [that you] are ready to try to make the commitment to change."[6] Student employees learn all aspects of the enterprise, including dish washing, basic café management, basic prep, sandwich making, hot line, and running the cash register in front, and receive a daily stipend for their work.

While the program at Curt's is certainly one of a kind, companies and organizations with similar missions are cultivating change across the United States. In this article, I highlight the work of food-based businesses and nonprofit organizations that work to prevent involvement in the criminal justice system and provide employment opportunities for people with criminal records. By making spaces for people to assert their independence, showcase their abilities, and share the fruits of their labor with other individuals and groups, these enterprises seek to create positive change in the lives of directly affected individuals, particularly in low-income Black and Latino communities. Through an analysis of regulations and policies that limit the rights of individuals with criminal histories, along with an examination of mission statements, hiring criteria, and interviews with owners, directors, and employees, I illuminate the efforts of these institutions to combat punitive state practices while considering their distinct brands of philanthropy. I also suggest a broader abolitionist approach that employs food as a mechanism to effect change and fosters connections across communities.[7]

Legal Limitations: Employment Barriers Facing Individuals with Criminal Histories

Stable employment is considered a significant factor in reducing or preventing recidivism. But individuals with criminal histories face various difficulties obtaining stable jobs, often perpetuating a cycle of incarceration. As the National Employment Law Project has reported, approximately 70 million people have some type of arrest or conviction record that prevents them from obtaining jobs, despite relevant knowledge and skillsets.[8] Once a potential employer learns of an applicant's criminal history, the chances of that job seeker receiving a callback decrease by 50 percent.[9] The effect is even greater for Black men, where only one in three receives a callback.[10] Although this research showed that employers were hesitant to hire Black people even without criminal records, they became more reluctant to make job offers when they were aware of a known criminal history. Conviction records for Black people, then, have significant impacts on one's ability to engage in the labor market.[11]

Recent legislative and policy efforts have helped, with states, cities, and counties across the country enacting fair chance ordinances and laws that make it unlawful for companies to consider criminal records when first assessing a candidate's application. These regulations call for assessments that focus on an individual's age at the time of offense, the length of time since the offense has been committed, and the relevance of the offense to the job being sought.[12] Twenty-five U.S. states have adopted such ordinances for public employment, including nine that require private employers to likewise abide by this law. Illinois is one of these nine states, suggesting a progressive environment in terms of fair hiring practices in the state where Jay resides. More than 150 cities have also enacted fair chance policies, recognizing the economic benefits, including an increase in tax contributions and sales tax, and a decrease in criminal justice spending.[13]

Even with these progressive laws, limitations still exist for individuals with certain kinds of convictions or in certain types of employment.[14] State licensing boards in many professions exclude individuals with conviction histories even though they have received the requisite education and passed the appropriate tests, often while incarcerated. For example, the American Bar Association indicates that more than 12,000 restrictions exist for individuals with felonies, and more than 6,000 restrictions are in place for people with misdemeanor records. Moreover, there are close to 20,000 permanent restrictions that would render a person ineligible for work indefinitely and 11,000 mandatory denials of licenses that leave no discretion to an employer.[15] Thus, even where fair chance policies are beginning to offer a reprieve for individuals facing discrimination based on their convictions, licensing statutes and requirements continue to prevent them from full participation in the workforce. States maintain different requirements for the same occupation and employ different standards to evaluate applicants.[16] Moreover, applicants face difficulties navigating blurry application processes

that do not clarify the meaning behind broad phrases like "good moral character" and leave people wondering about their status and without recourse.[17] What this looks like practically is that people in many states who have learned the basics of plumbing or electrician work while in prison are unable to secure jobs upon release because of the particular restrictions of licensing boards in the states in which they reside. Similarly, people who complete prison sentences and go on to attend college and obtain degrees in subjects like nursing find out when they try to sit for their board exams that they have been automatically deemed unfit because of criminal convictions.[18] Until the completion of a systematic rewrite of state licensing laws, this unjust gap will continue to have disproportionate and severe impacts on low-income Black and Latino communities that bear the greatest burden of hyperincarceration. That said, some businesses, nonprofit organizations, and social enterprises have taken it upon themselves to effect change in this area by offering jobs, training, and more to people who have had direct contact with the criminal justice system. And even more than that, food provides a particular vehicle through which individuals can learn to empower their bodies, minds, and communities.

Food-Based Strategies for Post-Incarceration Success

Similar to the ways in which renegade foodways facilitate connections among people in prison, these organizations and companies provide places where formerly incarcerated people can learn new skills, build community, and earn a living.[19] Their goals include providing training and employment, reducing recidivism, and building individuals and communities, and their work speaks to the role of food as an agent of change. In many ways, these entities provide avenues by which formerly incarcerated people can assert agency, take control of their health, enhance personal and political engagement, and promote sustainability while growing a multigenerational, multiracial, and multigendered antiprison movement. The potential consequences of this type of work are thus far reaching and get at issues of food production/consumption, hyperincarceration, activism, and freedom. Though many of these entities are relatively new, the groundwork on which they have developed was laid long ago.

History Rooted in the Civil Rights Struggle

The contemporary food-based activities that form the basis of my research have roots in the Civil Rights struggle and particularly in the Black Panther Party Breakfast Program, which began in 1969 when Huey Newton called for all chapters to launch a Free Breakfast for Children Program. People in Oakland and across the United States began to view food as a potential tool to address structural inequality. As David Hilliard, the Black Panther Party's Chief of Staff pointed out, "food serves a double purpose, providing sustenance but also functioning as an organizing tool."[20] This recognition of food as a means of politi-

cal mobilization in an effort to combat hunger and overall injustice became a major element of the Party's agenda. The food program that began in Oakland, California, had spread to thirty-six cities by 1971 and incorporated free food programs and free groceries with items donated by community members, local churches, and neighborhood businesses. The Party called out those in the business community who perpetuated the hunger problem by making food items unaffordable. The breakfast programs took on a consciousness-building role, leading people to understand the interconnectedness of capitalism, starvation, and marginalization. Their success can be measured by the strength of the attack FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover launched against them with his memo to FBI offices that read:

> The Breakfast for Children Program promotes at least tacit support for the Black Panther Party among naïve individuals and what is more distressing, it provides the BPP with a ready audience composed of highly impressionable youths. Consequently, the Breakfast for Children Program represents the best and most influential activity going for the BPP and, as such, is potentially the greatest threat to efforts by authorities to neutralize the BPP and destroy what it stands for.[21]

Although the breakfast programs were ultimately dismantled by COINTELPRO,[22] they planted the seeds for future food-based resistance efforts (and ironically future federal government programming in the national school lunch program). Fred Hampton, the Deputy Chairman of the Black Panther Party in Illinois, asserted the breadth and depth of the breakfasts when he said, "First you have free breakfasts, then you have free medical care, then you have free bus rides, and soon you have FREEDOM!"[23] Organizations that sprouted later have embraced this approach as well.

In the 1990s, political prisoner and former Black Panther Herman Bell, along with advocates in Maine, conceived of the Victory Gardens Project, a grassroots enterprise that employed food to facilitate social change and economic self-sufficiency.[24] This project linked urban and rural areas in the northeastern United States by creating a collective practice among organizers and volunteers who shared resources, skills, and labor as they worked to bring organic produce to their communities. The goal of the Victory Gardens Project was to use this hands-on participation to restore lands, establish community independence, and combat inequality. During its eight-year span, Victory Gardens handed out more than thirty tons of free produce.

The legacy of this project lives on in the Freedom Food Alliance,[25] a New York cooperative of rural and urban farmers, activists, and political prisoners who prioritize food as a method to deal with environmental, economic, food, and prison injustices. Following the Victory Gardens model, the foundation for this organization's transformational approach is rooted in food sovereignty[26]

and community control over food production and consumption. Herman Bell remained involved in this project from prison and provided another avenue for activists to create dialogue about current juridical policies and practices, specifically around incarceration and food. One of the organization's key programs is the Victory Bus Project, which forges connections between rural and urban spaces by transporting and feeding families of incarcerated people as they visit their loved ones who are housed in prisons many miles from home. Bus riders eat fresh produce as they strategize about developing sustainable alternatives to prison. In this way, Freedom Food Alliance galvanizes people who have been most directly and negatively affected by the justice system to take part in their personal and community health.

Modern Counterparts That Work to Develop Food, Jobs, and Sustainable Communities

Many of the establishments at which I conducted interviews[27] are wedded to facilitating connections between food, work, and empowerment. Though each follows a distinct approach, they maintain certain characteristics in common. For example, all of these entities focus on food, whether growing, preparing, or serving, and all work to disrupt cycles of incarceration. One functions as a for-profit business in a suburb of Chicago, the owner of which chooses to employ adults with criminal convictions and teach them a new business model. Another is a mobile social enterprise in New York City run by a young college graduate with experience working with incarcerated youth. Still another is a pair of nonprofit organizations in Oakland directed by progressive and experienced individuals that connect people on the inside and outside with experience and well-paying jobs. One is a decades-old nonprofit started by a pastor that has developed into a large enterprise with multiple locations in Los Angeles. Two organizations work specifically to empower youth outside Chicago and in San Francisco, but with different models that I will discuss below. Other organizations follow similar approaches in Boston, Washington, DC, Dallas, Portland, and New Orleans.

For-profit businesses are providing food-based job openings for formerly incarcerated men and women. I Have a Bean, a coffee-roasting company in the Chicago suburb of Wheaton, falls into the category of "business as mission," so according to the company's founder, Pete Leonard, a middle-aged white male entrepreneur who previously owned a software company, "what we do is as important as why we do it. We roast and sell coffee from the top 1 percent of coffee in the world using what society considers the lowest of the low."[28] Leonard started the company with two partners after he witnessed first-hand the difficulties his brother-in-law, who had spent time behind bars, experienced finding post-release employment. Around the same time, in 2005, Leonard also led a mission trip to Brazil to pour cement for a church. He happened to see someone roasting coffee behind his shed. As he puts it, "I tasted it, and it was a taste

epiphany."[29] He went on to design and build a coffee-roasting machine, perfecting his coffee recipe over time with the help of willing taste-testing neighbors. When choosing a name for the business, he first chose Second Chance Coffee and has since rebranded with the help of a marketing expert. In an effort to avoid initial stigmas or perceptions that the product was subpar, he opted to keep the focus on the superior product and renamed his company I Have A Bean. The name choice is an interesting one as it recalls Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, though Leonard did not mention this. [30] His position as a white business owner with no Black employees at the time of the interview leads me to wonder how he would be regarded by potential future employees. Would they view the name of the company as an attempt at solidarity considering Leonard's business model and commitment to hiring people with criminal histories, or would they be offended by it, especially in light of the increasing difficulty Black people with criminal records face in seeking employment, as I noted earlier?[31]

Leonard's preferred employees are formerly incarcerated people, and he seeks to hire people who have been or are currently enrolled in an established re-entry program. Since Leonard's coffee roasting company is a for-profit operation, it does not incorporate some of the components that nonprofit organizations include. As he indicated, he attempts to hire individuals who are also participants in other programs that facilitate success after incarceration, like those providing counseling or life skills training. In that way, his role is solely to offer employment, though several of his employees believe that he has given them much more by equipping them with technical expertise, communication skills, and business experience.[32]

Jobs at I Have a Bean serve as springboards to other employment opportunities, as highlighted by his former employee, Miguel, who discussed the variety of skills he honed while working for Leonard: "I roasted coffee, which involves packaging; I started doing the farmers markets where they sell cups and bags. I learned how to brew. I started reaching out, and people were buying a lot of coffee. I couldn't be doing what I'm doing now [prison ministry] had I not worked here and developed those skills."[33] Leonard claims that his newly designed roasting machine allows for a "level of control that would let someone who doesn't know anything come in and do it."[34]

This technology is particularly helpful, considering the barriers former prisoners face obtaining licenses from professional boards and applying for work with most private employers. With no knowledge or experience required, Leonard is able to present prospects for employment and skills-based learning that others may not be equipped or able to do. While his long-term goal is seventy-two microroasting plants around the country, he points out that "really we just want to roast and sell the top 1 percent of coffee, and the more we sell, the more post-prison people we can employ."[35] While his ambition as a businessperson is evident, so is his mission to facilitate improvement and success in the lives of people who have suffered. Though his approach may not come

across as radical, his open-mindedness and flexibility allow employees to engage in various parts of the business and find their niche. In this way, his labor and vision inspire his employees and give them a chance to brew their talents, along with high-quality coffee.

Another Chicago establishment has quite a different approach. Felony Franks[36] places its employees' pasts front and center in the name of the hot dog stand, menu items, restaurant lingo, and advertising. When customers approach Felony Franks, they don't place their orders but instead "plead their cases." They might choose the "Felony Frank," a jumbo hot dog, the "Misdemeanor Weiner," a regular hot dog, or the "Pardon Polish," a Polish sausage. If they still have "reasonable doubts," they might instead ask for "Freedom Fries," "Objection Onion Rings," or a "Deliberation Drink."[37] Incorporating this terminology urges people to speak openly about issues faced by formerly incarcerated people, according to creator and former owner Jim Andrews, who employed individuals with felony convictions at his restaurant paper-supply business, Andrews Paper Company, and thought opening the hot dog stand would further combat homelessness presumably because of the known increased risk of homelessness after incarceration.[38] Andrews spent $160,000 to rehabilitate a Polish sausage stand on a busy street on Chicago's West Side. What he created in 2009 was a small space with cinderblock walls, no tables or chairs, and servers standing behind bulletproof plastic, a standard practice among neighborhood stores. A unique list of Miranda rights welcomed customers who had "the right to remain hungry. Anything you order can and will be used to feed you here at Felony Franks."[39] His slogan as heard in his theme song began and remains to this day "Food so good it's criminal."[40]

But not all residents and city officials in Chicago agreed with him. One long-time resident, Michael Cunningham, explained that positive change is taking place in his community, and this restaurant is "a step back,"[41] presumably because it glorifies criminal activity in its use of various criminal charges as the names of menu items, rather than condemning it. Moreover, Robert Fioretti, the city alderman that represented the area in which Felony Franks was originally located, claimed that using language focusing on criminal behavior merely perpetuates the stigmatization of people with criminal records.[42] Fioretti opposed Felony Franks for other reasons, as well, namely, that the hot dog stand's name applauds criminal activity and in turn damages the West Side's reputation.[43]

Fioretti's opposition to Andrews's project led to a two-year lawsuit that began with an attempt by Andrews to install a larger sign that would be more visible from the street. The city denied Andrews permission to post the sign; Alderman Fioretti subsequently proposed an ordinance that would prohibit signs that extended seven inches or more from a building's façade on the street where Felony Franks was located, a project he claimed was part of a beautification effort and not related to the hot dog stand sign.[44] In early 2011, after the city denied Andrews's permit request for a sign, Andrews filed a federal lawsuit requesting $300,000 in damages against the city. The following month, the City Council

quietly approved the permit request. Nonetheless, Andrews closed his original shop in the summer of 2012. Although some community members respected his mission, the expense and hassle of the lawsuit, combined with the opening of a liquor store that brought rowdiness to the street corner where Felony Franks was located, led to his decision to pick up shop.[45] While Andrews considered Evanston as a new home, opposition from residents there[46] made Los Angeles, a city that is home to other organizations doing similar work, his top choice. However, in 2014, his son Deno Andrews decided to follow in his footsteps and reopen Felony Franks in a suburb of Chicago. Until November 2017 when his restaurant officially closed, he sold hot dogs at 6427 North Avenue in Oak Park.

The younger Andrews employed the same business and advertising tactics his father did while simultaneously emphasizing the supposed high-quality affordable food produced at his "hot dog joint." As he explained in his promotional video, despite higher costs, Felony Franks procured fresh onions and tomatoes, created a steak burger comprising 90% lean prime cuts of steak from the same supplier that provides meat to top Chicago steakhouses, and sold sausages made by a long-time Italian sausage maker in the city with the Felony Franks original recipe and made from pork from one farm. Along with high-quality meals, part of Deno Andrews's mission was to destigmatize incarceration, provide meaningful employment, and decrease marginalization by refusing to use terms like "ex-offender" and "ex-felon."[47] He also commented that "once jail time is served that a person has paid his or her debt to society."[48] The attention he placed on his employees' prior convictions could have myriad effects.

An alternative analysis to the Andrews' assertions that Felony Franks fosters an open dialogue about incarceration and to opponents' suggestions that the restaurant is moving that area of the city backwards by approving criminal activity is the notion that the restaurant may be trivializing the gravity of the hyperincarceration problem experienced nationwide, and particularly in Chicago. Though both Andrews suggest that people will speak openly about imprisonment, they provide no material to suggest an informed and engaged discourse has emerged. Instead, it seems more likely that by forcing customers to engage in a noncritical way with the language of the carceral state, he may be perpetuating the very stigma he claims to oppose by participating in "carceral othering." I define "carceral othering" as the practice where incarceration and other disciplinary measures tied to the prison work to render incarcerated people as "other," meaning they are objects of the carceral state.[49] In this specific case, calling attention to employees' past criminal convictions and incarceration histories would further other his employees by inviting outsiders to participate in the potential judgment that comes with knowing surface-level information about employees' backgrounds, marking them as "criminal," and failing to engage in a more productive dialogue. Moreover, by poking fun at the language of incarceration, and in turn, the oppression suffered by so many of the city's Black residents, including his own employees, Andrews seems to turn his restaurant into a touristic experience, perpetuating the notion of the prison as

spectacle. Finally, Andrews's "paid a debt to society" rhetoric is detrimental to antiprison work because it ignores the structural and systemic inequalities that often lead to incarceration in the first place.[50] Nonetheless, it seems evident that the controversy around Felony Franks continues to provoke debate for some about the failures of the carceral state.

Many other organizations that employ people with criminal records function as nonprofits with a social justice–oriented plan in place for individual and community empowerment. At Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles, for example, former gang members, many who have been incarcerated, participate in educational, parenting, and substance abuse programs, while receiving training over a sixteen-month period to work in several food-based establishments, including a diner, bakery, and farmers markets in the greater Los Angeles area.[51] Father Greg Boyle founded Homeboy and works as its executive director. While serving as the pastor of Dolores Mission Church in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of East Los Angeles, and after watching his community suffer the effects of gang violence, hyperincarceration, and death, Father Boyle worked to create a school, daycare, and employment opportunities. He began his first project, Jobs for a Future and Proyecto Pastoral in 1988, and through it, he developed a social enterprise in an abandoned bakery. Homeboy Bakery came to life in 1992, and Homeboy Tortilleria followed a couple months later in downtown Los Angeles. In 2001, Jobs for a Future became an independent nonprofit called Homeboy Industries and is now the self-proclaimed largest and most successful rehabilitation and gang reentry program in the world.[52] According to the organization's 2015 Annual Report, that year, Homeboy generated more than $16 million in revenue from their social enterprises and individual donations, and their financial profile indicates over $12 million in assets, confirming their status as a stronghold in the community. Moreover, a study done by the UCLA School of Public Affairs concluded that 70 percent of graduates of the Homeboy program had not been arrested in the two years since leaving the organization.[53]

Omar, a forty-five-year-old Latino man and former gang member and prisoner, works as a pastry chef at Homeboy and shares his appreciation for what he has learned from Homeboy: "Thank God for a place like this that gives us the opportunity to reform our lives and make it better for ourselves. I've been clean for two years. No drugs. They test us, keep us on our toes, make sure we're clean. We have programs that help us here. We have to take classes here, like parenting classes. People here really care about us."[54] Omar speaks about this experience positively and does not elaborate on the penalties or conditions of the drug testing at Homeboy. The organization offers free mental health services, including substance abuse counseling, which confirms its multilayered dedication to employees. Omar has known Father Greg since he was thirteen years old, and he tells me that in his younger years, he would run around the projects where he lived, selling drugs and gang banging and that no one really cared until Father Greg showed up. After being imprisoned as a young adult and then returning to his home, Omar sought help from Father Greg. A lot of

his inspiration comes from his four-year-old son: "My son, that's the reason. He's four. He's catching up. They notice. I don't want him growing up like me. No gangs. None of that stuff. I want to give him a different life."[55] He initially started doing maintenance at Homeboy, but when he volunteered in the bakery and showed interest in pastries, pastry chef Nick Glenn started teaching him.

Omar's experience with food began in the pastry department, where he currently works full-time, making all the cookies, cupcakes, and cakes from scratch. He creates the dough, kneads it, bakes it. He explains how food connects him, physically and emotionally, to people with whom he had no connection prior: "I work with rival gang members, cooking with them, doing things that I wouldn't do with them. If we saw each other before on the streets, we'd shoot each other, either fight, or try to kill each other. But we had to put that to the side."[56] He doesn't hide the apprehension he felt at the start of his employment and his surprise at how well Homeboy has served him: "It's a good experience, something I didn't really think I would do. I didn't know how it would work out, working with rival gang members."[57] He also has hopes for the future, including getting "a little bit more experience and either stay here and help others or later on, start my own business. I'm gonna stick with the baking and try to make it out there."[58] He currently writes his own recipes and photographs the pastries that he cooks but doesn't indicate whether he shares them publicly at this point. When I asked about his favorite pastries, he mentioned his Mexican pepitas, what he described as "a little cookie with cinnamon, pistachios, and pumpkin seeds in it. And then after I bake them, I put caramel on top."[59] It's evident that the experience he has had at Homeboy has provided him not only with training to prepare baked goods from scratch but also hope, pride in his work, and confidence that he will have additional opportunities to help himself and others in the community.

Other employees reiterate these positive sentiments about their own experiences at Homeboy. Josefina, who is Latina, in her late thirties, and from Southern California, remembers her reluctance about working there, thinking it represented people who forgot where they came from. She spent a few years in juvenile hall, beginning in 1992, and then spent several years in and out of adult county jail and one year in federal prison. At the insistence of her probation officer, she agreed to give Homeboy a try and quickly came to realize how inspirational she found the workplace and particularly her fellow employees. She ponders her experience and comments,

> I like it because you're working with people that are just like you, that understand you. I remember being in juvenile hall and hearing people come talk to us and it would go in one ear and out the other because I was like you ain't been where I've been. But to be around people who know your struggle or that go through the same things you go through, it kind of inspires

> you. Like if they can do it, I can do it. Slowly but surely I started making that change.[60]

Unlike some other program participants, Josefina came to Homeboy with experience cooking and baking. As a prep worker in the kitchen, she has to take direction and ask questions, experiences that she told me have been very humbling for her. She thinks for a minute about her current role and the training she has received at Homeboy and then shares her thoughts about what she has learned: "I think the training is not so much in the cooking and prepping, it's more like life skills, working with people you normally wouldn't work with."[61]

Lorena, who is Latina and in her twenties, spent three years incarcerated and reaffirms Josefina's opinions of Homeboy. She describes the opportunity she receives at Homeboy as "a beautiful thing."[62] She describes the thorough training she received in keeping foods fresh, preparing them, making salads, cutting, slicing, making dressings and full meals. She learned more than culinary skills. In Lorena's words, "Communicating, having patience, really opening up and letting people in is something I learned besides kitchen skills."[63] While contemplating what the future may hold, she confidently asserts, "but I do know that all the skills I'm getting here will in my future be helpful. I do know that."[64] Like Omar, both women speak proudly of their work, recognizing the chances she has taken, the benefits she has received, and the contributions she continues to make to her new community.

Still other establishments focus specifically on youth who have been convicted of crimes and provide unique restaurant experiences that speak to the backgrounds and culture from which many incarcerated youth come, while also providing broad-based training. Old Skool Café in San Francisco is a youth-run restaurant created by Teresa Goines, a middle-aged white woman whose experience as a former juvenile corrections officer in Southern California led to her second profession.[65] She heard stories of youth who were released from juvenile detention centers and reoffend due to lack of opportunity and wanted to make a change. Goines employs youth ages sixteen to twenty-two who apply by writing essays, interviewing, and submitting letters of recommendations. Once accepted, trainees must be working on their GED or high school diploma. Students train for four months, learning all aspects of the business, including bussing tables, managing, or serving as head chef. Old Skool Café has reported success based on its recidivism rate of 10 percent as of 2014, much lower than the national average of 76 percent.[66] The ambience is rather formal considering the age of most of the staff. The style of the dining room, as well as staff uniforms, are inspired by the Harlem Renaissance, and music of that era plays while patrons dine. The evening I was there, though piano playing enhanced the opulent décor, the hustle and bustle of people moving around and engaged in conversation seemed front and center. I couldn't help but notice the deep reddish tint of the walls and ornamental mirrors placed neatly upon them. Ornate chandeliers hung from the ceiling, and polite waiters dressed in dark red shirts

and black blazers and black pants appeared often to check in. The floor and tables were both made of dark wood, giving the entire place the feel of a sort of speakeasy. Some of the tables were surrounded by large chairs, and others were placed close to booths upholstered with red velvet. Goines has explained, "from the Harlem Renaissance to jazz and swing, so much of that was started by African-Americans. So many of our youth are of minority descent, I feel like that connection to that era is really important."[67] Student-employees look extremely professional, and their demeanors indicate they take pride in their work and feel connected to their community.[68] While Goines is religious and the program is faith-based, she describes it as inclusive and focuses on providing hope to youth. One activity she encourages is the creation of dream lists.[69] Her goal, she says, is to encourage them to dream and recognize their potential. As she puts it, "The core of it is giving them hope. . . . Once that light goes on, whatever they do, they're on their way to fly."[70] But since hope cannot be measured like recidivism rates, one must wonder how far it goes. Goines points out that while much of their training focuses on the restaurant industry, they also learn how to interview and write résumés, so it seems they will have gained skills that can serve as an impetus in their job searches.[71]

Founded by Jordyn Lexton, a white woman in her midtwenties, Brooklyn resident, graduate of Wesleyan University, and former high school English teacher at Rikers Island, the main prison complex for New York City, Drive Change is a youth-empowering social enterprise comprising several food trucks that provide culinary training to formerly incarcerated youth, ages seventeen to twenty-five. Its mission is directly related to New York's strict laws that try youth as young as sixteen as adults, labeling them "felons," and leading to a future with the same barriers adults face as they leave prison. Drive Change began "serving delicious, locally sourced food with a side of social justice"[72] in early 2014. Lexton's organization is completely mobile; food trucks move around New York city, selling a variety of creative takes on typical food items at an affordable price while simultaneously delivering a bit of advocacy,[73] meaning that the individuals running the truck are youth who have served time at Rikers Island. If asked about the name of the truck, they can provide personal perspectives about the truck's role in providing employment and skills to formerly incarcerated youth. While the trucks are not overly explicit in announcing their social justice mission, Lexton hopes that by providing a quality product in a well-designed vehicle, she and her team will reach a broad audience; in turn, people who might have limited or no experience with the legal system in the state will gain a new understanding of the obstacles facing youth with felony convictions. Of course, this theory has not been tested yet since the first food truck, which I describe in detail below, has mainly been used for private events.

