Rational Antimodernism: Scientific Cookery, Natural Foods, and the Antimodern Impulse in Progressive Era Cookbooks

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Introduction and Methodology

"The dawn of the Twentieth Century shows the light of knowledge shining on all great achievements, but the most brilliant light is in the advancement of the Science and Art of Cookery and the Culture and Economy of the Home Beautiful."[1] This sentiment, contained in the introductory pages of an early 20th century cookbook, was a common one in the domestic and food reform circles of the Progressive Era. In line with the dominant thinking of the day, these groups looked towards scientific advance in order to project scientific expertise, which supported reform efforts intended to modernize the American diet and home through increased efficiency and rationalization. These efforts took many forms, from cooking schools to radio programs. One particular format with a long American history most tangibly reflects both the rhetorical and the quotidian changes that came with the dietary reform efforts of the Progressive Era: the cookbook. Long considered gendered rhetorical spaces of culinary authority, cookbooks in Progressive Era America evolved to take on a position of scientific authority in keeping with societal trends privileging rationality, order, and efficiency. Often connected to the home economics, domestic science, and cooking school movements of the period that viewed food as a foundational euthenic[2] tool for population improvement, cookbook authors consciously rationalized their instructions and highlighted nutrition in keeping with the latest scientific theories and advances. In doing so, they also consciously and subconsciously reinforced another Progressive Era trend that seems contradictory to the period's focus on scientific expertise: the antimodern impulse.

The drastic changes in the food provision, habits, and rhetoric of the Progressive Era have received a good deal of scholarly attention. The foundation for the modern understanding of the period's radical changes in the relationship between Americans and the food they consumed was laid in 1988 by Harvey A. Levenstein. His monograph, *Revolution at the Table,* argues that the period between 1880 and 1930 in America saw a full-blown revolution in food habits when "material, social, and ideological forces," such as technological advances, demographic changes, and rational reform efforts, "converged to shape new ways of eating and new attitudes towards food."[3] Various scholars have used Levenstein's foundation to explore other avenues of the topic. In *Modern Food, Moral Food*, Helen Zoe Veit focuses on the dietary morality of Americans and the Food Administration during World War I, showing that the voluntarism of the period complicates the many top-down narratives that came before her. Jessamyn Neuhaus and Sarah Walden have contributed monographs on the long gendered history of cookbooks in America, with both positioning

[1] Francis Carruthers, *Twentieth Century Home Cook Book* (Chicago: Thompson & Thomas, 1905), 7.

[2] The field of euthenics concentrated on improving the immediate lives of humans through their environment and consumables. This stands in contrast to eugenics, which focused on improving the lives of future generations through environmental or reproductive intervention.

[3] Harvey A. Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table: The Transformation of the American Diet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 210.

the Progressive Era as a transformational period in the domestic rhetoric contained in the texts. International migration historian Donna Gabaccia has also done substantial work on the impact of immigrants and their food cultures on American food habits, showing a tension between the Americanizing projects of the Progressive Era, which worked for the erasure of immigrant cuisines, and other strains of dietary reform that adopted immigrant foods. It is a rich field of historical study, with many strands explored and countless more open.

One aspect of the subject that I have yet to see explored, though, is how this rationalization of food supported the antimodern impulse of the period. This impulse, chronicled by historians such as T.J. Jackson-Lears, was characterized by a longing for an idealized version of the preindustrial past which emphasized a life of nature and authentic experiences untinged by the ills associated with headlong industrialization and corporatization. This seemingly contradictory overlap of antimodernism and rational reform has stood out to me during my time with cookbooks from the period. In the rhetoric and recipes of Progressive Era cookbooks, the burgeoning and immensely powerful fields of nutrition science, domestic science, and home economics gave antimodern food tendencies a scientific weight. At the moment when food production and provision were becoming increasingly industrialized, furthering the alienation of the urban and suburban consumer from the food they were consuming, cookbook authors, who were overwhelmingly from and speaking to this alienated demographic, used the discourse of science and progress to support a balanced, unrealistically antimodern diet of natural, locally grown foods. This support directly impacted some Americans' day-to-day interactions with antimodernism through basic consumption in a way that could have lent scientific credence to the movement as a whole.

My research, and thus the argument presented in this paper, is largely shaped by a few beliefs about the Progressive Era and its sources. In characterizing the period as a whole, I share Daniel Rodgers' opinion that the Progressive movement cannot be evaluated as a coherent one, and that it should instead be viewed as an "era of shifting, ideologically fluid, issue-focused coalitions, all competing for the reshaping of American society."[4] There must be a "recognition of multiplicity"[5] within the reform movement, but also of this multiplicity's discursive commonalities, namely a "rhetoric of antimonopolism," "emphasis on social bonds and the social nature of human beings," and the "language of social efficiency."[6] In this paper, this means that the Progressives mentioned did not necessarily have the same motivations nor the exact reform goals as every other reform activist of the era that could be termed a Progressive. However, they do participate in the movement's shared discourse of scientific efficiency and modernization, which, in the case of the domestic and nutrition science branches of the reform movement, were paradoxically used to support antimodern tendencies.

In regards to cookbooks, I agree with Arjun Appadurai that these texts, and the rhetoric and recipes that they contain, reflect the food production and distribution practices as well as the class, hierarchical, and social values of the society in which they originate.[7] This is a belief also shared by Donna Gabaccia, who stated in her work on immigrant cuisines of the period that food habits, and therefore the cookbooks that shape and reflect them, are "concrete symbols of human culture and identity."[8] Per this view, I feel comfortable extrapolating the social beliefs shared by the bulk of cookbooks that I have studied to the wider demographic group that the books' authors belong to, and I assume that the texts reflect this group's worldview in a meaningful way.

[4]Daniel T. Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," *Reviews in American History* 10, no. 4 (December 1982): 114.

[5]Daniel T Rodgers, "Capitalism and Politics in the Progressive Era and Ours," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 13, no. 3 (2014): 379.

[6]Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," 123.

[7]Arjun Appadurai, "How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30, no. 1 (1988): 3.

[8]Donna Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 8.

