

# The Smell of Home: *Refogado* and Culinary Identity in Portuguese-American Culinary Literature<sup>1</sup>

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## Summary

This article examines the ways in which the cuisine of the Portuguese diaspora in the USA comes to represent the ethnic heritage of those who produce it, both as the food that holds connotations of home, and the food that allows them to perform their identity as Portuguese-Americans. The article focuses mainly on the work of two cookbook authors: Maria Lawton and David Leite. It analyses how specific culinary techniques, such as those used to make the onion, oil and garlic base for many dishes, which is known in Portuguese as the *refogado*, may reveal tensions between cultural identities, practices and values. It explores how the materiality of food and specific dishes are used by cooks to negotiate memory, emotions and cultural identity.

## Opsomming

Hierdie artikel bestudeer die maniere waarop die kookkuns deur kokke uit die Portugese diaspora in die VSA hul etniese erfenis verteenwoordig. Dit geld sowel die kos wat konnotasies met die huis het as die kos wat hulle in staat stel om hul identiteit as Portugees-Amerikaners uit te leef. Dit fokus hoofsaaklik op die werk van twee kookboekskrywers: Maria Lawton en David Leite. Die artikel ontleed hoe spesifieke kulinêre tegnieke, soos dié wat gebruik word om *refogado* te berei, wat as die basis dien vir baie Portugese disse en bestaan uit uie, olie en knoffel, spanning tussen kulturele identiteite, praktyke en waardes kan ontbloot. Dit verken hoe die essensie van kos en spesifieke disse deur kokke gebruik word om 'n oorgang na geheue, emosies en kulturele identiteit te bewerkstellig.

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## Introduction

An ethnographic approach to cultural production in all of its forms views culture as part of, not separate from, daily life. Literature, as one aspect of cultural production, is therefore a crucial window into the intellectual and emotional life of individuals and groups. Culinary literature as a specific genre is revealing of culinary and gastronomic habits of specific people and communities, both in the home and in public spaces. Culinary literature takes on particular importance for the ways that it reveals, shares, and experiments with the foodways and gastronomic practices of specific ethnic and cultural groups. In situations of mobility and migration, ethnic cuisine comes to constitute the taste of home, to mark out identity, to preserve traditions, and to allow members of other ethnic or cultural groups to “taste the other”. As Leo Pap observes (1992: 213), “Culinary art constitutes an important part of the national traditions of any foreign-born group in the United States”. He goes on to note that even when non-English languages fall out of use among migrant groups, recipes and foodways may live on and come to be valued within US-American culture more broadly. This article will offer a qualitative analysis of how identities are narrated and performed, and how traditions are sustained, reproduced and played with by two Portuguese-American home cooks who have made their cooking practice public. It will use textual analysis of print culinary and cuisine-related literature, and it will draw on unstructured interviews and personal observations conducted during four periods of fieldwork in South-Eastern Massachusetts, USA in 2016-17, in order to produce an analysis of Portuguese-American identity through food.

The article will focus principally on two self-styled Portuguese-American home cooks and food writers, each of whom has achieved a certain fame within the local community and beyond. Maria Lawton and David Leite are of very similar backgrounds and of a similar age. Each is now in their 50s; their families are originally from São Miguel in the Azores; they grew up in Bristol County, in South-Eastern Massachusetts; they both experienced the stigmatisation of being from an immigrant family; they are both second-generation migrants (Lawton moved to the USA when she was a very young infant). In spite of these similarities, their relationship with Portugal and its food is markedly different, and is revealing of very distinctive experiences of “home”, of “Portugueseness”, of “Americanness”, and of “Portuguese-Americaness”. For both writers, the food of their family heritage is a crucial factor in the performance of their identity as hyphenated US-Americans today, functioning in some ways as a borderland or “third space” in which the hybridity and fluidity of their migrant ethnic identity may be elaborated. In some ways, and although I do not wish to suggest that the same oppression exists in the same way, the power structures of migration resemble those of colonialism, in that migrant people are constructed as other by the hegemonic culture of the society in which they live. Postcolonial theory therefore offers

