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REMEMBERING STATELESSNESS IN FOOD STORIES FROM JEWISH SHANGHAI



Anna Reading

In February 1943, a Proclamation was issued in Shanghai by the occupying Japanese military forces that required all stateless refugees to register at an internment camp: ‘Men who had never washed a plate in their lives were now scrubbing floors, washing their clothes in cold water and lining up dejectedly with their tin plates for their meals’ (Willens 2010: 145). Recollections of food, its presence and absence, its ingredients and its technologies, are the staple narrative of Liliane Willens’ memoir. Taking a multi-disciplinary and context-led approach to the memoir’s food stories, in this chapter I seek to illuminate how the Jewish diasporic presence within the ‘polycentric, decentred city’ of Shanghai left complex and contradictory memories caught between the tensions of European colonization and Jewish displacement (Abbas 2000: 774).

Little attention has been given to the complexity of the tensions between colonialism and statelessness in studies of ‘cultural memory’, which, in Jan Assman’s (2008: 109) sense of the term, stretches across historical, mythical and cultural time, making it an important baseline for cultural identity. Western Memory Studies, in its earlier years, analysed cultural memory primarily in relation to the nation state (Erlil and Rigney 2018) and it was not until the mid-2000s that the field reconceptualized memories as ‘traveling’ (Erlil 2011: 4–18), cosmopolitan (Levy and Sznajder 2010), globalized (Assman and Conrad 2010), transcultural (Bond and Rapson 2014) and

trans-nationalized (Erl and Rigney 2018). Yet, these Western and largely Anglo-centric mobility paradigms remain troubled by Western-Chinese cultural memories of 1930s and 1940s Jewish refugees in Shanghai (Zhuang and Erl 2014). Memories of the Jewish community from that period in Shanghai are complicated by being positioned betwixt and between identities and experiences of Western colonialism, historical Jewish identity, Japanese occupation and the Communist Revolution.

Jewish people started to arrive in Shanghai after the first Opium War in 1842, fleeing European and Russian antisemitism, with new waves of antisemitism and subsequent Nazism in the 1930s leading to Jews taking refuge until the end of the Second World War in the European Concessions of Shanghai (Pan 2019; Ristaino 2001). As in other colonized countries in Asia, while Jews arrived having lost their loved ones, their professions and their homes, they were at the same time unusually privileged as Europeans in a 'racialized hierarchy of "exotic" non-Western, colonial spaces' (Das 2018: np). In Willens' (2010) *Stateless in Shanghai*, memories of food materialize some of the contradictory experiences of Jewish people between the colonizers and the colonized, the nation and diaspora, between citizenship and statelessness. I set out to show in this chapter that Willens routinely recounts memories of being stateless in Shanghai through a synaesthetic drawing together of her recollections of food, of her family's privileged colonial position, and of the eventual loss of that position. By assembling the fragrances, tastes, preparation and consumption of food from her childhood, her youth and her return visit in adulthood to Shanghai, Willens evokes for both herself and for her readers what Katherine Swancutt, in the introduction to this volume, refers to as the 'conceptual, material and sensorial qualities' of memories. Seen in this light, Willens reflects upon food, statelessness and even her efforts to remake her cultural identity in the face of what might otherwise have been its imminent loss through a process that I propose here to call 'metabolizing memories'.

Metabolizing Memories

The crafting of food memories within Willens' memoir, I suggest, metabolizes memories in a way that transforms her difficult personal memories into cultural memory. My analytical metaphor of 'metabolizing memories' builds on Jean Seaton's (2009) idea of 'metabolizing' identities to express the ways in which people publicly express their relationships to nationality. The idea of the analytical metaphor within memory studies is developed by Jessica Rapson in her work in the American South in which she uses 'refining memory' as the guiding idea to 'bring attention to the hidden memories of slave labour as well as the process of segregation since the pro-

cess of refining sugar to make it white involves separation' (Rapson 2018: 1–2). I use 'metabolizing memory' similarly as a guiding metaphor for the ways in which personal experiences that may have been difficult to digest, that is to process, assimilate or express within communicative memory, are then transformed into public memory through a repeated mnemonic theme, metonym or trope within artistic or cultural expression. In Willens' memoir, food memories are frequently served with detailed stories of shopping for food, different culinary arts and a variety of manners and foodways, thus offering a rich foci for cultural memory analysis.

