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More than Just the "Big Piece of Chicken": The Power of Race, Class, and Food in American Consciousness*

Psyche Williams-Forson

In 1999 HBO premiered Chris Rock's stand-up comedy routine *Bigger and Blacker*. One of the jokes deals with what Rock humorously calls the "big piece of chicken."[1] Using wit, Chris Rock delivers a semi-serious treatise on parenting and marriage. First, he admonishes the audience for not recognizing that "a real daddy" receives little praise for "making the world a better place . . ." A man, or "daddy", according to Rock, pays bills, provides food, and all of a family's other necessities. Despite his efforts, he rarely receives any praise for his "accomplishments." Although these tasks are clearly part and parcel of adult responsibilities, Rock ignores this truism in an effort to set up his commentary on the intersection of race, class, gender, and food. Continuing, he argues, "Nobody appreciates daddy . . ."

By way of illustrating why a father needs and deserves such concern Rock points out that fathers work hard all day fighting against the stresses of life. Then a father—particularly an African American father—comes home to more stress:

> And what does daddy get for all his work? The *big piece of chicken*. That's all daddy get is the *big piece of chicken.* That's right. And some women don't want to give up the big piece of chicken. Who the fuck is you to keep the *big piece of chicken*? How dare you keep *the big piece of chicken*! A man can't work for 12 hours and come home to a wing! When I was a kid, my momma [would] lose her mind if one of us ate the *big piece of chicken* by accident. "What the fuck? You ate the *big piece of chicken*. Oh Lawd, no, no, no! Now I got to take some chicken and sew it up. Shit! Give me two wings and a poke chop. Daddy'll never know the difference."[2]

Chris Rock's kind of humor has an extensive history as a form of black expressive culture. Physically, he walks back and forth on stage, bobbing and weaving as he shares different versions of his comic narrations, turning out stories from "everyday conversational talk."[3] Rock uses this form of performance or narrativizing to wage social commentary on a variety of issues including stereotypes of black people and chicken. When an artist uses stereotypes there are a number of factors that have to be considered including the purposes to which such oversimplifications are put.

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Stated more plainly, the humor of Chris Rock makes us wonder about the subversive ways in which objects like food can be used to contest hegemonic representations of blackness and the ways in which performances of blackness reveal complicated aspects of identity.

Investigating Intersections

As more or less correctly stated, there are roughly two methodological schools of thought when talking about African American foodways. There are those that focus on the food itself and its connections to the African Diaspora. Among them are historians of the American South (e.g., Karen Hess, Joe Gray Taylor and Sam Hilliard) and African American studies (e.g., Tracy Poe and Robert Hall), archeologists (e.g., Theresa Singleton and Anne Yentsch), geographer Judith Carney, anthropologist Tony Whitehead, and independent foodways scholars (e.g., Jessica Harris, Howard Paige, Joyce White, and Diane Spivey). Those who focus generally on the intersections of food and identity, representation, and/or contestation are literary scholars Anne Bower, Kyla Wazana Tompkins, Doris Witt, and Rafia Zafar, sociologist William Whit, anthropologist Charles Joyner, and folklorist Patricia Turner; media specialist Marilyn Kern-Foxworth, and historians Kenneth Goings and M. M. Manring.[4] My research into the realm of African American foods is not only about locating, identifying, and understanding the connections between foods but also the people who consume them. This approach goes beyond the theories that argue we are what we eat and the ways our foods reflect our cultural identity. Rather, the method I employ asks us to consider what we learn about African American life and culture by studying the intersections of food, gender, race, class, and power. How do African American historical, socioeconomic, and political spaces influence the foods that are consumed? How is this consumption a part of the performance of black class? Further-more, what do we learn about African Americans when black people willingly engage in perpetuating the oversimplified images or ideas that are sometimes held by the larger American society?

Black people have long been engaged in ideological warfare involving food, race, and identity. Most commonly known are the stereotypes concerning black people's consumption of fried chicken and watermelon. Though these stereotypes have been around for centuries they are still pervasive in the contemporary American psyche. Consider, for instance, the numerous postcards, invitations, and other ephemera that illustrate African American men, women, and children with watermelon.

Black feminist scholar Patricia Hill Collins suggests the need to be attuned to the ways in which processes of power underlie social interactions and are involved in the process of external definition. These definitions can be challenged, however, through the process of "self-definition." The acts of "challenging the political knowledge-validation process that result[s] in externally defined stereotypical images . . . can be unconscious or conscious acts of resistance."[5] One engages in the process of self-definition by identifying, utilizing, and more importantly, redefining symbols—like chicken or watermelon—that are commonly affiliated with African Americans. By doing this, black people refuse to allow the wider American culture to dictate

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what represents their expressive culture and thereby what represents blackness. But this process of defining one's self is fraught with complications and complexities particularly if the group fails to understand or acknowledge that there is a power structure at work behind the creation of common affiliations, labels, or stereotypes.

Collins explains these complications further in her delineation of self-valuation or the replacement of negative images with positive ones. This process of replacement can be equally as problematic as the original external definition if we fail to understand and to recognize the stereotype as a controlling image. This concept is perhaps best illustrated by the example of Chris Rock's comedy that opens this essay. Though I will return to Rock's funny side later, Collins' caution is registered here. The exchange of one set of controlling images for another does little to eradicate the defining image itself. Consequently, black people need to be clear about the ways in which historical, social, political, and economic contexts have established reductionist narratives and how these accounts are embedded in food.

One way that blacks can both deal with these narratives and gain independence from them is to begin by taking a close look at the historical basis of various food stereotypes. These stereotypes tend to be distorted portrayals of those cultural behaviors that are and have been used in order to diminish black personal and collective power.

Stereotypes Abound

Stereotypes involving black people have been around for years. Indeed, they continue to exist.[6] Elsewhere I argue extensively for the partial evolution of some of these stereotypes as ideologies shaped from laws and ordinances passed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[7] It was and continues to be my contention that these depictions partly emerged as a way to control the economic gains of enslaved and free men and women who bartered and traded in the marketplace. Historians often cite newspaper articles, court documents, and travelers' accounts among other critical sources detailing information on early African and African American entrepreneurs of food. Nineteenth-century travelers' diaries, for example, indicate "flocks of poultry [were] numerous" and, "there are very few [slaves] indeed who are denied the privilege of keeping dunghill fowls, ducks, geese, and turkeys." Moreover, some black people would often sit by the wharf for days on end waiting to buy foods like chicken and then sell them for exorbitant prices.[8] Historian Philip Morgan notes a similar practice whereby some travelers would instruct their stewards to hold in reserve various foods like bacon so they would have bartering power with "the Negroes who are the general Chicken Merchants [*sic*]."[9]

As with any encroachment, the bartering and trading by African Americans ushered in a slew of regulations that sought to limit items being sold door-to-door and in the market. To be sure the ambiguous ownership of goods prior to sale was one of the many reasons for stalling and halting the sale of goods. Foods were not supposed to be sold prior to passing through the town gates, and in particular customers were not supposed to purchase goods whose ownership might be difficult to trace. This included items such as chickens, which were often sold outside the market.

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Archeologist Anne Yentsch maintains that foods such as oysters, salted fish in large barrels or casks, cattle, sheep, and hogs that were alive could easily be traced because they were by-and-large produced by small farmers.[10]

Chickens, on the other hand were far harder to pinpoint. Even though several blacks had chickens their masters and neighboring farms had them as well. Sometimes these birds roamed freely and thus were traded or sold in an effort to obtain more favorable goods. Often times, especially during the colonial era, it was difficult to ascertain the exact origins of a bird. Except among the wealthy, most chickens during that time were not kept in hen houses. Chicken and fowl were free to roam finding food and shelter wherever possible, an issue that easily lends support to the charge of theft. Additionally, there was no widespread formalized system of breeding in early America when many Africans and Native Americans were engaged in bartering. Consequently, it was difficult to distinguish most common fowl from one another with the exception of certain kinds of partridges, pheasant, and hens. This reality, however, did little to hinder the accusations of theft, which were not only levied against slaves but also free blacks and fugitives.

These claims were fueled by black people's use of trading practices like forestalling, which legal ordinances did little to reduce. According to the *South Carolina Gazette*, one writer complained that almost on a daily basis, black women could be found huckstering and forestalling "poultry, fruit, eggs," and other goods "in and near the Lower Market . . . from morn till night," buying and selling what and how they pleased to obtain money for both their masters and themselves. Often times their prices were exorbitant and they would use all kinds of marketing strategies to choose which white people to sell to and for how much.[11] Robert Olwell captures this point when he explains: "as slaveholders, Carolina whites felt that slaves should be generally subordinate, but as property holders and capitalists they also had to recognize the legitimacy of the market in which sellers had the right to seek the highest price for their goods."[12]

Many whites viewed blacks with "great prejudice" when they sought to engage in capitalist enterprises. Under slavery's oppression, blacks, regardless of their status, were to be subordinate at all times. Any deviation from this norm was a threat to the social order that had been systematically and institutionally constructed over time. Consequently, any element of freedom recognized and enjoyed by black people, and particularly women, was an affront to white social power. Lawrence McDonnell explains it this way: "The marketplace . . . is a neutral zone, a threshold between buyer and seller . . . . Master and slave confronted each other at the moment of exchange as bearers of commodities, stripped of social dimensions . . . [this] linked black sellers with White buyers, and hence with White society, not only by assertion of black humanity but through White objectification. Slaves appeared here equally purposeful as Whites."[13]

Money and a small measure of market power assaulted the charade played out during slavery that sought to convince black people that freedom would never come. Attributing black economic gain to theft helped to perpetuate the travesty. By attributing stealing by slaves to an inherent nature rather than a condition of their circumstances (or even to a performance of sorts), slave owners were able to deflect attention from their own participation in this aspect of slave victimization.

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Morally, it was much better to believe that slaves were natural thieves than to believe that the institution of enslavement contributed to their larceny. Clearly there is some truth to the claim that slaves engaged in thievery; the extent to which this was the case, however, is rooted in white patriarchal ideology.[14]

Though devoid of a disposition toward theft, some slaves did engage in pilfering and stealing. Some scholars however, have referred to these acts as skill and cunning. Eugene Genovese's study of African American life and culture, suggests this when he writes, "for many slaves, stealing from their own or other masters became a science and an art, employed as much for the satisfaction of outwitting Ole' Massa as anything else."[15] *In Weevils in the Wheat*, for example, ex-slave Charles Grandy tells that hunger was a motivating factor for stealing food. He says, "I got so hungry I stealed chickens off de roos' . . . . We would cook de chicken at night, eat him an' bu'n de feathers . . . . We always had a trap in de floor fo' de do' to hide dese chickens in."[16] This is just one example of African American trickster heroism that not only reflects a kinship to African traditions but also views this type of behavior as both morally acceptable and necessary for survival. At the same time, it is a subversive cultural form that uses humor in its expression.

John Roberts' point about early African Americans should be registered here: "Given the desperate and oppressive circumstances under which they lived, enslaved Africans could not be overly concerned with the masters' definition of 'morality' of behaviors that enhanced their prospects for physical survival and material well-being. The task that they confronted, however, was how to make such individually devised solutions to a collective problem function as a behavior strategy for the group without endangering their adaptability or the physical well-being of members of their community."[17] Although the oppressive circumstances of today are nowhere near those of enslavement, the delicate balance of performing individual behavior and yet not suffering collective consequences is still applicable. Teasing out this sense of balance and its complications might become more apparent as I discuss African American performances of stereotypes during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The South suffered a devastating loss of free labor with the end of the Civil War and migrations of newly freed blacks; it found itself in a precarious situation. Its infrastructure was suffering economically, politically, socially, culturally, and physically. Suddenly, the millions of freed blacks became an overwhelming problem. What about their rights? Would they be given rights? How and to what end? How would white Southerners keep their subordinates in line? Was this even possible anymore? These and many other questions played themselves out on the political landscapes of the day. But they were also played out on cultural playing fields as well. According to historian Kenneth Goings, the loss of control over black people registered such a blow among white Southerners that they began using emerging technology as one means of reasserting control and reclaiming power.[18]

Advancing technology, namely the camera, was useful for depicting African Americans—men, women, boys, and girls—as visually conciliatory. As Grant McCracken intimates, such illustrations were useful for alleviating some of the "nervous prostration" brought on by the rapid changes of the time. Goods and commodities were used in an effort to alleviate some of the distress caused by the

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social, political, economic, and cultural transformations.[19] Goods were particularly useful for helping individuals contemplate the "possession of an emotional condition, a social circumstance, even an entire lifestyle" by making desires concrete.[20] These illustrations, or commodities of racism, were coveted possessions. They enabled their owners not only to possess the physical object but also to mentally covet the pastoral image of the gallant South that whites wished to maintain. This interpretation is certainly not the only reason that people might have purchased these kinds of photos. But for sure these images and their owners were complicit in spreading the network of racial power.

What quickly emerged through this visual communication was an ideology of black inferiority, which assisted in the formulation of racist stereotypes. These stereo-types were perpetuated by advertisements, trading cards, sheet music and stereoviews like that which illustrates an African American baby in a buggy, caption reading: "When I Dit Big, 'Oo'll Have to Roost Hiah." This, and countless other images are clearly staged as if to appear natural. More than likely it was the case of African Americans performing to stay alive. From the thieving child, to the salacious lover of white hens, African Americans—particularly men and boys—were constantly ridiculed; more often than not it was centered on the stereotypical image of the coon.

Kenneth Goings, whose study *Mammy and Uncle Mose* historicizes the cultural and political economy of black collectibles, maintains that the coon image was one of the most offensive stereotypes. M. L. Graham used this coon motif as the mascot for his little-known "Coon Chicken Inn" restaurants. The emblem, a black-faced man with large, extended red lips, was typically symbolic of how whites would stereotype black people with food to endorse various products like fried chicken. Considered a most effective advertising technique, images like these reinforced the stereotypical Old South/New South myth of the loyal, happy servant just waiting to be used by the master—and now the consumer.

The restaurant with all of its accoutrements became a metaphor for whites using and discarding black service. When the meal is complete, the napkins, plates and utensils bearing the black-faced logo are discarded and along with it any remnant of the serviceable "darker" that is no longer needed or desired. This act of symbolic and physical disposal provided whites with what Goings describes in a similar discussion as a sense of "racial superiority" and a "therapeutic sense of comfort."[21] Manipulating these objects of material culture enabled white Americans not only to forge an alliance across class lines, but also to more collectively subjugate and vilify black people. The ideology of black inferiority provided a safeguard for white America during a time when their racial, economic, and political balance was perceived as unstable and threatened.

Unfolding against this backdrop, are the numerous ways that food becomes interlaced with discourses of power, race, class, and gender in American consciousness. Chicken, for example, which was once championed as a celebrated food of the South prepared by some of the best culinary talent turns into an object of ridicule and defacement. Chicken—both the bird and the food—is fraught then, with paradoxes in the contexts of the historical and economic circumstances of the South. On the one hand, black consumption of chicken was seen as normative; on the other hand, this

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consumption was also perceived as negative. The issue is made more complex when we read chicken—the food—as a cultural text.

Fried chicken, a largely southern food that emerged out of social institutions shaped by racial complexities, is one of many foods that blurs the lines between the "symbolic separations [of] those who prepare the food and those who consume it."[22] Black women were widely credited with lining "Southern groaning boards." This was their rightful place as loyal cooks—a cultural demarcation that became necessary for symbolically separating the domestic rituals of the South. Black women prepared and cooked fried chicken for white families but they did not consume it; and, thereby they maintained the purity of southern cuisine. Mentally, this belief was important for reinforcing the necessary symbolic distance between cook and consumer. This configuration is made problematic and complicated, however, by the insistence that black people are zealous about their consumption of fried chicken.

What becomes necessary then are carefully coded words and messages. Namely, the word Southern becomes coded for white, while "soul food" is decoded as black. Diane Spivey has labeled this coding phenomenon, "Whites Only Cuisine." She says:

> The end of the [Civil] war also signaled the beginning of the redefining of southern White heritage. Food was a factor in the efforts of southern White elites to hold on to their old way of life. Cooking and cuisine were remade to look uniquely southern . . . . Asserting that the recipes were "southern" made [their] cookbooks exclusionary, and therefore racist, because the cookbooks and recipes contained therein were heralded as the creations of the elite southern White women. In an attempt to promote southern White culture, therefore, the concept of "southern cooking" started out as *Whites Only Cuisine*.[23]

Given the mass exchange of foods and food habits that occurred between early Africans, Europeans, and Native Americans it is almost impossible for one group or another to claim any recipe as original or native to their culture. With the ebb and flow of people across continents, regions, and lands come vast amounts of mutual exchange resulting in multi-amalgamations between and among cultures and foods changing and evolving over time.

The intersections of food with power and other variables enable a reading of the ways in which the idea of blackness as performance boldly emerges. As I have discussed thus far, since their arrival in this country, Africans and Africans born in America have been performing race in myriad ways. Long after the auction block performance African Americans engaged in other racial acts like participating in staged photographs and witnessing their recipes being usurped. A good many of these performances of racial roles for survival involved food. Part of understanding the food and foodways of African Americans asks that we also question what all of these performances had to do with blackness and issues of identity? And how has agency been a part of the performance of this blackness? Turning back to Chris Rock's comedic discussion of the "big piece of chicken" helps us to think a bit more about these questions.

In the vignette that opens this essay Chris Rock is explaining how the children of an African American family have eaten the "big piece of chicken" even though they are aware that this piece of meat belongs to their father. In the comedy, Rock makes manhood and fatherhood synonymous with the right to have the largest piece of

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chicken not simply as a reward but as a right. Rock argues that this is the father's just portion because "daddy can't work all day and come home to a wing." Implied, of course, is the fact that because the father leaves the home to work and engages in a number of anxieties outside the home, he therefore deserves all of the praise—including culinary recompense.

On the surface one could argue that this routine is simply another of Rock's treatises on the ills of society. Every race of people can identify with this scenario—one of the many aspects of Rock's performances that endear him to diverse audience members. However, my contention is that this scene is multifaceted. Rock is, in effect, performing blackness in ways that can be described as both subversive as well as oppressive, rendering this piece to be about more than "the big piece of chicken." Rock is dissident in that, more or less, he follows the basic formula of delivering an African American trickster folktale. Consider, for example, Jacob Stoyer's slave narrative, *Sketches of My Life in the South*, wherein he tells a story of man named Joe and how he outsmarted the master's wife, Mrs. King. According to the story, Joe killed and dressed a turkey that belonged to the King family. In his haste to get the bird into a pot without being caught, he neglected to cut it leaving its knees to stick out of the pot. To hide his thievery, Joe threw one of his shirts over the pot. When Joe failed to respond to the calling of Mr. King, Mrs. King came into the kitchen to inquire of his whereabouts. Discovering the theft, which Joe declined to know anything about, she saw to it that Joe was punished for "allowing the turkey to get into the pot."[24] The point here is the way in which Joe was able to dupe, if only briefly, the King family. The larger issue is the momentary reversal of power executed by Joe in his performance as a "dumb slave."

Similarly, Rock manages to dupe both white and black audience-goers who usually have paid a somewhat hefty price to enjoy a laugh. By performing racist, sexist, and otherwise problematic comedies Rock proffers the illusion that he buys into these notions as truisms. In doing so, he is a relative trickster, perpetuating the racist perception of black people as chicken lovers.[25] But as E. Patrick Johnson argues, "blackness does not only reside in the theatrical fantasy of the White imaginary that is then projected onto black bodies. Nor is blackness always consciously acted out. It is also the inexpressible yet undeniable racial experience of black people—the ways in which the 'living of blackness' becomes a material way of knowing."[26] Among black audiences then, it is not surprising that Rock's performances are laudatory and celebratory. Many watch the performances of him and other comedians and laugh uproariously knowing that much of what is being performed has all kinds of negative implications. Yet, there is something to be said for these dramatic interludes, which often make audiences momentarily forget about their troubles. The very fact of the matter is that these comedians are enjoyed precisely because they engage in the slipperiness of black cultural politics.

Part of this slipperiness derives from another suggestion offered by Johnson: "The interanimation of blackness and performance and the tension between blackness as 'play' and material reality further complicates the notion of what . . . 'playing black' is and what 'playing black' ain't." Rock engages this question of "black is/black ain't" with his audiences. With white audiences he leads them into thinking that he is performing what "black is" as he mocks, mimics, and ridicules black people. With black

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audiences, he relies upon a number of "in-group" techniques to offer black audiences comic relief while simultaneously playing to a number of 'truth claims.'[27] Later, using a similar coded performance as the trickster hero in African American folktales, Rock turns the tables on this segment of the audience using the rhetoric of race, class, and gender.

The art of verbal play has always been a vehicle of self-expression for black men and women, although women have only recently been recognized as engaging in such. Rock understands the role of signifying in the black community and employs it well in his routines. From Rock's references to the fact that daddy experiences stress all day from working in a "white world," we can assume that daddy feels little or no economic power. Consequently, in order to establish his manhood, he needs to assert his authority at home. One of the ways he is able to affirm his household status is by eating the "big piece of chicken." Here the chicken functions metaphorically and literally as a source and a reflection of masculine power. Rock's subtle explication of this power enables him to dupe his black audience-goers—particularly the women.

Using children as the catalyst, Rock creates the scenario of mama as a culinary artist. After her children consume the forbidden big piece of chicken, she is able to flawlessly recreate it by expertly sewing together two wings and a pork chop. In addition to all of the other work mama has done during the day—caring for children, running a household, cooking and other chores—she now has to make up for the fact that one of her children has eaten the wrong piece of chicken: "Oh Lawd, no, no, no! Now I got to take some chicken and sew it up. Shit! Give me two wings and a poke chop. Daddy'll never know the difference."[28] The challenge posed by this situation is perhaps the cause for Rock acknowledging, "Now mama got the roughest job, I'm not gonna front." Denying daddy his rightful portion is a measure of disrespect that will surely bring wrath upon the children. To avoid this mama tries to make amends. Mama then has not only procured, prepared, and presented the food, she now has to alter and re-prepare the meal while simultaneously protecting her children. After all of this, mama will undoubtedly have to "do a jig" so that daddy does not recognize her necessary handiwork. She then will have to placate him if he discovers the ruse.

The discussion of mama's incredible talents is double-edged because while plentiful, her culinary and household ingenuity must not be celebrated because to do so would reveal that daddy is eating something less than the "big piece of chicken." Equally problematic is that it has gone unnoticed that while mama is not in the paid work force, she is nonetheless very much involved in a system of work. Her work, unfortunately, is largely domestic, economically undervalued, and from the standpoint of this example, aesthetically unappreciated. Because even though mama has created another large portion for daddy she cannot speak of it because it will only make daddy feel that he gets little for all his "hard work." Unspoken are the stories of mama's day of work, her troubles, and her battles—many of which are represented symbolically by the chicken.

It is not surprising that Rock would gender his discussion to include some kind of praise of a mother's culinary abilities. As Pamela Quaggiotto notes, "the mother determines when, what, and how much family members will eat . . . . She controls the symbolic language of food, determining what her dishes and meals will say

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about herself, her family, and world."[29] And yet his depictions of "mama" are both enlightening and baffling for what they seem to reveal/hide about Rock's gender and racial agenda. Clearly the parody and humor of this situation are evident. Though the audience knows it is a joke, there is uncertainty over whether mama's work is being praised or ridiculed. Moreover, there are the questions of whether or not Rock is waging some sort of commentary on racial stereotypes involving black people and chicken. For example, it is significant to note that Rock never specifies whether the chicken is fried or baked. In fact, he does not have to because he relies upon a certain amount of a priori knowledge that assumes that chicken eating in the company of black people means "fried." Comforted by the fact that black audience members bring to bear their own life experiences and cultural memories surrounding food and thus know what "black is" and "black ain't" he is able to launch into his dramatization.

Maybe it is a similar comfort and ease that Rock attends to when at the end of the routine he admonishes women to remember their "proper" place in dealing with men. Undoubtedly many in the audience see mama's work as a labor of love that is taken for granted, not needing any particular recognition. In fact, Rock half-heartedly suggests this when he implies that daddy has the primary responsibilities in the household. As if rethinking this assertion, Rock soon after backtracks by supplying his one line of praise for mama. Despite all of this backpedaling, by the end of his show Rock is clear about his direction as he definitively reinstates his masculinist stance. He closes his performance with: "Women talk too much. They always want you to be listenin.' Let a man get situated! Let me get my other foot in the door! Let me get somethin' to eat. Let me get somethin' to drink! Let me take a shit! Go in the fuckin' kitchen and get me my *big piece of chicken*!" Having said this, Rock drops the mike and struts off the stage amid the cheers and shouts of approval from men—and women.[30]

Food objects are useful for elucidating the type of obscurities revealed by this kind of close reading. Additionally, they are politicized by the meanings inscribed in their uses and associations historically and contemporarily. This is particularly salient to an article like chicken that is perceived to be generic in its uses among all races and ethnicities of people. The meanings that chicken holds for black people are as diverse as its members. But when chicken is placed in various contexts alongside performances of power and race then it is plentiful for what it reveals beyond being a portion of food.

This essay has attempted to illustrate the importance of moving beyond studying merely the foods of various cultures to include the behaviors, actions, contexts, and histories that involve them. As this article has also suggested foods like chicken, that have been used to stereotype African American people, are often actually undergirded by intersecting variables of race, gender, class, and power. This fact, perhaps more than any other, lends credence to the notion that food is always about more than what it seems.

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Notes

1. For a more detailed analysis of this particular routine of Chris Rock's see Williams-Forson, *Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, and Power* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2006), 178–185.

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2. Chris Rock, *Bigger and Blacker*.
3. Geneva Smitherman, "The Chain Remain the Same: Communicative Practices in the Hip Hop Nation." *Journal of Black Studies* 28, 1 (September 1997): 3–25.
4. Though in no way this dichotomous, most of these scholars can be roughly divided into these categories, as Krishnendu Ray observes. See book review by Ray, *Building Houses out of Chicken Legs*, in *Food & Foodways*, 15:1–6, 2007. Also see *African American Foodways*: *Explorations of History & Culture*, Ed. Anne Bower (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007).
5. Patricia Hill Collins, "Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought," *Social Problems* 33, no. 6 (1986): 516–517.
6. African Americans have long been caricatured as brand mascots for various food and household products. For example, a grinning black chef named Rastus was used to represent Cream of Wheat hot cereal and a pair of black children who were known as the Gold Dust Twins, were used to advertise soap powder. In addition to the now infamous Aunt Jemima, who sold pancake mix, there have been numerous other grinning black women who were "Jemima-like" that were used to sell fried chicken, shortening, and cookware. It also should be noted that other races and ethnicities have also been stereotyped where food is concerned. First there was Frito Bandito, who spoke in an exaggerated Mexican accent and then there was the Chihuahua who muttered ¡Yo Quiero Taco Bell! In March 2007 Masterfoods USA, a unit of Mars Foods attempted to hoist the stereotypical depiction of "Uncle Ben" from servant to chairman of the board. The attempt was met with mixed success. See Stuart Elliott, "Uncle Ben, Board Chairman." *The New York Times*. 30 March 2007, C1.
7. For a more lengthy discussion see Williams-Forson, *Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs*, in particular chapters 1 and 2. See also Williams-Forson, "'Suckin' the Chicken Bone Dry': African American Women, Fried Chicken, and the Power of a National Narrative." In *Cooking Lessons: The Politics of Gender and Food*. Ed. Sherrie Inness. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000): 200–214.
8. Anne E. Yentsch, *A Chesapeake Family and Their Slaves: A Study in Historical Archaeology* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 242.
9. Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1998), 359.
10. Yentsch, 245.
11. Quoted in Robert Olwell, " 'Loose, Idle, and Disorderly': Slave Women in the Eighteenth-Century Charleston Marketplace." In *More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas*, Eds., David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996): 97–110. See also, Yentsch, 242–243; Phillip Morgan, 368–372.
12. Olwell, 102.
13. McDonnell, "Money Knows No Master: Market Relations and the American Slave Community." In *Developing Dixie: Modernization in a Traditional Society*, ed., Winfred B. Moore, Jr., Joseph F. Tripp, and Lyon G. Tyler, Jr. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1988): 31–44.
14. Lichtenstein, " 'That Disposition to Theft, With Which They Have Been Branded': Moral Economy, Slave Management, and the Law." *Journal of Social History* 21 (1989): 413–40.
15. Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, Inc., 1976), 606.
16. Charles L. Perdue, Jr., Thomas E. Barden, and Robert K. Phillips, Eds. *Weevils in the Wheat* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1976), 116.
17. Roberts, *From Trickster to Badman*: *The Black Folk Hero in Slavery and Freedom*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989): 33. Lawrence Levine also establishes connections between the African American trickster and the acquisition of food. See "The Slave as Trickster," in *Black Culture, Black Consciousness*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 121–133.
18. Kenneth W. Goings, *Mammy and Uncle Mose: Black Collectibles and American Stereotyping* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 4–7.
19. Grant McCracken's discussion is a good one on the ways in which consumer goods helped to preserve hopes and ideals during the Victorian era. See "The Evocative Power of Things," *Culture and Consumption* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 104.
20. McCracken, 110.
21. Ibid., 47.
22. Mary Titus, "'Groaning Tables and Spit in the Kettles': Food and Race in the Nineteenth-Century South," *Southern Quarterly* 20, no. 2–3 (1992), 15.
23. Diane M. Spivey, "Economics, War, and the Northern Migration of the Southern Black Cook," in *The Peppers, Crackling, and Knots of Wool Cookbook: The Global Migration of African Cuisine* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999), 263.
24. See Jacob Stroyer, *Sketches of My Life, Sketches of My Life in the South*. Part I. 1849–1908. Salem: Salem Press (1879). *Documenting the American South: The Southern Experience in Nineteenth-Century America*, eds. Lee Ann

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Morawski and Natalia Smith (2001). Academic Affairs Lib., U. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/storyer/stroyer.html> (June 1, 2007).

25. Williams-Forson, *Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs*, 176–181.
26. E. Patrick Johnson, *Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 8.
27. Patricia Turner and Gary Alan Fine suggest that when rumors and/or stereotypes are based on information that *could be* correct it is considered a truth-claim. Truth claims contain a certain amount of "cultural logic" because they make "cultural sense" (i.e. all black people eat fried chicken) even though no systemic, definitive evidence exists in which to substantiate them. *Whispers on the Color Line: Rumor and Race in America*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 18.
28. Chris Rock, *Bigger and Blacker*. Videocassette. HBO Studios (1999).
29. Pamela Quaggiotto as quoted in Carole M. Counihan, "Female Identity, Food, and Power in Contemporary Florence," *Anthropological Quarterly* 61 (1988): 52.
30. It is quite easy to become overcome with laughter by Rock's prose and delivery. The immediacy and dramatic nature of the moment invite this response. It is only later, once you have had a chance to relive the scene that one might realize the sexism inherent in both the rhetoric and the performance as Rock leaves the stage seemingly in command, having said all that he has had to say.

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10

The Overcooked and Underdone: Masculinities in Japanese Food Programming*

*T. J. M. Holden***

To the Western ear, the phrase "Japanese food show" will likely conjure images of teams of smocked chefs hustling through a rangy in-studio kitchen, racing the clock, concocting ingenious ways to prepare a particular ingredient, thereby pleasing a panel of judges and defeating a crafty culinary rival. In fact, though, food battles are only one genre of food show in Japan; a genre, itself, that is widely represented on television. Moreover, battles are but one way that gender and, in this particular case, masculinities are expressed in Japanese culinary TV. Stated another way, on Japanese television, food shows are manifest—even ubiquitous—and food is a dominant means by which identity discourse transpires (Holden 2003).[1] While masculinity is but one component of identity, it is a major one. It is a discursive formation that emerges prominently at various turns in TV food shows, in multiple ways.

This article's purpose is to demonstrate the degree to which discourse about masculinity courses through Japanese food shows. So, too, does it seek to open for consideration the communication architecture and set of codes through which masculinities are expressed. This is important for at least two reasons: first, because it has not been done before; and second, because (not unlike the false perception that *Iron Chef* is representative of the universe of Japanese food shows) prevailing assumptions about Japanese masculinity are similarly truncated. The paltry range of masculinities depicted on culinary TV must be said to play a part in that. For the most part, masculinity is a narrow, repetitive discourse; hence, the "overcooked" in this article's title. What is underdone is both ironic and intriguing. First, the salary-man—the prototypical version of Japanese masculinity—is virtually invisible; secondly, although a wide range of male characterizations (that is, fashions and mannerisms and lifestyles) may be on display, the actual range of masculinities represented on TV is close to nil. Despite the fact that a more protean set of representations concerning masculinity exist as social text out in the world beyond the screen, inside the box, these masculinities are, like the salaryman, incapable of being found.

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Japanese Masculinity in the Academic Literature

What are the prevailing assumptions about Japanese masculinity? Until recently, discourse was nearly univocal, confined to the social type, "salaryman." The urban, middle class, white-collar worker has remained a relatively uncontested figure in both academic literature and public consciousness. Emblematic of the "typical" Japanese male since the 1960s (e.g., Vogel 1963; Plath 1964), this caricature persisted relatively unabated into the 1990s (e.g., Rohlen 1974; Allison 1994). Now, however, that image is beginning to change. As Roberson and Suzuki (2003:8) recently observed, the salaryman is but an idealized version of Japanese masculinity. Its wide currency may be explained because it articulates other powerful "discursive pedagogies," such as the capitalist employee, state taxpayer and family provider. The authors cite Ito (1996), who has argued that past conceptions of Japanese masculinity have been driven by views of hegemony and, in particular, three "inclinations" characterize the dominant discourse concerning masculinity.[2] These inclinations, identified as (interpersonal) authority, power, and possession (especially in relation to women), obviously align easily with conceptions of men as workers, members of power structures, protectors, and "bread-winners."

Importantly, Roberson and Suzuki assert, the salaryman is not the sole version of masculine identity in contemporary Japan. Indeed, there are numerous discourses available regarding what is "male" in contemporary Japan.[3] Such a critique is consistent with a general, quiet revisionism that has transpired in Japanese studies over the past two decades; one that has alleged greater heterogeneity in Japanese identity.[4]

The unitary image of masculine identity in the form of salaryman reflects an association of masculinity with particular institutional sites (for instance, *inside corporation* or *outside home*). This has been a standard, unreflecting, academic trope during the post-Pacific War era. It is also (coincidentally) consistent with the way Hall (1994) has theorized that identity *ought* to be decoded (i.e., within institutional contexts). For most researchers of Japanese masculine identity, those institutional contexts have centered on the state, the workplace, and the school (Connell 1995). By inversion (i.e., reflecting a relative absence or exclusion), the institution of family (and its locus, the home) can also be included in gender-identity discourse.[5]

Perhaps in reaction to the institutional emphasis, Roberson and Suzuki's volume is rich with alternatives: civil movements, transnational information flows, transgender practices, day-laborers. Non-institutional theorization of identity is an important maneuver, but does not minimize the importance of institutions in bounding, framing, and providing meaning to contemporary identity. This is particularly true in an era of "reflexive modernization" (Robertson 1992; Beck 1994), constituted by "late modern" or "post-traditional" societies (Giddens 1994), such as Japan. In this article, in particular, it is the media institution (generally) and television (specifically) through which masculine identity is found to flow. As shown in my previous work on "mediated identity" (2003), such formal institutional sites are heavily implicated in the gender-identity calculus.[6] In a word, media (such as television) are institutions—no different than the state, corporation, or family—that provide the ideational and "physical" context within which masculinity is represented and through which it is reproduced.

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In this article, I explore one genre within this institutional site of television communication in Japan: food discourse. Surveying this content, one soon learns that Japanese masculinities are both on-message and beyond-message vis-à-vis past academic framings. Consistent with what has heretofore been alleged about masculine identity in Japan, there is a widespread hegemonic masculinity on display. At the same time (and significantly), that hegemonic masculinity is *not* played out through the aegis of the corporate worker. Despite the pervasive expression of masculine identity through food talk, and despite the fact that such identity tends to be hegemonic in nature, there is nary a salaryman to be found. Japan's televisual masculinity is singularly hegemonic, yet it is not confined to a particular model or "type" of person. It is communicated through any number of people—both male *and* female (as we shall see), people who are both conventional and unconventional in appearance, job designation, or background.

Japanese Television and Food Discourse: A Précis

All of this is important because television is the preeminent medium of communication in Japan. It has a diffusion rate of 100%,[7] is viewed by virtually every Japanese person every day,[8] and outpaces other popular forms of information processing, such as newspapers (86%), cell phones (73%), and the internet (27%). It has been reported that, on average, at least one TV set plays 7 to 8 hours a day in each Japanese dwelling, with personal viewing rates per day approaching 225 minutes.[9] A recent European survey ranks Japan second worldwide in terms of daily TV viewership.[10]

While television is dominant, one might wish to argue that food is not. A conservative accounting—based on genres reported in television guides—suggests that TV food shows comprise but 5% of programming between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. The reality, though, is quite different. Begin with the fact that, unlike other countries (in which food shows are generally confined to specialty cable channels, or else a particular hour on a particular day), Japan's food shows can be found on at least one commercial station during "golden time"[11] on multiple days of the week. In past years, there has been either a food-themed show or a show with a regular food segment every day of the week in prime time.

The best current embodiment is "*Dochi no Ryāri Syou*" (*Which?! Cooking Show*). Now in its seventh season, it is a highly rated Thursday night offering from 9 to 10 p.m. In this show, seven entertainers must choose between two dishes prepared before their eyes by rival chefs from a prestigious cooking academy. The guests are allowed to sample the food and are given a chance to change "sides" if or when their preferences for the respective dishes shift. Their decisions are often influenced by two hosts—both popular male TV fixtures, one in his late 40s, the other in his early 60s—who interview chefs, cajole the guests, and make impassioned appeals for their support. *Dochi* also serves as a window on the world, with segments on the people and places associated with one of the key ingredients in each dish: a fisherman, for instance, a dairy farmer, or cabbage grower, all toiling away in their respective remote corners of Japan.

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In addition to shows that are exclusively about food, a number of golden hour variety shows feature regular segments built around food. For instance, SMAPXS-MAP—now in its sixth year and hosted by Japan's premier "boys band" (SMAP)—includes a "Bistro" segment in which an invited guest (generally a female entertainer) is welcomed into the bistro by the "owner" (generally SMAP's lead singer Masahiro Nakai), interviewed about her life and career, then eats (and judges) rather elaborate, multi-course meals prepared by competing teams (which are comprised of SMAP pairs).[12]

The popular, Thursday night variety show *Tonnerus' Minasan no Okage Deshita* (Tunnel's: Because of Everyone's Good Will) offers a weekly segment in which two guests—usually one male and one female—are invited to sit alongside one member of the (male) comedy duo, *Tonnerus*. Both guests are served four dishes, which they must consume while being interviewed about the food as well as their life histories. Free discussion and casual banter co-mingle with on-camera consumption. At the end of the show, all four participants vote as to which dish the guests consumed and pretended to enjoy, but in actuality detested.

Gotchi Battaru is a third show in which food plays an important, entertaining role. It is actually an elaborate segment of another show, the Friday evening variety hour, *Guru Guru Ninety-Nine*. Four regulars (comedians, usually, and all men) travel each week to a different top-rated (and pricey) restaurant and try to guess the price of a set of dishes prepared for them. An invited guest from the entertainment world accompanies them.[13] After all individual estimates are summed, the guest farthest from the price of the entire meal must pay for everyone. Cumulative, weekly totals are also kept and posted on the show's web site, listing how many times each regular has lost, and how far in arrears he is. Discussion during the show is balanced between good-natured ribbing of individual guestimates, information about how the food is prepared, and comments about how each dish tastes.

These are four examples of food discourse on Japanese TV, reflective of a larger pool of shows in which food plays either a primary or secondary role. Factor in the number of shows in which food appears in an ancillary role (for instance, during morning "wake-up" programs that discuss urban culinary trends or local village festivals, or else travel shows that present the foods of target destinations that can be consumed) and the percentage of food-related discourse on Japanese television increases exponentially. This description does not even begin to tap the great reservoir of "inadvertent food discourse" in which food serves as an incidental, but prominent background feature during dramas, quiz shows, newscasts, sporting events, and the like. Finally, one must not forget the ubiquitous presence of food advertising on TV, which has been found to account for as much as 20% of all ads broadcast in a one month period (Holden 2001).[14]

All considered, it is *impossible* to view food discourse as a trivial or negligible element in Japanese televisual communication. Food is present on virtually every channel, every hour, every day of the week, throughout the broadcast day.

Characteristics of Televisual Masculinities

What then, of gender, in general, and masculinity, in particular, is in these televisual culinary productions? First, these elements are neither invisible, nor insignificant.

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Furthermore, scrutiny of the content of food shows supports recent theorization on gender. To wit, rather than simple sets of stereotypical differences between classes tagged as "male" and "female," masculinity and femininity clearly emerge as social constructions, i.e., sets of reproduced practices and performances that mimic and support a system of power.[15] In fact, the ways in which gender identities (in general) and masculinities (in particular) are communicated in these televisual productions faithfully reflect Ito's (1996) trinity of authority, power, and possession. Similarly, there are cases in which femininities are constructed and communicated in such a way as to embody and buttress Ito's hegemonic masculinity. Let's consider concrete examples of these elements, in turn.

