



UNIVERSITY *of the*  
WESTERN CAPE

**Producing and Consuming the Wembley Whopper and the  
Super Fisheries Gatsby: Bread Winners and Losers in  
Athlone, Cape Town, 1950-1980.**



**Tazneem Wentzel**

UNIVERSITY *of the*  
WESTERN CAPE

**Student number: 3524048**

**Supervisor: Prof. Ciraj Rassool**

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for the degree of Magister Artium in the Department of History,  
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Culinary Discourse, Tradition, Food History, Take-aways, Immigration, Production, Consumption, Race, Diet, Biopower, Nutrition, Health, Food Management, Biopolitics, Agency, Resilience

**Abstract:**

Wembley Roadhouse and Super Fisheries have cemented themselves as food institutions on the Cape Flats. Family-owned take-aways establishments that appeared on the black periphery and catered for the black consumer were popularised amid the political and economic upheavals of forced removals in the 1970s. The shifting labour market, changing work schedules, and hardening political climate was reflected in the popularisation and consumption of bread-based take-aways on the Cape Flats. This research sets out to show how the production and consumption of the Wembley Whopper and the Super Fisheries Gatsby constituted cultural signifiers of agency that were historically embedded within a set of discursive practices and a business ethic that distinguished halal take-aways from franchised and state subsidised food. Ideas of tradition and health became categories through which racial discourse was operationalised by both cultural and scientific agents of the colonial and apartheid state. Nevertheless, the Whopper and the Gatsby represented fast food culinary adaptations that appealed to a mobile generation of activists that challenged social restrictions and ideas about race and diet.

## Plagiarism Declaration

I, Tazneem Wentzel, hereby declare that ‘Producing and Consuming the Wembley Whopper and the Super Fisheries Gatsby: Bread Winners and Losers in Athlone, Cape Town, 1950-1980.’ is my own work. I understand what plagiarism is and all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Tazneem Wentzel



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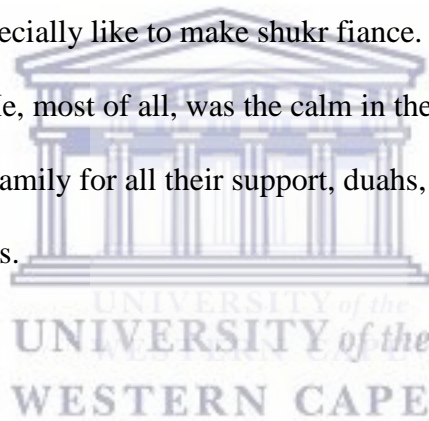
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## Introduction

A tall metal sign in the shape of a hamburger reads: “Home of the Wembley Whopper.” The sign demarcates the Wembley Roadhouse on the corner of Belgravia and Denchworth Roads in Athlone, Cape Town.

In 1995, Wembley Roadhouse executive, Corrie Nel, told a journalist: ‘The phones start ringing to take orders every evening at 6pm and don’t stop until the small hours.’<sup>1</sup> Cars pull in and out of the car service area. Orders are made to the server, written on slips of paper, which are then placed at the counter. People walk expectantly to the service counter. They stand in queues and place their orders. They enter empty handed and emerge clutching bags of food. Steam and busy hands characterise the heart of Wembley: the kitchen. The kitchen is state of the art, air conditioned, and outlined by a series of large windows. One set of kitchen windows is dedicated to the car service area. People pull up in their cars, and wait inside their cars for service. The other set of windows faces a recently renovated eating area with marble tables and umbrellas. There are no chairs. Seating takes place in parked cars. Food oscillates from inside to outside. The menu promises a ‘bewildering variety of curries, samosas, salads, grills and deep-dish pizzas. Welcome to the ‘Wembley Roadhouse.’<sup>2</sup>

Modelled on the American style roadhouse, the Wembley Roadhouse was pioneered through the business savvy of Abdullah Eshack Gangraker, also known as Mr Wembley. Gangraker inherited the family business, known then as E.O. Gangraker Stores, and turned a small family business into a thriving company. “In

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<sup>1</sup> Maureen Barnes, ‘Hallowed and halal hall of food’, *Sunday Times Cape Metro*. 17 December 1995.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Wembley Roadhouse Menu’ (Cape Town: Wembley Roadhouse, n.d.).

1931, [Mohamed Gangraker] acquired the property in Belgravia Road. This is the same property that today houses the Wembley Market. It was a small shop with a house attached to it.”<sup>3</sup>

A five-minute drive from Wembley to 63 Old Klipfontein Road leads one to another food landmark in Athlone: Super Fisheries. Enclosed by a meat market and vegetable stalls, people walk in and out carrying plastic bags and Gatsbys. Super Fisheries is locally known as the birthplace of the Gatsby, and its owner, Rashaad Panday, is locally referred to as the ‘inventor’ of the Gatsby. Super Fisheries specialises in a variety of Gatsbys ranging from polony with *atchar*, fish, masala steak and chicken. Emerging out to feed of the need to feed his workers, Panday used what was available in the shop, a french loaf with chips and *atchar*, to create what would be called a Gatsby. This basic combination became a staple in many fast food places across the Cape. ‘Being a resourceful individual,’ Panday combined what he had - ‘a round Portuguese roll, polony, slap chips and *atchar* - and sliced the creation into four so they could all enjoy a piece. For many locals, especially those living on the Cape Flats, this colossal sandwich was not merely a meal; ‘it’s a way of life, a cultural symbol and an important part of their heritage.’<sup>4</sup>

Cheryl-Ann Michael suggests that food is a ‘slippery’ concept that is made and remade, ingested and digested, and which ‘disavows fixity.’<sup>5</sup> The ‘slippery’ nature of food is refracted in the plethora of interdisciplinary studies about food. From

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<sup>3</sup> Abdullah Eshack Gangraker. *Wembley Echoes*. (Self-Published, n.d)

<sup>4</sup> Cheri Morris. ‘The Gatsby Sandwich: Unwrapping Cape Town’s signature super loaf’, 25 May 2017. < capetownmagazine.com>

<sup>5</sup> Michael, Cheryl-Ann. ‘On the Slipperiness of Food,’ *Beautiful/Ugly: Diaspora Aesthetics*. (ed.) Sarah Nuttall. (London: Duke University Press, 2006): pp 257-266.

the cultivation to the preparation and eating of food, food occupies a material and symbolic role in the individual and collective formation of personhood and subjectivity. Food is,

all about transformation—of the material foodstuff, of the consuming individual in body and in spirit, and of the eating order that encompasses products and people. From production and preparation to physiological and symbolic consumption, every stage of the food cycle turns food into something else.<sup>6</sup>

The Wembley Whopper and the Gatsby reflect a series of social, political and economic transformations. These bread-based food items became cultural signifiers and markers of culinary heritage through a process of ordering and assembling ingredients in unique, and culturally satisfying ways. Bread-based take-aways oscillated within culinary sites of production and consumption in ways that were distinct of halal take-aways.

Halal take-aways were popularised in the aftermath of the implementation of the Group Areas Act in the 1960s. As black communities were forcefully relocated to areas outside the city, the social and economic fabric of survival was unraveled. The impact of this shift in residence, meant that people had to travel far distances to and from work. This ultimately reorganised the amount of time available in the kitchen to prepare food, and as a response to the shifting labour market, work schedule, and political climate, different forms of mobilities and eating on the go emerged.

Esther Reiter suggests in the book *Making Fast Food: From the Frying Pan to the*

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<sup>6</sup> Priscilla Fergusson, 'Eating Orders: Markets, Menus, and Meals'. *Journal of Modern History*, Vol 77, No 3. (September 2005): pp 679-700.

*Fryer* that the development of the fast food industry reflected a ‘particular vision for contemporary life’ that resulted in the entrance of the marketplace into how food was prepared and consumed within the home.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, it was a large scale commercial reordering of the relationship of family and food that followed from the development of new technologies of freezing and preserving food for soldiers during World War Two. By the 1950s with the advances in food technologies, the increased ownership of automobiles, and the growth of suburbia, the American fast food industry had fundamentally reshaped how food was produced and consumed. The growth of the fast food industry was a scientifically managed commercial enterprise that produced food that could be easily, efficiently, and quickly assembled.<sup>8</sup> This was unlike the historical emergence of halal take-aways and the bread-based food items in Cape Town. Though halal take-aways drew on home-cooked flavours, these culinary corners remained small-scale family-owned businesses. The Gatsby cut in four and the Wembley experience of eating out, communicated a shared experience of marginalisation and resilience. Bread, in both instances, was a medium through which experience was communicated and the flavours of *huis kos* were translated as a response to a changing work schedule. State subsidised bread between the 1900s and the 1980s reflected a different social and political ordering of society.

Bread, particularly state-subsidised white bread, was strictly regulated and subsidised by the National Party from the 1930s to the 1960s. Economically, the

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<sup>7</sup> Esther Reiter. *Making Fast Food*. (Canada. University Press. 1991): 16-25

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*

increase in bread production and the flourishing wheat-bread industry reflected an emerging self-sufficient white South Africa. The closely regulated market paralleled increasingly oppressive racist legislation that monitored, surveyed, and disciplined racial boundaries. The subsidisation of white bread and its monopolisation emerged against the backdrop of the Mixed Marriages Act (1949), Group Areas Act (1950), the Jan van Riebeeck Festival (1952), Bantu Education Act (1953) and reflected the aspirations and institutionalisation of the separatist ideology of the apartheid state. This period was known as the '*wittebroodsdae*' (honeymoon phase) for white South Africans. The discourse and popularisation of white bread was entangled with the production of whiteness.

Roughly twenty years after the popularisation of white bread, both the Whopper and the Gatsby began to appear on the periphery of the city, beyond the glare of the state. In both the time of centralised bread production, and the time of the emergence of the Whopper and Gatsby, bread was the mediating factor. On the one hand, bread has been a national staple, and on the other, a leisure food item that consumers bought into. Bread became a commodity with a social history that offered historical insights and socio-political context.

The state menu and the take-aways menu reflected culinary assertions of biopower on the one hand and resistance to biopolitical technologies of administering race on the other. Locating bread and the chains of production and consumption within the frame of the institutional and take-away menu opens up an interesting avenue to understand the way personhood, race, and ethnicity were made and remade during the period of the 1950s to 1980s. Exploring food in this

manner lends itself to engaging with food as a public culture, and raises numerous questions around food, flavour, and agency. The paradox of the invisibility of take-aways as culinary heritage, notwithstanding the popularity and longevity of many take-aways establishments, misses the historical value and culinary knowledge contained in them as locations for understanding socio-political changes. This research therefore seeks to understand the production and consumption practices of take-aways at the Wembley Roadhouse and Super Fisheries in relation to the symbolic and material transformation of state-subsidised bread production from 1950 to 1980.

Both the take-aways and the state 'manufactured' particular systems of culinary knowledge of production and consumption. Drawing on Michel Foucault, diet was a critical category through which human behavior could be understood, managed, and also made more efficient.<sup>9</sup> This was similarly the case in South Africa during the 1900s to the 1950s that witnessed the curious emergence of a regime of 'care' that deployed and produced nutritional scales of health and disease. Subsequently a series of dietary interventions were introduced as a way of ensuring the health of mine workers as well as transforming the 'native' into cheap, 'dignified' labour.

The process of reformulation and transformation of categories of people into racial groups hinged on a biological interpretation of social issues such as poverty and social anxieties such as racial intermixing. This marked a particular formation

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<sup>9</sup> Michel Foucault. *The History of Sexuality, Volume 2: The Use of Pleasure*. (1990. New York: Vintage).

of power and administration in the production of race and nutrition in South Africa. For this research, biopower is used as an assertion of authority in the management of black labour, and biopolitics refers to the administration of racial discourse through food.

## **Methodology**

This research combined interviews, archival research and theoretical readings of food literature in South Africa and more broadly. Recipe books and menus have been key sources in locating the changes in bread-based take-aways. The idea of take-aways as a focus of research emerged in the process of my work to collate the historical time-line for the *District Six Huis Kombuis Food and Memory Cookbook*. It was in this process that I came to understand the role that food memories have played in the connection of people and place. The food and memory cookbook emerged from a long-term project that began in 2006 as a design and craft memorial project. It was and continues to be a process-based project that makes use of the skills that many of the retired, and unemployed women have acquired. The creation of products speak to the cultural heritage of District Six. The workshops opened the space for ‘forgotten voices, fragile memories...to be acknowledged and made visible.’<sup>10</sup> In other words the fragments of a broken past were reconstituted in the process of remaking and invoking the cultural memory of District Six. This research builds on and adds to the culinary narratives of the District Six Museum, by exploring how communities and

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<sup>10</sup> The District Six Museum. Huis Kombuis Design and Craft Memory Project – 2006. ([www.districtsix.co.za/Content/Exhibitions/Past/2000/HuisKombuis/index.php](http://www.districtsix.co.za/Content/Exhibitions/Past/2000/HuisKombuis/index.php))



businesses remade themselves in the aftermath of the forced removals. What were the culinary strategies for remaking a community? Walter Benjamin's provocation of reading history against the grain prompted me to think more deeply about grain literally. This led me to asking questions about the role that *Triticum aestivum* (common bread wheat) has had in South African history.

The District Six Museum's process-based approach has been a major influence on the way I think about the production of history. It is from this standpoint that the culinary histories of bread-based take-aways in Cape Town is approached as a dynamic confluence of influences that were reflective of the sociopolitical context, rather than a nostalgic, static culinary repertoire.

The nature of this study combines biographies of take-aways on the 'periphery' with biographies of state bread policy from 1950 to 1980. The institutional archival base for the history of bread production concentrates government and government-affiliated policies and businesses, such as Wheat Boards, agricultural policies, and reports in newspapers. This base is useful in understanding the national, political and economic climate of bread production as it demonstrated the ways that bread was deployed as a medium through which the biopower of the state was administered. The archives and literature on South African bread production were embedded in the political project of both the colonial and apartheid states. This is similar to the case of heritage cookbooks from the period 1950 to 1980. These historical productions cannot be read in isolation from one another. In an effort to read along and against the grain, this research combined oral histories of take-aways establishments and interviews with individuals



knowledgeable in food culture with literature on historic bread production.

## **Outline**

The research is structured into four chapters. Chapter One, explores the food and literary culture between the 1950s and the 1970s and how the essentialised categories of race and ethnicity were produced through food. The concept of tradition, like tribe, was mobilised by cultural agents of apartheid and for this reason, the emergence of halal take-aways has not been included in the culinary historiography.

In chapter Two, I explore the emergence of take-aways within a genealogy of immigration. Here, I demonstrate the historical production of food ways and how this connected to the social reality of exclusion, marginalisation, and also resilience on the periphery. In Chapter four, I bring the consumption patterns of halal take-aways and state subsidised bread production together in a discussion on the politics of refusal and the politics of consumption. Here, I show how food consumption and food abstinence worked as political tools that enabled apartheid's prescribed institutional racial diets to be disrupted. This research is structured in this manner to understand how the production and consumption of halal take-aways at Wembley Roadhouse and Super Fisheries reflected the transformation in bread production under apartheid from 1950 to 1980.

Overall, this study shows how Wembley Roadhouse and Super Fisheries were locations for the production of culinary belonging through mobile food choices on the periphery of the city.

## Chapter One

### Recipes of Mothers: *Lang Sous*, *Huis Kos* and Take-aways

Desiree Lewis has argued that food scholarship in the global South is overwhelmingly characterised by the question of food security. Indeed, visual representations of people in Africa as ‘starving’ and ‘diseased’ have persisted as nagging stereotypes which continue to reify the African continent as a homogenous whole. The visual language that encodes Africa in this way is one that echoes through culinary discourse of food in Africa. For Lewis, the persistence of this representation in the South is partly due to the ‘political and scholarly attention to food as an index of injustice and exploitation, and never a source of agency and pleasure.’<sup>1</sup> Deprivation and malnourishment overshadow production and consumption styles for pleasure, agency and resistance.

The historical representation of the South African culinary landscape has been entangled with the construction of race and ethnicity through food. In this chapter I will demonstrate how cultural agents of apartheid such as Izak David Du Plessis, played a central role in producing and disseminating ideas of race and ethnicity through food. Particular to Cape Town, the invention of ‘Malay’ as an ethnic category within the apartheid project from 1950 to 1970 produced an essentialised construction of ‘tradition’. Like ‘tribe’ this formed part of a constellation of categories that were promoted under the banner of ‘volkekunde’ to reinforce the idea of racial order. The field of food literary culture between the 1950s and the

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<sup>1</sup> Desiree Lewis, ‘The Hunger Games’, *Chronic Foods*. (April 2017).

1970s promoted an essentialised static idea of tradition through the figure of the ‘Malay’ cook, in an effort to preserve and fix a culinary racial scale of development. This chapter will show how specific publications and publishers colluded in this project of exoticisation and the making of race and ethnicity. Here I will also show how the ethnological canonisation of the concept of traditional has resurfaced in the form of nostalgia in contemporary heritage and memory cookbooks. From this I will show how South African culinary discourse tend to overlook halal take-aways, which also serve as an important repository of culinary knowledge.

### ***Die Slamse Koning***<sup>2</sup>

Shamil Jeppie’s work on Izak David Du Plessis, shows how a ‘ruling class actor reinvented’ and ‘reconstituted’ the ethnic subjectivity of the ‘Malay’ as a racial category that served the apartheid project of separation. The title of ‘*Slamse Koning*’ was given to Du Plessis by close friend and then Prime Minister, D.F. Malan. The title indicated Du Plessis’ perceived authority on ‘Malay’ culture while also reflecting his fascination with otherness. This fascination was cultivated as an intellectual curiosity. Prior to his position as Commissioner of Coloured Affairs in 1951, Du Plessis authored a PhD on Malay folk songs and also started the Cape Malay Choir Board in 1939.<sup>3</sup> Du Plessis was part of various literary groupings that were hubs for the cultural politics of white Afrikaner mobilisation. Together with other authors such as Louis Leipoldt (author), Jan

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Die *Slamse Koning*’ or ‘Muslim King’ was a ‘title’ given to I.D. Du Plessis by Prime Minister D.F. Malan, who has been described as a friend of Du Plessis.

<sup>3</sup> Shamil Jeppie, ‘Historical Process and the Constitution of Subjects: I.D. Du Plessis and the Reinvention of the ‘Malay,’ Honours Thesis, University of Cape Town.1987.

Cilliers (poet) and Cornelius Jacobus Langehoven (poet), a literary movement was created that positioned its cultural pursuits from a volkekunder vantage point. The movement popularised the idea of separate cultural development as a means for ethnic preservation, since ethnic and racial mixing were seen as a risk to traditional ways of life. Jeppie suggests that Du Plessis ‘emerged at the moment of mobilization of Afrikaans-speakers and he was both mobilized and acted as a mobilising capacity.’<sup>4</sup> Although Du Plessis preferred ‘cultural politics over party politics’, he engendered and promoted ethnic ideals that emerged as part of an apartheid social engineering project.

In describing the influences on his work, Du Plessis quoted the Karoo, the English Romantic poets of the 19th century, and the Malay way of life in the Cape as key influences.<sup>5</sup> The fascination and exoticisation that characterised the cultural work of Du Plessis, is the genealogy of exoticism that Gabeba Baderoon unpacks through the lens of food. Baderoon suggests that the association of ‘Malay’ and food as a ‘colourful feast’ and ‘Malay cooking as a spectacle’, revealed a ‘highly specific form of exoticism’<sup>6</sup>.

For Baderoon, this stereotype harks back to the colonial period of slavery in the Cape and speaks to the intimately peculiar relationship of slave cooks within the household of the Master. The association of ‘Malay’ and food were constellations which for Baderoon, were recurring representations that can be dated from the first cookbook published about Cape cookery. The relationship between an

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<sup>4</sup> Shamil Jeppie, ‘Historical Process and the Constitution of Subjects’.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Gabeba Baderoon. *Regarding Muslims: From Slavery to Post Apartheid*, (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2015.): 46.

invented ethnicity and a style of cuisine, shows the paternalistic affection towards a nostalgic image of the docile slave cook which invisibilised the historical trauma of the everyday violence in the slave-owner's kitchens. Du Plessis, like many white cookbook authors of the time invented the concept of 'Malay' within a eurocentric and exoticised idea of tradition through food.

Du Plessis' curiosity about 'Malays' as a fixed, static, ethnic group steeped in traditional ways of life and traditional ways of cooking, combined with his 'mobilising capacity' for cultural nationalist agendas, demonstrated an ideological orientation characteristic of the time. Culinary literature particularly cookbooks of 'Malay' cooking between the 1950s and the 1970s by white authors, sought to document social and racial differences in the preparation rituals and eating habits of people from an ethnological vantage point. This is evident in Du Plessis' description of Hilda Gerber's work on Cape Malays. For Du Plessis, Gerber's book was,

not just a collection of recipes but a study of food habits, and a comprehensive survey of a subject which has long called for treatment by an expert.... The literal recording of many of the recipes gives a distinctive local colour to this work.<sup>7</sup>

At the centre of these narratives was the subject of the docile, anonymous 'Malay' cook whose 'art form,' or tradition was on the brink of 'extinction'. The paternalistic attitude and salvage paradigm exhibited towards the invented subjectivity of the 'Malay,' was an ideological current that similarly undulated in the way the 'Bushman' were represented in the diorama at the South African Museum, Cape Town.

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<sup>7</sup> I.D. Du Plessis. 'Foreword,' in *Traditional Cookery of the Cape Malays*. (Cape Town, A.A. Balkema, 1978).

Prior to being removed, the Bushman diorama served as a popular tourist attraction. Constructed from a violent process of literally casting the bodies of living ‘Bushman,’ the place of the diorama was also the ‘most controversial’ and ‘hotly contested.’<sup>8</sup> The exhibit formed part of an ‘anthropological project’ that ‘sought to document the physical characteristics of a race believed to be near extinction.’<sup>9</sup> The 19th century hunter-gatherer display that formed part of a natural history museum, was used as a visual demonstration of the evolution of racial hierarchy. Similarly, the concept of ‘Malay’ was an object of inquiry for apartheid cultural protagonists, which sought to invent and insert a racial category through the documentation of physical and cultural characteristics into the apartheid lexicon on race and ethnicity. The production of race and ethnicity in the case of the ‘Bushmen’ and the ‘Malay’ formed part of a political project of racial evolution and ‘justified’ racial separation.