Drive Change's first food truck, Snowday, highlights and draws attention to local foodways. Every menu item, including savory pancake poppers, maple grilled cheese, and pulled pork sliders, served by Snowday incorporates local maple syrup from the state of New York to benefit and promote the work of the

local farming industry. In fact, the website for the Snowday Food Truck claims that

> Our fare is built with ingredients sourced locally, seasonably and sustainably. We know the best flavor is a byproduct of ingredients grown with great care, and the freshest ingredients come from the closest farms. With every bite, you're pouring money back into our local economy, as we source the majority of our ingredients from within 200 miles. With every dish, you're deciding to take back our food production from the hands of multinational corporations, as we work hand in hand with small and family farms.[74]

This declaration of commitment to local sources may seem interesting to some considering Snowday's namesake item, Sugar on Snow, is an item Lexton borrowed after eating hot maple syrup poured over snow during a family trip to Canada. Her intent certainly seems laudable; she describes wanting to share "that amazing food experience" with other people: "So it went from something so small to wanting to provide that to other people in the city and then thinking why don't I start a food truck that serves this along with some other things and hire my students to work on it and do a whole program around it because food can be such a vehicle for really dispelling some of the preconceived notions about anyone really."[75] This notion of food experiences understood as simultaneously personal and political and narrated as facilitators of community and social change is one that appears often in terms of individuals' experiences with food during and after confinement. On the other hand, the potential criticism that could result from one's ability to travel, "find" an indigenous menu item, and then make that item the namesake for one's enterprise is also something to keep in mind.[76]

The organization also declares its support for sustainability and community. Part of its design includes repurposed wood from Hurricane Sandy to create a modern log cabin on a metal frame. The purchase, design, and rehabilitation of Drive Change's first truck were made possible, in large part, by community funds collected during the organizations successful indiegogo campaign that raised $42,196 from 347 supporters.[77] The launch film from this campaign lays out Lexton's message by highlighting the difficulties one formerly incarcerated youth faced upon returning home after imprisonment.[78] In particular, the film features a young Black boy walking out of Rikers Island in his blue hoodie, clutching a single paper bag of belongings. He returns to a house where he is depicted as lonely and out of place. As he walks outside the following day, his voiceover indicates that he half hopes no one recognizes him or remembers what he got into. An older Black comrade hands him a job application that asks about felony convictions, and the viewer watches the boy's face drop. He sits on a park bench with the words "Dead End" painted over his head and then runs

into other Black youth trying to get him involved in activities that will continue to bring him down. As he walks alone, he views a painting of the Drive Change food truck on a blank white wall. His voice reminds him, "I am the source of my own growth."[79] Eventually, he stands alone on a basketball court, and Lexton appears in the Drive Change truck to pick him up, smiling and motioning for him to hop on the truck, apparently signifying the opportunities that await him. His voice indicates that when doors close, you open them. Without knowing more of Lexton's story, some might critique this effort as part of a larger "white savior industrial complex"[80] whereby white middle-class U.S. citizens take it upon themselves to "save" Black people. The video on its own seems to reinscribe some of the stereotypes Black youth face in terms of criminality and Black families face in terms of being described as uninvolved or unsupportive. Moreover, Lexton driving up as a white woman to rescue the youth with no options can be misread as an attempt to intervene in a community of which she is not a part.[81] The authority she seems to automatically acquire reminds us of the privilege her whiteness allows in these spaces. That said, Lexton's experience teaching incarcerated youth, her work with the city of New York on employment initiatives for people with felony convictions, and her investment in her employees seem to counter potential critiques and demonstrate her commitment to the cause. As Teju Cole has explained in his writings on the "white savior industrial complex," one of the key practices of doing good work is "first do no harm. There is the idea that those who are being helped ought to be consulted over matters that concern them."[82] Lexton's ongoing dedication to learning about the disproportionate effects of incarceration on Black youth, her development of alternatives to incarceration, and her recognition of her own privilege[83] suggest that she is interested in ongoing engagement and improvement in her work.

After the video, Lexton appears on screen to describe how she left her full-time job to build Drive Change and give opportunities to kids coming out of prison who face so many challenges upon release. The challenges Lexton highlights in the launch film form the foundation for her training program, which provides payment to youth workers and includes three phases that correspond to the challenges faced by her students after reentering the community. Phase one, the pretruck training phase, lasts four months and focuses on licensing and certification, customer service, and general job readiness and includes a one-week internship on the truck to check preparedness before moving onto phase two, the truck employment phase. During this four-month phase, student-employees work one shift and participate in three smaller courses in three separate transferable skill areas that correspond with what they will be doing on the truck: money managing/accounting (cashier), social media/marketing (customer service), and culinary arts (head chef). The manager on each truck determines how to expedite everything, and the licensed supervisor (not a student-employee) drives each truck. The final four-month phase is a transitional phase tailored to the individual needs and motivations of each student-employee, who will have

been working with a social worker during the entire fellowship to offer assistance and determine next steps. Students are required to work in another job at this point while continuing courses at Drive Change.

Lexton's goals for how fellowship recipients might continue their food work beyond Drive Change link back to her desire to have each truck individually branded and her mission to provide students with industry and leadership skills. Her hope is that some students may franchise their own trucks and continue the mission while serving as their own bosses and sidestepping the difficulties that come with applying for more traditional jobs in New York and other cities when one has a criminal history. At the same time, though, it is important to note the prohibitive costs involved with purchasing one's own food truck, paying for required permits and licenses, and coming up with funds to rent parking spots, lease commercial kitchen space, and participate in food-based events.[84] Nonetheless, Lexton's objectives again foreground and embrace the ideal of food as a potential agent of social change that can provide education, training, and paid employment and, in effect, lower recidivism, promote positive community development, and confront the state's continual marginalization of formerly incarcerated people.

An organization with a different model that is also committed to providing employment to people after they leave prison is Planting Justice, focused on growing food rather than cooking and serving it. When graduates of the Insight Garden Program,[85] a gardening program at San Quentin, are released, they have jobs waiting for them the following day at Planting Justice, where they will make $17.50 an hour working on various gardening projects. The organization aims to provide healthful amenities, including "Fresh veggies. Good jobs. A safer, healthier neighborhood."[86] Its mission is broad and brings attention to systemic inequalities, including harsh treatment of food workers and limited or lack of access to healthy, fresh, affordable food particularly in low-income areas by providing skills, education, and jobs that promote sustainability to marginalized populations. Founded in 2009 and directed by social justice activists Gavin Raders and Haleh Zandi, the organization engages in a variety of activities and practices that foster its mission. By providing what they refer to as "holistic reentry," they work to end the inequities and systemic poverty that lead to incarceration, and their plan is based on providing job training prior to release and then continuing it afterward along with peer support, full health coverage, a living wage, and opportunities to grow and move forward. As far as specific jobs, Planting Justice has raised funds and purchased farms at which they provide training in permaculture and horticulture, growing nutritious local food that is available on a sliding scale to residents who are part of a neighborhood with no grocery store. Thus far, their recidivism rate is 0 percent as compared with California's 65 percent recidivism rate.[87] Based on that statistic, as well as the appreciation I witnessed among current employees, it seems that Planting Justice has delivered success along with its services.

Mark, a Black man in his late forties, who spent twenty-five years in San Quentin and graduated from the Insight Garden Program, extends praise to his current employer, who, Mark explained, provides ongoing training, the chance to be outside, and continued connection with Insight Garden Program. He calls Gavin Raders "the boss of all bosses"[88] and recounts a time when Raders brought his team to Burbank Elementary School to educate them on tree growth and the importance of recognizing suckers that will take the life out of a tree. Mark thinks that "elevated my game. When I see a tree, I already know what to do."[89] The enjoyment shows on his face when he thinks about his favorite parts of the job, which include getting his hands dirty and getting in the mud. He still credits much of his success to the person who got him started on this path, Beth Waitkus, the founder of Insight Garden Program. He told me, "When I didn't care, she did. If she could put the interest and energy in me, I think I could, too. I got closer to Beth. The re-entry program afterward, staying connected. That was the best part. Just knowing that in spite of, or regardless, I got you."[90] In the future, he sees himself "helping people first"[91] and continuing to take on the responsibility placed on him by Planting Justice. "Food is nutrition. It's supposed to be fun. It's not supposed to be obesity, trans fat, food deserts. We need to contain them to a minimum. That's one thing PJ does. We are responsible. We go to high schools, building community gardens, giving free gardens to low-income housing. We are putting our best foot forward."[92] Mark articulates connections between food, health, labor, and joy and illustrates the ways Planting Justice has contributed to growing these connections among individuals and communities.

These positive attitudes resonate with another program participant, Leon, a Black man who spent eleven years in Solano State Prison and his last five months in San Quentin. He remembers meeting Raders when he came to San Quentin for part of his training in the Insight Garden Program. He began work upon release in 2012 and says his education began immediately, as he took in "more about pruning, gardening, gray waters, raised beds, how to plant. I just thought you put plants in dirt. I've learned the names of the dirt and compost and mulch, the time to plant a plant and where, north, south, east, which direction is the sun."[93] He expresses his thankfulness for the relationships he has built, commenting that "I just love my job. It is like a big family here."[94] What Planting Justice and its employees are building could have a long-lasting impact on entire communities, and this is not lost on Leon. His happiness stems from "working with my hands, being in the outdoors, fresh air."[95] But more than that, as he reveals, "you have a sense of freedom. It's like you're giving back for your kids and grandkids and kids to come. They can say my great-great-grandfather planted this tree. I can visualize my great-great-grandkids eating a piece of fruit and telling the story, my great-great-grandfather planted this in 2013 and here it is in the year 2050."[96]

The roots that Leon has helped cultivate showcase food as a potential foundation for future generations to learn, grow, and harness skills in sustainable and more just ways. That said, the nature of this organization and others is

that its status is dependent on continued funding. Part of the business model involves employees canvassing to raise money by speaking about their work in the community. I observed this canvassing firsthand during my visit and found it extremely inspirational. We visited a busy marketplace crowded with mainly white shoppers, and I was impressed by the poise and pride in the employees' voices as they taught strangers about the organization. Rooting employees in their work by giving them a stake at making their own future by continuing funding for the organization seems to raise awareness about the way nonprofits work while also facilitating their involvement and showcasing their personal contributions to their success.

The Hopefulness and Limits of Food-Based Approaches

A few months after my first interview with Jay at Curt's Café outside Chicago, I tried to reach out to him but received no response. I learned that within a few weeks of our conversation, he had been arrested and incarcerated on new charges. I wrote to Susan Trieschmann, the director of Curt's Café, the nonprofit café at which he had been working, and we corresponded about the difficulties involved with coming home from prison.[97] The multiple layers of oppression—lack of housing, adequate healthcare, education, networks of support, and inconsistent counseling—work to break people down, continually reminding them that their lives don't matter. In Curt's Café's first three years, Trieschmann trained 110 men.[98] While Curt's had a 2 percent recidivism rate, 45 percent of people released from prison in the state of Illinois return within three years.[99] In 2015 Curt's opened a second café specifically to work with formerly incarcerated women in southern Chicago. As Trieschmann reiterates, "this is a community problem, and the community needs to be part of the healing process."[100] Without decent housing, support that extended beyond his workplace, and the ability to afford basic amenities, Jay couldn't have succeeded. Curt's alone could not make up for the lacks allowed for by the state's carceral project.[101]

Some of the more holistic programs that I have studied here begin to open up a space for the community to take part in the health and development of its most vulnerable citizens. These types of programs, including Curt's, that focus on more than just one aspect of foodways and whose work extends to diverse members of the community seem ripe for success. For example, some, like Planting Justice, offer jobs and training to former prisoners who then pass on the benefits of sustainability to young people who have not been convicted of crimes, thereby investing in their communities as they earn an income. Others, like Curt's Café, employ formerly incarcerated youth in an effort to stop the cycle of incarceration and teach them the benefits of gardening, eating healthy food, as well as how to run a café and how to interview for future jobs while also creating a community of like-minded people who have been through similar experiences. Homeboy provides a thorough model, as well, by providing

counseling, job training, and education to all participants and by giving them a chance to work at a variety of sites, including gardens, bakeries, and restaurants. Each of these spaces has the potential to teach visitors about their mission.

For many of the people I interviewed, productive possibilities came with hope. Yet that hope required these individuals' own labor, as well as the commitment of entire communities through funding and investments in education, training, and health. Even with this insight, recognizing the structural racism inherent in state policy and practice leads one to ponder the extent of the impact of such organizations. These organizations have problems as well. At their worst, companies like Felony Franks, for example, despite providing jobs to former prisoners, make light of the extent of the incarceration problem in branding and could be causing more harm than good. I would also be remiss to ignore the fact that all of the directors of the organizations and enterprises I visited exhibit and maintain privilege in the form of their whiteness, and some in their economic upbringing. Ensuring that the people with whom they are attempting to engage are part of the conversation about what would most benefit them and facilitate their objectives will be important as these organizations continue to develop. Moreover, cultivating a greater awareness about programs that may inadvertently work to build the carceral state rather than mobilize against it in all its forms will be necessary to advance the type of food-based abolitionist project I envision.

I refer to this abolitionist approach as "food radicalism," a more inclusive strategy for the mobilization and assertion of broad food-based rights among individuals whose stories often do not appear and are purposefully disappeared in traditional discussions regarding the right to food. Food radicalism advocates listening to those who are directly affected and including their knowledge and customs as part of the framework, as well as expanding the research and models on which we rely. Moreover, it highlights the efforts of individuals and groups already engaged in advocacy around food sovereignty, food democracy, and food justice; recognizes the points of convergence and divergence among them; and marshals this body of work to develop a sustained sense of activism and assertion of rights that starts with food and can potentially lead to freedom. I borrow the word "radicalism" from Cedric Robinson to indicate the ongoing and continual struggle, movement, and resistance to dominant thought,[102] and I modify it with the word "food" to clarify that the resistance we are centering is specifically related to the multiple uses of food as a way to evoke power or effect change. It is my hope that naming and legitimizing this radical approach will allow for a complete revision of systems that perpetuate racist structures of knowledge and power. This is not to say that the other categories and words, particularly food sovereignty, food democracy, and food justice, are not useful; in fact, I think they are part of food radicalism. But I am deliberate in my word choice as a method of emphasizing the continual process, practice, and progress toward the right to food and the accompanying rights that could potentially come with it. Specifically, I call attention to rights that are being asserted in

response to structural dominance, oppression, and exploitation for low-income Black and Latino communities and specifically those experiencing the direct effects of the carceral state. I expand on this discussion elsewhere.[103]

I remembered Jay's voice when he talked about the garden. He had made something he was truly proud of. Opportunities for growing and working in nature are starting points for connecting with the land, the community, and one another. I have described examples of the ways food and foodways can, perhaps unwittingly, assist people in achieving a small sense of agency in an oppressive situation by providing them with the sustenance to nourish their minds and bodies, the tastes and memories to allow them some control over their condition, and the skills to obtain jobs. If we take these activist responses to the punitive state as starting points, work to involve those who are the most directly and disproportionately affected in shaping opportunities for themselves and others, and explore various types of investments in their communities, particularly in ways that decrease their reliance on policing and prisons, we may see a fuller emergence of the power of food. Encouraging this type of comprehensive approach could contribute to the creation of a food-based framework for abolition. In this way, hope could move from a fleeting feeling or possibility to a radical transformation.

Notes

1. Susan Trieschmann, interview, September 2013.
2. I use pseudonyms for all formerly incarcerated interviewees.
3. Jay, interview, September 2013.
4. Curt's Café, "About Us," Curt's Café website, http://curtscafe.org/about-us/.
5. Curt's Café, "Our Program," Curt's Café website, http://curtscafe.org/our-program/.
6. Susan Trieschmann, interview, September 2013.
7. Prison abolition is a well-established intellectual and political movement to end surveillance, policing, and imprisonment and create humane and lasting alternatives to them. This project builds on the work of abolitionist scholars, activists, and organizations, including Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Craig Gilmore, Dylan Rodriguez, Beth Richie, Dean Spade, Critical Resistance, and Incite!, among others. For more information, see Critical Resistance, "What Is the PIC? What Is Abolition?", http://criticalresistance.org/about/not-so-common-language/, and Dan Berger, Mariame Kaba, and David Stein, "What Abolitionists Do," *Jacobin*, August 24, 2017, https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/08/prison-abolition-reform-mass-incarceration.
8. National Employment Law Project, "'Ban the Box' Is a Fair Chance for Workers with Records," Fact Sheet, April 2017, http://www.nelp.org/content/uploads/Ban-the-Box-Fair-Chance-Fact-Sheet.pdf.
9. Devah Pager, "The Mark of a Criminal Record," *American Journal of Sociology* 108, no. 5 (2003): 937, 955. Pager's research involved what she calls an "experimental audit approach—in which matched pairs of individuals applied for real entry-level jobs—to formally test the degree to which a criminal record affects subsequent employment opportunities."
10. Ibid., 959.
11. Ibid.; see also Michelle Natividad Rodriguez and Beth Avery, "Unlicensed & Untapped: Removing Barriers to State Occupational Licenses for People with Records," National Employment Law Project, April 26, 2016, http://www.nelp.org/publication/unlicensed-untapped-removing-barriers-state-occupational-licenses/.
12. National Employment Law Project, "'Ban the Box.'"
13. Michelle Natividad Rodriguez and Beth Avery, "Ban the Box: U.S. Cities, Counties, and States Adopt Fair Hiring Policies," National Employment Law Project, April 1, 2017, http://www.nelp.org/publication/ban-the-box-fair-chance-hiring-state-and-local-guide/.
14. Fair chance policies do not affect state laws that prevent individuals with specific offenses from obtaining specific jobs (i.e., individuals with sex offenses will continue to be precluded from employment at certified day care centers and schools).

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24. Official Website of Herman Bell, http://www.freehermanbell.org/VictoryGardens.html.
25. Freedom Food Alliance Website, https://freedomfoodalliance.wordpress.com/about/.
26. La Via Campesina Website, https://www.viacampesina.org/en/. La Via Campesina is an international coalition of producers, agricultural workers, rural women, and indigenous communities that advocates on behalf of over 200 million farmers in policy discussions. La Via Campesina coined this term to assert the right of people to define their food systems and to advocate for the rights of individuals to control their food and nutrition.
27. As part of my dissertation research at the University of Texas at Austin, I conducted twenty-five interviews with individuals affiliated with food-based establishments, including a gardening organization, coffee-brewing company, cafe, restaurant, and a food truck, that focus on hiring people with criminal convictions. I interviewed formerly incarcerated people as well as founders and directors of such enterprises. Marek, "Cooking with Conviction."
28. Pete Leonard, interview, September 2013. Pete Leonard interview, September 2013. I interpreted the phrase "top 1 percent of the coffee in the world" to mean that his coffee was extremely high quality and he was working to help people who many others would not consider for employment.
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100. Ibid.

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Zombification, Social Death, and the Slaughterhouse: U.S. Industrial Practices of Livestock Slaughter

Stephanie Marek Muller

In an August 2016 interview with National Public Radio, Gloria Sarmiento, a representative for the labor advocacy group Nebraska Appleseed, recalled workers' comments on the horrific conditions facing employees working on "the chain" in U.S. American slaughterhouses: "The speed of the line is really fast. The supervisors are yelling all the time. . . . They are treating us like animals."[1] The article covered the hidden stories of many employees in U.S. American slaughterhouses (also called abattoirs): "most often immigrants and resettled refugees, slaughter and process hundreds of animals an hour, forced to work at high speeds in cold conditions, doing thousands of the same repetitions over and over, with few breaks."[2] It introduced the people behind the raw tenderloins sitting in the supermarket, those responsible for ensuring that each American can consume an unprecedented 200 pounds of meat per year. In a further effort to rehumanize the forgotten workers, Oxfam America's Oliver Gottfried remembered a striking testimonial given by one abattoir employee about agricultural executives: "If they care this much about their animals, why can't they care about their people?"[3]

From an animal liberationist perspective, these sets of statements could be (and very often are) considered hyperbolic at best, "speciesist"[4] at worst. By critiquing the economic conditions of slaughterhouse employees at the expense of the slaughtered animals, these workers and their advocates in the news media seem to refuse to heed scholar Carrie Packwood Freeman's warning that "the

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treatment of farmed animals and their breeding for food constitutes a social issue which the news media have an obligation to present fairly for public debate."[5] One *could* say that slaughterhouse employees may be overworked and underpaid, but they are not being poked and prodded by electric prongs to move faster toward the slaughter line and, subsequently, the end of their lives. One *might* argue that these workers, though systemically underprotected, are still not necessarily subject to the particularly unique mode of "reproductive tyranny"[6] that turns hens and cows into unwilling, unwitting baby-producing machines and kills them for meat once they are "spent." One *can* point out that annual abattoir worker death tolls do not even reach the hundreds, let alone *10 billion*, which is the number of livestock animals slaughtered per year by the U.S. American agriculture industry. After all, in 2017, approximately 8,916,097,000 chickens, 240,011,000 turkeys, 121,372,000 pigs, 32,189,000 adult cattle, 512,000 calves, 26,628,000 ducks, and 2,178,000 sheep were slaughtered for meat in the United States alone.[7]

In response to the above critiques, this article argues that the rhetorical "weighting" of such oppressions is ultimately counterproductive to the aims of intersectional, interspecies justice. Whoever has suffered "more" or "worse" or "in what capacity" is not a fruitful lens by which to study animal and/or human rights. Rather, instead of being studied in *opposition* to each other, the intersecting and often co-constituting oppressions of *Homo sapiens* and other species in the U.S. American livestock industry must be studied *in relation* to one another. It is important to note that despite the differences in *degree* in many of these instances of abuse, they are in large part similar in *kind*. That is to say, they are a part of broader spectrums of systemic inequality and state-sanctioned violence. These ideological and material inequalities, despite having different species subjects, are not distinct from one another but, rather, *mutually constitutive*.[8]

Indeed, to ignore the plight of slaughterhouse workers is to ignore a key corner of the intersectional labyrinth that is the pursuit of social justice. Ecofeminist rhetorician Richard Rogers highlights how human and animal issues are inextricably linked to broader systems of power. Scholars and activists interested in issues of animal and/or human rights must take seriously theories of intersectionality in their analyses wherein "the very categories of domination and subordination (which also include nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, and ability) [are] mutually constitutive, pointing to an interdependence between and lack of any firm foundation for such categories."[9] Critical animal studies scholar Nekeisha Alexis further warns that "animal advocates overlook a crucial piece of the puzzle when they celebrate employee layoffs and criminal convictions without attending to the ways racism, sexism, capitalism, and other forms of oppression foster a culture of violence on factory farms."[10] An intersectional approach to the oppressions inherent in industrial agriculture notes how slaughterhouse employees are not merely deranged sadists torturing and killing animals for the sport of it. Many, if not the majority, of these workers are actually in highly vulnerable social positions—people of color, refugees, and

undocumented immigrants—and thrust into one of the most dangerous jobs in America, often with little to no legal protections. They too are victims of systemic violence in which they are "routinely subject to chronic and debilitating injuries and illnesses, physical exhaustion, verbal and emotional abuse by superiors, and severe restrictions on their most basic needs."[11] Agricultural animal abuses are strategically hidden from view and thus rendered invisible, but so too is the hidden "psychological trauma" inflicted on workers who "experience, on a daily basis, large-scale violence and death that most of the U.S. American population will never have to encounter."[12] Employees' intense vulnerability can allow their rights to be violated without repercussions. Thus, although abattoir workers are not marched to their *literal* deaths like the animal inhabitants inside the slaughterhouse, they frequently experience what historical sociologist Orlando Patterson calls "social death."[13] In other words, these unfortunate subjects are kept in a state of zombiedom, of "death-in-life."[14] A state of "institutionalized marginality" must be understood as "the ultimate cultural outcome of the loss of natality as well as honor and power. It [is] in this too that the master's authority rest[s]."[15]

In recent decades, the amount of animal products consumed by the average American has increased exponentially. Through vertical integration (a carefully coded term for monopolizing), a few large companies completely control the U.S. meat industry, such as Tyson, Cargill, National Beefpacking Co. LLC, and JBS USA. Despite the massive growth of meat production, increased profits for corporate higher-ups, and obscene amount of corpses disassembled for flesh, slaughterhouse employees have not seen the profits: "While slaughterhouse wages have historically been above the average manufacturing wage, the slaughterhouse wage fell below the manufacturing average in 1983 and was a whopping 24 percent lower than the average manufacturing wage by 2002."[16] Currently, employees earn approximately $26,000 a year (on the high end) for full-time work despite working considerably longer hours (twelve or more hour days), doing more physically and psychologically intense labor than the average American employee.[17] Instead of wage increases, employees have had to increase the speed of the line. According to one worker, "From the time you enter, you're told that if the plant stops 10 minutes, the company will lose I don't know how many millions of dollars. . . . It's always 'faster, faster.'"[18] In doing so, workers face high risk of serious injury and have neither the time nor the incentive to ensure "humane" treatment of the animals being sent to slaughter. The vicious routinization of forced apathy, mandatory cruelty, and countless deaths in the name of profit is one representation of what Barbara Noske calls the "animal-industrial complex,"[19] demonstrating how "capitalist biopolitics do typically operate via an assumption of human/animal hierarchy, but collectively resource humans and animals alike for capitalization often in the same places and at the same times."[20]

Critical animal studies scholars insist that "single-issue campaigns," that is, advocacy focused on only one aspect of intersectional, institutionalized, sys-

temic oppressions, are detrimental to animal liberation. The study of one at the expense of the other or the emphasis of one as "more important" than the other is not an effective form of social justice communication. Within this framework, this article takes seriously the assertion that "although cruelty must not be excused, it is crucial to link the trauma factory farm employees undergo to the trauma they inflict on the animals. Without an intersectional approach, animal advocates fail to unmask the full extent of the violence."[21] Particularly notable literature has identified animal abuses as analogous to, connected to, and often even worse than, historical human-on-human atrocities. For example, *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust*, by social historian and Holocaust specialist Charles Patterson, analogizes industrial agriculture to the Holocaust, explaining how agricultural practices influenced practices in concentration camps and vice versa. *The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery*, by bioethicist Marjorie Spiegel, takes a similar approach using the transatlantic slave trade as a central thematic.[22]

These works are renowned in animal liberationist circles for their careful melding of the historical abuses of ethnonationalism, racism, and speciesism, but they have met considerable criticism. They have been criticized for appropriating the histories of oppressed peoples while ignoring the particularities of ethnic histories, and ultimately recentering whiteness as the basis for social justice ethics.[23] Feminist legal theorist Maneesha Deckha notes the affective consequences of invoking direct, historical analogical comparisons between human and animal suffering due to the long legacy of using the category of "subhuman" as a cultural agent of violence: "Obviously, it can be very unsettling for vulnerable human groups to destabilize this boundary . . . especially so for vulnerable human groups whose humanity has been historically denied."[24] After all, as philosopher Sylvia Wynter so famously explained in her genealogy of the colonial European construction of humanity, man's "overrepresentation" necessarily depended on the not-manness (and thus animalness) of the colonized.[25] Thus, regardless of any latent speciesism involved in not wanting to "be" animal, the historical connotations of being forced into that arbitrarily constructed category and subsequently relegated to societal marginality necessitate a serious reconsideration of the propriety of invoking such comparisons. This controversy is further compounded by the risk of "appropriating" a particular cultural group's struggles for another group's ends.[26]

In response to these cogent critiques, this article offers what I deem a more fruitful conceptual metaphor of the zombie. This disquisition draws on evaluations by critical-cultural communication studies and critical animal studies of the interplays between racist and speciesist practices. Odd as the assertion may be, this article argues that the "walking dead" of horror films might render greater understandings of speciesist–racist interplays in industrial agriculture. Despite the current fandom surrounding pop culture hits like *The Walking Dead*, *Shaun of the Dead*, and *i-Zombie*, discussions of zombies need not be limited to fantastical representations. An understanding of the inner workings

of the U.S. American slaughterhouse is incomplete without the bloody deaths, mangled flesh, and psychoses so reminiscent of zombie slashers.[27] Furthermore, cultural theories of zombiedom reveal the colonial ties that weave together killers and the killable. By using zombies as metaphors for animals-to-be-slaughtered and their would-be slaughterers and by applying real-world examples of zombification in the U.S. American abattoir, this article reveals a concerning condition that I call "comorbid zombification." The term reflects a sociocultural condition in which agricultural animals, rendered socially dead from birth, act on and are acted on by slaughterhouse workers who, through their proximity to animality, reify their own (often racially inscribed) socially dead, "sub"-human, and ultimately zombified cultural statuses. Comorbid zombification is a process by which human–livestock interactions in the slaughterhouse produce and perpetually reproduce conditions of what Achille Mbembe labels "death-in-life."[28]

What follows is an explication of critical cultural theories of the zombie in order to demonstrate the fantastical monster's unarguable ties to issues of race, social positioning, and status as human. This thesis builds on theories of social death, necropolitics, and the social production of humanness. I follow with three distinct analyses of comorbid zombification as manifested in the U.S. American slaughterhouse. The first manifestation of the process of comorbid zombification is cultural. Workers and the animals at their mercy often occupy vulnerable, liminal, and purposefully invisible positions in the U.S. American social sphere, denied "rights" and even "humane treatment" within and even before they even set foot in the slaughterhouse. The next manifestation is physical, wherein human and animal bodies in the abattoir often mimic what pop culture consumers commonly imagine as an injured "zombie body." The final manifestation is psychological, in which residents of the slaughterhouse are at times driven to psychoses often identified as criminal, deranged, or monstrous. Ultimately, the U.S. American slaughterhouse is a space that reifies the sliding scale of humanity, wherein marginalized persons are "closer" to "inferior" beings, both metaphorically and literally, ultimately rendering both parties as "less than human" and therefore disposable in the public eye.

