

Antioch University

AURA - Antioch University Repository and Archive

Antioch University Full-Text Dissertations &
Theses

Antioch University Dissertations and Theses

2017

A Poetics of Food in the Bahamas: Intentional Journeys Through Food, Consciousness, and the Aesthetic of Everyday Life

Hilary B. Booker

Antioch University, New England

Follow this and additional works at: <https://aura.antioch.edu/etds>



Part of the [Caribbean Languages and Societies Commons](#), [Environmental Studies Commons](#), [Ethnic Studies Commons](#), [Philosophy Commons](#), and the [Sustainability Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Booker, H. B. (2017). A Poetics of Food in the Bahamas: Intentional Journeys Through Food, Consciousness, and the Aesthetic of Everyday Life. <https://aura.antioch.edu/etds/347>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Antioch University Dissertations and Theses at AURA - Antioch University Repository and Archive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Antioch University Full-Text Dissertations & Theses by an authorized administrator of AURA - Antioch University Repository and Archive. For more information, please contact hhale@antioch.edu.

A POETICS OF FOOD

Committee Page

Committee Chair: Dr. Elizabeth McCann

Dr. Jean Kayira

Ms. Jean Amaral

Dr. Selima Campbell-Hauber

A POETICS OF FOOD

A POETICS OF FOOD

A POETICS OF FOOD IN THE BAHAMAS:
INTENTIONAL JOURNEYS THROUGH FOOD, CONSCIOUSNESS,
AND THE AESTHETICS OF EVERYDAY LIFE

By

Hilary B. Booker

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Environmental Studies

at

Antioch University New England

2017

A POETICS OF FOOD

© Copyright by Hilary Booker 2017

All Rights Reserved

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the residents of the Simpson Penn Centre for Boys,
who taught me
the difference
between
appearing powerful
and
being powerful.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I want to thank the universal force of infinite creativity which has brought me here, which is in me, and which guides my path. I want to extend deep gratitude to my family. To my parents – thank you for all of your support. Thank you for allowing me to stay with you while writing my dissertation and for tolerating my dissertation attitude. I have infinite gratitude to and for my therapists and spiritual directors, without whom I would not have completed this work. I am grateful to all of the Antioch University New England faculty and staff who have facilitated my journey. I am grateful, especially, for the members of my committee who have been patient and adaptable throughout this journey. The members of my original cohort and the students in the Environmental Studies Department have contributed to my journey through emotional and intellectual support and expansion, for which I am grateful.

Thank you to the people who agreed to participate in this study. You have given me gifts greater than that which I can articulate. Thank you to all of my communities and families in Nassau and the Bahamian diaspora who welcomed and accepted me while I lived there and continue to do so. Thank you for supporting me through my own journey of consciousness and spiritual growth. Thank you for agreeing to walk together. I want to thank the few friends and colleagues who remain at the submission of this manuscript for enduring the journey with me. I also wish to thank the new people who have entered my life since returning to the U.S. for proving to me that what I seek is seeking me, even in what I expected to be the least likely place.

I started my PhD nine years ago. So many people have helped me reach this point that it would be impossible to name everyone individually and unfair to exclude any one person. To thank everyone who contributed to this dissertation, to the life that has allowed me to write it, and to the life that continues to emerge at its conclusion would require its own chapter.

ABSTRACT

This research explores intentional food practices and journeys of consciousness in a network of people in The Bahamas. Intentional food practices are defined as interactions with food chosen for particular purposes, while journeys of consciousness are cumulative successions of events that people associate with healing, restoration, and decolonization personally and collectively. This research examines (1) experiences and moments that influenced people's intentional food practices; (2) food practices that people enact daily; and (3) how people's intentional food practices connect to broader spiritual, philosophical, and ideological perspectives guiding their lives. The theoretical framework emerges from a specific lineage of theories and philosophies of hybridity, diaspora, creolization, poetics, critique, and aesthetics from the Caribbean. The research explores how intentional food practices reflect expressions of emerging foodways and identities in the Caribbean and joins them with the history of consciousness and intentional food practices in African and Caribbean diasporas. Ethnographic research methods, poetic analysis, and constant comparative analysis provided a foundation for an exploratory approach grounded in the realities of everyday lives. A purposeful snowball sample of twenty-seven (27) in-depth semi-structured interviews provided a primary method of data collection, supported by personal journals, field notes, and document review. No food security research has been published that explores intentional food practices in The Bahamas generally or on the island of New Providence specifically. Key findings suggest a broad variation in people's intentional practices. The intentions underlying these practices reflect desires for individual and collective healing, restoration, and decolonization in their daily lives. By exploring their food practices, interviewees express how they find restoration and healing through visceral experiences with their bodies.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| Dedication..... | i |
| Acknowledgements | ii |
| Abstract..... | iii |
| List of Figures..... | vii |
| Chapter 1 – Introduction | |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Food Security in The Bahamas: An Overview of the Research Context | 4 |
| Geography and climate..... | 4 |
| Ecology and geology | 4 |
| Agriculture and fisheries production..... | 6 |
| Economy | 7 |
| Health | 10 |
| Purpose of the Study | 11 |
| Theoretical Framework | 12 |
| Primary Research Questions | 16 |
| Methodology/Research Design..... | 17 |
| Research Significance | 20 |
| Research Assumptions and Scope | 20 |
| Role of the Researcher..... | 21 |
| Chapter Summary | 22 |
| Chapter 2 – Literature Review | |
| A Transformation of Relations of Resistance and Domination: Intentional Food Practices and Conscious Foodways in the African Diaspora | |
| Introduction | 27 |
| Food Practices as Cultural Practices | 28 |
| Emerging Foodways..... | 30 |
| Diaspora..... | 34 |
| Intentional Food Practices and Conscious Foodways in the African Diaspora..... | 37 |
| Food Culture in African and Caribbean Diasporas..... | 50 |
| Conclusion | 52 |
| Chapter 3 – Theoretical Framework | |
| A Poetics of Food: Applications for the Aesthetics of Everyday Life in the Caribbean | |
| Introduction | 53 |
| Creolization..... | 57 |
| Caribbean Critique & Poetics..... | 61 |
| The Aesthetics of Everyday Life | 64 |
| Experiential specificities | 66 |

A POETICS OF FOOD

| | |
|---|-----|
| Expression through multiple forms, languages & genres | 67 |
| Temporal, spatial, & conceptual fluidity..... | 71 |
| Orientations toward the generative/transformational | 73 |
| Aesthetic practices as economic practices | 74 |
| A Poetics of Food | 75 |
| Conclusion | 81 |
| Chapter 4 – Methodology | |
| Poetics, Ethnography, & Research: Practices of Everyday Life | |
| Introduction | 82 |
| Researcher Positionality & Ethics | 83 |
| Ethnography as a Practice of Everyday Life | 87 |
| Interpretive ethnographies | 90 |
| Performance ethnographies | 92 |
| Auto-ethnographies..... | 95 |
| Participant Selection | 97 |
| Research Methods | 99 |
| Interviews | 99 |
| Field notes | 103 |
| Personal journal entries..... | 105 |
| Document review | 106 |
| Data Analysis | 107 |
| Triangulation | 113 |
| Limitations of Research | 113 |
| Conclusion | 115 |
| Chapter 5 – Findings | |
| Farmers of Light: Intentional Food Practices and Emerging Conscious Foodways in The Bahamas | |
| Introduction | 117 |
| Catalysts on the Journey | 119 |
| Lifestyle shifts | 121 |
| Exploring different modalities of spirituality and healing..... | 122 |
| Childhood practices and experiences | 125 |
| Connecting with family and ancestry | 126 |
| Connecting with other people, cultures, and traditions..... | 129 |
| Self-sufficiency and development..... | 131 |
| Sense of pride in one's self, ancestral, or national identity | 132 |
| Acquiring knowledge and information | 135 |
| Noticing how food affects the mind and body | 137 |
| Food Practices | 140 |
| Dietary practices | 143 |
| Community & support | 145 |
| Inquiry/Investigation..... | 149 |
| Preparation techniques | 151 |
| Making do | 154 |
| Following established foodways & dietary systems | 156 |

A POETICS OF FOOD

| | |
|--|-----|
| Food procurement | 160 |
| Connections between intentional food practices and broader values..... | 162 |
| Freedom and independence..... | 164 |
| Restoration and wholeness..... | 171 |
| Right relationship..... | 179 |
| Development..... | 185 |
| Power and worth..... | 187 |
| Spiritual development | 192 |
| Connection to something greater than oneself | 195 |
| Conclusion | 196 |
| Chapter 6 – Discussion | |
| Introduction | 198 |
| Emerging Foodways/Emerging Identities | 198 |
| Arts, Culture, and Creative Practice | 204 |
| Decolonization and Healing | 208 |
| Transformational Learning and Empowerment | 213 |
| Relationship and Community..... | 224 |
| Conclusion | 226 |
| Chapter 7 – Conclusions & Considerations for the Future | |
| Introduction | 227 |
| Theoretical Framework and Literature Review | 229 |
| Research Design | 230 |
| Dissertation Summary | 232 |
| Limitations of the Research | 233 |
| Implications and Recommendations for Theory..... | 235 |
| Implications and Recommendations for Policy & Practice | 239 |
| Further Research Recommendations | 242 |
| Conclusion | 243 |
| References..... | 245 |
| Appendix A – Research Statement..... | 275 |
| Appendix B – Consent to Participate in Research | 276 |
| Appendix C – Guide to Conversation | 278 |
| Appendix D – Permissions | 279 |

List of Figures

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Fig 3.1 | The Aesthetics of Everyday Life (Theoretical Methodology) |
| Fig 4.1 | Interviewee Responses to Catalysts on the Journey |
| Table 4.1 | Catalysts on the Journey – Categories and Themes |
| Table 4.2 | Food Practices, Categories, Themes |
| Table 4.3 | Intentional Food Practices and Values – Categories and Themes |
| Table 6.1 | Mezirow’s Ten Phases of Transformative Learning |

Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction

In 2010, I moved to Nassau, the capital of The Bahamas, to facilitate a sustainable agriculture project with the Bahamian Ministry of Agriculture as part of its on-going attempt to increase food security. At the time, I knew hardly anyone in Nassau and held a perspective that I might define as “beyond food security,” or more closely aligned with food sovereignty, food justice, and decolonizing food practices. My eco- and justice-centric lifestyle and plant-based diet led me to seek like minds in a place I was told there were none. About five months following my arrival, I began to encounter people in Nassau with similar perspectives about food (sustenance), food sovereignty (adequate access to and control over all aspects of one’s sustenance) (see NGO/CSO Forum for food sovereignty, 2002; see Schanbacher, 2010; see Windfuhr, Jonsen, & FIAN-International, 2005), sustainability (the relationship between human life and the ecologies in which it is embedded), political and cultural decolonization (liberation, autonomy, de-linking from structures of oppression) (see Bogues, 2009; see Farrell, n.d.; see Kemedjio & Mitsch, 2010), and the world. I found people whose core beliefs resonated strongly with mine, even as the particularities of their experiences were both very different from and very similar to my own. Mostly (but not surprisingly), the people I encountered whose lives resonated most with mine held core political and spiritual beliefs that were demonized by political leaders, dominant religious leaders, the media, their friends, neighbors, and families. Many of the people whose lives and beliefs resonated with my own lived in places that people I had encountered in Nassau up to that point told me to avoid and followed practices that were marginalized and considered illegitimate by the standards set by dominating public institutions and their constituents.

A POETICS OF FOOD

In the five years that I lived in Nassau, I was involved with people who are intentional about their food practices in a variety of different ways. Through living out my daily life, I discovered that most of the people to whom I would assign this identity hold diverse propensities toward healing and transformation, broadly defined. Further, I sensed that these orientations to healing and transformation extended beyond eradicating hunger, going on a particular type of diet to lose weight, or decreasing statistical incidences of Non-Communicable Diseases. Something else was going on. Something unspoken resonated with my own experience and contrasted with what I perceived to be dominating narratives about food, identity, health, and power in The Bahamas. This research is an academic investigation of some of these narratives as “food journeys”—narratives that connect people’s intentional food practices to philosophical and spiritual imperatives.

Burgeoning critical research demonstrates the ways in which systems, structures, and approaches developed to support people’s wellbeing may lack the capacity to hold diverse realities of everyday life—particularly based on race, ethnicity, economic development, and income . This particular study embeds itself in literature surrounding political, cultural, and social systems and movements – particularly related to the context in which this research is set. With this foundation, I have sought to explore how people navigate social political systems and movements in ways that support their everyday lives and why they are motivated to do so. This research explores how people in Nassau who subscribe to a variety of philosophical and spiritual approaches—such as human rights, decolonization, holistic health, indigenous healing systems, African spiritual systems, and Abrahamic religions—work with what is available to them to create structures that sustain the particularities of their everyday lives. It further examines how these approaches and structures are reflected through their intentional food practices.

A POETICS OF FOOD

This study recognizes that individuals' intentional food practices are the building blocks for emerging foodways—or constellations of food practices. As such, it attempts to provide a framework expansive enough to contain both the benefits and drawbacks of each approach and the ways in which they might be merged so that the strengths of each might compensate for the limitations of others. Further, this understanding might provide groundwork for containers that offer people opportunities to determine for themselves how the aspects of given philosophical and spiritual approaches serve the needs of their bodies, lives, families, and communities.

Research on environmental and food justice (A. H. Alkon & Norgaard, 2009; Gottlieb & Fisher, 1996; Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010; Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, 2012) and food sovereignty (Altieri, 2009; Altieri & Nicholls, 2008; Beauregard-Langelier, 2007; Cañada, 2006; Cohn, 2006; Fesler-Schnitzer, 2007; Haugen, 2009; International NGO/CSO Planning Committee on Food Sovereignty, 2006; NGO/CSO Forum for food sovereignty, 2002; Schanbacher, 2010; Windfuhr, Jonsen, & FIAN-International, 2005) illuminates necessarily how external structures affect the lives of people in marginalized communities. Similarly, much food security research in The Bahamas focuses on climate, lack of resources, poor soil quality, lack of technological innovation, national debt, over-reliance on tourism, and distribution challenges (Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology Commission, 2001; FAO, 2003, 2009; Hepburn, 2008). This research project seeks to complement research within these frameworks by examining the particularities of individual experiences from the inside out. Additionally, it seeks to focus on what is working, how it is working, and why it is important to those engaging with these practices to make things work. The next section offers an overview of the general research context in which the lives of the people I interviewed are embedded. Following, the remainder of this chapter discusses the purpose of the study and offers an overview of the research and an outline of the dissertation.

Food Security in The Bahamas: An Overview of the Research Context

Geography and Climate. The Commonwealth of The Bahamas is an archipelago comprised of 700 islands and 2500 cays that spans 100,000 mi² of ocean whose most northeasterly island is located 50 mi from the southeastern coast of Florida in the United States. The nation's population is 350,000 people and the majority (nearly 300,000 people) is concentrated on the 80 mi² island of New Providence, where its capital, Nassau, is located. Despite being in the Atlantic Ocean and close to the United States geographically, The Bahamas is considered part of The Caribbean historically, culturally, politically, and economically.

Temperatures in The Bahamas usually range between 78°F and 90°F, though Winter and Summer seasons are distinct with the circulation of different air masses (Buchan, 2000). Additionally, The Bahamas has rainy and dry seasons characteristic of many sub-tropical climates. Because the islands are low-lying, they tend to get less rain than other nations in the Caribbean—though this is expected to change with increasing temperatures (Rogozinski, 2000).

Ecology and Geology. The islands, cays, and rocks of The Bahamas are formations of stressed calcium carbonate, or pulverized sea shells and corals, that have been condensed over the course of time (Buchan, 2000). Several theories attempt to explain the history of their geological formation. The northern and central islands rest upon two primary platforms that are thousands of feet thick. The northern islands rest upon the Little Bahamas Bank, while the central islands rest upon the Great Bahamas Bank. About 80% of the Bahamas' land mass is no more than one meter above mean sea level (The Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology Commission, 2001) and the highest point is on Cat Island at 206ft above sea level (Craton, 1999).

A POETICS OF FOOD

The Bahamas has seven types of soil: Coral Sands, Black Loam, Red Loam, Sand Loam, Brackish Swamp, Marl, and White Marl, with the first three being the most predominant (Hepburn, 2008). With the exception of Red and Black Loam, none of these is particularly suited to large-scale lush plant production, especially on New Providence. This has been one of the primary reasons why the majority of initiatives to implement plantations and large-scale farms have failed (Craton & Saunders, 1998). Additionally, the soft and porous limestone foundation of the islands lends to a high propensity for rainwater erosion, which has been a significant cause of “formations such as caves, sink holes, and solution pits” (Craton 1999, p.95).

The Bahamas’ archipelagic nature is one of its most defining geographic features. Half of the country is ocean and the distance created by water allows for unique opportunities, challenges, and phenomena. Wetlands, swamps, and water comprise 47% of the nation’s area (World Resources Institute, 2003), though the country possesses no rivers or streams. Most Bahamian ocean is relatively shallow, with the exceptions of the Tongue of the Ocean and Exuma Sound, which separate the two bank platforms and reach depths between 1500m and 1800m (Buchan, 2000).

Bahamian fringe and barrier coral reefs and atolls are the most prolific in the Atlantic or Caribbean and healthier than those in other nations, yet declining rapidly. Sustained increases in temperature (exceeding 30°C) have lead to coral bleaching and several diseases continue to affect their health (Buchan, 2000). These coral reefs provide habitat to many of the fish from which local fisherman derive their income. As fisheries are the country’s most prolific resource, the traditional livelihoods of many people, especially on the family islands, depend on healthy reef communities.

Several species of land plants and animals considered “native” to The Bahamas were introduced from the Caribbean during the last glacial advance, which caused the sea level to

A POETICS OF FOOD

drop 100m and allowed animals to traverse from island to island (Buchan, 2000). Manioc, ground nuts, beans, guava, mammee apple, guinep, and tamarinds were among these “native” plants that provided the primary diet of indigenous Bahamians: the Arawak Lucayans (Craton, 1999).

Agricultural and Fisheries Production. Traditionally, the Arawak Lucayans and Bahamians developed innovative ways of utilizing the land for food production. Among these was growing plants and small fruit trees (especially bananas) in deep holes of compacted soil, most commonly called “banana holes” or growing small plants in the crevices of the limestone. Additionally, the Lucayans planted root vegetables in mound agricultural systems and used the root flour to make various types of bread (Craton, 1999).

From the 1970s through to the mid-2000s, The Bahamas had a reasonable exportation of citrus fruits. In 2004, however, citrus groves on two of the family islands, Abaco and Andros, caught a blight that devastated the groves and forced a ban on the exportation of all citrus (Eneas, 2010). Fisheries represent the most-exported good, creating a \$100 million revenue each year, mostly from the spiny-tail lobster (Eneas, 2010).

In 2004, agriculture and fisheries comprised three percent of gross domestic product in The Bahamas (“Agriculture development profile - The Bahamas,” 2009; Hepburn, 2008). In 2002, agricultural revenue peaked at \$60 million and it has decreased dramatically since (Eneas, 2010). On average, 15% of food consumed in the Bahamas is produced locally, which has resulted in an annual food import bill of \$500 million—more than twice of the government’s total available capital expenditure (Rodgers, 2010).

Following Columbus’ invasion of The Bahamas, indigenous growing methods from the Americas and Africa were utilized to maintain bush medicine practices, which continue to be

A POETICS OF FOOD

used – especially on the family islands (Craton & Saunders, 1998). The use of many traditional methods has decreased, however, due to economic challenges, due to population shifts from family islands to the more urbanized islands of New Providence and Grand Bahama (the islands upon which Nassau and Freeport are located), and due to movement toward more industrial agricultural methods (Craton & Saunders, 1998).

The most productive resource in The Bahamas is the ocean (Eneas, 2010; Hargreaves-Allen, 2010). The islands of The Bahamas are home to 900mi² of healthy fringe and barrier Bahamian coral reefs and atolls, yet their health is declining rapidly (The Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology Commission, 2001). According to the Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology (BEST) Commission (2001), Caribbean ecologies are

under stress because of increasing human activities, tourism-related infrastructure, environmentally inadequate disposal of liquid and solid waste, decaying drainage infrastructure, uncontrolled development schemes, severe weather events, mismanagement of coastal ecosystems, and increased sedimentation due to poor watershed management (p.64).

Sustained increases in temperature (exceeding 30°C) and fishing practices have lead to coral bleaching and several diseases continue to affect the health of reef communities (Buchan, 2000). Local fishermen, especially on Bahamian family islands (inhabited islands besides New Providence and Grand Bahama considered more rural), depend on healthy reef communities to maintain their livelihoods (Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2015).

Economy. In 2014, The Bahamas derived 78.5% of its income from tourism, off-shore banking, and other service-related ventures (United Nations Statistics Division, 2017). Its higher hotel capacity is higher than any other nation in the Caribbean (The Bahamas Environment,

A POETICS OF FOOD

Science and Technology Commission, 2001) and it has provided the structure for most off-shore banking in the Caribbean, including in The Cayman Islands (Roberts, 1995; Rodgers, 2010).

Dependence on foreign investment, off-shore banking, and tourism leaves The Bahamas vulnerable to global neoliberal economic and trade policies and “the goodwill of a superpower not to use food as a weapon,” which depletes its national security and food sovereignty (Rosset, Patel, Courville, & Land Research Action Network., 2006).

Following forty years of political independence, The Bahamas spends \$500 million per year (Eneas, 2010; Hepburn, 2008)—more than twice the government’s total available capital expenditure (Rodgers, 2010)—to import close to 90% of its food from other countries. In 2004, agriculture and fisheries comprised three percent of gross domestic product in The Bahamas (FAO, 2003; Hepburn, 2008). While agricultural revenue peaked at \$60 million in 2001, it has decreased dramatically since due to a serious citrus blight and tariff reductions (Eneas, 2010). Prominent narratives of food security in The Bahamas support reducing the annual food import bill and stimulating the national economy through food production (Eneas, 2010; Hepburn, 2008; Rolle, 2012; Thurston, 2011). The cost of producing food, however, often exceeds the cost of importing it because the cost of food production includes the cost of doing business in an import society at each step of the supply-production-distribution chain.

Because tourism drives the Bahamian economy, hotels, gourmet restaurants, and fast food chains have a great deal of influence over food and agriculture policy, especially as it relates to trade (Eneas, 2010). Internationally-owed and tourism-based establishments tend to purchase imported foods, rather than local because their buyers—primarily from North America and Europe—expect a level of consistency in the quality and availability of certain products that many individual farmers are unable to provide. While a number of cooperatives have been formed, current technological and human infrastructure has yet to coordinate people and

A POETICS OF FOOD

products with consistency that satisfies adequately most chefs, hotels and major food purveyors (FAO, 2009; F. Gumbs, 1981).

The Bahamas has a service-based, rather than production-based economy, meaning that almost all products, food or otherwise, are imported. Duty is one of the primary ways in which the government generates income. Current duty on foodstuffs can be up to 45% (Bahamas Customs & Excise Departments, 2016). While some foods are duty-free, duty on many of the materials necessary to produce and distribute food tends to be between 35% and 45% (Bahamas Customs & Excise Departments, 2016)—creating a situation where the cost of producing food is often higher than the cost of importing food (especially for small-scale producers).

The Bahamian economy faces several challenges in terms of resource management, depletion, and environmental/climate change. According to the Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology (BEST) Commission (2001), Caribbean ecologies are

under stress because of increasing human activities, tourism-related infrastructure, environmentally inadequate disposal of liquid and solid waste, decaying drainage infrastructure, uncontrolled development schemes, severe weather events, mismanagement of coastal ecosystems, and increased sedimentation due to poor watershed management.

Climate researchers expect The Bahamas to experience increased symptoms of climate change: increased weather variability, stronger hurricane seasons, and sea-level rise. These phenomena can weigh heavily on the local economy by decreasing land availability for agriculture, by changing the marine habitat that affects fisheries, and by decimating beaches that attract tourism (The Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology Commission, 2001). The Bahamas is party to the 1994 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (The Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology Commission, 2001). Some government officials

A POETICS OF FOOD

have acknowledged that environmental issues such as the effects of climate change and waste management impact the political economy and culture of The Bahamas (The Government of The Bahamas, 2011). This creates space for broader discussions focused on ecology, environmental health, and sustainability—including impacts on and ramifications resulting from the food system.

Urban and tourism infrastructure development contaminates and erodes already rocky and sandy soils affected by sparse unreliable rainfall, further implicating the ability to produce food consistently (Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology Commission, 2001, p.28). The family islands, particularly in the south, tend to lack fresh water and soil resources necessary for agriculture, especially since the southern islands receive about half of the amount of rain that the northern islands receive (Buchan, 2000). Lacking infrastructure and land resources, agriculture and tourism tend to be less feasible on the family islands, further contributing to economic challenges (The Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology Commission, 2001).

Health. Rates of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease are higher in The Bahamas than any nation in the Caribbean, despite its having the highest GDP (FAO, 2003; World Health Organization, 2012). The Bahamas has the highest diabetes rate in the world (at 9.2%) (ACE Diabetes, 2015) and the sixth highest obesity rate in the world (at 36.2%) (Turnquest, 2015). Yet, even with the highest GDP in the Caribbean, the relative cost of food is high.

Much of the food imported from the United States includes food products that have been subsidized by the United States government. Many of these products are not regulated by United States food and agriculture agencies and, therefore, are exported to the Bahamian market cheaply and labeled as “export only” (Eneas, 2010). Typically (though not always), this dumping

A POETICS OF FOOD

means poor-quality food for Bahamians and subsidized international competition for small-scale Bahamian producers.

Purpose of the Study

This research seeks to explore (1) intentional food practices among people in Nassau, Bahamas; (2) the reasons why those practices are enacted; and (3) the ways in which intentional food practices reflect and connect to broader desires for healing, restoration, and decolonization. This research engages with critical and emancipatory frameworks that seek to redefine conventional definitions of food security¹ based on the everyday lived experiences of people in Nassau. This work seeks to contribute to food security, food justice, food sustainability, food sovereignty, and emerging foodways literature. It does so by exploring how people in Nassau engaging with intentional food practices define food security for themselves in their everyday lives given their own philosophical, theoretical, spiritual, cultural, and political foundations.

This research seeks to address the ways in which food practices and the health of individual lives might have philosophical implications that remain unexamined in research connected to food security in The Bahamas. It asks different questions about what food security might mean by exploring the ways in which people from a select group seek to maintain a sense of physical, emotional, cultural, and spiritual health through their intentional food practices. Finally, this work seeks to explore how intentional food practices of people in The Bahamas might connect to literature on intentional food practices generally and in the African diaspora

¹ The Food and Agriculture organization of the United Nations defines Food Security as “Ensuring that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to the basic food that they need” (Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2006). Recent attempts to expand this definition exist, yet remain inadequate to address economic development holistically (Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2006).

A POETICS OF FOOD

particularly, especially in relationship to philosophies of healing, restoration, and decolonization—terms that are explored further in the literature review.

The previous section discussed the research context as presented by researchers examining food security in The Bahamas typically. As Pulis (1999) asserts, research on Caribbean “cultural identity” and “worldview ... have, for the most part, been eclipsed by economic histories of plantations, quantitative analyses of public opinion, and statistical accounts concerning modernization, development, and the allocation of scarce resources” (p.2). Food system analyses lack accuracy unless they are developed in conjunction with the unique cultural, historical, social, economic, and ecological legacies that shape Caribbean realities (Ford, 1992). In response to such claims, this research seeks to examine both the food system and the lenses that are used to analyze, describe, and perceive the food system.

While Bahamian “food insecurity” is named as a sociocultural and political economic issue (Eneas, 2010) related to larger economic, social, and cultural development processes, the processes and structures themselves remain unexplored through formal academic research. Additionally, to date, no research addresses Bahamian food realities explored through aesthetic political frameworks and lenses—especially those aligned with the historical and cultural specificities of The Bahamas specifically and the Caribbean generally. This research seeks to connect the topic of research with the method of research by investigating how the food practices of individuals within a particular network in Nassau, Bahamas reflect pursuits of healing and liberation in their lives and communities. The following section outlines briefly the framework I will use in order to do that and subsequent sections will connect the methods to the framework.

Theoretical Framework for the Study

A POETICS OF FOOD

The theoretical framework for this dissertation is a poetics of food. This framework is based on a theoretical methodology I call the Aesthetics of Everyday Life, whose composition includes: experiential specificities; expression through multiple forms, languages, and genres; spatial and temporal fluidity; generative/transformational orientations; and aesthetic practice as political economic practice. This framework has been developed from the vast literature of Caribbean poetics and Caribbean Critique. Further examinations of the framework, theoretical methodology, and the literatures from which they are derived are provided in Chapter 3.

Food is culture. Food practices are cultural practices. Cultural practices are aesthetic practices—they define what is meaningful within a group of people that identifies with a particular culture. This research uses a cultural-aesthetic political lens to address the personal-political, rather than by applying political economic, development, or socio-scientific lenses to cultural aesthetics. The latter are used often to shape research about the relationships between food, culture, health, and economic development. I have chosen to engage with an aesthetic political lens because such frameworks are also the cultural analytics that Caribbean critics, writers, and scholars use most frequently to analyze the nature of power in the systems and structures that govern daily lives (Campbell & Niblett, 2016).

While the sole site in which I collected data was Nassau, Bahamas, the experiences of many of the people who I interviewed connected them directly to larger networks of realities and histories often defined as the African and Caribbean Diasporas. This is a common experience described in the literature – especially that related to pan-Africanism, the Black Atlantic, and Black Internationalism (Frey, 2009; West & Martin, 2009; Williams, 2012). The African Diaspora has several definitions, including “those persons who have migrated from Africa to the Americas, Europe, Asia, and Australia, or whose ancestors migrated to these places, whether forced or voluntarily” (Valdes, 2012, p.xi).

A POETICS OF FOOD

African Diaspora is material, visceral, of the flesh. And simultaneously, it is an analytical and a political metaphor meant to create spaces for more accurate representations of the realities of blackness that transcend national boundaries (Hintzen & Rahier, 2010). Hintzen and Rahier (2010) refer to diaspora as

the entire chain of consciousness, the ‘implicit structure of shared meaning’ that provides the basis for universal black self-recognition. It does the ideological work of calling ‘into awareness’ what is ‘unrecognized.’ As such, it creates the conditions for recognition against the hegemony of misrecognition (p.xii).

Similarly, West and Martin (2009) write,

The black international, we argue, has a single defining characteristic: struggle. Yet struggle, resistance to oppression by black folk, did not mechanically produce black internationalism. Rather, black internationalism is a product of consciousness, that is, the conscious interconnection and interlocution of black struggles across man-made and natural boundaries—including the boundaries of nations, empires, continents, oceans, and seas. From the outset, black internationalism envisioned a circle of universal emancipation, unbroken in space and time (p.1).

Chuku (2015) writes,

African diaspora has come to embody so many things to different peoples, including a global phenomenon, a movement, migration, traveling circuits, dispersal and redistribution; and imagined/re-imagined and invented/re-invented through thought, cultural and literary production, and struggles for political participation and economic survival (p.xxx).

She further writes that it is

A POETICS OF FOOD

a search for identity by Africans and people of African descent ... It is about unfolding contemporary cross-cultural and multicultural societies and communities, nationalism and nationalities, frontiers and boundaries, cultural transmission, identity formation, power relations, communication and translation, colonialism and neocolonialism, pan-Africanism, ethnicity, race and gender, modernity and progress (Chuku, 2015, p.xxxi).

“The Caribbean” is a contested term. Using it with integrity requires acknowledging that its unifying force lies in its diversity, multiplicity, and variation. People in “The Caribbean” are at once in singular places and part of a broad collection of cultures, spaces, histories, and identities—this is a lived reality that unites people across “The Caribbean” and the islands/nations of which it is comprised. It is sometimes referred to as a region of repeating islands—a metaphor that seeks to illuminate the tension between singularity and mimicry (Benitez-Rojo, 1996).

I focus on the literatures and concepts associated with the African diaspora because of its profound impact on the Caribbean and its diasporas. Within the context of this research, I consider the African diaspora as a larger entity within which the Caribbean and its diasporas are embedded or nested. Similarly, the theoretical framework draws from discourses and literatures from across/around The Caribbean and its diasporas because of the interconnected nature of Caribbean lives and experiences.

Foodways are “group-shared systems of ideas or rules concerning food, meals and eating patterns”—or sets of food practices (Tuomainen, 2009, p.527). Food practices and the intentions with which they are enacted are the primary units of analysis in this research. Sets of intentional food practices in The Bahamas, therefore, might be defined as intentional foodways in The Bahamas. The purpose of this research is to define intentional food practices among a particular network and to understand if and how people connect those intentional food practices and

A POETICS OF FOOD

philosophies of food to other philosophies of healing, liberation, and wholeness to which they are committed personally and in community.

As bell hooks (1989) mentions, emancipatory political consciousness and self-recovery are inherently linked. One cannot exist without the other. Collections of personal journeys of healing, consciousness, and development reflect the collective journey of healing, consciousness, and development within a given group, network, or other entity. This research explores the relationships between these journeys by examining how individuals and communities give them meanings that are reflected in food practices. Chapter 2 examines and defines this particular lens and reviews the literature that informs it. The remainder of this chapter defines the research questions, research design, and structure of the dissertation.

Primary Research Questions

This research explores people's intentional food practices, how their pasts have catalyzed their practices, how the intersection between people's pasts and their experiences with intentional food practices influence their beliefs, and how these beliefs shape their desires, hopes, and dreams for the future. This research seeks to answer the following primary research question:

How do the personal food practices of people who are intentional about their food choices in Nassau reflect personal commitments to healing, recovery, and decolonization?

This primary research question is addressed by asking, specifically, the following sub-questions:

- What draws people in Nassau to be intentional about their food practices?

A POETICS OF FOOD

- What are the personal food practices of people who are intentional about their food choices in Nassau?
- What are the reasons why people who are intentional about their food choices in Nassau engage in particular food practices?
- Are the personal food practices of people in who are intentional about their food choices in Nassau related to particular ideological assumptions or philosophical commitments?
- How do people who are intentional about their food choices in Nassau define the relationship between their personal values and their personal food practices?
- How does the relationship between the values and food practices expressed in my interview data correspond with the personal observations recorded in my journals, my document review in Nassau, and my literature review of food practices related to healing, recovery, and decolonization?

Methodology and Research Design

This section summarizes the methodology and research design for this research, which are explained in-depth in Chapter 4. The ethnographic methodology for this research seeks to be relational, reflexive, and transformative for the researcher, the research participants, and those who may be affected by the research project. The methodology for this research is built from an understanding that ethnographies are structures through which to both practice everyday life and understand the practices of everyday lives. This research explores the connections between people's everyday intentional food practices and how these practices reflect people's journeys of consciousness. As Ehn, Lofgren, and Wilk (2016) point out, "By starting in the everyday, it is

A POETICS OF FOOD

possible to find surprising connections between small matters and large issues ... subtle details of daily life still hold many secrets” (p.1).

Ethnography is a “methodological approach” that draws from a range of “qualitative techniques for collecting or producing material on social life in different settings through interviews, observations, and other fieldwork procedures where the researcher is personally present in ‘the field’ of study” (Ehn et al., 2016, p.2). I draw particularly from the viewpoints of interpretive/alternative ethnographies, performance ethnographies, and auto-ethnographies to select a collection of methods that would answer my particular questions, as stated in the previous section. I have drawn from interpretive/alternative ethnography (of which performance and auto-ethnographies are sub-fields) as an approach because of the ways in which this set of methodological approaches explicitly names and centers the sorts of phenomena that are central to the lives of the people who I interviewed and to the phenomena this research privileges (Denzin, 1997, 2014). These specific approaches are described further in Chapter 4.

Denzin (2014) writes,

This is a postcolonial world, and it is necessary to think beyond the nation, or the local group, as the focus of inquiry. This is the age of electronic capitalism, diaspora, and instant democracy in the media. Postnational social formations compete for resources to serve the needs of refugees, exiles, and the victims of ethnic and cultural genocide (p.xii).

He further writes that

ethnography is a moral, allegorical, and therapeutic project. Ethnography is more than the record of human experience. The ethnographer writes tiny moral tales ... These tales record the agonies, pains, successes, and tragedies of human experience. They record the deeply felt emotions of love, dignity, pride, honor, and respect (Denzin, 2014, p.xiv).

A POETICS OF FOOD

My primary research method was in-depth semi-structured ethnographic interviews conducted in Nassau—each of which lasted for about an hour. Field notes, personal journal entries, and document review served as secondary methods to support this ethnographic study. Semi-structured interviews allowed me to explore people’s everyday lives with them in a conversational style that both maintained a general direction and allowed for flexibility (O’Reilly, 2012; Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999). My personal journal entries document my observations of my everyday life and my interactions in the food system in Nassau – many of which were with the people who I interviewed. Using personal journal entries and experiences is a method used typically in auto-ethnography – a methodology which seeks to diminish the distance between researcher and research participant by connecting the researcher’s personal experiences with broader cultural and sociological issues (O’Reilly, 2012).

Participants for the in-depth semi-structured ethnographic interviews were selected through a snowball sample. Snowball sampling (also referred to as respondent-driven sampling or chain referral) is a method of selecting informants used to illuminate networks (Bernard, 2011). Snowball sampling is useful in cases where the number of people who would fall into a particular category or be in a network is small and/or in populations that are small (Bernard, 2011)—both of which are true about the network that served as the focus of my study. Additionally, I collected field notes and integrated them with personal journal entries from my time in Nassau preceding the research period. Finally, I combined these data sets with document and literature review. I analyzed data by merging constant comparison with a poetic analytical method. Constant comparison “involves continuous comparison of incoming data with emerging interpretation” (Mabry, 2008, p.218). I used poetics as part of my analytical framework because of how the practice of poetics aligns with my theoretical framework context (Lalla, Roberts, Walcott-Hackshaw, & Youssef, 2013).

Research Significance

This research suggests that in order to bring about “food security” in The Bahamas, a definition of food security aligned with the particularities of everyday life in The Bahamas is necessary. It uses one lens meant to offer a particular understanding of food practices in The Bahamas and asks people who enact those practices why they do so. To do this comprehensively is a vast order whose enormity far exceeds this research. Instead, this research seeks to approach the reasons why some people are intentional about their food practices. That is, it explores and expresses a tracing of emerging food practices enacted by those who have already considered why they do what they do as part of their personal and spiritual growth. It further seeks to express findings indicating that participants’ knowledge of why they do what they do has led them to make changes in their practices that have, ultimately, left them feeling productive, healthy, connected to their communities, self-assured, self-sufficient, and wanting to transfer positive changes in their own lives to the lives of those around them.

Research Assumptions and Scope

The theoretical framework for this dissertation is the poetics of everyday life—experiential specificities; expression through multiple forms, languages, and genres; spatial and temporal fluidity; generative/transformational orientations; and aesthetic practice as political economic practice. Caribbean poetics and Critique is an ethical stance, inherently, and the guiding ethical stance of my research. This theoretical framework is also a philosophical imperative that holds specific assumptions about the nature of reality and the nature of research.

A POETICS OF FOOD

Individuals, communities, and their everyday lives hold unique particularities. Every language and form of expression holds its own forms of intelligence and wisdom. Ways of understanding time and space are fluid. Generative and transformative practices and experiences are critical and centered. The practices and philosophies that relate to aesthetic forms are critical responses.

Holding to these assumptions means producing data that are specific to a given space and time. They are unlikely to be reproduced in other places and times because they are meant to be specific. This framework assumes that the collective is understood better through the addition of specificities of experience. The realities of everyday lives can be understood better when more realities, more lives, and more particularities are included. While the data are not generalizable, necessarily, the type of data and combination of methods used to produce it could be applied broadly.

Role of the Researcher

Relational research is both critical and compassionate (White, 2009). It neither abuses nor appeases, but emerges as conversations between human beings united by a common struggle to transform themselves and the worlds in which they live (Anderson & McLachlan, 2016; Bartlett, Iwasaki, Gottlieb, Hall, & Mannell, 2007). My research has been designed based on my own understandings of everyday life and my perceptions of how such understandings emerge in and through the lives of other people. More than just a commitment to “honoring” my perceptions of how the thoughts, feelings and actions of the people I interviewed, my research reflects how I have learned to think, feel, and act when I am in Nassau. I walk with no illusion that my realities replicate the realities of any other human being. Yet, given that my understandings of myself are based in my understandings of others, it would be ignorant if not irresponsible to assume that no similarities exist between my experiences and the experiences of those I interviewed and with

A POETICS OF FOOD

whom I associate in Nassau. This research expresses my understandings of individual and cultural identities and how they seem to be emerging based on my perceptions of interviewees' responses. The poetics of everyday life focuses on the ways in which the world is transformed through relationships and connections as they are understood inter-personally and culturally.

Chapter Summary

This dissertation reviews relevant literature, describes my research design, shows my data, discusses data I collected, embeds the data in relevant literature, and offers suggestions for further research. This chapter has offered an overview of the research context, purpose, questions, design, significance, assumptions, and my role as a researcher. The remainder of this section summarized briefly each chapter of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature pertaining to food practices as cultural practices and emerging foodways. It defines creolization and diaspora as I apply them within the context of this research and, finally, explores the history of intentional food practices and conscious foodways associated with the African and Caribbean diasporas. It lays a foundation for Chapter 3, which explores a particular way of understanding consciousness and liberation emerging from definitions of critique, poetics, aesthetics, and creolization from the Caribbean.

Chapter 3 introduces the reader to Caribbean Critique and Poetics as narrative forms that emerge from Caribbean cultural sensibilities. It then traces the particular lineage of theories, philosophies, and narratives that inform my data analysis. This article explains how the Aesthetics of Everyday Life is defined as a theoretical methodology—including experiential specificities; expression through multiple forms, languages, and genres; temporal and spatial fluidity; orientations toward the generative/transformative; and aesthetic practice as political economic practice. Finally, it describes A Poetics of Food--a theoretical framework through

A POETICS OF FOOD

which emerging foodways might be assessed and articulated in the complexities of their everyday forms.

Chapter 4 describes the methodology used to formulate, conduct, analyze, and articulate my research in a way that aspires to align with the theoretical framework and the context in which it takes place. It provides an in-depth description of the methods I used and how I used them, with an emphasis on my interview process and analytical method, which merged constant comparative and poetic approaches. It offers a discussion of my position as a researcher, the limitations of the research, and the epistemological underpinning of my research design.

Chapter 5 illuminates the findings of this research. These include interviewees' intentional food practices; events and experiences that have led them to be intentional; and the ways in which these practices reflect spiritual, philosophical, and existential values and beliefs. The findings are supported by quotes from the interview transcripts.

Chapter 6 connects my findings to the literature about intentional food practices and conscious foodways in the African and Caribbean diasporas. It further explains what this research seeks to contribute to the literature. It explores five themes in particular: (1) Emerging Foodways/Emerging Identities; (2) Arts, Culture, and Creative Practice; (3) Decolonization and Healing; (4) Transformational Learning and Empowerment; and (5) Relationship and Community.

Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation with a brief summary of the dissertation's highlights and main points. It discusses the common themes that weave through each chapter. It further outlines the limitations of the research; discusses possible contributions to theory, policy, and practice; and makes recommendations for future research.

A common theme that emerged in my research was the act of blessing, which resonates with the literature on intentional food practices in the African and Caribbean diasporas. In my

A POETICS OF FOOD

own experience, offering an invocation is a common Bahamian practice. Regardless of the particular spiritual system or set of spiritual systems to which one subscribes, invoking the spirits that have been sent to offer guidance to daily lives remains essential. I wrote the following poem when I was still seeking to define my research and I believe it was an invocation for what it has become. When I wrote it, I am not sure that I understood that the word I wrote would be the word that was born and delivered in the form of the research that I have now completed. It still sums up my research in two pages better than anything I've written since. It is called Net/works.

Net/works

*Blessed BE The Wounded, they will only heal
Blessed BE The Broken, they will only mend
Blessed BE The Fatigued, they will only awaken
Blessed BE The Bound, they will only release
Blessed BE The Colonized ...²*

That. Is. WE.

Jesus turned fishermen into fishers of men--
Missions accomplished:
Churches of Divine Deliverance
redeem holy spirit Pentecostal Jehovah god revivals,
evangelizing Sundays salvific, thick with
pork, peas and rice, plantain pep rallies—Charming ...
Snakes, Eve, Please,
How your net works?

From what roots this Mangrove grows?
Wet warm wombs securing
freshly tattered nets, unraveling lifted walls
once protected the net work:
6 months petrified in limestone,
surrounded by sharks feeding
salty interactions, stealing identities
with Irene's galvanizing breath beating steel³.

² This stanza reflects the form of the Beatitudes in the Bible's Book of Matthew

³ This stanza is based on a personal reflection of my time working at Simpson Penn School for Boys – The Bahamas' national boys detention center.

A POETICS OF FOOD

On the friends, family, and lovers⁴ plan,
coiling routes echo the curves of voluptuous women painted on Wulff Rd store fronts.

But anyway, the net works.

The path is rarely apparent
in the arteries of sea-logged cays, blocked by
cultural colonial cholesterol;

But anyway, the net works.

Makeshift avenues shapeshift yards, trails
blaze bushes just 'cause the sun shine;
private porches public as bathroom beach bars--sacred
Ma'at⁵ manes maintain the goombay, bangin, singin,
"We don' eat slave food
marchin down streets
singin 'We Shall Overcome'."⁶
Playin lives of sista' brotha' auntie' cousin
like a game of Fox Hill dominoes⁷, and
any way the net works, Pastor still preachin in Parliament on Monday mornin.

Don't let looks fool you;
But, anyway,
the ***net***
works.

Enigmas contradict themselves, stiff
colonial governments occupy militiamen's skin,
defining routes of religious hierarchies' harassment
RACE ***harass*** *GENDER* ***harass*** *CLASS*
harass (***her ass***)

.....Still ...
sinuous sea grasses dance the tide,
mirroring Junkanoo⁸, rushing,

⁴ "Friends, family, and lovers" is an oft-used Bahamian term referring to nepotism and the conveyance of favors with no associated merit.

⁵ Ma'at is a Kemetic word for balance, order, harmony, or justice.

⁶ This was a quote from a conversation I had with a local holistic health practitioner.

⁷ Fox Hill is one of the oldest villages in Nassau and has historic significance in terms of its African roots. It has a round courtyard at its center where, typically, older Bahamian men sit and play dominoes – a popular local past time.

A POETICS OF FOOD

feigning surrender, failing to subside,
conch slip slides slime slicking down;
The Rules? Ignore the Laws
Of Physics.

Wat-ches-keep-rhyth-ms
rather than hours, space u n d i v i d e d--
Matter created
the matters destroyed.

I have forgotten what I
know, so
the net must *work.*

Invisible are the wholes,
 Blessing Colonizers,
 Rich, Sick;
 they ain' get control
 in NETS
 with holes. (Booker, 2015b)

⁸ Junkanoo is a Bahamian cultural festival similar to Carnival or Mardi Gras that originates from the day off given to enslaved Africans the day after Christmas. It is a performative parade with costumes, drums of many types and sizes, and brass instruments.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

A transformation of Relations of Resistance and Domination: Intentional Food Practices and Conscious Foodways in the African Diaspora

“We lack, in academic discussions of food,
the consciousness vividly apparent
in the parent liberationist,
decolonization movements
the African Diaspora has construed:

a transformation of relations of resistance and domination
expresses decolonization
through practices related to food.
Articulating the complexity of how food ways
infiltrate people’s everyday space,
desires and dreams
are revealed through research
on such divergent topics
as consciousness and taste”
~(Booker, 2015a)

Introduction

This chapter reviews literature related to my research on intentional food practices and journeys of consciousness and/or spirituality in Nassau, Bahamas. The study examines (1) the intentional food practices of a self-defined group of people in Nassau, (2) the reasons why they enact particular food practices, and (3) how those food practices relate to their broader existential

A POETICS OF FOOD

values, desires, and dreams. This research connects, specifically, to literatures on food, foodways, food systems, and food culture—particularly related to emerging foodways and foodways in the African Diaspora and the Caribbean and its diasporas. In this chapter, I will review literature related to (1) food practices as cultural practices, (2) theoretical concepts of emerging foodways, (3) a definition of diaspora applied within the context of this research specifically, (4) a history of intentional food practices and consciousness in the African Diaspora, and (5) a history of food culture in the African Diaspora.

Food Practices as Cultural Practices

Food studies and food anthropology assert that food is culture and identity (Counihan, 1999; Higman, 2008; Kim, 2015); “food gets at the heart of what it means to be human” (Slocum & Saldanha, 2013, p.1). Guthman (2008) writes that food is a “hallmark of culture and society” (p.1175). Menck (2012) asserts that “individuals engage food as a way of making meaning of their worlds ... there is a deep connection between culture and the physicality of food in production and consumption” (p.16-17) and that “food signifies belonging” (p.106). She further states that “Food is a physical representation of self and culture, as it is experienced in a place—it is this process that connects the sensual aspect of self to other and the place both live together” (Menck, 2012, p.120). Schwegler (2013) suggests, “we not only see food; we see through food” (p.9). Barthes (1997) writes, “For what is food? It is not only a collection of products that can be used for statistical or nutritional studies. It is also, and at the same time, a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usages, situations, and behavior” (p.21). He further suggests that

food sums up and transmits a situation; it constitutes an information; it signifies. That is to say that it is not just an indicator of a set of more or less conscious motivations, but that it is a real sign, perhaps the functional unit of a system of communication ... For all food

A POETICS OF FOOD

serves as a sign among the members of a given society (Barthes quoted in Warner, 2015, p.73).

Food practices are biological, cultural, political, economic, and social (Lupton, 1996; Menck, 2012). They include all human interactions with food and its associated resources. Food practices are diverse and include: farming, animal husbandry, and production (Aistra, 2008; Al-Hafedh, Alam, & Beltagi, 2008; A. Alkon, 2008; FAO, 2009; F. Gumbs, 1981); fishing, hunting, and foraging (Badjeck, Allison, Halls, & Dulvy, 2010); dietary practices such as veganism and vegetarianism (Harper, 2010b; Phillips, 2010; Witt, 1999); processing (Aistra, 2008; FAO, 2009); land conservation and seed saving (Aistra, 2008); food safety (FAO, 2009); consumption (Alaimo, Packnett, Miles, & Kruger, 2008; D. Armstrong, 2000), recycling and composting (A. Alkon, 2008), education (A. Alkon, 2008), slaughtering (Pedersen, 2010), and artistic representations (Pedersen, 2010) among others. The study of food practices and foodways emerges from anthropologies of food. The next section will explain further why and how I have maintained traditional concepts of foodways while also introducing other emerging foodways scholarship to expand upon how they are defined and described.

Expressing food practices necessitates articulating the complexity and breadth of the food ways, spaces, and resources that penetrate people's everyday lives. Palmie (2013) writes that "sumptuary practices can aid us in thinking through complex histories, wide-ranging processes of cultural change, and the unfolding and transformation of relations of domination and resistance" (p.222). Food practices can reflect a person's or group of people's attempts to release themselves from multiple forms and points of oppression, such as national/ethnic, racial, gender, sexuality, economic standing, etc (see Benediktsson, 1998). A practice considered decolonizing in one place, at one time, or by one group of people or individuals may not be considered decolonizing in other places, at other times, or by other groups of people (see Benediktsson, 1998). Only an

A POETICS OF FOOD

individual or group of people seeking liberation can determine whether or not a practice is decolonizing, liberating, or oppressive for them in a given place and time.

Emerging Foodways

Foodways are defined by some as sets of food practices and behaviors within a socially or culturally bound group (Keller Brown & Mussell, 1984; Kim, 2015). Foodways are tracings of “how the form, cooking method, ingredients, tastes, aroma, etc., of a specific food have come to be formulated over the course of time and as a consequence of its traveling over space” (Kim, 2015, p.5). Foodways tend to be defined, also, by the movement of food and food practices across time and space, making them a valuable perspective for this research. This research seeks to contribute to research and understandings of emerging foodways specifically by expanding and shifting the ways in which “groups of people who enact this set of practices” is defined.

