

First Symposium of Australian Gastronomy

THE UPSTART CUISINE

Proceedings

Adelaide, March 12-13, 1984



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Proceedings of the First Symposium of Australian Gastronomy

Carclew, Adelaide, March 12 and 13, 1984

edited by Barbara Santich

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We are especially grateful to Roger Chapman and the staff at Carclew, first for the offer of their facilities and also for their help and forbearance both before and during the symposium.

Robyn Ravlich, of the ABC, kindly offered to record all proceedings and provided with us with a copy, on which the first part of this publication has been based.

From the recording, Margaret Corston managed to make sense of a variety of voices, sometimes in unison, and produce a typed transcript for editing. We also thank her for retyping all the written papers included in this volume.

Phillip Searle's banquet was the climax of the symposium, and words are inadequate to express our appreciation of this event.

Finally, our thanks to all who contributed foods and wines, for these say as much about gastronomy as any intellectual opus.

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First Symposium of Australian Gastronomy
 Carclew, North Adelaide, March 12-13, 1984

PROGRAM

Monday

- 10.00 Foyer:
 Coffee and registration
- 10.30 Ballroom-north end:
 Chair: Graham Pont
- Michael Symons - A potted history of Australian gastronomy
- DISCUSSION: What is gastronomy?
 We consider the paper already circulated on "definitions"
- Chair: Stephanie Alexander & Duré Dara
- WRITING ABOUT FOOD
- Marion Halligan - The word made flesh: Can we talk ourselves into an Australian cuisine?
- Barbara Santich - Chroniques gastronomiques and restaurant reviews
- Gay Bilson - The restaurateur's right of reply
- DISCUSSION
- 12.30 Garden:
 Drinks
- 1.00 Ballroom-south end:
 BROWN BREAD LUNCH - Bread has strong symbolism. Such was the shortage of grain in the early NSW colony that Governor Phillip added a "bring your own bread" request at the bottom of invitations. We ask participants to bring their own brown bread to the first lunch, which will stress simplicity
- 3.00 Ballroom-north end:
 Chair: Alan Davidson
- THE QUALITY OF INGREDIENTS
- John Possingham - Towards diversity or dullness in our day-to-day diet
- Gabriel Gaté - "They all look the same to me"
- 3.30 DISCUSSION: What makes a good cookery book?
 What are our favourite cookery books and why? What are the main genres of cookery book? What are the technical requirements of a good cookery book? What makes recipes relevant? Are there yet any Australian works which are essential?
- Derrick Casey - Wine and food combinations
 The paper will be accompanied by a tasting

Tuesday

10.00 Foyer:
Coffee

10.30 Ballroom-north end:
Chair: Gay Bilson

Graham Pont - Brillat-Savarin's 'Bouquet'
Anthony Coronos - Culture and agriculture: Towards
a philosophical cosmology of food
Helen Peacocke - If we could eat oysters, why not
witchetty-grubs?
Max Lake - Balance and harmony
Yvonne Webb - All things bright and beautiful
Janet Jeffs
Nicholas Bonham - Australian fêtes

1.00 Verandah:

CUISINE DU COEUR - Many participants for whom
cooking is a "gentle art" and a "joy" are contributing
a favourite dish for a luncheon on the Carclew verandah
and grass. Cath Kerry and Barbara Santich are
coordinating. While the Monday lunch stresses
simplicity, this will search out what dishes are closest
to our hearts. We detect a French bias.

3.00 Ballroom-north end:
Chair: Don Dunstan

DISCUSSION: What future activities do we plan?

3.20 DISCUSSION: What can we do about the Australian
cuisine?

Can we rely on restaurants to educate eaters? What
would be radical home economics? Is there a role
for government? Should we focus on a single goal,
campaign or slogan? Is good food destined to remain
elitist?

4.45 CLOSING ADDRESS - Alan Davidson

7.30 On lawn outside ballroom:
Drinks

8.00 Ballroom:

BANQUET - Phillip Searle
The details are a surprise. But Phillip Searle moves
away from restaurant traditions as he solves the age-old
questions of orchestrating extravagant and amusing
dishes for 48 people. Philip White has organised the
wines. You should dress up for the occasion, which
will be more festive than formal. You will be able to find
your own seat and breaks in the proceedings will let you
swap places.

PROLOGUE

This is the record of two days of eating and talking in Adelaide on Monday and Tuesday, March 12-13, 1984. The event was partly inspired by symposia held in Oxford, but covered the broad field of gastronomy.

We considered that Gay Bilson had summed up the history, the pretentiousness and the promise of the Australian cuisine by the comment that ours was an "upstart culinary country". The lack of food traditions called for a positive and reasoned response, so that the emerging culinary exuberance could be guided by food scholarship and perhaps work wonders.

The meeting was convened by Gay Bilson (proprietor of Berowra Waters Inn), Graham Pont (senior lecturer at The University of NSW) and Michael Symons (restaurateur and author). Much of the organisational work was carried out by Barbara Santich (a scholar of French language and cuisine).

Our foremost aim was a get-together of like spirits. We attracted about 50 keen contributors, a balance of what we term "theoreticians", "practitioners" and "passionate amateurs". Alan Davidson honoured us with a visit from London.

We were lucky with the venue, the Carclew mansion (the South Australian government's youth performing arts centre), which provided a mixture of grandeur and informality.

The papers were varied, and inspired much discussion then and since. We publish here an edited version of the spoken proceedings, plus complete written texts.

We also wanted the meals to "make a statement". We asked participants to bring their own brown bread to the first lunch, which, under Cath Kerry's supervision, included lobster and mayonnaise, cheese and fruit.

For the next day, those who wished to contribute by cooking provided a charming display of fine terrines, cakes, and bread rolls tumbling from a bread "guillotine".

The climax was the Tuesday evening banquet, at which Adelaide chef Phillip Searle had been given a free hand. The following morning, some writers amongst us decided they could best acknowledge the banquet by each recording impressions, which conclude this volume.

The First Symposium of Australian Gastronomy will never be surpassed. The exciting occasion, developing an almost religious fervour, has stimulated new and better activities, which will undoubtedly be reported upon at our next meeting.

MORNING COFFEE, Monday 12 March

Almond bread
 Hazelnut bread
 Langues de chat ...baked by Lois Butt
 Lemon ring biscuits
 Orange almond biscuits

Anzac biscuits
 Lebkuchen ...baked by Gwenda Robb
 Sacristains

SESSION 1

GP: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the the First Symposium of Australian Gastronomy.

I would like to record publicly our thanks to Barbara Santich and Michael Symons for the extremely efficient way in which they have set up the conference. I would also like to thank Cath Kerry for her help in organising the catering arrangements, and Jill Stone for her delightful herbal arrangement.

I have many apologies from people who would have liked to have been at this conference. I can't mention all the names but I think one is very important - Betty Meehan, whose book on Aboriginal cookery will soon be published.

I would now like to welcome a man who needs no introduction, Michael Symons, who published in 1982 the first serious work on Australian gastronomic history, *One Continuous Picnic*. Today he is going to introduce the conference and the subsequent discussion with a review of some of the ideas and key figures raised in his very important book which, I think, will emerge eventually as a turning point in the development of Australian gastronomic consciousness.

MS: Thank you. I think firstly I had better explain what I think this conference is about: The First Symposium of Australian Gastronomy, *The Upstart Cuisine*. I think that it was designed to be something of a get-together of people and that is why we have been a bit strict about numbers. Beyond that I think that the purpose in my mind is to establish or help establish gastronomy in this country and also to discuss the Australian cuisine.

I want to clarify the words gastronomy and cuisine as I understand them. I think gastronomy is the study of eating, and studies the Australian cuisine amongst other things. Cuisine in that sense is just a style of eating. You could talk about the cuisine of a restaurant or you could talk about the cuisine in Australia; I think that the Australian cuisine falls into three stages. Having said that, I can explain the title of my paper, *A Potted History of Australian Gastronomy*. It is not a summary of my book because that is a study of the Australian cuisine. This paper is the study of the Australian study of eating.

I have done some quick calculations and I have decided that you can reasonably expect to have 76,650 meals during your lifetime but to die only once. Those everyday events represent nourishment, sensual gratification, conviviality and cultural expression, not to say the nation's biggest industry, certainly in demand for television ads. Beyond that I claim that it is possible to believe that feeding is what life is all about, to a certain extent what

society is about or what being a human being is about. Dr. Johnson pointed this out some time ago, that while some people had assumed that the difference between humanity and other animals was that human beings had language and used tools, in fact the difference was that man was the cooking animal. And to me, certainly feeding is the biological mechanism by which we are connected in a way to the stars, the process by which energy is turned into life and life is actually sustained. Human society, too, is very much based on finding food, cooking it and enjoying it. I also think it is possible to claim that the highest expression of human culture is probably the banquet. In traditional societies where the importance of food was clear, where everyone grew food to survive, witnessed the progress of the seasons through food, celebrated important events through food, then people realised the importance of food and did not have to pay anyone to think about it. In an industrial country like this, without any real agricultural or culinary traditions, we need a deliberate, almost scientific response, otherwise we will leave our eating to the multinationals or large corporations who are quite ruthless in telling us what we should eat.

I think if the present culinary exuberance in this country can be guided by food scholarship, then we can work wonders. I hope that we don't have to press the arguments in favour of thinking and talking about eating too far here. I think it is more what form such a discussion should take.

Leading up to this symposium there have been a couple of things of importance. One, I think, was the publication of my book, the other was Graham Pont's course last year at the University of NSW in Gastronomy. It has been a fairly rare event at any university to have a course of that type. He based it very much on his reading of Brillat-Savarin, and I think certainly I have been very influenced by Graham's enthusiasm for that book. Brillat-Savarin thought that gastronomy should assume the rank among the sciences which is incontestably its own. I can't find him saying that it should be the first of the sciences but I have certainly read other people claim that. This might sound a bit far-fetched but nevertheless it is something that I believe. In effect we are saying that gastronomy can tie the other sciences together; it's a practical science. Science tends to know more and more about less and less, whereas gastronomy would claim to be fairly holistic and would confront everything before it can speak. Brillat-Savarin said that the theoreticians should get together with the gourmards or the cooks, so I hope that at this meetings the theoreticians and the practitioners can learn from each other.

