THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN ELITE MIDDLE-CLASS:
FOODIE DISCOURSE IN Bon APPÉTIT MAGAZINE

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Gwynne Mapes, BA

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Gwynne Mapes, BA

Thesis Advisor: Heidi E. Hamilton, PhD

ABSTRACT

As Johnston and Baumann (2010) note, “Most everyday food choices both reflect and reproduce societal power divisions of economic and cultural capital” (128); in this sense, food practices can be seen as markers of social class and social identity. This paper speaks to how these concepts manifest themselves in the foodie community, as seen in the writing of Adam Rapoport, the editor-in-chief of the food/lifestyle magazine Bon Appétit. By building on work from the fields of Critical Discourse Analysis, Sociology, Linguistics, and Food Studies, the current study examines how the juxtaposition of ordinary and extraordinary food (and life) experiences works to normalize elite foodie status. Using a combined qualitative and quantitative methodology, I analyze the editor’s discourse in a sample of 44-columns (May 2011 – December 2014), demonstrating how the linguistic patterns seem to establish the construction of an elite middle-class.

My analysis is composed of three parts: first, I address the general construction of an elite foodie identity by examining Rapoport’s language use across his “Editor’s Letter” columns, and highlighting how he uses markers of upper-class practices (within the categories of particularity, excess, and socializing) while simultaneously indexing middle-class life (within the categories of simplicity, informality, and locality). I delve more specifically into these themes in the subsequent sections: in the second, I trace the frequencies of parenthetical asides and scare quotes in “Editor’s Letter”, revealing how multivoicing is a tactic by which Rapoport connects to his audience, and likewise navigates social class boundaries. Third, I determine the types of negation terms the editor employs in his writing, focusing on “no”, “not”, and “never”, and argue that they are used to draw lines of distinction between valued and valueless practices that appear to index both ordinary and extraordinary experiences.

Ultimately, I suggest that Rapoport’s linguistic choices across the sample reflect an overall normalization of social privilege: by equating an upper-class experience with a middle-class one, the editor implies that a foodie lifestyle is classless, and universally attainable. In so doing, his discourse is reflective of larger issues in society, and of the class hierarchies existing in the US today. Thus, this study illustrates how everyday practices of consumption are implicitly connected to power, ideology, and social practice.
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INTRODUCTION

“Style and Sustenance”: this is the title of the “Editor’s Letter” column of the March 2015 issue of *Bon Appétit* magazine. It is an apt description of the magazine’s content, as well as the ideals by which its readers, ‘foodies’, seem to live (and eat). The importance of the juxtaposition of these two words in the context of food and social life is the focus of this thesis; by exploring how the discourse of a popular magazine addresses the role food plays in the lives of food enthusiasts, I speak to issues of social privilege in American society, and how food and food discourse can be indicators of one’s class status. In her book on social eating behavior and inequality in the U.S., Julier (2013) posits: “people with greater access to resources that accrue from gender, race, and class privilege…can focus on the meal as a social accomplishment rather than a necessity” (3). Thus, I suggest that for foodies, the style of one’s food practices is as important as – if not more important than – the notion of sustenance. In what follows I will demonstrate how one particular foodie (Adam Rapoport, the editor-in-chief of *Bon Appétit*) achieves this dichotomy in his discourse; by using linguistic discourse analysis to examine examples of the juxtaposition of ordinary and extraordinary life experiences, I ultimately argue that Rapoport normalizes his elite foodie identity, contributing to the perpetuation of class hierarchies as they exist in contemporary American society.

The term ‘foodie’ is a complicated one to define; its original usage is generally attributed to *The Official Foodie Handbook (Be Modern – Worship Food)* [1984] by Paul Levy and Ann Bar (Johnston and Baumann 2010: 53). Perhaps the subtitle, the command that readers “worship food,” is most illuminating; in this sense, foodies can be defined as people who are so invested in food they ‘worship’ it, considering it to be a form of art much like music or painting. Johnston and Baumann also note that this particular community approaches food “as a subject for study, aesthetic appreciation and knowledge acquisition” (57); because of this emphasis on food
knowledge, foodies possess specific cultural capital (in addition to economic capital, in many cases). Despite these elements of distinction, Johnston and Baumann also note that ‘foodie’ as a term has been re-claimed in recent history to define those who are anti-snobbery, or against the elite gourmets of 1950’s-era French cuisine.

For my purposes, I consider foodies to be those whose eating practices are especially important as personal expressions of identity, particularly as they occur within foodie groups or discourses. One avenue through which foodies can demonstrate and legitimate their identities is a publication like Bon Appétit magazine; Bon Appétit is a clear platform for such constructions, as the writers and editors of the periodical focus solely on their food-related personal experiences. As far as readers are concerned, Bon Appétit subscribers are able to access trending ingredients and restaurants, as well as geographic areas and select cities that are especially food-oriented. In this sense, Bon Appétit is a legitimating institution (Mayr 2008) by its contribution to the creation of a social reality for foodies and to the ways in which food is discussed in foodie communities. Furthermore, Bon Appétit writers can be seen as exemplary foodies: they are experts in their field (Johnston and Baumann 2010). Thus, Bon Appétit is a worthy site for analysis. By examining the discourse of a foodie magazine, one might gain insight not only into the operating norms of foodie culture, but also into larger issues of consumerism and consumption at play in society as a whole.

The format of this paper is as follows: first, I will discuss relevant theoretical literature and empirical studies pertaining to food, language, and society. I will then provide important background information regarding Bon Appétit magazine, its management, readers, and editor-in-chief Adam Rapoport. Third, I will discuss my research methodology and introduce the first section of analysis, in which I qualitatively explore how the editor’s language use indexes opposing class memberships, highlighting how certain categorical markers of upper-class status
(particularity, excess, and socializing) are juxtaposed with those that suggest a middle-class experience (simplicity, informality, and locality). In the second section of analysis I delve deeper into these issues; using a combined quantitative and qualitative analysis of parentheses and scare quotes in the “Editor’s Letter” columns, I reveal how the editor navigates social class boundaries via multivoicing. The final analysis section tracks Rapoport’s use of negation in his articles; by determining how the editor uses terms like “no,” “not,” and “never” to draw lines of distinction, I speak to the types of practices that are valued by foodies, and how these relate to social identity. After a brief discussion section during which I review and compare the results from the preceding analyses, I conclude by suggesting how the present study contributes to areas of thought on food and social class, as well as language, power, and ideology.

**Literature Review**

In order to situate my data and findings in the larger conversation surrounding food, language, and society, I will discuss relevant literature from various disciplines, namely Critical Discourse Analysis, Sociology, Linguistics, and Food Studies. The interdisciplinary quality to this review of prior work reflects an important component to my own study: a thorough understanding of foodie discourse demands attention to the many ways food, and talk about food, is present in academia and society at large. As such, first, I will explain my theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis and how it is a suitable method of analysis for my particular data set. Second, I will discuss important contributions to the literature as demonstrated by cultural sociologists and theorists. Third, I will turn to the work of linguists, exploring the relationship between language and food as well as talk about food; and finally, I will focus on research regarding magazine and foodie discourse specifically.
Theoretical Framework: Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), simply put, can be understood as the study of how language is a form of social practice, and how those in privileged social positions consciously or unconsciously use language to maintain their power. Perhaps one of the most foundational passages explaining this approach to discourse comes from Wodak and Fairclough (1997):

… discourse is socially constitutive as well as social conditioned – it consumes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Since discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power. Discursive practices may have major ideological effects – that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people. (258)

In this sense, it is clear how language can be explicitly tied to social practice, particularly as it helps maintain the “status quo” of social distinction and hierarchies of power. Also of import is the idea that context cannot be removed from analysis: extra-linguistic factors are considered by practitioners of CDA, and a “multi-disciplinary and multi-methodical approach” is required in order to fully comment on social phenomena (Wodak and Meyer 2009: 2). As a result, no scholar employs CDA in quite the same way—all rely on various methods of analysis from fields that span several disciplines, examining data involving myriad topics. Wodak and Meyer synopsize that CDA can be divided into six general research approaches: Discourse Historical (see Reisigl and Wodak 2009); Corpus Linguistics (see Mautner 2009); Social Actors (see van Leeuwen 2009); Dispositive Analysis (see Jäger and Maier 2009); Sociocognitive (see van Dijk 2009); and lastly, Dialectal-Relational—this final approach relates most closely to my interests, and is attributed to Norman Fairclough.

Fairclough (1995) defines his particular focus in CDA literature as a “multifunctional view of text” that considers the ideational, interpersonal and textual/identity functions of a particular discourse (58). To relate this method to my data, one would consider the
recontextualization of social practice in “Editor’s Letter” columns (ideational function); the
construction of the relationship between the writer and reader (interpersonal); and the
constructions of writer/reader identities (textual). This approach is conducive to the view that
text is “consumed” (62) by its audience, alluding to the idea that it is ingested and somehow
redistributed. In this sense, it is inherently intertextual:¹ Fairclough (1992) suggests that
“particular sorts of text are connected with particular forms of social practice” (269) and in this
sense, the relationship between the two cannot be separated.

Fairclough’s perception of intertextuality as it relates to social practice can be traced
directly to the foundational theorists on the topic – Julia Kristeva, who writes that
intertextuality involves “the insertion of history (society) into a text and this text into history”
the response of the other (others), toward his active responsive understanding, which can
assume various forms: educational influence on the readers, persuasion of them, critical
responses, influence on followers and successors, and so on”(75-6). Thus it can be said that
discourse is designed to influence for a purpose—social actors recontextualize a text as a form
of consumption and consequent response.

In sum, considering my endeavor to explore the social implications of Rapoport’s
discourse in “Editor’s Letter” columns, as well as the text’s relationship to systems of power (as
seen in the author’s elitist stancetaking), CDA is an ideal framework with which to approach
the data. Thus, I will explore how the text functions ideationally, interpersonally, and textually
(Fairclough 1995), and establish its connections to a higher social order. First, however, it will
be necessary to look more closely at social structure, and how food and consumption are
components of its enactment in the world.

¹ I elaborate on this later in Section II.
French theorists such as Roland Barthes and Pierre Bourdieu have famously studied food’s relationship to social life: whereas Barthes (1961) discusses how one’s consumption of food serves as a social signifier and system of communication for behavior and the manifestation of identity, Bourdieu takes this notion further in his foundational book *Distinction* (1984).

Bourdieu conducted a survey in the mid-1960s on a sample of 1,217 people as a means to determine the cultural competence and capital of various social groups, as well as how these qualities relate to consumption. Importantly, Bourdieu found that one of the most distinguishing aspects between the different classes was the application of the “principles of a ‘pure’ aesthetic in the most everyday choices of everyday life, in cooking, dress or decoration, for example” (40). Thus, bringing aesthetic standards or values to a common, non-bourgeois (traditionally) practice is a mark of differentiation for the upper-class. Notably, this idea can be said to apply only to those who occupy distance from the practical urgencies associated with food or other everyday practices. Bourdieu goes on to explain that a pivotal element to the maintenance of class distinctions is the unrecognizability of privilege:

The affirmation of power over a dominated necessity always implies a claim to a legitimate superiority over those who, because they cannot assert the same contempt for contingencies in gratuitous luxury and conspicuous consumption, remain dominated by ordinary interests and urgencies...The most ‘classifying’ privilege thus has the privilege of appearing to be the most natural one. (56)

This “natural” quality to privilege is directly related to Bourdieu’s notion of taste, an additional element to upper-class distinction that is the result of birth (nature), incapable of being acquired or learned. Again, Bourdieu implies that taste is most visible “in the ordinary choices of everyday existence” (77) and its power is directly related to the distinctive value derived
from unconscious reference to class distribution – not to the reality of ‘good taste’ in a given context.

Mintz and Du Bois (2002) reiterate these ideas—their thorough review of studies pertaining to the anthropology of food reflects how often “food systems have been used to illuminate broad societal processes”(100). The authors importantly note that the discourse surrounding a cuisine can essentially define the cuisine itself; in this sense, it can be seen to both create and legitimate the food practices of certain communities (Mayr 2008; van Leeuwen 2007). Legitimation in discourse refers to how institutions (and other systems of power) use their authority discursively as a means of validating their practices. For instance, Van Leeuwen notes how home décor magazines can be said to “legitimize their prescriptions…with stories of the way media personalities or exemplary non-celebrities renovate and decorate their homes” (95). In exemplifying how written discourse even of an innocuous sort can be said to engage in legitimation tactics, the author reiterates the important connection between discourse, power and social practice – a linkage essential to the present study.

Likewise, LeBesco and Naccarato (2008) write in the introduction to their book Edible Ideologies, “[Food] representations actively produce cultural sensibilities and the possibility of transgression”(13). They argue that the dominant ideologies of a given culture reveal themselves in the way practices of food consumption are framed and represented—for example, in the authors’ chapter about Julia Child and Martha Stewart they suggest that food practices can help sustain class hierarchies “by promoting the illusion of class mobility”(225). Their study of these two food celebrities points to the idea that consumers of food-oriented television and print programming are perhaps less interested in recipes, but more seduced by the portrayed social statuses that the food culture experts seem to claim and possess. Using writing and television samples from Child’s and Stewart’s respective programs and books, LeBesco and
Naccarato demonstrate how both women position themselves as part of a privileged class, yet simultaneously “situate themselves outside of such boundaries as they differentiate their approach to cooking from the more class-based elitism that one might expect from them” (228). It is this indexing of unattainable, upper-class status while also claiming regular, easily accessed middle-class membership that seems to also be presented within the pages of Bon Appétit.

