

“Without Sympathy There is No Cookery”: Imperial Knowledge and the Creation of “Indian” Cuisine

SUE SAMUELSON AWARD FOR FOODWAYS SCHOLARSHIP 2019

By: Julia Fine

Abstract: By viewing colonial British cookbooks and Indian cookbooks in conversation with one another, this essay analyzes the cultural melding and appropriation that occurred in foodways during the colonization of the Indian subcontinent. It particularly explores how British cookbooks published in India at this time attempted to bind Indian cooks within an ahistorical and homogenized vision of India. Yet, as demonstrated through a close reading of two prominent Bengali cookbooks, South Asian cooks adapted these recipes in order to present a vision of nationalism that undercut British superiority and reified Indian independence. The dialogue that emerges by exploring contemporaneous cookbooks affords a space to view changes to foodways that emerged from the colonial encounter as well as their impacts and cultural importance.

Keywords: India, Great Britain, colonialism, cookbooks, creolization, foodways

“Perfectly plain cookery is suitable only for England where plain food is of the best; but in India, where meat is poverty-stricken and vegetables are tasteless, spices and flavoring are a necessity,” opens one 1914 British colonial cookbook, instructing British memsahibs on how to run a proper household in colonial India (Shalot 1914: v).¹ In the wake of the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857, new protective borders (both literal and metaphorical) emerged around the European community in India. Yet, as the above quote evinces, the kitchen remained a site where Indian domestic servants of any gender interacted with their British memsahibs. Indeed, as one British Indian cookbook author suggested in its title page epigraph, “We may live without friends; we may live without books / But civilized man cannot live without cooks” (Newman 1893). Thus, although the memsahib instructed the cook as to what dishes to serve, the cook exercised significant control over food preparation and presentation. This arms-length collaboration created a syncretic cuisine combining British and subcontinental influences. The resulting food was, according to food historian Cecilia Leong-Salobir, “distinct and different from the food practices of Britain and Asia, but at the same time incorporated dietary components of British culinary traditions and embraced indigenous ingredients and practices from the colonies”(2011: 69).

Many scholars have studied the ways in which this cultural mixing functioned within the British colonial kitchen. Prominently, Mary Procida has argued that this novel cuisine “was intended to demonstrate the colonizers’ mastery and dominance in the private arena of the empire as in the public sphere” (2003: 123). In contrast, other scholars, including Utsa Ray and Jayanta Sengupta, have focused on the cuisine as it emerged in South Asian kitchens outside of and in response to direct colonial control. They argue that this cross-cultural melding effectively shaped the colonial middle class in Bengal and constituted one means by which they articulated visions of nationhood (Ray 2015; Sengupta 2010). While Procida, Ray, and Sengupta put forth important contributions to

the field of imperial food studies, by focusing solely on either the colonial British or the Indian kitchen, these authors fail to recognize the intrinsically dialectical nature of colonialism (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009). To understand this cultural dialogue, then, we must move beyond dichotomous constructions of the colonial domestic and public spheres as well as the British colonial domestic sphere and the Indian domestic sphere. By acknowledging these spaces as inherently fluid and permeable we see not only how domestic imperial statecraft functioned, but also how it was received and adapted by Indian actors.

Here, I focus on British cookbooks written in Indian languages aimed specifically at both the memsahib and Indian cook in the British colonial household. I analyze them in conversation with Indian-authored cookbooks written in South Asian languages for Indian housewives rather than memsahibs, which were beginning to be published in certain regions of India during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I explore the different forms of cultural mixing that emerge in these colonial cookbooks. As Robert Baron and Ana C. Cara write in their discussion of "creolization" as a lens for cultural analysis, "when cultures come into contact, expressive forms and performances emerge from their encounter, embodying the sources that shape them yet constituting new and different entities" (Baron and Cara 2011: 3). Many have discussed this cultural mixing in terms of Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity, which he presented in his work *The Location of Culture* (1994).² However, here, I elucidate these emergent cultural forms using Baron and Cara's understanding of creolization. I use this not to describe the Indian subcontinent, as creolization is a historically specific phenomenon as well as a "powerful marker of identity in Latin America, the Caribbean, Southern Louisiana, Cape Verde, and the islands of the southwest Indian Ocean." Rather, I use this as a *lens* to analyze Indian cultural forms to "liberate us conceptually from a nation of fixed or 'finish' products in culture, whether purportedly 'hybrid' or whole" (Baron and Cara 2011: 4).

