A Kitchen of their Own: Alternatives to Mainstream Feminism in Contemporary Chicana Writings

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Abstract: This paper focuses on representations of cooking and the kitchen in the works of three Chicana writers, Mercedez Holtry, Sara Borjas, and Alyssa N. Griego, arguing that these poets' texts perform a reclamation of the kitchen as a potentially empowering space for women while they also acknowledge its more oppressive legacy. Faced with the reality of the patriarchal use of food and cooking as tools of domination, the poems put forward hopeful reclamations and revisions that suggest that the kitchen needs to be viewed as a space that women can appropriate. The texts thus resist the rejection of the kitchen and domesticity, which has characterized second-wave feminism, and the texts continue the legacy of revision that has characterized Chicana literature since its beginnings in the 1980s. In poems by Borjas, Holtry, and Griego, cooking appears not only as a tool of oppression but also as a tool of resistance, a means of self-expression and healing, and the kitchen becomes a space of creativity and subversive pleasure.

Keywords: Chicana literature; food studies; Chicana poetry; food and gender.

Introduction: Second-Wave Feminism, Chicana Feminism, and Food

Stacey Gillis and Joanne Hollows have suggested that certain strands of feminism have led to a wholesale rejection of the realm of domesticity, a rejection that overlooks the more positive aspects that domestic life and its activities may offer for women. The home was seen only as a sphere of oppression and constraint (Gillis and Hollows 142). More specifically, this led to a rejection of the kitchen, which expressed itself through varied demonstrations and actions: in 1968, for instance, a group of feminists dumped a pile of aprons in front of the White House; in 1970, feminists marched in New York City with signs that read "Don't Cook Dinner, Starve a Rat Tonight"; and "Don't Assume I Cook" became a popular feminist slogan (Williams 59). Such actions reflected the fact that the kitchen has historically played a central role in perpetuating patriarchal oppression and gendered injustice through which women were tasked with doing the entirety of the labor of domestic cooking without compensation and/or acknowledgment as part of the performance of appropriate femininity (cf. DeVault).

Thus, second-wave feminism, in reaction to this oppressive legacy of patriarchy represented by cooking, concentrated on dissuading women from participating in the "feminine mystique" (cf. Friedan) associated with such activities. It encouraged women who were fighting for social and cultural equality to turn away from the domestic sphere and to focus their attention elsewhere. As Meredith Abarca and Nieves Pascual Soler explain, second-wave feminism aimed at "bringing women out of the kitchen" (12). Rosie Boycott, the founder of feminist magazine *Spare Rib*, later admitted that she regretted having "furthered the belief that cooking was a demeaning pursuit for women" that should be "consigned" to "the bin of history" (Boycott, n. pag.). Effectually consigning cooking to the bin of history led to a lack of academic interest within feminist studies for food and cooking (Avakian and Haber 2). However, in recent years, feminist scholarship has started to fill this gap by examining the multifaceted role food and cooking can play in women's lives. Del Aguila and Miseres explain that domesticity should not be automatically equated with oppression because the domestic can actually contain positive aspects that contribute to women's healing and agency (8). Among the positive functions of cooking, growing, and preparing food for women, Hélène Le Dantec-Lowry singles out the potential for food to bring women together in friendship and solidarity, creating supportive networks, or "bonds of womanhood," across differences (118). For their part, Kate Cairns and Josée Johnston invite us to pay attention to the pleasures that "making delicious food" can offer women, such as a sense of "meaning," empowerment, and "identity" (8). The scholarship in "feminist food studies," which yokes together two words (food and feminist) that have seemed antithetical especially throughout the second-wave feminist movement, explores such nuances by focusing on how women have reclaimed food and the kitchen from sources of oppression to resources for healing and even resistance.

Chicana literature offers accounts of the kitchen and food that enrich this critical conversation, validating the importance of such nuanced approach to the realm of food and domesticity.[1] By highlighting the positive functions that cooking and the kitchen can fulfill in

[1] Chicano/as are descendants of both the Indigenous peoples of Mexico and the Spanish conquerors; they became citizens of the United States after the annexation of part of the territory of Mexico was

women's lives, Chicana writers propose a challenge (if not a resistance per se) to the narrative associated with second-wave feminism that the domestic sphere is somehow not conducive to the aims of feminism. Through their poetic approach, the writers add an experiential dimension to the scholarship that has sought to uncover and highlight the way women have reclaimed the domestic sphere and found in cooking a tool for creativity, solidarity and empowerment. There clearly is a discrepancy between mainstream narratives of food associated with the second-wave feminist movement, which present the kitchen as "a symbol of oppression," on the one hand, and, on the other hand, accounts of cooking found in Chicana feminist texts, in which the kitchen appears as "a space of accomplishment and empowerment" (Gutiérrez y Muhs 13). This conflict or dissension between Chicana texts and mainstream feminism's vision of the kitchen as emblematic of, and reducible to, patriarchal oppression is at the center of this paper.