Relatedly, Elliott (2008) discusses the importance of the ‘other’ in food consumption, arguing that ‘orientalism’ – the West’s domination and authority over the Orient – allows Western culture to define itself by identifying who, or what, it is not (184). By examining Canadian-produced food labels of ‘exotic’ foods, the author find that the ‘other’ is literally packaged and consumed—she concludes that “control over food representations has powerful implications for perceptions of one’s own and other cultures” (185). Thus, food discourse can be seen as another means by which a dominant class or culture legitimates themselves and their preferences by excluding others. This idea is present also in Guthman (2013[2003]). The author notes that the trendy pursuit of organic food is in direct opposition to fast food; this dichotomy illustrates a class separation in that ‘good’ food “is out of the economic and cultural reach of non-elites...” (497). By studying the rise in popularity of organic salad mix in the US market, Guthman indicates how the pursuit of organic food is simply another means by which the economically privileged define and control ‘good taste’ (Bourdieu 1984).

Warde, Martens, and Olsen (1999) examine another trend in eating, specifically, the consumption of ethnic food in Britain and the idea of cultural “omnivorousness” (107), or openness to different varieties of art and food. They suggest that variety in eating may serve as a form of ‘multicultural’ capital and a modern version of Bourdieu’s concept of bourgeois distinction. Using a survey to determine which restaurants people of different socioeconomic
statuses choose to patronize, the authors demonstrate how ethnic restaurant attendance and knowledge corresponds with a “comparatively privileged” section of the populace (114). Hence, they contend that (as others also have: Peterson and Kern 1996; Julier 2013; Johnston and Baumann 2010; Kwon & Kwon 2013; Woodward 2012) contemporary status competition is “to appear to honour the populist ethic of equivalence among cultural preferences while still laying claim to cultural refinement and superiority by implicitly marking some genres as exceptionally worthy” (123).

It is important to note that this type of trendy egalitarianism is extremely difficult to measure—researchers must determine how one’s pursuit of variety or exoticism in cuisine contributes to a sense of distinction, a cognitive process that is almost impossible to quantify. However, some scholars have used surveys as a means of examining whether an omnivorous consumer considers the variety in his/her choices to be superior to others; for example, Kwon & Kwon (2013), consumerism and marketing researchers, argue that “culturally tolerant people do, in fact, perceive taste hierarchically” (124). Their conclusions are based on a survey dataset comprised of 167 omnivores and 107 “univores,” taken from a representative sample of the U.S. population. Ultimately the authors assert that their study reflects “the ambivalence embedded in Euro-American high culture: people are encouraged to be inclusive, tolerant and open-minded, and simultaneously be a member of an exclusive society, with the attendant superior self-image” (124). Later I will discuss omnivorous ideologies as they pertain more explicitly to foodie discourse; for now it is sufficient to state that cultural elites might be recognized via the variety they pursue, and the value they attach to such pursuits.

**FOOD & LINGUISTICS**

While these aforementioned works certainly serve to situate the social issues concerning food and class, they noticeably lack a detailed analysis of the discourse surrounding
this topic, as well as the intersection of linguistics and food studies. Historically, this has occurred at the point of lexical semantics (Buccini 2013); however, Silverstein’s (2003[1996]) work on wine tasting and indexical order is one of the earlier examples of sociolinguistic analysis as it relates to consumption, though it doesn’t specifically address food. Silverstein presents examples of professional wine-tasting notes, commenting on the evaluative voices in the descriptions of flavor, arguing that the language not only indexes particular identities orchestrated by the speakers, but also marks one’s “Bourdive (1984) ‘distinction’” (226). The author coins the phrase *culturally eucharistic*, writing:

…by using [wine tasting] lingo in context, the lingo has the indexically entailing effect or creative power to index consubstantial traits in the speaker. As we consume the wine and properly (ritually) denote that consumption, we become, in performative realtime, the well-bred, characterologically interesting (subtle, balanced, intriguing, winning, etc.) person iconically corresponding to the metaphorical “fashion of speaking” or the perceived register’s figurations of the aesthetic object of connoisseurship, wine. (226)

It is thus that talk about wine (or food, as it were) can be viewed as performance (Baumann and Briggs 1990) with the aim of depicting a certain social identity.

Relatedly, Jurafsky (2014) explicitly discusses the “language of food” as it pertains to one’s (embedded) cultural preferences. The author asserts that there is a grammar of cuisine: a structure to eating that is learned “early and deeply” (227) in a given culture, such that it shapes how we perceive and experience food in all situations. Jurański’s premise is pivotal; in this sense, eating practices are inextricably tied to social and cultural identity, as is the language we use to discuss it. For instance, the author’s computational analysis of restaurant menus reveals that high-status restaurants tend to use a fewer number of adjectives to describe their food offerings:

Expensive restaurants don’t use the word ripe (or fresh or crispy) because we assume that food that should be ripe is ripe, and everything is fresh. Middle-priced restaurants are worried that you won’t assume that because they aren’t fancy enough, so they go out of their way to assure you. (18)
In this sense, distinction and wealth can be immediately signified through language pertaining to food consumption; consequently, social privilege can be associated with those who choose to patronize expensive establishments. Thus, social identity and dining choices are irrefutably linked.

Lakoff (2006) contributes more specifically to the discussion of food, identity and discourse using qualitative discourse analysis, asserting that eating practices and talk about food contribute to one’s sense of belonging to a community, and to one’s “group ethos” (144). Though much of her chapter focuses on the progression of food-related discourse throughout history, one key component is her analysis of wording in cookbooks, and how it has changed overtime. Her comparison of three recipes from three cookbooks (for the same dish) reflects “very different kinds of communication, based in turn on different assumptions made by each author (or set of authors) about who the reader is…” (164). For instance, while Mastering the Art of French Cooking (Simone Beck, Louisette Bertholle, and Julia Child) features verbose recipes with precise instructions, Chez Panisse Vegetables (Alice Waters), published 40 years later, “is considerably vaguer – leaving many decisions, in postmodern fashion, up to the reader” (164). In this sense, readers can be said to construct cooking identities based on those that are constructed for them in the cookbook discourse they choose for instruction. Though Lakoff does not address foodie journalism specifically, her idea that discourse concerning food is tailored to a specific readership reflects an important premise in my own work: that the editor of Bon Appétit writes purposefully for his audience.

**MAGAZINE & FOODIE DISCOURSE**

Work examining magazine discourse has largely focused on women’s magazines, and issues of feminist thought and gender relations (Gill 2009); Talbot (1995), however, reiterates the issues I discuss earlier. The author’s study of the articles in a teen magazine suggests that
“every text has an implied reader” who is “likely to take up positions [the magazine] offers unconsciously and uncritically” (146). This sense of response is important—a reader who is similar to the ideal reader of the author’s imagination will accept the position and identity s/he is awarded by the text, and then perhaps enact this position elsewhere.

The few scholars who have considered foodie discourse in magazines and other periodicals tend to approach it as cultural sociologists; in this way, their analyses are applied broadly to foodie culture and lack the specificity and depth that sociolinguistic discourse analysis offers. One such example is Hanke (1989), who examines word choice and attitude in the food writing of Philadelphia Magazine and The Philadelphia Inquirer as a means of commenting on printed media and mass communication. He asserts that the two publications speak to the symbolic meanings and values attached to food consumption. Additionally, the work of Johnston and Baumann (2009, 2010) uses a CDA approach to examine foodie culture and identity, focusing on the texts produced by gourmet food writers and on interviews (conducted in 2008) with foodies themselves, demonstrating “how foodie discourse shapes how social agents do (and do not) respond to social injustices…” (2010: 38). The analysis in their 2010 book is previewed by an extensive discussion of the history of the gourmet “foodscape” (2); it chronicles foodie journalism’s roots in French cuisine and the movement towards organic, local fare (7-20). This lengthy history situates the authors’ main undertaking: namely, to discuss how foodie journalism and discourse help contribute to food’s serving as a source of status and distinction in our society. The authors suggest, however, that issues of class are virtually absent from the discourse, or referenced off-hand and normalized (189). In this sense, they echo sentiments expressed by other practitioners of CDA—deeply embedded cultural ideologies are often disguised by everyday discursive practices (Wodak and Meyer 2009: 8).
Johnston and Baumann also reiterate the sociology literature discussed previously, writing that, “it is widely recognized that cultural elites...have exited a period of straightforward cultural snobbery and entered an ‘omnivorous’ era...where the traditional divide between highbrow and lowbrow has eroded” (3). In a pursuit of omnivorousness, Johnston and Baumann argue that foodies frame food as authentic (e.g. a corn dog from a country diner) or exotic (e.g. East Asian cuisine) in an attempt to “negotiate a fundamental ideological tension between democracy and distinction” (36); by partaking in ethnic or lowbrow cuisine, foodies are able to exhibit a certain degree of egalitarianism while simultaneously indexing omnivorous (elite) foodie ideals.

The authors also consider this idea in their 2009 article. Using the same data upon which their 2010 book is based, Johnston and Baumann (2009) demonstrate the implicit and explicit political dimensions revealed in foodie journalism texts and talk. As Mayr (2008) acknowledges the inextricable link between knowledge and power, Johnston and Baumann find that foodie discourse is implicitly political because knowledge of food is a form of cultural capital. However, they also assert that it is not simply that “food practices are highly classed” (25), but rather that foodie discourse deemphasizes this precise issue and instead attempts to present foodie culture as entirely class neutral. The authors note that foodie writing presents wealth as ordinary, commonly connecting food to “’socialites,’ families with fortune, royalty or descendants of former royalty, Hollywood celebrities, or people presented as high-status professionals...” (23). This routine downplaying of social privilege begs the question as to whether this sort of covert politicism is part of the inherent institutional order of foodie journalism (Sarangi and Roberts 1999).

Though this collection of work touches on the social implications of food consumerism and foodie journalism more generally, it lacks the specificity made available by linguistic
discourse analysis, as well as the benefits of systematically collected data. In this way, my analysis of a particular sample of foodie writing fills a clear void in the existing research in food studies and discourse analysis. A framework of sorts for this undertaking is present in Jaworski and Thurlow (2009)—though the authors do not examine foodie journalism specifically, they discuss elitist stance in travel writing, a genre that is similar in its orientation to consumerism and its appeal to those of a more privileged economic class.

Jaworski and Thurlow build on DuBois’ (2007) notion of stance triangle, combining it with an orientation to CDA and power relations (Kress 1995; Hodge and Kress 1988). They consider how journalists for The Guardian and The Sunday Times travel sections perform social evaluations in texts by commenting on what is desirable or undesirable. For instance, both papers promote high-end consumption and leisure, noting exotic locations visited by celebrities (e.g. Johnny Depp, pg. 205) and expressing disdain for mass tourists and unseasoned travelers. The authors examine how the specific language use of the writers conveys these sorts of evaluations, pointing to instances of negation, celebrity name-dropping, and expert knowledge, among many others.

Additionally, in reiteration of Johnston and Baumann (2009) and the concept of covert classism in foodie journalism, Jaworski and Thurlow assert that stancetaking “conceals its evaluation as ‘neutral’ and ‘normal.’ It is this which often gives stancetaking its power” (221). Thus, as the authors recognize elitist stancetaking in travel journalism and its perpetuation of class hierarchies, it is perhaps via this same tactic that foodie writers are able to discursively create and maintain the class politics inherent to the institution they represent. However, it is important to note that Jaworski and Thurlow define elitism as a discursively achieved identity rather than an actual socioeconomic position held by the journalists (196); this definition differs markedly from my own conception of elitist stance in Bon Appétit, as I argue that the editor’s
seemed social privilege is a reality of his economic existence, not just an identity indexed via discourse alone. Despite this difference, however, Jaworski and Thurlow (2009) serve as the inspiration behind the pursuit of my particular topic.

The works reviewed above are representative of the interdisciplinary quality to exploring issues of food, social class, and discourse—many scholars have considered the links between eating practices and social issues, and all have found that food and talk about food have greater significance than bodily nourishment. As Belasco (2002) writes, “to eat is to distinguish and discriminate, include and exclude. Food choices establish boundaries and borders” (2).

While the aforementioned literature addresses these issues in a variety of contexts, the present study contributes to the discussion by focusing specifically on the discourse of one exemplary foodie, whose words are notably important to a vast community of readers. Additionally, the literature lacks a thorough discourse analysis of foodie publications in general; the current paper is one step toward closing this gap in the literature.

DATA/METHODOLOGY

In the section below I explain the motivation behind choosing Bon Appétit, and “Editor’s Letter” in particular, as a site for analysis, and also provide context for the column’s relevance to issues of social distinction. First I supply background information regarding the magazine and its leadership, its readers, and Adam Rapoport as an editor and public figure. I then proceed to discuss my dataset, and general methodology. Third, I provide detailed explanations of my analysis, describing the specific focus and methodological approach in each.

THE MAGAZINE

Bon Appétit magazine is published by the mass media company Condé Nast, which publishes a variety of magazines such as Vogue, Vanity Fair, GQ and The New Yorker, among
others (a total of 24 publications). In addition, Condé Nast manages the CN Media Group, which includes various corporate partnerships and media enterprises. Condé Nast management is relevant to *Bon Appétit* in that it is the larger institution in charge (financially and bureaucratically) of the magazine as a whole—though I have no way of determining its level of influence on the content of the publication, the company’s website provides valuable insight into *Bon Appétit*’s identity as a Condé Nast brand managed by Condé Nast employees.

