

The Power Behind the Pudding: Hidden Hierarchies in the African Colonial Cookery Book

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ABSTRACT: Recipes are usually considered as innocent concoctions. However, I will argue in this paper that various dominating male hierarchies and ideologies infiltrate themselves into these culinary texts. Thus, imperial power permeates the African colonial cookery book, binding the colonialist's housewife to her tropical dwelling, to the church or women's group while fixing most of the indigenous population in various degrees of paternalistic servitude. For example, one of the first colonial African cookery books, Mrs A.R. Barnes's *The Colonial Household Guide*, declares that 'the chief object of this book is to assist in their duties the housewives and mothers of the colony.' (1890). After independence, the new male nationalist leaders, as part of the nation-building exercise, summoned local recipes to the nationalist cause, so consolidating their legitimacy as a governing elite, and often fixing women in their national home-making role. Most female writers of African cookery books seem to collude with the dominant elite and perpetuate this gender divide. Thus, in Mary Ominde's *Kenyan Cookery Book*, the author declares that 'The book attempts to remind the housewife of the importance of a balanced diet when planning the family menu. ... This in itself is a contribution to the development of nation building ...' (1975: introduction). Gramsci's ideas of hegemonic power through the media to 'manufacture consent' and legitimacy and Louis Althusser's notion of interpellation will be shown to be relevant to the analysis of the hidden hierarchies lurking within the African cookery book.

Puddings, and sweet food in general, play an important part in colonial cookery books. For example, the list of chapters in *Recipes from Bechuanaland* (undated, circa 1950) begins as follows: 'Cakes, Scones, Breads, Pastry, Biscuits and Cookies, The Kitchen (poem), Tarts and Tartlets, Puddings and Sweet Dishes, Fillings and Fruit Drinks and Beverages [...]' (facing p. 1). These chapters take up nearly half of the book and the colonial housewives who contributed to the volume clearly envisage the preparation of sweets as an essential part of their duties. These are the preferred dishes of the settlers in their colonial home. Cookery books might be thought of as harmless, ideology-free, innocent concoctions but as I shall argue, imperial patriarchal power is hidden behind these puddings.

There is no surprise as to how the colonial housewife was envisaged in the British Empire during the colonial period. Domesticity is a constructed notion of considerable

complexity and one that changes over time, although the predominant Victorian model of patriarchal dominance was clearly difficult to dislodge. In Britain and its empire in Africa, there was a clear British colonial gendered notion of domesticity which interacted with an array of different African versions of domesticity. Mission schools taught domestic science to African girls in both British and Portuguese Africa (see, for example, Sheldon 1998; Tripp 2004). This article does not examine in any detail these interactions, but focuses on how the Western notion of domesticity was perpetuated in colonial Africa. Many of the cookery books from British colonial Africa have sections giving advice and 'hints' usually in a section following the recipes: the housewife is drawn into manifold household chores beyond just the cooking. These instructions to the colonial housewife were openly proclaimed, but, as will be suggested here, cookery books, and books of advice to the colonialist's wife, also contributed to the maintenance of this version of domesticity in more subtle ways.

Karen Tranberg Hanson sees 'domestic' as having a number of denotations such as 'a space, or physical setting (home); a type of activity, work (home-keeping) or preoccupation (domestic affairs); a relationship implying power (controlling, taming, civilization), or organization (household management); and an occupational title (household servant)' (1992, p. 3). She also stresses the importance of domesticity in the establishment of domination in the colonial context and how 'the ideologies associated with domesticity played a crucial role and as yet insufficiently acknowledged role in influencing the cultural order of African history' (p. 5).

In this paper, I shall focus on cookery books in different colonial empires, and how they, along with books proffering advice on keeping the home, fixes or interpellates the imagined reader in a position of colonial homemaker. In writing about national anthems previously I have stressed the role of Althusser's notion of interpellation and the performance of these songs as contributors to building a sense of national unity (Cusack 2008, p. 47). Althusser saw ideology as being perpetuated by ideological state apparatuses such as churches, the education system, and the family, as well as by the political and cultural systems (Althusser, 1972, p. 252). These ideological state apparatuses hail or interpellate individuals as subjects, that is 'call people forth' as subjects. By repeatedly addressing or hailing a subject he or she can become culturally interpellated with certain values. Althusser had illustrated the notion of interpellation by referring to the policeman's call of 'hey you' where the person addressed in turning

around to face the policeman ‘becomes a subject’ (Althusser 1972, p. 272). By, for example, obeying the call to ‘arise’ proclaimed in the national anthem the Nigerian, a person becomes a Nigerian subject. What I argue here is that a similar process is at work in the reading of the colonial cookery book. The colonial housewife reading the cookery books would be repeatedly interpellated in her domestic role. She becomes confirmed in the role of the home keeper of her colonial dwelling.