Traditionally, some foodways research has been used to mark the “contamination” or death of a foodway when members of a particular group of people integrated practices considered cultural outliers. This was understood as a reflection of the “contamination” or “death” of a particular culture when it was no longer “pure”. This research, alternatively, seeks to maintain the definition of foodway as a set of food practices enacted by a particular group of people (see Keller Brown & Mussell, 1984; see Kim, 2015). It seeks to distinguish itself in three ways: (1) by redefining the parameters for “a particular group of people,” (2) by illuminating variability in practices, and (3) by highlighting the reasons why particular practices are enacted. This eliminates the assumption that the parameters that define a particular group of people are external or set arbitrarily. This section reviews literature surrounding *emerging* foodways—a literature emerging in its own right.

A POETICS OF FOOD

The units of analysis in foodways research are the individual food practices and behaviors of a group of people. The units of analysis are the interactions that people have with food and the different ways in which those interactions manifest. Traditionally, foodways have been bound and defined in terms of traditional lines of division, such as race, ethnicity, nationality, and region (Counihan, 1999; Keller Brown & Mussell, 1984; Kim, 2015). In research, these groups and the foodways associated with them tend to be defined as homogeneous. The sets of practices assigned various groups were analyzed and arranged as generalizable, which ignores heterogeneity (Keller Brown & Mussell, 1984; Kim, 2015) because it holds an assumption that heterogeneity cannot be cohesive. Research methods and theoretical frameworks that have been used in the past present differences in practices among a given group as a perceived “weakening” of the bonds within that group and “an absence of a shared pattern and a breakdown of the old system,” rather than as indicators of variability and as evolutions of ethnic, cultural, and other identity groups (Keller Brown & Mussell, 1984, p.11).

The study of foodways and the groups used to define them as homogeneous and static has contributed to debates about the “original” and “authentic” characteristics of a given foodway (see Barthes, 1997). Besides igniting controversy, these definitions and debates are used to delineate individual and cultural legitimacy and illegitimacy, violence, and oppression based on a romanticized past, rather than the realities of the present and possibilities for the future (Counihan, 1999; Kim, 2015). Counihan (1999) writes that “reflect[ing] and re-creat[ing] the gender, race, and class hierarchies so prevalent in American society, deconstructing food rules is part of the process of dismantling the hierarchies that limit the potential and life chances of subordinate groups” (p.115).

Foodways research’s focus on individual food practices presents conceptual opportunities to view the particularities of individual and collective food practices as indicators of personal,

A POETICS OF FOOD

social, cultural, and political change (Counihan, 1999; Farrish, 2015; Kim, 2015). This opportunity to see change can go unnoticed if research focuses on how to streamline foodways. Emerging foodways research uses food as an indicator for cultural and social *change*, rather than stasis (Cheung, 2005). Emerging foodways research seeks to demonstrate how practices that might be considered “divergent” from previous perspectives actually maintain the essential core purposes of established practices through understanding the reasons why practices are enacted. Even though economic status has been one of the parameters used to define foodways, how economic status determines specificity in food practices remains largely unexplored (Warner, 2015). The focus on individual practices—including those which might be considered alternative to the norms in a given cultural context—allows changes, evolutions, and differences in food practices (and, in turn, culture) to be historicized, contextualized, and viewed through particularities (Cheung, 2005; Farrish, 2015). It also offers opportunities to see the complicated ways in which power flows and the ways in which various types of knowledge can facilitate subversive practices and realities (Farrish, 2015).

The variable particularities of food practices in Nassau illuminate a Poetics of Food in Nassau, which reflects the Aesthetics of Everyday Life for which I draw from the literatures of Critique, Creolization, and Poetics from the Caribbean, as described below. The purpose of this research is to utilize the concept of foodways as sets of particular food practices and combine that concept with creolization and diaspora discourses in a way that traces foodways and the meanings assigned to them as emergent and dynamic.

Foodways are reflections of the cultures with which they are associated. Both cultures and foodways continue to become more variable and heterogeneous, meaning that methods and discourses underlying foodways research need to reflect their diversity (Keller Brown & Mussell, 1984). Such methods and discourses could include greater variability in the types of practices

A POETICS OF FOOD

included in foodways definitions, less attention to generalizability, more astute understandings of new and different ways in which people understand and define their social and cultural groups, and explorations of how meanings assigned to different practices change as cultures change (Farrish, 2015; Keller Brown & Mussell, 1984). Understanding the ways in which food practices are embedded within a particular ecological, social, cultural, and geographic contexts allows for more nuanced discussions and discerning analyses of the reasons why people make conscious or intentional choices about food (Warner, 2015).

While identity proved to be a key aspect of how and why the people I interviewed choose to be intentional about their food practices, this research does not seek to offer a set of patterns that can be used to formulate a sort of group identity, as is frequently the case (Keller Brown & Mussell, 1984). Alternatively, the practices this research highlights are those enacted by and connected to certain foodways identified and described through the interviews I conducted. Rather, this research explores those patterns enacted by and connected to certain foodways as identified and described by key informants. That is, this research examines how foodways in The Bahamas are changing through reflections on the realities of the everyday lives of a particular collection of people.

This section discussed food practices as indicators of variety in the experiences and values of people within a self-defined network and why they are important units of analysis within the context of this research. It further described emerging foodways and the part they play in the overall framework of this research. This section is a springboard from which to offer a review of the literature focused specifically on food practices that are intentional and the ways in which intentional food practices—particularly in and among the African and Caribbean Diasporas—illuminate relationships between dynamic foodways and senses of consciousness. The following

A POETICS OF FOOD

section prepares for that discussion by defining creolization and diaspora within this research context and my purpose for drawing from these concepts.

Diaspora

The terms diaspora and creolization are sometimes used interchangeably (Prabhu, 2007; Sandoval, 2000). Within the context of this research, they are two concepts that are related, yet distinguished from one another because of the ways in which they fit in with the theoretical framework. Chapter 3 defines and discusses the concept of creolization as it applies to this research. This section discusses the ways in which diaspora figures into the research design conceptually.

Diaspora, in this research, refers specifically to definitions and experiences of Atlantic African diasporas (particularly the movement of peoples, materials, values, and ideas from Africa to North America, South America, and the Caribbean) and Caribbean diasporas (the movement of peoples, materials, values, and ideas throughout and beyond physical Caribbean geographies). These diasporas form an interconnected web or net, across which information, knowledge, bodies, consciousness, spiritual practices, and food practices flow. While such movement occurred pre-slavery, this research focuses specifically on the ways these flows developed as a result of trans-Atlantic slavery and emerged following.

Harris (2011) describes an orientation to diaspora that has influenced her understanding of what it means to have African American identity in her work on food in the African Diaspora:

The history of African Americans in this country [the United States] is a lengthy one that begins virtually at the time of exploration. Our often-hyphenated name,

A POETICS OF FOOD

in all of its complexity, hints at the intricate mixings of our past. We are a race that never before existed: a cobbled together admixture of Africa, Europe, and the Americas. We are like no others before or after us. Involuntarily taken from a homeland, molded in the crucible of enslavement, forged in the fire of disenfranchisement, and tempered by migration, we all too often remain strangers in the only land that is ours. (p.1)

At its most basic, diaspora is defined as transnationalism, as “phenomena of staying and moving as regenerative principles underlying processes of creolization that are being crafted by the double-articulating movements of diasporas remixing the world, their world, and convoluting those knots of presence” (Crichlow, 2009, p.139). These flows facilitated a global movement around peoples of African identity and people who associate with the African diaspora in the 1960s, igniting a relationship between the American Civil Rights movement and various manifestations of anti-colonialism and decolonization in Africa and the Caribbean (Crichlow, 2009; Harris, 2011; Shih & Lionnet, 2011). As Harris (2011) explains,

in 1968, San Francisco State College became the first institution of higher learning in the country [United States] to establish a black studies department. The institutionalized study of the history of African Americans went hand in hand with the growth of a cultural nationalism movement that celebrated African American culture in all realms and contributed to an increasing awareness of an African world, as a greater number of African Americans began to have an international approach. (p.212)

She further asserts that “many of those who became leaders in the independence movements in the Caribbean and on the African continent had been students in the United States” (Harris, 2011, p.212).

A POETICS OF FOOD

While information, knowledge, and ideas manifest differently when they are embodied and contextualized differently in geographic and cultural locations, the interactions between key leaders in these movements and the spread of these ideas were and remain deeply diasporic—rooted in networks and movable entities and identities more than in static places and spaces.

Harris (2011) justifies,

Fights for basic civil rights in the United States paralleled those in the Caribbean and on the African continent, where the battle for autonomy and the ability to govern their own countries continued through the 1960s. The dates of independence for African and Caribbean nations resonate alongside the dates of gains in the march toward full equality for African Americans ... The map was gradually transformed from British imperial pink and French imperial turquoise into a raft of new nations. Africans, Caribbean peoples, and African Americans looked at one another across political divides and cultural contradictions and recognized that an international community was being born. (p.212)

Because of this reality, any discourses “rooted and routed” (Crichlow, 2009, p.xiv) in this particular temporal, political, and cultural moment must be understood as connected to these broader sensibilities and processes (Harris, 2011; Shih & Lionnet, 2011). Among these processes, decolonization is critical. As Mehta (2009) describes,

Physical and spiritual wounds reveal the primary traumas of these diasporas embedded in memory, forcible separation from family and country, human rights abuses, and patriarchal violence. At the same time, open wounds also create new spaces for cultural reaffirmations, resistance, and marginalized identities that contest their subaltern status within colonial and neocolonial structures. (p.1-2)

A POETICS OF FOOD

This “battle for autonomy and the ability to govern their own [African and Caribbean] countries” that Harris (2011, p.212) describes serves as the basic foundation for the definition of decolonization applied within the context of this research. A broader definition is explored in Chapters 5 and 6.

“The Caribbean” is not a culturally, nationally, or racially homogenous classification. Therefore, people living on Caribbean islands and associated with their diasporas are also not culturally, nationally, or racially homogenous (Mehta, 2009). The majority of people in The Caribbean--though not all--have genetic ancestry that can be traced to Africa—though, frequently, not solely. A notable portion of people in The Caribbean and its diasporas may not have genetic ancestry that modern genetic records can trace to Africa (the origin of the species, notwithstanding).

Describing the Caribbean as “a diaspora space par excellence,” Mehta (2009) explains that “Diaspora is not only the physical dispersion, migration, movement of peoples, it also becomes a fluid, movable, expandable identity in and of itself—a defining feature of Caribbean identities” (p.2). The affects of the African Diaspora and its sensibilities on the totality of Caribbean cultural, spiritual, intellectual, and political ancestries (as opposed to genetic ancestries) as they relate to food and consciousness is a distinguishing feature of this research. As a result, within the context of this research, I associate those included in the Caribbean and its diasporas with the African Diaspora regardless of genetic ancestries or officially state-sanctioned national identities. This section covered the definition and purpose of the concept of diaspora within the context of this research. The next section discusses the roles that intentional food practices have played in developing and maintaining consciousness throughout the history of the African Diaspora as it is defined in this research context.

Intentional Food Practices and Conscious Foodways in the African Diaspora

This research centers creolization processes as methods and ways of being that people employ consciously to facilitate their own liberation and self-recovery individually and collectively (see Glissant, 1989, 1997; see Knepper, 2006; see Murdoch, 2007; see Premdas, 1996). In literature and discourse from the Caribbean and its diasporas, these processes of creolization are expansions of the definition of decolonization offered briefly in the previous section that relate to the cultural specificities of Caribbean lives (Premdas, 1996). Githire (2014) writes,

Over the past decade critics of postcolonial and diaspora literatures have paid increasing attention to the use of metaphors of food, eating, digestion, and related tropes by women writers across national boundaries to frame and critique continuing relations of domination and control within changing national and international economic, political, and social landscapes ... In fact, if a substantial proportion of depictions of alimentary acts and practices within contexts of postcolonial and diasporic cultural productions position functions of eating (and its corollary, non-eating) as powerful tools of expression and identity, most of the authors locate their critique within the problematic of imperial/colonial relations of domination and exploitation, and their modes of resurgence beyond colonial/imperial rule. (p.1)

This research focuses specifically on the ways in which people seek liberation (for themselves and others) and self-recovery through food practices. This section reviews the literature on intentional food practices and conscious foodways in the African diaspora—including definitions of these terms in the literature, articulations of specific practices, and the reasons why such practices are enacted. This section highlights connections the literature makes between intentional food practices, consciousness, and identities in African diaspora.

A POETICS OF FOOD

Conscious foodways research examines how people enact food practices intentionally for political and spiritual purposes. Mary Douglas writes, “Food is a field of action. It is a medium in which other levels of categorization become manifest ... Food choices support political alignments and social opportunities” (quoted in Warner, 2015, p.110). Warner’s (2015) archaeological survey of two families of African ancestry in Maryland assesses how those families made specific food choices in order to navigate and avoid racism, as well as claim African identities. He further suggests that these families may

well have had difficulty articulating why they chose to eat the foods that they did. They would not have been talking about how their food choices were communicating culture or group identities or collective histories. Indeed, eating is such a taken-for-granted act that it often slips into the realm of the unconscious. Asking a person *why* they eat what they eat is a pernicious question. While answers will commonly revolve around ‘it tastes good’ or ‘it’s good for you’ or ‘it’s cheap,’ they rarely reveal the long-standing traditions, subtle symbolisms, or social implications of what a person consumes. Yet, everyday meals *are* illustrative of broader social patterns, both reflecting and reinforcing the value and belief systems of particular groups (Warner, 2015, p.110-111).

Dominant histories in “the Americas” about people of African ancestry tend to begin with enslavement. Critical cultural, race, and ethnic theories and studies tend to focus on the ways in which people in the African Diaspora remain enslaved and oppressed systematically in various ways. Critical cultural, postcolonial, and “ethnic” socio-psychological theories tend to focus on the ways in which the consciousness of individuals and collectives can both support and subvert oppression by working through the challenges of attempting to shift personal and collective consciousness (Bhabha, 1987; Fanon, 2008; hooks, 1989).

A POETICS OF FOOD

The cultural and spiritual ancestry of the African Diaspora holds a history of forced displacement from the physical ecologies from which African ancestral lines evolved. When Africans were brought to “the Americas” via the trans-Atlantic slave trade, many ancestral histories and cultural legacies remained in Africa. Many African foodstuffs remained in Africa. Though, many foodstuffs, preparations, and cultural orientations were also transferred from Africa—the acknowledgment of this transfer, however, is still emerging in recent foodways narratives (see Mosadomi, 2008). African languages that would have been spoken by Africans who were brought to the Americas were primarily spoken languages. Africans were not taught how to write the European languages spoken by those by whom they were enslaved. The general discontinuation of African language and culture created a disconnect between the histories and legacies of Africans pre- and post-slavery because many cultural ways of being and forms of expression were lost in translation or absent from foodways narratives (Mosadomi, 2008).

The connection between food, power, and race in the United States from the moment of slavery to the current moment has been well documented (see Farrish, 2015; see Warner, 2015; see Williams-Forson, 2006). Food consciousness in the African Diaspora is not only about making intentional food choices and the reasons why one makes intentional food choices. Equally, it is a personal and collective examination of the reasons why people who identify and associate with the African Diaspora have not had the privilege of making intentional food choices (Williams-Forson, 2010). The following section references literature about African American foodways and foodways of the African diaspora, with a focus on literature pertaining to intentional or conscious food practices and foodways within the African Diaspora. One will notice little about intentional food practices in The Bahamas because, currently, this topic remains unexplored in academic literature.

A POETICS OF FOOD

Conscious or intentional food practices for ideological purposes in the African Diaspora have been enacted throughout the history of Africans' presence in "the Americas"—particularly as forms of resistance to Euro-centric culture and racial oppression (Harris, 2011; Wallach, 2015; Warner, 2015). Warner (2015) writes that "One way African American agency can be seen is through material culture" (p.29). The history of slavery, oppression, and discrimination often has made direct protest dangerous. As a result, people with African ancestry have chosen frequently to resist oppression in subtler ways through cultural production and, particularly, through food practices (Wallach, 2015). Foodways were carried from Africa and altered to fit the new context. Additionally, new foodways and movements began during slavery and were carried through until the Civil Rights and liberation movements throughout the diaspora. These foodways and movements, as described below, laid the foundation for the contemporary conscious foodways that have resulted—many of which figure into the food practices and motivations of the people I interviewed to carry out this research.

Warner (2015) writes that the intentional food choices of people of African ancestry: were a part of a dynamic process through which individual and communal identities were negotiated and defined in the socially and politically oppressive milieu of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By persisting in their love of pork and creating private economies for poultry and fish, these families were quietly stating on their own terms that they were *African* Americans and not just Americans. (p.3, emphasis in original)

During slavery, enslaved Africans saved seeds gathered from fields or in kitchens and tended their own gardens to supplement the rations offered by white masters (Harris, 2011). During their "off-time," enslaved and free Africans sold vegetables they grew and animals that they raised, hunted, and fished as street vendors and at markets—sometimes even to their own masters—despite the fact that it was illegal in some places (Harris, 2011). When Philadelphians

A POETICS OF FOOD

began freeing enslaved people and later as slavery was abolished, freed blacks used their food service skills and knowledge from being butlers to create the idea of catering. This development generated a strong economy for catering which also created space for people to develop and financially support themselves employing a number of other skills (Harris, 2011). The idea of developing informal economies through catering and vending produced and gathered foods spread into a number of Northern cities, providing a foundation for the uplift of people of African ancestry in the Americas. As Harris (2011) writes, “whether free people or those with a view toward freedom, they were Americans moving toward dreams of full citizenship who had become a major force in the urban food-disbursement chain” (p.130).

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, some people of African ancestry chose to eat pork more than beef—even those people who had the means to afford either—because eating pork was viewed as a way of differentiating oneself from white society (Warner, 2015). In his survey of two families of African ancestry in Annapolis, Maryland, Warner (2015) discusses that the families avoided white-owned businesses as much as possible, joined forces to produce their own meat, collected seafood from the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, and hunted wild birds. The foods that people of African ancestry did not procure locally from each other were procured from national brands to ensure that they were receiving the same quality of foods as people of European ancestry (Warner, 2015).

Autonomous economies and a sense of control over one’s labor status was critical for people of African ancestry at the turn of the twentieth century and procuring and producing their own food provided communities of African ancestry with “a sense of dignity, belonging, and freedom” (Warner, 2015, p.124). Similarly, stealing food was an easy way of procuring food since it could be done without leaving a trace. Besides its practical application, theft covertly

A POETICS OF FOOD

undermined white authority and was discussed openly and matter-of-factly among the enslaved (Farrish, 2015; Harris, 2011; Warner, 2015).

At the Tuskegee Institute, a Historically Black University, Booker T. Washington (the Institute's principal in the early twentieth century) intentionally instituted a particular diet for students in the dining halls. He did this because he believed that food “came to the table embedded with messages about culture, status, politics, and economics” and “reflected both assimilationist and nationalist goals” (Wallach, 2015, p.165). Washington

continually advocated for a food system managed by and for black people. He believed that food practices were an important means of preparing the black population for first-class citizenship, if racism could be ameliorated, or for independent racial sustenance if it could not ... he helped create a food culture that simultaneously paid homage to the high moral tone of progressive food reformers and to the African American culinary heritage rooted in slave culture (Wallach, 2015, p.166).

Washington developed and maintained relationships with those considered publically as progressive food reformers of his time, such as Fannie Farmer, John Harvey Kellogg, Edward Atkinson, Ellen Swallow Richards, and Wilbur Atwater (Wallach, 2015). While Warner discusses the consumption of pork as a strategy of differentiation from white society, Wallach (2015) writes that Booker T. Washington advocated for the consumption of beef because he felt it was part of claiming citizenship and being considered “civilized”. Partially, this was in order to maintain funding for Tuskegee—which aligns with Warner's (2015) assertion that the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture analyzed people's food consumption patterns as a way of discerning who were and were not “prudent, hardworking, and refined citizens” (p.83, quoting Daniel Horowitz). He supported consumption of local produce and foods associated traditionally with New England for the same purpose. Simultaneously, he integrated vegetables traditionally associated with the

A POETICS OF FOOD

south and touted their health by noting their similarities with or relationships to “northern” vegetables whose consumption was advocated by northern white progressive food reformers (Wallach, 2015).

Washington and his associates (including W.E.B. DuBois) ate beef consciously to resist pork as a food associated with slavery and the South and to evoke a sense that people could make their own conscious decisions rather than following what had always been done (Wallach, 2015). Eating beef was considered subversive because most southerners, regardless of racial identity, could not afford it. Other food practices that Washington required at Tuskegee were “proper etiquette” and manners—such as eating meals at consistent times and using napkins and table cloths (Wallach, 2015, p.170-171). Wallach (2015) writes that for Washington,

food practices were about more than obtaining adequate nourishment. Mistakes at the table, such as using the wrong plate or creating an unattractive menu card, provided evidence of poor character and could not be overlooked. Students were charged with paying careful attention to the practices of cooking, eating and serving because proper food habits would prepare them to assume the rights of first-class citizenship should they be proffered. However, equally significantly, Washington wanted black people to take seriously the challenge of achieving food self-sufficiency as a means of becoming less dependent upon white goodwill, should it fail to materialize. (p.176)

Despite Booker T. Washington’s aforementioned philosophical undertone, he appreciated and celebrated aspects of black and Southern cooking as well—including opossum. He valued self-sufficiency above all else and, with his associates at Tuskegee, worked hard to produce as much food as possible on the Institute’s grounds. He held special classes for women developed around the ideas of food self-sufficiency and black food autonomy and he encouraged local farmers to

A POETICS OF FOOD

reduce their cotton yield in exchange for food crops to decrease dependence on the national economy. Washington had a very definite food philosophy:

Food was a tool of economic independence and could ameliorate the impact of racism if African Americans became less dependent on white employers and creditors to fill their stomachs. The ability to assert black national culinary independence could indeed have softened the blows of dependency and oppression (Wallach, 2015, p.179).

The connection between Black food autonomy and conscious or intentional food practices continued to swell in the twentieth century. After having experienced equality abroad during World War II, American soldiers of African ancestry became determined to raise their quality of life in the United States and bring equality home (Harris, 2011). *Ebony* magazine hired a food editor who could focus on nutrition as its chief editor “recognized that knowledge of proper nutrition was a necessary part of the growing world of possibility for African Americans” (Harris, 2011, p.195).

In the 1960s, Fannie Lou Hamer—among those involved—started the Freedom Farm in the Mississippi Delta in order to facilitate food self-sufficiency for people in Mississippi of African ancestry (Cooley, 2015). This farm not only provided food, it provided knowledge and information about nutrition, food production, food preparation, and how to be food self-sufficient. She participated in a documentary called *Hunger—American Style*, whose purpose was to raise awareness around issues of poverty, such as the lack of actual sustenance being received by people who were underprivileged and underserved—particularly those with African ancestry (Cooley, 2015).

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) held food drives in the 1960s to support southern black sharecroppers whose dietary needs were not being met and whose supplementary nutrition was revoked by the U.S. government. While delivering food to people

A POETICS OF FOOD

directly, SNCC members educated people to whom they delivered food about voting and other civil rights of which they were unaware, which led directly to increased black voter registration in those districts (Cooley, 2015).

Food self-sufficiency was a critical aspect of the Black Panther campaign. To garner support, they offered free breakfast programs for school children (Cooley, 2015). In 1968, the National Sharecroppers Fund sent Black leaders to Israel to learn more about growing methods and communal cooperatives in order to spread the knowledge to underprivileged and undeserved people of African ancestry in the south. While people of African ancestry in the “Americas” had been writing cookbooks since the 1860s (Harris, 2011), in the early 1960s soul food cookbooks were produced to ensure that soul food would not be misappropriated by white chefs and writers (Stanonis, 2015).

Soul Food was embraced as the foodway of African Americans and was called such “because it fed the spirit as much as the body on the long march to institutionalized equality” during the Civil Rights Movement (Harris, 2011, p.201). Harris (2011) writes,

In the 1960s, as the history of African Americans began to be rewritten with pride instead of with the shame that had previously accompanied the experience of disenfranchisement and enslavement, soul food was as much an affirmation as a diet. Eating neckbones and chitterlings, turnip greens and fried chicken, became a political statement for many.
(p.208)

Mostly unrecognized in the literature on foodways of the African Diaspora, many recipes that are now considered to be staples of soul food emerged from intentional use of specific ingredients, recipes, and preparation practices associated with Hoodoo, Conjure, and other

A POETICS OF FOOD

syncretistic spiritual systems⁹ (Stanonis, 2015). This spiritual orientation towards food holds an inherent belief that food is a conduit for spirit and energy—which is part of the reason why it is called “soul” food (Stanonis, 2015). Histories, meanings, and definitions of soul food are vast (Harris, 2011; Opie, 2008) and beyond the scope and needs of this review. The idea of soul food is significant within the context of this research, however, because particular foods and food practices have been followed intentionally for political purposes related to individual and collective identity to rewrite and reimagine the histories of people in the African Diaspora. Farrish (2015) suggests that “Instead of placing the emergence of antebellum black food culture in conversation with what it would become—southern foodways and soul food—I would suggest locating it within its historical moment and the space in which it was produced” (p.163). This sensibility of specificity allows the actual foods and practices considered soul food to be fluid and variable while maintaining an essential cohesive intentionality.

At the same time, class divides led wealthier and more privileged people of African ancestry to make intentional choices about food that aligned them more with European foodways. Additionally, “By the end of the decade [1960s] and throughout the 1970s, brown rice, smoked turkey wings, tahini, and tofu also appeared on urban African American tables as signs of protest against the traditional diet and its perceived limitations to health and well-being, both real or imagined” (Harris, 2011, p.209). Vegetarian cookbooks, such as *Dick Gregory’s Natural Diet for Folks who Eat: Cookin with Mother Nature* by Dick Gregory and *Soul to Soul: A Soul Food Vegetarian Cookbook* by Mary Keyes Burgess offered justification for

⁹ Syncretistic spiritual systems, in this research, refer to a wide range of creolized systems of spiritual practice that emerged in North America, South America, and the Caribbean comprised of various combinations of indigenous African, indigenous American, indigenous European, and Christian spirituality and practice. Such systems and their associated practices are also a key cultural link in the Diaspora, connecting people across geographic spaces (Stanonis, 2015).

A POETICS OF FOOD

“natural” living and plant-based foods as a way of promoting the health and uplifting the identities of people associated with the African Diaspora (Harris, 2011).

In the 1970s through the 1990’s, Edna Lewis—a prominent chef in New York City and the Carolinas—promoted the use of fresh and seasonal ingredients in her restaurants as well as in the cookbooks she published: *Edna Lewis Cookbook*, *A Taste of Country Cooking*, *The Pursuit of Flavor*, and *The Gift of Southern Cooking* (Harris, 2011). In the 1980s, Nia and Zach Kondo wrote *Vegetarianism Made Simple and Easy: A Primer for Black People* (Harris, 2011). In his review of soul food, Opie (2008) describes people who avoided the diets of their childhoods (except for on special occasions) for health purposes.

In addition to political commitments, the connection between intentional food practices and spirituality among people in the African Diaspora is well documented. Perhaps the most well-known, The Nation of Islam – a pro-black Afro-centric Muslim organization – focused strongly on food as a means of economic independence, creating agro-food coops to support its members who observed Halal guidelines and rejected food associated with slavery (Cooley, 2015; Harris, 2011; Opie, 2008; Stanonis, 2015). The Nation of Islam’s leader, Elijah Muhammad, published two dietary manuals: *How to Eat to Live* and *How to Eat to Live, Book 2*, eschewing what he called the “slave diet” (Harris, 2011). Pork was avoided strictly and dessert, typically, was bean pie—demonstrating the Nation of Islam’s commitment to a mostly plant-based diet (Harris, 2011). Additionally, given its Afro-centric orientation, many of the foods privileged by the Nation had international African influences (Harris, 2011).

The various movements and foodways described above set the stage for modern food consciousness associated with the African Diaspora. Over a century after Booker T. Washington asserted the need for food practices to reflect one’s citizenship and membership in American society, Halloran (2015) writes that people such as Will Allen, Michael Twitty, Oprah Winfrey,

A POETICS OF FOOD

Ron Finley, and Michelle Obama support and participate in urban farming and advocate self-sufficient food systems for the nation and for people associated with the African Diaspora. Less well-known, Detroit's Nezza Bendele cooks vegan soul food specifically for organizing and activist events, noting "Our community can't reach its full potential if we are eating Hot Cheetos for breakfast" (quoted in Guzman, 2016). Similarly, The Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit featuring the knowledge and cooking of "Mama Myrtle Curtis, a co-founder of a non-profit that provides monthly classes on how to cook delicious, local, seasonal food" (Guzman, 2016). Halloran (2015) asserts that these contemporary practitioners see a direct link between their ancestors, a broad range of oppressive legacies associated with farming and food, and opportunities for people of African ancestry to re-claim and re-write their part in developing the nation and experiencing a sense of national belonging (Halloran, 2015).

Highlighting the somewhat subtle use of food practices as cultural resistance and self-recovery in the twentieth century provides a springboard for contemporary scholars to "promote the understanding of black women's lives as cultural work" (Swindall, 2015, quoting Psyche Williams-Forsen p.137). Swindall (2015) uses this as a backdrop to describe the significance of Michelle Obama's work with food and nutrition. Particularly, she points out how the specificity of the amalgamation of Michelle Obama's identities provides a unique lens through which to view her activism. Swindall (2015) writes that Obama's food activism "cannot be essentialized into one category because there are too many bands of light being refracted" (p.137).

A. Breeze Harper's (2010) *Sistah Vegan: Black Female Vegans Speak on Food, Identity, Health, and Society* is a compilation of essays by black female vegans about their food practices and the reasons why they enact them. Williams-Forsen (2010) writes that the essays in Harper's book "speak not only to food and choice, but also to food and its intersections with numerous forms of injustice that are insidiously destructive to their lives" (p.ix). It is about

A POETICS OF FOOD

“how a specific group of Black-identified female vegans perceive nutrition, food, ecological sustainability, health and healing, animal rights, parenting, social justice, spirituality, hair care, race, sexuality, womanism, freedom, and identity that goes against the (refined and bleached) grain” and about “how dietary habits and food production connect to either the dismantling or maintenance of environmental racism, speciesism, ecological devastation, health disparities, institutional racism, overconsumption, and other social injustices” (Harper, 2010a, p.xix).

Within the context of this book, veganism is defined as “the practice of refusing animal-based foods and products” (Phillips, 2010, p.9); a

“complex set of beliefs and practices, including an interest in environmental sustainability and social justice in the production of food; a preference for organic and minimally processed foods that have not been genetically modified (non-GMOs); adherence to principles of food combining and healing through plant-based foodstuffs; support for products that have not been subjected to animal testing; interest in alternative, naturalistic, or integral/medicinal practices; and an overall concern for mind-body wellness. Thus, veganism is not just a way of eating; it is a way of life” (Phillips, 2010, p.9)

In this compilation of essays, food consciousness in the African diaspora is described from a number of different angles. Among them, a belief that animal products should not be consumed because the animal industry’s violent and oppressive nature originates from the same sentiments and structures of slavery (Harper, 2010a; Loyd-Paige, 2010) and “Black Americans were *derogatorily* categorized *as* animals within a racist colonial context” (Harper, 2010a, p.xv). As a sense of solidarity due to inequitable food distribution (Loyd-Paige, 2010), animal rights and speciesism (Harper, 2010a; Loyd-Paige, 2010), physical health and healing (Loyd-Paige, 2010). Loyd-Paige (2010) writes, “I made a conscious decision to change my eating habits so that they would more closely represent my thinking on issues of social justice, the equitable use

A POETICS OF FOOD

and distribution of global resources, and the health-diet-survival connection for African Americans” (p.2-3).

Food Culture in African and Caribbean Diasporas

Scott and Rushing (2014) note that “Daily decisions regarding what to eat or not to eat relate to the social construction of personal and regional identities as well as the maintenance of physical health” (p.147). They further suggest,

given diet’s reflection of culture, any observation of change in the production and consumption of food suggests a shift in individual, collective, and even global cultural narratives. While the intangible effects are deeply felt in understandings of local tradition, culture, and meaning, changes in habits regarding food also affect more tangible, quantifiable facets of life. Each point in the chain of productive and consumptive habits is slightly altered when new ideas are introduced affecting not only regional identity and local culture, but also health. (p.147)

Africans in Diaspora in the “Americas” have used food as a way of negotiating identity and subverting oppression since the advent of slavery (Harris, 2011; Wallach, 2015; Warner, 2015). While the connection between food, oppression, and Africans in diaspora from slavery to the present has been explored, the ways in which people associated with the African and Caribbean diasporas are creating new foodways is an emerging area of study and public discussion to which I hope this work will contribute.

The majority of the literature or narratives about intentional food practices in the African diaspora are associated with a certain lifestyle that tends to be more diasporic and hybrid in nature, drawing from multiple nationalisms, spiritual systems, and healing modalities. Examining foodways in African and Caribbean diasporas has emerged recently in works such as Wallach’s,

Dethroning the Deceitful Pork Chop: Rethinking African American Foodways from Slavery to Obama, a history of African American foodways. The book's contributors offer reasoning for the practices typically associated with African American culture, such as soul food, and discuss early reformers' contributions to shifting what African American foodways look like today. The final chapter mentions some of the more recent prominent contributors to discussions surrounding black food, such as Michelle Obama, Will Allen, Michael Twitty, and Oprah (Halloran, 2015). Halloran discusses popular movements, such as urban gardening and "black food citizenship"—a term coined by Jennifer Wilkins and defined as:

the practice of engaging in food-related behaviors (defined narrowly and broadly) that support, rather than threaten, the development of a democratic, socially and economically just, and environmentally sustainable economic system (Halloran quoting Wilkins, 2015, p.217).

Conclusion

This chapter reviews literature for my research on intentional food practices and journeys of consciousness in The Bahamas. It explores literature on intentional food practices and conscious foodways in the African Diaspora from the perspective of a particular definition of creolization and diaspora. As this review demonstrates, intentional food practices in the African diaspora have a long history and continue to evolve, borrowing from a wide range of theories, philosophies, religions, and spiritual traditions. This is a sparse review compared to the many descriptions of the ways in which food and spirituality correspond with practices in the African and Caribbean diasporas across a variety of spiritual systems and traditions. Such a review is beyond the needs and limitations of this research but holds possibilities for future examinations

because it offers descriptions of practice in the African diaspora that are not offered frequently in academic and public narratives.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework

A Poetics of Food:

Applications for the Aesthetics of Everyday Life in the Caribbean

“I don’ wanna take sides,
but when the shit hit the fan
and the dust subsides,
I’m lookin to thrive.
So I remember this little hint...
edge communities hold the most diversity.
And even when diversity leads to adversity,
it can still hold great pleasure,
and it remains the most accurate measure
of an ecosystem’s ability to adapt,
so we’re very apt to integrate cultures.
We’re not assimilationist,
our fate is swallowing vultures:
we’re where the transformation is.
I think the resolution
might be in the solution
surrounding the land:
2 parts salt, 3 parts water, 4 parts

sand slipping through my hand
and the ability from necessity
to Hold. Accept. Let go.
YES, bey!
That is what really puts us in the know ...”
~(Booker, 2015c)

Introduction

This chapter connects to the theoretical methodology and theoretical framework for my research on intentional food practices and journeys of consciousness in The Bahamas. It covers the following topics: 1) justification for working with a theoretical methodology and a theoretical framework; 2) the ways in which I define creolization and diaspora within the context of this research; 3) Caribbean Critique and Poetics as theoretical approaches and the literature associated with these approaches that inform my theoretical framework; 4) the Aesthetics of Everyday Life as a theoretical methodology; and 5) a Poetics of Food as the theoretical framework.

The narratives, theories, and discourses framing this research are embedded in literatures and theories of hybridity, de-colonization, de-colonialism, and anti-colonialism. Hybridity, diaspora, and liberation literatures, inherently, denote movements of bodies, movements of consciousness, and transitional processes away from oppression and towards liberation, transitional processes away from plantation mindsets and towards homeland mindsets .

Based on Chela Sandoval’s (2000) *Methodology of the Oppressed*, working with a theoretical methodology relates to the concept of movements of consciousness, differential consciousness, or psychic/ideological fluidity. Differential consciousness is intentional psychic movement, or a form of psychic movement that is employed as a survival tactic – as outlined by Sandoval’s (2000) *Methodology of the Oppressed*. It is not to be confused with the research methods and methodology used to conduct this research—a discussion of which exceeds the

A POETICS OF FOOD

bounds of this article. Yet, the research methods and research methodology used to employ this research were chosen and developed as a result of the theoretical methodology. I made this choice in order to demonstrate cohesion between the methods I used to study consciousness and the consciousness with which I conducted my research.

According to Kamau Brathwaite, everyday lives in the Caribbean cannot be understood without an understanding of “nommo,” or cultural practice (Pulis, 1999, p.2). Food practices are cultural practices (Counihan, 1999; Guthman, 2008a; Higman, 2008; Kim, 2015; Menck, 2012; Schwegler, 2013; Slocum & Saldanha, 2013), and they are the primary practices that inform the research conducted within the framework described in this article. As food practices are aesthetic cultural practices, I want to maintain that research can also be an aesthetic cultural practice—and that it might be considered an ethical imperative when exploring and speaking to cultures whose ethics and political commentaries are so often manifest in aesthetic cultural forms.

The Aesthetics of Everyday Life seeks to ask the questions: How do the cultural specificities of a particular culture or place emerge through intentional practices? How are these specificities formulated and expressed within the context of what people love, desire, find beautiful, and produce creatively in their everyday lives? The Aesthetics of Everyday Life, as a theoretical methodology, was developed to illuminate the specificities of emerging intentional or conscious foodways in Nassau, Bahamas from theories and narratives that have emerged through Caribbean cultural and aesthetic thought and production over the past century. My hope, however, is that it can and will be applied to other aspects of cultural life and creative production in The Bahamas, as well as in contexts throughout the Caribbean.

I emphasize food practices as cultural practices in this research to connect necessarily the development of food systems and economies to overall processes of creative, cultural, and economic development. Understanding the development of food systems and local food

A POETICS OF FOOD

economies as cultural development requires related creative production and cultural frameworks that emerge naturally in and from people's everyday lives to be incorporated into all economic development platforms and policies (Reese & Rosenfeld, 2002).

A Poetics of Food in The Bahamas is a framework built from a theoretical methodology that I call the Aesthetics of Everyday Life—a way of understanding how the hopes and dreams for the future of Bahamian culture may be embedded in everyday practices. The Aesthetics of Everyday Life is a lens capable of illuminating the indigenous systems and structures in Nassau that exist and continue to emerge. Many of these systems and structures exist, though they seem invisible to the eye that lacks the capacity to see past the indicators of efficacy expressed in so-called established cultural frameworks. With the Aesthetics of Everyday Life and A Poetics of Food, I seek to view oft-explored issues in new ways that I hope resonate more cogently with the realities of the everyday lives of the people I interviewed and others with similar orientations doing similar types of work.

A Poetics of Food has lines and rules that are pliable enough to suit the variability of everyday life, yet strong enough to support and protect authentic cultural development. It is meant to be a dynamic structure relevant to the realities of everyday lives. It does not describe or explain what “the food system” looks like—or even what it “should” look like. Rather, it is a multivocal expression of the food practices of a particular network of people and the reasons they enact them in particular ways. It is lens developed as an offshoot of The Aesthetics of Everyday Life and a lens used frequently to articulate the realities of food in diaspora—which I discuss in the final section of this chapter dedicated specifically to a Poetics of Food.

The Aesthetics of Everyday Life is a theoretical methodology associated with narratives of critique, poetics, and creolization from the Caribbean. The following sections define creolization and diaspora as they are used in this research and describe their importance. After that, I explain

A POETICS OF FOOD

the theoretical approaches of Caribbean Critique and poetics generally to set the stage for a specific theoretical lineage that informs this research. I then describe what I have distilled from these approaches and literatures to formulate *The Aesthetics of Everyday Life* and define the characteristics I use to qualify this theoretical methodology. Finally, I describe *A Poetics of Food* as a way of approaching this research on food practices and how these poetics manifest themselves in other narratives and research on food and foodways in and among the African Diaspora.

Creolization

Some literature uses the terms “creolization” and “hybridity” interchangeably (Prabhu, 2007; Sandoval, 2000) with other terms such as *métissage* (Prabhu, 2007), diaspora (Prabhu, 2007), and syncretization. Each term--in addition to post-colonial, creolization, and hybridity--holds a variety of definitions across theories and contexts. As discussed in the previous chapter, creolization and diaspora are the primary related concepts with which this research engages. The previous chapter defined the ways in which diaspora is defined in this research. This section will examine the ways in which creolization offers an additional layer of conceptualization to the experience of diaspora. Within the context of this research, these terms hold a strong relationship with one another. Yet, they are not used interchangeably.

Creolization, conceptually, tends to be applied to two broad phenomena: one is creole as a subject—a person or culture of mixed race or a new language comprised of two older languages; the other is creolization as a process. This research focuses specifically on the idea of creolization as a *process*. The research itself is bound by a traced lineage and definition of

A POETICS OF FOOD

creolization as a process or set of processes with very specific orientations towards decolonization as both acknowledgment and release from the past as necessary to creating a future aligned with individual or collective desires. This orientation does not ignore the past, forget the past, or resist its significance in formulating specific moments and perceptions of reality. Rather, this specific orientation toward creolization focuses on the need to develop new narratives about emergent individual and collective identities (Pieterse & Parekh, 1995) wherein people re-write and redefine their own histories as acts of healing and self-empowerment (Crichlow, 2009; Shih & Lionnet, 2011).

Creolization, oriented in this way, “requires a revolution in politics, thought, and language, all simultaneously, and is much more than a reaction against colonialism. Rather, it is an act of self-assertion and self-creation” (Shih & Lionnet, 2011, p.17). It is an active rather than reactive orientation (Shih & Lionnet, 2011). It produces generative narratives strong enough to accept and hold the sense of loss inherent in legacies of violence embedded in this entanglement (Glissant, 1989; Prabhu, 2007; Shih & Lionnet, 2011) that simultaneously, “renounce trauma as a space from which to speak” (Prabhu, 2007, p.10). Creolization as radical healing, therefore, loses its purchase if it is not contextualized and historicized in specific realities of “forced transculturation” (Shih & Lionnet, 2011, p.25).

Creolization theories exist with the explicit purpose of “decolonizing the mind” (Shih & Lionnet, 2011, p.15), of unpacking the history of European intellectual thought (especially German and French), critiquing it, and allowing multiple narratives to bleed together in ways that empower the story teller (Shih & Lionnet, 2011). Creolization theories seek “to express the polycentricity of theory” (Shih & Lionnet, 2011, p.31) that honor Caribbean spaces as “site[s] of disruption, transformation, and exchange enabled by a relational process of cultural negotiation” (Mehta, 2009, p.3).

A POETICS OF FOOD

Creolization is a term with multiple connotations and meanings. These may be considered paradoxical because creolization holds (1) specific historical moments of violence and displacement; (2) the ways in which those moments have resulted in irreversible cultural cross-fertilization; and (3) the idea that accepting and continuing such cultural cross-fertilization is necessary to transform the pain caused by the original violence (Glissant, 1997; Shih & Lionnet, 2011). At its most basic, creolization is

the mixing of cultures and languages in parts of the early colonial world ... a straightforward empirical reality in which cultural and ideological entanglements abound ... a flexible hypothesis that allows researchers to map different relationships, modes of contact, and migration patterns in and among diverse ethnic and linguistic communities (Shih & Lionnet, 2011, p.2).

Creolization is

simultaneously descriptive and analytical: it emerges from the experiential but provides a theoretical framework that does justice to the lived realities of subaltern subjects, while explaining their experiences in terms of an epistemology that remains connected to those realities. Creolization indexes flexibility, welcomes the test of reality, and is a mode of theorizing that is integral to the living practices of being and knowing (Shih & Lionnet, 2011, p.2).

It is “processes of ‘selective creation and cultural struggle’” built around the reality of constant relationship (Crichlow, 2009, quoting Michel-Rolph Trouillot, p.ix). It is perpetual cultural transformation through Relation (Glissant, 1989), “the ways in which different cultures encountering one another in contingent historical circumstances transform themselves and each other into new and unforeseeable entities” (Prabhu, 2007, p.105). It is “a dynamic process in which difference continues to function and proliferate as a constitutive reality and as a basis for

A POETICS OF FOOD

thought and action” (Prabhu, 2007, p.106). Creolization is a philosophical stance from which the idea of “purity” of experience or composition is an impossibility (Glissant, 1989). Creolization is entanglement, an emergence marking something new altogether; in this entanglement, one cannot “return” to the specificity of a previous state, only the specific diversity of the true self.

Glissant (1989) describes creolization as “the passage from the all-encompassing world of cultural Sameness, effectively imposed by the West, to a pattern of fragmented Diversity” (p.97). He further writes that “The tug of Sameness, which is neither uniformity nor sterility, interrupts the efforts of the human spirit to transcend that universal humanism that incorporates all (national) peculiarities” (Glissant, 1989, p.97). Creolization represents a “Diversity, which is neither chaos nor sterility,” that “means the human spirit’s striving for a cross-cultural relationship, without universalist transcendence” (Glissant, 1989, p.98).

Crichlow (2009) reorients creolization as a way of seeing the world, that “Creolization processes are ... symbolic refractions of a particular mapping of the present ... and the ontological media for renegotiating the incoherencies of presence (absence) and for navigating space and place” (Crichlow, 2009, p.x). She writes that she seeks to “redirect the terms of the creolization debates in ways that speak to the journeys toward the refashioning of self, times, and places in the intertwinement of global and local processes” (Crichlow, 2009, p.ix). As incoherence, creolization is “a journeying, or crossing, which paradoxically roots and routes our densely inscribed subjects through seas of history and obscure mappings of the present; through ineluctable rites of Middle Passage and its liminal spaces exciting dreams, memories, hopes, and the post-Creole imagination of opaque futures” (Crichlow, 2009, p.xii) that “exhibits patterns of creativity congruent with unpredictability, novelty, and parody” (Shih & Lionnet, 2011, p.11). It is “an ongoing journey, or crossing, that one sought to make in the pursuit and homing of modern freedoms” (Crichlow, 2009, p.xiv). This is the spirit in which I present my research on

A POETICS OF FOOD

individual intentional food practices and their relationship to emerging foodways in The Bahamas. The next section describes how the concept of creolization as process relates to the reality of diaspora as a space in which to root oneself and one's identity while, simultaneously, holding an inherent malleability.

The concept of creolization as process relates to the reality of diaspora as a space in which to root oneself and one's identity while, simultaneously, holding an inherent malleability, a literal route. While creolization is the journey of the collective imagination akin to individual psychic integration, diaspora might be described as material and/or physical movement—the two mirror one another.

This section covered the definition and purpose of the concept of creolization within the context of this research. Ancient African spiritual systems have a strong emphasis on one's connection to one's ancestors. Citing and referencing other people's work can be like naming a tradition, invoking one's intellectual ancestry, as a way of naming our roots, regardless of how broad or deep. The intellectual roots of this research lie within a diverse lineage of Caribbean Critique, creolization, and poetics that is examined in the next section.

Caribbean Critique and Poetics

This section engages specifically with Caribbean Critique—a theoretical approach rooted in the period of decolonization, considered a period of emerging national and cultural identities (Gomez, 2005; Harney, 1996; Nesbitt, 2013). In the Francophone Caribbean, French Caribbean and French African intellectuals became enmeshed culturally at French universities and developed the Négritude movement. From the Négritude movement grew the Creolité, Creoliste, and Antillanité movement(s) in response, whose discourse(s) are central to the framework

A POETICS OF FOOD

presented by this chapter. Caribbean Critique is a genre, a way of perceiving the world, and a way of expressing the world embedded in the everyday lives of people in the Caribbean.

This section traces a specific intellectual lineage, not through a linear chronology, but through what Adjarian (2004) refers to as “necessary interrelationships that derive from transverse patterns of historical development” (p.7). I call this set of discourses a lineage because it traces narratives developed in relationship to each other across space and time based on a common cultural struggle (Crichlow, 2009) shared by people in relationship with one another. The lineage represents a discourse, though in no way a “unified” or “unifying” one. The center of the lineage, within the context of this research, is the area of Caribbean Critique that explores creolization and poetics from the Créoliste/Créolite and Antillanité movements. I include the writers Aimé Césaire and Franz Fanon in that lineage because they are Caribbean-born, because they had relationships with Créoliste and Antillanité writers, and because later more predominant créolistes such as Édouard Glissant wrote in strong response to them. Aimé Césaire was influenced by and worked closely with his wife, Suzanne Césaire, who is considered to be more closely aligned with the créoliste movement than with the Négritude movement because her sense of poetics was more aesthetically than politically oriented (Nesbitt, 2013). Both Aimé Césaire and Suzanne Césaire’s poetic orientations influenced the poetics that emerged from the region across linguistic boundaries. I include Franz Fanon because he and Aimé Césaire were colleagues, mutually influencing each other’s work politically and intellectually. While Fanon was aligned with the Négritude movement early in his career, he made a transition with his later work and activism, expressing discontent with Négritude. Questioning Négritude’s pro-Africa/anti-European orientation, he was instrumental in creating an opening for Glissant’s notion of totality and integration (Prabhu, 2007).

A POETICS OF FOOD

Créoliste writers represent the core of this lineage because they were the earliest Caribbean academics to publish their particular style of politics, poetics, and aesthetics and wrote for multiple audiences and in multiple languages—the significance of which I explain further later in this section. This way of being through writing opened the door for a new Caribbean Critique and poetic sensibility between and across linguistic, cultural, economic, and racial spheres. Given that this research context exists in and among the Anglophone Caribbean, the lineage includes Anglophone writers in the Caribbean whose work emerges from the Créoliste tradition and poetic sensibility. The style of writing prevalent among female writers of the Caribbean grounded in the work of Maryse Condé is especially noteworthy. I acknowledge that visual and performing artists are part of this lineage as the relationships between artists, cultural critics, musicians, and writers are close and mutually influential in the journey to cultural expression and wholeness (C. Bailey, 2014; Crichlow, 2009). However, given the focus of this work on language and linguistic expression and the proliferation of art and music in the Caribbean, exploring those actors and their work exceeds the limitations of this literature review.

Creolization, as articulated by the Creolité/Créoliste and Antillanité movements, is political and aesthetic (Glissant, 1989; Puri, 2004)—it is said to embody poetics more than politics. But, perhaps more accurately, these movements represent the creative political superlative of multiplied and multiplying realities as rooted in aesthetic practice. This framework centers poetics of creolization that articulate desires to move beyond resistance politics and the notion of de-colonization as a political and economic project (Puri, 2004). This poetics is a set of cultural and aesthetic lenses through which to examine political and economic structures conceived by colonized and colonizing psyches rather than economic and political lenses through

A POETICS OF FOOD

which to view culture and aesthetics. Glissant (1989), in *Poetics of Relation*¹⁰, perceives the role of poetics as a style of cultural critique, “as a cross-cultural poetics: not linear and not prophetic, but woven from enduring patience and irreducible accretions” (p.142). In response to the staunch nationalism and pro-Africanism of Négritude, Glissant (1989) imagines a “Caribbeanness” that seeks to relate, rather than differentiate, to bring together, rather than tear apart. He is more concerned with a “cross-cultural process that modifies but does not undermine” national identity and the differences it encompasses (Glissant, 1989, p.139). “What is the Caribbean in fact?” he asks: “A multiple series of relationships” (Glissant, 1989, p.139). Prabhu (2007) writes that “while examining *Relation* always implies the relation of all possible things and their interrelations, it is impossible to name that totality, capture it or delimit, once and for all, its boundaries” (p.109).

Puri (2004) writes that Glissant’s (1997) *Poetics of Relation* (among other theories of hybridity) may be considered a manifesto—a work whose meaning emerges more fully through the erotics of desire than through traditional notions of political critique. That is, Glissant’s Poetics of Relation expresses his desired framework moving forward—a poetics that might create transformation in the multiple contexts of the Caribbean and beyond. Similarly, Adjarian (2004) discusses that allegory is used frequently in Caribbean Critique because it is “a trope that allows writers to connect the worlds of the possible with the worlds of the actual” (p.8). Furthermore, many writers of postcolonial Caribbean Critique utilize themes of corporeality and the body as pathways to broader themes having to do with nationalism, politics, identity, and history

¹⁰ Glissant makes a distinction between the meanings of “Relation” in French and “relationship” in English in that “Relation” in French encompasses a “totality” without emphasis on subjective exclusivity. Prabhu (2007) indicates that “*Relation* requires a constant figuring of the entire totality within which specific concepts and intercatations become coherent” (p.108). Glissant (1997) explains that “totality” need not be directly associated with the idea of totalitarianism and that totalitarianism, as a concept, would find difficult survival in terms of his articulation of “Diversity”.

