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"Recipes Like Floating Islands:" Recipe, Autobiography, and Memory in The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book

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“Recipes Like Floating Islands:”
Recipe, Autobiography, and Memory
in *The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book*

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by

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The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book was the subject of my project for a few reasons but two of the main reasons I can accredit to my parents. My mom gave me her copy of the cook book when I was fourteen or fifteen and since then it has always interested me. My dad was a supreme chef who instilled in me an interest and passion for food and cooking that I carry with me always. I want to thank my mom, June Stoddard and my dad, David Chappe, for those gifts. (And for giving me the middle name Alice!).

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Introduction: "why not gather my recipes"

After meeting a certain Alice Babette Toklas in 1907 in Paris, Gertrude Stein wrote an entry in a notebook about her:

> She is a low clean through to the bottom crooked, a liar of the most sordid, unillumined, undramatic unimaginative prostitute type, coward, ungenerous, conscienceless, mean, vulgarly triumphant and remorseless, caddish, in short just plain rotten low… (Janet Malcom, *Two Lives: Gertrude and Alice* 149)

This written account is interesting (and hilarious) for obvious reasons. But it holds significance for a few less obvious reasons. One is that it is comes from a primary document that contains a cache of the way Gertrude perceived herself and those around her. The ways in which she changed over her life can be tracked through the progression of her written thoughts into time. Evidently her opinion of Alice changed and the two were inseparable for the rest of her life. But the account above marks a type of autobiographical act that can also be tracked into how she wrote about Alice in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, *Everybody's Autobiography*, and other works of autobiographical intent. When you write about yourself and your world in a journal or a notebook, you are commencing a type of collection, of moments that is, of your past and your life that can be returned to over and over again. Apart from the slanderous notes above, I see the account as being a touchstone for autobiography in the Stein tradition.

While I do love reading the gossip of Gertrude Stein, that is not what I ventured to write about in the following pages. This paper is about her female companion Alice B. Toklas and the primary documents that she collected and created an account of her life

with. Gertrude paved the way for a writing practice about life with her lover that Alice herself followed in by writing about her life with Gertrude. Alice's written work is not a replica of Gertrude's modernist account of life where art and aesthetics are a dominant focus. Alice wrote a cook book. After Gertrude passed away in 1946, Alice was short on money so her friends and publisher Simon Michael Bessie urged Alice to create the cook book to help her earn money. In a letter to W.G. Rogers in 1947 Alice explains how after speaking to the picture dealer George Maratier about the food in Bilignin she had the idea for the cook book:

> … suddenly it came to me if I could get recipes printed in some magazine I'd be as eligible as Richard Wright – so why not gather my recipes – make the cook book and get a job. (78)

It was just that simple – all she has to do was "gather" her recipes and put them together in a book. But the idea of gathering recipes for a cook book was a little more complex than Alice had conceptualized it to be – the act of writing was an afterthought in her initial pang of inspiration. In correspondence with her friend Samuel Steward in 1949, Alice said that she hadn't tried to write since she "was ten or eleven years old… so perhaps one has to have some experience of writing for even a cookbook" (*Dear Sammy* 169). When she realized how key writing was for the cook book, she also realized that a cook book is related to writing but in a different way than the books she had edited for Gertrude. In 1952, she tells Isabel Wilder (wife of Thornton Wilder) that "the cook book is started and very soon bending over an imaginary oven will keep the temperature a-mounting and a-mounting" (*Staying On Alone* 264). But by 1953, she wrote to Carl Van Vechten that she was having "difficulty in getting the miserable cook book finished [it]

has been a tormenting and a very unsatisfactory effort" (276). She was also under "a pernicious attack of jaundice" as she wrote the book (A Word with the Cook).

The conditions around the writing of the cook book were completely different than with Gertrude's written accomplishments – people weren't necessarily rooting for her or even depending on her to produce in the same way that they had been with Gertrude. Despite these circumstances though, Alice created something meaningful and unique. Bessie, her publisher, had initially asked Alice to write an autobiography to which Alice replied "Oh, I couldn't do that." What she did agree to do was a cook book that "would, of course, be full of memories." (Bessie, A Happy Publisher's Note to the 1984 Edition). The recipes and memories coexist happily. In the beginning of her book *Two Lives: Gertrude and Alice*, Janet Malcom writes that "leafing through her copy of the *Cook Book*, the evidence of ancient food stains leads me to the recipes that she… cooked…" And how "underlinings and marginal comments also highlight the passages… whose tart snottiness gave me special delight in the fifties" (5). My mom gave me her own little yellow copy of the cook book and winkingly pointed out the recipe for "Haschich Fudge." The *Cook Book* took on a following after its publishing; it is still a sort of cultural icon. In her forward to the book, MFK Fisher says that Alice would probably have "shrug[ged] and smile[d] with pity and disbelief, to find that the cook book she put together for publication… would immediately be recognized and then issued again and again" (xiv). Pages later she calls Alice's creation "a minor masterpiece" (xv).

The "masterpiece" in the cook book happens because of what she chooses to put into it. She shares special recipes such as "Fried Cookies," "Floating Island," "Iced

Soufflé," "A Tender Tart," and "Artichokes à la Isman Bavaldy" where you are to "hold an asparagus upright in the heart of an artichoke while a wall of the sauce is built around it with the right hand" (11). Also shared are vibrant stories about two world wars, an illustrious trip around the US, her life in France being surrounded by her artist friends like Picasso, Matisse, Sir Francis Rose… The distinguished list of recipes and stories goes on. The narrative is about food and the life that Alice led around that food; it is written with immense zeal (and a little bit of snark) for the experiences she had, the food that she grew in her gardens, the meals she ate all over Europe and the US, and the friends she shared those meals with. But there is an intricacy in the weaving of a narrative in a cook book. The title is deceiving – we are not just picking up a cook book but a book "full of memories."

As Alice lived, worked, and coexisted with her literary "hubby" Gertrude for nearly fifty years, she is not naïve to the power of the written word (Stein, *Baby Precious Always Shines*, 51). The cook book is crafted in a seamless way that marries recipes with stories - this seamless marriage is where the complexities of the book arise. There is an inner working between the recipes and the stories that is not explicit. Just like Gertrude's journal entry about Alice is a primary document reference for remembrance, Alice's recipes are primary document references as well. But to what end? And what does it really mean for a life narrative to be created with recipes and written around food?

In this paper I will consider how Alice's recipes affect her stories. Throughout her life she was taken with the culinary craft. In the first chapter of my project I will think about the particulars of the cook book, how it compares to a "traditional" cook book and then work my way into how her passion for food and cooking mixes with the stories from

Alice's time with Gertrude to create a life story. In that story, the apparently "low clean through to the bottom crooked… liar of the most sordid" person described in Gertrude's notebook, blossoms in a completely opposite direction – into an Alice who loves life and cares about the people who surround her (Malcom, *Two Lives: Gertrude and Alice* 149). We learn so much about who Alice is, what she likes, who her friends were, and most importantly what she ate in her cook book. In the second chapter I look at specific ways in which the life narrative diverges from the recipes to become an autobiography inside of the cook book and what that means in the context of a cook book. As I noted already, the recipes and the stories sit peacefully next to each other, but my research looks at how the two forms are particularly different. The final chapter will focus on memory's function in the cook book and how time and chronology are warped in the process of creating the narrative.

Alice cooked and Gertrude wrote. This is how we know the two women and their roles as lovers. But in my research I discovered that Alice cooked *and* wrote. The qualities that literary critics adorned Gertrude with, become applicable for Alice. *The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book* is as MFK Fisher said a "minor masterpiece" and as Janet Malcom called it "a work of literary modernism" (*Two Lives*, 4). The book is much more than a cook book and Alice is much more than a cook.

Chapter 1: "it comes from the box"

Reading a cook book is different than reading a book. Although cook books can be read, the people who typically read them are cooks, bakers, chefs, or those who are generally interested in food and ways it can be made. Reading a cook book such as *The Joy of Cooking* is in every way different from reading a Henry James novel for various reasons, but the most important difference is that a cook book lacks an explicit narrative. The recipes in a straightforward and standard cook book may have been acquired during the life of the cook book's writer. But that narrative is not typically included. Then there is *The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book*, which presents recipes in a less straightforward fashion. Alice's recipes come from her recipe collection, which is not what one might expect. In the introduction to *Aromas and Flavors of the Past and Present*, Alice's second cook book, Poppy Cannon also talks about this box of recipes:

> Already she had a collection of recipes. With her the recipes came before the actual practice of cooking... In France she kept the recipes she gathered in a cardboard box and later added those from England, Italy, and Spain. The box endured and outlasted the German Occupation. Generally she remembers all about each recipe, where she first tasted it, who wrote it for her. But sometimes the background has slipped away out of memory and she will say of a certain dish only that "it comes from the box." (x-xi)

Alice began collecting recipes when she was a young girl and continued to do so throughout her life. She asked her friends, her mother's cook, and the cooks that she and Gertrude Stein hired, to give her to give her their personal recipes, original recipes, and cook book recommendations. At restaurants she often asked the chefs for the recipe when

she really loved a certain dish. The cook book chronicles many of those recipes. Her act of collecting "came before" her cooking practice. Once she started cooking she was so in tune with the recipes in her collection that she could whip something up without looking at a recipe. But when she did forget a certain recipe, "it [came] from the box." This is a narrative that doesn't precede most cook books. Alice's cook book is a different kind of specimen.