Power: Masculinity as Competition

To begin, let's return to *Dochi*, previously introduced, in which rival dishes are hawked by two male hosts. These front-men are combatants who do whatever they can to secure victory: interviewing the competing chefs (who are almost always men), sampling the food, cajoling the guests to join their side, and making impassioned appeals for support. At the end of the contest, one exults in victory, the other despairs in loss. Their win-loss record is updated weekly on *Dochi*'s website. At the close of each show, the victorious host holds court center stage, consuming the favored meal with the winning guests. He gloats and needles the losing host as well as those unfortunate guests who voted incorrectly. These minority members are made to observe and, sometimes, even serve the winners. *Dochi*'s discourse, in short, is one of contestation, of dominance achieved, and of subordination suffered; it operates in the vernacular of power.[16] Its conflictual, competitive discourse is one normally associated with games—not unlike the *Iron Chef* show, with its clock, rival combatants, teams of specialists, sideline announcer, play-by-play and color commentators, and final judges. Such competitive shows adopt the rhetoric, the visual, contextual, and practical tropes of sport, "an institution created by and for men," (Messner and Sabo 1990), whose practices service the reproduction of hegemonic masculinity.[17]

Viewed in this way, shows like *Dochi* and *Iron Chef* support a sporting, contentious masculinity. They conjure constructions of gender in terms of combat—not coincidentally performed almost exclusively by men. And lest one wonder whether this is but an aberration, we must note that this discursive practice is not confined to one or two shows. *Bistro SMAP*, after all, is a competition between teams. The results are not simply points on a weekly chart, but kisses acquired from the female guests. And even in shows where food is used to measure intellect, sophistication, and judgment (e.g., *Gotchi Battaru*), the discursive frame centers on competition to avoid pecuniary loss and, thus, public "face."

In keeping with the notion that gender is not simply reducible to male/female categorizations, there are those Japanese food shows in which women battle one another for judges' approval. When they do, these females adopt the vernacular of (hegemonic) male discourse.[18] They are operating within an authoritative structuration of power, working against rivals for a favorable personal result. In a word, women in the context of Japanese mediated identity are not immune from operating in the rhetoric, manifesting the core trait of hegemonic masculinity.[19]

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Authority (I): Masculinity as Executive Function

Among the categories that Goffman identified in his qualitative assessment of *Gender Advertisements* (1976) was "executive function," the role (of elevated position, control, and authoritative action) that men adopt when paired in ads with women. This function was patent in my own content analysis of gender in Japanese television ads (1999); it also seems widely replicated in Japanese television food shows.

Men are executives insofar as they are accorded the lead and the power to direct. All activity flows through them, or else beneath their commanding gaze. In food shows, masculine guidance can take the form of two guises: host and chef.

Host As *Dochi*'s description suggests, men often appear in the role of host. This is not a hard and fast rule—*Emiko no O-shaberi Kukingu* (Emiko's Cooking Talk)—features a female host. Importantly, though, Emiko defers to the chef who is a man. As is true of all food shows, in the matter of food preparation, culinary direction, and advice, the chef operates as chief executive. For the host, the role is clearly defined and circumscribed: hosts greet guests, interview them about their lives, solicit their opinions about life and food, ensure that attention is accorded to the chef's (often backgrounded) work in the kitchen, and facilitate the flow between and balance these various elements. Important among the latter is timekeeping and scheduling; hosts determine when final judgments will be rendered. As guardians of continuity, they also verbally validate results tendered by chefs or guests. In a word, they exert administrative control over the communication event.

In cases where there are multiple hosts of differing gender, executive function adheres to a "gender order," with males invariably reigning over women. Consider the show *Chūbō Desu Yo* (This is the Kitchen). Airing at 11:30 p.m. on Saturdays, the hosts' job is not only to welcome guests and make them feel at home, but also to prepare a meal with them in an in-studio kitchen. Like *Dochi*, the guest offers judgment on the food prepared, and, like *Dochi*, that decision has the power to make the hosts exult in triumph or deflate in defeat. Unlike *Dochi*, however, the hosts are not rivals, and, importantly, unlike *Dochi*, they stand in a particular (power) relation to one another. The female host of *Chūbō* (Ikumi Kimura) is intro-duced at the outset of each show as an "announcer." Moreover, she wears the same green and yellow sticker on her apron that all newly minted drivers in Japan affix to their car windows—signifier of a beginner. Tellingly, Ms. Kimura has worn that sticker for over three years. By contrast, the male host (formerly a popular singer named Masaaki Sakai) introduces himself as possessor of "three stars"—the highest rating that can be awarded to a prepared dish on the show—and "Master Chef."

Gender ranking does not end there. During the course of the half hour, Sakai provides directions to Kimura in the kitchen, during the interview segments, and at the dinner table when the time comes to ask the guest for his or her evaluation of the completed meal. Often Sakai will interrupt his work in the kitchen to engage the guest in conversation, leaving Kimura to toil on her own, making sure that the preparation moves toward completion. In addition, during the critical moments of the show, when a segment has to be concluded or a result announced, it is Sakai who takes the lead.

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"This dish is *finished*!" he will intone after the casserole comes out of the oven. Or, as they consume the food, he will suggest, "Ms. Kimura, please ask the guest for his final evaluation." Kimura-san will then dutifully inquire, "For this dish, how many stars will you give?" Once the guest has responded, it is left to Sakai to affirm the judgment. As the camera focuses tight on his face, he shouts theatrically toward the rafters, "for this dish . . . one and a half stars!"

Chef There are numerous shows in which the chef also adopts the executive function by instructing the host and/or guests in the ways of food preparation. *Chūbō* is emblematic of this, introducing three chefs at the outset, who perform on their own premises. Having viewed three variations on the show's selected meal, the three amateur cooks now follow one of the demonstrated recipes. At various stages of the preparation, the three loosely discuss the method they are following. In particular, though, once the meal has been completed and is being consumed, they discuss where they may have improved on the meal—what ingredient was in too little or too great supply, where the oven or stove was used for too long or too short a time. In short, the amateurs note their deviations from the chef's instructions and chastise themselves for failing to conform to his direction.

In addition, *Chūbō* features a short segment introducing a resident apprentice in one of the chef's kitchens. Almost always, these chefs-in-training are young men in their early twenties. In every case to date, these young men are depicted receiving commands from elder male employers. Here again, then, Japan's food shows cast men and masculinity in a discourse of authority.

With but two exceptions, the featured chefs in all of Japan's food show genres are men—the exceptions being the case of desserts and *katei ryōri* (home cooking).[20] When these dishes are featured, female chefs consistently appear. However, because neither category of food is widely represented on food shows, the female presence tends to be overshadowed by that of the male. As a consequence, viewers are apt to perceive "chef" as a male role and, logically, see men as culinary authorities. It is not a stretch to assert that, on the other side of the gender equation, the significance that flows out of the two areas reserved for female expertise (desserts and home cooking) communicates that women are "sweet," soft, peripheral or decentered (i.e., not associated with main courses), less sophisticated or elaborate, and also are specialists in meals served in private rather than out in the public sphere.

Authority (II): Masculinity in Profession

The executive function is not the only way in which status and authority are communicated in cooking shows. Another is the provision of expert knowledge. And like the direction of stage and culinary activity, this is another function that is performed predominantly by men. The recognition of a chef as an "expert" occurs in numerous ways in food shows.

First, and most obviously, is the invocation of the title "chef" to those who are called upon to perform in these TV productions. The deference hosts show to these culinary workers—soliciting their opinion about preparation, allowing them to explain the peculiarities and secrets of each ingredient—goes a long way toward

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elevating cooks to a position of authority. Clothes, too, serve as markers of professional association, and guest chefs never fail to appear in the starched white aprons and *toques* of those who cook for a living. Finally, and most importantly, is the chef's resume. In Japan, where organizational affiliation is one of the significant markers of legitimacy, food shows take pains to introduce their kitchen authorities not simply by name or age, but by pedigree. For example, they name the schools in which they have trained, the countries in which have they apprenticed, and under which banner they now wield a spatula. In a word, this discursive formation is framed institutionally, in terms of economy and social sanction.

Dochi serves as exemplar of this intellectual construction, drawing its chefs exclusively from one corporate group, *Tsuji* in Osaka—arguably Japan's most prestigious professional cooking academy. The title "*Tsuji*" (or its offshoot "*Ecole Culinaire Nationale*") flashed beneath the in-studio chef or else on the food show's web page is enough to communicate "expert." To Japanese media consumers, "*Tsuji*" connotes "rigorous training," "knowledge," "competence," "professionalism," and "quality-control."

As mentioned earlier, *Dochi* (not unlike most other food shows) calls upon its professionals to provide advice in between segments of host/guest repartee. Culinary experts explain the "dos and don'ts" associated with particular foods and tricks for preparing a meal to perfection. Hosts are careful to respond with affirmative noises, such as "Oh, I see" or "That makes sense," or even "Incredible!"—clearly stressing the presence of a knowledge hierarchy. In this way, the message is communicated that chefs are "professionals," not merely because they have a title and an impressive uniform, but because they are experts and leaders in their field.

Status in a Binary Universe: The Comparison with Women One of the major areas of contestation in gender studies—appropriated from structuralism and ushered in large part, by Judith Butler (1990)—is the issue of language as totality, a closed system in which signs give rise, by inference, to (often invisible) paired opposites. On these terms, "man" begets "woman" as "feminine" conjures "masculine." As Hughes (2002:15) has observed, "In the male-female binary, to be a woman requires us to have a corresponding concept of man. Without this relation, the terms alone would have no reference point from which to derive their meaning."

Butler's influence—along with Foucault's (1980)[21]—was to move analysis beyond simplistic binaries. At the same time, the structure of meaning in Japanese televisual productions is predominantly dualistic, creating sign-pairs of male/chef and female/not chef. In this way, what is present, what is communicated, and what "exists," is an absence of females in the role of "chief cook," and the banishment of women from public kitchens as either professional or apprentice. All of this can produce the view that women are *not* cooking authorities, and that "chef" is a male identification, rather than a female one.

Probing this possibility further, we find that women who appear as cooks in Japanese cooking shows are often featured in one of two ways: in the primary guise as "*talento*" (entertainer), or else in the capacity as "housewife." In the case of the former, women seldom, if ever, offer culinary advice. Their cooking duties are mere props to their true identity, star, singer, sex symbol, or actress. In the case of

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the latter, women prepare foods and engage in activities associated with the private domain of the household.

An example of the former is found in the Sunday afternoon show, "*Iron Shufu*."[22] A spin-off of *Iron Chef*, this variety show features female guests, all former entertainers who are now married. The show has a number of components: two rounds of quizzes (one centering on food customs, another concerning ingredients, nutrition, and calories), then a round in which kitchen skills are on display. For instance, housewives might have to run an obstacle course while flipping stir-fry in a wok, or grasp slippery *konyaku* with chopsticks. One week, there aired a task involving whipping cream, after which sticky hands and quivering fingers were made to thread three needles in succession. Following this ordeal, contestants were asked a battery of personal questions regarding life with their husbands (e.g., where was their first date, what was the first present they received from their husband, when is their wedding anniversary).

Once all these tasks are completed, the two highest scoring guests (measured in terms of fastest time through the obstacle course and most correct quiz answers) are pitted against one another in a cook-off. They are given thirty minutes to prepare a meal in the *katei* (or "home-cooking") style. Like its namesake, *Iron Chef*, one featured ingredient must be integrated into the menu. An additional stipulation (since it is *katei* style) is that one of the courses must be served with rice. A panel of celebrity judges—along with the president of a cooking school (i.e., a professional/expert)—offers evaluative comments and scores the two contestants. In numerous ways, then, *Iron Shufu* embodies elements of the masculine hegemonic discourse: competition, expert evaluation, and female cooks associated with private (home-made) food. It also casts women in overtly-domesticated roles that differ in multiple, stereotypical ways from those accorded to men. In this way, patriarchal gendered discourse is reproduced.[23]

Markers of Masculine Identity It should be observed that there *are* a few food shows in which female chefs prepare foods other than desserts or home cooking. In these cases, however, an interesting designation is attached to the cooks; an appellation that appears to undercut their status as authority. Their title is "*riyōri kenkyu ka*"—literally "food researchers." One tangible effect of this title is that it tends to soften the impression left when a woman is offering advice to a male announcer or host.

This is not so in reverse, of course. Where women are being instructed and a man is in the tutelary role, there is no shying away from affixing the title "chef" or "*sensei*" (teacher), providing his professional affiliation, and clothing him in the garb of the professional cook. A prime example is the after-hours entertainment (Saturday 12:30 a.m.), *Ai no Ēpuron 3* (The Love of Three Aprons), in which three young (generally sexy) *talento* are assigned the task of preparing a particular dish (for instance, apple pie) without the benefit of a recipe. The final product is then presented to a panel of (generally) male entertainers. The program's website explains that the "women must make the dishes for these men with love."

The bulk of the show involves the heaping of (generally critical) judgments by the male hosts upon each of the women's food productions. Thereafter, the dishes are assessed by a professional (male) chef. His comments, though generally respectful,

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aim at improving the women's effort next time out (with the implicit assumption that there *will* be a next time). Due to the deference paid to him by the guests and hosts, as well as his uniform and title, he comes across as an authority possessing special knowledge; his words are treated as insights beyond reproach.

Possession: Masculinity as Ownership

Punctuating and possibly stoking the go-go era of Japanese socioeconomic development were distinct epochs in which particular trinities of goods were sought. Thus, there were the three Ss of the late 1950s and early 1960s: *senpūki, sentakuki*, and *suihanki* (fan, washing machine, and electric rice cooker); the three Cs of the late 1960s: *kā, kūr ā*, and *karā terebi* (car, air conditioner, and color TV); and the three Js of the late 1970s: *jūeru, jetto, and jūtaku* (jewels, jetting, and house).[24] Aside from travel by jet, all of these items were goods to be owned. They were statuses secured through acquisition and were communicated via conspicuous display.

Of course, these trinities center on consumption; however, they also reflect a discourse of possession. It is this rhetoric that can also be spied in Japanese food productions, particularly in relation to the chefs who appear. In numerous shows, the chefs are introduced on the premises of restaurants they have founded, manage, and maintain. Cameras capture them either outside the door of their business or else inside, in the dining area. Invariably, they proudly bow in greeting and offer some remarks of invitation. Viewers are treated not only to tours of their kitchens, but are shown menus, sample the décor, drink in the ambiance, and even watch the chef as he prepares and then consumes his product.

Chūbō, previously mentioned, is noted for such excursions to the owner-chef's domain. So, too, though, are the numerous shows in which hosts travel to a particular locale (perhaps in a village off the beaten path) or else seek out a particularly special dish. In such cases, the chef becomes something more than a food preparer; he becomes host in his own right, commander of a world of his own invention, and interviewee. His status as owner lends an additional power to his countenance. He is not only executive, not only employer, not only expert, he is also landholder, proprietor, and business owner. In Japan, for historical (social class-based) reasons, these are quite powerful statuses to hold. And, of course, it goes without saying, these are roles that are almost exclusively held by men, at least in the Japanese televisual universe.

Alternative Conceptions of Televisual Masculinity

Thus far, we have explored how masculinity in TV food programming is consistent with past conceptions of Japanese masculinity; in a word, it embodies a hegemonic discourse of authority, power, and possession. Here, I wish to briefly identify two elements that suggest alternative, though not necessarily inconsistent, conceptions of gender identity.

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Creation: Masculinity as Production

When Sherry Ortner offered the now-famous assertion (1974) that women are nature and men are culture, she was referring to the notion that the male world is "made"; it is a world invented, produced, rendered, and controlled. Certainly, this is the message from Japan's food shows—where the key producers are generally all male. Production transpires within an institutional context (media) and, within that context, an (generally) organizational structure. Such a structure is "man-made"; it is a humanly constructed, artificial environment, configured to confer status and facilitate the expression of power. The tools wielded and the products crafted on these shows, may or may not belong to the cooks, but the fact that they are produced in audio-visual spaces generally presided over by men and filtered through rhetorical strategies that are often regarded as "hegemonic masculinity" suggests that these productions are, in fact, male; they are possessions of the male producer world and, hence, can be associated with masculine identity.

By contrast, for women—who are so often associated with the "natural realm"—their televisual role is generally one of nurturer or consumer. As such, their job is to *facilitate* food production (as hosts) or else serve as end-users (as guests).[25] Certainly, exceptions can be located as in the case of the *Three Aprons* or the *Iron Shufu* shows, previously described. In each case, however, production is for purposes supportive of a patriarchal frame, namely, satisfying the dictates of male hosts or else proving one's wherewithal in providing an amenable home for a husband. Because competition is involved, the women in these shows subrogate themselves to and adopt the logic of hegemonic male discourse. Even when they are not governed by the male world, they seek to uphold and reproduce the logic of that world.

Freedom: Masculinity as Agency

If the message of some TV food shows is that women exist within a clearly delineated, bounded structure, the same could obviously be said of men. As previously mentioned, chefs are often depicted as members of organizations (as in the case of the *Tsuji* performers) or else (as in the case of the *Chūbō* chefs and a wealth of other shop proprietors) as proud possessors (creators, owners, executives) of structures that, incidentally, are "man-made."

At the same time, this image of attachment must be counterbalanced with the impressions of independence often communicated by Japanese media productions. As Gill (2003:145) has written, "Japanese male fantasies frequently stress the mobile: the sportsman, the traveler, the man of action, the magically endowed superhero." For men, and especially television viewers, the majority are tied to structures of "permanence and stasis" (Ibid:146) and, so, pine for an alternative model of existence—a model offered by the television shows. This is not so much embodied by the chefs who have hung out their shingle and run their own businesses; rather, it is in the aegis of the entertainers and guests who saunter onto the food show stage seemingly unencumbered and free of institutional affiliation or organizational layering.

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This is a version of Japanese masculinity that is less well known—one that has few exemplars out in the free world, one that is often relegated to the realm of wish fulfillment (for instance, movies centering on the vagabond peddler "*Tora-san*," leaderless *samurai*, like the "*47 Ronin*," or meandering monks like "*Zatoichi*," or, more recently, daily news about highly-publicized "free agents" who have migrated to play baseball in America). It is a version of masculinity that, far from the quintessential salaryman, views male identity in terms of autonomy and individually-oriented existence. It is a disparate image of masculinity, one which may have little referent in reality, but is, nonetheless, persistently cropping up in televisual productions.

Alternative Masculinities

While the general argument on these pages has been that, with regard to Japan's televisual food shows, little alternative discourse circulates concerning masculinity, this is not completely the case. As we saw in the previous passage, discrepant masculinities *do* exist. And, in fact, these discrepant versions are greater—more extensive and farther reaching—than simply that of the autonomous agent just described. Here, I'd like to consider a few of these deviations, and also what that may tell us about contemporary Japanese society.

TV's Widest Angle: Masculinity's "Multiplicity"

It is not infrequent that alternative genders—transgendered men and female masculinities—surface on Japanese TV.[26] Food shows and food advertising, in particular, often feature performances of multiple genders.[27] Consider, for example, *Dochi*. Generally, six of the seven invitees rotate weekly,[28] often striking a numerical balance between men and women. Among the former, past episodes have included a transvestite, numerous *rikishi* (sumo wrestlers), retired baseball and tennis players, actors, singers, comedians, writers, and producers.

The transvestite, in particular, warrants mention here. His name is Akihiro Miwa, and he is a cultural icon. A former cabaret singer, Miwa is as famous for his elegant gowns as he is for his silky singing voice and his romantic involvement with a famous novelist, the late Yukio Mishima. A writer and TV personality, as well as a regular on variety shows, Miwa is accorded respect, with little hint of derision or disdain. The same can also be said for the homosexual twins "Píco" and "Osugi," the "new half," "Pítā," and the ubiquitous and enormously popular transvestite, Ken'ichi Mikawa. While one would be hard-pressed to claim that transgendered men are widely represented on Japanese television, it would also be impossible to deny their presence. Rarely does a day pass without the appearance of a person embodying an alternative conception of gender on mass-distributed, mass-consumed Japanese television.

Alongside these versions of masculinity are also other "models." On *Dochi* alone, one encounters an obese wrestler from Hawaii; a waif-like singer from Japan's longest-running boy's band, SMAP; a forty-something producer in scruffy beard, blue jeans, signature cowboy boots and ten-gallon hat; a Japan-raised, blond-haired,

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grungy, earring-studded Canadian; an elderly actor with assiduously trimmed goatee, adorned in *yukata* (traditional male *kimono*). In short, one can hardly claim that what is broadcast is the narrow, repetitive discourse of masculinity embodied by salarymen in gray suits and conservative ties. So, too, could one hardly assert that this motley mélange of free agents fits the profile of power wielding, authoritative, possessive hegemonists—at least on the surface.

The Illusion of Freedom

It must be recognized, however, that while such "models" of masculinity may materialize on-screen, good reasons exist to view their social impact with caution. As guests, these men stand in an asymmetric relationship to those who manage the show, specifically, the hosts and chefs in front of the cameras. For these latter groups, invariably, action is wrapped in the vernacular of masculine hegemony. Significantly, no matter what model of masculinity hosts and chefs may *appear* to communicate via their appearance, they uniformly manage to channel food talk into discourse concerning authority, power, and possession.

It also must be noted that a disjuncture exists between the televisual and the real worlds. Food shows place a plethora of free agents on display and communicate alternative masculinities and femininities in far greater measure than the stereotypical types comprising the world beyond the screen. To wit, in Japan today, organizational work still accounts for upwards of 70% of those employed;[29] day laborers and casual or part-time workers also comprise a significant sector of workers. Nonetheless, in show after show, from the food-centered *Dochi, Chubo Desu Yo*, and *Kakurea Gohan*, to the weekly cooking segments on SMAPXSMAP, *Tonnerus*' (*Minasan no Okage Deshita*) and *Gotchi Battaru*, workers—both within and on the margins of "organizational society"—are *never* invited to sit at the TV table.

What's more, while the actors and actresses, athletes, singers, comedians, and the like *appear* to be "free agents," it is also apparent that this is mere illusion; they are far from free. Almost all of the food consuming-performers on screen belong to invisible corporate structures that book them onto these shows, not only to reap money, but more importantly, to gain further exposure for them, their popular cultural product. As such, the consumer-performers on food shows offer the illusion of independence, reproducing a myth of masculine and feminine freedom that in actually doesn't exist. In its stead stands the more hegemonic, structurated model of masculinity that pervades almost all of Japanese society today.

The Absence of Vision

In the same way, although transgendered and alternative masculinities are represented on these shows, it is generally only through the aegis of a handful of prominent entertainers, the few, established well-known, accepted "others" who make the perpetual rounds in what is a finite, hermetic, televisual universe. Today, these performers who began as public curiosities rotate from show to show, appearing

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in a variety of genres equally distributed across the four major channels and spread throughout the seven day viewing week. The consequence is that the message that they might embody of alternative versions of masculinity stands a very real likelihood of being absorbed into, and even overshadowed by, the intimacy cultivated through repetitive exposures of star and host and encounters between viewer and performer.[30] It is this affective bond, I would aver, that may easily lead to the emotional embrace of the one or three or five alternatively masculine "regulars," without having to inculcate the ontological potentials they actually embody. The result may be that viewers become desensitized to, or even come to ignore, the performativities that these personalities signify, the various transgender potentials of "transvestite," "drag queen," "new half," or "homosexual."[31]

The Tight Focus of Televisual Masculine Identity

There is no end to food shows on Japanese television. No two are exactly identical, but all are broadcast for a purpose. To be sure, they exist to educate and entertain. Occasionally they may carry some deep unspoken or less motivated purpose, for instance, the mediation of identity. When this occurs it might be identity defined in terms of the nation, interest group, or individual (Holden 2001, 2003). Or, as shown here, it may be identity cast in terms of gender.

Televisual food shows clearly play a powerful role in communicating masculine identity in contemporary Japan.[32] Clearly, too, such shows are not amenable to the representation of all aspects of masculinity. Beyond the gender performativities previously mentioned, a number of contexts are absent from the screen in which masculinities are generally reproduced. For instance, save for the simulated kitchens in which chefs toil, workplaces are almost entirely absent. Also missing are homes, sites where parenting occurs.[33] Class also is invisible, as are men who are unemployed or else under-employed. Not surprisingly, the homeless are non-existent. In short, there is so much that bears on masculinity that televisual productions ignore, deny, or banish from public view.

The discourse that does appear in these productions serves to present, interpret, translate, and/or modify masculinities. Interestingly, as pervasive as gendered identifications are, the emblematic masculinity for Japan, the salaryman, is entirely pulled from the frame. In his place are other figures—numerous tropes, codes, characters, social processes, institutions, organizational structures, and human agents—both visible and invisible, who are employed to communicate masculine identity. It is a certain kind of identity, a singular kind of identity that is consistently organized and communicated in terms of authority, power, possession, production, and—only seemingly—autonomy.

Notes

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1. This work, like two precursors (Holden 1999, 2001), is based on a systematic sampling of the universe of Japanese TV shows. As explained in that earlier work, recording transpired over the course of an entire month and was supplemented with new programming as some shows were retired and others debuted. Analysis was based on the construction of three distinguishable data sets: (1) an "ideal week" of prime time food shows, (2) food-related advertising, and (3) regular programming in which "inadvertent food discourse" was regularly introduced. Especially considering the extensive amount of air-time accorded to the last category, it was concluded that food discourse is ubiquitous on Japanese television, playing virtually every hour, on every channel, every day.
2. Ito's concept was developed in association with his introduction to men's studies—written in Japanese. Clearly, however, the concept is not culturally bound and can be applied to other contexts.
3. Presaging this work, perhaps, was McLelland's (2000), which argues that homosexuality in Japan does not reduce to a neat, unitary discourse.
4. Among a chorus of writers Lebra and Lebra (1986), Moeur and Sugimoto (1986), Harootunian (1989), and Befu (2000) have observed that there is no homogenous Japan, comprised of a single class, gender, geography, ethnicity, occupation, or generation.
5. Iwao (1993:271), while arguing that Japan has witnessed a dramatic opening up of the public sphere (and, attendant institutional sites) for women, discusses how family has remained one institution which an earlier generation of women use to define their identity.
6. In my conceptualization, "mediated identity" is interactive and institutional, involving: (1) significations, (2) conveyed through representations of sameness and difference, (3) by media, and (4) brought into relief by: (a) references to (socially constructed) group-based traits, and (b) the depiction of relationships between: (i) individuals and/or (ii) groups. Even more recent work on cell phone users (Holden forthcoming) suggests that the above definition requires modification to allow for the power of users to communicate representations of themselves and actively construct identities by consciously utilizing media.
7. Japan: Profile of a Nation, Kodansha (1995:247). See also Kazuo Kaifu, "Japan's Broadcasting Digitization Enters the Second Stage: Its present state and prospects," NHK Culture Broadcasting Institute, No.11 (New Year, 2000). In fact, the diffusion rate as early as 1965 was 95%.
8. 95% of the population according to Shuichi Kamimura and Mieko Ida. See: "Will the Internet Take the Place of Television?: From a Public Opinion Survey on 'The Media in Daily Life,' " NHK Culture Broadcasting Institute, No. 19 (New Year, 2002); url: #http://www.nhk.or.jp/bunken/bcri-news/bnls-feature.html.
9. NHK's Research Institute reported a figure of 3 hours and 44 minutes in a 2001 survey. This statistic has consistently topped three hours since 1960. Kato (1998:176), reports that viewer rates averaged three hours and eleven minutes in 1960 and three hours and twenty-six minutes in 1975.
10. Bosnia is the only country to rank ahead of Japan in terms of daily average viewing. See: " '2002'; Une Année de Télévision dans Le Monde; analyse les paysages télévisuels et les programmes préférés de 1.4 milliard de téléspectateurs dans 72 territoires audiovisuals."
11. The Japanese equivalent of "prime time," running from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m., Monday through Sunday.
12. The Bistro SMAP website can be accessed at the following url: http://www.fujitv.co.jp/b_hp/smapsmap/ bistro.html. Pages such as the following (http://www.eonet.ne.jp/~smapy/SMAP-DATA.htm) feature cumulative data on guests, meals prepared, team combinations, winning teams, and number of victories amassed by each SMAP member. Awards are given to the chef (among the 5 SMAP members) who has recorded the most victories in a season.
13. Generally Japanese, although in the first season Chris Carter and Jackie Chan were invited. Carter won and Chan finished last of the four contestants.
14. The actual numbers were 681 out of 3,656 ads. Food was the second most advertised product category—behind "events" and about equal to "cars" and "sundries". This is significant insofar as Japan boasts the world's second largest advertising market, amounting to $223,250,000 just for television. This translates into 957,447 ads, consuming 6,016 broadcasting hours per year. (*Source*: Dentsu Koukoku Nenkan, '02–'03 [Dentsu Advertising Yearbook, 2002–2003], Tokyo: Dentsu, 2002; pp. 57, 90, 89 [respectively]). Advertising serves not only a major motor for consumption-based capitalist societies; it also works as one of the major means by which cultural communication occurs. Through ads, television exerts both a socializing and ideological power, narrowly and repetitiously re/producing images of gender, cultural values, history, nationalism, and political, social and personal identity (among others). I have explored these manifestations in, among other works, studies of gender advertisements (1999) and "adentity" (2000a) in Japan.
15. See, for instance, Hearn and Morgan (1990) and Broad and Kaufman (1994).
16. One might wish to have a "representative" example of masculine hegemony, in the form of one particular host. However, there are any number of "male figures" or "characters" across the TV spectrum who adopt the traits of hegemonic masculinity. The number of cases is so large, and any particular TV personality may accentuate a certain masculine trait over another, that it is best left to work through various cases in which these traits are expressed. In this way, the characteristics constituting hegemony take precedence over the particular "hegemonic representative"; so, too, does this afford us the freedom to recognize cases in which, for instance, women

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adopt those characteristics, thereby, serving to "enrich" and strengthen the spread of this masculine hegemonic discursive formation.

17. Indeed, Messner (1992) has argued that sport is one of the primary areas in which hegemonic masculinity is learned and perpetuated. To the degree that food shows adopt sporting rhetoric, then, they serve as such communication vehicles as well.
18. To underscore this point, consider the case of the female chef who finally prevailed on *Dochi*. Having appeared and lost a number of times, when her dessert finally won she gushed: "That's the first time I won!" Reflecting on past efforts, which resulted in her having to sit for the cameras, in a room off center stage, eating the food (by herself) that she had prepared, she explained, "When I lost, that (i.e. sitting alone eating my food) was the hardest thing . . ."
19. Importantly, it is not "female masculinity" (Halberstam 1998) that they manifest, rather a male model of masculinity.
20. Home cooked meals are those served everyday, featuring a soy sauce base and/or rice.
21. See, for instance, Fausto-Sterling (1993) and Halberstam (1998).
22. "Shufu" is the word for "housewife" in Japanese.
23. An example of what Sugimoto (1997) decries as the overarching ideology of the male-centered family in Japan;one that, in his opinion, is deeply sexist and patriarchal.
24. These triplets have, over the years, held currency in the popular culture, from marketers to journalists to everyday citizens, and, hence were widely discussed. The recitation here, however, is from Kelly (1992). In the early 1990s, just prior to the bursting of the "economic bubble," young women talked about searching for mates who possessed the "three kos (highs)": physical height, job status, and salary. In the late 1990s, after half a decade of economic downturn, these same women complained that their salarymen husbands embodied the "three Ks": kitanai, kusai, kirai (dirty, smelly, hateful). Mathews (2003:116), more optimistically, speaks of a new set of three Cs for men: bringing home a *comfortable* income, being *communicative*, and *cooperating* with childcare and housework.
25. In Tobin's (1992:10) words, "consumption is associated with the sphere of women." At the same time, Tobin is careful to observe that, while such associations may exist, they amount to critically under-assessed stereotypes. In fact, in Japan today, women also produce and men consume. Too much emphasis has been accorded to this artificial (and inaccurate) dichotomy—a point to bear in mind when applying Ortner to contemporary Japan.
26. Here I refer to the women of Takarazuka theatre in which an all-female cast plays roles both male and female. These stars have, on occasion, crossed over into TV. According to Nakamura and Matsuo (2003:59), Takarazuka is a "special type of asexual, agendered space," one allowing "both female and male fans, regardless of their sexual orientations, (to) temporarily transcend their everyday gender expectations and roles." A recent, quite different, example of female masculinity was the 2003–04 Georgia (canned coffee) TV ad campaign in which women, dressed Takarazuka-style, as salarymen, wreak havoc in their office space, tormenting their (male) boss, while dancing, rapping, taunting, and laughing with delight.
27. Here I invoke Lunsing (2003:20) who employs " 'transgender' in the broadest sense possible". In his words, "the majority of people have at least some attributes ascribed to the opposite gender and thereby can be seen to engage in transgender activity."
28. One guest holds near-permanent status: Tsuyoshi Kusanagi, singer for the J-pop mega-group, SMAP. Kusanagi's appeal may lie in his asexual, if not effeminate, countenance. As a character with a blurry gender identity, he appears to comfortably rest between the weekly groups of three males and three females. It is not uncommon to see Kusanagi among the winning side in a 4 to 3 split, often in cases when the food choice cleaves panelists along traditional gender lines.
29. Precise statistical confirmation can be illusory. One such study—from a Marxist/worker's perspective (Voice of Electricity Workers) can be found at the following url: http://www.eefi.org/0702/070215.htm. Its data is culled from numerous official and unofficial studies in the mid-1990s which, combined, work the figure toward the 70% threshold. More recent reports from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (1999) speak to dramatic decline in the number of employees in blue collar jobs (due to economic downturn), as well as a glut of professional and technical workers.
30. English-language studies of Japanese television are rather sparse. One of the best, by Painter (1996), argues that TV productions seek to produce "quasi-intimacy" by "emphasiz(ing) themes related to unity (national, local, cultural, or racial) and unanimity (consensus, common sense, identity) . . ." (198). I would go further. Theorization I am currently completing suggests that affective bonds are formed among a national community via the hermetic circulatory process I described earlier. The result, in the first instance, is a fusing of affective ties between viewer, performer, host, production team, and TV station. In the second instance, it is the dislodging and transfer of such bonds (as the performers and viewers jump from program to program and station to station, day after day). In the final instance, it is the creation of a sort of seamless, floating family locked in an on-going communal conversation. Although Painter doesn't suggest as much, it would seem that the intimacy he first described today serves increasingly as a stepping stone in the forging of solidarity among TV's national viewers;

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a solidarity that in contemporary Japan, exerts greater unifying power than that of corporate, legal, religious or ritualistic activities and formations.

31. On these categories—"the various tropes constructing transgender" in contemporary Japan—see Lunsing (2003).
32. Female identity, to be sure, is just as rich an area of inquiry. Femininities are more variegated than masculinities. There are so many "types" of women on-screen; at the same time, ultimately, the range of female motion is less extensive. For, as we have seen in this research (at least when it comes to food shows) so much of feminine discourse is subrogated to expressions of masculine hegemony. Women end up operating within those terms, either employing such tools of power, themselves or deferring to them.
33. In fact, men are rarely, if ever, depicted cooking in homes. Male culinary acts are: always for show (i.e., in the studio); associated with work (i.e., in the role of chef); or else at play (i.e., during seasonal picnics, generally in commercials).

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11

Domestic Divo? Televised Treatments of Masculinity, Femininity, and Food*

Rebecca Swenson

Over the sound of clashing knives, television host Mark Dacascos warns the audience that they are about to witness a "battle of masters" in which a "band of brothers" will be put to the ultimate test. The lights dim and floor opens to reveal three shadowy figures slowly rising from beneath the stage. As the music swells and spotlights flash, Dacascos cries, "Gentlemen, prepare for battle!" (Episode IANS03). The scene carries the same masculine intensity and drama of a boxing match; however, combat takes place in "kitchen stadium" and focuses on culinary—not martial—art. Here, on the Food Network's *Iron Chef America*, food preparation is sport, and chefs are athletes.

With high production budgets, scriptwriters, and lucrative marketing contracts, food television has come a long way since the days of Julia Child's simmer-and-stir type programming that introduced French cuisine to American homemakers. Yet, at other moments, food television appears to have not changed at all. Before battles commence on *Iron Chef America*, peppy Food Network star Ingrid Hoffman spends the morning chopping-and-blending her way through *Simply Delicioso*, an instructional cooking show dedicated to introducing viewers to Latin-inspired dishes. Like Julia, and a long line of feminine cooks, Hoffman digs through the refrigerator while explaining to the camera that she has decided to do something fun for her girlfriends and loved ones: mix up her "Yummy Avocado Sopita" and host a "Spa Day" luncheon (Episode IY0201).

The easy mix of masculine "battles" and feminine "spa days" on the Food Network reflects important assumptions about audiences and beliefs about gender, food, and the rewards of labor. The division of labor—in and outside of the kitchen—is no longer as definite as it was in Julia Child's day. A gender segregation of tasks within the domestic domain still exists; however, there are signs of a convergence in certain areas of the home—especially in the kitchen (Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000). If men are doing more work in the kitchen, our cultural ideas about what is and is not strictly "women's work" might also be shifting. The way cooking tasks are divided within the home and described on television is important, for as West and Zimmerman (1987) write, issues of allocation—such as "who is going to do what" or

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"who is going to get what"—often reflect our beliefs about the "essential" nature of significant social categories, such as "man" and "woman" (p. 143). Yet, there have been very few academic analyses of how ideologies surrounding women, men and food are changing (Julier & Lindenfeld, 2005, pp. 2–3).

The Food Network is an important site that articulates discourses about gender and cooking, as it is one of the most widely viewed channels devoted to instructing viewers about how to buy, prepare, and consume food. It is also part of the underanalyzed genre of television programming that seeks to make over the domestic sphere (Ketchum, 2005, p. 218). The Food Network's audience and profits have continued to grow since its 1993 launch, and as of January 18, 2008, the network was available in 96 million coverage area homes (Barnes, 2006; Food Network "Facts and Figures" document). Although the network's core audience is in the United States and Canada, some Food Network shows are also available in Australia, Korea, Japan, Egypt, Thailand, Singapore, the Philippines, Monaco, Andorra, Africa, France, and the Caribbean (Robinson, 2006; Keeler, 2006).

In this article, I examine how the relationship between masculinity, femininity, and cooking has been historically constructed, describe current presentations of gender on the Food Network, and then discuss the implications of these mediated constructions on social change and equality. My analysis is guided by the following research questions: does the Food Network present cooking as gendered "work"? If so, are these constructions different from the masculinities and femininities previously identified in popular discourse around cooking? These questions are important as challenges and revisions to cultural texts about the kitchen shape and reshape gendered divisions between the public and private sphere.

To analyze the Food Network, I look at how production, social and ideological codes within each program, work together to construct the work of cooking. I also compare male and female hosts to illustrate how cooking activities uphold and challenge the traditional masculine and feminine binary. I argue that the Food Network is one channel of discourse in which cooking is no longer defined solely as women's work. White men are prominent in the Food Network kitchen; however, channel programming carefully protects the concept of White masculinity by separating it from feminine, family-centered domestic labor in subtle and nuanced ways.

Doing Dinner, Doing Gender

In the last 30 years or so, feminists—and other researchers—have challenged conventional wisdom by conceptualizing the link between biological sex, gender norms, and sexuality in diverse ways. Postmodern conceptualizations further the flexibility and freedom of categories like "feminine" and "masculine" by separating biological sex from gender norms. Judith Butler (2004) takes these conceptualizations one-step further by calling into question the strict, binary division of gender and pointing to the wide range and breadth of both biological sex and gender manifestations (p. 42). Weedon (1997) also describes gender as a socially produced and historically changing aspect of identity that is shaped by cultural and institutional discourse within a society. She writes: "As children we learn what girls and boys

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should be and later, what women and men should be" from social institutions, such as "the family, schools, colleges, teenage fashion, pop culture, the church and worlds of work and leisure" (Weedon, 1997, p. 3).

Social institutions and popular culture, as described by Weedon, have made the kitchen a gendered space in which deeply held ideologies about "natural" feminine or masculine behaviors are evident. Inness (2001b) writes that kitchen culture transcends the "passing down of Aunt Matilda's recipe for Swedish meatballs" to include recipes on "how to behave like 'correctly' gendered beings" (p. 4). The idea that food preparation is fun and pleasurable has its roots in its assignment to the happy homemaker, a wife and mother whose unpaid labor is done for loved ones because of natural, altruistic, and maternal instincts. For example, Neuhaus (2003) describes how cookbooks in the late 1940s and 1950s urged women to focus entirely on their family's welfare "for the good of their families and for the nation" (p. 223). Devault (1991) also writes that the image of women "doing for others" is a powerful, central image in American society of what a woman should be (p. 1). She argues that household tasks, like cooking, are events in which we mark ourselves as acceptable men and women (Devault, 1991, p. 118). Household tasks are often continually associated with one gender and become viewed as natural expressions of "one's gendered relations to the work and to the world" (Beck 204 quoted in Devault, 1991, p. 118).