Now I should quickly mention the history of Australian gastronomy. Firstly I think I would include as a gastronomic work the first cookery book in this country, Edward Abbott's book published in 1864 under the nom-de-plume 'An Australian Aristologist'. Then I would include Dr. Muskett's *The Art of Living in Australia*. He was a doctor who saw health reasons for urging sensible dieting. The third book would be Rita's essays on domestic science called *Cottage Cookery Hygienic and Economic*. These books do what gastronomy should do. They draw upon all the other sciences, for example Dr. Muskett was much more than a medico, he was interested in education, geography, agriculture, nutrition and cookery and so on. I think they also speak to everybody. I think the aims in gastronomy should be that it should talk to not just a small esoteric group and Edward Abbott certainly did that: he dedicated his book to his fair country women.

All those books think that food is what life is all about. To take one example, Rita, who wrote probably about 1897, said that she really couldn't understand why the country did not set up a chair of gastronomy or why there should not be a Minister of Gastronomy.

My book is a gastronomical history of this country, and it is probably the

first attempt to write a history of a nation through gastronomy. To defend this approach I would like to mention two things in my book. One is an attempt to see what is the most important thing that can be said about Australia. I think it has been that we were set up by the British. Certainly that is what people say about our food. If I ask people, what is the most distinctive thing about Australian food, they will say it's very English. Yet I have found lots of other influences, for example American, and therefore I think the most important thing about Australia is that we were the first advanced capitalist country in the world. We were set up in what the explorers found was an inhospitable place. The Aborigines were absolutely useless, according to the explorers. They did not grow anything, they did not have gold, they did not have anything that could be plundered. A whole new approach was needed, to think that you could bother settling Australia, and that approach was the industrial approach with industrial food. It was feasible to think about shipping in rations from overseas and for one hundred years Australia imported much more food than it exported. We were set up as the first urban, first industrial, first advanced capitalist country in the world, and you can see that easily from the gastronomic point of view, because in studying the people's relationship to the soil you see that we in this country have no peasants. It was an uncultivated continent two hundred years ago, then suddenly in came industrial food without any peasant food or agrarian civilisation in between.

Finally I would like to say that there have been three stages in the Australian cuisine. The first was set up with those imported rations, flour, tea and sugar and reliance on the local meat. The second period began in about the 1870s, when factories were set up in the cities to process food. The railways opened up the country to farming, to orchards, to dairying, and milk, wheat or whatever was brought into the cities and turned into Rosella tomato sauce or Fosters lager or Arnotts biscuits or any of those distinctive commercial products that we think are Australian.

The third period occurred after the Second World War. It relies very much on the car, because people go to the supermarket now and can pick up a whole week's supplies. The distinctive thing about the present cuisine is the idea of convenience.

In the first period there was really no need for cookery books. The second period required all those books like *The Commonsense*, *Mrs Schauer*, *The Green and Gold*, which in fact use processed foods, the ingredients of the simple grocery shelves. Finally in the third period we have had an explosion of cookery books, in any style that you like, but paradoxically I think the reason is that cooking has been taken out of the home kitchen into the factory. What has happened is that industry first took over agriculture, took over farming, then took over the preservation of food, and finally it has taken over the preparation of food.

Coincidentally, each time the food industry took over another step in the production of food, the shake-up of eating habits was sufficient to cause renewed interest in gastronomy. It caused renewed interest in faddish diets, in vegetarianism, in health; and each change in the diet has caused an interest in dining out and in gastronomy. The first period didn't directly influence Australia because the agricultural revolution was occurring in Europe, but it produced a lot of English writers who influenced Edward Abbott. The industrialisation of the pantry or the cellar, in other words the introduction of food processing in the factories, unleashed another burst of enthusiasm to study food and take an interest in changing diets, which stimulated the awareness of Rita and Dr. Muskett. I think that the industry's takeover of the kitchen and the introduction of take-aways and frozen foods, all the convenience foods, and the growth of 14% per year in the number of licensed

restaurants in this country, has stimulated this symposium.

I hope very much that this symposium will play a part in establishing gastronomy. I think the world needs it and I hope that this moment in fact will be seen as the most historic in the history of Australian gastronomy.

GP: I fully agree with Michael, this is an historic occasion and I wonder whether in one hundred years people will look back and say "who was that maniac who introduced the faith, and who was Michael Symons, and what did they do, how did they perceive the subject, and so on". Looking forward a bit, what fascinates me is the question of what character, style or form gastronomy will take in Australia. It is a vast unformed field which, I think, is undergoing very rapid change. It is for this reason that we went to the trouble of circularising a list of definitions. As a philosopher by training I found the problem very challenging, in fact as the conference drew nearer and nearer I had to work harder and harder on thinking about the subject.

Now perhaps we could ask for any questions arising out of Michael's paper.

BC: I agree with Michael's assessment of the pernicious effect of industrialisation on our food, but I would like to ask his comments on the role that government also plays in supporting this industrialisation, and how we might be able to exert an influence in altering that support. Now I am looking at a couple of areas where I think we ought to try and make some impact. Firstly, there is a vast amount of research which goes into new crops and that research is aimed at producing higher yields, more mechanisation, and those sorts of objectives disregard the taste of the food, which is never a research goal in any of the institutions that are set up to carry out this sort of work.

The second area where I feel that government supports industrialisation is the marketing area where the move is to try for uniformity of marketable commodities. If you don't conform with these so-called "quality" standards then your produce will never even reach the market. Now, that has reached an even greater effect in other countries overseas, but it certainly is the trend in Australia. How can we prevent industrialisation taking over the fresh food areas as well as the industrial food area?

MS: We have a session this afternoon that I hope will address itself to that topic, and we will have plenty of chance tomorrow afternoon to talk about what can be done, and I interpret that as including what can be done in the political area. Political gastronomy.

MH: I am very interested in your remarks on gastronomy as a science, but you didn't say much about gastronomy as an art. What about the idea that music is the art that cultivates the ear, painting and so on and the art that cultivates the eye; taste is a sense like each of these, and therefore gastronomy is the art of cultivation of taste.

MS: I suppose that my ideas on gastronomy are changing daily and the reason I use science is in a sense of irony. My degree is a Bachelor of Science but I have gone through a most intense anti-scientific stage of my life and I rather like the idea of calling a science something which scientists would never recognise as a science. I suppose I am balancing also the notion that we are at a Festival of Arts. As a final justification I would say that's what Brillat-Savarin refers to it as.

BS: Brillat-Savarin did write a lot about sensory knowledge - on taste, on

flavour, and so on - and I think that gastronomy synthesises both sensual and intellectual experiences.

MS: I think I tend to ignore the actual practical, cooking, side when I say a science and I guess you would have to say that that was the artistic side. The aspect I am thinking about at the moment is the theoretical, political or social side, which is certainly an error of omission.

JH: It could also be seen as craft.

MS: I agree. I suppose art to me is high art. I think that this country can afford six artists, we probably have one or two ... The rest could be regarded as craftspeople.

GB: We are getting outside gastronomy

MS: Yes, when does cooking finish and gastronomy start?

BS: I think that gastronomy begins when cooking is eaten

GP: ... or judged.

PW: It's like wine appreciation, which has come to a stage where you can't really say that the wine smells like cabbage unless some scientist can isolate a cabbage component in it. It is becoming like all the arts, they are being raided by technologists; the refining of an art involves refining of materials and weapons or whatever.

MS: Let's get back to my point of view. If gastronomy can be absolutely big enough no scientist can possibly take it over.

GG: It is sometimes thought that gastronomy starts when there is some type of pleasure but the same thing may not be gastronomy for everyone.

MS: I would certainly exclude that from my idea of what gastronomy was because you certainly can study, as I say, starvation or you can study anorexia nervosa

GP: Is the baby a gastronome, the baby gets pleasure from the mother's breast. Is that gastronomy?

MS: Also there is a difference between the gastronome and the gourmand. The gourmand is meant to see the pleasure in food.

LCh: I am a political scientist and I am interested in the conflict that Michael seems to have, in that he supports Rita's call for a Minister of Gastronomy and yet I imagine that his study of the history of gastronomy in this country would show him that administrators and regulations have been the enemies of gastronomy.

MS: I would say that we can give up once we have a Minister of Gastronomy.

GP: At this juncture I might call an end to this discussion and thank Michael Symons and the audience for their comments. I invite Stephanie Alexander and Dure Dara from Stephanie's Restaurant in Melbourne to introduce the speakers of

the next session.

SA: There are three people to present their papers in this session and Dure and I thought that we would like first to make a brief personal statement. It is really just to introduce ourselves. I am an owner-chef of a restaurant in Melbourne and am extremely delighted to have been invited to what I can see as a very special first occasion. I am also pleased but rather anxious to have been asked to chair this discussion on writing about food. I am first and foremost a cook, heavily involved with my day-to-day practical work but also have a very real interest in the quality, content and promotion of food writing and verbal communication about food.

Our study of the papers to be presented has resulted in an extremely lively debate between Dure and myself and has reinforced our belief in the interrelatedness of our separate fields of interest. They are separate but are inevitably linked; on the one hand I have my need to create, largely intuitively, and on the other I feel a need to be interpreted intelligently and sensitively to maximise the pleasure of my customers. I see us as representing in fact the flesh and the word and we combine and complement each other in our work. That is why it is so interesting that the first paper from Marion Halligan is entitled *The Word Made Flesh*. When we talk on Australian cuisine the two areas are always present.

DD: My major preoccupation for the last ten years has been playing and performing my own music. Both these disciplines call on expressive, intuitive faculties, coupled with the application of real and applied knowledge. Working with Stephanie's food and interpreting and presenting her ideas while attending her dining customers has been an enjoyable progression of the experiences which I have come to expect while playing music. The historical context and content in understanding where we are and what we are doing, and debate on the state of our gastronomic culture are all issues I have had to face in my work in my current profession. I am grateful for and welcome the opportunities to discuss and exchange these ideas with people of similar intent.

I will first introduce Marion Halligan.

MH: I realised when I came to the end of writing my paper - *The Word Made Flesh: Can We Talk Ourselves Into an Australian Cuisine* - that it was a very greedy paper that stuffs itself full of things. There was probably enough material for six more leisurely, expansive articles.