A POETICS OF FOOD

(Adjarian, 2004; Burrows, 2014; Chancy, 1997; A. P. Gumbs, 2011; R. King, 2014; Taylor, 2011).

Previous critiques interrogate the theories from which I draw both individually and within the broader context of postcolonial theories and European philosophy (see Prabhu, 2007; see Puri, 2004). This literature review seeks, specifically, to understand how a particular lineage of creolization narratives might provide a lens through which to view dreams and desires encoded in the aesthetics of the everyday lives of people intentional about their food practices. It further seeks to articulate how consciousness, as defined later in this chapter, allows people to draw relationships between their food practices and the rest of their existence.

The Aesthetics of Everyday Life

The Aesthetics of Everyday Life is a framework that connects this research to the literatures surrounding Caribbean critique, creolization theories, and poetics. Applied to this research, this framework is meant to illuminate how people's food practices are connected to individual pathways to liberation and to provide new and autonomous definitions of foodways that originate from individuals' intrinsic senses of liberation and healing.

I trace a lineage of creolization and poetics from Caribbean Critique that form a particular cultural understanding and analytic I refer to as the Aesthetics of Everyday Life. This lineage can be used as a framework to link material realities with consciousness in the Caribbean. The Aesthetics of Everyday Life in the Caribbean, not dissimilar from Glissant's (1997) *Poetics of Relation*, is a set of interconnected themes featured heavily in Caribbean Critique that provides a lens through which to view and understand everyday lives in the Caribbean. This framework includes: Experiential specificities; Expression through multiple forms, languages, and genres;

A POETICS OF FOOD

Temporal and spatial fluidity; Orientations toward the generative/transformative; and Aesthetic practice as political economic practice.

The Aesthetics of Everyday Life (Theoretical Methodology)

Fig 3.1

Experiential specificities. Experiential specificities resist a “generalizing universality,” which Glissant (1989) writes is “the ultimate weapon in the process of depersonalizing a vulnerable people” (p.139). They value every experience as unique and multifaceted (Tuhkanen, 2009). Caribbean poetics recognizes “that the practice of everyday life constitutes the realm of the political in its smallest, often invisible forms” (Nesbitt, 2013, p.128). Experiential specificities provide channels through which to understand material manifestations of political economic systems and cultural narratives—and the vast quantity of forms they can take.

Antillean literature is “by and large a response to the colonial empires that created or ‘invented’ ... the Caribbean both culturally and discursively” (Adjarian, 2004, p.5). The

A POETICS OF FOOD

proliferation of writing from the Caribbean in the first person serves to provide counter-narratives to dominant reductive “master” narratives that privilege Euro-centric and patriarchal perspectives (Glissant, 1997; Larrier, 2006). That is, they resist the idea that experiences are generalizable by illuminating the particularities of many realities—especially through autofictions, creative autobiographies, and autoethnographies (an aspect of this research which is explored further in the following chapter outlining the methodology). These forms and Caribbean critique and poetics begin with self-reflection and offer accounts of how internal dynamics reflect external dynamics at various scales. As Smorkaloff (1994) attests, “In contemporary Caribbean literature, creators interrogate themselves, take the pulse of local reality, and examine their situation within the map and history of the planet, revealing a complex, historical Caribbean” (p.5).

Adjarian (2004) writes about how Michelle Cliff, Jamaica Kincaid, Edwidge Danticat, Jan J. Dominique, Julia Alvarez, and Rosario Ferré—from their diversity of national, racial, and linguistic backgrounds—articulate different individual experiences that result from similar political phenomena. They serve to explain how and why the personal can be seen as political and the political can be seen as personal (Mordecai & Wilson, 1989). Specificities of experience are “a way to implicitly suggest new categories of historical thought,” they “become the paths by which to trace personal, social, political, and historical landscapes ravished by the tempests of colonial desire” (Adjarian, 2004, p.11-12). Focusing on the specificities of individual experiences as they emerge in the literature allows lives in the Caribbean and its diasporas to be understood in terms of realities as they are actually experienced and named by the people who are experiencing them (Smorkaloff, 1994).

Expression through multiple forms, languages, and genres. Specificities of experience are connected to multiple genres and forms of expression--comparable to what Glissant (1997) refers to as multilingualism in his *Poetics of Relation*--including poetry, plays, novels, music, and visual art. The multilingualism of Creolization includes compositions of multiple genres and languages, compositions that integrate several genres into one composition, and compositions that integrate multiple languages and dialects. Additionally, many créoliste and antillanité writers write across forms, genres, languages, and dialects.

Expression through multiple literary forms and genres holds the possibility that different genres, forms, and languages may hold different aspects of cultural frameworks of creolization more fully than others and, simultaneously, that no one form or genre holds a totality of experience. This principle relates to Glissant's (1989, 1997) assertion that power dynamics express themselves when the written word in its Euro-centric forms is privileged, subordinating the spoken word in its creolized and Afro-centric forms—the most widely-used forms of expression in Caribbean contexts. Glissant sees the end of writing altogether in a creolized world where the origin of languages used most frequently is spoken and shaped by speech, rather than written. He writes,

the only way ... of maintaining a place for writing ... is, to remove it from being an esoteric practice or a banal reserve of information ... to nourish it with the oral. If writing does not henceforth resist the temptation to transcendence, by for instance, learning from oral practice and fashioning a theory from the latter if necessary, I think it will disappear as a cultural imperative from future societies (Glissant, 1989, p.101).

Dialectics between the oral and the written refers to Glissant's (1997) claim that Creole(s) are/were oral languages, that values and meaning are carried in cadence and emphasis, and that they cannot be completely translated in written form. He writes that cultural liberation requires

A POETICS OF FOOD

the liberation of the spoken word from the relegation of “dialect” or “folk speech” to a place with equal prominence to the written word: “the written is the universalizing influence of Sameness, whereas the oral would be the organized manifestation of Diversity” (Glissant, 1989, p.100). Mordecai and Wilson (1989) emphasize the constant need to liberate the Word, supporting this assertion with work from Brathwaite and Walcott, among others. In a more recent analysis, Bailey (2014) discusses the ways in which late twentieth century and early twenty-first century writing and fiction express and expose a performative and poetic quality that mimics Caribbean creole orality.

Maryse Condé uses critique and fiction (Condé, 1989) writing as a way of moving away from “objective determinations in society, whether historical, economic, or political, that limit the freedom of Antillean subjects” and to concentrate on “trac[ing] the effects of this macro-structural dependency and alienation as it manifests itself in the figures and dispositions of Antillean subjective experience” (Nesbitt, 2013, p.127). Suzanne Césaire wrote critique for popular and academic audiences (see Césaire, 2012) in addition to poetry (see Césaire, 2012). Aimé Césaire wrote poetry (A. Césaire, 1983a, 1983b, 1983c, 1990b, 1990d, 2011, 2013; A. Césaire, Rosello, & Pritchard, 1995), plays (A. Césaire, 1968, 1969, 1990a), and critique/essays (A. Césaire, 1990c, 1996b). Glissant wrote essays (see Glissant, 1989), critique (see Glissant, 1989, 1997), plays, poetry (Caws, 2004; Glissant, 1997), and novels about decolonization and creolization (Glissant, 1989, 1997; Nesbitt, 2013), as he was “committed to a postcolonial aestheticism that values ‘certainty and beauty’ rather than the emancipation and justice at the heart of Fanon’s struggle” and “substitutes a universalist *poétique* for militant *politics*” (Nesbitt, 2013, p.134, emphasis in the original). Kamau Brathwaite, similarly wrote across genres, including plays, poetry, and cultural and literary critique (see Brathwaite, 1993). His hybrid styles have been coined as “proems” and “pangeneric” (Savory, 2011).

A POETICS OF FOOD

Using multiple forms and genres to articulate specificities of experience in different ways attributes to the fluid and dynamic nature of narratives of creolization (Nesbitt, 2013; Tuhkanen, 2009). The thought of multilingualism is connected to the dialectics between the oral and the written in that it maintains space for colonial languages, Creole, dialects, their articulations, and the ways in which they offer different sorts of frameworks. Larrier (2006) writes that Caribbean novels (many of which include creolist and antillean thought and authors) are performative. That is, even though they are written, the style of writing demonstrates performance, expresses movement that reflects the Relation to which Glissant refers (Larrier, 2006). Furthermore, the “I” and auto-orientation of many Caribbean narratives express fluidity of identity—not only within an individual, but expresses, with one “I”, the thoughts and perspectives of multiple individuals (Larrier, 2006). This relates to Glissant’s (1997) thought of multilingualism--the dynamism of language and variability in articulation. In the process of creolization, cultures and aspects of cultures “are colliding, slipping, and sliding into one another” and “connecting and disconnecting discourses, the expressions that represent the betwixt and between, and the communication that co-opts as well as the communication that confronts co-optation” (Clair 2003, p.289). With this fluid orientation, Caribbean critique moves in and out of different forms of expression, such as Aimé Césaire’s multilingual or hybrid genres that integrated poetry and critique (A. Césaire, 1996a) or that integrated poetry into the speech of plays (A. Césaire, 1968). In these fluid representations, one genre is not embedded into another—such as a piece of poetry being critiqued. Rather, the narrative continues, but in a different form, voice, or language.

Because narratives of creolization embody fluidity, they reject ideas of “purity,” ideas that fragmentation dissolves, and ideas that cultural variety “dilutes” cultural orientations of origin. Creolization discourse describes the “cultures” from which they are derived as “whole,” even as they hold the tension of violence, fragmentation, rupture. Glissant (1997) writes that the

A POETICS OF FOOD

complexity and “explosion of cultures ... is the violent sign of their consensual, not imposed, sharing” (p.34). Suzanne Césaire writes about “cultural cannibalism,” which Condé differentiates from Aimé Césaire’s (more widely recognized) conceptualization (Nesbitt, 2013): Suzanne Césaire’s “cultural cannibalism invokes a mode of relating to the world that refuses destructive confrontation ... renews rather than destroys the culture it absorbs and transforms. European and African cultures do not cease to exist when they are cannibalized in the New World. Instead, they extend their compass, revalued, transformed, and renewed in novel cultural contexts” (Nesbitt, 2013, p.129).

It has been suggested that Glissant’s *Le Discours Antillais* (Caribbean Discourse) was a turn away from “the political project of decolonization” (Nesbitt, 2013, p.141). The power of the baroque is a process of métissage and “naturalization” that Glissant describes in the historicity of the baroque aesthetic where art met the “clash of civilizations” and the “naturalization” of science, which took on a more relative sensibility. Creolization processes are articulated as movement towards survival, construction, creation. Narratives of creolization from the Caribbean orient towards the generative and aesthetic over the resistant and destructive (Puri, 2004). These processes are not without pain or loss—loss of identity, loss of control, loss that is felt as a result of change (Sandoval, 2000). Rather than solely deductive or exclusive, creolization is inductive and constructive. It is about tension and movement *between*, in spaces that cannot be articulated. Glissant (1997) writes that the poetics of Relation have a nonprojectile imaginary construct that transforms the center/periphery system into a system in which every “periphery” is a center in and of itself. In this new system, the imagination may be projected outwards, but not with a given destination in mind, not with a destination pre-determined through power or resource distribution. Rather, such a tracing emerges through the aesthetics of everyday life. That which seems destructive, that which seems like death, that which seems static in this new

A POETICS OF FOOD

imaginary is only a stop along the way. The only final destination is liberation. Everything else is a phase to be transcended.

Temporal, spatial, and conceptual fluidity. Dash (1998) wrote that

literary traditions have never been self-contained. Whether bound by nation, region, class, or race, literary phenomena always involve complex relations with international ideologies or literary styles. This capacity of literary movements, even the most parochial or defensively inward-looking, to create new configurations out of a process of adapting, incorporating, and ultimately modifying other literary phenomena is particularly strong today. (p.2)

I do not want to suggest that the any worlds considered other than or outside of the Caribbean do not also possess deep and broad senses of plurality and diversity. I would suggest, in conjunction with the literature, that Caribbean sensibilities and articulations are “the vanguard in the process of cross-culturality ... a metaphor for the human condition, characterized by unceasing change and creative discontinuity” (Dash, 1998, p.6). Similar to the non-projectile imaginary, creolization poetics from the Caribbean emphasize a-linear senses of time and space—chronologies that are multiple, spaces that are archipelagic. Within the European and academic traditions, Caribbean writing has been organized primarily geographically and linguistically (Dash, 1998; see Goslinga, 1998). Many contemporary Caribbean writers and critics, however, seek to use alternate filters and organizational forms such as gender (Anim-Addo, 1996; Mordecai & Wilson, 1989), political ideologies and forms of resistance (Anim-Addo, 1996; Ferly, 2012; Smorkaloff, 1994). Ferly (2012) uses the common Caribbean metaphor of the mangrove to articulate the relationship between specificities of experience and temporal, spatial, and conceptual fluidity: “Rather than the single rhizome ... the focus becomes the mangrove,

A POETICS OF FOOD

that is, a network of rhizomes. Centering on the system ... makes [Glissant's] *Relation* a more effective tool to put the archipelago in conversation with its various diasporic communities and establish a dialogue between the islands of the region across languages" (p.1).

Caribbean critique and theories of creolization center feelings of displacement and collective losses of memory that serve to suspend time within the fluidity of entanglement. Donnell (2006) writes about the need "to reconfigure the Caribbean tradition as more movable, divergent and unruly" (p.1), much like physical and cultural realities, with ever fluctuating and moving boundaries (Smorkaloff, 1994). Glissant (1989) attributes "the acceleration of history" to creolization, calling it "a consequence of the saturation of Sameness, [that] like a liquid overflowing its vessel, has everywhere released the pent-up force of Diversity" (p.99). Furthermore, Smorkaloff (1994) writes,

Contemporary approaches to the Caribbean and Caribbeanness tend to be inclusive rather than exclusive, extending up and down the Caribbean coast of continental Latin America, indeed to London and New York, to wherever Caribbeans have made and remade their lives, taking into account the history of fragmentation that has shaped each one of the island nations. (p.2)

Jamaica Kincaid (1988) suggests that the sense of chronology she witnesses in her country of origin, Antigua, partially relates to geography--the physical experience of living on an island, of being surrounded by a seemingly endless expanse of water. Glissant privileges this archipelagic sensibility: "Ordinarily, insularity is treated as a form of isolation, a neurotic reaction to place. However, in the Caribbean each island embodies openness. The dialectic between inside and outside is reflected in the relationship of land and sea ... A Caribbean imagination liberates us from being smothered" (Glissant, 1989, p.139). Balance between the present moment and duration has to do with a sense of time and the ways in which narratives of the past and future

shift as the present moment shifts. It opposes the idea of a dominant and static masternarrative or master time keeper.

Orientations toward the generative/transformative. Creolization, initially, was an identity-generating project, “an ideological project for the imagining of a particular kind of community” (Crichlow, 2009, p.7). The purpose of creolization was to open up the imagination to possibilities that had not yet presented themselves. This meant both imagining new ideas and, as stated in the previous section, new ways of expressing those ideas. These new ideas and new expressions were meant to challenge the power dynamics in Caribbean realities by offering different approaches, different ways of being. Furthermore, Caribbean writers, across genres, took the forms that were available to them and transformed them into other forms—often achieving the ends of various political and creative movements more fully than those who originally developed the forms (Smorkaloff, 1994). Surrealism was among these forms in the early liberationist movements and Jean-Paul Sartre suggested that the liberationist and transcendent vision of the Surrealist movement was manifest most fully by his Caribbean-born contemporaries (Smorkaloff, 1994). The liberating capacity of this way of being and seeing the world is discussed further in the following section.

Mordecai and Wilson (1989) write in their anthology of Caribbean women writers that that Caribbean writers center “the quest for a sense of identity and wholeness, intimately bound up with the issue of names and naming” (xiii-xiv). I discuss the latter theme further in the next section. Prabhu (2007) writes that “Glissant’s metissage and creolization startlingly privilege a conception of *qualitative* difference being articulated in an encounter in the *first* place, rather than the classic Marxian notion (also present in Hegel) of quantity being cumulatively transformed into qualitative difference” (p.117).

Aesthetic practices as political economic practices. Practitioners of Caribbean Critique and poetics' use of aesthetic forms—art, creative writing and poetry, and music—as political economic practice, as political action, marks a unifying and remarkable quality (Mordecai & Wilson, 1989; Smorkaloff, 1994). In the previous chapter, I discussed the ways in which food practices have been used in the African Diaspora as subtle forms of resistance. It is safer to take political action in the form of daily food practices seen as preferences than it is to speak directly in resistance to oppressors. It is safer to resist in the privacy of one's own home, one's back room, than to resist oppressive structures on the street. In the same way, the colonial imagination might consider aesthetic practices to be simply acts of leisure and pleasure. Cultural acts and formations, in the colonial imagination, may be meaningful, but may not necessarily be perceived as political because they fall outside of the domain of what is considered powerful and political in the colonial structure. Yet, to develop unique cultural forms is to name and give shape to culture from the inside.

Aesthetic practices are cultural practices. Culture defines how meaning is assigned, as well as what people who identify with a given culture consider meaningful. Culture determines what is given power within a given society or group of people. Therefore, the most radical political act, the ultimate form of liberation, might not be to attain the indicators of power assigned to the system by which one feels oppressed. Perhaps, the most radical political act, the ultimate form of liberation, is to change that to which power is assigned and, therefore, to change the internal indicators of power—especially as they relate to the possibilities for self-sufficiency and sustainability given the limitations and realities that present themselves daily.

A Poetics of Food

A POETICS OF FOOD

This study seeks to propose a Poetics of Food emerging from a lens of Caribbean Critique, creolization, and poetics described throughout this chapter as an expansive analytical and methodological structure through which to understand emerging foodways in The Bahamas. Similar to Loichot's (2013) book *The Tropics Bite Back: Culinary Coups in Caribbean Literature*, which "looks at the use of food metaphors in Glissant's theoretical texts as modes of practicing Relation or creolization" (p.xxxii), this work analyzes food as both an entryway into understanding emerging culture and cultural identities and a reality of emerging culture and cultural identities. Knepper (2006) writes, "Caribbean identities, linguistic transformations, religious beliefs, music, cuisine, and aesthetic practices have been shaped by the fragmentation and intermixture of various traditions" (p.70). Aligned with the aforementioned theoretical literature, Loichot (2013) writes, "the real and the metaphoric, the practical and the theoretical, are never fully separated in Glissantian thought," (p.8) asserting a necessity "to build a culinary poetics independent from colonial confrontation" (p.xxx) and expressing a need

to analyze food in the Caribbean not only as a basic need but also as a form of cultural expression, a form of political resistance, and a form of civilization. Food, therefore, can be both the site of lost power and empowerment, depending on its source and its use. (p.x)

Among other things, emerging foodways research focuses upon understanding how the narratives of those implicated in food practices have been marginalized in narratives about foodways (Farrish, 2015; Williams-Forson, 2006). As Farrish (2015) writes,

benne seeds or chili may have given a dish an African signature, but they were not the only marks left by black cooks. Enslaved women cooked, but they did not 'write the book' on southern cooking. White mistresses granted themselves that privilege. Thus the black influence on southern cooking was obscured through the very act of its recording. (p.161)

A POETICS OF FOOD

Food and language are deeply connected—especially in emerging, diasporic, and Caribbean foodways. As Mosadomi (2008) writes, “Through an interdisciplinary paradigm, namely the interface between linguistic memory and cultural survival ... food and language are inseparable in the American Southern culture ... [and] the fundamental roots of American southern language and culture, are African” (p.240). Yet, even as food and language are considered African and anti-colonial, they are also considered neocolonial. Loichot (2013) writes,

Europeans and other Western colonizers, tourists, and readers have associated the Antilles with the primal act of eating, whether in the figure of the cannibal, or in that of its tamed counterpart, the Caribbean itself—its land, people, and language—all reduced to delectable objects: ‘Cannibal islands,’ ‘spice islands,’ ‘succulent women,’ ‘luscious beaches,’ ‘peppery language’. (p.vii)

Similarly, Githire (2014) writes,

Even the reception of the literary production and artistic works from the Caribbean and Indian Ocean islands in Western metropolises has frequently been couched in the language of eating. Marketed as exoticized commodities and objects of curiosity, Caribbean/Indian Ocean texts are presented as food through the use of gustatory metaphors that describe the ‘taste’ of the language in which these texts are written as warm and savory. Such metaphors are meant to capture the flavor of the text—often written in a blend of Creole and English, Dutch, French, or Spanish—and excite the palate. (p.4)

Given this understanding of food and language as inseparable in creolized and diasporic contexts, the study of emerging foodways in diaspora is connected intimately with the study and production of emerging foodways narratives. A Poetics of Food not only discusses variability of

A POETICS OF FOOD

food practices, but variable forms of expression given the linguistic and conceptual variability inherent in emerging culture—specifically in African and Caribbean diasporas.

Harris—arguably the foremost expert on African American foodways—writes about her book *High on the Hog: A Culinary Journey from Africa to America*:

I have deliberately foresworn the traditional academic format that I teach in order to move the odyssey forward. For *High on the Hog* is a journey into the realm of African American food ... this is a personal look at the history of African American food that tells the tale in brief compass, introduces a rich and abundant cast of characters, and presents some of the major themes in a discursive manner ... its writing has led me on an odyssey as well as opened doors in my life, my mind, and my soul that I will be entering and investigating in future years as I too attempt to journey from the hock to the ham and take my own life higher on the hog. (p.3-4)

Paule Marshall “portrays the ways in which Caribbean women, in the context of the kitchen, created poetry of resistance against exploitation in their everyday lives,” offering a path to an authentic poetics of food and consciousness as the aesthetics of everyday life in the Caribbean (Gadsby 2006, p.141). Historically, immigrant communities in Europe and the United States have been given derogatory names based on the foods with which their cultures were most identified (Loichot, 2013). African and Caribbean communities in diaspora, alternatively, have claimed the names of hybrid foods as part of their identities (Loichot, 2013). Loichot (2013) writes that dishes such as “*ajiaco*, pepper-pot, gumbo, *feijoada*, and *awara*,” noting that “Like jazz standards, these dishes are based on unlimited variations on a basic theme” (p.11). That is, the foods themselves embody a certain poetics.

Harris (2011) describes how food has contributed to developing the diasporic imagination to promote unification through common struggles globally. By describing how the introduction

A POETICS OF FOOD

of African and West Indian foods into black neighborhoods has shifted the particularities of (especially urban) African American foodways, she also describes the shifting cultural particularities of diasporic experience. Opie (2008) takes a diasporic approach to his book *Hog and Hominy: Soul Food From Africa to America*, which he describes as a project that “seeks to understand the history of soul and its relationship to people of African descent and their food within an Atlantic world context” (p.xii). Books such as *Vibration Cooking: Or, The Travel Notes of a Geechee Girl* by Verta Mae Smart Grosvenor, *The African Heritage Cookbook* by Helen Mendes, and *Satisfy Your Soul* approach foodways of the African Diaspora as international and cross-cultural foodways rather than bound by time and space (Harris, 2011). This reflects changes in cultural identity and understanding and the language that is used to define it, as “‘black American’ no longer means up from the South. It can also encompass folks from the Caribbean, Central and South America, and the African continent itself” (Harris, 2011, p.226).

Harris (2011) writes that the late 1970s saw a “multiplicity of gastronomic and political positions and their dietary restrictions were difficult to navigate and confounded more than one diner,” demonstrating the ways in which the process of creolization in diaspora produces seeming contradiction and necessitates ideological fluidity (p.218-219). “At an African American party today,” Harris (2011) asserts,

it is possible to find the fried bean fritters from Brazil known as *acarajé* served along with Jamaican meat patties or the Trinidadian roasted chickpeas called *channa* that originated in India or, yes, fried chicken and a mess of greens. Beverages might include Senegalese *bissap rouge*, Southern mint julep featuring top-shelf bourbon, Guyanese rum and ginger ale, or a mellow California merlot. (p.226)

A POETICS OF FOOD

This diversity represents both an emerging sensibility surrounding how foodways are might be defined and the ways in which that sensibility signifies and celebrates emergence and change in culture mirrored by food.

Poetics, as previously examined, is a method by which to reach a space between, a third meaning (and a forth, and a fifth, and a sixth ...). “The third meaning” becomes “a passage from language to process, a passage from narrative to an erotics of being, to ‘soul’ ...” (Sandoval, 2000, p.147). Barthes (1997) suggests, “it is obvious that if the subject of food had not been so trivialized and invested with guilt, it could easily be subjected to the kind of ‘poetic’ analysis that G. Bachelard applied to language” (p.23). He then goes on to ask,

Why not speak, if the facts are sufficiently numerous and sufficiently clear, of a certain ‘spirit’ of food, if I may be permitted to use this romantic term? By this I mean that a coherent set of food traits and habits can constitute a complex but homogenous dominant feature useful for defining a general system of tastes and habits ... how will we use the units established in this manner? We will use them to reconstruct systems, syntaxes (“menues”), and styles (“diets”) no longer in an empirical but in a semantic way—in a way, that is, that will enable us to compare them to each other. We must show, not that which is, but that which signifies. Why? Because we are interested in human communication and because communication always implies a system of signification, that is, a body of discrete signs standing out from a mass of indifferent materials (Barthes, 1997, p.23).

A Poetics of Food is a framework through which to employ its associated theoretical methodology – the Aesthetics of Everyday Life. A Poetics of Food is an aesthetic analytic through which to view the cultural imagination—a way of describing how desires for cultural change are

A POETICS OF FOOD

encoded in cultural practices—in this case, food practices and the ways in which they are analyzed and articulated. Bruner (1986) writes,

All cultures are constructions that take historical elements from different eras and sources; all combine images and words and are based on lived and imagined experience. All constructed cultures require belief; that is, the participants must have confidence in their own authenticity, which is one reason cultures are performed. It is not enough to assert claims; they have to be enacted. (p.25)

A Poetics of Food incorporates the Aesthetics of Everyday Life, as described above: Experiential Specificity; Expression through multiple forms, languages, and genres; Temporal and spatial fluidity; Orientations toward the generative and transformative; and Aesthetic practice as political economic practice. The Aesthetics of Everyday Life can facilitate an understanding of people's desires for the future that might shape the structures that can both support and challenge individuals, families, and communities from their own soulfulness. A Poetics of Food illuminates how our food lives express our dreams and desires for the future, for a better world than the one in which we find ourselves now. A Poetics of Food creates space for multilingual and multivocal expressions of the aesthetics of regular food practices enacted intentionally as they emerge in the everyday lives of people connected with one another to various degrees.

Conclusion

This chapter built off of the literature from the first chapter to explore how food practices and foodways in the African Diaspora incorporate these characteristics to create a space in which this particular research might embed itself within this literary legacy. It further traced a particular lineage of creolization in which the Aesthetics of Everyday Life are rooted and routed. It finally discussed the ways in which food practices and foodways in the African and Caribbean Diasporas have always been and continue to be poetic and discussed in poetic ways. This lineage of

creolization in the Caribbean serves as the foundation from which the framework for this research has evolved. The next chapter explains the research design, including descriptions and justifications for the methods and methodologies I used to employ this research, the implications of my involvement, and the ways and reasons for setting the research boundaries as I have.

Chapter 4 Methodology

Poetics, Ethnography, & Research: Practices of Everyday Life

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to explore (1) intentional food practices among people in Nassau, Bahamas; (2) the reasons why those practices are enacted; and (3) the ways in which

A POETICS OF FOOD

intentional food practices reflect and connect to broader desires for healing, restoration, and decolonization. The research explores how specific theories and realities of creolization and diaspora affect intentional food practices and, as a result, the expression of emerging foodways in the Caribbean. It examines a particular lineage of Caribbean critique and poetics to understand a variety of identities in the Caribbean. This research integrates these ideas into a theoretical methodology called the Aesthetics of Everyday Life, and joins them with the history of consciousness and intentional food practices in African and Caribbean diasporas.

This chapter examines the methods and methodologies I used to carry out my research on intentional food practices and journeys of consciousness in The Bahamas and describes how I have sought to apply my research methods as intentional practices that reflect the Aesthetics of Everyday Life (my theoretical methodology) and a Poetics of Food (my theoretical framework) discussed in the previous chapter. In this chapter, I describe my position and ethics as a researcher. I then define a set of epistemological orientations situated in Ethnographic methodologies and, finally, I offer an in-depth explanation of the specific methods I used, including why and how I used them.

Researcher Positionality and Ethics

As Goodall (2000) asks, “Who are you? Who are you when you *write*? Who are you *in your writing*? What are the differences, if any? If there are differences, are they ones that *matter*? To the work? To your audience? To those whom you’ve studied? To you?” (p.131, emphasis in original). Goodall (2000) suggests that “Your persona also creates perceptions of the kind of person *you* are. Personal history passages, choices of theoretical framing and explanatory metaphors, displays of human vulnerability and emotions, the questions you ask, the way in

A POETICS OF FOOD

which you arrive at answers—all of these narrative and rhetorical devices reveal your motives, goals, habits of mind, and behavior” (p.131-132).

As sub-fields of postcolonial studies, theories of Creolization and Diaspora hold inherent ethical imperatives that privilege knowledges, narratives, and peoples typically marginalized, underprivileged, and oppressed in the spaces where people live, work, and play (Sandoval, 2000; Shih & Lionnet, 2011). Because of this built-in imperative, these theories tend to be method and practice-oriented (Crichlow, 2009; Sandoval, 2000; Shih & Lionnet, 2011), applied relationally and reflectively to academic research methods--neither oppressing a group nor seeking to appease or avoid realities of trauma and oppression. Caribbean Critique and poetics hold a sensibility that has emerged from Caribbean decolonization efforts that began with “‘writing back’ to the empire” (Bailey, 2014, p.7), then turning inward and, finally, embracing a fluid gaze that might hold the key to liberation (see Glissant, 1997; see Kullberg, 2013; see Sandoval, 2000).

Research methodologies are part of the performance of postcolonial discourse, which according to Gonzalez (2003), “operates within the structures and social realities that were erected by colonialism, without being determined by them. This dynamic calls for the unequivocal knowing of one’s voice, and the ability to communicate assuredly from this place” (p.82). The postcolonial perspective is not an idea, but a force that might be considered “a form of spiritual surrender” or “spiritual practice” (Gonzalez 2003, p.82). hooks (2006) defines decolonization as “personal and political self-recovery” and also describes it as a spiritual endeavor—a reclamation of the human spirit (p.295).

Over the past several years, I have been engaged in my own process of personal decolonization and self-recovery, which informs my understanding of what self-recovery and decolonization mean in a personal way, on a visceral level. I could not have engaged in this research project nor imagined these questions without a personal understanding of what it means

A POETICS OF FOOD

to recover one's voice and to maintain that voice with authentic strength. Part of my ethical stance in this work is to state openly the ways in which my own life and processes are intertwined in the work.

I seek to honor the unique particularities of individuals, communities, and their everyday lives. I seek to respect the intelligence and wisdom that every language and form of expression holds. I seek to include and honor that ways of understanding time and space are fluid. I seek to center generative and productive practices and experiences in my research. I understand and practice aesthetic forms and philosophies as critical responses. Yet, as these are my intentions, at the time of submitting this manuscript, I have not had the opportunity to explore whether or not the research actually was transformative for anyone other than myself. Additionally, the manifestations and expressions of this work—including the manuscript—have not yet been shared with others in Nassau to even create space for the sort of transformation I hope to achieve. Future research and inquiry, hopefully, will allow me to both develop indicators for transformation and gain a better sense of whether or not those indicators for transformation exist in this research.

I am a female citizen of the United States of European descent. With enough sun and humidity, the color and texture of my hair and skin change and given that I tend to live outside of tourist and ex-pat areas, I have sometimes been classified as “Yellow”—especially if I wear dark sunglasses. This is an important distinction in the nuanced racialization system of The Bahamas. I almost always wear dark sunglasses because I have light eyes. In the brightness of the Bahamian sun, my bright eyes become irritated easily. Equally critical, my bright eyes (which put me in a small minority in Nassau) are a prime motive for harassment from men across economic and racial realms. I am a graduate student researcher and I grew up in the mid-Atlantic states with relative privilege and attended private Catholic schools until college.

A POETICS OF FOOD

In Nassau, I have assumed and been given a multitude of identities that have held differing and relative amounts of power and influence. These power differentials transferred from my regular life to my positionality as a researcher. Fifteen (15) of the people I interviewed were strangers when I interviewed them and fourteen (14) interviewees were people I already knew. Some of them are friends, former employers, professional advisors, former college students whom I advised, associates, and fellow community activists. I did not go to Nassau, originally, to conduct this research. This research subject emerged from the realities of my own everyday life at the time. Since 2010, I have lived and worked in many places on the island—including farms, the national boys' detention centre, food establishments, community centers, spiritual organizations, and art communities. I know many people who hold diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Throughout my life, people often have been confused by my own combination of background, personality, beliefs, passions, and sets of knowledge. That did not change when I moved to Nassau.

Research and literature on Caribbean cultures emphasizes complexity and hybridity in human psyches and cultures because of the ways in which lines of chaos/order, contradiction/integration, colonization/emancipation and sovereignty are concentrated in the fabric of cultural understandings (Hickling-Hudson, 2006; Knepper, 2006; Lima, 2002; Mackie, 2005; McLeod, 2008; Murdoch, 2007). Identities can shift as they move across social, cultural, and temporal landscapes. When this shifting, this drifting, is done effectively, researchers can come into contact with the power of relational and differential movement (Sandoval, 2000). Critical and emancipatory researchers maintain an acute awareness of their identities and how their identities influence other people's perceptions of and interactions with them (Armstrong, 2008; Motha, 2009; Romm, 2001). Data collection can be influenced by the multiple identities given to them within a social construct—our identities as citizen-subjects, as Foucault would

A POETICS OF FOOD

assert (Sandoval, 2000). Naming the various identifying factors that I believe the people with whom I interact might apply to me provides a better understanding of how my data collection may have been affected by other people's perceptions of how I show up in the world physically, culturally, and psychically. Although this describes some of my "identifying characteristics," it says little about who I am. In my own process, decolonization has been more about releasing myself from the limitations these sorts of characteristics can hold and more about recovering my true self, my authentic voice.

Sometimes I speak with an American accent and sometimes I speak "like a true true Bahamian". Usually I move between the two fluidly given the company and topic of conversation, as do most of my friends and associates who went to school outside of The Bahamas, who are of mixed nationalities, and who move fluidly in and out of Nassau, yet identify as Bahamian. As Madden (2010) writes, "the use or misuse of language or dialect can aid or impede the attempts of the ethnographer to make headway" (p.61). He further points out that "While it is essential to know the language, it's not always advisable to use it" (Madden, 2010, p.61). My ability to speak and understand Bahamian dialect—and to know when and when not to employ it—makes me feel more comfortable in my communications with other people and, as a result, eases communication overall. As is true in learning any language, it has afforded me an opportunity to see the world in a completely new way. I didn't develop this capacity to be a good researcher. I developed this capacity as a survival technique so that I could communicate and relate with the human beings surrounding me when I arrived in Nassau—a personal trait that emerged as a useful competency in a researcher.

Caribbean scholar Gordon Lewis "advocated that the whole of Caribbean studies adopt a more humanist spirit to counter the compartmentalization of modern disciplines and the uncritical acceptance of the natural science model of investigation" (quoted in Harrison, 2008,

p.135). Shih and Lionnet (2011) write about the relationship between the contexts to which theories are applied and the contexts from which they emerge. They discuss Takeuchi Yoshimi's idea of "Asia as Method," that "different realities mandate different analytics" (p.20-21). That is, ways of being observed within cultural exploration define the methods for data analysis. In light of these understandings and the aspects of the Aesthetics of Everyday Life and Poetics of Food discussed in the previous chapter, the methodology I have applied to this research might be considered "Caribbean as Method" because I have sought to apply Bahamian, Caribbean, creolization, and diasporic sensibilities into my research design and implementation.

Ethnography as a Practice of Everyday Life

The previous chapter explained my theoretical framework. The previous section of this chapter described my philosophical and ethical orientation. The remainder of this chapter will delve into my research methodology and methods. Given the philosophical and ethical imperatives mentioned in the previous section, my intention with this work has been to create continuity between my theoretical framework, my methodology, the research topic, and the ways in which the research is performed and practiced in reality (Cook & Michelle Harrison, 2003).

Methodology is the relationship between technique and theory or epistemology and method (Denzin, 1997). According to Denzin (1997), "there is a need for a reflexive form of writing that turns ethnographic and theoretical tasks back 'onto each other'" (p.xii). This means that I have approached the methods I have used to collect and analyze data critically and reflectively in order to align my epistemological orientation with the orientations of Caribbean Critique, creolization, poetics, intentional food practices, and emerging foodways as described in my theoretical framework.

A POETICS OF FOOD

Ethnography, a broadly-defined methodology, necessitates one's integration into a particular context and by the representation, description and/or interpretation (perhaps individual, perhaps collective) of the ways in which people who inhabit a given context derive meaning in their lives and in the world. Its imperative is to “describe, interpret, and discover new relationships and processes embedded into the world” (Marcus, 1998, p.18). Interpretive, performance, and auto- ethnography are “alternative” and related approaches to this pursuit that relate to the researcher's personal experiences (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014; Denzin, 1997; Goodall, Jr., 2000). For interpretive, alternative, performance, and auto-ethnographers, the line between everyday life and research is blurred until almost or definitely nonexistent (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014).

Gille (2001) asserts that ethnography “is an epistemological position. Doing ethnography is a commitment to study an issue at hand by understanding it from the perspective(s) of people whose lives are tied up with or affected by it” (p.321). As described in the previous chapter, my theoretical methodology, the Aesthetics of Everyday Life, includes the following aspects: (1) Experiential specificities; (2) Expression through multiple forms, languages, and genres; (3) Temporal and spatial fluidity; (4) Orientations toward the generative/transformational; and (5) Aesthetic practice as political economic practice. I have chosen ethnography as a methodology—and particularly drawn from certain traditions—because of the ways in which these traditions of ethnography allow me to maintain the Aesthetics of Everyday Life in my research design and methods.

Ethnography is “a way of engaging and expressing cultural phenomenon” (Clair 2003, p.289) whose ultimate goal “is to create conditions for a more enriching and enabling analysis and understanding of the human experience” (Harrison 2008, p.2)—which aligns with the Experiential specificities included in the Aesthetics of Everyday Life. Rawlins (2003) describes

A POETICS OF FOOD

truthful ethnography as a relational exchange that facilitates radical self-transformation—which aligns with Orientations to the generative/transformation in the Aesthetics of Everyday Life.

Ethnographic methodologies subscribe to an understanding that history is not left in the past, but transformed, re-produced, and reinvented through contemporary practice (Davies, 2008), a concept aligned with Temporal and spatial fluidity included in the Aesthetics of Everyday Life.

Glesne (1997) describes a prediction for future ethnographies that mirrors the styles of Caribbean poetics and Critique: “ethnographies of the future will be multigenre constructions, made up of many voices, and inclusive of emotional reactions as well as analytical descriptions. A single ethnography might include critical, theoretical, and humanist essays; narrative; poetics; and pictures, photos, and drawings” (p.204). This idea aligns with Expression through multiple languages, genres, and forms included in the Aesthetics of Everyday Life. Within the bounds of this dissertation, I provide a traditional academic structure that integrates poetry with critical, theoretical, and humanist approaches. Following the submission of this manuscript, I will create additional expressions, including spoken word poetry, paintings, photographs, essays, articles, and art installations.

My theoretical framework is a tracing of theories—a demonstration that the theories themselves are moving, are in diaspora as they are carried by people in diaspora. Diaspora is movement. Diaspora is difference and fluidity. Ethnography as a methodology provides space to maintain diverse voices and perspectives, to create a cohesive and coherent story about intentional food practices that demonstrates many reasons why people might choose them. I used a collection of ethnographic methods described below to represent fluidity and a Poetics of Food that is performed within the bounds and realities of everyday life.

This research is based on the practices of a collective of individuals familiar enough with one another to know each other’s food practices and refer me to each another. The collective as

A POETICS OF FOOD

a whole is not the unit of analysis. Rather, the units of analysis for this research are intentional food performances and practices and the reasons why they are enacted. The following sections explore the methodological approaches to ethnography and data analysis from which I have borrowed to shape this research: Interpretive Ethnographies, Performance Ethnographies, Autoethnographies, Poetic Analysis, and Constant Comparison. I then describe the specific methods and strategies I used to collect and analyze data.

Interpretive ethnographies. Interpretive ethnographies (sometimes called “alternative” or “new” ethnographies) (Denzin, 1997), as counterstories, tend to privilege the breaking free of dualisms by imagining a third way and acknowledging that ethnographies are “constructed understanding[s] of the constructed participant’s constructed point of view” (Mantzoukas, 2010, 427). As Vaught (2011) explains, “Authentic counterstorytelling is not merely an effort at reversing the masternarratives by promoting an oppositional or opposing worldview ... Masternarratives succeed because they operate in dichotomies and dualisms, because they elicit sharp opposition ... The transformative potential in authentic counterstorytelling lies in complexity, in uncertainty and multiplicity, in unmasking the steel face of domination” (p.19).

Alternative ethnographies seek to be practical and hold a number of underlying assumptions that illuminate a diversion from more classical or traditional forms of ethnography. They are messy. They are multivocal. They are multi-sited (Coleman & von Hellermann, 2011; Madden, 2010; Marcus, 1998), even un-sited (Denzin, 1997; Madden, 2010) given the ways in which spaces and ways of moving through the contemporary world can reconfigure the ways in which spaces and sites are understood (Madden, 2010). They are revealing and surprising. They reject researcher objectivity and embrace the subjectivity of the researcher and all people involved in the research process.

A POETICS OF FOOD

Madden (2010) writes that “subjective and reflexive elements” are “not a problem to overcome,” but “a productive force ... to learn to confront” (p.21). They recognize the diminishing space between the researcher and those under study. They are self-reflexive (though to varying degrees and in diverse ways). They are dialogical. They illuminate the ways in which the researcher identifies him or herself as well as how he or she is identified—including the ways in which one’s identity might be hybrid (Denzin, 1997). According to Madden (2010), “Acknowledging the fact that the ethnographer is the primary tool of research and an active participant in the ethnographic field also means that properly confronting the influence of the ethnographer on research and representation is an unavoidable precondition of a reliable ethnographic account” (p.23). Ethnography, as a methodology, “has the advantage of connecting subjectivity to the surrounding world” (Kullberg, 2013, p.3). Many discussions of ethnography provoke uncomfortable discussions about the necessary objectivity of research (which assumes that any research in any field can hold objectivity) or simply provide apologetic justifications about its imperfections. Kullberg (2013), alternatively, agrees with Glissant that ethnography “frames dialectics between self, others, and environment, alluding to complex relationships” (p.3). That is, ethnography’s potential value and power in the development of creolized Caribbean identities lies in subjectivity because of the opportunity to represent multiple perspectives and connections (Kullberg, 2013).

Alternative ethnographies tend to blur boundaries and identities across political and disciplinary distinctions (Denzin, 1997). Such a blurring seeks less to diminish the important contributions particular legacies offer and more to gain flexibility in their distinctions by “adopting different discursive strategies depending upon our circumstances and purposes” (Bochner & Ellis, 1996, p.22). They seek to serve as “a form of creative nonfiction, to take certain expressive liberties associated with the arts, but to feel the ethical pull of converting data into

experiences readers can use” and to write *to* and *with* the people they write *about* (Bochner & Ellis, 1996, 28). Kullberg (2013) writes that ethnography has “a double purpose: it simultaneously mediates oppression and holds the promise for self-liberation” and refers to Glissant’s claim that ethnography “has something to teach Caribbeans: how to look back and look at themselves in order to gain internal knowledge” (p.3).

Performance ethnographies. Given that Caribbean culture is innately performative (Bailey, 2014), performance ethnography is an ethnographic approach well-suited to my research context. Bailey (2014) writes that “Scholarship on Caribbean cultures has firmly established that performance is a fundamental, integral part of Caribbean experiences” (p.12). Ethnography, as a field, seeks to interpret and describe nuance and variation based on observation and dialog, rather than simply categorizing and reducing cultural and personal experiences (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2001). Conquergood (2013) defines culture as performance, which “prevents the reification of culture into variables to be isolated, measured, and manipulated ... [and] dissolves hard-edged distinctions between observer/observed, self/other, subject/object” (p.17). According to Bailey (2014), modern Caribbean Critique narratives hold “a critical practice that is attentive to performance as a primary, analytical approach” (p.5)

Performance ethnography is a unique posture from which to view the relationship between the ways in which meaning is produced, re-produced, and derived from the material world (Johnson, 2013) because it holds an underlying assumption that ethnography is dynamic (Davies, 2008) as life is dynamic. Conquergood (2013) describes performance not as *transcendence* but “*transgression*, force which crashes and breaks through sedimented meanings and normative traditions and plunges us back into the vortices of political struggle” (p.58).

A POETICS OF FOOD

Performance ethnography seeks to use performance as a unit of analysis that is socially productive because its focus is on the relationship between ideals and performances rather than the victimization, demonization, or romanticization of self, individuals, or groups of people (Conquergood, 2013). Furthermore, the methodological validity and precision of performance ethnography lies in the reality that cultural performances are “framed, repeated, and recognizable events” (Conquergood, 2013, p.20). And yet, this is balanced by the reality that “cultures are colliding, slipping, and sliding into one another” and “connecting and disconnecting discourses, the expressions that represent the betwixt and between, and the communication that co-opts as well as the communication that confronts co-optation” (Clair 2003, p.289).

Caribbean Critique is performative because it expresses cultural performance, it is written in styles and structures that are performative, and it is often performed (Bailey, 2014). This reality reinforces performance ethnography’s validity within the context of Caribbean realities. By articulating fluidity with precision, performance ethnography offers an alternative approach in a context in which research methodologies fall short frequently as a result of the organizational structures they reflect (Carr, 2005; Kingsbury & Klak, 2005; Kingsbury & Sletto, 2005; Klak & Kingsbury, 2005). The aforementioned shortcoming has created a concentration of research in assessing political and economic structures comparatively, rather than local manifestations of those structures and the people who inhabit them (Harrison, 2008, p.134). This research seeks a creolized approach, taking aspects of social science, humanism, and Caribbean Critique that support nuanced understandings. It invokes Geertz’s thick description—a view of the world as “a complex continuum of overlapping likenesses and differences that should not be placed in neat boxes, and certainly not two boxes” (Shweder, 2005, p.1) and culture as “elusive and

A POETICS OF FOOD

fragmentary, dependent on performance and crystallized by aesthetic form” (Alexander & Smith, 2011, p.2).

Understanding culture as constantly being created and recreated through performance makes the embodied experience of the researcher, “the researcher’s own humanity, vulnerability, and power,” a significant and deeply ethical ethnographic method (Johnson, 2013, p.12). Co-performance changes power dynamics (Johnson, 2013). Performance ethnography extends beyond the researcher/researched duality by turning its gaze to the conversation between the researcher and those with whom she interacts (Conquergood, 2013). This methodology appeared in my research design in terms of the format of my interviews as deeply conversational. Additionally, midway through the analysis process, I performed spoken word poetry at a local art gallery and invited research participants to perform and invite others to perform. This performance, potluck meal, and its accompanying conversation offered added commentary to the ways in which I had distilled the data to that point. Performance as an approach and relational research analysis require deep reflexivity that corresponds with the tools of auto-ethnography.

Autoethnographies. Autoethnography served as another key approach appropriate to the research context because the tension between the researcher’s personal experience (auto-) and broader cultural phenomena (ethno-) serves as the primary center from which questions are derived and answers are expressed (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014). It is defined as “cultural analysis through personal narrative” (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014, p.17); “a systematic method of introspection with an aim toward critiquing the practices of everyday life” and “an attempt to interpret the public and private dimensions of cultural experience and seek a critical distance and perspective on each” (Neumann, 1996, p.192). It prioritizes the part that positionality plays in collecting,

A POETICS OF FOOD

analyzing, and representing data. I chose this approach because autoethnographic research contributes inherently to an inclusion of hybrid identities and marginalized voices within academic knowledge (Denzin, 2014).

Autoethnographic methods contribute to an inclusion of hybrid identities and marginalized voices within academic knowledge (Denzin, 2014). Autoethnography also accounts for the multiple and fluid identities of one person, which helps to complicate stereotypes and acknowledge intersectional identities¹¹ (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014). Offering a more precise representation of people's lived realities honors the ways in which one's self identity and perceived identity shift in multiple ways as she moves across cultural, economic, political, social, and physical spaces. Neumann (1996) writes that autoethnographies "democratize the representational sphere of culture by locating the particular experiences of individuals in a tension with dominant expressions of discursive power" (p189). This relates to the theoretical underpinnings of Caribbean literature that center individual experiences and the prevalence of auto-narratives as a form of resistance to colonial and neo-colonial representations in research and other forms of literature (see Coppola, 2008; see Jain, 2009; see Kullberg, 2013; see Larrier, 2006; see Nesbitt, 2003). Caribbean writers also use auto-narratives to explore the many places that figure into lives, realities, and diasporas in and of the Caribbean (Crosta, 1999).

A complex representation and understanding of the individual extends beyond writing with or about "a kind of comfortable liberal pluralism that acknowledges diversity and difference," to embody an "uncontrollable plurality" that "can never be contained" (Bruner, 1986, p.24). Autoethnographic praxis serves as "a discursive activity that finds its bearings,

¹¹ Intersectionality is a theoretical positionality that honors that people experience oppression and privilege based on multiple characteristics: racial, political, gendered, sexual orientation, economic, etc.

A POETICS OF FOOD

practice, and value as a response to the ambiguities of a particular cultural and historical context” (Neumann, 1996, p.193).

Autoethnographers “research themselves in relation to others” (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014, p.17). While aspects of the narrative of my dissertation will illuminate my relationship with others, the focus of this research is intentional food practices and the ways in which they reflect certain ideological commitments to healing. The relational orientation of this research approach is more methodological, rather than topical. As in autoethnographies, I will use personal experiences and personal journals as a source of data (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014), though not the primary or sole source, as this research seeks to examine the diverse personal experiences of selected members of a whole network.

While this research is not an autoethnography purely, it holds certain components to autoethnography. It prioritizes reflexivity (Bochner & Ellis, 1996); it seeks to maintain the tension between personal experience and political, cultural, and social phenomena (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014); and it seeks to “allow another person’s world of experience to inspire critical reflection” (Bochner & Ellis, 1996, p.22) in the ways in which interviews are approached, as well as in the ways in which the final narrative is laid out. This research is closely aligned with my own life because of the connections I have with many of the people I interviewed. Equally, this research idea was born out of how my own ideological commitment to healing affects my food practices and my broader life.

Participant Selection

I used a snowball sampling technique to conduct 27 in-depth, semi-structured or conversational (Stage & Mattson, 2003) interviews with people who are intentional about their food practices. Snowball sampling (also referred to as respondent-driven sampling or chain

A POETICS OF FOOD

referral) is a method of selecting informants used to illuminate networks (Bernard, 2011). It is useful in cases where the number of people who would fall into a particular category or be in a network is small and/or in populations that are small (Bernard, 2011)—both of which are true about the network that served as the focus of my study. I chose the first interviewee—someone who runs an organization and support group for people in Nassau—particularly parents with young children—who are intentional about their food practices or seek to be more intentional about their food practices. I chose her because she is known in the community as a leader for intentional food practices, wellness, and healing and is connected to a strong network of people.