Devault's (1991) concept of gender as something that is "done" for others is borrowed from West and Zimmerman (1987), who describe "doing gender" as a social activity unconsciously performed with or for another. For the purpose of this research, I also borrow West and Zimmerman's (1987) definition of gender as a situated performance that is "carried out in the virtual or real presence of others who are presumed to be oriented to its production" (p. 126). In this conceptualization, gender becomes an interactional and institutional phenomenon, instead of simply a property of individuals. This is important, as viewing gender as an individual attribute or as a role often obscures how gender is produced in everyday activities, like cooking (West and Fenstermaker, 1993, p. 151). I am interested in exploring gender as an activity that is performed in response to institutional and social norms and is capable of pluralities—both masculinities and femininities. I am also interested in the contradictions that might surface within these pluralities and the ways in which masculinities and femininities might be disrupted from a historical perspective (Connell, 1995, p. 73).

With this definition of gender, masculinities and femininities are both an "outcome of and a rationale for various social arrangements and as a means of legitimizing one of the most fundamental divisions of society" (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 126). As such, it is important to connect moments of "doing gender" with hegemonic power structures and institutions that legitimate "normal" and "deviant" constructions of personhood. Butler (2004) notes that gendered discourses enable and constrain how an individual defines himself or herself and constitute subjects while Foucault (1976) notes that these discourses are always framed within particular relations of power. The disciplinary practices of enacting and reenacting of gender norms regulate the body until its gestures, postures, and movements are recognizably feminine or masculine. Discourse gains power through its ability to repeat or reiterate an idea until it seems natural and normal. Below, I describe how cooking culture has made gender a natural and normal part of discourse about the kitchen.

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The Way to a Man's Heart

The private kitchen is a feminized space and female domain; however, men have not been totally absent from kitchen culture. Neuhaus (2003) points out that at least thirteen cookbooks intended for men appeared in the United States from 1946 to 1960 (p. 195). Most of these cookbook writers told men how to prepare meat over a roaring fire, assuming an innate, caveman-like connection between men and barbequed meat (Neuhaus, 2003, p. 194). As Adams (1990) argues, meat has long been a symbol of masculinity and male power. If he was not next to the BBQ, the male cook was portrayed as a hobbyist, easily preparing dishes with creativity and flair for occasional fun rather than as an everyday task (Neuhaus, 2003, p. 74). Hollows (2002) writes about an alternative masculinity in her research on the meaning of the "bachelor dinner" in *Playboy*'s regular food pages from 1953 to the early 1960s (p. 143). *Playboy* did not exactly conform to the 1950s vision of tradition; instead, the imagined reader was an urban "glamorized bum" who rejected the married, suburban, and female-centered life of his "breadwinner" counterpart (Hollows, 2002, p. 144). Not surprising, *Playboy*'s food columnists made explicit connections between food, cooking, and sex and frequently referred to the sensual pleasures of eating, the seductive effect of entertaining, and the aphrodisiac qualities of certain foods (Hollows, 2002, p.146). *Playboy* also negotiates unease at integrating cooking into a masculine lifestyle by suggesting recipes in a "travelogue" format, where the dish is connected to a tale of adventure in an exotic locale (Hollows, 2002, p. 144). Hollows (2002) concludes that the *Playboy* chef is not obligated to cook, does not shape his cooking to satisfy the tastes of others, and views cooking as an enjoyable leisure activity (p. 152).

Within the public sphere, the professional chef has long been male. Even today, restaurant kitchens are notoriously sexist and macho (Pratten, 2003, p. 455). Women still hold less than 10% of the top positions in the culinary industry (Cooper 1998). Roche (2004) writes the United Kingdom's Equal Opportunities Commission receives more complaints of bullying and sexual harassment from those in the hospitality industry than any other employment sector. The separation between the discourse of feminine cooks who prepare food everyday out of necessity and the haute culinary discourse of male professionals has a long history in both the United States and Europe. Trubek (2000) writes that the founding masters of French cuisine saw themselves as educators and "a combination of elitism and missionary zeal characterized the attitude of male French chefs towards French women" (p. 12).

Visions of masculinity within American culture are always relational and exist only by depending on an "other"—in this case femininity (Connell, 1995, p. 68). The female cook described by Devault (1991) in *Feeding the Family* and the professional or Playboy chef described by Hollows (2002) and Trubek (2000) both invest "care" in an imagined other by preparing meals; however, female labor demonstrates love for the family and is a gift to a husband or children, while the male laborer aims to produce more fleeting sexual encounters, put on a glamorous show for others, develop a career, or pursue the pleasures of eating for himself (Devault, 1991, p. 118; Hollows, 2002, p. 151; Trubek, 2000, p. 12).

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Overall, the main message to men in cooking literature during the first half of the twentieth century was that despite being masters of the professional kitchen, the private kitchen was not their lair (Inness, 2001b, p. 12). If men did wander into the home kitchen, cooking must be negotiated in very specific ways to protect the concept of masculinity (Inness, 2001b, pp. 18–19). The "male cooking mystique" is based on the following assumptions about the relationship between men and cooking: "if men choose to cook, they must make sure their masculinity isn't diminished;" men's taste in food is antithetical to women's taste in food; men should cook manly food, like wild game and other types of meat; if men cook meals besides meat it should be a rare event and cause for applause; if a woman wants to keep a man she should adapt to his tastes in food, not the reverse (Inness, 2001b, pp. 18–19).

Inness (2001b) writes that the male mystique has far-reaching implications for how our society uses gender to separate and justify the larger division of labor: "Women are the ones responsible for a double shift, working a full-time job and then rushing home to cook a meal for the family. Since cooking in our society remains deeply linked to gender, if a wife decides not to cook, this frequently is perceived as a sign that she is 'abnormal' and 'bad'" (pp. 35–36). It also eliminates expectations that men share second shift responsibilities with working women.

However, if the division of labor is shifting—albeit in limited and subtle ways—is the male mystique shifting as well? If so, this might help society redefine 'normal' and 'deviant' forms of masculinity and femininity and allow both genders to continue to question what appears to be natural and inevitable divisions between the public and private sphere.

Method

As discussed above, the purpose of this research is to examine how masculinities and femininities presented in popular cooking culture might be shifting and to investigate if the male mystique, as described by Inness, still holds true today. I conducted an initial textual analysis of Food Network programs that ran during October 20 to October 27, 2006. In addition, the tapes were supplemented with additional viewings of significant programs during November and December 2006. After identifying core themes, I analyzed Food Network programs that ran during January 2 to January 23, 2008 from 8:30 am to 11 pm CST weekdays and from 6 am to 11 pm CST weekends. These time periods captured multiple episodes of the Food Network's most popular and current programs.[1] Many blocks of programming were repetitive, as the network frequently rebroadcasts shows and often plays food-related infomercials during the overnight hours. Overall, total viewing resulted in approximately 200 hr of original programming.

As of January 2008, the Food Network's Web site lists 57 celebrity hosts and 71 shows as part of their current line-up.[2] Network hosts are predominately White and male. Of the 57 celebrity hosts listed on the Web site, 38 hosts are male, 19 are female, 42 hosts are Caucasian, 7 are Japanese, and 8 are African American. It is important to note that the gendered portrayals discussed here focus on White masculinity and White femininity.[3]

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Overall analysis focuses on narratives and key themes, social cues in the host's language, action and appearance, and production conventions used to convey the relationship between the host and imagined viewer.

Cooking Codes

Food Network programming combines food preparation with travel, adventure, history, trivia, pop culture, and competition. To potential viewers and advertisers, the Food Network divides programming into two major blocks: daytime "in the kitchen" and evening "way more than cooking" programs.[4] Within daytime "in the kitchen" programs, two themes were prominent in shows featuring men as hosts: *cooking as way to flex professional muscles* and *cooking as leisurely entertainment*. Conversely, female hosts tend to portray *cooking as domestic work done for family and friends*. During evening "way more than cooking" programs hosts construct *cooking as competitive contest* and *cooking as a journey*.

Cooking As Way to Flex Professional Muscles

By adopting the role of chef, instructor or scientist, male hosts construct cooking *as a way to flex professional muscles*, a theme which rejects situating the male cook as an everyday provider of the personal, domestic care that is a hallmark of family life. This masculine performance relates to work done by Adams and Coltrane (2005), who write that men and boys remain ambivalent about family life because "achieving manhood" is typically based on accomplishments in extrafamilial settings, such as business, sports or politics (p. 230). This creates a situation in which "boys and men 'come from' or 'have' families" but "they often experience profound difficulties being 'in' them" (Adams & Coltrane, 2005, p. 230). By giving cooking an aura of professionalism, hosts reify masculine autonomy from domestic responsibilities and maintain the masculine ideal of "breadwinner" and "good provider."

In shows like *Molto Mario, Party Line with the Hearty Boys,* and *Tyler's Ultimate*, the hosts often make casual references to previous business experience and culinary training. For example, in the "Sweets and Coffee" episode of *Party Line with the Hearty Boys*, Dan Smith and Steve McDonagh are arranging food on a table for a party and digging in cupboards for props. Smith turns to the camera and says: "This is what we do as caterers—go through your stuff!" (Episode DS0105). Similarly, in *Boy Meets Grill*, as Bobby Flay prepares a pot of homemade chicken stock, he tells the camera, "This is how I was taught in culinary school, crazy, I know!" (Episode GL0612). Florence also peppers his speech with phrases like "this is an old classic restaurant cooking tip" (Episode BW0510). Other male hosts mark their professionalism by wearing the traditional white jacket used by chefs. A few male hosts don the jacket during the entire program while others, such as Emeril Lagasse in *Essence of Emeril*, only wear it during the introduction.

Mario Batali, who also wears a chef jacket, frequently pulls down maps and other props to educate viewers and his audience. During the "Messy Polenta" episode,

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Batali compares culinary history and techniques from different regions of Italy and describes how difficult it is for chefs to educate American restaurant customers about the proper way to combine seafood and dairy within a dish (Episode MB2G18). Batali's recipes are time-consuming and complex, for example, he tells viewers that his Baccala alla Veneta has to soak for 2 days in water that must be changed three times a day. At one point in another episode, an audience member points out a heavily smoking pan on the stove. Mario assures him it is fine, as "things smoke up in a professional kitchen." At the end of shows hosted by Mario Batali, Tyler Florence, Bobby Flay, and Emeril Lagasse a reference to their restaurants often appears on the screen.

In comparison, female personalities with instructional programs position themselves as approachable, domestic cooks that prepare meals for friends and family members, rather than as professional chefs or artists. Despite some impressive credentials, female hosts rarely mention cooking professionally and dress in casual clothes, usually with an apron.[5] Female hosts, such as Rachael Ray in *30-Minute Meals* and Robin Miller in *Quick Fix Meals* directly address the challenges of efficiently preparing weeknight meals for families. Robin assures viewers that "cooking three weekday meals is a cinch as long as you plan ahead" (Episode RM0209). During the introduction to *Healthy Appetite* host Ellie Krieger tells viewers that she understands eating healthy is hard when you are juggling everyday life. At the end of the "Mood Food" episode, Krieger adds, "you can put this together when you get home for work —it is super energizing" (Episode EK0307). In every episode of *30-Minute Meals*, Ray cranks out dinner in 30 minutes from start to finish so viewers "can put great food on the table, and still have time to enjoy your family, friends or tackle that home improvement project you've been waiting to get your hands on" (Food Network Web site).

Food Network also uses subtle costuming, positioning, and camera work to create a masculine professional and feminine domestic frame. *Paula's Party* and *Emeril Live*[6] are both high-energy "new domestic cooking shows" which look like talk shows with loud, excited and adoring studio audiences, music, and an overall "party" atmosphere (Ketchum, 2005, p. 225). In these shows, the host alternates between talking directly to the camera and interacting with a live studio audience that claps and cheers back at the host on cue, creating a social atmosphere. Like other programs in the talk show genre, select audience members become part of the host's routine and have to shift from viewer to performer. Although Deen and Lagasse host similar shows, they differentiate themselves in subtle ways that construct cooking as professional labor for Lagasse and as domestic labor for Deen.

During *Emeril Live*, Lagasse wears a professional chef jacket with a towel casually slung over his shoulder and some episodes open with Lagasse coming into the studio in street clothes and waiting while two assistants help him into the professional garb. Like a president, athlete, or actor, Lagasse jogs into the studio amidst cheers, shakes hands with those in the front of the studio audience and waves to those in the back. This works to position Emeril as an expert who is on stage and ready to entertain fans. Paula enters the studio in a much more casual way, stands close to her audience, hugs her guests, and leaves her street clothes on during the entire show.

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Despite an impressive business background that includes restaurant and catering success, Deen portrays herself as a bawdy but home-spun, grandmotherly figure. She blends cooking demonstrations with family anecdotes, self-help mantras, humor, sexual innuendos, and advice. Deen creates the feeling of an intimate women's circle by referring to audience members as "us girls," inviting audience members to join her behind the stove and answering personal questions about her life and family. Deen also says things like, "How good are you going to look when you serve this? You will have him eating out of your hand for weeks." Conversely, Lagasse's interaction with audience members is much less intimate. Audience members tend to sit facing the stove and dialogue is more call-and-response, in which Emeril shouts "Bam" or "Should we go for it?" and the audience mimics him, replies "Oh, yeah baby" and cheers.

In other programs, especially shows like *Food 911* and *How to Boil Water* hosted by Tyler Florence, the male host establishes professional authority by more directly adopting a "chef-and-student" model with guests and cohosts. In *Food 911*, Florence comes to the rescue of a viewer by traveling to their home kitchen in order to help revamp and prepare a specific dish. In *How to Boil Water*, Florence conducts short classes during which he teaches his "cooking challenged" cohost actress Jack Hourigan how to prepare basic meals. She mimics Florence, asks questions, and presses him for explanations as he cooks. During the introduction to the "Healthy Helpings" episode, Hourigan says, "this is the show where beginners like me learn just how easy it is to cook with confidence." Florence chimes in, "That's right, Jack. I'm going to show you and everyone at home how to become an accomplished cook" (Episode BW0510).

Within this theme, masculinity can also be protected using other areas of professional skill besides formal culinary training and business expertise. For example, in *Good Eats*, Alton Brown enters the kitchen as a scientist and a historian who often treats cooking as an opportunity for an educational lecture or experiment. Poniewozik (2005) describes Brown as "the MacGyver of mackerel" who explores how food works from "the chemistry of cured salmon" to "the physics of pressure cookers." In the "Dr. Strangeloaf "episode, Brown uses pie charts, rockets, magnifying glasses, and other props to educate viewers about the properties of wheat kernel, yeast, and bacteria. Like a botanist, he traces the evolutionary development of plants that produce key ingredients used by craft bakers (Episode EA1H15). Other male hosts also reference the "science" of cooking. For example, Batali tells guests, "this is what emulsification looks like in science books" (Episode MB2G18). Flay also assures viewers that making pastries requires a lot of chemistry and math (BFIE13).

Science, business, and professional training function to separate the work done behind the stove by masculine hosts from that of "women's work." Instead of using cooking to explore science or reenact broad strokes of culinary history, female hosts describe recipes as valued personal possessions that preserve family history, values, and generational legacy. "The family that eats together stays together" is the opening line for *Sara's Secrets* "Sunday Dinner with Aunt Fanny" episode (Episode SS1B83). Moulton has Fanny di Giovanni on as a guest, who helps make a Sunday dinner that is guaranteed to "get everyone to the table." Aunt Fanny, who appears to be over

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60 years old, talks about how her mother prepared similar dishes. In *Semi-Homemade with Sandra Lee*, Lee says, “I have been cooking and entertaining for years, in the way that my grandmother did. It takes so much time, so I created shortcuts and shared them with my girlfriends—they love them and so will you.” Nigella Lawson’s “Fun Food” episode focuses on cooking for her children, which she described as both fun and dreamy (Episode NL0104). Similarly, in the “Gourmet Fiesta” episode, Amy Finley of The *Gourmet Next Door* tells viewers that she enjoys preparing Mexican recipes because her kids love the food (GY0105). *Everyday Italian* with Giada De Laurentiis and *Barefoot Contessa* with Ina Garten also frequently refer to making meals as “gifts” for loved ones. Preserving the familial chain of cooking expertise has long been a feminine task; these hosts reify their femininity by coding cooking as a fulfilling act of love and intimacy done for others.

Shapiro (2004) writes that “nothing in the long history of women doing what used to be man’s work has ever seemed to Americans as unnervingly radical as the notion of men wholeheartedly engaged in woman’s work” (p. 253). The above programs illustrate how male hosts draw upon a professional ethos to resist being classified with the feminine, family-centered domestic cook. However, not all instructional programs hosted by a male personality fit a professional frame. Cooking was also constructed as *leisurely entertainment*, a theme that implies a temporary slippage into the domestic lair. The temporal nature of this frame protects the concept of masculinity, for as Shapiro (2004) writes, “to help out is noble; to place domestic responsibilities on a par with one’s job is suspect” (p. 253).

Cooking As Leisurely Entertainment

Thomas Adler (1981) reports that as late as the 1930s, men who went into the kitchen to cook for the fun of it “were in danger of being a laughingstock” (p. 45). This stereotype began to erode as the amateur male cook gained popularity along with the post-World War II backyard barbequing trend in the United States (Adler, 1981, p. 47). To make cooking an acceptable masculine activity, Adler (1981) writes that it is important to designate special meals and tools to the male chef (p. 50). This keeps masculine cooking “festal” and separate from mundane and “ferial” feminine cooking habits (Adler, 1981, p. 50).

On the Food Network, male hosts separate the “festal” and “ferial” by making cooking a special event. For example, host Tyler Florence often uses a professional frame to reify masculine authority in the kitchen; however, *Tyler’s Ultimate* “Sunday Dinner” is one episode that embraces the domestic, family-centered realm (Episode TU0204). Florence is careful to position Sunday dinner as a special event, different from weekday meals. He tells viewers that he orders takeout during the week and goes out on the weekends; however, Florence believes Sunday dinner is a special time to cook and guides viewers on how to create the “ultimate” pot roast to get the family together. Other programs like *Easy Entertaining with Michael Chiarello, Good Deal with Dave Lieberman*, and *Guy’s Big Bite* also closely resemble the feminine, domestic, family-centered frame yet are careful to position cooking as a fun, temporary, and voluntary leisure activity. These male hosts do not discuss the challenges of routinely

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cooking for a family but do show viewers how easy and enjoyable it is to prepare meals for friends on occasion.

For Michael Chiarello of *Easy Entertaining*, cooking is a pleasurable hobby. He prepares a full dinner in every episode and is always extremely relaxed and in control while at the stove. He owns a vineyard and often strolls among grapevines with a glass of wine as pots simmer on the range. The "Fireplace Cooking" episode opens with Michael in a lumberman jacket chopping wood before his guests arrive (Episode MO1A02). Chiarello changes out of his lumberman jacket into casual clothes to cook; and then, as his guest's arrive, Chiarello dons a professional chef jacket. During this same episode, the camera cuts to Michael sipping coffee at a sidewalk café after doing some initial prep work in the kitchen, and later, he takes another break by chatting on the telephone with his feet propped up on his desk while the meal cooks. As usual, guests applaud Chiarello during the meal, toast him with their wine glasses and enthusiastically tell him how wonderful and talented he is.

Good Deal with David Lieberman also positions the host as an experienced and leisurely entertainer but for a much younger, urban, and hip demographic. A promo for Lieberman's show says the young host has a style that is focused on "a budget minded twenty-something audience with social-driven calendars. Without sacrificing taste (or cash), [Lieberman] could fill something of a void in talking to Gen Ys who are increasingly adopting more 'domestic' lifestyles, often opting to stay in and host a dinner party rather than spending the evening bar hopping" (Trendcentral.com, 2005). During the opening of the show, host Lieberman assures viewers that he spares no expense during his day job as food writer and professional gourmet chef. At night, however, he finds a way to entertain his friends "like a king" while keeping costs down. Entertaining is both a hobby and economic necessity for Lieberman. For example, in the opening to the "Lite-N-Healthy" episode, Lieberman tells the camera that he is going on a vacation with his friends and everyone has resolved to save money, exercise more and eat healthy to get ready for the beach. In order to "help us all out," Lieberman tells viewers that he is going to cook up a light and healthy meal that costs less than $8 a person. As in most episodes, Lieberman invites a group of friends over to enjoy the food at the end of the show. As with Chiarello, the guests praise Lieberman and rave about the meal (Episode DA0203).

Like Chiarello and Lieberman, Fieri, the Gen-X inspired host of *Guy's Big Bite* who has spiky blond hair, tattoos, a goatee, and dresses in bowling shirts and skate-boarder shorts, occasionally cooks for his "posse" and has male friends join him in the kitchen. Although the "posse" isn't present on all episodes, the party is ready to start at any moment. The kitchen looks like a recreation room with a full bar, a stage with drums and guitars, a pinball machine, a bumper pool table, a giant television screen, and a bright orange racecar-themed fridge. While turning on the stove, Fieri says things like, "let's get this party started!" While shuffling pots around, Fieri is trying to "keep the party going," and as he plates the food, Fieri is "putting the party together" (Episode GI0306).

Related to *cooking as leisurely entertainment*, another interesting theme surfaced at a few points—cooking as male bonding activity. Unlike the feminine cook who ties bonding in the kitchen to generational legacy and her role as mother, wife, daughter

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and friend, this narrative about male camaraderie was supported by references to manual work and vocational fraternity. For example, in the "Cooking Club for Men" episode, a group of guys gets together in Chiarello's kitchen to cook a meal (Episode MOIB08). Chiarello raises his glass at the end of the episode and says, "Here's to men that cook!" He also assures the men while making dinner, "what guys have to remember is that cooking is more like construction than an art." In another show, Flay goes to the Seattle Pike's Place fish market to interview a group of "buddies" who work the market. Flay interviews one young man who describes how the "guys" throw BBQ parties after work as a way to keep the camaraderie up and talk about things besides fish (Episode BQ0304). Similarly, in *Emeril Live's* "Firehouse Thanksgiving" episode, a group of New York firefighters are shown bonding like a family by cooking and eating together (Episode EM0310). Emeril talks about the importance of bonding as a team while working together—both in the kitchen and while battling a fire. As the men prepare a turkey for Emeril, they talk about being comrades in the kitchen and refer to their peers as a "family."

When cooking is constructed as leisurely entertainment, food television adopts a "masculine domesticity" that helps redefine the private kitchen in ways that give men a place at the stove. However, this place remains only partially and temporarily tied to the rewards and responsibilities of family life. Marsh (1988), who coined the term, refers to masculine domesticity as a redefinition of manliness to include some traditional female activities (p. 180). She argues that advice literature, architectural design, recreational patterns and personal papers from the turn of the twentieth century suggest men started to draw themselves into the domestic circle by assuming more day-to-day responsibilities of child-rearing and household maintenance while still rejecting the feminist notion that these tasks should be shared equally (Marsh, 1988, p. 166). Gelber (2000) applies Marsh's term to the 1950s "do-it-yourself "trend of home maintenance yet calls it "domestic masculinity" to recognize the creation of a male sphere inside the house. He writes, "unlike masculine domesticity, which had men doing jobs that had once belonged to women, domestic masculinity was practiced in areas that had been the purview of professional (male) craftsmen, and therefore retained the aura of preindustrial vocational masculinity" (p. 73). Household maintenance, and related trappings like heavy tools and workshops, eventually became defined as a masculine domain and shifted how suburban masculinity was idealized within the United States (Gelber, 2000, p. 87). Similarly, with food television, the vocational roots of professional chefs allow male hosts to embrace the private kitchen as an important site of work. However, themes such as *cooking as leisurely entertainment* limit the masculinities and femininities performed in the kitchen by defining work done by men for families as temporary, voluntary, and peripheral to the rewards and responsibilities of their roles as fathers, sons, and husbands.

Cooking As Journey

In touring series, both male and female hosts go "on the road" to showcase unusual dishes and sights in restaurants, bakeries, and backyards around the globe. Here, the

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domestic kitchen disappears, as the focus is on eating, traveling, buying and selling food rather than on meal planning and preparation techniques.

For some shows featuring a female host, the purpose of the journey is to provide trip-planning services for viewers, often with a focus on being economical. Budgeting has long been associated with the "thrifty homemaker," and Hollows (2002) points out how writers of the *Playboy* column refused to be concerned with economy in order to distinguish between the single, self-focused, bachelor, and the family-centered housewife. Hollows (2002) contrasted *Playboy's* rejection of budgetary constraints with Helen Brown's (1962) *Sex and the Single Girl*, written during the same time period, in which Brown gives single girls tips on how to be more economical while cooking and wrote "being smart about money is sexy" (Brown, p. 105 quoted in Hollows, p. 149).

This feminine "thrifty homemaker" theme is present in shows like Rachael Ray's *$40 a Day* and *Rachael's Tasty Travels*. The premise of *$40 a Day* is to see if Ray can complete her quest to find good meals in different cities while staying under the "paltry" $40 per diem budget. A receipt appears on the screen at the end of show so viewers can tally up what Ray was able to buy for her money. In *Tasty Travels*, Ray doesn't have to stick to a budget but continually talks about the inexpensive nature of the food. "What a bargain!" she often exclaims. During the introduction to the "Austin" episode, Ray says, "For years, I've been traveling the globe, discovering incredible deals and finding the best food—all with an eye for value. Now, I'm returning to my favorite places to bring you more of my money-saving tips!" (Episode RY0108). Ray works for viewers so they can "turn any next vacation into a delicious, affordable adventure!" (Episode RY0202).

However, not all female-hosted programs focus on being "thrifty." In *Rachael's Vacation* and *Weekend Getaways*, Ray and Laurentiis also perform trip-planning work for viewers yet do so without focusing on a budget. In *Weekend Getaways*, Laurentiis describes extravagant activities, restaurants, and lodging options for different locales; for example, in the "Las Vegas" episode, she takes a helicopter ride around the city and tries racecar driving (Episode WG0206). In media interviews, Giada describes her role on *Weekend Getaways*: "I want to be sort of a travel guide. What to see, how to get there, what activities you can do, where to eat, it's a combination of all those things" (Huff, 2007).

Rather than perform trip-planning or budgeting services for viewers, male hosts of touring series are portrayed as down-to-earth, "everyman" food critics who want to satisfy their "manly appetites" with "real" American food or as "cultural anthropologists" who can unlock the secrets of exotic locales by eating local cuisine, like the *Playboy* adventurer. Fieri of *Diners, Drive-ins and Dives eats*, chats with customers and employees, and gets dirty in the kitchens of greasy spoons across the United States. Like other hosts of these "manly appetite" segments, Fieri relies upon American themes that valorize small, family-owned businesses and self-made mom- and-pop type restaurateurs who are "living the dream." For example, on the "24/7" diner episode, Fieri chats with owner George Liakopoulos, who fulfilled his life-long dream of following his immigrant father into the restaurant business by purchasing the White Palace Grill in Chicago from the original owner (who established the diner in 1939). Fieri tells viewers that if they need to "chow down" in the middle of the night,

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they would be lucky to find a "real deal" diner like the White Palace that serves big plates of "down-home," "scratch-made" food (Episode DV0210). Similarly, in *Road Tasted*, the Deen brothers are perpetually positive and hungry food connoisseurs who "hit the road" to sample edible fare from local specialty shops and family-owned craft manufacturers.

The travelogue goes global in shows hosted by maverick "cultural anthropologists," like Lamprey of *Have Fork Will Travel* and Bourdain of *A Cook's Tour*, who enjoy extreme cuisine in exotic settings.[7] In the "Cobra Heart: Food That Makes You Manly" episode, Bourdain is "willing to try anything, risk everything" as he travels to Vietnam in search of "the extremes of experience." Bourdain seeks out unusual fare, including a fetal duck egg, which is supposed to enhance male virility, and a beating cobra heart, which is supposed to strengthen the diner. At the end of the episode, Bourdain tells viewers that he is not disappointed in his Asian adventure as it was "even more scary" than he anticipated, yet strangely enough, he was "feeling stronger" (Episode TB1A03). Although the domestic kitchen is not present in these touring series, the journey of cooking is still presented as gendered work. "Thrifty homemakers" journey in order to perform budgeting or planning services to others while adventurers and those with "manly appetites" journey to satisfy themselves or indulge in fleeting, exotic escapades.

Cooking As Competitive Contest

In an article written by Janet Keeler (2006), Food Network's vice president of network programming Bob Tuschman is quoted as saying, "Viewers have different needs at different times of day. We don't do any less cooking shows than we ever did, but we just put them on at different times of day. At night, people want information in a gentler way."

Ironically, to portray cooking information in a "gentler way," shows like *Iron Chef*, *Iron Chef America*, *ThrowDown with Bobby Flay*, *Dinner Impossible*, *Glutton for Punishment* use a competitive sports format. In these programs the hosts are athletes competing against other chefs, racing against the clock and performing for judges. For example, in *ThrowDown* Flay finds a master chef or local expert and shows up unannounced to "challenge the best of the best" to a cook-off. In the Phillyb "cheesesteak" episode, the screen splits to position heads shots of challenger Tony Luke and host Flay as boxers going head to head (Episode BT0111). Flay jogs into the area where they are going to compete and cooks in front of a crowd of spectators who are chanting his name. At the end of the cooking session, a panel of judges crowns Luke the "Throw Down Philly Cheesesteak" winner.

Although there aren't two contenders competing directly, *Dinner*: *Impossible* also has a competitive field, as host Robert Irvine receives his "mission assignment" at the beginning of each episode and struggles to create a dinner party for a large group of people with a team of local assistants and limited resources in 6 hours or less. In the "Ice Hotel Impossible" episode, the introduction plays off the show "Knight Rider," as Irvine receives challenge details on a computer screen mounted in a "talking" car. Here, he learns he must create a "blazing feast" in arctic conditions for 75 people and immediately speeds off to the Ice Hotel in Quebec, Canada.

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These competitive contests place cooking firmly in the public sphere and promote a version of masculinity tied to hierarchy, success, power, speed, and stamina. As Birrell and McDonald (2000) write, "sport is best understood as a male preserve, a major site for the creation of male bonding, privilege and hegemonic masculinity" (p. 5). By supporting hegemonic masculinity rather than a domestic masculinity, competitive contests counter constructions of cooking as nurturing, democratic, and family-centered labor.

Yet, it is important to recognize that both male and female chefs participate in competitive contests as hosts, contenders, supporting staff, and judges. Many *Food Network Challenges* allow both male and female professional chefs to compete in bake-offs and other contests for prize money in front of a live studio audience. In the "Ice Hotel" episode, Irvine barks orders to a staff of men and women from a local culinary school who help him shop, prepare, and serve the food. Female chef Cat Cora is one of three main "Iron Chefs" who battles in *Iron Chef America's* "kitchen stadium" and often prevails over her male challengers; for example, Cora beat experienced restaurateur Joey Campanero in the "Venison" face-off, bringing her battle record to 7–3 (Episode IA0313). Overall, competitive contests function to normalize the "manly" nature of professional cooking and to remove cooking from the cooperative ethos of family life; however, the sports orientation of these programs does not completely work against a nongendered division of labor. In small ways the network does resist the classification of separate spheres when female hosts become active participants in the public sport of cooking and the performance of hegemonic masculinity. According to Adams and Coltrane (2005), "There is a direct correspondence between sharing power in more public domains and sharing the care and drudgery of domestic life in the family realm" (p. 243).

Conclusion

Spigel (2004) points to a strategy used by modern art museums to negotiate their affiliation with television in the postwar culture. She writes "here, as elsewhere, the gender of the highbrow was male, even while his tastes seemed to be in the traditionally feminine realm of domesticity" (Spigel, 2004, p. 361). The Food Network is a similar cultural institution that uses gendered notions of taste and the highbrow sensibilities of the culinary arts to negotiate the tension between masculinity and feminine domesticity within the televised home kitchen.

As the themes above illustrate, the Food Network does construct food preparation as gendered work, and cooking is negotiated in ways that protect traditional understandings of masculinity and femininity. For women, "kitchen culture" is still strongly tied to the domestic family, generational legacy, and care for others. For the masculine cook, the "cooking mystique" has shifted, in that cooking discourse no longer warns men that the kitchen is not their lair; yet, to protect the concept of masculinity, men enter the kitchen as scientists, chefs, athletes, and entertainers.

The most striking way in which the binary between the genders is maintained is through the absence of discussion by male hosts of cooking as everyday, family-centered labor. Many female hosts of "instructional" cooking shows, such as Rachael

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Ray in *30 minute meals*, offer viewers "quick" solutions to meal preparation and situate cooking firmly in the private, domestic kitchen. Conversely, many male hosts of instructional programs, such as Batali or Lagasse, differentiate themselves from the feminine cook by constructing cooking as a professional, public challenge rather than as a domestic chore. The rewards of cooking are blurred with pleasure, recognition, and leisure for these male chefs and their constructed viewers. By tying men's work in the kitchen to rewards outside of the family, the Food Network furthers a "domestic masculinity" that allows men to be at the stove without fully engaging in "women's work" and prevents men from acknowledging the benefits of "achieving manhood" through nurturing, family-centered labor.

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge moments of convergence or slippage between these gendered distinctions—for example, when Michael Chiarello addresses the masculine, domestic cook and suggests men set up "cooking clubs" on *Easy Entertaining* or when Cat Cora battles on *Iron Chef*. Most importantly, these shows do assume that viewers of both genders are domestic cooks who are going to download recipes and purchase products for use in the kitchen at home, rather than within a professional kitchen or for competition. Food television should pursue these moments of convergence in the kitchen and expand the gendered rewards of cooking. For example, Tyler Florence could address the challenge of cranking out a set of "ultimate" weeknight dinners at home for his wife and kids while keeping it efficient, budget-friendly, and interesting. Similarly, spunky Guy Fieri could demonstrate the rewards of teaching his two sons how to prepare family recipes (that don't involve grilling meat). Ellie Krieger, who is a dietician and adjunct professor, could dissect the science behind food preparation. Paula Deen could have a show that allows viewers to go behind the scenes to see how she manages her professional kitchen and staff.

By situating the contemporary "instructional" genre of television within the larger cultural history of the kitchen, this research helps further our understanding of media's role in constructing and sustaining the social values and roles that order society. As more male cooks join female cooks in the kitchen at home and on television, it is important to continue examining how kitchen culture treats "doing dinner" as gendered work. Policy makers have begun to identify those conflicting demands of economy and family as a "problem" for society. The divide between the public and private sphere is no longer feasible or desirable for most men and women. Identifying individual and institutional-level solutions is in the best interest of both genders, and to do this, it is necessary to continue to examining the masculinities and femininities constructed around specific household tasks.

Notes

1. I eliminated late night programming from my analysis (11 pm to 4:30 am CST) in order to focus on daytime, primetime, and weekend programming when viewership is high and the network broadcasts new shows. January 2008 was the most-watched month in network history with viewing levels among adults aged 25–54 at 454,000 during primetime, up 21 percent versus 2007, and at 308,000 during total day programming, up 2007 levels by 11 percent (Food Network Press Release).
2. From FoodNetwork.com on January 2, 2008.

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3. Al Roker's *Roker on the Road* and Marlie Hall/Eric McLendon's *Recipe for Success* are the only shows with an African American host that ran during the studied 6:30 am to 11 pm time period during January 2008. Other shows featuring a Black host, including Warren Brown's *Sugar Rush*, Sandra Pinckey's *Food Finds*, and Bobby River's *Top 5*, were sporadically aired during January 2008 in the 4:00 am CST timeslot and so were outside the parameters set for this study. The two other African American hosts, Pat and Gina Neely, have a new show, titled *Down Home with the Neelys*, which is set to premier Saturday, February 2, 2008 at 11:00 am CST. All of the Japanese hosts are associated with the *Iron Chef* and *Iron Chef America* series, which is included in my analysis. With new programs featuring African American hosts premiering in 2008 portrayals of race within food television are promising areas for future research.
4. The network runs commercials promoting these two blocks to viewers and mentions them in media kit materials to potential advertisers. In the quarter one schedule for 2008, the "in the kitchen" block appears to run from 10:30 am to 8:00 pm EST weekdays and from 7:30 am to 2 pm EST weekends. The "way more than cooking" block appears to run from 8:00 pm to 11 pm weeknights and from 2 pm to 11 pm weekends. Weekday mornings from 9:30 am to 10:30 am mixes both types of programming.
5. However, women participating in "competitive contests," which are discussed below, are an exception to this statement.
6. The Food Network cancelled *Emeril Live* in November of 2007 after a 10-year run. Reruns of the show remain prominent on the programming schedule. Unlike most of the other "in the kitchen" programs, these shows run during the evening; During January of 2008, *Emeril Live* is on at 7:00 pm EST and *Paula's Party* is on at 10:00 pm EST.
7. Some touring series used the travelogue format to highlight a business, entrepreneur, or unique food manufacturing process and did not fit into either the "thrifty homemaker" or "manly appetite" theme. In shows like *Recipe for Success*, *The Secret Life of*, *Unwrapped*, *Behind the Bash*, *On the Road*, and *Inside Dish with Rachael Ray*, both male and female hosts become pop culture journalists who interview experts, owners and workers and illustrate how their stories are intertwined with American history, contemporary food trends, and culture.

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12

Japanese Mothers and *Obentōs*: The Lunch-Box as Ideological State Apparatus*

Anne Allison

Introduction

Japanese nursery school children, going off to school for the first time, carry with them a boxed lunch (*obentō*) prepared by their mothers at home. Customarily these *obentōs* are highly crafted elaborations of food: a multitude of miniature portions, artistically designed and precisely arranged, in a container that is sturdy and cute. Mothers tend to expend inordinate time and attention on these *obentōs* in efforts both to please their children and to affirm that they are good mothers. Children at nursery school are taught in turn that they must consume their entire meal according to school rituals.

Food in an *obentō* is an everyday practice of Japanese life. While its adoption at the nursery school level may seem only natural to Japanese and unremarkable to outsiders, I will argue in this article that the *obentō* is invested with a gendered state ideology. Overseen by the authorities of the nursery school, an institution which is linked to, if not directly monitored by, the state, the practice of the *obentō* situates the producer as a woman and mother, and the consumer as a child of a mother and a student of a school. Food in this context is neither casual nor arbitrary. Eaten quickly in its entirety by the student, the *obentō* must be fashioned by the mother so as to expedite this chore for the child. Both mother and child are being watched, judged, and constructed; and it is only through their joint effort that the goal can be accomplished.

I use Althusser's concept of the Ideological State Apparatus (1971) to frame my argument. I will briefly describe how food is coded as a cultural and aesthetic apparatus in Japan, and what authority the state holds over schools in Japanese society. Thus situating the parameters within which the *obentō* is regulated and structured in the nursery school setting, I will examine the practice both of making and eating *obentō* within the context of one nursery school in Tokyo. As an anthropologist and mother of a child who attended this school for fifteen months, my analysis is based on my observations, on discussions with other mothers, daily conversations and an interview with my son's teacher, examination of *obentō* magazines and cookbooks, participation in school rituals, outings, and Mothers'

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Association meetings, and the multifarious experiences of my son and myself as we faced the *obentō* process every day.

I conclude that *obentō* as a routine, task, and art form of nursery school culture are endowed with ideological and gendered meanings that the state indirectly manipulates. The manipulation is neither total nor totally coercive, however, and I argue that pleasure and creativity for both mother and child are also products of the *obentō*.

Cultural Ritual and State Ideology

As anthropologists have long understood, not only are the worlds we inhabit sym-bolically constructed, but also the constructions of our cultural symbols are endowed with, or have the potential for, power. How we see reality, in other words, is also how we live it. So the conventions by which we recognize our universe are also those by which each of us assumes our place and behavior within that universe. Culture is, in this sense, doubly constructive: constructing both the world for people and people for specific worlds.

The fact that culture is not necessarily innocent, and power not necessarily transparent, has been revealed by much theoretical work conducted both inside and outside the discipline of anthropology. The scholarship of the neo-Marxist Louis Althusser (1971), for example, has encouraged the conceptualization of power as a force which operates in ways that are subtle, disguised, and accepted as everyday social practice. Althusser differentiated between two major structures of power in modern capitalist societies. The first, he called (Repressive) State Apparatus (SA), which is power that the state wields and manages primarily through the threat of force. Here the state sanctions the usage of power and repression through such legitimized mechanisms as the law and police (1971: 143–5).

Contrasted with this is a second structure of power—Ideological State Apparatus(es) (ISA). These are institutions which have some overt function other than a political and/or administrative one: mass media, education, health and welfare, for example. More numerous, disparate, and functionally polymorphous than the SA, the ISA exert power not primarily through repression but through ideology. Designed and accepted as practices with another purpose—to educate (the school system), entertain (film industry), inform (news media), the ISA serve not only their stated objective but also an unstated one—that of indoctrinating people into seeing the world a certain way and of accepting certain identities as their own within that world (1971: 143–7).