The paper is in fact an overview of French gastronomic writing. I chose French because that seems to be the model, French cuisine we generally agree to be the best in the world, so French gastronomic writing. It's the only cuisine that has a body of literature attached to it. The conclusion I came to was that if we are going to achieve a great or good or even half-way decent cuisine, it is not going to exist in its fullest sense without writing. As I have said in my paper, the typical gastronome has fork in one hand, pen in the other. Whether it is an art or a science, we are all writing about it, putting our words down on paper. Pen and fork are equally mighty.

I am very interested in writing fiction and the connection between gastronomy and literature. In novels by Balzac and Zola eating is very important and something that I suppose that I should have talked about in this paper is the attitude of Australian novelists to food. I know that when I write fiction, food occurs very often. I tend to place people by the sort of meal they serve, create an emotional situation by what is being eaten by people.

I tried to think whether any other Australian novelist had done it and our friend Patrick White came to mind. In *The Eye of The Storm*, a character is eating rancid, fatty, burnt lamb chops which represents his burnt, rancid, fatty state of mind. The use of food indicates mood, indicates character too.

I think the reason why we don't talk about food in novels is in fact the

same reason we don't have all those things Michael discussed in his book; we don't have a peasantry. Peasants who have been so intimately connected with the production of food do tend to be very interested in the eating of it and a good meal is a celebration, any meal is probably a matter of thanksgiving and a great deal of effort. France has the advantage of being an industrial society still very much located in its peasant origins, so people in France today will still say: this is my area, I come from here. Obviously we can't invent links with something which never existed or reconnect ourselves to the land from which we never came but once we become more aware of meals as celebrations, as an important part of our significant daily life, so that things happen at them and around them, then we are going to get writers writing about them and a body of gastronomic literature produced.

I do think that we can achieve a gastronomic literature. What I am interested in is the double balance of the words, if you like, on gastronomic literature - that is, literature which is about gastronomy and literature which also takes note of what people are eating, so that gastronomy should be a thing for literature. This will have to happen naturally, I don't think that you can force it, but on the other hand you can help it. You can provide a climate. You can use metaphors from growing vegetables or fruit trees, you can provide a climate where you fertilise it, stimulate it, give it the right conditions and nurture it. You can't make it grow but you can provide conditions in which it will. I think that if it is a two-way process, the connection between writing about food and the fact of cooking it, making it, preparing it and so on, that both will flourish equally but it must be absolutely appropriate.

SA: I must apologise for not introducing Marion correctly, in fact she is a very well known writer and writes beautifully in our gastronomic magazines.

I would now like to introduce Barbara Santich who is known to many of you and who is one of the organisers of this conference. She is currently doing research for an MA in French mediaeval cuisine.

BS: In my paper I talked about gastronomic writing without really saying what it is. One of the reasons for this was that I had a lot of trouble in deciding what it is, so I decided that it was much easier to say what gastronomic writing is not. For example, it isn't an article introduced by a statement: Now is the season for strawberries and here are some beautiful recipes which I am sure you will all enjoy. Nor is it the sort of restaurant review like: I had steak au poivre and my friend had veal scallopine; for dessert we had chocolate mousse and pancakes, they were all very delicious, and we had a lovely wine, and it was a very enjoyable dinner and it was a marvellous restaurant. That's not gastronomic writing either.

Looking back to Grimod de la Reynière and his *Almanach des Gourmands* - and Grimod de la Reynière is considered the father of modern gastronomic writing, in France at least - it starts at the month of January and talks about the products that are available in that month in Paris. For example, he talks about beef - what you can get in Paris, where it comes from, which is the very best beef and why a particular area produces such a high quality, the various cuts and what you do with them, and which merchants to buy from. If that is gastronomic writing, and I think it is, one could write similarly on a particular sort of apple - where it grows, and when, and how the peculiarities of soil and climate combine to produce a fruit with certain special characteristics which suit certain culinary purposes. We don't see much of this kind of writing in Australia, and I ask myself why: is it that it is not being written, or is it being written but not published?

I think the answer is that it is not being published, and here I am not so

much thinking of the specialised monthly or bimonthly magazines as the daily and weekly press, where editors seem to think their readers want to be entertained and titillated by trivia rather than be given something to think about. The National Times and the Australian Financial Review, two fairly serious publications, both have regular features on wine but never anything on food or gastronomy. Why? Is it that drinking wine and talking about drinking wine are acceptable, yet eating and talking about eating are not. There are probably just as many words written about not eating - dieting - as on eating. If editors can accept an article about wine on, say, the types of wine grapes grown in Tasmania then they should equally be able to accept an article on different varieties of tomatoes: why there are different varieties, why one grows better in this area, a comparison of tastes, uses and so on. Of course, we are in another chicken-and-egg situation, in that we rarely know what sort of tomatoes we buy anyway, but articles like this would at least introduce the idea of diversity, as John Possingham will discuss this afternoon. There could equally be articles on meat, on lamb, say: the particular breeds and crosses which produce a certain type of lamb, which regions it comes from, when it is at its best, so that moves towards a grading system for lamb could be encouraged. I have tried to introduce this idea to the AMLC, with no success. At the moment 'lamb' covers such a wide range of qualities that writing about it, or suggesting recipes, is particularly difficult. It is this sort of gastronomic writing that is important if we are to break away from industrialisation.

As for restaurant reviews, the first requirement might be that editors allow them more space, so that the writer can develop a theory or can really say what a particular restaurant or chef is trying to do and how. I think that the restaurant review could develop as a genre of gastronomic literature, but it would have to develop as Marion Halligan has just suggested. The fact of eating at a restaurant need not be the sole theme of the article but the point of departure for a series of thoughts. Gastronomy combines sensory and intellectual experiences and gastronomic writing has to appeal to both the mind and the senses, so that while reading you can almost savour the taste or feel as though you would like to do so. For this reason, the gastronomic writer should have both theoretical and practical understanding and experience.

We won't get to this stage of gastronomic writing overnight, but when we do get there we will have more chance of improving what we have in Australia.

SA: Our third speaker is Gay Bilson. Gay, who is a colleague and a fellow chef, will speak to us about The Restaurateur's Right of Reply.

GB: I have written quite a lot about food but I am speaking to you now as a restaurateur and cook. I am talking about restaurants, by which I mean the sort that I run, the sort that Stephanie runs. We run a restaurant because we are passionately in love with cooking and with food. We want it to be our restaurant because we want it to be in our set of aesthetics, we want to dictate, I suppose. I also like the idea of teaching within a restaurant and the give and take from the people who work with you. And when I use the word 'cooking', I mean a passionate care for the craft and the produce. I also want to say that I am not giving you a hypothesis so much as making a statement of the dilemmas that I feel within the profession.

One of the things I would like to talk about involves misconceptions, since the restaurateur traditionally has no right of reply. What I think I might be able to do within this symposium is to say a little of what is usually not said. Here, in a sort of diplomatic circle, I can give vent to things I feel and that I suspect a lot of other restaurateurs feel, but in a sense we are

never allowed to air them. You see at the worst we restaurateurs could be said to have lost our souls to the pens of the reviewers.

One of the things that muddies the quality of food criticism is that everyone judges with the prejudice of their palate which isn't quite the same as a music critic having a prejudice for strings. This may be interpreted at its very worst as an example of the 'I don't know much about food but I know what I like' attitude towards the stomach. The lack of professionalism and what constitutes professionalism in a food and restaurant critic might be discussed later. It certainly has got a lot to do with the fact that there is little gastronomic writing involved. The lack of professionalism allows the reviewer to promote the misconceptions and myths about restaurateurs, always seen as wiping sweat from their necks from the heat of the stove.

Why I think this notion continues to exist is that the reviewer and the public want to identify creativity and craft and hard slog with the one person. It's the promotion of the chef as cult figure. No one seems grown up enough to be able to cope with a restaurant simply being good or bad as the sum of its parts. No one wants to know about the brigade who executed the chef's ideas or their own ideas and certainly no one wants to recognise a waiter in Australia who gives professional service, that is, service that is hardly noticeable.

Cooking, the celebration and joy of cooking, have no traditional place in our culture. The 'cuisine du coeur' which could have produced the caring restaurateurs is actually being created by the restaurateurs themselves so that we have a situation in which it is the restaurateur in Australia who is the educator. This culinary contradiction might be labelled as upstart.

Of course to exacerbate the problem we are a lot of upstart cooks as well. We are, in a sense, learning as we educate but we are putting our hearts into the practice, practising what we preach with every plate we put out. So it's the restaurateurs who could be the chroniqueurs gastronomiques, except that we are tongue-tied to the stove. The critic in Australia seems to have little conception of gastronomy and the passionate restaurateur who, I am suggesting, is the educator is in a way being left out of any chronicle that could be made of the upstart cuisine.

Cooking is one of the last old-fashioned activities left in our video screen, fast food age, even with the help of the Robot-Coupe, the Dito and the microwave (not a dirty word given its proper use). Cooking involves discerning labour and intensive care. Because of this the audience, the non-cooks, hold this peculiarly labour-intensive occupation in awe. I, too, sometimes think that it is slightly insane, except that every now and then I catch a glimpse of what it is I am trying to achieve and the points system of criticism becomes peripheral, a game played by extra-culinary beings, signifying very little.

We need to put restaurant reviewing into perspective because while we have only reviewers we will remain consumers and never become gourmands. The title of Marion Halligan's paper says it all: The Word Made Flesh. Writers who can communicate therefore excite us more than a thousand cookery books filled with glossy photos.

Writing about food, at its best, can produce something akin to lust and when that happens, somewhere somehow between the gastronomer's typewriter and the chef's piano, between the theory and the practice, we just might begin to reach some form of upstart culinary harmony.

Discussion

AED: How can one overlook important gastronomic writing in Greek, Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, even the English - even in the eighteenth century - and I wonder whether Marion Halligan's concentration on French tastes doesn't imply

an acceptance of a definition of gastronomic writing which is really very French-based. I would suggest that Grimod de la Reyniere and Brillat-Savarin are just two good examples of one kind of gastronomic writing. It may be linked with her other assumption, that most people would agree that French cuisine is the best in the world. This kind of statement might have seemed right twenty or thirty years ago, but not any more.