an interesting perspective on the study of specific ethnic groups in a given society. Homi Bhabha (2004: 95) urges, as a move to decolonise knowledge, the acknowledgement and celebration of the “unfixity” of the other as the object of academic enquiry. This article explores some of the possibilities afforded by such a position. Its analysis of cooking and of writing about cooking uses an interdisciplinary framework that combines an ethnographic approach with theoretical tools from postcolonial, cultural, translation, memory, and performance studies, to enable an understanding of identities (plural) in flux, where the various national and/or hyphenated signifiers of “Portuguese” and “American” are not viewed as alterations or divergences of some pre-existing standard, but rather as forms of cultural enunciation that reveal difference, and the tensions and negotiations that arise from that difference. In the work of Lawton and Leite (as in the practice of other Portuguese-American home cooks), the kitchen becomes “the place of invention and rejuvenation of traditions”, where plural and shifting national, ethnic, diasporic and community identities are built (Dodane 2015: 2), and where ideas of home and belonging are forged, and feelings of unbelonging and unhomeliness are navigated.

## **Geographical and Social Context of South-Eastern Massachusetts**

The New Bedford/ Fall River area of South-Eastern Massachusetts is home to the largest Portuguese diaspora community in the USA. Williams (1982: 122) notes that the patterns of migration have remained steady over the years, with a period of rapid growth in the 1970s; that observation holds true today. Many of the families in the region are from an Azorean background, although there are sizeable Madeiran and continental communities too. Scholars such as Pap (1992) have commented on the importance of regional identities in this diaspora region, as well observing a tendency to “Americanize”. More recently, however, Rosalie Ribeiro (2000: 33) has observed a renewed sense of pride in ethnic heritage among the Portuguese community, while Jenette Barnes (2006: 7) explains that increased pride has also meant an increased visibility, particularly with reference to food and foodways. Today, the tastescape of New Bedford and Fall River is punctuated by innovative uses of *linguiça* and *chouriço*<sup>2</sup> to make new entrants to the food scene “Portuguese”, such as the Portuguese poutine served at dNB Burgers in New Bedford. A number of cafés and restaurants proudly display their “Portugueseness”, with similar dishes being presented across menus of different establishments, particularly in the Acushnet Avenue part of town that is most closely

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2. *Linguiça* and *chouriço* are very similar forms of cured and spiced pork sausage.

associated with the Portuguese community. In an environment where “Portuguese” has been associated historically with a largely blue-collar socio-economic status, this significant ethnic group in the USA is also in the process of recasting itself as chic, again with particular emphasis being paid to culinary cultures. In New Bedford and Fall River, more recently established businesses such as Portugália Marketplace (an independent, gourmet supermarket) and Tia Maria’s European Café are trendy counterpoints to the ethnic enclaves that have traditionally represented a somewhat fixed version of “Portugueseness” in the public sphere. Run by the children of immigrants, they seek to share a vibrant and contemporary “Portuguese” culture with all who visit, regardless of their ethnic heritage. More broadly in the USA, the fine dining scene now features a number of Portuguese-American establishments offering innovative dishes inspired by Portuguese culinary traditions, such as George Mendes’s Aldea in New York (the Spanish spelling of the restaurant’s name reflecting a broad Iberian heritage and Mendes’s training with Basque chef Martin Berasategui in San Sebastián), and the “New Portuguese Cuisine” of Manuel Azevedo at La Salette in Sonoma, California. It is in this context of a renewed sense of pride in Azorean and Portuguese heritage, and a desire to share the tastes of their identity, that we must read Lawton, Leite and other writers like them.

## Reading Culinary Literature

Cookbooks and culinary literature are crucial tools in research about food and how people live. Today, even in the least literary minded households, there is a high probability of finding a glossy cookbook. As Chiaro and Rossato remind us, in societies where people have more abundant leisure time, cultural interest in food practices is also heightened (2015: 237). In the USA, this cultural interest is manifested in the production, marketing and consumption of ethnic cookbooks, which seek to present the recipes of the various “old countries” from which many contemporary US-Americans’ families migrated. Food thus becomes a matter of context as much as (or perhaps more than) necessity (Cronin 2015: 244): it marks class, location, politics, economics and more; and indeed it is marked by these intersections of identity, its very materiality existing in a dialectical relationship with the intangible. Thus, and while Sutton (2001: 3) has noted that many academics sneer at the study of food, foodways, broadly speaking, provide an optic through which to approach sensory, emotional and memory experiences, and the elaboration of identities in flux.

