EIGHTH SYMPOSIUM OF AUSTRALIAN GASTRONOMY

SUSTAINING GASTRONOMY

Proceedings
Adelaide, September 28 - 30, 1994

PROCEEDINGS OF

THE EIGHTH SYMPOSIUM OF AUSTRALIAN GASTRONOMY

Sustaining Gastronomy

Adelaide, September 28-30, 1994

Edited by Barbara Santich, Jennifer Hillier and Catherine Kerry

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Eighth Symposium of Australian Gastronomy

SUSTAINING GASTRONOMY

Adelaide, September 28-30, 1994

Carclew and St. Mark's College, North Adelaide

PROGRAM

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 28: Carclew

3-00 - 6.00 p.m.	Registration and book sales Exhibition: Symposium memorabilia
6.00 - 11.00 p.m.	PIE TEA

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 29: Carclew

9.00 a.m	Late registration
9.30 12.30 p.m.	**Sustaining Gastronomy**: Invited papers Chair: Barbara Santich

We are devoting most of the day to the theme of Sustaining Gastronomy, extending the unique Australian philosophy of gastronomy. Several interpretations have already been offered· discussion is bound to elucidate others.

9.30 - 10.30 a.m.	Anthony Corones: Sustaining Gastronomy
	Coffee (book room open)
11.00 - 12.30 p.m.	Michael Symons: Simplicity John Coveney: Eating into the Environment: Nutrition, Health and Sustaining Gastronomy
12.30 - 2.30 p.m.	Lunch: The Oxford, North Adelaide
2.30 - 4.30 p.m.	Invited responses & open discussion, led by: Tim Marshall John Possingham Carolyn Edwards Gae Pincus William Wongso Colin Sheringham
5.00 p.m.	Coffee and drinks, St. Mark's
5.30 - 7.00p.m.	**Food in Film**: presented by Gay Bilson & Tina Muncaster (Senior Common Room, St. Mark's)

7.30 p.m. TV Dinner - Chair: Alan Saunders
Dining Hall, St. Mark's

Taking a cue from Gay and Tina's afternoon session, we are running the screenings into dinner. On the basis of your suggestions we will show scenes which gastronomers might find of special interest, and discuss how they might contribute to broader film analysis.

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 30: Carclew

9.30 - 11.00 a.m. **Authenticity**: Panel discussion
Jennifer Hillier
Alan Saunders
John Fitzpatrick,
Chair: John Possingham

Coffee (book room open)

Authenticity: why is it such a vexed issue? The aim of this panel is to explore and extend the debate trivialised in the media, where authenticity is presented as an anachronistic 'frozen historical perspective'. (McGrath, Adelaide Review, Jan 94)

11.30 - 1.00 p.m. **Women as custodians of tradition**: Panel discussion
Sri Owen
Rosa Matto
Maggie Beer
Dur-é Dara
Chair: Sally Ball

When cultivation and cooking are central economic activities women have high status. Do women have a special reason for promoting traditional food culture?

1.00-2.30 p.m. Tampopo lunch

2.30-4.30 p.m. **Towards a Code of Dining**: Open discussion, led by
Cath Kerry
Nick Papazahariakis
Sara Adey
Chair: Sarah Stegley

What are the essential rules of contemporary Australian dining etiquette? This afternoon we will decide a definitive set of ten do's and ten don't's.

4.30 p.m. Symposium IX?

7.00p.m. Symposium dinner: Chef Urs Inauen
The Institute, North Terrace

PIE TEA

Carclew, Wednesday, September 28, 1994

Pizza rustica	Sally Ball
Pheasant pie	Maggie Beer
Pumpkin, lentil & cumin pies	Rosemary Brissenden
Kangaroo, prunes & beer pie	Paul Bunney
Turkey & asparagus pie	Rick Burford
B'stilla	Jennifer Hillier
Sausage roll	Greg Hodge
Pizza ripiene	Rosa Matto
Indonesian panades	Nick Papazahariades (Sri Owen's recipe)
Venison & kangaroo pies	John Possingham
Tourtière québecoise	Barbara Santich
Chicken & tarragon pie	Jill Stone
Beef burgundy pie	Michael Treloar
Sour cherry pie	Gayl Jenkins
Galataboureko	Vicky Swinbank

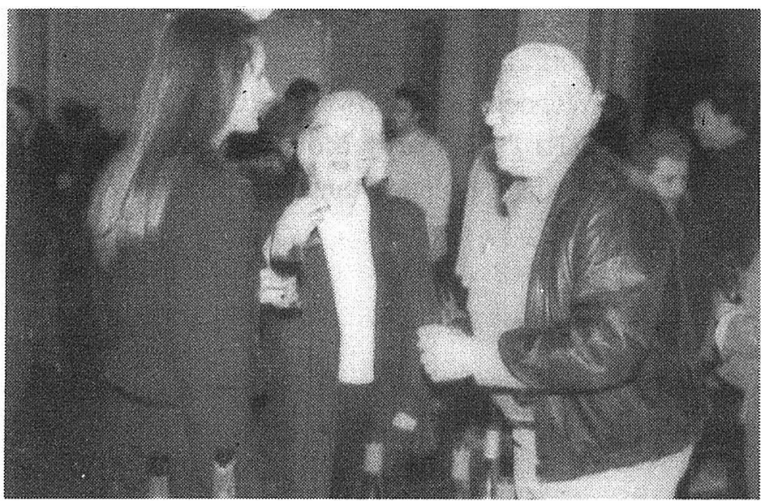
SYMPOSIUM BISCUITS

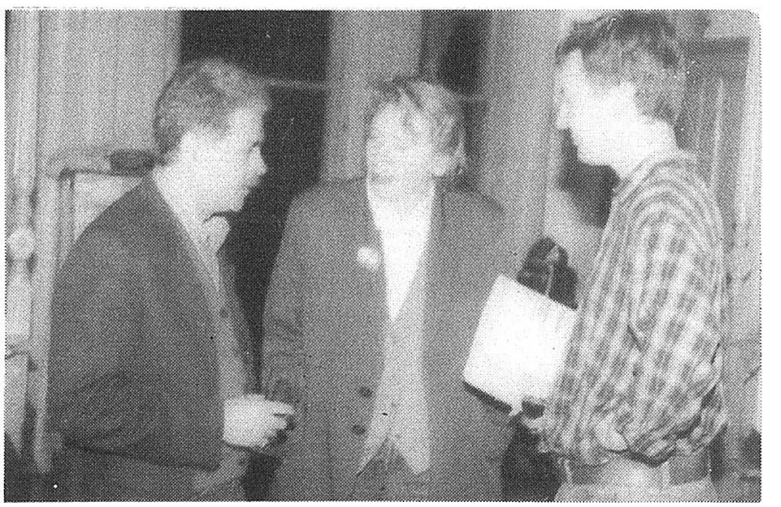
Hazelnut shortbread & Biscotti	Sara Adey
Arabian cookies	Lilian Alden
Almond tarts & Cats' tongues	Lois Butt
Mexican wedding cookies & Boomerangs	Marieke Brugman
Vanilla and almond crescents	Carolyn Edwards
Cowboy cookies	Margaret Emery
Cheese biscuits	Jeanette Fry
Cinnamon, Almond & Almond cocoa biscuits	Helen Hughes
Oat cookies	Nola Kenny
Pinenut cookies	Peter King
Anzacs	James Langley
Hazelnut cookies	Tony Tan
Praline & Ginger biscuits	Sue Zweep

SYMPOSIUM WINES

Selected by Zar Brooks

Irvine Sparkling Merlot (Eden Valley) 1989
Tolleys Sparkling Pinot Noir (Padthaway) 1990
Boston Bay Riesling (Port Lincoln) 1994
Clos Clare Riesling (Clare Valley) 1993
Bleasdale Verdelho (Langhorne Creek) 1994
Coriole Chenin Blanc (McLaren Vale) 1994
Rockford's Local Growers Semillon (Barossa) 1992
Tolley's Gewürtztraminer (Barossa) 1994
Primo Estate Colombard (Adelaide Plains) 1994
D'Arenberg Noble Riesling (McLaren Vale) 1989
Antipodean Blend (Barossa) 1994
Cherise Sangiovese (McLaren Vale) 1991
Hillstowe Pinot Noir (Carey Gulley) 1993
D'Arenberg D'Arry's Original (McLaren Vale) 1991
Barratt's Pinot Noir (Piccadilly Valley) 1993
Yalumba Old Vine Grenache (Barossa) 1993
Geoff Hardy Kuipto Shiraz (Kuitpo Forest) 1993
Wendouree Shiraz/Mataro (Clare Valley) 1992
RBJ Theologicum Mourvèdre/Grenache 1993
Bleasdale Madeira (Langhorne Creek) 18 years old





PROLOGUE

Jennifer Hillier

For the tenth anniversary we returned to Carclew mansion, the South Australian government's youth performing arts centre, which had been the setting for the inaugural and second Symposiums. While the old mansion showed the wear and tear of its intervening occupancy, we were gratified to discover that this Symposium, reflecting its theme, sustained the stimulation of early years. The first session, especially, with some of the original paper-givers created a strong sense of déjà vu. In the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Alan Saunders found it a good title, punning elegantly on the word 'sustaining'. Wanting to raise environmental and health issues and conscious that we had been going ten years we adapted the title Our Sustainable Table from a collection of essays published originally by the *Journal of Gastronomy* (now in book form, published by North Point Press, San Francisco, 1990). The overall coherence of the theme is brought out in the papers here to be read. We hope that they capture the intense concentration.

Consistent with the Symposium's history of ongoing practice and self-analysis, in planning we sought once again to synthesise its unique ethos. 'Sustaining Gastronomy' drew attention to the Symposium's traditional project of reflexive definition. Our ambitions for the intellectual focus informed our decision to set panels on specific topics. The result was a focussed sense of relevance. It proves the importance of the process of analysis in extending its critical pleasure.

The tenth anniversary offered the opportunity of saluting some of the early favourites, like the Pie Tea and the couscous. Familiarity with the ups and downs of the series also made for easy planning. Perhaps the dialectical nature of Symposiums was evidenced in an over-reaction to Canberra's abundance; our food may have become too understated. However, while the meals were deliberately simple, they were never extraneous. The TV dinner, while it may have been disadvantaged by the hold-ups in the previous session, was intentionally austere. Having in the past celebrated and extolled the conviviality of the table, on this occasion it was deliberately subverted. The scene was set - a stark refectory, narrow tables, empty, faintly glowing marbled bowls - more Oliver Twist than La Grande Bouffe. The enormous screen was the reverse of hospitality - the thief at supper in Peter Greenaway's film The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover.

Film at the Symposium will always be problematic, owing to the time screenings take and the non-participatory role of the audience. We thought we would overcome the latter by asking participants to introduce their choices and overcome the time factor by running the film component through the dinner, thus making a virtue of necessity . Of course, amid all these dangers, the success of the evening owed much to Alan Saunders, who performed with aplomb the classic role of chair. While this session looked at the overt foodie films - Tampopo, Babette's Feast, Like Water for Chocolate - it also showed how gastronomy might provide insight into quirky or unintentional food references in film.

Both the Couscous Supper and Friday's Udon Noodle Lunch needed plates and bowls that were unavailable from the usual hire companies. We decided to ask The Jam Factory, South Australia's premier craft design centre and workshop, to make bowls

especially for these meals. The marbled couscous bowls were offered for sale at the conclusion of the Symposium, as were the noodle bowls, thus creating more reciprocal and sustaining links between the local gastronomic crafts. After the Symposium, we had to place a second order to cover the demand!

The couscous needed plates with enough depth to hold the broth. They were glazed in marbled colours of ochre, green and blue (reflecting the favourite Moslem colours of green and yellow). The Udon bowl was more delicate and glazed in a celadon green. While it was shaped to fit in the cupped palm of one's hand, it was deep and large enough to hold a full meal with a fine rim from which to sip the broth. Both bowls were stamped with Symposium of Australian Gastronomy, Adelaide, 1994.

The Symposium dinner reflected both the general pattern of Symposium dialectics and our specific theme. Simplicity and sustainability, as provided by Urs Inauen from our local coffers, would only do to follow the high art of Canberra's final act.

Adelaide thanks all those visitors and locals alike that made this event so memorable. With the residence at St Marks just down the hill from Carclew, Adelaide's convivial compactness re-inforced the intimacy that this small town can offer. But long live the dialectic! On the eve of Sydney we're looking forward to the power and the glory of the big smoke

SUSTAINING GASTRONOMY

Introduction by Barbara Santich

Welcome to the Eighth Symposium of Australian Gastronomy. This first session addresses the theme of the symposium: sustaining gastronomy. The ambivalence is deliberate - gastronomy which sustains (life, society) and the the sustaining of gastronomy, something these periodic gatherings have encouraged.

It's over ten years since we assembled in Carclew for the First Symposium of Australian Gastronomy in 1984, and our intention at this eighth anniversary symposium is to return to some of the themes and aspects of previous symposiums. One of the things we did at the first symposium was to set up some definitions - a definition of gastronomy, for example. This has always been difficult for me - I've never really been happy with any of the definitions of gastronomy, such as 'the art and science of good eating and drinking', as Julia Child favours. It's easy to understand the concept, to know what is meant when people talk of the gastronomy of Italy, or of France, or of Malaysia; you know it means the local foods and wines and drinks, together with the eating and cooking and social traditions that go with them. It's easy to understand what is meant by a gastronomic history, or the gastronomic character of a particular town or region.

But gastronomy itself is devilishly difficult to define, and so we usually resort to the definition of Brillat-Savarin who, while formally defining gastronomy, also described it in other ways. In his words, gastronomy is:

La connaissance raisonnée de tout ce qui a rapport à l'homme en tant qu'il se nourrit.

In the absence of other contenders, this definition is adequate and I'm happy enough to accept it as it is. I'm less satisfied, however, with the translations that have been proposed. Since I think it relevant to today's session, I'd like to offer a translation which I believe to be more appropriate.

The first part is 'la connaissance raisonnée', which I prefer to translate as reasoned understanding. Most others have interpreted 'connaissance' as knowledge but it is more than knowledge; knowledge is acquired through the brain while understanding is something that also comes through the senses, and certainly our senses are important in developing an understanding of what we eat and drink. It is relevant, too, that the first few chapters of Brillat-Savarin's book are devoted to the senses. But what we receive through the senses is interpreted in the brain - it is 'reasoned'. So let's agree on 'reasoned understanding' for this phrase.

The next part is 'de tout ce qui a rapport à l'homme': literally, of everything that concerns man. I'm happy to use the word 'man' inclusively, to refer to everyone, as Brillat-Savarin intended. One could, of course, spell it out: everything that concerns man and woman, or resort to genderless 'people'. However, with the plural people - everything that concerns people - the sense of the individual is lost. 'The reasoned understanding of everything that concerns people' suggests that it might be an objective study, whereas I think Brillat-Savarin meant it to refer to the individual as well, to be self-reflexive. Alternative translations are 'of everything that concerns the individual' or 'of everything

that concerns us'; the latter is probably preferable, though it must be remembered that 'us' is not just a small circle of friends but mankind in general.

Finally, 'en tant qu'il se nourrit'. A number of translations have been suggested here - insofar as he is an eating animal, or insofar as he is an eater. Literally, it means 'insofar as he is nourished, or nourishes himself'. Many translations avoid this awkward phrase with the words 'everything that relates to man's nourishment', but this puts the focus on the actual food and not on man, not on the person, which is where I think it should be. And while 'se nourrit' literally means 'nourishes himself', I believe a better translation would be 'sustains himself'.

So, combining the various parts, we have:

Gastronomy is the reasoned understanding of everything that concerns us insofar as we sustain ourselves.

Thus, as Brillat-Savarin outlined, it relates to the production of food ('food' taken in its widest sense to include everything we eat and drink), and the means by which foods are produced; the political economy of food; the treatment of foods, their storage and transport and processing; their preparation and cooking; meals and manners; the chemistry of food, digestion and the physiological effects of food; food choices and customs and traditions. We might not be able to include all these aspects - and there are undoubtedly more - in our discussions over the next few days, but it's time to make a start, with Anthony Corones addressing the topic: Sustaining Gastronomy.

SUSTAINING GASTRONOMY

Anthony Corones

[The delivery of the paper began with some 'ritual theatre' — an offering of food to the Goddess of Gastronomy, accompanied by sacred music and burning incense. The offering was then distributed to the 'congregation'.]

You are probably thinking I've gone mad. Offerings to a goddess? Prostrations? Contrary to the appearances, however, there is method in the madness; and it has direct relevance to the issue of sustaining gastronomy. At least, so I hope to persuade you.

I owe the inspiration for my ritual prelude to Brillat-Savarin's brilliant concluding chapter to *La Physiologie du goût*, Bouquet, in which he presents a 'gastronomical mythology'. The mythology provides a stunning contrast to his attempts to establish the scientific and theoretical foundations for gastronomy earlier in the book, and one cannot help but wonder why Brillat-Savarin chose to end on such an apparently contrary note. My guess is that he thought the mythology was necessary to complete the foundations for gastronomy. His efforts provide a starting point for my consideration of the theme for this Symposium: sustaining gastronomy.

Before launching into the mythological domain, however, I want to deal briefly with Brillat-Savarin's suggestions about sustaining gastronomy in the more mundane and scientific sense. First, there is the issue of sustaining gastronomy as a scientific enterprise. Brillat-Savarin recognised that it was not enough for some individual merely to lay out the principles of gastronomy. Rather, if gastronomy is to be established and *sustained* as a science, it must progress to the point of having its own 'academicians, universities, professors and prizes' (Brillat-Savarin, 1970, p. 56); that is, it must become an institutionalised discipline and practice, with its own research program, on the model of other sciences. Brillat-Savarin even urged the need for government support and funding. So far as the form of institutionalised and professionalised science is concerned, Brillat-Savarin was surely right in his intuitions here, though he failed to appreciate the pressures which mitigated against the sort of interdisciplinary enterprise he had in mind. Despite such difficulties, however, food and foodways are studied across many different disciplines, much as Brillat-Savarin anticipated.

Second, we are reaping all manner of benefits from such studies, again much as Brillat-Savarin proclaimed in his advocacy of gastronomy; and as he put it in aphorism IX, 'The discovery of a new dish does more for the happiness of mankind than the discovery of a star'. In other words, we have a great deal to hope for and expect in terms of human sustenance *from* gastronomy. There are, therefore, two senses in which Brillat-Savarin addresses the issue of sustaining gastronomy. In the first sense, 'sustaining' is a verb — sustaining the enterprise of gastronomy is something which we have to do. In the second sense, 'sustaining' is an adjective — a well sustained gastronomy is something which can in turn be sustaining to us. These considerations, however, take us only so far. That is, they show how the theme of sustaining gastronomy can be explicated in a scientific sense; but there is a deeper sense in which that theme can be considered, and that is the

sense which Brillat-Savarin generates through the device of the gastronomical mythology.

The basic move is very simple: personify gastronomy, and turn her into a goddess, Gasterea. This allows Brillat-Savarin to address sustenance in a way which is impossible in secular rational discourse; and he immediately emphasises her importance by asserting that 'The whole world would be hers if she wished to claim it; for the world is nothing without life, and all that lives takes nourishment' (Brillat-Savarin, 1970, p. 287). If all life depends on Gasterea, then she can lay claim to being *the* sustainer; even sustenance itself. Brillat-Savarin's elaborate fantasy in Bouquet, in which he describes the Goddess and her cult, is a wonderfully observed evocation of religious practice and devotion. Most tellingly, Brillat-Savarin remarks that 'The festivals of the goddess are equal in number to the days of the year, for she never ceases to bestow her benefits on mankind' (Brillat-Savarin, 1970, p. 288-9). Her principal temple, however, is not ***just*** a temple. Indicating a familiarity with Baconian philosophy of science, Brillat-Savarin places a scientific laboratory in the rock on which the temple stands: 'Deep inside that hallowed rock are those mysterious chambers where Art puts Nature to the question, and subjects her to his laws' (Brillat-Savarin, 1970, p. 287). In a dazzling stroke, Brillat-Savarin puts gastronomical science at the service of his gastronomical mythology.

While Brillat-Savarin puts a classical Greek gloss on his gastronomical mythology, there is a broader and deeper mythological tradition which I intend to draw on for my analysis of the Symposium theme: namely, the Mother Goddess tradition. This tradition is extremely ancient. It receives a striking literate expression in the following Homeric hymn:

> Of all-mother Earth will I sing ...
> Eldest of beings, who nourisheth all things throughout all lands,
> Yea, all things that walk on this goodly earth, that swim in the sea;
> That fly in the air — all feed on the bounty bestowed of thee.
>
> O Queen! Unto mortals to grant life-sustenance is thine,
> And to take it away. ... (Pfister, 1961, p. 46)

The third century AD 'Prayer to Terra Matris' closes the circle of life — all life begins and ends in the Mother Goddess:

> Nature's mother who bringest all to life and revives all from day to day. The food of life Thou grantest in eternal fidelity. And when the soul hath retired we take refuge in Thee. All that Thou grantest falls back somewhere into Thy womb. (Matthews, 1991, p. 15)

Cynical as we might be about putting things in mythological terms, we can at least acknowledge a certain wisdom and understanding here. Our dependence on our own mothers, and on the earth more generally for life and sustenance, is clear enough. That we should cultivate an appropriate recognition and appreciation for such basic facts of life is scarcely unreasonable; and in cultures which lived much closer to the land, one would expect their myths and rituals to be the medium and bearers of the collective wisdom of the culture.

But what about us? In some ways, scientific understanding has begun to illuminate mythological wisdom. We are all becoming aware of the notion of ecology, and the catastrophic consequences of destroying the intricate balance of ecosystems. The fertility of the earth can no longer simply be taken for granted, and we no longer need a myth to tell us so — the invocation of sustainable development has taken over from the invocation of the Mother Goddess. Indeed, the notion of sustainable development has almost become a mantra in some circles. Conserving the Earth's vitality and biodiversity seem all the more urgent as we grow accustomed to idea that we are living on 'spaceship Earth'. Having lifted ourselves off the planet, we can look on it in a way which demonstrates dramatically the need for us to care more deeply about how we treat it. After all, it's the only life support system we have. Our sustenance hangs on the sustenance of the earth.

While the current dialogue on sustainability is being driven by the environmental movement, it could have emerged from the establishment of gastronomy as Brillat-Savarin conceived it. It didn't. But this is no reason why gastronomy cannot and should not contribute to that dialogue now. In fact, it is in some ways imperative that it do so, particularly if proper care and attention is to given to food and foodways within that dialogue. It would be a pity if we were all reduced to eating plankton because it was decided that that was the most sustaining and sustainable food source in light of the environmental crisis. Further, the quality and diversity of foods, the establishment of sustainable agricultural practices, and the awesome possibilities and dangers raised by the genetic engineering of new foods, are all areas where gastronomy must find a voice. That voice should still, however, be informed by mythological modes of thought. On this score, I think that Brillat-Savarin was on the right track.

Of course, one person's vision does not amount to a revolution. Brillat-Savarin's gastronomical mythology fell on deaf ears. No doubt Brillat-Savarin hoped that he could make his gastronomical mythology a part of the life and common wisdom of the people; but while he had high hopes for the power of myth, he does not seem to have understood the nature of myth. Confusing myth with the sacred, he tried to institute a sexist and pagan form of religion at a time when the prevailing religion was politically suspect and fragmented. His task was hopeless then, and it is even harder now, no matter how many people bleat about the need to re-establish a sense of the sacred. What must be understood is that while myths often invoke the sacred, what they basically do is express certain attitudes: attitudes toward the gods, the land, stars, people, animals, plants, farming, warfare, childbirth, motherhood, fatherhood, work, play, death, etc, etc. Those attitudes are effective in so far as they are firmly established in a particular form of life. Outside that form of life, they have no force or validity. Within that form of life, they are not thought to be 'myths' (in the sense of falsehoods) at all.

It is not the case, therefore, that we are living in a post-mythological age. Rather, we tend to take our own attitudes for granted. If, for example, someone insists that women should go around covered in black clothing from head to foot, with only their eyes peering through a slit in a veil, the common western attitude would be one of horror and revulsion. If we were told that this should be done for the sake of women's freedom, and that such a manner of dressing is a form of women's liberation, we would not automatically question our own attitudes to dress and women's liberation, but protest that the proponent of such an outrage understood nothing about women or liberation. In other words, we could not genuinely advocate such a style of dress for women without

changing our attitudes to a large range of other things. On a food-related matter, if a vegetarian insists that animals have a right to life, and are therefore not to be eaten under any circumstances, this is an attitude to animals and the eating of animals which conflicts with that of the meat eater, who regards animals as fit for human consumption. And what is the attitude behind this? Whether self-consciously or not, the meat eater does not place animals on the same footing with humans when it comes to the right to life. There is thus a big difference between the attitude that meat is not 'fit' to eat, and the attitude that it is.

Regardless of our cynicism about myth, then, we are not free of it, nor can meaning and values be established without it. Consider the scientific enterprise. Is there anything necessary or inevitable about it? Certainly not. There are many knowledge systems and ways of knowing; yet, we value and persist with an enterprise which costs billions of dollars annually, and which is, quite frankly, dangerous. While anti-science lobbies exist, science has become a carrier of a host of attitudes to all sorts of things. The basic attitude seems to be that we will only be doing things properly once science has shown us the way — hence such marvels as 'scientific motherhood', 'scientific management', 'scientific agriculture', etc. Even economics has scientific pretensions. While it is true that science has been used as a weapon against various myths, it is itself a most potent form of myth, in league with the State, and the support behind various positive visions of the future (witness, for example, the overtly scientific mission of the SS Enterprise in the science fiction television series *Star Trek*). Even the 'green' movement is in thrall to science in so far as science is invoked to 'prove' that we are in deep environmental trouble, and that we have to do this or that scientifically justified thing to fix the problem.

We do not, of course, live in a monomythic culture. There are conflicting attitudes abroad, and the politics of that conflict needs to be engaged. Returning to the notion of sustenance, a reductionist attitude might have it that the best thing to do is to find out what nutrients, from a chemical point of view, humans need in order to be sustained. Carrying this even further, one might, as Plato argued in *Gorgias*, decide that ideally food should be regarded as medicine, and that we should follow the prescriptions of doctors with regard to what we should be eating rather than leave such important matters in the hands of cooks. The vile flattery of cooks, according to Plato, should give way to the enlightened rationality and knowledge of the scientist. What this implies for us as eaters is no doubt a little grim. Sometimes, of course, people *are* given expert medical advice on dietary matters for particular and life threatening illnesses. To turn the 'food is medicine' attitude into the guiding mythology of eating, however, is not only to succumb to scientistic rationalism, but also to pretend to know what is 'best' and seek to impose a particular regime of power and control. It is, in other words, to advocate a broader mythology which appropriates food and eating to its own ends.

How different this is to the kind of gastronomical mythology which Brillat-Savarin advocated, wherein science subserves other ends. The goddess language encodes a quite different attitude to sustenance. The ritual with which I began this talk bends the knee and humbles the vaulting pride of scientistic ambition. It is even, quite frankly, somewhat offensive to our largely rationalised sensibilities. But how have we come to such sensibilities? And what sustains them? Brillat-Savarin's attempt to create a special drama of sustenance cuts very deep because it challenges so much else that we hold dear; so much so that he couldn't even come out and speak about it plainly. Had he done so, however, he would have failed as a mythographer.

I claimed earlier that the Mother Goddess tradition already contained the sorts of lessons about sustenance which Brillat-Savarin encodes in his gastronomical mythology. The time has come to consider the issue of how appropriate such a tradition is for us. First, in so far as the myth depends on casting women in the roles of 'mother' and 'nurturer', it smacks of political incorrectness. Certainly, some women want to emphasise these qualities as quintessentially 'feminine' qualities. But at a time when some women are busy constructing other myths which require the breaking of such a stereotype in order to escape the bondage and even the brutality of the attitudes which presume to keep women in their 'right place', there would be little point to trying to re-establish that myth. In any case, some elements in the men's movement also challenge the appropriation of the role of nurturer by women. Better to leave gender out of it, then, and pursue and develop further the kind of mythology which aids the environmental movement; for it is here where all people can work together, regardless of how the experiments with the myth of freedom to make ourselves as we wish turns out. Five or more 'genders' can work to sustain the ecology of the planet, just as well as one.

There is nothing strange, then, about the mythographic enterprise. We are living, in fact, in one of the most creative mythographic periods ever. While the power of myth seems more pervasive in a monomythic culture, it is no less so in a multimythic one. But the politics of it is different in some ways. We are obliged to a certain tolerance. The politics of tolerance, however, is wonderfully paradoxical; for it turns out that tolerance is a form of intolerance. In order to maintain religious tolerance, for example, the claims by any one religion to the right and obligation to rule the State must not be tolerated. To maintain cultural tolerance, cultural purity cannot be tolerated.

Turning this line of analysis to cuisine, the 'authenticity' of particular cuisines is always being undermined in a multiculinary society. And yet, we like to maintain the myth that one can create authentic foreign food here. What makes a dish authentic? What makes a cuisine authentic? These are questions which require mythological analysis. The 'knowledge' presumed by someone who pronounces that this or that dish or cuisine is 'authentic' is at best the 'knowledge' of a cultural insider. It is now commonplace in academic circles that no outsiders have the right or place to speak about, or on behalf of, any particular group. The more 'empowered' particular groups become, the more they find and enforce their own voice. Perversely, then, there is something strangely 'authentic' about the kind of 'cuisines' to be found on the supermarket shelves (Indian, Mexican, Thai, Italian, etc); but that authenticity is the authenticity of the global consumerisation and industrialisation of food. If we plunder the cuisines of the world, is this not itself a cuisine? If we 'mix and match' cuisines ('east-west', 'tex-mex', etc), is this not cuisine?

The success which the myth of economic rationalism has had in transforming the form life for everyone on the planet creates genuine difficulties for the preservation of traditional cuisines, and not because of any imperialistic intent. It's much more subtle than that. Indeed, the discovery of a cuisine has become a sure way of destroying it. Or at least, the transforming effects of that discovery mean that any attempt to sustain the 'authenticity' of a cuisine is an attempt to turn it into a museum piece. And the people who fight to preserve it are reactionaries of a kind, defined by their resistance and 'antiquarian' efforts.

Driven by particular attitudes, people attempt to construct their world. There is no 'world-in-itself' except as a philosophical abstraction; and there is no 'knowing about the world' except in the framework of the attitudes incorporated in particular forms of life. Whether we like it or not, we are obliged to participate. To refuse to do so is itself participation in so far as it is resistance to something or other. Thus, we might, with Epicurus, throw up our hands in horror at the political game (and Athenian politics was really quite dreadful), and retreat to a garden estate in the country, to eat, drink and be merry with our friends. But that too is creative politics, the self-conscious creation of a new form of life, of a guiding mythology. In rejecting the gods, Epicurus empowered the human condition; and in denying that death is an experience in life, he took the sting from that also, allowing people to live for their own pleasure, without fear or compromise. What else was his atomistic philosophy but an empirical mythology? If his vision continues to influence people, it is testimony to the power not so much of the details of Greek atomic theory, but of the attitudes which it encompassed.

Similarly, we should regard the gastronomic task as a creative one, requiring a firm mythology, and necessitating that we struggle with the form of life. The consideration of sustenance is of vital importance, and in so far as the gastronomer is willing to enter the dialogue on sustainable development, there will be an active engagement with the politics and mythologies of our time. So be it.

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SIMPLICITY

Michael Symons

In food terms, simplicity is attractive, suggesting a lack of fuss. It is the perfect poached peach.

That's probably the most solid contribution I can make to the chosen topic. For simplicity is not simple, and I will have to introduce, among other things, a balancing concept of `depth'.

I was brought up on it, mind you, in food terms weaned on Leo Schofield's restaurant reviews. From the start, he rated `simplicity of preparation and presentation, value for money and freshness of prime importance' (quoted Symons, 1982: 235).

At that time, simplicity seemed to be the secret of Tony's Bon Goût (the Bilsons' restaurant before they moved to Berowra Waters Inn). 'Forget the aspics, the decorated foods, the chaud-froids. Today's food is different - less got-up, uncomplicated, letting the ingredients speak for themselves. Less is more', Schofield revealed (1976: 159). And I have carried the flame ever since...

Introducing their *French Cuisine for Australians* (1981), Gabriel and Angie Gaté listed the secrets of good food as 'freshness, simplicity and love'. In response, I wrote:

> These [freshness, simplicity and love] have come in peasant societies through an intimate, daily relationship with food production. Little is eaten that is not grown within walking distance... Our food has gained the three opposite attributes - it is portable, pretentious and profitable... Our eating and drinking can usefully by regarded as "one continuous picnic" (Symons, 1982: 256).

The first meal at the First Symposium on March 12, 1984, was a `Brown Bread Lunch'. The program announced: `We ask participants to bring their own brown bread to the first lunch, which will stress simplicity' - the bread was accompanied by lobster and mayonnaise, cheese and fruit.

Simplicity's importance was further reinforced in my studies of the ancient Greek philosopher Epicurus, who says he is content with a good cheese:

> Send me some preserved cheese, that when I like I may have a feast (translated Bailey, 1926: 131).