Food – its lack or abundance, its sourcing and cooking, its serving and eating, its gift and exchange, its digestion and indigestion – is both essential and commonplace to all human experience and forms some of our earliest and lasting memories (Holtzman 2006). Wherever human beings travel to or settle in, they find or grow food, often domesticating and raising animals that they kill, cook and eat. And in retelling stories of settlement and movement, they tend to remember vividly how food was adapted, remixed and remade (Rozin and Gohar 2011). Food materializes and dematerializes practices and encounters between cultures and identities, acting as a metonym for understanding migratory memories (Holtzman 2006). Food thus involves a complex mnemonic exchange, leading to the ingestion of experiences that cross the inside/outside boundaries of the self, as well as the self and the other with the meal or food changing and losing its original state and form.

How then do food memories metabolize the displacements and continuities of mnemonic exchange between the West and China? More specifically what do they reveal in terms of the experience of being without nationality or citizenship within a colonial enclave as with the stateless Jewish community in Shanghai?

Nationality, Citizenship and Statelessness

Ideas of nationality, citizenship and statelessness have different aetiologies within and outside of China. Within Western history they have their origins in ancient Greece and Rome in which citizens of a city-state, according to Aristotle, were required to fulfil seven criteria for citizenship that included age, class, nationality, nation, property, profession and sex. It was only with the development of the nation state in the eighteenth century that the citizen became defined in relation to only one state (Li and Wu 1999: 157). In China, although the word citizen emerged about two thousand years ago, meaning 'a person who worked for, and would be protected by, the state or emperor', the Western concept of citizenship was largely absent from law (Li and Wu 1999: 158). Even with the 'modern notion of citizenship' in the Law

of Election of the People's Republic of China in March 1953, there have been effectively 'three notions of the political subject: "people", nationals and citizens' (Li and Wu 1999: 158).

Most people do not have to think about their nationality since it is normally granted by the state through meeting one or more requirements. If a person is born into a particular territory, then they have the right of citizenship of that country under what is termed *jus soli* – the law of the soil. Or the person acquires or inherits citizenship through one or more of their biological parents under what is termed *jus sanguinis* – the law of blood. In addition, in most countries it is possible for a person to acquire citizenship through 'naturalization'.

At the international level, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 15) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 made nationality a human right and states that 'no-one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his (sic) nationality nor denied the right to change his (sic) nationality' (United Nations 1948). This implicit legal recognition of statelessness was 'motivated by the impulse to respond to the atrocities committed during the Second World War, among them mass denationalizations and huge population movements' (Goris, Harrington and Kohn 2009: 4). However, when the UN Convention for Refugees was first created in 1951 it did not include any definition for those who were stateless. Recognition of statelessness was only ratified in international law in 1954, following the need to identify those whose status was not covered by the 1951 Convention. Statelessness in international law nowadays refers to a person who 'has no national home, and is considered without a national identity or citizenship' (ibid., 4). While some refugees may be stateless, not all stateless people are refugees. In many cases, people who are stateless have never crossed an international border. The prime reason for a person to lose their nationality is as a result of racial or ethnic discrimination – as well as gender-biased citizenship laws. In addition, though, there are those who are unable to prove their nationality or who 'despite documentation, are denied access to many human rights that other citizens enjoy' (ibid., 4). In the case of the latter, a person may be 'stateless in practice' and as a result cannot rely on the state for protection (ibid., 4).

In China, nationality was something constructed through the legal system as well as through language, culture and territorial loyalty. Until the 1909 Nationality Law people born in China were required to demonstrate perpetual allegiance to China, which included not emigrating beyond China's borders. However, towards the end of the nineteenth century this began to change: 'This doctrine of perpetual allegiance, tolerable as it might have been at a time when nations were sufficient unto themselves, was incompatible with the adventurous and commercial spirit of the nineteenth century' (Tsai 1910).

After the first Opium War of 1839–1842, large numbers of Chinese citizens began to emigrate from China to seek what they considered to be a better life for themselves. Nonetheless, despite these changes, China did not change its law on citizenship in the nineteenth century, believing that to do so would be against the principle of divine right. Instead, it just ‘let matters drift’ resulting in an anachronism in relation to citizens who moved to European countries (Tsai 1910).