In *Photography with a Difference* Rassool and Minkley demonstrates how photographer Leon Levson’s work comes to occupy a central space within the visual vocabulary of South African resistance photography. Minkley and Rassool dig into understanding the relationship of imaging to representation, and how a collection of photographs is marked by biography. The authors trace Levson’s representation of ‘native life’ as a constructed production of ethnicity and race that generated ‘a completeness, and a totality that is read as a visual encyclopaedia

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<sup>8</sup> Patricia Davison, ‘Typecast: Representing Bushman at the South African Museum,’ *Public Archaeology*. (Vol 1, 2001): pp 3-20.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

of Native Life.’<sup>10</sup> This, like the Bushmen diorama and the ethnological illustrations of ‘Malay’ foodways in cookbooks, served as part of the apartheid ‘encyclopedia of Native Life.’<sup>11</sup> In each of these instances, the black other was the object of inquiry, display, and exhibition. The diorama in the South African Museum, the ethnological cookbook, and the production of images of an ‘intensely African’ and ‘tribal’ social reality of ‘the native,’ operationalised static, eurocentric representations of otherness. In so doing, this reinforced social-racial hierarchies in South Africa of white subjects objectifying black subjects.

Best selling cookbook author and commentator, Julia Turshen suggests that:

‘Readers welcome cookbooks into their most private and intimate moments, reading them before bed and using them to create meals for loved ones. In this close access to our readers, in this cosy and secure space, cookbook authors can create connection.’<sup>12</sup>

Cookbooks occupy an intimate space within the home. Recipes offer a tangible method of connection to a style of eating. However, the appropriation of a cooking style by authors such as Gerber combined with the production of an ethnic categories of ‘Malay’ and ‘traditional,’ cooking methods in ethnological cookbooks offered a more insidious consumption of an essentialised category of racial order. Exotic otherness could safely be consumed within the comfort of the home. Subsequently, the domain of health, nourishment and the formation of persons was turned into a field of ethnicity.

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<sup>10</sup>G Minkley, C. Rassool, ‘Leon Levson’s Camera Studies of Native Life in South Africa: From Bantu Studies to Social Documentary Photography,’ *Kronos*. Vol 31 (Nov 2005) 209.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Julia Turshen, ‘To Change Racial Disparity in Food, Let’s Start With Cookbooks,’ *Eater*. (Apr 5, 2018, 1:05pm)<<https://www.eater.com/2018/4/5/17153806/racial-inequality-food-cookbook-authors-publishing>>



Relating this to the invention of the ‘Malay,’ cultural agents and authors of apartheid documented and constructed an exotic other by framing ‘Malay’ subjectivity within a eurocentric conception of ‘traditional.’ The eurocentric cookbooks on ‘Malay’ foodways in particular were aimed at a ‘European’ audience, serving as a manual to appropriate the foodways of the invented and essentialised category of the ‘Malay.’ This mode of documentation blended exoticised ideas of otherness to preserve ‘tradition’ from the impending ‘onslaught’ of both modernisation and racial mixing. Despite these ideological attempts to fix race and ethnicity within a eurocentric framework, the anonymous ‘Malay’ cooks would often subvert the process by deliberately leaving out essential ingredients. By withholding essential knowledge ‘Malay’ cooks maintained a sense of autonomy by preserving their authorship of recipes.

The same racial politics and eurocentrism that figure in the 19<sup>th</sup> century museum, can be read in the production of culinary literature in the 1950s and the 1970s. In the making of a cookbook for example, there are numerous individuals who are responsible for the design, photography, research marketing, and printing. This requires a substantial budget as well as understanding of the type of cookbook to be produced. Often, the professionals responsible for these specific areas of administering a cookbook into a tangible text, have very little contextual knowledge of the cuisine of the cookbook. Culinary literature of this genre produce and popularise conceptions of taste, pleasure and enjoyment within a set of racial politics.



Gabeba Baderoon explores the representations of Muslim food in the Cape as 'exotic' and 'mysterious' and shrouded in secrecy. For Baderoon, these characterisations are preserved by the secrecy that envelopes the visibility of Muslim food in public space.<sup>13</sup> Exotic representations combined with the 'invisibility' of Muslim food within the public domain, are the elements that lend itself to the enigma of the 'Malay.' Du Plessis hints at a similar idea of invisibility of Malay cookery in the public domain, suggesting that 'Malay' cookery is not showcased in 'typically South African restaurants' as the 'pride of place'<sup>14</sup>

Though Baderoon and Du Plessis' come from opposing schools of thought, they both agree on the invisibility of Muslim and 'Malay' food in the public space. Contrary to this, forms of Muslim cooking have been, and continue to be available in Cape Town's 'restaurants'. Based on conventional definitions, a restaurant is a place in which people pay to sit and eat their meals. From this basic idea of a restaurant, many places such as *The Crescent Cafe*, *Aneesha's*, *Cosy Corner*, the *Wembley Roadhouse*, are a few eating places that have existed and continue to exist. These restaurants sampled various components of the 'traditional' restaurant and home-cooked food, and remixed these elements to form popular culinary corners. This runs contrary to the notion of the invisibility and paucity of Muslim food.

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<sup>13</sup>Gabeba Baderoon, 'Stealing with the Eye: Stories of Muslim food in Cape Town,' in *Imagining the City*, (eds.) Sean Field, Renate Meyer and Felicity Swanson. (HSRC Press, 2007):115.

<sup>14</sup>I.D. Du Plessis. 'Foreword' in *Traditional Cookery of the Cape Malays*. (Cape Town, A.A. Balkema, 1978)

***Lang Sous Huis Kos: The production of tradition as a form of agency***

*Indian Delights* was an instructional manual that cultivated a culinary literacy within a rapidly changing cultural context. *Indian Delights* did this by encoding a methodology for preparation and eating of Indian food. It did this by collating a variety of traditional recipes, anecdotes, drawings, and advice into a ‘single text’. This ran contrary to the prevailing exoticism narrative. *Indian Delights* disrupted the authorship model, by taking ownership of Indian heritage in the research and compilation of one of the most extensive diasporic Indian cookbooks. It was authored, edited and published by the tenacity and charisma of the Women’s Cultural Working Group. Putting gastronomic knowledge into writing reflected and shaped the way a community was being imagined among people of Indian ancestry within a South African context.<sup>15</sup> For authors Vahed and Waetjen, who worked extensively with the Women’s Group, the emergence of a ‘culinary print culture’ transformed the private kitchen into a ‘public space’ and the readership of the cookbook became ‘agents of the diaspora.’<sup>16</sup>

The food knowledges combined in *Indian Delights* emerged from a different historical and political standpoint to eurocentric cookbooks common during the 1960s and the 1970s. *Indian Delights* offered a solution to the changing working lives of Indian women, many of whom were entering the professional world and did not have the time to apprentice with mothers and mother-in-laws to learn traditional culinary methodologies of food preparation.

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<sup>15</sup>Goolam Vahed and Thembisa Waetjen, ‘Kitchen Publics’. *South African Historical Journal*. Vol, 61 No 3. (2013): pp 575-593.

<sup>16</sup>Thembisa Waetjen, ‘Kitchen Publics’: pp 575-593.

*Indian Delights* offered a changing diasporic gendered audience a means of preserving tradition, while in its literary aspiration constituted a modern Indian South African citizen. The cookbook itself instigated and constituted a culinary literary network of reviews, publications and ‘public responses. Unlike Gerber’s work that constructed a static category of the docile ‘Malay’ cook, *Indian Delights* demonstrated a dynamic gendered authority and potentiality of food knowledge as a means of political and social contribution.

The women of the cultural group were both the researchers, funders, and editors. They remained the authority of their own culinary knowledge. The book has been republished fifteen times over a period of fifty-five years with minor edits as a response to the changing readership. Tradition, in this case can be read as a dynamic process of edible, historically produced transformations which are encoded a community and its experiences. The photography, design, layout, and editing of *Indian Delights* was done by members of the Women’s Cultural Group. The authority on the representation of a particular style of preparing South African Indian food remained within the hands of the Women’s Cultural Group. The production of *Indian Delights* demonstrated the potential agency of cookbooks when unmediated or filtered through a eurocentric gaze for a eurocentric audience. Cookbooks such as *Indian Delights* offered their readership more than a methodology for food preparation. It also offered a cultural anchor.

Food writer, Heather Thompson shows how the preparation of traditional recipes within a community mean much more than ‘feeding the belly.’

Cultural or ‘traditional’ food, like music and art, is not just about feeding the belly. It is speaking to a history of a community, what they have been through together, where they have travelled

together. It's an emotional language expressing the true story of a people's experience on the planet, all of the nuance that gets left out of history books is revealed by these subtler passages through the body.<sup>17</sup>

The sharing and eating of traditionally prepared meals is a form of comfort, connection and communication. *Indian Delights* encoded a historical diasporic experience.

Indian Delights has become a standard gift for newly-weds and culinary novices. With its wide circulation, this text provides a common household reference on Indian South African communal identity and its transoceanic origins.<sup>18</sup>

This sentiment can also be read in the *District Six Huis Kombuis: Food and Memory Cookbook*. Shaun Viljoen writes that:

memories of food in the book are so much more than recipes passed on; they are assertions of an indomitable spirit of survival, stories of family and community....<sup>19</sup>

The *Huis Kombuis Cookbook* it is not a collection of traditional recipes or a 'conventional cookbook.'<sup>20</sup> Rather, the book is a collection of historical foodways that mirrored the community of District Six. The cookbook is structured according to the stories of forcibly removed residents. The difference between the *Huis Kombuis* cookbook and Gerber's cookbook, is that individuals, their stories, and their recipes are named and framed by their photograph. The cookbook has no single author. Instead, each person and their story is not only an author and contributor, but also interpreter of their own experience. The contributors of

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<sup>17</sup> Heather Thompson, 'Culinary Appropriation,' *Apocalypse Pantry*. 2016 <[www.theapocalypsepantry.com](http://www.theapocalypsepantry.com)>

<sup>18</sup> Goolam Vahed and Thembisa Waetjen, *Gender Modernity and Indian Delights*. (Cape Town, HSRC Press 2010):106.

<sup>19</sup> Shaun Viljoen, 'District Six and the Recuperative Power of Stories of Food,' *District Six Huis Kombuis: Food and Memory Cookbook*, (Cape Town: Quivertree Publications, 2016): 8.

<sup>20</sup> Tina Smith, 'About the Project,' *District Six Huis Kombuis: Food and Memory Cookbook*, (Cape Town: Quivertree Publications, 2016): 1

culinary knowledge are not absent from or left out of the food history of District Six. The cooks of Gerber's cookbook remain anonymous contributors who appear as ahistorical shadows.

The *Huis Kombuis* Cookbook emerged from a 'series of craft and textile workshops' as part of the 'memorialisation methodology of the District Six Museum'. The book is one outcome of an ongoing organic process. As a publication, it is part of a broader trend within culinary literature that emphasise heritage, food, and memory in the 2000s. Other cookbooks to have recently emerged by the same publisher include: *Karoo Kitchen*, and *Bo-Kaap Kitchen*. The emphasis in this series by Quivertree Publications is the intimate and often neglected space of the kitchen as a site of history. For Baderoon, the kitchen was an ambiguous space,

'From the period of slavery to apartheid, the South African kitchens have been a site of harrowing intimacy, power, knowledge and invisible ideological contest, with profound cultural effects.'<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore,

'the kitchen was a site of small resistances encoded in tastes, sound, touch, glances, and smells. Here enslaved people learnt not only how to survive, but gathered resources for subversion.'<sup>22</sup>

With the politics of the colonial kitchen in mind and the production of racialized subjects in cookbooks during the 1950s and the 1970s, how do we understand and where do we locate the series of heritage cookbooks published by Quivertree Publications?

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<sup>21</sup> Gabeba Baderoon, 'Regarding Muslims,' 50.

<sup>22</sup> Gabeba Baderoon. 'Regarding Muslims,' 51.

The *District Six Huis Kombuis*, *Karoo Kitchen* and *Bo-Kaap Kitchen*, were produced through a series of interventions. These interventions include the design and layout of the book, how the food will be photographed, and how the narrative will unfold through texts and images. The cookbooks were reflections of a series of decisions by editors, photographers and designers. The culinary representations in these books are managed, administered, and encoded in particular ways.

In *Karoo Kitchen* and *Bo-Kaap Kitchen*, the aesthetic similarity is more evident than in the *Huis Kombuis Cookbook*. Both *Bo-Kaap Kitchen* and *Karoo Kitchen* were photographed and designed by Craig Fraser and Libby Doyle. On the cover, the geographical name of the kitchen is placed close to the top. The eye then moves down towards an image of a dish. The image of the spotlighted dish takes up most of the cover assuming a central position. Three quarters of the dish is displayed. On the left of each book, closest to the spine, a patterned edging frames the title and the image of the dish. In *Bo-Kaap Kitchen* there is an image of a white lace pattern which connects with the white fluffy *klapper* (dessicated coconut) of the *koestieters* (traditional donought) and the white title of the book. The whiteness is contrasted with a dark rusty brown background. In *Karoo Kitchen* the eye-catching dish is a bowl of warmed-almost orange pears with faint yellow custard on a light blue backdrop. On the left-hand side of the book towards the spine are a series of sepia collaged archival images. Both cookbooks are subtitled with a version of ‘heritage recipes and true stories...’

The *District Six Huis Kombuis Food and Memory Cookbook* is not designed and edited in the same way as the other two cookbooks. Instead, the title is in a bold

blue. It is textured by what seems to be embroidery. The book feels different in the hand. It does not have a gloss cover like the other two cookbooks. Below the title is an image of an embroidered crayfish, chilies, spices tomatoes and onions. This image is part of the earlier *Huis Kombuis Project* in which participants of the project created recipes with fabric paint and thread. These images are framed and displayed in the District Six Museum. Unlike the *Karoo Kitchen* and *Bo Kaap Kombuis*, this cookbook does not have the patterned panel on the left-hand side of the cover closest to the spine. The cover also does not display ‘heritage recipes and true stories....’ Furthermore, the curator of the *Huis Kombuis Project* Tina Smith is also credited under the design and layout. Unlike the other two cookbooks the photographer for the *Huis Kombuis* cookbook was Jac de Villiers whose contribution to the representation of the Huis Kombuis was praised as,

photographs [that] have captured an infinite beauty and brought to the surface a dignity that has deep resonance with the memory of District Six. It has been an absolute honour working with you on this project.<sup>23</sup>

Although the *Huis Kombuis* cookbook is part of this publication series, the book is one of the outcomes of a long-term memory project. It is for this reason that there are many works that contributors have made in the process of the project which have become part of the book. This is particularly visible on the cover. The cover can be read as being transgressively embellished with the organic memorialisation practise of the *Huis Kombuis*. The processual nature of the work of the District Six Museum, the choice of photographer, and the inclusion of the head of exhibitions of the District Six Museum Tina Smith as part of the design

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<sup>23</sup> District Six Museum. ‘Thanks and Acknowledgements,’ *District Six Huis Kombuis: Food and Memory Cookbook*. (Cape Town: Quivertree Publications, 2016): 269.



team, demonstrates a more authoritative approach on how the story was mapped out aesthetically. Within the publication context, the *District Six Museum* still managed to assert itself in the key areas or representation in which food professionals often dictate the manner in which the visuality of food is consumed.

In comparison to the culinary work of the *Huis Kombuis*, Craig Fraser problematically suggests in *Bo- Kaap Kitchen* that:

the book captures the Bo-Kaap at the moment in time when the community stands firmly resolute against the inevitable expansion of the thriving city of Cape Town...For some time now I have felt the urgency to produce a book that in some way preserves this historic Cape Muslim quarter, even if only in paper.<sup>24</sup>

Fraser's motivation is awkward. Emerging as a photojournalist in 1994, 'capturing' post-apartheid historic moments such as 'Nelson Mandela's release' to 'rugby at Newlands,' Fraser moved into exploring more 'authentic cultural pursuits...right on his doorstep'<sup>25</sup> *Shack Chic*, was the first culinary endeavour that Fraser pursued which lead to the establishment of Quivertree Publishers. Relating this back to the food writing of the 1950s and the 1970s, Fraser's political impetus and urgency with regards to Bo-Kaap echoed a rose-tinted nostalgia of preservation characteristic in Gerber's *Traditional Cookery of Cape Malays*.

The heritage cookbooks that have been published through the particular lens of Quivertree framed the representation of traditional South African culinary histories problematically within a eurocentric discourse. In the 1950s and the

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<sup>24</sup> Craig Fraser. *Bo-Kaap Kitchen: Heritage Recipes and True Stories*, (Cape Town: Quivertree Publications, 2013): 9.

<sup>25</sup> Craig Fraser. 'Biography' <<https://www.quivertreepublications.com/team/craig-fraser/>>



1970s culinary print culture presented a representation of the ‘Other’ within the lens of tradition. The category of tradition was authored, edited and designed within a specific ethnological schemata that ideologically upheld the values of racial separation. This was reminiscent of the social realist impulse in Leon Levson’s photography, the scientific racism in the Bushmen Diorama, and the orientalism of I.D. Du Plessis. These moments of collusion with the racial project of the time demonstrated how race and ethnicity were constructed through different cultural technologies of apartheid.

### **Take-aways: Remixing tradition?**

Generally, buying food on the go in the 1950s and the 1970s was not an affordable everyday occurrence. In certain cases, as is illustrated by editor, Zuleika Mayat in *Indian Delights*, ‘[t]he can and or junk food is good in an emergency, but for daily fare, good wholesome products must be used.’<sup>26</sup> Food bought in a shop to be taken away to eat on the go was a last resort. The concept of traditional food prepared in the family kitchen, served both nutritional and social value. The concept of take-aways is different to popular conceptions of fast food such as McDonalds and KFC. The differences lie in the scale of the business operation, the business model, and the productive capacity of fast food establishments and take-aways business. Halal take-aways in Cape Town are defined as small businesses. They are owned by a particular family and ownership is transferred from father to son. Each take-aways has their own secret recipes and flavours which distinguish it from each other. They each have something unique

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<sup>26</sup> Marek Korczynski and Ursula Ott, ‘The Menu in Society: Mediating Structures of Power and Enchanting Myths of Individual Sovereignty,’ *Sociology*. Vol 40, No 5. (October, 2006): 912.

to offer. Lastly, the waiting period for take-aways is much longer in comparison to fast food. Fast food enterprises are managed to ensure that a standardised quantity, and flavour can be produced within a short span of time. Unlike fast food, take-aways blended the concept of traditional home-cooked flavours within a speciality bread.

I want to suggest that halal take-aways on the periphery, occupied intriguing culinary corners and offered historical perspectives on changing work and social conditions. These food establishments blended principles of production and fused it with traditional flavours of home-cooked food. The commodification of home-cooked flavours are visible in the way take-aways such as Wembley drew on the American roadhouse of the 1950s and adapted it to the particularity of customers desires in Athlone. These culinary corners, the family-owned take-aways, are generally not engaged with as critical sites of memory and food heritage. That is, despite the popularity and longevity of many halal take-aways.

Family owned take-aways such as The Wembley Roadhouse and Super Fisheries have been examples of resilience and agency. Both these food institutions developed on the outskirts of the city. They embraced and adapted principles of production from the 1950s American Roadhouse, a cornerstone of the ‘American dream,’ and drew on the Portuguese Fish and Chips shop to cater to the palettes of the periphery. The menus of these take-aways were inculcated with the flavours and meanings of resilience traditionally associated with home-cooked food, also referred to as *huiskos*.<sup>27</sup> Often, take-aways will proclaim in their signage that they

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<sup>27</sup> Afrikaans for home-cooked food.

are 'home' to a particular unique food item. Wembley describes itself as 'The Home of the Wembley Whopper', and Aneesa's 'Home of The Vienna Chips Parcel.' At the centre of the 'homes' of the Whopper, the Gatsby, and the parcel, is the kitchen.

The kitchen comprises of mostly but not exclusively women staff. The space of the take-aways is gendered and has a particular kind of sociality and relationship with customers. The structure and methodology of the take-aways relies on notions of familiarity and intimacy. It can be read as an extension and reinterpretation of home. The kitchen and the quality of its product created a community of customers looking for a particular flavour at a particular price. Take-aways are historically produced and emerged at a particular moment on the South African culinary landscape. If, as Baderoon suggests, the colonial kitchen 'formed an unrelenting, perilous and transformative arena in which an uneven contest between slave-owner and slave was fought,'<sup>28</sup> how do we locate and understand the emergence and popularisation of take-aways as a kitchen-home construction in the 1970s on the periphery of Cape Town? What relevance is this reformulation after the experience of forced removals?

### **Framing take-aways**

Following the forced removals of the 1960s communities were relocated and fragmented across distant parts of the Cape Peninsula. Wembley Roadhouse and Super Fisheries established themselves as food institutions on the periphery of the city in Athlone in the 1970s, during a politically, economically and turbulent

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<sup>28</sup> Gabeba Baderoon. 'Regarding Muslims,' 50.

period. The city became a place of work that people commuted to. The signature meals of Wembley and Super Fisheries, the Whopper (burger) and the Gatsby (a large French loaf) respectively, were responses to a shifting labour market, work schedule, and political climate. The Whopper and the Gatsby catered to the palette and the pocket of the black consumer that was in a constant state of mobility between home and work. These food institutions relied on a vocabulary of taste, quality, and business acumen to provide food at affordable prices. The transformation of bread, in both preparation and consumption, reflected the economic and political context.

The Whopper and the Gatsby blended the principles of the production line with the flavour of traditional home-cooked meals. Now, with eating on-the-go, a consumption style based on sociality and sharing was popularised. The Gatsby cut in four eaten with the hands out of grease-proof paper, combined a collective contribution by four people that would split the cost accordingly. The changes reflected in eating habits began to constitute a particular kind of culinary belonging based on the sociality of consumption. Thus, as the social political context changed so did the foodways, practices and patterns. The popularisation of the Whopper and the Gatsby to the broader social and political context of the time can be read in relation to the rationalisation of subsidised state bread production. Locating the Wembley Whopper and the Gatsby as an archive that is practised, packaged and consumed, in relation to the rationalisation of state subsidised bread, offers a potential of reading history both along and against the grain.

The production of whiteness in the 1950s-visible in the production process of white bread and the popularisation of bread-based take-aways in the 1970s, speak to two particular moments in South African culinary history. Bread, particularly white bread was strictly regulated and subsidised by the National Party from 1948-1980. Economically, the increase in bread production and the flourishing wheat-bread industry, reflected an emerging self-sufficient white South Africa. The closely regulated market paralleled increasingly oppressive racist legislation that monitored, surveyed, and disciplined racial boundaries. The subsidisation of white bread in 1950 read against the backdrop of the Mixed Marriages Act (1949), the Group Areas Act (1950), the Jan van Riebeeck Festival (1952), the implementation of the Bantu Education Act (1953), reflected the aspirations and institutionalisation of the apartheid government. This period was known as the ‘*wittebroodsdae*<sup>29</sup>’ or the honeymoon phase for white South Africans.

