

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-28696-1 - Cooking, Cuisine and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology

Jack Goody

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Editors: Jack Goody & Geoffrey Hawthorn

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Preface

Most prefaces are postscripts, and this is no different. On reading what I have written, I need to call attention to the three points which should be made at the beginning rather than the end. First, I have used the terms 'hierarchic' and 'hieratic' to refer to those states with developed, stratified sub-cultures and those without (the crude difference, I argue, between most Eurasian and African states). Secondly, I have employed the word 'cuisine' in three distinct ways: in the general sense of the products of the kitchen, more specifically (as in the title to the book) for a culturally differentiated cuisine – the high and the low – and finally in the specialised sense of those highly elaborated forms of cooking found in only a few societies such as China, the Middle East and post-Renaissance France. The third point is more general and arises out of a visit to Australia and South-East Asia. For the same contrast that I note between the cooking and cookbooks on Africa and Asia is found between those of New Guinea and Indonesia, for example, in Anne Mac Gregor's *Papua New Guinea Cookbook* (Milton, Queensland, 1972) and Rosemary Brissenden's *South East Asian Food* (London, 1969). The inhabitants of New Guinea, like the original inhabitants of Australia, are adopting the foods characteristic of the earlier industrial cuisine of Europe – corned beef, tinned pilchards in tomato sauce (or Japanese mackerel), heavily sweetened tea, and bread. In Indonesia the elaborate cuisine of earlier times remains largely intact, though there was an important division between the cooking of the interior 'tribes', that of the kingdoms based on intensive rice cultivation, and, as in West Africa, that of the merchant communities of the ports. In Bali the elaborate preparation and decoration of traditional foods at temple festivals is directed at attracting the gods and their followers to come down and join in the worship. Later on the congregation retrieves their gifts, taking home the leavings of the god's table, which they call, literally, 'what is asked back'.

A visit to Australia inevitably provokes an interest in the kind of 'de-evolution' that occurs in frontier situations, in the outback, on the homestead, out west, since the search for history involves the resurrection of recipes on how to bake your own damper and instructions on how to

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build your own dunny. But that theme, like many other such topics, must await a future occasion.

I am conscious that while I have given notes for my written sources, I have not acknowledged my oral ones. Since this book was half-intended to be an inaugural lecture, I should begin by expressing my thanks to my colleagues at Cambridge, first to my earlier ones, especially to Audrey Richards, Meyer Fortes and Edmund Leach, and secondly to my present ones, especially to Gilbert Lewis and Stephen Hugh-Jones who have provided references and comments. Martha Mundy, Asha Sarabhai, David McMullen and John Iliffe, among others, have saved me from a number of errors. Kum Gandah and Suhrid Sarabhai have made field trips pleasurable and stimulating experiences. Cathie Roth, Anne Robson, Jane Moon, Norman Buck of 'St John's College Library, the librarians of the Haddon Library and the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences, among others, have helped with the production. Esther Goody participated in the fieldwork, developed some of the ideas, read an earlier version and made many valuable comments. And I am especially in debt to Patricia Williams and Geoffrey Hawthorn who rightly insisted on the need for more work than I had intended.

Cambridge, November 1981

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TO MY MOTHER,

who like many good Scots, and to the greater benefit of her children, showed more interest in other things. However she learnt some cooking from one of her many older sisters, Edith Rankine, whose recipe book was the outcome of a course in nursing and records with startling clarity the imprint of empire on British tastes. It begins with Skink Soup, and goes on to Girdle Scones, Pitcaithly Bannocks, Curry of Cold Meat, American Dough Nuts, Imperial Biscuits, English Stew, Welsh Cheese Cakes, Fish Kedgerec, Russian Fish Pie, . . .

AND TO MY DAUGHTERS,

Joanna and Jane, whose various concerns with food, professional and spiritual, have been deeply affected by the imperial past and the international present.