

FANNING THE FLAMES OF FANDOM: HOW WE LOVE (PAULA DEEN) SO MUCH

by

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(Under the Direction of Elli Roushanzamir)

ABSTRACT

Fans are an integral part of media related communications. Fans are more than just consumers: they are communicators and transmitters. It is their importance in the media cycle that makes the examination of their creation important within research. This article seeks to examine how the object of interest creates fans; more specifically this article is using celebrity chef Paula Deen to examine how language and media content is used to create fans.

INDEX WORDS: Fandom, Paula Deen, Transmission Model, Ritualistic Model.

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## CHAPTER 1

### FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD, SOUTHERN STYLE

#### **Introduction**

“Miss Paula Deen U are my number one cooking fan, I love u so much I would love to meet u in person. Miss Paula u are beautiful on the out side as well as the inside. Have a wonderful holiday, an stay encourage!!!!” Connie Vest posted on Paula Deen’s blog in December of 2011. Vest’s enthusiasm to meet Deen in person and her intimate attitude towards Deen’s personal life (“have a wonderful holiday...”) shows the deep and intimate relationship she feels with Deen. Vest’s interest in Deen’s life, her desire to meet her, and her intimate and personal knowledge of Deen puts Vest into the category of fandom.

Fandom is a social construct of fans that have a deeper level of interest towards the object of their interest than fans. This group goes far beyond the term “fan,” as they are not just loyalists. While a fan is someone who enjoys the object of interest, fans involved in fandom go beyond devoted to borderline obsessive (Jenkins, 1988). These fans participate in their object of interest in ways such as: involving themselves with discussions with other fans, knowing all aspects of a character or celebrity, knowing all aspects of a show/object of interest, and making a pilgrimage to a place that has importance to the object of their fandom (Jenkins, 1988; Lewis, 2002).

When people imagine fandom, images of costumed extremists come to mind. Fandom has been confined to stereotypical events like Comic Con, where fans are known to dress up as their favorite fictional character; and sports, where fans paint their bodies and follow their teams across the country. Either way, extreme fans are swathed in a stigma of ‘social awkwardness,’ and assumed to be seeking acceptance from other members of society (Jenkins, 1988; Lewis,

2002). However, the scope of fandom reaches far beyond these stereotypical examples, showing how fans involved in fandom are constructed by the content of their affection.

Lewis (2002) argues that fans are not misunderstood misfits gathered together at a Sci-Fi convention. To the contrary, extreme fans are people who are passionate enough to dedicate a substantial part of their life to a particular topic; not dissimilar to a professor who dedicates his or her life to his/her passion, or an antique lover who is always traveling to find a treasure. Fandom's fans are the devoted audience members who go to extremes in order to enjoy and feel a part of a particular show, movie, story, or other hobby (Jenkins, 1988; Lewis, 2002). These audience members are eager to fill a void that they feel their life lacks, and attempt to find a place they belong (Lewis, 2002). Fans can follow any number of interests to fill this void. This void can be filled in two ways: through the object of interest itself or through the community of fans. Fans of the celebrity chef, Paula Deen, are therefore investigated to see how the object of fans interest amplifies their consumption. For the purpose of this study, the term fan will be defined as fan involved in fandom.

### **Review of Literature**

The word fan originally stems from the word fanatic, coming from the Latin word *fanaticus*, meaning "insanely but divinely inspired," (Merriam-Webster, 2011). The first known usage was in 1682 and is believed to have been in reference to sports and the theater. From here, fandom was picked up by science-fiction enthusiasts, who created jargon for the subculture of fandom- much of it still used today (Coppa, 2006). Science fiction fandom's roots are credited to the letters-to-the-editor section of Hugo Gernback's magazine *Amazing Stories* in 1926. This section allowed fans to discuss stories both with the editor, and with other fans, thus beginning

the community aspect to fandom (Coppa, 2006). The magazine even published contributor's address so fans could correspond with each other directly.

Media fans are claimed to have been born from science fiction fans in the 1960s. The television programs *Star Trek* and *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* are credited with much of this emergence, but for very different reasons. *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* was a very popular show that had a strong viewership. Fans would rush home to watch the mystery show every Friday night at 10. Fans wanted to talk about the show. They searched for other fans who regularly watched the show to talk about it (Coppa, 2006). *Star Trek*, on the other hand, had trouble staying on air. Ratings went down on the show, therefore fans may have been forced to become more vocal and participatory to keep the show on air (Coppa, 2006).

By the 1980's, Americans began to widen their fandom scope to British television series, like *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, and new American shows like *Cagney and Lacey*. *Cagney and Lacey* was one of the first non-science fiction shows to truly notice a clear fan base. This fan base was especially noticeable when the show was brought back from being cancelled after a successful letter writing campaign by fans of the show (Coppa, 2006). Detective shows like *Miami Vice* and *Moonlighting* were also shows from the 1980's that began to see an emergence of fans.

Today, fans can be divided into multiple categories: Science fiction fans, sports fans, celebrity-crazed fans, media fans, and lifestyle fans to name a few. The first two categories are easier to spot. These are the fans who outwardly show their fandom through dressing up, painting themselves, and making a commotion about the object of their Fandom. These fans are the focus of a majority of research (Jenkins, 1988). The second two categories, however, are slightly more difficult to spot. They are not as noisy about their fandom, nor do they usually

outwardly express themselves. Instead, these fans believe their excitement deals more with preferences than obsessions, and they are more conventionally involved. These fans go to events, seek out celebrities or personalities whom they enjoy, and make pilgrimages to landmark places that have a significant meaning to the object of their fandom (Lewis, 2002).

Fans are involved with fandom for two main reasons. The first is that they are consumed by the interest itself; like a fan that is obsessed with his or her sports team or a particular TV show. This interest involves a genuine love of the players, plotlines, characters, or whatever makes that particular interest attractive to them. The fan may love the idea of feeling involved with the object, and may be able to feel that he or she can relate to the players or personalities related to the object. For fans involved in fandom, their interest is a part of their personal identity.

The second reason for fandom is the fan's connection to other fans. Their fandom is part of their social identity; fans involved in fandom see themselves as in their own ingroup, and others as in the outgroup (Reysen & Branscombe, 2010). In some cases, this community feeling is imagined. Fans feel they are a part of a larger community with a shared interest, even if they have never been around similar people (Reysen & Branscombe, 2010). Simply the idea of being involved in an area that has other supporters is enough to make fans feel they belong within an ingroup. However, in many cases fans have the ability to join together at conventions, games, and other events, which in turn strengthens the need to be involved in fandom (Jenkins, 1988). The need for community within fandom is known as fanship (Reysen & Branscombe, 2010).

Fans are usually therefore more enthusiastic about current trends. According to a study by Reysen and Branscombe (2010), many media fans claim popular television shows as their favorite fan interest. Fans of hobbies and sports teams tend to gravitate towards what they grew

up with. Hobbies and sports teams fans often have had an ingroup instilled in them since youth. This ingroup usually includes their family and close friends. Media fans, however, select newer trends because they are popular. They can connect with more fans and feel a part of a larger ingroup if they chose to enjoy more popular culture. In many cases, fans of more current media also have a more contemporary means with which to talk to other fans about their shared interest. These fans can join messaging boards and Twitter feeds about shows and characters if they choose; however most older media, such as older television programs, do not have the same community.

While fans may see themselves as part of the ingroup, they are typically seen as being in the outgroup by society (Lewis, 2002). Fans are viewed by society and some researchers as socially isolated individuals searching for acceptance into a group of any kind. Part of the allure of being a fan is the acceptance and community that comes from a shared interest (Lewis, 2002; Reysen & Branscombe, 2010). The paradox is that some fans involved in fandom may not see themselves as fans because they are not the typical costumed enthusiasts. Instead, they may consider themselves as enthusiasts of subjects; they are unaware of any type of acceptance seeking. Nevertheless, these fans often share characteristics to extreme fans. They rush home to watch their favorite shows. They vote for the next *American Idol*. They participate in celebrity gossip, such as who got kicked off of *Dancing with the Stars*? They exchange recipes they have gotten from Paula Deen's cooking shows and follow her on Twitter or Pinterest. These fans are virtually the same as the painted sports fanatic and light-saber carrying enthusiast; they are simply harder to label.

Fans enjoy feeling entertained with the object of their interests. They care about these personalities, and believe they know them well enough to know how these characters will act and

how they think (Auter & Palmgreen, 2000; Jenkins, 1988). Some fans even care enough to create storylines and plots for the characters they follow. With social media and computer mediated communications (CMC) connections between the fan and the object, the relationship can be even stronger. The fan now has the ability to ask the personality questions about themselves, furthering their knowledge and making a stronger fan (Auter & Palmgreen, 2010).

The Internet and CMC have intertwined the interest and community aspects of fandom. Fans can now reach to other fans out through blogs and microblogs to discuss the object of interest. Celebrity objects of interest can also join the community through blogs, Facebook pages, messaging boards, and Twitter. While the Internet can link fans interested in a specific subject together, it has now also allowed objects of interest (or people directly involved with these objects) to participate in the conversation (Sanderson, 2008). For example, a lead actress on a television show has the ability to sign on to Twitter and follow the conversation viewers are having by following a hash tag, and even participate in the conversation, responding directly to a viewer through their Twitter handle, or by simply interjecting using the show's hash tag.

One celebrity who does this well is Jada Pinkett Smith from the show *Hawthorne*. Smith will get on Twitter and tweet her fans during the show using the hash tag #Hawthorne. Fans have the ability to then ask Smith questions about the show and whatever they want to know; Smith will answer a select few. Deen also converses with her fans through Twitter. Deen is constantly tweeting her followers about upcoming appearances, giving them a recipe of the day, and tweeting personal pictures of her everyday life for her fans to consume. This connection through the internet not only allows fans the opportunity to find each other, but also the ability to engage in a conversation with a beloved character or personality themselves. In an email interview done with Deen she wrote, "Twitter is so fun, y'all. It's like a little conversation with

my fans. We can chat about our favorite recipes or what we're cooking for dinner. It's great for getting to know what people want to see for recipes!" Deen claims that Twitter is a useful tool in creating a deeper relationship with her fans (Deen, 2012).

The media have not only been a major contributor to society's interest in celebrities, but also has changed the way fans interact with and view celebrities (Furedi, 2010). Celebrities' public lives are splashed across magazines, television shows and the Internet for any fan to find (Young & Pinsky, 2006). As a result, audience members feel a sense of familiarity with these celebrities. Fans know intimate details of celebrities' lives, and feel they themselves are apart of them. This one-sided relationship is known as a parasocial bond.

The Parasocial Interaction Theory (PSI) states that viewers form superficial relationships with personalities they see on television after a period of time due to the "face-to-face interaction that can occur between media characters and their audience" (Ballantine & Martin, 2005, p. 198). This 'face-to-face interaction' takes place between an audience member and a screen. While parasocial interactions used to require only a television set, the online world has changed the dynamics (Eyal & Cohen, 2006).

Parasocial relationships feel real to viewers because they mimic the patterns of a genuine personal relationship (Rubin & McHugh, 1987). In a study of impact of the sitcom *Friends* in its final season, Eyal and Cohen (2006) found that though the disbanding of an artificial relationship is less stressful than parasocial relationships, it follows a similar pattern. So while these relationships may be weaker than true social relationships, they mirror the illusion of intimacy (Ballantine & Martin, 2006). However, social networking sites have shattered the fourth wall that traditionally blocks fans from full intimacy. Celebrities now have the ability to engage with their fans. They can answer questions, write blogs, respond to friend requests and tweet back.

This new level of intimacy has allowed fans to feel more connected to celebrities than ever before, thus strengthening the possibility to lapse into the world fandom.

One reason media fans are attracted to current media is the evolution and strengthening of celebrity. While the celebrity is not a new concept, it is one that has changed with the advancement of media. Celebrities are individuals who are well known because of various forms of media and command a considerable amount of public attention. They are generally wealthy, exciting, and through their fictional character or persona can create an affable personality audience members are curious and interested in. The level of celebrity is also achievable. Any person that can attract a significant amount of attention to themselves can be ranked at a celebrity status. Today we have celebrity lawyers, psychiatrists, bloggers, chefs, YouTube stars, and the list goes on (Furedi, 2010). There has been a shift to fan-created celebrities and characters who are creating more fans. Celebrities are becoming manufactured less from their skills, and more from their ability to be interesting to the public, if even for a short time. Today's celebrities have become products of the media, which in turn cultivates and amplifies their popularity through portrayals of "reality" or through a competition.

Part of the reason for this new trend in celebrities is how they have been created through the popular genre of reality TV. Reality TV can be broken into two major categories: shows that are contests or game shows, like *Big Brother*, or *American Idol*, or *Top Chef*; and shows that follow people around in their ordinary lives or give these lives a twist. Shows like the later, referred to as docusoaps, include series like *The Real Housewives* series or *Wife Swap* (Kjus, 2009). In contests or game shows, celebrities can be created through active audience participation; audience members determine the fate of the contestants on the show through voting. Thus, fans have the ability to create celebrities by joining together in their imagined



community and encouraging outgroup members to help make their favorite character a celebrity. In the second category, however, fans create celebrities through viewership and demand (Kjus, 2009).

The irony behind docusoaps is that while celebrities can be created through them by viewership, in many cases we are watching because we want to see the normality of celebrity life (Fogel, 2008). Society enjoys the idea that celebrities can be like us. We want to know that they have a family that they are a part of. This family center can be applied to the success of many shows like *The Real Housewives* series or *The Kardashians*. Our curiosity with how celebrities live their lives and raise their children fascinates us.

As an exemplar of how audiences are searching for the celebrity, one could look at the genre of cooking shows. Cooking shows are a relatively new phenomenon, beginning to grow in popularity in the early 2000's as Food Network found success after a ten-year struggle in 2003 (Ketchum, 2005). The network grew in popularity once the network changed how they framed their shows. Food Network became a station that was not selling food: they were selling a lifestyle through a personable chef (Ketchum, 2005).

