UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

FEMINIST FOOD RHETORIC:

WOMEN'S RHETORICAL STRATEGIES ACROSS

INSTAGRAM, FOOD PODCASTS, AND COMMUNITY COOKBOOKS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

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Norman, Oklahoma

2022

FEMINIST FOOD RHETORIC:

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A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

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Table of Contents

For Mom

January 8, 1960 – November 10, 2020

Acknowledgments

Like veganizing one of chef Christina Tosi's cookie recipes, writing *Feminist Food Rhetoric* involved lots of trial, error, and guidance and support from many people spread out across the US.

First, I would like to thank the members of my committee, several of whom have supported me since I began coursework at the University of Oklahoma. To my advisor, Will Kurlinkus, who always seemed to know what I was trying to say before I figured out how to say it. Your feedback helped improve my writing, but it also gave me the confidence to explore researching food beyond cookbooks. Thanks for always encouraging me to do more and believing in my work even when I didn't. To Susan Kates, who suggested I rhetorically analyze cookbooks in the first place. To Sandy Tarabochia, whose feedback on seminar papers and drafts guided me to question what I was doing and why from multiple perspectives. And to Katie DeLuca, who mentioned how I might think about cooking texts as technical documents during a prospectus meeting. Our conversation inspired my analysis of *The Splendid Table*.

I would also like to acknowledge Anna Barritt and Eleah Anz, who started this journey with me and became friends I could turn to when I had writing questions or needed to vent about a lesson plan gone wrong. To Noah Patton-Cooke. My time at OU would've been filled with more panic and imposter syndrome than it was had it not been for you. Thank you for spending your Friday nights doing homework with me. Those hangouts led us to collaborate for the first time and start a peer mentor program. Here's to many future collaborations!

Thank you to the mentors and friends who have helped me over the years. Michelle Naka Pierce, thank you for teaching me how to teach. J'Lyn Chapman, thank you for suggesting I take a gap year (which turned into four) after my MFA. It was a much-needed break. Sarah Richards

Graba, thank you for being a collaborator, late-night cupcake froster, pedagogical sounding board, and so much more. Since 2012, you've been the constant force of nature I needed to grow as a teacher/scholar/human. Alyssa Velk, no matter where we are, we'll always be the A-Team. Thank you as well to the members of the CPTSC-GSC. The Discord was the virtual office space I needed to feel connected to other grad students while dissertating during a pandemic. Morgan Banville, Evelyn Dsouza, and Elena Kalodner-Martin, our weekly GatherTown writing sessions gave me life. Lastly, thank you to all the Bake Clubbers for showing up and understanding the power of a cookie.

Mom, you always said I was going to write a book. This isn't a book yet, but it's a start. I wish you were here to talk about recipes and tell me the latest neighborhood gossip. Dad, thanks for driving across the country, always answering the phone when I need you, and supporting my ambitions to get what I want out of life.

Above all, thank you to my husband, Sam. You took a chance on a poet who dreamt of getting her Ph.D., and you left Denver to support me while I read sixty pages a day and worked through weekends. As cliched as it is to say, I wouldn't have been able to write this dissertation without you cheering me on from the next room and making sure I ate something other than tortilla chips. Let's take D'Wayne and Jeff for a walk, make pizza, and watch a Robert Pattinson movie to celebrate.

Abstract

Demonstrating that food and cooking instructions are important everyday artifacts worthy of rhetorical criticism, *Feminist Food Rhetoric* advances rhetoric and writing studies scholarship on food by moving beyond the dominant focus on studying cookbooks. Analyzing multiple media used to teach cooking skills, I define cooking texts as any form of media (e.g., social media platforms, radio shows and podcasts, and cookbooks) used to circulate cooking knowledge. I argue that people use food to create collaborative community-oriented spaces that utilize the active creation and sharing of content alongside learning to rhetorically construct identities while uncovering and recovering voices and epistemologies often ignored or excluded. Drawing on feminist rhetoric, food studies, and media studies, I use rhetorical criticism, interviews, and qualitative coding to identify how women use cooking texts across time and locations. I apply these methods to a variety of cooking texts, studying how a hashtag on Instagram led women to find a community at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the rhetorical strategies of a food radio host that works to recover foodways while teaching listeners how to cook, and the gendered and classed ideologies subverted, reinscribed, circulated, and memorialized in community cookbooks. Investigating elements of remediation and participatory culture, I find that cooking texts are a form of constitutive rhetoric that create a communal identity through opportunities for collaborative co-authorship, build community despite geographical distance, are used to respond to cultural upheaval and become a form of social activism that memorializes places, cultures, people, and events.

Figures

Chapter 1

A Seat at the Table:

Employing Feminist Rhetoric, Food Studies, and Media Studies to Examine How Women Use Food to Create and Memorialize Communities

> No text, including cookbooks and other cooking literature, exists in a vacuum but in a cultural context that infuses it with meaning.
>
> —Sherrie A. Inness, *Secret Ingredients*

> The sazón is the ability to "seize power over one part of oneself" through the epistemology of all our senses, which in turn helps to regain the body as a center of knowledge.
>
> —Meredith E. Abarca, *Voices in the Kitchen*

I. Introduction: Instagram, Food, and Remembering the COVID-19 Pandemic

If you have an Instagram account, you probably noticed a lot of sourdough in your feed during 2020. Sourdough starters, breads, and a variety of baked goods using "discard" (the leftovers from maintaining a starter) began trending in the spring of 2020 as COVID-19 spread. Worldwide, people found themselves with extra time as they were advised (or ordered) to only leave their home for essential activities. Learning how to bake sourdough was one way to fill that time, but the interest in bread wasn't limited to social media. In June, baker Bryan Ford realized just how timely his first book, *New World Sourdough*, was when it quickly sold out and made its way onto *Epicurious*' top summer cookbooks list (Joseph, "6 New"). As the prefacing quote from women's studies scholar Sherrie A. Inness acknowledges, "cookbooks and other cooking literature" are culturally constructed—they represent the political, social, and cultural ideologies present at the time of publication. For Ford, a cookbook meant to teach home cooks the basics of sourdough bread paired with images of loaves shared on Instagram captures a general response to sheltering-in-place and the rise of baking at home as it memorializes how COVID-19 brought people into the kitchen.

As restaurants closed and my social media feeds filled with people spending more time in their kitchen, I saw professional chefs, like pastry chef Christina Tosi, use social media to try and make socially-distanced food participatory. They encouraged people to bake or learn some new kitchen skills and share the results by posting images on Instagram and leaving baked goods on neighbors' porches. Over months of quarantine, protests for racial justice, and the 2020 presidential election, Tosi's Instagram baking group, known as Bake Club, grew into more than a celebrity chef posting cooking videos. The community of people watching, baking along, and posting images of their bakes crafted a collective memory of COVID-19 that sought to fight isolation and used cooking as constitutive rhetoric. Indeed, Bake Club's collective memory, which Barbie Zelizer explains as memories "that are determined and shaped by the group" (214), memorializes the pandemic through food, but baking also fulfills a physical and emotional hunger. When Bake Club members remember 2020, it will be memorialized through the ways food allowed us to connect with other people despite geographical distance.[1]

But the COVID-19 pandemic is only one example of people using the relationship between food and collective memory to do rhetorical work. Examining food more broadly, this dissertation argues that community-created cooking resources utilize collective memory to recover, construct, and maintain an embodied communal identity to respond current events, spread inclusive cooking knowledge, and perform community activism. By attempting to understand the response to cooking during the pandemic, which is the focus of Chapter 2, and the rhetorical strategies of twenty-first-century cooking communities more generally, this project attempts to fill a gap in current rhetoric and writing studies scholarship on food and cookbook rhetoric. Although rhetoricians, such as Sarah Walden and Lisa Mastrangelo, study food and

[1] Here, and throughout Chapter 2, I use "us" because I am an active member of Bake Club.

community, cookbook scholarship in rhetoric and writing studies tends to focus on historical cookbooks as the central artifact of study rather than exploring the living, multiple modes rhetors use to spread cooking knowledge.

And although this dissertation does not solely focus on food during the current COVID-19 pandemic, a study of food as constitutive rhetoric through a feminist lens seems even more timely as we find ourselves separated from those we would gather around the table with. As rhetoricians John Louis Lucaites and Celeste Michelle Condit say, "[t]he ability to create a sense of community, and thus the possibility of social and political life as we know it, depends upon the human capacity for communication" (1). Here, Lucaites and Condit, like rhetoricians from Aristotle to Maurice Charland, see community formation as the purpose of rhetoric. "Constitutive rhetoric," says Charland, "is part of the discursive background of social life. It is always there, usually implicitly, and sometimes explicitly articulated. It is more than a set of commonplaces, but is the con-text [sic], the pre-rhetoric that is necessary to any successful interpellation" (147). By examining something so ordinary as food and cookbooks, rhetoricians can examine how communities use food to build identities informed by the past and rooted in the present to shape the future. However, the fundamental role food plays in community formation has been left relatively untouched by the field.

For example, Walden's *Tasteful Domesticity,* a significant contribution to the field as the first book-length study of cookbooks in rhetoric and writing studies, takes a feminist historical recovery approach as she analyzes cookbooks from 1790-1940. To be sure, Walden's hyper-focus on cookbooks works to establish these texts as significant rhetorical spaces for women and worthy of study; however, there is no mention of other forms of media, like radio, where women also engaged in public and participatory discourse through food. Notably, in the chapter on home

economics, Walden glosses over the role of women on the radio that coincided with the domestic science movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. By expanding to media beyond books, including radio (Chapter 3), I hope to demonstrate how women used—and continue to use—food rhetorically to connect across time and space, build participatory publics, and embody traditions and memory.

Perhaps one reason scholarship on food is underrepresented in rhetoric is because of rhetoric's traditional focus on male, oral, and written discourses. That is to say, because of the perception of cookbooks as women's literature and cooking as women's work, their significant role in constructing communities and shaping literacy is traditionally ignored. In contrast, folklorist Janet Theophano notes that cookbooks in the seventeenth century were a "common place" for women to "raise their level of literacy" (156). Women encouraged children to practice writing in cookbooks, and through the space of the kitchen and recipes, they gained "opportunities for reading, writing, and socializing" and constructed literacy events (Theophano 167). "[A]ny action sequence, involving one or more persons, in which the production and/or comprehension of print plays a role," literacy events contribute to constructing community by developing shared literacy practices that inform identity (Heath 392). Though the definition of literacy event emphasizes reading and writing, and Theophano demonstrates how women learned these skills in the kitchen, one of the goals of this dissertation is expanding the definition of food literacy events from primarily focusing on printed texts (cookbooks) to include a variety of what I refer to simply as *cooking texts*.

When I say *cooking text*, I go beyond cookbooks to encompass any form of media used to circulate cooking knowledge; I also consider the relationships built between the texts and the social interactions centered around food. More specifically, the cooking texts studied in this

dissertation include Instagram posts (Chapter 2), radio programs (Chapter 3), and community cookbooks (Chapter 4). Using these cooking texts, I seek to answer the questions:

- How is food used rhetorically as a feminist tool?
- What kinds of unique participatory roles does food create and memorialize that can't be found as clearly elsewhere?
- For women specifically, how does the interactive nature of Instagram posts, radio shows, and cookbooks transform how food is used rhetorically to create participatory roles, memorialize cultures, and construct a community text?

By answering these questions throughout this dissertation, I hope to support the claims that (1) cooking texts rhetorically create communal identity specifically through co-authorship that embodies women in the past, present, and future; (2) cooking texts create a local community despite geographical distance; and (3) cooking texts are used by rhetors to respond to cultural upheaval and as a form of social activism.

To begin explaining how cooking texts function, the remainder of this chapter reviews the scholarship that shapes my approach. First, I introduce key feminist rhetoric and feminist food studies research central to supporting this project's arguments. Then, I explain the three primary lenses (social circulation, remediation, and participatory culture) I use to rhetorically analyze cooking texts. Finally, I conclude with a brief overview of the remaining chapters, including the specific research questions each chapter addresses. Overall, I argue that the food we eat contributes to how we identify with, learn from, and memorialize the communities in which we participate.

II. Literature Review: The Interdisciplinary Nature of Studying Food

Have you ever asked someone to define American food? If you have, you probably received various answers ranging from hamburgers and hotdogs, the food you might eat during the summer to celebrate the fourth of July, to the all-American apple pie. "What exactly is American food? And what makes us American?" asks food expert and TV host Padma Lakshmi in the opening credits of *Taste the Nation with Padma Lakshmi*, a food travel show Hulu released in the summer of 2020. Lakshmi attempts to answer this question in each episode as she works to recover and showcase the voices of those who have helped shape American food. Like defining American food, many scholarly subfields inform how I understand food's relationship to rhetoric. This section focuses on scholarship from feminist rhetoric and includes food studies, community literacy, and communication studies to argue that women use food to teach cultural values, demonstrating this dissertation's interdisciplinary approach. In making these connections, I join feminist rhetoric scholars like Lisa Ede, Cheryl Glenn, and Andrea Lunsford who argue that a feminist approach to rhetoric can encourage rhetoricians "to reflect upon, and possibly even reconsider, their disciplinary projects" (56). Ultimately, feminist rhetoric is a way to argue that "knowledge based in the personal, in lived experience, be valued and accepted as important and significant," thus expanding what counts as knowledge to include cooking texts (59).

Feminist Rhetoric

According to Cheryl Glenn, feminist rhetoric "focuses on the rights, contributions, expertise, opportunities, and histories of marginalized groups and supports coalitions across and among these groups" (*Rhetorical Feminism* 3). Glenn's definition guides the approach I take in examining the three significant rhetorical purposes of cooking texts identified above (rhetorically creating a communal identity through co-authorship that recalls women in the past, present, and

future; building a local community regardless of physical location; responding to cultural upheaval), leading to a feminist participatory approach to recovering, constructing, and memorializing identity.

Recovery work, a central component of feminist rhetoric, has often focused on more traditional oral and written discourse like speeches and essays. For instance, Glenn's *Rhetoric Retold* and the anthology *Reclaiming Rhetorica* edited by Lunsford highlight women's work from antiquity (like Sappho and Diotima) to the twentieth century (such as Julia Kristeva). Glenn and Lunsford's work laid the foundation for rhetoricians to move beyond oration to recover women. For example, scholarship on pedagogical texts such as elocution materials (Johnson; Kates) and the material rhetoric of artifacts such as needlework samplers (Goggin) and knitting (Greer; Robertson) emerged to argue that rhetoricians could—and should—study ordinary artifacts. Rhetorically analyzing food, I argue, continues to build off previous feminist rhetoric scholarship; however, it is slightly different in that the emphasis on recovering absences is grounded in collective memory explicitly connected to food.

Here, collective memory refers to the memories that "are instantiated beyond the individual by and for the collective," which contribute to constructing group identity (Zelizer 214). Recent feminist scholarship in rhetoric and writing studies on food and cookbooks (Eves; Fleitz; Mastrangelo; Tippen; Walden) emphasizes recovery as integral to memory and history. In particular, Carrie Helms Tippen's scholarship focuses on Southern recipes exclusively, showing how cookbooks and cookbook writers use food to recover marginalized voices and redefine identity through collective memory. By analyzing recipes from the South, Tippen demonstrates how cookbooks recover narratives of the Great Migration from the point of view of African American women ("Writing Recipes"). Referencing the work of Glenn and Lunsford, Tippen

explains that feminist historiography, the general approach used to study historical texts, "emphasizes absences in narratives, recovering voices, facts, or events that had previously been unknown or unacknowledged and offering an alternative narrative" (16). By including other narratives of the Great Migration, Tippen demonstrates how collective memory for and by African American women emerges.

Similarly, Rosalyn Collings Eves concludes that the purpose of three cookbooks published by the National Council of Negro Women is to memorialize food and the stories that accompany them to recover "a collective memory of what it means to be an African-American [sic] woman in the twentieth century" for people who have been excluded and robbed the power of written memory through racism and sexism (287). Next to the recipes, contributors share memories of where and when they ate the food. In this way, food simultaneously recovers and memorializes the voices of African American women alongside US history. By connecting food and collective memory, it is possible to recover and memorialize marginalized groups, redistributing power by circulating previously ignored narratives. However, as we'll examine when we look at cookbooks in Chapter 4, not all cookbooks counter dominant white upper-middle-class ideologies.

These two examples examine cookbooks, but recovery isn't limited to traditional, written texts. Indeed, social media can also sustain networks of social relationships centered around exchanging food and creating collective memory, affecting how we understand food and memory through virtual documentation of ordinary encounters. For example, digital media communications scholar Lee Humphreys argues that documenting ordinary, everyday moments, like what someone ate for breakfast, is not a new phenomenon. Instead, social media platforms, like Instagram, are similar to older media such as diaries. "Historically, diaries, particularly those

of women," says Humphreys, "chronicled everyday life activities and events of the household and community," and women often shared their diaries or passed them on to other family members (2). Like diaries, cookbooks "recorded these social and economic transactions" of everyday life (Theophano 48). In a way, social media posts have become a standard practice for chronicling food, utilizing what Humphreys refers to as "remembrancing," or "a way of creating, sharing and engaging with media traces in ways that allow us to collectively think about our pasts, presents, and futures," thus creating collective memory (90). Like the Instagram posts analyzed in Chapter 2, examples of virtually sharing food serve as examples of remembrancing and collective memory.

From Feminist Rhetoric to Feminist Food Rhetoric

Though Joshua J. Frye and Michael S. Bruner argue that food rhetoric "is increasingly dominant discourse and suffuses co-cultures, popular culture, countercultures, global economics, and environmental policies" (1), feminist rhetoricians (Dubisar; Cognard-Black and Goldthwaite; Goldthwaite; Fleitz; Tippen) have shaped a slightly different working definition of feminist food rhetoric. According to Abby M. Dubisar, a central purpose of feminist food rhetoric is to "show how food discourses subvert, complicate, and strengthen dominant understandings of gender in persuasive ways" ("Toward" 119). Additionally, "feminist rhetoric scholars can more fully address how food discourses contribute to such silence or amplification" (122). It's Dubisar's explanation of feminist food rhetoric that this dissertation utilizes to join the existing conversations on food.

Unlike rhetoricians studying food rhetoric in general, feminist food rhetoric emphasizes recovering and uncovering marginalized voices. But it goes further to expand food's rhetorical possibilities to focus on how food aligns with power and authority. Dubisar summarizes feminist

food rhetoric approaches to research, acknowledging they include studying cookbooks; alternative food activism and food preservation; stereotypes; agricultural rhetorics; environmental rhetorics, sustainability rhetorics, and ecocomposition; health and embodied rhetorics; maternal rhetorics; popular culture; masculinity and food; and the rhetorical significance of vegetarianism and veganism. The work of this dissertation most closely aligns with cookbooks, popular culture, and masculinity and food. "Studying cookbooks as rhetorical texts," says Dubisar, "creates a feminist counter-narrative for the historical meaning of food and rhetoric's masculine tradition" ("Toward" 119). By studying what I define above as *cooking texts*—any form of media used to circulate cooking knowledge—this dissertation builds on Dubisar's work defining feminist food rhetoric.

In the previous section, I illustrated how collective memory aligns with feminist recovery projects. Now I'll explain how feminist food rhetoric establishes cooking texts as collaborative, multisensory, embodied texts. For instance, Jennifer Cognard-Black's analysis of her grandmother's recipe collection explains that annotations indicating where the recipe came from make recipes collaborative across time. Such collaboration shows that the recipes are a form of collective memory and that there's "collaborative authorship and artistry that's happening as women swap, record, and edit these texts" (37). Additionally, Cognard-Black describes this collaboration as a form of embodied rhetoric, emphasizing the ways that recipes physically interact with bodies in the past, present, and future. For example, the recipe's author evokes embodied rhetoric by "holding the pencil or pen, translating a literal dish into the symbolic of language" (40). Then, "[t]here are the bodies of the past—the women (and a few men) who originally created and shared these recipes with the writer of the current moment" and "there are also the bodies of the future and those of the future-present" who continue to use the recipe.

Finally, there are the bodies "in the process of sustaining themselves, literally," or the people who get to eat the product of the recipe. The representation of multiple bodies collectively contributes to recipes' embodied rhetoric and makes food rhetoric unique among feminist rhetorics.

Although I agree that recipes are an embodied rhetoric that creates physical collective memory that spans generations, Cognard-Black's study of memory across alphabetic texts makes me wonder how similar moves might occur across other modalities. So how are the senses (smell, touch, taste, sight, and sound) part of the embodied rhetoric of recipes?

The work of Meredith E. Abarca, professor of Latina/o literature and food studies, includes all of the senses when explaining food and recipes as embodied rhetoric, demonstrating that knowledge can be centered in the body. "Sazón," which Abarca defines as "a sensory way of knowing" and "the language spoken in the kitchen" that is unique to each cook, applies to examining cooking texts as collaborative, embodied, and multisensory (*Voices* 50-1). For example, Irma, one of the women Abarca interviewed, explains that she doesn't measure the amount of water needed to cook rice. Instead, she says, "*I think it is in my hand because I just mix the rice [with a spoon] and I know when it needs more water or when it has enough*" (50; emphasis original). Here, Irma relies on touch, supporting Abarca's argument that all senses, not just sight, contribute to an individual's sazón and embodiment in the kitchen. Indeed, smell is also an embodied part of recipes that triggers memory as "smells evoke what surrounds them in memory, what has been metonymically associated with the smell in question" (Sutton 89). When I encounter the smell of ham and cabbage, for example, I am transported to my mother's kitchen the day after Christmas. The memory of ham and cabbage cannot exist on its own as it needs more context to explain the dish.

As I have hopefully demonstrated thus far, the study of food, cooking, and cooking texts is not an entirely new interest in rhetoric and writing studies and continues to be of interest as scholars publish articles and edited collections on food[2]. And regardless of the media—whether it's Instagram posts, radio programs, or cookbooks—studying cooking texts emphasizes how women rhetors use food as a space for recovery, a way to memorialize communities and construct collective memory, and to create collaborative, embodied, multisensory texts. Through the work of this dissertation, I contribute to conversations rooted in feminist rhetoric as I highlight how women use food as a constitutive tool, employing a mixed-methods approach to rhetorically analyzing cooking texts.

III. Methods and Methodologies: A Recipe for Research

In general, food studies is not defined by one theoretical approach or research methodology but takes an "interdisciplinary approach to studying where food comes from, how it is prepared, consumed, and disposed of" (Black 201-2). As I used Dubisar to explain above, the work of feminist food rhetoric invites a multitude of research approaches. Therefore, this dissertation uses mixed-methodology to rhetorically analyze three case studies in which women-led communities use food and cooking texts. I use feminist rhetorical criticism, applying the lens of social circulation, and add remediation and participatory culture as additional analytical lenses to create the methodological framework used in each chapter. Generally, Eileen E. Schell says that "feminist rhetorical methods and methodologies are themselves rhetorical, highly adaptive, moving, breathing and representative of a continuum of methodological approaches," reinforcing that the way feminist research is conducted changes depending on the rhetorical situation the rhetorician finds herself in ("Introduction" 16). Therefore, no one methodology defines feminist

[2] For example, Donovan Conley and Justin Eckstein's edited collection on food rhetorics came out in 2020 shortly after I drafted this chapter and began interviewing Bake Club members.

research, allowing me to structure the rhetorical analyses in this dissertation around the theories and approaches that align with the three primary research questions posed in this chapter's introduction.

Feminist Rhetorical Criticism

While methodologies vary, a central goal of feminist criticism is to examine "the strategies that are used to disrupt hegemonic structures and that provide alternative ways of thinking, acting, and being" (Foss 154). To understand how rhetors accomplish this goal, the first lens my methodology is grounded in is Gesa E. Kirsch's and Jacqueline Jones Royster's feminist rhetorical practice of social circulation, which "invokes connection among past, present, and future in the sense that the overlapping social circles in which women travel, live, and work are carried on or modified from one generation to the next and give rise to changed rhetorical practices" (660). To illustrate what they mean by social circulation, the authors use Kirsch's research project on the *Woman's Medical Journal* (*WMJ*). From 1893 to 1952, the *WMJ* was a space where women published their medical research and networked with and promoted the work of other women (Royster and Kirsch, "Social Circulation" 177). Kirsch includes six "personal news" items from women physicians posted in the journal, observing "women's movement across cities, regions, and continents" as they graduated from medical school (179-80). By analyzing the personal news from the journal, Kirsch hopes to map "medical women's access, knowledge, and professional identities in rhetorical, social, political, and economic context" during the early twentieth century (181).

Indeed, cooking texts are also artifacts of women's social circulation. Contemporary community cookbooks utilize this circulation, drawing on recipes from the past and present to shape current and future community values through food. For example, Chapter 4 examines how

the Junior League, a women's organization committed to community service, uses cookbooks to circulate and promote networking, mentorship, and women's work while using food to construct and memorialize a collective white upper-middle-class identity. The chapter analyzes how including event menus in their cookbooks is one way women in the Junior League record their socialization, marking important events through the food served. Thus, social circulation highlights how food and cooking texts are used rhetorically by women across time and generations, something I couldn't get from other lenses. Essentially, a focus on social circulation leads me to ask the questions:

- Why was this cooking text created? What is its rhetorical purpose?
- How many people contributed to the creation of the cooking text? How are individuals invited to contribute? How active or passive is individual participation? Who is excluded from participating?
- Who is the leader of the community? How is that leader established, what is their role, and how does power circulate within the community?
- Who are the community members, and how does one become a member? What are the rules of membership?
- How is memory invoked in cooking texts, and what is memory's rhetorical purpose?
- Who are the cooking authorities referenced? Why are these authorities cited, and how do they contribute to the community's identity?

In asking these questions, I seek to observe cooking texts' movement to trace how they teach, maintain, and potentially subvert cultural values across time and media.

Remediation

Though social circulation could be used on its own to examine the feminist rhetorical

strategies unique to cooking texts, I add remediation to consider different types of media beyond written cooking instruction, such as social media posts and radio programs. Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin define remediation as "the formal logic by which new media refashion prior media forms" (273). Although Royster and Kirsch say that social circulation "helps us to see how ideas resonate, divide, and are expressed via new genres and new media," they do not explore how women's cultural values or the medium women use adapts across time to fit the rhetor's needs (*Feminist Rhetorical Practices* 101). In contrast, Chapter 2 includes a short examination of how television is remediated to deliver cooking instruction on a social media platform to highlight what cultural values get picked up when the medium changes.

Thus, each chapter compares how women adapt various forms of that chapter's medium. For instance, Chapter 3 compares a 1950s radio show to a food podcast that began in the twentieth century and still airs weekly. Though radio programs and podcasts are similar mediums, understanding how the content shifted over time impacts how listeners perceive women's expertise and provides insights into cooking texts as multisensory learning experiences. The questions specific to remediation are:

- How does the medium's evolution reflect the changing values of the communities across time?
- What does the changing medium contribute to the communities' rhetoric?
- How does memory influence the cultural values included and the choice of the medium?

While social circulation focuses on the network established via the cooking texts I examine, I use remediation as a specific form of social circulation to consider how culture changes across time and the chosen medium's impact.

Participatory Culture

Lastly, in addition to social circulation and remediation, I focus on the participatory culture of cooking. As defined by Henry Jenkins, participatory culture is

> a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices. A participatory culture is also one in which members believe their contributions matter, and feel some degree of social connection with one another (at least they care what other people think about what they have created). (Jenkins et al. 4)

Although Jenkins studies the participatory culture of fandoms such as Harry Potter fans who write fanfiction about Hogwarts and the series' characters, examining how feminist food rhetoric is participatory culture contributes to identifying the rhetorical strategies used by rhetors in cooking texts. Because, as I argue, food, cooking, and the social interactions accompanying it can provide participatory spaces, participatory culture emphasizes the embodied elements of cooking texts. As stated above in the feminist rhetorical criticism section, such spaces are definitionally feminist. Likewise, Abarca notes that the narratives we tell about food are embodied narratives "that find expression in the performative acts that occur while gathering, making, eating and sharing food; even without the assistance of words, people can fully engage in a communicative process through their senses and emotions" ("Food Studies" 18). In this way, food is seen as participatory communication, evoking the senses to share cultural ideologies. Participatory culture is an inclusive form of constitutive rhetoric that recognizes gatekeeping and power and seeks to remove such barriers to literacy by viewing participants as co-constructors of knowledge.

When I say that food can provide participatory spaces, I mean the social interactions revolving around cooking and eating. For example, Chapter 2 demonstrates food's participatory nature by highlighting how online baking club members share recipes to support fellow home cooks. By engaging with posts on social media, specifically Instagram, the members remediate the conversation that often occurs when sharing a meal in-person, thus taking a social element of food and moving it online. Throughout this dissertation, I use participatory culture to examine who engages in the community's activities and the role of collaboration, sharing, and mentorship. To specifically explicate how each cooking text and community functions as participatory culture, I use Jenkins' definition to qualitatively code cooking texts by looking for the following:

- ***Low barriers to artistic expression*:** How is access to ingredients, kitchen equipment, and pre-existing cooking skills taken into consideration? What makes cooking a creative (artistic) outlet? How are cooking skills taught, and how are they honed?
- ***Support for creating and sharing one's creations*:** How do community members share resources like helpful tips to support members' creating? How do community members promote each other's work?
- ***Informal mentorship*:** What role does mentorship play in the community? How is this mentorship similar to or divergent from formal literacy sponsorship?
- ***Social connection*:** How do members create social connections through the food they make and the cooking texts they create?

To be considered participatory culture, I argue that at least one of the criteria mentioned above must be a central component of the community's activity to represent that active participation, a

key feature of Jenkins' definition of participatory culture, is present.[3] Though participatory culture is often studied in new media (e.g., television, blogs, online forums, etc.), it applies to older media such as books. For instance, Jenkins, Mizuko Ito, and danah boyd explain that participatory culture can "manifest in particular technologies, and, quite often those invested in participatory culture leverage existing platforms to serve their goals, but *participation should be understood in socio-cultural rather than technological terms*" (184; emphasis added). Indeed, participatory culture is not synonymous with technology. Instead, the community determines the media used to participate. From Instagram posts to community-created cookbooks, I accentuate food's role in collaboratively constructing identity across generations and platforms by looking at participatory culture across new and old media.

A Feminist Rhetorical Analysis of Cooking Texts and the Communities That Make Them

Taken together, I utilize social circulation, remediation, and participatory culture to conduct a feminist rhetorical analysis of cooking communities and the artifacts they create. Combining these three lenses for a methodological framework provides a unique way to explore how issues of gender, power, class, and privilege function in cooking texts. Overall, I use social circulation to uncover how women rhetors use cooking texts, remediation to highlight how changes in media spread cultural values across time, and participatory culture to emphasize how communities collaboratively develop identity through cooking texts. The questions posed for each lens apply to the three body chapters; however, the descriptions below include the questions specific to each chapter's cooking text.

[3] Jenkins does have a much more concise definition of participatory culture: "Culture in which fans and other consumers are invited to actively participate in the creation and circulation of new content" (*Convergence Culture* 331). However, the extended definition above informs research questions specific to participatory culture, and I employ it in each chapter to demonstrate that participatory culture extends beyond fan culture.

IV. Project Overview: A Three Course Tasting Menu of Cooking Texts Produced by Women

In addition to this introductory chapter and a concluding chapter that provides some ideas for additional research, my dissertation consists of three body chapters that aim to study how women use cooking texts to construct a communal identity. Each body chapter serves as a case study of a specific women-led community using different media. First, in "#BakeClub: The Rhetorical Strategies and Literacy Practices of Baking Together on Instagram During a Global Pandemic" (Chapter 2), I use qualitative interviewing and rhetorical analysis to examine how food communities form online and the way they respond to current events, in this case, the COVID-19 pandemic and the murder of George Floyd. Second, in "More Than 'A Show About Life's Appetites': Developing Culinary Expertise on *The Splendid Table*" (Chapter 3), I conduct digital archival research on women's food radio programs, identifying the rhetorical strategies that the host uses to teach listeners about where food comes from and how to cook. Third, in "Constructing Regional Identity in Community Cookbooks: The Constitutive Rhetoric of the Junior League of Denver's Fundraising Texts" (Chapter 4), I consider how cookbooks use location to cultivate, circulate, and memorialize a white upper-middle-class identity.

To further explain each chapter's focus, I've provided brief descriptions and each chapter's specific research questions.

Chapter 2. #BakeClub: The Rhetorical Strategies and Literacy Practices of Baking Together on Instagram During a Global Pandemic

In this chapter's introduction, I mentioned COVID-19 and food on Instagram. Chapter 2 embraces the pandemic as a kairotic moment to investigate food's power to rhetorically construct community while not being in the same physical location. I examine how social media,

specifically Instagram, is used as a platform for participatory culture as I act as a participant-observer in Bake Club, an online baking group formed at the beginning of the pandemic. By analyzing how the group formed, why people (specifically women) participated, and how the group evolved over its first sixty-nine days, I attempt to understand the importance of a home baker identity during a global pandemic, asking:

- What are the rhetorical moves such online pandemic baking communities use to construct interactive texts?
- How does cooking and posting about it on social media work as a way to ward off pandemic-induced isolation?
- How does analyzing how others bake together transform our understanding of what a feminist approach to baking as social activism entails?

With a focus on parasocial relationships (Hills), microcelebrity (Marwick), and how food is used to respond to pandemic isolation and systemic racism, I identify the connections between food, community, and social activism. In doing so, I identify what I call a *feminist food community*—groups where food is the main topic of conversation and is used to create cooking texts that combat social inequalities.

Chapter 3. More Than "A Show About Life's Appetites": Developing Culinary Expertise on The Splendid Table

What happens when a woman finds herself hundreds of miles away from her community? Who can she turn to for domestic guidance? Chapter 3 continues thinking about how cooking texts help women connect across distances. According to Nelljean Rice, what she calls "radio homemaking" "began in the 1920s, escalated during the Depression years, and lasted until the proliferation of television in the 1960s" (182). As local radio homemaking stations became

syndicated, women across the US could receive cooking instructions from other women and develop their domestic expertise.

Today, talking about food on the air hasn't completely disappeared. In fact, there are hundreds of podcasts of varying quality on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts that list food as a central part of the show. To understand the rhetorical purpose of food radio shows, Chapter 3 uses 1950s homemaker radio episodes in the Evelyn Birkby Collection of Radio Homemaker Materials from the University of Iowa Digital Library and episodes of the contemporary food podcast *The Splendid Table* to explore how food-focused radio programs remediate food's social elements to develop women's culinary expertise. Exploring how food podcasts utilize an oral storytelling style called conversational recipe telling (Norrick) as invitational rhetoric (Foss and Griffin), Chapter 3 seeks to answer the questions:

- What rhetorical strategies are used to exchange recipes and establish expertise in food podcasts?
- How do food podcasts help construct and maintain traditional feminine and masculine identities, and how do these identities inform perceptions of expertise?
- How do food radio programs subvert gendered ideologies that designate the kitchen as a women's place?

The chapter defines *The Splendid Table* as a *feminist* cooking text, which is a cooking text that works to disrupt gendered ideologies communicated through food and seeks to recover marginalized people excluded from the dominant description of American cuisine. By analyzing host Lynne Rossetto Kasper's interactions with female and male callers, I explicate how situated ethos (S. Crowley) impacts these exchanges.

Chapter 4. Constructing Regional Identity in Community Cookbooks: The Constitutive Rhetoric of the Junior League of Denver's Fundraising Texts

The final body chapter analyzes the cooking text that paved the way for women rhetors to use radio and social media: community cookbooks, the recipe collections compiled mainly by women's organizations. Chapter 4 focuses on two collections created by the Junior League of Denver (JLD), a women's organization designed to serve the community. Conducting close readings of the JLD's first cookbook, *Colorado Cache* (1978) and their most recent publication, *Centennial Celebrations: A Colorado Cookbook* (2019), I identify the themes, similarities, and differences in these two texts published decades apart, asking the questions:

- How might the layout and design of such community cookbooks contribute to their ability to construct, circulate, and maintain a regional identity?
- What do the cookbooks subvert or reinscribe about femininity expressed through gendered cooking ideologies?
- How are community cookbooks a "repository for memory" (Holtzman 370)?