While both structures of power operate simultaneously and complementarily, it is the ISA, according to Althusser, which in capitalist societies is the more influential of the two. Disguised and screened by another operation, the power of ideology in ISA can be both more far-reaching and insidious than the SA's power of coercion. Hidden in the movies we watch, the music we hear, the liquor we drink, the textbooks we read, it is overlooked because it is protected and its protection—or its alibi (Barthes 1957: 109–111)—allows the terms and relations of ideology to spill into and infiltrate our everyday lives.

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A world of commodities, gender inequalities, and power differentials is seen not therefore in these terms but as a naturalized environment, one that makes sense because it has become our experience to live it and accept it in precisely this way. This commonsense acceptance of a particular world is the work of ideology, and it works by concealing the coercive and repressive elements of our everyday routines but also by making these routines of everyday familiar, desirable, and simply our own. This is the critical element of Althusser's notion of ideological power: ideology is so potent because it becomes not only ours but us—the terms and machinery by which we structure ourselves and identify who we are.

Japanese Food as Cultural Myth

An author in one *obentō* magazine, the type of medium-sized publication that, filled with glossy pictures of *obentōs* and ideas and recipes for successfully recreating them, sells in the bookstores across Japan, declares, "the making of the *obentō* is the one most worrisome concern facing the mother of a child going off to school for the first time" (*Shufunotomo* 1980: inside cover). Another *obentō* journal, this one heftier and packaged in the encyclopedic series of the prolific women's publishing firm, *Shufunotomo*, articulates the same social fact: "first-time *obentōs* are a strain on both parent and child" ("*hajimete no obentō wa, oya mo ko mo kinchoshimasu*") (*Shufunotomo* 1981: 55).

An outside observer might ask: What is the real source of worry over *obentō*? Is it the food itself or the entrance of the young child into school for the first time? Yet, as one look at a typical child's *obentō*—a small box packaged with a five- or six-course miniaturized meal whose pieces and parts are artistically arranged, perfectly cut, and neatly arranged—would immediately reveal, no food is "just" food in Japan. What is not so immediately apparent, however, is why a small child with limited appetite and perhaps scant interest in food is the recipient of a meal as elaborate and as elaborately prepared as any made for an entire family or invited guests?

Certainly, in Japan much attention is focused on the *obentō*, investing it with a significance far beyond that of the merely pragmatic, functional one of sustaining a child with nutritional foodstuffs. Since this investment beyond the pragmatic is true of any food prepared in Japan, it is helpful to examine culinary codes for food preparation that operate generally in the society before focusing on children's *obentōs*.

As has been remarked often about Japanese food, the key element is appearance. Food must be organized, reorganized, arranged, rearranged, stylized, and restylized to appear in a design that is visually attractive. Presentation is critical: not to the extent that taste and nutrition are displaced, as has been sometimes attributed to Japanese food, but to the degree that how food looks is at least as important as how it tastes and how good and sustaining it is for one's body.

As Donald Richie has pointed out in his eloquent and informative book *A Taste of Japan* (1985), presentational style is the guiding principle by which food is prepared in Japan, and the style is conditioned by a number of codes. One code is for smallness, separation, and fragmentation. Nothing large is allowed, so portions are all cut to be bite-sized, served in small amounts on tiny individual dishes, and arranged on a table (or on a tray, or in an *obentō* box) in an array of small, separate containers.[1] There is

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no one big dinner plate with three large portions of vegetable, starch, and meat as in American cuisine. Consequently the eye is pulled not toward one totalizing center but away to a multiplicity of de-centered parts.[2]

Visually, food substances are presented according to a structural principle not only of segmentation but also of opposition. Foods are broken or cut to make contrasts of color, texture, and shape. Foods are meant to oppose one another and clash; pink against green, roundish foods against angular ones, smooth substances next to rough ones. This oppositional code operates not only within and between the foodstuffs themselves, but also between the attributes of the food and those of the containers in or on which they are placed: a circular mound in a square dish, a bland-colored food set against a bright plate, a translucent sweet in a heavily textured bowl (Richie 1985: 40–41).

The container is as important as what is contained in Japanese cuisine, but it is really the containment that is stressed, that is, how food has been (re)constructed and (re)arranged from nature to appear, in both beauty and freshness, perfectly natural. This stylizing of nature is a third code by which presentation is directed; the injunction is not only to retain, as much as possible, the innate naturalness of ingredients—shopping daily so food is fresh and leaving much of it either raw or only minimally cooked—but also to recreate in prepared food the promise and appearance of being "natural." As Richie writes, "the emphasis is on presentation of the natural rather than the natural itself. It is not what nature has wrought that excites admiration but what man has wrought with what nature has wrought" (1985: 11).

This naturalization of food is rendered through two main devices. One is by constantly hinting at and appropriating the nature that comes from outside—decorating food with season reminders, such as a maple leaf in the fall or a flower in the spring, serving in-season fruits and vegetables, and using season-coordinated dishes such as glass-ware in the summer and heavy pottery in the winter. The other device, to some degree the inverse of the first, is to accentuate and perfect the preparation process to such an extent that the food appears not only to be natural, but more nearly perfect than nature without human intervention ever could be. This is nature made artificial. Thus, by naturalization, nature is not only taken in by Japanese cuisine, but taken over.

It is this ability both to appropriate "real" nature (the maple leaf on the tray) and to stamp the human reconstruction of that nature as "natural" that lends Japanese food its potential for cultural and ideological manipulation. It is what Barthes calls a second-order myth (1957: 114–17): a language that has a function people accept as only pragmatic—the sending of roses to lovers, the consumption of wine with one's dinner, the cleaning up a mother does for her child—which is taken over by some interest or agenda to serve a different end—florists who can sell roses, liquor companies that can market wine, conservative politicians who campaign for a gendered division of labor with women kept at home. The first order of language ("language-object"), thus emptied of its original meaning, is converted into an empty form by which it can assume a new, additional, second order of signification ("metalanguage" or "second-order semiological system"). As Barthes points out, however, the primary meaning is never lost. Rather, it remains and stands as an alibi, the cover under which the second, politicized meaning can hide. Roses sell better, for example, when lovers view them as a vehicle to express love rather than the means by which a company stays in business.

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At one level, food is just food in Japan—the medium by which humans sustain their nature and health. Yet under and through this code of pragmatics, Japanese cuisine carries other meanings that in Barthes' terms are mythological. One of these is national identity: food being appropriated as a sign of the culture. To be Japanese is to eat Japanese food, as so many Japanese confirm when they travel to other countries and cite the greatest problem they encounter to be the absence of "real" Japanese food. Stated the other way around, rice is so symbolically central to Japanese culture (meals and *obentōs* often being assembled with rice as the core and all other dishes, multifarious as they may be, as mere compliments or side dishes) that Japanese say they can never feel full until they have consumed their rice at a particular meal or at least once during the day.[3]

Embedded within this insistence on eating Japanese food, thereby reconfirming one as a member of the culture, are the principles by which Japanese food is customarily prepared: perfection, labor, small distinguishable parts, opposing segments, beauty, and the stamp of nature. Overarching all these more detailed codings are two that guide the making and ideological appropriation of the nursery school *obentō* most directly: 1) there is an order to the food: a right way to do things, with everything in its place and each place coordinated with every other, and 2) the one who prepares the food takes on the responsibility of producing food to the standards of perfection and exactness that Japanese cuisine demands. Food may not be casual, in other words, nor the producer casual in her production. In these two rules is a message both about social order and the role gender plays in sustaining and nourishing that order.

School, State, and Subjectivity

In addition to language and second-order meanings I suggest that the rituals and routines surrounding *obentōs* in Japanese nursery schools present, as it were, a third order, manipulation. This order is a use of a currency already established—one that has already appropriated a language of utility (food feeds hunger) to express and implant cultural behaviors. State-guided schools borrow this coded apparatus: using the natural convenience and cover of food not only to code a cultural order, but also to socialize children and mothers into the gendered roles and subjectivities they are expected to assume in a political order desired and directed by the state.

In modern capitalist societies such as Japan, it is the school, according to Althusser, which assumes the primary role of ideological state apparatus. A greater segment of the population spends longer hours and more years here than in previous historical periods. Also education has now taken over from other institutions, such as religion, the pedagogical function of being the major shaper and inculcator of knowledge for the society. Concurrently, as Althusser has pointed out for capitalist modernism (1971: 152, 156), there is the gradual replacement of repression by ideology as the prime mechanism for behavior enforcement. Influenced less by the threat of force and more by the devices that present and inform us of the world we live in and the subjectivities that world demands, knowledge and ideology become fused, and education emerges as the apparatus for pedagogical and ideological indoctrination.

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In practice, as school teaches children how and what to think, it also shapes them for the roles and positions they will later assume as adult members of the society. How the social order is organized through vectors of gender, power, labor, and/or class, in other words, is not only as important a lesson as the basics of reading and writing, but is transmitted through and embedded in those classroom lessons. Knowledge thus is not only socially constructed, but also differentially acquired according to who one is or will be in the political society one will enter in later years. What precisely society requires in the way of workers, citizens, and parents will be the condition determining or influencing instruction in the schools.

This latter equation, of course, depends on two factors: 1) the convergence or divergence of different interests in what is desired as subjectivities, and 2) the power any particular interest, including that of the state, has in exerting its desires for subjects on or through the system of education. In the case of Japan, the state wields enormous control over the systematization of education. Through its Ministry of Education (Monbusho), one of the most powerful and influential ministries in the government, education is centralized and managed by a state bureaucracy that regulates almost every aspect of the educational process. On any given day, for example, what is taught in every public school follows the same curriculum, adheres to the same structure, and is informed by textbooks from the prescribed list. Teachers are nationally screened, school boards uniformly appointed (rather than elected), and students institutionally exhorted to obey teachers given their legal authority, for example, to write secret reports (*naishinsho*) that may obstruct a student's entrance into high school.[4]

The role of the state in Japanese education is not limited, however, to such extensive but codified authorities granted to the Ministry of Education. Even more powerful is the principle of the "*gakureki shakkai*" (lit., academic pedigree society), by which careers of adults are determined by the schools they attend as youth. A reflection and construction of the new economic order of post-war Japan,[5] school attendance has become the single most important determinant of who will achieve the most desirable positions in industry, government, and the professions. School attendance itself is based on a single criterion: a system of entrance exams which determines entrance selection, and it is to this end—preparation for exams—that school, even at the nursery-school level, is increasingly oriented. Learning to follow directions, do as one is told, and "*ganbaru*" (Asanuma 1987) are social imperatives, sanctioned by the state, and taught in the schools.

Nursery School and Ideological Appropriation of the *obentō*

The nursery school stands outside the structure of compulsory education in Japan. Most nursery schools are private; and, though not compelled by the state, a greater proportion of the three- to six-year-old population of Japan attends pre-school than in any other industrialized nation (Tobin 1989; Hendry 1986; Boocock 1989).

Differentiated from the *hoikuen*, another pre-school institution with longer hours which is more like daycare than school,[6] the *yochien* (nursery school) is widely perceived as instructional, not necessarily in a formal curriculum but more in

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indoctrination to attitudes and structure of Japanese schooling. Children learn less about reading and writing than they do about how to become a Japanese student, and both parts of this formula—Japanese and student—are equally stressed. As Rohlen has written, "social order is generated" in the nursery school, first and foremost, by a system of routines (1989: 10, 21). Educational routines and rituals are therefore of heightened importance in *yochien*, for whereas these routines and rituals may be the format through which subjects are taught in higher grades, they are both form and subject in the *yochien*.

While the state (through its agency, the Ministry of Education) has no direct mandate over nursery-school attendance, its influence is nevertheless significant. First, authority over how the *yochien* is run is in the hands of the Ministry of Education. Second, most parents and teachers see the *yochien* as the first step to the system of compulsory education that starts in the first grade and is closely controlled by Monbusho. The principal of the *yochien* my son attended, for example, stated that he saw his main duty to be preparing children to enter more easily the rigors of public education soon to come. Third, the rules and patterns of "group living" (*shudanseikatsu*), a Japanese social ideal that is reiterated nationwide by political leaders, corporate management, and marriage counselors, is first introduced to the child in nursery school.[7]

The entry into nursery school marks a transition both away from home and into the "real world," which is generally judged to be difficult, even traumatic, for the Japanese child (Peak 1989). The *obentō* is intended to ease a child's discomfiture and to allow a child's mother to manufacture something of herself and the home to accompany the child as s/he moves into the potentially threatening outside world. Japanese use the cultural categories of *soto* and *uchi*; *soto* connotes the outside, which in being distanced and other, is dirty and hostile; and *uchi* identifies as clean and comfortable what is inside and familiar. The school falls initially and, to some degree, perpetually, into a category of *soto*. What is ultimately the definition and location of *uchi*, by contrast, is the home, where family and mother reside.[8] By producing something from the home, a mother both girds and goads her child to face what is inevitable in the world that lies beyond. This is the mother's role and her gift; by giving of herself and the home (which she both symbolically represents and in reality manages[9]), the *soto* of the school is, if not transformed into the *uchi* of the home, made more bearable by this sign of domestic and maternal hearth a child can bring to it.

The *obentō* is filled with the meaning of mother and home in a number of ways. The first is by sheer labor. Women spend what seems to be an inordinate amount of time on the production of this one item. As an experienced *obentō* maker, I can attest to the intense attention and energy devoted to this one chore. On the average, mothers spend 20–45 minutes every morning cooking, preparing, and assembling the contents of one *obentō* for one nursery school-aged child. In addition, the previous day they have planned, shopped, and often organized a supper meal with left-overs in mind for the next day's *obentō*. Frequently women[10] discuss *obentō* ideas with other mothers, scan *obentō* cook-books or magazines for recipes, buy or make objects with which to decorate or contain (part of) the *obentō*, and perhaps make small food portions to freeze and retrieve for future *obentōs*.[11]

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Of course, effort alone does not necessarily produce a successful *obentō*. Casualness was never indulged, I observed, and even mothers with children who would eat anything prepared *obentōs* as elaborate as anyone else's. Such labor is intended for the child but also the mother: it is a sign of a woman's commitment as a mother and her inspiring her child to being similarly committed as a student. The *obentō* is thus a representation of what the mother is and what the child should become. A model for school is added to what is gift and reminder from home.

This equation is spelled out more precisely in a nursery school rule—all of the *obentō* must be eaten. Though on the face of it this is petty and mundane, the injunction is taken very seriously by nursery school teachers and is one not easily realized by very small children. The logic is that it is time for the child to meet certain expectations. One of the main agendas of the nursery school, after all, is to introduce and indoctrinate children into the patterns and rigors of Japanese education (Rohlen 1989; Sano 1989; Lewis 1989). And Japanese education, by all accounts, is not about fun (Duke 1986).

Learning is hard work with few choices or pleasures. Even *obentōs* from home stop once the child enters first grade.[12] The meals there are institutional: largely bland, unappealing, and prepared with only nutrition in mind. To ease a youngster into these upcoming (educational, social, disciplinary, culinary) routines, *yochien obentōs* are designed to be pleasing and personal. The *obentō* is also designed, however, as a test for the child. And the double meaning is not unintentional. A structure already filled with a signification of mother and home is then emptied to provide a new form: one now also written with the ideological demands of being a member of Japanese culture as well as a viable and successful Japanese in the realms of school and later work.

The exhortation to consume one's entire *obentō*[13] is articulated and enforced by the nursery school teacher. Making high drama out of eating by, for example, singing a song; collectively thanking Buddha (in the case of Buddhist nursery schools), one's mother for making the *obentō*, and one's father for providing the means to make the *obentō*; having two assigned class helpers pour the tea, the class eats together until everyone has finished. The teacher examines the children's *obentōs*, making sure the food is all consumed, and encouraging, sometimes scolding, children who are taking too long. Slow eaters do not fare well in this ritual, because they hold up the other students, who as a peer group also monitor a child's eating. My son often complained about a child whose slowness over food meant that the others were kept inside (rather than being allowed to play on the playground) for much of the lunch period.

Ultimately and officially, it is the teacher, however, whose role and authority it is to watch over food consumption and to judge the person consuming food. Her surveillance covers both the student and the mother, who in the matter of the *obentō* must work together. The child's job is to eat the food and the mother's to prepare it. Hence, the responsibility and execution of one's task is not only shared but conditioned by the other. My son's teacher would talk with me daily about the progress he was making finishing his *obentōs*. Although the overt subject of discussion was my child, most of what was said was directed to me: what I could do in order to get David to consume his lunch more easily.

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The intensity of these talks struck me at the time as curious. We had just settled in Japan and David, a highly verbal child, was attending a foreign school in a foreign language he had not yet mastered; he was the only non-Japanese child in the school. Many of his behaviors during this time were disruptive: for example, he went up and down the line of children during morning exercises hitting each child on the head. Hamadasensei (the teacher), however, chose to discuss the *obentōs*. I thought surely David's survival in and adjustment to this environment depended much more on other factors, such as learning Japanese. Yet it was the *obentō* that was discussed with such recall of detail ("David ate all his peas today, but not a single carrot until I asked him to do so three times") and seriousness that I assumed her attention was being misplaced. The manifest reference was to boxed lunches, but was not the latent reference to something else?[14]

Of course, there was another message for me and my child. It was an injunction to follow directions, obey rules, and accept the authority of the school system. All of the latter were embedded in and inculcated through certain rituals: the nursery school, as any school (except such nonconventional ones as Waldorf and Montessori) and practically any social or institutional practice in Japan, was so heavily ritualized and ritualistic that the very form of ritual took on a meaning and value in and of itself (Rohlen 1989: 21, 27–28). Both the school day and the school year of the nursery school were organized by these rituals. The day, apart from two free periods, for example, was broken by discrete routines—morning exercises, arts and crafts, gym instruction, singing—most of which were named and scheduled. The school year was also segmented into and marked by three annual events—sports day (*undokai*) in the fall, winter assembly (*seikatsu happyokai*) in December, and dance festival (*bon odori*) in the summer. Energy was galvanized by these rituals, which demanded a degree of order as well as a discipline and self-control that non-Japanese would find remarkable.

Significantly, David's teacher marked his successful integration into the school system by his mastery not of the language or other cultural skills, but of the school's daily routines—walking in line, brushing his teeth after eating, arriving at school early, eagerly participating in greeting and departure ceremonies, and completing all of his *obentō* on time. Not only had he adjusted to the school structure, but he had also become assimilated to the other children. Or, restated, what once had been externally enforced now became ideologically desirable; the everyday practices had moved from being alien (*soto*) to being familiar (*uchi*) to him, that is, from being someone else's to being his own. My American child had to become, in some sense, Japanese, and where his teacher recognized this Japaneseness was in the daily routines such as finishing his *obentō*. The lesson learned early, which David learned as well, is that not adhering to routines such as completing one's *obentō* on time results not only in admonishment from the teacher, but in rejection from the other students.

The nursery-school system differentiates between the child who does and the child who does not manage the multifarious and constant rituals of nursery school. And for those who do not manage, there is a penalty, which the child learns to either avoid or wish to avoid. Seeking the acceptance of his peers, the student develops the aptitude, willingness, and in the case of my son—whose outspokenness and individuality were the characteristics most noted in this culture—even the desire to conform to the

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highly ordered and structured practices of nursery-school life. As Althusser (1971) wrote about ideology: the mechanism works when and because ideas about the world and particular roles in that world that serve other (social, political, economic, state) agendas become familiar and one's own.

Rohlen makes a similar point: that what is taught and learned in nursery school is social order. Called *shudanseikatsu* or group life, it means organization into a group where a person's subjectivity is determined by group membership and not "the assumption of choice and rational self-interest" (1989: 30). A child learns in nursery school to be with others, think like others, and act in tandem with others. This lesson is taught primarily through the precision and constancy of basic routines: "Order is shaped gradually by repeated practice of selected daily tasks … that socialize the children to high degrees of neatness and uniformity" (p. 21). Yet a feeling of coerciveness is rarely experienced by the child when three principles of nursery-school instruction are in place: (1) school routines are made "desirable and pleasant" (p. 30), (2) the teacher disguises her authority by trying to make the group the voice and unity of authority, and (3) the regimentation of the school is administered by an attitude of "intimacy" on the part of the teachers and administrators (p. 30). In short, when the desire and routines of the school are made into the desires and routines of the child, they are made acceptable.

Mothering as Gendered Ideological State Apparatus

The rituals surrounding the *obentō*'s consumption in the school situate what ideological meanings the *obentō* transmits to the child. The process of production within the home, by contrast, organizes its somewhat different ideological package for the mother. While the two sets of meanings are intertwined, the mother is faced with different expectations in the preparation of the *obentō* than the child is in its consumption. At a pragmatic level the child must simply eat the lunch box, whereas the mother's job is far more complicated. The onus for her is getting the child to consume what she has made, and the general attitude is that this is far more the mother's responsibility (at this nursery school, transitional stage) than the child's. And this is no simple or easy task.

Much of what is written, advised, and discussed about the *obentō* has this aim explicitly in mind: that is making food in such a way as to facilitate the child's duty to eat it. One magazine advises:

> The first day of taking *obentō* is a worrisome thing for mother and *boku* (child[15]) too. Put in easy-to-eat foods that your child likes and is already used to and prepare this food in small portions. (*Shufunotomo* 1980: 28)

Filled with pages of recipes, hints, pictures, and ideas, the magazine codes each page with "helpful" headings:

- First off, easy-to-eat is step one.
- Next is being able to consume the *obentō* without leaving anything behind.
- Make it in such a way for the child to become proficient in the use of chopsticks.

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- Decorate and fill it with cute dreams (*kawairashi yume*).
- For older classes (*nencho*), make *obentō* filled with variety.
- Once he's become used to it, balance foods your child likes with those he dislikes.
- For kids who hate vegetables …
- For kids who hate fish …
- For kids who hate meat … (pp. 28–53)

Laced throughout cookbooks and other magazines devoted to *obentō*, the *obentō* guidelines issued by the school and sent home in the school flier every two weeks, and the words of Japanese mothers and teachers discussing *obentō*, are a number of principles: 1) food should be made easy to eat: portions cut or made small and manipulated with fingers or chopsticks, (child-size) spoons and forks, skewers, toothpicks, muffin tins, containers, 2) portions should be kept small so the *obentō* can be consumed quickly and without any left-overs, 3) food that a child does not yet like should be eventually added so as to remove fussiness (*sukikirai*) in food habits, 4) make the *obentō* pretty, cute, and visually changeable by presenting the food attractively and by adding non-food objects such as silver paper, foil, toothpick flags, paper napkins, cute handkerchiefs, and variously shaped containers for soy sauce and ketchup, and 5) design *obentō*-related items as much as possible by the mother's own hands including the *obentō* bag (*obentōfukuro*) in which the *obentō* is carried.

The strictures propounded by publications seem to be endless. In practice I found that visual appearance and appeal were stressed by the mothers. By contrast, the directive to use *obentō* as a training process—adding new foods and getting older children to use chopsticks and learn to tie the *furoshiki* [16]—was emphasized by those judging the *obentō* at the school. Where these two sets of concerns met was, of course, in the child's success or failure completing the *obentō*. Ultimately this outcome and the mother's role in it, was how the *obentō* was judged in my experience.

The aestheticization of the *obentō* is by far its most intriguing aspect for a cultural anthropologist. Aesthetic categories and codes that operate generally for Japanese cuisine are applied, though adjusted, to the nursery school format. Substances are many but petite, kept segmented and opposed, and manipulated intensively to achieve an appearance that often changes or disguises the food. As a mother insisted to me, the creation of a bear out of miniature hamburgers and rice, or a flower from an apple or peach, is meant to sustain a child's interest in the underlying food. Yet my child, at least, rarely noticed or appreciated the art I had so laboriously contrived. As for other children, I observed that even for those who ate with no obvious "fussiness," mothers' efforts to create food as style continued all year long.

Thus much of a woman's labor over *obentō* stems from some agenda other than that of getting the child to eat an entire lunch-box. The latter is certainly a consideration and it is the rationale as well as cover for women being scrutinized by the school's authority figure—the teacher. Yet two other factors are important. One is that the *obentō* is but one aspect of the far more expansive and continuous commitment a mother is expected to make for and to her child. "*Kyoiku mama*" (education mother)

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is the term given to a mother who executes her responsibility to oversee and manage the education of her children with excessive vigor. And yet this excess is not only demanded by the state even at the level of the nursery school; it is conventionally given by mothers. Mothers who manage the home and children, often in virtual absence of a husband/father, are considered the factor that may make or break a child as s/he advances towards that pivotal point of the entrance examinations.[17]

In this sense, just as the *obentō* is meant as a device to assist a child in the struggles of first adjusting to school, the mother's role is generally perceived as that of support, goad, and cushion for the child. She will perform endless tasks to assist in her child's study: sharpen pencils and make midnight snacks as the child studies, attend cram schools to verse herself in subjects her child is weak in, make inquiries as to what school is most appropriate for her child, and consult with her child's teachers. If the child succeeds, a mother is complimented; if the child fails, a mother is blamed.

Thus, at the nursery-school level, the mother starts her own preparation for this upcoming role. Yet the jobs and energies demanded of a nursery-school mother are, in themselves, surprisingly consuming. Just as the mother of an entering student is given a book listing all the pre-entry tasks she must complete—for example, making various bags and containers, affixing labels to all clothes in precisely the right place and of precisely the right size—she will be continually expected thereafter to attend Mothers' Association meetings, accompany children on field trips, wash her child's clothes and indoor shoes every week, add required items to her child's bag on a day's notice, and generally be available. Few mothers at the school my son attended could afford to work in even part-time or temporary jobs. Those women who did tended either to keep their outside work a secret or be reprimanded by a teacher for insufficient devotion to their child. Motherhood, in other words, is institutionalized through the child's school and such routines as making the *obentō* as a full-time, kept-at-home job.[18]

The second factor in a woman's devotion to over-elaborating her child's lunch box is that her experience doing this becomes a part of her and a statement, in some sense, of who she is. Marx writes that labor is the most "essential" aspect to our species-being and that the products we produce are the encapsulation of us and therefore our productivity (1970: 71–76). Likewise, women are what they are through the products they produce. An *obentō* therefore is not only a gift or test for a child, but a representation and product of the woman herself. Of course, the two ideologically converge, as has been stated already, but I would also suggest that there is a potential disjoining. I sensed that the women were laboring for themselves apart from the agenda the *obentō* was expected to fill at school. Or stated alternatively in the role that females in Japan are highly pressured and encouraged to assume as domestic manager, mother, and wife, there is, besides the endless and onerous responsibilities, also an opportunity for play. Significantly, women find play and creativity not outside their social roles but within them.

Saying this is not to deny the constraints and surveillance under which Japanese women labor at their *obentō*. Like their children at school, they are watched not only by the teacher but by each other, and they perfect what they create, at least partially, so as to be confirmed as a good and dutiful mother in the eyes of other mothers. The enthusiasm with which they absorb this task, then, is like my son's acceptance and

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internalization of the nursery-school routines; no longer enforced from outside, it is adopted as one's own.

The making of the *obentō* is, I would thus argue, a double-edged sword for women. By relishing its creation (for all the intense labor expended, only once or twice did I hear a mother voice any complaint about this task), a woman is ensconcing herself in the ritualization and subjectivity (subjection) of being a mother in Japan. She is alienated in the sense that others will dictate, inspect, and manage her work. On the reverse side, however, it is precisely through this work that the woman expresses, identifies, and constitutes herself. As Althusser pointed out, ideology can never be totally abolished (1971: 170); the elaborations that women work on "natural" food produce an *obentō* that is creative and, to some degree, a fulfilling and personal statement of themselves.

Minami, an informant, revealed how both restrictive and pleasurable the daily rituals of motherhood can be. The mother of two children—one aged three and one a nursery school student—Minami had been a professional opera singer before marrying at the relatively late age of 32. Now, her daily schedule was organized by routines associated with her child's nursery school: for example, making the *obentō*, taking her daughter to school and picking her up, attending Mothers' Association meetings, arranging daily play dates, and keeping the school uniform clean. While Minami wished to return to singing, if only on a part-time basis, she said that the demands of motherhood, particularly those imposed by her child's attendance at nursery school, frustrated this desire. Secretly snatching only minutes out of any day to practice, Minami missed singing and told me that being a mother in Japan means the exclusion of almost anything else.[19]

Despite this frustration, however, Minami did not behave like a frustrated woman. Rather she devoted to her mothering an energy, creativity, and intelligence I found to be standard in the Japanese mothers I knew. She planned special outings for her children at least two or three times a week, organized games that she knew they would like and would teach them cognitive skills, created her own stories and designed costumes for afternoon play, and shopped daily for the meals she prepared with her children's favorite foods in mind. Minami told me often that she wished she could sing more, but never once did she complain about her children, the chores of child raising, or being a mother. The attentiveness displayed otherwise in her mothering was exemplified most fully in Minami's *obentōs*. No two were ever alike, each had at least four or five parts, and she kept trying out new ideas for both new foods and new designs. She took pride as well as pleasure in her *obentō* handicraft; but while Minami's *obentō* creativity was impressive, it was not unusual.

Examples of such extraordinary *obentō* creations from an *obentō* magazine include: 1) ("donut *obentō*"): two donuts, two wieners cut to look like a worm, two cut pieces of apple, two small cheese rolls, one hard-boiled egg made to look like a rabbit with leaf ears and pickle eyes and set in an aluminum muffin tin, cute paper napkin added, 2) (wiener doll *obentō*): a bed of rice with two doll creations made out of wiener parts (each consists of eight pieces comprising hat, hair, head, arms, body, legs), a line of pink ginger, a line of green parsley, paper flag of France added, 3) (vegetable flower and tulip *obentō*): a bed of rice laced with chopped hard-boiled egg, three tulip flowers made out of cut wieners with spinach precisely arranged as

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stem and leaves, a fruit salad with two raisins, three cooked peaches, three pieces of cooked apple, 4) (sweetheart doll *obentō—abekku ningyo no obentō*): in a two-section *obentō* box there are four rice balls on one side, each with a different center, on the other side are two dolls made of quail's eggs for heads, eyes and mouth added, bodies of cucumber, arranged as if lying down with two raw carrots for the pillow, covers made of one flower—cut cooked carrot, two pieces of ham, pieces of cooked spinach, and with different colored plastic skewers holding the dolls together (*Shufunotomo* 1980: 27, 30).

The impulse to work and re-work nature in these *obentōs* is most obvious perhaps in the strategies used to transform, shape, and/or disguise foods. Every mother I knew came up with her own repertoire of such techniques, and every *obentō* magazine or cookbook I examined offered a special section on these devices. It is important to keep in mind that these are treated as only flourishes: embellishments added to parts of an *obentō* composed of many parts. The following is a list from one magazine: lemon pieces made into butterflies, hard-boiled eggs into *daruma* (popular Japanese legendary figure of a monk without his eyes), sausage cut into flowers, a hard-boiled egg decorated as a baby, an apple piece cut into a leaf, a radish flaked into a flower, a cucumber cut like a flower, a *mikan* (nectarine orange) piece arranged into a basket, a boat with a sail made from a cucumber, skewered sausage, radish shaped like a mushroom, a quail egg flaked into a cherry, twisted *mikan* piece, sausage cut to become a crab, a patterned cucumber, a ribboned carrot, a flowered tomato, cabbage leaf flower, a potato cut to be a worm, a carrot designed as a red shoe, an apple cut to simulate a pineapple (pp. 57–60).

Nature is not only transformed but also supplemented by store-bought or mother-made objects which are precisely arranged in the *obentō*. The former come from an entire industry and commodification of the *obentō* process: complete racks or sections in stores selling *obentō* boxes, additional small containers, *obentō* bags, cups, chop-sticks and utensil containers (all these with various cute characters or designs on the front), cloth and paper napkins, foil, aluminum tins, colored ribbon or string, plastic skewers, toothpicks with paper flags, and paper dividers. The latter are the objects mothers are encouraged and praised for making themselves: *obentō* bags, napkins, and handkerchiefs with appliqued designs or the child's name embroidered. These supplements to the food, the arrangement of the food, and the *obentō* box's dividing walls (removable and adjustable) furnish the order of the *obentō*. Everything appears crisp and neat with each part kept in its own place: two tiny hamburgers set firmly atop a bed of rice; vegetables in a separate compartment in the box; fruit arranged in a muffin tin.

How the specific forms of *obentō* artistry—for example, a wiener cut to look like a worm and set within a muffin tin—are encoded symbolically is a fascinating subject. Limited here by space, however, I will only offer initial suggestions. Arranging food into a scene recognizable by the child was an ideal mentioned by many mothers and cook-books. Why those of animals, human beings, and other food forms (making a pineapple out of an apple, for example) predominate may have no other rationale than being familiar to children and easily re-produced by mothers. Yet it is also true that this tendency to use a trope of realism—casting food into realistic figures—is most prevalent in the meals Japanese prepare for their children. Mothers I knew

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created animals and faces in supper meals and/or *obentōs* made for other outings, yet their impulse to do this seemed not only heightened in the *obentō* that were sent to school but also played down in food prepared for other age groups.

What is consistent in Japanese cooking generally, as stated earlier, are the dual principles of manipulation and order. Food is manipulated into some other form than it assumes either naturally or upon being cooked: lines are put into mashed potatoes, carrots are flaked, wieners are twisted and sliced. Also, food is ordered by some human rather than natural principle; everything must have neat boundaries and be placed precisely so those boundaries do not merge. These two structures are the ones most important in shaping the nursery school *obentō* as well, and the inclination to design realistic imagery is primarily a means by which these other culinary codes are learned by and made pleasurable for the child. The simulacrum of a pineapple recreated from an apple therefore is less about seeing the pineapple in an apple (a particular form) and more about reconstructing the apple into something else (the process of transformation).

The intense labor, management, commodification, and attentiveness that goes into the making of an *obentō* laces it, however, with many and various meanings. Overarching all is the potential to aestheticize a certain social order, a social order that is coded (in cultural and culinary terms) as Japanese. Not only is a mother making food more palatable to her nursery-school child, but she is creating food as a more aesthetic and pleasing social structure. The *obentō*'s message is that the world is constructed very precisely and that the role of any single Japanese in that world must be carried out with the same degree of precision. Production is demanding; and the producer must both keep within the borders of her/his role and work hard.

The message is also that it is women, not men, who are not only sustaining a child through food but carrying the ideological support of the culture that this food embeds. No Japanese man I spoke with had or desired the experience of making a nursery-school *obentō* even once, and few were more than peripherally engaged in their children's education. The male is assigned a position in the outside world, where he labors at a job for money and is expected to be primarily identified by and committed to his place of work.[20] Helping in the management of home and the raising of children has not become an obvious male concern or interest in Japan, even as more and more women enter what was previously the male domain of work. Females have remained at and as the center of home in Japan, and this message too is explicitly transmitted in both the production and consumption of entirely female-produced *obentō*.

The state accrues benefits from this arrangement. With children depending on the labor women devote to their mothering to such a degree, and women being pressured as well as pleasurized in such routine maternal productions as making the *obentō*—both effects encouraged and promoted by institutional features of the educational system, which is heavily state-run and at least ideologically guided at even the nursery-school level—a gendered division of labor is firmly set in place. Labor from males, socialized to be compliant and hardworking, is more extractable when they have wives to rely on for almost all domestic and familial management. And females become a source of cheap labor, as they are increasingly forced to enter the labor market to pay domestic costs (including those vast debts incurred in

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educating children) yet are increasingly constrained to low-paying part-time jobs because of the domestic duties they must also bear almost totally as mothers.

Hence, not only do females, as mothers, operate within the ideological state apparatus of Japan's school system, which starts semi-officially with the nursery school, they also operate as an ideological state apparatus unto themselves. Motherhood *is* state ideology, working through children at home and at school and through such mother-imprinted labor that a child carries from home to school as the *obentō*. Hence the post-World War II conception of Japanese education as egalitarian, democratic, and with no agenda of or for gender differentiation, does not in practice stand up. Concealed within such cultural practices as culinary style and child-focused mothering is a worldview in which the position and behavior an adult will assume has everything to do with the anatomy she/he was born with.

At the end, however, I am left with one question. If motherhood is not only watched and manipulated by the state but made by it into a conduit for ideological indoctrination, could not women subvert the political order by redesigning *obentō*? Asking this question, a Japanese friend, upon reading this paper, recalled her own experiences. Though her mother had been conventional in most other respects, she made her children *obentōs* that did not conform to the prevailing conventions. Basic, simple, and rarely artistic, Sawa also noted, in this connection, that the lines of these *obentōs* resembled those by which she was generally raised: as gender-neutral, treated as a person not "just as a girl," and being allowed a margin to think for herself. Today she is an exceptionally independent woman who has created a life for herself in America, away from homeland and parents, almost entirely on her own. She loves Japanese food, but the plain *obentōs* her mother made for her as a child, she is newly appreciative of now, as an adult. The *obentōs* fed her, but did not keep her culturally or ideologically attached. For this, Sawa says today, she is glad.

Notes

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1. As Dorinne Kondo has pointed out, however, these cuisinal principles may be conditioned by factors of both class and circumstance. Her *shitamachi* (more traditional area of Tokyo) informants, for example, adhered only casually to this coding and other Japanese she knew followed them more carefully when preparing food for guests rather than family and when eating outside rather than inside the home (Kondo 1990: 61–2).
2. Rice is often, if not always, included in a meal; and it may substantially as well as symbolically constitute the core of the meal. When served at a table it is put in a large pot or electric rice maker and will be spooned into a bowl, still no bigger or predominant than the many other containers from which a person eats. In an *obentō* rice may be in one, perhaps the largest, section of a multi-sectioned *obentō* box, yet it will be arranged with a variety of other foods. In a sense rice provides the syntactic and substantial center to a meal yet the presentation of the food rarely emphasizes this core. The rice bowl is refilled rather than heaped as in the preformed *obentō* box, and in the *obentō* rice is often embroidered, supplemented, and/or covered with other foodstuffs.
3. Japanese will both endure a high price for rice at home and resist American attempts to export rice to Japan in order to stay domestically self-sufficient in this national food *qua* cultural symbol. Rice is the only foodstuff in which the Japanese have retained self-sufficient production.

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4. The primary sources on education used are Horio 1988; Duke 1986; Rohlen 1983; Cummings 1980.
5. Neither the state's role in overseeing education nor a system of standardized tests is a new development in post-World War II Japan. What is new is the national standardization of tests and, in this sense, the intensified role the state has thus assumed in overseeing them. See Dore (1965) and Horio (1988).
6. Boocock (1989) differs from Tobin *et al.* (1989) on this point and asserts that the institutional differences are insignificant. She describes extensively how both *yochien* and *hoikuen* are administered (*yochien* are under the authority of Monbusho and *hoikuen* are under the authority of the Koseisho, the Ministry of Health and Welfare) and how both feed into the larger system of education. She emphasizes diversity: though certain trends are common amongst pre-schools, differences in teaching styles and philosophies are plentiful as well.
7. According to Rohlen (1989), families are incapable of indoctrinating the child into this social pattern of *shundanseikatsu* by their very structure and particularly by the relationship (of indulgence and dependence) between mother and child. For this reason and the importance placed on group structures in Japan, the nursery school's primary objective, argues Rohlen, is teaching children how to assimilate into groups. For further discussion of this point see also Peak 1989; Lewis 1989; Sano 1989; and the *Journal of Japanese Studies* issue [15(1)] devoted to Japanese pre-school education in which these articles, including Boocock's, are published.
8. For a succinct anthropological discussion of these concepts, see Hendry (1987: 39–41). For an architectural study of Japan's management and organization of space in terms of such cultural categories as *uchi* and *soto*, see Greenbie (1988).
9. Endless studies, reports, surveys, and narratives document the close tie between women and home, domesticity and femininity in Japan. A recent international survey conducted for a Japanese housing construction firm, for example, polled couples with working wives in three cities, finding that 97 percent (of those polled) in Tokyo prepared breakfast for their families almost daily (compared with 43 percent in New York and 34 percent in London); 70 percent shopped for groceries on a daily basis (3 percent in New York, 14 percent in London), and only 22 percent of them had husbands who assisted or were willing to assist with housework (62 percent in New York, 77 percent in London) (quoted in *Chicago Tribune* 1991). For a recent anthropological study of Japanese housewives in English, see Imamura (1987). Japanese sources include *Juristo zokan sogo tokushu* 1985; *Mirai shakan* 1979; *Ohirasori no seifu kenkyukai* 3.
10. My comments pertain directly, of course, to only the women I observed, interviewed, and interacted with at the one private nursery school serving middle-class families in urban Tokyo. The profusion of *obentō*-related materials in the press plus the revelations made to me by Japanese and observations made by other researchers in Japan (for example, Tobin 1989; Fallows 1990), however, substantiate this as a more general phenomenon.
11. To illustrate this preoccupation and consciousness: during the time my son was not eating all his *obentō*, many fellow mothers gave me suggestions, one mother lent me a magazine, my son's teacher gave me a full set of *obentō* cookbooks (one per season), and another mother gave me a set of small frozen-food portions she had made in advance for future *obentōs*.
12. My son's teacher, Hamada-sensei, cited this explicitly as one of the reasons why the *obentō* was such an important training device for nursery-school children. "Once they become *ichinensei* [first-graders], they'll be faced with a variety of food, prepared without elaboration or much spice, and will need to eat it within a delimited time period."
13. An anonymous reviewer questioned whether such emphasis placed on consumption of food in nursery school leads to food problems and anxieties in later years. Although I have heard that anorexia is now a phenomenon in Japan, I question its connection to nursery-school *obentōs*. Much of the meaning of the latter practice, as I interpret it, has to do with the interface between production and consumption, and its gender linkage comes from the production end (mothers making it) rather than the consumption end (children eating it). Hence, while control is taught through food, it is not a control linked primarily to females or bodily appearance, as anorexia may tend to be in this culture.
14. Fujita argues, from her experience as a working mother of a daycare (*hoikuen*) child, that the substance of these daily talks between teacher and mother is intentionally insignificant. Her interpretation is that the mother is not to be overly involved in nor too informed about matters of the school (1989).
15. "*Boku*" is a personal pronoun that males in Japan use as a familiar reference to themselves. Those in close relationship with males—mothers and wives, for example—can use *boku* to refer to their sons or husbands. Its use in this context is telling.
16. In the upper third grade of the nursery school (the *nencho* class; children aged five to six) that my son attended, children were ordered to bring their *obentō* with chopsticks rather than forks and spoons (considered easier to use) and in the traditional *furoshiki* (piece of cloth that enwraps items and is double-tied to close it) instead of the easier-to-manage *obentō* bags with drawstrings. Both *furoshiki* and chopsticks (*o-hashi*) are considered traditionally Japanese, and their usage marks not only greater effort and skills on the part of the children but their enculturation into being Japanese.