Many Chicana writers, who identify as feminists, portray the kitchen as a positive sphere and the cook as a figure of inspiration and creativity (Rebolledo 130). Meredith Abarca has suggested that, in Chicana literature, the space of the kitchen is reclaimed from a space of "mandatory wifely and motherly duty" to a space of self-expression and agency (Abarca 19). This article adds to such scholarship by focusing on younger Chicana poets, whose works (in contrast to the work of prose writers) have not been studied through this particular lens, specifically Sara Borjas, Mercedez Holtry, and Alyssa N. Griego.

Sara Borjas published her poetry collection *Heart like a Window, Mouth like A Cliff* in 2019 and won the American Book Award for it in 2020; spoken word artist Mercedez Holtry published *My Blood is Beautiful* in 2016 and *I Bloomed a Resistance from my Mouth* in 2018; Alyssa N. Griego published *Sad Girl, Strong Woman* in 2018. These poets portray

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ratified by the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848. Initially, they were treated as second-class citizens whose rights, especially over land, were constantly violated by Anglo-Americans. While at first this population remained very proud of their Mexican origins, they began to assimilate into American culture after World War II. In a push against assimilation, the Chicano movement of the 1960s emphasized cultural pride, advocated for a more inclusive education and mobilized against inequality and discrimination. Chicana writers denounced the sexism that was rampant within the movement and explored the specific experiences of Chicana women in their writings, which flourished from the 1980s onwards (cf. Bruns).

Chicana subjects who navigate their culture, class, and gender in texts that alternate between grief, anger, and hope. They are connected through common thematic threads such as themes of womanhood, domesticity, racism, trauma, generational conflicts, history, and imperialism. Their writings also share a clear political intent evidenced, for example, by Holtry's poem entitled "Dear Donald Trump," which excoriates the former president for his racist comments. However, Holtry's anger does not stop at the former president but it is also directed at what she calls "Euro-White feminism," or neoliberal feminism, in which "the conversation always leads back to feminism being solely about pay gaps and glass ceilings and nothing to do with the reclamation of my body" (*I Bloomed* 54). While identifying as a feminist, Holtry clearly distances herself from certain strands of feminism that do not fit in with her intersectional experience, and her writing resists any unidimensional portrayal of womanhood. This paper shows the ways in which Holtry, Borjas, and Griego question mainstream feminism's "blanket rejection of the kitchen" (Abarca 36), as they reclaim the kitchen and their body through their nuanced and thoughtful relationship to food.

From Oppression to Empowerment: The Kitchen as an Ambiguous Space

While my article sets out to offer a feminist and empowering reading of the kitchen and of cooking, it is important to note that Sara Borjas's, Mercedez Holtry's, and Alyssa N. Griego's poetry acknowledges the role played by food and cooking in perpetuating unequal gender dynamics through the imposition of gender norms, which expect women to self-sacrifice for others by catering to their every need. Such dynamics, in which cooking has been not only imposed on women as a form of labor but has also been implicated in oppressive constructions of womanhood, have been well-explored by feminist scholars (cf. Couhinan, Inness). These dynamics are reflected by poems such as "Dinner Gone Cold" by Holtry, which chronicles both the expectation for women to care for others and to feed others and the imbalance in relationships that often ensues. In the poem, the speaker goes to great trouble to lovingly prepare a meal for her lover, only to have him come home hours late eating junk food:

I hand wash the vegetables one by one,
sauté the peppers,
[…]
burn my finger,
and he shows up with a bag of chimichangas[…]
I cry myself to sleep
knowing if I had looked in the mirror
I would see my mother. ("Dinner Gone Cold" 32)