Chapter 4 concludes that the JLD's community cookbooks construct a regional identity (Powell) that constructs, circulates, and memorializes a white upper-middle-class identity.

Chapter 2

#BakeClub: The Rhetorical Strategies and Literacy Practices of Baking Together on Instagram During a Global Pandemic

> I bake when I'm having a good day, I bake when I need an escape. I bake because it forces me to share, I bake to spread joy. I bake as an indulgence of spirit, of self. I bake when I need a snack. Baking is something I can count on, Milk Bar is where I go to bake.
>
> —Christina Tosi, *Instagram, March 17, 2020*

> Thanks to all of my bakeclub friends! 2020 has been a ride and I am blessed to have spent the virtual time with you to escape the madness. A heartfelt thank you to @christinatosi who dedicated her time to us and helped many of us see the power of a bakedgood.
>
> —@latinahomecook, Bake Club Member, *Instagram, December 30, 2020*

> The table is a place of pleasure; this is an ancient discovery, but it holds on to its truth and its secret, because eating is always much more than just eating.
>
> —Luce Giard, *The Practice of Everyday Life, Volume 2: Living & Cooking*

I. Sheltering-in-Place and the Rise of Baking: Creating Feminist Food Communities

If you're like Christina Tosi, pastry chef and founder of the renowned New York City bakery Milk Bar, or Instagram user @latinahomecook, baking is an activity that not only provides sustenance but also serves as an escape from day-to-day stress. In March 2020, as restaurants closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the act of posting bakes on social media became a way for those experimenting with baking as a result of pandemic-related isolation to socialize. "Maybe hashtags," says cooking magazine *Delish*'s deputy editor Sarah Weinberg, "are the new support groups, where more than 10 people can safely congregate." Hashtags like

#PandemicBaking and the groups that they created like #BakeClub gave people a way to find a community where hashtag users actively create and circulate content around a shared interest. In this chapter, I argue that examining community formation and composing on Instagram can demonstrate some of the ways that women form digital food communities and use them to promote cooking as a valued literacy. Furthermore, exploring how communities use hashtags and baking on Instagram can exemplify how the seemingly ordinary act of cooking shapes the composing practices of women.[4]

On March 23, 2020, Tosi asked her Instagram followers if they wanted to join her baking club ("#baking club starts"). Since then[5], Tosi has been baking on Instagram Live at 2 p.m. and sharing custom Spotify playlists.[6] When Bake Club members (known as Bake Clubbers) look back on 2020, it will be memorialized through photos of food posted on Instagram, which trigger the taste of a countless number of cookies, the relationships such food allowed us to develop, and the unique ways—like exchanging recipes and learning to be more creative in the kitchen—that food connected us to other people through mostly virtual interactions. As a card-carrying Bake Clubber, I watched, baked, and wondered how the group developed a collective home baker identity for its members, the importance of this identity, and what this community formation teaches us about collaborative composing, food, and activism.[7] By working to understand this

[4] The use of "women" throughout this chapter includes anyone who is female-identifying.
[5] As of March 2022, Tosi still hosts Bake Club, though it's shifted from daily baking to a once-a-week format.
[6] Each day of Bake Club has its own playlist. As Tosi says on Bake Club's first day, "music in the kitchen is essential" because it brings positive vibes as we "bake together and groove to the tunes" ("Baking Club Day 1" 00:00:20–00:00:42). So, in the spirit of Bake Club and dancing it out in the kitchen, I've made a playlist that incorporates songs from the days referenced and analyzed throughout this chapter. You can access the playlist by visiting open.spotify.com/playlist/5wESbMgoTLskMAidY7kicI?si=e7473f7f8f1d40b2. I suggest turning up the volume and letting it play in the background while you read so you can get the full Bake Club experience.
[7] I've been watching videos since day one and consider myself an active community member. For me, active participation means watching the videos live, baking along or afterward, using #BakeClub to join the conversation, and liking and commenting on other Bake Clubbers' posts. I use the first person throughout this chapter because of my involvement. Additionally, Bake Clubbers know I'm writing about the community. I use #BakeClub to share my research and writing process on Instagram, and members who follow me support my project by commenting on and

turn to food and cooking during a global pandemic, this chapter examines how cooking, food, a celebrity chef, and a hashtag foster parasocial relationships—which are social relationships that mimic in-person relationships—that were restricted during the COVID-19 pandemic.[8]

More specifically, a study of cooking on social media offers new insights into how women use food rhetorically to form communities, promote learning, and as a form of activism. According to Sarah J. Jackson, Moya Bailey, and Brooke Foucault Welles, hashtags, which are user-generated, "have become the default method to designate collective thoughts, ideas, arguments, and experiences that might otherwise stand alone or be quickly subsumed" (xxvii). Though Jackson et al. specifically examine hashtag activism—how groups and supporters use hashtags to "advocate for social change, identity redefinition, and political inclusion" (xxviii)—on Twitter, their use on Instagram serves the same function. Ultimately, I argue that Tosi takes a feminist rhetorical approach that "focuses on the rights, contributions, expertise, opportunities, and histories of marginalized groups" (Glenn 3), employing baking first to combat the pandemic and then to address systemic racism. Tosi uses Instagram to form a digital cooking community that evolves into what I define as a *feminist food community*: a group where members use food to (1) construct a collective home baker identity through the active creation and sharing of content; (2) view learning as integral to community participation; and (3) combat social inequalities linked to gender and racism.[9]

"liking" posts I share about my dissertation. For example, Lynne (one of the Bake Clubbers I interviewed) commented on a dissertation post about community cookbooks.

[8] When I first conceived studying an online cooking community, I planned to participate in a Facebook group with an established history like Rachael Ray Inspired Recipes (est. 2016) or The Pioneer Woman Recipes and More (est. 2018). So while the pandemic presented a unique opportunity to study a digital food community's formation, either of these groups or countless others like them could have been rhetorically analyzed to study how such communities create and circulate collaborative compositions and the group's parasocial relationships.

[9] Despite isolating the features here, feminist food communities cannot exist without incorporating all features. That is to say, simply creating and sharing content on social media and emphasizing learning on their own shows how a digital food community embraces participatory culture, however, it does not make it feminist. Instead, they must incorporate all three features to be considered a *feminist* food community.

During the pandemic, #BakeClub connected bakers across the United States. For example, Bake Clubber Kelly says Instagram has been a lifeline: "I post more frequently, interact with a lot more people I haven't met in real life, and it's less of like, here's an update on my life and more of like, here's something cool I have to share" (Personal interview).[10] Indeed, for many people like Kelly, sharing photos of baked goods formed connections, built community around food, and provided an escape from the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic leading me to ask, what are the rhetorical moves such online pandemic baking communities use to construct interactive texts? How does cooking and posting about it on social media work as a way to ward off pandemic-induced isolation? And how does analyzing how others bake together transform our understanding of what a feminist approach to using baking as social activism entails?

To answer these questions, I review scholarship on celebrity chefs and parasocial relationships on social media, which I contend provides readers with the necessary background on women's role in video cooking instruction that applies to analyzing cooking on social media. Then, I analyze Instagram posts and personal interviews, using Bake Club as a case study to identify three ways the community uses food rhetorically—cultivating relationships in times of isolation, promoting creative epistemologies, and social activism—and understand how the group formed and changed over several months of baking to address concerns beyond pandemic isolation. Though Bake Club began as a response to the pandemic, studying the group's activity provides insights into communities formed more slowly over time as hashtags encourage the circulation and creation of communities to form faster (Jackson et al. xxix). In a way, the COVID-19 pandemic and #BakeClub offer a time-lapse view that can be applied to study how

[10] Kelly is one of nine women I interviewed about Bake Club. I would like to thank all of the interview participants for taking the time to talk about baking and supporting my research. Additionally, thank you to all Bake Clubbers, including Christina Tosi. Your Instagram posts and comments informed this research and provided me with a creative outlet that started as a way to escape the pandemic and grew into a community I came to depend on.

women use social media to form digital and feminist food communities under more normal circumstances. Finally, I conclude by offering insights into what Bake Club teaches rhetoricians about digital and feminist food communities.

II. Seeing Women Cook: From Broadcast Television to Social Media

Watching people, and more specifically women, cook on TV isn't a new phenomenon. In the 1950s, as more households purchased televisions, TVs were "ideal companions for housewives and a perfect forum for cooking instruction" (Collins 45). Librarian Kathleen Collins says that Dione Lucas, host of *The Dione Lucas Show*, "was likely the first person most people saw cooking on national television" (50). First airing in 1947, Lucas' show argued that "cooking is one of the few creative outlets left for a modern housewife," providing a form of multimodal creativity and artistic power for women, yet the show ultimately emphasized teaching viewers cooking skills (Collins 48). Lucas's argument is one that historian Jessamyn Neuhaus identifies as integral to cookbooks published in the 1920s and 1930s. By the 1950s, cookbook authors emphasized that a central component of women's social roles, which included cooking daily meals, revolved around food (220). With the addition of cooking on TV, women no longer relied on a family member to pass down recipes and demonstrate techniques. Instead, early TV cooking can be viewed as the first step toward defining participatory cooking instruction as shows' purpose shifted from educational to include entertainment[11].

Perhaps watching women like Lucas cook on TV had an impact because television is what philosopher Marshall McLuhan refers to as a "participant medium" (416). That is to say, on some level, watching television engages viewers, especially when the show teaches a process, like cooking, that leads the viewers in making something (425). Daytime cooking shows, in

[11] Food radio programs experienced a similar evolution between the twentieth and twenty-first century. See Chapter 3.

particular, build relationships between celebrity chefs and the audience (Collins; Presswood; Reinhard and Ganguly). According to Kelsi Matwick and Keri Matwick, "[c]elebrity chefs construct themselves as authorities in cooking but at the same time as authentic and real to viewers" (2). The authenticity and interactions between the celebrity chef and the audience develop intimate relationships as the ordinariness associated with sharing recipes mimics interactions that often occur when exchanging recipes in person.

Since *The Dione Lucas Show*, many women (and men) have entered our kitchens through television, and cooking TV shifted from the mundane task of teaching viewers how to cook and merged with entertainment. Even how-to cooking shows, which Matwick and Matwick categorize as shows that take place in a domestic setting, feature a single host, and emphasize teaching, must entertain viewers to keep them engaged (11-2). With the creation of the Food Network in 1993, programming began shifting "from people who like to cook to people who love to eat," placing more emphasis on cooking shows as entertainment as chefs who thrived through live audience interactions, like Emeril Lagasse, became hosts (Collins 167). Because of the rise of celebrity chefs on television, the relationship built between the host and viewers grew, cultivating what film and television studies scholar Matt Hills defines as parasocial interaction, or "a type of *imagined* rather than co-present social relationship" (463; emphasis original). These parasocial relationships use media to "give the illusion" of an in-person relationship with the celebrity, including celebrity chefs (Horton and Wohl qtd. in Hills 464). For instance, celebrity chef Rachael Ray uses storytelling to present "herself as ordinary and relatable" to reach her viewers (Matwick and Matwick 58).[12] While current media studies scholarship emphasizes

[12] Rachael Ray is not a trained chef, and she uses her identification as a home cook to connect with viewers. In fact, she got her start hosting cooking classes at Cowan & Lobel, a gourmet grocery store located in Upstate New York, while she worked as the store's buyer. Listen to Ray's Radio Cherry Bombe interview to hear about her culinary career and her work to eradicate childhood hunger (Diamond, "Rachael Ray").

celebrity chefs on television, this chapter adds to research on food and parasocial relationships by examining how social media furthers bonds created specifically during a global pandemic that limited in-person interactions.

Indeed, social media sites fulfill a need for belonging when individuals feel ostracized (Iannone et al. 491). Although Iannone et al. focus on people who feel ostracized by examining Tweets that express an elevated need to feel like they belong, their findings apply to the need for belonging felt during the pandemic. Bake Clubbers, for example, often receive "likes," comments, or reposts from Tosi and other members that develop relationships. These interactions helped women stay connected beyond the home during COVID-19-mandated quarantines despite only knowing each other online. Through "likes," or what is known as parasocial digital affordances (PDAs), members share information, establish bonds, and convey support (Hayes et al.; Ozanne et al.; Carr et al.). As Bake Clubbers comment on each other's posts, these relationships grow, structuring learning as integral to community participation. These relationships, I find, continue to develop between members as they comment on posts that aren't directly related to Bake Club. For instance, Bake Clubber @_kathleen.kelly_ often posts about training for and participating in marathons and, since other members connected with her via #BakeClub, they show their support by "liking" these posts ("Galentine Squad").

Thus, parasocial relationships develop between celebrity chefs and fans. For example, studying fans of food shows, CarrieLynn D. Reinhard and Lauhona Ganguly argue that "self-identified fans may have more motivation to watch food television shows, which could drive repeated returns and continuous exposure to content" as they learn about food through watching their favorite celebrity chefs (71). So as virtual pandemic cooking took off, fans gravitated toward familiar chefs like Tosi to guide them in their kitchen. Reinhard and Ganguly

demonstrate how food moves from television to social media as fans engage with related content, including following chefs' social media accounts (77). However, the authors examine traditional broadcast shows (e.g., *Barefoot Contessa, MasterChef,* etc.), leaving a gap in research regarding fan interactions between chefs, like Tosi, that film and distribute cooking content on social media.

Furthermore, chefs using social media often develop microcelebrity status, which Alice E. Marwick explains as "a mindset and set of practices in which the audience is constructed as a fan base" (333).[13] Notably, microcelebrity enhances our understanding of how watching people cook strengthens parasocial relationships. For instance, the YouTube cooking channel associated with the popular food and lifestyle magazine *Bon Appétite* (*BA*) is an example of wildly successful microcelebrities[14]. *BA* shared their first YouTube video in 2012, and they now publish new content weekly, have more than 5 million subscribers, and their chefs have a significant number of Instagram followers.[15] Host Brad Leone, who has been with *BA* since 2011, has over 800 thousand Instagram followers and practices microcelebrity through engaging fans via Instagram posts, directly addressing them and "breaking down the traditional audience/performer spectator/spectacle dichotomy" (Marwick 345). Tosi similarly uses her microcelebrity status to

[13] Theresa M. Senft coined the term microcelebrity in 2008 to define "online performances" by women using "webcams, video, audio, blogs, and social networking sites" where the purpose was to increase popularity with their digital audience (25). Since then, studies depict the diversity of performers from articles on queer microcelebrity, beauty vloggers, and gamers to an edited collection that focuses on the broad reach of microcelebrities globally (Abidin and Brown).

[14] Hosts of the cooking shows as of 2022 include three returning chefs (Brad Leone, Andy Baraghani, and Chris Morocco) and eight new chefs (Harold Villarosa, DeVonn Francis, Tiana Gee, Melissa Miranda, Samantha Seneviratne, Chrissy Tracey, Rawlston Williams, and Claudette Zepeda).

[15] As a dissertation on feminist food rhetoric, it's important to acknowledge that while *BA* is a popular cooking source that greatly contributes to the conversation on microcelebrity, it's not without fault. In June 2020, then Test Kitchen assistant editor Sohla El-Waylly revealed that Black and Indigenous people of color (BIPOC) colleagues were not receiving equal pay for appearing in videos (C. Crowley). By October 2020, El-Waylly, along with Priya Krishna, Rick Martinez, Gaby Melian, Molly Baz, Carla Lalli Music, Amiel Stanek, Claire Saffitz, Christina Chaey, Alex Delany, announced their departure from *BA* (Premack). In December 2020, book publisher Dawn Davis took over as editor-in-chief and has been working to address the inequity experienced across *BA* (Brancaccio).

build parasocial relationships with Bake Clubbers but complicates Marwick's understanding of practitioners seeing "their audience as fans" by calling Bake Clubbers family (337). Although Tosi's microcelebrity chef status certainly attracted participants and meant that she received attention from mainstream media outlets like *HuffPost* and *The New Yorker*, Bake Club evolved into a familial space as members built relationships beyond baking at 2 p.m.

III. Method and Methodology: Analyzing Instagram Posts and Conducting Interviews Using a Feminist Lens

To understand how Bake Club became a significant community during the COVID-19 pandemic and *evolved* into a feminist food community that uses food to promote the active creation and sharing of baking, learn to be more creative, and address systemic racism, I analyzed Instagram posts beginning with day one (March 24, 2020) and interviewed nine active members.[16] Following qualitative research theorist Johnny Saldaña's coding methods, I began with a "provisional 'start list' of codes" (40). However, as I applied deductive coding to capture how posts perform participatory culture through low barriers to artistic expression, support for baking and sharing baked goods, informal mentorship, and social connection, I gave myself space to expand the code list to keep a more open mind.[17] The first time I looked at a post, I assigned a pre-established code and inductively coded it to create subcodes identifying patterns and participation levels. Finally, I chose interview participants from the members who participated since March and posted images of their bakes at least once a week or commented on posts. At first, my analysis stopped with day sixty-nine because on June 1, 2020, Tosi announced

[16] I hoped to interview at least five Bake Clubbers. After collecting Instagram posts and determining who consistently participated, I sent direct messages via Instagram to ten participants. I assumed that several members would be unavailable or nonresponsive, but only one member didn't reply. I moved ahead with the nine interviews to better understand why women participated in Bake Club. See Appendix A for the IRB-approved interview materials, interviewee demographics, and the qualitative code list.

[17] Henry Jenkins identifies the four features listed here as participatory culture. See Chapter 1 for a broader explanation of how this dissertation uses Jenkins overall.

that she was pausing to address concerns of systemic racism after the murder of George Floyd ("I started").[18] I thought Bake Club would cease to exist at that point, but members continued posting. As we'll see, the pause acts as a catalyst that demonstrates how self-care (in this case, baking) can move beyond combating isolation, driving Tosi to question how her whiteness and inaction contribute to systemic racism and how she can use her microcelebrity as allyship.

Though food can further what Kate Cairns and Josée Johnston call "hegemonic feminine ideals" (e.g., enjoying doing the daily cooking, taking pleasure in grocery shopping, and using food as care-work), it's also associated with joy, pleasure, and social justice. The women Cairns and Johnston interview express joy through the sensory experience of canning and emphasize the "embodied pleasures of cooking—the repetitive movements, distinct textures, aromas, and colors—pleasures derived through the *practice* of making food," deemphasizing the role that feeding others plays (151-2; emphasis original). Additionally, the authors explore how women change the food system by shopping local and leading community food projects, demonstrating that food can provide pleasure and serve as resistance, noting that pleasure and activism are not inherently separate (153). Indeed, the prolific writer and Black feminist adrienne maree brown recognizes how, together, pleasure and activism use joy to "bring about social and political change" and center "pleasure and joy as resistance" (10, 432). Initially, Tosi designed Bake Club to find joy and pleasure in food to combat pandemic isolation; however, analyzing posts after the Bake Club pause provides insights into how Tosi incorporates self-reflection. This move is integral to Bake Club's evolution because it demonstrates how feminist food communities use rhetorical feminism to reflect and self-correct (Glenn).

[18] Though activism is a feature of feminist food communities, baking and activism don't always look the same. As I stated in the introduction, Bake Club began as a way to combat pandemic isolation and, therefore, the group's initial activism centers around spreading joy, but this chapter also acknowledges that baking and activism during the pandemic address issues of systemic racism.

Significantly, analyzing posts after June 1, 2020 provides insights into how the group incorporated reflection to continue despite their leader stepping back and is essential to Bake Club's identity as a feminist food community because it demonstrates how food empowers women through decentralizing power. So to understand food's role during the pandemic and how this feminist food community formed, this chapter uses my participation as a Bake Clubber alongside posts and interviews with three members—Elaine, Lynne, and Kelly—Tosi's Instagram Live videos and posts, and content from other members to highlight community interaction. After inductively coding the nine interviews, I determined that Elaine, Lynne, and Kelly represent three diverse types of Bake Clubbers in terms of how they participate: members who didn't post on Instagram before the pandemic (Elaine); frequent posters (Lynne); and users who follow a hashtag but don't necessarily post daily (Kelly). Significantly, zooming in on three Bake Clubbers with different participation styles provides an in-depth analysis of how digital food communities form parasocial relationships. Based on the insights I gleaned from analyzing one digital-turned-feminist food community, I determined that such communities value failure as a learning process and that they use storytelling as a rhetorical strategy to include diverse voices; however, I recognize the limited perspective that analyzing a feminist food community led by a white microcelebrity entails. Further research on feminist food communities led by women of color is needed to fully understand such communities' rhetoricity.

New Instagram Poster: Elaine

The first participant, Elaine, is a stay-at-home mom with school-age kids who began posting on Instagram as a pandemic-inspired activity. In her first post on March 3, 2020, she shows off an extensive cookbook collection, but it isn't until April 18, Bake Club day twenty-six (Figure 2.1), that she mentions Tosi, referring to Bake Club as a fun "Choose Your Own

Adventure baking experience" where you can participate even if you don't have the exact ingredients ("Christina Tosi's Baking Club"). Bake Club's adventurous baking style is an

Figure 2.1: The first time Elaine posts about Bake Club, she shares images of her strawberry cereal squares (left) and French toast muffins (right) and describes Tosi's videos as "30 min of joy" that she looks forward to each day.[19] *As we'll see, the joy Elaine expresses here is a significant contributing factor for Bake Clubbers overall.*

important design feature because it emphasizes accessibility and interactivity as central to learning. During our conversation, Elaine recalls "Can You Dip It?" as the first day she participated, even though she chose not to post about it.[20] Elaine's hesitancy to share her bakes comes from how she used Instagram as a "virtual magazine" before the pandemic to follow celebrities and explore accounts focused on home décor and food (Personal interview). Her initial interaction demonstrates that she uses social media to build parasocial relationships with celebrities. When the pandemic started and her volunteer opportunities shut down, she turned to Instagram to find a community that wasn't "concurrently available offline" (Carr et al. 386):

[19] The caption for Elaine's post says, "Christina Tosi's Baking Club: At 1pm daily, I have baked with Christina Tosi from Milk Bar on InstaLive. She posts pics of the ingredients the night before. I never have everything but that's the fun of improvising and being creative. It's like a Choose Your Own Adventure baking experience. And her tricks are things you can bring to your next recipe. Family favorites have been these two recent creations...Strawberry shortcake inspired rice Krispy treats(using old marshmallows, Rice Krispies, last of the pkg of milk cookies, raspberry jam and freeze dried raspberries) and French Toast Muffins (using leftover hot dog buns and croissants). 30 min of joy I look forward to in the middle of my day" ("Christina Tosi's Baking Club").

[20] Rather than a straightforward recipe, "Can You Dip It?" is a game-like snack where Tosi encourages us to take the ingredients we have on hand (fruit, graham crackers, etc.), melt chocolate, add an extract for more flavor (vanilla, mint, banana, etc.), and dip the items into the melted chocolate to create a variety of treats.

> I felt like I was hovering. I was just waiting for them [her kids] to come down for breakfast…and I was like, this is not healthy for me or for them; I need to find a project. And so I felt like it [social media and cooking] was the way I could escape and cope in a productive way where my family could still enjoy what I'm making. (Personal interview)

While she tags Tosi in her first Bake Club post, she doesn't use the group's hashtag, which makes sense given her previous Instagram use following celebrities and DIY accounts. Her initial use of the platform as a place where she can take a moment for herself and explore topics of interest informs her early interactions, but, as we'll see throughout this chapter, Elaine became one of the most active members, commenting on #BakeClub posts and participating during the Bake Club pause. Overall, Elaine represents members who started posting on Instagram and using the hashtag to combat the isolation of the pandemic felt through a loss of in-person gatherings.

Most-Frequent Poster: Lynne

Unlike Elaine, Lynne, a stay-at-home mom with adult children, posted regularly on Instagram before the pandemic and was a Tosi fan, having used her cake recipes for birthdays. An Instagram user since 2013, Lynne likes the platform for microblogging and its intertextuality, specifically for exchanging recipes. "It's getting to that day and age where we just want a sound bite. We don't want to read three pages of notes," says Lynne. "I want to see photographs, a brief description, and I like it when they put links and I can go find more" (Personal interview). Lynne utilizes hashtags in her first Bake Club post on day eight because of her familiarity with the platform and her interest in finding similar content ("Tuned in accidentally"). Her caption describes the tortilla-making process, saying that she "loved the demo" because she can see and easily follow Tosi's technique (Figure 2.2). As Lynne's post shows, participating in Bake Club

Figure 2.2: Lynne's first Bake Club post states that watching Tosi make tortillas was helpful because she "could see what the technique was and how it looked" while making hers.[21] *Learning how to cook through watching builds parasocial relationships as Bake Clubbers feel connected to Tosi through her instruction.*

leads to learning and documenting new techniques through microblogging. Indeed, Lynne is a very active participant and explains what she likes and learns in post captions, emphasizing learning through participating. She frequently comments on Bake Clubbers' posts, and like Elaine, Lynne helped maintain members' parasocial relationships during the pause by continuing to bake and offering recipes and variations. Lynne is the most frequent poster of the three women, often posting multiple times about the same recipe. As an Instagram user and Bake Club member, Lynne represents participants who joined for the social connection experienced specifically through recipe exchange.

[21] Lynne's mulitparagraph caption explains how she found Bake Club and the benefits of watching live: "Tuned in accidentally to Christina Tosi's bake club. She was making flour tortillas today. / Despite having a good pan for tortillas I've never made them from scratch. Christina said they were easy, so decided to try it. I had all the ingredients flour, Crisco (or some kind of fat), kosher salt and water. / I loved the demo. One could see what the technique was and how it looked all along through the process. Instead of me thinking "I guess this is right." I knew it was right. / I did find one does need to roll them out to 8" as suggested. Smaller it was thick, chewy and doughy. I didn't care for that. I did get my ruler out and that gave me a better idea of how big I wanted them. / Hubs came home early from work and said the house smelled amazing. He and the poodle did a "mommy made tortillas" dance. He and Nova love flour tortillas. When I started cooking the 2nd tortilla Nova caught onto the aroma and was my best friend in the kitchen. #bakeclub #christinatosi #christinatosibakingclub #flourtortillas #tortillas #pandemicooking #homemadefood #thankyouchristinatosi @christinatosi" ("Tuned in accidentally").

Hashtag Follower: Kelly

The final participant, Kelly, is a freelance musician who enjoys finding creative activities overall. Like Lynne, Kelly had an Instagram account before the pandemic. She began using the platform in 2012 to share pictures and play with filters, and she represents Bake Clubbers who baked and posted on day one (Figure 2.3). Before Bake Club, Kelly enjoyed following Tosi and

Figure 2.3: In her very first Bake Club post, Kelly emphasizes the joy she feels baking with Tosi and Bake Club, a common theme she discusses when talking about Tosi and her participation.[22]

and watching her judge *MasterChef* and *MasterChef Junior* because her energy is fun, and you can learn a lot from her media appearances. The authenticity felt through Tosi's ability to make cooking fun is a crucial attribute of microcelebrities, and it strengthens Kelly's parasocial relationship with Tosi (Marwick 344).

In general, Kelly uses Instagram and food to spread joy.[23] When quarantine started, Kelly began posting on Instagram more as a way to spread joy and interact with people, and Bake Club specifically provided her with the "deviation from media, statistics, and anxiety" that she needed ("@christinatosi is doing"). Additionally, baking serves to create embodied connections to others: "especially during the pandemic, I'm not able to visit any of my friends or family, and

[22] Kelly's brief caption captures her early participation in Bake Club: "@christinatosi is doing a baking club via IG, and it was exactly the deviation from media, statistics, and anxiety that I needed. I hope @daynedehaven is in the mood for some lemonade tea - glazed cookies later... #bakingclub #bakethequarantine" ("@christinatosi is doing a baking club via IG").

[23] Kelly also proclaims that spreading joy is her purpose in her Instagram bio ("Superhero by day").

they haven't visited here either, so that's this really sweet point of connection through baking" (Personal interview). Through food and digital food communities, bakers like Kelly build parasocial relationships to remedy pandemic isolation and fulfill a need for belonging (Iannone et al.). Though Kelly doesn't post daily, she watches the videos live and "likes" posts, representing Bake Clubbers who show up to learn and foster parasocial relationships.

IV. Using Food to Connect in Times of Isolation

As we've seen in the brief introduction to three members, perhaps the primary reason Bake Clubbers are attracted to food communities on social media is that they are looking to collaborate through the embodied interactivity of cooking. The need for connection, ultimately heightened during the pandemic, leads participants to search for shared activities to bond over. For example, on day seven, Tosi acknowledges that she sees what viewers share: "Caramel sauce yesterday, y'all. You crushed it. I saw some really great ideas. Chai tea caramel: I would 100% get down with that" ("Baking Club: Day 7" 00:01:19–29). In this interaction, Tosi uses "strategic intimacy to appeal to followers," building Bake Club's parasocial relationships (Marwick 333). Even though Tosi provides the caramel recipe, she shows she sees members' variations, practicing microcelebrity by interacting with them (e.g., "liking" their Instagram posts and recognizing contributions at the beginning of videos). Her acknowledgment establishes that participants contribute valuable knowledge and demonstrates that together, we're making "a text that exists as a creation of a community of participants," which composition and literacy scholar Beverly J. Moss calls a "community text" (203). In doing so, Tosi establishes that participants, who are her students, contribute valuable knowledge and that community literacy is socially situated.

Indeed, acknowledging variations and contributions from others is central to creating the social context of recipe sharing, which, according to Susan J. Leonardi, makes recipes embedded discourse because they are designed to be exchanged. Built into their design, then, recipes utilize what Jim Ridolfo and Dànielle Nicole DeVoss define as "rhetorical velocity": "a strategic approach to composing for rhetorical delivery" that considers how distance, travel, speed, and time shape the composing process "across physical and virtual networks and spaces." When sharing recipes, "hearers-readers-receivers are *encouraged* to reproduce it [the recipe] and, in reproducing it, to revise it and make it their own" (Leonardi 344). In a way, recipes are like memes; they're revised and circulated, but what does it mean that this level of revision occurs?[24] The rhetorical velocity and meme-like qualities embedded in recipe exchange is a strategy Tosi employs in the community's design. By fostering the creation of a community text, I argue that Tosi sets a precedent for cultivating relationships through exchanging recipes and the act of "liking" and commenting on posts, thus using recipe sharing as a feminist food practice.

How Exchanging Recipes Makes Bake Club Collaborative

Overwhelmingly, Lynne's Bake Club participation emphasizes exchanging recipes as a form of communication that exemplifies what it means to share food virtually. Recipes, says Leonardi, tell a story. When Lynne posts about Bake Club, she uses storytelling and provides context and recommendations to connect with members. She personalizes the recipe through narrative but, in doing so, also encourages others to do the same. For example, in her post caption from May 7, 2020, Lynne remediates a conversation that might occur in the kitchen or written recipe introductions ("#bakeclub day 45"). Let's imagine we're in her kitchen. First,

[24] Memes are commonly discussed as participatory culture. Like memes, recipes can be revised and become "tools for creativity and production" (Jenkins et al., *Spreadable* 27). See Gal et al.; Shifman; and Vie for a quick overview of memes, "memetic videos" as participatory culture, and the use of memes as digital activism.

Lynne reveals the recipe's origin. The post opens with "#bakeclub day 45," indicating Tosi's baking group as the recipe's source (Figure 2.4). Here, Lynne eliminates the need to list ingredients and steps because providing the source and recipe title ("Little Motivators") gives us enough information to locate the recipe.

Figure 2.4: Lynne walks us through her experience using Tosi's recipes and the process she followed to make the "Little Motivator" cookies.[25] *Her Instagram captions often follow this writing style, giving readers insights into the recipe overall and remediating in-person recipe exchange.*

[25] In her caption, Lynne records her baking process for others to follow: "#bakeclub day 45 "Little Motivators" cookie made with a brownie mix. Easy, delicious and trust Christina's advice "they're great for breakfast." Kidding aside the trust I'm really talking about is if she says "put a tablespoon of unbrewed coffee grounds in your recipe" DO IT! / The first recipe of hers (compost cookies) I made asking for unbrewed coffee grounds I nearly didn't. Thought it sounded like a terrible idea. Then I reigned myself in and said trust the recipe! I think the coffee grounds is a what put the flavor and delightfulness of that cookie over the top. So no hesitation this time. / I used my larger cookie scoop #16 for these and it makes a cookie that is almost too rich for one sitting. I only ate half, but I am a chocolate light weight [sic]. I did have a friend that wanted to help me finish it though. / Sorry baby chocolate isn't good for doggies here's your favorite a blueberry. Oh maybe I should eat a few healthy blueberries myself... you know to tamp that cookie down. @christinatosi #christinatosi Brownie mix recipe from @iambaker #cookies #brownies #browniemix #bakingwithtosi" ("#bakeclub day 45").

Then, Lynne explains her history using Tosi's recipes: "The first recipe of hers (compost cookies) I made asking for unbrewed coffee grounds I nearly didn't [include the coffee grounds]. Thought it sounded like a terrible idea. Then I reigned myself in and said trust the recipe!" By telling this story, Lynne creates what Carrie Helms Tippen refers to as a "citation narrative," or an introduction to a recipe that works as a "network of exchange" between the cookbook writer and recipe contributor (74). In doing so, Lynne establishes ethos by citing Tosi as a source she's familiar with and invites others to trust her while simultaneously co-authoring the recipe through her recommendation and support.

Next, Lynne introduces a baking tool: "larger cookie scoop #16." By referring to its size, she recognizes that the audience for this post has a similar level of baking knowledge while also teaching readers the technique she uses. Finally, Lynne gives a brief evaluative statement, describing the cookie as "almost too rich for one sitting" because of its size, annotating the recipe for future use. Both the scoop size and evaluative statement incorporate moments of collaborative authorship that occur when women exchange and revise recipes. Annotations like this, which were once written in cookbook margins or discussed when eating and sharing the recipe with a friend or relative, now circulate in online networks. "For women and their social networks," says Janet Theophano, "the exchanges of recipes for their books was also a form of communication. It provided women with opportunities for reading, writing, and socializing across class lines" (167). Though Theophano refers to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century recipe exchanges here, online networks function similarly to hone women's cooking literacy.

In fact, Lynne's recipe documentation teaches others how to make the cookies as if she were baking with them. The tripartite role as student, maker, and teacher alongside recipe sharing is central to digital food communities as "the collaborative authorship and artistry that's

happening as women swap, record, and edit these texts brings to mind a feminized form of exchange" (Cognard-Black 37). As Lynne adds her comments about the recipe's source (Tosi), her experience using Tosi's recipes, and the evaluation of the cookie, she remediates women's recipe sharing for Instagram as a practice that seeks to form community through the social circulation of recipe exchange and the development of parasocial relationships. By building a community space that values co-authorship, Tosi uses an assets-based classroom model that values student expertise and knowledge in practice.

Creating a Community Text Through Hashtags, Comments, and "Likes"

In addition to connecting through recipe exchange, Tosi and members use the group's hashtag, #BakeClub, tagging content and demonstrating how images are "used for 'sharing and communicating significant social experiences'" (Leaver and Highfield qtd. in Leaver et al. 70). #BakeClub allows members to archive their creative process and embrace the platform's "social sharing opportunities" (Leaver et al. 66). For instance, if I'm looking for baking inspiration, I can browse #BakeClub, find a recipe/post from another Bake Clubber, and engage with it by commenting, "liking," or making it. The use of "likes," which are "paralinguistic digital affordances (PDAs), the frequently used one-click tools" on social media platforms such as Facebook's thumbs up icon or Reddit's upvote system, further members' parasocial relationships (Hayes and Wesselmann et al. 1). "Liking," which is represented on Instagram by a heart, allows Bake Clubbers to express "social support" (Carr et al. 390). According to Ozanne et al., "liking" behavior represents gratified usage motives (e.g., "liking" a Facebook Post to indicate it's entertaining) and underlying motives that "refer to the user's inner motivations" and contribute to sharing "information about the self" (1). It's the gratified usage motives, which focus on entertainment, bonding, self-identification, and information/discovery, that Bake Club

emphasizes (Ozanne et al.5). Through hashtags, comments, and "likes," women use digital food communities to cultivate relationships that support one another by learning to bake and developing a shared home baker identity.