After consulting this bountiful secondary scholarship on the Progressive Era diet, I began exploring the period's cookbooks with a piqued interest in the intersection between nutrition science and antimodernism. Multiple digital cookbook archives made this exploration easier. Of particular help during my research process were the University of Minnesota's Doris S. Kirschner Cookbook Collection and Michigan State University's "Feeding America" digital collection of influential cookbooks. Texas Tech University's and Virginia Tech's cookbook collections also held valuable sources. In these books, I analyzed both the recipes and, especially, the lengthy prose sections. Unlike many of their modern counterparts, Progressive Era cookbooks contained long rhetorical, ideological, and explanatory sections of prose which were designed to turn the cookbook into a larger scientific manual for a wide variety of domestic tasks. These sections provide valuable and explicit insights into the motivations behind the practical changes put forward in recipes and instructions.

Cookbooks like the ones analyzed here are valuable historical sources, but also have limitations which they pass on to any historical study utilizing them. As Appadurai points out, cookbooks are "often an effort on the part of some variety of specialist to standardize the regime of the kitchen, to transmit culinary lore, and to publicize particular traditions guiding the journey of food from marketplace to kitchen to table."[9] Or, as Sarah Walden succinctly put it, "everyone eats; not everyone writes."[10] The cookbook authors of the Progressive Era were largely white, middle or upper-middle class women who often hailed from New England and who were dedicated to dietary and domestic reform as a tool to improve American society. While their beliefs can be mapped onto other members of this demographic in broad strokes, any construction of absolute monoliths in regards to food habits would be irresponsible. These texts only showcase and mirror norms, and not how individuals worked within or resisted them.[11] This point is especially worth reinforcing because I am only exploring one very particular facet of Progressive Era dietary reform, with countless other modes of exploring these texts left out.

Despite these limitations, I believe that it is possible to demonstrate that cookbooks during the Progressive Era spoke from a position of established scientific authority, partaking in the dominant reform discourse of the day, to recommend that their readers consume fresh, natural foods, which in turn supported antimodern sentiment in relation to one of the two most basic forms of human consumption: eating.

Cookbooks and Culinary Authority

There is a long history of cookbooks speaking from a place of culinary authority that far predates the emergence of scientific authority in the Progressive Era. The cookbook, in a form recognizable to a modern American audience, first emerged in England in the 17th century. However, these cookbooks were not printed, published, and distributed widely. Instead, they were communal manuscripts, shared within a certain confined community with recipes and remedies that had been passed down in said community.[12] These collections already carried a certain authority, defined by a trust that corresponded with familiar names and close geographic, communal, and perhaps even familial bonds. In the 18th century, the printed cookbook proliferated and their authors constructed a more familiar form of culinary authority. In form and style, the texts become more impersonal and encyclopedic, with far more recipes than the older local manuscripts, increased

[9] Appadurai, "National Cuisine," 3.

[10] Sarah Walden, *Tasteful Domesticity: Women's Rhetoric and the American Cookbook, 1790-1940* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2018), 22.

[11] Jessamyn Neuhaus, *Manly Meals and Mom's Home Cooking: Cookbooks and Gender in Modern America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 2-3.

[12] Sandra Sherman, "Culinary Authority," in *Invention of the Modern Cookbook* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2010), 1-4.

calls for foreign ingredients as they became more available in the marketplace, and wider range in instructions relating to domestic tasks that extended beyond cooking. The authority now was not one of mutual trust but of the author as a mentor in a domestic world where the average consumer was far out of her depth.[13]

While the medium was evolving in England, cookbooks were not particularly popular in pre-Revolutionary America. Neuhaus attributes this to the harsh realities of colonial life, where a "cuisine of survival" took precedence over one of taste. When cookbooks did finally begin to spread in the colonies in the mid-18th century, they were largely English imports of the encyclopedic type that targeted upper-class women.[14] Importation of English cookbooks drastically decreased during and after the Revolution, and the first American cookbook, *American Cookery*, was published by Amelia Simmons in 1796.[15] The lengthier title states that it is an *American Cookery …Adapted to This Country, and All Grades of Life.* This naming is reflective of Simmons making "an intentional break from British tradition and an assertion of emerging American identity."[16]

The particular identity being asserted was a female one. Simmons herself says that the book "is calculated for the improvement of the rifing generation of *Females* in America," and aims to "eſtabliſh the *female character*, a virtuous character."[17] This rhetoric, shared in the majority of cookbooks at the turn of the 19th century, was in step with the republican fervor sweeping America after the revolution. In particular, it aligned with the ideology of "Republican Motherhood," which took shape in the early 19th century as the gender lines in American society hardened and women were increasingly relegated to domestic work as the mutual struggle for survival that defined colonial society faded.[18] In this ideology, domestic work was an important and gendered field in the construction and perpetuation of republican American society. By embodying the values of "reason, virtue, and self-control," and passing them on to their children, women could be active, productive citizens of the new American republic.[19] Cookbooks, like Simmons', then took on an authorial role in prescribing how to embody these values; only by following their instructions could a woman truly harness her domestic power to productively contribute to the society around her.

In the Victorian era, the normative expectations of women in American society changed. Of the values associated with Republican Motherhood, reason faded from importance, while religious morality and an associated self-control ascended. This change was driven in the early 19th century by Protestant reformers as a moral reaction against a perceived culture of abundance. They abhorred the "animal passions" that had triumphed over civilized, Christian values, and preached a lifestyle of self-discipline and self-control.[20] Dietary reformers of this mode advocated for simple eating as a form of dietary asceticism.[21] These beliefs found a hold in American society, and by the mid-19th century the domestic sphere was seen as the primary place to build such moral habits. And, since the domestic sphere was seen as the female domain of a strictly gendered society, women's roles came to be seen as deeply connected to morality and religion, and they were perceived to have the duty of teaching the Christian value of self-regulation to their family.[22] Domestic texts

[13]Sherman, "Culinary Authority," 28-31.
[14]Neuhaus, *Manly Meals*, 8-9.
[15]The lengthier, full citation: Amelia Simmons, *American Cookery, or the Art of Dressing Viands, Fish, Poultry, and Vegetables, and the Best Modes of Making Pastes, Puffs, Pies, Tarts, Puddings, Custards, and Preserves, and All Kinds of Cakes, from the Imperial Plumb to Plain Cake, Adapted to This Country, and All Grades of Life* (1798).
[16]Walden, *Tasteful Domesticity*, 36.
[17]Simmons, *American Cookery*, 3.
[18]Neuhaus, *Manly Meals*, 12.
[19]Walden, *Tasteful Domesticity*, 29.
[20]Daniel Sack, *Whitebread Protestants: Food and Religion in American Culture* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 187-190.
[21]Sack, *Whitebread Protestants*, 197.
[22]Walden, *Tasteful Domesticity*, 56-57.