Shanghai’s Jewish History and Memory

After the first Opium War waged by the British State, the city of Shanghai was colonized by other European States. European powers seized Chinese territories which were termed ‘concessions’ providing Britain and other European countries with trade ports advantageous to them and supported by an infrastructure of European emigrants (Eber 2012). In addition to thousands of Europeans who had officially moved to work and reside in the International Settlement, the city permitted entry to tens of thousands of visa-less refugees in the 1920s and 1930s (Ristaino 2001; Eber 2012). This included many Jewish families forced to move to escape pogroms in Eastern Europe and Russia, White Russians escaping the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, and after 1933 Jews escaping Nazi Germany, including its occupied territories after 1938 (Goldstein 2015). These refugees and stateless Jews mingled with Middle Eastern Jews who had started to arrive in Shanghai in the 1840s fleeing earlier pogroms in Europe and Russia (Eber 2012; Goldstein 2015). By 1942 there were around 25–30,000 Jewish residents, both Sephardic and Ashkenazi. In Shanghai about 10 per cent of the non-Chinese population were interned with other ‘enemy nationals’ (Jakubowicz 2009: 101–102). By the outbreak of the Second World War there was a vibrant Jewish refugee community with six synagogues which became part of the Shanghai Jewish ghetto (Gruenberger 1950). After the war Jews sought exit papers and visas to leave China. Most went to Israel, Australia and the US (Iwry 2004; Finnane 1999). The majority of the Chinese Jewish population had migrated abroad by 1959.

Jewish homes, cultural buildings and synagogues were then taken over by the Chinese State and turned into public buildings (Pan 2019). In 2007, the Government of Hongkou District in Shanghai restored the Ohel Moshe synagogue to its original architectural style, based on historic drawings in the municipal archives, and opened it as a museum commemorating the Jewish refugees of Shanghai (Wang 2017; Pan 2019). In the twenty-first century, digital technologies afforded new kinds of access and mobilization of archival stories and memories about and by the Chinese-Jewish population (Jakubowicz 2009).

Modern Shanghai might suggest itself then as an historically emerging cosmopolis – a utopian transnational place where people can move across the usual boundaries required in national life. However, as Belinda Kong suggests, Shanghai ‘presents a complication’ (2009: 280). On the one hand it has a cosmopolitan reputation yet ‘its status as a modern metropolis (literally a “mother city” replete with imperial overtones) originated precisely at the historical moment of its colonisation, when it was forcibly opened to Western trade and settlement’ (Kong 2009: 280). Mnemonically, Shanghai is a city that ‘brings together location and globality but simultaneously reminds us that a world city may emerge, not from civilizational self-development or democratic consent, but from military and imperial conquest’ (Kong 2009: 280).

Once at the periphery of cultural memory, accounts of Jewish exile in Shanghai have, in recent years, undergone a degree of uneven globalization through digitization. Eyewitness accounts written during the 1930s and 1940s rendered through the material memories of letters, diaries, newspapers and written testimonies have been re-mediated and further materialized through a range of artistic forms including novels, films, museums exhibitions and comic books. These bring into global view accounts of the Jewish community expanding and settling in Shanghai between the two world wars (Zhuang and Erlil 2014). Shanghai has since been interpreted through its sense of futurity dialectically bound up with memory (Lagerkvist 2013) as well as the fractured sense of multiplicity and mobility in accounts by both Chinese and Western authors born into Shanghai’s cosmopolitan colonialism (Kong 2009: 281).

Liliane Willens’ *Stateless in Shanghai* (2010), although part of the wider emergence of memoirs by the Jewish diaspora from Shanghai (see Tobias 1999; Heppner 1993), is distinct because Willens was born in Shanghai and her memoir tells the story of inherited national displacements combined with colonial privilege, as well as of a navigating between multiple national identities, histories, cultures and languages. Born in the French Concession of Shanghai, Willens eventually learns that her father obscures the memory of her Russian identity and feeds her instead a false memory of a European-Romanian identity. It is only when it becomes apparent that the family should leave Communist China after the Second World War that it becomes clear that in fact Willens and her family are stateless.

The memoir begins by recounting how Liliane Willens’ father was born in 1894 in Radomyshel, then part of the Russian Empire known as the Pale of Settlement created by Catherine the Great in which the one million Jewish population was frequently subjected to violent antisemitic pogroms from their non-Jewish neighbours. The violence led to her father fleeing to Vladivostok in 1916, to Harbin in Manchuria in 1919, and then to Shanghai in

1920, where he claimed he was a Romanian national. Liliane's mother, we are told, was born in 1902 in Novosibirsk in Siberia: her great-grandfather, having served twenty-five years in the Russian army, was allowed to live outside of the Pale of Settlement (Willens 2010: 8).

The food stories in Willens' memoir begin with the inherited memory of Willens' great-grandfather's bakery, which they had to sell before fleeing to Harbin in China because of the Russian Revolution. Unable to make a living baking in Harbin, they moved again to Shanghai. Then in 1921 they lost their Russian citizenship because the Soviets 'denationalised all the Russians who fled the Rodina (Motherland) during and immediately after the Revolution' (Willens 2010: 8). At the same time, in Shanghai her parents experienced for the first time living without being subject to antisemitic laws or prejudice: 'Here it was the Chinese who were being treated as second-class citizens in their own country. Once settled, stateless refugees would often act in the same discriminatory manner towards the Chinese as did the treaty power's nationals' (Willens 2010: 17). The stateless place of exile in Shanghai for Willens is thus the home where she was born in 1927 and where she subsequently spent her childhood and young adulthood until 1951.