### *The Food Network*

Food Network has had a steady increase in viewership since 2006. As of September 2011, distribution of Food Network was at 99 million households in the US, up 9 million from 2006 (scrippsnetwork.com, 2011). The station is licensed to air in 138 countries. Food Network hit record high ratings in 2011, being the top watched cable network on Sunday nights. FoodNetwork.com also is the most viewed site for the cooking category, averaging at 8.6 million unique viewers per month. In 2008, Food Network launched its magazine, *Food Network Magazine*. After one year in circulation, the magazine reached 1 million copies in circulation.

The magazine was up to 1.4 million paid circulation by 2010 (Pardee, 2010). The magazine also had added two times the number of ad pages within a year of circulation.

Currently, the top show on The Food Network is *Rachel Vs. Guy: Celebrity Cook Off*, which saw record ratings, during its latest premiere on January 1, 2012. The show's viewership among adults ages 25-54 increased 22% over the prior year. Among other Food Network game shows are *Cupcake Wars*, *Chopped*, *Ace of Cakes*, and *Worst Chefs in America*. Food Network also maintains its popular traditional cooking shows with celebrity chefs like Paula Deen, Bobby Flay, Anne Burrell, Giada DeLaurentiis, and Rachel Ray. Most of these celebrity chefs host more than one show out of the networks 117 shows. Paula Deen hosts three shows on the network, *Paula's Best Dishes*, *Paula's Home Cooking*, and *Paula's Party*. Her sons, Jamie and Bobby Deen, have hosted several shows in the past, in which Deen frequently guest starred. Her son, Bobby Deen, has started his own show called *Not my Momma's Cooking* that features his mother's recipes using more low calorie ingredients.

Some celebrity chefs have outsourced their on-air personalities to other networks. Rachael Ray has a talk show syndicated through CBS called *The Rachael Ray Show*. Ray's show started in 2008, and is co-produced by Ray and Oprah Winfrey and falls under the umbrella of Harpo Productions. Guy Fieri also has broadened his scope from celebrity chef and host to a game show on NBC called *Minute to Win It*. Giada De Laurentiis is another celebrity chef who has a reoccurring role as a guest reporter on NBC's *The Today Show*. These celebrity chefs are popular enough with the public that their personality can be used to sell other shows on other networks.

Food Network is owned by Scripps Network Interactive, which also owns other lifestyle networks like HGTV, DIY Network, Cooking Channel, Travel Channel, and Great American

Country. In 2010, Scripps Network Interactive was listed at number 30 in the leading media companies, rising from its spot at number 34 in 2009 (Bradly, 2011).

Adema (2000) argues that the success of Food Network comes from their ability to “break social barriers” by having upscale chefs like Emeril Lagasse host shows, claiming that anyone could cook extravagant dishes. As the network evolved, more simplified shows were deemed more appropriate for viewers. Hosts began to cook in what appeared to be their kitchens rather than in studios. They were personable, showing viewers how to cook anything from a fancy, four-star meal to a quick, 30-minute family meal (Ketchum, 2005).

Along with this do-it-yourself approach, cooking shows also became more entertaining; celebrity chefs made food and cooking look fun. First starting in the 1970s with the quirky Julia Child, celebrity chefs/hosts had personalities and families- a personal touch hidden within their show. Cooking shows provided useful information as well as entertainment by mimicking a realistic, though idealistic, lifestyle. Audience members had the opportunity to feel like a part of the host’s personal life by being able to cook with the hosts and their families via their TV screens. Viewers were invited into these personalities’ television homes through setting techniques, lighting, camera angles, and a base amount of personal information. These personalities were becoming more than just TV hosts; they were becoming friends (Ketchum, 2005).

Creating a parasocial bond with celebrity chefs like Paula Deen makes the transformation into fandom more appealing. Fandom fans are characterized as seeking some form of acceptance; hosts fulfilled these needs. Fans are able to feel a part of these host’s lives from the show’s introduction as they are invited into one of the most intimate rooms in the house: the kitchen (Ketchum, 2005; Lewis, 2002). Between competition cooking shows to basic one-on-

one format, Food Network's popularity shows that viewers seem to love the realistic and personal aspects of cooking shows. The addition of personal details of the hosts has made cooking shows now take on the characteristics of reality TV shows. Some cooking shows even have game show or contest-like qualities, with audiences sitting in the studio and competitions between chefs or even everyday people.

Through these changes, Food Network currently finds itself in a niche between reality TV and home improvement. Food Network not only added hosts who were entertaining to watch—they created celebrities. *Celebrity Chefs* had big personalities, a skill, and families that they brought on air. With so many celebrity chefs being created, competition cooking shows became a logical leap. Starting with one cook-off show (*The Iron Chef*), Food Network soon realized the potential behind these game shows, and added more. Today, Food Network airs over 15 game shows, many of which are hosted by celebrity chefs. If a celebrity chef does not host the show, then they hold the higher, more prestigious position as a judge. By using only their own stars to fill the positions on these game shows, Food Network is cultivating and creating more celebrity chefs. Paula Deen is no exception. Deen got her start on Food Network contest, “Ready... Set... Cook!” After the success of a few episodes, Deen soon got her own show on Food Network.

### *Paula Deen*

Unlike most Food Networks hosts, Paula Deen is a southern chef. In fact, her show is shot at her home on Tybee Island, Georgia, and she projected a southern charm to match her southern cooking. Her Southern appeal tapped the down-home, family-oriented stereotypes of Southern culture. Today, thousands of tourists make the pilgrimage every week to dine at

Deen's Savannah, Georgia, restaurant made famous by her two shows on Food Network and 10 plus cookbooks (PaulaDeen.com, 2011).

Paula Deen's down-home glamour, which has catapulted her into cooking stardom, started in a lackluster fashion. After losing both her parents, going through a divorce, and suffering from agoraphobia, Deen started her empire in 1989 by selling sandwiches and other goods she made from home under the business name The Bag Lady. Eventually, her business outgrew her kitchen, and Deen opened a restaurant at a Best Western known as The Lady. Five years later, her restaurant, The Lady and Sons, opened in Savannah, Georgia. In 1997 Deen published her first cookbook, a series of recipes from The Lady and Sons. The book became a best seller. Two years later, Deen started occasionally appearing on several of the Food Networks shows. In December of 2002, her show "Paula's Home Cooking" premiered; it is still on the air.

The show "Door Knock Dinners" by Gordon Elliot began Deen's climb to fame. After meeting with Elliot through a mutual friend, Deen agreed to host an episode of the show. After receiving high ratings from her first appearance, Deen agreed to go on the show again. The Food Network then asked Deen to appear on a show called "Ready... Set... Cook!," a cooking contest where chefs were given a set of ingredients and had to cook a meal using all the ingredients presented to them. After a few years of negotiations, the Food Network told Deen in 2001 that she would be hosting a new show that would premiere in 2002 (Deen, 2007).

Deen is now the author of over 10 cookbooks (Appendix A), has hosted three shows, and publishes her own magazine. Additionally, Deen created a cookware line, and is CEO of The Lady and Sons restaurant. She has won two Emmys, helped her sons create their own cookbook and shows (which she supports by frequently appearing as a guest), and played lead role in the

blockbuster movie *Elizabethtown*. Over eight million copies of her cookbooks have been sold worldwide. Deen has also launched a furniture company, greeting card company, and a Savannah Sea Cruise within the past few years.

In her book, *It Ain't All About the Cookin'*, Deen tells her fans that she does not see herself as a chef. Instead, she sees herself as a cook. She claims her style of cooking is unrefined, not gourmet, and not formally educated. Instead, she claims her style is Southern and self-taught at her grandmother's stove. Deen claims that she is a success story of the American dream, and aims to inspire her fans to achieve their goals as well. The theme of self-made, modest, and skilled celebrity seems to be enticing to viewers. In a media web that currently consists of stars who are famous not for their skill but for their wealth or fame, a woman who pulled herself up from agoraphobia to a multi-million dollar empire is an attractive option to follow (Furedi, 2010).

Deen can be linked to a reality-show star in several ways- perhaps most notably as a talk show host in her series, *Paula's Party*. Talk show hosts are personable, and give viewers a glimpse into their personal lives and opinions through their own opening dialogues, the guests they bring on the show, and the topics they discuss with these guests (Kjus, 2009; White, 2007). Deen's informal speech and by making viewers feel like participants in a conversation, Deen has the ability to build a parasocial bond with her viewers, making them feel welcomed into her home and her life (White, 2007). Typical talk show format has hosts address their audience members in first person, which also makes audience members feel more a part of the show. For example, Deen may ask her guests a question that makes her audience members feel more intimately involved in the conversation.

Deen also undercuts her celebrity status in order to make herself more relatable to her fans (White, 2007). On the show, Deen sounds like she is just like her audience members gushing about the guests on her show. Talk shows are about the hosts, but they are also about the celebrity guests who appear. The celebrity should always be more important than the host; therefore the host has to be modest about their own fame so they will not upstage their guest. Deen follows this rule, raving about how excited she is to have the guest on her show, helping the audience relate to her because she is like them (White, 2007).

Deen mirrors a reality star in the way she portrays her family on her cooking show. Fogul claims that fans are interested in the nuclear family. They want to know that celebrities have families in which they actively participate, and instill good moral values. Deen exemplifies her Southern values, and acts as an advocate for good manners and good family morals. Deen furthers her stance by showing her family frequently on her show and sharing intimate, family memories (Fogul, 2008).

Deen also has a spicy side to her humor, and is known by her fans for her use of double entendres and perverted sense of humor. The gift shop at her restaurant, *The Lady and Sons* sells shirts saying, “The ho cakes are free!” Deen is known for flirting with her male guest stars and promptly laughing at her own jokes. This type of humorous and spicy personality can make fans feel like they are listening and talking with an old friend. Humor is a means that uses frequently with brands because audience members enjoy humor (Chung and Zhao, 2011). Deen not only recognizes her bawdy humor, but justifies it, claiming, “My God has a sense of humor even if what I say has a four-letter word in it. I think he’d want me to laugh” (Deen, 2007). Deen encourages her fans to laugh with her. Through her humor, Deen can make her fans feel like they have personally known her for years, making them more likely to buy her products.

Considering how Deen's empire is directly linked to her fans consumption, it is important to further analyze their relationship. This study links media content to the production of fandom. The production and expansion of a fan base increases Deen's value as well as her brand's value. The economic and cultural impact of Deen's combined efforts makes her a formidable businessperson and a cultural phenomenon well deserving of scholarly attention and analysis. Deen's fans provide the door to her world.

The results of this study have the potential to be expanded to other areas of fandom. Paula Deen is being used as the exemplar because she went from being nearly homeless to the CEO of a multi-million dollar company: she is a personality strongly supported by her fans. By examining the verbal cues, such as conversational language and use of pronouns that increase parasocial bonds, which are given by the media producers to potential fans, the elements that compose Fandom can be analyzed.

The appeal for the study of fandom is fans economical implications for media providers. Through their voracious consumption, fans push for more production; therefore media producers make more money. This study seeks to answer how fan-related culture drives the production of media, and how this production continues to drive fandom. This question will be answered through the application of theoretical frameworks by James Carey to explain what appeals to fans in order to create Fandom, and how these fans push for more production of their favorite media. This will be done using Carey's two concepts of communications and Hall's explanation of the media/consumer relationship.



## CHAPTER 2

### SOMETHING SMELLS GOOD

#### **Theoretical Framework**

James Carey (1975) says that there are two models of communications: a transmission model and a ritualistic model. The transmission view illustrates the technical aspect of communication. It focuses on the “transmission of signals or messages over distance for the purpose of control” (p. 3). A ritualistic view, however, explores the ‘community’ aspect of communication, and “is linked to terms such as sharing, participation, association, and fellowship, and the possession of a common faith” (Carey, 1975, p. 6). The transmission model reflects the power of the message sender, while the ritualistic model provides a more dramatic interpretation of the message and the community that interprets the communication. While Carey points out that these models are counterpoints, he also explains that one cannot be looked at without the examination of the other.

Carey (1975) argues that both aspects of communications are rooted in religion. Transmission was a way to spread the religious word quickly and effectively to create power, while ritual communications had people searching for those who shared a ‘common faith.’ These facets of communication are still accepted as a way of communications today, and are still lenses through which we can understand media messages today (Carey, 1975). Audience members are looking for quick bits of information that they understand and agree with, while also looking for other audience members who share these beliefs (Carey, 1975). This faster means of communications has caused some audience members to reach a new level of consumption and enjoyment that has become interactive and borderline obsessive. This level is currently known as fandom (Jenkins, 1988; Lewis, 2002).

Part of the lure of the fandom culture is explained by Carey's argument: Communications in terms of transmission and ritualism. Fans try to recreate and disseminate new information about the subject they love, while also hoping to find acceptance and fellowship through a common bond with others (Jenkins, 1988; Lewis, 2002). One could even claim that for some fandom mimics religion, bringing with it all the characteristics of religious faith: the calling to a higher power, the need to spread the word, and the communal ritual of gathering with other in celebration.

The media actively exert influences on society. Through the need for the faster diffusion of messages, technological/production advances have been made that allow the instantaneous information on popular events. This means more media can be consumed faster, and the gap between a fan and super fan can be blurred (Carey, 1975; Lewis, 2002). The concept of fandom is a response to media influence. Fans are now constructed to become super fans as media today have allowed independence that permits audience members to determine how, when and where they consume their media. This makes determining how much information on one particular subject fans consume possible (Jenkins, 1992). However, while the media are major catalysts in how audience members act, there must be some other social authority that sways audience members and strengthens this media influence (Hall, 1982). Therefore, fans who are looking for acceptance are going to be influenced not only by the media, but by other fans who are also following the media's messages in order to gain acceptance from their peers (Hall, 1975; Jenkins, 1992).