Frequently, Bake Clubbers comment on ingredient choice and baking success to encourage home bakers. On day fifty-five, for instance, members converse about their icebox cakes, and it's the positive interactions on posts that celebrate bonding, ward off isolation, and develop a communal baking identity.[26] For example, @ailisilia gets "extra credit" for incorporating previous bakes, and @bethany.hopes tells her that "Using the Greta was a pro move!🔥" Like Tosi's choose-your-own-adventure approach to baking, the interactions between members exemplify how women interact in digital food communities via comments to build parasocial relationships and a community text filled with recipe variations.

[26] It is important to acknowledge that while interactions between members promote positivity, trolls do comment during the livestream. Community members primarily respond by ignoring the comments and shifting the focus back toward baking by mentioning ingredients, bake time, or something they like about the recipe. Instagram users also self-police and can report a user to have them removed. During the livestream, Tosi doesn't read the comments at all. By ignoring trolls, members stay focused on helping one another learn as much as possible from the live videos.

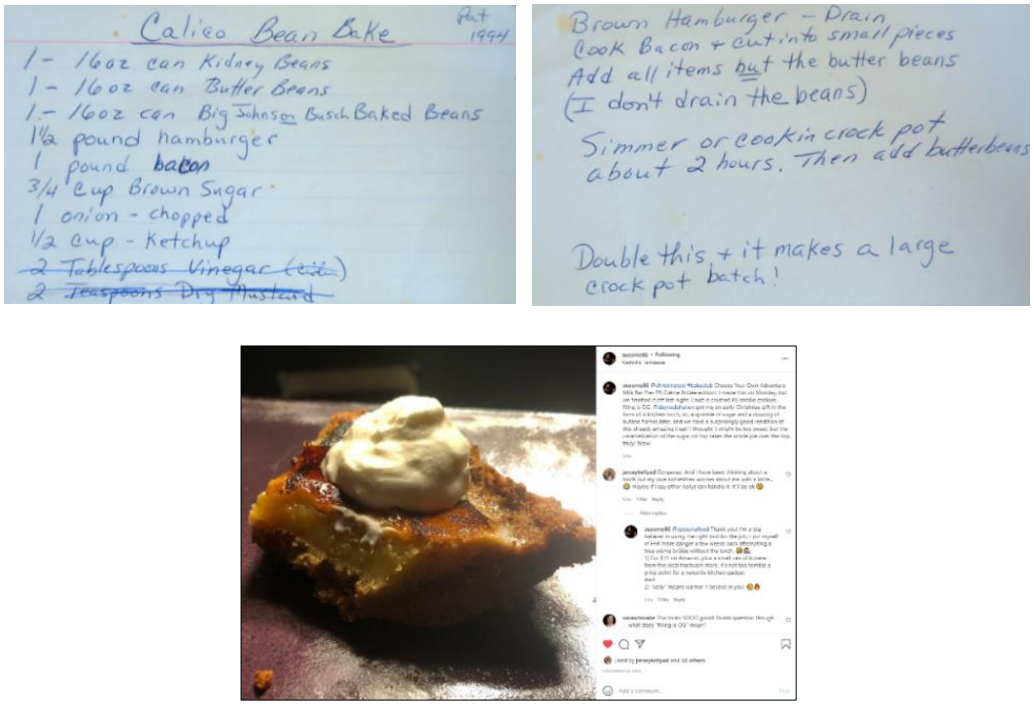

Figure 2.5: The recipe on the top is from my mom's (Shelly Waterman) recipe collection. Her handwritten recipe cards indicate modifications but preserve the original recipe by keeping the omitted ingredients, documenting how the collaborative authorship occurs. The recipe on the bottom is Kelly's Milk Bar Pie post.[27] *Although a reader needs to do some research to understand the substitutions she makes, she preserves the original recipe by noting what she changes (the crust and caramelized topping).*

In particular, Kelly uses Bake Club as a space to connect through "liking," thus contributing to the community in a way that remediates the "dual authorship" of handwritten recipe cards that provide where the recipe came from and include notes that might differ from the original (Cognard-Black 36). My mom's recipe card for "Calico Bean Bake," a signature summer potluck dish, demonstrates traditional dual authorship by including the recipe's origin

[27] In her caption, Kelly provides the ingredients she used to make a version of the Milk Bar Pie: "@christinatosi #bakeclub Choose Your Own Adventure Milk Bar Pie- PB Crème Brûlée edition! I made this on Monday, but we finished it off last night. Crust is crushed PB sandie cookies, filing is OG. @daynedehaven got me an early Christmas gift in the form of a kitchen torch, so, a sprinkle of sugar and a dousing of butane flames later, and we have a surprisingly good rendition of this already amazing treat! I thought it might be too sweet, but the caramelization of the sugar on top takes the whole pie over the top, truly! Wow!" ("@christinatosi #bakeclub Choose Your Own Adventure").

("Pat 1994") in the top right-hand corner and noting her customizations (Figure 2.5). Instead of rewriting the recipe, she crosses out ingredients she doesn't use (apple cider vinegar and dry mustard), adds that she doesn't "drain the beans," and indicates that the recipe can be doubled to make "a large crockpot batch!" Kelly, and other Bake Clubbers, make similar adjustments when they post their bakes, highlighting member interactions alongside baking knowledge.

For example, on day 138, Kelly attributes the recipe creator at the beginning of the post by tagging Tosi: "@christinatosi." Then, she notes that her Milk Bar Pie, a well-known Tosi creation, deviates from the original recipe, using peanut butter cookies for the crust instead of oatmeal. Finally, she explains that she finishes it by adding a crème brûlée-style topping of caramelized sugar but that it has "OG" Milk Bar Pie filling ("@christinatosi #bakeclub Choose"). From handwritten cards to Instagram posts, what's important here is that social media expands traditional recipe exchange and continues to acknowledge that recipes utilize collaborative authorship. Through citing the source, experimenting and documenting changes, and circulating recipes, Bake Clubbers embrace co-authorship that's unique to cooking but limited during the pandemic.

Like Kelly's modification of written recipes in her Instagram post, the interactions between members, in general, elicit emotional and social gratification through "liking." According to Hayes and Carr et al., receiving "likes" makes the poster feel happy and contributes to maintaining parasocial relationships (180). Indeed, Bake Clubbers use hashtags and "likes" to follow one another and satisfy the need to connect during the pandemic. Though commenting and "liking" might seem like passive interactions, they "are significant rhetorical engagements" used by women on social media and demonstrate active participation (DeLuca). Additionally, "liking" an Instagram post is a form of recipe annotation that acknowledges that the recipe has

been shared and seen, developing the recipe creator's confidence and building a collective home baker identity as they construct a "community that respects their authority and experience" (Fleitz, "Cooking Codes" 2). Thus, even if they don't comment on the post, Bake Clubbers' interactions create an empowering community through recipe sharing. Though some posts receive as few as ten likes and others have fifty or more, this simple act strengthens members' relationships.[28]

V. Promoting Food as a Creative Epistemology

If the primary reason for participating is collaborating and building parasocial relationships through embodied interactivity (cooking), the second reason Bake Clubbers join digital food communities is to learn through a process of making or creating that values women's epistemologies and their knowledge of cooking while using failure as inquiry. The pandemic, in particular, highlighted these epistemologies as shelter-in-place orders were issued across the US, and people stocked up on groceries to limit leaving the house. From toilet paper to frozen pizza, it became difficult to find household staples and food that would keep longer. Articles in *The New York Times* featured images of shelves with almost no boxes of pasta left and checkout lines spilling into grocery aisles (Knoll). The emergency shopping meant that home cooks had to rethink what they could access, often relying on ingredients they had on hand. But as quarantine took off and people began cooking and baking to feed themselves and occupy their time, many found they had to be "thrifty." What Jennifer E. Courtney defines as "kitchen thrift," "a home-based set of goal oriented practices that conserves or increases food resources while supporting well-being," emerged (51). Courtney's analysis derives from nineteenth- and twentieth-century

[28] Though I can't definitively speak for all Bake Clubbers, the number of "likes" didn't discourage interviewees. On some level, they post because they want others to like their work; however, their posts serve to connect them to the larger community through #BakeClub, regardless of how many "likes" they receive.

cookbooks; however, the idea of knowing how to use what's available, emphasize well-being, and nourish yourself and others "both physically and emotionally" exists beyond written recipes and became integral to pandemic baking (51).

In Bake Club, for instance, Tosi promotes a kind of kitchen thrift that emphasizes creativity while affirming "a sense of creative agency" for women who need an outlet to combat the pandemic's isolation (Abarca, *Voices* 82). Creativity emerges across Instagram posts through Tosi's encouragement to bake with whatever is in the pantry and emphasizing personal ingredient choice. For example, for day three, Tosi posts an ingredient list that includes mini pretzels, coffee, cereal, almonds, a box of Jell-O, and cocoa powder ("#Baking Club Day 3"). Rather than dictating how to flavor what's being baked, this image gives participants an idea of what they might add based on the ingredients they have on hand. Tosi reinforces the flexibility and creativity of ingredient choice in the caption, saying, "Pic 2 is to get your ⚙'s turning – we'll talk more tomorrow!" To demonstrate how to incorporate ingredients and "choose your own adventure" during the live baking session, Tosi separates her batter into four bowls and adds a different ingredient to each, encouraging Bake Clubbers to play with the various ingredients they have ("Baking Club: Day 3 Meringues"). With Tosi's guidance, Bake Club functions as a digital food community that emphasizes learning to bake in a creative, embodied way driven by cultivating joy. Thus, it highlights women's epistemologies through cooking.

The Importance of Recipe Variations and Failing

Even during live baking sessions, Tosi inspires participants to use what they have, mentioning substitutions for things like all-purpose flour and teaching Bake Clubbers that they can deviate from recipes whether their substitutions are driven by thrift or preference. By inviting, and more importantly encouraging, deviation, Tosi builds an inclusive space where

women with limited access to ingredients who were often facing job cutbacks, the loss of childcare facilities, and the responsibility of homeschooling can gather in a virtual setting, experiment, and find inspiration in the creativity of combining ingredients.[29] By designing a more accessible space, Tosi takes an approach to community development that "gives people agency and credit for their current expertise" and establishes participants as "co-constructors of knowledge" (Durá et al. 23) as they share their substitutions in Instagram posts. Like recipe collaboration, variation is a rhetorical strategy that invites participation, and the creativity accompanied by baking along in real-time continues to build Tosi's intimate relationship with Bake Clubbers through direct address (Matwick and Matwick 39–40). From the beginning of a live baking session to the end, Tosi uses first and second-person pronouns to connect to the audience and often recognizes individual Bake Clubbers:

> Today's a new day; it's Friday. We played a little game where we posted the ingredients online last night like we always do, and we said if you get it, you get a prize…454 people guessed [and] one person got it right…Gabrielle! You got it right. Don't tell anybody what you guessed. I'm gonna tell them in just a second. ("Bake Club Day 53" 00:01:55–00:02:27)

The use of we, you, and a specific Bake Clubber's name (Gabrielle) creates a kind of conversation between Tosi and viewers, suggesting an "accountability and responsiveness" to members, exceeding what "mainstream celebrities [like actors, musicians, and athletes] usually provide their fans" (Marwick 345). Through these direct addresses, Tosi's live videos create an

[29] Cairns and Johnston explain that in the US and Canada, women are positioned "as more domestically oriented than men and primarily responsible for caring through food—within the home and beyond" (37-8). Women, who disproportionally work low-wage jobs, experienced this positionality more so during the pandemic as they lost employment and were more likely to leave the workforce due to a rise in caretaking responsibilities as childcare facilities closed and schools transitioned to online education (Bateman and Ross; Kashen et al.).

embodied space where the kitchen represents "a site of multiple changing levels and degrees of freedom, self-awareness, subjectivity, and agency" as members alter recipes (Abarca, *Voices* 19).

Indeed, modifying recipes is an artistic expression that Tosi cultivates and Bake Clubbers embrace through making, eating, and sharing baked goods. For instance, on day forty-four, not only is creativity incorporated in the recipe's title ("Go Your Own Way Nougat"), but Tosi recognizes that, due to the pandemic, many Bake Clubbers can't buy flour. So, before she reveals the recipe, she addresses the flour concern:

> We're not baking. Don't freak out. Tomorrow we will be baking, but I've been getting a lot of comments from y'all that you still can't find flour, so I'm choosing a recipe that takes that in mind. Today we're not using flour either, and tomorrow flour is not one of the ingredients that I'm calling for, okay. I got you. ("Bake Club Day 44" 00:04:40-00:05:06)

Again, Tosi practices microcelebrity, demonstrating that she's listening and responding to the community's needs. Though acknowledging access to ingredients here doesn't directly relate to creativity, Tosi recognizes the lack of flour and doesn't want it to prohibit members from participating, demonstrating Bake Club's accessible design. In fact, the next three recipes don't require flour either, and Tosi spaces out recipes calling for flour after day forty-four, allowing members to focus on their creativity without worrying about missing an ingredient. When building digital food communities, I argue it's integral to consider access issues. In doing so, the

communities work to break down class status communicated through food and place a higher value on creating opportunities that utilize embodied epistemologies.[30]

How Elaine Uses Variations

Using Bake Club as a creative space, Elaine and Kelly's Instagram posts emphasize variation. For Elaine, choosing different ingredients is part of the "fun" ("Christina Tosi Bake Club Day 53"). For example, on day fifty-three Elaine makes two different patties (Tosi's take on a peppermint patty) with various toppings. When she gives the ingredients in the patty party video, Tosi says bakers need "some sort of extract" ("Bake Club Day 53" 00:04:00). Though patties might immediately lead bakers to use mint as they associate the treat with peppermint patties, Tosi's encouragement to choose a variety of ingredients fosters creativity and defines "the personality" of their patty party, inspiring Bake Clubbers to co-author recipes (00:06:42). The two flavors, almond and strawberry vanilla, and different toppings show Elaine's creative take (Figure 2.6).

Figure 2.6: Elaine's patty party post shows her creative approach to making peppermint patties.[31] She tops each patty with something different (ice cream cone pieces, strawberries, and shredded coconut), using some leftover ingredients from previous Bake Club bakes.

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[30] Food as an indication of class is a topic researched by sociologists, philosophers, food studies scholars, and rhetoricians (Bourdieu; Cairns and Johnston; Certeau et al.; Cognard-Black; Courtney; Naccarato and LeBesco; Tippen; Walden). See Chapter 4 for a more extensive discussion on cooking texts and class.

[31] Elaine's patty party caption explains her flavors: "Christina Tosi Bake Club Day 53: Pattie Party 🎉! This was so much fun! Threw a little strawberry jam and vanilla coated white chocolate sprinkled with freeze dried strawberries

Furthermore, choosing ingredients based on the flavor she wants or what's in her kitchen isn't just a fun activity for Elaine during Bake Club—it's part of her kitchen epistemology, which is the knowledge she gains through being in the kitchen. The way that Elaine goes about finding recipes and coming up with meal ideas for her family emphasizes artistic expression, so it's no surprise that she embraces Tosi's baking instructions. Before the pandemic, Elaine bought what looked good at the grocery store and worked backward, using the ingredients she could find as a way to figure out what to make for dinner. During our conversation, she explained that her recipe-finding and cooking process hasn't changed that much since COVID began. The main difference is that now instead of buying what "looks good," Elaine looks in her "COVID quarantine refrigerator," sees what ingredients she has to work with, then grabs a cookbook and uses the index to figure out how to make the ingredients into a meal (Personal interview). A kind of reverse meal planning, Elaine's cooking style, like Tosi's choose-your-own-adventure approach to ingredients, exemplifies Bake Club and, more generally, cooking as a platform for women's creative expression.

The Way Kelly Embraces Failure

Indeed, artistic expression is the main reason Kelly joined Bake Club. Because creativity is such a big part of her life as a freelance musician, it only seems natural that she pursues creative hobbies (Personal interview). Even when the recipe doesn't turn out right, Kelly has a creative mindset, learns from her failures, and turns them into something else. For example, on day fifty-nine, she takes a cookie that "failed" because it spread too much, flattening out during

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and nilla wafers. Second batch of patties had almond extract coated with semi-sweet chocolate sprinkled with coconut and chocolate jimmies...mini inside out Almond Joy. Some were also sprinkled with sugar cone and chocolate jimmies for the non coconut [sic] lovers in my house. #bakeclub #bakingclub @christinatosi ("Christina Tosi Bake Club Day 53").

baking, and uses it to make a snack (Figure 2.7).[32] Its flatness isn't the desired outcome, but instead of throwing it away, Kelly spreads some peanut butter on a cracker and crumbles up the

Figure 2.7: Unlike most Instagram posts, which only document successful, picture-perfect cookies, Kelly's day fifty-nine cookies demonstrate what went wrong.[33] She posts the snack she made (left) from the cookie failure (right). By turning her "failure" into something new, she demonstrates her thriftiness and takes a growth mindset that Tosi incorporates into the community's design.

the cookies to make a version of the Ritz Cracker Cookies. Rather than being disappointed, Kelly embraces her kitchen epistemology that includes recognizing where she went wrong: "What does one do when you have a few that spread WAY too much (because you were overconfident and decided to *forego the test cookie*…🤦‍♀️)?" ("Day 59"). One of Tosi's cookie baking tips, Kelly acknowledges that not following the advice of baking one cookie first and adjusting the bake time, oven temperature, or adding ingredients based on the test cookie's result can lead to imperfections.

[32] My first-hand experience with flat cookies has taught me that spread like this generally occurs when the fat (usually butter) melts in the oven, and there isn't enough flour to compensate and hold the cookie's shape. Taking pre-baking steps like chilling the dough before rolling it out or freezing cookies for about ten minutes before baking can help.

[33] In her caption, Kelly says how she took a failed cookie and made it into something delicious: "Day 59 of @christinatosi #BakeClub! Ritz cookies! What does one do when you have a few that spread WAY too much (because you were overconfident and decided to forego the test cookie...🤦‍♀️)? Make little ritz cookie cracker sandwiches with the failed bake, add some peanut butter, and dip them in chocolate! Yeah!" ("Day 59").

Here, Kelly's post emphasizes creativity and learning in a way unique to cooking texts and foundational for Bake Club's evolution into a feminist food community: documenting failures, sharing them, and learning from the overall process. Significantly, by sharing her failure, noting what she didn't do, and making something new from the unsuccessful bake, Kelly takes an approach to cooking that "promotes a self-reflective and interactive model of an inquiry relationship" (Heldke 15), offering guidance to others and preventing herself from making similar mistakes in the future. In this way, acknowledging her failure as part of the composing process can "highlight some of the ways twenty-first-century composers work, play, and go about the business of making and negotiating meaning in their lives" (Shipka 38). Posting the failure on Instagram, which is a platform where the "visual is of paramount importance" and images of aesthetically pleasing food fill users' feeds, #BakeClub posts capture the entirety of the baking process and continue to remediate the recipe exchange that, as we saw in the first section of this chapter, is foundational to digital food communities (Leaver et al. 45). Through recording her baking failure, Kelly inserts herself and her experience into the recipe, thus embodying the text to learn and guide current and future members while building beginning to demonstrate Bake Club's identity as a feminist food community that recognizes failure as part of the creative process.

Learning and Modifying Recipes

At the end of the nineteenth century, the push to value women's epistemology, particularly cooking, began with domestic scientists—women who worked to elevate household work to a professionally recognized status.[34] As feminist rhetoric scholar Jessica Enoch points out, domestic scientists "challenged the idea that the home was a site of drudgery and boredom"

[34] Ellen Swallow Richards is one of the most well-known domestic scientists (Enoch; Stage; Walden). See Chapter 3 for a connection between cooking texts (specifically radio) and the domestic science movement.

to transform women's domestic authority as they demonstrated that the kitchen is a space of scientific inquiry (89). Despite the move to frame cooking as science, home cooking and domestic work still aren't considered a valued form of knowledge or an art; however, Meredith E. Abarca's work seeks to elevate everyday cooking and establish its value. By shifting our thinking of art and craft to include home cooking, Abarca argues that viewing "domestic spaces as a field of epistemology validates the social, cultural, and economic significance of women's household work" (*Voices* 6). To demonstrate how domestic spaces validate women's epistemologies, specifically creative expression, Abarca shares her conversation with Liduvina Vélez about her handmade tortillas. For Vélez, learning occurs alongside other women over "long periods of individual experimentation" and acts as an extracurricular learning space (90). Living in the countryside, Vélez learns to make tortillas out of necessity, yet they contribute to her social capital. While tortillas are considered an everyday cuisine, they "require a cultivation of talent and skills" that, when recognized, elevate kitchen epistemologies (92).

We see this emphasis on cultivating skills and valuing knowledge when Lynne talks about joining Bake Club. She says, "I didn't really realize at the time that we were gonna learn things. Not that I didn't think I could learn, that I know all, but I've been cooking since I was five years old" (Personal interview). Even though recipe sharing drives Lynne's participation and is the reason she joined in the first place, learning to take creative risks became part of her baking and, as we'll see here, gives her more agency in the kitchen. Lynne feels she expressed creativity through baking for the first time when she modifies day eighty-five's recipe for cheddar cheese pineapple casserole (Figure 2.8). Because the dish didn't appeal to her, she

Figure 2.8: Taking inspiration from the pineapple casserole dish, Lynne came up with a cookie recipe that, to her surprise, was well-received.[35] *Through experimenting, she demonstrates what she's learning about flavors from Tosi.*

experiments and uses the casserole flavors to make cookies: "So that was the first time that I tried to be a little more adventurous, and with some experimentation, I made a really good cookie. I sent those to my husband's work, and people wrote me notes about how wonderful those cookies were" (Personal interview). Here, the skills and confidence Lynne gained empower her to take "authorship" of her creation, ascribing value to the learning that occurs in the kitchen (Abarca, *Voices* 118). Lynne models that she's using Tosi's lessons to learn to be a more adventurous baker and create recipes by experimenting when she posts her cheddar cheese pineapple casserole-inspired cookies: "I wrote down what I did, and I wrote down what I might want to do next time. I'm so glad I did. My first thought was one (batch) and done. Then I thought, if this is good, I may want to do it again. I better take notes" ("I made #bakeclub day

[35] As we've seen in her previous posts, Lynne uses the caption to record her cookie recipe process: "I made #bakeclub day 59 Ritz Cracker cookies, but I made them day 85 Pineapple casserole style. I was surprised and I shouldn't have been. 3 people asked for the recipe. / I sent about 8 cookies for my hubs to share at work. I thought he'd put them in the nurse's lounge. He said there weren't very many, so he shared them with a few coworkers he knew had a sweet tooth and would enjoy a cookie. / As I made the recipe I put my Tosi hat on and took notes. I wrote down what I did and I wrote down what I might want to do next time. I'm so glad I did. My first thought was one (batch) and done. Then I thought if this is good I may want to do it again. I better take notes. Never thought anyone else would want to make them. If anyone else wants to give it a try I took notes. 😁 / I thought it would be a delicious little weird cookie. Turns out it's just plain delicious. @christinatosi #pineapplecasserole #cookie #cookies #christinatosi #pineapple #cheese #cheddarcheese #ritzcrackers" ("I made #bakeclub day 59").

59"). Over months of Bake Club, Tosi hints at how research and development for new recipes occur, emphasizing note taking and tasting. Indeed, tasting is essential to the baking process and crafting what Tosi calls a "flavor story." For example, on Bake Club day sixty-eight, Tosi explains how cake truffles tell a flavor story:

> So you're gonna grab your cake; you are going to start to think about and craft your flavor story at this point, okay? Your flavor story is what do I want my cake truffle to be? How do I build these flavors? My recommendation from eleven years of making cake truffles and coming up with them is don't underestimate the power of including something textural in the center of your cake truffle, but more than anything, my recommendation is you got to do you. ("Bake Club Day 68" 00:22:43–00:23:12)

Through questions ("What do I want my cake truffle to be? How do I build these flavors?"), just like we saw in the previous section when she uses direct address at the beginning of the patty party video, Tosi develops intimacy with Bake Clubbers (Matwick and Matwick 40).[36] Then, she uses their relationship to encourage creativity through flavors. In doing so, Tosi empowers members to experiment using what they have.

Thanks to Tosi's teaching, Lynne and other members learn to see cooking as "art-in-process" where the process of creating and sharing the recipe is an artistic expression that provides agency by giving women a creative outlet (Abarca, *Voices* 81). As a result of Bake Club and Tosi's approach to experimentation through ingredient choice, Lynne believes that she is growing as a baker: "She [Tosi] encourages you to experiment and use different things. You know, corn Chex, throw some pretzels in there. I would've never thought. I would've went, well I gotta wait till I buy some corn Chex, because that's what the recipe says. But now I'm like, oh,

[36] In Chapter 3, I argue that questions are a rhetorical strategy that encourages home bakers to develop their expertise.

what do I have in the cabinet?" (Personal interview). Before Bake Club, as Lynne explains here, she followed recipes verbatim, but after months of baking with Tosi, she notes how she modifies recipes in her Instagram posts so she can make it again. Because of Tosi's overall assets-based approach to teaching that emphasizes using what you have, learning from mistakes, and modifying recipes, Bake Clubbers can recognize and apply what they've learned. As we'll see in the next section, they employ their knowledge to ventures that use baking as social activism.

VI. Employing Food as Self-Care and Social Activism

So far, this chapter has argued that the primary reason women participate in digital food communities is that they're drawn to engage with others through cooking and that such communities value creative epistemologies and learning from failure. The third and final reason women are attracted to digital food communities is that they provide the opportunity to come together over a shared goal. Tosi designed this space to empower members, whether they're fighting loneliness or raising awareness of a particular social issue. In this final section, we'll consider how sharing images of baked goods during the pandemic impacted participants' well-being, what self-sponsored learning looks like for the community, and Bake Club's evolution from a digital food community to a *feminist* food community that strives to use food to combat systemic racism.

Over months of baking, Bake Club evolves into a feminist food community where sharing content and learning are integral components to combating pandemic isolation and systemic racism. Indeed, using #BakeClub, members compose posts that contribute to finding joy and countering the pandemic's isolation, but Bake Clubbers also use food as "pleasure activism," which is "the work we do to reclaim our whole, happy, and satisfiable selves from the impacts, delusions, and limitations of oppression and/or supremacy" (brown 13). Through using

her platform (Instagram) for pleasure activism, Tosi organizes the community "around what we long for rather than what we are against" (brown 278). Using what brings her pleasure and joy—baking together—Tosi addresses systemic racism and amplifies the work of Black and Indigenous people of color (BIPOC) during and beyond the pandemic.

The Impact of Sharing Ordinary Moments During the Pandemic

While a significant purpose of Bake Club is shifting the in-person exchange of recipes and food online, the parasocial relationships between members and Tosi captured via #BakeClub construct a space where they can cope with COVID-19 through posting, sharing joy, and member interactions. For example, Elaine says her posts aren't just for her followers: "They don't really care that I missed a day. But it's more for my ritual. It's more for my sanity. I'm nervous that if I don't have this every day, something to do, that I might feel lost, and it's just a meditative everyday thing" (Personal interview). In a way, posting about cooking on social media takes the form of journaling for Elaine. According to Lee Humphreys, women write in personal diaries to document "the daily activities, musing, and reflections on the events of the day" and, historically, share their writing with friends and family (31). Notably, sharing diaries highlights the importance of women's everyday activities and ways of knowing. Like diaries, Bake Clubbers compose social media posts to share experiences because "knowing the daily routines and events of someone's life can build intimacy between people" (Humphreys 46), which became crucial to combating the pandemic's isolation as women took on additional caretaking responsibilities or were unable to interact with friends and family in person.

Figure 2.9: Elaine packaged her homemade candied nuts to give to neighbors.[37] *She often takes the opportunity to distribute her bakes to friends and family, thus using Bake Club to spread joy.*

On day forty-one, for example, Elaine mentions "sharing the joy of @christinatosi #BakeClub" by delivering candied nuts to neighbors ("Christina Tosi Baking Club: Sweet"). The simple act of sharing food keeps Elaine active, gives her an activity she uses for self-care, and posting about it situates and connects her to the surrounding world because cooking provides a "connection to our sense of self, to others, to places, to specific times in rather concrete ways" that the pandemic limited (Abarca, *Voices* 104). For Elaine, the meditative process of cooking emphasizes the group's ability to fulfill a need overall: "It's been such a nice therapeutic activity for me. I think I've really leaned on it more than ever…Baking truly makes me happy" (Personal interview). When Elaine posts on Instagram, she demonstrates how she participates in the Bake Club community to spread joy despite the loss of activity outside of the home, modeling how digital food communities become feminist food communities through using parasocial relationships to pull members out of complacency or, in this case, isolation (Figure 2.9). Generally, Cairns and Johnston find that women see cooking for themselves as less pleasurable

[37] In her caption, Elaine demonstrates how she shares her Bake Club bakes: "Christina Tosi Baking Club: Sweet and Savory Nuts. Pecans and Macadamias...sweet =crystallized with sugar and tumbled in chocolate and cocoa powder...savory = butter, brown sugar, curry. Putting on our walking shoes and sharing the joy of @christinatosi #bakeclub #bakingclub" ("Christina Tosi Baking Club: Sweet").

because "pleasure is derived through care-work—that is cooking *for others*" (147; emphasis original). Despite social distancing restrictions, Bake Club maintained that sharing food was an essential component of creativity and well-being that contributed to members' building and maintaining a home baker identity.

Indeed, anthropologists like David E. Sutton claim that "food does not simply symbolize social bonds and divisions; it participates in their creation and recreation," thus playing a more prominent role in forming an identity for individuals and groups (102). Through sharing food with others, a connection is formed "between a person and the world" (Certeau et al. 183). So as the pandemic limited in-person opportunities to connect through food, Tosi and Bake Clubbers maintain food's social qualities when they "share" food by posting on Instagram and dropping off goodies for neighbors. Tosi models this sharing after day four when she posts a video leaving bags of meringues on her neighbor's porch with the caption "Q: what do you do with all your #bakingclub treats?"[38] Her action demonstrates how, even during quarantine, food is a way to connect and care for one another, and this moment is the beginning of the group's pleasure activism. "Pleasure is the point," says brown, and "[w]e can gift it to each other in a million ways: with authentic presence, abundant care, and honesty...[and] with delicious food" (441).

For Kelly, in particular, food is a pleasurable and therapeutic experience. "When she's [Tosi] like, I'm gonna do this Bake Club, and you can just join, I was like, cool, I'm in for whatever it's gonna be, and I know that baking is going to be a positive strengthening kind of a thing," she says (Personal interview). Because of her creative mindset, Kelly knew that baking could help her cope with quarantining. Indeed, seeing baking as self-care and therapy was

[38] Until day thirty-three, Tosi and Bake Club used #BakingClub to tag their posts and share them with community members. After day thirty-three, Tosi began using #BakeClub instead. No reason for the hashtag update is provided and some Bake Clubbers who have been baking since the beginning continue tagging their posts with both hashtags.

common during the pandemic. For instance, Weinberg posits that baking uses mindfulness as self-care. “When you’re baking,” says Weinberg, “you can’t help but be engaged.” The engagement helps bakers focus on the activity at hand and, in the end, there is a tangible result in the form of a baked good. In addition, Weinberg explains that posting about baking on social media is part of therapeutic, mindful baking because you can tap into a community of other people sharing a similar interest. Bake Clubbers use baking as mindfulness, embodying brown’s pleasure activism principles through emphasizing paying attention to the process and “tuning” into actions that bring happiness, satisfaction, and joy to reclaim themselves from pandemic oppression (14).

Indeed, finding community and friendship through the creative baking process emphasizes the joy Tosi and the group brings. For instance, when she receives her Bake Club card[39] in the mail, Kelly posts to express her joy and gratitude for Tosi, saying, “you are a bright light in these crazy times, and baking with you has brought many a joyful moment to our home these past months” (“Look who is”). Like Elaine, Kelly documents her Bake Club participation to focus on the joy she experiences by counteracting the pandemic’s isolation and embracing the community as a space for pleasure activism.

Self-Sponsoring Learning: Continuing as a Community without a Leader

For the first sixty-nine days of Bake Club, Tosi’s goal was to use Instagram to spread “posi vibes.” Additionally, social media platforms, explains communications scholar Zizi Papacharissi, “sustain activities that are organized around information sharing and learning, creativity and innovation, and discourse” (121). Indeed, participants like Elaine see Bake Club as

[39] On day forty-two, Tosi announced participants could be an official card-carrying member of Bake Club. She launched a sign-up page on her website (christinatosi.com) and sent physical membership cards to everyone who signed up. New members can still join; however, it’s unclear whether they receive a card or if signing up just adds the individual to the email list.

a space for discourse and positive community interaction: “Everyone has nothing but wonderful things to say, to lift each other up…we are all supporting each other. Everything’s gonna be okay” (Personal interview). Here, Elaine acknowledges Bake Club’s supportive network is essential, but even though positivity grounds the community, that doesn’t mean conflicts don’t arise. Although this chapter’s first section emphasizes how “likes” foster positive interactions (and that comments on Tosi’s posts promote positivity), the tone shifts after the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020.

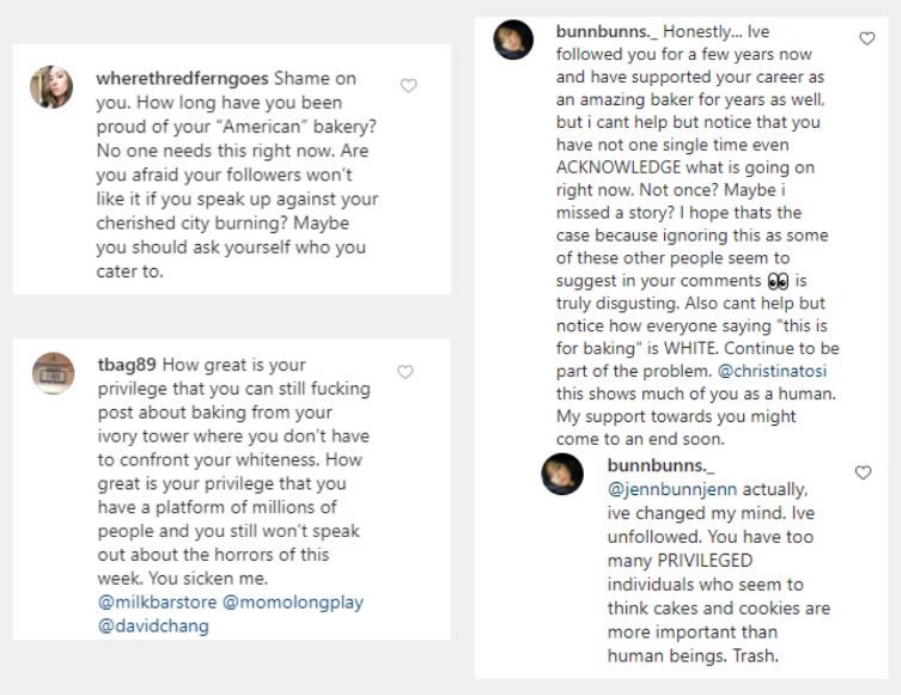


Figure 2.10: After the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, Instagram users called Tosi out for not using her platform to speak out against racial injustice.