MH: Obviously one of the reasons I didn't talk about these other gastronomic writings is that I don't know much about them. I was using the French as a model, because I think that the French cuisine is the one that we in this country take as our model, although we do look at other cuisines. I am particularly interested in what the "men of letters" of the time made of gastronomy, and the fact that food writers were interested in gastronomic writing as a branch of literature.

MStr: This French influence annoys me. It seems that the English are the only ones with such an inferiority complex, to want to call everything by a French name. In this country we have multicultural influences, yet we cling to French remnants. We should have a much broader outlook.

MH: I think the French model is good because you stand in the middle of a country, look at all the material and make something of it. We look around, and we see the vegetables the Indo-Chinese have grown, we see that a Japanese way of doing fish works superbly for our fish, and we include it in a cuisine that follows on a French model. It is no longer French cuisine, it is Australian.

SA: I think most people have an opinion on the degree of importance of French influence and the use of French terminology, but perhaps there are comments on other aspects of the papers.

LCh: I was interested in Barbara's report on the difficulty of obtaining a satisfactory response from the AMLC on the question of identifying different types of lamb. One of the things that can be done is to get women, as consumers and cooks, on to the boards of some of these statutory authorities. Brian and I were fairly successful in getting this adopted as government policy and now there are attempts to get women on to such boards. I would encourage people to put their names forward, as gastronomers, otherwise we might not get the individual appreciation of different types of foods.

PW: I would like to ask what can be done about the standard of food and wine writing - how soon can we expect to see an improvement?

ML: The problem is one of communication. Basically Australia is too small for the kind of development we are looking for and we don't generate enough contemplative people. As far as the media is concerned, we are not paid enough for our time and talent; there is insufficient recognition of what we say. I think that from this symposium will flow some of the results we are hoping for, but we have to be patient.

SA: The distances in Australia act against us being able to pool the terrific resources that we have.

DD: The magazines need the support of individuals; in that way we can perhaps change editors' attitudes.

SA: I think at this point we should break for lunch. Thank you.

LUNCH, Monday 12 March

Brown bread	...contributed by all participants
Fresh butter	...churned by Barbara Santich and Jill Stone
Boiled fresh lobster	...realised by Cath Kerry and and Vicki O'Neill
Mayonnaise	...whisked by Cath Kerry
Mature rinded cheddar cheese and Bronhill fresh goat cheese	
Fresh seasonal fruit	
Perrier Jouet champagne	
Petaluma Rhine Riesling 1983	
Hungerford Hill Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon 1980	

SESSION 2

BS: I would like to introduce Alan Davidson, publisher and author of several books, of which my favourite is Mediterranean Seafood. This is more than just a cookery book - it could be called a gastronomic text. Alan's company, Prospect Books, is involved in printing and publishing facsimile editions of rare books, the most recent one being Hannah Glasse's The Art of Cookery, one of the most successful cook books of the eighteenth century. Alan Davidson is also organising, with Theodore Zeldin, the Fourth Oxford Symposium to be held at the end of June, 1984. Its theme is cook books and recipes - what goes into a cook book, what sort of recipes, how the recipes should be presented. They hope to get a lot of information about what people look for in a cook book, what the users of cook books would like to see in the books they use. Alan will introduce the two speakers for this afternoon and then chair the discussion to follow.

AED: The first part of this session has two papers on the quality of ingredients, the first to be presented by John Possingham, chief of the CSIRO Division of Horticultural Research.

JP: I offer my congratulations to the organisers of this meeting, getting people together to talk about the upstart cuisine of Australia. There are lots of meetings where people talk very seriously about wine, there are other meetings where people talk semi-seriously about food and wine but manage never to talk about the food. At this meeting I hope that we talk about the food.

In CSIRO we do research on things related to horticulture which includes vegetables, fruits and flowers. Our main interest is in fruits, including grapevines. I think there is a similarity between the quality factor of the wine industry and the food industry in this country, and we could in fact have had a symposium on the upstart wine industry of Australia, which is essentially European-based, as our food is. In the wine industry some people at least are realising that the wine cannot be better than the grape; it actually can be worse. In the past many people were of the view that it was only the winemaking that mattered, not the original product, and this has a relevance to the food industry.

My concern is in the erosion of the diversity of the raw materials. As we upgrade our skills in fields like food preservation we tend to have the capacity to eat the same sort of food all the year round. In fact we turn this into a virtue, that food never varies, so that instead of thinking that we might have diversity in food, we are moving towards the opposite tendency, at least in the mass food market. I am afraid that in some of our restaurants we have food that is similar all year round.

One reads of the well known chefs of Paris who visited Les Halles to buy vegetables and fruit, and I am naive enough to believe that they did not select fruits just because they looked good, there was really a strong desire to pick out fruits that had these three characteristics of flavour, texture and taste.

One of the things sweeping the horticultural world is the development of fruits that have what we call buyer appeal. Amazingly enough it is nearly always red. People who like red apples also like red peaches and red mangoes, and this preference is very strong in the USA and Japan. The Japanese spend a lot of time giving peaches a very red colour, using a skilful technique of reflecting the sun's rays off the ground which makes them even more red but they don't taste any better, they just look good.

One of the things we lack in Australia in our cooking is this concept of

using food that is in season. We have a difficulty because we have such an enormous land mass where we can grow practically any fruit or vegetable at any time of the year, and if we throw in a bit of transport we can get access to a very wide range of fruit and vegetables throughout the year. We make it worse by importing ingredients by sea and air from the northern hemisphere, so that if we yearn for the flavour and taste of oranges and lemons, that we were used to in the middle of winter, we can get them in the middle of summer from California.

We have to ask ourselves: Do we really want this?

The disadvantage that we have in relation to Europe is that our climate is different. It is really only southern Australia that is similar to the shores of the Mediterranean. Europe has this built-in variation in season that we don't. We have to make a deliberate decision that we want to have some variation, or that we are not interested in it. The other aspect is that we would eat a range of different varieties. There is a tendency developing where, if you can store fruit and vegetables or import them from the northern hemisphere, you get the idea that such-and-such a variety is the best one. It is not a question of best, we should consider whether we really require to have a range of different lines. In the wine industry it has been shown that people don't really wish to drink the same wine all the year round. All winemakers have a problem in that they get adjusted to their own wine, which is called cellar palate; once you get used to one wine it becomes your only standard.

I wonder whether we haven't the same problem with our own food. We get adjusted to a certain style of food and think that this is the best. What I make a plea for is that we seek all the time a range of flavours from early-season, mid-season, late varieties. We must retain diversity. We do it more in the wine industry. Despite all the blending that is carried on, there is a conscious seeking-out by a lot of consumers of a range of wines with different characteristics. We are not saying that one is better than the other, but we do have different tastes, and we hope that these differences will be accentuated as time goes on. I think that is one of the things that we must look for in our cuisine and I leave you with this message.

AED: Gabriel Gaté, who will present the second paper on ingredients, is probably well known to just about everybody present as cookbook author and food consultant.

GG: I congratulate the organisers of this meeting. I think it is of the utmost importance that people with similar philosophies meet together to share them.

My paper is based on a comparison of markets in Australia and overseas, but first I would like to mention the comments of a Japanese chef who came to Australia two years ago. Masaru Doi is a highly respected Japanese chef and I asked him how he viewed Japanese cuisine, in comparison with French, Chinese or Indian cuisine. He replied that he thought Japanese cuisine the best in the world and I asked, why is that? He said: I went to the market this morning, in Melbourne, and there was not one fish which was fresh. The fish had been left for many hours. In our cooking we need extreme freshness, we are cooking with ingredients in which there is still some life. That answer made me think.

This year I visited the markets in Hong Kong, in Singapore and in Gennevilliers, a fairly poor suburb on the outskirts of Paris. I compared these with the Prahran market in Melbourne, one of the better markets in Australia. In Singapore the market was fairly modern, nothing was in big quantities but everything was very fresh. In Hong Kong I spent more time in the market because I was asked to cook for a dinner party there and I bought live fish. There was

a Chinese lady who bought maybe 80 grams of fish and the man killed the fish for her and just cut off a bit of the tail. I talked to my friend in Hong Kong and he said yes, they buy only what they need, freshness is very important to them.

In Paris there was an enormous variety, but what was interesting was the labelling of the ingredients. There were three different type of chickens, all labelled according to their origin and price and all looked very good. One could see there was a choice and that there was a reason why this chicken was better than that one. There were rabbits and hares, in their skins, and the pheasants were in their feathers. The cheeses were alive . It was all extremely inspiring.

Now going to the Prahran market can be a very interesting experience but not all the time. It is especially interesting on Thursday when all the ingredients are fresh, when there is a good selection, but on Tuesday the vegetables are the same as the ones sold on Friday. Everything is only organised for once a week. The main difference seems to be that the people shopping at the market in Australia seem to be middle-class people, whereas the people shopping overseas seem to be working class people. Maybe the working-class people in Australia go to the supermarket and advertising plays a very important role in that. It must not be forgotten that gastronomy is for everyone, not just for the elitists. The markets are open to everyone.

In some ways I feel that the artisans in Australia could do much better than they are doing and I think that we need more dedication. I have read somewhere that the artist in Australia is so free that sometimes he does not do as much as he could do because he can give up at some stage to get his liberty.

In the market here I have often been told, and especially when choosing fruits such as strawberries, "They all look the same to me". That is the Australian attitude, there is no distinction between good quality, not so good and rubbish. A tomato is a tomato, whether green or red, ripe or unripe. There is a lot of work to be done to improve this situation. We need more artisans trying to make better cheese, trying to grow better strawberries. I don't think we can trust the big societies but rather individuals, who will try to do one thing as best they can. At the moment there is no effort at all to promote the product of a particular region as distinctive, all goes into the same barrel. This sort of promotion is badly needed.

AED: I think those two presentations complement each other very nicely and I think the emphasis on vegetable markets and fish markets is absolutely right. They are the best indices of the gastronomic health of a community. I particularly specialise in fish markets and I believe that the excellence of a market and the freshness of the fish do not depend at all on the wealth of the community but rather on the local tradition and the degree of discrimination shown by people who shop at the market.

Now does anyone want to ask questions or make general comments on the subject of ingredients?