The discourse and popularisation of white bread was entangled with the production of whiteness. The relationship between bread and race was clearly articulated by the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry in 1951,

[t]he hon. member says that we made fine promises to the people in connection with white bread etc. We promised them a white civilisation [and] I just want to say to the hon. member that he can expect a completely white policy from this side.<sup>30</sup>

Roughly 20 years after the rationalisation of white bread, both the Gatsby and the Whopper appeared on the periphery of the city beyond the glare of the state. This follows from the forced removals and redistribution of people across the city.

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<sup>29</sup> A direct translation would mean white-bread days.

<sup>30</sup> Benjamin Stanwix, 'Wheat, Bread, and the Role of the State in Twentieth Century South Africa,' *Economic & Social History Graduate Workshop*, 2012.

The 1950s and 1970s reflected the institutionalisation of an apartheid rationality that extended to every sphere of individual life. The impetus to bring a racial order through hierarchical discursive practises, stemmed from an anxiety of both the native question and the poor white problem of the 1930s. It was through the research and social medicalisation of nutrition that intervention strategies to sustain, preserve and protect the black mine worker and the poor white were implemented. This tenet of protection and preservation echoed through the National Party policies on white bread. As Benjamin Stanwix suggests,

The poor whiteism that was a concern in the 1930s remained a live issue during the 1940s and one that NP took seriously. In the run-up to the 1948 general election the NP published a political brochure called *The Worker's True Friend*...again seeking to represent white workers and consumers interests.<sup>31</sup>

The poor white problem in particular served as a discursive field for racial intervention that manifested itself through a constellation of biopolitical techniques and disciplinary technologies that characterised the governmentality of the apartheid state. Bodies needed to be disciplined and rationalised along racial lines to avoid a chaotic liberal recipe of the past. However, with increased political and economic pressure placed on the apartheid government in the 1970s, the protectionism of the 1950s began to wane. This expressed itself in the increasing liberalisation of industries such as the wheat-bread chain of production. White bread as a metaphor for whiteness was increasingly exposed to the broader political will for democracy. Within this context, the popularisation of bread-based take-aways in the form of the Super Fisheries Gatsby and the Wembley Whopper declared a sense of culinary belonging. Together these moments formed

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

part of a culinary complex that showed how consumers were both positioned and positioned themselves within racialized culinary hierarchies. This research explores how the processes of rationalisation and popularisation intersect with one another through biographies bread.





## Illustrations

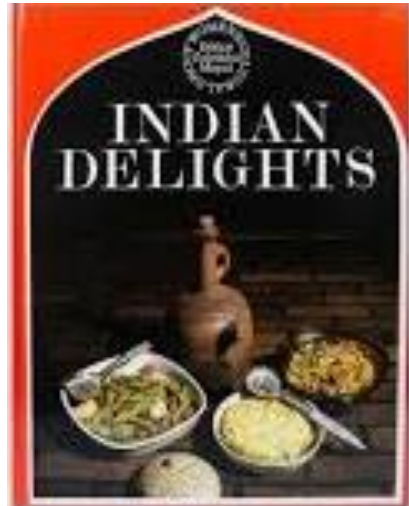


FIGURE 1 COVER OF INDIAN DELIGHTS. WOMEN'S CULTURAL GROUP, DURBAN.



FIGURE 2 KAROO KITCHEN AND BO KAAP KOMBUIS COVERS. THE IMAGES SHOW THE SIMILAR AESTHETIC LAYOUT AND DESIGN. QUIVERTREE PUBLICATION.



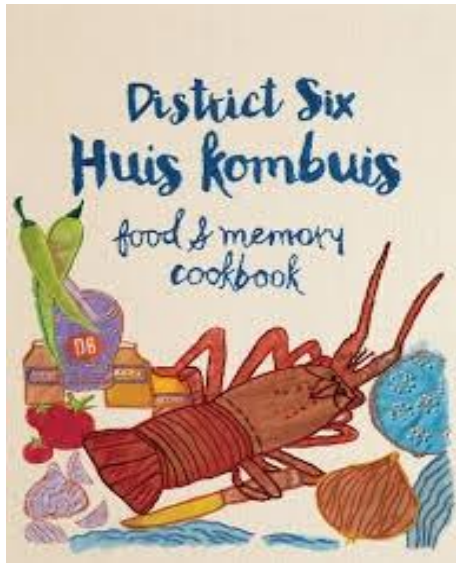


FIGURE 3 COVER OF THE DISTRICT SIX MUSEUM HUIS KOMBUIS COOKBOOK. THE COVER COMPOSED FROM THE EMBROIDERY MEMORY WORK OF THE HUIS KOMBUIS.



FIGURE 4 LOGO OF ANEESA'S TAKE-AWAYS WITH THE SLOGAN RELATING TO HOME.

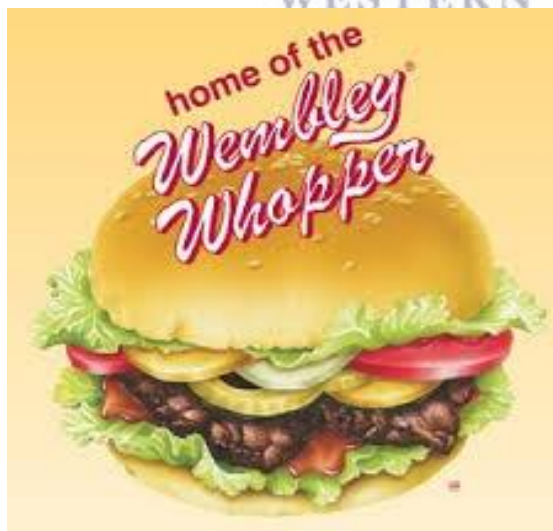


FIGURE 5 WEMBLEY ROADHOUSE SIGNAGE AND ADVERTISING OF THE WEMBLEY WHOPPER.

## Chapter Two

### Menus of fathers: The Whopper and the Gatsby

The previous chapter explored how the concept of tradition was produced in culinary writing during the period of the 1950s to the 1960s, and how this was framed through eurocentric discourses of food anthropology. The heritage and memory cookbooks produced in the 2000s by Quivertree Publications resurrected the concept of ‘traditional’ in the form of a nostalgia that like tribe, rendered tradition into a eurocentric ethnological category. From this viewpoint, tradition did not include take-aways as repositories of culinary histories.

Take-aways are a messy business. The preparation process of take-aways blended ‘traditional’ slow cooked lang-sous food and reframed it with greaseproof paper, ready to be taken away and eaten elsewhere.

In this chapter, I will show how the small business emerged as a critical space of self-authorship, autonomy, and reconstituted a community through food. The space of the take-aways brought together historical experiences of forced removals and racial segregation with black capital investment on the peripheries of the city. The production and consumption of the Wembley Whopper and the Super Fisheries Gatsby constituted cultural emblems of agency. These emblems were historically embedded within a set of discursive practices and business ethic that distinguished halal take-aways from franchised and state subsidised food production. The material and symbolic production and consumption of the Whopper and the Gatsby reflected aspirations of autonomy and self-determination

during the period of the 1970s to the 1990s which mirrored the political sentiments of the time.

### **Immigration and small business ownership**

Culinary histories of take-aways in South Africa were influenced by layered experiences of migrations of Eastern Europeans, Indian merchants, and Madeiran traders. Predominantly artisanal, mercantile and working class, the experiences of migration came to have an indelible influence on food culture and foodways of the Cape.

The settlements of Eastern European Jews in South Africa in the 19th century were predominantly politicised artisans. They brought with them a class-consciousness informed by socialism and a range of skills in industries such as tailoring, carpentry and baking. Eastern European Jews formed part of the lower rungs of Cape society, and were different to the Anglo-German Jews who had already settled here prior to the 1900s. The Anglo-German Jews were ‘successful in manufacturing’<sup>1</sup>, with some notable Jewish businessmen ‘pioneering the manufacturing sector in the Cape Colony.’ To Eastern European Jews, Anglo-German Jews were ‘associated with British culture and way of life’, while ‘Eastern European Jews displayed a foreign culture that proved an embarrassment to their acculturated coreligionists.’ Furthermore, ‘the majority of Jewish workers came from the cities of Belorussia-Lithuania’ were ‘destitute artisans which constituted the Jewish population that immigrated to South Africa’<sup>2</sup> in the 1900s.

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the manufacturing sectors included tobacco, tanning, the garment industry, and also the wholesale market.

<sup>2</sup>Evangelos A. Mantzaris, ‘Jewish Trade Unions in Cape Town, South Africa.1903-1907: A Socio-Historical Study’. *Jewish Social Studies*, (Vol 49, No 3, Summer - Autumn, 1987): 260.

The South African landscape offered economic opportunity and a politically fertile ground to cultivate socialist ideals of a newly emerging artisanal class of Eastern European Jews. This manifested in a series of short-lived artisanal trade unions for tailors and bakers. The impetus of this stemmed from the desire to ‘tackle everyday problems’ such as ‘low wages and poor working conditions.’<sup>3</sup>

The class antagonism between Anglo-German Jews and Eastern European Jews surfaced in places of residence and language. Eastern European Jews resided predominantly in District Six opening small family owned shops such as delis, bookshops, and bakeries. Veronica-Sue Belling explains that:

In the earliest days Jewish ritual requirements, such as mezuzes, taleysim (prayer shawls), and prayer books as well as the special Jewish food requirements, such as matzo for Passover, and even bob, the traditional flat bean used in the making of coolant, were imported from the Jewish booksellers of which there were at least four in District Six in Cape Town. The best known was M.Beinkinstadt.<sup>4</sup>

Bookshops such as Mr Beinkinstadt’s, served as capillaries to Eastern European Jewishness. The bookshops were social spaces to engage with literature and culture. Cookbooks and recipes in newspapers were important ways for Jews to maintain their cultural connections to ‘home’ while negotiating the new terrain of the Cape. These architectural doorways between the Cape and Eastern Europe allowed people access to the ‘ingredients’ necessary to remake, maintain, and adapt to the socio-economic and political conditions of the Cape at the time.

*Kitka*, a distinctly South African Jewish bread eaten on the Sabbath is perhaps the

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<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Veronica-Sue Belling. ‘Recovering the Lives of South African Jewish Women During the Migration c1880-1939.’ Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Cape Town. 2013: 70.

best example of culinary adaption in the Cape. It is a uniquely homegrown term that was and continues to be used to describe what is widely known as *challah*.

For many ex-residents of District Six, Jewish businesses played an important role in serving the community and had close loyal clientele. For contributor Sheila Rolls they frequented various Jewish businesses for food items. It was a convenient stop over where everything could be found and bought on the tick. The most fondly remembered Jew was referred to as *Rooikop Jood* (Red haired Jew). Rolls describes how they ‘went to *Rooikop Jood* to buy beans and peas, and any food really, such as fish oil and butter because he sold just about everything.’<sup>5</sup> Another *Huis Kombuis* contributor Moegamat Benjamin fondly remembered his experience of the bakeries in Buitenkant Street which he ‘loved going to, to buy bread’, because he ‘always got a little cake or something for free.’<sup>6</sup>

The communal oven was a common feature of bakeries in District Six. Many homes were not equipped with an oven and the act of baking bread was a luxury reserved for weekends and special occasions. This coincided with the special baked goods that were prepared on Fridays for the Sabbath. The bakeries in District Six offered their oven at a small price. Customers would bring their baking tin with their unbaked bread to the store to be baked and picked up later in the day. Johnsons Bakery was one such bakery:

My mother used to knead and put the dough into *bakkies*. Then I must take it to the bakery and they number it and give me the number 1 card. All the people would bring their bread in their own *bakkies* and

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<sup>5</sup> Shiela Rolls, ‘Stretching the Pot, Shiela Rolls Tyne Street.’ *District Six Huis Kombuis: Food and Memory Cookbook*, (Cape Town: Quivertree Publications, 2016): 77.

<sup>6</sup> Moegamat Benjamin, ‘*Huis Kombuis*, The Food of District Six,’ *District Six Huis Kombuis: Food and Memory Cookbook*, (Cape Town: Quivertree Publications, 2016):107.

Mrs Johnson would put in a big fire place where they baked the bread.  
After a certain time I had to fetch it again....<sup>7</sup>

While many businesses remained, the 1930s were marked by the exodus of Jewish families from District Six to neighbourhoods and networks with similar religious backgrounds. This coincided with the increased policing of the category of whiteness that manifested itself in the implementation of the Immigration Quota Act (1930) and the Alien Act (1937) by the National Government.

Sally Peberdy's work on white immigration in South Africa suggests that the South African government 'showed concern about the ethnic composition of its *white* population' and that 'the immigration from Europe should be in line with the relative ration of the original stocks of the Union.'<sup>8</sup> The narrow perception of whiteness came to encompass other categories of potentially dangerous immigrants, including Madeiran traders and fishermen.

The limited historiography of the Madeiran immigration to South Africa notes that a substantial Madeiran population migrated to coastal areas, such as Cape Town. Pedro Machado suggests that from 1936 to 1969 the Portuguese population of Cape Town grew from 228 to 675. From 1940 to 1980, within four decades, Woodstock was home to a significant Portuguese population.<sup>9</sup>

Clive Glaser suggests that for 'largely unskilled' and 'illiterate Madeirans' legal immigration were closely regulated. As a consequence, 'illegal entry was an

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<sup>7</sup> Annie Bam, 'Niks het geflop nie,' *District Six Huis Kombuis: Food and Memory Cookbook*, (Cape Town: Quivertree Publications, 2016): 99.

<sup>8</sup> Barbara Henkes, 'Shifting Identifications in Dutch-South African Migration Policies (1910–1961),' *South African Historical Journal*, Vol 68, No 4. (2016): pp 641–669. Henkes draws on Peberdy's work extensively to explore the historical production of whiteness within different immigrant communities.

<sup>9</sup> Pedro Machado. 'Little Madeira-The Portugese in Woodstock C.1940 - C.1980,' Honours Thesis. University of Cape Town. (1992): 6.

integral part of the Madeiran experience in South Africa.’<sup>10</sup> Madeirans relied on their agricultural and fishing backgrounds to open up South African economic doorways in the fishing industry. Also, it was predominantly men who came to Cape Town as contract labour for ‘large fishing companies in Lüderitz or as workers in family-owned cafes.’<sup>11</sup>

Portuguese fishermen were sought after and the opportunity of contract labour ensured that ‘the anxieties of finding work in a foreign country were considerably lessened.’<sup>12</sup> Despite the experience of illegality as an anchor in the reconstruction of the Madeiran identity in South Africa, secured contracts made the immigration boundaries for Madeirans more permeable and South Africa more accessible.

Madeiran immigrants relied on their familial networks as social and economic security on arrival. Though much time was spent working in Lüderitz many fishermen opted to permanently reside in Woodstock due to its proximity to the harbour as well as schooling opportunities that were available in the area. An additional attractive feature of Woodstock was that a significant immigrant population resided there. It was in Cape Town that wives were brought over to settle and make families. This resulted in families diversifying their fishing trade into small business ownership such as the fisheries specialized in fried fish and chips. These businesses were crucial to orientating and supporting newly arrived Portuguese immigrants.

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<sup>10</sup> Clive Glaser, ‘White But Illegal: Undocumented Madeiran Immigration to South Africa, 1920s–1970,’ *Immigrants & Minorities*, Vol 31, No 1. (2013): pp 74–98.

<sup>11</sup> Pedro Machado, 14.

<sup>12</sup> Pedro Machado, 40.



The Madeiran fisheries were characteristically passed on from father to son, and employed fellow Madeiran immigrants wanting to expand their economic opportunities. The fisheries were important social and economic stepping-stones into a foreign country. Aires Justino ‘Steen’ Ferreira, owner of Palace Fisheries in Salt River describes the relationship of fathers, sons and business in South Africa:

My dad grew up without a father – he left Madeira to seek his fortune in South Africa just a few months before my dad was born. When my dad was 19 he set out to find his father....In 1955 he [the dad] got his big break: with the help of a silent partner he bought Palace Fisheries in Salt River. I started working in the shop when I was five, stacking the bread rolls and ‘drumsticks’ (French loaves) in the window.<sup>13</sup>

In Cape Town, a quintessential British meal would come to be associated with Madeiran immigrants. Made in a similar fashion minus mushy peas, the labour and residential movements of the Madeirans were reflected in the emergence of Madeiran South African fisheries. These institutions were generally not aimed for sit-down. Space was a challenge and became dangerous within a context in which racial intermixing became increasingly regulated.

The popularisation and association of fish and chips and the fisheries as distinctively Portuguese in Cape Town can be read as an assertion of a community aspiration within a racial hierarchy of the time. By removing the mushy peas, the quintessential British take-aways was localised and repackaged and reflected a mobility and historical connection to former agricultural activities in Madeira. During the 1950s and the 1960s, fisheries dominated the take-aways landscape as Hosein, Manager at Super Fisheries suggested: ‘The take-away scene was totally

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<sup>13</sup> Aires Justino ‘Steen’ Ferreira owner of Palace Fisheries in Salt River, speaking about the family owned fish and chips shop. Found in an article by Nick Dall. Nick Dall, ‘The Fish and Chip Chronicles’ *High Life*. (May 2017): 32-40.

different.... In the 60s you only had the fish and chips. Now that has changed. It has expanded tremendously. The choice...you know...'<sup>14</sup> The popularisation and incorporation of fish and chips within popular culinary discourse, reflected the establishment and permanent presence of a Portuguese community within Cape Town.

The establishment of small businesses within the food sector reproduced critical economic and social avenues of investment into a foreign environment. Despite the Immigration Quote Act of 1930 and the government efforts to contain a particular definition of the white South African, Eastern Europeans and Portuguese were still able to access opportunities to become citizens, own property, and start small businesses. Indian immigrants on the other hand, were subjected to the harshest application of these laws.

Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie suggests that,

'[w]hile provision was made to exclude the illiterate European poor from the language and monetary requirements, provided they had work contracts, there were no such concessions made for those from the East.'<sup>15</sup>

The harsh application of immigration laws also stemmed from the economic threat that Indians posed to whites. John Western suggests that 'Indians were perceived as an economic threat and ordinances were enacted against them.'<sup>16</sup> The expansion of Indian businesses was carefully managed.

For example, Indians were forbidden to settle in Bloemfontein or anywhere near the Orange Free State by an ordinance imposed in

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<sup>14</sup> Interview with Hoosein, Manager at Super Fisheries by Tazneem Wentze. 04<sup>th</sup> January 2018

<sup>15</sup> Uma Duphelia-Mesthrie. 'Betwixt the Oceans: The Chief Immigration Officer in Cape Town, Clarence Wilfred Cousins (1905–1915),' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol 42, No 3. (2016): pp 463–481.

<sup>16</sup> John Western, *Outcast Cape Town*. (London. George Allen & Unwin, 1981): 47.

1891. In 1885 the Transvaal government prohibited Asians from owning fixed property....<sup>17</sup>  
Based on the genealogy of legislation aimed specifically at Indian immigrants dating from 1859, Indians were closely monitored by a series of regulations including whom one could marry, where one could trade and where one lived. The Pegging Act, the Asian Land Tenure Act, and the Indian Representation Act were deliberate limitations imposed to regulate the ability of Indians to own property and conduct business. Areas of sociality and particularly trade were clearly delineated.

Unlike Eastern European and Portuguese business owners who were ‘reluctantly’ constructed as constituting white, Indian and ‘Asiatics’ were undesirable aliens.<sup>18</sup> Thus, Indian traders were relegated to particular ‘peripheral’ communities of colour such as Rylands and Cravenby. Despite this, investment of ‘Indian’ capital into racially divided peripheries such as Athlone transformed the area physically, socially and politically into a different kind of ‘centre.’ The emergence and popularization of halal take-aways reflected the success of black owned businesses that catered specifically for black consumers. That is despite state regulations that sought to limit the threat of alternative capital to white monopoly.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>18</sup> I use the term reluctantly as there was a preference for a particular kind of white immigrant. Portuguese and Eastern European immigrants experiences a degree of prejudice in the form of Rooi Gevaar and the Roomse Gevaar.

<sup>19</sup> Here I am expanding on Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie’s ideas of centre and periphery in Rylands, and the way that residents changed their environment. From the article ‘Speaking about building Rylands.’ Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie, ‘Speaking about building Rylands (1960s to 1980s): a Cape Flats history,’ *Social Dynamics*, Vol, 40, No 2. (2014): pp 353-370.

### **The kitchen, the menu and the customer**

The historical emergence of halal take-aways reflected a particular arrangement of producing and consuming food. The feature, which distinguished halal take-aways, was the formation of a unique, historically produced relationship between the kitchen, menu, and customer. These elements, which constituted the take-aways structure, were informed by a process of rationalisation and social ordering that was rooted in the experiences of migration and forced removals. This rationalisation shaped what kind of food was prepared, how it was prepared and to whom the food could be sold to.

### ***The kitchen and the staff***

The idea for a Wembley Roadhouse in Cape Town germinated on the bonnet of a Ford Escort in the parking lot of the legendary Blue Lagoon, Durban. Mr Gangraker (Owner of Wembley Roadhouse) was due to return home from Durban. Unfortunately, he had missed his flight and on his way back to the hotel to make alternative arrangements, Gangraker asked the taxi driver to take him to a place 'for a bite to eat.' The driver took Gangraker to one of the most well known eating-places in Durban, the Blue Lagoon. The Blue Lagoon was premised on the American style roadhouse of the 1950s and was a hub for social activity. While eating roti and meatballs off the bonnet of the taxi, Gangraker was mesmerized by the operation, management, and flow of Blue Lagoon. For Gangraker,

All around me cars were pulling up, its occupants rushing to the shop to place their orders. I watched this assembly of young and old, gathering to enjoy good food and good company. Watching this teeming spectacle, I thought, why can't I do this in Cape Town. Wembley Roadhouse was born...On the bonnet of a Ford Escort.

Today the roadhouse is part and parcel of the social fabric of our community.<sup>20</sup>

The inspiration that had hit Mr Gangraker on the bonnet of the Ford Escort resulted in the construction of a roadhouse styled on the Blue Lagoon. Wembley was mapped around the centrepiece of the kitchen. Two parking areas were developed in Denchworth Road and Belgravia Road. The parking on Belgravia Road has been used mostly for placing orders that were collected by a Wembley waitress and then placed at the kitchen. The food is then collected from the kitchen and distributed to parked cars through the car window on a tray. A printed menu can be requested. However, a menu is also displayed near the collection window. Food is then brought to the car and eaten in the car. The other parking area in Denchworth Road is mostly used for collections. Customers stand in a queue and place their order at the window. The Denchworth parking area is used for eating meals and socialising. It is a self-service area. The parking areas and newly renovated marble sitting area appear as arteries that connect to the central area, the kitchen.