New media have brought with them the ability to create and disseminate information quickly, making the transmission model an obvious choice to investigate fandom. Those involved in fandom can therefore reach out to others of a 'common faith' if seen through the

ritualistic model of communication (Carey, 1975). Bonds are made through communications and mass media, as those involved in Fandom create their own media to spread throughout the fan world (Jenkins, 1988). Fans have the opportunity to create new information and new story lines that can be spread in order to aggressively illustrate their fandom and transcend the message to other fans that they are ready to join (Carry, 1975; Jenkins, 1988). Fandom is ultimately about community and the interconnectivity of communications. Jenkins states, “for fans, consumption sparks production, reading generates writing, until terms seem logically inseparable” (1988, p. 88).

However, transmission is only one piece of the larger jigsaw of fans and fandom. In other words, media effects are “regulated by other social processes” (Hall, 1982, 58). This means that societal conventions help shape how audience members are affected by media. Specific to fandom, L. Lewis (2002) argues “the mass media provide (the argument goes) ways for these inadequate people to bolster, organize and enliven their unsatisfying lives” (p. 18). Therefore media are not a villain generating fandom; rather they are vehicles to acceptance and ritual from like-minded audience members, which is why we must also investigate fandom through the ritualistic model (Carey, 1975).

When considering the implications of fandom on our society, it is important to consider how everything down to the word “fandom” was shaped also through cultural means. Society perceives participants of fandom as “super fans”- over-zealous fans that do not know when to stop (Jenkins, 1988; Lewis, 2002). These fandom fans are enthusiasts who are infatuated with the subject matter’s trivia, the celebrities it has supporting it, collect all the memorabilia surrounding it, and are generally regarded as social misfits (Jenkins, 1988). However, fandom is a more complex construct than just “super fans.” Anyone can attain this level, no matter his or

her preference in the object of interest. Fandom implies passion. Anyone can achieve the level of enthusiasm it takes to earn the status of fandom by being altering aspects of their life around an object of interest.

If a part of fandom is the creation of culture as Jenkins suggests, then fans are participating in the creation of communication and new fan created literature such as microblogs and posts (assets to both the transmission and ritualistic models) as well. Since the work published by Jenkins, the capability of fans has changed. Fans are no longer limited by distance, only coming together for conventions. They have an entire community online, as well as the ability to create new culture and new content. Fans therefore have the capability to create their own community (Carey, 1975).

Fans also cause media producers to create more content. Fans themselves must be wary of the mass consumerism that has evolved with the enhancement of advertising and PR techniques (Lewis, 2002). Fans have evolved into the perfect consumers, as they push for more content to consume. If the fan suffers from a lack of an ingroup, they are even more susceptible to the persuasion found in advertising techniques and fan-related products as they are searching for a commonality with other audience members. These fans believe that if they own the official products and know everything about the subject, they will find acceptance within some community (Jenkins, 1988; Lewis, 2002).

Media companies can therefore also be incorporated into Carey's argument of transmission and ritual models of communication. Companies are attempting to create more content delivered instantaneously to their fans in order gain economic power. Companies do this through honing in on the communal aspect communications, alluding to social acceptance

through the buying of their products. Fans therefore interpret the produced media as a means to gain community. Media producers, however, see media production as a way to gain power.

Jenkins claims that Fandom creates culture, however, that is only half the story. Fandom creates consumption and fan production of media messages that in turn cause television and other media producers to create more messages to be transmitted. Therefore more fans emerge who demand more production to be consumed. A cycle is the result: media producers distribute information; fans consume it and crave more. Consequently, more media are produced by both media producers and consumers (Jenkins, 1988; Lewis, 2002).

The purpose of this study is therefore to examine how media producers use transmission and ritual communications to produce fan driven materials, and how these materials can generate a higher population in Fandom. In other words, how do media producers create an environment within which fandom emerges and thrives? Specifically, how does Paula Deen's company of goods, services exemplify that phenomenon?

## **Methods**

In order to answer the research questions posed above, a textual analysis was used. In this case, Paula Deen and her media productions were used as the text, and analyzed for evidence of Deen's encouragement of fans' consumption. Deen's persona is part of this text that was analyzed. A textual analysis methodology was chosen because it gives specific insight into the connotation, interpretation, and latent meaning of the text (Hall, 1982). Textual analysis delves deeper into how the text is intended by the sender, and interpreted by the audience (Hall, 1982). Validity per se is not an issue because, to quote Hall, textual analysis "preserves something in the complexity of the language and connotation which has to be sacrificed in content analysis in

order to achieve high validity” (1982, p. 15). In other words, textual analysis looks for evidence within the text- a feat content analysis is too timid to tackle.

In the methodology of textual analysis, Hall provides a map to guide the technique. First, text was chosen that provides a clear insight into Deen’s persuasion of fans to consume her product. The verbal text spanned 14 years, starting with Deen’s first cookbook, published in 1997. Video content spanned five years, starting with season six (2006) of *Paula’s Home Cooking*. Three cookbooks were analyzed, starting with her first book, a cookbook from a few years after her show began, and her latest cookbook. Two copies of Deen’s magazine *Cooking with Paula Deen* were also analyzed as well as Deen’s memoir and Twitter feed.

Second, the content underwent what Hall refers to as a “long preliminary soak” (1982, p. 15). All were gathered and had a first read. This stage allowed for specific examples to be isolated and further analyzed later. It is from this text that the repetition of Deen’s language and actions were observed and noted as identifiers of the actual meaning of the media she is producing for her fans.

In the last stage, the examples that were isolated from the chosen texts went through a more intensive analysis in order to understand the true meaning behind Deen’s persona and media empire. The text was then be analyzed through Carey’s models of tramissional and ritualistic consumption of media. Media was also searched for any evidence of fandom driving production and industry in creating fans. Language encouraging a parasocial bond, such as casual and familiar language, was also analyzed. Familiar type language promoting a parasocial bond strengthens fandom because the fan may get the sense of acceptance they have been searching for from Deen herself, enticing the fans to buy more products from Deen.

Contemporary content was predominant because of Deen's increasing popularity throughout the years. However, earlier content was used to juxtapose her evolving persona to see how it began to encourage her fans consumption of her product. The sample is a convenience sample based on the media I was able to access. Though a convenience sample, the sample covers various moments within Deen's fame, starting with her first cookbook and ending within the last year of Deen's career.

Deen's memoir, *Paula Deen: It Ain't All About the Cookin'* was the first media to be textually analyzed for evidence of parasocial bonding. Deen's language and personal details about her life were carefully examined to find if there is evidence of Deen enhancing and building fan's parasocial bonds with her. Due to the personal details given in her memoir, it can be assumed that Deen will attempt to form parasocial bonds. Therefore, a closer examination of Deen's writing style and language use will be analyzed to search for subtle clues of Deen reaching for more fans.

Three of Deen's cookbooks were analyzed for evidence of parasocial interaction with her fans. The cookbooks analyzed are: *The Lady and Sons*; *Paula Deen and Friends: Living it up, Southern Style*; and *Paula Deen's Southern Cooking Bible: The New Classic Guide to Delicious Dishes with More than 300 Recipes*. These books were analyzed chronologically, and were searched for evidence of Deen attempting to form intimate bonds with her audience, and using her language style (writing with a southern inflection, writing in first person like she is talking to an old friend) to recognize conversational aspects of her stories to gain more fans.

For the analysis of television shows, three episodes of Deen's show "Paula's Home Cooking" underwent a detailed analysis. These shows were spaced to search for a progression of Deen's changing persona and if she did undergo any form of a change. The shows chosen

started with the second episode from season six, *Grubfest*. From here, an episode from 2009, *Chocolate Fever*, will be analyzed to see if there was any change in Deen's on-air personality, as well as be analyzed for general content and parasocial bonding. The last episode was from Deen's 2010 season, *Southern Style*. This was one of the latest episodes shot of Deen's show and was analyzed from both a progressive standpoint as well as an individual analysis of the episode. Episodes were gathered from a convenience sample. No shows before 2006 could be found, therefore the earliest show came from 2006. However, Deen's popularity was still new at this point, and an earlier episode would not change the results. Shows were found on the video site Hulu and watched from there. The magazines chosen were also a convenience sample based off of what could be found. Two magazines were analyzed: The 2009 May/June edition and the 2011 September/October issue.

Last, Deen's Twitter feed will be analyzed for a month's worth of interactions with her fans. Deen's interactions were counted and analyzed for her use of personal detail sharing, photo sharing, product promotion, and fan interaction. Deen's Twitter statistics in accordance with other Food Network celebrities was also analyzed as well as the number of her tweets.

### **Expected Findings**

In this study, the expected finding is a strong link between fan consumption and the production of Paula Deen's franchise concomitantly to find evidence of Paula Deen's franchise constructing fans. Paula Deen's persona as well as the literature used within Deen's company map how fans consumption equals major payouts to media producers, therefore encouraging these media producers to create more products that encourage more fans.

I anticipate that the study will support the idea of fandom created through the text of Deen's magazine and cookbooks, as well as through content in Deen's cooking show. As fans



consume Deen's materials, they will feel the personal connection to Deen and feel the acceptance they crave as fans. Therefore, they increasingly consume products, as well as moving from their identity as fans to the community of fandom and thus creating more fans.

## CHAPTER 3

## BLEND. DON'T MIX, STIR, OR BEAT

**Memoir: Paula Deen: *It Ain't All About the Cookin'***

Deen's memoir, *It Ain't All About the Cookin'* is one of the most significant ways Deen reaches out to her fans. In her book, Deen dives deep into her personal life, graphically depicting her parents' death, her failed first marriage, her financial and personal struggles, her religion, as well as her new marriage and struggles with her stepdaughter. Through these stories, as well as through her verbal style, Deen attempts to strengthen her parasocial bond with her fans and make fans out of readers. Deen's attempt to strengthen parasocial bonds can be seen in her memoir most strongly through her use of language, use of personal stories, her sense of humility, and her moral stance. All of these factors are used to encourage fans to form a deeper parasocial bond with Deen that can push fans towards fandom. First, her language will be considered.

Parasocial bonding depends on fans consuming media to feel closer to the celebrity of their choice, and Deen provides all the material her fans need to know what Paula Deen would do. Deen claims in her book that she chose to confess the details of her life because she "loves [her] fans so much" and feels that she owes her fans the truth about her life, as well as the encouragement to try for their dreams the way she did (Deen, 2007, p. 2). Deen continues to be aware of her fans, saying later in her memoir, "it's only me, Paula, talking to you as I would if you were sitting at my own kitchen..." (p. 178). Deen sets the stage for a friendly, interpersonal conversation. Fans can imagine themselves sitting across from Deen at her own kitchen table, sipping coffee (like Deen herself is doing on the cover of the book) and discussing her life.

Deen uses a conversational style of writing in her memoir. She writes in second person, addressing her audience specifically through pronouns like "ya'll" and "you." Deen applies

these pronouns as a way to make her readers and fans feel like they are having an interpersonal, one-on-one conversation about the most intimate details of Deen's life. Deen uses both singular and plural pronouns throughout her book, which encompasses the community aspect of fandom. Fandom is concerned with how fans relate to other fans; therefore by using plural pronouns like "ya'll," Deen engages her fans, making them believe that she is talking to a community. Using the ritualistic model, the use of the plural pronoun promotes the community fandom component of an ingroup of fans. Ritualistic communications is applied because Deen is starting a conversation with a group of her fans through these plural pronouns. She is using language that encourages a group of her fans to respond to herself and to each other, creating a moment of intimacy with her fans.

However, Deen also uses singular words like "you," "girl," and "darlin.'" These words show a level of familiarity and intimacy with her audience. Deen writes as if she is talking to her reader directly. She confides to her reader intimate details of her life. The use of "girl" implies that Deen is talking to a close girlfriend. Fans can hear Deen saying "girl" with an upward inflection in her voice, laughing as she is telling her story. The use of girl also shows that Deen knows her audience. Deen knows that a majority of her viewers and readers are women; therefore she genders her omniscient reader in order to simulate intimacy with that fan. The use of the word "darlin'" shows a new level of familiarity, stepping into a friend status. "Darlin'" is a nickname. It is also a name that establishes a friendly disposition towards another person. The use of the singular pronoun establishes fanship, allowing the fan to create a deeper relationship with Deen, the object of interest.

Deen uses other direct references to her reader through her memoir. For example, in her memoir, Deen describes a fight she had with her son. Deen reveals that she told her son she

hated him, and in a moment of catharsis writes, “can you imagine me... saying such a thing...?” (Deen, 2007, p. 2). Deen asks a direct question to her fans here. She is sending a signal to her readers saying in essence, “you know me, I would never do that.” By asking such a direct question to her readers, Deen establishes a connection with her readers. She is hoping her readers feel that they know her well enough to know how sorry she was for that moment, and establish a sense of intimacy through the use of a personal story.

Another language technique used in Deen’s memoir is her grammatical style of writing. Deen uses conversational words and spellings throughout her book. She frequently uses the words “ya’ll,” “yo” (your), “liketa” (likely to), and “ain’t.” These words, as well as many clichés and southern expressions used throughout the book, are words readers probably expect to hear from the Southerner they see on Food Network. Through her conversational and phonetic way of spelling, the fan can read Deen’s book using her voice. When Deen writes, “I could eat ‘em up,” the reader can hear Deen’s southern voice saying that phrase (Deen, 2007, p. 1). This technique is intentional, as Deen had a co-author when writing this book. Deen, her co-author, and publisher abandoned writing a grammatically correct book and focused on creating a way to have her voice go through her fans heads as they read her personal stories. Fans can now not only read about Deen’s private life, but they can do so in a fashion that reminds them of her telling them herself through her own language and voice. This paired with Deen’s use of personal pronouns helps makes fans feel like Deen is putting herself on their level, confessing her life to someone she considers to be close to her.