It is also important to stress that performance matters in identity formation and that the role of actually cooking a dish, or organising the home, consolidates the identity of the housewife, whether as an imperial participant or later, as a postcolonial nation-builder. As Judith Butler has argued ‘there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender: the identity is constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results’ (p. 25). The performance creates the identity – the identity does not create the performance.

French and Portuguese Colonies

Western notions of domesticity might have varied among the different colonial powers. It is likely however that a general western notion of the women’s place in the home is common to most western countries. Certainly, under Portugal’s right-wing *Estado Novo* (New State, 1933–74), the role of women was clearly set out. A youth movement for girls, based on Italian and German fascist models, was set up in 1937 and attendance was compulsory for seven to fourteen old girls. The movement published a magazine, *Menina e Moça*, from 1947 to 1962, where the philosophy proclaimed was that the future wife and mother was to be an excellent housewife, an ideal woman, capable of producing a good meal, despite any difficulties, without bothering the husband (Braga and Braga 2012, pp. 207–8).

However, I have, as yet, not identified any cookery books written by women in colonial Francophone or Lusophone sub-Saharan Africa. It is possible that the British colonial policy of indirect rule of their African subjects produced a space for the colonial wife to write books for her fellow settlers and ‘colonisers’. Perhaps the French colonial policy of assimilation placed all the emphasis on importing French food and reproducing the essentials of French cuisine. Thus, there was perhaps less of a need to produce a cookery book for the settler as the only cuisine acknowledged was the classical French one.

However, there are a few glimpses of French colonial attitudes to African food in books written by men. When men get involved in describing African ‘chop’ (food) a cataloguing inventory usually replaces the recipes set out in the colonial housewives’ cookery books. R. de Noter, ‘a man of taste in all senses of the word,’ (p. xi) published *La Bonne Cuisine aux Colonies* in 1931. There is a section on Africa which starts with a recipe for *Singe aux arachides ou Foutou* (Monkey with Peanuts or Foutou). Here the ‘foutou’ are dense peanut balls in a sauce, but they can be

also made from plantain or manioc. We are told that according to the Commandant Baratier, the dish is exquisite, ‘but you have to have courage to eat it’ (p. 43). Tortoise liver, camel-stomach stew, dromedary feet ‘en vinaigrette’ are also included in the recipes all which seems very distant from the comfortable puddings that permeate the British colonial cookery books (pp. 48, 82, 83). This book is more of an ethnographic study, with an element of exoticism, rather than advice for preparing food for Europeans in the colonies.

In the *Guide de la Colonisation au Togo* (1924), a part of which country the French had taken over from Germany after the First World War, the European resident is told to avoid the starchy food of the natives as not being suitable for the European digestion, and focus on meat whether beef, lamb, pork or game. It also gives advice to eat vegetables, especially for the evening meal. The reader is also told to avoid contact with women of easy virtue, as venereal disease is widespread (pp. 74–78). The *Guide de la Colonisation au Cameroun* has very similar advice, plus a recipe for making palm oil acceptable to the European as other fats and oils are too expensive (pp. 62–64). These two books were addressed to the male colonialist.

Few cookery books have been identified as emerging from colonial Lusophone Africa. Oscar Ribas’s *Alimentação Regional Angolana* (1971) is another ethnographic study rather than a cookery book. When simple recipes are presented, the quantities of ingredients are seldom specified. In the original book, Ribas’s sisters provided the food which was then photographed by a brother-in-law and which provided twenty-one illustrations for the book (p. 3). Joaquim Xabregas’s *Algumas ementas angolanas: seu significado nutritivo* (Some Angolan Recipes: their nutritional significance) is another male ‘scientific’ effort. Neither of these books is addressed to the women of colonial Angola. Here, as with the French examples above, the supposed male readers are viewed more as eaters, in contrast to the female preparers of food (see, for example, Christensen 2017, pp. 166–181).

