Ninth Symposium of
Australian Gastronomy
St John's College
University of Sydney
10-14 April 1996

Power breakfasts power to the people *power shoulders* power bloc powermonger power play POWER STRUGGLE power packed knowledge is power

food & power

to the power[10] throne power the powers that be the power of one powersteering *balance of power* power lunches power struggle power corrupts POWER OF THE PRESS *the power and the glory* power loving power without responsibility

PROCEEDINGS OF

THE NINTH SYMPOSIUM
OF AUSTRALIAN GASTRONONY

food & power

Sydney, 10–14 April, 1996

St John's College
University of Sydney

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Convenors:

Back Row (L to R): Courtney Clark, Gayl Jenkins, Hilary Wright, Alan Saunders, Maria Kelly, Ross Kelly, Colin Sheringham. Front Row (L to R): Chris Downes, Sara Adey, Pamela Gillespie, Jane Adams.

Not in Photo: Cherry Ripe, Gillian Hurley-Gordon, David Dale.

Design: Broad Concepts, Editing: Jane Adams, Copy Editing: Belinda Henwood

Photographs: Daniele Mattioli

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email: treloars@treloars.com

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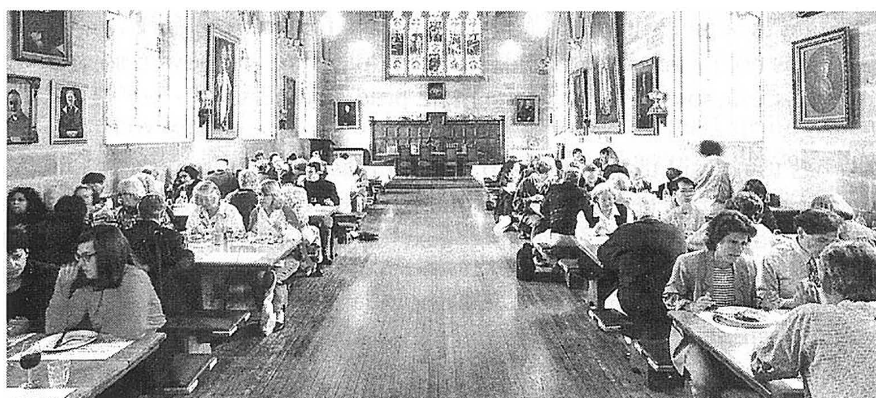


The First Supper – St John's College.

introDUCTION

Every symposium of Australian gastronomy has had two aspects. One the one hand, there has been something that could happen anywhere: the intellectual, and sometimes very abstract, discussion of what we eat and why we eat it. On the other hand, there has always been a particular location that has shaped and coloured both the food consumed at the symposium and the discussion around it. It was the location (a theological seminary) that lent a religious aura to discussions at the fifth symposium, just as talk about ecology and primary produce was given focus by the bracing discomforts of the retro-hippy encampment in the bush that was the tenth symposium.

As it happens, most of the intellectual action at the ninth symposium also took place at a religious college but this was in Sydney, and Sydney has never been a very religious place. It is, and always has been, a city happily obsessed with power, property and pleasure, and, in organising the symposium, we saw no reason to hide from this fact. The result was certainly not an idealistic or noble symposium, but then it was never meant to be.

food & power

As the following proceedings reveal, our discussions explored thoroughly the many connections between food and power, but the meals did so as well. The most innocent of these was, perhaps, breakfast at Bondi on the final day, enhanced not only by Leif Etournaud's food but also by a school of dolphins, which, right on cue, put on a spectacular display.

The other meals were more deeply implicated in the themes of the symposium and, as a consequence, were not without their critics. Easily most popular, perhaps, was the poverty lunch organised by Sean Moran, who did wonders with brussels sprouts and introduced dripping to people, many of whom (in these olive-oil-obsessed days) have probably never encountered it before.

Serge Dansereau's futuristic dinner (incongruously held in the Gothic splendour of St John's College) offered excellent food in a style that many diners couldn't handle: *sous-vide* duck in plastic bags that you had to snip open with the scissors provided. This was followed by hot dogs and tequila – slightly off-message as far as the theme of the symposium was concerned, though both were provided by Professor Bruce Kraig from Chicago, an expert in these matters whose offerings we certainly weren't going to turn down, theme or not. Here, and elsewhere in the symposium, TV cameras were present, which, again, disturbed those symposiasts for whom an occult, Masonic atmosphere has come to seem essential to these meetings. The organising committee, however, took the view that getting so many people together to talk so knowledgeably about food is not something to be ashamed of and that it is worthy of public celebration.

Many of the symposium's themes came together in the final dinner at the Opera House, organised by Christine Manfield and Lew Kathreptis. Secret police, clad in black, ushered us to our seats, slaves brought in some of the food and drag queens forced us to go down on our rather phallic desserts. It was both a celebration and a satire of pleasure and power, so effective that its irony was, it would seem, lost on some of the more prudish diners.

Finally, it has to be said that there is no general reason for the record-breaking delay in the appearance of these proceedings: a multitude of gremlins got into the works, each at a separate stage in the production process. We apologise for the delay; but we are happy and proud to offer this volume now.

Dr Alan Saunders

proLOGUE

REMEMBRANCES OF SYMPOSIA PAST

Dr Barbara Santich, University of Adelaide

Since the first symposium in 1984 – a lively and exhilarating occasion which inspired euphoria and much subsequent activity but alas no descriptions (except of Philip Searle's legendary banquet) – I have written reports for publication in *Petits Propos Culinaires*. Fortunately, given the vagaries of memory, most were published, reminding me of the ideas and meals which I found memorable at each of the nine symposia of Australian Gastronomy held to date.

It all began in Adelaide in 1984 with about forty-five participants, including Alan Davidson, joint founder of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery. We had no idea how people would respond, but the buzz of conversation at lunch the first day (freshly cooked lobster – thanks to Cath Kerry – with mayonnaise, home-baked brown bread and butter) dispelled all qualms. The spectacular final banquet conceived by Phillip Searle and Cheong Liew, has since become gastronomic legend.

One result of the first symposium of Australian Gastronomy was to establish Brillat-Savarin as sage and guru, to be respected if not always followed. His book, *Physiology of Taste*, has provided a kind of background to subsequent gatherings. Gay Bilson's choice of title – 'The Upstart Cuisine' – was, in retrospect, even more relevant than it seemed at the time, for it sparked a questioning process which continued through the next several symposia: our role, place and identity in the culinary world.

With the 1980s shaping as the decade of the 'foodie' – or perhaps 'nouveau foodie' – the topic of 'Foodism: Philosophy or Fad?' seemed appropriate for the second symposium. No definite conclusion was reached, though there was strong support for philosophy in several papers: an outline of the gastronomic tradition established by Athenaeus, and continued by Platina and Brillat-Savarin; an exposition of the philosophical doctrines of Epicurus; and the postulation of a theoretical foundation for gastronomy. A more precise understanding of gastronomy began to evolve: neither an art nor a science, rather gastronomy is an ethic, a guide to an art of living.

Meals at Australian symposia are intended to say as much as the formal sessions. Thus, preceding a discussion on markets was a visit to the soon-to-be-relocated Adelaide wholesale market and lunch at Ruby's Cafe, a market institution. Under the original Ruby (Jones), it served hearty steak-and-eggs breakfasts to farmers. At the following lunch the foods all related to the papers presented that morning: thus, a selection of quandongs, pistachios and macadamia nuts; a platter of fresh asparagus with a dressing of tomatoes, fresh coriander and spices; pickled vegetables, Middle Eastern style; couscous; and a cheese board with all the cheeses stuck with little flags announcing their names. To conclude, The Australian dinner, presenting many people with their first taste of kangaroo – 'best piece of beef I've had for years!' was one comment – and a quandong tart for dessert.

it began in Adelaide in *1984* with about 45 participants

The third symposium, with its theme of 'A Multiculinary Society', moved to Melbourne with one day in the romantic-pastoral setting of Montsalvat and one at the University of Melbourne. It was larger than previous symposia – about 80 participants, 18 papers, 2 discussion sessions and an (optional) market tour. Defining multiculinarism as the co-existence of many cuisines and the awareness of other cuisines, Anthony Corones gave examples of multiculinary societies in the ancient world and explained how multiculinarism can give an impetus to gastronomy. James Halliday, on the other hand, warned of the danger of being over-swamped by what he called 'world food', the same nouvelle cuisine derivative that, in many cities, is supplanting the local traditions. In our haste to accept new cuisines – the opposite of culinary xenophobia – we should take care not to stray too far.

The question of 'An Australian Cuisine?' naturally arose, some symposiasts arguing that we did not need one, others preferring a multitude of other cuisines. Almost everyone was opposed to the 'melting pot' theory, that from all these diverse cuisines a single tradition would eventually emerge. In discussing which cuisines from which Australia might most

profitably borrow, there was a leaning towards the various cuisines of Asia, though no definite answer emerged. The debate must have seemed odd to English journalist Paul Levy, who remarked that this concern with national identity and the question of a national cuisine is peculiar to Australia.

Symposium four moved to Sydney, the party city, and in the bicentennial year of 1988 the theme was 'Food in Festivity'. It was memorable for many things. Phillip Searle's supper of quail, stuffed with wild and black rice, wrapped in lotus leaves and baked in clay, together with his trademark chequerboard ice-cream in a metre-square version weighing 100 kg and needing six broad shoulders to bear it triumphantly to the table; the almost-prosecution symposiasta display of cakes contributed for the opening reception. Borrowed cakes, by and large. Michael Symons pointed out that, as a nation which has no proper festival and scarcely knows how to be festive, we have no traditional festive foods (but, as we discovered later, we do have a distinctive genre of cake decorating which uses medicinal syringes to create the finest and most intricate designs).

'Bush Tucker' provided the menu for the reception, beginning with witchetty grubs, lightly barbecued. A succulent taste sensation, with a faint prawn flavour, to some palates, or nutty, to others, and in texture rather like thin, crisp pork crackling on a cushion of tender and juicy fat. Then came kangaroo, salted and smoked, accompanied by chutneys made from the Illawarra plum and the rosella; buffalo spiced with native pepper; a salad of mangrove samphire, subtle and intriguingly salty; a salad of wild greens with macadamia nuts and macadamia nut oil; bread made with the ground nuts of the Burrawang palm; and finally, a beverage made from roasted and ground wattle seeds. Definitely not my cup of tea!

Proceedings proper took place at the Powerhouse Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. Early arrivals were taken on a guided tour of the Museum's Social History exhibition which featured two Australian kitchens, one evoking a slab hut in the bush around 1890, the other a suburban bungalow of the 1920s. A small showcase of celebratory banquet menus – the earliest dated 1858 – continued the 'Food in Festivity' theme.

Don Dunstan, former premier of South Australia, remembered in gastronomic circles for his far-sighted *Don Dunstan's Cookbook*, gave the opening address: 'Tradition and Renewal in Australian Gastronomy'. His interpretation of 'gastronomy' stressed the culinary side, but his then-and-now comparisons relating culinary modes to lifestyles revealed an enormous shift in Australian values and customs.

Continuing the theme, Vic Cherikoff, a native foods consultant, spoke of the potential of the 10,000 or so indigenous ingredients which had been part of Aboriginal diets for centuries, and forcefully expressed his belief in an agricultural revolution which would see – in some environments – the flora-destructive, hard-hoofed mammals replaced by native, soft-footed marsupials which would be humanely and efficiently harvested for human consumption.

Addressing the symposium theme, Anthony Corones philosophised on the idea of festivity, looking at the occasion itself and the enjoyment of the festival. While I analysed the evolution of the banquet, from its inception in fifteenth-century Italy and its subsequent adoption as a literary device (by Rabelais and Erasmus) to the mass banquets of post-revolution France and the banquet as political propaganda. Graham Pont described the banquets of Louis XIV at Versailles, illustrating his talk with images of the 'Pleasures of the Enchanted Isle' and contemporary music by Lully and Lalande.

The fifth symposium was incorporated into the two-week long Adelaide Festival of Arts, which itself recognised the gastronomic domain by organising a session on food writing as part of the Writers' Week program and by partly sponsoring a food fair near the city's retail market. This was the first live-in symposium, participants being cloistered in part of a seminary in Adelaide's foothills. Its theme was 'The Pleasures of the Table' – as both a general concept and the title of Brillat-Savarin's Meditation 14. Anthony Corones, viewing food technology as a modern form of witchcraft and a perversion of nature, suggested that we institute a new order of eating, and re-humanise food. Michael Symons proposed a re-humanisation of Christianity, based on table fellowship, a concept emphasised by Susan Parham who demonstrated the relevance of gastronomy to town planning, and argued for a more sympathetic treatment of public space.

This symposium initiated the communal cook-your-own dinners. Some people shopped (having been allowed a budget of $7 per person), some cooked, some served, and the ingredients bought by group A, for example, were cooked by group B for table C. It sounds much simpler on paper than it worked in practice. At times the kitchen scene was chaotic, but it was a joy for me (a server) to see the energy, passion and enthusiasm (not to mention fellowship!) radiating from these cooks, amateur and professional. The memorable event of this symposium was Michael Symons' proposal that it be the last. It was inconceivable to me that a series of gatherings which had made some achievements and promised still more, should

be abruptly terminated when its increasing strength and confidence was evident with each gathering. Fortunately, audience reaction was so strongly against the idea of finality that there was no question of ending. Nevertheless, the proposal encouraged serious thinking as to the purpose of the symposia.

The Australian Symposium has always differed greatly from its Oxford counterpart. In Australia we have alternated seasons, cities and convenors, and have attempted to break out of the rigidity of the traditional conference mode. But do we get together every eighteen months or so simply to party? Is it to exchange ideas, have our minds and senses stimulated, our batteries recharged? Or do we seriously believe that we should reform Australian food and eating by encouraging structural changes, changes in society, its outlook and its perceptions?

We are not militant, nor even organised, but we share some common beliefs. We enjoy the pleasures of the table, we enjoy our (gastronomic) way of life, which involves a respect for food and the nature from which it came – a measured respect, which condones neither waste nor destruction. It involves a respect, too, for our own gastronomic predilections, which are honest and (we hope) non-perverted. And because we believe that many others would like to enjoy a similar life, we offer to share our philosophy with them, that they, too, may be happy and healthy. If this is our raison d'être, then we are following exactly the same path trodden by Brillat-Savarin almost two centuries ago. He, too, had ideas of reforming society by encouraging it to adopt gastronomic ideals – ideals which, as Don Dunstan and Anthony Corones pointed out, are still supremely relevant. The idea of forming a society or institute of Australian Gastronomy was, however, overwhelmingly rejected at the following symposium.

we are not militant, nor even organised, but we *share* some *common beliefs*

This sixth symposium, held in Geelong in 1991, invited Canadian academic Margaret Visser and borrowed its theme from the title of her book, *Much Depends on Dinner*. It was here that I was first introduced (by Colin Sheringham) to 'food courts', which previously I had imagined as something like Versailles under Louis XIV. It was also the occasion when Gay Bilson's long short story provoked Stephen Mennell's pique. While most of the symposium took place at Geelong, we enjoyed a superb seafood lunch at Queenscliff and later learnt about oyster breeding at the nearby marine science laboratory.

Canberra in 1993 also continued the live-in policy, though at the end of the first day we adjourned to the Senate Chamber of the old Parliament House for a public forum on the Mediterranean diet. The intellectual theme of this symposium was 'Nature and Culture', an age-old dilemma destined to be perpetually provocative but never resolved. Keynote speaker Claudia Roden described not only the fading of nature-determined traditions in Italy and the unification of the country by pasta, but also the rescue and enhancement of these traditions. Richard Hosking spoke of the Japanese reverence for the seasons, while Sri Owen and Rosemary Brissenden debated the state of traditional cuisine in Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia, both expressing more-or-less pessimistic views.

Materially, the symposium began with a presentation of wines from twelve wineries of the Canberra region, augmented by various smoked and salted meats and fish of local provenance plus cheeses from the South Coast and poetry from Canberra poets. It concluded with a most extraordinary meal in the National Gallery, where we were also privileged to preview an exciting exhibition of surrealist art. This banquet, prepared by Gay Bilson and Janni Kyritsis and the staff of Berowra Waters Out, challenged our imaginations as much as our digestions. It was not a dinner designed to gratify the senses, nor a demonstration of the cook's art and virtuosity, but rather represented an intellectual position (as did much of surrealist art) which deemed death a necessary prerequisite to life, and celebrated life through death.

The theme for the 1994 Eighth Symposium of Australian Gastronomy – or the tenth anniversary Symposium, the series having started in 1994 – was 'Sustaining Gastronomy'. The ambiguity was deliberate. It meant both the sustaining of gastronomy and gastronomy which sustains (the individual, society, agriculture and the environment). Anthony Corones argued that gastronomy can also be considered a religion which contributes to the sustaining of a culture; discussing the relevance of mother-nature myths in early cultures.

He demonstrated a logical progression from the idea of sustaining agriculture to sustaining the ecological balance of the earth as a whole.

In addition to individual papers, panel discussions debated the question of authenticity, raising more issues than answers, and the subject of 'Women as Custodians of Tradition'. This was perhaps the most interesting – partly because women's roles and traditions could not, it seemed, be separated from those of the men. The Italian associations in Adelaide, for example, maintain many of the gastronomic traditions of the various regions of Italy, at the same time differentiating the woman's role (in the kitchen) from that of the male (office bearer, outdoor barbecue cook). Duré Dara's perception was perhaps more realistic: while men tend to be acknowledged as custodians, it is women who, by default, perpetuate culinary tradition, partly because it gives them a sense of identity. She argued for a reconciliation of male and female custodial roles, noting that custodians of tradition are also custodians of values.

Finally, to Sydney in 1996, and the theme of 'Food and Power'. In his summing up of proceedings Dr Alan Saunders remarked that food can be linked with almost anything to yield a stimulating subject for debate and discussion, intimating that the infinitely complex subject of food has the power to open minds and imaginations to a diversity of interpretations and perspectives. Power could be derived from various sources (world, state, household) and operate at various sites (body and soul). Meal planning also took account of ideas of power: thus the Ascension Day pie, a variation of a traditional Ascension Day dish on the Greek island of Cephalonia, hinting at the power of the Church; a *sous-vide* Futuristic Dinner, featuring breast of artificially inseminated duck and a nutrient composition chart, demonstrating the power of scientists; a powerfully flavoured Thai lunch, picnic style; and a prison-style menu in an ex-prison, where power was held by those wielding ladles.

Keynote speaker was Professor Bruce Kraig, whose book *Cuisines of Hidden Mexico* was launched at the symposium. He gave examples of food used as a means of control in ancient societies and in later industrial societies, and discussed the power associated with foods carrying contemporary symbolic meanings. These included images of American culture, the American dream associated with fast foods, American-style, -owned and -controlled multinational corporations.

While probably a majority of papers saw food and power in a context of authority and control (power over), several others saw power as an enabling force. Whether or not they exercised it, consumers could be seen as having the power to accept or reject new foods, be it simply a new variety of apple or a genetically engineered one.
By demonstrating preferences, they had power (or potential) to change food production practices in such a way as to improve the environment. Absolute power, in the hands of Louis XIV, enabled many improvements to be made in gardening and horticulture, through the innovations of Jean de la Quintinie. Alicia Rios's multi-sensory 'Mediterranean Symphony of the Senses' demonstrated the power of aromas, more than any other sensory stimuli, to evoke memories and associations. The final banquet allied performance and culinary arts and, with a diversity of references, emphasised the power of the church, of the female sex (and the power of belly dancers over their bodies) and the male sex, of myth and tradition, and of subverting of all of these in a finale worthy of Sydney's Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.

Such an episodic and selective, subjective summary can hardly hope to capture the essence and soul of the Australian symposia but perhaps it gives clues as to how they evolved and progressed – at least for this person, who gratefully evolved and progressed at the same time.

the infinitely complex subject of *food has the power* to open minds and imaginations

REGISTRATION

Welcome Supper

Wednesday 10 April

Soups

Provencale Fish Soup with Aioli

Guinea Fowl Broth

Breads by Symposiasts

Cheeses

Kangaroo Island Brie

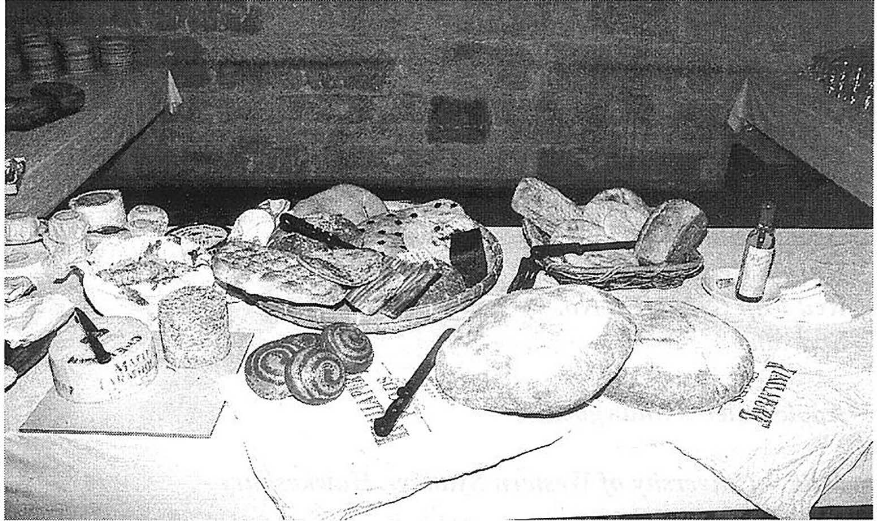
Edith Ash Goat

Charleston Brie

Jumbunna Blue

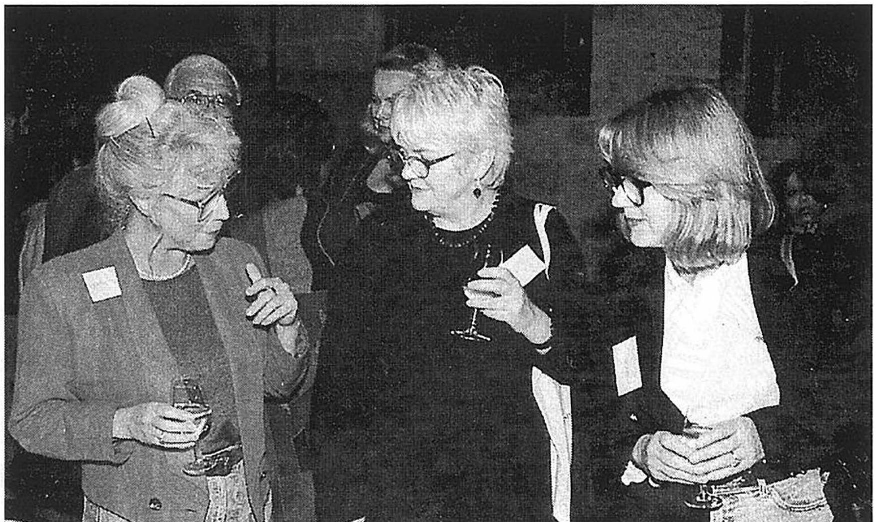
Maffra cloth-wrapped Cheddar

King River Gold



Loaves and cheeses.

Souped up.
From left: Francisco Garciade Paredes, Cherry Ripe, Mary Brander, Courtney 'wide-eyed' Clark.



Talking turkey.
From left: Jeanette Fry, Stephanie Alexander, Elaine Chambers.

BREAKFASTS

Thursday 11 – Saturday 13 April

Pastries & breads – Gerbe d'Or

Coffee & Tea – Belaroma & Cooee Teas

Apples from Karambi Orchards, Bilpin
Granny Smith
Harold Red Delicious
Red Fuji (Naga-Fu No. 2)
Spartan

Apple Juice – Snowgoose

Milk – University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury

Jams – Auntie Howard's, Bundanoon

Bircher Muesli – Pam Gillespie, Young

Served throughout the symposium.

Courtesy: Sydney Morning Herald

FOOD and POWER

session one

the world

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

FOOD AND POWER

Bruce Kraig, Professor of History, Roosevelt University, Chicago

Abstract

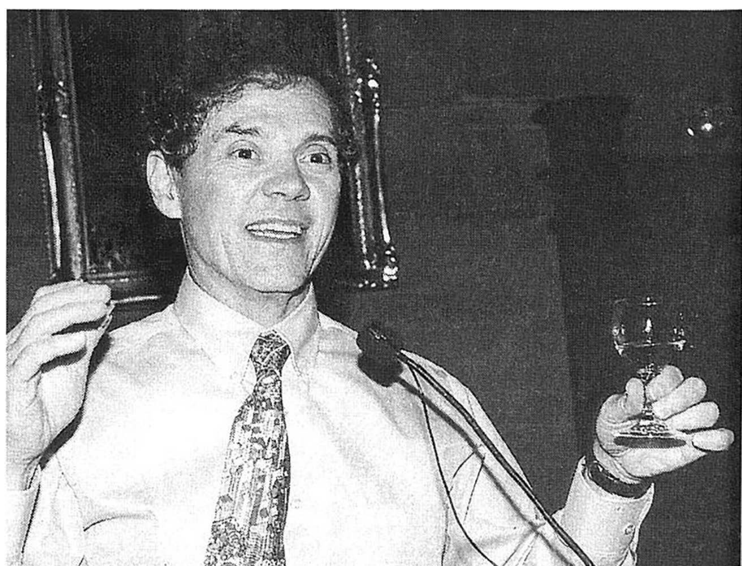
This paper explores some of the ways that food, in its many forms can be used to illustrate political, social, economic (including ecological), and cultural power relationships among and between human social groups. The purpose of the paper is to briefly examine some of the work already done in these areas and to suggest some avenues of further exploration.

Who has the power to determine food choices is a critical historical factor. The biological conquest of the New World (including Australia) by Old World plants and animals is a well-known case.
That process depended upon cultural preferences: if European tastes were not for beef, then perhaps we would be eating, McBisons and McSkippies (as in kangaroo) in our fast-food emporia.
Fast food in its prepackaged and restaurant forms is the latest example of cultural (and economic) power. The forms are corporate, First World, and thoroughly hegemonic. Snack foods, colas, and burgers have penetrated to every corner of the world and bring with them whole sets of ideas based in Western consumerism. There is much more to be said about the last theme and it should be a large topic of conversation.

fast food **in its prepackaged and restaurant forms is the latest example of cultural (and economic) power**

The word 'power' normally has political meanings attached to it and certainly control of foodstuffs has been a time-tested way of maintaining political authority. The centralised collecting and distributing agencies of ancient Sumerian cities seem to provide a case in point. The great famines in the Soviet Ukraine in the 1930s and central China in the 1950s were exertions of political will by authoritarian regimes.

Power, however, has many means of expression beyond the overtly political. There are myriad examples of social, cultural and economic/ecological hegemony. Furthermore, control of symbols may be just as important as real physical domination. Foods and certain preparation have always been a marker of internal social stratification and, in a larger sense, a way to distinguish those outside one's social group. For the former, the European Middle Ages provides a good example. And for the latter, many foods we consider 'disgusting' are merely those of 'foreigners'.



Bruce Kraig, keynote speaker, framed for posterity.

'Food and Power' is an immense topic for two reasons. If for no other, 'food' in its cultural, social, and biological aspects is entwined with most expressions of human life; and the idea of 'power' in its many forms inhabits the consciousness of modern people and drives many of our actions. The subject of 'food and power' is so large that one must divide it into categories and themes, and observe that each is enmeshed with one another, individual strands hard to distinguish from the others. What I can hope to do is touch on several themes, putting them in some historical perspective.

First, principles and categories, with apologies to political scientists. When I mentioned the subject 'food and power' in my seminar on food history, several of the gluttonous students wisecracked that surely I would discuss what I like to do best: eat. Logical, they reasoned, since without food the human body has no power-fuel for the body's motor. This opinion is natural to us moderns because it poses a model for thinking about the world: a machine, or a system of functioning parts that uses or creates energy – that is, power. The metaphor extends from the body to the world, thus phrases such as 'holistic', then 'world systems' or 'trade networks', to use a more organic image.

Machine imagery suggests two principles of power. One is a mechanism with potential for something, perhaps abilities or energy generation; the other is, well, let me quote Abigail Adams, on the eve of the American Revolution: 'I am more and more convinced that man is a dangerous creature; and that power, whether vested in many or a few, is ever grasping, and like the grave, cries "Give, give!"'

Power can be dominating and extractive, a vehicle for political and economic authority. Using an old phrase, these figurative locomotives, are run by those who 'operate the levers of power'. This aspect of 'power' has many means of expression beyond the political. Myriad examples of social, cultural, and economic/ecological control or hegemony by someone over someone or something else abound. Control of symbols, of ideas and institutions that they represent, may be as important as physical domination. For instance, foods and certain preparations have always been markers of social stratification within societies. On a global scale there is the example of the spreading commercial and political power of transnational corporations. They are adept at manipulation of symbols, masters of semiotics by which they are increasingly dominant in world economies – and more.

We should keep in mind, though, the first principle. 'Power' also means potential, energy as yet untapped but eventually useable. This is the realm of human cultures, all encompassing, ever adaptive, ever changing. At the same time, 'potential also means power uncontrolled, the irrational, the wild.[1]'

To begin at the beginning, the fundamental political and economic (including ecological) ideas of power as related to food mean dominion over the natural world. The usual reference here is to Genesis (1: 26-29).

Consider this from a recent book on vegetarianism:[2] 'Certainly, the history of the human relationship with the animal kingdom would have been radically different if Western Society had not become thoroughly imbued with the Judeo-Christian concept of human supremacy.'

foods **and** *certain preparations* **have always been markers of social stratification within societies**

That is to say, human beings abandoned a presumed dialectic with nature and embraced a dualist world view. From now on, the argument goes, nature became 'the other', something to be subdued and controlled. The priests who wrote Genesis and St Paul, who followed the tradition, often have taken a bashing for their ideas about humans' supposed 'dominion' over the Earth and other living things. To blame the gross exploitation of the planet and destruction of the 'natural' world on 1) the Judeo-Christian tradition and 2) on Western societies in general is a little misplaced. Non-Western history is replete with examples of human societies that misused their environments...to their great detriment (ancient Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley, maybe classic Mayas, and many more). Did all of them heed Genesis's account of God's will?

Nonetheless, something happened in many human societies all over the world that permitted them to seek power over their natural environments. It was a process occurring over the course of long millennia, beginning many millennia ago, and it echoes down the ages to our own time. Women are responsible for it.

To see it, we need to briefly examine the roots of food's relationships to power. The theory runs something like this: food collecting or raising is at the base of all societies. Dominion has the same root as 'domestic' from the word for 'house'. Literally, that means to bring someone, something into one's house. What was once wild came under human control. That means plants and animals. The process is called domestication and in the Old World it is associated with the Neolithic Age, beginning some 9-10,000 years ago.

According to one persuasive theory domestication[3] of the wild was accomplished through a set of ideas called '*domus*'. More than a physical house, it meant concepts: home, family units, social structure, and such mental constructs as 'inside' versus 'outside', (the latter called '*agrios*'), life and death. Evidence abounds that the *domus* long predates agriculture. Huts and hearths, domestication of fire itself are examples. That may have happened one-half to perhaps a quarter of a million years ago. Archaeologists postulate a long period of semi-domestication of animals and perhaps plants from at least the end of the last ice age. Therefore the taming, exertion of control over plants and animals was not some set of sudden acts done from economic necessity. Rather domestication came from sets of pre-existing ideas. There was no sudden Neolithic Revolution in a modern sense of the word (once the standard theory), only reinterpretation by peoples of a known and unknown world. We have been habituated to the consequent ordering of the world for millennia.

Material evidence and commonsense tell us that women were at the heart of the process[4]. The hearth, knowledge of and processing of plant material, child-rearing, and continuity of family units were their entire sphere. It is one of our chief cultural principles that women are nurturers (Lady Thatcher a splendid example). And are not women the keepers of that Great Tradition, home cooking?

Without doubt, women invented the apparatuses of historic cookery, pottery and grinding stones and the techniques and recipes that went with them. Maybe they were even responsible for genetic selection of plants that became food staples – wheat and barley in Southwest Asia, millet in China, and maize in the Americas. By so doing, they 'cultured' the wild.

One more thing. If most of the interpretations placed on parietal and mobiliary art of the European Upper Palaeolithic Age are correct, then the natural world must have been a place infused with numina. Because the material and immaterial worlds intertwined, human interactions with them would have been complex. 'Magic' (likely in the hands of specialists even then) is one word for it. Magic, though, is the wild and must be 'cultured' by *domus* and it is an ongoing process, as I will suggest later. In culinary terms, it is the production of finished dishes from raw (wild) ingredients. Kitchen magic.

The basis for new forms of society came from these new strategies for survival. Ecological imperialism, to lift a phrase, was one of them. Once horticulture-based villages were established, the long process of colonisation of virgin lands began. It is still going on, only we often call it destruction of natural environments. Early farmers the world over took their domesticated plants and animals into these lands. Someone has claimed that wheat must be the world's most intelligent living thing because it has 'persuaded' humans to colonise the world with itself. Corn is smarter, weeds are at the top of the plant I.Q. chart. However one wants to look at it, human beings took their food preferences with them, constantly manipulating both foods and environments to suit these perceived needs.

Tastes have as much to do with these processes as anything else, though sometimes necessity's iron hand grips hard. Here is an example: water. About 1500 tons of water are needed to grow 1 ton of wheat: 900 for every ton of rice and 600 for corn. For a wheat yield of 1-2 tons per hectare, 15-30cm of water are needed[5]. In the semi-arid regions of Southwest Asia, rainfall ranges from a trace to about 25 cm. The ultimate result is irrigation – and the great 'hydraulic civilisations' of world history.

Irrigation is not necessarily the diagnostic test for early state systems, but it does imply elements that are. These are relatively dense populations, hence a need for more food (demand driving production), differential access to wealth, social stratification, and social-political hierarchies, all of them maintained by religious and military force. That's a mouthful, but it is as good a definition of civilisation as any I know.

By the fourth millennium in the Old World, somewhat later in China and the Americas, full-fledged civilisations had been formed not because of existing surpluses, but by the creation and control of increased food supplies. In the absence of large numbers of luxury goods, or consumer products, food was a main means of political control.

So was religion, but in ancient Mesopotamia[6] and the Indus Valley, these two went together. In both these civilisations storage buildings and granaries were clustered around temple complexes. Documentary sources show that Sumerian and Akkadian priests had large tracts of land worked by tenants and slaves, and that they distributed grain to the populace in times of need. 'Theocratic Socialism', in Thorkild Jacobsen's[7] hyperbolic phrase.

If the theocratic state could control people by dispensation of food, it could do the same by withholding it. Demand denial would be an ever-linked dialectic of power. Second millennium Shang Dynasty royal tombs in China (at Hsi-pei-kang) feature rich burials surrounded by human sacrifices. Some were servants, most slaves. Of these, many showed clear evidence of malnutrition.

In Guatemala the classic city-kingdom of Tikal gives further evidence. A study of graves[8] there shows a considerable size difference (7 cm) between men buried in richly furnished tombs and those not so favoured. At Chalcatzingo, a Formative site in western Mexico, chemical studies of bones demonstrate that individuals buried in high status graves ate much more meat than those found in simple graves (low strontium vs. high strontium levels). Food, then, had become markers of social distinction and a tool of political control in early civilisations.

We might be appalled at the thought of deliberate starvation, but what shall we make of the *homens nanicos* of Brazil's Pernambuco region? As a result of generations of suffering from protein deficient diets and illness it is reported[9] that more than 30 per cent of the peoples of the region are physically and mentally stunted. Men average about 4 ft 4 in. in height, 40 per cent of the children are malnourished. Poor cane cutters can expect to consume about 1500 calories a day, when food is available, but burn about 3500 during work: poor children get 600. Once they might have had an acre or two for manioc, rice and beans, but lately most have been forced from the land by plantation owners who grow sugar cane for synthetic fuel production. Nor is there any hope for redistributing good farmland when so much of it is owned by the few families who dominate the state government. How different from these miserable souls were the poor of Tikal or Chalcatzingo? Only here the suffering is done in the name of profit not divine right – or are they the same thing?

State power combined with food supplies did not always mean enforced starvation. The ancient Roman frumentaria, the grain dole, later followed by oil, pork, wine, and baked bread was provided to the citizenry beginning in Caesar's time. As Paul Veyne[10] points out, the imperial frumentaria was an example of 'euregetism', whereby the wealthy were expected to give largesse to the public from their own private resources. Costs of buildings, games, and public banquets were paid for by the well-off as demonstrations of their membership of the ruling class[11]. These activities were not only practical politics, but deeply symbolic acts. It was a system headed by a benevolent paterfamilias-emperor providing for the members of his great house. And this in one of history's great tributary, extractive empires.

At about the same time, across the Eurasian landmass, emperors of the Han Dynasty (Wen, Wu, Ching among them) were redistributing land among the peasantry while lowering taxes, building irrigation projects, and propagating knowledge of advanced farming methods. With these words, Emperor Wen re-established the ploughing ceremony: 'Agriculture is the basis of the empire. Let the Field of Tribute be laid out and I in person shall lead the ploughing in order to provide millet for the ancestral temples.' In China, emperors were at the centre of harvest agricultural rituals, responsible through observance of rituals for the fertility of the land. They magically connected the unseen and seen realms of existence.

In these parallel empires there is no doubt that the elites symbolically separated themselves from commoners by food – types of food and preparations. E. N. Anderson[12], has observed that an 'entrenched elite led to increased gourmetship, originally justified by appeal to ritual – especially rituals that underlined social differences.' And, further, that 'never again would the Chinese entertain seriously the notion that those in power should not enjoy the fruits of success.' Romans thought so too, and if the Satyricon has any validity, the upper class certainly showed it. Here, then, is combined power over human beings and foodstuffs, perhaps somewhat benevolent, but all wrapped in symbolic language.

Similar signs of prestige and status that such systems of power engender pass into later civilisations. One need hardly mention the displays of conspicuous consumption[13] that mark the noble banquets of medieval and early modern Europe. Catherine de Medicis's feast in Rome in 1513, held in a public square before an admiring crowd, of the great quantities of food, and the lady's appetite for them. It was a blowout that would have put Trimalchio to shame. The same can be said for China, at least by the Song Dynasty. Banquets then might have had

two hundred dishes and, like their descendants, any and everything might appear on such a table[14].

Culinary aesthetics and heath considerations apart, there were differences between the two civilisations. One of the most important of these was the way that food was produced. China had long since developed intensive agricultural systems featuring large numbers of peasants working small plots of land. The West, in general, had extensive systems and, driven by the marketplace, could envision something like exploitative production: factory farming on plantations, *encomiendas*, *haciendas*. Further, Europeans, common folk in particular, seemed less receptive than were Chinese to novel foodstuffs – unless they conformed to preconceptions about what was acceptable. The varied histories of the turkey, tomato, and potato are witness to the thesis. These attitudes have had long life-spans.

It should be no surprise, then, that when Europeans conquered and colonised what were to them new lands, they brought all of their food prejudices with them, and their own foods as well. Alfred Crosby[15] gives many examples, notably New Zealand in his classic work, *Ecological Imperialism*. My own country provides evidence. Late in the seventeenth century, a colonial Englishman, Robert Beverley[16] bragged: 'I don't know any English Plant, Grain, or Fruit, that miscarries in Virginia ...'No Seed is Sowed' but it thrives, and most Plants are improved by being Transplanted thither.'

Particularly he praised the quality of apples, nectarines, apricots, and peaches that grew to twelve inches in circumference, European grapevines, almonds, pomegranates, figs, wheat, barley, oats, and rye. He then declared that the kitchen gardens of his neighbours have 'all the Culinary Plants that grow in England.'

Thirty-some years later a fellow Virginian, William Byrd II[17], listed favourite vegetables and herbs to be found in Virginia gardens: artichokes, asparagus, beans of many kinds, beets, broccoli, four kinds of cabbage, cauliflower, carrots, cress, cucumbers, several varieties of lettuce, mustard, onions, parsnips, potatoes, radishes, rhubarb, spinach, truffles, turnips, chives, fennel, garlic, horseradish, parsley, sorrel, angelica, anise, borage, burnet, coriander, dill, marjoram, rosemary, savory, yarrow, and others.

Apart from beans and potatoes (these, originally Peruvian, either transhipped from Europe, or perhaps native sweet potatoes) – there is nothing New World in these lists. The same went for animals, cattle and especially pigs (Bartolome de las Casas thought that the vast swarms of wild pigs in the New World descended from eight pigs that Columbus brought with him on his first voyage).

Many of the wild greens and herbs used by the native peoples of North America never entered the main inventory[18] of the colonial pantry (chenopodia, knotweed, maygrass, and a host of others). Maize, tomatoes, yes by the eighteenth century, but not much else. Look at Beverley's inventory – wheat and barley fields dominating corn, not wild skunk cabbage, but proper 'domesticated' cabbage. Indeed, the only characteristic American dishes with pure Indian roots are sweet corn (on the cob, and lathered with butter – not the way it was eaten by native peoples), succotash (fresh beans and corn – often dosed with cream), baked squash (also usually made with butter), and maybe pumpkin ... in good old English pie form.

Speaking of pie, colonial American tastes ran to heavy spicing, a carryover from medieval Europe – in the colonies applied increasingly and exclusively to sweets. Anyone with any income at all used pepper, cloves, mace, cinnamon, and ginger. For luxuries one had oranges, lemons, raisins, prunes, sweetmeats, European wines, English beer, and West Indian rum. Nothing here that an Indian Cacique would ever recognise.

What does this tell us about the English colonisation of North America? That it was accompanied by conquests – political, social, and ecological. The long history of American Indian-European relations is one where the natives were either subsumed into the dominant European culture, often by coercion, sometimes by persuasion; or they were simply exterminated, deliberately or otherwise. What seemed most useful, the Europeans adopted or adapted (a better word for it). Even the poorest of the immigrants, slaves and poor white farmers, ate mostly European fare (fat pork, grits – the cheap replacement for peas or grain porridge, mustard, spinach or dandelion greens, biscuits, and maybe sweet potato pie). The culinary agrarian domination of North America was almost complete.

Why should this have been so? Historians have adduced many reasons, with ethno-centrism at the core. But could we not also say that the settlers replicated an ancient anxiety? The desire, necessity, of culturing the wild. We need only glance at contemporary literature[19] to see the fear that the idea of 'savagery' induced in the European immigrants and their descendants. People huddled in their towns, or even cabins, on the edge of a howling wilderness. Fear of violent death may not have been the worst of it; rather it may have been loss of one's culture, fear of going native, as in Joseph Conrad's famous depiction. Stories of Indian abduction of white children and making them into natives abounded, much the same as adults who might themselves become 'savages'.

For women no fate could have been worse, for who would want to become a mere 'squaw'. Loss of culture, loss of self-control are ancient dreads to the civilised. How homey and safe Byrd's food plants seem, even now: the comforts of English pie and puddings.

So prevalent has been the fear of 'the alien' that historian Richard Slotkin[20] claims by the late nineteenth century, as the American frontier faded into legend, radical industrial workers assumed the metaphor of the savage Indian. In America most immigrant workers came from eastern and southern Europe. They spoke strange languages, had cultural habits (close community ties), nasty religions (Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Judaism) and weird foods. Their efforts to create trade unions seemed deeply subversive of prevailing WASP cultural attitudes – a return to the primitive, for that is how the immigrants were often portrayed. The pejoratives tell us the ways: 'dirty Micks', 'dumb Pollocks', 'Hunkies', and 'scheming Jews'. Did not the elites of every industrialising country of the period view their industrial workers in similar fashion? The Morlocks of H. G. Wells, Zola's *Bate Humaine,* though his was genetically doomed.

It is not odd that many social uplifters tried their best to get immigrants to give up their insalubrious foodways and eat 'American' diets. Jane Addams in Chicago attempted to provide standardised healthy meals at her settlement house and taught all the latest principles that American nutritional science offered. The experiment failed miserably: Italian housewives simply refused to give up their pasta, vegetables, olive oil, and fish, for the joys of hearty red meats. Social control did not come through food, but in other ways. Food, however, is a symbol of the civilising process.

One more thought about the wild. It is dangerous, and always lurking beneath the veneer of civilised life. The natural world is always ready to strike back. Crosby points out that an unintended result of human intervention in an ecosystem is the spread of weeds. Ineradicable, ever-spreading, Frankenstein monster weeds, *Island of Dr Moreau* weeds. It is the stuff of horror stories and films, or maybe nothing less than weed imperialism: empires of clover, plantain, kudzu.

More seriously, certain moralists among us see a lesson: we human beings are engaged in a war to subdue nature[21], and no matter how temporary the victory, surely we will loose in the end.
Our technology, the extensions of our facile brains, cannot save us, indeed, are the tools of our destruction. Devastate the earth and nature overwhelms us. Most of us accept some version of that story. If it is true, then what really is dominion over the earth, power over human beings?

There is an area of the world, however, that has always seemed a model for a different kind of arrangement by which one small group of people held power over a larger one; a place where political control was mitigated by integration of religion, genes, and foods. It's Mexico. Allow me to use it as something of a test case for the relationship of food to power.

Here was a region, Central America really, with what scholars call a Great Tradition: the same characteristics of high civilisation as in the Old World. We know much about pre-Columbian civilisations, and yet very little. Cities, art, some of the belief systems, we can see and know something about. And what emerges is strange to us. From what we know of it, based on archaeology and a few written sources, Bernardino de Sahagan in particular, the cuisine was highly varied in flavours and textures, colourful, and sophisticated. Based on early Spanish accounts of what they saw in the markets of Tenochtitln, it would seem that even common folk had varieties of food unthinkable in contemporary Europe. No wonder Bernal Diaz del Castillo recounted, even thirty years after the events, how stunned he and the rest of Cortez's army were by the sight of the Mexican capital city.

This is not the place to rehearse the native foods and possible culinary preparations of Mesoamerica. The late Sophie Coe[22] has done an admirable job of that in essays and in her penultimate book.
It is sufficient to say that food nested in the heart of Mesoamerican civilisation, indeed, of all civilisations. It was the core of ritual observance (like China, the rulers of Mesoamerica's cities, states, and empires carried out vital rituals that ensured growth and harvests). It could be, too, that food was an integral part of everyday life, informing what people did, said, and thought. Certainly modern Mexican culture is as fixated on the subtleties of food as are the French, Italians, Chinese and maybe Australians. Not Americans, I might add.

What I want to talk about are some consequences of the Spanish conquest of Mexico and illustrations of how power was deployed. I will start with a story of a great vice-regal feast held in Mexico City in 1538. In a celebrated paper, Sophie Coe[23] counterpoises it with Diaz's description of Emperor Motecuhzoma's everyday fare. The latter was served a meal composed of fowl, wattled fowl, pheasants, native partridges, quail, domestic and wild ducks, deer, peccary, reed birds and doves and hares and rabbits, among other native animals. More than likely many of the meats had been cut into small pieces and served in a chilli-flavoured sauce. There were more than 2000 jars of chocolate and fruit without end.

All of this was accompanied by a large variety of tortillas (Sahagan names many varieties that appeared in marketplaces). After delicately tasting each dish, the Emperor sent most of the food back, presumably to be distributed to members of the court or household.

The banquet of 1538 was the kind that Catherine de Medici could have got her teeth into. In condensed form, the menu had on it, salads, roasted kids and hams, pies made of quail and doves followed by stuffed fowl and chickens; blancmange and tortas, after which came chicken and native partridges and quail in vinegar (escabeche). That was the first course. The next had many pies of birds and game, fish pies (neither were eaten, but done for show), then cooked lamb, beef, and pork with turnips, cabbages, and garbanzos. Fruit of many kinds came in the middle of the feast, then were brought native fowl cooked whole, with their beaks and feet silvered, whole ducks with gilt beaks, and heads of pigs and deer and calves, for show. The diners also got courses of olives, radishes, and cheese plus cardoons and native fruit. Fountains of red and white wine flowed freely. As if all this were not enough, Diaz says that the lesser lights among the Spanish had whole roast young cattle stuffed with chickens and quail and doves and bacon. Our witness and participant says that everyone ate to the point of bursting.

colonial settlers **retain more of the** *societies* **from which** *they came* **than remains in the** *homeland*

What does the comparison tell us? That the Spanish elite and would-be elite insisted upon eating European food, at least in official settings. Everyone wanted meat. The Europeans had come from a continent where only the rich ate much meat (rather like the situation among the Aztecs) and now they wanted all they could get. Their pigs and cattle came right away, the first pork butchering operations in Mexico City in place by at least 1525. Sweets were also imported quickly (in this banquet ladies were served several kinds). Spanish landlords quickly set up sugar growing and processing operations and even imported African labour into Mexico to run them, as they, the French and English had done in the Caribbean. Pies were a European standard, requiring wheat flour, eggs, and butter for crusts. Unless wheat was imported, then it was planted quite soon after the conquest. There are many more conclusions to be drawn from this interesting comparison (including a glimpse into what seems to us to be the horrendous hodge-podge of a medieval banquet), but this is clear: the first generation Spanish intended to be Spanish in their new land, to dominate it by culture, religion, politics – and by gluttony.

Historians often observe that colonial settlers retain more of the societies from which they came than remains in the homeland. That is certainly so among colonial elites in Mexico, as the 1538 banquet shows. There were no native dishes on the menu, only some native Mexican ingredients done in European ways. Mexican cookery, then, conserves some of the medieval Spanish practices. Throughout the colonial period that was the definition of good cookery and it passed down the social ladder into ordinary homes, especially in cities.

(Here perhaps we ought to start thinking about theories of how cultural styles are disseminated – Simmel's[24] trickle-down theory and related to that Veblen's Conspicuous Consumption theory. Put it this way, why would Diaz fondly remember this grand feast thirty years later? He must have eaten similar meals, glutted on his 'earned' riches. Because it was not the food itself that mattered, but the spectacle, a display of his and his cohorts's newly found position in the world; they not only elbowed the Spanish aristocracy, but aped them as well – the bourgeois gentilhomme in the making.)

What are some of these old ways? One is the large quantity of spices and herbs in certain dishes, particularly meats. The kinds of spices used – cinnamon, for instance is a tip off. Few European dishes utilise this spice except for desserts (apple pie, again). Thickening agents routinely include breadcrumbs, a technique used by the first star European chef, Taillevant, at the end of the fourteenth century, and current until the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. Adobo, vinegar-based sauces or marinades, are nothing less than the medieval standards verjuice or eisel. Even meats and the ways that they are cut for some dishes is antique – whole chunks of pork for carnitas. Garlic and onions are in everything. The kinds of cheeses routinely used in Mexico are unsophisticated country cheeses of Spanish origin. These are but a few old Spanish ways embedded in Mexican cookery.

Once again, Mexican cuisine is a rich blend of Old and New Worlds, but we should not forget its conservative qualities. Nor can we forget that it was the product of conquest and political domination. The banquet mentioned above was just that, a special event.

At the day-to-day level, we might suppose that the Spanish ate what Indian women servants made for them. It was probably something we would recognise as Mexican food, say European meats, mixed with chilli sauces on a corn tortilla. Perhaps, but European plants and animals came to dominate the food scene. Alexander Humboldt himself in the early nineteenth century estimated that of the roughly 250 cultivated plants in the New World, only 45 were clearly indigenous. Crucial plants, certainly, but still quite few compared to those eaten before the Spanish got here. That is to say, European grasses, other plants and animals, supplanted native species and colonised the Americas. The conquest was as much the realm of botany and zoology as anything else.

That the Spanish and their animals were a disaster for the indigenes need hardly be said. The Spanish crown gave Cortes and his men *encomiendas* which were large tracts of land hosting Indian villages. The landlords had absolute power over the subject peoples who paid tribute in the form of labour, produce or anything else they had of value. The abuses of the Indian peoples was so appalling as to prevent detailing here. The legend of Spanish cruelty, the Black Legend, has its foundation in reality. Several important churchmen such as Fray de las Casas argued against *encomiendas*, but to no avail, for the *encomienderos* were laws unto themselves. In fact, these plantations were familiar to the Spanish because they replicated the system back in Castille, an essentially manorial system. Indeed, we can think of them, their contemporary counterparts in Eastern Europe (worked by serfs), and the soon-to-be sugar plantations of the Caribbean as the beginnings of the modern commodification of food. The *encomienda* system eventually declined at the end of the sixteenth century. By then great damage had been done.

By the seventeenth century, disease, atrocious working conditions and overwork destroyed much of the Indian population. It is estimated that by 1700 only about one million Indians survived from a population of about eleven million at the time of the conquest. Huge cattle and sheep herds were allowed to trample the good Indian farmland and they were denied water rights. Finding it impossible to live under this system, many Indians retreated to poor lands where they became dirt-poor farmers. Others moved to *haciendas*, essentially self-sufficient estates where they worked as share croppers.

Eventually Mexico recovered. By the eighteenth century the population began to grow again, only now there were an equal number of *mestizos* to Indians; Spaniards formed less than 20 per cent of the population. By then, however, 200 years after Cortes, Mexico had become a new society, something we can recognise as modern. By then the outlines of its cuisine had been set, needing only a few more additions to fill out today's complete picture.

food is still a tangible marker of social distinctions, and political and social control. The Zapatistas of Chiapas did not simply ***make it all up***

Now, although Mexican cuisine is a brilliant mixture of the Old and New Worlds, something of the old stratification remains. No matter what the official mythology, or even policy, people of pure or almost pure Spanish descent run the country – one hardly ever sees indigenes in important positions. They are widely and despairingly known as 'the invisible Indian'. In the back country villages, and the markets in small towns, food demarks the poor natives. Everywhere, women prepare food from scratch with *molcajetes* and *metates*, even grinding their own corn to make tortillas. City women, women of Spanish hue, hardly ever do anything like this. The indigenes' food is heavy on starches, beans and corn, fruits and vegetables, while their rich countrymen eat meat. The same can be seen in many parts of the world – only in Mexico it is a distinct carryover from conquest and control. We might say, depending on ideology, that money is the determinant access to food. Maybe, but food is still a tangible marker of social distinctions, and political and social control. The Zapatistas of Chiapas did not simply make it all up.

Last, to return to the beginning.
The Conquistadores took their New World empire by means of new technologies – physical, social, and mental. There is something modern in the conquerors' idea of the world: it is not a place in which one fits as part of a grand scheme, rather it is something to exploit. The purposes may be social or personal, the effect is the same. That is, in mental construction, the new masters were separated from 'nature', quite unlike their new subjects' worldview. The playing out of these ideas involved politics and warfare. Cortes and company knew well the axiom '*divide et impera*', and had learned the intricate politics of the Italian city states.

Unlike Aztec warfare, much of it ritualised, Europeans fought to kill and conquer. Taking over from native rulers, Spaniards quickly learned how to operate the native levers of power. They knew the symbolic use of religion and language, theirs replacing or absorbing native ones. The plough, cattle, and pigs were real enough; they were symbols of power as well. The great feast of 1538 served as reification – to the participants and observers.

What we have been examining so far are what seems to us to be archaic sources and means of power – usually brute force with conspicuous displays of it. Our own age has all of that and something new: the power of goods, consumerism, the power of persuasion with food as a main course.

Earlier, I mentioned corporations as embodying new cultural power systems and in that way establishing forms of dominance. What follows are a few thoughts on the subject.

Since the early 1980s, there has been a growing scholarly literature on something now called the 'consumer revolution'. The '80s seems apt timing, since it was a period of resurgent free-booting capitalism, or were the two phenomena related? The new theorists say, among other things, that for too long historians have explained the rise of modern industrial society from the producers' perspective – the Industrial Revolution.
The consumers' side of the equation is just as, perhaps more, important in producing our modern world. The basic idea here is that demand drives production, therefore any 'revolution' is built on ideas pre-existing in a society, the concept of *domus* as an example. Production and consumption, though, are woven together by such questions as who drives demand in the first place.

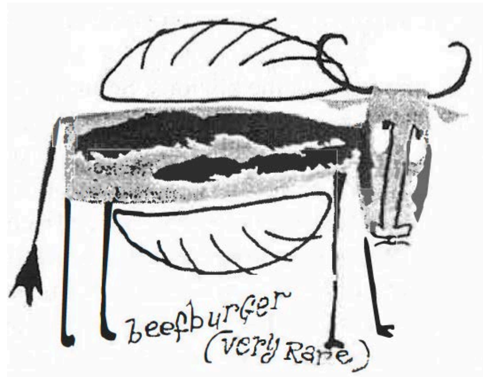
As a prime example of the revolution, McKendrick[26] cites the excitement of English customers in the 1690s evinced at the introduction of low-priced cloth imported from India. As McCracken puts it: 'The sudden demand for this fashion was an early indication of the new consumer tastes which would act as an engine driving domestic production and foreign importations to a new scale of activity.' McKendrick describes a 'commercialization of fashion' as a way in which consumer demand changed and was manipulated by eighteenth century innovations. That is, an 'intensified tyranny of fashion, a more rapid obsolescence of style, the speedier diffusion of fashion knowledge, the appearance of marketing techniques such as the fashion doll and the fashion plate, the new and more active participation of previously excluded social groups (trickle-down here), and finally, new ideas about consumption and its contribution to the public good.'

McKendrick's major examples include Josiah Wedgwood, 'who both followed and led the consumer boom of the period', the latter by orchestrating the tastes of the 'opinion leaders' of this period, the aristocracy. He also examines the career of razor-strop manufacturer George Packwood, 'Lar, Sir, we keeps a poet!' Quite so, the commercial patron of the arts.

It is difficult nowadays not to see the point: goods drive the world. In what ways? By the nineteenth century, consumers 'occupied a world filled with goods that carried messages. Increasingly they were surrounded by meaning-laden objects that could only be read by those who possessed a knowledge of the object-code. Of necessity they were becoming semioticians in a new medium, the masters of a new code. In sum, more and more social behaviour was becoming consumption, and more and more of the individual was subsumed in the role of the consumer.' (McCracken [20]).

What were and are the codes, then? McKendrick thinks that everything was motivated by the drive for status by newly emerging middle classes which ideology then filtered down to lower and lower social orders. Maybe, but there are other compelling arguments such as Campbell's which claims 'that new patterns of consumption were both cause and consequence of Romantic definitions of the self. The Romantic insistence on the uniqueness and autonomy of the self, and its insistence on the realisation of the self through experience and creativity, both drew from, and drove, the consumer revolution. Increasingly, individuals were prepared to suppose that 'the self is built through consumption [and that] consumption expresses the self'' (McCracken [20] citing Campbell). If that means food, then the phrase 'we are what we eat' takes on a other meaning than the merely alimentary.

Though there are other explanations, this one defines a distinctively Western notion. The reason for citing it, as well as rattling on about consumption, is obvious: we live in a world increasingly dominated by Western goods, Western cultural ideas, Western food. Furthermore, many, maybe most of them, are American. More on that in a moment.



Let me return to food and semiotics. McDonald's has some 7000 outlets in 89 countries. Several years ago I visited one in Beijing and wondered why hordes of Chinese patrons packed the place, why parents lined up to take photos of their children with a statue of Ronald McDonald. A few years ago Sami Zubaida in a speech to the Oxford Symposium called the process 'petty consumption' (a version of anthropologist Sol Tax's 'Penny Capitalism'). By consuming, meaning buying or eating, little, cheap things from the outside world, people in the emerging nations can connect to that greater sphere. Hence Chicago Bulls and Michael Jordan T-shirts are distributed and worn worldwide. That's a wonderful idea and needs to be taken further.

In the emerging world a McDonald's hamburger is more than a hamburger; it is invested with much more meaning than a piece of dried out beef. The code reads, modernisation, something greater and better than we have. It also scans as exotic and therefore culturally more interesting than our stuff. Why? Because it is made by invisible hands in a factory, it is raw food transformed by the magic of industry. Even beef itself has these intrinsic characteristics in many Lesser Developed Nations. The burgers are served in a hygienic facility created according to American principles of food preparation: fast, clean, and cheap. Modern-progress-better is the idea. Who doesn't believe it? There is in American fast food a new set of cultural signs set out for the rest of the world to follow and they are being read.

One parenthesis. Sometimes a hamburger is just a hamburger. It can be delicious. All the requisites are there: salt and grease, maybe some crunchy, sweet or sour condiments, accompanied by crisply fried and heavily salted potatoes. Heaven on a bun, as it is said. Right?

What we are looking at is cultural power, the ordering of human sentiments through goods themselves and habituation of buying. Therefore, who in real world terms controls the business, who controls the market, who controls those symbols by which everything is ordered, controls the world. The language and symbols of the new order are, as Australian sociologist Joel Cohen[27] seems to say, American.

I refer mainly to my own country now, though there are universals. McDonald's. Why, again, do Chinese, Filipinos, anyone in the 'outside' world visit McDonald's? A student of mine recently said that her three-year-old lives to visit McDonald's. He does not want to be at home, only McDonald's. 'Take the kid to Disneyland,' I said, 'it's the same thing.'