Originally, I intended to interview people associated with this network, specifically. However, the organization maintains no actual “membership,” so the term became ambiguous. Who is considered a member? Who gets to make that determination? Does someone consider her or his self to be a member? Long breaks between meetings and communications specifically pertaining to that network provided additional challenges to defining membership. Therefore, I changed the selection criteria to people who interviewees considered to be “intentional” or “conscious” about their food practices. This purposeful approach allowed interviewees to define these terms in their own ways. While wellness, healing, self-recovery, and decolonization are aspects of this research, they were not qualifications I applied to participant selection. Rather, through the interview process (described below), I inquired as to whether there were underlying philosophies, values, or experiences that connected people with their food practices.

As a result of this change in criteria, rather intuitively, I chose myself to interview one other person. In the end, this decision served to contribute to the research when someone to whom I was referred did not refer me to other people, but to two particular communities. She did not know anyone from those communities, personally, but the second person I chose to

A POETICS OF FOOD

interview belongs to one of those communities and was then able to refer me to others from both of the communities to which I was directed.

Some interviewees chose to contact the people they wanted to refer personally before giving me their names and contact information. Some people offered me contact information if I did not know the person they suggested. Generally, I allowed the relationships that people had with each other and their understandings of each other dictate how initial contacts were established. I contacted people by phone, email, Facebook messenger, and Whatsapp messenger. If I was referred to someone with whom I was unfamiliar, I introduced myself, indicated that I had been referred to him or her, and told them by whom with the referees prior consent. Once I contacted people, I described briefly the explicit purpose of the interview and my research as explained in my interview guide (Madison, 2011; Stage & Mattson, 2003). The official script of the Research Statement I also used as my cover letter can be found in Appendix A.

Overall, I was referred to fifty (50) people. Nine (9) people did not respond, Eleven (11) people were unable to participate, and two (2) people were unable to participate but referred me to other people. When people referred me to others, I wrote the names down without indicating whether or not I had interviewed someone previously. Nonetheless, given the nature of social interaction in Nassau, I found that many people knew that I was interviewing people, whether they were included or not.

I intended to interview people until no new names were offered or up to 30 people—as considered standard in a purposeful sample (Bernard, 2011). I ended up interviewing 27 people over the course of 30 days, with many more suggested names remaining than time to interview them. The following section discusses in greater detail the nature of the interviews as they occurred in real time.

Research Methods

The particular forms of ethnographies discussed earlier in this chapter illuminates philosophies that have influenced how this research seeks to answer key research questions by exploring people's everyday lived experiences. This section examines the particular methods I used to collect and analyze data. My research methods included: (1) interviews; (2) field notes; (3) personal journals; and (4) document review. Interviews with key informants were my primary data source, while the remaining data sets are meant to support the data that emerged from the interviews through triangulation. The following sections will discuss in further detail the methods that I used, how I used them, and why I used them. I will then discuss further the method of triangulation that I used.

Interviews. Ethnographic interviews can “give an authentic insight into people’s experiences” and allow for “deep mutual understanding” (Silverman quoted in Miller, Glassner, & Silverman, 2011, p.133) by positioning the interviewer as someone seeking knowledge that she does not possess and placing the interviewee in a position of relative power (Wolcott, 2005). Interviews allow the researcher space to ask the interviewee specifically about the effectiveness of her methods and how the participant feels the information could be used effectively (Wolcott, 2005). I conducted in-depth semi-structured ethnographic interviews because they can be effective when interviewers have with good rapport with the interviewees, understand cultural and linguistic norms, and are embedded within cultures and well-positioned with individuals being interviewed (Bishop, 1999).

I conducted semi-structured ethnographic interviews in a conversational style, as described by Stage and Mattson (Stage & Mattson, 2003), which were part personal narrative and part topical interview (Madison, 2011). I chose semi-structured interviews as a method

A POETICS OF FOOD

because their conversational nature allows people more space to express themselves and to explore their thoughts than formal structured interviews (K. V. Fox, 1996). While they are exploratory and conversational, having a guide makes it possible to answer specific questions (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999.; Wolcott, 2008). Therefore, they served as an appropriate vehicle to facilitate a discussion about people's everyday lives—the primary topic of this research. Having lived in Nassau for five years prior to conducting the interviews, I knew the general cultural cues, dialect, and anachronisms—which validates this method further.

I asked interviewees to choose where and when they were interviewed so that they felt comfortable, which I hoped would contribute to more robust conversations. I had a brief period of time to conduct the interviews and I wanted to make meetings as convenient as possible for people willing to offer their time. I also wanted the actual process of the research to reflect the aesthetics of everyday life.

Bailey (2014) writes that

contemporary Caribbean critique and poetics represent not only particular oral forms such as songs, stories and proverbs, but also the communal spaces (yards, verandahs, village squares, friend and family gatherings, political meetings, demonstrations, dancehalls, churches, carnival parades) where performances are staged ... Thus, in recovering these forms of orature, writers simultaneously encode the extensive gamut of meanings and discursive possibilities of their performative contexts. (p.3-4)

Similarly, Loichot (2013) writes,

The geography of *The Tropics Bite Back* cannot be bound by clear spatial, political, or linguistic borders. It embraces multifarious sites such as the Caribbean communal yard or *lakou*; the slave quarters and its Creole gardens; the big-house kitchen cabin; the hills of free maroons; the beach for Sunday gatherings; the *potaje* or outdoor cooking structure;

A POETICS OF FOOD

the tiny square kitchens of transnational urban spaces of immigration in the Bronx or in Parisian suburbs; the bodies of women and men ‘cooked’ by historical violence and representation; the delirious fantasies of Europeans imagining the cannibal scene; the theoretical spaces of Glissant’s creolization; or the cannibal writing that concocts preparations from shreds and ingredients of previously devoured texts. (p.xi)

These descriptions align with my own experience of interviewing people in Nassau. Interviewing people within the spaces of their everyday lives contributed to a real ethnography of everyday life, as I interviewed people in their homes, in their places of worship, in their workplaces, in coffee shops, at restaurants, and while they drove their children to and from school. Reflecting the ebb and flow of everyday life over that month, one person to whom I was referred gave birth and one lost her mother. Even though this dissertation is not being presented in a style of orality, the spirit of Bahamian orature is reflected in the data and in the way in which the data was analyzed, as I expand upon below (Bailey, 2014).

Interviewees read and signed a consent form that was approved by Antioch University New England’s Institutional Review Board. A copy of the original consent form can be found in Appendix B. The wording changed slightly early on as not all participants selected were associated with S.E.E.D.lings’ Place—the network whose members I originally thought I would be interviewing. Participants had the option of remaining anonymous in the written report or not, as well as whether or not they wanted our conversation to be recorded. All but one of the interviews was recorded with a TASCAM DR-44WL digital recorder. I then transcribed all of the recordings.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with the assistance of a pre-prepared interview guide including ten questions to guide the conversation. A copy of my interview guide and interview questions can be found in Appendix C. My initial introductory question related to

A POETICS OF FOOD

why people became involved with the organization/network that I originally thought would set the criteria for my research participants. Because that changed, I changed the introductory question. The new first question, in many cases, led the people with whom I spoke to answer the majority of the remaining questions without my provocation.

My familiarity with the cultural affiliations of interviewees and the interviewees themselves offered me access and entre that I might not have had otherwise. Additionally, I knew many of the people I interviewed to varying degrees. I had a solid idea of what I wanted to ask and, yet, I wanted participants to have the freedom to take their ideas where they felt appropriate and also to ask me questions. Several people asked questions—mostly about the research, how I was going to use the interviews, and how and whether I thought the research could contribute to bettering The Bahamas. My final interview question included suggestions for questions I might have asked but did not. Two people suggested additional questions that offered profound insight. I allotted an hour for each interview, out of respect for the time of the people I interviewed. Most of the interviews lasted between an hour and an hour and a half, with interviews ranging from fifteen minutes to two hours and forty minutes. They tended to be relaxed and many were filled with enthusiasm and laughter.

Interviews were completed over a 30-day period from May 2015 to June 2015. Once the interviews were completed, I transcribed them myself and member checked them (returned the transcriptions to the interviewees) to ensure that she or he approved of the transcriptions. No one disproved, aside from mis-spellings and typos. Because no one whose interview was recorded asked to be anonymous, I used the initials of the people I interviewed in the interview transcriptions. In addition, however, I gave each person the number code (starting with 00001) (see Bernard, 2011). I bound the collection of interviews in two binders and separated them by

individual interview. The data analysis process that followed is described further in depth following the sections on the additional data sets.

Field notes. Field notes are data collected by the observer based on what she sees and experiences (or, more accurately represent something noteworthy) in a given period of time (Goodall, Jr., 2000). Ideally, they are a balance between her observations of the outer world in which she is situated as well as her inner thoughts and emotions and the relationship these observations, thoughts, and emotions have with her previous experiences and the literature with which she is working (Foltz & Griffin, 1996; Goodall, Jr., 2000).

According to Goodall (2000), “fieldnotes are less about what you initially ‘see’ and ‘experience’ than they are about *connecting* those fieldwork details to larger and more self-reflexive issues ... what fieldnotes represent is one part recorded observations and experiences and two parts interpretations, or how you learn to *hear in* and *through* all of that” (p.86, emphasis in original). Part of the purpose of writing field notes is “to attribute in words what is unsaid, what is unspoken, or what casually but perceptibly drifts, like smoke among strangers, in between what is, what might be, and what appears to be” (Goodall, Jr., 2000, p.87)—making it a useful method of data collection in a research project that seeks to make the covert overt, the implicit explicit.

What are normally considered “field notes” are actually “field notes proper,” a combination of sets of descriptive and analytic field notes generated from jottings, diaries, and logs (Bernard, 2011). I used all of these sets of notes during the interview period. Jottings are quick notes taken in a significant moment or observation or directly following. The researcher utilizes “memory aids,” sketches, quantitative information, and mnemonic devices to capture the essence of a moment (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). Jottings are used

A POETICS OF FOOD

to develop more in-depth descriptions of the experience, observation, or moment in diaries and the field notes proper. Logs are plan books. They indicate how the researcher plans to spend her time on the left page and how she actually spends her time on the right page. The diary is an account of one's personal feelings and experiences.

Field Notes Proper are the primary container for one's observations. They include methodological, descriptive, and analytic notes—the majority of which are descriptive (Bernard, 2011). My field notes include descriptions of and reflections upon my participant observation and informal conversations in social and professional interactions and situations, as well as reflections upon interviews and observations of inflection and body language. I used these notes as evidence to support the data collected through interviews. I transcribed all of my sets of field notes with numbered pages. I used the codes I developed for interview participants, developed new codes for each new individual mentioned by name, and added any new people or organizations to my contact tree.

Personal journal entries. Frequently, interpretive and autoethnographic researchers use personal and reflective journals as primary data sets from which to develop their narrative. Examples include MacDougall (2005) in her exploration of PeerSpirit circles, Slovin (2013) in her experimental path to self-sustainability, Lewis (2007) in her recollection of recovering from a life-threatening disease, Poulos (2009) in his part-autoethnography of family secrecy and part-methodological manual on practicing “accidental ethnography,” and Richardson (2009) in her account of a close friend's palliative care. While the primary data set for this research is the collection of interviews discussed above, reflective journals and my personal experience have

A POETICS OF FOOD

informed much of my knowledge and thinking intentional food practices in Nassau and the ways in which they manifest themselves.

Similarly to the researchers mentioned above, my personal journals serve to contribute to broader inquiry. My in-depth personal journals are written in a similar form to field notes and note particularly how I have understood my everyday experiences within the context of my theoretical work. As a result, these journals represent the significant personal data that have led to my understanding of decolonization, of what trying to be intentional about food practices in Nassau looks like from my own perspective of my life and from my observations of others with whom I've been involved, and the ways in which those understandings have changed over time.

Nineteen personal journals from five years of living in Nassau include cultural observations and personal reflections—among them, working with varying degrees of closeness with some of the people I interviewed, as well as others who are intentional about their food practices personally and professionally. These journals include descriptions of and reflections upon my direct participation, participant observation, and informal conversations in social and professional interactions and situations. These experiences have influenced every aspect of my research—including the general topic, my research questions, my methodological choices, and my analytical processes.

My choice to use personal journal entries as a separate data source was approved by the IRB, given the precedence set by the works mentioned above, the knowledge of the panel to whom I reported for approval, and my choice to use these entries for general information, rather than for statements about specific individuals. I used my personal journals, along with document review and field notes, to triangulate data collected in the interviews. I created continuity between the codes I developed for interview participants and in field notes, developed new codes

A POETICS OF FOOD

for each new individual mentioned by name, and added any new people or organizations to my contact tree.

Document review. In addition to other data sets, I used document review to support the verifiability of my narrative and to situate it within the contemporary historical context (Wolcott, 2008). As Wolcott suggests (2005), “documents” can be loosely defined, and, within the context of ethnographic research, are both emphasized as that which is accessible and supports other data. I reviewed pamphlets, booklets, cookbooks, newspaper articles, social media postings and pages, and other documents related to events, organizations, and practices associated with intentional food practices in Nassau, especially as they relate to the people I interviewed. I developed an index of documents and wrote brief notes for each document, including how it relates to individuals I interviewed, their practices, and their beliefs. These sources are relatively limited, though I asked people I interviewed for any resources they thought would be helpful. I created continuity between the codes I developed for interview participants, field notes, and personal journals, developed new codes for each new individual or organization mentioned by name, and added any new people or organizations to my contact tree.

Data Analysis

The four key data sources described above were used to explore why people are intentional about their food practices, how people are intentional about their food practices, what their food practices are, whether or not those practices are connected to philosophical or ideological commitments and, if so, which ones? As articulated above, I have a primary data set—interview data, and three secondary sets—personal journals, field notes, and documents. The secondary data is meant to support and/or contrast the data collected from the interviews.

A POETICS OF FOOD

Data analyses were informed by the constant comparative method in Grounded Theory and a poetic form of analysis. Grounded Theory holds an underlying assumption that “large amounts of non-standard data produced by qualitative methods renders a predetermined external structure to analyzing the data unsuitable” (Lancaster, 2005, p.163). It is meant to be an “inductive” (Birks & Mills, 2015; Lancaster, 2005) and “holistic” (Lancaster, 2005) approach to data. While this is not a Grounded Theory study, I used aspects of the constant comparison method of data analysis associated with Grounded Theory. Whereas some methods seek to understand how a data set “fits into” previously created systems and structures, constant comparison makes it possible to illuminate both the similarities and the uniqueness of structures and systems that emerge through a given qualitative data set (Coyne & Cowley, 2006).

I used a combination of constant comparative and poetic methods of analysis. Vadasaria (2014) writes that poetry is “both a method and ... an alternative epistemology that actively challenges and transforms dominant world orders” (p.168). As a method, it “provide[s] the researcher/reader/listener with a different lens through which to view the same scenery, and thereby understand data, and themselves, in different and more complex ways” (Prendergast, 2009, p.xxviii).

I used the constant comparative method to answer specific research questions. During the transcription process, I wrote initial memos about emerging themes and connections between the data. I used what Birks and Mills (2015) refer to as initial and intermediate coding processes associated with the constant comparison method, which Locke (2001) defines as “comparing incidents applicable to each category” and “integrating categories and their properties” (p.45). Constant comparison is used to identify actions and practices that are interconnected in a data set (Hoare, 2012). I used a constant comparative analytical lens because it “offers explanations

A POETICS OF FOOD

which are relevant to a particular set of circumstances and situations” (Lancaster, 2005, p.163) and “seeks to understand the experiences of individual life-worlds” (King, 1994, p.27).

I used what is referred to as **Researcher-voiced poetry** (Prendergast 2009) and poems from the field (Lahman et al., 2010) to reflect on my field notes, journals, and memories (Fitzpatrick, 2012). This research emphasizes specificity and variability in the data I collected through the sets described above, especially interview data, to align with Caribbean Critique, creolization, and poetics theory from the Caribbean. Therefore, while I am using constant comparison systematically to answer specific questions, I am not using it reductively (Chen & Boore, 2009) or to achieve theoretical saturation (Coyne & Cowley, 2006). I integrated constant comparison with a poetic approach (see Furman, Langer, Davis, Gallardo, & Kulkarni, 2007; see Glesne, 1997) because the driving force behind Caribbean Critique and poetics remains the uniqueness, variability, and dynamism of narrative styles as critical engagement (C. Bailey, 2014). A poetry-based method corresponds with creolization and Caribbean poetics and allows me to capture the fluid and differential data I collected through interviews.

Memo writing is a form of note-taking about thoughts that emerge throughout the analysis process. As Chen and Boore (2009) describe, “memoranda encourage a higher level of abstract thinking by getting the researcher to reflect on the described themes and patterns in the data relationships between categories and emergent conceptualisations” (p.2255). It can be formal or a more free-form style of writing into a “way of knowing” (Locke, 2001, p.51). My memos emerged in both styles, the latter of which took a poetic form, (see Eshun & Madge, 2012; see Fitzpatrick, 2012; see Glesne, 1997).

I used a poetic method because of the ways in which poetic methods have the potential to reflect everyday language, ways of being, and ways of organizing thoughts in Nassau specifically and Caribbean cultures generally. I used this method to create memos because it allowed me to

A POETICS OF FOOD

integrate what I gleaned from the interviews, the literature, and my personal experiences across languages and concepts. It allowed me to distill emerging themes that did not always have direct translations without losing the essence of people's stories, my interdisciplinary lens, and my theoretical integrity. As one listener explained about the poetry I presented, "I love how you moved fluidly between these three distinct voices in your poetry: American academic Hilary, Bahamian Hilary, and then this third voice that is still distinctly you but less defined than the other two voices."

Caribbean critique literature and theory hold that communication in Caribbean culture is poetic and performative, inherently. As an intuitive approach (Eshun & Madge, 2012), poetry as method can break open data to multiple interpretations and truths (Fitzpatrick, 2012; Furman et al., 2007) for the researcher and the reader alike. Poetry as method aligns my research methods with my theoretical framework and epistemological commitments because "In creating research poems based on varying views of different community members, the research poem has the potential to convey the inevitable contestations (and agreements) between different social actors..." (Eshun & Madge, 2012, p.1407).

I read through the interviews twice and wrote notes in the margins to facilitate initial (Birks & Mills, 2015; Emerson et al., 2001) or open (Chen & Boore, 2009) coding. I highlighted significant data, color-coded by research question. I wrote initial themes on index cards whose color corresponded with the color highlighted. I used gerunds in my initial coding process in order to maintain a process/practice orientation to my data (Birks & Mills, 2015; Hoare, 2012). Additionally, I used in vivo codes when possible to maintain the language of the people whom I interviewed (Birks & Mills, 2015).

On a third reading of my interview transcripts, I wrote the individual pieces of data, based on my highlighting, on white index cards and included the initials of the person quoted, as

A POETICS OF FOOD

well as the page on which the quote was located. Once I finished writing down each individual piece of data, I integrated them with the initial themes using index card pile sorts (Bernard, 2011). In this process, I was able to determine more readily whether or not a given piece of data actually answered the question being asked, whether it answered multiple questions, another question, or none of the questions at all. Initially, I tried to sort through multiple questions at one time and found that to be overwhelming. I then addressed each research question on its own and found that this systematic approach eased the process. I added theme piles as they arose and developed an indexing system based on the emergent themes following the pile sorts for each question.

In order to produce a narrative that includes the rich and diverse experiences represented by my data and aligned with my theoretical framework, I kept all themes that had at least three pieces of data—even if each piece of data was from one person. Multiple pieces of data from one person in a given theme were sometimes paradoxical or contradictory, representing how creolization manifests individually as much as collectively. I used the literature as a data sub-set, primarily to broaden and strengthen the definitions assigned to a given code (Coyne & Cowley, 2006). These strategies allowed me to maintain my commitment to a diversity of voices—even if all of the voices inhabit one person. Using the constant comparative methods allowed me to maintain these themes in a manageable way by developing taxonomies of sub-categories and sub-themes.

I wrote memos throughout my analysis to track the patterns and connections I noticed between emerging themes, categories, questions, data sets, and literature. I used intermediate coding (Birks & Mills, 2015) to answer questions related to emergence—a strength and purpose of this particular method (Chen & Boore, 2009), to develop conceptual relationships between codes and categories, and to produce sub-categories where necessary (Birks & Mills, 2015). In the

A POETICS OF FOOD

intermediate phase of coding, I wrote memos about the significance of the categories that emerged (Locke, 2001) and category properties—terms that describe the data in a given category (Birks & Mills, 2015). I used a method of data analysis referred to as Participant-voiced poetry (Prendergast, 2009), found poetry (Prendergast, 2009), research poems (Eshun and Madge, 2012), poetic transcription (Glesne, 1997), data poems (Lahman et al., 2010), composite poetry (Lapum, Church, Yau, Matthews David, & Ruttonsha, 2012), and narrative poetry (Marechal & Linstead, 2010) that utilizes the voices of research participants. In this method, pieces of interview transcripts are combined in condensed forms saturated with statements that seem significant to the research questions (Eshun & Madge, 2012; Prendergast, 2009).

Each theme for each question is a data set with its own documents in which I copied the direct quotes from all of the corresponding index cards. Each person I interviewed has a corresponding color code. I then read through each theme for each question to finalize that the data represented the theme associated with it. I constantly compared the interview data with itself. I used index guides for each subsequent data set to compare themes and assess which themes emerged most frequently within and across data sets (Chen & Boore, 2009). In conjunction with my memo writing process, I used matrices (Bernard, 2011; Fetterman, 1998) and conceptual mapping (Birks & Mills, 2015) to assist with my comparative analysis of the themes that emerged from each data set.

Acknowledging that grounded theory studies use theoretical memos as the final unit of analysis for coding (Chen & Boore, 2009; Coyne & Cowley, 2006), I used the constant comparative method as a systematic approach to my data (Chen & Boore, 2009) and merged it with a poetic method. I combined the constant comparison method with a poetic method to develop categories and connections between various aspects of the data, various voices in the data, and between various data sets. Finally, I used an interpretive (Eshun & Madge, 2012) or

A POETICS OF FOOD

lyric (Marechal & Linstead, 2010) poetic method in my late-stage memos to integrate multiple sources and viewpoints from my data, myself, and the literature.

These memos became the basis for my findings, articulated in the following chapter. I divided my data into three (3) sets: (1) catalysts on the journey; (2) intentional food practices; and (3) Existential intentions/values underlying interviewees' food practices. Each of these data sets had corresponding categories and themes. Categories are the related elements that "explain the 'main concern' of the participants in relation to the research [questions]" (Woods, Gapp, & King, 2016, p.664). Themes are the patterns (Woods et al., 2016) or components (J. R. Fox, 2009) of data sets that fall within the realm of each category. Catalysts on the journey included themes condensed into nine (9) categories, intentional food practices were divided into eight (8) categories, and existential intentions/values underlying interviewees' food practices were divided into seven (7) categories. Each category holds a broad range of additional themes which are described in further depth in the following chapter that explains the findings of this study.

Triangulation

Triangulation is an analytical tool which supports the validity of data by comparing data sources that are independent on one another against each another. Fielding and Fielding (2008) define triangulation as

agreement in the outcomes of more than one independent measurement procedure, relative to studies employing a single procedure. The position assumes that there are realities that exist independently of the observer, that have stable properties that can be

measured, and that can be mutually related as the basis of internally consistent explanations of social phenomena. (p.555)

Triangulation is especially important and effective when different methods or data sources hold different biases – or different strengths and limitations (Fielding & Fieldling, 2008). In this research, journal entries, field notes, and extensive review of documentation provided for rich description and triangulation of the interview data.

Limitations of Research

Each aspect of this research was based, intentionally, on relationship and the ways in which particular relationships manifest at a given time. While this has numerous strengths (particularly in terms of the transformative capacity of the research process itself), it leaves the research nonreplicable, even if the exact methods are recorded and repeated. Even if the same person repeated the research, people and relationships constantly change and no two conversations are held twice.

I interviewed 27 people in the period of thirty days during May 2015 and June 2015. The primary data upon which this research is based reflects what and how the people I interviewed thought and felt in a very finite period of time with varying sets of events for people personally and collectively—many of which emerged in the data. I only interviewed people once and the interviews varied in length from 15:26 (min:sec) to 2:43:42 (hr:min:sec). While the interviews were rich, there is only so much that can be discussed in such a short time period. The transcriptions present many questions and need for further clarifications on a number of points. Additional interviews would allow me to explore various themes that were related in the interviews in different ways than I had previously considered.

A POETICS OF FOOD

People change. People change from day to day. Lives are fluid, practices are fluid, beliefs and ways of being and thinking about the world can be fluid. Because I am connected to many of the people I interviewed, I am cognizant of the ways in which their lives, practices, and beliefs have changed over the period of time since the interviews were conducted. I am even more cognizant of the ways in which my own life, beliefs, and practices have changed over that period of time and how that affects the way in which I understand the data. Knowing what I know now, being who I am now, I might have asked a completely different set of questions. Also, I learned more than I ever could have imagined conducting these interviews, both in terms of content and in terms of the process of conducting an interview. While that learning is valuable, it could also potentially be seen as a limitation, or perhaps just a reality.

Using a snowball sample is a purposeful way of choosing research participants. While it offered my research the relational orientation I sought—perhaps even more than I expected—it also has limitations. A lot of the people I interviewed sort of exist in a similar social circle, intentionally. Relatively speaking, they have similar views of the world, and come from similar educational, economic, and racial backgrounds. Most striking to me, I think, was the relatively limited window in terms of age. Most of the people I interviewed are between the ages of 35 and 45 and the exclusion of elder voices is a limitation to the variability in narrative.

I am a human being conducting research with other human beings. All human beings have limitations when it comes to trust, transparency, and honesty. I have no way of proving whether or not people's interview responses originate from their own authentic feelings, thoughts, or practices. I also have no way of accounting for whether and/or how my previous interactions with people and my personal associations have affected their responses. Familiarity can generate intimacy and care and, just as easily, it can breed contempt and misunderstandings—especially in a close-knit community. Relationships have strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, I designed

A POETICS OF FOOD

my research in such a way that I did not select my interviewees. This meant that I knew the interviewees to differing degrees, and I felt cognizant of the ways in which those degrees of familiarity affected people's responses and the depth into which they explored various ideas and experiences. In some cases, people were hesitant to explore the connections between their food practices, their journeys of healing, and/or their spiritual journeys—particularly people who did not know me well.

Conclusion

This chapter explored my position and ethics as a researcher, including how I chose methods and methodologies that correlate with my theoretical framework. I discussed epistemological or philosophical orientations that underlie my research and their relationship to my theoretical framework and methods. I described and justified the methods and methodologies that guided my research, and explained the methods that I used—including why and how I used them. My primary intent was to engage with research methods and methodologies in ways that felt aligned with the particularities of the research context and the philosophies underlying the literature review that supports it.

The next chapter of this dissertation presents the research findings and the following chapter discusses their relationship to the literature and triangulates them with other data sources. The findings chapter explains why people enact particular food practices intentionally, names categories of food practices that were named in the interviews, and examines the ways in which the practices mentioned and their associated intentions connect to broader desires for healing, restoration, and decolonization.

Chapter 5

Findings

Farmers of Light: Intentional Food Practices & Emerging Conscious Foodways in The Bahamas

“This is when I was a child. Readin a book. Just picked up a random book, in a pile. Cause my mum is a librarian. And so, we always had piles and piles of books on all – any and everything. There was a book on, I think, fruits. And in the beginning of this book, it said all meat is grass. All meat is grass. And then ... and I stopped. You know I was a child. I thought, I thought about it ... all meat is grass. And that, all grass is light. So a farmer is basically a farmer of light. And I – that just blew my mind as a child! And that freaked – that is like, WOAHH! You know? That idea is crazy. And so now, as a, as an

A POETICS OF FOOD

adult ... a farmer. I ... I get up, or, if I have somethin to do – let's say I have a – I'm growin crops, I'm tendin some crops. There's a sort of smallness to what I'm doin ... that, has ... that, that I guess, in its stillness, is significant to me. It's – I don't know, I don't know if I'm explainin this properly, but, if I have, if I'm watchin these seeds, these seedlings, like, mature, and I'm lookin for insects and doin certain things. And I'm, like, waiting for particular things to happen, and I'm watchin these things, it's like, the whole world around me? It quiets itself." ~Interviewee U

Introduction

The purpose of the research was to explore particular intentional food practices among a specific group of people, the reasons why people engage with these practices, and whether/how these practices connect to people's broader life values and desires for healing, restoration, and decolonization. This chapter discusses research findings about intentional food practices and the reasons why they are enacted among a group of people in Nassau, Bahamas. The findings presented in this chapter result from 27 in-depth semi-structured interviews of people living on the island of New Providence who were selected using a snowball sample—as suggested for purposeful samples (Bernard, 2011). I chose two individuals I knew as the first participants based on their reputations as leaders in two realms of intentional food practice. The remaining interviewees were selected by other interviewees and identified as being intentional or conscious about their food practices.

Typically, demographic information is collected in an ethnographic sample. For the purposes of this study, I chose not to collect this information (including age, race, religion, economic information, gender, sexual orientation, occupation, and experience) for a number of reasons. Among my justifications, asking for some of this information is considered disrespectful in Bahamian culture, I was concerned that singling out/distilling certain identifiers would detract from the narrative, and forcing people to choose certain identities and identifiers counters the overall philosophical imperative of respecting hybridity in individuals as much as in communities.

A POETICS OF FOOD

Some people did offer specific identifiers in the conversations that emerge in the findings – though I have not sought to include them explicitly.

This chapter focuses on food practices of individuals I interviewed, particular events or moments in their lives that influenced their choices to be intentional about their food practices, and the ways in which their intentional food practices reflect broader life intentions and values. Chapter 5 will connect these findings to literature related to intentional food practices and consciousness in the African and Caribbean diasporas. Three (3) units of analysis are presented in this research: (1) catalysts on the journey; (2) intentional food practices; and (3) Existential intentions/values underlying interviewees' food practices.

Catalysts on the journey are events and experiences in people's lives that led them to make changes in their daily food practices. Typically, the first of these events was discussed as an initiation of sorts on what several interviewees named as their food journeys or spiritual journeys. This data set produced nine (9) categories with associated themes. Intentional food practices are direct interactions with food that are enacted for a particular reason. This data set produced eight (8) categories with associated themes. Existential intentions are the underlying values and desires that inspire people to be intentional about their food practices. This data set produced seven (7) categories with associated themes.

Catalysts on the Journey

This section discusses findings related to why people became intentional about their food practices or chose to change or maintain particular practices intentionally. The reasons why people began their food journeys and the reasons why they maintain them overlap, even as practices and reasons for maintaining them may have shifted over time. Catalysts are events—sometimes gentle and sometimes seemingly destructive—that facilitate shifts in movement. All interviewees were asked to describe what led them to be intentional about their food practices

A POETICS OF FOOD

and all responded with various moments, events, and experiences that encouraged shifts in their food practices.

15 interviewees inferred that one discovery or intentional practice leads to another, or even that their transitions in food philosophy and practices have been inevitable. One person suggested, “We’re intentional as, like we’re human beings. We’re picky, you know, you eat what you like to eat” (Interviewee B). Another person surmised, “I saw where the knowledge what I had been accumulatin over X amount of years, not even knowin why, it was goin to lead to this” (Interviewee E). Interviewees noted deep connections to these shifts in their lives, even when meanings remained hidden at the time of a particular transition. One person noted, “I knew that I, I must be a vegetarian because I can’t stand to see the chicken get kill,” and “there were little moments, little moments of, um, awareness, you know?” (Interviewee F).

The catalysts that interviewees’ discussed fall into the following categories: (1) lifestyle shifts; (2) exploring different spiritual/healing modalities; (3) childhood experiences; (4) connecting with families and/or ancestries; (5) exposure through others; (6) individual and collective self-sufficiency and development; (7) pride in one’s identity; (8) acquiring new knowledge and information; and (9) noticing how food affects the mind and body. Chart 4.1 demonstrates the distribution of catalysts across the group of people I interviewed and the following sub-section discusses each of these categories further with support from my research.

Fig 4.1 Interviewee Responses to Catalysts on the Journey

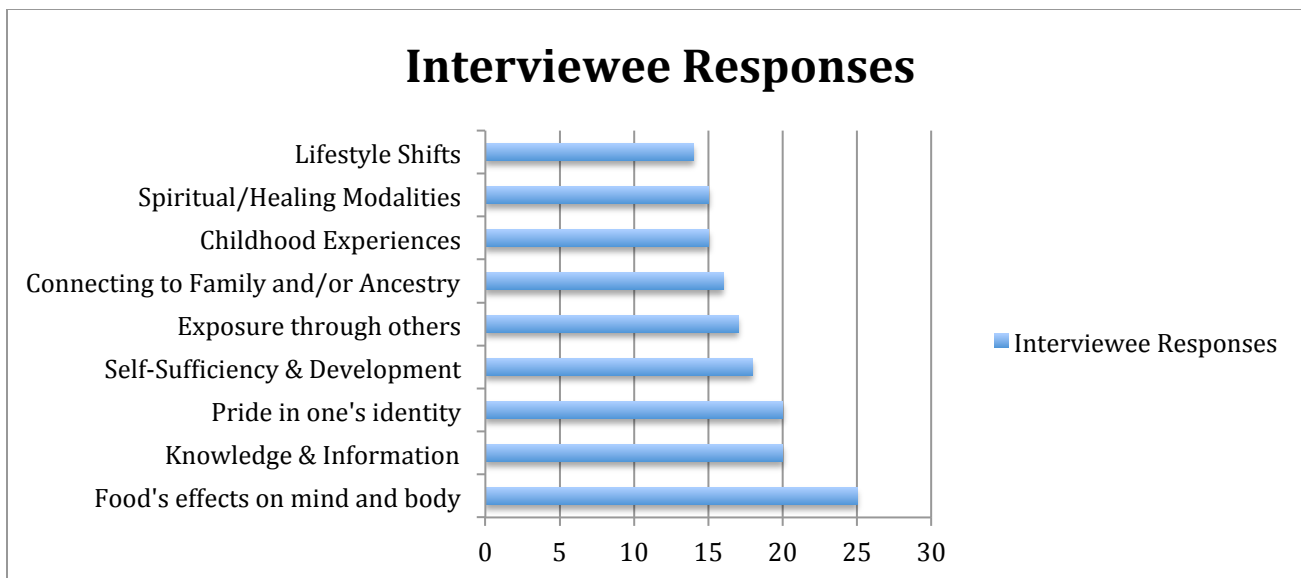


Table 4.1 shows each category in this data set and the themes into which it was divided.

Table 4.1

Catalysts on the Journey – Categories and Themes

| Catalyst Categories | Catalyst Themes |
|--|---|
| Lifestyle shifts | (1) personal and family health and weight issues (2) travel and going away to college (3) embracing one's culture(s) and ancestries (4) living "more naturally" (5) reducing the amount of chemicals to which one exposes oneself (6) political action (7) convenience and economic purposes (8) desires for personal satisfaction |
| Spiritual/Healing modalities | (1) exploring religions and spiritual systems (2) seeking the truth of who one is (3) desiring to find truth |
| Childhood experiences | (1) growing food and fishing during childhood (2) being exposed to animal slaughter during childhood |
| Connecting with families and/or ancestries | (1) having children/supporting children's health (2) community support (3) connection to/appreciation for ancestral culture and foodways |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| | (4) witnessing family members' suffering or death |
| Exposure through others | (1) travel/going away to school (2) associating with people from spiritual and cultural traditions different than their own in The Bahamas (3) romantic partners past or present (4) having community and support |
| Self-sufficiency and development | (1) individual self-sufficiency and autonomy (2) collective autonomy and national development |
| Pride in one's identity | (1) Pride in unique personal identity (2) Pride in identity as a Bahamian (3) African ancestral pride |
| Knowledge and information | (1) they or a loved one had personal health issues (2) they felt betrayed by the allopathic medical system (3) they felt betrayed by the spiritual systems that surrounded them (4) they wanted to know more about relationships between the food, medical, and pharmaceutical industries that emerged through their research |
| Food's effects on the mind and body | (1) physical changes in the body (2) changes in how one thinks/shifts in consciousness (3) behavioral changes |

Lifestyle shifts. Lifestyle shifts include the following themes: (1) personal and family health and weight issues, (2) travel and going away to college, (3) embracing one's culture(s) and ancestries, (4) living "more naturally," (5) reducing the amount of chemicals to which one exposes oneself, (6) political action, (7) convenience and economic purposes, and (8) desires for personal satisfaction. As one person explained,

I was in Canada, so it's kinda like a movement. You find like-minded people, and it's kinda like, ok – like, I can do this and I began to enjoy and my frame of mind started to, to change, and then it did, it wasn't a diet anymore. It was a lifestyle ..." (Interviewee I).

A POETICS OF FOOD

Another asserted, “when you got into older religions, you start to get into a vegetarian lifestyle and a vegan lifestyle” (Interviewee A). Lifestyle shifts manifested as changes in appearance, with seven people making direct correlations between their intentional food practices and choosing to wear their hair naturally—either locked or free of weaves, wigs, and chemical relaxers. 16 people I interviewed became more conscious of their food practices when they began cooking for themselves and/or their families, either by choice or out of necessity. As one interviewee stated, “I started cooking for myself, so, I started, like, hearing more about the things I was eating cause I had to prepare it myself” (Interviewee B). Another person indicated, “I went on a fast for awhile. And uh, I saw there was like a lack of good food. Like, good vegan food. And, I was like, every day I just had to come home and cook. So I’m like, I might as well sell it” (Interviewee P).

Exploring different modalities of spirituality and healing. When people explored their spirituality, they came across systems that hold intentional food practices inherently—such as Judaism, Rastafarianism, Islam, Kemetic systems, and Seventh Day Adventism. This category is comprised of the following themes: (1) exploring religions and spiritual systems, (2) seeking the truth of who one is, and (3) desiring to find truth in the world influenced people’s choices to be more intentional about their food practices, regardless of whether one indicated ascribing to a particular system and regardless of what s/he perceived as rules in a given system. One interviewee asserted:

we got kicked out of the church, and that started our journey ... through the highways and byways ... within the space of, say 7, say 7 years in total? We visited churches, or, organizations ... I don’t just mean, say, um, Christianity. I’m also talkin bout Kemet, um organizations, um, also other Rasta organization, um, Muslims, Seventh Day Adventists.

A POETICS OF FOOD

You know, just everybody that, that seeks to consciously bring the connection. And that's where, uh, that's where the journey started (Interviewee G).

Exploring spirituality and healing modalities was an extension of interviewees' initial desires to find and know the truth about themselves and the world in which they live for a variety of reasons. At the intersection of feeling betrayed by allopathic health systems, feeling betrayed by spiritual systems, increasing knowledge of conventional food systems, and a desire to have truth and be well, people sought out alternative and holistic modalities of healing.

16 interviewees indicated that people of various spiritual orientations—including Rastafarianism, Seventh Day Adventism, Judaism, Kemetic systems, and Islam—influenced their choices to be intentional about their food practices. Exposure and openness to a broad range of spiritual traditions and philosophical perspectives led people to think differently about their own lives and practices, allowing for different sorts of connections between various aspects of life and ways of living and being. Exploring various food philosophies led to connections that might not have been apparent at first glance. As one person noted:

coming up from, in a Christian nation, being a altar boy, that's all I knew – right? Then I go off to college. Muslim room mate. Sikh girlfriend. Jain friend. Always thought Jews were white. I met this black Jew. What the fuck? Like ... like ... like, so now, it's like, my mind's just reeling at all these people and all these different types of backgrounds that they comin from and, and I just can't wrap my mind around the fact that these people are not Christian. You know? And – but yet, they have some of the very same experiences as me ... their family, they go through the same heartaches and pains as me, whatever. So then, that's when I started questionin the whole religion thing. Cause – these five people, plus me, having totally different religions, havin the same situations. Yet, they prayin to

A POETICS OF FOOD

this one, they prayin to that one, praying to this one – but everybody havin the same results (Interviewee L).

Connected with the themes mentioned previously, nine (9) people noted that returning to Nassau after shifting their food practices—regardless of the reason—drew them to associate with different people than they had previously. Four (4) people indicated that connecting with people whose food practices aligned with theirs meant surrounding themselves with different spiritual and philosophical foundations, which directly influenced changes in their own. One participant mentioned, “Returnin from school ... I started to awaken. The enlightenment started becoming stronger towards my spirituality within true Rastafari” (Interviewee H). While another asserted, “After, um, comin home and startin to hang out with the Rastas, and learnin how to cook a little bit more, I went back off to school again from there ... so now I’m a little bit more armed, right?” (Interviewee L)

Nineteen (19) people associated their food practices with spiritual and healing systems. Even if they did not adhere formally to a particular spiritual system, people in this category were influenced by having been exposed to or exploring them. Rastafarianism, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Seventh Day Adventism, African spiritual systems, and various forms of New Age spirituality are among the spiritual systems that interviewees explored and practiced. Additionally, interviewees discussed being influenced by various indigenous and holistic healing modalities, such as bush medicine (11 respondents), Ayurveda (1 respondent), Kemeti health practices (4 respondents), various forms of yoga (5 respondents), Reiki (1 respondent), Macrobiotics (2 respondents), Naturopathy (1 respondent), Energy healing (1 respondent), light therapy (1 respondent), and sound therapy (1 respondent).

Childhood practices and experiences. Current food practices were associated with those of interviewees' childhoods—even if their food practices at the time of the interviews were not the same as their childhood food practices. Typically, these practices were learned from people's grandparents – especially if their grandparents lived or grew up on family islands. This category was divided into the following themes: (1) growing food and fishing during childhood and (2) being exposed to animal slaughter during childhood.

Eight (8) people tied their intentional food practices to growing food and fishing during childhood. One person mentioned,

I grew up in Detroit, but my father was Canadian, so we always went to Canada every weekend. And in Canada, it's like farmland city. Where we came from, it was just flat farming, and my grandfather had a farm ... So a lot of what we were eating was grown and we just would bring it back in Canada, and we would go fishing every single Saturday mornin. Friday night, we wet the dirt, so the worms could come up. Pick our worms, four o'clock in the mornin, we get up by five. We, ya know, over in Canada fishing. Five thirty, our lines are already in the water. We fish all morning and come home. We be home by, like, nine o'clock. So we ate a lot of, you know, fresh fish that we were catchin, lots of vegetables (Interviewee C).

Another person mentioned, "The back yard has fruit trees. And my mother would bake bread. And my grandmother would send up root vegetables that they grew in Mayaguana. And corn. And fish. And dried conch. So we really wouldn't eat red meat but on occasion"

(Interviewee W). An additional person explained, "bein able to GROW my own food ... and my Summers were fruits. Daiquiris. Um – you know – I would say, from June to October, we GOUGED ourselves on fruits. I mean, I'm talkin fructose out the ass" (Interviewee X).

A POETICS OF FOOD

Similar to childhoods spent fishing and growing, two (2) interviewees discussed eliminating meat from their diets after being exposed to animal slaughter. One proclaimed,

I was 15, my dad said, come with me to the farm. I'm gonna kill a goat. I hopped in the car, cause I don't have the opportunity to go with my daddy by myself that often. My father is not a part of, active part of the household. So, we hop in the car, we drive 15 minutes around this farm on Joe Farrington Road. And um, he picks out a goat after I played with the goats and petted the goats, and they kill the goat. And I watch and listen to the goat die. I don't eat meat. Anymore ... I am now 41. And I'm not eating meat (Interviewee W).

The other shared, "We had this chicken named Charlie. I'm jumpin all over the place. How this Chicken name Charlie? We used to feed Charlie, and pet Charlie, and, I come home one day and I don't see Charlie. And I said, 'Where's Charlie?' My grandmother says, 'Charlie's for dinner'" (Interviewee F).

Connecting with family and ancestry. Connecting with family refers to connecting with one's family of origin and ancestry. It also includes connecting with/adapting to one's chosen family—particularly given the definition of family as village/community that aligns with traditional African cultural orientations. This category is composed of the following themes: (1) having children/supporting children's health, (2) community support, (3) connection to/appreciation for ancestral culture and foodways, (4) witnessing family members' suffering or death.

Seven (7) people mentioned the impact of having children and supporting their children's health as critical to their food practices. One person mentioned,

A POETICS OF FOOD

One thing that has changed me, a lot ... is, becoming a mother ... becoming like responsible for somebody else's body, and nutrition ... you're responsible ... from the moment you have this child ... you are responsible for figuring out how to feed this child, you know? And I've taken that responsibility so seriously – more so that I thought I would (Interviewee Z).

Another respondent shared, “My first impulse, again, was, I'm not gonna die and have, and leave my child here because I like corn beef and rice – no” (Interviewee F).

Besides genetic families, community family and friends also play a strong role in the lives of the people I interviewed. Community members and friends influenced people to become more intentional about their food practices. Fifteen (15) people I interviewed also noted that their communities and circles of friends supported and challenged them to maintain their intentions and to continue to do better in all aspects of their lives. One respondent indicated,

I went through five years of, just complete bliss. And then the minute that, you, you know – the diet ... at the beginning, we said that, when I cleaned up the diet, then, the lifestyle, you know, thinking changed. And then, um, when my community began to collapse, the diet fell behind it (Interviewee Y).

Nineteen (19) people noted that their food journeys and personal research connected them to and offered them a deeper appreciation for their ancestors' cultures and foodways--both traditional Bahamian foodways and traditional African foodways. One interviewee conveyed his appreciation for his Bahamian ancestors: “in readin different philosophies ... I began to realize, that, ... what many of our grandparents did in The Bahamas was actually the RIGHT thing to do. So drinkin Soursop Tea and Pear Leaf Tea, and, you know, all the various stuff we grow on the islands” (Interviewee X). The importance of re-gaining African identities and sensibilities was expressed in such ways as,

A POETICS OF FOOD

When I say the return, I mean to go back – ok, for example – when, when my ancestors were brought here from Africa, a lot of the food they ate, the customs they would, wasn't brought with them. They had to revert to what was the dominant culture, right? So, when I, when I mention – for example, like, um, what, with the grains – like Sorghum, like Millet, like Teff – stuff like that. They are foods that people eat in Africa. Even a lot of the, the squashes – you know? Like the Butternut Squashes, the Pumpkin, Zucchini – these are things that people subsist off of in Africa. There's a, a series of books – there's three books called *The Lost Foods of Africa*. Those same three books – I have them on the, on the, on the e-file. And, what I did is I, I looked at a lot of the fruits and the vegetables – you know, like the Guinep, the Guavas – a lot of these things are – they come from Africa. So, when, when I eat this way, I feel like it's goin back to that (Interviewee O).

In connection, seven (7) people witnessed family members suffer and/or die through a variety of health conditions, impacting their choices to become more aware of what and how they ate. These participants did not want to experience those conditions, nor put their children at risk for experiencing those conditions. One person noted, “The part that cause me to shift was when I lost my dad, my uncle, and my aunt from cancer. And, that shifted my attention into refocusin to what I eat” (Interviewee K). Another proclaimed, “Coming from a family of excess, and sickness, disease ... I did not want to be who I saw” (Interviewee F). This theme emerged from five (5) of the seven (7) people whose intentional food practices led them to start their own food and health-centered businesses. One person asserted, “[my father's cancer has] definitely been a huge reason as to why I have the type of menu that I have in the restaurant” (Interviewee I).

Connecting with other people, cultures, and traditions (Exposure through others). Connecting with friends, family, and community members at home and abroad was a prominent reason why people changed their food practices. Interviewees encountered people, places, and cultural or spiritual frameworks different than those with which they were familiar. These interactions brought them to different types of information and narratives that shifted their perspectives about themselves and the world at large. This category is divided into the following themes: (1) travel/going away to school, (2) associating with people from spiritual and cultural traditions different than their own in The Bahamas; (3) romantic partners past or present, and (4) having community and support.

Nine (9) people indicated that their food practices began to change when they went away to school – both because of economics and because new experiences and social groups changed their perspectives. One person shared,

I was off to Drexel, um, art school ain't cheap ... I can't work in the States, you know. I only getting money to pay for, you know, rent, and food, from my parents. But, art school ain't cheap. Projects cost mon-ay. And so, I had to do a bit of adaptation to the, um, stringent wallet, that I had at the time ... I started cutting out certain things when I went to the food store, cause, you know, I gotta get that project done next week, Thursday.

You know? So, why I can't buy no chicken today? ... And so, I started cutting out certain things outta my diet (Interviewee L).

Another respondent remembered, "In Canada ... people were so much, I mean, so much more receptive to the idea ... maybe for a different reason, because all animal activism and animal rights and all these different sorts of issues ... I think I was vegan more so because of that influence" (Interviewee I). Five (5) people indicated that shifting experiences and perspectives as a result of travel and going abroad for school also led them to seek out, interact with, and befriend

A POETICS OF FOOD

different people and different types of people than they had growing up. As one respondent indicated, “I started cuttin out certain things outta my diet. And then, break, came home. Started hangin out with more naturalists, you know? Rastas and stuff like that” (Interviewee L).

Going abroad exposed interviewees to different foodways. Similarly, eleven (11) interviewees indicated that associating with people from spiritual and cultural traditions different than their own with inherent food philosophies in The Bahamas impacted their food choices. As one interviewee noted, “A lotta Muslims, in The Bahamas, they not Bahamians ... so I, not only was I exposed to a different, a different religious views, I was exposed to different cultures ... So I was a little more well-rounded” (Interviewee U). Another interviewee asserted,

The Rasta said to me ... the statement he made ... it put me on a soul-searchin path, and, and on the soul-searchin path, I did a lot of Seventh Day Adventist works ... I went tryin on a Seventh Day Adventist diet ... From the church I was in? They did something that was called the Daniel’s Diet ... So, when they did the Daniel’s Diet, I was like, you know? You could LIVE like this ... we was a regular, uh, Pentecostal Church (Interviewee G).

Four (4) interviewees noted that partners past or present were catalysts for their intentional food practices or shifts in their food practices. One person indicated,

I would have started off, uh, moving – I guess I very subconsciously toward a particular lifestyle. I would have cut off, you know, the processed hair and then gone completely natural, maybe two years after. I don’t know, don’t remember the exact timing. Uh, and then at one point, I then cut out red meat. Um, honestly cannot remember why, or what lead me to that, or if anything specifically sparked me. But I made the decision. And then, in two thousand nine, two thousand ten, I was re-acquainted with my now-husband ... who was already a vegan (Interviewee Q).

A POETICS OF FOOD

Related to partnerships, having community and support emerged as a theme critical to initiating and maintaining an intentional lifestyle. Interviewees noted that their friends made them feel stronger in their perspectives and provided the emotional, spiritual, and practical support they needed to continue with the lifestyles they chose. People discussed that maintaining their intentional practices required having friends with the same intentional practices – both emotionally and practically. As one interviewee asserted,

The adjustment period was very tough, but because I had persons who I could call on to say, well, how you make this? How you make that? How you make the next thing? ... having a circle ... you must have in order to have things work (Interviewee D).

One person noted that when her community of support started to dissipate, so did her discipline about her food practices. Another person said,

As I was changing my diet ... what I know is that because I had about I would say ten to about, let's say 15 to 20 different people also changing their diet. It made it easier. Because, if there were days when I didn't feel like cooking, I could go to somebody else's house and they're cooking, you know? (Interviewee A).

Self-sufficiency and development. Eighteen (18) interviewees' indicated that their belief in the connection between the ability to feed oneself or make intentional food choices and one's level of self-sufficiency shifted their food practices. This category is comprised of the following themes: (1) individual self-sufficiency and autonomy and (2) collective autonomy and national development.

One person noted: "I switched to vegetarian in probably like my 11th year of high school and it's mostly just ... because I could. It was one of those, um, decisions taking control over

A POETICS OF FOOD

your, um, own, your own life” (Interviewee B). Others connected to collective senses of autonomy and development, as the following quotes demonstrate:

Food security is directly linked to sovereignty – national sovereignty. And food security is also directly linked to individual sovereignty and independence, right? Food security is a vital building block in – a community block, right? When parents have to focus every day on how they going to feed their children, they can’t focus on their jobs. They can’t focus on community development. And, and building personal passion ... so, food security is a vital building block for any nation’s development or any citizen’s development – any family, any community’s development. Right? (Interviewee J).

[I studied agriculture] to help move the country towards, um ... food security ... the question that came to my mind that really got me angry about the whole thing was that, why are we spending so much money importing food, when, some countries prize the food we’re producing (Interviewee S).

Sense of pride in one’s self, ancestral, or national identity. Twenty (20) people noted that their intentional food practices were a result of their sense of pride in various forms of identity. The following themes make up this category: (1) Pride in unique personal identity, (2) Pride in identity as a Bahamian, and (3) African ancestral pride.