Following Baron and Cara's recognition of the in-process and dialogic nature of creolization, I bring together contemporaneous British and Indian cookbooks. While the colonizers' cookbooks attempted to bind Indian cooks within a homogeneous, ahistorical vision of India and Indian food, South Asian cooks adapted this cuisine to produce their own melded culinary forms which expressed an understanding of India as separate from and superior to Britain. This emergent Indian cuisine not only undercut the totalized colonial vision of "native food," but also opened up space for new imaginations of a decolonized India.

Inside the Colonial Kitchen:

Inscribing India within British Imperial Knowledge

Cookbooks written by British authors in dual-language South Asian languages and English reveal significant aspects of imperial ideals and aspirations. These books came into vogue in the late nineteenth century (Leong-Salobir 2015: 140–141). Although their authors acknowledged that many cookbooks for the British colonial kitchen already existed in English, they felt the need to publish recipes in South Asian languages as well because, as one cookbook author put it, "not one Englishwoman in a hundred can, even in her own tongue, give an intelligible explanation of a receipt, much less in a language that Nabi Bukhsh³ could understand. The results are sometimes appalling" (Shalot 1914:

iv). Similarly, an 1881 cookbook written in both English and Urdu justified its publication by a need for standardization and control:

The principal stumbling block in the way of teachers has hitherto been the impossibility of relying on the memory of their cooks to retain the numerous ingredients and often complicated processes of a variety of dishes of which they have no record. It seemed to us that this obstacle would be removed by the possession of a Cookery Book which our cooks could read, in which they could find a simple clear account of the dishes they have to make, instead of being as heretofore dependent on a garbled, inaccurate, vague viva voce translation (Newman 1893: iii).

Thus, in order for the memsahibs to instruct their cooks more accurately and quickly, these dual-language cookbooks began to proliferate.

From the above quotes, we can glean the intended audience of the dual-language works: the English woman or memsahib, as well as “Nabi Bukhsh,” a stereotypical moniker for an Indian cook. Within the British imperial domestic sphere in India, cooking in the colonial home was not necessarily seen as a woman’s task. Rather, as Mary Procida has demonstrated, “neither the physical space of the kitchen nor the knowledge and skills required of the good imperial homemaker were narrowly gendered as feminine” (2002: 132). Indeed, men authored many of the works that the British imperial cookbooks were based on. In the preface to the 1879 work *Dainty Dishes for Indian Tables*, a cookbook in English and Urdu, the author writes, “Where Francatelli, Soyer, Miss Acton, and a host of others have spoken in vain, what hope is there for a new teacher, unless he be the pioneer of a new path up the hill of difficulty?” (Newman 1893: iii). Both Charles Francatelli and Alexis Soyer are men, and while use of the word “he” might signal any gender, it suggests the unnamed author could be as well. Procida notes as well that “ordinary Anglo-Indians found nothing unseemly or unmasculine in men’s involvement in domestic and culinary affairs” (2002: 132). This subgenre of cookbooks thus destabilizes contemporary expectations about how men and women were to interact in both the domestic sphere as well as the larger biopolitical project of empire.⁴

While it is impossible to quantify the readership of these works, something of their popularity in British India can be inferred from the many editions issued. For example, at least seven editions of *What to Tell the Cook, or, The Native Cook’s Assistant: Being a Choice Collection of Receipts for Indian Cookery, Pastry, &c., &c.: in English and Tamil* were released between 1875 and 1910. The book proved so successful throughout British India that a Sinhala adaptation of the book was published for British colonists living in Ceylon in 1895, which was then reissued at least once in 1901. Similarly, *Dainty Dishes for Indian Tables* was first published in 1879 and then reissued six times between then and 1908. These new issues included a Persian edition in 1895, demonstrating the work’s sustained appeal to a wide audience. The introduction to the fifth edition notes that “the cordial reception with which ‘Dainty Dishes’ has been received may be taken as proof that such a work was needed by English Residents in India” (Newman 1893: v). Their popularity makes these works potent historical sources for understanding the construction of colonial cuisines.