Two things occurred to me. One is that in the world of commerce everyone, even children – especially children – are fair game. Massive advertising campaigns for children's products, food especially, (if sugar, artificial colour, saturated, processed cereals are food) are directed to this age group. All those advertisements feature fantasy characters, or children playing fantasy roles. That is the real appeal of goods in the world of consumption: magic. This is the key to why McDonald's, why Western goods, can be sold around the world.

There is in American fast food a *new set* of *cultural signs* set out for the rest of the world to follow and they are being read

If self is identified and created by goods, then goods have transformative qualities. They are magical in the sense that they have the special powers: influence over natural and supernatural forces in ways that we mortals cannot understand. I can hardly begin to explore the idea of individuality, of selfhood, in the modern world.

Suffice it to say, Americans from the beginning were infused with religious ideas that promote the notion of self through direct relationship to the godhead. Further, the individual can be transformed through faith and by acting on it. Frail human beings can be lifted out of themselves to another level of existence, a supermundane plane, out of the misery of the carnal world.

It is an old theme, access to supernatural, and it has many expressions from large scale to small, including millennialism (the famous cargo cult among Pacific island peoples, or pilgrimage to holy shrines). Once upon a time access to the supernatural, and magic, was in the hands of shamans living in small communities. Magic has always been domesticated by rituals. In our new age, religion has become secularised, and as part of that process transformation of the spiritual self has become mere selfishness and corporeal, or example, thinness, fitness, naval-gazing, 'California Culture' we call it. It is almost as if the mystical transubstantiation in the mass has been transformed into transubstantiation of the individual self by self through consumption. For the large-scale version, we have Disney and McDonald's. Both are secularised magic – in both belief is suspended, one in reality, the other in gastronomy.
These magical, transformative qualities make Western goods, Western foods and the very temples in which they are purveyed, attract the believers, those Third Worlders. Why not, since they mean very much the same thing to us. Shopping malls are nothing less than secular cathedrals of consumerism. Eating a hamburger in such places is a ritual act by which one becomes something else. What is that something else? What is the message in the edible package? It is the American Dream, the classic liberal ideology that 'can make it' in the world. The rhetoric is rugged individualism, unchecked capitalism, the birthright of everyone. America represents opportunity, economic freedom, and, more important, the right to be an individual, unconstrained by a corporate society. To paraphrase the Unabomber, freedom is 'control of the circumstances surrounding one's life.'

Freedom is a fuzzy concept and the reality differs, as the immigrant experience in America proves (they habitually formed mini-versions of their communities back home usually centred on churches). I am inclined towards the view that to many people American freedom means magical transformation of self. 'In America the streets are paved with gold', was and is the immigrants' creed. In the same way that common folk who took off on the peasants' crusade in the late eleventh century believed that Jerusalem was a magical city whose walls were studded with precious gems, this conception does not mean money alone, if at all. It is a millennialist vision on the grand scale and also personally transformative. As Victor Turner[28] argues, people going on pilgrimage enter a state other than this world or the next, something marginal. 'Liminality', he called it. Crudely taken, that is what coming to America is, that is what partaking of Western, American goods and food is.

What I am saying is the obvious. Selling goods, selling image, is a powerful means of cultural domination. Consumerism is the operative principle, and all the more powerful because it is built on persuasion rather than coercion. Maybe. Here, then, come the priests of the new religion, specialists of the creed of goods: advertising, marketing and public relations executives. Their methods and language, unless I am completely ethnocentric, are American. We can even trace its development from the age of P. T. Barnum through the propaganda machine created by the government in World War I.

America, they have told us, is the New World, made rich by God's blessing (this called American Exceptionalism) and, especially, by mass-produced abundance: the feasts of the old elites now for the masses. Our efficiency, our machinery, combined with unique personal freedom, is to be envied. But, they said and say, you can have it, too. Goods break down class barriers, goods break down social structures, goods are good. Here is our image, then, and as more than one critic has observed, America's main export is its image.

In America we are told that we have thus created a 'classless' society, in Turner's phrase a 'commercial communitas'. That is how we achieve true freedom, again, the ultimate that a society values. But there is a dark undercurrent (Tocqueville called it a dark cloud overhanging Americans of the 1830s – it's still there). In a world made real only by goods, everything depends on this principle: unfulfilled desire. Cargo-cult-like, we yearn for goods.

How do we know what we desire? Choose your theory: envy of conspicuous consumers, emulation of elites, fashion leaders, or maybe our human nature itself, magpies who collect anything that glitters. The currently popular theory of hegemony holds that consumers are informed, directed, manipulated to do what they do by industrial/commercial/financial elites. Perhaps. Whatever the explanation, the effect is the same, desire must be instilled and never quite satisfied. The idea of goods is invested with meaning, but the objects or foods themselves have transitory meanings. Advertising controls meaning, advertising domesticates magic[29]. Those who control it, Wizard-of-Oz-like, hold the levers of power.

Selling goods, selling image, is a *powerful means* of *cultural domination*

And yet, many observers have noted, that in the consumer society goods are drained of intrinsic meaning. Adorno and others of the Frankfurt School saw mass-produced goods and all popular culture as 'washed out' because in the world of mass production and mass consumption everything has been levelled, everything is made into a commodity.

Herein is a critical point, an arrow leading back to McDonald's and food in general. I do not mean to pick on McDonald's in particular, it is the world's best (read most successful) restaurant chain. Its secret has always been uniformity. I did not say consistency – we expect a single restaurant to serve preparations consistent from one visit to the next – but uniformity. The founder of the feast, Ray Kroc, decreed that the franchises will serve the very same fare from California to New York, and likely from Sydney to Seoul. Customers should be reassured that they will have the same good food wherever they are. Why? The goal of large commercial enterprises is to sell things, and a stable, uniform world is the best way to achieve their ends. To food chains, what they sell are commodities, goods, corporately neutral in values (but really filled with greater meanings than the idea the goods holds).

Everything that's sold in this way becomes commodified. A recent article in an American magazine of opinion, *The Nation*, by a well-known commentator on American culture expressed shock at discovering that pop music and other elements of 'Hip' were, gulp, not the howl of protest and revolution, but merely stuff for sale on the mass market. According to many culture critics of the Adorno bent, such as Hermann Bausinger[32], popular culture drained of deep meaning, axiomatically sinks to the lowest levels of quality and meaning in order to appeal to the widest audience. It is shallow and flavourless, like eating a 'low fat' something.

Worse, still, is this: Kenneth Burke[33] suggests that one element of meaning is action, action in thought and language, say, or action in literature. But popular commodified culture and food is the antithesis of action; it is something to be merely consumed – passive acts. It means inaction and is therefore deliberately stupefying. No matter how much Sting sings of ruined rainforests, or Bruce Springsteen screeches about downtrodden industrial workers, the ultimate effect is to do nothing. Their consumers have been schooled in being passive vessels living lives of ironic detachment (in Nietzsche's memorable characterisation). The ultimate effort of uniform fast food chains and prepackaged, mass foods producers is to sell. That's the goal: uniformity, blandness the path. The telos is about power and control.

The image of American fast food and just about everything else sold by the industrial world to the four-fifths who can hardly afford it is one thing. However reality can be more than symbolic. Beneath the superstructure of slick marketing is the ever-expanding web of transnational corporations. When about 10 per cent of the world's measurable economic activity, more than $2 trillion a year, is spent on food, we could hardly expect large business concerns not to enter the market. Philip Morris, Grand Met, RJR, Nestlé, Kohlberg Kravis, Roberts, ConAgra, and a handful of others have become 'global grocers'. As Barnet and Kavanagh[34] point out, when giants take control of a market, costs go up.

A study of a package of Kellogg's Corn Flakes shows that the farmer gets 10 cents, storage and milling takes 4 cents, Kellogg's processing, labour, storage and shipping costs 52 cents, another 52 cents goes to advertising and marketing to retailers, another 55 cents is put to warehousing and other costs and the final cost to the retailer is $US1.73. The price to consumers is $US2.25. That is to say, 75 per cent of the costs of industrial food is in non-food related activities. Kellogg's has 40 per cent of the US market; such is the power of marketing and habit. What happens, then, when glamorous processed foods enter LDC markets and drive out local foods? Here is real power.

I can say this. Whether the cause or a symptom of changes in world economies, the story of global food companies tells us that traditional production, and maybe cultures, are dissolving before our eyes. Goods, consumerism, corrodes ancient ties of work-home-governance. In a classic of economic anthropology, Mark Edelman[35] has shown how international forces ranging from lending institutions, the national state, and organised beef interests, together with market forces (driven by marketing) have had devastating effects on Costa Rican society. They have produced, as well, an ecological disaster, destroying half the country's rainforest in the last forty years, and almost as much arable land.

The ideology of individualism inherent in consumerism is handmaiden to these new economic processes. So is uniformity in cultural commodities. Atomised people, such as we Americans (and other Western peoples), are easier to sell to; fragmented governments easier to manipulate. Economies of scale is the mode of production. That is what global businesses are about in their struggle for market share, a struggle in which they manage to have created a global hierarchy based on wealth and political power. In cultural terms, the rulers of our modern world are nothing less than a 'managerial cultural hegemony' (Jackson Lears). How much like the elites of the earliest civilisations they are?

To conclude, at last, I'll summarise. Power has many faces: political, economic, environmental, social and, critically, cultural. It begins with the idea of domestication and is expressed in early complex societies as mixtures of all of these mitigated or expressed through religion. In the era of European expansion, power was declared in its rawest dominant forms. Now, in the new age of global economic powers, it is far more subtle and more powerful than ever: it has so seductive a face, the face on the cereal box.

Notes

1. This is the realm of the irrational. In traditional societies contacts with the irrational are mediated through Carnival. For discussions of this important element of culture see E. Leach, 'Symbolic Representations of Time', in *Rethinking Anthropology* (London, 1961), and for a graphic illustration, E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Carnival in Romans* [tr. Mary Feeney] (George Braziller, 1979).
2. Colin Spencer, *The Heretic's Feast, A History of Vegetarianism* (University of New England Press, 1995 [1993]), p. 108.
3. Ian Hodder, *The Domestication of Europe, Structure and Contingency in Neolithic Societies* (Oxford, 1990).
4. As Cora DuBois has graphically shown in *The People of Alor: a Social-Psychological Study of an East Indian Island* (Cambridge, MA, 1969).
5. See Vaclav Smil, *Energy in World History* (Boulder, CO., 1994).
6. R. M. Adams, *The Evolution of Urban Society: Early Mesopotamia and Prehispanic Mexico* (Chicago, 1966).
7. Thorkild Jacobsen, 'Mesopotamia', in H. Frankfort, et al., *The Intellectual Adventure of the Ancient Man* [renamed *Before Philosophy*] (Chicago, 1946, et seq.).
8. See William Haviland, 'Stature at Tikal, Guatemala: Implications for Ancient Maya Demography and Social Organization', *American Antiquity*, 36; Margaret Schoeninger, *Dietary Reconstruction at Chalcatzingo, A Formative Period Site in Morelos, Mexico* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1979); and Jonathan Haas, *The Evolution of the Prehistoric State* (New York, 1982).
9. Gay Marx, 'A Hunger So Severe That It Stunts Poor', *Chicago Tribune*, September, 1992.
10. Paul Veyne, 'The Roman Empire', in *A History of Private Life I: From Pagan Rome to Byzantium*, [tr. Arthur Goldhammer] (Cambridge, MA, 1987).
11. Burton Watson, *Records of the Grand Historian* (New York, 1967).
12. E. N. Anderson, *The Food of China* (New Haven, CT, 1988).
13. See comments on this and other wretched excesses in Jean-Francois Revel, *Culture and Cuisine* [tr. Helen R. Lane] (New York, 1982).
14. Jacques Gernet, *Daily Life in China on the Eve of the Mongol Invasion, 1250-1276* [tr. H. M. Wright] (Stanford, CA, 1962).
15. Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism* (Cambridge, 1986).
16. Robert Beverley, *The History and Present State of Virginia* [ed. Louis B. Wright] (Chapel Hill, NC, 1947). See also Jane Carson, *Colonial Virginia Cookery* (Williamsburg, VA, 1985).
17. Richmond Croom Beatty and William J. Molloy (eds), *William Byrd's Natural History of Virginia, or The Newly Discovered Eden* (Richmond. VA, 1940).
18. Bruce Smith, 'Prehistoric Plant Husbandry in Eastern North America', in Wesley Cowan and Patty Jo Watson, *The Origins of Agriculture* (Washington, D.C., 1992).
19. As an example of a widening literature on the subject see James Axtell's works, e.g., *The European and Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of North America* (New York, 1984); *Imagining the Other: First Encounters in North America* (Washington, D.C., 1991); *Beyond 1492: Encounters in Colonial North America* (New York, 1992). Also see Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier* (Middletown, CT, 1973).
20. Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment* (Middletown, CT, 1985)
21. Harvey Levenstein's comments on this and other 'nutritional reformers' in *Revolution at the Table* (New York, 1988) are a good summary of the process.
22. Sophie Coe, *America's First Cuisines* (Austin, TX, 1994).
23. Sophie Coe, 'A Tale of Two Banquets', Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery (London, 1987) and the original source, Bernal Diaz del Castillo, *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Neuva España* (Madrid, 1982).
24. Georg Simmel, 'Fashion', *International Quarterly*, 10 (1904), and Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York, 1912).
25. Bartolome de las Casas, *Apologetica historia* (Madrid, 1958).
26. See Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plum, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: the Commercialisation of Eighteenth Century England* (Bloomington, IN, 1982,; Colin Cambell, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* (Oxford, 1987)

[This posits the concept of the 'Other Protestant Ethic', an ecstatic emotional one]; Grant McCracken, *Culture and Consumption* (Bloomington, IN, 1988); and the seminal work, Fernand Braudel's, *Capitalism and Material Life 1400-1800* [tr. Miriam Kochan] (London, 1973).

27. Joel Cohen, *Culture, Multiculture, Postculture* (Thousand Oaks, CA, 1995).
28. Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors, Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Chicago, 1969).
29. See Jackson Lears's masterful *Fables of Abundance, A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York, 1994) and Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream, Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley, CA, 1985).
30. For good examples of this important school of thought see Theodor Adorno's collection of essays, *Prisms* (New York, 1986), or Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension* (Boston, 1978).
31. Stephen Drucker, 'Who Is the Best Restaurant in America?', *The New York Times Magazine*, March 10, 1996.
32. Hermann Bausinger, *Folk Culture in a World of Technology* [tr. By Elke Dettmer] (Bloomington, IN, 1990 [originally published, 1961]).
33. Kenneth Burke was one the world's leading literary critics and philosophers. See his collection, *Language As Symbolic Action, Essays on Life, Literature, and Method* (Berkeley, CA, 1966).
34. See Richard Barnet and John Cavanagh, *Global Dreams, Imperial Corporations and the New World Order* (New York, 1994).
35. Mark Edelman, 'From Costa Rican Pasture to North American Hamburger', in Marvin Harris and Eric B. Ross (eds) *Food and Evolution* (Philadelphia, 1987).

Power talkers – Marion Halligan and Jan Power.

FOOD and POWER

session one

THE WORLD

Chair: Ross Kelly

ROSS KELLY

The organising committee had a lot of fun arriving at the theme of food and power. One of the self criticisms of it was that it could become something like a chapter out of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to Galaxy* where we are attempting to ask the question of life, the universe and everything and end up with the answer '42'. So it became very clear that we needed to set a structure, segment it and then derive the agenda.

So we came from this sense of let's start with the world, let's then narrow it down to the state, narrow it down to the families, further down to the body, then the soul. So what we're going to do over the next three days is really half a day devoted to focusing on the world, the state, the family, the body, the soul, the future. The world – that's the one that we're going to focus on between now and lunch time and it's a pretty-big-five-billion-people-thing, especially knowing that two billion of those people are hungry.

The whole idea of the commerce around food is one of the driving forces behind the world and we have two speakers in this session, firstly John Fitzpatrick, then Sri and Roger Owen. At this point I'll introduce John and just say that I thought his was one of the really exciting papers of the last symposium in Adelaide. He spoke of the geology and the topography of the Mediterranean and we learned about the trade, military access and trade routes, and the way those influences died. In some ways he will build on that paper this morning.

He is going to talk about the absence of fish in the Sardinian diet and other paradoxes of material life. John is a teacher in international relations at Flinders University, Adelaide and his discovery of food really came through thinking about international relations and the way it ultimately relates to food. He will explore the relationship between food culture and economic, military power.

knowledge is power *power rangers* **to the power[10] powers behind the throne** powerwalk **power elite**

THE ABSENCE OF FISH IN THE SARDINIAN DIET, AND OTHER PARADOXES OF MATERIAL LIFE

Dr John Fitzpatrick,
Department of Politics,
Flinders University, South Australia

Abstract

This paper explores the relationship between food cultures and economic/military power in the pre-industrial world by looking at situations in which a major food resource (i.e. seafood) seems to be much less prominent in regional cuisine and diets than might be expected on the basis of its relative abundance in the regions in question.

Three cases are considered, which may be roughly labelled as the Sardinian, the Polish and the Manchurian, though these labels are not to be understood as signifying, 'national' or 'sub-national' cuisines – concepts which the paper will explicitly argue are worse than useless for thinking about the problem considered. Though the three cases differ in major ways, the paper will argue that all are best understood in terms of core-periphery models of military and economic power.

Introduction and Agenda

Sardinia is the second largest island in the Mediterranean, after Sicily. In many respects it is a microcosm of the Mediterranean environment. Most of the landmass is composed of high plateaux of around 3000 feet, with a few higher mountain peaks rising to just over 5000 feet (there are no very high mountains, as in Sicily). These uplands are now largely deforested, substantially as a result of human impact. The dominance of the uplands accentuates the most characteristic feature of Mediterranean rainfall patterns: the sharp contrast between cool, relatively wet winters and hot dry summers. Most of the rivers run torrentially for limited periods in winter and dry up in summer, and are only marginally navigable. Because of the erratic rainfall, rapid runoff, and associated erosion from the deforested uplands, cultivation of the narrow coastal plains is subject to contrasting problems of semi-aridity and malaria-producing swamps.

Sardinia lies relatively near the Italian peninsula and is today part of Italy. Indeed the partly French monarchy of Piedmont-Savoy, which became the ruling house of united Italy in the late-nineteenth century, was commonly described as the 'kingdom of Sardinia' after its main 'Italian' possession prior to the wars of the Risorgimento. It is so close to the smaller island of Corsica in the north that 'geologically Sardinia is a continuation of Corsica', though Corsica is today part of France and has been controlled by different external powers to those controlling Sardinia for most of the last 1000 years.

However, if one focuses not on the island as a whole but on its major regions of cultivable plains and useful harbours, Sardinia's primary geographical orientation is not towards either Italy or France but towards North Africa (in the region of ancient Carthage) and, more distant, towards the Balearics and Spain.

Sardinia's east coast is somewhat forbidding and difficult of access, the coastal strip being narrow and backed by forest land. Both traders and invaders found their easiest entry from the south, west or northwest. These coasts are rich in bays, lagoons and marshy land, good for fishing and wild-fowling; natural harbours abound, particularly little sandy inlets known as cale or calette, large enough to protect small boats and offering easy access into what is here a less thickly wooded hinterland (Guido, 1963, p.27).

Finally, though, Sardinia fronts onto one of the large stretches of deep, open sea that make the Mediterranean basin as a whole relatively poor in fish. The island itself has sufficient continental shelf around it to make its immediate waters relatively rich in fish – rich enough for it to have given its name to one of the most characteristic Mediterranean fish, the sardine. But despite this relative abundance of seafood in the immediate vicinity, Sardinia has become notorious among food historians for the marginal place – if not literally the absence – of seafood in the local diet. Waverly Root, who has attached to Sardinian food the influential label of a 'Stone Age cuisine', sums up the situation as follows:

> The curious distaste of the Sardinians for the sea results in a gastronomic anomaly; inhabiting an island set in waters teeming with fish, Sardinians show little interest in seafood. This phenomenon goes back as far as the records. Until fairly recently, the only communities of fishermen on Sardinia were at Carloforte, after the Genoese took it over, and Alghero, after its settlement by the Spaniards. Even today, the principal fishing ports of the island are, in a sense, foreign. They still include Alghero and Carloforte,

> to which Porto Torres-Stintino and Caligari [the capital] have been added. Stintino is now the capital for tuna fishing, but for the main it is carried on not by Sardinians, but by Sicilians. (Root, 1971, p. 676; see also Roden, Harris, Alcar.)

This puzzle of an entire population largely turning its back on a major food source – in particular a major protein source – despite its relative local abundance in a broader Mediterranean context where seafood is both highly prized and relatively scarce provides the central agenda of this paper. Sardinia clearly presents a major anomaly for the commonsense assumption that popular foodways (in the pre-industrial era) are primarily determined by the basic environmental constraints of what Fernand Braudel calls material life, responding above all to the range of potential foodstuffs locally and seasonally available. I will assume, without trying to justify the assumption here, that it is unsatisfactory to respond to an anomaly on this scale with the kind of cultural relativism which says there is no accounting for taste, and suggest instead that another type of materialist explanation may be sought at the level of long-term geopolitics and competing imperial political economies in the broader Mediterranean framework.

In brief, I suggest that the 'absence of fish in the Sardinian diet' is one symptom of a broader puzzle – why no stable, locally grounded economic order developed around the considerable resources of Sardinia's more accessible coasts and plains – and that this broader puzzle is best understood in terms of the long-term pattern of external influences on Sardinian development. What follows is a brief sketch of the pattern of territorial control and economic exploitation of Sardinia from around 1000 BC to the nineteenth century, with accompanying comments on the implications of these territorial patterns for the character of Sardinia's coastal economy. In its current state, it is obviously far from a satisfactory response to the puzzle in the terms sketched above. But I hope it at least indicates that this is a useful place to be looking for a satisfactory response.

Historical Patterns of External Influence on Sardinia

The earliest era of external influence upon Sardinian development presents a striking contrast to modern images of the island as one of the most backward regions of the Mediterranean (e.g. Root's characterisation of its 'Stone Age cuisine'). In the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age, the 'leading edge' of economic development in the Mediterranean (including the first development of a recognisably Mediterranean food culture) was clearly in the east. Sardinia's central location in the western Mediterranean, within comparatively easy sailing distance of Sicily and Malta, northwest Africa, and Spain and the Balearics, initially placed it in the forefront of economic and technological diffusion from the east to the west of the sea.

The first substantial direct foreign influence on Sardinian development may have come at the very end of the Bronze Age, around the thirteenth and twelfth centuries BC. Archaeological evidence indicates that this period produced the first real take-off of the local 'Nuragic' culture – named after the large conical towers which were 'its most characteristic and interesting monuments' – and eastern technological influences appear to have been important in this process. The 'Shardana', who allegedly gave their name to the island, were represented as immigrants from the east in ancient sources, and may have arrived as an offshoot of a major migration of 'peoples of the sea' in the eastern Mediterranean described in Egyptian sources. However, a far better documented, and far more important starting point in the search for external influences is the role of the Phoenicians.

The Phoenician and Carthaginian Phase

The Phoenicians were undoubtedly the most important group in long-distance trade in the early Iron Age Mediterranean, and the primary exporters of eastern influences to the west of the sea. They were also leaders in food production attuned to the Mediterranean environment: in terracing mountain slopes and harnessing short coastal rivers for irrigation; in the sophisticated cultivation of wheat, wine, olives, figs and dates; and in the harvesting and processing of seafood. Their earliest trading cities, in what is now part of coastal Lebanon, 'were part of the political economy of the Egyptian empire' then, after 1000 BC, of the Assyrians providing services and goods to their powerful neighbours, in return for protection, access to profitable markets, and foodstuffs (Harrison, 1988, p.41). Their period of maximum autonomy and prosperity within this framework lasted roughly from the late eleventh century BC to the mid-ninth century BC and, from the beginning, involved important trading impacts on the western Mediterranean.

Sardinia was important to the Phoenicians in its own right – especially for its metals – and secondly for its convenient location on the route to Spain – which was even richer in metals and, in turn, gave access to

important trade circuits on the Atlantic coast. The Phoenician role in Sardinia is 'notoriously ancient', possibly beginning in the eleventh century BC and certainly in the tenth (Moscati, 1973, p.257). Their impact is perhaps best described in terms of constructive symbiosis. They needed to work with the indigenous populations in the uplands to gain access to metals; and though they were interested in exploiting Sardinian agricultural and fishing resources to support their own colonies, there was neither incentive nor possibility for them to reshape the island's economy towards the bulk production and export of a few basic foodstuffs, as later occurred under Rome.

The Phoenician settlements appear to have been peaceful and limited to a few trading stations around the coast, usually promontories or off-shore islands which offered good beaching facilities for their boats. Other factors influencing their choice were the presence of a rich hinterland (particularly for metals) and of lagoons and salt marshes for netting and preserving fish (Guido, 1963, p.193).

An intensification of this pattern occurred in the eighth century, when eastern Phoenician firms set up 'permanent colonial outposts [in the West] where they manufactured finished luxuries as well as iron objects, cloth, dyes and foodstuffs like food and wine' (Harrison, 1988, p.43). The period also produced more substantial emigration from the Phoenician homeland, and in general a more substantial and complex external presence in the coastal regions of Sardinia. Around the same time – and clearly in part because of this external influence from more advanced cultures – the local 'Nuragic' culture reached its highest level (Guido, 1963, p.20–21,106).

In the sixth century, the North African city of Carthage increasingly assumed an imperial hegemony over the other Phoenician colonies in the west and, in the context of increasing competition with the western Greeks, proceeded to a more systematic occupation of the accessible western regions of Sardinia around 510 BC. Carthage was a much closer and more demanding external presence than the eastern Phoenician cities, and its rule did begin the process of directing the economy of the coastal plains towards the production of a few major products for the metropolis – above all grain for the Carthaginian armies. Restrictions were allegedly placed on the planting of trees, to maximise the area available to grain (Root, 1971, p.665); large estates were required to provide an annual quota of grain for army use; and 'large numbers of Libyan slaves were brought in to repopulate some areas, to work on the farms and in the mineral and salt mines, and to help exploit resources such as grain, flax, olives, tunny-fish, sardines, coral and wool' (Guido, 1963, p.202).

On the other hand, the Carthaginian impact increased the scale and sophistication of the colonial economy and polity in Sardinia, and of its interaction with the indigenous Sardinian populations.

The island became increasingly important to the Carthaginians, a number of new towns and sanctuaries were founded and earlier Phoenician sites were enlarged and given a new importance. In time, some autonomy was probably allowed, and the towns may have been ruled by suffetes and a senate. For the next few centuries, the population was ethnically mixed – indigenous Sardinians in the mountains, descendants of early Phoenician settlers, Carthaginians and all the mercenaries and deported peoples brought in by them (Guido, 1963, p.202).

There is also little doubt that seafood was an integral part of the coastal diet and economy of this time. Salting fish was 'a typical industry of the Punic West', and the salted and fermented fish paste garum – which later became so prominent in the food of imperial Rome – was a Carthaginian speciality. It was particularly associated with Cadiz, in Spain, but 'the saltworks which developed [throughout] the area of Punic dispersion were closely connected with the industry of salting fish' (Moscati, 1973, p.223).

The Roman Phase

Rome seized both Sardinia and Corsica from Carthage in 238 BC, just three years after its final conquest of Sicily in the long and destructive First Punic War. The local population evidently found Roman rule more harshly imperial than that of Carthage, and in 215 BC there was a major local rebellion, backed by the landing of a Carthaginian army. The Romans suppressed this, but continued to face periodic Sardinian insurrections down to the last major stand of the local population in 177 BC. On that occasion, Livy claims, 10,000 armed men were killed on the Sardinian side and all their weapons burnt as an offering to the god Vulcan. This 'great heap of weapons', Margaret Guido observes, 'symbolised the funeral pyre of the long and proud Nuragic culture' (1963, p.209).

Roman rule changed the political economy of external influence in Sardinia in two crucial respects, both undermining the prospects for complex foreign-local economic interaction in the more accessible coastal regions. On the one hand, there was a greatly intensified demand for the production and bulk

export of basic foodstuffs to serve the needs of the new imperial metropolis. Carthage had demanded grain primarily for its armies in the field. Rome required grain for the imperial city itself, which had a less favourable agricultural hinterland than Carthage but rapidly developed a far greater population than its vanquished rival, growing in tandem with its relentless imperial expansion from around 10,000 in the early fourth century BC to almost a million in the late first century BC. Sardinia was initially second in importance to Sicily among Rome's colonial granaries, dropping to third place when Rome gained complete control of Carthage's North African hinterland after the Third Punic War in 146 BC. However, the Sardinian contribution to Rome's total food imports remained very important down to the first century BC. When the Sardinian grain supply was blockaded in 40-38 BC by one of the factions in the civil wars of the period – the Sicilian supply having been cut off three years earlier – 'the starvation of Rome loomed' (Wilson, 1996, p.443).

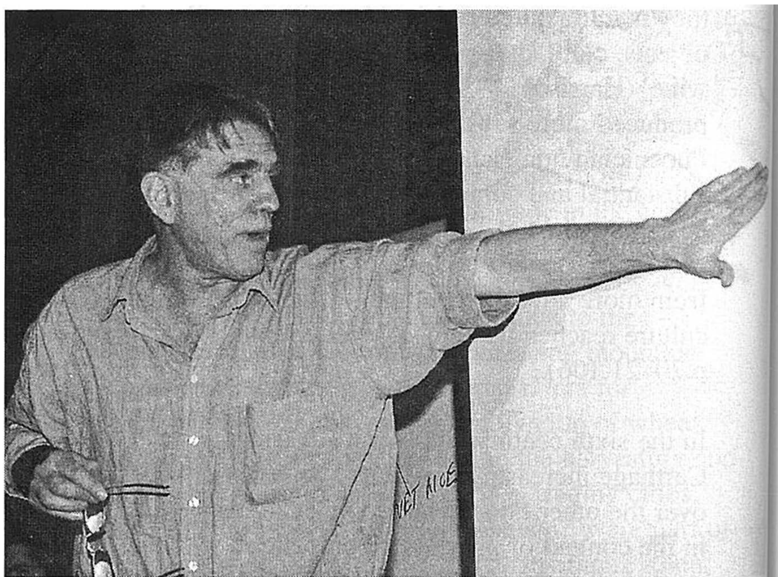
On the other hand, Sardinia's place in the broader economic life of the Roman empire was much more marginal than in the Carthaginian empire. In the former, western Sardinia was geographically pivotal to a relatively small maritime empire otherwise bounded by North Africa, Spain and Sicily. By the first century BC, Rome's imperial orbit extended over the entire Mediterranean; and even in the west, the main navigation routes between Rome and Spain and Gaul passed north of Corsica, consigning Sardinia to the status of an economic backwater except in the narrow and exploitative function of granary to Rome (Guido, 1963, p.210).

This tendency towards the exclusion of Sardinia from the more productive and pluralistic dimensions of trade within the Roman empire must have been further accentuated in the early centuries AD, as the vast territories conquered in transalpine Europe rose in political and economic importance to Rome. Over the same period, Sardinia fell back still further in the hierarchy of grain suppliers, with Egypt now assuming unequivocal first place. But the sustained pressure of a million-plus population meant that Roman demand on all major granaries remained high, and 'there is no suggestion of a decline in Sardinian agriculture, or any suggestion that cereal-production levels did not remain high' (Wilson, 1996, p.447).

Other than its significance as a granary, however, Sardinia seems to have been primarily known to Romans for persistent problems of malaria on the coastal plains, piracy on the adjoining seas and banditry in the mountains.

There was no real Roman attempt to colonise Sardinia 'except with settlements of the Botany Bay type' narrowly designed to enforce colonial control (Cary, cited in Guido, p.210), and the division between coast and interior probably became more pronounced – with 'Sard remaining the everyday language' of the latter (Wilson, 1996, pp.443–448).

A third sub-phase in the long Roman era may be distinguished from the early fourth century BC. There was a far-reaching reorganisation of the empire, in response to a fifty-year period of politico-military crisis in the third century, which decisively followed military logic and further undermined the already faltering imperial economy. A new eastern capital was established at Constantinople, and the Egyptian grain supply was diverted from Rome to Constantinople from 330 AD onwards. Sardinia thus ended the Roman period once more rising up the hierarchy of grain suppliers to the imperial city, while the broader trading environment of the empire collapsed around it. When finally seized from the decrepit western empire by the North African Vandal kingdom in 455 AD, it had been a Roman colony for almost 800 years, only a few years less than Sicily.



John Fitzpatrick shows and tells.

I have so far found no direct documentation of the economic impact on Sardinia of these last centuries of Roman decline. But it seems reasonable to postulate two important consequences, both of which would have encouraged a substantial deterioration of the physical environment, economic productivity and level of population on the coastal plains. First, Rome remained a very large city heavily dependent on imported food for a century or so after the diversion of Egyptian grain to Constantinople in 330 AD.

During this time, it seems likely that the pressure of Roman demand would have increased on the lesser granary regions remaining under Roman control, encouraging agricultural exploitation beyond the 'carrying capacity' of the land (certainly something like this appears to have occurred in Libya around this time, producing a rapid deterioration in what had previously been a remarkably productive agriculture in a fairly marginal physical environment) (Chatterton and Chatterton, 1985). Second, once the terminal decline of Rome – together with its satellite cities and towns in central Italy – began in earnest in the fifth century, it advanced very rapidly, taking with it a whole regional economy shaped around large-scale food exports to the metropolis.

This drastic collapse in the Roman market for imported foodstuffs has recently been linked to a striking symptom of environmental collapse beginning around the same time. This is the phenomenon of unusually deep sedimentation or alluvial 'fill' which is 'an almost universal feature of the river valleys of the Mediterranean basin in the period 400-900'. At first attributed to major climate change – for which, however, there is little evidence in contemporary records – this alluvial fill has more recently been interpreted as a direct result of the politico-economic decline of Rome.

The alternative theory is that the fill was formed as a direct result of the collapse of the classical agricultural system. Failure to repair terraces as the mass-market for olive oil and wine declined led to erosion as previously revetted soils were washed away.

The Post-Roman Era

I have suggested above that eight centuries of exclusive and exploitative Roman rule decisively reversed the trend towards a complex coastal economy (including a sophisticated exploitation of local seafood resources) which had been developing in the preceding Phoenician and Carthaginian era. I will now briefly indicate that this Roman legacy was entrenched by external geopolitical developments over the fourteen centuries separating the fall of the western Roman empire from the political unification of Italy under a monarchy nominally described as 'Sardinian'. My summary of geopolitical developments in this 'post-Roman era' is extremely sketchy, and in several cases it seems impossible to say which external power, if any, really controlled the island. But this very geopolitical uncertainty is my central point about the post-Roman era. If the main factor inhibiting a stable, relatively balanced development of Sardinia's coastal plains in the Roman era was the narrowly focused demand of a single imperial power, the lack of any stable pattern of territorial control seems the major inhibiting factor in the centuries which followed.

As noted above, the Vandals detached Sardinia from the western Roman empire in 455 AD. Almost exactly a century later, a campaign of reconquest by the eastern (or Byzantine) empire, reclaimed Sardinia, Corsica and the Balearics, along with southern Italy, Sicily, North Africa and the southern tip of Spain. However, these reconquests left both east and west in a condition of socio-economic exhaustion, and could never have been sustained from Constantinople over the longer term. After roughly another century, almost all of these territories were lost by Byzantium in the face of the meteoric rise of Islam. Beginning with the conquest of Egypt in the 640s, Islamic powers swept across North Africa and Spain in the space of seventy years, even reaching Narbonne and Toulouse on the southern French coast in 715 and 721 AD respectively. However, in this first great phase of their advance, the naval power of the various Islamic forces remained limited, and Sardinia and Corsica, having been detached from Byzantine rule by the indirect consequences of the broader Arab victories, appear to have drifted into an uncertain and dangerous 'no man's land'.

Around the beginning of the eighth century, according to the political geographer Colin McEvedy, Sardinia voluntarily entered the Carolingian Frankish empire to the north – 'a reflection of the savage piracy that was devastating the Mediterranean coasts' (McEvedy, 1961, p.46). However, this notional shift to a new imperial control must have been almost irrelevant in practice, as the Carolingian empire – even at its height overwhelmingly a land-based power – was already on the verge of disintegration. On the other hand, Islamic naval forces were growing more powerful, taking control of Sardinia in 827, Corsica in 850, and Sicily over the period 840-865 AD.

The campaign for Sicily, against the remnant Byzantine empire, was the longest and most hard-fought. But once conquered, Sicily remained under Islamic control till the late eleventh century and, within the framework of this enduring link to Islamic North Africa, reached what is widely regarded as the highest point of economic development and culinary sophistication in its long and extraordinary history. By contrast, no stable link was established between Sardinia (or Corsica) and the major Islamic powers in North Africa, the primary Islamic impact on them coming from pirates operating from the European shore, out of a base at Fraxinetum in Provence.

Abandoned by Christendom, though not effectively occupied by Moslems, their [geopolitical] status is as uncertain as their actual state was wretched'(McEvedy, 1961, p.50).

By the mid-eleventh century, the Islamic pirate base on the Provençal coast had been destroyed and naval predominance in the western Mediterranean was passing to the northern Italian seaports. In 1050, the remaining Islamic forces in Sardinia were ejected by the combined forces of Pisa and Genoa. Pisa subsequently attempted to claim exclusive territorial control over Sardinia, but the Genoese challenge to this claim was evidently persistent and long-lasting. David Abulafia, writing of the situation in 1179, describes Sardinia as 'anciently disputed territory' between the two trading cities (Abulafia, 1977, p.154). Pisa was finally eliminated as a major naval power by Genoa in 1284, and this initiated a period of Genoese control of Corsica which lasted till the mid-eighteenth century. Sardinia, however, had by 1323 been taken over by the rising power of Aragon – which defeated Genoese competition for the island with Venetian assistance – beginning a period of almost 400 years of control by powers based in the Spanish peninsula.

The new Mediterranean empire of Aragon was initially an expression of Catalonian sea-power and above all the mercantile strength of Barcelona. When Barcelona lost its urban independence from the inland Aragonese monarchy in the late fourteenth century, Catalan naval dynamism went into long-term decline (Braudel, 1971, pp.145-7). But the late fifteenth century produced a united Aragonese-Castilian monarchy in Spain; and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Sardinia became the dependency not of a declining west Mediterranean empire but of a far-flung 'Hapsburg superpower', over-shadowing both northern Europe and the western Mediterranean and controlling vast new territories in the Americas as well. By the late seventeenth century, the ramshackle power structures of Hapsburg Spain were disintegrating in their turn. Having swapped a Hapsburg for a Bourbon royal house, and still trailing Sardinia as one of its lesser Mediterranean dependencies, Spain entered the War of Spanish Succession (1701-13) as a very subordinate ally of France.

The Franco-Spanish alliance was defeated in this war, and in the concluding Peace of Utrecht (1713), Sardinia went to Austria, along with the more important acquisitions – from the Austrian viewpoint – of Naples, Lombardy and the ex-Spanish Netherlands. The duchy of Piedmont-Savoy – a minor power which benefited from picking the right coalition at the critical time – got Sicily, and the associated right for the duke to call himself a king. In 1717, however, 'the Spanish had a stab at winning back their Italian provinces' first occupying Sardinia and then invading Sicily. With the help of the British fleet, the Austrians pushed the Spanish back. But they kept Sicily for themselves, giving Sardinia to Savoy as a consolation prize, which at least still allowed the duke to maintain his claim to be a king (though only in a backward colony with no historical connection to his metropolitan base) (McEvedy, 1972, p.62).

This territorial settlement, as noted earlier, held through to the wars of Italian unification. Nominally, this enthroned the king of 'Sardinia' as the king of all Italy. But the eminence this implied for Sardinia was illusory, an artefact of the niceties of European diplomatic nomenclature. In reality, Sardinia was regarded by its northern monarchs as equally, if not more backward than the southern 'mezzogiorno' region of the peninsula Italy, where resistance to northern domination of the new Italian state was suppressed with 'unmeasured brutality', with more people being killed than in all the other wars of the Risorgimento combined (Katz, 1971, p.37). In Sardinia itself, 'the Piedmontese systematically cut down the woods with the illusory object of denying cover to the bandits who hid in them' (Root, 1971, p.665).

Food-related Trends in the Post-Roman Era

This final section of the historical discussion considers the major implications of the extreme political and military instability of post-Roman Sardinia for the pattern of economic development in the coastal plains and coastal waters of the island. It seems useful to begin with two general factors which, either separately or together, have been advanced as underlying causes of the hostility of the Sardinian population to the coastal regions and hence, indirectly of the marginal place of seafood in the Sardinian diet.

The first factor is malaria. 'Until a quarter of a century ago' Waverly Root observes, 'the coasts were miasmas of malaria'. The Sardinians considered them fit only for animals (Root, 1971, p.659). There can be no doubt about the importance of this factor. However, as Braudel points out, malarial swamps were an endemic feature of the pre-industrial Mediterranean environment, with its high winter rainfall and its narrow coastal plains overshadowed by mountains and high plateaux. Where they became the dominant feature of a particular coastal environment, they should be regarded as both

symptom and cause of the failure of sustained agricultural development in the foothills and plains of the region in question:

> If [the peasant] drains the marshes and puts the plains under the plough, the malaria retreats. The best remedy against malaria, says an Etruscan proverb, is a well-filled pot. But if the drainage and irrigation channels are neglected, if the mountains are too quickly deforested, altering the conditions of the flow of the stream, or if the population of the plain falls and the peasants' hold on the land is relaxed, then malaria spreads again and paralyses everything. The plain will soon be reduced to its original marshy state: it is an automatic counter-improvement (Braudel, 1972, p.65).

Like malaria, *piracy* was an endemic *Mediterranean problem* rooted ultimately in the character of the *physical environment*

Therefore if one is to invoke the general Mediterranean problem of malaria to explain the specific Sardinian problem of an island population with an aversion to fish, one should specify when and how malaria became an exceptional constraint upon coastal development in the Sardinian case.
The preceding historical sketch suggests that this was not true of the Phoenician and Carthaginian era, when Sardinia was in the forefront of the spread of a developed east Mediterranean agricultural and fishing economy into the western Mediterranean. Rather, the watershed appears likely to have come in the later Roman period, as convulsions in the geopolitical situation of the Roman core led to first over-exploitation of foothills and coastal plains, then to the collapse of complex terracing and drainage arrangements in the Sardinian periphery.

Following the Roman collapse, the prospects for malaria being pushed back by the re-emergence of a complex local economy in coastal Sardinia were fundamentally undermined by the constant instability in the geopolitical situation of the island.

Rather similar considerations apply to the second background factor sometimes cited as an explanation for the historical retreat of 'indigenous Sardinians' to the interior of their island (and to a corresponding interior' diet), namely piracy. Like malaria, piracy was an endemic Mediterranean problem rooted ultimately in the character of the physical environment. Fishing, trading and piracy were all closely inter-linked maritime activities.
Given Sardinia's relatively high maritime potential, the real question is why it is not primarily remembered as a base for piracy (and fishing and maritime trade) rather than as a region especially subject to the depredation of pirates based elsewhere.

Again, it seems that the watershed between these two roles comes in the Roman era. Sardinia was known to the Romans as an important base for pirates at least down to the early first century AD, and as such it figured prominently in the much touted campaign of Augustus to eradicate piracy from the Mediterranean. In fact, David Braund suggests, the Roman eradication of piracy was less far-reaching than is often claimed. 'Imperial controls (the fleets, coastal armies, local powers) combined with the effects of relative stability to create a Mediterranean world which suffered piracy mainly at an everyday, low intensity level' (Braund, 1995, p.209). However, given its importance as an imperial granary (and its proximity to Rome), Sardinia was one of those regions where piracy was likely to be regarded as a major challenge to imperial policy, not as a localised nuisance which could be safely disregarded.

After the Roman collapse, piracy in the Mediterranean became both endemic and 'high intensity' for many centuries, but Sardinia increasingly appears not as a base for pirates but as the prey of pirates based elsewhere. The scale of this problem in the years 500-1000 AD has already been mentioned, and it continued, if on a somewhat less intense level, into the subsequent period of struggle for control of the island between Pisa, Genoa and Barcelona/Aragon/Spain. Pisan ships based in Sardinian waters appear to have preyed on Genoese trade with Sicily and the eastern Mediterranean during the period of north Italian naval ascendancy (Abulafia, 1972, p.140). In subsequent centuries, Sardinia's coasts were 'constantly harassed by the attacks of Barbary pirates' from Islamic North Africa. In the late sixteenth century, the capital Caligari

emerged as an important slave market for Islamic captives of Christian slave vessels – being caught up, in a distinctly subordinate role, in a 'revival of active Christian privateering, a sort of counter-offensive launched against the Barbary corsairs and based in the Balearics, southern Spain, Naples and Sicily' (Braudel, 1972, p.151).

By the mediaeval and early modern period, therefore, the coast-interior relationship in Sardinia corresponded closely to that sketched by Waverly Root in his own exploration of the puzzle of the Sardinian diet: a succession of transient and limited 'foreign' occupations of the coast, a subsistence, dispersed and semi-tribal economy and society in the interior, whose populations were effectively 'isolated from external influences... both individually and collectively' (Root, 1971, p.659). This had not, as Root implies, been the situation since time immemorial: rather it represented a radical reversal of trends developing in the Phoenician and Carthaginian era. But it was essentially the situation which would prevail down to the late nineteenth century.

Within this general framework, the major economic attractions of Sardinia for the external powers were the same as in the Roman era: metals and grains. Braudel observes that the 'solicitude' for Sardinia on the part of Pisa and Genoa 'was accounted for by its gold mines' (Braudel, 1972, p.151). But both cities were also dependent on imported grain, especially Genoa, which had no significant rural contado on the narrow Ligurian coast and was forced to trade for grain to survive. At this point, Sardinia evidently remained sufficiently important as a grain producer to be considered by the Genoese as a potential replacement for their primary supplier, Sicily. In 1162, when the Genoese contemplated abandoning their trade treaty with the Norman kingdom of Sicily and joining the Holy Roman Empire in an attack on the Normans, one critical consideration was whether they could supplant the Pisan influence in Sardinia by such a move.

> The Genoese knew that legitimacy of control over Sardinia would be determined by the imperial nod. Sardinia counted all the more since, like Sicily, it was a grain producer; if, in abandoning Sicily, the Genoese secured a tighter hold over the Sardinian estates, they need not go hungry (Abulafia, 1977, p.123).

This situation continued into the period of Aragonese/Spanish domination, with the important qualification that Sardinia as imperial periphery must have become of increasingly marginal economic significance to an increasingly distant imperial core. As noted above, Sardinia's 'Spanish' period began with little more than a shuffling of the chairs among contending city-empires in the western Mediterranean, from Pisa and Genoa to Barcelona. But by the sixteenth century it was the distant appendage of a Hapsburg superpower whose most important colonial interests by far were in the Netherlands and the Americas. Even in the earlier phase of this transformation of the Spanish core – the subordination of coastal Barcelona to the inland power and interests of Aragon – Sardinia's economic significance was evidently in question. The constant rebellions of its inhabitants produced 'loud complaints [in Aragon] about the expense and loss caused by the continual reinforcement of troops in Sardinia, a pestilential island generally not thought to be worth the trouble it had caused' (Chaytor, 1933, p.189). In the later period of united Spain, Sardinian resources of metals and grains – let alone of fish – must have paled into insignificance in comparison with those opened up by the expansion and integration of the Atlantic, North Sea and Baltic economies and the conquest in the Americas.

However, this later period did produce one new and very revealing instance of Sardinia's importance as a specialist foodstuff supplier. To once more quote Braudel:

> In the sixteenth century, and even before no doubt, the island was the Mediterranean's leading exporter of cheeses. And so through Caligari, the island was in touch with the rest of the Western world; boats and galleons loaded with her cavallo or salso cheese sailed to the neighbouring coasts of Italy, Leghorn, Genoa and Naples; even to Marseilles, in spite of competition from rivals, the cheeses of Milan and the Auvergne; and even to Barcelona. (Braudel, p.151).

Sardinia's career as a specialised cheese exporter has two important implications for the theme of this paper. First, it exemplifies very clearly the status of the island as what Jane Jacobs calls a 'supply region', whose economic structure is reshaped around the production of one (or a few) specialised products to meet the demands of distant cities. This relationship had in fact begun with the Roman demand for Sardinian grain. In the sixteenth century, the product demanded had changed; and the demand came from many distant cities, not one: but the distorting effect on Sardinian economic development was effectively the same. Second, the specific product now demanded by the outside world – namely cheese – reflected and reinforced the long-term contraction of 'Sardinian' economic activity away from the agricultural and fishing resources of the coastal regions towards the largely pastoral economy of the of the interior. Moreover, by providing an external economy incentive for the 'huge herds of sheep and

goats which played an important part in the destruction of the forests' (Root, 1971, p.665), it further undermined the ecological preconditions for a healthy coastal economy.

Conclusions and Implications

The recurring theme of the preceding historical sketch has been the pervasive influence of a multitude of external military and economic powers on Sardinia's economy and the prospects for its food culture. In effect, I am claiming that Sardinian history over almost three millennia is to be understood primarily as a colonial history, and to focus my concluding remarks it may be useful to start with a literary passage which advances a very similar proposition, in this case about Sicily.

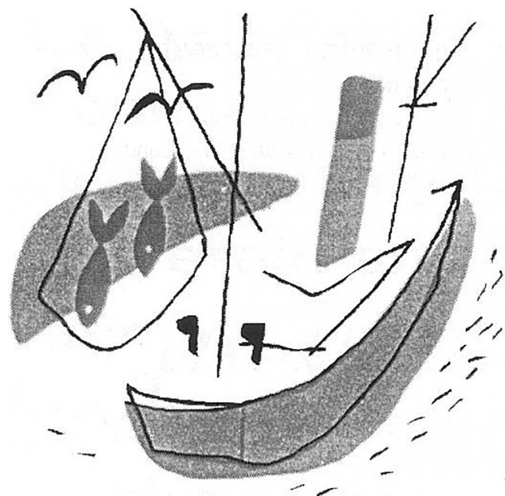
In Giuseppi di Lampedusa's *The Leopard*, Prince Fabrizio invokes the long colonial history of Sicily to account for his attitude to what he regards as the latest invasion of his country – the takeover of Sicily by 'united Italy' at the time of the Risorgimento:

> We are old, Chevalley, very old. For over twenty-five centuries we've been bearing the weight of superb and heterogeneous civilisations, all from outside, none made by ourselves. We're as white as you are, Chevalley, and as the Queen of England; and yet for two thousand five hundred years we've been a colony. This violence of landscape, this cruelty of climate, this continual tension in everything, and even these monuments of the past, magnificent yet incomprehensible because not built by us and yet standing around us like lovely mute ghosts; all those rulers who landed by main force from every direction, who were at once obeyed, soon detested and always misunderstood. Their only expressions were works of art we couldn't understand and taxes which we understood only too well and which they spent elsewhere. All these things formed our character, which is conditioned by events outside our control as well as a terrifying insularity of mind.

Prince Fabrizio's reference to 'all those rulers who landed by main force from every direction' presents as a description of the specific historical predicament of Sicily. But it would apply, with equal or greater force, to the history of Sardinia sketched above. More to the point, it would apply, to greater or lesser extent, to almost any region flanking the Mediterranean basin, up to at least the nineteenth century. The pre-industrial Mediterranean was above all a complex of seas and coasts, hemmed in by mountains and high plateaux, with coastal regions typically having much more in common with each other than with the interior regions to which they have become yoked in the last century or so of industrialised transport and 'national' state-making. In this pre-industrial environment, the occupation of attractive coastal regions by successive waves of 'foreigners' was not an aberration: it was the norm. So much the norm that the whole notion of 'foreigners', in the sense invoked by modern nationalist ideology, is quite misleading.

Thus Waverly Root's conclusion that the Sardinians did not develop a tradition of eating fish because they kept to the mountainous interior while a succession of foreigners occupied the coast is really a restatement of the problem. It begs the more interesting question why the 'foreigners' did not leave a local tradition of eating fish which could today be experienced as an important part of a broader complex called 'Sardinian cuisine'. Sicily, as Prince Fabrizio insisted, had more than its share of foreign invasions: indeed, Root describes Sicily, from the viewpoint of food culture, as 'the domain of the Saracens' – acknowledging the pervasive influence of the mediaeval Islamic period on subsequent Sicilian cuisine. But few would deny that there was a distinctively Sicilian cuisine, and one paying due attention to local seafood. Similar comments could be made about the Mediterranean coast of Spain, where Islamic influence was entrenched for many more centuries.

In the eighth or ninth century, Sardinia 'came fully into the orbit of the Eastern world [and] then her economy, based on splendid natural resources and developed by a vigorous people stimulated by foreign technicians, responded to the full, and it is reflected in the flourishing renaissance of the Full Nuragic period' (Guido, 1963, p.192).



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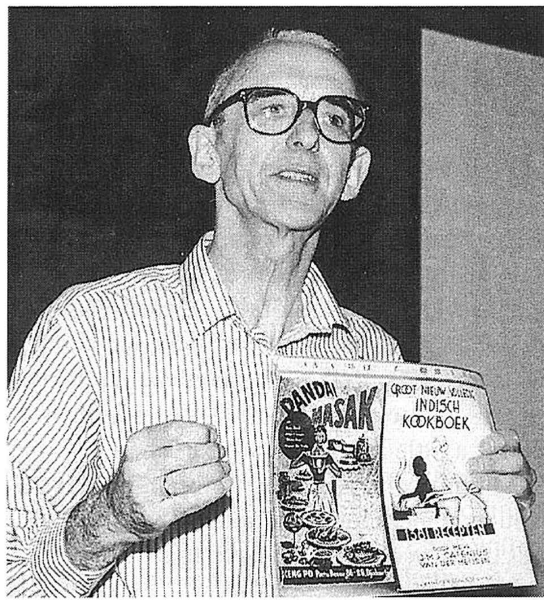
BITING BACK: REACTION TO FOOD PRESCRIPTIVENESS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Sri and Roger Owen, London



Roger and Sri Owen.

Abstract

We shall look at three areas of communal life in Southeast Asian countries with the focus on Indonesia and suggest a hypothesis for each. We will supply facts and arguments that we have been able to find to support or undermine each hypothesis.

1. Food and Religion
Generally, we think religion in Southeast Asian countries is a public thing, a symbol of communal and national solidarity. There is plenty of evidence for this in Muslim countries. We need also to look at Buddhist states and the predominantly Catholic Philippines. Food rules (pork, alcohol) are taken for granted in Muslim societies, but the fast of Ramadan is an opportunity to show publicly solidarity with other members of every group, to family, office or club.

2. Food and Colonialism
We hope to illustrate this with material from books of advice for Europeans going out to the colonies, from cookbooks, from the development of restaurants in different countries, from the extent to which foodways, attitudes and recipes were swapped between colonial power and the colonised.
We believe food was an especially sensitive area and reactions between the two parties were complex and different in different countries.

3. Food and Big Business
This question, of course, concerns Australians and Europeans as much as it does Asians. Our eating habits are being radically changed by developments in food technology, social change and the rise of multinational food corporations. Food advertising has become part of popular culture. To what extent is this situation accepted gladly (as religious food rules generally are), or resignedly or unthinkingly?
Do Asians consciously or unconsciously fight to retain any of their traditional foodways or their favourite family meals? Who owns and controls their food resources and distribution networks? Are they, by and large, better or less well nourished under the new system than they used to be?

Our hypothesis, at the moment, is that rural populations who move into town are happy to hand over control of their food supplies and daily menus to big business. Qualms about unhealthy diet affect only a small proportion of the population. Is there any foreseeable, likely development that may lead to mass rejection of the new food culture, food nationalism, even food jingoism?

Do Asians consciously or unconsciously fight to retain any of their *traditional foodways* or their favourite family meals?

Introduction

ROGER OWEN This is a great privilege to be given time in such a crowded program, where such weighty and stimulating matters are being discussed. I am slightly alarmed to look back at the rather light-hearted way in which the idea of this session was first discussed between us. Now we've become a little more sober, and occasionally have the feeling that we might – to use a gastronomic, expression – have bitten off a little more than we can chew. We hope, therefore, that apart from presenting this paper to you as something of a dialogue, you will also help us chew over what we have to say.

The pattern outlined in the abstract is still basically unchanged. We are going to talk about Southeast Asia and the reactions of people to those who attempt to tell them what to eat, and how to eat. We're going to do this under three main headings – religion, colonial power and contemporary big business. Of the three we regard the contemporary situation as being the most interesting and the most profitable to discuss.

By training I'm an historian, but nevertheless I'm going to focus on the situation as it is today, as Sri will also do. We both see the present situation in Southeast Asia as something that has come about through historical process. Southeast Asia today is a collection of countries, and can't really be described as a single area. It's a collection of countries in a state of break-neck social and economic change. You really have to go to Jakarta, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Manila and into the peripheral territories, to appreciate how rapid this process of change is and how people's ways of life and customs are being overhauled and revolutionised. This is a result of historical progress and at our advanced stage we can both look back – in my case about thirty years, in Sri's case a little bit longer – and detect this historical change taking place even in our own lifetime.

Let's look first at the question of religion. In Southeast Asia there is a religious patchwork which has developed over a very long period. If we begin at the beginning, we would have a kind of substrata, plus we have Buddhism and Hinduism imported from India and China. The peoples of Southeast Asia are extremely inventive people but have never actually produced a major religion system of their own. They've always taken their religions from elsewhere which links up with what we want to say about colonialism.

It's an area in which ideas have been imported and have then begun to change. After Buddhists and Hindus, the Muslims took over from about the tenth and eleventh centuries onwards and spread throughout large parts of Southeast Asia. Finally the Christians arrived, firstly the Catholics, closely followed by the Protestants and all of these religions are still represented in various areas of Southeast Asia today.

What is the situation? The Buddhists are reeling from recent events. The Hindus have become limited to a very small part of Southeastern Bali, the tourist bits. The great success story has been that of Islam, and they also have perhaps the most interesting things to say about food. The Catholics are predominant in the Philippines but they are found in every other country of the area, and the Protestants are also still prosperous.

Religion has by no means disappeared and it is a fact to be taken into account whenever we consider food traditions in the area today. Certainly in Indonesia. Buddhists are reluctant to take life and have tended to favour vegetarianism. Our rather limited acquaintance with the Buddhist countries in the area suggest that they actually eat meat as happily as anybody else does.

In the Philippines, the grip of the Catholic Church is still firm but it has become much more indulgent. Our informant in Manila advises that the only two days in the year when Catholics are expected to fast are Good Friday and Ash Wednesday. During Lent they are supposed to abstain from meat on Fridays and eat fish, but that is no penance because fish is loved by Filipinos.

Food is a *gift* from God and it's to be *enjoyed* and *appreciated* provided it is halal, and acceptable to the faithful

In Indonesia and Malaysia where you have the largest Islamic community in the world, the attitude to food is the same as found in other parts of the Muslim world.

Food is a gift of God and it's to be enjoyed and appreciated provided it is halal, and acceptable to the faithful. This means that the meat must be properly killed with little rituals, prayers being said over the dying animal. Muslims, of course, are not allowed to eat pork, they are supposed to fast during the month of Ramadan and they are commanded to abstain from alcohol. When I first went to Indonesia thirty years ago, these prohibitions were, I think, only moderately or patchily observed.

SRI OWEN It would be thirty-four years ago.

ROGER OWEN Actually the exact number of years may be important. Since that time things have changed significantly and Indonesian society is now 90 per cent Muslim. Among this group I would say 100 per cent observe Islamic food restrictions. Would you agree with that?

SRI OWEN Especially during Ramadan. Most Muslims in Malaysia observe this very, very strictly. They consider food has to be eaten in large quantities, has to be shared. Their spirit also has to be fed with something that makes them feel that food, although it has to be eaten in big quantities, has to be shared.

Indonesian food and quite a lot of the other Asian food is now considered to be healthy because religion decrees that one should not be over indulgent. That's all that I can say on this subject but I am going to later mention cooking. Roger has already given you a little bit of background on *The Rice Book*. Roger wrote much at the beginning of the book and I dealt with the cooking and the recipes because that's what I love. I love cooking.

ROGER OWEN That does raise the point that I was going to touch on later, which is, what is the nature of the power we're discussing? Religious power is not the same as colonial power.

SRI OWEN That is my experience as well. You know, in Malaysia, that you go to jail if you eat pork. In fact in any of the hotels, restaurants or supermarkets, there are special sections where you have pork served. In the markets you have specialist, isolated sections so the Muslims are not offended and don't see pork being slaughtered. Pork is not sold in restaurants, not even in the big clubs.

ROGER OWEN Can I ask a question? Malaysia is a federation. Are these laws or practices universal or are they limited to certain states?

CAROL SELVARAJAH No. They are universal in Malaysia. It is the law of the country.

PAM GILLESPIE Can I ask a question? Are you considered to be very powerful and wealthy if you then own pigs?

CAROL SELVARAJAH Only the Chinese own pigs and they're sold at the market. It isn't connected with pork at all.

DURÉ DARA But it's more than pork. It's about not eating during the fasting time, and if you break the fast that's against the law.

ROGER OWEN That is quite different from Indonesia where you will not be a victim of the law if you break the fast, but you will meet with disapproval from your group, whether it's your family or your workmates.

