innovative impression of the region's past, present, and future. Lundy's decision to construct her text around the complex values and aspirations of contemporary Appalachians demonstrates how cookbooks have the potential to tantalize the taste buds while simultaneously imparting serious lessons about the way food customs and consumption can have a meaningful social impact. Through their literary encounters with a diverse set of locals who are using food to reclaim the region's identity and create a promising future for their communities, readers develop a new appreciation for both Appalachia and the cookbook genre as a whole. This realization, in turn, serves as a reminder that the stories we tell about certain dishes and the individuals who prepare them have the power to affect (for better or worse) the lives of very real people. Consequently, by framing this delicious and diverse collection of recipes in a way that offers readers food for thought, Lundy ultimately leaves us with a hunger in our hearts for narratives that foster a sense of hope and community.

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15 "A lifetime spent in the pursuit of good flavor"

Edna Lewis's Cookbooks

Nicole Stamant

"Long overlooked as primary documents that women have written abo their own lives and work," Janet Theophano reminds us in her extr ordinary *Eat My Words: Reading Women's Lives through the Cookbooks Th Wrote* (2002), the "intimate stories" shared in cookbooks "reveal indiv dual women telling their own life stories, their versions of their commu nities, and the visions they have of society and culture" (2–3). In so doin cookbooks are invaluable literary testaments to how people lived an thrived, how they made do, and how they inscribed their communitie That cookbooks should be read as literary texts is not as provocative statement as it once was, although such study often remains outside of th realm of academic inquiry, especially if the text is more recipe-focuse than reflective; cookbooks, themselves, are less frequently considered tha other kinds of culinary memoir. That said, as Anne Goldman argues, "t write about food is to write about the self as well" (169), and recipe provide invaluable ways to read the lives of the individuals and commu nities sustained by those accounts. The works of acclaimed chef Edn Lewis exemplify how important cookbooks can be to literary study sinc they present Lewis's lived experience, recollection of community an cultural existence, and thoughtful engagement with the natural world They also underscore a dedication to a craft—cooking—that has bee fraught by centuries of black women's laboring for others, specifically i this realm, preparing food for others to consume while often being seen themselves, as a consumable product, rather than as agents in and o themselves. Lewis's keen attention to history, ancestry, and the land in he cookbooks provide an important lens through which to understand race and space in American culture.

In this consideration of Lewis's works, I rely on Thadious Davis's formulation of "southscapes," a term that, Davis explains, "call[s] attention to the South as a social, political, cultural, and economic construct but one with the geographic 'fact of the land'" (2). Southscapes insist on the intimate relationship "between society and environment as a way of thinking about how raced human beings are impacted by the shape of the land," and offers a way to consider "space, race, and society in the Deep South"

(Davis 2). While Davis's considerations focus primarily on locations in Mississippi and Louisiana, such a theorization of the central role of an aesthetics of space is crucial for how I read Edna Lewis's insistently place-specific recipes and recollections. Importantly, Davis considers not only the role of enslavement in African American experience but also of segregation in relation to places in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century, since, in segregated society, "place is a spatial marker conveying quite specific meanings" (6): historically, these are locales in which phrases like "Blacks have to 'know their place' and to 'remain in their place'" were common, and those places were clearly marked with signage, such as "Whites Only" or "Colored" (Davis 7). Edna Lewis, born in 1916 at the height of the Jim Crow era in the United States, was acutely aware of such restrictive and proscriptive places, and implicitly considers how counter-spatiality might undergird foodways and traditions in her works. In fact, Lewis's texts underscore the ecological and environmental implications of southscapes and are unapologetic about the intimate relationship between African Americans and the natural world. Engaging Lewis' works require a considered interrogation of space, place, and history, with a particular focus on the complexities of consumption: who consumes, what they consume, and how they consume.