The kitchen is lit up and visible through a series of windows, and staff wear maroon and white Wembley uniforms. On the collection side, there are three separate areas for placing your order, paying and collecting. On the other side of the kitchen, waitresses that are predominantly men collect the orders from the parked cars and place them through the glass windows. They wear white coats, similar to a medical doctor. The front pocket of the white coat has the Wembley logo printed on it.

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<sup>20</sup> Abdullah Eshack, Gangraker. *Wembley Echoes*. (Self-Published, n.d): 30.

Wembley is clearly organized and choreographed enterprise. Spaces are demarcated for different purposes depending on the needs of the customer. The space offers the option of lingering in the area or taking food away. Wembley operates from the morning and extend until 12:00am. The success of the business can be read in the renovated marble flooring and steel exterior of the roadhouse and in the number of philanthropic organisations that Wembley Group of Companies is attached to.

Super Fisheries is much smaller than Wembley. The shop has not undergone much renovation. The layout of a take-aways and a fish counter are in the same position as they were when it opened. A large green and white sign on the outside of the building demarcates the shop. A large glass window, framed by a small entry allows passers-by to peer into the shop. A glass counter that separates the area where customers place their order, or buy their fish from the fresh fish counter divides the entire shop. A menu broken up into themed panels in the same typography as the sign outside the shop is mounted onto the wall above the counter. Upon entering, to the left is the fresh fish counter. Fish is cut, weighed, and wrapped up to order. In the centre the Gatsby loaves are packed neatly and displayed in a transparent glass counter. On top of the counter is a display of the *atchars* for sale. To the right are the till and the refrigerator for cold drink. People line up from the till to the outside of the shop. One staff member takes the order, the rest prepare the meals. The men wear white coats, again similar to a medical doctor. The women wear blue uniforms and aprons. With periodic moments of quiet, the shop is usually busy until closing. There is no seating. Customers stand

to the left of the shop once their orders have been placed. At both Wembley and Super Fisheries, the kitchen and the hands that prepare the food are always visible. Customers can watch how their food is prepared while they wait. The transparency of preparation is reflected in the architecture of the shop and how the shop is mapped out for the customer. The ingredients, the preparation, and the people who prepare the food are all visible to the customer.

At the centre of Super Fisheries and Wembley is the kitchen. The staff that work in both kitchens are of diverse backgrounds. There is a gender divide that is reflected in the uniform and type of work that is done. Generally, the staffs are trained on the job and are often very loyal to the business, staying on for many years. The owner of Aneesa's, Mr Z Khan, another popular take-aways in Cape Town, suggested that staff turn-over was based on,

...the interaction between management and staff. This is why staff tends to stay on long. If you're a crappy boss then staff wouldn't stay long. They would leave tomorrow....If you treat them with dignity and decency then ya....<sup>21</sup>

Each staff member plays a critical role in the process of preparation. For Owner of Super Fisheries, Rashaad Pandey,

You must have decent staff that can talk nicely with the people. It's important. That's why all these people are working with me long already....Pat and Marie have been with me for over 15 years. Evelyn was with me for almost 20 years, but she had to go back to Knysna to look after her mother.<sup>22</sup>

At Super Fisheries, roles are clearly designated. When the shop becomes full, everyone falls into place succinctly frying chips, cutting rolls, adding salads and sauce that together compose Gatsbys and other orders. Wembley is more

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<sup>21</sup> Interview with Zaheer Khan, Owner of Aneesas by Tazneem Wentzel. 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Rashaad Pandey, Owner of Super Fisheries by Tazneem Wentzel. 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017.



rationalised with a bigger kitchen and more staff. My understanding of their kitchen is limited to what I have observed through the windows and experienced from eating as a customer. The time of preparation and collection of food can vary. Unlike fast food where food is delivered within a standard time of 10 minutes, take-aways can take up to 40-60 minutes. This is because meals are prepared from scratch, as opposed to dehydrated meat or pre-fried and treated chips.

In the previous chapter it was suggested that the colonial kitchen was an ‘unrelenting’, ‘perilous’, and ‘transformative’ space,’ that ‘from the period of slavery to apartheid the South African kitchen has been a site of harrowing intimacy, power, knowledge and invisible ideological contest with profound cultural effects.’<sup>23</sup> The South African colonial kitchen was a layered space of oppressive ideological, racial, and gendered entanglements. It was premised on the basis of subjugation and silence. The kitchen in the context of Wembley and Super Fisheries operates as horizontal space of exchange that emerged from a transnational working class experience of immigration, discrimination and entrepreneurship, and resilience. The kitchen in this sense, offered intangible food heritage that reflected the changing work relations and political situation.

### ***The menu and the customer***

‘Whether you’re feeling peckish over lunch or wracked by late-night cravings, the Wembley Road House is an institution designed to satisfy any seeker of fast, wholesome, delicious food’<sup>24</sup> The ‘bewildering’ menu of Wembley offers a

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<sup>23</sup> Gabeba Baderoon, *Regarding Muslims*. (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2001): 50.

<sup>24</sup> Wembley Roadhouse. <<http://wembley.co.za/roadhouse/>>

diverse range of food choices. This ranges from curries, samoosas, salads, grills, deep-dish pizzas, and burgers. Additionally, there are a variety of milkshakes and refreshments some of which are locally inspired and others Indian in origin. The two most popular food options are, arguably the double hot dog and the Wembley Whopper that *must* be accompanied by a milkshake. The menu is not static. Changes can be read in the additions and subtractions to the ‘bewildering’ menu. These additions include custard apple milkshakes, the oreo milk shake, and various healthier burger options. The presentation of the menu can be described as clandestine. The menu is not printed in a poster format big and bold. Instead, the printable version is stuck on the wall. No bigger than an A3, it is unassuming. Aesthetically, the colour scheme of the menu is consistent with the maroon and white uniform and the Wembley branding.

The menu of Super Fisheries is humble in comparison to Wembley’s bewildering menu. The menu is more focused on the sale of fish and Gatsbys. Pandy suggests,

The most important thing [my father] taught me was to always stay positive in business, always treat the people with respect and give the people what they want. That’s all. When I opened this shop [my father] told me, don’t make things and don’t sell things to people that you don’t want to eat.’<sup>25</sup>

The menu offers various versions of affordable Gatsbys. The price range of Gatsbys can be anywhere between R40 for a baby to R200. The most well-known Super Fisheries Gatsby is the Polony Gatsby layered with homemade *atchar*<sup>26</sup>. Gatsbys can be bought as a half (also known as a baby) or a whole. Fish Gatsbys are the speciality of Super Fisheries. The addition of *atchar* on the Gatsby is

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<sup>25</sup> Interview with Rashaad Pandy Owner of Super Fisheries by Tazneem Wentzel. 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017

<sup>26</sup> *Atchar* is a condiment made of spicy preserved vegetables, mango or lemon. This can include orange infused *atchar*.

another feature that is unique to Super Fisheries. The *atchar* Pandy's secret recipe that was passed down from his father.

The menu is presented boldly on a large A0 laser printed board. It matches the exterior signage of the shop. The outside eye-catching signage is consistent with the interior of the shop. There are no printed take-aways menus available.

Customers enter look at the boards, make their selection and place their order. The menu somewhat frames the shop, in the same way the counter does. It divides the space of the customer from the kitchen. Meals bought at Super Fisheries were meant to be taken away and eaten elsewhere. The shop itself does not allow for sit-down meals. The menu has also undergone renovation from the time of the establishment of the shop. The close proximity of Super Fisheries and Wembley to Klipfontein Road, and 'centrality' to the periphery of Cape Town allows for easy accessibility via public transport and also allows for a variety of customers.

Neil Nair remembers the people of Athlone who constituted the clientele of Wembley and Super Fisheries for him,

Athlone was fairly safe. I remember walking down the road going to buy lunch at the fisheries. Everybody knew each other. The vendors, the vegetable guys, the fruit sellers and the people that worked in the local shops. There was a vibrancy. [It] was an eclectic mix, and it has always been an artistically charged place. I think in communities that are very artistically charged you automatically find a political consciousness. I think that Athlone has a very strong artistic history, especially in music. I mean Robbie Janson and those guys came from Athlone and used to perform here. Some of the most prominent...I don't want to call them night clubs, but places of social activity were in Athlone. There was Goldfinger, the Beverly Lounge....So when people got together in those places, I think they were a hive and you find it was a breeding ground for political consciousness.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Interview with Neil Nair by Tazneem Wentzel. 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017.

Athlone was an intersection of social, political and culinary influences. This attracted people from the surrounding areas of Bridgetown, Kewtown, Rylands, Gatesville, Gugulethu, and Langa. The popularization of take-aways occurred alongside increased political consciousness and activity in the area. Often, Super Fisheries kept their kitchen open till late on request from rally organisers to feed the hungry masses after their political activities. Political activism and the popularization of take-aways were parallel developments.

Vahed and Waetjen suggest that the production of *Indian Delights* led to the ‘development of culinary print culture’ which transformed ‘household kitchens into public spaces...’<sup>28</sup> Following this, take-aways rationalized the production of ‘huiskos’ flavours through the assembly line of the commercial kitchen. The familiarity of home-cooked food became a commodity that was bought and sold at a particular exchange rate. Accessibility was specified between opening and closing times with a clearly designated menu.

The menu presents a list of food items to the customer. It is a key mediator between customer and kitchen and reflects a culinary literacy different to the culinary print culture of a recipe book. How the menu is presented, what is offered, and whether it is acceptable to the customer are critical factors that determined the shape, form and success of the take-aways.

Marek Korczynski and Ursula Ott suggest that the ‘menu is attractive because’ it places the customer as ‘autonomous chooser between alternatives’ and ‘operates

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<sup>28</sup>Goolam Vahed and Thembisa Waetjen, ‘Kitchen Publics,’ *South African Historical Journal*, Vol 61, No 3. (2013): 57.

as a form of filter that promises the opportunity to exercise real, and meaningful choice.<sup>29</sup> Relating to this, halal take-aways created a space in which the customer was offered a list of food items to choose from. The alluring possibility of choice within a context in which a second state of emergency that had been declared in the 1980s by the apartheid state, reflected an aspiration for the right to autonomously choose a consumption style. Furthermore, the presentation of choice within the format of the menu resulted from a process of co-authoring by the business owner and the customer. In contrast with Korczynski and Ott's conception of the menu as produced independently from the consumer/customer, the emergence of halal take-aways was rooted in the process of co-authoring. Ultimately, the success of a small business depended on the buy-in from loyal customers. Mr Pandy speaks to the value and importance of the relationship with the customer.

You start off with a menu. Those years there was mostly just chip rolls and fish and chips. There wasn't Gatsbys and things like that. I had my raw fish counter in front and my take-aways on the side. Like it is now. But you know what the people want. They ask for this and that. In this type of business, you must always think about your customer. If they want it then you do what your customer says. A lot of the things I wanted on the menu it didn't work because the people didn't buy it. It is important that you listen to what your customer has to say.<sup>30</sup>

Foregrounding the relationship with the customer in this way was part of an inherited business principle. Particularly important was the palate of the customer. The customers' palate and their desire to consume particular food items were critical in defining the content of the menu. In this sense, the menu reflected the

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<sup>29</sup> Esther Reiter. *Making Fast Food*. (Canada. University Press. 1991).

<sup>30</sup>Interview with Rashaad Pandy Owner of Super Fisheries by Tazneem Wentzel. 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017

desires of the customer. They had the agency to change the menu thereby having the ability to change the possibilities and constraints of what the menu presents.

Relating this back to Korczynski and Ott's ideas on the menu and choice it appears as if the menu is produced in isolation from the customer. In addition to this, the customer has no particular influence on the menu. In this instance, the menu appears to be created separately from the customer, presenting a list of prescribed choice. Within take-aways, the pallets of the customer and their opinion on the food items are important to the success of the take-aways.

Therefore, the customer occupies a crucial role in not only making a selection from the menu, but also what stays on the menu and what is removed. Halal take-aways offered customers not only a space in which choice could be exercised, but also a space in which the menu was co-authored by both business owner and customer.

The Wembley Roadhouse and Super Fisheries are amongst many halal take-aways that emerge in the 1970s and become popularised in the mid-1980s to 1990s.

Gangraker, owner of Wembley, extended the family general grocer to include a roadhouse, butchery, bakery, and more recently, a travel agency. Gangraker has passed on and his son now runs the third generation family business.

Pandy, owner of Super Fisheries expanded the family butchery to include a take-aways. It is in the second generation of ownership that both Super Fisheries and Wembley acquire their distinctive characters of Gatsbys and Whoppers.

Both Pandy and Gangraker grew up in the shop, learning the trade and business acumen of their fathers. Gangraker, owner of Wembley writes:

Like many of my generation, I was born in the shop. Maybe not literally, but our earliest memory is of that shop. Initially we were carried in by our mothers, cocooned in the womb. As babies we were often placed in a cardboard box, wrapped up in blankets and we watched and learnt.<sup>31</sup>

Unlike the recipes that are collated, edited, and packaged in *Indian Delights* that maintained cultural avenues of traditional Indian cooking for a dispersed Indian community, the production of menus in halal take-aways reflected a transfer of intergenerational business ethic. The Wembley Whopper and the Super Fisheries Gatsby embodied a rationalised historical modality of production and consumption that constituted an aspirant culinary assertion of belonging during the 1970s to the 1990s. Both bread-based food items are commodities with social histories and markings of individual biographies.

After opening and refurbishing the butchery, Gangraker ventured further into the food business. He adopted a culinary concept of the roadhouse from the Blue Lagoon, and with the assistance of his wife Galiema Gangraker, adapted the concept it to the specificity of Cape Town. The concepts of the roadhouse along with the drive-in were popular social hubs during the 1970s to the 1990s. These social formations were influenced by American fast food, drive-in, and diner culture of the 1950s and the 1970s.

Ester Reiter suggests that ‘[t]he growth of the fast food industry represents the successful unfolding of a particular vision of contemporary life.’ The fast food vision of contemporary life included a reshaping of how work was conducted, how food was prepared, and the relation of consumers to food eaten on the go.

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<sup>31</sup> Abdullah Eshack, Gangraker. *Wembley Echoes*, 12.



This vision was realized through the scientific management of food, the mechanisation of production, and the management of labour. Every aspect of the production process came under the managerial microscope. The management of the minutia became an industry standard. As a result of these changes, fast food was segmented to cut costs and become more efficient in the production and assembly of burgers. Esther Reiter suggests that ‘pre-pared foods began to appear on the fast food landscape following calls by the Institutional Sales Manager for Kraft Foods Ltd. who ‘urged restaurant owners to throw away the jam pots.’<sup>32</sup> The metaphor of ‘throwing away the jam pots’ reflected a shift in the production of food. As Reiter suggests,

Food manufacturers were encouraged to look beyond the supermarkets to the institutional market for food sales. Products such as pre-sliced cheese and portion-control packs of jellies and ketchup were introduced in 1952, and actively promoted by the end of the decade.<sup>33</sup>

Pre-prepared food, pre-sliced, and portion control were examples of the implementation of a carefully managed modality for production and consumption. The inconspicuous intrusion of the minute changes in the way food was prepared and the way condiments were used, reflected an incursion of accountable consumption. It was a way of ordering the social life of consumption and a display of the power to order. More and more, the fast food industry appeared like the 19<sup>th</sup> century museum that transformed people ‘en mass’ into subjects that witnessed the exhibition of power, knowledge and the order of the world.<sup>34</sup>

Similarly, fast food spaces transformed the customer into a post World War Two

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<sup>32</sup> Esther Reiter. *Making Fast Food*.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Tony Bennett, ‘The Exhibitionary Complex’, in *Representing the Nation*, (eds.) D Boswell and J Evans, (London. Routledge. 1999).

consumer that ingested and digested food corporations' orderings and the power to order the world through food. Then, what do the rationalisations of food production and the formation of particular kinds of personhood reveal about halal take-aways in Athlone during the 1970s?

### **The material and symbolic production and consumption of the Whopper and the Gatsby**

Wembley displays a form of rationalisation and organisation that are reflected in the method and material of preparation. The Wembley Whopper and the Burger King Whopper use completely different ingredients in what appears on the surface to be a similar burger. Wembley does not use dehydrated meat or mass produced rolls and chips. Assembling a Burger King Whopper has been researched and designed in such a way, that preparation is 'managed down to the finest detail.'<sup>35</sup>The Burger King Whopper is the outcome of highly standardised process and follows a strict preparation method to ensure that a Burger King Whopper tastes exactly the same in every context. In this way, the Burger King Whopper is embedded with its own universal flavour profile that is the same from Cape Town to New York. Therefore, the standardised process is refracted in the universalised flavour that embeds itself in consumption as a pillar of production. Making a universal standard logistically possible and economically profitable relied on low wages and the mass manufacturing of food. As James Mc Lamore, founder of Burger King suggests,

There are only two things our customers have, time and money - and they don't like spending either of them, so we better sell them their hamburgers quickly.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Esther Reiter. *Making Fast Food*. (Montreal: McGill/Queens University Press. 1991): 6.

<sup>36</sup> Esther Reiter. *Making Fast Food*, 63.

Contrary to Burger King, Gangraker's principle of production was based on quality opposed to quantity.

Never compromise on quality. This is your promise to your customer. From the freshest fruits to the finest cuts of meat, from the taste of the Whopper to our wholesome rolls, quality is what defines our brand. Quality though, is not confined to our products, it must permeate through all that we do.<sup>37</sup>

Fatima Gangraker played an instrumental role in shaping the direction of the menu and the type of food that was served in Cape Town. The Wembley Whopper reflected a particular locally rationalised process of production and mode of consumption. It drew on the idea of a fast food concept of a Whopper but adapted it to the desires of local customers. From the rolls that are baked by the in-house Wembley bakery, to the meat that is sourced from the in-house butcher, it is a network of small businesses that make Whoppers possible. The layers of masala steak, chips, salad, and Whopper sauce are prepared on site and to order. The rolls are different size and consistency to the Burger King Whopper. Waiting time for a Whopper is 30-60 minutes. It is definitely not fast food and other than in name, there is hardly any resemblance between the Wembley Whopper and the Burger King Whopper.

Super Fisheries owner, Rashaad Pandy, ventured on his own into the business of take-aways after working closely with his father in the butcher for many years. It was after the experience of being forcefully removed from Claremont to Landsdown that the circumstances led to the 'invention' of the Gatsby by Pandy. Using what was left over in the shop, chips, bread, polony and *atchar*,

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<sup>37</sup> Abdullah Eshack, Gangraker. *Wembley Echoes*. 30.

unwittingly, Mr Pandy would create a staple that would come to characterise Cape Town's culinary landscape. When asked how Pandy is certain that the invention is his, he replied that 'no one else has come forward to say otherwise.'

Furthermore, the idea of Pandy as the inventor has been reinforced through popular media that circulate and distribute this claim.

Like Gangraker, Pandy grew up in his family business working in his dad's butchery from 1969 to 1974. As an only son, when Pandy decided to open his own fisheries next door to the family butchery, his father was less than thrilled as he had hoped that Pandy would take over the family butchery. Despite this, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 1974, Rashaad Pandy opened his own fisheries, named Super Fisheries. Super Fisheries would later become the unintentional home of what would be called a Gatsby. As Pandy illustrates,

The start of the Gatsby was actually by accident. We were moved from Claremont. My dad bought a plot in Landsdown. That time I had a truck and I got four guys to go and clear the plot. We went to clear the plot and afterwards I told them I'm going to organise them something to eat by the shop. Those years there wasn't cell phones so I forgot to tell them to hold some aside fish and chips because the guys are going to be hungry when we come back. When I came back to the shop there wasn't much left. There was chips left, there was polony and there was *atchar*. Those years there wasn't a long bread, it was a round Portuguese bread. I thought to myself, the easiest way heat up the chips again, cut open the round bread, heat up a couple of polonies, and I took the *atchar*...The *atchar* we got here, my dad showed me how to make it. I put that on. It was a round bread, and I cut it into wedges. And I kept for me also a piece because I was hungry. Then froggy, he was the one who said laanie, this is a smash. This is a Gatsby smash. And I thought to myself, this is nogals not a bad idea. I tasted it and it didn't taste too bad. The next day, I took the bread and put some on the counter. I told the people they must taste it and see if they like it. Everything was positive. The response was positive. So I started putting it on the menu as a Super Gatsby....The

people actually came back to me and said the wedges are difficult to eat, why don't. I make it on the long roll.<sup>38</sup>

The popularization of the Gatsby depended on the acceptance of the culinary offering to customers. With a few minor tweaks in the shape of the role on the advice of the customer, the Gatsby became both a cultural phenomenon and weekend staple within many take-aways on the Cape Flats. It has a specific shape and form that many have adapted as part of their own culinary repertoires. For example, Cosy Corner in Wynberg has taken the form of the Gatsby and made a speciality rump Gatsby. It is pricey, but it is a unique offering that infuses a Cosy Corner remix on the popular food item. There are many variations such as this, which occupy their own place on the Gatsby landscape. Though many may dispute who makes the best Gatsby, there is a general consensus on what constitutes a Gatsby. A Gatsby is a culinary symbol that belongs to all who enjoy it. It is meant to be shared. Except in the case of Food Network Chef Sonja Edridge who attempted to completely reinvent the Gatsby within a eurocentric culinary repertoire for an audience who would generally not frequent a take-aways on the periphery. Edridge attempted to gentrify the Gatsby by using a 'ciabatta loaf, homemade mayonnaise, Asian plum chutney, with deep fried potato wedges and curry.'<sup>39</sup> The gentrified gatsby was met with a public backlash.

Now I know how the lady who first made mrs balls chutney felt when madame stole her recipe. This is called cultural expropriation without compensation. Just watch how this rubbish version ends up on Woolies, foodlovers and checkers shelves. Tsek keep your gourmet Gatsby. We are coming for your land....<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Interview with Rashaad Pandey Owner of Super Fisheries by Tazneem Wentzel. 10th October 2017

<sup>39</sup> Nathan Adams, 'Changes to the humble Gatsby hard to swallow for Capetonians,' *Food and Drink. IOL*. (7<sup>th</sup> March 2018) <<https://www.iol.co.za/lifestyle/food-drink/changes-to-the-humble-Gatsby-hard-to-swallow-for-capetonians-13641802>>

<sup>40</sup> Anthony David Jaftha. Facebook comment in relation to Edridge's video. 2017.

The Gatsby is more than a food item. It is also a relationship between people and place and a form of sociality. For Fatima Pandy the gentrified gatsby whitewashes the role that Super Fisheries played during the liberation struggle.