This is often quoted to show that he was not an Epicurean in the gastronomic sense, as if foodies must prefer gluttony, elaborateness and other excess.

But it is like the *Ruba'iyat* of Omar Khayam, which repeatedly base life on the blissful minimum, most famously:

> Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,

> A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse - and Thou (Edward Fitzgerald translation, Ed 1. xi).

The first of Gault et Millau's ten commandments of nouvelle cuisine was: reject unncessary complication in cookery (quoted Mennell, 1985: 163). As Mennell shows, simplification has been foregrounded in the various renewals of French cuisine, which have often been called 'nouvelle cuisine'.

Athenaeus gives an example of such renewal in the fourth century BC. Two cooks (Sophon of Acarnania and Damoxenus of Rhodes, who had been fellow pupils of Labdacus of Sicily) did away with spices and preferred quick cooking:

> These men, to be sure, wiped out the old tried seasonings from the cookery-books, and utterly abolished from our midst the mortar; I mean, for example, caraway-seed, vinegar, silphium, cheese, coriander, seasonings which Cronus used [ie, were as old as time]; all these they have removed... they themselves, governor, desired only oil and a new stewpan, and a fire that was quick and not blown too often; with that they prepare every dinner (Athenaeus 403e-404a; 1927-41, 4: 329).

Elizabeth David's 'omelette and a glass of wine' is a trusted theme, too. In a Greek comedy of the third century BC, a cook wants to invite the person 'with knowledge of many sumptuous banquets, I'll make him forget them all, Simias, if I can only show him an omelette, and set before him a dinner redolent of the Attic breeze' (Athenaeus ix.405d; 4: 335).

Since at least Trimalchio's feast in Petronius' *Satyricon*, various food-oriented writers have parodied excess. Marcel Rouff, in his *Life and Loves of Dodin-Bouffant, Gourmet*, exploits various types of ridiculous meal in order to urge a return to simplicity (Oliver, 1967: 16).

Curnonsky advocated more simplicity and less pompous show in restaurant cooking. The majority of diners, he wrote, no longer cared whether the dish bore the name of a famous diplomat or celebrity - 'They ask simply that things taste of what they are, that a fricassée is called a fricassée, a matelote a matelote, a roast chicken a roast chicken, that nothing is substituted for butter...' (Curnonsky, *Souvenirs*, Paris, Librairie Delagrave, 1958: 274; quoted Mennell, 1985: 277).

M.F.K. Fisher's second preface to the *Physiology of Taste* is brief and to the point: 'The need for simplicity which Brillat-Savarin helped to strengthen in me is even stronger than it was in 1949 and I see no need to add to what I wrote then, except perhaps to avow that my love for the old lawyer burns as brightly now as ever' (in Brillat-Savarin, 1971: vi). Given that Brillat-Savarin does not expressly campaign for simplicity, she presumably refers to his response to attacks on alleged 'gluttony'.

Simplicity comes praised in all directions. In 1929, André Simon announced that:

> Simplicity is, happily, the guiding spirit of present-day Gastronomy. But Simplicity must not be simply a pose: still less an excuse for slimming. Simplicity

> must be intelligent. In Gastronomy, simplicity means aiming at *one* peak and leading up to it. There are varieties of combinations beyond count, but the principle of aiming at one outstanding dish and wine is to be commended. Outstanding does not mean complicated nor extravagent, but that there will one principle dish of the meal and one wine which will harmonise with it, however inexpensive it may be (1951: 27-28).

Writing in 1791, Richard Warner complains that even during the reign of Richard II (1377-1399), French cooks were in fashion in England, 'and they appear to have equalled their descendants of the present day, in the variety of their condiments, and in their faculty of disguising nature, and metamorphosing simple food into complex and nondescript gallimaufries' (1791: xxxii).

As a closing example of the widespread advocacy of simplicity, and its relativity, writing from Madras at the end of last century, 'Wyvern' claims:

> You cannot make your dinner too simple in detail, and the fewer servants you employ to carry it out the better. How distressing it is too see a herd of attendants, mobbing each other like a scared flock of sheep, at a time when everything should be as orderly, and as quiet as possible. To ensure calm service, pare down the number of your dishes to the fewer possible, and for eight guests never allow more than four servants, besides your butler, to attend the table (1891: 10).

Simplicity as sustaining

Uncertain whether or not to spell out my topic's perhaps obvious connections with the theme of `sustaining gastronomy', I quickly mention two links[1].

Firstly, is simplicity a key gastronomic value, like freshness? (Indeed, is freshness a type of simplicity?)

At the time of the first Symposium ten years ago, it was a struggle to gain acceptance for freshness. Many people said the demand was 'idealistic': frozen food was entrenched; you couldn't fight supermarkets. Well, the importance of freshness is now taken for granted, even by supermarkets (one corporation advertising as 'The fresh food people').

And so, with freshness accepted, should we sustain Australian gastronomy by moving on to a new commitment to simplicity? This would be to 'sustain gastronomy' in the sense of maintaining the rage.

More importantly, the suggestion of sustainable agriculture is associated in my mind with the need to get back to the 'simple life', and so what is that? Superficially at least, simplicity in gastronomy seems desirable in sustaining more of us longer.

HOWEVER, THERE IS A PROBLEM WITH SIMPLICITY.

This is the problem: On the one hand, we desire simplicity, and I have cited several testimonials. We praise a serve of proper vanilla icecream, with crunchy specks. On the

other, there is a suggestion in simplicity of sterility.

On occasion, even Epicurus liked luxuries. In his *Letter to Menoeceus*, he explains that a person appreciates the finer things when not in hock to them: 'Those have the sweetest pleasure in luxury who least need it' (Bailey, 1926: 89).

We demand more apple varieties than three - Granny Smiths and Red and Golden Delicious. We detest Big Macs for production-line imperialism.

Mixed farming seems more sustainable than monoculture. Ecologists praise bio-diversity. We must save heritage seeds (Saunders, 1994).

That is, the issue raises an interesting tension, with simplicity often undesirably connected with the likes of *asceticism, puritanism, modernism, philosophical reductionism, totalitarianism, fundamentalism, monoculture, economic rationalism...* In contrast to simplicity, we find the 'simplistic'.

When people speak of returning to the 'simple life', I have long presumed they actually want a richer, more rewarding and more diverse experience. That is, simplicity seems to mean not just hacking away, but at the very least also exposing something rewarding.

On reflection, it seems to me that a restaurant like Berowra Waters Inn is a notable for *simplicity with depth.*

Marcel Proust can transport us directly into these layers. The hotel manager at Balbec bows to the guests solemnly, as if 'in the presence of the Holy Sacrament', and yet appreciative, motionless and masterful, 'as if to show that his glittering eyes, which seemed to start out of his face, saw everything, inspected everything, the minute finish of the details as well as the harmony of the whole of this "Dinner in the Grand Hotel"' (quoted Aron, 1975: 11).

There must be more to it, and I want to examine simplicity and its concomitant of `depth' by recourse to a favourite writer, Thomas Walker.

Thomas Walker & *The Original*

Born in England in 1784, Thomas Walker inherited wealth, studied at Trinity College, Cambridge, was a political Radical concerned with poverty, and became a police magistrate.

He is survived by *The Original*, a personal weekly newspaper on food, travel and health published in London during 1835.

The Original did not last one year. He announced that he was exhausted and was taking a holiday. Before he could resume, he died in 1836, in his early 50s.

It is no great literary work, yet the issues were immediately collected into a book, which went into several editions. So, too, did the food essays themselves, and I am using the edition of 1928, known as *The Art of Dining*.

I hold Walker dear - and not just because he coined the word 'Aristologist' (for student of dining). While his tone is straightforward and earnest, his advice remains extraordinarily valid. Importantly for the moment, within the gastronomic literature, he stands as the greatest advocate of simplicity.

Explaining his campaign, he writes: 'I think the affluent would render themselves and their country an essential service if they were to fall into the simple, refined style of living, discarding everything incompatible with real enjoyment' (1928: 7). Opposing the `ornamented and cumbrous' style then in vogue, he predicts the triumph of 'simplicity and convenience' (20).

The main message is to remove unnecessary impediments to good dining. A example is that the kitchen should be adjacent to the dining-room to ensure the food is still hot.

Devoting much attention to service, or what he calls 'attendance', he is against too much ceremony: `With respect to wine, it is often offered, when not wanted; and when wanted, is perhaps not to be had till long waited for... How different, where you can put your hand upon a decanter at the moment you want it!' (1928: 6). 'A chief maxim of dining with comfort is, to have what you want when you want it' (2). That is, he discourages pretentious `attendance' or service, the 'real end of which is to do that for you which you cannot so well do for yourself' (4).

This principle applies today in letting people top up their own glasses (with the added attraction that people gain a better idea of how much they have consumed).

Of course, the menu should be simple. Before his time, he argues against *service à la franÿaise* in favour of *service à la russe.* That is, rather than a great numbers of dishes being placed on the table for the servants to serve, he believes in a few dishes, one at a time.

In place of mindless profusion of plates, he favours the variety brought by the seasons:

> The productions of the different seasons and of different climates point out to us unerringly that it is proper to vary our food; and one good general rule I take to be, to select those things which are most in season and to abandon them as soon as they begin to deteriorate in quality. Most people mistake the doctrine of variety in their mode of living. *They have great variety at the same meals, and great sameness at different meals* (32; my italics).

He advises against over-catering. Don't worry that the table might look bare. 'Enough is as good as a feast' is a sound maxim. `In proportion to the smallness of dinner ought to be its excellence, both as to quality of materials and the cooking' (24).
Walker's outrageous sexism (eg 1928: 2, 14, 33, 45) shows up in his warnings against garnishes and ornament, since he blames women for the fussiness of meals. For example:

> There is one female failing in respect to dinners, which I cannot help here noticing, and that is, a very inconvenient love of garnish and flowers, either

> natural or cut in turnips and carrots, and stuck on dishes, so as greatly to impede carving and helping. This is the true barbarian principle of ornament... the ornament is an encumbrance, and has no relation to the matter on which it is placed.... But there is a still worse practice, and that is pouring sauce over certain dishes to prevent them from looking too plain (14).

He was, as he says, a 'herring-and-hashed mutton' man (45), who favours the 'plain, easy style of entertaining' (41).

In paring back, he favours plenty of vegetables, and opposes desserts:

> One of the greatest luxuries, to my mind, in dining, is to be able to command plenty of good vegetables, well served up. But this is a luxury vainly hoped for at set parties (33).
>
> As to desserts, I am no friend to them... Desserts are made instruments of show... a perpetual source of temptation to excess (36).

He pushes for moderation in food and in wine:

> The art in using wine is to produce the greatest possible quantity of present gladness, without any future depression... Drinking too quick confuses both the stomach and the brain; drinking too slow disappoints them... When the proper point of elevation is attained, so use the glass as just to keep there, whereby enjoyment is prolonged without alloy (51-52).

Finally, in these snippets of aristological wisdom, he was a great advocate of champagne: 'I never knew a party that could be said to go off ill, where there was a judiciously liberal supply of good champagne' (58) - note the phrase 'judiciously liberal'. He devotes an article to arguing that champagne ought to start a meal - yet again, advice worthy following today.

To examine a little more theoretically what he is doing, let me point out that, firstly, he wants to make sense of *cultural* forms, complaining of useless cultural add-ons, mere form without content, show without substance.

> It is one of the evils of the present day, that everybody strives after the same dull style - so that where comfort might be expected, it is often least to be found. State, without the machinery of state, is of all states the worst (7).

He shudders to think how often he has been `doomed to a solemn mockery' of enjoyment; 'how often I have sat in durance stately, to go through the ceremony of dinner, the essence of which is to be without ceremony, and how often in this land of liberty have I felt myself a slave!' (1-2).

If people are to avoid thoughtless form for its own sake, they must rely on general principles, working out the right detail for the particular occasion. 'I put aside custom, fashion, and prejudice, as enemies to the **true theory and practice**' (18).

So, what are these principles? As I say, he dwells upon the cultural 'means of preventing

distraction at the dinner-table' (21). However, it is not just negative - merely cutting back for cutting back's sake. He advocates a positive program: *to bring diners closer to their food and to each other.*

For him, 'simplicity' expresses the aim of living more in harmony with one another and the physical world. Simplifying culture brings social and natural togetherness. We get 'back to basics'.

He removes thoughtless complications because they take away from the essentials:

> The legitimate objects of dinner are to refresh the body, to please the palate, and to raise the social humour to the highest point (13-14; see also 35)

To take the case of social life, he emphasises sound interpersonal communication. Among the improvements, he suggests that invitations give guests an idea of what is planned, including who else is invited, 'not only so as to prevent disappointment, but to prepare the invited for any particular circumstance, in order that they may come with the proper disposition, created by anticipation' (42; see also 44).

Similarly, he lays great stress on what is called 'general conversation'. This is shared rather than separate conversations. He says that a party should be, to quote the French revolutionists, `one and indivisible' (15). 'By an unity I mean where there is general conversation only, instead of particular or partial. It is absurd to call that one party which is broken into many, but which sits at one table' (26).

To encourage this, he advocates no more than eight at a meal (just as he stands against solitary dining). He also quotes Madame de Staël's description of Corinne's drawing-room, which was 'simply furnished, and with everything contrived to make conversation easy and the circle compact' (23).

This is also why he opposes 'useless centrepieces' on the table - for example, flowers, ceramic stands and candelabra. Remember that it is in 1835 that he writes:

> I rather think the best mode of lighting a table has not yet been discovered. I think it desirable not to have the lights upon it, nor indeed anything which can interrupt the freest communication between the guests, upon which sociability greatly depends... (22)

Instead, 'I would have a basket of beautiful bread, white and brown, in the middle of the table, with a silver fork on each side, so that the guests could help themselves...' (22).

In other words, Thomas Walker is no mere iconoclast but positively wants to sustain bodies, sustain sensory pleasures and sustain conviviality.

Seen in this light, simplicity bears some relation to the ideas of 'authenticity' set out in *The Shared Table* (Symons, 1993: 68-77), authenticity being regarded there as intimacy with nature, society and culture.

For Walker, it is empowering. An advantage of 'a simple, stateless style of living is, that it admits of so much liberty in various ways, and allows of many enjoyments, which the

cumbrous style totally prevents' (1928: 27).

Likewise, it is not destructive (as in some campaign of unrestrained ascetic negation or economic rationalism), but constructive:

> To order dinner well is a matter of invention and combination. It involves novelty, simplicity, and taste; whereas, in the generality of dinners, there is no character but that of dull routine (25).

He is not averse to 'little additions... which give a sort of poetry to a repast, and please the palate to the promotion of health' (2-3).
Aware of the attractions of simplicity, one builds - in search of some quality of harmony, coherence, union... A dish, a meal, the whole occasion coming to form a *gestalt*, a whole greater than its parts (Symons, 1993: 56-59).

Remember the 'unity' of Walker's preferred conversation, the way people come together as 'one'. The furnishings, especially the lighting, should direct attention to 'produce an effect from the whole, and not by the parts' (1928: 16).

Walker deplores the 'unmeaning and unconnected courses now placed before our eyes. This is a matter of study and combination, and a field for genius' (34).

I hope that I have shown that simplicity is not just an absence, but a positive quality. It requires us to think in terms not just of stripping away but also cultivating dignity, elegance, *depth.* Simplicity in culture does not interfere with the diners' communion with the physical world and one another.

Simplicity with depth

In the relative absence of gastronomic theory, it is useful to turn to architecture, with which gastronomy has much in common. To better understand the paradox of simplicity with depth, I have looked into architectural debates on modernism versus postmodernism.

The pivotal architects of the twentieth century have advocated simplification. Students have been brought up believing that nature uses the least amount of material for a given structure. In nature, we find the most direct solution[2].

In a book on *Ornament and Crime* in 1908, Adolf Loos argued: 'The evolution of culture is synonymous with the removal of ornament from utilitarian objects' (quoted Greenhalgh, 1990: 45).

In a now quite shockingly fascist manifesto, *Towards a New Architecture* (1923), Le Corbusier drew inspiration from industrial forms, engineering solutions like streamlined cars and wheat silos. He saw the need to house workers in vast estates of apartment blocks.

'Less is more', pronounced Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. As much as any other architect, he can be considered the 'father of steel and glass architecture'.

However, modern or 'international' architecture now stands accused of reductionism, sterility and institutional anonymity. Hence, in 1961, Robert Venturi coined the witticism 'less is a bore' (Greenhalgh, 1990: 38).

The boring is rejected by postmodern architects in favour of pluralism. They turn their back on the perfect object to be read in only one way. The trouble is that while postmodernists announce wonderful intentions, and they have succeeded with some small-scale buildings, their skyscrapers are often the same brutal blocks with quickly outdated ornamentation (Greenhalgh, 1990).

There must be others ways, and the most promising may well be that of Christopher Alexander, whose *A Pattern Language* has been used in previous Symposiums by Susan Parham (eg 1991). In his intriguing theoretical statement, *The Timeless Way of Building*, Alexander praises a 'quality without a name'.

'There is a central quality which is the root criterion of life and spirit in a man, a town, a building, or a wilderness. This quality is objective and precise, but it cannot be named' (Alexander, 1979: 19).

Alexander speaks of successful buildings as 'beautiful, ordered, harmonious - yes, all these things. But especially, and what strikes to the heart, they live' (9). Then he circles around, trying to find a name, the closest suggestions being: 'alive', 'whole', 'omfortable', 'free', 'exact', 'egoless', 'eternal' (29-39).

In the face of his mystical search, the actual solution spelled out in the *Pattern Language* is empirical, sifting through the elements which contribute to satisfying design:

> The rich and complex order of a town can grow from thousands of creative acts. For once we have a common pattern language in our town, we shall all have the power to make our streets and buildings live, through our most ordinary acts. The language, like a seed, is the genetic system which gives our millions of small acts the power to form a whole (1979: 351).

Incidentally, this sounds like Frank Lloyd Wright, who borrowed from Japanese architecture the need for simplicity and precise balance, and moved towards an organic architecture using the multiplication of cells. Examine one cell and you know what the whole looks like, he said, claiming to produce a non-reductionist simplicity. That is, using biological metaphors, these architects claim that by using simple living elements people can build organic wholes.

For those who have not yet got the idea of depth, as well as architecture, I have received help from (believe it or not) Paul Davies, *The Mind of God: Science and the search for ultimate meaning* (1992)[3].
Davies writes of the theoretical physicists' attempt to formulate a Theory of Everything. This seems to imply reductionism, in that we can keep reducing and reducing the world into some brief piece of mathematics: 'Underlying the complexity of nature is the simplicity of physics,' he writes (1992: 135).

'But the universe is... far from being simple. It possesses a subtle kind of complexity

that places it partway between simplicity on the one hand and randomness on the other. One way of expressing this quality is to say that the universe has "organised complexity"' (1992: 136).

One attempt to capture such organisation mathematically belongs to Charles Bennett and involves something he calls 'logical depth'. The idea is that simple laws of physics can be repeated over and over to produce amazing complexity. In fact, the amount of information processing required to generate a state of a system is its 'logical depth' (Davies, 1992: 137). 'Highly organised patterns are logically deep, because they require that many complicated steps be performed in generating them' (138).

'A living organism has great logical depth, because it could not plausibly have originated except through a very long and complicated chain of evolutionary processes.' This lets Davies suggest that the essence of life's complexity lies not with the fundamental rules, but with their repeated use. 'The computer has to work very hard applying the rule again and again before it can generate deeply complex patterns from simple initial states...' (138)

He relays Murray Gell-Mann's remark that 'deep systems can be recognised because they are the ones we want to preserve. Shallow things can easily be reconstructed. We value paintings, scientific theories, works of music and literature, rare birds, and diamonds because they are all hard to manufacture. Motorcars, salt crystals, and tin cans we value less; they are relatively shallow' (Davies, 1992: 138).

Using this kind of argument, I can conclude that the *simple* is 'logically shallow', but, against this, *simplicity* has `depth'.

Have we got any further, though? The mystery is not that simple rules will eventually generate complexity, although that's wondrous enough, but that this complexity will then reveal apparent coherence, with patterns at higher and higher orders.

I am not sure that Davies intends his search to lead away from physics, but it seems to me that he has shown that physics is not as interesting as biology, let alone the cultural sciences, each examining meaning at increasingly higher orders of complexity[4].

But how can patterns like organisms and cultures emerge out of chaos? To come to terms with this, we might have to turn to evolutionary thinking, such as process philosophy. 'There appear to exist general organising principles that supervise the behaviour of complex systems at higher organisational levels, principles that exist alongside the laws of physics (which operate at the bottom level of individual particles). These organising principles are consistent with, but cannot be reduced to, or derived from the laws of physics' (Davies, 1992: 182).

This is the perplexity of 'emergent' phenomena. Emergence? This is when patterns emerge at higher orders, and emerge apparently unpredictably.

To skip elsewhere, archeologists have had to confront this general problem, when early cities, say, seem to grow coherently, so that potters tend to cluster in certain quarters, and so on. Borrowing from thermodynamic studies in chemistry, the Belgian scientist Ilya

Prigogine has stressed propensity of non-equilibrium systems like cities for self-organisation.

Advancing this approach, Prigogine's colleague P.M. Allen has simulated the growth of urban centres, predicting the growth of new and more complex forms. Taking into account such factors as industry, population and retail trade, he modelled a small town developing into a city, predicting the shifting locations of various activities (Renfrew & Bahn, 1991: 433).

My essay appears to have strayed far from simplicity in food, and yet I can point to gastronomic writers of direct relevance. Concerned with questions of authenticity, and with some comprehension of general issues, these writers caution about the need to balance cultural and natural realities, the so-called higher and the lower levels.

It might be a short essay, but Georg Simmel does bother, uniquely for one of the founders of sociology, to write in 1910 on 'The sociology of the meal' (Symons, 1994a). In recommending white table linen, family portraits on the wall, light conversation and simple, 'childish' looking foods, Simmel provides a metaphysical-sounding, fascinating discussion. In a meal, he says, we find a balance between the elaborately aesthetic and the crudely animalistic. Neither can be overemphasised at the expense of the other.

As an example of his thinking, Simmel opposes food which we might say looks 'too good to eat': `Whereas the beauty of an artwork has as its essence its untouchability, which keeps us at a distance, it the refinement of the dining table that its beauty should still invite us to disturb it' (in Symons, 1994a: 349).

To take another writer German writer a century earlier, and this time an art historian, Baron Rumohr specifically discusses 'Simplicity or Complexity of Dishes' (Book Three, Chapt II; 1993: 179-181). However, at that point, the issue is purely nutritional: should we offer few foods or a mixed diet - and he favours the middle way.

Nonetheless, more generally in the *The Essence of Cookery*, Rumohr stands for simplicity (in some complex sense). He deplores in ancient Rome the 'annihilation of the character of any dish by blending and over-processing' (1993: 46). Quoting a complicated recipe of Apicius, he declares: 'The food has been dried up and overseasoned so much that it has been mummified' (47), and so on.

Rumohr's case is that the self-aggrandising *art* of cookery, with its showy recipes, becomes detached from its traditional roots. This is a forerunner to Simmel's argument, and relates, I suggest, to the present discussion in terms of the need to balance 'simplicity' with something else, which I have termed 'depth'. Somehow the drive towards simplicity cuts away the distractions from a fuller experience of society, nature and ourselves.

Finally, in another classic of the gastronomic literature, *The Supper of the Lamb*, Robert Farrer Capon captures some of the dialectic by pushing for 'fancy cooking and plain eating'. His point is that Madison Avenue (the advertising industry) seeks to convince us that that our destiny is to eat like kings while practising nothing but minimal cooking.

'Against all the propaganda for fancy eating and plain cooking, I hope to persuade you to cook fancy and just plain eat. Only a daily renewed astonishment at things as they are can save us from the idols; it is our love of real processes and actual beings that keeps us sane' (1969: 144-145).

He is also struck by the irony, which I should have mentioned earlier, that cooking something satisfyingly simple seems surprisingly hard (certainly, fanciness tends to be a mark of the bad cook). Leaving this to Father Capon, he writes, with (sexism but) a telling example:

> If you were to poll the man in the street on the question: Which is harder to accomplish - something simple or something complex? you would no doubt find that most people take it for granted that simple things are easy and complex ones difficult. Yet if you were to ask the question of the knowledgeable men in respect of their own trades, you would find that the reverse is true. The writer would tell you that he wrote 5000 words because he didn't have time to write 1500...

'It is simplicity, therefore, that takes the most doing, even though complexity has more going on', Capon tells us (1969: 156). This is in the context of his argument in favour of pastry over cake. Puff pastry is 'merely' layers of butter with flour and water, yet the result is magical.

He writes: 'I trust you will admit that puff pastry makes an excellent paradigm of the paradoxicality of being: stark ordinariness intimately conjoined with incredible complexity; the simple and the difficult rolled into one; plainness transfigured by care' (164).

I started off documenting the widespread view that, in food terms, simplicity is attractive. It somehow suggests lack of fuss. It is chicken, pickles and rice.

While simplicity suggests stripping away unncessary formality, it means getting back to basics. It also suggests harmony, elegance and depth.

It also includes building over time. Depth comes from the layers of reality which have patiently evolved, as if life is a self-generating beauty, which requires no gilding.

For us, simplicity is a balancing act, to get culture in tune with nature. It means not over-ornamenting the richness which seems irrepressible. It is an elusive quality, the puff-pastry of life.

NOTES:

1. A discussion of simplicity was also applicable to the next day's topics, most obviously to 'authenticity' and to a 'code of dining'.

2. Thanks to Rachel Hurst for helping, with typical precision, with architectural points.

3. In the spoken version of this paper, I demonstrated a simple magic trick performed merely with the two hands and in which the thumb appears to become detached. I repeated the illusion when I feared my discussion seemed to go 'out to lunch'.

4. Norbert Elias is one sociologist to have written on such matters. See either his *Involvement and Detachment* or Stephen Mennell's 1989 book about him.

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EATING INTO THE ENVIRONMENT: NUTRITION, HEALTH AND SUSTAINING GASTRONOMY

John Coveney

What I want to do today is to look at the relationship between nutrition, health and a sustaining gastronomy. Sustaining gastronomy as I see it is about producing food in a way that is sensitive to the environment, and preparing and eating it in ways that nourish the body and the mind. Such a gastronomy would also be culturally sustaining because it would help to connect people through food which had a sense of familiarity, and authenticity. Without giving away the ending before you have read the book, I'm going to suggest that if the past is anything to go by 'nutrition, health and sustaining gastronomy' is something of a contradiction in terms.

Despite the current nutritional and medical interests in what we might call sustaining cuisines (for example the much quoted Mediterranean diet), the things really of interest here are the biologically active ingredients in these cuisines, not the cuisine itself. This is because nutritional science has not been interested in gastronomy. It has instead been interested in looking at food at a microscopic level to find out which ingredients are health giving and which ones are disease forming. Now that is a perfectly legitimate field of study, and we have made great strides in our understanding about food and disease over the past 50 years. The problems come however when the findings of nutritional and medical research are incorporated directly into the food supply. The consequences are readily apparent in the supermarket for anyone to see: aisles of food claiming to be nutritious and healthy, but which are far from sustainable in an environmental sense and a gastronomic sense. These are the areas I want to explore today.

I also want to point to some ways in which a climate could be fostered by a coming together of nutrition, health and gastronomy through sustainability.

In order to open up the area I want to look at the issue of the food supply, especially the future of the food supply. It would seem that from a sustainability point of view the Australian food system is in deep trouble. Two hundred years of farming practices have produced catastrophic effects on the land with problems like soil erosion, soil and irrigation salinity, nutrient loss (Fray, 1991).

At the other end of the food chain our supermarkets boast a wide variety of foodstuff, from a sustainability point of view, there are major problems. Much of what is sold uses energy intensive processes from non-renewable fossil fuels either in the manufacture or in transportation (Smith, 1991). Apart from some of the fresh fruit lines little is made of seasonality, and even less of regionality. In my greengrocer's recently snowpeas from Zimbabwe were for sale. If it takes 435 calories to fly one five calorie strawberry from California to New York (Pimentel and Pimentel, p165 1979), I will leave you to calculate how much energy it took to bring a 3 calorie snowpea all the way from Africa to Australia.

Perhaps the real excesses of the food supply are in the manufacture and popularity of 'diet' foods, which are considered to be wasteful from a sustainability point of view. 'Only one calorie' Diet Coke uses over 1600 calories just to make the aluminium can (Gussow and Clancy, 1986)

The biodiversity of our diet has dwindled. This may have been made worse by the so-called health revolution in the supermarket. In the UK there are fears that the current fad for low fat meats may lead to a market preference for animals with low fat carcasses, resulting in the loss of genetic stock of herds who may have naturally high fat content (Food Program, ABC, June 1994).

There is something else about our food supply that prevents it from being sustaining, and here I am thinking about cultural sustainability. For many consumers the food supply is almost alienating. Consumers are worried about what is in food, in terms of additives and contaminants. They are also concerned about what is not in it in terms of freshness, flavour, nourishment. Instead of a sustaining gastronomy, our food supply might be regarded a non-sustaining 'gastro-anomie' to borrow a term from Claude Fischler (see Mennell, Murcott and van Otterloo, p13, 1992).

Understandably there is a feeling that things cannot continue the way they are going. That changes and choices are required. But which way and which ones? In his book *The Sane Alternative*, James Robertson (1980) discusses a choice of futures for the planet, and I want to focus on two which are the ones that are often presented to us as ways out of the problem. They are described by Robertson as The Hyper-Expansionist option and the Sane/Humane/Ecological option.

Joan Gussow, an American nutritionist who speaks and writes passionately about food and ecological issues, has used Robertson's options to predict the future of the food supply (Gussow, 1991). This is what she has to say.

The Hyper-expansionist option

Here the prediction is that the food supply in the future will be largely in the hands of biotechnology. Genetic engineering will have made it possible to breed plants and animals that are pest-resistant, drought-resistant, day and night resistant, salt tolerant, heat tolerant, cold tolerant, season tolerant (and of course low in saturated fat). Meddlesome things like seasonal and regional differences, which do tend to interfere with the ebbs and flows of the food supply, would simply vanish. The primary foods themselves would be highly packagable and transportable, with robustness built into their characteristics, through for example, including a fish gene into tomatoes to allow them to be snap frozen.

Proponents of this option promised cheaper food in the long run, since there will be less wastage during the growing period, and fewer applications of biocides and fertilisers.

Of course there would still be costs involved in transporting food, and costs involved in the storage of food, so perhaps the next step is to relocate primary production of food away from the farm and into the places where it is mainly consumed, ie high density urban areas. Gussow points out that this particular scenario was proposed by two scientists from the US Agriculture Department . Basically farms would be used to grow a supply of ligno-cellulosic plants which are then converted to sugar syrups and transported to sites alongside towns where food is 'grown' on a continuous basis. Tissue culture techniques already allow the laboratory production of the flesh of certain plant foods. The greatest possibility is with animal foods which could be grown in vitro, mainly because we have much more knowledge about animal physiology than plant physiology. Current research

into gustatory perception of smell, how we taste food and how this can be put into food, will help enormously with the production of fabricated foods.

This futuristic system has some ecological advantages - we are assured. There would be no requirement for annual plant production, thus eliminating the need for yearly ploughing of soil and thereby reducing soil erosion.

As far as the consumer is concerned, under the Hyperexpansionist option things might not look too different. Food stores would continue to stock a wide variety of food, but the basic ingredients in food would be derived in a different way. Food would continue to be promoted and purchased in terms of convenience, nutrition, economy, safety and above all dependability.

So the Hyperexpansionist model, otherwise known as HE favours the biotechnological fix as the answer to the problem of future food supplies.

Sane\Humane\Ecological option

The Sane - Humane - Ecological option, otherwise known as SHE, recognises that the only sensible way ahead is thorough small scale, locally produced food systems that are in touch with the natural rhythms of the environment and the climate. Instead of flattening out seasonality and regionality, this option celebrates them as a prominent feature of the food supply. Agricultural inputs are low in everything but human effort, and chemical enhancement of the soil is replaced by crop rotation, integrated pest management, inter-planting of species. The emphasis is also on biodiversity both to enrich the diet but also to minimise pest infestations.

However as far as the consumer is concern there are big changes. The emphasis would be on fresh, minimally processed food. There would be fewer out of season and non-regional foods. Those available would be expensive, perhaps because they have attracted an eco-tax designed to reflect the real costs of producing and transporting these foods. Consumers would be closer to the raw material of the meals that they make, and that would be good because people would know what they are eating. Generally then there would be fewer convenience foods, less pre-packaged foods and perhaps less overall variety. However, we would see a return to there might be greater variety within certain foods, for example, we might see a return of early apples coming at the beginning of summer and late apples at the beginning of winter.

There would probably be a reduction in meat consumption. This is because the raising of livestock and poultry would become more humane - no more chicken concentration camps.

So there are two choices: HE foods, literally man-made foods, or SHE foods, mother nature foods. Of course, the proponents of the SHE option, recognise that there is no real choice at all. They are able to point to some major flaws with the technological fix that the HE option promises. For example, the past has shown that technological solutions to food supply problems have not always delivered on promises.