Posted prominently on the website are the bios of the *Bon Appétit* editor-in-chief, Adam Rapoport, and vice president and publisher, Pamela Drucker Mann. The bios note the success of these two leaders; Drucker Mann is credited with bringing the magazine record-breaking advertising revenue since her appointment in January 2011, as well as collaborating with the editor to rebrand *Bon Appétit* as a food/lifestyle magazine rather than an epicurean one. Additionally, in 2013 *Bon Appétit* was credited with the #1 paging percent increase of any fashion/beauty/lifestyle/epicurean title and named the Advertising Age A-List Magazine of the Year, honors that speak to the financial motivations behind *Bon Appétit* content and the roles of Drucker Mann and Rapoport in achieving these goals. Both bios also mention prior employment within Condé Nast—Drucker Mann at *Glamour* and *Jane*, and Rapoport at *GQ*.

The aforementioned information points to two important characteristics of the magazine: first, *Bon Appétit* is a business with the purpose of producing income, and its leadership is credited with advancing this particular role. One can assume, then, that the content is not motivated solely by food preferences or trends, but also by consumers. Second, the magazine is marketed as a lifestyle magazine, a characterization that speaks explicitly to its relationship to social and class issues; one’s food choices index a particular lifestyle, which in turn indexes a particular community and class (reminiscent of the ideas put forth by Bourdieu

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2 The bios were accessed from the Condé Nast website on November 10, 2014: <http://www.condenast.com/brands/bon-appetit>.
(1984), discussed previously). Adding to this classification is the leadership’s previous positions at style and fashion magazines—in a sense, *Bon Appétit* is more about the stylization of *self* than food. In sum, these two identifiers allow the magazine to be associated with both issues of power and financial motivation (as an institution), as well as with issues of social life and economic class (as a lifestyle publication). Thus, it is a prime setting for the exploration of how the leadership’s discourse is shaped for a particular audience, and how this discourse can be said to contribute to the social reality of the foodie community.

**The Magazine’s Readers**

Conde Nast lists the circulation demographics of *Bon Appétit* on their website (see below, Table 1). Notably, 73% of the 6.5 million readers are female. The median household income is $91,879, 50% have graduated college, and 62% are married. There is very little data available beyond these somewhat arbitrary statistics, but it does offer insight into the life of *Bon Appétit*’s average reader—one can conclude that *Bon Appétit* is meant to identify mostly with women, and with a middle-class audience, of which half has graduated from college.\(^4\) Notably, Rapoport’s household income is most likely considerably larger than the median of the magazine’s readership; an article in *New York Magazine* (from 2000)\(^5\) claims that the editor-in-chief of an

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Audience</th>
<th>6.5 mm</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median Household</td>
<td>$91,879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender – Female</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education – Graduated College+</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment – Professional/Managerial</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status – Married</td>
<td>62%</td>
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*Table 1: Based on similar listing from [http://www.condenast.com/brands/bon-appetit/media-kit/](http://www.condenast.com/brands/bon-appetit/media-kit/) (accessed November 12, 2014)*

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\(^3\) In the fall of 2014 I contacted magazine headquarters to try and obtain more illustrative statistics, but was told the information could only be released to advertisers.

\(^4\) I should note that this percentage (50%) is markedly higher than the national average (30%). See 2012 US census statistics: [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).
NYC-based periodical like *Bon Appétit* makes anywhere from $500,000 to $1.5 million annually. Furthermore, Rapoport’s wife, Simone Shubuck, is a renowned New York florist and artist, and occasional contributor to *Style* magazine (Moskin 2010). Her salary is unknown, but in any case, it certainly adds to the couple’s household income.

**ADAM RAPOPORT IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE**

At the time he became editor of *Bon Appétit* Rapoport was interviewed by Julia Moskin for *The New York Times* (among other media outlets). In addition to stating that he “is known for producing a lot of simple, stylish food” (2), a quotation attributed to Mitchell Davis from the James Beard Foundation describes the editor as caring more about what he eats than “anyone.” Davis also notes: “Putting a GQ-style editor in the *Bon Appétit* job confirms that food is part of being an informed, stylish, with-it kind of person” (2). This idea, that food is a marker of style and that Rapoport embodies this ideal, is an interesting one. It speaks explicitly to the concept of food as a social signifier rather than simply a provider of sustenance. Additionally, at the start of his new position Rapoport is described as having said (according to Ruth Reichl, former editor of *Gourmet*) that he will be mindful of the social and environmental issues concerning food – to an extent: he will make sure “the magazine does not call for endangered fish in its recipes, for example… but does not see education as the magazine’s primary role” (9). Thus, from the outset of his career at *Bon Appétit* Rapoport seemed to symbolize an explicit (and apolitical) marriage of food and style, quite unlike the editors of other popular food magazines.

One other relevant aspect to Rapoport’s role at *Bon Appétit* is his relationships with, and affinity for celebrities. His tenure as editor-in-chief was characterized in part by his insistence that celebrities occupy a bigger role in the magazine (Moskin 2010: 3), a promise that seems to

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6 I suspect this range has increased considerably in the last decade. Anna Wintour, editor-in-chief of *Vogue* magazine (a CN publication) reportedly made $2 million annually in 2005 (“Who Makes How Much?” *New York Magazine*, September 26, 2005. Edited by Kate Pickert.)
7 Where Rapoport was first employed after college.
have been executed in the magazine’s subsequent issues (I discuss this in detail later). It is also interesting to note the Rapoports’ presence in the New York social scene: according to his public bio, the editor has been nominated as one of the most intriguing people in the media, and he and his wife have been photographed on numerous occasions with notable socialites, celebrities, and at red carpet events. These aforementioned aspects of the editor’s public persona and economic standing serve to highlight his elite status: though of course, as Jaworski and Thurlow (2009) note, an elite identity can be constructed in discourse whether or not it is based in economic reality. It is, ultimately, an interactionally achieved persona.

The Data

My dataset includes all Bon Appétit issues during a 44-month timeframe: May 2011 through December 2014 (a total of 44 articles). I received a subscription to the magazine as a gift in April 2011, but did not begin analyzing data from the periodical until the Fall of 2013, for my final paper in Institutional Discourse (taught by Heidi E. Hamilton at Georgetown University). From that time on, I continued renewing my subscription to Bon Appétit, and used it as data for all my subsequent classes.

As was my focus in earlier papers, for this study I analyze the “Editor’s Letter” articles in the dataset, all of which are written by Adam Rapoport, who became editor-in-chief of the magazine in May 2011 and has since maintained his position in this role. The reasons I chose this particular column as a site for analysis are twofold: Rapoport’s role as the editor of the magazine affords him special attention to its content and vision. His involvement in both the financial and content-driven/artistic aspects of the magazine brings a different perspective to his writing, and to the issues he addresses in his columns. “Editor’s Letter” is the first column in each issue: it seems to set the tone of the magazine as a whole, as well as explain or
anecdotally preface the theme of the current issue. In this sense, Rapoport’s articles serve as thematic summaries, and are institutionally relevant.

Second, “Editor’s Letter” is one of the few articles that appear in every issue, in a relatively predictable format. This sort of consistency allows for the least amount of variability in the data, strengthening my analysis and conclusions. Each column ranges in word-length, though most are approximately 450 words; they are complemented by images that correspond with the topic-matter, and occasionally feature Rapoport himself. The relevance of these images is outside both the scope of this study, and my area of expertise – consequently I do not discuss them in my analysis.

Additionally, I align myself with an ethnographic approach to the text: I situate my analysis of Rapoport’s columns in the larger context of the magazine—thus, I briefly examine various other recurring pieces (such as “The Party” and “Navigator”), as well as cover stories, featured celebrities, and other articles. Though my reference to these columns is not comparable to the depth of my analysis of “Editor’s Letter,” it serves to accentuate and solidify the themes present in Rapoport’s writing.

**METHODOLOGY**

My analysis is divided into three parts: the first serves as an overview of the discursive issues pertaining to social class and prestige in the “Editor’s Letter” columns, namely, how Rapoport seems to index opposing class memberships. I concentrate on three main categorical markers of upper-class status, all relating to foodie practices: *particularity* and *specialized knowledge; excess;* and *socializing* or partying. Conversely, I also identify three categorical markers of middle-class food practices: *simplicity* and *authenticity; informality* (anti-snobbery); and *locality* or rural America. I settled on these categories based on patterns I observed in the data;

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8 Analysis of other Bon Appétit articles is relegated mostly to Section I.
however, my methodology is largely qualitative in that I provide specific examples of analysis to highlight the editor’s simultaneous indexing of different class memberships. In this way, I demonstrate the clear juxtaposition of the ordinary and the extraordinary.

Second, I elaborate on the patterns discussed above more specifically by examining the editor’s use of parentheses and scare quotes in his writing, illustrating how these two sets of punctuation marks contribute to his navigation of the social class differences between himself and his readers. Arguing that they serve to indicate the presence of an “invisible speaker” (Bakhtin 1984) in the discourse, I trace the distribution of instances in which the editor uses these mechanisms to conversationally connect with the reader, distancing himself from his privileged status and instead conveying a normal/ordinary social class membership.

Third, I continue in this vein by tracking Rapoport’s use of negation in his columns—by determining the frequency and methods by which he asserts that he is not doing, eating, or being something, I am able to quantitatively measure how negation functions in his discourse to create boundaries of distinction, while also simultaneously allowing the editor to straddle different levels of social prestige. My analysis focuses on the words “no”, “not”, and “never” and is further explained in the section using qualitative examples. Ultimately, I assert that negation terms are used by the editor to reject practices that are deemed snobbish, as well as others that reflect a lack of ‘good taste.’

In using a combined quantitative/qualitative approach I am able to speak to the patterns of the phenomena I observe, while also thoroughly explicating these trends with textual excerpts. In this way, I demonstrate how Rapoport appears to routinely construct classism in his writing by representing himself (and therefore other foodies) as ‘middle-class elites’—an economically and socially boundless, yet ordinary and non-privileged, community of individuals. By juxtaposing ordinary life experiences with extraordinary ones, inserting
parenthetical asides and scare quotes in his writing as multivoicing, and using negation prolifically to set up parameters of distinction, Rapoport not only takes an elitist stance toward people, food, and other objects, but he also attempts to neutralize his upper-class identity and deny his economic and social privilege. Thus, using a CDA approach, I ultimately suggest that the “Editor’s Letter” column, and Bon Appétit magazine in general, create an illusion of social and economic accessibility as part of a foodie identity, despite clear evidence to the contrary. What follows not only exemplifies these discursive tactics in the magazine itself, but also speaks to larger issues of class and privilege in society as a whole.

SECTION I: THE GENERAL CONSTRUCTION OF AN ELITE MIDDLE-CLASS

As LeBesco and Naccarato (2008) write, representations of food and food practices in magazines provide consumers with access to a privileged class. However “because such access is limited and temporary, it ultimately does not challenge dominant ideologies of class. To the contrary, it protects them by providing consumers with an illusion of access that contradicts the reality of their economic and social position” (225-6). To illustrate this assertion, I will focus on five issues of Bon Appétit: June 2011, January and July 2012, May 2013, and August 2014. I selected these months as representative of the magazine’s discourse as a whole; in the proceeding section I will analyze each issue in turn, highlighting various social class markers falling within the categories I outlined previously. While numerous linguistic features are noteworthy in the magazine, my analysis will focus predominantly on descriptive qualifiers, or more generally, the particular words Rapoport uses to elaborate on his personal experiences and food practices.
The June 2011 issue features a celebrity, Gwyneth Paltrow, on the cover. In addition, she is the focus of a feature article (written by Rapoport)—celebrity profiling is not uncommon in Bon Appétit; in fact, every issue includes a “Back of the Napkin” column which highlights a particular celebrity and their food preferences. The power in these references lies in the idea that celebrities are idolized in American culture. As Van Leeuwen (2007) writes, “the mere fact that these role models adopt a certain kind of behavior, or believe certain things, is enough to legitimize the actions of their followers” (95). Importantly, celebrities occupy a position of high status both socially and economically. This considered, Rapoport’s “Editor’s Letter” for June 2011 is of particular interest: it features his accidental meeting with celebrity chef Mario Batali, who is dining with Paltrow at the New York restaurant Torrisi Italian Specialties. Rapoport happens to also be eating there with his wife; notice how he indicates awe and excitement at eating in the same restaurant as the stars by qualifying his statements with particular descriptors:

Example 1
1 Sitting about eight inches away was Mario Batali, who was finishing dinner with
2 Gwyneth Paltrow.
3 Now, I don’t care how jaded you are; when this sort of thing happens you still act like a
4 giddy teenage girl.
5 Trying to be as ho-hum as possible, we said hello to Mario (I know him a bit from
6 writing about his restaurants over the years) and chitchatted about the new Bon
7 Appétit...

First, Rapoport immediately indexes his excitement at socializing with the two celebrities: “Now, I don’t care how jaded you are; when this sort of thing happens you still act like a giddy teenage girl” (lines 3–4). By describing his behavior as that of a “teenage girl” Rapoport seems to align himself with ordinary Bon Appétit readers, who would presumably be star-struck at being in close proximity to Batali and Paltrow. However, Rapoport’s discourse seems to also index a certain level of social privilege. He writes, “we said hello to Mario (I know him a bit
from writing about his restaurants over the years) and chitchatted about the new *Bon Appétit* (lines 5-7). Not only does Rapoport already know Batali (“Mario”), but he also engages in “chitchat” with the celebrities—this descriptive choice is interesting in that it seems to make their conversation seem casual and commonplace, as small talk often is. Furthermore, consider the physical proximity of Rapoport to the pair (“eight inches away”, line 1); this illustrative detail serves to align Rapoport to celebrities as they occupy the same space, and therefore can be said to reference his own privileged status, though it is depicted as being quite routine.