Lewis wrote four cookbooks: *The Edna Lewis Cookbook* (1972), *The Taste of Country Cooking* (1976), *In Pursuit of Flavor* (1988), and *The Gift of Southern Cooking* (2003), which she co-authored with her student and friend Scott Peacock.[1] Throughout these texts, Lewis emphasizes the "great care" that should be taken with food, both in its preparation and in the ingredients and materials used to prepare it. She insists on seasonality, locality, and freshness. "I feel fortunate to have been raised at a time when the vegetables from the garden, the fruit from the orchard, and the meat from the smokehouse were all good and pure, unadulterated by chemicals and long-life packaging," Lewis writes in the introduction to *In Pursuit of Flavor*. "As a result, I believe I know how food should taste" (vii). Such belief is communicated throughout her oeuvre of literary cookbooks. Her recipes are clearly written and accessible to home cooks—in her words, they are "a welcome introduction to good food simply and lovingly prepared"—and they present a challenge to the ubiquity of mass-produced food available in contemporary America (*Pursuit* viii). In her rebuke of pre-packaged and deracinated food, Lewis exposes some of the ways in which food production technologies obscure the histories, geographies, and individuals who create and curate the culinary. Her works foreground those who grew, harvested, and prepared meals based in a particular place at a particular time: specifically, African American communities in Freetown, Virginia. In the introduction to the thirtieth anniversary edition of *The Taste of Country Cooking*, Chez Panisse founder and outspoken advocate for fresh sustainable food chef Alice Waters explains that, for its initial audience, the community Lewis presents and describes

> may have seemed even more remote than it does today. Back then, the possibility that many Americans might once again strive to eat only local, seasonal foods, raised or gathered or hooked by people they knew, seemed distant at best. Back then, most of us were more or less resigned to the industrialization of our food, the mechanization of our work, the trivialization of our play, and the atomization of our communities. (xi)

Lewis's work rejects these seeming inevitabilities, insisting instead on the intimate relationship between consumption and production, on sustainability and biodiversity in what Jane Lear describes as Lewis's "steely commitment to a farm-to-table connection." This commitment underscores Lewis's attachment to the land—the farms, rivers, and woods—from which food comes. In so doing, Lewis also makes a political statement that links her works with those throughout African American history: that to care for one's own land, one's own community, one's own family, is a human right. Angela Davis has argued that in caring for their own communities, enslaved black women "perform[ed] the *only* labor of the slave community which could not be directly and immediately claimed by the oppressor," and that domestic and household work "was the only meaningful labor for the slave community as a whole" because women "could help to lay the foundation for some degree of autonomy" (87, emphasis original). Domestic work, then, and for the purposes of this particular argument—cooking specifically—is a form of resistance. Lewis' cookbooks, in foregrounding the community they memorialize and in recording the daily work of maintaining the land, harvesting the crops, and preparing the food preserved in the recipes and reminiscences they contain, underscore the intimacy of consumption and the potential for resistance contained therein.

Freetown, Virginia: Counterspace

In her introduction to *Black Nature: Four Centuries of African American Nature Poetry* (2009), Camille Dungy writes: "Even during the most difficult periods of African American history, the natural world held potential to be a source of refuge, sustenance, and uncompromised beauty" (xxv) and this rich potential is explored and displayed in Lewis's recipes. The relationship between African Americans and the natural world has been largely ignored or reduced to an exterior perspective of that relationship. Dungy explains that

> regardless of their presence, blacks have not been recognized in their poetic attempts to affix themselves to the landscape. They haven't been seen, or when they have it is not as people who are rightful stewards of the land. They are accidentally or invisibly or dangerously or temporarily or inappropriately on/in the landscape. (xxvi)

In Lewis's works, however, there is an intimacy between the land and the people who inhabit it, who care for it, and who maintain it.

Lewis explicitly recognizes the circumstances that brought her ancestors to Virginia and unapologetically claims their space as stewards and caretakers of that land. These histories are placed at the beginning of her works, as in the introduction to *The Taste of Country Cooking*, where she writes:

> I grew up in Freetown, Virginia, a community of farming people. It wasn't really a town. The name was adopted because the first residents had all been freed from chattel slavery and they wanted to be known as a town of Free People. My grandfather had been one of the first: His family, along with two others, were granted land by a plantation owner, Claiborn R. Mason, Jr., for whom one of them had served as coachman … After the first three families were settled, eight more joined in and purchased land. They built their houses in a circle around my grandfather's, which was in the center. My grandmother had been a brickmason as a slave—purchased for the sum of $950 by a rich land owner who had several tracts of land and wanted to build two imposing houses on different locations. Grandmother was put to work molding the bricks, then carrying them and laying them (one of the houses she worked on still stands today, owned and restored by a college professor, but the other was destroyed in the Civil War). (xix)