Zombies, Zombification, and Defining the "Human"

Although zombies—like werewolves, vampires, and other monstrous human perversions—are often dismissed as inhabitants of fantastical films, they are hardly "empty signifiers."[29] The zombie figure carries within it the cultural hopes and fears of those who conjure it. Indeed, as media scholar Bernadette Calafell observes, "Monsters are said to reflect the anxieties of their times."[30] The history of the zombie dates back to colonial Haiti, wherein enslaved peoples feared that suicide might lead to a form of living death as opposed to a peaceful afterlife, thus giving slaves a reason to continue living. After the Haitian Revolution, the myth of the zombie continued via fears that malevolent *bokor* (Vodoun sorcerers) might bewitch bodies to perform free labor. In this

way, zombiedom was initially representative of immense cultural and religious anxieties surrounding unending, mindless bondage.[31] Anthropologist Wade Davis further identifies zombies not as abstract fears but as very real possibilities of existence. "Zombification" is a "social process" through which one's "outcast" status allows privileged members of society to enforce zombiedom—not as a "random criminal activity" by malevolent *bokor* but as a "social sanction imposed by recognized corporate groups whose responsibility included the protection and policing of that society."[32] This description explains zombification as a very real production of social relationships and serves as the basis for criticisms of the zombie.

Cultural theorists and critics have asserted that zombies, within a Western context, represent a neoliberal, white-supremacist, patriarchal, heteronormative, Judeo-Christian society's fears of cultural dissolution at the hands of "Othered" hordes. Eric Watts argues that in U.S. contexts, mediated zombie hordes reflect "postracial American apocalyptic politics" in which "the 'zombie' figures the apocalypse as a national collapse."[33] Steven Pokornowski claims that popular zombie outbreak narratives mirror legal and media narratives of African American deaths at the hands of law enforcement—in other words, both zombies and black bodies are racialized, pathologized, and killable.[34] Jon Stratton similarly critiques that fears of zombie hordes mirror Western nations' anxieties about increased influxes of asylum seekers, refugees, and "illegal" immigrants. No matter *who* the zombie signifies, the "men behind the monsters" represent Giorgio Agamben's "bare life," a liminal state of being in which a person does not truly qualify as a "person" under the law. Those resigned to bare life endure a marginalized existence in which even basic necessities of life are not guaranteed. And, "excluded from the rights and privileges of the modern state, those displaced people . . . can be treated in a way that enables them to become associated with a condition mythically exemplified in the zombie."[35] The undead and those they signify can thus represent "completely realized colonial objects. Zombies cannot be recognized, accommodated, or negotiated with; once identified, they must immediately be killed.[36]

To understand the material and existential conditions of the politically, legally, and socially disenfranchised, one must understand cultural theories of "living death," specifically necropolitics and social death. Postcolonial critic Achille Mbembe's conception of necropolitics serves as a useful add-on to Foucauldian notions of the biopolitical, or how sovereigns exert control over living bodies. The necropolitical refers to the state's potential to make certain bodies killable, such as naming enslaved bodies "chattel" to deny them of their personhood and subsequently of their legal rights to life and liberty. Sovereign powers maintain a constant "state of exception"[37] to ensure that violence against bodies is justifiable. The ideal necropolitical subject is, according to Mbembe, kept in an unending "*state of injury*, in a phantomlike world of horrors and intense cruelty and profanity."[38] I argue that the social process of zombification is better

understood as the process by which, vis-à-vis the realm of the necropolitical, one becomes socially dead physically, psychologically, and culturally.

Even if we question the analogy that industrial agricultural places animals in the role of the ideal socially dead subject (the chattel slave), the connections between animality and the question of the zombie are undeniable. The social production of zombiedom is synonymous with what Katherine McKittrick dubs the "social production of humanness," which entails the ways in which Western ontologies "normatively conceptualize difference, cast our present hierarchical order as a truth, and site Man as a location of desire. . . . Humanness is, then, both Man made and human made, pivoting on the displacement of difference and alternative forms of life."[39] In other words, colonial understandings of the world privilege a human/nonhuman binary wherein the ideal human body mimics those in control of the world—specifically, the white, male, heterosexual, able-boded, Judeo-Christian, human body.[40] Deviants from this representation of the human are therefore inferior, which is to say closer to the animal, and therefore of less inherent value.[41] Animality is understood as injuring, resulting in people being unjustly "treated like animals" or compared to them in a derogatory fashion. Fashioning the connection between human and animal slaughterhouse subjects requires scholars to heed the warning that "as long as the automatic exclusion of animals from ethical standing remains intact simply because of their species, such a dehumanization via animalization will be readily available for deployment against whatever body that happens to fall outside the ethnocentric 'we.'"[42] Slaughterhouse subjects, human *and* animal, exist in uncomfortably close proximity to one another, thus contaminating each other with the particularities of their liminalities and further reifying a colonial sliding scale of humanity.

The connection between humanness, animality, and the creation of socially dead subjects stages a needed discussion of the industrial U.S. American slaughterhouse. After all, "the making of the Americas was/is an (often dangerously genocidal and ecocidal) interhuman and environmental project through which 'new forms of life' can be conceptualized."[43] In identifying contemporary forms of "bare life," critical animal studies scholar Laura Hudson argues that not only humans can be named socially dead but so too can animal subjects within an ultramechanized capitalist system that excludes certain figures from the rewards of production and instead abuses their labor. Livestock, for instance, are part of everyday social interactions in America, even if their presence is not known. Many, perhaps even most of us, eat their meat, wear their skin, or drink their milk without ever acknowledging the living body that produced them. The industrial farm serves as an ideal manifestation of a state of exception (considered a moment of "emergency" or "intense need" wherein the state overrides traditional securitization norms and regard for the humane treatment of subjects for the maintenance of an abstract public good) wherein violence is normalized and justified:

> Here, animals cease to represent domesticated nature, becoming instead representatives of an industrial production process that reduces all life to bare life. After centuries of breeding and control, many of the animals raised in intensive western agriculture appear as artifacts rather than living beings.[44]

Meanwhile, those persons assigned to slaughter socially dead animals are often shoved to the margins of social life. In direct violation of modern propriety, many slaughterhouse employees not only represent liminal persons (the nonwhite, the illegal immigrant, the parolee) but also engage in acts of violence deemed unsuitable for genteel middle-class life.[45]

The abattoir serves as "*a zombie-hood* grounded in the tasks performed at the plant. Workers simultaneously bring home 'the bacon' and find themselves transformed by their environment into a slaughterhouse body."[46] The following sections do not reject the agency of the human and animal bodies within and outside of the slaughterhouse walls. Neither do they attempt to render invisible their many acts of resistance against their conditions. Rather, they seek to elucidate the exploitative processes by which the animal-industrial complex *attempts* to strip these agencies, to castrate acts of resistance, and to ultimately reify the culturally constructed subhumanity of slaughterhouse inhabitants to further the capitalist cause. This process, dubbed, comorbid zombification, emerges in the realms of the cultural, the physical, and the psychological.

Zombiedom and the Cultural

Comorbid zombification in the slaughterhouse is, from a broad cultural standpoint, the result of purposeful invisibility, institutionalized hatred, and intense vulnerability. The U.S. American agricultural imaginary embraces nostalgia where individual, salt-of-the-earth farmers raise their cows, chickens, pigs, and sheep on healthy green pastures with love and care. Whether or not such affections ever truly existed (or ever can exist) between agriculturalists and the animals doomed to slaughter, the vision of roaming animals in open fields is now nothing but a "greenwashed"[47] myth perpetuated by the food industry, one that caters to the needs of those consumers too fragile to imagine their own complicity in agricultural exploitation. Indeed, the master narrative of pastoral animal husbandry belies the material and conditions of U.S. American industrial agriculture that relegate slaughterhouse populations to a liminal realm between peaceful nature and civilized culture.

With the above conclusions in mind, American literature scholar Gerry Canavan argues that "we live in the real world, a zombieless world, where the only zombies to be found are the ones we ourselves have made out of the excluded, the forgotten, the cast-out, and the walled-off."[48] The abattoir epitomizes this phenomenon, for in a building dedicated to slaughter and the "inhumane," invisibility is the name of the game. According to geographer Richard White,

> These places of slaughter are private and forbidden. . . . Indeed the active exclusion of people is aggressively enforced, in the shape of explicit warning signs, electric fences, barbed wire adorning high walls, patrolled by security guards and/or surveyed by CCTV cameras. Any unauthorized person or group who does manage to gain entry does so at great personal risk.[49]

And who other than investigative reporters and animal activists would even *want* to enter such an arena of blood, guts, death, and horror? As the old homage goes, "If slaughterhouses had walls, everyone would be vegetarians." Thus, in order to keep the agriculture industry profitable and a meat-eating society complacent, the animal and human abuses that occur day by day in the abattoir are strategically hidden from public view. As psychologist and animal rights activist Melanie Joy explains, "While it is difficult, if not impossible, to question an ideology that we don't even know exists, it's even more difficult when that ideology actively works to keep itself hidden."[50] What Joy dubs a "carnist" ideology not only normalizes the eating of flesh via mass slaughter but also normalizes the treatment of those relegated to the margins of society, those unfortunate souls unable to find work other than in the abusive confines of the abattoir.

From the farm to the chain, industrially farmed animals are hidden from public view. Note the geography of industrial agriculture, wherein confined animal feeding operations and slaughterhouses are disproportionately located in rural, poor communities inhabited by people of color—in other words, in those communities least likely to garner media attention for the horrific environmental and health consequences of living among sick animals.[51] The facilities themselves are often windowless, preventing any prying eyes from seeing the horrific conditions of the animals awaiting their demise. By the end of the day, the animal bodies whose lives were spent behind walls are rendered even more absent through their transformation from once live flesh to abstract, inert "meat." Per philosopher Stephen Thierman, "the living, breathing animals who ate, slept and interacted—often in atrocious conditions—literally disappear. In the slaughterhouse, their individuality is completely elided as they become inert commodities for human consumption."[52]

Through the strategic production of institutionalized racial division, the agricultural industry further ensures that slaughterhouse employees as "individuals" disappear so that empathic alliances, such as unions, cannot form.[53] Infamously, in 2000, *New York Times* journalist Charlie LeDuff reported a dismal scene at one abattoir wherein racial segregation was not only the norm but also a strategy to keep workers in line:

> The few whites on the payroll tend to be mechanics or supervisors. As for the Indians, a handful are supervisors; oth-

> ers tend to get clean menial jobs like warehouse work. With few exceptions, that leaves the blacks and Mexicans with the dirty jobs at the factory. . . . The locker rooms are self-segregated and so is the cafeteria. The enmity spills out into the towns. The races generally keep to themselves. . . . Language is also a divider. . . . This means different groups don't really understand one another and tend to be suspicious of what they do know.[54]

Ironically, the cliquishness of the abattoir led not to racialized group solidarity but rather to depersonalization. According to one worker, "They don't kill pigs in the plant, they kill people."[55] The plant is so loud, so fast paced, so mechanical that even those of the same racial composition cannot bond: "the workers double their pace, hacking pork from shoulder bones with a driven single-mindedness. They stare blankly, like mules in wooden blinders, as the butchered slabs pass by."[56] Ultimately,

> The people in this environment have a hard time seeing each other and this inability leads to distrust, segregation, and animosity. A very tangible effect of these reductions seems to have been the stifling of attempts at collective action with respect to unionization. In this carceral institution, the disciplinary partitioning and ranking of individuals along various axes causes individuals to effectively disappear.[57]

Workers were, in this scenario, struggling to engage in authentic interactions, to form lively social bonds, and were instead transformed into zombified figures that merely existed side by side.

There is little doubt that farmed animals have little to no legal protections. The fact that they are consumed and enjoyed by lawmakers and their hungry constituents ensures such pitiful conditions. Indeed, the most "revolutionary" advances in U.S. American agriculture in the past few years have merely ensured more human (perhaps better described as *slightly less inhumane*) treatment of farmed animals, such as the "phasing out" of battery cages and gestation crates or the adoption of less terrifying slaughter methods, such as those suggested by Temple Grandin. They are chattel, not persons under the law, thus lacking the legal rights and privileges supposedly guaranteed to conscious beings. The possibility of "rights" for farmed animals is an impossible notion, for, as legal scholar and animal activist Gary Francione notes, in conditions where a human's pleasure versus an animal's life are placed in contestation with one another, only the party with legal personhood (and thus moral standing) will be victorious.[58] Perhaps employees might advocate on behalf of the animals in their "care," but, as Alexis cautions, "without meaningful legal protections,

employees are compelled to remain silent about these conditions and the aggression used against nonhuman animals."[59]

Even though abattoir employees are biologically human, culturally they tend not to hold the legal rights and moral standing promised to employees under U.S. American labor law. In many instances, this has to do with citizenship status. Slaughterhouses are often populated by "illegal" immigrants who risk deportation by speaking out against poor working conditions. Such brutish conditions explain the 100 percent annual turnover rate at some abattoirs.[60] So inhumane are working conditions that one Oxfam report noted that due to a disregard for legally mandated bathroom breaks, "too many workers tell stories about urinating on themselves, or witnessing coworkers urinating on themselves."[61] Humiliated workers have been known to wear diapers to work or avoid nourishing themselves entirely: "Jean, from a Tyson plant in Virginia, says that even though she's diabetic, 'I don't drink any water so I won't have to go.'"[62] Employees often work twelve-hour days for up to seven days a week doing backbreaking work without health insurance.[63] If employees dare to rest, they might be fired on the spot: "Once you get hurt, they are just waiting for these people to do a mistake to fire them because they don't want them over there . . . you sit down, you get tired, they fire you because they say you're sleeping."[64] And, despite "strict" U.S. Department of Agriculture regulations on abattoirs, inspectors usually care more about food purity than workers' rights, with new policies consistently coming into place that decrease government inspections and leave safety measures to the companies themselves.[65]

From a broader cultural standpoint, abattoir work is "a labor considered morally and physically repellent by the vast majority of society that is sequestered from view rather than eliminated or transformed."[66] By making absent the human and animal bodies slated to suffer in the slaughterhouse, Americans can, if they wish, conveniently forget about the very real bodies maimed and killed in the name of meat production. As was famously depicted in Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, within the mysterious slaughterhouse walls, inhabitants are less than human under the law, with animals and migrants lacking legal protections entirely and other workers strategically separated from one another to prevent justice-seeking alliances. For many of those human persons shopping for ground chuck at the grocery store, abattoir inhabitants are little more than spirits of slaughters past. Within the slaughterhouse, however, multiple bodies function—or are, at least, under constant risk of functioning—under the zombified conditions of social death "manifested through the overseer's disposition to behave in a cruel and intemperate manner and in the spectacle of pain inflicted."[67]

Zombiedom and the Physical

The transformation of human and animal bodies into shambling, infected, near corpses via the politics of industrial agriculture serves as the first site of comorbid zombification. As undead monsters, zombies are hardly exemplars of

beauty and health. Those confined to zombiedom have rotting, bleeding skin, bruised and beaten by those protagonists intent to slaughter them once and for all. These monsters are infected with dangerous, contagious diseases that transformed them into their disgusting physical forms in the first place. These contagions are the bane of pure society and of those healthy human bodies keen to stay that way.

Prior to arriving at the slaughterhouse, the animals have already started resembling the rotting, shambling corpses associated with popular culture zombie films. Life on a factory farm forbids bodily flourishing. At best, animals are left "languishing in appalling conditions."[68] With the advent of genetic engineering, animals like chickens are now born so biologically warped that their immense torso mass cannot be supported by their tiny legs. They are born and raised indoors, with little to no sunlight or fresh air. To compensate for overcrowding, birds are often "de-beaked" without anesthetic. In March 2014, the animal advocacy group Mercy for Animals covertly recorded the horrific sight of farmed turkeys "stricken by open wounds, rotting eyes, and gruesome infections."[69] Pregnant pigs languish in tiny enclosures called "gestation crates," which are so small that the animals can barely turn around. Their immobility results in bellies swollen and rotting from time spent on the floor in their own urine and feces.[70] The piglets are ripped from their mothers and further mutilated: "tails are cut off, their teeth are often clipped in half, their ears are mutilated, and males' testicles may be cut off—all without any pain relief."[71] Broiler hens (those female chickens who have not been sent to slaughter due to their ability to lay eggs) and dairy cows (female cows whose reproductive cycles have not yet been "spent") endure artificial insemination, embryo transfers, forced molting, hormone injections, heat cycle monitoring, and other practices that alter the natural biological functions of these animals and leave their bodies in irreversibly damaged states by the time they are sent to slaughter.[72] Many animals are already infected with diseases like pneumonia by the time they are sent to "the chain," sicknesses that, like *Resident Evil*'s T-virus, easily spread to humans and turn their brains into mush, like mad cow disease. And, en route to the slaughterhouse, livestock frequently experience bodily harm during travel due to being stuffed and cramped into trucks.[73] Joy describes the experience of chickens: "grabbed and crammed into crates that are stacked on top of one another, they can suffer broken or dislocated wings, hips, and legs, as well as internal hemorrhages."[74]

Once they have arrived at the slaughterhouse, animals are already in a tragic state of life in death. However, some have it worse than others, as in the case of "downed animals." Coldly called "nonambulatory livestock" in the industry, these are the animals that arrive too sick or too injured to stand and walk on their own. In 2009, President Barack Obama banned the use of downed animals for meat consumption, and more and more animal "welfare" legislation is being passed to avoid profiting off sick creatures. However, since these animals are devoid of profit, they are often left to die of neglect. Melanie Joy

reports that "still-living animals have been documented being dumped onto a 'dead pile,' which may contain dozens of corpses. The downed animals that are not discarded may be dragged by hooks or chains or bulldozed by a forklift."[75]

Employees are not free from the flesh-rotting, bone-breaking experiences on the slaughterhouse chain. Debbie Berkowitz, a former official for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), darkly notes that "part of the business model in this industry is to sacrifice worker safety on the altar of profits."[76] By the end of one's employment in an abattoir, many have incurred irreversible bodily damage. The meat industry's already dangerously high level of injuries among workers is growing ever higher as the speed of production increases. For instance, approximately 25 percent of meatpackers take ill or are injured every year.[77] A 2014 OSHA report reveals that beef and pork processing workers were seven times more likely to have repetitive motion injuries.[78] The furious pace of slaughterhouse work results in an all-too-common array of musculoskeletal disorders in workers' "muscles, tendons, ligaments, and nerves, that cause pains, strains, and inflammation."[79] Common injuries for meatpackers include the banal (such as tendonitis and carpal tunnel syndrome) and the severe (such as puncture wounds, lacerations, bone splinters, and complete loss of appendages).[80] Even normal bodily functions can be disrupted on the line. Multiple investigative reports have found that workers, even pregnant women, are often unable to use the bathroom while on the line, with some even refusing to drink water or even wearing diapers to work.[81]

Sometimes the brutality of the chain leads to death itself. In 1983, one worker died from inhaling poisonous fumes while cleaning a blood-collection tank. Despite the company being fined and ordered to develop new cleaning methods, a second worker died while cleaning the same tank a mere three years later. Additionally, a 2002 article for the *Los Angeles Times* reported that in Nebraska, one worker sliced open his chest with a boning knife near the end of his shift.[82]

However, a majority of the deaths are hardly as gruesome as a horror movie. Like the beginning of any zombie apocalypse, slaughterhouse worker deaths start with infections. Eric Johnson reports an excess of deaths from cancer among slaughterhouse workers, particularly of the tongue, esophagus, lungs, skin, bone, bladder, and lymph nodes. Apparently, it is the excess contact with sick and abused animals that leads to the excess of disease: "exposure to microbial agents by the airborne route or through contact with contaminated carcasses or animals is well known in abattoirs and meat processing plants, and workers work in production lines that bring them in contact with hundreds or thousands of animals daily."[83] Given the high rate of cuts and lacerations, infectious agents have "ample opportunity" to enter the bodies of unsuspecting workers. Further, workers show an increased risk for stroke.[84]

The fear of contamination and contagion is preeminent in zombie horror films. In the "real world," we might also consider the means by which slaughtered animals and slaughterhouse workers become vectors for disease among

the "pure" and "innocent" public. Seventy-three percent of emerging pathogenic diseases are zoonotic in origin.[85] Note the ever-growing fears of foodborne diseases, such as E. coli, salmonella, and mad cow disease, as well as the less-talked-about but deadly campylobacter. In a haunting, horror movie-esque description of the microbe's potential for growth in overcrowded poultry operations, biosecurity experts Hinchliffe and colleagues describe the overnight transformation of chickens' bodies into infected agents:

> Thriving in conditions of intense physiological change in which immune systems are commonly compromised, Campylobacter is also successful in high stress environments wherein already compromised birds seem to produce the necessary physio-chemical conditions for the bacterium to spread both within the body (its uptake from the gut to muscles) and throughout the concentrated population. . . . A typical UK poultry house of *10,000-30,000 birds can, as a result, become positive for Campylobacter almost overnight*.[86]

Additionally, excess use of antibiotics on livestock animals had left many scientist concerned about antibiotic resistance, particularly the risk of a resistant superbug capable of producing a "public health crisis" (a carefully coded term for pandemic).[87]

Slaughterhouse workers were not free from these contagions. Because they worked so closely with contaminated carcasses, workers were at a significant risk of contracting zoonotic diseases capable of being transmitted from human to human. For instance, the Centers for Disease Control reported that workers were at increased risk of Q fever, which at its most benign manifested as influenza but at its worst could become pneumonia or hepatitis. OSHA warned that meat processing workers might develop antibiotic-resistant staphylococcus infections, better known as MRSA, as well as brucellosis, influenza, and dermatological infections.[88]

While zombies do not exist in "real life" as literal manifestations of the undead, they are certainly real as exemplars of social death when looking at the physical bodies moving within the U.S. American slaughterhouse. Human and animal bodies exist as maimed, as constantly injured beings analogous to the bleeding, festering bodies of monstrous zombiedom. And, as in the grand master narrative of a zombie apocalypse, already vulnerable slaughterhouse populations risk exposing those closest to them to contagions. Furthermore, the zoonotic diseases borne from the necropolitical pit of the slaughterhouse might just lead to a pandemic the likes of which zombie films have never seen.

Zombiedom and the Psychological

The identification of the zombie with the development of violent psychosis provides a suitable entrée point for a second form of comorbid zombification. One of the most commonly emphasized zombie traits in the horror industry is the zombie's desire to feed, a hunger of such ferocity that the zombie body embraces brutal sociopathy. While exploited animals are hardly empty shells devoid of agency, it is important to note how, prior to arriving at the slaughterhouse, livestock animals have figuratively "lost their minds" due to conditions of intense trauma and confinement. Furthermore, on interacting with these zombified creatures, slaughterhouse workers become prone to similar trauma-induced psychoses ranging from posttraumatic stress to sadistic behaviors inside and outside of the job. The U.S. American slaughterhouse is the arena where human and animal bodies meet, enacting psychological violence on one another and spreading that violence outside of the abattoir's bloody walls.

Life on a factory farm leads to multiple representations of psychosis in farmed animals. The animal-on-animal violence that goes on in industrial agricultural arenas is reminiscent of the gruesome carnage left in a zombie horde's wake. Given that their short lives are filled with little more than "disease, exposure to extreme temperatures, severe overcrowding, violent handling"[89] and more, that the animals might act out is hardly a shock (at least to those who are not foolish enough to still think of nonhumans as mere automata). Many are traumatized from birth. Calves are separated from their mothers much earlier than in nature, a process recognized by veterinarians as a "major psychological stressor."[90] Michael Pollan explains that "weaning is perhaps the most traumatic time on a ranch for animals and ranchers alike; cows separated from their calves will bellow for days, and the calves, stressed . . . are prone to getting sick."[91] Chickens—fat, cramped, and drugged as they are—find themselves unable to carry out natural behaviors like roosting and foraging. As a result, they develop psychotic behaviors ranging from feather pecking to cannibalism. Pigs have developed neurotic behaviors, such as biting each other's tails off and chomping at the bars of their pens. Some are even known to experience a form of posttraumatic stress disorder (what the agricultural industry calls "porcine stress syndrome") as a result of their cruel treatment.[92] In the name of "welfare," some geneticists are experimenting with livestock to see if they might make the animals incapable of experiencing suffering. In doing so, scholar Laura Hudson argued that "perhaps even this spontaneous expression of distress at their captivity will be lost and they will truly become the blind, living machines of production that they imperfectly embody today."[93] In other words, the crazed, violent zombie body might be replaced by a docile monster that, like any zombie, is doomed to meet its end with a shot to the head.