In Portugal, under the *Estado Novo*, all the colonies were treated as ‘provinces’ of Portugal. A short book, written by two women, was published in 1969 by the *Agência geral do ultramar* giving recipes from Portugal ‘overseas’ (M.A.M.). This is a compilation of recipes without any hints or mention of the cook. Maria Odette Cortes Valente, late in the colonial period, wrote the massive (567-page) *Cozinha regional Portuguesa* (1972) which includes many recipes from the African provinces, as well some from Goa and Macao. The writer first addresses the text to the female reader, but in a section entitled ‘PARA TI’ (for you), Artur, probably her husband, urges the author, that despite any misunderstandings, she should still offer a smile to her husband and daughters (no-pagination, following title page): the woman is summoned to the stove and told to keep smiling while she is there.

A list of 755 Portuguese Cookery books and manuscripts (Rêgo 1998) produced for the Portuguese Ministry of

Culture and the *Biblioteca Nacional* in Lisbon names one book of unknown authorship published in Angola (circa 1960?) which is not mentioned above: *Manual de Culinária*, published in Nova Lisboa (present day Huambo) by *Publicadora Angolana*. The first Mozambican cookery book, *Cozinha Moçambicana*, was published in 1975, the year of independence.

As in British East and Southern Africa, there were very large settler communities in Angola and Mozambique. The complexity and singularity of current Angolan cuisine can be traced back to colonial times (See Cusack 2010). It is possible that the adoption by the Portuguese *Estado Novo* of Gilberto Freyre's notion of Lusotropicalism, that is, that the Portuguese were more adapted to the tropics than other colonialists, and mixed better with their African subjects, might have mitigated against any special advice for the Portuguese housewife: after all, the 'colonies' were just part of Portugal (See, for example, Catelo on Lusotropicalism, 2015). More likely, many of the women who settled in Lusophone Africa in the 1950s and 60s were not able to read, so they probably just continued using their mothers' recipes remembered from their home in Portugal. More research needs to be done as to the cooking that was encountered in colonial Francophone and Lusophone Africa, and what advice, if any, was offered to the colonial housewife.

The Housewife and the Bachelor

There are a number of colonial cookery books published in British colonies between 1890 and the independence of African states in the 1960s. These include books from Kenya, Uganda, Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Nigeria, Ghana, Bechuanaland, as well as South Africa. Others were produced in England for the use by colonial housewife. Will Sellick argues that the food of British colonial Africa was an 'ephemeral cuisine' reached its zenith during the brief period of African colonial rule, the 'imperial intermission', as it has been called, from about 1880 to 1965 (p. 10). However, despite the shortness of colonial rule, elements of these colonial cuisines have been incorporated into post-colonial African national cuisines (see Cusack 2000).

A number of the British colonial housewives in the settler communities in Africa were prepared to introduce African foodstuffs into the colonial domestic space. Perhaps this is a further example of what Geoffrey Pilcher has pointed out about Mexican cuisine: that it was women who first introduced native American recipes into Mexican cookery books, as they were less concerned with the social stigma associated with the pre-Columbian dishes. Male chefs in Latin America were the main proponents of French cuisine (pp. 211–14).

In the preface to the 1890 edition of *The Colonial Household Guide*, recently republished as *Where the Lion Roars*, Mrs A. R. Barnes writes 'The chief object of this book is to assist in their duties the housewives and mothers of the colony [...] Nothing contributes so much to the

discomfort of a home as badly or wastefully cooked food [...] (p. 4). The collection of recipes is followed by a series of chapters such as 'Useful knowledge', 'Hints to isolated mothers' and 'Washing, starching and Ironing'. In this last section, we are told that washing should be completed early in the week as '[a] husband, possibly employed from home all week, does not care to see it [the washing] about; it appears as if there is no room or welcome for him if much work of this sort is about then' (p. 280). The list of housework tasks is very considerable and many other colonial cookery books include a similar section.

The Western dominant ideology of domesticity is proclaimed openly here. To make a bed you are told to put on a clean apron – and do it as early in the morning as possible (p. 274). By putting on that apron your identity is performatively constituted as a housewife, or, looking at this in a slightly different way, by obeying the call to rise and putting on the apron, she is culturally interpellated as a housewife. Many of these women who contribute to these books were clearly happy to occupy this position.