Sixteen people indicated that their intentional food practices are connected to a sense of pride in their identity as a unique individual. One interviewee stated, “food is an expression of who I am” (Interviewee O). Another person I interviewed mentioned, “anything that’s intentional in like details, you know? ... shows that ... that’s critical thinking. You’re not just

A POETICS OF FOOD

throwing something on yourself ... it's a level of self-respect" (Interviewee B). An additional participant commented,

In agriculture ... it's like, you get the chance to be your own person. You have a chance. You know? ... I don't have to cut my hair how I want cut my hair. I don't have to ... I guess, like a wild west kinda thing. And, the only thing stoppin me is my own ingenuity and, and my own – what I have planned (Interviewee U).

Pride in one's identity as a Bahamian was another theme that emerged for eight (8) people. One respondent described,

Six months before I was about to graduate from highschool ... the Minister of Education ... came and he gave a talk, the opening address for our careers week, and he strongly encouraged us to study agriculture, and he gave a number of statistics. Um, one was how much money we were spending importing food – that was one that struck me. And the other one was that, um, there was still some production – commercial production. And, he referred to melons that were being produced in Andros. And ... I just remember hearing that Japanese – that these melons were being exported to Japan. And the Japanese were willing to pay a hundred dollars a melon. And I thought ... You gotta be kiddin me. Now – they are willing to pay a hundred dollars a piece for melons grown here, but yet, we're spending, what I recall, he said, at that time, one point two billion dollars importing food ... those two things just did not make sense to me. How, on one hand, we could be exporting melons that were so prized, and then, on the other hand, importing so much food, and it was, I thought it was ridiculous. So, um, that really, uh, that was the moment that just changed my course of study ... years later ... I learned that the Japanese highly value fruit. I mean, fruit, for them, is like gold, diamonds or gold. I mean, they really value fruit, so. When I realized that – and I thought, oh my gosh. These

A POETICS OF FOOD

people – they don't just buy any old piece of fruit. They highly value it. And they wanted ours? You know? So that made even more sense to me then. I was like, wow. They know their fruit, and they want ours (Interviewee S).

Another person explained,

I've been all over the world ... I've been to Belgium, I've been to France, I've been to Italy. Um, been to England, been to Ireland. I've been plenty places. I've been to Canada. Been to California. And ain' nobody could cook fish like a Bahamian (Interviewee J).

A third person mentioned, "A part of how you grown your food or what you eat is, is a part of your, your identity, your cultural identity, and you should, you should kinda hold onto that" (Interviewee U).

A sense of African ancestral pride was a key theme noted explicitly by eleven (11) respondents.

One person professed,

as I began to study food and understand more about it, um, I realized that a lotta the libation and stuff that are poured durin a lot of African, uh, ceremonies ... originally, our libation was to eat what our ancestors ate. Thereby revivin their spirit in us. And so, that is now how I see food along with it being a comfort still. It's also understandin that there's certain elements, uh, nutrients, vitamins, etc that are in the foods that allow for me, as an African, to function the way I'm supposed to function (Interviewee A).

Another person proclaimed,

whoever knowledge this get in the hands of, they also need to know that we, too, are a conscious people ... lemme see what my wife give me for the lunch today ... I got water, I get carrot, I got a Bingi bread, I got a natural banana. You see what I'm sayin? So ...

A POETICS OF FOOD

I'm, I, I'm living where my people live. And all knowledge about the Alkaline life
(Interviewee G).

Acquiring knowledge and information. Twenty-three (23) interviewees sought specific information for a number of reasons, which served as the themes for this category. These themes included: (1) they or a loved one had personal health issues; (2) they felt betrayed by the allopathic medical system; (3) they felt betrayed by the spiritual systems that surrounded them; and (4) they wanted to know more about relationships between the food, medical, and pharmaceutical industries that emerged through their research. Some informants encountered knowledge and information happenstance, and some found it because they were seeking it.

Interviewees acquired knowledge and information from a number of different sources, including educational institutions at various levels, other people with whom they were connected, arts and entertainment sources, various spiritual and religious traditions, the media, books, music, the internet, and magazine and journal articles. Regardless of the initial introductions to information or knowledge that facilitated shifts in people's food practices and philosophies, the people I interviewed noted that the more information they sought or the deeper they went into a certain practice, the more information they discovered. In a sense, what they sought was seeking them. One interviewee described, half-joking,

all this wealth of information just – you know, they say if you keep focused on it, the information's gonna come? Well. Jesus. Christ. With a vengeance. And I think that's what really fuelled my fire ... And, everything is connected. And so, once I started on that path, leaving The Bahamas, It was just ... my parents sent me off into the world, buddy, they don't know what the Hell they did. Because, I came back a totally educated problem
(Interviewee L).

A POETICS OF FOOD

Nine (9) people indicated feeling personally betrayed by allopathic medicine (a theme to differentiate from a disbelief in the allopathic system) when a friend or family member died or when allopathic health practitioners were unable or unwilling to listen to them. As one interviewee noted,

the nurses, them, the doctors, them, failed her. She was supposed to have a physical therapist massage her leg, because she had poor circulation ... they supposed to be massagin the foot. She ended up catchin gangrene in her toe and havin to get her leg amputated, little below the knee ... people in the hospital, een doin what they supposed to do. And you get the doctor there, talkin bout, he don' know nothin bout celery (Interviewee D).

Similar to feeling a sense of betrayal by the allopathic system, seven (7) people indicated a sense that followers of certain spiritual systems lied to them or led lives they perceived as hypocritical. As one interviewee described, "I readin scriptures, but I don't see my family followin it. I don't see my pastors followin it. None of the church members followin it. ... in Leviticus, it's tellin the priest that they're, they should look like me. You shouldn't be shavin and you should have locks ... it wasn't makin no sense. We sayin one thing. We practicin one thing" (Interviewee H).

Connected to the previous two themes, eighteen (18) interviewees' conveyed that their own research provided them with information different than what they were taught by their families and friends, surrounding cultures, and media. Eight (8) respondents attributed this gap to relationships between the food, medical, and pharmaceutical industries connected to capitalism, corporatism, and industrialism. One participant mentioned,

And the same corporations, you know? The people that own this plaza, own this plaza, own the insurance company that's insuring this plaza. So it's the same amount of money

A POETICS OF FOOD

going around and round and round, and ... whenever they feel charitable, they'll have, they'll have, they'll have um, you know, programs, and different things to empower the community. It's very dark... (Interviewee B).

A lack of consistency between the narratives with which people were raised and the new narratives they were discovering offered created a sense of distrust about the whole world, evidenced by the question, "if they lyin to us about food, what else they lyin about?" (Interview A). Eleven (11) people I interviewed expressed a deep desire to know the truth about themselves and the world surrounding them as a result. A sensed disconnect between systems that had dictated interviewees' lives and new information they encountered was a significant theme that led interviewees to connect with the different narratives of their personal, familial, and collective histories discussed previously.

Noticing how food affects the mind and body. Noticing one's body's response to food was the experience named most frequently as a catalyst on people's intentional food journeys. More than any other single type of event or experience, people chose to be intentional about and/or change their food practices and maintain their intentional food lifestyles because of visible and visceral changes in their bodies and minds. Twenty-five (25) people noted physical changes and shifts in their mental attitudes and behaviors as a result of shifting their food practices for political, philosophical, spiritual, or health reasons. This category is divided into the following themes: (1) physical changes in the body, (2) changes in how one thinks/shifts in consciousness, and (3) behavioral changes.

Participants described noticing both expected and unexpected physical benefits to changes in their food practices, such as weight loss, improved reproductive functions, better skin, reduction or eradication of chronic pain and health issues, decreased allergic reactions, increased

A POETICS OF FOOD

clarity and stamina, increased elimination frequency, and decreased illness overall. Alternatively, changing their diets, interviewees noted, led to increased sensitivities related to different foods and substances, healing crises, and skin eruptions. As respondents changed what they ate, they noticed their bodies functioning in different ways than they had experienced before. One interviewee noted, “if it’s not nutrient dense at all ... of course you gon be tired, because you luggy and puttin your body through whole bunch of frickin work, tryin break down this shit that een even turn into anything” (Interviewee R). Other respondents shared,

I was completely vegan and I saw alla the, um, changes my body was going through, right? I literally had, um, these boils on my body. PAINful! ... I was like, you know, like if alla this poison and gook is inside of me, I really know I shouldn’t have been eating this food (Interviewee A).

[the doctor] said, ok. I’ll give you 30 days. If in 30 days, you could reverse some of what you’re going through ... I’ll just leave you alone ... and so, I went home that same day, and it’s weird. I went from, you know, eatin 3 hamburgers, a coke everyday, a Whole Nut, and the next day, I went raw ... in those 30 days, I reverse all those litany of diseases that he told me I had ... so I – after I saw the results with that, I just kept continuing (Interviewee F)

becoming macrobiotic ... made a big difference in my life. I went from being a hefty lady to a very skinny lady (Interviewee N).

In addition to physical changes, interviewees noted how changes in their food practices facilitated changes in their thinking, mental capacity, and consciousness. One interview participant stated, “when I cleaned up the diet, then, the lifestyle, you know, thinking changed”

A POETICS OF FOOD

(Interviewee Y). Another person explained, “The food you eat directly affects your body. Not just what you eat, but your thought processes” (Interviewee V). Interviewees indicated having clearer thoughts, describing the following:

There’s a strong spiritual connection between food, between food, and our consciousness ... between the mental aspect of it. It clears out your mind, so your, your thought process is a lot more clearer. You’re a lot more quicker with your responses, your ability to, to break down ... thought processes and be able to, you know, regurgitate in a different way kinda thing, whichever (Interviewee R).

It’s just finding ways to harness the energy when we start to go on more vegan or plant-based diet, we start to see things more vividly. Our thinkin process starts to become more clearly, you know? Everything starts to be more transparent wherein what you dealin with. You find the violent way you would have been thinkin or the way you were – it don’t be the same no more (Interviewee H).

One person observed, “I have a friend who has some mental stuff? I started tellin him about these foods rich in B vitamins, and Niacin, and stuff? He has cut down on his psychotropic meds bill almost to nothing” (Interviewee F). Another respondent proclaimed poetically, A wide variety of MOODS, that come with the consumption of particular foods” (Interviewee X).

In addition to the connection between food and the body and mind, interview participants discussed the connection between food and behavior. On person suggested, “[Food] plays a part in our energy, which, you know, obviously relates, and how we relate that to everything around us” (Interviewee Q). Another participant observed,

when you eat healthy, it’s, you feel good. But then, you’re able to, uh, relate and take care of your family, and, everybody, you know? Better ... because, if you is always sick,

A POETICS OF FOOD

because of not – you wouldn't be able to communicate and relate as much as you would like with your family and friends and, you know? (Interviewee M).

A final person integrated all of these ideas with this description of a personal campaign:

People will, people make good decisions when they're in a good place, and people are in a good place when they're healthy. And so we realize that one of the biggest keys to social development and positive social change was to help people improve their diets, help people make better choices by helping them improve their diets. People eat snack food, and processed food and junk food, because they don't have the time, or they think they don't have the time, to create a healthy balanced meal. And so, we realize that, instead of uh, instead of agitating for people to change – it, it would be more effective if we created an environment in which it was easier for people to change. And that's where eat better, think better, do better came about (Interviewee J).

This section outlined how interviewees described the reasons why they choose to be intentional about their food practices. The following section of this chapter offers evidence based on their discussions of particular food practices. Then, I go on to explain how these practices reflect broader existential values, goals, and intentions for themselves and others.

Food Practices

Intentional food practices that emerged from the data were organized into the following categories: (1) Dietary Practices; (2) Community and support; (3) Inquiry/investigation; (4) Preparation Techniques; (5) Making Do; (6) Following established foodways and dietary systems; and (7) Food Procurement. Chart 4.2 demonstrates the specific food practices that emerged in my research, followed by descriptions of these food practices. This chapter concludes with a

A POETICS OF FOOD

discussion of how the people I interviewed explained these practices, why they find them to be meaningful, and how they relate to the broader values that shape people's lives.

Table 4.2

Food Practices, Categories, Themes

| Food Practice Categories | Food Practice Themes | Specific Food Practices |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Dietary Practices | Avoiding/Reducing specific foods | Avoiding dairy Avoiding gluten Avoiding pork Avoiding/Reducing processed foods Avoiding white foods Eliminating hybrids & GMOs Eliminating meat from the diet Reducing potatoes Reducing salt Reducing starch Reducing sugar Fasting |
| | Choosing specific foods | Combining foods intentionally Consuming ancient grains Consuming lionfish Consuming local foods Consuming plant-based foods Consuming sea vegetables Consuming whole grains Drinking herbal teas Eating from the ground Eating local fish Eating organic foods Loving avocados |

A POETICS OF FOOD

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Community & Support | Personal Support | Advising others Asking for support Supporting one another |
| | Sharing | Eating together Sharing food Sharing information |
| Inquiry/Investigation | Working with food publicly | Advocating Owning/running one's own business, establishment, or organization |
| | Researching | Reading the ingredients Knowing where your food comes from |
| Preparation Techniques | Experimenting | Experimental cooking Experimental growing techniques Experimental eating |
| | Cooking techniques/styles | Converting dishes Preparing own food Seasoning |
| Making Do | Approaches/Philosophies | Avoiding microwaves Cooking with love Maintaining convenience Planning meals ahead of time Preparing food judiciously |
| | Adapting | Maintaining flexibility Taking own food to other people's houses Adapting to children's needs |
| Following established foodways & Dietary systems | Working with what's available | Reducing reusing recycling Following a food budget |
| | Following certain dietary systems & principles | Eating a pescatarian diet Eating a vegan diet Eating a vegetarian diet Eating according to the seasons Eating a raw diet Maintaining alkalinity Using food as medicine |
| | Maintaining established foodways (cultural systems) | Maintaining traditions and rituals Tasting different cultures Using ingredients consistent with certain cuisines |

| | | |
|----------------|------------------------------------|--|
| | | Using the bush |
| Procuring food | Bartering | Sharing food |
| | Gathering/Producing | Working for food |
| | | Eating local fish |
| | Patronizing certain establishments | Growing your own food |
| | | Using the bush |
| | | Shopping at produce exchange |
| | | Shopping at local/neighborhood grocers |
| | | Shopping at farmers' markets |
| | | Buying directly from farmers |

Dietary practices. All twenty-seven (27) respondents mentioned being intentional about their dietary practices. Dietary practices are those related to the specific foods or types of foods a person eats or chooses not to eat. The resulting themes in this category are (1) Avoiding/reducing certain foods and (2) Choosing specific foods. This section discusses specific dietary choices that interviewees discussed as being part of their own practices. Chart 4.1 demonstrates how many people indicated each practice that emerged through my analysis of the interviews.

Associated with the theme consuming particular foods purposefully, three (3) people mentioned consuming lionfish intentionally, three (3) people indicated that they consume sea vegetables purposefully, and four (4) interviewees professed a love for avocados:

Cause avocados? I would eat them, breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Ok? Like, I would do avocado in the morning. Uh, Look! Avocado goes from just slices of avocado, with maybe some lime on it, to, um, avocado sandwiches ... guacamole ... flickin ... a pie – the avocado key lime pie. ooo, gosh. Look – avocados are BOMB! (Interviewee L).

A POETICS OF FOOD

Interviewees described the intentional consumption of particular food groups, such as plant-based foods, local fish, and whole grains—mentioning their choices to consume foods they defined as “fresh,” “good,” “from the ground,” and “whole”. For example, one interviewee explained “eating healthy means eating fresh – not a, not a lotta preserved or canned food, you know? It, it just came from the field, and you eat it” (Interviewee M). Another participant (self-identified as vegan) clarified,

I am very much conscious of, teaching her [my daughter] that fresh fish – we live in The Bahamas – good clean fish. You could buy fresh fish every day. Fresh fish is the way to go. You know, leave that frozen process stuff alone (Interviewee X).

Participants also declared that they avoid, eliminate, or limit certain food groups, including dairy, gluten, processed and white foods, hybrids and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), meat, and starch. People describe avoiding, eliminating, or limiting certain foods for political, spiritual, and health purposes (as noted in the previous section explaining catalysts for changes). Eight (8) people mentioned fasting for both health and spiritual reasons. Interviewees described avoiding both specific foods and certain types of food. Among these categories, twelve (12) people mentioned avoiding pork. Twelve (12) people indicated avoiding white foods. Twelve (12) people discussed avoiding processed foods and twelve (12) people expressed avoiding sugar. Additionally, ten (10) interviewees discussed avoiding “slave food”—or foods and dietary practices they associated with slavery, slave diets, and desires to transcend remnants of slavery in modern society. As an example,

the culture of food that we have in The Bahamas is no different than anywhere else in The Caribbean. It’s a culture that we have because of the experience of being here. It is a culture that is closely tied to the slave experience. So what, what, what people is ate in slavery is similar to what we eat now. Now I, I had a change in the way I eat when I

A POETICS OF FOOD

noticed the, the health situation – family. You know I, I come from, um, a father – my father died twenty eleven. He died from um, um complications to the diabetes and high blood pressure. And then, his mother – she went blind cause of diabetes. His father also had diabetes but he died from prostate complications. And on my mother’s side – her mother and her grandmother – which is my great grandmother are both double amputees. And then, her father died – he went blind and he died from renal failure because of that. So, from when I was a child, I knew that something, something had to be done differently (Interviewee O).

Community and support. Having and needing community and support was another prominent category, which I divided into the following themes: (1) Personal support, (2) Sharing, and (3) Working with food publicly. Personal support included advising other people one-on-one, For example, one interviewee explained, “I actually help people structure their meals at home” (Interviewee I). Another participant told me, “We offer a consultation service. We consult with farmers, vendors, and event organizers on emerging agricultural consumer trends” (Interviewee J). In addition, personal support includes asking for support, receiving support, and supporting one another. One person indicated, “I used to look for people. I used to announce it on my show. Do you grow this? Do you grow that?” (Interviewee F). Another person explained, “if there were days when I didn’t feel like cooking, I could go to somebody else’s house” (Interviewee A). Still another person suggested,

They [friends] used to do, um, the delivery service ... so I remember, on the, on the phone, either with one of, one or two a them, or both of them at different points, and getting, um, like, I don’t know what to do with the tofu (Interviewee D).

A POETICS OF FOOD

One person discussed her “monthly support group gathering” (Interviewee Q), which another participant described:

We would just meet, and just, kinda share recipes, uh share, which foods we were introduced to ... because at the time – I was doing a lot of the, um, seeds and the nuts wholesales ... particularly at one of the meetings, we talked about quinoa ... (Interviewee T).

Another person explained,

So I do little community events ... the last one that I did was Plate N Place ... a movie night ... I talk about my food. I get all the food local ... I show pictures of the farmers. I ... tell you where I got the food ... you could ask me how it’s made. I’ll give you the recipe (Interviewee P).

A final person indicated,

We do a lotta discount shopping, so we have a couple of sets of friends who they can come any buy at cost from us ... and just take a, a bit of advantage from something we can do and they don’t have the time to do (Interviewee J).

Building off of the previous themes, Sharing included practices such as eating together, sharing food, and sharing information. One respondent discussed,

on Whatsapp, I have a group ... 52 members in the group – and, what happened is – in the group, we carry on with different, like, health talks, health conversation. And, the group is strictly health ... There’s no profanity in the group, no cursin and I talkin bout these are people from different walks (Interviewee E).

Other interviewees described their sharing practices at home, explaining, “We have family dinners” (Interviewee S) and “We have friends who come over and cook with us once a week,

A POETICS OF FOOD

and we have like a shared meal” (Interviewee Z). Yet another person related an experience in her home to a broader cultural phenomena:

I live in a house with my mother. If friends stop by unexpectedly, she expects us to feed them. If they come by at dinnertime, you feed them what you eating. You offer them a plate. Um, you don’t let people leave without finding out if they need something to eat (Interviewee J).

One respondent, while discussing her restaurant, stated, “We give away recipes. I have no secret ingredients” and further explicated, “I believe in sharing knowledge ... I believe that if I’m given um, knowledge that I need to give it, I need to share it. It’s not meant for me ... it isn’t even mine” (Interviewee I). Another farmers’ market vendor asserted,

Growing it and selling it direct to consumer at the farmers market helps me to encourage people to prepare non-traditional Bahamian vegetables in a different way ... that helps me to, to share, you know, spread the knowledge on crops ... how to prepare them (Interviewee S).

A final interview participant proclaimed,

Um, when I turned vegetarian? I had many family friends tell me how crazy I was, and this was just a phase, that I’ll be back eating meat in a few years. And, you know, it took most of them about ten to fifteen years – but, after bout the ten year mark? One by one, people started to come – so lemme ask you a question – my doctor tell me, say I need to eat less salt. How do you make food with less salt? Um, you know. My doctor say I need to stop eatin pork, or, I need to stop drinkin milk, you know. What do you use? Or, where do you go to get the stuff? Which – at the time, you know, I was happy to share at THAT point – you know, and – was mature enough to say – I was tellin you this ten years ago! But you didn’t wanna fuckin LISTEN! (laugh) You know? But, just happy to the fact that,

A POETICS OF FOOD

they were at a point, where they were WILLING to listen, and I still had the information, to share with them. And, yeah – so I always share (Interviewee X).

Previous discussion about Community and support alludes to the final theme in this category: Working with food publicly. This includes advocating for oneself and one's community (defined variably) and owning/running one's own business, establishment, or organization. Sixteen (16) interviewees indicated that they work with food publicly as advocates, teachers, heads of businesses and organizations directly related to food, and clinicians. Twelve (12) of those sixteen (16) currently work or have in the past owned their own food-related businesses, including farms, catering businesses, food and drink delivery services, restaurants, value-added processing businesses, farmers' markets, and nutrition counseling services—with most wearing several of these professional hats.

One person described that at her vegan delivery service, “everyday, I do something new, and something different ... I do, like on Whatsapp? I send a Whatsapp out on Sundays ... the menu for the week” (Interviewee P). A former business owner stated, “I had a vegetarian catering business for awhile ... in essence – soul, Bahamian SOUL food – but it was vegetarian,” (Interviewee X) while a current restaurateur explained, “We introduce the restaurant ... we have 2 now – one in Freeport” (Interviewee K). One teacher informed me, “I was a counselor of sorts here in The Bahamas at the original Eden Center ... I was giving lectures on nutrition, and giving, uh, cooking classes and cooking macrobiotic lunches,” (Interviewee N) while another in the public school system suggested “We are trying to find ways to make them, to make them aware that agriculture – it is a million dollar industry” (Interviewee M).

Inquiry/Investigation. All twenty-seven (27) of the people I interviewed described extensive inquiry and investigation of various forms. According to participants, these processes of inquiry and investigation allowed them to discern which practices would best serve them in light of where they found themselves at various points on their journeys. I divided this category into the themes of (1) Researching and (2) Experimenting.

Participants mentioned engaging in research for a number of reasons--primarily to know what they are putting in their bodies and to know where their food comes from. In addition to reviewing a vast array of cultural, political, and spiritual resources, interviewees read books such as *Alkalize or Die*, *Fit for Life*, *The Vegan Handbook*, and *Back to Eden*; viewed documentaries such as *Food, Inc.*; read scientific articles; searched the internet on sites such as Natural News and YouTube; read ingredient labels; attended nutrition classes, conferences, and seminars; and earned certifications and degrees related to food and food practices. Among the resources, participants mentioned specific food-centric healers such as Queen Afua, Dr. Sebi, Dr. Laila Afrika, Dr. Wallach, and Dr. Jewel Pookrum.

Interview participants also described various processes of experimentation with cooking, growing practices, and trying different foods and types of foods—especially related to different foodways or cultural orientations. One person explained, “I experimentin to try things ... chick peas and lentils ... veggie patties that we make of a peas patties” (Interviewee H), while another illuminated while laughing, “I had to practically burn down the kitchen ... you know, experimentin with foods and stuff” (Interviewee L). One respondent listed a vast array of experimental recipes in her partner’s repertoire:

Vegan Juju cookies ... Dilly donut holes ... infused local fruit rums ... vegan chocolate, frozen chocolate pies and ice cream – chocolate ice cream, with eggplant as a base. We’ve

A POETICS OF FOOD

made three types of wine from eggplant, right? Um, we make latkes from zucchini. We make zucchini sorbet (Interviewee J).

Interviewees described how limitations facilitated experimentation and made them more creative:

We're eating better now than we did ... cause it cause you to think outside the box ... from that moment, now we're not intentionally meat free at home. Um, but, just, I just don't, cook a lotta meat (Interviewee S).

It's also kind of exciting to get a box of mixed goods and then try and figure out, you know, what you're gonna make, of that (Interviewee Z).

Before I even knew bout a spiralizer and noodles, right? I would say, ok, I wanna eat pasta ... So I said, ok. What can I use? ... I started usin all kinda things that would give me that crunch ... I don't care what the actual item is, but as long as it could duplicate that sensation that I'm looking for? So, I started experimenting with those kinda things (Interviewee F).

Alongside experimental cooking, one person explained his desire to experiment with what he eats: "I'm so open to tryin different foods? I'm so open to, to tastin different cultures and different ways how people prepare foods? ... I like to try things as I get it. I don't wanna anticipate it" (Interviewee V). Another person discussed experimental growing practices, explaining the need to maintain practices that are environmentally aligned and that produce quality products. She stated, "[my husband] comes across a lot of, um, innovative [agricultural] products" (Interviewee S).

Preparation techniques. Preparation techniques is another category that emerged through the interviews. This category illuminated the following themes: (1) cooking techniques/styles and (2) cooking approaches/philosophies. The sorts of cooking techniques that interviewees discussed included converting traditional dishes into healthier or plant-based recipes, preparing one's own food, and seasonin. Eleven (11) respondents discussed converting dishes they enjoyed and with which they were familiar into plant-based or "healthier" versions. One participant mentioned, "a lotta the foods that I eat still, that I enjoy eating. I just found a vegan way to make it" (Interviewee A), while another informed me, "We make cheese replacement from Avocado ... We make ice cream or sherbet from Almonds and Sapadilly" (Interviewee K). One chef explained, "I was able to take, you know, basic Bahamian dishes – slightly convert em over – and even to this day, in my house, I still cook those tings very much the Bahamian way. But very much vegan-oriented" (Interviewee X).

Because people are intentional about the food they put into their bodies, making their own food has been an important practice. Fourteen (14) respondents mentioned cooking for themselves as an important intentional food practice. Among the commentary, interviewees shared the following:

Having to deal with the fact that I have to, um, prepare my own foods, I, turned to cooking a bit more ... (Interviewee L)

When I, um, made the switch to vegetarian – cause I had to cook everything myself, or I would just eat sides (Interviewee B)

A POETICS OF FOOD

I cook all of his [my son's], his foods and since he was able to eat, um, solid foods, I've, I've cooked everything at home, by hand ... and so that's made a very big difference, just to know what goes in the pot (Interviewee Z)

I rarely eat out. So, I'm always cooking for myself (Interviewee N)

Ten (10) interviewees discussed emphatically seasoning as an important intentional Bahamian food practice. One interviewee proclaimed, "I come from a country where, we cook with a lotta spices. Spice is in my culture. Spice is in my mouth from before I was born. There's no way I could go from spice to unspice" (Interviewee L). Another respondent suggested,

Bahamians can season food like no one else. I think a lot of this bourgeois cuisine that people are into now? The seasoning is on the top. Ok? One of the great things about what we do as Bahamians – and this is island people to a degree ... we are very into the whole marinating of something. You gotta taste that season to the bone (Interviewee F).

I think tomatoes, thyme, and lime and pepper and salt. Like I, I travel a lot because, with my activism and advocacy. Um, and I travelled a lot as a young person in school. Um, and I've been all over the world. I haven't been to Australia. I haven't been to Russia. I haven't been to China. I've been to Belgium, I've been to France, I've been to Italy. Um, been to England, been to Ireland. I've been plenty places. I've been to Canada. Been to California. And ain' nobody could cook fish like a Bahamian ... That's Bahamian food. Rubbin ya fish with salt and lime and pepper ... It seems is a Bahamian ting. I've been to Suriname, been to Guayana, been to Curacao, been to Trinidad, been to Barbados, been to, uh, Dominican Republic, been to, uh, I said Jamaica already, right? ... Been to Jamaica. I think I been to one, one other place in the Caribbean, and ain' NONE of

A POETICS OF FOOD

them, I taste some lovely food in these people dem country. But Nobody seems to be able to cook fish, like Bahamians. That is somethin – that, that lime, that salt, and that pepper, is sumpin that Bahamians know how to do (Interviewee J).

The theme Cooking approaches and philosophies included diverse practices such as avoiding microwaves, cooking with love, maintaining convenience, planning meals ahead of time, and preparing food judiciously. Four (4) interviewees discussed avoiding microwaves. Five (5) interviewees discussed cooking with love, as evidenced in statements such as,

what we do, our first and last ingredient, literally, is love. Um, and when I say that – even when the lady in the back is just cleaning, ... we're just choppin up the veggies, you literally have to do that with love, knowing what it is that you're going to produce ... we want you to enjoy it as though you were home, nostalgic, with your parents, in the back yard, you know, legs cross, doin whatever, just eatin this food that brings back, like, the greatest memories. Or, if you're not feeling well, it's this food that you're eating that's actually, uh, really nutritious and giving you life – because it's cooked with love (Interviewee I).

Six (6) respondents mentioned cooking with colors. An artist described, “I love to see lots of fruits and vegetables together – just so colorful. And I'm an artist, too, so I love colors and just – so, eatable colors? Wow!” (Interviewee Y). Four (4) interviewees discussed the importance of maintaining convenience. One interviewee discussed that her choice to shop at one large-scale grocer is

largely based on convenience ... There's like these vegan shops now that are popping up that have like, that are specific and have like gluten free stuff ... but we're very like, if it's practical. We can plot it out, get it done in the shortest amount of time, and we'll just do it that way (Interviewee B).

A POETICS OF FOOD

Two (2) people were adamant about preparing food judiciously. Five (5) respondents mentioned planning meals ahead of time, as evidenced by the following:

On Sundays, I'll cook, like in the crock pot? A pot a beans and then they go for the whole week. And, you know, I put em in soup, I put em on top of a salad. I put em on top of the plate. You know, any mess, mix it with some tuna, or some sardine, or, and have em all different ways (Interviewee C).

Recently, I was able to revisit the, uh, the weekly uh ... menu. Uh, and so I kind of put something together that like gives me a little more structure (Interviewee Q).

Making do. The practice of making do means to make the most of what is available—time, money, and resources of all kinds. The category Making do included two (2) primary themes: (1) Adapting and (2) Working with what's available. Adapting included practices such as Maintaining flexibility, Taking one's own food to other people's houses, and Adapting to children's needs. The ways in which interview participants discussed adapting are evidenced through quotes such as, "sometimes you have to end up making the choice of the lesser evil, you know, just based on what's available to you ... I'm not inflexible about what I do" (Interviewee Q). According to participants, taking their own food to other people's houses—mentioned by four (4) interviewees—ensures that foods meeting their qualifications will be available. In addition, participants noted that this practice serves as an opportunity to expose friends and families to their lifestyles and food choices. For example, an interviewee explained,

We just kinda isolate our eating choices to us, and not to our family. I think one of the areas I really wanna stress, is, I think we have to become very very proactive in feeding our families, and extended families, how we eat as individuals. Make it a part of what you

A POETICS OF FOOD

put in your house as a family. Don't do two sets of grocery shopping – for me, and for the children. For me, or for my husband. And I think that's how we are going to extend the health (Interviewee T).

Six (6) interviewees discussed the ways in which they reduce, reuse, and recycle as part of their food practices. The ways in which they do this are evidenced by the following interview quotes:

To make sure our meals stretch ... we can recycle some of the things in our grocery basket, so that it lasts for several meals (Interviewee Z).

We started a very small home-based business ... we started collecting, uh, refuse mangoes, salvaging mangoes, mangoes people were throwing away, leaving to rot, and we started moving through Nassau, and collecting them. And, we started making lemonade (Interviewee J).

I don't really like wasting things ... If I steam vegetables, I keep the steaming water, and I use it to cook grains, or, I put it on plants if I'm not going to use it. It's like – those intentions of keeping the nutrition, uh, elements, being used and not wasted (Interviewee N).

We have access to a lot of coconuts, so I use coconuts and Almonds – everything when I cook: the milk, the trash. You know, we grate it, that, or put it in the juicer ... I would use the trash in the, um, in cookin and whatnot, like baking and whatnot (Interviewee H).

A POETICS OF FOOD

Following a food budget is another way in which nine (9) interview participants discussed the importance of working with what's available. For some participants, this practice and task even came with a sense of pride in one's identity. The following quotes demonstrate this phenomenon:

I've been forced to use my own resources to make it work. I'm a foodie, but I'm cheap.

I'm unemployed. I'm broke. But I love food and I don't tolerate substandard food. I am a chef. I know how easy it is to cook a great meal with limited resources – so ... there's no excuse for bad tastin food (Interviewee J).

Bein proactive is utilizing those food that nature of god has put there (Interviewee K).

With the Rastafari culture, what they do is they make the BEST of the lil that they have (Interviewee G).

Following established foodways and dietary systems. Following established foodways and dietary systems was a major category that emerged from the interviews. This category includes two (2) major themes: (1) Following certain dietary systems and principles and (2) Maintaining established foodways (cultural food systems). The dietary systems and principles that participants discussed, include eating a pescatarian diet, eating a vegan diet, eating a vegetarian diet, eating according to the seasons, eating a raw diet, maintaining alkalinity, and using food as medicine.

Seven (7) people discussed having followed a pescatarian diet at some point on their food journeys. Eight (8) people identified as vegans and one (1) person laughed as she described her identity as a pesco-vegan in the hierarchy of plant-based and animal-free dietary systems:

A POETICS OF FOOD

There's different hierarchies of vegan ... even within the vegan world ... I'm at the lower end of the echelon table, alright? Cause I still do the fish, so I am an oxymoron. I am a pescovegan, right? (Interviewee D).

Ten (10) people indicated that they followed a vegetarian diet along their food journeys and six (6) people discussed their efforts to eat according to the seasons. Four (4) interviewees discussed their choices to eat raw foods intentionally for part or all of their meals and five (5) participants professed alignment with an alkaline diet. Thirteen (13) people discussed using food as medicine. Two (2) self-identified Rastafarian priests explained the following:

If a person come to me and say, well um, my mom has sugar. We would get the Morning Glory, boil that, uh, 1 or 2 other lil bushes, and that'll help purge, and they could stay on that for about 3 months – and, they could give the sugar back to who they got it from (Interviewee H).

We eat food ... have the beets on the table, we have callaloo. We have Kale. These things we eatin for minerals ... (Interviewee E).

Following established foodways—including those of their families and ancestors, as well as those to which they are attracted for taste, cultural, or health purposes—was a theme that emerged through the interviews. Twelve (12) people mentioned maintaining traditions and rituals from their families, ancestries, or national identities. This set of practices is demonstrated by the following quotes:

[foods that I eat] come from Africa. So, when, when I eat this way, I feel like it's goin back to that ... that's important to me to know myself. Because I wasn't really taught anything about who I am, here? You know what I mean? And in the school system, they'll teach you from slavery to now. They don't go back to, to that ... it keeps the, the

A POETICS OF FOOD

system the way it is. And, and the oppressor will never give the oppressed what he needs to take the power away from him (Interviewee O).

Bein from Eleuthera, we'd get a case of pineapples ... my grandmother – after she would cut the pineapples, she used to make this thing that to this day, that, I still, I make it myself ... where you take the skins of the pineapple, you soak em and they ferment and they make this beautiful drink (Interviewee F).

My father, um, is an avid grower. So – from a very young age, I had always been planting, growing, eating ... So THAT, then, now, sparked um, a massive, growing thing in me ... now I had a philosophy, behind that. You know, WHY I should grow, WHY it should be organic, you know? (Interviewee X).

Sunday is like, the big day. We have, we have the big meats, you know? And this is something that goes back into African culture ... and in the Bahamian culture (Interviewee D).

Four (4) interviewees mentioned the importance of tasting different cultures and the influence that this practice had on their food practices. One person mentioned,

If it's a new food, if you in a new place? Let me try the foods. Let me enjoy the good taste. Let me enjoy the bad taste. Let me just try it. That's what I like. Don't put no thought behind it (Interviewee V).

Another interviewee discussed how growing up between The Bahamas and the United States exposed her automatically to different foodways:

A POETICS OF FOOD

I had that kind of, you know, the American, where we were going out to get burgers and fries. But then, when I would go home, or go to my aunt, we would have the peas and rice, the stew fish, the macaroni and cheese, the fried fish, the fried chicken, the conch fritters (Interviewee F).

The same interviewee discussed how she uses ingredients consistent with certain cuisines:

Every day, we were fermentin sumpin, marinatin sumpin. Remember the kimchi we used to make? And, you know, people like, what you know about kimchi? I'm like, but I have a, a Thai sister-in-law who's married to a Bahamian man (Interviewee F).

Another participant discussed, similarly,

Even though I loved Thai food, I didn't have any awareness of went into Thai food. So here comes Food Network, now, with all these chefs preparin different things – and that kinda opened my eyes to, ok. So, Thai food, then, is lots of Ginger, Galangal, Kefir Lime leaves ... So, any of those shows, really, really helped me to hone, um, my skills (Interviewee S).

Finally, eight (8) interviewees described using bush and herbal teas to supplement their diets, maintain their health regimes, and facilitate spiritual balance. The ways in which participants described this practice are illuminated in the following:

The priest now, should always be balance with the spiritual and the physical healing, because people is need spiritual healing. But, not bein a superstitious priest or caught up in that concept, we're not just gonna look for the prayers to do all the healin if a person is physically sick. And not just on the spiritual problem, so he has to know the right concoctions or bush to try deal with certain ailments (Interview H).

A POETICS OF FOOD

One time I was comin down with the flu, or, comin with cold cause I slept – wash my hair, slept on the – you know, it was cold, slept under the window and all that stuff. Woke up feelin all nasaly and horrible. I stop there and the woman was like, look, here's the Fevergrass for you. And you gonna feel better – so, that and Moringa (Interview L).

[my father] used to make, you know, juice from the Noni ... From there, we add on something called Brasalita Wood. Um, Brasalita Wood is good when someone is low iron (Interview E).

Food procurement. People discussed procuring their food from a variety of different sources and through a variety of different practices. This category is divided into the following three (3) themes: (1) Bartering, (2) Gathering/Producing, and (3) Patronizing certain establishments. Bartering included sharing food and working for food. One mother described her experience as a pregnant student in the U.S. on public assistance:

I would barter ... I'll give you the, the whatever I don't eat if you give me a ride to the food store and the farmers market. You can eat all the stuff that I don't eat off of my WIC (Interviewee D).

The same interviewee discussed how her son barter with his frinds and half-siblings for her famous vegan brownies. In addition, she explained how she brings this principle into a public forum:

I have this Facebook group ... this came into my spirit to do ... I barter with people ... that is what I started. That is what it's about. You're not supposed to buy anything. And you're supposed to meet people that you can at your own risk. But it's literally – I have a

A POETICS OF FOOD

seedling of a soursop. You have a seedling of a papaya. And let's switch. And it's, if you wanna buy, that's on you, but everything is supposed – and, and then this is also like support local farmers (Interviewee D).

One participant explained that he designed menus for a friend with a vegan restaurant in exchange for designing the restaurant's menus each week (Interviewee L), while another described accepting barter at the farmers' market:

the people that say to us – “oh, I don't need to buy any Passion Fruit. I have Passion Fruit in my yard. It's get Passion Fruit goin to waste.” And then we say to them, “well, why are you letting them go to waste? Why wouldn't you bring them to the market with you? You can barter with us, for product. Or, you can sell them, to us. Or we can give you the names of other drink vendors that want THEIR drink to taste as good as OUR drink and have no idea how to do it.” Right? And so, just now, I had ... somebody who was another vendor at an event, came to us and somebody said, “go check them.” We bought Passion Fruit from her, and she now sees the value of it, and she called us and said, “hey, I got another bunch of Passion Fruit. I'm getting ready to go on a trip. I'm tryin to make as much extra money as I can for my trip. Can we work somethin out?” And so, then they begin to see the value in growing a tree or maintaining a tree that they planted or that they found on the property that they bought. Then they begin to see the value. (Interviewee J).

Gathering/Producing one's own food emerged as a theme in the interviews. This includes practices such as growing one's own food, gathering food from the bush, gathering food from other people's gardens and yards, and fishing locally. Fourteen (14) people discussed growing at least some of their own food. Five (5) people mentioned gathering or foraging food from the bush

A POETICS OF FOOD

or from other people's yards with permission and eight (8) people discussed fishing or obtaining fresh fish from local fishers.

Patronizing certain retail outlets emerged as the second primary theme in this category. Seventeen (17) people I interviewed discussed patronizing conventional grocery stores, six (6) people mentioned patronizing independent groceries and health food shops, twelve (12) mentioned farmers' markets, thirteen (13) people said that they buy from independent farmers directly, and seven (7) people indicated that they shop at the Produce Exchange – a government subsidized discount outlet for local produce.

Connections Between Intentional Food Practices and Broader Values

A significant aim of this research is to examine the ways intentional food practices in Nassau reflect certain ideological commitments to healing, as healing is defined by the people enacting these food practices. The previous section presented the data on food practices and the reasons why those practices were initiated. This section presents data related to why interviewees are intentional about their food practices and discusses the overall relationship between food practices and the reasons why they are enacted—as demonstrated both in my research and in the broader literature on the topic. The next section focuses on why people maintain their food practices—including the philosophies and spiritual systems to which they adhere, personal and collective values they hold, and their hopes and dreams for the future.

The following section examines the philosophical underpinnings that inform interviewees' food practices based on the interviews. It examines how people understand the ways in which their intentional food practices reflect who they are and what they believe. Interviewees connected their intentional food practices to the following desires, which also represent the categories into which I divided this data set: (1) freedom and independence; (2) restoration and

A POETICS OF FOOD

wholeness; (3) right relationship; (4) personal, cultural, and national development; (5) a sense of self worth; (6) spiritual development; (7) and connections to that which is greater than themselves.

Table 4.3 illuminates the themes assigned with each of these categories.

Table 4.3

Intentional Food Practices and Values - Categories and Themes

| Connection Categories | Connection Themes |
|---|--|
| Freedom and independence | (1) Survival and security (2) Self-sufficiency (3) Colonialism and slavery (4) Liberating the mind, body, and spirit |
| Restoration and wholeness | (1) Restoring cosmological/mythic narratives (2) Feeling well (3) Peace of mind, (4) Potential for healing (5) Balance (6) Family/genetic/ancestral weaknesses and limitations, (7) Restoring a sense of connectedness (8) Knowing/returning to Self |
| Right relationship | (1) Relationship with oneself (2) Relationship with other people (3) Relationship with the planet |
| Development | (1) Personal (2) Collective (Community, National, Global) |
| Power and worth | (1) Self-worth, (2) Collective worth (3) Personal empowerment (4) Collective empowerment |
| Spiritual development | (1) Following a religion/spiritual system with inherent food guidelines (2) Intentional food practices strengthened commitment to/shifted spirituality (3) Discipline from intentional food practices strengthened spirit (4) Food discipline facilitated discipline in other areas of one's life |
| Connections to something greater than oneself | No themes |

Freedom and independence. Interviewees indicated that they want to be free and independent in their lives both individually and collectively. They described wanting to feel like they can take care of themselves and meet their basic needs regardless of outside factors and conditions. Four (4) themes emerged from this category: (1) Survival and security, (2) Self-sufficiency, (3) Colonialism and slavery, and (4) Liberating the mind, body, and spirit.

Particularly given the uncertainty in the world, people discussed wanting to know that they have the skills and the resources for basic survival and security. The following quotes from interview participants demonstrate this theme:

I'm of one that believe, that if, the mail boat, or, the ship – because of unforeseen purpose where there's a war, a natural disaster – cannot service or bring food from the United States, or wherever, to the food stores in The Bahamas. I feel like human beings – Bahamian – should not perish and suffer because there's no food in the food store. How is it, that, if the food store run out of food, we would have a riot, and, we would starve to death (Interviewee K).

I see food as a way of, of – or at least agriculture – as a way of – worst-case scenario? I could always eat. I could always eat. Like I, like if I alive? If I, I could eat, if I could grow – even if I growin coconuts and I could drink, I could survive. So there's, there's a certain level of freedom involved in that (Interviewee U).

there are health benefits to eating local. That the soil that you plant your feet in, inherently and naturally knows what you need to survive in this environment (Interviewee J).

A POETICS OF FOOD

Most people eat unconsciously. They eat cause it's time to eat. I mean, you see kids walkin to school with a Honey Bun and a VitaMalt – if they're lucky. A soda if their parents don't give a crap, right? So – I can't expect that kid to know that he should stop and make an assessment of the cars before he cross the street, because his brain is runnin on straight sugar. And processed, craziness! I can't expect him, to think better. Cause all he knows, it's time to cross the street cause my school over there. So he's not even, consciously thinking. Right? So – I can't expect him to DO better. I can't expect him to THINK better. I can't expect him to THINK better, if he doesn't have the fuel and the resources to GET there. He's get – he's, he's instinctively putting something to, to feed his first brain – the brain that keeps him alive, the GUT brain, the survival brain (Interviewee W).

the battle is to get our people healthy. Get em well. You know – this, term wellness, has popped up in The Bahamas over the last, ten years. Which is a good thing. Because, um, wellness deals more with, preventative measures – as compared with curative measures. And um – so the battle is for wellness of our people. Um, people are more productive, if they are healthy. If you are operating at your optimum level, you will produce at your optimum level. Um, I think the statistics are somewhere between seventy and eighty percent of the Bahamian population is overweight. The NATION, is sick. We cannot produce at our optimum level, if we fightin diseases. We just tryin to survive. And so, for me. With the discovery, with the learning, of, what it is to be a vegetarian – or just say, to eat healthy – not necessarily a vegetarian. Um, it's something I knew I had to share, with people, if they were willing to listen (Interviewee X).

A POETICS OF FOOD

Two (2) participants discussed food as a human right. Others made connections between independence, food security, and biosecurity:

[I studied agriculture] to help move the country towards, um ... food security ... the question that came to my mind that really got me angry about the whole thing was that, why are we spending so much money importing food, when, some countries prize the food we're producing (Interviewee S).

Food security is directly linked to sovereignty – national sovereignty. And food security is also directly linked to individual sovereignty and independence, right? Food security is a vital building block in – a community block, right? When parents have to focus every day on how they going to feed their children, they can't focus on their jobs. They can't focus on community development. And, and building personal passion ... so, food security is a vital building block for any nation's development or any citizen's development – any family, any community's development (Interviewee J).

where is our biosecurity at? Zero. Biosecurity garbage. Trash. I'll give you an example. You could walk on the government farm, from anywhere, any frickin place. You coulda come from, you coulda come from foot and mouth, putting foot and mouth LAND – who KNOWS where you just came from. You're there. On the government farm. The tractor from the government farm – you just been government farm. Go the next place, next random place. Come back this the farm again – all kinda shit happenin. Nobody knows what's goin on. THAT'S a major issue! At least be, set an example! For farmers and then, boom, ok, well, boom. Then you get foreigners, or rich Bahamians bringin in anything in they planes and cars and whatever they want bring in, they could bring in. Bring in all

A POETICS OF FOOD

type weird bugs and plants and thing like that – not passin through no real checks and balance and things like that. Say, come on, man! Y'all want a epidemic or something (Interviewee U).

with us not havin a, an FDA, or any type of department what would of lookin to that, the security of our food? Let's look at Kentucky. Where does all the chicken come from? Are these chicken farmed chicken what had feathers one time? Or they were chicken that were grew in an incubator system, with wires hooked up to them, that never had a head, never had feathers (Interviewee H).

Your thinking cannot elevate, if you are worried about hunger and shelter. The minute you ain' worried about bein hungry and bein, um, um, WET, and COLD? That's when, you can think about other things (Interviewee Y).

Survival and security are connected to the second theme, self-sufficiency, which also emerged in some instances as a form of self-containment. Self-sufficiency and sovereignty are more than surviving. These terms refer to being able to provide oneself and one's community with all the resources necessary to thrive. Interviewees emphasized the importance of looking inward—to oneself, one's community, and one's nation—for knowledge and resources, rather than relying on oneself and one's own people to not only survive, but thrive. One interviewee noted that food self-sufficiency could help deepen a sense of pride that he sensed is missing in many sectors of the population:

I think that's [food production] a good starting point, for people to wake up and realize, and start ... to take pride in their identity as Bahamian, as a, as a human being existin in

A POETICS OF FOOD

our little clump a land where our ancestors gave us, that OUR family have roots
(Interviewee U).

Interviewees suggested that lacking this awareness is a form of self-oppression. As one respondent stated, “We don’t realize that we could do it ourselves. We oppress ourselves when we do that” (Interviewee V). One person noted, “there’s like a, an intrinsic, like, like somethin good about the, just bein local. It’s OURS! WE did this ... WE did this home” (Interviewee U), while another stated, “There’s an intrinsic disconnect with, working for someone else, instead of working for you, and your body, and your house. You know? Your actual people” (Interview W).

The Bahamas’ high food import bill is often attributed to poor growing conditions. Some attribute it to a sense of laziness. Yet, people who I interviewed saw something deeper than either of those things. On one hand, they prove it is possible because they are doing it. One interviewee called for “ferocity in our existence, in our mindset to say that ... we will not accept any kind of food, or we don’t need anyone else to feed us. We’ll do this ourself” (Interviewee U). He further professed:

We are basically an off-shoot of somewhere else ... we’re like a space colony, you know?
... they send supplies, from time to time ... So – we, we can’t really never call ourself
truly sovereign, and you beholden to people for food (Interviewee U).

The third theme that emerged from this category was colonialism and slavery—the origins of oppression, phenomena that needed to be released from the psyche in order to facilitate freedom and independence. Eight (8) respondents discussed colonization as a mindset that causes people to feel attached or obligated to conditions from the past that are damaging, even dangerous to people’s existence. Personal and collective decolonization processes and food practices were viewed as connected:

A POETICS OF FOOD

we have parasites in these foods that literally alter the way you think ... for the benefit of the parasite. And so we liken that unto, then, the system that we live in, right? ... we're just like that rat that doesn't run away from the cat pee, it runs towards it. And that has everything to do with the food. So the food and spirituality is very connected (Interviewee A).

Colonialism in, in the mind, mentally, can happen to the food (Interviewee R).

It's what we've been taught ... it's a colonial mindset. And – to the point of even loving the thing, that's killin you – even when somebody tells you – that is **KILLING** you! “No no no no no – this is who we **ARE?**” You know? **I HAVE TO EAT** this stuff (Interviewee X).

Ten people connected food, food practices, and slavery explicitly. This connection is demonstrated by quotes, such as:

it is a trickle effect of colonialism, because, while my family wasn't directly enslaved, the food products that remains to them was the after, a lot of the effects left over from colonialism (Interviewee G).

In slavery, we were given, they didn't call it slave food but we were given slave food. And ... that colonization of our palate and our dietary habits still plagues us to this day. And so, it's hard for us to even feel **LIKE** we're colonized because we're still on the same diet we were on while we were on the plantation (Interviewee A).

I'm not eatin the slave shit (Interviewee F).

It [the standard Bahamian diet] is, essentially, still very much, an enslaved person's diet (Interviewee X).

you know this post-traumatic slave syndrome get everybody thinkin, and this colonial society, that, if you um, uh, speak well and eat properly that you actin white ... They don't even link me to The Bahamas. Right? What are you eating? ... It goes right back to this whole post-traumatic slave, where they think that uh, this, that, that whiteness equals, you know, um, good stuff, healthy eating and, and, and the best of things, and, and, and blackness equals the opposite, and it's, it's so unnerving (Interviewee D).