Within Willens' memoir, stories of food feature regularly. Studies by John S. Allen (2012) and Deborah Lupton (1994) suggest that it is through memories of food that people craft cultural tastes and complex identities. Both food and memory are what Jon D. Holtzman characterizes as 'a floating signifier, albeit in different ways': food is a multi-layered and multi-dimensional subject, while cultural memory likewise may range from literary accounts to the personal nostalgia of the 'tea-soaked biscuit' (2006: 362). Stories about food articulate the tensions between local, ethnic and national memory cultures as well as diasporic and mixed or hybrid memories.

As discussed in the chapters by Wei Luan (this volume) and Yejun Zou (this volume), food (or the lack of it) relate to the mnemonics of a person's embodied identity. But in addition, Willens uses her food memories to help process, or 'metabolize', the ways in which the usual roots/routes to citizenship through blood, soil or naturalization become at times blocked or complicated by her statelessness. For example, Jewish dishes that might in other situations be remembered as being inherited through 'blood' or family are recalled on a material, sensorial and even synaesthetic level through descriptions of how they were prepared and served by her Chinese cook and servants. Food stories that otherwise might be reminders of a much loved homeland are crafted in terms of her family's displacement and fear of contamination from European and Chinese national soil. Here, then, the food and culinary arts often acquired as part of a process of naturalization by a host nationality or national culture are absent. In the next section I analyse Willens' food memories and how she draws upon these to metabolize

the absences of cultural identity brought about by statelessness relating to blood, soil and naturalization.

Blood

Early on in Willens' autobiography there is a black and white photograph tellingly entitled 'Birthdays with Amah's' (2010: 32). As the title of the photograph suggests, citizenship acquired through one's parents or through 'blood' is complicated by the fact that in Shanghai, as in many other British and European colonies in China and elsewhere, the children of colonizers were raised by local inhabitants. In China it was poor peasant women or 'Amahs' who came to the city and lived in cramped conditions in colonizers' homes and who did the affective and practical caring, including shopping for food, feeding and eating with the colonizers' children. Thus, the photograph shows European children celebrating a child's day of birth. Rather than sitting on the laps of their blood mothers, the white colonial children sit uneasily on the laps of their Amahs around a table laden with European style baked cakes with cream and decorations served with tea in teacups on a white tablecloth with silver cutlery. On the right hand-side we see two European mothers and at the back a European mother and father. They stand uninvolved, observing the scene, at a distance from their children.

Willens extends this sense of alienation from her blood mother through recollections of shopping for and eating Chinese street food with her Old Amah. The intimate moments she shares are not memories of eating European food or Jewish food with her mother, but memories of sampling Chinese and Shanghainese food sold by street vendors and in the local markets. She describes how in the 1920s and 1930s, when she was around the age of six, she would accompany Old Amah on her shopping trips. They would pass 'the moo dong man' who collects human waste in wooden buckets (Willens 2010: 30). She recollects how she would look forward to these outings because 'old Amah' would bite off small pieces of meat, fish and baked dough and give them to Willens to eat. With this, the story told then is of the Chinese Amah's saliva literally mixed up with the food that the child takes, chews, swallows and ingests. The descriptions are mouth-watering, detailed and rich:

When old Amah had a few extra copper coins to spare, she bought a piece of dough fried in sizzling oil which she blew upon before handing it to me. She would also share with me breakfast food, small da bing pancake and the you tiao, strings of dough fried in boiling oil and then twirled by the vendor into an elongated shape.... When Old Amah was feeling extra generous, she bought and shared with me the pyramid-shaped zongzi filled with glutinous rice and wrapped in palm leaves, which I munched with delight. For dessert, which she bought me

when I nagged her sufficiently, there were the sticky yuan xiao balls of rice covered with sesame seeds. (Willens 2010: 31)

Food memories in other studies have been shown to be seasonal and include prospective memories with the anticipation of eating again a particular seasonal delicacy or feast related food, with the repetition and rituals associated with the creation and consumption of certain foods and drinking events (Sutton 2000 and 2001). With Willens' food stories, these root the seasons and changes of the year predominantly through Chinese rather than European or Jewish festivals: 'I especially enjoyed the Chinese mid-autumn festival since old Amah would always buy me dousha bao, a cake filled with mashed sweet red beans that she knew I preferred to the cakes and sweets we ate at teatime in our home' (Willens 2010: 31).