Life on the killing floor is not kind to the psyches of employees greeted with terrified animals with psychosis. Indeed, time spent in a slaughterhouse may as well be considered time spent being contaminated with a "killing dis-

ease"—something in the air that, if left untreated, can make one bloodthirsty and cruel. In the age of social media, more and more undercover videos "go viral" and produce social outrage and disgust over the treatment of farmed animals. For example, in 2008, the Humane Society of the United States released footage of workers at the Westland/Hallmark Meat Company beating cattle, shocking them, and using forklifts to drag downed animals to slaughter. A similar Humane Society video emerged showing workers at Bushway Packing Inc. shocking and beating baby calves that still had their umbilical cords attached and even skinning some of them alive.[94] Workers have been instructed to rip off birds' heads and have guiltlessly played with the decapitated corpses for fun.[95] Indeed, "the nature of the slaughterhouse work may have caused psychological damage to the employees because the employees' actions certainly rise to the level of abnormal cruelty that would cause concern among the general population."[96]

While horrifying scenes like this continue to enter the public eye, companies often attribute the abuse to a "few bad apples" in the slaughterhouse. According to Alexis, "management's first line of defense is blaming overtaxed laborers who are compelled to follow orders in heinous working environments. Firing low level employees reassures consumers that, with the exception of a few heartless rule-breakers, all is well on the farm."[97] However, all is most certainly *not* well, at least not when it comes to the mental health of slaughterhouse workers. The "faster, *faster!*" ethic of production ensures that workers have neither the time nor the incentive to see that the animals do not suffer. However, the impossible speeds of the chain also ensure that employees will lose their sanities as quickly as they carve up carcasses. The Georgetown University Law Center's Jennifer Dillard hauntingly observes,

> While the average American will never see the inside of a slaughterhouse and may be able to eat a hamburger without confronting the pain and terror of a cow's final moments, thousands of slaughterhouse workers across the country face that troubling predicament every day, creating an employment situation ripe for psychological problems.[98]

Perhaps those with preexisting sadistic or psychopathic tendencies would be more inclined to pursue slaughterhouse work. However, research suggests that the nature of the work tends to produce the psychosis, not the other way around. Psychologist Rachel MacNair suggests that people placed in excruciatingly traumatic environments in which *they themselves* must perform acts of violence on others can also experience a form of posttraumatic stress disorder called PITS—"perpetration-induced traumatic stress."[99] Slaughterhouse workers embody a sector of the population at extreme risk of developing PITS. Indeed, Dillard narrated the concerns of one Virgil Butler, a veteran slaughterhouse employee having nightmares about chickens and also remembering a

fellow employee being "hauled off to the mental hospital" for similar dreams.[100] Another former worker reported to the *Huffington Post* his recurring dreams about the "hide puller machine," wherein "once-living beings became identical hot carcasses . . . peeling the valuable hide from the animals' body while operators saw at the connecting tissues. The skin is pulled off the face last as the lifeless body jolts from the industrial force."[101] Yet another former hog slaughterhouse worker hauntingly recalled,

> If you work in that stick pit for any period of time, you develop an attitude that lets you kill things but doesn't let you care. You may look a hog in the eye that's walking around down in the blood pit with you and think, God, that really isn't a bad-looking animal. You may want to pet it. Pigs down on the kill floor have come up and nuzzled me like a puppy. Two minutes later I had to kill them—beat them to death with a pipe. I can't care.[102]

One more reminisced,

> Down in the blood pit they say that the smell of blood makes you aggressive. And it does. You get an attitude that if that hog kicks at me, I'm going to get even. You're already going to kill the hog, but that's not enough. It has to suffer.[103]

The combination of performing violence and being haunted by past performances of violence has ripple effects to the workers' outside communities as well. Communities with larger proportions of slaughterhouse employees tend to have greater crime rates, specifically domestic violence and other violent crimes, such as rape and murder.[104] Some courts of law have even used workers' occupations to argue their guilt: "it is clear that the defendant's occupation at the slaughterhouse was seen as an occupation that enhanced a person's tendency to commit—or at least to be comfortable with—violent acts".[105] The desensitization to violence and development of "pathological sadism"[106] caused by ending the lives of up to several hundred animals per hour ostensibly turns the formerly good and moral into mindless, sociopathic monsters. They become, according to one employee, "emotionally dead."[107]

Emotionally numbed, socially dead, undead: within the confines of the U.S. American industrial abattoir, it is difficult to tell the terms apart. The processes of zombification within the slaughterhouse infect the mind as well as the body, producing troubled throngs of condemned animals driven to madness from lives of torture and tormented employees driven to genocide and haunted at home. Even the zombie hordes of Hollywood struggle to kill as many subjects per day as the average slaughterhouse employee, and most do not turn on and rip each other to shreds like demented livestock. From a psychological

standpoint, the slaughterhouse often produces an even more violent, tormented zombie than anything popular culture could even imagine.

Concluding Remarks

Cultural studies and critical animal studies consistently feud over the ethics of analogizing human and animal suffering in the form of particular historical moments. In this article, the zombie is deemed a more suitable analogy that binds the sufferings of disenfranchised humans. The concept of comorbid zombification explains human and animal interactions at the industrial U.S. American slaughterhouse. Comorbid zombification reflects the process by which slaughterhouse populations interact and intra-act to reify and reproduce the ideological and material conditions designating them as inferior, unprotected, and killable beings. This process is traceable in its cultural, physical, and psychological manifestations. The slaughterhouse is a site of necropolitical praxis—a site that hides and justifies violence against vulnerable populations, *Homo sapiens* or otherwise.

American studies scholars interested in hegemony, power, and oppression must take seriously the necessity of demonstrating the interconnections between animal and human oppression. Critical animal studies scholars will find zombiedom to be beneficial to the intersectional analysis of animal liberation research. By showing how slaughterhouse labor is interconnected to speciesist and racist logics and practices, including animals *and* the undead, we can think through the intersectionality of social justice theories and praxis.

Notes

1. Peggy Lowe, "Working 'The Chain,' Slaughterhouse Workers Face Lifelong Injuries," National Public Radio, August 11, 2016. https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2016/08/11/489468205/working-the-chain-slaughterhouse-workers-face-lifelong-injuries.
2. Lowe, "Working 'The Chain.'"
3. Lowe, "Working 'The Chain.'"
4. "Speciesist" is the adjective form of a discriminatory ideology and set of corresponding material practices called "speciesism." This "-ism" refers to perceptions of the *Homo sapiens* species as inherently superior to all other species based on limited compelling evidence. Under speciesist rules, human beings are morally justified in exploiting nonhuman animals and conceiving of them as "things," or as means to ends. See Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* (New York: Random House, 1975).
5. Carrie Packwood Freeman, "This Little Piggy Went to Press: The American News Media's Construction of Animals in Agriculture," *The Communication Review* 12, no. 1 (2009): 3, https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://scholar.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1007&context=communication_facpub.
6. Nekeisha Alayna Alexis, "Beyond Suffering: Resisting Patriarchy and Reproductive Control," in *Anarchism and Animal Liberation: Essays on Complementary Elements of Total Liberation*, ed. Anthony Nocella II, Richard White, and Erika Cudworth (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012), 108–23.
7. U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Livestock Slaughter 2017 Summary April 2018," http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/current/LiveSlauSu/LiveSlauSu-04-18-2018.pdf; U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Poultry Slaughter 2017 Summary February 2018," http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/current/PoulSlauSu/PoulSlauSu-02-26-2018.pdf.
8. For instance, in the case of "reproductive tyranny," we could note how the spectrums of sexism, misogyny, and reproductive control are intimately related across species lines. Early and contemporary eugenics discourses, for instance, emerged in large part from "advances" in animal

agriculture and were then applied to humans, justified under social Darwinian discourses detailing which "fit" bodies should be allowed to exist. See Adele Clark, *Disciplining Reproduction: Modernity, American Life Sciences, and the Problem of Sex* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), and Marouf Hasian, *The Rhetoric of Eugenics in Anglo-American Thought* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996).

9. Richard A. Rogers, "Beasts, Burgers, and Hummers: Meat and the Crisis of Masculinity in Contemporary Television Advertisements," *Environmental Communication* 2, no. 3 (2008): 284.

10. Alexis, "Beyond Suffering," 112.

11. Alexis, "Beyond Suffering," 112.

12. Jennifer Dillard, "A Slaughterhouse Nightmare: Psychological Harm Suffered by Slaughterhouse Employees and the Possibility of Redress through Legal Reform," *Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law and Policy* 15 (2008): 391.

13. Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).

14. It is, of course, important to specify that while Patterson's concept of "social death" has been applied to multiple arenas of contemporary society, his original conceptualization was based in historical analyses of chattel slavery, labor, and social marginality. This article does *not* claim that the conditions of slaughterhouse workers are to be taken as such. After all, these workers are not forbidden from being married, not legally defined as chattel, and so on. This article uses the concept in a similar manner as other scholars who have interrogated such systems as the prison-industrial complex through the *theoretical lens* of social death, based as it is on notions of alienation/marginalization/killability, but *not* as an attempt to make a direct historical analogy that dissolves the distinction between chattel slavery and more generalized capitalist exploitation.

15. Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 46.

16. Dillard, "A Slaughterhouse Nightmare," 392.

17. Lowe, "Working the Chain."

18. Quoted in Dillard, "A Slaughterhouse Nightmare," n. 10.

19. Barbara Noske, *Humans and Other Animals: Beyond the Boundaries of Anthropology* (London: Pluto Press, 1989).

20. Richard Twine, "Revealing the 'Animal-Industrial Complex—A Concept and Method for Critical Animal Studies," *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* 10, no. 1 (2012), n. 2.

21. Alexis, "Beyond Suffering," 112.

22. Charles Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust* (New York: Lantern Books, 2002); Marjorie Spiegel, *The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery* (New York: Mirror Books, 1996).

23. Cathryn Bailey, "We Are What We Eat: Feminist Vegetarianism and the Reproduction of Racial Identity," *Hypatia* 22, no. 2 (2007): 39–59.

24. Maneesha Deckha, "The Subhuman as a Cultural Agent of Violence," *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* 8, no. 3 (2010): 44.

25. Sylvia Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, after Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (2003): 257–337.

26. Trina Grillo and Stephanie M. Wildman, "Obscuring the Importance of Race: The Implication of Making Comparisons between Racism and Sexism (or Other-isms)." *Duke Law Journal* 1991, no. 2 (1991): 397–412.

27. I would note, however, that outside of popular culture, the "zombie" must not be conflated with a human (or animal) body devoid of subjectivity or lacking agency.

28. Achille Mbembé, "Necropolitics," *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 21.

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Free Food, Free Space: People's Stews and the Spatial Identity Politics of People's Parks

Kera Lovell

As radio host and historian Studs Terkel discovered when he arrived at Chicago's activist-created Poor People's Park at the corner of Halsted and Armitage one fall evening in 1969, food served as a symbolic form of cultural and territorial reclamation. Created spontaneously by activists days prior, the park was the most recent spatial occupation by Lincoln Park residents who had been protesting the impact of urban renewal on affordable housing. Terkel heard the crunch of shovels and rakes hitting the rocky dirt, yet the smell of simmering Puerto Rican *asopao de pollo* or chicken stew continued to draw the residents' attention.[1] When asked by Terkel why she came out to cook for park workers, Ceil Keegan explained that the dish honored the ethnic heritage of the Young Lords leading the park's construction. Her calm and earnest tone conveyed her pride in cooking for these activists as a form of emotional caretaking, encouraging denigrated members in her community to be proud of their culture. Local newspapers had characterized the protest as militant and hypermasculine, yet Keegan made a public display of slowly cooking a delicious vat of chicken stew—its tantalizingly rich aroma pouring into the lungs of their surrounding white middle-class critics who looked on from the sidewalks with derision. Within Poor People's Park, food was a medium for asserting power and reclaiming space that became a foundation for building cross-cultural alliances across boundaries of race, gender, ethnicity, and class in the Lincoln Park neighborhood.

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Focusing on "people's stews," this article examines the racial politics embedded within shared meals cooked within urban spatial takeovers in the late–Cold War era. People's stews were collectively produced potages made from scavenged ingredients that, when cooked together in public bonfires, symbolized a cross-cultural unity of resistance to the Man. Soups were one of several key meals frequently served in "people's parks"—urban recreation areas created illegally on vacant lots between the late 1960s and the mid-1970s. As part of a larger pattern of "placemaking" protests in the postwar era, people's parks were created to protest a range of issues, from the Vietnam War to urban renewal to police brutality.[2] While historians have focused on situating select case studies of people's parks within broader patterns of Vietnam-era activism, as well as the emergence of hippie modernist design, putting these parks in conversation with one another reveals food as a lens into how American identity shaped the successes and struggles of coalition building within this era.[3] Food not only served as what Warren Belasco has called a "marker of revolutionary consumerism," but shared feasts like people's stews functioned as spectacles, forms of sustenance, and symbols of occupied territories that have shaped how some participants have remembered these protests.[4]

Scholars of the U.S. postwar left have increasingly uncovered diverse narratives of alliances during this era that challenge rigid political distinctions, revealing what historians Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle have argued is more of a disjointed trajectory of social justice commitments than a cohesive movement.[5] While art, performances, and the underground press have been analyzed as mediums for countercultural and leftist political expression, food was also a critical component of the resistant aesthetics within the politics of community-based urban design as a radical protest movement for the postwar left.[6] Activists used food to link identity, space, and power in the postwar era: protests over segregated dining spaces in white homes and restaurants helped launch the civil rights movement; a back-to-the-earth, whole-food movement transformed hippie communalism into popular capital enterprises; and feminists used kitchens, restaurants, and bars to create safe spaces while enabling women to reclaim radical domesticity as a form of revolutionary group identity empowerment.[7] Structural inequality embedded within the food system fueled the Black Panther Party's Free Breakfast Program and the United Farm Workers' (UFW) international grape boycott, and it inspired the creation of alternative economies like food cooperatives and communes within the whole-grain revolution.[8] African Americans centered the denigration of soul food and the racialization of hunger and malnutrition in racial self-determination movements.[9] At the dawning of the environmental movement, food connected spirituality and the healthy body to the earth. While alcohol and drugs were essential to the beat movement in the early Cold War era, the popularization of weed and LSD helped catapult the idea that consumption could be a mindfully liberating experience.[10]

While scholars have cited the significance of Berkeley's People's Park in helping to ignite an ecologically driven countercuisine movement critiquing the capitalist-driven American food system, the significance of food performances within these politicized happenings as spatial protests has been ignored.[11] As Michael Wise and Jennifer Jensen Wallach have argued, examining food culture opens an interdisciplinary window onto the past in ways that traditional historical sources and methods cannot: "Food crosses the abstract boundaries of culture due to the corporeal certainty associated with the act of consumption, grounding our communities in the material worlds around us, revealing the limitations of traditional modes of historical research focused narrowly on the archival exegesis of manuscript sources."[12] Food as a form of cultural politics helped connect activists to one another and their bodies to the landscape, heightening the insurrectionary potential of land reclamation as a symbol of collective resistance.

Within participants' cultural memories of these direct actions, the sensorial experience of stews, from the smell of the smoky bonfire to the sticky residue coating your hands after eating with your fingers, transformed the memories of these spatial occupations into imagined utopian community building. Work felt harder, food tasted juicier, and fires burned hotter, creating an ephemeral experience that many parkgoers described as being seemingly more authentic and therefore more impactful than other forms of rebellion. Parkgoers imagined food within these spaces as a medium for redefining authenticity as spontaneous, experiential, and shared, in contrast to the containment of modern American life. Yet as Martin Manalansan IV reminds us, the construction of cultural authenticity empowers some while disempowering others: "Consumption is never a complete process. While it can lead to satiation, it can also lead to more hunger, more queries, and lingering discomforts."[13] Food therefore offers an opportunity to interrogate the blurred borders between the emotional experience and the politicized practice of social change within this moment that continue to affect our historical memories of this movement.

Transnationalism and Racial Self-Determination in "Liberated" Space and Food

Interrogating the racial politics of people's stew begins with its name, which symbolically imagined its consumption as an extension of revolutionary movements resisting colonialism in the Global South. The term "people's" had a long, complex history by the postwar era, having been frequently used in largely European movements for nineteenth century populism seeking to create spaces of civic uplift—*rus in urbe,* or open green spaces for natural public leisure. State-run "people's parks," *volksgarten,* or *folkpark* were created in industrializing cities in Europe and Russia as respite from the factory and a tool of social reform. These nineteenth-century parks were highly sculpted and socially regulated, with selective entrance rules specific to race and class, as

well as deportment.[14] These parks were often coupled with community centers called people's palaces or people's houses that served to raise the morale of the working class by developing programs on language, history, and culture.[15] Yet in European colonies like eastern China, urban green spaces and leisure areas remained racially segregated; public parks and gardens in Shanghai prohibited Chinese, Japanese, and Indian citizens, as well as dogs and bicycles.[16]

By the midtwentieth century, "people's" took on new meanings that signified territorial reclamation as part of an anticolonial revolution. Designating China as the People's Republic of China in 1949 reflected the new focus on the needs of the peasant populace rather than the colonial oligarchy. Critiquing colonizers' use of the word to describe civic-minded yet segregated parks in the revolution, places like the Shanghai Race Club were renamed as people's parks. Mao Tse-Tung's new government argued that cooperatives like people's communes and people's parks educated and trained the proletariat in exchange for communal production.[17] This use of the term migrated to the United States as media coverage of the Vietnam War and anticolonial movements captured headlines.[18] By 1968, when the Oakland Black Panthers sold Mao's "little red book" of quotations through the Bay Area as an arms fundraiser, "people's" became part of larger cross-cultural political discourse rejecting American imperialism.[19]

The use of the term "people's" within occupied territories challenged the construction of America as a nation made for the people, seeing it now as one insurgently remade by the people. From people's parks and the People's Pad—a Bay Area affordable-housing squat—to people's stews, "people's" came to describe a variety of political movements, groups, and actions oppositional to American nationalism by the late 1960s.[20] The descriptor embedded the stew at people's parks within transhistorical and transnational discourses of both civic uplift and power reclamation, while offering participants the ability to make and consume revolution. This discursive reimagining of parks and stews as part of a larger movement of postwar Maoism reflects larger patterns of post–World War II orientalism that exoticized the political struggles of racially and economically dominated or Third World people.[21] The descriptor "people's" threaded together food, people, and the landscape, including the creation of the park's People's Revolutionary Corn Patch, as well as its slogan, "let a thousand parks bloom"—an adaptation of the Maoist phrase, "Let a thousand flowers blossom"—symbolizing the spread of the communist revolution.[22] These references carried more symbolic weight than a reflection of transnational political organizing—"imperfect analogies" that reinforced strategic essentialism of ethnic minorities through forms of horticultural, culinary, and aesthetic play.[23] The material culture of foreign plants, flags, art, and food in people's parks transformed performances within these spaces, such as manual labor and food consumption, into primitive narratives that became exotic lenses through which to experience the park as more "authentic" than modern urban America.

The "free food" ethos of many Berkeley-area people's parks was inspired by several local organizations like the Black Panthers and the Diggers, whose free-meal initiatives were rooted in decades of free-food giveaways by civil rights groups and labor organizers, from Operation Breadbasket to UFW strike kitchens.[24] The nearby Oakland Black Panthers became the most nationally recognized organization advocating for free food as a formation for antiracist community building in the late 1960s. For racial self-determination groups like the Black Panther Party, making food free illuminated how malnutrition was produced by the intersectional oppressions of race, ethnicity, and class. The group marketed their free breakfast campaign for children as a survival program—a socialist solution to the racist capitalist economy—and used demonstrations and articles in both mainstream and underground media to shame grocery stores that failed to donate food. Pig calling by the Black Panthers, as well as antipolice hog roasts made famous by the Students for a Democratic Society and the Yippies, would later inspire weekend hog roasts at some people's parks seeking to attract spectators.[25]

The Bay Area in the 1960s witnessed a growing movement of political, countercultural, and service organizations serving free meals as a critique of structural inequality in the United States. People's stews served outside would become reenactments of mid-1960s hippie "be-ins" that offered free food as a medium for community building and critiquing capitalism. The Bay Area Diggers popularized food giveaways as a playful civil disobedience tactic in the mid-1960s to challenge displacement. While writing to their white hippie audience in their newsletters called feeds, the group continued to use their platform to shed light on the connections between institutionalized racism and anticapitalism—even calling out patterns of racial prejudice within their hippie community that took advantage of the exoticism and affordability of San Francisco's working-class black neighborhoods despite their white privilege of not needing to escape segregation.[26] The Diggers argued that the best coalitional defense against structural inequality was an anticapitalist revolution in which food, housing, farms, and tools would be available for free.[27] Meals offered at no cost were part of the group's larger liberation ideology, including setting up free stores and free kitchens as a tool to critique and ultimately "drop out" of the normalization of capitalism.

The Diggers focused on feeding crowds in public spaces, often discussing them like ticketless theatrical productions. At one event, the group famously required attendees who wanted free food to walk through a giant empty wooden frame as a symbolic "new frame of reference."[28] At times, the massive quantities of food they distributed at one time, with flyers announcing takers for "100 cases of lettuce," "Free soup—bring a spoon and bowl," and "Free Perch—400 lbs.," reflected their interest in sharing the excess they were fortunate enough to acquire, rather than their own demands to feed the hungry.[29] Centering food in their political street theater, the Diggers took over street corners, public parks, and vacant storefronts to give free food and household items to the poor—

namely, starving teenage runaways who had fled to bulging hippie ghettoes in search of a raised consciousness. The Diggers argued that food, when used within playful direct actions, called on participants to think about their complicity with capitalist systems of poverty and malnourishment, along with the cultural values placed on store-purchased foods versus donated ingredients. As described by George Metevsky in the *Berkeley Barb,* he first saw the group shouting "Food as Medium!" while distributing "shopping bags filled with day-old bread, wooden crates of tossed green salad, a ten-gallon milk container steaming hot with turkey stew, and apples all over the ground." Insurgent food giveaways became a demonstration tactic for the poor to reclaim their right to the city and fully engage with public space outside the bounds of for-profit food consumption.[30] Publicizing photos, offering shared meals, and giving away free food in occupied territories became a way to visually communicate that their alternative domestic spaces and political groups were autonomous and that their anticapitalist visions for society were sustainable.

Over the course of the 1960s and 1970s, communes and eating and gardening cooperatives increased, and the Diggers became part of a range of groups that argued that growing, cooking, and eating "free" food—meat and produce that imaginatively existed outside the bounds of capitalism—fostered an alternative economy in which bodies and nonnormative political ideas could be nurtured and sustained. At the same time, the Diggers' pamphlets situated their food actions at the cross-cultural intersection among several social justice currents in the 1960s, including "the symbolic importance of sit-ins at segregated restaurants; the Quaker-led fasts against the war; the consumer boycotts in support of grape and lettuce pickers."[31] Food also became essential to the labor of creating and sustaining people's parks.[32] Transnational, cross-cultural, and anticapitalist discourses rooted within free food in these spaces mobilized coalitions of social justice advocates across lines of race, ethnicity, age, and class. As a tool for symbolic political play, food offered activists opportunities to embed their land reclamation projects within cross-cultural histories of social justice activism: food boycotts as a labor-organizing issue for food-industry workers, strike kitchens to keep labor actions fueled, free shared meals as a critique of racist capitalism that reinforced poverty and malnutrition in communities of color, and movements for "agrarian nationalism."[33]

People's Stews, Food Giveaways, and the Culinary Culture of Insurgent Placemaking

Following the framework of Mary Douglas, understanding food culture at people's parks requires "deciphering a meal"—analyzing what types of cooking techniques and ingredients are used, as well as when and by whom these meals are shared, in order to interrogate the social relations hidden within.[34] Food culture at people's parks at times functioned discordantly—largely dependent upon the culinary and horticultural leadership of individuals who donated

goods, cooked meals, and planted vegetable gardens on- and offsite as their contribution to the project. Film footage of several parks, including Berkeley's People's Park and Berkeley's Mobile Park Annex, reveals how two main styles of food offerings created different moods in these spaces over the course of the day and week: planned dinners and foraged midday snacks that fluctuated as park labor waxed and waned. Workers as both spatial creators and territorial protectors were nearly always present, yet the largest concentration of laborers arrived on the weekends, when food was more widely available, making weekend food consumption more spectacle and celebration than mere sustenance. Announcements of festive, collectively shared meals frequently held at nights or on the weekends also attracted parkgoers whose presence politicized the informal be-in as an occupying force.

During the day, food culture helped shape the park's life cycle. Video footage captured how hungover prelunch parkgoers lounged quietly around a brewing coffee percolator on the campfire. In the background, a patch of fledgling sweet pea, tomato, and bean plants were growing in the west end of the park; by midday, park workers were on site to water and expand vegetable patches taking shape in the park's first weeks, as well as set up apparatuses for roasts and stews cooking over the course of the day. Throughout the early afternoon, park attendees took advantage of randomly donated consumables, from readymade sandwiches to do-it-yourself concoctions that domesticated the space. While some parkgoers who lived nearby and walked home for meals, other weekend parkgoers began arriving by the afternoon, waiting near the smoky campfires in anticipation of the evening's untamed barbecue. After children left by nightfall, adults huddled around the campfire to roast wieners and melt marshmallows for s'mores. After 10 p.m., firefighters and police officers frequently arrived to extinguish campfires or respond to noise complaints. By early morning, park leaders arrived to pick up the broken Coke bottles, empty jugs of Red Mountain wine, and trash left behind by twilight revelers before new workers would arrive, the cycle beginning anew. Taken together, food at Berkeley's People's Park was a form of energy, work, celebration, and performance. Across the array of activist-created parks, free shared community meals frequently kept these spaces occupied and, in turn, imbued these territories with symbolic political powers. Growing seedlings, happy eaters, and caregiving chefs became a metaphor for the park's success.

Most often, lists of food offerings at people's parks read nonsensically, with focus on the slapdash array of ingredients and the public consumption of alcohol and marijuana as indicators of legally liberated space. At Berkeley's People's Park, mixed-race groups of men and women passed glass jugs of red wine from mouth to mouth while eating crumbly chunks of baguettes and fresh carrots.[35] According to coverage of the park in the student newspaper of the University of California, Santa Cruz, "Watermelons, oranges, wine, and marijuana [were] communally shared by the workers, freaks, revolutionary intellectuals, little old ladies, and children."[36] The random diversity of shared

food consumption became a metaphor for celebrating how spatial protests like people's parks attracted a range of participants. On the first day of work at Chicago's Poor People's Park, workers shared watermelons, doughnuts, and soda while bandaging blistered fingers.[37] Similarly in Berkeley, "Beer, wine, lemonade, soda pop, and cider always seemed to appear when you were thirsty. Bandaids [sic] and gloves were passed around."[38] Food facilitated moments of rest in which workers could compare and bind their wounds—their scratches, soreness, and hunger manifesting as symbolic corporeal proof that their activist labor had been arduous and politically meaningful. Within this space of transient political symbolism, processed foods, purchased ingredients, stolen meats, and leftovers all offered opportunities for new beginnings that imagined the park project as facilitating a cross-cultural coalition beyond the bounds of one political organization.