Four days after a Minneapolis police officer murdered Floyd, comments on Tosi’s Bake Club day sixty-nine post reflect the turmoil felt across the US as protests in support of Black lives began. According to journalist Derrick Bryson Taylor’s timeline, after Floyd was killed, Black Lives Matter protests began in Minneapolis, and by May 27, 2020, they “erupted” in major cities. Unlike the previous sixty-eight days where Bake Clubbers express excitement about

baking and ask questions about ingredients, comments from Instagram users who identify as non-white call out Tosi's silence and white privilege. The three comments included here (Figure 2.10) share similar sentiments, criticizing Tosi for not acknowledging systemic racism or using her platform to "speak out about the horrors of this week" (Tosi "#bakeclub day 69 sundae"). The response to Tosi's inaction depicts a common occurrence where hashtags produce "material effects in the digital and physical sphere" (Jackson et al. xxxii). Up to this point, #BakeClub brought bakers together to combat pandemic isolation; however, connecting around shared interests doesn't inherently lead to civic engagement. In fact, sharing "personalized interests" can enable "people to connect around commonalities without having to compromise their own belief systems" (Papacharissi 128). Indeed, Bake Club attracts members whose motivation to participate is pandemic-driven, and of the nine interview participants, only two don't identify as white.[40] Interviewees mentioned they started baking along because it was fun, gave them something to do, and acted as a distraction from politics, but Tosi decides she can't remain silent and her acknowledgment of racism begins to "register" its presence (Ahmed, *Living* 34).[41]

At the beginning of Bake Club day sixty-nine, Tosi says, "what we do here every day is light, it's light-hearted, it's full of joy. It's meant to be an escape, yet also a togetherness, but I just couldn't jump into Bake Club without first acknowledging what's going on in our country at large and especially this weekend" ("bake club day 69: 🍋 ice" 00:00:49–00:01:10). Tosi reiterates, like the Instagram quote prefacing this chapter states, that she turns to baking on good and bad days, and that's what we're going to do today:

[40] See Appendix A for demographic information about participants.
[41] To respect participants who wish to remain anonymous, I've summarized the responses from all nine interviewees when I asked why they started participating in Bake Club.

> In all of the difficult times in my life, I have always found answers in the kitchen…Whether that's sharing something with someone, something that I make, something that I learn, sharing space in the kitchen with somebody that just needed to stand next to someone, whether it was just standing with myself and having difficult conversations or just wading through the heft that can sometimes be life. And what we do here at Bake Club at the end of the day is about shepherding that same level of care with reality, with a sense of courage, and with a sense of openness, and you're all right here, right now, to bake to be a member of Bake Club for your own personal reasons. So let's get to it. (00:01:44–00:02:44)

Her introduction to the day's video shows that, while she's not questioning her privilege to continue baking as a white microcelebrity, she recognizes her inaction. Still, baking's pleasure at this moment resists the pandemic rather than systemic racism as she leads bakers in making lemon ice. But despite Tosi's day sixty-nine persistence to keep baking, instead of going live at 2 p.m. on June 1, 2020, she shares an image of a handwritten note (Figure 2.11). She says, "I've decided to pause Bake Club for now, and instead I am digging in. I ask, I listen, I learn" ("I started").

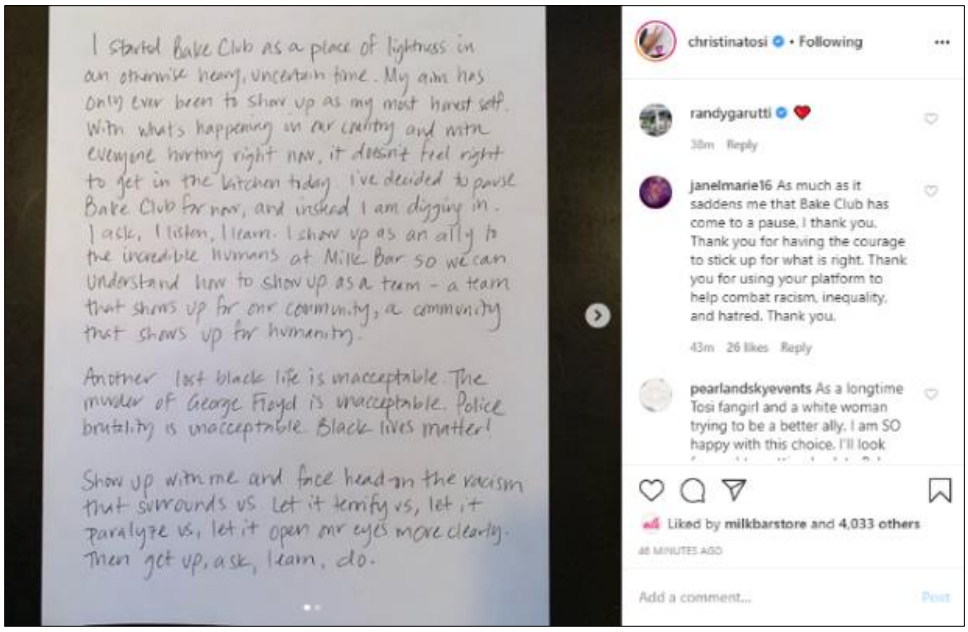


Figure 2.11: Since Instagram is an image-driven platform, Tosi handwrote a letter about pausing Bake Club and took pictures of it, giving her pause post a more personal feeling.

The post is still problematic because Tosi's statement doesn't indicate any actionable items and can be viewed as "performative allyship," which Jackson et al. explain as "announcing or demonstrating allyship for an audience" (154-5). So what would she be learning by not hosting Bake Club? More importantly, what would she be *doing*? In stepping back, Tosi demonstrates how digital food communities can use rhetorical feminism to evolve into a *feminist* food community that operates "in a constate state of response, reassessment, and self-correction" (Glenn 4). Perhaps Tosi could've kept Bake Club going while asking, listening, and learning, but the decision to stop and dedicate her energy to supporting Black lives cultivates an awareness of how inaction contributes to racism and embraces the idea that "to become a feminist is to stay a student" (Ahmed, *Living* 11). But before we discuss how Tosi self-corrected and transformed Bake Club, let's examine what Bake Clubbers did during the pause.

While Tosi reflected on her role as a community leader, members kept Bake Club going, but they didn't turn the hashtag into part of the political conversation. Instead, #BakeClub is a

space of reckoning, which Humphreys defines as "the process of engaging with media traces," such as Instagram posts, "to better understand ourselves and the world around us" (27). After the pause, members use the hashtag to continue to share their bakes as a form of self-sponsored cooking literacy that continues combatting pandemic isolation. For example, the pause led Lynne to search for #BakeClub to see what others were up to, demonstrating that even without the celebrity chef that brought them together, relationships built with other members "can remain significant" (Hills 471). The connections Lynne's made at Bake Club are one of the best parts, and she feels that the pause encouraged members to get more acquainted:

> I was like, 'Oh, what am I gonna do? I'm bakin' all by myself.' So I started going on Instagram, you know, #BakeClub, and commenting and liking other Bake Clubbers. That's how we all kind of started getting more acquainted was during those few weeks of contemplation. (Personal interview)

Without Tosi, members lean on each other to continue baking and provide the social connection and support they need as the pandemic continues.

Along with the pause, Tosi deleted the ingredient post for day seventy and the recipe for "Bacon-Onion-Cheese Bread," but members saw and saved it before its removal and, after realizing it was gone, a few Bake Clubbers began circulating it. Here, the recipe's social circulation "makes visible a functionality that may be anchored in the beginning of everyday experiences," like recipe sharing, to show how Bake Club furthers women's self-sponsored learning (Royster and Kirsch, "Social Circulation" 172). Bake Club member @e.n.b.i, for example, made the bread ahead of time and didn't know Tosi removed the recipe until she posted that afternoon ("@christinatosi #BakeClub"). In the comments, Elaine mentions that @bethanysbakedgoodies shared the recipe, and Lynne, who accessed the recipe in the morning

and still had it open, offered to distribute it.[42] In her "Bacon-Onion-Cheese Bread" post, Kelly acknowledges the pause: "Last new official #BakeClub recipe for awhile [sic], as our fearless leader @christinatosi has declared a pause for a time while we all learn, reflect, mourn, and lovingly show up on behalf of the movement at hand" ("Day 70"). Like Tosi's pause letter, Kelly demonstrates that the Bake Club community extends beyond baking for the sole purpose of enjoying something homemade and though she doesn't say what "the movement" is, she shows her support by indicating that she will also take the time to learn and reflect.

The "Bacon-Onion-Cheese Bread" is the beginning of an "independent study"[43] where members remake past recipes, catch up on recipes they didn't make, and take on six new recipes from Tosi's website."[44] Seeing this time as an "independent study" highlights that Bake Club is more than a fun activity. Instead, baking with Tosi is a form of literacy learning, and continuing this work on their own is central to seeing how cooking literacy is taught and learned. Through their continued baking, members demonstrate the transferability of Tosi's lessons by tackling recipes and encouraging community formation on their own. Looking at independent study posts, we can see how, as Lynne acknowledges in her interview, members became more active during the pause. Making "Mac-'N-Cheese Pancakes," for instance, Lynne provides her evaluation of the pancakes and interacts with others in the comments. Though she thinks they taste good, she notes "they weren't out of this world delicious" and suggests that using a better quality macaroni and cheese and some additional flavors would make them better. Though Lynne commonly offers evaluations like this, she continues the embedded discourse within recipe exchange here

[42] Unfortunately, @bethanysbakedgoodies' Instagram profile has since been deleted.
[43] Lynne acknowledges that she first saw @e.n.b.i. refer to this time in Bake Club as "independent study," and that's how she thinks about Bake Club during the pause ("Mac-'N-Cheese").
[44] Tosi's pause letter mentions that she's "added a few recipes online" ("I started"). By providing new recipes in her absence, Tosi demonstrates that Bake Club hasn't been some kind of publicity stunt. Rather, it has been a space to connect with one another during the pandemic and as a microcelebrity, she cares about her fans.

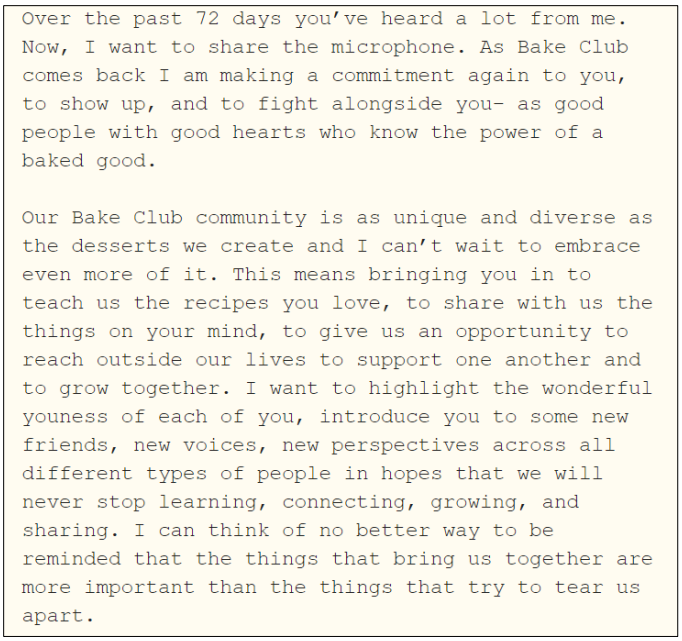
by including her recommendation to improve the pancakes and demonstrates that sharing cooking literacy is part of community-making.[45] Elaine appreciates the recommendation and thanks her for the "honest review" and Kelly comments, wondering "what Tosi would give us for variations." Like the recipe exchange that occurs when Tosi provides variations and substitutions, the comments provide some ideas, demonstrating the rhetorical velocity of recipe exchange and how members apply Tosi's lessons to sponsor their learning.

When she makes the pancakes, Elaine takes Lynne's advice, folding in chives and bacon and topping them with hot sauce ("Christina Tosi Bake Club Mac"). Lynne compliments her for "pumping up the flavor," after which Elaine thanks her again for "making it first with an honest review." Other members @halibaking, @carpedolce, and @mburke421 tell Elaine the flavors make the pancakes "a show stopper." Then, Elaine concludes by acknowledging the role food plays as "True comfort food which all of us need during this time of empathy, kindness, and fight for change." Through recipe exchanges, posts continue to fulfill a need for interaction during the pandemic and use recipe's embedded discourse to further the group's identity as a feminist food community that supports one another even in the absence of their leader.

"In an Effort to Do My Part": Using #BakeClub to Amplify BIPOC Voices

As Bake Clubbers kept baking and maintained parasocial relationships through the hashtag, it wasn't clear Bake Club would return. So the email newsletter Tosi sent on June 18, 2020 announcing Bake Club's restart on June 21 was a warm welcome (*Sunday*). Tosi says she

[45] For scholarship on self-sponsored literacy and literacy acquisition that takes place outside of the writing classroom, see Brandt; Gere; and Roozen and Erickson.



Over the past 72 days you've heard a lot from me. Now, I want to share the microphone. As Bake Club comes back I am making a commitment again to you, to show up, and to fight alongside you- as good people with good hearts who know the power of a baked good.

Our Bake Club community is as unique and diverse as the desserts we create and I can't wait to embrace even more of it. This means bringing you in to teach us the recipes you love, to share with us the things on your mind, to give us an opportunity to reach outside our lives to support one another and to grow together. I want to highlight the wonderful youness of each of you, introduce you to some new friends, new voices, new perspectives across all different types of people in hopes that we will never stop learning, connecting, growing, and sharing. I can think of no better way to be reminded that the things that bring us together are more important than the things that try to tear us apart.

Figure 2.12: In an email to Bake Clubbers, Tosi announces Bake Club's return and uses direct address to connect on a personal level.

wants to "share the microphone" and that she "can think of no better way to be reminded that the things that bring us together are more important than the things that try to tear us apart" than to restart Bake Club (Figure 2.12). However, it isn't clear how it will be different in the email. What will it look like for Tosi to highlight "new voices, new perspectives" during baking sessions?

It remained to be seen if #BakeClub and the community overall would move beyond performative support. Generally, "hashtags that claim to move privileged members of society toward solidarity with those less so," explain Jackson et al., "are often regarded with skepticism as a kind of faux allyship that recenters privileged groups" (156). Thus, I awaited Bake Club's return with skepticism. To restart, Tosi reads a note that Bake Clubber Kathleen sent her during the pause:

> We [Kathleen and her son Eli] talked about her [Tosi's] decision to put Bake Club on hiatus during these tumultuous times when our country's systemic racism has once again

> senselessly cost another Black life. Tough conversation to have with any kid. Tougher so between a white mom and her Black son. He's disappointed and doesn't really get why we can't bake and fight racism. So we'll continue to do both. ("Bake Club: Day 70" 00:04:20–45)

After sharing, Tosi tells viewers that she and her Milk Bar team have actively implemented antiracist practices and participated in the first #BakersAgainstRacism bake sale.[46] Bake Club's first day back acknowledges what Tosi is working on, but when Kathleen and her sons Jonah and Eli join Tosi in the kitchen on day seventy-four, she employs pleasure activism to use food to center "pleasure and joy as resistance" through the inclusion of voices other than her own (brown 432).[47] The move to include other people in the live videos builds on the moments where Tosi encourages members to show up for one another and support communities impacted by the pandemic during Bake Club's first sixty-nine days. For instance, before making brownies on day seven, Tosi speaks on behalf of Relief Opportunities for All Restaurants (ROAR) and the Independent Restaurant Coalition (IRC) ("Baking Club: Day 7"). Both ROAR and the IRC began in March 2020 to provide resources for restaurant and food industry workers affected by COVID-19 ("About Us"; "Mission"). While Tosi delivers the call to action in a quick shoutout at the beginning of Bake Club, she uses moments like this to encourage viewers to support their

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[46] On June 4, 2020, the Instagram account @BakersAgainstRacism posted and encouraged bakers of all skill levels, from home cooks to professionals, to sell their baked goods and donate the proceeds to an organization supporting Black lives. The co-creators, chefs Paola Velez, Willa Pelini, and Rob Rubba, hoped to attract at least eighty bakers. On June 20, 2020, over 2,000 bakers worldwide held pickup times, made deliveries, and featured limited edition baked goods to raise funds to fight systemic racism. At Milk Bar in NYC and LA, for example, Tosi and her teams sold peanut butter and banana cookies and donated the proceeds to Campaign Zero, a non-profit with the mission to end police violence in the US. The day after the bake sale, Tosi used this cookie recipe to restart Bake Club, talk about Bakers Against Racism (BAR), and show how baking can fight systemic racism ("Bake Club: Day 70"). Many Bake Club members, including interviewee @j3nnifromtheblock, participated in the initial BAR bake sale and continue using baking to fight injustice (Personal interview). On February 26, 2022, BAR announced their sixth bake sale, an "emergency bake sale to fund-raise for those who are providing food, shelter, transportation and medical services" in Ukraine ("Hi Bakers").

[47] Tosi starts collaborating with others to make the Bake Club playlists. You listen to Eli's playlist, "Eli's Jams," on Spotify.

communities in some way during each video. With the addition of guests after the pause, Tosi moves from *saying* she's acting to *showing* her support and shifts the call for social awareness from pandemic isolation to systemic racism, using community-engaged work and social change as her kitchen epistemology. She invites diverse makers to share their stories during Bake Club to make the community more inclusive and promote Black-owned businesses.

As Leaver et al. explain, groups on Instagram "use the platform to raise social awareness for various causes in a more accessible manner" (151). Tosi uses her microcelebrity status with over 500 thousand Instagram followers to share the work of diverse makers, which addresses systemic racism by including people of color often ignored in the culinary industry.[48] After Jonah, Eli, and Kathleen, Tosi collaborates with fashion designer Tan France, Milk Bar's communications coordinator Meme Wilson, Jade (a student at Food & Finance High School in New York City), and cookbook author and food editor Kristina Gill. The inclusion of voices other than her own, specifically those of Black and Indigenous people of color (BIPOC), becomes a central focus to diversify Bake Club. For example, Tosi announces an additional weekly Bake Club segment called Teach Me Something where she does her "part in uplifting and amplifying Black and POC [sic] voices" by asking a friend to join and teach Bake Clubbers how to make something (*August 2: Week 15*).

The weekly collaborations vary depending on the guest, but several segments include a video posted to Tosi's YouTube channel followed by #TakeoverTuesday, where she gives her Instagram over to the guest to post and share stories about their life and business from her account.[49] Post-pause, Tosi uses her platform for "supportive organizing" for racial justice

[48] I use the term "maker" here because Tosi doesn't exclusively incorporate chefs; however, the majority of guests are from the culinary world.

[49] Teach Me Something videos feature Tavel Bristol-Joseph, Joanne Chang, Paola Velez, Jon deBary, Samantha Fore, Karla Smith Brown, Ash Ledet, Pooja Bavishi, Gonxhe Maqellara, Maya-Camille Broussard, James Mark,

(Jackson et al. 154). For example, Tosi collaborates with Tavel Bristol-Joseph, an Austin, TX-based pastry chef originally from Guyana, for the first Teach Me Something to promote his work and diversify the culinary industry's promotion of white chefs. They record a video where they virtually bake his "Monster Cookies"[50] together.[51] But before the baking begins, Tosi introduces Bristol-Joseph and acknowledges his success by mentioning that he owns five restaurants and that he's the "first pastry chef to win a Food and Wine Best New Chef award."[52] Then, Tosi conducts a mini-interview and invites Bristol-Joseph to share where his determination and creativity come from (00:01:18–56):

> I think it came because I grew up in Georgetown, Guyana, and you know was trying to figure out where I wanted to be when I grew up. I wasn't a kid that knew what I wanted right away, so when I used to bake with my aunt…I used to bake for punishment because I played basketball all the time, and anytime I would be out playing ball, she would try to get me to come home early, and I would want to stay out late, so her punishment was you're gonna bake with me every Saturday for the kids in Sunday school…and then it just kind of…turned into this really fun thing to do with my aunt every Saturday. So I was like I think this is what I want to do, and my uncle, he always used to tell me I don't care what you do just be the best that you can be at it. (00:03:24–00:06:50)

Marissa Gencarelli, Cory Nieves, Grocery Run Club, Girls Who Invest & Anna Zhou, Tai Davis, Andre Springer, Eat Good NYC, Zoë Kanan, Helen Jo Leach, Fany Gerson, and Tosi's mom Greta Tosi-Miller. As restaurants and businesses reopened, the additional YouTube videos weren't continued; however, Takeover Tuesday continued through December 2021. After the new year, Tosi redesigned Bake Club once more to ask members who they wanted to support in their community. With the implementation of Bake Club Mail Call, Tosi solicits submissions from Bake Clubbers to show support to someone in their community, "a teacher, coworker, a local business or charity," that she will talk about during Bake Club and mail a treat to (*Bake Club: Week 93*).

[50] "Monster Cookies" are 6 oz cookies usually made with dark chocolate chunks and pecans. The recipe is posted in the YouTube video description (Tosi, "Teach Me Something: Tavel Bristol-Joseph").

[51] Bristol-Joseph and Tosi are in their respective home kitchens, which is representative of how baking together occurs virtually throughout the pandemic.

[52] The other 2020 recipients include chefs Nick Bognar, Trigg Brown, Camille Cogswell, Eunjo Park, Niven Patel, Daisy Ryan, Lena Sareini, Donny Sirisavath, and Douglass Williams.

The story Bristol-Joseph tells is similar to the one published in *Food & Wine* announcing his Best New Chef 2020 award (Shah). When he won this award, his first restaurant, Emmer & Rye, had been open for five years, but despite his Austin-based success, Bristol-Joseph doesn't have the same level of fame as Tosi. Employing her platform to create a space for Bristol-Joseph to share his expertise, Tosi uses storytelling to "help sustain movements that may yield political impact of a specific form" (Papacharissi 132). In this case, bringing Bristol-Joseph into the kitchen works to combat racial injustice by decentering Tosi's voice and calling on Bake Clubbers to use the pleasure that baking "Monster Cookies" brings them to learn about BIPOC bakers.

Furthermore, Tosi's #TakeoverTuesday strategically uses social media to advocate for social change, holding up food-inspired pleasure and joy as resistance as guests share their work via her Instagram Stories.[53] Originally designed to disappear within twenty-four hours, users can choose to archive "a collection of themed Story segments" and post them on their profile as Stories Highlights (Leaver et al. 28). Tosi uses this feature to create a space for BIPOC makers to share and preserve their work (Figure 2.13). Some guests, like Bristol-Joseph, record themselves

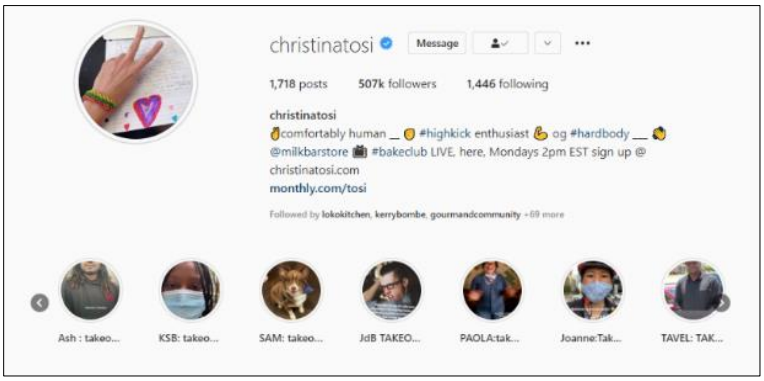

Figure 2.13: Tosi's Stories Highlights, a permanent addition to her Instagram profile, feature #TakeOverTuesday guests.

[53] See Leaver et al. for a more complete history of Instagram as a social networking platform.

to show Bake Clubbers their lives and capture their story as a cohesive video while others feature still images with captions and animated text. For example, the Stories Highlight for Lee Lee's Rugelach takeover includes six segments that feature the narrative of the owner and baker Alvin Lee Smalls, aka Lee Lee, and images of rugelach alongside the cakes and cookies also offered at the bakery located in Harlem (Tosi, "Lee Lee's"). Like Jackson et al. point out in their analysis of hashtags and allies, Tosi's incorporation of #TakeoverTuesday seeks to recognize her positionality and privilege and use her microcelebrity to circulate BIPOC narratives. Through social media, Tosi works to diversify representation in the food industry and encourages her fans to seek out and support the guests' content.

VII. Conclusion: What Studying Bake Club Teaches Rhetoricians about Digital and Feminist Food Communities

Though Christina Tosi isn't the first microcelebrity chef to use food to build digital communities, this analysis uncovers the rhetorical strategies women in an online baking group (Bake Club) utilized to combat pandemic isolation, expanding scholarship on food and parasocial relationships. Hashtags, comments, and "likes" warded off pandemic isolation while teaching Bake Clubbers baking skills. Additionally, my analysis introduces how microcelebrities and digital food communities use Instagram to advocate for social change and evolve into feminist food communities that use food to (1) construct a collective home baker identity through the active creation and sharing of content; (2) view learning as integral to community participation; and (3) combat social inequalities linked to racism. Led by Tosi, Bake Clubbers like Elaine, Lynne, and Kelly created a community through #BakeClub. Ultimately, sharing food via Instagram establishes ways to exchange recipes and food during the pandemic, emphasizing baking as a pleasure activism. Though Tosi initially designed Bake Club to bring happiness,

satisfaction, and joy during a time of uncertainty, the additions of Teach Me Something and #TakeoverTuesday invite BIPOC makers to tell their stories and use food to center "pleasure and joy as resistance" to counter systemic racism (brown 432). As members connect with other bakers, learn how to be more creative in the kitchen, and find joy through baking, they further Tosi's overall message that baking and baked goods are powerful community-building tools. But, from a feminist perspective, what do Bake Club's rhetorical strategies teach rhetoric and writing studies scholars about digital food communities more generally?

With the inclusion of multiple voices, Tosi is doing what Sara Ahmed refers to as diversity work, "the work we do when we are attempting to transform an institution" (91). For example, Teach Me Something and #TakeoverTuesday are Tosi's attempts to transform the professional culinary world through baking, demonstrating how digital food communities can use food to address racism in particular. What this case study shows us is that further research on digital and feminist food communities that began during the pandemic and the summer of 2020, in particular, is needed. Examining #BakeClub's rhetorical strategies is a starting point for inquiry into such communities and their evolution during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. In the next chapter, we'll continue exploring the feminist rhetorical strategies women use to teach people how; however, we'll go back in time to a different medium: radio.

Chapter 3

More Than "A Show About Life's Appetites":

Developing Culinary Expertise on *The Splendid Table*

> Everybody thought it was going to be a recipe show. Well, yes, but it's going to be much more; it's going to be humor, satire, you know, politics, etc.
>
> —Lynne Rossetto Kasper, "The Splendid Lynne Rossetto Kasper," *Radio Cherry Bombe*

I. Food Radio as an Embodied Listening Experience

From 1995 until 2017, Lynne Rossetto Kasper hosted *The Splendid Table* radio show. She taught listeners about food from around the world by having conversations with chefs like Rick Bayless and answering listeners' culinary questions live on the air.[54] Since the beginning, Kasper used food narratives, or the stories that "exist as embodied narratives that find expression in the performative acts that occur while gathering, making, eating and sharing food," to share her culinary expertise (Abarca, "Food Studies" 18). For example, when a listener named Shannon calls to ask what it means when a cookbook says "to bruise a cardamom pod," Kasper uses the opportunity to teach listeners to embody their cooking in a way that is similar to Tosi[55]:

Kasper: Well, a bruise is kind of like what a bruise is when we bump ourselves. It's not a crush. It's not as far as a crush. And it's not just rolling it around. And the idea is you would take either the heel of a knife, you know the end of your knife—

Shannon: Right.

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[54] Rick Bayless is an American chef and restauranteur most well-known for his TV show *Mexico—One Plate at a Time* ("Meet Rick Bayless"). Over the years, he appeared frequently on *The Splendid Table* where he and Kasper taught listeners about Mexican food culture. See "Episode 134: Tequila" (00:20:50–28:15).

[55] I encouraged you to listen to this Spotify playlist to get the full Bake Club experience while reading Chapter 2. Now I suggest listening to an episode or two of *The Splendid Table*. You can listen to this first example by visiting www.splendidtable.org/episode/2003/04/19/the-williams-in-williams-sonoma. Kasper's conversation with Shannon begins at 00:48:53.

Kasper: —you'd put the cardamom pods in a mug or something that won't crack, and you just gently bruise them in the sense that you wouldn't break 'em up, but you pound them enough to just start to smell a great deal of aroma from them.

Shannon: Okay, so the little seeds inside, you wouldn't want those escaping. You just wanna crush it enough or squish it enough to smell it.

Kasper: If some of the seeds escape, it's not the end of the world.

Shannon: Okay.

Kasper: When you bruise something, you're getting less flavor than if you crush it all the way, but more flavor than if you just throw that whole spice into a dish.

Shannon: Gotcha.

Kasper: And that's what it is and if you think about what happens when you get bruised, you know, maybe you get thrown against something that's coarse, and you get scraped, that's essentially the idea of what you're doing to a whole spice when you're bruising it.

Shannon: Okay, well, thanks for your help, Lynne. ("Episode 238" 00:49:29–50:38)

Throughout this interaction, Kasper explains the amount of pressure needed to bruise a cardamom pod, relying on touch, but she emphasizes smell most of all. Listeners learn that the purpose of bruising is to release the aroma, infusing the dish with more flavor. Kasper could've explained the technique without utilizing smell; however, she strives to demonstrate that cooking is a multisensory experience. This chapter examines such on-air conversations to identify

Kasper's rhetorical strategies to develop her expertise, share it with others, disrupt dominant expertise, and incorporate multiple sources of knowledge.

Wherein the last chapter discussed how women formed a digital food community on Instagram to resist pandemic isolation and how it evolved to counter systemic racism, this chapter rhetorically analyzes the radio show *The Splendid Table* to expand on the role multisensory storytelling plays in developing women's culinary expertise.[56] I ask, what rhetorical strategies are used to exchange recipes and establish expertise in food podcasts? How do food podcasts help construct and maintain traditional feminine and masculine identities, and how do these identities inform perceptions of expertise? And how do food radio programs subvert gendered ideologies that designate the kitchen as a women's place?

To investigate these questions, I first trace radio's connection to food programming to understand how food radio shows began as a way to fulfill a need for domestic expertise. Next, I introduce conversational recipe telling—a nuanced oral storytelling format that incorporates invitational rhetoric—to explain how food radio attempts to use stories to teach listeners how to cook and simultaneously change cultural perceptions of people and food. Then, I analyze episodes of *The Splendid Table* and identify three rhetorical strategies used to educate listeners about cooking and food culture: (1) preserving local foodways—the cultural, political, and social qualities of food; (2) using simple comparisons; and (3) implementing sensory feedback. In doing so, I argue that these rhetorical strategies construct what I define as a *feminist cooking text*. As explained in Chapter 1, *cooking texts* expand the study of food rhetoric beyond cookbooks to incorporate any media used to circulate cooking knowledge and accounts for the relationships food cultivates. A *feminist cooking text*, specifically, follows the same basic principles but

[56] I use radio show and podcast interchangeably to describe *The Splendid Table* because of its history, which you can read about in this chapter's artifact description.

disrupts gendered ideologies communicated through food and cooking and recovers regional and ethnic cuisines as part of an American food identity. In doing so, I explicate how expertise on *The Splendid Table*, established through an individual's situated ethos, complicates how feminist cooking texts operate.

II. Domestic Science: Radio and Multisensory Composing

"When radio programs were first broadcast in the early 1920s," says Kathleen Collins, "suddenly there was a new channel for transmitting culinary advice" (15). Specifically, radio connected women to domestic experts during the twentieth century when moving created "the absence of an older relative in the home" (N. Rice 174). Similar to the parasocial relationships Bake Club members developed in Chapter 2, listeners formed connections with radio hosts, known as "radio homemakers," who shared recipes and answered their questions on the air, providing women with a community. Ann V. Bliss explains that the term radio homemaker describes women radio hosts broadcasting from the Midwest as early as 1925 (999). Using domestic expertise as a radio homemaker gave women a way to enter the broadcast business, which "was (and still is) predominantly a male profession" (Birkby, *Neighboring* 320). Indeed, sharing their domestic expertise was a way for women to enter the public sphere and become microcelebrities, allowing them to "inhabit the celebrity subject position through the use of the same social technologies used by musicians, athletes, and actors" (Marwick 334). According to Nelljean Rice, the most successful radio homemakers were the local women "who projected a sense of connection with the community" by sharing recipes listeners submitted, thus creating that space for cultivating expertise (182). However, domestic radio shows were not limited to "real" women. Two of the most famous women on the radio were Aunt Sammy and Betty

Crocker, both of whom are fictional (Collins; Murray; Neuhaus; Shapiro).[57] Like the *Betty Crocker Cooking School of the Air*, radio shows created a relationship with the audience that encouraged active participation in the programming. Through writing letters, listening to the radio program, and cooking, such radio shows created a "participatory feedback loop of cultural activities" as listeners informed the content (Murray 62-3). Though I examine conversations on the air rather than in letters, I find that food radio shows continue to form communities centered around the host's domestic expertise while building parasocial relationships constituted by sharing personal stories and other people's recipes.

Thus, radio homemakers provided a regional and local community service for women that remediated in-person recipe sharing to create what Rice calls "a community cookbook of the air," giving women a place to circulate their expertise (175). Indeed, radio homemaker Evelyn Birkby shows that through projecting "sincerity, enthusiasm, and optimism," the radio homemakers developed ethos, becoming trustworthy friends that encouraged, educated, listened to the community, and created an "extended family" (*Neighboring* 20-1). To build a genuine connection, radio homemakers didn't simply instruct listeners. Instead, they framed recipes within stories to invite participation and create a welcoming learning space. For example, in the first episode of her local radio program *Up a Country Lane* (1950), Birkby connects to listeners in the opening address by describing her home and introducing her husband and two kids:

> There, in the middle of the cornfield, is where the Birkbys live…There is a nice lawn around our house, and around the green grass is what I call a grove of trees…Our family consists of Dulcy Jean, who's almost three…She has an outstanding feature, I think—a

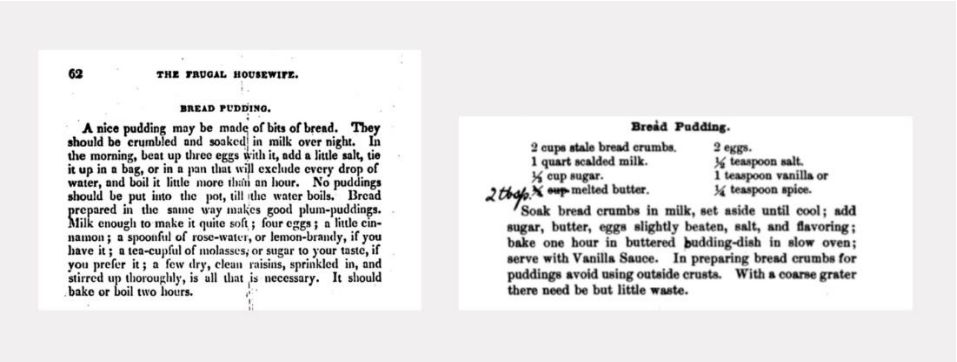
[57] The Betty Crocker persona, for example, was invented by Washburn Crosby's (now known as General Mills) advertising department in 1921 as a "fictional spokeswoman" that the company's home economics experts initially used to answer customers' letters about baking (Neuhaus 169).