MS: It might be thought that good food relies on cheap labour, yet you cited the freshness of the fish in the markets of Bergen and Vientiane and suggested that there's no explanation in terms of the wealth of the community. Why, then, have Australian ingredients come out worst in these two papers?

JP: Part of the answer is the lack of consumer demand. At the Lenswood apple research station I asked if there were any of the exotic apple varieties, such as Cox's. The answer was no, we don't have any buds of those because although the growers can grow them, no one would buy them. This is the constant

problem. We don't seem to have developed the sophisticated food shops. I think we have more speciality wine shops than speciality food shops.

LCh: Surely the problem is, where does the consumer place some pressure. The artisan who should be encouraged to supply fresh food is frustrated because of the regulations made by governments. The goat cheese industry in South Australia is one example of this. But when you talk of consumers not demanding a Cox's Pippin apple, where can they go, what channels can they use to express a preference?

CK: I think it is very interesting to ask who the buyer is. Do you mean the buyer who puts it in the shops, or is it the consumer?

I read two reports in the paper recently. The first report was that the buyer, or the consumer, was demanding that we have only Delicious apples, and that the other varieties be phased out. The next report concerned the growers, who said that Jonathons produced more and were easier to produce. I find it very frustrating that because of economics, and because we don't have the tradition of people touching fruit, that no one demands that anything else happens.

JP: Tasmania has very good Cox's apples. They are sold in England, but there is really no market for Cox's in Australia. I think that the problem is that the market is not sophisticated enough.

MS: Can I give the example of cherries. There are 10 or 15 varieties grown on one farm, near Uraidla, for the simple reason that cherries can't be handled terribly well by our capitalist food supply system. You have special hard cherries to transport to Sydney, and better-tasting cherries for the local market because there are no transport problems. The hard cherries split if it rains, so the grower has to have other varieties as a sort of insurance. There are early ones, which don't keep, and late varieties. The buyer does not even know what variety he is getting, in fact there is an incredible variety. The question of what the consumer wants is disregarded for the simple reason that you make more money out of having a variety of cherries, because they are not so easily handled in cold storage.

MB: I would like to say something as both a grower and a restaurateur. We get paid bonuses for both the quality of the grapes we deliver and for variety, which is worked out between us and the winery we deal with. As a restaurateur, I feel we should be going to our suppliers directly, circumventing the system, telling our suppliers what we want and thereby giving them the bonus they need to have the incentive for quality. It is quite easily done if we all help each other by communication with each other, and if there is direct communication between restaurateur and farmer so that the farmer gets the bonus he is entitled to.

BC: If we do that we would be prosecuted because we are not allowed to buy an orange from an orange grower. You have to go through a marketing authority.

NB: Is it not true that vegetables are like motor cars, that there is a model for each year, and that sprays and insecticides are geared for a particular variety. When farmers are deciding what varieties to grow, they can be influenced by the people who provide seed, take the crop, etc.

JP: Farmers get a feedback from their wholesalers, who say "this is what we can

sell". Farmers back the best option.

JH: Should we be debunking the supply/demand idea?

JP: It doesn't work in these speciality areas.

GB: Can you tell us what is the basis of the policy of the CSIRO? It seems to me that what you are saying is at odds with what I thought the CSIRO should be doing, helping the grower produce more so that he can sell more over a longer period, and so on.

JP: We have an interest in breeding better varieties to suit Australia. One of the delusions is to think that that all you have to do is get a good variety from Europe, and you'll find a place in Australia where it will grow equally well. That is not always true. Our general thrust is to breed a better average quality, but in the process to get together a vast range of different cultivars so that we have these available for a number of crops.

GB: I read about a horticulturist in France who is seeking species that are dying out, and is slowly collecting these from all over the country. Is someone doing that here?

JP: We are doing that with grape vines, there is a museum of grape vines at Great Western, pre-phylloxera rootstock planted before 1850.

AED: A recent exhibition of apples in London included between 700 and 800 different varieties of apple which are still being grown somewhere in England, with particulars of where they are being grown. The public response was overwhelming, but it seems difficult to transfer this enthusiasm to the retail market, so that one could get the variety in the shops.

MStr: Gabriel said earlier that gastronomy is not elitist, that it should involve all people. Therefore, if the CSIRO can produce better crops, not necessarily taste-wise, but better crops in regard to quantity, is it not a concern to provide more of these foodstuffs for the rest of the world?

Secondly, concerning the provision of more different varieties - who can afford them? Most people in Australia are living reasonably well on a fairly inexpensive diet. You can go to the market with about \$35 and come out loaded to the hilt. You go to the market in Germany with \$35 and you might get the paper bag the stuff comes in. I think you have to balance quality against quantity and price that you are prepared to pay.

Finally, and this applies to about 95% of restaurateurs, the first thing that they ask the supplier is: "What price can you get it to me at?" As long as we have that sort of attitude, we will get mass-grown, easily-transported produce. If we can educate ourselves and start paying differential prices and demand better-quality produce, and if we then retrain our customers to accept what we are trying to give them, I think we might be on the way to establishing the ideals we want.

HZ: The real problem, and we are not really addressing it, is that the consumer neither knows nor, very often, cares. I think the real problem is educating the public. We are talking about what WE would like and not what the consumer would like.

AED: This is a theme which may be echoed in the next part of the discussion - I

would like to ask whether recipes or cookbooks should deal just with cookery, or whether they can also include material on ingredients.

SA: I can give the example of a Melbourne business, air-freighting into Australia a few of the French cheeses that are allowed into this country. Although hailed with acclaim and enthusiasm by many restaurateurs and individual consumers, after one year they are finding the support insufficient for their type of product. I feel this is very significant, that any attempt to provide a minority service is very fragile, and may founder not through lack of quality nor lack of interest, but just because the minority interest is so small.

GG: Sometimes I demonstrate in big shopping centres, and I find that most of the shoppers are fairly ignorant - they don't know how to joint a chicken, nor how to do a vinaigrette dressing, nor how to season. Most people have no idea of the different meat cuts, how tender or how tasty it would be. People in Australia don't learn cooking from their mothers, they learn from the Women's Weekly, from the cookbooks we write, from the information we give them, but not from the family centre.

JP: We have a series of consumer booklets - I will bring them in tomorrow - concerning different citrus fruits and advocados. We publish these solely to try to inform the consumers, not the farmers, about the range of different varieties and we sell them in rather large numbers.

JJ: In relation to Gabriel's paper, I have noticed in markets in France and Hong Kong that there seems to be more conversation about the produce, not only with the vendor but also with the other buyers. It seems to me this has more to do with a cultural influence.

AED: I think local traditions are important. My own feeling is that it is not a matter of the community being wealthy or poor, it is more a matter of how many think in terms of choosing carefully for a given dish, and who have been brought up in a tradition where this is normal.

In conclusion, I think all these questions benefit from being examined in specific detail and instances. There is one publication, with a circulation of under 200, which is of exceptional interest in this regard. It is called "Twelve Times a Year", and is produced by the owner of a restaurant in Dartmouth, England. It is a chronicle in complete detail of where he gets all his supplies - fish, vegetables, fruit, wines, bread - who makes things for him, what is coming in from abroad, why local supplies have dried up, and although he writes extremely well, I must say thirty pages of this is fairly heavy going. I am collecting them with great care because, to the best of my knowledge, this is a unique piece of documentation and I think the full set will be, in later years, a very valuable reference just because he misses nothing out. (Note: Enquiries to Tom Jaine, The Carved Angel, 2 South Embankment, Dartmouth, South Devon, UK. Ed)

I think we should now move on to the topic of recipes and cookery books. What are the main genres of cookery books - which is a useful reminder that there are various genres, and the criteria for excellence in each may well be different. There are straightforward cookery books for everyday family use by people who don't seek to do anything sensational, and then there are very specialised books which seek to provide enthusiastic experimental cooks with the information they need.

What are the technical requirements of a good cookery book? It would be

interesting to hear from some of the people present who have written cookery books and who use them professionally. What makes recipes relevant? Are there any Australian works which are essential. I can think of two Australian books that I regard as being the best in that particular field, both published in Western Australia about five years ago on crustacean cookery, by Lesley Morrissey.

To begin in a general way, I would like to point out that for the bulk of the world's population, cookery books at present available are extraordinarily simple. Those which are currently produced in China are of the just-give-us-the-recipes-please type. The recipes are not very well presented, you have to do a bit of interpolation and interpretation to get the right results. The position in the Soviet Union is broadly similar. In PPC 16 we are publishing a long study of 36 recent Soviet cookery books, from all over the Soviet Union, by an American scholar called Sophie Coe. About four of these contain significant information which is more than recipes, like historical information or interesting anecdotes about how recipes arose, how they changed over the years. The great majority of the books are just recipes.

In India the situation is quite different and quite puzzling, because on the one hand you have a very large number of very simple, unsophisticated cookery books which are essentially just recipes, and at the same time you have a small number of highly sophisticated ones containing a lot of other interesting matter. One or two of them, produced by Indian authors and initially published in India, are among the best books of their kind. That is certainly true of the outstanding cookery book in Sri Lanka, it is remarkably good and packed with the kind of information I tend to look for in a cookery book.

I said earlier that we probably wouldn't find just one set of criteria that would apply to all kinds of cookery books. There may be certain criteria which do apply to the whole range, and I would suggest three for your consideration. Firstly, the book should be founded, or largely founded, on direct experience/knowledge. Now that is not quite the same as saying that the author must be totally familiar with every recipe from having made it lots of times, but it comes close to that. This criterion rules out a lot of general books where you may sense that the author is very good at baking, or very interested in fish cookery, but where a lot of the chapters have been put in because the publisher wants a comprehensive cookery book. There is a lot of padding which does not represent direct knowledge or experience.

The second criterion is that attributions and acknowledgements should be correctly made. This is something I feel strongly about. I feel that I can often tell a lot about the quality of a book from seeing what the author has to say about the sorts of recipes being reproduced. An author who is punctilious in saying "this is a slightly adapted version of a recipe published in so-and-so's book" instantly wins some merit in my eyes, while an author who appears to have dreamed up 565 recipes without any help from anybody is immediately suspect.