Muriel (Lady) Tew's *Cooking in West Africa made easier* (1920) was written mainly for the benefit of young bachelors based in Nigeria. In the introduction to the new (2007) edition David Saffery points out that in West Africa most of the cooking was carried out by native cooks and that the recipes reflect a very British cuisine with little adaptation of local foods and recipes (p. v-vi). Here, the bachelor was not seen as the cook but as advisor to the native cook and as Lady Tew puts it in her introduction, 'I have tried to choose dishes which a native cook should be able to turn out well with a little difficulty [...] the recipes enable the cook to give his Master a variety of plain dishes and frequent change ...' (p. xvii). Neither master nor male cook, unlike the housewife, is expected to understand weights so quantities are given in 'cups', a 'little' butter or 'a thick piece of fish' (p. 31). The food which the bachelors' cooks were encouraged to prepare seems very bland, for example, stone cream which consisted of milk, sugar and gelatine while we are told that 'Oxo can be made with milk instead of water. It forms a nourishing food, but is not very palatable' (pp. 106, 150).

The role of the colonial housewife is again set out in great detail in Emily Bradley's *Dearest Priscilla. Letters to the Wife of a Colonial Civil Servant* published in 1950 and the expectations seem to have changed little since the 1890s. Bradley makes clear what position the women will occupy in the colony: 'Your husband will come in at twelve. Perhaps you have gone out to dress the salad or see that the pudding has set. He will want a cold drink in a comfortable chair, then his lunch, and perhaps a rest before he goes back to the office' (89). There is nothing hidden about the advice here and the colonial housewife is instructed to be a silent helping hand to the man of the house. Indeed, one chapter is entitled the 'Silent Partner' as the wife is supposed not to have any ideas of her own about what is going on in the husband's office: 'yours must be a domestic anonymity as

absolute as purdah. To the world you reveal no more than polite attention and interested ignorance' (115). The poor housewife is told 'you must be serene, reposeful and silent, but also chatty and stimulating. You must be happy to be alone, yet glad to put everything aside and be at anyone's disposal [...]. You really are going to a man's world in which you will be very much the lesser half of this imperial partnership' (p. 120).

Emily Bradley was advising a bride what to do when newly arriving in Africa. In contrast, Captain H. Osman Newland in his *West Africa: A handbook of practical information* is directing his advice to the male newcomer to Africa, and has a frontispiece entitled, 'A West African beauty', showing a topless young African woman bedecked with necklaces. Another illustration shows three bare-breasted, 'West African women showing strange forms of neck-wear and head-dress', with both pictures directed at the male gaze (p. 162). In 'Appendix I' the newcomers are told how to live and what to wear:

'[f]rom dawn to about 4.30 p. m. a sun topi (hat) must be worn. Many also wear a spinepad (a padded cloth worn along the spine by men in the British army in the tropics), especially when shooting [...] too much fruit induces diarrhoea, a condition to be dreaded as much as constipation [...] When rising, an orange, a couple of bananas, or some papaw can be taken. The pawpaw is improved if eaten with lime-juice and sugar [...] The two dishes peculiar to the country for the European are palm-oil chop and ground-nut chop. They are both excellent, except when prickly heat is about' (pp. 427–29).

All this advice was no doubt useful, although it is not clear that a spinepad was of great benefit. There is little evidence of any domestic environment except for advice on dealing with servants: '[d]o not flog your boys [...] treat your domestics with a sense of humour' (p. 430).

The first edition of Marie Pickering's *Tropical Cookery Simplified* published in 1936 was designed as a collection of everyday recipes using tropical foodstuffs: it was written to be 'understandable by the intelligent native cook [...] proportions in these recipes are based upon such common measures as the teacup and tablespoon rather than on weights. The book should be especially useful to Messing Officers and others leading bachelor lives in the tropics' (p. 5). The advice on boiling vegetable seems to confirm that the British of that era tended to overcook them: the average recommended time for old beetroot is three and a half to four hours and spinach, 30 minutes (p. 79). In the new edition published in 1963 (*Tropical Cookery*) Pickering announces 'Times have changed and it is necessary to revise the book completely and to plan it for the housewife [...] The new edition will, I hope, be useful to the newly-wed wife who is joining her husband on her first tropical assignment' (p. 7). Thus, instead of cups of flour we have ounces, but the vegetables are still boiled to extinction

(p. 65). What is clear from these editions is that the colonial wife is envisaged as ensconced in the kitchen while the husband, viewed as incompetent in the domestic sphere, is still capable of giving simple instructions to the 'intelligent native'.