As the narrative progresses, Willens recalls teenage adventures on her bicycle particularly in the autumn and winter, 'to buy sweet potatoes and chestnuts. When the weather started getting warm we purchased sugarcane, enjoying the sweet taste of juice and spitting out the husks as we cycled to our respective homes' (Willens 2010: 77).

David E. Sutton (2000 and 2001) has shown that people remember temporally and geographically distant events through what they recall they were eating at the time and in that place, with embodied and sensorial experiences constructed through both the absence and presence of a given food. This synaesthetic experience becomes evident when Willens is forced to leave Shanghai and finally obtains her exit papers to travel by train across China, at which point she realizes that the forbidden Chinese food that she loved and secretly ate with her Amah is particular to the city of Shanghai (Willens 2010: 261).

Food in other studies has been shown to validate and maintain ethnic identities (Brown and Mussell 1984, Comito 2001, Douglas 1984, Gabbacia 1998, Gillespie 1984, Humphrey and Humphrey 1988, Kalčík 1984, Lockwood and Lockwood 2000, Powers and Powers 1984, Shortridge and Shortridge 1998). However, as Holtzman (2006) notes, there is a problem in that such accounts rely uncritically on ideas of cultural resistance to acculturation. Thus, while Willens' food memories seem to show her acculturation of Chinese culture, they are also the means for coming to terms with a number of contradictions arising from her statelessness within a colonial concession.

It is useful here to expand on this point. Migrant memories often include food deprivation (Diner 2003) but Willens' experience of nurture and repletion through Chinese food with her Amah is juxtaposed with memories not of her own deprivation but of Chinese peoples' hunger: as they eat, Old Amah shoos away the starving street children. 'I thought it was silly of them to stare at me while I was eating and wondered why their mothers did not

buy them food' (Willens 2010: 32). Further on, Willens recalls 'the sight of near-starving adults and children in the streets not far from the warm and safe enclave of our home in the French Concession' (Willens 2010: 35), with beggars a 'permanent fixture' alongside the disturbing image of Chinese mothers with emaciated breasts trying to suckle their starving infants (Willens 2010: 37). The 'emaciated breast' of the Chinese mother is a reminder of what Orlando Patterson terms the 'natal alienation' created through the destruction of maternal bonds that are a feature of relationships within colonization (Patterson 1982: 7).

Willens recollects that her consumption of Chinese street food acquired with her Amah was a secret. The Chinese treats are not validated through being bought openly from the family shopping allowance but are purchased from Old Amah's own money. These memories of secret treats with her Amah are recalled, and I suggest, ultimately metabolized through Willens' own realization that Old Amah perhaps paid for the Chinese delicacies out of her own money because Willens' parents forbade her to eat food made in 'such unsanitary conditions' (2010: 32). She then confesses that she never told her own mother about eating these forbidden delicacies because if she had done so, then her trips into the markets and streets beyond the colonial concessions would have ended. The shopping for and eating of Chinese delicacies and food thus acts as a cultural metonym through which memories of statelessness – the displacement of European citizenship and the absence of Chinese citizenship – are recalled, recounted and effectively metabolized by Willens, who invites readers to imaginatively empathize with her own experience. Old Amah's choice to take her on market trips and buy treats for her with her own money suggests that Old Amah envisaged herself as a 'dry mother' (*ganmiang* 干娘) or godmother to Willens, treating her within Chinese custom as she would her own daughter. At the same time, however, Willens is not and can never be a Chinese citizen *jus sanguinis* – by blood.

Soil

Memories of food within Willens' memoir are also associated in complex ways with soil and land, which is suggestive of the loss or impossibility of gaining citizenship through being born on a particular national territory, land or 'soil'. Soil in Willens' narrative is not remembered as something that food is grown from, or that provides her with cultural or mnemonic roots. Rather, soil is recalled as a source of contamination, potential poisoning and disease. When Willens describes how she eats at street vendors with her Amah, she says 'We slurped the soup from the same bowl and spoon' (Willens 2010: 33). Yet this intimate pleasure is followed with a recollection of the Chinese street vendors' equipment and culinary practices in which the

spoon and bowl had been ‘washed earlier in grayish water with a soiled rag the vendor dried on his sleeve’ (Willens 2010: 33).