Beyond scavenging for midday snacks or campfire circles, two of the most common foods produced within activist occupations in public space were people's stews and hog roasts that functioned like rituals, using anticapitalist culinary metaphors to politicize the space as antiestablishment. At Berkeley's People's Park, people's stews were held every Saturday and Sunday at noon during the first few weeks of work. Stews large enough to feed hundreds often required collective management and assembly, as well as creative thinking that added to the park's aesthetic. Ingredients were boiled over the course of the workday in a metal trash can, stirred with a large wooden stick, and served with a 3-ft-long ladle or shovel on thousands of paper plates. Smoke and steam billowed from the can, blocking views, yet crowds swarmed with arms outstretched to taste the experiment. One photograph of a people's stew captures the curiosity and excitement of the meal, revealing a crowd of men circled round, squinting quizzically into a steaming cauldron while the girl being served holds her paper plate outstretched, biting her lip in excitement.[39] Unlike thinner soups that required spoons for sipping, these stews were thick and meant to be eaten with your hands from mismatched containers.[40]

As a celebration of the make-do ingenuity of "peasant food," stews were often collective creations with donated vegetables, grains, beans, and other scraps—a potluck-style reenactment of a stone soup made from leftover ingredients without a specific recipe. In her memoir, Wendy Schlesinger described the first people's stew held at Berkeley's People's Park as a fundraising challenge for the park's organizers who solicited stores for donations of soup bones, vegetables, and bits of leftover meat.[41] Video footage of a potluck preparation at People's Park No. 6 in Berkeley panned across cardboard boxes of corn, string beans, onions, and celery, among other vegetables, in prep for that day's people's stew.[42] In his documentary on Berkeley's People's Park, titled *Let a Thousand Parks Bloom,* filmmaker Leonard Lipton captured a man stirring a waist-high trash can full of rice and tomato–based stew, while another man off to the side tossed a handful of basil leaves into the mixture.[43] Callouts for one people's stew in the *Berkeley Barb* encouraged everyone to "bring vegetables,

spices, whatever's your thing," while more expensive proteins were specifically requested: "Chefs say meat is hardest to get. Bring meat. Then EAT IT!"[44] Because donations changed from day to day, stews changed tastes and textures spontaneously, allowing some participants the opportunity to contribute to spatial protests through culinary expertise.

Stews and soups made sense of the randomness of the park's leaderless structure that offered opportunities to women and men, young and old, skilled and unskilled, to become makers together. People's stews served during long workdays in these territories juxtaposed misshapen and sporadically donated ingredients that put varying tastes, textures, and colors metaphorically in racial harmony with one another. With little guarantee that food would taste good when dependent upon the choices of volunteers, the experience of people's stews focused on the symbolism of their collective production and consumption. Eating with your fingers and tasting how your donations complemented your neighbor's ingredients created intimacy that personalized the project.

Because a variety of racial and ethnic groups created people's parks during this era, the racial, gender, class, and immigrant identities of park creators shaped the cultural meanings of the food constructed within. At Chicago's Poor People's Park, Keegan's *asopao de pollo* was a powerful statement of support for Puerto Rican pride—a language with which to confront ethnic stereotypes, articulate racial and ethnic self-determination, and sustain the labor of park occupiers. While the foundation of chicken and rice formed Keegan's hearty meal for the park's horde of workers, the savory aroma of garlic and tomato sauce, bay leaf and vinegar, wafted through the park and captivated Terkel's interviewees, who began to talk about Keegan's food like home cooking. By ladling and passing a bowl of hot soup, park creators joined together, their shared family meal converting a disheveled lot into a home.[45] Puerto Rican stews shared in occupied public territories similarly transformed vacant lots into community-building projects in New York City's *Loisaida.* Photographs by Garry Tyler of Plaza Caribe, a people's park built by squatters at the corner of 112th Street and Broadway, show crowds of Puerto Ricans, African Americans, and Polish Americans gathered on the occupied lot. Artists painted several murals on the brick exterior of tenement buildings lining the park, layering phrases like *Liberación* with images of armed revolutionaries of color. Off to the side, several women stand at a table with their hands in large metal pots preparing for a shared stew.[46]

Sharing soup not only warmed workers at James Rector's People's Park in Madison, Wisconsin, but also facilitated a coalition between largely white parkgoers and local Chicano organizing. As captured by photographer David Giffey in 1969, the park hosted a "Mexican dinner fundraiser" for the UFW, coinciding with a protest on campus at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in support of the grape boycott.[47] Footage of the park's first Memorial Day celebration reveals a mostly white, male, college-age crowd ladling thick soup from a giant fire-kindled communal vat or nodding in agreement with a rock

band performing on a small platform.[48] Stapled underneath the park's entryway sign is a UFW poster with an Aztec eagle reading, "Viva La Huelga, Viva La Causa." In the background, another poster reads, "La Lucha es la Fuerza," indicating a visual trail of UFW material weaving throughout the densely packed lot. Although the park largely served as a hangout space for students and an outdoor concert venue for rock bands, this shared meal fundraiser became an opportunity for students to learn more about and connect with working-class Chicano activists in the region. Meals like these not only celebrated *mestizo* culinary heritage but also facilitated racialized consumption as a medium of cross-cultural political organizing. Purchasing plates or bowls of Mexican food enabled University of Wisconsin's largely white student body to playfully and politically consume the Chicano people—their exotic brown skin, their strength in colonial resistance, and their oppression.

For park creators of color, food became a way to celebrate their marginalized racial, ethnic, and national identities, while for white parkgoers, food sometimes became a medium with which to ignore their privilege. Shared soups made from donations recreated the metaphorical American melting pot at the same time that they became a medium to critique American colonialism—cross-cultural culinary fantasies that became a practice of what Stephanie Hartman has called "appreciative inclusiveness."[49] Park creators transfigured racialized metaphors onto spaces for food production and consumption, as well as food itself. Looking back on her first day of work in the park, Schlesinger compared the park's mud pit to a South Asian rice field, comparing the spectacle to what it must have been like to see two approaching water buffalo.[50] Agricultural zones within the park, including a "miniature Mexican garden," were mentioned without explication in an early supportive review of the park.[51] Within the context of the Vietnam War and cross-cultural antiracist activism at home, bygone and foreign narratives of food production and consumption became exotic lenses through which to experience the park as more authentic than modern America. For participants like John Simon, food, drink, and drugs were instrumental in fueling continuous work in the park that he imagined came easy to hardworking Asians.[52] Embodying Chinese dedication to hard work—what many participants of Berkeley's People's Park described as foreign in their educated, domesticated, middle-class lives—became a point of pride without regard to forced labor and inhumane working conditions.

People's stews became simultaneously a medium for collaboration and a vessel for racial play that at times facilitated power hierarchies that reinforced white and male privilege. The ethnic exoticism of the seemingly foreign landscape and labor permeated culinary discourses, creating mythological borderlands in which activists and community members could embody overlapping and even contradictory identities of imaginative racial and national play.[53] Food, work, and the creation of alternative, insurgent landscapes became mediums for participants to enact transnational, transhistorical, and cross-cultural fantasies

of racial harmony through a framework of "orientalism."[54] By imagining themselves as foreigners from past and present, park participants used food to cross borders that they could not.[55] Through foreign ways of seeing, processed and purchased foods became seemingly more authentic within the park. People's stews that connoted racial harmony served as a form of cultural comfort for Americans wrestling with their own privileges within the context of imperialism at home and abroad. At the same time, shared savory stews made the park project more enterprising, their meals more intimate and collective, their labor more productive, and their landscapes more natural and wild that, in turn, sanitized how this culinary tourism functioned as a form of cultural appropriation.[56]

Despite these important distinctions across people's parks, food helped make sense of the inherent ideological contradictions within these activist projects. In an attempt to create a racially harmonious "political palate," white hippie food culture encouraged playful culinary exoticism that made heterogeneity comfortable in broadly symbolic ways. Although park creators solicited donations and offered free meals as a political statement, in reality free foods within people's parks never existed outside of capitalism and were only metaphorically liberated. Similar to commune cooking that Hartman has argued was often "diverse and unorthodox," with purchases of wholesale cans of Chicken of the Sea lining the kitchen pantry, parks embraced both slow-roasted meals and store-purchased snacks as political metaphors.[57] Participants gardened for vegetables, pined for stew from scratch, and yet at park picnic tables, men and women laughed while making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches from prepackaged white breads. By preparing stew from grocery store donations in a galvanized metal trash can, food culture in people's parks harnessed the privileges of modernity while simultaneously critiquing it as inauthentic.

This culinary exoticism also became written onto anticapitalist narratives within the park, including the creative reuse of wilted vegetables and food scraps for stews, watering cans for beverage pitchers, and metal trash cans for soup cauldrons. Gentrification remnants, like stones, ceramic tiles, and steel beams used to line and decorate bonfires and barbecue pits for cooking, became a materiality with which park creators constructed their politics and identities as environmentally beneficial amid intersecting narratives of pollution and waste of white, Western modernism. Many white park creators in 1969 defended their projects by using nonwhite and working-class narratives of self-sufficiency. Potluck stews and exoticized recycled park landscapes created a political theater of racialized sustainability for middle-class hippies who appeared to "nourish themselves on disaster," like struggling farmers in Vietnam.[58] Like the Navajo storytelling of the efficiently dismantled buffalo on the Western plains, food became a way to perform a political theater of sustainability amid intersecting narratives of environmental degradation and waste of the modern era.[59]

Taste and the Production of Cultural Memory

People's stews were part of a vibrant visual, material, and performative culture within Vietnam War–era activism that helped make spatial protests like people's parks political. Throughout this period of territorial confrontations, free giveaways of people's stews remained essential to the experience, mission, and political symbolism of direct actions like these that helped connect social justice allies with one another. As parks were increasingly regulated after Berkeley's People's Park was famously fenced on Bloody Thursday in 1969, culinary storytelling became part of the cultural memory of these projects as sources of emotional nourishment. Looking back on a photograph of a soup potluck at Berkeley's People's Park, Todd Gitlin remarked that the radical aspects of cooking in public transformed simple sustenance into revolutionary theater: "Steam rises from the pot. You know, looking at [it] the stew probably tasted raunchy but it was *there,* it was there at the right time, it was appreciated, and, who knows, it may still be remembered by those who tasted of it. *It was useful*" for imagining and remembering a community as the early 1970s increasingly became described as one defined by political declension.[60]

Other parkgoers like José "Cha-Cha" Jiménez of the Young Lords cannot recall meals within Poor People's Park. For him, shared meals took a backseat to the daily experience of survival to defend their community from police and pro-developer politicians. In contrast, Jiménez remembered the Young Lords' free breakfast giveaways in the occupied church basement, their partnership with an architect to design an affordable housing project, and the murders of their members and supporters.[61] As Studs Terkel meandered through Poor People's Park, his interviewees cited their membership in allying organizations like the Mexican American Young Comancheros, the white working-class Young Patriots, and the Latin Eagles who shared frustration with displacement and poverty, as well as their own ideas for the site, including a pool, church, park, and more affordable housing.[62] The ingredients, aroma, and display of the *asopao de pollo* fed the spirits and stomachs of workers. The surrounding Poor People's Park, as one of several territories the Young Lords would occupy, represented the expansion of a movement.

Putting seemingly oppositional memories of food within these politized spaces in conversation with one another does more to reveal a culinary political fluidity within this historical moment, in which food helped transcend the boundaries of radical, liberal, and cultural activism. As food studies scholar Mark Padoongpatt reminds us, debates over whether People's Park participants were revolutionaries, "'liberal multiculturalists,' or racists or imperialists or all of these" distracts from the larger argument that "an analysis of foodways can enrich our understanding of colonialism and imperialism in ways that an analysis of architecture, literature, art, or music have not or, perhaps, cannot."[63] Across the People's Park movement, food became a way for a range of activists to produce and consume rebellion—a currency with which to perform and ex-

change political discourses that helped fuse consciousness-raising body politics with the materiality of the liberated landscape for activists in different ways and are thus remembered differently. Shared feasts and communal outdoor dining areas became part of the political palette that helped define activist-occupied territories as resistant to capitalism. Warm meals transformed work sites and actions into homes that sustained workers while reclaiming domesticity for working-class women and people of color displaced by postwar urban renewal. Stews filled the bellies of park creators and their allies while fulfilling activists spiritually and politically by encouraging them to imagine these occupied territories and the movements that created them as nourishing, autonomous, and sustainable. For some, these memories remain strong, while for others, the memories of these shared feasts have faded.

At the same time that cooking and eating meals became opportunities for playing with identity, meals within these spaces shed light on the inherent contradictions bound within these movements for spatial power. Within this postmodern moment, food's ephemerality and mobility enabled it to take on new political meanings as it passed from one race, one activist group, and one locale to another through visual storytelling. Cooking, serving, and eating food offered limitless opportunities for identity exploration that became part of what "the movement" was trying to become—"more a process than a product, and thus more a direction or a motion than a movement."[64] Food as a form of racialized imaginative play allowed activists to metaphorically expand their pinpointed parks, feed-ins, and tent-ins on vacant lots into a larger "territorial imperative."[65] However, in comparing the experience of people's parks, some park creators—often those who were white, middle class, and male—were able to revel in culinary play more than others.

Deciphering the subtle and hidden codes of shared meals within late 1960–era placemaking projects reveals a complex system of hierarchical social relations often erased in accounts by participants, critics, and historians.[66] Adapting Monica Perales's argument about the inherent contradictions within discourse on authenticity, I argue that spatial protests attracted participants because they created a table where foods and people coexisted, combined, and collided that simultaneously silenced other ways of eating and being, illuminating a dramatically shifting cultural landscape in the late–Cold War era.[67] By providing a central point of social convergence within urban space, passing the bread and ladling the stew, shared meals helped activists imagine a cross-cultural, transnational, and transhistorical community of unified activists, even if only for a moment. Food play functioned as both consciousness raising and political fantasy through which eaters could embody multiple overlapping identities of oppression and empowerment beyond their personal experiences. Food grown, cooked, and eaten in public space became a medium with which to identify with and romanticize anticolonial movements within and beyond the United States. At the same time, communities of color used food to articulate their agency by situating their national and ethnic food cultures within a larger framework of

social justice organizing. Growing, cooking, and eating food facilitated shared experiences that helped raise consciousness about the colonial power structures enveloping the food system and, by extension, American culture.

Notes

1. Studs Terkel, Interview, T3400 SCD, approx. 60 min. recording (ca. August 1969), Studs Terkel Collection, Chicago History Museum.

2. Jeffrey Hou, ed., *Insurgent Public Space: Guerrilla Urbanism and the Remaking of Contemporary Cities* (Routledge, 2010); James Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil* (Princeton University Press, 2008). I am modeling my definition of placemaking on Hou's definition of insurgent public space as a momentary rupture in power hierarchies, indicative of a larger erosion of public space. "Making" indicates activity in creation and power of self-determination, whereas "using" would affirm the power of the state. Hou models his definition on Holston's notion of "insurgent citizenship" or the "insurgent space of citizenship" that positions this form of placemaking as oppositional to public space regulated and maintained by the state. For an examination of the People's Park movement, see Kera Lovell, "Radical Manifest Destiny: Mapping Power over Urban Green Space in the Age of Protest, 1968–1988" (PhD diss., Purdue University, 2017). For more on individual case studies of people's parks, see the following texts: W. J. Rorabaugh, *Berkeley at War: The 1960s* (Oxford University Press, 1989); David Farber, *Chicago '68* (University of Chicago Press, 1994); Stanley Irwin Glick, "The People's Park" (PhD diss., State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1984); Jon Cash, "People's Park: Birth and Survival," *California History* 88, no. 1 (2010): 8–29, 53–55; Eric Avila, *Folklore of the Freeway: Race and Revolt in the Modernist City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014); Richard Griswold del Castillo, *Chicano San Diego: Cultural Space and the Struggle for Justice* (University of Arizona Press, 2008); and Wilfredo Cruz, *City of Dreams: Latino Immigration to Chicago* (University of Arizona Press, 2007).

3. For more on design, see Lovell, "Radical Manifest Destiny;" Michael Carriere, "Between Being and Becoming: On Architecture, Student Protest, and the Aesthetics of Liberalism in Postwar America" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2010); Greg Castillo's coverage of Berkeley's Ohlone Park in "Hippie Modernism: How Bay Area Design Radicals Tried to Save the Planet," *Places Journal* (October 2015), https://placesjournal.org/article/hippie-modernism/; and Peter Allen, "Violent Design: People's Park, Architectural Modernism and Urban Renewal," ISSI Fellows Working Paper (University of California, Berkeley, 2007), http://escholarship.org/uc/item/6vz4s7jj.

4. Warren Belasco, *Appetite for Change: How the Counterculture Took on the Food Industry* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

5. Literature on transnational and/or cross-cultural coalitions can be found in Stephanie Gilmore, *Feminist Coalitions: Historical Perspectives on Second-Wave Feminism in the United States* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2008); Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Southern California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Gordon Mantler, *Power to the Poor: Black–Brown Coalition and the Fight for Economic Justice* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015); and Michael William Doyle and Peter Braunstein, "Introduction: Historicizing the American Counterculture of the 1960s and '70s," in *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and '70s* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 10.

6. For just a few examples of the importance of food politics to art, performances, and the underground press in this era, see Elissa Auther and Adam Lerner, eds., *West of Center: Art and the Countercultural Experiment in America, 1965–1977* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); Bradford Martin, *The Theater is in the Street: Politics and Public Performance in 1960s America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004); and Abe Peck, *Uncovering the Sixties: The Life and Times of the Underground Press* (New York: Citadel, 1991).

7. For examples, see Finn Enke, *Finding the Movement: Sexuality, Contested Space, and Feminist Activism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Vicki Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930–1950* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987); and Kathleen Blee, ed., *No Middle Ground: Women and Radical Protest* (New York: NYU Press, 1997).

8. See Raj Patel, "Survival Pending Revolution: What the Black Panthers Can Teach the US Food Movement," in *Food Movements Unite!... Strategies to Transform our Food Systems,* ed. Eric Holt-Giménez (Oakland: Food First Books, 2011), 115–36; Matt Garcia, *From the Jaws of Victory: The Triumph and Tragedy of Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2007); Heidi Tinsman, *Buying into the Regime: Grapes and Consumption in Cold War Chile and the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); Lauren Araiza, *To March for Others: The Black Freedom Struggle and the United Farm Workers* (Philadel-

phia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Craig Cox, *Storefront Revolution: Food Co-ops and the Counterculture* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994); Martin Deppe, *Operation Breadbasket: An Untold Story of Civil Rights in Chicago, 1966–1971* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2017); Mary Potorti, "Food for Freedom: The Black Freedom Struggle and the Politics of Food" (PhD diss., Boston University, 2005); Margaret Rose, "From the Fields to the Picket Line: Huelga Women and the Boycott, 1965–1975," in *No Middle Ground: Women and Radical Protest,* ed. Kathleen Blee (New York: New York University, 1998), 225–50; Margaret Rose, "Women in the United Farm Workers: A Study of Chicana and Mexicana Participation in a Labor Union" (PhD diss., UCLA, 1990); Rosemary C. R. Taylor and John Case, eds., *Co-ops, Communes, and Collectives: Experiments in Social Change in the 1960s and 1970s* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979); Maria McGrath, "Food for Dissent: A History of Natural Foods and Dietary Health Politics and Culture since the 1960s" (PhD diss., Lehigh University, 2005); Mary Rizzo, "Revolution in a Can: Food, Class, and Radicalism in the Minneapolis Co-op Wars of the 1970s," in *Eating in Eden: Food and American Utopias,* eds. Martha Finch and Etta Madden (University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 220–38; Anne Knupfer, *Food Co-ops in America: Communities, Consumption, and Economic Democracy* (Cornell University Press, 2013); Joshua Clark Davis, *From Head Shops to Whole Foods: The Rise and Fall of Activist Entrepreneurs* (Columbia University Press, 2017); Etta Madden and Martha Finch, eds., *Eating in Eden: Food and American Utopias* (University of Nebraska Press, 2008; and Stephanie Hartman, "The Political Palate: Reading Commune Cookbooks," *Gastronomica* (Spring 2003). Although not principally focused on food, Auther and Lerner's edited collection *West of Center* offers insight into how activist and artist collectives like the Diggers, the Droppers, and the Harrisons made food political in the postwar U.S. left through performance art.

9. Jennifer Wallach, ed., *Dethroning the Deceitful Pork Chop: Rethinking African American Foodways from Slavery to Obama* (Chicago: University of Arkansas Press, 2015); Frederick Opie, *Hog and Harmony: Soul Food from Africa to America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Doris Witt, *Black Hunger: Soul Food and America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

10. Chris Elcock, "From Acid Revolution to Entheogenic Evolution: Psychedelic Philosophy in the Sixties and Beyond," *Journal of American Culture* 36, no. 4 (December 2013): 296–311; W. J. Rorabaugh, *American Hippies* (Cambridge University Press, 2015); Timothy Miller, *The Hippies and American Values* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2011).

11. Belasco, *Appetite for Change;* Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* (Penguin, 2007).

12. Michael D. Wise and Jennifer Jensen Wallach, eds., "Introduction," *The Routledge History of American Foodways* (Routledge, 2016), 2.

13. Martin F. Manalansan IV, "Beyond Authenticity: Rerouting the Filipino Culinary Diaspora," in *Eating Asian American: A Food Studies Reader,* ed. Robert Ji-Song Ku, Martin F. Manalansan IV, and Anita Mannur (New York University Press, 2013), 299.

14. Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America* (MIT Press, 1982); Karen Jones, "Unpacking Yellowstone: The American National Park in a Global Perspective," in *Civilizing Nature: National Parks in Global Historical Perspective,* ed. Bernhard Gissibl, Sabine Höhler, and Patrick Kupper (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 35.

15. Christoph Grafe, *People's Palaces: Architecture, Culture and Democracy in Postwar Western Europe* (Amsterdam: Architectura & Natura, November 5, 2014).

16. Lee Ou-fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930–1945* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1999), 29.

17. Chang-tai Hung, "A Political Park: The Working People's Cultural Palace in Beijing," *Journal of Contemporary History* 38, no 3 (July 2013): 556–77.

18. Chalmers Johnson, *Autopsy on People's War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 23.

19. For more on post–World War II Maoism in the West, see Robeson Taj Frazier, *The East Is Black: Cold War China in the Black Radical Imagination* (Duke University Press, 2014); Richard Wolin, *The Wind from the East: French Intellectuals, the Cultural Revolution, and the Legacy of the 1960s* (Princeton University Press, 2010); and Aaron J. Leonard and Conor A. Gallagher, *Heavy Radicals—The FBI's Secret War on America's Maoists: The Revolutionary Union/Revolutionary Communist Party 1968–1980* (Zero Books, 2014).

20. Johnson, *Autopsy on People's War.*

21. For examples of this, see Mark Padoongpatt, "'Oriental Cookery': Devouring Asian and Pacific Cuisine during the Cold War," in *Eating Asian American: A Food Studies Reader,* ed. Robert Ji-Song Ku, Martin F. Manalansan IV, and Anita Mannur (New York University Press, 2013), 186–207, and Franny Nudelman, "Trip to Hanoi: Anti-War Travel and Transnational Consciousness," in *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness,* eds. Karen Dubinsky and Ian McKay (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

22. Michael Carriere, "The Lessons of People's Park for the Occupy Movement," *History News Network/News Analysis,* June 6, 2012, reprinted in Truth-out.org, http://truth-out.org/news/item/9634-the-lessons-of-peoples-park-for-the-occupy-movement (accessed October 18, 2015).

For two examples using what would become a popular phrase, see Frank Ciecierka, "Let a Thousand Parks Bloom," poster (1969), All of Us or None Archive, Oakland Museum of California, reprinted online at http://picturethis.museumca.org/pictures/let-thousand-parks-bloom, and Leonard Lipton, *Let a Thousand Parks Bloom,* film, 16 mm (1969), in the Pacific Film Archive Film and Video Collection, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, University of California, Berkeley, archived online at https://archive.org/details/cbpf_00002.

23. Brian Norman, "Crossing Identitarian Lines: Women's Liberation and James Baldwin's Early Essays," *Women's Studies* 35, no. 3 (2006): 241–64.

24. Deppe, *Operation Breadbasket;* Rose, "From the Fields;" Rose, "Women in the United Farm Workers."

25. For a longer discussion of this, see Lovell, "Radical Manifest Destiny."

26. Chester Anderson, "Two Page Racial Rap, In Memoriam: Malcolm X, Who Died to Make Us Free, Too, Baby," flyer (February 9, 1967), Box 1, Chester Anderson Collection, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

27. "The Diggers State Simply," flyer (ca. 1966), Box 1, Chester Anderson Collection, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

28. Michael William Doyle, "The Haight–Ashbury Diggers and the Cultural Politics of Utopia, 1965–1968" (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1997), 5; also see Martin, *Theater Is in the Street,* 86–124.

29. See multiple flyers in Box 1, Chester Anderson Collection, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

30. For a description of the group's anticapitalist, pro-love food philosophy, see Alex Forman, "San Francisco Style: The Diggers and the Love Revolution," *Anarchy* no. 78 (August 1967): 221–24.

31. Belasco, *Appetite for Change,* 18.

32. Although Berkeley's People's Park remains the most well-known activist-created park, my research documents more than forty examples of activist placemaking in the late 1960s and 1970s. See Lovell, "Radical Manifest Destiny."

33. Russell Rickford, "'We Can't Grow Food on All This Concrete': The Land Question, Agrarianism, and Black Nationalist Thought in the Late 1960s and 1970s," *Journal of American History* (March 2017): 956–80.

34. Mary Douglas, "Deciphering a Meal," *Daedalus* 101, no. 1, Special Issue: Myth, Symbol, and Culture (Winter 1972): 61–81.

35. "People's Park (Berkeley)," film, KRON-TV, San Francisco Bay Area Television Archive, http://bit.ly/2d1wlDe.

36. "Doing the Thing: People's Park," in "This Week's Issue" (Informal Student Publication, Merrill College, University of California, Santa Cruz, May 16, 1969), 1, McHenry Library, Special Collections, University of California, Santa Cruz, http://bit.ly/2dvmGrz.

37. Ron Powers, "Develop 'People's Park' as a Protest," *Chicago Sun-Times,* August 5, 1969, 3.

38. Steve Haines, "A New Kind of Rest: Work in People's Park," *Berkeley Barb* 18, no. 194 (May 2–8, 1969): 4.

39. Stephen Shames, Photo of stew, reprinted in P*eople's Park: Still Blooming 1969–2009 and on* . . . , ed. Terri Compost (Berkeley, CA: Slingshot Collective, 2009), 96.

40. While this is demonstrated in photographs of people's stews, another fictionalized narrative discussing a counterattack on a fenced park the month following the closure of Berkeley's People's Park also includes a scene of a people's stew. Told in the voice of an exotic Hindu narrative, the story begins with a discussion led by a godly male leader named Benya "eating People's Stew . . . with his fingers, as was his custom, [who] reached across the stew pot and grabbed the Deputy's glass, in one gulp draining it of wine" before smoking a joint. Benya goes on to lead a discussion with his forces and God, debating the merits of taking back "the soil of our native land" from the "pig power structure." See Lenny (sic) Lipton, "At the Flick," *Berkeley Barb* 8, no. 23 (June 6–12, 1969): 16.