Chemical pesticides are promoted on their ability to control pest infestations and improve crop yield. The problem is that over 500 species of insects have now developed a resistance to pesticides. In the US in the 30 years since 1945 there has been a 10 fold

increase in pesticide use. However during the same period annual crop losses due to insect infestation has actually increased from 7% to 15% (Hindmarsh, 1992).

From a food production point of view therefore, the SHE option provides a convincing and compelling argument as a food supply choice for the future. However, it is likely that consumers will be the final arbiters of the food system (Gussow and Clancy, 1986), so we must weigh up the future with an understanding of both production and consumption.

In what follows I look again at the HE and SHE options as positions at opposite end of a food supply continuum. I want to weigh up a number of consumer and health issues which are likely to position the future food supply at a point along the continuum; that is becoming either more or less technological, more or less sustainable.

Consumer issues that are likely to position the food supply closer to the techno-scientific (HE) option.

It is true that consumers are usually fairly sensitive to developments which appear to tamper with the food supply. The issues that raise most concern are related to additives, chemical residues, and other contaminants. Consumers want safe, pure, natural food - not unreasonably.

Over the past decade or so the food industry has met consumer demand for these features by a proliferation of foods announcing that they are 'natural', no artificial colourings or flavourings. Consumers appear to have got what they wanted.

This will be a big plus for the food system based on Hyper-Expansionism, which will, let's face it, produce foods that are 'natural'. Already we there are HE foods that have the same look, feel, form, colour as old varieties of food. In fact, the similarities are so striking that the Food and Drug Administration in the USA has already decreed that foods produced through biotechnology need not be labelled as such since there are no safety or usage concerns to which consumers must be alerted (Federal Update, 1994). So the new Flavr Savr 'tomato', a variety which has been genetically engineered to increase its shelf life, need not be identified to consumers as different in any way to other tomatoes.

Health issues that are likely to position the food supply closer to the techno-scientific (HE) option.

It is clear to anyone who shops that the promotion of food on its health and nutritional merits has become almost epidemic proportions. For a relatively new science like nutrition, this is quite a success story. It is quite clear that nutrition means business - in all senses of that term. The clamber by food manufacturers to make a nutritional claim about their products has reached silly proportions. Foods that have never have cholesterol or salt in them are proclaimed as 'Cholesterol free' or 'Salt free'. This fits very nicely with the HE option possibilities for, as I pointed out earlier, it has been the role of nutritional scientists to discover what it is in food that makes it disease forming or health enhancing. But, finding out that broccoli for example contains an ingredient that protects against cancer does not necessarily lead to the logical conclusion 'eat more broccoli'. It could lead to the situation where the magic ingredient is used to enrich another food (Gussow and Akabas, 1993). In the HE scenario it will be possible to engineer the active ingredient in broccoli

into the ingredients that make up a pizza (which presumably can be heated up in the car microwave on the way home from work).

Why not tell people to eat more broccoli, you ask? Why bother? The HE option allows consumers to continue eating what they are already eating, manufacturers just make sure the ingredients are 'nutritious'. For example, during the oat bran craze, there was less publicity about the benefits of eating wholegrain porridge, and most about the wonders of eating 'Brekkie Crunch' and muesli bars to which oat bran had been added.

Of course whether HE foods will make people healthier is another matter. Trying to tart up people's diets by surreptitiously substituting so-called unhealthy ingredients for healthy ones does not always work. For example, artificial sweeteners have be in wide use for the past few decades and are used in a number of foods and beverages. You would therefore think that the consumption of refined sugars would have plummeted. However, the decrease in refined sugar intake has been small. What has happened is that the per capita consumption of soft drinks (much of which is sugar free) has more than doubled over the past 3 decades (Lester, p 71 1994).

We are just about to see the launch of foods with artificial fat in them. My guess is that they will not reduce people's fat intake. So while the food supply might be getting more nutritious, people might not be getting healthier. This is something I want to discuss later.

Consumer issues that are (un)likely to position the food supply closer to the sustainable (SHE) option.

In almost every wish list by consumers about food, the topics that come up again and again are Freshness, Nutrition, and Natural. However it is often hard to reconcile these views by the consumer with the kinds of foods they purchased. The trolleys going through the check-outs in the supermarket are not always brimful with fresh, unprocessed goodness, are they? So, when we see that fresh foods are usually in less evidence in most people's supermarket trolleys than processed food, this is telling us two things (at least). Firstly, that freshness is great, but it has its place. For most shoppers, usually women, getting meals prepared and on tables in a fairly short time is also important. Secondly, for many consumers, nutrition need not be sacrificed for convenience now that additives are 'natural', products are 'cholesterol free', 'salt reduced' etc. You really can have your cake and eat it.

While you might think therefore that the Fresh, Nutritious and Natural demands by consumers might encourage the SHE option, we need to consider what might seen as the disadvantages of starting meal preparation from basic ingredients. There is much discussion about the amount of time really saved by so-called convenience foods, but perhaps the most important thing here is not the amount of real time saved but the amount of time perceived to be saved. The whole idea (including the name) of convenience foods may discourage consumers from going back to basics.

The other issue that might get in the way of the SHE option is that there does not exist a large enough sub-culture able to provide the momentum to put it on a larger agenda. For example, in his book *Appetite for Change*, Warren Belasco (1989) illustrates the way that 30 years ago in the US the hippy counterculture took on the food industry, and to some extent won. So the reason why I can now buy my bean sprouts and brown rice from the

supermarket is perhaps because the food industry took it seriously and saw a market which accommodated the young, hip, radical, consciousness-raising movement of the 1960's. Today no similar sub-culture is large or interested enough to do the same for the SHE option.

Health issues that are (un)likely to position the food supply closer to the sustainable (SHE) option.

On the face of it, the SHE option nicely fits with the aims of nutrition and health experts. For almost two decades now various dietary guidelines have promoted more fruit, more vegetables, and more breads and cereals. The sub-text of guidelines like eat less salt and less sugar is really 'eat fewer processed foods' since we know that about 80% of salt, 70% sugar comes from so-called manufactured foods. You would expect therefore that current nutrition incentives would be promoting the SHE option, and certainly the National Food and Nutrition Policy for Australia recognises the need for a food system that is ecologically sustainable (AGPS, 1992).

The problem is that it is really hard to tell how seriously sustainability issues are taken by policy makers and nutrition experts (who often inform policy). Perhaps there is a belief that the changes required for SHE are too big, too economically unrealistic. Perhaps that is why at the International Congress of Nutritional Scientists, held last year (1993) here in Adelaide, discussions about nutrition and sustainability were noticeably absence in a conference whose theme was 'Nutrition and the Environment'.

The point was made rather bluntly by one of my students who pointed out that it was difficult enough to encourage people to eat any apples, yet alone ones grown locally from organic orchards. I do wonder, then, whether the problem for nutritional scientists with the SHE option is that it is too soft - not enough hard science. In other words SHE just isn't HE.

How might this change?

As I have already said, if the past is anything to go by the future food supply will tend to go down the path of a technological fix. I have suggested that the medicalisation of the food supply has helped and will continue to help push food in this direction. Perhaps one way of moving to a more sustaining food supply is through a reconsideration of the whole business of health, and indeed nutrition. There are some interesting stirrings in this area, let me explain.

The medicalisation of the food supply has been predicated on the understanding that eating foods low in fats (especially saturated fats), low in salt and sugar, high in fibre etc will make us all healthy. What is really meant here is that it is likely to reduce mortality and morbidity. As many writers now point out, this does not necessarily lead to health. Labonte (1991) points out that up to now health has been defined in very narrow terms - that is to be free of disease. A definition of health that has traditionally been part of the biomedical viewpoint. Another view of health is the social model. Here health is considered to be a product of the environment in which we live, not just the chemical or physical environment, ie whether or not you live near a lead smelter or in a rat infested slum, but the social and economic environment too.

Under the social model of health it is possible to have a disease or be disabled but feel perfectly healthy because of the social support you have through your family and friends; the feeling of being wanted, cherished, valued. Similarly, it is possible to have nice low levels of cholesterol and blood pressure, eat a fantastically healthful diet but in fact feel lousy because you are worried about every mouthful you eat - a bit like the character Woody Allen played in the film *Annie Hall*.

What has all this got to do with nutrition, health and gastronomy?

I think I have shown that for many reasons, nutrition and health interests have tended to be on the nutrient/disease interface. This interest belongs to what Pat Crotty (1993) calls 'the post-swallowing nutrition culture'. It is an interest in food and nutrition only after it has been swallowed and is being metabolised. It is a view of food that requires a nutrition educator, such a myself, to attempt to explain some fairly complicated physiological and biochemical processes to an already overwhelmed public.

It has become clear to many that an interest in food only after it has been swallowed falls short of a true understanding of nutrition (Coveney, 1990), and there is growing interest in health in the 'pre-swallowing nutrition culture'. In this culture interests centre on socio-cultural issues and food, food distribution patterns and habits. The pre-swallowing nutrition culture is more likely to look at how and why food is eaten rather than at what nutrients are consumed. On the issue of the Mediterranean diet, questions would be asked like: is the environment in which food is eaten contributing to health? Does eating in company, with family and friends, make a contribution to health? Does a sense of satisfaction and knowledge of familiarity and authenticity about food contribute to health?

The two nutrition cultures are split by that famous Cartesian dualism: the mind and the body - a dualism it has become very fashionable to undermine. This is fairly easy to do in this instance for it has become clear to many that what we think and feel about food might have a direct bearing on the way nutrients are physiological and metabolically handled. For example in a study on iron absorption in Thai and Swedish subjects, researchers found that iron absorption was greatest when participants ate foods from their own culture, with flavours they reported to have enjoyed most (Hallberg et al 1977, see also Cassidy, 1994). In other words, when the subjects ate food they were familiar with and liked, that food was more nourishing.

What we are perhaps seeing here is a physiological justification of a maxim that has always underpinned gastronomy - eat and enjoy. Not that the whole-hearted enjoyment of eating should ever need to be physiologically justified, except perhaps to nutritionists. The idea that feeling good about food can influence health might see an interest in a whole new movement in nutrition. We might see different a direction taken in research, one that tries to understand social and cultural issues and food. For example the importance of eating in company (for health and cultural reasons) has been raised at these symposia and in the literature (see eg Symons, 1993). This could lead to a very fruitful line of collaborative research between nutritionists and others who have an interest in cuisines, gastronomers for starters.

In conclusion then, upto now nutrition and health have been understood in ways that have not necessarily been sensitive to the environment, both the physical and cultural environments. A reconceptualisation of the way food and health are inter-related through

sustainability could see the beginnings of important likes between nutrition, health and gastronomy.

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PLATTERS OF

Whole Loaves of Wood Oven Baked Bread Filled with Roasted Garlic Bulbs, Served with Extra Virgin Olive Oil and Sea Salt

Salad of Baby Spinach Leaves, Olives, Artichokes and Capsicum

Anchovy and Sage Roasted Quail

Fried Polenta Cake with a Fennel, Baby Onion and Olive Braise

Sardines Marinated in Vinegar and Garlic

Freshly Poached Asparagus with a Melon and Red Onion Salsa and Crispy Pancetta

Air Dried Beef with Parmesan Crackers, Slow Roasted Baby Tomatoes and Egg Yolk

Chargrilled Giant Octopus with Roasted Beetroot Mash and Aioli

Semi Soft Wine Washed Top Paddock Cheese and Meredith Dairy Blue Served with Membrillo and Lavos

SUSTAINING GASTRONOMY

INVITED RESPONSES

Tim Marshall: Sustainable agriculture

Thanks very much for inviting me today. I did enjoy the three presentations we heard this morning.

I did not come with anything prepared to say, so I do hope that what you get from me this afternoon is genuinely my response to the morning, and if it's not addressing things particular to the three speakers, then it's the things that popped up into my head while I was listening to them. So perhaps I'll just start by saying that I thought the three speakers this morning were very gentle about the fact that a big part of the food issue is about selling, and that some of the things - which John in particular referred to when talking about a future technocratic response to food - a lot of those things are really possibly with us already in some form or another.

I don't know how many of you know, for instance, what Maggie Thatcher did before she became Prime Minister. She was famous as a person who managed to get more air into icecream than anyone else had been able to do. Now why does the food industry want to do that? The food industry wants to do that in order to sell you more cheap products like air and water.

A lot of what we see happening to food at the moment is driven by the desire to make profits and because there is only a certain amount of food that we can consume, unless we go back to some unsavoury Roman habits, one of the things the food industry will do is to find more and more places to put food in front of us, to try and force us to buy more. Why do you think that we have the change that's happened in the last ten years in petrol stations? Petrol stations are now are not just about pumping gas or fixing your brakes, they're about selling you food and that's a major change. Dog food is another example. Twenty years ago there wasn't much of a dog food market. Dogs ate what people left over, but now of course there's a very large industry which is based on feeding dogs.

On the bio-technology issue, I think I have to say that I remain fairly sceptical about what we're told we will get out of the products of gene technology. Just for example, if you look at the tomatoes I can buy in the supermarket and the ones that come from out of my back yard, there is not much similarity in the product. They're the same colour and roughly the same shape, but less and less are they the same shape and they certainly don't taste the same, so I think there are lots of promises about what the food technologists will deliver and I'm very sceptical.

What do all of those things I've just mentioned have in common? Well I think that one thing they do, to a very large extent, is to take the people out of the equation. People no longer have control over what they're buying, they don't know what they're buying. In the future for instance, is a vegetarian going to be told that there's a fish gene in their tomato? Or is a kosher food eater going to be told there's a pig gene in their whatever?

I am reminded of one of my favourite writers of all time, Wendell Berry. Some of you might know his works, essays like *The Agriculture Crisis as a Crisis of Culture,* much reproduced and well worth reading, or a book called *Our Sustainable Table* which

features some of his essays. Berry is someone who can easily produce notable quotes; his definition of a sustainable agriculture is one which 'does not deplete soils or people'. Putting the people back into the sustainability debate is, I think, very important.

What does agriculture itself need to be sustainable? From my perspective it needs seasonality and freshness. Those two things go together and I think they are essential for sustainability. It needs a variety, in particular, local variety. I re-read recently a famous essay by Roy Rappaport on the Tsembaga tribe of New Guinea. It was printed in September 1961 in *Science Magazine.* He says that the Tsembaga tribe in the highlands country consumed 260 varieties of vegetables from more than 40 species. I think that those people who think that we are so much better off with respect to the choices that are open to us in our society might just dwell on that and think how many species or varieties you actually consume, or most people consume in an average diet.

I have thought a great deal about the concept of sustainability, especially as it applies to agriculture. When people first come to change their farming system they usually come with a substitution mentality. They ask 'What can I use instead of the conventional product?' 'What do I use instead of herbicide x,' or 'What do I use instead of a pesticide y'. I think I saw this morning, especially perhaps in Anthony's paper, some sort of references to substitution. I think the more people get into an alternative agriculture, the less they look for substitutes, the more they look to total redesign of the system, total rethink of the system so that we can design the problems out of it, so that we don't need the pesticides, because in the very way we have set up your system we can account for prevention. This is the real value of biodiversity, translated into the agricultural system (i.e. not just into the surrounding environment, but into the production system itself). In practice it comes out in the new farming system as diversity, in multiple ways. Rotations achieve diversity through time, and seasonality is a large part of ensuring that correct rotations are met (seasonality also reduces the energy needs of agriculture in both production and distribution). Other examples of strategies used by alternative agriculturalists to redesign their system include polyculture, companion planting, undersowing, covercropping and the inclusion of non-productive (i.e. non-harvested) plants for the purpose of soil enrichment and protection and as habitat for beneficial organisms.

The next issue I would like to touch on may be telling you things you already know. It concerns quality. If you consider aspects of quality in, for instance, an apple, then you will discover that most of our quality characteristics for the apple are totally external and cosmetic. We grade apples according to size. If you're not 54 to 55 mm then you're not in grade A. Also colour, shape and size, all things which are very cosmetic. I think people are now becoming more interested in the internal qualities of their food, not only nutrition but taste, keeping qualities, freedom from residues etc., and as the population gets more sophisticated in dealing with concepts of sustainability, so I believe more and more esoteric things will come into our definition of quality. People will be prepared to consider humaneness of the production system for farm animals as an aspect of quality of the food which results from that system. People may be prepared to consider even more esoteric things like energy consumption to produce the apple as a characteristic of quality of the apple, and other things such as social justice for farmers and farm labourers.

And to finish, one last comment. I work mainly with organic farmers and I see the clean food movement making absolutely no moves whatsoever to embrace organics. I think that in doing so, there is a very major failure on their part and that it may reveal something about the motivation of the clean food movement. To satisfy me, every farmer does not have to be organic. To satisfy me every farmer has to strive as much as they can to be as sustainable as they can. But if the clean food movement can't see the benefits of organic farming, can't see that you need a vanguard of really very brave pioneering growers who are trying to push the limits of showing just how free of chemicals we can be in our production system, then that makes the clean food movement to me look more like an apology for the current practices in agriculture than about a movement that is really seriously trying to change agriculture.

John Possingham: Organic Farming

I've argued with Barbara about the title of this symposium because I could never work out what it meant ... Sustaining the input to gastronomy is perhaps one of the topics that we are talking about now, and I think wine sneaks in as part of gastronomy.

Vineyards have a problem; people are picking on them and accusing them of contaminating the environment. The traditional vineyards of Europe are now in densely populated areas. Originally they weren't, but as the population grew people clustered around vineyards. Often they are in very lovely areas, people come to live there and the next thing is that they turn around and say, we really don't like these vineyards. Let me give you a little example. I bought an almond orchard in Willunga the other day. Driving around on the first day I met the next door neighbour who asked 'What are you going to do?'. I said 'I'm going to dig out those almonds and grow some grapes'. He said 'Oh well, we'll have to leave. My wife can't stand those dreadful sprays you people use in viticulture'.

And that's the truth of it, viticulturists have traditionally been able to throw around all sorts of fungicides and insecticides, and these do contaminate the environment. I think, however, we are moving quite quickly now to control this. Adelaide is not unique, Melbourne is similar; there are vineyards literally in suburban areas and we have to be very careful not to spray as we used to. With fungicides we are going to have to spray in closed boxes so that we actually go over the row and spray across, catching all that doesn't get on the leaf and recirculating it. These spraying plants are being made; they're more expensive but we are going to have to use them. We'll use them for insecticides, too, to prevent these chemicals getting into the environment.

One problem we don't have yet, but which is a major problem in Europe, is the use of fertilisers. The Rhine Valley is particularly susceptible, since overuse of fertiliser ends up in the Rhine River, and this is another area viticulturists have to be very careful about. The use of weedkillers has also been targeted, and they are now being replaced by using the grass that grows down the row and throwing the grass underneath the vine. This practice makes a major contributor to overcoming weed problems.

I don't think its all black. Fertiliser people are getting closer to supplying small amounts of fertiliser by analysing the leaves or the petioles so they know how much nitrogen or phosphate to apply so that it won't be in excess, as in that German situation. With fungicides the situation is very interesting situation. Almost as quickly as clever scientists produce a new chemical that will kill fungi better, or quicker, the fungus mutates to develop resistance. So we are left entirely with copper, the use of which is centuries old. So is sulphur, but sulphur is not a problem it doesn't contaminate soils to any significant extent. Copper is a problem, but no one seems to be able to find a solution to living without copper. These two amazing compounds, flowers of sulphur and copper sulphate, are likely to continue to be used, but we have to use less and less of them in terms of letting them hit the ground. As long as the copper only goes on the leaf and we collect any residue from these closed circuit sprayers they should not contaminate. In places like France, by comparison, grapes have been grown and these products used for many centuries.

On the insecticide side there has been an amazing development, using proteins out of bacteria that are toxic to insects. They are not toxic to anything except the insect that they have been targeted at. One of these bacilli makes a series of proteins that kill different insects; insecticides developed from these don't affect any other living organism, only those susceptible to that protein. In fact, hardly any other organism is susceptible, only those specific insects targeted, because the metabolism of an insect is very different to that of just about every other animal. Insects have different blood, for example.

Returning to copper, the ultimate goal is to breed a resistant vine and people are doing this very actively; there are fungal resistant grape vines. The French are violently opposed to them. They used to have a lot of them, but they don't promote them very much, mainly because the red wine varieties that are disease-resistant are less acceptable, palate wise, than the white wine varieties. There are some very fine white wine varieties that are actually resistant to most of the fungal diseases, but entrenched conservatism will stop us from using them for a long time to come. Nevertheless, disease resistance is a scientific reality with the white wine varieties. Some of the red wines aren't that bad, though a Frenchman would spit out a variety called Chambourcin which is the current loved wine of a couple of wine writers around this country. Chambourcin is almost completely disease resistant but it has a different flavour to a regular red wine; it happens to be made in one particular place in Australia.

So this may be our solution. Of course people are working feverishly with molecular biology to try to effect a change in disease resistance in, say, Cabernet Sauvignon. The argument is that they can put a gene in and it won't change anything else, but my guess is that it will, because disease resistance resides in some of the tannins and anthocyanins, which is why red wine is so much easier to make than white wine. Some of those very compounds that you love to taste have antibacterial and anti-fungal properties. Personally I don't believe we will ever get a Cabernet Sauvignon that is altered in no other characteristic than disease resistance, but this is an area of great activity.

On the wine making side, of course everyone seeks an alternative to sulphur dioxide. We have never quite found it, but the levels of sulphur dioxide required in red wine have been reduced to such an extent that those people who suffer from sulphur dioxide sensitivity will move out of white wine into red wine, and of course it will drive us into drinking only wines where sulphur dioxide levels are much lower.

These are all the bad things about wine, what are the good things about vineyards? They produce wine, that's the first good thing, you've got to get them in perspective. There are 66,000 hectares of vineyards in Australia, less than .01% of the land surface of Australia - compare that with the area devoted to wheat, sheep and cattle. Vineyards occupy such a small proportion but they are in areas where people do want to live. It is almost self-defeating; like airports, wherever you situate it you build a freeway to it and people go and live by an airport. Vineyards are a bit the same. They are nearly all located in very nice parts of the world where people would want to go and live.

The other good thing that has emerged recently is that because we are now selling over 10% of our wine overseas we have to conform to very stringent overseas regulations. we have a series of tests that have to be done, a label integrity program, we can't use just any

chemical. With the big companies, every vigneron has to supply to a big company a complete list of every chemical he has put on his vineyard. You can fudge it if you want to - but you have to remember that chemists now have long since stopped thinking that they were smart when they could detect one part in a million. A common level now is one part in a thousand million. The French got caught, not so long ago, with a product called prosimidone which they were using it to control a particularly bad fungal disease; it is detectable so easily, in concentrations as low as one part in a thousand million. Increasingly, there are a lot of safeguards built into wine so that people really have to conform to these newer technologies.

Carolyn Edwards: Reflections on the Theme of Sustenance

In Anthony Corones' paper this morning we heard of Hilary Putnam's idea that if there were no values there would be no facts. So I shall give you a few facts and see how quickly you can work out my values.

Firstly,according to UNICEF, 38,000 children die of malnutrition every day.

56% of agricultural land in the U.S. is used to produce beef.

Over 35% of the world's grain production goes to feed cattle.

It takes 50-100 times more land to produce meat than its equivalent in vegetarian food.

It is predicted that by the year 2030 China will face a grain deficit equal to what now constitutes the world's total grain exports.

Meat farming is one of the worlds major users of water as well as a major producer of pollution - water and air. In fact meat farming totally reverses the Biblical story of the loaves and the fishes where you had a very small amount of food and fed an enormous amount of people. We're now starting with what constitutes an enormous amount of food, more than enough to feed the entire population of the world, and feeding a very small number of people with it.

And in the unlikely event you are in any further doubt - a few more positive facts for you:

Vegetarians live longer, have healthier hearts, healthier blood vessels, healthier bowels, lower blood pressure, less cancer and they're slimmer - not that I think that any of those things are virtues in and of themselves.

Vegetarians have not enjoyed good press in the past. A gastronomist at Symposium V lumped us in with teetotallers and other food fetishists. We're often seen as obsessed with health, over-emotional or perhaps simply neurotically unable to deal with the pleasures of (the) flesh. One gastronomist here, whom I will not name, said on seeing me 'Oh you must be here to do the vegie thing!'. Actually, I'm not here to advocate vegetarianism *per se* but rather to reflect on the notion of 'Sustaining Gastronomy' from a perspective which necessarily brings to mind the formulation 'gastronomy which sustains'. Many vegetarians would regard themselves as making an informed choice, one which is healthy for the individual, socially responsible and ecologically sustainable. In an ideal world everyone would be free and able to make that choice for themselves.

What I am advocating is far greater awareness about what we're consuming so that we really understand what our food is costing us. This is important because whether we do nothing at all differently when we go away from here, since even if we do nothing differently we are still making choices with our lives. Unlike John Coveney

and his Zimbabwean snow pea I believe most of the population, as someone also mentioned this morning, have no idea where the food they are eating is coming from. In the case of meat I don't think people actually want to know where it comes from and how it gets on to our plates. Advertising colludes in the kinds of euphemistic notions that surround the production of meat. Think, for example, of the trim lamb campaign: It has the most extraordinarily clean butcher shop, clean meat, no dirty fat, butcher's apron is absolutely spotless, there is not a spot of blood to be seen, the window is really shiny; in fact the only reference to an animal in the entire thing is that lovely furry, funny little dog who leaves us all with really nice feelings at the end of each ad. [An update; my own local butcher shop is now displaying large cardboard cutouts of characters from the film Babe. What do people make of this juxtaposition, I wonder.]

I do not support the kind of line which says that if you're going to eat meat you should be able to kill it yourself and Alan Saunders has mentioned that kind of philosophy in one of his columns. He said that there are lots of things that he believes need to be done, like the disposal of sewage, that he doesn't actually want to do himself but would prefer to pay someone else to do. I agree but would add that, as in the case of sewage, we need to know where it goes, what's done with it and how it's going to affect us in the long run. I think it's the same with meat. I'd like to know where its coming from, what's in it and the consequences for the planet. Well actually, there's no pleasure in knowing but I do know and that's why I don't eat it - the argument here is for greater awareness in the choices we make.

The health and ecological concerns about meat eating are quite well documented in a variety of sources so I won't go into those but I would like to address some metaphysical concerns. I'm thinking here of the film Like Water For Chocolate where one of the strongest themes expressed regards the extent to which the emotional experience of the cook is transmitted to the diners via the preparation and consumption of food. If we extend that concept to include the experiences of the animals we are consuming, in particular the misery, suffering and eventual terror which characterises for many the totality of their lives, we must be discomforted if not alarmed by the implications.

Anthony mentioned that myths create patterns of behaviour and keep them functioning. There are at least two enormous myths around meat today and one of them is the protein myth - I know it's probably a slight misuse of the term, I'm thinking of myth more in terms of a lie rather than a story perhaps but the great protein myth, that if we don't eat meat we'll have to eat lots of dairy foods, cheese and eggs otherwise we'll get sick, weak and be generally unhealthy, is simply not true. On the contrary, the dangers of excess protein are well documented and these include... osteoporosis! Against the weight of contemporary 'wisdom' which urges women of a certain age and over to consume more dairy products, consider if you would that the incidence of this disease in cultures where dairy foods are not part of the diet is virtually nil. The other myth I'm referring to arises from an interpretation of the book of Genesis, is present in Cartesian philosophy and expressed in the liberalism of the philosopher John Locke as 'a title to perfect freedom and uncontrolled enjoyment of all the rights and privileges of the law of nature' - it's all

ours to use. However, sustaining gastronomy must have an ethical component when our meals are literally costing us the earth.

Now, where I think all this relates to what people this morning were saying is in terms of what we are going to do. When we go away from here we may have had our minds changed but I believe it is crucial that we change our behaviours as well as our minds. There are probably lots of ideas that I don't have - I'm optimistic that you will have a great many - but one thing I would like to do is make a particular and heartfelt appeal to restaurateurs because I do believe in the trickle-down effect of influence and that people in positions of power and influence have a responsibility to use it thoughtfully. It's a curious situation that people often say 'I eat heaps of vegetarian food at home', or, 'all my friends eat vegetarian'. Someone said to me today, 'people I know say they eat 75% vegetarian food'. Yet there is never 75% or 50% or even 25% vegetarian food on most restaurant menus and I wonder why this is? Is it because meat is still seen as the real thing, the real food, the pleasurable food and if we're not having it we're not having a good time or we're not having a proper meal or perhaps we're not even really being fed? I know that chefs can do fantastic things with vegetables and do - and then they might put bacon in it or it becomes a side dish to a meat dish and so again I'd simply like to make an appeal to restaurateurs and people who have influence in this field to feel inspired to create more food with grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables (land and sea) as well as encouraging interest in it because in the not so long term this is what will sustain us as sentient beings and gastronomers.

Gae Pincus: Authenticity

Authenticity in relation to food is a very interesting and important topic. Hearing the papers this morning and thinking about some of the issues that are currently on the agenda of the National Food Authority, there is a range of very varied topics where authenticity, or some notion of authenticity, is an important aspect of the work that we are doing.

As most of you know, the Authority has been in existence only since August 1991Its establishment by the federal Government, with the agreement of all of the state and territory governments, was a major piece of micro economic reform. Finally the day dawned when all of the states and territories agreed to have uniform national food standards. That wasn't the case until 1991, and there are still some deviant standards out there. Some of those particular standards that are still in operation in some states involve authenticity issues.

For example South Australia is, I think, the only state in Australia where pink dye is allowed to be added to prawns. The present regulatory principle is that additives, including colours, may only be added to foods if there is a demonstrated technological need. The argument in the rest of the country in relation to the existing national standard, which says that coloured additives are not allowed to be added to fresh prawns, is that the prawn is a prawn and there is no need for additives. I guess the industry here feels that the local white prawns won't sell unless they look pink like other people's prawns, and the technological need is consumer acceptability.

Now I would have thought that there was a marketing challenge - the great albino prawn should take over the tables of the nation, but no, it is certainly the case that here in Adelaide the prawns are dyed pink. It is a hard one, I guess, to come to terms with if you have to make a national regulatory decision - should prawns be undyed as an authentic natural product, or should the dye be allowed to stay in use in South Australia, and therefore be permiited throughout the country, on the basis of a moderate tradition of use with local prawns. If it is permitted should there be mandatory labelling of prawns on display to show the presence of an additive?

The Role of Science in Codex

Anthony spoke in particular about science, and of course scientific data and analysis are the basis of most food standard setting.

There has been a major debate internationally in the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the international food standards setting body, about the role of science in food standard setting, after a decision in the Commission in 1991 effectively refusing approval for the use of hormonal growth promotants in cattle production. Some may see this as an authenticity issue. The Europeans opposed the use of hormonal growth promotants on the basis of consumer acceptability and animal welfare. Their use was supported by the United States and others, including Canada, Australia and New Zealand, on the basis that

change the organisation's rules to specify that all Codex standards should be based on science, and only science, very narrowly defined. The Europeans said no, they should be based on science and other relevant factors, but then went on to argue that these should include animal welfare, consumer acceptability, religion, culture, etc etc. If such wide objectives were accepted in relation to food standard setting you might never have agreed international standards again.

Australia has played a role in facilitating resolution of the debate because we drew the debate back to the formal objectives of Codex - consumer health and fair trade. In that context other factors besides scientific data and analysis are certainly relevant, but they have to be factors which are consistent with the objectives of consumer health and fair trade. Many of the wider objectives pursued by the Europeans may be legitimate concerns for countries or regional bodies when they are setting their own standards, deciding whether or not to pick up the Codex international standards, but they are not legitimate concerns of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Review of the Food Standards Code.

Returning to the work of the National Food Authority, there are a range of issues where authenticity is relevant. In relation to the composition of some foods, for example, should we continue to have recipe standards for foods like jelly or jam? Many foods are covered by compositional or recipe standards in the Australian Food Standards Code which are fairly prescriptive in terms of what must, may, or may not be used in their production.

The Authority us currently embarking on a wide review of the Food Standards Code and is considering a move away from highly prescriptive compositional standards to a more flexible definitional approach, which would give industry more opportunity to innovate.

The compositional approach is likely to be retained for some special dietary foods, such as infant formula, and some other basic foods, like bread, which are important to the Australian diet. The quality and fair trade aspects of many existing compositional standards should be able to be met with more detailed consumer labelling information. However, authenticity could be relevant here in terms of the question of which foods should continue to be protected by more prescriptive compositional standards.

Health Claims

John talked about medicalisation of the food supply and that is a real issue. Food and drugs are regulated differently in Australia and the dividing line is sometimes difficult, with products on the margin causing regulatory problems. The risk is that some products falling in the grey area may not be regulated at all, which could have health and safety consequences. The traditional divide between foods and drugs has been that drugs have a therapeutic function and so you can make claims about their therapeutic effect. Such claims are tested and evaluated to ensure that they are honest. In the food regulatory area, however, traditionally therapeutic or health claims about food have never been permitted.

