

Goldthwaite, Melissa A., editor. *Food, Feminisms, Rhetorics*. Southern Illinois UP, 2017. 296 pages.

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Melissa Goldthwaite's edited collection *Food, Feminisms, Rhetorics*, a 2017 addition to Southern Illinois University Press's "Studies in Rhetorics and Feminisms" series, poignantly explores intersections of women's experience and food practices through a range of rhetorical frameworks. Eighteen authors, ranging from established scholars to new voices, contribute to the collection, engaging in discourse about the cultural, historical, and embodied complexities surrounding food, womanhood, and feminism in the United States and beyond. While each chapter in the collection easily stands alone as a thorough analysis, together the pieces in this book make a strong argument for additional attention—in scholarship and in everyday living—to food's impact on lived experience, especially for women. Authors in the collection examine feminism and food practices broadly writ, from historical representations of women's cooking to agricultural implications on home and family; images of nourishment during the holocaust to emotional associations with dieting cookbooks. Feminist scholars looking for scholarly yet accessible discussions of food—growing, buying, cooking, eating—will likely find topics of interest in *Food, Feminisms, Rhetorics*.

Organized into four sections, the chapters of this book explore, analyze, and complicate rhetorical intersections of food and female experience. Part I, "Purposeful Cooking: Recipes for Historiography, Thrift, and Peace" focuses on cookbooks as sites of inquiry, as authors discuss social, political, personal, and cultural effects—and legacies—cookbooks create for readers in and across time. Part II, "Defining Feminist Food Writing," presents rhetorical analyses of feminist approaches to writing about food, with authors interpreting how food writers adopt or create feminist approaches to writing about food practices and experiences. Part III, "Rhetorical Representations of Food-Related Practices," similarly analyzes intersections of food practices and identity, focusing on lived experiences of food to interpret its social, cultural, and emotional effects, particularly on women's experience. And part IV, "Rhetorical Representations of Bodies and Cultures," complicates relationships between

food habits and corporeality, suggesting additional meanings to how cultures and societies interpret, analyze, and attempt to control bodies through experiences with and attitudes toward food. Together, these sections and the chapters within them provide a deep exploration of, as the book's title indicates, food, feminisms, and rhetorics. *Food, Feminisms, Rhetorics* suggests that there is no one way to talk about food and no one feminist approach to food practices, and it importantly complicates stereotypical notions of relationships between food, bodies, and experiences.

Several chapters explore the complexities of food through lenses of politics, history, or culture, both celebrating and problematizing how food and bodies that consume food are discussed across contexts. Abby Dubisar, author of chapter four, "Promoting Peace, Subverting Domesticity: Cookbooks against War 1968-83," and Abby Wilkerson, author of chapter eight, "Not Your Father's Family Farm: Toward Transformative Rhetorics of Food and Agriculture," for example, trace relationships between food and politics. While Dubisar explores the ways in which second-wave feminists made space for activism through cookbook genres, Wilkerson calls for social justice in the current agricultural sphere: "To promote real change in the food system, from agricultural labor regulations to farmers' market promotions and youth gardens, sustainability and food justice rhetorics must challenge the commodification of land and food—and the presumed 'whiteness' of family values" (130). These and other chapters in *Food, Feminisms, Rhetorics* make a case for more widespread attention to food politics as an arena that affects everyone who eats.

Still politicizing but also historicizing food, other authors such as Alexis Baker offer interpretations of bodies through a food-focused lens. In chapter fourteen, "Feeding the Self: Representations of Nourishment and Female Bodies in Holocaust Art," Baker argues that art during the holocaust was the "product of rhetorical choices," where Jewish women in particular chose to portray themselves visually with strong, nourished, healthy bodies (200). Jennifer Cognard-Black, in chapter two, "The Embodied Rhetoric of Recipes," takes a more personal approach to historicizing by exploring how recipes passed down from her grandmother invoke physical, embodied memories and habits, some of which hold problematic (e.g., racist and sexist) values. Both of these chapters demonstrate political-historical complexities surrounding food, suggesting that public and private food histories might inform current food practices and politics.

While the authors discussed thus far present political and historical interpretations of food and food practices, still others view feminist approaches to food through a cultural lens. Authors such as Sylvia A. Pamboukian (chapter eleven, "Sugar and Spice: cooking with the Girl Poisoner") and Tammie M. Kennedy (chapter twelve, "Boxed Wine Feminisms: The Rhetoric of Women's