Cookbooks provide us with examples that can be studied of identities in performance – and particularly of ethnic identities (Kalčík 1984: 54-55). Yet these texts cannot be approached as literature in quite the same way as we would approach a novel. Wheaton (2014: 276) cautions that a systematic

approach is needed for the study of the recipes that they contain, especially given the repetition both within and between cookbooks, which makes them potentially a rather dull read. It is true that mere lists of recipes may well constitute a tedious cover-to-cover reading experience. This is especially the case for the many popular community cookbooks that have been produced by Portuguese-Americans and other groups in the USA. These home-made, cheaply-bound fundraisers often serve the additional purpose of simply seeking to set down and share well-loved recipes for the purpose of ethnic survival (Gabaccia 1998: 182), telling in the process some of the food habits of those who produced them (Ireland 1998: 112). They require a specific approach, which examines how the repetition of dishes and techniques described (or not) might be revealing of what home cooks did in the past.

However, Lawton and Leite's books do not constitute community or compiled books, nor are they just recipe books. Lawton's, in particular, is what Sutton describes as a "nostalgia cookbook" – a means of transliterating an oral knowledge that used to be passed on through apprenticeships (Sutton 2001: 143, Wheaton 2014: 278). As such, the production of a nostalgia ethnic cookbook might be understood as an act of translation that contributes to "a larger discourse that shapes identities" (Desjardins et al 2015: 259). Leite's glossy, commercially-produced cookbook is different: it seeks not to retain the knowledge of his family, but is an exploration of a foreign cuisine into which he has special insight, given his own ethnic heritage. Both of these types of ethnic cookbook are a way of sharing information between those who have a similar heritage, and at the same time disseminating knowledge to those "outsiders" who want to learn about the cultural traditions of the other.

Gvion's explanation of why ethnic cookbooks are useful to us as scholars is worthy of citation:

Cookbooks are another way of gathering culinary knowledge and enhancing collective memories. They mean different things to different social groups and often their concept is foreign to immigrants and minorities, who transmit their culinary knowledge orally. Cookbooks written by either immigrants or minorities turn ethnicity into reservoirs of practical knowledge, meant for the integration of their culinary knowledge within the boundaries of local cooking. In other words, when immigrants and minorities think there is a potential clientele for their food, they are willing to disseminate their culinary knowledge in a form that is potentially appealing.

(Gvion 2009: 394)

In Gvion's reading, these cookbooks function materially as a means of migrants finally making themselves at home in the new country, while retaining an attachment with the home from which they came. As much as they are about food, ethnic cookbooks are also about the performance of identity, the elaboration of cultural difference, the narration of collective and individual memory, and the commodification of that memory. They may

provide for a “return to the whole”, countering the fragmentation of experience and identity that anthropologists have observed in migrant people (Sutton 2001: 75); on the other hand, they translate the ethnic culture, making it palatable and accessible for outsiders, preserving it for later generations of those who share a similar heritage, and providing a text in which points of contact, of sameness and difference of cultural identities and practices, can be observed.