The everyday quality of this run-in is explicitly reinforced when Rapoport goes on to explain that he ends up eating dinner in the same restaurant as Paltrow later that week:

*Example 2*

1 Two nights later, I was at Michael White’s Osteria Morini, munching on fried mortadella skewers with a buddy from *GQ*.
2 And who was seated two tables over but Paltrow.
3 More chitchat ensued, and we exchanged e-mail addresses so we could talk about getting her into the magazine and, yeah, maybe even on the cover.

Although Rapoport indexes excitement at seeing Paltrow initially, this subsequent run-in begs the question as to whether this is merely performed for *Bon Appétit* readers in order to display the importance of Paltrow’s elite status effectively. Whatever the reason, the experience is no longer marked as exceptional, but rather appears to be relatively ordinary. He once again mentions his physical proximity to the star (“two tables over”, line 9) and repeats “chitchat ensued” (line 10), resulting in their exchanging “e-mail addresses” (line 10), a potential sign of friendship – or at the very least, collaboration. Thus, the editor’s description points to the normalcy of celebrity interaction, ultimately marking his own class membership as elite, but simultaneously neutralizing his privilege by initially portraying an authentic, excited reaction to a celebrity. In this sense, the June 2011 issue juxtaposes markers of upper-class socializing behavior with qualifiers indexing middle-class norms.
The first issue of the New Year, January 2012, focuses on cleansing after the holidays and vegetable-centric dishes. It also includes two contrasting feature articles: “La Grande Dame” is about La Grenouille (New York’s most prestigious French restaurant), and “Simply Thai” profiles authentic Thai cooking at home. The juxtaposition of these two articles provides the perfect context to Rapoport’s column—“La Grande Dame” symbolizes the decadence and snobbery of 1950’s-era gourmet food (see Johnston and Baumann 2010). The article itself discusses a dining experience at the restaurant, focusing on all details from the evening, including the 4-foot tall flower arrangements. “Simply Thai,” on the other hand, serves as a step-by-step manual for home cooks who wish to create flavorful and inexpensive cuisine; expertly drawn images of the various techniques accompany recipes, as well as a list of recommended Thai pantry staples. The featured chef in the latter article, Andy Ricker, proclaims: “Thai food is, at its head, dead simple” (Jan. 2012: 92). This marker of simplicity is characteristic of a more egalitarian foodie identity, which does not focus on showy forms of cultural capital – truly paradoxical to the lavishness represented in “La Grande Dame.”

The clear contrast between these two feature articles is noticeably demonstrative of Rapoport’s writing in his January 2012 column. Though the premise of his piece seems to point to ordinary, middle-class ideals (limiting extravagance by cutting back on spending, alcohol, and unhealthy eating), Rapoport employs various descriptive qualifiers which simultaneously index his own social privilege. Consider how he discusses cutting down on coffee in the following excerpt:

*Example 3*

1. I really look forward to my afternoon iced red eye.
2. But I also really look forward to my morning iced red eye (Clover-brewed Guatemalan coffee with a shot of espresso).
3. That’s a lot of caffeine. And whole milk. And white sugar. And money (you do the math:
4. $3.59 x 2 x 365).
5. The afternoon coffee has gotta go. (Unless, of course, I’m in Italy. I mean, come on.)
Notice Rapoport’s use of descriptive qualifiers, which seem to fall in the categorical frames of particularity and excess—the author’s specificity of “iced red eye” (line 1) conveys a specialized knowledge about coffee, a mark of foodie identity. One can presume from this line that a standard iced coffee would not suffice; rather, it must be “Clover-brewed Guatemalan coffee” (lines 2-3) loaded with “whole milk” and “white sugar” (line 4). The effect of listing the ingredients in his drink, separated by periods, also seems to reflect the excessiveness of the beverage—it forces the reader to pause between each clause and take in the information, adding to the mounting sense of indulgence. Rapoport acknowledges this himself, saying “The afternoon coffee has gotta go,” but importantly, he notes: “Unless, of course I’m in Italy” (line 6). This final, off-hand comment, indexing international travel (and its required capital), serves to mark the passage as portraying upper-class status. While the objective of the excerpt is to exemplify the editor’s efforts to move away from indulgence and excessive spending (an entirely middle-class sentiment), in reality he still insinuates his social prestige, as well as the idea that cutting back is not really necessary for his economic and social situation.

Another example of this sort of discursive technique occurs in the final paragraph of the January 2012 column. Rapoport discusses limiting his meat intake, while also portraying his extreme particularity:

Example 4
1 Cheap cold cuts pumped with nitrates don’t do anything for me. Neither does a mediocre burger.
2 At lunch in the Condé Nast cafeteria, my go-to sandwich is avocado, cheddar, cucumber, and tomatoes (in season only!) on multigrain toast.
3 If I’m going to eat meat in 2012, it’ll be at dinner, when I can source it from my butcher.
4 – heritage breed pork, air-chilled chicken, prime steak.

Perhaps most noticeable is Rapoport’s reference to what he won’t eat: “Cheap cold cuts,” a “mediocre burger” (lines 1-2), and even out of season tomatoes (line 4). In proclaiming these things unfit for his tastes, he attributes value to certain foods above others, and of course

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9 This use of negation is analyzed in greater detail in Section III.
acknowledges that he *can* be particular; it’s a choice. In this vein, Johnston and Baumann (2010) write that “the most highly valued foods and food experiences – the foods that provide maximum distinction – are far from universally available”(14). For instance, the meats Rapoport declares eatable are all highly valuable, both aesthetically and economically.

“Heritage breed pork, air-chilled chicken, prime steak” are meats one doesn’t find at an average grocery store—as Rapoport notes, they can only be sourced from his butcher (line 5), and their rarity is expensive. Thus, while Rapoport appears to condemn indulgence in his January 2012 column, by using descriptive qualifiers that index particularity and excess he ultimately persists in representing his identity and lifestyle as privileged and lavish.

*July 2012*

In every *Bon Appétit* issue is a section called “The Party”: each month it features a different type of food-themed party for readers to host, and includes detailed recipes and serving suggestions. July 2012 is no different; the article describes an “All-American barbecue” and encourages readers to “wow your friends” (July 2012: 49). This final detail alludes to what LeBesco and Naccarato (2008) mention, that regularly hosting parties seems to be a mark of upper-class life and identity: “[Martha] Stewart propositions as the problem with this scenario not the cost of the party, but the burdensome social obligation. Thus, readers are addressed as if they inhabit a world where money doesn’t matter – a position adoptable only by those with lots of it”(232). In this sense, “The Party” is framed for readers as part of everyday life. Rapoport’s columns also seem to echo this sentiment; in fact, nearly 1/3 of the articles feature him hosting or attending get-togethers. His July 2012 piece describes a “fun backyard dinner” (Rapoport, Jul. 2012: 16) with multiple friends—the following excerpt highlights his forgetting to plan an appetizer for the gathering:

*Example 5*

1 I splurged on a dry-aged, bone-in rib eye as well as a whole branzino.
2 Our friend Matt, and enthusiastic – and rather particular – mixer of vodka Martinis,
promised that he’d take care of the cocktails. But just before the guests arrived, I realized I hadn’t thought about what to serve before dinner.

Notably, Rapoport’s specific description of an expensive, massive cut of beef and the “whole” branzino exemplify the routine peppering of descriptors that seem to imply over-the-top indulgence. Even his decision to “splurge” for a simple evening with friends seems to mark the discourse as particularly upper-class. Lines 4–5 introduce the premise of the entire column: “I realized I hadn’t thought about what to serve before dinner.” Indeed, the fact that this is classified as a problem severe enough to dedicate an article to how it was solved is a sure sign of one’s being socially elite—Rapoport’s status demands he impress his guests, and in turn, his attitude toward serving an appetizer conveys that he assumes his readership possesses similar aims. Thus, even during a casual dinner with friends Rapoport constructs an identity that is explicitly connected to his social privilege.

However, Rapoport also indexes a middle-class attitude in the same column, and in so doing appears to simultaneously resist his elite status. The proceeding text describes himself and his guests enjoying the appetizer he put together with ingredients he had on hand (avocado toast):

Example 6
1 But there we were, standing around the kitchen island, munching and drinking and
2 smiling – things couldn’t have been any easier or tasted any better.
3 The moment was a testament to simplicity.

The writing in this passage evokes an aura of casual enjoyment: “standing around the kitchen island” (line 1) and “things couldn’t have been any easier” (line 2) both serve to portray the experience as simple and authentic. As I outlined previously, this sort of informality seems to index a middle-class identity, and an ordinariness to which readers can relate. Johnston and Baumann (2010) assert that simplicity is a trait in food that is valued because it conveys “honesty and effortlessness” (75) – relatedly, “‘Simple’ ways of life are linked not only with
‘simple’ production but also with the ‘simple’ preparation of food” (79). Thus, in preparing avocado toast Rapoport is tapping into a common value held by foodies: the pursuit of authenticity, which in turn indexes his similarity to and solidarity with *Bon Appétit* readers. In this way, Rapoport uses particular descriptors within his column to assert both upper-class and middle-class memberships.

*MAY 2013*

Another recurring column in most issues of *Bon Appétit* is “Navigator,” which highlights a particular region or city and notes its best restaurants and local attractions. The routine presence of this column, and the fact that many of the articles feature exotic locations, speaks to the importance of travel to foodies. Though vacation is certainly a luxury for much of the US, it is never framed as such; rather, travel is presented as a routine part of the foodie experience. While the May 2013 magazine does not include the “Navigator” column, travel is thoroughly covered in the issue, given that it’s titled “Travel America,” and highlights many locations across the country worthy of visiting for the food alone. In fact, one article called “The BA Q&A” features an interview with Mario Batali (the chef mentioned in the June 2011 issue), which includes his tips for traveling. Notably, Batali remarks, “I don’t eat in airports or on planes. At O’Hare, however, Rick Bayless has a restaurant called Tortas Frontera. It’s the one place I’ll trust” (May 2013: 24). In this way, Batali draws a clear distinction between food that is worthy and unworthy, while also referencing his familiarity with a particular airport (i.e. specialized or expert knowledge). Thus, he projects a clear association with an elite class.

Similarly, Rapoport’s May 2013 column references the editor’s many trips, and highlights in particular his standard room service order during these (international) excursions. In so doing, Rapoport clearly draws attention to the normalcy of travel in his life, as well as points to his particularity, and the worthiness of certain foods over others. In the following
excerpt, Rapoport discusses a classic club sandwich, an item he claims to routinely order in hotels around the world:

*Example 7*

1. Much of a club’s appeal is that you (usually) know exactly what you’re going to get.
2. Specifically: three slices of white or wheat (*lightly* toasted; the bread should be pliant),
3. mayo on each slice; iceberg lettuce (shredded, preferably); tomato (even out of season,
4. I’m afraid); crisp bacon; and thinly sliced turkey.

Of course, a club sandwich is classically American (available at every diner in the US, I’m sure), and also relatively simple, as Rapoport notes. It has a precise structure with un-exotic ingredients: the listing of these components serves to index this ordinary simplicity, and mark the editor as regular, middle-class. Additionally, however, Rapoport introduces specificity into this structure. He mentions that the bread should be “*lightly* toasted” so that it’s “pliant” (line 2), and that the lettuce should be “shredded, preferably” (line 3). In this sense, even the simplest of sandwiches is made distinctly worthy of consumption (versus its overly-toasted counterpart).

Notice also how Rapoport admits that the sandwich might contain sub-par tomato: “even out of season, I’m afraid” (lines 3–4). While in some ways this confession points to a certain commonness, the use of “even” (indicating an exception from the norm), and the historically proper phrase “I’m afraid” both serve to index a particular level of social prestige. Thus, despite describing an informal dining practice, Rapoport still succeeds in displaying his particularity and elite status.

This theme is enhanced throughout the rest of the article, but the final paragraph seems to expertly sum up the overall sentiment. After describing a unique club sandwich he experienced in Milan, Rapoport concludes with the following:

*Example 8*

1. In the years since, I’ve enjoyed the European version on a number of trips.
2. Is it better than what I get stateside? I won’t go that far.
3. But what’s important is that when I need to take a (brief) break from food while traveling, home is just a button away.
Firstly, Rapoport makes clear reference to his many trips to Europe (line 1), a final indication that international travel is a regular part of his life. However, he also reinforces his love for the standard (American) version of the club sandwich, as well as his desire for home, despite being a well-traveled elite: “when I need to take a (brief) break from food while traveling, home is just a button away” (lines 3–4). It’s important to note that the entire premise behind taking a “break” from food is something only people accustomed to excess can experience and relate to; likewise, the symbolism behind home (or in this case a club sandwich) being “a button away” indexes another level of social privilege—the image conveys the idea that Rapoport is able to get exactly what he wants, when he wants it. Thus, though he reinforces his commonality by describing his penchant for simple American fare, Rapoport ultimately indexes upper-class membership by referencing expensive travel, and drawing lines of distinction around what is worthy of consumption.