I argue that these cookbooks present the British as benevolent, validating the right of Britons to consume what they understood as "native food" and the notion that mutual understanding undergirded the colonization of India. For instance, *Ceylon Cookery, Or, The Native Cook's Assistant* (1901: vii) opens by noting its creation at the request of a Sinhalese cook:

Many years ago, an intelligent Sinhalese cook came to us with a ponderous English Cookery Book saying: — "Master make one Sinhalese book like this, plenty good for Cokies"! In an office where a newspaper is manufactured daily, our cook evidently thought it would be a small matter turning out a Sinhalese edition of Mrs. Beeton's well-known work.

The nature of the text presents colonialism as a benevolent (albeit patronizing) exchange of British and Indian cultural ideals, one that answers to the requests of Indian servants. This effect is even ingrained in the format of these books, which typically present English and South Asian translations on facing pages. The bilingual diptych, combined with the English production of these vernacular cookbooks, implies mutual construction and exchange of British and Indian cultural ideals.

The recipes and meal plans featured in these books also further this vision of benevolent exchange, as they attempt to consolidate "Indian" food traditions that were comprehensible to and consumable by the British colonizers. In *What to Tell the Cook*, for example, one sample meal menu consists of "Mulligatawny, Beefsteak Pie, Cutlets à la Soubise, Kabob Curry, Pancakes." Other menus offer "Clear Soup, Roast Leg Mutton, Harico, Chicken Curry, Bread and Butter Pudding," or "Vegetable Soup, Boiled Fowls and Tongue, Mutton and Cucumber Stew, Dry Curry, Custard Pudding" (1875: 86). Although mulligatawny and curry were essentially foods created by British colonizers—based on the presumed Indian originals—the texts implicitly mark them as "Indian" foods by writing that these are foods "every native" makes and eats (cf. *What to Tell the Cook* 1875: 34; see also Narayan 1995; Roy 2010; Ruthnum 2017).⁵ The inclusion of such allegedly "native" recipes alongside European dishes without distinction suggests a form of cultural mixing through which British imperialists can absorb Indian culture.

While this mixing of cultural influences here does not represent true creolization in the terms of Baron and Cara due to the fact that rather than "embody[ing] resistance to domination and asymmetrical power relations," it works to uphold them even as it claims benevolence, it suggests the way cultural forms were changed in a dialogic process among both colonizers and colonized. As the 1902 cookbook *Things for the Cook (In English and Hindustani)* begins, "Without sympathy there can be no cookery" (Shalot 1914: iv). The book makes clear that sympathy here is demonstrated through appropriating "Indian" cooking styles, writing that "Perfectly plain cookery is suitable only for England where plain food is of the best; but in India, where meat is poverty-stricken and vegetables are tasteless, spices and flavoring are a necessity" (Shalot 1914: iv). By framing this mixed style in terms of "sympathy," the British writer suggests both the ability of Britain to understand Indian cuisine on a visceral level, as well as the larger idea of consent and benevolence underlying imperialism. Yet this sympathy is predicated on the superiority of British vegetables and meat over Indian ones, and thus recapitulates British supremacy even within the claim of benevolence. This notion of

unequal cultural mixing is furthered by the very inclusion of Indian languages alongside English. *What to Tell the Cook; or The Native Cook's Assistant*, which in its first iteration was written only in Tamil, begins by noting that in the second edition, the "Publishers have availed themselves of the suggestion proffered by several of their constituents, with a view to make it more valuable to House-keepers to print the English Text on the opposite page of the Tamil." (1875: Preface). In other words, the inclusion of the English was meant to allow the memsahibs to check up on domestic servants and correct their cooking. In this sense, while the first edition allowed Indian cooks to use the book on their own terms, this edition attempted to control Indian knowledge through the inclusion of English.