## Representing Home through Food

The article will now move on to explore how “home” is represented in Lawton and Leite’s writing, retaining these notions of flux, fragmentation, performance, and hybridisation of identity as the basis for the analysis. In his groundbreaking anthropological study of taste, smell, and memory, David Sutton has noted how the Greeks of Kalymnos consistently refer to food and food memories, with smell being particularly strongly associated in space and time, and “flavour principles” being associated with specific places and identities (2001: 89). This observation holds true in the cookbooks under consideration here, as well as in other diaspora writing. Specifically, the *refogado* – the sautéed onions, garlic and olive oil that forms the base of many Portuguese dishes, and which may have other elements such as tomato, paprika or bay leaf added – is one of the “flavour principles” of Portuguese cuisine. Its smell is often referred to by food writers, for example:

We didn’t even have a door to our kitchen. What we did have was whole apartments filled with the aroma of pungent garlic and sweet onions melting in big pans. “*Refogado*” – my maternal grandmother, Vovo Costa, would tell me its name, urging me to repeat it. *Refogado* (Leite 2017: 5)

We often say that we know when we are in a Portuguese home because of the aroma of *refogado* that fills the kitchen. (Ortins 2001: 10)

Both my parents are very good cooks [...]. No matter who was at the stove, I picked up the scent of *refogado* [...]. It’s the basis of nearly everything we ate. (George Mendes in Ko 2014: 14-15)

This romanticised image of Portuguese cuisine elevates one of the most basic culinary techniques to a more elite status (Anderson 2005: 138). Moreover, the *refogado* is not specifically Portuguese, for a similar technique is found in cuisines from Italy to India. In general terms, the revaluation of basic techniques which are common to home cooks and which provide additional, cheap flavour and depth to dishes, and the incorporation of those techniques into a higher-class framework is one of the key changes that foodways reveal over time. This is particularly relevant in situations of mobility, where, as

Gvion notes (2009: 404), migrants use their culinary culture to shape their public image. The casting of the *refogado* as a flavour principle of ethnic Portuguese cuisine follows this pattern. At the same time, these cooks' various narrations of the smell of it in the home, point to the identification of cultural difference between Portuguese-Americans and other US-Americans: the strong aroma of the *refogado* is both homely and unhomely. At the same time as it inspires feelings of comfort, it is the smell of otherness in relation to the dominant host culture. In a society in which strong food smells seem to be avoided in the public sphere (as I observed during ethnographic fieldwork in New Bedford), the *refogado*, its smell and its flavour, provide a material and sensorial elaboration of cultural difference that is associated strongly with the immigrant home.

Notably, Maria Lawton's *Azorean Cooking: From My Family Table to Yours* (2015) makes no special mention of the *refogado*, although of course it appears in fact in many of her recipes. I questioned Lawton about the difference between her food writing and that of other Portuguese-Americans (personal conversation 2017). She explained that the technique is so basic, and so frequently used, that she felt no need to describe the process beyond a simple "sauté the onions until they are translucent in color" (2015: 74). Equally, the *refogado* is not mentioned specifically as a technique in community cookbooks such as *Madeiran Cooking* (Jacques 2009), although it appears in fact in numerous recipes. By contrast, in Leite's *The New Portuguese Table* (2009: 27), the *refogado* receives special attention in the opening section on ingredients:

[Onions are] so important to Portuguese cooking that they're the base of countless dishes. Nearly every savoury recipe begins with "Faz (make) *um refogado*". *Refogado* is an onion, and sometimes a bit of garlic, slowly cooked in olive oil until meltingly tender. I always have a jar on hand (see page 240) so I can plop a few tablespoons of the golden mixture into a pan and be on my way. Saves a lot of time during the week.

Leite's description recalls the romanticised memory of the smell of *refogado* in the home when he was growing up: the onions must be *meltingly* tender. The action of chopping and sautéing onions and garlic is described as time-consuming. In conversation with Lawton,<sup>3</sup> I wondered whether the *refogado* is a technique that reveals the distinction in values between hegemonic US-American and Portuguese foodways: the *refogado* is considered time-consuming within a broader US-American culinary culture that devotes thirty-seven minutes per day, on average, to food preparation (Cargill 2015: 62). Lawton agreed that this was a plausible explanation, although she expressed surprise that the technique would be seen as time-consuming, adding that she

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3. I made several invitations to David Leite, both by email and in person, to participate in the research; he did not respond.

usually sets the *refogado* going and gets on with another task while it cooks. Two other home cooks who participated in interviews and cooking workshops mentioned the same practice. In Portuguese cuisine, the *refogado* is barely considered a step in a recipe, but it is noticeable by its absence from a dish: several first-generation interviewees pointed to the lack of a *refogado* in food produced quickly as one of the principal “inauthentic” features of local restaurants that advertised themselves as Portuguese. The *refogado* thus becomes that “in-between” point where culture is located (Bhabha 2004: 33). It is the place in which a tension arises between one cultural tendency to value time highly, and another in which flavour and taste are valued highly, because depth of flavour takes time to produce.