SYMPOSIAST And that's why they are flogging McDonald's, a company that's usually on about conspicuous consumption with lots of fast windows. In Jakarta they actually have curtains that they pull across during Ramadan, so that people can eat without being tempted.

ROGER OWEN This brings us to the point that what you eat marks you as a member of a particular group. You are either in the group or outside the group and you either want to be in it or you don't want to be in it.

SYMPOSIAST When I was in Asia, I thought the fact that there were state police policing Ramadan showed the cultural basis for food punishments. Obviously they didn't believe the customs were strong enough to be kept without sanction.

ROGER OWEN That surprises me because in Indonesia the fast is religiously observed without any legal sanctions.

SYMPOSIAST On the first day they closed down a couple of restaurants that also had alcohol consumption. The police go in, close down a few clubs or restaurants and it is reported in the newspapers. Then in a few days they open up again.

SYMPOSIAST Can the shop usually inform people urgently?

CAROL SELVARAJAH They accept a certain amount of tolerance in Indonesia. I find it a very much more relaxed atmosphere and I think the Muslims are easier about the idea of what they can and what they can't eat. This is not possible in Malaysia.

ROGER OWEN Indonesia has always been such a variegated state that they have to be tolerant and that is one of their good points.

ROSEMARY BRISSENDEN Could I just make a point? Having visited Indonesia and Malaysia for as long as you both have, the local change is huge, but that is related to a couple of things, and there are different forces at work in Indonesia and Malaysia.

In Malaysia, in the '60s there was an uneasy blend of Malay, Chinese and Indian populations. But the political power of the Malay population has become very much greater in the last thirty years. It is the political power of the state, whereas Indonesia was deliberately set up as a non-political state. The church and state were linked in the original founding of Indonesia. It was set up as a non-theological state and therefore the signs of religion were much less visible in Indonesian life thirty years ago. In the intervening thirty years in Malaysia there has been a significant increase in the Malay population, while in Indonesia there has been an increasing display of Islam. Indonesia is associating itself with, quite naturally and logically, the growing world strength of Islam and is an emerging world power.

SRI OWEN Population-wise, Malaysia has always had that balance of population problem. The Chinese were actually 50 per cent of the population until they were incorporated into part of the federation.

ROGER OWEN Of course these problems of population mix and religious mix stem partly from the colonial past as well. Time is fleeting. May I press on? And make a few comments on something else.

MAX LAKE It seems quite simple that we have an historical principle emerging. It seems that power is directly related to the distance from Mecca.

SRI OWEN Now we have to go back to the second part of what we would like to discuss.

ROGER OWEN I'll be brief. When I was trying to collect my thoughts and some material for the colonial section I came across a lovely sentence in a book by Jack Goodie called *Cooking, Cuisine and Class*, in which he remarks about African states and African societies.

Their tolerance of the unknown was dependent on what sort of foreigners arrived and I think that is also true of Asian societies. Different countries in Southeast Asia inherited very different sorts of foreigners, first the Spanish and Portuguese, with the Portuguese fading after a while, except in places like Macau and East Timor. The Spanish were attracted to the Philippines which remained Spanish until the 1900s. Then they were replaced by the United States, for half a century or so. The French came onto the scene rather late and established themselves in Indo-China, Laos and Vietnam. The British tried to get into various places and eventually landed in Malaysia. The Dutch, having chased out the British, the French, the Spanish and the Portuguese from various parts of Indonesia, eventually established the biggest European Empire in Southeast Asia, the one with the most colourful history.

It's important to realise that there's still a Dutch power in Indonesia and the Dutch were involved in a major colonial period of expansion into Sumatra less than a hundred years ago. They didn't take over Bali until ninety years ago. When I first went to Bali you could still find rather ancient Balinese who could tell of the rather dreadful events which took place when the Dutch finally overran the island.

The food picture in each area seems to depend on the culinary sophistication of the invading foreigners. The British really had no impact on Malaysia, as far as I can see. I'm willing to be contradicted on this. Nor has Malaysian food had an impact on Britain until quite recently. Even today, I think most Malaysian restaurants in Britain are really Singaporean, thinly disguised. The French obviously are at the other extreme. I have to confess that we haven't been to Laos, Cambodia or Vietnam – which is a terrible gap in our education – so possibly people here can enlighten us. I'm told that some French restaurants and French cookery traditions have survived in these countries, despite the appalling history of the last sixty years. [Heads nod in agreement.] That's reassuring. And the Dutch surprisingly had a big impact on Indonesian food – much bigger that one might expect. I carried this photocopy of the front covers of two cookery books all the way to Australia. This is a Dutch cookery book with over 1300 Indonesian recipes published in the Netherlands in 1930, and this is an Indonesian cookery book published in the 1960s. It's very instructive. We haven't yet had time to do a detailed analysis of the contents of these books but at first sight it looks to us that the Indonesian book has the larger percentage of Dutch recipes. If anybody is interested in looking at these I'll pass them around.

SRI OWEN The reason why there are so many Dutch recipes in the Indonesian book and so many Indonesian recipes in the Dutch book, is because each country seems to like other peoples' cooking better than their own. Especially in Indonesia, Indonesians believe Indonesian food is one of the best in the world, but when they serve Indonesian food to foreigners they are very apologetic: 'I'm terribly sorry this is all we can give you.'

'You know, we can't give you any better than this.' What is in front of you is a big feast and they'll still say that. What I would like to do, is to make Indonesian people really proud of their food. When you are proud of your food I think you can influence other people. You can influence the eaters, the diners, because you are so convinced that your food is good.

Now this brings me to my pet subject but it does still have something to do with power. Now this is about *rijsttafel*. Why *rijsttafel* is still considered to be Indonesia's best-known dish when you ask people in the United States, in Britain, in Norway, everywhere in Europe, whether they know Indonesian food, they will say, 'Yes, I know *rijsttafel*'. *Rijsttafel* was introduced by the Dutch into Indonesia during colonial times. It was presented in big five star hotels to the planters, and the Dutch government colonial officials. It was presented in such a way that the Indonesian waiters or waitresses who presented it could show off in their beautiful costumes. The Dutch gentlemen would sit around their beautifully laid tables and be served food. Whether they liked the food or not, they realised that being served in that way was an expression of colonial power. They enjoyed being served by the servants and really enjoyed the food, except when it had too much chilli in it. (When I was in Holland to promote *The Rice Book* I was asked by the American Rice Council to use it to promote American rice.)

These days everybody still talks about *rijsttafel*. *Rijsttafel* is not cooked terribly well in Indonesia. It's very difficult to cook 20 to 30 dishes even in a big kitchen with a large kitchen staff, because the preparation of each individual spice for individual recipes is quite different and time-consuming. When my grandmother used to prepare *rijsttafel* she would allocate one niece to one spice and another to the paste. Each recipe would be quite distinct. Nowadays when *rijsttafel* is made in a big restaurant kitchen or hotel kitchen they just make chilli paste and the rest of the other spices are added into it depending on the recipe. But, I won't go too deeply into the cooking process. I want to go back to the origins of *rijsttafel*. It derived from the harvest and harvest festivals of people in the paddy fields during my grandmother's lifetime. It's normally the men who work the land and paddy fields, and it was very hard work. To cheer them up to continue working, the village women would prepare food. Each household competed to prepare the best dish they could and brought it to the fields to feed the hardworking menfolk. That is why Indonesian *rijsttafel* comes with a big bowl of rice and so many different dishes. Each household in a large village produced all those different foods during the rice harvest.

Rijsttafel also has a religious significance. Rice for Indonesians, and I think for most rice-eaters, or rice-growing countries, is very highly ranked as food. Rice, as Roger and I have explained in *The Rice Book*, represents a lot of goddesses and gods. Harvest is a big eating time. They also give some of the food to the gods and in Java, for instance, the god of rice is female. Her name is Sri – that's where my name came from. That's why many Indonesian mothers give their children the name of Sri, because the goddess Sri is the goddess of rice as well as the goddess of fertility.

Indonesia has a population of over two million because most mothers, certainly during my mother's lifetime, want to have as many children as possible. The more fertile you are, the more honoured you are in society. So that's the influence of religion on the Salamatan and the Dutch contribution called *rijsttafel*. Now I will go back. Why is *rijsttafel* still very popular? Why in Indonesia do a lot of people and a lot of big companies sponsor it to be served in big hotels the way it used to be served during colonial times? Is the unseen power of the colonial times still there?

One recent example I witnessed was at the Bali Hilton. We didn't actually go there because I didn't go to Indonesia to eat *rijsttafel*. We just saw a poster, of Indonesian women wrapped in their traditional costume with bare shoulders, and the advertisement said, 'Rijsttafel served by 10 Balinese maidens'. That alone was enough to keep me away from that place.

ROGER OWEN I suppose I looked at that particular poster through the eyes of a politically correct supporter of feminism. It seemed to me that it did what very few advertisements manage to do, it succeeded in insulting everybody in the picture. It insulted the ten Balinese maidens. It insulted the European or American couple who were sitting at the table being served because the young lady was in grave danger of being upstaged by all this feminine beauty behind her. And I thought it also insulted the young man who was sitting there smiling rather smugly at the situation he'd got himself into.

Why do I find *rijsttafel* objectionable? Because it's bad for my digestion and I think *rijsttafel* has certainly ruined the digestion and waistlines of numerous visitors without revealing any of the spirit of Indonesian food.

My theory is that *rijsttafel* is the Indonesian revenge against the Dutch. In fact, it typifies the way in which food enables the oppressed to get their own back. Generally speaking the best recipes, the best cooking, comes from the lower classes.

This is a terrible generalisation. It comes from the lower classes because when you are poor and have very few resources, if you are going to enjoy your food, you've got to cook well. Of course the vast majority of people don't cook well and, as a result, don't enjoy their food. I know that hunger is the best source of good food and it's a fact that still remains in Spain. For example, the classic Spanish dishes, paella etc. are essentially peasant dishes.

My theory is that *rijstta el* is the *In onesian revenge* against the Dutch

In Indonesia, as far as we can tell, the best dishes originated among the farmers and this is the way in which the poor managed to assert themselves against the wealthy. Long ago I came across an Italian saying – I can't remember who said it – that 'bed is the poor man's opera.' You might also say that 'the dining table is also the poor man's opera.'

This really brings us to the final stage where we wish to talk about big business today which you can, of course, present as a form of colonialism. But I think we'll probably have to turn this over to general discussion because time is nearly over and I'm sure people have things they want to say.

Could I just leave you with two final questions? One is based on my remarks about *rijsttafel* being a kind of subconscious revenge. Maybe power, although it has to be seen to be exercised and has to be exercised routinely every day in order to be kept alive, maybe real power is actually based on quite subconscious or unconscious feelings and relationships? I'd like to put one question to Sri which is inspired by Bruce Kraig's comment that modern, commercially produced food has to be bland in order to reach a mass market. Will Indonesians ever give up chilli?

SRI OWEN No, I don't think so. Chilli is such a healthy thing. In my next book, *Healthy Thai Cooking*, I will explain a little bit more about chillies and other ingredients that have healthy properties. There is one final thing I'd like to say. I've always said in my books that Indonesian cooking is not written down in the way Chinese cooking was written down. We cannot look back to the history of food in Indonesia because very little has been written down. We discovered on our latest visit to Jakarta a professor at the Agricultural College in Bogor who had tracked down quite a lot of very early manuscripts about Indonesian food in Britain, in the Netherlands, and some in America. The colonial powers took them back to their own countries and now a group of Indonesian scholars are beginning to study them. They have permission to borrow the manuscripts to study them and to record history. I'm looking forward to this.

ROGER OWEN The Professor has told us these old Javanese and Balinese manuscripts are mostly written on longtar leaves and are probably derived from Sanskrit treatises on diet, so they are of medical interest rather than culinary. But of course food is food and food is medicine as well. So you reckon chilli is well entrenched?

SRI OWEN Oh yes. Not many people know that the chilli is not indigenous.

ROGER OWEN I would like to have known what a symposium, say 400 years ago, would have said about the sudden welcoming of this foreign vegetable into societies which have hitherto made do with pepper.

We're almost out of time. Have we a few minutes Mr Chairman? Or does anybody wish to take up any points?

JOHN NEWTON Could I just make two brief points on *rijsttafel*? One, that it seems to me that appropriation of food is an act of power anyway, the appropriating of food and branding is an act of aggression as well as power. It's part of this thing, of the colonial mincing around as a surfer with a beautiful young woman. The reason I think it has been perpetuated is – having lived in Southeast Asia and worked in those countries – that most of the people who go there, still have a sort of colonial fantasy. I haven't been to Southeast Asia for twenty years but at that time there were these people walking around thinking they were the great white masters. Most distasteful.

CHERRY RIPE You mean, people working in industry there?

ROGER OWEN People working in big companies there. I think this has largely changed but it undoubtedly still survives.

SRI OWEN In my experience the younger generation of visitors to Indonesia don't really know about *rijsttafel* until the PR people in hotels tell them, 'This is *rijsttafe*l, this is a banquet. This is what you have to eat.'

ROGER OWEN We know the gift of food is a way of asserting your power over somebody, and I suppose it's a way in which the managers of hotels and restaurants can assert their power over their guests.

ROSEMARY BRISSENDEN I think we should go back to the first paper and to his point that consumption drives production and also dominates what is made available. Most foreigners who visit Indonesia have really only encountered Indonesian food as *rijsttafel.* So, when they go there, and see it in big hotels, they say 'Ah we know what this is. We won't go to a restaurant, we'll eat here.'

ROGER OWEN Yes, I think that's true but that doesn't justify the continued existence of *rijsttafel*, as I'm sure you'd agree.

BARBARA FISHER I'd just like to make the point that perhaps it's not always a consideration of this post-colonial period of power, but sometimes actually meant as a compliment. I mean, we don't always appropriate food that other countries tend to want simply to dominate. I was in Amsterdam a couple of years ago at an Antiquarian International Conference. We had a fantastic banquet in a Gothic church in Neiden, a deconsecrated church, with Indonesian food, and Indonesian costumes and a gammelan orchestra. It was a fairly incongruous set-up but I thought it was an interesting thing. Maybe the Dutch are still living in their colonial past but I think it was also meant as a sort of compliment to the international gathering that was there.

ROGER OWEN The Dutch do still have very strong emotional ties to Java, and Bali in particular.

SRI OWEN Oh, I would like to say that I don't object to *rijsttafel* because rice is a staple. But I object that *rijsttafel* nowadays is served in Indonesian tourist centres, and the food doesn't taste authentic. I don't mind people serving *rijsttafel* if the food is good.

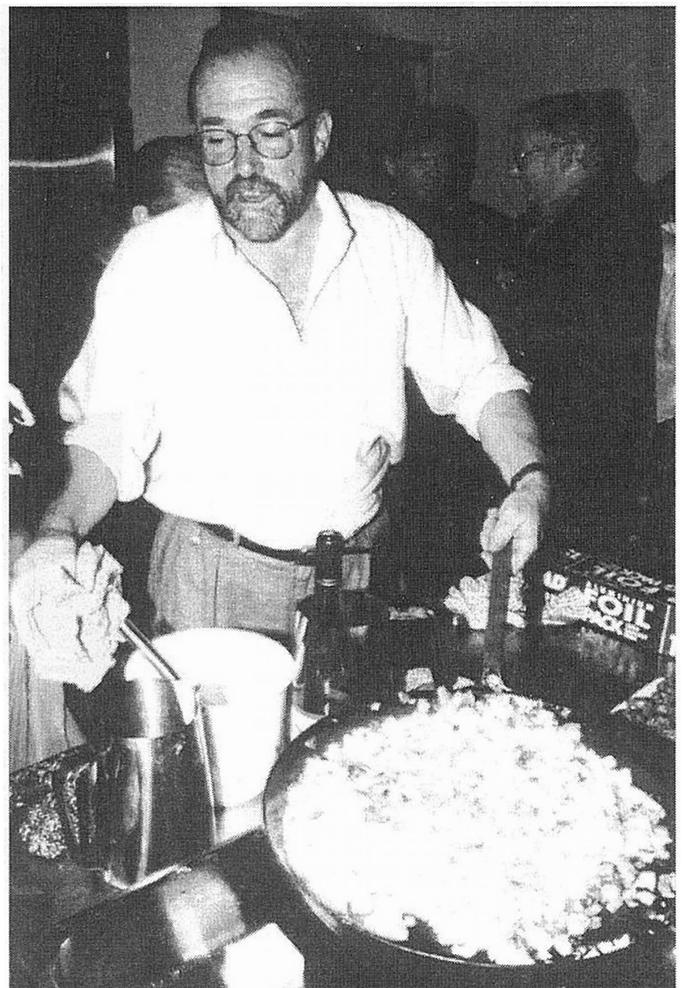
ROGER OWEN That's fine.

SANDRA ALEXANDER But it's also interesting. Some of us have been to Asian conferences and the major conference dinner was a *rijsttafel.* What is happening in the big hotels, is that they are taking over something which has been symbolically a presentation to the powerful, as is so much architecture and everything else to do with big hotels, and selling that to the paying populous. It's great status, *rijsttafel* was a very high-status form of banquet in Indonesia in the '60s, from what I recall.

SRI OWEN Yes, the name *rijsttafel* is so well known that people immediately connect it with Indonesian food. I don't object to that, but the cooking needs to be good.

ROSEMARY BRISSENDEN In Hanoi, for instance, one of the really fascinating things to see is small, very dark shops, coffee shops. You don't really see them until you get inside and the tables are very low on the ground. You only realise after you've been in and seen what is on offer and come out again that the name which is outside, which is 'Gato', signifies exactly what is in there – cakes and coffee cups.

ROSS KELLY Out of respect for Peter Conistis who is preparing lunch for us, we are going to have to draw this discussion to a close. There's an opportunity to talk further about this over lunch. Thank you Sri and Roger.



John Newton: The Pan Man.

GOOD THURSDAY LUNCH

Thursday 11 April

by Peter Conistis

Three-meat 'Ascension Day' pie with roast capsicum salata

Calliga Robola NV Boutari

Grand Reserve Naoussa 1989

Slow-poached quinces in rosewater with sheep's milk yoghurt

Peter Conistis, who was born in Sydney of Greek parents, began cooking less than four years ago. In 1993 he opened his first restaurant Cosmos, which specialised in modern Greek-influenced food and has won a number of awards. In 1994, Peter wrote his first cookbook, *New Greek Cuisine*, which has been very successful. He is currently writing his second book on Greek and Middle Eastern food.

Good Thursday Lunch, St John's College.

Mary Brander tucks in ...

... and so does James Langley on Ascension Day, 1996.

FOOD and **POWER**

session two

the state

THE AMERICAN HOT DOG

Bruce Kraig, Professor of History, Roosevelt University, Chicago

Abstract

If the main model used in viewing the ways that food and power relate to one another is hegemonic, then this paper argues the converse: a 'democratic' one. These few comments show the tenor of the presentation.

The hot dog evolved from several varieties of German and Eastern European sausages, into a uniquely American food. Its singular quality derives from its uses – among the first mass-produced foods, cheap street food for new urban populations, and especially, its association with public events where theoretically people of all social levels mix. Baseball, a socially unifying, sporting, event has been linked to the hot dog since at least the turn of the century. The same can be said for the Coney Island boardwalk in New York, the birthplace of Nathan's in 1916.

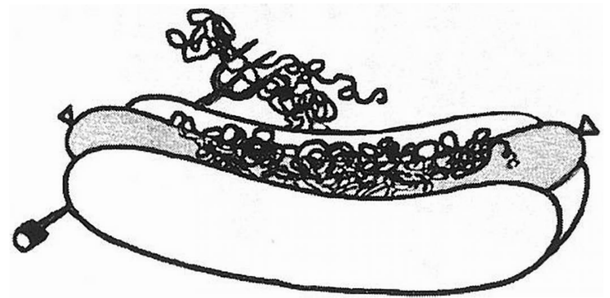
Hot dogs can also define neighbourhoods, especially in Chicago, where stands are often the focuses of local communities. In Chicago hot dog stands are places that traditionally featured a single food (though now many more); therefore the hot dog itself has become a symbol of place and for both individual and folk memories, of time.

The story of the hot dog is the history of a food industry – from processing to purveying. It is also the tale of a nation undergoing rapid change, local communities, and the individuals that developed the business and culture of hot dogs. Despite a good deal of cultural homogenisation since World War II – the result of migration, the influence of television and not least the growth of nationally distributed foods and the supermarkets in which they are sold – elements of American regional culture remain.

The histories of our nation's regions are interesting and complex. Each was formed by immigrants from diverse cultural backgrounds and, according to one recent theory (David Hackett Fischer's *Albion's Seed, Four British Folkways in America*), regional cultures retain certain basic characteristics from the earliest days to the present. The differences range from dialect to foods. The hot dog, an industrial foodstuff, shares something of this quality in that it differs from region to region in the way it is eaten, what goes on it, and where it is served.

Further, the hot dog business is one of the arenas where large-scale producers and purveyors who view the products as commodities, battle with highly individualistic entrepreneurs. The latter include small hot dog retailers whose stands tell us something about culture and economies at the lower end of the social scale.

To extend analyses by Louis Hartz *(The Liberal Tradition in America)* and more recently Gordon Wood *(The Radicalism of the American Revolution)*, one can say that the hot dog has come to symbolise the two main currents of American thought: individualism and equality. In its ideal eighteenth-century liberal form, 'equality' meant equality before the law, perhaps equal access to opportunity, but in popular ideology it speaks of social levelling. Official organs of social control – schools, government, media – all carry forward versions of these themes and explicitly say this is the meaning of 'democracy'. Going to ball games, attending fairs and picnic grounds, Americans of all social and economic stations meet and mingle. Most of all, they reinforce the democratic ideal of equality by certain foods in public places. Hot dogs are among the first foods to fill the role of American social unity. In our ever more bureaucratic and socially stratified nation – both private and public – they constitute a radical symbol.



Once can say that the *hot dog* has come to *symbolise* the two main currents of American thought: *individualism* and *equality*

The most commonly used model of the ways that food and power relate to one another is 'hegemonic', meaning, directed by authority down the social hierarchy. Things are never so simple in real life, so this presentation about the American hot dog and hot dog stands argues the converse: a 'democratic' or anti-hegemonic model. It derives from inherent American ideologies.

The hot dog evolved from several varieties of German and Eastern European sausages into a uniquely American food. Its singular quality derives from its uses – among the first mass-produced foods, cheap street food for new urban populations, and especially, its association with public events where people of theoretically all social levels mix. Baseball, a socially unifying sporting event, has been linked to hot dogs since at least the turn of the century. The same can be said for the Coney Island boardwalk in New York, the birthplace of Nathan's in 1916. Hot dogs can also define neighbourhoods, especially in Chicago, where stands are often the focuses of local communities. In Chicago hot dog stands are places that traditionally featured a single food (though now many more); therefore the hot dog itself has become a symbol of place and, for both individual and folk memories, of time. Thus, it stands apart from the normal means of market control – advertising and marketing of commodities.

This story of the hot dog is the history of a food industry – from processing to purveying. It is also the tale of a nation undergoing rapid change of local communities, and the individuals that developed the business and culture of hot dogs. Despite a good deal of cultural homogenisation since World War II – the result of migration, the influence of television and not least, the growth of nationally distributed foods and the supermarkets in which they are sold, elements of American regional culture remain. The histories of our nation's regions are interesting and complex. Each was formed by immigrants from diverse cultural backgrounds and, according to one recent theory (David Hackett *Fischer's Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America*) regional cultures retain certain basic characteristics from the earliest days of British colonisation to the present. The differences range from dialect to foods. The hot dog, an industrial foodstuff, descending from German and East European immigrants, shares something of this quality: it differs from region to region in the way it is eaten, what goes on it, and where it is served.

Further, the hot dog business is one of the arenas where large-scale producers and purveyors who view the products as commodities battle with highly individualistic entrepreneurs. The latter includes small hot dog retailers whose stands tell us something about culture and economies at the lower end of the social scale.

To extend analyses by Louis Hartz (*The Liberal Tradition in America*) and more recently Gordon Wood (*The Radicalism of the American Revolution*) one can say that the hot dog has come to symbolise two main currents of American thought: individualism and equality. In its ideal eighteenth-century liberal form, 'equality' meant equality before the law, perhaps equal access to opportunity, but in popular ideology it speaks of social levelling. Official organs of social control – schools, government, media – all carry forward versions of these themes and explicitly say this is the meaning of 'democracy'. Going to ball games, attending fairs and picnic grounds, Americans of all social and economic stations meet and mingle. Most of all, they reinforce the democratic ideal of equality by certain foods in public places. Hot dogs are among the first foods to fill the role of American social unity.

Hot dog stands, however, represent reactions to the cultural uniformity fostered by corporate feeding apparatuses that are the franchised fast-food chains. In Chicago many stands are bastions of petty entrepreneurship, thus antithetical to large corporate business structures (until the petty entrepreneurs themselves become corporate). Their settings within neighbourhoods and their decor are often distinctly non-modern. The traditional food itself, the hot dog is unmodish, filled with 'unhealthy' ingredients. In these and many other ways, the stands represent archaic, nostalgic, anti-hegemonic ideal, still radical in American culture. The iconography of these stands tells us about these ideas.

Hand-painted, often with anthropomorphed and zoomorphed sausages displayed, hot dog stands are often places where modernity (the corporate world) has not penetrated. Here old carnavalesque values (or lack of them) hold sway. These are wild places where, like Carnaval, everything bursts out of the normal cultural categories; except for the sausage itself. Nothing is standardised. Ritualised, yes, especially in what goes on the hot dog and how it is eaten, but only partly related to the greater regimented world.

In this respect, among others, hot dog stands in Chicago (and some other places) are sacred places. Because they represent old values and specific localities that are linked to memory. Many a diner enters another world at the hot dog stand. You can see it in the beatific expression on consumers' faces when they bite into a juicy, well-presented 'dog'.

And when asked about it, they will often say that this is how they remember their long-gone childhoods. This otherworldliness is another key to the decor and settings of many hot dog stands. Perhaps pie stands have similar values in Australia.

Many of the hot dog stands' decor can be described as kitsch. In Herman Bausinger's (*Folk Culture in a World of Technology*) definition of the word, it means linking of formal innovations to humanist sentimentality. Kitsch occurs when avante garde techniques might be joined to familiar objects. Fast food-frying machines, nationally distributed soft-drinks, drive-up hot dog eateries, are all food industry innovations and revolutionary means of producing and selling food. But the human element in hot dog places, the hand-made signs, the odd, jumbled decor of many, are signs of other times and places, instantly sentimental, instant kitsch. They represent what is anti-modern in an industrial/post-industrial age.

Foodways can be expressions of deliberate opposition to *fashion leaders* and *cultural power*

Hot diggedy dog, it's Bruce Kraig and his corporate tie.

One more point – among many brought up when examining photographs of hot dog stands – is Stephen Mennell's thesis (in both *The Sociology of Food* and in *All Manners of Food*) that foodways can be expressions of deliberate opposition to fashion leaders and cultural power. That is surely the case when we see hot dog stands promoting themselves as purveyors of abundant amounts, even massive quantities, of 'unhealthy' food. Virtually all organs of official food opinions tell us to eat less, and more salubrious food. Hot doggers thumb their noses and this children's refrain comes to mind: 'Nobody loves me, everybody hates me, I'm going to go eat worms …' And considering the folklore about what mysterious meats go into a hot dog, perhaps this refrain is apt.

'WHITE WITH FOUR': FOOD ON THE INSIDE

Jeanette Fry, The Excellent Moveable Feast, Melbourne

Abstract

The power to withhold food, to mete it out, to use it as punishment, to subdue and to reward, is one of the greatest tools available to staff in institutions. This paper will examine the way in which the state uses this power to influence the behaviour of young offenders and offers a perspective on the way in which food can be used to create a sense of powerlessness within an institutional setting. I have drawn on my experiences in the 1970s, teaching basic living skills at Turana Youth Training Centre, an institution for boys who have either offended against society or who have proved intractable and been made wards of the state.

Introduction

My paper today is based on my experiences in an institution for young males who had been through the courts, either because they had committed an offence or were in need of care and protection.

The nature of institutions ensures that those living in them are reduced to a collective presence through denial of the opportunity to express their individuality. I would like to look at the way in which the preparation and delivery of food influences this loss of self and provides management with a tool of discipline.

Although I am speaking today of a particular kind of institution, it is my belief that many of these practices are common to all institutions. The Swedish philosopher Bengt Wolfensberger proposed the theory that societies lump together geographically all their deviant groups just as ethnic and religious minorities are clustered together in ghettos. Turana was a magnificent example of this theory in practice.

Situated between a large hospital for the aged and an equally large institution for the mentally ill, its maximum-security area overlooked a school for the intellectually disabled and a treatment centre for adolescent males with severe psychiatric disorders. Just up the road was the serum laboratory, and beyond that the zoo. Running through this complex of disenfranchised creatures was the tramline. I mention the serum laboratory because it was responsible for one of the most appalling smells that I have ever experienced. Every week or so it would waft across the open grounds – the kids used to say they were burning the monkeys after they had been used for the production of polio vaccine. This macabre story really appealed. In fact, it was the burning of the host eggs wherein the Salk vaccine was grown that caused the pong.

Of course, such an odour would not have been tolerated in a normal residential suburb. The complex consisted of a series of featureless red brick buildings on several levels, scattered over a couple of acres of open ground. Barbed wire topped the high wall of the maximum-security compound which was entered via a roller door to a small exercise yard. Rooms were just large enough for a narrow single bed and a chest of drawers. The barred windows were small and well above eye-level. Living areas were furnished with no-nonsense vinyl and laminex. There was a large, central kitchen which provided meals for the whole complex, staff could eat in the dining room attached to it.

The nature of *institutions* ensures that those living in them are *reduced* to a collective presence through *denial* of the *opportunity* to *express* their *individuality*

Turana (probably named for some long-dead public servant, not for the Bathurst-winning Holden as the boys liked to think) was home to 150 males between the ages of 15 and 18 years. Their misdemeanours ranged from petty theft to arson and malicious damage through to serious assault and murder. Some were wards of the state as a result of family breakdown, failed fostering, or the inability of parents to manage a difficult adolescent.

I recall a particularly unfortunate case of a fifteen-year-old being dropped off at a police station in a holiday resort and the parents continuing off up the coast, much as one might dispose of an unwanted animal. His mother would send him a carton of cigarettes (by taxi) in lieu of a weekend visit.

After being classified, boys were taken to the section which would be home for the duration of their sentence. Personal clothing was removed and locked away. The institution garb consisted of jeans (made in Geelong prison out of the wrong kind of denim), dark-check flannelette shirts and windcheaters. All clothing was washed in the great communal laundry and returned to the section (not always to its original wearer). Boxes of jocks and socks were sorted by one of the boys in a very haphazard fashion.

The first inkling that all was not as it was 'on the outer' came with the hot drink at suppertime in the remand section: tea, milk and sugar in the big teapot poured into faintly greasy plastic mugs. Both glass and china were considered dangerous in this section and so one became resigned to plates scored by knives and forks, carelessly washed by unwilling helpers. A snack consisted of white bread, margarine and a variety of spreads, jam, Vegemite or peanut butter, each bearing traces of the other.

However, it was after classification that one settled into the serious business of learning how to exist in this unfriendly environment, to start seeing oneself as a member of the group, to forget how it was to make choices, to bond with one's fellow offenders against the pigs, the screws and the staff in the kitchen who produced inedible food.

Breakfast was prepared in the section: toast, cereal, milk and sugar. Here one could make a stand and we come to the title of my paper. Unlike in remand where everything went into the pot, here it was white with three, four or even five sugars, the damp spoon in the sugar bowl, instant coffee scattered over the bench, as much milk as you liked. Cappuccino was the go for a while. Frantic stirring of coffee, sugar and milk to a thick paste which when eventually combined with hot water provided a frothy coffee enjoyed with gusto and the inevitable fag – I think the person who conceived that awful sentimental coffee ad probably did time. You know the one, not only is the intimate dinner party saved by Nescafé but love blossoms and the long-lost daughter confides in her mother at last. It shows great belief in the power of coffee.

Lunch, known as dinner, was the main meal of the day because the kitchen staff were highly unionised and the state reluctant to pay the overtime they demanded. It suited everyone, everyone that mattered, that is. The food was delivered to the sections in a hot-box. This consisted of a large stainless-steel trolley with several lidded compartments, a kind of mobile bain-marie. They were tethered to power points in the main kitchen where they stored up heat for the journey to the section. Hot food was placed in the compartments and the boxes waited for the youth officers to come and claim them, to guide them gently over the speed humps with their cargo of meat, vegetables, soup, salad (not improved by its encounter with hot steel). Care had to be taken with the custard, and jelly was a special case. On occasions when the staff were too busy to leave the sections, trainees 'on trust' might be dispatched to collect the food. Often the first indication of an absconding was the non-appearance of lunch.

Now to the food itself. If we look at the way a roast was prepared, for example, we can see that everything was done for the convenience of the staff both in the kitchen and in the section. The large rolls of beef (which came from the butcher who had won the contract with the cheapest quote, naturally) were cooked and refrigerated overnight.

The fat and meat juices were poured away prior to the dishes being washed. The following day the meat was sliced uniformly thin on the big slicer and gravy made using Gravox or beef booster, flour and water. The meat was reheated in the gravy, placed in the hot-box, and allowed to stew until serving time. The aromas of meat cooking in the oven, the crisp brown outer layer, the juice running as the meat is cut, the scraping up of the tasty scraps to make a gravy, none of these sensations were experienced by those who would eat it. In a way, the food in the institution was not unlike fast food, where there is no hint of the method used to cook it.

Is it fried? Roasted? Poached? How did it smell, what shape was it, what *was* it?

The resulting uniformly grey meat in a highly salted sludge was accompanied by frozen beans, over-cooked and sitting in water in the hot-box, and roasted or mashed potatoes. This could sit for up to an hour in the kitchen before being transported to the section. The meal eventually arrived at its destination to be served up by the officer on duty, invariably male, as there were only two women working with the boys. For many of these young men, eating was an activity fraught with anxiety. Meal times at home were often times of conflict, there may have been little to eat, and perhaps the food was poorly prepared. Some literally did not know how to use a knife and fork. Once on an outing to a restaurant one of the boys searched the

menu for something he could legitimately eat with his fingers. Sandwiches or a bowl of chips were the only options. The rapid growth of the fast food industry suggests that this phenomenon still occurs.

The food in the *institution* was not unlike *fast food* where there is no hint of the *method* used to cook it

Many of the male staff felt they could best maintain discipline by adopting a strong no-nonsense approach to everything. Kate Llewellyn, in her book *The Floral Mother*, talks about women 'bringing grace to the act of eating'. This is an idea whose time had not yet come, certainly not to Turana.

Everyone had to wait until a signal was given to start eating and conversation was discouraged. It was at the moment of service that we saw the full exercise of power using food as its tool. (Not unlike an expensive boarding school I heard about recently, where the prefects were in charge of doling out food. Some of the smaller boys nearly starved to death.)

Food was dumped on the plate and dispatched to the consumer with scant regard to appearance or palatability. Staff not only determined how long the boys would wait before the meal was served, hence its condition, but also decided on the size of the portions and who would receive what and how much. It was here that minor grudges could be settled and rewards given. If there was going to be trouble it would occur at mealtimes. Evidence of favouritism could trigger arguments, either between the boys or between the boys and the staff. Servings were put aside for boys confined to 'the slot', Turana's answer to the padded cell. It had neither light nor windows and contained only a cot and a bucket.

Section staff never ate with the boys and most referred to the food from the kitchen in a very negative fashion; special meals were prepared for the staff dining room, except on Fridays when they all hopped into fish and chips. This separation of food into good enough for the boys but not for the rest, further devalued the worth of what was prepared for them and reinforced its inferiority. Remarks from the boys on the quality of the food were considered inappropriate and evidence of ingratitude.

Seasoning was done in the kitchen. Pepper was not allowed on the tables as it could be reused. When I first arrived and was setting up my kitchen in the Education Centre, I wondered how we came to use so many mixed herbs. One of the boys later told me that they tried smoking them but they made them very crook. Tinned fruit had to be kept locked away as it was the makings for low-grade alcohol, although by the time most of them reached the adult prison they had graduated to distilled spirits, made on the premises of course. The great ruse at that time at Turana was the doctored can of Coke which the family brought in on Sunday afternoons. All available spending-money (something, like $3 a week, allocated by the state) bought sweets and cigarettes from the canteen. The high proportion of sugar in their diet led to many encounters with the resident dentist.

Because the staff were highly unionised, everyone worked strictly to rule. Weekends presented a pretty bleak picture with cold meat and salad as the main meal and an evening meal of pies that could be heated in the section. A special treat of bacon and eggs on Sunday was entirely dependent on the goodwill and honesty of the officer on duty, since misappropriation of rations was common. One kitchenhand had a bag, specially designed to accommodate whole legs of pork, which she wore under her skirt.

The hierarchy in the kitchen presented an interesting sidelight. The cook, an Australian, was a public servant with a Certificate from William Anglis and experience in army kitchens. His kitchenhands were, in the main, women from immigrant backgrounds, primarily Italian, undoubtedly more capable than he of producing nourishing and interesting meals but, since they spoke little English, they were unwilling or unable to make suggestions. Consequently, they were reduced to following the cook's instructions, regardless of their own inclination. They brought their own delicious lunches from home. At Turana, instead of lasagna and salad, we had tinned spaghetti with white toast and chips!

This WASP influence on the menu resulted in the grey roasts, the pale meals of boiled mutton, boiled potatoes, cauliflower and white sauce, and limp salads stained with canned beetroot, thinly sliced tomatoes and mayonnaise made with malt vinegar and condensed milk.

Potatoes were a staple and even had their own preparation room. The Potato Room consisted of a sink, chip-maker, chopping bench and several large pots. They turned out boiled potatoes, mashed potatoes, baked potatoes and chips. Now I don't have to tell you that potatoes have the capacity to be the food of the gods with butter, garlic, cream, parsley and parmesan or they can be dispirited, watery sludge with hard grey lumps, or gluey, disintegrating mounds. That's why Fridays meant so much. Battered fish and chips: the boys ate the chips and the batter and left the fish.

Then there was soup. It came condensed in large tins or dehydrated. Labour costs precluded the peeling of pumpkin or chopping of onions that would have resulted in nutritious home-made soups.

The deficiencies at Turana were inherent in the philosophies that supported the system: control and punishment outweighed the wider more admirable aims of humane containment, rehabilitation and repayment of a perceived debt to society.

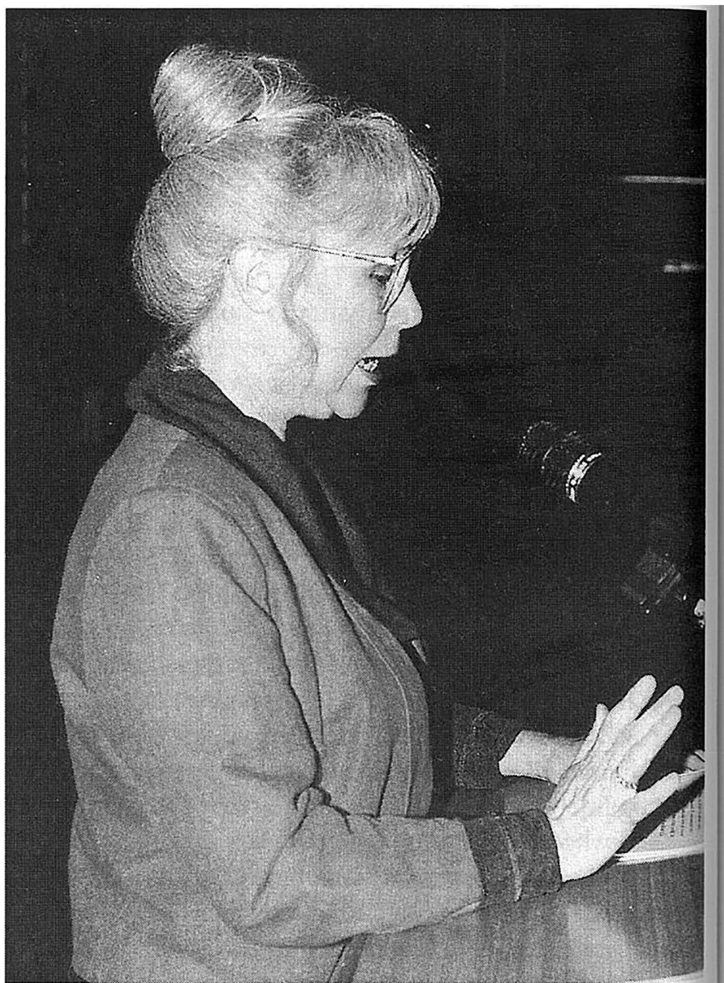
It's easy to look back and see how things might have been improved, at least with regard to food as something other than fuel. Certainly the advent of women in the system has led to a more humane approach, if not as gracious as Kate Llewellyn would have wished. Smaller institutions have tried other ways of distributing the daily fare.

Fairlea, the womens' prison in Melbourne, has a self-catering model which hands over food distribution to the prisoners. The women, who are in cottage-style accommodation, draw rations from a central kitchen. These rations are dispensed by a senior prisoner so power has merely been devolved from one level to another. Imagine how an ex-prison warder who is vegetarian and in isolation for her own protection fares under this system. Gardening is popular as a means of augmenting the fresh vegetable supply. It is also in an area close enough to the fence for small parcels of other herbaceous substances to be slipped through.

The self-service style cafeteria works well but places far greater demands on service personnel and facilities. More importantly, it requires a change in attitude by the governing body. The question is, does it allow the people in its charge to be self-determining in the matter of diet? Will society view this as yet another example of soft options for offenders? What do we expect of our justice system? By treating people as inferior beings, do we change them for the better at the same time as we seek retribution for their misdemeanors?

I believe education was and is an important part of the individual's plan for change whilst inside.
The Education Centre at Turana offered trainees programs in literacy, numeracy, driver education and living skills. I worked in the old kitchen with small groups of boys. They could plan, prepare and consume a meal, make a cake for a special occasion, or just experiment. I also had a kind of travelling-circus food trolley and visited the closed sections where we cooked on little stoves or in frypans.
Reading Stephanie Alexander's account of her excursion to a primary school brought back memories of my trolley days.

Mostly, the activities in my kitchen took boys out of the dreadful sameness, the drabness of the surroundings and the lack of choice. It gave kids a chance to be kids and have that long, slow coffee – white with four.



Jeanette Fry speaks out.

PALATE TRAINING AND GEOGRAPHY/CLIMATE EXERT CONSIDERABLE POWER OVER OUR BEVERAGE, FRUIT AND FOOD PREFERENCES

Dr John Possingham, FAIAS, FTSE, Visiting Fellow, Faculty of Science and Technology, University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury

Abstract

Many of the fruits we currently consume have been with us for a long time – in excess of five centuries. This can be illustrated by looking at still-life paintings of the old masters in European galleries where it can be seen that many of the fruits we eat have changed little in the same period. The pome, stone and berry fruits have scarcely altered while our winemakers are currently using grape varieties that were with us in Roman times.

Over this same time period the world outside of Europe has provided a lot of 'new' crops such as maize, rice, tomato, potato, and a range of peppers, capsicums and chillies which have been incorporated into European diets. More recently have come avocado, blueberries, kiwifruit, macadamia and a range of tropical fruits such as mango, lychee and rambutan. However, there is considerable inertia in our adoption of new products as we tend to like the food sensations to which our palates are exposed when we are young. We often suggest that new fruits and foods are an acquired taste. This means our palates have to get used to them, e.g., avocados and kiwifruit.

Geography and climate also exert a major influence on the regional nature of the fruits and vegetables that can be grown. It not only controls what can be grown where, but it also modifies the flavour and taste and overall characteristics of most fruits, especially those with recognisable quality factors. For example, in cold areas the fruits and beverages made from them struggle to accumulate high levels of sugar but they are rich in acids that add freshness to the palate. Conversely in warm areas, acid levels tend to be low as warm nights lead to the loss of these compounds by respiration, giving fruits a sweet, sugary character. Some examples of the influence of palate training, geography and climate on the nature of the wines and fresh fruits consumed in different parts of the world will be provided.

Introduction

The ideas for this talk came from my early work in the CSIRO where, in the early 1960s, I decided to set up breeding programs for grapevines and other fruit crops as a way to obtain new varieties that might be more suitable than existing varieties for growing in Australia. In this work we had some successes, especially with the grapevine as we produced a new grape for drying, carina, and a new table variety, marroo seedless, which is now grown in California and Chile but not in Australia! We also bred a new wine grape, tarrango, which has been developed by Brown Bros. in northeast Victoria into a gold-medal-winning wine at this year's Adelaide Wine Show.

We had lots of critics who questioned why we were bothering to breed new varieties of fruit crops when already there were almost more available than we could ever utilise. At the time we commenced this work we did not realise how conservative people are about accepting new fruits and wine with different flavours and tastes. Despite this, the current use of genetic engineering to selectively insert disease-resistance genes into existing varieties without making any other changes is seen as permissible.

In this talk I suggest that what we like to eat and drink is initially largely determined by our parents and the part of the world in which we spent our childhood and adolescent years. Geography and climate are major influences as they affect the type and range of fruits, beverages and even foods that are available for consumption and educate our palate to having essentially a regional standard.

We did not realise how *conservative* people are about *accepting* new fruits and wine with different flavours and tastes

Wine

Of all the products we regularly consume, wine is associated with the most quality factors. Some of these are objective, such as freedom from undesirable odours and taints including acetic acid (volatile acidity), hydrogen sulphide (rotten eggs) etc., while other factors that determine quality and in turn consumer preference can at best be described as subjective, especially to untrained consumers.
There is amazing conservatism about wine as virtually all (grape) wine is made from fruits of the one species, *Vitis vinifera*, which originated in forests of Asia Minor in the Caucasian area. The varieties that we grow today were selected some 2000 years ago and have continuously been propagated by vegetative means to preserve forever, literally, their flavour and taste characteristics.

Soldiers and merchants moved *vinifera* grapes first to Greece and Italy, then to the rest of Europe and developed regional industries. It was found that individual varieties were better suited to growing in different regions throughout Europe: with riesling grown along the Rhine River; pinot noir and chardonnay in Burgundy; shiraz on the slopes of the Rhône River; the cabernets in and around Bordeaux; palamino and pedro in Jerez; Spain for sherry; and a melange of *vinifera* varieties grown along the River Douro in Portugal for port wine production.

Wine production is characterised by the use of traditional methodologies and extreme conservatism with respect to the varieties used. Very few deliberately bred new grape varieties play a major role in wine production. Exceptions are muller thurgau which is important for bulk white wine production in Germany, pinotage in South Africa, ruby cabernet in California, and possibly tarrango in Australia in the future.

Although wine is a product that is moved around the world, the majority of it is consumed where it is grown and both regional consumers and the individual winemakers tend to suffer from a problem known as 'cellar palate'. This takes the form of liking wine that is produced in the region more than other wine, and in the extreme case, of winemakers liking only wine which is produced within their own cellar. Wine is very forgiving, so much so that you learn to like and disregard the faults of the wine you have available. Your palate becomes trained to the product of the region and of the cellar and adopts this as a standard against which to compare other wines.

Currently, viticulturists are using small-scale winemaking as a way to assess the results of a variety of vineyard experiments aimed at improving the quality of wine grapes. Instead of measuring the characteristics of the juice they believe it is better to make small (20 litre) lots of wine and to measure the success of their experiments by tasting the wine.
To do this properly they have developed techniques to train the tasters and their palates!

The inseparable two – climate and geography – exert massive effects on wine quality, not only determining the varieties that can be grown in a given region, but also in modifying the composition of the grapes.
Europe, Switzerland and Luxembourg provide examples of cool climate viticulture that produce wines low in sugar – and in turn in alcohol – and high in acidity. There is a preference for their own wines in both countries as they see virtue in consuming low-alcohol wines but they like their freshness (shades of battery acid!). On the other hand, in the hotter climates of Greece and along the Dalmatian coast, wines lack acid, are high in alcohol and commonly have an oxidised character.
The retsina (pine resin) character – a consequence of transporting wine in pine barrels – helps overcome oxidation problems and caramel flavours and is further example of cellar palate.

Fresh Fruits

Table Grapes

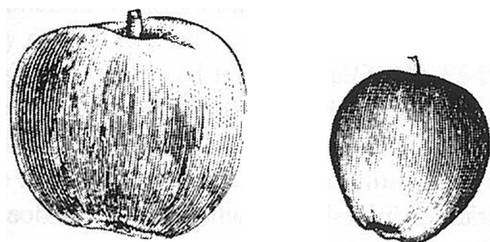
Currently there is an interesting contest occurring in the world's marketplaces between seedless and seeded fresh grapes.
The USA consumes about one million tonnes of seedless grapes, with a little over a half coming from California (the rest largely from Chile). Australia and some northern parts of Europe are following this trend of giving preference to seedless grapes, the vast majority of which are Thompson seedless (sultana) which are increased in size by treating them with GA (gibberellic acid.) In this product, texture is a very important consideration. The rest of Europe consumes almost three million tonnes of seeded grapes, largely produced in Italy, Spain and France.
It is relevant to add here that it is almost impossible to grow seedless varieties in Europe because the climate is not warm enough for these varieties.
Here consumer preferences relate to geography /climate or are they suppressed by the high cost of imported seedless grapes?

In contrast, in Japan there is a clear preference for large, grapes, and for this reason large red globe grapes are eagerly sought. They also have some local varieties that with bunch-trimming and berry-thinning, produce very large berries. Some of these are 'slip skin' or strawberry-flavoured grapes that are hybrids between American *Vitis* species and European grapes. Size here is more important to consumers than flavour. A further commercial example from Japan is the application of chemicals to grapes that increase seed number and, in turn, berry size. Although Australians prefer seedless varieties, we do want our grapes to be large as we favour GA-treated grapes over natural sultanas. It will be interesting to see whether the Japanese preoccupation with berry size and not with seedlessness will extend to her near neighbours Korea, Taiwan and mainland China.

Apples

Japan is involved in a major change that is occurring in the world's markets for apples. This is the move towards varieties with a high sugar content which currently include the varieties fuji and sansa. Again they prefer very large fruits and they remove a high proportion of the crop to obtain big apples up to 150 mm in diameter. They like them to contain so much sugar that they form translucent areas in the flesh. This character in the fruit is known as 'water core' in Australia and is a defect that makes fruit unmarketable. It is an example of palate training to accept a regional product.

There are good examples of country preferences in apple varieties with Cox's orange pippin being preferred in England and red delicious in the USA. Australia is moving away from our ubiquitous Granny Smith towards potential new stars in Sundowner and Pink Lady. Perhaps we are retraining our palates towards quality apples!



Mango

In some respects we are novices when it comes to this crop which has only been available in quantity for a relatively short time. Many people think our Bowen mangoes are a good product but internationally they would score badly because of their large stone and high fibre content, especially near to the stone. In India they consider the variety Alphonse as the best mango because of its superb flavour, even though it is a green-skinned variety. Whereas in Florida considerable emphasis is placed on appearance, with fruits that have a pink flush to their skin being preferred. It will be necessary for us to develop our own standards now that it is clear that we can become a major producer of this world crop. It will be interesting to see whether we will prefer flavour to appearance!

Guava

In Thailand these fruits are eaten when they are hard and green, while in South Africa they are made into drinks when pink and fully ripe. This crop has not been a success in Australia as most people do not enjoy their pungent flavour and strong smell.

Conclusions

I hope I have convinced you that your parents and the region of the world where you spent your childhood and adolescent years have a major influence on the things that you like to eat and drink. The appreciation of fruit, food and drink is essentially a learned experience and we are to a major degree indoctrinated by our parents. Some of us are capable of breaking out of these imposed patterns of behaviour, but many do not and simply enjoy what we have become used to.

Geography largely acting via climate is a more difficult restraint as it has a major influence on the type and range of fruits, beverages and even foods that are available for consumption. Although our shops are stocked with a wide range of produce from many countries of the world, the bulk of what we consume is produced locally. This produce has the characteristics of the region where it is grown and educates our palate to a standard set by the region.

I think the final message I would like to leave you with is that we must all have an open mind when it comes to quality standards for products such as wine and fresh fruit. We must recognise that we have been pre-programmed by the influences we have been exposed to throughout our lives. It is necessary to educate our palates to appreciate the unusual products we become exposed to such as 'bush tucker'.
At the same time we must recognise that there are large regional differences in produce that bring diversity to our tables and increase our enjoyment of beverages, fruits and foods.

QUESTION & ANSWERS

Chair: Jennifer Hillier

SYMPOSIAST How did the hot dog get its name?

BRUCE KRAIG The phrase hot dog dates back to 1890. The mythological tale is that it was a German sausage which at the turn of the century was popularly called a dachshund dog because they have a natural casing and curl up when you cook them. They were made by German butchers, so they became known as dachshund dogs because as everyone knows, Germans have dachshunds. At a ball game in 1901 they ran out of their proper food, so the owner of the catering service had to go and get some of these German dachshund sausages. A sports cartoonist had the vendor saying, 'Get your red hot dogs here.' This is not true. It's a stretcher story. It means a good athlete. And somewhere between 1890 and 1900 it became converged with dachshund dog. That's where the word comes from. Literally the fact they are frankfurters with wings!

SYMPOSIAST What of the issue of tomatoes?

JOHN POSSINGHAM They simply build a square one because they can fit more in a truck to transport for processing than a round one. They've chosen other factors and faults, but the universal factor is the fast affordability. We get most of our tomatoes from up in the north. We used to have industry centred around our major cities. We had glasshouse industries and with a very short distance from production to utilisation. Then it was cheaper than to bring them from the hot part of the country, so the farmers drove the issue. And the consumer went along because I think he had no other options. He didn't have available highly flavoured tomatoes. There has been so much effort put into this problem but we're not winning because the genetic engineers are putting the gene in for long storage life. One thing has been successful. They can prevent a tomato softening and can antagonise softening genes so we're still further away from the table, put it that way. It's the very complicated production cycle that calls the tune, rather than the consumer.

BARBARA SANTICH I've got another question for you John. I hope you can answer something that has been puzzling me for a long time. Where have Waltham cross gone? When I came to Adelaide you used to be able to get them about this time of the year and they were very nice grapes. Then they gradually disappeared and there was this other variety called Italia which people would sell as Waltham cross, but they weren't. And now you don't even get Italia. All you get are these really awful, awful seedless ones which I refuse to buy. So please where are Waltham cross, are they in New South Wales?

JOHN POSSINGHAM They have disappeared into wine. Waltham cross were a speciality of Swan Hill. They were a little tricky there, in that they had to prune them. Swan Hill has become a favourite area for growing wine, it's surprisingly close to Melbourne. It's cool so most of the vineyards growing Waltham cross have been dug up and turned over to wine grapes.

BARBARA SANTICH And is that the same with muscatels?

JOHN POSSINGHAM Well, yes, but muscatels are very hard to transport. We haven't really grown many Italias. I mean Italias are a really big grape, the seeded grape that's grown in Southern Italy. It's fascinatingly hung on the vine until its very, very ripe, and it's a beautiful gold colour with just a touch of mustard. And other one is red glow which has been marketed in Australia, but hasn't developed. They should be marketed more.

BARBARA SANTICH I suppose my next question is, why don't people ever ask me when they do their consumer surveys, what people want?

JOHN POSSINGHAM I can't answer that one!

JOHN FITZPATRICK What's very interesting about the theme of the sessions is that we've had a very strong presentation by Jeanette about the deadly effect of the institution, and from Bruce a very optimistic version of about what the market does. I don't know whether anybody believes it because in fact he puts up his entrepreneurs and says these guys will never succeed, but he thinks they will succeed. In fact, there is one way of reading Hartz's thesis about the level of competition in America, quoted in Kraig's abstract, that is precisely the notion that there is this image in the society of the United States, in a society of enormous material abundance, of the possibility for everybody to succeed, where historical reality has increasingly not been that.

I'd just like to take up the question of the democratic character of the hot dog. I can't talk about the Chicago situation, just my first experience of New York, not the hot dog, but the American breakfast. I came into New York from Newark International Airport, through that utterly devastated, dead industrial territory, into Times Square bus station.

I was actually staying on the Lower East Side, in fact for a night at the 37th Street YMCA, because I couldn't get into the cheap hotel I thought I was going to get into. It was a Sunday afternoon and it was a black city. It was quite threatening – it was a very foreign 'other' sort of city. I got up next morning – a business morning – and there were still quite a lot of blacks around, but it was essentially a white city. There were business people there and in the way of America, which was again something new to me, everybody was out eating their breakfast in various types of breakfast places. And the breakfast was surprisingly cheap. As far as I could see the same sort of breakfast was being offered in all sorts of places, so that somebody with a relatively low living standard can still participate. Now the superficial democracy about that is the people who came into their businesses were driving in from garden suburbs outside New York, where they don't pay taxes. The people who were eating their breakfast in New York are living in a place that has been hollowed out by precisely this kind of class set of relationships. I take the point you were making about the specificity, the special local magic, that has been there in this little space, in essentially an industrial landscape. But I mean, is it really democratic or is it just the illusion of democracy that you're talking about?

BRUCE KRAIG My paper was presented in an optimistic way because that's how Americans like to think about themselves, but the fact is I think we're very pessimistic. But we still tell ourselves some stories and that's what I mean about democracy.

ROSEMARY BRISSENDEN It's quite the opposite. The role of people in democracy was very different because the whole thing is entirely industrialised. The sausage is an industrial product. Bread is cotton wool, also an industrialised product, and people don't have much and the hot dog is cheap food. So you don't have to have a lot of money to eat it. When I was at UCLA in Los Angeles that was all that was offered. At lunchtime that was what you lined up to get – there was nothing else.

BRUCE KRAIG Well, this was true. The hot dog has been replaced more or less by the hamburger and the chain hamburger at that. What you say is exactly right, but the people's reaction to it is democratic. They rebelled against it and by putting things on it, by creating and following this mythology, by going to these little places they think they're not part of the industrial state. They are, as industrial as a car's exhaust.

JOHN NEWTON Does anyone understand the actual nature of the hot dog?

BRUCE KRAIG We were just talking about this. The hamburger is the ultimate result of processing in industrial food; it is really processing a patio. But the hot dog is different because it does have something hand-made about it that is different from the hamburger. American's don't like to chew.

DURÉ DARA Hot dog in a roll.

BRUCE KRAIG That's a favourite song.

DURÉ DARA Well that's the icon isn't it?

GAY BILSON It may seem trivial but I read recently about the hot dog stand on 5th Avenue outside the Met in New York where apparently the business goodwill changed hands for something around $300,000. I presume it's true. Does this cross anything you've said about the democratic nature of the hot dog stand? I mean is it in fact a hotbed of small business and making a lot of money?

BRUCE KRAIG No, it's a culture of icons.

SYMPOSIAST Tell us about your tie. [Bruce Kraig was wearing a colourful hot-dog tie.]

BRUCE KRAIG Absolutely, you're going to be eating one of these today – a cultural icon.

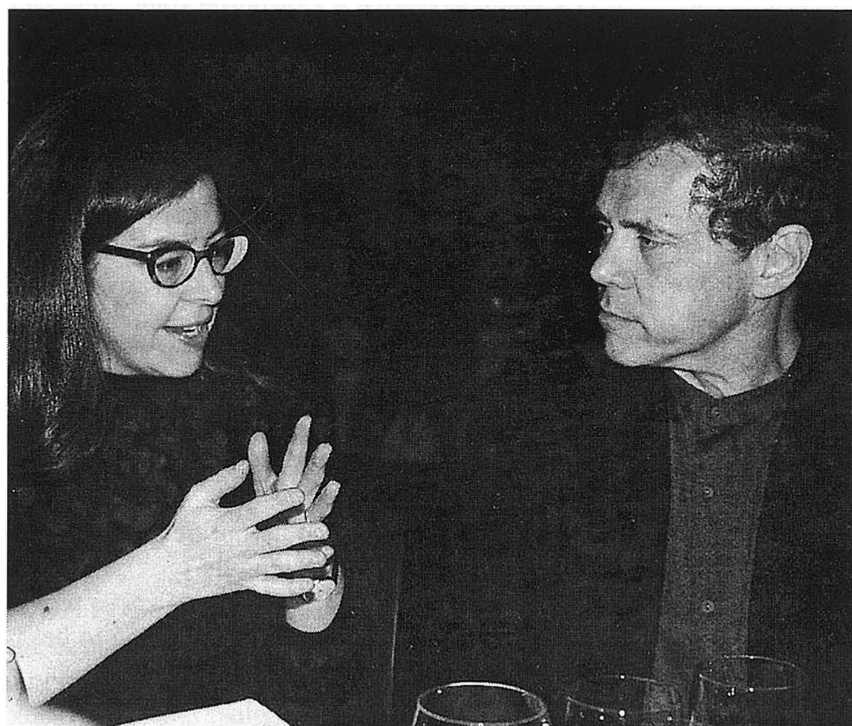
SYMPOSIAST Is it silk or polyester?