> dimple in her chin. Her daddy has that dimple in his chin, and she inherited it… and it really makes a very attractive part of her appearance. When we knew that we were going to have an addition to our family this late winter, one of the things that I wanted so much was to have another child with another dimple in his chin. I just thought I couldn't possibly be fortunate enough, but along about January the seventh, when Bobby was born, and we had all his fingers and toes counted and knew that everything was accounted for, I looked at his chin, and he too had a dimple. (00:04:38–05:46)

The conversational tone establishes her community connection and displays her ethos as a homemaker by introducing her family and sets her up to deliver instructions from her sister-in-law for trimming a cake with sugared violets in the episode. Similarly, *The Splendid Table*'s host, guests, and callers foster parasocial connections, or "a type of *imagined* rather than co-present social relationship" through sharing stories to build a similar relationship between host and audience (Hills 463). Callers often include background about their question, whether they're asking about a specific recipe or want to learn a cooking technique. The significance of these narratives is that they reflect how radio reincorporated features removed from cookbooks during the Progressive era (1896–1916) that prioritizes basic cooking education and remediates in-person recipe sharing to develop the parasocial relationship between the caller and the host, which is crucial for developing expertise.

As historian Jessamyn Neuhaus explains, cookbooks published toward the end of the nineteenth century shifted from providing instructions within a paragraph to a standardized list with exact measurements, similar to today's cookbooks (Figure 3.1). The standardization arose from the domestic science movement, which emphasized "the application of scientific principles to home problems" (Enoch 86) and elevated cooking to a scientific endeavor by making it "an

exact and perfectible task" (Neuhaus 22). Although the domestic science movement gave women a way to pursue work outside the home, the standardization of recipes made cooking more



62 THE FRUGAL HOUSEWIFE.

BREAD PUDDING.

A nice pudding may be made of bits of bread. They should be crumbled and soaked in milk over night. In the morning, beat up three eggs with it, add a little salt, tie it up in a bag, or in a pan that will exclude every drop of water, and boil it little more than an hour. No puddings should be put into the pot, till the water boils. Bread prepared in the same way makes good plum-puddings. Milk enough to make it quite soft; four eggs; a little cinnamon; a spoonful of rose-water, or lemon-brandy, if you have it; a tea-cupful of molasses, or sugar to your taste, if you prefer it; a few dry, clean raisins, sprinkled in, and stirred up thoroughly, is all that is necessary. It should bake or boil two hours.

Bread Pudding.

2 cups stale bread crumbs.	2 eggs.
1 quart scalded milk.	½ teaspoon salt.
½ cup sugar.	1 teaspoon vanilla or
2 tbsp. ~~cup~~ melted butter.	¼ teaspoon spice.

Soak bread crumbs in milk, set aside until cool; add sugar, butter, eggs slightly beaten, salt, and flavoring; bake one hour in buttered pudding-dish in slow oven; serve with Vanilla Sauce. In preparing bread crumbs for puddings avoid using outside crusts. With a coarse grater there need be but little waste.

Figure 3.1: As seen in the 1835 publication of The Frugal Housewife *(left), ingredients and some quantities and measurements are provided within an instructional paragraph. In contrast, the recipe from* The Original Boston Cooking-School Cook Book 1896 *(right) shows what became the standardized recipe style widely implemented at the turn of the twentieth century. It lists ingredients and measurements before the instructions to portray cooking as more logical and scientific.*

sterile. A significant difference between cookbooks written before the twentieth century, like *The Frugal Housewife*'s bread pudding recipe, is the assumption that cookbooks were supplemental documents meant to expand on lessons family members taught young women. Because primary cooking instruction occurred alongside women in the kitchen, recipes didn't need to be exact, but with the domestic science movement and the implementation of cooking schools at the end of the nineteenth century, cookbooks became a way to provide a "holistic cooking school education" (Walden 132). However, the recipe standardization also used food and science as an assimilation tactic that "removed distinguishing flavors from regional and ethnic cuisines, in favor of a scientific and increasingly corporate food culture" and used food to promote American identity

(Walden 117). So while the domestic science movement created opportunities for women to work outside the home, it contributed to the erasure of immigrants' foodways.

Thus, twenty-first-century food radio shows like *The Splendid Table* emerge as feminist cooking texts that work to recover the cultural erasure enforced by early twentieth-century cooking texts by educating listeners about where food comes from and how to cook dishes that might include unfamiliar ingredients. As Susan J. Leonardi explains, alongside recipe's social context, sharing contributes "to the gendered nature of this form of embedded discourse" (344). As we'll see, I discovered that recipe sharing on the radio often reinscribed the gendered discourse around what women "know" about cooking even while working to recover voices and teach listeners.

III. Artifact Description: A Brief History of *The Splendid Table*

For twenty-two years, *The Splendid Table* host Lynne Rossetto Kasper greeted listeners by calling it "the show for people who love to eat" and "a show about life's appetites." The first episode aired on Minnesota Public Radio on January 4, 1995 as a live call-in show ("About the Splendid Table"). Though perhaps best known as a radio show, *The Splendid Table* exemplifies remediation where the rhetorical strategies of the new medium (radio) are based on an older medium (pre-domestic science cookbooks). Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin explain remediation as "borrowing in which one medium is itself incorporated or represented in another medium" (45). Indeed, the show was inspired by and borrows the narrative qualities of Kasper's first cookbook, also called *The Splendid Table*, which is a tome on northern Italian food. The cookbook includes recipes for more familiar dishes such as veal parmesan and others like baked pears with fresh grape syrup that were less familiar in the 1990s; however, it's the inclusion of

the region's history and a forty-two-page ingredient guide that makes it more like a master class than a recipe collection.

"Since recipes tell only half the story of what makes this cuisine so special," says Kasper, "I have accompanied many of them with notes that share the legends, histories, origins, and people that shape this place and its foods" (11). The move to include stories, background information, and ingredients Americans might not recognize is an act of feminist historiography that attempts to reintroduce flavors that the domestic science movement removed from cookbooks to cultivate American identity through white, middle-class taste (Enoch; Walden). For example, the "American diet" domestic science promoted favored meat (beef and pork) alongside "boiled vegetables" and unseasoned or "simple" dishes (Walden 138). Embedding stories within recipe notes and on radio shows recovers some of the cultural diversity overwritten in the early twentieth century and mimics familial knowledge sharing for women without or separated from their immediate family.

Even in shorter notes like the one included with the recipe for balsamic vegetables, for instance, Kasper provides rich insights about the region that teach the reader about Italian foodways:

> Every year when vegetables are harvested in the Modena area families put up jars of marinated peppers, cauliflower, and onions. Traditionally served as a first course with bread fritters, these can also be an unusual condiment with ham, roast pork, or any cured meat. Mix them into salads for a great boost in flavor. They are a refreshing alternative to the jarred version sold in Italian grocery stores. (18)

Kasper's introduction explains that jarring vegetables is a regional tradition and gives tips for serving. Similarly, the radio show borrows from the cookbook, and Kasper highlights locality

and regional identity through conversations about local restaurants and businesses across the United States to preserve food culture. For instance, weekly segments with Jane and Michael Stern emphasize regional food through the Sterns' exploration of local restaurants.[58] When they appear on *The Splendid Table*, the Sterns contribute to preserving local foodways and culinary expertise while creating an embodied listening experience that furthers the show's purpose of introducing listeners to "different cultures, cuisines and ideas" ("About the Splendid Table").

Although it began as a live show, *The Splendid Table* has since switched to a prerecorded program (available as a podcast) where listeners' questions, submitted as emails or, preferably, voice memos, are answered during the episode and broadcasts on over 400 stations.[59] Despite the shift from live to prerecorded, and the change of host from Kasper to food writer Francis Lam in 2017, providing cooking advice remains a central purpose. Regardless of the host, past and current episodes typically follow the same structure to construct a feminist cooking text that highlights multicultural foodways by moving from conversations with food industry professionals to recipes, cooking tips, and general kitchen advice, and ending by answering listeners' questions. The show's long history and the preservation of its format, specifically answering questions during the show, make *The Splendid Table* a prime example to analyze food radio's rhetorical strategies.

[58] The Sterns are the duo behind *Roadfood*, a collection of guides and articles written while traveling across the United States. Notably, the mission of *Roadfood* seeks to highlight "local flavor" for road trippers, which includes describing the food alongside the restaurant's setting ("All About Roadfood").

[59] The exception to the prerecorded show is the live Thanksgiving episode, known as "Turkey Confidential," where current host Francis Lam and top chefs take calls to help listeners navigate holiday cooking (though the 2020 and 2021 episodes were prerecorded due to the COVID-19 pandemic).

IV. Method and Methodology: Listening to *The Splendid Table*

Conversational Recipe Telling and Invitational Rhetoric

To understand how the show circulates culinary expertise to create a feminist cooking text, this chapter rhetorically analyzes episodes that aired between 2000 and 2016 to illustrate how Kasper uses conversational recipe telling and invitational rhetoric.[60] As linguist Neal R. Norrick explains, conversational recipe telling is an interactive oral storytelling format where stories "open and close in distinctive ways, and listeners respond with continuers, assessments, questions, and co-telling. Moreover, the telling of a recipe may occur within the course of a narrative, naturally growing out of the narrative and segueing back into it" (2740). From a feminist rhetorical standpoint, these exchanges function as invitational rhetoric. Communication scholars Sonja K. Foss and Cindy L. Griffin explain that the purpose of invitational rhetoric

> is to provide the basis for the creation and maintenance of relationships of equality. Its primary communicative options are offering perspectives and the external conditions of safety, value, and freedom that enable audience members to present their perspectives to the rhetor. (374)

In pairing invitational rhetoric with conversational recipe telling, I explicate how food radio shows function as constitutive rhetoric. By closely analyzing how Kasper employs these strategies, this chapter explores how women use recipes as embedded discourse and emphasizes how recipe circulation develops women's culinary expertise. My initial interest in *The Splendid Table* centered around conversations on regional foods.[61] After listening to Kasper's interactions

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[60] The significance of these dates reflects the online availability of episodes before Francis Lam took over for Lynne Rossetto Kasper. Though, as I pointed out, Lam kept a similar format, the call-in segment's transition to playing and responding to prerecorded voice memos rather than a live conversation between the host and callers decreases the show's conversational recipe telling slightly; however, *The Splendid Table* continues to exemplify a feminist approach to food literacy through programming that emphasizes sustainability, food culture, and using food to tell stories ("About the Splendid Table").

[61] See Chapter 4 for a rhetorical analysis on cooking texts and regional identity.

with callers more closely, I became fascinated by how she shared her cooking knowledge to teach listeners how to cook while expanding the kinds of food a US-based audience considered eating.[62] Therefore, this chapter's focus became identifying and understanding Kasper's rhetorical strategies.

Episode Selection and Initial Discoveries

Because this dissertation seeks to understand how food is constitutive rhetoric that communicates and preserves local community identity despite geographical distance, I restricted my episode search to those that include a conversation with Jane and Michael Stern and don't focus specifically on cooking for national holidays (e.g., Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc.). By choosing episodes with a focus beyond holidays, a broader understanding of how the show educates listeners on a week-to-week basis emerges. Based on these two criteria, I identified eighty-eight potential episodes airing between 2000 and 2016. To make the number of episodes more manageable, I selected one episode per year for a total of seventeen episodes that represent the most places geographically based on the Sterns' travel.[63] Then, I listened to each episode twice. The first listen familiarized me with the episode's structure and *The Splendid Table*'s general format (conversations with guests; recipes, cooking tips, and general kitchen advice; call-in questions). And in the second listen, I coded episodes to trace patterns and themes that Kasper uses to develop her rhetorical strategies.

As we'll see in this chapter's analysis, two distinct question styles emerged from listening to Kasper's conversations with callers. Frequently, questions center around learning a recipe for

[62] Whenever possible, Kasper incorporates ingredients and cuisines with which listeners might be unfamiliar. For example, "Episode 386: Islamic Kitchens" gives a brief history of Arab cuisine and its influence on Mediterranean food (00:13:14–00:20:30). As the title might suggest, the episode counters the post-September 11 association of Islamic countries with terrorism by using food as a connecting point.

[63] See Appendix B for the code lists, episode titles, and a breakdown of callers' perceived gender.

a specific on-hand ingredient or inquiring about an unfamiliar food. The second type of question comes from callers who wish to develop their basic cooking skills or learn a technique. Overall, callers range from those who know some cooking basics to listeners cooking for themselves for the first time. Despite the question type, recipe- or skills-focused, Kasper establishes a pedagogical structure that uses analogies and sensory feedback to teach listeners with various cooking skills, demonstrating a rhetorical awareness of her audience's needs.

Gender and Participatory Culture

Across the seventeen episodes, Kasper took calls from forty-two women and sixteen men. Regardless of gender, callers provide acknowledgment tokens and engage in "expert talk," which presents an opportunity for participants to display their expertise and co-tell stories with Kasper (Norrick 2750). In doing so, Kasper builds a participatory culture. The significant difference between women and men who call in, as we'll see, isn't how Kasper responds. Instead, the difference emerges through callers' tone, the type of food and overall cooking purpose, and how they frame the conversation to highlight their expertise. For instance, women more commonly ask questions geared toward trying something new for dinner, whereas men tend to ask about cooking for special events like a barbecue or tailgating party. Indeed, men's questions support the ideologies of twentieth-century cookbooks about men cooking for special occasions and when cooking occurred outside (i.e., grilling, smoking, etc.) (Contois; Inness; Neuhaus). I could've chosen to restrict my analysis to listeners' questions, which would have eventually led me to identify Kasper's three rhetorical strategies (incorporating foodways, teaching with analogies, and using sensory feedback); however, these interactions make up about ten minutes of an hour-long radio show. So, instead of limiting my study to callers, I analyze full episodes to focus on the show's overall rhetoric.

As I listened, I identified the four qualities of participatory culture (low barriers to artistic expression; support for creating and sharing one's creations; informal mentorship; and social connection) explained in detail in Chapter 1. However, the more episodes I listened to, the more I recognized that one feature of participatory culture stands out above the rest: social connection. Therefore, the following analysis sections use several episodes from my dataset to analyze listener questions and conversations with guests to demonstrate how Lynne Rossetto Kasper uses conversational recipe telling as a feminist rhetorical strategy (invitational rhetoric) that highlights local foodways by featuring regional foods and teaches listeners how to cook. In doing so, I reveal how *The Splendid Table* navigates issues of gendered culinary expertise and women's ethos to create a feminist cooking text that fosters connection.

V. Developing and Challenging Women's Ethos and Cooking Expertise: Lynne Rossetto Kasper's Rhetorical Strategies

Like the recipe sharing on Instagram discussed in Chapter 2, radio remediates the social experience of circulating recipes and teaching others how to cook. However, while posting on Instagram constitutes a home baker identity, unique to radio is how it develops women's ethos beyond the home through their status as domestic experts. Generally, we understand the rhetor and their choices construct ethos from an Aristotelian emphasis on the speaker's moral character, goodwill, and knowledge. But, as Enoch argues in her feminist spatial rhetorical analysis of place, location complicates ethos: "an audience's perception of a rhetor's ethos does not only pertain to past knowledge about that figure and her place in the world. Ethos can also be composed 'on site' through the rhetorical displays and performances the rhetor enacts before the audience" (99). So what happens to a rhetor's ethos if "on site" is on air? Women radio hosts

work outside the home, yet they broadcast into domestic spaces through radios or smart speakers like Google Home or Amazon Echo, obscuring geographical locations.[64]

Additionally, Lorin Shellenberger points out that this common understanding of ethos "does not account for how certain factors, such as the rhetor's race or gender or the material conditions and lived realities a rhetor faces, might influence how their ethos is perceived by an audience" (74). Expanding our understanding of ethos to call attention to location, in this case, the liminal space of the airwaves, and gender recognizes that socially constructed ideologies impact a rhetor's credibility, even if their expertise is understood. Thus, this section utilizes episodes of *The Splendid Table* to identify women radio hosts' rhetorical strategies that develop and maintain their ethos and domestic expertise, specifically related to cooking.

Whether teaching listeners with a variety of cooking skills, speaking with professional chefs, or answering callers' questions, Kasper utilizes cooking and the gendered ideologies that surround it to employ three rhetorical strategies to develop her ethos and listeners' expertise simultaneously[65]: (1) incorporating history and local foodways; (2) using analogies to keep instructions simple; and (3) providing sensory feedback. Though I've isolated the rhetorical strategies here, they often occur simultaneously throughout episodes. For instance, Kasper and guests emphasize teaching with analogies even when the conversation's focus employs sensory feedback (as we'll see when Kasper guides listeners through a tea tasting). And while not every interaction features foodways, Kasper's emphasis on simplicity and sensory feedback overall

[64] Today, radio shows, and podcasts especially, can be recorded from almost any location. Various locations were possible even in the 1920s. For instance, radio homemaker Jessie Young had a microphone that broadcasted from her kitchen (Birkby 42).

[65] Cookbooks often utilize gendered ideologies, like women's role as homemakers, to make their argument. See Dubisar's "Promoting Peace, Subverting Domesticity" and Mastrangelo's "Recipes for/of Subversion."

provides embodied, multisensory cooking lessons that further her authority as a domestic expert and often subvert gendered ideologies during moments of conversational recipe telling.

Rhetorical Strategy #1: Incorporating Foodways

Foodways, says food studies scholar John T. Edge, are "the study of what we eat, as well as how and why and under what circumstances we eat" (8). Additionally, Chicana food studies scholar Meredith E. Abarca expands on foodways' cultural connection, noting that they "are deeply embedded in the formation of personhood and nationhood" and that women specifically use food to "speak out to change the circumstances of their lives, who define their own subjectivity and acts of agency" (*Voices* 7; 166). In this section, we'll explore how incorporating foodways is the central rhetorical strategy that makes *The Splendid Table* a feminist cooking text, acting as a "social space" where women can "enhance their competencies, sense of agency and authority, and consequence in the worlds in which they function" (Royster and Kirsch, "Social Circulation" 171). Significantly, exchanges between Kasper and callers emphasize performing agency and authority to construct ethos.

When Kasper takes listeners' calls, they often ask for a recipe or pose a question about an ingredient that takes a foodways approach to cooking (e.g., asking about a recipe from a specific location or ingredient). Not only does Kasper provide cooking instruction in these moments, but she includes background information commonly found in recipe headnotes that teaches readers about the recipe or ingredient's origins. As we'll see, this information conveys food's cultural, social, and sometimes political qualities. By citing a recipe's history, I argue Kasper takes a feminist approach to educate listeners, preserve foodways, and develop her ethos as a domestic expert. Indeed, she often weaves history lessons into her response to explain ingredients and cooking techniques, creating what Carrie Helms Tippen defines as a "citation narrative," or "a

form of origin narrative that credits a prior author for innovating or contributing a recipe to the cookbook" (73). The citation strategy is similar to the recipe sharing in Chapter 2 as Bake Club members used #BakeClub and tagged Christina Tosi to cite a recipe's origin. When cookbooks use such citations, explains Tippen, they engage in feminist historiography, which "emphasizes absences in narratives, recovering voices, facts, or events that had previously been unknown or unacknowledged and offering an alternative narrative" ("Writing Recipes" 16). Even if Kasper doesn't cite a specific person, she performs feminist expertise by fulfilling the recipe collector role and accentuating foodways to include previously left-out narratives.

For instance, when Kate calls in search of a recipe for a "really good Mexican pozole," Kasper takes the opportunity to perform feminist expertise to recover Mexican-American foodways, acknowledging that for her audience, which most likely consists of white listeners, this dish is probably unfamiliar ("Episode 229" 00:44:36-41).[66] Using two features of conversational recipe telling, questions and co-telling, Kasper recovers foodways through teaching and begins by asking Kate a clarifying question: "You mean the stew with the pork and the corn?" (00:44:42-44). Here, Kasper poses the question to take what is perhaps an unfamiliar term, "pozole," and provide a simple reference point. As a domestic expert, we can assume that Kasper knows what pozole is, but by asking Kate to clarify, she invites her to participate in the recipe telling and creates a connection to a common dish, stew, that listeners might know and can

[66] Though I could not locate the listener demographics from when *The Splendid Table* first aired (1995), we can deduce that most listeners were primarily white women based on the program's location (Minnesota) and current audience base. According to the 2021 US Census Bureau statistics, 83.8% of Minnesotans identify as white ("Quick Facts"). Additionally, American Public Media, *The Splendid Table*'s producers, states that listeners in 2022 are 53% female, 37% of listeners are between twenty-five and fifty-four, 72% are college graduates, and 55% have annual household incomes of at least $75,000 ("The Splendid Table"). So, as a feminist cooking text, *The Splendid Table* strives to educate listeners about cultures and people beyond these demographics.

visualize.[67] Questions construct Kasper's culinary ethos and simultaneously develop callers' cooking literacy in a way that de-emphasizes the teacher (Kasper) as the sole authority, making callers co-constructors of knowledge.

Although Kate doesn't give her exact location, she says that where she lives, the dish uses hominy, prompting Kasper to define this ingredient before giving her recipe:

> Hominy is essentially the English word for the dried whole kernels of corn that have been soaked in a lime water—lime…like the stone lime—and that loosens the husk. It also, by the way, releases the niacin in the corn [and] was a really important nutritional aspect of the way native peoples of Central and South America lived. ("Episode 229" 00:44:50-00:45:17).

Like defining pozole as a stew, Kasper continues to educate listeners about food outside the US and contributes to recovering and circulating foodways. Moves like this that include diverse ingredients contribute to Kasper's ethos and construct *The Splendid Table* as a feminist cooking text because they seek to recover the cultural diversity that early-twentieth-century cookbooks removed from American food, serving to, as Glenn would say, "remap" the narratives included in histories (*Retold* 7). Though subtle, crediting a recipe's origin recovers the contributions of people who built the US's foodways but are often excluded from cooking texts. Indeed, culinary historian Barbara Haber says that the "implicit assumption" in mid-nineteenth century cookbooks "is that the authors were offering a white audience recipes invented by whites" (xiv). Feminist cooking texts, then, contribute to recovering the voices of marginalized communities

[67] Stews have a long history as a staple dish in the United States. For an example of how stews function as a form of authenticity that creates identity, see Tippen's rhetorical analysis of Brunswick stew's historical narratives (*Inventing*).

and move white listeners to "globalize" their "points of view" (Royster and Kirsch, *Feminist* 25).[68]

Finally, Kasper explains how to make pozole. However, she continues performing feminist expertise by emphasizing local foodways and welcoming localization when she introduces her version and says it's based on her time in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where you won't find tomatoes in dishes with green chilies. Kasper creates her culinary ethos by mentioning a precise location and acknowledging that the dish might be different elsewhere ("Episode 229" 00:45:25-48). Notably, using her knowledge of one specific location (Santa Fe) to construct her response and establish herself and the recipe as "authentic sources of knowledge" builds Kasper's ethos as a culinary expert (Tippen 74). To take a feminist approach, food scholar Alice Julier says we must ask, "what is our origin story? Where did we come from?" (17). Julier poses these questions about food studies as a field; however, her point is that feminist food studies must work to recover narratives and teach the "history of agrarianism, colonialism, industrialization, the gender-race-class politics of food access and availability, and the cultural contexts that shape choices in these environments" (22). Kasper incorporates foodways to include history and cultural connections to construct *The Splendid Table* as a feminist cooking text.

Furthermore, the localization of expertise remediates community-centered in-person recipe sharing similar to how Bake Clubbers modify recipes. "Recipes," says literacy scholar Suzanne Kesler Rumsey, "represent the larger literacy practices within the community, specifically women's work" and how "food is an obvious way a culture passes on intellectual

[68] For some examples of cooking texts that contribute to this recovery work, see Toni Tipton-Martin, *The Jemima Code: Two Centuries of African American Cookbooks*, U of Texas P, 2015; Michael W. Twitty, *The Cooking Gene: A Journey Through African American Culinary History in the Old South*, Amistad, 2017; *Taste the Nation with Padma Lakshmi*, Hulu, 2020.

inheritances" (72). This unique local knowledge is a form of expertise often passed down, woman-to-woman, in the kitchen that Kasper and food radio shows utilize to build parasocial relationships with listeners that begins when she greets them. For example, Kasper always uses the caller's name and greets them like an old friend: "So Kate, what do you want to talk about?" (00:44:34). In doing so, Kasper builds a connection and draws on *The Splendid Table*'s overall focus of recovering and, through circulating cooking epistemologies, preserving local foodways:

> They take a pork shoulder because it's beautifully marbled and has wonderful flavor. You cut it up into maybe a one-inch dice. You have some garlic, some onion, a little bit of oregano, and green chilies. And you simmer that with the dried pozole…Some people like to pre-soak the corn overnight in cold water, you know, in the fridge. I've seen people just throw it in; it takes a long time to cook and what happens is the pork almost melts into the liquid, and you have salt and pepper in there, and the green chilies give it that sparkle, and it's this brilliant stew. ("Episode 229" 00:45:19-00:46:43)

Although Kasper's primary purpose is to answer Kate's question and teach listeners how to make the dish, she simultaneously documents New Mexico's foodways by saying "what they do" and providing a technique for soaking the corn. Through such host-caller exchanges, Kasper demonstrates that, as Enoch says, ethos "is deeply connected to one's relationship to a group and that group's location" (74). Notably, Kasper constructs her authority and promotes local foodways by referencing her time in New Mexico and works to reconstruct a narrative of the US's cuisine that includes native foodways. In sum, Kasper's foodways approach is a bit unique. She uses questions and co-telling to not only introduce her listeners to the origins of food but also to deemphasize whiteness by circulating recipes.

Rhetorical Strategy #2: Teaching with Analogies

Though Kasper and *The Splendid Table* overall seek to convey expertise through educating listeners about foodways, like early twentieth-century homemaker radio programs, the show's second rhetorical strategy—teaching with analogies—also fulfills a need for general cooking instruction and functions as a feminist literacy practice that recognizes listeners' various cooking knowledge. Besides seeking recipes, listeners often call to develop their basic cooking skills or learn a technique. For example, after a conversation with a friend, listener Pam calls to ask Kasper a clarifying question: what is a slurry ("Episode 339")? Like recipe-focused questions, callers participate by using acknowledgment tokens (e.g., yeah, okay, etc.) to show they're following Kasper's instructions, but the teaching during these conversations relies even more so on analogies and demonstrates the collaborative nature of conversational recipe telling in a way that decenters Kasper's expertise by inviting callers to share experiences. In doing so, Kasper takes a feminist pedagogical approach that, as Crabtree et al. say, "emphasizes the epistemological validity of personal experience, often connected to the notions of voice and authority" (4). Through the invitation to speak on the radio, Kasper validates listeners' experiences. However, such interactions, as we'll see, can simultaneously reinscribe the gendered stereotypes established in nineteenth-century cookbooks that showed domestic duties were a woman's responsibility (Walden) and early twentieth-century cookbooks that marked baking as feminine and grilling as masculine (Counihan; Elias; Inness; Neuhaus). Of course, it takes a lot more than one food radio show to reframe food's gendered associations. However, women's studies professor Carolyn M. Shrewsbury says that "empowering strategies allow students to find their own voices, to discover the power of authenticity" (9). During calls, Kasper

takes this feminist pedagogical approach grounded in empowering to help her predominantly female caller base recognize their culinary expertise.

"I don't know what a slurry is and how you would use it," says Pam. "I've heard of it expressed by a friend of mine who is a really good baker, and he said well make a slurry. He told me, but I didn't understand it" ("Episode 339" 00:44:34-50). To make a slurry, Pam's friend says "something about putting it in a food processor and putting corn starch" (00:44:52-56). It's no wonder Pam didn't understand—even I, with my primarily self-taught cooking literacy, can see his instructions are vague and utilize unnecessary kitchen equipment. Notably, this moment demonstrates gendered cooking roles for both Pam and her friend. Though she doesn't say if he's a professional baker, the fact that she refers to him as a "really good baker" reinforces that when men choose to cook, it's perceived they have a higher level of expertise than women (Inness, *Dinner Roles* 31). So even though Pam's friend demonstrates expertise in an area of cooking deemed feminine (baking), his masculinity isn't challenged because his baking prowess is presented as something he chooses to do. Perhaps more important, he has a narrow understanding of expertise. Unlike Kasper, Pam's friend doesn't break down what a slurry is and fails to explain it in a transferrable way.

Instead, he glosses over the term and assumes his vague details of using a food processor are good enough. But why doesn't Pam ask her friend to explain what a slurry is again? An undercurrent of shame connects to how others perceive Pam and the cooking expertise expected of her as a woman. "Shame," says feminist theorist Sara Ahmed, "can also be experienced as *the affective cost of not following the scripts of normative existence*" (*The Cultural Politics,* 107; emphasis original). In this case, Pam simultaneously disrupts and perpetuates expected expertise because she doesn't know what a slurry is, but instead of asking her male friend to clarify, which

would be embarrassing and further break cooking's gendered roles, she asks a domestic expert. When Kasper greets her, she says, "we've got Pam calling from San Antonio" ("Episode 339" 00:44:27–28). Even though Pam risks someone identifying her, calling Kasper is a more comfortable option because historically, women passed cooking expertise on to the next generation through oral and written instructions and created an accessible platform that "provided women with opportunities for reading, writing, and socializing across class lines" (Theophano 167). Moreover, because Kasper is a woman, it's socially acceptable for other women to seek her culinary expertise.

Unlike Pam's friend, Kasper recognizes the need to define the technical term (slurry) with the user in mind. Information designer and technical communicator David Farkas explains that this teaching stems from a user-centered focus: "Understanding your audience and adapting to their background and information needs is central to writing procedures, as it is to all forms of communication" (125). Indeed, Kasper grasps that her verbal instructions need to break down steps and processes for an audience with varying levels of expertise. Kasper incorporates this awareness into her response by utilizing simplicity to "find the core" of the idea and ensure that Pam and listeners can follow along (Heath and Heath 28). Analogies, say Chip Heath and Dan Heath, assist us in understanding unfamiliar ideas "because they invoke concepts that you already know" and take an assets-based approach to instructions (57). For example, using a simple concept, Thanksgiving gravy, Kasper defines what a slurry is and how to make one:

> It's a method of thickening that involves just liquid and the thickener, so it could be flour and water, it could be cornstarch and water, and…what you want to do is always add the liquid to the cornstarch or the flour or the arrowroot or the potato starch rather than the starch to the water because then you can never get the lumps out. You see? And I mean, I

> make a slurry every Thanksgiving because I always thicken my Thanksgiving gravy with one. (“Episode 339” 00:45:23-58)

Kasper’s instruction demonstrates her expertise by following a natural form of conversational recipe telling embedded in storytelling (Norrick 2744). She begins her lesson in the first person (“what I know about a slurry”), then she switches to the second person and imperative clauses for the cooking instructions (“what you want to do”). Finally, she returns to the first person (“I make a slurry”) to conclude. But Kasper’s closing statement, “I make a slurry every Thanksgiving,” provides a simple, concrete connection to slurries and aims to restore Pam’s confidence by using a comparison that makes “it possible to understand a compact message” (Heath and Heath 57). Because callers reach out to Kasper from across the US, it’s safe for her to assume that they celebrate holidays like Thanksgiving, which leads her to deduce that Pam has probably made gravy before. And she was right. Pam says, “Oh my God, I do, too. I didn’t even know it” (“Episode 339” 00:45:58-00:46:00). Through Kasper’s teaching, Pam learns a name for a technique she’s probably been using for years, and she gets a confidence boost as a homemaker.

At the end of the call, Pam says, “That was a lot easier to understand” (“Episode 339” 00:46:34-35). Kasper continues demonstrating the simplicity of making a slurry, telling listeners she puts “the flour in the bottom of a tall drinking glass, and then I add some cold water, and I beat it with a fork” rather than using a food processor (00:46:04-08). By emphasizing simplicity, Kasper draws on women’s expertise of ordinary, everyday home cooking to teach, whereas Pam’s friend makes slurries unnecessarily complex, which is not ideal when you’re the one responsible for dinner every day.

Rhetorical Strategy #3: Sensory Feedback

"The difference between a *rhetorical* and *living* kitchen," says Abarca, "lies in the kind of sensory knowledge used to operate within such a space" (*Voices* 55; emphasis original). Throughout her ethnographic study of working-class Mexican and Mexican-American women, Abarca and her interviewees cook together as a way for her to embody her research and experience first-hand how the kitchen is "a site of knowledge and empowerment" (5). It's this embodied learning experience that radio attempts to remediate. Kasper often employs the third rhetorical strategy—sensory feedback—to teach listeners about foodways and uses analogies to enhance these instructions. This section examines how Kasper employs on-air tasting to teach listeners to enjoy food and drinking in an embodied way. Through incorporating smell and taste in addition to sight into her feminist cooking text, Kasper works against the division of the senses and rejects the mind/body split to compose multisensory texts that teach listeners to develop their expertise and value ways of knowing from a multicultural point of view.

Additionally, Kasper's sensory feedback incorporates multimodal listening, which multimodal pedagogy scholar Steph Ceraso defines as "the practice of attending to the sensory, contextual, and material aspects of a sonic event" (*Sounding* 6). Ceraso goes on to say that the "goal of multimodal listening, which relies heavily on a conscious, heightened awareness of the body, is to reeducate people to attend to how the senses that they have access to work together to shape their unique embodied experiences" (7). Indeed, radio cooking shows must incorporate sensory feedback in some way to teach listeners how to tune in to the kitchen space. Without the ability to see the host, using the senses is vital; however, the main difference between early homemaker radio shows and *The Splendid Table* is that sensory feedback became a way to shift

programs from fulfilling a domestic need to raising listeners' consciousness, a central component of feminist pedagogy, by introducing them to unfamiliar foods and customs.

Before we "listen" to Kasper, we need to hear from the radio homemakers. "Since preparing food is a daily occurrence in most households," says Birkby, "the radio homemakers have always made menu ideas and recipes a part of each program" (*Neighboring* 20). Their shows gave women in rural areas a way to learn how to cook. For example, on the early homemaker radio show *Kitchen-Klatter* (1946), host Leanna Driftmier broadcast live cooking demos from her kitchen table. One of her daughters often made the recipe while Driftmier read it over the air (Birkby, *Neighboring* 93). The sounds of baking, like a whisk hitting a bowl, gave listeners the feeling of being in the kitchen alongside the Driftmier women, but the emphasis remained utilitarian as Driftmier provided exact recipes:

> A half-cake of quick yeast or compressed yeast dissolved in two tablespoons of warm water and one-half teaspoon of sugar. That's two tablespoons of warm water, half a teaspoon of sugar, and a half a cake of compressed yeast. Add this to one-half cup of thick, warm potato water. Add this to one-half cup of thick, warm potato water. Then, add one-half cup of melted butter. If you want to skimp on the butter, you can use a fourth of a cup of melted butter. One-fourth of a cup of melted butter. One-fourth of a cup of honey. Use sugar if you have it, but if you don't have it, use one-fourth of a cup of honey. One egg, well-beaten. One small bottle of maraschino cherries, chopped. One cup of pecans, and the lady who sent this recipe said do use pecans. They're better than anything else. One cup of pecans. Two and a fourth cups of flour, or enough to make a soft dough. That's two and a fourth cups of flour. (00:11:25–12:53)

Significantly, Driftmier repeats the ingredients and quantities, but what you can't see in the transcript are her pauses. After giving the ingredient, she holds for a few seconds so listeners can write it down. Like the cooking schools established in the early twentieth century, homemaker radio programs prioritized teaching women basic techniques. Similarly, Kasper uses sensory feedback to instruct, but the central purpose shifts from providing basic cooking skills to educating listeners in a way that, through incorporating multiple senses, shows how "mundane experiences [like cooking] can be transformed into aesthetic experiences" (Ceraso, *Sounding* 35). In these moments, radio remediates in-person recipe and food sharing to reconstruct a connection between the senses, which teaches embodied culinary expertise. Though these moments occur throughout episodes, they're accentuated during on-air tastings.