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17. For the mother's role in the education of her child, see, for example, White (1987). For an analysis, by a Japanese, of the intense dependence on the mother that is created and cultivated in a child, see Doi (1971). For Japanese sources on the mother-child relationship and the ideology (some say pathology) of Japanese motherhood, see Yamamura (1971); Kawai (1976); Kyutoku (1981); *Sorifu seihonen taisaku honbuhen* (1981); *Kadeshobo shinsha* (1981). Fujita's account of the ideology of motherhood at the nursery-school level is particularly interesting in this connection (1989).
18. Women are entering the labor market in increasing numbers, yet the proportion who do so in the capacity of part-time workers (legally constituting as much as thirty-five hours per week but without the benefits accorded to full-time workers) has also increased. The choice of part-time over full-time employment has much to do with a woman's simultaneous and almost total responsibility for the domestic realm (Juristo 1985; see also Kondo 1990).
19. As Fujita (1989: 72–79) points out, working mothers are treated as a separate category of mothers, and non-working mothers are expected, by definition, to be mothers full-time.
20. Nakane's much-quoted text on Japanese society states this male position in structuralist terms (1970). Though dated, see also Vogel (1963) and Rohlen (1974) for descriptions of the social roles for middle-class, urban Japanese males. For a succinct recent discussion of gender roles within the family, see Lock (1990).

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13

Mexicanas' Food Voice and Differential Consciousness in the San Luis Valley of Colorado[*1]

Carole Counihan

> *I never cooked you know. I was always a bookworm. Ever since I was a growing up. When it was time for the dishes, they couldn't find me, so my poor sister had to do them by herself. … We had an outhouse—a soldiers', a government toilet outside—and I'd take a book, you know, and I'd go there, and they'd say, "Where's Helen?" And somebody would pop up and say, "Oh she's in the toilet reading, she could be." And when I thought the dishes were half done or done I'd pop up. I never was responsible for them, they never depended on me, and my sister was such a good cook. She was a good cook and she griped about me not taking turns on the dishes but she didn't fight, she didn't mind. She was grown up on the job, you know, it was natural for her.*[2]

These words of Helen Ruybal, a ninety-nine-year-old widow, mother of two, and former teacher, are part of a long-term ethnographic project I have been conducting since 1996 in the Mexican-American town of Antonito in rural Southern Colorado. I collected food-centered life histories from nineteen women, including Ruybal, and suggest that they reveal women's voice, identity, and worldview.

Antonito is six miles north of the New Mexico state line in the San Luis Valley, an eight thousand square-mile cold desert valley lying at approximately eight thousand feet above sea level between the San Juan and Sangre de Cristo mountains. Antonito is located in Conejos County in the Upper Rio Grande region on the northern frontier of greater Mexico.[3] The population of Antonito is 90% Hispanic and thus it is an excellent site to study the contemporary experience of rural Chicanas and Chicanos. My forthcoming book, tentatively titled *Mexicanas' Stories of Food, Identity and Land in the San Luis Valley of Colorado*,[4] gives a full exposition of how my nineteen interviewees described land and water, defined food and meals, and enacted family, gender, and community relations. In this paper, I use excerpts from one woman's interviews to make two points—first, to affirm the value of the food-centered life history methodology, and second, to suggest how women can display differential consciousness through their practices and beliefs surrounding food.

Food Voice, Feminist Anthropology and *Testimonios*

For over two decades, I have been using a food-centered life history methodology in Italy and the United States to present women's food voices.[5] Food-centered life

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histories are semi-structured tape-recorded interviews with willing participants, on their beliefs and behaviors surrounding food production, preparation, distribution, and consumption. I developed this methodology out of a feminist goal of foregrounding the words and perspectives of women who have long been absent in recorded history. In the interviews women describe material culture as well as their subjective remembrances and perceptions. Topics include gardening, preserving food, past and present diets, recipes, everyday and ritual meals, eating out, foods for healing, eating in pregnancy, breast-feeding, and many other subjects (see Appendix 1 for a list of interview themes). For many women (and some men), food is a significant voice of self-expression. In the meals they cook, the rituals they observe, and the memories they preserve, women communicate powerful meanings and emotions.

Like other feminist ethnographers, I have grappled with how to present an authentic picture of my respondents, one that is as much theirs as possible.[6] I used a tape-recorder so I could begin the process of representation with their words. Before doing interviews, I established informed consent, telling people in Antonito who I was and what I was doing there, promising confidentiality, and giving them the choice to participate or not.[7] I asked for their permission to tape-record, explaining that I wanted to have their verbatim descriptions of their experiences, but I also assured them that they could turn the tape recorder off at any time and decline to answer any questions, both of which they did on occasion. While I tried eventually to address all of the topics on my list (see Appendix 1), interviews were conversations with their own momentum and wandered into many non-food topics.

I have not followed the practice of some ethnographers of citing transcriptions verbatim, but at the urging of participants, I have edited the transcriptions to achieve readability, while staying as close to their original language as possible. I eliminated repetition and filler expressions (e.g. "like," "you know"), edited lightly for grammar, and moved around phrases and sections to achieve greater coherence.

My methodology coheres with two linked intellectual traditions—feminist anthropology and *testimonios*. It shares feminist anthropology's goals of placing women at the center, foregrounding women's diversity, challenging gender oppression, and reconstructing theory based on women's experiences (Moore 1988). My use of food-centered life histories to give voice to marginalized women links with the research of other feminists who have examined food as women's voice[8]—particularly Hauck-Lawson's (1998) research on immigrants in New York City, Pérez's (2004) "Kitchen Table Ethnography" with women on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border, and Abarca's (2001, 2004, 2006) "culinary chats" with Mexican and Mexican-American working class women—all of which use women's food stories to theorize about their identity, agency, and power.[9]

Like the *testimonios* gathered by the Latina Feminist Group, food-centered life histories are about "telling to live." *Testimonios* involve participants speaking for themselves about events they have witnessed, events centered on "a story that *needs* to be told—involving a problem of repression, poverty, subalternity, exploitation, or simply survival" (Beverly 1993: 73). *Testimonios* are personal narratives that reveal individual subjectivity while calling attention to broad political and economic forces. They grew out of Latin American liberation movements at the same time that feminism was emerging in politics and scholarship. Sternbach (1991) highlighted the fact that these movements shared "breaking silences, raising consciousness,

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envisioning a new future, and seeking collective action" (Sternbach 1991: 95). Both feminism and *testimonios*, she said, linked the personal and the political, the "private, domestic or intimate sphere" with the "public, historic or collective one" (Sternbach 1991: 97). This is also the aim of food-centered life histories: to thrust the traditionally private sphere of cooking and feeding into the public arena and show the impact of women's experiences on culture and history. The experiences and voices of rural Colorado *Mexicanas* have been left out of the historical record for too long,[10] and recuperating them enhances understanding of the diversity of Mexican and Mexican American women. It fulfills a central goal in feminist ethnography, enriches our understanding of American culture, and makes possible more inclusive political policy.

Food and Differential Consciousness

Across cultures and history, food work can represent drudgery and oppression but also power and creativity. My second goal in this article is to show how women can challenge subordination and strive for agency through their food-centered life histories by evincing what Chela Sandoval (1991) calls "differential consciousness." Differential consciousness is a key strategy used by dominated peoples to survive demeaning and disempowering structures and ideologies. It is the ability to acknowledge and operate within those structures and ideologies but at the same time to generate alternative beliefs and tactics that resist domination.[11] Differential consciousness is akin to Scott's (1990) idea of the "hidden transcripts" developed by oppressed peoples to undermine public discourses upholding power structures. Ruybal and other women in her community took diverse stances towards food and were able, in Sandoval's words, to function "within yet beyond the demands of the dominant ideology" (1991: 3).

Women can develop differential consciousness in their relationship to food, as Ruybal did, by challenging the dichotomy between production and reproduction that has been so detrimental to women's social status.[12] As Engels originally pointed out in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, and feminist anthropologists have elaborated upon,[13] the splitting of production and reproduction led to the privatization and devaluation of women's labor both inside and outside the home, and, to quote Engels (1972: 120), the "world historical defeat of the female sex." Interpreting Engels, Eleanor Leacock (1972: 41) argued that a major force in the subjugation of women has been "the transformation of their socially necessary labor into a private service." This process has characterized much of women's food work with the global decline of subsistence farming and the separation of production and consumption, but women in Antonito have resisted it in several ways.

Ruybal pursued three strategies throughout her life that displayed differential consciousness and enabled her to overcome the production–reproduction dichotomy surrounding food. First, she rejected cooking as pillar of her own identity yet respected women who did it—especially her sister Lila. Second, she welcomed and legitimized her husband's cooking, and thus reduced the dichotomization of male and female labor. Third, she produced and sold *queso*—a fresh, white cow's milk cheese—and, thus, transformed kitchen work into paid, productive labor. In these

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ways, Ruybal minimized food's oppressive dimensions and enhanced its empowering ones. I focus on Ruybal's experience but place it into the broader cultural context by referring to other women I have interviewed in Antonito, some of whom shared Ruybal's strategies of publicly valuing women's domestic labor, enlisting men's help in the home, and making money from food. In contrast, other women in Antonito found cooking to be a symbol and channel of oppression (Counihan 2002, 2005). Food work offered diverse and conflicting avenues of self-realization for *Mexicanas* in Antonito as it has for women everywhere.

Antonito, Colorado

Antonito is a small town running six blocks east to west and twelve blocks south to north along U.S. Route 285 and State Highway 17 in Southern Colorado. Several Indian groups, especially the Ute, Navaho, and Apache, originally inhabited the region around Antonito in what is today Conejos County. This area was claimed by Spain until Mexican independence in 1821 and by Mexico until the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, when it became part of the United States. In the mid-1850s, the earliest Hispanic settlers immigrated from Rio Arriba County, New Mexico and settled in the agricultural hamlets of Conejos, Guadalupe, Mogote, Las Mesitas, San Rafael, San Antonio, Ortiz, La Florida, and Lobatos on the Conejos, San Antonio, and Los Pinos rivers. When the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad tried to build a depot in 1881 in the county seat of Conejos, landowners refused to sell their property, so the railroad established its station and a new town in Antonito.[14]

The town grew steadily due to its commercial importance, saw mills, perlite mines, ranching, and agriculture through and after World War II, with its population peaking at 1255 in 1950 and then dropping steadily to 873 in 2000. In the 2000 census, ninety percent of residents declared themselves "Hispanic." Today the town hosts a pharmacy, a locally owned supermarket, three restaurants, a seasonal food stand, two gas stations, a video store, a hair salon, and several gift and used-goods stores. The climate is cold, dry, and dusty with average annual rainfall a meager eight inches and only two frost-free months a year. Traditional agriculture and ranching depended on the complex ditch or *acequia* system that channeled water from the rivers into the fields, but today commercial agriculture relying on center-pivot irrigation is increasingly common.

Today, poverty is widespread in Antonito, Conejos County, and the predominantly Hispanic rural region of Northern New Mexico and Southern Colorado that Martínez (1998: 70) calls the *siete condados del Norte*, the seven rural counties of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado with Chicano/a majorities.[15] In the Antonito area, important employers are the town, the county, the perlite mine, the schools, the hospitals in La Jara and Alamosa, and the service economy in Alamosa thirty miles north. Many people get by on odd jobs, baby-sitting, trading in used goods, home health care work, public assistance jobs, and welfare. In the summer and fall there is a small tourist economy due to the popular Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad, and to hunting, fishing, and vacationing in the nearby San Juan Mountains.

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Helen Ruybal

Helen Gallegos Ruybal grew up with her parents, two brothers, and one sister in the small farming and ranching hamlet of Lobatos, four miles east of Antonito. They owned a modest five acres of land that Helen's mother inherited from her parents. Helen's father used the land to raise some crops and farm animals to provide for their subsistence. She said, *My father used to milk four or five cows, to get around, to get going. And we had two or three pigs and he took care of them and butchered them at the right time, and we had lots of pork*. Helen was not born into the local elite, called *ricos*, whom she defined as those having *money and ranches and animals and cows and water*, but she did achieve membership in the Hispanic elite through education, work, and accumulation of wealth.

Ruybal's parents followed the traditional division of labor: *he provided and she raised the children*. When her father was young, Ruybal said, *He was a common laborer*. But later he opened a small store and also taught school for a while. She remarked: *My father opened up a little convenience store just in a room of the house because the school was there and the kids would go buy candy and go buy peanuts. And they had cigarettes and tobacco and all those things … And my mother just cooked and sewed and raised the kids and put up the garden food*. Ruybal's mother was like most women in the community, including her sister Lila, whose primary work was gardening, preserving food, cooking for the family, caring for children, sewing, quilting, cleaning, washing clothes, and other forms of reproductive labor.

Rejecting Cooking, Respecting Women Who Cooked

But Ruybal diverged from the norm represented by her mother and sister and spent as little time as possible on domestic chores throughout her life, while maximizing her productive paid work outside the home. Her food-centered life history revealed both the tactics she followed and the ideologies she developed to support her choices—ideologies grounded in differential consciousness. Ruybal eschewed the housewife role and cooked as little as possible, but valued and benefited from the help of her mother, sister, and husband. Her strategy minimized the subordinating dimensions of reproductive labor.

Even as a girl Ruybal had ambitions beyond the traditional female role: *I wanted to be different. I wanted to go my own way*, she said. She aspired to *education, earning money, and doing some good to people*. Assistance from her sister and parents was critical to Ruybal's ability to study and work: *I had my likes and dislikes supported at home. … My parents were interested in education for all of us … and my folks believed in going without so we could have supplies and go to school and we never missed it*. By running a store and raising their own food, Ruybal's parents were able to send her to Loretto Academy, a Catholic boarding school in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she completed high school and teacher certification. She returned home and began teaching while she went part-time and summers to Adams State College in nearby Alamosa. She achieved a BA in 1954, which enhanced her credentials and earning power. She was employed steadily, first in several different hamlets around Antonito,

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and later in the better paying Chama, New Mexico public schools forty miles away over the San Juan Mountains.

Ruybal's employment gave her financial independence, which meant that she did not have to marry for economic reasons as many girls did. Helen's future husband, Carlos Ruybal, courted her for years and both families supported the match, but Helen resisted marriage: *I wanted to be free to do what I wanted. … I didn't want to be tied down. … I didn't want to get married, and I refused to all the time, for the sake of not having a family to keep. … I wanted to work, and I felt like if I had children, I wasn't going to be able to work. I skipped marriage for a long time.*

Not only did she avoid marriage, but Ruybal also rejected cooking and the prominent role it played in many women's identity: *I never cooked you know. I was always a bookworm. Ever since I was a growing up*. For Ruybal food production, preparation, and clean-up were marginal activities she avoided if she could: *I'm not really a kitchen guy, you know what I mean, a provider in the kitchen*. Nonetheless, she could not escape cooking entirely but made it clear that she was a haphazard and indifferent cook. For example, one day she visited me and brought a gift of bread she had just made, saying, *Is it good? I thought it was kind of good. Sometimes it doesn't come out right. . … I'm not a good cook [laughs], I'm not a steady cook*. Another time Ruybal spoke about making home-made tortillas, which she and everyone else in town thought were superior to store-bought ones, but she acknowledged her own uncertain skill: *Sometimes I make tortillas. And sometimes they come out good and sometimes they don't, not so good. And oh well.*

Ruybal eventually succumbed to cultural pressure to marry and she had to manage the household and the two children who came soon after her marriage. Crucially important was the support of her mother and sister: *My sister Lila was my right hand; she raised my kids. I'd come from my home, one mile, and I'd leave my kids there. What they didn't have, they had it there, and what they had, well they used it. She took care of them, fed them, and cleaned them up, and when I came in the evening I visited with her, and I picked them up, and I went home.*

Ruybal respected her sister's domestic identity, proficiency in the home, and accomplished cooking: *Lila had six children. … She used to sew and crochet and knit and make quilts, pretty ones. … And she cooked and she baked. … Her children still remember the jelly rolls, and they came out perfect like the ones in the store. … She used to make pies, a table full of pies, apple pies. … And she had such a good heart, and she was a good cook, she was a good housekeeper.*

Throughout her life Ruybal valued her sister and worked hard to stay on good terms with her: *We got along fine until she died. We were in favor of each other always, since we were growing up. … And we never got mad at each other, and we never got into a fight. … If it was for my side, she'd go out of her way to do it, and I'd go out of my way to appreciate it. I gave her a lot of things. … If she needed twenty dollars, I gave it to her. … I always would give her every gift like that, any amount. And she would accept It. … I had a good job in the first place, and I had less children, and more money, more money coming in. I was working and I couldn't miss a day and she never earned money. She just cooked, and washed and ironed, and took care of her kids and my kids.*

Even though she said her sister "just" cooked, Ruybal was able to appreciate and benefit from her sister's assumption of traditional female duties while at the same time she rejected them for herself. Not all women in Antonito were able to forge

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mutual respect out of difference, and public criticism of other women's choices was not uncommon. But Ruybal and her sister displayed differential consciousness by valuing and benefiting from each other's different choices vis-à-vis domestic labor and public work.

Blending Gender Roles: Involving Husband in Cooking

Ruybal's food-centered life history revealed how she improved her status by involving her husband Carlos in domestic chores and thus challenged the splitting of male and female labor so instrumental to women's subordination.[16] Ruybal did not marry until she was sure that Carlos would support her career as a teacher. She said, *He thought of me. If I was going to work, he didn't want to put any objections, just go ahead and work. And … the first thing, [my daughter] Carla came. And Carlos helped me a lot and I helped him a lot. … And then, not even two years later, [my son] Benito came. I wondered how far I was going that way. And I didn't want a large family. … So after that, well, we just didn't let our family grow bigger. … We were both combined. We both wanted the same thing.*

Because of her economic contributions to the marriage and busy work schedule, Ruybal was able to secure her husband's help at home and to skirt some of the domestic labor that fell to most women: *I never had to cook. … I had kids, but they went to boarding school. I had them in the summer and Carlos used to help me a lot. In fact, they'd be with him at the ranch. … He would [cook] when I wasn't home. On Fridays when I came from school he had supper ready. He did fried potatoes, he did fried beans, and he did everything fried quickly, because he didn't want to be at the stove watching it. … And he cooked and he had a good meal and I helped him too, we both cooked*. Carlos learned to cook as many men did during summers in the all-male sheep and cattle camps, but unlike most, he utilized his skills at home.

Ruybal described the prevailing gender ideology based on clear and separate male/female work and the differential strategies and consciousness that she—and some others—upheld: *People just wanted to go that a lady's job is a lady's job. ... They didn't expect the wife to go out and plow the garden or to pick up the plants or brush. They didn't like for them to do men's jobs. … And a man's job would be a man's job. … But I knew husbands that did all the housework … and they took care of the babies, put them to bed and fed them, changed them, dressed them, and changed the diapers, and people would laugh at that, for me they did too. … People would be nasty about it—some would—they were jealous. … They didn't want men to be that soft and kind-hearted. ... But others said, well, she deserves it, that he be considerate. She deserves that help. … They would consider it right, she deserves it if she works and earns the bread and butter, why not do the dishes for her and do the floor, and make the beds and things like that? And others would think that that's ladies work—make the beds and wash the floor, some men didn't do anything but eat and provide—provide flour, provide money, provide salt and pepper. All those things but they wouldn't do anything in the kitchen.*

Carlos liked to be a helper always. … I always had some other little thing to do, understand? I didn't have it to sit down here and watch. I did other things that had to be done, even little things and bigger things in the home, or in my job, my duty. Because I had to be prepared for that every day and I saw that I was before I tackled anything else. In the

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mornings, when I went to Taos [to teach], he'd get up early in the morning and run my car, warm and ready to go and he'd come in and prepare breakfast for me. … He saw me out and the dishes were left on the table and buying more bread was left on the table and he'd get those things ready for the week, he'd do it.

Ruybal's relatively egalitarian marriage went against the publicly stated value of men controlling family and budget. One man told me that he knew several marriages that fell apart when the women bettered themselves through education, attained jobs outside the home, and gained financial independence. Husbands did not always define their wives' economic success as a boon, but according to Ruybal, Carlos respected her brains and business acumen, and they worked together as successful business partners, with Helen bringing in a steady salary and Carlos managing the growing ranch. Their cooperation allowed them to maximize their economic position and accumulate land and cattle, attaining the status of *ricos*.

Ruybal's economic power outside the home raised her value in the home. Involving her husband in the family cooking and admiring him for it improved the status of food work, reduced her domestic workload, established reciprocity, and challenged the subordination implicit in the expectations that women feed and serve men (cf. DeVault 1991). In contrast, another Antonito woman, Bernadette Vigil, described how her Puerto Rican husband humiliated her by forcing her to cook rice his way, and threw her creations against the wall until she "*got it right*" (Counihan 2002, 2005). Vigil's was an extreme situation, and most women fell somewhere in between Ruybal and Vigil, cooking—sometimes willingly and sometimes not—and spending much of their time on domestic chores, especially feeding men and children.

Transforming Reproduction to Production: Making and Selling Cheese

Ruybal's food-centered life history detailed how she transformed food work from "private service" to public gain by selling cheese she made from the milk of the family's cows. She said, *For ten years, at least ten years, maybe more, I made cheese, white cheese. My husband and my son used to milk at the ranch and bring it from there to town. … Cheese was a luxury item, like ice cream on a cake. … Oh, that used to be my job, and I'd use that money for a lot of little things. Even big things, I'd just put it with the rest of the money. … That was a job, but I liked the idea, I didn't work hard. Even when I went to school, I'd leave the cheese hanging and I'd go away and come back and it was all ready to take it out and put it in the pan in the refrigerator. … As long as I had the milk, instead of throwing it away, I made cheese. That's what I did it for more than for an income. But I loved to get the money that I got from my work.*

Converting reproductive labor to productive work enhanced Ruybal's pride, money, and power—in her culture and in her marriage—and enabled her to develop differential consciousness towards food work as she simultaneously minimized its importance in her identity and valued its economic contribution. Many other women in Antonito used their food preparation skills to make money. For example, Ramona Valdez grew up on a ranch in Guadalupe with her parents and two siblings, and from the 1930s through the 1950s, she regularly made cheese and butter, which she sold for fifty cents a pound. Valdez also raised and sold turkeys. Through these activities, she was able to accumulate $800, a lot of money in the 1950s. Pat Gallegos made and

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sold cheese in the 1990s. Flora Romero was renowned for planning and cooking the food for funeral dinners and weddings. Gloria Garcia and Dora Sandoval both owned and ran local restaurants, and they catered weddings and parties as well. Several women made and sold tortillas, burritos, *empanaditas*, or tamales. Selling food in public gave what they ate in the home a monetary value and transformed food work from undervalued "reproduction" into remunerated "production." By holding differential attitudes towards these diverse forms of food preparation women were able to value their own work and that of others.

Conclusion

Ruybal's food-centered life history showed how she used food as a path to dignity and power, key issues in women's mediation of gender roles. She was among a minority of women in her community who achieved a college degree, a steady career, and a reduced domestic workload; nonetheless she was not unique but rather fell on a continuum of acceptable roles for women. Indeed almost all of the nineteen women I interviewed worked for money for varying periods of time. As they went in and out of the work force, their domestic roles contracted and expanded. Their experiences showed the permeability of the boundaries between public and private, production and reproduction, a permeability that some women, like Ruybal, were able to exploit to gain social prestige and economic power.

Ruybal's food-centered life history revealed her differential consciousness. She functioned "within yet beyond" dominant beliefs about women's food roles—*within* by valuing domestic labor and those who did it, *beyond* by curtailing cooking and using food to further her identity as a worker: *within* by recognizing the gender-dichotomized power structure of her culture, *beyond* by transcending gender oppositions. She, more than many women in her community, managed to shape "the relationship between women's reproductive and productive labor" (Moore 1988: 53), an essential step toward gender equality. Ruybal's flexible attitudes and activities surrounding food enabled her to be economically empowered and socially valued, and to attain the sense of belonging and respect that are hallmarks of what scholars have called cultural citizenship (Flores & Benmayor 1997).

Food-centered life histories are a valuable means to gather information that may otherwise be inaccessible (Hauck-Lawson 1998). They can reveal women's nutritional status, economic realities, psycho-emotional states, social networks, family concerns, and even spouse abuse (Ellis 1983). This information can buttress public policies relevant to women's needs, such as the WIC program, food stamps, and meals for senior citizens; small-business loans for women to start up food-based enterprises; and publicly funded child-care programs to permit women to work and attain parity with men.

I have used food-centered life histories to project Ruybal's voice into the public arena and counter the silencing that has been a central weapon in women's oppression (hooks 1989). Ruybal and other *Mexicanas*' food stories are *testimonios* that counteract erasure and affirm the value of women's labor, memory, and resourcefulness. They increase understanding of Chicanas' diversity in the United States, and challenge universalizing and demeaning portrayals (Zavella 1991).

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Appendix 1 Food Centered Life Histories

Food-centered life histories consist of tape-recorded semi-structured interviews with willing participants, focusing on behaviors, experiences, beliefs, and memories centered on food production, preservation, preparation, cooking, distribution, and consumption. The following is a list of key topics presented in condensed form. In an interview, questions are not nearly so condensed and they follow the flow of conversation. Many lead naturally to further topics without prompting.

(1) Consumption
What are people/you/your family eating?
- (a) Where do foods come from, local vs. imported foods?
- (b) Diversity of cuisines?
- (c) Vegetarianism?
- (d) Picky eaters?
- (e) Processed foods?
- (f) Fast vs. slow foods?
- (g) Dietary make-up?
- (h) Nutritional composition?
- (i) Seasonal, weekly variation?

Describe the quality of food.
Describe your meals: names, when, what, where, with whom.
- (a) Describe eating at home.
- (b) Describe eating out—school, daycare, restaurants, fast food, etc.

Describe the atmosphere and social relations of the eating experience.
Describe the current practices about outsiders eating in the home.
Describe the most important holidays and the role of food and commensality.
Do you know anyone with fussy eating habits, eating disorders, body image issues?
Do you know anyone suffering hunger, malnutrition, or food-related health problems?
How do individuals and the community deal with hunger and malnutrition?
Describe the relationship between food and health. Are foods used in healing?
Describe beliefs and practices surrounding eating in pregnancy.
Describe beliefs and practices surrounding eating during the post-partum period.
Describe the beliefs and practices surrounding infant feeding.
Over your lifetime, what are the most important changes in foodways? Their causes? Effects?
Describe outstanding food memories, good or bad.
Describe symbolic foods and their meanings.

(2) Production
How and by whom are foods produced, processed, and prepared?
Who cooks with what principal foods, ingredients, spices, and combinations?
What are some key recipes?
How are singles, couples or families handling the division of labor at home and at work?
- (a) Who does the meal planning, shopping, cooking, serving, clearing, dish-washing?
- (b) Who does other chores—bathroom, floors, clothes-washing, ironing, child-care?

How are boy and girl children being raised vis-à-vis food chores?
Describe the kitchen, place in the home, appliances, cooking tools, and technology.
Is there home gardening, canning, drying, freezing, brewing, baking, etc.? Recipes?
Describe the garden, layout, plants, labor, yearly cycle.

(3) Distribution
Describe your food acquisition.
Who procures food, by what means, where, when, and at what cost?
Do you shop in a grocery store, supermarket, farmers' market, coop, or CSA?
Is food exchanged or shared? How, with whom, when, why?
Is there a food bank, food pantry or soup kitchen in the community? Describe.

(4) Ideology
Describe food uses in popular culture, literature, films, art, advertising, music, etc.
Is food used in religion, magic, or witchcraft?

(5) Demographic Data:
Describe date of birth, marriage, children, parents, occupations, residences, etc.

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Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper was published as "Food as Mediating Voice and Oppositional Consciousness for Chicanas in Colorado's San Luis Valley," in *Mediating Chicana/o Culture: Multicultural American Vernacular*, ed. Scott Baugh, Cambridge, England: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006, pp. 72–84. I thank Scott Baugh for offering new ways of thinking about my work. I thank Penny Van Esterik for helpful comments and my husband, Jim Taggart, for his support and insights. I thank the people of Antonito for their hospitality and all the women who participated in my research for their generosity, especially Helen Ruybal, an extraordinary woman who passed away at the age of 100 in 2006. This paper is dedicated to her memory.
2. Direct quotations from my interviews with Helen Ruybal appear in italics throughout the paper.
3. Paredes (1976: xiv) defined Greater Mexico as "all the areas inhabited by people of a Mexican culture" in the U.S. and Mexico. See also Limón (1998). "*Mexicano*" is one of the most common terms that the people of Antonito use to describe themselves, along with Hispanic, Spanish, and Chicana/o. The life story of Helen Ruybal, like the lives of other women living in rural areas of Greater Mexico, differs in many ways from those of the urban Mexican and Mexican-American women of her generation explored by Ruiz (1993).
4. This book is under contract with the University of Texas Press.
5. See especially my book *Around the Tuscan Table: Food, Family and Gender in Twentieth Century Florence* (2004) as well as Counihan (1999, 2002, 2005).
6. See Behar and Gordon (1995), Gluck and Patai (1991), and Wolf (1992).
7. The American Anthropological Association Code of Ethics guided my research: http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethcode.htm
8. On the food voice see Brumberg (1988), especially in her chapter "Appetite as Voice" reprinted in this volume. See also Avakian (1997) who collected personal accounts of cooking and eating from women of various class and ethnic groups. Thompson (1994) collected stories from eighteen women of color and lesbians who used food to cry out against racism, poverty, abuse, and injustice. Hauck-Lawson (1998) showed how one Polish American woman expressed through food her social isolation, depression, and declining self-image—issues that she was unable to speak about directly and that affected her health and diet.
9. Historically, the production, preservation and preparation of food were central to women's roles and identity in the Hispanic Southwest (Deutsch 1987). See Cabeza de Baca (1949, 1954), Gilbert (1942) and Jaramillo (1939, 1955) on the recipes, cooking, and culture of Hispanic New Mexico. Many of the Mexican American women interviewed by Elsasser et al. (1980) in New Mexico and by Patricia Preciado Martin (1992, 2004) in Arizona described foodways and dishes similar to those of Antonito. Williams (1985) and Blend (2001a, b) used a feminist perspective to uncover both the liberating and oppressive dimensions of women's food work and responsibility. Abarca (2001, 2004, 2006) used "culinary chats" and Pérez used "kitchen-table ethnography" to explore Mexican and Mexican-American women's diverse lives. See also Bentley (1998), Montaño (1992), Taggart (2002, 2003), and Taylor and Taggart (2003). For fascinating analyses of literary representations of Chicanas and food, see Ehrhardt (2006), Goldman (1992), and Rebolledo (1995).
10. Deutsch (1987: 11) wrote, "Written history of female minorities or 'ethnics' is rare, that of Chicanas or Hispanic women rarer though increasing, and of Chicanas or Hispanic women in Colorado virtually non-existent."
11. See Segura and Pesquera (1999) on diverse oppositional consciousness among Chicana clerical workers in California. Gloria Anzaldúa's "*Oyé como ladra: el lenguaje de la frontera*" is a wonderful example of differential consciousness expressed through language use (1987: 55–6).
12. Two recent discussions of Latinas' role in transnational food production that undermine the production/reproduction, male/female dichotomy are Barndt (2002) and Zavella (2002).
13. See Lamphere (2000), Leacock (1972), Moore (1988), Rosaldo (1974), Sacks (1974), Sargent (1981).
14. On the history, culture, and land use of the San Luis Valley, see Aguilar (2002), Bean (1975), Deutsch (1987), García (1998), Gutierrez and Eckert (1991), Martínez (1987, 1998), Peña (1998), Simmons (1979), Stoller (1982), Swadesh (1974), Taggart (2002, 2003), Taylor and Taggart (2003), Tushar (1992), Weber (1991), and Weigle (1975).
15. The *siete condados del norte* are Costilla and Conejos Counties in Colorado, and Taos, Río Arriba, San Miguel, Mora, and Guadalupe Counties in New Mexico (Martínez 1998: 70).
16. See Ybarra (1982) and Pesquera (1993) on the relationship of Chicanas' earning power and work to husbands' sharing of household labor.

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14

Feeding Lesbigay Families*

Christopher Carrington

> To housekeep, one had to plan ahead and carry items of motley nature around in the mind and at the same time preside, as mother had, at the table, just as if everything from the liver and bacon, to the succotash, to the French toast and strawberry jam, had not been matters of forethought and speculation.
>
> *Fannie Hurst*, Imitation of Life

> Life's riches other rooms adorn. But in a kitchen home is born.
>
> *Epigram hanging in the kitchen of a lesbian family*

Preparing a meal occurs within an elaborate set of social, economic, and cultural frameworks that determine when and with whom we eat, what and how much we eat, what we buy and where we go buy it, and when and with what tools and techniques we prepare a meal. [...] As sociologist Marjorie DeVault convincingly argues in *Feeding the Family* (1991), the work of preparing and sharing meals creates family. Many lesbigay families point to the continuous preparation of daily meals and/or the occasional preparation of elaborate meals as evidence of their status as families. The labor involved in planning and preparing meals enables family to happen in both heterosexual and in lesbigay households. However, both the extent and the character of feeding activities can vary dramatically from one household to the next and often reflects the influence of socioeconomic factors like social class, occupation, and gender, among others.

In this chapter I pursue two objectives in the investigation of feeding work in lesbigay families. First, I explore feeding work through analyzing its character and revealing its often hidden dimensions. This entails some discussion of how families conceive of and articulate the work of feeding. For instance, participants use a number of rhetorical strategies to portray the organization of feeding in their households. Many participants use two distinctions: cooking/cleaning and cooking/shopping. I will show how these distinctions function to create a sense of egalitarianism and to obfuscate rather than clarify the process of feeding. This inevitably leads to questions about the division of feeding work in lesbigay households. [...] Second, in

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this chapter I explore how socioeconomic differences among lesbigay households influence feeding activities, and vice-versa. Therein, just as feeding work can create family identity for participants, so too can feeding work create gender, ethnic, class, and sexual identities.

The Character of Feeding Work

As DeVault (1991) so aptly describes in her study of feeding work in heterosexual families, the people who do feeding work often find it difficult to describe the task. Commonly held definitions and most sociological investigations of domestic labor often reduce feeding work to cooking, shopping, and cleaning up the kitchen—the most apparent expressions of feeding. But when interviewing and engaging in participant observation with people who perform these functions, it becomes clear that cooking and shopping refer to a wide range of dispersed activities that punctuate the days of those who feed. It includes things like knowledge of what family members like to eat, nutritional concerns, a sense of work and recreation schedules, a mental list of stock ingredients in the cupboard, a mental time line of how long fruits and vegetables will last, etc. Frequently, these activities go unnoticed because they often happen residually and unreflectively. For instance, the way that one comes to know about the character and qualities of food stuffs—through experimentation, through conversations with colleagues, through browsing in a cookbook at a bookstore, through reading the food section in the newspaper—these activities often appear as recreation or as an expression of personal interest and not as forms of work. Yet, to successfully feed a family, such activities must occur and consume the energy and time of those who do them. In order to illuminate the full character of feeding work in lesbigay families, I want to look behind the traditional typologies of cooking, shopping, and cleaning and reveal the dynamic and invisible character of much of the work involved in feeding these families.

Planning Meals

Feeding actually consists of a number of distinct processes including planning, shopping, preparation, and management of meals. Planning presumes the possession of several forms of knowledge about food, about the household, about significant others, and about cultural rules and practices toward food. In most of the lesbigay families in this study, one person emerges as a fairly easily identified meal planner; hereafter I refer to such persons as planners. Planning for most families means thinking ahead, perhaps a day or two or even a week, but in many cases just a few hours before a meal. For those who decide what to eat on a day-to-day basis, they often decide and plan meals while at work. Matthew Corrigan, an office administrator, put it like this:

> Usually we decide something at the last minute. Or sometimes we go out with someone. We rarely go out with just us two, but with others as well. If Greg is home in time and has an

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> inspiration, he will make something, but the general pattern is for me to throw something together when I get home. I usually decide at work what to make.

A retail clerk, Scott McKendrick, reports: "We decide right before we eat. We go out to the store and buy enough brown rice for several days or a package of chicken breasts or broccoli. We shop every three days." "We" actually refers to Scott's partner, Gary Hosokawa, a thirty-six-year-old bookkeeper who works for a small hotel. Earlier in the interview, Scott reports that his partner cooks 75 percent of the time, and later in the interview he indicates that his partner stops at the store several days a week. In fact, Scott makes few planning decisions. His partner Gray makes most of them. [...]

Many times the partner who pulls together meals on a daily basis does not consider what they do as planning. One computer engineer, Brad O'Neil, explains: "I hardly ever plan. It just happens at the last minute." Further questioning reveals he often decides at work what to make and often stops at the store to buy missing ingredients. Like the other planners, Brad knows the foodstuffs available at home, he knows where to go to get what he needs, and he knows how to prepare the food. Mentally, he draws the connections between things at home, the things he needs, and a potential meal. He plans, through he fails to recognize his efforts as such.

In some instances, someone plans for a longer period of time, often a week. Those partners who plan by the week more readily recognize the planning they do. While some planners find the effort enriching and pleasant, many others express a certain amount of frustration with the process, particularly in deciding what to make. Randy Ambert, an airline flight attendant, expresses the frustration this way:

> I find that he doesn't give me any input. I rarely make things he doesn't like, but he doesn't tell me what he wants to have, I have to do that every single week. I am constantly searching for clues as to what he likes and doesn't like. I don't think he truly appreciates how much effort it takes.

Sucheng Kyutaro, an office manager for a real estate agency, explains:

> I also find it hard to figure out what she likes to eat, I think. It's a pain to get her to tell me what she will eat and then she becomes annoyed when I forget it the next time. I think about her every time I try to come up with some dinner items.

These comments illustrate one of the hidden forms of work involved in feeding: learning what others will and will not eat and learning to predict their responses. Hochschild (1983) uses the terms *emotion work* or *emotion management* to refer to this kind of empathetic activity, quite often performed by women, but as my research suggests, by many gay men as well. When thinking about domestic work, most people conjure up images of cleaning bathrooms, buying groceries and cooking meals. Emotion management involves the process of establishing empathy with another, interpreting behavior and conducting yourself in a way that "produces the proper state of mind in others" (Hochschild 1983, 7). Emotion management involves the management of feelings, both of your own and those of others. For example, it involves efforts to soothe feelings of anger in another or to enhance feelings of self-worth when someone "feels down." Sucheng's effort to "think about her partner every time" she plans a meal, in order to avoid producing "annoyance" in her partner,

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constitutes emotion work. Sucheng hope to create an emotional state of satisfaction and happiness in her partner through her feeding efforts.