Beginning with this historical narrative of her community of Free People, and through the ancestral history of her grandparents, Lewis underscores the importance of the agency of authorship—in building and creating their own spaces—and the ways in which her recipes embody the importance of subjectivity. Her works serve as what Theophano calls a "map," and in this case it is a map to the past, created by her ancestors, and which serves as a guide for future communities who, like the residents of Freetown, inhabit space(s) of their own making (14). Describing the organization of Freetown, with her grandfather's house in the center, she shares an intimate public history with readers who are unlikely to be connected to it. The recipes, and the histories they distill, memorialize the spaces of Virginia and, in particular, demonstrate the community's patterns of consumption which are explicitly connected to the land and to the work of one another.

"African Americans are tied up in the toil and soil involved in working this land into the country we know today," Dungy reminds readers. "Viewed once as chattel, part of a farm's livestock or an asset in a banker's ledger, African Americans developed a complex relationship to land, animals, and vegetation in American culture" (xxii). Dungy's language precisely echoes Lewis' introduction. In many ways, Aimee Carrillo Rowe's concept of coalitional subjectivity—a position that "center[s] belonging as a starting point for naming and imagining location, as opposed to an effect of location"—is one way to further interrogate the relationship between geographical location and relation and invigorate the idea of southscapes (19). For Lewis, the complex relationship African Americans develop with environments is about physical place as much as it is about how individuals belong to those places within community.

These complexities are given the attention they deserve in Lewis's works, in the recipes themselves as well as in the headings or descriptions that accompany them. Her seasonally organized cookbooks reflect a clear connection to physical environment, as certain foods grow and thereby become available, or unavailable, at certain times. Such an organizational scheme underscores her community's habits of consumption as it also demonstrates their resistance against what could be understood as a mass-produced or homogenized foodways tradition, in which everything is always available, even if it is not local or cultivated for taste. Within those seasonal sections are menus for specific kinds of gatherings: from the quotidian "A Hearty Midday Dinner" and "An Early Summer Lunch of the Season's Delicacies" to the more culturally significant "Sunday Revival Dinner," "Emancipation Day Dinner," "Morning-After-Hog-Butchering Breakfast," along with a number of Christmas-related recipes, including "Preparations for Christmas," "Christmas Eve Supper," "Christmas Breakfast," and "Christmas Dinner." Notably absent are other national holiday celebrations, including the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving, which underscore Lewis's belonging to her particular community and how she presents *their* specific cultural memory, rather than trying to make the history the reader expects conform to her community's realities.[2] Marvalene H. Hughes likewise posits that "the central core of Black food celebrations is the *intent of sharing*," and such a tenet of communal intimacy is clear in Lewis' texts (277, emphasis original). Following these recipes—which requires both careful sourcing of ingredients and thoughtful preparation of dishes—allows readers, too, to participate in this system of sharing; we, like the community of Freetown, can enjoy the meals and learn about historical contexts, while consuming that history responsibly, avoiding essentializing or appropriating her history and memories.

This history Lewis provides refuses historical amnesia: by providing specific details, Lewis demands that readers recognize the intricacies of her family's history and how their histories make her work possible, providing context for our consumption.[3] Reading the recipes provided within *The Taste of Country Cooking* and *In Pursuit of Flavor* through the prism of post-Reconstruction African American experience, readers' assumptions about Southern life and, in particular, Southern cooking, are rendered more complex and are fundamentally connected to what Dungy calls "the devastating realities of history" (xxi). Indeed, they provide readers with collective memory of Freetown, whose members chose to establish a community for themselves. Their collective sense provides a crucial element that challenges particular historical narratives about the lives of Southern African Americans. W. Fitzhugh Brundage reminds us that life in the "postbellum

South was not a tabula rasa on which blacks and whites could sketch their futures without regard to the past," but rather that, "Through law and custom, the slaveholding elites of the antebellum South had fashioned a public culture that was rigorously exclusionary" (9). The creation of Freetown poses a direct challenge to that exclusionary public culture, of course, and what makes Lewis's work so important in that context and in ours is that she provides readers glimpses into Freetown's private spaces of consumption—into its kitchens and at its tables—through recipes: texts simultaneously public and private. In so doing, consumption is presented as resistance and activism: as ethical and sustainable and necessary.