_AUGUST 2014_

The content in July and August issues of _BA_ tends to gravitate toward the topics reminiscent of a classic American summer: easy-access produce, grilling, and casual, backyard socializing. In fact, each “Editor’s Letter” column in the July publications (2011–2014) featured “grilling” as its main narrative theme; three out of the four August issues discuss in-season tomatoes from local farm markets. This explicit focus on experiences and values associated with _Americana_ reflects the magazine’s commitment to the foodie ideal of rustic simplicity. The August 2014 issue perfectly encapsulates this trend. One of the magazine’s monthly features, “The Challenge”, demonstrates four unique ways to prepare a single ingredient—August 2014 focuses on corn, which is not only markedly American in its association with summer barbeques, Independence Day, and the rural US, but is also economically American. The United
States is, by far, the largest producer of corn in the world\textsuperscript{10}; its quintessential “Americanness” is most certainly related to its absolute availability.

Furthermore, August 2014 also features articles titled “Summer Casual” (about informal dishes to serve throughout the warmer months) and “Hudson Explorers”—the latter piece documents a meal shared between a group of local bakers, food writers, and restaurateurs based in the Hudson Valley of upstate New York. The eclectic photos in the article not only reveal an enormous vintage flag hanging from a white washed garage door, but also a plethora of locally foraged produce and farm-raised meats. Fittingly, one of the photos is titled “Pioneer Women,” featuring two female artisans in denim, boots, and “Rosie the Riveter” hairstyles; a toddler and sheep dog are keeping them company in front of the aforementioned flag. The rustic imagery evoked by this photo and others, as well as the well-known American values of “exploring” and “pioneering” demonstrate the magazine’s emphasis on foodies’ national identity (Bello, Aug. 2014: digital edition). In appealing to the classic American experience they simultaneously index the experiences of ordinary, middle-class readers.

Rapoport’s effort to achieve a similar message in his August 2014 column is clear; he refers to the local farms and produce stands on the North Fork of Long Island by name, adding that the vacation destination is “kind of like its across-the-way neighbor the Hamptons, except there’s no Jay and Beyoncé and no mega-mansions. Just lots of farms, rocky bay-side beaches, and some of the best farmstands in America” (Rapoport, Aug. 2014: digital edition). This unglamorous (though certainly not undesirable) depiction of his vacation spot reinforces the value foodies attribute to rural locations and rustic fare. However, as he’s demonstrated before, Rapoport continues in his column to highlight the abundance and specialized food knowledge

typical of his privileged foodie existence by discussing the variety and amount of produce available to him at one of the aforementioned farmstands during a particular excursion:

**Excerpt 9**

1. Crate after crate brims with cherry, pear, and grape tomatoes of every hue.
2. And then there are all the meaty heirlooms, bursting with juice and flavor.
3. I’ll grab some Sun Golds and Green Zebras and a handful of the Great Whites,
4. the kind of mix that chef Yotam Ottolenghi uses for his tomato salad on the cover.

The lush excess of the available produce in this excerpt can be seen in the descriptive terms used to qualify the items: “Crate after crate,” “brims” and “tomatoes of every hue” (line 1) all work to solidify the sheer abundance of the scene. Similarly, the editor’s description of “meaty heirlooms, bursting with juice and flavor” (line 2) suggests an almost rich and exotic quality to the otherwise basic and unexciting vegetable/fruit. This sort of decadent description is reminiscent of the excess typically valued by elite foodies, despite the ordinariness of the context.

Additionally, consider the second section of the excerpt: “I’ll grab some Sun Golds and Green Zebras and a handful of the Great Whites, the kind of mix that chef Yotam Ottolenghi uses for his tomato salad on the cover” (lines 3-5). Rapoport expertly names the varieties of tomatoes he selects in the narrative, demonstrating his specialized knowledge while also making it appear casual and commonplace with terms like “grab” and “a handful”; thus, his expert status is deemed unremarkable. Furthermore, notice how he proceeds to parallel himself to a celebrity chef whose dish is featured on the magazine’s cover: “the kind of mix that chef Yotam Ottolenghi uses” (line 4). In comparing his cooking practices to those of the famed cook and author, Rapoport reinforces his expert and privileged status.

The preceding analyses demonstrate how the editor indexes experiences and eating practices from both an upper- and middle-class lifestyle. It is clear from the magazine issues examined that these themes are not only present across the “Editor’s Letter” dataset, but also
throughout *Bon Appétit* as a whole. In the following sections I will speak to this same juxtaposition of class markers, but will highlight more specifically the tactics by which Rapoport seems to discursively construct this unattainable classlessness.

**SECTION II: MULTIVOICING VIA PARENTHETICAL ASIDES AND SCARE QUOTES**

In the upcoming discussion I establish how the editor not only tailors his writing to reflect a ‘middle-class elite’ social status, but also, in his use of parenthetical asides and scare quotes, ensures his discourse is multivoiced. By marking everyday/ordinary experiences and colloquial language constructions, instances of specific detail, instructional asides, and elitist opinions with parentheses, Rapoport intertextually repeats and voices the observed ideals of the foodie community. Likewise, by using scare quotes to either diminish his own privileged status (via humor) or convey distance from non-foodies (or non-foodie terms), the editor reinforces the distinctions between foodies and ‘others’ while simultaneously grouping himself with his readers.

The focus of this section stems from a specific understanding of intertextuality. My definition of the term is three-fold: first, in line with Fairclough (1992) and a CDA approach (Wodak and Meyer 2009), I assert that language use connects with, and in some cases constitutes, social and cultural processes. In this sense, texts repeat forms of social practice, and vice versa. The implications of such a relationship are powerful; in respect to *Bon Appétit* specifically, the magazine allows foodies to access trending ingredients and restaurants, as well as geographic areas and select cities that are especially food-oriented. Second, these same socially-situated texts can be considered *dialogic* (Bakhtin 1984) in the sense that no utterance represents a single speaker, but rather encapsulates the utterances of others before it: discourse contains “several ‘voices’, reminiscent of particular characters, social groups, or styles” (Sclafani
Parentheses are one rhetorical mechanism by which these voicing patterns are clearest: literary theorists posit that parentheses allow writers to carry on two conversations at once (Buchholz 1979:1); highlight and voice parody (Hanoosh 1989); and link ideas between sentences or to other texts and worlds (Suleiman 1977). In this way, it seems that multivoicing is a quality almost inherent to one’s use of parenthetical asides in writing.

Lastly, the text is not only multivoiced in the sense I discuss above, but also in that it anticipates its audience. It is designed with respect to the potential words of the listener/reader, whether or not s/he is able to respond. Bakhtin (1984) notes: “The second speaker is present invisibly, his words are not there, but deep traces left by these words have a determining influence on all the present and visible words of the first speaker” (197). This third element of intertextuality lends itself especially to texts that are monologic: despite the readers’ literal absence from “Editor’s Letter,” they can be seen as “invisible speaker[s]” (197) guiding the path of the writer’s discourse. This idea is reiterated in Talbot (1995): the author discusses how magazine writers attempt to establish friendship between themselves and their readers, “In part, by communicating ‘I know what you’re like, and I’m like that too.’” (154). Use of scare quotes is a tactic via which Bon Appétit writers seem able to accomplish this: Scollon, Tsang, Li, Yung, and Jones (1998) note that scare quotes make texts “polyvocal” (236) while also adding emphasis or focus to particular words. Predelli (2003) confirms this idea, adding that the quotes themselves imbue the enclosed terms with contextual information from which the readers interpret additional meaning(s)—in this sense, scare quotes mark certain words as possessing particular semantic values, which the writer assumes his anticipated audience will understand.

With these theoretical concerns in mind, I counted the occurrences of parenthetical asides and scare quotes in the dataset and categorized them based on their perceived purpose in
the column—for instance, whether they seemed to mark instruction for the readers, or some sort of colloquial expression, or out-group status (among several other categories, outlined earlier). In what follows I first address parenthetical asides, and second, scare quotes—ultimately I comment on how these punctuation features contribute to multivoicing and intertextuality in Rapoport’s “Editor’s Letter” columns.

**PARENTHETICAL ASIDES**

Firstly, I put each occurrence of parentheses in one of four categories, though at times I noticed potential overlap across two or more of these. This happened rarely enough that I felt

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of occurrences</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Standard, middle-class experience/conv. language</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>“(I think it was a metal mixing bowl)”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Instructional</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>“(Beer first, then ice)”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Extra detail/specificity</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>“(shrimp cocktail with a side caddy of oyster crackers; broiled lamb chops with emerald-green mint jelly)”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Upper-class</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>“(unless I’m in Paris)”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>87</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2:** Parentheses usage (excluding internal pg. # references)

comfortable with the final tally, depicted in Table 2. It illustrates that while many uses of parentheses point to elaboration on the editor’s part (Category 3: e.g. telling the reader what he ate at the restaurant he’s discussing), over 40% of parenthetical asides seem to index a middle-class membership of sorts, or friendly rapport with the reader. Additionally there are 15 occurrences of purely instructional content—I would argue that in these instances, Rapoport lays claim to his expert status in the foodie community. The smallest category is number 4; instances in which Rapoport seems to make explicit references to an upper-class lifestyle or elitist ideology via parentheses were rare.
The aforementioned categories lead me to my qualitative analysis. In what follows I consider specific uses of parenthetical asides from each category, beginning in order with Category 1, and concluding with Category 4. First, I show how Rapoport uses parentheses as a means of voicing and appealing to his readers as members of the same community via colloquial language and reference to ‘everyday’ experiences. I then proceed to expand on Category 2, illustrating how Rapoport’s instructional asides mark his unique position and expert voice, contrasting the solidarity expressed in his other parenthetical asides; next, I consider Category 3, demonstrating how specific uses of detail and elaboration serve as a strategy through which to legitimate the editor’s foodie status and experiences. Finally, I examine an occurrence from Category 4, exemplifying the explicit (though rare) indexing of elitist ideology. Throughout all of these sections, I suggest that the editor’s writing is reminiscent of a larger social practice—the tendency to index classlessness in foodie discourse, while simultaneously appealing to his audience.

**Category 1 – Ordinary Experiences/Language (38 occurrences)**

As I mentioned earlier, most parenthetical asides were classified as instances of indexing ordinariness via middle-class, normal experiences, and colloquial or conversational language. The following example, from August 2013, describes an instance of the former: while on vacation with his wife and child in a rented beach house in Montauk, Rapoport prepares lunch for friends who stop by unexpectedly. Forced to make-do without the full kitchen to which he’s accustomed, the editor describes his process. Consider how the use of parentheses allows him to take on different voices in the column:

*Excerpt 10*

1 On went the pasta water, and into a makeshift ice bucket (I think it was a metal mixing bowl) went a couple bottles of rosé.
2 Then, I sliced up some Sun Gold cherry tomatoes from a nearby farmstand.
First, note that for a casual lunch with friends, Rapoport insists on chilling his wine in “a makeshift ice bucket” (line 1) instead of keeping the bottles cold in the fridge. This description explicitly demonstrates Rapoport’s upper-class voice—by referencing an upper-class treatment of wine in a situation that is deemed low-key, he indexes the life experiences of the wealthy elite. However, the editor uses a parenthetical aside to voice a more ordinary sentiment: he says the ice bucket was “a metal mixing bowl” (lines 1-2), seemingly seeking to establish an unexceptional quality to the lunch. Additionally, the use of a common kitchen tool conveys his similarity to other foodies; even the construction of the detail itself seems to reflect this sort of ordinariness: using “I think” (line 1) implies that the ice bucket was so unremarkable that Rapoport barely remembers what he used. In this way, Rapoport appears to mitigate his upper-class voice with a parenthetical reference to normalcy. This tactic allows him to navigate the social class differences between himself and his readers, and to reflect the foodie ideal of anti-snobbery.

The other aspect of this ‘ordinary’ category is colloquial language. Instances of this sort can perhaps be said to “give the impression of treating each of the people ‘handled’ en masse as an individual” (Fairclough 2001[1989]: 62), evoking personalization, or even friendship. In his July 2011 column, Rapoport describes a phone conversation with his wife, Simone, about purchasing a home in New York City. Note how he marks his own role in the dialogue with parentheses, calling attention to the conversational nature of his language:

*Excerpt 11*

1 She let fly about how one of a kind it was (uh-huh)
2 and how it hadn’t even gone on the market yet (uh-huh),
3 how it was prewar blah blah blah (uh-huh)
4 and how it had this huge backyard and… (I’m sorry, what was that?)

In the most explicit sense, the parentheses here outline two distinct voices: Rapoport, and his wife. By reconstructing their conversation in this way, however, the editor conveys a relatable normalcy to their interaction: he is listening to Simone carry on (note the “blah blah blah” in
line 3) but not necessarily taking her seriously, conveyed by the repeated “(uh-huh)” (lines 1-3). I would argue that this use of “(uh-huh)” is marked as a colloquial expression typical of spousal interaction—in this way, the relationship between the two is depicted as ordinary and similar to the presumed readers’ relationships. This idea is reinforced by the final parenthetical aside in line 4: “(I’m sorry, what was that?)”. Voicing his own speech in this way again serves to convey a lack of attention to Simone’s words; it seems that he literally did not hear what she said. The spoken quality of this discourse, of course, is another element serving to mark this excerpt as ordinary. The entire exchange appears casual and colloquial, much like the relationship Rapoport routinely attempts to establish with his readers. Thus, the samples above exemplify how parentheses are used in “Editor’s Letter” to convey sameness and friendship with a foodie audience while also displaying values common to the foodie community.