Most lesbigay families, just like most heterosexual families, do not engage in the emotion work of feeding in an egalitarian way. For example, partners in lesbigay relationships do not share equal knowledge of the food tastes and preferences of each other. Queries about the food preference of partners reveal a highly differentiated pattern, where the planners possess extensive and detailed knowledge of their partner's preference and food concerns, while their partners know comparatively little about the planner's tastes. In response to a question about his partner's food preference, Steven Beckett, a retired real estate agent, reports that "he will not eat 'undercooked' or what the rest of us call normally cooked chicken, if he finds any red near the bone he will throw it across the room. Milk has to be low fat. Pork has to be quite cooked. He likes things quite spiced. He doesn't like peas or Brussels sprouts." Steven's partners, Anthony Manlapit, answers, "I think he likes a lot of things, I know he likes to eat out a lot." In response to the same question, Robert Bachafen, a school librarian, responds, "Yes. I stay away from radishes, shellfish, and certain soups. It's basically trail and error. He won't touch barbecued meats. I have learned over the years what he will and will not eat." His partner, Greg Sandwater, an architect, says, "I can't think of anything. He is not too fussy." Emily Fortune, a homemaker and mother of infant twins, as well as an accountant who works at home replies, "She doesn't care for pork. She has a reaction to shrimp. She doesn't like fish that much. Used to be that she wouldn't eat chicken. She doesn't like bell peppers. She doesn't like milk." Her partner, Alice Lauer, a rapid transit driver, says, "There aren't too many things she doesn't like." A finance manager for a savings and loan company, Joan Kelsey, replies, "Liver, brussels sprouts, she doesn't like things with white sauces. She is not as fond of junk food as I am." Her partner, Kathy Atwood, an accountant, responds, "I can't think of much of anything she doesn't like."

Steven, Robert, Alice, and Joan all plan meals and hold responsibility for the lion's share of feeding work. The partners of these meal planners confidently assert that their partners tend to like most things. Not true. In interviews I asked explicit questions about food likes and dislikes and found that planners indeed hold food preferences though their partners often do not readily know them. The ease with which planners cite detailed accounts of their partner's food likes and dislikes suggests that they use such knowledge with some frequency. Coming to know a partner's food preferences takes work: questioning, listening, and remembering. Successful feeding depends on this effort. [...]

Nutritional Concerns as Feeding Work

While the planners need to learn the food preferences of family members and continuously learn about food and its preparation from a variety of sources, they must also take into consideration a whole set of concerns about nutrition. Such concerns seem omnipresent in our society, through my research indicates some significant variation by both gender and age regarding this issue. Many of the planners work within fairly stringent guidelines regarding the nutritional content of

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the meals they prepare. [...] Many lesbian and gay-male (in particular) families fight over the nutritional content of food. These concerns cast a long shadow over the entire feeding process for some of the male planners. Joe McFarland, an attorney, states:

> We constantly fight about it. I am more conscious of fat and calorie content and seem to have to remind Richard constantly about it. He prepares great meals, but I am trying desperately to stay in shape. He gets upset because sometimes I just won't eat what he made or very much of it. I don't see why it's so hard for him to make low-fat stuff.

His partner, Richard Neibuhr, who does the feeding work, perceives it this way:

> Yes. Well, we try to cut fat. We eat a lot less red meat. We eat fish and poultry and we always skin the poultry because that's not too good for you. We eat a lot of rice and potatoes and avoid white cheese and butter. It all boils down to him trying to sustain his sexual attractiveness, I think. It would be easier for me to tell you things he will eat. He will not eat pork, no sausage. He eats one or two types of fish, he eats chicken and pasta. Anything other than that, it's a battle royal to get him to eat. It's too fat! He won't eat Greek, Mexican, Chinese—forget it. He will eat Italian, but only with light marinara sauces, sea bass, sole, skinless chicken, and that's about it. He is very picky and it all comes down to his effort to look beautiful. It's a lot of work to come up with meals that meet his dietary standards and yet still taste good and don't bore you to death.

Note the extent of Richard's knowledge about his partner's food preferences. Also note that Richard carries the burden of making sure the meals remain nutritionally sound.

Lesbian households also report conflicts over the nutritional quality of meals. Deborah James, a daycare worker, shares the following thoughts:

> Yeah, she doesn't want me to fry things because it makes such a mess and she has to clean it up. She would rather that I stir-fry and make more vegetables. She likes my cooking because it tastes good, but she would rather eat healthier than I would. I think my cooking sort of reminds her of her growing up. She partly likes that and she partly doesn't because it reminds her of being poor and I think the food I make sometimes, she thinks she's too good for it, that she should eat like rich people eat. I try to keep her happy, though.

Emily Fortune, a work-at-home accountant in her early thirties who recently became the mother of twins, maintains concern over both her partner's nutrition and her newborn children's nutrition. Emily, in response to a question about conflict over food states:

> Yes, I am still nursing, so I watch out for what the babies are going to get. We are no longer vegetarians. We both were at one time, but I eat a lot of protein for the babies. I think Alice would prefer a more vegetarian diet that was better for her. I try to think up meals that are healthy for all of them, both Alice and the babies. It's hard, though.

In most cases the meal planner becomes responsible for preparing meals that conform to dietary preferences and nutritional regimes.

In sum, planning meals, learning about foodstuffs and techniques, considering the preferences and emotions of significant others, and overseeing nutritional strategies frame the essential yet invisible precursor work to the actual daily process of preparing a meal. However, before the preparation begins, one must shop.

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Provisioning Work

Shopping includes much more than the weekly trips to buy food products. DeVault (1991) recommends the use of the term *provisioning* to capture the character of the work involved in shopping. Provisioning assumes several forms of mental work that precede the actual purchase of food, including determining family members' food preferences, dietary concerns, as well as culturally specific concerns about food. Further, provisioning depends upon the following additional activities: developing a standard stock of food, learning where to buy the "appropriate" food, monitoring current supplies, scheduling grocery trips, making purchases within particular financial constraints and building flexibility into the process. Each of these components appears in lesbigay households and most often fall to the planner to orchestrate and perform.

Quite often these dimensions of provisioning go unrecognized and get subsumed in the rhetorical strategies participants use to describe the division of feeding work. More than half of the lesbigay family members use the distinction cooking/shopping to describe the division of tasks in meal preparation. This distinction creates an egalitarian impression, as in the phrase "She cooks and I shop." But the distinction conceals. In most cases the person with responsibility for cooking either did the actual shopping himself or herself or they prepared a list for the other person to use at the market. Responses to queries about who writes grocery lists illustrate this dynamic, as Carey Becker, a part-time radiologist, put it: "I write the list for major shopping for the most part, as well. She knows what brand to buy, so I don't tell her that. But I am the one who knows what we need and I make the list up for her." Daniel SenYung, a health educator, speaks of a similar pattern: "During the week when *we* are cooking, *we* write things on the list. He is more likely to do that, I guess, because he is cooking and will run out of stuff, so I get it at the store. He knows what we need." Note the recurrence of the phrase "knows what we need." In both instances the phrase refers to the possession of a stock knowledge of foodstuffs. Planners develop and possess an extensive mental list of standard ingredients used in their kitchens. In the research I asked to see the current grocery list, should one exist. I saw thirty-two such lists. In the wide majority of cases, just one person wrote the list or wrote more than three-quarters of the items on the list. In those relationships where participants make a distinction between shopping and cooking meals, lists become longer and more detailed. For instance, many planners specify brand names or write down terms like *ripe avocado* instead of just *avocado*. The cumulative effect of such detailed list writing greatly simplifies the work of shopping and undermines the seeming egalitarianism of the cooking/shopping distinction.

The Significance of Small Grocery Trips

In most households, shopping includes a number of smaller trips to supplement throughout the week. In the wide majority of lesbigay families, one person makes these supplemental trips. In most cases, the person who bears responsibility for meal preparation does this type of shopping. They often stop at the store at lunch or, more

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often, on their way home from work. While many families initially indicate that they split cooking from shopping, in reality the person who cooks often shops throughout the week while the other partner makes "major" shopping trips, usually on weekends and often using a shopping list prepared by the planner at home. At first glance the intermittent shopping trips during the week appear ad hoc and supplemental in character. Yet for many lesbigay households, particularly in the lesbian and gay enclaves of San Francisco, these little trips constitute the essential core of feeding. Many planners shop at corner markets near their homes or places of work, frequently purchasing the central ingredients for the meal that evening—fresh meats and vegetables, breads, and pastas. In many respects the weekend shopping actually looks more supplemental. Again, the grocery lists prove instructive. They contain many more entries for items like cereals, granola bars, sugar, mustard, yogurt, and soda than for the central elements in evening meals: vegetables, fresh pasta, fish, chicken, bread, potatoes, corn, prepared sauces, and often milk.

The intermittent shopper often operates with a great degree of foresight. Alma Duarte, a bookkeeper for a small business, belies the ad hoc characterization of daily grocery trips:

> Every couple of days, I go to the store. I do the in-between shopping. Every couple of days, I run down and pick up stuff we need or are running out of. I buy vegetables, fish, and bread. I buy the heavy items at Calla Market because she has a back problem, so I buy like soda and detergent and kitty litter, but she does the big shopping on weekends. I almost always go and buy fish on Monday afternoons at a fish market near where I work and then I stop at the produce market near home. And I have to go and get fresh vegetables every couple days over there.

Alma speaks of at least three destinations, and she obviously organizes her schedule to accommodate these different trips. One might think that this kind of shopping appears rather routine, after all, she describes it as "in between." Note that she does not consider this effort major, rather her partner does "big" shopping. Yet each of Alma's little shopping trips consists of a rather large number of choices about feeding. She must decide on what kind of fish and conceive of other items to serve with it. She decides when to go for vegetables and chooses among myriad varieties, making sure not to buy the same ones over and over yet also measuring the quality of the produce. Interestingly, she identifies her partner as the shopper, though she actually makes most of the feeding and provisioning decisions for her family. [...]

Monitoring: Supplies, Schedules, and Finances

Another component of feeding work revolves around the efforts of planners to monitor the supply of foods and other household products. DeVault suggests the complexity of monitoring work:

> Routines for provisioning evolve gradually out of decisions that are linked to the resources and characteristics of particular households and to features of the market. … Monitoring also provides a continual testing of typical practices. This testing occurs as shoppers keep track of changes on both sides of the relation: household needs and products available. (1991, 71)

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Lesbigay family members, both planners and others, attest to clear patterns of specialization when it comes to who keeps tabs on both food products and other household products like cleaning supplies, toiletries, and items like dinner candles. Very few families reported splitting this effort up equally, and even those that did, did so gingerly. Susan Posner, an employment recruiter in the computer industry, recounts: "Neither one of us keeps track. It just kind of surfaces that we need something. We don't have a list or anything. I guess whoever runs out of toilet paper first. And I guess I run out of toilet paper a lot. [*Laughter*] Okay, so maybe I do it." Susan's comments should give pause to students of domestic labor. Her comments reveal not only that she does the work of monitoring supplies, but also that she seems either unaware or perhaps to be attempting to deny that she does it. The planners, who do much of the monitoring, frequently speak of the dynamic character of the work. Tim Cisneros, a registered nurse, describes how he needed to change his routine in order to get the right deodorant for his partner:

> I mostly shop at Diamond Heights Safeway, though now I go over to Tower Market as well, at least once a month. 1 started doing that because Paul is hyperallergic to most deodorants, and he needs to use one special kind, and Safeway stopped carrying it. I tried to get it at the drugstore next to Safeway, but they don't carry it, either. So now, I go to Tower to get it. I buy other stuff while I'm there, so it's not really a big deal.

Tim captures the dynamic quality of provisioning. As demands change in the household or products change in the market, he comes up with new strategies to maintain equilibrium. Among roughly half of the families reporting a shopping/cooking division, more discussion of products occurs. Narvin Wong, a financial consultant in healthcare, comments:

> We sometimes get our wires crossed. I buy what he puts on the list, and that's almost always what we usually buy. I mean, I know what we need, but sometimes he changes his mind about what he needs and I don't always remember him telling me. Like a few weeks ago, he put olive oil on the list, and 1 bought olive oil. He says he told me that he wanted to start using extra-virgin olive oil. Well, I didn't hear that, and he yelled and steamed about it when he unpacked the groceries.

Narvin's comments suggest that perhaps less of this kind of conflict takes place in households where one person performs both the actual shopping and the provisioning work behind the trips to the store. Further, Narvin's partner, Lawrence Shoong, says that he often tries to go with Narvin to the store. Why?

> Because it gives me a chance to see what's out there. Narvin doesn't look for new things. Even if he does, he doesn't tell me about them. I like to know what's in season and just to see what's new. And inevitably, he forgets stuff. I know I should write it on the list, which is what he says, but when I go to the store, I can go up and down the rows and remember what we have and what we need.

Again, this points to the interdependent and dynamic character of feeding work. To do it successfully, given the way our society distributes foodstuffs and defines appropriate eating, the meal planner needs to stay in contact with the marketplace. Many planners do this through reading grocery flyers in the paper or in the mail,

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but many also try to stay in contact with the store itself. As Lawrence's comments suggest, much of provisioning work takes place in one's mind, the place where much of the hidden work of monitoring takes place.

Just as the work of monitoring the household and the marketplace come into view as highly dynamic processes, so too does the planner monitor the dynamic schedules of family members as a part of provisioning work. This means that many planners shop with the goal of providing a great deal of flexibility in meal options. For instance, many planners report selecting at least some dinner items that they can easily move to another night of the week should something come up. Sarah Lynch, a graphic artist who works in a studio at home, captures the dynamic circumstances under which she provisions meals:

> I never have any idea when Andrea will get here. She may stay at the bank until 11:00 at night. Sometimes, she doesn't know up until right before 5:00 whether she will be able to come home. So I still want us to eat together and I want her to get a decent meal, so I try to buy things that I can make quickly and that still taste good. She will call me from her car phone as soon as she is leaving the city. That gives me about an hour. I often will make something like a lasagna that I can then heat up when she calls, or I buy a lot of fresh pastas, in packages, you know the ones, and I will start that when she calls. I also try to buy a lot of snacklike items, healthy ones, but things like crackers and trail mix and dried fruit so that she can eat those things if she is really hungry and went without lunch or something, and so I can eat white I am waiting for her to get here.

Similarly, Matthew Corrigan, an office administrator, provisions meals to accommodate the schedule of his partner:

> I sometimes find it hard to keep a handle on things. Greg is active in a number of voluntary things—our church and a hospice for PWAs—and he serves on a City task force on housing issues. I am never completely sure he will be here for the meals I plan. So I try to have a lot of food around that we can make quickly and easily, like soups, veggie burgers, and pastas. If it gets too tight, and it often does, we will eat out, or just he will eat out and then I eat something at home, and hopefully I have something here to make.

Both Matthew and Sarah provision their households in light of the need to build in flexibility around the work and social schedules of their partners and themselves. The effort they put into this kind of dynamic provisioning frequently goes unnoticed and often appears routine, but they clearly think about these scheduling concerns in the work of provisioning for their families.

In addition to the efforts planners make in monitoring schedules, supplies, and markets, many also report concerns about monitoring finances. Participants refer to financial concerns in deciding what to eat and where to shop. The cutting of coupons both illustrates financial concerns and demonstrates the de facto division of provisioning work in many lesbigay families. Rarely do all family members report cutting coupons. For the most part, one partner, the planner/provisioner, cuts coupons. Tim Reskin, a clerk in a law firm, describes his use of coupons:

> Over time I have developed a sense of the brands that I know that we prefer. Sometimes I have coupons that I use. It's not like I will use any coupon, but if there's something that seems interesting or we don't have an opinion about, I might use that to decide. I always go through the Sunday paper and cut out the usable coupons. Cost is a big criterion for us.

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In addition to cutting coupons, the less affluent households more often report that they compare prices, watch for sales and buy large-portioned products at discount stores like Costco and Food for Less. Lower-income planners also report spending more time reading grocery advertisements and going to different stores to buy sale items with the purpose of saving money in mind.

The estimates provided by participants regarding food expenditures provide additional insight into the division and character of feeding work. Weekly grocery expenditures vary significantly for lesbigay families, ranging from thirty dollars a week in the less affluent households to over two hundred and fifty dollars a week in the wealthier ones. Not that family members always agree on the cost of groceries. Planners estimate spending roughly thirty dollars more per week on groceries than their partners estimate. The thirty-dollar figure functions both as the mean and the median among the one hundred and three adult participants.

This knowledge gap in food expenditures points to several interesting dynamics. First, it reflects planners' knowledge of the cost of the many small trips to the store during the week. Second, it indicates planners' greater attentiveness to the cost of food items. Finally, it often points to the expectation of family members that planners should monitor and limit the cost of food. Consider the following examples. Tim Reskin and Philip Norris live in a distant East Bay suburb in a modest apartment. While they both work in the city, they live in the suburbs to avoid the high cost of housing in the city. Phillip performs much of the work of feeding their family. He plans the meals and creates much of the grocery list. In explaining why Tim does the bigger shopping on weekends, they both speak about financial concerns. Tim puts it this way: "Money, that's a major part of the reason why he doesn't go to the store. For Tim, he doesn't take price into consideration as much as he should. I use coupons and don't get distracted by advertising gimmicks at the store. I am more conscious of money." Philip sees things somewhat differently, but points to the issue of cost as well.

> He shops. He feels he has more control at the store. He feels he's a smarter shopper. I tend to look for high quality, whereas he tends to look for the best price. He does seem sharper. Well, he thinks he has a better handle on excessive spending. I don't know, though. You know, he does limit things during the major shopping, but then I have to go out and get things during the week. I am very, very careful about watching the cost. But you know what? Partly I have to go out and get things because of his complaints. He says that I cook blandly, like an Englishman. But the fact is, I work with what he brings home, and if he won't buy spices or sauces or whatever, in order to save money, then the food will taste bland. He denies that's what happens, but it is.

Phillip actually bears a significant part of the responsibility for monitoring food costs. Note the phrase "I am very, very careful about watching the cost." Philip's comments illustrate the interdependent character of monitoring costs and planning meals, but further, he also must consider his partner's satisfaction with the meals.

A strikingly similar example emerges within a lesbian household. Marilyn Kemp and Letty Bartky live in one of the lesbigay neighborhoods of San Francisco. They both work in lower-level administrative jobs and find themselves struggling financially. They talk about the high cost of housing and how to cut corners in order to

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stay living in San Francisco. Letty, who performs much of the feeding work in the family, comments on Marilyn's approach to weekend shopping:

> Marilyn likes to shop like a Mormon—you know, be prepared for six months. She buys these huge boxes of stuff. I think it's silly. I am more into going two or three times a week. Also, I like to take time to make up my mind, while she just wants to get through the store as fast as possible. She bitches that I don't make interesting things to eat, but what does she expect given our financial constraints and her shopping regimen.

Marilyn sees it differently: "We don't disagree much at all about shopping. I do it because I am more cost-conscious than she is."

Both of the above families suggest that it is one thing to manage the cost of groceries while shopping, but another matter entirely to manage the cost of groceries in the broader context of feeding the family.

Preparing Meals

The actual physical work of preparing meals each day requires thorough analysis. In some instances, the physical preparation of the meal occasionally begins in the morning when meal planners take items from the freezer to defrost for the evening meal. Some planners report other early morning efforts such as marinating meats, vegetables, of tofu. Most planners begin the meal preparation shortly after arriving home from work. Many report emptying the dishwasher or putting away dry dishes from the rack as one of the first steps in getting ready to prepare the evening meal. This point to the ambiguity of the cooking/cleaning distinction offered by many participants. The majority of meal planners arrive home from work earlier than their partners, more than an hour earlier in most cases. Depending on the menu items, which vary widely, participant's estimate that meal preparation takes approximately an hour. The preparation of the meal involves mastering a number of different tasks, including coordinating the completion time of different elements of the meal, managing unexpected exigencies like telephone calls or conversations with family members, coping with missing ingredients or short supplies, and engaging in all of the techniques of food preparation, from cutting vegetables to kneading pizza dough to deboning fish to barbecuing meats.

Many meal preparers find it difficult to capture the character of the process involved in creating meals. Even those who seem well versed in cooking find it difficult to characterize the process in its true fullness and complexity. Clyde Duesenberry, who prepares most of the meals in the house, comments:

> We make pesto quite a bit. We have that with fried chicken or some sausage or whatever. We like breaded foods. We like Wienerschnitzel. We will have blue cheese on burgers. We roast chickens quite often. We watch cooking shows quite a bit. The story about Mike, he can do it if he wants to, he knows the basics of cooking. One time I got called out on a call on a Sunday evening and he took over and we never had chicken as good as he made it. He cooks the broccoli. He knows how to do that. It isn't the recipe that makes a cook, it's the mastery of techniques. I can't even begin to cover all the territory of cooking you are asking about.

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The meal preparer realizes the complexity of the work involved and struggles to put it into words. Usually their words belie the full extent of their effort as they struggle to express what they do. Another participant, Daniel Sen Yung, says:

> I tend to steam things a lot. I use dressings. A lot of salads and stuff. I don't know *[said with exasperation]*, it's hard to describe, I just do it. Each time it seems like there are different things to do. I call someone and ask them, or I look at a cookbook, or I just experiment and hope for the best. I make some things over and over and each thing has its own routine.

The daily physical process of meal preparation takes on a highly dynamic and thoughtful quality. While some meals take on a routine quality in some households, for most the process appears much more vigorous and multifaceted. It requires the constant attention, the knowledge, and the physical labor of meal prepares.

Feeding and Cleaning

In contrast to meal preparation, the cleanup of the evening meal appears much more routine, requiring less mental effort, less time, less knowledge, and less work. As previously indicated, many lesbigay households use a cooking/cleaning distinction to explain the organization and division of feeding work. However, in close to one-third of the sample, the person who prepares the meal also cleans up after the meal. The cleaning component deserves closer analysis. Those who clean up the kitchen estimate a median time of thirty minutes. They talk about clearing the dishes, loading the dishwasher, putting away leftover food, and wiping the counters and the stovetop. Some include taking out trash or wiping floors, but not most. Among the less affluent families, participants include washing and drying the dishes. As I briefly noted earlier, meal preparers often empty the dishwasher or put away dry dishes when they begin preparing the evening meal. The work of cleaning up is highly routinized in most lesbigay households, requiring little decision making and little emotional work. Barbara Cho, a shift supervisor for a hotel, notes that the cleanup actually allows her time to think and unwind from her day: "It's not a big deal. I clean off the table. Sandy helps bring in the dishes. I load the dishwasher, wipe off the counter, and put stuff away. It's a great time for me to think about things, I often reflect on my day or decide what I'm going to do that night. It helps me unwind." Rarely do meal planners/preparers conceive of their feeding work in these terms. Most spoke of the importance of staying focused on meal preparation in order to avoid burning meats or overcooking vegetables, and of coordinating meal items so they reach completion at the same time.

Several meal preparers also note that they make some effort to limit the mess caused by meal preparation and actually do a lot of cleaning as they go. Sucheng Kyutaro, who prepares most meals eaten at home, notes:

> She complains a lot if I make too much of a mess during cooking. So I kind of watch it as I go. I try to clean the major things as I cook. I will rinse out pans, like if I make spaghetti sauce, I will run all the remains from the vegetables down the garbage disposal and rinse out the sauce pan and I always wipe off the stove. She really doesn't like cleaning that up at all.

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Gary Hosokawa, a payroll supervisor who does much of the feeding work in his family, remarks: "Usually I cook and he cleans. Although I am really anal about keeping a clean kitchen, so I clean a lot while I am cooking. There is not that much for him to do."

The preceding comments demonstrate the limited character of cleaning up after meals in many lesbigay households, and they further undermine the salience of the cooking/cleaning distinction employed by many participants to indicate the egalitarianism of their household arrangements.

Feeding Work and the Creation of Gender, Class, Ethnic, and Family Identities

Feeding and the Production of Gender Identity

Recent empirical and theoretical work on the sociology of gender conceives of the production or achievement of gender identity as resulting from routine and continuous engagement in certain kinds of work and activities socially defined as gendered (Berk 1985; Coltrane 1989; West and Zimmerman 1987). This perspective emerges from a school of thought in sociology that understands gender as a dynamic and purposeful accomplishment: something people produce in social interaction (Cahill 1989; Goffman 1977; Kessler and McKenna 1978). West and Zimmerman point to the significance of action, interaction, and display in the process of "doing gender": "a person's gender is not simply an aspect of what one is, but, more fundamentally, it is something that one does, and does recurrently, in interaction with others" (1987, 140). Gender is not the product of socialized roles in which individuals continually recast themselves. Rather, gender requires continual effort to reproduce in everyday life. Since in this society and many others gender constitutes an essential component or the system of social classification, "doing gender" results in keeping social relationships orderly, comprehensible, and stratified. Frequently, individuals possess an awareness of doing gender while deciding how to conduct themselves in daily life. How masculine should one appear while observing a sports event? How feminine should one appear in a television interview? Berk demonstrates how household tasks function as occasions for creating and sustaining gender identity (1985, 204). Coltrane (1989), in his study of fathers who become extensively involved in the work of childcare, shows how such men must manage the threats to gender identity that such work poses to them. To violate the gendered expectations of others often lends to stigma and to challenges to the gender identity of the violator. Coltrane found that men who care for (feed, clean, teach, hold) infants often face stigma from coworkers and biological relatives, and that oftentimes the men hide their caring activities from these people to avoid conflict and challenges to their masculine identity. Men performing domestic labor—or women who fail to—produce the potential for stigma, a matter of great significance for gay and lesbian couples, where the reality of household life clashes with cultural gender expectations.

Accordingly, managing the gendered identity of members of lesbigay families becomes a central dynamic in the portrayal of feeding work both within the family and to outsiders. In general, feeding work in the household constitutes women's

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work, even when men engage in the work. That link of feeding with the production of womanly status persists and presents dilemmas for lesbigay families. Let me begin my analysis of this dynamic by pointing to a rather odd thing that happened in interviews with lesbigay family members. I interviewed family members separately to prevent participants from constructing seamless accounts of household activities. In so doing, inconsistencies occurred in the portrayal of domestic work, including feeding work. In six of the twenty-six male families, both claim that they last cooked dinner. In four of the twenty-six female couples, both claim that the other person last cooked dinner. How can one explain this? Were the participants simply confused? Why a persistent gendered pattern of confusion? Lesbian families do more often report sharing in the tasks of meal preparation than do gay-male families, so here the confusion may reflect the presence of both partners in the kitchen. Participant observation confirms such a pattern. For instance, in two of the four female households observed in depth, both women spent the majority of time during meal preparation together in the kitchen. I do not mean to imply that they share every task or divide meal preparation equally. Frequently, they engage in conversation and one person assists by getting things out the refrigerator, chopping celery, or pulling something out of the oven. Mostly, one person prepares and manages the meal while the other helps. The question remains, Why do men who did not prepare a meal claim to have done so, and why do women report that their partners who assisted actually prepared the meal?

The answer looks different for female and male households. In some lesbian couples the partner who performs much of the feeding work seems to also concern herself with preventing threats to the gender identity of her less domestically involved partner. This pattern seems most persistent among lesbian couples where one of the partners pursues a higher-paying, higher-status occupation. Consider the following examples. Cindy Pence and Ruth Cohen have been together for eleven years. Cindy works as a nurse, and she does much of the feeding work in the family. Ruth works as a healthcare executive. Ruth works extensive hours, and it often spills over into their family life, something Cindy dislikes. Ruth acknowledges that Cindy does much of the domestic work in their relationship, including the feeding work. Ruth says that she tries to help out when she can, and she tries to get home to help with dinner. They each claim that the other person cooked the last meal at home. During my interview with Ruth I asked about work and family conflicts, and how work might impinge on family life. Ruth comments:

RUTH: Cindy's great about my work. She does so much. I don't think I could handle it all without her. She sort of covers for me, I guess and I feel guilty about it, but I also know that she appreciates how hard I work for us.

CC: What do you mean, she covers up for you?

RUTH: I mean, she gives me credit for doing a lot of stuff at home that I don't really do. I mean, I help her, but it's not really my show. She does it and I really appreciate it. But I feel terrible about it.

The same kind of feelings emerged in an interview with Dolores Bettenson and Arlene Wentworth. Both women work as attorneys for public entities, though Dolores's job requires less overtime and allows for a more flexible schedule. Dolores reports working for wages forty hours per week, while Arlene reports working for wages around sixty hours per week, including frequent trips to the office on Saturdays

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and on Sunday evenings. Dolores handles much of the feeding work of the family, while the couple pays a housekeeper to do much of the house cleaning. Both Dolores and Arlene initially report that they split responsibility for cooking. Arlene, in response to a question about conflicts over meal preparation, says:

> I think things are pretty fifty-fifty, we are pretty equal: I guess she does things more thoroughly than I do, and she complains about that, but she always gives me a lot of credit for the stuff I do. Sometimes, I think she gives me too much credit, though, and I feel guilty about it, because, as I said, she takes that kind of stuff more seriously than I do, I just don't have as much time.

Both Ruth's and Arlene's comments reveal a pattern of the more domestically involved partner assigning credit for completing domestic work that the less domestically involved partner did not do. I suspect that this occurs in part to provide "cover" for women who spend less time doing domestic work, less time "doing gender."

In a similar vein, the pattern among gay males appears the opposite, and more intensely so, in some respects. Engaging in routine feeding work violates gendered expectations for men. I emphasize routine because men can and do participate in ceremonial public cooking such as the family barbecue. Yet the reality of household life requires that someone do feeding work. In heterosexual family life, men are usually capable of avoiding feeding work, but in gay-male families, someone must feed. Only in a very few, quite affluent households did feeding work seem particularly diminished and replaced by eating most meals in the marketplace. Most gay-male, couples eat at home, and among many of them I detect a pattern of men colluding to protect the masculine status of the meal planner/preparer. The conflicted claims of who last prepared an evening meal illustrate this dynamic and also reveal the ambiguous feelings held by men who feed about their status and their work. Bill Regan and Rich Chesebro have been together for three years. Rich works at a large software company and Bill works as an artist. Bill often works at home and carries much of the responsibility for domestic work, including feeding work. Both men claim that they last prepared the evening meal. Other questions in the interview reveal that, in fact, Bill prepared the last meal. When I asked about the last time they invited people over for dinner, Bill replied that it was two days before the interview, on Saturday night. When asking about what he prepared, he responded: "Well, let us see, *last night I made lasagna*. Oh, and that night, Saturday, I broiled tuna." It turns out that Bill made the last meal, though Rich claims that he did: Why should Rich make such a claim? Part of the answer lies in Rich's concern, expressed several times, that Bill not become overly identified with domestic work. When asking Rich about who last went to the grocery store, Rich replies: "I think that Bill might have, but it is not that big of a deal really. He really likes his work as an artist and that's *where his true interest lies*" (emphasis added). This response initially confused me. I ask about a trip to the store, and I receive an answer emphasizing Bill's work as an artist. I let this response pass, but later in the interview, I ask Rich about who last invited someone over to dinner, and who typically does this. In a similar rhetorical move, Rich says: "Well, I suspect Bill might be the one to do that, but I don't think it is that significant to him, really: *His real love* is his work as an artist, that's where he puts most of his energy" (emphasis added). At this point in the interview I decide to pursue Rich's intent in moving us from matters of domesticity to Bill's status as an artist. I ask Rich

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why he brought up Bill's work as an artist in the context of who most likely invites people to dinner. "Well, because I worry that people will get the wrong idea about Bill. I know that he does a lot of stuff around here, but he really wants to become an artist, and I don't want people to think of him as a housewife or something. He has other interests." As these comments disclose, Rich attempts here to manage the identity of his partner. This interpretation receives further confirmation on the basis of Rich's answer to a question about how he would feel about his partner engaging in home-making full-time and working for wages only partly or not at all:

> Well, I wouldn't like it at all. I don't see how that could be fair, for one person to contribute everything and the other to give little or nothing to the relationship. Plus, what about one's self-respect? I don't see how one could live with oneself by not doing something for a living. I would not be comfortable at all telling people that Bill is just a housewife. If he wanted to do his artwork and do more of the housework, that would be okay, I guess, but that's kind of how we do it already.

While Rich attempts to shield Bill from identification with domestic work, both in order to protect Bill from the status of "a housewife or something" but also to confirm his own *belief that domestic work holds little value*, the reality remains that Bill does much of the domestic work, including feeding work. Doing feeding work ties Bill to a more feminine identity. Bill put it like this in response to a question about whether the roles of heterosexual society influence the character of his relationship with Rich:

> I think that the functions all need to be handled. There is a certain amount of mothering that is required and whether that is done by a man or a woman does not matter. But mothering per se is an important function. And there is a certain amount of fathering having to do with setting goals and directions and creating focus. I guess people do think of me as more of the mother in our relationship, because I cook and invest a lot in our home, but that's their problem. Sometimes I feel strange about it, but I like to do it and I like the family life that we have together.

Bill's words capture the ambiguity of feelings about feeding work and other domestic work that I heard frequently in many lesbigay households. On the one hand, Bill recognizes the importance of such work (mothering) to creating a family life. On the other hand, he feels strange about his participation in domestic work. Bill's partner worries about people identifying Bill with domestic work and emphasizes Bill's identity as artist.

Another gay-male household illustrates a similar set of dynamics. Nolan Ruether and Joe Mosse have been together just under two decades. They live in an affluent suburban community outside the city. They both work in healthcare, though in very different settings and with quite different responsibilities. Nolan is a registered nurse and reports working forty hours per week. Joe works in a medical research lab and reports working closer to fifty hours per week. He also has a part-time job on the weekends. Nolan handles much of the domestic life of the family, including much of the feeding work. Both partners claim that they last cooked an evening meal. They actually eat separately more often than not, with Nolan eating a meal at home in the early evening that he cooks for himself and Joe either eating something on the run or eating something late when he arrives home. Joe indicates that he does the major

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shopping on weekends, though Nolan makes frequent trips to the market during the week and says that "I often pick up things that will be easy for him to prepare when he gets home from work, and I frequently will make something that he can simply warm up when he gets in." Nolan actually cooked the last meal, while Joe warmed up the meal when he arrived home late. Throughout the interview Joe emphasizes the egalitarian character of their relationship and diminishes the amount and significance of domestic work in the household. When I ask about conflicts over meals or meal preparation, Joe responds, "Um, well, we hardly ever eat meals at all. There is no work to conflict about. I eat out and he tends after his own." Nolan reports that they eat at home half the week, while they go out the other half. Nolan reports that they do not plan meals, though he says that they do communicate on the subject: "We don't plan meals, really. We either are both at home and I ask him what he wants or I call him at work and then I just go to the store and buy it. We don't keep a lot of food here, because I tend to run out to the store most every day." Nolan does much of the feeding work. He engages in routine provisioning work for the family, and he plans many of the family's social occasions that involve food. He also does most of the emotional labor related to food. Now consider Nolan's responses to questions about his feelings toward traditional gender roles for men and women in American Society:

> I certainly see the value in it, in ways I never did before I was in a relationship. There's a lot of work to be done to keep a house nice and to make life pleasant. I get pretty tired sometimes, I don't think Joe has any sense of it, really. He is off so much doing work, but he works so much by choice. You know, I think I said, we don't really need the money, but he couldn't imagine being around here doing this stuff.

Does he think that traditional gender roles influence the pattern of domestic life in your relationship?

> Well, in the sense that I do everything and he does very little, yes, I think it resembles the traditional pattern. He would of course deny it and get angry if I pushed the topic, so I don't bring it up, and I feel it's kind of difficult to talk to anyone about it because, well, because they might think of me as a complaining housewife or something, and I don't think most people can understand a man doing what I do. So when he says there isn't that much to do around here, I just sort of let him believe what he wants. It isn't worth the trouble.

Notice the ambiguity of feeling Nolan expresses about talking to others about his situation. Nolan's restraint (emotion work) actually enables Joe to diminish the importance of the work that Nolan does to maintain family life. Joe's approach to his household life closely resembles the pattern of need reduction detected by Hochschild (1989, 202) among some men in her study of heterosexual couples. Consider the following excerpts from our interview:

> CC: Tell me about your feelings toward traditional roles for men and women in the family in American society.
>
> JOE: I think those roles have declined a lot. It's more diverse now. I am really glad that such roles have declined. I feel that there should be two people out earning incomes. I don't think that people should stay at home. I can't see the value in it. Everyone should have outside interests. And I especially don't think that a man should be stuck in the home, cooking and stuff like that. Nolan works full-time, and we mostly eat out.
>
> CC: Do you feel like the prescriptions for such roles influence or shape your relationship? Why or why not?

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JOE: Definitely not. We are both men and we both work for a living, and so we don't really fit those images. We don't have much domestic work here, especially since I am not here that much.

CC: What would you think of your partner or yourself engaging in homemaking full-time and working for wages only partly or not at all?

JOE: I would not be too pleased with it. There has to be a common goal that you both work toward. For one to contribute everything would not be fair. I don't make that much of a mess, and so I don't think that there would be anything for him to do.

Throughout this exchange Joe not only diminishes the presence of domestic work through emphasizing how often he is gone but also expresses his concern that his partner not become overly identified with domestic work. Nolan's own feelings of ambiguity about doing domestic work, and the threat it poses to his gender identity, actually keep him from talking about his circumstances.

One observes another example of the salience of gender to the portrayal of feeding work in dinner parties. Using Goffman's conceptions of "frontstage" and "backstage" work, sociologist Randall Collins suggests that cooking meals for dinner parties constitutes a frontstage activity that "generally culminates with the housewife calling the family or guests to the table and presiding there to receive compliments on the results of her stage (or rather table) setting" (1992, 220). The backstage work, much more arduous and time intensive, consists of a wide array of different kinds of invisible work: planning, provisioning, and monitoring. The work is often invisible in the sense that these forms of work receive little public recognition during dinner parties. In most lesbigay families the responsibility for both the elaborateness and the exoticness of foods for dinner parties becomes the responsibility of the meal planner/preparer, and often this person takes front stage at the dinner party.

However, in ten of the lesbigay households, and in contrast to the normative pattern in heterosexual families described by Collins, the person who cooks for dinner parties often only engages in the frontstage work while the other partner performs much of the backstage or more hidden forms of work. These ten households share a common pattern. In the male families the person who performs routine feeding work and performs the backstage work for dinner parties also works for wages in somewhat female-identified occupations: two nurses, a primary education teacher, a legal secretary, a social worker, and an administrative assistant. The frontstage males work in male-identified occupations: two accountants, an engineer, an attorney, a physician, and a midlevel manager. In the female families exhibiting a split between frontstage and backstage feeding, frontstage women work in male-identified occupations: two attorneys, a higher-level manager, and a college professor. The occupations of the backstage females include two retail sales workers, a nurse, and an artist. Taking the front stage in such dinner parties may well function as a strategy on the part of these lesbigay couples to manage threats to the gender identity of the domestically engaged men or the less domestically engaged women.

Confirming this pattern in the words of participants proves somewhat elusive. None of the women who do backstage feeding work for dinner parties expressed dissatisfaction about this. And while several of the men complain that they do not receive credit for the backstage work they do in preparation for such dinners, they also seem reluctant to make much of a fuss about it. Tim Cisneros, who works as a nurse and does much of the routine feeding work, responds to a question about who last prepared a meal for dinner guests, and why, by saying, "Well, I guess you

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would have to say he did. Though, I am the one who did most of the prep work for it. He gets a lot of pleasure out of cooking fancy stuff for others, and while I think I should get some credit, I don't make a big deal about it. I would feel kind of weird pointing it out, so I just let him take the credit. It's easier that way." Tim's observations convey his awareness of an inconsistency between frontstage and backstage, and his assertion of the ease of maintaining that inconsistency makes it plausible to think that there is little to gain, and there may even be a cost, in disclosing the inconsistency.

As evidenced by the above cases, gender operates as a continuous concern for lesbigay families, but in ways more complex than many accounts of lesbigay family life indicate. The gender strategies deployed by the different participants suggest an abiding concern about maintaining traditional gender categories, and particularly of avoiding the stigma that comes with either failing to engage in domestic work for lesbian families or through engaging in domestic work for gay-male families. The portrayal of feeding work by lesbigay households conforms to these gender-related concerns, and partners tend to manage the identity of their respective partners.

Feeding Work and the Production of Class Identity

Feeding work in lesbigay families both reflects and perpetuates social-class distinctions. Patterns of meal preparation and patterns of sociability forged through the sharing of meals across families reflect the presence of social-class distinctions among lesbigay families. These social-class distinctions seem quite apparent but, historically, sociologists have found it difficult to find such class differences among lesbigay people. Two decades ago, when sociologist Carol Warren conducted a study of gay life, she concluded:

> It is clear that members tend to think of themselves, no matter what the abstract criteria, as members of an elite class .... since an elegant upper-middle-class lifestyle is one of the status hallmarks of the gay community, it is quite difficult to tell, and especially in the context of secrecy, what socioeconomic status people actually have. (1974, 85)

The families in this study do not lead secret lives: only five of the 103 adults interviewed completely hid their identities from coworkers, and only six hid their identities from biological relatives. It seems that as the lesbigay community becomes more visible, so too do differences among lesbigay people become more visible. Gender and racial distinctions pervade lesbigay life. Social-class distinctions also pervade lesbigay life and patterns of feeding often reflect and reproduce such distinctions.

The organization, preparation, and hosting of dinner parties plays a significant role in the production of class distinctions among lesbians and gays. Upper-middle-class lesbigay families report organizing and participating in dinner parties for friends and coworkers with much greater frequency than middle- and working/service-class families, except for some ethnically identified families, to whom I will return shortly. In terms of household income, the top 25 percent of families report either holding or attending a dinner party at least two times per month. In the bottom 25 percent, families rarely report any such occasion.