Because it's not a straight on cook book, it isn't the first cook book a cook pulls off of his or her shelf when preparing dinner. What Alice has to say about cooking and food is not necessarily instructive. On the first page, in the first sentence she tells us that:

> The French approach to food is characteristic; they bring their consideration of the table the same appreciation, respect, intelligence and lively interest that they have for the other arts, for painting, for literature and for the theater. (3)

Alice introduces "The French Tradition" through its people and what they are considerate of. She is clearly familiar with not only with how the French cook and treat their food, but who they are, how they think, and what they like. She also manages to introduce her opinion that food is an art. In the second sentence she clarifies one thing: "By French I mean French men…" and then in the next chapter that "Women are not supposed in France to be *gourmets*" (3, 15). Before even giving us a recipe, Alice creates a cultural landscape and history that we can think about while reading or trying out the recipes. The first recipe is of course, "Boeuf Bourguignon." She introduces it with these mantras in mind:

> To cook as the French do one must respect the quality and the flavor of the ingredients. Exaggeration is not admissible… These qualities are not purchasable but must be cultivated. (5)

Although this is a rich way to begin, there are two deterrents already for the cook approaching French food for the first time. One is the requirement that we "cultivate" the consideration and respect to cook like the French – just because we bought her cook book doesn't mean we'll masters of French cuisine. Another is that the cook book's set up is not easily approachable. Although the majority of the food chronicled in the book is French food, it has a different effect on its user than Julia Child's *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*. The beginning of Julia Child's table of contents looks like this:

> Kitchen Equipment
>
> Definitions
>
> Ingredients
>
> Measures
>
> Temperatures
>
> Cutting: Chopping, Slicing, Dicing, and Mincing
>
> Wines

Kitchen equipment can be confusing, so Child supplies some succinct explanations and even illustrations to elaborate. The next chapter is a glossary of all of the cooking terms used in the book with the French translation of the verb as well. In "Ingredients," a list of all of the ingredients in the book are given, alphabetized, with options for how to cook with them. "Measures" breaks down exactly how to convert French measurements to

American ones (and vice versa) with a mathematical table. The same goes for "Temperatures." The art of chopping, slicing, dicing, and mincing is complex - we must learn! There are illustrations with explanations for "the knife grip," "dicing solid vegetables," three versions of "dicing onions and shallots" etc. And, in a cook book about French cooking, "Wines" may be the most important chapter to study. Of course this chapter is just as thorough as the ones preceding – red, to white, to brut, how to store them, which wine is best used for… These sections all come even before Chapter 1 (which happens to be the soup chapter). It is extremely detailed, easy to navigate, and thoughtfully planned in a meal-oriented order.

Alice's cook book is not organized like *Mastering The Art of French Cooking*. Her table of contents looks instead like this:

1. The French Tradition
2. Food in French Homes
3. Dishes for Artists
4. Murder in the Kitchen
5. "Beautiful Soup"

It continues on in this manner for eight more chapters. Tossed aside is the strategic arrangement of the recipes so that the fellow cook who reads along can easily find the section on wines. Prioritized is a different methodology where life experiences take precedence. The illustrations in her cook book, by Sir Francis Rose, are not how a hand should wield a knife or of a standing mixer. They instead show scenes like a beautiful dining room set for dinner with chandelier lit above, Alice and Gertrude driving in a Red Cross vehicle in France during WWI, emblematic husks of corn tied with an American

flag ribbon surrounded by oysters and roast chickens to signify the "Food in the United States" chapter. The soup chapter, "Beautiful Soup," isn't a list of "beautiful" soups to start your meal, but is about the varying traditions of gazpacho in different cultures. Soup is just an opportunity to offer an insight into the cultural or social or political logic of food -- and in fact, of recipes. She says that while "eating *gazpacho* in Spain… [she] came to the conclusion that recipes through conquests and occupations have travelled far." (49). This is a fascinating idea, and one that certainly never enters the soup chapter or anywhere else in *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* -- it isn't immediately relevant to how to make the soups.

Even more jarring for the reader who genuinely wants to cook from Alice's book, is the fact that, in the confusingly arranged chapters the recipes "appear like floating islands, in no special order" (*Time Magazine issue 21, 1954*, 110-111). This metaphor of the "floating island" refers to the French dessert "ile flotantte" - meringue floating in sweetened cream. Time's anonymous writer seems to imagine the recipes proper as the meringue, drifting along in a sea of something else. But this formulation indicates the frustration that lies ahead for the cook who genuinely or simply wants to cook from the recipes. Although Alice wrote the book "as cook to cook," the merit and organization of the cook book is not immediately welcoming (A Word with the Cook)[1]. There are, of course, a lot recipes and even an "Index of Recipes," which actually is very organized and accessible, but these are the only "normal" cook book elements of the book. In the forward to her cook book, Julia Child tells her readers that "the recipes here are thoroughly detailed since this is a teaching book," which makes for a cook book that is

[1] Alice's forward to the cook book.

informative, instructive, helpful, organized, and illuminating about the food her cooks are approaching (*Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, 17). Alice, though, chooses to do something different. The recipes are there to teach if the reader wants to learn from them, but Alice isn't necessarily there to assist that learning experience step by step of the way. So what does this mean for the cook book? What is going on in the cook book if it is an unconventional version of one?

For the reader who doesn't want the traditional pedagogical experience from their cook book, but who wants who instead to be told stories about French food and gazpacho and who probably knows who Alice B. Toklas is, the arrangement of the book and the flotation of the recipes is enticing. You don't exactly know where you'll end up, but the recipes will absolutely take you on a journey - they're a part of her past and her life. They add something real to a narrative that sometimes feels like fiction. In the chapter "Food to Which Aunt Pauline and Lady Godiva led us," the chapter which tells of Alice and Gertrude's life during WWI, recipes for "Flaming Peaches" and "Hot Chocolate" appear alongside stories of Alice and Gertrude's travels around France in their cars (Aunt Pauline and Lady Godiva) meeting friendly people and eating good food, all during a world war. It begins with flames, but it's not a building or a village that's on fire. "Flaming Peaches," the first recipe in the chapter, reads:

> Fresh peaches are preferable, though canned ones can be substituted. If fresh, take 6 and cover with boiling water for a few minutes and peel. Poach in 1½ cups of water over low flame or 3 or 4 minutes. Place in a chafing dish, add ¼ cup of sugar and ¾ cup peach brandy. Bring to the

> table and light the chafing dish. When the syrup is about to boil[,] light and ladle it over the peaches. Serve each peach lighted. (58)

It is matter-of-fact and instructive. Different from her explorative narrative writing, the recipes are teaching you something; there is a finality in a recipe that tells you that you will end up with a finished product. "You need to do X to get to Y. The end." "Flaming Peaches," as she describes them at the end of he recipe, are "a simple, tasty and effective dessert" (58). Even without this description though, we can imagine being served a plate of fresh, sweet, and literally on fire peaches that probably elicited some sort of celebration. This recipe is included after Alice explains how she and Gertrude arrived in the French town Saulieu in their "Aunt Pauline – Model T, bless her – [which] made no more than thirty miles an hour…" and ate a lunch of "*Panade Veloutée*, Ham Croquettes… [finished with] *Peches Flambées*" (57). The recipe gives us something tangible and sweet to grasp onto while we ponder what Alice and Gertrude even talked about as they slugged along in their Model T.

The fact that we even know about this lunch in Saulieu gives us a clue to the interpretive difficulty mentioned about: the peaches belong not just to a cookbook, or a recipe box, or a restaurant menu, but to a life story. Alice wrote her cook book as a way of sharing her life experiences with us beginning with her childhood and leading all the way up to WWII. The book is a cook book because she calls it one and because she inserts her recipes, but she also shares anecdotes from her past in a nonchronological order - the book is more than a cook book, and its also not your garden variety memoir. As Alice "routed" through her collection, memories would jump off the recipe cards and

pause her, only to take her back into the depths of her mind and then to the typewriter to write down those reminiscences (A Word with the Cook). This concept nods back to the metaphor the "recipes like floating islands" – the recipes float along into her mind and then back into the book accompanied by narrative, which is the metaphorical cream.

This experience is not totally original. Paul Schmidt's essay "As if a Cook Book had Anything to do with Writing" from a 1971 issue of *Prose* journal, examines two traditions in the food writing genre: what he calls the Escoffier and the Savarinist. Alice, along with M.F.K Fischer, fall under the tradition forged by Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, the author of the book *The Physiology of Taste or Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy*. The book is a series of scientific and existential, as well as anecdotal, "meditations" on food. Schmidt understands that those who write about food, write about it in the "way others have written [about it] before us" (180). So, Savarin's food writing tradition concerned, chiefly, gustatory sensibilities intertwined with pleasure, memory, and place. He wrote that:

> If, in the midst of these solemn meditations, a piquant anecdote, a pleasant memory, or some adventure of an active life forms itself at the tip of our pen, we shall let it take shape, to divert for a little while the close attention of our readers… (181)

Schmidt notes secondarily that this is "the statement of [Savarin's] literary intention, and an entire school of writing derives from it – anecdote stimulated by food, the memory of taste awakened by anecdote" (181). This takes us a long way in understanding what Alice is doing, although it's is not perfectly true for her. Where she may have learned from her predecessor to let food "stimulate" her narrative, she lets her recipes motivate her

anecdotal history. Recipes represent food, but they are not real food. Savarin lets a physical meal remind him of an experience but all it takes for Alice are the bits of paper in her collection. A meal can only be eaten in the present but a recipe can be enjoyed forever – it will always preserve the original experience. Alice says that:

> When treasures are recipes they are less clearly, less distinctly remembered than when they are tangible objects. They evoke however quite as vivid a feeling – that is to some of us who, considered cooking an art, feel that a way of cooking can produce something that approaches an aesthetic emotion. (*The Alice B Toklas Cook Book*, 100)

A meal creates a different vivacity than a recipe. The power that the recipes have over Alice's recollection creates a vision of her past for us that the recounting of her meals is secondary to.

Aside from this difference, Alice belongs to the food writing tradition that Savarin invented. He valued "pleasures of the table" above all and defined those pleasures as "a reflective sensation which is born from the various circumstances of place, time, things, and people who make up the surroundings of the meal" (181). The "reflective sensation" is more than present in Alice's *Cook Book* - it seems to be the only way to describe how her book came into being. In her short preface to the book, "A Word with the Cook," Alice writes that the cook book was drafted during "a pernicious attack of jaundice" and that:

> it was written as an escape from a narrow diet and monotony of illness… [but also out of] nostalgia for old days and old ways and for remembered

> health and enjoyment [that] lent special lustre to dishes and menus barred from an invalid table, but hovering dream-like in invalid memory.