BRUCE KRAIG It's silk!

PAM GILLESPIE (to John Possingham) You spoke originally of the lack of acceptance of new grape varieties into Australia and yet the acceptance of table varieties. I put the question to you – Is it because wine is still one of the products available to consumers that is bought because of its flavour? We haven't managed to be able to reproduce that by genetic engineering like tarango or thurgau very easily, whereas table grapes are bought solely on their appearance or transportability.

JOHN POSSINGHAM I think you're right but my feeling is that people are incredibly conservative

about wanting to just drink the major four now – cabernet sauvignon, shiraz, semillon and chardonnay. It is just extreme conservatism that they are the only flavours that matter. The industry wakes up every now and again with a nightmare – what's going to happen when the people stop drinking this stuff? They might want a new flavour but they don't seem to want to do this. But you are right, the table grapes area is a very interesting one – it's not flavour, it's texture. The real reason why these Thompson seedless are so popular is they've got this lovely crunchy texture with almost no flavour. You get the odd person who loves muscat flavour, but you can't eat a lot of them. If you have more than a little twig you've had enough muscat for the day, so you actually want something with a lower flavour and a nice appearance. But the wine industry is incredible about its conservatism. It's been going on for 2000 years.



Susan Parham and Bruce Kraig 'finger' it out.

'POWER *TALK* for the POWER *HUNGRY*'

POTATOES, POWER AND POLITICS

Some comments on the Australian food industry in the context of a global food economy

Tony Webb, Australian Food Policy Alliance, Sydney

Abstract

A paddock-to-plate analysis of the Australian potato industry illustrating the concentration of power in the hands of four processing companies, four retailers and two fast-food chains. The paper examines the way this power operates to drive changes in processing and growing of potatoes (inappropriate varieties, inappropriate growing, regions etc.), the negative impacts of these changes on consumers (value for money), public health (undermining nutrition guidelines), farmers (increased effort, impacts on farm family and rural community life), the environment (increased use of pesticides, fertilisers, water and soil compaction, algal blooms etc.) and food standards (pressure for weakening of Australian food standards for heavy metal contamination).

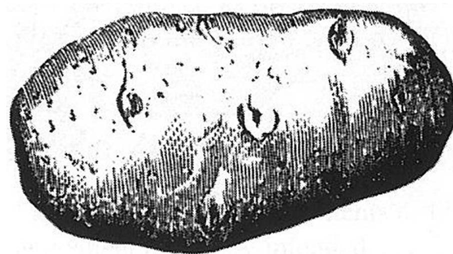
It indicates how this pattern is reproduced in a wide range of food-industry sectors and the current activities of farmers, unions, consumers, environment and/or development, womens, church, youth and social justice groups to raise these in the context of 'fair trade' at local, national and international levels.

Introduction

I have been to many conferences and often find that days, weeks and months afterwards I have great difficulty in remembering much of what I heard. Even with the best presentation in the world we are lucky if we can remember more than one or two major points. Today I am going to try for three and to make it easy I've reduced these to three key words – 'potatoes, power and politics'.

I propose to introduce you to the story of the humble Australian potato as it makes its way from paddock to plate and to use this as an example of what is a general pattern in the structure of the Australian food industry, characterised by concentration of power in the hands of a small number of transnational corporations – a pattern that is repeated on a global scale. I then want to talk about the politics of food how this power is wielded by transnational corporations, not just between rich and poor countries but within any country, rich or poor, our own included.

In this context it is not very helpful to talk of the injustice affecting the Third World. What we are dealing with is the politics of a Fourth World food economy, one in which the family farmer, food industry worker and consumer are, in structural terms, similarly disadvantaged in both rich and poor countries. Though obviously the effect is greater in poorer countries it is only a matter of degree.
I will then illustrate how the international trade rules, particularly those just concluded in the Uruguay round of the GATT, which led to the creation of the World Trade Organisation, make the situation worse, much worse! And finally, I will try to suggest what we can do about it.



The Potato Industry

Potatoes are the world's fourth largest food crop behind wheat, rice and maize (corn). In Australia, potato production is the largest horticultural product. Around one million tonnes are grown annually with a value of close to $400 million. Almost all are grown for domestic consumption. Only 1 per cent is exported and less than 1 per cent is imported.

One in ten of our farmers is involved in growing potatoes, usually on rotation with other (legume) crops and pasture for sheep or cattle. This three to seven-year rotation is essential to prevent the build-up of disease, particularly potato cyst nematode, and represents a longstanding sustainable agricultural practice.

What I will show is how this industry is controlled by only nine corporations. These companies, all acting in their own best interests according to the rules of trade, competition and the 'free' market, produce a situation in which consumers, public health, workers, farmer livelihoods, farm family and rural community life, and the environment are, to put it bluntly, stuffed! And the trends that are apparent appear to be likely to make this situation worse not better!

The flow chart (Figure 1) represents the flow of one million tonnes annually from paddock to plate.
It shows: 50 per cent produced by two states – Victoria and Tasmania. Less than 1 per cent imports, though this is growing under the influence of

transnational control of potato processing. One per cent of exports – mainly to the Pacific – though again increasing as at least one of the processors is now rapidly expanding sales of French fries to Asia. Seven per cent of potatoes are returned for seed also about to change as the global industry develops mini- and micro-tubers and 'true-seed' varieties (owned and patented by agri-business corporations, of course) which can be shipped around the world.

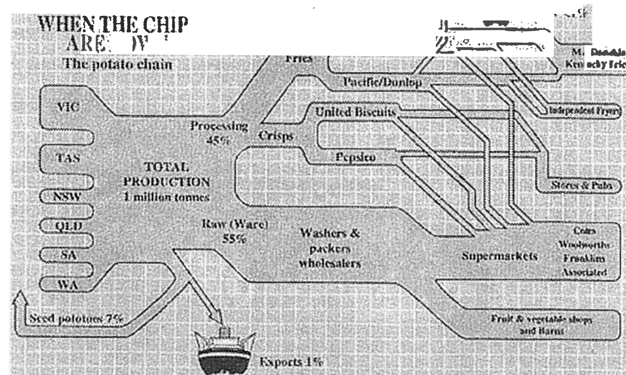


Figure 1

Of the one million tonnes, roughly half are sold as raw (ware) through a system of washers and packers, some of which are owned by the supermarket chains, to reach the consumer either through one of the many small fruit and vegetable shops (20 per cent of sales) or through one of the four large supermarket chains (who when we add in their processed potato products control 40 per cent of total potato sales).

On the processed side, the flow splits again roughly 30 per cent and 20 per cent into prepared/frozen chips (also known as French fries) and to potato crisps. In each channel there are just two companies. On the crisp side – United Biscuits (who recently bought out Coca-Cola) and PepsiCo (Smiths and Walkers Crisps respectively), both US owned. On the chip side – Pacific Dunlop (now owned by Simplot, USA) and McCains (Canada) who in turn have major contracts with the fast-food chains dominated by McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken (closely allied to PepsiCo). Thus nine corporate interests dominate the whole industry, with two to four controlling any product flow.

Now, the fast food chains discovered early on that if you make long, thin chips rather than short, fat ones you get about 20-25 per cent less actual potato in the standard paper cup. They buy on weight and sell on volume. Long, thin chips absorb more fat and salt than thicker ones – with public health implications. To make a long thin chip you need a large, oval, woody potato – the variety of choice is the North American russet burbank which does not grow well in Australia, and requires more attention, more fertiliser, water and pesticide. Minimum tonnage demands from the processors have also led to use of heavier machinery and increased soil compaction. The burbank is a slow-growing variety, taking longer to mature. So as well as increased inputs, it also takes away the four to six weeks at the end of the season when farmers and their families used to have a holiday. All this in the name of meeting an advertising-induced, predominantly teenage-oriented market 'demand' for 'French fries', rather than chips: consumers, public health, potato processors (and their workers), farmers, their families, rural communities and the environment get stuffed. The trend has been made worse in recent years as the large processors have encouraged production of potatoes in areas where our forefathers, for good reasons, decided that potatoes were not a suitable crop, with further implications I will touch on below.

A similar pattern of dominance by a small number of large corporations can be seen in the analysis of other commodities. For example dairy, citrus, confectionery.

Concentration of Power

It is common for economists to talk of concentration figures. A 50 per cent concentration figure is the number of companies that between them have control of 50 per cent of the market. In thirty-nine sectors of the Australian processed food industry the 50 per cent concentration figure is one. That is, one company controls 50 per cent of the market in these sectors. Across the whole industry it is usual to find two or three companies controlling 60 –70 per cent and rare to find more than five in any sector. For example:

- Rice –1 company 70 per cent
- Pasta – 2 companies 59 per cent (3 = 70 per cent, 4 = 78 per cent)
- Processed vegetables – 2 companies 50 per cent (90 per cent with generic/house brands)
- Fish – 2 companies 68 per cent
- Breakfast cereals – 2 companies 67 per cent (3 have 86 per cent)
- Biscuits – 1 company 69 per cent (2 = 82 per cent).

Overall, the paddock-to-plate structure of the food industry shows 130,000 farmers at one end and 17 million consumers at the other, with a major concentration of power in the middle as the food passes through the hands of about thirty major corporations (within which there are usually only two or three in any product line), and just four supermarket chains. This is a global phenomenon. A similar picture can be seen in many other countries.

The common feature worldwide is the increasing concentration of power in the hands of the large transnational corporations (TNCs). Now, there is much that we as consumers – and we all need to eat, have to be thankful for. For those of us in affluent countries, gone are the days of insecurity over the food supply, there is also increased variety as we can, literally, enjoy the fruits of the earth – tropical fruits in cold climates and foods from the other side of the globe when our own are out of season. Along with these benefits, however, have come some detriments, not all obvious at first.

The push for lower costs has depressed commodity prices, with lower returns to growers, offset in some of the richer countries by subsidies. There is also a push for lower wages and reduction of employment regulations and this extends to other regulations generally, and particularly environment protection and food standards. Thus, one of the effects of this so-called free trade, is a lowering of standards, with governments seeking to attract corporate investments on the basis of less stringent regulation, in some cases 'bidding down' these controls in order to attract investment. With increased security and variety in the global food supply we are also witnessing a lowering of quality in the food available for those who cannot afford the best, and a weakening of the economic power of these same people where they work on food production and processing.

The Politics of Food

The way that this power is used gives cause for concern, not just at the national level, but internationally. The concentration of power in the hands of the TNCs has recently been institutionalised through the concluded GATT agreement – which is to be the basis for the new World Trade Organisation (WTO) – which will set out the trade rules for the next century. There are a number of issues that we need to be concerned about in the areas of agriculture, multi-fibre agreements (clothing textiles and footwear), trade in services, investment controls, intellectual property rights, human/labour rights and environmental damage.

Finally, and most important for this symposium, there is to be international harmonisation of food standards. The combined effect of these measures has been described by analysts from Third World countries as 're-colonisation' – a massive rewriting of the rules in favour of the developed world and, particularly of the transnational corporations.

A brief look at some of these issues will illustrate the cause for concern.

Agriculture

There is to be little real change in agriculture, a subject of a paper in itself. The European Union (EU) and the USA have already absorbed many of the subsidy reductions required by use of historic baselines, transfers of commitments between commodities (reducing subsidies in economically unimportant areas while retaining them in others), and in the EU by a shift in subsidies from direct (price support) to indirect subsidies (regional and social fund support mechanisms). However, the need for food security – the need for poorer countries to protect their local agricultural base and support the local population which depends on farming can be undermined as these economies are opened to international trade dominated by the large global corporations.

Multi-fibre Agreements

Some of the anti-competitive arrangements of the multi-fibre agreement originally intended as a temporary measure to offset developing counties advantages in clothing and textiles are enshrined as semi-permanent in the WTO.

Trade in Services

Rules on trade in services will allow greater scope for transfer pricing practices which allow TNCs to make little profit (and hence pay little tax) in many countries where they operate while reaping the global rewards in tax havens.

Trade-related Investment Measures

WTO investment rules will increase the scope for the TNCs to take over and control whole sections of industry on a global as well as a national basis.

Trade-related Intellectual Property Measures

Intellectual property rules are already allowing patenting of the stuff of life itself and the ability to force recognition of this ownership by corporations on a global scale.

Human/Labour Rights

There is widespread concern over a number of aspects of human rights and the failure of the international trading regime to recognise these. One has to ask, is it fair to have to compete with

goods produced by child labour, prison labour, peonage or the various shades of slave labour that still exist? Equally, one can ask whether we should have to compete with labour costs that are artificially held down by the absence of the fundamental rights of workers to collective bargaining which exists in many countries. Yet in both these areas not only are such human rights not recognised as trade issues – their enforcement by any form of trade sanctions is specifically prohibited. The process and production methods clause in the WTO agreement says that we may not discriminate between goods on the basis of how they are produced.

Environment Protection

A similar argument applies to the issue of environmental protection. I have touched on the issue of intellectual property which affects the right of farmers to harvest their own seeds for planting where these have been patented by corporations, often as a result of biotechnology and genetic engineering. There is also the issue of land degradation, the exploitation of the land and peasant peoples until they are exhausted, whereupon the corporations move on to the next country. We can already see this with forestry. The failure to count the cost of the depletion of natural resources, sometimes sanctioned by lax controls by governments desperate for overseas investment and export income, allows for a competitive advantage that distorts trade around the world. Thus the absence of environment protection amounts to a hidden subsidy paid for by the land and future generations, and by all who have to compete with such a distortion. Our own farmers' ability to undertake land care is affected by the lowering of commodity prices caused by such distortion. Yet all such trans-border issues are deemed to be outside the sovereign rights of the concerned and affected countries – any action to remedy the concerns is regarded by the WTO as protectionist. The classic example of this was the dolphin/tuna case where the USA laws to prevent importation of tuna caught by Mexican methods which kill dolphins was declared illegal by GATT.

Country of Origin Labelling

Another example, closer to the food area, can be seen in the recent campaign we have run on country of origin labelling. For many years now the term 'Made in Australia' has been a joke, some would say a fraud sanctioned by lax laws that allowed manufacturers to claim goods as Australian with little, if any, Australian content. For example, peanut butter could be made from imported Chinese peanuts (with much higher cadmium residues than Australian peanuts) and labelled 'Made in Australia'. A similar example was found with bacon 'made' from imported pork.

Consumers, farmers and trade unions have waged a four-year campaign for truth in labelling, insisting that food labelled as 'Made in Australia' should be both grown and processed here. The extent to which industry has opposed this has been incredible and the battle is not fully over yet. But the important thing to note is that government initially backed the industry position by arguing that the international code on labelling was that the country of origin was the country where the last act of processing took place.

Food Standards – The Processes of Deregulation and Degradation

What we are witnessing is a progressive deregulation of the food industry. The effects of this trend towards deregulation on food quality can be seen in the example from the UK where abandoning minimum content requirements in meat products led to dramatic reductions in meat content in a range of meat products. The substitution of fat and other bits of the carcass of animals through rendering and mechanical recovery – with the use of colours and flavouring to disguise this – has undermined the health and nutrition messages that governments around the world pay lip service to. This systematic adulteration and lowering of standards can also be seen to underlie the current disaster for the industry caused by 'mad cow' disease. Another example is the way that pressures to harmonise Australian and international standards for pesticides led to the proposals that would have significantly weakened our standards.

This trend to lower standards has been internationalised in GATT by the Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary Standards Agreement. Under this, the recommendations of the UN Codex Alimentarius Committee become the international norms, not as floor standards (minimum quality standards that everyone is expected to meet), but as ceiling standards where any country applying a standard higher than the Codex can be dragged into the WTO disputes system for using the standard as a non-tariff barrier to trade. It is worth noting that a report called 'Cracking the Codex' by my colleagues in London found that representatives of TNCs accounted for about 25 per cent of the delegates at Codex meetings. Consumer and public health representatives accounted for around 2 per cent.

One standard under threat as a non-tariff barrier to trade is the Australian limit on residues of the heavy metal cadmium. Australia has one of the best, i.e., most stringent standards for this heavy metal in the world. Cadmium intakes can lead to liver and kidney damage. There is also some newer evidence of effects on sperm cells with the most vulnerable group being teenage boys, the very group most prone to stuffing their faces at McDonald's with hamburgers and French-fries – potatoes! There have recently been applications to relax the standard for cocoa, rice crackers, rice, wheat, peanuts and potatoes. This last category driven by the Potato Industry Council, heavily influenced by McCains who have been opening up potato production in South Australia, and Edgells/Pacific Foods doing the same in Western Australia and Tasmania. Both Western Australia and South Australia have sandy loam soils and South Australia has a problem with salination in irrigation water, both of which increase the take-up of cadmium in root crops. So after years of maintaining a standard that has actually significantly improved farming practice – driving farmers to reduce the use of phosphate fertiliser which is the main source of cadmium contamination on the land – the combination of expanded production and the need for more fertiliser to support the russet burbank are about to reverse the trend.

The effects will be to increase environmental pollution, including the problem of algal blooms in river systems, and damage the clean and green image we are using to market our food into Asia. It will also blow a hole in the only defence Australia has against the imposition of lowest-common-denominator food standards under the GATT/WTO Codex agreement. To claim that our higher standards are non-discriminatory we need to show consistency, that all standards are on the high side of the international norms and that these apply to all foods – domestic, export and imported. Potatoes are essentially a domestic commodity. A change here will be seen as relaxing standards to suit our domestic needs. We will simply not be able to maintain that other standards are not simply a disguised form of protection to keep out imports.

What Is To Be Done?

Now I come to the hard part. What are we to do about this situation? I wish I had a simple blueprint for the alternative. I don't, and if I did then we would already be doing it. What I do have, however, are a number of suggestions for starting points.

National Food Alliance

First we need a national alliance between all who are concerned. I can point to the model of the UK National Food Alliance which grew out of the work of the London Food Commission. Here in Australia our starting points have been 1) The Food Policy Alliance (Farmers Unions and Consumers), and 2) The Fair Trade Forum (FPA + environment, aid/development groups). What we need next is a new, much broader alliance including academics, food writers, cooks, and concerned individuals. This also needs to link into international networks (such as the baby food action groups (IBFAN); Food Irradiation Network (FIN); US groups such as the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP-Food First); or the European networks of eco-consumer groups (EECCC) and the Third World Network (TWN); and others.

National and International Campaigns

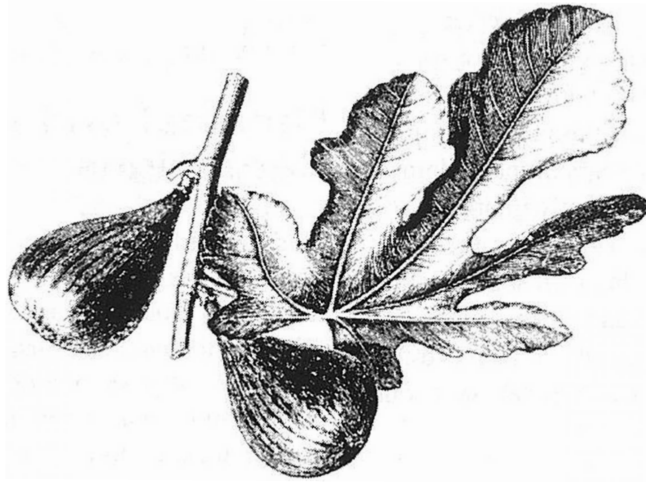
This cannot be a talk-fest. What is needed now is action, developing national and international campaigns around the issues of quality food, national standards and inspection systems and – one currently being considered by the consumer movement – for an international convention banning trade in unsafe food.

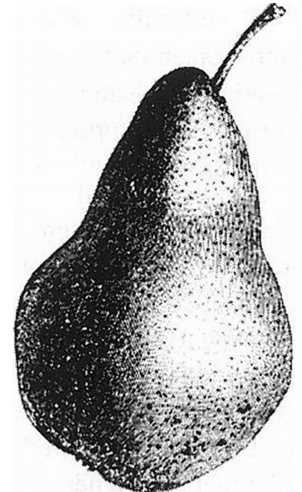
It is, quite frankly, obscene that food which we reject as unsafe on the basis that it fails to meet our food standards is still allowed to be re-exported, to go port-hopping around the world looking for a country with lower standards or a less vigilant inspection regime, where it can be sold. The classic example in this area came from my earlier work on food irradiation where we uncovered numerous examples of food, rejected as unfit because of high bacterial contamination, being purchased by international traders, irradiated in the Netherlands (a process that came to be known as 'Dutching' or 'sending food on a holiday to Holland'), and put back on the market.

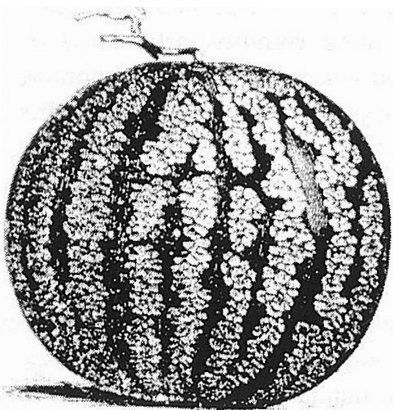
This new Food Alliance would not be opposed to trade but would insist on fair trade as a counterweight to current mania for free/deregulated trade – trade where the public interest in clean, safe, quality food grown in a clean and green, sustainable environment comes first.

A number of symposiasts indicated an interest in discussing these ideas further and meetings are to be held in major cities in the near future. Anyone interested in participating is welcome to contact the author.

La Quintinie perfected the art of the useful garden...







ROYAL POWER AND GASTRONOMIC INNOVATION

**Dr Barbara Santich,
University of Adelaide**

Power, as we know, comes in many forms – the power of authority, the power of knowledge, the power of force, the power of persuasion, the power of words. The brief introduction to this theme of food and power, in the introductory notice for this symposium, touched on the power *in* food – as in powerful flavours – as well as the power of individuals and groups in relation to food (production, marketing, distribution), and eating. Implicit in these examples is the notion of power *over* others.

Indeed, all of the six dimensions of power listed (the world, the state, the household, the body, the soul, the future) involve, in some way, power *over* – power over populations, groups, individuals. In today's society this sort of power is generally seen, at least in theory, as wrong and unjust and, if not exactly corrupt and evil, then at least undesirable. It's power seen through the pessimistic eyes of Henri de Montherlant, who wrote that there is no power but only abuse of power.

But there are other ways of understanding power. Bruce Kraig mentioned a mechanical interpretation, power as potential. Power can also mean the capacity to produce an effect. Rather than power over, it is power *to*, an enabling power, a beneficial sort of power: the power to do things or have things done, power to create or have works of beauty created, power to pursue knowledge and understanding, power to encourage research, power to push forward the frontiers of learning. This is the sort of power I want to discuss today, especially in relation to the French court of Louis XIV at Versailles in the seventeenth century and the gastronomic innovations associated with it.

Innovations are neither always necessary nor desirable – think of the vertical grill, which must have been designed by a male scientist. In today's global market we can probably get mangoes all year round, so we might not be interested in developing a way to have mangoes ripening in September, three months earlier than usual – but in seventeenth-century France, when the bulk of what appeared on the dinner tables was local and, above all, seasonal, the appearance of asparagus in December – two to three months earlier than its natural season in the more temperate south of France, and melons in June, must have been welcome (albeit destined to a privileged few). They also represented a great triumph on the part of the gardener (who might be seen as exercising his power over nature).

The court at Versailles was the centre of power, absolute power, the kind of power we prefer to live without these days, though we should remember that there is a distinction between absolutism and tyranny. It was power by virtue of birth rather than power by appointment or popular mandate, and, at least in theory, and according to tradition – it was of divine origin. Since the time of the Capetians the king was assumed to hold the crown from God. The king, then, was obliged to follow the rules of divine law; he was bound by divine and natural laws to secure the welfare of his subjects and to uphold justice. He was under a moral prescription to work for the greater good of the kingdom. Louis XIV chose to fulfil his role and his duties by assuming absolute power, which meant a concentration of power and with it a withdrawal of the king from the society and institutions created under previous monarchs. Versailles was the symbol of this absolutism.

Power is invisible, but the king had an obligation to make it visible. Louis XIV probably made it all too visible in the grandeur of Versailles, depleting the royal coffers to such an extent that he was obliged to have the gold and silver plate melted down and replaced by dinner services in porcelain, thus starting a fashion for this material. In many areas, however, he used his power wisely, encouraging industry and trade and increasing the prosperity of the country, and also encouraging science, arts and letters. He created the Academy of Painting and Sculpture in 1663, the Academy of Sciences in 1666 and the Academy of Architecture in 1671. Pensions were offered to artists, and intellectual life flourished.

One of the advantages of absolute power is that it can encourage innovation (in a more efficacious manner than a democratic and representative committee!). It was fortuitous that Louis XIV's power went hand-in-hand with wealth, for the king received the benefits of the nation's taxes. Louis XIV could thus use his royal power and wealth to employ, and give free reign to, the most talented, most creative, most innovative artists: Le Nôtre in the gardens of the Château of Versailles, Le Brun as painter and decorator of its interiors. His royal power also enabled him to house and feed a prodigious stable of horses, the relevance of which will become clear later. The appointment which concerns food was that of Jean de la Quintinie as Royal Vegetable Gardener. Jean de la Quintinie was a lawyer with a passion for

horticulture – and for pears. He abandoned the law to devote himself to his orchard. According to Waverly Root, he gave some of his pears to the dramatist Racine who, duly impressed, passed them on to Le Nôtre. Le Nôtre was equally impressed and in 1670 managed to get La Quintinie appointed as Superintendent in charge of Orchards and Gardens at Versailles where he came to the attention of the king.

One of the advantages of *absolute power* is that it can *encourage innovation*

That's a nice story, but a more likely story is that La Quintinie, after touring Italy to learn about gardening there, came to the attention of Colbert, the king's finance minister, when Colbert was establishing the vegetable gardens at the château of Vaux-le-Vicomte; at the same time as Le Nôtre was fixing the formal garden and Le Brun the ceilings inside. In 1679 (when Louis XIV was thirty-six years of age), it became apparent that the original *potager* was too small to supply the needs of the court, and La Quintinie was given authority to construct a new one. At the same time he was elevated to the position of Chief Gardener. It seems that these were new titles – new posts – which gives an indication of La Quintinie's abilities and, perhaps, a new respect for vegetable gardens.

The Potager du Roi which La Quintinie created is still a working garden, belonging to the École Normale Supérieure d'Horticulture et du Paysage, and open to visitors who can see it more or less as La Quintinie left it. Completed in 1683, it covered about 20 acres, with a large basin in the centre to provide water. La Quintinie made it a sunken, walled garden, thus endowing it with a particular micro-climate to benefit the diversity of species cultivated. Meticulous attention was given to the planting design, as the diagram plan makes clear.

Jean de la Quintinie died in 1688 but he had already written down what he had discovered and learned, and his book, *Instructions pour les Jardins Fruitiers*, was published by his sons in 1690.

It has been described as one of the best gardening books ever written, with instructions so precise a child could follow them, and details for every month of the year.

Given his interest in fruit trees in general, and pears in particular, it is not surprising that he devoted much attention to developing new methods of pruning (his pruning was designed to yield good harvests of fruit rather than simply give the tree an attractive shape) and growing on espaliers. But he also worked out a system for transplanting large shrubs and trees – very important at that time when new châteaux wanted instantly mature gardens. La Quintinie believed that there was beauty in well-ordered vegetable gardens, a belief many French today would seem to share. In his book he wrote: 'It is, above all, necessary that [such a kitchen garden] please the eye ... The handsomest form for a cultivator of fruits and vegetables is a beautiful rectangle, especially when its corners are carefully squared and its length is one and a half times its width ... Views of neatly squared, carefully tended beds of strawberries, artichokes, and asparagus or of chervil, parsley and sorrel, afford great pleasure.' According to Diderot, in his *Encyclopédie*, La Quintinie perfected the art of the useful garden as Le Nôtre perfected the art of the pleasure garden.

As Chief Gardener, La Quintinie seems to have had a free reign in deciding what to plant, but as he was also in the service of the king his duty was to please the king. Louis XIV loved melons and figs, so his gardener went to great lengths to ensure that these fruits featured frequently on the royal table, and at times of the year when, even in their warmer, native climates, they would not be ripe. Versailles is not the sunny Mediterranean home of figs and melons, and to present these fruits in June, at the beginning of summer, was a feat of ingenuity, achieved through the use of glasshouses (usually heated by means of stoves in the centre) and horse manure – of which Versailles was certainly not short.

La Quintinie also invented what the French call *'les primeurs'* – as in the sign 'Fruits et Primeurs' above every fruit-and-veg. shop. *'Les primeurs'* are the early, the very earliest, fruits and vegetables – like the first cherries for the Melbourne Cup.
For Louis XIV, La Quintinie produced strawberries in January and asparagus in February, again, using repeated applications of fresh horse manure to gradually warm the soil of his raised beds.
His out-of-season petits pois were avidly sought (fresh, green peas were introduced to France about the middle of the seventeenth century, probably from Holland; Nicholas de Bonnefons called them

'pois de Hollande'). Louis XIV took a keen interest in his *potager*, visiting often and discussing plans and progress with the gardeners. It's not certain that the king shared his gardener's passion for pears, but apparently he did learn how to prune the trees into the various patterns developed by La Quintinie, the branches in parallel horizontal rows or vertical, like two- and three-pronged forks, for the espalier, or open-vase shapes for the orchard.

It's interesting that pears seem to have had a status advantage over apples and were more deserving of royal patronage; *Le Jardinier François* of 1651 lists seventy-four different early season varieties ripening in the months of August and September. Apples were considered common, ordinary fruits, and La Quintinie did not allow them much space in his garden, lavishing his care on the pear trees of which he grew about 300 varieties, many of which he himself developed. His favourite was the *bon chrétien d'hiver*. (Until 1963, two of La Quintinie's fruit trees were still alive at Versailles; the pruning techniques which retard maturity tend to enhance longevity.) Possibly their shape, and the texture and colour of their skin, give pears an aesthetic interest which appeals to painters, for pears seem to feature much more frequently in still-lifes than do apples, but I suspect it was more the status of the pear which earned it a place in the galleries.

These horticultural innovations – new varieties of pears, new methods of pruning and cultivation, new growing techniques to yield precocious harvests – might not today appear very significant.
But remember, this was before the days of Mendel and theories of genetics; it was before the days of Liebig and chemical fertilisers and certainly before the days of artificial growth stimulants. La Quintinie succeeded in producing his early asparagus because he observed and studied the natural processes and managed to reproduce them using natural resources. Although the royal melons probably didn't get much further than the royal court, the Potager du Roi inspired similar gardens all over Europe and the principles of his gardening had much wider and more enduring impact. Hannah Glasse in 1747 gave instructions 'to raise a Sallat in two Hours at the Fire', which required taking fresh horse dung, laying it in a tub near the fire, sprinkling it with mustard seeds then covering with a thin layer of horse dung. 'Keep it by the fire, and it will rise high enough to cut in two Hours', she added.

La Quintinie's achievements are a tribute to his art and science, his imagination and his understanding and but it was royal power, with its intellectual patronage and financial support, which allowed these skills to be realised, which encouraged his experimentation, just as royal power encouraged the genius of Le Nôtre, the architects Le Vau and Mansart, the decorator le Brun, the dramatist Molière, the composer Lully.

Today we don't have royal patrons, nor even many wealthy individual patrons, and in Australia, at least, the idea of monarchs with absolute power is at odds with our desire to be a republic. Also, the notion of power has shifted. It no longer seems to include the reciprocal values of duty and responsibility, though Prime Minister John Howard has talked of the mandate the people of Australia have given him and his responsibility to fulfil the promises he made to them. So who, today, is pushing forwards the frontiers of horticulture, of agriculture, of food production, of food preparation? And with what agendas?

In Australia today, the power enjoyed by Louis XIV is spread amongst governments (and its instrumentalities) and large corporations. Research into horticulture, agriculture, livestock production, methods of transporting and processing foods, is carried out by universities (often dependent on grants from industry), the CSIRO, Departments of Agriculture and a few large companies. Like La Quintinie, these researchers are seeking the reward of the funder's favour, but the funder's favour is not given for the flavour, the palatability, the originality of the product but for its profitability, for the farmer, the processor, the company, the state, the nation, the health of the nation. Profitability means numbers, and numbers speak to power. The power that encourages creations, inventions, innovations also limits their scope.

In seventeenth-century France, when power was concentrated in one individual – the king – success meant pleasing Louis XIV. The results of La Quintinie's experiments in the royal garden were tested through the palate of Louis XIV. By all accounts, Louis XIV liked food, and liked good food, so it might be assumed that whatever passed his palate was a worthy addition to the ingredient repertoire. (What would have happened if Louis XIV had spat out, in disgust, the first petits pois?)

In the absence of a royal palate to test today's alimentary innovations, the power to approve or reject devolves upon our own. It becomes our responsibility to encourage innovations, or give them the thumbs down (the vertical grill, the olive oil margarine). We are not usually given the chance before new products are launched and distributed, but we should remember that, while today's innovators might have the power to innovate, we have the power to accept or reject their innovations, and we should not hesitate to express it.

Plan du Jardin Potager du Roi

'The vegetable garden which is in the middle of the town of Versailles is situated at the foot of the Satory slopes, between the canal of the Swiss Guards and the large Deer Park. The large square in the middle is filled with vegetable plants only, with trees surrounding the smaller squares. The little gardens which surround it are of different sizes according to the rarity and the popularity of the fruits they enclose.

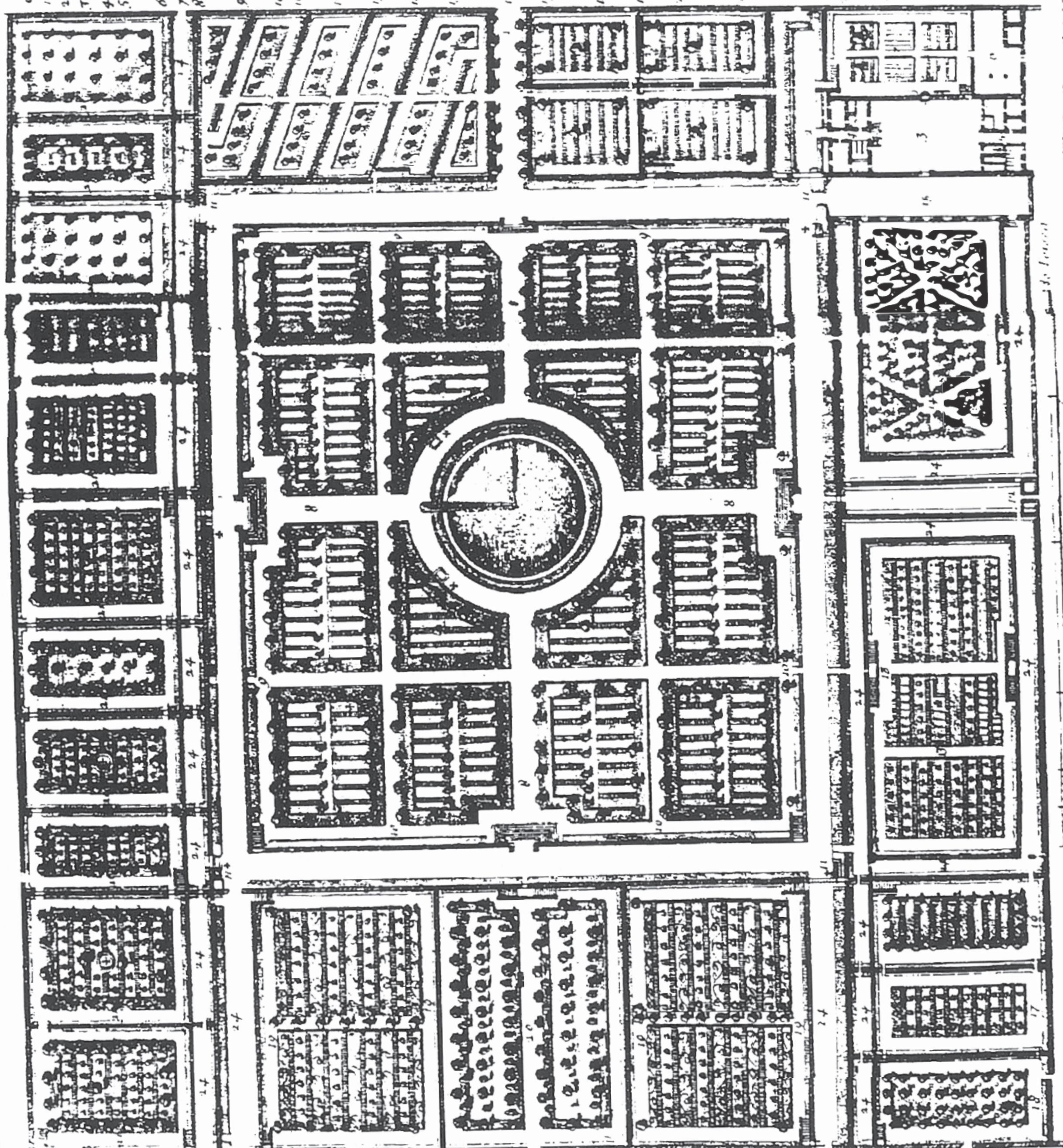
The low borders of dwarf trees edge the beds of spreading fruits and vegetables for salads and desserts. The espaliers are exposed to the sun, according to the needs of each tree, and there are even some on oblique walls to receive the sun from all quarters. All the gardens are linked, and all have small reservoirs to enable them to be watered, with terraces under which is a glasshouse in which to store, over winter, those fruits and plants which do not bear the cold.

The Melonniere and the Figuerie are the largest of these gardens, and the latter has two glasshouses one above the other in the style of a gallery 25 *toises* in length (about 25 metres); the ground level glasshouse is used for fig trees in boxes, while that which is above, and level with the terraces, houses several models of the king's buildings. This garden, which is maintained with care, was designed by and planted by the late M. de la Quintinie, director of all the king's fruit and vegetable gardens; the writings he has left testify to his knowledge and experience in agriculture.

Le Potager du Roi

Key:

1. King's entrance
2. Entrance for ordinary people
3. Courtyard – for the gardener
4. House – for the gardener
5. Accommodation for gardener's apprentices
6. Poultry yard
7. Small flower garden
8. Large square or garden for large vegetables
9. Espaliers of peach trees
10. Espaliers of pears
11. Terrace of large square with muscat grapes
12. Pavilion from which herbs and salads are distributed
13. Melonniere, with beds of several spreading fruits
14. Figuerie of fig trees in boxes and espaliers
15. Gallery of models below which is the glasshouse for the fig trees
16. Beds of small cucumbers and espaliered peach trees
17. Beds of salad herbs, with espaliers of clingstone peaches and nectarines
18. Fig trees, as bushes and espaliered
19. Asparagus beds with espaliered peaches
20. Plum orchard of plum trees as bushes and espaliered
21. Small gardens of different vegetables, with peach, pear and apple trees as bushes and on espaliers
22. Diagonal gardens with espaliered peach trees
23. Gardens for strawberries with early cherries
24. Terraces with glasshouses below and Reservoirs for watering



Barbara's Versailles Garden.

FISH FOR FOOD OR FISH FOR FUN?

Barbara Sweeney, Universal Magazines and Annie Foord, Marketing Manager, Sydney Fish Markets Duncan Leadbitter, Oceanwatch, assisted in the preparation of this paper

We plan to address the power struggle between commercial and recreational access to fish stocks and the implications that this has on fish resources and availability of fish to the consumer.

There is a compelling debate here. Australia is facing a loss of access to sustainable stock by the end of the century and even if the fish stock is sustainable there is no guarantee that the fish will reach the restaurant table or the consumer.

Do you remember, as children, being told not to play with your food? There you were pushing that hated piece of liver or parsnip around the plate to give the impression that you were engaged somehow in the meal, but at all times studiously avoiding the actual act of eating it. A parent's stony glare and insistence that you stop playing with the food was enough to have the incident escalate into a power struggle. 'You' against 'them'.

A power struggle of this nature exists in the Australian fishing industry. It's a power struggle that has come about as fishermen compete for access to a common natural resource – a resource that has been adversely affected by largely unrestrained fishing, effects of habitat degeneration and effects of pollution. On one hand you have the professional fishermen who fish for their livelihood, for profit and on behalf of the millions of seafood consumers. On the other you have the recreational anglers who fish for fun and profit.

This power struggle is not unique to Australia. It is happening throughout the world. And it is a struggle that may see, in the worst-case scenario, some species disappear from consumers' plates.

Putting food on the table is a dirty business. In agriculture it is literally dirt, in fishing it is blood and guts. There is no question that fishing is cruel, whether the catching is done by professionals or recreational anglers.

In the past the struggle was in the act of getting the food. It was a battle between the fishermen and the elements, a battle of wits with the forces of the sea and the fish themselves. Now, with the development of technical devices such as affordable satellite navigators, depth sounders and reliable outboards which allow fishermen to go further afield, the guesswork and skill has largely been removed and questions about sustainability have entered into the equation.

Those who play with their food are pressuring fishermen and politicians to reallocate available stocks from commercial fishermen, who fish on behalf of consumers, to anglers. This pressure often comes in the guise of concern for the environment and in the form of arguments such as: recreational fishing is more valuable to the economy; recreational fishing is valuable to tourism; the commercial fishing industry is taking all the fish; there are more anglers than commercial fishermen and they should get a larger portion of the pie.

Should seafood lovers be concerned? How great are the threats to seafood meals? This paper looks at some of the current pressures on the catching sector of the seafood industry and specifically focuses on the intensifying battle between those who play with their food – recreational anglers – and the people who supply it, those who don't.

Although Australia has the second-largest fishing zone in the world its fisheries production ranks about fiftieth in the world in terms of tonnes per year. We fare better in terms of value of production due to the fact that many important species are luxury products, such as abalone, crayfish and prawns.

In comparison to many highly productive but colder climates, our commercial markets feature an enormous variety of fish – some 120 species – although 90 per cent of people would only see 10 per cent of these. Fisheries management in Australia has a mixed record. Some species, such as gemfish have been over-fished to the extent that quotas are now at zero, others like southern blue fin tuna have also been over-fished and quotas are at an all-time low but a slow recovery in the population is occurring. Some fisheries, such as the Gulf of Carpentaria prawn fishery were once over-fished but, after a painful period of restructuring, they are back to a sustainable level. However, the status of the majority of our species is unknown. In general, the higher the value of the fishery, the more we know about it – simply because there is more money available to study it.

As the industry has devoted more funding to fisheries research some extraordinary facts have emerged. Contrary to both the expectations of fishery scientists and managers, and popular opinion, the commercial catch does not dwarf the recreational catch.

But the research has only focused on the commercial sector and there is little information about the size of the essentially uncontrolled recreational catch, a situation that presents as a major management issue and as a threat to the sustainability of some stocks.

So how big is the recreational catch? On an Australia-wide basis in exact terms nobody knows but there are a number of smaller-scale studies that suggest that the recreational take is about one-third of the commercial catch. This is surprising in itself but especially so given that the bulk of the commercial catch is in fisheries where there is no recreational catch at all.

Inshore, where the occasional holiday danglers and dedicated anglers fish from the shore or in small boats, there is an increasing body of evidence that the recreational catch exceeds the commercial catch in a substantial way. For example, research has shown that 70 per cent of the fin-fish catch, fish like coral trout on the Great Barrier Reef, is taken by the recreational sector.

A NSW Fisheries research project on the NSW northern rivers – Richmond and Clarence – showed that in the Richmond River, the recreational catch of yellowfin bream and flathead were many times greater than that of the commercial sector.
In the Clarence, catches of bream and flathead were similar between the two sectors, which according to the report was surprising given that the Clarence River esturine commercial fisheries are probably among the largest in NSW. Catches of sand whiting are similar for both rivers and for both sectors and the recreational catch of tailor is 100 times that of the commercial catch in both rivers.

A 1984 NSW Fisheries study of commercial and recreational fishing in Sydney's estuary stated that the 1980-1981 recreational fish catch was 64,700 kilos greater than the commercial catch. Astonishing figures occur again on the Great Barrier Reef where there are 24,000 privately registered boats whose owners make regular recreational fishing trips to the inshore reefs. An estimated number up to 270,000 trips are made each year with a catch estimated as equal to that of the commercial fishers.

Although it is estimated that one in four Australians go fishing at least once a year it is the dedicated few that take the majority of fish. One study in Westernport Bay and Port Phillip Bay in Victoria found that 5 per cent of anglers catch 50 per cent of the recreational catch. Many of these fish find their way onto the black market.

The dollars that recreational anglers spend are actively targeted by many tourism associations as a way of bringing visitor dollars to rural areas.
In the equation the visitor dollar is perceived to be of greater value than the dollars contributed by the fishing industry. But in many coastal towns up to 50 per cent of the local catch stays in that town as does the fishers' spending dollars.

Take the experience of Port Lincoln in South Australia, a town that owed its existence to the local agricultural industry, until the farmers hit hard times. Port Lincoln was lucky enough to have a second string to their bow – the fishing industry – which has enjoyed enormous growth in the past few years, with a thriving tuna farming industry and rock lobster and prawns catches. Much of the fishing money stays in the town.

It's the economic arguments that are often used by recreational anglers to justify reallocation. But the methods by which the recreational and commercial groups value their catch are different, as are their methods of valuing their catch in a wider economic framework, i.e., the value of their product in the community. A 1995 article published by the Victorian Fish Tackle Association states that the value of the recreational sector is $387 billion compared to that of the commercial sector's value of $4.3 million.
There is no explanation of how these figures were arrived at and at the very least they are inflammatory. Other figures suggest that the recreational fishing industry is worth about $2 billion a year.

People respond to such figures and arguments. Recently, the NSW South Coast Tourist Office put to the local council that commercial fishing be banned in some local estuaries in order to allow the recreational anglers exclusive access. The area relies on tourism and one of the main reasons that people visit the area is to fish. Local fishermen have noticed a decline in the catch and their reasoning is that if visitors don't get to catch a fish there will be a long-term effect on tourism. Increasingly, local councils are responding to pressure to get involved in this issue.

But is this a problem of perception. The recreational angler is sitting on the river's edge, not getting much of a bite. They look across to the estuary and see a boat trawling across the river's mouth.
They're going to put two and two together and lay blame squarely on the commercial fishermen when they go home empty handed. The pressure is on in the United States where last July all commercial nets were banned from Florida state waters. This followed similar moves in other states bordering the Gulf of Mexico such as Texas and Louisiana.

Following hard on its heels was a proposal to ban all gill nets for the taking of salmon in Washington State waters, but this proposal was beaten.

The anti-net push is active in the eastern states to the north of Florida and is active in Australia. There is a call by a leading tackle importer to remove all nets from estuaries and beaches and stop all prawn trawling. Many angling clubs have similar views.

The demands to stop certain commercial practices does not stop at nets. Kingfish traps have been banned in NSW and there have been calls for the banning of all traps. Hooks on long lines have also been targeted. Every commercial fishing method has been the subject of a call for a ban in recent years. Ironically, the recreational sector uses all the same methods, except trawls.

When the call went up for kingfish traps to be banned a group of NSW south coast fishers arranged for an RSPCA assessment. They reported daily to the office of Richard Jones, Member of the Legislative Council NSW State Parliament, which is where this information came from. On a cruelty rating of 5, with 5 being the most cruel; the method of the catch was awarded a rating of 2 and the landing a rating of 5, because the fish dies. The RSPCA rated the recreational catch a 5 and their landing also with a 5. This report has never been released.

It isn't a matter of either group being right. Both sectors contribute to the economy, both are important for tourism and the evidence for catch controls all round is compelling. However the numbers argument is worthy of more exploration because it is the argument that is used in the political arena and it is the area where the consumer is potentially most influential but currently most disempowered.

In NSW alone an estimated two million people go fishing at least once a year compared to the 1900 professional fishermen. Traditionally, fisheries managers have acknowledged that the commercial sector is the licensed supplier of seafood to the general population and thus represents a wider interest than just 1900 families.

However this acknowledgement has broken down in recent years and one reason is that some lobby groups can promise votes delivered but others do not. The consumer has no voice and does not exercise the right to express a point of view on fisheries management issues. The numbers game is stacked against those who eat seafood but do not catch it themselves.

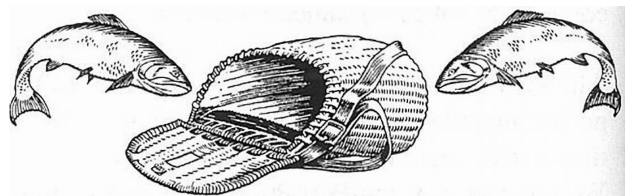
The dollar cost of commercial closures can be substantial but there are other costs as well. Fresh seafood not only contributes to our quality of life, it contributes to life itself. Fresh, oily fish radically reduces the incidence of asthma in children and omega-3 fatty acids in fish reduce the risk of heart disease. And the fish that contain the highest levels of omega-3? Inshore species such as mullet, luderick, bream and tailor, sand whiting, tarwhine and garfish.

If a ban for net fishing inshore were to be successful it is estimated that 20 per cent of catch would be lost to the Sydney Fish Market auction room floor. In order to make up the shortfall, fish would need to be bought in from interstate and overseas, prices would rise, freshness would be compromised and the loose live fish trade which has just been established specifically for the local Asian market would be affected.

It's too simplistic to just blame the commercial fishers or the recreational lobby. There are responsible people in both sectors and people who are looking to share a dwindling resource responsibly.

Solutions would have to be multi-layered addressing the concerns of both sectors, the environment and the natural resource. In NSW this seemed possible when the groundbreaking *Fisheries Management Act 1994* was introduced. The Act, taken up as a blueprint by fisheries around the world, has the potential to allow effective management of the resource into the future and it gained the support of the commercial and recreational sectors and conservationists. When the Act was debated, the current Minister for Fisheries spoke strongly against the legislation and in the last twelve months the Act does not appear to have been implemented in letter or spirit. In this time the rift between the commercial and recreational fishers has widened after several years of cooperative existence. There is a call for a committee of enquiry.

Fish for food or fish for fun? It may be a case of: 'You want to eat it? Catch it yourself.'



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Chair: Jennifer Hillier

SYMPOSIAST What happens to the potato as it goes from the fields to the consumer? What happens to the dollar when it goes back from the consumer? Is there a split? Can you talk to us about it? Where do the dollars, the other 90 cents go?

HARLAN WALKER Obviously to the distributors, the supermarket chains.

JOHN NEWTON Why did the standards fall when the regulation was taken off?

TONY WEBB Instead of prescribing what people will do, you allow people to compete on the basis of what they judge to be best and the industry judge is that more value for money was possible by putting other things into those products, so the standard dropped when the regulations lapsed to a minimum standard. The same argument can be applied right now in the Australian wheat industry. The argument that we do not need standards, state controls, and meat inspectors, is convenient to the industry. The market will punish those who abuse, the market will punish the company that lost control of temperatures when an assignment has been due to go to Korea. The bulk were shipped instead to Russia where consumers of course are ready to punish the Australian meat industry. How do you as the consumer know what was going on and how do you choose to do something about it?

You have the same example with pesticide-DDT contamination in northern New South Wales because there they have built a feedlot on top of an old drip site. The company knew they were twelve times over the limit, they did nothing until suddenly tests came back. They broke the consignment up into at least twelve different lots to twelve different countries, hoping thereby to have it disappear into the system as a small amount and when it was discovered all hell broke loose to get it back. There are three other abattoirs in the area, same auction system and with product sold on the domestic market. But where do we as consumers intervene in that process? The reality is when these scandals break it doesn't affect the cowboys. It affects the whole of our industry. That is why we see deregulation is not going to work. It allows for the lowest common denominator standards to creep in and if we are in the market on the basis of quality then all you need is a few scandals like that and the whole thing falls over.

I'm sorry, I've gone on far too long on that line but I'm really passionate about this issue. It annoys me so much to see what is going on in the name of deregulation and market forces which promotes that all this will be wonderful. It is hell! Nowhere in the world has this system ever delivered quality for the individual consumer because the individual consumer is actually powerless. The individual consumer is relatively powerless in dealing with these large corporations who control and dictate what is going to be on offer. So if we as consumers are going to have impact, we've got to organise. Got to get organisation together to the point where we have the kind of voice that can actually force change.

VIRGINIA McLEOD I'd like to ask if McDonald's and similar companies are so demanding of the potato producer to produce a specific type of potato that costs the producer a lot more to produce. Do they pay them more for this potato?

TONY WEBB Potatoes normally require, used to require, a seven-year rotation, because of the build-up in the soil. At once stage in the negotiations in Tasmania, a company was trying to push the growers to adopt back-to-back planting. Season after season, and year after year. Fortunately the growers organised and said, 'No way, that would be the end of our livelihood.' And fortunately in Tasmania, a lot of the growers diversified. Those who are making money have at least five separate contracts. Those who are not supplying one major company with potatoes are going out backwards.

VIRGINIA McLEOD So it's fair to assume that people who are providing people like McDonald's aren't exactly happy producers. If this is the case, why is it that it is so difficult for people (like the English couple) who are trying to prove that McDonald's have got incorrect practices. Why is it so hard to prove McDonald's wrong?

TONY WEBB Why? Because they are winning that case.

VIRGINIA McLEOD I know they are winning. They are taking twenty months.

TONY WEBB The damage is being caused by whole transcripts of the proceedings being on the Internet for anybody in the world to see this company being dragged through the mud.

What's the company going to gain? McDonald's are doing what the rules say makes economic sense. They are playing by the rules. Where does the

TONY WEBB continued consumer, those who work in the industry, those who grow for the industry, the farmers, the workers, the consumers, those who care about the environment, those who care about any aspect of that, where do they begin to change those rules? Where do we get the power to rewrite the rules? Because the rules of economics are not handed down, they are written by human beings on a global scale, they are being written right now in terms of the international trade rules. Where do we ask? Will we get asked by the world trade organisation, GATT? Why not?

The price of freedom, somebody said, is eternal vigilance. I suggest we now need to get much more mature. What we need to do is to start using the organising bodies, small working bodies, people passionately concerned about particular issues. We need to research those issues, find the people who know, put together the arguments and then begin to campaign. Mad cow disease. I was in Britain when Jeffrey Cameron came out of a meeting and said, 'We've got to do something about Bovine Somatotrophic Encephalitis (BSE). I can't even pronounce it.' If we can't pronounce it nobody else will take an interest in it. So what does he do? Those cows are mad – we'll call it mad cow disease. It's the same process of uranium-contaminated food around the world. Call it 'Dutching'. The first thing about campaigning is you need to reclaim the language and put information in plain English so people can understand what is going on. We're talking about gut food, and what it does to your gut. Then we'll talk about mad cow disease and we'll talk about all the other things in a language you can understand.

HILARY WRIGHT On one of your slides you talk about the consumer part of the Australian retail game and you ended it off with 80 per cent being in the hands of the giants – Woolworth's, Coles etc. I think that the power of the customer can come by letting them know the power the retailers have over them. They, the retailers, are constraining what we put in our supermarket trolleys by allowing only certain items to go on their shelves. By charging exorbitant line fees to stock products. The small providers, small producers, cannot afford to pay these fees to put them in there so they are excluded from the major marketplace, which is limiting our access and is really immoral.

The customers, I mean consumers generally, are not aware of this practice. It costs an exorbitant amount of money to put a gondola end at the end of a supermarket aisle, but you look at who does it. The Cadbury, PepsiCo and the Smiths Crisps people, who pay $10,000 per week per store for the right to display.

TONY WEBB It's driven by the bar-code system. Within forty-eight hours a supermarket can tell a manufacturer more information than the company itself can retrieve. It would take most companies at least a month to get the same information back through its own information network. Information – this is where the supermarkets are scoring hand-over-fist in relation to manufacturers, especially small manufacturers. Consumer have increasingly limited choice, from the goods that are on offer.

CATH KERRY You talk about our food sources being limited and I have an anecdote. I think it applies to this. Recently my brother had an interesting experience with two very big ice-cream brands which just goes to show the frightening length that big companies will go to fight against each other for our dollar. He recently owned a café, and stocked Streets Ice Cream. Someone came in – you know padded shoulders, big hair, glasses, clutching a folder – and said to him, 'What do I have to do for you to get Peter's Ice Cream in here?' My brother is terribly shocked by everything. I mean this is a person who doesn't smoke, has never drunk Coca-Cola, recycles everything and finds himself in this nasty world. He said, 'Well I suppose I'm interested in a good price and a good service.' She said, 'Right, I'll bring a Peter's thing in here, you know one of those fridges, and I will give you the first month free. Secondly, I will pay for everything in that Streets freezer and tomorrow we will come and pick up that freezer and return it to Streets. And I will ring the Streets person and tell them that you are no longer interested in Streets.'

Now, isn't that frightening? To me that is like Mafia tactics. To his merit he slept on it and decided he would stay with Streets. Peter's are not only willing to better the price (and 20 per cent of the basic product), they improved on price and took away the embarrassment in having to deal with the Street sales person. That is the length that they'll go to sell their products. So what hope does a small producer have to get some, you know, potato chips into a supermarket against these big people? Absolutely none.

FUTURIST DINNER

Thursday 11 April

By Serge Dansereau

Breast of Artificially Inseminated Duck with
Hydroponic Vegetables & 86-17-93a Potatoes
(Sous Vide)

Par-baked Bread Roll

Mono-unsaturated Butter Blend

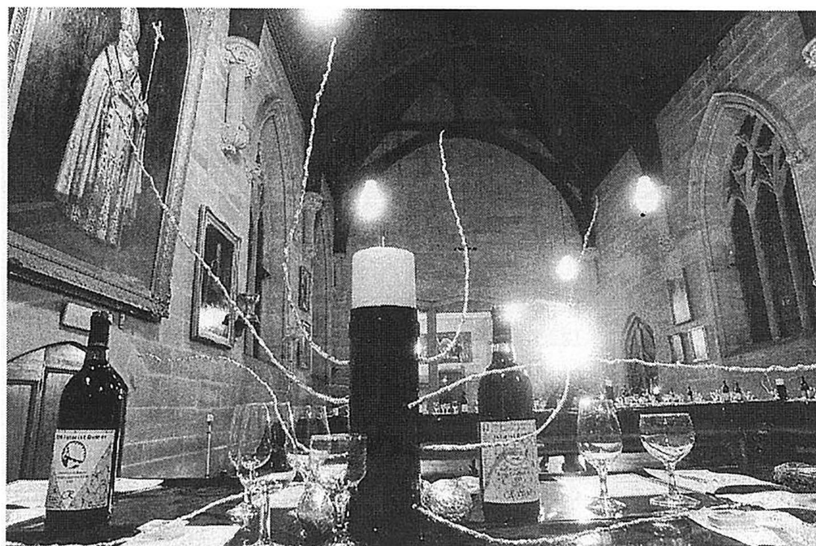
Huntington Estate Shiraz Cabernet FB34 1991

Long Life

FUTURIST DINNER NUTRITION ANALYSIS

	Grams	Cholesterol	Fat	Calories	kJ	Sodium
Duck Breast	120 gm	22 mg	10 gm	210 cal	900 kJ	80 mg
Potato	50 gm	0.5 mg	5 gm	35 cal	145 kJ	5 mg
Green Beans	30 gm	0.1 mg	2 gm	7 cal	27 kJ	70 mg
Baby Carrot	30 gm	0.1 mg	2 gm	11 cal	40 kJ	30 mg
Sauce	90 ml	11 mg	12 gm	28 cal	120 kJ	400 mg
Butter	20 gm	22 mg	17 gm	145 cal	580 kJ	150 mg
Bread	30 gm	0	0.5 gm	70 cal	290 kJ	130 mg
Total	**370 gm**	**55.7**	**48.5 gm**	**506 cal**	**2102 kJ**	**865 mg**
Wine	375 ml	0	0	240 cal	1015 kJ	60 mg

Disclaimer: *The Regent, Sydney, does not accept responsibility if your daily calorie count surpasses your prescribed intake.*



Eating the Future, St John's College.

SOUS VIDE

Sous vide is a cooking technique that may eventually transform domestic cooking by obviating the need for a kitchen altogether. It has been billed by some of its proponents as *the most significant culinary advance in fifty years.*

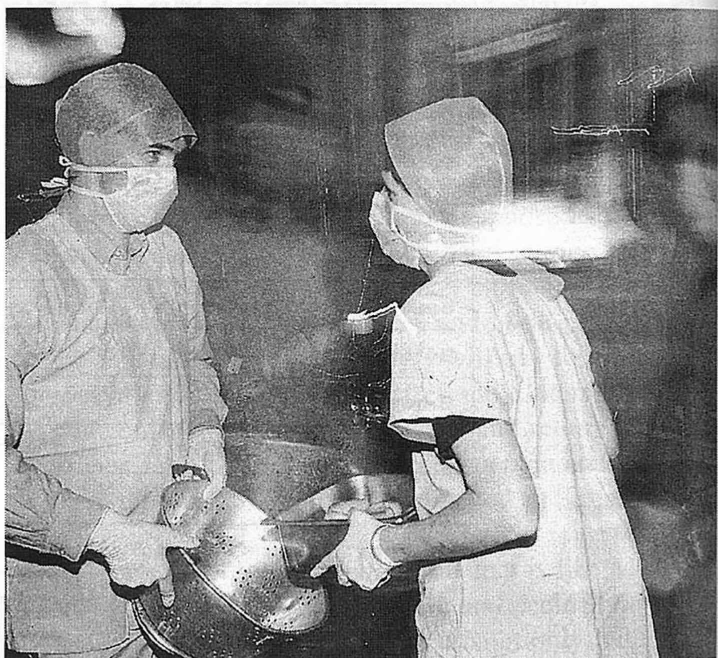
Food prepared using this method literally means 'under empty' or 'vacuum sealed'. It is packed in a heavy-duty plastic pouch, and then the air is sucked *out through the plastic.* The pouch is then chilled, ready to be cooked, or, if the food inside is already cooked, ready to be re-heated in the bag. The main factor in its favour is convenience: the pouches can contain ready-sauced, individual servings.