Moreover, the addition of Indian dishes (or rather, what the British thought were Indian dishes) in English meal plans also served to reify colonial ideals about what is Indian. In British India, "cultural forms in society newly classified as 'traditional' were reconstructed and transformed by and through [imperial knowledge] which created new categories and oppositions between colonizer and colonized" (Dirks 1996: ix; see also Mantena 2018: 89-118).⁶ In the case of these colonial cookbooks, the promotion of mutual understanding in fact worked to articulate and actualize British control over an idea of India and Indian cuisine. Consider the description of curries given in *What to Tell the Cook*: "Curries. Every native knows how to make these: chicken and prawn are, perhaps, the favourite ones" (1875: 34). By claiming it as the single dish that South Asians intrinsically know how to make, the cookbook marks curry as a unified symbol of Indianness. But the book then goes on to provide over fifteen recipes for variations on curry. By informing cooks how to prepare a dish "every native knows how to make," the cookbook essentially instructs the Indian cooks how to prepare properly what they supposedly already know, repackaging and presenting "Indian food" to domestic servants in a form chiefly understood and comestible by British colonialists.

A similar process occurs in many other colonial cookbooks. *Things for the Cook*, for example, offers a recipe for "Shami Kabab," which is subtitled "a Native receipt" (Shalot 1914: 31). The subtitle suggests that the recipe came *from* the cook, one of the few "natives" with whom the memsahib would have interacted. Yet by including the recipe in *Things for the Cook*, the memsahib essentially re-instructs the cook on what she understands to be his own cuisine to conform to British interpretations. Moreover, this British construction of curry and kebabs, as scholars such as Uma Narayan (1995: 63) and E.M. Collingham (2006: 115-120) have demonstrated, wholly elides the regional and cultural specificities of India. This melded cuisine thus recapitulates and reinscribes a British vision of a homogeneous, knowable, and controllable India.

The Transformation of Indian Foodways: A Case Study in Bengali Cuisine

The Indian colonial kitchen can be seen as one site of creolization, offering a "critical way of conceptualizing the emergence of cultural phenomena borne out of the necessity to negotiate cultural differences and to resist dominance by asserting a new local voice" (Baron and Cara: 3-4). These Indian colonial kitchens represented sites of creolization, where "subaltern cultural communities resisted the imposition of mechanistic, systematizing, standardizing norms from official, politically dominant cultures" (Ibid: 6). Utsa Ray has shown (2015) that colonial British cookbooks represented one way that British cuisine was transmitted to Indian people and appropriated into different

regional cuisines, thus contributing to the production of cultural mixing within Indian foodways. Of course, I do not mean to suggest that this was the only way such mixing occurred; rather, this solely represents one fruitful way of knowing what parts of Anglo-Indian culture were actively and explicitly transmitted to Indian peoples. In order to trace this exchange of culinary ideas and the effects of this exchange on Indian foodways more completely, here I draw on the work of Utsa Ray and compare recipes provided in British colonial cookbooks written in Indian languages to those appearing in cookbooks written by South Asians for use in the Indian domestic sphere. These comparisons help illustrate how cooks might have taken and transformed the knowledge disseminated in texts such as *What to Tell the Cook* and *Things for the Cook*, to varying effects. This process reveals one change to Indian foodways catalyzed by the colonial encounter, and significantly, the emergence of an Indian cuisine self-consciously symbolizing Indian independence from the British.

Most scholars focus on the development of cookbook culture in South Asia only in the postcolonial era. Arjun Appadurai (1988), for example, has focused on the spread of cookbooks in postcolonial India during the 1950s, and similarly, Rachel Berger confirms that the Indian cookbook was a "largely twentieth-century commodity" (2013: 1628). Yet South Asian cookbooks published in the nineteenth century can already be seen as active participants in a dialogue—or even a debate—with British cookbooks about the colonial kitchen. While caste restrictions as well as oral traditions would likely have limited the popularity of these works, such cookbooks were published in several regions of the country during the late Victorian period in multiple languages: *પાક શાસ્ત્ર* [*Pak Shastra: Cookery*], a late nineteenth-century Gujarati cookbook; *पाक रत्नाकर* [*Pak Ratnakar: The Gems of Cooking*], a late nineteenth-century Hindi cookbook published in Delhi; and many Bengali cookbooks, two of which will be the focus of the remainder of this essay. This smattering of examples begins to demonstrate the variety of food cultures across South Asia as well as the publication of cookbooks taking place across the different regions in relation to their cultural and linguistic differences.