Over the years, tea expert Bill Waddington made regular appearances and led in-studio tastings using what equates to think-aloud protocol.[69] A method used in usability testing, think-aloud protocol asks participants to say their thoughts aloud while performing a task (Howard 183). Though commonly used to study "individuals with varying levels of expertise" in a variety of situations (i.e., cooking an unfamiliar dish or learning basic cooking skills), Kasper narrates what she sees, smells, and tastes not to demonstrate what she's struggling with as a user but to verbalize her experience in a simple way and share expertise so listeners can learn about what she's tasting (Fonteyn et al. 430).

In doing so, *The Splendid Table* becomes a feminist cooking text that prioritizes teaching listeners about foodways beyond the US and is aware that an audience of "sensing, nerve-filled, responsive bodies" is listening (Ceraso, *Sounding* 43). Kasper continues incorporating foodways and adds sensory feedback throughout episodes to teach listeners how to use their senses in a

[69] In the seventeen episodes analyzed for this chapter, Waddington joins Kasper in-studio three times ("Episode 99"; "Episode 229"; "Episode 383"). The appearances occurred in 2000, 2002, and 2008, respectively.

way that rejects "the binarism of higher [sight and sound] and lower [smell, taste, touch] senses" (Abarca, *Voices* 77). For example, on-air tea tastings with Waddington begin with Kasper inviting him to provide context about the tea. Here, Waddington introduces Kasper and listeners to dragon well, a green tea from China, and provides political context:

> **Waddington:** Most of that tea would be available through the Chinese government because the tea industry was controlled by the communist government for many, many decades. But about ten years ago, capitalism started to creep in, and people who have been growing tea for their own pleasure for generations started to make it available outside of their local villages. (00:23:33–24:47)

Similar to the way Kasper teaches listeners about Mexican-American foodways when caller Kate asks about pozole, Waddington educates listeners about tea's political association.

After the context, the tasting begins with Kasper describing what she sees, but Waddington quickly directs her to focus on scent:

> **Kasper:** You have these white porcelain, small cups with lids on them, and then there's like a sawtooth edge.
>
> **Waddington:** Smell it first.
>
> **Kasper:** This is amazing. This is green. I should explain this [the tea leaves] looks like very thick grass. It smells like toasted barley and the ocean, and oh my goodness, you know how the sea smells at high tide? Wow. That's amazing. The last thing: if I were blindfolded, I would never know that was a tea. ("Episode 383" 00:24:19-49)

Notably, Kasper uses analogies to describe her experience, continuing to incorporate the second rhetorical strategy so listeners can connect the look of the tea leaves to something familiar (grass) and the tea's scent to the ocean's brininess. Kasper crafts a multisensory listening experience that aids listeners in understanding the complexities of an unfamiliar green tea. Next, Kasper continues by describing the tea's color, but she quickly moves on to taste:

> **Kasper:** Okay, now it's a clear, pale gold liquid. Oh my. It almost has a slight saltiness to it and a toasted quality—tastes very green, if you know what I mean. It's green tea, but I mean it tastes fresh. It has that fresh quality to it. But the other part of it is it's very mellow, and it just reminds me of the ocean. ("Episode 383" 00:24:51-00:25:18)

Again, Kasper mentions the ocean, creating a comparison for listeners to understand and incorporate a narrative description. A key feature of conversational recipe telling, using food narratives on radio shows develops the host's ethos to, as Birkby explains, build community by using "sincerity, enthusiasm, optimism, and compassion" and connect with listeners to build parasocial relationships (*Neighboring* 320). Even when providing sensory feedback, Kasper teaches listeners through simple comparisons like grass and the ocean but emphasizing the senses utilizes embodied knowledge that is essential to sharing her expertise.

"So I Would Say": How Men Challenge Women's Ethos and Domestic Expertise

So far, we've seen how Kasper and guests use foodways, simplicity, and sensory feedback as rhetorical strategies to teach listeners about food, cooking, and develop expertise. The listeners' questions analyzed in the previous section come from women. But what kinds of questions do male callers ask? And what happens to Kasper's ethos as a culinary expert when

men seek her advice? When Kenneth calls from Orlando, a theme around the type of food and cooking men ask about emerges:

> **Kenneth:** My tailgate group has challenged me to come up with something interesting for our next home football game. We're playing a team whose mascot is the thundering herd as in Buffalo. So I was wondering what kind of ideas you might have for tailgate on a grill with buffalo meat other than just making buffalo burgers. ("Episode 494" 00:33:47–34:13)

Regarding the topic, questions like this one about buffalo meat from Kenneth perpetuate gender roles that proliferated cooking instruction in the twentieth century. Cookbooks "described men as hearty eaters fond of meat, strong flavors, and coffee" in contrast to women who enjoyed "frilly, fussy food" like "dainty little canapes of smoked salmon on crackers and circles of toast spread with a mixture of cream cheese and strawberry jam" (Neuhaus 77, 79). For example, the sample menus in *Betty Crocker's New Picture Cook Book* (1961) make this gendered distinction based on the type of event. Dinner menus feature roast beef, lamb, or pork, whereas "delicious luncheons" avoid red meat and prioritize salads and impressive desserts like baked Alaska (41). Though the menus don't explicitly state attendees' gender, readers can assume that women are the guests at a luncheon since men would be at work and dinners are designed to serve mixed company.

More importantly, the feminine and masculine categorization depicted in Kenneth's inquiry extended into cooking spaces. Like cookbooks, authors "linked men and meat" to cooking outside, making barbecuing masculine since meat is the featured food (Neuhaus 192-3).[70] As food and gender studies scholar Emily Contois demonstrates in her analysis of food

[70] See Chapter 4 for more on how cookbooks complicate gender, food, and the outdoors.

blogs, these distinctions pervade, defining masculine foods as "spicy, hearty, and savory flavors, and hefty portions consumed with gusto" that revolve around outdoor cooking (246). Because of the gendered food discourse established in cookbooks, I argue that male callers sustain this stereotype and, as we'll see, challenge Kasper's expertise developed by the situated ethos of cooking meat.

Sharon Crowley says situated ethos recognizes the power relationship between the rhetor and the audience (109). For Kasper, differential power relations arise with male callers. Notably, in the episodes I analyzed, women callers didn't ask about meat. Instead, as we saw in the previous sections, they asked for a specific recipe (Mexican pozole) or wanted to learn basic skills (how to make a slurry). While Kasper might suggest a dish that includes beef or chicken, it wasn't the caller's purpose to discuss meat. Instead, the inquiries about meat come from men.[71] How men engage in conversational recipe telling reflects the way Kasper maintains her ethos as a cooking expert, especially when cooking meat, because "a person's ethos, as well as the site from which that ethos emerges, precedes the rhetor" (Enoch 77). Thus, Kasper must emphasize the ethos she already has when she answers questions from male callers.

To illustrate, let's look at how one caller, Rob, challenges Kasper's ethos and expertise. Though still utilizing conversational recipe telling, the opening exchange immediately reinforces gendered cooking spaces, drawing on outdoors' situated ethos:

Rob: Some friends of mine run a supper club out here in New York, where we go around to different lofts and apartments and whatnot and host a big

[71] Of the sixteen male callers represented in the episodes I analyzed, three asked Kasper meat-specific questions. See "Episode 386: Islamic Kitchens," "Episode 424: Hmong Kitchen," and "Episode 494: Plays with Food." Outside of meat, male callers seem to respect Kasper's expertise; however, the number of female callers (forty-two) compared to men supports the claim that "daily domestic cooking should be women's responsibility, while men should have a different relationship to cooking" (Inness, *Dinner Roles* 18).

> dinner party for people, and they're having one in my backyard in Queens. So we were discussing the menu, and the theme was rustic Italian barbecue, and I have this great smoker, so I said why don't we try to smoke some boar, some cinghiale. ("Episode 424" 0:35:43-0:36:09)

This opening exchange communicates gendered cooking roles in two ways. First, Rob supports the notion dictated in twentieth-century cooking literature that the day-to-day cooking work falls on women whereas men cook on special occasions. In "defining male cookery as a special event, cookbook authors and editors also defined everyday cookery as women's work" (Neuhaus 75). Here, Rob draws on the ethos established by the reason he's cooking (a supper club event). Second, Rob signals gendered expertise within feminine and masculine cooking spaces. He's hosting a "barbecue" and using his "smoker," which reinforces men's outdoor cooking prowess, maintains women's place inside the home, and furthers the gendered cooking construct that men "perform the 'important' special cooking associated with grilling food outdoors" (Inness, *Dinner Roles* 28). Although Rob tries to rely on his situated ethos, the opening follows Kasper's general implementation of conversational recipe telling in that she invites him into the conversation when she says, "what do you want to talk about?" ("Episode 424" 0:35:42). Kasper uses the same opening whether the caller is female or male, which is her attempt to make the caller-audience feel at ease when they ask their question. This move functions as invitational rhetoric that gives the caller space to "accept the invitation offered by the rhetor by listening to understand the rhetor's perspective and then presenting their own" that builds "appreciation, value, and a sense of equality" between Kasper and callers (Foss and Griffin 366).

In this case, Rob uses the opening to challenge Kasper rather than listen; however, he also takes the opportunity to acknowledge Kasper's Italian culinary expertise. Though he calls

under the premise that he needs her advice, it quickly becomes apparent that he wants Kasper to validate his culinary expertise. He's calling about "rustic Italian barbecue," and he shows his knowledge while appealing to Kasper's culinary background by using "cinghiale," the Italian for boar. Indeed, the Italian establishes the purpose of their recipe telling as "engaging in expert talk on a topic of mutual interest" (Norrick 2748-49). But "expert talk" is supposed to show that participants work "as co-members" of their shared expertise and invite them into the conversation (2753). Instead, Rob wants to lead the conversation.

Thus, the call with Rob differs from the calls from women mentioned in the previous sections. For example, Pam doesn't present herself as an expert when asking about slurries. It wasn't until Kasper connected slurries to Thanksgiving that she saw that she knew what they were all along. On the other hand, Rob recognizes Kasper's expertise and uses it to turn the focus of the conversation back to himself whenever possible. For instance, Rob poses himself as an expert by mentioning the meat's internal temperature:

Rob: And the research I had done online indicated that you had to get it to like 180 degrees for a certain amount of time to break down the collagen.

Kasper: But it's more like 160-165.

Rob: Oh, Interesting. Okay.

Kasper: It's gonna give you a very different result.

Rob: Interesting. So I got it to 180 in my smoker, and this was much better as a shoulder, but it was still much drier than I would have liked.

Kasper: First of all, this has got to be a very expensive venture that you're going into.

Rob: It's been an expensive couple of tests so far. So that's why I don't want to do any more tests before we get going on this.

Kasper: Yeah, alright, two things. First of all, the leg is gonna be really lean, especially on a wild animal.

Rob: Yeah.

Kasper: But the shoulder always has more marbling even on game, and game is always generally leaner than the domesticated version of the animal. Two things. First of all, you want to cook it really, really, really slow. Secondly, 160 165.

Rob: Okay.

Kasper: It's a very good thing to aim at, at the center of this baby, though, you know, you don't want to have this be under that temperature. And if it's a little safer to take it a little further, you know, if you want to be sure that it's that temperature right down to the center of the meat because this is a blocky, thick piece of meat.

Rob: I see. ("Episode 424" 00:36:58-00:38:15)

Instead of accepting Kasper's note that the temperature should be lower and moving the conversation forward from there, Rob dismisses Kasper by saying "interesting" and continues telling her what he did, invalidating her domestic expertise in favor of his online research. Rob talks almost as much as Kasper does throughout the conversation, attempting to validate his experience even though his first few attempts were "drier" than he wanted. Notably, he doesn't view this dryness as a failure and uses the practice rounds to demonstrate he's knowledgeable about the meat and simply seeks a bit of guidance. Overall, the exchange reinscribes gendered

power through its association with masculinity, and men's cooking texts continually emphasize that meat is masculine. Steak, in particular, is "the ultimate male food," and "the ultimate method of cooking the steak (or other foods) is outdoor cookery" (Inness, *Dinner Roles* 27). In general, grilling, or in this case, smoking, is a way to display masculinity, and Rob reinforces that because Kasper is a woman, she must not know how to cook meat.

After emphasizing the internal temperature again when she says "secondly, 160, 165," Kasper asks a series of follow-up questions about the brine:

Kasper: But the other thing is, how have you been brining it? How long have you been brining it?

Rob: I've been brining it for, you know, it's pretty much maybe fourteen hours on the first two…

Kasper: How much does the shoulder weigh?

Rob: About eight pounds.

Kasper: And how thick is it?

Rob: I'd say at least eight inches. (00:38:15–35)

Indeed, follow-up questions, as we saw during Kasper's conversation about pozole, are a standard conversational recipe telling strategy. She uses them to give callers the most accurate advice possible and educate listeners beyond a single cooking technique, but here, they also function to reestablish her domestic expertise. From an invitational rhetoric perspective, the questions allow Kasper to value her knowledge "as well as the audience because it communicates that they [Kasper] are not willing to allow the audience [Rob] to violate their integrity" (Foss and Griffin 370). Although Rob rejects the invitation to participate as an equal

co-member, Kasper maintains her ethos with the larger audience through follow-up questions that show she knows about brining.

Yet again, Rob moves to dismiss and challenge Kasper. In response to the brining time, Kasper suggests cutting it down:

Kasper: All right, generally speaking, I mean, there's a lot of variations of this. I'd cut down your brining time.

Rob: Really? (00:38:38-45).

Here, "really" is an acknowledgment token, but women's acknowledgment tokens show they're listening and don't disregard Kasper's expertise. For instance, Kate shows active listening when Kasper explains soaking corn in lime by saying things like "yeah" and "interesting," but she doesn't use her acknowledgment tokens to interrupt Kasper, whereas Rob does ("Episode 229" 00:45:05–24). Hearing his skepticism, Kasper moves on to ask him what's in the brine, and Rob uses her question to demonstrate his expertise once again:

Kasper: Tell me about your brine. What's in your brine?

Rob: I was doing…I had read that a cup of salt per gallon of brine was the way to go. But if you're using kosher salt that you needed actually more because it's fluffier. So I would say probably two cups to each gallon of water.

Kasper: You overdid the salt. That's one thing.

Rob: Interesting. (00:38:47–39:05).

Like the previous exchange regarding temperature, Kasper immediately sees and points out part of the problem, that there's too much salt, and she's met with another "interesting" and quick dismissal. Rob finds it necessary to maintain his masculinity by demonstrating that he knows

how to smoke meat and cook wild game in each interaction. Interestingly, the only questions he poses are the doubtful "really" statements. He called Kasper to ask a question, yet she is the one posing questions, reinforcing a gender dynamic where the male caller maintains authority.

Significantly, Rob uses the final exchange to maintain this gendered expertise and ends the call by saying, "We're gonna sauce that as well, which will help add some moisture back in," which operates as another attempt to seem more knowledgeable than Kasper (00:40:31-34). Even though Rob called for Kasper's advice, his quick dismissal indicated throughout the conversation with the words "interesting" and "really," and his continual reference to his expertise perpetuates the stereotype that women's cooking knowledge of meat is naturally inferior to men's. Even if Kasper doesn't regain her expert status with Rob, she maintains her ethos with listeners. Before this final exchange, she summarizes her cooking instructions:

> **Kasper:** I think here's the deal. If you over-brine too long or you have too much salt in the brine, it's actually drawing moisture from the leg, and if you go too far, you can end up having it dry out. This is what I would try. I would try to stick with, let's say, one and a quarter cup of kosher salt to the gallon of water. And I would suggest that you brine one hour per pound of meat… But the other thing is, you smoke it slowly… But don't take it beyond about 165… If you can, do that and hold it at that temperature until it's 165 all the way through. (00:39:15–40:16)

Overall, Kasper's performance of expertise changes when interacting with callers like Rob in that she doesn't rely on the three rhetorical strategies (incorporating foodways, teaching with analogies, and using sensory feedback). Instead, she reverts to the repetition that earlier radio homemakers like Leanna Driftmier used to ensure general listeners receive instruction, providing

the meat temperature four times and the amount of salt twice to maintain her ethos when her expertise is challenged. Additionally, her strategy here differs from conversations with women because she needs to emphasize she knows how to cook meat to counter gendered cooking roles. Providing exact temperatures and measurements rather than teaching with analogies does just that.

VI. Conclusion: Some Nuances of Feminist Cooking Texts

In this chapter, I've defined *feminist cooking texts* as media that circulates cooking knowledge while disrupting gendered ideologies constructed through food. In feminist cooking texts, domestic experts create an embodied, multisensory experience to preserve local foodways and share kitchen epistemologies. Using conversational recipe telling, which invites listeners to engage in "expert talk" through questions and co-telling, food radio shows and podcasts like *The Splendid Table* employ three rhetorical strategies: incorporating foodways, teaching with analogies, and sensory feedback (Norrick). Central to feminist cooking texts is highlighting foodways to incorporate food's cultural, political, and social history.

Additionally, feminist cooking texts fulfill a need for domestic education and use analogies to keep instructions simple. By invoking familiar concepts, domestic experts break down cooking terminology to "find the core" of an idea to teach in a way that's memorable for the student (Heath and Heath 28). Lastly, in utilizing a multisensory approach to teaching, feminist cooking texts reject "the binarism of higher and lower senses" in favor of an embodied kitchen epistemology (Abarca, *Voices* 77). And according to Steph Ceraso, food science research "can serve as a heuristic for pedagogical experimentation in multimodal composition and rhetoric courses" ("Sound Never"). By emphasizing the senses, feminist cooking texts are sites of empowerment that value multiple ways of knowing.

But to fully understand feminist cooking texts, we also need to recognize that these three rhetorical strategies used to disrupt dominant ideologies around gender and food occur within texts that simultaneously reinscribe them. For example, during Lynne Rossetto Kasper's conversation with caller Rob, she struggles to maintain her status as a domestic expert because he asks about food typically deemed masculine: meat. Indeed, twentieth-century cooking literature often portrayed women as inferior cooks when it came to meat (Inness; Neuhaus). Yet, women have historically used cookbooks, a traditionally feminine platform, to subtly subvert ideologies and contribute to community reform. Though I've focused on radio and one food podcast, feminist cooking texts' rhetorical strategies apply to all food media, from Instagram posts to community cookbooks. In the next chapter, I examine another media, community cookbooks, and focus on how feminist cooking texts subvert gendered outdoor cooking while constructing a regional identity for the Junior League of Denver.

Chapter 4

Constructing Regional Identity in Community Cookbooks:

The Constitutive Rhetoric of the Junior League of Denver's Fundraising Texts

> In the pantheon of women's organizations, none conjures up images of social status as does the Junior League of America.
>
> —Paula C. Barnes, "The Junior League Eleven"

> The Junior League of Denver, Incorporated (founded in 1918), is an organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable.
>
> —Junior League of Denver, "Mission"

I. "Cook, Connect, and Celebrate…Colorado Style!": How Locations in Junior League of Denver Cookbooks Construct a Regional Identity

When you pick up a cookbook for the first time, do you read it cover to cover? Or do you scan the table of contents, flip to the desserts section, and immediately identify which cake you'll bake first? If you're the second kind of reader, you're using the cookbook to do precisely what it was designed for: cooking. However, cookbooks are more than technical texts that teach users how to make good food—they're ideologically constructed artifacts that perform feminine, spatial, individual, and community identities. Take *Centennial Celebrations: A Colorado Cookbook*, for example. Before recipes for pizza and pasta, the cookbook presents photos of kids making pizza at a Denver museum's teaching kitchen alongside a short history:

> In 1975, the Junior League of Denver adopted the newly created A Museum for Children (now known as the Children's Museum of Denver at Marisco Campus) as a two-year community project. JLD volunteers organized classes and workshops for children,

> created and staffed a specialty gift shop, helped organize a benefit event, and awarded a grant to the museum. In the mid-1980s, the League once again got involved with the museum at its new location along the Platte River. League volunteers worked in partnership with the museum staff to design and test a comprehensive volunteer program. Today, after a large expansion in 2015, the Children's Museum of Denver at Marisco Campus contains more than nine acres of hands-on exhibits where children can learn through play. (109)

Here, we learn about how the Junior League of Denver (JLD), a women's volunteer organization, contributed to a local museum geared toward children's literacy. By volunteering and funding the museum through a grant, the JLD acts as a museum sponsor, and there's an underlying premise that the JLD's involvement ensured the museum's continued success. The note seems to say that without the JLD's early support, the museum wouldn't be the learning space it is today. "Sponsors," says Deborah Brandt, "are any agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable, support, teach, and model, as well as recruit, regulate, suppress, or withhold literacy—and gain advantage by it in some way" (19). Brandt goes on to say that "sponsors deliver the ideological freight that must be borne for access to what they have," arguing that a critical understanding of sponsorship examines *who* shapes a community's ideologies (21). But how, exactly, do cookbooks published by women's organizations "hail an audience or specific identity into being" (Presswood 45)?

Such cookbooks and their introductory notes, or what Lisa Mastrangelo calls "extras" (e.g., local advertisements, poems, and aphorisms), use facts about the location to signify the creators' values ("Community" 79). The cover-to-cover reader might engage this content during the first read, but it's likely skimmed and forgotten during cooking. However, as this chapter

argues, ignoring these notes is problematic because even ordinary texts such as cookbooks rhetorically construct people, places, and memories. So what does the children's museum history say about the women who compiled the cookbook and the memories they use to construct a regional identity? According to William C. Kurlinkus, when we study memory, we must ask, "who wants whom to remember what, why, and how?" (422). Thus, in this chapter, I analyze JLD cookbooks, asking: How might the layout and design of such community cookbooks contribute to their ability to construct, circulate, and maintain a regional identity? What do the cookbooks subvert or reinscribe about femininity expressed through gendered cooking ideologies? And how are community cookbooks a "repository for memory" (Holtzman 370)?

By asking these questions, this chapter seeks to understand how community cookbooks, the recipe collections commonly curated by churches and social organizations that are place- and memory-based, memorialize locations and women's philanthropy. First, I review scholarship on community cookbooks and location-based rhetorics to establish how rhetoric and writing studies scholars generally analyze community cookbooks. Then, I use two JLD cookbooks (*Colorado Cache* and *Centennial Celebrations*) as a case study to interrogate the identity that, as the mission statement prefacing this chapter indicates, centers around "developing the potential of women" and who that identity excludes. Through examining the standard practice of including contributors' names alongside recipes used in community cookbooks and the inclusion of historical notes and event menus, I consider how such texts become souvenirs that simultaneously dismantle gendered ideologies surrounding who cooks and reinscribe the privileged identity associated with women's clubs like the JLD. To conclude, I suggest how additional research on community cookbooks as memory texts (Eves) and technologies of memory (Kurlinkus) can contribute to understanding how regional identities form.

II. Literature Review: Constructing and Memorializing Regional Identity Through Community Cookbooks

"If we consider those issues where regionalism is largely generated as a *topos* in the public sphere," says rhetorician Jenny Rice, "we may find ourselves talking about food, labor, migration patterns, consumption, or land" (204). Indeed, community cookbooks, "also known as regional, charitable, and fund-raising cookbooks," are one such way to study how food constructs regions (Bower 1). As historian Megan J. Elias explains, these community-generated cooking texts are generally "compiled by women of middle-sized towns or small cities, congregations, or clubs" to raise money for things like repairing local buildings (17). Elias goes on to say that because the cookbook organizers collected recipes from within the community, these texts represent the group's "accumulated cooking knowledge and tastes" located throughout the US and that the "American cuisine constructed in these books was not static, but moved in trends across regions simultaneously, uniting regions even in the process of transformation" occurring after the Civil War (18; 23). For example, a community cookbook like *Centennial Celebrations* might make its way from Denver, CO to Buffalo, NY where home cooks begin to understand Colorado through the JLD's representation of locations across the state featured alongside recipes.[72] Therefore, it's essential to critically examine community cookbooks to understand who these texts exclude from the JLD's place-based memory.

Although the definition of community cookbooks provided here implies that these texts represent various geographic areas and communities, cookbook analyses published in rhetoric and writing studies tend to focus on how food constructs a regional identity and community

[72] The locations here represent places I've lived as well as cities with Junior League chapters that have published cookbooks.

literacy in the South (Mecklenburg-Faenger; Tippen; Walden).[73] For example, Sarah Walden argues that "southern cookbooks in part *constitute*, rather than merely *represent*, southern identity" (83; emphasis original). In Southern domestic writing, taste "perpetuates material preferences and maintains a social hierarchy while it obfuscates the contributions of slave labor to a growing plantation economy" (84). Significantly, Walden points out that domestic writing, which includes community cookbooks, serves multiple purposes:

> to educate young, inexperienced housewives; to maintain class status; to perpetuate the necessity of a planter elite despite composing only an extreme minority of the population; to rally a disparate group around a central cause; and to promote one's cultivated values as essential to a victorious region ready to write them off as a threat to national unity (112).

Though other cooking texts, like the Instagram posts discussed in Chapter 2 or the radio programs in Chapter 3, serve similar purposes, I find that community cookbooks (because of they are produced and connected to specific regions and communities) accentuate class status explicitly linked to regional identity.

Perhaps the focus on the South stems from the post-war cookbook publishing boom where women used cookbooks to raise funds for "victims of the war—orphans, widows, the wounded, veterans" (Longone 18). To be sure, community cookbook scholarship does extend to other geographic regions and includes a history of how community cookbooks function to promote women's literacy. For instance, Janet Theophano emphasizes cookbooks are more than just instructions for cooking—they're social artifacts that women used to create communities, maintain identities, and learn to read and write. In her analysis of three cookbooks, Theophano

[73] As of March 2022, the South is the only region represented in a monograph on cookbooks and identity in the field of rhetoric. See Walden.

argues that the cooking texts "allude to meals and events, people and places, success and failures, joys and sorrows, lives and deaths of those loved and known. In sum, they represent the life worlds—past and present—of their creators" (83).[74] By recognizing the multiplicity of these texts, I argue that studying community cookbooks reveals how organizations, represented by cookbook compilers, circulate what Kurlinkus calls "god memories," the "complex ideologies, bound in epideictic pride, reduced to ideal moments that answer the question: 'Who are we?'" (423). As we'll see, for the JLD, it's the feminization of the outdoors as a space where "urban sophistication meets outdoor adventure" that define their members and a Western Junior League regional identity (*Centennial* 13).

By analyzing regional identity in community cookbooks outside of the South, we can learn more about how women shape regional identity and place-based rhetorics across the US. Thus, I further women's cookbook rhetoric scholarship by leaving the South and the nineteenth century to explore the Rocky Mountain Region in the west and the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. But before we travel to places around Colorado, it's essential to understand how some community cookbooks construct identity via memorialization. According to Rosalyn Collings Eves, community cookbooks memorialize individuals by naming recipes after them (e.g., Wilma's Skillet Hash and Aunt Bee's Hot Stuff Chicken), which can "encourage active remembrance" through associating food with an individual (286-7). In doing so, community cookbooks engage embodied memories evoked by cooking, smelling, tasting, and eating/sharing the food named for this individual, turning a written recipe into a multimodal text experienced

[74] Theophano analyzes a commercial cookbook that functions like a community cookbook by attributing recipes "to individuals from across the nation" (53); a Jewish community cookbook from Rochester, NY that includes "modern" recipes like Tuna Salad Casserole that followed Jewish dietary rules and "celebrated American pluralism while displaying the community's own ethnic, religious, and national identities" (68); and a community cookbook compiled by women living in a concentration camp during World War II who handwrote their recipes and used food to defy "their captors by imagining another world, past and future, but not the present" (79).

sensorially. The names in the cookbooks Eves analyzes[75] often represent female family members (like Aunt Bee) and ultimately demonstrate that recipe sharing continues to be an embedded discourse between women.[76] Although JLD cookbooks name recipes after people, they're usually Colorado celebrities.[77] Memorializing people in community cookbooks is noteworthy; however, this chapter demonstrates that the JLD chooses to emphasize location rather than individuals, making them unique regional cooking texts that can circulate as "memory texts" for readers that are current or former residents and JLD members. In doing so, they create a collective memory of Colorado that can be transported beyond the state, and the JLD shapes and controls these memories.

Similarly, Mastrangelo examines how community cookbooks "function as literate practices of a community" ("Community" 73). Reading the cookbook's recipes for "social, textual, geographical, and historical clues," Mastrangelo argues that readers can garner how people use written language in their everyday lives and understand the community through descriptions of the local food (74). For Mastrangelo, the community cookbook's emphasis on local recipes extends the text beyond a space for reading and writing and becomes a way to learn about the people who belong to a community through interpreting their food practices. In examining JLD cookbooks, I found that the local, represented in recipes with ingredients grown

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[75] *The Black Family Reunion Cookbook: Recipes and Food Memories*; *The Black Family Dinner Quilt Cookbook: Health Conscious Recipes and Food Memories*; and *Celebrating Our Mothers' Kitchens: Treasured Memories and Tested Recipes* were published by the National Council of Negro Women. Eves argues that the purpose of the three texts is to memorialize food and the stories that accompany them to help construct "a collective memory of what it means to be an African-American woman in the twentieth century" (287).

[76] See Chapter 2 for examples about recipe sharing as embedded discourse.

[77] For instance, the only recipe in *Centennial Celebrations* that uses a person's name is former Denver Broncos running back "Reggie Rivers' Football Sunday Salmon Salad" (20). *Colorado Cache* names recipes after Denver activist and food writer Katie Stapleton. Though perhaps a less familiar name outside of Colorado than a former NFL player, Stapleton is described as "a philanthropist and radio cooking show host" and was involved in creating *Colorado Cache* ("DU's Cookery"). The cookbook committee thanks Stapleton "for her advice and support" and recognizes her contribution in seven recipe titles (5). The small memorialization of individuals led me to identify memorializing locations as the cookbooks' priority.

in Colorado like "Peaches Brulee" [sic] (*Colorado Cache* 57) and "Grilled Peaches with Whipped Ricotta Fig Toast" (*Centennial Celebrations* 24) and mentioned throughout the cookbooks within notes and callouts, defines their sophisticated urban outdoor identity via white women belonging to the upper-middle class.[78]

Though food choice might seem unassuming, Pierre Bourdieu calls attention to how food depicts class, arguing that it is a central component of cultural capital, which he explains as "the distinctive forms of knowledge and ability that students acquire—whether at home, at school, or in relations between the two—from their training in cultural disciplines" (xviii). Here, Bourdieu emphasizes that multiple sites construct cultural capital, including more traditional forms of teaching like schools and cultural locations (museums, historical landmarks, etc.) and material objects like food. Further expanding Bourdieu's cultural capital, Peter Naccarato and Kathleen LeBesco introduce "culinary capital" to more clearly "make sense of food as an economic and cultural commodity, to demonstrate how a society's food practices function to circulate and challenge prevailing values and ideologies, and to understand how this is connected to the work of creating and sustaining a sense of Self" (1-2). Naccarato and LeBesco see culinary capital as a way to "understand how and why certain foods and food-related practices connote, and by extension, confer status and power on those who know about and enjoy them" (3). In analyzing the "extras" used throughout JLD cookbooks (introductory notes, historical context about places, and event menus), the food-related practices construct a what a feminine outdoor identity entails.

Undoubtedly, locations, or places, are a significant aspect of forming a shared identity. But more importantly, community cookbooks, as stated above, are regional texts.[79] In defining

[78] Peaches from Palisade, CO are a summer favorite and are sold at farmers' markets across the state and local grocery stores.

[79] For sources specifically on community cookbooks as regional texts, see Bower; Elias; Fleitz; Longone; Mastrangelo; Theophano; Tippen; and Walden.

region, cultural studies scholar Douglas Reichert Powell explains that they "are a particular sort of place, a kind of meta-place that emerges from analyses and descriptions of how specific sites within a group relate to each other" (66). Furthermore, Powell stipulates that regions don't have flags—a state or city is not a region (4). So while it might seem that Junior League of *Denver* cookbooks fall outside of this definition because of their focus on a city, they represent public memory for Junior League (JL) women and the Western region more broadly. Their cookbooks are "rich, complicated, and dynamic cultural" texts that convey "how the places that make up the larger region are understood" (6; 66). More commonly, rhetoricians studying public memory examine what Blair, Dickinson, and Ott call "memory places," the "particular kinds of places more closely associated with public memory than others (like museums, preservation sites, battlefields, memorials)" (24). To explore how JLD cookbooks define a regional identity that evokes memory places throughout its pages, let us now turn to how I chose and analyzed community cookbooks for this chapter.

III. Method and Methodology: Reading Close Enough to Taste Colorado

When I began thinking about what I call *cooking texts*—any media, including videos posted on Instagram (Chapter 2) and food radio shows (Chapter 3), that circulates cooking epistemologies—I knew I needed to dedicate a chapter to the cooking text that inspired my research on food and identity in the first place: community cookbooks. Thus, the next question became what community cookbooks would I analyze to understand how cooking texts utilize the active creation and sharing of content alongside learning to rhetorically construct collective identities? As mentioned in the previous section, community cookbooks are compiled by various organizations (women's clubs, churches, universities, and more) across the US, so it was

essential that I choose a specific club and region to focus this chapter. Ultimately, I chose to analyze Junior League community cookbooks because (1) they have a long history of publishing community cookbooks;[80] (2) they utilize the cookbooks as a fundraising tool to support their community programming, thus functioning as a feminist food community;[81] (3) they have quite a following;[82] and (4) their texts are widely accessible via individual JL chapter websites, online retailers, and bookstores.[83]

My initial research revealed ninety-five cookbooks from twenty-nine states across the US easily purchasable online.[84] For a more extensive study of community cookbooks, I would've analyzed all ninety-four texts. However, this dissertation's emphasis on *cooking texts* rather than cookbooks led me to narrow the selection further. To do so, I next identified JL chapters with more than five cookbooks—Colorado (6), Florida (11), Georgia (12), Louisiana (13), Texas (7), and Virginia (7)—discovering that fifty-six cookbooks have been published across six states. Then, because a central goal of this dissertation is to understand how women's cooking texts circulate across time, I turned to publication dates, asking, what JLs published a cookbook in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries? When I collected publication information during the fall of 2020, the most recent JL cookbook's release date was 2019. *Centennial Celebrations* stood out not only by its pub date but also because of the League that published it. Unlike cookbooks

[80] Leagues have consistently published cookbooks since 1950. See the next section in this chapter for a short history of their cookbooks.
[81] In Chapter 2, I define feminist food communities as groups where members use food to construct a collective home baker identity through the active creation and sharing of content, view learning as integral to community participation, and combat social inequalities linked to gender and racism. Ultimately, the JL can be categorized as a feminist food community because, even though the identity they promote reflects a white upper-middle-class status, their philanthropic goals use food to make literacy more accessible throughout Denver.
[82] Pinterest boards, blog posts, and articles in publications like *The New York Times* and *Food and Wine* demonstrate that Junior League cookbooks have a following outside of their respective chapters.
[83] JL cookbooks are commonly sold at local bookstores, but some, like *Centennial Celebrations*, can be purchased in the cookbook section in Barnes & Noble stores throughout Colorado.
[84] See Appendix C for a table of JL cookbooks and this chapter's code lists.

published in FL, GA, LA, TX, and VA, I had a working knowledge of Colorado cuisine and lifestyle[85]. After selecting the West as my region, I wondered how, as anthropologist Jon D. Holtzman says, is the kitchen, or in this case a community cookbook, a "repository for memory" (370)?

To answer these questions and those posed at the beginning of this chapter, I used close reading to perform what rhetorical critic Sonja K. Foss defines as ideological criticism, a rhetorical analysis method that seeks to discover how "the artifact functions for the audience who encounters it and the consequences it has in the world" (248). Like the previous body chapters, I coded the cookbooks using Henry Jenkins' four qualities of participatory culture (low barriers to artistic expression; support for creating and sharing one's creations; informal mentorship; and social connection) to identify what stereotypes *Colorado Cache* and *Centennial Celebrations* use to constitute a shared identity represented through mentioning locations.[86] Ultimately, I discovered that the cookbooks complicate the rugged outdoor-centric persona stereotypical of Colorado and, thus, the Western region while challenging gendered ideologies (e.g., women cook in the kitchen and men cook outside) surrounding who cooks.