The vivid descriptions of eating with her Old Chinese Amah or dry mother are juxtaposed with recollections of European food as a bland, colourless list of items: ‘The food I ate in the marketplace was much tastier than the meat, chicken, potatoes, vegetables and soup we ate at home’ (Willens 2010: 32). European food is associated with chewing and taking her time: ‘I was always told to eat slowly’ (Willens 2010: 32). As Sebastian Abrahamsson notes, ‘Food can be ‘wolfed down or savoured slowly; and it can be ingested, digested and metabolized at different speeds in relation to an eating body’ (2014: 1). Meals are recalled as served on a table with linen, crockery and metal cutlery and associated with the meticulous ritual removal of all external evidence of the meal entering the body: I was always told to ‘wipe my mouth with the napkin’ (Willens 2010: 32).

Fear of contamination through or by food for the stateless Willens, then, is not only remembered in relation to Chinese food but also European food. The contamination from the Chinese soil that the food grows in, however, is developed further through recollections of how ingredients sourced from land near Shanghai were prepared by their Chinese cook, Shao Wang. Willens recalls how he was required daily to wash the locally grown vegetables and fruit with a strong solution of potassium permanganate ‘to cleanse them properly’ because ‘all had been fertilized in the countryside with human manure’ (Willens 2010: 38). Potassium permanganate was an imported chemical compound routinely used within European countries from the mid-1850s as disinfectant: in this case it removes Chinese ‘soil’ as both land and faecal matter. Similarly, the water is recollected as undrinkable and heavily chlorinated, requiring first to be ‘boiled’ and then cooled in the refrigerator (Willens 2010: 38). The memories thus articulate a well-worn colonial household obsession with keeping the dirt and disease of the colonized at bay (Leong-Salobir 2011). The epitome of this contamination is the story of herself as a child trying to copy the Chinese children going to the toilet on the street. However, unlike Chinese children, her trousers are not split on the backside and she defecates in them, thereby soiling herself with the indigestible waste products of her secret consumption of Chinese food.

In the final part of the memoir, Willens describes returning in the late 1990s to Shanghai and her experience of vivid moments of synaesthesia and gustatory nostalgia: ‘vendors still crowded the streets selling the food I had always enjoyed eating, especially the crispy, oily da bing and you tiao. When I bit into the latter after so many years, the aroma lured me back in time to the voice of Old Amah’ (Willens 2010: 295).

Just as Benoît Vermander (this volume) and Yejun Zou (this volume) demonstrate, the significance of nostalgia has been shown to provide a mne-

monic link to a lost time and place. In Willens' case, this lost time and place might be reached through the consumption of particular foods (Sutton 2000 and 2001). Gustatory nostalgia is invoked through a variety of materialities, 'ranging from the sensory clues the shops evoke, the cultural mnemonics of the commodities purchased, and how the goods acquired allow for practices that foster historically validated forms of identity' (Holtzman 2006: 367). Food memories become the nexus for diasporic identities in the context of globalization (Ray 2004), such that persons recall, recount and imaginatively identify with stories of gustatory nostalgia. By sharing nostalgic stories of food, persons open up social spaces in which they can reflect upon, and metabolize, their longing for a time or place that they had previously experienced. Willens in this case is also able to contrast recollections of dirt, contamination and poverty with both the recent shift in China towards a perceived cleanliness and the absence of poverty or hunger sampled from her secure and no longer stateless position as an American citizen. She thus recounts that on her return trip to Shanghai as an adult, years after she had left China, 'the vendors now wore white cotton caps and clean smocks over jeans and T-shirts and cooked food at much cleaner stalls than in the past' (Willens 2010: 295).

Naturalization

Naturalization is the third way in which a displaced individual or migrant may acquire citizenship. Naturalization requires not just residency but acquisition of particular knowledge and understanding of the culture that one resides and, indeed, cooks and eats in. While the acquisition of citizenship through naturalization in some states might include a civics or loyalty test and an oath of allegiance, in terms of food, naturalization involves acquiring knowledge of local produce, as well as the skills and manners to cook, serve and eat dishes within the culture of one's adopted home. Willens' experience of growing up in Shanghai does not lead to citizenship through naturalization and this is articulated through her recollections of denaturalization in relation to foodways.

When Willens recalls being on the street with her Amah, she describes 'picking up' 'native habits' that include 'spitting sunflower seeds in the streets, belching loudly after gulping down my bowl of rice' (Willens 2010: 34). Gulping food noisily and consuming quickly may have been considered rude in Willens' household, but this is also considered to be rude within China. As Eugene Cooper suggests, even on the street the mode is to think of others: 'At the macro level of China's great tradition, one finds such behaviour characteristic of the chun-tze, the individual skilled in the li (etiquette, rites, and ceremonies)' (1986: 183). Willens' choice of language –

‘spitting’, ‘belching’ and ‘gulping’ – suggests an awareness that street food may be consumed through Chinese ways of eating (2010: 34). Yet her language also connotes a partial knowledge, a de-naturalized colonial mindset that overlays disgust with relish and thereby ‘others’ the manner of Chinese food consumption in relation to the ‘refinements’ of the West. This of course raises the question of how far Willens identified empathetically with, or metabolized, her statelessness as a child and youth in Shanghai.