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These meals function to reproduce social-class alliances and identities. For example, these meals become occasions for professionals to identify potential clients, learn of potential job opportunities, learn of new technologies, or stay abreast of organizational politics. During election cycles, these dinner parties among the affluent can take on political significance. Many lesbian and gay politicians in the city of San Francisco use such occasions as fundraisers. The lesbigay politician attends the gathering and the campaign charges between $50 and $500 per person. Among the wealthier participants living in San Francisco proper and earning household incomes of over $80,000, nearly every household reports either attending or hosting such a meal. These dinner parties provide access to power and influence on policy, and they play a crucial role in the political order of San Francisco lesbigay politics.

In a wider sense, dinner parties contribute to the creation of social-class identities. As DeVault comments on the function of hosting dinner parties, "it also has significance in the mobilization of these individuals as actors in their class: it brings together 'insiders' to a dominant class, and marks their common interests" (1991, 207). Given DeVault's observation, what does it mean to claim that these shared meals "mark their common interests"?

Beyond the more obvious career advantages and the sheer social enjoyment of such occasions, part of the answer lies in the symbolic meaning people attach to cuisine and the Style in which hosts present it. Collins conceives of the symbolic meanings people attach to such occasions as an example of "household status presentation" (1992, 219). In other words, the choice of cuisine and the style of serving constructs social-class identity for the participants. Further, dinner parties function as occasions for the display and sharing of "cultural capital" (Bourdieu 1984). Bourdieu conceives of cultural capital as knowledge and familiarity with socially valued forms of music, art, literature, fashion, and cuisine, in other words, a sense of "class" or "good taste." Bourdieu distinguishes cultural capital from economic capital, therein arguing that some members of society may possess higher levels of cultural capital yet possess less wealth, and vice-versa. The household often functions as the site where cultural capital or good taste finds expression. Dinner parties often operate as a stage upon which the hosts display and call attention to various forms of cultural capital, including everything from works of art to home furnishings, from musical selections to displays of literature, from table settings to the food itself. The elaborate and the exotic quality of meals plays a central role in the upper-middle-class lesbigay dinner party. The higher-status participants often speak of specializing in a particular cuisine. Joe Mosse speaks of his interest in Indian cuisine:

> We often have Indian food when guests come over. I started cooking Indian food as a hobby many years ago. We've collected lots of Indian cookbooks, and I do a lot of different dishes. People generally love it. It's unusual and people remember that. You can get Indian food when you go out, especially in San Francisco, but how many people actually serve it at home?

Such dinner parties become elaborate both through the featuring of exotic menus and through the serving of a succession of courses throughout the meal: appetizers, soups, salads, main courses, coffee and tea, desserts, and after-dinner drinks. These dinner parties often feature higher-quality wines, and the higher-status participants often know something about the wine; this becomes part of the conversation of the evening.

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In sum, the dinner party serves as an opportunity for the creation and maintenance of class distinction.

Class differences impact the character and extent of everyday meals as well. More affluent families spend less time in preparing meals for everyday consumption than do the less affluent. A number of factors contribute to this. First, the more affluent eat out quite frequently. One in five lesbigay families report eating four or more meals per week in restaurants. Those who eat out more often earn higher incomes. Second, the more affluent use labor-saving devices like microwaves and food processors more frequently. Third, they often purchase prepared meals from upscale delis and fresh pasta shops. All of this purchasing feeding work in the marketplace enables more affluent couples to achieve a greater degree of egalitarianism in their relationships. These couples resemble the dual-career heterosexual couples studied by Hertz (1986). To the outside observer, and to the participants, affluent lesbigay families are more egalitarian in terms of feeding work, and they purchase that equality in the marketplace. As Hertz so eloquently argues:

> On the surface, dual-career couples appear to be able to operate as a self-sufficient nuclear family. Nonetheless, they are dependent as a group and as individuals on a category of people external to the family. Couples view their ability to purchase this service as another indication of their self-sufficiency (or "making it"). Yet, appearances are deceptive. … What appears to be self-sufficiency for one category of workers relies on the existence of a category of less advantaged workers (p. 194).

Accordingly, scanning the lesbian and particularly the gay-male enclaves of San Francisco one discovers a preponderance of food service establishments offering relatively cheap and convenient meals: taquerias, Thai restaurants, pasta shops, hamburger joints, Chinese restaurants, and delis. Most of these establishments employ women, ethnic and racial minorities, and less educated, less affluent gay men. The low wages earned by these workers enable more affluent lesbigay families to purchase meals in the marketplace and to avoid conflicts over feeding work. Many affluent lesbigay families report deciding to simply eat out rather than face the hassle of planning, preparing, and cleaning up after meals. Less affluent families may not make that choice, and thus they spend much more time and effort in the production of routine meals.

Feeding Work and the Production of Ethnic Identity

While one's social-class status influences whether one attends dinner parties with much frequency, those families with strong ethnic identifications do report more shared meals. Among these groups the sharing of food, and the ethnic character of that food, becomes an important expression of ethnic heritage and cultural identity. Gary Hosokowa, an Asian-American of Hawaiian descent, speaks of the centrality of his *hula* group to his social life and understands that group in familial terms. In response to a question about how he thinks about family, Gary replies:

> It's really strange, hard to explain. In Hawaiian culture, your *hula* group is family. In ancient times, the *hula* teacher would choose students to become *hula* dancers and they would live

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> together and become family. They ate together, slept together. They were picked from their own family groups and became part of another family group. *My hula* group is my family, we eat together, we dance together. It is very deep, spiritual thing for me.

For Gary, the sharing of meals functions to create and sustain ethnic identity.

In like manner, Michael Herrera and Frederico Monterosa, a Latino couple together for three years who live with a young lesbian women, Jenny Dumont, consider themselves a family. They also speak of a larger family, consisting of other Latino and non-Latino friends, as well as Federico's cousins. Michael and Frederico report recurrent dinner and brunch gatherings, often featuring Mexican foods. Michael remarks:

> We like to make enchiladas a lot, and sometimes we have meat, like beef or something, but always with a Mexican soup for our family gatherings. We get together every couple of weeks. It's very important to me. It's one thing that I think a lot of my Anglo friends feel really envious about, we sort of have a family and many of them don't.

When comparing the appeal of ethnically identified foods to the upper strata of the lesbigay community (mostly Euro-Americans) with the appeal of such foods to the Asian and Latino participants it becomes clear that the food symbolizes very different things for each group. For the affluent lesbigay families the food represents creativity and contributes to the entertaining atmosphere of the dinner party. It carries status due to its exoticness and the difficulty of its preparation.

In contrast, among Asian and Latino lesbigay participants, food expresses ethnic heritage and symbolizes ethnic solidarity, and sometimes resistance to cultural assimilation. Many Asian and Latino participants pride themselves not on the variety of cuisine but on the consistent replication of the same cuisine and even the same meals.

Feeding Work and the Production of Family

Feeding work plays a pivotal role in the construction of lesbigay families. The comments of meal planners/preparers suggest a conscious effort to create a sense of family through their feeding work. For instance, Kathy Atwood and Joan Kelsey, a lesbian couple in their mid-thirties and living in a sort of lesbian enclave in the Oakland neighborhood of Rockridge, both speak of sharing meals as constitutive of family. Kathy, talking about why she considers some of her close friends as family, says, "Well, we eat with them and talk to them frequently. I have known one of them for a very long time. They are people we could turn to in need. They are people who invite us over for dinner and people with whom we spend our fun times and because of that, I think of them as family."

Other participants point to sharing meals, as well as jointly preparing the meals, as evidence of family. Fanny Gomez and Melinda Rodriguez have been together for nine years. Fanny does much of the feeding work for the family. Fanny tells of how she and a close friend, Jenny, whom she considers a part of the family, actually get together to prepare meals for holidays and birthdays.

> I certainly think of Jenny as family. She is the partner of the couple friend that I mentioned earlier. She and I get together to plan meals and celebrations. It feels like family to me when we

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> talk, go shop together, and then cook the meals. I mean, it's like family when we eat the meal together, too, it's just that preparing the meal, I guess, it reminds me of working with my mother in her kitchen.

For Fanny, the planning, provisioning, and preparation of the meal constitutes family. The feeding work of Fanny and Kathy links material and interpersonal needs together and results in the creation of family.

We have seen that feeding work within lesbigay families is neither inconsequential nor simple. Strangely, much conversation and academic analysis concerning feeding work reduces the complexity of the enterprise, minimizes its significance, and legitimates the view held by many participants that they don't really do very much feeding work—a view held by those who do it as well as by those who don't. In part we can explain this sentiment by remembering that those who feed often lack the vocabulary to articulate their efforts to others. Few people will tell others that they spent part of their day monitoring the contents of their refrigerator, but they do. Such work remains invisible. We must also understand that many participants diminish feeding because they don't want to face the conflict that a thorough accounting, as I have just provided, might produce in their relationship. Moreover, given the potential for stigma that exists for the men who feed, and the women who don't, it becomes even clearer why the work of feeding remains particularly hidden in lesbigay households.

Finally, concealing the labors of feeding reflects the cultural tendency to romanticize domestic activities as well as to romanticize the relationships such activities create. Spotlighting the labor involved tarnishes the romantic luster that people attach to domesticity. I can't count how many times I have heard people who feed respond to compliments saying, "Oh, it was nothing really." Perhaps this is just a matter of self-deprecation, but it might also suggest a cultural cover-up of the laborious character of such efforts. The dinner guests don't really want to hear about the three different stores one went to in search of the ingredients, nor the process of planning and preparing the meal, nor the fight one had with one's spouse about whom to invite or what to serve. A thorough investigation of the labors involved in feeding the family reveals that feeding is work. Recognizing feeding as work raises the impertinent question of why the effort goes uncompensated, a question that leads directly to issues of exploitation and inequality, issues ripe with the potential for social and family conflict.

Given the social precariousness of lesbian and gay relationships, mostly due to the lack of social, political, and economic resources, the tendency of the participants to avoid such conflicts is probably essential to their long-term survival. When some resources exist, as in the case of economic resources, assuaging such conflicts becomes easier. When ample economic resources exist, feeding becomes less arduous with affluent families turning to the marketplace for meals and preparing meals at home teaming with creativity, quality, symbolic meaning, and nutritional content. When lesbigay families lack economic resources, as is the case among many of the working/service-class families, feeding looks different: routine, fatiguing, nutritionally compromised, and symbolically arid (in the sense that the capacity of feeding to produce a sense of family is compromised). Participants rarely conceive of eating ramen noodle soup on the couch as constitutive of their claim to family status, but they frequently conceive of eating a nutritionally complete meal at dining-room table as constitutive of such a claim.

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15

Thinking Race Through Corporeal Feminist Theory: Divisions and Intimacies at the Minneapolis Farmers' Market*

Rachel Slocum

Introduction

The Minneapolis Farmers' Market is simultaneously constituted by connections made through difference as well as multiple forms of exclusion, by bigoted ideas but also clear curiosity and pleasure. A theory of race that rests on the raced body's practices in connection to food, market space and different visitors needs to recognize racial inequality, non-racist acts and anti-racist encounters. Drawing from an ongoing ethnography, this paper explores the divisions and intimacies of everyday practice that produce the embodied racial geography of the Market. It does so in order to explain how racialized bodies emerge through this food space.

Opening in 1876 as a wholesale market with over 400 growers, the Minneapolis Farmers' Market (hereafter the MFM or the Market) is now a retail enterprise scaled back to 240 vendors, including both producers and 'dealers' who resell goods purchased whole-sale. The Market's three red-roofed, open sheds stand opposite the interstate. When not in full swing, it is a desolate location absent of pedestrians, dwellings or shops; its soundscape, the hiss of cars rushing by on the highway ramps above. The Market provides space for vendors through permanent places, some of them handed down through generations. 'Dailies', vendors without a permanent spot, get assigned different locations depending on the availability of temporarily unused stalls. The market manager answers to the board consisting of ten older men and two women who govern the MFM. The majority European-white population of growers, some of whose families have been at the market for five generations, was augmented by the arrival in the 1970s of Hmong immigrants.[1] Hmong people now constitute almost 1 per cent of the Minnesota population, but approximately 40 per cent of the vendors, and two of the twelve board members.

To some, the Market is a crowded, bustling, confusing urban space on the weekends. It serves a diverse group of urban and suburban customers. In this diversity

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are Latinos, Russians, Eastern Europeans, Scandinavians and various other white ethnicities, Vietnamese, Hmong, Chinese, South Asian, Somalis, East Africans and American Indians. On summer weekends up to Labor Day, in addition to being a shopping place, the MFM is also a tourist attraction during which time the throngs of people are noticeably more white. But prices at the MFM for local and non-local goods are typically not high and the fact that the MFM is *not* a growers-only market makes it more inviting to a greater race- and class-diverse population.

This space is also constituted by the globalization of food production, transport and consumption that pushed the MFM from wholesale into retail and which today makes it more difficult for some smaller vendors to market their goods. In the context of the neoliberal discourse of personal responsibility (for one's body size, health and welfare), the new urbanism and alternative food, the Market's presence is awkward. The Twin Cities is home to newer immigrant communities, arriving under different terms, including peoples from Laos, Somalia and Latin America. The nostalgia for quiet, safe 'American' communities meets the Market: a rambunctious place for Minnesota, with diverse customers and, for some publics, strange vegetables. The Market troubles the pervasiveness of hyper-commodified, sanitized and segregated public spaces (which is not to suggest it is not itself sanitized, commodified and segregated).

This paper contributes in three areas. First, the literature on embodied geographies has tended to focus on representations of bodies, revealing how bodies are inscribed by society, or has relied on the concept of performativity. In contrast, this paper deploys corporeal feminist theory in which the body's materiality is foregrounded. Second, the paper enhances scholarship on race by claiming, through this materialist framework, that it is important to speak of race through phenotypic differentiations, connections, tendencies and what bodies do. Third, by focusing on embodied racial geographies in a farmers' market, this study contributes to a growing body of work on such markets in the Global North.

Farmers' Markets, Corporeality, Race

Farmers' Markets

To the sites of the dinner table, the kitchen, recipe books and supermarkets (Bell and Valentine 1997), this paper adds a less studied area: the farmers' market. Farmers' markets have recently experienced a renaissance in the USA and their numbers have burgeoned (Brown 2002). A valuable public space, the market is a crossroads for different foods, bodies and discourses that shape the city and the agro-ecological region. Spatial processes and varying mobilities of people and goods converge to constitute the MFM within uneven relations of power (Massey 1994). Here, there are brief, pleasurable meeting points that need to be recognized along-side the comparatively invisible violence of systemic processes.

Farmers' markets have been constituted by discourses of quality and nationalism as well as consumer distrust of the state (Ilbery and Kneafsey 2000). Ideals of localness and quality become conflated as consumers assume something local is more authentic or healthier (Futamura 2007; Holloway and Kneafsey 2000). Some research

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suggests that these markets may encourage social networks (Gerbasi 2006) through the 'relations of regard' that develop (Sage 2003) or via consumer requests for sustainable practices (Hunt 2007). While the farmers' market could enable practices that change social relations, they may also reaffirm entrepreneurialism and individualism (see Gregson and Crewe 1997). Markets should not be seen as only the location of celebration and community; such nostalgia renders invisible the conditions that shape the market (Stallybrass and White 1986). This nostalgia is deeply racialized (Watson and Wells 2005).

The alternative food movement uses farmers' markets as vehicles to improve food access and encourage sustainable farming. Organizations and consumers interested in local food and sustainable farming tend to be wealthier, more educated and white (Allen 2004). As vehicles to augment grower incomes through better prices, some markets cater implicitly (organic-only, location, music, classes) to a well-off, educated and often white demographic, which I have argued (2007) produces white food space (see also Alkon 2008; Guthman 2008). These accounts undertake important analyses showing how farmers' markets are formed through various discourses and what work these meanings do. This paper is concerned, instead, with the bodies, things, movements and clustering, that are necessary to meaning.

A sensual space where connections among particular natures and certain foods are more deeply valorized (Kirwan 2004; Parrott, Wilson and Murdoch 2002), farmers' markets are spaces of intimacy. Considering intimacy between the human and more than human brings the materiality of both into focus. Sarah Whatmore (2002: 162), for instance, writes that 'the rhythms and motions of inter-corporeal practices [growing, provisioning, cooking and eating] configure spaces of connectivity between more-than-human life worlds; topologies of intimacy and affectivity that confound conventional cartographies of distance and proximity, and local and global scales'. Similarly, Emma Roe (2006) suggests attention to the visceral relations and embodied practices involved in eating and being eaten as a means to understand food fear or interest in organic. The biochemical and physical properties of vegetables sold at the MFM intimately shape human bodies and the city. The gut, after all, 'allows the outside world to pass through us' and in so doing, it maintains relationships with others (Wilson 2004: 44). In this public space, 'negotiation is forced upon us' (Massey 2005: 114). The paper is interested in those spoken and silent negotiations and even more so in the frisson of contact,[2] the mix of fear, surprise and wonder.

Embodiment, to which I turn next, is indispensable to this analysis of race, division and intimacy. Sensory exchange constitutes much of the sense of place of the Market. Different bodies brush against one another, smell tomatoes, exclaim with curiosity and lean with heavy bags. Bodies respond differently to the properties of foods—their taste, smell, color, consistency, temperature, vitamin content, calories and ripeness. What counts as embodied in this paper encompasses *what* people do, say, sense and feel as well as *how* they do any of these things.

Embodiment in Feminist Materialist Theory

Geographers have expressed great interest in the body, contributing to feminist philosophy by showing how space and embodied difference are co-constitutive

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processes (e.g. Ainley 1998; Bell et al. 2001; Butler and Parr 1999; Teather 1999; Nast and Pile 1998; Pile 1996; Rose 1995). Bodies become gendered through activities in place and the place itself is active in the production of capacities. But despite the apparent enthusiasm for the concept of embodiment, Robyn Longhurst (1997, 2001) proposes that in geography bodies continue to be represented while their fleshiness is held at bay. Yet the ways bodies fit snugly into airplane seats (Longhurst 2005), throw a ball (Young 2005) or are leaky, messy and rubbery are important to consider as part of a political as well as a conceptual argument.

A contentious point within feminist theory has been the question of how to talk about physically different bodies without reifying that difference (Williams and Bendelow 1998). One means was to focus on how society's norms shape bodies. But social constructionism understood matter as pre-existing and unintelligible and had not theorized how sexual oppression occurs at the 'level of the constitution of bodily materiality as sexed' (Cheah 1996: 111). The importance and sophistication of performativity as a response to these inadequacies cannot be overstated. But as it has been articulated by Judith Butler (1993), the matter of bodies is mediated by discourse and therefore comprehensible only through that mediation. Pheng Cheah (1996) finds that Butler excludes natural materiality and instead confines matter to human morphology which the latter understands as already cultural. For Butler, 'materiality becomes present, is given body, … only in being … signified in language' (1996: 116). Yet, asks Jacinta Kerin,

> If we insist on conflating ontological inquiry *per se* with the way in which it has worked historically within dominant knowledges then the possibility of thinking otherwise is foreclosed How can we decide what it means to affirm an array of materialities unless we are permitted some, however contingent, ontological concept of what those materialities are? (1999: 99–100)

Kerin points out that feminists cannot afford *not* to engage with matter—its existence, its necessity and its bearing on interpretation. For Elizabeth Wilson (2004: 8), engaging with matter means not sidestepping the neurological and biochemical, as she claims many humanities and social science accounts of the body have done. Exploring what may, at first glance, appear essentialist or reductionist is useful, she argues, to the feminist project.

Far from being a tired topic, the discussion of nature and culture has only just begun. Some of the most interesting contributions to that conversation have come from Elizabeth Grosz. Her philosophical positioning of nature and culture provides the ground from which to speak of the body's mattering.[3] No dismissal of work concerned with epistemology occurs; the question for Grosz (2005: 5) is the debt representation owes to ontology. Culture, she writes, drawing on Darwin, is not the completion of an incomplete nature. Instead, nature 'enables and actively facilitates cultural variation and change'; the biological incites culture, but nature does not limit the cultural. Culture and representation have an outside that impinges on the plans of the living (see Clark 2005). The competing forces of this outside induce subjectivity and make culture act and change (Grosz 2005: 30–31, 43, 47–49).

Earlier, Grosz (1994) had argued that all aspects of the subject can be just as adequately explained through bodies as through the mind or consciousness. Bodies are biological and sensory, not merely blank slates for inscription by society and not

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biologically-given entities with particular destinies. Generating 'what is new, surprising, unpredictable' (Grosz 1994: xi), bodies are the 'passage from being to becoming', thus what bodies do is to continually form themselves ('positive becoming') (Colebrook 2000: 86–87). Bodies become through what they do, the relations of which they are a part and the formations in which they act. Corporeality, then, refers to a dynamic capacity of human bodies to emerge in relation to each other and to things, within social and physical limits, and thereby to form sexual and racial identities (Grosz 2005). While these differences are not limited to those forms we currently acknowledge, they are not 'open to self conscious manipulation, identification or control by subjects' (2005: 89). A body's capacities, finally, are always enabled or limited by the socio-physical space in which they are located (Saldanha 2007).

In geography, an interest in ethics and particularly affect and emotion has emerged to focus attention on material bodies. For instance, Sarah Whatmore (2002) argues that without the body being understood in terms of its corporeality, it will be difficult to develop ethical relationships within more-than-human worlds. Some of this work has emerged from non-representational theory (see Harrison 2008; Obrador-Pons 2007) and some is explicitly feminist (Ahmed 2004; Bondi, Davidson and Smith 2005; Tolia-Kelly 2006). The paper draws on the latter's work, which Grosz refers to as 'a phenomenology of everyday life' (Kontturi and Tiainen 2007: 252). Thus the examples I provide can be situated in both the realm of the intentional (disdain for those who bargain) and the unintentional: 'the impersonal or pre-personal, subhuman or inhuman forces … competing microagencies' beyond the control of the subject (Grosz 2005: 6).

The feminist materialist scholarship that provides the inspiration for this paper can be read as arguing for an appraisal of race as embodied, non-essentialist being, not only that which is discursive or performed. I am not making the claim that this theory is useful because I think that what is true for sex/gender is also true for race. Sex, even though it is many, differentiates people biologically and socially in a way that is not true for race. But the point is that these feminist theorists have taken the important step of engaging with the body's matter rather than dismissing such an interest as pre-critical and dangerously essentialist.

The Materiality of Race

Race tends to be understood as a consequence of societies' ideas that become productive truths about people. Significant work has gone into underscoring the racist history, genetic irrelevance and arbitrariness of racial categories. From this, many have argued '*there is no such thing as race*' (Nayak 2006, his italics) and further, that the fiction that is race must be abolished (Gilroy 2000). Different approaches to race and racism rely on these ideas. From sociology and legal studies, critical race scholars argue that racism has been perpetuated by institutions of law and emphasize deconstruction to undermine racist narratives, relying on personal experience and storytelling to build others (Delgado and Stefancic 2001). Drawing on the concept of performativity, Anoop Nayak finds that in some critical race writing, racial groups are positioned as at once fictional, relational and tangibly irreducible … [unable to] 'escape the body politic' (2006: 416). He argues that figures such as 'white women'

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have to be understood as part of historically and geographically specific processes (see Kobayashi and Peake 1994) 'that constitute this subjectivity as intelligible, and [as part of] the symbolic regimes of language that summon this representation to life' (Nayak 2006: 417). Whether using the language of construction (Jackson 1998) and reconstruction (of whiteness) (Gallaher 2002), memories and performance (Hoelscher 2003), or performance and space (Thomas 2005), there is an emphasis on the social, on representations of the real and implicit or explicit use of the work of Judith Butler. Even a work dedicated to 'making race matter' (Alexander and Knowles 2005) is still primarily about performance and the dangers of linking race in any way to biology.

Building on these important contributions, the paper argues that it is not enough to talk about constructions or performance, leaving the body's matter out of the analysis (Saldanha 2006; see also Moore, Pandian and Kosek 2003). Indeed, fictionalizing race makes some of the most interesting aspects of race disappear, whether the focus is an affective historiography of race (Anderson 2007), the embodied experience of displacement and segregation (Delaney 2002) or the embedding of race in the body (Wade 2004). Writing on white hyper-sensitivity to smell in the Ecuadorian Andes, Weismantel claims:

> It is in the interactions between bodies and the substances they ingest, the possessions they accumulate, and the tools they use to act on the world [that] we can really see race being made, and making the society around it. This kind of race is neither genetic nor symbolic, but organic: a constant, physical process of interaction between living things. Little surprise then that it has a distinct smell. (2001: 266)

I turn now to the emphasis of this paper: the tendencies and actions of raced bodies.

Race becomes material through the body. Groupings of bodies do things and are 'done to', becoming racialized in the process (Grosz 2005). From this perspective, bodies are not only inscribed; they actively participate in the material production of themselves and other bodies. Race takes shape out of the physical gathering of bodies in which phenotype matters in its connection to material objects, practices and processes (Saldanha 2007). The term phenotype does *not* indicate any essential connections, but it and other visible characteristics (e.g. clothes) are recognized in real, everyday interactions and so play a role in what people do. Bodies stare at each other, or are glimpsed or ignored; they are moved or forced to stop; some meander, others stride; giving way and standing ground, they prevent and enable. In this sense, what happens to bodies, what they do and the fact that they tend to be white or brown in certain places are all important to consider with the aim of understanding how and why that happened. Race, then, is a process, made and remade not just by exclusions and erasures, but by its ongoing connections (Saldanha 2006).

Skin is 'a site of subjectivity, crisis, desire, instability' and thus has productive potential in day-to-day practices (Ahmed 1998 cited by Johnston 2005: 112). In Lynda Johnston's example, beach space and the activities that take place there produce bodies with specific desires and capacities. Skin changes color, confusing one's sense of 'who's who'. Some white bodies lying on beaches became darker and were taken for Maori. Phenotype, of course, should not be understood as referring to the visible form of an interior essence. Phenotypic differences produce mobile and gradual

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groups, made through processes that change these groupings of bodies—their color, shape, size and health. Such change may occur over a lifetime, with inter-racial offspring, through generations or because of wealth or poverty. Equally, bodily changes may be a consequence of not having enough food or enough of certain foods and it may be due to how bodies are physically implicated in and shaped by capitalism, patriarchy, neocolonialism and so on. People are phenotypically different and structurally organized into populations that are endlessly disrupted, and therefore temporary, contingent upon class, sexuality, nationality, age and gender. The materiality of race does not refer to innate differences nor does it map phenotype, posture, clothes, language, accent, gestures or gait to 'a race', because there are no 'races', but it does refer to bodies.

The ways people sense worlds is part of how differences are shaped. Mark Smith (2006) proposes that restoring hearing, smell, touch and taste to an understanding of racial difference might shed some new light on how unthinkingly race is made and racism learned. In his account, white southerners had ways of determining whether someone was 'black' by smell, touch, taste and sound—because vision was not always reliable. Yet it is clear that 'seeing remains … extraordinarily important for locating racial identity' (Smith 2006: 3). Rather than posit the visual as an 'all determining foundation of race' (Brown 2005: 273, n14–16), the claim I make is that (observed) bodies are one part in a series of intersections. These bodily differences are noticed (in particular ways in this racist society) and they enable what occurs at the Market, in ways that limit and open avenues, supporting ethical engagement, mobilizing confusion, activating prejudice or reinforcing inequality. Though I acknowledge sound, smell and touch, vision remains central to this account. I also use vendor and customer vision because it is unreliable, contributing to raced imaginaries and productive uncertainty about raced bodies. That a physical knot of whiteness around some foods, for instance, happens is something that should be discussed. Equally, when diverse bodies encounter each other through leafy greens when they ordinarily might not, race should not be left out of the analysis.

When I use the term 'Hmong growers', rather than suggesting that this group 'has' a discrete and pre-formed identity, I understand 'Hmongness' as a process of becoming. Instead of an argument that makes uncritical use of descriptive demographic facts, I propose using the term 'white farmer' or 'Hmong grower' as something dynamic that includes phenotype and land ownership, clothes and speech, types of vegetables sold and generations at the market. I recognize that Hmong farmers are seen as different by some customers and known as Hmong by many vendors. Emergent 'Hmongness' is embodied through, for instance, the sale of bitter green and collards, facial features, wearing 'traditional' dress or a tie, having a CIA identity card. It becomes through the suggestion that I watch *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift* to understand Asian/Hmong fast car culture. 'Hmong' means vending for fifteen years compared to four generations, renting as opposed to owning land, and, according to some white vendors, it means 'under-pricing the market'. Race is an active process in which Hmong emerges as the object of white liberal interest which wants to help Hmong people through land donations. Hmong becoming at the Market is active in a question about my 'racial background' which arises because I have 'such blue eyes'.

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The aim here is to be able to talk about the material tendencies racially differentiating bodies without making racist statements or authorizing essentialist identity politics. Understanding how racially different bodies emerge through practices provides different insights into race. What follows is an attempt to work through the particular challenges that arise in talking about racial embodiment and to demonstrate how the Market makes sense through this lens.

Methods

Observation, inclusive of vision, sense of smell, hearing and touch, is a method necessary for this paper's argument. I draw on participant observation as well as informal and formal interviews conducted from May 2006 to March 2008. The research has moved between naturalistic observation and participant observation—in other words it has ranged from conversation, interview, peripheral membership and active membership in a social crowd (Adler and Adler 1998). My observations have noted routines, rituals, spaces, organization, interactions, behavior and clothing (Denzin 1989). I took photos to study later and tried vegetables unfamiliar to me. I undertook naturalistic observation of the Market on most weekends in 2006 during the late spring, summer and fall months from 6 a.m. until 2 p.m. as well as during the week at different times and on different days. I have attended one board meeting, at which I discussed the research and one annual membership meeting in March 2008. The research also involves making sense of overheard exclamations and questions.

I have done structured interviews with the market manager, several vendors, a member of the Minnesota State Department of Agriculture, the Minneapolis mayor and a close associate, four local non-profit leaders and a researcher working on Hmong agriculture. Additionally, I have followed Twin Cities food activism and visited other markets. Unstructured interviews took place at the Market with resellers, growers, customers and custodial staff as well as by email and letter with some vendors over the 2006 2008 seasons and off season as well. Typically, I speak to several of the same people each week. All told, I have done informal interviews with about sixty people (vendors and customers). Some of the quotes in the paper are from handwritten notes taken while vendors talked to me or while I listened to others' conversations. Others are from taped and transcribed interviews. The interviews and observations that I draw on are illustrative of themes that have emerged so far in the research. The paper is not an exhaustive statement on the Market but instead offers a way of thinking about these collected observations.

Race as Bodily Practice

Racial difference in the context of the Market is a corporeal relationship to growing, selling and eating food. It emerges through what can be called 'racial practices': the production and marketing of certain plants, the location and quality of someone's land, ideas about 'good' food and the gathering of racially identified people

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around some vendors and vegetables but not others. Thus food practices that may not usually be associated with race can be called racial practices, but not any fixed sense. At the market, bodies are not just inscribed by food practices; they are materially produced through what people buy, who they talk to, where they grow vegetables, as well as through phenotypic differences (Saldanha 2007). The materiality of practice does not deny that meanings circulate through these actions, but wants to show how it is the matter of race and operating policies, land ownership, vegetables, laughter, pesticide use and touch within the space of the Market that is necessary to meaning.

In the following two sections (racial divisions and public intimacy), I attempt to show how bodies moving around the Market, attaching themselves to some foods, brushing shoulders and being propelled by curiosity are all ways of talking about race as bodily practice.

Racial Divisions at the Market

Race emerges at the Market through four spatial processes: the clustering of bodies around tables; the avoidance of markets with resellers; dress and comportment; and racial imaginaries. As a zone of encounter in a racist society, it would be surprising if race did *not* emerge in this market space through prejudice and separation and so I first consider racial divisions.

Roots and Leaves

Race emerges spatially as bodies ebb and eddy around vendors' stalls. Some bodies search for organic eggs, others move towards amaranth leaves and still others cluster around basil in a neat bunch, without roots, shut inside a hard plastic container. Clear cohesions of white people are evident around the enclosed herbs laid out on a red and white checked tablecloth. Opposite this permanent stall is often a Hmong daily vendor selling much larger bunches of basil, fastened with a rubber band. Desiring food in plastic indicates a particular expectation of how food arrives and what quality means. Other customers come because they have established a relationship with these growers, whose produce also appears in area supermarkets. These clumps of white people are also visible around the locally grown asparagus laid in short, upright, brown paper bags that sells at $6 for one pound, and later, the heirloom[4] melons and potatoes (six dollars for about eight finger potatoes). The expense plus the relationship of these particular foods to the desire for local, fresh, non-conventional food is part of why white people are evident here. Finally, some trust and comfort may come from engaging with a white vendor.

There is something to be learned about race through plants. Racial divisions occur through greens and roots. Hmong tables carry cilantro and onions with bristling roots. These growers have learned that there are Asian and African populations who come to the Market seeking certain vegetables and demanding roots attached. Race emerges through connections among visible difference, a plant, its nutrients and

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politics, the soil it requires, the land used and the care given its growth. Thus one could say that race is in the leaves. Hmong growers have verdant cascades of amaranth, black nightshade, sweet potato leaves and pigweed. Most white growers do not leave the roots on and they do not supply amaranth or pigweed ('no I don't sell it, it's a weed').

In the third shed, white vendors are clumped at the western end, while most of the rest are Hmong permanent or daily vendors, hence among vendors, it is called the 'Hmong shed'. There are white vendors here who enjoy the company of non-white people and also those who refuse to be situated next to Hmong vendors. In the third shed, as well, are the two Hmong resellers, the only African American vendor and a white flower reseller who employs two African American men. This grizzled reseller spends the morning shouting at customers, one minute cajoling them with a bouquet, and the next, daring them to look away from his aging blossoms. In 2006 a white wild rice daily vendor was situated next to the sole African American vendor in the third aisle, but in 2007 moved to a place in the middle shed. Regardless of how vendors have come to be positioned in the sheds, the cohesions of bodies among the three reveals a racial division of the space.

Caring Where Your Food Comes From

The movement of people at the MFM is also toward other food spaces and this is partly due to the presence of six larger food resellers at the MFM. While vendors of asparagus, certain herbs and meat receive greater concentrations of white customers, a markedly diverse gathering of racialized and classed populations is evident around reseller tables. Some MFM vendors I have spoken with accept the resellers in their midst but some customers do not. Nationwide, farmers' markets are typically for growers only. Alternative food consumers denigrate the resale of non-local foods, going so far as to shop at other markets to avoid the MFM because it allows the practice. One middle-aged white man at the local-only St. Paul market explained to his friends that unlike St. Paul, the goods at the MFM looked like they had 'fallen off the truck on the way to the market'. On the Nicollet Mall downtown (Thursday's MFM location), an older white man in a suit asked a strawberry vendor if he knew where pineapples grew in Minnesota, indicating, with his head, the Hmong-owned reseller behind them. The vendor replied, shaking his head, 'yeah, I call them banana sellers'. This vendor was working for a fairly large-scale conventional farmer—but a more local one.

What I am describing is not as simple as a distaste for resellers or prejudice against the more mixed (class and race) clientele that comes to the MFM, drawn, in part by resellers. Whiteness emerges through the thinking that local is necessarily best and that the St. Paul market is 'more local' as well as through the fact that alternative food tends to be a white movement. It comes into being through the spatial separation of a more white and more middle-class (socially and economically) group from more brown and more working-class people.

There is a sense that the products available and the prices at the MFM bring people who do not recognize the close-to-the-edge profitability and the work involved in sustainable, organic or smaller-scale farming. The fierce demand for cheaply priced

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food has been observed by some customers and vendors as coming particularly from newer immigrant non-white populations. Indicating toward the flow of people around a reseller, another vendor told me, 'they don't care where their food comes from'. White growers claim that Hmong farmers encourage ignorance of the difficulty of farming by typically charging one dollar for ample bunches of vegetables. But for some it is the established members of the Market whose habits participate in the preference for cheap. Referring to the white, longer-term vendors, one grower remarked, 'they shop at Cub [a local, conventional, low-cost supermarket] and eat at McDonalds'. Finally, a white grower recounted how a white, woman customer told him 'I don't know if I feel like peeling potatoes tonight'. The grower said to me, shaking his head, 'if people don't even want to *peel potatoes*, that's it, I'm finished'. It should be pointed out here that the gendered division of labor is a factor that should not be discounted in discussions of such shopping practices.

Baby Strollers and Lattés

Bodies present themselves differently at the Market. Few shoppers I have seen charge through the Market intent on getting through in minimum time; the experience tends to be more exploratory. Some Asian and African visitors wear high heels, skirts, dress pants or wax prints. Others go to the Market in shorts, sneakers and oversized t-shirts, with coffee in one hand—and these people tend to be white. This same group tends to stroll through the market as they talk with their companions. Advises Beth Dooley (2001), 'Nearly twice as big and much busier than St. Paul's, [the MFM] can be downright daunting. My strategy is this: First, go to Neon Coffee in the northwest corner for a latte′ … '. White people can be differentiated as middle class because they have a canvas bag from the expensive organic chain, Whole Foods, over their shoulder. Elderly bodies are also here, but I have seen only a few with wheeled baskets to tote food. Women originally from an African nation in bright cotton prints come at 5:30–7 a.m. to negotiate for large bags of greens, moving these to the trunks of cars and coming back for more. In a quantity sufficient to last the winter, these greens will be cooked and frozen. This group may come so early because it suits their schedule, because the leaves are more fresh or it may have something to do with the increasing presence of white bodies the later it gets. Regardless of the reason, the composition of bodies changes and changes the meaning of this space over the hours of the morning.

Children are brought to the Market as part of a shopping or a tourist experience. Strollers pushed by men and women of color tend to have bags full of produce slung over the handles of strollers and under the seat. Strollers are evident even during the busiest part of the day when the aisles are nearly impassable. One white middle-class father, pushing his child in a baby carriage, said, 'We're going to see lots today'. He falls into the tourist category. Vendors call tourists 'basket kickers'—people who come to look but not to buy. While not always a white practice, basket kicking is the domain of those who have the leisure time and no need or wish to purchase anything from a farmers' market. Market tourism is also associated with cooking demonstrations and musical guests. Having fun at the farmers' market is encouraged as one of the key aims of the Mill City Market. Last year its website called on

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residents to '[j]oin local healing art practitioners for health lectures, demos & mini-sessions exploring mind and body work such as Qi Gong, Tibetan medicine, Thai yoga massage, herbalogy, homeopathy, meditation, acupuncture, dance, boot camp fitness and eating like food matters'.[5] The Eastern emphasis often associated with the new age movement can be loosely linked with a white, middle-class demographic.

Comfort Zones and Confusion

Constituting this space are racial imaginaries in which the perceived clarity of race is brought into relief through observations that are sometimes prejudicial. Vendors mistaking East Africans for African Americans appears to be the norm, but a woman vendor observes that she can clearly pick out features of African American, Somali and Ethiopian customers. One vendor suggested, with considerable enthusiasm, that the 'Somali' women who come early to buy large bags of 'okra' (noted in previous sub-section) might be engaged in something illicit. An older white vendor, told me that there are lots of African Americans who come to the Market, contrary to what I had noticed. When I said as much, he told me, 'if you turn around, I think you'll see they're here'. I did and there were people standing further down the aisle, but they were from an African country. I could tell because of how they were dressed (button down shirt, tucked in, slacks), what they were buying (bitter green) and the quantities they were purchasing. Had I been closer I might have discerned differences in gestures, stance or accents. There is no point calling this ignorance. Instead, I am intrigued by the wish to see, the act of seeing something else and the inexorable fuzziness of race.

People of color from global non-US cultures are said to disturb the 'comfort zone' of white customers and thus the lower sales volume can be attributed, in part, to their presence. This (racist) comfort zone is placed with equanimity alongside other reasons for fewer sales like gas prices, the weather or construction. A young white vendor with whom I was talking about the purchase of greens by Africans asked me if I saw whether they used cash. He proposed that I would 'see a lot of them using food stamps'. His statement is familiarly prejudiced as it connects skin color to something opprobrious in the mainstream national imaginary—the use of government support. Some white farmers claim that Hmong growers get special assistance, which they do not deserve and are able to succeed largely through this and the help of children. A customer remarked, as she walked by some mong kids behind a table, 'I thought child labor was illegal'. Other imaginaries mobilized are claims made by Hmong people that farming is something Hmong women and elderly Hmong do. An African American man complained that Somalis refuse to talk with blacks ('we got bombed by Somalis'), Asians always want cheap produce and Latinos are 'not invasives', implying that others are. One middle-aged white male farmer noted that it is people from the Middle East who bargain most fiercely. 'Those people', he said, pointing in an obvious way to what appeared to be a South Asian family walking past at that moment. As he pointed, they looked back at him.

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This section has offered examples of how racial division emerges through stereotypes, movement, location and production of plants—bodily practices. If embodiment concerns the characteristics of bodies and what people do, race is embodied at the Market through attractions to vegetables that segregate the space as well as the ways some racialized groups think other racialized groups act.