Enclosing food in a vacuum has two advantages. It prevents food from oxidising. That is, being exposed to the air, thereby changing both flavour and colour. And more importantly, since it doesn't need to be frozen, the cell structure of the food isn't broken down, so the food retains its texture and moisture. Also, because food is encased in plastic, none of the flavour leeches out into the cooking medium. And because it retains its natural flavour, manufacturers claim it eliminates the need for flavour-enhancers and salt.

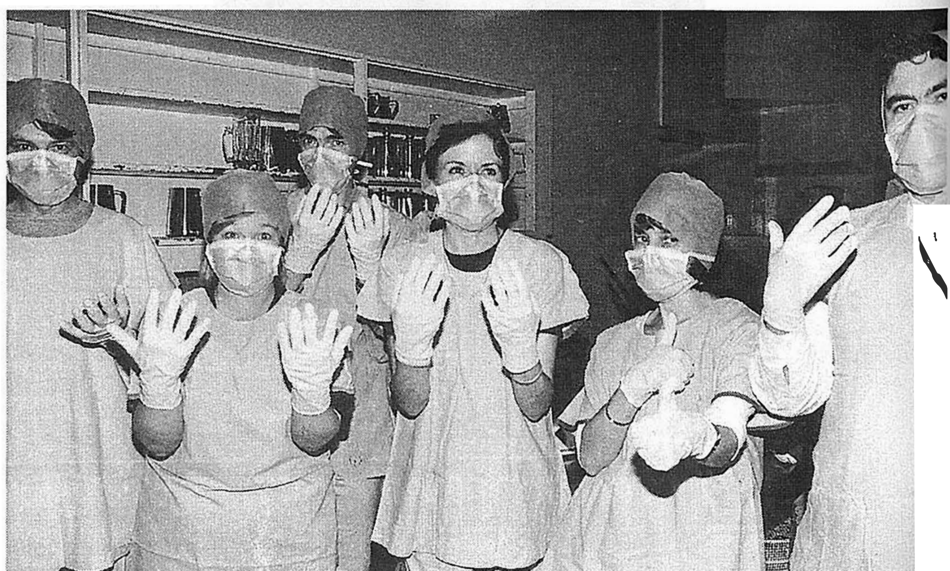
For the domestic market, it has the potential to bring gourmet meals, and I mean seriously good food, not the demeaned use of the word, into the home, ready-prepared. Here we are talking high-class fare. In France, retail *sous vide* is quality food for people who haven't got time to cook.

From: *Goodbye Culinary Cringe*, by Cherry Ripe, Allen & Unwin, 1996.

Serge Dansereau and his sous vide duck dinner.



A flying feed – Chris Downes and Hilary Wright.



The surgical service team.

GASTRONOMY QUIZ

Quiz Master: Dr Alan Saunders

Question 1 In her book, *Wind Breaks,* Rosemary Stanton suggests that her studies found the average number of daily emissions was how many? (We are talking about farting, letting one off, a botty-banger, a fluff.)

Answer Seven for women and 12 for men. But there was a large variation, ranging from 3 to 38.

Question 2 Who said, 'Champagne is the only wine that lets a woman stay beautiful after she has drunk it.'?

Answer Madame de Pompadour.

Question 3 Who committed suicide because the fish did not arrive?

Answer Vatel, when cooking for King Louis XIV.

Question 4 Wheelbarrows were issued to Sydney policemen in 1837 for the removal of drunks. True or false?

Answer True.

Question 5 What did James Bond like 'shaken not stirred'?

Answer His vodka martini.

Question 6 What, colloquially, is known as underground mutton?

Answer Rabbit.

Question 7 Name the region where Taltarni's vineyards are situated? (It is also the same name as a major French/Spanish geographical feature.)

Answer The Pyrenees in central Victoria.

Question 8 Who said '… the curse of the land (Australia) – dyspepsia – is brought on in a great measure by badly cooked and therefore indigestible food'?

Answer Phillip Edward Muskett in *The Art of Living in Australia*, 1894.

Question 9 In Geelong, who presented the brilliant paper on shopping-centre food courts?

Answer Colin Sheringham (who also wrote these questions).

Question 10 Pimms No. 1 has a whisky base. True or false?

Answer False. It is gin.

Question 11 Who created the Camembert cheese?

Answer Mme Harel, a farmer's wife, in about 1790. There has even been a statue erected to her in the town of Camembert.

Question 12 Who wrote the world's first restaurant guide in 1803?

Answer Grimod de La Réyniere.

Question 13 Name one of the vegetables that is listed on the printed menu for the banquet held in Canberra.

Answer Red cabbage, spinach or beetroot.

Question 14 What is the role of a 'Pantler'?

Answer Officer in Charge of the pantry and master dispenser of the bread.

Question 15 What is the title of Elizabeth David's first book?

Answer *A Book of Mediterranean Cooking*, 1950.

Question 16 When was Brillat-Savarin born?

Answer 2 May, 1755, at Belley in the Ain district.

Question 17 What does Taltarni mean?

Answer It is Aboriginal for 'red earth'.

Question 18 List the four most important growth areas or crus in the Cognac region?

Answer Grande Champagne; Petite Champagne; Borderies; and Fins Bois. (The other two are Bons Bois and Bois Ordinaires.)

Question 19 Who is often credited with opening the first restaurant?

Answer Boulanger who opened a shop selling 'restaurants' in 1765 in Rue Poulies.

Question 20 Where is the Factory House?

Answer Oporto, Portugal. It is the building used for meetings by the port shippers.

Question 21 Who was Curnonsky?

Answer Maurice-Edmond Sailland (1872-1956), a writer, dubbed Prince des Gastronomes. Founded the Academie des Gastronomes in 1927.

Question 22 What is an *Agaricus bispora*?

Answer A mushroom, the common white variety.

Question 23 What city has more hot dogs stands than any other urban area in the world?

Answer Chicago.

Question 24 Who wrote the *Futurist Cookbook?*

Answer F. T. (Fillippo Tommaso) Marinetti.

Question 25 What is Brillat-Savarin's fourth aphorism?

Answer 'Tell me what you eat: I will tell you what you are.'

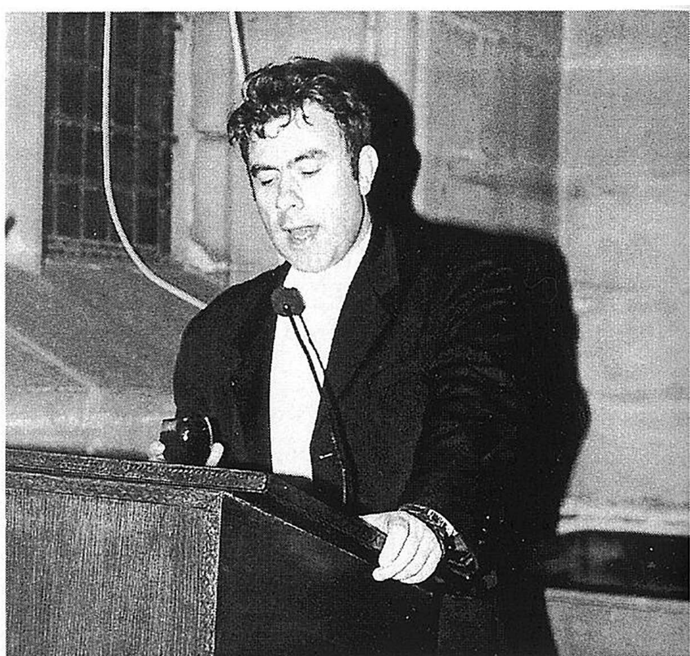
Question 26 In what year was the first Australian shipment of wine made to London?

Answer 1823.

Question 27 In what year did Lakes Folly vineyard have its first vintage?

Answer 1966.

[This quiz followed the Futurist Dinner and the Hot Dog and Tequila Tasting.]



Quiz Master Dr Alan Saunders.

Three 'not-so-wise' women: Jennifer Hillier, Susan Parham and Gae Pincus.

FOOD and **POWER**

session three

2nd keynote address

FOOD and POWER

session three

THE HOUSEHOLD

Chair: Sara Adey

SARA ADEY
Good morning everybody. Hopefully not too many fuzzy heads this morning. Last night we saw a rather extreme, and to most, undesirable perspective of the future and as the program progresses we will obviously see some other perspectives of the future.
And that brings us to our next speaker.

The other week in the paper I was reading renowned economist Professor John Kenneth Galbraith, a 'big picture' person, was visited recently by the Dalai Lama who asked what would the world be like if everybody had an automobile? Galbraith replied this is something you can't contemplate. This renewable and non-polluting form of energy involved in contemplation will need to be tapped as a major energy source if the planet's problems are to be headed off. In short, low-energy systems will require high-energy consideration. Something, Dr Tim Flannery of the Australian Museum, Sydney, and author of *The Future Eaters*, and another 'big picture' person, is heavily into. His topic today, 'Food, Power and Nationhood in a Low-energy System'.
With great pleasure I give you the man Robyn Williams describes as 'Indiana Jones, but with the credibility to match the flare.' Dr Tim Flannery.

Power breakfasts power to the people *power shoulders* power bloc powermonger power play

SECOND KEYNOTE ADDRESS

FOOD, POWER AND NATIONHOOD IN A LOW-ENERGY SYSTEM

Dr Tim Flannery,
Australian Museum, Sydney

Thank you for that awesome introduction. I am very pleased to be here today, because I think that gastronomy and food play a particularly important role in our lives and our relationship to the environment. And I suppose that is because the act of eating reaffirms our position in nature. Really, it determines where we fall on the tropic scale, whether we are predators, herbivores or decomposers and because of that, every time that we open our mouths to eat we are performing a very fundamental function which determines how we relate to the rest of nature in Australia. And it is because of that I guess that I am particularly pleased to be here.

What I want to speak about today was the nature of these environments that we impact on when we do eat, when we prepare our food, when we open our mouths to consume. Because the nature of the Australian eco-systems that supply a significant amount of our food are very different from those elsewhere in the world. And through coming to an understanding of those eco-systems and how they shape life I think we can gain some real insights on how we can do things better, how we can do things more excitingly, with a more authentic preparation touch them and do things that are really sustainable in the long term. Because I am afraid that at the moment the way we produce food in Australia really isn't sustainable in the long term. We're using European models and ways of doing things and imposing them on this very different eco-system with quite disastrous results.

The two factors that I really need to pinpoint early on that are special about the Australian environments are the nature of their soils and climate. I mean both these areas led Australia to a very short straw in the world scale. Soils are, of course, important because they nurture the plants that feed us all, including the carnivores ultimately. And Australia's soils are very different from those found anywhere else overseas. The basic plant nutrients are really lacking in Australian soils. The nitrates, phosphates, trace elements, that all plants need to grow are present at very, very low levels in Australian soils. In fact, if you compare soil type to soil type within Australia and overseas you see that these elements, nitrates and phosphates, are present at about half the level that they are in overseas soils. And the trace elements are really badly lacking in a lot of our soils. In fact, a third of our agricultural areas are about to be treated with trace element supplements just to allow plants to grow on them. It is a pretty unusual situation worldwide.

To make matters worse, Australian soils are very thin generally, they're leeched and they are highly structured. They have very high soil temperatures compared with overseas soils and they have very poor water retention capacity so they don't hold water in them. In other words they are a terrible kind of subtrate to grow things in. Now the reason that this is so is really that Australian soils are a fossil, they are a fossil resource. They haven't formed over the last eighteen million years by and large, a lot of the soils are much older than that and that is because Australia has been geologically comatose for the last nineteen million years. The last really exciting thing that happened in Australia was when New Zealand broke off and the Tasman Sea opened and it drifted off to the east. They took all the good soils with them of course and went into a nice climatic zone. But beyond that, Australia has been basically quiet – nothing has happened to create new soils.

Now if you compare that with the Northern Hemisphere you'll see how different things are. In North America, for instance, 15,000 years ago there was an ice sheet covering North America that was 13.6 million square kilometres in extent. Now, Australia is only 7.6 million square kilometres so that ice sheet was nearly twice as big as Australia. And 15,000 years ago, geologically speaking, is nothing. It doesn't really count in terms of soil formation, it's almost in the present if you want, statistically speaking, from a geological perspective. But that ice sheet was very important because it was several kilometres thick and it had enormous power to break up rock. And what it did was to bring the rock types together from right across the northern part of that continent, ripped out enormous boulders, many of them much larger than this room, ground them up into a dust essentially, moved them all southwards and then spewed them out at the end of that glacier and laid down enormous soil beds that you see in North America today. And the same thing is true of Europe and Northern Asia. Soils that have formed 15,000 years ago are soils where our European and Asian ancestors began agriculture and those soils still feed a very large percentage of the world's population.

Now, in Australia we did have and ice age but it had a very different effect here, because Australia is flat

and largely in the tropics. Here it just caused vast deserts and at the height of the ice age 40 per cent of the continent was just an open field without any vegetation on it. Erosion was rife, what little soil there was, was blown away. We had one ice cap on Mount Kosciuszko which was about 50 square kilometres in extent, but didn't produce any soils. So you can see how the history of the continents has been so different and Australia has preserved these very, very ancient leech soils.

So that might be bad enough but when we come to climate we'll see that Australia has even more problems. I suppose people that live on the east coast of Australia, particularly Sydney and Melbourne, imagine that we have seasons in Australia. Well I'm afraid to tell you that we don't have meaningful seasons in Australia here. I know because I mow the lawn and I go and mow it every now and again and I know that often six or eight months can go by without me needing to mow it at all, and then all of a sudden, regardless of the time of the year, I'm out there every two weeks pushing a lawn mower around and trying to get the thing to work. That is because our seasons are in unison in Australia.

I guess when you begin to compare it with the Northern Hemisphere, you think that the Northern Hemisphere has got a harsh climate, it is strongly seasonal, throughout the winter nothing grows for six months. But it really is a tremendously productive system because it is so dependent and regular. Animals know that they can hibernate and they will have enough food resources to wake up in four or six months' time and feed again. Plants can lay dormant and then they have this tremendous flush of growth and vitality in the spring and farmers, of course, know when to sow their crops and reap them within a week or two.

In Australia that isn't the case because our seasons are an illusion and what governs productivity here in Australia is a strange phenomenon called the Southern Oscillation. And the Southern Oscillation brings rainfall to Australia on a cycle that is about two to eight years long. So we can go for four, five or six years, once a century or once every two centuries without meaningful rainfall in eastern Australia. Other times we will have a series of floods, for years in a row, occasionally we will get a statistically average year where farmers do best, and I suppose the statistical average year is a bit like the pond that was on a statistically average that the statistician drowned in. It's about as meaningful as that.

So this Southern Oscillation has had a profound effect on Australian volume, it brings productivity – great variability to productivity between years rather than having a standard annual cycle. And of course that makes annual endeavours like farming very, very difficult, because you can never guarantee from year to year that you are going to make the profit. And we are going to understand the impact of this from some studies that have been done recently. One of the most interesting was done on production in central Queensland. It shows there that the Southern Oscillation brings about a 30 per cent variability in rainfall to that area. That translates in average to a 60 per cent variability in crop yield, and that in turn translates to a 100 per cent variability to whether the farmer goes broke or makes a record profit. So the Southern Oscillation really determines the nature of life on the Australian continent to a very large extent.

We think it has been working for millions of years. We have evidence that it has been working for many thousands of years. But it has certainly has been a profound factor in shaping life on this continent. If I had more time I'd expand on how that's happened. But I think I had better go on to some other factors.

Before I move on, I should say that the Australian seas are very much like the land. We have a fishing zone about 9 million kilometres in extent and it is extremely poor. We are fifty-fifth in size amongst the world's fishing nations and most of our fishery resources are in a state of exhaustion and collapse, except those very, very few that have been managed well. And that is because the seas around Australia are a mirror image of the land. They are a biological desert.

Now, how has that shaped life? Paradoxically, these factors have given rise to great diversity in Australia. Australia is one of the eight mega-diverse regions on the planet. We have more species of ants on Black Mountain outside Canberra than there are in all of Great Britain. I have more species of lizards in my garden just a few kilometres from here than exist in all of Great Britain. Tremendous bio-diversity …

In rich environments species like you and I can dominate. So give us good soil and regular rainfall and we will out-compete every other species. Because we are just a bit better at it than all the others. This is true for a lot of species from algae through to lizards through to other mammals and ourselves. But vary those factors a bit and make life a bit hard and species like us find it really hard to make a foothold. In other words, if the soil gets a bit poorer we can't produce a crop of wheat, we graze, and if we graze there is room for other species. Vary it a bit more and we can't graze but we might be able to get in there just occasionally and in those areas there is even more

room for other species, until you get to the really poor environments like the heathlands and the southwest of Western Australia, the heathlands there have a diversity that is absolutely stunning. Four thousand species of flowering plants just in that little southwestern corner of Western Australia. It's as diverse as the richest rainforest on the planet. So poor regions paradoxically are very rich in species. And if you are rich in species that gives you a lot of potential to do things like create strange environments.

Now just to talk a little bit about how the animals are shaped by these factors. I'd like to start with the koala, because it is an animal that everybody knows and it has made one of the strangest sacrifices with regard to earth resource impoverishment that has ever been made, I think. I have a friend who is interested in brain structure and some years ago he and I had a road-killed koala on our dissection table at the University of NSW. We plonked open the skull and my friend looked inside and my friend said, 'That was a very sick animal.' Because, there inside the cranium were these two, little shrivelled walnut halves that were the hemispheres of the brain floating in the fluid. Anyway, we got another couple of koalas and they were all the same. And he said, 'This is impossible because the brain inflates the cranium. Anyway, it just can't be.'

But why should it be so? We finally convinced ourselves that this was a real phenomenon and we think we have ultimately found the reason for it. The reason is that the koala lives in a very resource poor environment, it eats eucalypti leaves which are toxic so it needs to limit its intake of those toxins and so it has to limit its energy output. So everyone sitting in this room this morning, whether he is sore headed from last nights dinner or not, your brain weighs about 2 per cent of your body weight yet it's using 18 per cent of the energy that you are using. And that is just sitting there, not playing chess or doing anything else, just sitting listening or relaxing. That is the equivalent of a small tub of margarine worth of energy every day. It is an expensive organ to run. So if your koala is thinking 'shall I get rid of the leg, or the arm or whatever?', the brain looks like a pretty good thing. You are up in the tree, you are out of danger, so that little vacant look they have in their eyes is real, they made the ultimate sacrifice to survive. Now I'm not suggesting that we, living Australian humans make the same sacrifice but it does show you how extreme this environment can be at shaping things. There is no other animal on the planet that has done anything like it.

The wombat is even more extraordinary. It is the only large mammal on the entire planet that eats grass and lives in a burrow and that is a unique adaptation. The way it's been able to do it is that the wombat is the greatest energy miser of all time. It lives on one-third of the amount of grass that a kangaroo needs to survive. And that is an extraordinary adaptation. I mean it is so unusual in the world of physiology that when those results were published in 1994 it really electrified the world as to how this animal could do this. It turns out that it is a very judicious animal, everything is regulated very nicely, to within a degree, there is no waste in the system. It has a big brain though, which is rather strange, it hasn't made that sacrifice. But anyway, the wombat is really absolutely unique, and is again shaped by these lone stark environments where there is very little to get by on. Animals have had to economise.

The reason kangaroos hop is the same, hopping is just more efficient than running and where energy is limited you'd better take the most efficient option. There are even more bizarre adaptations when you get into the more obscure regions of Australian biology. The antichinous is one of the most unusual, and male antichinous are very special because they live only eleven months, and they spend their last month of their life in a mating frenzy seeking females and they eventually die from either sexual frustration or exhaustion, we don't know which. But they do all die at once. In fact, they've just ... no they are growing now, but by September/October they will be in serious trouble. The females live for longer than that, they have to bring up the young of course. And the reason, we think, that the male antichinous has such an enormous sex drive is to forget about eating and sleeping over this period, because there is not enough food in the Australian environment to support male antichinouses, mother antichinouses plus young who are growing. So you've got to sacrifice the males out of the population just to leave enough food for the growing young and females to survive through the next year. That again is an extreme adaptation. There are not many places on the planet where you see these kind of things.

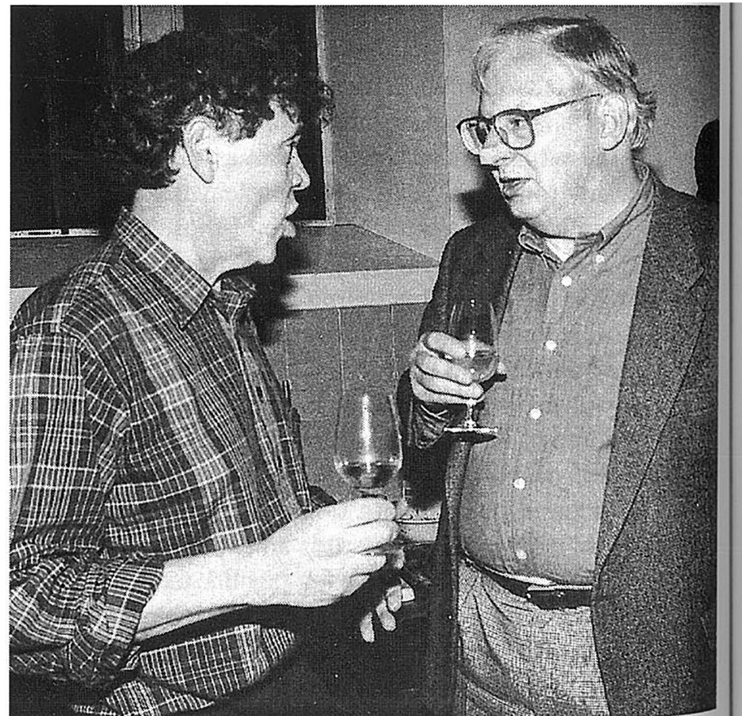
So anyway, that gives you an idea of how unusual this continent is that we are living on. So how does all this affect our eating habits and why am I here today telling you this? Well it seems to me that this great bio-diversity that we have here in Australia provides a wonderful opportunity for culinary innovation. A bit of experimentation. A word of warning, a lot of the plants are poisonous or chemically defended so we don't want to end up poisoning anyone. But still, I think there is tremendous potential here, we are in one of the eight mega-diverse regions on the planet, we've got to be able to make use of it.

The other thing I'd like to say is that in the past Australia has gone in for mass production and that is crazy, mass production of food. This environment is so textured, so infinitely varied and has such low potential to produce volume that we are mad to be producing wheat at $130 a ton and selling it overseas – it's absolute insanity. The environmental cost of doing that is probably 100 times or 1000 times greater than the money we get back. It's not the way for us to go in future. We've got to make the best of this environment as it exists, and it seems to me that small high-quality, high-value, ecologically true products which vary over the country are really the way to go because the cost of production here is high – high by diversity, fragile soils, uncertainty of rainfall. All of those things add up to a challenging environment for us to work in and I think that unless when we produce, we have a small amount of product which is a very, very high value and high quality, we are not going to be able to pay the ecological cost of production. The cost will be too great for what we lose. So, for Australia's wine industry, some of the small industries in Tasmania seem to me to be ideal in that sense, in that they are taking advantage of tiny regional interests and producing a very high-quality, high-value product.

I hope that this *symposium* will always remain a *terror* to the *gastronomically challenged*

Beyond that we really need to support our rural sector and help it to diversify. Our people on the land have, over the last two hundred years, been slowly adapting from the European model of agriculture to a uniquely Australian one and that has had enormous costs. If you look at farmers at the moment and you look at the financial structure of most farms, there are about 10 per cent doing very, very well, there are another 10 per cent doing moderately well, and then there's a very, very long tail of people who are slowly going broke. And if we lose the expertise that the long tail represents we will be doing very, very poorly so we need to get behind the rural sector and help them. One of the ways we can do that is to take on some of the risk involved in production in Australian environments. So, our banks should be providing rainfall index loans to farmers so that we as a community take on part of the risk that the Southern Oscillation puts on us. Secondly, help them to diversify by opening up markets that will allow more kinds of diverse products to get into the marketplace. Now kangaroos, emus, Tasmanian wallabies and possums – all of those things, I think, are important elements that the person on the land can put into a rural mix which will give them a livelihood and provide diversity on these farming lands. After all, most of Australia's bio-diversity is not on National Parks, it's on farms. So we have to somehow make those farms work. And, it seems to me, that the consumers – you and I – have a really critical place in that process. We are the ones who have to open up markets that will allow people to produce those things that are ecologically low cost.

I suppose that's by and large what I wanted to say apart from thanking you for the honour of speaking in front of a symposium like this which is very close to my heart. I hope that this symposium will always remain a terror to the gastronomically challenged and that's all I'd like to say.



Powerbrokers: Bruce Kraig and Richard Hoskings.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Chair: Sara Adey

VIC CHERIKOFF I welcome your words. I hope you also expand your range to include the thirty-six plant species that are currently commercialised that are of indigenous origin as well. Let's not forget also perhaps about Aboriginal land management practices of recycling nutrients through fire, fire stick farming effectively, and the mosaic burnings and so forth and maintaining a diversity that has been there 200 years and decreasing over that period as a result of the preceding 100,000 years, but, yes, certainly welcome. I welcome your comments and I hope that everyone here starts supporting some bush food industries.

PAM GILLESPIE I also welcome your comments but one of the things that I'd like to ask you is that you identified that the small producer is the way to go and my belief, probably is the biggest problem is that farmers are not marketers, and it's hard to get that produce into a marketplace. Which is one of the reasons we have the control of the big chains such as Woolworth's and places like that controlling the farmers. How would you solve that sort of a problem?

TIM FLANNERY It's one of the great difficulties. I think that the Australian wine industry has lessons to teach everyone in terms of getting small-volume, high-quality product onto the market. It's much more difficult with food, of course I suppose there's just a greater monopoly in terms of outlets. But I think it has to be led from the upper end in some ways – it's going to be a high-quality product, it's going to be expensive, relatively, and perhaps leading from the top is the way to go, as you perhaps would. But maybe there are ways of organising these industries too, the way that the kangaroo industry is organised at the moment, is maybe not a bad model, we have a centralised system of processing but I don't know, perhaps we need to get some really good marketers in to tell us.

PAM GILLESPIE In my industry which is wine (I'm a winery and vineyard owner), the big are getting bigger and controlling and monopolising and contracting out and very much dominating this industry. It will soon end up in exactly the same state (which is my belief) unless somehow we change the philosophy of the people who are consumers. Probably they don't recognise that, in fact, Southcorp is the ninth-largest wine company in the world and contracts out probably, I think the last statistic was about 50 per cent of the grapes grown in Australia.

TIM FLANNERY I guess that's really the fundamental problem at the moment and I must admit that's outside my area of experience.

COURTNEY CLARK Thank you very much, I thoroughly enjoyed your address. I just thought I'd like to share with everyone quickly the problems that you have in actually going onto the land and creating an area that is integrated and diverse. We purchased from, well I won't say who from, but we purchased 27 hectares in Kangaroo Valley. The farmer wanted to sell, we wanted to buy, we paid the money, and the Council held the whole thing up. The Council held it up because the Department of Agriculture said, 'You cannot farm on less than 100 acres'. You know, that was the whole philosophy – that it is impossible for you to create something here where you can make money. You know, you are going to be a blot on the landscape, you are not going to be a good farmer, you are female, you know the whole issue.

Okay, so it was only because I knew someone in the Land and Environment Court and rang the people up, and found out that we would win eventually if we wanted to go that far. I then visited the Council and said to them, 'I'm going to win. If you wish to go ahead that's fine with me, I'll follow you the whole way to the Land and Environment Court. When I win I will turn round and tell your ratepayers exactly what you've done. They withdrew the case immediately, we got the transfer of the land, but they forgot to tell us that even though we're 5 kilometres out of town that they've re-applied town rating – village rating – not rural rating. So, we spent the next two years proving that we could farm successfully and eventually won the rural rating. But, it's very, very difficult, when we have a market for our produce. It's not as if we are going to go and sit on the land and just degrade it, we actually sell to our company everything that we produce. So, we are successful farmers, but they could not appreciate that we could do it because it was different, it was outside the boundaries of what they had experienced and so they were supremely negative and it was a battle.

MAX LAKE I join with everybody else on congratulating you on a marvellous paper. The question I want to ask is, when will it be available because we usually wait for a year for the symposium proceedings? I speak a lot internationally particularly and I make the point that I believe Australian winemakers are the most innovative winemakers on the planet. And I make the point that this is because this is such a harsh country. We're not cleverer than anybody else, it's just that we have a bigger challenge and there's an adaptation going on there that I think is very interesting.

MAX LAKE continued Australian winemakers are in demand all over the world but I'd like all the facts that you gave us access to this morning – it's absolutely mind-boggling, thank you.

TIM FLANNERY A lot of what was said is in my book *The Future Eaters.* [Laughter.]

ELAINE CHAMBERS I have difficulty in coming to terms with what's happening in the areas around say, Sunraysia ... where you've got soil degradation due to excessive irrigation from the Murray-Darling system and instead of addressing the problem of salinity, which is a creeping paralysis of the entire area, there they are producing salt-resistant vines to get a high yield, a greater return, and to sustain an industry in an area that is absolutely polluting the entire environment. That's a confusion that I have.

TIM FLANNERY This all seems to me from Sir Robert Menzies's words, when he was opening the Snowy Mountain Scheme, 'We need big men with big ideas for a big country and we've made big mistakes.' Thinking that way, that one has been the biggest. I don't know, I haven't got any answers as to how to rectify these mistakes. Some of these are probably just universal.

JOHN FITZPATRICK A bit of a comment led to a question. When we talk about a European model in Australian agriculture in some ways it seems to me that's misleading. I mean, obviously there were beginnings of this extensive-type agriculture in Western Europe, but it's essentially a settler colonial model, an industrial model. It's about the linkage of Europe to the Americas, to Australia etc. And maybe the paradigm of it is, in fact, what happened in the United States and here. I'm just wondering what you think about the importance of linking the kind of more intensive versions and localised versions of agriculture from Europe, from Asia, like fish-farming techniques from Northeast Asia, and localised peasant-type agriculture with the other kind of localised niche food production that you think is appropriate to the Australian environment. Because it is, as you say, a very diverse environment which has got a lot of ecologies which do have relationships to other areas in the world with a lot of intensive farming over a long period of time.

TIM FLANNERY I guess really I haven't given a great deal of thought to it, but if I can just give some brief details on it. I think that this intensive agriculture, like aquaculture we see in Asia and intensive small-scale peasant agriculture in Europe, have developed energy-rich systems. They are systems where one species or two species can fill a whole ecological niche and in that kind of environment you only need half-a-dozen elements to make the system work and you can have rice production with fish ponds and so on. That isn't the way Australian eco-systems work. Here, there are hundreds of species that we could control, so here we just have to tread more lightly. I don't think it will intensify as the European Nations systems.
We are going to have to develop our own quite different models and yes, there will be some areas where we are totally not right, but in the end we need to leave enough for the functioning of our systems. The spaces between our productive areas will be the kind of vacant spaces, there'll be comprises that we make just to live in the environment. They won't need to be filled, they are just going to be part of the necessary comprises that we make living in a place like this.

Beach Babes: Courtney Clark and Cath Kerry.

FOOD and POWER

session three

the household

FOOD and POWER

session three

THE HOUSEHOLD

Chair: Cath Kerry

CATH KERRY

When I was a schoolteacher, I didn't ever have problems with discipline. The rowdier the class got, the quieter I became, and one of the standard tricks was when I walked into a class and didn't say a thing until they stopped talking. It didn't work with you.

I suppose as we have more and more symposia, they are actually becoming familiar, they are no longer new. We are developing all sorts of traditions and quite often this time we have referred back to previous symposia. We've been doing a lot of reminiscing. Well, we are about to reverse the papers here, because it seems a more logical follow-on from the previous speaker.
So, that will save me from doing the introduction I was going to do. Which reminds me of the time, you might all remember in Geelong, where a certain person was the Chair and read a delightful story and unfortunately the person who was meant to be giving the talk got very annoyed and he thought he was being upstaged and walked out of the room.

Do you remember that? So, I won't read out this piece that I was going to read and I'll be saved by the fact that we are going to reverse the papers. Vic Cherikoff and Pearl Wymarra are going to be giving a piece together. I think we probably first came into close contact with Vic when he supplied the bush foods for the opening session of the 1988 Gastronomy Symposium in Sydney and I don't think I really need to introduce him any further than that. Pearl works with Wyung, the Indigenous Australian Education Unit at the University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury.
So I'll give it over to them.

power of good and evil *power is the great aphrodisiac* **power from the barrel of a gun** **intoxicated with power**

ABORIGINAL WOMEN AND POWER

Vic Cherikoff, Bush Tucker Supply, Sydney and Pearl Wymarra, University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury, Richmond, Sydney

VIC CHERIKOFF

Thanks very much. I'll be giving a short presentation first up and then Pearl will follow up with the last ten minutes or so. (Could I have the slides on please?)

The title of the talk, which was decided in about thirty seconds over the phone, is 'Aboriginal Women and Power' in keeping with the conference of food and power and obviously talking about the relevance of food to Aboriginal women. Now, it might seem a little bit strange that I, as a male, am presenting a paper about Aboriginal women.

However, I spend a lot of time with Aboriginal women and have done over the years as they are my preferred tutors in the ways of bush food. At the same time I have been out with many men, as well, out in the bush having them show me a few of the foods they know and there are some very interesting parallels there to be had there. Sure, it's the men who have known how to cook bush foods in hot ash. They've known how to prepare many of the larger game; they know about the rules of division, who gets what food and so forth. However, it's certainly true that right across the country amongst the 600 different Aboriginal groups in Australia pre-settlement, the women would have provided most of the carbohydrate, therefore most of the energy, most of the fibre, which, in fact, protected Aborigines against diabetes. We now suffer one new case of diabetes every three minutes in Australia. Think of that. And many of the other important nutrients from food were supplied by Aboriginal women. (If I could just flick through a few of the slides. The next one starts to show a little bit of the sophistication.)

We're talking here about gastronomy and about food and about power representing food in desirable ways. Always, with every race, the qualities of food are absolutely paramount and any of you who have spent time with Aboriginal people, who still know about food and are proud enough to be able to go out, harvest food and present it to a guest, will know that. I've sat around campfires and had meals that I think would be fit to grace any of the best restaurants of the world – with a bed of green leaves, garnished with a boiled crab claw already cracked, ready to eat. A steaming catfish steak, again cooked to perfection and presented at the same time. All prepared in order, along with a piece of gruntle, which is a tropical fish – the only concession to a weekend's camping for the people who are there.

I'd actually been there for a week and spent the whole week living off the land. These people came to camp for the weekend. They put boiled potato on it because they hadn't gone out digging yams. They weren't really prepared to do it. There were wild horses in the area and they were scared of them. But, in any event, that plate of food, following a week out in the bush living off the land and then an invitation at the end of that week for dinner cooked by an Aboriginal family, was really something to see. It simply impressed me – the interesting presentation and the coordination of cooking effort that brought all those elements together. Cooking in hot sand, pippies pressed into the wet sand, the hinge uppermost, and then burning twigs put over the top of them.

I don't know if any of you were down in Melbourne at some of the food presentations that I've done down there. We did a massive cook-in for about eighty-odd food writers in Melbourne in Heide Art Gallery with just a huge trench of pippies, mussels and cockles that were cooked up. We did have a few snobs who wouldn't want to eat anything out of the ground. Well, they missed out on some of the best shellfish, steamed with gum twigs, cooked in their own juice – absolutely succulent.

I've sat around *campfires* and had meals that I think would be *fit to grace* any of the best restaurants of the world

To Aboriginal men and women who knew how to prepare the various foods, cooking in the ground often was a communal exercise with both men and women getting together because it is hot work, it's hard work. In fact, I was taught how to prepare

food in the ground-oven by people who call them 'cup maree' – we should know that term as well as we do 'hangi', the Maori's word. I was shown how to cook a whole pig which was caught and killed up in Cape York. We actually cooked it underneath corrugated iron. I refined that myself and learnt how to cook in paperbark and have done so on numerous occasions at various functions. In fact, I was in the Kimberley cooking for Prince Charles, who flew in for a 1988 Bicentennial exercise in the Kimberley, and I had about 100 Aboriginal people from the local communities as well. We had the army supply chickens and all sorts of things and they were all cooked Aboriginal-style. And I got compliments from the women, so I'm proud of that.

It came back to the women to start putting sophistication into food again. Whenever you're out with men they'll kill an animal and they cook it on the coals as simply as possible. No fuss. Oh, it's the same as all us guys, isn't it really? When you're cooking for your family you slam it under the grill, it's done, out it goes. You're cooking for someone special, you're trying to chat up a new girlfriend or do something special for a particular function, and that's when you stick your apron on and you go out and you do all the fancy cooking and you start to pair it off with all those natural products like wine loaded with preservatives (sorry mates).

The women added the sophistication of wrapping food in paperbark and adding herbs in and around fish and pieces of meat, taking the time obviously to cook fresh fish. I mean it was caught only minutes ago. Paperbark was often collected before you even went fishing. The herbs were always at arm's length. This fish (on slide) could even be un-gutted because it cooks so quickly the gut contents don't affect the flesh at all. You can actually pull them out after you cook the fish. Or, if you pull the guts out you insert a few other herbs inside and you stitch the orifice so you don't lose too much of the juice into the paperbark. So, there are the women adding sophistication to the paperbark-cooked fish, or any small mammal.

I was with Maudie Bennett who at the time was in her early sixties and this was in a community on the Peninsula at the top-end near Darwin, across the harbour from Darwin. Maudie fed ten of us, non-Aboriginal women and myself for two weeks. Going out harvesting, she was standing on the edge of rock shelves and spearing fish and then saying, 'Quick, quick, come and grab them' because they were too big for her to lift out on her wooden spear that was barbed with a bit of reinforcing wire all tied together with kangaroo sinew. She made the tools herself. I saw her eighteen months later and she said, 'Vic, you'd be proud of me, I've stayed out bush the whole year.' Now the reason she was out there was because she wanted to get away from community life and settlement life. There are a lot of problems in Aurukun where the Councils have put together five races of Aborigines, five clans, the Wik people, who were amongst the most aggressive people in the area. There is a little bay, just north of Arracum which is called Cape Keer-Weer. The Dutch named it and it means 'keep away' and the reason is that the first Dutchman that set foot on the beach received a spear in the chest. Welcome to Australia, what do you think of the country?

In any event, Maudie was very skilled at being able to harvest what she thought were the best choices of food. She'd spear stingray that were dinner-plate size. Anything larger she wouldn't go for – if she hit them she often let them go. There's a very fine criteria of quality amongst desert people that go out. I know Jenny Isaacs actually recounted a number of stories where she's been out bush with Aborigines and they've killed five kangaroos and only taken two. Now Whites think that a great waste. Well Aborigines have their own criteria, thinking that three of those kangaroos were not worth eating. They prefer fish that are three-quarters grown, not full grown.
So instead of all the fisherman stories, 'Oh you should have seen the one I caught last weekend … 'Well, if you're an Aborigine you would have thrown that one away. I was with an Aboriginal man one time who had harvested a barramundi and he'd got it out of the river just by netting the river. Here was a huge barramundi – it was very large – and he actually gave me the whole barramundi because he'd reserved the guts, the entrails, for himself. It was interesting to realise that we do throw away a lot of the best parts of our food. And Maudie also showed me this.

That stingray was prepared by the women by removing the liver – the stingray was cooked first one side and then the other. The initial step was to remove the liver to keep it cool. Now, again, the only liver that was eaten was a liver that was just slightly greying from pink. If it was dark grey it was rejected. So there is an assessment of the state of health of the animal, in fact. The slightly pinky-grey livers were kept cool, and they were aware of covering it up. These days, even if you cover it up and there are flies around, you stick it near a tree that has a green ants' nest in it because the green ants will run all over the liver. They won't eat much and they keep the flies away. Great technique. These days even carcasses of kangaroos are hung up off the ground in trees with green ants' nests in them as well. The green ants swarm all over the carcass, you'd never get a blowie on it.

So, I mean, these ideas came across and have been in Australia for many, many years. It's not something new. It's the way it's always been done. The cooled liver that might have been kept in the shade or in some fresh, running water in a creek near the coast, was sometimes simply cooked on top of the cooking stingray. You've got one side cooking, you then flip it over, peel back the skin, tear the liver off the lip (usually just into two), put the liver on top of the flaps – the wing flaps which are the only part of the stingray that you eat – and put hot coals on top of the liver. Now, the liver is high fat. The hot coals also make the fat run into the flesh. Once the liver is cooked you flip off the coals, tear off the liver, mince it through the meat and you've basically got self-saucing stingray. Another way that Aboriginal women took the cuisine a little further was actually to cook the stingray just partially so that basically you are just searing it on the fire and you can peel back the skin, scrape out all the flesh, and make yourself a little pocket of stingray flesh, then put the raw liver in the middle, wrap it in paperbark and cook it on the hot coals. Again, you've got self-saucing stingray. This keeps the moisture in the meat even more. It takes a little more preparation, but it was done.

Tim Flannery mentioned wombat. Wombat is an almost inedible meat if you try eating the meat just as is without marinating or without doing some sort of processing. Aborigines would gut the wombat, stick the cavity full of pepper weeds – in the high country, in the Snowy regions – and then bake the whole wombat with the herbs already inside. They did the same with cassowaries and lemon aspen fruit. They had European traditions of putting citrus fruits with red meat to enhance the flavour. We've lost that, only some chefs are starting to bring it back in again.

The Aboriginal women also appreciated how to manage the country. Aboriginal men, these days, are aware of the fire-farming and burning in mosaics and in the tropics, particularly where you get the long, dry grasses, those are always burnt off at a particular time of year. They knew where to set the fire so that it would burn back to a river. But the Aboriginal women knew much more about the actual plants. I've been with so many men in areas where I've known the country, and I've known where to get yams. I've worked in the area and I've dug yams myself, sometimes in 45-degree heat and then I've certainly lost a lot of the weight I am carrying now just digging the yams. You obey the Aboriginal laws, in that you never dig half-way down a yam and then say, 'Oh, bugger it, I'm tired!' and snap it off. That is against Aboriginal rules. You've got to dig the whole way if you start. So there is a respect for the foods. Another reason for doing this is that, effectively, by leaving the bottom of the yam you are not going to get regeneration. If you leave the top of the yam then there is some opportunity for the yam to re-grow. So once you've started, there's no point in taking the top, you take the lot. I've never been with an Aboriginal group digging yams where they've given up in exasperation simply because there are roots and rocks and hard soil a few feet down. They've always persisted.

Knowing male and female plants is another interesting thing. The Aboriginal women actually classify plants and the languages reflect this. Their taxonomic classifications are even a few degrees of sophistication on from our botanists today. We might call it one name. When you get a plant in the Sydney region it doesn't form edible roots. Up north it forms huge tubers.

Aboriginal women know male and female plants simply by looking for the seeds, and (on the next slide) you'll see the seed pods which Aboriginal women use as a rule when they're out yamming early in the season, when the green leaves (on the previous slide) dry away and you see these seed pods just starting to form; they are still green out in the bush, you harvest the male yams first. You dig males and you're not allowed to dig female plants, and everybody obeys that. Talk about women and power. There's a reason for it, because if you went for the females first, before the seeds had set, you wouldn't get preservation of the species in the longer term. So they dig male yams first and then later on in the season when the seeds have formed, dried and actually been spread, that was the time to dig the female tubers. They had names also for tubers that were long and obviously male and for the short, squat ones which were obviously female. Well, that's an almost artificial classification in European eyes, simply because if it hits something solid it tends to blow out in a ball and if it's got nice deep soil it keeps growing long. But Aboriginal people had male and female and some mythology, some mythological ramifications of the differences simply based on the shape of the storage organ.

Aboriginal women also did most of the laborious work. I suppose in many ways you get that in most cultures in fact. Men are the ones who sat back, communed with the gods, did all the cerebral work, you know the story. The monks studied religion and developed that line of things and it was up to the women who basically kept these blokes, these freeloaders, going. Well, Aboriginal women did exactly the same. It's changing now thankfully (I suppose the women are thinking that) but still, today Aboriginal women get a lot of pride in being

able to supply the family with carbohydrates that are not purchased from stores. You go into Aboriginal settlement stores, which are invariably run on the grounds that they are simply there to make the maximum dollars out of Aboriginal people who are relatively wealthy because of the social security payments into these communities, a high disposable income at least. The profits made in these settlement stores are usually greatest on the highly value-added and nutritionally compromised products as well. That is where the profits are maximal – with packets of chips and soft drinks and so forth – and you get very poor quality fresh vegetable and fresh fruits. Aboriginal people have always been expected to go out and get bush foods from the wild.

The *profits* made in these settlement stores are usually greatest on the highly value-added and *nutrionally compromised* products

(The next slide shows a bush onion being dug by two women.)

(A series here of four slides.) This is the kentia palm. The next slide shows processing of it by a very well-known Aboriginal artist. Flinders University was where she did a bit of a demo and study processing kentia nuts. Here the technology of processing understood by the women has ended up as a science. They ended up taking three Aboriginal women down to Deakin University and pitting them against a $500,000 gas chromatograph with a dedicated scientist. And the Aboriginal women who processed the nuts, said, 'Yes, it's ready to eat' when the machine could no longer detect levels of sicus in macro-nanogram quantities. (This slide shows the meal ready to eat.) Aboriginal women were also able to just pick up the nuts from the bush – and they've usually been weathered out there for a year, through fire through a couple of seasons – and they break open the shells, smell them, and they know that the content, which is usually a chalky powder, is ready to eat.

Just quickly, some mangrove worms. I've never met better axe people than Aboriginal women. They'd even put some of the woodchoppers at the Easter Show to shame the way they can direct an axe, usually a blunt axe as well, exactly where they want it and split logs to get out the mangrove worms. We've got a picture here of Marjorie showing the mangrove worm. Great example. You might have seen the bush tucker man, if you are a bit of a devotee of seeing the snakes on TV. Here's Les Hiddons being given a mangrove worm by a man, stuffing it into his mouth and crunching away on shell grit. If you know how to eat mangrove worms, in fact, you would eat it like spaghetti. If you're a kid, and you get a mangrove worm, you put one end of the worm in your mouth and you suck and all the shell grit ends up on your lips. You simply wipe that away and what you've eaten tastes like oysters. But it is a very important food for women because it is very high in zinc, iron and copper, and was used particularly as a nutritional supplement when menstruating or pregnant, or even for men recovering from illness.

Lastly, before Pearl comes on – I think I've taken a little bit of time but we'll also try to squeeze back on schedule. So if I could just say, as part of the growing bush food industry we are now relying on Aboriginal communities to supply products from their lands that are beginning to be managed more and more as commercial ventures. Certainly there is a lot of bio-diversity happening out in the bush to supply the commercial quantities of bush food happening now. And I've had Aboriginal women say one of the best examples applies to wattle seed and the supply of wattle seed. One of the best things about that particular industry is that the Aboriginal women were gaining respect from the young girls who were going out with them again. And, as they collect the seed and clean the wattle seed of the pods and debris, they are learning the methods of yandying and this particular purification method of cleaning seeds for food, that they were never interested in before. But because we put this dollar value on the seed, the Aboriginal women are regaining their standing and their dignity and their respect in the community from the young girls. I think that is probably one of the most significant contributions that bush food has made to Aboriginal communities. Let alone the millions of dollars we've pumped in over the last thirteen years. I'll stop there. Did that sound like a conclusion?

PEARL WYMARRA

Thanks very much for the invitation to come and share this session with you from Hilary and Colin at the University of Western Sydney. Just a very quick background of where I am coming from. I grew up actually on the Torres Strait, on a place called Thursday Island. That is actually why my name is Pearl because my father was a pearling skipper who used to take people out diving for the pearls, back in the early '40s. He said when he got married and had his first daughter he'd call her Pearl. So that is why I'm called Pearl. I grew up in the Torres Straits, but actually my people are traditional owners of the Cape York Peninsula area, right at the tip of Australia. That has been in the news a lot lately but we are right at the very top. You have probably heard about the Wilderness Lodge. Well my father's people own that. Now, at long last, they have got it back and are starting to do really great things there.

Growing up on Thursday Island, I'm sitting here listening to Vic and my mouth's watering because I'm thinking of my childhood, especially with the stingrays and how we cooked our fish. It was always roasted and stuff like that. Growing up on Thursday Island was probably a little bit different to a lot of the slides that Vic showed, because we lived mainly off the sea, going back to the mainland every now and again to go hunting in the bushland, in the Cape York area. But just very quickly, just looking at the slides, I look back on my upbringing and the sorts of foods I ate as a child. I never had a weight problem there. I was a quarter of the size I am now, half maybe. I am on the track of getting back to that by the way, because I am starting to tap into a little bit more traditional foods that I can buy around the place. Because, not living at home it is hard to really get back to the traditional – the way we used to eat – because I have to get back up there to get a lot of what I need. But I have been surveying the supermarkets and places and finding that there are lots of things I can substitute and then when I go back home I get back into some of the traditional foods.

Aboriginal people's health has been affected because when European settlers came to this land we were introduced to a lot of the foods that were refined. And when we were at the missions we got really conditioned into believing that those foods were really good for us and we had to eat them if we were going to be like everybody else. Nice and healthy and all that. And put a bit of meat on our bones and whatever. So a lot of what happened in our area, and is still happening, is our health is suffering and people are now starting to look back and say, 'Lets look at how we used to eat in the islands there and the Cape York area.'

I just want to share quickly a couple of things. Growing up on Thursday Island we did eat a lot of indigenous foods, like wild gooseberries that grew on the island and wild passionfruit. I remember we used to go swimming and we used to pick all these wild fruits. Now I go back home after living down here for thirty years and find that the kids go down to the local shop and buy fast foods like a Chico Roll or whatever, when they go swimming. Whereas we used to pick the passionfruits, we used to pick wild gooseberries and wild lady apples. We ate a lot of sweet potato and we ate the woneye [?] which is a fruit from the islands which has a story behind it. If you eat the woneye [?] you keep going back whether you are indigenous or non-indigenous. I've eaten lots of them because I'm going back a lot, as often as I can afford it. Wild cashews and, of course, they introduced coconuts. I still want to find out sometime, somewhere, where coconuts really come from. It is fascinating to me. Maybe someone can tell me later.

Now I go back home after living down here for thirty years and find that the *kids* go down to the local shop and *buy fast foods* like a *Chico Roll*

The non-indigenous foods that we ate that still grew wild on the island were custard apples, mangoes (well mangoes aren't indigenous to Australia), wild almonds. Now I don't know whether Vic in your travels you've seen wild almonds. We have them growing quite profusely on Thursday Island where I think they have been imported with the Asian fisherman coming over and the people coming in the pearling industry back in the early '20s and '30s

when they brought the seeds of this plant. And the wild almond is a really fascinating fruit because when we used to go swimming we'd pick them and we'd wait for them to get ripe and you could eat them whole, you could eat the kernel, crack the seed and eat the nut. But as far as I know it's not indigenous to Australia. Of course we lived on a lot of fish and crabs and we ate the seeds of the poinciana as well. You know the long seed of the poinciana tree? I don't know if you know it – we used to eat them green, just crack them open and eat them. And then people used to dry them, I see a lot of earrings being made now from the poinciana tree. Now poinciana isn't indigenous, that is another introduced one up there and, of course, the other foods we ate were fish and crabs. Mussels which we used to call 'uckle' and we used to go down into the mangroves and get them.

And the dugong and the turtle – we had turtle eggs. And pigeon eggs and, like Vic was talking about, the organs are a delicacy with us – eating the organs of the turtle and the dugong was also a delicacy. So if someone said, 'We've got some turtle steak for you', we'd just say 'Guts, have you got any guts as well?' Or intestines, or whatever – somebody picked me up about that one day – but we used to say turtle guts. Okay, the more polite term is 'tripe'. And we used to steam it and roast it.

A lot of times in my growing up we used to go to Marpoon, where I was actually born. Old Marpoon, I don't know if you've heard of it, but it's near Weipa, and the people were shifted from that area. Were shifted and settled all around Queensland – the Northern Queensland area. My mum actually, was re-settled there from the territories. So my dad met her while she was living at a mission called Marpoon. So when we were living on Thursday Island, Dad and Mum used to take us to back down to Marpoon for Christmas holidays, you know when the schools were on a break. I have wonderful memories of going bush with my grandfather, and my grandmother and getting lapanga [?] which is a little onion-like nut that grows in the swamps. We used to go down waist-deep into the water. I can remember this and my grandfather saying, 'You've got to put your hand right down and pull these out and really clean them and then look and if they are not really ready we have to put them back in.'

As I was writing all this I got really nostalgic thinking that I haven't really reflected on this for a long time, writing down the sorts of things I used to do as a child. We would always to go in and get the weenies which are the waterlily seed pods. I used to eat that big bunch at the end and you just took off the dried plant and you'd eat it. I remember peeling it back and there were all these seeds, and we'd just eat it raw. Sometimes we'd roast it. We'd roast the lapanga [?] as well. We also used to collect sugar bag and eat wild apples. I know that Vic knows about wild apples as well from up that way. Bush peanuts, we used to call them 'beere' [?] (also known as balk-balk). We used to go into the bushes and say, 'Oh there's a beere tree' and they were bush peanuts, just in pod things. And when they ripened they opened up and the seeds were black and that was the right time to eat them. You can also eat them green, but it depends. We were always told not to eat certain fruits until the first rain or when a particular tree was flowering, or when another tree lost its leaves or whatever. We'd also collect sugar bag, wild honey and stuff like that. My grandfather and my grandmother were our teachers.

We also ate – because it was a coastal area – the saltwater turtle and the dugong, and the freshwater turtle. We would either just throw it on the coals whole and the whole thing would cook and then we'd just peel it off and separate whatever couldn't be eaten and eat the rest. Or sometimes we'd just boil it in a big pot. We used to call that 'rindi' [?].We had snake, and goanna. I remember eating goanna after watching my grandfather catching one for the first time and showing us how to clean it and how to cook it. Of course, wild duck, geese, brolga – these are all in that Marpoon area. It was like a Garden of Eden. I can remember going there as a little kid and just going into the bush and being fascinated by what was there. And, of course, oysters, crabs – all those things Vic was talking about. Fish and whatever.

One of the things we don't eat up there is crocodile. I went to a butcher's shop the other day because I was trying to prepare some things for our International Food Fair at the University a couple of weeks ago, and I settled for just making some kangaroo stew – cheating, you know, putting all the other stuff in it, potato, pumpkin and onion, you know. It went down very well by the way Hilary. There wasn't any left, the pot was scraped clean. And I made damper because I'm getting known for my dampers. I make them a lot out there. Anyway, when I went to the butcher's shop I was telling him, and he said, 'Oh you use crocodile, I've got crocodile there too.' And a little piece of crocodile meat was something like $18, and I said, No. I said I had tasted it somewhere but we don't eat it where I come from.' When I did taste it, though, at another bush tucker day it tasted very much like chicken. I thought I was actually eating chicken, and someone said, 'Oh no, that is crocodile.' Apparently they import it from New Guinea. We don't eat shark either,

because shark is a totem up in our area.
Our method of cooking was, like Vic was saying there, roasted or wrapped. We didn't wrap so much in bark in that area because we didn't have a lot of trees with a lot of bark. It was mainly in leaves – a rainforesty-type area where you grab the big leaves for wrapping. The eggs of course – the turtle and pigeon eggs – we used to boil or put them under the coals.

I was thinking about how you compare brains and flathead and things like that. The flathead is a real delicacy fish down here but up in Thursday Island we throw it back. We don't it eat. We say, 'That is no good fish.' I was surprised when I went fishing with my husband once and he caught a flathead and he was absolutely thrilled and I said, Oh no, we can't eat that!' But when I ate it, it was beautiful. I was conditioned to think that we didn't eat flathead because there were other fish that were better. So you just threw it back. Same thing with brains. We have a thing about them – I don't know whether they're eaten anywhere else but we never touch brains. We'll eat all the other organs but never brains. There is something about eating someone's mind and an animal's mind – it just turns us off. But then I had my mother-in-law prepare brains in breadcrumbs for me when I first came down here thirty years ago to live in Penrith. It was beautiful. I had to stop thinking that I was eating brains and was polite and ate.

CATHY KERRY

I think it's a perfect example of too many good things to say and too little time. Thank you Vic and Pearl.

So we move on now to Tina. She has moved to Sydney and at the moment she is at the University of Sydney doing a PhD and she is particularly interested in food in contemporary literature.

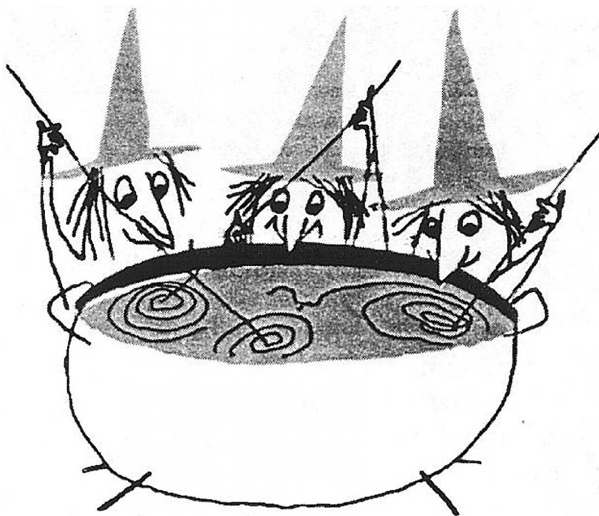
Mr Bush Tucker – Vic Cherikoff.

KITCHEN MAGICIANS: ALCHEMY, POWER AND GLORY

Tina Muncaster, PhD candidate, University of Sydney

First of all, I would quickly like to thank the Committee (especially Chris) and also extend a thanks to all of you for waiving part of the fee so that I was able to attend the symposium. It is nice to be able to pay the rent and come to the party too and I do appreciate it.

So now hopping into the kitchen, but it's not totally unlinked to what we've just heard, because I am still talking about the link with women's third power – I'm talking about knowledge. In the 1960s nobody wanted to be like their mothers, at least not anybody that was aflame with the influence of the feminist vanguard of the late '60s and early '70s. By the turn of the century, while the good household was encouraged and maintained by social praise, the general profile of the kitchen and kitchen work was somehow subtlely, negatively regarded so all the better to overtly promote improvements, gadgets and anything that could be hooked up to gas and electricity.



For one generation of women the kitchen was often a prison. Usually because of the lack of other choices both public and private. For another generation the articulation of the spirit and the aims of feminism provided the chance to make choices about everything from sexuality to never seeing another Sunday roast. The woman who remains at home succeeds in hiding from the fundamental issues of female developments, writes Tim Sheman.

So Sheman and others, such as Susie Orbach and Marilyn Lawrence, have addressed serious issues concerning women and their relationships to food but it's interesting scanning through the broad range of books on the subject – most of which have emerged in the '80s. They portray practically an epidemic of women who are worrying about eating an extra peanut when I thought they were meant to be negotiating for an extra ten grand a year. Now in the '90s, books such as *The New Victorians* by Rene Denfield jostle for shelf space next to Greer and Daly, saying that we have not failed feminism but feminism has failed us. I am very aware at the conflicts at stake here, although this paper may entertain on a very different scale, please do not think that I make light of those conflicts. But what is more and more clear is that theory and ideals that have urged some of us into that abstract minefield of public achievement might have also left us alienated and anxious because we forgot to take the best parts of our physical, sensual and participatory life with us.

A quick aside after researching the development of the kitchen since the turn of the century, both here and in Britain. I don't want to get side-tracked into the variations in actual house-planning, after the advent of gas and electricity and the consequent explosion of labour-saving devices. The majority of kitchens we're familiar with seem to be divided between what we can now afford to call nostalgic, that is all around the traditional kitchen table, and functional, that is where you press a number of buttons and join your guests on the terrace. Basically this is a choice that still causes conflict, particularly to the British government as I have found, who gave up making 'we're to help you' films and kitchen planning in the '60s when the kitchen versus the serving hatch business got too tricky altogether.
So there are a lot of things that go in the kitchen and all the letters in the last '*Good Weekend*' (the one that has just been out this weekend in response to the previous issue on 21st Century Woman) shows that I'm not alone here. Things of the garden and the kitchen, writes Jenny Zimmerman, are what will redeem humanity.