In the remainder of this essay, I turn to how these culinary cultural dynamics played out specifically in the region of Bengal. Because Bengal was the center of colonial administration until 1911, uniquely creolized British/Indian cuisines emerged in the kitchens of the growing Bengali middle class. Bengal was also an important site for the development of different strands of Indian nationalist thought, where, as Jayanta Sengupta and Rachel Berger demonstrate, cooking and eating became important arenas for the expression of nationalistic expression (Sengupta 2010: 97; Berger 2013: 1622–1643). Cookbooks, especially popular among the developing Bengali middle class, were central to the very construction of that Bengali middle class itself, as Ray has demonstrated (2015: 3-8). However, this is not to suggest that Bengal is representative of all of colonial India. In focusing on Bengal, my aim is not to extrapolate a general claim about the transformation of Indian foodways across different regions and cultures. Rather, through close-reading the works of two popular authors at the time period—Pragyasundari Devi and Bipradas Mukhopadhyay—I demonstrate one way the colonial encounter changed the sorts of foods that South Asian cookbooks prescribed, and the specific ways in which these changes were presented by writers in Bengal. By focusing on the works of two popular authors, I do not mean to suggest that they represent the only visions of Indian nationalism promulgated at this time in Bengal.

Rather, they represent a specific vision of Indian nationalism closely tied to their own subject-position as middle-class Hindus. Yet at the same time, these represent, as Ray has shown, significant contributions to Bengali literature as the “most popular” recipe books at the time, constituting “classic examples of the changing diet of Bengalis” (2015: 63-64).

These cookbooks exemplify what Ray calls “hierarchical cosmopolitanism,” which attempted to “cosmopolitanize the domestic” while maintaining a regional flavor (2015: 13), as can be seen by comparing two recipes for plum pudding. A typical British cookbook from this time period might simply list ingredients in a recipe for plum pudding as: “One lb. raisins, 1 lb. flour, $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. suet, 2 tablespoonfuls of treacle, 1 pint milk. Ginger may be added, but no eggs. It cannot be boiled too much” (Poynter 1904: 8). By contrast, Pragyasundari Devi presents a recipe from the early 1900s in a paragraph of full sentences outlining steps and details for making the dish (1995: 118; as translated in Ray 2015: 70-72):⁷

The bread needs to be made into crumbs by rubbing them between both palms. Lard needs to be finely chopped and mixed with finely chopped candied peel. Then slivered nuts, currants, raisins, lard, and candied peel are to be mixed with the bread crumbs. Add sugar. Mix three eggs. This mixture is then spooned onto a flesh towel. Ghee is to be added. Then this towel is tied together and dropped into a vessel of boiling water. This mixture will be steamed.

Here, we see how the British recipe for a dish given in “*What*” and “*How*” has been transformed into one acceptable to Bengali Hindus by the substitution of lard or pork fat for beef suet, a foodstuff against Hindu law. In Devi’s other recipes, she further transformed British dishes by adding ingredients not widely used in Europe. For example, British colonial cookbooks tended to make a custard sauce sweet: “Flavour with vanilla essence, or almond if preferred, add the well-beaten yolks of 5 eggs, and a little salt, with a tablespoon of cold milk, and stir over the fire till thick; whisk to a froth” (A Lady Resident 1865: 65; cf. the presentation in Ray 2015: 70). By contrast, Devi (1995: 118), translated in Ray (2015: 70-72), made the sauce she called “custard” a sweet-sour savory:

Slice the onions into four, stem them and mince them. Pour ghee into the saucepan. Put in onions and whole spices of cinnamon and cardamom. After stirring for a while add some milk. Add celery and salt. After it comes to a boil add some flour mixed with water. When the mixture thickens add vinegar.