and cookbooks, already holding a high degree of culinary authority, "took on a sacred significance" as they contained the thorough moral education a mother needed to impart to her household, which had far-ranging effects on the morality of American society.[23]

Finally, as the 19th century progressed, cookbooks also took on increased culinary authority thanks to an authority vacuum left by urbanization and migration. The actual demographic changes will be further explored in the next section. For now, though, it will suffice to say that increased urbanization and migration in the 1800s led to a decrease in the accessibility of physical family recipes and the advice of the elderly, two of the most important traditional modes of passing along domestic knowledge, due to increased distance and decreased communication between familial generations.[24] Cookbooks, with an established authority, filled this void for many American women. So, by the start of the Progressive Era in the late 19th century, cookbooks as texts carried a substantial amount of authoritative weight already through the breadth of their content, their implicit moral and religious value, and the lack of other immediate authoritative domestic figures. As a medium of expert knowledge, then, they were well-positioned to benefit in popularity and public trust from the increased faith in expertise that came with the Progressive Era, especially considering the centrality of diet to many reform efforts.

The Food Revolution and the Progressive Era Diet

In addition to the evolution of cookbooks, American food production, distribution, and consumption underwent massive changes during the second half of the 19th century and during the Progressive Era. The proliferation of railroads better connected rural and urban areas, which, in combination with advances in railcar refrigeration and preservation through canning, allowed for the wider availability of many foods, especially meats, fruits, and vegetables.[25] On the farms themselves, changes were also afoot. Steam and gas powered machinery like tractors became farm necessities, as they increased production and required less labor.[26]

These technological changes helped drive major demographic shifts in rural America. In 1850, nearly 85% of the American population was still engaged in agricultural occupations.[27] Due in part to the decreased labor needs and increased productivity of mechanized farms, the percentage of Americans employed in agricultural work was only 50% by 1870 and decreased to 35% in 1900, while annual wheat production increased from 254 to 599 million bushels.[28] In 1930, the agricultural workforce percentage was down to 21.5%.[29] These occupational shifts in part helped drive urbanization, as unemployed workers moved to cities. On the distribution and processing end of the American food production system, the Progressive Era saw a rise of vertically integrated industrial food producers who directly owned distribution and industrial manufacturing, and either

[23]Walden, *Tasteful Domesticity*, 56; 59-60. For social effects, see Walden, *Tasteful Domesticity*, 72. In short, the mid-19th century is when diet began being linked to population health and civilization improvement in a scientific sense, largely through the importance of climate and environment in Victorian racial science.

[24]Neuhaus, *Manly Meals*, 16.

[25]Neuhaus, *Manly Meals*, 17-18; R. Neal Peterson and Nora L. Brooks, *The Changing Concentration of U.S. Agricultural Production During the 20th Century: 14th Annual Report to the Congress on the Status of the Family Farm*, Agriculture Information Bulletin Number 671 (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Agriculture, 1993), 2.

[26]Peterson and Brooks, *Changing Concentration*, 2

[27]Elaine M. McIntosh, *American Food Habits in Historical Perspective* (Westport: Praeger, 1995), 87.

[28]S. Margot Finn, "Aspirational Eating: Food and Status Anxiety in the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era," in *Discriminating Taste: How Class Anxiety Created the American Food Revolution* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2017), 53.

[29]Carolyn Dimitri, Anne Elfland, and Neilson Conklin, *The 20th Century Transformation of U.S. Agriculture and Farm Policy*, Economic Information Bulletin Number 3 (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Agriculture, June 2005), 2.

also owned industrial farms or signed exclusive contracts with large groups of farmers.[30] By 1914, these large food corporations had all but completed their takeover of the industry from small, independent producers and their local middlemen, and food processing would entail 20% of all U.S. manufacturing after 1900.[31]

This changing economic landscape also affected the social dimensions of food, particularly in the upper and upper-middle classes. The early Victorian era dominance of idealized self-discipline had given way to habits of conspicuous consumption, characterized by excessive portions, lavish parties, and French recipes, in the American upper class by 1880.[32] At the same time, a new professional middle class with leisure time and disposable income was growing which began throwing lavish, multi-course meals of its own to make its newfound status more visible.[33] Central to this tradition, and to upper and middle class domestic life more broadly, were domestic servants. Many families had multiple live-in servants, and few middle-class households had none. In 1880, one quarter of all urban and suburban households had at least one domestic servant employed.[34] As the Progressive Era moved forward, however, the number of domestic servants dropped due to better employment opportunities opening, while the number of families entering the middle class continued to increase.[35] The lavish parties of the Gilded Age were quickly becoming untenable, and a new middle class dietary style was emerging, centered around smaller meals that could be cooked by just one person.

These major transformations in food production and provision were accompanied by revelatory discoveries in the field of nutrition science. Before the 20th century, some foods had always been seen as good and necessary. However, there was no scientific understanding of precisely *why* they were so central to the human experience. The first strides toward solving this enigma were taken in the 1840s and 1850s, when German scientists discovered proteins, carbohydrates, fats, and minerals, and that each nutritional group held specific bodily importance. These discoveries spread quickly, and were popularized in the American public consciousness in the late 1870s and 1880s.[36] Calories were applied to food as a tool to measure energy in 1896 and saw near immediate public acclaim, popularizing the rational view of food as fuel and appearing on menus and cookbooks regularly by the 1910s.[37] Vitamins were discovered in the early 20th century, and were linked to health in rats at Yale in 1908, a finding solidified in 1912. There was no practical way to measure these trace but important substances until the 1930s, but that did not stop them from capturing the public imagination incredibly quickly.[38] During the Progressive Era, scientific discoveries were answering long-held questions about human dietary and nutritional needs in rapid succession.