This writing style is very intentional in that not every gerund is left missing the “g” from the end. Usually Deen will write words such as sitting in their correct form. However, words like “talking” that generally alludes to a level of intimacy or bonding are almost always written

with a missing “g” and apostrophe, like “talkin’.” Words like talking are trigger words for parasocial relationships. They signal to the fan how their object of interest is reaching out, whether it is to them or to another person or celebrity. “Cookin’” is another southernism Deen uses to establish a voice. Deen uses “cookin’” the most when taking the “g” from the gerund, probably because cooking is what has made her famous. Therefore, cooking is the way she is going to establish a relationship with her fans. This style also creates a personality within Deen’s writings that can be recognized by readers when expanded to other formats. For example, Deen can write this way in her memoir, her cookbooks, and her Twitter, making her voice seem more authentic. The stylized aspect also makes Deen’s writing easy to mimic, meaning other professionals in her corporation can write for Deen while still sounding like Deen’s voice.

The language also becomes more southern when Deen defends herself to her readers. The change is subtle, but Deen uses clichés and slips into a deeper southern dialogue when she is defending herself to her reader. For example, when Deen is discussing the comment section of her Food Network page, she becomes defensive over the comments that describe her as an unsanitary chef. In this section, most of the gerunds are missing g’s that are replaced with apostrophes, and Deen uses “ya” instead of “you.” This slight difference in her dialogue pushes the reader to read the paragraph faster. Deen writes:

Well you know what? That ring was a gift from the love of my life and I’ve never before had anything like it. I’m not going to have it sittin’ in someone’s pocket even for thirty minutes. If I were home cooking in my kitchen, it’d be on my finger, just like ya own ring doesn’t leave ya finger when you’re cookin’ up eggs. Deen, p. 183.

Here, Deen allows her southern dialogue to prevail as she defends herself to her reader. She uses more to illustrate that she is a sassy, southern woman; a character Deen probably feels is appealing to her female fans.

Deen also uses personal stories to engage her fans and make them feel like a part of her life. Deen's story is not a typical success story. Deen goes to deep and dark areas of her life, as well as incredibly intimate places. For example, throughout the book, Deen discusses her sex life, her parents' sex lives, and alludes to her sons' sex lives. Deen tells her readers that her ex-husband was good to her only in the bedroom, and even taking her reader to darker parts of her life. Deen discusses her parents' deaths, her dysfunctional and verbally abusive first marriage, and her constant financial struggle. Deen even tells her readers about her first menstrual period. Deen splashes the most intimate moments of her life across her pages to make her fans feel truly a part of her most private life.

Sex is a topic Deen brings up often throughout her book. From her sex life with her ex-husband, to her affair with a married man, and life with her current husband, Deen is unafraid to broach the topic of sex with her readers. At one point, Deen even explains why she loves sex so much: it reminds her of food. As she explains the relationship between food and sex, the conversation mimics that one would have with a good friend. Sex is an awkward topic if not discussed with a trusted person. Deen however does not just talk about sex; she explains how the shape of certain foods and the texture can mirror sexual pleasure for her. Deen's fans therefore get more than a look into her personal life; they even are privy to what arouses Deen, a conversation meant for trusted friends. Deen therefore invites her fans into one of the most personal area of her life: her sex life.

Sprinkled in with these details of her life, Deen throws in the occasional recipe. Starting on page 25, Deen gives family recipes that go along with the content. For example, while Deen is in the middle of describing her life with her parents, Deen gives fans her mother's recipe for doughnuts. Later, when she is discussing her agoraphobia, she provides a recipe for Mississippi Mud cake, her favorite comfort food. "I could eat a whole cake when I was hindin' under my bed," Deen admits (Deen, 2007, p. 47). Adding these recipes along the way also add a personal touch. These recipes seem sacred; they were her family's. We are reading about how Deen's mother made her favorite doughnuts while we are simultaneously learning about her mother's bone cancer. The reader feels almost inclined to fry a batch of dough and coat the dessert with her mothers fudge to mourn Deen's loss as we flip through the pages.

At times, Deen treats her fans like a pastor; she uses her pages to confess. She confesses that she got her black maid arrested for hitting her when she was 10. She confesses that she was sleeping with her high school boyfriend. She confesses to being a smoker. Deen's profession of her guilt makes her seem more human to her reader. Deen is no longer a celebrity; she is flawed, like her fans. She feels guilty about her past, and she needs the catharsis of admitting her transgressions. Admission is one way we bond with friends. Sharing guilt means there is a level of intimacy and trust in the relationship because we trust that the person we share our transgressions with will not leave us. Deen confides in her fans because she knows her fans will not leave her, rather they will commend her for sharing the personal details of her life.

Atonement is a word Deen uses later in her book. Deen consistently claims that this book is the true and entire story of her life, the good and the bad. She says that she is atoning because her fans deserve to know. Having such dedicated fans means great revenue for Deen, and she knows that her fans built her empire. Deen readily admits to this throughout her book. She

claims that she owes her fans the truth because of this. However, it is easy to wonder if this is why Deen really feels her fans deserve to know such intimate details of her life. Deen wants her fans to love her. Therefore, she wants her fans know about her so they will feel closer to her, and consequently continue to consume her products. It is also in Deen's best interest to broaden her fan base. She knows that through her confessions, she has the ability to earn the respect and trust of new fans that could become new major consumers.

In one very intimate story, Deen almost begs for forgiveness from her fans through putting herself directly at their level. After admitting to a 10-year affair with a married man, Deen compares her fans to her. She explains how they are so alike.

Don't judge. It could have been you. It could be you. Why not?  
Don't you cook like me, eat like me, talk like me (even if you're not from Savannah), think like me, love your family passionately like me? It could have been you. Deen, 2007, p. 101.

Deen's use of the phrase "it could have been you" seeks sympathy and forgiveness from her fans. Deen then goes into all the ways they are alike. Knowing that she is writing to her closest and most dedicated fans, Deen knows she can claim their similarities. Fans involved in fandom with Deen probably do cook like her, eat like her, and think like her; she has encouraged them to do so throughout her time as a celebrity chef. Deen wants to connect over her confession. She even throws in the line "it could be you" to show that she has been there- she understands what her fans have been through or are going through.

Along with Deen's intimate relationships with her ex-husband and current husband, she also discloses another very intimate relationship she has: her relationship with God. Throughout her book, Deen mentions her religion. She mostly does this in offhanded comments where she



discusses where she said a prayer, which can be a common phrase in every day speech that does not necessarily have to be religious. However, as Deen begins to talk about how she was lonely, she begins to mention how she prayed specifically to God to bring her a “neighbor.” Deen meant specifically by this phrase that she wanted a companion. Deen then dives into a discussion of prayer. How prayer can easily be done while cooking. Deen from here begins to use words like “blessing,” and explains her faith to her readers.

Through Deen’s strong faith she shares her moral values with her audience. Fogel’s idea of the nuclear family that we enjoy watching celebrities’ families because of their strong morals is prominently shown as Deen describes how important her faith has always been to her (2008). Though Deen says her second marriage and stepfamily goes against the nuclear family (she says this verbatim at one point), Deen is the modernized nuclear family. Deen is portraying what so many of her fans are going through today- blended families. Deen makes herself relatable because her relationship with her stepfamily is not perfect, especially her relationship with her stepdaughter. Deen discusses fights they got into and moments when she claims she did not like her stepdaughter; she is being honest about a sensitive subject that is affecting many American women today. Though Deen makes it seem that she is confessing this because she has vowed to tell the truth, she is also showing her fans how much she is like them. Deen’s imperfections make her more appear to be less of a celebrity and more of a friend to her readers.

Deen also humbles herself through her stories to gain her fans admiration. Deen begins her memoir by saying “I never call myself a chef... I’m a cook” (Deen, 2007, p. 2). Deen continues to explain that she, like most of her fans, never went to cooking school. Deen learned, as most of us do, through her family. Deen credits her grandmother for teaching her how to fry chicken and to use as much butter “as you can get your hands on” (Deen, 2007, p. 16). Deen

places herself at the culinary and educational level of her fans. She tells them that she is not more educated than them, and consistently brings up the fact that she failed a couple of her classes several times in high school. Deen does not want to be known for being an ostentatious chef who uses advanced cooking techniques; she wants anyone to be able to prepare her meals.

Humor is another way Deen humbles herself to her audience members. She laughs at herself throughout her memoir, teasing herself about how she failed algebra and was a cheerleader from Albany, Georgia. Deen uses comedy throughout her memoir to enhance the character she has created in her fans' minds through television appearances and stories in her cookbooks (discussed below). Deen shows her fans that she is someone who can laugh at herself. For example, Deen shares with her fans a joke recipe made by New York comedian Sarah Schaefer about the amount of butter Deen puts in her dishes. Deen says that she thought the mock recipe was too funny not to share with her readers. Deen shares the recipe, which is basically different forms of butter added together, to show her fans that she has a good sense of humor. Knowing that Deen can laugh at herself from both her own jokes as well as the jokes made about her by others makes Deen more endearing to her fans. This makes Deen seem like a carefree woman that fans know they could get along with, which heightens their parasocial bond with Deen. Using the ritualistic model of communication, we can see how Deen's humor causes fans to talk about her sense of wit and good personality so they will want to try and get to know her better. If transitioned to the transmission model, Deen's humor can encourage fans to buy her products. If fans want to know find Deen funny and see that as an attractive trait, they will buy more of her products encounter more of her humor.

Deen discusses what is real and what is not about her show. Deen admits to creating an atmosphere that feels realistic for her fans, which is why some episodes will have her dogs, her

husband, and her sons in them. Deen also reveals how the show is created. She describes to her fans the multiple meals that are made in advance for swap outs and close ups. Deen describes the behind the scenes actions, and that she did not film her show out of her house until 2005. Deen's admission to the running of her show strengthens parasocial bonds because she discusses the truth with her fans. Deen is explaining to her fans what really happens on her set, from whether she really takes a bite of her food, to what happens to the food after she makes it. In a way, Deen is breaking down the fourth wall of the TV screen, and letting her fans know more about life on the actual set so they can feel like they are there, a part of the action.

### **Cookbooks**

#### *The Lady and Sons*

In Deen's first cookbook, published in 1998 before she was a celebrity chef, Deen's language and personality is different than it is in her later publications. In *The Lady and Sons*, Deen opens the book with a note from herself to her readers. This book was an important starting point for Deen as it was her first cookbook, and was a starting point to her fame. In Deen's note to her readers, Deen does not try to write in her assumed down-home voice, but writes in a more conventional manner.

Deen also does not delve into her personal life in her first cookbook. She vaguely explains her humble beginnings and urges readers to never give up, but she does not discuss her personal life per se. Deen keeps her audience at a distance, only addressing them once when she says, "I hope you will enjoy these favorite recipes of mine" (Deen, 1998, p. vii). While Deen does still use her second person style of writing, she does not invite them to share the details of her life because she is not at that point with her readers; she has not established that interpersonal

relationship. Deen is first getting her readers to appreciate her food and the celebrity will come second.

Other than Deen's introduction to her cookbook, there are only a few places where Deen shows any part of her life. The rest of the book gives basic directions for the recipes she provides. Deen explains that these are all recipes from her restaurant, and from here only gives the basic instructions. There are no additional stories, only a few titles to some of the dishes give insight into Deen's family history, like Grandma Hier's Carrot Cake, or Mother's Rolls. For some of these recipes, a brief story of less than 100 characters may be written in bold under the title. Otherwise, Deen sticks to the directions.

Only a fan who has recently bought the cookbook but who knows a great deal about Deen from her TV show and other publications would be able to feel the personality of Deen within the pages of her first cookbook. Fans who know to look for Deen's references to her family members and friends may feel closer learning her mother's recipe for rolls, but this language would not be enough to create a new fan from just this book. Other resources would be necessary at this point for Deen to create real fans who have parasocial bonds with her; more forms of transmission communication would be necessary.

This version of *The Lady and Sons* cookbook is not her original first version. Deen claims in her 2007 memoir that there was five thousand copies put out of her original *The Lady and Sons* cookbook, and that at the time (in 2007) they were selling for over 200 dollars on Ebay. My search for the cookbook did not yield any results. This earlier version, published by a local publisher in Savannah, apparently had more personal stories according to Deen. However, the 1998 version published by Random House has no stories from her past with the exception being the story of how she opened the restaurant her recipes are from. If Deen's original version had

the number of stories she alludes it does in her memoir, than this would mean that Deen's publishers at Random House changed her style and told her to distance herself from her reader. Because Deen did not have any fans at the level of fandom yet, getting too close to her public too fast (especially because Deen was not at a celebrity level yet) could have been detrimental to her career. No one would buy a cookbook to read the stories of a woman they have never met. However, once Deen was an established celebrity chef, she could then be allowed to divulge her personal life to her fans to create a stronger level of fans. She could create fanship later, for now she needed to create an interest.

*Paula Deen and Friends: Living It Up, Southern Style*

In her cookbook *Paula Deen and Friends: Living It Up, Southern Style* (2005), Deen takes a different approach to her cookbook. In her Forward, Deen explains that the purpose of her cookbook is to consider various party ideas, then provide the recipes that would fit that occasion. Deen, who thanked over 50 friends who contributed recipes to her book, tells her fans that this book was a collaboration of great southern chefs whom she would like to "introduce" her fans to.

The cover of the cookbook shows Deen, holding a pitcher of lemonade and smiling warmly at the camera. Deen's friends are blurred in the background, congregated to the left of her in the frame. Deen has her back to her friends, and appears to be looking at the audience. Even though Deen's friends are there in the background, her attention is on her reader- her fan.

After thanking her friends for their contributions, Deen tells her readers that she is going to introduce them to the friends who contributed to the book. Deen's use of the word "introduce" is a personal way of describing how she will bring in these friends' recipes. Introduce sounds warm and inviting. Because the subject of the cookbook is parties, the phrase

“introduce you” mimics that Deen and the reader themselves are at a social event, and Deen is going to introduce her reader to her friends. The community implied through Deen’s party planning cookbook reflects the ritualistic model. Deen invites her fans into the conversation she is having with and about her personal friends, making fans feel like they themselves are a part of the friendship.