Apart from the relation between her illness and the writing of the cook book, Alice wrote the book nine years after Gertrude passed. The cook book is not only a testament to Alice's immense culinary talents, but to her life with Gertrude. The "dishes," "menus," and "table" are charged with the "special lustre" of Alice's life and the memories she shared with her friends and with Gertrude. Alice's life with Gertrude becomes something like a dream which she immortalizes in her cookbook. As Schmidt puts it:

> The book is a memory of how things were; it is a time and place and people remembered…the remembrance depends on eating. At the table, it often seems, time and place are reduced and concentrated…And we fix the scene…in the distillate memory of what we ate. (194)

Each meal fixes us in a certain memory around a specific table. Although the recipes and the meals that they transcribe are separated by the physical realm, they are connected in the energy that they create in the memory. The recipe leads Alice to her memory of the meal and in that memory exists a vivacity from what was eaten and who it was shared with. This energy is something that arises in her mind and in our imaginations.

One of the most vividly conjuring recipes is the "Liberation Fruit Cake." From 1940 till the liberation of France, Alice collected "prized provisions [of] 4 lbs. citron, candied orange and lemon peel, pineapple and cherries and 2 lbs. raisins, all of which [she] had put into two well covered glass jars." This cherished stash of dried fruits was being saved for the day Alice could bake the cake and celebrate the liberation of France.

Looking at the two jars "cheered [Alice] greatly during the increasingly dismal days of that winter and the early spring of 1944" (*The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book,* 216). Alice was eventually able to use her precious reserve when she made her cake and sent it to the American soldiers whom Gertrude and she had met in the countryside. This recipe is so clearly not just a recipe; even the ingredients were a sign of hope for Alice. The recipe's significance stems from the fact that there was a food shortage during the Occupation. Even though she knew that the fruit in the jars were not an option in the kitchen until France was liberated, they created a sentiment of hope. Although they were relatively small in quantity and size, the jars of fruit had a large symbolic meaning. The mere fact that the jars of fruit existed meant that the day of France's liberation day would come. By proxy, the recipe is a representation for the memory of the day France was free and the hope that the fruit gave her during the Occupation. The recipe encapsulates the hope that Alice placed on her jars of fruit and preserves it forever. "Liberation Fruit Cake" is a written version of the hope and celebration of the day France was freed.

So what difference does it make that all of these recipes come from a collection? For one, it is notable that the recipes had been nestled together in a box for years. When Alice acquired a new recipe, the space inside the box would decrease and the recipes would grow closer together. Even before the cook book or the recipe reading process, the recipes and the memories that they contained were becoming acquainted with each other because of the limited space in the box – they lived together. The word itself, "collection," is even another word for memory – the mind collects the memories that we create. In her book *On Longing*, Susan Stewart notes that "the collection marks the space of nexus for all narratives, the place where history is transformed into property…." (xii).

The memories of her life that were to become the narrative in the book become property in the space of the collection. Through this concept of the word and of the space in the collection, Alice's recipe box can be seen as a physical manifestation of her mind - a specifically recipe-oriented mind, that is, where she owns her memories as property. Although we will never exactly know how Alice organized her collection, we do know that she was hyper aware of its contents. Even when she forgot a recipe, as she told Poppy Cannon: "it comes from the box" (*Aromas and Flavors*, x-xi). The fact that she could be sure what she had forgotten, was in the box, meant that there was some form of organization that enabled her to remember its contents. As the collection was a precursor to her cooking practice, it held a passion for food that led her into the kitchen. Her collection was a space of interest and admiration before it was a space of reference.

Clearly the collection, the recipes, and the cook book are all not what they seem. They all have split personalities and all do much more than their traditional tasks. On one side are the contents of a cook book, and on the other are the bits and pieces of a life. The bits and pieces create an autobiography. Paul Schmidt says that "recipes act as subtle mnemonics" for Alice's past (194). This relationship between Alice and her recipes creates the vibrant narrative that not only illuminates French people and their food traditions but also tells us who Alice is. The people who gave her recipes and who cooked for her were people who affected how she became Alice. The food she ate at restaurants and the recipes that came from those chefs influenced how she cooked. Her collection and the recipes in it account for these influences and the memories that were created.

So what sort of book is this? Tracie Marie Kelly has coined the genre of "Culinary Autobiography," under which Alice's *Cook Book* is subcategorized as an "autobiographical cookbook." In the chapter "If I were a Voodoo Priestess" in *Kitchen Culture in America*, Kelly argues that "there is a power we get from telling our stories through our recipes" (252). This power comes from the space in which the recipes were created, the kitchen. For cooks, the kitchen is a space of power and control, so it is only natural that the stories that come tacked onto a recipe are powerful in a specific way. The "power" of Alice's stories doesn't only come from her confidence in the kitchen but also from the admiration for Gertrude, which is another way that the cookbook and the autobiography become fused. Alice shared most of her meals with Gertrude, so her presence throughout the stories in the book is constant. Delving deeper into the idea of an "autobiographical cookbook," Kelly notes that "the division between cooking, history, and storytelling blur; the reader may wonder in some cases whether the recipes are the primary texts and the other devices incidental, or reverse" (252). In Alice's case, this is totally accurate. The recipes are the only primary document used in the book and really the only documents needed. The "other devices" in the cook book are the stories; they come out of the recipes. Kelly reminds us that:

> Once we realize that a cookbook is more than a collection of instructions – that it may be an expression of the self – we have another avenue to explore in the ongoing effort to reclaim the words with which women have organized their lives and values. (253)

The notion that Alice's cook book is "an expression of [her] self" is not an unwarranted one. The book is called "The **Alice B. Toklas** Cook Book," after all. It is not just written

by her - it is all about her. In this subgenre that Kelly has sectioned off for Alice, recipes and written memories are equal forms for expression of the self. Although a recipe is not the most creative written form, it is the expressive emblem of a person's creative cooking process and creativity in the kitchen. But the recipes also convey the stories of how Alice's self came to be. Alice's food and memories are inseparable not only in the *Cook Book* but in her sensibilities and in the way she thinks. She created an autobiography out of her inherent connection to food and cooking but also out of the way the recipes lead her to her memories.

Just as Kelly's explores Alice's cook book, Anna Linzie proposes her own reading of this distinctive mixture of autobiography and cook book, hinging particularly on the vexed question of what sort of "writing" this is. In her book *The True Story of Alice B. Toklas: A Study of Three Autobiographies,*[2]Linzie characterizes the cook book as "a renegade autobiography" (139). This refers to Alice's compromise agreement with her publisher Simon Michael Bessie to write a "cook book… full of memories" instead of a straight-on autobiography (138-139). In this classification of the cookbook, Linzie poses the question: "does writing remain *writing* when it is based upon a (deliberate) departure from generic expectation?" (139). The generic expectations prompted by reading autobiography are that the book be about a person and by that person as things truthfully happened. But Linzie suggests that the very essence of the writing changes in an autobiography that is also a cook book. And indeed the final lines in Alice's cook book complicate this question: "As if writing a cook-book had anything to do with writing"

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[2] Which looks at *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* by Gertrude Stein, *What is Remembered* by Alice and *The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book* as three "deferred" autobiographies, in the Derridean sense.

(*The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book*, 280). This was her response, she says, to Thornton Wilder's question: "But, Alice, have you ever tried to write?" (280). Along with the "generic expectations" of reading autobiography comes the "generic expectations" that the writer is "writing" in the ordinary sense of the word. This argument that begins with these final words in Alice's *Cook Book*, continues in a letter to Samuel Steward from 1949 that Linzie brings up in her analysis. Alice recounts the incident where she told Thornton Wilder about her cookbook. But in this letter, we get a different version of answer to the same question:

> … but Alice have you ever tried to write. Not since I was ten or eleven years old was the answer – so perhaps one has to have some experience of writing for even a cookbook. But can't one count and build upon conviction – prejudice and passion – my inadequate equipment. (141)

Writing, as Alice conceives of it in this letter, requires some form of "equipment," whether it is physically manifested or more philosophically. Her equipment consists of "conviction…prejudice and passion," which she suggests might be judged, by Wilder's standards as being "inadequate" (141). But even through the feeling of being judged by Wilder, she created a form of writing that is unique to her book.

Linzie read the passage to indicate that Alice

> is self-confident as a cook and recipe collector, but not as a 'writer,' and particularly not as the writer of an autobiography" because Gertrude wrote her autobiography and "it's done." (141)

Linzie thinks that "Alice seems to worry about encroaching upon her husband's territory (the autobiography)" (141). As there are inherent and explicit gender roles in the relationship between Alice and Gertrude, there are gender roles in the event of the writing of the "autobiographies." But Linzie's formulation misses a more fundamental dimension of what it means for Alice to write through "conviction – prejudice and passion" (141). Maybe Alice never "tried to write," but that is not what matters in her cook book. Alice's "writing" is the side effect of what her recipes do to her as she reads them. As she reads her recipes and remembers her past, the written narrative comes to her. The life story is jolted into being as she reads the bits of her past – her typewriter becomes the delivery mechanism through which she translates the experience. Alice created what Janet Malcom calls "work of literary modernism," not out of any desire to experiment with form or content, but simply by giving into her own recipe sifting and reading process (*Two Lives*, 4). She let the recipes direct her memory thus follows those memories through that surge of the past into her text.

To repeat: what sort of writing is this? One thing we can say for sure is what it's not: Alice's other autobiographies. Alice's use of her collection and recipes for the purposes of memory is distinctive not only in the context of her cook book, but also in the context of the two other books that she wrote. She authored *Aromas and Flavors of the Past and Present* and *What is Remembered*. The latter is a cook book and the former is a memoir – the two halves of what make up *The Alice B Toklas Cook Book*. But neither of them creates a version of the past that is quite similar to what is seen in Alice's first cook book. *Aromas and Flavors* gives a short preface written by Alice in which she evokes a Proustian relation between the aromas and flavors of her past to the present. She shares

an anecdote about eating garlic, which had been forbidden to her as a child, at a friend's birthday party as a child. But her garlic infused memory doesn't develop into anything except for tips about cooking with strong herbs. The recipes in the book are not assisted by memories. They are no floating islands but blocks of text. *What is Remembered* shares a bleak history of Alice's past in which she focuses mostly on Gertrude and her books, other literary and artist friends and their accomplishments. To share the bleakest of all reminiscences in the book, Alice concludes the memoir with Gertrude's death, as if it was when both of their lives ended:

> By this time Gertrude Stein was in a sad state of indecision and worry. I sat next to her and she said to me early in the afternoon, What is the answer? I was silent. In that case, she said, what is the question? Then the whole afternoon was troubled, confused and very uncertain, and later in the afternoon they took her away on a wheeled stretcher to the operating room and I never saw her again. (173)

This paragraph may as well sum up the tone of the whole book. It has none of the zeal or zest for cooking, eating, and food or even life that *The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book* is built on. Not once in the *Cook Book* can you find any passages or even sentences that are this bleak. One notable similarity between both books is their use of primary documents in the text – there are captioned photos in the center of the book. The photographs, like some of Alice's recipes, are supplied by Alice and Gertrude's friends, namely Bobsy Godspeed and Carl Van Vechten. Some of the photos are included with a quote from the text as its caption. But the photos don't enrich the narrative in the same way that the recipes do in the cook book; they are merely secondary to the text. What is comes down

to is that *Aromas and Flavors* and *What Is Remembered* exist almost as companions not to be read without the cook book. They are like sidekicks to the breadth and vibrancy of the cook book.