41. Wendy Schlesinger, "The Creation of the People's Park (and Other Political Events)—A Love Story from a Leader's Point of View," unpublished manuscript (courtesy of the author): Chapter 5, 4.

42. "People's Park Mobile Annex (Berkeley)," archival film footage, KRON-TV News (Young Broadcasting of San Francisco, May 1969), San Francisco Bay Area Television Archive, http://bit.ly/2d1wlDe.

43. Lipton, *Let a Thousand Parks Bloom.*

44. "Peoples Stew," *Berkeley Barb* 8, no. 19 (May 9–15, 1969): 2.

45. For more work on the gender dynamics of labor, including food production, within people's parks, see Kera Lovell, "'Everyone Gets a Blister': Sexism, Gender Empowerment and Race in the People's Park Movement," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 46, nos. 3 & 4 (Fall/Winter 2018);

Lovell, "Radical Manifest Destiny;" and Schlesinger, "Creation of the People's Park."

46. Garry Tyler, "People's Park Built by Squatters," photographs (July 25, 1971), in Box 17a, Shoot 710173, *Daily Worker* and *Daily World* Negatives Collection (PHOTOS.223.001), Tamiment Library and Wagner Labor Archives, New York University.

47. David Giffey, "Madison UFW Benefit at People's Park," photograph, Image ID 90052, David Giffey: South Madison Oral History Project and Migrant Farmworker Photographs 1966–1971, 1999–2000 Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society.

48. WKOW 956.5, Features (Newsfilm), 1969 June, Madison, Wisconsin, Television Newsfilm, 1955–1981 Collection, Series: WKOW Television Newsfilm, Wisconsin Historical Society.

49. Hartman has argued in her analysis of hippie food culture how 1960- and 1970-era commune cookbooks included internationally inspired recipes like "China Stew, Tamale Pie, [and] Oriental Liver" that imagined international connections. See Hartman, "Political Palate," 36.

50. Schlesinger, "Creation of the People's Park," Chapter 4, 20.

51. Haines, "New Kind of Rest."

52. John Simon, "People's Park: Just the Beginning," *Liberation Magazine* (July 1969).

53. Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* third edition (Aunt Lute Books, 2007).

54. Edward Said, *Orientalism,* first Vintage Books edition (New York: Vintage Books, October 12, 1979).

55. Concept adapted from Arjun Appadurai, "How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India," *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* 30 (Jan. 1988), 3–24.

56. For discourse on interrogating the search for culinary authenticity, see Monica Perales, "The Food Historian's Dilemma: Reconsidering the Role of Authenticity in Food Scholarship," *Journal of American History* (December 2016): 690–93; Amy Bentley, "From Culinary Other to Mainstream America: Meanings and Uses of Southwestern Cuisine," in *Culinary Tourism,* ed. Lucy M. Long (Lexington, KY, 2010), 209–25; Meredith E. Abarca, "Authentic or Not, It's Original," *Food and Foodways,* 12 (no. 1, 2004), 1–25; Allan S. Weiss, "Authenticity," *Gastronomica,* 11 (Winter 2011), 74–77; Rachel Laudan, "A Plea for Culinary Modernism: Why We Should Love New, Fast, Processed Food," *Gastronomica,* 1 (Winter 2001), 36–44; Gavin Benke, "Authenticity: The Search for the Real Thing," in *Republic of Barbecue: Stories Beyond the Brisket,* ed. Elizabeth S. D. Engelhardt (Austin, 2009), 90–95; and Lavanya Ramanathan, "Why Everyone Should Stop Calling Immigrant Food 'Ethnic,'" *Washington Post,* Aug. 21, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/food/why-everyone-should-stop-calling-immigrant-food-ethnic/2015/07/20/07927100-266f-11e5-b77f-eb13a215f593_story.html.

57. Hartman, "Political Palate."

58. Franny Nudelman uses this phrase to describe how white middle-class radicals described their trips to Vietnam during the war, in which they could use food and clothing to "play" the other through "imperial eyes." See Nudelman, "Trip to Hanoi," 243, and Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (Routledge, 1992).

59. Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (Yale University Press, 1999).

60. Todd Gitlin, "Death Is Not Final. Only Parking Lots," *Nickel Review* (December 26, 1969): 7.

61. José Jiménez, Conversation with the author, February 28, 2016.

62. Terkel, Interview.

63. Padoongpatt, "Oriental Cookery," 189.

64. Doyle and Braunstein, "Introduction," 10.

65. Carriere, "Lessons of People's Park."

66. Douglas, "Deciphering a Meal."

67. Perales, "Food Historian's Dilemma," 691.

Sugar Babies: Confections of American Childhood in Vik Muniz's *Sugar Children* and Kara Walker's *Marvelous Sugar Baby*

Tashima Thomas

> "What did they live on?" said Alice, who always took a great interest in questions of eating and drinking. "They lived on treacle," said the Dormouse, after thinking a minute or two. "They couldn't have done that, you know," Alice gently remarked. "They'd have been ill." "So they were," said the Dormouse; "*very* ill."
>
> Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* at times contemplates the existential dilemma of subsisting exclusively on a treacle diet. The term "treacle" is a British idiom that refers to the dark brown syrupy molasses obtained from raw sugar during the refinement process.[1] Moreover, Carroll suggests an etiological exposure assessment of an exclusively treacle diet endangering one's wellness and resulting in great illness. Carroll uses Alice's great interest in eating and drinking (read: "Drink me." "Eat me."), as the operative expression of his fascination with saccharine and other sugared variants that sweeten the narrative leading to adventures into the absurd. Kara Walker's black-and-white cutout silhouettes are historical treatments of the absurd and the obstinately ridiculous yet terrifying predicaments of U.S. slavery and the plantation agroindustrial complex. Walker's *A Subtlety* is a kind of "Adventures in Sugarland"—an exploration of treacled bodies, labor practices, and the apo-

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theosis of mother sugar as a raced, gendered, sphinxed goddess. While Vik Muniz's *Portraits of the Sugar Children* share a material and temporal affinity with Walker's work, Muniz emphasizes the inevitable void of the children's sugar futures. Together, these two artists' work in sugar offers a comparative analysis that goes beyond the material and temporal and ultimately addresses the contentious and violent histories of sugar and the vulnerability of children's bodies.

Walker's blockbuster installation at the Domino Sugar Factory, *A Subtlety or The Marvelous Sugar Baby*, drew over 130,000 visitors from all over the world and was available for public viewing on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday for only a few weeks in the spring of 2014. The installation featured thirteen sculptures of young black boys made of resin and coated in molasses. Through time and heat, the sugary black bodies partially dissolved into sticky liquefied footpaths, leaving the sculptures in various states of dismemberment and disappearance. The official title for Walker's piece is the following:

At the behest of Creative Time Kara E. Waker has confected:

A Subtlety

or the *Marvelous Sugar Baby*
an Homage to the unpaid and overworked Artisans who have refined
our Sweet tastes from the cane fields to the Kitchens of the New
World on the Occasion of the demolition of the Domino Sugar
Refining Plant

Walker's predilection for creating superfluous, romanticized titles is typical of her approach. She invokes a nineteenth-century aesthetic visually and literarily. For example, her 1997 installation of black-and-white silhouettes titled *The End of Uncle Tom and the Grand Allegorical Tableau of Eva in Heaven* shares the embellished title inspired by Harriett Beecher Stowe's 1852 novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Walker's nineteenth-century visual aesthetic is further explored within the industrial space of the refining plant.

The Domino Sugar Factory was built in 1927 on the East River in the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn. It was originally a storage facility that processed and whitened tons of sugar. The soon-to-be demolished factory had been shuttered for over a decade when it hosted its final installment of sugar profundity courtesy of Creative Time and Kara Walker. In their curatorial remarks, Creative Time emphasizes the racial and sexual connotations of the seventy-five-foot sugar sphinx whose kerchief-covered mammy-styled head emphasizes the stereotype of the desexualized black female domestic laborer, while the prominent hips and buttocks with exposed vulva emphasize the stereotype of the overly sexualized bodies of black women. To this latter assumption, I would like to add that the domestic labor represented by the mammy stereotype is a double bind of labor. The work of historian Deborah Gray White

reminds us of the distinctions experienced under racial slavery as two systems, one for men and one for women. The author critically analyzes black female slavery, investigating the psychological, relational, physical, racial, and sexualized nuances. White's exposition of the Jezebel/mammy mythologies imposed on enslaved black women and thereafter is addressed visually in Walker's sphinx sculpture.[2] The hypersexualized buttocks and vulva I believe also represent the forced sexual labors of enslaved black women to produce additional enslaved offspring/laborers as represented by the sugar and resin boy sculptures and to satisfy the sexual whims of those who fancied themselves their masters. The sphinx's body becomes an extension of the plantation machine as sexual machine. The sugared sphinx in situ resided in the same physical location of the sugar processing machinery at the Domino Sugar Factory. While the entire installation, including the embodiment of the figure as an Egyptian sphinx and the conundrums of interpretation that flavor this work, deserves discussion, this article focuses primarily on Walker's display of confected children.

Kara Walker's *Marvelous Sugar Baby* incorporated over thirty tons of sugar to accompany the sphinx. Walker confects sugar sculptures of young boys, some carrying baskets of rock candy and granulated sugar and others toting hands of bananas. I am interested in the elasticity and etherealness of the materiality of sugar and how it folds layers of meaning from our past and present: how the body and the bite melt, mold, and vanish. Walker's sugar-coated resin sculptures of young boys focuses our attention specifically on the edibility and vulnerability of young black children.

I examine the trope of "Eating the Other" as it relates specifically to sugar children in the visual arts and offer a glimpse as to how this trope of youthful edibility manifests also in literature. Specifically, this trope appears in the work of Vik Muniz's *Portraits of the Sugar Children* and subsequently relates to Walker's work by addressing shared aesthetics, materiality, and the black body as a consumable entity. This shared attunement to the materiality and mediality of sugar by Muniz and Walker culminates into a richer tableaux of sugar body politics and speaks to how the transformation of sugar children shape up in unexpected ways, opening up interpretation in ways that are also unexpected.

Sugarcane is the most popular source of sucrose as a refined carbohydrate. It is propagated asexually and lives in tropical and subtropical climates, requiring lots of water and labor for production. Sixteenth-century Spain pioneered this process of producing sugar in the Americas through technology, African slave labor, and the plantation system. Originally considered a luxury food product in Europe and used mainly medicinally and as a condiment or spice, sugar became more democratized as the sweet tooth of Europe grew, creating global competition. At the forefront of this global trade competition was England. As Sidney Mintz points out, "England fought the most, conquered the most colonies, imported the most slaves (to her own colonies and, in absolute numbers, in her own bottoms), and went furthest and fastest in creating a plantation system. The most important product of that system was sugar."[3]

Sugarcane was introduced by the Portuguese in St. Kitts by way of Brazil in the 1640s. Shortly thereafter, thousands of Africans were captured and enslaved to power the European-controlled sugar plantations in what Cuban novelist and cultural historian Antonio Benítez-Rojo refers to as plantation machines, saying, "This family of machines almost always makes cane sugar, coffee, cacao, . . . bananas, pineapples, . . . and other goods whose cultivation is impossible or too expensive in the temperate zones; furthermore, it usually produces the Plantation, capitalized to indicate not just the presence of plantations but also the type of society that results from their use and abuse."[4]

The Brazilian-born, Brooklyn-based artist Vik Muniz was vacationing on the Caribbean island of St. Kitts when he was introduced to a group of children who were the offspring of sugarcane workers. Impressed with their carefree attitudes, Muniz began taking Polaroid photographs of the children. Muniz's *Portraits of the Sugar Children* (1996) were created by starting with black paper and then "drawing" a portrait by sprinkling sugar until forming an image. Once complete, he captures the skillfully rendered portrait in a photograph, pours the sugar in a glass jar, and begins a new portrait. There are a total of six portraits belonging to this series of gelatin-silver prints, each approximately twenty by sixteen inches. Later, the children introduced Muniz to their parents, who worked in the sugarcane fields performing a treacherous labor that generations prior have toiled with since the seventeenth century.

This was the first time Muniz worked with the medium of food—a material format that would become a hallmark of his work. For example, in 1997, Muniz re-created a famous Hans Namuth action portrait of the artist Jackson Pollock at work on one of his large drip paintings. Using chocolate syrup as his "paint," Muniz rearticulated the Hans Namuth portrait solely in chocolate syrup. The syrupy concoction that worked as the medium of this portrait also was a reflection of the viscous paints that Pollock dripped like syrup on his canvases. Muniz further tested his fluency in chocolate syrup, creating glutinous portraits of Marilyn Monroe, Bella Lugosi as Dracula biting a woman, and a three-panel re-creation of Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper*. It is noteworthy to mention that Muniz uses an edible medium to paint Dracula in the action of "eating" as well as Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper* being focused on an epochal moment of communal eating, thereby creating layers of consumption through medium and context.

Muniz's *Double Mona Lisa* (1999) was made from peanut butter and jelly. It was fashioned after Andy Warhol's *Double Mona Lisa* (1963), which, of course, was fashioned after Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* (1503–1517). The *Double Mona Lisa* portrait was painted with one jelly Mona Lisa and one peanut butter Mona Lisa. In 2004, he painted a series called *Caviar Monsters*, where he rendered images of Dracula, Frankenstein, the Mummy, the Creature from the Black Lagoon, and other characters from the horror genre exclusively in black caviar on white paper. He photographed the painted portraits, creating chromogenic prints, and then mounted them on aluminum. During an interview

Figure 1: Vik Muniz, *Valicia Bathes in Sunday Clothes*, 1996. Courtesy of Sikkema Jenkins & Co. Gallery, New York. © 2018 Vik Muniz / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY.

with *DROME* magazine in 2012, Muniz was asked *why* he chose to paint with food, and in his response, he clarifies,

> Paint is just made out of different components, like food, it only has a different consistency. When you work with something that has a taste, immediately you evoke a different sense and it is interesting to create pictures that work in many sensory levels. Generally, I'm more concerned with taste, rather than food. In fact, I don't really use food, but I use things that spoil, because that justifies the photographic act.[5]

Muniz's disavowal of not using food—even though his paintings were created using chocolate syrup, caviar, black bean soup, coffee beans, or peanut butter and jelly—can be read as a clear assertion of wanting to separate his practice from the association of painting with food, which may allude to the kitschy and craftsy. Rather, the disassociation from the food medium that catapulted his artistic success can be interpreted as matter of strategy for an artist yearning to being taken seriously as a legitimate, creative force. However, by 2012, Muniz had already achieved immense success as an international artist. Ultimately,

Muniz painted with an edible medium. Although Muniz describes his approach using food as being concerned more with taste, his portraits are not eaten—they are photographed and consumed by collectors and the public. Likewise, his *Double Mona Lisa* is not for eating, nor are his sugar children.

Muniz titled the sugar portraits according to some notable physical quality of each child. For example, some of the portraits are titled *Big James Sweats Buckets*, *Valicia Bathes in Sunday Clothes*, or *Ten Ten's Weed Necklace*. Muniz "paints" texture in the portraits by ascribing indentations of layers of sugar with his fingers. These "fingerprints" are usually more apparent when viewing the large photographs in person. When viewed in person, each sugar granule is afforded its own spatial significance, whereas any small restructuring of any granule could drastically change the portrait. There is a seductive quality in the puffy whiteness of sugar crystals that halos each child in a billowy poof of snowy clouds. The sugar clouds suggest a fleeting quality of youth that fades and blurs into the edges of the portraits. However, closer inspection betrays the clouds with the finger of the artist as you notice that each child is covered with the impressions of someone's fingers undercutting the youthful innocence with the possible threat of physical violence. At this point, on closer inspection, you realize that someone's hands have been all over these children. What at first may appear as dreamy portraits in something sweet turns sour at the impressions of many fingers handling and shaping the children's bodies.

After each portrait is drawn with sugar, Muniz photographs the drawing and then places all of the sugar in a small glass jar that he refers to as an "urn" and affixes the original snapshot on the jar. The correlative body of sugar ashes in the "urns" is reflected in the seasonal burning of the sugarcane fields. Like the ashes of a dearly departed family member, the sugar urns are a kind of memorial for the once effervescent portrait of a soon-to-be-departed carefree and jovial child who would shortly join the ranks of their parents in the sugar fields. The laboring bodies that would produce the sugarcane are drawn with the sugar and returned to their sugar grave. The conflation of sugar and the black body refers to the terrible colonial histories of slaves working over sixteen hours a day cutting, hauling, crushing, boiling, milling, and packaging sugarcane. Often compared to resembling a factory, the boiling house was "where the juice from the crushed cane was transferred for reduction, clarification, and crystallization."[6] This process was fraught with accidents resulting in the dismemberment and mauling of bodies, even death.

It is the trope of the consumable black body that is at stake here in Muniz's *Portraits of the Sugar Children*. "I use things that spoil," Muniz offers, "because that justifies the photographic act" as it relates to the sugar children as an artistic project.[7] This raises the question as to what extent the bodies of the children he uses can be read as despoiling fodder for consumption.[8] The sugar children portraits raise interpretive questions as to how Muniz's photographic process challenges consumptive tourism notions of pleasure. Muniz is quoted earlier mentioning that he is interested in how working with an edible medium

conjures taste and the senses at many levels. There is a sybaritic, or pleasure-seeking, enjoyment of the senses and the transitory pleasures of sweetness in the material and visual realm in a way that furthers the artist's own genre and success. The artist as tourist in St. Kitts creates sugar portraits and then returns home. Once the tourist returns to one's homeland, a certain critical distance is created through physical and socioeconomical detachment. In other words, a particular use value is applied to the black children photographed by Muniz, whose premature symbolic deaths are buried in sugar urns and thereby packaged and available for consumption. The processing of the sugar children for consumption is a manifestation of the trope of the consumable black body. The black body is consumed by the tourist before "it spoils" as part of the touristic experience of pleasure and enjoyment. It is also a manifestation of the aesthetics of taste that creates critical distance between the consumer and consumed through class distinctions.

The intersections of colonial desire, appetite, and consumption of vulnerable black bodies are explored throughout art and literature. For example, both Carlyle Van Thompson's *Eating the Black Body: Miscegenation as Sexual Consumption in African American Literature and Culture* and Vincent Woodard's *The Delectable Negro: Human Consumption and Homoeroticism with U.S. Slave Culture* discuss the desire and consumption of subjugating black bodies through sexual violence. Woodard buttresses his argument with words like "taste," "appetite," and "delectable" in order to draw attention to how the desire for the enslaved African or black American had epicurean implications. He says, "The desire was less about literal consumption and more about the cultivated taste the white person developed for the African."[9] Likewise, Kyla Wazana Tompkins focuses on nineteenth-century literature, the literary function of the kitchen, the mouth as a site of political intensity, and the occasional black caricature. Tompkins closely explores the dialectic of the eaters and the eaten. She interrogates the consumption of black bodies in three antebellum novels: Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig*. She concludes,

> If Stowe's representation of blackness as food serves to develop the metaphor of objectification, like Hawthorne's it also renders the black body appetizing to her readers. And while the invitation to consume blackness is not explicit, the extensive food metaphors would seem to indicate that the desire to commune with and consume blackness is latent in the text.[10]

Although Tompkins's studies are relegated to the nineteenth century and my images reach into the contemporary period, the same tropes and aesthetics appear in the works of Muniz and Walker. Rendering the black body appetizing to not only readers but also viewers, as in the case of visual art and culture,

gains a precise specificity when thinking about the vulnerability of children's bodies. Karen Sánchez-Eppler looks at the role of children in nineteenth-century American culture and suggests that Hawthorne's association with children functions as a sign of commodity capitalism.[11] Muniz's photographs of black children rendered in an edible substance that embodies layers of commodity fetishism become closely associated with both the art market and the sugarcane industry.

However, we do not have to look to eighteenth-century plantation images to find tropes of the laboring black body in the sugarcane field. Although slavery was abolished in St. Kitts in 1834, the sugarcane workforce comprised approximately one-third of the island's labor force thereafter. However, in 2005, the government of St. Kitts closed the sugarcane industry in favor of developing the island's tourism industry. Many of the former sugar-field laborers were able to secure employment cultivating various fruits and vegetables.[12] Some might suggest a hopeful shift of the narrative that celebrates the escapement of Muniz's *Sugar Children* from the fate of the sugar fields. Nevertheless, I do not want to oversimplify the exchange of one industry (sugarcane) for another (tourism) as if the latter is not fraught with its own endangerments. I believe the transition of colonial island economies from agroindustrial plantation systems to contemporary tourist industries is a complicated and difficult adjustment. There is a dissolving of time and space between the colonial and the present as seen through the history of sugar plantations and contemporary sugar portraits/sugar urns. The same distinctions that appear in Muniz's work addressing the presentation of the physical body/ethereal body find habitation in the work of Kara Walker's *Sugar Baby*.

Kara Walker's *The Marvelous Sugar Baby*

While Muniz gravitated toward individualized portraits of children, Walker created a singular "type" of child that stood as representative of all enslaved children engaged in the production of sugar. Walker's sugar resin boys stood approximately four feet high and took on the countenance of an eighteenth- or nineteenth-century black caricature. They are portrayed with an oversized head and sheepish grin and as bare chested with bottoms covered unceremoniously with a loincloth. The small boys carry oversized baskets containing sugar crystals, powdered sugar, and orange resin-colored sugar rocks. They appear incapable of lifting such heavy burdens with such undeveloped arms. Walker may be commenting on the ridiculousness of these mammoth tasks in satisfying western Europe's growing sweet tooth. She reminds the viewer of colonial slavery where the blackamoor appears in paintings or, in the eighteenth century, the decorative arts as ornamental reflections of the wealth of the patron. Each young sugar boy holding a basket functions in a similar fashion in the manner of porcelain decorative blackamoors that held sugar or cream or sweetmeat bowls or salt cellars in the eighteenth or nineteenth century. Theoretically, sociologist

Figure 2: Kara Walker, *African Boy Attendant Curio with Molasses and Brown Sugar* from "The Marvelous Sugar Baby," Installation at the Old Domino Sugar Factory Warehouse, 2014. Courtesy of author Tashima Thomas, PhD.

Pierre Bourdieu reminds us in *Dinstinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* that the bourgeoisie observe a strict sequence of food consumption as an "expression of habitus of order, restraint and propriety which may not be abdicated."[13] He identifies the bourgeois social relationship to food as a disciplined behavior concerned with the social ceremony of the sequence of dishes, attention to different utensils, a hierarchical seating plan, and an etiquette that not only involves an invisible censorship of bodily pleasure but also could be extended to the observation of the aesthetic refinement of the porcelain object such as the decorative blackamoors. I refer again to Creative Time's curatorial summary, which suggests that:

> the heart of her title, *A Subtlety*, refers to sugar sculptures that adorned aristocratic banquets in England and France [during] the Middle Ages, when sugar was strictly a luxury commodity. These subtleties, which frequently represented people and events that sent political messages, were admired and then eaten by the guests.

Walker's sugar boys are then a play on exploitative decorative arts of the slaveholding past. Mintz acknowledges, "As a decoration, sugar was obviously important in ceremonial contexts, such as weddings, birthday parties, and funerals, where sculptured sugar could serve to memorialize."[14] In this respect, Walker's use of sugar sculptures is an extension of these ceremonial traditions. In the title of her confection, she memorializes the unpaid skilled laborers of the sugarcane fields as well as the kitchens in the installation at the Domino Sugar Factory. She also memorialized the end of an era in sugar production in Brooklyn. It is also important to note that while Muniz's sugar children and Walker's sugar sculptures were not devoured, the sugar sculptures at the aristocratic banquets were. However, in function and aesthetics, I believe Walker's sugar sculptures are more closely aligned with the decorative porcelain blackamoors. European porcelain makers in the eighteenth century created prototypical examples of the blackamoor decorative figures.

Adrienne L. Childs's chapter, "Sugar Boxes and Blackamoors: Ornamental Blackness in Early Meissen Porcelain," looks at exoticized figures of the blackamoor popularized in Meissen porcelain beginning in the early eighteenth century. In 1710, the Meissen manufactory was first opened in Dresden and became the first major European producer of "hard-paste white porcelain that approximated the popular Chinese prototype."[15] Developing from a fascination with the exotic Other and the colonial project, Meissen popularized the motif of the decorative blackamoor. Childs describes how the black figures often represented allegories of Africa or the Americas and were usually restricted to the role of servant. Childs describes one such sugar bowl, *Negress with Basket*, which she attributes to Kändler and Johann Friedrich Eberlin, who created it for Meissen in 1741, as being in a typical Rococo style that emphasizes the black

female's dark skin coloring, red lips, and white eyes.[16] However, much like Walker's sugar boys who are in the gesture of offering, *Negress with Basket* can be interpreted as in a gesture of offering. The decorative figure therefore functions in the manner of a servant.

Childs's also describes in her essay another piece that closely resembles Walker's sugar boys in function and likeness. *Moor with Emerald Cluster* (ca. 1724), sculpted by Balthasar Permoser (1651–1732), from the Dresden collection, features a smiling black male figure whose crowned head is tilted up and his nude body dripping in gold jewelry, including elaborate bracelets, necklaces, and cuffs attached to all of his limbs and torso. Childs identifies the motif of "African Exoticism" that appears in Permoser's work as a conflation of African bodies and American Indian bodies, which she classifies as characteristic of eighteenth-century exoticism. *Moor with Emerald Cluster* holds an emerald step that was presented to August of Saxony by Emperor Rudolf II in 1581 and was a part of a series of four moors altogether; the second and third held trays of pearls, while the fourth held a tray of crystals.[17] Childs goes on to contextualize the social functions of these objects, saying, "These moors are the ultimate in ornamental blackness, encrusted with jewels and precious metals, their bodies both display and deliver the wealth of distant lands and embody the unabashed accumulation and consumption of exotic luxury goods by European elites."[18] The social function of the decorative blackamoor was also extended into the public sphere and can be traced to a time when "in England, it was fashionable for aristocratic women to be accompanied by a black boy, who was treated as a sort of toy (when he outgrew this role, he was usually sent to the Caribbean)."[19] This extension of the young black boy as an expensive trinket that would reflect the owner's wealth and status to a public audience is a colonial tradition that Walker may also be addressing. By quoting the decorative blackamoor figure within a postmodern context, Walker constructs a clashing of colonial/postcolonial sensibilities. Through interaction with a public audience, the artist is able to observe the legacy of the exoticized Other in a theater of sugar fantasy.