This is now a very important issue for the industry, consumers and many regulatory bodies throughout the world. There is a lot of pressure for change from industry. Some companies are already making health claims in their advertisements which many consider to breach the Food Standards Code, but there has been a reticence by the state and territory authorities to enforce that law. Justification for the present rule is that, despite all the research that demonstrates quite significant health related roles of various nutrients, you cannot say that a particular nutrient or a particular food will prevent or will cure a particular disease because there are so many other variables such as genetics, lifestyle, smoking, whether you are male or female, etc. etc.

Functional Foods

An emerging issue between foods and therapeutic goods is the notion of functional foods, or designer foods as they are being called in the US. Functional foods are foods which have been altered, possibly through the use of genetic engineering, to have a specific metabolic or physiological function beyond nutrition to assist in the prevention or treatment of diet-related diseases. There is a special rice available in Japan, for example, with a modified globulin content, for use by people suffering certain types of skin disorders.

The concept of functional foods remains in its infancy, with many complex issues to be resolved. Much of the debate is focused on how to distinguish these food products from therapeutic goods, and the scope for making health claims in marketing such foods.

Public health and safety concerns have been expressed by many consumer organisations and public health practitioners in relation to functional foods. Central to these concerns is the perceived 'medicalisation' of the food supply, with food products being developed to have similar functions to drugs.

These concerns include:

i) the proposed marketing strategies for functional foods may compromise consumer ability to select a healthy, balanced diet (consumers replacing basic or 'authentic' foods with foods that could be viewed as magic bullets);

ii) the consumption of functional foods may have an adverse impact upon nutritional health; and

iii) the technological processes associated with production of functional foods could raise consumer safety concerns.

The identification and characterisation of functional foods will primarily depend upon the ability of their proponents to substantiate any potential claimed health benefits. The main issue in this regard is whether functional foods will actually represent a departure from the conventional assessment of the relationship between food and health.

Food Fortification

The most contentious issue handled by the Authority to date has been the addition of vitamins and minerals to processed foodstuffs, which clearly raises authenticity issues. This matter was inherited from the National Health and Medical Research Council, the previous standard setting body, where it had been unresolved for twelve years. The current Standard A9 permits the fortification of several foods with a range of vitamins and minerals, some to unlimited levels. This standard was developed in the 1960s before a lot was known about many of these nutrients. Although manufacturers have not taken full advantage of the current permissions, some heavily fortified processed products are presently available. Some of these products bear little resemblance to the basic foods from which they are made. Some contain nutrients in quantities far in excess of their original amounts. Consumers may be misled into thinking that these products are better than their authentic counterparts, when in fact, their nutrient profiles have been markedly changed both by losses through processing, and unnatural levels of addition.

The revision of Standard A9 by the Authority was originally based on the international Codex Alimentarius principles for the addition of essential nutrients to foods. These principles were designed to preserve the inherent nutritional quality of foods as much as possible, and provide for the addition of vitamins and minerals to foods to:

restore the nutrients lost in processing;
permit nutritional equivalence of substitute foods (for example soy beverages for milk, margarine for butter); and
fortify foods where there is a demonstrated public health need (for example the addition of iodine to table salt).

The draft Standard proposed by the Authority was considered by the National Food Standards Council in March 1994, after an intense lobbying campaign by some members of the breakfast cereal industry, and returned to the Authority for reconsideration. The resultant reconsidered draft Standard is currently being considered by Council out of session. In reconsidering the draft Standard, the Authority had to modify the Codex principles to accommodate the request from the National Food Standards Council to permit fortification where there was no safety risk. This resulted in a broader range of nutrients being permitted to be added to the listed foods, as well as a general increase in the maximum limits of addition that were formerly recommended. However, on the basis of safety concerns, the draft restricts some of the additions presently permitted.

Conclusion

With this case there has been a change of balance. Food regulation has traditionally been conservative, which has been appropriate in an area where scientific knowledge is changing or is just not there. Up until now the proponent of a new additive in food has had to prove to the regulators that it is safe for long-term human consumption. With vitamins and minerals now the regulator effectively has to prove they are unsafe, which may be difficult given limited research data.

Whilst there is a genuine and valid desire by industry to limit regulation to facilitate innovation and take advantage of export markets, many public health professionals consider that the public health balance is being outweighed by a marketing balance.

I would like to finish by encouraging all of you here to take an interest and participate in the Authority's open and transparent standard setting processes. I would hope that as well as being concerned with the physical, social and spiritual sides of nourishment you would be concerned also with the regulatory environment. Many of the current and upcoming issues before the Authority could dramatically change the nature of the Australian food supply and I hope you all will share your knowledge, experience and enthusiasm and become actively involved in the process.

William Wongso: Sustaining Gastronomy in Indonesia

Coming all the way from Jakarta, I think my views are different to those of the other previous speakers. Sustaining gastronomy: the issue of gastronomy hardly exists in our country. Even the word 'gastronomy' has always been confused with 'astronomy'; if you walked into a village and said you specialised in gastronomy, people would say 'What, can you read my mind?'.

I would say 'sustaining gastronomy' should be sustaining of the tastes of the tradition. Indonesian tradition has never been exposed. As you know, Sri Owen has written a book about regional cooking, where she also mentioned that Indonesia has no gourmet culture. So basically, with no gourmet culture, we don't have court food. To give you an example: in the north-east of Sumatra there was once a Sultan Iskanda who would instruct the people from outside of the court to supply a minimum of five dishes daily for his daily diet - this is what is meant by court food. At the end of the Sultan's reign it was been found that about 140 special dishes had been selected by the Sultan. I doubt that this percentage still exists at the present moment. This is a problem that we are facing now in Indonesia.

Food in Indonesia has never been considered intellectually and is just a fact of practice. Again Sri and Roger Owen have been doing their homework for Indonesia through their London-based office for the last 28 years, yet she is still unknown in Indonesia. Internationally she is recognised for her knowledge of Indonesian cooking and her teaching of Indonesian cooking worldwide. This is a great pity, I think that maybe the next national medal should be rewarded to Sri, through the President. Everybody thinks anybody doing cooking demos is just a 'cocky'. The cocky is the word for cook, from Dutch explained to Indonesians, in Indonesia they say cook is 'cocky'. Cocky is the lowest position and everything is done through the back door.

People are confuses also about the work I'm doing. Today I'm doing a lot of consultancy, restaurant operation, I learn about the international culinary activities, and so forth. But the common perception is that I am a chef, thinking I'm a chef, which I am not. I try to explain to all Indonesians that I'm collecting cooks, I'm collecting rare cooks from the region. The diversity of Indonesian regional cooking as known and represented internationally is what you know: gado-gado, satay, nasi goreng, etc. Again I'm fully in agreement with Sri Owen, that the rijsttafel issue should be eliminated as it creates a lot of confusion, Indonesian foods being seen simply as rijsttafel. We don't have Indonesian foods, what we have is regional cooking.

This regional cooking is largely unknown. I sourced a quote from Cherry Ripe who said 'It's bizarre that until today Indonesian food is unknown to its closest neighbour, Australia.' Another example: Bali is just a backyard for every Australian, but nobody is aware of its culinary heritage. And Balinese never present their food and traditions to visitors, nor do they have a custom of to eating outside. They are a hospitable people whose aim is to please the visitor, so they do something which they think is best for the visitor, but it is not Balinese cooking. In Bali the cooking influences come from the visitors, because there is an abundance of Australians coming so you might encounter a lot of Java menus in all the restaurants.

For the last ten years the fast food invasion of Indonesia has been quite rapid. It is a highly capitalised venture. And automatically it is giving the alert to a lot of Indonesians concerned that it might push aside our tastes of tradition which will affect our next generation. I admit, I personally would never advise the Government to stop the practice, to of restrict the fast food industry coming into Indonesia, because it makes a big economic impact. The fast food industry employs a lot of people, and it has the potential to train workers in the industry without taking budgets from the Government. So we have to accept this globalisation, but at the same time we have to concern ourselves with sustaining our traditional tastes.

Well, the fact is that it suddenly happened, last year in October, during the world food days, when Mrs President suddenly inaugurated the campaign, the 'I love Indonesian food' campaign. It was like a big bomb dropping from the sky, and we were so scared: 'What does this have to do with us? What should we do with this?' This message should be carried out by the Ministry of Food and Logistics. It has only happened in the last cabinet that we have Minister of Food. But I found this wonderful, because the Minister of Food is also the head of National Logistics. The National Logistics is in charge of commodities - for example rice, soya beans, sugar are controlled by this office. So to make everything move faster he gave instructions to all the heads of regional logistics offices. The first condition or criteria of their performance was to control the commodity price; we have had a big long drought so the government had to control the price rises.

But the second criteria was to effect this issue from Mrs President and make the 'I love Indonesian food' campaign work. I'm just in the middle of designing a program for this priority. Nobody knows what the priorities should be, and there has been a lot of advice, suggesting modification. But how can this work? It's like getting a blind person to choose colours, you can't take a kind of cooking practice which is very regional and suddenly say to modify it. So we have developed guidelines. We have made fast moves within a short period of time to collect the popular dishes among the regions. Just the popular dishes, it doesn't have to be an in-depth survey, it's enough just to lock it in and keep it maintained, prevent it from being wiped out. So from province to province, through the Minister's office, there is a duty to collect ten or even five popular items. This will give us a basis for our selections to put into the national menu board. This is the only way, and the best way to select is through a competition. Before the competition involved every province, but you cannot have one province with one religion compete with another province with a different religion. So with the guidelines and through these popular items the competitions is fairer. We should also give incentives to all regional cooking to stress the value of economy.

So what to do. In a sense, Indonesian food is practically a single dish. What we like is to go to a little place to eat one kind of dish; now we need to have more and more food centres offering many different dishes. Food centres have to be invested through the high economy group. I've been designing a few food centres from Jakarta to accommodate all these food specialities into one room, and the Minister's office will expand the concept to all different regions, with the first priority the tourist destinations. Then we will build up a location, with sanitation control and all facilities provided, and those who win the competition can come in. The food is authentic, standards of quality are maintained and in such an environment traditions are kept.

The other goal which this campaign is achieving in a faster way is to create an appreciation of the traditional tastes of the regions, giving people the chance of cross tasting so that they appreciate the local food. We never talk about the food for tourists; if the campaign succeeds, if the Indonesians can appreciate their own food, that will automatically introduce the foods to foreign visitors. That is the only way, and immediately, at the same time, we will publish a guide book for Indonesians who travel to other regions telling them where to eat. This doesn't mean it is impossible to let internationals know our culinary heritage, without our people knowing, but because of the geography of Indonesia it's hard for people from one area to travel to another area to eat. But also the conditions are different, the ingredients are totally different, the religions are different, the slaughtering is different - it can be halal or it can be different.

So that is the meaning we should be applying to Indonesia, sustaining gastronomy in Indonesia should focus on sustaining the tastes of tradition.

Colin Sheringham

I want to adapt Tim's approach and not push my own bandwagon which just happens to be food courts, a subject that has already received a mention by Barbara, so you will not be hearing about food courts.

So, I thought, what can I talk about? I spoke to both Anthony and Michael outside about their respective papers this morning. I don't know how you felt about them, but they touched on virtually every topic you could possibly think of, so maybe I should address a topic they did not mention. So what topics have not been talked about? Farming, religion and ritual have been mentioned but as yet no one has mentioned optical fibres. So I will mention optical fibres. Which is not helpful because I don't know anything about them, though Michael told me that when he was a science writer he had written about them, which put paid to that idea.

Somebody, however, had mentioned the concept of Mediterranean cuisine so maybe in my ten minutes I should allow everybody to have a sleep. A ten minute siesta could be my contribution. Several people who have heard me speak before suggested that this would be a 'bloody good idea'. But look, I have paid my three hundred dollars and this is my ten minutes. So, actually, I will start with something that John tried to do.

I could not believe that John stood up and defined what 'sustaining gastronomy' was. Now I had thought, well, I am not sure what is being defined. When I found out that I would be given the opportunity to speak I felt that I should give the topic some serious thought and try and pre-empt or find out what topics Anthony or Michael would address. So I phoned Anthony to request an abstract or sense of direction. That way I could read something, maybe find a quotation and at least sound knowledgeable. Anthony has just told me that there is a message on my answering machine at home informing me that he had not written anything as yet. So this approach has not helped. So I was forced to just sit down and think about what this concept of sustaining gastronomy actually entailed.

Has anyone here ever used mind mapping? One person.

Take a blank sheet of paper (I would do this to students so we might as well all have a go) and write the words 'sustaining gastronomy' in the middle. Once you have completed that you just need to draw lines off at tangents and build up a web of complexity that is an issue that everybody addressed this morning.

You may think of a topic such as agriculture or even what gastronomy is. This is where I started my map and thinking back with the definition of gastronomy offered by Brillat-Savarin. Not, however, at the depth of thinking Barbara has applied. I now need to go back, learn to speak French and translate it for myself.

So, if you start to now build up the web... this morning we have heard people speak on agriculture. This could be one tangent. You could then plot how agriculture is changing or how rural communities are changing. This progresses this tangent a bit more, building up the web.

I decided that I would constrain myself to building up this web by thinking about past Symposiums that I had been to. One of the tangents then is communication. People thinking and talking about gastronomy. Therefore, I had thoughts of Barbara's award for writing about gastronomy. This led to thinking about the books I had read. Books such as Stephanie's book, Marian Halligan's, Cherry's book (a book that I receive a mention in on page 128) and her talks about food courts, a topic that has been covered before so I will leave that topic; Alan Saunders and his food program. There is even a university course, 'gastronomy', and we will not even attempt to delve into wine writing because this topic is just too large.

What other tangents could we add to our mind map? We could look at the physical act of eating which then brings in the notion of ritual. This then made me think of one author who I was keen to bring into this talk - the French anthropologist, Igor de Garine, whom I have met and had lunch with. A most fascinating person. I reminisced about the number of topics we discussed over that lunch and the depth of his writing that looks at 'food and prestige'. A topic worth mentioning again today. Igor identified that some foods are more prized than others and we have just heard that meat is more prized than vegetables. You can see that I am a vegetarian if you recall the comment that suggests that vegetables keep you thin.

Igor talked about how there is food for different occasions - there is food you eat just with your family; there is food you offer to guests and there is food you eat when you are poor. I remember that when I was a student I was a recipient of Austudy at $180.12 per month and paying $30 a week rent; if anybody works that out, it does not leave you much to live on. There are approximately two thousand pasta dishes and as a student I feel I ate most of them. There is food that satisfies hunger, therefore I could talk about how people eat hot potato chips in shopping centre food courts because I do know something about food courts. John mentioned something about a health thing and that is interesting when you know that people purchase hot chips and, because they are health conscious, they buy a 'diet coke' to accompany them.

Igor also talked about the relationship of food and power. Max Lake has told me at breakfast this morning how on first class airline flights you are served all this wonderful food. This made me realise that there is a relationship between food and power in Max's narrative.

Let us now return to our mind maps. We should be starting to build a fairly large and complex web. Some of the other things that I added to my map relate to having heard Margaret Visser speak at Geelong. The rituals associated with dinner and eating, for example, the concepts involved with not putting a knife in your mouth, not only because of the physical danger but also because of what it symbolised. Over lunch today we discussed the taboos associated with the touching of food that are somewhat strange given that touching food can be pleasurable. It is fun, especially with foods like soft cheese that has a certain tactile quality.

I then thought about the writer Mary Douglas and some of her work. All these were added to my map and hopefully people are still adding to their individual maps - you should be! I found that my mind map helped me begin to make sense out of the complex notion of sustaining gastronomy.

It is with this in mind that I was totally 'blown away' when John had thought all this through and then preceded one step further and defined the concept for us. I had not even managed to get to the boundary of the web. Every time I put it away I would need to drag it back out to add new sections or clarify existing pieces. We have heard about food technology, interesting papers about gene shearing and other scientific breakthroughs.

In terms of my ten minutes I would rather sit down and have a long discussion because I feel that the speakers this morning said some of the most wonderfully interesting things. Certainly I would like to hear Anthony explain 'Life, the Universe and Everything' in slightly more detail than he escaped with earlier. Michael may like to help with just the simple parts of that.

If then I could just quickly sum up I thought the speakers this morning did an excellent job opening up the issues, especially the issues of complexity. An issue that I feel is wonderful and provides the driving force for me to keep returning to these Symposiums.

It is the people in this room, people like Gay Bilson or Alan or indeed many others, people with quite high public profiles, that make you question what it is that you can say to them about food, except about food courts, which I know about. This is the beauty about food, it is complex and so trans-disciplined. This is what will sustain gastronomy - the fact that it touches so many parts of our life, it is intertwined with everything we do. Food is one of the fundamental threads that run through life. So, with this in mind I look forward to the next sessions, to dinner tonight and, with some trepidation after past dinners, to tomorrow night.

FOOD IN FILM

Gay Bilson's Film Show (and Quiz - won by Alan Saunders)

The selection shown for this quiz, apart by being limited by what I had, included documentary films because the subject of food and film is usually only seen as what is used in feature films and fiction, whereas cooking lessons, etc, are all part of the subject. The treatment of food by camera is a record of social significance. Advertisements are another area which should be explored.

1. AGL (Australian Gas Light Co) Television Advertisement. Series entitled Women in Control. (60 seconds) 1982 (?) 1981 (?). Gay Bilson at Berowra Waters Inn.

Included only for its curiosity value and for sentimental reasons, and I guess for a gentle laugh.

2. Life on a String directed by Chen Kaige 1991 (Feature Film)

Included for its scene of a rustic restaurant in an extraordinarily wild and furious setting and the unique method of serving the bowls of soup. The scene also includes in its story a great moral sense of generosity, centred on the table.

3. Columbo (Television Feature Series), starring Peter Falk, and in this episode, Louis Jourdan (taped from TV rerun of the original series, date? 1970s?)

Included for light relief and for a giggle at its dated presentation of a restaurant and related dialogue.

4. Civilisation, written and directed by Lord Kenneth Clark. 1960s
Programme two: The Great Thaw (12th century)

Included because it includes film of monks eating today in much the same simple way they must have in the period that Clark is talking about. Also because the simplicity of the table, the bowls, the jugs is ravishing.

5. The Aga: A Design Classic BBC Documentary, 1987
Inventor: Dr. Gustav Dalén (Swedish), 1922

He won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1912 (Automatic Lighting Systems; he had worked on warning lights for lighthouses and buoys until blinded by an explosion. Included for Sir Roy Strong's cruel but amusing dismissal of the bourgeoisie. And for the Aga.

6. Milou en mai, directed by Louis Malle 1989 (Feature Film)

The film was set in 1968, the year of the student riots in Paris.
Included for its three wonderful scenes of meals which illustrate the ease with which the French eat at the table, the unselfconscious gusto of their appetite.

7. Albert Herring; opera composed by Benjamin Britten (1947), text by Eric Crozier after Guy de Maupassant.

Glyndebourne Festival Opera production by Peter Hall, conducted by Bernard Haitink 1989??? (I saw this production with Leo Schofield but can't find the file for the date, and my video missed who filmed it (BBC?) and its date).

Included for the afternoon tea scene where Albert is taken with the hiccups, and also because it juxtaposed the English with the French in Milou en mai. Also because it is an example of a table in opera.

8. Heimwee Naar De Dood (Nostalgia for Death): documentary film by Ramon Gieling (Nederlands? date?)

The poet and essayist who takes part in the film is Octavio Paz. It is a film about Mexican attitudes towards death.

Included for its fascinating film of a meal in a Mexico City restaurant specialising in 'unmentionable cuisine' but as much for the conversation conducted by the intellectuals and artists around the table.

9. The Body Dinner (Closing banquet for the Seventh Symposium of Australian Gastronomy), Australian National Gallery, 9 March 1993.

Created and directed by Gay Bilson, with Janni Kyritsis and Berowra Waters Out.

Included for those who attended the last Symposium, and also because the climax of the dinner (a bandaged, youthful body rising from under fruit) places the table in a thoughtful, yet exhilaratingly theatrical context.

10. Die Blechtromme (The Tin Drum) directed by Volker Schlondorff 1979 (Feature Film)

Gunter Grass wrote the novel (1959).

Included for the great, great scene of the horse's head alive with eels, and its related scene where Oscar's mother is stuffing pickled fish into her mouth (and later suicides).

11. Berowra Waters Out at the Botanic Hotel, Adelaide Festival of Arts 1986.

The cook is Janni Kyritsis, the video was made by Gus Howard.

Included for purely nostalgic reasons. And because we were back in Adelaide for this Symposium. Only the cognoscenti would know that Berowra Waters Inn was always called Berowra Waters Out when we cooked away from the river.

12. Chicken and Duck Talk, a feature film from Hong Kong shown by SBS 1994.

Comedic, serious foodies!

13. The Flavour of Green Tea Over Rice, directed by Yasujiro Ozu 1952

Poignant scene of marital reconciliation over the simplest of Japanese meals, signifying the wife's recognition of the superficiality of her need for a sophisticated city life.

14. Il Porcile (Pigsty), directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini 1969.

Cannibalism used as political satire.

15. La Fantome de la Liberte (The Phantom of Liberty), directed by Luis Bunuel 1974

Satiric scene of bourgeous pretention at table.

In actuality (and for technical and time reasons) selections 12-15 were not shown. Had more time been available I'd have liked to have shown the great scene in the cafe in Five Easy Pieces, most of Mike Leigh films, Jane Campion's Sweetie, the scene with the baguette in Diva, and so many more. However, in the excerpts shown after dinner at the college, I included:

Drawing on a Mother's Experience video of a performance piece by Bobby Baker (date? 3 years or so ago?)
Bobby Baker's performances leave us devastated by the tragedies which are played out by women in their domestic space.

FOOD IN FILM: DIRT, DESIRE AND DELIGHT

Tina Muncaster

Food in film, as elsewhere, has to *look* good, either in some simple integrity preserved in its origins and preparation, or as part of a more elaborate setting. Alternatively, food is deliberately made to look disgusting in order to shock. The banal, or ordinarily domestic rarely appears, or it is rendered 'invisible' as a background to other drama. 'Ordinary' is not necessarily the coffee and doughnuts the all-American cop grabs to eat: even that is a narrative signifier for the all-night stake-out. One literary example of food as 'ordinary' appears in Nora Euphron's *Heartburn*, where Rachael, deserted by her husband Mark, charts love by the status of the potatoes she cooks. Fancily prepared potato is a sign of her passion, pasta is an early warning sign that the relationship is on the rocks and when it's all over she celebrates solitude with a bowl of hot mashed potato and butter, to be eaten in bed. It's one of the most delightful chapters of the book, but interestingly it doesn't appear at all in the film by the same name. It's much more cinematically satisfying to watch Meryl Streep throw a Key Lime pie over Jack Nicholson and his expensive blazer: let's face it, when did a bowl of mash ever go down as a great moment in film history?

Food employed as a device in film resorts then to a classic role with poetical and metaphorical power that recognises food as a vital unit of the imagination; placed within a cinematic medium it has the added advantage that visualisation is the primary logical force in our experiences. It is an essential strategy of representation, conferring authenticity and realism, while also assuming its own internal narrative of desire and potential gratification.

Ironically, this food element may also be collaborating in constructing a false authenticity, the mythical part of the power and allure of the food motif, providing a seemingly fixed and materially real point in time and space, while at the same time empowering a slippage of both to achieve an intended cinematic effect, such as the fantastic or the shocking. For example, in *The Cook, the Thief, his Wife, her Lover*, we are seduced by the lush surrealism of the film; our imagination is drawn in and fixed by certain narrative expectations which revolve around food, with the chef as the orchestrating pivotal point for the action. There remains, for all the rest of the bizarre activity, a 'proper' meal and related activities such as food preparation and washing-up.

Like love, sex and death, food is a universal experience and therefore invested with an automatic credibility which succeeds in eliciting or helping suspension of disbelief. In his essay from *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes has examined the success of food captured by camera and the need to gloss over its bestial origins and brutal transformation, presenting only the delightful and desirable. Film employs this glossing technique too: yet by acknowledging the materiality of the subject and those who engage with it, it can equally decode and invert the process to provoke shock or disgust

The Western perception of food and communal eating often favours this presentation of food as an aesthetic concern, symbolic of a keynote desire to transcend mortality through consumption, a concept fraught right from its pre-Platonic beginning. Hesiod's *Theogony* reminds us that the mortal following of the fleshly meal ritual ostensibly

satisfies our need to soar divinely through the presumed sanctity of the shared table, yet the very nature of the food eternally sets us apart from the gods who feast only upon the fragrance of the sacrificed meat and bitter herbs.

Still, none of this deters the film-producer with a budget to spend and cliches to reinforce and Western consumer attitudes towards eating often privilege form and style above content. Particularly in popular, rather than say cult movies, the vulgar aspects of bodily needs are removed and the primary status of food devalued to an accessory symbolic of luxury and refinement. The conversation and metaphorical revelation of character by appetite takes precedence as protagonists overtly abide by certain customs and manners, while covertly engineering a more Darwinian approach to events, that is, the survival of the fittest, not least of all in parrying conversation.

Kathleen Turner and Michael Douglas present a fine example of the upper middle class dinner table as battlefield in *The War of the Roses*; an argument over the story behind their beautiful wine-glasses is the turning point for Barbara Rose in her marriage and the prompt for her to make pate from Benny the dog. Another, different, celebratory and semi-aristocratic food ritual that provides a useful cinematic setting is that of the picnic with the illusion of the raw and natural world tamed and civilised. Eating outside allows the suggestion of familiarity with the natural origins of what is consumed, yet the whole affair requires logistical preparation that remains highly unnatural. Scarlett, ('I'll never be hungry again!') in *Gone with the Wind*, even resorts to eating in secret before she goes on a picnic, so that her ladylike and 'civilised' demeanour is preserved, requiring her only to pick daintily. The vague pastoral recollections aspired to by the genteel picnic transform low appetite in to high sentiment: it's frontier life turned to play, a chance to establish territory and appropriate the landscape rather than interact with it, although the landscape does a little appropriating of its own in Peter Weir's *Picnic at Hanging Rock.*

It's a far cry from the immediacy of the peasant woman roasting a potato over a fire, in the rain, out in the muddy potato fields in the film of Gunter Grass' *The Tin Drum*, or the bonding between the old man and his grandchild as they devise ways to warm the earth so that they might have the earliest crop of tomatoes to sell in *The Tree of Wooden Clogs.* For these characters, food is an authentic part of physical existence; they would be more likely to attend a picnic hosted by Rabelais than Rhett Butler.

Still, food remains an essential motif in film for fusing those two lexical areas of sustenance and eros. As soon as the Cook serves the Wife and the Lover identical entrees we know it is inevitable there will be a carnal conclusion somewhere in the near cinematic future; a spilled and broken jar of red jam shared by Dirk Bogarde and Charlotte Rampling in *The Night Porter* mirrors their bloody, knife edged and sado-masochistic relationship where they end up literally starving, and Tom Jones in the film by the same name does for fruit what Lauren Bacall did for the cigarette. This link between food and sex is very easily made in cinema, both subjects being extremely visually stimulating, perhaps above all other subjects except violence. It's also easily overdone to the point of, perhaps unintended, satire. Daughters of friends of mine enthusiastically told me about the fridge scene from *9 1/2 Weeks*, starring Mickey Rourke which I wasn't familiar with and subsequently watched. It didn't do much for me, but they thought it was the ultimate in gastronomical sexiness: then they have a passion for Magnum ice-cream ads, too.

In a previous paper (Adelaide symposiette, 1994) I explored the connections , but also the differences between eroticism, sensuality and sex in terms of food and eating, and a passionate debate emerged concerning the point at which eroticism and carnality verge; I can confidently say that the subject remains as yet unresolved. As far as food in film being an erotic or metaphorical representation of sex, remember what Barthes says - it's not the obvious that is most erotic, it is where the slippage occurs, the subtle tear or rip in the fabric of the familiar.

So what is it about the misuse of food in film that can so repel or shock us? As anthropologist Mary Douglas would say, it is only matter out of place. The breaching of the most obvious taboo, that of cannibalism, doesn't, I suggest, shock us as much as the violation of supposedly lesser ones. *Eat the Rich*, *Fried Green Tomatoes* and *Delicatessen* all feature cannibalism, yet they are hardly hard-core horror. In fact, in each of them, cannibalism is tempered by black humour which packages the taboo element more acceptably.

This features in *The Cook the Thief, his Wife, her Lover* too, yet arguably far more shocking is the moment when Albert Spica pierces the young girl's cheek with a fork, an action that has purportedly prompted audience members to leave the cinema. What this means is that we shouldn't underestimate the latent violence kept in check by dining etiquette, something which Margaret Visser has devoted a whole book to. The dangerous proximity of the fork remains common to us all.

Other scenes which have shock value in this particular film include Albert smearing a victim's face with faeces, and shutting the two lovers in the van of rotting meat so that they can make their escape. We do not like to be reminded of the final processing of that which we consume, nor of the simple processes of decay, we prefer to deny the natural functioning of the body.

An avant-garde movie by shock-horror director Philip Brophy, *Salt, Saliva, Sweat, Sperm*, foregrounds the daily functions of an average yuppie body throughout the day. We are given the sense of the individual being emotionally alienated and via the film it's revealed that his body has become merely an orificed conduit for the flow of capitalist consumer products, be it TV programs or canteen spaghetti. We are given the journey of all such products in graphic detail and Brophy highlights the fact that we are no more than a pair of eyes linked to an unquestioning brain and so many feet of alimentary canal. As he reminds us, we 'Eat, Shit, Die'.

To start to sum up some of what I have introduced here: I began by observing that food offers an apparently stable and recognisable system of representation and cultural identification while at the same time embodying the potential for transgression. It is within the dynamics of transgression and disorder that food as a narrative device utilises its full potential. It is able to challenge personal and extra-personal boundaries which we regard as guarantors of human order.

Food is dangerous because it travels between the natural and the cultural and our existential completeness is threatened every time a morsel of the external environment crosses over into the internal one, for without rigid control of this boundary crossing there is always the danger of some loss of our culturally constructed self. We like to think

of ourselves as sealed unpolluted units, upon whom civilisation has bestowed the privilege of moving untouched through a natural world of flux, flow and decay. The contemporary French critic, Julia Kristeva, discusses this fear of the mouth as a visible and complex mediating site between the inside and the outside world. Think how many times in film where it is the actual act of placing food in one's own mouth, or more provocatively, someone else's, usually in close-up, which provides the frisson for a particular cinematic moment.

So let me leave you with my theory tonight about food in film: it's to do with the cinematic articulation of humours in the mediaeval, or even the classical sense; that is the dry versus the wet. First of all we have the meat factor, obvious in its link to the cannibalistic taboo, less so in its representation of capture, possession, violence, murder, dismemberment and transformation by cooking. Meat is a status food, still primarily reserved for masculine consumption in many social food hierarchies. It is usually cooked, which links it with heat rather than cold; by cooking it is often relieved of its natural juices, so it is dry rather than wet. Meat provides resolution within the narrative of the meal, sometimes disrupted, but ultimately recalling patriarchal appropriation of the passive body.

Turning to the seductive qualities of food, what I'll call the gravy factor for want of a culinary label, that is, what is essentially the factor in which our ultimate natural state is recalled, water. *Salt, Saliva, Sweat, Sperm* reminds us how water is too close for comfort, the most natural transgressor: as Brophy says, 'our bodies are moist machines fuelled by our own fluids - sometimes dry on the outside but always wet within'. It's extremely noticeable on the screen how 'sexy' food is often wet: for example, the passing of the egg yolk between the two lovers mouths in *Tampopo*, or of course, the fruit scene in Tom Jones.

The exchange of fluids is primary, constant and dangerous, inferring a state of metamorphosis and decay, which we fear, and increasingly today drawing us towards a culturally induced breakdown of which we are terrified. Yet the sexual thrill of uninhibited exchange cannot be denied. By contrast meat is secondary, processed by 'civilising' forces stacked with cultural and social coding. In terms of our popular psychology and media, such as cinema, we still draw very much upon philosophical dichotomies of male and female, cultural and natural, safe and dangerous that haven't changed much since Hippocrates:

'The female flourishes more in an environment of water, from things cold and wet and soft, whether food or drink or activities. The male flourishes more in an environment of fire, from dry, hot foods and mode of life.'

And I'll let Voltaire have the final word, solving once and for all that eternal and enduring question that still persists - why are the French more sexy than the English? In his words: 'In England there are 60 different religions but only one sauce.'

Symposiasts' choice of food films

In one of the pre-symposium letters we asked symposiasts to nominate their favourite food films or food sequences in films. Tampopo was clearly the most popular. Here is the complete list.