After the forward, Deen writes an introduction to her cookbook. The detail and writing style of the introduction mimics a letter sent to a close friend. Deen writes to her fans as if she is picking up a conversation with them where she had left off. She nods to her last cookbook, asking her fans if they remember where she left them then in the story of her life. She continues her introduction discussing the latest things that have happened since that cookbook. “Many other wonderful experiences have come my way since my last writing,” Deen writes to her fans in letter format (Deen, 2005, p. 2). Deen acts like she is catching up with an old friend. She discusses her marriage, her show, her upcoming movie, and her new stepchildren as well as her two sons. Deen discusses family members that only fans who have read her previous books or watched her show would know about. For example, Deen writes, “Oh, and by the way, Aunt Peggy is still reigning over all she surveys” (Deen, 2005, p. 4). Deen does not introduce who Aunt Peggy is, however she relies on her reader to remember who she is from previous cookbooks.

As she moves through the intro, Deen’s language begins to change. Whereas before the only evidence of a relaxed, speech-like form of writing came in the form of the word “ain’t” in the Foreword, Deen’s introduction crescendos into a full-blown southern dialogue by the middle of the page. Starting with her use of the word “cookin’” at the very end of her Forward, Deen starts her introduction writing as she speaks on her television show. Deen uses “ya” and “ya’ll”

instead of you and you all. She also abbreviates certain gerunds, replacing the “g” with an apostrophe, just like in her memoir. The word cooking is always written this way. As her introduction progresses, the more conversational her writing style becomes. By doing this, Deen ensures that her fans will read her greeting to them through her own voice, and therefore feel closer to the celebrity chef.

Later, in the mini introductions to each chapter, Deen slips into a more formal style of writing. While she adds in the occasional “ya’ll,” her text is substantially less southern and grammatically correct. Gerunds remain in tact, even on her favorite word to drop the “g”, cooking. Deen still, however, sporadically throws out her customary “ya’ll.” This acts as a subtle reminder to Deen’s fans that she wrote the book and she is talking to them. Deen also uses more of her own voice when describing herself. During her chapter on working lunches, Deen slips into her southern style more than when she is telling the story of one of her contributors. During the introduction to this chapter, Deen uses southernisms like “ya’ll,” “boy howdy,” and “’em” so fans would hear her voice telling her story. Deen wants her fans to feel like she is being real with them, so she is less formal with her writing when she is describing her life than she is when describing the lives of her contributors. Using her style of language causes the fan to read her words in her voice, strengthening that parasocial bond the fan has created.

At the very end of her introduction is Deen’s signature. The signature is her authentic signature, in a bold font, made to look like Deen herself honestly signed the book her fan is holding in their hands. The signature adds to the interpersonal letter type element to the introduction, making the past few pages appear more like a personal letter than the introduction to a book. Here we can see through the transmission model how Deen transforms the communication into an interpersonal format that could inspire loyalty within her fans. The

ritualistic model also can be used here to illustrate how Deen's signature creates an interpersonal feel to her cookbook.

Once Deen gets into the actual recipes within the book, the reader can also see how she has changed from her first book, *The Lady and Sons*. While Deen stayed in a third person, though distant tone the entire book, Deen now includes her personal preferences and stories throughout her directions. For example, when explaining how to make her bacon wrapped corn, Deen writes "the bacon will not be brown, which does not bother me one bit, but if it bothers you, gently pull the husks back and run it under the broiler for a few minutes until the bacon is brown" (Deen, 2005, p. 8). By doing this, Deen shares her preferences with her fans. She gives personal details about how she likes her food, then offers a suggestion for her fan. Deen has added more of herself to her cookbook directions than she did in her previous books.

Deen also shares personal stories with each recipe. While in *The Lady and Sons* Deen may name the recipe after the creator and add a small section in bold about that person, in *Paula Deen and Friends: Living It Up, Southern Style*, Deen gives detailed accounts of how she discovered certain recipes, as well as family and friend reactions to these recipes. Deen is sharing facts about herself; not large plot points of her life like her memoir does, but smaller, more everyday stories. She is discussing with her fan what her and her husband talk about over dinner, or what games they play during her children's birthday parties. These small but intimate details allow the reader to gain more knowledge of how Deen really is. Discovery of how celebrities act and would react in certain situations in a major foundation to parasocial bonding. Therefore, Deen is providing the groundwork for fans to not only get to know Deen's recipes, but also get to know Deen's personal life.



Deen's use of punctuation has also changed since her first cookbook. In *Paula Deen and Friends: Living It Up, Southern Style*, Deen uses more explanation points than she did in *The Lady and Sons* cookbook. This way when reading the cookbook, fans hear the excitement in Deen's voice, hear a slight change of inflection in her voice in their heads, and catch on to her humorous remarks. Deen laughs a good bit during her public appearances and television show (which will be discussed in the next section), and seeing explanation points allow her fans to know when Deen is expressing her humor.

Deen allows her contributors to write descriptions of their parties and give advice. By doing this, Deen allows her fans to feel like they have also been introduced to her friends. Her fans can feel like part of Deen's social circle, and Deen expects them to feel this way as she will use people's first names and continuously refer to the same group of people using only their first names or their nicknames. For example, Deen refers to one of her contributors as "Bubbles" after the contributor's nickname given to her by her grandchildren (Deen, 2005, p. 103). Deen would occasionally interject with her own comments during her friend's sections. When she did, she always made sure to go into her voice. For example, when describing a dinner to make for a boss coming over, one contributor was explaining why she preferred a type of meat. During her explanation, Deen wrote in parenthesis, "18 dollars a pound, ya'll!" (Deen, 2005, p. 53). Deen does this to ensure her fans know that she is interjecting here. Deen wants her fans to be able to recognize her voice over her contributors'.

Deen again uses religion frequently throughout her cookbook. Church and church events frequently come up as Deen explains her meals. This could be because church is a relatable event. Many families go to church, have children that attend church retreats and choir practices, and attend other social functions through their church. Deen is capturing a niche market,

showing these fans foods that would be good for these types of events; she even offers a brunch menu for after a child's christening. Deen is showing her fans that she has a religious side, a characteristic that is very appealing, especially for her older demographic. Deen understands that readers like seeing the family aspect of the celebrity, but they also like seeing their moral center (Fogul, 2008). Deen provides that moral aspect and presents herself a good, southern, Christian woman to her fans. Deen also shows that she has an open mind in regards to religion, as she includes a Jewish menu near the very end of her book that is specifically for Shabbat dinner, and claims that they tried to dedicate a chapter to a bat mitzvah, but soon realized most people have that event catered. Deen is hinting here that she supports all people of different faith, and she assumes her fans have similar morals to her own.

The audience for which this book is written is another important thing to consider. Deen knows she is writing for female audience, and even addresses them directly once saying, "Let's use our heads, ladies" (Deen, 2005, p. 140). Deen mostly addresses her fans in a group fashion, using plural pronouns like "ya'll" and "you all," though she does frequently use singular pronouns like "you." Again, Deen does this to heighten fans' sense of ritualistic communications as this type of language makes fans feel like part of Deen's ingroup as well as making them aware of other fans. Fans can gain a sense of community through her use of "ya'll," while also occasional feel like they are in a personal conversation with Deen when she writes "you."

#### *Paula Deen's Southern Cooking Bible*

In Deen's latest cookbook, *Paula Deen's Southern Cooking Bible*, she goes back to a semi-traditional style of cookbook writing. While she is still more personal with readers than she was in her first cookbook, *The Lady and Sons*, Deen acts as more of a culinary expert than she

did in *Paula Deen and Friends, Living it up Southern Style*. Even the cover of *The Southern Cooking Bible* is different from her previous cookbooks and is a throwback to her *Lady and Sons* cookbook cover. The cover of this cookbook does not show a large picture of Deen on the cover with her family and friends as she does in *Paula Deen and Friends* as well as some of her other cookbooks not discussed in this analysis. Instead, the cover is a plain white cover with blue and peach text. At the very bottom is a small bubble with a picture of a smiling Paula Deen. However, the picture is not overbearing, and follows the text. There are no warm pictures of Deen serving her guests, instead this cookbook is meant to be more serious and show her fans and possible fans that she is the expert in Southern cuisine.

Deen still uses her traditional southern style of writing and her usual “ya’ll” to engage her reader, however Deen is not as personal about her life as she has been in previous cookbooks. For example, in her introduction, Deen barely discusses herself. She assumes that her reader is a fan and already knows her history. Instead, Deen gets into the history of Southern food, establishing herself as an expert of the cuisine. Deen begins the introduction by saying, “Ya’ll know I was born and raised on Southern food and made my name sharing my version of down-home cooking with the world” (Deen & Clark, 2011, p. 1). Deen starts her introduction by assuming that her reader is familiar enough with her and her past to know that she is a southern chef who is from Albany, Georgia who began her empire through her southern cooking. This can be seen by the way Deen starts her introduction by saying “Ya’ll know...” (Deen & Clark, 2011). Deen assumes that her readers are fans who are familiar with her life.

Deen then gets into the history of southern cooking. As Deen discusses the difference between Creole and Cajun, she uses more formal writing skills. There are few “ya’ll’s” thrown in, and all gerunds remain intact. This different approach to an introduction reads more as Deen

showing her expertise in the subject. In the past, Deen has refuted the title of Chef and calls herself a cook because she was not formally educated. However, in this latest book, it seems that she is trying to show her reader that even though she did not attend culinary school, she does know and understand the roots of her field. By establishing herself as an expert, Deen is trying to gain those fans who do not take her seriously because of her uneducated background as a chef. Deen is proving to her hesitant readers that she has traveled throughout the south to learn about these dishes, and she knows her trade. “I’ve learned and loved over the years as I’ve met other cooks all across the South, and all the amazing people and stories behind that food is great” Deen writes, showing that she has been all these places and learned from other Southerners the best recipes (Deen & Clark, 2011, p. 2).

Though Deen does not discuss her life in her introduction to her cookbook, she does share stories with her fans in her introductions to her chapters. Large details of her life are usually passed over as if the reader already knows them, and Deen would instead focus on another aspect of the story. For example, during the introduction to Chapter 7 on poultry, Deen discusses how she got her aunt’s chicken and dumpling recipe. Deen tells the reader that after her father died she called her aunt and asked her to teach Deen how to make his favorite recipe, chicken and dumplings. Deen introduces his death but does not linger on it because she has told her readers before about his death, and knows her fans will remember. Including this detail of her experience with father’s death gives her fans a deeper look into Deen’s personal life.

Deen also discusses the hospitality of Southerners frequently throughout her introduction. Deen explains that southern hospitality came about because the South has had such economic struggles that offering good food was the nicest thing a person could do. Later in her cookbook, Deen continues to explain how nice southerners are, claiming most southerners would tell a

stranger to come into their home and “set a spell” (Deen & Clark, 2007, p. 2). Deen wants her readers to find the South warm and inviting because she is Food Network’s projection of the South. If her readers feel that the South is welcoming than they will more than likely feel that Deen, a southerner, is also welcoming. For those fans from the south, Deen is attempting to be a representative of their region. Therefore she must represent the south with a slight stereotype to engage fans not from that region, while also staying true to her fans who are.

More of Deen’s products are advertised throughout Deen’s *Southern Cooking Bible*. For example, in her section on appetizers, Deen tells her readers that if they are in a hurry they can stop by their local Costco to buy one of her dips in the freezer section. This plug for her product plants a seed in her fan’s heads. They now know that she has a dip available at their local grocery store and they can go buy her product. Therefore, the next time they are planning a party or a special occasion that calls for seafood dip her fans will recall that Deen has a product they can buy to fulfill that need.

Deen’s language mimics that of her previous cookbook. While she is not as casual as she was in her memoir, she does try to show her own voice more than she did in *The Lady and Sons* cookbook. Deen tends to dip into a less formal language when she is providing the recipe for less formal food. For example, in her brief introduction of her Chili and Cheese Dip, which has thus far been Deen’s least expensive dip, Deen slips into a southern accent within her writing. Deen writes “puttin’” and “turnin’” several times in this short paragraph. While in her previous introductions to her recipes, which were both seafood dips, she has written, “ya’ll,” Deen still stayed more formal with her writing. Deen may have felt that more expensive, upscale recipes should be written in a more elegant fashion. However, dips that were meant to be shared with

family and friends during a night in were less formal and could allow a less formal language around them.

Deen also uses her favorite word “ya’ll” more frequently in this cookbook. In fact, the first sentence Deen’s fans read when reading the sleeve of their book says “Hey ya’ll!” Deen begins her introduction with “Ya’ll know...”. When starting several of her sections (appetizers, pasta and rice dishes, and vegetables and beans) with a sentence containing the word ya’ll. If it was not in the first sentence, ya’ll was not much further down, and was almost always included in every section. Only five introductions to a new chapter out of 16 did not contain the word “ya’ll” at all.

Profanity has been brought into this cookbook. This is the first of the three that has had Deen use any type of profanity. While the only word she uses is damn, Deen has already shown through her use of profanity in her memoir that she does feel comfortable enough with her fans at this point to use profane language when talking to her readers. This could be because she established this relationship already in her memoir, which was written after both *The Lady and Sons* and *Paula Deen and Friends, Living it up Southern Style*. Now, three years later Deen feels that she has the type of relationship with her fans that she can use words like damn without losing their respect. In fact, showing this sort of comfort around her fans may even help build a parasocial bond as fans can feel like they are on such an intimate level with Deen.

### **TV Show: *Paula’s Home Cooking***

#### *Season 6 Episode 2, Grubfest*

In the first episode analyzed, *Grubfest* (2006), it is clear that Deen is established with her audience, but she is still not at the level of having an audience who knows her well. She begins her show by introducing herself to her viewers, and describing what the show is going to cover in

that episode. Deen explains that she and her sons will be cooking what she calls “Grub” food, or good food that is not necessarily attractive. As Deen sets up the three dishes she will be demonstrating on the show, the food fades in with her narration.