Although Willens was born in Shanghai and lived there into her twenties, her stories of food and foodways reveal that she never acquired the skills of Chinese cooking or, indeed, cooking of any kind including that of European, Jewish or Russian cuisine. She does not even make a picnic herself or lay a table. Her memories of all culinary arts and surrounding food cultures are thus one important key to how she comes to identify, and ultimately metabolize, the impossibility of citizenship through any kind of naturalization.

Other studies suggest how migrant food memories construct ‘traditions’ that may in fact be a relatively recent adoption (Tuchman and Levine 1993) or may be crafted in new environments by migrant communities or for migrant communities with particular adaptations by a proxy local chef or cook around the absence or presence of particular ingredients, skills or technologies (Abarca 2004). Willens tells us that her mother, because her father insisted, kept a partially kosher home including going to a shop that sold meats cleaned under the supervision of a rabbi. For Passover ‘Cook and Old Amah would have to clean all the cupboards and replace all the china, cutlery, tablecloth and napkins with those set aside for Passover week’ (Willens 2010: 60). It is the Chinese cook Shao Wang who is taught by her mother to create Jewish feasts (Willens 2010: 60) while Willens and her sister remain ignorant of how to cook Jewish food, with no culturally inherited culinary skills from their mother.

As the narrative progresses through the late 1930s, it is memories of the colonizers’ European and sometimes American foodstuffs that are described, the latter perhaps prefiguring her later acquisition of US citizenship (Willens 2010: 85). Willens recalls children’s parties with ‘ice-cream, candies and cake’ (2010: 58) and the refined cakes served at tea parties in the homes of French, Swiss, Italian, stateless Russian and other European nationalities. Her mother would make ‘her mouth-watering cream cakes while Shao Wang baked his celebrated sponge cake’ (Willens 2010: 59). Yet it is not her mother but Shao Wang who would spend days scouring the market for exactly the right ingredients. After the guests arrived, ‘when my mother indicated the guests were ready’, it was Shao Wang who ‘carefully poured the tea into delicate little cups, adding a slice of lemon, and then cut the cake, which we children later ate’ (Willens 2010: 59).

Stories of food may signify the memory of the loss of a place or time that the individual has not directly suffered (Appadurai 1996: 78). Thus, Willens describes how her mother taught Shao Wang to prepare Russian dishes including 'zakushi' and 'pirochki' (meat in an oily dough) and 'pelmeni, small dumplings with meat or vegetable', a native dish of Siberia (Willens 2010: 60). While dumplings are found in many cultures and there is a sense in which Shao Wang would have found the preparation of these familiar, the story reveals the contradiction that it was the Chinese cook who was 'naturalized' into the Jewish Russian household and food of the French concession, rather than Willens and her family becoming acclimated to Chinese culture through Chinese foodways.

This imperialist relationship between the stateless Russian Jewish family and their Chinese cook is recounted as having undergone major changes in the late 1930s as increasing numbers of Jewish refugees from Austria and Germany arrived in Shanghai. Although Willens remembers that there were parties and dinners, she also recalls that her father regularly drove her mother to the refugee processing centres to donate 'foodstuffs and clothing' (2010: 116). As she learns that the story of her Romanian national identity is a false narrative made up by her parents, she saves up to go to the French bakery to buy croissants, baguettes and chocolate. 'Since I realised now that I was stateless, the French Concession became my country' (Willens 2010: 117).

After the Japanese takeover of Shanghai in 1937 her father loses his job; Shao Wang is let go and her mother supports the family through sewing clothes with Lao Papa, a Chinese tailor. Her memories change to recollections of directly experienced hunger, food scarcity and food charity, which unfold in tandem with memories of stitching at home with Lao Papa who shares with a hungry Willens his simple lunch of rice, vegetables and fish.