British African Cookery Books

A whole series of books written and coordinated by women emerged in British Africa along the lines set by Mrs Barnes in *The Colonial Household Guide*. For example, *The Bulawayo Cookery Book* was first published in 1909 in aid of the Building Fund for the St. John the Baptist Church in Bulawayo. The involvement of the Church in many of these colonial books suggests the established imperial order was firmly controlling the approved version of domesticity into which the colonial wife was to be submerged. On the title page, the following ditty is inscribed:

We may do without love,
We may do without books,
But where is the man
Who can do without cooks?

As David Saffery points out in his introduction there is 'a preponderance of comfortable, middle-class British family dishes [...] yet, look more closely [...] and the unmistakable flavours of southern Africa become evident' (p. 8). Most of the fish dishes are made from tins – lobster, salmon, oyster – as a reliable railway network was not yet available. The book is interspersed with advertisements including one for 'Blue Band, Aerated Water Factory' addressed 'To Housewives' (p. 124). The usual miscellany of hints follows the food recipes including one from a Mrs Nash: 'A Novel Cushion. An eiderdown, when not in use, makes a capital and comfortable cushion if carefully folded and put into a pretty chintz or silk slip' (p. 151). According to this, these are the sort of concerns which the colonial wife should address.

This is one of a number of these books which consist of recipes contributed by various women. Thus, for example, on page eighty-six we have recipes provided by Mrs Heyman (Fish Kedgerree), Mrs Vincent (Hot Pot), Mrs Granger (Minced Ox Kidney on Toast) and Mrs Issels (Meat Roll). Here, this solidarity of colonial wives is inviting the reader to join the hegemonic group along with a gentle ideological nudge to conform with these contributors' conception of the dominant notion of imperial domesticity.

A Rhodesian Cookery Book first published in 1967 has been reprinted as a *Zimbabwean Cookery Book*: the only evidence for this change being the obvious ill-fitting of the word 'Zimbabwean' in the Foreword by Yvonne Hayward. The idea behind the book is 'to share some recipes with the women of the country' (p. 3). The recipes provided here by 'women who have lived in Zimbabwe and Zambia for a long time' are mostly standard simple British middle-class



Figure 1. Housewife at the stove (Guggisberg, p. 168).

contributions but with very limited evidence of any African connection, with recipes for guava Jelly and paw paw jam lying between marmalade and lemon curd (p. 30). This is certainly not cuisine 'à la Zimbabwe' as promoted on the back cover.

Another early publication is *The Kenya Cookery Book and Household Guide*, which first appeared in 1928, and was compiled by members of St Andrew's Church Women's Guild in Nairobi. There have been only very minor changes made to the book since first publication and the more recent Kenway Publications edition of 1994. As well as an abundance of puddings and standard British middle-class fare this book does occasionally acknowledge its African origins with, for example, a Swahili section giving a list of useful words and phrases, including broom (*ufagio*) or duster (*kitamba cha vumbi*) (pp. 263–268). A shortened Swahili version of the book entitled *Kitabu Cha Upishi* was published in 1935. A number of recipes wander away from the standard British cuisine: stuffed Chowchows (Chayotes) and a few pages of maize and maize meal recipes including *Ugali* and *Irio* (pp. 108, 117–122).

There is a long section on Household Hints including such items as cleaning and curing poultry feathers (p. 244) and advice on not putting out washing to dry on bushes 'as