As a natural extension of the perceived relationship between slavery, food, and food practices, interviewees called for liberating the mind, body, and spirit—the forth theme in this category. One person suggested, “for you to heal, you have to accept – well, first of all, you have to recognize. Then accept. And to move on” (Interviewee L). Another explained the purpose of his business: “I have a company called, uh, Kosher Ital Eats and Drinks ... I see it as a means to awaken the people” (Interviewee E). Reducing levels of stress on the body and the mind in order to free the mind was considered critical and people connected that to the food they eat. It was an especially prominent theme among people who eat no or very little meat because of the belief that the stressful energy the animal produces during slaughter is then transferred to meat. One participant observed,

I had some of the most violent friends, but by the time they would have been on a vegan-based diet for a year? They, everything changed. They started seeing more, started having more regard and respect for life and other people's goodwill. Or wellbeing.

Restoration and wholeness. Among the interviews, individual and collective processes of rebuilding, of restoring what has been damaged, and of putting back together what has been broken merged as a prominent category. This category is comprised of the following themes: (1) Restoring cosmological/mythic narratives, (2) Feeling well, (3) Peace of mind, (4) Potential for healing, (5) Balance, (6) Family/genetic/ancestral weaknesses and limitations, (7) Restoring a sense of connectedness, and (8) Knowing/returning to Self. Seven (7) interviewees suggested that maintaining their food journeys was connected to restoring cosmological or mythic narratives, as the following quotes demonstrate:

We look at the original cosmology of the world, what our ancestors would have set up, it didn't need any rearrangin or changin. We coulda just follow it. But after the invasions, that was all broken up ... Doin this error now, we would call that the mirror bein broken. So you broke up a mirror, it has many pieces. After the mirror's been broken, and, you're only able to find a piece or so many pieces cause you don't have the whole, the little that we find from the mirror, or one finds – he feels he can, from he can see himself in it, feels he have enough to go on. It's not the whole. But, he has enough now to say, well hey ... Yeah. I can go on. Some are comfortable with what they got and believe. Like it's all, it's the whole – but not til they meet up with someone with a bigger piece of the mirror, and just pick their piece of the mirror together (Interviewee H).

In searching for the knowledge, it actually helped me to search for other types of knowledge, and other forms of right knowledge (Interviewee D).

A POETICS OF FOOD

When I realized they was lyin to me about food, I questioned the spirituality that I was learnin ... and so, it, it really took me on a journey whereby I recognized that certain foods were blocking certain spiritual pathways (Interviewee A)

I read books on every aspect of life ... And um, it helped to open up my sense of African-ness ... that was like, you know, comin out a pool and divin into the ocean. And um, so I really credit, um, that one moment, that on choice, to, accept, what I didn't know? ... as, like, literally, transforming my entire life (Interviewee X).

The same way, like how we realize the food is kinda contaminated? I's actually realize the doctrine, religious doctrine itself is contaminated (Interviewee E).

As mentioned in the previous category's discussion, the people I interviewed provided a sense that they want more than just to survive. They want to thrive, to be well. Nine (9) people discussed wanting to feel well physically and emotionally, noting over time, that certain practices allow them to feel better than others. Interviewees suggested:

I switched to vegetarian in probably like my 11th year of high school ... I noticed I felt a lot better so I, so I never went back. And um, I don't get sick ... it just, it feels better (Interviewee B).

It's just, again, amazing how food has a direct impact on everything, even your happiness factor (Interviewee F).

A POETICS OF FOOD

For me, and my family, we want to um to feel a particular way – and, and eating a particular way allows us, then, to tune in to us and Nature, a particular way as well, so. It's a, it's a circle – a cycle, a cipher for us (Interviewee Q).

I didn't even need to read anymore. I didn't need no one to tell it to me, like, no. My body spoke to me clearly and, loud enough (Interviewee R).

Being well is physical as well as emotional, spiritual, and social. Interviewees are intentional about their food practices and advocate for others to be intentional about their food practices to create a sense of wholeness – both for themselves and for those around them. One interviewee described the relationship between wholeness and consciousness:

Unconscious people – people that don't know what they don't know, don't know what they need, that don't know what they're missing – these are not whole human beings. And most of these people think that they're whole – because, those spaces are being filled by somebody else's culture.

and

We don't make anything. We don't understand anything. Uh, and so we get easily consumed by this consumerist culture. People keep tellin us what we need to be whole human beings, and because we don't know what a whole human being is, we just keep believin them (Interviewee J).

Four (4) people I interviewed mentioned being intentional about their food practices because it brings peace of mind. One person I interviewed mentioned, “Bein mindful, just brings me peace, peace of mind” (Interviewee C). Another person explained,

A POETICS OF FOOD

If I'm watchin these seeds, these seedlings, like, mature, and I'm lookin for insects and doin certain things. And I'm, like, waiting for particular things to happen, and I'm watchin these things, it's like, the whole world around me? It quiets itself (Interviewee U).

Ten (10) people interviewed stated that they engage in their food practices to demonstrate the potential for healing, that healing is possible – this was especially true among people who own their own businesses. People healed their own bodies or helped their family members heal their bodies. Participants suggested emphatically, “The body **RIGHTS** itself” (Interviewee X) and “The body can repair itself” (Interviewee L). These respondents indicated that it is possible to heal oneself by being intentional about what is put in and on the body and they wanted to make these products, practices, knowledge, and resources available to others. As one interviewee asserted,

It was the Japanese who had the Hiroshima bomb drop on them and I learn this from Dr. Jewel Pookrum, and she was talkin bout how they had nursed their, their people back to health within one generation off a miso soup and tofu and what's not and I'm like, well hell! If it could work for the Japanese after a nuclear bomb, maybe it could work for my mummy, with Lupus (Interviewee D).

Ten (10) people mentioned finding individual and collective balance as a theme that described why they choose to enact particular food practices. One interviewee noted,

I think vegan was definitely, or is definitely a way to help regain the balance. But for us as a people, I wouldn't suggest the vegan diet for everybody. It's not for everybody. You know, I think that um, we have to strike a balance (Interviewee A).

Another clarified,

It's more about teaching her [my daughter] eat **RIGHT** – as compared to my personal philosophy. You know? I chose to be vegan. Eventually, she will choose whatever she

A POETICS OF FOOD

chooses ... I have to teach her BALANCE, as compared to extremism ... If I wan be extreme, I could be extreme for me. But I CAN'T be extreme for HER ... I just gotta teach her the principles, and then let her manifest that, however she chooses (Interviewee X).

A Rastafarian Priest mentioned,

We'll have the priest now, should always be balance with the spiritual and the physical healing, because people is need spiritual healing. But, not bein a superstitious priest or caught up in that concept, we're not just gonna look for the prayers to do all the healin if a person is physically sick. And not just on the spiritual problem, so he has to know the right concoctions or bush to try deal with certain ailments (Interviewee H).

Restoration and wholeness connected not only to their own experiences, but to three (3) participants' senses that family/genetic and/or ancestral weaknesses and limitations needed to be addressed and restored through a shift to new types of practices. One interviewee stated,

Personally, I wanted to fix the root cause of what was wrong with me. And again, coming from a family of excess, and sickness, disease – you know, thinking it's ok to chop your toes off. I've had so many family members who, oh chile, I gotta lose these toes from diabetes ... and that was haunting me, too ... I did not want to be who I saw (Interviewee F).

Another asserted,

my family split in two. My family, on my mother's side, suffered from either obesity, or you just boney. Right? And usually the men are the ones who are just boney, right? Go figure. And, and it's the women, who suffer with this obesity because they eat anything they wanna eat. So, only because I eat the way that I eat, am I able to maintain my size 6/8 dress size (Interviewee D).

A POETICS OF FOOD

Restoring a sense of connectedness emerged as a theme connected the restoration of the body, mind, and spirit, as demonstrated by several practices and beliefs mentioned during interviews. Ten (10) people stated explicitly that everything is connected. As discussed in the previous section, this manifested as a call for restoring balance in healing and spiritual modalities, in healing the physical and spiritual bodies simultaneously. It also appeared as discussions about the overflow of one's food journey into other aspects of one's life, as the following demonstrate:

You can't change what you do to the toe, and not have it affect the ears. Everything is connected. So the, so the minute you start to open your consciousness and open your mind to accepting "I want natural things in me," that is naturally going to spill over. And, I mean, that goes right now to skin as well (Interviewee D).

For us, the body is a temple ... and so – all of that is linked to everything that we do. It's linked to the way that we eat, it's linked to how we treat each other ... to how we treat ... all living things (Interviewee Q).

All living things are connected. We are all connected. In the universe (Interviewee P).

Because of this belief that everything is connected, interviewees discussed making changes to different aspects of their lives once they changed their food choices. They described that their food practices brought them into a sense of how every aspect of life affects every other aspect. As a result, ten (10) people I interviewed discussed their intentional food choices as part of a broader shift in lifestyle. This means that when they changed their food practices, they changed other practices as well, or that changing other aspects of their lifestyles led them to reconsider their relationships with food:

A POETICS OF FOOD

When you go in the mentality with going ON a diet, you going on this thing for only a couple days, couple weeks, whatever. If you CHANGE your diet, that means you actually changing your lifestyle. And a lotta times, too – yes, your lifestyle will change once you change your diet. It has to (Interviewee L).

I make it [health] a part of my lifestyle ... (Interviewee R).

It's not just food. It's a lifestyle (Interviewee Q).

It wasn't a diet anymore. It was a lifestyle (Interviewee I).

You have to live the lifestyle ... (Interviewee T).

In the interviews, thirteen (13) people connected knowing themselves or returning to themselves and their food journeys. Seven (7) respondents indicated that this meant returning to what they considered lost or forgotten cultural or ancestral understandings:

It wasn't until I got into, um, to this, to this healthy eating, that I got more Afro-centric. Because it brought me back to my roots. And it brought me back into, ok, these are the things that our ancestors ate. And Mummy tell me more about Grammy. And what did she eat? ... these types of stories. And it just led me on this path (Interviewee D).

I always say, you know, well, what were we doin when we were building pyramids? Let's eat those foods? Cause when Imhotep was writin those medical formulas, what was he eatin? ... When the science of, um, Sumeria and, you know, different parts of Africa and ... when those things were comin into fruition, what were we eating? We've had way less

A POETICS OF FOOD

inventions by Africans POST-slavery and, and colonialism ... we're not taught to think that we could invent something. It doesn't serve the purpose of the colonialist, so ... or the slave master (Interviewee A).

that is where it comes down to, you know, bringin us back to as we were in the beginnin, so to speak – and when I say that, I mean, um, more of a natural, you know, approach (Interviewee E).

[foods that I eat] come from Africa. So, when, when I eat this way, I feel like it's goin back to that ... that's important to me to know myself. Because I wasn't really taught anything about who I am, here? You know what I mean? And in the school system, they'll teach you from slavery to now. They don't go back to, to that (Interviewee O).

Ten (10) people indicated that it was a return to an earlier time of their lives or a way of staying in tune with oneself:

Our instincts are there. But it's been numb and dead by starch and blood. And we need to get that, to RE-connect ... reconnect, to life, to their own instinct, their God-given instinct. And sometime, common sense (Interviewee K).

I know if I just have lettuce, tomatoes, and some mustard ... I can make a sandwich and I'll be perfectly fine. And I can live ... you get that deep understanding of yourself (Interviewee B).

I wanna eat as pure as possible when I can. But when I don't, I feel like I need to fast to, to um, to get more clean and in tune with my body and with myself. Cause when I fast,

A POETICS OF FOOD

fast isn't only about eating. It's not about, um, tryna lose weight, or, stuff like that. It's about really getting in tune (Interviewee P).

Right relationship. Fifteen (15) people I interviewed indicated being in right relationship as a reason they maintain their intentional food practices. One person said, simply, "I want to be kind in what I choose to eat" (Interviewee F). I divided this category into the following three (3) themes: (1) Relationship with oneself, (2) Relationship with other people, and (3) Relationship with the planet. Twelve (12) people discussed that their intentional food practices affect their relationships with their bodies and their whole selves. One participant mentioned, "I like me a little much ta, you know? ... once you're aware, you know, it's really, for me, hard to ignore it ... how do you put, purposely, put formaldehyde or, or ammonia ... in your body?" (Interviewee C). The following quotes represent how others discussed the ways in which the body serves the individual when the individual chooses to feed the body what it wants and needs to function:

The more one could, could understand their body, how it works, the food what we eat, know what we eat is minerals, not just as tastes, the more we could give our body what it really requires (Interviewee E).

You could have a better life, as a vegetarian. One – you be a lot lighter. So you could move a little bit more. You won't be as, as tired. You'd have more energy to do stuff now. So now you're more active, so now you could actually DO more things (Interviewee L).

A POETICS OF FOOD

I learned later that health and mind is so closely connected because, um, the more that she started to feel good, the more that the food started to work. And that she got healthier (Interviewee D).

Four (4) people described their bodies as temples for which they have a responsibility to care. This dynamic points to the dual necessity to care for and remain in right relationship with oneself and with the spiritual world. The following quotes demonstrate this phenomenon:

for me, um, it's, it's directly linked to viewing the body as a temple, and wanting to, uh, treat it as such. And that means from a mind, body, spirit, emotional perspective, giving it the best that you can, um, to be well, to be balanced (Interviewee Q).

If you could develop a discipline with what you put in your temple, into your body, that is going to be reflected into what is being put into your spirit (Interviewee D).

you know, it's my vessel. You know, this is what's carryin, and, and God gave me this vessel, you know? So I think I should at least humble myself and take care of it while I'm in it (Interviewee C).

If your body's the temple of the lord, or the temple of your deity, in which you house within you, you wan keep all that energy clean. You wan keep the house for that energy clean (Interviewee H).

The significance of changing their relationships with themselves related to what respondents learned about relating with other people. For example, one participant shared,

In treating yourself with, in a particular way, by what you do, how you, how you deal with it, how you treat it, what you put into it, how you take care of it, and seein the

A POETICS OF FOOD

rewards. I think that could do a lot ... with bringin people's awareness in terms of how, how we should interact with each other (Interviewee R).

Everyone eats. Because we all share this basic need, no matter our differences, food provides an opportunity to bring people together in a unique way. Five (5) people talked about how choosing to be intentional about their food practices pushed them to develop relationships with people who they may not have encountered, known, or wanted to know otherwise. As one interviewee explained,

There is, um, a connected line between everything that we can all lean on, no matter what differences we have each other – I could hate you, but I'm gonna work with you, if you have the same initiative and drive to make sure we get some muthafuckin proper food to eat! I will hate you and work together with you. I mean, and you know, that's somethin when food could teach us to do and help us work with each other, to actually come out as a community, as a family (Interviewee R).

As discussed in the previous section about food practices, bartering or gather/sharing what was grown in one another's yards were themes that emerged. Typically, this occurred between people who already knew one another. Yet, related to the idea above, one person wondered how relationships between neighbors might change if people who grow fruits and vegetables in their yards were compensated for the added value of their property given the work they put into it. He suggested:

the ultimate transition that I would like to do, is I would like to eat food outta my yard or outta your yard ... lemme go and lemme talk to the people and lemme get some a that ... in doin that, I think that I can build a better relationship with people. They can appreciate the value of the products the foods and the plants they have in they yard. And, either I can pay 'em or have some type a barter system with them ... And, once I start

A POETICS OF FOOD

doin that, I can now, not only have proper food, but I can actually build proper relationships, because, we live in a system now – that, everything so automated, that, we don't even talk to people. We don't even converse with people. We don't share ideas. We don't barter. And, what we doin, is we taken the power from our hands and puttin the power in the hands, the power in the hands of the automators – the social engineers of this, of this world (Interviewee V).

Another participant shared,

That kind of thing is important – just sharing a meal, and then the conversation and the, the community that it creates (Interviewee Z).

Nine (9) people indicated being intentional about their food practices, specifically, to bring people together. This theme emerged for people who intentionally support a wide variety of dietary practices in their businesses or groups to which they belong as a way of ensuring that there is something for everyone. Commensality, or the communal potential of food, emerged as a component of right relationship with others. Seven (7) people, particularly referred to how this is maintained at Sunday Dinner. Similarly, nine (9) people noted that practices associated with food—especially given the extra time and resources required to connect with food intentionally—are significant forms of love and comfort. As one person explained,

I came to the realization that, you know, what we do, our first and last ingredient, literally, is love. Um, and when I say that – even when the lady in the back is just cleaning, then we saw, you know, we're just choppin up the veggies, you literally have to do that with love, knowing what it is that you're going to produce (Interviewee I).

Eighteen (18) interviewees indicated wanting to help other people and wanting to support those who support them. Among their comments, they demonstrated a genuine desire to improve their communities, the nation, and the world. One participant explained, “I wanted to do

A POETICS OF FOOD

something, again, for the community, to help them to see on a wider scale, what was available to help support them along their way” (Interviewee Q). Another discussed the relationship between the practices she employs at her restaurant and its effects on the broader community:

Food is only a catalyst for what it is that we do. Um, and I believe in nation building. I believe in community building. I believe in empowering the persons that are, who I’ve hired. Um, I believe in a team (Interviewee I).

Eight (8) of the people I interviewed, I might refer to as “early adopters” of intentional food practices. These are Bahamians who have been intentional about their food practices (primarily having plant-based diets) for close to or more than twenty years—and most of whom did not inherit those practices (i.e. because they grew up in Rastafarian or Seventh Day Adventist homes). While these individuals recognize that everyone has their own journey to walk, they and others also wanted to make the journeys of those following them easier than their own by making the resources necessary for self-transformation more available than they were for themselves. One person said, “I wanted to do something, again, for the community, to help them to see on a wider scale, what was available to help support them along their way” (Interviewee Q). One of the “early adopters” pleaded, “I just really felt I needed to save my people, you know? It can’t be all this diabetes and cancers and all this stuff” (Interviewee L). This collection of interviewees did not want other Bahamians to feel as though they have to go outside of themselves, outside of their own culture, and outside of the country to find resources in order to sustain themselves—even though and, perhaps because, that is what many of them had to do.

Six (6) people I interviewed said they grow and/or repurpose food – personally or commercially – in order to provide food for the nation that is healthy and economical. Their desire to provide for the nation and for their communities is what motivates them to continue their work, even when it is difficult. The people who I interviewed who want to help other people

A POETICS OF FOOD

also hold a sensibility that emphasizes creating and holding spaces that make it possible for people to realize what kind of lifestyle will support them, their health, and their well-being. As one person noted, “We realize that ... instead of agitating for people to change – it, it would be more effective if we created an environment in which it was easier for people to change”

(Interviewee J).

A clear desire to do no harm to other people and animals emerged through the data. Ten (10) people’s journeys of food and consciousness were begun or catalyzed as a result of watching a person or animal suffer—something to which they hoped never again to bear witness. Two (2) people’s vegetarian diets were the result of watching animals be slaughtered, among other factors. Three (3) people became conscious about their diets because they watched people die in ways that they felt were akin to slaughter:

with my dad, they cut his tongue out. And they said, if we remove – they, meaning the oncologist, the physicians, authority. They said, if we remove your dad tongue, he will live. And we followed their instructions. Took the chemo, the radiation. It look like somebody took up blow torch and burn him up, you know, afterwards. And he died, practically in my arms. From this heinous and barbaric, um, therapy – hydrogenics. And I was like, man. In two thousand. In, in, in this, new millennium, we in a barbaric state – where you mean to tell me that with all the amenities and the technologies – that, persons are still subjected to this type a treatment. And I say, if this is the best that the authorities have to offer, I don’t want nuttin to do with it. Because, I suffer to see what my dad went through. I wouldn’t wish it on my worst enemy. So, there’s a fear there, for me. And I said, I don’t wanna die like this. What do I have to do? They don’t have the answer – obviously. So, my journey began researchin (Interviewee K).

A POETICS OF FOOD

People's intentional practices reflect their care for other people and animals. In the same way, five (5) people indicated that their care for their bodies reflects their care for the Earth—the one body we all inhabit, as demonstrated by the following:

It's one thing to then talk about you doing what you can to ensure that YOU are healthy, but my gracious. If you don't take care of the planet that has to provide those things to keep you healthy, then you're still shootin yourself in the foot (Interviewee Q).

I'd probably even weight protection of the environment a little, a teeny bit heavier than, um, protection of my own body (Interviewee S).

Environmental care was connected to the ways in which intentional food practices reflect or have activated an overall lifestyle change and a sense that larger environmental issues need to be incorporated into the definition of a “healthy” or “holistic” lifestyle:

Vegan lifestyle ... is not just about the health side of it ... It's also about taking care of the environment, using eco-friendly products (Interviewee Q).

the environmental issues, again, is another issue. So you might be eatin healthy, but when there's a gas leak over here, and there's fire burning for years, and, there are environmental hazards that are killing the nation, and nobody's talkin about. People are dying – literally – YOU know this (Interviewee I).

Development. Development is divided into two (2) themes: (1) Personal, (2) Collective (Community, National, Global). Ten (10) people I interviewed shared their belief that change is possible because they have proven it within the confines of their own lives and families. Since

A POETICS OF FOOD

they have made changes in their own lives, despite challenges and opposition, they believe the people around them can make changes too. If enough people change, then the course of the future changes and the environment into which their children will emerge will be better than that into which they emerged. No participant indicated that the path of personal growth or community development has been easy, but those for whom this was an important issue inferred that fewer blockages would allow for development to extend beyond what has proven possible so far. This belief applies to hopes for the emerging generation of individuals:

I really want to influence our children to begin these thought processes much earlier in life ... I want for them, for it to be almost organic – pun intended. You know ... for it to just be. For it, to literally – for them to just be (Interviewee Q).

We realized that in order to build community? You have to build the individual first (Interviewee U).

Because development is both personal and collective, material and cultural, this belief holds for emerging collective culture as well:

What we've decided to do is, to figure out how to grow ideas ... Because we know that we not going to get anybody to pay us for our ideas, until we get them to appreciate the culture of indigenous ideas. And so we know we have to feed them until they get their mind right, to be able to understand what we're talkin about ... to be able to feed them, we have to make it affordable – because we're not cosmopolitan enough – see, the ideas that we bring and the way that we bring aren't cosmopolitan enough to attract the people, but we know if we could get the food into them, that eventually, they will begin to hear us, right? (Interviewee J).

A POETICS OF FOOD

Food is only a catalyst for what it is that we do. Um, and I believe in nation building. I believe in community building (Interviewee I).

Without the food, without the proper diet ... we ain' never gonna have a healthy nation. You ain' ga never have the type of humanity you want (Interviewee H).

Power & worth. This category is divided into the following themes: (1) Self-worth, (2) Collective worth, (3) Personal empowerment, and (4) Collective empowerment. Nine (9) people I interviewed shared a distinct belief that personal and collective self-worth is a primary reason why they are intentional about their food practices. One interviewee discussed her choice to switch to a vegetarian diet as a meat-lover following a viewing of Food, Inc., stating, “I love me more than I loved food” (Interviewee C). An advocate for human rights and decolonization shared, “I’m not gonna spend my money with people who support, um, discrimination against the community, who support the marginalization of the community” (Interviewee J). An artist who became very sick after sacrificing his lifestyle for his craft mentioned, “It was just like, look. We gonna heal you, cause we can’t afford to lose you. You valuable, right?” (Interviewee L).

Self-worth was not only discussed at the personal or individual level, but also at a collective and national level, as participants’ shared their sense that individual and collective/national self-worth is lacking in The Bahamas. Interviewees implied that outsiders see an immense amount of value, worth, and beauty, but there’s little internal sense of beauty. The following two quotes from interviewees demonstrate their perception that this lack of internal sense of worth and beauty connects to national and individual justifications for degradation and being taken advantage of:

A POETICS OF FOOD

Um ... a friend of mine, said something the other day. He likened The Bahamas to, a pretty girl – beautiful girl – with very low self-esteem. So, this beautiful girl – she just can't SEE herself. She just can't see her own WORTH. She's been abused. You know? And so, as a result, she just bend over, and take any old doggy what comin to her. And she just get fucked left, right, and center. You know? And, she gettin beat up. She gettin beat down. You know? She still gorgeous, you know. But, she been run through the mill. You know? And, and she just can't, she just can't CATCH any old ting what come along, she wan do it – because she, does not see, her own power. You know? And she's not BRAVE enough to stand up for herself (Interviewee Y).

our Ministry of Tourism has done such a good job, that Bahamians forget that they live here. But they're not on vacation, right? And so – for me? Sure – you wanna charge that tourist thirty dollars for a crawfish tail out, out of season? That's great. I'm down for that. I am not payin you thirty dollars for a crawfish tail at any time. And I tell them – I wouldn't eat in your restaurant when it in season, because a that foolishness. I am a Bahamian. You don't charge me that. But – we've been so, we get so caught up into whatever this dynamic is, that not only will we pay the price that's on there for the foreigner. But then we degrade the Bahamian that suggests that it's too much money. And then, we say to them – well, you, you can't afford to eat the people things, don't come to they place. When in truth, YOU not a tourist. You ain't SUPPOSED to be payin those prices. You a Bahamian ... So, we've ended up paying for a paradise that we could never attain ... because – it's not our paradise (Interviewee J).

There was a sense that, ultimately, real change in both the health of individuals and the health of the culture as a whole requires a deep sense of self worth:

A POETICS OF FOOD

People make good decisions when they're in a good place, and people are in a good place when they're healthy. And so we realize that one of the biggest keys to social development and positive social change was to help people improve their diets, help people make better choices by helping them improve their diets (Interviewee J).

In treating yourself with, in a particular way, by what you do, how you, how you deal with it, how you treat it, what you put into it, how you take care of it, and see in the rewards (Interviewee R).

Eleven (11) people I interviewed stated explicitly that you are what you eat. So, the food one consumes and the ways in which one goes about procuring it are deeply connected to the fabric of one's identity, to the reality of one's being. Interviewees expressed this idea in the following ways:

What we eat, is who we are. It's a part of culture ... food is an expression of who I am (Interviewee O).

I see the importance of food. And how it affects the thinkin and everything around you, your existence (Interviewee U).

Vegetables are truly my source of life ... vegetables and fruits ... it is who I am (Interviewee X).

When you eat animals – dependin on how these animals were killed, um, all of that ends up showing up, in, in who you are (Interviewee P).

A POETICS OF FOOD

Bein the metaphysical person I am, there's this saying that I grew up hearing ... as within, so without. And for me, the food definitely is that (Interviewee F).

One person described his food identity, his alignment with certain intentional food practices as an outward reflection that demonstrates his identity to others, saying, "They also need to know that we, too [Africans/people of African ancestry], are a conscious people" (Interviewee G).

Ten (10) people I interviewed stated explicitly that they are intentional about their food practices because they feel empowered when they have control over their food practices, over what they put in and on their bodies. They shared that having control over one's food is related to having control over one's life. One respondent mentioned,

the empowerment that came from making my own food choices could be, you could say that it's fed into my, just, on a general empowerment level. You feel more empowered about something, then you're, sort of your perspective about your whole life, you feel more empowered.

In the same way, participants indicated that not knowing what one puts in one's body denotes a lack of control over one's life and one's health:

Spoon governance. If you cannot govern your spoon, you cannot govern any part of your life. Ok? (Interviewee W).

My business partner calls it spoon control ... why do you expect somebody to operate their vehicle properly at a red light or a stop sign if it's obvious to everyone, that they can't operate their spoon properly (Interviewee J).

A POETICS OF FOOD

Food can be used as a gift, and food can be a weapon. And – once you are in charge of your health. Once you in charge of your food, that's how you, that's the first kind of feeling you have. It's not the money you have, it's the food you have (Interviewee U).

[becoming vegetarian] wasn't really rebellious cause it was my choice, so ... it was more just, um, taking control, having some sort of self-control over your life (Interviewee B).

I saw my discipline trickle down into other areas of my life, just from bein disciplined with my food. So bein disciplined with food especially the culture, though, where our food diet is heavily saturated with starches and meats and so forth. If you could discipline yourself, with food – mentally, that does a drastic change on how you could be discipline in controlling your thought processes (Interviewee R).

Once I start doin that [eating food grown by myself and those around me], I can now, not only have proper food, but I can actually build proper relationships, because, we live in a system now – that, everything is so automated, that, we don't even talk to people. We don't even converse with people. We don't share ideas. We don't barter. And, what we doin, is we takin the power from our hands and puttin this power in the hands ... of the automators – the social engineers of this world. And, that is one of the biggest tragedies that we don't realize that we could do it ourselves (Interviewee V).

I read books on every aspect of life ... And um, it helped to open up my sense of African-ness ... that was like, you know, comin out a pool and divin into the ocean. And um, so I

A POETICS OF FOOD

really credit, um, that one moment, that one choice [becoming vegetarian], to, accept, what I didn't know? ... as, like, literally, transforming my entire life (Interviewee X).

Spiritual development. Eleven (11) people connected their intentional food practices to general life discipline, spiritual discipline, and liberation. These people indicated that their intentional food practices are related to their spiritual practices and that the relationship between the two helps facilitate a sense of liberation in their lives. One interviewee said, “Without the food, without the proper diet, we ain’ gonna never have a proper spirituality. We ain’ never gonna have a healthy nation. You ain’ ga never have the type of humanity you want” (Interviewee H). This category is divided into the following themes: (1) Following a religion/spiritual system with inherent food guidelines, (2) Intentional food practices strengthened commitment to/shifted spirituality, (3) Discipline from intentional food practices strengthened spirit, and (4) Food discipline facilitated discipline in other areas of one’s life.

Eight (8) people explained that they have at some point on their food journeys adhered to religions or spiritual systems with built-in food practices, including Rastafarianism, Islam, Christianity, kosher law, and other African spiritual systems/practices. Part of why these individuals are intentional about their food practices is to maintain their internal and external spiritual commitments and callings, as indicated in the following quotes:

Genesis one hundred twenty nine, the beginning of the Bible – it speaks about the leaves bein for medicine, and ... the fruit being for meat. The herbs is for the healin (Interviewee K).

A POETICS OF FOOD

I really started my, um, uh, job training, so to speak, at Sandals ... And then I was able to bring that out into the world. And, so that's why I say, like, it's god's plan what I do. I only do what I am called to do. Literally, within my business, within my life (Interviewee I).

With that lifestyle, you know, the culture, the Rasta culture, you know, the food is automatic ... as I said, growin up, reason why I would not consider myself a Rasta, be a Rasta, because of the food. Not even what I believe or don't believe or if I believe in Selassie or not (Interviewee R).

Kosher means somethin that is set apart or somethin that is prepared in a certain kinda way, or that is, treated in a higher, higher standard than, than the other rest. Um, that would, of course, be more of a natural, and, and less profane, or less, um, defile kinda, kinda approach to it. The health group name is kosher, because, to me as a priest, the people who you supposed to be dealin with supposed to be set aside from – right. Supposed to be set aside from what the world has to offer, so to speak (Interviewee E).

The second theme represents six (6) interviewees' descriptions of how being intentional about their food practices increased their commitment to spirituality generally or shifted how their spirituality manifests itself. One person referred to growing his own food as a spiritual practice, saying, "I am here for a particular period of time on this planet, and while I'm here, I'm tending to the certain needs of myself" (Interviewee U). Another explained,

in searching for the knowledge, it actually helped me to search for other types of knowledge, and other forms of right knowledge, and so, my artwork kinda blossomed in

A POETICS OF FOOD

that direction. So, I had more, um, things that were dealin with more of the esoteric and the more spiritual types of things in my, in my art (Interviewee D).

The third theme represents the part that maintaining intentional food practices plays in strengthening participants' spirit overall, as indicated in the interviews. This is represented by the following quotes,

you have to do this particular thing, routinely, which now brings in discipline, um, outside of um, different distractions what would go on, because like, say, if now a family that grows up where errybody eats, eats, say, um pork? And the other person be like, hey, um, these antibiotics and, or, these um, worms, all these things in the pork is bad for me, so eh, I don't want this mummy. Lemme just get the side orders, but now that, now the other people at the table start teasin the person and everything, but then, it's up to the person to say, hey, I don't even worry bout what y'all sayin, like, I dealin with it myself (Interviewee E).

my business partner calls it spoon control. Right? She says to me – why do you expect somebody to operate their vehicle properly at a red light or a stop sign if it's obvious to everyone, that they can't operate their spoon properly? Right? So spoon discipline and spoon control is very important. It's a, it's a basic building block. And if you don't get that right, then you not gonna get anything else right. And if you allow anybody, if you allow somebody to give you anything to put in your body, you'll allow somebody to give you any information to put in your head, into your mind. You'll allow them to give you anything to put into your spirit (Interviewee J).

The final theme in this category represents how interviewees' indicated that their intentional food practices were/are a first step in facilitating discipline in other areas of their

A POETICS OF FOOD

lives. For example, one respondent indicated, There's humungous amount of connections just simple food, diet, and community, and how we, how things are goin on in community and, and between men, how we interact with other males, at the same time. Another shared,

I see what I eat physically – ok, as a person, I'm not just a physical. I have a mind. I have emotion. I guess you could say, it's interconnected ... yeah, I have a mind which is interconnected – some people say interconnected with the, with emotions – with the soul. But like, physically, I see food as a part of health. I see exercise as a part of health. I also practice ... Kemetic Yoga. But I have a certification in that as well. I use, um, Russian Kettle Bells. I um, do a lot of, um, um studyin and research on history – World History, African history in particular, so I see like all of it is connected (Interviewee O).

Connection to something greater than oneself. The final category in this data set relates to how interviewees' intentional food practices connect them to something greater than themselves—typically, something cosmic. Nine (9) respondents described how being intentional about their food practices offered them knowledge about food and how it extends beyond their existence and their own lives, with no thematic variation in this category. In particular, this group of participants noted that food allows them to understand their place within the universal order of things and connects them directly to the Earth and to broader cosmic forces. In other words, they believe that the bodies they're in are connected to the body they are on, and beyond.

The following quotes demonstrate this sensibility:

the food itself, I see, really is a link, we ... it links us to the planet, to the sun, to the galaxy, to the universe (Interviewee A).

A POETICS OF FOOD

most of my life ... I connected to the source of food – seeing it grow from the ground, and understanding that’s a part of how the universe brought us together (Interviewee T).

I had that moment, when I realized, that I am that I am – I am EVERY thing. And everything is me ... I felt powerful and small at the same time (Interviewee Y).

There’s a great link to how people relate to, reconcile with their food and how they relate to and reconcile with the wider world ... it’s one of those microcosms (Interviewee J).

For us, the body is a temple ... and so – all of that is linked to everything that we do. It’s linked to the way that we eat, it’s linked to how we treat each other ... to how we treat ... all living things (Interviewee Q).

Errybody experience the Sun. Errybody experience these seasons ... puttin your body in line with that. That’s why even the calendar is a agricultural calendar, because it’s based on the Sun, the Moon, and the season (Interviewee E).

Conclusion

This chapter describes three sets of data that emerged from the semi-structured interviews I conducted via snowball sample about food practices and consciousness in Nassau, Bahamas: (1) Events and experiences that led people to become intentional about or shift their daily interactions with food; (2) Food Practices – or particular ways of interacting with food; and (3) Existential reasons why initiating and maintaining food practices is/was important.

A POETICS OF FOOD

The primary reasons why people became intentional or shifted their food practices were (1) lifestyle shifts; (2) acquiring new knowledge and information; (3) connecting with people, cultures, and traditions other than one's own; (4) connecting with families and ancestries; (5) childhood practices and experiences; (6) senses of pride or connection to various forms of identity; (7) individual and collective self-sufficiency and development; (8) exploring different modalities of spirituality and healing; and (9) noticing how food affects the mind and body. Food practices were numerous and organized into the following types of practices: (1) Dietary Practices; (2) Community and support; (3) Researching; (4) Preparation Techniques; (5) Making Do; (6) Following established foodways and dietary systems; (7) Food Procurement. Existential reasons for initiating, maintaining, and shifting various practices were also numerous and organized into broad categories based on people's desires for themselves, their families, their communities, their nations, and the world. I organized them into the categories: (1) freedom and independence; (2) restoration and wholeness; (3) right relationship; (4) Personal, cultural, and national development; (5) self-worth; (6) spiritual development; and (7) connections to something greater than oneself.

This chapter described the data as it emerged from my research. The next chapter discusses the findings further, including the ways in which the data from the interviews connects to broader literature about intentional food practices and consciousness in the African and Caribbean diasporas. The final chapter will examine the limitations of this research and suggest future research possibilities.

Chapter 6

Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to explore the intentional food practices of a particular self-defined network of people, why they are intentional, and how they understand the relationship between their intentional food practices and their journeys of personal and collective restoration. I interviewed 27 people in Nassau about their intentional food practices as they define them and the intentions with which they enact them to understand whether and how their interactions with food reflect personal commitments to healing, recovery, and decolonization. This chapter discusses those findings in light of the literature on food practices and consciousness in the African and Caribbean diasporas.

Chapter 2 describes specifically the history of intentional food practices and consciousness in African and Caribbean diasporas. The food practices of the people I interviewed relate, especially, to more recent literature about intentional food practices and emerging conscious foodways in the African Diaspora. This chapter discusses my findings in light of that literature as well as broader literature relating to six particular themes: (1) Emerging Foodways/Emerging Identities; (2) Arts, Culture, and Creative Practice; (3) Decolonization and Healing; (4) Transformational Learning and Empowerment; and (5) Relationship and Community. The following chapter concludes the dissertation by examining potential implications that the findings of this research might offer theory, policy, and practice.

Emerging Foodways/Emerging Identities

Food is a medium through which to view multiple worlds and multiple aspects of the world simultaneously (Schwegler, 2013). Food practices are ways of articulating the complexity

A POETICS OF FOOD

and breadth of the food ways, spaces, and resources that penetrate people's everyday lives.

Palmie (2013) writes that "sumptuary practices can aid us in thinking through complex histories, wide-ranging processes of cultural change, and the unfolding and transformation of relations of domination and resistance" (p.222). They can be material reflections of a person's or group of people's values and the ways they seek to live those values into existence daily. This includes practices meant to release oneself from multiple forms and points of oppression, such as national/ethnic, racial, gendered, sexuality, economic standing, etc (see Benediktsson, 1998).

Foodways can be defined as sets of food practices and behaviors within a socially or culturally bound group (Keller Brown & Mussell, 1984; Kim, 2015). Foodways are tracings of "how the form, cooking method, ingredients, tastes, aroma, etc., of a specific food have come to be formulated over the course of time and as a consequence of its traveling over space" (Kim, 2015, p.5). On his blog "Afroculinaria," Michael Twitty (2016), a prominent contemporary thinker and practitioner in African diasporic and southern foodways, discusses the idea of "identity cooking," which he describes as "how we construct complex identities and then express them through how we eat."

This research explores, specifically, how intentional food practices and purposes for enacting them might reflect emerging foodways and the particularities of emerging intentional lifestyles and communities in The Bahamas. Critical to these emergent foodways was the interactions people had with people from cultures, places, and spiritual systems different than their own. Changing foodways seemed to be connected to people's stories of coming of age. As Tuomainen writes, "We start learning the cultural rules of food and eating very early in our socialization, and are not even consciously aware of the rules until we are confronted with other cultures" (Tuomainen, 2009, p.527-528).

A POETICS OF FOOD

A taxonomy of six distinct Bahamian foodways took shape in my interviews: (1) Traditional African; (2) Indigenous Bahamian; (3) Slave; (4) Traditional Bahamian; (5) Average Bahamian; and (6) Conscious Bahamian. While an in-depth description of all of these foodways is beyond the scope of this discussion, my research revealed that certain food practices interviewees qualified as conscious emerged more prevalently than others. Those “conscious” food practices corresponded with similar sensibilities, even if not with identical pre-established belief systems. For example, twenty-three (23) people indicated that they eliminated meat from their diets. Despite the fact that these people self-identified with eleven (11) different spiritual and philosophical systems (including African spiritual systems, having a cosmic sensibility, holistic health, Islam, Christianity, Judaism, the Kemeti system, Pan-Africanism, Rastafarianism, Womanism, and Yoruba spirituality), food practices were not presented as prescriptions for living particular lifestyles necessarily, nor were they all maintained at the time of the interviews. Rather, for the individuals I interviewed, their intentional practices represented material indicators of personal development as they defined them for themselves.

While an in-depth description of each category named in the taxonomy mentioned above is beyond the limitations of this dissertation, understanding the evolution from which these conscious foodways are emerging is important. Every interview participant described her or his perception of the modern average, or established, Bahamian foodway, both contrasting and comparing these perceptions to his or her own choices and what they qualified as conscious food practices in The Bahamas. Four (4) interviewees referred, specifically, to “the Bahamian Average Diet – or B.A.D.” This Average Bahamian foodway was qualified as being imported/foreign (indicated by 11 people), high in starch (indicated by 19 people), high in sugar (indicated by 18 people), heavy in meat (indicated by 18 people), primarily fast food (indicated by 12 people), processed/canned (indicated by 16 people), comprised of what is

A POETICS OF FOOD

available/affordable/economical (indicated by 12 people), comprised of large amounts of food (indicated by 9 people), and comprised of foods that are left over or rejected (indicated by 6 people). In contrast, the Conscious Bahamian Foodway was qualified as local/seasonal (indicated by 21 people), low in starch and white foods, low in sugar, low in meat/animal products, fresh, and whole.

Interview participants discussed particular foods and dishes incorporated into each foodway, congruent with literature about Caribbean food—especially in terms of primary creolized dishes (i.e. Peas and Rice in The Bahamas or the Pepper-Pot in Jamaica) (Loichot, 2013). The literature surrounding foodways of the African Diaspora focuses upon the necessity of both maintaining traditional soul food and African American foodways and also finding ways of making these foods healthier, given the high rate of non-communicable diseases in communities of the African Diaspora (Gourdine 2011; Whit, 2007). Eight (8) interviewees noted that they maintain dishes they associate with the average Bahamian diet, but use different ingredients. A former plant-based food business owner who I interviewed explained,

one thing that many MEAT eaters who ate from me would say, is that, I would give them, you know, in essence – soul, Bahamian SOUL food – but it was vegetarian. And so, what I learned to do is convert, you know, the basic Bahamian way of eatin, just into veggies. With, so, you know – like a steam. You know – you can steam down some lentils. And, you know, it’s slightly different than steam chicken (laugh) – but, it’s the same comfort food kinda feelin (Interviewee X).

Converting dishes is prominent in soul food literature. Whit (2007) mentions the names of several soul food cookbooks that seek to be “healthy,” though none are those mentioned by people I interviewed—nor do they follow the dietary guidelines interviewees mentioned. Brock (2004) offers ways of converting soul food dishes into

A POETICS OF FOOD

lower fat and/or plant-based versions. Bryant Terry's numerous cookbooks offer plant-based ways to prepare food from traditional African American foodways, or soul food. His research, activism, and cookbooks of vegan soul food share recipes aligned with the cultural legacies of soul food as well as the reasons why he has chosen to shift the ingredients he uses for personal and collective reasons.

As discussed in the previous chapter, connecting with family and ancestry was important for interviewees on a number of levels. Interviewees noted that they chose to eat diets that they perceived as more similar to the diets of Africans before slavery. Doing this, they believe, will allow them to live more healthfully and more aligned with their own spirits. Hall (2007) suggests this is a critical reason to study African foodways—so that we might understand the foods, diets, and health of the people that were brought to the Americas and the ways in which their bodies would interact with what is present and lacking in this environment.

Pride in one's identity is a prominent theme in the literature surrounding intentional food practices in the African Diaspora and food practices in general. The development of soul food and the choice to eat soul food as a demonstration of black pride and celebrating the ingenuity of one's ancestors is written about broadly (Gourdine 2011; Whit, 2007). While interviewees indicated that they use different ingredients to create many of the same dishes included in the average Bahamian diet, many of the substitute ingredients they mentioned are aligned with traditional Bahamian and traditional African foodways, as described by interviewees. This demonstrates interviewees' understandings of these various foodways as cultural evolutions—or, as one person mentioned, it is a re-evolution—a return to.

The vast majority of literature pertaining to food production and preparation in African and Caribbean diasporas centers female experiences and is written by female authors (see Loichot, 2013). Furthermore, vegetarian, vegan, and plant-based diets (followed by a majority of

A POETICS OF FOOD

the people I interviewed), tends to be associated with females and femininity (Sanders & Reddy, n.d.) A defining feature of this research, potentially, about half of the people I interviewed were men—most of whom cook for themselves and seven (7) of whom are the primary cooks in their households. This research demonstrates that males are carrying more food responsibilities than is reflected in the literature and creates an opening for further reflections on what it means to be a male with food responsibilities, as well as how mens' commitments to intentional food practices offer insight into emerging Caribbean masculinities that challenge dominant perceptions.

One interviewee reflected on this concept directly:

there's this funny connection between food and, and masculinity. I detest the Burger King commercial 'Eat Like a Man' Because ... frickin Whopper sandwich and it says, 'Be a man. Eat a burger.' I eat fuckin salad, and I'm still a man ... Come on. Like, I gotta eat meat to be a man? ... So um, even the food and the masculinity between men is skewed ... It leads into the mental, mental aspect of how men carry themselves and so forth. You gotta be strong. You gotta kill. You got to kill, to be a man. Think of the psychological connections there that we're saying. If you're not killing something to eat it, you are not a man ... There's humungous amount of connections just simple food, diet, and community, and how we, how things are goin on in community and, and between men, how we interact with other males, at the same time. I got ridiculed, um, a bit, for it. I get it, let it get to my discipline at the same time, too. If I could say screw all that goddamn ridicule so forth, still be discipline, do what I want? Made me more stronger. It made me more comforted in who I am, and again, leads to the liberation of, of myself, of self, self-liberation. Um, I, I think, I think there needs to be a campaign put forth on, on just solely that. Masculinity and food (Interviewee R).

Arts, Culture, and Creative Practice

Arts, culture, and creative practice emerged as significant to interviewees' journeys of food and consciousness. Nine (9) of the people I interviewed indicated that at least part of their income is derived through the arts, entertainment, and/or media. Six (6) of those individuals currently or in the past also have derived part of their income from food ventures where they created Caribbean, Bahamian, and soul style plant-based or "healthy" foods. This aligns with the reality that most critical literature and work that describes Caribbean food is creative in nature (Loichot, 2013). It also speaks to the inherent creativity and performativity of Caribbean culture and the relationship between creative expression and cultural critique.

The theoretical methodology for this research is the Aesthetics of Everyday Life—a way of understanding and thinking about how material realities and ways of being in everyday lives give shape and voice to broader values and senses of consciousness. This framework is developed from a Caribbean creolization and diasporic literature that is inherently aesthetic and cultural and meant to be used not only in the research design and data collection, but also the expression of data.

The Aesthetics of Everyday Life is a method of incorporating a Caribbean-centric way of being into research and ways of being as a researcher. As a result, it also points to a Caribbean-centric way of being *conscious*. As the following quote highlights, this sensibility relates strongly to the theme of creolization as decolonization within a Caribbean context:

Creolization is about *bricolage* drawing freely upon what is available, recreating with new content and in new forms a distinctive culture, a creation in a situation of domination and conflict. It is not about retentions but about reinterpretations. It is not about roots but about loss. It must be distinguished from cultural contact and multiculturalism because, at heart, it is a practice and ethics of borrowing and accepting

A POETICS OF FOOD

to be transformed, affected by the other. (Vergès quoted in Knepper, 2006, p.71, emphasis in original)

Bricolage is an artistic and creative method. It is also a research method. Its forms as creative, cultural, and research methods that “make do” and “use the materials at hand” are born from what Levi-Strauss emphasized more as a way of being than a way of producing (Knepper, 2006).

The prominent theme “making do,” which merged in the research and is prevalent in literature about Caribbean cooking, might be considered as a form of bricolage, a material manifestation of creolization. This cooking method, born from the engrained propensity for “making do,” is part of living and creating Caribbean lives. Knepper (2006) writes,

Creolization can be seen enacted through *bricolage* as the art of the disparate and fragmentary: the art of adopting and adapting multiple concrete fragments or artifacts as well as elements of imaginative, ideological, cultural, social, or religious practices, experiences, and beliefs. (p.73)

Yet, even as the idea of “making do” has creative potential, it is a necessary way of being resulting from loss, destruction, lack, and unequal political, social, economic, gender, and racial relations (Knepper, 2006).

Creativity and innovation were necessities rather than intentions or choices. This paradoxical dynamic emerged in my research when interviewees described the necessity of honoring the ingenuity of their enslaved and post-slavery ancestors’ foodways even as they (interviewees) sought to create intentional lives. This is evident through the following interview quotes:

I’m not eatin the slave shit ... not to disrespect my ancestors, cause I know why the slaves ate what they ate, but I believe, I een ga eat no chicken foot (Interviewee F).

A POETICS OF FOOD

when my ancestors were brought here from Africa, a lot of the food they ate, the customs they would, wasn't brought with them. They had to revert to what was the dominant culture (Interviewee O).

decolonizing the imagination. Um, it has a lot to do with us understandin that when we were brought from Africa, our food wasn't brought with us. You know? And we would always be given foods that could be easily grown for, you know, as cheap as possible, that could keep us full for a very long time ... And also, also understandin that the leftovers, ya know? The slave master got the choice cuts. We got the leftovers. We just talked about it in church today, you know, the fact that we didn't originally want the leftovers but that's all we had to eat. Now ... we eat the leftovers, not because we have to, but because we feel like, that's what we're supposed to eat cause that's what mummy cooked for me, and Grammy cooked that for me, ya understand? And so that, to say no to chitlins and hot dog and, ya know, hamburger and all that stuff is not just sayin no to the food. It's sayin no to mummy. It's sayin no to Daddy. It's sayin no to everybody that fed you and it's sayin ... it's sayin that everybody who fed you and nurtured you, you're spittin in their face ... to say no to that food. And so I think it's important for us to be, I guess, educate people that ...ya parents didn't know any better. They just did the best they could do. And that food sustained us long enough to be here, to realize we don't need it (Interviewee A).

The last quote insinuates a potential tension between the creativity inherent in the process of “making do” and the freedom in not having to make do. Interviewees discussed the ways in which they navigate this tension materially when they use that same creativity both to maintain

A POETICS OF FOOD

cultural dishes that appeal to their senses and give them comfort and to compose them of certain ingredients that intentionally connect them with their senses of self and personal values.

The history of slavery, oppression, and discrimination often has made direct protest dangerous. Similar to African diasporic culture generally, aesthetic practice in Caribbean contexts, traditionally, has allowed practitioners to mask their political statements as art and creative practice (Arrizon, 2002). As a result, people with African ancestry have chosen frequently to resist oppression in subtler ways through cultural production and, particularly, through food practices (Wallach, 2015). Whereas some literature *about* the Caribbean places political and aesthetic theories, works, and sensibilities in opposition with on another (Arrizon, 2002), this work seeks to work *from* a Caribbean political aesthetic sensibility to discuss intentional food practices. As Neysha Soodeen explains,

We need to recognize, define ourselves or re-define ourselves as Caribbean people. A lot of that has to do with our art, our creativity, sculpture, music, our colors, our food -- food is art, creating a recipe is art. That is why people should want to come to the Caribbean for our art, for the stimulation of the senses on a deeper level (from interview with Barrow, 2013, p.59).

Haynes (2002) writes about the ways in which conscious spirituality and creative aesthetic practices facilitate liberation in African and diasporic sensibilities. Her focus on women's veneration of the body aligns with the extent to which experiences with one's body and mind affected interviewees' choices to maintain intentional food practices. Some of the spiritual sensibilities Haynes (2002) discusses align with those of people whom I interviewed—in particular, the Yoruba/Santeria/Lucumi/Ifa/Orisha tradition--which has a food component and influenced the artwork of at least one interviewee.

Decolonization and Healing

Among my interviews, freedom and independence emerged as a prominent theme corresponding with personal and collective freedom, national independence and national and cultural liberations. Interviewees enacted food practices intentionally in order to re-claim a sense of identity and independence as Bahamians, as Africans, and as people following a variety of spiritual systems and practices. A key purpose of this work was to distill whether or not a connection exists between interviewees' intentional food practices and a desire for decolonization—particularly related to definitions of decolonization theory and practice that have emerged from the Caribbean.

Foodways were carried from Africa and altered to fit the new context. Taking the diasporic nature of this work and its associated literature into account, Warner (2015) writes that “One way African American agency can be seen is through material culture” (p.29). Data described in the previous chapter related to “Freedom and Independence” elucidates interviewees' reluctance to eat slave food and perpetuate colonialism through their food choices. New foodways and movements began during slavery and were carried through until the Civil Rights and liberation movements throughout the diaspora. These foodways and movements have laid the foundation for the contemporary conscious foodways that continue to emerge—including those connected to the food practices and motivations of the interviewees for this research.