Here, the poetic language and form is put to the service of making visible the often invisibilized and devalued labor that women accomplish in the process of feeding others, the minutiae of gestures, the effort, and even the suffering (the speaker's fingers are burnt) that goes into actually producing a meal. Holtry thus subverts the devaluation of cooking while visually portraying the imbalance and inequality that cooking can embody when it is performed within a heteropatriarchal context through the page-long depiction of the actions that cooking requires. Cooking is associated with injustice, with feminine self-sacrifice, and tears. The speaker's unhappiness, just like her cooking, appears to have been inherited: it seems to her to be an echo of her mother's life, which suggests that the maternal legacy is one of oppression and victimization. The mother may have taught the speaker how to produce a beautiful meal, but she has also shown the speaker unhealthy patterns of dependency and helplessness. In a similar fashion, Sara Borjas expresses resentment towards her mother conforming to gender norms of feminity in the kitchen as she points out in a meta-poetic aside: "When my mother cooks in my poems, I hate her for her domesticity" ("We Are Too Big for This House" 20). A mother figure is also associated with an oppressive promotion of female self-sacrifice through cooking in "September 28, 2016" by Alyssa N. Griego:

Chili was cooked every
weekend by my grandmother
[…]
I was always told to behave,
Cook and clean
Then be saved.
Be that woman, Virgin Mary
enslaved. (136-37)

Like Holtry, Griego dialogues with the invisibilization of women's domestic labor through poetic language: the enjambement in the first two lines and the use of the passive voice foregrounds *that* "Chili was cooked" before actually enouncing *who* cooked it, thus mirroring the way patriarchal society tends to conveniently forget or omit women's domestic and culinary labor. Griego also makes explicit the gender norms that have been taught to her and that associate femininity with a domestic role of subservience and sacrifice, embodied in the image of the Virgin Mary. The rhyme between "saved" and "enslaved" ironically underlines the oppressive falsity of the discourses with which she has been inculcated: they promised salvation but actually enforced submission. At first glance, it seems that the grandmother conforms to this submissive role, cooking every weekend for an unnamed "he." However, the poem actually suggests that her submissiveness might have been a mere facade. Elsewhere in the poem, we learn that she would get "mad" and "chant a curse," an expression that—especially in the context of a poem about chili bubbling on the stove—is reminiscent of the imagery of witches, which implies subversion and rebellion. Thus, the grandmother appears to be a more complicated figure, both associated with the performance of traditional femininity and with a potential resistance and rebellion bubbling underneath.

A similar revaluation of preconceived perceptions of mother figures and their relationship to cooking as described in the previous section also appears in Holtry's poem "Brown Woman," which illustrates the ways in which contemporary Chicana writers propose a nuanced vision of the kitchen by portraying it as a space of potential agency for women. In the poem, Holtry suggests that women who cook should be recognized as active agents, not submissive victims acquiescing in their own oppression, and that cooking might be reclaimed as an empowering activity, a source of pride and power:

> At the family gathering mi abuela says,
> 'Mija, serve your man a place!'
> And I respectfully do so,
> […]
>
> But even Abuela knows,
> mistake a brown woman's kindness for weakness, […]

> Along with euro white feminism,
> you will awaken *el volcan* sitting dormant behind
> the barriers in her chest. ("Brown Woman" 21)

"Euro white feminism," Holtry suggests, is mistaken when it equates spending time in the kitchen and in the domestic sphere with being submissive, oppressed, and alienated. Behind a façade of conformity to gendered norms may lie a hidden subversiveness, highlighted through the image of the dormant volcano. An association between food, cooking, and women's power also underlies Alyssa N. Griego's "September 28, 2016," which metaphorically links cooking with the figure of a deity:

> a
> Goddess told me
> [...]The lines in my lips
> Were a revolution
> Made of maize, beauty,
> spices, a fusion. (136)

Maize is the grain that is used to make tortillas as well as other Mexican staples, and it is traditionally prepared by women (Pilcher 106). This foodstuff has been particularly associated with women's role as feeders within the Mexican cultural tradition. Here, however *masa* is dissociated from traditional gendered roles because it is paired with an evocation of matriarchal power and fulfilling relationships between women. "September 28, 2016" can be therefore read as an evocation of same-sex desire between women (which is the focus of the central narrative in Griego's collection): the Goddess evokes the beauty of the speaker's lips, and the mention of "revolution" suggests a sense of rebellion and subversiveness that points towards a forbidden kind of love (as well as to the possibility of a culinary resistance). The poem plays on and subverts the traditional patriarchal association between women's bodies and consumable goods, in which women are metaphorically seen as edible. This trope of the edible woman leads to dehumanization and objectification, as noted by Emily E. Goodman: "the process of objectification, fragmentation, and consumption renders the identity of the consumed woman irrelevant, affirming that her only function is to satisfy the needs and appetites of a man with no regard to her own agency" (48). The

metaphor of the edible woman can thus lead to a legitimation of violence against women as Karen Cruz suggests:

> Such representations reflect a dynamic, indeed an aesthetic, that allows and encourages males to believe they have the right to taste a 'bit' of' the other.' […] some men's assumption of such license, particularly in relation to women of color, can lead to far more violating encounters. (196)

While the image of the edible woman has historically been a part of patriarchal and sexist representations and discourses, Griego reclaims the association between women's bodies and food by foregrounding an affirmative relationship *between* women, where appreciation for women's bodies replaces their possessive and sexist appropriation. The quasi-recipe at the end of the poem with its enumeration of ingredients ("maize, beauty / spices, a fusion. / Peppers and love") thus appears to be a recipe for revolution through decolonial love and self-love.

The association of cooking, food, and women's power found in the passages cited above could be interpreted as potentially problematic because it might be understood to echo the "angel in the house" stereotype, which attempted to make middle-class women's entrapment within the domestic sphere more palatable by presenting this sphere as a dominion instead of a cage. While women's crucial role as deities within the domestic space was proclaimed, this authority did not extend beyond the front door. One might therefore wonder whether replicating the association between women and cooking, even when women's agency and power are underlined, does not keep reinforcing sexist norms of femininity and whether the power evoked within these poems is not an illusion. On the contrary, by emphasizing women's anger, rewriting patriarchal tropes, and denouncing gender norms, the poets cited above manage to link food, domesticity and women's power in a way that does not perpetuate sexist, oppressive norms of femininity. Indeed, the angel in the house is replaced by forceful, potentially angry women, who have the power to destroy as well as to create, to tear a house down as in Holtry's aforementioned poem "Brown Woman":

I've seen my 5'2 Mexican mother throw a frying pan once
farther than John Elway can launch a football.

Call a brown woman weak and watch […]
how your household becomes something fragile
like egg shells. (22)

While the poem starts with an image of conventional feminity (with the speaker "serv[ing] [her] man a place"), it ends with images of a woman's anger and power. Throwing a pan with the strength of a football player or erupting like a volcano clearly depart from the behavior of the "angel in the house." Thus, Chicana writers' resistance towards popularized, mainstream feminist discourses about women and cooking operates through their association of cooking, food, and women's power and agency.

The Kitchen as a Space of Creativity and Pleasure

Holtry's title, "Brown Woman," reads like a reference to an older poem, published by Chicana activist Sarah Duarte in 1975 and entitled "Brown Women." Duarte's poem also mentions food to highlight the way Euro-American feminism has failed to incorporate the perspectives and experiences of women and color and working-class women:

When the white women say "we're all alike"
The Brown women ask the white women
"[…]
Were you made to feel ashamed because
you ate a different food
Did you have to run and hide
To eat so as not to be made fun of." (195)

If as Duarte suggests, Euro-American second-wave feminism tended to ignore or make women of color—including Chicana women—invisible, but Chicana writers resist this invisibilization, and their writing of food reflects the specific perspective of their intersectional identity. Indeed, the Chicana writers' suggestion that the kitchen can be an empowering place for women is rooted in the experiences of marginalized working-class

women in the United States, for whom the kitchen may represent one of the only available spaces of creativity and fulfillment. Such women, including the writers' mothers and grandmothers (or their own younger selves, in some cases), do not necessarily have opportunities to exercise agency in the public economic sphere, but they chisel out pockets of freedom, sensory pleasure, and creativity within the domestic sphere. This is the case, for instance, with the speaker's grandmother in Holtry's "La Washa": "I watched my grandmother make a work of art / out of *masa* and pork dripped in red" (*My Blood is Beautiful* 7). The cook becomes an artist, whose performance captures the attention of the speaker. The grandmother makes a form of art or a creative practice out of the materials she has available and in the space that is accessible to her, the space of the kitchen. The poem suggests that this woman, who is most likely not able to express her creativity in many ways, channels it through cooking. This depiction of the kitchen as a place of art demonstrates what Cristina Herrera has described as "an effort by Chicanas to fuse working-class sensibility and artistry—to connect the two rather than separate them" (147) by showing cooking as a form of art that can be practiced within the restraints of working-class life.