This nutritional research both supported and drew support from a wider public interest and faith in scientific expertise that prevailed during the Progressive Era. The discourse of the day was already centered in large part on social improvement through science, and the nutritional discoveries gave dietary reformers a concrete way to push for change. By emphasizing science in the kitchen, they could bring the home out of the Victorian past and into step with the modern world. The widespread faith in such exercises can be seen in the range of reform strategies across demographics. Food fads exploded as Americans tried diets employing intensive chewing, single-food meals, low protein or all meat diets, uncooked foods, yeast-free diets, forced feeding, and intermittent fasting.

[30]Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 37.
[31]Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 43; McIntosh, *American Food Habits*, 99.
[32]Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 14-15.
[33]Finn, "Aspirational Eating," 54-56; McIntosh, *American Food Habits*, 94.
[34]Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 18.
[35]Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 161-162.
[36]Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 46-47.
[37]Helen Zoe Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food: Self-Control, Science, and the Rise of Modern American Eating in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 46-47.
[38]Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 148-149; Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food*, 45.

Not entirely unlike today, amateur guesses formed the bedrock of nutritional science, some of which have turned out to be correct. All of these diets drew on the malleable science of the time to justify themselves.[39]

The new nutrition also inspired food activism, as muckraking journalists drew on new nutritional science to show that major food processors employed unsanitary conditions and unhealthy practices.[40] This work touched a public nerve, and helped drive the pure food movement, which was dominated by white upper-middle class women and whose capstone achievement was the 1906 passing of the Pure Food and Drug Act.[41] Bottom-up immigrant activism against urban injustices were also often linked to concerns founded on new understandings of medical, environmental, and nutrition science.[42] Other branches of science that were popular in the public imagination also used nutrition science advances to support their fields. Of particular note are eugenics and, especially, euthenics, which saw food as one of the central causal environmental factors shaping physical, intellectual, and racial development.[43] This rationalization of the diet also featured heavily in American cookbooks and the specific dietary reform efforts which informed, supported, and spread them.

Scientific Cookery and Scientific Cookbooks

Cookbooks, and domestic reform in general, were largely informed, and often directly produced, by the home economics movement. Home economics as a field emerged in the 1870s, and was framed around the core idea that domestic work was important and could be studied scientifically. This domestic science would function as a middle road between women's public reform work and the male-dominated social sciences, becoming one of the few scientific fields open to women.[44] The cookbook authors affiliated with this school were explicit about defending this gendered role; one even said that "Women are the first to advance a reform, and to them must the world look for a continuation of this feeble awakening which has been begun in the breakfast, and which, with careful discrimination, will prove the greatest blessing of the age."[45] The movement was spurred in its development by "the servant problem." Some upper and middle class women who had depended on domestic servant work now had to perform household tasks for the first time.[46] On the other hand, families just entering the middle class could not find the domestic service that status had previously entailed. The professionalization and rationalization of domestic work by home economists aimed to increase the work's perceived status.[47] The importance of this transition is apparent in the cookbooks of the period, which make explicit that their recipes are "arranged so as to require the attention of but one person."[48] It was also a transition that was aided by technological and economic developments, such modern plumbing, improved iceboxes, and wider availability of fresh-baked bread outside of the home.[49]

The home economics movement started with a focus on improving the lives of the working class.

[39] Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food*, 39-40.
[40] Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 39.
[41] Finn, "Aspirational Eating," 61-64.
[42] For a case study on Progressive Era Chicago, see Shana Bernstein, "Health Activism From the Bottom Up: Progressive Era Immigrant Chicagoans' Views on Germ Theory, Environmental Health, and Class Inequality," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 17, no. 2 (2018): 317-344. Especially pp. 317-320, 323-329.
[43] Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food*, 102-104.
[44] Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 75; Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food*, 83.
[45] Annie R. Gregory, *Women's Favorite Cook Book* (Detroit: The Bradley-Garretson Co., 1902), 10.
[46] Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food*, 80-81.
[47] Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food*, 79.
[48] Mary Lincoln, *Mrs. Lincoln's Boston Cook Book: What To Do and What Not To Do in Cooking* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1894 [1884]), vii.
[49] Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food*, 81.

During the Progressive Era, food was a visible site of wealth inequality. Families that made less than $900 annually in the late 1910s and 1920s, on average, spent 44% of their income on food. For families making $3100 annually, 35% of income was spent on food. For better-off families, those making $7000 a year, only 15% was spent on food.[50] For home economists focusing on working class improvement, the scientific discoveries of calories and nutrients economized nutrition, allowing them to recommend diets and food choices that maximized nutrition gained for money spent. In doing so, "domestic scientists promoted themselves as educated authorities, and science, rather than spirituality, was the social savior."[51] This utilitarian view of food reform led middle class reformers to advocate for practices such as cutting out dessert and replacing meat with alternative protein sources.[52] It was a rhetoric that privileged economy over all else, including pleasure, and was spread to the working classes through texts and cooking schools. However, it ultimately failed in the 1890s, as the working class targets of the reform efforts rebuffed the rejection of pleasure, the elitist tilt of the home economics leadership, and the inadequacy of the technologies pushed in the cooking schools.[53] After this failure, the home economics reformers focused exclusively on white middle class women, with science and professionalism centered in their discourse. This rationalizing effort can be clearly seen in the cookbooks of the day, which were written by and directed towards this demographic.

The home economics movement, and the field of domestic science that it helped to popularize, ignited a trend of "scientific cookery" that "swept the nation" during the Progressive Era. This trend was driven by a belief in "the ability of scientific rigor and nutritional training to elevate housekeeping and the preparation of food in particular into an exact and perfectible task."[54] This effort began with the opening of cooking schools that taught the application of scientific methods to food preparation, and which soon spawned the publication of cooking school affiliated cookbooks which spoke from a place of scientific authority. The first of this genre was Mary Lincoln's 1884 *Boston Cook Book*, where Lincoln consciously presents herself as the first principal of the Boston Cooking School and which covers everything from bread-making to sorbet crafting to cooking for invalids and even the proper care of kitchen utensils. This text was the first of the scientific cookbooks, which would be the defining mode of cookbook production during the Progressive Era.[55]

This scientific focus can be explicitly seen in the prose sections of these cookbooks, which regularly feature heavy ideological and moral rhetoric about the domestic sphere. Lincoln herself identifies women's lack of scientific knowledge as the barrier to modernization in the domestic sphere. For her, "the amount of ignorance shown by many women is surprising,"[56] for they have "relegated [their scientific knowledge] to the attic …where they help mice to material for their nests, but help no woman to apply the principles of science upon which the health and welfare of her household largely depend."[57] Lincoln's mission, then, is to recenter cookery as "the art of preparing food for the nourishment of the human body. When given its proper importance in the consideration of health and comfort, it must be based upon scientific principles of hygiene and what the French

[50] Chin Jou, "Let Them Eat Beans? Class and American Food Discourse during the Progressive Era," *Global Food History* 6, no. 1 (2019): 60. This data comes from U.S. government standard of living reports. Although these years comprise the tail-end of the Progressive Era, they are representative of longer-standing dietary inequalities.