The addition of ghee, which had Hindu ritual uses, suggests that Devi deliberately transformed this dish into a melded British/South Asian one (Ray 2012: 706–707). The use of cardamom corroborates this conclusion. While heavily used in Bengali cooking at the time, it was still rarely found in British home cooking then. This vision of cosmopolitanism makes foreign food acceptable to Bengali tastes while demonstrating Bengali modernity and cultural know-how in engaging with worldly foods. Devi’s recipes defiantly reject the center-periphery model of power that typically makes cosmopolitanism the preserve of the imperial country, thus undercutting British perceptions of Bengali cooking.

In other Bengali works, authors are explicit about the fact that they are mixing their cuisine. For instance, in *Cookery*, Mukhopadhyay identifies English chops as an "authentic recipe," but then writes (1887: 358-359):

Readers can clearly understand that the way this English chop has been prepared seems rather bland despite the fact that this is a much-esteemed delicacy for the English. To make it more palatable to food lovers across the world we suggest a few tweaks in the recipe.⁸

Mukhopadhyay then elaborates a similar recipe with the addition of ghee and ginger juice, a popular seasoning in Bengal. Thus he self-consciously shows that he has constructed a creolized dish that is more acceptable to the Bengali palate, thereby bringing the European into the realm of the Bengali. Conversely, by noting that the Bengali additions to the dish would make it more "palatable to food lovers across the world," the Bengali palate displaces European taste as the default.

In addition to regionalizing these foreign dishes, the Bengali cookbooks—as demonstrated in Mukhopadhyay's introduction to *Cookery*—attempted to construct a distinctly national cuisine in which the foreign and regional are brought into the fold of a developing Indian cuisine. Besides the "English Chop" recipe, *Cookery* expressly draws on global ingredients and recipes, including recipes for "German Stew," "French Mutton Cutlet," "Irish Stew," and "English Meat Roast" (9-10). While the integration of Western European food specialties demonstrates the cosmopolitan palate of the Bengali middle class, as Ray has argued (2014: 63-64), in *Cookery* Mukhopadhyay subsumes these foods into the realm of Indian cuisine. "India has an unparalleled wealth of chewable, suckable, lickable, drinkable food. The science of consuming food that was beneficial for health was also devised in this country," he writes in the introduction (9-11), advocating that the consumption of all healthy food stems from a supposed Indian ideal.

This country to which Mukhopadhyay refers is also understood to be made up of the different regions and religions within the subcontinent. At the beginning of one edition, he writes that he has taken "recipes from across India like the *laddus* from Patna, *gujiya* from Allahabad, *kachori* from Kasi, *pera* from Mathura, *dalmut* from Agra, *nakuldana* from Delhi, *mohanpapri* from Lucknow, *mohanbhog* from Lahore and Ambala, *papad* from Hapar, *kulcha* from Kashmir" (11). By listing places throughout the Indian subcontinent, Mukhopadhyay suggests that it is the regional which constitutes the national cuisine. Thus he subverts the British vision of a pan-Indian curry by forming a vision of Indianness predicated on the regional. Furthermore, he encompasses multiple religions within this understanding of India, writing that his work is aimed at "the Hindu and the non-Hindus, as well as the Shakta and the Vaishnavs" (Ibid). By listing these different religions, he suggests that Indian cuisine is made up of the foods of "all creeds of people," rather than being a single, homogenous entity. By extension, then, he promulgates a vision of a decolonial nation that is ambitious and somewhat utopian.

