nutritionists to convey, especially in those communities where large body size has traditionally been valued (Pollock 1995).

Nutritionists and anthropologists continue their dialogue about food and its wider importance, leading to a wider range of ideas for nutrition educators on meal structures, variations in eating, cooking, and gastronomic principles, as well as to new ideas about the links between food and health.

10.5 The Social Language of Food

The social language of food incorporates not only the material entities of foodstuffs but also the wider place of food in social interactions. Food 'communicates' through a set of categories in which values are embedded. As a code, 'the message [that food] encodes will be found in the pattern of social relationships being expressed. The message is about different degrees of hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion, boundaries and transactions across boundaries' (Douglas 1975: 249). Following Lévi-Strauss's use of binary pairs, such as raw and cooked foods, Douglas draws a contrast between the food categories of meals and drinks as social events, in order to ask whether 'a correspondence is found between a given social structure and the structure of symbols by which it is expressed, the question of consciousness' (p. 251). Alternatively, Barthes argues for:

> the (necessary) widening of the very notion of food…as more than a collection of products that can be used for statistical or nutritional studies. It is also at the same time, a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usages, situations, and behaviour…Food sums up and transmits a situation; it constitutes an information; it signifies. (Barthes 1997: 21)

The importance of understanding food in its social setting is that it takes us beyond material elements, such as price or chemical components, to discern another layer of categorization. Material objects, whether rice or haggis, embody a range of gastronomic features that include the esteem associated with those foods, the value of labour inputs, the 'proper' foods appropriate to a specific occasion, the ideological principles meeting commitments through sharing, and the panoply of ideological factors behind food sharing.

p. 245 The many dimensions of food sharing are well illustrated by the multivalence of the Tongan concept of *kainga.* Literally it refers to food (*kai*) for the group (*nga*). But the term is used most frequently to refer to a family group including the space around the household. Tevita Ka'ili (2005) explains the many spaces (*va*) that are alluded to when the term *kainga* is used, whether physical or social spaces. It may refer to a household, or to a church group that shares food and a place to stay, particularly for Tongan groups overseas in California or Maui (p. 101). This multi-layered concept signifies the multitude of ways in which food sharing reinforces social bonds.

Sharing food across national boundaries has increased exponentially around the world in the last forty years (Pollock 2009). As families and individuals establish new communities in metropolitan settings, the foods they share reinforce wider social networks, as they exchange news and ideas and refurbish their national language. Nostalgia for a former way of life is evoked by the tastes and smells of 'home', even if alternative foods, or means of cooking, must be substituted for the 'real thing' (Kolo 1990). Trying to recreate experiences associated with cooking in an earth oven in an urban environment beyond the islands can meet with social disapproval of the new host community—as in suburbs of New Zealand towns, when a Pacific island church group wishes to warm the ties with home through the smell of cooking from an *'umu* (earth oven). The joy of meeting and exchanging news of others is strengthened by familiar tastes and smells, despite the restrictions.