The *refogado* as it is elaborated in cookbooks and in culinary practice reveals how knowledges around food work differently. Experienced cooks know that the particular flavour of the *refogado* needs to work with the rest of the dish, so the base of garlic, onion and olive oil might be cooked more slowly and thus hold a sweetness that combines well with a salty *bacalhau* (salted cod) dish, or it may be sautéed quickly to retain some of the acidity that contrasts with a fattier meat dish. The olive oil might be exchanged for pork lard in some dishes; tomato might be added for the base of a fish stew; and in the case of a dish like *Amêijoas à Bulhão Pato* (clams with garlic and coriander), the onion would be omitted altogether and butter added to the oil. However, this is not explicitly explained in cookbooks; rather, the knowledge comes with practice, with trial and error. As Virgílio Nogueiro Gomes indicates in his *Dicionário Prático da Cozinha Portuguesa* (2015: 329), the *refogado* is a technique that is fluid and subject to different elaborations: “*Refogado* – Princípio de muitos pratos de culinária que consiste em colocar ao lume uma gordura, azeite ou banha de porco, e cebola ou alho, até começar a cozer” (*Refogado* – the beginning of many culinary dishes, which consists of putting heat under a fat, olive oil or pork lard, and onion or garlic, until it starts to cook). While it is a simple enough technique, the *refogado* requires knowledge about flavour combinations and cooking times. As it is revalued in migration by socially-mobile cooks such as David Leite and George Mendes, it is made more complex than a simple sautéed onion and garlic. Both of these men provide a recipe for *refogado* itself, and both advocate keeping a cooked *refogado* in a jar, ready to scoop out a spoonful as required (Leite 2009: 240; Ko 2014: 235). The *refogado* functions, then, like a boundary object, interpreted differently by/within/ across different communities and individuals, and with meanings that change in different contexts. For Leite, the meaning of the *refogado* is contained in its smell and the memories that smell evokes, but it sits today in conflict with his cultural values which privilege time as precious: “I find spending up to half an hour sautéing onions takes a chunk out of busy weekday evenings” (2009: 240). For Lawton, the depth of flavour that the *refogado* adds is valued highly, and the time spent preparing the base of the dish is negligible: “This recipe is a very simple and



quick fish dish [... ...]. Heat the oil; in a large, deep skillet over medium heat. Add the onions and cook until they turn a nice golden color, about 15 minutes. Next, add the garlic and mix well with the onions.” (2015: 48)

When the cooking of Leite and Lawton is viewed comparatively, then, different values around food are revealed. For Leite, the *refogado*, although it is time consuming, evokes the memory of his childhood home and it is a means of bringing the past into the present (Connerton 1989: 2); for Lawton, a similar amount of time is considered a quick technique or “trick” of cooking which adds depth of flavour.

The target audience for each writer’s work is relevant to their performance of identity as cooks and as Portuguese-Americans. Lawton’s best-selling *Azorean Cooking* is a success of self-publishing. She wrote the book for her daughters as a means of preserving their family heritage, and the texts that accompany the recipes are packed with memories, family stories and emotional responses to the dishes. She writes:

Putting together this cookbook took me longer than I imagined. At times it became very overwhelming for me. I found myself reliving everything all over again, and I would mourn the loss of my parents and grandparents with every memory of a celebration that we shared together. [...] I am proud of who and where I came from. I am proud to be Azorean.