Uncool...my cousin Rashaad Pandy invented the Gatsby. Yasmina my sister and I worked in Super Fisheries as young girls on the weekends. It must also be noted that when we raised fund for COSAS trips for national meetings, Rashaad Pandy with his generous heart gave generously. Also, when we had to raise money to move young activists out of the country, again we reached out to Rashaad (Boeta) and he always gave generously. Lest we forget the contributions made by many in the pursuit of justice. <sup>41</sup>

From these kinds of responses, the Gatsby is obviously much more than a French loaf with various fillings. The rights to produce a Gatsby are not owned by one particular business. It is a communal intellectual culinary property. Each version has their own unique recipes that have different appeals to different customers. None of these interpretations have been met with the same venom as Edridge's. This is because the preparation of a Gatsby follows a similar process, price, and place. It is made by small businesses on the periphery who have a connection and investment in the area in which they are based. There is a historical relationship of co-authorship and investment on the customer's part as well. The cultural appropriation of the Gatsby by Edridge spoke to a history of culinary appropriation reminiscent of ethnological cookbooks such as Gerber's *The Cape Malays*. The flavours of the Gatsby may vary, but the historical experience, structure and format that infuse its flavour, remain the same.

Without detracting from the number of meals that Super Fisheries prepares daily, comparatively Super Fisheries has a less varied menu than Wembley. Super

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<sup>41</sup> Fatima Pandy. Facebook Comment in relation to Edridge's gentrified Gatsby. 2017.

Fisheries prepares and sells roughly 500 Gatsbys a day. Therefore, there is an ordered process, system and architecture that rationalised the preparation, production and consumption of Gatsbys. The architecture of preparation was influenced by Portuguese fisheries and inspired by the lack of halal take-aways specialising in foods other than curries, salomies, and samoosas. The fish for the Gatsbys are sourced from Pandy's fisheries. The rolls are sourced, (presently) from a fellow small business owner, Mr Dramat who owns Cookies Bakery. The *atchar* is made by Pandy using his father's secret recipe. The take-aways is staffed by approximately 6 to 8 men and women, the majority of who have been working for Pandy for roughly 10 years and more. Together, this small team churns out Cape Town's most popular culinary dish.

Pandy's underlying business ethic has been derived from the wisdom of his father whom he worked for before opening his own shop. Pandy's father emphasised the importance of the customer, the product that you sell to the customer, and how you treat the customer. This can be read in the way Pandy prioritised the tastes and palettes of the customer in defining his menu. By allowing customers to taste and provide feedback on ideas, Pandy developed a business vision based on collaboration. This contrasted with the 1970s American fast food model of scientific management and production of food. Instead, Super Fisheries emerged from a genealogy of British Fish and Chips that was reinterpreted by Portuguese immigrants in Cape Town. This was then accidentally translated into the Gatsby.

In Pandy's description of how he came up with the concept of the Gatsby, he



explained how they were clearing a plot in Landsdown after they had been forcefully displaced from Claremont, and the guys who had been assisting were hungry and needed food. From Landsdown he then went to the Fisheries and made what was to be called a *Gatsby Smash* from the left over chips, rolls, and *atchar*.

In the same way that people refashioned and reinvented themselves their homes and networks on the periphery, the Gatsby was invented from the leftovers of the kitchen. Perhaps it reflected the experience of remaking a life from what was left over that led to the Gatsby becoming a cultural icon. Either way, as ‘visions of ordering contemporary life’, the Gatsby reflected an intimate collaboration between take-aways and customer. The intimacy of this relation and the shared experience was inscribed and made edible and to a certain extent bearable in the formation of the Gatsby.

### **Culinary technologies of co-authoring belonging**

Repackaged home-cooked flavours of the Whopper and the Gatsby reflected a complex network of historical, ‘social, economic, and political rationalisations.’<sup>42</sup> These bread-based food items acquired biographies that were produced symbolically and materially in a series of transformations and authorings. From the wheat to bread, from potatoes to chips, beef to masala steak, ‘from production and preparation to physiological and symbolic consumption, every stage of the food cycle turns food into something else.’<sup>43</sup> Every stage of making and eating

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<sup>42</sup> Priscilla Ferguson. ‘Eating Orders: Markets, Menus, and Meals,’ *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol 77, No 3. (September 2005): pp 679-700.

<sup>43</sup> Priscilla Ferguson. ‘Eating Orders: Markets, Menus, and Meals,’ 680.

halal take-aways is marked by biography. Therefore, applying a conventional biographical approach to the historical production of the Whopper and the Gatsby within a trajectory of birth/origin and death constrains the circuitry layers of historical production to the opening of the shop and the sale of food-items. Instead, the Whopper and the Gatsby acquired a biographical place on the culinary landscape of Athlone and are also marked by a biographies of a community's historical experience.

Earlier in the discussion I showed how the preparation processes of the Whopper and the Gatsby reflected a historically produced social ordering of the world. Furthermore, this process is co-authored and transformative. It is co-authored in the sense that the production and consumption of food items involved a relationship of loyalty and trust between the take-aways and customers. Preparation was transformative in that it changed ingredients and fashioned them into something that was desirable to the customer. These transformations and co-authorings took place in a context of intense political turmoil of the 1970s and 1980s. If take-aways reflected visions of and for social life, what does the popularisation of a mode of consumption and production of Whoppers and Gatsbys reflect in the context of a society subjected to an oppressive apartheid state? I would argue that these commercial enclaves in which business owners and customers collaboratively authored their autonomies and their constraints, were in fact, transgressive spaces of the 1970s to 1990s. The halal take-aways offered a place in which the apartheid state's racialized order for social life could be disregarded and undisciplined through food.

These racial orderings were also echoed in ethnological approaches to South African culinary histories. Cookbooks was one such site that presented a method of preparation and an racialized ordering of how ingredients should be used in the production of ‘traditional’ food. These cookbooks were characteristic of the period and formed part of the cultural project of apartheid. Eurocentric cookbooks acted as extensions of the apartheid disciplinary apparatuses that constituted what traditional was and produced static ideas of race and ethnicity within a racial scale of development. In so doing, cultural agents sought to invent and maintain a hierarchical racial ordering of people through food, by claiming authority on culinary knowledge and silencing the cooks who shared their recipes.

Contrasting this, the creation of the menu within the context of halal take-aways offered a possibility to participate in the exercise of real and symbolic choice. It was in the editing of bread that take-aways infused historical experiences and ideas of autonomy. In the same way that the raw materials of potatoes, flour, and meat were used in remaking and investing in Athlone, forced removals and racial discrimination were the socio-political ingredients that politicised the consumption of goods from black-owned businesses as form of resilience and resistance. This occurred at a time when the apartheid state ‘exhausted’ their manufacturing sector on their white consumer and needed a new black customer to extort capital from.<sup>44</sup> The discriminatory laws of the Group Areas Act and the Immigration Act that strictly regulated the trade of Indian businesses, Indian business owners had already developed a loyal black customer base on the

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<sup>44</sup> Patrick Bond, ‘Introduction: Two economies – or one system of superexploitation’ *Africanus*, (Volume 37, Issue 2, Jan 2007): pp 1-21

peripheries to which they, along with other undesirable races were relegated to. This relationship was coloured with the shared historical experiences of discrimination and distrust of the apartheid state. The co-authored process of establishing a culinary literacy within the take-aways setting created a different kind of vision of social order and culinary belonging that was premised on participation and choice at a particular exchange value, of course.



## Chapter Three

### Biopower and the Wheat-Bread Industry

The bread-based take-aways industry that developed in Cape Town around the Whopper and the Gatsby in the 1970s needs to be understood within a genealogy of bread production and consumption in South Africa. At this time the Whopper and the Gatsby emerged as statements of urban independence on the part of a displaced working class that looked-for mobile food forms that drew upon ideas of home. However, at the turn of the twentieth century bread production and consumption had emerged as a form of biopower and the assertion of state authority. A new wheat industry received state subsidy in order to diminish reliance on imports. Between the 1930s and the 1960s bread was used as a nutritional strategy and political technology to address the native question and the poor white problem.

In February 2013 Dr Mandisa Mbali and Dr Handri Walters unwittingly opened a door to a cupboard in the Sasol Museum that exposed the ideological skeletons of Stellenbosch University's institutional past. The contents of the cupboard included human remains such as a skull, hair and eye samples. With this, classifications instruments were also found that belonged to the leading Nazi eugenicist of the 1930s, Eugen Fischer. This served as a direct relation between the University and Nazi Germany, a relationship that the University had for a long time suffered amnesia about.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mandisa Mbali, Handri Walters, 'Rethinking Maties Apartheid Past.' *Mail and Guardian Online*. (18<sup>th</sup> June 2013) <<https://mg.co.za/article/2013-06-08-rethinking-maties-apartheid-past>>

The significance of uncovering the institutional ‘skeletons in the closet’ was that it brought to light the spectres of scientific racism that formed part of the institutional memory and discourse of the University. It was poignant that Mbali and Walters, lecturers of the undergraduate medical anthropology course, uncovered the macabre role that the University played in the production of scientific racist discourse. The collection of skulls, hair, and eye samples served as physical evidence for supposed racial differentiation. This formed part of a hierarchical racial order that was a systemic discourse that infused all spheres of society. The scientific racism of apartheid drew upon these ideas and operated through a myriad of methods. Bread production was one such avenue.

Bread is a historically produced commodity that links producers, consumers, and the state in dynamic and illuminating ways.<sup>2</sup> Emerging from a genealogy of research, subsidisation and regulation, bread production was inextricably bound up with the institutionalisation of colonial and apartheid legislation. The production of biological racial categories was operationalized through food management and dietary prescriptions as a technique of biopower. The ‘native question’ and later the ‘poor white problem’ were social ills around which the political project of racialization was rationalised through bread production and consumption between 1900 and 1970.

### **Flour, Water, Yeast: The makings of a permanent settlement**

The wild grasses he metamorphosed into cultivated wheat, cultivated rye, and all the other grains that became the great nourishes of mankind. These new varieties have fruit which clings so firmly to the pedicel that it can be removed only by trampling, shaking, or beating-

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<sup>2</sup> Benjamin Stanwix, ‘Wheat , Bread , and the Role of the State in Twentieth Century South Africa,’ *Economic & Social History Graduate Workshop*, 2012.

that is, by what we call threshing. The threshing floor is the battlefield between the tenacity of the stalk and men's hunger for flour.<sup>3</sup>

The combination of flour, water, yeast, and the chemical reaction between these humble ingredients has occupied a symbolic and material place in history. In South Africa, the first wheat was planted by commanding officer of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) Jan van Riebeeck in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Wheat cultivation and other crops were important sources of nutrition for the newly established Dutch refreshment station at the Cape. The refreshment station was never intended to become a permanent place of habitation. Instead, the objective of the station was to supply passing Company ships with a fresh supply of food and various other services. Thus, a small garden was cultivated as a means of sowing the seeds of survival along an arduous and lucrative spice route to the east.

The cultivation of wheat for baking was a political and economic concern. It was carefully administered and every bushel was accounted for by the Dutch administration. The approach of the Dutch administration was to restrict and regulate the sale of wheat to avoid the establishment of a permanent settlement and limit outside trade. Fourie illustrates the limitations imposed on Company servants in the early Dutch settlement.

Jan van Riebeeck, released 9 Company servants to become free burghers, farming for private gain but with severe economic barriers – farmers were only allowed to sell to the Company at prices set by them, manufacturing was prohibited and a set of monopoly contracts (*pachts*) was imposed that permeated all sectors of the tiny economy.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Heinrich E. Jacob, *Six Thousand Years of Bread: Its Holy and Unholy History*, (New York, Doubleday, Doran And Company, 1945).

<sup>4</sup> Johan Fourie, 'The Wealth of the Cape Colony : Measurements from Probate Inventories The Wealth of the Cape Colony : Measurements,' *Working Paper 268*. Stellenbosch University. February (2012).

The early colonisers were lower ranking soldiers and sailors with very little capital. As a result they were unable to produce enough supplies for both the colony and the passing ships. To aid the production in the colony, the Dutch government granted tools, loans, and seeds to the burghers.<sup>5</sup> The assistance and contributions by the Dutch authorities facilitated the expansion of the Cape colony into the surrounding districts. Robert Ross suggests that agricultural improvements, the increased cultivation of wheat, and the importation of slaves were critical to fostering a more stable yield of crops. Furthermore, this relied substantially on slave labour. Artisan slaves were engaged in numerous workshops in and town.

From 1690 the wine and wheat cultivation were the earliest formations of agricultural organization, expansion, and permanent settlement. This was based on assistance, protection, and a slave labour force that the Dutch administration provided. After the second British invasion of the colony in 1806 and the removal of the Dutch authority, a new market opened up for local production that facilitated the economic wealth of colonialists. Grain production increased, particularly in the cultivation of barley, oats and rye.<sup>6</sup> Wheat production, on the other hand, continued to struggle to ‘adapt’ to a foreign landscape and succumbed to bad weather and plant disease.

The uncovering of mineral wealth in the 1860s to the 1880s in South Africa fundamentally altered the landscape and it quickly became an alluring place of

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<sup>5</sup> Johan Fourie, 'The Wealth of the Cape Colony : Measurements from Probate Inventories The Wealth of the Cape Colony : Measurements,' Working Paper 268. Stellenbosch University. February (2012).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*



untapped wealth. In addition to this, 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain was witnessing the birth of its own modern, industrialising nation-state. It was on this backdrop that exercise of colonial power was accompanied by an increased ‘intellectual curiosity’ and production of ‘colonial knowledge which became closely bound up with processes of colonial self-discovery.’<sup>7</sup>

The discovery of diamonds in Griqualand West in 1867 and gold in the Witwatersrand in 1886, repositioned South Africa as an economically attractive space for British colonisers.<sup>8</sup> South Africa became a space in which colonial identity inserted and asserted itself as a permanent authoritative presence. The prospect of gold and diamonds lured large numbers of people locally and internationally to South Africa. Urbanising clusters began to develop as a result of the influx of people’s and the coercive reshaping of black labour as mine workers.

The mineral ‘revolution’ of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the accompanying population spike presented a new set of infrastructural and administrative challenges. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Doctor George Turner, a colonial medical officer from the cape illuminated the issues that newly urbanising towns faced.

...preventable diseases are far too prevalent and prevail chiefly in the towns, and unless Municipalities are granted and exercise proper powers over the water supply, drainage, and building, the mortality from these causes will continue to increase with the growth of the towns.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Saul Dubow, ‘Earth History, Natural History, and Prehistory at the Cape, 1860-1875.’ *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, (Vol 46, No 1, January 2004): pp. 107-133.

<sup>8</sup> Charles Simkins and Elizabeth van Heyningen, ‘Fertility, Mortality, and Migration in the Cape Colony, 1891-1904.’ *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 22, No 1. (1989.): pp 79-111.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

Added to infrastructural challenges, meeting the consumption demand with a stable food supply was another difficulty and major factor that contributed to the mortality rates. For an emerging industrialising colony, fresh fruit, protein and carbohydrates were important sources of both stamina and survival. In response to an unstable food supply, agricultural research began to develop wheat-breeding programmes from 1891. These programmes began to develop cultivars of wheat that were resilient to weather and disease. The concern with wheat production was an institutional and policy priority since dietary instability was affected by the availability of foodstuffs that fluctuated seasonally.<sup>10</sup> Unlike rye and oats that flourished, wheat struggled to adapt to the environmental conditions of the Cape. The fluctuating availability of food and poor diets resulted in poor productivity.

The emergence of a British Medical Association in the Cape in 1891 and the accompanying Medical and Pharmacy Act in 1893 reflected a shift towards the professionalization of an emerging health sector in the Cape.<sup>11</sup> With the professionalization of medical care and the high mortality rates, medical research focussed primarily on the newly urbanising health and sanitation issues faced in the Cape colony. Malnutrition and the outbreaks of diseases such as the scurvy epidemic in the early 1900s and the smallpox epidemic in 1901 prompted early nutritional investigation and research. Diana Wylie suggests that the pervasiveness of the belief in the deterioration of South Africans as a consequence of diet was used to ‘explain a wide variety of maladies,’ to the point that it might

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<sup>10</sup> Diana Wylie, *Starving on a Full Stomach. Hunger and the Triumph of Cultural Racism in Modern South Africa*, (University Press of Virginia. Charlottesville and London. 2001).

<sup>11</sup> Charles Simkins and Elizabeth van Heyningen, ‘Fertility, Mortality, and Migration in the Cape Colony, 1891-1904,’ pp. 79-111.

better be called ‘an intellectual syndrome.’ Furthermore, from 1900 to 1930, scurvy gained ‘the lion’s share of attention from nutritional researchers.’<sup>12</sup>

It is within this frame that the pervasiveness of poor nutrition became a threat to an industrializing administration. Diagnosis and prescription of dietary intake were key methods of intervening in and preventing the spread of disease. Bread was one of the staples that were reconfigured alongside the intake of maize to make room for a ‘balanced’ sustainable dietary intervention. The institutional, political and economic history of bread reflected shifting political orientations which can be read in how bread was administered and consumed in the early 20th century. Bread in its material form and symbolic value was ‘authored’ through a series of agricultural producers, experts and consumers. It is through these networks of these authorings that bread acquired its particular institutional biopolitical biography and served as an extension of political and economic interests of the administration.

### **The native question and scientific nutrition discourse 1900-1938**

Prior to the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910, wheat already enjoyed a degree of administrative protection. This was done to foster local production by limiting the importation of foreign wheat flour. Ten years after the discovery of South Africa’s mineral deposits, wheat harvests remained poor and developing a resilient and adaptable wheat cultivar became a pressing agricultural concern. As a result, the first wheat varietal breeding programmes and research were conducted at the Stellenbosch Agricultural School in 1891. Approximately

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<sup>12</sup> Diana Wylie, ‘Starving on a Full Stomach’, pp 130-131.

10-12 years later, Johannes Henock Neethling became the lead researcher at the school and the central figure in expanding the field of wheat breeding research. Neethling was credited with the development of 95% of the wheat varieties from 1915 to 1956.

Selected by General P.W. Botha as one of eight candidates to further his studies in agriculture, Neethling completed his undergraduate degree in agricultural science at Cornell University, and was further educated in genetics in Germany and Amsterdam. Neethling's knowledge and expertise was credited as fostering '[t]he existence and well-being of the small grain industry in South Africa amidst poor environmental conditions and the ravages of diseases.'<sup>13</sup> Neethling became the first professor of the department of genetics at Stellenbosch University. The Wheat Board monumentalised his contribution to scientific research in 1949 by renaming the Welgevellen Experimental Station in his honour.<sup>14</sup>

The agricultural developments in wheat breeding emerged in tandem with the proliferation of nutritional research on urbanising mining centres as part of a global trend towards the production of scientific knowledge on the proper management of food and diet. Unlike the U.S. and Europe, South Africa presented its own demographic dynamic. The black majority presented a particular challenge to the administration that needed to be reconfigured within the modernising aspirations of the administration. Nutrition became a vehicle through which the 'native question' could be addressed.

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<sup>13</sup> Stellenbosch University, Johannes Henock Neethling Biography, Genetics Department History. <<https://www.sun.ac.za/english/faculty/agri/genetics/about-us/history>>

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*

As was the case in Van Riebeeck landing in 1652, the outbreak of scurvy resurfaced as a threat to the health of the miners and the mining industry in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Diana Wylie sketches the impact of scurvy in the mines by suggesting that:

‘[b]etween November 1902 and April 1903, 12 percent of the miners, or 186 men, who died on the Witwatersrand gold mines succumbed to scurvy, prompting the first nutritional research in South African history’<sup>15</sup>

The impact of scurvy on the body was such that it caused the body to bleed easily and lead to the body haemorrhaging from itself. Thus, mine labourers affected by scurvy were susceptible to death and death posed a great liability to the emerging mining companies. The nutritional welfare of mine labourers were important economically for mining companies and more generally to the industrialising visions of an emerging state. Wylie suggests that sick workers, were seen as ‘costly ciphers’ that ‘depended on the support of their employer.’ It was a result of these conditions that ‘modern nutritional science was born.’<sup>16</sup>

The nutritional welfare of miners were of such concern that in 1913, the same year that the 1913 Natives Land Act was passed, the Chamber of Mining invited Colonel William Crawford Gorgas to investigate the high death rates within the mines. Gorgas was an internationally renowned expert on disease control who appeared like a medical pioneer on the frontier of infectious disease. He embodied the triumph of science over adversity, and was celebrated in scientific magazines:

The suppression of yellow fever, malaria and dysentery in the Panama Canal Zone is one of the triumphs of modern medicine, and General Gorgas, under whose direction the work was accomplished,

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<sup>15</sup> Diana Wylie, ‘Starving on a Full Stomach,’ pp. 34-35.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

symbolises more completely perhaps than anyone else the control of disease by science and the applications of pathology.<sup>17</sup>

The scientific impetus that characterised agricultural, medical and nutritional research in the early 20th century reflected an industrialising attitude prevalent in both the U.S. and Britain. Leading South African scientists in the fields of wheat, maize, and medicine were sent overseas to universities in the U.S. Britain, Netherlands and Germany as intellectual investments. The intention of these investments was to ‘cultivate’ a research paradigm to promote agricultural production and nutritional values. These global investments formed a discursive connection that was directly influenced and shaped by eurocentric ideas about food and health. Experts in the fields of medicine and nutrition were often invited to investigate South African problems such as the case of Dr William Gorgas (Crown Mines Company) and Dr A J Orenstein whose visit resulted in public health reforms within the mines.<sup>18</sup> These kinds of connection become more visible in the political construction and ideological foundation of bread from 1930 to 1948.

In the historical making of the modern loaf of bread in the U.S. Bobrow-Strain suggests that; ‘[b]read was – as it had been for millennia – brownish, heterogeneous, unruly’ and ‘the product of unstandardized artisan labour’. However, ‘by 1900 the revolution had begun’ and ‘between 1850 and 1900 the number of commercial bakeries grew by 700 percent.’<sup>19</sup> A new ‘system and order’

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<sup>17</sup> The Scientific Monthly, ‘William Crawford Gorgas,’ *The American Association for the Advancement of Science*, Vol 11, No 2. (2018): pp 187-190.

<sup>18</sup> J.P.V van Niekerk, ‘The Health of Miners.’ *South African Medical Journal* (Vol 103, No 1, 2013): pp 3-4.

<sup>19</sup> Aaron Bobrow-Strain, ‘White Bread Biopolitics,’ pp 265-290.

had reformed ‘small bakeshops into model palaces of automatic baking’ into ‘uniformly, white, sliced, and modern bread.’<sup>20</sup> The shift in bread baking from the home to the factory was popularised through the dissemination of hygiene and nutritional discourses. Invisible germs omnipresent in the home and in food were seen as intimate threats to survival and necessitated the management and maintenance of hygiene standards within the home. The technological progress that factory bought bread offered was that it was uncontaminated and made within hygienic and controlled environments. The lab and its hygiene standards became the norms and values which the home needed to orientate itself towards in practise.