IV. Artifact Description: A Brief History of the Junior League and Their Cookbooks

Junior League Background

When Mary Harriman founded the Junior League in 1901, the mission statement said that "young women would be organized to contribute to the community" ("Founder"). But Harriman, the nineteen-year-old daughter of railroad executive E. H. Harriman, and the members during the

[85] As I mentioned in the introduction, I lived in Colorado before beginning my doctoral studies at OU. Perhaps, on some level, I kept narrowing my criteria until I selected Colorado cookbooks. I recognize that my longing for the community and home I left behind probably contributed to this cookbook choice; however, I believe drawing on my knowledge of regional landmarks enhances this chapter's claims about community cookbooks as memory texts. Even though I couldn't physically be in CO, I could experience it through the food and stories told in the JLD's cookbooks, allowing me to develop a stronger connection to place while researching and writing this chapter.
[86] See Chapter 1 for a detailed explanation of how I use Jenkins' definition of participatory culture to analyze texts.

Junior League's (JL) formative years shaped the image that would come to mind. Even in the twenty-first century, when someone mentions the JL, the image conjures white debutantes. Indeed, early "members included daughters from some of America's most well-known families—Whitney, Vanderbilt, Roosevelt, Morgan, Peabody, Reid, Livingston" and gave them a club where they could engage in social reform that aligned with their class status (Gordon and Reische 34). The founding members were involved with the Settlement Movement in New York because, as reported at the first annual meeting in 1902, "it is one to which all the members can lend their sympathies irrespective of church or creed. As is well known this is one of the most efficient movements of the times to aid in the solution of the social and industrial problems of a great city" (33). From the outset, the Junior League chose not to align themselves with religion, and one of their largest early projects was to build a nonsectarian tenement house for working women (40-1). So while the roster of founding members was white upper-class women, their voluntarism has always involved working with the community for social reform.

Furthermore, writing about JLs in Arkansas, Paula C. Barnes says working "with the league—albeit unpaid volunteer work—was acceptable for many women because it brought access to the outside world and the opportunity to satisfy one's personal goals while raising a family" (49). However, since the 1990s, "typical members" in chapters across the US shifted from housewives to unmarried women with advanced degrees and full-time jobs, and the JL, also referred to as the League, has grown into an international women's organization centered around voluntarism, community engagement, and professional development (50; "Mission, Vision & Values").[87] Today, JL members represent more racial diversity. The League's website includes

[87] The Junior League became the Association of Junior Leagues of America (ALJA) in 1921, connecting thirty Leagues across the US. When the first League was founded in London in 1985, the ALJA became the Association of Junior Leagues International, Inc. (AJLI) ("The History").

member stories accompanied by a photo and many feature women of color. Though the page risks being performative in a look-at-how-diverse-we-are kind of way, the highlights capture how the League has worked to diversify over the years. For example, Krystal Clark's member story links to a news article about her being the first Black president of the Junior League of Nashville (J. Bliss). The article shares Clark's story as a first-generation college student who joined the League in North Carolina and saw its lack of diversity. After moving to Nashville in 2011, she transferred her League membership and began working to change the organization's representation so that women wouldn't say, "I can't go in that building because I am African American or because I am Latina or because I am a lesbian or because I am not from a well-to-do family" (Clark qtd. in J. Bliss).

Though there is a more diverse representation in JL chapters, it's essential to note *how* someone becomes a member reproduces inequities. For example, to join the Junior League of Oklahoma City (JLOC), prospective members must first complete an online form to request more information ("Join").[88] Each JL includes membership fees, which the JLOC indicates are due with final applications, but the website doesn't indicate the cost.[89] Next, the JLOC requires that interested women attend a "Prospective Member Information Event," after which they "can then be invited to become a Provisional member." These steps ensure that prospective members are knowledgeable about the JLOC and committed to joining; however, there are additional membership criteria. The JLOC requires two letters of recommendation and a personal statement that confirms the candidates' age, residency, interest in pursuing volunteer work, commitment to community service, and interest in growing through community involvement ("Criteria").[90]

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[88] After reviewing several JL chapter websites, it's clear that filling out an interest form is standard practice.
[89] The only mention of costs can be found by clicking on "Reinstate Your Membership." From there, the membership fee of $203 for 2021-2022 can be paid.
[90] Across Leagues, members must be at least twenty-one to join.

In contrast, prospective JLD members are not required but "encouraged" to attend a requirement event ("Become a Member"). After applying online, they'll receive an "invitation to join," after which they must pay their provisional yearly dues of $280, complete additional paperwork, and attend the upcoming new member retreat.[91] Although it's slightly easier to join the JLD compared to the JLOC, the multi-step process that requires access to technology and the cost of dues could prohibit some women.

Now that we know a bit about the JL's background and how to become a member, let's examine their cookbook publishing history.

Junior League Cookbooks in General

BAKED LAMB SHANKS — Serves 2

2 lamb shanks
4 Tbs. lemon juice
Salt and pepper
2 Tbs. olive oil
1 garlic clove, crushed
½ tsp. oregano
1 large onion, quartered
1 cup beef bouillon
1 pkg. (10 oz.) frozen artichoke hearts, thawed

Rub lamb shanks with some of the lemon juice. Salt and pepper to taste. Saute in the olive oil until well browned. Put into a casserole dish, sprinkle with the remaining lemon juice, and add garlic and oregano. Add the onion to the casserole. Cover and bake for 2½ hours at 300°. Add the bouillon and artichoke hearts. Increase heat to 350° and bake 1 hour longer.

Elizabeth Riley Beach
(Mrs. David E.)

LEG O'LAMB — Serves 8

1 leg of lamb
3-4 garlic cloves, quartered
Prepared mustard

JELLY SAUCE:
1 jar (10 oz.) red currant jelly
½ cup butter
Worcesterhire sauce to taste

Trim fat from lamb. Make slits in meat and insert garlic cloves. Cover lamb with mustard. Bake at 325° for ½ hour per pound.
Jelly sauce: Heat the jelly, butter and Worcestershire sauce. Serve warm with lamb.

Diane Pascucci Wheeler
(Mrs. Richard O., Jr.)

SAM'S CORNISH GAME HENS — Serves 4

1 cup wild rice or 1 box (6 oz.) long grain and wild rice
1 env. Italian salad dressing mix
2½ cups boiling water
1 can (10½ oz.) cream of chicken soup
2 rock cornish game hens
Salt and pepper

Spread rice in a 3 quart shallow baking dish and bake at 375° for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally until golden. Combine salad dressing mix, boiling water and soup. Stir into the rice. Cut hens in half lengthwise. Season with salt and pepper. Place hens, cut side down, on top of rice. Cover dish tightly with foil. Bake at 350° for 1 hour. Uncover and bake 30 minutes longer or until rice and hens are tender and brown.

Joanna Holliman Potts
(Mrs. Lawerence D.)

112

Figure 4.1: The Junior League of Tulsa's cookbook, published in 1978—the same year as the JLD's Colorado Cache*—is immediately recognizable as a community cookbook with its white spiral binding and contributor's names underneath recipes.*

According to JL historian Nancy Beth Jackson, chapters began selling community cookbooks as a fundraiser to support their voluntarism. When I hear the phrase "community

[91] Leagues do offer a monthly payment plan option.

cookbook," it brings to mind a collection of uniformly formatted recipes bound with a plastic comb that features the contributor's name. For example, the Junior League of Tulsa's (JLT) cookbook, *Cook's Collage* (1978), is what I consider a stereotypical community cookbook with its hard plastic cover, lack of images, and vast number of recipes (Figure 4.1).[92] The spiral binding gives it a DIY aesthetic, and the inclusion of recipe contributors' names recognizes the community's involvement. However, as we'll see, the JLD does not use these standard features, and their design contributes to rhetorically constructing a complicated outdoor identity for women in the Western region.

Over the years, cookbooks have been a consistent way for JLs to fundraise and support educational community-centered initiatives.[93] According to the JLD website, their cookbooks have sold "more than 2.1 million" copies, and the proceeds help fund their childhood education initiatives, but determining the precise publication information for the first cookbook and how the funds get allocated for community projects is complex ("Cookbooks," "Purchase").

Individual JL chapter websites focus on their unique publishing history, demonstrating that each JL draws on their regional identity first despite belonging to the same international organization. For instance, a search for "cookbook" on the JLT's website takes readers to information about their most recent cookbook, *Oil & Vinegar*, and has no mention of JL cookbooks at large ("Cookbooks"). Even sources written and promoted by the League provide conflicting information. For example, the League's timeline indicates that the Junior League of Dallas's 1923 cookbook was the first publication, and it began "a tradition of fundraising through cookbook publishing" ("The History"). Yet Jackson's JL cookbook history says that

[92] *Cook's Collage* is 339 pages, and most pages contain two or more recipes.
[93] For instance, the oldest JL cookbook still in print (1950), began to fund programs like "the League's school of speech correction" (Jackson 97).

Minneapolis sold a handwritten recipe collection from 1943 to 1944 with no mention of Dallas's text (97–99). Despite the unclear history of the first publication, there is no debate surrounding the oldest League cookbook still in print. Published by the Junior League of Charleston (JLC), *Charleston Receipts* (1950) is still available for purchase via the JLC's website and in stores in South Carolina like Charleston Specialty Foods.

Junior League of Denver Cookbooks

Although they didn't start publishing cookbooks in the 50s, the Junior League of Denver has a long cookbook record. First published in 1978, *Colorado Cache* is their oldest cookbook and contains "over 700 recipes selected from approximately 2800 submitted" (5). The introduction to the 30th-anniversary edition proclaims that it's sold more than a million copies. Additionally, we learn that the revenue contributes to training volunteers and funding community projects like the Senior Citizens' Health Center at St. Luke's Hospital that helps "meet the medical and social needs of patients 65 years and older" and programs like Kids in the Kitchen, which teaches families "healthy eating habits and lifestyles" (4). Throughout the cookbook, illustrations by JLD member Ann Douden feature landscapes around Colorado like the Aspen trees found in the Maroon Bells mountain peaks (34-4) and the iconic rock formations on the Garden of the Gods' hiking trails (246-7). Though the illustrations are sepia sketches of the outdoors, they contribute to building a regional identity connected to the outdoors.

Unlike most community cookbooks, the JLD's most recent publication, *Centennial Celebrations* (2019), stands out first through its design because it doesn't use the stereotypical plastic comb binding previously mentioned.[94] American culinary historian Janice Bluestein Longone acknowledges that not all community cookbooks use this plastic comb. Some "are

[94] In fact, none of the JLD cookbooks use the plastic comb binding, and *Colorado Cache* is the only paperback.

expensively and professionally produced with the stated purpose of reaching a wide national sales audience" (27). Indeed, *Centennial Celebrations* uses case binding,[95] giving the book a more commercial aesthetic that contributes to the white upper-middle-class identity the JLD cultivates through the design and layout, which, as we'll see, features professional photographs.[96]

V. Memorializing Locations: JLD Cookbooks as Souvenirs and Compilations of Collective Identity

During a trip to Colorado, maybe you purchased a postcard featuring snow-covered mountains or a miniature replica of Lawrence Argent's sculpture "I See What You Mean," the blue bear that peeks into the Convention Center's windows. These souvenirs, explains literary critic Susan Stewart, allow you to take external experiences home (134). But the souvenirs, even miniature bear replications, acquire value from the stories and moments they represent for the individual. "The souvenir replica is an allusion and not a model; it comes after the fact and remains both partial to and more expansive than the fact. It will not function without the supplementary narrative discourse that both attaches it to its origins and creates a myth with regard to those origins," says Stewart (136). In other words, the memories associated with the object make the item valuable. Like souvenirs, community cookbooks utilize two rhetorical purposes as they form collective memories for the people compiling the text while evoking spatial memories for readers familiar with the region.

For instance, when general readers indulge in the spiced hot chocolate called a "Mayan Mocha," perhaps the first sip conjures the crackling warmth of the fireplace after a day on the

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[95] Hardcover books use case binding that requires the pages to be sewn together then glued to the spine. See Evans for more on bookbinding styles (70-2).

[96] Cookbooks compiled by Junior League chapters in the last five years tend to use case binding unless the design references a previous edition. For example, *Charleston Receipts*, the "oldest regional JL cookbook in print," continued using the plastic comb binding until 2021 ("Charleston"). Their 70th-anniversary edition upgrades from the plastic comb to a white metal spiral binding, but they maintain the cookbook's original aesthetic by using the recognizable green and white cover.

slopes (*Centennial Celebrations* 55). Although a deceptively ordinary text, community cookbooks hold powerful place-based memories. Like memory places (museums and monuments), community cookbooks "are frequently understood as offering a unique access to the past" (Blair et al. 26-7). As we'll see, both *Colorado Cache* and *Centennial Celebrations* are public memory texts that use a dedicated restaurants section and historical facts (*Colorado Cache*) and photographs of Denver landmarks (*Centennial Celebrations*) to serve as souvenirs for home cooks and, perhaps more importantly, JLD members that construct a shared identity for the present and future based on the past.

Like replicas, JLD cookbooks are metonymic objects for home cooks interested in cooking regional cuisine or supporting the organization's community involvement. But because cookbooks are designed to be cooked from, they go beyond narrating a family trip to encouraging users to employ food as a vehicle to recall their experience. Holtzman refers to this kind of recollection as "gustatory nostalgia," a "sentimentality for a lost past, viewing food as a vehicle for recollections of childhood and family" (367). By cooking from a regional cookbook, food embodies memory as it transports the home cook to the time and place enveloped in that taste and smell, situates them in the present moment through eating, and orients them "toward future memories that will be created in the consumption of food" (Sutton 28).

In addition to home cooks, JLD members can use the cookbooks to share their accomplishments with other Leagues and future members—an essential strategy for circulating their regional identity and the League's philanthropic pursuits. Specifically, we'll examine how narratives included in *Centennial Celebrations* alongside menus from events document the organization's community involvement through their sponsorship and maintain the group's white upper-middle-class identity.

Colorado Cache: "Selected" Restaurants and Historical Facts in Section Introductions

As Carrie Helms Tippen explains, chef- and restaurant-centric books can act as "a kind of souvenir of a place and experience" (*Inventing* 116). Making a recipe from a restaurant you enjoyed can transport you to that place and time and strengthen your connection to that moment. By remembering such locations through food, *Colorado Cache* creates an embodied food memory that constitutes a shared identity by connecting to the state's historical landmarks. Maurice Halbwachs, who developed the concept of collective memory, says such memories give "the group a self-portrait that unfolds through time, since it is an image of the past, and allows the group to recognize itself throughout the total succession of images" (147). Thus, collective memories work toward establishing a group's fundamental characteristics. The self-portrait the JLD paints through memorializing restaurants and references to the outdoors begins building a regional persona that holds Denver at its center.

In "Restaurants," *Colorado Cache*'s final section, JLD members include recipes from ten restaurants around the state. The section introduction says that the selection "is not meant to be a definitive listing of the best in the state, but rather a sampling of some of those restaurants our members consistently enjoy" (398). Although community cookbooks operate under the premise that community members contributed the recipes, the "Restaurants" section makes an explicit place-based argument that furthers a white upper-middle-class identity through upscale dining establishments. It makes sense that the restaurant selection centers around Denver, other recognizable cities (Boulder, Castle Rock, Colorado Springs, and Wheat Ridge), a popular ski resort (Vail), and a historic mining town (Georgetown). However, Powell reminds us that "how the map is drawn," so the places and landmarks it includes, are as essential as *who* draws it and *why* (5). Though Powell refers to literal maps here, the restaurants included in *Colorado Cache*

create a map reflecting white upper-middle-class food choices. For example, recipes like "Roast Crown of Lamb Bouquetiere" from The Brown Palace are central to this identity formation (403). Occupying a unique triangular section of downtown Denver, The Brown Palace is a historic landmark. Its interior design mirrors the splendor of Colorado's gold mines, and guests have enjoyed dining there since 1892 ("Rich Tradition"). The JLD constitutes a regional identity of affluence established by two of Colorado's "famous foods," lamb and steak, and its mining history through both food and location, crafting a collective memory that longs for the splendor associated with Colorado's gold and silver mining.[97]

In addition to restaurants, *Colorado Cache* uses outdoor spaces to emphasize the land's importance. Recipes for "*Red Rock* Rellenos," "*Mount Evans* Elk Sausage," and "Pot Roast *Breckenridge*" represent a few dishes that memorialize regional landmarks in the title (emphasis added). Such inclusions recognize an iconic rock structure turned open-air amphitheater (Red Rocks), the highest mountain peak in the North American Front Range (Mount Evans), and a mining town turned ski resort where a nationally-distributed craft beer got its start (Breckenridge).

Locations like these, explains Mastrangelo, evoke community by recalling places "informed readers of the cookbook" recognize ("Community" 79). Indeed, as a former Colorado resident, I easily recognize the landmarks, cities, and towns referenced in recipe titles. However, as Powell would say, the history "is curiously detached" from the current location and functions in more of a "decorative, commemorative role" because it simply provides "schoolbook history" that states facts (75). For example, Powell mentions a bronze compass that marks historical sites surrounding its placement in a park, but it provides no broader context (72). In other words, the

[97] Colorado, unlike other states, doesn't have a state food. Instead, listicles that feature states' official foods reference livestock like lamb and cattle (Mannon; Miller).

historical information in *Colorado Cache* doesn't include a critical application that explains how users can engage this background knowledge in the present or why it's included. Despite the lack of context, the history notes convey who makes up the JLD's membership roster (white women) and who is excluded (Indigenous women).

Examples of this decorative commemoration are on the "Hints from" pages that begin each section. These pages are similar to commercial cookbook introductions that provide the reader with a list of items to stock in their pantry, preferred kitchen tools, or explain techniques[98] that became the standardized cookbook format during the domestic science movement.[99] For instance, "Hints from **La Junta**" introduces the "Fish and Game" section, giving tips about food safety (such as the importance of avoiding cross-contamination when handling raw meat) and others about how to cook lean meats like venison that, as we saw in the "Restaurants" section, construct a regional identity based on animals, like lamb and elk, raised and hunted in Colorado (110). But the page goes beyond cooking advice. A note about La Junta shifts from teaching readers about wild game to providing geographic context that places Indigenous women outside of the JLD:

> **La Junta** is situated in the southeastern, arid prairie country. Sagebrush, cacti, yucca and mesquite cover the somber land, the habitat of prairie dogs, jack rabbits [sic] and lizards.

[98] If you pick up a cookbook from your collection (or look at one the next time you're browsing in a bookstore), you'll most likely find these informational pages at the front of the book. For example, the cookbook I grabbed, *Cherry Bombe: The Cookbook*, includes essential tools to keep in your kitchen (knives, a stockpot, baking sheets, etc.) a few extra tools for specific cooking techniques that make it easier (including a clip-on thermometer, kitchen scale, and cookie scoop), and "rules" that help ensure success (i.e., read through the recipe first to make sure you have everything to you need before cooking) (Diamond and Wu 15-6). According to Neuhaus, such introductions became standard toward the end of the nineteenth century when cookbook authors recognized they were writing for an audience without prior cooking training (23).

[99] Prior to the 1900s, cookbooks utilized a paragraph-like structure for cooking instruction. The domestic science movement, which occurred at the turn of the nineteenth century, created standardized formatting that listed ingredients before instructions. See Chapter 3 for a brief overview of the domestic science movement and its relation to cooking texts, specifically radio.

> The Yucca plant was used by the Indians to make rope from its fiber, and its roots make a lather in water. (110)

The inclusion of such notes grounds readers in Colorado geographically and reinforces that the outdoors, specifically the prairies, are part of the JLD's regional identity, but it provides no context connecting La Junta's history to the JLD members. In fact, all of the "Hints from" pages reference the outdoors or the city's connection to the land, arguing that regional identity is deeply tied to the landscape.[100] Yet the references throughout don't explain how the landscape, in this case, La Junata's prairie, is significant today or what the reader should gain by connecting to the land through its history and the recipes in the "Fish and Game" section.

Notably, their mention of "Indians" excludes Indigenous people from the JLD's history by juxtaposing Indigenous knowledge about the land (like using the Yucca plant) with recipes throughout the section that incorporate fish and wild game caught and hunted in Colorado, such as trout and the dusky grouse, that appeal to white upper-middle-class tastes.[101] For example, one of the first fish recipes, "Smoked Trout or Salmon," seems like a rustic dish based on the title (111). However, the instructions involve marinating the fish in a brand-specific fast-cure mix (Morton's Tender Quick), liquid smoke, ice cream salt, and water for twenty-four hours, then baking it for six hours. The liquid smoke and oven transform the recipe from a rustic dish most likely cooked on an open fire to one cooked indoors. Additionally, the recipe includes a note to teach the home cook about eating this dish: "Serve plain as an appetizer with unsalted crackers." Through specific ingredients, an extended prep and cooking time, and notes about entertaining, the JLD perpetuates that hosting events is a primary concern for members and their audience.

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[100] The other locations are the Royal Gorge (8), the Front Range (36), the Frying Pan River (54), the Roaring Fork River (78), Central City (135), the Garden of the Gods (186), Golden (214), Baker Peak (226), Montezuma (248), the Matchless Mine (277), Deer Trail (306), and Sugar City (326).

[101] The recipe for grouse uses the bird's former name, the Colorado blue grouse (118).

Indeed, notes throughout the cookbook emphasize that entertaining is a way for women to express themselves. By mentioning that a dish is "great served as a first course for a luncheon" or that an entrée "is beautiful when sliced," making a "spectacular presentation," *Colorado Cache* connects the League to privileged women who have the time and resources to entertain (37; 146).

What's unique about the "Hints from" pages is what they convey about the outdoors and gendered stereotypes around cooking. Indeed, as mentioned in the last chapter, twentieth-century cookbooks associated men with meat and outdoor cooking (Contois; Counihan; Inness; Neuhaus). For instance, Sherrie A. Inness's analysis of *Meats for Men: Eighteen Favorite Meat Dishes for Men* (1954) explains that cookbooks written for a male audience included robust meat sections with little emphasis on vegetables to establish that not only was meat a staple of the male diet, but men were naturally good at outdoor cooking (27). So perhaps it's not surprising that *Colorado Cache*, a cookbook compiled by women, reads as though they'll be the ones cooking; however, the twenty-page section dedicated to food caught or hunted in Colorado argues that women can cook meat just as expertly as men. For example, only "Daddy's Venison Chili," one of the section's forty-six recipes, references men in the kitchen (124). Notably, the JLD's omission of references to men throughout the cookbook dismantles the stereotype that JLD members are housewives and mothers.

Most community cookbooks memorialize people by including the recipe contributors' names alongside the recipe, which, as mentioned in Chapter 2, is a way to cite the recipe's origins. Indeed, the Junior League of Tulsa cookbook mentioned in this chapter's brief JL cookbook overview, published the same year as *Colorado Cache* (1978), includes the contributors' names underneath the recipe instructions with husbands' names in parentheses.

Thus, readers learn that Elizabeth Riley Beach (Mrs. David E.) submitted the "Baked Lamb Shanks" recipe (*Cook's Collage* 112). Additionally, some recipes simply list the contributor as Cookbook Committee, and there are recipe submissions not associated with a husband like Melissa A. Morgan's "Special Seafood Dish" (138). However, most recipes in the JLT cookbook include this parenthetical husband citation, and no recipes list male contributors. The emphasis on husbands reflects Oklahoma's more conservative ideologies overall. Unlike the JLT, none of the JLD's cookbooks include the husband parentheticals.[102] Instead, the JLD lists contributors in alphabetical order at the back of the book (408-10). The significance here is that the cookbook committee removes the implicit association of cooking spaces with housewives, but the contributors are still associated with the cookbook's creation, maintaining the submitters' co-authorship. So while most community cookbooks further women's role as the stereotypical married homemaker, the JLD anonymizes submissions to reject this connection in favor of a more liberal identity commonly associated with Colorado.

Yet *Colorado Cache* doesn't wholly reject the association with the outdoors and masculinity. Subtle references to gender reinscribe cooking roles similar to their appearance in popular commercial cookbooks. For example, *Betty Crocker's New Picture Cook Book* (1961) doesn't directly say that women can't grill or cook meat, but an illustration in the "Meal Planning" section depicts a father grilling what looks like hamburgers (30). Such subtle reminders do appear and reinforce gendered cooking roles that *Colorado Cache* mostly rejects. An example of this is a note about who brings home the wild game on the "Hints from **La Junta**" page: "Always be appreciative to the hunter or fisherman. A sportsman is very concerned with the final presentation of his provisions" (110). Here, the JLD expertly manages how they

[102] Though this chapter only analyzes two of the JLD's cookbooks, this is true of all six texts.

memorialize women. Writing about using nostalgia as a rhetorical design component, Kurlinkus says, "perhaps the core skill of the rhetoric of memory today is carefully layering innovation and tradition" (423). It's this juxtaposition between innovation (women operating autonomously) and tradition (outdoor sports as masculine) that *Colorado Cache* and JLD cookbooks overall balance. While *Colorado Cache* seems to say women can cook wild game, the act of hunting remains masculine.

Like the gestures toward expected marital status represented by including husband's names alongside recipes, this subtle masculinity demonstrates how community cookbooks are complex artifacts that women use as a platform to push for gender equality. Although Gordon and Reische explain that, even at the height of the women's movement in the 1960s the League "lumbered forward very, very slowly, hobbled by an outmoded structure and procedures better suited to a smaller organization and more tranquil times," JLD cookbooks show what their version of gender equality looks like (132-3). As Dubisar explains, even community cookbooks with a clear activist message, like the peace and human rights organization CODEPINK's cookbook, "reflects most fully the experiences of privileged women who have the time and resources to compose a cookbook" ("'If I Can't Bake'" 10). Thus, the JLD subverts the League's association with stay-at-home housewives. But, despite the organization's effort to construct a regional identity associated with the outdoors, the JLD dictates what outdoor activities are appropriate for women. In this case, women can be unmarried and enjoy cooking outdoors, but *Colorado Cache* maintains men's traditional role as providers by categorizing them as the "sportsman."

Centennial Celebrations: Photographs and Regionalism in Callouts

Through *Colorado Cache*'s subtle references to masculinity, we saw how the JLD's cookbooks communicate that women's connection to the outdoors revolves around cooking and entertaining. In the forty-one years between the two cookbooks, this connection grows more apparent through *Centennial Celebrations*' memorialization of the outdoors depicted alongside hosting upscale events. With its high-quality photographs, the cookbook appeals to Colorado home cooks interested in regional cuisine, and such users continue to be the primary market for JLD cookbooks. After all, they are a community-centered fundraising tool. The cookbook sales directly benefit projects like Kids Connect, a program the JLD started to emphasize the importance of families reading together. However, *Centennial Celebrations*' primary rhetorical purpose is to memorialize one hundred years of the JLD's achievements. In doing so, they reinforce the groups' white upper-middle-class identity. When capturing collective memory, Halbwachs says it "is essential that the features distinguishing it from other groups survive and be imprinted on all its content" (147). Indeed, the JLD continues to set itself apart from the stereotype of the League "as a club you joined if you were still single after college and needed to find a good man," omitting any references to marital status (Kosinski). However, they further the notion that the socially acceptable association between women and the outdoors revolves around event planning.

In contrast to *Colorado Cache*'s broad focus on the state, *Centennial Celebrations* takes a more centralized approach, using photographs of various landmarks around Denver to define a JLD identity "where urban sophistication meets outdoor adventure" (13). Though Powell says regions are cultural constructs and not "a static, stable geophysical entity," like a city, JLD cookbooks blur this distinction (6). Their association with the League makes their boundaries

less stable. Broken into six geographical areas, Denver becomes one city representative of the eleven states that constitute the Western Leagues.[103] Powell explains communities create regions deliberately, so regional women's clubs, like JL chapters, are examples of purposely constructed communities that serve to connect women to a national identity. In *Centennial Celebrations*, callouts with the subtitle "Discover Denver" feature sites around the city to show readers what the JLD means when they say that Denver blends sophistication and the outdoors.[104] Like *Colorado Cache*'s "Hints from" pages, each callout includes a note about a location, but where *Colorado Cache* lacks commentary on how this history impacts Denver, the short written account paired with a high-quality photo take what could have functioned as decorative ways to commemorate sites and incorporates the JLD's work to provide some broader context.

For example, The Molly Brown House callout features the JLD as the primary subject, but it contextualizes the site's history to create connections between the community and Denver's past. Perhaps best known as a Titanic survivor, Molly Brown used her wealth to support "education, suffragism, feminism, the rights of children, the rights of miners, and social and political change" (Iversen iv). So while the JLD doesn't mention Brown's philanthropy, they align themselves with historical women who espoused similar educational and charitable values. Not only did they provide monetary support to "save the home from potential destruction," but after opening the house as a museum, "members provided guided tours, conducted research, and helped cultivate collections" (*Centennial Celebrations* 93). Though the callout doesn't explicitly state *why* the JLD chose to help save this house, readers familiar with the museum and Molly

[103] See "Junior Leagues by Geographical Area" for a map identifying League regions.
[104] In book design, callouts feature things like text, photos, and graphics to enhance the reader's understanding of the topic.

Brown's work overall can deduce that they're connecting their voluntarism to preserving sites around Denver tied explicitly to women's philanthropy.

Additionally, *Centennial Celebrations* includes menus and images from past JLD events, constructing affective bonds and performing public memory. In doing so, they circulate the JLD's god memory captured in the phrase "urban sophistication meets outdoor adventure" and the call to "cook, connect, and celebrate…Colorado style" mentioned in the introduction, repeated on the back cover, and used in marketing materials (Instagram posts and promotional videos) that define their members and a Western JL regional identity. But what exactly *is* this sophisticated outdoorsy identity, and *who* is excluded from the JLD based on this representation? Let's look at one of the menus to consider the social class promoted via what the JLD chooses to memorialize.

The first menu in the cookbook, titled "Gatherings To Go," features the food and beverages members and guests enjoyed at a summer picnic held at Red Rocks, a popular Colorado venue, in 2018 (*Centennial* 17).[105] The menu page features three elements—the food served they served, event photos, and a note about the location—that memorialize the JLD's work and begin showing what they mean by "urban sophistication." As the first menu, it circulates the JLD's philanthropic pursuits. Clubwomen, says literacy scholar Anne Ruggles Gere, created and circulated texts to "share their ideas and activities with others, to display their accomplishments, [and] to represent themselves in their own terms" (105). Indeed, *Centennial Celebrations*' menus fulfill this purpose, but more importantly, the food exerts culinary capital,

[105] Next to the menu is a photo of the invitation for the summer picnic. *Centennial Celebrations* features photos and menus from events close to the books' 2019 publication date before each section. The "Event Photo Index" in the back of the book lists locations and vendors. Although the event's purpose isn't included, the details document the venue, food, and vendors, simultaneously memorializing the event and providing information for future event planning.

using “food and food practices as a way of conferring cultural authority and circulating dominant ideologies” (Naccarato and LeBesco 12).

Guests enjoyed “Watermelon Rosé Margaritas,” “Blood Orange Cocktail,” “Picnic Skewers,” “Summer-Style Orzo Salad,” and “Peach Cupcakes with Brown Sugar Frosting,” but if we focus our attention on the identity constructed through dessert, we see how the JLD emphasizes that a sophisticated urban identity that “meets outdoor adventure” is wrapped in a feminized treat that promotes a white, middle-class identity. According to gender and media scholar Elizabeth Nathanson, cupcakes promise “entrepreneurial freedoms that provide a fantasy work/life balance for women who are expected to ‘have it all,’ while ignoring structural inequalities that make balance impossible” because of their connection to women-run bakeries (250). By including the “Peach Cupcakes with Brown Sugar Frosting” on the menu, in the event photos, and on the book’s cover, the JLD continues cultivating a privileged identity for members. The cupcakes craft a god memory “of bake sales and happy housewives” that invoke an image of a white upper-middle-class 1950s June Cleaver-like mom (Nathanson 253). Thus, the menus circulate a public memory that associates the JLD with the League’s privileged founders.

In addition to the food list and photos, each menu includes a note about the venue. Similar to the callouts featured throughout the book, the note memorializes an iconic Denver site, but the menus go beyond depicting landmarks to historicize one of the JLD’s community programs:

> In 1947, the Junior League of Denver, along with the May Company, sponsored the first-ever concert series at the now world-famous Red Rocks Park Amphitheatre. Since then, Red Rocks has hosted everything from symphonies and rock bands to operas and rap performances. Over the years, it also has become a place to exercise, worship, watch

> iconic films, or just stand in awe of this naturally formed outdoor venue. Each spring, summer, and fall, locals and visitors arrive early for their favorite shows so they can tailgate and soak in the mesmerizing views of Red Rocks. (17)

Like the note about the Children's Museum of Denver that opens this chapter, the same underlying claim exists: without the JLD's sponsorship, Red Rock Amphitheatre wouldn't be the cultural space or iconic landmark it is today. In particular, this note furthers the sophisticated urban outdoor adventure identity by showing what outdoor activities are appropriate for women. Overall, the description of Red Rocks as an entertainment venue emphasizes that, for JLD members, the outdoors isn't the rugged stereotype of camping and hiking often associated with Colorado and the West. Instead, it's a refined, catered event hosted outside. Overall, the rhetorical moves surrounding memory, gender, and place circulated by preserving the menus are similar to those established in the JLD's first cookbook (*Colorado Cache*). They continue moving the League's membership away from married women while saying what outdoor activities, in this case, organizing upscale gatherings, are appropriate for women.

VI. Conclusion: A Call for More Research on Junior League Cookbooks as Technologies of Memory

When I set out to research cooking texts for this dissertation, I began with community cookbooks—the recipe collections commonly curated by women belonging to social organizations. I was most interested in the question I posed at the beginning of this chapter about design: How might the layout and design of such community cookbooks contribute to their ability to construct, circulate, and maintain a regional identity? Layered within this question were explorations of craft rhetoric, food memories, and cookbooks as technologies of memory. But because I couldn't pass up the COVID-19 pandemic's kairos (Chapter 2), this initial exigency

moved to the back burner and an analysis of how cooking texts and the communities that create and circulate them take a feminist approach to food rhetoric emerged. Therefore, this chapter exists somewhere between my initial inquiry and reading the Junior League of Denver's cookbooks to understand what they contribute to defining feminist food rhetoric. Through close reading, I discovered that JLD cookbooks modify the standard community cookbook layout to recognize women's autonomy by removing the parenthetical inclusion of husbands alongside recipe submissions. However, they ultimately construct, circulate, and maintain a white upper-middle-class identity expressed through associating the outdoors with an opportunity to host upscale events, or what *Centennial Celebrations* refers to as "urban sophistication meets outdoor adventure" (13).

Additionally, the JLD fits the definition of a feminist food community because they construct a home cook identity for readers by creating cookbooks, their mission centers around learning and community participation, they engage in community activism by selling their cookbooks to support education programs in the Denver metro area, and they train women to be community leaders ("Community"). Even though the JLD only represents a small sample of Junior League cookbooks' constitutive rhetoric, there are broader implications for what regional cookbooks contribute as memory texts that "memorialize both individuals and community" in addition to cultivating "a sense of collective memory that in turn shapes communal identity" (Eves 281). As a whole, Tippen says that cookbooks "have a decided 'lean' towards epideictic rhetoric, praising the cooks who have gone before and convincing audiences that the recipes therein are delicious" ("Writing Recipes" 23). To be sure, Junior League of Denver cookbooks continue this tradition of praise by capturing the JLD's community-engaged projects. However, the epideictic rhetoric displayed in *Colorado Cache* (1978) and *Centennial Celebrations* (2019)

memorializes the JLD's philanthropic pursuits while furthering a white upper-middle-class identity. It's "the complex ideologies bound in this epideictic pride" that needs further exploration (Kurlinkus 423). More work should be done to understand how Junior League cookbooks are technologies of memory that develop regional identity.