The kitchen thus becomes a space of creativity, through cooking or other activities such as writing or producing art. Some Chicana writers, like Sandra Cisneros or Pat Mora, depict a sort of hijacking of the kitchen, which is turned into a writing room, a place where texts are created instead of dishes: in doing so, they resist mainstream, popularized feminism's indifference towards or rejection of the kitchen by presenting it as a space that can be reclaimed by women and invested with new meanings. Sara Borjas, for instance, entitles one of her poems "The poet sits down in her parents' kitchen to write about love" (in *Heart like a Window, Mouth Like a Cliff*). Significantly, in 1980, Chicanas Cherríe Moraga and Alma Gómez, along with other feminists of color, founded a feminist press called Kitchen Table Press, a name that encapsulates the idea of the kitchen as a space of gathering and supportive dialogue which nourishes women writers, as Barbara Smith has explained in an article retracing the creation of the press: "We chose our name because the kitchen is the center of the home, the place where women in particular work and communicate with each other" (11). In line with the name of the Kitchen Table Press, contemporary Chicana writers

like Sara Borjas associate their texts with food and the kitchen, depicting their own creative work as rooted in the material and sensorial world embodied by food. When Holtry compares her grandmother cooking to a performer, Borjas suggests that her own poetry and performances are rooted in that space of the kitchen:

> I am trying to say the tamale
> roots this pocha's life. That it should not be left out
> of this narrative […]and there is no performance
> or languages in my body that did not originate in the same
> place tamales did […]. ("There Are Tamales Here" 83)

By saying that her performances and her use of language "originat[e] in the same place tamales did," Borjas suggests the importance of the body and the senses in her creative process. Her choice of associating her creation with the humble space of the kitchen may also stem from her wanting to claim a proximity to the material world of ordinary life and ordinary people, in contrast to a conception of the artist as transcendent and detached from materiality. Here, she also invites her readers to pay attention to food as a material reality instead of reading it only as a symbol or metaphor. Indeed, many Chicana texts offer realistic accounts of the U.S. food system and critique it rather than simply using food as a metaphor for other issues. More generally, awareness of material reality and the material contexts for Chicana writing is needed to explain why the domestic sphere might be seen as more attractive and fulfilling than the public sphere in such writings: because Chicana literature is rooted in the experience of working-class women of color for whom the home might be more of a haven and safer space (when domestic violence is not present) than the public sphere, in which they work exploitative jobs and face racism. In that context the kitchen may be the only space of creativity available as Chicana writer Gloria Anzaldúa explains: "Forget the room of one's own—write in the kitchen […]. No long stretches at the typewriter unless you're wealthy and have a patron […]" (170). These words exemplify the way Chicana literature's rootedness in the experience of working-class women of color leads to different approach to the kitchen and the domestic sphere to the one governing popular accounts of second-wave feminism and its rejection of the kitchen. The nuanced representation of food in such writings fills a gap in Euro-American feminism when such feminism uniformly

condemns domesticity without recognizing the important function domesticity has played in women of color's lives, as underlined by bell hooks and her concept of "homeplace" (49). Chicana writers illustrate the importance of an intersectional approach to domesticity without universalizing the domestic experiences of white, middle-class women (Delia Lanza 65).

The Kitchen as a Space for Pleasure

The kitchen can be a space of creativity, where women who may not have many other opportunities to express themselves can enjoy some form of self-expression through cooking. It also appears as a space of/for pleasure in texts that reclaim food and cooking in order to resist patriarchal culture in general and, more specifically, its promotion of strict body norms that encourage women to deprive themselves of food. Patriarchal culture, while promoting the idea that femininity means cooking for others and catering to others' appetites, simultaneously discourages women from actually enjoying the fruits of their labor as they are also supposed to remain thin (cf. Bordo). Traces of this diet culture are omnipresent in Sara Borjas's poetry collection *Heart Like a Window, Mouth Like a Cliff*, which explores the speaker's relationship with her own mother's weight. The poem "We are too big for this house" enumerates the hostile reactions her mother's fat body has elicited, and criticizes the injunctions placed on women's bodies which lead to the starving of women's bodies but also of their souls: "There are consequences to starving a woman's mind, to denying a woman herself" ("We Are Too Big for This House" 22). In the collection *Sad Girl Strong Woman*, Alyssa Griego states "We are breaking / family cycles" ("May 27, 2015" 16) and in the case of food, breaking the oppressive cycle entails reclaiming food as a source of pleasure and breaking away from the culture that privileges thinness. This is evoked by Holtry in the poem "Freedom" which brings a hopeful perspective regarding the possibility of reclaiming the realm of food and cooking:

> It's coming home to mama's green enchiladas
> Made with love.
> […]
> It's the day we stop calorie counting because nobody's going

> To miss some grumpy old bitch that only ate salad
> Freedom would potentially be salad if it's taco salad
> —and it contains bacon. (50)

Salad is one of the most gendered foods, associated with femininity and the pursuit of thinness that is pushed onto women by dominant gendered norms (Lupton 111). Here Holtry rejects this foodstuff and its oppressive subtext, in favor of more nourishing and pleasurable meals. In the poem, cooking appears as a way of nourishing and satisfying the female body that has been so starved and mistreated either materially or symbolically. Cooking for each other and for themselves is presented as a potential avenue for freedom as it liberates women from the male gaze and diet culture. Cooking and food are positioned as tools for liberation through pleasure in a society that denies women such pleasure. Food thus allows women to satisfy their own sensuality, challenging patriarchal society's contempt for the body and the senses. Pleasure and love intertwine in Holtry's poem through the food that is cooked and eaten. The seemingly banal act of consuming a meal thus becomes a gesture of self-affirmation and healing, subversive of the patriarchal gendered norms that police women's relationships to food by pushing them to conform to thin beauty ideals. Thus in the poem, cooking and eating food almost appear as examples of a hidden, subversive resistance that may not be noticed as it pertains to the quotidian. However, as Brinda Mehta suggests, such resistance is precisely advantageous because "female power in the kitchen lies in its invisibility, that is, in its ability to transform an unfavourable situation to the advantage of women through strategies of subversive affirmation" (115). In the often-overlooked sphere of the kitchen, of domesticity, women may employ subversive tactics in resistance to patriarchal norms. This discreet subversion is also at play in Holtry's writing that turns cooking into a tool for women to not sacrifice themselves but to satisfy themselves as well as each other, escaping self-suppression and suffering and moving towards more pleasurable affects as they gather around the kitchen table.

Concluding Remarks

Women's relationship to the culinary sphere has been the focus of debate within feminist studies in recent decades. Second-wave feminism tended to portray the domestic sphere in general as a site of unmitigated oppression, and domestic activities as manifestations of patriarchal domination. Emancipation was equated with a wholesale rejection of the kitchen. However, many women tended to remain attached to these domestic traditions that appear as valuable sources of connection, practical knowledge, ritual, and even creativity. This has led to many feminist scholars making the case for a reexamination of women's relationship to the culinary sphere as a source of meaning and subversion. Building on the critical work on Chicana writers' relationship to the kitchen, this paper aimed at exploring the theme of cooking and food in texts by a younger generation of Chicana writers who continue to challenge limited views of women's relationship to the kitchen. Many Chicana feminist writers resist the depiction of cooking as merely a chore, an insignificant or even anti-feminist act, and of the kitchen as a space of unmitigated oppression for women. My readings above demonstrate that this nuanced viewpoint on cooking can be found in texts by Sara Borjas, Mercedez Holtry, and Alyssa N. Griego. The poems show that Chicana literature's reclamation of the kitchen—as already analyzed by Tey Diana Rebolledo and Meredith Abarca in regards to earlier Chicana texts—continues in the latest generation of self-identified Chicana writers. These three poets' works resist popularized, mainstream Euro-American feminism's portrayal of the kitchen as a space of pure oppression and drudgery through their suggestion that the culinary and domestic sphere can be a space of agency and power for women. In their texts, the kitchen is reclaimed and used in ways that differ from its intended function within the patriarchy, which is to be a space where women devote themselves to others and perpetuate the gender hierarchy. On the contrary, the poems associate food and cooking with power, women's rightful anger, but also with pleasure, creativity, and (self-)love as a tool of healing and resistance. Far from the stereotypical vision of the kitchen popularized by second-wave feminism, the kitchen appears in these texts as a space of complicated layers, worth investigating and reclaiming. The poems thus resists a particular strand of white, middle-class feminism (and its privileges) by highlighting intersectionality and the imperative to listen to women who have not been

included in particular feminist discourses. Literature can help in this as it gives voice to the granular, complex textures of women's experiences.

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