In South Africa, ‘the science of healthy eating’ was underpinned by a similar scientific orientation as was the case in the U.S. In addition, the nutritional reformulation of diet was also used as a means to construct and reinforce biological differences of race. The dominant perception was that it was necessary to ‘instruct future generations of [Africans] to overcome ignorant dietary habits of their forebears,’ as a means of civilising the ‘native’ in scientifically based food ways.<sup>21</sup> The production of bread that was imbued with the above scientific population regulations, appeared in stark contrast to the ‘ignorant dietary habits’ of the past. Rationalised production reflected the ‘enterprising’ propensity of colonialists towards ‘efficiency’ and ‘progress.’ Black labour had to be ‘educated to eat a cheap, balanced diet.’<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Diana Wylie, ‘Starving on a Full Stomach’. pp 33-35.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

The efficient distribution of food staples according to the predetermined caloric intake rationalised a pattern of consumption for black labour. Subsequently dietary prescriptions were implemented which entailed a balanced diet that provided enough nutrition to survive and to be declared physically healthy, but not enough to feel satisfied. This robbed the social, cultural, and traditional values of preparation, eating and sharing food. It removed the affirmative quality of food consumption. Reshaping the diet and controlling the consumption habits of black labour were part of a political project of repositioning consumption to suit the production practises and values of an industrialising South Africa. Prescribed nutritional practice emphasised scientifically based nourishment and consumption, opposed to pleasure, satisfaction or enjoyment. Reforming the 'African' diet reflected a method of changing land tenure and peoples relationship with land, food, and selfhood.

The 'African' diet was both produced and framed through discourses of health and disease as a site for reforming and managing a population. The 'African' diet was invented and stereotyped as a homogenous and insufficient. This characterisation manufactured the idea of an 'African' network of food ways and food management that was inefficient in being able to feed 'Africans.'

In the same way that cultural agents such as I.D. Du Plessis invented the idea of the 'Malay' as an ethnic, docile and static category for the cultural justification of apartheid, the oversimplification and homogenisation of the 'African' diet, served to validate the idea that 'Africans' did not have 'sophisticated food ways' and were 'savages' on the culinary and nutritional scale of evolution. Framing the



concept of the ‘African’ diet in this way operated in a similar vein to racial index cards of eye colour, nose shape, and hair type which ascribed categories and types to behaviours.

The prescription of diet through ‘dignified’ consumption, presented a set of nutritional norms and possibilities that modernity offered. Based on racial Darwinist perceptions of what different races consumed and should be consuming, the diets of African labour shifted from ‘porridge and milk [and] was replaced by tea, bread, and sugar.’<sup>23</sup> This was crafted by authorities that prescribed bread and other staples as part of the institutional diet of workers. The consumption of bread was actively encouraged through nutritional propaganda in the mines by medical practitioners, who suggested that,

‘[Africans] must be educat[ed] to eat a substantial meal before going underground and also to eat something—a loaf of bread, for example—in the middle of the shift.’<sup>24</sup>

Consuming bread produced in the emerging Union of South Africa, was constructed as a matter of nutritional value to which black labour should subscribe. The other benefit of the having bread as a rationed staple was that it created a guaranteed market for the production of bread to be directed to.

Within the wheat-bread production chain, major developments were being made in of wheat breeding programmes. After the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910, Unie17, Unie28, Unie31, Unie52 and Unie81 were developed and released from the Elsenberg Research Station as part of Neethling’s research.

Unie 52 became the dominating cultivar between 1917 and 1927. This was

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<sup>23</sup>Diana Wylie. ‘Starving on a Full Stomach,’ 34.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*

followed by the release of ‘Farrertrou, Koalisie, Stirling, Sonop and Eleksie between 1933 and 1958.’<sup>25</sup>

The wheat breeding programmes of this era were ‘focused on adaptability to the new environment.’<sup>26</sup> This included, ‘resistance to stem rust, periodic droughts and wind damage.’<sup>27</sup> The breeding programmes were directly related to the political events of the time such as ‘Unie’(1910), which marked the founding of the Union of South Africa. With the growing demand for bread and the increasing centrality of bread production to national stamina, farmers in the Western Cape Region agreed to form a co-operative called Wesgraan in 1912. In 1920 Wesgraan Co-Operative became known as Bokomo.

Wheat conglomerates came together and endeavoured to monopolise the industry in order to ‘stabilize the wheat price and consolidate production.’<sup>28</sup> This followed on from the agreement with the state to protect the local wheat-bread industry by placing a limitation on the foreign importation of wheat in the 1920s. Sourcing the critical ingredient for bread to rise, yeast was another difficulty which bread production faced. Yeast had to be imported from Europe. One person, Daniel Mills revolutionised this and became ‘the catalyst for the birth of one of the world’s leading yeast manufacturers.’<sup>29</sup> In 1923, Mills opened the first yeast factory in Maitland, Cape Town. The establishment of this yeast factory

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<sup>25</sup> Charity R. Nhemachena and Johann Kirsten, 'A Historical Assessment of Sources and Uses of Wheat Varietal Innovations in South Africa,' *South African Journal of Science*, Vol 113, No 3–4 (2017): pp 1–8.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*<sup>28</sup> Benjamin Stanwix, 'Wheat, Bread ,and the Role of the State in Twentieth Century South Africa,' *Economic & Social History Graduate Workshop*, 2012.

<sup>28</sup> Benjamin Stanwix, 'Wheat, Bread ,and the Role of the State in Twentieth Century South Africa,' *Economic & Social History Graduate Workshop*, 2012.

<sup>29</sup> Anchor Yeast. 'Why Bread Matters,' *Bakers Forum Newsletter*. Autumn 2017.

represented another step in the direction of a self-sustaining wheat-bread chain of industrial production. A key ingredient in the chemical reaction for making bread rise could now be locally sourced. The switch to factory-produced yeast reflected the broader shift to dehydrated yeast and mastery over its previous temperamental, 'unruly and organic nature.'<sup>30</sup>

After World War One (1918) and in response to the Great Depression (1929), the Union institutionalised these interventions in the form of the Marketing Act in 1937. This legislated the monopolisation of the wheat-bread chain of production and gave sole authority to the Wheat Board to regulate all aspects of bread production. This included, fertiliser for growth, milling of flour, baking techniques, oven management, packaging and distribution. Stanwix illustrates the extent of the Wheat Board control by suggesting that,

Beginning in 1938 the Board controlled the import and export of wheat and wheaten products; prohibited the sale of wheat to any person other than the Board and its agents; prohibited the sale of wheat, flour, and bread for prices other than those fixed by the Board; enforced restricted registration of millers and bakers, and even regulated the size of bakers' ovens.<sup>31</sup>

The rules and regulations for producing bread were strictly monitored and controlled, giving very little room for small independent bakeries to exist.

Government intervention in agricultural processes through scientific management for social and political welfare was a common feature both nationally and internationally.

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<sup>30</sup>Aaron Bobrow-Strain, 'White Bread Biopolitics,' pp 265-290.

<sup>31</sup> Benjamin Stanwix, 'Wheat, Bread, and the Role of the State in Twentieth Century South Africa'.

The period between 1860 and 1938 described above, saw the rationalisation of wheat-bread production chains, the emergence urbanised labour force, and the early industrialising nation. These socio economic developments also saw the proliferation of nutritional surveys that sought to diagnose the causes of disease and prescribe interventions through food and ‘healthy’ eating. Wylie suggests that it was common for white experts of the time to hold the belief that,

‘[i]f black people resisted the lessons of modern science and failed to manage their land successfully or to eat intelligently, they were making themselves outcasts from modernity.’<sup>32</sup>

It was through nutritional science, agricultural science, and social scientific research that the ‘correct’ ‘dignified’ diet was constructed and this became part of reconstituting and resolving the ‘the native question.’

### **The poor white problem and bread production 1932 - 1970**

The period of 1860 to 1938 was characterised by an embedded cultural racism through which the authorities sought to resolve the ‘native question’ through a variety of techniques such as the food management. After the newly established Union of South Africa (1910), concerns from philanthropic organisations and government officials were mounting regarding the poor white problem. The poor white problem, like the native question was historically produced and scientifically conceptualised to invoke a series of policy interventions. The concern about white poverty saw the launch of a series of inquiries that marked a shift away from creating a ‘dignified’ black labour force (1910-1920), to legislating hierarchical racial protections and privileges for white South Africans.

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<sup>32</sup> Diana Wylie, ‘Starving on a Full Stomach,’ 4.

In 1932, the report of the Carnegie Commission of Inquiry into white poverty brought attention to and possible solutions for the poor-white problem.

As developments and rationalisations were being made in the adaptability and resilience of wheat, nutritional surveys suggested that 'white poverty' remained wide spread. According to *The British Medical Journal* in 1933, the poor white population of the Union was approximated at 300 000 of a total European population of 2,000,000. Furthermore, the economic state of poor whites were attributed to the 'inadequate adjustment to modern economic conditions.'<sup>33</sup>

The mortality of African workers within the mining compounds was similarly explained. Other contributing factors were problems of adaptability and unrestricted competition between races. According to the Pretoria Correspondent,

The unrestricted competition on the labour market between the unskilled Bantu and the poor white, and the low wages the European then receives; create conditions of poverty, which have a demoralizing effect on the Europeans.<sup>34</sup>

The cultural racism that underpinned both the native question and the poor-white problem was framed through supposed nutritional deficiencies. The 'native question and 'poor-white problem' were diagnosed as medical problems that if effectively treated, could be 'cured.' The required treatment was government intervention. Earlier efforts to modernise 'native' diets to create healthy productive labour had proved 'successful' in reforming land and people for industrialization objectives.

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<sup>33</sup> Pretoria Correspondent, 'The Poor white problem.' *The British Medical Journal*, (Vol. 2, No. 3788 August 12, 1933): pp 296-297.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

The poor white problem became a cause for national concern. Among those affected,

[S]chool children in the Transvaal, including those who, besides being poor were suffering from malaria. The investigation seemed to indicate poverty and unsatisfactory diet generally had more detrimental effect on nutrition than malaria which occurred early in the year.... The conditions of poverty and ignorance led to lack of food and to wrong diet; these weaken the resistance of the poor white to disease and reduce his working power.<sup>35</sup>

It was 'improper', 'shameful', and 'unnatural' for white South Africans, who were deemed racially superior to be subjected to the same conditions of employment and wages as black workers. The 'demoralising' effects on the white worker and the squalid living conditions of poor whites were taken up as a moral cause by the Dutch Reformed Church and closely aligned government agencies such as the Department of Agriculture.

The Dutch Reformed Church played a vital role in spearheading this campaign by organising a series of conferences dating from 1893 in Cradock, Stellenbosch and Bloemfontein.<sup>36</sup> One of the important conferences organised before the Carnegie Commission meeting in Cradock in 1916 included government officials, professors from the Stellenbosch Theologians, and D.F. Malan, then editor of *Die Burger*.<sup>37</sup> The wide representation that was included in the discussion regarding 'white poverty' showed the breadth of the concern and high levels of sectorial mobilization. One of the most important outcomes of this conference was that the

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Robert Vosloo. 'The Dutch Reformed Church and the poor white problem in the wake of the first Carnegie Report (1932).' *Studia Historiae Ecclesasticae*, Vol, 29, No 2. (December 2013): pp 19-32.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

parameters of the category 'poor white' were outlined. This gave shape and form to the 'problem' in which poor whites were becoming native.

As with the 'native question,' the poor white issue became a moral and political problem that needed be resolved through scientific management. After calls to investigate had come from various sides, the Dutch Reformed Church, The Carnegie Corporation appointed two sociologists to conduct the investigation.<sup>38</sup> In 1932, this research was published as the Carnegie Report in which one volume was specifically dedicated to nutrition.

The problem of poverty needed to be addressed through careful calculation and from the data; a trajectory of economic upliftment and racial protection could be embarked upon. Alongside these developments, the wheat breeding programmes in Stellenbosch celebrated the release of the new cultivar called 'Stirling' which reflected South Africa's departure from the gold standard in 1932. 'Stirling' was characterised as having 'had the greatest impact on wheat production in the Western Cape' due to its 'resistance to stem rust' inherited from previous cultivars, as well as its 'adaptability and quality.'<sup>39</sup> As breakthroughs in adaptable, disease resistant wheat were being made, so too were protections and privileges for white South Africans being implemented.

The significance of the Carnegie Report was that the report outlined a diagnosis and prescription for white poverty along racial lines of inferiority and superiority. In the same way that the wheat-bread chain of production enjoyed protection and

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<sup>38</sup> Robert Vosloo, 6.

<sup>39</sup> Charity R. Nhemachena and Johann Kirsten, ' pp 1–8.

investment for survival encoded in the Marketing Act of 1937, the poor white problem was investigated and addressed similarly using a scientific discourse and biopolitics of race. However, with advent of World War Two (1939), the short-lived protection was supplanted by wartime restrictions. On the 5th May 1941, '[w]hite bread was officially withdrawn from production, and the so-called 'standard' (or wartime) loaf announced.'<sup>40</sup>

The food supplies in South Africa were rationed by the National Supplies Control Board (NSCB). This board was established particularly for the purpose of implementing the Wartime Measures Act. Albertyn suggests that the primary concern of the NSCB was to determine commodity supplies, the productive capacity of industries, and to prevent 'profiteering of producers' during the war effort.<sup>41</sup> Within this context of rations, the Wheat Board decided to conserve supplies of wheat by increasing the bran content. The frugal bread production practises imposed under conditions of war took the form of the 'national loaf' or 'war time loaf.' The new loaf was 'coarser and darker than traditional brown or whole-wheat' bread in an effort to stretch the wheat supplies. The loaf was described as 'mouldy-looking and grey in colour' and tasted like 'damp sawdust' with 'gelatinous blobs in its texture.'<sup>42</sup>

The British Ministry of Food controlled the supply of rations within South Africa and other countries to sustain the war effort. The import of food was limited in order to 'conserve shipping space' for defence purposes. As a Dominion under

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<sup>40</sup> Benjamin Stanwix. 'Wheat, Bread, and the role of the State in Twentieth Century South Africa,' 8.

<sup>41</sup> Yolandi Albertyn. 'Upsetting the Applecourt: Government and Food Control in the Union of South Africa during World War II c. 1939-1948.' MA Thesis. Stellenbosch University. 2014. 10.

<sup>42</sup> Yolandi Albertyn, 'Upsetting the Applecourt,' 46.



British influence the South African wartime diet was fundamentally configured along these lines through import controls and through the close administration and accounting of food supplies were implemented. The impact of wartime controls permeated into the home. In 1946, baking biscuits and cakes in the home was outlawed. In addition to this, the government forbade the sale of bread between 3pm and 4am and also imposed bread-free Wednesdays.<sup>43</sup>

The measures of austerity that were implemented during and after the war became a source of dissatisfaction towards the Smuts administration in the post-war years. Many Afrikaners felt that South Africa should not have been involved in both World War One and Two, and felt a sharp resentment towards British administration after the South African War in 1902. The National Party capitalised on the discontent and mobilised their campaign around ‘bread and butter’ politics that spoke directly to the grumblings of disgruntled Afrikaners. In 1947, leading up to the election, bread surfaced as a metaphor for an uncompromising administration that would serve the needs of the worker, particularly the white worker. In 1948, the National Party came to power by a narrow majority. The previous restrictions on consumption, the use of flour, and the sale of white bread were replaced by a new political horizon. Bread was central in this new political frame. National Party pamphlets made this connection:

The National Party takes care of the worker. Here is the proof: There is bread, white bread, brown bread, that takes care of the worker’s health. To keep the price of bread low for our workers the National Party pays a subsidy out of State funds.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Benjamin Stanwix, ‘Wheat, Bread, and the Role of the State in Twentieth Century South Africa.’ 10.

<sup>44</sup> The Pamphlet was located in the (House of Assembly, Debates, Hansard, Vol. 67. 1948a), Cited in Benjamin Stanwix’s Paper. ‘Wheat, Bread, and the Role of the State in Twentieth Century South Africa’

The historic moment was reflected in wheat breeding programmes. The release of the cultivars ‘Eleksie’(1948) and ‘Hoopvol’ (1948) was a historic moment in wheat breeding programmes. This coincided with the National Party coming to power, a moment that marked the beginning of apartheid. The availability of white bread on the shelves became a symbol of success and a metaphor for freedom from British influence and wartime restrictions. Triumphantly, bread was showcased as the trophy of a new era of administration. Connections were drawn in parliament between white rule and white bread:

[t]he hon. member says that we made fine promises to the people in connection with white bread etc. We promised them a white civilisation [and] I just want to say to the hon. member that he can expect a completely white policy from this side.<sup>45</sup>

Nutrition was constructed as a national priority that entailed subsidisation and protection for producers and white consumers. Through a process of urbanisation, the growing nutritional demands of black labour and the affordability of bread, bread became a staple. The unintended consequence of maintaining a low price for white bread was that it allowed all races to have access to the staple. The shift to bread as a staple was in part due to the rising price of maize that did not enjoy the same historical government protection as wheat.

The bread subsidy was never intended to benefit black consumers, and it became a cause of concern. It was believed that white tax money should be used for the protection and well being of white citizens. Attempts were made to discipline black consumers back into their ‘appropriate’ diet that was conceived as maize-

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

based. Black consumption of white bread transgressed the racial hierarchy that had been outlined by the apartheid government. White bread was meant for white people. Maize was meant for black people. The emerging concerns of black bread consumption reflected a shift away from the nutritional popularisation and propaganda drive to encourage bread consumption in the 1920s.

Dr. Karl Bremer, the Minister of Health at the time, sought to actively reinstate the consumption boundary by developing what was known as the ‘Bremer Loaf’ in 1953. The ‘Bremer Loaf’ was fortified with various nutrients and included ingredients such as ‘groundnut meal, buttermilk powder, skimmed milk powder, and calcium carbonate.’<sup>46</sup> The loaf was designed and packaged by the Department of Agriculture and distributed to hospitals and feeding schemes in schools and prisons. Initially well received, the Bremer Loaf was later met with suspicion by black consumers and was renamed ‘apartheid bread.’

Technological advances, the monopolisation of the wheat-bread industry combined with the protection that government offered agricultural producers, fostered a ‘golden era’ of production and consumption. This was consecrated in festivals such as the tercentenary of the Jan van Riebeeck festival in 1952 that formed part of a genealogy of state spectacles that reinforced the ideas of racial hierarchy. Similar to the nutritional scales of health and disease, the lineage of South Africa was depicted within a linear scale of evolution from savagery to civilisation.<sup>47</sup> However, with increased political constriction of black South

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<sup>46</sup>Benjamin Stanwix, ‘Wheat, Bread, and the role of the State in Twentieth Century South Africa.’

<sup>47</sup>Witz Leslie, Minkley Gary, Rassool Ciraj, ‘South Africa and the spectacle of public pasts: heritage, public histories and post anti-apartheid South Africa’ in *Unsettled Histories: Making South African Public Pasts*. (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2017).

Africans and the imposition of the Immorality Act (1950), The Group Areas Act (1950), the Population Registration Act (1950), the Bantu Education Act (1953), the political situation was unstable and volatile. As South Africa clung to its ‘unfashionable’ racist ethos, it was increasingly economically isolated. Thus, the previous protections that were offered to investments into agricultural development and racial separation became costly to maintain. The decline in global markets and the increased expenditure that was dedicated to national security resulted in an

As markets slowed in the 1970s and the price of bread increased, another phenomena was taking root on the periphery of Cape Town. This period marked the development and popularisation of the Whopper and the Gatsby. Reformation of the wheat-bread industry began to loom on the horizon, as commissions of inquiries were once again assembled to decide the future direction of the industry.

### **Diet as a category of intervention**

Michel Foucault has suggested that diet itself was a fundamental means through which human behaviour can be understood. Diet was part of how people managed their existence and how the state managed its population. Food and its categories were part of the formation of forms of subjection.<sup>48</sup>

The commercial production, distribution and consumption of white bread in South Africa from 1860 to 1980 reflected a network of technologies and discourses that were involved in the production of categories for racial separation. The symbolic

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<sup>48</sup>Michel Foucault. *The History of Sexuality, Volume 2: The Use of Pleasure*. (1990. New York: Vintage).

and material value ascribed to white bread was not static. In the 1900s bread was prescribed as part of the diet for black labour as part of a process to reform black South African's into 'dignified' labour. In 1948, white bread was monumentalised as a trophy marking the success and prospect of the new apartheid administration.

In both instances, diet was a category through which the 'native question' and later 'the poor white problem' were articulated in biopolitical terms. The emergence of a peculiar form of scientific discourse was an apparatus through which various problems about labour and citizenship were articulated. The scientific production of knowledge and management of food advocated by an assemblage of 'experts' such as doctors, farmers, and scientists, produced dietary scales for optimum health and nutrition which was later explicitly connected to racial hierarchies of consumption.

The mining compound was arguably one of the earliest laboratories for establishing the most economically efficient ratio of food and health. With the outbreak of disease, the mortality rates of productive labour were an economic concern to mine owners. The result of the concern was a series of nutritional inquiries and the appointment of mining medical officers to oversee the overall health of miners that ensured their productive stamina. In addition to this, racial Darwinist ideas of evolution characteristic of the period configured diet, race and dignity in a peculiarly South African way. Diet was seen as a method for 'dignifying' labour in production and consumption, as well as a prescription for the overarching 'native question.' This was further problematized and polarised against the 'poor white problem,' which manifested itself in the medicalization of

competition between black and white workers. Inter-racial competition for employment was seen as having a demoralizing effect on both the racial respectability and the overall health of white workers. Diet was a category through which the state operationalized race.

Bread played a particular role in this operationalization. As a staple on the states prescribed 'menu,' the cultivation and proliferation of agricultural, medical, and social research on nutrition reflected the biopower of the state in the 'calculated management of life' and the transformation of people through food.<sup>49</sup> Nally suggests that,

the pauper becomes will be converted into the sturdy labourer; the prisoner will be rehabilitated; savage populations will be civilized; wastelands will be transformed into productive environments.<sup>50</sup>

The historical meanings of bread in all its variations shifted contextually as a source of starchy stamina for a dignified black labour force, to a trophy of white superiority, mastery, and self-sustainability. The genealogy of wheat-bread production from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century reflected an emergence and proliferation of state racialized biopower. Thus, bread was marked by an institutional biography of biopolitical strategies that seized, managed, and exerted influence over the 'taxonomy of everyday life.'<sup>51</sup> Reading bread with and against the grain in this way gives insight into the insidious administration of race in the food that we eat.