But then there is the precursor to all of these texts - Gertrude Stein's *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, which circumvents the first rule of every autobiography by not actually being written by the person it claims to be about. We hear Alice's voice through Gertrude's hand:

> I was born in San Francisco, California. I have consequently always preferred living in a temperate climate but it is difficult, on the continent of Europe or even in America, to find a temperate climate and live in it. (3)

While many critics praise Gertrude for writing in the colloquial way that Alice speaks, it still screams Stein. The syntax is so overtly Stein that it drowns out the Alice who is presented. The account of Alice itself is not even very focused on Alice. It circulates mostly around Gertrude and the gangle of artists who flocked about the two women in their Paris salon. Food is definitely present in the book but not in the same way that Alice situates her stories around the dinner table.

One shared character between Alice's cook book and Gertrude's is Gertrude's cook Hélène. In *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* Hélène is described in the light of the artists who surround her.

> Hélène had her opinions, she did not for instance like Matisse. She said a Frenchman should not stay unexpectedly to a meal particularly if he asked

> the servant beforehand what there was for dinner… So when Miss Stein said to her, Monsieur Matisse is staying for dinner this evening, she would say, in that case I will not make an omelette but fry the eggs. It takes the same number of eggs and the same amount of butter but it shows less respect, and he will understand. (8)

A meal is not measured or celebrated here as a communal aspect or a homegrown creation, but as a social construct. This version of Alice's autobiography is concerned with Paris and the artists who were presents in the women's' lives. In Alice's version, the same Hélène story goes like this:

> No one could have accomplished so much with so little effort and in so little time as Hélène did. She was that rare thing, an invariable cook. She knew all the niceties of making menus. If you wished to honour a guest you offered him an omelette *soufflé* with an elaborate sauce, if you were indifferent to this an omelette with mushroom or *fines herbes*, but if you wished to be insulting you made fried eggs. (171)

The same detail about Hélène making fried eggs to be insulting is framed this time by her talents and intuitiveness as a cook. Where her credence as a social instrument was the main point in Gertrude's written account, Hélène's gustatory sensibilities and how they influenced Alice are what is important in the *Cook Book*.

In the stack of these associated books, Alice's cook book prevails in the autobiographical and cook book aspects because it is written as a deeply personal, sacred and treasured document and because it is written by the woman herself. The past she

inscribes is textured with ingredients of her life that can only be found in the recipes that catalyze her memories and propel her to write the book.

Alice created a special hybrid form of writing that teaches her readers how to make boeuf bourguignon and/or learn about Alice and Gertrude's life during the Occupation. Somehow the cook book and autobiography genre are able to mingle seamlessly and even symbiotically. The recipes that come from a collection with its own rich narrative arrive at Alice's eyes to tell her of her past and what to write about. They tell her to write about herself and what she ate. We can cook with her memories or we can read her recipes.

Chapter 2: "A Frenchman can say no more"

One of the chapters in the *Cook Book* is called "Recipes from Friends;" Alice asked her friends to submit recipes to her (when she was somehow running out ideas to write about). But for the one or two sentences above a few of the recipes, the chapter is almost untouched by Alice. She lets the recipes of her friends exhibit themselves. In the chapter we find recipes from friends such as Fania Marinoff, Sir Francis Rose, Mary Oliver, and Carl Van Vechten, to name a few. The cook book is riddled with scenes of Alice spending time with her friends and traveling to visit friends, but in this chapter we get to meet those friends. The inclusion of this chapter gives us a different kind of narrative. While it is not straightforward "self life writing," it is a backwards way of introducing the people who were most influential and important to Alice. In the rest of the cook book, Alice lets the recipes have a conversation with the narrative, but in this chapter she lets the recipes speak for themselves. This chapter is actually organized much like those in *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, beginning with appetizers, winding its way through proteins, vegetables, sauces, and ending with desserts, beverages, preserves and chutneys. This cook book normalcy in the midst of an experimental modernist narrative catches the reader a little off guard. But at the same time, it also doesn't feel that strange because the chapter is in a cook book - this chapter is what some of the readers may have been waiting for. It lends itself effortlessly to the purpose of a basic cook book: cooking.

But this is not a basic cook book. While any of the chapters can be cooked from, the intricacies of the document come alive with the inclusion of a life story and of the details how this person became herself through the food she ate and those she ate it with.

While we do not get the same kind of contextualizing that Alice is so good at with the recipes from her collection, "Recipes with Friends" leaves these recipes alone to develop in the minds of the readers. The recipes are unique and specific just like the people who shared them. Carl Van Vechten contributed a recipe for "Garlic Ice Cream" with the parenthetical "(a dressing for salad)" (251). Brion Gysin contributed the most popular item of the cook book, "Haschich Fudge" – "which anyone could whip up on a rainy day" (259). Mary Oliver shared two ice cream recipes: "Wedding Anniversary Ice Cream" and "Ice Cream for Adults" (257, 258). The rest of the recipes in the chapter are just as detailed and particular – and non-narrative. These recipes piece together a picture for the reader. Through the imaginary events in which these recipes might have been served, through the people who created and savor these recipes, and through the juxtaposition of these people and their recipes next to each other, we can start to see how they all connect around a dinner table.

And indeed one of those friends, Sir Francis Rose, supplies an image of this dinner table. His drawing in "Recipes from Friends" imaginatively illustrates the scene we may have in our minds. There are three people sitting around a table that is adorned with a table cloth, a water pitcher, plates, wine glasses, and a skillet. One person, maybe Alice, approaches the table with another pitcher. They sit under the shade of a pillared awning. They are all made of fruits and vegetables. Even though they are fruit baskets arranged as humans, they still hold gestures that signify a sort of jubilance that is expressed in Alice's writing. The person walking towards the table holds up his or her hand, waving to a person at the table who has their hand up as well. The scene is set.

Paul Schmidt sees scenes in the cook book, and possibly this illustration, like this: "There people sit still, one amiably next to another. And we fix the scene, like a photograph, like a perfume, in the distillate memory of what we ate" (194). It's a memory, yes, but a radically different sort. This chapter is anomalous in the *Cook Book*. "Recipes with Friends" functions in a more literal way than the other chapters in the book – it presents the primary material as what it is without any analysis or explanation. Rose's illustration does not so much assist the recipes as enhance them. A cook can choose to cook from this chapter without a second thought. But the recipes in this chapter also function as pieces – almost like physical remnants or tokens – of the people Alice loved and admired. Because these recipes are left in their pure states, we are able to understand something about each person with only the knowledge we can glean from what is given in each recipe.

Aside from what the untouched recipes in "Recipes from Friends" do for the reader and the general narrative of the book, the chapter's existence sheds light on how strange the rest of the book is. It is the only chapter in the cook book that seems most like it really belongs in a cook book and because of this anomaly, the autobiography is made that much more noticeable. Autobiographical narrative becomes the rule in this cook book, while listing recipes *à la* Julia Child is the exception. So what does autobiography mean in Alice's cook book? Her concept of the genre is definitely more influenced by Brillat-Savarin than by the autobiography touchstones – Rousseau, Montaigne, and St. Augustine. But it still exists in the same genre as they do, however oddly. Philipe LeJeune's classic definition of the genre only seems to apply partly here:

> A retrospective account in prose that a real person makes of his [or her] own existence stressing his [or her] individual life and especially the history of his [or her] personality. (Olney, *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* 18)

Although the broad scope of this definition does apply to the cook book Alice's *Cook Book*, we need to be specific. Her cook book focuses on the "history of… [her] personality" as it relates to her recipes and the food she ate (18). The cook book is made up of the stories of how Alice became Alice. The recipes facilitate these stories and also give us, in their primary form, a literal part of Alice's life. As the recipes motivate the stories, they also supply the reader with the cook book's conception of autobiography which depends on memory and the past.

In the introduction to *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, James Olney quotes Erik H. Erikson's words on memory in autobiography:

> it is memory that reaches its tentacles out into each of these three different 'times' – the time now, the time then, and the time of an individual's historical context. (19)

Memory is involved in any autobiographical act, to be sure. But the form of the remembrance and its prompts is unusual in Alice's case. It is her recipes, after all, that help her "reach" into those pockets of memory and then to report what happened. The recipes are what change the meaning of autobiography for her. As memory and the past are the central elements in the cook book, Alice has moments where time and memory come together to prove how distinctive her autobiographical act is. In the chapter called

"Food in the United States" Alice describes how she felt when walking to the market in New Orleans:

> In New Orleans I walked down to the market every morning realizing that I would have to live in my dream of it for the rest of my life" Alice is conscious of what she will miss, what she is enjoying in the present, and what she was not able to enjoy in France. (131)

This is a spot where "the time now, the time then" and the time of Alice's present work with memory collapse together - they create a metaphysical instant in the autobiography (Onley 19). When you are writing about yourself, the subject matter is always something that happened in the past. Writing for an audience entails that what you write has already happened. But in her account, that past that is preserved in your writing will also, as Alice puts it, have to be lived in as a dream, or an idea, or a memory, for the duration of your life. It will already be a dream as it happens. The distinction between the past and the present is obliterated: Alice narrates the historical moment, the present of her account, as if it were already in the past. She thinks about how the past is already upon her and how the present is already a dream. The manner in which Alice construes her past creates a complex autobiographical act. "Autobiography" means "self-life writing" in its simplest state, but it also means combing through the bits of ones past to learn, remember, and know who you are through writing.