The third general criterion could be applied to any book with recipes in it, and is that the instructions given with the recipes should be clear, to the extent appropriate, and precise. Total precision, I think, can often be the road to disaster and can have the effect of stifling any thought about what one is doing and how it would work out, but there are many circumstances where precision is required and precise instructions should be provided.

On top of that there is the general question: should cookery books just be cookery books with recipes in, and perhaps some general advice at the beginning, like a little chapter on weights and measures, or is it desirable that they provide information of an historical or cultural kind. It would be interesting to see whether we can distinguish one type from the other. There is

the question of literary style – how much does this matter? Perhaps it doesn't matter in relation to certain types of cookery book. I am very conscious of the fact that there are hardly any cookery books at present about the cookery of Africa south of the Sahara, and researching this area is very difficult. I often wonder how people there who want cookery books manage.

We might also consider, in connection with recipe books, the allied question of books on ingredients where the recipes, if present, are a substantial feature. It seems to me an interesting category of books, and the discussions we have just had suggest that perhaps this is a valuable category and one which we may be in danger of overlooking.

Finally, on the question of relevance, I feel that I am a bit suspicious about this criterion because I think sometimes relevance may not be immediately apparent, and I think that we should try to leave room for books that are of intrinsic interest or importance, even if they don't immediately seem particularly relevant to any large identifiable need. I'd like to relate the strange case history of a book which we published, "Traditional Recipes of Laos". Laos is a country which had no cookery books at all, now it has this one, in Lao and English.

The reason we published it was not because it was particularly relevant but because the recipes came from a cook who wrote them in his note book while he was working as a chef at the Royal Palace of Luang Prabang and who expressed as his dying wish the hope that these recipes would be published and the proceeds used for a Buddhist good cause. Also, his widow fervently believed that his soul could never rest in peace until his dying wish had been executed. She was also disturbed at the thought that her turn might come, and she too might die before she had been able to achieve this. So Prospect Books agreed to publish the work; the rationale we then supplied was that there were lots of organisations, particularly in northern America but also in Australia, who are coping with refugees from all the Indo-Chinese countries and who would welcome some guidance about what these people normally ate at home, and how they did their cooking.

So we invented a kind of hypothetical relevance, which turned out not to exist at all. Then we discovered that the book was relevant, because the Lao refugees themselves really wanted copies because this was a part of their own cultural heritage and tradition which had never been recorded in Laos, where all the traditions are orally transmitted, and from which they now felt cut off. The book is now actually filling a real need and has also made some money for this charity approved by the late chef's elder son, but if we had been asking ourselves the question: is this book relevant? I think there would still be no cookbook on Lao cookery. This isn't supposed to lead to any conclusion, I just wanted to set you thinking a bit, and now I would like to see what you have to say on the subject, what you look for in cookery books, what your personal desiderata are.

BS: In relation to your first criterion, I agree that the book should be founded on direct experience and knowledge. This gets down to the way the recipe is presented – with some recipes you know, on reading them, that the writer is putting into words what he or she has actually done and that gives you more confidence in the recipe.

JS: I do quite a bit of rewriting of recipes in my teaching, and I see students who get absolutely flummoxed by the process of trying to translate recipes from imperial into metric, so this is a plea for consultation by authors with those who have this expertise – and in Australia we have to make the transfer from one system to another quite a bit.

Also, there is no consistency between the English and Australian metric standards, which makes for difficulties in the school situation - for example, the metric spoons are of different size.

I am also interested in recipes written for specific groups, such as people who have only got one arm or people who have to manage on their own, and I recently came across a cookery book for people who couldn't read. The explanation for a milk shake was fine, but later I came to a recipe for chocolate chip cookies, where all the ingredients and steps in the method were illustrated with little drawings and diagrams, and after three or four pages, at the end of the recipe, was the statement: 'Makes six dozen chocolate chip cookies'.

My mind boggled at the thought of someone struggling through this recipe with not much equipment, and at the end find himself overwhelmed with chocolate chip cookies. The thought of converting that recipe, to make a smaller quantity, writing out every single step, reproducing every drawing, before that recipe was usable, was disheartening, to say the least.

I would also make a plea for writers not to include very small quantities as mass - it seems ludicrous to specify 20 grams of something, when most domestic scales are only accurate to the nearest 50 grams, and in addition, people could be encouraged to cultivate some intellectual judgment, rather than blindly obey a recipe. I have been trying to get students to be a bit experimental, even in leaving out a few grains of salt and this is quite a daunting task.

AED: That latter point is perhaps one we could all agree with, and include in our recommended criteria. The book should encourage rather than discourage the exercise of judgment on the part of the user, within reasonable limits.

GH: We tend to talk of cookery books as being both domestic and commercial. I am from the commercial cookery field and have different criteria. In the cookery books that I would recommend or be happy with, for use by a student in food preparation, I would look for clarity of presentation, easy reference finding, a minimum of colour illustrations, maybe some interesting sketches or drawings to bring out a particular point, but there are differences between a book for the housewife and one for the commercial situation.

MH: I would like to expand that point, for the housewife too. I have dozens of cookbooks and use them for inspiration. Although I have a great repertoire of dishes for home-and-entertaining domestic cookery, what I want in a cookbook is something that arouses my imagination, gives me an insight, an extension into the subject that I am dealing with. But if I had set up house only recently and had only just begun cooking, then I would want a completely different kind of book again. So we are looking at a huge range of books, for many different requirements.

CK: I agree, and I think it just as worrying that some domestic cookbooks are very trite as the fact that commercial cookbooks might be chosen not to have coloured pictures - that is sad on both sides. The best cookbook I have ever read is Michel Guerard's Cuisine Gourmande, because I can take it to bed and read it as a novel. It's a very scientific book which explains to me why something is happening, and it suggests that it will not be the end of the world if I substitute one thing for another. It is an absolutely beautiful book to read, it has an undercurrent of enthusiasm and a lovely romanticism - how you will feel by eating the end result.

GB: I think it is a very good cookbook, too, but for a different reason. I think that they are actually terribly good recipes.

AED: These features are not incompatible, and ideally all would be present.

JH: For a beginning student, I would recommend the Time-Life geographical series of cookbooks, because they put food in a cultural perspective.

GG: One of the books I love is by a French chef, Alain Chapel, and the title, in translation, is 'Cooking is Much More Than Good Recipes'. His book is more than recipes, it includes stories about the garden, anecdotes concerning friends, etc, so that you learn something of the chef himself and his philosophy.

CK: That is the one book of the Troisgros, etc, series that has not been translated into English, and I doubt that it ever will be.

ML: It also uses more cream than any other!

BC: I'd like to return to one of the first points, that a cookbook should be based on knowledge and experience. It seems to me that this is often a problem, because it assumes a lot of knowledge on the part of the reader. This is particularly true when we start moving out of our own particular area of cooking to, say, Indian or Chinese cooking. The author often assumes certain knowledge and skips over it, but for the reader who is not familiar with that whole style of cooking, more elaboration is required.

AED: It remains true that the author of the book should have direct knowledge and experience.

BC: I think books don't have enough feedback at the end, they don't really describe what we should achieve. Often the recipe will end by saying 'Cook for half an hour in a certain temperature oven', without saying what you are going to achieve at the end of that particular time or what it is going to look like. Again going to Indian cooking, there are many different regional consistencies of dhal in India, yet very few cookbooks specify whether it is going to be very liquid or more solid or whatever.

AED: This may open the way for a discussion of the desirability and usefulness of illustrations, particularly coloured photographs.

GP: From a historical point of view, written documents are very unreliable; in cookery there is almost an inverse relationship between what is written down and what is actually cooked. It is a mistake to think that you can learn all about cookery from a book.

I think that the most neglected genre is improvised cuisine. One should emphasise that cookbooks are records of peoples' traditions and inventions, and very often they leave out the most vital part, how the person arrived at this recipe. The more general point is that there are genres within food. There are different situations which allow creativity, and one of the most elementary, in today's kitchen, is to open the fridge door and see what should be used up - this is often a starting point for inventiveness.

BS: Nobody should expect to open a cookery book, follow a recipe and know how to do it, just as you can't learn to speak a foreign language from reading a

book about it. If you want to learn a particular technique, you have to go to a cooking school or ask someone to show you.

MT: Some instructions can be given, but 'Cook for 30 minutes in a 400 degree oven' is one of those unnecessarily precise instructions which almost invariably - at least with my oven - is never right. But if the instruction was 'Cook until such time as it goes brown', then even an inexperienced cook might achieve a better than hit-or-miss result.

One other point, in relation to the features that both Cath and Gay mentioned about Guerard's book - one of my favourite cookbooks is the Salvadore Dali book. If you have ever attempted any of those recipes, you will find that the features are invariably incompatible, that the picture in fact has no relation to the recipe. But it is a delightful book, and very good for those who are not good cooks, because the recipe will never turn out!

AED: Many people don't have an oven they can set to 400 - I know we haven't - but it is an excellent idea to say 'Cook until golden brown'. But it would be useful to add, 'This will probably take about 30 minutes'.

ML: There is a new convection-microwave oven, which you can program for bread proving for 30 minutes, then for baking using one-third convection, two-thirds microwave at 150 degrees for 28 minutes and you will pull out a perfect loaf of bread every time. The new technology might solve these problems.

GG: Those ovens can't always be relied on. Consider a piece of beef for roasting - the time taken to roast depends on the shape of the piece of meat. A souffle or a roast is cooked when it is cooked, and this is hard to explain. However, many of my students feel very insecure if I don't give them precise times and temperatures. A good cookbook should inspire confidence in the reader, with recipe introductions and comments and descriptions of the end result.

AED: How do you feel about photographs?

GG: I like them, but preferably of people and food together.

GR: I'm responsible for the best food-oriented collection in a public library in Melbourne, and I'd like to say what I look for in a cookbook. I like a preamble - some culinary writing in addition to recipes. Ingredients should be listed in the order in which they are used. I like the dishes to have some relation to the seasons, and I personally like very technical instructions. It should have a good index. But in a public library, the popular books are those with colour plates.

AED: I'm not sure whether we are analysing the requirements of a good cookbook then trying to define how to make a product in that category good, or whether we are talking about what sort of cookery books people ideally would want and would buy, in our opinion. Do you have an example of a book that matches your criteria and is excellent, in your opinion.