**Category 2 – Instructional Asides (15 occurrences)**

As the editor of *Bon Appétit*, Rapoport has an established identity as a foodie with expert knowledge and status. Van Leeuwen (2007) posits that authority “is vested in a person because of their status or role in a particular institution…” (94); one could conclude that if this authority was not accepted by the public, Rapoport would not be in his position at the magazine. In support of this expert role, Rapoport routinely references trending ingredients and foodie values; the results of Category 2 depict how parenthetical asides are one method through which he accomplishes this sort of construction. Many times this is by specifying how a type of food should be prepared, or reinforcing the particular season during which certain produce are tastiest—the example below is from June 2014. Rapoport discusses backyard barbeques, including how he and his colleagues prep a beer-cooler. In the excerpt below, he uses parentheses to mark specific instructions:

*Excerpt 12*

1. Yes, we work plenty hard, but if there’s a going-away party or a birthday, we’ll absolutely pull out the Coleman cooler.
And there will be a discussion about how to properly stock it (beer first, then ice) and whether or not to add water (definitely—it helps loosen things up, making for easy bottle withdrawal).

Notice how Rapoport gives a direct instruction in line 4: "(beer first, then ice)." This command stands out as it directly contrasts the collaborative sense depicted in line 3: “And there will be a discussion about how to properly stock it”, implying that there is a difference of opinion between the group of colleagues. In voicing his own opinion, however, Rapoport channels his expert status, instructing readers to stock the cooler accordingly.

The same sense of conviction is displayed in line 5, following the topic of whether one should add water to the cooler. Rapoport insists: “(definitely—it helps loosen things up, making for easy bottle withdrawal)”, implying, again, that there is no debate concerning this issue. By voicing himself as expert, however, I should note that Rapoport also appears to reinforce his ordinariness; the detail of a “Coleman cooler” (line 2) stocked with beer immediately evokes rural America, and casual socializing. This use of instructional voicing to relay information pertaining to ordinary, middle-class experiences is a prime example of Rapoport’s reaching out to the reader: not only is he anticipating their acceptance of him as expert, but he is also tailoring his talk to relate to their presumed social status. Thus, as in other examples of instructional asides, the editor effectively multivoices his discourse as a means of straddling the class boundaries between himself and his readers.

Category 3 -- Detail and Elaboration (30 occurrences)

The importance of detail in conversation has long been established by Tannen (2005 [1989]); van Dijk (2010) reiterates many of her ideas, saying that use of detail conveys credibility, and is consequently an effective means of persuasion (600). In using parentheses to include extra detail about a particular topic, I argue that Rapoport not only lends truth to his experiences, but also allows his readers to participate more fully in his narratives. In this sense, he seems to exhibit Bakhtin’s (1986) assertion that listeners, though silent, are not passive but
active participants in discourse. A text is constructed “in anticipation of encountering [a]
response” (94). We cannot measure what the readers responses might be, of course, and how
they will be enacted in the social world; however, it is possible to imagine how the use of detail
via parenthetical asides allows readers to more effectively pursue or enact the experiences
Rapoport describes.

Thus, consider the following excerpt from September 2012, during which the editor
writes about one of his favorite restaurants in New York, a relatively unknown, family-owned
Italian place serving traditional food. Note how Rapoport laces his description with detailed
asides to the reader:

Excerpt 13
1 The food is kind of Italian (veal Marsala, chicken francese).
2 kind of old-school Continental (shrimp cocktail with a side caddy of oyster
3 crackers; broiled lamb chops with emerald-green mint jelly).
4 The drinks are large and stiff.

Throughout the column, Rapoport appears to be painting a picture of the restaurant (the name
of which he never discloses)—this excerpt is no exception. By including details about the
Italian dishes “(veal Marsala, chicken francese)” (line 2) he conveys the authenticity of the
establishment. Similarly, describing “old-school” (line 2) dishes like “(shrimp cocktail with a
side caddy of oyster crackers)” and “(broiled lamb chops with emerald-green mint jelly)” (lines
2-3) vividly depicts traditional restaurant-fare of earlier decades; readers seem invited to recall
these sorts of restaurants, and to relate the editor’s narrative to their own experiences with the
dishes he names. It is important to also note that Rapoport’s discussion of this anonymous
restaurant, one that is not trendy or expensive (presumably) is a clear example of the foodie
preference for omnivorousness: the editor appears to be “selectively drawing on multiple
cultural forms from across the cultural hierarchy” (Johnston and Baumann 2010:34). Thus, as
depicted in earlier examples, Rapoport makes use of parentheses as a means of marking text
designed for the readers specifically, while also accentuating his foodie status and ideals.
Category 4 – Upper-class Practices/Elitist Ideologies (4 occurrences)

Occasionally, as depicted in Table 2, Rapoport appears to take on a voice that expresses a sense of distinction and value representative of the upper-class. The utterances in this category could have been placed in Category 3 (they are all clearly details designed to elaborate on the topics of the columns). However, they each seemed to serve an additional function; to communicate Rapoport’s conception of worthy foods, and also to convey his privileged lifestyle. As noted earlier, Bourdieu (1984) discusses how the application of aesthetic concerns to mundane, everyday practices is one of the most telling identifiers of the upper-class—this idea seems to apply directly to the example below, taken from the March 2012 issue. The experience described in the column is a casual “Pizza Nite” at the Rapoport house. The editor discusses various ingredients and methods the family uses to prepare their pizzas. In what follows, note especially the editor’s evaluation of pizza sauce:

Excerpt 14
1 There’s no seated dinner, just a bunch of us hanging out in the kitchen,
2 stretching dough and popping pies into a cranked-up oven
3 (ours hits 550 degrees).
4 In terms of toppings, we always break out some fresh mozzarella, good olive oil,
5 and cans of San Marzano tomatoes
6 (jarred “pizza sauce” is banned from the pantry).
7 If we have time, we’ll caramelize a mess of onions and crisp up some pancetta
8 (the two go great together).

While there are two other uses of parentheses in this excerpt (which have been placed in Category 3), note the evaluative comment in line 6: “(jarred “pizza sauce” is banned from the pantry).” First, “pizza sauce” is in quotations, implying that it is so unworthy of the Rapoport family’s consumption it should not even be called pizza sauce. Furthermore, it is officially “banned” from their household, clearly indicating its unacceptability as an ingredient. Rapoport intensifies this description by specifying a particular type of tomatoes as a replacement, drawing a symbolic boundary between worthy and unworthy food (Johnston and Baumann 2010). It is this distinction between good and bad food that conveys an elitist ideology, and
that is telling of Rapoport’s privileged status. In marking his voice emphatically with parentheses, he draws attention to the importance of deeming certain foods acceptable and others not; furthermore, his expert foodie position allows him to offer this idea to his readers as a standard by which they should also live.

Thus, in this instance and in the other examples, Rapoport appears to use parenthetical asides as a means of characterizing particular voices in the text. In so doing he is able to navigate class boundaries and appeal to ordinary, middle-class readers while also representing elite foodie ideals; the result is a depiction of the two social statuses as being equivalently desirable and important.

Scare Quotes - Results and Analysis

Scare quotes in the text function differently than parenthetical asides in that they literally indicate words spoken by others – or by the author himself – at some point in time. Mostly they appear to convey some sort of distance from the terms they mark, whether this means a temporal separation or an ideological one; this can function as a means of indicating out-group or in-group status. Figure 2, below, represents the various ‘quoted’ parties—a total of 21 occurrences¹¹ are depicted and organized according to whom the words are attributed to, implicitly or explicitly, in the articles. They appear in chronological order (as they occur in the dataset) within each list; lists themselves are arranged in the figure in no particular order. Column 1 outlines uses that indicate things that have been said by the editor’s friends, family, and coworkers – an auxiliary in-group, so to speak (e.g. “my dad let it be known that I’d have to go out and find a ‘real’ job” – Sept. 2014). Column 2 depicts the uses that seem to reference a former period of Rapoport’s life during which, by his own admission, he was immature or unstylish; these occurrences convey a humorous or mocking tone (e.g. “The red ‘accent’ wall I

¹¹ Not included in the tally are uses of quotations to mark actual dialogue, to reference articles within the magazine itself or elsewhere, or to mark technical terms or proverbial phrases.
thought was so daring became chocolate brown” – June 2013). The uses in Column 3 convey things said by non-foodies, or ‘others’. They seem to illustrate a marked distance from (and even disdain for) these speakers (e.g. “In an era when powders, foams, and ‘tweezer food’ dominate the culinary world’s headlines, Brock wants to take us back home.” – September 2011). Lastly, Column 4 contains words attributed to Rapoport’s current self—in most cases

these appear to index normalcy and relatability, or an ordinary class-membership (e.g. “I wouldn’t call it ‘cooking’ per se” – Aug. 2013).

The aforementioned categories serve to depict how scare quotes in Bon Appétit ensure its multivoiced quality, according to which particular voices are portrayed at a given time. In the subsequent qualitative section I focus on examples from Column 3 (words attributed to non-foodies) and Column 4 (words attributed to Rapoport’s current, foodie self). I have selected these two categories for analysis because they seem to best represent issues of class boundaries in the editor’s discourse; while examples from the other columns certainly contribute to the classless quality of the writing, they are less straight-forward in terms of attributable function. With this in mind, I first examine examples of scare quotes occurring as references to the words of ‘others’, demonstrating what values are attached to non-foodie membership, and how

Figure 2: categories of scare quotes in sample (21 total occurrences)
these uses allow Rapoport to distance himself from the associated group. Second, I consider scare quotes occurrences from Column 4, illustrating ways these marked terms seem to convey normalcy and foodie in-group status. Ultimately this analysis reveals how the words of foodies and non-foodies are marked in order to create solidarity with readers and other presumed foodies.

Category 3 – Voicing non-foodies

In his discussion of the semantic role of scare quotes, Predelli (2003) remarks that they can often evoke sarcasm, and are used “with the intent of mocking someone’s inappropriate use of [a word]” (14). This sort of behavior can be seen clearly in Rapoport’s line “In an era when powders, foams, and ‘tweezer food’ dominate the culinary world’s headlines, Brock wants to take us back home. We’re more than ready to go” (Rapoport, Sep. 2011: 16). By marking the item with quotes, the editor suggests that ‘tweezer food’ is actually not food at all, and those who consume it are (perhaps) snobbish gourmands, or are simply not privy to his (and other foodies’) superior knowledge. Another column also exhibits this sort of voicing: the April 2014 article, titled “A Real Project”, discusses a friend of the editor (Meeghan Truelove) and her devotion to cooking elaborate, impressive dishes. In the column Rapoport describes the complicated recipes, culminating in a challenge to his readers to tackle similarly difficult projects. In the excerpt below, notice how the editor employs scare quotes as a means of voicing those who do not advocate this sort of cooking (e.g. cooking shows such as “30-Minute Meals with Rachael Ray”):

Example 15

1. It’s this sort of spirit—ambitious, energetic, fearless—that fuels our
2. section The Project.
3. In it, we offer up the kinds of dishes that explicitly aren’t “quick” or
4. “simple” or that have “five ingredients or less.”
5. These are involved dishes that, when pulled off, are absolute
6. showstoppers.
Firstly, the editor immediately references the “spirit” (line 1) of his foodie-friend Meeghan Truelove: by indirectly proclaiming her “ambitious, energetic, fearless” (line 1), and equating these qualities with *Bon Appétit* staff (in the “our” of “It’s this sort of spirit…that fuels our section The Project” – lines 1-2), Rapoport creates a particular identity for foodies. They should be ambitious in the kitchen, and cook things that are challenging “showstoppers” (line 6). Consider how these qualities are juxtaposed with those proclaimed by non-foodies: “we offer up the kinds of dishes that explicitly aren’t ‘quick’ or ‘simple’ or that have ‘five ingredients or less’” (lines 3-4). This sort of characterization appears to reference magazines (or other types of food media) that cater to a different kind of home cook – one who is concerned only with saving time, and not with the craft of preparing food. By voicing these ‘others’ with scare quotes Rapoport seems to mock their non-foodie values, while also elevating his own, and those of other foodies.

Additionally, consider how this voicing tactic is enhanced by the details provided regarding the various “ambitious” recipes. Rapoport notes that Truelove grinds “her own Toulouse sausage,” sources “authentic Tarbais beans,” and confits “duck legs” (Rapoport, Apr. 2014: 14). All these ingredients are not only associated with gourmet, privileged eating, but are also expensive. For instance, a pound of Tarbais beans is approximately $30, compared to a standard variety, which is somewhere around $2 at local grocery stores. The column also mentions an article in the same issue of magazine with instructions for crafting a particular pastry from Brittany, France (“kouign-amann”); as discussed earlier (see pg. 29), references to international travel and foods serve as markers of privileged experiences, all requiring significant wealth. Thus, the association of an adventurous foodie mentality is directly linked to prestigious ingredients and experiences—by voicing non-foodies with scare quotes Rapoport places them in contrast to in-group foodie privilege. In this sense, the editor’s multivoicing
allows him to draw boundaries between foodies and ‘others’ according to socially privileged experiences, aspirations, and values.

**Category 4 – Voicing Self and other foodies**

As I demonstrate in earlier sections, though he continually indexes his own privilege, Rapoport seems to also downplay his foodie prestige as a way of relating to, or voicing his readers. As a presumed expert in his field, and for the economic and social class differences noted previously, Rapoport appears to mitigate his high status via his use of scare quotes, particularly as they pertain to his ability to prepare food. The following example is from the February 2014 issue: the title of the column is “It’s Okay to Cheat,” and it documents Rapoport’s use of frozen puff pastry and rotisserie chicken to construct a chicken pot pie for his wife’s birthday dinner. In particular, note how the editor uses scare quotes as a means of minimizing his own skill:

*Example 16*

1. After work, I grabbed a rotisserie chicken from the market across from our apartment, along with a bag of frozen peas and pearl onions, a bundle of carrots, and a package of Dufour frozen puff pastry.
2. I snipped some thyme and flat-leaf parsley from our garden and got to work.
3. So no, it wasn’t exactly “from scratch.”
4. But just like we do in the magazine every month, I focused on flavor and technique. I made a silky béchamel that I enriched with chicken stock I had in the freezer.