Alice's definition of autobiography depends on memory and the past more than just to relay her narrative into her book, but also to create a setting. The past is not just where everything takes place, and is emphasized as a place of comfort from the start. When she thinks about her past, she is comforted by what she had, what she ate, what she

saw. Looking back at the quote from "A Word with the Cook," Alice says that in her state of being jaundice stricken she wrote the book out of "nostalgia for old days and old ways and for remembered health and enjoyment…" Thinking of the days when Gertrude was by her side and when she was healthy, comforted her in the hospital as she wrote her book. Her writing is fixed in a state of nostalgia. But the past is not exactly what it was; it is told after the fact which inevitably creates a different version of that past.

Of this sense of the past in autobiography, Georges Gusdorf says:

> Autobiography is not simple repetition of the past as it was, for recollection brings us not the past itself but only the presence in spirit of a world forever gone. ("Conditions and Limits of Autobiography," *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* 38)

For the reader, Alice's past is fresh but we also know that it is remembrance that we are reading. For Alice though, there is a distance between her and her past – she can never return to that past, and she seems to have known that already in the past - all she can do is reside in nostalgia and the emotions of her nostalgia. She recovers that past by attempting to relate to her past self. In the chapter "Treasures," when Alice is recalling and sharing the recipes that began her collection she tells us: "It surprises me… to find that my collecting of treasures commenced so very, very long ago and that many of them, consequently, are no longer treasures" (98). Here, her past self catches her present self off-guard – she can't relate to the little Alice who treasured sweets and cakes. In her autobiographical act she resolves this face-to-face recognition with her past self by sharing the "surprise" she felt. She realizes she has changed through her taste in food but she can still appreciate the recipes for their memorial merit.

So how does a person begin to remember his or her life while it is still happening? Again, the recipes answer this question for Alice and her readers. Primary documents like photographs, diaries, scrapbooks, etc. are the usual suspects but as Alice's autobiographical cook book is not generically-faithful, it comes as no surprise her that *recipes* are her guides. On this topic as well, Gusdorf has some insight:

> Autobiography is… never the finished image or the fixing forever of an individual life: the human being is always a making, a doing; memoirs look to an essence beyond existence, and in manifesting it they serve to create it. (47)

This is a complex understanding of what happens in autobiography. But what Gusdorf is getting at is that the movement of time does affect the self writing act – the product is inherently not finished because the person who is writing has not finished living. The "essence beyond existence" may not exactly refer to the use of primary documents to aid remembrance, but Alice's recipes carry an essence of her life that definitely resides beyond existence. Her recipes are preserved in her collection like relics in a time capsule; when she resurfaces them, they are the same as when she first collected them. Because of their preservation through time, they also preserve Alice's memories. Using them as her guides means that the image of time and the space of nostalgia that is set up in the book is also preserved. Although it is not a finished image or "the fixing forever of an individual life," it is the "fixing forever" of specific moments and memories (47). This is central meaning of autobiography for Alice – to fix moments of her life in the sweetness or saltiness of the food she ate and cooked. Through these moments fixed in taste, Alice is created.

This meaning of autobiography brings us back to the organization of the book and the idea of "recipes like floating islands." Because Alice fixes her memories in the tastes of the food in her recipes, her recipes direct the movement of the memories. The comparison between "ile flottante" (meringue floating in sweetened cream, to refresh your memory) and Alice's recipes makes it so that the recipes are the meringue and the narrative the sweetened cream. But in the way she manifested the metaphor, the recipes facilitate the cream (narrative) instead of the cream enhancing the meringue (recipes). In the chapter "Treasures," which seems like the least organized chapter in the book, there are two recipes for "Mushroom Sandwiches" that tell us otherwise and point right at the concept of autobiography that has just been established. In "Mushroom Sandwiches (1)," Alice tells us that:

> Mushroom sandwiches have been my specialty for years. They were made with mushrooms cooked in butter with a little juice of lemon. After 8 minutes' cooking, they were removed from heat, chopped and then pounded into a paste in the mortar. Salt, pepper, a pinch of cayenne, and an equal volume of butter were thoroughly amalgamated with them. Well and good. (109)

This recipe begins with a recollection and the whole reads like a memorization. She remembers having made the sandwiches as her "specialty for years" and then she remembers how she made them and tells us. Then she adds "But here is a considerable improvement over them, also called," and then leads into the next recipe:

Mushroom Sandwiches (2)

> This method is the same up to a certain point. These are the proportions. For ¼ lb. mushrooms cooked in 2 tablespoons butter add 2 scrambled eggs and 3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese and mix well. The recipe ends with: This makes a delicious sandwich which tastes like chicken. A Frenchman can say no more. Which gave me the idea of introducing chicken sandwiches in which chopped and pounded chicken is substituted for the mushrooms. Naturally they are well received. (109)

After the recipes she says "So we are back to chicken with some recipes for them, delicious or original. This one is both…" And she gives the recipe for "A Hen with Golden Eggs" (109). The inclusion of the second mushroom sandwich recipe provides some insight into the inner workings of Alice's mind and memory. The first thing to note is that the second recipe reads like a memorization up until, "The recipe ends with," which signifies the beginning of her literal transcription of a recipe from the box. But then she introduces "a Frenchman can say no more," which brings us back to her past of living in France with the Frenchmen who said everything tasted like chicken. Then she tells us that her revision of mushroom sandwiches led her to create another sandwich with actual chicken. This is a recognition of a specific moment in her past when she realized that making chicken sandwiches was a good idea. Then she leads into actual chicken recipes. She is literalizing the metaphor ("tastes like chicken") by actually using chicken. Just the thought of how Frenchman think everything tastes like chicken prompts her to make the chicken sandwiches and thus to include them in this recipe. This shows that the

organization of this chapter is directly connected with her memories and thought process. Her memories are literally fixed into her recipes in this instance.

This transition through memory appears again in the book at the beginning of the chapter "Beautiful Soup" after "Murder in the Kitchen" has ended. The chapter opens with:

> From murder to detection is not far. And here is a note on tracking a soup to its source. It was a result of eating gazpacho in Spain lately that I came to the conclusion that recipes through conquests and occupations have travelled far. (49)

The associative power of her memory through her recipes leads the way here. This opening is so strange and interesting because it jumps from the theme of the previous chapter to the next through two ideas that seem so unrelated to food – "murder and detection." But then she also manages to slip in the word "occupation" alluding to her experience living in France during the occupation. Just the inclusion of that word brings us a little closer to who Alice is and what happened in her life that meant most to her. The chapter is about her gazpacho research through different cultures. But this research process only gets only a short five-page chapter while WWII quietly dominates the book. There is only one chapter explicitly dedicated to life during the Occupation, but the war is also mentioned in small ways throughout[3]. With each mention of the war, it becomes

[3] In "Murder in the Kitchen," Alice says: "The only way to learn to cook is to cook, and for me, as for so many others, it suddenly and unexpectedly became a disagreeable necessity to have to do it when war and **Occupation** followed" (37). And in "Food to Which Aunt Pauline and Lady Godiva Led Us," Alice tells us that: "On the road to Chartres we [Gertrude and Alice] made acquaintances with an excellent little restaurant which unfortunately disappeared during the **Occupation of the second world war**" (76). These are just two examples of the "small ways."

apparent that that time affected her life deeply. The insertion of the word here is one of those small moments. The idea of recipes surviving "through conquests and occupations" is what ties these two points in Alice's life together - it happens in only one sentence. In that sentence she refers both to her own recipes that survived through the Occupation and to the gazpacho recipes that she proceeds to share from Seville, Cordoba, Segovia, Poland, Turkey, and Greece. Although the recipes that she kept through the war weren't specific dishes that marked recognition of a culture, she emphasizes to the idea of saving a recipe through a time of war. Her thoughts of anything related to wartime will inevitably be enrobed by her memories of the Occupation. She says "From murder to detection is not far," and goes on to detect how gazpacho roamed through various cultures and wars, and she also detects how her recipes travelled from the past to the present and through wars (49). Her memory ties together these narrative threads.

Alice's memory is a locomotive that passes through the gustatory stops of her life. The movement happens through remembrance and with each stop the person materializes. In this space of memory, the past cannot actually be recovered but can be brought back as a spirit, an emotion, which she can use to remember things in tandem with her past self even when she has changed. Her change is taken into account in the acknowledgement that we make as readers who know that time keeps moving while the book is written in a way that seems as if time has stopped. Autobiography for Alice means to create an image of her life and herself through meals of her past and the experiences around those meals. Her past is characterized by the sentiments which the recipes elicit.

Chapter 3: "a room now blown to bits"

Alice's *Cook Book* is a cache of recipes and a volume of memories. In the book Alice describes her past as a place frozen in time. The past is treated as a setting where she once lived; a home where everything happens around a dinner table. Alice remembers through her recipes. From these specific remembrances arise associations that create a web of connections. This web convenes on the pages with their "mingling of recipe and reminiscence" (AWord with the Cook). Alice thinks about her life through food in a similar way that fellow female food writer MFK Fisher thinks about her life through hunger. Fisher explains her understanding of these associations in her forward to *The Gastronomical Me*:

> I tell about myself, and how I ate bread on a lasting hillside, or drank red wine in a room now blown to bits, and it happens without my willing it that I am telling too about the people with me then, and their deeper needs for love and happiness…There is a communion of more than our bodies when bread is broken and wine drunk. And that is my answer, when people ask me: Why do you write about hunger, and not wars or love. (353)

Fisher's conception of what happens when she writes about food is intricate. The intricacies arise out of what else "communes" through the nostalgic eating. Each woman writes about food in a distinct way, Alice mingling recipes with narrative, Fisher remembering life through prose narrative that is about food. But the most important connection between Fisher's and Alice's food writing method, it's the notion of preserving what has been "blown to bits" through remembering and then through writing.

Although Fisher writes as well about eating bread "on a lasting hillside," she is still writing of the memory, the memory that represents a time that cannot be returned to. Alice's recipes collection preserves time as the bits of what has elapsed already. The collection segments the past into pieces. These bits help Alice explore her memories and her past as a place that cannot be returned to – it can only be looked at in fragments.