Thresholds of Consumption

Brundage notes that "the rituals of black memory represented a form of cultural resistance" and "countermemory," which, I suggest, are codified in Lewis's recipes and in the physical and spatial location of the kitchen (10). Kitchens are liminal spaces, often understood as the heart of the house, but also historically were often removed from the architecture of the main house. Kitchens are a space of transition and transaction, of goods entering a space and being transformed, of people joining and eating and consuming. The messiness of cooking, the repetition and dailiness of it, its clear link to the natural world (in dirt, for example, or killing animals for consumption), and its intimate connection to abject materials—ingredients which were once living but are killed or harvested in order to render them edible—have led the acts of cooking to be considered marginal or held in low esteem.[4] From the beginning of enslavement, African American women cooked for white families in the American South and throughout the country, placing them in the position of cooking but not consuming. "Through their labor and their talents," Rebecca Sharpless writes in *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens: Domestic Workers in the South: 1865–1960* (2010), African American women "fed fifteen generations of white southerners" and, following emancipation, "the work of these women also fed their own families, in the form of wages and food left over from their employers' tables" (1). For Lewis, this history—both in terms of African Americans' cooking for others and in sustaining their own families—is never far from her negotiation of her own relationship to cooking, although it is not made explicit in the books themselves. Instead, she filters her recipes through the specific landscape and history of Freetown, requiring readers to think carefully about the ingredients they use and the provenance—both in terms of terroir and authorial perspective—of their food.

The ephemerality of cooking is materially located in the recipes and recollections of both those who prepare the food and those who consume it, which is one reason why recipes themselves are so important. Theophano suggests that "cookbooks open doors into the details of the kitchen, an oddly evocative place to understand other ways of living" (7). For African

American cooks, people for whom literacy was illegal under enslavement and for whom oral transmission of recipes was crucial, Lewis's recipes demonstrate what Colleen Cotter describes as a "written reduction of an actual event" (71). In her entry titled "Plums," for example, Lewis writes:

> Plums of all kinds were looked upon as being very special, perhaps because of their deep pastel colors, their different shapes, textures, and sweet flavor. The bright-red round variety were the first to ripen, and were used in preserving and wine-making. Damsons were always made into preserves ... The pale-green ones called greengages were stewed. And the dark-purple ones were used for pies, tarts, and fruit compotes. Everyone had plum trees in their orchards and new plants were constantly seeded, and the seedlings were passed around from neighbor to neighbor. (*Country Cooking* 164)

Lewis's affection and appreciation for biodiversity is clear, here, as is her insistence on how the community responds to it. The cultural knowledge of which plums were best for which ends—which should be stewed, which should be preserved, which should be fermented—underscores the kind of intimacy in shared knowledge and recognition of scarcity Lewis' cookbooks demonstrate. Production and consumption here are linked in the cultivation of plants and across the variety of uses to which the plums could be put. Sharing the seedlings underscores a devotion to the future, to revitalizing orchards with an eye toward more variety for the community. In direct contrast to an understanding of fruit that stems from monoculture and grocery stores, where a plum is simply a plum, Lewis demonstrates the possibilities for those who have an intimate, expansive knowledge of the world around them. Dungy points out that "the natural world contains much that demands attention. Survival in hostile environments depends on understanding the very complexity of these environments" and Lewis's works demonstrate how her community throve in hostile, complex environments, ecologically and culturally (xxvi). That certain varieties are good for certain things, and not for others, illustrates how specific natural knowledge manifests within her cookbooks, providing urgently needed counternarratives.

In *Southern Provisions: The Creation and Revival of a Cuisine*, David S. Shields provides a seven-pages-long table that delineates types of vegetables, and varieties of each vegetable in order to illustrate the incredible biodiversity of regional produce available in the nineteenth century (42–49). In so doing, he also explains the divide he sees between how cookbooks present ingredients and how gardening books explain what is available. Shields writes:

> Always aware that a reader might not have a particular ingredient available, the author [of nineteenth-century cookbooks] used the most categorical designation possible for vegetables, grains, and meats.