As Deen begins to cook her first dish, the audience begins to learn more about her. Deen first discusses her husband, Michael, telling her viewers that he hates when her ring gets dirty. Deen then takes off her wedding ring, placing it in her front pocket. As she is doing so, she continues to discuss how much she loves her ring from her husband and how she wears it to keep it safe. Deen then begins to discuss her extended family. She explains that she has her two sons, whom she acts as if the viewer should be familiar with them, then introduces that she also has stepchildren, a niece, and a brother that are always in her house. Deen shows familiarity with her viewers when she says “and, you know, besides having two sons I have...” (Paula’s Home Cooking, 2006).

As Deen pulls her first course from the oven, suddenly the two boys she was just discussing with her viewers appear on screen. They act like hungry boys, rushing in, grabbing plates and chattering with their mother about how much they enjoy the dish. The boys then ask for bread, turn and begin to leave. “Where are you going?” Deen asks. “To watch TV, thanks mom” her sons reply (Paula’s Home Cooking, 2006). Deen stands, acting surprised for a second, then turns her attention back to her viewer.

The scene is set to recreate a family atmosphere. Deen and her sons are mimicking a typical family where the boys rush in, grab food, and then head back to watch TV. While the scene is obviously scripted, it has the ability to resonate with viewers as a real family being a family. Deen is showing her audience members that she understands being a mother, and sympathizes with what a thankless job it can be, while also showing that she is a part of a warm

family. While the boys are heading back to “watch TV,” they are still thanking her and teasing her for her efforts in the kitchen, lovingly complimenting what they claim to be their favorite meal.

Deen then calls her sons back in and tells them that she forgot the bananas for the dessert segment and has to go out and find some. Deen tells them that they are in charge of the next segment. Deen’s sons act surprised, claiming they don’t know what they are doing as Deen leaves the frame. Again, the scene is scripted as Deen explained in her introduction that her sons would be cooking with her, but all three are playing that the scene is completely organic. The boys then look to the camera as if they are waiting for a reaction from their viewer. Suddenly, the boys know exactly what to do.

Deen’s sons have a constant dialogue as the camera is on them. They both give directions when necessary, then have what seems is a more personal conversation as they talk directly to each other, pretending the camera is not there. Bobby, the younger son, compliments his older brother’s skills within the kitchen, turning to the camera telling the viewers that his brother has more experience than him. As the two continue to pull the recipe together, Deen’s older son, Jamie, acts as if he is giving his younger brother advice, telling him to cook what he knows and feel comfortable in the kitchen. By the time Deen returns with the bananas, the meal has been completed and Bobby has been advised by his older brother. The two have created a scene from the nuclear family’s kitchen: two boys who love each other, but still tease each other. Bobby and Jamie Deen are showing Deen’s viewers that she has two polite and moral young sons, which could give her viewers a more positive opinion of her.

Throughout the show, Deen and her sons engage in playful banter. They tease each other every time they are on screen. As Deen returns with the bananas for the last segment, she asks:



Deen: “So the Paula Deen show is...?”

Bobby: “No more. Welcome to the Bobby Deen show.”

Deen: “Whatever.” Deen, 2006.

Their conversation mimics what a family would say to each other, teasing and laughing with each other. The three enhance family life, enticing viewers with the idea that if they cook with their children, perhaps they could also achieve this level of intimacy with them. Deen and her sons embrace their act as the nuclear family to bring viewers back to their kitchen.

Again, Deen understands her audience. She ends her show with a tip, claiming that the last quick recipe will get women who receive unexpected guests out of trouble. As Deen throws together her last recipe quickly, she discusses with her viewer how irritating it is to have a husband suddenly bring home houseguests. She finishes her dish, smiles and laughs at the camera telling her viewer, “and you’re outta the woods, girl!” (Paula’s Home Cooking, 2006). Deen is trying to relate to her viewers on a new level here, through their husbands. Deen provides a quick tip, hinting that it will make dealing with husbands easier, and therefore make for more marital bliss. The production value of the show was very low. The camera appears to be hand held, only being placed on a tripod for close ups of food. The first shot, which shows Deen walking inside after standing outdoors, follows shakily in front. The angle and shaky feel to the camera makes the viewer feel like they themselves are walking into Deen’s kitchen. They are standing at her counter, watching her make her meatloaf and listening to her talk about her husband.

#### *Season 9, Episode 5, Chocolate Fever*

Deen’s show changed drastically between season six and season nine. The production value became much stronger, Deen became more open with her viewers, and Deen knew that her

fans knew her family well enough for her to discuss them without an introduction. Deen also knew that her fans knew her well enough at this point that she did not need an introduction. Her show therefore became more personal and had a less scripted feeling.

The show begins in a room other than the kitchen in Deen's house. Deen stands by a large armoire, and says to her viewers, "I've got a confession to make, ya'll" (Paula's Home Cooking, 2009). Deen tells her viewers about the chocolate filled drawers in her house, then she opens the drawer of the armoire to reveal it contains only candy. Deen laughs, acting as though she has revealed an embarrassing secret to a good friend. She continues to tell her viewer how important the drawer is to her and her husband Michael. Deen does not explain who Michael is. Instead she is assuming that a fan, someone who would already know that Michael is her husband, is watching her. Deen then gives a hearty, friendly laugh and tells her fan, "see you at the stove!" (Paula's Home Cooking, 2009).

Deen's intro has changed, showing her setting a table with the help of her two sons. The three of them are laughing and teasing each other. Bobby is seen giving Deen a playful shove, and the two laugh at each other. A shot of a large, white house is then shown. The house is different from the yellow house shown in the previous episode analyzed. According to Deen's memoir, this is actually her house in Savannah. The yellow house shown in season four belonged to her Executive Producer, Gordon Elliot.

As the introduction ends and the viewer is brought to the kitchen, it is obvious that the kitchen is different as well. The kitchen has more tools, more things for Deen to work with. Her kitchen looks homey and lived in. In the mid left corner of the screen, slightly out of focus, sits what appears to be a glass of wine. The atmosphere permits the viewer to feel a part of the action. The wine glass gives a subtle hint of invited company, or of a friendly gathering; like

Deen is having a houseguest over and they are exchanging recipes over a glass of wine. While Deen never drinks the wine or brings attention to it, it is there as a subtle hint for her viewers to pick up on.

Deen engages her viewers frequently throughout her show. She asks them questions, asks for their help, and gives them instructions. Deen acts like her audience is standing in the kitchen with her. For example, as Deen measures out the flour for her recipe, she tells her viewers, “ya’ll help me count” (Paula’s Home Cooking, 2009). Later, as Deen is trying one of her finished products, she pours a glass of milk with ice. As she is stirring the drink together she asks, “Do ya’ll like ice in your milk?” (Paula’s Home Cooking, 2009). Deen even directs her audience where to go, telling them to follow her when she goes to the stove, and telling them to look inside at the finished product. Once Deen has finished her three recipes, she tells the viewer to go join her at the table she has set up. “I don’t want you to miss a thing!” she tells them (Paula’s Home Cooking, 2009).

Deen is trying to engage her fans. She is asking them questions like whether they prefer ice in their milk. She asks them to help her count the cups of flour she adds. Again Deen is attempting to form parasocial bonds with her viewers by making them a part of her cooking process, like giving her viewers instructions that will make them feel like they are in her kitchen with her and measuring the flour and helping her set the table. Deen is also trying to create a type of ritualistic communication through these verbal cues. Deen uses the phrase “ya’ll” in several of her commands and questions, enhancing the social aspect of fandom. Deen is playing to both a community of fans through plural pronouns like “ya’ll,” while also creating personal ties through singular pronouns like “you.”

Viewers are also treated like guests visiting her house as Deen tells her fans to “please come back” before every commercial break. After breaks, Deen thanks her viewers for returning, then rewards them with a finished, or semi-finished, product. Viewers are told to “move on over here with me” by Deen, as if they are following her around the kitchen, talking about the recipes in person (Paula’s Home Cooking, 2009). Viewers are expected to feel like one of Deen’s guests and friends by the end of the show.

One major difference between this show and her earlier show is that Deen pretends to bake in her show. While in the season four episode, Deen said that there was a second dish prepared to show viewers how the finished product would look; Deen acts as if her food is actually baking in this episode. For example, as Deen places the cookies in the oven and tells her viewers they are taking a short break, she first urges them to come back so they can see her freshly baked cookies. Deen says, “so while we’re gone, I’m going to put these in the oven and by the time you can say ‘jack rabbit’ we’ll be back and I’ll have those cookies for you” (Paula’s Home Cooking, 2009). Common sense dictates that Deen is not baking finished products on her show. One of her dishes takes twice the amount she has on her show to even bake. Deen still maintains the illusion, however, as pulling a freshly baked good from the oven creates a more inviting and realistic atmosphere for her viewers.

After the food is prepared, Deen takes a large bite of everything. She will sometimes fix herself a plate, and sometimes she will take a bite straight from the finished product. This element of Deen did not change between the first show analyzed and this one. Deen makes sure that she tries everything she cooks, and shies away from dainty bites. Deen claims in her memoir that while her Executive Producer found this to be a disgusting trait, she felt that it was part of who she wanted to portray herself as. Deen wanted to seem genuine to her fans. She

wants to show viewers that she stands by her food enough to take a large bite on camera, not a “princess bite” as she refers to it in her memoir. Not only does Deen want to stand by her food, but she also wants to show that she is a real woman, who eats the food that she prepares. She wants her fans to see that she is not a snobby celebrity chef, but a real woman that takes real bites.

As Deen ends her show, she says her same catchphrase used in *Grubfest*. Deen says, “So it’s time to say goodbye, but you know that I always send you love and best dishes from my kitchen to yours” (Paula’s Home Cooking, 2009). In her final farewell, Deen claims that her viewers know that she always sends her love. Deen presumes that her viewers are fans who know her catchphrase by heart. For those who do not know her slogan, they have heard the word love in the phrase. Deen has told these viewers that she is sending them with her love, a gesture that is meant for close friends. Deen is sending her viewers away hoping they will feel a connection with her, and in turn love her and become a fan who consumes her and her products.

*Season 12, Episode 3, Southern Style*

In this episode of “Paula’s Home Cooking,” Deen and her husband, Michael, cook a meal together on screen for Deen’s viewers. After Michael leaves, the audience is left with a bubbly Deen, who continues to try to penetrate the fourth wall, or that disconnection left by television and other media types, with her viewers. Deen does this through the use of language, physical actions, and the use of time to make her viewers feel like they are in the kitchen cooking with Paula Deen.

As the screen fades from black, Deen is standing in her kitchen, greeting her audience with a friendly “Hey ya’ll, welcome to my kitchen today!” (Paula’s Home Cooking, 2010). Deen explains the content of her show that day, saying that she is making her husbands favorite

dish of oxtails. Again, she introduces her husband by name, expecting fans to already know who he is.

While Deen begins to prepare the first dish, her husband's favorite, Michael walks into the kitchen, saying that he is on his way to work. Before he goes, however, Deen puts him to work over the stove. As Deen stands chopping vegetables, she gives her directions to Michael instead of the audience. For this segment, the audience is treated as an observer. Deen and her husband talk back and forth to each other as Deen randomly fills viewers in on parts of their conversations. For example, Deen asks Michael about whether his son cooks oxtails when he is on the boat. Deen then turns to the camera and explains that their son works on a tugboat for weeks at a time, and cooks while he is on the boat. Deen and Michael have seemingly intimate conversations that the viewer therefore is able to be a part of.

The viewer is almost being invited into their marriage while the two work on screen together. Throughout Michael's time on screen, he and Deen act like a married couple alone in the kitchen. They flirt with each other, they call each other pet names, and they kiss. While the two keep the audience informed, they still act like they are the only two in the kitchen. Once Michael has fulfilled his role on the show of appearing to help Deen with his favorite dish, he tells her he has to go to work. The two say, "I love you" and kiss goodbye. Michael then leaves the set, and Deen returns her full attention to her audience.

Deen attempts to break the fourth wall in this episode through her language and her actions. Deen continues to use phrases like, "grab a drink and hurry back" and "while you were away" (Paula's Home Cooking, 2010). However, Deen also tries to make viewers feel like they are there experiencing her food with her. As explained in the second episode analyzed, Deen takes large, realistic bites of her food. While trying the hocolate, Deen places about half the cake

in her mouth. As she is chewing, she looks to the camera and says, “Open wide... open wide. Did you get it?” (Paula’s Home Cooking, 2010). While saying this, Deen has broken off another piece of the hocado and is extending the piece out towards the camera. As she is doing this, the camera angle changes, showing Deen’s hand outstretched with the hocado. Deen is pretending to feed her audience with a piece of the cornbread, attempting to make her viewers feel like they are so much involved in her show that they can even taste what Deen is cooking.

Deen also uses the illusion of time to maintain a realistic scenario with her viewers. Upon returning from a commercial break, the audience can see that the plate where the hocado sat after Deen’s bite and offering towards her viewer that the hocado has been mostly eaten. Deen looks down at the hocado as the camera pulls in on her and says, “while ya’ll were away I kept munching on the corn bread!” (Paula’s Home Cooking, 2010). While this show was not shot live and very easily could have not taken the break and continued to film, Deen made the audience believe that she was on the same break as them, eating the cornbread while she was waiting for her audience to return to her kitchen.

Production aspects on the show changed as well. The intro was almost non-existent, only showing Deen’s white house in Savannah and the title card. Music was added under her talking during this episode as well. While in earlier episodes the only music was in the intro, music now played once Deen got about half way through each recipe. The last major change in production was the use of a pop-up informational tile. While Deen was cooking the oxtails before her husband entered the scene, a small, blue text box popped into the screen with information of what an oxtail was. This bit of information helps Deen appear to her fans like an expert in the area of Southern cuisine. Deen also establishes herself as an expert through her use of tips. Deen gives tips that were passed down from her mother, and also gives facts about the food she

is preparing. For example, when making a lace hocolate, Deen explains where this type of cornbread got its name. Deen tells her viewers that the bread is called a hocolate because they use to be cooked over an open fire on the blade of a hoe. These bits of information make Deen look like she knows the background of the food she is cooking, and establishes her as an expert to her viewers.