As the war progresses, the lack of food in Willens' memoir serves as a cultural metonym for the removal of any remaining state protection, including any protection by European colonizers. Willens' memories thus become those of poor nutrition, of toxic fumes from charcoal stoves, and witnessing others' starvation. In 1942 Shanghai residents are given ration cards and line up on a daily basis to buy bread (Willens 2010: 136). The family can no longer run the Western refrigerator since electricity is curtailed to a few hours a day. Gas for cooking is restricted which leads to her mother buying a Chinese hibachi charcoal stove, which in summer they cook with outside and in winter they cook with inside, opening the window to let out the acrid smoke: 'The priority for all residents was to purchase rationed food before it disappeared from the specially designated stores. Rice, oil and sugar could be purchased illegally on the black market but at much higher prices' (Willens 2010: 143). Willens recalls the family's meagre rations with the memory

of bundles of dead babies on the streets: in Shanghai around 300 children starved to death each night. Much like Luan (this volume) shows in her discussion of Mo Yan's novel *Big Breasts and Wide Hips*, Willens invites her readership to empathetically identify not only with the history and public memories in China of the lack of food, but with the often dramatic experiences of survival that accompany them.

By February 1943 a Proclamation required all stateless refugees to register for an internment camp (Willens 2010: 145). Most of Willens' friends and their families are interned but the Willens family remain free since they had entered Shanghai before 1937. Her Australian Uncle Ralph, and his daughter are, however, quickly interned. Thus, as with Willens' memories of the starvation of others on the streets, her memories of internment are close but not actually her own: she hears from relatives the complaint of perpetual hunger, 'meals being limited to a bowl of gruel, a piece of brown bread, rice with cabbage or beans, and tea brewed from overused leaves' (Willens 2010: 147).

They celebrate VE day with iced water and tea. And after Japan surrenders on 15 August 1945, American B-29s airdrop food packages at the internment camps. Quickly, Willens' family recommences a hectic social life of 'tiffins', luncheons, teas and dinners, one highlight of which is a trip aboard HMS Euryalus with a story of food abundance that includes a 'table laden with scones, biscuits, marmalade, and pineapple juice' (Willens 2010: 192). When she returns from the internment camp her aunt remarks how strange it was to use china and silverware and to sit at a table with a cloth (Willens 2010: 179). Her memories of Chinese food also become more vivid again: in the celebrations for Chinese New Year Willens remembers buying chestnuts and '*da bing* and *you tiao*, as well as sweet rice wrapped in palm leaves and buns coloured red for the occasion' (Willens 2010: 189). At twenty, she admits that despite the War she is in a 'cocoon in the comfortable last vestiges of colonialism' (Willens 2010: 195).

After she gains her exit visa and leaves Communist China for Japan, Willens lives at the YMCA in Tokyo. She recounts no stories of Japanese food, but rather pre-figures her US citizenship through recollecting how she often ate in an American restaurant across the road from the hostel and how she 'often purchased the latest delicacies from the United States and other countries from speciality stores reserved for foreigners only' (Willens 2010: 269). For the first time in the entire memoir Willens describes the purchase and preservation of her own food in the communal refrigerator and describes cooking for herself: while it is only the boiling of water on a hot plate, this food memory simultaneously evokes the end of statelessness and her future American citizenship.

Conclusion

Memories of food and foodways feature prominently in Willens' memoir, and in analysing some of these, I have sought to highlight some of the contradictory experiences of statelessness for Jewish people in colonial Shanghai. Willens' stories of food reveal difficult personal or communicative memories. Her stories also recount the experience of holding multiple and contradictory cultural identities as a stateless person that are sometimes fragmented and difficult to personally digest: these include her experience of discovering the false memory of her Romanian nationality, being part of the Jewish diaspora, living within a European concession, and being raised by Chinese servants while attending a French school. Stories of food in the memoir act as metonyms for complex memories of statelessness and the absence and impossibility of citizenship through blood, soil or naturalization as a Jewish person in Shanghai.

The exploration of cultural memories of Jewish Shanghai also provides insights into the relatively unexplored tensions between colonialism and statelessness, which is a lacuna within narrative and memory studies. Attention over the past decade has been given to narratives and memories that may be connected, move, travel and migrate beyond national boundaries, thereby leading to cosmopolitan, globalized and transcultural memories. But my analysis of cultural memories within the complex and multi-layered city of Shanghai suggests the need to pay more attention to narratives that invite readers to imaginatively identify with, and indeed metabolize, the personal, social and cultural memories of others who have found themselves trapped by historical conflicts and unable to move, with no citizenship and no clear national identity, despite the privileges they enjoyed through colonial occupation. Historically, not just in China but in many countries of the world, Britain and other European countries left complex colonial legacies from occupation that involved privileged economic concessions for a minority, as well as forced migration and displacement. We might find in these places a collision of cultures, a mixing and intermingling of hybridized identities and memories that are easy to digest, that move. Yet we also need to be attentive, as this chapter suggests, to the fact that there will also be narratives and communicative memories that were clearly difficult to digest. It is through cultural memory forms – such as the memoir – that the complex legacies between Britain and China may be shared and metabolized into a transnational body politic.

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