[51] Walden, *Tasteful Domesticity*, 129.

[52] Jou, "Let Them Eat Beans?," 63-64; Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food*, 42.

[53] Joe, "Let Them Eat Beans?," 65-66; Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 52-54. The technology pushed by the cooking schools in particular was often distributed for free or at cost, but had a cooked output of inferior quality.

[54] Neuhaus, *Manly Meals*, 21-22.

[55] Walden, *Tasteful Domesticity*, 114.

[56] Lincoln, *Boston Cook Book*, v.

[57] Lincoln, *Boston Cook Book*, vii.

call the minor moralities of the household."[58] To this end, she promises to impart "all the chemical and physiological knowledge that is necessary for a clear understanding of the laws of health, as far as they are involved in the science of cookery."[59] Domestic work needed science in order to be more rational, efficient, and modern, as only through an understanding and application of scientific knowledge in food preparation could a mother adequately provide a healthy diet for her family. The broader population, however, does not necessarily have a strong grasp on such knowledge; therefore, the cookbook author, here Mary Lincoln, takes on a voice of scientific authority and expertise to impart such wisdom.

We can see a similar strategy employed by Fannie Farmer, another principal of the Boston Cooking School whose 1896 cookbook, *The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book*, was a best-selling text through the Progressive Era and remains in print to this day. She, too, immediately opens her book with scientific rhetoric, saying that "with the progress of knowledge the needs of the human body have not been forgotten. During the last decade much time has been given by scientists to the study of foods and their dietetic value, and it is a subject which rightfully should demand much consideration from all."[60] Her goal for the food reform movement is that dietary rationalization will make it so that "mankind will eat to live, will be able to do better mental and physical work, and disease will be less frequent," and that her text will contribute to this goal by not only being "looked upon as a compilation of tried and tested recipes, but that it may awaken an interest through its condensed scientific knowledge which will lead to deeper thought and broader study of what to eat."[61] Again, we see that the cookbook is positioned as a scientific authority that imparts rational expertise with societal implications.

Such scientific goals were not all high-flying, heavy-handed rhetoric, though. They shaped all of the information contained in the cookbooks and its presentation. As seen earlier in this paper, the Progressive Era was a time of increased scientific categorization of nutrients, and the quick popularization of said categorizations. Cookbooks partook in this categorization frenzy as a key strategy to be "not only a collection of recipes," but a text "which shall also embody enough of physiology, and of the chemistry and philosophy of food, to make every principle intelligible to a child and interesting to a mature mind."[62] This trend, too, seems to have originated with Mary Lincoln. She includes in her text the chemical compositions and physical anatomies of core food groups, such as wheat and bread. However, she also goes into equally deep description about substances and processes more tangentially related to cuisine, such as the elemental composition of the air, the process of combustion, and the chemical formation and make-up of anthracite coal.[63] Lincoln also includes precise cooking time tables, dense tables of weight and measurement conversions, and shows how to use the more precise measurements with standard utensils, like when she explains that "*One half teaspoonful* is most accurately measured by dividing through the middle lengthwise."[64] Fannie Farmer includes similar tables in her text, and takes the compositions and categorizations a step further by elaborately breaking down all foods into organics (including proteids, which "build and repair tissues," and carbohydrates, which "furnish energy and maintain heat") and inorganics ("mineral matters" and water).[65] She then breaks down the recommended daily nutrition of an adult, which is composed of "3½ oz. proteid ; 3 oz. fat ; 10 oz. starch ; 1 oz. salt ; 5 pints water."[66] Then, Farmer systematically reviews the chemical compositions of waters, salts, starches, sugars,

[58]Lincoln, *Boston Cook Book*, 1.
[59]Lincoln, *Boston Cook Book*, vii.
[60]Fannie Farmer, *The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1896), vii.
[61]Farmer, *Boston Cooking-School*, vii.
[62]Lincoln, *Boston Cook Book*, v.
[63]Lincoln, *Boston Cook Book*, 3; 5.
[64]Lincoln, *Boston Cook Book*, 24-25; 30-31; 25.
[65]Farmer, *Boston Cooking-School*, 1-2.
[66]Farmer, *Boston Cooking-School*, 3.

and key foods to allow for rational planning of the daily diet. Milk, for example, is defined as "Proteid, 3.4% ; Fat, 4% ; Mineral Matter, .7% ; Water, 87% ; Lactose 4.9%."[67]

Other authors use different methods of scientific categorization and composition. In 1909, Isabel Gordon Curtis, for example, used a strict scientific system of nitrogenous (made up of albuminoids/proteids and the gelatinoids) as well as non-nitrogenous (carbohydrates, hydrocarbons, and vegetable acids) foods.[68] Each subcategory has its particular uses, such as vegetable acids "preserv[ing] the alkalinity of the blood," so a balanced diet that makes use of all types of nutrients is necessary.[69] These differing scientific classifications could be the result of advances in nutrition science, or of the field's malleability at the time. One thing is certain, though. By including such precise categories, classes, and compositions of food, and by saying that balancing *all* of them was necessary for good health, cookbook authors positioned their texts as scientific authorities that needed to be followed and learned from in order to guarantee happy, healthy living for one and one's family.

Perhaps the most tangible way that the scientific focus of the cookbook touched the lives of those who read it, though, was through the rationalization of the recipe that took place during this time. The cooking schools and cookbooks of the Progressive Era oversaw an overhaul of recipe form and content, with lists of ingredients that averaged around five to six items, standardized measurements, and in-depth instructions that allowed for more accessible, scientifically precise recipes.[70] This overhaul makes more sense if we look at individual recipes. For an example from an early cookbook, we can return to a recipe for Stew Pie from Amelia Simmons:

> Boil a fhoulder of Veal, and cut up, falt, pepper, and butter half pound, and flices of raw falt pork, make a layer of meat, and a layer of biſcuit, or biſcuit dough into a pot, cover cloſe and ſtew half an hour in three quarts of water only.[71]

This can then be compared to a recipe from Mary Lincoln:

Breakfast Puffs, or Pop-overs.