As the episode ended, Deen tells her audience, “I hope that the next time we see each other ya’ll have tried some of these dishes” (Paula’s Home Cooking, 2010). Deen is reaching out to her fans in several ways through this sentence. First, Deen is saying that they will “see each other” soon. Through the use of the verb see, Deen is telling her fans that they are part of a mutual interpersonal relationship, like she sees her viewers just as they see her. Deen is also saying that this will happen soon, implying that she knows her fans will return for her next episode. Her fans are also told to try these recipes. Deen is encouraging them to make the recipes she shared that week, before they watch her show the next time. Deen is therefore encouraging the consumption of her product. She is encouraging fans to go on Foodnetwork.com to find these recipes and make them. While the website is not mentioned, the website is a good way for fans to get print of directions of the recipes in case they missed the directions on the show. Deen wants her fans to try her recipes and consume her products.

## **Magazines**

*May/June 2009*

In the first magazine analyzed from May/June 2009, Deen begins with her introduction under the title, “Hey ya’ll.” After the first paragraph of her introduction, Deen omits the ya’ll and moves to singular pronouns, like “you.” Again, Deen is using singular pronouns to create a



connection between her fans and herself, making it appear that she is having a conversation with her fan directly, like the content is meant specifically for them.

Deen also uses the introduction to empathize with her fans. As Deen explains the set up for this issue of her magazine, she says that she understands the bad position audience members are in because of the bad economy, and therefore included affordable meals. Deen writes:

I also know we have to watch the money we spend grocery shopping and entertaining friends and family for dinner. But just so we don't miss out on the fun, I have put together some fabulous cost-effective recipes for you, and they're all made with chicken. Deen, 2009.

Deen uses the pronoun “we” to include herself in that statement. “We” need to watch our spending; “we” should still have a good time. Though Deen is a drastically different economic situation than a majority of her readers, she is trying to relate to her fans, implying that she too has to watch her spending. Deen later attempts to form a commonality with her fans again when she tells them, “I know how busy everyone is these days” (Deen, 2009). Deen’s use of the phrase “I know” helps her to seem like she is empathizing with her fans.

Deen then ends her introduction with her signature and a picture of her and her grandson. The signature, however, is not of Deen’s whole name. Instead, she signs the intro simply “Paula.” This may be because Deen is attempting to put her fans at more than an acquaintance level. She is showing her fans that they are on a first name basis. Deen is “Paula” to her fans, not Mrs. Deen or Paula Deen. She is instead close enough to be called Paula. The photograph of Deen and her grandson also shows that she wants her

fans to think of her as an intimate friend, so she is posting a personal picture taken of her and her son at her 62nd birthday party.

While the rest of Deen's magazine includes mostly recipes that do not show her personality, there are a few times that Deen provides a personal story or detail to share with her fans. For example, in her introduction to a section on events, Deen mentions that she used some of the recipes listed when she met her daughter-in-law's parents for the first time. While she does not go into detail, Deen provides enough information to her fans to remind them that she is speaking to them, not another writer for the magazine.

Also in her recipe sections, Deen compliments her fans that submitted recipes for one of the sections. Every recipe had a small introduction by Deen where she would say things like, "Mary Reed of Cincinnati, Ohio, knows how much I love my fried chicken" (Deen, 2009, p. 55). Deen uses these small introductions to make the fans who submitted recipes sound like friends. Some introductions use stories from the fan ("Susan Barron of Vicksburg, Mississippi, dreamed up this Southwestern pizza when her kids couldn't choose between pizza and tacos for dinner"), while some introductions present the submitter as a close friend ("My friend Linda Rosemont of Columbus, Georgia, created this crunchy chicken recipe to use those Georgia pecans we adore") (Deen, 2009, p. 59).

Within the magazine, several ads for food related products, as well as Deen's own products, are positioned throughout the magazine. First, in a section called "Paula's Picks," Deen lists kitchen products that she enjoys. Mixed amongst these products was a product from Deen's store: a set of teakettles. The kettles are placed in the middle of the page, with only the fine print below telling readers that they are from Deen's store. Other ads placed in the magazine were paid advertisements from other brands. One ad shows a

picture of a salad with a can of walnuts beside it. In the lower left corner is a quote that says, “I would never serve a salad without these sweet and crunchy nuts, ya’ll” (Deen, 2009, p. 99). A picture of Paula Deen is shown on the canister, and Deen’s signature is below her quote as well as on the canister of nuts. Deen also endorses a Dentist in the Savannah area with a full-page ad with another quote from her and her signature. After building a relationship with her readers and creating fans, Deen then endorses these brands that show her picture and her quotes in order to get her fans to buy these products. Deen makes money off of these endorsements, and therefore wants her fans to buy these brands.

At the end of the magazine before the last ad, Deen ends with a personal farewell to her readers. While her conclusion discusses her love for spring and is not very personal, fans are still left with Paula Deen’s own written word as they close the magazine. Her picture and her goodbye is the last thing the fan reads, and the fan can therefore feel like they are leaving the company of a friend. Deen is the last thing on their mind as they finish her magazine.

#### *October/November 2011*

In the second magazine analyzed, which was released in October of 2011, Deen does more endorsements and more advertising of her latest products. In the magazine, Deen has three full-page ads that show her picture and her endorsement for the product. The products include Philadelphia Cream Cheese, Springer Mountain Farms, and Smithfield Ham. Along with these advertisements, Deen also endorses several products through her recipes and advice column, including Smithfield Ham, and Simply Potatoes.

The endorsements are made discretely, in response to reader's questions and in the ingredients columns of her recipes.

Deen also advertises her own products more in this issue than the previous issue analyzed. For example, in the introduction Deen promotes her latest cookbook that was released earlier that month. Later in the magazine, Deen has a section dedicated to her home décor line. Deen's furniture line launched in August of 2011, and because of the magazine's bimonthly distribution, this was the first magazine published since the launch of her magazine. Therefore, it seems that Deen is attempting to use her magazine, which she knows her fans consume, to present a new product to those fans for purchase. Deen is hoping that by showing her already dedicated fans her latest product, they will be supportive of her and buy her furniture.

Deen also shows her voice more in this later issue as well. While in the magazine from 2009 it was never certain when Deen was writing versus when another writer was writing, this magazine refers to Deen in third person when another author is writing. Deen mostly writes introductions to sections. While she may not tell as many personal stories about herself, her voice and language style are more present in the introductions she writes.

## **Twitter**

Paula Deen has a strong presence on Twitter. She currently has more followers than any other Food Network chef, including Rachael Ray, who also has a popular talk show. Deen also tweets almost every day, and tweets to her fans frequently. Therefore, Deen's Twitter was analyzed as a way to see how Deen reaches out through social media to her fans. Deen's Twitter account was followed and analyzed from January 1, 2012 to February 13, 2012. A total of 145

tweets were analyzed for their content, use of pictures and links, and use of other users (or fans) twitter handles. Overall, Deen's Twitter was searched for content that showed an outreach of parasocial or interpersonal communications towards her fans.

As of March 19, 2012, Deen has over 708,000 followers on Twitter; which is over 100,000 more followers than popular celebrity chefs Rachael Ray and Guy Fieri. Deen has tweeted a total of 2,828 times as of March 5, 2012. She has been a member of Twitter for almost four years; her first tweet went out in May of 2008. Deen usually Tweets about two to three times a day. The frequency of her tweets ranges from once a day up to eight times a day. Deen tweeted eight times a day twice, one time being the day she confirmed that she has Type II Diabetes on *The Today Show*, which was on January 17. Deen was a faithful tweeter during the month and a half period (44-days) her tweets were analyzed. January 2 was the only day Deen did not send a tweet in that 44-day period. Fewer tweets were sent out in February than in January, even subtracting the 17-day difference from January to February.

Most of Deen's tweets contained promotional content (Table 1). Exactly 63 tweets contained content about her website, magazine, Pinterest account, or TV show. Many tweets contained links to her website, and contained the hashtag "#dailytweat." A total of 43 tweets contained the hashtag "#dailytweat." These tweets usually contained content about recipes, and linked to her website for directions. Sometimes Deen's #dailytweat had content unrelated to food, such as beauty tips or stories about her life, and would link to her blog or to a picture.

Other promotional tweets encouraged fans to consume other media that Deen was involved in at that time, like guest appearances. For example, Deen tweeted on January 18 "Don't forget to tune into The Chew today, ya'll!" (Twitter, 2012). Deen sent out several Tweets about an upcoming trip to Sacramento in January. Deen also reminded viewers to look

for her on *The Today Show*, when she officially announced her Type II Diabetes. Overall, Deen had 15 tweets that told her fans where she would be in the next few days, including TV shows, the South Beach Food and Wine Festival, and the Super Bowl.

Deen also promoted her other social media vehicle, Pinterest, a social networking site for posting items of common interest, three times during the 44-day period. Through these promotions Deen was speaking to her established fans, encouraging them to go to her website and her Pinterest account, both of which advertise and sell her various products. While these tweets are also encouraging any food lover and follower to click on the link to her website, Deen can count on her fans. Deen is aware of her social media influence, and knows that fans who see that she is a part of another social networking site may try the site out to follow her. As of March 19, 2012. Deen has over 50,000 followers on Pinterest, a site that only has 10.4 million users (Pinterest, 2012).

Deen reached out to her fans regularly through Twitter (Table 1). A total of 36 tweets were directed towards her fans generally, telling them stories of what she was currently doing. For example, on February 2, Deen posted “Just stepped on plane to fly to California. Gonna be a long flight but brought my favorite pillow” (Twitter, 2012). Deen used these tweets to make her fans feel closer to her. Fans can know that she is playing with her dogs, or lounging outside. Her fans can predict her actions, an important part of creating a parasocial bond, because they feel that know who she is through her Twitter. Occasionally, Deen would specifically tweet to her fans directly. Deen tweeted to her fans using their Twitter handles 10 times during the 44-day period. Three of these tweets included three fans each, so Deen tweeted directly to 16 fans directly. Mostly Deen thanked her fans for their support on her announcement of Diabetes. Two fans received tweets for their birthdays.

Deen assumes that her followers are fans that have read most of her books and know people from her life. Deen references extended family members and personal friends twice in the 145 tweets analyzed. The first tweet is a recipe from a woman Deen refers to as “Bubbles.” Bubbles is the nickname given to a close friend of Deen whom is mentioned in her cookbook *Paula Deen and Friends*. By using her nickname, Deen assumes that her fans remember that Bubbles is a close family friend of Deen’s. Deen also posts a picture of her stepdaughter, Sarah and niece, Corrie. Deen even posts a blog by Corrie. Deen knows that her fans know her well enough to know these members of her family.

Some of Deen’s tweets contained pictures, or Twit Pics (Table 1). Twit Pics are classified as pictures that are posted specifically to twitter, and not linked through another photo sharing website. Many of the pictures analyzed from the 145 tweets analyzed looked like they were taken and uploaded by Deen herself. Deen posted 10 pictures during the 44-day period. These pictures showed family vacations from her cruise, pictures of her make-up artist, and pictures of her family. Deen also retweeted two pictures sent to her by her fans. One was of the buffet from The Lady and Sons, while the other was a fan’s attempt at one of Deen’s dishes. Deen posts these pictures to make her fans feel like a part of her life. This is especially apparent in the Twitter pictures sent during the time analyzed. Pictures from before this time period were taken by someone else of Deen doing various public events, like Jay Leno or pictures of her on the set of her show. An additional four pictures were posted to other photo sharing sites through Deen’s Twitter. These pictures showed Deen behind the scenes at photo shoots, laughing and being a normal person with her husband and staff.

Deen also promoted her sons throughout in her tweets, advertising her son, Bobby’s new show and recipes from that show. Deen retweeted or mentioned her son’s a few times during

within the 145 tweets. Deen mentions her son Bobby eight times within the 44-day period. Five of those times Deen mentioned him through his twitter handle. Two of those mentions refer to his new show, two were retweets with text, and one contained a recipe by Bobby and his brother Jamie. Deen mentioned Jamie Deen four times in the 44-day period. Three of those four times he was retweeted with text.

### **Summary of Media**

After analyzing these 5 forms of media, several patterns emerged. Deen uses several strategies to communicate with her fans. These include her southern characteristics, her humor, her moral center, and her personal stories. All of these facets can be further analyzed to understand how Deen communicates with her audience in order to create fans at the level of fandom, and how this relationship creates consumers out of fans. These patterns will be further analyzed in chapter 4.



## CHAPTER 4

### SHARING RECIPES

#### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Throughout the several forms of media utilized, Deen uses a variety of methods to create fans. Deen's manner of reaching out changes over time as well, showing that as Deen became more of a celebrity chef who accrued more fans, the more she adjusted the dynamics of her personality and created a more communal tone to her communications, fitting into a more ritualistic model of communications.

Deen's first cookbook was written years before her first episode of *Paula's Home Cooking* aired. In this first written piece by Deen, she is substantially less personable than in later cookbooks, her memoir, and her show. As Deen's fame grew, her persona did as well. Deen became more open with viewers as her fame began to develop. Once Deen created a fan base, she was then able to cultivate her relationship with these fans in her later cookbooks, shows, magazine, and Twitter. The more popular Deen was becoming, the more a pattern emerged of Deen strengthen her bonds with her viewers to create fans who could rise to the level of fandom.

The most prominent ways Deen strengthens this bond was through her use of language, her personal stories, her humor, and her religion. These various facets can be analyzed through both transmissional and ritualistic models of communication, though both models showed more prominently than the other at some points. Deen's language and Southern dialogue were perhaps the most significant tools used, as Deen's style of speaking and use of interpersonal words were used heavily through all three media analyzed.