> Cookbook authors avoided particularizing varieties of fruits or vegetables. Even fewer (three, maybe four) said *anything* about the production, the growing of the vegetables or fruits indicated for use. Consider briefly the role of famous authors silent about the subject. None of the great matrons of the cooking schools spoke of it. Not Lydia Marie Child, Mrs. Ellis, Mrs. E. A. Howland, Miss Leslie, Sara Josepha Hale, Elizabeth Ellet, Mrs. S. T. Rorer, S. Annie Frost, Jennie June, Catharine Beecher, Juliet Corson, Maria Parloa, or Fannie Farmer. Nor did the master hotel chefs of the century—William Volmer, Pierre Blot, Felix Deliée, Charles Ranhofer, and Alexander Filippini. None of these figures noted the stupendous increase in the variety of types of vegetables available … American cookbooks (and I include the canon of southern classics by Mary Randolph, Sarah Rutledge, Mrs. A. P. Hill, Mrs. Lettice Bryan, Mrs. Maria Barringer, Mrs. Sarah A. Elliott, Miss Tyson, Marion Cabell Tyree, Mrs. B. C. Howard, Lafcadio Hearn, the Christian Women's Exchange of New Orleans, A. G. Wilcox, Mary Stuart Smith, and Mrs. Washington) of the nineteenth century did not register the single most distinctive development of national cuisine—the enormous proliferation of fruit, grain, and vegetable varieties during the 1800s. (50, emphasis original)

Such absences in nineteenth century cookbooks demonstrate how distinctive Lewis's attention to these varieties is and how her insistence on biodiversity sets her works apart from the kinds of cookbooks that predated her. While Lewis's cookbooks are published well into the twentieth century, the recipes themselves are inherited from her family and community members, and repeatedly challenge the "categorical designation" reinforced by the cookbooks Shields observes and the attendant obfuscation of growing and cultivating fruits and vegetables. In fact, Shields continues, across the canon of American cookbooks, both regional and national, from the nation's inception, there has always been a "disconnect between production and cooking and eating"; entrenched "in two mutually exclusive bodies of print (garden books and cookbooks), we witness a cultural fissure firmly in place in the mid-nineteenth century" (51). It is, of course, this industrialization of foodways and artificial separation between cooking and growing, between consumption and production, that Lewis rejects so firmly and counters in her works.

Creating something from the earth, by hand, is at the center of Lewis's works. Her grandmother's labor as a brickmason under enslavement is essential knowledge for the rest of Lewis's works: for Lewis, ownership and stewardship of the thing made, along with critical consideration of the complexity of consumption, are of foundational importance. *The Taste of Country Cooking* is, in fact, dedicated "to the memory of the people of Freetown." While reading Lewis's cookbooks with an eye to their usefulness, to how well the recipes are written or how attentive they are to how a reader might prepare a dish, a reader recognizes the clarity with which they are assembled. As Shields argues, "traditional cuisines cannot be understood simply by reading old cookbooks; you can't simply re-create recipes and—voilà! … If the ingredients are mediocre, there will be no revelation on the tongue" (3). For Lewis, explaining that "purple plums" are needed is one way to underscore the need for specific, excellent ingredients. If those ingredients are unavailable, perhaps the reader will advocate for different kinds of produce, searching out new tastes and new ways of engaging with the world. In so doing, they would be participating in a revival of diverse ecologies, challenging the conventional narrative of production and consumption as being corporatized and deracinated, rather than specific and rooted.