Public Intimacy and Encounter

So far I have discussed racial divisions and essentialist productions of racial difference. Now I turn to a public intimacy that also constitutes the Market and could be productive of other, non-racist ways of living and doing race. Writing about race and domestic intimacy, Ann Laura Stoler suggests that 'strangely familiar "uncanny" intimacies. … may leave room for relations that promise something else, that activate desires and imaginaries less easily named' (2006: 14). Guiding this section is Stoler's point that intimacy provides a view into both structures of dominance *and* the promise of 'something else'. Race emerges through the encounters I discuss below as well as through the separations outlined above.

Intimacy, a spatial process of tense and tender ties, does not require proximity but needs to consider alterity (Thien 2005, see also Fortier 2007). The world becomes intimate with the gut through the alterity of food; stomach problems indicate the breakdown of relations with others (Wilson 2004). Echoing this, a local food advocate at a Twin Cities gathering to 'build community and dismantle racism' suggests 'we have two things in common: food and isolation'. In this paper, intimacy refers to the domestic, public act of food provisioning. It is embodied through the seemingly mundane yet critically important acts of seeing, smelling, touching, anticipating, wondering about food, all of which are shared in public space by different bodies. A practical politics of the intimate reveals the home in the world, a realm of untidy, unruly bodiliness (Fidecaro 2006: 255).

The Market enables an intimacy absent in other spaces of consumption such as malls, supermarkets and gas stations. Alphonso Lingis (1998) writes of encounter through travel (even to a market), which people undertake to lose their identity. Travel forces the imprisoning skin of privilege to become recognizable to some. The more meanings we ascribe to others' ways, the more bodies become hidden and the violence of stereotype arises. It is the inexpressiveness of the body, unconnected from the lines of inscription that excites.

The intimacy present at the Market is one of contact, connecting people's lives outside the Market to this food moment through small talk, questions asked about food, seeing the same farmer, the smell of earth on the wind and touching vegetables. Pleasure, in this context, is not only an individual experience; it emerges among bodies and things in place. Looking at pleasure shows the intimacy of human contact in which race matters though it may not be the only or primary organizing feature. I will cover four types of public intimacy: public eating and desire, curiosity about foods, chatting and bargaining. These minutiae are food practices that are also racial, bodily practices.

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Roasted Corn and Honey Space

One of the most popular sites for public eating is the roasted corn stand. On one end of the stall next to boxes of Florida-grown sweet corn, an eight-foot roaster stands, slowly rotating unhusked corn up and out of sight until they return, blackened on the outside and brilliant cooked yellow on the inside. The corn is removed from the roaster, a green ear taking its place, the cooked corn moves on to be husked, dry leaves pulled back to hug the stalk, then to the butterer, a woman who also collects your two dollars and then finally to the customer who goes off to shake cayenne, lemon or just salt on the redolent, dripping ear. The corn is sweet, crunchy and hot. The workers are usually one Latino man and two Latina women. On summer weekends there is a line of ten to twelve people waiting patiently. Standing in the scent of hot butter and corn, people bite into their ears, or, cob in hand they walk through the Market. Sharing in this pleasurable intimacy of eating publicly, market goers make this stand the most racially diverse place in the Market.[6] Because the stand is here and because it is corn that is sold (which appears to appeal to different populations), different bodies are concentrated and thus come into eating contact when the other spaces of their lives would probably not enable such interaction.

Honey space is also more fractured: the single-source raw honey vendor with the more labor-intensive honey-collecting practice and the more expensive glass jars has high racial diversity. Standing by his stall, I heard people driven to seek honeys similar to those from other places they called home. I listened to conversations the vendor initiates about the epidemic of bee deaths and the low quality of heated honey sourced from China and sold in conventional supermarkets. He knows about the shades and tastes of honeys from other parts of the world and suggests which of his honeys—the dark amber Buckwheat to the lighter Basswood—might be similar. He provides samples to taste. With a good location, a range of products (pollen, dried apples, candles, honey comb) and a glass case full of bees at a child's eye level, this honey vendor draws many older and younger bodies. In 2006 I heard a woman from a European country talking with the vendor about how the honey is like that from her country of origin. I recognized her again in 2007. We talked about honey, the coarse, brown bread that is no longer available in her other country, and then about blue eggs that were once sold at the Market. Honey space and the conversations that shape it suggest that the MFM is potentially a zone of interaction in which different bodies meet through desire for foods lost and found.

Curiosity Toward the Unknown

The pleasure of curiosity can be associated with some bodies. Curiosity about growing practices and unknown vegetables is mostly a white middle-class tendency at the Market. They ask, 'What's this?' as they touch the bitter melon, feeling its chartreuse ridges. It is more often than not someone white who asks a Hmong grower, 'Did you grow these? Did you pick these this morning? Where do you farm? Where is your garden? How big is it? Do you use pesticides?' These questions may be provoked in part by skepticism about the Market's localness because resellers also vend there.

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They may indicate the intensity of alternative food fervor. A discourse productive of the Market is Hmong misuse of pesticides ('Hmong growers think if some is good, more is better'), which may also explain these questions. Alternatively, the questions may emerge from customers' interest or desire to talk.

It is true, as some vendors claim, that white people shop at white vendors' stalls. But white people shop at Hmong tables as well and those that do may want to interact with different people, hold 'foreign' objects and try vegetables that are strange to them. Some middle-class white people may travel more, fear less, be more curious and more enabled to try new things than some non-white people. Whiteness at the Market is the security of having all of your vegetables available in many venues. But there is something more going on than security and availability, something more than the impulse to appropriate that moves white shoppers to reach for unknown fruit. Through that reaching, is it possible that other ideas about people and food that open more avenues for ethical engagement might obtain? Of course white people are not the only ones who try new plants. For instance, I watched a Hmong vendor attempting to get a Latina woman to try basil. He told her 'it's used in Italian food'. 'Italian food?' she said dubiously, taking it, smelling the leaves and passing it to an older woman shopping with her. 'Just try it', the grower said, giving it to her. She took it.

The Joy of Small Talk

Pleasure is part of the sensuousness of bodies in this space. People walking in the aisles meet the eyes of people passing. They smile, they look interested or their faces are blank because one can be non-reactive, unthinking, guided forward, without effort, by the swell of the crowd. One woman recounted how she sometimes visits a farmers' market near her home twice during its hours of operation. Her emotional attachment to this market is so great that she felt left out when she overheard the vendors talking of meeting for dinner but did not invite customers. A white MFM producer whose spouse died recently tells me details of the spouse's death and burial during our first conversation. I watched her tell the story to other customers, using an album of photos of her spouse's burial site. She can do this in part because she is a woman and maybe because she has the confidence of middle-class whiteness supporting her. She seemed to think that customers would want to know, would want an explanation. Another white vendor brings beer every weekend, keeping it cold in his refrigerated truck in order to drink and talk with homeless African Americans after the Market closes. His black friends, he tells me, say he's 'black on the inside and white on the outside'. The Market is also one of the few public places in Minneapolis in which I have seen white gay men walking hand in hand and pausing to smell soap.

People are drawn to markets for the opportunity to have conversations with growers. The market is one of a few places where one can speak easily with someone who is not a friend or relative. This opportunity to converse with vendors is routinely mentioned by denizens of farmers' markets as the part of the experience they love. Hmong growers came to realize the importance of this conversational interaction—the possibility of small talk and the desire of consumers to converse with the person

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who has actually grown the food they buy (Kerr 2007). Hmong farmers bring their children who have grown up using English. It is the youth who call out, asking shoppers to try something new. Through small talk, race emerges in connection to age, English fluency, time and farming practices. If there are not younger people present, it will be more difficult for customers to have the interaction some desire, but curiosity, as noted earlier, and willingness on the part of the vendor, propels the encounter forward.

There are different sensibilities toward the joy of chatting. Some farmers view these conversations as a chore, a job that must be done to make a living. Not surprisingly, vendors seem to find more pleasure in their relationships with other vendors and long-term customers. Intimate knowledge about people's lives is conveyed, particularly among vendors, especially within racialized groups (but not entirely) and to some extent with customers. Vendors know who is ill and recovering or who has died as well as who has retired and not been replaced by family members. An older white woman vendor comes to the Market for the company of other vendors (not the customers), not for the money she might or might not make. An African American vendor's father came 'for the people' and suggested that his sons understand that this was what the Market was about, not necessarily for making a profit. For one middle-aged vendor, the Market used to bring regular customers with whom he established friendships, but he laments the fact that there are fewer and fewer of such customers.

The Time of Bargaining

Hmong and white vendors have conveyed to me their distaste for bargaining, another type of intimate interaction. They claim prices are already low. To bargain or not to bargain is a racial practice that varies over time. One white grower said his father's best customers were 'the blacks, because they never argued about the price'. It is possible that in white, largely rural 1950s Minnesota, African Americans did not feel comfortable haggling or did not do so for reasons that are more complicated than fear. His father sold them mustard greens, which his family grew but never ate. Organic eggs sell for $4.50 a dozen but one Asian woman asks the white woman vendor, 'for four dollars, right?' Vendor: 'Well I need $4.50 so I won't lose money'. Customer: 'These are so good, you know I always buy from you'. The vendor, clearly reluctant said, 'Ok, this time, Ok. But don't tell anyone'. Having lost her husband and being unable to pay for organic certification, the price this vendor asked is critical to economic survival. I listened as a Hmong grower told two South Asian customers asking for a lower price, 'I grow these [fenugreek plants] for thirty days and at the end of that time, I ask for a dollar a bunch'. He told me 'I don't sell my vegetables for less than a dollar. That's the price. They can try to get it cheaper somewhere else'.

This section has suggested that the public intimacy afforded by the Market is a site for potentially productive encounter. These intimacies are part of racial embodiment at the Market. Intimacy is not separate from racial division; plants racially divide the Market but they also invite curiosity and spur encounter.

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Conclusions

I focused on the scale of bodies to suggest that the concept of racial embodiment as an emergent process of connection is a means to understand race, food and the Market. I argued that despite the importance of social construction and performativity to thinking race, these frameworks do not enable a discussion of matter. Rather, the work of feminist materialists, particularly Elizabeth Grosz, allows an exploration of racial embodiment through phenotypic difference and the things that bodies do. Embodied differences among racialized groups emerge through practices—growing, selling, purchasing and eating food. These are partially observable tendencies of bodies that exist dynamically in social and physical space. To think about race as what (phenotypically differentiated) bodies do helps to analyze this food space as one in which people are racially divided and brought together. Racial embodiment can be a means to catalog the obvious, subtle, creative and changing forms of racism as well as note 'what else' happens in this place. I argued that racial divisions can be seen through the production of certain plants by one racialized group and the clustering of bodies around some tables and products. Playing out the intimate human acts of food sale and consumption, different bodies display dismay, wonder, frustration and delight. Race is one important part in the act of the encounter in which bodies are central. The process that is race consists of bodies interacting with amaranth, Market sheds, honey, other bodies and the Minnesota fields.

Elizabeth Grosz proposes that the task of feminist theory is to formulate questions that generate inventiveness. Feminist materialist theorists have been on the forefront of theorizing the body in ways that acknowledge biology and society. They have done so towards other politics. Exploring how race emerges, embodied, strengthens politics by expanding the discussion of race to include more than representation, recognition and intentional actions. What (anti-racist) politics would follow when bodies, formations in which they act and bodily practices are foregrounded?[7] Grosz suggests that identity could be understood in terms of bodily practices. Thus a politics of bodily practices against oppression should be undertaken as a struggle of endless 'becoming other' in which categories of action, not the struggle for recognition, are affirmed. She writes,

> Without an adequate acknowledgement of the material, natural, biological status of bodies (these terms being understood as vectors of change rather than as forms of fixity), we lose the resources to understand how to best harness these forces which invariably direct us to the future; we lose an understanding of our place in the world as beings open to becoming, open to activities, if not identities, of all types. (Grosz 2005: 89)

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paper still further. Many thanks, finally, to Minneapolis Farmers' Market vendors who gave me their time and thoughts.

Notes

1. The Hmong, indigenous peoples of China, left their lands in the mid to late 1800s, eventually coming to reside in the mountainous regions of Laos. They were involved in various acts of resistance against the French and Laotian governments. Some provided assistance to the USA in its war against Vietnam and persisted in attacks against the government of Laos after the USA withdrew from the region. Many Hmong people fled Laotian retaliation and now live in refugee camps in Thailand. Since then, some have been relocated to other countries, including the USA (Yia 2000). US Hmong populations are concentrated around the Twin Cities, MN and Fresno, CA.
2. This phrase thanks to an anonymous reviewer who read an earlier version of the paper when it was under review at *Cultural Geographies*.
3. This term from Cheah (1996).
4. Heirlooms are cultivars preserved by passing seeds down through generations. Often they have been selected for flavor and have not been grown using industrial agricultural production methods (Kingsolver 2007).
5. See <www.millcityfarmersmarket.org> (accessed 9 June 2007).
6. Technically, this stand is in the Farmer's Market Annex, a privately owned space that rents to vendors of food and other goods that covers the block adjacent to the MFM. Together they make this Market space.
7. M. C. Emad, Institute for Advanced Study, University of Minnesota, personal communication, 5 May 2008.

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16

The Raw and the Rotten: Punk Cuisine*[1]

Dylan Clark

Having been moved 2,000 miles to the north of its original home on the Rio Grande, a steel government sign was placed along the colorful fence of the Black Cat Café in Seattle, and there it retained something of its original meaning. It was a small white sign with black letters which announced, "U.S. Border." On one side, land administered by the United States; on the other, the sign implied, a space beyond the reach of the American state: an autonomous region.

For five years, this zone was a haven for people called punks and their kindred spirits,[2] an assortment of young adults who exercised and debated punk praxis in and through the premises. At the Cat, punks read, talked, smoked, and ate. They chewed ideas and articulated dietary practices, and rehashed their experiences with one another. Being punk is a way of critiquing privileges and challenging social hierarchies. Contemporary punks are generally inspired by anarchism, which they understand to be a way of life in favor of egalitarianism and environ-mentalism and against sexism, racism, and corporate domination. This ideology shows up in punk routines: in their conversations, their travels, and in their approach to food.

Food practices mark ideological moments: eating is a cauldron for the domination of states, races, genders, ideologies, and the practice through which these discourses are resisted. Indeed, as Weiss (1996: 130) argues, "Certain qualities of food make it *the* most appropriate vehicle for describing alienation." The theory and practice of punk cuisine gain clarity when they are viewed through the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss (1969), who saw the process of cooking food as the quintessential means through which humans differentiate themselves from animals, and through which they make culture and civilization. Lévi-Strauss's tripolar gastronomic system defines raw, cooked, and rotten as categories basic to all human cuisines. This model is useful for analyzing punk cuisine, and thereby punk culture. Yet this article also toys with the model, using it to give voice to the ardent critics of "civilization." Many punks associate the "civilizing" process of producing and transforming food with the human domination of nature and with White, male, corporate supremacy. Punks believe that industrial food fills a person's body with the norms, rationales, and moral pollution of corporate capitalism and imperialism. Punks reject such "poisons" and do not

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want to be mistaken for being White or part of American mainstream society. A variety of practices, many dietary, provide a powerful critique against the status quo.

A Punk Culinary Triangle

In the punk community, food serves to elaborate and structure ideologies about how the world works. Through a complex system of rules, suggestions, and arguments, punk cuisine is a code like those posited by Lévi-Strauss (1969, 1997). But punk cuisine is best discussed as a cultural mechanism responsible to its own logic, and in dialogue with what punks perceive to be the normative culture. Lévi-Strauss's ideas about food are insightful, especially when placed in a locally defined context (Douglas 1984). His culinary triangle (Figure 16.1) provides a helpful way to think about how the transformations of food can be cognitively mapped. For example, American food geographies have shifted toward processing (or cooking) food. Industrial food products are milled, refined, butchered, baked, packaged, branded, and advertised. They are often composed of ingredients shipped from remote places, only to be processed and sent once more around the globe. From a Lévi-Strauss perspective, then, punks consider industrial food to be extraordinarily cooked. Punks, in turn, preferentially seek food that is more "raw"; i.e., closer to its wild, organic, uncultured state; and punks even enjoy food that has, from an American perspective, become rotten—disposed of or stolen.

For punks, mainstream food is epitomized by corporate-capitalist "junk food." Punks regularly liken mainstream food geographies to colonialism because of their association with the Third World: destruction of rainforests (allegedly cleared for beef production), the creation of cash-cropping (to service World Bank debts), and cancer (in the use of banned pesticides on unprotected workers and water supplies). Furthermore, punks allege that large-scale stock-raising (cattle, chickens, pigs) and agribusiness destroy whole ecosystems. A representative of this point of view states, "Ultimately this vortex brings about the complete objectification of nature.

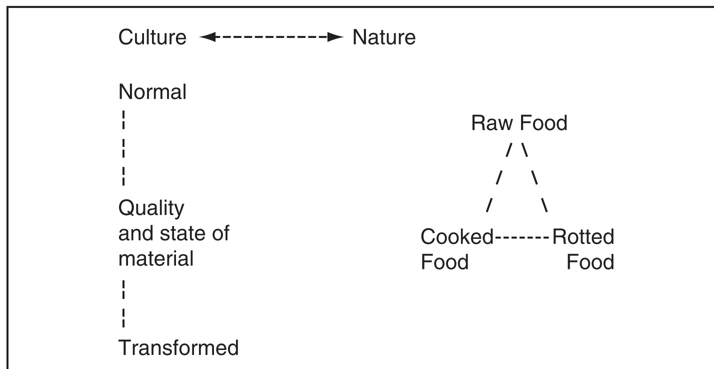

Figure 16.1 Lévi-Strauss' (1969) culinary triangle (Adopted from Wood (1995: 11)).

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Every relationship is increasingly instrumentalized and technicized. Mechanization and industrialization have rapidly transformed the planet, exploding ecosystems and human communities with monoculture, industrial degradation, and mass markets" (Watson 1999: 164; see also CrimethInc. Workers' Collective 2001: 122).

Punk food attempts to break free from the fetishism of food as a commodity. As such, it is ideally purchased in brandless bulk or directly from farmers, self-made or home-grown, and otherwise less commodified, which is to say stolen or reclaimed from a garbage dumpster. By bathing corporate food in a dumpster or by stealing natural foods from an upscale grocery store, punk food is, in a sense, decommodified, stripped of its alienating qualities, and restored to a kind of pure use-value as bodily sustenance. In their organic, unmediated forms, such foods come closer to a "wild" diet, free of commodification and hierarchical relations of production, and closer to Lévi-Strauss' "raw" and "rotten" and further from his "cooked." Comments anarchist Bey (1991: 54), "Food, cooked or raw, cannot escape from symbolism. … But in the airless vault of our civilization, where nearly every experience is mediated … we lose touch with food as nourishment; we begin to construct for ourselves personae based on what we consume, treating *products* as projections of our yearning for the authentic."

The Order of Signs at the Black Cat Café

Hardly a quaint place sweetly nestled in a booming urban landscape, the Black Cat was a boxy structure enclosed by a jagged rampart of fencing and discarded materials. Part of the fence was topped with a tangled line of bicycle frames, reminiscent of a wall of thorns. It enclosed a café yard of scattered benches, tables, and cigarette butts. Against the side of the café a mass of bicycle frames and parts made a tangled mound of metal. To beautify the courtyard, scrap-wood planters held salvaged greenery. The place looked more like a junkyard than a restaurant, for it violated normal aesthetic conventions associated with dining. Unlike other restaurants, the café did not strive to declare sanitation and safety. If the space of modern authority is clean, empty, and clearly marked (Sennett 1990: 38), the façade and decor of the Black Cat Café suggested the antithesis. The café was cluttered, soiled, its interior covered with posters, art, and canvas coffee sacks: packed with bulky, dilapidated furniture, it felt cramped.

This ambiance was precisely what drew punks to the Black Cat collective. On a dirty cement floor that would offend mainstream good taste, punks tossed their rucksacks holding all their worldly possessions. Where others were repelled by the body odors of the unwashed, punks recognized kindred spirits. Where others feared to eat food prepared by grimy, garishly pierced cooks, patrons appreciated the ambiance of food lovingly prepared.

Food itself was one of the centrally reversed signs here, perhaps because food was the ostensible *raison d'être* for the restaurant. Black Cat food, like the café itself, was a declaration of autonomy and organic creation, a rejection of commodification. Meat and dairy products were proudly excluded. Vegetables with peanut sauce, tofu scrambles, and other vegan creations served as entrees. The place and the food rejected

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strict adherence to conventional conceptions of hygiene, where even the appearance of filth somehow infects the object or the body. Here hygiene was associated with bleached teeth, carcinogenic chemicals, and freshly waxed cars, and operated as a code for sterility, automation, and alienation. Hygiene meant "idiot box" sitcoms and suburban fears of dark bodies. At the café, hygiene was a projection of Whiteness, and rejected.[3]

In rejecting the image of sterility, the Black Cat collective scorned decades of market research, and refuted dominant mantras of modernity. Marketing doctrine in the United States urges restaurants to emphasize scrubbed surfaces, clarity, and predictability. As a rule, the food industry seeks to provide a product so clean and neat that its human creation is not readily apparent. In this sense, the commodity fetishism as a corporate mandate is more apparent to the senses than is the migrant laborer in the field or the minimum-wage dishwasher. For the greater punk community, interchangeability, consistency, and hygienic food represent food that is utterly cooked and gastronomically problematic: "When we accept their definition of 'cleanliness,' we are accepting their economic domination of our lives" (CrimethInc. Workers' Collective 2001: 123).

What to make, then, of a restaurant which rarely produces a tahini salad dressing the same way twice or a pile of home fries without a good many charred? What of a restaurant with spotty service, spotty dishes, where the roof leaks, and the bathroom reeks? For five years, the Black Cat found a way to thrive in spite of, or because of, its unorthodox practices. The workers and patrons of the café are a different breed who seek out what is "rotten" in mainstream society. One worker-owner, Ketan, talked about how the marginality of the Black Cat scared away many potential patrons, but noted with a laugh:

> I hope … people realize that this not a café. This is not a café. This is not a restaurant. … That's not what this place is about. This is a safe space. It is a haven for people who want to live their lives away from the bullshit of corporate oppression. That's what this space is about. It's not about anything else other than that. It's for people who want to believe what they want to believe and not be ridiculed, and be free from control by governments or other forms of systematic, abusive power things.

Food as Gender/Power

As a site of resource allocation, food tends to recapitulate power relations. Around the globe, unequal allocations of food according to a patriarchal system are common. A working-class male comes of age in France when he is able to help himself to large volumes of food (Bourdieu 1984). Men, and sometimes boys, often receive larger amounts of food and have culinary choices catered to their taste (see Narotzky 1997: 136–37; Mintz 1985: 144–45; Appadurai 1981). Thus, food displays practices through which unequal gender power is acted out, resisted, and reproduced (Counihan 1999). Punks, too, play out gender/power relations in their diets. In recent years, the punk ethic has become more committed to anarchist, egalitarian principles that celebrate and practice an antihierarchical social order, including one that prohibits a hierarchy of gender.

Feminist praxis in punk explicitly critiques food as a site of repression, using the Victorian age as an example of a discourse disciplining female bodies through food

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(Mennell 1985). This discourse was fostered in part by capitalist food and pharmaceutical industries eager to create new products for dieting and beauty (Bordo 1993; Chapkis 1986). Feminists identify this discourse as a form of control over women that at times leaves them malnourished, anorexic, or bulimic, and fixated on manipulating their body shape and diets. As a gendered and specifically American national project, by the early twentieth century, through women's magazines, newspapers, churches, cookbooks, and civic societies, native-born and immigrant women were educated in "home economics," a correlated set of technologies intended to produce an idealized femininity schooled in Whiteness, to produce the right kind of patriarchy and racial order of the U.S. nation-state. Such ideological uses of food are routinely referenced in punk food discourse, in everyday talk, by bands such as Tribe 8, and in "zines" (the popular broadsheets of punk) such as *Fat Girl*.

Thus, many punks identify the body as a place where hegemony is both made and resisted. Punks are critical of the beauty industry and of the commodification of the body. They argue that food is part of a disciplinary order in which women are taught to diet and manage their bodies so as to publicly communicate in the grammar of patriarchy. "Riot girl" punks, in particular, have produced a large volume of zines, music, conversations, and practices that challenge the sexist politics of food. In the ongoing evolution and critique of punk culture, diet is one of the many places where feminist ideas have been advanced and largely won out.

Indeed, vegetarianism for many punks is partly a feminist practice, but it also reveals ideological fissures within punk culture. Meat, with its prestige, caloric content, and proximity to physical violence, has been widely associated with masculinity (Adams 1990; Rifkin 1992). Yet even within punk culture, which is critical of both sexism and meat-eating (O'Hara 1999), some punks continue to produce an overtly sexist, masculine presence (Nguyen 1999) and one associated with eating meat. Meat for some punks is a way to challenge feminism in punk and to reassert masculine power. Other punk meat-eating falls into the categories of those who are apolitical about food, and those who flaunt meat-eating as a way of challenging punk orthodoxy.

For most punks, however, meat-eating is collaborative with an unjust social order, which punks typically portray as a patriarchy. Opposing social hierarchies, and living in staunchly patriarchal societies, they need to subvert male supremacy in everyday life, and vegetarianism, widely stigmatized as an oriental and feminine practice, helps to differentiate punks from the mainstream.

Punk Veganism

In punk veganism, the daily politics of consumption and the ethical quandaries of everyday life are intensified. In part, the decade-long struggle to make food and animal products overtly political was carried out by bands such as Vegan Reich and in zines. Zines regularly comment on animal rights, industrial food, and veganism. Often drawing upon Rifkin (1992) and Robbins (1987), many zines recount details of cruelty toward animals, contaminated meat, and the unhealthful effects of meat and dairy products on the human body. Other punk writing describes environmental consequences of industrial food production. "Even Punks who do not acknowledge

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the concept of animal rights and hold strong anthropocentric views have been known to change their diet purely for environmental reasons" (O'Hara 1999: 135). In the daily praxis of punk, vegetarianism and veganism are strategies through which many punks combat corporate capitalism, patriarchy, and environmental collapse.

The emphasis on a radical diet was not always a dominant part of punk cultures. But by the 1990s, veganism was a rapidly ascending force within the greater punk landscape in North America. Led by the "straight edge" punk movement, veganism gained credence across the punk spectrum, including those who scorned the drug-abstaining politics of straight edge, as did most Seattle punks in this study.

At the Black Cat Café, punks said that to eat animal-based products was not only unhealthful, it participated in the bondage and murder of animals. Many punks were concerned about the cruel conditions of factory farms, where animals were kept in cramped quarters, pumped with hormones and antibiotics, and "tortured" in sundry ways. Near the middle of its tenure, the Black Cat discontinued its use of milk and eggs. A vegetarian café from its outset, the Cat became more orthodox when its menu was made completely vegan. The transition to a vegan menu marked a turning point for the collective. The original members had dropped out, and a younger, more militant membership had taken control. The café became less tolerant, less compromising, and more thoroughly punk in its clientele and ambiance. Ketan expressed the urgency that many punks feel about veganism:

> There's this line that occurs with being vegan and being activist: at what point does the freedom of people who believe what they believe cross over to the point where people are being harmed? You know? Like, yeah: people are free to eat meat. But actually, in this day and age, they *can't* eat meat because it's killing animals. Because someone is eating meat, land that could potentially benefit all of us is being destroyed. I have a lot of problems with that line: I don't want to impede people's freedom, but what everyone does affects everyone else. … I honestly believe that people have to stop eating meat now. Now! I'm not gonna force anyone to stop eating meat, but they're hurting me, my children's future, my friends, my family—because they're eating meat. And they're hurting the Earth, which is most important of all.

Many punks around the nation were part of the growing politicization of the culture, with veganism at the forefront of the politics. To be vegan in America is to perpetually find oneself in the minority, chastised, excluded, challenged, and reminded of one's difference. In this sense, veganism also served as an incessant critique of the mainstream, a marker of Otherness, and an enactment of punk.

Raw as a Critique of Cooked

In punk cuisine, the degree to which food is processed, sterilized, brand named, and fetishized is the degree to which it is corrupted, distanced from nature, and "cooked." Punks describe a world under the assault of homogenized foods and culture, a world of vast monocropped cornfields and televisions lit with prefabricated corporate "infotainment." Whereas industrial agriculture is associated with genetic engineering, monocropping, pesticides, animal cages, chemical fertilizers, and commodification, "raw" food tends toward wildness and complexity.

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Punks perceive in everyday American food an abject modernity, a synthetic destroyer of locality and diversity. The "cooking" of foods, to which punks vociferously object, is an outcome of the industrialization and commercialization of modern food production, which are made visible and critiqued through punk culinary practices. The following trends in modern food manufacture and consumption comprise the increasingly cooked qualities of food against which punks can be said to form their culinary triangle.

From a punk perspective, American food has reached an unprecedented and remarkable state: nearly all the food that Americans eat is received in the form of a commodity, and the fetishism of food goes far beyond the simple erasure of labor. Lears (1994: 171) describes the emergence of the industrialization of eating:

> By the 1920s and 1930s, advertisements for food displayed an almost panicky reassertion of culture over nature—an anxious impulse to extirpate all signs of biological life from one's immediate personal environment. That impulse has been spreading widely for decades, as methods of mass production were brought to food processing and distribution.

Such logics, for example, are apparent in the segregated meat products, in which the animal carcass is hidden. The animal's head, feet, and tongue (its recognizable body parts) have disappeared from most American butcher displays.

Through the most sophisticated branding, packaging, and advertising, American food commodities work hard to conceal the labor, spatial divides, and resources that went into making the food. Or, as Weiss (1996: 131) shows, "the effects of encompassing transformations in political economy (colonialism, wage labor, commoditization and the like) … [have] their greatest and gravest consequences for food." In modern advertising, images of food often divert attention from the industrialized production of food, and draw attention to its consumption (DuPuis 2000). Rather than depict the mechanized dairy factory, ads show celebrities and athletes wearing smiles and milk mustaches. Notes Harvey (1989: 300):

> The whole world's cuisine is now assembled in one place. … The general implication is that through the experience of everything from food, to culinary habits, music, television, entertainment, and cinema, it is now possible to experience the world's geography vicariously, as a simulacrum. The interweaving of simulacra in daily life brings together different worlds (of commodities) in the same space and time. But it does so in such a way as to conceal almost perfectly any trace of origin, of the labour processes that produced them, or of the social relations implicated in their production.

Perhaps these postmodern geographies, along with relentless commodification, heighten the fetishism of the commodity, hiding as much as possible the making of a product; the alienating conditions of production, cooking in the extreme.

Punks see industrialized food production not as a desired convenience, but as one of the hallmarks of monoculture. The anarchist idea of monoculture plays on the "culture" part of the term, thus expanding it to cover not only modern industrial agriculture, but also mainstream culture. For punks, monoculture encapsulates the idea that societies around the world are being devoured and homogenized by consumerism; it invokes the idea that humans everywhere increasingly eat, dream, work, are gendered, and otherwise live according to a narrow and hegemonic culture

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sold to them by global capitalism. Across the globe, punks argue, humans are losing their cultural, ecological, temporal, and regional specificity. Among other things, this means that people are often eating foods grown and flavored elsewhere: people everywhere are increasingly alienated from that which keeps them alive.

"Raw" food, which is to say, organic, home-grown, bartered food, was one way punks resisted the spread of monoculture. At the Black Cat Café, customers could trade home-grown organic produce for meal credits, they could trade their dishwashing labor for meals, and they could drink "fair trade" coffee. Moreover, the café strove to subvert profiteering at every step in the food's production. At the Cat, people who might be called punks contrasted the synthetic, processed, and destructive diet of the mainstream with their own, and declared that their bodies and minds were healthier for it, unpolluted by toxic chemicals and capitalist culture.

Stealing Yuppie-Natural Foods

Not far from the Black Cat Café, Seattle hosted a variety of natural-foods retailers, who attracted both the contempt and the palates of punks. Such places offered organically grown foods marketed to an upscale clientele. Indeed, the natural-foods industry in 1990s Seattle was part of a vast reconfiguration of food in America, which witnessed a hitherto unprecedented niche marketing of what punks saw as foods which fed egos more than bodies. The punk narrative critique of the natural-foods movement was extended by stealing, for by this the food was remade.

Punk discourses of food are partly a response to the heightening of identity marketing in foods over the last few decades of the twentieth century. Although locating identity and prestige in food is an ancient practice, it has historically been limited by income, tradition, and spatial divides. But in contemporary America, the bewildering array of food choices challenges the consumer, whose choices are understood to "express" or manufacture him- or herself. Americans have reached the point at which food as essential for survival has been sublimated under the ideology of food as self-gratification and consumer identity.

Such formulas were apparent to punks in the commercial discourse on natural foods. Punks regard these foods, while ostensibly pure and simple, as much commodities as the food products that preceded them, and derisively locate "yuppie," "individualistic," and "White" behavior in an expensive obsession about one's own purity and health (see Bey 1991: 53). The natural-foods industry, then, is a target of punk critical practices. In Seattle, the Puget Consumers' Co-op (PCC) bore the brunt of the punk natural-foods critique. Fashionable, expensive, and allegedly catering to a mostly White and upscale clientele, the PCC was scorned by punks.

While commodified natural foods were repulsively overcooked, they were simultaneously closer to the raw forms of food that punks preferred: organic, bulk, and whole grain. So, while the PCC market offered the organic products that punks preferred (as well as a relatively tolerable and tolerant workplace for those who opted for wage labor), the high prices and upscale marketing represented the cooking of foods; the heightened state of gastronomic fetishism from which punks felt alienated. Cleansed of their commodification, these foods would be perfectly suited to the punk culinary system. Thus, many punks, whether as workers or customers, targeted natural-foods

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supermarkets for theft (c.f. Himelstein and Schweser 1998: 18–21, 24). In this manner, the kitchen of the Black Cat Café was routinely stocked with products stolen from chain supermarkets and natural-foods stores. This behavior suggests an axiom of punk culinary geometry: in the act of being stolen, heavily cooked food is transformed into a more nutritive, gustative state. Stolen foods are outlaw foods, contaminated or rotten to the mainstream, but a delicacy in punk cuisine.

The Rotten Logic of Dumpster Diving

Each night American supermarkets and restaurants fill their dumpsters with food, and each night punks arrive to claim some of it. A host of foods become rotten in corporate-capitalist food production: food with an advanced expiration date, cosmetically damaged produce, food in dented packaging, day-old baked goods, and the like. As punks saw it, people were hungry in Seattle, in America, and around the world. To punks it was obscene that businesses were trashing good food (Resist 2003: 67).

Unlike raw foods, dumped food tends to be commercialized, nonorganic, and highly processed. Baked goods, donuts, produce, vegetables, pizza, and an array of junk foods are foraged by punks, who otherwise disdain such products. Yet in the process of passing through a dumpster, such foods are cleansed or rotted, as it were, and made nutritious and attractive to the punk being.

It was ironic to punks that people are hassled by security guards, store employees, and police merely for taking things out of a dumpster. Not only did the mainstream waste food, it protected its garbage with armed guards. Commented one punk: "There is the odd paradox—the casualness with which they will throw something into the dumpster, and the lengths they will go to protect it once it's there. How an innocent and harmless act—dumpster diving—will be confronted by greedy shopkeepers, store managers, and employees with scathing words, rage, and violence" (Anonymous 2001: 72). Taken in tandem, the waste of food and the protection of waste were seen by punks as the avaricious gluttony of American society. Food in dumpsters is, for most Americans, garbage and repulsive. It goes beyond the pale of Whiteness to eat food classified as garbage: only untouchables, such as the homeless, eat trash. So for those punks who were raised White or middle class, dumpsters and dumped food dirty their bodies and tarnish their affiliation with a White, bourgeois power structure. In this sense, the downward descent into a dumpster is literally an act of downward mobility. Moreover, eating garbage (food deemed rotten) is a forceful condemnation of societal injustices. On an ecologically strained planet home to two billion hungry people, punks see their reclamation of rotten food as a profoundly radical act.

Gastro-Politics in Punk Activism

For its five years of existence, the Black Cat Café was the kitchen of Seattle's punk scene. It was a decidedly anticorporate environment, where mainstream types were not always welcomed, and where there was always room for young wayfarers. As with

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many cultures, punk food practices helped shape community, symbolize values, and foster group solidarity. The Black Cat was a place where anarcho-punk "disorganizations" could put up flyers, recruit members, and keep their limited dollars circulating. At the café, feelings of alienation from the mainstream were converted into punk sentiments and channeled into anarchist practices.

Various activist groups were associated with punk culture. One of the foremost was Food Not Bombs, an anarchist dis-organization. It served to collect, prepare, and distribute free food to the homeless and the hungry. The hostility of the Seattle City Council and Seattle police toward Food Not Bombs was received at the Cat as another sign of American class warfare and a coercive attempt to force even the homeless to turn to commodities for their survival (see also Narotzky 1997: 114). When Food Not Bombs was cited for giving meals to the poor, this revealed the militancy of the ruling class to punks. Despite—and because of—the hassles from authorities, Food Not Bombs drew many volunteer hours from people who were affiliated with the Black Cat. Ketan mentioned Food Not Bombs as inspiring him to become a punk:

> I think the reason I chose not to [be a part of the mainstream] is … empathy … empathy and recognition of … what we're going through. I myself have been helping out with Food Not Bombs for a year straight, and [so] I've got a pretty good idea of what [poor] people go through. And I myself have [suffered] in the sense that I've not had my own space, and it's drove me crazy—you know, not knowing where I was going to sleep the next night. … Certainly I can't say that I know exactly what's going on [with the homeless], but I'm just trying to say that I have some understanding of it, you know? Just knowing that [poverty's] happening. And knowing that that's happening in the midst of that CEO making 109 million dollars [a year] … just knowing that makes me not want to be a part of that [wealth]. And that's happened with a lot of people here. I don't want to say what they believe, but—people here try to be as aware as they can of what's going on.

Another member of the scene, Karma, said that the "sense of family" drew her to the Cat.

> I like the fact that it's not run to make money. It's run for people, not profit. There's always some cause happening, some flyer up about something to go to: Books to Prisoners or Food Not Bombs or the Art and Revolution thing. … I think [activism] has a lot to do with it—certainly not the majority of why people come here. I think the majority of why people come here is because there's cheap food that's damn good. But because the food is specifically vegan, and that on a level by itself is activism, a lot of activists are vegan so they end up coming here. [Laughs.] And that kind of spurs the whole activism-crowd thing. Because they're all coming here, leaving their flyers, more people are coming, they're seeing the flyers, "Oh yeah, look: this is going on."

By making its political content explicit, food became a primary site of discussion and recruitment. In these movements, punk cuisine took shape and with it punks at the Black Cat concocted a daily life of meaningful situations, anarchist discourse, and resistance to "the System."

Conclusions

Contemporary punks—largely anarchist, antiracist, and feminist—use food as a medium to make themselves, and to theorize and contest the status quo. As an integral part of their daily practice, punks politicize food. For punks, everyday

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American food choices are not only nutritionally deficient, they are filled with a commodified, homogenous culture, and are based in White-male domination over nature, animals, and people around the world. Punk cuisine is one way punks critique these power relations, and one substance with which to remake themselves outside of those relations. Punk cuisine is a way to make punk ideas knowable, ritualized, and edible; a way to favor the less mediated anarchist food over the capitalist product: the raw over the cooked. From punk vantage points, modern American food is transformed to a cultural extreme; its origins in nature and labor are cooked away, leaving a fetishized byproduct. Punk cuisine aspires toward food that is free of brand names, pesticides, and exploited labor, and toward food that is as raw as possible. In punk poesis, raw is a metaphor for wild, and one of the most important tropes in punk culture. Where mainstream society is said to control, exploit, and homogenize foods and people, punks idealize freedom, autonomy, and diversity.

For five years, the Black Cat Café brought punks together in a cultural space where they critiqued modernity, capitalism, Whiteness, and mainstream America. In their cuisine, punks identify and challenge Fordism, sexism, greed, cruelty, and environmental destruction. They choose to avoid eating American cuisine, for they see the act of eating everyday American food as a complicit endorsement of White-male corporate power. Reared White and middle class, and raised on foods that are seemingly nonideological in American culture, punks come to reject their ethno-class identities and cuisine, for they believe that mainstream American foods recapitulate a violent and unjust society. Mainstream American food, with its labor and natural components cooked beyond recognition, is countered with the raw and rotten foods of punks; foods that are ideally natural, home grown, stolen, discarded, and uncommodified. These foodways define punk cuisine and punks themselves.

Notes

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2. Research for this article stems from my participant-observation in the Black Cat Café in Seattle from 1993 to 1998. The café was owned and operated by people called "punk" in their culture for their anarchist philosophy. Punks are diverse, and though these punks might be called "anarcho-punks" (to distinguish them from gutter punks, straight-edge punks, and other types), all punk ideologies are related. The cuisine of punks is always changing, always being argued over, and always responding to new circumstances and ideologies.
3. The restaurant was never in violation of health codes except for minor offenses (once, for example, an inspector prohibited leaving rice in the rice cooker and the collective grudgingly had to buy a food warmer). Dishes, food, and hands were washed, and no customer ever reported suffering from food poisoning.

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