GR: It would have to be Richard Olney's Simple French Food.

JS: I have a general point to make - that we don't eat just dishes, we eat meals, and I think all recipes should include serving suggestions, whether the recipe is intended as an accompaniment, or what accompaniments are served with

it, what part of the meal it should form. While these would not be obligatory, at least there would be some guide to help in meal planning.

AED: Laos again may be the exception. There all dishes are put forward simultaneously and no distinction is made between them, and they are all eaten with fingers.

If you are addressing, say, an audience of Australian or British people and telling them about some exotic foreign dishes that you think they may want to cook, do you say that this a simple lunch dish, or this makes a good supper on a cold day. You know that this is crazy from the point of view of the place of origin, yet I don't know the answer to that one.

JR: I would like to know, of people who have written cookbooks, how many people have undertaken market research before putting pen to paper?

AED: Do you mean formal market research? I suppose most authors do their own informal market research while writing the book.

In my own case, I am both author and publisher and doubly concerned with this problem. All I can say, from the books I have written, is that the efforts I have made to predict success in terms of sales have been quite wrong. The most successful book, and the only one that has made any money at all for me, is the one which seemed to be the least likely to succeed, to wit, *Fish and Fish Dishes of Laos*, published at Vientiane in 1974. My record as a publisher is almost equally lamentable. If you learn of any successful examples of market research, I would be glad to know about them. I may say there is one such exercise going on in America, which I think will probably be successful. A big firm is trying to establish if there is a market in North America which would sustain a 5000 print-run of a series of 25 old cookery books in the English language, reproduced in facsimile. My guess is that they are going to find that the market will be about 2500 to 3000.

GB: I think that we have completely neglected the whole area of someone like Escoffier, a textbook in my kitchen. All the other cookbooks that we have been talking about might have ten terrific recipes that you use over and over again, but they are not great books, they are not definitive volumes. However old-fashioned Escoffier might be, he never says a word wrong.

SA: I feel the same about Elizabeth David, who hasn't been mentioned.

AED: I think there are certain classic books which, in a way, have faded into the past and not many copies are sold nowadays, but practitioners and experts, in particular, probably rely very heavily on them and go back to them regularly. I should perhaps mention that I think that some practitioners rely too heavily on these sort of standard books of the trade.

DD: The market is full of cookery books. If we are talking about what we want in cookery books, and thinking of the future as well as the present, and if we are saying that Australians don't know what fresh food is, then we should concentrate on books about food and thinking about it rather than on recipes. It seems to me that we need to have books about food, and if we know more about ingredients and food we might need fewer recipes and spend more time enjoying cooking and eating.

AED: I think that is very well put, and it supports the suggestion that I tossed out earlier. Would everybody agree with this line of thought?

GR: WE buy this kind of book, but the people who need them don't.

AED: I think that we could reasonably say that we feel that there is room and perhaps some need for more books primarily about food as opposed to those full of recipes. We're agreed on that point.

MStr: Escoffier's works are brilliant, but from the point of view of a teacher, they are written for Europe and to transpose them into teaching situations in Australia is very difficult. It's fine for us to philosophise about it, but for students who don't want to philosophise, who are supposed to be given survival skills, it is very hard to utilise that sort of a book. I think it would be very hard to utilise 'Ma Cuisine' as a general book for the home. It would leave people confused. But if we could write books like that today, and utilise a philosophical approach as Escoffier did, we certainly would be far better off. My favourite cookbook doesn't mention one recipe, but it is a lovely book to read and inspires you to do cooking.

AED: Is there a text book of cookery which is 100% Australian, and which is good and suitable for use here.

ML: It would have to be The Country Woman's Cookbook. Seriously, it has been published for 18 or 19 years and used by countless generations of country women in NSW. The recipes are simple and foolproof.

LCh: In each state there has been a sort of cooking manual - the CWA, the Green and Gold - which includes household hints as well as recipes.

BS: I think we ought conclude this discussion. I would like to thank Alan very much for his chairing of this session, and introduce Derrick Casey and Jim Plummer, who will talk about food and wine combinations before we proceed to a tasting.

DC: I teach a course in wine and food appreciation at the Regency Park College, for management and chef's certificate students, and this paper is basically an introductory resume of that course.

We tend to think of food and wine in combination. There is a lot written about food and wine combinations, unfortunately not a lot is relevant. There are many concepts about food and wine, red meats with red wines, white meats with white wines, certain wines going with game and certain others with fish, but often this is more misleading than saying nothing at all because the wine and food combination area is extremely complex, requiring some knowledge of both wine and food and a great deal of response and responsiveness from the people partaking of it.

Organoleptic perception is what tasting is all about. How much do we think about what we are eating and drinking, what it is that makes up a flavour, and therefore what is it that makes an enjoyable combination of the two? The combination that we are going to look at today is wine and game. Game is the meat of wild animals - in Australia we have pheasant, venison, hare, buffalo, kangaroo and a few wild birds. In many cases game is hung to develop that characteristic game flavour, and we conjure up thoughts of game as a strong robust meat. When we look at wine and food combinations in relation to game, we think of a robust wine and often have a disappointing end result because game in itself is certainly not robust. Fresh pheasant, for example, is a very delicate bird, more delicate than a chicken in many respects. In the

average restaurant one eats fresh pheasant, there are no restaurants I know of that can buy hung game, in fact I think that it is illegal to sell hung game but very few restaurateurs would hang it themselves.

Today we will sample a classic dish of pheasant souvaroff, made with fresh and hung pheasant. The pheasant had been hanging for 12 days at 11 degrees and another 4 days at 2 degrees, just to retard it a little bit because it was over the weekend. If you walk out into the dining room you will probably get some of the true aroma of that lovely hung game. We will taste both dishes with three different wines, a young cabernet, a young cabernet rose and a chardonnay, three fairly different and characteristic wine styles.

I use as an analogy for food and wine combinations stepping into a hot bath. We pop our feet in, slowly lower ourselves down and finally relax into the bath. When we have resolved in our own minds that the bath isn't uncomfortable we can lie there very comfortably. The temperature of the water hasn't really reduced greatly but our perception and our system have become accustomed to the heat of the bath. Now the same can be said about consuming food and wine. If we eat a pheasant or any other dish, our sensory perceptors become fatigued very quickly. The real taste perception is generally in the first one or two mouthfuls, after that the perceptors become fatigued and we need something to refresh them - which is like getting out of the hot bath, running under a cold shower then jumping back into the bath again. So, with food and wine, we have a wine that really refreshes the palate and then go back to the food, so that we can taste it again.

The intent of our classes is to get people to think a little bit more about what they are eating, and to try to start defining flavours in their own minds, because describing a flavour is a very difficult process. If you have ever tried to describe how something tastes, you will realise how difficult. The tasting today is simply an evaluation exercise to make you sit down and think about what you are eating. Our course is the expansion of this whole concept. We look at all sorts of fish dishes, meat dishes; we look at the meats, the seafoods, the vegetables, identifying each particular flavour. You must have a basic knowledge of the concepts of cookery, what the finished dish looks like, tastes like, feels like, to be able to marry a good wine to it and therefore have a total enjoyable experience, rather than one of the wine overpowering the food to such an extent that it is not worth drinking with it, or vice versa.

Jim Plummer is going to add a few words about the wines. Jim is a colleague of mine, one of the winemakers for Penfolds Wines, and has participated in the courses with me in the past. Then we will move into the back room, have a look at the pheasant dishes with the wines.

I will just leave you with my thoughts on the fresh and hung pheasant. It is a little like comparing a mild cheddar cheese to a fully matured esrom. And now I will introduce Jim Plummer.

JP1: Briefly, I would like to emphasize what has already been said concerning the wine. Just as much as you need to have some idea of cookery techniques and what to expect in a dish, you also need to have some idea about the sort of wine you are trying to marry with the food. This area has been sadly neglected in Australia over the past few years. There are many cookery books on the market but sadly, so many of our books on wine education have been lacking in some aspects. Those of European or American origin don't cover our wines, those that have been produced in Australia often have rather romantic renditions of the wines and in fact have little information to pass on about what to expect. With the wines this afternoon, we are asking you to ignore colour, clarity and odour and concentrate on the taste sensations. We would like you to assess the wines individually to see what flavours there are, what tastes there are, and I

differentiate flavour perception from taste perception, because in taste we are looking at basically the sensations of sweetness, acidity or sourness, and bitterness. We also want you to look at the after-taste, the feeling that is left in your mouth after you have swallowed the wine, and how long it lasts.

We would like you to look at each wine and at each of the two dishes separately, keeping in mind what they are, then start to intermarry the wine and the food. The way to do this is to take a mouthful of food then look at the aftertastes, the sensations you are left with, and then introduce the wine. What should happen is that the wine should be like the cold shower, but to take the concept one step further, it is almost like being in the middle of a sauna then rushing out and plunging into an ice-cold pool of water. We are trying to refresh our palates so that we can keep on having that stimulating experience.

Now there is a particular reason for presenting each of these wines. They will always give you a different sensation, alone and with a different preparation of the pheasant. Look at the acidity of the wine, the overall flavour perception, the complexity of the wine. Would you think perhaps the wine would be better by itself? Does it make you want to keep on eating the dish longer than you would have without the wine? Why do you have a wine with the food?

As to the three wines, the first is the cabernet rose, a very fresh and light style of wine typifying the cabernet sauvignon fruit; you should find it a reasonably simple wine with the accent on the fruit character coming through and probably of medium acidity. The second wine is a chardonnay which again has medium acidity, but it should also have another element which we will leave for you to discover. The final wine is a cabernet sauvignon from Coonawarra, completely different to the first cabernet rose even though made from the same grape, but the grapes have come from different regions. Again, it is fairly simple wine although it has had other complexing factors introduced to it.

The final point concerns vocabulary, and in wine appreciation you don't have the right words to describe something if you want to pass that information on to someone else. It's up to you to find your own words, we are not trying to influence that. There are many combinations of wine and food and what we are saying may not suit you, but we know that there are some combinations that don't work and still many others to be discovered. Thank you.