Tampopo	13 votes. Nominated scenes: students eating noodles (Robert Carmack); omelette (Max Lake); egg exchange (Rosemary Brissenden)
Babette's Feast.	11 votes. Nominated scenes: dinner preparations (Lois Butt, Ann Creber, Sue Hosking); picnic (Belinda Jeffery); pub scene (Robert Carmack)
Like Water for Chocolate	8 votes. Nominated scene: quail/rosepetal episode (Pamela Gillespie)
The Cook, The Thief, His Wife & Her Lover	7 votes. Nominated scene: final meal (Maura Boland)
Tom Jones	4 votes. Nominated scenes: eating with fingers (Ann Creber); eating the apple/pear (Rosemary Brissenden)
La Grande Bouffe	3 votes. Nominated scene: final images of meat hung on trees (Barbara Santich)
The Draughtsman's Contract	2 votes. Nominated scene: pomegranate scene (Helen Hughes)
Women in Love	2 votes. Nominated scene: eating fig (Fiona Stewart)

The following films had one nomination each:

LA Story

Age of Innocence

Monty Python: episode of Man who Came to Dinner (Zar Brooks)

My Mother's Castle: outdoor eating scene (Ann Creber)

Red Sorghum: pissing in the wine (Michael Dowe)

Gigi: eating ortolan (Michael Dowe)

Fawlty Towers: rat episode (Margaret Emery

Story of Boys and Girls (Sarah Gough)

Who's Killing the Great Chefs of Europe

The Party: Peter Sellers as waiter (Max Lake)

Eating Raoul (Virginia McLeod)

Three Women: failed dinner party (Michael Symons)

Satyricon: feasting (Sue Zweep)

Brady Bunch: their sanitised, sterilised table (Sue Zweep)

Frenzy (Alan Saunders)

Modern Times (Alan Saunders)

Mr. Saturday Night (Alan Saunders)

Old Dark House: dinner scene (Alan Saunders)

Sous les Toits de Paris: dinner scene (Alan Saunders)

TV DINNER

Couscous Supper at St Marks
(Cath Kerry & Jean-Pierre Kerry)

White Ladies on the terrace, accompanied by
Allumettes aux anchois

Chicken couscous with yellow vegetables

Fresh fruit

The Cook, The Thief, His Wife & Her Lover (to be shown as people enter dining hall)
Chair to lead short commentary on it.
Tampopo - Dur-é Dara (noodle etiquette scene - significant film also in that we are doing Tampopo Noodle lunch tomorrow).
Babette's Feast - Cath Kerry (short scene where Babette speaks French).
Like Water For Chocolate - Alan Saunders
La Grande Bouffe - Barbara Santich (final scene, meat on trees).
Tom Jones - Rosemary Brissenden (eating seduction).
Ju Dou - Jennifer Hillier (food seduction scene).
Nosferatu - Alan Saunders
The Seventh Seal - John Fitzpatrick (wild strawberries and milk communion).
Down By Law - Jennifer Hillier (Roberto catches and cooks the rabit and reminisces about home).
Diva - Cath Kerry (the zen of buttering the bagette).
Eating Raoul - Virginia McLeod
Summer (The Green Ray) by Eric Rohmer - Jennifer Hillier (scene where young girl talks about why she is a vegetarian).
Monty Python - Zar Brooks (exploding man scene).
The Party, Peter Sellers - Max Lake (drunken waiter).
Reservoir Dogs - Alan Saunders
Red Sorghum (pissing in the vat).
Raise The Red Lantern (meals illustrating status of wives)
The Immigrant, Charlie Chaplin - Michael Symons (making a meal of a boot).

AUTHENTICITY

PANEL DISCUSSION

AUTHENTICITY

Jennifer Hillier

It is in the context of the Symposium theme of sustainability that I'd like to talk about authenticity.

The dictionary meaning of authenticity is: 'reliable, trustworthy; of undisputed origin, genuine'. Michael Symons says in *The Shared Table* that 'authenticity' 'is an 'argument about honesty - honesty to ingredients, honesty to environments, honesty to social relationships, honesty to cultural traditions, honesty to our bodies'.

It is a handy concept. More often than not when I am critical of the dominant food culture it is in terms of authenticity. Authenticity means being true to something and that something in gastronomy ought to be defined in terms of specific localities and seasons. Simply put, I think we should eat local food predicated on the seasons. But it, importantly, implies a set of relationships, as I shall explain.

My conception of authenticity is based on limits. If we are going to sustain our planet we need to live within the limits of nature. As the Club of Rome recommended in the early 1970s, we need to limit growth. In the modern industrial context, food has become an abstracted commodity, transported beyond the bounds of its material determinants. Dining should everyday replenish our links with nature and our cultural community; yet more often than not it is yet another contribution to alienation and meaninglessness.

For me authentic eating is a critical, lively practice as diverse as the range of traditional regional cultures we know about in pre-industrial settings, which survive to greater or lesser degrees even in many parts of the contemporary world. Their diversity constitutes for many people one of the most genuinely interesting dimensions of travel. We are not mistaken in looking to these traditional cultures for evidence of authenticity. Our mistake is in assuming that they cannot offer us models for authenticity in the modern context.

My views on authenticity are shaped by my experience of tradition and authenticity in Italy, both on my first trip -which was the catalyst for the Aristologist - and my Churchill Fellowship. I was the first restaurateur to be awarded a fellowship, which shows that gastronomy is being perceived to be more central. Two of my referees were Gay Bilson and Maggie Beer, which also points in a way to us sustaining each other and thus sustaining gastronomy.

I am a seventh generation Australian. The daughter of a butcher, I grew up in central western New South Wales. My home landscape was treeless wheat and sheep country. The village of Caragabal gradually lost the traditions of both baker and butcher; my father was no competition for the large abattoir industry, and our bread also succumbed to its plastic-packaged, transportable competitors. What was once the focus of a family farm-based community has been reduced to a 'blink and you'll miss it' truck stop, general store and pub.

By contrast, I was struck by the cultivated Tuscan landscape, a landscape sustained by generations of peasantry. Even in rural Australia, I had very little experience of the important link between agriculture and eating. My Australian industrial eyes appreciated in a special way the stone terraces of olives and vines necessarily constructed to accommodate the width of the oxen and plough. The mixed or 'promiscuous' method of farming provided material evidence of continuities between Tuscans and Etruscans.

Fifteen years ago my customers at the Cantina di Toia at Bacchereto still had a coherent sense of regional identity, which had enabled them to preserve more easily their regional traditions. They had a very clear sense of the significance of their cuisine and only tolerated a few of my innovations. I might add that the pavlova was a success.

I was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to return to Italy to investigate the maintenance of that tradition in an increasingly globalised market. From first-hand experience of living in Tuscany 15 years ago, I believed that the Italians, with their strong inheritance of a coherent tradition, would continue to resist our type of economy predicated on industrialised change. One of the absolute joys and vindications of my respect for Italian regional gastronomy was the many conversations both direct and overheard of a gastronomic nature. Anywhere and everywhere people of my generation and older volunteered passionate and opinionated stories. I had only to mention my project and I would be regaled with the six authentic Tuscan dishes and their local variations. Italians are still extremely proud and very knowledgeable of their local food. Yet this love and enthusiasm for food in itself can't defend threatened authenticity.

Before I left, many people warned me about the changes. Italy's incredibly rich regional diversity - determined by its hilly geography, varied climates, human practice and culture - is now just 'catching up' with modern history. I actually spoke to butchers in the Val d'Arno with similar stories to my father's. Unfortunately large food interests have the capacity to lobby and set EU policy, so that small butchers are succumbing to the hygiene authority's red tape which does not favour peasant produce and are marginalised by the high cost of establishing killing facilities that will meet EU standards.

Of course, it goes without saying that local Tuscan farmers have little bureaucratic clout and merely answered my queries with knowing but impotent shrugs. The tragedy is that these resourceful traditions have survived and adapted in ecologically sustainable ways for generations, and in one generation it seems the juggernaut of fast food progress has run them down. I found myself saying to them that they should actively choose what sort of culture they wanted, otherwise the changes would be made for them. Unfortunately, despite the incredibly creative efforts of groups like Arcigola Slow Food, Italy's political crisis and complete disillusionment with the capacity for political reform, means that the future isn't very promising.

While I may seem fairly pessimistic about the possibility of sustaining traditional regional food cultures in Italy, my time spent there in the past and more recently has informed my endeavours here. Any understanding of what makes these cultures 'authentic' must account for the importance of the ecological and social conditions which structure them. We certainly cannot viably transport the products of these cultures, but we can have some of the same relationships; an awareness of the importance of location, the seasons, etc. which may seem simple, but from which grow good complex cultures.

Critics of authenticity perceive it as unchanging, monolithic, canonic, rule binding, static, like recipes etched in stone. I will indulge in two rather long quotations from critics of authenticity, one from the world of everyday food journalism, the other from a more weighty semi-academic text.

Firstly, John McGrath in the Adelaide Review of January, 1994, praised an eclectic menu of a 'contemporary cosmopolitan' restaurant which presented 'Indian food, bagels, bruschetta, spaghetti marinara and Thai green curry'. In doing so, he quarrelled with an 'authentic' view, which he presented as being in opposition to the restaurant's mixing of food traditions. McGrath seeks to tar authenticity with the brush of political correctness and to cast its advocates as thought police. He says:

> And why not? Authenticity schmauthenticity. An Indian may cook focaccia as well or better than an Italian. For many years Australia's best Italian restaurant was run by (gasp) an Australian. 'Italian' recipes from the New York province of Italy find a home in Tuscany. Emu rendang and kangaroo vindaloo could become fashionable in Malaysia and India, and a good thing too. ...
>
> Viewing authenticity with a frozen historical perspective is a bit fraught, too. What was Indian food like before the Moghuls? (Hold the almonds, hold the pomegranates) or before the Americas? (Hold the tomatoes, hold the chilli)
>
> India has produced many forbidden foods, no pork for some, no beef for others, some folks eat lamb but shun chicken, garlic is under suspicion for inducing naughtiness in some, tomatoes look like blood to others. ... Chance would be a fine thing.

The flippancy of this piece glosses over the issues of real interest in the debate. Nowhere does McGrath's attempt to define what his invisible targets might mean by the term authenticity. Rather, he implies that to criticise the mixing of food cultures in the name of authenticity is to misrepresent true history which, according to his conception, is predicated on a notion of change and contingency. A more 'authentic' view of history must take into account notions of causality and, in relation to food especially, acknowledge the material determinants. As I've just pointed in relation to my experience of ecology and food relationships in Italy, Italian food cooked by an Australian need not be inauthentic, but Pizza Hut certainly can. 'Contemporary cosmopolitan' cuisine seems to allow for a laisser faire mish-mash of cuisines which represents not so much history as culture set free from coherent ecological and cultural restraints. For a writer who parades his knowledge, he strangely excuses rampant culinary ignorance (as though it were some creative freedom). He parades his knowledge in a world he promotes as not needing any. McGrath also relies on Sokolov's claim that change has always been part of history.

And so secondly, Raymond Sokolov in his book *Why we Eat What We Eat* is another critic of authenticity.

> We have all grown up believing in the principle of culinary authenticity and tradition as an axiom of human civilisation, but the norm around the world has

been change, innovation (p.11). To call any dish authentic is to take a freeze-frame still from a moving picture (p. 98).

Sokolov goes on to criticise advocates of authentic French food like Elizabeth David thus:

It was especially convenient for food writers to take each national or regional cuisine as a given. Their main goal in the sixties and seventies was to make it possible for jet-age gourmets to reproduce at home, with reasonable accuracy, exactly what they had eaten on vacation. History, if there was any for these dishes, was beside the point. Authenticity was what mattered.

And by authentic these anthropological food authors meant whatever their informants cooked for them. But it was implied that these dishes had been made in exactly the same way since man first strode upright on French soil. No one ever said this, of course, but it was the unspoken assumption of hundreds of otherwise excellent books.

When did French cooking begin to resemble what we call French cooking? There will never be a simple, good answer to this question, but all available evidence argues that there never was a time when French food had a Platonic essence. ... A continuous record of recipes going back to the Middle Ages shows a dynamic, evolving process - not immutable granite traditions. Authenticity is yesterday's orthodoxy (p. 95).

Why are they so opposed to the authentic? Unless, as I suspect, it fits into post-modernist ideology, where no one person can presume, or at least no one person can unreflexively presume, to speak on behalf of anyone else.

However, the voice of the critic who might look to the past in order to judge the present seems to be lacking. Is it merely nostalgia to seek to compare the coherence of past cultural enterprises with our own? McGrath's cavalier observation that Indian cooks may produce bruschetta as well as they produce pappadams is a good example of the problem. A knowledge of cooking technology across cultures might give insights into why pappadams and bruschetta may have significant links which could disclose the important relationships between efficient fuel consumption and the provision of staples. Relationships which could well be emphasised and articulated in the cause of sustainability.

It is tempting to believe that critics of authenticity have fixed on an easy target. Rather than accepting the responsibility to criticise the exponential globalisation of food production and consumption and the overall homogeneity in food cultures it produces, they celebrate instead the superficial plurality which emerges as a by product of this broader globalisation process. In *The Shared Table*, Michael Symons argues that the significant cultural changes to eating patterns in Australia are not simply due to migration and multiculturalism but are in large part a by-product of the same patterns of food transport which produce fast food cultures:

Now, within the past few decades, production has become global in several senses. Food corporations are truly worldwide. We consume the same

> hamburgers, pizzas and cola drinks in what has become very much a 'world cuisine'. But most importantly, the food industry is now global in another sense, in that it typically prepares the total meal. Food technology commands the entire technical battery of growing, preserving, processing distribution and cooking (p. 11).

Why criticise arguments for authenticity when post-modern globalism pays little heed to the concept anyhow? By the time we wake up to the seriousness of the debate and recognise that sustainability does penetrate the realms of taste and fashion it might be too late for the planet. The basic problem is that the critics have a ridiculously simplistic idea of authenticity. It is as if it is merely following tediously 'correct' recipes. As I say, it can also be seen as an opponent of 'alienation' and so something much more profound.

My conception of authenticity and tradition is a long way from the view presented by McGrath and Sokolov. For me tradition does not represent fixity and changelessness. Rather, using Italy as my example the tradition represents a dynamic set of relationships, which have provided an incredible range of diversity, characterised by differentiation as opposed to homogeneity.

Finally, I might add that while Sokolov criticises Elizabeth David's 'anthropological' perspective, I believe he misses the actual historical method of her work. There is always a very genuine historical dialectic present. She writes from the perspective of an English woman who uses French provincial culinary traditions, amongst many others, in order to criticise her country's parlous gastronomic status especially its post-war, industrialised, peasantless, drabness. She speaks of transcending the rations experience. For her, the lively authenticity of French provincial cookery becomes a powerful critical tool.

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AUTHENTICITY

Alan Saunders

Jennifer Hillier asks, quite reasonably, how anyone can criticise authenticity when there's so little of it around. I can only say that my background is in philosophy, and things don't have to exist for us philosophers to criticise them; the concept alone will do. In fact, it is the concept that I principally want to criticise today, and not that range of activities to which Jennifer and others wish to apply it.

To begin with, let us look at some of the ways in which we use, or have used, the word 'authenticity'. My examples are drawn mostly from the recent history of musical performance and my text is taken from the mediaeval Islamic philosopher Al Gazzali, who said that the only true traditionalist is the man who doesn't know that he's a traditionalist. (I'm sorry about the sexist formulation, but that's medieval Islam for you.) The idea behind this pronouncement is, I think, that traditionalism is essentially an innocent, unreflective activity. If you are put in the position of being able to choose the traditional way from a number of options available to you, then the essentially unselfconscious nature of traditional activity will have been decisively violated. So the true traditionalists will be, as it were, the tribe of indigenous people before the white men arrive, and particularly before the anthropologists arrive. As soon as they arrive - the traders and missionaries with their beguiling stories, sermons, pictures and goods reflecting alternative ways of living, and, worse still, the anthropologists with their incessant questions about tribal life - then tradition becomes a choice, which means that it is at best compromised and at worst corrupted.

Now, turning to the ways in which we have used the word 'authenticity', what strikes me is the fact that it no longer crops up very much in our moral discourse. I suppose its last moment of glory occurred about twenty-five years ago, when the American literary critic Lionel Trilling published his book *Sincerity and Authenticity*. Since that time, it hasn't been very popular, and I think one of the reasons for this is that we now lack a coherent vision of what it is to be a human being. We have far too many conflicting views: the structuralist, the post-structuralist, the materialist, the historically-based, the economically-based, the Freudian (which last Trilling himself did something to popularise). We no longer have a commanding vision, a normative moral psychology, in the way that, say, the ancient Greeks used to have one, so we find it very difficult to talk about being an authentic person, being true to yourself. How could it not be difficult, since some of us lack even a notion of the self, suspecting it to be merely a linguistic construct loosely allied to a biological entity?

But it has happened in the last few decades that, just as the noise of clashing methods and doctrines has drowned out the notion of authenticity as a moral concept, so a wealth of historical material has started to make the word 'authentic' popular in other fields of discourse. I am going to talk about just one of these fields: music.

The essential fact about the revival of early music in our time is that, not long ago, music had little sense of its own history. In this, it differed very much from the other arts. In 1809, the British painter Benjamin Robert Haydon - a very bad painter but a

fascinating diarist - confided the following to his journal: 'Spent a miserable morning comparing myself with Raphael'. Now, I think it reasonable to assume that no British musical contemporary of Haydon's, no composer, however bad (and most British composers at that period were bad) had his morning ruined by thoughts of how he measured up to Josquin, Ockeghem or any other musical contemporary of Raphael. They knew that these guys had existed, but they didn't see them as any sort of competition: there was no sense of the music of the past as being something that had a performance life and was worth listening to; it was frozen in textbooks and you didn't perform it.

That was in 1809. Shortly thereafter, things began to change. The revival of early music - which we might date from Mendelssohn's performance in 1829 of Bach's 'St. Matthew Passion' - steadily gathered momentum throughout the nineteenth century, but its greatest spur was the invention of the long-playing record. So the fifties and sixties of this century are the great period of acceleration in the revival of early music, and that is when the word 'authentic' starts to represent something that people are aiming at: you want an authentic performance; you want yours to be more authentic than the last guy's. And I think the essential notion here is that of revival. Nobody in 1960 worried whether they were performing Beethoven or Brahms authentically, because, as far as they knew, we'd been performing Brahms and Beethoven continuously and without significant change of style since the time of Brahms and Beethoven. They thought they were just doing it the way you did it: the question of authenticity simply didn't arise. Authenticity came into your considerations only if you were performing music for which there was no unbroken performance tradition, music that had been revived. They were a few exceptions to this (such as Handel's 'Messiah', for which there is an unbroken performance tradition) but mostly it was music that had disappeared for a few hundred years and was now being revived. That was when you started troubling yourself about authenticity. (Of course, to trace a genuinely unbroken performance tradition is to discover what unbroken tradition always reveals: steady change, whether by transmutation, erosion or accretion, but that is another story.)

From the perspective of time, we can now see that all these earlier attempts at authenticity bear the mark of the eras in which they were made. So somebody in 1930 trying to give you an authentic performance of Bach no longer sounds to us like our idea of a performance of Bach's music; it sounds like a nineteen-thirties attempt to do Bach, just as earlier attempts to paint in the styles of the old masters carry for us now the mark of their times (even to my visually illiterate eye, the Vermeer forgeries executed in the forties by Van Meegeren don't look much like Vermeers - they look like copies of Vermeer made in 1940 - but at the time they fooled even the experts). Now, if we look at what people were doing in attempts to revive, say, the music of Bach in, say, the twenties and thirties, what is noticeable, I think, is not the influence of Bach but the influence of Stravinsky. Many of these early attempts to perform Bach sound to us mechanical, hard-edged, modernistic, and that's what they wanted at that time: they thought that the eighteenth century could be used as a weapon against the nineteenth-century romantic tradition.

Gradually, this state of affairs has altered. I think it was about 1977 or 1978 that I heard an English musicologist say in a lecture that we didn't like the word 'authentic' any more, that it was skewing the debate. And I think that this represented a scepticism born

of several decades spent trying to perform music authentically and realising that every performance you gave was likely to be out of date the following day in the light of some new scholarly discovery (or, more probably, some new scholarly reinterpretation of evidence already to hand). So now you were simply going to learn as much as you could about the performance practices of the past, you were going to perform the music in an historically-informed way, but you were no longer going to presume to use the word 'authentic'. And although announcers on ABC Classic FM radio may still use the it, I haven't noticed the word cropping up all that much these days in the professional musicological literature.

Now, how does this connect with food and with authenticity in food? I think that one point of connection is the notion that I mentioned of using the eighteenth century as a weapon against the nineteenth, the notion that your striving for authentic performance is a reaction against something else. In a way it's an aspect of something that Jennifer brought up when she talked about using the notion of the authentic as a weapon against modernism. Just as, on the one hand, we have performances of Bach which are influenced not just by a desire to sound like Bach but also by a desire not to sound nineteenth-century and romantic, so we find the same thing in food. Jennifer's already mentioned Elizabeth David: well, there is a passage in Elizabeth David where she says of Mediterranean food that: 'It is an honest cooking, too; none of the sham Grande Cuisine of the International Palace Hotel.'* So she's using honest peasant food as a weapon with which to rap over the knuckles the chefs who are tizzying up food in the big hotels.

Another example would be *cuisine de grande mere* - 'granny food' - which at one pointed was touted by various people (following the English food writer Paul Levy) as the next thing after *nouvelle cuisine*. Here, the point is not so much that you're cooking like your granny but that you're cooking in a way that isn't *nouvelle cuisine*; it's an essentially reactionary gesture.

But my favourite example concerns the Mediterranean diet. At the beginning of last year, a conference was held at Harvard at which various nutritionists and other interested parties got together to try to work out exactly what this Mediterranean diet was. Can we, they wondered, really talk about one diet covering an entire large region? What might be the characteristics of this diet? For example, how much of total calorie intake comes from fat? Well, it depends where you are in the Mediterranean. Do you drink wine or not? Well, it depends whether or not you're a Muslim. There are all sorts of potential variations. The solution that the conference found to these puzzles was to put together something called 'the optimal traditional Mediterranean diet'. This was more or less what you'd expect it to be: not very much red meat, a lot of pulses and legumes, a lot of greenery, a little red wine occasionally, and so on. A very healthy diet, but I think it sounds distinctly fishy. What does 'optimal traditional' mean? In this context, 'optimal' can only , I think, mean 'approved by modern nutritional science', but what is traditional about a tradition that's acceptable only when it has been approved by modern nutritional science? The function of the words 'traditional' and 'Mediterranean'

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* Elizabeth David, introduction (1950) to *A Book of Mediterranean Food* (rev. ed., London, 1988), p.16. The argument of this and the next couple of paragraphs is developed at greater length in my book *A is for Apple* (Sydney, 1995).

in the phrase 'optimal traditional Mediterranean diet' is not gastronomic, anthropological or sociological. They are there solely as an advertising gimmick, a way of defining a particular diet over against something else - the standard American diet - and those nice, comfortable, fuzzy words 'traditional Mediterranean' are a way of selling the concept to people who would otherwise be pigging out on burgers and fries.

What is happening now in the performance of early music is that the best performers are relaxing. They have absorbed so much of the historical information available to them that they can use it as they please: they don't have to keep going to the textbooks and looking things up, they're comfortable with it, they're easy, they're relaxed. That is how I think we should be with food, the eating of it, the preparation of it and the writing about it, and I don't think you can be relaxed if you have that essentially troubling word 'authenticity' hanging over your head. According to the programme for this symposium, one of the questions that we're supposed to be addressing here is 'the vexed question of authenticity'. But authenticity is an essentially vexed question: it's only when we're vexed that we talk about authenticity.

So, though I agree entirely with everything that Jennifer says about the desirability of regionality and seasonality, I don't really want to talk about authenticity. I think it's a questionable concept because, even if we limit ourselves to food that is both local and in season, we still have available to us a variety of ways of preparing it. We cannot recover our innocence; we can never again be in the position of an old rural community with just one, homogeneous food culture. So, though I think that basically I want what Jennifer wants, I don't want to call it authentic.

AUTHENTICITY AND SUSTAINABILITY IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: ROME, ISLAM AND MEDITERRANEAN CUISINES

John Fitzpatrick

Introduction

This paper is concerned with the contrast between cuisines which are essentially *regional* - embedded in specific ecological contexts and primarily shaped by adaptation to what is locally and seasonally available - and cuisines organised along *core-periphery* lines, involving the large-scale transcendence of regional ecological constraints through 'cash cropping' and bulk transport of food according to the structure of core demand. The core historical concern of the paper is the food economy of imperial Rome, and the impact of Roman core-periphery structures on the early development of regional cuisines in the Mediterranean basin. I also attempt to highlight the special character of the Roman impact by locating it against apparent trends in both what I call the `Eurasian ecumene' prior to the consolidation of Rome's all-Mediterranean empire in the first century BC and in the reconstitution of that ecumene in the `mediaeval Islamic world' emerging from the great Arab conquests of the seventh century AD.

I think the Roman story is interesting in its own right. But I am also interested in its contemporary implications. Like Jennifer Hillier in her contribution to this session, I want to link the panel theme of *authenticity* to the broader symposium theme of *sustainablity*. I want to define authenticity in cuisine essentially in `materialist' terms - essentially as being true to regional ecological determinants - and to suggest that authenticity in this sense is an important dimension of ecological sustainablity.

The general relevance to this argument of pre-industrial case studies lies precisely in the importance of ecological constraints on the scale and intensity of politico-economic integration normally achievable in the pre-industrial world. These constraints were essentially twofold: the enormous cost of bulk transport by land (where the potential for effective military control was relatively highest) and the great difficulty of imposing unified military control over maritime regions (where the economic burden of transport costs was relatively lowest). Taken together, they had several important implications. Great empires were typically much weaker and more pluralistic internally than conventional images suggest. The degree of effective central control declined rapidly the further the movement from the imperial core. Frontier regions of contiguous empires typically had more in common with each other than with their respective imperial cores. Long-distance trade, between empires and even within them, was neccessarily confined to preciosities - goods with high value to weight - and was often the province of diaspora groups specialising precisely in this area of `cross-cultural trade'.[1]

Where relatively dense networks of economic and cultural interchange developed among many states over an extended area without breaking through these basic ecological constraints, it seems useful to speak of a loose, polycentric ecumene or `world'. Such ecumenes had an obvious importance in the historical emergence of complex regional cuisines. They did not override the basic ecological constraints which kept regional cuisines regional: but their expanding and deepening networks of interaction facilitated

the long-term diffusion of knowledge and techniques, of food stocks and food-related practices, which made such cuisines increasingly rich and complex. Moreover, the longer-term growth of ecumenes was normally strengthened, not weakened, by the rise and fall of great empires. One the one hand, the imperial expansion phase typically accelerated the diffusion process, particularly where such expansion incorporated new ecological zones which had previously been only tenuously linked into an ecumene. On the other, any tendency towards patterns of imperial integration systematically overriding ecological constraints was taken care of by the phase of imperial decline (or rather the ecological unsustainabilty of such patterns was a recurrent cause of such decline).

This consequence of imperial rise and fall was so common that it seems to taken almost for granted in the literature on the history of pre-industrial cuisines. Such literature typically centres round a problematic of diffusion: who intoduced what when where how?. It also seems to involve an essentially cumulative view of the historical development of more complex cuisines, in which political and trade expansion across ecological frontiers is implicitly associated with only one type of outcome: *the wider diffusion of food stocks and food-related practices*. However, the history of the modern world economy has been increasingly dominated by a radically different dynamic: not the limited, incremental and long-term adaptation of foodstocks to new ecological conditions *but the `real time' transport across ecological frontiers of bulk food commodities, produced as cash crops in economic peripheries for consumption in economic cores.* Far from advancing the potential for complex and broadly-based regional food cultures, economic integration of this sort tends to suppress it, whatever the apparent evidence to the contrary in the consumption of privileged strata in both core and periphery.

The specific importance of Rome as a case-study lies in the temporary approximation of its imperial economy to this second pattern. The empire at its height spanned three major ecological zones, exhibited a pattern of core demand which powerfully ecouraged the movement of commodified bulk food across ecological boundaries, and developed a transport infrastructure facilitating such movement which was almost unique among pre-industrial great empires.[2] Of course, the Roman-era breach with `normal' ecological constraints in these respects was puny in comparison to that made possible by the technological and organisational resources of contemporary global capitalism. The transformations it produced were confined to a relatively small area and proceeded at a pace which was glacial by today's standards. And unlike the capitalist world economy to date, the Roman empire notoriously rose *and* fell. But the Roman imapct was sufficiently extraordinary in its historical context to make the structural analogy with contemporary core-periphery strucures a meaningful one. And precisely because the Roman revolution was clearly limited in space and time, it provides an illuminating, slow motion and historically-bounded analogue for core-periphery patterns of food production and consumption in the contemporary world.

Within its general materialist bias, the paper seeks to highlight the intersection between two levels of analysis. The first focusses on what Braudel has called the everyday structures of `material life', the production and consumption practices of ordinary people, the domain of the *longue duree*.[3] The second involves the kind of *`concrete, socio-spatial and organisational'* appoach to the dynamics of imperial state-making and market formation advocated by Michael Mann. It focusses on issues that must have proccupied both merchants and military strategists in the pre-industrial era: *'organisation,*

control, logistics and communication' [4]. But it is still at bottom a story about food and ,above all, the movement of food.

Ecological Frameworks and Longue Durée

This section outlines a number of ecological features of the Mediterranean and surrounding areas which seem especially relevant to the issue of regionalism in cuisine. It obviously relies very heavily on Braudel.

Mountains, plateaux, foothills, plains

The sea was not merely landlocked but hemmed in by great mountain chains and plateau regions which often reduced the Mediterranean lands proper to a narrow littoral belt. Mountain barriers were particularly important around the northern shore, where they largely walled the Mediterranean lands off from northern Europe and so radically segmented the great peninsulas that Braudel defines the Mediterranean lands as 'a series of compact mountainous peninsulas interrupted by vital plains'.[5] On the southern shore, the Atlas range ran parallel to the edge of Sahara desert, and thus had much less independent significance as a barrier.

The mountains proper and the high plateaux usually presented too severe an environment to sustain the full range of typically Mediterranean cultivation and in this sense served to intensify tendencies towards discrete micro-regions. However, given erratic rainfall and rapid runoff from the mountains, the plains typically required extensive and ongoing investment in both drainage and dry-land irrigation techniques to prevent them from succumbing to contrasting problems of semi-aridity and swamps.[6] Thus the foothills often played a crucial role as the seedbed of regional cultures, for 'between 200 and 400 metres [were] found the optimum conditions of the Mediterranean habitat'.[7]

Climate, rainfall and aridity : the 'true' mediterranean ecology

The predominant climate - technically described as 'dry subtropical'- was shaped primarily by the radically opposed influences of the Atlantic ocean and the great desert belt, producing the characteristic sharp contrast between cool, moderately wet winters and hot dry summers[8] A significant proportion of the winter and early spring rains typically came in violent storms, while summer presented an ever-present threat of drought. Even though rainwater-based agriculture was the predominant pattern, with irrigation playing an important but ancillary role, conditions often tended towards the semi-arid.

> 'Crops and plants must adapt to drought and learn to use as quickly and profitably as possible the precious sources of water...The Mediterranean by its climate is predestined to a shrub culture. It is not only a garden, but providentially a land of fruit bearing trees'.[9]

This climate, with its distinctive separation of rainfall and warmth, generated a central band of 'true' Mediterranean ecology defined above all by the limits of cultivation of the most Mediterranean of all fruit bearing trees - the olive. 'Often the climate of a narrow coastal fringe', this 'true' Mediterranean region was distinctly smaller than the Mediterranean as a total complex of seas and littoral regions.[10] It excluded not just the great bulk of France but also substantial northern sections of the Spanish, Italian and Balkan peninsulas, while linking their more southerly regions closely to related regions on the north African and Levantine coasts.

Relationship with the arid zone/oasis belt

Beyond this southern and eastern orientation of the true mediterranean belt itself, there was also an ancient sybiosis between it and the Afro-Asian arid zone. East of the `true mediterranean' coastal strip in front of the Atlas, the Sahara continued as an undulating plateau 'from southern Tunisia to southern Syria...directly bordering the sea'. Moreover, this was only the beginning of 'the great desert that runs uninterrupted ..up to the gates of Peking'[11] (and also down into the northwest of the Indian sub-continent).

The climatic spectrum of this great belt involved multiple gradations of steppe, semi-desert and desert patterns: from the `hot arid' extreme of Sahara and the Arabian Peninsula to the `semi-arid mid-latitude' pattern predominant in Syria, Turkey, much of Iran and northwest China. But it also contained a chain of lesser and greater oases regions, including several of the greatest civilisational core areas in the ancient and mediaeval world : the Nile, Tigris-Euphrates, Indus and Huanghe river systems. Moreover, the material culture of this entire region, with the exception of its extremities in northern China, was characterised by the unifying role of the date palm, which was arguably even more important as the signature of oasis world agriculture than was the olive for the agriculture of the true mediterranean zone.[12]

Though irrigation agriculture was undoubtedly the norm throughout this zone, it too nourished a wide repertoire of fruit bearing trees and shrubs potentially adaptable to the Mediterranean environment, and presented analogous challenges of land and water management to deal with soil which 'without constant attention..quickly reverts to marsh or desert like steppe'[13]. In effect, this entire arid zone/oasis belt constituted another great catchment area of food stocks and practices, whose progressive merging with those of the Mediterranean region made an enormous contribution to the development of the full potential of Mediterranean cuisines. This was a symbiosis of great antiquity. The initial `agricultural revolution' began in regions of broadly Mediterranean ecology on the rainwatered foothills surrounding the West Asian `fertile crescent', before entering the critical breakthrough to irrigation agriculture on the plain around the fourth millenium BC, while the enormous productivity of irrigation agriculture in turn made the oasis world a critical engine of further development in the Mediterranean basin right through to the classical Islamic era.