Therefore, these ornamentalized black figures that Childs identifies as displaying the wealth of distant lands function in a similar fashion to Walker's young boys as the very embodiment of the wealth of the sugar plantations through their constitution of sugar flesh. Furthermore, the accumulation and consumption of exotic luxury goods by European elites is also represented in the literal consumption of sugar by European and American elites. British consumption of sugar increased by 2,500 percent in 1800, while thirty years later, total production (including beet sugar) included 572,000 tons of sugar to an almost exclusive European market. Within sixty years, by 1890, 6 million tons of sugar was exported. However, with emancipation forces at work, the profitability of sugarcane began to wane with the increase of sugar beet production, emerging Asian markets, the Sugar Duties Act of 1846, and the increase of international free trade. The democratization of sugar led to an increased supply and demand, especially among poorer Americans. Today, some have attributed

Figure 2: Kara Walker, *African Boy Attendant Curio with Molasses and Brown Sugar* from "The Marvelous Sugar Baby," Installation at the Old Domino Sugar Factory Warehouse, 2014. Courtesy of author Tashima Thomas, PhD.

the obesity epidemic in the United States partially to an increased consumption of sugar. Unhealthy eating habits have destructive bodily consequences, including type 2 diabetes, which has affected many Americans, especially communities of color. The overconsumption of sugar can contribute to long-term complications that result from type 2 diabetes, such as amputations. This can be related to the dismembered sugar sculptures that melted by the end of the installation. Referring to the epigraph discussing subsisting on an exclusively treacle diet, "Alice gently remarked, 'They'd have been ill.' 'So they were,' said the Dormouse; '*very* ill.'"[20] Walker's sugar sculptures can therefore function as a colonial and contemporary commentary on past and present sugar consumption. However, Walker's sugar boys are similar to *Moor with Emerald Cluster* not only in function but also in a shared aesthetics.

Although the moor is represented as an adult male, unlike Walker's much younger sugar children, the moor's skin glistens in a lacquered darkness, reflecting light in ways very similar to the reflection of light off the hard candied bodies of the young boys. Also, like Walker's sugar boys holding baskets of sweet rock crystals, the moor is also holding a basket filled with emerald crystals. These figures are also both in a position of serving, which is symbolic of maintaining a social hierarchy as well as referencing the luxury and wealth of the New World. In a quote that almost anticipates Walker's sugar children, Childs compares *Moor with Emerald Cluster* to *Negress with Basket*, saying, "Both substances being offered are rooted in the colonial encounter, the emerald from Colombia and the sugar from Brazil or the West Indies."[21] The trope of the ornamentalized black as a colonial servant in the decorative arts has been popularized since the sixteenth century. Childs concludes, "The close association between sugar, slavery, and the Meissen object exemplify how material culture celebrated black slavery in a manner that recast human degradation and exploitation into exotic vignettes."[22] It is this ornamentalization of the black subject as sugar bowl and intercessor that is reflected in Walker's sugar boys in the tradition of material sumptuousness, exploitation of the black body, and consumption of luxury goods by colonial elites.

Some of the young boys are carrying hands of bananas, drawing on the closely related histories of sugar and bananas. After the profitability of sugarcane began to subside, colonial investors wanted to sustain market share and increase their business. They looked to the new industry of bananas. Sugarcane stalks were uprooted, and bananas were planted in the same soil. Sugar plantations became banana republics. This may be a possible explanation for some of the young boys toting bananas as well as the oft-cited association between bananas and blackness.

The young boys wear the same mask of silent contentment as the eighteenth-century porcelain figures offering their sweet basket of goods to the audience. In this manner, I was confronted with a disturbing experience at the installation. As I stood viewing one of the sugar boy sculptures, a group of young men and women next to me were observing the same child whose "skin" glistened like

a melting sweet. One of the white men expressed his own hunger for the young boy's body, saying, "I want to lick him, but I can't." I was struck by this young man's at once public vocalization to lick the boy and at the same time his self-conscious negation of the pleasure principle. Conceptualized by psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud as the id's desire for immediate gratification through eating and drinking (or fantasy), the pleasure principle of the young man was suppressed mostly likely because of public disapproval. As if to publicly acknowledge that although licking the young boy would be pleasurable, he is willing to deny himself this pleasure as a kind of moral asceticism. This man's wish to lick the young boy catapulted my mind into the past when such behavior would have been routinely visited on the lives of the enslaved. Perhaps this is why Walker chose to create children sculptures of only boys, no girls, to emphasize the homoerotic dangers encountered during periods of enslavement. Saidya V. Hartman addresses a predilection for inappropriate behavior that violates vulnerable black bodies in the case of *State of Missouri v. Celia, a Slave.*

In *State of Missouri v. Celia*, Celia was a slave who was purchased by her owner, Robert Newsome. Newsome had begun continuously raping Celia beginning the day she was purchased and ending when she killed him four years later. Hartman goes on to describe the efforts of Celia's attorney to prove that Celia was acting in self-defense against her attacker and should be protected by Missouri's laws regarding crimes of ravishment against women, which applied to white women and enslaved women alike. However, the courts disagreed, found Celia guilty, and sentenced her to death by hanging. Hartman goes on to say, "As *Missouri v. Celia* demonstrated, the enslaved could neither give nor refuse consent, nor offer reasonable resistance, yet they were criminally responsible and liable." Hartman quotes Leon Higginbotham's remarks regarding the case, saying Celia's guilt "held that the end of slavery is not merely 'the [economic] profit of the master' but also the joy of the master in the sexual conquest of the slave."[23] Likewise, under the threshold of slavery, the young boys could neither give nor refuse consent to be licked.

Artist Renée Green's work explores the relationship between the textile industry and the slave trade as located in the production of *toiles indiennes*, a fabric popularized by the French aristocratic classes during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Noted for their bright colors and tropical scenes, the *toiles indiennes* fabrics were used to create elaborate garments, upholstery, and curtains. In Green's 1994 installation *Taste Venue* in New York at the Pat Hearn Gallery, she upholstered an entire room, wall, chairs, chaise longue, pillows, and pajamas in the style of a mauve and white *toiles indiennes*. Green designed her own pattern to include eighteenth-century French aristocratic pastoral scenes, a black slave in chains, a hanged white Frenchman during the Haitian Revolution, and a Senegalese nun.[24] However, as the title *Taste Venue* suggests, behind a circular cutaway flap of the *toiles indiennes*, Green has included a reproduction of an image of a white eighteenth-century slave owner licking the face of one of his black slaves, tasting his sweat as a determinant of his health and

subsequent monetary value. The flap must be lifted by the viewer to witness this event emphasizing the surreptitious form of knowledge. An event that stands in contradistinction to Bourdieu's treatise on bourgeois taste whose social ceremony of the meal is committed to the denial of "the crudely material reality of the act of eating and of the things consumed, or, the basely material vulgarity of those who indulge in the immediate satisfactions of food and drink."[25]

Bourdieu's analysis of taste as a principle of classification does not consider the literal manifestation of tasting the corporeal body, although he concludes that "it follows that the body is the most indisputable materialization of class taste, which it manifests in several ways."[26] Thinking about taste as a racialized and sexualized hierarchy of social behaviors complicates Bourdieu's location of the body as site of materialized class taste. Rather, Green's and Walker's works expose the contemporary desire of the white male observer to taste the candied body of the young black boy. Renée Green's cutaway flap when raised therefore responds in a similar fashion likened unto the lid of a covered dish revealing the desserts entrée of the consumable black body. At the same time, the flap, when unattended, conceals the underbelly of desire, offering instead a serene landscape of aristocratic taste. This contradicts Bourdieu's conception of the bourgeoisie's commitment to the meal as social ceremony and as "an affirmation of ethical tone and aesthetic refinement."[27] To be clear, the act of tasting another human being's sweat to assess their health condition and monetary value is unethical and a form of savagery that is the antithesis of aesthetic refinement. Therefore, Bourdieu's theory of taste and the class body is limited when considering the physical manifestations of desire, appetite, and consumption. Imperative to a discussion of taste and the body is an understanding of colonialism and the history of the Black Atlantic. Jennifer A. González elaborates on Green's homology of taste and aesthetics of aristocratic habitus, saying,

> Collapsing two notions of taste—the aesthetics of aristocratic décor and the nearly cannibalistic gesture of the slave trader—Green's installation also brought to mind the origin and etymology of the notion of taste as the primary eighteenth-century discourse on beauty in the arts.[28]

My point here is to emphasize the comments made by the white man at Walker's installation. To lick the young black boy is a wish fulfillment embedded historically in a visual and literary archive. Whether it is the sugared-over body of a young boy or the tasting of a corporeal enslaved body, the construction of colonial appetites has an enduring menu of gastronomical favorites.

These reiterations of past and present turning and falling back on each other collapse the boundaries of time and space. One audience goer described her experience, saying, "I found the intensity of the exhibit, the space, and the smells propelled me both backward and forward."[29] Perhaps this backward motion in time/space and forward swoon into the present destabilizing our time/

space continuum is part of the artist's intention in this installation. What happens when certain audience members' appetites for colonial slavery imagery and unmitigated privilege, coupled with a sensorial explosion of the smell of warm baking sugar, confound present-day ethical judgments? Walker is able to conjure a variety of sensibilities in audiences through her use of aesthetics and veritable sweet battering of the senses.

While Muniz's sugar children portraits are dissolved and/or dismembered into urns, Walker's sugar boys could very well be dissolved by being "licked" to death. However, time and temperature dissolved the sugar boys and parts of the sphinx as well in Walker's installation. By the end of the installation, after a few weeks, the heat, sun, and bodily traffic had melted the sugar resin boys into various states of dematerialization. Some of their arms had completely melted off, their feet spilling into dark black pools of sugar blood. This also reenacts the destructive power of the sugar plantation over the black body. Their bodies fragmented, melted, and collapsed into chunks of candied sludge by the end of the engagement at the Domino Sugar Factory.

Historian Robin Bernstein observes the relationship between childhood and innocence beginning in the nineteenth century, a period of high sentimentalism. Bernstein states, "At the mid-nineteenth century, however, a romanticism sugared over into sentimentalism, writers began to polarize black and white childhood."[30] Bernstein's metaphor of a sugared-over romanticism is analogous to Walker's aesthetic that draws attention to the sugared-over bodies of children in bondage. However, it is Bernstein's attention to the stereotype of the insensate pickaninny in literature that most closely resembles the dismemberment of Walker's sugar children. Bernstein follows how the staged performances of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* eventually led to the characterization of the young black Topsy to become invulnerable to pain and suffering. To be able to experience pain was to be human, and the justification of slavery was embedded in a discourse that classified enslaved Africans as inhumane and therefore insensate. Bernstein writes,

> Slavery had been legitimized in part by widespread claims that African Americans were impervious to pain. Thomas Jefferson, for example, wrote in 1781 in *Notes on the State of Virginia* that Negroes' "griefs are transient." Southern doctors claimed that people of African descent carried a hereditary disease called "dyaesthesia Aethiopsis," or an "obtuse sensibility of body" that supposedly rendered black people invulnerable to corporeal punishment.[31]

The disintegration of Walker's sugar children toward the final days of the installation is the visual depiction of Bernstein's written rendering. One by one, the boys lost hands, feet, arms, and various parts of their bodies. The dismembered sugar laborer was a common sighting during the colonial period because

Figure 2: Kara Walker, *African Boy Attendant Curio with Molasses and Brown Sugar* from "The Marvelous Sugar Baby," Installation at the Old Domino Sugar Factory Warehouse, 2014. Courtesy of author Tashima Thomas, PhD.

of the hazardous nature of the work that caused many to lose their digits, limbs, and even their lives in the process of cutting, hauling, crushing, and boiling the sugarcane. The practice of disremembering or forgetting the violent tragedies of slavery effected on edible, saccharinized bodies is personified in the melting sugar children. In this respect, Walker's sugar children are sculptured struggles to remember a forgotten history that tethers them not only to labor but also to a place. Jason Young argues that "even when we forget the meaning of those times and that place; even when we have never known, the very landscape retains the memory of it."[32] This is why it was important to host Walker's installation inside the sugar processing plant. The landscape of the Domino Sugar Factory is a reflection of the forgotten memories of sugar laborers. James Young quotes Hershini Bhana Young, who "argues that rememory, 'takes the form of shadows, images, and shapes that flicker by.'"[33] Walker's sugar children become memories tied to a sugar landscape, a specific place, a remembering through the shapes of children that flicker by through the slow dematerialization of their bodies.

Rememory is closely tied to the work of author Toni Morrison. Morrison's *Beloved* is a return, a reconciliation, and a "rememory" of the story of Margaret Garner and the haunting of her deceased child. Gwendolyn Dubois Shaw intertwines a reading of Morrison's work with Walker's and addresses the continuities of rememory. When discussing Walker's *The End of Uncle Tom and the Grand Allegorical Tableau of Eva in Heaven*, Shaw reads this as "an effort to 'rememory' the visual stories out of the mediated testimonials of the traumatic events and lingering repercussions of slavery that [Sojourner] Truth's slave narrative exemplifies."[34] Memories can be fleeting and haunting within themselves, and Walker's sugar children have the transitory quality of a dissolving medium and the haunting African American cultural ethos of terrorizing slave narratives. In an absence of full consciousness, the sugar children therefore become the dismembered disremembered.

Sugarcane had to be processed rather quickly because it starts to lose its sugar content once cut. Mintz notes that "once [sugarcane] is cut, the juice must be rapidly extracted to avoid rot, desiccation, inversion, or fermentation."[35] This reality caused the enslaved laborers to endure grueling and deadly physical, psychic, and sexual alienation of their bodies. The physical and sexual abuses of the enslaved are concomitant in any discussion of slavery. They are most profoundly recognized on the sugar plantation as the largest and most successful of New World industries. Both of these nuances of physical and sexual exploitation are present in Walker's installation.

It was in this moment of contemplating labor exploitation and rememory during the last weekend of the installation that I observed a young woman cry out to her male partner regarding one of the sugary boys' crumbling state as she exclaimed, "Look! Oh no. He's lost his arms!" Her apathetic partner shrugged his shoulders and without a word sauntered off. Walker's application of nineteenth-century aesthetics carries what Bernstein refers to as a system of signs,

or the scriptive thing that reveals a host of implied actions. The practices of scripted things enter our system of culture and are then performed. I believe that the mostly apathetic viewer witnessing the dismemberment of Walker's sugar boys reacted according to the scripted prompts that dictate the young black child as impervious to pain, like Topsy. Although this is a discussion regarding sugar sculptures, the children represented in these works whose bodies disintegrated into black puddles were often read according to the same script of one whose "griefs are transient." In Walker's previous works of black-and-white cutout silhouettes, she has referred to the paper as a kind of "script," saying,

> I've been interested in the way in which black people (or commonly: "African Americans"), or the way at least I responded to, or ignored, or reaffirmed or reinforced certain stereotypes about myself, other blacks, or more interestingly—white people—who retain a sense of white supremacy blithely unaware of the power Black life has over them. The silhouette is the most concise way of summing up a number of interests. [It is a way] to try and uncover the often subtle and uncomfortable ways racism, and racist and sexist stereotypes influence and script our everyday lives.[36]

This performance of the script is what I witnessed during the encounter of the passive viewer and the dismembered sugar child. As a three-dimensional live sequence of actors and witnesses, a living tableau of one of Walker's black-and-white silhouettes, the audience took part in a drama that was provoked by such encounters with scriptive things. As a result of the scriptive thing, that is, the insensate black child impervious to pain and suffering, the insouciant viewer performs by offering a dispassionate response. It is the response and interaction of the viewer that become increasingly central to Walker's work.

Conclusion

Sugar has a special talent for reigniting the existential trauma of colonialism. Through sweetness, it beguiles. Through whiteness, it obscures. Each tiny processed granule wields the power of subtlety. Sugar in its totality is an invitation of pleasure and pain that raptures the senses. The materiality of Muniz's sugar children unwittingly addresses the contentious and violent histories of sugar and the vulnerability of children's bodies. Walker conceptualizes the mediality of sugar to draw attention to the traumas of the history of sugarcane's cultivation, production, and commodity fetishism and how the act of consumption transforms the consumer/viewer. By way of comparative analysis, we are able to draw conclusions regarding how Muniz and Walker created sugar children whose images or bodies rapidly dissipated into piles of sweet goo or granules, and consider how these bodies were consumed by space, time, and audi-

ences. Throughout the Domino Sugar Factory and especially evident near the installation's exit, footprints can be seen tracking the sticky black sugar from the building into the outside world. Walker incriminates the audience in this installation. The tackiness of our sugar past is stuck to all of us in the present.

Notes

1. I use the term "treacle" at times when referring to Kara Walker's work because of the shared nineteenth-century aesthetic associations between this term and the visual and literary archive, such as can be found in Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. Sidney W. Mintz adds that "molasses, or treacle, cannot be crystallized further by conventional methods. It is, of course, quite sweet, and can be used for sweetening food; in the English diet, it was for more than a century at least as important as any crystalline form of sugar; in refined forms, it remains important to this day." Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (London: Penguin Books, 1985), 22.

2. Deborah Gray White's book *Ar'n't I a Woman: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: Norton, 1999) is especially useful in comparing the lived day-to-day experiences of black women from slavery to the modern era. Her chapter "Jezebel and Mammy: The Mythology of Female Slavery" is a detailed exposé of these conditions.

3. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 38. Mintz's anthropological approach looks carefully at the production, consumption, and power of sugar. His focus on the Anglo-Caribbean sugar industry considers how the rise of sugar gave rise to cultural meanings. With a nod to visual culture, Mintz also included colonial illustrations of sugar harvesting, labor, and elegant sugar molds from a French cookbook of haute cuisine as part of his discussion in *Sweetness and Power*, acknowledging the importance of including images and the work they perform when included in an anthropological study of commodities.

4. Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 9.

5. Francesca Cogoni, "Vik Muniz: Food for the Soul," *DROME*, September 2012, http://www.dromemagazine.com/vik-muniz-food-for-the-soul.

6. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 47.

7. Cogoni, "Vik Muniz."

8. Another way of thinking about the term "spoil" is in regard to its popular usage referring to a "spoiled child," referencing the overindulged, privileged child. Again the association between Muniz's usages of spoil with children carries multiple layers of meaning. Further insight into the image of the colonial child is expanded on at length by Bill Ashcroft in *On Post-Colonial Futures: Writings Past Colonialism* (London: Continuum, 2001). Ashcroft states, "While transformations of those tropes, such as 'the child,' employed to 'other' colonized peoples, has been a widespread function of post-colonial discourse, the interrelation between the material economies of colonialism and the transformative dynamic of that discourse has been profoundly important" (67).

9. Vincent Woodard, *The Delectable Negro: Human Consumption and Homoeroticism with U.S. Slave Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 18.

10. Kyla Wazana Tompkins, *Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the 19th Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 113.

11. Tompkins, *Racial Indigestion*, 95.

12. Silberman, 8.

13. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 196.

14. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 122.

15. Adrienne L. Childs, "Sugar Boxes and Blackamoors: Ornamental Blackness in Early Meissen Porcelain," in *The Cultural Aesthetics of Eighteenth Century Porcelain* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 161.

16. Childs, "Sugar Boxes and Blackamoors," 161.

17. Childs, "Sugar Boxes and Blackamoors," 171.

18. Childs, "Sugar Boxes and Blackamoors," 171.

19. When the child outgrew his usefulness as a toy through the passing of his youth, being sent to the Caribbean was a sentence of hard labor and not a vacation. Matthew Parker, *The Sugar Barons: Family, Corruption, Empire, and War in the West Indies* (New York: Walker & Company, 2011), 299.

20. Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and through the Looking-Glass*. (New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2004), 84.

21. Childs, "Sugar Boxes and Blackamoors," 173.

22. Childs, "Sugar Boxes and Blackamoors," 167.

23. Saidya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 86. Hartman adds, "The black body was simply the site on which the "crimes" of the dominant class and of the state were externalized in the form of a threat" (82).

24. Matthew Parker discusses the entanglements of textile manufacturing and the many faces of the slave industries in his book *The Sugar Barons: Family, Corruption, Empire, and War in the West Indies* (New York: Walker & Company, 2011.) He states, "Banks, insurance companies, shipbuilders and brokers all participated in and benefited from the trade, and profits were invested in manufacturing. Manchester in particular, thrived, producing textiles that the Liverpool shippers took to Africa to pay for the slaves" (298).

25. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 196.

26. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 190.

27. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 196.

28. Jennifer A. González, *Subject to Display: Reframing Race in Contemporary Installation Art* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), 228.

29. Kimberly D. Nettles-Barcelon et al., "Black Women's Food Work as Critical Space," *Gastronomica*, Winter 2015, 45.

30. Bernstein, 43.

31. Bernstein, 50.

32. Jason Young, "Through the Prism of Slave Art: History, Literature, Memory, and the work of P. Sterling Stuckey," *Journal of African American History* 91, no. 4 (Autumn 2006): 395.

33. Young, "Through the Prism of Slave Art," 395.

34. Shaw, 52.

35. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 21.

36. Darby English, *How to See a Work of Art in Total Darkness* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 84–85.

Welcome to Flavortown: Guy Fieri's Populist American Food Culture

Emily J. H. Contois

Described as a "dude chef," the "rock 'n' roll comfort food king," and "a supernova of kitsch," Guy Fieri transformed food television when he won the reality show *Next Food Network Star* in 2006. Beyond his several television programs—most notably the Emmy-nominated *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* (2007 to present) but also *Guy's Big Bite* (2006 to present) and *Guy's Grocery Games* (2013 to present), among others—Fieri's food empire now includes restaurants, cookbooks, rock 'n' roll gastro-tours, food products, and cooking equipment. With an estimated net worth as high as $10 million, he is routinely included on lists of top-earning chefs.[1] Infamous for his catchphrases, sense-stunning food, bleached-blond spiked hairstyle, casual wardrobe, and copious, garish jewelry, Fieri has for more than a decade been the target of considerable media attention, both complimentary and derogatory. As Julia Moskin wrote in the *New York Times*, Fieri "has brought a new element of rowdy, mass-market entertainment to American food television. . . . He has a Sarah Palin-like ability to reach Americans who feel left behind by the nation's cultural (or, in his case, culinary) elite."[2]

Guy Fieri constructs his populist brand of gastronomic entertainment in part through cultural tropes often presented as uniquely "American." Fieri posits his own definition of America, one espoused on his programs, especially *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* and its accompanying cookbooks. The program asks, "What is American food?"—a polemic inquiry that encapsulates the

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myths, tensions, and paradoxes that make up American identity. A close study of Guy Fieri and the definitions of America and American food that he proffers on *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* illuminates some of the motivations behind the most recent rise of populist sentiment in the United States.

Defining Guy Fieri's Populism: "Welcome to Flavortown, USA"

An imagined location, Flavortown, USA, proves challenging to define, even for Fieri himself. In his first cookbook—*Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives: An All-American Road Trip . . . with Recipes!*, published in 2008—Fieri welcomes readers to "take a trip to Flavortown," a place that he created, one populated by the flavors, ingredients, dishes, restaurants, people, and feelings showcased on *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*.[3] Fieri frames Flavortown as a destination, a place not all around us but one that we must travel to visit. Emphasizing this distance, Fieri's definitions of Flavortown often mention means of travel with phrases like "We've got a conductor on the train going to Flavortown" and "Me and the number-one bus driver goin' to Flavortown."[4] Fieri hails his viewers, "All aboard!"

Revealing the slippery and at times contradictory meaning of Flavortown, Fieri has also described Flavortown in the language of recent food trends and values, using phrases like "food revolution" and "scratch-made, home-made, farm-to-table, knowing what's really in front of you."[5] Fieri also emphasized the intangible (and even fanciful) qualities of Flavortown as "a state of mind" in a February 2017 interview in which he likened Flavortown to Willy Wonka's chocolate stream and *The Matrix* saying, "You can only get down with Flavortown if you believe in Flavortown."[6] While a nebulous concept, place, and community, Flavortown overlaps in interesting and often inconsistent ways with the America that Fieri constructs, an idea of the nation that speaks directly to the rise of populism in our current historical moment.

Although widely invoked as a political buzzword, particularly in recent years in the United States, populism is a notoriously vague, often misunderstood, and hotly contested term.[7] Numerous scholars have sought to define and clarify populism.[8] For example, political theorist Margaret Canovan defined populism in modern democratic societies as "an appeal to 'the people' against both the established structure of power and the dominant ideas and values of the society," such as "individualism, internationalism, multiculturalism, permissiveness and belief in progress."[9] Within such a framework, appeals are simple and direct, and "the people" are considered ordinary, decent, and associated with what Paul Taggart called "the heartland"; the people are the binary opposite of "the elite."[10] In his history of populism in the United States, Michael Kazin concedes that these divisions obscure race and gender, but he further asserts that conflict between the powerless us and the powerful them "involved debates about the meaning of Americanism itself," which holds "rule by the

common people" as "the core ideal of American democracy."[11] Discussing the targets of populist politics, Canovan writes, "Populist animus is directed not just at the political and economic establishments but also at opinion-formers in the academy and the media," seeking in each case to divide rather than unify.[12]

While not exactly a charismatic leader, Guy Fieri and his food media empire express and manipulate the basic tenets of populism. Fieri presents himself as a people's celebrity chef and a champion of "mom-and-pop" restaurants despite his own considerable wealth, privilege, and status. Recognizing his audience's stake in an us-versus-them debate, Fieri's food media empire exploits this divide as he positions himself and his viewers against the culinary elite who dominate food media and dictate hegemonic definitions of "good food" and "good taste." Communicating his populism through food, Fieri emphasizes the supposed divisions between pretentious foodies and ordinary eaters, haute cuisine and greasy burgers, fine-dining restaurants and diners, drive-ins, and dives. In doing so, Fieri's food media empire may appear to resist dominant definitions of "good food," but as Peter Naccarato and Kathleen Lebesco demonstrate in their work defining culinary capital, such exercises in gastronomic resistance may in fact "celebrate and reframe the terms through which culinary capital is attained."[13] In the case of *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*, this dual pursuit of populist resonance and culinary capital is also imagined as a nationalist project of defining America and American food.

Filmed as segments of one, long, all-American road trip, *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* charts a path to Flavortown as Fieri visits primarily small, locally owned restaurants where chefs, cooks, and owners prepare their specialty dishes for the camera and Food Network's national audience. At each location, Fieri observes the cooking process, asks questions, points out notable facts, cracks a few jokes, and, at the end of the segment, takes a bite (or two or three) of the prepared dish and gives his copious and enthusiastic compliments to the chef. Throughout the program, Fieri invokes a nationalist theme, which the show's three tie-in cookbooks assert textually from cover to cover. With recipes for Cap'n Crunch French Toast, American Chop Suey, and BBQ Bologna Sandwiches, *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives: An All-American Road Trip . . . with Recipes!* "takes you on a tour of America's most colorful diners, drive-ins, and dives."[14] The cookbook presents the restaurants—and their related personalities and stories—as not just "good food" but also as "all-American" and distinctly American "treasures." In the cookbook, Fieri goes further, as the introduction reads,

> The show is about capturing Americana, and it embodies what the food business is in the United States. Some of the greatest chains originally started as mom-and-pop restaurants. I'm a small-restaurant owner myself; I know their marketing budgets are small. So, to have a chance to recognize these family institutions, these cultural epicenters, is unbelievable. I'm

> more honored to be in their presence. They say thank you so much for coming, and I say thank you so much for existing, because this is what America is about, the opportunity and the cultural bridges.[15]

Fieri's second *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* cookbook, published in 2009, further extended such claims, proclaiming itself "a road map to road food that's earned its culinary citizenship in Flavortown."[16] In such ways, Fieri explicitly frames *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* in terms of conscribed national identity and a multicultural American dream, rooted in notions of business culture and growth.