The Myth of Edna Lewis

Rowe's idea that belonging is political undergirds Lewis's texts, then, as she establishes a countertradition to a hegemonic, monocultural, corporatized American consciousness and experience. Insisting on the importance of her ancestral history, writing fondly and passionately of her childhood and her community through the culinary traditions that made it possible, Lewis provides readers with a vision for the future that also recalls the past. Such elements of her work have also made her a quasi-mythological figure and, accordingly, there is a certain reverence with which writers who work with Edna Lewis's cookbooks approach her recipes.[5] Reading across articles and features, Lewis's biography usually takes a prominent place. Kim Severson in her memoir *Spoon Fed* (2010) considers Lewis's recipes and how Lewis's books challenged expectations about what Southern food could do and did do; Severson relays Lewis's disdain for the idea of "soul food" ("Inner-city restaurants that served watery greens and greasy fried chicken and dull macaroni and cheese were a bastardization of real, true Southern cooking and, to her mind, didn't represent anything good" [Severson 167]),[6] and underscores Lewis's cooking career in New York. "People have come to call Miss Lewis the grade dame of Southern cooking," Severson writes, "but the biggest piece of her cooking career was in New York. She had been drawn to the city because of its politics and culture," noting that "Politics were very important to Miss Lewis. She had been the first in her family to vote, and said her greatest honor was to work for Franklin D. Roosevelt's first presidential race. Later, she would march with Dr. Martin Luther King at the Poor People's March in Washington in 1968" (167–168). From there, Severson writes about Lewis's glamorous restaurant work in the middle of the century, where people like Howard Hughes, Salvador Dali, Marlene Dietrich, Eleanor Roosevelt, Greta Garbo, Tennessee Williams, and William Faulkner dined at her restaurant. It is at this point that, in Severson's writing, the central place of politics fades away and Lewis resumes her status as grande doyenne of Southern cooking.

While Severson's aim in *Spoon Fed* is her own, it stands in, here, for how a great deal of work on Lewis looks: her biography often overpowers the textuality of the cookbooks. As Katja Lee notes, celebrity life-writing often "derives its meaning and significance from the discourses of celebrity in circulation outside it and from the discourses and systems of celebrity it embodies and reproduces, whether intentionally or not" (87). Celebrities themselves are often rendered the object for consumption, an especially complex and potentially troublesome situation when the celebrity is one whose works challenge the historical consumption of African American bodies-as-objects. Further complicating our relationship with celebrity life-writing, Lee asserts, are the "field of forces negotiating the meaning of celebrity," which are unnavigable for both the celebrity and the reader, which is why "the multiple discourses that circulate about a particular individual shape not just our reading strategies but potentially the production of the text as well" (87). Lewis's interesting life—either the celebrities she met and the worlds she inhabited as a chef or the fact that, as Sara Franklin writes, she "was among the first southern African American women to pen a cookbook transparent about the author's true identity—race, gender, and even name"—has a tendency to overshadow what is special about the cookbooks themselves: that her community and history in Freetown, her family, and her intimate relationship with the land provide political foundations for Lewis's cooking. I argue that Lewis's cookbooks, then, serve as both a memorialization of a particular place and community and as a way for readers to consume a particular political approach, entrenched in the longer history of African American experience.

Unquestionably, Lewis's biography and her work as a professional chef is important, as is the role she held in "drawing serious attention to the cooking of the American South" (Franklin), but so too is the way she recovers and reveals the particularities of her communities and her ancestry. "For years, poets and critics have called for a broader inclusiveness in conversations about ecocriticism and ecopoetics," Dungy writes, "one that acknowledges other voices and a wider range of cultural and ethnic concerns. African Americans, specifically, are fundamental to the natural fabric of this nation but have been noticeably absent from tables of contents. To bring more voices into the conversation about human interactions with the natural world, we must change the parameters of the conversation" (xxi). Likewise, Rowe reminds us that belonging is both complex and, in and of itself, political:

> belongings may be multiple, shifting, and even contradictory (in terms of the norms they produce, the politics that drive them, the conditions for loving they request, or demand): family, neighborhood, friends, allies, colleagues, social groups, lovers, nations. In this sense, these sites of belonging are political as they operate in relation to power: with and through, as well as against, in resistance to, and even in directions that redefine and redistribute it. (18)

Lewis's ability to situate herself among these multiple relational positions, including her own celebrity, allows her to expose the relationship of belonging and power, especially complex when considering how recipes function in their negotiation of consumption: of authority and novice, experience and attempt. As a community, Freetown was established as a direct response to political and social structures in the service of autonomy. Lewis's works similarly strive to point out the contradictory impulses of sites of belonging while, ultimately, resisting the kinds of structures which attempt to circumscribe and denigrate her work and her community.