In every cookbook except her first one, *The Lady and Sons*, and in her memoir, Twitter feed, and magazines, Deen wrote the way she speaks. Deen began to do this after her show had begun, perhaps because fans that bought her cookbooks would know how she spoke. Therefore, Deen began to write with a Southern accent, a trait that at the time made her different from most of her Food Network cohort. Deen did this through her omission of the last letter of gerunds, the use of phrases like “’em” and “ya’ll,” “cookin’,” and through southern sounding catchphrases. On her television show, Deen uses the same characteristics. This practice utilizes a stereotype of Southern women, which viewers can quickly understand and therefore relate to. Deen uses her Southern charm to make her viewers quickly understand her and feel close to her, and she does this in both her written and spoken language. Through the ritualistic model we can see how this uniform dialect through both Deen’s media provides community. Fans can rely on Deen’s voice to appear in her various media forms. Looking through a transmissional lens, we can also see that Deen benefits from this reliance as fans will therefore buy her products expecting her voice.

Deen also used pronouns and singular nouns to enhance fan’s parasocial bonds. Words like “you,” “ya’ll,” and “girl,” were regularly used by Deen when referring to her fans. Deen used words like these to instill a sense of familiarity between herself and her fans. Deen says several times throughout her cookbooks, memoir, magazines, and TV show that her viewers are her friends who are there in her kitchen while she is cooking. Therefore, Deen wants her fans also feel like they themselves are in her kitchen, listening to Deen as she talks directly to them. Deen also seems to understand the community within fandom as she also often pluralizes her pronouns, using her infamous catch phrase, “ya’ll” when speaking to her fans collectively. By using her language to incorporate a community of fans, Deen is creating a type of communication that allows a type of conversation between herself and her fans, which can be

seen through the ritualistic model as a means of creating a community. Through the transmission model, Deen's use of language can be seen as a means to gain consumer support, which creates power, through her cookbooks.

This power is especially seen at moments when Deen at an expert status. In her *Southern Cooking Bible* and in her season 12 episode three show, *Southern Style*, Deen uses subtle hints to distinguish herself as an expert. Deen explains in the *Southern Cooking Bible* the history of southern cuisine, and describes her culinary experiences throughout the south. In her show, blurbs pop up on screen to explain the cut of meat Deen is using. Deen also is cooking a southern delicacy (oxtails) that many viewers do not know to prepare. Through these proceedings, Deen is an established expert in southern cooking. This expertise suggests a form of power held by Deen; the more Deen appears to know about her trade, the more likely a consumer will chose her products over her competitors.

Deen's use of personal stories is another way she reaches out to her fans. Deen frequently tells stories in all her forms of media analyzed. While she tells less in her magazine than any other type of media, Deen uses her memoir, cookbooks, Twitter, and television show to give fans an intimate look into her personal life. In her cookbooks and memoir, Deen tells stories about her past and the people who made her a celebrity. On her television show, Deen has the people themselves appear, playing out their importance on screen for the fan to see first hand. Deen's Twitter feed allows fans to see personal pictures taken by the celebrity chef herself. Deen's magazine is written under the assumption that key characters are already known through these other media, and gives small quips of information and personal photographs to her fans.

These personal stories are a key to creating a relationship with her fans. Deen wants her fans to feel like they know her. She claims in her memoir that she wants her fans to know her completely because she cares about them. However, Deen also needs these fans to know her because she needs them to care about her in order to care about her brand. Through the transmission model we could claim that if her consumers only knew her as a southern woman who cooked food she would have a harder time gaining brand loyalty; they could watch her show but buy Rachael Ray's pots and pans. However, if her consumers feel a genuine connection with her then they will be more likely to buy Deen's products. However, this connection derived from personal stories fans read in her cookbooks and see on her television show make Deen a relatable celebrity that her fans want to engage in an interpersonal relationship with. Fans will want to talk to her, as well as to each other about her. The more these fans talk about her, the more they consume about Deen to know more about her.

Humor is another characteristic used by Deen to reach out to her audience. While Deen does not consistently make jokes, she does laugh frequently on her television show, and references her sense of humor in her memoir. While reading Deen's cookbooks and magazine a normal audience member may not be able to pick up on Deen's humor, a fan who is familiar with her television show reads these materials through Deen's voice. This means that they know when Deen would be laughing through her sentence. This is important for several reasons. One is that it shows that Deen's fans are involved in this parasocial relationship enough that they feel they know Deen's sense of humor. Because the reader knows when Deen would laugh, the reader may laugh.

Deen's religion and moral values is another way she connects with her fans. In her cookbooks and memoir, Deen frequently discusses her faith. She does this through direct

references; mentions of church parties, and implications through phrases like “bless your heart.” On her television show, Deen’s values on display physically through her relationships with her sons and her husband. Deen embraces the stereotype of a church going, family loving Southerner. This display of religion and family values is one that is often seen in a mother or grandmother, which makes Deen appealing to a younger audience, as well as to audience members who share the same values.

Through these attempts to gain a parasocial relationship with her audience, and turn audience members into fans, Deen also wants to turn fans into consumers. Deen’s magazine and Twitter showed that she encourages her fans to look at her products, and endorses them to her fans. Through her cookbooks, Deen mentioned favorite brands she used, like Smithfield Ham; however, Deen’s magazine took her brand to a new level. Fans were required to see her favorite products through full-page ads, and in some cases under the guise of a magazine section. For example, Deen’s home décor line was made into an entire section of the magazine so fans would believe they were reading about Deen’s style, when really they were being fed an advertisement of Deen’s brand. Deen’s magazine was one of the last types of media created (other than her Twitter and other areas of Social Media where she is present), which makes the amount of advertising she does through the medium interesting. She advertises more here than any other form of communications. Therefore, the transmission model of communications can be applied, as she is first creating bond with her fans, and then using her influence through her magazine to push her products.

All of these attempts to connect with her viewers can be seen through Carey’s transmission and ritualistic models of communication. These communication forms were ritualistic in that she was trying to create conversation for a community within her brand. This

conversation was meant for both her fans to have with each other, but also for fans to have with Deen. Through her personality, language, morals, and humor, Deen creates a character that is interesting enough to talk about, then creates a place on her website for her fans to talk about her. Deen has also created a character who seems to be interested in have these conversations with her fans herself. The transmission type communication was created through the various media types Deen used to talk with her fans. Deen used a variety of media to disseminate information broadly and quickly to her audience in order to create numerous new fans quickly.

While these models are counterpoints of each other, they are necessary in the explanation of the other. Power, a characteristic the transmission model centers around, cannot be achieved without the creation of community. Likewise, community, which the ritualistic model examines, relies on a power to create a common bond. Therefore, in order to create fans, a media object must be able to achieve power and community. In order to be successful, Deen must encompass both power and community to create fans who are engaged enough to fall into the category of fandom fans.

In a personal interview (March 1, 2012) with Deen, she claimed that she did not see her fans as fans, but rather as friends. Deen wrote, “I still don't like to think of myself as having ‘fans.’ I kind of like to think of it as just a really big group a friends.” Deen’s use of the word “friends” can be seen through the ritualistic model as means to create these friends. Deen does knowingly talk to her audience in a way that creates a bond with her viewer that could ultimately lead to fandom and fanship.

However, Deen also claimed in this interview that she does not see herself as a brand. Deen wrote,

I've always said that the best thing that I can be is me. I had to think of

myself as something that's not real, or not true to myself in some way, you know? And I think that's what people connect with the most. They don't want to see someone that's trying to be someone or something that they're not. Deen, 2012.

Deen therefore feels that she has created an empire through being herself. This type of attitude could be a major facet in what makes her so appealing to her fans. Though there is evidence of change in her dialogue and amount of personal stories she tells, Deen did consistently act as a friend to her consumers, and attempted to create a type of friendship with those viewers; a friendship that could ultimately lead to fandom.

### **Limitations and Further Studies**

One of the most glaring limitations of this study was its one sided approach to fandom. In order to understand how celebrities and other media institutes can construct fans, the fans must also be analyzed equally. Future studies however should focus on the fans' interpretation of media insinuation to buy their products or watch their programs. Fan literature, such as blogs, micro-blogs, and fan pages, should be analyzed to examine how fans interpret the messages transmitted to them through media producers.

Future studies should also examine the consequences of deception to fans by a media producer. Within the past few months, Paula Deen revealed that she has been struggling with type II diabetes for the past three years. Deen received a mixed response from her audience with some supporting her and others criticizing her lack of disclosure. Given Deen's reputation for her tendency to batter, deep fry, and butter any food item lacking in flavor, a question exists as to fans' reaction to news of Deen's diabetes. Leaving out such a major detail of her life could harm

Deen's parasocial relationship with her fans; however, her eventual admission may strengthen this bond for other fans.

Future studies should also try an analysis of one type of media, instead of a trans-media approach like this study. While this study allowed content to be analyzed in a variety of transmission type communicative means that Deen uses, analysis of one type of medium in full (i.e. all of the cookbooks or an entire season of her show) would also give a unique and different view of how Deen reaches out to her fans.

Overall, Deen and other celebrities have the ability to create fans with the transmission model of communication they and other media producers put out there for their consumers. Through the creation of fans, these celebrities have the opportunity to build a brand for themselves; therefore this relationship with their fans is one worth fostering. Though Deen claims that she herself is not a brand and is a friend to her fans, she cannot deny the benefit having this close, almost interpersonal relationship to her fans has been to her. Fans are good for business, and celebrities will always try to maintain these relationships to keep their popularity alive.



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## APPENDIX A

## PAULA DEEN'S COOKBOOKS

*The Lady and Sons Savannah Country Cookbook* (1997)

*Paula Deen and Friends: Living it Up, Southern Style* (2005)

*The Lady and Sons Just Desserts: More than 120 Sweet Temptations from Savannahs Favorite Restaurant* (2006)

*Paula Deen Celebrates!: Best Dishes and Best Wishes for the Best Times of Your Life* (2006)

*Christmas with Paula Deen: Recipes and Stories from My Favorite Holiday* (2007)

*Paula Deen's My First Cookbook* (2008)

*The Lady and Sons Too!: A New Batch of Recipes from Savannah* (2008)

*Paula Deen's Kitchen Wisdom and Recipe Journal* (2008)

*Paula Deen's the Deen Family Cookbook* (2009)

*Paula Deen's Savannah Style* (2010)

*Paula Deen's Southern Cooking Bible: The New Classic Guide to Delicious Dishes with More than 300 Recipes* (2011)

Table 1  
Deen's Tweets

Promotional Tweets	Engaging/Personal Tweets	Twit Pics Tweets
@Paula_Deen: #dailytweat: Chocolate Spice Cupcakes For Two ow.ly/8VFn3	@Paula_Deen: @hboyd72 Happy 40th Birthday!	@Paula_Deen: Michael, Corrie and Sarah in St Maartens. That's where we are today! yfrog.com/oct28xuj
@Paula_Deen: New board on @Pinterest: Chocolate Valentine's Day ow.ly/8XgXl	@Paula_Deen: Tomorrow I'm off to Indiana for the Super Bowl. Are you having a party or watching it with family? ow.ly/8RKaa	@Paula_Deen: That our cruise ship y'all! yfrog.com/oc2nlvnj
@Paula_Deen: #dailytweat: Sweet and Mild Shrimp Stirfry ow.ly/8VFed	@Paula_Deen: @juliehutchison3 @michaelallenwin @mamamann2 Thank you for the birthday wishes. I feel so very blessed to celebrate another year.	@Paula_Deen: This is everything Courtney needs to make me pretty! yfrog.com/esd0muwj
@Paula_Deen: New "Date Night Recipes" board on @Pinterest, perfect for a sweet Valentine's Day evening at home! ow.ly/8U2OJ	@Paula_Deen: @wthrmnslaughter @donnamariescaff Love and blessings to you, too!	@Paula_Deen: RT @dwalls34: Italian today @Paula_Deen style!! @Lady_and_Sons Buffet Lasagna & Italian Sausage pic.twitter.com/NHPRgfyq

<p>@Paula_Deen: Make your sweetheart feel extra special when they open a box of homemade chocolate assortments this Valentine's Day! ow.ly/8XhJq</p>	<p>@Paula_Deen: Can't wait to be in Miami later this month for SOBE Wine and Food Fest! ow.ly/90hht</p>	<p>@Paula_Deen: Guess where we are today! yfrog.com/oe4oxzuj</p>
<p>@Paula_Deen: My team is working hard this week in Savannah on a photoshoot for my website. This spicy seafood pasta looks delicious! ow.ly/i/riI6</p>	<p>@Paula_Deen: @ethud01 South Beach Wine and Food Festival</p>	<p>@Paula_Deen: On a photoshoot today &amp; took a quick break to play Jack's new game. He knows how to work this better than I do! ow.ly/i/r74O</p>
<p>@Paula_Deen: #dailytweat: The Deen Bros. Lighter Macho Nachos ow.ly/8EnP2</p>	<p>@Paula_Deen: Shooting a summer shot for my magazine today by pool. Its in 50's doesn't feel like summer.</p>	<p>@Paula_Deen: Guess where I am?? yfrog.com/g07pldvj</p>
<p>@Paula_Deen: Make sure y'all tune in to Bobby's new episode tonight on Cooking Channel!</p>	<p>@Paula_Deen: @jessifalc Glad you love the dishes, girl- so sorry about your pan! You can learn about warranty information here: 1 (888) 298-1071</p>	<p>@Paula_Deen: How pretty is this street! yfrog.com/obxjdunj</p>
<p>@Paula_Deen: Are you on Google+? Add me to your circle! ow.ly/8EArr</p>	<p>@Paula_Deen: Just stepped on plane to fly to California. Gonna be a long flight but brought my favorite pillow.</p>	<p>@Paula_Deen: Just had a hysterical photoshoot with photographer @matthoylephoto! Love it! ow.ly/i/pUEt</p>

Paula Smith was an active member of several fandoms during the late 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. In 1973, Paula Smith first coined the term Mary Sue by writing a piece in "A Trekkie's Tale" in Menagerie #2. The piece was satirical in nature, lampooning the original Star Trek female characters who became love interests for the central characters in the story. In 1977, Sharon Ferraro and Paula Smith created the Fan Quality Awards (FanQ) awards in conjunction with SeKwester\*Con Too. The original categories