First, consider how Rapoport’s preparation for the meal is framed as casual: he “grabbed a rotisserie chicken from the market across from our apartment,” bought frozen vegetables and a non-descriptive “bundle of carrots” (lines 1-2). This sort of language seems to indicate a certain lack of effort; the ingredients were purchased on his way home and were predominantly pre-made. Even the “bundle of carrots” suggests a lack of planning or precision, an idea that is reinforced by his snipping “some thyme and flat-leaf parsley from our garden” (line 4)—it would appear the meal was thrown together rather haphazardly. This sort of casualness is also indexed in line 5. Rapoport’s use of scare quotes to highlight his decision to not cook the meal
“from scratch” seems to convey his acknowledgement that this behavior is contrary to readers’ expectations. The editor is a presumed food expert, and the skill required to cook a meal from start to finish is one commonly associated with foodies. In fact, the magazine itself is devoted to this value: its main purpose is to teach readers how to make trending dishes for their daily meals and parties. In this sense, the cooking experience Rapoport describes is marked, and serves to normalize his status as a skilled cook and foodie.

In downplaying his foodie prestige, the editor appears to group himself with his ‘ordinary’ readers; however, as the column continues he explains how he maintains foodie values despite using short cuts in his cooking practices. Rapoport writes: “just like we do in the magazine every month, I focused on flavor and technique. I made a silky béchamel that I enriched with chicken stock I had in the freezer” (lines 6-8). Thus, though the meal is not prepared “‘from scratch’” it still has homemade components (including the reference to “frozen chicken stock,” which indicates it was prepared at an earlier date). Furthermore, the “technique” and “flavor” Rapoport mentions are associated with the magazine as a whole: pointedly including his cooking practices with those of other foodie writers implies the ingroup status he attributes to himself and his readers. While this example ultimately serves to demonstrate how scare quotes can be used to voice the ordinariness of foodies, it also points to how Rapoport allows himself (and others) to “cheat” (see title of column) without compromising the distinction and value they place on certain ingredients and experiences.

In sum, Bakhtin’s important notion of ‘the invisible speaker’ is made clear in the preceding analyses. By multivoicing his discourse using parenthetical asides and scare quotes, Rapoport effectively laces his writing with appropriate and relatable indications of lifestyle that speak both to his privileged status and to the ordinary experiences of his readers. In this sense, these punctuation marks demonstrate the multi-layered intertextuality of Bon Appétit discourse.
SECTION III: SYSTEMS OF DISTINCTION VIA NEGATION

Regarding the use of negative statements in discourse, Tannen (1979) writes that it “is one of the clearest and most frequent indications that an expectation is not being met” (147). Additionally, she draws on Labov (1972), who asks: “What reason would the narrator have for telling us that something did not happen since he is in the business of telling us what did happen?” (380-81). These ideas pertain especially to evaluation in discourse, in the sense that particular utterances capture the meaning of an event or a narrative; they can be said to point towards what is important in the text. In the context of Bon Appétit discourse, Tannen and Labov’s respective works highlight how the presence of negation characterizes Rapoport’s writing as largely evaluative – even interpretive – and also suggests that negation terms may function as a way of thwarting readers’ (or a more general audience’s) expectations of his lifestyle or foodie identity.

In more specific reference to issues of elitist stance in writing, Jaworski and Thurlow (2009) discuss how travelogue writers commonly employ “the lens of the negative” in their evaluation of tourist practices, creating “social differentiation” by stating what is not desirable behavior when traveling (203). It is this idea that is most relevant to Rapoport’s use of negation in “Editor’s Letter” columns; to explore these aforementioned issues of distinction and value as they pertain to foodies, I determined the frequency with which the editor employed the words “no”, “not”, and “never” in the dataset. I chose not to focus on other forms of negation (e.g. contractions, words like “none” or “neither”) simply due to issues of time, limited tools for coding and counting, and space within this paper. After completing my quantitative analysis I felt the data gleaned was sufficient as a representation of the ways negation terms can serve as markers of distinction. Figure 3 demonstrates the various frequencies of negation practices in Rapoport’s columns. Chart A indicates the percentage of occurrences of “no”, “not”, and “never”
in the data; “not” clearly holds the majority. There were 73 occurrences across the dataset, or about 59%. “No” represents 23% of negation words (28 occurrences) and “never”, 18% (23 occurrences). The marked difference in use of “not” could be in part because of common sentence constructions like “not only, but also” — I did not explore this particular issue further, however, because I chose to focus more on the categorical functions of the terms rather than which one was used in each instance.

This brings me to Chart B, which represents the categories of negation, or the topics the editor references using “no”, “not”, and “never”. I formulated these categories based on patterns I observed in the data, and then placed each occurrence within a category accordingly. I omitted instances that seemed to serve as figures of speech (e.g. “no disrespect”) or simply to relay meaning according to sentence structure and semantics, apart from issues of distinction (e.g. “He may or may not have…”), from the final categorical tally due to lack of relevance (15 total occurrences). The chart reveals that the highest number of occurrences (39) pertained to food or food practices, which includes ingredient knowledge, cooking, and food philosophy (e.g. “not too much of any one ingredient” and “it was never about the food”). The second most
common category is Fanciness/Simplicity (i.e. a trend away from formality, toward simplicity and relaxation) with 30 occurrences, or 27% (e.g. “not that this was some hifalutin affair”). The third, Miscellaneous Lifestyle references, pertains to vacations, fashion, family values, and so forth (e.g. “she never settles for a basic wrap job”). This category represents 24%, or 26 total occurrences. Lastly, the Health category, which refers to uses relating to a measured amount of health ideology, represents 13% of the occurrences (e.g. “I’m not prone to excess”). In sum, it is clear that Rapoport employs negation terms within a variety of categories; thus, issues of value for foodies seem to apply to much more than just food. Rather, distinction is revealed across a number of lifestyle practices, and appears to function as a means of defining group membership.

Importantly, while negation establishes systems of distinction, it is also a method by which Rapoport can continue to straddle boundaries of social class. For instance, an example of this is his tendency to use negation as a means of creating distance between himself and unworthy food items while simultaneously emphasizing how eating is more about people and relationships than food. In the qualitative sections that follow I exemplify this sort of juxtaposition by focusing on each of the four categories established in Chart B). First, I analyze excerpts that illustrate how Rapoport uses negation terms to delineate between valued food practices and non-valued ones; second, I turn to the Fanciness category, examining the editor’s trend toward simplicity and informality (markers of a normal middle-class). Third, I illustrate how negation functions in references to Miscellaneous Lifestyle to emphasize desirable styles and/or experiences; and fourth, I examine an excerpt pertaining to ideologies of healthiness (or unhealthiness) and how Rapoport makes use of negation terms to display a balanced view of nutrition. Ultimately I suggest, as in other sections of analysis, that the editor’s writing exhibits a tendency to represent foodies as members of an elite middle-class—negation terms
that serve to both establish distinction and downplay privilege are indicators of this sort of behavior.

_Food and Food Practices – 36%_

A common identifier of the foodie community, which I’ve mentioned in previous sections (see pp. 26, 29), is the preference for certain types of foods over others. This ‘worthiness’ is related to a food’s deliciousness, of course, but also to issues of its trendiness (as identified in foodie publications and elsewhere), and its moral value—as Johnston and Baumann (2009) note, environmental concerns and animal welfare are commonly taken into account by foodies, though “the explicitly political dimension of foodie discourse is frequently subordinated to the aesthetic dimension” (10). Other issues of worthiness might also pertain to the food’s cultural significance; this can be related to personal or cultural nostalgia. For instance, Johnston and Buamann (2010) explore how certain foods labeled as low-class or kitsch can be perceived as exotic in the right context. One foodie the authors interviewed in their research commented: “I’m a huge fan of the old American café, you know, where you want to get a hot turkey sandwich or chicken fried steak. And it could look like a real hole-in-the-wall, you know, but you go in and they’ve got some world class stuff going on” (116). In this sense, even foods that are not explicitly ‘gourmet’ can be deemed valuable, precisely for their lack of trendiness.

The example that follows illustrates this last concept, and highlights how the editor attributes value to a commonplace club sandwich (see also pg. 29) in his particularity for its structure, which he marks with negation. By using “not” and “never” to qualify his conditions for a club sandwich, Rapoport establishes lines of distinction for otherwise ordinary fare:

_Example 17_

1 And _not_ too much any one ingredient—the sandwich shouldn’t spill out the 
2 sides when you bite into it.
3 Oh, and it’s got to be cut into four triangles, _never_ in half.
4 (Bonus points for frilly toothpicks).
It is obvious in line 1 that a good sandwich is defined by what it does not have: “too much of any one ingredient,” which creates the undesirable effect of the contents “spill[ing] out the sides when you bite into it” (lines 1-2). In this sense, by using the term “not” (and additionally, “shouldn’t”), Rapoport is able to attribute boundaries of distinction to an otherwise mundane sandwich. His use of “never” in line 3 also contributes to this sentiment: “Oh, and it’s got to be cut into four triangles, never in half.” This rather ridiculous mandate is perhaps tongue-in-cheek, but it works to solidify the nostalgic element to the value placed upon these details. Cutting a sandwich into four sections seems elementary and certainly kitschy—“Bonus points for frilly toothpicks” (line 4) reinforces this characterization. In embracing these specifics, however, Rapoport not only appears ordinary and anti-gourmet in his approval of classic American fare, but he also reflects his elite foodie particularity. Thus, by using terms of negation to characterize the desirable qualities of a club sandwich, Rapoport presents himself and other foodies as valuing certain foods above others.

Another aspect of the food-centric uses of negation in the dataset pertains to food ideology. The overwhelming sentiment expressed in Rapoport’s columns is the idea that food consumption is not about food itself, but about the people one shares it with. This sort of expression takes many forms, but is often made most explicit through terms of negation—perhaps because it may counter the expectations of ‘others’ in their views of the foodie community. In any case, by establishing that foodies are more concerned with friends, family, and colleagues than ‘good taste’, the editor serves to downplay the elite aura associated with particularity in consumption practices. The proceeding example, from the June 2011 column (see also pg. 22), explains Rapoport’s motivation for putting a celebrity, Gwyneth Paltrow, on the cover of the magazine – an atypical decision for Bon Appétit. In his justification the editor clearly uses negation to reinforce food’s relationship to the people who prepare it:
Example 18
1 But the thing is, food is never just about food.
2 It’s about catching up with your friends over a good bottle of Nuits-Sant-Georges
3 (that would be my pick, at least)
4 and spending some iPhone-free time with your family at the dinner table.
5 It’s about that brisket recipe from your mom
6 and the grilled-chicken marinade from your pal in college
7 It’s about the people in your life.

First, the editor writes that “food is never just about food” (line 1): this proclamation stands out as a bold one because of his use of “never”, arguably the most forceful negation term present in the dataset. In his use of this word, Rapoport suggests that his position cannot be debated.

Furthermore, he supports the statement with examples. He writes of recipes passed-down by “your mom” (line 5) or “your pal in college” (line 6), “catching up with friends” (line 2) and eating dinner with your family (line 4). These experiences not only explain the association between food and people, but also seem to channel an ordinary American lifestyle—though, importantly, they are qualified by selected descriptors. For instance, catching up with friends happens “over a good bottle of Nuits-Saint-Georges” (line 2); the specific name of a “good” bottle of wine, a classic symbol of both cultural and economic capital (see Silverstein 2003[1996]), qualifies an otherwise everyday experience. Thus, in using negation to characterize his stance on food as being one of human concern while also adding references to standards of particularity, the editor constructs the impression that foodies are ‘everyday elites’.

FANCINESS/SIMPLICITY – 27%

A common mantra in foodie discourse is the resistance to anything especially formal or fancy; instead, an omnivorous attitude is valued, and explicit snobbery and gourmet preference are rejected. One purview through which this idea can be seen in *Bon Appétit* is a direct disdain, via negation, for expensive or formal lifestyle practices (although these are interwoven with copious references to pricey ingredients and international travel). Relatedly, Warde, Martens, and Olsen (1999) note that varied cultural consumption “continues to reflect social inequalities
and, if it symbolises refinement, is a potential mechanism for social exclusion” (124). Thus, while an anti-gourmet attitude can be perceived as egalitarian, it may simply be a signifier of a different sort of distinction. In the example that follows, from August 2013 (see also pg. 37), Rapoport uses negation to characterize his vacation rental home as explicitly not impressive or extravagant, demonstrating the trend in his writing to resist formality and fanciness. Consider how he describes the property:

Example 19
1 It had a screened-in porch and a big gas grill next to a not-so-big pool,
2 and I suppose you could say that it was close enough to the beach
3 that the drive to the shore didn’t feel so long.
4 So, no, it wasn’t some Hamptons-esque dream house, but it was a house.