Harris (2011) writes about the Great Migration of African Americans from the American South to the North:

Tattered clothing and knapsacks filled with meager belongings were replaced by scratchy new store-bought finery and flimsy cardboard suitcases, but the essential baggage that came in the hearts and heads of both enslaved and free was hope. Hope didn't change. It

A POETICS OF FOOD

remained a constant—the hope for a new place to live free, the hope for a place with jobs that would allow a person to support a family, the hope for a place in a country where they could be themselves and be at peace. (p.171)

This quote reflects a sense that emerged through my interviews. Over a third of the people I interviewed were born within five years of independence. I call these people Independence babies. In my time in The Bahamas, I have observed members of this generation grapple, individually and collectively, with how to break away from the structures that dictated their parents' generation and figure out who they want to be while maintaining respect for the practices and philosophies that allowed previous generations to survive.

Freedom and independence was a primary theme among the civil rights and black power movements in the 1960s—through which a connection to soul food and plant-based diets emerged strongly. The inter-relatedness of food as a broad indicator of individual and community health remains. As an example, the Berkeley Food Institute recently held a Community Forum on Black Liberation and the Food Movement. Stating its purpose, the forum

aims to address how structural racism and violence within the food system specifically affect the Black community, as well as the capacity of food system work to address Black liberation. The afternoon will include a Keynote address by former Black Panther poet and playwright Judy Juanita, a panel of Bay Area community leaders, and audience participatory breakout sessions on topics including: food sovereignty, economic development, Black farmers and agricultural production, police and community violence, food-related disease, trauma and healing (University of California - Berkeley, 2016).

A POETICS OF FOOD

Restoration and wholeness refer to physical, spiritual, emotional, cultural, and community health and the ways in which all of these aspects of health are inter-related. Armand (2011) writes,

the path toward integration can be viewed as hierarchical levels of increasing consciousness. Moving through this hierarchy involves removing the layers of discord or impurities from our being. The layers of discord may be experienced in one as resistances to existing in our natural state. Our natural state is free from disease. (p.10)

The themes of self-worth, development, freedom, and restoration and wholeness all speak to reasons why people of the African Diaspora turn to alternative medicine. Bailey (2002) mentions a lack of research that even acknowledges the use of alternative medicine in African American communities, let alone explores what it is, how it is used, and its effectiveness. He discusses two studies of alternative medicine in African American communities—one in New York City and the other in San Francisco. These studies resonate with my findings as they illuminate the use of herbal or bush teas/tinctures and discuss that these remedies and recipes were passed on by older generations (Bailey, 2002). Desires for independence, wholeness, and a new lifestyle in which people practice self-care is reflected by the black consciousness movement of the 1970s where people of African Ancestry looked to more natural approaches to health as part of a desired shift in collective identity (Semmes, 1990).

In a study of women managing breast cancer with a broad variety of alternative healing modalities, African American women were mentioned as using spiritual healing modalities more than any other modality (including dietary, herbal, physical, and psychological) (Bailey, 2002) – which aligns with the importance of spirituality and consciousness in healing and in facilitating people's food practices. Literature about

A POETICS OF FOOD

Rastafarian lifestyles and food practices also highlights the importance of food practices, spirituality, and wholeness in the African diaspora (see Barrett, 1997; see Kroll, 2006).

Ten (10) people indicated, explicitly, that we are what we eat. Brock (2004) discusses using food and diet as medicine – particularly through plant-based sources. She offers an overview of disorders prevalent in communities of the African Diaspora, such as non-communicable diseases and reproductive challenges, and explains how to manage them with one's diet – particularly through plant-based sources. Dr. Llaila Afrika offers a similar index of treating dis-eases through African medicine. His medical reference, however, outlines the philosophical underpinnings of African medicine and then offers plant, herb, and body-based treatments for hundreds of diseases.

Phillips (2010), follows veganism as part of what she identifies as ecowomanism, or “healing and honoring this collective human-environmental-spiritual superorganism through intentional social and environmental rebalancing as well as the spiritualization of human practices” (p.8). One interviewee also ascribed to womanism as a philosophy, denouncing religious systems that she sees as sexist. Phillips further writes. “Veganism is a strong expression of conscious harmlessness toward animals and plants and the earth's resources. It is aligned with a variety of spiritual belief systems that suggest a relationship between biological self-purification and spiritual growth” (Phillips, 2010). Phillips (2010) indicates that “Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and the Baha'i Faith” are among the religions that integrate intentional food practices to facilitate spiritual growth and commitment (p.11). According to literature on the subject, people enact intentional food practices for a variety of social, political, and ecological issues that connect them to something greater than themselves (and, often, to everything outside of themselves) (Phillips, 2010).

A POETICS OF FOOD

Belasco (2006) explores relationships between counterculture movements of the 1960s and 1970s—such as anti-war and environmental movements—to organizations such as the Nation of Islam and the Black Panthers. Other literature focuses on specific practices, such as veganism and vegetarianism and community gardens. This research seeks to describe the ways in which everyday food practices in and among the African and Caribbean diasporas illuminate particular senses of consciousness and identity.

Fifteen (15) people indicated that changing their food practices also meant changing their lifestyles. Phillips (2010) asserts that “veganism is not just a way of eating; it is a way of life” (p.9). Modern black consciousness that was born from merging nationalist and liberation struggles with the Civil Rights movement in the early to mid-20th Century began as an internationalist movement dedicated to peace, anti-violence and anti-war maintained an internationalist or diasporic orientation consciously (Williams, 2012).

Seven (7) interviewees discussed how choosing a different lifestyle and going more natural with their hair was related to their choices to be more intentional about what they ate. Van Deburg (1992) writes, “A natural hair style served as a highly visible imprimatur of blackness, a tribute to group unity; a statement of self-love and personal significance ... the natural look in hair styling became an important symbol of black cultural autonomy and psychological ‘debrainwashing’” (p.201)—or, decolonizing the imagination, freeing the mind.

Connected to the themes of collective self-sufficiency and exploring different modalities of healing, Walton, Jr. (1994) writes of African Americans living in oppressive conditions in South Carolina in the early 20th Century: “in this atmosphere of denial, rejection, restriction, and discrimination, blacks took their liberation—the liberation of their bodies, minds, physical well-being, and spiritual salvation—into their own hands” (p.62). Participating in her church’s Daniel Fast catalyzed Loyd-Paige’s (2010) choice to become vegan because of how different her body felt

A POETICS OF FOOD

when it was over and the sense of community it created. A Daniel's Diet or Daniel Fast eliminates all animal products, stimulants, and intoxicants from one's diet. One of the interviewees in my research also named The Daniel's Diet as a practice that facilitated his food journey practically and spiritually. Daniel Fasts are practiced by various churches in Nassau – particularly during Lent. While working with friends and associates in different plant-based food establishments, I encountered people following Daniel Fasts, noticing the differences in their bodies, and wanting to know more about how to maintain the diet as a diet, and not simply a fast.

Transformational Learning and Empowerment

Twenty (20) interviewees defined acquiring knowledge and information—both by searching for it and by discovery—as a catalyst for shifting beliefs and behaviors. Participants engaged with a variety of sources and resources, including from formal education (4 people), family and community elders (7 people), books (15 people), other people, and the internet/multimedia. These resources were connected to a broad range of themes that emerged at various points along their journeys of food and consciousness. Six (6) people noted that engagement with formal institutions of learning affected their journeys, while all twenty (20) people sought to acquire knowledge and information on their own accord. These pursuits for knowledge and information based on the everyday realities of interviewees' lives relate to transformational theories of learning and reveal how certain ways of learning affect behaviors of learners and their senses of empowerment—especially among adult learners.

Cranton (2006) defines adult learners as “mature, socially responsible individuals who participate in sustained informal or formal activities that lead them to acquire new knowledge, skills, or values; elaborate on existing knowledge, skills, or values; revise their basic beliefs and

A POETICS OF FOOD

assumptions; or change the way they see some aspect of themselves or the world around them.”

(p.2) The types of learning and knowledge acquisition that interviewees described correlate with active (Better, 2013), autonomous (Atehortua, 2010), or transformational learning paradigms—especially from humanist perspectives. Humanist student-centered learning is a process-oriented approach (Atehortua, 2010) considered analogous to “personal growth, consciousness raising and empowerment” (Tangney 2014, p.267). Cranton (2006) asserts, “When something unexpected happens, when a person encounters something that does not fit in with his or her expectations of how things should be, based on past experience, the choices are to reject the unexpected or to question the expectation. When people critically examine their habitual expectations, revise them, and act on the revised point of view, transformative learning occurs.” (p.19)

In alignment with Mezirow, Cranton (2006) defines transformative learning as “a process by which previously uncritically assimilated assumptions, beliefs, values, and perspectives are questioned and thereby become more open, permeable, and better validated.” (p.2) She later adds that it “incorporate[s] imagination, intuition, soul, and affect.” (p.2) Brookfield and Holst (2011) quote Cranton’s definition and further attest that “transformative learning is a rich hermeneutic since moving toward more cooperative, collective, democratic, and socialist ways of thinking and living requires a transformation in the ways we think, the ways we act toward each other, the ways we organize society and politics, the ways we distribute the resources available to us, and the ways we understand the purpose of life.” (p.33) They quote Mezirow’s assertion that “transformative learning involves liberating ourselves from reified forms of thought that are no longer dependable” (Mezirow quoted in Brookfield & Holst, 2011, p.34).

Brookfield and Holst (2011) avow that transformative learning has an anti-Capitalist purpose and define it as “a theoretical starting point for understanding how people learn a whole new way of being—a way of thinking, acting, feeling, and creating—that moves from acquisition

A POETICS OF FOOD

to creative fulfillment in association with others.” (p.34) From this perspective, learners feel empowered when they are allowed to take control of their own learning, their knowledge acquisition, and the ways in which they integrate what is acquired it into their own lives. This seems to be true, especially, when the catalyzing moment or subject of the learning is the desire to break out of a paradigm that represses one from achieving her or his full expression as an autonomous being (Tangney, 2014).

Mezirow’s Ten Phases of Transformative Learning (listed below) are a significant piece of the foundation of transformative learning, and reflect the ways in which interviewees’ described the learning processes upon which they have embarked on their food journeys.

Table 6.1

Mezirow’s Ten Phases of Transformative Learning (Kitchenham, 2008, p105)

| Phase Order | Phase Description |
|-------------|--|
| Phase 1 | A disorienting dilemma |
| Phase 2 | A self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame |
| Phase 3 | A critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions |
| Phase 4 | Recognition that one’s discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change. |
| Phase 5 | Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions |
| Phase 6 | Planning of a course of action |
| Phase 7 | Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one’s plans |
| Phase 8 | Provisional trying of new roles |
| Phase 9 | Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships |
| Phase 10 | A reintegration into one’s life on the basis of conditions dictated by one’s perspective |

Cranton (2006) writes that, although transformative learning is voluntary, “People may not always deliberately set out to critically question their beliefs and values; many times transformative learning is prompted by an outside event and that event may be unexpected, hurtful, or devastating” (p.6). This idea reflecting Mezirow’s first phase corresponds with catalysts

A POETICS OF FOOD

on the journey described by interviewees that included disorienting dilemmas such as interviewees or their loved ones getting sick, sparking senses of betrayal by allopathic medicine or realizations that the values and actions of spiritual/religious systems in which they were raised were incongruous. As one interviewee stated,

I find myself ... usin the Bible, and I readin scriptures, but I don't see my family followin it. I don't see my pastor's followin it. None of the church members followin it. But the Bible sayin this is what it supposed to do. In Leviticus, it's tellin the priest that they're, they should look like me. You shouldn't be shavin and you should have locks. Again, it says that if, in Numbers six, chapter six, it's like – hey, um, if a man or woman chooses to separate themself unto the Lord – well, isn't that what every god-fearin person tryin to do? Separate themselves unto the Lord? So, everybody should separate themselves to the Lord and follow this Nazarene vow if that's the case. So it like, well, how come no body else is doin it? Now we could see examples where, like for Samson – his mother woulda took him to be a Nazarite unto the Lord – well, how come no one ... givin their children unto the Lord? If you love your children more than the Lord? Or, so, it wasn't makin no sense. We sayin one thing. We practicin one thing (Interviewee H).

Cranton writes that transformative learning can be differentiated from other forms of adult learning in which a person seeks to solve a practical problem or solve a problem practically because it is “driven by critical *self*-reflection, exploration, and intuition with no further reference to the world outside of the self.” (p.7) This idea is reflected in Mezirow's second and third phases. Self-examination and critical assessment came out in the form of anger, rejection of one's previous education, and rejection of the history one had been taught about one's roots and identity. This aspect of the process is demonstrated by the following quotes:

A POETICS OF FOOD

at the time, I was reading *Fit for Life* is when I was really just understandin how lied to we were, and are ... THAT'S when like I pushed EVERYTHING back to the side.

Cause like, if they lyin to us about food, what else they lyin about? I questioned church, I questioned food, I questioned ... any information that came across me (Interviewee A).

it's – the information that triggered a curiosity about what else I did not know, that I thought was true, that wasn't true. And, you know, that then, you know, increase me to check, uh, you know, my personal history ... (Interviewee X).

When I found out, when I really started reading information about food and realizing how I'd been lied to, pretty much. Like, I really went on a SERIOUS rampage. You know, on finding out the truth. And, from then, I've never really stopped learning (Interviewee L).

Mezirow's phase 4 relates to adult learners' realizations that their experiences are not isolated to them. Cranton (2006) writes that "Discourse with others may play a vital role," (p.7) but that "transformation can also occur without collaboration, so I do not think we can describe collaboration as being a defining characteristic of transformative learning" (p.8). While it may be true that transformation can occur without collaboration, interviewees made strong assertions about the importance of reaching out to find other people making similar changes, about changes made because of their connections to others, and the needed for community in order to maintain their chosen lifestyles. These assertions are demonstrated in the following quotes:

It was so important, um, to know that there were people out there that they could listen to, that they could turn to, for ongoing regular guidance, information ... (Interviewee Q).

A POETICS OF FOOD

Support systems are very very very important to maintaining this kinda lifestyle
(Interviewee Y).

As my journey, you know, goes on, I'm tryna or wantin to find, you know, the healthy,
the healthy people as well as, while, I myself is on this journey, the group allow
information to be expose ... so, people could now carry on their own journey ...
(Interviewee R).

As I was changing my diet ... what I know is that because I had about I would say 10 to
about, let's say 15 to 20 different people also changing their diet. It made it easier.
Because if there were days when I didn't feel like cooking, I could go to somebody else's
house and they're cooking, you know? ... so that support system: I think it was key for
allowin me to, you know, maintain the diet (Interviewee A).

These quotes also reinforce Cranton's (2006) discussion about the role of learner networks, which she refers to as "any sustained relationship among a group of people within a formal or informal learning context or a relationship that extends beyond the boundaries of the learning group" (p.166). Related, Better (2013) writes, "Being able to reflect on their [her students'] experiences heightened their sociological eye and made the students more accountable and more engaged in class" (p.392). In addition to needing to reach out to others and find community and support to maintain practices, seven (7) respondents—all of whom are male—described participating in "reasoning sessions" where they could discuss and debate the knowledge and information they acquired as critical to developing their own beliefs and maintaining behaviors that align with them.

A POETICS OF FOOD

Interviewees engaged in Mezirow's phases 5, 6, and 7 (exploring, experimenting, and acquiring knowledge) when they researched the changes they were considering and/or experiencing and started experimenting with new ways of being. Authors in *Sistah Vegan* similarly named a multitude of resources, such as *Kripalu Kitchen: A Natural Foods Cookbook & Nutritional Guide*, *The Green Lifestyle Handbook* by Jeremy Rifkin, *Body and Soul: Profits with Principles*, *Mother Earth*, the *Utne Reader*, Dick Gregory, *Sugar Blues* by William Dufty, and *Eternal Treblinka* by Charles Patterson. For example, interviewees described reading books about food and food practices, taking nutrition and healthy cooking classes, experimenting to find new ways of cooking the comfort foods they grew up eating, and using their creativity to develop recipes using what is readily available and/or in season. These practices are demonstrated by the following quotes:

Before I even knew bout a spiralizer and noodles, right? I would say, ok, I wanna eat pasta ... So I said, ok. What can I use? ... I started usin all kinda things that would give me that crunch ... I don't care what the actual item is, but as long as it could duplicate that sensation that I'm looking for? So, I started experimenting with those kinda things (Interviewee F).

I was tryin to figure out like a substitute for eggs ... I used apple sauce sometimes, Bananas sometimes ... once we got to the point where, you know, we could make those in vegan form. Then like, life got a little easier (Interviewee A).

It's also kind of exciting to get a box of mixed goods and then try and figure out, you know, what you're gonna make, of that (Interviewee Z).

A POETICS OF FOOD

We're also, like very adventurous. So we'll ... we like to make new things from the same ingredients. So we'll go online and just, like, google ingredients and look up recipes (Interviewee B).

Cranton (2006) writes, "By definition, transformative learning leads to a changed self-perception. When people revise their habits of mind, they are reinterpreting their sense of self in relation to the world" (p.8). This relates to Mezirow's phase 8 related to people's attempts to live into their shifting identities. This phase was activated when interviewees made efforts to integrate their desired changes into a lifestyle that suited the beliefs they were developing and shifting. It relates especially to interviewees' shift in the relationship between their personal/ancestral history, their identities, and their overall lifestyles. This idea is demonstrated by the following quotes:

I think that's [food production] a good starting point, for people to wake up and realize, and start ... to take pride in their identity as Bahamian, as a, as a human being existin in our little clump a land where our ancestors gave us, that OUR family have roots (Interviewee U).

You can't just cut out the meat, and expect to lose the weight. And expect to be healthy. You gotta change everything. One thing can't just get drop out. You gotta balance out (Interviewee L).

To say no to chitlins and how dog and, ya know, hamburger and all that stuff is not just sayin no to the food. It's sayin no to Mummy. It's sayin no to Daddy. It's sayin no to everybody who fed you and nurtured you (Interviewee A).

A POETICS OF FOOD

When you start talking about the way you grew up, and, what you ate and when you kinda begin to poke holes at that, it becomes offensive. For some. For many. Um, so you wanna be mindful of that too (Interviewee Q).

Mezirow's phases 9 and 10 relate to taking what one has learned, integrating it into one's life, and sharing it with others. These phases manifested themselves when interviewees integrated the information they gathered with their experiences and took it out into the community in various forms of activism and education. For example, interviewees shared:

Green Earth Festival ... brings together as many businesses, companies, locally – and internationally ... that sells products and services in the area of, of health, wellness, or, and/or sustainability – eco-friendly (Interviewee Q).

We started a revolution on that campus, because, we went to the, to cafeteria and we were like – where are the vegan options? And, you know, this is America! So I, I ended up getting a refund ... I got, uh, money back, because I'm not eating from this cafeteria, because you don't have high-quality foods, and there's no vegan options, and I refuse to eat pasta and marinara sauce ... And we were like, well, where's the soy ... we protested and we lobbied and, and we went to the dean ... we were like, bad-ass. You know? (Interviewee D).

Growing it and selling it direct to consumer at the farmers market helps me to encourage people to prepare non-traditional Bahamian vegetables in a different way ... that helps me to, to share, you know, spread the knowledge on crops ... how to prepare them (Interviewee S).

A POETICS OF FOOD

what we've decided to do is, to figure out how to grow ideas. Figure out how to grow ideas. Because we know that we not going to get anybody to pay us for our ideas, until we get them to appreciate the culture of indigenous ideas. And so we know we have to feed them until they get their mind right, to be able to understand what we're talkin about. And we have to, to be able to feed them, we have to make it affordable – because we're not cosmopolitan enough – see, the ideas that we bring and the way that we bring aren't cosmopolitan enough to attract the people, but we know that if we could get the food into them, that eventually, they will begin to hear us, right? So it's, it is a very subversive and subtle campaign to get people to do better, by gettin them to think better, by giving them opportunities to eat better (Interviewee J).

Many of the people I interviewed discussed their food journeys as connected to their journeys of consciousness. Freire (1973) discusses learning—adult learning, in particular—as a process of “conscientization” (Kitchenham, 2008). “Conscientization” or “conscientização,” “refers to learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (Freire, 1993, p.17). Freire (1973) writes,

The more accurately men grasp true causality, the more critical their understanding of reality will be. Their understanding will me magical to the degree that they fail to grasp causality. Further, critical consciousnessalways submits that causality to analysis; what is true today may not be so tomorrow ... Critical consciousnesss is integrated with reality ... Once man perceives a challenge, understands it, and recognizes the possibilities of response, he acts. The nature of that action corresponds to the nature of his understanding. (p.44)

One of the pioneers of critical and radical political education, in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1993) suggests,

A POETICS OF FOOD

This, then, is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well. The oppressors, who oppress, exploit, and rape by virtue of their power, cannot find in this power the strength to liberate either the oppressed or themselves. Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both. (p.26)

Freire's pedagogy holds three levels of thought, with critical consciousness being the ultimate goal. Shor (1993) writes about these levels:

The lowest stage is the most dominated, 'intransitive thought,' where people live fatalistically, thinking that their fate is out of their hands. Only luck or God can influence their lives. They do not think their action can change their conditions. Disempowered ... The next level of thought is 'semi-transitive,' where people exercise some thought and action for change. Partly empowered, they act to change things and make a difference, but they relate to problems one at a time in isolation, rather than seeing the whole system underlying any single issue ... Those people who do think holistically and critically about their conditions reflect the highest development of thought and action, 'critical consciousness.' Freire refers to this group's thought as 'critical transitivity,' to suggest the dynamism between critical thought and critical action ... A critically transitive thinker feels empowered to think and to act on the conditions around her or him, and relates those conditions to the larger contexts of power in society." (p.32)

According to Shor (1993), Freirean education has four qualities: "Power Awareness, Critical Literacy, Desocialization, and Self-Organization/Self-Education" (p.32), to which are attached "An agenda of values" that he (Shor) describes as: "Participatory, Situated, Critical, Democratic, Dialogic, Desocialized, Multicultural, Research-Oriented, Activist, Affective." (p.34)

A POETICS OF FOOD

These values relate not only to the experiences discussed by the people I interviewed, but also to both the research methodology and theoretical methodology that served as the foundation for this dissertation. Finally, and also related to the methodology of this research, Brookfield and Holst (2011) discuss transformative learning's aesthetic dimension, asserting that "the spontaneous and passionate forces at play in artistic creativity intersect with radical learning and education." (p.145) Supporting the integration of aesthetic theory and practice into transformative adult education, Brookfield and Holst (2011) further write,

Anytime you choose to engage with a new experience or to try to appreciate the internal rules of new artistic forms, you are engaged in aesthetic learning that challenges customary ways of assigning meaning and that opens you up to the spontaneous, nonrational, and emotional elements of your being ... The political significance of art is that it helps us make this break with the ordinary and gives us new forms of visual and spoken language that open us to new ways of sensing and feeling. (p.145-146)

This concept aligns with the previous section in this chapter that explores interview participants' discussions of how arts, entertainment, and cultural practice have affected their journeys.

Relationship and Community

Philpott (2013) defines right relationship as "the entire set of obligations of everyone in the community in relationship to one another," and situates it within a framework of restoration, reconciliation, and forgiveness (p.403). Bowers (2012) discusses the importance of intentional practices in Mi'kmaq culture to facilitate right relationship "in human and natural systems" (p.300). Dowd (2011) quotes Loyal Rue in his discussion of right relationship as harmony between all peoples and species:

A POETICS OF FOOD

living in harmony with reality may be accepted as formal definition of wisdom. If we live at odds with reality (foolishly), then we will be doomed, but if we live in proper relationship with reality (wisely), then we shall be saved. Humans everywhere and at all times, have had at least a tacit understanding of this fundamental principle. What we are less in agreement about is how we should think about reality and what we should do to bring ourselves into harmony with it. (p.28)

Similarly, Bonnett (2002) uses the term right relationship to define sustainability. Phillips (2010), a contributor to *Sistah Vegan* and self-identified ecowomanist, describes “conscious harmlessness” as a part of right relationship defined by “ahimsa,” or “nonviolence and respect for all life” in Buddhist, Jain, and Hindu philosophies (p.8).

Just as sharing food and Sunday Dinner emerged as critical in my research, Whit (2007) and Gourdine (2011) describe both sharing food and eating together as important components to African American foodways and maintaining African American culture. Cooking with love was named as a preparation practice in my research. In the 1970s in Harlem, cooking with love was considered the determining factor for whether or not food could be defined as soul food . Van Deburg (1992) writes, “As Obie Green, Georgia-born proprietor of one of Harlem’s soul food eateries told a reporter in 1968, ‘Soul means love. And I cook with soul and feeling. I couldn’t be a dollar-sign cook if I tried’ (p.203). He further states, “Individuals such as Green claimed to cook by ‘vibration,’ constantly improvising and altering their recipes to suit the mood or the moment (Van Deburg, 1992, p.203), which aligns with the idea in my interviews that there is a “mood of the food,” that energy is transferred through food, and that people are constantly experimenting and improvising.

Conclusion

This research produced a rich and thick data. This chapter assessed how this data relates to the following themes: (1) Emerging Foodways/Emerging Identities; (2) Arts, Culture, and Creative Practice; (3) Decolonization and Healing; (4) Transformational Learning and Empowerment; and (5) Relationship and Community. While each of these themes was discussed separately, they are united by the themes discussed in the previous chapter about the relationship between people's food practices and their broader themes. These themes both connect this research to previous research and thought and create a foundation for future research and ways of thinking about this topic. An examination of how some of that future research might be framed is provided in the following chapter.

Chapter 7

Conclusion and Considerations for the Future

“When you get to the end,
go back to the beginning,
go back to what you know.
It was “accidental,”
emerging from everyday experiences.

Making do with what was available,
I was so scared I’d be rejected,
be subjected to a loss I couldn’t bear,
complicating my life with my constant critical stare”
~(Booker, 2015a)

Introduction

This research is about whether and how people’s food practices in The Bahamas connect to their journeys of consciousness, to the things that both offer and shape meaning in their everyday lives. It explores how some of the most basic practices of everyday life can connect to and reflect how we come into and live through our understandings of who we are. It examines how we experience the reality of being in the world in this life in these individual bodies we inhabit on this Ecological body, the Earth, our home.

Perceiving consciousness as larger than a single grand narrative is central to this work. It supports the idea that daily intentional decisions are both indicators of coming into and maintaining a sense of consciousness as well as expressions of particular beliefs. Can food play a part in how we are awakened and brought into the fullness of our being? According to the majority of participants in this research, it can. According to my findings, food is both a force to facilitate awakening and an indicator of whether and how awakening occurs because eating is a daily necessity for human existence—whether or not it is practiced intentionally.

A POETICS OF FOOD

This research is about journeys of consciousness or spirituality—the movement of our positionality as our sense of being expands—rather than *states* of consciousness. It describes particular moments or events experienced by individuals that they perceived as expansions of their being and/or increased senses of connection with themselves, other people, and the planet. This work is also about how our relationships with the bodies we're in affect our relationships with the body we're on. In the same way that the people I interviewed made connections between their bodies and their minds, many argue that a connection exists between collective consciousness and the health of individual ecosystems and the biome (Grimm, Grove, Pickett, & Redman, 2000; Ingalsbee, 1996; Kineman & Poli, 2014; Lahiri-Dutt & Samanta, 2013). The individual mind must be integrated in order to move in definitive, if fluid, directions (Armand, 2011). Armand (2011) discusses personal integration as correlated—if not synonymous—with consciousness expansion. Collective consciousness, similarly, cannot interact intentionally with the Earth's ecology unless it is integrated. Collective consciousness, too, must be integrated in order to move definitively toward collective health and wholeness.

The theories of creolization, critique, and poetics from which I drew to develop the framework for this research align with the realities of everyday lives in the Caribbean to illuminate both the challenges and possibilities of this process at the collective level. This research seeks to apply these theories and processes to demonstrate that looking at the particularities of individual experiences actually facilitates the ability to see similar desires, similar hopes and dreams for the future. Further, it seeks to bear witness to individual experiences of integration that might provide models or microcosms of collective experiences of integration.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Through an examination of a specific lineage of critique, creolization, and poetics from the Caribbean, I developed a theoretical methodology I refer to as the Aesthetics of Everyday Life. The topic of my research is food and consciousness – how consciousness emerges through the Aesthetics of Everyday Life and what that looks like through the material realities of people's food practices. The Aesthetics of Everyday Life is a methodology defined and described in depth in article 2. It is comprised of Experiential Specificity; Expression through multiple forms, languages, and genres; Temporal and spatial fluidity; Orientations toward the generative/transformative; and Aesthetic practice as political economic practice. Experiential Specificity refers to the need to define the particulars of a person's experience or life – as each one differs in a diverse world. Expression through multiple forms, languages, and genres honors the many languages that one speaks to convey similar ideas—sometimes out of habit, and sometimes out of necessity. Temporal and spatial fluidity refer to the differential ways in which people who employ this methodology move through the world. Orientations toward the generative and transformative are an aspect of the methodology that seeks to imagine new ways of being in the world that build rather than degrade. Aesthetic practice as political economic practice illuminates the potentially subversive nature of aesthetic practices and the ways in which they can transform political economies.

This conclusion moves fluidly, in alignment with the Aesthetics of Everyday Life, even as it incorporates traditional academic approaches. It is meant to illuminate how the process of doing research is a food practice that parallels the journeys to and through consciousness described by the people I interviewed. I want to show that research is not a mysterious activity, but one tradition, one method among many that can facilitate journeys of returning to and living fully the truths of who we are. It's not mysterious, though it can be mystical – and I am privileged

A POETICS OF FOOD

to say that my own experience has included mysticism, even as, a perhaps because, I have been challenged. Research might be seen as a form of divinatory initiation, just as divinatory practices might be considered indigenous forms of research. I have used a method that merges constant comparative analysis with poetic analysis to define a holistic perspective of the intentional food practices of a particular group of people to nurture and support emergent educational structures and all of the other structures that dictate our lives.

Research Design

Perhaps decolonization is built into the design,
since it's surprising,
given the identity I'm often assigned,
that III could be the embodiment of decolonization:
a visceral sensation of uncertainty
that is expansive, not pedantic.
And when people ask:
"The Bahamas--what is it like?"
I find American English
never cuts it quite right
in a way that's properly aligned
with the way Bahamians signify their signs. (Booker, 2015a)

The theoretical framework for my dissertation is about movement, evolution, and development of expression and form. My dissertation itself is also meant to illuminate the emergence of a particular form and expression and to offer the literature's support for doing so. My research design was developed in conjunction with my theoretical framework and philosophical underpinnings. My theoretical methodology, the Aesthetics of Everyday Life, informed my research methods, which are described in depth in Article 3. I describe a collection of ethnographic methodologies and methods that I drew from to conduct this research so that the actual research could take place congruently with the dynamism and limitations of the Aesthetics of Everyday Life.

A POETICS OF FOOD

This research is a culmination of my own daily experiences and the interviews which very much occurred within the confines of everyday life in Nassau – breastfeeding babies, dropping kids off to daycare, meeting in people’s work places, homes, places of worship, and coffeehouses. Given that reality, I am articulating my research in a way that resonates with my understanding of the Aesthetics of Everyday Life in Nassau. The interviews, like this dissertation and the emerging forms of Caribbean cultural production with which it is associated, move fluidly in and out of different languages, dialects, and genres that are both spoken and written languages.

Every dialect is a language that portrays a perspective of the world that can’t be conveyed through any other means. Every time a language is rejected, so too, is a culture; so too, is a whole set of knowledge; so too, is an entire system of understanding that may hold a piece of the puzzle to solving a problem or saving the world. To only convey my research through written form would eclipse the meaning of what I understand and have the power to convey. It would denigrate the power and value of the Bahamian spoken word – a language that has become a critical aspect of my own linguistic palate and the way I understand the world. For this reason, I performed poetry based on my research in Nassau at an art studio and national historic site, accompanied by African drummers. To convey my work solely in academic forms would not only ignore the reality of the lives of the people with whom I have been working, but it would be rejecting a part of myself that has been illuminated because of my life in Nassau. I have been a part of this community, I have experienced and performed these practices on a visceral level, and I have relationships with others who engage in these practices. I have a desire to use the authority that comes with conducting research as a personal food practice to illuminate the performative power of people constructing autonomous individual and cultural identities and emerging foodways through the acts of their daily lives.

Dissertation Summary

This research examines intentional food practices and conscious foodways in a Bahamian context and relates it to literature about how intentional food practices have formed African diasporic experience—particularly related to practices and experiences of consciousness from slavery through to the contemporary time. Intentional food practices as acts of consciousness and spirituality are traced to set the foundation for the philosophies of liberation and anti-colonialism that are traced through a particular lineage of poetics, creolization, and critique from the Caribbean. This work seeks both to describe the ways in which food practices are cultural practices and why cultural, creative, and aesthetic practices are important within the lineage of poetics, creolization, and critique from the Caribbean that I have traced.

The beginning of the dissertation attempts to form an ethical foundation of connectedness and the value of everyday lives and practices that relate to the content of the research. I have sought to maintain those same ethics and sensibilities in the methodologies and methods I chose to conduct this research. I chose the methods and methodologies from which I drew intentionally because of how I felt they align with the realities of my own everyday life in Nassau and the philosophies and theories from which I have drawn. The methods are meant to demonstrate my commitment to my theoretical methodology, the Aesthetics of Everyday Life, and to afford opportunities for me to employ that methodology by articulating my research in a number of different ways and venues. The literature review explores cultural and anthropological literature of food practices as well as literature about intentional or conscious food practices in the African diaspora. My data connects with this by illuminating the individual intentional food practices of a particular group of people and the reasons why they enact them.

Limitations of the Research

This research is a particular study based on single interviews that took place within a short period of time. In many ways, it is not replicable—particularly given the fact that I know and have relationships with many of the people I interviewed. Familiarity with one's research participants allows for richer and deeper conversations. It allowed me to have conversations in which both I and interviewees could refer to previous experiences and knowledge. It facilitates a feeling of trust. One interviewee noted this explicitly, reflecting on our first meeting several years prior:

I will say this. There was, there was a thought in the back a my head, you know, when you first came around, and, were askin the questions and whichever. I say hold on, hold on. This white girl here to try to infiltrate and, and from inside break shit down, kinda thing, whatever? Cause, right throughout history, you have those people. This is why, you know, Marcus Garvey situation and kinda, you know, dealing with infiltratin from the inside, broke it down. So, I'm like, hold on, hold on. I ain' ga free my information. I don't know how she know, but I gotta watch you. I gotta make sure you with us. (Interviewee R).

While familiarity has its benefits, it also has limitations—particularly in a small place. While close relationships might allow people to feel more comfortable sharing certain perspectives, it could also inhibit people from sharing pieces of personal information based on their perceptions of me, their understandings of who I know, and their beliefs about my beliefs. Sometimes, it is easier to be honest with someone unknown and not connected to one's community and life.

I did not do a pilot study or pilot interview. While a pilot study would have allowed me to test the study instrument before I implemented it, pilot studies are not always employed in or considered necessary in ethnographic research (Forsey, 2010). Generally, the instrument

A POETICS OF FOOD

remained the same – though, a couple of the questions changed over time. Primarily, this was related to the changing qualifications for identifying potential participants, which would not have emerged in a pilot study since it was related more to the method of selecting participants than it was to the interview questions. While this shift created a broader pool from which to draw and expanded the definition of intentionality and consciousness that was implemented, it also shifted some of the underlying assumptions that I had coming into the research.

The people I interviewed consistently did not perceive the way that I intended one question. I asked people what they wished other people knew about their food choices and a number of people's responses indicated that they believed that I was asking why they think other people should maintain the same practices as theirs. The question I meant to ask was about what people would like to share with others that they think would allow others to know them better or more fully.

Moving forward, there are slightly different questions I might ask to move more deeply into how people feel their food practices reflect their senses of self. I think this is true, especially, given that the shift in how respondents were chosen created a shift in how I discussed the underlying values that are reflected by people's food practices. Additionally, these interviews were and were meant to be exploratory. They were meant to create a foundation for how to converse about food security from within the bounds of a particular framework—the realities of everyday life in Nassau. As a result, my inquiry in the interviews did not include questions that named specific food practices – nor did I incorporate such questions into succeeding interviews, as a grounded theory approach might recommend. This means that, most likely, people did not mention all of their food practices, which may have also affected how they articulated their reasons for choosing the practices they did share.

A POETICS OF FOOD

It seemed as though there was a lack of differentiation for some of the respondents (though, certainly not all) between their own practices, their beliefs about food, and their beliefs about the food practices they believed people should enact. I tried to compensate for this with my data analysis through very careful readings. I only included in my analysis food practices that people indicated that they enact personally.

In the future, I might be more cognizant of interviewing people with whom referees have clear relationships, as opposed to interviewing people who are referred to me because they have a reputation in the community of working with particular issues or having particular missions. I noticed a difference in the quality of interaction when either I knew the person I interviewed or the person I interviewed had a clear personal relationship with the person who referred him or her. Additionally, because I know most of the people I interviewed, I know that a majority of them are under the age of 50. As a result, the perspectives, lives, and experiences of elder Bahamians were overlooked, even as many of the people I interviewed expressed the critical influence of their elder family and community members.

This research was not meant to be statistical or to produce statistics. Rather, it was meant to develop a different narrative about food and food practices in The Bahamas. While this can afford cultural significance, I am also aware of the ways in which those in power privilege statistical data over narrative.

Implications and Recommendations for Theory

This research contributes to existing theory because it connects a broad range of theories that, typically, remain unconnected in academic literature even as they are connected in everyday lives. The literature review contributes to current theories and provides a springboard for future theoretical development. A plethora of literature exists about diasporic consciousness,

A POETICS OF FOOD

black consciousness, the black Atlantic, and black internationalism. Yet, intentional food practices in the African Diaspora and the connection between intentional food practices and consciousness beyond soul food are sparse—despite the fact that food is mentioned at least minimally in much of the literature. This literature review seeks to center food specifically and material realities generally in order to suggest that food might be viewed as both a tool for and indicator of consciousness within the African diaspora and in self-identified communities generally.

Similarly to the literature review, the theoretical framework seeks to build a theory of how to view certain experiences and types of experiences within the contexts of everyday lives with differing particularities in systems with shared phenomena. *The Aesthetics of Everyday Life* is a theoretical methodology that can serve to navigate multiple cultural and material realities and foci of lives in diaspora. As globalization, cultural diversification, and creolization increase across contexts, so does the need for frameworks that align with realities of diaspora, multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, hybridity, and complexity.

A Poetics of Food, like the literature review, seeks less to develop a new theory, and more, to illuminate and center ideas and perspectives that already exist but are marginalized in the literature. *A Poetics of Food* is a way of understanding the material realities of one of the most basic practices of human existence, of understanding what that looks like. It is not only about how the experiences are lived, it is also about how they are understood and conveyed – which serves as a critical component of my methodology.

No one document or expression can articulate all of the realities that of people who eat (which would be all people). Therefore, no one document or expression is adequate to articulate multiple sources of data and types of sources of data in ways that allow those sources' underlying spirits to remain true. As a result, aligned with my theoretical framework, multiple expressions,

A POETICS OF FOOD

genres, and languages are necessary. This dissertation is one expression of the research I have conducted. It is meant to provide a document that is accessible to the academic community reviewing it and serves as one of many forms of expression I intend to use to convey the research that I have conducted.

This dissertation is written in a particular style that resonates with the conventions of academia. Similarly, other documents and expressions are conveyed in ways that resonate with the conventions of other cultural systems. What is accessible to the academic community might not be accessible to those who are unfamiliar with that community's conventions. Similarly, what is conventional in other communities, often, remains inaccessible and misunderstood to academic communities. Glissant (1989, 1997), specifically, discusses this reality as being one of the prime reasons why multiple languages, genres, and forms are necessary. He calls it opacity—the ability to understand that there will always be something that cannot be understood about other people's lives. This resonates with my belief that ethnographers are not called to understand the realities of other people's lives. Rather, we are called to bear witness to the ways in which other people seek to understand their own lives—a task that requires us to understand and reflect upon our own lives.

Research about the development of food practices and their relationships to the systems and structures that support them has implications for understanding effective strategies for overall economic development. Furthermore, understanding sustainable food practices, economies, and development as cultural practices connects the efficacy of sustainable economic development to the sustainability of cultural and aesthetic practices and the ways they affect collective consciousness of people within particular contexts.

I suggest the following recommendations for further research based on the contributions this research might offer theoretical development:

A POETICS OF FOOD

- Conduct this research on other islands in The Bahamas and other islands in the Caribbean.
- Compare studies between islands in The Bahamas, in The Caribbean, and in other diasporic contexts.
- Apply the Aesthetics of Everyday Life to other material realities in The Bahamas and elsewhere.
- Consider what histories are told and used to inform research, how they are told, and to whom.
- Accumulate a more Bahamian-centric theoretical base—use more literature written by people in The Bahamas to inform theoretical approach.
- Explore further the poignancy of aesthetics, culture, and creative practice as theoretical methodologies to stimulate the creative cultural economy and its research capacity in The Bahamas specifically and in the Caribbean and its diasporas generally.
- Integrate more non-written forms of expression and their interpretations into theoretical frameworks.
- Flesh out the taxonomy of Bahamian foodways further and explore how Bahamian foodways are situated in and across time and space.
- Explore relationships between healing the individual psyche (i.e. trans-personal psychological and anti-psychiatric frameworks) and healing collective psyches (i.e. socio-psychological and political economic philosophies related to structural inequalities and liberation that appear frequently in the literature associated with African diasporic experiences).

A POETICS OF FOOD

- Examine diasporic experiences as emerging cross-cultural spiritual practices, hybrid structures that inform personal lives, and collective spiritual structures.
- Explore intentional medicinal and spiritual practices that people enact in order to facilitate mutual and holistic healing and restoration of their bodies and consciousness that are considered Earth-centric approaches.
- Explore the unique particularities of traditional African spiritual systems in diaspora—particularly what its unique form of Earth-centrism has to offer understandings of what it means to be connected to the Earth as one body with many diverse ecologies.
- Explore the politics of faith, care, hope, and love in theoretical approaches.

Implications and Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Currently, this is the only research that examines individual intentional food practices in The Bahamas. Recent research, such as the sustainable Exuma project (Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 2015), seeks to understand the lives of people in The Bahamas so that people in The Bahamas might be taught how to live more sustainably. This is the only study that examines how people in The Bahamas have developed health, justice, and sustainability-centered approaches to food and food practices in contemporary life while working within the limitations of everyday life in Nassau specifically and The Bahamas generally. As such, it illuminates practices and structures that people enact to facilitate their own wellness. This is a minimal study and further research needs to explore the practices and realities of a larger and more diverse population. Nonetheless, this research and its focus might provide a foundation for

A POETICS OF FOOD

understanding which policies and resources governmental and non-governmental agencies and actors might emphasize for the greatest efficacy.

This research suggests that people in Nassau are producing food for themselves and others in ecologically sustainable ways and with minimal inputs, reversing their health problems, decreasing stress on the healthcare system, developing their own economies, working together, and sharing food and information in order to maintain their health and promote the health of others. While these programs and individual actions are small, they could also be perceived as microcosms of larger programs. Rather than recreating programs and initiatives from other contexts, policy makers and reformers might look to the realities of these systems and offer more opportunities for support. This research suggests that people feel empowered and take action to better themselves and their communities in generative ways when they feel as though they have access to the information they need to make informed decisions about their lives. Such data supports popular movements to implement a Bahamian Freedom of Information Act, to improve the public library system, and to introduce a more experientially-based education system that motivates people to reflect on their own lives. This research suggests that people have a greater sense of national pride when they have a multi-faceted perspective of their identities and histories. Such data supports expanding both what histories are taught and the ways in which they are taught. This research suggests that when people eat more vegetables, they feel better mentally and physically and, as a result, they are more likely to take actions that both maintain their own health and support that of others. Such data supports finding ways of making vegetable consumption more economical.

While this research focuses primarily on food practices, it provides an entryway to explore further the spiritual practices enacted by people who live their lives intentionally with the goal of improving the overall wellbeing of The Bahamas and the world. While I have not emphasized

A POETICS OF FOOD

the social positions of the people I interviewed or the specific nature of their spiritual practices, a deeper examination of these aspects of people's lives would produce a more complete picture of individual and collective healing practices. Additionally, many of the practices with which interviewees identified are marginalized in Bahamian society and centering these practices might help to shift perspectives of people who identify with non-majority spiritual systems. I am interested, specifically, in understanding how these practices contribute to developing authentic cultural identities, supporting healthy and whole socio-psychologies, expanding consciousness, and healing individual and generational traumas.

The findings of this research offer suggestions to individuals for the types of practices that others in The Bahamas have implemented in their everyday lives to improve their health, wellness, and ways of being—particularly in terms of food practices and the reasons why people in The Bahamas engage with these practices personally. It also demonstrates that living a particular lifestyle and engaging in particular practices is possible, even as it requires a certain level of flexibility and a great deal of effort. I hope that this work will serve to inspire others seeking to initiate these practices, as it has inspired me to continue with my own practices and maintain my own journey, even as my life, practices, and reasons for enacting them have changed.

As this research might inform policies at the governmental level, it might also inform policies, practices, and relationships in and across food, healing, creative, and spiritual communities of practice. While it is a limited study, it does seek to demonstrate that people from a broad variety of spiritual and philosophical backgrounds hold similar values and desires.

The people I interviewed were selected via snowball sample. This method of choosing interviewees aligned strongly with my overall methodology and philosophical foundation that prioritizes connectedness. I created a network map of the names of people to whom I was

A POETICS OF FOOD

referred but did not discuss or explore this in the dissertation. Besides maintaining ethical integrity, using this method created the emergence of a few names being repeated, representing the possibility that some people are “nodes” in the system. Future research might examine the nature of intentional networks further and how and why certain people become these “nodes”. This could provide further insight into the flow of power, knowledge, and resources for those seeking to develop new intentional systems, structures, and networks.

Further Research Recommendations

- Extend the network of interviewees.
- Continue grounded approaches to cultural research in The Bahamas in order to allow internal definitions to emerge.
- Use the list of food practices generated by this research to create a pilot survey that allows people to define food practices in greater depth.
- Use surveys, focus groups, and other research instruments to ask people which practices they enact and why. Different instruments can create different kinds of discussions.
- Explore further the intersection between cultural critique, political theory, and aesthetic production.
- Explore how relationships between “cultural producers” and cultural critics (if there’s even a line between them) influence different types of expression around similar kinds of ideas and how culture is transferred across cultural, national, racial, economic, and gendered lines through the sharing of common crafts.

A POETICS OF FOOD

- Explore the knowledge, practices, and experiences of Bahamian elders that surround food and wellness generally to understand better the evolutionary pathway of food and intentional food practices generationally in The Bahamas specifically and the Caribbean and its diasporas generally.
- Explore further the information, knowledge systems, and perspectives that underlie Bahamian understandings of health.
- Include how cultural and aesthetic forms such as music, literature, art, poetry, and performance describe and discuss foodways to produce richer and more complete understandings of the relationships between intentional food practices and culture.
- Explore further the part that identity plays in what people eat and why.
- Take inter-disciplinary approaches to the relationship between the Earth and human bodies.

Conclusion

Embedded in this research are not only the hopes and dreams of the people who I interviewed, but also my own hopes and dreams as a member of the community in which I conducted this study. This research is a demonstration of one of my own intentional food practices—the practice of doing research. It is meant to provide evidence related to specific food practices and the reasons why they are enacted to develop emerging foodways and emerging culture in The Bahamas despite immense challenges. I hope this evidence of how people have improved their own lives will help to draw support to those who have demonstrated commitments to their own development and to the development of their communities.

A POETICS OF FOOD

I hope this dissertation will help to connect people from a wide variety of backgrounds and facilitate relationships that can lead to mutually beneficial experiences and lives. I hope that it will serve as one part of a larger conversation around the similar roles that artistic/creative communities, healing communities, and spiritual communities have in developing emerging consciousness, identities, and ecological sustainability in The Bahamas.

This dissertation presents a small portion of the findings of the overall research project I conducted. Moving forward, I will offer additional deliverables based on the research, including those meant to offer insight to how policies and regulations at all levels might support the emergence of cultural, political, and economic forms that bring the balance, beauty, and love sought by those I interviewed and many others. I hope that illuminating the emerging systems and structures that reflect the beauty of what already exists and what continues to emerge will create further opportunities that support those who seek to be self-sustaining. This research reflects how people's understandings of the bodies they are in and the body they are on have informed their understandings of their personal and collective cultures and what they hope to help manifest as The Bahamas continues to develop and mature as a nation with its own unique identity and gifts to offer the world.

A POETICS OF FOOD

References

- ACE Diabetes. (2015). Bahamas Leads The World In Diabetes Prevalence [Medical]. Retrieved January 6, 2017, from <http://www.acediabetes.org/2015/10/bahamas-leads-the-world-in-diabetes-prevalence/>
- Adjarian, M. M. (2004). *Allegories of Desire: Body, Nation, and Empire in Modern Caribbean Literature by Women*. Connecticut: Praeger.
- Agriculture development profile - The Bahamas. (2009). Retrieved May 19, 2010, from http://www.caricom.org/jsp/community/donor_conference_agriculture/agri_profile_bahamas.jsp
- Aistra, G. A. (2008). *Land and Seeds: The Cultural, Ecological, and Global Politics of Organic Agriculture in Latvia and Costa Rica* (Doctoral). University of Michigan, Michigan.
- Alaimo, K., Packnett, E., Miles, R. A., & Kruger, D. J. (2008). Fruit and Vegetable Intake among Urban Community Gardeners. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 40, 94–101.
- Alexander, J. C., & Smith, P. (2011). Introduction: The Rise and Fall and Rise of Clifford Geertz. In J. C. Alexander, P. Smith, & M. Norton (Eds.), *Interpreting Clifford Geertz: Cultural Investigation in the Social Sciences* (pp. 1–6). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Al-Hafedh, Y. S., Alam, A., & Beltagi, M. S. (2008). Food Production and Water Conservation in a Recirculating Aquaponic System in Saudi Arabia at Different Ratios of Fish Feed to Plants. *Journal of the World Aquaculture Society*, 39(4), 510–520.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-7345.2008.00181.x>
- Alkon, A. (2008). Paradise or pavement: the social constructions of the environment in two urban farmers' markets and their implications for environmental justice and sustainability. *Local Environment*, 13(3), 271–289.

- Alkon, A. H., & Norgaard, K. M. (2009). Breaking the Food Chains: An Investigation of Food Justice Activism. *Sociological Inquiry*, 79(3), 289–305. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-682X.2009.00291.x>
- Altieri, M. A. (2009). *Agroecology for Food Sovereignty*. Food First Books.
- ALTIERI, M. A., & NICHOLLS, C. I. (2008). Scaling up Agroecological Approaches for Food Sovereignty in Latin America. *Development*, 51(4), 472–480. <https://doi.org/Article>
- Anderson, C. R., & McLachlan, S. M. (2016). Transformative research as knowledge mobilization: Transmedia, bridges, and layers. *Action Research*, 14(3), 295–317.
- Anim-Addo, J. (1996). *Framing the Word: Gender and Genre in Caribbean Women's Writing*. Massachusetts: Whiting & Birch.
- Armand, K. (2011, October 10). *Integrative Processes in the Experience of a Yogic Breathing Exercise: A Concurrent Mixed-Methods Study* (Doctoral Dissertation). Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, Palo Alto.
- Armstrong, D. (2000). A Survey of community gardens in upstate New York: Implications for health promotion and community development. *Health & Place*, 6, 319–327.
- Armstrong, K. (2008). Ethnography and Audience. In P. Alasuutari, L. Bickman, & J. Brannen (Eds.), *The Sage HAndbook of Social Research Methods* (pp. 54–67). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Arrizon, A. (2002). Race-ing Performativity through Transculturation, Taste and the Mulata Body. *Theatre Research International*, 27(2), 136–152.
- Atehortua, J. N. (2010). Cognitive Styles: An Approach to Autonomous Learning in L2 Adult Students. *Revista*, 4(8), 1–24.
- Badjeck, M.-C., Allison, E. H., Halls, A. S., & Dulvy, N. K. (2010). Impacts of climate variability and change on fishery-based livelihoods. *Marine Policy*, 34(3), 375–383.