In opposition to British attempts to codify "Indianness" within a framework of British knowledge, the indigenizing of the foreign may have even functioned as a way to uphold

Indian cultural superiority over the British. Mukhopadhyay offers many recipes for “curry” in his discussion of curry in *Cookery*.⁹ Lizzie Collingham argues that curry in British India was “not just a term that the British used to describe an unfamiliar set” of South Asian dishes, but a “dish in its own right, created for the British in India” (2006: 118). In *Cookery*, however, Mukhopadhyay offers a different explanation that displaces the ownership of curry from the British living in India, while still noting its essential melded form. Acknowledging many different recipes for the dish, including “Sour Curry,” “Fennel Seed Curry,” “Papaya Curry,” “Fish Curry,” and “*Arum* Curry with Potatoes,” he explains their origins in Europeans learning “to cook ‘curry’ from the Jews and the Jews learnt it from the Muslims” (Mukhopadhyay 1928: 272; trans. Ray 2015: 67). Unlike cookbooks such as *What to Tell the Cook* which claim that curry is a recipe “every Native knows,” Mukhopadhyay attempts to historicize the dish as a mix across European cuisine, Jewish cuisine, Muslim cuisine, and now—based on Mukhopadhyay’s own subject-position—Hindu cuisine. Here, then, Mukhopadhyay takes the imperial knowledge given in cookbooks like *What to Tell the Cook* and reinvents curry to be an essentially mixed dish from its beginnings, while still claiming its origins as non-occidental. Mukhopadhyay thereby removes ownership from the Europeans while subverting ideas about what “every Native knows,” undermining British understandings of Indian culture.

Conclusion

Through these Bengali cookbooks by Devi and Mukhopadhyay, we see how creolization within the region served to undercut the vision of Indianness promoted by the British in their cookbooks. As the Bengali cookbooks show, the emerging middle-class kitchen was a space where colonial (mis)understandings of a homogeneous and consenting India could be rewritten and transformed by both men and women Indian cooks. In the terms offered by de Certeau, colonized Indians were able to “continually turn to their own ends forces alien to them” through the conscious creation of and discourse surrounding creolization (1988: xix). The appropriation of British-introduced recipes and foodstuffs represented an “everyday form of resistance” through which Indians could assert their own understanding of India and its relationship to the world.¹⁰

References Cited

Cookbooks

A Lady Resident. 1865. *The Englishwoman in India: Containing Information for the Use of Ladies Proceeding to, or Residing in, The East Indies, or the Subjects of Their Outfit, Furniture, Housekeeping, The Rearing of Children, Duties and Wages of Servants, Management of the Stables, And Arrangements for Travelling. To which are added Receipts for Indian Cookery*. 2nd ed. London: Smith, Elder & Co.

[No author]. 1901. *Ceylon Cookery; or, the Native Cook’s Assistant. A Collection of Receipts for Ceylon Cookery with Useful Household Hints: In English and Sinhalese*. 4th ed. Colombo: A.M. & J. Ferguson.

Devi, Pragyasundari. 1995. *Amisha o niramisha ahara*. Calcutta: Ananda Publishers.

Mathur, Chaube Dattram Ji. 1869. *Pak Ratnakar* [The Gems of Cooking]. Delhi: Matbae Hindu Press.

Mukhopadhyay, Bipradas. 1886. *Pak Pranali Vol. 2* [Cookery]. Calcutta: Dr. R.J. Chakraborty's Dispensary at Great Edin Press.

———. 1928. *Pak Pranali* [Cookery]. Vols. 1-5 Kolkata.

Newman, W., & Co. 1893. *Dainty Dishes for Indian Tables*. 5th ed., rev. Calcutta: W. Newman & Co. See also: <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/rrijp2wp> (accessed March 5, 2020)

[No Author] *Pak Shastra* [Cookery]. 1884. Ahmedabad: Ahmedabad Satyodaya Press.

Poynter, E. S. 1904. "What" and "How", or, *What Shall We Have?, And How Shall We Have It?* Calcutta: Thacker, Spink, & Co.

Shalot. 1914. *Things for the Cook: In English and Hindustani*. Calcutta: Thacker, Spink, & Co.

[No Author]. 1875. *What to Tell the Cook, or, The Native Cook's Assistant: Being a Choice Collection of Receipts for Indian Cookery, Pastry, &c., &c.,: in English and Tamil*. 2nd ed. Madras: Higginbotham & Co.

Scholarly Secondary Sources

Appadurai, Arjun. 1988. How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30 (1): 3–24.