1 cup flour.	1 egg, yolk and white beaten sep-
1 saltspoonful salt.	arately.
1 cup milk.	

> Mix the salt with the flour; add part of the milk slowly, until a smooth paste is formed; add the remainder of the milk with the beaten yolk, and lastly the white beaten to a stiff froth. Cook in hot buttered gem pans or earthen cups in a quick oven for half an hour, or until the puffs are brown and well popped over.[72]

The latter includes a full but simple list of ingredients with precise measurements and a far more detailed set of instructions. The recipe is rational, efficient, and scientific. Even the less detailed recipes of the era retain these qualities. For example, a meat loaf recipe from an 1896 cookbook;

> Two pounds of chopped beef, one pound of chopped pork, two eggs, four teaspoons of milk, five crackers, rolle fine, salt and pepper. Mix in loaf with bits of butter on top. Bake one hour. - Mrs. Henry N. Wilson[73]

[67] Farmer, *Boston Cooking-School*, 9.
[68] Isabel Gordon Curtis, *The Good Housekeeping Woman's Home Cook Book* (Chicago: The Reilly & Britton Co., 1909), ix.
[69] Curtis, *Good Housekeeping*, x.
[70] Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 50; Neuhaus, *Manly Meals*, 21; Walden, *Tasteful Domesticity*, 114.
[71] Simmons, *American Cookery*, 23.
[72] Lincoln, *Boston Cook Book*, 94.
[73] Maud C. Cooke. *Three Meals a Day: A Collection of Valuable and Reliable Recipes in all Classes of Cookery, with Toilet, Health, and Housekeeping Departments* (Chicago: North American Publishing Company, 1896), 166.

A recipe like this is much more of an exception than the rule for Progressive Era cookbooks, but even here an increase in measurement precision and instruction detail is apparent.

Science, then, was central to the rhetoric, content, and authority of the Progressive Era cookbook, in keeping with the discourse of scientific expertise and modernization of the time. For cookbook authors, the stakes of such a position were clear, as food and civilization were inextricably linked. As Fannie Farmer put it, "cookery is the art of preparing food for the nourishment of the body. …Progress in civilization has been accompanied by progress in cookery."[74] Individual dietary improvement was directly connected to progress because, "as a man is inevitably what he eats, so the characteristics of the cookery presented to his palate, are almost invariably reproduced in his life and works."[75] By rationalizing the diet of the individual and increasing bodily health thanks to new advances in nutrition science, these authors were directly improving the health and efficiency of American society.

Modernism and Antimodernism in the Progressive Diet

One oft-noted and interesting tension in the Progressive Era is that between the discourse of progress and the antimodern impulse. This is an impulse examined in considerable depth by T.J. Jackson-Lears, who noted a movement of antimodernists unified under the notion that "the modern secular utopia was after all a fraud,"[76] a notion propelled by a sense that one "somehow had to choose between a life of authentic experience and the false comforts of modernity."[77] In dietary reform and cookbooks, this impulse is visible in the increased recommendations of fruits, vegetables, and meats all being consumed in a balanced, natural diet. Like the facets of the movement that Jackson-Lears explored in *No Place of Grace*, this "antimodernism paradoxically often looked forward rather than backward," too.[78] However, this view forward was not shaped by the values of the emerging corporate consumerist system, like many of Lears' examples, so much as by the scientific advances made in nutrition and diet.

One of the most notable changes of the Progressive Era, and a chief manifestation of antimodern sentiment, was the popularization of fruits and vegetables as playing an important role in the American diet. Before the Progressive Era, consumption of this food group had alternated between two extremes. On the one hand, vegetarianism had originated as a fad of the Romantic Era in the 1830s and 1840s, and had continued as a supposedly more moral, less animalistic mode of eating through the 19th century, seen most famously in the Battle Creek Sanatorium and the work of John Harvey Kellogg.[79] More regularly, though, fruit and vegetable consumption in America was quite low through the 19th century, and, outside of a few fruits valued for medicinal properties (most notably apples), fruits and vegetables were largely consumed in small quantities as sides during meat-centric meals.[80]

The new discoveries relating to food composition and bodily nutrition changed this perception as people began understanding that fruits and vegetables were key components of human health. They then became central tenets of the food reform campaign, as seen in the period's cookbooks. Lincoln prescribes "a large variety of vegetables in our food to promote perfect health. Vegetables

[74]Farmer, *Boston Cooking School*, 17.
[75]Cooke, *Three Meals a Day*, iii.
[76]T.J. Jackson-Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 301.
[77]Jackson-Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 300.
[78]Jackson-Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 303.
[79]Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 4; 92-93.
[80]Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 4-5.

are rich in saline substances which counteract the evil effect of too much animal food."[81] Fannie Farmer takes this a step further, listing five different types of "Vegetable Acids" (Acetic, Tartaric, Malic, Citric, Oxalic), their compositions, as well as the fruits and vegetables in which they could be found.[82] For her, vegetables "are chiefly valuable for their potash salts, and should form a part of each day's dietary."[83] Of fruits, "the varieties …are numerous, and their uses important. They are chiefly valuable for their sugar, acids, and salts, and are cooling, refreshing, and stimulating. They act as a tonic, and assist in purifying the blood."[84] This information is vague because few hard scientific answers as to precisely *why* these natural foods are so important were present. All that was known was that they were, and the authors could thus claim scientific authority when recommending that "much of the money expended on for some kinds of meat would be expended for fruit,"[85] that a "simple course of fruit is all that is needed after dinner, and is much more wholesome than pies,"[86] and that "for the promotion of health and the saving of labor fruits for desserts far surpass pies and puddings."[87] These vague understandings would be clarified by the growing knowledge of vitamins in the late 1900s and 1910s, but even then the health benefits of fruits and vegetables remained a foggy topic with immense public power.[88]

There were two major new ways to eat fruits and vegetables in the Progressive Era. The most accessible way was through home or industrial canning, processes that saw major advances in the 1870s and 1880s and allowed for fruits and vegetables to be stored for out-of-season consumption in a more natural state than the previous pickled or sugared variations. Canning instructors, often supported by the companies that produced the means of storage, leaned into this more natural status. One claimed that "two of the most important and wholesome articles of food used by the human race are Fruits and Vegetables," which "in their natural or preserved state should be served daily, for when in good condition they are a healthful article of diet, as they supply a variety of acids which invigorate the system and keep the blood in good condition."[89] And these foods are a natural gift to humanity, for "there is no article of diet that nature so abundantly provides, and none that gratifies our appetites better."[90] Scientific senses of health are invoked to support a taste for natural foods in a natural or close-to-natural state.

