

CHAPTER 5

ENGLAND - EMPIRE

Cooking up Time: Arcs of Movement

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Word: **Movement**. The word movement is meant to capture the messy changing relationships that make up or “cook up” time as something that threads together pasts, presents and futures not in some sort of vacuum but in an ongoing process of becoming with or through people, places and materials.

Number: **3.187519682018**. Resembling π , a never ending nor settling number that continues to capture mathematicians’ imagination, this number is meant to represent the weaving together of three years significant for schooling related to cookery, food and nutrition in Liverpool – and far beyond.

Image: Mid-1960s – Jean Webster (left) and Carol Jones, second-year students at the F.L. Calder College of Domestic Science, pictured demonstrating “work study” (a teaching-learning method adopted from a context of industrial management) as applied to scone-making. Courtesy of LJMU Special Collections and Archives. Fanny Calder Archives, Box 2, Folder Newspaper Cuttings.

In the West we tend to think of time as something that moves forward along one line: something that is singular rather than manifold, and continuous, not really characterised by breaks. When we say things like ‘time stood still for a moment’, we don’t really mean it, do we? Time goes on. As a feminist theorist, Karen Barad, has suggested in a 2016 lecture called *Troubling Time/s, Undoing the Future*, we have “modern” scientists like Isaac Newton to thank for the idea that “the” future always follows linearly from “the” past. Like her, António Nóvoa and Tali Yariv-Mashal, among others, in a text from 2003 have invited us to think of time not as ‘a single “thread” (the thread of time)’ running between events and the past and the future but as ‘many threads (...) intertwined’ (p.

433). Echoing a comparison made between “the passage of time” and the “formation of a landscape” a decade earlier by the anthropologist Tim Ingold (1993, p. 152), Nóvoa and Yariv-Mashal (2003, p. 433) have likened the image of multiple times enmeshed to a “geological formation”, where we find layers of time’ crossing over. These layers of time, they claim, are to some extent specific but also have things in common, as they “influence” each other. Think of it as a “meeting” of things happened, happening, and imagined as due to happen, with various meanings attached to it depending on places, people and things involved. This meeting never stops, though; it is an on-going ‘process of transformation’ and it is this, as also Joyce Goodman has written very recently (2018), that gives a “width” and “thickness” to time. Usually, she argues, we tend to reduce this width and thickness when we draw boundaries between events and “the” past, present and future. We can’t escape cutting up time in one way or the other, but perhaps we can “cook up” time so that the “messy” relations of places, people and things that make up “strings” of times entwined are not lost entirely.

In what follows, I will engage in some cooking up of time myself, going back and forth between pasts, presents and futures bound up with a specific school. This school was founded in 1875 by Fanny Louisa Calder as the Liverpool Training School of Cookery and as of 1921 renamed the F.L. Calder College for Domestic Science, a college which later still (1981) merged with the I.M. Marsh College of Physical Training into Liverpool Polytechnic (since 1992 Liverpool John Moores University). The Liverpool Training School of Cookery wasn’t so much a school as it was an institute for teacher training, although it did also organise cooking classes for girls (and occasionally even boys) of primary school age. The school, above all though,

educated young middle-class women in the “art” of cookery, laundry, “housewifery” and other household branches, so as to enable them to help prepare mainly lower class girls and women in Liverpool and surrounding districts to make the best of the poor housing and living conditions they faced. Through cooking classes, the school believed, a waste of material and human resources, not to mention “intemperance”, could be prevented. Liverpool then being a major European harbour city and transatlantic gateway, the school also was to organise classes for ‘gentlemen and respectable emigrants’, to quote from a history of the institute published in 1967 and written by Margaret Scott, a then former staff member. This book paints a picture of unique foresight on the part the school’s foundress and likeminded “ladies”, such that the then present of the F.L. Calder College of Domestic Science seemed fully anticipated, indeed perfectly mirrored in its 90-year long past as the Liverpool Training School of Cookery.

The photo included here, like Margaret Scott’s book, dates from around the mid-1960s and can be seen to cook up time in quite similar ways. The photographer is unknown, but not so the young women pictured demonstrating “work study”, as applied to scone baking, and neither some places were the photo circulated. The image, preserved at the LJMU Special Collections and Archives alongside a dozen other images of no doubt partly staged household activities, among other places featured in a 1968 article of an unidentified local news outlet written by “target reporter” A.D. McWhinnie. With Elizabeth Edwards, it could be said that the photograph does not just show or represent an educational baking activity, but “performs” it, negotiating how past, present and future thereby “meet” each other through the precise place, people and materials involved. Here it performs above all a “timely” method used for “domestic

science” by F.C. Calder College in the education of ‘housewives-to-be’, to quote McWhinnie. According to him, the college ‘pioneered’ the ‘application of a management skill to household chores’, with guidance from the Merseyside Productivity Association. In his words, F.L. Calder College, for instance, set up ‘experiments with string diagrams, arcs of movement etc., as they related to needlework, cookery,’ and other curriculum subjects. Objectively measured were thereby ‘movements from larder to table to make coffee’, among other things. All this looked most promising for teaching-learning in an institute planning a Bachelor of Education Degree course in a field of education still in the process of establishing its scientific status. Management seemed the way forward, as it was bound up with “objective” measurement and (peer) observation. Here, a past Calder College present and future can be seen to meet a past from the Liverpool Training School of Cookery as well as a Liverpool John Moores present. I’ll explain by going back – and then forth.

From the start the Liverpool Training School of Cookery and Fanny Louisa Calder worked hard to get cookery education and “household economy” more generally recognised, first as an art and towards the end of century as a “science”. This was not just a local effort but a national, indeed international one that became part of a cookery education movement and, wider still, a women’s education movement. In fact, education in various household branches opened up new jobs for women, first for the middle classes, but soon for women in all walks of life (Akiyama, 2008). The Liverpool school, actively shaping such new times for women, was behind the formation of a Northern Union of Cookery Training Schools and the funding at a national level of practical cookery as a subject in elementary schools for girls (1882). Its work included classes for men and

women headed for the Continent, America, South Africa, Siam (Thailand) and other sovereign nations and colonies that were said to offer ‘instruction in the cookery of the foods appropriate to their destinations’ (Scott, 1965, p. 30). Increasing demand in classes for the colonies were linked to progress slowly made there as well as at home, but would the “modern” cookery methods exported from England have been seen as progress for people there? It may well be that different notions of time (for men and women, for Western and indigenous people, respectively) existed and influenced each other. In the West, women like Fanny L. Calder were moving on from times of ‘Victorian femininity’ (Scott, p. 30), claiming new roles and helping to bring about new times also for less privileged women as experts in household “management”.

Fast forward to 2018, a year in which practice-based Undergraduate Nutrition Programmes at Liverpool John Moores were shut down in a spirit of good business management. Looking back, perhaps “management” was not the way forward after all?

What other times do you feel need cooking up based on the photograph included above?