Furthermore, each of these cookbooks—and the many episodes of the program, which run back-to-back on Food Network for hours at a time—articulate definitions of America and American food that depend on claims to the "authentic." In studies of food, authenticity emerges as a concept with significant cultural value but one that is nevertheless constructed, contingent, and variable.[17] Framed as a quest for American cuisine and a showcase of American food businesses, *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* manipulates the cultural valiance of authenticity within Fieri's populist construction as a chef of and for the people. Within this framing, "the people" made up of a mass media audience—one partly imagined and partly actual viewers—who are presented as real, ordinary, and good, if at times overlooked by "the elite." This imagined audience and the theme of authenticity appear repeatedly as Fieri's cross-country road trip defines America through four key themes: 1) the value of rebellious freedom, expressed through food, tattoos, and rock music; 2) nostalgic American symbols and spaces, like the open road and the diner; 3) democratic notions of taste; and 4) a complicated multiculturalism.

Rebellious Freedom: "Cookin' It, Livin' It, Lovin' It"

Guy Fieri's notion of America capitalizes on the concept of freedom, presenting it as a cornerstone American value and attribute.[18] Notably, Fieiri's conception of freedom emphasizes ease, frankness, boldness, and a lack of restriction more so than consideration for political rights or liberation from the constraining power of another.[19] Fieri's culinary approach purposefully plays free and loose with the rules of cuisine, breaking convention and embracing hybridity. For example, episode 6 of *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives'* fourteenth season features one of Fieri's own restaurants, Johnny Garlic's, in Santa Rosa, California, which exemplifies his culinary style.[20] Customers describe the restaurant's cuisine with phrases like "It's a very unique menu" and "They always have something different from the norm." Although Fieri's own ethnic heritage is part of the formula, Italian cuisine is by no means centralized at Johnny Garlic's, as one diner describes the fare as "a mixture of so many different cuisines," further elucidated as "Asian blended with Mexican blended with Italian

blended with Cajun." On *Next Food Network Star*, the program on which Fieri achieved his fame, he defined his "culinary point of view" in similar ways as "the gauntlet of food. My culinary point of view is kinda off the hook and out of bounds."[21]

While cuisine is a form of cultural expression unto itself, Fieri communicates freedom through other arts as well, including tattoos, which have a unique resonance in the professional food world. Compared to other industries, professional chefs commonly have multiple tattoos, which serve as markers of nonconformity to mainstream labor norms, unruly self-expression, and individuality, linked to the food they create.[22] While Fieri is unexceptional for having more than a dozen tattoos and using them to exhibit his identity and food views, he uniquely commodified tattoo culture within his culinary brand. In this regard, Fieri's story mirrors popular perceptions of tattoo tycoon Ed Hardy, known for his role in mainstreaming, elevating, and then commodifying U.S. tattoo culture, glitter and all. As a result, scholar Margot Mifflin argues that "hating Ed Hardy became a national pastime."[23] Guy Fieri's visual presentation is implicated in this Hardy hatred, as Fieri adopted Hardy-esque aesthetics wholesale in his own personal style. Fieri also incorporated such aesthetics into his cookbook *Guy Fieri Food* (2011) and his line of culinary products. Fieri-branded knives boast silver details reminiscent of flame decals, while Fieri-branded spatulas feature tattoo flash designs—scrolls that read "Cookin' It, Livin' It, Lovin' It," traditional koi fish, and a pig wearing a top hat.[24] While once nonconformist symbols of rebellion, Fieri's tattoos—on his body, printed in his cookbook, and branded into his cookware—become ambivalent representations of both working-class resistance and corporate capitalism, of self-expression and mass production.

Guy Fieri also emphasizes notions of freedom through rock music and musical metaphors, which he uses to describe his persona, his audience, and his food. Fieri writes in one of his cookbooks, "All I wanted was to be a great dad and a chef . . . okay, maybe I wanted to be a rock star, but I can't play a thing, so that wasn't going to happen."[25] Indeed, the Fieri brand co-opts rock music as another way to construct an "out-of-bounds" culinary persona, though one that reinforces the histories and contemporary representations of whiteness among both rock stars and celebrity chefs.[26] Fieri routinely plays air guitar with kitchen tools and makes rock hand gestures toward the camera. Fieri also mentions musicians throughout *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*, like his "buddy" Sammy Hagar, and features guest appearances from Kid Rock, Gene Simmons of KISS, and Steve Harwell from Smash Mouth. In addition, when Fieri took a national food tour through dozens of cities at 5,000-seat venues in 2011 and 2012, the press dubbed it "rock 'n' roll meets culinary," as it included a rock sound track (with bands like Lynyrd Skynyrd and Mötley Crüe), pyrotechnic-like flame tricks, and a T-shirt cannon—elements rarely featured in cooking demonstrations.[27] Mentioning and featuring these various musicians serves to further establish Fieri's "rocker" brand as an out-of-bounds celebrity chef.

Guy Fieri also employs "rock 'n' roll" as a cultural synonym for authenticity, applying it to his audience. In *Guy Fieri Food*, Fieri recounts conducting a cooking demo at the South Beach Food and Wine Festival, which he describes as "a multiday, sophisticated affair, where people spend hundreds on tickets to watch demos and meet chefs, wineglass in hand."[28] Invoking musical metaphor and class-based distinctions between elite gastronomes and his readers and viewers, Fieri describes his fans as "rock 'n' roll," that is, as authentic and genuine without artifice or pretention, compared to the "sophisticated," wine-sipping crowd at the festival.

Fieri also uses rock music metaphor to explain his approach to food and why he believes it is so often critiqued. When discussing how some criticize his food as unhealthy, he says, "If you are AC/DC, you don't get credit for slow songs. And if you are doing a show about food with a dude with crazy blond hair and tattoos who drives a hot rod, of course everyone is going to think everything you eat is deep-fried."[29] In this way, Fieri aligns himself with a rock star persona while also using such a comparison to argue that he cooks and promotes healthy food, at least sometimes. When discussing the criticism he has received from other chefs, he states, "It's like music. Do classical musicians say that rock is wrong?"[30] In these various ways, Fieri uses music to emphasize the differences in technique and genre between rock and classical music to discuss the differences between his own food and haute cuisine. Fieri argues that each has and deserves their own rightful place, especially in Flavortown, where a sense of rebellious freedom rules.

American Symbols and Spaces: "Take a Trip to Flavortown"

As part of its cross-country road trip, the program *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* presents specific symbols and spaces as American, often in nostalgic ways. First, the show repeatedly invokes American-made car culture as part of its definition of a free, expressive, and individualistic America and as part of Fieri's populist appeal.[31] Fieri sets out with the top down to discover all-American food, a search based on the trope of freely traveling the open road by car—a journey to discover the nation and the self, immortalized in American novels and films, such as Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* and *Easy Rider*.[32] On *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*, Fieri drives in and out of most episodes in a vintage 1967 red Chevrolet Camaro convertible.[33] A historic "muscle car," Fieri's Camaro establishes his all-American, white, heteronormative masculinity within the first seconds of each episode. Fieri's celebration of classic automobiles as integral to American roadside foodways occurs within a paradoxical context, however, as the American auto industry continues to struggle economically and American car culture shows signs of decline.[34] Even as American car culture transforms—or perhaps because of it—*Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* emphasizes a nostalgic

automobility as a significant component of Flavortown and is part of the populism that the program and its host endorse and construct.

Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives also endorses nostalgic notions of small towns and "Main Street." Fieri invites viewers to seek out the food, people, and feelings of Flavortown—not of Flavorcity, Flavorland, or Flavorworld. Furthermore, "Main Street" is a cultural construct that American studies scholar Miles Orvell argues is "associated with small-town culture and mores, with traditionalism, with conservative social values, and against the values of the city."[35] Such depictions (and dichotomies) characterize Flavortown and the America depicted on *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*, though in ways more nostalgic than real.[36] Furthermore, this imagined Main Street community excludes members along the lines of race, class, gender, and sexuality.[37] Yet it retains an ambivalent appeal—or as English and American studies scholar Hua Hsu concedes in his *New Yorker* article "The Accidental American Genius of Guy Fieri," "At its best, his show skims across an America that still works for me as an idea: mom-and-pop restaurants, local specialties, food as community and comfort."[38]

These nostalgic, comforting, small-town feelings resonate strongly within the diner especially as both a material and a metaphorical space. While diners are held up as archetypal American food establishments, restaurants and diners have been significant historical sites of resistance and transformation.[39] Historian Andrew Hurley argues that diners were a space where working-class Americans "rearticulated their aspirations and frustrations in the language of consumption," particularly as dining out grew into an even more potent ritual demonstrating American class standing.[40] Through menu offerings, physical spaces, price points, and service norms, diners continue to symbolically communicate these "American" values and these class-based tensions surrounding dining access and food-based aspiration. Fieri reinforces the symbolic meaning of diners on *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*. His cookbooks define a diner: "To fit the category, a diner does not have to be in a stainless-steel car. Diners have to be a home away from home, a place where people feel really comfortable, where the food is memorable. This is why we go, to feel part of the FAMILY."[41] Emphasizing family, home, and comfort food off the beaten path, *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* highlights diners from across America, like A1 Diner in Gardiner, Maine; Standard Diner in Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Marietta Diner in Marietta, Georgia. Through American symbols and spaces—like the diner, the open road, American-made automobiles, small towns, and Main Street—Fieri and *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* construct a populist, nostalgic vision of America.

Democratic Taste: "Never Pretentious, Nothing Fancy"

In addition to notions of "freedom" and "American" symbols and spaces, Fieri's American cuisine is decidedly rooted in his conception of democratic taste as accessible and unpretentious. With his loudmouth demeanor, supremely

casual appearance, and deliciously greasy food, Guy Fieri intentionally adopts and endorses what some would mark as lowbrow. In this way, Fieri's definition of "good food" thwarts that of mainstream food culture, which American studies scholar S. Margot Finn summarizes as gourmet, healthy, natural, and ethnically diverse.[42] Building on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, Finn argues that class anxiety, rooted in increasing income inequality and its attending correlations with various types of capital, shapes such definitions of good food.[43] The food that Fieri cooks and promotes is intimately implicated in these socioeconomic trends. Presenting himself as an everyman, even as he has acquired significant wealth as a Food Network star, Fieri is adored by fans but reviled by his critics. They ridicule him for so enthusiastically promoting what they perceive to be cheap, unhealthy, and lowbrow food.[44]

Class tensions fuel both Fieri's fame and his polarizing status as critics squabble over the constructed differentiations between high and low culture, the authentic and the fabricated, the artisan crafted and the mass-produced.[45] For example, *The Daily Beast* rebukes Fieri as "The Trailer Park Gourmet," while in *Salon*, Farsh Askari castigates Fieri for destroying the Food Network by "gorging himself and ranting like an imbecile on fire."[46] In his *GQ* profile, Drew Magary writes (less derisively) that Fieri rarely dines out, preferring to cook at home or eat at one of his restaurants: "He is his own ideal customer—a man in love with his own middlebrow food."[47] On the other hand, Fieri's food and persona resonate strongly with his audience. While not a monolithic group, Fieri's audience includes fans historically excluded or ignored by the Food Network and food media more broadly. For the *New York Times*, Julia Moskin interviewed New Jersey residents who attended Fieri's culinary tour. They commented, "You feel like he has that same background just like you do, never pretentious, nothing fancy" and "He's the only one who never talks down to anybody."[48] Fieri performs this unpretentiousness through both food and language. Fieri wrote in his first cookbook, "See, I have a fiduciary responsibility (that's a big word for me by the way) to eat everything," carefully playing the part of the plainspoken (but omnivorous) common man.[49]

This sort of populism also forms a cornerstone of Fieri's take on American cuisine, or, as Moskin put it, "Mr. Fieri's cheerful embrace of taste at the expense of tradition is an example of what makes him so popular, and of why other chefs tend to dismiss him."[50] Fieri's food opposes tradition and culinary rules. The food he cooks and promotes combines ingredients, techniques, and flavors in his own exuberant approach to fusion cuisine, tailored to appeal to the most mainstream of gastronomic desires. Fieri celebrates such tastes, while other chefs, such as Alice Waters or Jamie Oliver, endeavor to elevate, educate, or mold them. Instead, Fieri meets his audience where they are, making remarks like "A lot of people who like sushi don't really like raw fish or seaweed. So I make what they do like."[51] For these eaters, he makes "The Jack Ass Roll" using tapioca paper instead of seaweed nori, using barbecued chicken instead of

raw fish, and adding in avocado and spicy chili mayo for a California twist on a Japanese tradition.

Fieri's approach to sushi demonstrates his populist resonance, which embraces "ordinary" tastes as it resists trends that have gained momentum in the past few decades.[52] Some have considered the mainstreaming of sushi consumption in the United States post-1970 as an indicator of America developing a more robust culinary culture.[53] In his article "How Sushi Went Global," Theodore Bestor writes, "From an exotic, almost unpalatable ethnic specialty, then to haute cuisine of the most rarefied sort, sushi has become not just cool, but popular."[54] Speaking of our current food moment, *Food & Wine* further declares, "America has become a sushi nation . . . a nation of sushi connoisseurs, able to discuss the difference between o-toro and chu-toro."[55] Fieri's popularity makes it clear that is not the case—at least not quite. While sashimi lovers and many food writers discount consumers disinterested in or disgusted by raw fish, Fieri provides these eaters a voice, assuring them they too have good taste.[56] By speaking to and for this audience—and directly contradicting culinary experts, food writers, and foodies—Fieri exerts his populist power through provocatively named and decidedly not raw sushi.

Beyond championing such individual tastes, Fieri sees himself as a missionary-like ambassador for a particular segment of food businesses, writing, "Hopefully my industry will say I carried the torch for the mom-and-pop joints. Helping rebuild American culture, one funky joint at a time."[57] On *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*, Fieri promotes affordable comfort food from across America rather than the fare that typically characterizes fine dining. Fieri writes in *More Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* that what he "digs" about doing the show is that "I get to shine a light on a real group of people—not the high-end joints with the seventy-five-dollar filet and such-and-such."[58] Similar to how he describes the fans who attended his gastro-tours as "real" compared to the festival-attending sophisticates, Fieri frames the food businesses featured on *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* as authentic and real, contrasted against disingenuous, high-end restaurants.

Similarly, Fieri presents himself as a people's champion, saying, "There *are* people using real culinary techniques in small towns. I'm carrying the torch for mom and pops. Who else is doing that?"[59] Almost in response, Jeremy Repanich withheld criticism of Fieri in his *Playboy* article after he interviewed 100 of the restaurant owners featured on *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*, finding that nearly every one "has seen an increase in their business, many of them benefiting from a more than 30 percent improvement. I also found that while leaders of the artisanal food movement snobbily dismiss Fieri, they fail to recognize that Guy has become a champion of restaurants who operate with the ethos foodies hold so dear."[60]

For example, Fieri takes the *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* audience out for handmade noodles with chicken at Frank's Noodle House, an unassuming Portland, Oregon, restaurant. Fieri learns from Frank how to make hand-pulled

noodles, which involves kneading, preparing, and resting the dough for hours before skillfully pulling and bouncing it into long, slender noodles, ready to be boiled. The chicken for the dish marinates for thirty minutes before Frank combines it with the noodles, vegetables, and sauce—what Fieri describes as "a rocket ship to Flavortown."[61] Taking his camera crew into Frank's small kitchen, Fieri demonstrates the significant skill, time, and effort that goes into making a takeout dish that can reach the eater in mere minutes and costs only $12.95.[62] As part of his populist persona, Fieri presents himself as an advocate for lesser-known and less acknowledged—or even derided—people, foods, and places, all of which he incorporates into his definition of an authentic American cuisine defined by democratic taste.

Multiculturalism: "This is the American Dream"

Finally, Fieri's definition of America incorporates a complicated and ambivalent multiculturalism. Multicultural theorists typically reject the "melting pot" ideal, a metaphor often used to describe American food culture but one that demands the assimilation of minority groups into the dominant culture. Instead, multiculturalism "favors an ideal in which members of minority groups can maintain their distinctive collective identities and practices" as part of cultural integration.[63] Emphasizing the unique and the universal, the funky and the familiar, *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* endorses an America and an American food culture that is distinctively diverse rather than assimilated and melted down. In her defense of Guy Fieri in *Lucky Peach*, Julia Turshen picks up on this theme as she writes, "When it comes to visibility and inclusiveness, *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* succeeds. . . . Food allows the show to highlight inclusivity without being *about* inclusivity."[64] *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* attempts to represent a multicultural America in the ways that it depicts ethnicity, race, immigration, and citizenship status as well as region, space, and place in relation to "authentic" American food culture.

Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives features chefs, restaurant owners, and cuisines from all over the world. As but one example, a season 13 episode featured all family-run restaurants with varied specialties: hand-pulled noodles in Vancouver, barbecued fish tacos in Virginia Beach, and Cuban sandwiches in Brooklyn.[65] While the emphasis on a nostalgic notion of family sanitizes and universalizes the program's attempted multiculturalism, it nevertheless endorses America and American food culture as culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse. Episodes repeat this emphasis, purposefully promoting restaurants and foods that take a hybrid or unique approach. Fieri frames Creole classics in Los Angeles; Hapa ramen in Lahaina, Hawaii; and vegan meats and cheeses in Minneapolis as just as American as the grilled cheese sandwiches, hot dogs, and burgers he promotes on other episodes.[66] The *More Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* cookbook also includes stereotypical American dream narratives, like the Tune-Up Café in Santa Fe, New Mexico—where El Salvadorian owner Jesus

Rivera serves up beef pupusa and banana leaf tacos alongside "comfort food, like stuffed French toast, and Southwestern favorites like chiles rellenos"—which Fieri describes as "the American dream."[67] In another episode dedicated to "southern staples" in season 13, Fieri presents three different versions of American southern fare, served up in Vancouver, Charleston, and New York City.[68] Southern food proves a demonstrative episode theme for Fieri, as he demonstrates how the South can be reimagined and reconfigured in geographies throughout North America, though notably in an effort to construct an "America" of Fieri's own design.[69] Capitalizing on the cultural salience of such stories, Fieri weaves immigrant and family narratives into his definition of multicultural American food, presenting each restaurant and every dish as a unique and distinct citizen of Flavortown, USA. These narratives in some ways mirror Feiri's own Italian American heritage, though his ethnicity goes largely unmarked within his programs and cookbooks, demonstrating the prominence of a universalized, white Americanness within the Fieri brand, even as it endorses multiculturalism.

In addition to promoting American food as ethnically and racially diverse, prepared by American-born and immigrant cooks alike, Fieri also draws attention to food businesses located in geographies across the United States, not just those on (what tend to be framed as) the "elite" coasts or in "hot" food cities. In "A Q&A with 'Guido' Fieri" in *More Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*, Fieri reinforces this focus on diverse and often overlooked places and spaces as he names Salt Lake City, Phoenix, and Cleveland among his favorite food cities.[70] While many episodes of *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* feature eateries in California or New York, the program visits restaurants in nearly every state, often advocating for restaurants squirreled away in strip malls, nestled next to railroad tracks, or based near industrial parks—eateries with unassuming storefronts and humble interiors.[71]

Despite these various attempts to depict a multicultural American food culture, *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* nevertheless engages in "culinary colonialism."[72] The program presents American foodways made from "the best places you've never heard of" that viewers can "discover" in thirty-minute segments and then visit (and consume) for themselves.[73] Like the hosts of other food travel programs, Fieri employs imperialist language when he describes the show's production, saying, for example, "I feel like we're astronauts exploring a new world."[74] While Fieri presents *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* as an "All-American road trip," he also refers to it as a "quest" and a "search," an exploratory mission to discover, map, and codify food, people, and places. Such distinctions reify assumptions that cast white, Western, well-financed men as explorers and immigrants, people of color, and women as those to be explored. Fieri tells food stories from his own position of power to a mostly white audience who exist within environments of both relative permanence and safety. The notion of hybridity that Fieri highlights and endorses enacts imbalances of power as

it engages cuisines and peoples that are constantly subject to alteration, appropriation, and erasure.

Compared to international culinary travel shows—like Bourdain's *No Reservations* (2005–2012) and *Parts Unknown* (2013–2018), Huang's *Huang's World* (2016–present), or Zimmern's *Bizarre Foods* (2006–present)—*Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* turns the focus of culinary conquest inward, giving it a domestic energy. *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* infuses gastronomic exploration with populist sentiment as it invites viewers to discover (or rediscover) what the program presents as "real," "authentic," "good," and "American" food. The program claims this food in the name of Flavortown, which aspires to inclusivity. Despite this, the program marks certain cuisines, ingredients, techniques, flavors, cooks, and eaters as Other. Yet this act of marking is enacted within a contradictory process that endeavors to include all of these aspects and people as part of a diverse and inclusive America. It is this ambiguously multicultural definition of American food that Guy Fieri pays tribute to on the menu at Guy's American Kitchen and Bar.

Conclusion: Guy Fieri's America, Alive (for a Moment) in Times Square

Guy Fieri's all-American road trip culminated in one of his most significant restaurant ventures, Guy's American Kitchen and Bar on 44th Street in New York City, which opened in the autumn of 2012 and closed at the end of 2017 without explanation from Fieri. At the restaurant, a giant, flashing "Guy Fieri's" sign, visible for more than a block, beckoned eaters from Times Square toward Flavortown—no longer an imagined place but an actual restaurant. Here visitors could observe, feel, and even taste the American themes that Fieri promotes on *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*. The "Our Story" section of the Guy's American Kitchen and Bar website (whose URL was aptly www.guysamerican.com) further positioned the restaurant as the material culmination of *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives,* drawing on American tropes and notions of small, hometown community:

> There's nothing like authentic. Nothing beats the real thing. Cars can't fake fast, guitars can't fake rock and roll, and no one can fake the feel-good flavors of American cuisine. Guy Fieri is one of the hottest celebrity chefs on the scene. In Guy's Food Network series, *Diners, Drive Ins, and Dives*, he tastes his way across the backroads of America gathering eclectic and savory inspiration along the way. This first-hand knowledge of American comfort food gone wild fuels the menu at Guy's American Kitchen & Bar. This dynamic restaurant features Guy's signature style of cooking, big on flavor and short on boundaries. Guy Fieri packs classic

> American cuisine with unexpected flavor; food done right and sometimes in a way you never thought possible. Simply put, Guy's American Kitchen & Bar allows hometown favorites and culinary expertise to satisfy the bold flavor cravings of visitors, fans and insatiable New Yorkers.[75]

References to food "gone wild" and "short on boundaries" emphasized the freedom of expression that Fieri employs to define America and American food. Multiple references—to fast cars, guitars, rock and roll, the backroads of America, comfort food, classic American cuisine, and hometown favorites—all positioned the fare at Guy's American Kitchen and Bar as emblematic of Americanness, at least as defined by Fieri and his own standards of authenticity and realness.

From the menus to the decor, Guy's American Kitchen and Bar invoked classic tropes of America, overtly presented in a red, white, and blue color palette. The restaurant facade, menus, and drink coasters boasted a Fieri-branded seal: a bald eagle with wings spread wide, its head emblazoned with the stars and stripes of the American flag. The three-story restaurant seated an epic 500 guests, physically embodying the notion of "American" abundance. The various seating areas also connoted the virile masculinity of the West, with mounted antlers, leather seats, and rustic hardwood floors. Throughout the restaurant, classic American symbols—rock music, car culture, vintage posters for ketchup and Levi's denim, and the American flag—invoked a nostalgic (and reductionist) sense of the nation.

Guy's American Kitchen and Bar also communicated Americanness through the menu and its food items, which can be read and interpreted as a distinct narrative, similar to a cookbook.[76] Dishes were conceptually linked to *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* and a particular configuration of American cuisine that is culturally accessible, hybrid, and distinctive. On the restaurant's website, the menu was described as follows:

> The menu at Guy's American Kitchen & Bar reflects his signature style of authentic and surprising flavors. Guy has traveled over 150,000 miles across America's backroads in *Diners, Drive-ins and Dives* in search of the best regional fare: Guy knows American food to the core. The dishes are crafted with the heart and soul of hometown favorites and infused with Guy's big, daring flavors. You will find beloved comfort food with a spin only Guy could have envisioned. Hope you're hungry, because Guy's imagination knows no boundaries.[77]

This description captures all four themes of Fieri's America: 1) freedom of expression with "big, daring flavors" that are crafted with "heart and soul";

2) American symbols and spaces, such as "backroads" and "hometowns"; 3) democratic taste for "beloved comfort food"; and 4) a multicultural cuisine that emphasizes regional variation and makes claims to be "authentic and surprising." The appetizers alone offered fusion mash-ups that Fieri presents as wholly American: Guy-talian Nachos, Sashimi Tacos, Chipotle BBQ Pork Soft Tacos, and California Egg Rolls. With such a menu, Fieri literally set out to bring Flavortown to life, a climactic moment in the road trip's narrative.

When I dined at Guy's American Kitchen and Bar in December 2016, I walked throughout the sprawling restaurant, taking in table after table of families and couples—all visiting Flavortown for the chance to "live it" and "love it." I observed the restaurant's "vintage Americana roadhouse flare" at a cheery holiday party that had reserved the entire downstairs space. At the muscle car bar, a crowd of men in suits enjoyed a rowdy happy hour. When pressed, our server shared that many of the patrons he waited on were fans of Guy Fieri and *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* who dined at the restaurant based on its proximity to the theater district as well as to make a specific pilgrimage to Flavortown. They hoped to catch a glimpse of Guy Fieri in the flesh or that their server might have met him and could attest to his "realness"—to affirm that Guy Fieri truly embraces their food views and them. The notions of authenticity on which Fieri built Flavortown now shape how his fans imagine and interact with his mediated persona.

Created on *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*, immortalized in the notion of Flavortown, and made material at Guy's American Kitchen and Bar, Guy Fieri's definitions of America and American food maintain his populist gastronomic brand. Fieri's brand draws from a common set of tropes and symbols often deployed on political stages, applying them to his food media empire. The small-town and the mom-and-pop restaurant define Fieri's America. These twin icons are meant to embody the identities and struggles of "ordinary" spaces, places, and people left outside of food media's purview. Fieri's America embraces conservative social values, emphasizing, for example, family and food spaces associated with it, like the diner. Invoking values like freedom and abundance, Fieri's America and foodways depend heavily on the nostalgic resonance of long-standing American symbols like the flag, the bald eagle, American-made cars, and the open road. At the same time, Fieri's American cuisine endorses chefs who break the traditional rules of cuisine, applauding culinary innovation—the funkier, the better—and promoting all kinds of hybridity. Fieri resists what are perceived as the elitist values of the city and the coasts, instead promoting a definition of good food that shuns pretension. Fieri's populist persona speaks directly to eaters who oppose culinary elites and who experience a sense of disenfranchisement regarding their own sociocultural status. Through the language of food, Guy Fieri's expansive food media empire provides a method for considering the most recent rise of populist sentiment in the United States, what motivates it, and what feeds it.

Notes

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