The other method of accessing fruit and vegetables was buying them fresh. This was aided by the advance of railroad technology, especially refrigerated railcars, which allowed wider transportation of fruits and vegetables outside of their native growing regions, lowered their prices, and reliably brought fresh produce to urban areas.[91] These fresh fruits were generally preferred to their canned alternatives through the Progressive Era, and were consumed in larger quantities by people with higher levels of wealth and education.[92] This is reflected by an overwhelming preference for fresh over canned fruit in a 1926 Department of Commerce survey,[93] as well as through the instructions offered in Progressive Era cookbooks. Authors wrote that "only sound, fresh fruit should

[81]Lincoln, *Boston Cook Book*, 291.
[82]Farmer, *Boston Cooking-School*, 14.
[83]Farmer, *Boston Cooking-School*, 251.
[84]Farmer, *Boston Cooking-School*, 13.
[85]Lincoln, *Boston Cook Book*, 391.
[86]Lincoln, *Boston Cook Book*, 391.
[87]Gregory, *Woman's Favorite*, 375.
[88]Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food*, 47-49.
[89]H.I. Blits, *Methods of Canning Fruits and Vegetables by Hot Air and Steam and Berries by the Compounding of Syrups also the Crystallizing and Candying of Fruits etc., etc., etc.* (New York: 1890), 5.
[90]Blits, *Methods of Canning*, 5.
[91]Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 31.
[92]Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 168.
[93]E.G. Montgomery, "What the Canned Foods Survey Brought to Light," *Canning Age* 8, no. 3 Convention Digest Issue (February 1927) cited in Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 163.

appear at the table" as it was "above all a great promoter of health,"[94] that "fruits are usually at their best when served ripe and in season,"[95] and that the reader should "have your vegetables as fresh as possible."[96] This went beyond simply buying fruits and vegetables that had freshly arrived on railcars, though; these authors, speaking from a place of scientific authority, insisted on home grown and freshly picked fruits and vegetables. Mary Lincoln wrote that "green vegetables should be freshly gathered,"[97] a sentiment Francis Carruthers echoed when recommending that readers "gather [vegetables] early, as they are so much better with the dew on them."[98] Only as an afterthought and a lesser option does she say, "if in the habit of getting your vegetables from the market, do so as early as convenient in the morning, pick, wash, and put in cold water until ready for use."[99] This was at a time when fewer and fewer Americans lived in rural areas and had access to a variety of fresh, locally grown foods, a fact particularly important here since these dietary reformers focused their energies on urban and suburban middle class women. These groups rarely had access to local, fresh-picked produce, and had to either settle for canned or transported alternatives. By speaking from a place of scientific authority and recommending the more natural, freshly-picked variants, then, these cookbook authors were in fact lending scientific weight to a lifestyle that was fast-disappearing in industrial, urbanized America.

In addition to increasing the appeal and consumption of fruits and vegetables, the nutrition science discoveries before and through the Progressive Era affirmed the consumption of meat. The United States has a long history of meat consumption dating back to the colonial era. Before the 1860s, pork reigned supreme as the most consumed meat in America, to the point that the young nation was sometimes called "The Republic of Porkdom" in jest.[100] Even during that time, though, beef was perceived to be the best meat for eating, and its consumption was limited only by availability and affordability. This began changing in the late 19th century when Westward expansion opened new cattle-grazing lands and railroad proliferation allowed for easier transport back to Eastern urban centers, resulting in a drop in prices.[101] The discovery and popularization of protein affirmed this consumption. Farmer says that "beef …is the most nutritious and largely consumed of all animal foods."[102] The food group as a whole "is chiefly composed of the albuminoids (fibrin, albumen, gelatin), fat, mineral matter, and water," which help the blood coagulate and replenish blood and muscle in humans.[103] Thus, a long-lasting American culinary tradition, defined by ruggedness, was reinforced by the science of the day.

It is important to note, though, that this affirmation of meat consumption came along with a measuring of said consumption. Instead of overwhelmingly eating meat, scientists began to understand that Americans should slightly lessen their (still important) meat consumption while increasing their consumption of fruits, vegetables, and other food groups. The dual excitement about both grown foods and meats in cookbooks could, and I would argue should, be seen as a reflection of this sentiment. There is widespread agreement that meat should be consumed daily and that fruits and vegetables should be consumed more often. And, considering the meat-heavy diet of 19th century America, the only way that fruits and vegetables could be consumed more often would be through decreasing meat consumption. This is exactly what happened. Food Administration surveys at the time of American entry into World War I indicate that Americans were eating less

[94]Lincoln, *Boston Cook Book*, 392; 391.
[95]Farmer, *Boston Cooking-School*, 473.
[96]Carruthers, *Twentieth Century*, 164.
[97]Lincoln, *Boston Cook Book*, 291.
[98]Carruthers, *Twentieth Century*, 164.
[99]Carruthers, *Twentieth Century*, 164.
[100]Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 4.
[101]Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 21.
[102]Farmer, *Boston Cooking-School*, 169.
[103]Farmer, *Boston Cooking-School*, 169.

meat and more fresh fruits and vegetables than earlier in the century.[104] In a broader picture, from the 1890s to 1930, Americans ate 5% fewer calories per capita, but had a much wider variety of nutrients in their diets. Far more fruits (especially citruses) as well as vegetables were being consumed, as well as more milk and cheese. Beef consumption per capita, meanwhile, fell from 72.4 to 55.3 pounds as diets became more well-rounded.[105]

This scientifically supported diet advocating natural foods had tangible positive health effects that reinforced its use. In the early 19th century, the overconsumption of meat and underconsumption of fruits and vegetables led to widespread national constipation; this began to be alleviated as diets diversified.[106] The increased consumption of essential vitamins alleviated deficiency diseases such as beri-beri and rickets.[107] Similarly, increased protein and niacin consumption in the South led to decreased rates of pellagra.[108] Scientific evidence had supported a natural diet which alleviated long standing health issues that had plagued American communities for decades if not centuries. The connection between scientific health and natural, antimodern consumptive practices was thus reinforced.