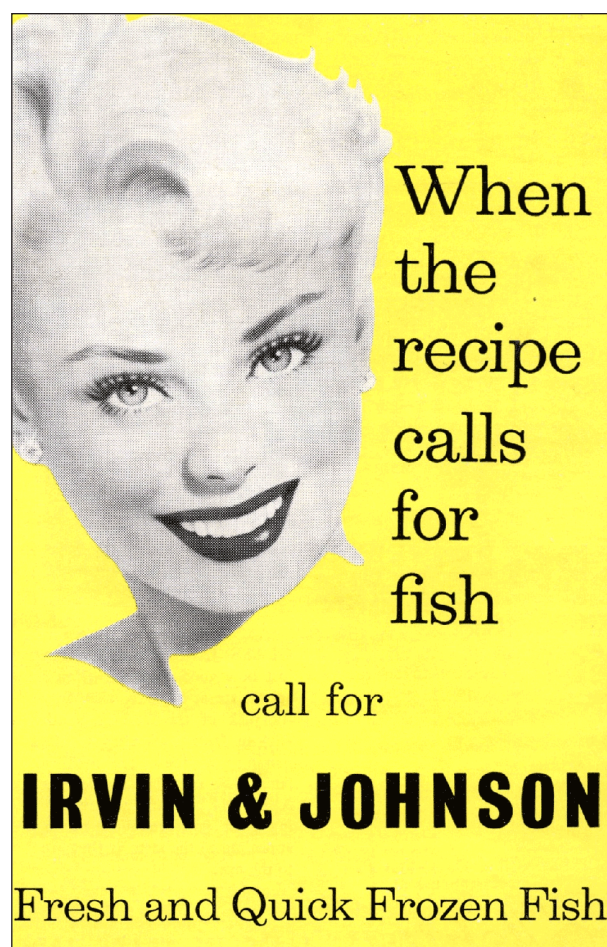


Figure 2. The housewife is very happy buying fish. (Guggisberg, op. p. 9).

harmful insects may lay their eggs on the clothing' (p. 249). Unlike many of the other books the text is not directly addressed to the housewife although in the preface to the post-independence 1970 edition the writer hopes that the book 'will prove even more useful and popular with all cooks and housewives in Kenya [...]' (unpaginated).

The Gold Coast Cookery Book was published in 1933 and was compiled by the British Red Cross Society. About eighty women contributed, mostly 'Mrs's', probably mostly the wives of colonial civil servants, with a few 'Miss's', some head-mistresses of girls' schools, a couple of religious 'Sisters' and Lady Thomas, the wife of the colonial governor. David Saffery in his introduction to the 2007 edition notes that unlike earlier colonial cookery books 'it is notable for its wide and enthusiastic use of local West African foodstuffs such as millet, groundnut, palm oil, cassava, okra and tigernut' (xxix). There are fifty-four pages devoted to recipes for fish and meat but 109 pages for sweets, cakes and confectionary confirming yet again the sweet tooth of the colonial residents and the importance of the pudding. This is yet another recipe book written by women for the colonial housewife. Lady Thomas contributes one of the five recipes for guava jelly (pp. 269–



3. Inside cover (Guggisberg).

70) and confirms the support of the imperial government for the enterprise. The reader, perusing a recipe book dominated by British puddings, will be gently reminded of her secondary role in the imperial patriarchal order.

In *Recipes from Bechuanaland* (Circa 1950) the Women's Institute in Francistown offers more of the same. The large first section, 'Cakes' is preceded by a poem by M. A. Smith: 'Mother in the kitchen, I would have you bake/ From this heavenly recipe, this delicious cake [...]'. There are fewer recipes using local ingredients than in the *Gold Coast Cookery Book* and in the Forward by the Patroness of the Women's Institute there seems to be some disdain for the local dishes as she concludes '[t]here is everything here from 'Madila' of the Kalahari to the most civilised of dishes' (n.p.). However, there is a brief section entitled 'On Safari' where buck is cooked in a pot and 'as soon as the buck is killed, the liver should be taken out and cut into thin slices [...] and cooked almost in their own blood' (p. 123). There are no instructions for the housewife on how to shoot the buck as presumably that is for the male members of the party. The section on 'Hints' includes advice on dealing with cut flowers, removing lipstick stains, keeping biscuits fresh and coping with a new hot water bottle and are clearly considered more suitable tasks for the colonial housewife (pp. 131,133).

Eating in Africa by Rosanne Guggisberg (1958) starts with 'dedicated to all husbands who enjoy good food as much as mine does and to all wives who have made cooking their hobby [...]' (facing title page). The writer is based in Kenya and the recipes are 'adapted to African conditions and supplies' (flyleaf) and is a straight forward collection of 800 recipes with perhaps fewer puddings and cakes than in

some of the other books. There are a number of recipes under the heading 'Hunter's Luck' which include 'Duiker Liver and Kidney Casserole', 'Francolin with Apples', the mysterious 'Thommy with Mushrooms' and Zebra Stew (pp. 59, 63–4). The role of the colonial housewife is assumed by this Swiss author, who spent most of her life in Africa, rather than spelt out directly as in other colonial African cookery books. However, there are a number of advertisements which confirm the colonial housewife's role, for example, one for Anchor Brand Yeast which, amongst other things, shows the housewife at the stove and another for a fish supplier where the ideal housewife beams contentedly over the prospects of acquiring such fish

(Figures 1 and 2). In these advertisements, the female readers of the cookery books are yet again being interpellated as housewives and hailed as subjects of imperial patriarchy. The inside of the front cover shows the housewife and also the domestic servants cooking with not just a smile, but dancing with delight at the prospect of doing so (Figure 3). Are the housewives and servants put on a par here?