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<sup>49</sup> David Nally, 'The Biopolitics of Food Provisioning,' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series*, Vol 36, No 1. (January 2011): pp 37 - 35

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*

## Chapter Four

### The Apartheid Food Regime and Culinary Belonging

In January 2011 an image of an unnamed Tunisian protestor came to symbolize the recurring struggle for survival within increasingly unbearable socio-economic conditions in Tunisia. The protestor, armed with a cigarette in the mouth and a baguette in his hands, aimed his frustration at a barrage of patrolling police. The significance of this image was that bread and butter politics were visually expressed in confrontation with the state. This act echoed back to the Tunisian bread riots of 1984 that took place in the same street and for similar reasons. The image of the Tunisian protestor became the visualization of opposition, and was subsequently reframed as the post-revolution superhero, Captain Khobza.<sup>1</sup> Like Mikhail Bakhtin's jester, Captain Khobza is an invention by and for the people of Tunisia. He belongs to everyone and critiques the state through strategic humour.<sup>2</sup> He is an avenger of the everyday.

Bread has a long history of being used as a tool of revolt and mobilisation against authority. From the flour wars in France in 1795, the New York flour riots in 1837 to the bread riots in Egypt, Iran, Tunisia, and Sudan. In South Africa 2013, bread distributor Imraahn Mukaddam found himself at the centre of a media storm that exposed a toxic historical relationship between bread producers, consumers, and the state. In a David and Goliath scenario, Mukaddam reported four major bread-

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<sup>1</sup> Khobza means bread in Arabic.

<sup>2</sup> News Wires, Baguette-wielding superhero is Facebook sensation. (19<sup>th</sup> July 2011).  
<<http://www.france24.com/en/20110719-tunisia-baguette-wielding-superhero-facebook-sensation-captain-khobza>>

producing companies to the Competition Commission for collusion and price fixing. The impact of the case was that it revealed the ‘unhealthy’ business practices of major food companies in South Africa. This exposed a genealogy of biopolitical strategies that administered race through bread from 1900 to 1980.

The process of rationalisation and racialization of food production and consumption was reflected in the changing symbolic and material position of white bread and those who consumed it. Despite the apartheid culinary complex and the insidious notion of institutional dietary prescriptions for ‘non-white,’ black consumers asserted their identities, cultures, and centrality of their dignity through food. In this chapter, I explore black consumption strategies of refusal and strategies of pleasure in relation to institutionalised dietary prescriptions of the apartheid state. I will argue that the biopower of the apartheid state which was exercised through food management and the production of categories of nutrition, was also contested and resisted through forms of gustatory protest. The strategy of refusal exemplified in the hunger strike and the strategy of pleasure represented in the consumption of bread based take-aways in Athlone, constituted as equally assertive formations of gustatory freedom.

### **Discipline, punishment and resistance**

Authors Stephen Allister Peté Angela Diane Crocker suggest that eating in colonial and apartheid prisons was ‘more than just eating:’

On the one hand, it was tied up with the assertion of power, dominance and control on the part of the prison authorities. On the



other hand, it was linked to resistance and the assertion of solidarity and identity on the part of the inmates.<sup>3</sup>

Unlike the mining compounds that sought to subjugate and ascribe racial norms and values to labour through diet, the prison sought to rehabilitate and discipline deviant individual bodies back into subscribing to racial norms and values. The racialized diets imposed on prisoners, especially political prisoners, revealed the way the apartheid logic used food as an appendage of racial order. The prison was used as a laboratory for state intervention and racialized diets were used as a biopolitical tool of the state. Former political prisoner Molefe Pheto wrote about this in his memoirs:

Wednesdays and Sundays were 'special' days. Supper was a mixture of old rotten boiled fish whose stink would reach us, permeating from the prison kitchens, long before the fish itself arrived; and when it did so, it was hardly recognizable as fish, with hundreds of thin bones that made it difficult to eat, quite apart from the disgusting smell of it. The alternative ... was pigskins boiled with old shrivelled carrots and dirty pale green beans. All this garbage was then ladled on to the foul mealie-meal porridge. On the day it was pig-skins, the fat had long curdled by the time it reached us, with the pieces of skin sticking out of the mess like shark fins.<sup>4</sup>

Prison food was deliberately unpalatable and dehumanising by removing all pleasure and communality from the process of eating. Often, in the nexus of eating and the refusal to eat, prisoners were brought into direct confrontation with the authorities. The hunger strike was perhaps the most effective non-violent method and gustatory tool of resistance for prisoners that had very little access to other forms of political expression. The aim of the hunger strike was to appeal to

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<sup>3</sup> Stephen Allister Peté, Angela Diane Crocker, 'Apartheid in the Food: An Overview of the Diverse Social Meanings Attached to Food and Its Consumption within South African Prisons During the Colonial and Apartheid Period,' (Part 1) *Fundamina*, Vol, 16, No 2. (2010), pp 86–97.

<sup>4</sup> Molefe Pheto, *And Night Fell: Memoirs of a Political Prisoner in South Africa*. (London: Allison & Busby.1983). 183.

the ‘moral force of their actions’ to achieve a particular objective by inflicting harm on the protestor and not the person or authority being protested against.<sup>5</sup> The refusal of the most basic requirements for a human body to survive, as part of a political cause, is a powerful act that has a long history.

Brigitta Svensson suggests that,

[a] country’s way of handling its prisoners says a great deal about its cultural value, patterns, norms, and habits. Criminal policy ultimately shows how everyday life, identities, and biographies are constituted. Criminal policy is thus really about cultural policy.<sup>6</sup>

Relating this to the South African context, what did the apartheid criminal policy reflect about the cultural norms, values, and patterns of the time? In the period 1948-1992, the National Party policy of separation criminalised all forms of racial mixing. This institutional policy imprinted itself on every facet of life; regulated movement, inter-racial relations, education, employment, marriage etc. The criminal policy was premised and differentiated on racial values, patterns and ‘norms.’ In the previous chapter I showed how nutritional policies for white and black populations reflected shifting political and ideological orientations on the native question and the poor white problem as objects of inquiry and subsequent intervention. With the imposition of apartheid, the rationalisation of production was accompanied by the racialization of food. The mining compound was the engine behind the industrialising aspirations of the Union of South Africa. It was also the early laboratory for nutritional research and policy intervention based on

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<sup>5</sup> Alizeh Kohari, ‘Hunger strikes: What can they achieve?’ *BBC Online*. (16 August 2011).

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-14540696>

<sup>6</sup> Brigitta Svensson, ‘The Power of Biography: Criminal Policy, Prison Life, and the Formation of Criminal Identities in the Swedish Welfare State,’ in *Auto/Ethnography: Rewriting the Self and the Social* (ed) D.E. Reed-Danahay. (Oxford: Berg 1997). 72.

values of nutrition. These values were adopted and adapted from the popularisation of British and American health and disease discourses in the form of health standards that were combined with the evolving separatist ideologies.

Nutritional values were produced by a range of experts who formulated healthy diets within an ethnological canon of tradition. Nutrition was category through which techniques of biopower were operationalized. The ‘African diet,’ what it comprised and also what it lacked became a site for intervention and modification to cultivate a ‘dignified’ labour force.

This cultivation paralleled the methodology in agricultural research to develop resilient wheat. The process of producing a ‘dignified’ labour force through diet sought to create a ‘dignified’ African subject within a racial hierarchy. Relating the production of nutritional policies to the evolution of criminal policies during apartheid reveals similar yet distinct constructions and managements of race through food. In this sense, like Svensson’s suggestion of criminal policy, the nutritional policy ‘ultimately reflected cultural policy.’<sup>7</sup>

Like the mines, the prison was another laboratory in which the technologies of state power to alter individuals according to their own ‘values, patterns, norms, and habits’ could be tested and experimented with. The political prisoner in this context, a person who sought to disrupt the racial order, was a dangerous individual on whom it was necessary for the state to exercise its dominance and

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<sup>7</sup> Svensson, ‘The Power of Biography,’ 72.

power. One technique through which the state demonstrated its power was through prison food.

When we were in jail, they served us food as if they were giving to dogs. They used food to insult us, to demean us, to insult in a manner that so demeaned you that you didn't feel human – in a manner that said, 'I am giving you food that I give to pigs and dogs' ... every day there were cooked mealies and porridge that had maggots. In the mealies, some of the worms weren't dead. We never saw another vegetable. On the day that they say it's meat, there is just lard and the fatty part of pork that you can't eat ... I was hospitalised several times in that prison.<sup>8</sup>

If the prison was like a training camp that experimented with the cultivation of the most effective methodologies to 'imprint norms and values,' the apartheid prison sought to reinforce the racial order. In the Robben Island Prison, racial order was demonstrated through the prescription of D and F diets. The D diet was meant for 'Coloured' and 'Asiatic' prisoners and included a ration of bread, fat, mielie rice/samp, jam, sugar, and coffee. The F diet was meant for 'Bantus' and included mielie meal, puzamandla, fat, mielies, and meat and no jam/syrup, sugar and coffee. The portion of rations allocated to 'Coloured', 'Asiatics' were significantly more than 'Bantus.'<sup>9</sup>In this sense, the provision of food was based on an apartheid racialized social ordering. According to ex-political prisoner, Michael Dingake,

The major grievance against the prison diet however was that it was discriminatory. Coloured and Indian fellow-prisoners had one diet scale [D diet] and the African, another [F diet]. This, despite the fact that they were not segregated in the communal cells ... How were the Coloured and Indian comrades to feel, when they enjoyed preferential food while their

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<sup>8</sup> Stephen Allister Peté<sup>3</sup> Angela Diane Crocker, 'Apartheid in the Food,' (Part 1): pp 86–97.

<sup>9</sup> Robben Island Museum. Prison Diet Menu.

African fellow inmates sat next to them force-feeding themselves on boiled mealies?<sup>10</sup>

Food was also used as a means of punishment. It could be removed as a result of any form of misconduct and meals would be subsequently replaced with rice water. Prisoners were ultimately dependent on the authorities to provide nutritional sustenance. Their consumption was carefully managed according to an apartheid ideology of race. The imposition of a 'biographical knowledge' of the nutritional needs of different racial groups served to remove the freedom to exercise choice in the daily ritual of eating.

The meaning conveyed by the food provided to prison inmates during the apartheid period was not only a confirmation of the raw power and control exercised by the authorities over every aspect of the prisoners' lives, but also an assertion of the political ideology of apartheid.<sup>11</sup>

Food plays a fundamental role in the affirmation of sociality and culture. The apartheid approach to the distribution of food to prisoners disregarded the human value entrenched in the ritual of preparing and eating food.

In *The Sovereign Whip*, Dinesh Wadiwe suggests that 'torture is an art of life preservation' and a 'good' torturer 'learns to maintain life on the brink of death.'<sup>12</sup> Besides the physical torture of beatings that were inflicted on prisoners during apartheid, food and the consumption of food was another means through which the body of the prisoner was assaulted with dehumanising nutritional values and

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<sup>10</sup> Michael Dingake, *My Fight against Apartheid*. (London: Kliptown Books Ltd. 1987): 204.

<sup>11</sup> Stephen Allister Peté Angela Diane Crocker, 'Apartheid in the Food: An Overview of the Diverse Social Meanings Attached to Food and Its Consumption within South African Prisons During the Colonial and Apartheid Period,' (Part 2) *Fundamina* (Vol 17, No 1, 2011) Unisa Press pp 112–124.

<sup>12</sup> Dinesh Wadiwel, 'The sovereign whip: Flogging, biopolitics and the frictional community,' *Journal of Australian Studies*, Vol 27, No 76. (2003): 117-125.

racial ideologies. This technique of torture sought to ‘make the body present and the soul absent.’<sup>13</sup>

Despite this form of torture, prisoners also resisted by refusing to consume. Hunger strikes by political prisoners were a common gustatory political weapon used against the regime. It was an important ‘survival mechanism’ through which inmates could also demonstrate their ‘ability to exert power over their captors’ and also over their own bodies.<sup>14</sup> In an interview with Anna Trapido, Anthony Xaba expressed the commonplace occurrence of hunger strikes. For Xaba,

We fought so many battles on Robben Island. If they did not listen to us we took hunger strikes. I remember sometimes we used to stay for three weeks without food, boycotting food, demanding our rights as prisoners according to the Boers’ constitution. At one time we took 21 days. There’s not a single year from 1963 to 1973, when I left Robben Island, that we didn’t have a hunger strike. Sometimes twice a year. Every year there was a hunger strike, every year ... because the situation was too tough. There’s not a single year from 1963 to 1973, when I left Robben Island, that we didn’t have a hunger strike. Sometimes twice a year. Every year there was a hunger strike, every year ... because the situation was too tough.<sup>15</sup>

Resorting to hunger strikes was recognised as a method of prisoners reasserting their sovereignty over their individual bodies. It also reflected their refusal to allow their bodies to be disciplined into racialized objects or units of production. Furthermore, the routine complaints about food produced a critique of the nutritional system that sought to dehumanise and force-feed prisoners through racist food management techniques. Anderson suggests that,

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<sup>13</sup> Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). pp 57-88.

<sup>14</sup> Stephen Allister PetéAngela Diane Crocker, ‘Apartheid in the Food,’ (Part 2), pp 112–124.

<sup>15</sup> Anna Trapido quoting Anthony Xaba. She conducted the interview on 9 Feb 2008 in Anna Trapido, *Hunger For Freedom: The Story of Food in the life of Nelson Mandela*. (Johannesburg: Jacana Media in Association with the Nelson Mandela Foundation. 2008).

self-starvation conceptually and methodologically obtains significance as cultural practice not simply in gesturing towards absence, but in viscerally and affectively summoning us to bear witness to the low, slow wasting away of human flesh.<sup>16</sup>

In the ‘gesture’ towards the wasting of flesh, using the hunger strike by political prisoners in South Africa was meant to appeal to an ‘essential bodily economy’ that all humans share.<sup>17</sup>

In 2012 and 2014, Iranian refugees caused a public outcry with a provocative and horrific public demonstration. The refugees resorted to a hunger strike to spotlight their living conditions. Added to this, the refugees sewed their lips shut with thread. The hungry and horrific image of the refugee had the effect of jarring the German public. The prescribed feelings of empathy and sympathy towards the refugees were replaced with horror and disgust. In *Becoming Flesh*, Michelle Pfeifer argues that in this act of defiance by the refugees, refugees ‘became flesh.’ They refused to contained, invisibilised and racialized bodies within the prescribed discursive framework of the refugee.<sup>18</sup> These strategies enacted an agency that disrupted the ‘docility and passivity’ required of refugees. In this sense the hunger strikes by refugees reclaimed the state’s biopolitical sovereignty over death or rather ‘life on the brink of death’, through the self-infliction and choice to die. For Pfeifer it is this disruption of power and dominance that not only jarred the German public’s perception, but also signified the refugee body on its own terms and for its own ends.

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<sup>16</sup> Patrick Anderson, *So Much Wasted: Hunger, Performance, and the Morbidity of Resistance*. (Durham: Duke UP. 2010).

<sup>17</sup> Hayley Rudkin, ‘Self-Starvation as Performance,’ *Cultural Studies Review*, Vol 18, No 1. (March 2012): pp 308-314.

<sup>18</sup> Michelle Pfeifer, ‘Becoming flesh: refugee hunger strike and embodiments of refusal in German necropolitical spaces,’ *Citizenship Studies*, Vol 22, No 5. (2018): pp 459-474.

In the South African context in which the apartheid state employed a variety of biopolitical techniques to construct, produce, and reinforce racial categories, the hunger strikes by political prisoners manifested in the ‘wastage of flesh’ for the political ideals of freedom and equality. These were used as a tool to re-signify the black body as more than a source of labour. The refusal to consume was also a refusal to digest racial divisions that constructed people as disposable units of production. They drew on the apartheid biopolitical techniques of managing ‘life on the brink of death,’ and subverted this by reclaiming their own bodies through the choice to live and die on their own nutritional terms, not on the prescribed dietary allowance of apartheid. Thus, ‘the struggle for a non-racial diet in South African Prisons’ was said to ‘[mirror] the broader struggle against the apartheid system as a whole.’<sup>19</sup> The preparation and consumption practises of food in prison by inmates and wardens generated an often-overlooked culinary biography of resistance and domination.<sup>20</sup>

### **I eat what I like: Pleasure and agency**

Biopolitical techniques produced a nutritional discourse that dissected and constructed consumption habits according to race. The dietary scales of nutrition were entangled with hierarchies of race. The historical production of nutritional discourse in South Africa was premised on the construction of ‘dignified’ labour for the national stamina of an industrialising South Africa. Diet was thus a category through which subjects, like prisoners could be remade into respectable labour. The work of achieving the most efficient and effective combination of

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<sup>19</sup>Stephen Allister Peté Angela Diane Crocker, ‘Apartheid in the Food’, (Part 2): 114.



health and food was spearheaded by conceptions of malnutrition within the mining compounds. Health and hygiene was inextricably bound up with the proliferation of racial ideas of contamination and purity. Consequently, the prescription of diet was also the prescription of racial order and place, as in the case in the construction of the 'African' diet. From the malnourished native question to the anxiety of the poor white problem, sites and subjects for dietary intervention were historically produced for political and economic policy development of an emerging industrial and later apartheid South Africa.

Desire Lewis has critically observed how amidst discourses of food which characterised the global South as an 'index of injustice, exploitation', the concept of malnutrition was a historically produced concept that surfaced at particular moments for shifting political and moral concerns. David Nally also reflects on the production of the Global South as malnourished and poverty stricken. For Nally,

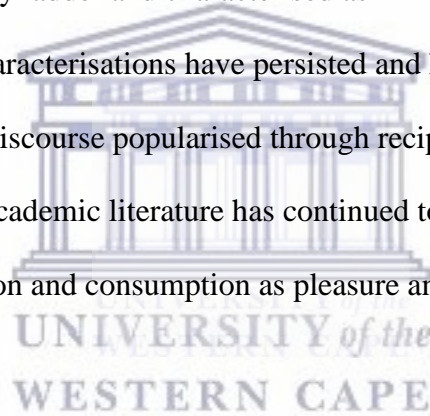
The promotion of agrarian capitalism was almost always couched in rhetoric of improvement. Indigenous modes of agricultural production were derided as backward, while native farmers were socially constructed as lazy. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Global South was firmly embedded in a discourse of development and improvement-what Vernon ironically refers to as the humanitarian discovery of hunger.<sup>21</sup>

In the same way that an ethnological conception of tradition was used to construct otherness in cookbooks in the 1950s, malnutrition as a concept was evoked as a justification for intervention.

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<sup>21</sup> David Nally. 'The Biopolitics of food provisioning'. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series*, Vol 36, No 1. (January 2011): pp 37-53.

As with the miners from 1910 to 1930, diet was a critical category through which black migrant labour could be managed and sustained through intervention and prescription of nutritional standards. These standards were produced by a series of experts in social sciences, medical sciences and agricultural sciences. Nutritional standards in South Africa were adopted from global nutritional practises and ideologies of cleanliness/contagion, health/disease, and nutrition/malnutrition. The global and local shift in nutritional discourse that was entangled with producing consumption patterns based on a hierarchical and eurocentric canon of culinary evolution. What is now termed as the global South was placed at the bottom of this culinary ladder and characterised as ‘malnourished’ and ‘depraved.’ These characterisations have persisted and have left an indelible mark on the way culinary discourse popularised through recipe books, cookery shows, celebrity chefs, and academic literature has continued to largely overlook the food preparation, production and consumption as pleasure and as agency in the global south.



In the book *Longthroat Memoirs*, Yemisi Aribisala begins the Nigerian culinary journey by introducing the reader to the politics of culinary discourse. Aribisala suggests that in order for a culinary repertoire to be represented and recognised it needs to be ‘talked’ about, or rather popularised through film, literature, media etc. Aribisala humorously addresses the above-mentioned characterisation of the global south, and particularly Africa’s lack of visibility on the gustatory landscape. In the case of Nigerian cooking methodologies, Aribisala illustrates that Nigerians have not bothered to speak about food in the way that culinary experts, gastronomers, or chefs have because there has simply never been a need

for it. The food speaks for itself to those who want to listen. Unpretentious and unassuming, just because Nigerian cooking does not feature as best-selling recipe books or cooking shows, does not mean that a rich history and complex process of preparation doesn't exist. Instead, the invisibility of Nigerian culinary discourse on the gastronomical landscapes is reflective of the politics of production and popularisation.

I learnt that you had to talk about food and this talking helped to concretise a personality/identity for the food. This talk would find its way into literature, film, television and other forms of media, forming the persona called 'food,' made up of speech and culture and stories, glamourized by patriotic affection and sentimental associations. Nigerians have never created that person from speech and stories and exaggerations, so that when I brought him up, the response was like talking about someone who never existed.<sup>22</sup>

Aribisala's biographical impetus to write Nigerian food was initially rejected by a major Nigerian Newspaper, because they did not want more 'jollof rice and egos soup and beef stew.'<sup>23</sup> In addition to this, the idea of writing Nigerian food was met with further confusion, since, food writing was presumed to refer to a recipe book. Despite these setbacks, *Longthroat Memoirs* emerged from a collection of essays published as a food blog in Lagos-based newspaper *234NEXT*. The blog itself was met with mixed reactions. Readers would write in to correct Aribisala's recipes and some would bluntly reject them. From its inception, the book was written in conversation, undergoing a series of edits/criticisms before being compressed between a front and back cover of a book.

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<sup>22</sup> Yemisi Aribisala, *Long Throat Memoirs. Soup, Sex and Nigerian Taste Buds*, (Abuja and London: Casava Republic Press. 2016): 1.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

Published by Cassava Republic Press as part of a literary shift in Nigeria which aimed at ‘feeding the African imagination’, *Longthroat Memoirs* was one of many titles which formed part of a literary movement to speak to an urban African experience.<sup>24</sup> As the world’s largest producer of cassava and the centrality of cassava, and with the centrality of cassava as a staple in Nigerian cooking, Cassava Republic Press drew on this food metaphor in the publication of books that reflected diverse everyday African experiences for the consumption by an African audience. As Bibi Bakare-Yusuf and Jeremy Weate, founders of Cassava Republic Press,

suggested:

“we have the contemporary experience of going in-between borders of the diasporic communities. What’s happening now is that African experiences are urban and it’s normal everyday life. There’s a huge yearning for the normalization of the experiences that Africans have.”<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, in the South African context culinary, literature was fundamentally shaped by the proliferation of nutritional standards and the ethnological fascination of other cultures. ‘Other’ culinary techniques were problematically framed within an ethnological canon that fixed cooking methods within the category of the ‘traditional.’ The concept of ‘traditional’ was used to ascribe particular forms of culinary repertoires within a limited eurocentric frame. Recipe books oscillated within the private spaces of the home and the kitchen. Cooking manuals such as ones that constrained ‘other’ culinary repertoires within a

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<sup>24</sup> Belinda Otas and Tolu Ogunlesi, ‘Feeding the African Imagination: Nigeria’s Cassava Republic,’ *Publishing Perspectives*. (27 April 2010).  
<<http://publishingperspectives.com/2010/04/feeding-the-african-imagination-visiting-nigerias-cassava-republic/#.VqlavZqLTZ4>>

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

eurocentric gaze inscribed a racial order within the intimate space of the kitchen and the home.