(2015: introduction)

In the introduction and in the stories that introduce individual recipes, the use of cuisine as a means of elaborating identity and reproducing memories and emotions is evident. Leite’s *The New Portuguese Table*, by contrast, is published commercially in a glossy hardback edition. This book presents memories not of Leite’s childhood, but of his rediscovery of Portugal as an adult travelling for the first time to his parents’ homeland:

Let me set the record straight: for the first thirty-two years of my life, I wanted nothing to do with Portugal, its food, or its culture. [...] But coming from a Portuguese family, I was hard-pressed to ignore my heritage.

(2009: 6)

When I decided to write this book, I had to rejigger my thinking. At first I felt that if I wrote about what I was experiencing – exciting, cutting-edge food, up-and-coming restaurants, a nascent TV food culture, elegant home entertaining – I was betraying my family, being unfaithful to the old ways.

(2009: 7)

Leite’s cookbook aims to reveal the food of Portugal in its updated form; a modern, trendy cuisine. Although he is never explicit about it, part of his coming to terms with his culinary and ethnic heritage is the ability to revalue it in line with his own class status. He writes of the rural traditions and local character of his family’s stories: “That Portugal was gone” (2009: 7). For

Leite, the “Portuguese” aspect of his identity shifts from being a fixed and undesirable past to being performed in the present through culinary innovation; for Lawton, “Portuguese” is a means of holding on to the past in the present. Terms such as Portuguese or Azorean cuisine hold very different meanings for each writer, yet for both of them, “Portuguese” (whatever the term may mean at a given point) is associated with home and family.

For Lawton and Leite, and for many hyphenated US-Americans, the term “home” has multiple meanings, each one imbued with multiple emotions (Brooks & Simpson 2013: 17). Indeed, while migration studies may be criticised for focusing too little on the emotions in favour of statistics, facts and flows, Food Studies approaches to migration enable us to access the emotional, lived experiences of those who move. As the Australian food writer Tania Gomes puts it, the memories, emotions, and culture shared by Portuguese across the globe connect them spiritually; foodstuffs thus become material memory-objects:

As the daughter of Portuguese migrants who once set out for Australia and then made it their home, I have learned and experienced every part of the Portuguese culture through the stories, memories and food my parents have shared. Every thoughtfully prepared meal of *bacalhau*, every homemade *chouriço*, and every tasty piece of *presunto* helps me to grow more deeply into the culture of my parents and the world they left behind [...].

These sights, smells and tastes of Portugal transcend time and place and live in Portuguese homes, scattered thousands of miles from their native land ....

(Gomes 2005: 14)

Gomes’ description acknowledges three of the “homes” present in the migrant imaginary: the family home or shared house; the country of habitation; the country of origin or heritage. These meanings coexist, and migrant people’s identities and feelings towards “home” are a continuous negotiation of the tensions that emerge between these understandings. In describing the retention of specific dishes and food practices as a home-making practice, Gomes supports Brooks and Simpson’s assertion (2013: 18) that the decision by migrants to leave “home” is not necessarily a rejection of home as such. In the case of many families who migrated to the USA, “home” or the homeland remained an ideal, a place to which they would potentially return, and a place which must be kept alive in memory. Food, thus, is a means of keeping alive that memory. Carmen Ramos Villar writes in her analysis of Charles Reis Felix’s autobiography that food occupied a special place in this family’s experience of migration. Eating Portuguese food enabled them to settle and connect emotionally with their new homes (house, country, region, society):

For Felix’s parents, food reinforces the idea of home as a safe haven in which they can practice cultural autonomy. In other words, the capacity of reproducing their own culture through a performative memory gives them a

sense of ontological, cultural, and even territorial continuity. For Felix, on the other hand, the description of eating Portuguese food brings forth the memory of the taste of childhood in the United States – the specific childhood of an offspring who has Portuguese parents.

(Ramos Villar 2013: 193)

Here, Ramos Villar points to the muddy notion of “home” for Portuguese-Americans. The material education through food of a past home for one generation constructs the tastescape of the present and of what will be their memories of childhood, for a second generation. Continuity of belonging to Portugal is thus established across both space (Portugal to the USA) and time (from one generation to the next; from past to present). There emerges from this performative memory act a fourth type of “home” that sits in parallel with the house and land where the migrant people have settled; that is, the “ethnic enclave” which reproduces and performs a collective “home” for the group or community. Leite’s evocative description of the ethnic enclave of Fall River sums up the tensions:

We were children of the neighbourhood. And playing in our slice of the city, which bled into the rocky Taunton River, we didn’t know people spat out words like *Portagee* and *greenhorn* as a way of insulting our parents and making them feel small. Hell, we didn’t even know there was anything other than Portuguese, which meant we didn’t know how to be ashamed.