Wine Drinking in *The Good Wife*”) discuss intersections of food and feminism in popular culture, completing rhetorical analyses of female characters in TV and movies. Other contributors, including Elizabeth Lowry (chapter eighteen, “Deconstructing the Plus-Size Female Sleuth: Fat Positive Discourse, Rhetorical Excess, and Cultural Constructions of Femininity in Cozy Crime Fiction”) and Arlene Voski Avakian (chapter nine, “Baklava as Home: Exile and Arab Cooking in Diana Abu-Jaber’s Novel *Crescent*”), set their rhetorical analyses of food practices in novels: for Lowry, analyzing plus-size female detectives in chick-lit crime fiction, and for Voski Avakian analyzing national identity and food in Diana Abu-Jaber’s *Crescent*. Yet a third approach to cultural analysis is represented through pieces such as chapter thirteen, Consuelo Carr Salas’s “The Commodification of Mexican Women on Mexican Food Packaging,” in which she describes the sexist and culturally stereotypical representation of Mexican women on “mainstream” supermarket salsa jars. All of these culture-based rhetorical analyses seek to bring identity to the forefront of relationships between food and feminism. Moreover, the chapters in this book represent a variety of frameworks for rhetorical analysis, further suggesting the complexities of food and feminism as situated in specific cultural contexts.

The methodological variation among chapters in the text provides readers with an array of approaches to feminist rhetorical and cultural analysis, further demonstrating not only the complexity of relationships between food and female experience, but the flexibility inherent in feminist methodologies. In the book’s first chapter, “Writing Recipes, Telling Histories: Cookbooks as Feminist Historiography,” Carrie Helms Tippen analyzes *Sweets: Soul Food Desserts and Memories* to trace the history of recipes as they are handed down between women, claiming the narrative created in the cookbook acts as feminist historiography. In doing this work, Tippen provides theoretical grounding for feminist historiography and evidence from *Sweets* to demonstrate that cookbooks award “kitchen women” power “as authors, rhetors, and rhetorical agents” (28). Feminist historiography, however, is just one of several approaches used by authors in *Food, Feminisms, Rhetorics* to analyze food practices. Several of the contributors, as noted above, employ traditional methods of rhetorical analysis by exploring the roles of ethos, pathos, and logos in food writing or imagery. Both Dubisar and Morgan Gresham, author of chapter fifteen, “Evolving Ana: Inviting Recovery,” frame their work in invitational rhetoric, while Kennedy employs social circulation (Royster and Kirsch) as a framework for analyzing women’s wine-drinking in *The Good Wife*. This range of methodological approaches, in addition to the range of sites for analysis, provides readers of *Food, Feminisms, Rhetorics* with a rich understanding of how food practices might be viewed as scholarly work.

The book certainly does not leave readers questioning scholarly attention to food, in part due to its thoughtful organization by Goldthwaite. The categorizing of sections makes the book's organization clear and its content cohesive, but Goldthwaite and the chapter authors ultimately charge the reader with the task of putting the chapters in conversation with each other. There is little cross-referencing across chapters in and between sections, which provides readers the opportunity to self-synthesize and draw their own connections. Moreover, Goldthwaite's introduction provides just enough context that the book has a clear argument:

And even though there exists no perfect recipe for dismantling unjust social, political, and economic hierarchies; no language that communicates with every audience; no food that can satisfy every hunger—there are, each day, opportunities to nourish, to learn better methods for preparing food and for analyzing it, to critique and to be more generous in sharing foods, practices, ideas, and ourselves. (10)

Goldthwaite has organized the text thoughtfully so that she provides cohesion in the argument, but still challenges readers to ask their own additional questions that might lead to further research. In other words, while the cohesion of the text is clear through its theme and organization, connections between and among chapters are not forced on the reader—rather, she is instead invited to contribute by drawing her own connections, thus placing her own voice in context with the authors' analyses.

Goldthwaite's *Food, Feminisms, Rhetorics* would make an excellent addition to any feminist rhetorician's bookshelf. Grounded in rhetorical analysis, the book situates food practices and women's experience together by analyzing them through familiar rhetorical frameworks. In particular, scholars investigating histories of rhetoric, intersections of rhetoric and cultural criticism, or intersections of rhetoric and literature will likely find chapters of this book useful to their scholarly interest. Graduate students or advanced undergraduates in rhetoric, furthermore, might find the chapters of this text additionally useful as examples of (feminist) rhetorical analysis in practice, especially when looking to apply rhetorical frameworks to more popular texts or sites. Whether veteran rhetorician or graduate student new to the field, feminist scholars are likely to find interesting and approachable arguments in this book.

Work Cited

Royster, Jacqueline Jones, and Gesa E. Kirsch. *Feminist Rhetorical Practices: New Horizons for Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy Studies*. Southern Illinois UP, 2012.

About the Author

Kelly Moreland is a Ph.D. candidate at Bowling Green State University (BGSU) where she also works as the Assistant Director of the General Studies Writing Program. Her teaching and research interests include writing program administration, feminist pedagogies and methodologies, embodied rhetorics, and digital and multimodal composition. She is currently working on her dissertation project, a feminist, community-based study that investigates how graduate teaching associates account for embodied performance as they learn to teach for BGSU's first-year writing program.