Much in the same style is *Ouma's Cookery Book* published in South Africa in 1940. The recipes are interspersed with little poems and ditties. The section on 'Hors Oeuvres' (p. 7) is preceded by:

A fair start to dinner,
Like a fair start in life,
Depends very much,
On the right kind of wife.

And before 'Bread, Scones and Buns' there is the quotation 'And so I stand beside the kitchen sink/ And washing dishes there, [...]' (p. 137). As usual there is an exhaustive list of household hints, including, in great detail how to deal with the stove and refrigerator and instructions on how to do such work as mending the tips of gloves by dropping a marble in the finger (p. 246). The new bride is advised that all this working has to be done happily as '[c]heerful surroundings and company induce good appetite [...] good digestion depends in general upon keeping the body in good condition by plenty of fresh air, congenial work and taking suitable exercise and by cultivating cheerful mental habits' (p. 254). High demands are placed on the new housewife to comply with the demands of the prevailing ideology, and she is expected to keep smiling, or whatever 'cheerful mental habits' are. Finally, the household

hints section begins with 'Your stove', thus quietly, as the housewife stands before her cooker, culturally interpellating her in her domestic servitude (p. 243).

The Nyasaland Cookery Book and Household Guide (1947) is another book aimed at the newcomer to Africa who is told '[t]he Nyasaland housewife finds a few simple tools very useful, such as a light hammer, a small screw driver, a pair of pincers, a saw, and an axe'. This is one of the cookery books which include local ingredients and there are nineteen recipes including fish from Lake Nyasa (pp. 23–28). Most of the 'General Household hints and Recipes' are aimed at the usual domestic cleaning and household management such as the advice to use 'Onion Water' for cleaning gilt picture frames. A Nyasaland woman following this advice is yet again being culturally interpellated as an imperial housewife. Recipe number 522 for 'Home-Made Flit' seems an alarming mixture: half a wine bottle of petrol, one ounce of wintergreen and half a wine bottle of paraffin (p. 154–5).

This set of books from British colonial Africa and South Africa are very similar in tone with some variation on the extent of inclusion of African foodstuffs into the recipes. The earnest contributors of recipes appear happy in their role as providers of comfortable food and a well-organised house for their imperial masters.

Conclusions

It is clear that Western conceptions of domesticity in the British Empire were wholly accepted by the female writers of the colonial cookery book. The examples given above have a similar approach and confirm that the colonial housewife is expected to follow in the footsteps of the Victorian middle classes, that is, the housewife is in full control of the kitchen and the servants but is there to support the colonial master. How the wife had to behave is often proclaimed openly and there is nothing unexpected in that. However, also hidden in the texts, are passages and pictures which interpellate the housewife, so consolidating her subordinate role in the colony. There is scarce evidence from cookery books for how housewives in the colonies in Francophone and Lusophone Africa are supposed to act, but what evidence there is suggests that it would be very similar to the British case. When men have been involved in all three colonial empires, the focus is on the consumption of the food, not the preparation of it. As for the African cooks and 'boys' they are seen as only capable of simple recipes and the housewife needs considerable skill to manage her household. The dominant European version of the ideology of domesticity impels the housewife to stand in front of the stove, and to keep smiling while she is there.

About the author

Igor Cusack, after a career as a geologist and manager in the oil and coal industries, completed a PhD looking at the

question of national identity in Equatorial Guinea. He then taught at the University of Birmingham and at the University of Bristol on the politics, history and literature of Hispanic and Lusophone Africa, as well as the cuisine, culture and identity of the Hispanic World. He has published widely in numerous book chapters and journals including, for example, *Nations and Nationalism*, *The Journal of African Cultural Studies*, *National and Ethnic Politics*, *Portuguese Studies*, *Luso-Brazilian Review* and *Food Culture and Society*. His research has pivoted around nationalism, national identity, masculinities and the literature and cuisines of Hispanic and Lusophone Africa. His work is currently focused on aspects of power and gender associated with African colonial and postcolonial cookery books.

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