Digestif

This contradictory nature of belonging and consumption are also manifest in the food itself, since "Cuisines have two faces: a cosmopolitan face, prepared by *professional* cooks; and a common face, prepared by *household* cooks. In the modern world. A cuisine is at least bimodal in constitution, with an urbane style and a country vernacular style" (Shields 5, emphasis original). Such bimodality is essential in considering the complexity of consumption, which can be dismissed as a mode of unconscious consumerism. Like the acts of cooking and eating, the multimodality of Lewis's works and recipes try to negotiate such different aspects of belonging: both outward facing and inward, written in the service of the memory of the community of Freetown and for a wider reading audience, by granddaughter and grande doyenne. As such, the ethical consumption Lewis's texts demonstrate some of the inherent power in consumption: that of agency and of determination. Theophano reminds us that cookbooks encapsulate the essential elements of lived experience—"life and death, youth and age, faithfulness and betrayal, memory and forgetfulness"—while they simultaneously "tell us how to make beauty and meaning in the midst of the mundane—a concept especially important for women, whose lives often are punctuated by the demands of feeding others" (6). To Theophano's essential elements of lived experience I would add self-creation: the ability to define oneself for oneself. To consider how we relate to one another in a variety of settings allows us to consider the processes, iterative and relational, of becoming. For Lewis, the demands of feeding others are always also historically resonant, as the position of African Americans across the United States has historically been inscribed and proscribed by others. Invoking southscapes and countermemory, Lewis's works challenge those representations, instead arguing that agency over food itself, over how that food is prepared, and over how that food is consumed is crucial. Her recipes and memories insist that we recognize the political elements of belonging and everyday modes of resistance have mattered in American history and how they continue to matter. If, as Brillat-Savarin's adage suggests, we are what we eat, Edna Lewis's cookbooks demonstrate that our habits of consumption reflect both who we are and what we value.

Notes

1 For the purposes of this chapter, I focus on *The Taste of Country Cooking* and *In Pursuit of Flavor* because they most fully display Lewis's voice and foreground the intimate relationship between her recipes and recollections. In the "Introduction" to *The Gift of Southern Cooking*, Peacock writes that he and Lewis "both felt that a first-person-plural voice speaking for both of us was awkward," so he assumed the authorial voice (xiv–xv). While it is his hope, he writes, that his writing "reflects both her passion for exploring what it means to be Southern, what the Southern experience is, and how it is reflected in food" (xv), my argument centers on how her recipes and recollections connect to her sense of politics and the environment. While many of the headnotes and, accordingly, the recipes blend Peacock and Lewis's cooking approaches and experiences, the primary voice remains his. (The bivocality of this particular text should be the subject of inquiry elsewhere.) Similarly, *The Edna Lewis Cookbook* was written with Evangeline Peterson. My copy, from Axios Press, features an introduction from Hunter Lewis and was published to commemorate the centenary of Lewis's birth. As such, it is more retrospective than the first edition, and features a number of photographs of Lewis, but does not prioritize her voice; Doris Witt observes that *The Edna Lewis Cookbook* "advocates for fresh foods without specifying its author's racial identity" (183).

2 For more about the relationship between Lewis's works and national identity, see Nan Seuffert's "Culinary Jurisprudence and National Identity: Penny Pether on *The Taste of Country Cooking*," in the *Villanova Law Review*, vol. 60, pp. 639–665.

3 Rafia Zafar, in "Elegy and Remembrance in the Cookbooks of Alice B. Toklas and Edna Lewis," argues that these works present "deliberate engagement with loss, as well as their respective embrace or rejection of their cultural identities" (33), noting that both authors "reimagin[e]" and "reincarnat[e]" the past "through recounted meals and now-unfindable ingredients" (35).

4 Zafar pays close attention to the way that "the killing that accompanies omnivorous eating" is connected to the elegy: "If elegy's subjects are death and loss, cookbooks' tales of once living flesh and the meals they comprise illuminate less recognized modes of mourning" and that an "animal's death makes real the loss that propelled the writing of the text" (36).

5 Sara Franklin notes that there is a kind of "mythology that surrounds Lewis," and Lewis's experiences, both as a child and as a chef, provide a frame for fiction, too, as in Sarah Rebecca White's *A Place at the Table* (2013).

6 Witt echoes this claim, quoting from a *Southern Living* profile which says that Lewis "'shudders at the idea of "soul food" [...] describing it as "hard-times food in Harlem—not true Southern food"'" (183–184).

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