The negation used in line 1 is significant: after first referencing the positive attributes of the house (a “screened-in porch and a big gas grill”), Rapoport proceeds to downplay the luxury of the setting by describing the pool as “not-so-big” (line 1). Of course, the fact that a beach house is also equipped with a pool is an indicator that the property might not be as drab as the editor constructs it. By inserting “not” into his reference to the pool’s size, however, Rapoport lessens the pool’s presence, and portrays his vacation as simple and informal.

This sort of description persists—after sheepishly admitting “I suppose you could say that it was close enough to the beach” (line 2) as an additional mitigation of the property’s positive attributes, Rapoport writes: “So, no, it wasn’t some Hamptons-esque dream house, but it was a house” (line 4). Importantly, Rapoport notes that the home is explicitly not “Hamptons-esque,” the Hamptons being the quintessential marker of summer vacation for the New York elite (see also pg. 32). In contrast, the Rapoport family associates themselves with the vacations of the middle-class, renting a home that is not a “dream house” (although it certainly might sound that way to some) in Montauk. Thus, using negation to establish that foodies do not emulate or desire formality and expensive luxury, and solidifying these
constructions with an additional downplaying of his privileged experiences, Rapoport demonstrates the foodie trend toward omnivorous consumption – and omnivorous distinction.

**MISCELLANEOUS LIFESTYLE – 24%**

As is true for omnivorousness, foodie identity encompasses much more than food practices. *Bon Appétit* classifies itself as a food and *lifestyle* magazine, and the topics it covers embody this classification—while they are all somehow connected to food, the articles (including “Editor’s Letter”) are laced with references to other sorts of consumption, as well as to general ideologies pertaining to life choices. In this vein, Woodward (2012) argues that consumption should be reconceptualized “as a universal practice of cultural interpretation where social actors seek ritualized, enchanting engagements with objects that originate across the economic and cultural spectrum and which are perceived to symbolize variegated ideals such as goodness, beauty, authenticity, or truth” (675). This perspective provides a lens through which we can examine Rapoport’s myriad references to objects of value, including this line from his December 2011 column: “And you can’t go wrong with string lights on the mantel or tree—I like the white ones, not the blinking colored ones” (Rapoport, Dec. 2011: 14).

Though we cannot determine exactly why the editor uses negation to emphasize his preference for white string lights over colored ones, perhaps it is enough to suggest that he attributes some sort of cultural value to the former, and something less desirable to the latter. This idea is also present in his discussion of his previous editorial position at *GQ* and the “uniform” the staff were expected to wear. Rapoport writes in the March 2012 issue that he and others wore “…straight-leg jeans (never boot-cut, never distressed)…” (Rapoport, Mar. 2012: digital edition). In emphasizing the particular type of jeans he wore, Rapoport demonstrates that one’s style is a form of “cultural interpretation” (see above)—he would *never* wear clothing that wasn’t considered stylish by the fashionable elite.
A different sort of negation usage in the Miscellaneous Lifestyle category falls under the purview of lifestyle ideology. Statements of this type can be described as pertaining to a particular outlook on one’s life choices and experiences. In the excerpt below, Rapoport describes a vacation he took with friends to the South of France, where, by chance, he meets Ronnie Wood from the Rolling Stones. Using negation, the editor sums up his experience by advocating for an adventurous spirit:

Example 20
1 That day taught me a lesson about travel, one I hope this special issue conveys:
2 When it’s easier to say no, say yes. Roll with it. Push yourself to break out of your routine.
3 Sure, a week by the pool at that posh resort will be nice and relaxing,
4 but it’ll never be anything more than that.
5 Travel is about escaping—about trying and tasting things you normally never would.

First, consider Rapoport’s advice: “When it’s easier to say no, say yes” (line 2). This is a unique example in the dataset in that instead of using negation to emphasize what foodies are not, the editor inserts “no” as a means of preparation for advocating saying “yes.” In so doing, he suggests that foodies should not be people who say “no,” but rather they should embrace new experiences and live adventurously. This sort of sentiment is also expressed in lines 3–4: “Sure, a week by the pool at that posh resort will be nice and relaxing, but it’ll never be anything more than that.” Since Rapoport positively frames relaxation often in his columns, this line is a little surprising. It suggests that relaxation as an experience is overvalued (“it’ll never be anything more than that”) and it is more desirable to “[try] and [taste] things you normally never would” (line 5) – again, using a negation term. From these examples it would seem that negation itself is negated; by attributing undesirability to one’s typical behaviors (i.e. saying “no”), Rapoport elevates an adventurous lifestyle (like his experiences traveling) to a higher status. Thus, negation in these examples once again serves to draw lines of demarcation between valueless vs. valuable objects and experiences.
Johnston and Baumann (2010) note that throughout the 1990’s, foodie tastes moved towards favoring “natural” and “organic” fare (12). Likewise, in her discussion of organic salad mix, Guthman (2013[2003]) writes that eating salad (and other healthy foods) is “in some sense performative of an elite sensibility”—similarly, my research suggests that privileged foodies position themselves as “models of discipline, control and moderation” (502, 503) – but not in a way that is associated with the health-obsessed. I have mentioned previously that it is taste that is the primary concern for foodies above all else (Johnston and Baumann 2010), and it is this precise idea that is expressed in the “Editor’s Letter” columns. As noted earlier, health is a topic covered most often in the January columns, when New Year’s resolutions are of interest to most Americans (see also pg. 25). In his January 2012 article, the editor describes a list of choices he intends on making throughout the year in an effort to be more health-conscious. The first of these is titled “Say no (sometimes) to dough.” In addition to this first instance of negation (saying “no” to white flour), Rapoport also uses “not” in his description of his future behavior:

Example 21
1 Nutrition-minded folks will tell you that white flour is the root of all evil. Fine.
2 But if I’m at Mozza in L.A. or Roberta’s in Brooklyn, I’m absolutely ordering pizza—
3 chewy, yeasty, crispy…everything good that white flour stands for.
4 And when I’m making fettuccine Bolognese on a cold Sunday afternoon,
5 I’m not reaching for a box of gluten-free pasta.
6 But the rest of the time? I’m going with multigrain toast for breakfast,
7 and for my lunchtime sandwich…

It is clear from the outset that Rapoport is working to present himself as someone who is not one of the “Nutrition-minded folks” who proclaim that “white flour is the root of all evil” (line 1). This rather dramatic portrayal is in direct contrast to the editor’s insistence that he will eat white flour despite the healthy naysayers: “…I’m absolutely ordering pizza—chewy, yeasty,
crispy…everything good that white flour stands for” (lines 2-3). This construction establishes Rapoport as one who does not want to be labeled as ‘healthy’ per se.

As the excerpt continues, this message is reinforced. The editor uses negation to definitively declare that if he’s going to cook a particular dish at home, he is “not reaching for a box of gluten-free pasta” (line 5). Again, by establishing explicitly that he will not choose the healthy alternative, Rapoport constructs an identity that is not obsessed with nutritional expectations. Instead, his priority is taste, and perhaps authenticity: his pasta and pizza will remain unadulterated. However, remember that the point of the column is to encourage readers (by his own actions) to make healthy choices; so, Rapoport declares that the “rest of the time” he’ll eat “multigrain toast for breakfast” and for his “lunchtime sandwich” (lines 6-7). Thus, Rapoport embodies an “elite sensibility” (see above) when it comes to nutrition—like other privileged foodies, he’ll pay some attention to being healthy, but he will not sacrifice taste.

The preceding analyses demonstrates how negation terms seem not only representative of how the negative can be employed to counter one’s expectations, but also how they serve to emphatically differentiate between valued practices and unvalued ones. In categorically illustrating the various ways Rapoport uses negation in his discourse, I suggest that the negative is another method by which he navigates class boundaries; by drawing lines of distinction while simultaneously downplaying prestige, the editor actively creates and propagates the notion of an egalitarian foodie lifestyle.

**DISCUSSION**

In review of these three sections of analysis, one item is especially important to note: the normalization of elite foodie experiences occurs regularly across the dataset, and can be measured broadly or with more specific units of analysis. In the first section I analyzed the
larger language patterns throughout the “Editor’s Letter” columns and other articles from the magazine, demonstrating how the editor’s discourse is representative of opposing class memberships in his reference to particular experiences or food practices. This overall trend of juxtaposing upper- and middle-class lifestyles via markers of particularity, excess, socializing, simplicity, informality, and locality can be seen in the subsequent sections of analysis as well; in this way, Sections II and III reinforce more specifically (and quantitatively) the trends developed in Section I.

In Section II I focused on intertextuality and multivoicing by tracking the uses of parenthetical asides and scare quotes in Rapoport’s writing. The occurrences of the former revealed that the editor employs parentheses mostly as a means of highlighting his ordinary/relatable lifestyle, but also sometimes to accentuate his expert and elite status. His use of scare quotes continues in this vein, creating distance from certain terms by marking them as belonging to ‘others’, while in other instances using quotes to index American normalcy or foodie group membership. Thus, the editor’s multivoiced discourse is representative of the larger patterns I initially identified, and speaks specifically to how the readers’ voices are incorporated in the text.

Section III, as well, expounds on this general theme. By creating lines of distinction between objects and practices that are valued vs. ones that are not, Rapoport not only displays preferences that suggest a privileged lifestyle (especially in reference to trending foods and ingredients), but also depicts the opposite—many of the examples index an anti-formality or anti-snobbery outlook on one’s food and lifestyle practices. It is thus that the editor’s noticeable navigation of social class boundaries is realized in his use of negation terms. As I have previously suggested, this equating of extraordinary and privileged experiences with an ordinary, middle-class life serves to create an idyllic state of classlessness, in which one’s
economic and social status is irrelevant to experiencing and performing ‘good taste.’ It is the resulting normalization of social privilege that stands out in the dataset, and is the primary concern of this study.

CONCLUSION

LeBesco and Naccarato (2008) write:

…representations of food and foodways, when closely examined, illuminate both the repressive power and the productive potential of representation, in a Foucauldian sense. Food representations have historically been understood as mere barometers of cultural sensibilities; instead, we contend that these representations actively produce cultural sensibilities and the possibility of transgression. (13)

Thus, it is not simply that food is discussed in a certain way in a particular publication—rather, the importance of this paper rests on the assumption that the editor’s discourse in Bon Appétit has value as a producer of culture, and even as a promoter of “repressive power” (see above). By illustrating ways in which Adam Rapoport’s discourse promotes the illusion of classlessness in food consumption practices, this study exposes a socially relevant activity that is presented as ‘normal’; this “production and naturalization of knowledge without our being aware of it” (Jaworski and Thurlow 2009: 221) is a powerful (and, arguably, common) component of public discourse.

The construction of foodies as ‘middle-class elites’ can be seen clearly in Rapoport’s monthly articles—his downplaying of his own prestige while simultaneously indexing experiences of the upper-class serves to depict a lifestyle that is virtually unattainable by his readers. By juxtaposing the ordinary and the extraordinary, Rapoport normalizes and to some extent, Americanizes, elite social status. Using parentheses and scare quotes to voice foodies and non-foodies in his discourse, the editor creates the appearance of ‘ordinary’ privilege. Likewise, he employs negation terms to draw lines of distinction between types of food practices, marking
some as valuable and others as not. Ultimately, Rapoport’s columns seem to depict a type of foodie who is neither snobbish nor ordinary; rather, he is egalitarian, responsible, and in possession of ‘good taste’. Thus, the editor’s language demonstrates the implicit connection between social class and food practices.

As the representative of an institution that is responsible for the promotion and endorsement of an inherently class-related topic, Rapoport is noticeably silent on issues of food access and humane production, environmental concerns, and international hunger. As Johnston and Baumann (2009) write: “It is this discrepancy between a framing of food as classless and the actual class linkages with food that cause us to identify foodie discourse as involved in class politics”(25). Indeed, Rapoport’s writing for Bon Appétit could be interpreted as perpetuating these conditions as they exist in the United States, although the present study does not measure the impact of his discourse on readers. This brings me to my next point: these assertions, of course, could be enhanced by further research. While the preceding analysis discusses noticeable patterns in the discourse of a 44-column sample from Bon Appétit, an ethnographic study of the magazine’s offices, as well as Condé Nast headquarters, would be beneficial for a true understanding of the goals of the foodie journalism institution, as well as the specific roles of the editor and other foodie writers. The direct effects of the institution’s bureaucracy on the content of the magazine, and the audience it’s trying to reach, could shed more light on the intended message, and the overall impact of the discourse. Likewise, interviews with Bon Appétit subscribers and other self-identified foodies would perhaps speak to the ways in which a widely-dispersed publication can impact social practice. Another direction would be to expand the current dataset to include articles from other food magazines such as Saveur or Cooking Light—do these contain “Editor’s Letter” columns, and do they seem to express similar ideas? Could they be classified also as food/lifestyle magazines, or is Bon
Appétit's niche unique, such that its relation to social issues is more noticeable? These and other questions should be explored in future work.

In sum, though the general public tends to perceive magazines simply as entertainment, it is important to consider how they are representative of certain ideologies and speak to issues beyond the foci of their titles. A foodie publication like *Bon Appétit* has the power to impact all its readers, yet in many ways its discourse seems to be consumed blindly; Fairclough (1992) writes that media “can be regarded as effecting the ideological work of transmitting the voices of power in a disguised and covert form” (276). In this way, *Bon Appétit* can be said to continually renew the control of the powerful, all under the guise of leisurely reading. Though this idea may seem melodramatic, let us consider reversing the scenario: instead of producing discourses that seem to reinforce class hierarchies, what if food/lifestyle magazines used their widespread influence to lessen the growth and prevalence of injustice? It is this (admittedly idyllic) proposition that news media and magazines should strive for.
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