As each recipe is a fragment of a point in history and in Alice's memory, each recipe is also a representative of certain people, places, and specific dishes. This web of associations that comes out of each recipe can be seen when we look at a recipe like "Nora's Soufflé Fritters" in the "Treasures." The recipe does not tell us all that much on its own (expect for how to make the soufflé fritters!). But the documentation of it combined with Alice's narrative explanation of its significance to her, we find out that Nora was Alice's mother's cook, that this recipe was a relic of Alice's childhood, and the recipe itself marks the beginning of Alice's act of collecting "so very, very long ago" (98). She opens the chapter by asking "What is the first food you remember, remember seeing it if not eating it?" And then tells us about her premier food: "breakfast food… cracked wheat with sugar and cream, corn meal with molasses and farina with honey" (97). But then she explains her second food: soufflé fritters. "Nora, my mother's cook, fortunately stayed on long enough for me to try her fritters" Alice says.

> Nora left my mother's kitchen when she was nearly forty years old to marry a well paid workman and proceeded to produce five or six children. Maggie, the nurse, would go to see her and on her return would tell the incredible story that Nora who had been such an exquisite cook was now feeding her family, including the youngest born, on canned food. (97)

She then leads into the recipe. In this exceptionally fluid way, Alice traverses time. She references the recipe which directly connects to who created it – Nora. Nora's near forty years under the employment of Alice's mother surfaces in one sentence as does her "production" of several children. In the course of this one short paragraph introduction to "Soufflé Fritters," Alice covers the span of over forty years. Thinking again about time capsules, the rediscovery of this recipe from Alice's childhood is like the digging up of a time capsule – inside are all the memories Alice had about Nora. In recounting the recipe to us, Alice also brings the untouched history of Nora back to life. The recipes represent not only, as Paul Schmidt sees it, "subtle mnemonics" for her memories and experiences, but also tangible primary documents for real events (194). The recipe for the fritters leads into another recipe of Nora's: "Nora's Ice Cream." The two recipes work in tandem to bring Nora and her cooking back to life. What's more, Alice understands that each recipe is a "treasure," a relic or a time capsule of a time from her past. They are precious to Alice because of what and who they represent. She carefully stows each one in her box to last forever. Another factor that qualifies her recipes as treasures is the fact that each piece of paper in its own way can lead one to create "an aesthetic emotion." (Toklas 100). They bring to life emotions and reactions that the body may have stored at the first taste of "Nora's Soufflé Fritters." The piece of paper also conjures the memory of a flavor, which is what Alice may mean by "an aesthetic emotion" (100). When we think of flavor as a memory or an emotion, the way we relay that memory to the present is not in a straightforward manner. It is not easy to describe a flavor. What does an asparagus taste like? The flavor is nuanced, the flavor is loud, the flavor is subtle; these descriptions don't mean anything. Flavor is something that can only be experienced in the present. But

if we are to think of a flavor as a memory it is usually tacked onto where we were when we tasted it or who we were with or what the flavor was made of.

With this in mind, flavor can also be understood as a trigger. Like Proust's madeleine, Alice's recipes transport her back into a specific time through flavors but also through associations with those flavors. For Proust it begins with a flavor but for Alice it begins with a recipe. After the recipe for "Nora's Ice Cream" appears, Alice writes that

> It surprises me, recalling these two of Nora's delights, to find that my collecting of treasures commenced so very, very long ago and that many of them, consequently are no longer treasures… My collecting of treasures began with Sweets – cakes and ices, desserts and candies – double the evidence for their date. For when one is young, that is what interests one the most; the rest follows. (98)

Connecting back to the idea of Alice's attempt to relate to her past self, in recalling "Nora's delights," Alice discovered that her appreciation and understanding of what was so special about the early recipes in the collection, had changed. Proust's madeleine awakened a whole different type of thought about memory and taste, but in looking at the way Alice remembers her past through her recipes, it is apparent that her memories are not what she thought they would be. It is not the recipe that changed but Alice. As she ages, Alice's has new eyes for reading her recipes.

The connection between Alice's recipes and Proust's madeleine continues with the idea of *mémoire involuntaire.* In his essay "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," Walter

Benjamin considers the psychological aspects of this idea. Benjamin tells us that Proust's conception of *mémoire involuntaire* is that

> the past is situated 'somewhere beyond the reach of the intellect and its field of operations, in some material object…, though we have no idea which one it is. And whether we come upon this object before we die, or whether we never encounter it, depends entirely on chance.'" (315)

Fisher writes that when her food writing begins to involve war, love, and power, it "happens without [her] willing it" (353). This may also be true in Alice's case. Proust's *mémoire involuntaire* functions entirely without effort or will. The web of connections that happens when Alice discusses "Nora's Ice Cream," or any of her recipes, also happens in this involuntary way. The most important thing to note in the connection between Proust, Fisher, and Alice, is that there is a trigger or an object in order to enact *mémoire involuntaire*. The objects in question for Alice are her recipes. The experience of Proust's protagonist with his madeleine was a metaphysical one:

> No sooner had the warm liquid, and the crumbs with it, touched my palate, a shudder ran through my whole body, and I stopped, intent upon the extraordinary changes that were taking place. An exquisite pleasure had invaded my senses, but individual, detached, with no suggestion of its origin. And at once the vicissitudes of life had become indifferent to me, its disasters innocuous, its brevity illusory--this new sensation having had on me the effect which love has of filling me with a precious essence; or rather this essence was not in me, it was myself. (*Remembrance of Things Past* 48)

The taste of the tea and cookie reawaken an indistinct memory in him that he has to develop with more sips of the tea and more time understanding what sensation the tea is making him feel – that is remembrance. Alice lives out her own version of this metaphysical experience. As opposed to remaking all the food in her cook book, tasting it for a few seconds and then flooding herself with the past, Alice reads her recipes and experiences something vivid. Her experience is similar to the madeleine incident but the act of reading versus tasting is what triggers the remembrance. In this act of reading, Alice cannot taste or savor the food she is reading about, but the memory and feelings that are drawn out of that piece of paper are what create the vivacity of the experience. "When treasures are recipes they are less clearly, less distinctly remembered than when they are tangible objects. They evoke however quite as vivid a feeling…" (100). Here Alice's is directly saying that recipes are not tangible objects; she says that "they are less clearly… remembered" than tangible objects. But at the same time, through her practice in the book, her use of the recipes to remember, she is indirectly saying that her recipes, in fact, are tangible objects. Another thing that Alice acknowledges in this remark, is the concept of indistinct memory. That is the type of memory that evoked by *mémoire involuntaire*. She then introduces her own version of Proust's metaphysics. This "vivid" feeling is induced firstly by the consideration of "cooking [as] an art" and then by the way a certain recipe is remembered along with the dish it describes (100). If cooking is an art, the element of aesthetics is introduced. This aestheticism works together with the power of memory to create a "vivid" feeling. To demonstrate her idea of "vivid feelings" and "aesthetic emotions" in reading a recipe, Alice asks her readers: "If one had the choice of again hearing Pachmann play the two Chopin sonatas or dining once more at

the Café Anglais, which would one choose?" (100). The answer is subjective, but the question brings light that each experience brings a different feeling. What it comes down to is how we can compare the experiences. If they are both experiences of art, which experiential elements are different? Which are the same? These questions are what brings Alice back to her collection. Her recipes are what the madeleine and tea are to Proust. She too experiences *mémoire involuntaire* in a transcendent and "vivid" way through her recipes and learns that art and the aesthetics of an original can be expressed even through a memory.

Through this metaphysical experience there is a chain reaction of remembrance that creates the progression in the book. In a given chapter, an individual recipe catalyzes a memory which catalyzes another recipe associated with that memory. Alice's intent to explore her memories mixes with the involuntary action of her memories in every chapter of the cook book. "Murder in the Kitchen" is a chapter where the constructs of time and memory are warped casually to convey stories surrounding the theme. The chapter begins with Alice comparing her intrigue over cook books to Gertrude Stein's excitement over Dashiell Hammett stories. This then leads into the fact the same crime scenes occur in the kitchen as well. As gory as it may be, "Murder in the Kitchen" mirrors the bits of memory that make up the cook book; Alice writes about butchering carp, pigeons, and duck – the bits of chopped up animals are also the bits of memory that Alice shares and discards. Before her recipe for "Carp Stuffed with Chestnuts," Alice explains how she learned to butcher a carp. "The fish man who sold me the carp said he had no time to kill, scale or clean it…" So Alice chose a knife, "found the base of its vertebral column and the plunged the knife in" (37-38). After this act of murder Alice goes about preparing the

fish for dinner: “I scraped off the scales, cut off the fins, cut open the underside and emptied out a great deal of what I did not care to look at…” (38). The scales, fins, and guts are the discarded bits of the cook book while the cleaned out carp is the recipe and memory that is shared.

This acknowledgement of gore leads Alice to remember that “murder in the kitchen” took place in the earlier part of her life with Gertrude. Alice writes: “In earlier days, memories of which are scattered among my chapters…” (37). She confesses that the order of the book is not chronological but “scattered.” This helps us understand that the past does not exist for her as a place to look back at day by day, but as a place to peer around as she pleases in a way where she does not change it. Alice explains then that cooking changed once the Occupation began and that it “unexpectedly became a disagreeable necessity.” Through these negative feelings that she developed for cooking during WWII, “It was at this time… that murder in the kitchen began” (37). Through Alice’s winding in and out of her collective past, she arrives on a distinct moment in time, the time when “murder” began. In another writer’s mind, writing about the Occupation of WWII and murder might elicit thoughts of the Holocaust. But as she does throughout the cook book, Alice detracts attention from the subject of the war by talking about food and cooking. The word “murder” in this chapter is repetitive and even a little funny in the context of the kitchen. But it is deliberate. Maybe there is an connection between the murders of WWII and the murders in her kitchen? This question never explicitly gets answered though.