Television showed us that.

I don’t remember a time without a TV. I was allowed to watch pretty much nonstop while my mother cooked, made beds, rearranged closets, hung laundry, and babysat my cousin Barry and me. But at some point, I noticed there were no families on TV speaking the soft sandpaper shushing of Portuguese words. Houses weren’t crammed with eight or ten people. No kid was forced to eat salt cod or octopus stew that seemed to take on pulsating purple life in the bowl.

(Leite 2017: 4-5)

In Leite’s description, the paradox of the ethnic enclave is made explicit: it is both a place of safety and belonging to the Portuguese community and a place that marks out inescapably his/their difference from those outside. Again, food marks the boundary between Leite’s heritage and the society he inhabits; it is a mark of his inescapable otherness and the reason he cannot feel quite at home. As long as he belongs *in* the enclave, he will never belong in the new land; and yet only by recreating the living memory of the homeland are his migrant parents able to settle and feel as though they belong in the land that they have made home. “Home” is an increasingly tricky concept, not only because the home that migrants leave behind may be unsafe or unjust (Harzig & Hoerder 2007: 3), but also because the home in which one lives may hold its own emotional dangers. Anderson points out that to eat food from home is to be emotionally at home, with the full range of emotions that this implies

(2005: 130). Home, in this reading and with its full range of emotions, is not, then, an entirely safe place. Rather, it is a site of contradiction, of tension, and of negotiation. Barrow (2002: 30) suggests that most Portuguese-Americans experience that conflict of identity that is suggested by Leite's lived experience as it is recounted through food memories.

The preservation of foodways across space and time has a number of functions, then: it may mark out and celebrate ethnic difference (Gabaccia 1998: 51); it may seek to preserve a vanished world (the "home" left behind) (Anderson 2005: 199-201); it may make "safe" and present a positive ethnic image to others of a different heritage (Kaplan, Hoover & Moore 1998: 131). Yet, as Kaplan, Hoover and Moore underline, ethnic foods do not exist in a vacuum and do not remain in a pristine state: they are rarely identical to the foods in the society of origin and exist in a dynamic relationship with the societies of origin and of settlement (Kaplan, Hoover & Moore 1998: 122-23). Although we know that foodways change, as Anderson reminds us (2005: 162), we often act as though they do not, and this fixedness of memory makes it more difficult for migrants, in particular, to process the changes in the "home" they left (Brooks & Simpson 2013: 42). Leite, for example, writes that the dishes he remembered from childhood tasted simply wrong, "Utterly, stupendously wrong" (2009: 6) when he ordered their namesakes during his first trip to Portugal. The disjuncture between his taste memories of "home" (house, family) and the "home" (Portugal) that he was told they came from was great. The trip, while it initiated a different journey through his heritage, did not reveal the Portugal remembered by Leite's father. For Lawton, by contrast, a physical return to São Miguel formed part of her desire to learn how to "cook Azorean" (Lawton 2015: introduction) as an act of "salvage ethnography" (Sutton 2001: 147), saving traditions and recipes from disappearance.

While Leite maintains a distinction between Portuguese-American and Portuguese, Lawton's food memories and practices demonstrate a much smoother sense of continuity with the "Azorean space" being unbound by geographical territories and connected instead by the emotions, memories, and food acts of those who live within it. Her food writing displays a transnational quality that refers to "the continuity of experience for migrants; the simultaneousness of their experience in different cultures; the emotional ties between people and places" (Harzig & Hoerder 2009: 83-84). The transnationalism of Lawton's lived experience comes to the fore in a hake stew (Lawton 2015: 36):<sup>4</sup>

This dish has a very special place in my heart. [...] On my trip to Sao Miguel I mentioned this dish [hake stew] to my Aunt Ines and she informed me that her mom, my grandmother, was the one who had taught my mom the recipe. [...] What happened during and after the lesson was very moving to me. [...] Yes,

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4. The absence of accents on Portuguese words is consistent with Lawton's text.