Relationship with the north european temperate zone

The other great ecological zone flanking the true Mediterranean belt was that of continental Europe north of the alpine mountain system. Two major climate types were involved: the 'temperate marine' pattern of northwestern Europe and the 'humid mid-latitude pattern predominant in eastern Europe and the Ukranian and Russian steppes. There was also a transition zone to these northern climate types in the Piedmonte-Lombardia-Emilia-Venezia complex, which the Romans called Cisalpine Gaul and Braudel describes as the southern end of the 'German isthmus').[14]

However, these northern ecologies never developed an agricultural symbiosis with the true mediterranean belt comparable to the ancient and important relationship between the latter and the arid zone/oasis world. The Romans signally failed to adapt their Mediterranean area techniques to the conditions of the heavy, wet soils of the north. They *were* impressively successful with wine production, which was a major economic interest of the landed elite and one of the most characteristic areas for the employment of slave labour. Over the course of several centuries, the grapevine was extended up towards its

inherent ecological limits, and lighter, more complex and valuable wines produced in the process. But they were a much less successful with the third member of the Mediterranean trinity - wheat.

Wheat is climatically the the most flexible of all the major grains and was grown in some measure throughout the northern reaches of the empire. But Roman agriculture in the north appears never to have really broken from the light `scratch' plough and associated techniques developed around the drier, lighter soils of the Mediterranean region. Paradoxically, it thus encountered an important ecological `limit' line - the southern limit of soils most appropriately worked with the heavy plough - well below the northern limit to which the vine was pushed in the Roman era.

Given this failure, the production of wheat and other common, mass consumption foods tended to be pushed towards lighter, drier soils on hillsides and in exceptionally well drained river valleys, and presumably also pushed into competition for desirable land with economically more valuable vine cultivation. Such competition would not have been a problem for elite landowners, for the intercropping of wheat, wine and (where ecologically feasible) olives was a common practice on large commercial estates, and one recommended by Roman agricultural treatises as the best way to ensure maximum employment for the slave labour force. But it does seem likely to have produced an even greater marginalisation of the holdings of the peasantry than might have been the case if more appropriate patterns of land use had been developed.

Transport, communications and the 'inland sea' paradox

Finally, in addition to his emphasis on the strongly segmented and micro-regional character of the land areas in the Mediterranean basin, Braudel dismisses the simple notion that the 'inland sea' itself was a natural force for macro-regional unity. It was 'not so much a single entity as a "complex of seas"'[15], and in normal pre-industrial conditions this worked to reinforce the tendency towards distinctive micro-regions, articulated above all by a number of vital 'narrow seas'.

Braudel lists six narrow seas: the Black Sea; the Agean; the sea between Tunisia and Sicily; the 'Mediterranean channel' between Spain and Morocco; the Tyrrhenian Sea between Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica and the Italian mainland; and the Adriatic.[16] Of these, the first four all systematically reinforced the intimate linkage discussed above between European-shore regions with 'true' mediterranean ecology and true mediterranean and/or arid zone regions on the Afro-Asian littoral. But trade and communications patterns in the Adriatic were also fundamentally aligned towards the east - with Venice providing only the most spectacular example. And the Tyrrhenian Sea was hardly less involved in interchange with the Afro-Asian shore, from the interplay between Carthaginians, Etruscans and Greeks in classical antiquity to that of the north African Arab powers and the Italian trading cities in the mediaeval era.

In contrast to the role of the narrow seas in integrating smaller regions, Braudel insists on the *barriers* to all-Mediterranean integration posed by the major stretches of deep, open sea to the east and west of Sicily, which he describes as the Ionian and Sardinian seas respectively. Poor in fish stocks, subject to violent storms in winter and to the persistent threat of pirate attacks in summer, they represented 'marine deserts...enormous, dangerous and forbidden stretches, no man's lands separating different worlds'[17] . Within the narrow seas, there was 'genuine intermingling of populations, and within

these limits it defied all barriers of race language and culture'. Movements towards integration beyond these limits, and above all attempts to unify the eastern and western 'halves of the sea...were like electric charges, violent and without continuity'.[18]

Given Braudel's *negative* verdict on the Mediterranean as a natural force for unity within its own basin, it is especially noteworthy that *positive* versions of the `inland sea' motif appear in connection with the major ocean routes linking the Mediterranean lands to South and East Asia. For instance, *The Times Atlas of World Exploration* notes a `poetic truth in the ancient legend that the Indian Ocean was landlocked', describing it as `the world's most favourable environment for long-range navigation [which] from remote antiquity, seafarers..exploited to open routes that extended the full breadth of the ocean' [19] Similarly Anthony Reid, in an analysis of the Southeast Asian *longue duree* explicitly inspired by Braudel, asserts that `moderate and regular' monsoon winds, relatively placid waters, `ubiquitous' and `remarkably kind' sea lanes and abundant fish stocks `made the mediterranean sea of Southeast Asia a more hospitable and inviting meeting place and thoroughfare than that stormier and deeper Mediterranean in the West'.[20]

By the mid-first century AD, Roman ships from the Red Sea coast of Egypt were reportedly using the monsoons to reach the Malabar coast of India.[21] In Sassanid Iran (contemporary with the later Roman empire), traders from Persian Gulf ports were trading with East Asia through Iranian emporia in Sri Lanka and perhaps also on the Malay peninsula. By the late eighth century, following the development of Baghdad as a great centre under the Abbasid caliphate, both the volume and the geographical scope of this trade evidently increased dramatically, and Arab/Iranian traders could regularly be found as far away as the southern Chinese port of Guanzhou.[22]

Besides an alternative to the land routes to the Indian sub-continent and China, these maritime routes also also brought direct contact with the spice trade of island and peninsula southeast Asia. Of course, many new food products reaching the Mediterranean from these tropical, high rainfall areas could never be acclimatised to Mediterranean conditions and continued as rare and expensive imports. However, the pull of this eastern trade was undoubtedly a further factor reinforcing the characteristic Afro-Asian orientation of the Mediterranean's narrow seas and the trading powers dominating them in `normal', polycentric periods of the region's maritime history.

The Mediterranean longue dureé and the Roman revolution

Taken together, these various environmental considerations strongly suggest two conclusions: first, the great importance of micro-regions within the Mediterranean complex of seas; and second, the strength of ecologically grounded links to the the Afro-Asian arid zone, compared to the relative weakness of such links to transalpine Europe. It is above all these two factors which I wish to highlight in locating the issue of Mediterranean cuisines against the broader context of the Eurasian ecumene.

The historical development of this ecumene went back millenia before the triumph of Rome, but a notable speeding up occurred around 500 BC, with the consolidation of the Persian empire. By this stage, the central bloc of arid zone and true mediterranean territories defined by the limits of the date and the olive were shared between the Persian empire (the great majority) and the Greeks, Carthaginians and Etruscans in the Mediterranean. Alexander's conquests and the Hellenistic era shifted the relative political balance between Greek and Persian but caused no drastic changes at the level of material

culture; and even the rise of Roman power down to the middle of the first century BC left in place an ecumene governed by these basic geographical parameters.

However, in the century and a half following Caesar's Gallic Wars (58-50 BC), Roman expansion produced a radically new pattern of relationships among ecological regions, and an unprecedented break with established ecological constraints on effective core-periphery paterns of political and economic organsiation. Three dimemsions of this transformtion seem especially relevant here.

First, the establishment of naval control over the whole Mediterranean delivered Egypt - the last and greatest external granary - to the Roman state, and more particularly the western faction which triumphed in the great civil wars of the first century AD. In no sense was Roman naval dominance the outgrowth of a long history as a commercial and maritime state. Rather. it was a relatively late by-product of Rome's relentless growth as a land power, whose devastating impact on Italian peasant agriculture will be discussed later.

Second, Rome was the first Mediterranean power to organise extensive territories beyond the mountain barriers ringing the sea, both through the exploitation of inland rivers and the construction of major roads - around 80,000 kilometres of `first class' roads by 200AD, according to M. G. Lay, providing `travel times...which were not to be appreciably bettered until the coming of the train two millenia later'. The bulk of this road network lay outside the northern limit of true mediterranean ecology as defined by the olive; perhaps the majority of it lay outside the northern limit of the light, Mediterranean plough; and a significant minority lay outside even the northern limit of the vine (Lay estimates 12-15,000 kilometres of `good quality' roads in Britain alone, though the distinction between good quality and first class is not clear from his text).[23]

In regard to both river and road, therefore, the Roman-era contrast in transport possibilities between the Afro-Asian shores and the new territories in northwest Europe was very pronounced. The one great road in the whole of north Africa, for instance, was the 2000km Via Nerva, which crossed north Africa from the Straits of Gibraltar via Carthage to Alexandria - a single great artery linking the leading granary regions of the empire, hugging the coastal strip throughout almost its entire distance, without any major feeder routes into the interior and without links to any major river except the Nile at its eastern terminus. Similarly, the Nile -the single instance on the Afro-Asian shore of a great river leading into a agriculturally productive interior - clearly did not function as a route for opening up that interior to a more closely articulated pattern of economic development. Rather, it was used to extract agricultural `surplus' from the interior to support the growth of great, parasitic mertropoli on the Mediterranean littoral - first Alexandria under the Ptolemies and subsequently Rome.

By contrast, the road system of northwestern Europe was both better articulated in itself and also closely linked to the complex interior river systems of the region: the Rhone, Aude, Garonne, Loire, Seine, Rhine, Danube, Po and their various tributaries. Though undoubtedly strategic in origin, as with the Romans original exploitation of river transport, the northern road system had critical economic side-efects. Barry Cunliffe has charted this partial shift in the function of the extensive network established in central and northern Gaul from 39BC onwards, first to faciliate Roman control of this recently

conquered province and second to lay the logistical and economic basis for the planned conquest of Germany (a project finally abandoned in 16AD).

> By river and road Gaul and the Mediterranean were linked to a western and northern [Atlantic] seabord at six principal outlets, seldom more than 200 km apart...There can be little doubt that the roads established [in this period]...essentially to facilitate supplies to the frontier, provided a great incentive to trade'.[24] .

Third, there was the new transalpine urban network which developed alongside the transport network, typically at the intersection of important river and land routes. This was the one major new area of city-building produced by the Roman phase and the *only* substantial case throughout classical antitiquity of the extension of Mediterranean-style urban culture deep into the continental interior.[25]

If the economic novelty of the Roman imperial order in defined in these terms, it can be seen to have lasted at its height for roughly 260 years. After a fifty-year period of external crisis and renewed civil war in the third century, the empire entered a stage of de facto east/west division around 300 AD, which was formalised a century later - with the Egyptian grain supply having been diverted from Rome to the new eastern capital of Constantinople from 330AD.

Rome, Islam and the Material Base of Mediterranean Cuisines

On the basis of the contrasts developed above, I now focus on the characteristic food historian's question about diffusion of food stocks and related practices, starting with the issue of plants and plant products, as an admittedly simplifying `tracer' for overall changes in the basic repetoire of Mediterranean cuisines. The following lists indicate those which seem to have been have been available in the Mediterranean region by at least the early Roman empire (around first century AD); those which seem to first appeared in the mediaeval Islamic period; and those which seem to have either `died out' or else `died down' so substantially in the immediate aftermath of Rome that might be classifed as effectively reintroduced in the Islamic period.

<u>Available in Mediterranean by early Roman empire:</u>
wheat, barley, rye, oats, olive, onion, garlic, broad bean, chick pea, pea, lentil, turnip, carrot, parsnip, lettuce, bitter greens, cucumber, leek, asparagus, celery, mushroom, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, fig, pistachio, pomegranate, date, walnut, grape, pear, apple, peach, melon, orange, lemon, apricot, citron, strawberry, cherry, rhubarb.
basil, marjoram, oregano, mint, rosemary, sage, savory, thyme, anise, caraway, coriander, cumin, turmeric, dill, parsley, fennel, anise, bay, caper, fenugreek, mustard, poppy, sesame, saffron, cardamon, ginger, cinnamon, pepper.

<u>Introduced during mediaeval Islamic period:</u>
buckwheat, eggplant, spinach, quince, almond, cane sugar, rice,.nutmeg, tarragon.

<u>Probably reintroduced during mediaval Islamic period</u>
artichoke, asparagus, cauliflower, orange, lemon, pomegranate, apricot, date, cloves, turmeric, cinnamon, saffron.

The construction of these lists was a problematic exercise, primarily because the extent of innovation in the Islamic period is often seen as considerably greater than is suggested here: to take just one recent example, Ayla Alcar credits `the Arabs' with *introducing* most of the items on my *reintroduced* list, at least into Spain and Sicily.[26] Indeed the scope of the Roman list given here (and the corresponding modesty of the Islamic introductions list) was a considerable suprise to me at first, and they were initially produced simply by following the judgement of those authors who seemed themselves to have surveyed the documentary and archaeological evidence in depth and to have a principled basis for resolving anomalies in it.[27] But there are also strong contextual reasons for taking the extensive Roman list seriously, and these go to heart of the central analytical problem of the paper: the gap between the broad social question of cuisine origins and the the narrower question of when particular food stocks and practices were first `introduced'.

First, as indicated above, a dynamic of competition and cooperation between major imperial states was already well advanced throughout the Mediterranean basin and adjacent arid zone territories for several centuries before the period of Roman predominance. The extent to which this pre-Roman dynamic began to push the diffusion process over a new threshold is evident not just in the introduction of genuinely new items to the Mediterranean but, even more revealing, in the diffusion of long-established ones from the east to the west of the sea. Even the olive, though cultivated for millennia in the east, seems to have become established as a food crop in the west only from the sixth to the fourth centuries BC, beginning a dramatic ascent in importance there from the third century onward.

Second, it seems clear that the emerging hegemony of Rome had already produced a further qualitative advance in trade in the west even by the late second century BC, and the developments in transport infrastructure and concentrated urban demand over the next two centruries can only have intensified this process. The Roman elite of the high imperial era were notorious for their quest for novelty in the area of food, and given levels of relative wealth which ranged from the merely great to the truly obscene, they were in an excellent position to make their demand effective. But it is probably also misleading to assume that the documented demand for more exotic products was restricted to the elite, since Rome by the high imperial era was a multicultural city par excellence and many of its middle strata must have contributed to this kind of demand.[28]

If the extensive Roman list *is* taken seriously it suggests that the initial transplanting of plant varieties from the great desert/oasis catchment area to the Mediterranean had already been substantially achieved by at least the first century AD (though in many cases centuries or even millenia before). However, in addition to the considerable dissent among historians about how much was *first introduced* via the Islamic world, there is a considerable consensus that in any event this period made a fundamental practical difference in *the longer-term embedding* of characteristically Mediterranean cuisines - a judgement captured strikingly in Lombard's flat assertion that the Islamic period initiated `the Mediterranean garden...[which] is utterly different from the garden of antiquity'.[29] By contrast, the Roman era seems to present food historians with the puzzle of an empire which had the potential to raise the diffusion process to unprecedented heights yet seems to have left a gulf rather than legacy of continuing cuisine development in the heartlands of the empire.

The implication, then, is that while the mediaeval Islamic period was of great practical importance to the repetoire of Mediterranean food stocks and practices, its positive importance lay less in the area of pristine `introductions' than in that of the long-term sustainablity of what had once been introduced. Conversely, whereas the Roman empire may have brought to a peak the process of pristine introductions in classical antiquity, the evidence of substantial `dying out' of food stocks and practices from the late Roman era suggests a negative impact in this area of sustainability.

This latter problem, moreover, cannot simply be accounted for by the fall of the empire in the west. The numbers of the early Germanic invaders were quite small and their elites were in general more interested in enjoying the remaining benefits of Roman civilisation than in overthrowing it. The whole process was hardly more traumatic than military upheavals that took place during and certainly after the mediaeval Islamic period, without producing comparable regressions in the area of cuisine. Outside the Mediterranean/West Asian zone, Chinese history provides several examples of drastic population decline and destruction of agricultural base through military conquest followed by remarkable recovery within the space of a couple of centuries. Moreover, similar patterns of drastic socio-economic and demographic decline followed by rapid recovery can be discerned in major pre-industrial plague eras, such as the Black Death in Europe and related developments in China. Rather than relying on a 'fall of empire' explanation, it seems better to focus on *what the Roman empire did at its height* to suppress the capacity at the mass level to sustain complex regional cuisines.

The Political Economy of Food in Imperial Rome

The decline and dislocation of the peasantry

The centuries of intense military conflict through which the Roman state rose to domination of the entire Mediterreanean had drastic negative consequences for the peasant base of the population. Between 225 and 23 BC, Keith Hopkins estimates, the 'median size of the army was 13% of male citizens'. - representing the recurent `absence, on average of 130,000 Italian peasants' from their land for a conscript period of around seven years. The total conscripted in the culminating civil wars (49-8 BC) was around 500,000, and though these numbers were subsequently halved and the army fully professionalised, this still required the enlistment of about one fifth of seventeen-year old citizens for the new average of twenty years.[30]

The burden of military service (which Hopkins describes as a form of ongoing temporary migration) drove peasant soldiers ever further into debt, producing an overall decline in the rural free population from 4,100,000 to 2,900,000, with most of the change probably in the first century BC. In that century and the next the process produced more direct and highly disruptive forms of mass migration of former peasants: to Rome and other cities, to other rural regions of Italy, and increasingly to other parts of the empire. Migration to Rome itself swelled the urban proletariat, 320,000 of whom were already receiving the `dole' of free wheat by 45 BC. Migrations within rural Italy (almost 250,000 adult males alone between 80-28 BC) typically involved the resettlement of ex-soldiers by powerful generals, but typically 'achieved little except to make a different set of poor peasants landless'. Migration outside Italy (150,000 adult males up to 49 BC and a further 265,000 between 49-8 BC) seems to have eased the constant struggle for land in Italy itself.[31] But soldier settlers in Italy were said to have often received poor land and made poor farmers; and since elite landholding outside Italy also

expanded dramatically in this period, it seems unlikely that transplanted Italian peasants fared better in the later conquered terrritories.

Indeed, this process of exporting the social conflicts of an ever-widening core was a systematic and centuries-long dimension of the Roman revolution. It was already well in train with the incorporation of the Greek and Carthaginian territories in southern Italy and Sicily, where large-scale depopulation (connected above all with the war against Hannibal) opened the way to the construction of the latifundia so characteristic of the subsequent agrarian order in those regions.[32] The later stages of the 120-year struggle with Carthage drew Rome decisively into the all-out conquest of the western Mediterranean basin, overlapping with `an almost literally endless series of Gallic and Spanish wars' against various groups of native peoples - in which resistance by the latter both to further Roman military expansion and to the `systematic loot[ing]' of already conquered provinces by Roman adminstrators was ruthlessly crushed. In Spain this process continued intermittently from 203 BC to 133 BC, producing `one of the most unedifying chapters in Roman history' and `countless atrocities against the Spaniards'.[33] In Gaul, it continued through to the final onslaught under Caesar in 58-50 BC, whose impact is graphically described by Cunliffe.

> The Gallic war had dragged on for eight years. During that time an unending supply of Roman military manpower had been brought into the war zone...hundreds of thousands [of Gauls] were killed, hundreds of thousands were carried away to be sold into slavery and incalculable numbers were maimed. The countryside in 50 BC must have looked very different from the countryside ten years earlier. The population was devastated, the land ravaged and the old social and economic systems were in ruins .[34]

In assessing the long term implications of these devastating wars for the subsequent agrarian order in the conquered territories, it is important to stress that Rome succeeded in the critical early centuries of its expansion because of its miltarily potency and its command of strategic communications links between more advanced and wealthy civilisations, *not* because it was itself economically developed. In the early third century BC, on the eve of its great phase of expansion outside its established strongholds in central Italy, Rome `had a simple near-subsistence econmy' with widespread rural `under employment':[35] indeed, this latter phenomenon is the most obvious source of the extraordinary reserves of manpower routinely employed in Roman miltary campaigns. Given the recurrent and cumulative dislocation of Italian peasant life caused by these campaigns, it seems unlikely that there were any substantial advances in peasant agricultural technique to be carried abroad in the great migrations of the the late first century BC.

On the other hand, superior levels of agricultural technique *had* been achieved by other peoples dispossessed or marginalised by Roman imperalism - and not just the more obvious groups such as the Etruscans and Carthaginians but also by peoples whom the Romans themselves dismissed as barbarians. Particularly important in this respect were the Gauls, both for the general level of their agrarian culture and for the extent of their adaptation to the conditions of transalpine Europe. They grew all the then known varieties of wheat in abundance, and even leaving aside their possible development of an embryonic heavy plough, their novel agricultural implements included a two-handed scythe, a horsehair grain sieve, and a mechanical harvester pushed by oxen -the last of

these being described by Anderson as one of the two most important advances in agricultural technology in classical antiquity.[36] These innovations came from a period of relatively independent and decentralised political systems in central and southern Gaul, where living standards even for elites were still closely tied to the production of basic foodstuffs at the local level. This social framework underwent major change in the Roman era, and it seems very probable that in Gaul (and perhaps in other `barbarian' territories) the overall result of incorporation into the Roman imperial system was a *regression* in agricultural technique at the level of localised peasant production of basic foodstuffs.

Slavery and the growth of agrarian capitalism

At the level of specialised production of commodities like wine and olives, organised and funded by wealthy elites with an eye to often distant markets, there were by contrast major new gains in the Roman period, bulding on the Etruscan and Carthaginian inheritance. However, these developments were inseparable from the fundamental transformation of the agrarian labor force through the the exponential growth of slavery. Mass enslavement consequent on military conquest began with the ea.ly Roman expansion in central Italy in the fourth century BC, with Roman histories suggesting `that over 60,000 individuals were enslaved during just five years of the Third Samnite War (297-293)'[37] By the first century BC, the flow of slaves into Italy formed a massive, structural counterpoint to the flow of Italian peasant migration outside the peninsula, as indicated in A. Tchernia's estimate of 300,000 Gallic slaves in Italy at the time of the Spartacus rebellion, almost two decades before Caesar's final campaign of all-out conquest in Gaul.[38]

Aggregate comparisons over the last two centuries BC show this slave/free relationship with particular starkness. Hopkins estimates that in 225BC there were around 4,500,000 free persons in Italy, to around 500,000 slaves. By 28BC the slave population on his count had grown to 2,000,000 (though some estimates are as high as 3,000,000) while the aggregate free population had *fallen* to 4,000,000, with its composition also being drastically altered by the conversion of peasants into urban proletariat.[39]

The expansion of the slave labour force continued into the first century AD and the geographical scope of large-scale agrarian slavery grew, especially in Spain and southern Gaul. Along with this new labour force, the elite benefited from a vast expansion in landholdings (largely through the dispossession of the both the Italian peasantry and conquered populations in the more recently annexed regions of the western empire) and huge gains in portable wealth extracted from older and richer colonial territories (above all in the former Hellenistic east).[40] Together, these three factors made possible a period of large scale agrarian capitalism, focussing above all on wine and olive oil, but also with a major expansion of pastoral ranching and other forms of specialised food production.[41]

Core consumption, bulk food transport and the distortion of periphery production

Finally, the end of the civil war and the progressive stabilisation of frontiers led to a qualitatively new structure of political and economic integration in which core consumption patterns shifted periphery production patterns towards radical over-concentration on a few key items. A crucial factor was the bulk transport of food throughout the Mediterranean and its major riverine hinterlands. And a crucial precondition of this was the temporary Roman success in overriding the segmented, regional character of the Mediterranean `complex of seas'.

The most obvious index both of the importance of this transport and of the scale and artificiality of 'core' demand is the rise and decline of the city of Rome. Not till the early fourth century BC did Rome pass the 10,000 mark: and with 'no natural resources, no manufactures, no trade' it had 'no commercial justification for growing beyond [it]'.[42] A century later, however, it was already one of the largest cities in the Mediterranean, with a probable population of around 150,000. By the early first century AD, it was was the unchallenged metropolis of an all-Mediterranean empire, absorbing massive grain imports from Sardinia, Sicily, North Africa and especially Egypt, and with a population exceeding one million (though this level may have already been reached by the end of the first century BC). It seems to have held around the million mark till the mid-fourth century - or a little after the inital diversion of the Egyptian grain supply to the new eastern capital of Constantinople in 330 AD - entering a period of long-term decline from this point onwards.

The significance of this million plus population sustained for around 350 years by a city with a relatively limited food producing hinterland is best understood in comparative perspective. Rome became the largest European city in history before London in the late 18th century, when Britain had crossed the threshold of its agricultural and early industrial revolutions. Rome was almost certainly the only city *anywhere* to maintain for centuries a population around a million primarily on the basis of long distance transport of bulk food until this level was reached by Ming-era Beijing - probably in the early 17th century. Given that the Mediterranean region -for all the attractiveness of its various regional cusines -had a relatively limited food potential in comparison to, say, transalpine Europe, the sustained impact of Roman imperial demand must have been enormous. That impact extended far beyond demand for wheat (which was itself imported in substantial commercial volumes beyond those appropriated in taxes). Rome had a similarly massive impact on other commodified foods produced and supplied mainly according to market imperatives -above all wine and olive oil but also other highly prized Mediterranean-basin products like *garum* - a fermented fish sauce which was `so commonly used that its absence from a dish must have been more noticeable than its presence' [43]..

Beyond the over-riding impact of the metropolis itself, it is important to note three other features of the new `core' demand. First, there was the mushroom growth of towns pulled in the wake of Rome in central Italy. The greatest concentration of these fell outside the main zone of the earlier Etruscan cities to the north and Greek cities to the south, and similarly outside the orbit of the most dynamic economic regions of mediaeval Italy -the northern belt of commercial and manufacturing cities and the great Norman kingdom in the southern peninsula and Sicily. Clearly, the location of this central Roman-era urban belt was determined above all by proximity to Rome itself, not by the independent economic potential of its relatively unprepossessing hinterland, so that the problem of the distorting economic impact of the metropolis is best related to a broader Roman metropolitian region rather than to the city of Rome alone. Moreover, just as the urban developement in central Italy was pulled into an artifical upward spiral with the rise of Rome, so it was implicated in a drastic downward spiral with the decline of Rome. Once the structure of food imports began to unravel, this decline was quite precipitate. By the mid-fifth century, after a hundred years which had opened with the diversion of the Egyptian grain supply to Constantinople and closed with the loss of the north African supply to the Vandals, Rome's population had probably fallen from a million to around 400,000. And `between the sixth and the ninth centuries the population was whittled

down to a few tens of thousands', with regular grain imports from any source having ceased in the 7th century.[44]

Second, there was the urban expansion north of the Alps - much the most important area of new urban development, beyond the growth of Rome itself and its central Italian hinterland.[45] But the prosperity of these northern cities was always heavily dependent on political and military criteria. Even at its height, the Roman road system did not transform the basic economics of land transport, which is estimated to have `cost roughly sixty times as much as sea transport and ten times as much as transport by river downstream'. The archaeological evidence that, despite this, `goods were transported far and wide overland and by river' seems to testify to the scale of profits to be obtained by exporting Mediterranean products to the islands of Mediterranean demand in the north.[46]

The basis of this profit, and of the generally lopsided character of long-distance trade in northwestern Europe in the Roman period, seems to have been ecological. Such trade did not, as in the mediaeval period, build on the independent vitality in localised production and exchange of towns whose vitality in this respect was grounded in turn in the economic dynamism of their rural hinterlands. Rather, the towns were essentially consumption centres whose consumption was underwritten by their political, military and administrative importance, and they provided a major stimulus to long-distance trade precisely because they *did not* have a productive interplay with dynamic rural hinterlands. They represented islands of concentrated demand for the material neccessities of Mediterranean urban culture in ecological circumstances which made it more or less impossible to meet this demand from local resources.

The most obvious culinary example of a Mediterrnaean monopoly which was central to the reproduction of this transplanted Mediterranean culture was olive oil, whose importance in classical antiquity went well beyond direct food consumption, since it was heavily used in food preservation (for storage and/or transport), in lighting and in personal hygeine. There were also other highly prized food products - like *garum* -which were effectively Mediterranean monopolies, Wine-making, of course, was not a permanent ecological monopoly of the Mediterranean, but the long-term process of trial and error required to adapt the vine to the colder and wetter northern climates may in practice have produced in the critical early centuries a structure of trade not radically different from that associated with the olive.[47]

Third, there was the demand of the legions stationed in the newly incorporated northern regions. Over the 260 years internal peace between the ending of the late-republican civil wars and the onset of the great crisis of the third century AD, around two-thirds of the total number of legions raised were deployed in transalpine Europe (plus Anatolia) well outside the zone of true Mediterranean ecology.[48] This was potentially another great market for wealthy landlords and entrepreneurs, whose potential was much enhanced by the fact that the frontier along which the bulk of these northern legions were deployed followed for most its length the Rhine-Danube river system. Archaelogical evidence suggests that the concentration of wealthy villas/farms in Roman territory actually increased close to the frontiers, indicating the pull of this legionary demand; and Michael Mann has described the mature Roman economy in general as a `legionary economy', whose basic motor force was a pre-industrial form of `military Keynesianism'.[49]

The dissolution of the Roman imperial order

The Roman economic order sketched above depended in general on the key consumption centres - Rome and its satellite towns, the transalpine urban network and the northern legions -sustaining their collective claims to a disproportionate share of the imperial tax base. More specifically, the `legionary economy' seems to have worked when the majority of northern legions figured rather like extra towns, with relatively stable geographical bases along the frontier. It also depended on a standing navy keeping piracy to a minimum in the Mediterranean complex of seas, and on stable frontiers and internal peace keeping the costs of the army relatively low. After the third century crisis, all this changed. Rome lost its metrapolitan preeminence to Constantinople. The transalpine urban network declined. The standing navy virtually dissappeared in the western empire and the size of the army doubled to around 450,000, while at the same time the main focus of state expenditure became the *mobile* armies intended to meet increasingly unpredictable threats on many fronts. [50] Finally, the last two centuries of the empire saw an increasingly destructive `power standoff' between lowly born emperors who had risen through the army, on the one hand, and the aristocratic economic elites on the other, with the latter adamantly refusing to surrender any of their economic privileges to prop up the state which was the ultimate source of those privileges. [51]

Among the multiple indices of the catastrophic unravelling of the late-Roman economic order, one of the most salient is a pattern 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'. The geologist who first identified this phenomenon suggested climatic deterioration as its cause, and therefore proposed such deterioration `as a major, but hitherto unsuspected, cause of the collapse of the Roman empire'. However, the absence of any contemporary reports of major climate change, together with evidence from subsequent excavations suggests instead that the physical phenomenon may be the result of a socio-economic cause:

> The alternative theory is that the [alluvial] fill was formed as a direct result of the collapse of the classical agricultural system. Failure to repair terrraces as the mass-market for olive oil and wine declined led to erosion as previously revetted soils were washed away.[52]

In sum, then, the central paradox of the Roman case is that a great imperial state, built through relentless military conquest, gave rise to a far-reaching and (for its time) highly orchestrated form of agrarian capitalism, which ultimately helped to undermine the state but could not survive without the state's support. The Roman order seems to have collapsed primarily because of internal contradictions rather than as a result of external conquest - with environmental contradictions being a crucial dimesnion of this collapse.

The Mediaeval Islamic World and the Revival of the Eurasian Ecumene

The nature of the Islamic world

The mediaeval Islamic world had its origins in the meteoric expansion of the Arabs beyond the Arabian peninsula began in 634 AD, which was played out over a terrain already 'pre-packaged' by long-term processes of imperial development across the Mediterranean and the arid zone, and was in crucial respects the precise opposite of the slow but intesely militarised expansion of Rome. In this initial phase, Arab-led armies

absorbed all the Persian empire and most of the eastern Roman empire, and went on to mop up other 'barbarian' conquerors of former empires to the east and west of this central bloc. By the mid-8th century, the Abbasid caliphate notionally controlled an uninterrupted imperial bloc stretching from the Pyrenees in the west to the Indus valley and Russian Turkestan in the east.[53] These great conquests were achieved with astonishingly small forces, largely because the empires and kingdoms they conquered were exhausted by mutual conflicts and had minimal loyalty from subject populations. For example, the initial force involved in the conquest of Spain was 17,000.[54]

This overarching 'Arab empire' fell apart even faster than it was put together. At its height, the Abbasid caliphate was so thoroughly Persianised that many writers treat it as a restored Persian empire; and as it declined its direct impact on the Mediterranean area rapidly diminished. In the ninth century Egypt re-emerged as a major Mediterranean power centre, for the first time since its absorption by Rome. As Arab power declined, Turks increasingly predominated in the east and Berbers in the west: but other important influences in the Islamic world come from Kurds, Caucasians, and Negroes. By the eleventh century new Christian forces were beginning to play a major role: the Italian trading cities, the Normans in Southern Italy and Sicily and the short-lived Crusader states in the Levant.[55]

In considering the relationship between political organisation and economic dynamics in the Islamic world, simple analogies between Roman and `Arab'empires are quite misleading. The initial Arab conquests did lay the foundation for a major expansion of trade and intellectual exchange across a vast contiguous bloc of arid zone and Mediterranean lands. `From Samarkand to Cordoba', Maurice Lombard observes, the new Islamic order produced a `syncretic' but `remarkably unified' urban civilisation. But given its ecological context, this civilisation could never be organised from a single core. It necessarily took the form of a `series of urban islands linked by trade routes'; and the progressive economic *strengthening* of these component islands over the the ninth and tenth centuries was inevitably accompanied by the progressive *weakening* of any practical evidence of central political control. As Lombard notes , this dual process `has been called, mistakenly..., "the dismemberment of the Abbasid Caliphate"; it would be far better.to call it the development of the Muslim World'.