Baron, Robert, and Ana C. Cara. 2011. *Creolization as Cultural Creativity*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

Berger, Rachel. 2013. "Between Digestion and Desire: Genealogies of Food in Nationalist North India." *Modern Asian Studies* 47 (5): 1622–1643.

Collingham, Elizabeth M. 2006. *Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Comaroff, John L., and Jean Comaroff. 2009. *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 2: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

de Certeau, Michel. 1988. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Dirks, Nicholas. 1996. Foreword. In *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*, by Bernard S. Cohn, ix-xvii. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Foucault, Michel. 2008. *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burcell. London: Palgrave Macmillan. A 2010 edition (New York: Picador) identifies François Ewald and Alessandro Fontana as general editors.

Leong-Salobir, Cecilia. 2011. *Food Culture in Colonial Asia: A Taste of Empire*. New York: Routledge.

———. 2015. Spreading the Word: Using Cookbooks and Colonial Memoirs to Examine the Foodways of British Colonials in Asia, 1850–1900. In *The Routledge History of Food*, ed. Carol Helstosky, 131–155. New York: Routledge.

Mantena, Karuna. 2018. *Alibis of Empire: Henry Maine and the Ends of Liberal Imperialism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Narayan, Uma. 1995. Eating Cultures: Incorporation, Identity and Indian Food. *Social Identities* 1 (1): 63–86.

Procida, Mary A. 2002. *Married to the Empire: Gender, Politics and Imperialism in India, 1883–1947*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

———. 2003. Feeding the Imperial Appetite: Imperial Knowledge and Anglo-Indian Discourse. *Journal of Women's History* 15 (2): 123–149.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/jowh.2003.0054>.

Ray, Utsa. 2015. *Culinary Culture in Colonial India: A Cosmopolitan Platter and the Middle-Class*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2012. Eating “Modernity”: Changing Dietary Practices in Colonial Bengal. *Modern Asian Studies* 46 (3): 703–729.

Roy, Modhumita. 2010. Some Like It Hot: Class, Gender and Empire in the Making of Mulligatawny Soup. *Economic and Political Weekly* 45 (32): 66–75.

Rudyard, Kipling. 1889. *In Black and White*. 2nd ed. Allahabad: A.H. Wheel & Co.

Ruthnum, Naben. 2017. *Curry: Reading, Eating, and Race*. Toronto: Coach House Books.

Scott, James C. 1987. *Weapons of the Weak*. London: Yale University Press.

Sengupta, Jayanta. 2010. Nation on a Platter: The Culture and Politics of Food and Cuisine in Colonial Bengal. *Modern Asian Studies* 44 (1): 81-89.

Notes

¹ The word "memsahib" typically refers to a respectful term employed by non-Europeans to address a white married woman living in India during the colonial period. For more information, see Procida (2002, 2014 reprint edition).

² Scholars that have used hybridity to analyze British-Indian foodways include Mary Procida (2003), Utsa Ray (2015), and Jayanta Sengupta (2010).

³ Nabi Bukhsh seems to be a stereotypical name for Indian servants and employees used by British writers. Rudyard Kipling used a similar name (1888: i).

⁴ Here, I draw on Foucault's definition of biopolitics as set forth in his posthumously published 1978-1979 lecture series (Foucault 2008).

⁵ For the British fabrication of curry and mulligatawny, see: Collingham (115-120); Roy; Narayan (63); and Ruthnum.

⁶ Mantena's work discusses the importance of codification in imperial statecraft.

⁷ Volume 1 of Devi's *Amisha o Niramisha Ahara* was published around 1900, the second volume followed shortly, and the third was published in 1907. The 1995 work is a reissue of the volumes. For more, see Ray (2015: 63).

⁸ I am grateful to Amrita Mukherjee for translating this passage. All translations from the Bengali cookbooks used here are courtesy of Amrita Mukherjee, unless noted otherwise.

⁹ The term "curry" most likely originally came from a Tamil word. For more, see Collingham (115).

¹⁰ I am indebted to James Scott for the phrase "everyday form of resistance" (1987: xviii-xxii).