- Bahamas Customs & Excise Departments. (2016, July 1). Rates of Duty for Frequently Imported Items Processing & Environmental Fees and the Newly Implemented VAT Fees [Governmental]. Retrieved October 24, 2016, from <https://www.bahamas.gov.bs/wps/wcm/connect/59df9e2e-53b5-4e0c-be28-d1d5c9e66426/FrequentlyImportedBrochureFinal2016-2017.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>
- Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology Commission. (2001). *First National Communication on Climate Change* (p. 99). Nassau, The Bahamas.
- Bailey, C. (2014). *A Poetics of Performance: The Oral-Scribal Aesthetic in Anglophone Caribbean Fiction*. Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press.
- Bailey, E. J. (2002). *African American Alternative Medicine: Using Alternative Medicine to Prevent and Control Chronic Diseases*. Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey.
- Barrett, L. E. (1997). *The Rastafarians*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Barrow, M. (2013). Neysha Soodeen: Caring, Competitive, Creative: Neysha Soodeen, CEO, MACO Magazine. *Caribbean InTransit*, 1(4), 52–63.
- Barthes, R. (1997). Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption. In C. Counihan & P. Van Esterik (Eds.), *Food and Culture: A Reader* (pp. 21–27). New York: Routledge.
- Bartlett, J. G., Iwasaki, Y., Gottlieb, B., Hall, D., & Mannell, R. (2007). Framework for Aboriginal-guided decolonizing research involving Métis and First Nations persons with diabetes. *Social Science & Medicine*, 65(11), 2371–2382.
- Beauregard-Langelier, H. (2007). *Food sovereignty versus trade liberalization□: the case of the rice sector in Mali*. The Hague: Institute of Social Studies.

A POETICS OF FOOD

- Belasco, W. J. (2006). *Appetite for Change: How the Counterculture Took On the Food Industry*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Benediktsson, K. (1998). Food Markets in the Eastern Highlands, Papua New Guinea: Actors, Power and Rural Development Geography. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 80B(3), 159–172.
- Benitez-Rojo, A. (1996). *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*. (J. Maraniss, Trans.) (Second). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Bernard, H. R. (2011). *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Fifth). Lanham: AltaMira Press.
- Better, A. (2013). Learning from Experience: Integrating Students' Everyday Lives into the Urban Community College Sociology Classroom. *American Sociologist*, 44, 385–395.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1987). Frantz Fanon and the psychology of oppression. *Race & Class*, 28(3), 81–84.
- Birks, M., & Mills, J. (2015). *Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide* (Second). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Bishop, W. (1999). *Ethnographic Writing Research: writing it down, writing it up, and reading it*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers.
- Bochner, A. P., & Ellis, C. (1996). Talking Over Ethnography. In C. Ellis & A. P. Bochner (Eds.), *Composing Ethnography: Alternative Forms of Qualitative Writing* (Vol. 1, pp. 13–45). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Bogues, A. (2009). Black Power, Decolonization, and Caribbean Politics: Walter Rodney and the Politics of The Groundings with My Brothers. *Boundary 2*, 36(1), 127–147.

A POETICS OF FOOD

- Bonnett, M. (2002). Sustainability as a Frame of Mind - and How to Develop It. *The Trumpeter*, 18(1), 1–9.
- Booker, H. B. (2015a, October). *242Food: A Bahamian Restoration Speakology*. Spoken Word Poetry Presentation, Hillside House, Nassau, Bahamas.
- Booker, H. B. (2015b, October 10). *Net/Works*. Unpublished Spoken Word Poem, Bahamas.
- Booker, H. B. (2015c, October 10). *What is going ON!?* Unpublished Spoken Word Poem, Bahamas.
- Bowers, K. S. P. R. (2012). From Little Things Big Things Grow, From Big Things Little Things Manifest: An Indigenous Human Ecology Discussing Issues of Conflict, Peace and Relational Sustainability. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 8(3), 290–304.
- Boylorn, R. M., & Orbe, M. P. (2014). Introduction: Critical Autoethnography as Method of Choice. In R. M. Boylorn & M. P. Orbe (Eds.), *Critical Autoethnography: Intersecting Cultural Identities in Everyday Life* (pp. 13–26). Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Brathwaite, K. (1993). *Roots*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Brock, R. M. (2004). *Dr. Ro's Ten Secrets to Living Healthy: America's Most Renowned African American Nutritionist Shows You How to Look Great, Feel Better, and Live Longer by Eating Right*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Brookfield, S. D., & Holst, J. D. (2011). *Radicalizing Learning: Adult Education for a Just World*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bruner, E. M. (1986). Experience and Its Expressions. In V. W. Turner & E. M. Bruner (Eds.), *The Anthropology of Experience* (pp. 3–30). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Buchan, K. C. (2000). The Bahamas. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 41(1–6), 94–111.

- Burrows, V. (2014). *Whiteness and Trauma: The Mother-Daughter Knot in the Fiction of Jean Rhys, Jamaica Kincaid and Toni Morrison* (Second). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Campbell, C., & Niblett, M. (Eds.). (2016). *The Caribbean: aesthetics, world-ecology, politics*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- Cañada, E. (2006). *Food sovereignty the people's alternative*. London: Progressio.
- Carr, E. R. (2005). Commentary: Riddim Me This, Riddim Me That. *Southeastern Geographer*, 45(2), 284–287.
- Caws, M. A. (Ed.). (2004). Edouard Glissant. In B. H. Edwards (Trans.), *The Yale Anthology of Twentieth-Century French Poetry* (pp. 395–401). New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Cesaire, A. (1968). *A Season in the Congo*. (R. Manheim, Trans.). New York: Grove Press.
- Cesaire, A. (1969). *The Tragedy of King Christophe*. (R. Manheim, Trans.). New York: Grove Press.
- Cesaire, A. (1983a). Ferraments. In C. Eshleman & A. Smith (Trans.), *The Collected Poetry* (pp. 260–357). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Cesaire, A. (1983b). Lost Body. In C. Eshleman & A. Smith (Trans.), *The Collected Poetry* (pp. 226–259). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Cesaire, A. (1983c). Noria. In C. Eshleman & A. Smith (Trans.), *The Collected Poetry* (pp. 358–399). Charlottesville: University of California Press.
- Cesaire, A. (1990a). And the Dogs Were Silent. In C. Eshleman & A. Smith (Trans.), *Lyric and Dramatic Poetry: 1946-82* (pp. 1–74). Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
- Cesaire, A. (1990b). i, laminaria ... In C. Eshleman & A. Smith (Trans.), *Lyric and Dramatic Poetry: 1946-82* (pp. 76–203). Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

A POETICS OF FOOD

- Cesaire, A. (1990c). Poetry and Knowledge. In A. J. Arnold (Trans.), *Lyric and Dramatic Poetry* (pp. xlii–lvi). Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
- Cesaire, A. (1990d). Wifredo Lam. In C. Eshleman & A. Smith (Trans.), *Lyric and Dramatic Poetry: 1946-82* (pp. 204–231). Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
- Cesaire, A. (1996a). Panorama. In M. Richardson (Ed.), K. Fijalkowski & M. Richardson (Trans.), *Refusal of the Shadow: Surrealism and the Caribbean* (pp. 79–81). London: Verso.
- Cesaire, A. (1996b). Presentation. In M. Richardson (Ed.), K. Fijalkowski & M. Richardson (Trans.), *Refusal of the Shadow: Surrealism and the Caribbean* (p. 88). London: Verso.
- Cesaire, A. (2011). *Solar Throat Slashed*. (A. J. Arnold & C. Eshleman, Trans.) (The Unexpurgated 1948 Edition). Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press.
- Cesaire, A. (2013). Like a Misunderstood Salvation. In A. Smith & D. Thomas (Trans.), *Like a Misunderstood Salvation and Other Poems* (pp. 43–70). Illinois: Northwestern University Press.
- Cesaire, A., Rosello, M., & Pritchard, A. (1995). *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land* (Vol. 4). Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books.
- Cesaire, S. (2012). *The Great Camouflage: Writings of Dissent*. (D. Maximin, Ed., K. L. Walker, Trans.). Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press.
- Chancy, M. J. A. (1997). *Searching for Safe Spaces: Afro-Caribbean Women Writers in Exile*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Chen, H.-Y., & Boore, J. R. (2009). Using a synthesised technique for grounded theory in nursing research. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 18, 2251–2260.

A POETICS OF FOOD

- Cheung, S. C. H. (2005). Consuming “Low” Cuisine after Hong Kong’s Handover: Village Banquets and Private Kitchens. *Asian Studies Review*, 29, 259–273.
- Chuku, G. (2015). Introduction. In G. Chuku (Ed.), *Ethnicities, Nationalities, and Cross-Cultural Representations in Africa and the Diaspora* (pp. xxix–xlvi). Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.
- Clair, R. P. (2003). Future Directions. In R. P. Clair (Ed.), *Expressions of Ethnography: Novel Approaches to Qualitative Methods* (pp. 289–296). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Cohn, A. (2006). *Agroecology and the struggle for food sovereignty in the Americas*. London [etc.]: [International institute for environment and development (IIED) [etc.].
- Coleman, S., & von Hellermann, P. (Eds.). (2011). *Multi-Sited Ethnography: Problems and Possibilities in the Translocation of Research Methods*. New York: Routledge.
- Conde, M. (1989). *Crossing the Mangrove*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Conquergood, D. (2013). *Cultural Struggles: Performance, Ethnography, Praxis*. (E. P. Johnson, Ed.). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Cook, I., & Michelle Harrisont. (2003). Cross over food: re-materializing postcolonial geographies. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 28(3), 296–317.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-5661.00094>
- Cooley, A. J. (2015). Freedom’s Farms: Activism and Sustenance in Rural Mississippi. In J. J. Wallach (Ed.), *Dethroning the Deceitful Pork Chop: Rethinking African American Foodways from Slavery to Obama* (pp. 199–214). Fayetteville: University Press of Florida.

- Coppola, M. (2008). Caribbean Autobiographies as Weapons in Identity Construction: Jamaica Kincaid's Annie John. In K. Gyssels & B. Ledent (Eds.), *The Caribbean Writer as Warrior of the Imaginary* (pp. 307–319). Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Counihan, C. M. (1999). *The Anthropology of Food and Body: Gender, Meaning, and Power*. New York: Routledge.
- Coyne, I., & Cowley, S. (2006). Using grounded theory to research parent participation. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 11(6), 501–515.
- Cranton, P. (2006). *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning: A Guide for Educators of Adults* (Second Edition). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Craton, M. (1999). *A History of the Bahamas* (Seventh). Canada: San Salvador Press.
- Craton, M., & Saunders, G. (1998). *Islanders in the Stream: A History of the Bahamian People* (Vol. Volume Two: From the Ending of Slavery to the Twenty-First Century). Georgia: University of Georgia Press.
- Crichlow, M. A. (2009). *Globalization and the Post-Creole Imagination: Notes on Fleeing the Plantation*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Crosta, S. (1999). Breaking the Silence: Cultural Identities and Narrative Configurations in the French Caribbena Novel. In S. Haigh (Ed.), *An Introduction to Caribbean Francophone Writing: Guadeloupe and Martinique* (pp. 159–176). Oxford: Berg.
- Dash, J. M. (1998). *The Other America: Caribbean Literature in a New World Context*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
- Davies, C. A. (2008). *Reflexive Ethnography: A guide to researching selves and others* (Second). London: Routledge.

A POETICS OF FOOD

Denzin, N. K. (1997). *Interpretive Ethnography: Ethnographic Practices for the 21st Century*.

Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Denzin, N. K. (2014). *Interpretive Autoethnography* (Vol. 17). Los Angeles: Sage.

DeWalt, K. M., & DeWalt, B. R. (2002). *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*.

Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Donnell, A. (2006). *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical moments in anglophone literary history*. London: Routledge.

Dowd, M. (2011). Thank God for the New Atheists: A Sermon by the Reverend Michael Dowd.

Skeptic Magazine, 16(2), 28–30.

Ehn, B., Lofgren, O., & Wilk, R. (2016). *Exploring Everyday Life: Strategies for Ethnography and Cultural Analysis*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (1995). *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago:

University of Chicago Press.

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (2001). Processing Fieldnotes: Coding and

Memoing. In A. Bryman (Ed.), *Ethnography* (Vol. IV, pp. 241–266). London: Sage.

Eneas, G. (2010). *The New Caribbean: A Region in Transition*. Indiana: Author House.

Eshun, G., & Madge, C. (2012). “Now let me share this with you”: Exploring Poetry as a

Method for Postcolonial Geography Research. *Antipode*, 44(4), 1395–1428.

Fanon, F. (2008). *Black Skin, White Masks* (Second). New York: Grove Press.

FAO. (2003). *Nutrition Country Profiles: The Bahamas* (Nutrition Country Profiles) (p. 20). The

Bahamas: Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN.

A POETICS OF FOOD

- FAO. (2009). *Agriculture Sectoral Plan for The Bahamas* (Report on Rapid Assessment of the Agriculture Sector by the FAO) (p. 68). Nassau, The Bahamas: Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN.
- Farrell, T. M. (n.d.). Decolonization in the English-Speaking Caribbean: Myth or Reality? In *The Newer Caribbean: Decolonization, Democracy, and Development*.
- Farrish, C. (2015). Theft, Food Labor, and Culinary Insurrection in the Virginia Plantation Yard. In J. J. Wallach (Ed.), *Dethroning the Deceitful Pork Chop: Rethinking African American Foodways from Slavery to Obama* (pp. 151–163). Fayetteville: University Press of Florida.
- Ferly, O. (2012). *A Poetics of Relation: Caribbean Women Writing at the Millenium*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Fesler-Schnitzer, R. (2007). *The world exists in a mustard seed□: grassroots resistance in the quest for food sovereignty*.
- Fetterman, D. M. (1998). *Ethnography: Step by Step* (Second, Vol. 17). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Fielding, J., & Fieldling, N. (2008). Synergy and Synthesis: Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Data. In P. Alasuutari, L. Bickman, & J. Brannen (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Social Research Methods* (pp. 555–571). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Fitzpatrick, K. (2012). “That’s How the Light Gets In”: Poetry, Self, and Representation in Ethnographic Research. *Cultural Studies & Critical Methodologies*, 12(1), 8–14.
- Foltz, T. G., & Griffin, W. (1996). “She Changes Everything She Touches”: Ethnographic Journeys of Self-Discovery. In C. Ellis & A. P. Bochner (Eds.), *Composing Ethnography: Alternative Forms of Qualitative Writing* (Vol. 1, pp. 301–329). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

- Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2006, June). Food Security. FAO Agriculture and Development Economics Division. Retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/forestry/13128-0e6f36f27e0091055bec28ebe830f46b3.pdf>
- Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2015). *Climate Change Vulnerability in Fisheries and Aquaculture: A Synthesis of Six Regional Studies* (United Nations No. FIPI/C1104). Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN.
- Ford, J. (1992). Guyana's food performance in a Caribbean context. *Food Policy*, 17(5), 326–336.
- Forsey, M. G. (2010). Ethnography as participant listening. *Ethnography*, 11(4), 558–572.
- Fox, J. R. (2009). A Qualitative Exploration of the Perception of Emotions in Anorexia Nervosa: A Basic Emotion and Developmental Perspective. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 16(4), 276–302.
- Fox, K. V. (1996). Silent Voices: A Subversive Reading of Child Sexual Abuse. In C. Ellis & A. P. Bochner (Eds.), *Composing Ethnography: Alternative Forms of Qualitative Writing* (Vol. 1, pp. 330–356). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Freire, P. (1973). *Education for Critical Consciousness*. New York: The Seabury Press.
- Freire, P. (1993). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New Revised 20th Anniversary Edition). New York: Continuum.
- Frey, S. (2009). The American Revolution and the Creation of a Global African World. In *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution* (pp. 47–71). Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

- Furman, R., Langer, C. L., Davis, C. S., Gallardo, H. P., & Kulkarni, S. (2007). Expressive, research and reflective poetry as qualitative inquiry: a study of adolescent identity. *Qualitative Research*, 7(3), 301–315.
- Gadsby, M. M. (2006). *Sucking Salt: Caribbean Women Writers, Migration, and Survival*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.
- Gille, Z. (2001). Critical Ethnography in the Time of Globalization: Toward a New Concept of Site. *Cultural Studies/Critical Methodologies*, 1(3), 319. <https://doi.org/Article>
- Githire, N. (2014). *Cannibal Writes: Eating Others in Caribbean and Indian Ocean Women's Writings*. Illinois: University of Illinois Press.
- Glesne, C. (1997). That Rare Feeling: Re-presenting Research Through Poetic Transcription. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3(2), 202–221.
- Glissant, E. (1989). *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
- Glissant, E. (1997). *Poetics of Relation*. (B. Wing, Trans.). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Gomez, M. A. (2005). *Reversing Sail: A History of the African Diaspora*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gonzalez, M. C. (2003). An Ethics for Postcolonial Ethnography. In R. P. Clair (Ed.), *Expressions of Ethnography: Novel Approaches to Qualitative Methods* (pp. 77–86). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Goodall, Jr., H. L. (2000). *Writing the New Ethnography*. Maryland: AltaMira Press.
- Goslinga, M. (1998). *Caribbean Literature: A Bibliography*. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press.

A POETICS OF FOOD

- Gottlieb, R., & Fisher, A. (1996). Community food security and environmental justice: Searching for a common discourse. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 13(3), 23–32.
- Gottlieb, R., & Joshi, A. (2010). *Food Justice*. Boston: MIT Press.
- Gourdine, MD, M. A. (2011). *Reclaiming Our Health: A Guide to African American Wellness*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Grimm, N. B., Grove, J. M., Pickett, S. T. A., & Redman, C. L. (2000). Integrated Approaches to Long-Term Studies of Urban Ecological Systems: Urban ecological systems present multiple challenges to ecologists--pervasive human impact and extreme heterogeneity of cities, and the need to integrate social and ecological approaches, concepts, and theory. *BioScience*, 50(7), 571–584.
- Gumbs, A. P. (2011). Dionne Brand: A Poetics of Diasporic Domestic Radicalism. In *The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature* (pp. 3–10). London: Routledge.
- Gumbs, F. (1981). Agriculture in the Wider Caribbean. *Ambio*, 10(6), 335–339.
- Guthman, J. (2008a). Bringing good food to others: investigating the subjects of alternative food practice. *Cultural Geographies*, 15(4), 431–447.
- Guthman, J. (2008b). Neoliberalism and the making of food politics in California. *Geoforum*, 39, 1171–1183.
- Guzman, M. (2016, December 22). Food has played an important role in America's social justice movements [Public Media]. Retrieved January 16, 2016, from <https://www.pri.org/stories/2016-12-22/food-has-played-important-role-americas-social-justice-movements>

A POETICS OF FOOD

- Hall, R. L. (2007). Food Crops, Medicinal Plants, and the Atlantic Slave Trade. In A. L. Bower (Ed.), *African American Foodways: Explorations of History and Culture* (pp. 17–44). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Halloran, V. N. (2015). After Forty Acres: Food Security, Urban Agriculture, and Black Food Citizenship. In J. J. Wallach (Ed.), *Dethroning the Deceitful Pork Chop: Rethinking African American Foodways from Slavery to Obama* (pp. 215–228). Fayetteville: University Press of Florida.
- Hargreaves-Allen, V. (2010). *An Economic Valuation of the Natural Resources of Andros Islands, Bahamas* (Conservation Strategy). Conservation Strategy Fund & Nature Conservance.
- Harney, S. (1996). *Nationalism and Identity: Culture and the Imagination in a Caribbean Diaspora*. Kingston: Zed Books.
- Harper, A. B. (2010a). Introduction: The Birth of the Sistah Vegan Project. In A. B. Harper (Ed.), *Sistah Vegan: Black Female Vegans Speak on Food, Identity, Health, and Society* (pp. xiii–xix). Brooklyn, NY: Lantern Books.
- Harper, A. B. (2010b). Sistah Vegan [Word Press]. Retrieved from www.sistahvegan.com
- Harris, J. B. (2011). *High on the Hog: A Culinary Journey from Africa to America*. New York: Bloomsbury.
- Harrison, F. V. (2008). *Outsider Within: Reworking Anthropology in the Global Age*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Harvard University Graduate School of Design. (2015). A Sustainable Future for Exuma: Environmental Management, Design, and Planning. Retrieved October 7, 2016, from <http://sustainableexuma.org/>

A POETICS OF FOOD

Haugen, H. (2009). Food Sovereignty - An Appropriate Approach to Ensure the Right to Food?

Nordic Journal of International Law, 78(3), 263–292.

Haynes, L. S. (2002). *Christio-Conjure in Voodoo Dreams, Baby of the Family, The Salt Eaters,*

Sassafrass, Cypress & Indigo, and Mama Day (Doctoral Dissertation). Louisiana State

University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, Louisiana.

Hepburn, E. S. T. (2008, December). Agritourism as a Viable Strategy for Economic

Diversification: A Case Study Analysis of Policy Options for The Bahamas.

Hickling-Hudson, A. (2006). Cultural Complexity, Post-Colonialism and Educational Change:

Challenges for Comparative Educators. *Review of Education*, 52, 201–218.

Higman, B. W. (2008). *Jamaican Food: History, Biology, Culture*. Jamaica: University of the

West Indies Press.

Hintzen, P. C., & Rahier, J. M. (2010). Theorizing the African Diaspora: Metaphor,

Miscognition, and Self-Recognition. In J. M. Rahier, P. C. Hintzen, & F. Smith (Eds.),

Global Circuits of Blackness: Interrogating the African Diaspora (pp. ix–xxvi). Urbana:

University of Illinois Press.

Hoare, K. (2012). Sifting, sorting and saturating data in a grounded theory study of information

use by practice nurses: A worked example. *International Journal of Nursing Practice*, 18,

582–588.

hooks, bell. (1989). *Talking Back: thinking feminist, thinking black*. Boston: South End Press.

hooks, bell. (2006). *Outlaw Culture: Resisting representations*. New York: Routledge.

Ingalsbee, T. (1996). EARTH FIRST! ACTIVISM: Ecological Postmodern Praxis in Radical

Environmentalist Identities. *Sociological Perspectives*, 39(2), 263–276.

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. (2012). Principles of Food Justice.

International NGO/CSO Planning Committee on Food Sovereignty. (2006). Final Declaration of the “Land, Territory and Dignity” Forum.

Jain, J. (2009). Inventions of Auto-Narratives in Braithwaite and Phillips. In J. Jain & S. Agarwal (Eds.), *Writers of the Caribbena Diaspora: Shifting Homelands, Travelling Identities* (pp. 44–54). Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers.

Johnson, E. P. (2013). Introduction: “Opening and Interpreting Lives.” In E. P. Johnson (Ed.), *Cultural Struggles: Performance, Ethnography, Praxis* (pp. 1–14). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Keller Brown, L., & Mussell, K. (1984). Introduction. In L. K. Brown & K. Mussell (Eds.), *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States: The Performance of Group Identity* (pp. 1–15). Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.

Kemedjio, C., & Mitsch, R. H. (2010). Aimée Césaire’s Letter to Maurice Thorez: The Practice of Decolonization. *Research in African Literatures*, 41(1), 87–108.

Kim, K. O. (2015). Introduction. In K. O. Kim (Ed.), *Re-Orienting Cuisine: East Asian Foodways in the Twenty-First Century* (pp. 1–9). New York: Berghahn.

Kincaid, J. (1988). *A Small Place*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Kineman, J. J., & Poli, R. (2014). Ecological Literacy Leadership: Into the Mind of Nature. *Bulletin of the Ecological Society of America*, 85(1), 30–58.

King, N. (1994). The Qualitative Research Interview. In C. Cassell & G. Symon (Eds.), *Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research* (pp. 14–36). London: Sage.

King, R. (2014). *Island Bodies: Transgressive Sexualities in the Caribbean Imagination*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press.

- Kingsbury, P., & Klak, T. (2005). Riddims of the Street, Beach, and Bureaucracy: Situating Geographical Research in Jamaica. *Southeastern Geographer*, 45(2), 251–273.
- Kingsbury, P., & Sletto, B. (2005). Critical geographies of the Caribbean and Latin America. *Geoforum*, 36(1), 13–15.
- Kitchenham, A. (2008). The Evolution of John Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 6(2), 104–123.
- Klak, T., & Kingsbury, P. (2005). Reply: Dialogue on Methodologies for Caribbean Geographic Research. *Southeastern Geographer*, 45(2), 288–293.
- Knepper, W. (2006). Colonization, Creolization, and Globalization: The Art and Ruses of Bricolage. *Small Axe*, 70–86.
- Kroll, F. (2006). Roots and Culture: Rasta Bushdoctors of the Cape, SA. In W. Zips (Ed.), *Rastafari: a universal philosophy in the third millennium* (pp. 215–255). Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers.
- Kullberg, C. (2013). *The Poetics of Ethnography in Martinican Narratives: Exploring the Self and the Environment*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
- Lahiri-Dutt, K., & Samanta, G. (2013). Living on Chars, Drifting with Rivers. In *Dancing with the River* (pp. 200–207). New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Lahman, M. K. E., Geist, M. R., Rodriguez, K. L., Graglia, P. E., Richard, V. M., & Schendel, R. K. (2010). Poking Around Poetically: Research, Poetry, and Trustworthiness. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(1), 39–48.
- Lalla, B., Roberts, N., Walcott-Hackshaw, & Youssef, V. (Eds.). (2013). *Methods in Caribbean Research: Literature, Discourse, Culture*. Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press.

A POETICS OF FOOD

- Lancaster, G. (2005). *Research Methods in Management: a concise introduction to research in management and business consultancy*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Lapum, J., Church, K., Yau, T., Matthews David, A., & Ruttonsha, P. (2012). Arts-informed research dissemination: Patients' perioperative experiences of open-heart surgery. *Heart & Lung, 41*, E4–E14.
- Larrier, R. (2006). *Autofiction and Advocacy in the Francophone*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press.
- Lewis, C. B. (2007). *Identity: Lost, found, and (re)constructed through healing narratives---an autoethnography of tragedy, travail, and triumph* (Ph.D.). Ohio University, United States -- Ohio. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.antioch.idm.oclc.org/docview/304834088/abstract/2E1C35A4851C4A3FPQ/5?accountid=26438>
- Lima, M. H. (2002). Imaginary Homelands in Jamaica Kincaid's Narratives of Development. *Callaloo, 25*(3), 857–867.
- Locke, K. (2001). *Grounded Theory in Management Research*. London: Sage.
- Loichot, V. (2013). *The Tropics Bite Back: Culinary Coups in Caribbean Literature*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Loyd-Paige, M. R. (2010). Thinking and Eating at the Same Time. In *Sistah Vegan: Black Female Vegans Speak on Food, Identity, Health, and Society* (pp. 1–7). Brooklyn, NY: Lantern Books.
- Lupton, D. (1996). *Food, the Body and the Self*. London: Sage.

A POETICS OF FOOD

- Mabry, L. (2008). Case Study in Social Research. In P. Alasuutari, L. Bickman, & J. Brannen (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Social Research Methods* (pp. 214–227). Los Angeles: Sage.
- MacDougall, S. N. (2005). *Calling on Spirit: An Interpretive Ethnography of PeerSpirit Circles as Transformative Process* (Doctoral Dissertation). Fielding Graduate Institute.
- Mackie, E. S. (2005). Welcome the Outlaw: Pirates, Maroons, and Caribbean Countercultures. *Cultural Critique*, 59(1), 24–62.
- Madden, R. (2010). *Being Ethnographic: A guide to the Theory and Practice of Ethnography*. London: Sage.
- Madison, D. S. (2011). *Critical Ethnography: Method, Ethics, and Performance*. SAGE.
- Mantzoukas, S. (2010). Exploring ethnographic genres and developing validity appraisal tools. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 17(5), 420–435.
- Marcus, G. E. (1998). *Ethnography through Thick and Thin*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Marechal, G., & Linstead, S. (2010). Metropoems: Poetic Method and Ethnographic Experience. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(1), 66–77.
- McLeod, C. (2008). Constructing a Nation: Jamaica Kincaid's "A Small Place." *Small Axe*, 25, 77–92.
- Mehta, B. (2009). *Notions of Identity, Diaspora, and Gender in Caribbean Women's Writing*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Menck, J. C. (2012, January). *Recipes of Resolve: Food and Meaning in Post-Diluvian New Orleans* (Doctoral Dissertation). Antioch University, New Orleans.

A POETICS OF FOOD

- Miller, J., Glassner, B., & Silverman, D. (2011). The “Inside” and the “Outside”: Finding Realities in Interviews. In *Qualitative Research: Issues of Theory, Method and Practice* (Third). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Mordecai, P., & Wilson, B. (Eds.). (1989). *Her True-True Name: An Anthology of Women’s Writing from the Caribbean*. Oxford: Heinemann International.
- Mosadomi, F. (2008). Food and Language: African Roots of American Southern Culture. In T. Falola, N. Afolabi, & A. A. Adesanya (Eds.), *Migrations and Creative Expressions in Africa and the African Diaspora*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.
- Motha, S. (2009). Afternoon Tea at Su’s: Participant Voice and Community in Critical Feminist Ethnography. In S. G. Kouritzin, N. A. C. Piquemal, & R. Norman (Eds.), *Qualitative Research: Challenging the ORthodoxies in Standard Academic Discourses* (pp. 103–119). New York: Routledge.
- Murdoch, H. A. (2007). “‘All Skin’ Teeth is Not Grin”: Performing Caribbean Diasporic Identity in a Postcolonial Metropolitan Frame. *Callaloo*, 30(2), 575–593.
- Nesbitt, N. (2003). *Voicing Memory: History and Subjectivity in French Caribbean Literature*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
- Nesbitt, N. (2013). *Caribbean Critique: Antillean Critical Theory from Toussaint to Glissant*. Liverpool: Liverpool University PRes.
- Neumann, M. (1996). Collecting Ourselves at the End of the Century. In C. Ellis & A. P. Bochner (Eds.), *Composing Ethnography: Alternative Forms of Qualitative Writing* (Vol. 1, pp. 172–198). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

NGO/CSO Forum for food sovereignty. (2002, June 12). Food Sovereignty: A Right For All, Political Statement of the NGO/CSO Forum for Food Sovereignty. Retrieved from <http://www.foodfirst.org/progs/global/food/finaldeclaration.html>

Opie, F. D. (2008). *Hog and Hominy: Soul Food From Africa to America*. New York: Columbia University Press.

O'Reilly, K. (2012). *Ethnographic Methods*. London: Routledge.

Palmie, S. (2013). *The Cooking of History: How Not to Study Afro-Cuban Religion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pedersen, H. (2010). Terror from the Stare: Visual Landscapes of Meat Production. *Antennae: The Journal of Nature in Visual Culture*, (14).

Phillips, L. (2010). Veganism and Ecowomanism. In A. B. Harper (Ed.), *Sistah Vegan: Black Female Vegans Speak on Food, Identity, Health, and Society* (pp. 8–19). Brooklyn, NY: Lantern Books.

Philpott, D. (2013). The Justice of Forgiveness. *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 41(3), 400–416.

Pieterse, J. N., & Parekh, B. (1995). Shifting imaginaries: decolonization, intrnal decolonization, postcoloniality. In J. N. Pieterse & B. Parekh (Eds.), *The Decolonization of Imagination: Culture, Knowledge and Power* (pp. 1–20). London: Zed Books.

Poulos, C. N. (2009). *Accidental Ethnography: An Inquiry into Family Secrecy*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Prabhu, A. (2007). *Hybridity: Limits, Transformations, Prospects*. New York: State University of New York Press.

- Premdas, R. R. (1996). *Ethnicity and Identity in the Caribbean: Decentering a Myth* (Working Paper No. Working Paper #234). Indiana: The Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies.
- Prendergast, M. (2009). Introduction: The Phenomena of Poetry in Research. In M. Prendergast (Ed.), *Poetic Inquiry: Vibrant Voices in the Social Sciences* (pp. xix–xlii). Rotterdam: Sense.
- Pulis, J. W. (1999). Religion, Diaspora, and Cultural Identity: An Introduction. In J. W. Pulis (Ed.), *Religion, Diaspora, and Cultural Identity: A Reader in the Anglophone Caribbean* (pp. 1–12). Australia: Gordon and Breach.
- Puri, S. (2004). *The Caribbean Postcolonial: Social Equality, Post-Nationalism, and Cultural Hybridity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rawlins, W. K., & Clair, R. P. (2003). Hearing Voices/Learning Questions. In *Expressions of Ethnography: Novel Approaches to Qualitative Methods* (pp. 119–125). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Reese, L. A., & Rosenfeld, R. A. (2002). *The Civic Culture of Local Economic Development*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Richardson, L. (2009). Writing Theory in(to) Last Writes. In *Ethnographies Revisited: Constructing Theory in the Field* (pp. 307–317). London: Routledge.
- Roberts, S. M. (1995). Small place, big money: The Cayman Islands and the international financial system. *Economic Geography*, 71(3), 237.
- Rodgers, K. J. (2010). *Is it Really Better in The Bahamas for Bahamians?* Nassau, The Bahamas: CIP.

A POETICS OF FOOD

- Rogozinski, J. (2000). *A Brief History of the Caribbean: From the Arawak and Carib to the Present* (Revised). New York: Plume.
- Rolle, K. (2012, May 16). Gray seeking to lower dependence on imported food. *The Nassau Guardian*. Retrieved from http://www.thenassauguardian.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=30961:gray-seeking-to-lower-dependence-on-imported-food&catid=3:news&Itemid=27
- Romm, N. R. A. (2001). *Accountability in Social Research: Issues and Debates*. New York: Kluwer.
- Rosset, P., Patel, R., Courville, M., & Land Research Action Network. (n.d.). Moving Forward: Agrarian Reform as a Part of Food Sovereignty. In *Promised Land: competing visions of agrarian reform*.
- Sanders, T. A. B., & Reddy, S. (n.d.). Nutritional implications of a meatless diet. *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, 53, 297–307.
- Sandoval, C. (2000). *Methodology of the Oppressed* (Vol. 18). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Savory, E. (2011). Kamau Brathwaite: Grounded in the Past, Revisioning the Present. In *The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature* (pp. 11–19). London: Routledge.
- Schanbacher, W. (2010). *The politics of food□: the global conflict between food security and food sovereignty*. Santa Barbara Calif.: Praeger Security International.
- Schensul, S. L., Schensul, J. J., & LeCompte, M. D. (1999). *Essential Ethnographic Methods: Observations, Interviews, and Questionnaires* (Vol. 2). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

- Schwegler, L. (2013). *Spycy shores invite the eyes: Towards a multidisciplinary visual theory of food* (Ph.D.). The University of Texas at San Antonio, United States -- Texas. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.antioch.idm.oclc.org/pqdtft/docview/1496773079/abstract/C1951ABB26B4AE5PQ/1?accountid=26438>
- Scott, M., & Rushing, W. (Dec2014). Barbeque Tofu and the Most Southern Food on Earth. *Arkansas Review: A Journal of Delta Studies*, 45(1), 146–155.
- Semmes, C. (1990). The Role of African American Health Beliefs and Practices in Social Movements. *Minority Voices*, 6(2), 45–57.
- Shih, S., & Lionnet, F. (2011). Introduction: The Creolization of Theory. In F. Lionnet & S. Shih (Eds.), *The Creolization of Theory* (pp. 1–33). Durham: Duke University Press.
- Shor, I. (1993). Education is Politics: Paulo Freire's Critical Pedagogy. In P. McLaren & P. Leonard (Eds.), *Paulo Freire: A critical encounter* (pp. 25–35). London: Routledge.
- Shweder, R. A. (2005). Cliff Notes: The Pluralisms of Clifford Geertz. In R. A. Shweder & B. Good (Eds.), *Clifford Geertz by His Colleagues* (pp. 1–9). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Slocum, R., & Saldanha, A. (2013). Geographies of Race and Food: An Introduction. In R. Slocum & A. Saldanha (Eds.), *Geographies of Race and Food: Fields, Bodies, Markets* (pp. 1–24). Farnham England: Ashgate.
- Slovin, M. (2013). *Becoming Sustainable: An Autoethnography in Story and Song* (Ph.D.). Prescott College, United States -- Arizona. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.antioch.idm.oclc.org/docview/1424827816/abstract/2E1C35A4851C4A3FPQ/1?accountid=26438>

A POETICS OF FOOD

- Smorkaloff, P. M. (Ed.). (1994). *If I Could Write this in Fire: An Anthology of Literature From the Caribbean*. New York: The New Press.
- Stage, C. W., & Mattson, M. (2003). Ethnographic Interviewing as Contextualized Conversation. In R. P. Clair (Ed.), *Expressions of Ethnography: Novel Approaches to Qualitative Methods* (pp. 97–105). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Stanonis, A. (2015). Feast of the Mau Mau: Christianity, Conjure, and the Origins of Soul Food. In J. J. Wallach (Ed.), *Dethroning the Deceitful Pork Chop: Rethinking African American Foodways from Slavery to Obama* (pp. 93–106). Fayetteville: University of Florida Press.
- Swindall, L. R. (2015). Looking through Prism Optics: Toward an Understanding of Michelle Obama's Food Reform. In J. J. Wallach (Ed.), *Dethroning the Deceitful Pork Chop: Rethinking African American Foodways from Slavery to Obama* (pp. 135–147). Fayetteville: University Press of Florida.
- Tangney, S. (2014). Student-centered learning: a humanist perspective. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 19(3), 266–275.
- Taylor, E. L. (2011). Rewriting the Mother/Nation: No Telephone to Heaven, In Another Place, Not Here and Cereus Blooms at Night. In M. A. Bucknor & A. Donnell (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature* (pp. 234–242). London: Routledge.
- The Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology Commission. (2001). *First National Communication on Climate Change* (Presentation to the Conference of Parties - UN Framework Convention on Climate Change). Nassau, The Bahamas.
- The Government of The Bahamas. (2011). The Ministry of Environment and Housing [Governmental]. Retrieved December 8, 2016, from

A POETICS OF FOOD

http://www.bahamas.gov.bs/wps/portal/public/gov/government/contacts/agencies/government%20ministries/ministry%20of%20the%20environment%20and%20housing!/ut/p/b1/vZLZkqIwFIafpR_AJglrX6Igu2wBAzcUgrLJpqgtTz86NRddU9XdN9OTc5XKf_LV-RlqpggVd-m1KtKp6rv0-NzHXEIDxRJFRrAUFnBACxxTdHgVCWv2EYg-D9gM-K5_SxEzggZ01m6S7F-bBpEwMzoxjrL-DRVQXfu9kA7tcaUjZBkGL8ORMNePBSXydPfGKjb-FZkYHupfYU1ONtt0QGePDrQqqYSubU76-fl397DyuiCPE2SZB2xozSW7sT2M06cc5jjQ0mq0SZQa639CpC9zErkGgU2bdP9dp6XS Oe9aH8VxPBs5sVcRvVwOsk8YRMgmTKrHoqXlz8uwCdL_NaFTsXVrn29Ze0reEVvg BWgQHOIBwJiqbCOuPddYZWy7CVIFN3LeswX9E3MW2fKyFX1TyszUmGX8Oidod 2BWDROJY8zTyUORvoAj5eETy7LoTO0YLwnx2zOF9PQTB2jLHeQTBLz0Gtwwm2 6cL0JvXhnXvj93qt3ihuv5n0eubk3L6vypi85dK-DIE6hrY3biYfbxUKBraXXWFNmwtku6ujnFspccrEwVj5ABk_jOhv8rmnybAi42e1Vjz 6N0lDRhbdO-IA4JZmj0IEHE2WPuUgjX-On1i0Vf2XONtA3gecv_B344mmiR4D_cAMOAAdAgED0fukDwWApTBDCJX98HbW5 mr549c9NAe5I8AwQA4ob3N8FxgzfhBktrC-LwcT4Z_mzRlhTM1sZx8tALlqLoi9k7_BtoI_z2AK4gZwQs8BX000CFtYWHIx47IosA WP13IPwpoGJb7uqpFC-fSmlVFTmTFgDzv4HcPwdu1L7dU0MbXE326muL9EOJL78A1WwS7A!!/dl4/d5/L2dB ISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/

Thurston, G. (2011, May 30). National food security laid out. *The Bahamas Weekly*. Retrieved from http://www.thebahamasweekly.com/publish/bis-news-updates/National_food_security_laid_out16140.shtml

A POETICS OF FOOD

- Tuhkanen, M. (2009). Queer Hybridity. In C. Nigianni & M. Storr (Eds.), *Deleuze and Queer Theory* (pp. 92–114). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Tuomainen, H. M. (2009). Ethnic Identity, (Post)Colonialism and Foodways: Ghanaians in London. *Food, Culture & Society*, 12(4), 525–554.
- Turnquest, A. (2015, November 10). The Bahamas Ranks Sixth On Obesity List. *The Tribune Bahamas*. Retrieved from <http://www.tribune242.com/news/2015/nov/10/bahamas-ranks-sixth-obesity-list/>
- Twitty, M. (2016). Afroculinaria. Retrieved July 20, 2016, from <https://afroculinaria.com/about/>
- United Nations Statistics Division. (2017). Bahamas: World Statistics Pocketbook [United Nations]. Retrieved January 6, 2017, from <http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=bahamas>
- University of California - Berkeley. (2016). Community Forum on Black Liberation and the Food Movement [University]. Retrieved October 23, 2016, from https://events.berkeley.edu/index.php?event_ID=103894&date=2016-11-19&tab=all_events
- Vadasaria, S. (2014). Anti-Colonial Poetics: Methodology from and for Palestine. In C. Fogel, E. Quinlan, & A. Quinlan (Eds.), *Imaginative Inquiry: Innovative Approaches to Interdisciplinary Research* (pp. 167–181). Bethesda: Academica Press.
- Valdes, V. K. (2012). Introduction. In *Let Spirit Speak!: Cultural Journeys through the African Diaspora* (pp. xi–xii). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Van Deburg, W. L. (1992). *New Day in Babylon: Movement and American Culture, 1965-1975*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

A POETICS OF FOOD

- Vaught, S. E. (2011). *Racism, Public Schooling, and the Entrenchment of White Supremacy: A Critical Race Ethnography*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Wallach, J. J. (2015). Dethroning the Deceitful Pork Chop: Food Reform at the Tuskegee Institute. In J. J. Wallach (Ed.), *Dethroning the Deceitful Pork Chop: Rethinking African American Foodways from Slavery to Obama* (pp. 165–179). Fayetteville: University of Arkansas.
- Walton, Jr., H. (1994). Black Rural Medicine: Dr. Elijah Washington--And A Black Health Policy. In H. Walton, Jr. (Ed.), *Black Politics and Black Political Behavior: A Linkage Analysis* (pp. 61–68). Connecticut: Praeger.
- Warner, M. S. (2015). *Eating in the Side Room: Food, Archaeology, and African American Identity*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- West, M. O., & Martin, W. G. (2009). Introduction: Contours of the Black International From Toussaint to Tupac. In M. O. West, W. G. Martin, & F. C. Wilkins (Eds.), *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution* (pp. 1–44). Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Whit, W. C. (2007). Soul Food as Cultural Creation. In A. L. Bower (Ed.), *African American Foodways: Explorations of History and Culture* (pp. 45–58). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- White, R. (2009). Care and Justice. *Ethical Perspectives*, 16(4), 459–483.
- Williams, Y. (2012). “They’ve lynched our savior, Lumumba in the old fashion Southern Style”: The Conscious Internationalism of American Black Nationalism. In N. Slate (Ed.), *Black Power beyond Borders: The Global Dimensions of the Black Power Movement* (pp. 147–167). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Williams-Forson, P. (2006). *Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, and Power*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Williams-Forson, P. (2010). Preface. In *Sistah Vegan: Black Female Vegans Speak on Food, Identity, Health, and Society*. New York: Lantern Books.

Windfuhr, M., Jonsen, J., & FIAN-International. (2005). *Food sovereignty: towards democracy in localized food systems*. Rugby Warwickshire UK: ITDG Pub.

Witt, D. (1999). *Black Hunger: Food and the Politics of Identity*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wolcott, H. F. (2005). *The Art of Fieldwork* (Second). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Wolcott, H. F. (2008). *Ethnography: A Way of Seeing* (Second). Lanham: AltaMira Press.

Woods, P., Gapp, R., & King, M. A. (2016). Generating or developing grounded theory: methods to understand health and illness. *International Journal of Clinical Pharmacy*, 38(3), 663–670.

World Health Organization. (2012). *Bahamas: Health Profile* (Health Profile). Nassau, The Bahamas: Pan American Health Organization. Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/countries/bhs/en/>

World Resources Institute. (2003). *Forests, Grasslands, and Drylands--Bahamas* (Country Profile). Washington, DC: World Resources Institute.

Appendix A

Research Statement

I am doing a project about the different food choices people make in Nassau and how they think that affects their lives. I have been talking with members of S.E.E.D.lings' Place because a lot of people who are involved are focused on their food choices. I recently spoke with _____ and she/he gave me your name because you have been involved with S.E.E.D.lings' Place. If you are interested and feel comfortable, I would like to talk with you about how you feel your own food choices affect your life.

I will write about these conversations in poems and my thesis report. I would like to audio record our conversation and take notes to make sure that my writing is accurate. I will also create scripts of these conversations but only I will look at them and they will be in protected files. I will create a summary of our conversation based on the scripts and my notes. Before I start writing, I will share this summary with you to make sure you agree with my interpretation of our conversation. I am using poetry and spoken word to write about these conversations. In the Fall, I will perform these poems publicly. I would like people I'm talking with to perform their own poetry or music related to these conversations. I will let you know when a date, time, and location have been confirmed. Even if you don't want to perform, I hope you will attend.

This is totally voluntary and if you feel uncomfortable speaking with me, there is no pressure for you to participate. If you want to participate, you can choose whether or not you want to be mentioned by name. I will perform the poems in Nassau and my thesis report will be available online. That means anyone with access to the internet will know you were part of this project if I use your name in my writing. If you choose to remain anonymous, I will refer to you by number or you may choose a name. The scripts, my codebook for names, interview notes, and files of recordings will be kept in password-protected files that only I can access.

My school requires me to get signed permission from the people who I talk to. This way, they know that you understand why we're talking and how our conversation will be included in my work. If you decide that you want to participate, I will bring that form for you to sign when we meet. You are welcome to contact me at any time with questions about the research.

Do you have any questions about the conversation or how it will be included in my thesis report?

Appendix B

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Hilary Booker is doing a project to describe how people in Nassau make food choices and how that affects their lives. This research project is part of Hilary's Phd work at Antioch University New England.

PROCEDURE

You are being contacted because _____ recommended you as a member or associate of S.E.E.D.lings Place. For that reason, I would like to talk with you about your food choices and how you feel they affect your life. It is your choice whether or not you would like to be a part of this project. Please read this entire form and ask questions about anything you do not understand before you decide if you want to participate.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Whether or not you are mentioned by name in this research is your choice. If you choose to remain anonymous, I will refer to you by number or a different name of your choice. Regardless of your choice, interview scripts, my codebook for names, interview notes, and files of recordings will be kept in password-protected files that only I can access.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

This project is meant to show positive changes Bahamians are making in their lives and Bahamian culture. It is meant to show that Bahamians know how to improve local problems related to food and do not always need to rely on people from other places. By participating in this project, you are showing other Bahamians the positive impact that members of S.E.E.D.lings Place might have on the country in general. You are also showing people inside and outside the Bahamas different ways to think about how food affects people's lives generally.

POTENTIAL RISKS

I will perform the poems in Nassau and my thesis report will be available online. That means anyone with access to the internet will know you were part of this project if I use your name in my writing. This project is not intended to be uncomfortable physically or emotionally. If you are hurt physically and/or mentally because of this research project, neither Antioch University New England nor Hilary Booker will provide any medical treatment, hospitalization, insurance or compensation, except as required by law.

PARTICIPATION AND OPTING OUT

It is your choice entirely whether or not to be part of this study. If you volunteer to be included in this study, you may opt out at any time without consequences of any kind.

RESEARCHER CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact Hilary Booker at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] or her research committee chair, Dr. Elizabeth McCann at emccann@antioch.edu.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The Antioch University New England Institutional Review Board has reviewed my request to conduct this project. If you have any questions about your rights in this project, please contact Donald Woodhouse, Chair of the Antioch University New England Institutional Review Board at +1 603-283-2101 or email dwoodhouse@antioch.edu or Dr. Melinda Treadwell, Vice President of Academic Affairs at Antioch University New England at +1 603-283-2128 or email at mtreadwell@antioch.edu.

I understand the project described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Appendix C

Guide to Conversation

I will tailor this guide prior to each interview based on what I already know about the person and this guide serves as a template or agenda for the overall structure of each interview.

1. Tell me about how you got involved with S.E.E.D.lings' Place?
2. How have you been involved with SP and its members?
3. What can you tell me about the standard Bahamian diet?
4. How does the standard Bahamian diet compare or differ from your own standard diet?
5. Can you tell me about what has affected the choices that form your standard diet?
6. Where does your food come from?
7. Can you tell me about how food is meaningful to you?
8. What about your food choices do you wish other people knew?
9. Describe for me your most perfect meal--if time, space, and money, were no object.
(where would it be? Would you share it with anyone else? If so, whom? What would you eat?)
10. Is there anything I've forgotten to ask you? Or is there anything you haven't shared that you'd like to?

Appendix D

Permissions

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **permissions (US)** <permissions@sagepub.com>
Date: Thu, Jun 15, 2017 at 1:29 PM
Subject: RE: Permission Request for Doctoral Dissertation
To: Hilary Booker [REDACTED]

Hi Hilary,

Ah, yes that was your voicemail – I wasn't sure and hadn't yet gotten to call back but if you have further questions, don't hesitate to let us know.

I am happy to report that you can consider this email as permission to use the material as detailed below in your upcoming dissertation. This also covers the uses you detailed (including the online repositories). Please note that this permission does not cover any 3rd party material that may be found within the work. You must properly credit the original source, SAGE Publications.

Please contact us for any further usage of the material and good luck on your dissertation!

Best,

Yvonne

--

Yvonne McDuffee

Rights Coordinator

SAGE Publications Inc.

From: Hilary Booker [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 15, 2017 10:12 AM
To: permissions (US) <permissions@sagepub.com>
Subject: Re: Permission Request for Doctoral Dissertation

Hi Yvonne:

Thank you for your response. I assume you also received my voicemail from earlier today.

The citation is

Kitchenham, A. (2008). The Evolution of John Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 6(2), 104–123.

Please let me know what the process for permissions will be and the amount of time it will take in order for it to be granted at your earliest convenience.

Many thanks for your help.

Best,

Hilary Booker

A POETICS OF FOOD

On Thu, Jun 15, 2017 at 11:53 AM, permissions (US) <permissions@sagepub.com> wrote:

Hello Hilary,

Thank you for your email and for all the details! This should most likely be fine as you've laid out but could you provide the full citation of the article you are using the table from? Then I can proceed with a more formal grant of permission.

All the Best,

Yvonne

--

Yvonne McDuffee

Rights Coordinator

SAGE Publications Inc.

2455 Teller Road

Thousand Oaks, CA 91320

www.sagepublishing.com

Los Angeles | London | New Delhi

Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne

From: Hilary Booker [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 9, 2017 12:51 PM
To: permissions (US) <permissions@sagepub.com>
Subject: Permission Request for Doctoral Dissertation

To Whom It May Concern:

I am doctoral candidate completing my dissertation at Antioch University New England and I want to request your permission to reuse a table in my dissertation. A copy of the table I am using and its appearance in my dissertation is attached.

My dissertation will appear in the following locations:

- a. Proquest Dissertations and Theses Database and that Proquest is a Print on Demand Publisher <http://www.proquest.com/products-services/pqdt.html>
- b. Ohiolink Electronic Theses and Dissertations Center and that Ohiolink ETD Center is an open access archive <https://etd.ohiolink.edu/>
- c. AURA: Antioch University Repository and Archive and that AURA is an open access archive. <http://aura.antioch.edu/>
- D. Print (for my own purposes)

Please respond at your earliest convenience. I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Hilary Booker

--

Hilary B. Booker
Environmental Studies
Antioch University New England
[REDACTED]