More recently, there has been a resurgence of traditional memory cookbooks by predominantly eurocentric publishers that seek to visibilise traditional and nostalgic cooking repertoires. The problem with this resurgence is that it displays the orientalist sentiments that I.D. Du Plessis demonstrated towards the racial construction of 'Malay.' Publication landscapes continue to be nuanced in this way since the culinary publishing industry is overwhelmingly eurocentric.

Julia Turshen explains this inequality in the publishing industry by showing that,

'[w]hen books by authors of colour do get accepted, they often discover the publisher has a monolithic approach to non-Western cuisines....For authors of colour who do convince people to believe in their work and to sell it to an audience they don't fully understand or appreciate, apprehension is a regular response.'<sup>26</sup>

In this sense, the culinary scales of comparison and the politics of who and how culinary discourse was popularised reflected a hierarchy of diets prescribed in the early 20th century through nutritional discourse in South Africa. Desiree Lewis suggests that,

'the visceral and cognitive freedom, pleasure and creativity in relation to cooking, eating and growing food has somehow become suspect to the left - evidence of some complete lack of radical commitment.'<sup>27</sup>

The same racial politics and eurocentricism that haunt academic discourse can be read in the production of culinary literature. In the making of a cookbook, there are numerous individuals who are responsible for the design, photography,

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<sup>26</sup> Julia Turshen, 'To Change Racial Disparity in Food, Let's Start With Cookbooks,' *Eater*. (5<sup>th</sup> April, 2018) <<https://www.eater.com/2018/4/5/17153806/racial-inequality-food-cookbook-authors-publishing>>

<sup>27</sup> Desiree Lewis, 'The Hunger Games,' *Chronic Foods*. April 2017.

research marketing, and printing. This requires a substantial budget as well as understanding of the type of cookbook to be produced. Often, the professionals responsible for these specific areas of administering a cookbook into a tangible text have a very narrow knowledge of the context of the cookbook and the audience who will consume it. Culinary literature of this genre, produces conceptions of taste, pleasure and enjoyment within a set of racial politics. It is then unsurprising that the literature on food in South Africa continues to be understood from the lens of depravity or ‘lacking radical political commitment.’

How then do we understand the choice to consume bread-based take-aways for pleasure against the historical backdrop of culinary discourses that overlook the choice to consume as a form of agency? If hunger strikes and the struggle for a non-racial diet were reflections of the broader struggle for freedom in South Africa under apartheid, can we understand the choice to consume bread-based take-aways in Athlone as an expression of resistance?

### **Bread-based take-aways and culinary belonging**

Unlike hunger strikes, everyday consumption patterns are often overlooked for their historical value. The networks and foodways that were sustained through sociality were informal methods of sustenance. Through the memory work of *Huis Kombuis*, the food networks and patterns of buying food were intimately connected to a shared sense of trust that residents and business owners shared.

Tina Smith of the District Six Museum explained,

“[that people] could buy on tick. They could buy one of. They didn’t need to buy the whole packet. They could buy one egg and not the whole tray. They could pay at the end of the week. So that whole network of trust was generational. The food influences of the Jewish

community was huge...The relationship with delhi's and how you bought food. Sjoe...can you imagine? That support structure was utterly and completely ruptured.

The food networks were important and reflected a 'way of life' of the community. The food that was served at the dining table was part of an economic, social and historical landscape. Before being transformed into a meal, the ingredients were once products in a lineage of production.

The impact of forced removals on foodways and networks meant that communities were fractured across the Cape Flats. The unfamiliarity with the terrain and neighbours meant that 'sports clubs, religious events', and social places were important avenues for reconnection with friends and families.<sup>28</sup> In this context, take-aways became important social spaces for people on the 'periphery' whose access to leisure was limited by laws that regulated movement and relations between different races.

The emergence of take-aways within the genealogy of nutritional discourses of dominance reflected an alternative rationale and vision for social order. They were not overtly directed at a political cause but embodied a politics of pleasure that subverted the prescribed pattern of consumption. The popularisation of the Whopper and the Gatsby in the turbulent 1970 in Athlone, occurred in an space known to be a politically active area.

The historical milieu that halal take-aways emerged into, revealed a different kind of culinary literacy to that of the ethnological recipes books of the 1950s and

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<sup>28</sup> Interview with Tina Smith. District Six Museum by Tazneem Wentzel. 29th January 2018.



1970s. Compared to the publishing process that confined the concept of the traditional to the domestic kitchen, take-aways such as Super Fisheries and Wembley formed also formed part of a production process and rationalisation of food, that was particular to the palettes of the people who consumed the food. This set halal take-aways apart from ethnological cookbooks that colluded in the racial project of apartheid. The popularisation of bread-based halal take-aways reflected a reinvention of home cooking and a redefinition of the parameters of the kitchen within a changing work and leisure environment.

Apartheid discourse on nutrition and diet produced categories of racialized subjects and units of labour, and the apartheid system prescribed what could be eaten, when it could be eaten, and where food could be eaten. For example, Tina Smith reflected on her own experience of take-aways growing up suggesting that,

the thing was...If you were non-white, you could buy take-aways but you couldn't sit down...They had Delhi's where you could buy, but you couldn't sit down. I remember my grandmother would say. Come I'm going to take you for a treat. And the treat was a ham sandwich a ham roll...Oh god that was the best. We're going to Stuttafords and we're going to get a ham sandwich. We used to eat it the whole day.<sup>29</sup>

In chapter two, I argued that the preparation process of take-aways blended 'traditional' slow cooked *lang-sous* food, and reframed it with grease proof paper ready to be taken away and eaten elsewhere. The small business emerged as a critical space of self-authorship, autonomy, and community that brought together a myriad of historical experiences through the production and consumption of food. Wembley Roadhouse and Super Fisheries produced a particular kind of

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<sup>29</sup> Interview with Tina Smith. District Six Museum by Tazneem Wentzel. 29th January 2018.



relation between kitchen, menu and customer. The reorganisation of this relationship produced a long lasting architecture of rationalisation that emerged from the historical experience of migration, forced removals and racial categorisation. This shaped the way food was prepared, how it was prepared and to whom it was sold.

Wembley Roadhouse that drew its inspiration from the popular American concept of the roadhouse, and Super Fisheries which drew its concept from the Portuguese fish and chip shops, folded borrowed concepts into the flavour pallet of the customer. As Rashaad Pandy suggested “You do what your customer says.” The customer in the framework of the take-aways was critical in shaping the menu. Whereas the apartheid business model worked through a series of experts, research, and policy research that formed a production chain of coercion and dietary prescription. The business model of Wembley and Super Fisheries evolved organically out of the needs of the customers. This was turned into a business ethic that was transferred generationally from father to son. It was this reformulation of business model, the production of food, and the reinterpretation of a state-subsidised staple, that ideologically shot back at the prescriptive biopower of the apartheid state over the possibilities of the everyday.

From the native question to the poor white problem, the shifting research question of state enquiry aimed at segmenting people according to a racial scale through food. It was a top down approach that filtered into all facets of the production and consumption process. In contrast, the customer in the take-aways had a more influential role to play in comparison with being a consumer of state-subsidised

foods. Customers in the take-aways had a direct influence on the display of choice framed by the menu. Furthermore, the personal connection of business owner to customer meant that any complaints were immediately dealt with. There were no drawn out channels or administrative processes that needed to be followed to speak with the owner. In the case of the Super Fisheries Gatsby, the coincidental meal was presented to the customers before being placed on the menu. It was the positive feedback that led to the Gatsby becoming a permanent feature on the menu. The shape and form of the Gatsby was altered by the requests from the customer and the complaints that the round roll was difficult to eat. This led to the Gatsby being transformed into its present form of an oversized French loaf. The process of fixing an item on the menu reflected a co-authored historically produced social, economic, and political rationalisations that repackaged the flavour of home-cooked, traditional food within a peripheralised social ordering of the world. The social ordering of bread-based take-aways though encompassed by a seemingly similar surface of apartheid, was infused with its own aspiring masala-steak and polony-chip filling. The architecture of autonomies which were refracted in the rationalisation of preparation and consumption of the Gatsby and the Whopper were embedded with stories of immigration, forced removals, and resilience. These food items and the spaces that the take-aways created in Athlone, opened up avenues into alternative visions and modalities for culinary belonging that the customer could participate in at a particular exchange rate.

For Korczynski and Ott,

‘[the] restaurant menu is created to enchant and appeal to the customer and it does this not only substantively through the descriptions of the available food, but also formally through the placing of the customer

as the autonomous figure who chooses between available alternatives.’<sup>30</sup>

Relating this to the take-aways in Athlone, the customer not only participated in ‘choosing between alternative’, but also participated in shaping the menu. The process of co-authoring menus and menu items created a horizontal plane of culinary production. The exercise of choice within a context in which the freedom to choose, and the luxury of choice was limited to a narrow racial sector, offered at the very least an enchanted idea of freedom which could be bought into and eaten. It was a tangible and temporary freedom. The popularisation of halal take-aways and the accompanying bread-based food items such as the Whopper and the Gatsby as consumer products was embedded in a historical, social, cultural, political, and economic process of production and consumption.

Authors, Sharon Zukin and Jennifer Smith Maguire have suggested that ‘consumption reflects the opportunities and constraints of modernity’ and can be understood as an ‘institutional field’.<sup>31</sup> The authors go further to suggest that the scepticism and aversion for consumption as a theoretical field within Europe, stemmed from 19th century ‘social theoretical schools such as Marxism which locate consumption and the desire to consume goods within the frame of commodity fetishism’<sup>32</sup>. In the piece ‘The Paris Arcades’, Walter Benjamin shifted the theoretical sense to the patterns of consumption. The difficulty with these legacies is that they are geared towards a non-African context. In South

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<sup>30</sup>Marek Korczynski and Ursula Ott, 'The Menu in Society: Mediating Structures of Power and Enchanting Myths of Individual Sovereignty,' *Sociology*, Vol 40, No 5. (2006): pp 911–28

<sup>31</sup>Sharon Zukin and Jennifer Smith Maguire, ‘Consumers and Consumption,’ *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol 30 (2000): pp 173-197.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

Africa for example the industrialisation of production and proliferation of mass consumption was premised on a racial discourse of separation and the entanglement of race and labour. In this regard, the works by Benjamin and Marx are inadequate in understanding the historical production of consumption patterns and take-aways in South Africa. The dominant discourse that pervaded the study of food in Africa was and largely has been premised on the framework of deprivation. This premise, as I have shown, was historically produced and constructed by architects of racial discourse in disciplines such as medicine, agriculture, and the humanities. The scientific approach to understanding production and consumption has oversimplified the heterogeneous ways in which people of colour asserted their agency through food and the choice to consume or refuse food particularly between the 1960s and the 1990s.

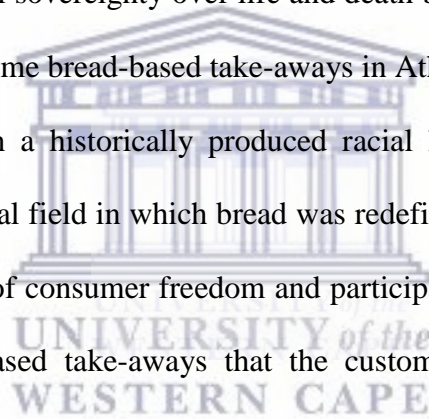
In the study of the Sony Walkman, Du Gay and his colleagues suggest that 'production and consumption are not two poles of a commodity chain, but continually interacting processes in a 'cultural circuit,' where products both 'reflect and transform consumers' behaviour.'<sup>33</sup> For Zukin and Maguire, consumer studies tended 'to be cultural analysis of texts and images' as forms of manipulating consumer desire that framed consumption as a form of disempowerment<sup>34</sup>. This runs contrary to Wembley and Super Fisheries that through the construction of menus in the period of the 1950s and the 1980s provided a space for people to exercise choice.

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<sup>33</sup> Paul du Gay, Stuart Hall, Linda James, Anders Koed Madsen, Hugh Mackay, Keith Negus, *Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman*. (California, Sage 1997)

<sup>34</sup> Sharon Zukin and Jennifer Smith Maguire, 'Consumers and Consumption,' 177.

The production and consumption chain of the above-mentioned take-aways resembles du Gay et al 'cultural circuit.' In that the production and consumption process were enmeshed with one another. The customer played a crucial role in shaping the menu and the food items on the menu. The customer was not a passive consumer but an active agent and role player in the popularisation of take-aways. It was the choice to consume combined with the participation in cultivating sovereign consumption patterns that reflected an aspiring desire for autonomy through the medium of bread within the frame of the popularisation of take-aways in Athlone. Therefore, the refusal to consume within the prison as a technique to assert individual biopolitical sovereignty over life and death bears a similar resemblance to the choice to consume bread-based take-aways in Athlone. Bread as a consumer product embedded in a historically produced racial hierarchy of consumption, became an institutional field in which bread was redefined and rationalised within an alternative frame of consumer freedom and participation. Arguably, the choice to consume bread-based take-aways that the customer had a role in shaping reflected the tenets of desire that democracy potentially offered. It is from this standpoint that the emergence and popularisation of take-aways in the politically turbulent time of the 1970s and 1980s is a key historical context to locating a style of consumption as a historically produced archive that was embedded in bread-based take-aways.



## Figures/Illustrations



FIGURE 6. ICONIC IMAGE THAT CIRCULATED DURING THE 2011 PROTESTS. THE IMAGE IS OF AN UNNAMED MAN WITH A CIGARETTE IN HIS MOUTH AIMING A BAGUETTE AT A GROUP OF POLICE. THIS IMAGE WAS SAID TO HAVE INSPIRE THE CREATION OF CAPTAIN KHOBZA. SOURCE. NEWS WIRES. 19<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2011.



FIGURE 7. IMAGE OF CAPTAIN KHOBZA, THE BAGUETTE WIELDING TUNISIAN SUPERHERO. IMAGE SOURCED FROM CAPTAIN KHOBZA'S TWITTER HANDLE @CAPTAIN5OBZA



## Conclusion

The aim of this research was to understand how the production and consumption of halal take-aways at Wembley Roadhouse and Super Fisheries relate to the transformation in bread production under apartheid from 1950 to 1980. The research also undertook to locate the processes of production and consumption of the Whopper and the Gatsby as a way to understand the socio-political context of the 1970s. This emergence was presented comparatively within a genealogy of state-subsidised bread production and consumption dating from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Chapter One mapped out the category of tradition and how it was invoked ethnologically as part of the apartheid cultural project of the 1950s. Cultural agents of apartheid such as '*Die Slamse Koning*' also known as I.D. du Plessis, played a critical role in the dissemination of eurocentric discourses of tradition and tribe that served as the social and ethnic premise for separate development.

Foodways and habits of ethnically and racially differentiated groups served as another frontier on which ideas of race and ethnicity were imposed through scientific racial management. In the 2000s, there was a publishing resurgence of food memory cookbooks. Perhaps unintentionally, particular publishers resurrected eurocentric discourses on food, this time under the guise of nostalgia. Complex culinary histories were made legible within a racial paradigm that was refracted in the visual aesthetic of these cookbooks. A template of understanding was used to reframe place and people within an overarching ideology of nostalgia,

especially for the food of home, often conceived in racial terms. In so doing, the space of halal take-aways was overlooked. Food narratives of resilience and agency have excluded halal take-aways as a source of historical value. This has occurred despite the historical place that these food establishments have occupied. It is from the discussion of how the concept of tradition was invented, produced, and invoked for a cultural politics of race that I then locate the historical emergence of halal take-aways.

Following this argument, I suggest that the historical particularity of halal take-aways and of the production and consumption of the Whopper and the Gatsby, is that these emerged as cultural signifiers of agency, resilience, and choice. The Whopper and the Gatsby reflected a material and symbolic aspiration of self-determination and autonomy. Halal take-aways appeared on the periphery of the city in the areas delineated the 'Cape Flats.' As was the case with the Jewish delis and the Portuguese fisheries, the small business served as a critical space of orientation, a nexus of familial networks, and source of economic prosperity.

Similarly, the immigration of Indian merchants to South Africa and the networks that were established in food businesses served as an important social and economic web. Indian business owners were subjected to the harshest application of the immigration and business licensing regulations as a result of the institutionalisation of racism and the economic threat that they allegedly posed to white businesses. The implementation of the Group Areas Act saw the displacement of many Indian businesses which were attached to homes. Traders



were forced to rebuild their business structures and homes on the periphery, much like people who were forced to relocate onto the black periphery.

This reconfiguration emphasised a business model centred on the black customer. It is for this reason that these family-owned enclaves developed a particular familial relationship with the customers that frequented their shops. There was a degree of trust, ownership and shared responsibility on the part of business owners and customers. This was an important social thread that weaved together a web of foodways that echoed the socio-political changes of immigration regulations, forced removals, and the racialisation of people and place. The late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were characterised by the emergence of a novel form of biopower that asserted state authority through food. From the 1900s to the 1950s, the production and consumption of bread reflected a biopolitics of health and nutrition that operationalised categories of race through food.

The discovery of gold and diamonds in the 1860s and the 1870s, ushered in a new economic incentive for a permanent settlement in South Africa. A new source of untapped wealth buried underneath the soil of South Africa was waiting to be uncovered. Subsequently, people and place were configured along patterns that facilitated colonial expansion and capital accumulation.<sup>35</sup>

A key unit in these production chains was black mining labour. However, the health, nutrition, and the increasing mortality of black miners became alarming to

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<sup>35</sup>David Nally, 'The Biopolitics of food provisioning'. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, new Series, Vol, 36, No, 1. (January 2011): pp 37–53.

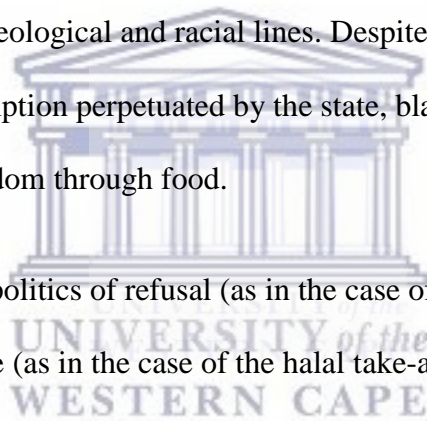
the colonial authorities. This triggered the first nutritional research to be undertaken by mining companies. Diet, like labour became another site of intervention for ‘civilising’ black subjects into the codes of respectability as a resolution to the native question. Paralleling this, increased research investments were made in the development and cultivation of adaptable and resilient varieties of wheat. In the same way that diets of miners were investigated to develop healthy resilient labour, wheat cultivation was researched and developed as a means of social intervention. This historical era revealed a Eurocentric approach to racial management that presented itself in many guises, from agricultural research, to ethnological surveys and nutritional research.

In the same fashion that the native question resulted in the dissemination of a scientised discursive framework for intervention, the poor white problem became another historical moment that led to state protectionism. In the same year in which the Carnegie Report called for the intervention and protection of poor whites, the wheat cultivar ‘Stirling’ was released. The Stirling reflected South Africa’s departure from the gold standard and was characterised by its resilience to disease. Preceding the Marketing Act by five years, in 1937 the Wheat Board enjoyed state subsidisation and protection from market fluctuation and was given complete monopoly of the wheat-bread industry. The board regulated every aspect from oven management to packaging. The complete authority over the industry was later reflected in institutional practises aimed at the strict regulation and control of production and consumption of state-subsidised commodities.

In 1948, when the National Party came to power, white bread was championed as the trophy of Afrikaner nationalism. This symbolised both the mastery over production and the cultivation of a crop such as wheat on an African landscape. The empirical developments of a wheat strain that was resilient and adaptable in many ways echoed the political rhetoric about protecting and privileging white South Africans to ‘thrive’ in the African ‘frontier.’

The genealogy of the wheat-bread industry reflected moments around which scientific investigation was used as a political strategy and nutritional policy. Diet was an essential category through which people and place could be reconfigured along ideological and racial lines. Despite the prescriptive framework of consumption perpetuated by the state, black South Africans asserted their agency and freedom through food.

I have compared the politics of refusal (as in the case of the hunger strike), and the choice to consume (as in the case of the halal take-aways) as culinary strategies and as assertions of gustatory protest. The representation of food in the South has been characterised by discourses of devaluation or by leftist scepticism. This left very little room to understand how the production and consumption of the Whopper and the Gatsby during the 1970s to the 1990s constituted a form of resistance. The popularisation of bread-based take-aways such as the Whopper and the Gatsby, undermined the scientific racism in state-subsidised bread. Contrary to the authoritarianism of apartheid, the rationalisation process that produced bread-based food items in halal take-aways, offered another social ordering of freedom and choice.



In 'Recipes of Mothers' and 'Menus of Fathers' I have hinted at the gendered dynamic in food preparation and commercial food production. In the documentation and publication of cooking 'rituals' in early recipe books of the 1950s by cultural agents such as I.D. Du Plessis, Hilda Gerber, and Louis Leipoldt, I show how a eurocentric concept of 'traditional' was used to produce ideas of race through food. In the process of this production, black women, and their role within the household and in culinary history as 'architects of South African flavour' were invisibilised. From this, the influence of black businessmen and the establishment of culinary enclaves of co-creation such as halal take-aways, have similarly been neglected as repositories of historical knowledge.

The production and consumption of Whoppers and Gatsbys in Athlone were reflections of the socio-political climate of the time. They emerged as particular kinds of historically produced culinary assertions against the biopower of the apartheid state. The assemblage of potatoes, meat, sauce, and salads embraced in a burger bun and a Gatsby loaf represented a possibility for gustatory reconciliation. Although this form of reconciliation was tangible, it was also temporary. From the first bite, the moment of ingestion also initiated the process of digestion. We have often neglected how our gut has been the site of historical resistance. With 80% of our immune system located there, our gut has been able mechanically and chemically to digest, absorb, and resist the apartheid biopolitics of race and ethnicity. Perhaps it is time to start taking our guts more seriously and bake our own bread.

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