What I can say with certainty is that the act of murder in the kitchen produces the memories that she shares and the memories that are thrown into the garbage. The

collective past mixes with the individual past - "certain contents of the individual past combine in the memory with material from the collective past" (Benjamin 315). It is after this distinct moment that Alice launches into her various "murder" themed recipes. During the chapter, Alice and Gertrude travel around Europe cooking and eating with new friends and old friends, but time is not stagnant. Alice notes that the moment of murder in the kitchen begins during the Occupation but further into the chapter Alice delves into the time when Gertrude and her hired Frederich as their cook in Bilignin. Frederich confides in Alice that he was from the same town as Hitler "and that anyone in the village was like all the others and that they were all a little strange. This was in 1936 and we already knew Hitler was a little strange" (43). Here again, where Alice could talk about Hitler's corrupt dictatorship she chooses to situate us in time for the purpose of the chapter. We find out what the world "already" knew about der Führer, that the war was about to begin (and so was "murder in the kitchen"), and the actual event in Alice's individual past. This quotation is a moment in time for Alice – she knew exactly what year Frederich told her his confidence. The movement through Alice's past that happens in this chapter, happens throughout the book. The past has elapsed. The past has ended, but at the same time that ending allows for a selective exploration through memories. Because Alice's has the collection filled with bits of the past, she has the license and ability to choose what goes into the past of her cook book and what is kept out just like how she prepares her carp.

This exploration of memories inevitably brings forth every kind of memory. Fisher's understanding of the fact that "our three basic needs for food and security and love, are so mixed and mingled and entwined that we cannot straightly think of one

without the others" tells us that there will always be something more than the food on the page (353). The separation that Alice's recipes provide between her and her memories bring forth not only sweet and nostalgic reminiscences but also some not so pleasant memories. Just like MFK Fisher remembers how she "drank red wine in a room now blown to bits," Alice writes about her life during the war (353). The war, WWII, represented a time in both women's lives that meant a constant lack of comfort and security. The way that Fisher remembers the wine she sipped is mingled with the understanding that what once existed is now gone. If we think about about a memory as being something that is preserved in thought but destroyed by the movement of time, we can think about eating and cooking as a literal demolishing of living things. But maybe it is more simple than that. Maybe just the mere fact that we *have* memories, memories of eating in places sometimes far away or long ago, reminds us of the fact that we can never go back. The "room blown to bits" is representative of the past as a setting – the past is an obliterated room because it is somewhere we cannot return to. Fisher's remembrances of the past through food and Alice's remembrance through recipes, show us that the past can by crystalized through the act of writing and preserved forever as a relic, but only as something untouchable and unchangeable. In the "room blow to bits," the "bits" are Alice's recipes – they are what she preserved from her life during the war, and in turn what preserved her memories. Although the past can never be returned to, like a time capsule, its contents can be rummaged through, looked at, and inspected. Alice recalls the past using her recipes as her guides, as the relics that have been preserved.

What makes Alice's recipe "bits" even more special is that they survived not only WWII but also WWI. Both of the wars are accounted for in her cook book. WWI is

represented by the chapter “Food to which Aunt Pauline and Lady Godiva led us” and WWII is represented by the chapter “Food in the Bugey during the Occupation.” Both chapters are framed by something other than the war that took place. During WWI, Alice and Gertrude drove around France for the American Fund for French Wounded, so that chapter centers around the two cars that the women had, “Aunt Pauline” and “Lady Godiva,” and the food that they were led to by the cars. WWII is framed by what food Alice was able to make or not make because of what restrictions the Occupation put on food. These frameworks expose the fact that through her exploration of memory, Alice chooses to share mostly good memories and the effect that they have on the reader is that the war was livable. The war’s restrictions could be worked around. This goes back to what Alice chooses to do instead of talking about Hitler and the murders of WWII. Alice indirectly narrates her time during these wars by sharing these positive memories from her recipe box and her memories around food. During WWI in Perpignan the women took over a closed banquet hall that they used as a hospital and hotel: “There were wartime restrictions, and a few privations, but each guest was hoveringly cared for by one or more of a family of four. The cook was excellent, southern – not Provençal but Catalan” (59). Or “During the wars, no game is allowed to be shot in France except boar that come down into the fields and do great damage” (61). Alice could talk about why no hunting was allowed “during wars in France” – most likely because they didn’t want any gun shots sounding off. But after each of these quotations fall a recipe, for “Millason,” a milky dessert, and “Roasted Saddle of Young Boar,” respectively. In the end of the day, there was always food and somehow it was delicious food. She comments on the restrictions but is still able to compliment the good food she ate and the friendly people

that she met. The war is an afterthought to the food – this is a purposeful and aesthetic decision. This aesthetic choice was possibly to ease these war tainted chapters in between the quaintness of the surrounding chapters. But she still manages to tell us things about her life during these wars even if only through what she ate.

Alice is able to retain this indirect storytelling when she recounts the food shortage of WWII. What we do know is that the second world war paid a toll on her creative capabilities in the kitchen. "By the autumn of 1943" she says, "food was no longer a subject" (216). Even in this case she finds a place where she can think positively – that is the future, where food would again be a subject:

> In 1940 I had accumulated amongst other prized provisions 4 lbs. citron, candied orange and lemon peel, pineapple and cherries and 2 lbs. raisins, all of which I had put into two well-covered glass jars… it was being saved for the liberation fruit cake. (216).

The way she recounts the contents of her jars is with a specific attention to detail. She notes the quantity in pounds. These jars were sacred during the war because they constituted the goodness of the future. "From time to time [Alice] would look at the jars… they cheered [her] greatly…" (216). Similar to how Alice's recipes were preserved during this time of destruction and the movement of time, these jars of fruit were kept and preserved as treasures.

Another thing gleaned about Alice's life during WWI is that German soldiers were "billeted upon [the women]" and took up rooms in their house in Bilignin (212). Here Alice finds a way to be funny.

> How the Germans cooked has no place in a cook-book, but their menu is offered as a curiosity. Per man: one large slice of ham 1 ½ inch thick heated in deep fat, the gelatinous-glutinous contents of a pint tin (replacing bread and potatoes?), the muddy liquid contents of a large tin (replacing coffee?). (212)

After she describes the German food regiment, she explains what happened when one of the soldiers gave her cook a can of "bread and potatoes." She winds her way through the time the German soldiers spent in her home to wind up at this memory:

> One day an orderly gave the cook a tin of the substitute for bread and potatoes. She in turn gave it to our most treasured possessions, four hens. They ran eagerly toward it, pecked at it and walked away. The cook, delighted in the *geste* of her French hens, through the mess into the mountain torrent… (213)

This is the only description we get about the time Alice and Gertrude spent living with the German soldiers. In the retelling of this story, Alice manages to compare the German soldiers to animals and to even devalue them in the comparison to the hens. The food that the Germans ate, was not even good enough for the hens and is plopped into a stream. This story demonstrates not only Alice's opinion of the men who were suddenly living in her home without her say, but it also shows a bit of bravery. In the act of feeding the can of food to the hens, Alice, Gertrude, and their cook were telling the Germans that they were not respected. But these opinions of the Germans are only understood through analysis. Nothing is very straightforward about her time during WWII except her

recollections of food. Only through her gustatory recollections is there a little bit of clarity to what happened to Alice and Gertrude during the war.

Moving forward through "Food in the Bugey during the Occupation," another serious incident told in a backwards way is found. Alice and Gertrude are forced to moved out of their house in Bilignin because their landlord, an officer in the French Army, needed his home as an outpost and Alice and Gertrude had to relocate. "We were heart-broken" she says, but magically "friends found [the two women] a house at Culoz…" (210). The heartbrokenness lasts for a sentence, but is redeemed in another sentence. Where she could delve into what their heartbrokenness felt like, or what it made them do, she moves forward into the more positive details. The women had to move to Culoz out of their beloved home in Bilignin but their friends found a new home for the women and in this new territory "there would be more fine dry white wine" (210). They would also be less noticed by the Germans. She slyly slips in this detail that signifies the danger they were in, but frames it around the new wine rich region they moved to. But still they had to keep low profiles - their American identities were precariously revealing during the Occupation. Even this danger though, is framed by the event that Alice and Gertrude began frequenting a pastry shop in Culoz. The owner of the shop, Madame Peycru, began sending Alice and Gertrude cakes. "Intending to be discreet, [Madame Peycru] had addressed [the cakes] to The Two American Ladies in Culoz" (215). This precaution almost gave the two women away, but they were able to tell their new cake baking friend to leave out their nationality and just send them the cakes wrapped in newspaper. Although we do discover that the women were in danger, it is only by way of the cake deliveries. Danger is represented by sweetness. In all of this sideways

storytelling though, there is a beauty to the fact that we understand what is going on even if it is through sloppy gifts from Nazis, the presence of "fine dry white wine" and cake deliveries (210).

One precise and important character is missing from this slanted wartime storytelling. That character is Bernard Faÿ. His name appears only once in the cook book in a strangely nondescript context. He is mentioned when Alice is on the topic of the religiously "controversial correspondence" between her friends Paul Claudel and Madame Pierlot. "Bernard Faÿ said that [Madame Pierlot] had been converted once and forever by Jean-Jacques Rousseau" (32). And that is the extent of Bernard Faÿ in the course of the cook book. But Faÿ was a close friend and confident of Alice and Gertrude's particularly during the war years. The three had a close friendship. Faÿ visited the women frequently when they lived in their house in Bilignin and when they had to move to Culoz. But the fact that Faÿ was a collaborator with Hitler during the war, makes the nature of his relationship with the women hazy. Both Alice and Gertrude were Jewish and gay – two red flags to anyone working with the Nazis - but their friendship with Faÿ persisted during WWII and long after. In a letter to Mrs. Charles B. Goodspeed in 1946, Alice tells her friend regarding Bernard Faÿ: "You know that Gertrude had a long and intimate friendship [with Faÿ] – it had its moments of more or less intensity but since we came back from U.S. in '35 it never varied" (*Staying on Alone* 25). Still this "intimate friendship," although more of Gertrude's friendship, remains left out of the cook book. At one point in "Food in the Bugey During the Occupation," Alice notes that "More people came to see us, even from Lyon, which is seventy miles distant. All in the *Resistance*, naturally" (214). The last sentence is deceiving if we know about Faÿ. We don't know

anything about him though, so the integrity of Alice's word becomes not so much diminished, but a little shaded. In her book *Two Lives: Gertrude and Alice,* Janet Malcom notes her feelings on this last sentence and on the discovery of this character:

> When I read this in the fifties, the last sentence did not cause me to smile knowingly as it does today. Then it went without saying the the people that Stein and Toklas saw during the war were the good guys. But today I know that at least one of the people who came to see Stein and Toklas at Culoz was not a good guy – indeed was one of the very worst guys, convicted of collaboration after the war and sentenced to a lifetime of hard labor. (48)

Malcom did her own research to discover the background of this "bad guy" in the years after her first reading of the cook book for her own project. Through this research she found a loop hole in the primary evidence she had. She notes that "*at least* one of the people who came to see Stein and Toklas at Culoz was not not a good guy…" (48). Her use of the phrase "at least" shows that she doesn't totally trust the accounts that these two women gave of their lives during WWII; if she found one person that was not validated in Alice's writing, she could very well find two people. But what does the cook book lose when we learn that Bernard Faÿ is not included in the story of Alice's life? What does this missing detail constitute for the cook book as a whole?