> The Muslim world from the eighth to the eleventh centuries was not only the point of departure in the the long history of Muslim civilisations, but also the point of arrival -hitherto unsurpassed - of an even longer history, namely the history of the urban civilistions of the ancient east...Set between China, India, Byzantium and the mediaeval barbarian societies -Turkish, Negro and Western - [it] was a melting pot in time and space, a great crossroads, a vast synthesis, an amazing meeting place.[56]

The Islamic world, the Eurasian ecumene and the revival of Mediterranean cuisines

In sum, the Islamic era never involved a general core-periphery organisation of the Mediterranean of the sort produced by Rome. Rather than a single great empire, it reproduced, at a higher level, the great Mediterranean-arid zone ecumene which had been formed in the first millenium BC and had been so largely disrupted by the rise of imperial Rome. There is now increasing recognition of the central role played by the `amazing meeting place' of the Islamic world in the transfer of the intellectual resources of classical antiquity to mediaeval Europe. This role seems to have been even greater in the

reconstitution and further development of the food resources of the pre-Roman Mediterranean. It also seems that much of the re-diffusion of `lost' food stocks and practices, together with the important set of `pristine introductions' effected in the Islamic period, came from the ninth century onwards - supporting Lombard's claim that the decay of the always illusory unitary `Arab empire' was closely connected with the rise of the Islamic world as a real ecumene.

Two specific features of this period clearly made major postive contributions to the development of complex regional cuisines. First, the Islamic ecumene was assopciated with a *resurgence of urbanisation* across the two great ecological zones in its immediate orbit. From the time of classical Greece, the tide of new urban development had been flowing westwards away from its original arid zone heartlands, first to the eastern Mediterranean basin, then to the western basin and finally under the Romans to northwest Europe.[57] With the internal decay of the Roman order, this tide had receded, drastically in the western Mediterranean and northwest Europe, and only somewhat less so in the eastern Mediterranean. In pre-Islamic (Sassanid) Iran, by contrast, there was a substantial urban revival, and the effect of the far-flung Arab conquests was not just to intensify this development in Iran and Mesopotamia but to project a new, related wave of urbanisation towards the southern Mediterranean.[58]

Second, the period produced a a virtual *revolution in water conservation and irrigation techniques* including the `Arab' or `Persian' water wheel and the *qanats* - sophistical underground tunnels for the conservation and channelling of water from submerged aquifers. Once again these developments appear to have started in Sassanid Iran: but the Arab conquests greatly expanded their geographical scope. In the Mediterranean region, they made possible major urban foundations (Kairouan, Fez, Marrakesh) in the northwest African Maghreb much further inland than the coastal strip development of the Roman period, while also introducing far more sophisticated irrigation techniques to `European' Islamic territories like southern Spain and Sicily, making possible unprecedented urban growth in places like Cordoba and Palermo.59 Above all, this this broad-based revolution in water use made possible great cities which were far more reliant on their own localities than Rome and the other great Mediterranean cities of classical antiquity.

Important as these positive aspects were, however, perhaps the most crucial feature of the Islamic ecumene was a *negative* one. It did not repeat the 'false start' experience of Rome. For all the new impetus it provided to the diffusion of knowledge and technique, it was subject to the normal ecological constraints on large scale movement of bulk commodities. The second great wave of diffusion and re-diffusion of foodstocks and practices was not countered by an imposed uniformity, allowing a gradual 'settling down' into regional ecological niches and providing the basic foundation on which subsequent accretions accumulated and further enriched Mediterranean cuisines.

Probably the most striking single instance of such regional reassertion was Egypt, where a Turkish governor effectively seceded from the Abbasid Caliphate in 868AD. This initiated a 650 year period - down to the Ottoman conquest in 1517 - during which Muslim Egypt became a political and economic core in its own right and `attained a degree of power and prosperity that it has never enjoyed since' (to say nothing of its colonial status under Rome). In addition to Egypt, Sicily and the African Mahgreb provide impressive examples of territories which were exploited peripheries under Rome

but re-emerged as great regional culture centres in the Islamic era; and southern Spain, though less systematically exploited under Rome, nonetheless experienced an unperecedented regional flowering under Islamic rule. The development of this far-flung urban network, the impossibility of a core-periphery system imposed from any one power centre, and the general advance across the region in techniques for more intensive development of local agricultural resources, had potent implications for the reconstitution of Mediterranean food cultures. These `great cities..with their abundantly stocked markets and affluent courts, developed, almost automatically, regional styles of cuisine' 60

Conclusion

As foreshadowed in the introduction, the Roman impact on the material culture of the Mediterranean and surrounding regions figures in this paper as a kind of morality tale about the potential (and already manifest) implications of the phenomenon of cash cropping and bulk food transport in the global food economy of the present day. Indeed, my thinking on the relationship between Rome and its imperial peripheries was specifically influenced by Michael Symons' analysis of the history of food in Australia, one of a group of European settler colonial peripheries which exhibit the logic of the global food economy in its purest form. Two of Symons' central motifs - `the tyranny of transport' and `a history without peasants' - are particularly relevant to the analogy explored here.

Of course the analogy can be pushed only so far. Insofar as Rome produced a form of agrarian capitalism, it was a form of capitalism fundamentally dependent on the survival of a single imperial state. Similarly, the Roman breach with ecological constraints on food transport were not based on any qualitative technological advances but merely on the exceptional organisational and logistical capacities of the Roman state at its height. As the state inevitably weakened, the environment `struck back' with the reassertion of normal ecologial contraints on large-scale economic integration and the system finally collapsed like a house of cards under the weight of its internal contradictions.

Contemporary global capitalism, by contrast, is characterised above all by its effective independence from the political fortunes of any state, and by the exponential advance of technological capacities for the transport, storage, controlled production and even genetic engineering of food. If the environment should nonetheless strike back today, it will not be in the sense that, while somewhat dented, it still effectively dictates the parameters of large-scale economic integration, but in the sense that it has been effectively shattered by economic integration running out of control. And the prospects for a subsequent return to more authentic and sustainable development patterns, of the kind associated in this paper with the food cultures of the Islamic era, will be correspondingly remote. Ecological collapse is more likely to mean simply ecological collapse.

1 Philip Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*, Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power, Volume I: From the Beginnings to AD1760*, Cambridge University Press, 1985.
2 -the only really comparable case being late-imperial China after the consolidation in the 15th century AD of the Ming Grand Canal system, linking the imperial capital Beijing to the great food producing regions of the lower Yangtze.
3 Fernand Braudel, The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean in the Age of Philip II, Vol I, Fontana, 1978.
4 Michael Mann, 1986:1-3, 22-32, emphasis in original.
5 Braudel, op cit, pp 23, 25-55.
6 ibid, pp 60-85.
7 ibid, pp 55-56.
8 ibid, pp 231-236.
9 ibid, pp 238-239.
10 ibid, pp 234-235.
11 ibid, pp 23-24, 171-188.
12 Braudel, op cit; Tannhil, op cit, pp 49-50.
13 Maurice Lombard, *The Golden Age of Islam*, North-Holland Publishing Company (translated by Joan Spencer), 1975, p 23. Lombard dsescribes the Arab-era 'Damascus oasis', virtually on the eastern boundary between mediterranean and arid zone ecologies, as 'an enormous garden' (p 27).
14. Braudel, *op.cit.*, pp. 202-206.
15 Braudel, op cit, p 23.
16 ibid, pp 108-133.
17 ibid, p 132.
18 ibid 133-35.
19 *The Times Atlas of World Exploration,* Times Books, 1991, p 136.
20 Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450-1680: Volume One: The Land Below the Winds*, Yale University Press, 1988, p 2.
21 Reay Tannahil, *Food in History*, Eyre Methuen, 1973, p 87.
22 Richard Hodges and David Whitehouse, *Mohammed, Charlemange and the Origins of Europe*, pp 130-149.
23 M.G. Lay, *The Ways of the World*, 1992, pp 52-57.
24 Barry Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans and Barbarians: Spheres of Interaction*, Duckworth, 1987, , p139
25 Perry Anderson, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*, Verso, 1974, p
26 Ayla Alcar, in *Mediterranean the Beautiful Cookbook*, Paul Hamlyn, 1994, pp 27-29, 95-99;
27 In particular Waverly Root, *Food: An Illustrated Dictionary*, Simon and Schuster, 1980.
28 On the multi-ethnic Rome at the height of the empire, see Norman Pounds, *An Historical Geography of Europe*, 500BC-AD1330, Cambridge University Press, 1973, pp 106-107.
29 Lombard, p 168.
30 Keith Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981, pp. 28-37.
31 *Ibid.*, pp. 66-74.
32 Tim Cornwell and John Matthews, *Atlas of Roman History*
33 ibid, p 48.
34 Cunliffe, op cit, p 124.
35 Hopkins, op cit, p 19.
36 Root, *Food*, p ; Anderson, *op cit,* pp 79-80.
37 Cornwall and Mathews, op cit, p 39.

38 cited in Hopkins, op cit.
39 Hopkins, op cit; P. A. Brunt, who has produced the most exhaustive analysis of these demographic trends and on whom Hopkins relies for much of his own analysis - estimates 4,400,000 free to 600,000 slaves in 225BC and 4,500,000 free to 3,000,000 slaves in 43 BC (though he too suggests that the aggregate free population may actually have fallen).
40 Hopkins, op cit; Anderson, op cit.
41. Anderson, op.cit., pp. 61-65.
42. Colin McEvedy, *The Penguin Atlas of Ancient History*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1972, p. 70.
43 Reay Tannahil, *Food In History*, Penguin, 1988, p 84.
44. Richard Hodges, *Mohamet, Charlemagne and Pirenne*, Duckworth Press, London, 1983, pp. 48-51.
45 Anderson, op cit, pp 62-64.
46 Introduction, in *Trade in the Ancient Economy*,
47 According to Hugh Johnson, the northern wine trade was already `enormous' - and Lyons `the second greatest wine port in the world, after Rome itself' - by the start of the first century AD. But `up to this time, there is no clear evidence of any vineyards in France north of the Mediterranean zone, defined by the Alpes-Maritimes in the east and the Cevennes in the west'. His suggested datings for the further expansion of vineyards are as follows: around the mid first century for Bourdeaux on the lower Garonne near the Atlantic coast, and the Rhone valley around Vienne; possibly the second century for Rhineland vineyards around Trier; around the late second or early third century for the Cote d'Or, near Autun in Burgundy; and the fourth century for many of the vineyards in the Loire valley.47 It thus seems fair to say that transalpine wine production under the Roman empire began to approach its full ecological potential only at a point when the political and social system underpinning the production, distribution and consumption of the product was already in a state of advancing crisis.
48 See maps in McEvedy, *The Penguin Atlas of Ancient History*, pp 76-87.
49 Mann, op cit.
50 Anderson, op cit, pp 84-86; Chester Starr, *The Influence of Sea Power on Ancient History*, Oxford University Press, 1989, pp 78-81.
51 Anderson, op cit, pp 88-103;
52 Hodges and Whitehouse, op cit.
53. Colin McEvedy, *The Penguin Atlas of Mediaeval History*, Penguin Books, 1980, pp. 36-45.
54 Lombard, *op.cit.*, p. 78.
55 McEvedy, *The Penguin Atlas of Mediaeval History*, pp. 46-69.
56 ibid, p 235.
57 McEvedy, *The Penguin Atlas of Ancient History*, pp 54-55, 70-71, 84-86. .
58 Lombard, op cit.
59 ibid.
60 Alcar, op cit, p 220.

WOMEN AS CUSTODIANS OF TRADITION

PANEL DISCUSSION

WOMEN AS CUSTODIANS OF TRADITION

Sri Owen

1

'Every dish was a regional dish to start with, a response to climate, resources and custom.' We need to think more about how much control we have - if any - over what we eat. I mean as a society, a community. We have a large measure of control over what we eat as individuals - nowadays, anyway. Even as a community, we can now give taste and fashion a much freer hand than was possible in the past. But deciding what we're going to eat is still a matter of choosing from what's available. Contrast this with machines, or drugs: we can specify what we need to do, then design something to do it. I daresay some snack foods or fast foods are developed today on the same principle, but my experience as a consultant to a retailing chain that wanted a new range of Thai recipe dishes made me realise what a hit-and-miss business food marketing is.

But how about Indonesia? They're just passing, broadly speaking, from a subsistence way of life to a free-market demand-led economy. The benefits of this are still very thinly spread for 90% of the population, but even so there have been great advances in the past 20-odd years: malnourishment is now rare, people who could barely afford pushbikes now ride mopeds, etc. What's happening to food?

My first thought is that in the old days there was no need for traditions to be guarded, because almost everyone was living pretty near the edge. They had to make the best of what little they had, and that was always the same - a staple crop (rice, taro, sago, one or two others), salt fish, fresh fish or chicken occasionally, goat or buffalo meat very occasionally, chillies of course; vegetables which people grew themselves or picked wild, a limited range of fruit (the best tropical fruits tend to be fairly expensive, even at the foot of the tree).

But then second thoughts came rushing in. In a subsistence economy, glut is just as common as scarcity; there were always times of year when people, some people anyway, had too much food, just because distribution was inefficient and storage impracticable. And hadn't I said myself that I suspected foodways often changed, quietly but quite quickly, and left little trace?

2

Indonesian food is often misunderstood - certainly, in Europe, people associate it immediately with rijsttafel. A rijsttafel is simply a way of serving food, and it is emphatically not Indonesian. True, many of the components of the rice-tables that used to be served during Dutch colonial times were cooked by local people and were based closely on Indonesian regional dishes. And Indonesians have always seized any excuse to throw a party based on a huge communal meal. But the use of exotic and expensive ingredients, and the lavish surroundings in which a rijsttafel was usually served and eaten, were totally alien to Indonesian tradition, as are the scaled-down set menus that

masquerade as rijsttafel in most Indonesian restaurants in the Netherlands today. However, the rijsttafel does bring together the two threads of Indonesian cooking that I want to talk about: the thread of the past and that of the future. The continuing existence of the rijsttafel suggests that there is some care for tradition and the good old ways of eating; but these are going to be lost very quickly if reliable custodians are not found.

That brings me straight away to why I want to preserve regional food traditions. Regional foods rely entirely on regional resources - fresh ingredients from the garden and the fields around your house and your village. The only important ingredient brought from a distance that I would expect to find in a local market, in, say, inland Central Java is salted fish; even spices were not carried from one region or island to another until recently. Freshness is everything in regional food. I think the introduction of freezers and microwaves into Indonesia is all to the good, or will be, when people are thoroughly accustomed to them and know how to use them properly. As a tourist in Bali you can still get Bali tummy because a lot of the people, even in big restaurants and hotels, don't really know how to use microwaves and freezers safely. But in the long run technology can benefit traditional cooking methods because it offers new options. We've seen it happen in Europe and America: convenience food and advertising have killed traditional kitchen values but magazines, TV and blenders have brought them back to life as smart consumer accessories.

There are signs of the same thing happening in Indonesia, where the sheer size of the population, and the very uneven rate of economic development across regions and social classes, make it more likely that old and new may overlap. On the other hand, I am not sure that the new ways will be willing to learn from the old (middle-class city dwellers have to be very sophisticated indeed before they are prepared to learn from country cousins out in the sticks) or, even if they are willing to learn, if they will be able to get the information they want (at the moment there are few channels of communication from the countryside to the city; all the information flow is in the other direction).

So I should be talking about keeping tradition alive over the intervening period, the period when everything new is glamorous and there is a real danger that traditions will be forgotten. Let us contrast the old ways and the new, and see how the new can adapt and preserve the old without betraying it.

West Sumatra is still a matrilineal society, as it was when my grandmother was a girl and long, long before that. She was wealthy, she owned ricefields and gardens of vegetables and coffee. She had no servants, because people in that area think it shameful to be a domestic servant and she would have thought it shameful to employ them, but she had less fortunate relations who were happy to live under her roof in return for helping in the house. She need not have cooked at all, but it happened that she enjoyed cooking and her great pleasure each day was to prepare a meal for twenty or so people: a goat, perhaps, spit-roasted whole over a fire in the yard. She would be there, supervising the operation, from start to finish - but someone else would pick the coconuts, open them, prise out the flesh and grate it and prepare coconut milk; someone else would cut and chop the spices and the vegetables. She herself would give orders, taste, from time to time add a spice that was lacking or decide the exact moment when something should be taken off the fire.

It was a hierarchical kitchen because it was in a hierarchical society, and there were all sorts of boundaries that could not be crossed. Women belonged in the kitchen because this was their jealously-guarded privilege; men were regarded as bad luck until the meal was ready, and my father, who passionately loved to cook, had to indulge this unusual taste in a little kitchen of his own, in the open air, at a safe distance from his mother. Men have always been banned from Indonesian kitchens since one of them, a feckless young farmer, married a heavenly nymph who brought him prosperity and three splendid meals a day. She told him he must never under any circumstances lift the lid of the rice saucepan when she was cooking rice. One day he crept into the kitchen while her back was turned and looked inside the pot. No one knows for certain what he saw, but his wife flew back to heaven in a huff, his happiness was ended and he never ate a decent dinner again.

This story may sound like a good argument for teaching young men to look after themselves in a kitchen and not depend on their mothers and wives to feed them, but it is not understood that way in Indonesia. However, one does see men in kitchens nowadays: an increasing number of professional chefs, who say their status used to be low but is now improving; and a lot of middle-class husbands, whose wives go out to work and who therefore share the housework in small city apartments with few or no servants. In their tiny kitchens, they need all the new technology they can get, as indeed we all do. I admit I sometimes use a pestle and mortar, even in London, to get the real taste of a dish I remember from childhood, but I do this as a luxury, not because I think I ought to keep the pestle and mortar alive. My usual practice is to put the spices in a blender and press the button. The taste is not absolutely the same, but if I can cook a traditional dish quickly and easily with new techniques then I am keeping the dish alive - which is far more important.

As a teacher, cookery demonstrator and cookbook writer I am obviously trying to address a fairly large audience from some distance away. It often seems to be a hopeless task, because Indonesia is almost unknown in Britain; if it is mentioned at all in the newspapers, it is usually in connection with British sales of weapons to the Indonesian armed forces, with the implication that these will be used to shoot up freedom fighters in East Timor. In any case, most Brits assume that Malaysia, which is familiar to them because they colonised it, must be far larger and more important than Indonesia, though in fact there are at least ten Indonesians to every Malaysian. I have never succeeded in raising more than a flicker of official Indonesian interest in my efforts to promote what I regard as one of my country's great assets and attractions. I go on banging away at it in the hope that I can do something to keep regional cooking alive inside Indonesia and make people in other countries know about it, appreciate it, and want to do it themselves.

But who will pass on these traditions in the ordinary Indonesian family, the Indonesian town and village? Cookery books multiply, there is at least one glossy magazine devoted to food, and cookery programmes on TV are popular. These are all very recent arrivals, and their standards vary alarmingly. Recipes tend to consist of a list of ingredients and the words "cook as appropriate" - the writer assumes that the reader knows how to cook and will recognise or work out the method on the basis of previous experience. In my grandmother's time, nothing was written down at all. My own first book, published in English in 1976, contains very traditional recipes; I would not, on the whole, cook those dishes that way today. I got the recipes from my mother's notes, which she must have

worked very hard at. She was not a good cook and did not pretend to be interested in cooking; my five sisters and I were lucky that my father's youthful activities in his little outdoor kitchen had made him an expert, so that we ate well, as long as there was money in the house. Like my grandmother, my father expected other members of the family to do the cutting-up and the chores; he was the chef, he possessed the knowledge of the mysteries, but what my sisters and I learned from him was picked up haphazardly, as I had learned from my grandmother when I was a small child, just by hanging about in the kitchen and watching.

My grandmother's principal helpers were always maiden aunts, who make up a very small proportion of the community in any part of Indonesia but who are always to be found in every family. Even today, an unmarried woman is not highly regarded by society at large, but there is one thing she can do and must do - to become a really good cook, so that she will always enjoy the esteem of her innumerable nephews and nieces. Even these excellent ladies, however, have not in the past been expected to pass on their knowledge. Why should they? It was the only key they possessed to a little prestige and power. Today, the decline of the extended family means that they have less opportunity to teach the young even if they want to do so. Still, I have some hopes of maiden aunts. (Doreen Fernandez makes a very similar point in one of her brilliant books on food traditions in the Philippines.)

But the best hope for the next decade or so is not in the home but in the eating houses and restaurants, at all levels. Fast food has always been abundant in Asia, from street food stalls, markets and travelling vendors. The modern fashion is to round these people up and put them into food courts where city authorities can keep an eye on them and provide reasonable hygiene. I see no harm in this, though I am not sure yet whether it will work. In 1993 I wrote enthusiastically about the Amanda Food Center near Denpasar. Almost before the words were in print, the place had closed and been replaced by yet another fried chicken chain. But one flop doesn't make a failure. In any case, there have always been restaurants in Indonesian towns, most of them run by emigre families from Padang on the west coast of Sumatra. The best of these serve a limited range of long-established favourite dishes, e.g. Rendang, but with all sorts of local variations dictated by local conditions. At the top end of the market, the tourist industry is encouraging the development of state and private hotel and catering schools. The ones I visited have dedicated staff and enthusiastic students. They may develop a national cuisine based on traditional dishes cooked in modern ways, the equivalent of what happened when French regional dishes were worked up into classics by Parisian restaurants. The first thing they must do is to create confidence in their own product - Indonesians must learn to value their cooking, and not assume that anything from abroad must be better merely because it has travelled. For the general public, Indonesian foodways are still fighting a losing battle against fashion, PR and advertising. The TV commercial, here as elsewhere, may be the most powerful teaching tool available today.

WOMEN AS CUSTODIANS OF TRADITION

Rosa Matto

In seeking to find a focus for this topic, I sought advice from a number of women in various Italian associations, mainly because I didnt know where else to start. In fact, this approach proved fortuitous because the fate of the associations, particularly in South Australia which is a scene I know very well, actually mirrors the problem of retention of traditional culture and the role of women in this.

To begin, I need to give you a very generalized background about this phenomenon, which in Italian is called 'associazionismo' and it should become a study in itself. Basically, when two or more Italians are gathered together in one room, they form an association. Now in South Australia, this has been on cultural grounds, religious, sporting and even at village level. For example, my family has connections with the Altavilla Irpina Club (the town of origin), the Avellino Club (the province of origin), the Campania Club (the region of origin). In addition, my brother belonged to two of the soccer clubs connected with the associations, my father was a committee member of the Italo-Australian Social Club and the Inter-Italian Organising Committee. When I was at University, I was president of the Italian Tertiary Students Association and the Italian Education Movement, later instrumental in the introduction of 'ethnic' broadcasting with 5UV - University Radio.

My family is not remarkable in any of this. In fact, we are pretty typical in our loyalties. These ties did not ever exclude us from attending functions - dances, 'sagre' or religious festivals of the other regions, in fact, I passed a pretty agreeable girlhood going from one association's activity to another. For the original immigrants, it was the first act of defence; for many people who felt lost and lonely, they used these associations to give a unifying structure to their lives, to give one another support and even as a barrier to the then predominantly Anglo-Irish society which was, in many cases, pretty hostile. So, when we talk about the maintenance of tradition, we sometimes see a desparate clinging to traditions, customs and values which set that group apart at the time of greatest migration, in the Italian scenario, the late 1940s and early 1950s.

The women of the associations that I spoke to are in despair. Their clubs are dying because of lack of membership and a feeling that the clubs no longer serve a viable purpose. The women, by and large, see the need to appeal to younger members and to the wider Australian community. There is in the Italo-Australian community a very grave concern that among the next generation, that is, my generation's children, there exists a strong element of cultural disintergration, of cultural confusion. This is very distressing to the women in particular, but they are all taking heart in one thing - a common theme that they all mentioned without prompting - that though the young people may reject those aspects of tradition which they ascribe to a culture based on hardship, misery and nostalgia, they do not, by and large, reject the food of their parents and their grandparents. For me, having been fortunate to have heard the previous papers, this has become a tantalizing problem. I wonder if we can accept a cuisine, cook it 'authentically', and appreciate its 'style' but reject or, at least, ignore its history and its source.

Food, of course, does not exist in a vacuum, it has a history, a social, cultural and a political context and so we can't talk about maintaining culinary traditions unless we know what those traditions are. This is a truism, but in Australia we always talk about 'traditional Italian cuisine' as though it is homogenous. In fact, of course, the people who came here over forty five years ago came from twenty or more different regions and countless numbers of smaller, isolated towns and villages. Some were educated professionals, others were highly skilled artisans, but most were semi-literate rural workers who became factory-fodder. So, for me, the first hurdle to overcome, was one of identification.

The truth of the matter is that Italians in Australia are no longer Italians. The original immigrants to Australia have lived over two-thirds of their lives in Australia, the next generation - that is my generation - were either born here, as I was, or came here as young children. The next generation are the result of 'mixed' marriages or the children of Italo-Australians who often can barely speak the language. And yet, it is true that we take part in rituals and traditions that are observably foreign. In reality, I don't necessarily know more about Italian history, politics, music, art or food than any of you listening to me. Like all first generation Italo-Australians, I have inherited my culinary traditions. These traditions came out on the boat with my mother and her sisters-in-law in that one-month journey from the south of Italy. In fact, what my mother had in her suitcase is a story in itself.

My father and his brothers were among the first to come to Adelaide from his village, Altavilla Irpina in Campania. He was the youngest brother, and at 23 years of age set up a boarding house in Thebarton, his brothers went off to work as shift workers at the tube-making factory. The boarders came, some with their families and some of them temporary bachelors, and they stayed at the house in Bennet Street. At various times, they left their families in my father's care while they went to cut cane up north, or pick grapes in the Riverland. So, when my mother and my aunts came out they already knew what their roles were going to be - that is, to cook for a household of people, mostly shift-working men. So, in the bottom of her suitcase was a rolling pin to make pasta. Not a pastry rolling pin, a long thin piece of dowelling - why she imagined she wouldn't find one here, I can't say, nevertheless, she came prepared. The pin was 4 feet long and rolled up in a bedsheet made from hemp. In the ship's hold she had her giant colander, 2 big white pasta bowls and 12 simple, white pasta plates - all these things survived the journey and now are among my possessions. There was a time when these things evoked too many poignant memories for my mother and she stored them in our garage. Curiously, the rolling pin, a pedestrian, utilitarian object is very precious to her still, and has been in constant use for fourty five years. My mother had no idea what she would find here, but she knew at least they were going to eat, and they were going to eat pasta.

Again, I'll state a truism. My parents' generation contributed to Australia's economic, social and gastronomic development, but only as outsiders. They sought economic security and for the most part they found it, but in those early days it was the delicatessens, the butchers and their own backyard gardening which helped to sustain their food culture. Luckily, since the 1920s, Adelaide had a number of Italian retail stores and butchers; the fish merchants Cappo Brothers had come out from Benevento and luckily, for my mother in particular, in the 1930s, the Borgia brothers had set up the factory we now know as San Remo. So, by the time I was born in 1954, delicatessens

like the one my uncle set up on Norwood Parade, close to Mr Vari, and other shops like the Savvas' Star Grocery in Hindley Street, meant that my mother no longer had to suffer the humiliations involved in daily shopping. My aunt often tells the story of her second day in Australia when she had to make clucking noises to indicate she wanted eggs at the corner shop - her stories, now embroidered over the years, were hugely amusing to us as children, but they didn't quite hide the humiliation underlying them.

Where do these stories come from? Why do I chose to be so personal? I was in fact inspired by Anthony in yesterday morning's paper. He asked whether traditional foods can live without stories, without history, without rituals. I don't think they can. This fact is not peculiar to Italian food, of course, but it is nonetheless, remarkable. In the kitchens everywhere where people (mostly women) meet to cook, be it to make fusilli as my family or spring rolls in my neighbour's Vietnamese family or to make phylo in the household of my Cypriot colleague, there is talk and there are stories. The stories I was told - like all stories - are a mixture of truth and fantasy. What I learnt, early, was that the stories that really mattered, those told with passion and strength, had to do with social justice, with poverty and the immediate realities of war. From those stories I also learned the traditional roles of women and the obligations of nurturing thrust upon them. So, from the stories I learnt many things and absorbed cultural norms. I don't necessarily want to pass on all those lessons to my children.

In this topic there are for me some very difficult issues. There are echoes of class debate amongst the people who emigrated, there are questions about the roles of men and women and about the inevitable and necessary rebellion of children against their parents who hold seemingly irrelevant and out-moded values. I don't want to be too romantic about Italian culinary traditions, especially, as I feel they are inextricably bound up with a very rigid patriarchal system and with a very rigid and crippling pattern of sex-role stereotyping. Even, in Italy today, so many rural dishes have their origins as survival fare under the oppressive regime of 'mezzadria' where rich, and often absent, 'padrone' took a huge share of the harvest, leaving the rural worker to feed his often large family with what remained.

Three weeks ago, I went to the Sicilia club to help make 1,000 arancini, 250 cannoli and various other small pastries made with ricotta and freshly made marzipan. It was for a wedding in the clubrooms the next night. We started at six o'clock in the evening and finished at two in the morning. There was not a moment of silence in all those hours. The stories, half in English, half in Sicilian dialect were all familiar to me. They are similiar to the stories my family tell when we make fusilli - the gossip about so and so's daughters, the bawdy stories of the village priests and what they got up to in the confessional and even testimonial stories about the power of the 'mal'occhio' - the evil eye and how to excorise it. See me later if you'd like the technique for dispelling its power!

But what do these stories have to do with food? Well, for me they are part and parcel of my food traditions. They underpin the rituals and techniques often still used in the recreation of the dishes. They belong, in fact, to the same ideology that explains my mother's response to any calamity - she makes chicken soup. It may be a death in the family, a migraine or a threatened miscarriage - it elicites the same response in my mother. In our village there is a saying, which I understand, is common in other parts as well. It goes like this - 'If a person is given a chicken for dinner, it means one of them is

sick'. This is not only a testimony to the nutritional value of the humble chook, it is also a reminder of the grinding poverty that the majority of Italian Australians sought to escape. My mother virtually brought up my young son and when it was time for his first 'solid' meal, she took herself off to the market to buy quail, because she had been taught that the smaller the bird, the more concentrated the nutrition. So, while my son's first proper meal was 'pastina in brodo di qualgia', I am reminded that along with some sound culinary pactices we may want to salvage, we may also have to sift through a lot of bogus science.

I think we will all agree that the traditions that we are talking about belong to people who came to a country that was not really convinced, despite Arthur Caldwell's propaganda, that it either wanted or needed migrants and so that initial response, that initial hestitation of acceptance, made them cling to those things that set them apart, as I have already said. One of the cultural symbols that did set them apart was their food and the women's role in preparing it. And these two factors became set in concrete. The women from the Associations all mentioned the central and pivotal role that food plays in the maintanance of regional heritage. The women I spoke to from the Focolar Furlan, a regional club from Friuli, from the Sicilia and the Campania clubs, all highlighted the similarities of the migration experience. They were people who mostly came from semi-subsistance rural communities, where the tradition had been to rely on the land to provide their food and significantly, I think, all the original immigrants had fantastic vegetable gardens with a vast array of the vegetables that they needed - eggplant, zucchini, capsicum, tomatoes, beans, raddichio, oregano, all the bitter greens and so on. I think at that time there was no real need to put pressure on greengrocers to supply those ingredients.

Then ten, maybe fifteen years ago, our parents began to get too old to tend the huge gardens they once had. They were pensioners, who could no longer afford the water rates, their children moved from home and there was no point in having such a garden, or in some cases, they themselves moved to a smart suburb with a smaller house and a correspondingly small plot of land . So now, because of their needs and because of us who have inherited or come to appreciate those tastes, we put pressure on greengrocers to supply rocket, fennel, artichokes and broccoli rape and so on.

In a simple sense, even in Australia my family has maintained a sense of seasonal work and produce. In summer, we used to take picnics in the Adelaide Hills where my parents felt very comfortable. Our hills are much like the hilltowns where they were born both in feel and in produce - cherries, olives, chestnuts, pears and apples. My mother would wander off before lunch and invariable find some nettles or dandelion which she would wave triumphantly above her head and send all the children off to find exactly the same plant to put into the salad. Of course, we were mortified - what if people saw us, foraging for, well, weeds, really weren't they? It's only recently, in adulthood, that I have come to understand why she did this. Her tradition was to make use of everything, so it was a real bonus to unexpectedly turn up a tasty addition to a simple salad.