Thus, I end this chapter with additional questions to inspire further research on Junior League community cookbooks, specifically. Overall, we must continue asking whose memories do the extra materials included in the cookbooks (like descriptions of places and the inclusion of event menus) value? Who is excluded from these memories, and how, as rhetoricians, can we work to recover the communities overwritten by circulating these public memories? If we analyze cookbooks from other Leagues in the Western region like California or Washington, will the white upper-middle-class identity constituted in Denver circulate there, too? In her short article on JL cookbooks, Marta Hess says she chose JL texts "because of the intriguing ways that cookbooks published at the same time by branches of the same national organization could be so different rhetorically in voice, style, and content" (2). Like Hess' statement about the Milwaukee Junior League's use of professional photos, we both found that some League cookbooks resemble commercial cookbooks (5); however, what does this design choice to move from a more DIY aesthetic represented in the plastic comb binding contribute to community cookbooks' functionality as technologies of memory? I selected the JLD because of their long cookbook publishing history and my knowledge of Colorado landmarks, but research on JL cookbooks across the US may reveal an even more significant understanding of the constitutive rhetoric of these seemingly ordinary artifacts.

Chapter 5

Toward Defining Feminist Food Rhetoric:

Key Findings, Limitations, Further Research on Food,

Feminism, Regionalism, and Memory in Rhetoric and Writing Studies

I. Food Memories and Feminist Food Rhetoric

Brinner, or breakfast for dinner, is a staple in my house. It's quick, easy to throw together if there's nothing else in the fridge, and it presents endless possibilities for omelets.[106] Biting into my vegan tofu scramble sandwich, the nuttiness of the cashews blended with tahini and the salty umami of miso paste transports me to Boulder, Colorado. The flavors and textures remind me of the food grown on campus and served at the Naropa University café. I can almost smell the café's signature chai latte, bursting with cinnamon and ginger, filling the Pavilion with its warm aroma as I watch the snow fall and cover the top of the Rockies on a cold January afternoon.

I'm sharing this food memory because these are the stories that cookbook authors often include in introductions or recipe headnotes to provide context and connect to the reader. It seems fitting, then, that I begin the end of this project with what Meredith E. Abarca and Joshua R. Colby refer to as food memories: "a sense that provides a polytemporal consciousness, that (re)defines home and longing for home, the root of one's identity, as an embodied experience, and that finds expression through various narrative forms: oral, written, digital, and performative" (4). Smell, taste, touch, sound, and sight create a multisensory experience that links food memories to locations to construct a collective identity. While writing *Feminist Food Rhetoric*, I recalled and created new memories by baking and cooking from the texts I studied. I baked cookies, cakes, muffins, and more with Bake Club, attempted my first fruit cake and was comforted by a red wine risotto from Lynne Rossetto Kasper's cookbook *The Splendid Table*, and embraced a longing for one of the many places I've called home with recipes from *Centennial Celebrations* like the vegan tofu scramble and a Denver sheet cake.

[106] My husband has a knack for turning leftovers into a delicious omelet filling. I'm convinced he could take anything in the fridge and find a way to incorporate it into eggs.

I embodied my dissertation by writing about, making, sharing, and eating these recipes. When I read these pages, I'm reminded of what I ate throughout the writing process and see an academic cookbook of sorts that captures two years' worth of cooking. This project began because I wanted to explore how written recipes circulate as memory texts passed down generationally within communities. Since I began researching cookbooks and food rhetoric in the fall of 2018, I've worked to rhetorically analyze everything from a nineteenth-century cookbook compiled by a stove manufacturing company to recipe sharing on Instagram. I've explored how such texts evolved alongside technology, their participation in reinscribing and subverting gender roles, and what these artifacts say about the communities that made them. As I close this project and prepare to bring my research on food to my first tenure-track job as an assistant professor of English, *Feminist Food Rhetoric* is my scholarly agenda's appetizer.

In the remainder of this final chapter, I first provide a few key points from each body chapter. Then, I consider some of *Feminist Food Rhetoric*'s limitations and how to move forward with additional research on cooking texts.

II. Key Findings

Chapter 1. A Seat at the Table: Employing Feminist Rhetoric, Food Studies, and Media Studies to Examine How Women Use Food to Create and Memorialize Communities

The first chapter establishes *Feminist Food Rhetoric*'s overall arguments, methods, and methodologies. After reviewing relevant research from the fields of rhetoric and writing studies and feminist food studies to contextualize food as a form of constitutive rhetoric, I explain how I use social circulation (Royster and Kirsch), remediation (Bolter and Grusin), and participatory culture (Jenkins) to rhetorically analyze what I refer to as *cooking texts*—any form of media used to circulate cooking knowledge. Importantly, rhetorically analyzing cooking texts as constitutive

rhetoric involves examining the relationships the texts foster and the social interactions they encourage.

Chapter 1 also notes that because of the work of other rhetoricians (Fleitz; Mastrangelo; Tippen; Walden), I can move beyond the claim that cookbooks are worthy of rhetorical study. By analyzing cooking texts that utilize different media (e.g., Instagram posts, radio, cookbooks), the chapter sets up *Feminist Food Rhetoric*'s central argument that such texts are a social, political, and emancipatory form of rhetoric that (1) rhetorically create a communal identity through co-authorship that embodies women in the past, present, and future; (2) create a local community despite geographical distance; and (3) are used by rhetors to respond to cultural upheaval and as a form of social activism. Each chapter works toward these three claims. For example, in Chapter 2, Christina Tosi and Bake Clubbers co-author recipes on Instagram while creating a community accessible across the US to respond to pandemic isolation. Next, the conversations between Lynne Rossetto Kasper and callers in Chapter 3 employ co-authorship by discussing recipes on the air, connecting listeners via the radio, and using food as activism to recover narratives excluded from dominant conversations on food. Lastly, the Junior League of Denver cookbooks analyzed in Chapter 4 utilize co-authorship through calls for recipes and reprinting favorite recipes from previous JLD cookbooks to create texts that circulate beyond Colorado and contribute to the group's community-centered activism as a fundraising source.

Chapter 2. #BakeClub: The Rhetorical Strategies and Literacy Practices of Baking Together on Instagram During a Global Pandemic

Chapter 2 examines how women form food-focused digital communities to respond to crises. Using Bake Club (an online cooking group that began in March 2020) and interviews with three community members, I define what I refer to as *feminist food communities*, which are

groups where food is the main topic of conversation. Such communities use food to (1) construct a collective home baker identity through the active creation and sharing of content; (2) view learning as integral to community participation; and (3) use food to combat social inequalities linked to gender and racism. Chapter 2 works to show how feminist food communities function, and I argue that within such communities, cooking is elevated to a valued literacy through creating collaborative community-oriented spaces.

The benefit of studying a community that began during the pandemic is that it gives rhetoricians a way to examine *why* a community formed, *how* the community operates, and if it underwent any significant changes from the community's beginning and in a relatively short time. Indeed, these features could be studied by analyzing women's groups that existed before the pandemic; however, hashtags and communities linked to current events and activism expedite research. Every day following #BakeClub felt like two weeks' worth of knowledge because, as Jackson et al.'s research on Twitter explains: "The narratives that emerge around Twitter hashtags evolve more quickly than traditional media" (xxix). So by analyzing a newly-formed feminist food community, I was able to identify the rhetorical moves faster.

Notably, Bake Club didn't begin as a feminist food community. Initially, chef Christina Tosi started baking on Instagram Live on March 24, 2020 as a way to counter pandemic isolation; however, after sixty-nine days of Bake Club, the murder of George Floyd catalyzed her to shift the group from a joyous way to cope with the pandemic to a community where members used their baked goods for social justice. After recognizing that she needed to use her platform to support Black and Indigenous people of color (BIPOC) and pause Bake Club, Tosi reflects and self-corrects, embracing what Cheryl Glenn calls rhetorical feminism to alter the community's mission. But was Tosi's incorporation of BIPOC voices an act of performative allyship?

No. Since Bake Club's return on June 21, 2020, Tosi has continued furthering the group's identification as a feminist food community. For example, Tosi called on Bake Clubbers to make cookies and raise money in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The Monday after the invasion, Tosi posted the weekly Bake Club video along with this message:

> Two years ago @paolavelez and @bakersagainstracism motivated me and this baking community to show up against darkness, to open our hearts and our ovens for a cause. When I say "dessert can save the world" this is what I mean, it can save us, connect us, so that we can create change. This week's #bakeclub is going to her as she rallies us to show up yet again for the world and for each other with the incredible #bakeforUkraine bake sale—which raises money for those impacted by the terrible events unfolding in Ukraine. ("#bakeclub week 102")

I've shared this Bake Club update to highlight Chapter 2's dual focus that first works to understand how digital food communities form and then examines what qualities make them *feminist* food communities.

Chapter 3. More Than "A Show About Life's Appetites": Developing Culinary Expertise on The Splendid Table

Before women turned to social media for recipes and cooking advice, radio programs offered domestic education. Chapter 3 explores radio programs' role in recovering diverse voices excluded from the food narratives that represent the US in addition to teaching listeners to cook. Using the contemporary food podcast *The Splendid Table*, I study how food radio programming uses conversational recipe telling (Norrick), a nuanced oral storytelling format, and invitational rhetoric (Foss and Griffin) to change cultural perceptions of people while constructing and subverting traditional feminine and masculine identities linked to food.

In doing so, I identify three central rhetorical strategies of food radio shows: (1) incorporating foodways—food's political, cultural, and social qualities; (2) teaching with analogies; and (3) using sensory feedback. Ultimately, Chapter 3 explains that shows like *The Splendid Table* are feminist cooking texts because they disrupt gendered ideologies communicated through food and cooking (like women's ability to cook meat) and recover regional and ethnic cuisines as part of the US's foodways.

Chapter 4. Constructing Regional Identity in Community Cookbooks: The Constitutive Rhetoric of the Junior League of Denver's Fundraising Texts

In Chapter 4, the final body chapter, I use close reading to rhetorically analyze two community cookbooks, *Colorado Cache Cookbook* (1978) and *Centennial Celebrations: A Colorado Cookbook* (2019), published by the Junior League of Denver (JLD). Community cookbooks, which are compiled chiefly by women's organizations to raise funds for community improvement, have been used throughout the US since the Civil War. Chapter 4 analyzes JLD cookbooks to understand how such texts function as souvenirs that dismantle gendered ideologies surrounding who cooks.

By analyzing how the cookbooks utilize landmarks around Colorado, I discovered that they complicate the stereotype of the wild West. And, despite the JLD's commitment to bettering the Denver community, the cookbooks memorialize a white upper-middle-class identity by making the outdoors synonymous with upscale events.

To conclude *Feminist Food Rhetoric*, I'll now provide some of this project's limitations and acknowledge where further research on cooking texts and food rhetorics is needed. The limitations align with my research suggestions and include incorporating more diverse communities and reorganizing the case studies from oldest to newest media to trace how women

use each cooking text as a technology of memory that memorializes places, cultures, people, and events.

III. Further Research: Limitations and a Call for More Feminist Food Rhetoric Scholarship

Feminist Food Rhetoric situates cooking texts and food as understudied forms of constitutive rhetoric. I hope that this project establishes that communities led by women have long used literacy events (e.g., baking together, sharing recipes, and composing regional cookbooks) and media ecologies (e.g., Instagram clubs and radio cooking programs) beyond alphabetic texts (cookbooks) to construct empowered identities. Yet, I recognize that more work needs to be done to craft a stronger connection to feminist rhetoric and memory.

First, I will address the most significant limitation: lack of diversity. The case studies used for each chapter center around communities that look pretty similar. Overall, Tosi, Kasper, and members of the JLD represent white, cisgender, heterosexual women. This issue of representation stems from the COVID-19 pandemic and the communities and artifacts still accessible during quarantine. Before Bake Club began, I planned to look at openly gay cookbook author and food equity advocate Julia Turshen's #FoodWriteNow. On March 16, 2020, Turshen announced on Instagram that she wanted to start a "fun writing class" where she'd teach participants how to write food stories "for at least the next couple of weeks" ("I saw that"). She used Instagram Live on March 17 to share a food writing prompt and lead a writing workshop. I wanted to see where this group led, what the hashtag memorialized, and how Turshen incorporated her food equity work into prompts and posts. However, nine days after the first writing prompt, she announced she'd be taking a "social media break" ("wouldn't normally").

I understood Turshen's need to focus on self-care as the pandemic began impacting

everyone's lives, especially those in the food and restaurant industry. So I switched my focus to another pandemic Instagram community I'd started following: #BakeClub. At the time, I didn't realize the shift in communities would set the tone for my entire dissertation to examine communities surrounded by whiteness. However, I recognize that highlighting the work of white women is an exclusionary act that, at its best, continues prioritizing white feminism in rhetoric and writing studies and, at its worst, appropriates Black feminism and scholars of color.

In the next course of *Feminist Food Rhetoric*, I will explore what it means that the chapters center around whiteness. Each chapter will be revised to ask how does the community's whiteness exclude people of color? To talk about Bake Club specifically, I'll explore access to and cost of ingredients and how the 2 p.m. time slot excluded essential workers. For *The Splendid Table,* addressing this concern means analyzing the show after Francis Lam took over to explicate what changed (or remained the same) when the host shifted from a white woman to a Chinese-American man. Finally, the JLD research focuses on a white upper-middle-class identity, but I hope to interview current members and work with their historian to access membership records to explore this further.

The second limitation applies to *Feminist Food Rhetoric*'s analysis of multiple media. The inclusion of multiple forms of media—social media, food radio shows, and community cookbooks—means that each case study required an understanding of a broad range of scholarly disciplines. I now understand why monographs, like Sarah Walden's book on American cookbooks, are restricted to one media. While focusing on one media would've given me more time to address the history surrounding women's rhetoric and that type of text, I stand by my decision to expand beyond a narrow focus on cookbooks and explore multiple media. It was a fun challenge and the beginning of a project that demonstrates the breadth of how women use

food rhetoric for feminist action.

The final limitation I'll mention is the order I researched and wrote the body chapters. In my prospectus, I set up *Feminist Food Rhetoric* to trace the evolution of media from community cookbooks to social media. But because I was concerned about timing and interviewing Bake Clubbers, I opted to write about #BakeClub first. Therefore, the project shifted to a more prominent focus on defining feminist food rhetoric. My initial plan for this project was to understand how each cooking text is a technology of memory. That is, by asking whose memories the media circulates, what do we discover about the identities that each type of cooking text memorializes? Although this focus is there, it's far too subtle. Given more time, I would've gone back and reorganized the chapters to take the research currently in Chapter 4 on identity, regionalism, and place-based memories and restructure each chapter. By revising *Feminist Food Rhetoric* to follow the original organization, I'll be able to address how each media functions as a technology of memory.

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Appendix A

Chapter 2: #BakeClub IRB Materials, Participant Demographics, and Code List

The first case study in this dissertation focused on a community that started on Instagram at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic (Bake Club). The materials in this appendix explain how I recruited interview participants. I've included the call for interview participants, a breakdown of the interview procedure, the interview script, demographic information for the nine participants, and the code list applied to Instagram posts to identify active members and common themes.

Call for Interview Participants

Hi (name),

As I'm sure you know, the first rule of #BakeClub is you tell everyone about #BakeClub! To tell even more people about Bake Club, I'm including a chapter on Bake Club in my dissertation. I'm a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Oklahoma in the Department of English, where I study rhetoric and writing studies. More specifically, I research cookbooks, cooking groups, and literacy.

I'm working on my dissertation in which I study a variety of cooking resources and the communities that make and use them. In the chapter dedicated to Bake Club, I'll be talking about Christina Tosi's videos, ingredient posts, and newsletters, as well as posts shared with the Bake Club hashtag.

I'd like to include interviews of up to 10 Bake Club members. I'm reaching out to you specifically because, since Bake Club began, you've posted images of your own bakes and/or commented on other Bake Club members' posts regularly.

Interviews will be conducted via Zoom, Skype, Google Hangouts, or phone from February 2021 through March 2021 and will take no more than 60 minutes. To participate in this interview, you must be at least 18 years of age and currently living in the United States.

If you would like to be interviewed about your experience and participation in Bake Club, send me a direct message here on Instagram, or send me an email at ashley.m.beardsley@ou.edu.

Thanks, baker!

Interview Procedure

All interviews were recorded as audio files using Zoom and transcribed automatically through otter.ai. Per International Review Board standards, participants knew that our conversation would be recorded and electronically signed a consent form. Interviews ranged from 45 to 60 minutes. Before recording, I read the pre-recording statement (provided in the Interview Script below) to explain the interview structure to the participants. The Interview Script also includes the questions I asked all participants. Although the interviews followed the same structure and I asked the technology- and media-specific questions first, #BakeClub specific questions second, and demographic questions last, I moved through the questions in each section as naturally as possible to make the interview feel more conversational. For example, participants often mentioned their favorite Bake Club recipe after I asked why they started participating in Bake Club or what they've been doing with their baked goods. Attempting to have a casual atmosphere during interviews allowed interviewees to speak more openly about their participation in Bake Club and their familiarity with other baking-related movements that started during the pandemic.

Interview Script

Pre-Recording. Thank you again for agreeing to this interview! Before we begin, I want to walk you through how this interview will go. Then, I'll start recording, and we can chat about Bake Club. Our conversation will be about 60 minutes. Please feel free to add whatever else you'd like throughout the interview. I'm here to listen to your story about Bake Club. Also, if there are any questions you'd prefer not to answer, just say "pass," and we can move on. First, we'll talk about Instagram and finding recipes. Second, we'll talk about your participation in Bake Club, specifically. To conclude, I'll ask general demographic questions. These questions will be completely anonymized—things like participants' age just give me an idea of who participates in Bake Club. Do you have any questions before I start recording and we begin our conversation?

Technology- and Media-Specific Questions

1. What's your general experience with social media and Instagram in particular?
2. What was your social media use like before the pandemic?
3. Why do you use Instagram?
4. Where do you generally find recipes?
    a. Has the way you find recipes changed since you started participating in Bake Club?
5. Tell me a bit about how you participate in Bake Club (watch videos live/afterward; follow recipes on the website; post your own photos).
6. Why do you post photos of your bakes on Instagram?

#BakeClub/Baking Participation Specific Questions

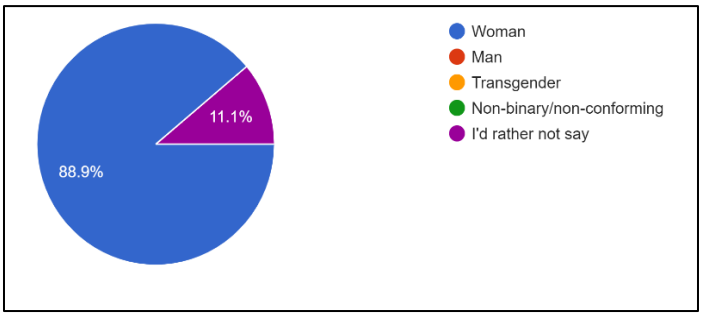
1. When did you start participating in Bake Club?
2. What was your experience in the kitchen before Bake Club?

a. How did you learn to cook/bake? Who taught you?

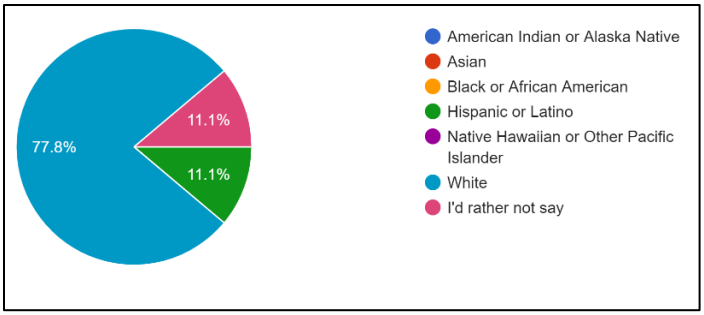
3. Why did you decide to start participating in Bake Club?
4. What have you been doing with all of your baked goods?
5. Did you ever have trouble finding ingredients to participate in Bake Club?
6. What's been your favorite Bake Club bake?
7. What's been your least favorite Bake Club bake?
8. Has Bake Club impacted your baking skills?
9. Have you participated in any of the bakes Tosi shared as "Teach Me Something" videos on YouTube?
10. Have you participated in any other bakes during the pandemic like Bakers Against Racism or Bake the Vote?
11. Is there anything else you want to tell me before we wrap up our interview?

Demographic Questions

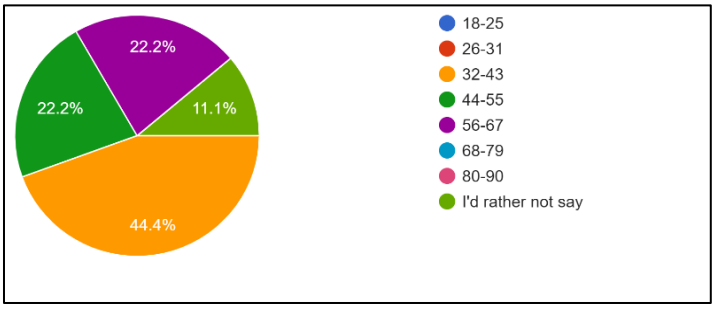
1. What gender do you identify as?



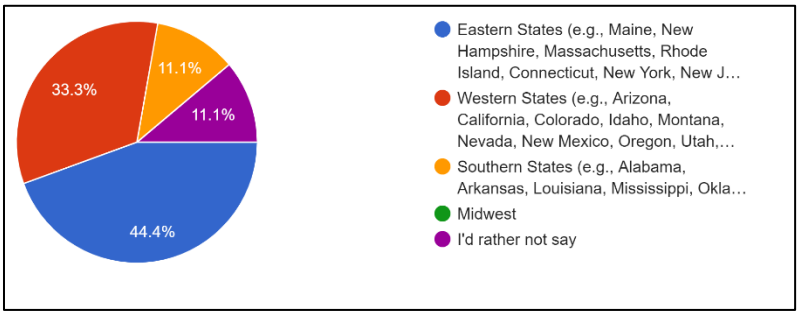
2. Please specify your ethnicity.



3. What is your age?



4. Where were you located during quarantine (March 2020)?



5. During the pandemic (March–December 2020), what did your employment look like?

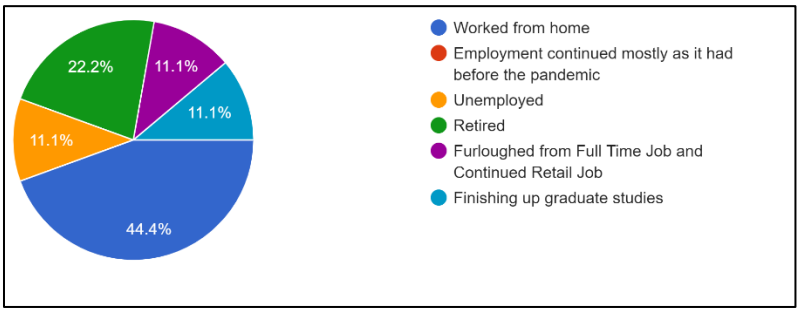


Table 2.1: Code List

Code	Description	Long Description
EXP	Low barriers to artistic expression	Code as EXP posts that mention having/not having access to ingredients, kitchen equipment, and pre-existing cooking skills as well as posts that talk about creativity and fun
MENT	Informal mentorship	Code as MENT any posts that mention learning from Tosi, another member of Bake Club, or someone else that the member learned from (e.g., family member, another microcelebrity, etc.)
SOC	Social connection	Code as SOC posts that mention that Bake Club fulfills a "need," that mimic conversation that would generally happen in person (remediating recipe sharing), and posts that mention sharing food with others
SUP	Support for creating and sharing one's creations	Code as SUP posts that praise people's creations and/or share resources—either linking to other sources or the member giving helpful tips—that help other members create

Appendix B

Chapter 3: *The Splendid Table* Code Lists and Gender Representation

Table 3.1: Primary Code List

Code	Description	Long Description
EXP	Low barriers to artistic expression	Code as EXP posts that mention cooking as a form of creative expression or that cooking is fun or joyous
SOC	Social connection + informal mentorship	Code as SOC posts that remediate the recipe sharing and domestic education that might normally occur in someone's kitchen
SUP	Support for creating and sharing one's creations	Code as SUP example where Rossetto Kasper works to elevate a type of cuisine by bringing on a chef or features a local businesses, including farmers, to help support their work; the guest must be the individual being supported

Table 3.2: Count of Primary Codes

Episode	Primary Code		
	EXP	**SOC**	**SUP**
Episode 099: The Naming of Things	4	23	1
Episode 134: Tequila		23	4
Episode 217: The Politics of Food		34	4
Episode 229: Miss Manners		32	6
Episode 238: The Williams in Williams-Sonoma		23	1
Episode 269: Fetzer Vineyards	2	44	6
Episode 325: Molecular Gastronomy		50	
Episode 339: Donuts	1	33	1
Episode 383: The Seventh Daughter		26	5
Episode 386: Islamic Kitchens	2	28	1
Episode 424: Hmong Kitchen		29	3
Episode 494: Plays With Food	6	23	
Episode 495: Ruhlman's Twenty	1	16	6
Episode 509: Cinco de Mayo	2	24	10
Episode 544: Turbot Soufflé		37	2
Episode 567: Tasting the Dirt		26	5
Episode 591: Cryo-Blanching	1	24	1
Grand Total	19	495	56

Table 3.3: Subcode List

Subcode	Description	Long Description
CULT	Culture, usually a MENT subcode	Code as CULT examples where listeners learn about the foodways of cultures outside of the United States
EATING TOGETHER	Eating together, usually a SOC subcode	Code as EATING TOGETHER examples that encourage listeners to use food as a form of socialization
GEN	Gendered ideology, usually an EXP subcode	Code as GEN examples of stereotypical gender roles (kitchen as woman's place; meat for men; etc.)
HIST	History, usually a SOC subcode	Code as HIST whenever we learn about the background of a food, ingredient, etc.
LOC	Location, usually a SOC subcode	Code as LOC examples that specifically mention where the dish/restaurant is or where it comes from; the focus might also be describing the location or the setting and the people there in order to convey the atmosphere and describe what the location is like
POL	Politics, usually a SUP subcode	Code as POL examples that discuss the political connotations of food and foodways
SHARE	Recipe sharing, usually a SOC subcode	Code as SHARE examples where the in-person exchange of recipes is remediated via the radio

Table 3.4: Count of Subcodes

Episode	Subcode						
	CULT	**EATING TOGETHER**	**GEN**	**HIST**	**LOC**	**POL**	**SHARE**
Episode 099: The Naming of Things	3	2	2	10	4	1	3
Episode 134: Tequila	3			9	3		12
Episode 217: The Politics of Food	1	1	1	3	5	7	19
Episode 229: Miss Manners	1		3	9	4	4	16
Episode 238: The Williams in Williams-Sonoma	1			5	6	1	11
Episode 269: Fetzer Vineyards	2	2		15	7	6	18
Episode 325: Molecular Gastronomy	8			10	8	3	21
Episode 339: Donuts		1	1	10	5		17
Episode 383: The Seventh Daughter	3			8	6	1	13
Episode 386: Islamic Kitchens	1			11	2		16
Episode 424: Hmong Kitchen	3	1	3	9	1	1	14
Episode 494: Plays With Food	3	5		8	1		12
Episode 495: Ruhlman's Twenty	1		1	2	1	3	15
Episode 509: Cinco de Mayo	3			5	10	3	15
Episode 544: Turbot Soufflé	1	1		8	12		16
Episode 567: Tasting the Dirt	1			8	2		19
Episode 591: Cryo-Blanching				3	3		15
Grand Total	**35**	**13**	**11**	**133**	**80**	**30**	**255**

Table 3.5: Count of Callers by Gender

Episode	Gender		
	F	**M**	**Total Callers**
Episode 099: The Naming of Things	3	1	4
Episode 134: Tequila	2		2
Episode 217: The Politics of Food	2	1	3
Episode 229: Miss Manners	3		3
Episode 238: The Williams in Williams-Sonoma	2	2	4
Episode 269: Fetzer Vineyards	4		4
Episode 325: Molecular Gastronomy	2	1	3
Episode 339: Donuts	3		3
Episode 383: The Seventh Daughter	2	2	4
Episode 386: Islamic Kitchens	1	1	2
Episode 424: Hmong Kitchen	1	2	3
Episode 494: Plays With Food	2	2	4
Episode 495: Ruhlman's Twenty	5	1	6
Episode 509: Cinco de Mayo	3	1	4
Episode 544: Turbot Soufflé	3	1	4
Episode 567: Tasting the Dirt	2	1	3
Episode 591: Cryo-Blanching	2		2
Grand Total	42	16	58

Appendix C

Chapter 4: Junior League Cookbooks and Code Lists

Table 4.1: Junior League Cookbooks

Cookbook Title	State	Date
Charleston Receipts	SC	1950
River Road Recipes	LA	1959
The Gasparilla Cookbook	FL	1961
A Cook's Tour	LA	1964
Houston Junior League Cookbook	TX	1968
Talk About Good	LA	1969
Little Rock Cooks	AR	1972
The Cotton Country Collection	LA	1972
Cotton Country Cooking	VA	1972
Bay Leaves	FL	1975
Cooking Through Rose-Colored Glasses	TX	1975
Virginia Hospitality	VA	1975
The California Heritage Cookbook	CA	1976
River Road Recipes II	LA	1976
A Taste of Georgia	GA	1977
Colorado Cache	CO	1978
Revel	LA	1980
Simply Simpatico	NM	1981
Magic	AL	1982
Traditions	AR	1983
To Market, To Market	KY	1984
Tidewater on the Half Shell	VA	1985
Charleston Receipts Repeats	SC	1986
Crème de Colorado Cookbook	CO	1987
Georgia on my Menu	GA	1988
Celebrations on the Bayou	LA	1989
Honest to Goodness	IL	1990
Colorado Collage	CO	1994
The Best of Wheeling	WV	1994
Of Tide and Thyme	MD	1995
Downtown Savannah Style	GA	1996
Apron Strings	AR	1997
Savannah Style	GA	1997
A Southern Collection	GA	1997
True Grits	GA	1997
And Roses for the Table	TX	1997
Southern on Occasion	GA	1998
Applehood & Motherpie	NY	1998

For Goodness Taste	NY	1998
Meet Us In The Kitchen: A Collection Of Recipes And Stories From The Junior League Of St. Louis	MO	2000
Notably Nashville: A Medley of Tastes and Traditions	TN	2000
Oh My Stars! Recipes that Shine	VA	2000
The Junior League Celebration Cookbook: A Treasury of the 400 Most Requested Recipes from Junior League Cookbooks	N/A	2000
Dancing on the Table: Easily Elegant Recipes to Keep the Joy in Entertaining	DE	2001
At Your Service: Southern Recipes, Places, and Traditions	GA	2001
Glitter to Gourmet – Savory and Sensational Recipes from the Junior League of Las Vegas	NV	2001
Austin Entertains	TX	2001
Colorado Colore: A Palate of Tastes	CO	2002
By Invitation Only: Artful Entertaining, Southern Style	FL	2002
Oil and Vinegar	OK	2002
Cooking from the Coast to the Cascades	OR	2002
Simply Classic	WA	2002
Bay Fêtes A Tour of Celebrations Along the Gulf Coast	FL	2003
Life of the Party	FL	2003
Always Superb: Recipes for Every Occasion	MO	2003
Fresh from the Valley	WA	2003
California Sol Food: Casual Cooking from the Junior League of San Diego	CA	2004
Beach Appetit	FL	2004
EveryDay Feasts	FL	2004
Home Again, Home Again	KY	2004
Roux To Do	LA	2004
Dining Dakota Style: A Celebration of Heartland Recipes from the Junior League of Sioux Falls	SD	2004
Toast to Tidewater	VA	2004
Mad about Food: A Collection of Recipes from a City That's Mad about Food	WI	2004
Pomegranates and Prickly Pears	AZ	2005
Something to Talk About	LA	2005
Between the Lakes: A Collection of Michigan Recipes	MI	2005
Tables of Content: Service, Settings and Supper	AL	2006
Savor the Seasons	FL	2006
Ring Around the Rosie	TX	2006
Add Another Place Setting	AR	2007
Simply Sarasota	FL	2007
Beyond the Hedges: From Tailgating to Tea Parties	GA	2007
Peeling the Wild Onion	IL	2007

Boston Uncommon	MA	2007
A Thyme to Entertain	MD	2007
Simply Southern	GA	2008
Cooking in High Cotton	LA	2008
Peace Meals	TX	2008
Big Taste of Little Rock	AR	2009
Colorado Classique by the Junior League of Denver	CO	2009
Pull Up a Chair	GA	2009
Texas Tables	TX	2009
My Mama Made That Virginia Favorites from the Junior League of Hampton Roads	VA	2009
Junior League's in the Kitchen with Kids	N/A	2009
Capture the Coast	FL	2010
You're Invited Back	NC	2010
Tell Me More	LA	2011
Talk About Good 2	LA	2011
Seasoned to Taste	TN	2011
Salt to Honey	UT	2012
Bluegrass Gatherings	KY	2013
Very Virginia	VA	2014
On the Squares Savannah Style	GA	2015
River Road Recipes III	LA	2017
Simply Sarasota	FL	2018
Centennial Celebrations: A Colorado Cookbook	CO	2019

Table 4.2: Primary Code List

Code	Description	Long Description
EXP	Low barriers to artistic expression	Code as EXP recipes and headnotes that mention having/not having access to ingredients, kitchen equipment, and pre-existing cooking skills as well as recipes and headnotes that talk about creativity and fun
MENT	Informal mentorship	Code as MENT materials in the cookbook that mentions the JLD's mission statement
SOC	Social connection	Code as SOC recipes and headnotes that contribute to making a collaboratively authored text as well as indications of how the JLD circulates their work
SUP	Support for local businesses, venues, and local food ingredients	Code as SUP mentions of community-engaged projects and events

Table 4.3: Count of Primary Codes

Cookbooks	**Codes**				
	EXP	**MENT**	**SOC**	**SUP**	**Grand Total**
Centennial Celebrations	49	4	49	29	134
Colorado Cache	261		77	11	349
Grand Total	310	4	126	40	483

Table 4.4: Secondary Code List

Subcode	Description	Long Description
CULT	Culture, usually a MENT subcode	Code as CULT examples where readers learn about the foodways of cultures outside of the United States, or there is a cultural stereotype
ENT	Entertaining Tip	Code as ENT specific notes that are geared toward what the cook might do if she's entertaining company
GEN	Gendered ideology, usually an EXP subcode	Code as GEN examples of stereotypical gender roles (kitchen as woman's place; meat for men; etc.)
HIST	History, usually a SOC subcode	Code as HIST whenever we learn about the background of a food, ingredient, location, the history of a JLD event, specific moments connected to memorializing (an act of historicizing), or remembering
LIT	Literacy, usually an EXP subcode	Code as LIT examples that emphasize food literacy or any kind of knowledge learning
LOC	Location/local foodways, usually a SUP subcode	Code as LOC examples that specifically mention where the dish/restaurant is or where it comes from
SHARE	Recipe sharing, usually a SOC subcode	Code as SHARE examples where the in-person exchange of recipes is remediated via storytelling
SPON	Corporate sponsor, usually a SUP subcode	Code as SPON when a corporate sponsor's logo appears, or there's a note that mentions the sponsor

Table 4.5: Count of Secondary Codes

Cookbooks	Subcodes								
	CULT	**ENT**	**GEN**	**HIST**	**LIT**	**LOC**	**SHARE**	**SPON**	**Grand Total**
Centennial Celebrations	6	21	1	58	27	12	1	6	133
Colorado Cache	4	28	1	32	218	54			348
Grand Total	10	49	2	90	245	66	6	1	474