I cried while cooking it and I cried while eating it. It's hard to explain, but I felt like I was with my parents at that table, enjoying each bite.

When staying on the island of São Miguel, Lawton is able to watch her aunt preparing a stew that her parents had loved and whose taste and smell moved her to tears. The experience evokes what Connerton describes as a “casual connection” to the past (1989: 2), where the objects and events that we experience now evoke those that were experienced in the past. The material foodstuff and its taste and smell properties thus evoke memory, creating a sense of belonging and being in the home of her past, while at the same time creating new emotional bonds between Lawton and her aunt and instilling a sense of belonging in the homeland that she left many years before (Sutton 2011: 89; Brooks & Simpson 2013: 48). In the cookbook, then, the dish functions both as an elaboration of group identity (Azorean, from São Miguel), and as a performance of family connections and memories. While we could share the stew, then (and while we shared a powerful and moving experience that induced tears during our conversation about this episode), the specific emotional and affective value of the dish remains as specific to the individual tasting it as was/is their relationship with the people whose memory it evokes.

For both Leite and Lawton, food performs as a way of reintegrating the past and present, of fixing and unfixing at once the hyphen in their Portuguese-American identity, and of experiencing a resulting sense of “wholeness” (Sutton 2001: 75). For Lawton, as for the Greek migrants that Sutton describes, the tastes and smells of foods from the home society are able to temporarily at least relieve the *saudade* for lost relatives and of being in one geographical land that is distant from another with which she has emotional ties.<sup>5</sup> The “Portuguese” or “Azorean” space which she inhabits is one that transcends land borders and time and is one that she is keen to open up and share with future generations: “I started my journey to learn all I could and to recreate and share all of my food memories with my family and friends” (Lawton 2015: introduction).

Lawton’s “Portugueseness” is part and parcel of her “Americanness”. For David Leite, by contrast, Portuguese food is a new discovery, rather than a rediscovery. His family’s stories of a backwards, ignorant Portugal left him ashamed of his heritage, but a physical trip to Portugal enabled him to find a modern, tasty Portugal in which he, as a US-American, could feel totally at home, to the extent that he sought the Portuguese nationality to which he was entitled as the child of Portuguese parents. As he puts it:

Even more disturbing was that I’d never imagined that any dish my family cooked could be made better by someone else. That trip launched me on a

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5. *Saudade* denotes nostalgia or longing for people and/or place, and is referenced repeatedly in Portuguese culture.

journey of discovery – of the food of my heritage and of myself – that included my becoming a Portuguese citizen in 2004.

(Leite 2009: 6)

Being a Portuguese-American, though, places him in the privileged position of being able to interpret that culture for his non-Portuguese intended audience, to reintegrate past and present in a way that no longer-needs to cause shame, and to return to the whole as a US-American who assumes his “Portuguese-” prefix on his own terms and not those of his family’s memories. A discovery of the trendiness and modernity of his heritage culture enabled Leite to celebrate that aspect of his past and bring into his present another version of “Portuguese” cuisine that is different from, but in dialogue with, his family’s culinary traditions. As translator of his heritage, Leite thus moves recipes across cultures, reproducing them in digestible form for those at home in the USA (Chiaro & Rossato 2015: 238), while finding and inhabiting, in the process, a space of belonging.

Food enables a sense of wholeness and belonging for both Leite and Lawton, as for countless others, and at the same time it brings to the fore a necessity for a phenomenological approach to food and food cultures, because while a number of similarities may be traced between their experiences, each individual experiences the same or similar foods, dishes and recipes differently. This study reveals, then, the need for an approach taking full account of the situatedness of foodways and emotional contexts in which food practices are elaborated, the extent of which can only be revealed through a continued exploration of some these themes.

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