The centre of our world is not located in computers and corporate headquarters, but it's what happens around the kitchen table, when we eat and drink and listen to one another. So in the ordinary domestic kitchen, there is always hard work, there is hard work in lots of places, but if you drop your platonic philosophic guard for a few minutes – in terms of the allotting of power between divisions such as public and private – I think it is very interesting. Actually some of us like it private. Susan Parham, at the fifth symposium in Adelaide, mentioned the contradictory

position of the kitchen and a woman's labour mystified as love. She also adds that this very private space is indeed one that they have power over. Margaret Visser at the sixth symposium emphasises power as something not to be dismissed lightly. It is a big power, she says and she also goes on to say from having first go at the choicest tit-bits behind the scenes to being in a bad mood and deciding, and I quote here: 'So tonight we are not having rare beef we are going to cook it right through.' And of course, who can forget the passion with which Sri Owen said yesterday, 'I love to cook' which encapsulates the fact that it can be both pleasure and power.

I am leading us into some literary examples here, of the power of what goes on in the kitchen, and I haven't made this exclusively Australian but if you can cope with hot dogs you can cope with this. This also went on to remind us of the anecdote of Helene, the chef of Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas, who loathed Matisse because he would ask what was for dinner before he decided to stay. So, forced to prepare something for him, Helene made him fried eggs rather than an omelet, as she said, same amount of eggs, same amount of bother. She felt Matisse might get the message about his rudeness. There has always been a strong tradition of cooking actually associated with artistic creativity. We know from Alice B. Toklas's cookbook that Gertrude Stein expected more than beans on toast for tea. And poor Alice comprehends powerful links between crying and cooking when she commits her first knife-wielding assassination on a wriggling carp, although later she learns to murder by smothering. Stein, herself, must have hung round the kitchen a fair bit to produce the intricate section on food that she includes in 'Tinder Buttons'.

The *centre* of our world is not located in *computers* and corporate headquarters, but it's what happens around the *kitchen table*

Although she doesn't appear to have exerted the tyrannical hold over the cooking that Patrick White had. In David Marrs's biography there are many references to White and his cooking and there always seems to be a well-beaten track between White's study and the kitchen. Marr catches the whole of the writer's irascible nature by commenting that when guests came for dinner and White disappeared into the kitchen, no-one followed. Toulouse Lautrec applied the same creative exuberance to his time in the kitchen as his time at the easel. Cooking added a different colour of thought to Lautrec which extended to his judgement of people in much the same manner as the cook in the Stein household. Some people, he deemed, are not worthy of dove with olives. They will never have any and they will never know what it is.

Like M. F. K. Fisher whose writing is as much a delight as her forays into the kitchen which would have been lost to us forever, if her first act of creation and love in the kitchen as a young girl had not been prized as such by her mother. After her little brother was born, just after he was born, the author made a pudding of her own accord. She decided to decorate it with ten ripe blackberries which she thoughtfully blew the alley dust off – she had picked them out in the back alley. And then wrapped in agony with hives and covered in cold compresses the author's mother reassured her that it was the loveliest pudding she'd ever seen.

Would Colette's writing have been so luscious if she'd never been drawn by her mother's eccentric lust for life that extends from the kitchen to the garden and all living, growing, seasonal and natural things? I mean, perhaps Colette's mother had a different point of view, but there's no doubt that the kitchen can be headquarters, central control and place of alternative knowledge all rolled into one. Real dynamics happen there with experiences of exchange and communication that shape a unique place in the development of our identity.

It can be a childhood sanctuary, as it is for Lilian in *Lilian's Story* by Kate Grenville, where food baked from the kitchen becomes her emotional solace. Similarly for the orphan Jessie Pedderson in Joyce Carol Oates's *Wonderland* when the whole family makes a gluttonous raid on the contents of the refrigerator. Jessie realises that she has never understood Christmas before. The kitchen becomes the haven where they literally eat themselves into being. I'm quoting: 'At home, especially when she is in the kitchen with Mrs Pedderson she murmurs his name to him Jessie Pedderson and she ate the muffin hungrily as if it was somehow mixed up with this feeling.'

In Marilyn Robinson's *Housekeeping,* after the suicide of her mother Ruth is looked after by Filby in the backwater town of Fingerbone and life becomes shadowy, luminous and shifting under Filby's dreaming influence. The kitchen becomes the centre of the girl's changing world. They eat with their fingers and they listen to Filby's stories and they say 'We looked at the window as we ate, we listened to the crickets and night hawks which were always unnaturally loud then perhaps because they were within the bounds that were around us or perhaps because one senses the shield for the others and we've lost our sight.' It's the kitchen where this peculiar metamorphosis begins to seep in. Jasmine is undergoing similar emotional and physical growth. During the last meal that she eats with her brother and the niece who looks after them both, the kitchen becomes infused by a disturbing sensuality that reflects Jasmine's own inner turmoil. There's talk of love, dinner is eaten slowly and haphazardly and the sound of repeated piano notes float through the air. Light fades and Jasmine shivers with a sadness left behind – it must be left behind.

Perhaps the most erotic description of the kitchen as the personal transformation would be Audrey Lewis's description of the young girl's love of the tactile pleasures of using her mother's mortar and pestle. The rhythmic pounding, the change of the ingredients, the flooding of the senses, take on a sexual appeal and she says, 'all these transported me into a world of scent and rhythm and movement and sound that grew more and more exciting as the ingredients liquefied. Pounding the spices released the feelings of the vital connection between the act of cooking and her own physical being making her aware of the alchemy of both her own action and her own body, full and rich and captivated by the gentle motion of the pestle.'

Angela Carter, generally extremely derisive of the new food vogue that she saw articulated in the British middle class press, admits that in a glass of wine one learns a discrete but enticing amount about her private life. Enough to appreciate that her definite opinion is not a sign of domesticity but of worldliness.

In *Generations* by Diane Bell, talk about growing up in Australia as told by various generations of women, the sense of mild anarchy and personal power in terms of what goes on in the kitchen is exhibited most by what many of her women say about the passing on of recipes. With the basic property of heat and water available to everyone, the women integrate practical experience of their individual knowledge to transform the basics of the natural world into something that is uniquely theirs. As they say, recipes were not shared randomly, they were only given to women who were close, trusted and worthy. You might be allowed to try a hand at your culinary integrity reflected in the relationship of women to their kitchen produce. In the *Treasure Recipe Book* they say that people who were not liked were not recorded because, as we all know, only good friends would give you the right quantities.

Jean Francois Revel says, 'that secrets of kitchen success become a matter of what is commonly available plus knowledge. Without this knowledge no one has a real idea of the conditions that allows it to be made. A list of ingredients will not result in success unless these conditions are revealed.'
So here is a dichotomy between theory of culinary knowledge and practice at simply doing things that breaks down without the participatory relationship between the two. Enquiry becomes invalid and action becomes mindless. Probably no one realises as much as Lucia in E. S. Benson's *Lucia's Victory* – her vision of arch-snob of the Victorian village of Tilling [?] being consolidated by social acclaim over her dish Lobster à la Riso. Relegated arch-snob Miss Mapp finds that the hostess will not divulge the recipe nor will the cook be bribed. In the kitchen intrigue she finds the magical key, the recipe book, and we see the feeling of potential power and glory Miss Mapp has for a few glorious seconds.
She's made herself almost sick eating the dish to identify the ingredients but it was what to do with them that provides the magical moment in the book. But the author quite rightly snatches it away from both her and the reader because it's the secret of success and it remains so. So this is all we get, but Benson makes our hearts leap along with Miss Mapp's when he says there manifest at last is this pearl of great price, Lobster à la Riso. And it began with the luscious words 'take two lobsters' which involves a considerable time afloat the upturned kitchen table, causing sudden floodwaters that come through Tilling.

This idea of transformation being more than just a list of ingredients was emphasised by Sheridan Rodgers's talk yesterday where the poorer people of a country had to combine labour plus knowledge to eat well. It immediately reminds me of the black cook Delila. In an imitation of life, probably even of my own mother who taught me – who taught us – how to cook the perfect cheese soufflé because meat was, and still is, too expensive in England to eat three times a day as you could do in Australia twenty years ago. As for Delila, she could take an already flanked steak, roll and manoeuvre it into a roast stuffed chicken. Or scarcely with more than a dash of milk, sugar and butter, fluff up muffins that rose out of the pan the shape and magnificence of the

chef's crown which Delila wore on her head during these operations.

Alan Mansfield was kind enough to give me an article yesterday, the basis of which is that America is actually afraid of the food and appetite that the black woman represents, and this ties in interestingly with material that has long been invisible and now has become available under a feminist voice where black women are contemptuous of recent trendy restaurant adaptations of some of their kitchen cuisines.

The same thing has happened with street wear. Now you can get a mess of greens in places other than Harlem and what the women say is that we waded in greens while Western culture was making our kids ask for processed hotdogs with white bread.

Apart from this idea of physical, sensual and, from what I've just said, cultural connections enhanced from the activities of the kitchen, sometimes what is going on in the kitchen is far more lively, relaxed or interesting than elsewhere. But don't tell everyone. I love the scene in Patrick Wyatt's *The Twybourne Affair* where Edith becomes the madam of an exclusive London brothel between the wars where, around the kitchen table, the girls can take a break from the theatre of their performance and eat faggots and peas or bangers and mash. They sit around as we all do in their comfy gowns or sleazy kimonos picking their teeth with their nails, scratching breast, armpit or crotch in the practical manner a girl's anatomy demands. The other residents trapped in a summer school diet of lettuce and lemon juice in Elizabeth Jolley's *Foxybaby*, eventually discovered their way to the kitchen and the resourceful Mrs Vickers who supplements her son's school income by rescuing the guests with crayfish, garden salad, trays extra. Whether you want to scratch your armpit or escape a health regime, the kitchen becomes a handy site for mild anarchy, a place to exert or enjoy individual powers of existence where the private self finds restoration for the social self. It is an anarchy that can be mild and Margaret Visser, in the paper I referred to earlier, reckons that it's not so bad that we go around actually poisoning one another. In one of my favourite books, *Like Water for Chocolate*, Tita the youngest daughter of the house has been forbidden to marry because traditionally it's her destiny to look after her mother. She takes the time in the kitchen to exert revenge the only way she knows how – by her cooking, by her magic in the kitchen. Actually I had this theory that she kills her sister by feeding her all this rich food. So she transformed everything around her.

So, on that note of wickedness or anarchy I'll end, but just keep in mind that not all faithful wives welcome the advent of dietary and health care knowledge that they've all got to cook by now. As the eighteenth-century writer John Garey reminds us in *The Beggar's Opera,* the comfortable state of widowhood was the only hope that keeps up a wife's spirits'. So maybe cholesterol was one of the last revenges available and remember what happened to the sons of disaffected Greek wives in classical times – casserole.

Kitchen Magicians: Carol Selva Rajah, Tina Muncaster, Gae Pincus and Nola Kenny at the Box Dinner.

'A Power Lunch'

FOOD and **POWER**

session four

the body

THE POWER OF FLAVOUR

Dr Max Lake, Sydney

Today's gastronomic symposium is about 'power', and my aim is to persuade you of the power exerted by the pursuit of flavour, and fragrance. To make certain we are discussing the same subject, flavour is a mix of taste and smell. We taste with the mouth and smell with the nose. However, the word taste in everyday use implies flavour, e.g., the taste of vanilla, or berries. To avoid confusion, be aware in any exchange whether taste is being used thus, or in its strict physiological sense, derived solely from the mouth.

The proper study of evolution unravels many of life's riddles. Therein lie the answers to the great social questions: why we behave as we do, and how did this come to pass? Thus it is with the power of flavour and fragrance to shape our pleasures and aversions, the very drives that move us in sometimes baffling ways.

Taste and smell may well have led to the development of the higher brain. I have little doubt that taste has played a major role in the development of speech. Tiny babies happily vocalise as they suckle. Ten thousand tender baby tastebuds are a massive input to the development of Noam Chomsky's speech centre. No less authorities than William Le Glos Clark and Frederick Wood Jones consider that the odour input to the front of the primitive beginnings of the brain led finally to the development of that summit of creation, the human frontal cortex, with its bewildering breadth of creativity and choice.

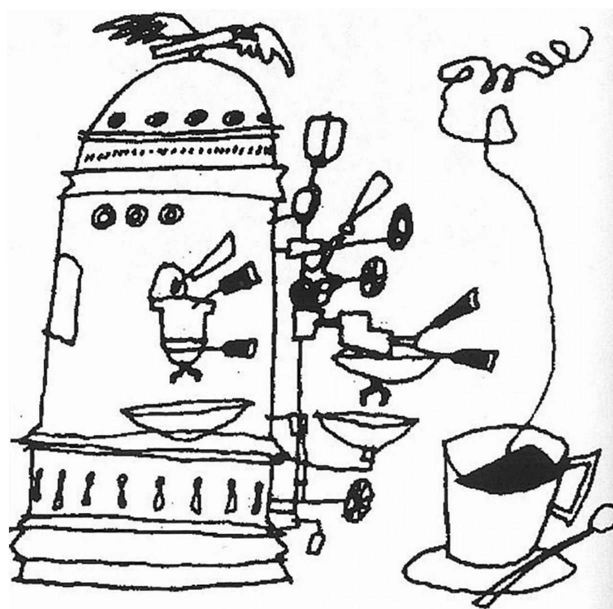
Quite simply there are but two basic drives, nutrition and reproduction, or using the power of small words, food and sex. There is another factor to add to the biological equation: the power that various tastes and smells have to move us is a function of their hedonic profile, or more simply how much we like or dislike them. The drive of animals we are able to observe is a compelling example. Don't feel too removed from the embarrassing or enviable, according to your point of view, of the behaviour of the pigmy chimp (they spend a substantial part of their waking hours 'at it' in the wild). The genetic difference between them and their observers is less than 2 per cent. Perhaps the direct and irresistible approach of our domestic animals to feeding or sex is more familiar. On a daily basis, how much effort do humans spend fine-tuning these drives into socially acceptable responses, and with what success? And how much pleasure, and pain, are avoided in the process?

Has this brief introduction persuaded you to the evolutionary path, the key to the understanding of the power of flavour?

In my last book it was suggested that the taste brain of an earthworm would serve as a model for the primary tastes and the power they exert. They are picked up in solution, either by the worm's body cover, or the lining of the mouth and throat.

SOUR (H+)	Controls the narrow range of ionic balance to support life
SALT (Na+)	Stabilises the composition of the body, internal sea
UMAMI (MSG)	Essential marker for building cell protein and a potent neurotransmitter
SWEET	For energy exchange of all cell activity
BITTER	Warns of threats to cell integrity.

If you need any confirmation of these concepts and the potency of these five primary tastes, consider the fact that the human situation of this worm's taste brain lies adjacent to the centres for control of heart, breathing, and vomiting, in the medulla, first part of the brain above the spinal cord. We are not just looking at health, but actual survival.



At a practical level it is obviously not just the caffeine fix that makes a cup of coffee so instantly arousing. The taste centre gets a belt of at least three (and five, with milk and sugar) of the primaries, and we haven't even started to look at the trigeminal taste quintet and the aromatic contribution to flavour from Dr Maillard's roasting. He found so many of our favourite flavours result from the union of a sugar and an amino acid heated together, to say nothing of the accompanying caramelisation.

In the time remaining, I shall select just one of the worm's taste brain quintet of primaries for further comment. Sweetness is a hot topic at the moment, what with the palate seduction of the innocents typified by added sugar to proprietary baby foods and the insufferable sweetness of the soft bun that encloses a McDonald's hamburger, to name but two examples. Perhaps its use in Asian cooking, or curing ham, illustrate the potency of additions that may be less obvious. Brillat-Savarin referred to sugar as 'the universal condiment'. The attraction of the flavour power of sweetness is universal and may be addictive, certainly if reinforced by a barrage of visual advertising.

Many processed high-sucrose foods do not taste sweet, e.g., flour-dredged fish and meats, enhancing what he refers to the 'go-away' of such foods, With proper proportions of fat and sugar, a mouthful of food may be swallowed without leaving the inside of the mouth coated with fat particles. It is now permissible to add 10 per cent of sugar to peanut butter, which otherwise has a poor 'go-away'. This is in addition to sugar's ability to enhance the body, or general mouthfeel, of a solid or liquid. Sugar has a tenderising effect (smoother, softer, whiter) a non-yeast bakery product. It enhances shelf life, inhibits staleness in bread, stabilises salt content and balances acidity in sauces and soups to mention some common uses.

The *influence* of *sugar* on the *world political scene* is incredible

Sugar consumption is showing a substantial rise in developed countries. From a baseline in the US early in this century, in round fractions, sugar consumption has doubled that of complex carbohydrates which has halved, and fat has increased by more than a quarter. Sidney Mintz gives some of the commercial reasons. This introduces another kind of power relevant to this symposium. The influence of sugar on the world political scene is incredible.

Black slaves were originally taken to the Americas to increase the production of sugar cane. As you ponder the ramifications of that fact, what about the origins of giant transnational groups that have such power on the world's economy today. How much of this is sugar based? Fernando Ortiz, in a study of the transition of one kind of society to another, remarks that 'Sucrose has become the favoured child of capitalism.'

Compare the economics of the energy production of sugar, and the implications for land management.

Land needed to produce 8 million calories:

Sugar	1 acre
Potatoes	4 acres
Wheat	9-12 acres.

I would have liked to delve further into the flavour power of the sexual smell brain. Fragrances of musk and synthetic analogues of the natural male pheromone, are frequently added to, or found naturally, in various foods and beverages (as widely different as wine, and children's drinks in Japan) with astonishing enhancement of flavour. And what about the ability of fresh truffles to perfume a whole bowl of eggs? Consider the almost universal culinary use of rotting prawns and fish as instruments of flavour power. If the TMA (arguably, on the basis of less is more, the ultimate female pheromone) of balachan is too much, what of the anchovy in Worcestershire sauce? Which hammers home the ultimate principle of flavour and fragrance, *less is more*. Those we like best, are at the level where they are barely perceptible. More is too much, and more than that, nauseating.

'Less is more', the ultimate paradox of the power of flavour.

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Chair: Duré Dara

ROSEMARY STANTON Sometimes one hears of people who've lost their sense of taste. It seems a terrible thing. Is it ever possible to recover it?

MAX LAKE Loss of sense of taste can be temporary, the only thing that I know has a positive effect is small supplements of zinc and that works for about 1 in 50. You've got to be very careful with zinc, because as you know there are all these biological cycles that are running like that with metals … and you poke one in here, one falls out this end so you've got to be very careful about disturbing the balance. But you can try some zinc, otherwise there are some neurological problems it's worth investigating. Loss of smell is another incredible tragedy, most commonly found in today's society when a face hits hard against the dashboard of the car and you become what is called 'anosmic'. The impact affects the middle-third of your face, everything goes backwards and you get a flat face and that sheers off the olfactory nerves. Sometimes you are just concussed and that effect can last for 18 months to 2 years but if you are anosmic, at the end of two years after such an injury or for another reason, sinusitis or other idiopathic causes, that's about it. In that case some people do tend to have retained some memory. A close friend to many of us, who runs one of Sydney's best restaurants, was in a tragic accident some years ago and that happened to him. He thinks he can smell coffee grinds and things like that and my guess is that it's like people who could speak before they lost their hearing or so forth as opposed to mutes from birth. I think they retain a memory in their computer bank, of the certain flavour profile and some of the taste of these smells coming in, getting in there and they 'see' a silhouette of raspberry or coffee. Either that or there is some tract round the back that no-one's worked out yet. I find that terribly exciting to think about.

PAM GILLESPIE I just wanted to know, I'm trying to work out in my own mind which theory is correct, to actually know the sweet, sour, salt and bitter and the patterns on the tongue and the fact that that is in fact wrong and that the sensations are picked up by all the little receptors on the tongue.

MAX LAKE I think if I understood the question – there are distinct areas on the tip of the tongue that sweet and sour will affect as well as bitter. And that's been blown out of the water because of the fact that parts that affect all the sensations are perceived all over the mouth. But as usual with these things you don't have a blue corner and a red corner. True, who was it that said 'it's not mine alone?' What happens is that the sensations are produced everywhere but they are concentrated, still known to be concentrated in the classical areas.

LYNDEY MILAN I'm sorry I'm going to have to disagree with you Max on one thing you said. You said that with McDonald's. 'Don't forget it's the flavour that keeps them coming back.' I think that is maybe the exception that proves the rule, it's the hype that gets the kids in the door. All McDonald's has to do is serve inoffensive food and I forget who it was yesterday who said about the blanding of food for mass consumption. As long as the food in McDonald's isn't offensive, and I know they put sugar in their buns to actually make it more palatable. I believe it's the hype that gets the kids going there, more than the taste.

CHERRY RIPE I strongly disagree with him. I think that McDonald's is one the most cleverly devised psychological taste products ever and it's the balance between the sweetness in the bun and the acidity in the tomato ketchup and the salt. And the fat, that gets people in.

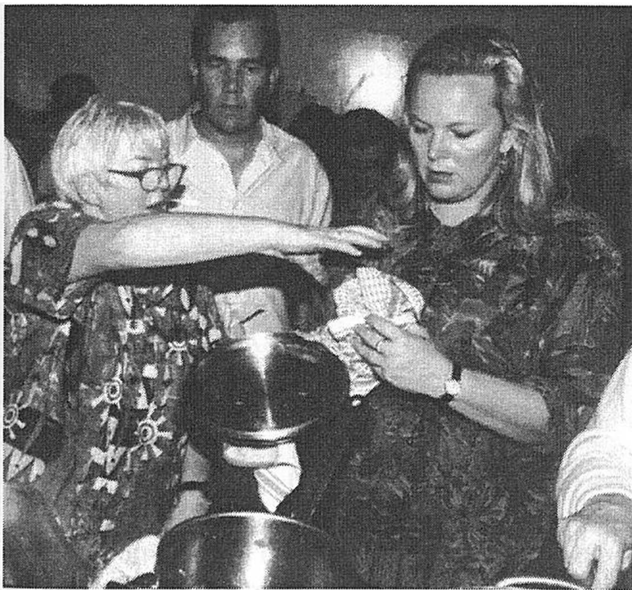
LYNDEY MILAN From when my children were little, they said, 'Oh look it's not because it tastes so good but we like to go.' And they like to go and get the little extra things and whatever. I mean that's my experience of children; it's not the taste.

ROSEMARY STANTON Can I add a bit there, because I've actually done some research on 8- to 12-year-old children and as to why they like going to McDonald's. Their number one reason is their mother is in a good mood because she doesn't have to cook. Their number two reason (which follows almost as strongly after that) is that everyone sits around together and actually talks to each other and because they are in public they don't have any fights over the meal table. And the third was well down the list, as was the taste of the food, the thing they liked about the food is its familiarity and the fact that you wouldn't get a brussels sprout lurking underneath anything. But basically it was the fact that they knew what to expect and the thing that really upset children about most menus is that you wouldn't know what you were getting. And it's that familiarity that might have some relevance. Now maybe the familiarity comes back with the blandness of the flavour but I would say that these foods, as I've said before, are foods to which no-one objects rather than foods which people positively love.

RICHARD HOSKING I've noticed in Japan in recent years that it's almost impossible to get any processed foods I haven't had sugar added. I think people get the impression that people are actually hooked by sugar from a fairly early age.

MAX LAKE Thank you for the question, Richard. I believe, that people get hooked by sugar from an early age. One of the things about which you were talking – Japanese flavour – is that they are basically smaller in stature than people in the West and it's a well-known physiological fact that the smaller you are the higher your energy output. And the higher your energy needs are, for example, a mouse would have huge energy needs compared to an elephant, relative to its skin surface, and will need lots more energy in its foods.

JUDY SANDFORD My child was born prematurely and for various reasons was fed a sour milk rather than a sweet milk and she actually prefers, or much prefers sour things. Olives are far more appealing than sugar products.



Power Cook Stephanie Alexander lifts the lid on Lyndey Milan (observed by Nick Herd).

the power of positive thinking

power house power tables

power driven power politics

BODY SCULPTURE AND POWER

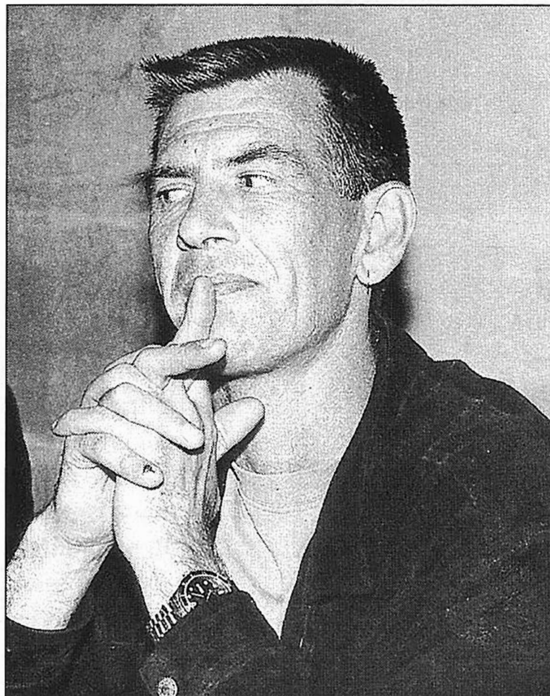
Alan Mansfield, Murdoch University, Western Australia

As many of you know Alan had to leave the Symposium for personal reasons before his paper was delivered.

'Life is trouble, only death is not.'

— Alan Mansfield quotes Zorba the Greek (aka Anthony Quinn)

Sadly, Alan gave up his struggle on 17 December, 1997.



FOOD AND THE BODY

Dr James G. Bergan, Centre for Advanced Food Research, University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury, Richmond

Adequate food supply has been one of the driving forces for the survival of the human race since the descent from the trees. For most of our history, it has been a case of eating to survive without thought as to the effect of food upon the human body. In recent history, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the science of nutrition has developed. Elaborate definitions exist for nutrition but the simple one of 'feeding the body properly' is still amongst the most adequate (1). The pursuit of the science of nutrition has led to an understanding of the physiological roles of nutrition (Figure 1).

1. Supply energy to the body

2. Growth and maintenance of the body and its cells

3. Regulation of the body and its cells

Figure 1. Physiological Roles of Nutrition.

The primary role of nutrition is to provide energy for the cells of the body and consequently for the body itself. This energy is not in the form of vitality as it is usually perceived by the public but is in the form of chemical energy as Adenosine Tri Phosphate (ATP) inside each cell. The body of a 70 kg man manufactures, uses and recycles approximately 64 kg of ATP every day (2). The nutrients, carbohydrate and fat as well as occasionally protein, supply the basis for this energy production. The other physiological roles of nutrition are important but are secondary to the provision of energy.

Secondary roles include growth and maintenance in which the adult body is repairing itself. Most cells live for a defined time period such as the red blood cell for 120 days and the intestinal cell for approximately 60 hours and then they are replaced by new cells. This process is sometimes referred to as 'dynamic equilibrium'. Major nutrients involved are protein, some minerals, a little fat and a large amount of water.

Regulation of the body and its cells is also secondary to the provision of energy but is important for the operation of the cells individually and as the whole body. This is where vitamins and most minerals make their contribution along with protein in the form of enzymes.

Nutrition has actually progressed through two phases and is currently in its third phase (Figure 2).

SURVIVAL phase

CURATIVE phase

PREVENTIVE phase

Figure 2. Phases of Nutrition.

The survival phase has been the longest and it is still possible that one day it will arise again. The curative phase developed in the mid-1800s and reached its zenith with the discovery of vitamins. As vitamin deficiencies were cured and thus decreased, the diseases of affluence, i.e., cancer, cardiovascular disease and diabetes, became more evident. The focus of nutrition shifted to that of prevention and we had the advent of Dietary Guidelines (3). Recently, the concept of 'functional foods'(4) has appeared with several different types being advocated (Figure 3).

FUNCTIONAL FOODS

Designer foods

Food analogues

Foodaceuticals

MEDICAL FOODS

Nutraceuticals

PROBIOTICS

Figure 3. Types of Functional Foods.

'Designer foods' are those being developed by the food technologists/engineers through new techniques including biotechnology. Examples are b-carotene-enhanced tomatoes through genetic engineering, orange juice with calcium added and the w-3 fatty acid enriched egg. 'Food analogues' are usually imitation foods or foods which have been manufactured from ingredients not normally associated with the original food. Soy milk is one such example with vegetarian hamburgers being another. 'Foodaceuticals' and the more recent 'nutraceuticals' are North American terms used to describe a range of functional foods or even an isolated nutrient. Examples include designer foods but also phytochemicals.

'Medical foods' appears to be the nomenclature preferred in Australia but the specific foods have the same wide range. 'Probiotics' (5) are quite a different type of functional food and are primarily fermented milk products. The concept of functional foods certainly reinforces earlier comments (6) with regard to the complexity and role of food in nutrition and health.

It is this last type of functional food to which the remainder of this paper will be directed but first a definition of functional foods should be presented (Figure 4).

DEFINITION

Appears as a normal food

Demonstrates a feature which affects/regulates a body function

Consumed as part of a normal diet

Figure 4. Definition of Functional Foods.

Most authorities agree that a functional food should appear as an ordinary/normal food in the diet and that it or some constituent in it will have a beneficial effect upon the health status of the consumer.

Probiotic foods are based upon the premise that select (beneficial) bacteria in the food survive the acid in the human stomach and populate the small and large intestines (Figure 5). These bacteria then have a positive effect in the intestines which may be due to altered metabolic activity or even a changed bacterial composition of the intestine itself (7). Many positive effects have been claimed but the evidence is fairly scant and somewhat controversial. Nevertheless, beneficial effects do appear to involve a significant reduction in gastrointestinal disorders such as lactose intolerance, diarrhoea and even constipation. Other claims include protection against colonic cancer, a reduction in plasma cholesterol levels and a stimulation of the immune system. The magnitude of the claims lends them credibility (8).

DEFINITION

'A live microbial feed supplement which beneficially affects the host animal by improving its intestinal microbial balance.'

FULLER (1989)

Figure 5. Definition of Probiotic.

The food industry has been very cautious about entering the functional food market. It is only in the area of probiotic food, such as traditional yoghurt and now drinking yoghurt derivatives, that the food industry in Australia has enthusiastically entered the market. Some of the reluctance of the industry to move ahead may be due to the National Food Authority's slowness in setting standards for functional foods (9). The preventative phase of nutritional science is definitely here and functional food is a part of it. Probiotic foods are one type of commercially available functional food.

Food is more than just something to eat

— USDA, HEW (1969)

Figure 6. Message of the Day.

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
Chair: Duré Dara

HARLAN WALKER Is there really any difference between what you call food analogues and unfamiliar foods? I mean, what is the difference between ice cream (?) you're describing and say … [?] that contain prussic acid or dairy products taking the milk of another mammal and converting it into butter or cheese or alcohol, taking grapes and letting them ferment. I mean are these different kinds of things from what you were describing?

JAMES BERGAN I think that the point I was trying to make is that the way I understand food analogues is they are foods normally present in society and in one way or another you are putting different ingredients together and coming up with something that resembles that same food. I mean, to be honest about it, I like a piece of good cheddar cheese, but the day that I eat cheddar cheese made out of gluten and vegetable oil, that's not acceptable – now that's a good analogue.

HARLAN WALKER Margarine?

JENNIFER HILLIER When we talk about cultural specificity with food, then how do you incorporate that into your scenario, your picture?

JAMES BERGAN I'm not quite sure I understand where you are coming from. Cultural specificity of a foodstuff is, one would say, goat's milk versus cow's milk. Is that correct?

JENNIFER HILLIER Well, I was just thinking, in China they eat everything so they eat differently to how we eat. Shall we say they are not food analogues?

JAMES BERGAN I think we've arrived at the situation where we're no longer eating anything. If you could go back 200 years in Australian history, you wouldn't have been there very long, but if you did, you'd find that if you killed an animal to eat it you'd eat everything. Now, I serve offal to half the people, maybe more than that, and they all turn up their noses and they're not hungry enough to do that. I think that's one of the issues involved in there. I was trying to use the term good analogue as … [?] but to use it as an imitation food where it is actually made from food ingredients that aren't related to the original concept of food. In some ways it's a way of utilising waste, if you wish. That's part of the argument that's made. I think it's a very poor argument.

SUSAN PARHAM I suppose I feel what is missing today, which I kept on hoping to hear, is a sort of critical analysis of why we've come to this position where we want to have technical fixes on technical fixes. When I think in the last couple of days we've heard a lot of things which have really said that we need to go back to location, to a sense of regionalism and production, to be eating everything, diversity. In a sense, I'm wanting to hear where nutrition is in the service of capitalism, which no longer wants us to be able to do those kinds of things because we are talking about profits. Now that's the critical analysis I didn't hear and it is what I'd like to hear. I'd like to know what your position actually is about those things. It's not something you're standing aside from in a passive way, recording, you know. You are part of an industry, you have a position and I think that position gives you responsibility to talk about why you want to do it and what you really think about it!

JAMES BERGAN That's a completely different approach to the way I was bought up – that's fine. I'm a nutritionist who is a representative of the food industry and to be honest about it, they've crucified it. Take wheat gluten as an example. Wheat gluten is a by-product of wheat, of flour. We produce a very large amount of it in Australia. If we can utilise it in some way that can convert it to a better product – forget the issue with respect to coeliac disease, because I think there are some ethical issues with respect to that. We can take that product and manufacture a product – let's say cheese – and we ship that overseas. The milk mountain as an example, is gone, there is no huge surplus of dairy products or casein or anything like that left. In fact, there is an argument that in southern New South Wales we are actually short of very large amounts of liquid milk. So there are those kind of issues that get into it. But that's nothing to do with the economic point of view. What you are doing is taking something like gluten and you're substituting it for casein or the dairy product that's involved. I don't know if that's answering your question.

SUSAN PARHAM Just one point very briefly, I think Tim Flannery made the point this morning that it's madness for us to have such a large wheat production. So in a sense we need to go back further steps and say why are we having these excesses of certain products which we then want to play around with technologically? We are creating situations which we don't need to create and actually mining our ecological capital from other places and the future to produce things that we don't really need and are actually not doing us any good in terms of biodiversity. So I see all that as being kind of linked together. That's the key I think that was missing.

JAMES BERGAN The other thing that it recognises is that the number of farmers haven't changed. The percentage of farmers in terms of agricultural percentages of population has gone down tremendously since 1900 but the actual numbers then is very similar to now. But it also very much feeds into the whole issue of world trade, which you were pointing out earlier. And in Australia we're exporting primary products and that's costing us …

JOHN NEWTON One of the problems in America is that food has ceased to be a pleasure and has become a problem, and one of the results of that is that 73 per cent of the American population is obese. How much responsibility do you think your profession takes for that for that sort of thing?

JAMES BERGAN Well, as a nutritionist my profession won't take any responsibility for that.

JOHN NEWTON I know sir that you don't talk of food at all – and most nutritionists don't talk of food at all – as a sensual, pleasurable thing. And you break it down into what we had last night – that terrible futuristic dinner.

JAMES BERGAN I think that the major issue is – and nutritionists can take some of the blame for this – that there has been a movement away from … [?], as with the discovery of vitamins and their so-called miracle cures. The public has bought that, they bought it like nobody's business. Well they bought nutritional biochemistry without realising they're talking about food. I think there are some other things going into it. First of all, that figure or percentage of obesity is dead wrong. They maybe overweight, that may be right, but Australia has got some things to worry about there too. I'm not defending America, don't get me wrong, I'm Australian at this stage of the game, and I hope it stays that way. But, I think there was a focus on nutritional biochemistry and there was a major loss in the idea of food, and even the pleasures of food.

JOHN NEWTON Earlier on you said you reject the anecdotal aspect of food. That means you don't listen to people?

JAMES BERGAN I didn't reject it!

JOHN NEWTON Well you did say 'reject', I wrote it down.

JAMES BERGAN Well, I reject the level of confidence in it.

JOHN NEWTON Well, I have more confidence in a cook than I do in a scientist.

JAMES BERGAN Well I would say that, if I was going to have surgery, I would have more confidence [in a scientist?].

JOHN NEWTON Surgery sure, not a meal.

JAMES BERGAN Well some scientists are pretty good with food.

MARY DAISH I think maybe what I've found lacking in both of the talks this morning is looking at the body not only as a scientific paradigm but also as a social construction. When you've got women and men who are both playing up with food and rejecting food there has got to be something else coming in – influences on our body that come from societal places and social construction that are just as powerful as a scientific analysis of our bodies. I put it to Max that socialisation of our senses is just as important as the scientific, in that when we smell something and recognise it, it reminds us of home – that is a socialisation, not only an essential reaction or chemical reaction. I think it's really important to remember in a session of body and food that there are women and men who are greatly suffering through our bodies and also being looked at through a dominant gaze constantly [seeing?] a scientific display of the brain that's got be questioned.

MAX LAKE I don't know how hungry you guys are, because this is another book that's been opened up.

MARY DAISH You've got the Yves Saint Laurent model as a scientific display of the brain. I mean, that's got to be questioned.

MAX LAKE We had twenty minutes and we did our best. If you're not too hungry, give me about two minutes. I'll try and address the question. In a book of mine, as yet unpublished, called *The Fragrance of Love*, the last chapter is the 'The War of the Sexes', and I've taken the example of … (inaudible).

MARY DAISH I'm not angry. No, no, no – I don't want to get into this debate.

MAX LAKE You raised the question of the socialisation of the senses and I believe that some women are angry with some men because they subconsciously resent … because they're angry at that fact their biological drive is driven by female odour – it has to be inhibited or they end up in jail. What percentage of the population? I expect it's more widespread than we realise. That is the negative thing, and the positive thing – in a sense positive – is the application of fragrance to our everyday living. I just spoke at an aromatherapy conference last week and I pointed out something that I've come across in

my research – that adding mint to the air-conditioning system in a building reduces the typing errors in the building by one-third. Now you can see that there is no end to this. New cars are sold with synthetic leather sprayed on them. The Maillard smell from bakeries, the manipulation goes on. Are you aware that a substantial number of toilet papers have added fragrance? What a shitty idea! I mean, I think, you've had enough about the socialisation process. It's a can of worms. I'd like to say a lot more, but it's another subject.

ALAN SAUNDERS Just following on from the last question on behalf of the organising committee. There was, of course, one speaker that you've not heard in this session and that is Alan Mansfield who had to return rather suddenly last night, or this morning rather, to Western Australia.
His paper was on 'Body Building and Body Image' and it would, I think, have put the entire discussion in a rather different perspective but unfortunately he wasn't able to give this paper. I hope we'll be able to persuade him to allow us to put it into the published proceedings.

CHERRY RIPE Oh, I just wanted to add something to what Dr Bergan was saying about food analogues and the increasing power and intrusion of the food industry into our diets. And that is, at the beginning of this decade it was predicted that by the end of this decade that 30 per cent of the American diet would be comprised of food analogues and Olestra is merely the most recent.

A Budding Body-builder comes out at the Power Banquet.

THAI PICNIC

Friday 12 April

by David Thompson

SOM DTAM

Green papaya salad with dried prawns,

peanuts and chillies

Tim Knappstein Gewürztraminer 1995

NAEM

Chiang Mai styled cured pork with ginger,

shallots and raw vegetables

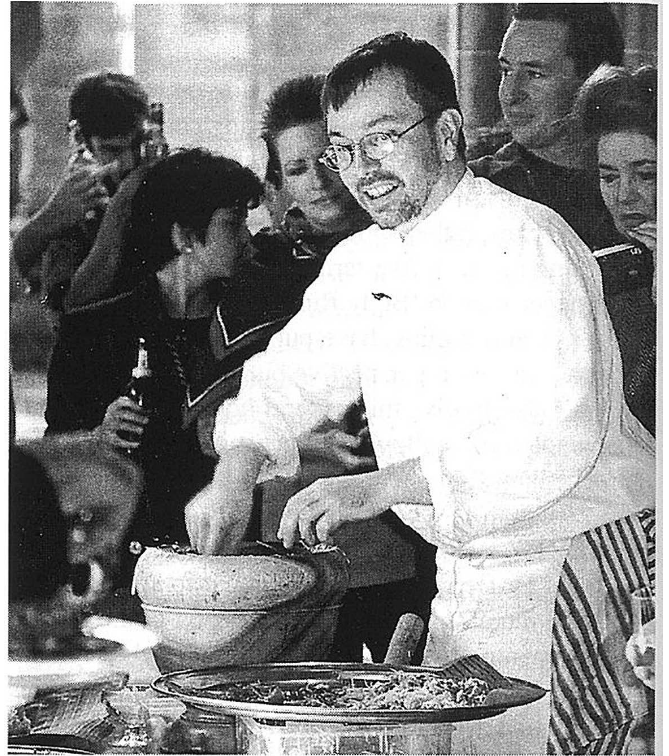
Mitchelton III Red 1993

Grolsch

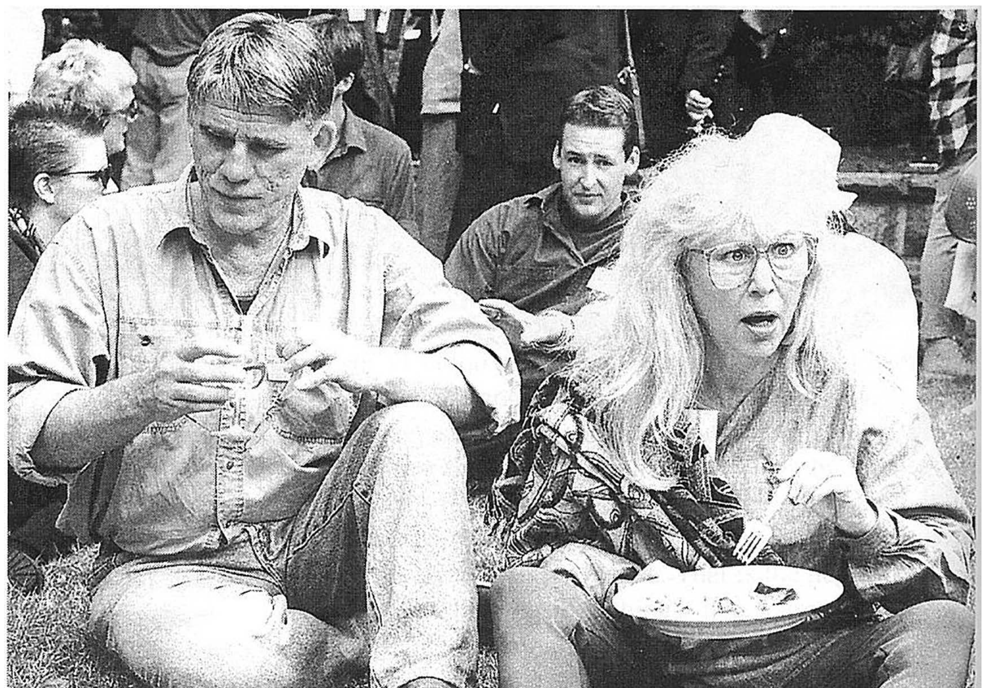
KAO NIAW

Steamed sticky rice

With thanks to the Restaurant & Catering Association NSW for their generous support.



David with mortar and pestle.



John Fitzpatrick and Janette Fry tackle Thai.

PREPARATION OF THE BOX DINNER

The Box Dinner has been a feature of several symposiums and the Sydney Food and Power Symposia was to be no different. As part of the theme, it was decided that part of the power of food in modern Australia was its multi-cuisinal roots. So each box represented a country which had formed part of the first wave of this country's multicultural background. Each of the seven country groups were then married together with a group of symposiasts ensuring that there was either a chef or great cook amongst them.

The groups then worked together to create a meal for another of the groups. This involved division of the tasks involved i.e., time management, preparation, cooking, presentation, propping and serving. The preparation and cooking were done using the corridors and kitchens of St John's College, which did not come with an abundance of state-of-the-art equipment to which some participants are accustomed. This added another dimension to the exercise, that of sharing of spaces, equipment and central pantry items. The conviviality of the whole event produced results which were fabulous, especially the food. The ambience was produced from props which were collected by fair means and foul, with some even stripping their beds to make appropriate attire.

Central Pantry

Salt (plain and coarse), cracked pepper, plain flour, butter, cream, milk, sugars (brown, castor and icing), baking powder, stocks (chicken, fish, vegetable and beef), vinegars (cider, tarragon and red wine), eggs, black olives, almonds, walnuts, rice (arborio), plain pasta, polenta, lentils, burghul, tomato paste, wooden skewers, dried breadcrumbs, cinnamon sticks, cumin, saffron, cayenne, paprika, nutmeg, cloves, dried red chillies, basil, dill, chives, thyme, oregano, coriander, parsley (flat and curly), tarragon, mint, stock powders (all types).

Greece

Ingredients

Spices and herbs –	fresh coriander, cumin seed, cinnamon quills, fresh parsley, basil
Vegetables	cucumbers, young beetroot leaves, vine leaves, lots of garlic, iceberg lettuce, tomatoes, spinach, red capsicum
Fruits –	figs, grapes, oranges
Seafood	anchovies (bottled or canned), octopus, prawns, squid
Misc. –	pinenuts, pasta (round tube, spaghetti)
Dairy –	fetta, yoghurt.

France

Ingredients

Spices and herbs –	fresh parsley, basil, tarragon, bay leaves, sorrel, coriander seeds, whole nutmeg, cloves
Vegetables –	mushrooms, leeks, French green beans, beetroot
Fruits –	pears, plums, raspberries
Meats –	chicken livers, whole corn-fed chicken, bacon rashers
Seafood –	crab
Misc. –	fresh baguette, Dijon mustard
Dairy –	cheddar, cream, butter, parmesan.

Turkey

Ingredients

Spices and herbs –	fresh flat-leaved parsley, fresh mint and coriander
Vegetables	spring onions, bitter greens (chicory etc.), tomato, cucumber, artichokes, radishes
Fruits –	lemons, pomegranates, dried apricots, apples
Meats –	nut of beef
Seafood –	tailor or bream
Misc. –	chickpeas, walnuts, white navy beans, black-eye beans, green olives, burghul, Turkish bread
Dairy –	yoghurt.

Italy
Ingredients

Spices and herbs –	fresh parsley, basil, fresh oregano, fresh thyme
Vegetables –	tomatoes, eggplant, mushrooms, artichokes (globe), asparagus, broad beans, cauliflower, radicchio
Fruits –	grapes, lemons, mandarins, melons
Meats –	minced beef, proscuitto
Seafood –	whitebait
Misc. –	pasta (fettucine), rice (arborio), polenta, whole hazlenuts, ciabatta
Dairy –	mascapone, mozzarella.

Portugal
Ingredients

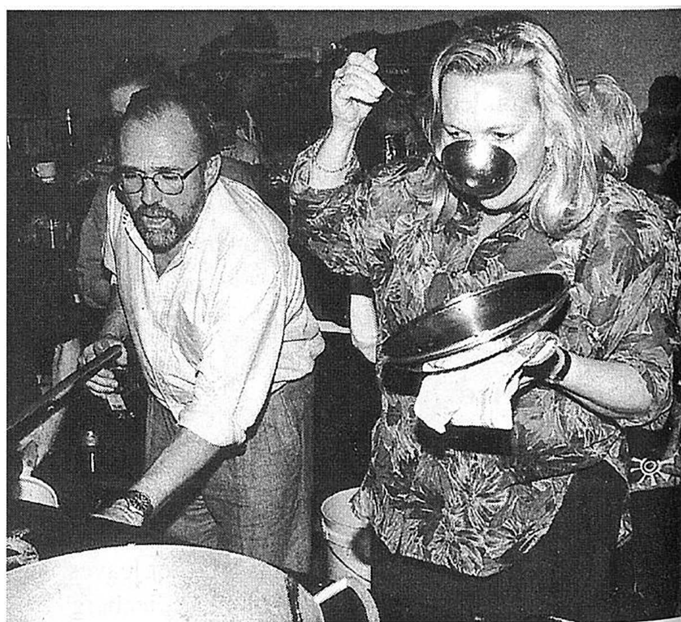
Spices and herbs –	curry powder (home-made)
Vegetables –	kale, pumpkin, sweet corn, tomatoes, turnip tops
Fruits –	figs, grapefruit, lemons, grapes, oranges, pears, quince
Meats –	beef or lamb, pork or veal, pheasant or chicken
Seafood –	sardines, tuna, clams, prawns, squid
Misc. –	brandy, Madeira
Dairy –	cheeses: alcohaca, castelo branco, serpa, flamengo.

Spain
Ingredients

Spices and herbs –	cumin, fennel seeds, fresh oregano, fresh parsley
Vegetables –	leeks, tomatoes, butter or flat green beans, courgettes, eggplant, globe artichokes, red capsicums, spinach
Fruits –	lemons, bananas, figs, grapes, melons, oranges, pomegranates
Meats –	minced pork/beef/chicken
Fish –	anchovies, fresh sardines, crab, prawns, mussels, octopus
Misc. –	rice (medium grain), pinenuts, raisins, currants, green olives
Dairy –	cheeses: cabrales, manchego, nata.

Tunisia
Ingredients

Spices and herbs –	fresh flat-leaved parsley, basil, oregano, thyme, harissa, cinnamon, cumin, saffron, fresh coriander, mint, paprika, caraway seeds
Vegetables –	black olives, capsicum (red and green), fennel bulbs, tomatoes, lettuce, eggplant, courgettes, chillies, Spanish onion, parsnips, okra
Fruits –	fresh dates, oranges, lemons, dried apricots
Meats –	minced beef, chicken, lamb
Seafood –	mixed fish and shellfish, canned tuna, whitebait
Misc. –	phyllo pastry, black olives, pita bread, almonds, walnuts, chickpeas, raisins, rose water, orange flower water
Dairy –	smen (matured ghee).



Soup Mistress Lyndey Milan and John Newton cooking the Box Dinner.

SPECIAL SESSION

THE POWER OF THE SYMPOSIUM

Hugh Wennerbom, PhD candidate, University of Sydney

By 'power', I do not mean intentional, individual power. I do not mean power over others, or hegemonic power. Rather, the kind of power I mean is productive and generative. It is a power of the possible, insofar as it makes it possible to say and do certain things. What I mean is that I think it is possible to think about food, and to do things with food, in ways that wasn't possible ten years ago. That, in relation to food, new spaces have emerged, new knowledge and practices. And that these symposiums have made significant contributions to the constitution of these new spaces.

It is a kind of power that is not necessarily conscious, and perhaps all the more profound (and powerful) because it isn't. Merely by acting collectively, for whatever personal motives, the symposiasts have produced representations and practices of food and eating that resonate widely. Representations and practices that have implications over and above the immediate participants. Such that it is a case of the whole being greater than the sum of its constitutive parts.

So the key point, for me, is that in forcing new gastronomical knowledge and practices, the Symposium of Australian Gastronomy really is an exciting site of invention. The kind of knowledge and practices that I am thinking of here are the way in which our food habits are lodged in philosophical frameworks, and are understood as rituals through which we experience and understand the world. Such an approach is embodied in the meals eaten, and indeed, even the meals can be read as essays on gastronomy in their own right. This is what I mean by the productive power of the symposiums. And this is no doubt what Paul Levy perceived when he remarked at the Third Symposium that 'through intellectual processes' and 'through meals eaten, the symposia 'are actually forging basic political philosophies' (p.6.)

The reason I was interested in this topic was that it presented itself as an opportunity to try to understand what the symposiums are, and where they have come from. An opportunity to read the proceedings, fuelled by the inclination that no-one with a serious interest in food in Australia can ignore the new paths that the symposia have forced. As such, this presentation is an interpretation of those events and individuals who collectively constitute 'The Symposia of Australian Gastronomy', and it is offered as a kind of 'thank you' for the way in which they – you – have, and continue to, enrich the possibilities of cultural, intellectual and gustatory life.

Set in the Context of a Period of Malaise and Transition

But before I talk about some specifics, I thought I'd try to locate the symposiums in a broader context. The proposition is, then, that, generally speaking, these symposia can be set in the context of a period of social malaise and transition.

In making, this proposition, I'm really just paraphrasing a commonsense view of events. For example, Margaret Visser makes such points in both her books, *Much Depends on Dinner* and *The Rituals of Dinner*. In *Much Depends on Dinner* she suggests that the malaise of the modern, industrial world is boredom, indifference. We live primarily in vast metropolises where the primary threat to our wellbeing is not famine or violence, but meaninglessness. With the fall of the grand narratives – the religious, scientific, and political utopias of the Enlightenment – we live in a flat, grey terrain. But it is not just the fall of these grand narratives, but also the dysfunction of our practices and rituals which gives rise to this condition of meaninglessness. So that, at its worst, not only are we disconnected from the earth – our agriculture – and not only are we disconnected from our past, our history, our traditions, but we are also disconnected from each other. 'Boredom', writes Ms Visser, 'is the twentieth century's version of social miasma'; just as pollution is our natural miasma, where a miasma is a 'noxious exhalation from putrescent organic matter: the sighing belly of the dead and bloated cow rotting in the midday sun'. In making this point she is echoing many social theorists from this century, such as Durkheim and his diagnosis of 'moral mediocrity', or Weber and his conception of 'disenchantment', and Simmel on indifference (1).

In *The Rituals of Dinner*, the metaphors are not so dark and forbidding. Here, she talks of revolutions and cycles, of things coming full circle. So that as things die, others grow from the ground upon which they fell. And the things, here, are rituals – the habits through which we know ourselves, through which others know us, and through which we know others.

So that:

> In our own time, cataclysmic social revolutions have made large numbers of rules and conventions redundant, and many of them have not yet been replaced with new signs and voluntary constraints that are broadly recognised and accepted. This is a time of transition, when old manners are dying, and new ones are still being forged. (1991, England, Penguin, p.25) (2).

The point here is that new rituals will be forged. There is a faith in our ability to make the most of our situation. Eating is a ritual par excellence, given that it is something we do many times a day. It reveals much about who we are, and how we relate to the world. And our eating habits have, and are, undergoing tremendous transformation. There is a great deal of uncertainty about where we are headed, as we saw in Serge's dinner.

So I want to suggest, along the lines of Visser's arguments, that these symposia are one of the sites where, through collective action, new rituals and ways of understanding the world are being forged.

Location

More specifically, the symposia can be located as one response to the food revolution that has swept urban Australia in the last twenty or so years. This is a revolution which has changed the way we eat, what kinds of ingredients we use, and how we cook them. And these are not straightforwardly good or bad changes – but a mixture of both. A mixture of polarities. A mixture of agribusiness, supermarkets, pre-prepared microwave meals, fast-food chains as well as restaurants, cafes, delis, speciality shops, boutique producers and providores. It seems that each end of the spectrum necessitates the other, insofar as, for example, agribusiness opens the space for small, localised, boutique markets. I would suggest that it is only because the anonymity and mechanical efficiency of industry has become the norm, that we value produce of integrity and we value helpful, personable service. The trend towards homogenisation of food has opened the space for foodism, epicureanism, and, indeed, gastronomy.

Hence, as Mr Corones has suggested, gastronomy (and the symposia) can be located as a kind of philosophical foodism. Foodism, as a social movement, is the ground in which this present revival of gastronomy grows. Which is not to limit gastronomy within the confines of foodism, to the ebb and flow of food fashions, but merely to suggest that it was a contributing factor to the emergence of gastronomy and the symposia. For as Corones, following Brillat-Savarin, points out, gastronomy is a transcendental meditation. It exceeds this ingredient, this recipe, this table. Gastronomy is about how everyday habits transcend their own profanity and signify something else, something that speaks of our comportment, our character, our conviviality. This is why Corones suggests the term 'biosophic' is appropriate to designate the field of gastronomy. Insofar as gastronomy concerns itself with wisdom about life, gastronomy, for him, is about how life is nourished and sustained.

Here, I anticipate what I think is so productive and inventive about the symposia.

What Rituals? What Knowledge?

For a start, the symposia have revived and invigorated the notions of 'symposium' and 'gastronomy'. While there is nothing new about these notions as such, I think that there is something special about the way these gatherings put them to work.

a symposium of gastronomy *nourishes* both *mind* and *body*

I have noticed that it appears somewhat fashionable in academic circles to refer to one's annual conference as a symposium. So that 'symposium' is used synonymously for 'conference', merely designating 'a meeting for discussion'. What is lost, or elided, in such usage is the fact that the term is a direct reference to Plato's book of the same name. For Plato and the ancients, a symposium is more than merely a meeting for discussion. The symposium takes place after dinner, in a convivial space, and is a drinking party. The symposium brought together food and philosophy. For example, in Plato's text, the discussion was devoted to the nature of love. The intellectual was very much embedded in the social. A symposium, then, for the ancients entailed a symbiosis of the senses and the intellect: a sense of wellbeing was a crucial element in thinking, and speaking, well. This symbiosis is a distinguishing feature of these gatherings. So that a symposium of

gastronomy nourishes both mind and body.
Such a use of the term 'symposium' has much deeper resonances than contemporary academic use.

Indeed, the academics seem completely at a loss when it comes to accounting for one's wellbeing at conferences. In a convoluted mime of ascetic puritanism, they choke down dreadful canteen food while dismissing the intellectual scope of these symposia on account of, and for no other reason than, the quality of the meals served here. I'm thinking in particular of the 1986 Food Habits Nutrition Conference, and some of Murcott's and Mennell's work on the sociology of food and eating. It's as though there is something incredibly dangerous and threatening about 'pleasure' for academic knowledge. That if something is enjoyable then it can't be serious.

These gatherings have also taken up and reinvested the notion of 'gastronomy' with significance. Given the scope of discussions at these gatherings, from cosmology to ethics, history to politics, regulation to technique, it is clear to see that this is no transparent or simple resurrection of an already established truth. Though Brillat-Savarin's text is clearly a focal point, it inspires flights of the intellect rather than blind or singular imitation. The gift of Brillat-Savarin's text is that it is a blend of genres, so that it is at once informative and charming, structured and coherent, with wonderful working definitions of things such as gastronomy and gourmandism, yet it is also full of associations and divergences.

Everyone, no doubt, has their own symposium highlights, such is the nature of the gatherings. And, I guess, as a way to get the ball rolling, I will mention a few that have struck me as poignant. But because there are so many, I have chosen them somewhat arbitrarily. I have chosen an incident or theme from each of the original organisers, with one exception, whereby I have repressed Graham Pont. Which is a move that people may or may not want to take up in discussion.

Santich

For Ms Santich, gastronomy is a way of life, an ethos (*Newsletter 11*, *Newsletter 23*). For her, food is 'far more than calories, far more than fuel for the human engine. It is nourishment for the mind and soul, entering into all our activities, all our thoughts, all our emotions, all our efforts to cite style and meaning to what we do' (*Proceedings 1,* p.77). This is because gastronomy 'is at the confluence of the streams of sensuality and intellect, and this aspect is epitomised in Brillat-Savarin's phrase, *la connaissance raisonnée,* the combination of logic and rationality with the experiences of the senses' (*Newsletter 11*). This is the symbiosis that is embodied in the term 'symposium'.

Positioned in the mouth, at the junction of language and cuisine, the sensible and the sensual, gastronomy broaches question of mind and body, of the transcendental and the immanent. For Ms Santich, gastronomy 'implies the meeting of the mind and body', which, she adds 'is the ideal of many religions'. Through a gastronomic way of life, she begins 'to comprehend the interdependence of, and interrelationships between, cuisine and culture, agriculture and religion, the forces which shape a society' (*Newsletter 11*). In broaching questions of mind and body, of food and stories, gastronomy provides a curious case study in the production of meaning. How do things become significant in our lives? What are their relations to death? To abjection? To love?

One of the ways she looks at this production of meaning is to revisit medieval medical doctrines. She thereby shows the historicity of food's significance, how it has changed, and how it may change again. 'Until about the seventeenth century,' she writes, 'medicine – in both theory and practice – was linked to, and sometimes indistinguishable from, dietetics and gastronomy' (*Proceedings 2,* p.51). The condition of possibility of such an embrace was the concept of balance, harmony. Health was defined in terms of balance, as 'a condition of perfect equilibrium, (*Proceedings 2*, p.51) (3). Paraphrasing Hypocrites, health is defined as wellbeing, which 'is influenced by the quality of the air, water, food and general living habits', where health means being well in both body and mind (*Proceedings 2,* p.51). The concept of balance guided the classical and medieval delimitation of the world, from the cosmos to every little, living thing.

Correctly, these medieval writings are not 'gastronomic'. What is relevant in them, and what they share with contemporary gastronomy, is *an ethic*. For more than anything else, what defines gastronomy, sets it apart, is its ethos. Texts such as Platina's *De Honesta Voluptate ac Valetildine* (*Proper Pleasures and Good Health*) 'lays down a gastronomic ethic inspired by the model of a healthy life and a fundamental concern for harmony between man and his world'. (*Proceedings 2,* p.59).