A tradition the vast majority of Italian Australians have maintained, and without which our cooking would be very different indeed, is the annual making of The Sauce. In January or February, usually on the hottest day of the summer, we have to make vast quantities of tomato puree in sterilized beer bottles. Each member of the family is assigned a task - the little children manage to poke in 2 leaves of basil into each bottle, as

they get older, they are promoted to the bottle chain or the capping of the filled bottles. The bottles then 'cook' to pasturize the contents and overnight they cool in their water bath. The result is produce for the rest of the year. This is an essential ritual in our family - a very productive ritual which happens unchanged every year. And over the years, there seems to be a reluctance to modify anything. Every year we say we must develop a more efficient system, but every year we re-invent the wheel and still we haven't developed the 'science' of making this essential ingredient in our cooking.

My extended family also used to make wine in the early autumn, and much to everyone's delight my brother and my husband have recommenced this activity. For the last ten years, their wine has won medals at amateur wine making shows, but the few remaining uncles, godfathers and older cousins are very scathing about the modern tendency to 'tamper' with the juice. Secretly, they are very proud and they are always ready with advice. This activity, as well as the killing of the pig, is presided over by the men, not the women. Every other year, in winter, one of my uncles would drive out to a farm in Virginia and select the pig. Over that year, the farmer would fatten it up, following the prescribed diet my uncle would give him. When the time was right, the animal would be slaughtered. The timing, of course, was a complete mystery to the uninitiated, and had not only to do with size and girth but also something to do with the waxing and waning of the moon. Then we processed the animal into prosciutto, salami, capocolo and so on.

Another of my uncles was a master at grafting trees. His services were much in demand by the family, the Italian community and before his death, by a number of professional landscape architects and planners. He learnt very early to conceal the key to his technique - it had to do with the cycle of the moon. His subtefuge was to say that he was busy - people regarded him as odd, the way he'd turn up at peculiar times of the day and the month. But no-one had as much success as he. You notice that I'm using past tense here. We no longer kill the pig, the younger members don't want to eat fatty pork, the older people are worried about cholestrol and altogether, it is too much work which is unappreciated. My own immediate family still makes olive oil each year.The curious aspect of my involvement in these activities, is the reaction of my older, more affluent cousins - those who have 'made good'. I get the feeling they think it all a quaint affectation. They don't take it seriously. They feign surprise when the oil is particularly good or the wine is great. They are amused that we playing at being 'contadini' - suburban peasants.

Well, I'll finish where I started, with the Associations. All the clubs that I've been associated with regard themselves as an extention of this family group. The clubrooms of the Focolar Furlan, for instance, are dominated by an enormous hearth - this is what a focolar means in Friulani dialect. The administration of this club is heavily dominated by men, mostly in the 45 - 65 age group. Every month there is a night for members and guests to dine at the clubrooms. They cook a speciality of the region which is 'polenta e qualgia'. During the day, the women prepare the quails, wrap them with pancetta, cook the polenta, set the tables and at night, the men cook the polenta strips on the grill and run the bar. The women pointed out something that was already pretty obvious, while they did most of the cooking, there were very few of them as office bearers. It encapsulated for me a sweet dilemma. That club, while maintaining a culinary heritage also upheld the traditional status quo regarding male and female roles.

Other regional specialities that this particular club thought it necessary to preserve were proper risotto and polenta making. One woman told us in a shocked and hushed voice that she had read a recipe for making polenta in ten minutes. The rest of the women shook their heads sadly, I disclaimed all knowledge of such an unnatural act. They also said it was important to preserve the seeds that had been allowed into Australia - the various radicchi and types of tomato, like marzano. This was perhaps the most despondent group and I felt that perhaps nostalgia was becoming the line of defence against what they saw as lack of respect and cultural alienation amongst the young. The Sicilian women, on the other hand, were marvellously dynamic and outward looking. They saw their salvation in youth and in broadening their cultural activities to the wider Australian community. The women from my region, Campania, bemoaned the loss of skills in two areas in particular, those of pasta making and pizza making, these being the two things that Neapolitans have exported to the rest of the world so well.

There is a statistic that most sociologists quote with a great degree of grimness but I think is actually good news. There is evidence which states that Italian-born immigrants in Australia live longer than both their contemporaries in Italy and Australian-born Australians. The same study shows that Italian-born women in Australia outlive their husbands by a good many years. People have worked out that the number of women over the age of 65 will double during the remainder of this decade.* I think that this is potentially a good thing, because if there are these women about they can be encouraged to teach us skills and tell us stories.

I am conscious that I must finish and I will finish by emphasizing two points. Firstly, I think we need to distinguish maintaining cultural traditions from remaining a separate group in society. This is a challenge but the benefit will be that a large group of Anglo-Australians will understand another cuisine with all its history, folklore and language. In that, I see the saving of some traditions. I think we must move from regarding Italian cuisine as 'cosa nostra', accessible only to the initiated; we have to look to being more inclusive.

The second and final point is my concern with being able to pick and choose those aspects of tradition which we consider to be worthwhile. Who is going to make those choices? In the current climate we will probably embrace pasta and bread-making but quite possibly stop short of killing the pig because pork is not highly fashionable and we are squeamish about the whole process anyway. But in the meantime of course, we lose the skills associated with the making of various smallgoods and thereafter we will have to buy those products and rely on commercial producers. Ultimately, the question remains, posed yesterday - and I'm no closer to the answer - what happens to traditional cuisines when we lose the rituals, the histories and the stories?

* Hugo, G. J. Patterns and Processes of Italian Settlement in South Australia. In *The Impact of Italians in South Australia.* Ed D. O'Connor and A. Comin, 1993.

WOMEN AS CUSTODIANS OF TRADITION

Maggie Beer

The traditions Rosa talked about have very much been passed down from mother to daughter, but of course the change in the pace of life means that much of it has been lost. It is interesting that as Angie and I talk with the Barossa women and record their food memories, the pride and the pleasure and the sense of fun comes through - yet it was an incredibly tough life for them. What is also coming through is almost disbelief that we could be so fascinated by it, and we could learn something by it, and the pleasure that gives is immense.

You know, when they first arrived in the Valley in the 1840s they cooked in huge cauldrons in the backyard. There were really amazing difficulties. It took years before they cooked inside and that was a black kitchen. It was so called because the walls were covered in soot by the cooking because there was no such thing as ventilation, and it was an open stove with no more than a grate. I went to see a little cottage, Luhrs cottage at Light Pass, and what really struck me was how small the house was. They raised something like 10 or 11 children in this house, the ceiling was so low the grate was so large and there were indentations in the stone where the woman of the house over the years had stood so many hours, and that really gets to you, that visual stuff!

Now Michael Symons would approve, I think, because they had a truly simple life, because they followed the rhythm of the seasons and continue to follow them now. They were a very resourceful and intelligent group of women, with very mixed literary skills. A few of them were highly educated and could read and write Gothic script, but many of them could not even sign their own names, so even though one or two families brought out a cookbook from their last port in Bremen, there were so few people who could read it. It was this traditional passing down that was far more important and also it was coming to a foreign land with all its harshness and having to adapt to the Australian climate. And they have kept their traditions but the adaptations have been really interesting. Angie Heuzenroeder and I have several frail exercise books where three generations have written their own family recipes in them. They hated waste of any kind so they just have pages here and there from this three generations because they wouldn't start a new book.

First of all it was all German, and then the next generation was half German, half English, and then the following generation was English with smatterings of Barossa Deutsch, so you could see that transitional language happening, and also that traditional taking up of local ingredients. Another thing that was interesting too was that not only did they pass down things from mother to daughter, but they had a very gentle liaison with the Aboriginals, and the Aboriginal women taught the Barossa women the finding of wild cherries and quandongs and the native currants, and so there were cross-cultural connections which, I think, are great for us to know about. We really only know about it from looking back at some really fantastic paintings and oral histories which have been most of our sources. I know then we're doing their oral histories, when we are sitting talking to these ladies they like to shock me by saying they used to have to kill the calves at 6 weeks so they could have calf's lung soup, or talking about the pig killing, (which is

not as alive and well today as it is in the Italian community). Until twenty years ago it was the most significant thing in the food cycle of the Valley, and they, the women, would say, 'we used to catch the blood in the bowls, but I didn't use all of the blood. It made it too dark.' They all had their very individual family traditions.

They were people of the land, and their food was all to do with growing for themselves, not for sale. But there was barter, mainly grocers going around to the farms and picking up eggs and cream and butter, and bartering for groceries. Their good traditions are so strong because they follow the rhythm of the seasons, they wasted absolutely nothing, and they cared so much about food. They also have this very strong tradition of the status of a good cook in the family. They would have these huge festivities and weddings and people would come for five days and had to be fed the whole time. Every family would have their 'Aunt', and the 'Aunt' was a very special cook, and was revered. She would come in place and control everyone, men included. Sally mentioned at the start this crossover of women in the home and professional cooks. Somehow in the Valley I see something there about the home cook who very much became the professional cook, albeit unpaid, because of the collective food festivity and food that happened in the Valley, probably because it became a centre for wine, and food in festivals started at a very early time, and has had a great influence in South Australia. The stories that have come ... such as the opium poppies the women used to cookfor the men. They weren't allowed to eat them, and they thought it was pretty silly eating them anyhow because the men got 'pretty silly.'

They were so interested in food. In the Valley, ladies grow crocuses to pick the stamens for drying, to have their own saffron. The keeping of the seeds - one day I ran out of petrol because I'm very vague and don't think about those practical things, and I ran out of petrol in from of a neighbour not too far away, and he took me into his garage and there were rows and rows of seeds collected by every member of the family. Collected for generations because they know which Aunty to go to for the best seeds for the cucumbers, and they had a tradition of keeping which is once again connected to the land.

The women of the Valley have begun to understand they they have these special skills and memories. and they are proud that we want to record them, but they also want to be part of this keeping of traditions. The traditions have been so strong for so long that they don't want them to disappear entirely. I think the main way they have done this is through the agricultural shows, encouraging their daughters to be part of the agricultural shows, and they are incredibly strong; there will be not so much goat's cheese, but goat's butter and all the preserving the continues.

The dill pickle championship was mainly a men's tradition, but women did the work and the men put their name to it. For three years I was an associate dill judge, and the fourth year I was the first woman dill judge they ever had. It was the women doing the work and the men taking the credit, and so there is not much difference there!

I'm a newcomer to the Valley, and having been here 21 years I am still considered a newcomer, but they do allow me certain licence because I do love the Valley so much. The way I see the traditions being kept today are what we are trying to do with food and festivities - our Vintage Festival, out Music Festival, which starts tomorrow - is trying to

give the public really simple country food of the season, and so it is an extension of Barossa Tradition, and a cry not to let these traditions be lost.

WOMEN AS CUSTODIANS OF TRADITION

Dur-é Dara

I got a lovely warm glowing when I read the word 'tradition', associated with the idea of women being custodians. Unlike the other speakers I don't represent mothers that cooked in my personal life, a mother or a grandmother or aunts who cooked, because I come from a colonised culture of women and men who aspired to be western-educated and spent a lot of time at work rather than in the kitchen. In my family we had cooks who were often male. So personally, I am very different from the other women on this panel, and my personal politics are about what perpetuating tradition does to the role of being a woman.

I believe that women are custodians of a lot of work and a lot of change but not necessarily of tradition, because I think that the guardianship of tradition is now largely determined by profit, communication, transportation, fashion and fad. In relation to this question, when cultivation and cooking are central economic activities women have high status; I cannot say that is the case today. Women do not have high status and they do not have status when they cook and cultivate because a large number of women in this world are slaves to cultivation, slaves to the 'HE' concept we talked about yesterday. Cooking is not, in this society, regarded as very important or central. It's regarded as a necessity and a luxury for those who have the time, like all of us here, to actually think and talk. So while I would love to talk about the fact that women are custodians of tradition - because they get the job done, they're left with a lot of the job and they do it - it's in spite of the fact that they're not custodians. The custodians of tradition are mainly men who own and manage the organisations which are serviced mainly by women.

I say that very strongly and with sadness at the lack of reconciliation between the honour and status that should be given to cooking and to caring for families and the issue of work. Cultivation and cooking, while being centrally connected to economic activity, do not in fact in 1994 give women status or appreciation, or equal pay or equal anything.

But do women have a reason for promoting traditional food culture? I think that the symposiums to date have proved that we have; this year is the first year that I've noticed a lot more men in the symposium. They've been largely driven by women; though the idea came from Michael Symons, and he deserves full credit for inspiring people to come, you'll find that women have been the driving force in making it real. Of course this relates to the fact that women generally are left with the custody of a lot of things. How many men cooked for this symposium biscuits or pies? A few heroes! - I think that says a lot about the way the job is left to us. I don't think it's a thankless job, I think it's very exciting, but what has come out of it is that work is a necessity for most women to survive. Consider these facts: two-thirds of the world's work is done by women, but women receive only one-tenth of the income for work, and they own one-hundredth of the world's property that's owned.

In spite of this, the truth of the matter is that you look after children and you have to feed them, it's as simple as that, so that by default you perpetuate tradition, because food tradition is comforting and familiar and gives identity. It is so deeply embedded in your

psyche, even if you have only a short food tradition contact with your own culture. My culture is completely watered down and completely based on my personal experience, so I believe in the culture of personal identity, and the personal style and the authenticity that comes out of discovering your own culture. This has to do with the memory of your traditional culture, but also has to be a synthesis of where you are and the means by which you can manage to keep that tradition going.

I want to say that I was very fortunate to come into contact, purely by chance, with Stephanie Alexander. When I first met her, she was totally interested in the food culture of France, reproducing it in her restaurant, expressing it in the way that she related to it, which had to do with the fact that she had been an au pair in France, had read very widely and had a mother who was a cook. Her food was not revolutionary but because everyone was looking to France without really understanding it - the general public didn't understand much beyond garlic prawns - they thought she was innovative. She wasn't. She was simply being practical about the things that she loved from France and putting them into action. But she was able to maintain some traditions that were worth importing, because of her determination to express her personal style. Stephanie's restaurant doesn't claim to be French or Italian, it's 'Stephanie's', which it makes it very easy to develop a sense of what part of tradition you choose to perpetuate, be custodian of - and promote. I realise that I'm not a custodian of, or promoting, cooking or cultivating, neither of which I spend much time doing, but what I am a custodian of is the tradition of eating, and the comfort, the joy, the pleasure, the sharing of that tradition, which I think is very important part of food culture.

Stephanie gave me permission to go ahead with doing the job that I found I had, managing a restaurant that was of personal style, which permits you to actually take custody of the traditions that you want to promote in that restaurant. I saw very quickly that there were so many transported traditions in the style in which one looked after people in restaurants, and realised that until I threw it all out and then sifted and chose things that I could actually manage and orchestrate for a start, I was developing a personal style. There was no point my trying to be like a European maître d' if it didn't suit my personality or my confidence or my history, but by developing a personal style that was constantly questioning tradition and creating a new expression of that tradition I felt that this is what it must mean to be a custodian of tradition in Australia.

And I think that this topic brings up challenges for us. We should not dispense with the inopportunity to be involved in promoting or preserving tradition because we all agree that something that has lasted a long time, and has significance for people, has value. Being in Australia today and coming to a symposium strengthens the idea that there are traditions worth promoting and preserving. But we must go beyond talking; the challenge for us at this symposium is to bring back the people who have thrown out challenges that cannot be properly developed in the short discussion time available, so that we can go away and personally contribute, in a kind of way, to the keeping of tradition - women and men, it has to be a reconciliation, the responsibility must be mutual. Someone like Gae Pincus who has made time, twice, to come to a symposium, has to be brought back, to tell us more about the battles that she does. We have to enter the arena as custodians of tradition, we have to enter the arena of regulations, we have to enter the arena of thinking about the real and inevitable consequences of the fact that 80% of all food in Australia is bought in supermarkets.

So if we're going to be real custodians of traditions of value, of traditional practices of value, in cooking or in eating, then we have to resolve to take up the challenge that people can bring to these symposia, whether philosophers or people who can to tell us what's happening out there, in a way that's not necessarily warm and romantic and beautiful. They must tell us what's happening and talk to us about it so that we have the opportunity to truly be custodians of great tradition.

Following 'Women as Custodians of Tradition'
a lunch of Udon Noodles
- inspired by 'Tampopo',
and prepared by Matsuri Restaurant -
was cooked on the Carclew veranda
and enjoyed on the lawns.

Then followed an open discussion on the topic:

TOWARDS A CODE OF DINING

Sarah Stegley (chair)

I knew that if I came to enough of these I'd end up in the chair. It is with great delight that I take up the chair because it's great to see a waitress in the restaurant of life finally get a crack at it. So from now on, I'm Madam Chair and these are my Chair children.

Cath Kerry is on my left, I've got Nick with the fabulous second name (Papazahariakis), and then Sara Adey.

This whole discussion will have an element of humour. It is in fact an hysterical notion that we can develop a code of dining. in Australia. I've been involved with a few other codes in my time. I've worked on the Alpine Advisory Service, and had to come up with codes of ethics on how campers should behave near streams, how horse-riders should behave as they go through the mountains - should they in fact gallop over the top of bushwalkers, or shouldn't they?

We are in for some fun and games but there is a serious side to this. And there are several models we could use - such as the old testament style, with the big don't: 'Thou shalt not gluttonise'.

Or we could move into the new testament style, with the big threat: 'Young males who eat too much , too often, alone will go blind'.

Or the Vogue Fashion Magazine style: 'Anorexia and bulimia were in, but now they're out, just like Princess Di.'

Or the New Wave style:'A meal had standing doesn't count.' If we go for really laying down the law and saying things like 'no eating on your lap', that wipes out the world's airlines and the world's hospitals. Be very careful if you're going to be prescriptive!

We also need some help here, what's known in the horse world as a 'pencil'. Marieke won't be our 'pencil', she'll be our 'white boarder', noting the points to be included in our code. Each of our contributors come from their own perspectives - Cath from the perspective of domestic dining; Nick has given a lot of thought to the more serious aspects of the hospitality industry; and Sara Adey will give the restaurateur's point of view.

Sara Adey

'Animals feed. Man eats. Only the man of intellect knows how to eat or how to dine.' Brillat Savarin

I wonder if we do all know how to dine. Like Sarah, I hesitate somewhat with the concept of codifying dining, particularly in Australia. I don't think dining should have strict rules and regulations as such. It should be relaxed, unrestricted, pleasurable, not dictated to or bound by do's and don'ts.

For centuries gastronomers have been philosophising and describing the essentials of dining etiquette. For example, 'The most indispensable quality in a cook is punctuality. It is also that of a guest.' 'To wait too long for an unpunctual guest is an act of discourtesy toward those who have arrived on time.' ' A man who invites his friends to his table and fails to give personal attention to the meal they are going to eat, is unworthy to have any friends.' Brillat Savarin once again. Others can be cited:

'It isn't so much what's on the table that matters, it's what is on the chairs.' W.S Gilbert

'At a dinner party, one should eat wisely but not too well and talk well but not too wisely.' Somerset Maugham

'The table is the only place where one is never bored during the first hour.' Brillat Savarin

'Since Eve ate apples much depends on dinner.' Byron

'After a good dinner one can forgive anybody, even one own's relations.' Oscar Wilde

'To entertain a guest is to make yourself responsible for his happiness so long as he is beneath your roof.' Brillat Savarin

My perspective is obviously going to be that of the restaurateur. I feel very strongly about the responsibility and work required of not only the restaurateur but also the restaurant guest. Certain basic conditions have to be satisfied before the relationship and the final outcome is a healthy and happy one. My brief was to list 10 do's and don'tsof dining and I have managed about 10 in total.

1.A positive attitude.
Both participants must leave their problems at home. Be enthusiastic, optimistic, don't expectations that are too high, be willing to please and be pleased, be adventurous, experimental, objective, open-minded and unprejudiced.

2. Healthy Communication
Communicate criticism and praise politely. I can't emphasise this enough. Feedback is exremely important whether positive or negative, but it is the delivery of this feedback that is important. If delivered rudely it will only aggravate and it may not be acted upon appropriately. Also rudeness may affect other people in the restaurant. It sends negative and uncomfortable feelings throughout. Staff tend to avoid you if you're rude. I have a card near the cash desk at Darling Mills which very very occasionally has been presented to an undesirable guest. It says 'Pleasant customers attract better service'.

3. Always communicate if you're going to be late and if there is a reduction in your table size.

4.The restaurateur should treat all customers equally regardless of age, sex or status. In the same way, customers should not expect priority treatment, for example- 'I want the best table in the house'.

5. The wine and the bill should always be presented to the person who requested it regardless of sex, age and so on.

6. Guests shouldn't be afraid to ask questions of the staff in any circumstances. In the same way, waiters should be sensitive enough to read a situation and assess whether a customer needs further explanation or information, but he or she should never be too intrusive. Sometimes, however, a long silence at the table can mean a waiter might move in and help their conversation along a bit.

7.Only present the cracked black pepper after the guest has tasted his or her entree, not before.

8.Both olive oil and butter should be available for guests.

9.Regarding the smoking issue - the ability to smoke should be determined by the individual restaurant's policy, not by the government or any other authority.

10.And finally I agree with Michael Symons that the wine bottle should be left on the table. Some people enjoy topping up their own wine regardless of how quickly they might be drinking.

Nick Papazahariakis

Thank you very much. I think Sara has covered quite a lot of the aspects of dining. Going back through history, the rituals of dining affect even cannibalism, which had rules and regulations. But things have changed and continue to change considerably. It was hard to be asked to discuss such a complex issue in a light-hearted manner. So where to begin?

Complaining - the restaurant industry really needs the customer to complain to achieve standards. I believe that if we want to achieve standards, the customer must learn to complain effectively. He should not complain to his friends, he should complain there and then and allow the restaurateur to do something about it. In a recent current affairs program a situation was set up with waiters having their fingers in the soup as they arrived at the tables, and being totally rude. It showed that as a country we don't like to complain, yet restaurants need feedback to help them assess what they are doing right or wrong in their operations.

There are of course various do's and don'ts such as arriving on time, keeping the restaurant informed if you are going to be late, not pushing your serviette into the dirty plate, not being offended if asked whether you need help.

Our restaurant (Chloe's) has an extensive wine list. Staff are there to provide a service but people feel intimidated to ask someone who has knowledge. They also feel that perhaps only a very expensive wine will be recommended. Our idea is to select a bottle of wine that will go with the food because we have more knowledge of what wines we have in stock.

People attend a restaurant with high expectations, which can create problems for them because those expectations don't fit within that restaurant's environment. Criticism from food and wine writers has often not looked seriously at what the restaurant has tried to achieve. So a complaint can be laid that a restaurant is expensive without the ingredients used by the kitchen being taking into consideration. Critics and others seem to apply the same standards to a 'fine dining' restaurant as to a 'Fasta Pasta' style operation.

As to achieving standards, it is important that the tourism industry acknowledge the importance of our food and wine industry.

As to smoking, we don't want to be policemen. There should rather be legislation against smoking in restaurants than making the restaurants responsible.

As to etiquette, it changes from culture to culture. Egyptians enjoy a cup of tea overflowing into the cup. While some cultures eat sheep's eyes we have to have everything filleted with the head off. Most places here use 'freshly frozen' food. Only by seeing the head of a fish can a housewife know the freshness of the product.

Convenience versus quality. General food standards are affected as much by the person who cooks at home as by the restaurants.

I believe that in the future our standards can overtake those of the international hotels around the world because our people are more multi-skilled. We live in a multicultural society and we can use these resources.to our benefit.

Catherine Kerry

We started off with a plate of grapes and we're going to finish with the same plate of grapes.
Please pass them around.

In Australia we ask whether we have an Australian Cuisine. In many countries, this would be an unnecessary question. In the same way I wonder why here we have to establish some rules for dining.

I see the matter in three parts. Firstly behaviour that affects us on a broad general scale, that affects every aspect of our lives; secondly, behaviour that directly concerns the table; and finally, the minutiae of individual behaviour or etiquette.

First of all, before anybody starts attacking me personally, I'd like to say that these are a set of ideals I'd like to impose on myself as much as on others. These are things that I believe in. They're not things that I'm necessarily good at *yet*. So when I get to some of these points, don't say, under your breath, well she's a fine one to talk.

There are general concerns for behaviour at table, but some things apply specifically to the giver and some to the receiver. If we see the table as symbolising life in general, in life, you have to be generous. If you're the sort of person who worries about who had the extra mineral water at the end of a meal, you shouldn't eat out with others, and you shouldn't ask anybody to eat at home with you.

Generosity is not just what you give to people, but it is also what you think of others. Don't think automatically the worst of others, that they are automatically going to have more than their share.

At table, your ego must become subordinate to that of other people. It goes as far as deciding not to wear your best dress if it's going to intimidate the people you are with. It's a matter of paring down, paring down all the time, because your ego must be less important than the ego of your guests. If you are having people over who don't feel confident in the kitchen, this is not the time to bombard them with a seven-course menu.

There's no point in eating with others, or in inviting others to come and eat with you, if you are not interested in people. Being interested in other people means also suppressing certain desires in yourself, in particular the desire to remain quiet, the desire to remain a watcher. Sometimes you have to actually overcome this fear of other people and move forward a little to show interest in them and bring those people out. I think that some sort of enthusiasm for others and the occasion is very important in general.

When you are at the table, the important thing is to stay at the table. If you are the giver, there is absolutely no point having people with you if you are preparing a meal which is going to keep you away from your guests, being always in the kitchen. That means that your food, your ego, is more important than your guests.

Also if you are a guest, stay at the table. You have eight people to dinner, you get up and five people all come out to help you. When they ask 'Can I help you?' you say 'Yes, you can, by going back and talking to those other people please. Try to entertain them so much, that they won't know I'm not there. That's the best thing you can do for me.' Then you have the people who want to come out to the kitchen to be with you because they want to gossip about something else. So if you are a guest, if you are on the receiving end, stay at table.

You should be very aware of others people likes and dislikes. Perhaps some people can't eat anchovies or oysters. As the giver you consider other people, but the problem is also that, at the same time, as the receiver, you should eat *everything*. That's why I think we are inflicting grave social problems on children by not encouraging them to eat widely. These kids are going to become people who want to do business with Japan. They are not going to be able to do business with Japan if they can't sit and have several mouthfuls of pickled fish liver.

You know how wonderful it makes you feel to receive a sign of recognition, of praise, when someone drops you a note or comments positively about something that you have done. This is something I wish I was better at. As a receiver of hospitality, it is nice to give recognition but as a giver, never complain, never explain. There's nothing worse than sitting to a meal and having the host beg for a response. 'Is it OK? Should I have done this that or the other?'. It puts every one so much on edge. You give it and then you forget about it. What you have done to that meal is unimportant compared to the atmosphere that you are creating for you guests.

Then there's the question of general good taste. We know some-one in Adelaide who has this amazing ability when getting ready to go out - she looks in the mirror and takes one thing off. I can't do that. I look in the mirror and I think 'Add a bit more.' I'd love to be able to do that but I *have* managed it at the table. Pare it down. Cut it back. Keep it simple. We have people like *Vogue* magazine tempting us to take on all sorts of very obstructing paraphernalia. (Napkin rings were once only used when you were staying with someone. You'd put your napkin in the ring to keep it for the next day. The napkin ring suggests that the napkin is going to be used again. So why use napkin rings when people are only eating once?) But the object is to sell people more *things.* During the industrial revolution, there was a new disposable income, more little gadgets were offered, little forks for pickles, little knives for fish.

Keep it simple, pare it down. Astound them with the lack of fuss. But of course you've got to be terribly well prepared. Astound them with how simple it all seems.

There should also be a respect for food. Never say 'Ugh' about food. Gabriel Gaté once said that the only thing 'Ugh' about food is hunger.

As the giver, you have to hold the table together, diffuse problems. As the receiver, don't sit and have that one on one conversation, discussing your broken marriage, because you're so shy you can't talk to everybody. It's terrible when people whisper in a corner.

Then we come down to those nasty little things that no-one really likes to talk about. The minutiae of etiquette and manners. But there are quite a few things where it would be

useful to have a few new rules laid down. Like lateness. We have at the moment a lateness problem and we have a lack of commitment problem. We're all so busy, we're all ringing New York at 4.00 a.m. We couldn't even know until Thursday morning who we thought might be coming to the Symposium!. No-one can commit these days and it's a real problem. What about mobile phones and beepers?

Back to the grapes...Take a grape? You take a stalk, (possibly cut with grape scissors) otherwise you're left with that disgusting mess that I've passed around. It seems to me a disrespect for food. How do you attack a brie? How do you end up with the brie still having some respect for itself? These are the little things that no-one really likes to talk about, that there were once books written about.

To finish, the other night I was very tense, and Sarah came up to me and gave me a squeeze and said that women of our age needed to learn to exude grace. And she's dead right so I'd like to leave you with a couple of my obsessions of the moment. Let's get rid of dinner parties, just have people over to eat. Let's try to exude a bit more grace but remember that manners are something that you don't see, you only notice them when they're not there.

Discussion

Sarah Stegley: One of the things that fascinates me when I think of this code of dining, is that restaurant reviewers obviously go to a restaurant with a point of view or a set of expectations in mind. But do they ever say what those expectations are? Are they comparing like with like?

Barbara Santich: I don't do many restaurant reviews but I think that any expectations that you might have are those of anybody in the community, derived from advertising, from what they've seen from the outside. The restaurant sets up something for itself and any member of the public can walk past, read the menu in the window, and get some impression of what that restaurant is like.
When I go somewhere and when I have some sort of idea of the restaurant's style, it's what I have picked up from the atmosphere, from what I've seen and read, and these are the same impressions that any one in the community would have. I'm not necessarily in a privileged position.

Sarah Stegley: What are some of your do's and don'ts from the customers view? If a set of expectations have been set up and you are immediately disappointed, give us examples of the things that have happened to you.

Barbara: First of all the welcome. If you're not welcomed in a nice way, if you're welcomed in an off-hand way, that doesn't augur well for the dining experience.
Anne Willan was here judging the restaurant of the year a few years ago, and we agreed on a couple of criteria. Before you've even looked at the menu and wine list, someone usually comes up and asked if you'd like a drink and I usually say I'd like a drink of water. You get good water and you get bad water. Good water is a plus for the restaurant. The bread and butter: if these are good then you've really got some sort of indication of what that restaurant's about. If those things fail you're not really interested.

Allan Saunders: When I'm reviewing anything, records, food, whatever, your first duty is to write an entertaining article because you are writing for people who might not read the book, might not go to the restaurant. That duty is equalled by the other duty of not being entertaining at the expense of the establishment, cheap jokes at the expense of the establishment . But my main problem with a lot of restaurant reviewing in this country is that it is done by people who are far more interested in food than is really good for them. We have to consider that a lot of people go to restaurants , not for the food. It's a night out, an occasion. Very few restaurant reviewers are given the space to evoke the atmosphere. One of my favourite food reviewers writes in England and I'm sure he's not highly respected by the food writing community, Craig Brown. He spends a lot of his time evoking what it's like to eat in this space. His actual analysis of food is actually inadequate ('It was scrumptious') but he does tell you what it was like to be in this restaurant.

Zar Brooks: Throughout the suburbs there are places such as Sizzler and when you drive past them they are extraordinarily full, because the people who go there don't have the problems they have in ordinary restaurants. When they arrive, they stand in a queue, they have a choice of four or five dishes in three separate categories to eat from and they

have maybe four wines to choose from. And it's easy for them. They don't have to be confronted by waiters, or where to sit or what to do when someone says do you want a drink. And when you talk to people about Sizzler they talk about the place and not the food. The father can take his family out to dinner and not be challenged. And a code of dining should take into consideration a lot of what people like in Sizzler.

Max Lake: I, too, have wondered about the success of Sizzler and my conclusion was because it offers such a huge selection of things for the kids to sprinkle in their icecream. That's choice, and the food's fresh and it's cheap.

Zar Brooks: I've worked out though that you can spend more on a meal at Sizzler at Goodwood Park than a meal at Nediz Tu.

Max Lake: A word on wine stewards. We all appreciate a wine steward who knows his stuff because these days it's impossible to know what the wines on the list are like and I do appreciate a sommelier who's really tutored in what's happening, but the thing that I appreciate most of all is someone who's honest. If I ask for a riesling, I don't want it to finish sweet and if I ask and I'm told the wrong thing I get cranky. If a restaurant can't have their stewards well tutored, let them be honest.

Eighth Symposium Dinner

Adelaide, October 30, 1994

Chef: Urs Inauen

Raw marinated snapper with couscous and roasted skin

Razorfish hearts with chargrilled asparagus & mushroom cream

Medallion of Kangaroo Island chicken in yabby broth
Tartlet of liver, kidney & combs

Loin of spring lamb with the queen of caraway on braised celeriac

Terrine of goat cheese with young lettuce leaves

Rhubarb & nut crumble in a pastry cup with ginger ice-cream

South Yemen coffee
Mignardises

EIGHTH SYMPOSIUM OF AUSTRALIAN GASTRONOMY

ADELAIDE, SEPTEMBER 28-30, 1994

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