What is comes down to is that reality in Alice's memory is activated by her recipes. The bits such as Faÿ that don't make it into the cook book are either not in the recipe collection or are discarded from the collection. "…the quantity of rejections for

this book is neither flattering nor encouraging. The wastepaper basket is too small" (98). In this process of piecing together her past through her recipes pieces the bits back together in a new way. In doing so she creates a double of her past. This double is manifested in her cook book not as an exact reproduction but as a selective stand in. This recipe based version of the past is full of senses: taste, touch, smell. Through the activation of these senses Alice's memories are also activated. Her memories attach themselves to related memories creating a web. In this web of connections, the past is preserved but also reflected upon as a place which can't be returned to. The past is rendered in the cook book as something that was, as something that can only be reminisced about. "… it was written as… nostalgia for old days and old ways and remembered health…" (A Word with the Cook). It cannot be returned to but its contents can be revisited as with a time capsule. Her recipes are the devices that filter her past as a place and create a specific volume of recollections. Alice chooses recipes as her lens but sometimes the recipes choose her in the Proustian sense - they act as triggers for her *mémoire involuntaire* wherein indistinct memories pepper her individual memories. While remembering one recipe such as Nora's "Soufflé Fritters," the recipe for "Nora's Ice Cream" reaches out to Alice because of their association together. The book's central focus on food also allows Alice to construct an image of her past that happens around each meal. Alice chooses what to share and what not to share. This basis for memory is tangible, memorial, and clairvoyant – the collection is made up of allusions. Each recipe alludes to a meal that happened previously and to the continuation of those meals into the future. With roots in the past, present, and future in the recipe collection itself, on top of Alice's personal memories, the cook book is written into all of these dimensions. Because

of this multidimensionality based on bits of the past, the cook book is a double of the past and the recipe collection is the tangible version of that past. The cook book is based very literally off of the collection – Alice's memory narratives all stem from recipes that are included in the text. The memories and associations that each recipe supplies happens when Alice's mind works in tandem with the collection. Alice is what brings the file of recipes to life in her written act. But even without Alice, the collection is a representative of the past that is narrated in the cook book. The box of recipes is the tangible counterpart to the memories written out in the cook book because it is what lasted through the past.

Conclusion: Chocolate Wafers

After the *Cook Book* was published in 1954, republished in 1984 and earned its acclaim, Alice kept living her life outside of the book; time kept moving while her book froze bits of her life in pages. But even as she grew old and moved away from a life with Gertrude, food was still a focus. In 1958, Alice wrote a second cook book (with Poppy Cannon's steadfast gaze over her shoulder), *Aromas and Flavors of the Past and Present* which as I have mentioned already, was not as successful as the first. And then in 1961, she wrote a forward to *The Artists' & Writers' Cook Book* which included illustrations and recipes by Marcel Duchamp as well as recipes by Man Ray, Harper Lee, Burl Ives, Upton Sinclair and others. Even the letters she wrote in the last years of her life included recipes. In 1962 to Louise and Redvers Taylor she wrote:

> The baths did a lot of good but the house doctor stuffed me with the most frightful medicines from which I am now recovering… Here are two recipes you'll find easy to make and tasty. (*Staying on Alone*, 411)

She then gives the recipes for "Home Made French Mustard," "Doody's Ice Cream," "Mocha Torte," and "Mrs. Moore's Creamed Crab" (which is actually four recipes, not two as she says). Clearly Alice has grown older, but her inherent passion for food still lingers.

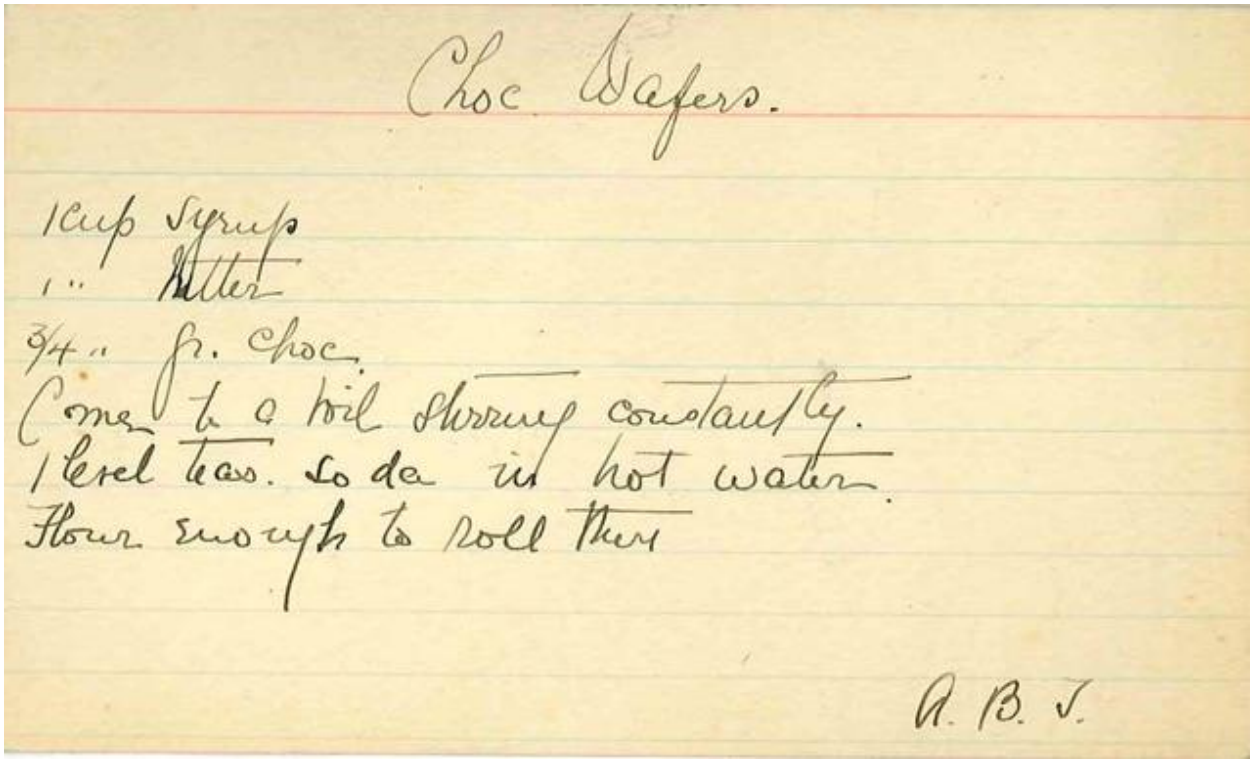
Which brings us back to where the cook book and her interest in cooking began - her collection. The collection is a physical space for her memories. In that physical space exist the recipes which are triggers for her memories that create the narrative in the book. The recipes float like islands in the cream of the narrative and are welcomed into the appetite in our eyes as we read. In the mingling of recipes and life narrative, Alice creates an autobiography inside of her cook book. This autobiography is influenced by the food

writing tradition created by Brillat-Savarin where "in the midst of these solemn meditations, a piquant anecdote… forms itself at the tip of our pen [and] we shall let it take shape …" (Schmidt 181). But in Alice's case her recipes feed the anecdotes. Similar to Proust's madeleine, Alice's recipes trigger her *mémoire involuntaire* – they are the objects that enact "something vivid" on Alice (*The Cook Book* 100). This vivid experience is what leads the progression of the book, creating a non-chronological map of time where the associative powers of Alice's memory creates the order of things. Even when her memories remember the difficult and dangerous times of WWI and WWII, food is what frames those memories. We only discover, indirectly, the danger Alice and Gertrude were in through Alice's recipes and through the food memories that Alice has. While one character, Faÿ, is just not included in the narrative, we can point to the recipes in the box for that exclusion. Alice creates a version of the past that depends on her recipes. Perhaps Faÿ was not related to any of the recipes and if he was, those recipes were discarded. The version of the past that Alice creates is not a copy of the past but a double, a nostalgic version where everything happens out of the recipes. The past cannot be returned to but can be recovered similarly to a time capsule. In Alice's case, the collection is the time capsule that preserves while the recipes are the remnants of the past.

As for the writing, even though Alice closes the book on the note that the cook book has nothing to do with writing ("As if a cook book had anything to do with writing"), it turns out that writing just takes on a new form (280). That form is composed of "conviction – prejudice and passion," and takes shape through Alice's recipe reading process (Toklas, *Dear Sammy* 169). Alice's cook book becomes a modernist experiment with form and content also through her reading process – her recipes are what lead her.

Her writing mode is a hybrid of recipe and narrative where we learn both how Alice prepared "Bass for Picasso" and how she learned her bass cooking method from her grandmother who "had no experience in the cooking and who rarely saw her kitchen but who had endless theories about cooking…" (*Cook Book*, 29). Similar to her grandmother, Alice had "endless theories about cooking," although she pretty much lived in her kitchen (29). Even in this short quote, we can track a trace of Alice's past that manifested in the Alice that wrote the *Cook Book*.

As we tracked the bits of her life through the cook book to create Alice in our minds, here is one of those bits of the real Alice to leave you with.


Choc Wafers.

1 Cup Syrup
1 " Butter
3/4 " fr. Choc.
Come to a boil stirring constantly.
1 level teas. Soda in hot water.
Flour enough to roll thin

A. B. J.

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