Symons

Michael Symons shares many of these concerns with ethics and balance. For example, in his paper on Epicurus, Symons finds resonances between classical

and contemporary gastronomic ideas and practices. Specifically, he shows how contemporary epicureanism has a base in epicurean philosophy, and vice versa. The challenge of the task is only understood when it is realised that, despite the etymology, common conceptions of the two are often mutually exclusive. That is, an epicure is generally understood as 'one given or adapted to luxury or indulgence in sensuous pleasures; a glutton or sybarite'; its excessiveness tipples it into vice. Epicurean philosophy, on the other hand, is generally understood by serious scholars as being quite ascetic. Symons argues that such understandings themselves are excessive or too rigid. His aim is to show the confluence between the two, and that through Epicurus we have the opportunity to 'place our own epicureanism within an existing epistemological, scientific, ethical and political framework' (*Proceedings 2*).

The hinge upon which Symons proceeds is the pleasure of the stomach: the idea that pleasure is experienced through the stomach, and that this is the locus around which we orientate ourselves. Both epicureanism and the philosophy of Epicurus share this precept. For Epicurus, we can only understand 'the good' through a sensation of pleasure. 'The beginning and root of all good', he remarks, 'is the pleasure of the stomach; even wisdom and culture must be referred to it.' But, he cautions, that by pleasure 'we do not mean the pleasures of profligates … for it is not continuous drinkings and revellings, nor the satisfaction of lusts … which produce a pleasant life.' Rather, by pleasure, Epicurus means a kind of balance or harmony: a 'freedom from pain in the body and from trouble in the mind'. A pleasure informed by temperance, and giving rise to prudence. Hence, Epicurus advocates a simple, tempered diet that 'gives us health to the full, and makes a man alert for the needful employments of life'. Such a diet 'fits us to be fearless of fortune', and when after intervals we approach luxuries, we will be better disposed to enjoy them.

Such an understanding of diet and health is compatible with Brillat-Savarin's definition of gourmandism and Bunyard's approach to food, as Symons points out. As it is with Platina, as Santich pointed out. What is common to all is a certain ethos – character, comportment. Such an ethic is productive, and generative. It is overflowing and generous. And equal to the task of addressing meaninglessness and transition. Through telling and revisiting stories about food, gastronomy generates a meaningful world. And such meaning is embodied and experienced in the practices through which we know the world – through meals eaten. Hence, not only does gastronomy tell stories about food, but enables food to tell stories – for the meals also speak. They can be essays on gastronomy in their own right. And I am thinking here in particular of the symposium banquets.

Bilson

Here, the banquet orchestrated by Gay Bilson at the sixth symposium, stands out. Set in the midst of a surrealist exhibition at the National Gallery, the banquet was a demanding affair in more ways than one. Where the symposia had been dominated by the tongue – the organ of taste and talk – Ms Bilson took the symposiasts in another direction. She went to the guts of gastronomy – literally. The table was set with a tripe tablecloth. It was a gesture that demanded intellectual digestion. No tripe was actually eaten, but for Ms Bilson, it constituted a 'course' or a 'dish' – an intellectual one. It articulated an interpretation of gastronomy: Here is the site of incorporation and transformation laid bare. It alludes to our darker depths, to our insides, the mortality of the thing. Gastronomy as an essay on death.

In isolation, the dishes were standard restaurant fare, but the images that the tripe (which was removed in undertaker's plastic prior to the eating proper), the exclusive service of red wine, the bandaged, all-male waiters, and the emphasis on meat, the theme of mortality was ever-present. It was unashamedly carnivorous in order to emphasise the carnality of eating. Exhilarating for some, the banquet was also not without its casualties. Some left, and one was sick. It was an instance where the power of the imaginary proved overwhelming for many. At any rate, the banquet served as a reminder of that which is most often forgotten or repressed in eating: death; 'a reminder of our fate to be born, to die, to be recycled (Santich, in *Proceedings 7,* p.102).

The final image of the dinner, however, was one of resurrection, the renewal of life through death. After pastry, diners were blindfolded. Fruit was brought to the table. Submerged beneath the figs and muscatels, was a body. Sido, Ms Bilson's youngest, wrapped in bandages, lay beneath the fruit. The corporeality of the thing. As the diners felt her presence in the darkness, as the blindfolds were removed, Sido raised herself from the table. The shifting of the stone. Resurrection, signifying that life persists only through death.

It was at this point that the diners were presented with menus, the text through which they could interpret what they had digested. It read as an inventory of body parts, inflecting the corporeal parts of each dish: stomach, egg, flesh, bone, skin, blood, heart, milk, fruit, Virgin's breasts, dead men's bones.

The banquet was extraordinary, and belongs to a new genre of dining, a genre that owes many thanks to Phillip Searle in particular. A genre where eating is elevated to explore abstract themes – such as death – and elevated to entail a kind of participatory performance. Such events are presentations in the same way as giving a paper is – only where papers usually tell stories about food, here it is the food telling the stories. And the story is incorporated corporeally as well as intellectually.
These gatherings constitute one of the most serious, yet sensuous, attempts to come to terms with the significance of food. Not only what food signifies, but also what it does, and how to do it, as it were. They have opened spaces, and produced knowledge and practices that are profoundly productive and positive.

Notes

1. Durkheim (1976). T*he Elementarv Forms of the Religious Life,* (London: Allen & Unwin), p.427; Weber, quoted in Symons (1993). *The Shared Table,* (Canberra, AGPS), p.148; and Simmel (1950). 'The Metropolis and Mental Life' in *The Sociology of Georg Sinmel* edited by K. Wolff (New York, Free Press).

2. The quote continues:

> A good many of our uncertainties, discomforts, and disagreements stem from this state of flux. Sometimes we hold the terrifying conviction that the social fabric is breaking up altogether, and that human life is becoming brutish and ugly because of a general backsliding from previous social agreements that everyone should habitually behave with consideration for others. At other times a reaction against the social rituals of our own recent past leads us to lump all manners together as empty forms, to be rejected on principle. There is a shying away from elaboration, a preference for the bare bones of everything.

3. The introduction to *The Tacuiniim Sanitatis* states the medieval concept of health quite clearlv. *The Tacuittutn Sanitatis* is about the six things that are necessary for every man in the daily preservation of his health, about their correct uses and their effects. The first is the treatment of air, which concerns the heart. The second is the right use of foods and drinks. The third is the correct use of movement and rest. The fourth is the problem of prohibition of the body from sleep, or excessive wakefulness. The fifth is the correct use of elimination and retention of humours. The sixth is the regulating of the person by moderating joy, anger, fear and distress. The secret of the preservation of health, in fact, will be in the proper balance of all these elements, since it is the disturbance of this balance that causes the illness which the glorious and most exalted God permits. (Quoted by Santich in *Proceedings 2.*) It is on the basis of this shared ethic that contemporary gastronomy resonates with medieval medical doctrines. Furthermore, Ms Santich hopes to see food and medicine once again embrace warmly, this time under the rubric of gastronomy:

> It is time to bring medicine and nutrition together again, within gastronomy.
> The gastronomic philosophies of Platina and Brillat-Savarin offer models for the twentieth century, as they did for the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries. The medieval goals of moderation and tempered pleasures, harmony between the individual and his diet and environment provide a sound philosophic base for 'rules of healthy living. (*Proceedings 2,* p.62.) (Marieke, Jeanette Fry.)

More power talk – Jane Adams, Sue Zweep and bystander with power scarf.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Chair: Gay Bilson

ALAN SAUNDERS Yes, actually this is a question and you've sort of invited it in the paper Hugh. Why did you repress or suppress Graham Pont?

HUGH WENNERBOM There was a time consideration – I didn't want to go too long – but my understanding of it was a power play in the symposium concerned with the direction in which various people thought it should go and he had wanted to institutionalise the symposium and had been unsuccessful in his attempt to take it in this direction and sort of had excluded himself into voluntary exile.

ALAN SAUNDERS Well, that's true, but when it comes to earlier symposia I'm reliant, like you, on published proceedings but looking back at these published proceedings I would have thought that he was, in fact, he did play a vital role in trying to conceptualise the subject of gastronomy.

HUGH WENNERBOM I think he more than any other played a vital role in putting Brillat-Savarin squarely in the sort of middle of the argumentation.

GAY BILSON Should we ask someone else to give us their interpretation or does it not matter that much? I mean, of course Graham's important. I should say here that it was Michael Symon's idea in the very first place to have a Symposium of Australian Gastronomy. In fact I have letters – which I have talked about to Hugh – having kept every one of Michael's letters over a very long time, where it says for the very first time 'let's do it'. It included Graham Pont and he was an enormous force, especially in the first two, and he brought in Dr Anthony Corones, who has given quite extraordinary papers. They are great papers to read and re-read, I suppose, in the proceedings.

MAX LAKE Historically, Graham's contribution is very considerable and as someone who perhaps at this stage in my life sees most of the game, there was a tremendous personality clash. And Graham felt himself increasingly on the outer. At Geelong, when he came up with quite a radical idea of the direction the symposium ought to take but he put it in the most extraordinarily bad way for a high-grade educated person. It was a very bad proposal that got lost, he was terribly hurt, and that, I think, was the beginning of the end as far as he was concerned. I for one would welcome him back with open arms. He has made a tremendous contribution and he has a lot to contribute – the thing at the last Sydney one where he combined the extravagances of the French cook with music and so forth. I think we all enjoyed it tremendously. I think we could do ourselves some justice by inviting him back and giving him a laurel wreath or something.

BARBARA SANTICH Opera Gastronomica.

MAX LAKE Yeah, Opera Gastronomica.

BARBARA SANTICH I was just going to say that going back to the beginning, that Michael raised the idea of having a symposium. I have just come back from a symposium in Oxford and I think Harlan would agree, Oxford symposia is very different to the sort of things we have had. At Oxford there were cookery writers but there were very, very few cooks who attended. And what we wanted to do in Australia was really get the intellectuals and the practitioners together, and that is why we have always tried to insist on as much attention being paid to what we eat and drink as to what we listen to and think about and talk about. And that is the thing that I think made the Australian symposia what they are, the success that they are – the thing that Hugh has been talking about that has made us different from all the other ones. We do have this blend of professions and interests in the group here and we do look after the mind and the body and if we gorge ourselves on both we think about it the next day.

HARLAN WALKER I quite agree with what Barbara said about the difference between this symposium and the Oxford one. This is in a way why I came to be re-stimulated and to re-think things based on vaguely what I knew about you. But that's not actually what I wanted to say. I would like to come back to a point made right at the beginning about what a symposium is and why it is and what we do. This is not much to do with the symposium being to do with gastronomy but a meeting of people together from time to time. I think you said that in our society, can you call Australia Western, or southern? Anyway non-oriental, or you'll get yourself into trouble. Anyway, I think you know what I mean. We have during this century done an awful lot to destroy the basic human need, which is a need I think to belong to a group. We have got rid of a lot of our religions, we've moved out of villages into huge cities and even if we work in companies, companies nowadays do not reckon to employ people for life, they use them as they want and off they go again. We do not fulfill what I think is a real, fundamental human need which is to belong to a group. When we come together like this, and this is the kind of slightly embarrassing thing

that nobody would think about talking about when they wanted to start something like this, but nevertheless it's what happens. We get together for a few days, we all work together, we cooperate and we go away feeling more human and more satisfied in a way which is very difficult to achieve these days. And that, in my opinion, is the very big value of the groupings, meetings that we have.

SYMPOSIAST I have had the experience of three symposia before this and I believe that it is an opportunity in this symposium for us to express who we are by the medium of food. And the food combines together all the past rituals and the philosophy and everything together and we get the opportunity to express that through the medium of food. And each dinner or meal that we have I think that you can see if you look back, you could probably guess who the chefs or the organisers were because you can see their personalities coming out in the food. It's a wonderful opportunity of combining what we spend so much of our lives doing – which is eating – and we restrict ourselves, well probably this group doesn't, but an opportunity to express through that, what it really is we're doing everyday in our lives. So thank you Hugh.

DURÉ DARA I just want to say that sometimes we're unaware of new people in the symposium and it's difficult for visitors to hear us go on about who did what when, and who it belongs to and what it's about. You also have to remember it's not ten years yet and that maybe this is the time to put history in its place so we don't have to bring it up all the time and then go on. It's not a long time, don't be so pedantic. History for us is important, so then let's record it. Hugh and everybody. There is a difference between intellectuals and academics. And lots of us are intellectuals and academics and practitioners and people who really are interested in gastronomy full stop – whether they cook or not. But there are so many of use here. I think it's an important part of our history to have this ritual, so that it's recorded. I mean, so many times with the box dinner we've talked about the person who thought of it. Let's record it all and get on with it because by the tenth year we've got to put our elders in place and get on with it.

JENNIFER HILLIER I don't think we should relegate history to the past. I think we are part of the history of the symposium and I think I mentioned in the preface to the last symposium that it's a dilative – it keeps on moving on, reacting against previous symposia and taking on the whole scope and range of symposia. And just talking about an aside that Cath Kerry made during his paper, it's a pity the ABC weren't here today.

I thought, well, yes, given that what Hugh was saying was very interesting and interesting in terms of how we'd like to be perceived by the outside – shall I refer to it as the outside? This sort of comes from quite a complex range of emotional things that my sister said last night. A Sydney chef referred to it as foodie theorists and people that were sort of out of the mainstream. So that sense of criticism from the outside – but I'll get to my point. The thing is, in previous symposia we had some very strong debates about media involvement and treating it like going to the convent, it's a treat for us. I regard it very much as a time for us to do what we damn well like and not to feel self-conscious about it – not to worry about networking, not to worry about the economical paradigm that we all function in the rest of the eighteen-month period or whatever. It's a sort of recharge, as Maggie said, after the first one. And really I think it's quite important to talk about whether we want the media here. And that's the sort of part of the process.

GAY BILSON If we are going to use whatever power we have, if the media, and I have no argument with them being here, but we must be the ones who tell them what the symposium is. Not them telling us.

Sue Zweep performing an ancient gastronomic ritual.

Three Puritans tuck in

FOOD and **POWER**

session five

the soul

FOOD and POWER

session five

THE SOUL

Chair: Marieke Brugman

MARIEKE BRUGMAN
Alan Saunders is the presenter of the ABC's Food Program, an author and his most recent book *A is for Apple* is one of the most enjoyable reads that I've had for a long time in terms of a food book.

And it's a particularly welcome addition to the food writing scene in Australia which often leaves a great deal to be desired. I'll say no more and let Alan talk to us about the soul.

ALAN SAUNDERS
Well thanks Marieke for that very flattering introduction and talking about leaving a great deal to be desired I should warn you that this is going to be a very dry and humourless paper.
But it won't last forever. It is the only thing that stands between you and the succulent delights of Richard Hosking's paper. But I'm afraid this is as arid as that picture up there of Sheringham and his mate dying in the bush.

powerwalk power elite
the powers that be the power
of one powersteering balance of power
power lunches power struggle
power corrupts POWER OF THE PRESS
the power and the glory

PURITIANISM AND FOOD

Dr Alan Saunders, ABC Radio National 'Food Program', Sydney

Now these days, of course, we're all Mediterranean. It is true that we like Thai food. It's true, as recent consumer research has shown, that very many Australian households stir-fry at least once a week, but still most of our multicultural society is not of Asian origin and it is very often to the Mediterranean that we respond most of all. In this we are, of course, encouraged by the nutritionists who have been urging upon us the virtues of the Mediterranean diet, which tends to mean the diet consumed by poor people in Crete about thirty years ago. They have only just got their act together with regard to the virtues of the Asian diet.

Now, of course, the Mediterranean diet is a concept not of anthropology or of sociology but of advertising. It's a way of selling us a diet high in fibre, complex carbohydrates, folates and anti-oxidants and low in animal fats. It derives its power from a romantic belief that many of us slip into in our unreflective moments to the effect that the peoples who live on or near the shores of that ocean know more than anybody else about the *savoir vivre*.

And you don't have to be Australian to believe that sort of thing. The latest issue of the British men's magazine *Arena* is dedicated to all things Italian, … On your behalf I had to go into a shop and buy this. And instead of choosing some sleazy newsagent around the corner – of which my neighbourhood is richly furnished – I had to go to Blockbusters in the CBD where all the staff are twelve and a half years old and haven't learnt respect. And this guy said, 'Be honest, you have just bought it because of the picture on the cover didn't you?' I did point out that I am a regular reader of this magazine and it normally has Robert De Niro and people like that on the cover, but anyway. In this magazine, Tony Parsons, the journalist, writes an introduction to this special-edition magazine, 'In Italy there is a tangible delight in being alive', he writes, and he goes on to enumerate trans-alpine virtues. They appreciate food rather than drink, they enjoy the company rather than the venue, and although life seems to be lived on the streets rather than behind closed doors, nothing is more important in Italy than La Casa …
But whichever Mediterranean country you, the Anglo-Saxon, Celt or German, chooses, the country of your soul – be it Southern France, Italy, Spain or Greece – it is bound to be a country that is either Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox which means, especially in the Catholic case, a country rich in religious festivals, public displays of fervour, local objects of devotion.

And how different, how much more helpful this seems to be than the morbid, private pieties of the Protestant north. Even the staunchest atheist can in good fellowship down a glass of red wine on the feast day of whatever saint protects the local olive groves. But when do you get a chance to drink with a Protestant? And of course, it is, as we all know, Protestantism that in the early days of White settlement laid its heavy hand on Australian culinary culture.

Now I have to say that I'm not referring here to anything that I've read anywhere but I do get the impression from conversation, and so on, that quite a few of those few people who think about these things believe that Australian food – at least in the first century and a half of White settlement – was bad because the food of the colonising power was bad, and that the food of the colonising power was bad because of something that these people call Puritanism.

Even Michael Symons – who maintains that English food culture matters to the history of Australia not because it was English but because it was the first industrial food culture – wants to make a connection between Puritanism and the disciplines of industrial capitalism. In his book *The Shared Table* Symons compares the rich, medieval European cycle of communal feasts and drinking – based on Christmas Day, May Day and Midsummer Day, seed time and harvest, Martin Mass where cattle were slaughtered – with the sad state of affairs initiated by the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century.

The Protestants eliminated all feasts which had no connection with the Biblical record and left only Sundays, Holy Week, and Easter and Pentecost, and in some cases Christmas. Symons remarks that just as the earlier calendar gaudily punctuated as it was with saints' days and festivals reflected the rhythms of agricultural life, so the erosion of festivals can be seen to belong to the efforts of the early industrialists to impose labour discipline which included stamping out sport, drinking and other popular entertainment.

Sadly, few writers on the subject of food and Puritanism have a case to argue that is as well spelt out as Symons's. Nonetheless, the sociologist Steven Neville manages to discuss the idea at some length in his important book *All Manners of Food, Eating and Tasting in France from the Middle Ages to the Present*. To do this he has to find someone who presents the case with sufficient specificity to furnish a thesis worth refuting. And he focuses on the hapless

Philippa Puller, a popular writer he conceived rather than a serious historian who in her book, *Consuming Passion*, bases her case on Puritan denunciations of luxuries and prolonged festivities at Christmas and other traditional holiday times. Now Neville has little trouble demonstrating that Puller's hypothesis depends on a definition of Puritanism that will not hold water. It is true that the English Puritans of the seventeenth century were much concerned with the strict observance of the Sabbath and were hostile to traditional feast days but this, Neville points out, had more to do with an aversion to drunkenness than to any hostility to feasting as such. He further points out that France – centre for many a gastronomic virtue – had in the sober Jansonists of the Catholic Church its own Puritans who were every bit as rigorous as their English counterparts, but whose significance is sometimes concealed from careless eyes by the fact that they were not expressly called Puritans. I suppose that what I want to do in this paper then, is essentially to offer a footnote to Neville's work and now that Neville has, as I believe, killed the Puritan hypothesis with a few deep thrusts of evidence and argument, what I want to do is bury the body beneath a further deluge of the same. So what I want to say is that Neville's right but he's rightly … as it were.

Now, in order to do that, I want to do three things. First, I want to establish that we all agree on what we're talking about when we use this word 'Puritan'. Next, I want to strengthen the Puritan hypothesis so as to attack it at its strongest rather than its weakest points. Finally, I want to show that physical pleasures are by no means denied in the Puritan tradition and the result may, I hope, help to enlighten us a little on the whole question of the relationship between religious faith and eating.

First then, what was Puritanism? I had no better definition than that offered more than ninety years ago by the historian G. M. Trevellyan. The religion of all those who wished to purify the usages of the established church from Tate or Popery or to worship separately by forms so purified. The established church, the Church of England, had split or had been split from Rome in the sixteenth century but its style of worship and its articles of faith remained, still remain happily, a mixture of the Roman Catholic and the Protestant.

Those people who we call Puritans wished to increase the Protestant element in the mixture and their Protestantism came in the form defined by John Calvin, the great Swiss reformer. Calvinism is built with remorseless logic upon two ideas – God's infinite goodness and the essential sinfulness of the human race. We are so sinful and God is so good that we could never by ourselves breach the distance between us and Him. We can be saved from eternal damnation only if God holds out his hand and draws us towards Him. The implication of this is that nothing that we do, no amount of prayer or good behaviour, can in any way contribute to our eternal fate. The elect, those very few of the human race who have been saved, can have done nothing to deserve their destiny. God has been determined on their salvation, not merely from their birth, not merely from the creation of the world, but from all eternity. Conversely, the eternally damned, the hell bent, and this means most of the human race, have done nothing to merit their fate either.

In the words of Thomas Hooker, the great New England Puritan of the seventeenth century, God to show the sovereign freedom of his pleasure will deny salvation to some who have begged of him and who have lived virtuous lives, whilst granting it to others who never sought Him. By thus stressing the transcendence of God, the Calvinists have created a system that was beautifully rational, coherent and closed. The product of this inhuman mechanism was inevitably, as the German sociologist Max Weber long ago pointed out, a feeling of unprecedented inner loneliness of the single individual.

Puritanism is thus responsible for much of the *individualistic* caste of the many modern English-speaking societies…this perhaps is one of the reasons why we might expect a Puritan to be *hostile* to gastronomy

Puritanism is thus responsible for much of the individualistic caste of many modern English-speaking societies, and in particular American society, and this perhaps is one of the reasons why we might expect a Puritan to be hostile to gastronomy. I haven't come across this argument anywhere, but I advance it now as part of my strategy of strengthening this Puritan hypothesis.

For one thing the knowledge that statistically speaking you are almost certainly condemned to everlasting hell fire is the sort of thing that might take the edge off anybody's appetite. Your attention is likely to be dedicated, not outwards to the communal pleasures of the table, but inwards to the solitary contemplation of your own soul. Can you discover in your heart any sign of God's grace? This is the sort of question that matters, not what's for dinner. Nor one would have thought, are you the Puritan likely to be impressed by the fact that the central ritual of Catholic Christianity, and I don't just mean Roman Catholic Christianity, involves a symbolic meal. Puritans can hardly ignore the Eucharist or as they called it the Lord's Supper because it is a ritual instituted by Christ himself when he broke bread with his disciples and enjoined them do this in memory of me. But it's importance in their scheme of salvation would appear to be marginal. Saving grace is a gift of God arbitrarily bestowed incapable of being either rejected or successfully sought and certainly not dependent on the eating of bread or the drinking of wine.

Well, there is no doubt that this view of eating and the Protestant tradition can easily be found in Protestant or perhaps we should say post-Protestant literature. Those Puritan congregations of the seventeenth century who chose to leave the Church of England, the Baptists, the Presbyterians and the Independents – or as they later came to be called the Congregationalists – have been known for most of their history as the dissenters or the dissenting interest. Their role in the cultural right of the English-speaking world has on the whole been inadequately understood, though in the last twenty years they have had a formidable advocate in the late Donald Davey, poet and critic. In one of his first essays on the culture of the dissenting interest Davey quotes from a book of 1933, Helen Cork's *Lawrence and Apocalypse* in which the author uses reminiscences of her own dissenting childhood as a means of locating D. H. Lawrence in the tradition which he claimed was formative in his upbringing. In the chapel, which is the House of God, sunlight comes in through small, coloured panes staining one's white frock rose and blue, writes Cork as quoted by Davey. Here no one eats, eating and drinking have nothing to do with God. He is conveyed to my perception by the singing, the silences, the ministers oratorical tone, the presence of the Great Book.

Now reading that I find it very easy to share Davey's indignation at this artless avowal, eating and drinking have nothing to do with God. So much as Davey says, for the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the blood of the lamb and here Davey interestingly relates this impoverished notion of Christianity common to port and to Lawrence with Lawrence's insistence on dissenting Protestantism as a religion of personal salvation. Lawrence was a moral elitist – it was his belief that Protestantism could not satisfy the mass of humanity because it is essentially a religion of the individual whereas the mass is capable of thinking only collectively. Against Lawrence, Davey quotes Robert Hall, a Baptist minister of the eighteenth century who insists on the Lord's Supper as a federal rite and a solemn recognition of each other and members of Christ. Robert Hall may have been unusual though he insists that he was not unique.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Reverend Isaac Watts, an independent minister long famous for such hymns as 'Oh God Our Help in Ages Past' and 'When I Survey the Wondrous Cross', wrote of the sacrament as this heavenly flesh, this sacred food and these are not the words of one who takes the Lord's Supper lightly. In fact, if we turn to the years just before Watt's hymn, we find the dissenters in theory the most severe aesthetic and pure of Christians expressing their delight in God's creation through a literary style that was sumptuous and rich in metaphor. They saw the almighty God of Calvinist theology as a creator who had left His mark on every part of His handywork which was therefore to be enjoyed. One of them, the Presbyterian Thomas Manson who died in 1677, described Christ as a saviour who came eating and drinking, that is, using the ordinary diet of men and eating promiscuously with all company in a more free use of the creatures. Taking the fare as he found it, and conversing with all sorts of men in a familiar course of life.
Of course, it is one thing to praise Christ for eating and drinking promiscuously in all company, quite another to behave like this oneself.

What can we find out about the actual eating habits of the Puritan household? Well if we turn to the Netherlands where the entire society was in theory committed to the practice of a Calvinist faith, we find food in plentiful supply and evidently greatly enjoyed. That much is clear from the Dutch paintings of the seventeenth century, even if we allow for those occasions when the food is there as a symbol of vanity or decay. It is true that Eastern spices were

suspect and so were sauces that might distract the diner's attention from plain wholesome ingredients but there is little suggestion that food itself could not be a legitimate ground of innocent pleasure.

Similarly, the Puritans of New England enjoyed the food that was abundantly supplied by their new homeland, often in many exotic forms. Even the sober John Winthrop, first Governor of Massachusetts, and not a party animal, writes enthusiastically in his journal of fat hogs, fine strawberries, good beer. And another New England Puritan refers to the kitchen as the family altar, there is notion of the family eating together, enjoying the food together.

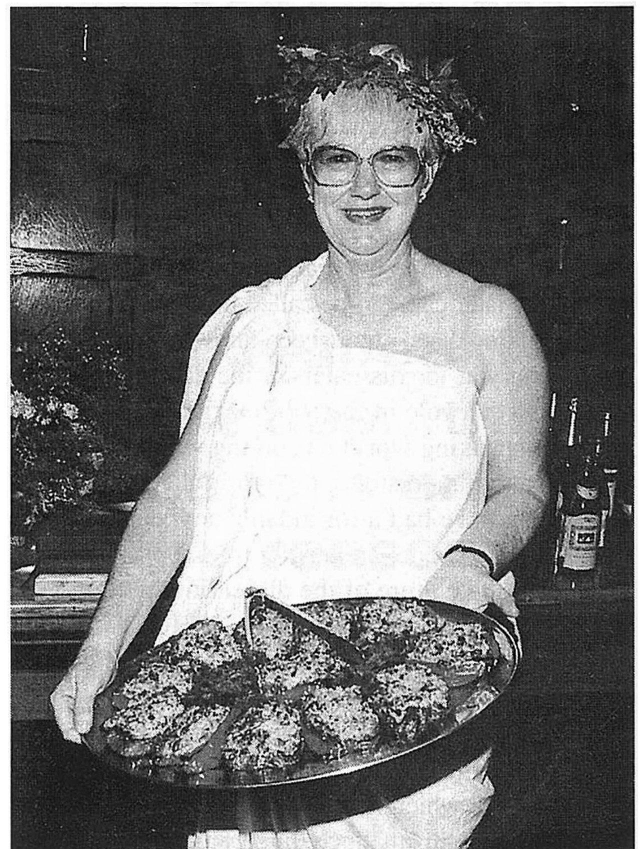
In England, as opposed to the American colonies or the Netherlands, the Puritans were never so confidently in control that they could relax and enjoy the exercise of authority. For the first part of the seventeenth century they were embattled against royal authority which sought to encourage the old Popish calendar of feast days. But this gives us no cause to believe that they were not susceptible to the pleasures of good food. Christopher Driver, sometime editor of the British *Good Food Guide* and himself a man of Puritan descent, mentions in his book, *The British at the Table*, that after the English civil war and the restoration to the throne of Charles the Second, the victorious Royalists mischievously published the household book of Oliver Cromwell's wife, intending thereby exposing to ridicule, her mean penny-pinching ways. It didn't work, said Driver, mercantile society responded to the excellence of the recipes and demanded further editions of the book.

This is not to deny that the English attitude to food has been at certain times distinctly joyless. Stephen Mennell writes about what he calls the trained incapacity to enjoy food and he locates it in the Victorian era, a time when the enjoyment of food was severely inhibited by fear of indigestion, bad breath and all manner of other adverse consequences. You could, I suppose, refer to this sort of thing as small 'p' puritanism, but it has little to do with the big 'P' Puritanism I have been discussing.

The sober moralism of the Victorian era derived from Methodism and the evangelical movement, and both these phenomena were Anglican in origin and largely unconnected with the Calvinism of the people I have been calling Puritans. Moreover the fear of food which Mennell describes seems often to have been encouraged by medical opinion. I suspect then we should see it not as the product of Puritan theology, but as the product of alienation from food.

Even those of us who are skeptical of the rhetoric of authenticity currently fashionable in gastronomic circles, can probably agree that people fear food when they see it as something other, a foreign substance that they are expected to take into their bodies.

Now you could argue, as Michael Symons seems to want to argue, and he is following on from Max Weber in this, that this alienation is not unconnected with Protestantism. The Protestant suppression of the old calendar had much to do with any position of the work patterns necessary for industrial capitalism. Now that is as maybe, but it does not affect my main argument which is that there is no connection between Puritanism properly defined and a fear of hatred of food. You could say I suppose that this is a tiny point. Certainly English-speaking societies just don't like food. It doesn't matter whether their failure to engage with food springs from what I would call Puritanism or from other modes of self-repression which others might want to call Puritanism. Well this may be true but I suspect that there is an interesting story to be told about the food of the Protestant North in England, Scotland, Germany, the Netherlands, Scandinavia and their cultural descendants in other parts of the world. And a first step in the direction of telling that story is to get our terms right and not to use Puritan simply as an unexamined term of abuse. Thank you.



Model Puritan Elizabeth Love serves capsicum.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Chair: Marieke Brugman

MARIEKE BRUGMAN: Do we have any pressing questions for Alan?

HARLAN WALKER … much more … but more importantly … [she] goes through Calvin's writings extremely thoroughly and produces lots of arguments both ways. Very specifically anti the pleasure of eating but also saying that under certain circumstances feasting was okay and I think you would find this particularly interesting to compare it with what you've been saying.

ALAN SAUNDERS I have to say I was at Oxford last year, I have seen the paper and as I was travelling in a taxi to the dinner last night it suddenly occurred to me, 'Oh my God don't forget that Oxford paper.' Unfortunately between then and when I finished my paper there was a meal and a lot of alcohol and it completely slipped my mind. I mean this is a squalid excuse for anybody with an academic background but not an uncommon one I may say. Thank you for drawing attention to it.

BARBARA SANTICH Thank you for your paper and thank you for distinguishing between the big 'P' and the little 'p' but the little 'p' puritanism still has a meaning. It has a popular meaning and it might get confused with the big 'P' but we can't deny that it is used, and it is used with the meaning and it is understood. What are we going to do in this dilemma?

ALAN SAUNDERS Well, I don't think it is a major dilemma because, in fact, most people don't want to talk about big 'P' Puritanism unless they are interested in this as an historical phenomena. And I'm not sort of objecting to the freer use of the term, but what I was actually addressing was the fact that some, there is an idea around, that Puritanism as a historical fact, had an effect on English food. That is, Puritanism of the seventeenth century, and that's what I'm concerned to refute. We can then look at other causes of repression and the fear of food and if people want to call that Puritanism then I mean I'm not going to try to arrest the term back from them.

JOHN NEWTON As one who wallows in the poison food of the Mediterranean … something strikes me, not food, but something that's puzzled me for a long time. For the twenty years that I've been – more than the twenty – living on and around and going around the Mediterranean, I've very rarely seen, and only ritually actually, once where I lived, drunk Southern Europeans. Every time you see drunks in Southern Europe they're usually English, German, Dutch, Swedish, all from the (Australians, of course) Puritan base and it has always puzzled me why this is so. Why is drunkenness so northern and pleasure with alcohol and using alcohol? It's not that there are no alcoholics in France, there are. It's not that the Spanish don't start their day with a shot of brandy and a coffee, they do. But you don't see that kind of aggressive, violent drunkenness you see everywhere in Northern Europe, and Australia and America.

ALAN SAUNDERS This is such an evident fact, and I agree with you. I'm sure that there must have been a lot of work, sociological work, done on it. In fact Barbara's done some, haven't you?

BARBARA SANTICH No, no. In France there is research looking at the drinking customs of Southern Europe … but they drink in a different way and at different times and it's the afternoon drinking that leads onto drunkenness, not the Mediterranean way. And even though the book by Slandran, the wonderful book *Histoire, La Table* … the French one, there's a picture of French people eating in the eighteenth century, late eighteenth century, and a picture of English people. There's a group of men at a round table, well some of them are under the table, and somebody is opening another bottle and looks like he's rolling over the table. And in another corner of the room there is a little cupboard that has a chamber pot in it, but they don't bother about that, they just go on the floor. That's the English style, as seen by the French.

ALAN SAUNDERS This is a North/South thing though I think, rather than necessarily a Protestant/Catholic thing because I believe it is not unknown for the Irish to drink [laughter] without food being present.

MARIEKE BRUGMAN I field one more person, one from Alicia Rios and then we must move on.

ALICIA RIOS Now, I would just say that we are not so much bound to be productive, but I think it's a good thing that at least we would never say take first things first, but rather second things first.

FOOD FOR THE GODS: THE POWER OF FOOD AS A SYMBOL IN JAPAN

Professor Richard Hosking, Hiroshima Shudo University, Japan

On hearing that the boar's head used to be the chief dish of Christmas dinner carried aloft into great halls in procession, a food culture student of mine instantly asked, 'What does it mean?' I was a little taken aback until I realised that he meant, 'What does it symbolise?'

I don't suppose any of us has wondered what turkey or goose symbolise. Indeed I doubt if they have any particular symbolism, apart from their adoption as festive foods. In a sense festivals and everything associated with them are symbols. Once you start peeling this particular onion you'll never get to the end of the layers, since symbols often symbolise other symbols. In the end you can't get away from the fact that language itself is a set of symbols.

In Japan, a food or dish would only become the main dish of a particular occasion if it symbolised something to do with that occasion. In other words, the symbolism of food is very important to the Japanese. The question of whether the food was chosen for the occasion because of its symbolism, or the symbolic meaning was imposed on the food as an afterthought, is a question I am not going into here, though I suppose it is more often than not the latter. An obvious example of food symbolism in Japan is the group of foods traditionally served at New Year, *osechi*, since so much is made of their auspicious meaning.

New Year's *osechi* food originated with dishes offered to deities during a ceremony introduced from China to the Imperial Court in the Nara Period (710-793). Because the dishes were offerings, guests brought them home in chip boxes instead of eating them at the ceremony site. Later, commoners began offering the deity of agriculture and the New Year lacquered boxes of fishes and vegetables simmered in soy sauce. This led to the custom of eating *osechi* at New Year's.

Most Japanese don't feel that the New Year has arrived until they eat *osechi*. This applies even if they only have one or two typical New Year dishes. *Osechi* is not served in individual portions, as is usual with food in Japan, but is presented in one container, usually a set of stacked boxes called *jubako*, to be used in common by all. Some of the items are *kazunoko*, salted herring roe, said to symbolise the hope of having many offspring; *kuromame*, black soybeans, symbolising good health, since the word is said to be a pun on another similar sounding word meaning 'to be in good health'. *Gomame* is a dish of dried, young anchovies but indicates prayers for a bountiful rice harvest, since it is written with Chinese characters meaning 'fifty thousand ears of rice'. Then there is *kobumaki*, fish rolled up in kelp seaweed. *Kobu* suggests *yorokobu*, meaning 'to be delighted'.

Here we have fairly straightforward food symbolism. When it comes to the exercise of power, let's look for a moment at the symbolism of sugar.

The Power of Sugar

Sugar is not only a sweetener in the literal sense, but is used in Japan as a symbolic sweetener. Later I shall refer to the decorative sugar confections offered to the ancestors and the gods. But even in the secular sphere in daily life, when a person becomes aware that he has seriously upset someone, he might send that person a gift of sugar to sweeten him up. I was once sent such a gift, which took the form of decorative sugar cubes for use in tea or coffee. Such decorative cubes are sold in all the better department stores and are often so attractive that one doesn't want to use them. A gesture such as this, when properly handled, can be an effective exercise of the symbolic power of food.

Food Offerings in Japanese Buddhism

I mentioned above that the special New Year dishes originated with dishes offered to the gods. Who then are the gods of Japan? The two major religions are Shinto and Buddhism. Whereas the gods worshipped in Shinto are endless in number, in Buddhism it is one's ancestors to whom prayers and offerings are made.

The dead are the 'gods', so to speak, of Japanese Buddhism, it being primarily a cult of ancestor worship. When you die, you become a Buddha, Hotoke, in Japanese, receive a new name and are installed in the family Buddhist altar regardless of where your remains might be; in fact you might be dispersed, with your voice-box (larynx) in an important temple, your bones in a grave somewhere, and your spirit enshrined at home. It is your spirit that sets the rice wine, fruit and vegetables offered to you at the altar. When the Japanese receive gifts of sake, fruit or vegetables, they usually place them for a time in front of the altar, before consuming them.

Sometimes whole meals are offered, and special foods are offered when the dead return to their families at the summer festival. The spirits can be sweetened up with sugar, which is formed into the shape of fruit and fish, painted colourfully and offered to them, and fresh fruit is quite a popular offering. Apart from the sugar, the offerings of fresh food and rice wine eventually get eaten and drunk by humans. The favourite foods of any particular ancestor are likely to be known and from time to time they will be presented.

'Altar' may not be the best word to use for the *butsudan*, which is a cupboard containing Buddhist images, incense burners and tablets bearing the names of ancestors. In larger houses, it is a very grand affair, with plenty of gold leaf, polished brass ornaments and an elaborate lighting system, and may have a room to itself. Smaller houses have smaller *butsudan*, usually in the best room. Either way, the offerings of food are set out in front of it for a time and then used.

In Buddhism, the food offerings are primarily a family affair, intended to keep the ancestors happy, and on certain occasions to commune with them in a shared meal.

Food Offerings in Shinto

Offerings of food in Shinto are not intended to cheer up bored or unhappy ancestors, but to keep on the right side of gods who may turn nasty.
The apples are always polished.

What, then, is Shinto? Shinto is the very ancient religion of Japan. The word means 'the way (or discipline) of the gods' and Shinto could well be termed a religion of ceremony. As a religion without official founders, Shinto has no tales of the conversions or revelations of early personalities, no official dogmas and no sacred texts (it does have several texts of myth, ritual and history). Thus Shinto is a popular religion, based not on doctrine, but on elaborate ceremonial rites.

Ritual has two major aspects in Shinto, purification and food offerings and it is the latter that concerns us. Food offerings are the core of each ceremony and festival; products from the sea, rivers, plains and mountains are prepared in the shrine's kitchen on a special fire. Food is either cooked or raw, or comes from live animals such as birds or fish. In offering, a distinction is made between food that is intended to be ingested by the divinities and food that is to be viewed by them. Modes of offering include placing on a table, hanging, scattering on the ground, putting into the earth, or releasing into water. Each major shrine has its own style of offering, and of preparation. At the level of the imperial tradition, much of the enthronement ceremony of the emperor consists essentially of food preparation and partaking. I shall return to this later.

Offerings of food in Shinto are not intended to cheer up *bored* or *unhappy* ancestors, but to keep on the right side of gods who may turn *nasty*

In the Shinto creation mythology, the sphere of the gods is restricted to Japan. Shinto is so closely identified with Japan as a physical entity that it cannot really be practised elsewhere. By modern standards of morality, none of the ancient gods would have kept their freedom for more than five minutes, but one of the less depraved and more distinguished, the sun goddess Amaterasu Omikaini, was the heavenly ancestress of the Emperors. The Emperor is traditionally regarded as the chief priest of Shinto. The Japanese word *tenno*, the word used in Japanese for the occupant of the chrysanthemum throne, actually means 'heavenly sovereign', with more than a hint of divinity. Amaterasu Omikami is still worshipped at the inner shrine of the Grand Shrine of Ise, the central shrine-complex of Shinto, and it is not without relevance that the head priestess of this most sacred of imperial shrines is the sister of the late Emperor Showa (Hirohito). The power of Shinto and its gods is very great. Last year the socialist Prime Minister, Murayama, avoided the ultimate act of conservatism, worshipping at Ise at New Year, by having a cold. This year he was forced to worship there. He resigned office the next day.

The Shinto gods require to be fed, as mentioned above, and enjoy communion with mortals. In the practice known as *naorai*, when a ceremony is over, the offerings are taken from the altar and eaten ceremonially.

By communing with the gods in this way, the participants receive their favour and blessing. The usual offerings are rice, rice plants, rice wine, wild birds and beasts, seafood, fruit, vegetables and salt water. Sometimes, however, the food is too sacred to be eaten by mortals.

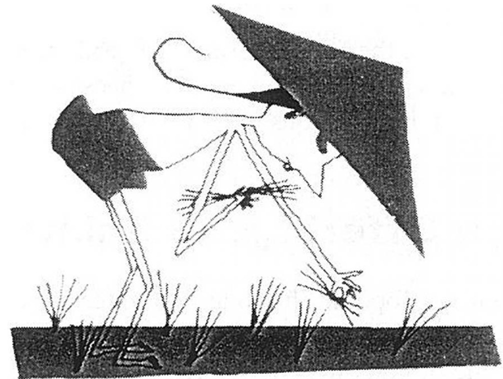
The Grand Shrine of Ise, which to this day preserves practices and traditions going back to the third century, grows the food speciality, with much ritual. No farm machinery here! Rice and vegetables are grown; rice wine (sake), of which the gods are especially fond, is brewed; fish are caught; shellfish, especially abalone, are gathered; and sacred salt is evaporated from the sea. The food is cooked over fire made by rubbing sticks together and served in vessels made at a special pottery. The gods are fed twice a day, according to ancient practice. After each meal the vessels with the food are buried. Ise Shrine has its own salt terrace, for making salt by the old method. The salt, which is especially favoured by Amaterasu Omikami, is baked into a pyramid shape for ritual purification as well as food offerings and only the old-style salt will do. The style of presentation of the food for the gods is comparatively simple at Ise. At the important shrines in the ancient capitals of Nara and Kyoto a much more elaborate style of presentation known as *takamori* is favoured.

Takamori

Taka means high and *mori* means the arrangement of food on a plate, a highly formalised art in Japan. So *takamori* means a style of presentation in which the food is piled up high on the plate. In the past, *takamori* was constructed to make a great display at the banquets of very important people. Nowadays it is only offered to the gods and the Emperor. After the present Crown Prince's marriage ceremony, the new couple visited the Emperor and Empress to inform them of their marriage. The Imperial Couple were seated before tables set with *takamori*. The Emperor touched the food with his chopsticks, indicating acceptance of the offering and suggesting a metaphysical kind of eating and that was all. These *takamori* had taken two weeks to put together. In one, slices of a solidified paste made of fish and sea urchin were built into a base of artificial, red apricot blossoms. In the other, thinly sliced, dried red salmon was inserted into a base of white apricot blossoms, also artificial. A *takamori* of rice was also served.

At shrines, and sometimes temples, the rice for this raised presentation is not cooked, but stuck onto columns inserted in the vessel, and formed into brightly coloured patterns. Dried beans are also used. The displays can be very elaborate and impressive. The Kasuoa shrine in Nara and the Shimogamo shrine in Kyoto are particularly noted for their amazing displays.

It has been mentioned that the Emperor is the chief priest of Shinto. The Imperial Palace in Tokyo is in effect a group of very important shrines over which the Emperor presides. Much of his daily life consists of an endless round of ceremonies and rituals performed at shrines within the palace, very reminiscent of the life of the Earls of Groan as described by Mervyn Peake in his famous Gormenghast trilogy. The Emperor grows rice in the rice paddy within the palace walls in the heart of Tokyo, planting the seedlings with his own hands. Rice is sacred to the Japanese and has to be grown with due respect. When the rice crop failed a few years ago, the ordinary Japanese were very reluctant to eat foreign rice. It 'stank' and an enormous amount was left in the warehouses, to be sent later as foreign aid to the starving North Koreans and others.



Digression on Rice

Let me digress a little, if I may. The world outside of Japan, including Australia, greatly underestimates the psychological trauma of the Japanese in having to import foreign rice and serve it at their tables. As usual, there is a compromise. The rice is imported and then not served at table but put to numerous uses in the food manufacturing industry. Vinegar, miso, rice crackers and a vast tribe of cakes all require rice, and there are innumerable nondescript uses to which foreign rice can be put.

Daijosai

Returning to the Emperor as chief priest of Shinto, a great problem, in effect a constitutional crisis, which showed the ultimate power of Shinto, arose when the present Emperor came to the throne. Traditionally, after his enthronement, which is rather a low-key affair, the emperor celebrates his first harvest festival. This is the Daijosai, an enormously elaborate and expensive affair.

Since the establishment of the post-war constitution there is supposed to have been a strict division between state and religion. This division survives on the basis of the allowable disparity in Japanese culture between the formality and the reality. Who would pay for this astronomically expensive Shinto harvest festival? The state does not support religion, but the state paid up to the tune of A$100,000,000.

A new Emperor's first harvest festival takes enormous preparation. The first thing to be done is for the Ise establishment to choose the most auspicious places for the two ritual rice fields to be planted, using, an ancient technique of divination. The rice is cultivated with elaborate ceremony, and when it is grown and harvested, it is taken by Imperial messengers to the specially built compound – *daij okyu* within the Imperial Palace in Tokyo. The compound houses two main halls and other buildings built of wood, using very ancient methods of construction. In the ceremony, which takes place at night, the Emperor offers a wide range of specially prepared foods to the sun goddess, Amaterasu Omikami, and then, as an act of communion with the gods, or *naorai*, he consumes steamed rice, millet and sacred rice wine (called *miki*). Later in the night the ceremony is repeated in the second of the two halls. In the next few days there will be a series of banquets rather more secular in character.

This ceremony, and everything to do with the Imperial family, is orchestrated by the Imperial Household Agency. Although a government agency attached to the Prime Minister's Office, it is probably the most powerful institution in Japan, able to control the Emperor, the Prime Minister and the Government rather than be controlled by them.

From all the above, we can see the fundamental symbolic role that food in the form of offerings to the gods and communion with them plays in traditional Japanese society, and how this allows for the exercise of power which goes beyond the established public institutions.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

SYMPOSIAST It is a general custom, that Japanese people marry in a Shinto ceremony but have a funeral in a Buddhist one.

RICHARD HOSKING Yes, well …

SYMPOSIAST Is that so?

RICHARD HOSKING Yes, I think so. The reason for this is that one has to be a Buddhist, unless you are the Emperor, because the Emperor is a Buddhist. There are Shinto funerals … Buddhist funerals but the wedding is fertility and everything else that Shinto is so concerned about, so the wedding will be Shinto.

RICHARD HOSKING I think there are Japanese who don't practise Shinto and they could have a Buddhist … I don't know what sort of wedding, I've never heard of a Buddhist wedding but I'm sure it would be possible. Of course a lot of Japanese are going to Christian weddings. I was quite surprised when a student of mine was being married in a large Catholic cathedral, and I said to him, 'You're not Christian are you?' and he said, 'Oh, no.' And I said, 'Well, why are you getting married in a cathedral?' He said, 'My mother likes the sound of the organ.'

"What do you think families will be eating in 2010?"

FOOD and **POWER**

session six

the future

FOOD and POWER

session six

THE FUTURE

Chair: Elaine Chambers

ELAINE CHAMBERS
Dominique Fisher is our next speaker and she is the Chief Executive of New Media and will be very well known to you, or many of you as the publisher of the *Australian Food Finder*.
She is also, with her many responsibilities, Director of the NRMA, and has had something that is shared by many of us, a lifelong interest in food, with a background in satellites and telecommunications. I'm just wondering whether her paper which will be the *Australian Food Finder* on the Internet, will highlight the power of technology.
I give you Dominique Fisher.

... **POWER** is not
a means, it is an **END**. ***Or is it?***

THE AUSTRALIAN FOOD FINDER ON THE INTERNET

Dominique Fisher, Weldon Information Enterprises

We now sort of make a rapid shift from the fifteenth century to the twenty-first century. In the time that we have available before lunch I just want to take you on a quick journey, basically where the food and beverage industry is going over at least the next ten years if not more. This journey has already begun for many in the food and beverage industry, albeit nervously, looking at how technology, particularly the Internet, can be used by them in the dissemination of their information out to the marketplace. This is for users of that information, be they consumers, traders, chefs, the supermarket buyer, whatever.

In 1994 my company published a book called the *Australian Food Finder*, which was an extremely ambitious project and a very expensive one. We went out to the marketplace and attempted to catalogue the Australian food industry, identifying products for sale, who their producers were, their agents, their purchasing conditions and whether or not they were licensed exporters. After $1.3 million and nearly twelve months later we were able to plonk a 2 kilo book in the marketplace that we were very quickly to discover was a mere slice of the Australian food industry. We learnt an enormous amount from this exercise, we learnt how the industry does business, who the key players are, how the public sector works or doesn't work with the private sector, how relationships, especially trading relationships, are jealously guarded. Perhaps most importantly for me, how suspicious and cynical people are in the food industry.

The change of our parent company ownership from Weldon International to New Media Corporation in September last year, gave me an opportunity to put in place a new strategic direction for the company. It was obvious to me that if we were to remain a relevant information provider to the food industry where information changes daily, because of availability, pricing and so on, we had to be able to provide product information that allowed for frequent change to keep the information current. Secondly, we learnt that no matter how relevant the information we were providing was, it had to be freely accessible.
That was due to a widespread mind-set that believed that the ... products for sale should be paid for by the sellers of those products not by the buyers.
And thirdly, the information had to work hard for the reader or the buyer. That is, that users of the information wanted instant answers, they didn't want to have to search through the information by cross-checking indexes and so on. It became pretty obvious that for us the Internet appeared to provide our solution.

Now my business has two very significant challenges. The first is to evolve a traditional publishing business into a multimedia publishing business, but perhaps the greatest challenge of all is how we migrate the food and beverage industry in all its guises into an online environment. Of course, the only way we can do this is to ensure there are major incentives for the food and beverage industry to do so and there starts to develop a very familiar theme that is part of the wider media debate – that unless there is content that is interesting and relevant to you, you will not bother to acquire the expertise or go to the expense to access it. Cable television operators around the world, including our very own in Australia, can tell us all about that. Given these facts, in order to satisfy the content demands of the food industry which is very fractured, the Internet is the perfect media to cater for the huge range of information needs cost-effectively. In less than a month from now the skeleton of a major food and beverage forum will be made public via the Internet called 'Foodtrack'.

In Internet parlance a forum is a managed space in the ether. If you like, it is like an electronic industrial path or perhaps a high-rise commercial building in the city with retail shops on the first floor, the food hall down in the basement, specialist suppliers and outlets, office space, childminding centre, the roof-top garden and so on.

'Foodtrack', we hope, will be the gateway to information on anything that's relevant to the food and beverage industry. If we go to the city building analogy, which now does not have to be on the corner of Pitt and Castlereagh Street in Sydney but rather floating above the earth with an international address, let's start with the food hall in the basement. The food hall will be the *Australian Food Finder* and all its spin offs. It will be the core, if you like, of 'Foodtrack', remembering the three lessons that I have learnt, namely that we have to have a mechanism to respond to frequent change, it has to be freely accessible and the information has to work hard.

The online version will be able to satisfy those demands. We've built a relational data base called 'The Food and Beverage Industry Data Base' that has, as part of its design, a template which initially suppliers, be they large or small, will have the ability to advise us of the changes of information by phone or fax or email. And instantly those changes will be able to be made to the data and available on the Internet via the 'Food and Beverage Industry Data Base'. Within twelve months, those suppliers who feel so inclined will be able to update their own

information remotely by coded access to the 'Food and Beverage Industry Data Base'. All information in 'Foodtrack' will be freely accessible by anyone on the Internet. We may have some paid services but they'll be bureau-style services for marketing intelligence research and so on. Basically I am operating on a principle that the content is free to the buyers or the viewers and that the sellers of the product are the people who pay. Finally the *Food Finder* will work hard for you in an online environment.

You'll be able to say I want apples, Granny Smith, my location is Tasmania. I want to export in October to Korea, or perhaps I am looking for baby beetroot, I'd prefer it if it were organic. I am in the Sydney metropolitan area, I need delivery within 24 hours. So it would be able to power through the information stored in it and be able to give you company or agent matches to your request. You'll click on the company logo or icon and up will come their home page. An intelligent electronic brochure, if you like, providing all the necessary details to enable you to make a purchase, either by phone, fax or email.

Ultimately you'll be even able to complete the transaction electronically through electronic commerce, banking online. The Advance Bank is already there now and they are allowing banking to occur. For exporters we have a deal, for example, which gives you an extent of how all of this can run. With Lloyds List, the shipping timetable people, we're looking at adding their timetable so that, for example, in the Korean apple request you can say I want to land the apples in Korea in October, my location is Tasmania. The data base will be able to tell you that your nearest seaport is Launceston and that Blue Line has a cargo ship departing on 15 October that lands in Korea on 29 October. You'll be able to send your email, place your booking and off you go.

You now begin to understand the power of the Internet to the food and beverage industry. Naturally this does not just apply to Australia – we're international now, no longer constrained by physical distribution of printed material with one-twentieth of the intelligence of the data online. We have modestly called our data base the 'Food and Beverage Industry Data Base', not the 'Australian Food and Beverage Industry Data Base' because it's capable of storing the information you're familiar with in the *Food Finder* on any supplier in any country in the world. While the stars are still in my eyes, we may as well go the whole hog with the dream. By clicking on say a country icon you can search the food products and information available in that country. Joint ventures with a company like ours operating in those markets will deliver the relevant content and, in about ten day's time, I'm travelling to Southeast Asia to put together the beginnings of negotiations for one of those joint ventures. There's huge international interest in this. But, if you remember that the 'Foodtrack' is only one part of this concept, and you can see it lends itself to be able to identify specialist suppliers, suppliers in organic creditation, Australian products and so on. We will spin out of the 'Food and Beverage Industry Data Base' specific print-base products as the content grows, for example an exhibition of the *Food Finder*. A special edition we are doing now for the hospitality industry, specifically directed at them, with suppliers providing products into the restaurants, pubs, clubs, hotels and so on. Live meat exporters to Southeast Asia, suppliers to the white tablecloth group and on it goes.

Moving up from the basement to the first floor the consumer-oriented services will include sites that will enable you to search by, for example, post codes, the retail outlets carrying a specific supplier's product. Mr Jones in Naremburn who is looking for the organic baby beetroot now puts in his post code 2065 and the nearest retail outlet carrying that product is Joanne at Northbridge. We'll have electronic chat sessions where say, a chef can host a session that may run over a few days responding to questions. And a sort of 'also known' as well, which will enable you to key in your understanding, or the terminology you're familiar with of a product, – using the example of the rock melon – and it will come up and tell you it is also known as a cantaloupe and so on. And this will be a huge boon to cooks especially using Asian vegetables. I don't know about you but I have a complete nightmare in that department trying to work out how that one piece of vegetable matter changes its name nine times across different outlets.

It will host consumer hotlines where complaints, and queries, can be posted publicly on a bulletin board. It will offer information services that support free-to-air or pay television or radio programs. For example, a radio or television program won't need to say any more, send your Reply Post envelope to PO Box 123, instead they'll be and be able to say come and see us at http://www.foodtrack.com.au and we'll be able to print the recipe or whatever piece of information you're seeking immediately off your computer in your room, office or whatever. I could just go on and on and on.

Quickly moving up the floors of the building to the commercial offices where we find the electronic headquarters or the home pages of George Weston

Foods, Golden Circle, George Manetta's Seafoods, Fruitex, Cadbury Schweppes, and so on, you are able to click on the company icon which you can also do in the *Food Finder* data base and get all sorts of details that range from annual report details to who the directors of the company are right through to the quality assurance programs that a particular company adheres to. They'll have pin number or password accessible areas say, for employees only or wholesale customers where the wholesale price lists will be displayed and are only accessible by pin number. A media centre that will allow a company to maintain its list of journalists, who they want to receive press or media releases and these will be automatically emailed or alternatively faxed.

Then moving up the building, there are, for example, the offices of the representative bodies and we are in discussion with many of these now. All with sites that are able to get disseminating information that is relevant either to their membership or to the broader community. There is a saving for these organisations to be able to communicate directly with their membership, post out membership forms, be able to put up project material for school children and teachers. The opportunities are phenomenal and many of these organisations are very excited by the prospect.

We haven't even got to education and training. The *Food Finder* was accepted as a recommended text in TAFE colleges when it was published in 1994 for those colleges offering hospitality and food technology courses, and they displayed interest in it. We have great interest in working with those organisations to ensure that we're able to accommodate the material that they specifically need. The childminding centre, if you like, will be the sort of food-related games and educational material. I think we have much to learn from the French commitment to taking food information about French products into French schools. I recall Stephanie Alexander doing something similar to that in Victoria I think last year. Perhaps we can be doing that online.

And finally the roof-top garden where the dreams can take place. This whole industry basically butts up against the tourism and cultural sectors. Regional culinary tourism has long been an interest of mine and I'm starting to contact organisations like the AHA calling for tenders for online services identified as 'pub getaway', where travel agents will be able to search online information about pub accommodation throughout Australia. A lot of these represented bodies who we're dealing with are wanting to provide that type of information back to the tourism industry.

Basically the aim is to make 'Foodtrack' a one-stop information shop or access point. In many cases we will develop the product ourselves. In other cases companies, individuals, will have developed content themselves outside 'Foodtrack' on the Internet. In these cases we intend to offer what we refer to as our 'corkage fee'. Basically what is called in Internet terms a hyperlink from 'Foodtrack' to their site, and in other cases we'll have an index of what is known in the Internet as related sites. I'm sure some of you have done food searches on the Internet. My searches have found a number of related sites that range from a food science site in Denmark, a nutrient databank of Canadian agri-web, to an online diet of vegetarianism called 'Veggies unite'. Lots of it is crap but some of it is fantastic, and part of what the service we'll be offering in 'Foodtrack' is sorting out those sites and basically telling you where you can find that information.

Finally, returning to where we began. How do we migrate the food and beverage industry onto the Internet? I can tell you with lots of hard work, relevant content, and a very long-term plan. Alongside all of this activity we're presenting to hundreds of food companies, representative bodies, we're in negotiations with modem and PC suppliers, Internet access providers and so on, to develop a sort of foundation connection pack. We're getting lots of interest and lots of support.

Probably one the most frequent questions that content providers ask is, 'Have you worked out how to make money out of this in order to survive?' I believe we have. Suppliers and sellers of those products will pay a basic registration fee of $500 a year to have all of their content and products and company information held – which will be accessible – and that is primarily a maintenance cost.

Secondly, funds come primarily from advertising and sponsorship in the form of home pages and site sponsorships and screen advertising. The model is not dissimilar to free-to-air television, free content advertising and so on. It is a long and ambitious path we're travelling, it's also incredibly exciting and my enthusiasm has to be great to overcome the suspicious and the cynical in the food and beverage industry.

This is the first time I have spoken publicly about our plans and I hope I have been able to give you some insight into how technology, and particularly the Internet, offers a truly powerful medium for all interested in the food and beverage industry, basically by ensuring free access to the information content that is relevant and exciting and constantly updated, a policy that does not deem anyone or any project a

competitor rather another site we need to promote in 'Foodtrack' – be it in or out of our electronic industrial park, with advertising and promotional opportunities like never before. I hope we will have found a way to deliver you power through greater knowledge of the food and beverage industry, so we can get on and do agri-tracking, sello-tracking, telly-tracking, garden-tracking. Thank you very much.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Chair: Elaine Chambers

ELAINE CHAMBERS:
Thank you very much indeed Dominique. As always, we have a time-constraint problem and I'd like to take two quick questions as the coaches are taking us to lunch. It is a vast and absorbing topic. No questions? Well, I think that just shows how well the subject was covered. Thank you very much indeed Dominique.

Food Finders: Barbara Sweeney and Greg Hodge prepare the Box Dinner.