I am not alone in making such a connection; sources from the day confirm that these thoughts were in circulation. One very explicit example is Annie R. Gregory's 1909 *Woman's Favorite Cook Book*, which takes a vegetable-heavy approach to health but includes a plethora of recipes for meat dishes, and which indulges heavily in antimodernism. One very early example from the text is in a series of drawings that come before the publication information. Under a drawing entitled "Dishes from the Field and Garden," there is a quote from eminent German naturopath and naturalist Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland: "The more a man follows nature, and is obedient to her laws, the longer he will live; the farther he deviates from these, the shorter will be his existence."[109] She also includes an entire chapter on "How and What to Cook When Camping Out," in which she extols the values of roughing it; "when we consider that the idea includes not only change of location, but change of dress, healthy exercise and simple living, we must all admit that it is a good thing for mankind."[110] This sentiment directly aligns with the intrinsically antimodernist nature study trend of the time.[111] When talking about the healthful natural bounty of fruits and vegetables, though, Gregory directly draws on the scientific food discourse of the time. "Fruits," she writes, "of which there is a bewildering variety, have a large place in the list of health preservers. Every fruit contains substances designed to inspire and humanize its votary. The juices are cool and healing and greatly assist in digestion."[112] As for food preparation in general, "every mother in this land should learn something of the chemistry of cooking. This knowledge would not only enable her to keep her family in health, but would teach them how to take care of themselves."[113] In cookbooks with antimodernist tendencies, the science was not rejected. Instead, the Progressive Era gains in nutrition science were employed as support for the larger reaction against modern society's discontents.

We can see a similar process unfolding in relation to corn consumption. Corn is perhaps the oldest American staple crop, and it supported countless indigenous communities for millennia before the arrival of Europeans in the Americas. During the early days of North American colonization,

[104]Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 141-142.
[105]Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 194.
[106]Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 5.
[107]Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 148; Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food*, 85.
[108]Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food*, 85.
[109]Gregory, *Woman's Favorite*, per-publication notes diagram no. 3.
[110]Gregory, *Woman's Favorite*, 431.
[111]See Kevin C. Armitage, "'The Child is a Born Naturalist': Nature Study, Woodcraft Indians, and the Theory of Recapitulation," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 6, no. 1 (January 2007): 43-70.
[112]Gregory, *Woman's Favorite*, 437.
[113]Gregory, *Woman's Favorite*, 438.

corn was widely consumed as a core cereal. By the 19th century, it was still eaten, but was also a stigmatized food. For many white middle class Americans, corn held a deep association with Native American cuisine, which can be seen in cookbooks employing the double term "maize (Indian corn)" as well as stereotyping cornmeal products as Indian, such as Fannie Farmer calling cornmeal gruel "Indian Gruel."[114] These communities still sometimes consumed these stereotyped meals, but looked down on Native American cuisine in general.[115] In addition, corn was associated with the rural South, especially African American communities, and was seen as the causal factor for the high rates of pellagra in the region.[116] However, when nutrition science revealed that pellagra was in fact linked to a protein deficiency and that corn had healthy properties, these negative opinions began to shift. Annie Gregory tapped explicitly into this change:

> It is true that the whole earth teems with fine food and it will ever yield bounteously to her children. No article of diet supplies nutriment so cheaply and with less trouble than cereals and vegetables. Take, for instance Indian corn. At the time America was discovered the inhabitants lived almost exclusively upon this cereal.[117]

This was a rhetoric that the Food Administration seized on during World War I, as they positioned corn as a truly American meal by connecting it in propaganda to the romanticized view of Native Americans shared by antimodernists such as Ernest Thompson Seton.[118] The new nutrition science again supported the antimodern viewpoint by giving foundation to claims of the "primitive" natural world's health advantages.

Conclusion

American cookbooks have long positioned themselves as a medium with a high degree of culinary authority. However, the foundations of that authority have changed over time, largely in keeping with changing societal expectations of women due to their status as highly gendered rhetorical spaces. In the Progressive Era, the dominant discourse was one of science, rationalization, and efficiency, wherein the modernization of the domestic space was linked to the advancement of American civilization. Drawing on new advances in nutrition science, cookbook authors actively participated in this discourse, and the texts took on a scientific authority. From this position of authority, and using newfound nutritional knowledge, cookbook authors began recommending increased consumption of fruits and vegetables as part of a balanced, idealized diet composed of natural foods. This diet, explicitly scientific in nature and deployment, provided rational support for the antimodern impulse, as it showed that a dietary shift to more natural and "primitive" food practices was good for the individual and, consequently, for society. The antimodern impulse, then, is not so paradoxical in relation to the emphatically rational reform movement of the Progressive Era as is often assumed. The two could be in tension, but they did not need to be. Science could support the desire to retreat from an unfulfilling modern life, seen here through a shift to more "natural" consumption habits.

This is a trend that we can still see today, from green corporate branding to urban farming techniques utilizing hydroponics or aeroponics. As we become more and more alienated in an increasingly modernized world from an idealized life lived close to nature, science and modernity are still positioned as the sole keys to solving their own discontents by allowing some form of nature

[114]Farmer, *Boston Cooking-School*, 85; 500.
[115]Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 29.
[116]Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food*, 109-111.
[117]Gregory, *Woman's Favorite*, 437.
[118]Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food*, 113

to reappear in the modern landscape. This in turn justifies the status quo's continual advance. The fact that this line of reasoning has persisted for centuries without adequately solving the alienation, though, points to the possibility that modernity and the desire for a life lived "naturally" are incompatible. This is a possibility that demands reflection. If it proves to be true, we must either call into question this self-perpetuating cycle of modern improvement itself or begin a realignment of our values to stop privileging ideals related to the natural world and its "authentic" experiences.

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