A POVERTY LUNCH

Saturday 13 April

by Sean Moran

Cell Block Theatre

Corned Hoggett
Pease Pudding
Brussels Sprouts
Bread & Dripping

Wynns Coonawarra Estate Chardonnay 1995
Wynns Coonawarra Estate Shiraz Merlot 1993

With thanks to TAFE for their generous support

Darlinghurst Gaol, now East Sydney Technical College, was the first large gaol built in Australia and was called 'the New Gaol'. The very first building to be completed was the women's cell block, now the Cell Block Theatre.

In 1840, some seventy women were marched procession-like, manacled and chained together from the rotting wide, over-crowded gaol called the 'Smell Hole' at Circular Quay through the streets of Sydney, past Old Government House and the raucous crowds lining Bridge Street, across the Domain and up through the scrub to their new quarters on Darlinghurst Hill.

The women's cell block comprising seventy-eight double cells, was planned to house 156. In the 1850s, the period of the goldrush, as many as 450 women were confined there, leading to overcrowding, extreme discomfort, disease and all kinds of administrative difficulties.

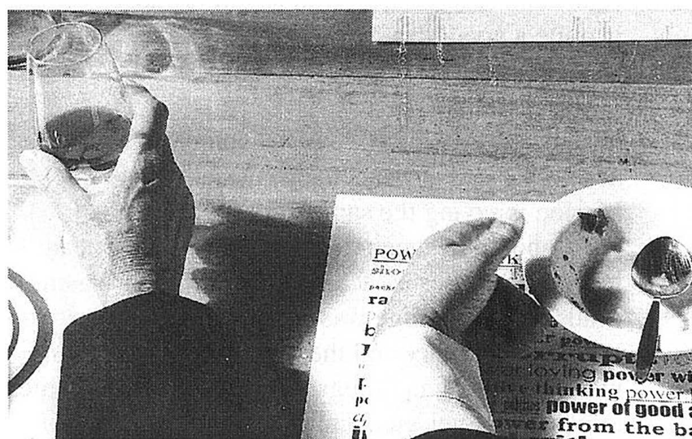
The central round house of the college housed the Chapel, the cells were on the first floor and the gaol bathhouse on the ground floor. The prisoners were led along underground tunnels from the Court House on Oxford Street and from Hyde Park Barracks where they were then deloused and bathed before being led to their various cells.

Between 1810 and 1912, seventy-nine people were executed on the site. Public executions were staged regularly. The gaol became a benchmark for misery, squalor, drunkenness and brutality. During World War I it was used as an internment camp for 'aliens'.

Today we will gatherer for a pre-lunch drink in the former exercise yard near the entrance of the Cell Block.

Alan, our security guard for the day, is happy to show people around the site and relate any tales – like the one about the inmate who killed seven husbands, and any of the ghost stories that abound. There was only one guard apparently who was brave enough to do the nightshift on his own.

Inspired by our convict past and the four years he spent at East Sydney Technical College, Sean Moran has created today's 'Poverty Lunch'. Sean began his professional cooking career in 1981, working in many restaurants including L'Aubergade, Bon Cafard, Berowra Waters Inn, Restaurant Manfredi, The Burdekin Dining Room, and Rockpool. In 1989, Sean was chef for Anders Ousback at the reopening of Taylor Square Restaurant and in 1991 opened the George Hotel Dining Room with Michael Robertson in his father's Waterloo pub. In 1993, Sean moved to the Grand Hotel Dining Room and currently runs Sean's Panaroma, I70 Campbell Parade, Bondi Beach.



A 'Poverty Lunch'.

CLOSING SESSION

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

MARION HALLIGAN One of the things that Tim, in fact his final point, which was on the overhead projector, I thought it was very important. It is the mention of food in stories, which of course is my particular approach, being a fiction writer.
But I was thinking that, in fact, our own past is a story. We can unfold the family who are interested in how mum and dad first met, and what brought them together, where they were and what happened.
I think this is a story, far from kind of being called history and put in the past, that we are going to be telling for a long time and I think it is important that we do keep rehearsing the details of it.

One of the things that I think is interesting about this symposium is the intellectual nature of it. I think perhaps Australia is moderately interested in this way. The people who like to cook also like to think about why they cook and how they do it but the story-telling part is, I think, immensely important and we shouldn't forget it. The other thing that I think is very interesting is that we do seem to be renewing ourselves. It's not just the same old guard.
There are new faces and there are young faces which is very interesting and so I think this kind of conversation where people can find out about the fights and struggles, as well as old friendships, is quite a good idea.

JOHN FITZPATRICK Just a comment as a newcomer and as very much an academic, I suppose Marion is saying the same thing. What she started with, about the generation of knowledge, I mean, it seems to me as an academic, the way in which academic knowledge was generated in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century was by splitting up things. By saying this is politics, this is sociology, etc., and that was a way then of saying, 'This is my patch, these are the received ideas and the axioms and so on and I don't have to talk to other people.' It also occurred, I think, in a very male-dominated area which was fundamentally separated from material practice and particularly from women's material practice in cooking and all these kinds of things. And my impression is that most academics know that is a hopeless way of organising. All the discipline boundaries have to be broken down. And there are constantly these attempts to establish disciplinary centres and what is striking about them is how powerful the disciplinary divisions remain and how difficult it is for people to really talk to each other across those kinds of things. Particularly the degree of the divorce still from what you might call material practice. What has been most striking for me in coming here is both the intellectual nature of the proceedings and those links that everybody has talked about. I think it is food which brings that out. Food production, food preparation.

BOB MacLENNAN If I understand it correctly, your definition, at the beginning, of 'gastronomy' was the understanding of everything that concerns us in so far as it sustains us. I listen to Hugh with his talk about health, balance, wellbeing and so on, and I also thought about the World Health Organisation's definition of 'health' as being a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing. I was just wondering whether one might sort of add to the definition of 'gastronomy', everything that concerns us insofar as it sustains us by contributing to our physical, mental, social and, if you like, ecological wellbeing. It is clear that food has to sustain us physically but it should also sustain us mentally in terms of the symbolism, the sensations that we obtain from it. But I think it might be useful in terms of our conflict in gastronomy to spell out the wellbeing as how it's done today.

SYMPOSIAST Not just to understand it?

BOB MacLENNAN Not just to understand it, but to take that on as a broader definition of what we mean by sustaining us, because it could sustain us only in one dimension, whereas we would like it to sustain us in multiple dimensions.

JOHN NEWTON What John was saying reminds me of – and I've told this story to a couple of you before – ringing the university here, actually a couple of years ago, and asking for and getting on to the history department and asking for the historian who was interested in food. And there was a long silence and this voice said, 'What does food have to do with history?' The other thing that strikes me, and I'm sure Ann will address it this afternoon, is that there seems to be an incredible fear of that confluence of senses and intellect, especially in this country … I don't know if it's puritanical or not, I don't know where it comes from.

ALAN SAUNDERS Can I just further add to John's point that I phoned Sydney University a couple of years ago and asked, was there anybody in the Fine Arts Department who could talk about food in art? And I was sent from extension, to extension to extension until finally some lowly minion who they had managed to collar came to the phone and said, 'Yeah, there's this guy, Alan Saunders, you might like to consult.' Which was extremely flattering which is

why I mention it to you now … but not terribly helpful.

SYMPOSIAST Perhaps it's up to us to explain to the rest of civilisation our real debt of pleasure.

MARIEKE BRUGMAN We probably should round-up unless someone urgently wants to address the symposium.

JEANETTE FRY My tendency is to press down on people and talk of institutionalisation as a way of controlling people and yet here we are and we've created our own institution. All of the things that I've said as negatives we are seeing as positives. We're living here together, we eat together, we eat the same food, we have little choice. I had to find the Vegemite this morning myself, very cunningly track it down. I'm only making a comment, but it is interesting – exactly the same situation can have totally different results. Here we choose to be together, to eat together, eat the same things and then talk our heads off about it and by talking about it and by sharing those thoughts with other people it seems to make it alright. Thanks.

Jeanette Fry and Lois Butt do Bondi.

THE BANQUET CHEFS AND MENU

Banquet by Chris Manfield & Lew Kathreptis

POWER

[ME. *poër*, *poeir*, *pouer*, a. AF. *poër*, *poair*, *pouair*, sb. use of vb. inf. *poeir*, *pouir*: – late pop. L. *potere*, repl. *posse* to be able.]

1. ability to do or act; capability of doing or effecting something.
2. (*usu. pl.*) a particular faculty of body or mind.
3. political or national strength; *the balance of power*.
4. great or marked ability to do or act; strength; might; force.
5. the possession of control or command over others; dominion; authority; ascendancy or influence.
6. political or social ascendancy or control; *the party in power*; *Black Power*.
7. military strength.
8. a state having national influence, esp. based on military strength; *the leading powers*.
9. vigour; energy.
10. anyone who or that which exercises authority or influence.
11. a state or nation having international authority and influence; *the great powers of the world*.
12. the powers that be, those in authority.

FOOD

Christine Manfield
Lew Kathreptis

ART DIRECTION & CHOREOGRAPHY

Mary Paul

COOKS

• Sophie • Meg • Russell • Virginia • Lauren

WAITERS

Margie Harris
• Lewis • Naras • Lisa • Drew • Fiona • Graham
• Anna • Ricardo • Lisa • Jerry • Robyn • Telly
• Briony • Oswaldo • Glen • Ben

PERFORMERS

Waiting Staff • Turkish Delights
• Tiffany • Lara • James • Mary
• Mistress Felina • Mistress Anastasia • Andrew
• Rodney • Nerissa • John

MAKE UP

• Jada • Annie

HAIR

• Yvette

COSTUMES

• Fabian (Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence)
• Judith (Mardi Gras)

WITH THANKS

• Maryjane • Roy • Greg • Stewart • Leone • Terry
• Con • Greg • Mark • Suzie

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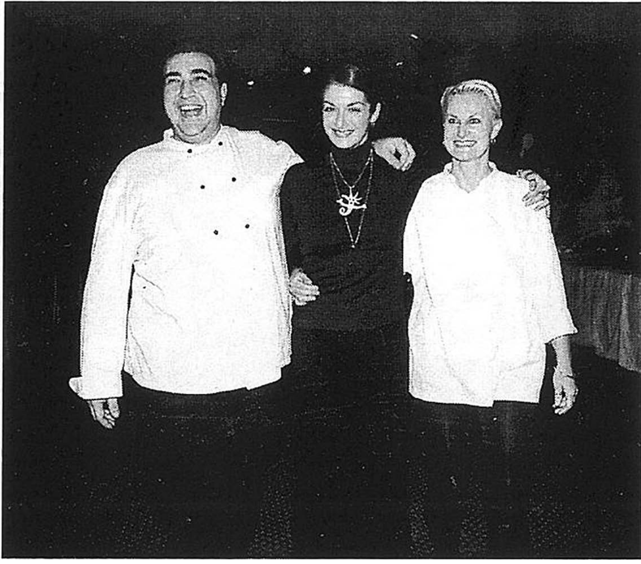
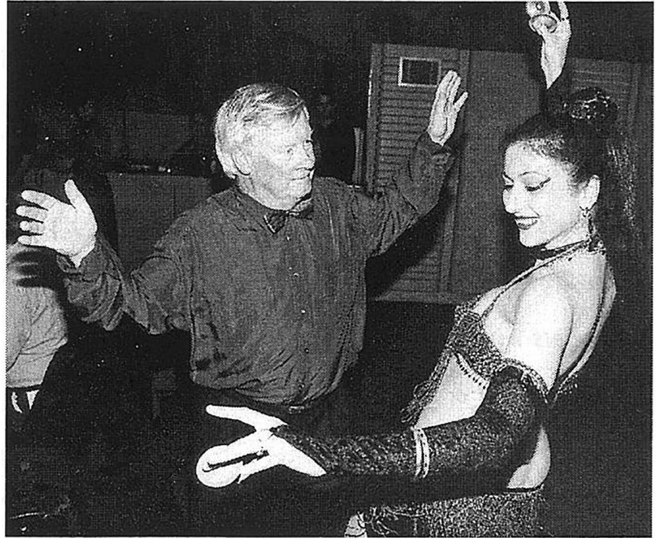
Opal Nero
Mephisto Leather
House of Fetish
Individual Wig

POWER PARTY PARADE



Lew Kathpeptis, Mary Paul and Chris Manfield take a power bow.



Graham Halligan working up an appetite.

High Communion.

Howard Nicholson, Tony Tan and friends.

BAYWATCH BREAKFAST, BUBBLES & BONDI

Sunday 14 April

by Laif Etournaud

Brioche

Passionfruit Curd

Kirks Plum Walnut & Orange Jam

Tomato Confiture

Sheep's Milk Yoghurt

Fresh fruit

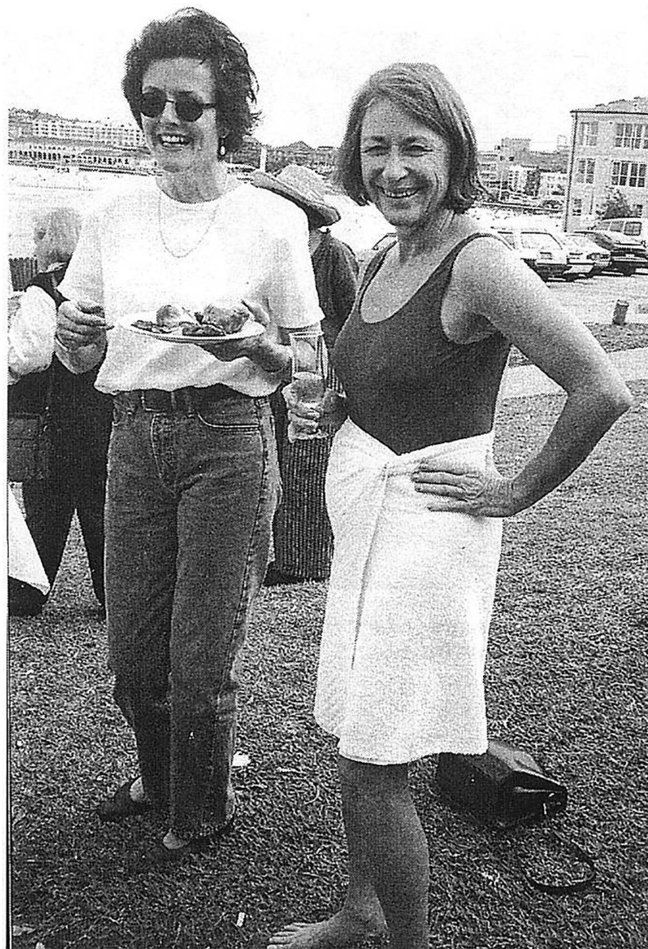
Pikelets with Orange Segments,

Sandalwood & Rose Extracts

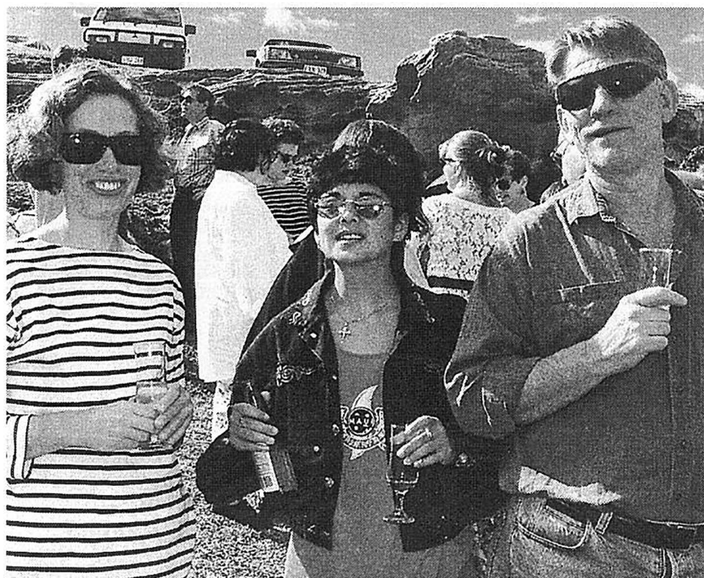
Coffee

Domaine Chandon Brut 1993

Laif Etournaud began his apprenticeship at Taylor Square Restaurant in 1989, moved to Berowra Waters Inn in 1990, Bistro Moncur in 1993 and in 1995 opened Onzain at Bondi Beach.



Bathing Belles Hilary Wright and Barbara Santich.



Baywatch Stars: Jennifer Hillier, Tina Muncaster and John Fitzpatrick.

Laif Etournard takes a breakie break with Maria Kelly.

THE NINTH SYMPOSIUM OF AUSTRALIAN GASTRONOMY ACKNOWLEDGES THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF:

ABC Radio National

Jane Adams Communications

Australia on a Plate

Ian Bersten, Belaroma

Peter Bourne

Brown Brothers

Buttercup Bakeries

Campbells

Cape Mentelle Vineyards

Centre for Continuing Education, University of Sydney

Centre for Performance Studies

Peter Conistis, Cosmos Restaurant

Cooee Tea

The Cookery Book

CWA, Young

Serge Dansereau & The Regent of Sydney

Darling Mills Restaurant & Farm

Domaine Chandon

East Sydney TAFE College

Estate Wine Distributors

Laif Etournaud, Onzain

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Grolsch

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Peter Howard

Huntington Estate

Huon Hooke

Gillian Hurley Gordon & Associates

International Olive Oil Council

Jacaranda Wiley

Karambin Orchard

Lew Kathreptis, Botanic Gardens Restaurant

Kirks

Tim Knappstein

Bruce Kraig Food for Thought Productions

Christine Manfield & Margie Harris, Paramount

Daniele Mattioli Photography

Mitchelton

Montrose Wines

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St John's College, University of Sydney

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Sydney Opera House

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David Thompson, Darley Street Thai

2K Down Mineral Water

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University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury

Vienna Beef Company

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Norma Willis, Juste Nous

The Wine Society

Wynns

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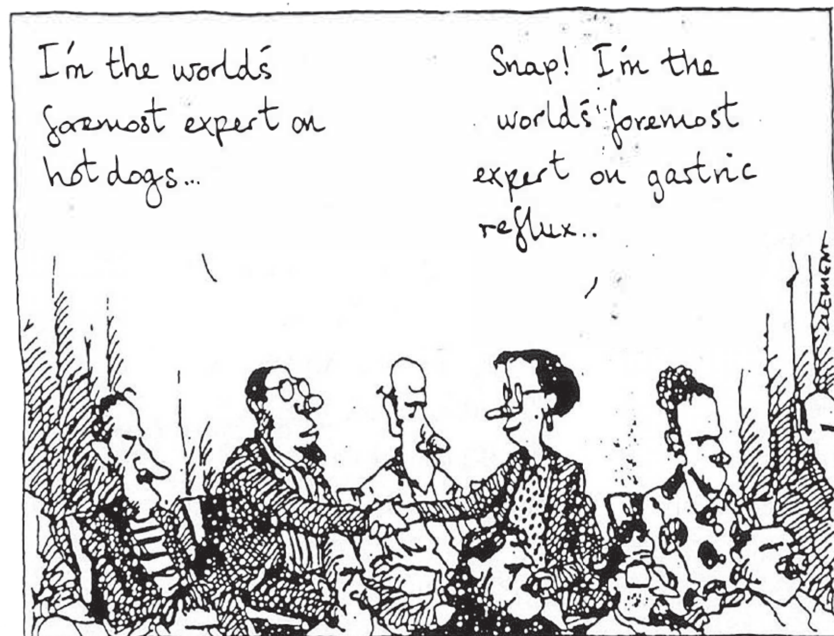
NINTH
SYMPOSIUM OF AUSTRALIAN GASTRONOMY

FOOD & POWER



Media Report

St John's College, University of Sydney
10 - 14 April, 1996

NINTH
SYMPOSIUM OF AUSTRALIAN GASTRONOMY

'FOOD AND POWER'

MEDIA COVERAGE

∞∞∞∞∞

§ ABC 7 30 Report

§ ABC Review

§ Channel 9 Today Show

§ ABC Radio National

§ ABC Radio 2BL

§ Radio 2GB

§ Radio 5DN

§ Radio 5AN

§ Radio 2HD

§ Sydney Morning Herald

§ Financial Review

§ Advertiser

§ The Age

§ Sun Herald

§ Canberra Times

§ Courier Mail

§ Hospitality

§ Inside Dining

§ Wentworth Courier

§ AAP

§ Food Media Club

SHORT BLACK

EDITED BY JOHN NEWTON
ILLUSTRATED BY ROD CLEMENT

Facelifts, openings

1996 is hotting up – lots of openings and reopenings this week. Vetro, an interesting new space masterminded by Stan Sarris (brains behind the Paradise Cafe chain), is a Seidler-designed addition to Seidler's own Grosvenor Place, a round, all-glass structure with one solid wall softened up with lots of curves by designer Grant McConnell (Cassis). Also – is this a first for Sydney? – a unisex toilet, reluctantly approved by a slightly suspicious council. Food from Nicky Jenkins (ex Bardellis in New Zealand) and Mocopan coffee blended by Sarris himself, who describes Vetro as "taking the cafe into a realm of elegance", just right for the surrounding heavy suits. Licensed, 7 am to 6 pm Monday to Friday, Grosvenor Place, 225 George Street, 247 8787. More modest, but a welcome addition to the constantly improving Crows Nest scene, is Dish, a new outing for Phillip Waddington (ex Merrony's, ex Launceston Place, London). A simple, refined table with dishes such as grilled octopus with a toasted almond and green olive tapenade, and lamb cutlets with roast onion, peas and tarragon in a space to match. BYO, non-smoking, lunch Wed-Fri, dinner Tues-Sat. 47 Willoughby Road, 9906 2275. Still northside, Mark Scanlan has reopened Milson's after a facelift from Brooke Picker Design, with seating increased to 90, a casual food bar area during the weekday afternoons (3-6 pm) featuring freshly shucked oysters, and Sunday brunch. 17 Willoughby Street, Kirribilli, 9955 7075... Finally, Robert O'Callaghan has reopened the well-regarded Revielle in Balmain, also with increased capacity in a new room upstairs, and a redesigned kitchen. Mon-Sat, 7 pm to late, 79 Darling Street, Balmain, 555 8874.

For serious food-lovers

MORE fun than it sounds, the 9th Symposium of Australian Gastronomy will take place in St John's College, University of Sydney, between April 10 and 14, dedicated, as the press handout says, to "serious explorations of contemporary and historical food, nutrition and other gastronomical issues". That's why one of the speakers is food historian Bruce Kraig from Roosevelt University in Chicago, described as America's foremost hot dog expert. The theme for this event is "Power and Food", and speakers will include Alan Saunders (on Puritanism and Food), Spanish food and performance artist Alicia Rios and Indonesian food writer Sri Owen. Thematic (and delicious) dinners will be cooked by Serge Dansereau (Kable's), Sean Moran (Sean's Panaroma), Peter Conistis (Cosmos), David Thompson (Darley Street Thai), Leif Etournaud (Onzain), with a final banquet by Paramount's Chris Manfield in tandem with Lew Kathreptis (Botanic Gardens Restaurant). That final banquet has been the subject of some controversy over the years, perhaps most notably Gay Bilson's still-talked-about tablecloth of tripe at Gluttony in Canberra in 1993. Two ways of going: $650 includes all meals, wine, sessions, documentation and accommodation at St John's College, $550 is the non-resident fee. To book (better hurry, places are filling fast) call Sara Adey on 660 5666.

Crossing boundaries

LAST weekend's Mardi Gras was an apposite launch date for the Drag Cafe (top floor, 169 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst, 369 4371), and the return to Sydney of drag revue and dinner. The food, described as "pan Asian, graciously served by glamorous waitpersons" is from chef Naomi (ex Bagel Bar), with shows by legendary drag queen choreographer and showstopper Miss 3D. Manager Tanya Bond (previously with the Black Market and the Hellfire Club) tells us there'll be special gay acts every week. Get cross, get dressed and go-go.

What's hot, what's not

YOU'VE noticed the multitudinous varieties of chillies popping up in good greengrocers around town; now you can learn how to tell hot from hurt, and how to harness the heat. In conjunction with The Chilli Festival at the Fragrant Garden, Erina, March 9 and 10, the Orchard Road Cooking School is planning a series of monthly chilli classes starting with a chilli identification class on Saturday, March 30, $50 a head, lunch and tequila tasting included. Call 412 2926 for details. While we're on cooking classes, last week's column had the Elise Pascoe School starting in May – in fact, it starts this month. For details, call Elise now on 363 0406.

Bubbles galore

THERE'S not a lot Domaine Chandon's head winemaker, Dr Tony Jordan, doesn't know about putting bubbles into wine, and he's speaking at the Domaine Chandon dinner to be held at CBD next Tuesday. Five courses, with a different champagne for each one, and one (chef Luke Mangan's signature rabbit tart) with the Greenpoint chardonnay. $85 a head, book on 299 8911, 75 York Street, Sydney.

Cast-iron cookware

THE cast-iron griddle is the best invention since the bagel – an indoor barbie that straddles your stove top and sears meat, seafood and vegs to perfection. Le Creuset, retailing at about $130, has long been a popular brand. But down south in Ballarat, Peter Charlton, of Furphy's Finery, has designed and made the Uluru Cooking Plate, which compares favourably. Not only is it a thicker gauge cast than the Le Creuset, and 50 mm bigger so it sits perfectly on the standard Oz

Taster

ROSLYN GRUNDY

Pastry perfection

TAKE flour, eggs, sugar, butter and milk, add a dollop of expertise and a pinch of magic and you have a recipe for perfect pastries.

Loretta Sartori, one of the country's foremost pastry chefs, will share her experience at the Age Epicure Master Class, to be held at the Grand Hyatt on 16 and 17 March.

Sartori has cooked her way around Australia and Europe, with stints in some of the city's best-known restaurants, including Chinois and the Stokehouse.

In a session aimed at sweet tooths, Sartori will demonstrate the techniques needed to make such nostalgic favorites as neenish tarts, lamingtons, honey truffles and sponges.

"Pastry-making is a dying art form," says Sartori. "The beautiful little cakes that we remember from our childhood are becoming rarer because of mass-production."

For information about Master Class, phone 9696 9988.

Cheap feast

QUICK quiz. Name the cafe that serves eggs cooked 15 ways. Or the vegetarian restaurant recommended by animal rights advocate Peter Singer. Or the restaurant that claims it's the first to offer Indian street food.

Full marks if you guessed Cafe Sweetheart in South Melbourne, the White Lotus in West Melbourne and Fitzroy's Guru Da Dhaba respectively.

If you didn't have a clue, you

Loretta Sartori: top pastry chef.

Ready to Fang

THE restaurant is not yet open and already bookings are pouring in. Madam Fang, the latest endeavor by the team who brought you Isthmus of Kra, Monsoon and Shakahari, opens its doors just in time for the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival's popular Restaurant Week (18-24 March).

Named after a Thai-Chinese madam, the 60-seat restaurant will offer a cross-cultural experience, says one of the owners, John Dunham. The food will be influenced by Asia and the Mediterranean. Madam Fang is at 27-29 Crossley Street, city. Tel: 9663 3199 or 9663 3511.

Brain food

HERE'S some food for thought. Next month, Sydney hosts the Symposium of Australian Gastronomy, a four-day conference entitled *Food and Power*, exploring contemporary and historical food, nutrition and other gastronomical matters of moment.

Visiting speakers include American hotdog expert (and food historian) Bruce Kraig, Indonesian food writer Sri Owen and Spanish food and performance artist Alicia Rios. Australian food academics, industry regulators, chefs and hospitality educators share the bill.

Between sessions, conference-goers will be fed by Sydney's top chefs.

The fee is $650, which includes meals, wines, accommodation at St John's College and all conference documentation. The non-resident fee is $550.

The conference takes place from 10 to 14 April. For information, phone the convener, Sara Adey, on (02) 660 5666 or fax (02) 660 8313.

THE AGE - EPICURE
5 March 1996

THE YABBY

Picks over food scraps

Having returned from the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival just this morning (Tuesday), my head and palate are still spinning from four days packed with a succession of wonderful meals and empassioned, brilliant artisans and thinkers. A couple of random highlights . . . opera and Italian food in the just-renovated George ballroom; dinner at Stella, including a brilliant dish of crisp-skinned duck and a table of cheeses from Australia's specialist makers, all individual, many wonderful; the integrity and deep knowledge of Chianti winemaker Poalo di Marchi; a perfect breakfast of Tuscan bread, ricotta, honey and berries at Il Bacaro; and a lunch of Yarra Valley produce and wines on the verandah of a 150-year-old private home. More later, but the festival continues until Sunday, so any excuse to head east is a good one.

The foodie trail then heads north for the ninth symposium of Australian Gastronomy in Sydney from April 10 to 14. The theme "Food and Power" will be chewed over by international guests US historian Bruce Kraig, Spanish performance artist Alicia Rios and Indonesian food writer Sri Owen, as well as local experts. Power breakfasts, lunches and dinners will be cooked by leading Sydney chefs, including Sean Moran, David Thompson and Chris Manfield. The symposium began in Adelaide and attracts a national audience. For further information write to convener Sara Adey at 134 Glebe Point Road, Glebe, NSW 2037, or call (02) 660 5666.

SIMON WILKINSON

THE ADVERTISER
20 March 1996

VISIONARIES

USTRALIA will be honoured oday by the arrival of the orld's greatest living expert on the history and philosophy of the hot dog. He is Bruce Kraig, Professor of European History at Roosevelt University, Chicago, who is here to give the keynote address at the Symposium of Australian Gastronomy * being held at Sydney University from Thursday. Kraig's speech is on the serious theme of "Food and Power", but his private passion is the frankfurt in a roll – not so much because of its flavour but because of what it symbolises. The emotional significance of the hot dog in American culture far exceeds that of the meat pie in Australia.

Kraig says hot dogs were originally churned out as "industrial food for the masses", but they turned into "the ultimate democratic dish – wet, salty, chewy, and able to be eaten fast". Americans mythologise them as the symbol of equality – rich and poor alike can sit in the stands at a baseball match and chew on a dog. Because they have no flavour, they do not offend anybody, but they allow freedom of the individual to add mustard, tomato sauce, pickles, onions, cucumbers, relish, peppers, sauerkraut, or chilli (or all at once, as is the fashion in Chicago).

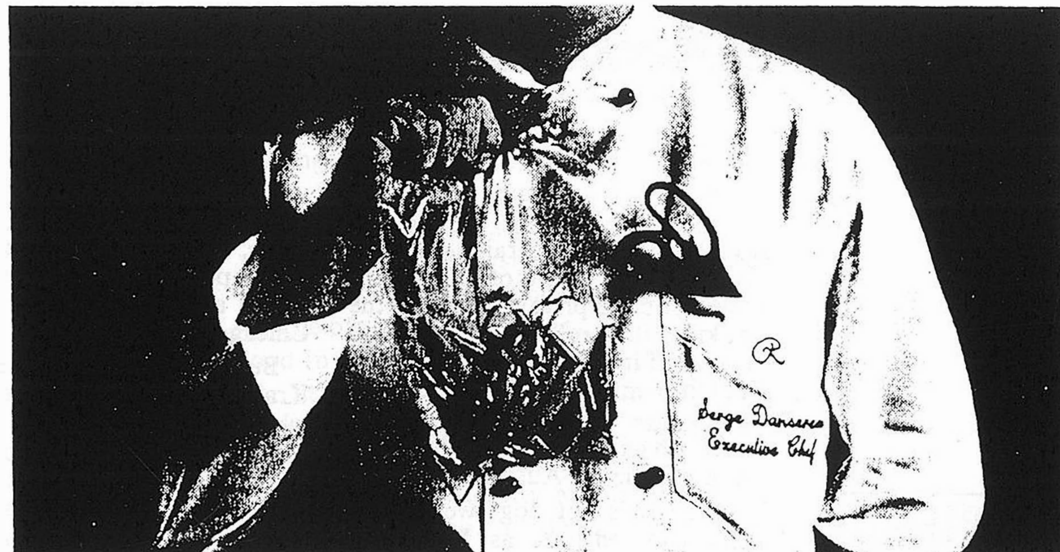
But what is actually *in* a hot dog? Kraig says the roll should be soft white dough, and the frankfurt would usually consist of ground beef or pork; sugar or sweet corn syrup; black pepper; paprika; spices such as nutmeg, mace or coriander; up to 30 per cent fat and 2 per cent salt. He does not trust Australian frankfurt manufacturers to get it right, so he is bringing with him a couple of hundred (uncooked) American hot dogs to teach the food experts at the conference how the real thing should look and taste.

* *For further details on the Symposium of Gastronomy, you can phone Sara Adey on 660-5666.*

SYDNEY MORNING HERALD
9 April, 1996

THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD
TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 1996

Beggar's banquet gives chefs a taste of power



CUT LUNCH . . . Serge Dansereau's vacuum-packed vision of future food. Photograph by SAHLAN HAYES

ALAN SAUNDERS savours some adventurous meals with a message.

SOME of Australia's keenest palates paid good money to eat warmed-up food off tables covered in sheets of black builders' plastic in Sydney last week.

And that was just Thursday's dinner. Lunch on Saturday was even more confronting. They had to line up, like those disgruntled queues of convicts in every prison movie you've ever seen, and their food was slopped cursorily onto cheap plates. This sort of weirdness can mean only one thing: another Symposium of Australian Gastronomy.

Since the first symposium in Adelaide 12 years ago, these gatherings of cooks, writers and people who just like food have combined serious, sometimes esoteric, discussion with some distinctly off-the-wall eating.

The theme of this year's gathering, held mostly at St John's College at the University of Sydney, was food and power. According to Sara Adey, of Darling Mills Restaurant, who chaired the organising committee, the meals were there to reflect either power or the lack of it. Hence Thursday's Greek Easter lunch provided by Peter Conistis, of Cosmos Restaurant, which represented the power of religion, and the Thai picnic prepared on Friday by David Thompson, of Darley Street Thai – a lot of chilli and garlic, very powerful in a fundamental way.

The brief given to Sean Moran, of Sean's Panaroma in Bondi, was to treat the symposiasts as though they had no power at all. The result was the poverty lunch at one of his old colleges, East Sydney TAFE in Darlinghurst.

The venue certainly looks powerful: the TAFE is housed in sandstone buildings that used to be a prison. Summoned rudely from the lawns outside, the symposiasts crept into the Cell Block Theatre with their bowls held before them, like grown-up Oliver Twists.

The food was basic but, of course, superior basic. There was hogget, specially corned for Moran by his butcher, pease pudding and everybody's least-loved vegetable, the brussels sprout (according to Moran, the sprouts were a challenge which he met elegantly by slicing them and cooking them slowly with onions). The bread was served with that old below-stairs favourite, dripping, but, again, this was an upmarket version, roasted with rosemary and garlic.

The really powerful, of course, control the future, and for a dinner that spoke of what's to come, the symposium turned to one of Sydney's most powerful and influential chefs, Serge Dansereau, of the Regent of Sydney.

His vision of the future embodied hydroponics and hygiene. In his hotel kitchens, he cooked up white breast of farmed duck with hydroponic vegetables and pink lady potatoes, then vacuum-packed them for reheating. At the college, the symposium committee, suitably kitted out in surgical gear, placed before each diner a little box made of silver plastic containing the warmed-up vacuum packs and a small pair of black scissors with which to snip his or her way into the food.

The loudest statement of all was a banquet put on at the Opera House by Chris Manfield, of Paramount, and Lew Kathreptis, of the Botanic Gardens Restaurant. Penned-in like cattle between red ribbons, the diners were ordered from the forecourt into the Opera House by staff clad in black uniforms and wielding truncheons. The food, superbly executed, was accompanied by a diverse floor show: black-robed bishops serving caviar as a communion offering, belly dancers, sailors waiting tables to the sound of the Village People, and a lot of black leather and bondage. "Very Sydney," snorted a Victorian symposiast. It was, and pretty powerful, too.

GOOD LIVING

Editor Lisa Hudson
Phone 282 2515 Fax 282 2481

Advertising Carolyn Stephens
Phone 282 2088 Fax 282 1748

SYMPOSIUM OF AUSTRALIAN GASTRONOMY

DINING STEPHEN DOWNES

Food for thought

THAT pharaoh of flavour, Max Lake, told me he wouldn't miss them for the world. He'd been to every one. If he could take away a single new idea he was happy, said the winemaker-surgeon. Today, he added, the Ninth Symposium of Australian Gastronomy had already given him three or four.

I'd never bothered reporting on this roughly biennial, three-day gastro-gabfest mainly because I'd once scanned the proceedings of the first. One day though, I decided, I'd have to crack my duck. The day had come.

The ninth's theme was food and power. Heavy stuff! The politics of potatoes, the wrestle between professionals and amateurs to hook our depleted fish stocks, how poor food can be used by an institution to control young offenders.

But the speakers I saw stuck to their theses – even if some had tenuous connections to the theme. In the Gothic halls of Sydney University's St John's College we heard Tim Flannery of the Australian Museum tell us why koalas are pretty brainless – to save energy. Working a mind uses enormous amounts of power. Koalas have apparently evolved their walnut-sized organs so that they can sit in trees all day getting high on eucalyptus leaves. But what I wanted to know was if, long ago, they had had big brains, organised a symposium and decided – in a flash – that exertion was an eight-letter word.

Dr Flannery's key points were excellent. He told us that Australia's land and sea were poor, ocean stocks in a "state of exhaustion and collapse". Out of this kind of poverty emerged the paradox of mega-diversity. In fact, Australia was one of only eight "mega-diverse" regions in the world. He argued that our potentially huge range of foodstuffs should influence our cooking (which is, as we know, already happening). Then he suggested encouraging farmers to cash in by cultivating kangaroo, emu and possum. "Rain-indexed" loans would help them tap potential. What might have been valuable at this point did not follow: the problem of new foods isn't producing them but selling them. A forum – including growers and relevant bureaucrats and ministers – might have agreed that if Australia is to market high-valued-added diversity it needs its own food culture (not the US's) and people in power who love eating and drinking at its best. I predict it's at least a generation away.

Vic Cherikoff of Bush Tucker Supply taught us that if you want to keep flies off your meat, store it near a "green ants' nest". The ants cover the meat and the blowies can't get a look in. (They apparently don't want to.) Filled with such tips, his slide show demonstrated the key role of women in Aboriginal cooking. Pearl Wymara of the University of Western Sydney's Aboriginal Unit gave us the flavour of growing up in a surprising "Garden of Eden" – Cape York Peninsula. She spoke touchingly of wild apples, cashews, gooseberries, turtles, fish and crabs.

Dr Lake himself took us through the anatomy of flavour, drawing on the less is more paradox, which I curiously enough discovered and revealed as gastro-law a few weeks ago (*AFR*, April 4).

He touched on the power politics of sugar and here, again, some kind of colloquium that included the people who make the decisions would have added icing to the cake.

James Bergan of the University of Western Sydney's Centre for Advanced Food Research outlined the body's dietary needs. I was surprised to learn that a 70kg man "uses and recycles" 64kg daily of the chemical fuel ATP (Adenosine-TriPhosphate). But Dr Bergan began to shock when he summarised the trend towards "functional foods" – imitation cheese, genetically altered tomatoes, soy milk, vegetarian hamburgers and "foodaceuticals". At that juncture I would have liked the people devising and approving these things to have explained themselves.

Dr Lake: The anatomy of flavour

For a long and jolly dinner we were dispersed into groups, each to prepare a "national" meal for another. And there was much fine eating and a surprising amount of drinking.

My overall conclusion? I had a great time. What I saw was interesting and valuable gullet-gazing by more or less the same group of people who do it every couple of years. But I also saw missed opportunity: the symposium could be an important political and educative tool when we desperately need one. It's a notion that might be worth considering for next time. ■

SYDNEY MORN NG HERALD
25 May 1996

All you can eat

BEHIND THE LINES
DON ANDERSON

"IF I READ another book about eating and sex I'll vomit," a woman exclaimed at the recent 9th Symposium of Australian Gastronomy. Madam, read no further. If I hear yet another academic symposiast blathering on about the hot-dog as an American cultural signifier, I'll go down with a severe attack of logorrhoea.

What is gastronomy? "The confluence of the senses and the intellect," as one symposiast elegantly formulated. I have been overwhelmed in recent weeks by the confluence of senses and intellect in Australian and British fiction. How else account for the intensely physical presence of food in such a cerebral work as David Brooks's textually lubricious *The House of Balthus* (Allen & Unwin). Consider the professor's loving preparation of cock soup.

"Tomorrow he will go to the markets for his usual weekly supplies, and then across the river for the six blood-red combs. These he will pound with coarse-ground black pepper, slice lengthwise with his sharpest knife, and stir in to marinate amongst the *chipotles* . . . *Cock soup*, he thinks again, . . . *the soup of generals, dictators, conquistadors*, but also, in celebration, of those who have suffered, of those who have chased them away."

The Winter 1995 issue of the British magazine *Granta* (no. 52), devoted to *Food: the Vital Stuff*, features text by Graham Swift, J. M. Coetzee, Margaret Visser, Chitrita Banerji and Romesh Gunesekera. Its cover is a loving colour reproduction of sushi, looking for all the world like wonderful worms and seductive sexual parts. It also includes a long extract from John Lanchester's justly celebrated debut novel, *The Debt to Pleasure* (Pan Macmillan), which begins disarmingly enough: "This is not a conventional cookbook." Indeed, it is not a cookbook at all.

One might say of Alan Saunders's *a is for apple* (Heinemann) that it is "not a conventional encyclopedia" but it is, this alphabetically arranged textual feast, the confluence of the intellect and senses that anyone who has heard the author's *Food Program* on ABC Radio National would anticipate. From the conclusion of "R is for Revolution":

"Damien Pignolet agrees that nouvelle cuisine usefully encouraged people to think more laterally about food, but he's worried that it has left us a generation of cooks who don't understand the use of fat and salt: 'try to cook something in water, without salt, and expect it to express some dignity of flavour – forget it.' This, alas, is so often the legacy left to us by the terrible simplifiers of revolution: a bland Generation X with more freedom than they know what to do with."

PERMIT me to recommend to Generation Xers, who surely need a rest from the excesses of Grunge, the more reflective pleasures of Julie Capaldo's *Love Takes You Home* (Mandarin), subtitled "a novel in 13 delicious meals", boasting such chapter titles as: "Pride sinks gnocchi"; "To forget troubles eat fritelle"; "To remember home – pigeon in a pan". Also recommended to know-nothings is Beverley Farmer's latest Australian-Greek novel, *The House in the Light* (UQP), with its emphasis on a peasant cuisine, which restaurateur and reviewer (notably of Lanchester's *Debt to Pleasure*) Gay Bilson has formidably argued Australia lacks.

An excess of decorousness ought not lead one to fail to mention Linda Jaivin's unspeakable – not at all the same as unreadable – *Eat Me* (Text), a book which can hardly be quoted in a family newspaper and may just have been the book the irate symposiast cited at the head of this colon – I mean column! – had in mind. But Jaivin's witty novel is smart enough to contain its own critique:

"A veritable gorgonzola of a book, its stench as overpowering as its narrative is underwhelming. Like the vegan mentioned in Chapter 2, this reviewer couldn't bring herself to swallow."

Which may be a trifle unfair to gorgonzola, if not to vegans.

The apparently unavoidable trope of food and fellatio presents itself in Amanda Lohrey's *Camille's Bread* (Angus & Robertson) – page 114, if you must. But Lohrey's calm, forceful novel is fair to vegans. Indeed, her male central character is much more complex and interesting than the macrobiotic SNAG some reviewers took him for. Lohrey shows how tactile, how textually sexy the nouns of food can be:

"The pickled limes, the bonito flakes, the opaque blocks of agar agar, the buckwheat soba; kuzu noodles, fruit kanten, bunya nuts, bean-thread noodles, kombu strips, nori, shiitake and hiijki are clearly not mysteries to him."

I am about to embark on the new, two-volume, 1770-page translation of Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities* (Knopf). I therefore thank Amanda Lohrey's Stephen for this observation apropos the earlier (1953) translation of Musil's Modernist classic:

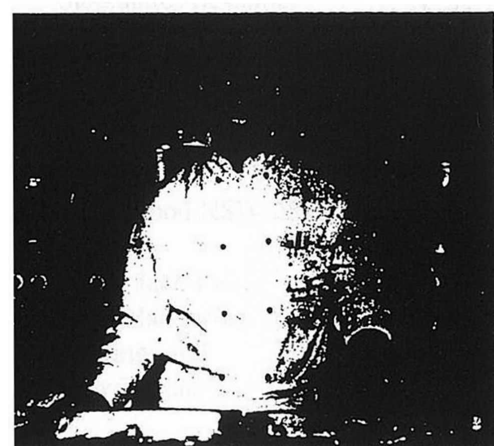
"Curious, isn't it, how Musil could write three volumes and 986 pages and never tell you once what his characters eat. These people are ethereal sprites; they speak the poverty of a philosophy that is not grounded in the body."

Less Musil, more muesli, perhaps?

ney—The venerable Oxford Symposium on d and Cooking may have inspired the Sympo- n of Australian Gastronomy, but they do things ferently Down Under. Very. Oxford's Aussie nterpart is a highly original, exuberant, and ir- rent four-day moveable food and talk fest con- ding with a devilishly clever banquet that keeps ple buzzing until the next can-you-top-this fab 18 months later.

the ninth Symposium, held here in April, the ne was "Power and Food." One hundred chefs, d writers, and academics settled in on the cam- of St. John's College to hear papers on topics ging from medievalist and food critic Dr. Bar- a Santich's discourse on "Royal Power and Gas- nomic Innovation" to an illustrated talk by Vic erikoff of Bush Tucker Supply Company about sh Foods and Aboriginal Food Power."

he keynote address was delivered by an Ameri- , Bruce Kraig, professor at Roosevelt University



ge Dansereau and Stephanie Alexander at the Box Dinner. Each group devised a menu from on diterranean countries.

Chicago and head of The Culinary Historians of icago. Kraig discussed various types of power re- ed to food—environmental, political, eco- mic, cultural—from Mesopotamia, where the gs controlled irrigation and food supply, to Mc- nald's, which sells the American dream to the t of the world.

As part of an ambitious and audacious program nposiasts were bused to a "poverty" lunch in mer jail; attended a Futurist *sous vide* dinner ere they grumbled over "Breast of Artifici eminated Duck with Hydroponic Vegetables npled Chicago-style hot dogs; and gulped dur- the entrée-course S&M show at the Power o od and Sex banquet in the Sydney Opera use, where waiters in drag served a phallic ssert finale.

At the first Symposium, held in 1984, renowned Sydney restaurate set the tone for future conferences acterized Australia as "an upstart cu with a lack of food traditions but a that the "theoreticians, practioner ate amateurs" in attendance could

It's evident that they've succeede cellent food books by symposium st display. Cherry Ripe, whose 1993 urged Australians to cast off their ority complex, also wrote—with au teacher Elise Pascoe doing the recip *the Beautiful Cookbook* (1995). *My Fo* cuisine of revered chef **Cheong Li** **laide Hilton**, who recreated a Last S at the 1990 Symposium.

Stephanie Alexander, who runs that bears her name in Melbourn the continent to write *Stephanie's A* *ling and Tasting. Paramount Cooking* fusion flavors of **Christine Manfie**

sleek, chic **Paramount** restaurant shared the preparation of this year **Lew Kathreptis**, chef at the **Bo** **Restaurant**, also in Sydney.

Among the other prominent Sy produced meals were **Serge Danse** **gent Hotel**, who prepared the cau Dinner. (A decade ago, Dansereau first chefs to support local food p. Regent's **Kables** restaurant, consi Australian favorite for local power the best of the country's **fish**, lamb

For a Thai picnic lunch on th **David Thompson**, chef/owner o **Thai**, who reads ancient Thai text but forgotten recipes, tossed up a paya salad with dried prawns, pea and prepared a cured pork dish with ginger, shallots, raw vegetables, and steamed sticky rice.

Then it was back to the cavernous St. John's kitchen to prepare the "Box Dinner." Attendees were divided into teams of 13 and each given a box of ingredients from which to devise a menu from one of seven Mediterranean countries. Each group also decorated its table and served its meal to another group. Initial confusion quickly gave way to the rhythms of chopping and the sizzle of saucepans as innate professional efficiency prevailed. Adelaide caterer **Cath Kerry** and her Tunisian team steamed couscous and whipped up a wonderful lamb with saffron and raisins. Stephanie Alexander, draped in toga, served the Greek-themed meal, and everyone raved about the food.

The next day's program included talks on "Puritanism and Food," the "Power of Food as a Symbol in Japan," the "Power of the Symposium," and two off-site meals. Political power was implicit in the "poverty" lunch at the Cell Block Theatre, a former prison where **Sean Moran** of **Sean's Panaroma** on nearby Bondi Beach served up a "retro-comfort" meal of corned hogget (between lamb and mutton) with herbed Brussels sprouts and mashed peas, and rhubarb with custard. "Prison guards" rushed in to harass the crowd.

It was a good warm-up for the Power of Food and Sex banquet. No sooner had everyone gathered for drinks on the Opera House steps than they were confronted by actors dressed as Russian soldiers who emerged from a 1950s limo, corralled them with a rope, and escorted them into the darkened dining area. Four "bishops" performed communion over caviar and toast, the appetizer for a sexually suggestive menu that included mussels on a bed of black seaweed, a chicken breast in broth embedded with half a hard-boiled egg, and a cream-filled dessert cone that the waiters served first to the men. Musclemen clad in black leather carried in a woman bound in chains, Adam and Eve cavorted in the (almost) buff, and all the waiters jumped onto the tables to dance.

The 1996 grand finale will probably go down in the annals as one of the most unusual, on a par with Gay Bilson's banquet in Canberra in 1993. It was held at the National Gallery of Australia during a Surrealist exhibit. The table was covered end to end with tripe, and guests were served a meal of flesh (steak tartare), bones (marrow), and blood (sausage).

The Australian books mentioned may be ordered through Kitchen Arts & Letters (212/876-5550) or Books for Cooks (800/355-CHEF).

—Meryle Evans

Gone fishing

Better control of recreational fishing is needed to avoid critical depletion of Australia's diverse fish resources, writes **Stephen Downes**.

At times, the stern of the boat was bathed in blood. It was great sport, but I suspect all four of us holding rods occasionally felt a twinge of remorse over our "success". Just a fortnight ago I helped to pillage the piscatorial playgrounds west of Darwin. In what effectively amounted to two long days of fairly constant striking and reeling, our quartet hooked perhaps a couple of hundred fish. We released about a quarter of them. The rest are being eaten – in Darwin and Melbourne.

We caught eight Spanish mackerel on fast-trolled lures, the two biggest about 18 and 20 kilos. (Regulations would have allowed us to bring back five each.) Our longtail tuna count was four, coral trout and (delectable) golden snapper about 10 each.

Success was less with the magnificent red emperor – only eight.

There were snapper, trevally, cobia and moonfish, useless monkeyfish and stonefish, and almost as useless barracuda. We got sick of hooking sharks (from half a metre to five metres) and were pleased that the whales, dolphins and turtles about the boat avoided our lines. Often, the sea boiled with tuna.

This multifarious submarine fauna sounds rich, but let me repeat the quote by Dr Tim Flannery of the Australian Museum I used in April: Australia's ocean stocks were in a "state of exhaustion and collapse". Paradoxicaly, they were very diverse.

Let me corroborate it with reference to another paper presented at the Symposium of Australian Gastronomy by Annie Foord, marketing manager of the Sydney Fish Markets, and others. It outlined a power struggle between commercial and amateur fisherpersons, suggesting that the latter took more fish than was generally recognised.

Fisheries management had a mixed record, perhaps implying that they needed to pay more heed to recreational anglers' takes. While some species had been overfished and had had quotas applied, "the status of the majority . . . is unknown", wrote Foord and her co-authors.

There was "little information about the size of the essentially uncontrolled recreational catch", but they cited an estimate of its being about a third of the commercial counterpart. Moreover, they implied, amateurs caught the fish that were most at risk, those that didn't school in larger numbers and were therefore less interesting to commercial trawlers. Seventy per cent of "finfish", the great-eating coral trout among them, taken on the Barrier Reef had a recreational angler at the other end of the line.

They cited an estimated 270,000 private fishing trips annually on the reef. Ms Foord concluded: "[The] evidence for catch controls all round is compelling."

While we know so little about numbers – of fish and anglers – noone should argue with her. Indeed, the Northern Territory Government should be congratulated for its tough stand, which already includes limits on such fish as barramundi and Spanish mackerel. Phillip Hall, recreational fishing officer for the NT's Department of Fisheries, told me a bag limit of 30 fish per person was "likely" early next year. As of Sunday, a new regulation allowed only five jewfish per angler. The tighter rules responded to illegal fish-selling by unlicensed anglers but was also a "conservative ethic recognising that the resource is not infinite".

What else might be done? Well, I for one wouldn't have minded paying a licence to fish – and a fairly expensive one at that – if I was assured that the bulk of it would fund research into fish stocks and their conservation. I'd also like to see more spent on aquaculture: in a country of species diversity and success in farming Atlantic salmon, barramundi and tuna it might reduce pressure on wild stocks.

The gastronome in me shouts that Australia's rich fishing should be a joy to all, that, say, recreational anglers should be allowed to sell a diversity of fresh fish to small specialist restaurants throughout the country. The conservationist and perhaps more reasonable side of me says I should content myself with the way it happened two weeks ago: if I want it I should have to catch it – under strict surveillance. ■

SYMPOSIASTS

Jane Adams
PO Box 1101
Potts Point 2011

Sarah Adey
134 Glebe Point Rd
Glebe NSW 2037

Lillian Alden
PO Box 5067
Sandhurst East Vic. 3550

Sandra Alexander
27 Surfside Avenue
Clovelly NSW 2031

Stephanie Alexander
20 Robinson Rd
Hawthorn East Vic. 3122

Trisha Arbib
PO Box 83
Bundanoon NSW 2578

Susan Jane Baird
6 Westland Road
Wellington 2
New Zealand

Maggie Beer
2 Keith St
Tanunda SA 5352

Mary-Ellen Belle
23 Horwood Drive
Breamlea Vic. 3227

Gay Bilson
PO Box 779
Willunga SA 5172

Mary Brander
PO Box 215
Ainslie ACT 2602

Rosemary Brissenden
1 Solander Court
Yarralumla ACT 2600

Marieke Brugman
PO Box 379
Mansfield Vic. 3722

Lois Butt
2 Hodgson St
Kew Vic. 3101

Ellie Chambers
20 Barkly St
Fitzroy Vic. 3065

Courtney Clark
64 Cameron St
Edgecliff NSW 2027

Lois Daish
40 Rodrigo Rd
Kilbirnie Wellington
New Zealand 6003

Mary Daish
7/41 Eildon Rd
St Kilda Vic. 3182

David Dale
11 Rush St
Woollahra NSW 2025

Duré Dara
18 Brockenshire St
Clifton Hill Vic. 3068

Pamela Davies
10 Anzac Parade
Bundanoon NSW 2578

Dorothy Davis
9/58 Shackleton Circuit
Mawson ACT 2607

Barry Digham
Box Hill TAFE
465 Elgar Rd
Box Hill Vic. 3128

Chris Downes
Centre for Continuing Education
Sydney University
Sydney NSW 2006

Stephen Downes
5 Wimbledon Grove
Eaglemont Vic. 3084

Carolyn Edwards
15 Waterside Crescent
Earlwood NSW 2206

Margaret Emery
PO Box 40
Gunning NSW 2581

Matthew Evans
8 David St
Forest Lodge NSW 2037

Meryle Evans
325 East 52 St
New York NY 10022
USA

Margaret Findlay
3 Blairgowrie Court
Brighton Vic. 3186

Barbara Fischer
21 Stratford St
Cammeray NSW 2062

John Fitzpatrick
9 Union St
Largs Bay SA 5016

Annie Foord
29/120 Cambridge St
Collingwood Vic. 3066

Jeanette Fry
40 Charlotte St
Richmond Vic. 3121

Michelle Garnaut
1st Floor, 8th Block
2 Lower Albert Rd
Central Hong Kong

Pam Gillespie
9 Valley View Cresent
North Epping NSW 2121

Leanne Gray
12 Jansz Crescent
Griffith ACT 2603

Graham Halligan
(deceased)

Marion Halligan
6 Caldwell St
Hackett ACT 2602

Caroline Harvey
78 Taylor St
Annandale NSW 2038

Nick Herd
27 Surfside Ave
Clovelly NSW 2031

Jennifer Hillier
9 Union St
Largs Bay SA 4016

Greg Hodge
3/5 Henley Rd
Thirroul NSW 2515

Di Holuigue
3 Armadale Rd
Armadale Vic. 3143

Richard Hosking
55 E Lamont Rd
London SW10 OHU UK

Helen Hughes
17 Victoria Rd
Bolwarra NSW 2320

Helen Jackson
46 Roseberry St
Balmain NSW 2042

Gayl Jenkins
15/21-25 Waratah St
Rushcutters Bay
NSW 2011

Ross & Maria Kelly
74 Glenmore Rd
Paddington NSW 2021

Roddy Kennard
117 Francis St
Bondi NSW 2026

Nola Kenny
1 Day Rd
Glen Osmond SA 5064

Catherine Kerry
45 Elderslie Ave
Fitzroy SA 5082

Peter King
15 Getting Cres
Campbell ACT 2601

Bruce Kraig
5907 W. Midway Park
Chicago IL 60644
USA

Max Lake
48 Arabella St
Longueville NSW 2066

James Langley
82 Fourth Ave
St Peters SA 5069

Graham Latham
20 Brownell Drive
Byron Bay NSW 2481

Anthea Leonard
Sweet Art
96 Oxford St
Paddington NSW 2021

Elizabeth Love
6 Annamena Cres.,
Eleebana NSW 2282

Helen Mackenzie
Private Mail Bag 2014
Box Hill Vic. 3128

Bob MacLennan
4 Lindsay Rd
Mt Glorious Qld 4520

Virginia McLeod
19 Glenara Rd
Kurrajong Heights
NSW 2758

Alan Mansfield
(deceased)

Alida Mednis
62 Renway Ave
Lugarno NSW 2210

Lyndey Milan
55 Crana Ave
East Lindfield NSW 2070

Tina Muncaster
21 Ness Ave
Dulwich Hill NSW 2203

John Newtown
15 Alexander St
Glebe NSW 2037

Howard Nicholson
PO Box 83
Bundanoon NSW 2578

Sri & Roger Owen
96 High St Mews
Wimbledon Village
London SW19 UK

Francisco Garcia de Paredes
Spain

Susan Parham
63 Whistler St
London UK

Gae Pincus
81 Ferry Rd
Glebe NSW 2037

John Possingham
31 Thornber St
Unley Park SA 5061

Ralph Potter
last known address:
Lillianfels Blue Mountains
Lillianfels Ave
Katoomba NSW 2780

Noelle Quinn
PO Box 3203
Albury NSW 2640

Sue Radd
5 Shepherds Drive
Cherrybrook NSW 2126

Carlos Repeto
c/- Radisson Plaza Hotel
O'Connell St
Sydney NSW 2000

Alicia Rios
General Peron, 19, 8º C
Madrid Spain 28020

Cherry Ripe
151 Underwood St
Paddington NSW 2021

Sheridan Rodgers
28 Lytton St
Cammeray NSW 2062

Judi Sandford
27 Garden St
Box Hill North Vic. 3129

Dr Barbara Santich
14 Alfreda St
Brighton SA 5048

Alan Saunders
ABC Radio National
PO Box 9994
Sydney NSW 2001

Paul Schrader
6/41 Eidon Rd
St Kilda Vic. 3182

Carol Selva Rajah
11 Duntroon Ave
Wollstonecraft NSW 2065

Spiro Servos
33 Propsect Street
Carlton NSW 2218

Colin Sheringham
University of Western Sydney
Locked Bag 1
Richmond NSW 2753

Rosemary Stanton
2866 Nowra Rd
via Moss Vale NSW 2577

Fiona Stewart
PO Box 853
Potts Point NSW 2011

Jill Stone
3 Lochness Avenue
Torrens Park SA 5062

Barbara Sweeney
PO Box 272
Balmain NSW 2041

Tony Tan
Unlimited Cuisine
28a Lansell Rd
Toorak VIC 3142

Jan Thompson
5907 W. Midway Park
Chicago IL 60644
USA

Harlan Walker
294 Hagley Rd
Birmingham B17 8DJ UK

Tony Webb
Food Policy Alliance
55 Reiby St
Newtown NSW 2042

Hugh Wennerbom
Murdoch Produce
2 Gehrig Lane
Camperdown NSW 2050

Hilary Wright
25/2 Artarmon Rd
Willoughby NSW 2068

Sue Zweep
19 The Grove
Austinmer NSW 2515

These details have been updated (March 2002) and are as accurate as possible.

IX
SYMPOSIUM
of
AUSTRALIAN
GASTRONOMY
SYDNEY 1996

the power of positive thinking
power house power tables
power driven power politics
power of good and evil *power is the great aphrodisiac* power from the barrel of a gun **intoxicated with power** ... POWER is not a means, it is an END. ***Or is it?***

'POWER *TALK* for the POWER *HUNGRY*'