MORNING COFFEE, Tuesday 13 March

Anzac biscuits	
Lamingtons	...baked by Stacey Hill-Smith
'Pig's ears'	...baked by Jackie Rakowski

SESSION 3

GB: This morning we have six papers, and just over two hours or about 20 minutes for each paper so there won't be any resumes about yesterday, which I thought was terrific. We are moving into the theoretical realm first, with a paper from Dr. Graham Pont, of The University of NSW. In 1982 he gave a course, within the Department of General Studies, on the history of food and in 1983 it became a course in gastronomy, based on the book by Brillat-Savarin, about whom Graham seems to know so much. Today he is going to give his meditations on Brillat-Savarin's meditations on gastronomy.

GP: Since my first acquaintance with Brillat-Savarin, I have been a devoted student and admirer, and adopted his classic work - in either the Anne Drayton or M.F.K.Fisher translation - as a textbook for my 'Food in History' course, first offered at The University of NSW in 1979, and for the revamped 1983 course entitled 'Gastronomy - A Philosophical Introduction to Food in Society'. The book proved to be capable of sustaining line-by-line study, a true sign of a classic. Yet still I find new ideas in his work, previously overlooked or only partly understood; and when, in preparing for this symposium, I studied again 'The Physiology of Taste', in various French editions and English translations, I made the surprising discovery that, despite its universal recognition as THE classic of western gastronomy, it is still generally misunderstood.

Having examined the reception of the book - that is, the history of peoples responses to 'The Physiology of Taste' ever since it was published in Paris at the end of 1825 - and having read the comments of editors and translators in all accessible editions, I find not one of them has recognised or understood the 'pièce de résistance' of the Physiologist's Feast, Meditation XXX, or 'Bouquet'. Structurally as well as gastronomically, this is the centrepiece of 'The Physiology of Taste', and yet it has been almost completely ignored by a century and a half of critics and commentators. The only serious reference I have found is in the Nouvelle Revue Française (No.346, 1 November 1981) where Jean Roudaut reprints the text of Meditation XXX, with a prefatory discussion. Roudaut is the only other person I know to have perceived the musical content of 'Bouquet', to which I drew attention in an earlier paper ('Gastronomy as Fine Art and Religion: Carême and Brillat-Savarin'). Now if it is a great and important book, and yet the centrepiece has been overlooked, it follows that the book is misunderstood.

In the preface to his book, Brillat-Savarin tells us that its writing was 'not a great labour... I have merely placed in order materials I had collected long ago'. 'The Physiology of Taste' contains a wealth of notes, observations, thoughts, recollections and other memorabilia collected through the author's long and varied career; and to put these into some kind of order,

Brillat-Savarin would have needed to draft a plan, for the final book has a clear and firm structure. At the beginning of Meditation VI, Brillat-Savarin tells us that 'when I commenced to write, my table of contents was already made out, and I had the whole plan of my book in my head...' That plan, I suggest, was a very appropriate one, gastronomically: its form is that of a carte, or menu. Abraham Hayward, one of the first and still one of the best English students of Brillat-Savarin, recognised the table of contents in 'The Physiology of Taste' as a 'menu', but did not draw any explicit conclusions about the form of the feast, which is obviously modelled on the classical Graeco-Roman dinner (deipnon or cena) consisting of three services. What nobler model could Brillat-Savarin have chosen?

Brillat-Savarin was a serious writer; he had read his predecessors, including Grimod de la Reynière and English writers, very carefully. He was a serious gastronome and gourmand, and regarded food as the basis of a happy and healthy life, and therefore the dinner was a good form to follow. This is obscured in the English translations, but the original edition is in fact two volumes. The second volume, after Meditation XXX, consists of a selection of trifles and tidbits and corresponds to dessert; the first volume is divided into two main parts, which correspond to the two services of a dinner.

The Professor's feast begins with an hors d'oeuvre of aphorisms and other prefatory material. The main service consists of thirty substantial Meditations: Brillat-Savarin tells us, in his 'Transition' from the Meditations to the Varieties, that the main service is devoted to the theory of Gastronomy and of Gourmandise, offered in a series of entrees. And in his preface, he left us a broad hint as to the aristological composition of his book: 'Si, malgré tant d'efforts, je n'ai pas présenté à mes lecteurs de la science facile à digérer...'

In the Oxford Classical Dictionary, the entry under 'Symposium' noted that a symposium form had been used by many writers including, in ancient times, Athenaeus, Plato and Xenophon. They had used the symposium form to communicate ideas about gastronomy and other subjects. The Deipnosophists of Athenaeus is a mine of information, from books which would not otherwise be known, arranged in the form of a discussion. Why would Brillat-Savarin reject this form? My answer is because the drinking party was no longer separate in his time. Wine had been brought into the menu, not reserved for later, and so he had to change the form. I found one reference in the Oxford Classical Dictionary which gave me a vital clue - some classical authors wrote not only in the symposium form, which is the second half of the classical dinner; a few also wrote in the form of the deipnon, dinner. I maintain that the form of 'The Physiology of Taste' follows that of a banquet.

Now in that form, the mythology of Gasterea, which is subtitled 'Bouquet', comes right at the climax of the dinner, at the end of the main course and before the dessert, which is the traditional spot for the 'entremets', the interlude. This is where he places gastronomic mythology. Thus Brillat-Savarin is referring to an ancient tradition of inserting theatrical pieces or some form of allegorical scene in the middle of a dinner, which indicates the crucial importance of 'Bouquet' or the mythology of Gastérea. I maintain that Brillat-Savarin abandons, in Gastérea, rational discourse which he uses elsewhere, and opts for a more ancient form of communication, poetry.

Brillat-Savarin was himself a musician and poet, not necessarily a great one, but he admired these forms. In 'Bouquet' he goes back to the mythological mode, trying to communicate the main lessons of his book in the most concise possible form, namely the traditional form of religious or mythological communication. In the period after the French Revolution, there had been experiments in mass communication, and I argue that Brillat-Savarin's

Gastérea, the Tenth Muse, is what Conrad Donatowski calls 'a muse for the masses'. Brillat-Savarin was trying to reform gastronomy as a mass culture, to express it in a universally comprehensible form. If you read his work carefully, you see that he is trying to set up gastronomy as a religion, a way of life, and the general outlines are quite clear from 'Bouquet'.

There are two main lessons in 'The Physiology of Taste' - the nature of gastronomy and the nature of gourmandise. Both concepts are difficult to comprehend, although gastronomy is relatively easier. Brillat-Savarin carried on the concept of the Ancient Greeks, that gastronomy is the science, the regulation of the system of the stomach, or belly. I think the subject is larger than this, but the term was coined by the Ancient Greeks, and we know that Archestratus took a scientific point of view, in accordance with his time. Another word, closely aligned to gastronomy but less common, is gastrology. There is a subtle difference between the two; gastrology, the logos of the stomach, is the pure science whereas gastronomy is a discipline concerned with regulation, the avoidance of excess, concern for quality of life and so on. Gastronomy is the right term for our discipline but it isn't just a pure science. One of the problems I see in the work of Brillat-Savarin is that he was an amateur scientist himself - he admired the achievements of the Enlightenment, he was very keen on chemistry; so he tended to push gastronomy into the scientific mould. His descriptions of experimentation, his analyses, his attempts to explain the mechanisms of taste, are all very scientific, in the fashion of the times. In 'Bouquet', however, gastronomy emerges quite clearly as a regulative discipline.

The concept of gourmandise is more difficult. Why did Brillat-Savarin use this word, which to almost everyone denotes one of the seven deadly sins? I think the simple reason was convenience of vocabulary. He wanted a general word to characterise an activity, an attitude, a life style, and in the French language there's no abstract noun corresponding to 'gourmet', as 'gourmandise' corresponds to 'gourmand'. But also, Brillat-Savarin had a sense of irony and of humour, and he was probably making fun of the old puritanical attitude, which he didn't share. Indeed, the book sets out to draw a very sharp distinction between asceticism - extreme neglect or disregard of food - and gluttony - extreme preoccupation. There's a moral content in 'The Physiology of Taste'. Brillat-Savarin is trying to convey a balanced attitude towards nutrition, and that is absolutely modern. Time and time again we find Brillat-Savarin anticipating modern ideas; we forget that in his time he was a revolutionary.

Gourmandise is a passion, a passionate but still balanced and reflective concern for the sphere of taste, over which Gastérea presides. Brillat-Savarin had before him the model of science, the scientific attitude, and I think he was trying to reconstruct gastronomy and gourmandise on the same model. Gourmandise is a passionate love for the good, the beautiful, the right thing in food, in nutrition and in taste. 'The Physiology of Taste' is an attempt to analyse an attitude comparable to the scientific attitude towards truth. As in the scientific tradition, there are extremes; the extremes of scepticism and partiality in science correspond to those of asceticism and gluttony in gourmandise. In the area of gourmandise, one can be too ascetic and puritanical and deny the reality of taste, or one can be too partial and be a glutton. Brillat-Savarin is trying to combine reason with feeling and in this respect is superior to Grimod de la Reynière.

Consider now the motivation for gastronomical mythology. Prior to Brillat-Savarin, people were trying to locate this emerging subject. A lot of people were writing and thinking about food before the concept of gastronomy was revived into French by the poet, Joseph Berchoux, in his 'poème didactique'

La Gastronomie. The term entered the French language in 1801, and immediately after that, in the quarter century from Berchoux to Brillat-Savarin, there was a real ferment of interchange of ideas between England and France, despite the Battle of Waterloo. Writers were reading each other and borrowing from each other, often without acknowledgment, and Brillat-Savarin borrowed from at least one English text, 'The School for Good Living', published anonymously in 1814. He must have read this, because many of his ideas are in that publication. So people were thinking about food at that time, as well as developing ideas and techniques. The problem for the intellectuals and philosophers was what to do with about this new subject, how to fit it into the scheme of things?

That, I maintain, is the central problem addressed in Meditation XXX: how do you conceptualise gastronomy? Brillat-Savarin, although he has taken up ideas from many different sources, says that gastronomy is a 'musical' science and art. Before him, people like Carême and Grimod had attempted to answer the same question and had tried to conceptualise gastronomy and the culinary arts under the ancient theory of architecture. Brillat-Savarin had read that, yet went further by putting gastronomy under music. He tried to elevate gastronomy to the highest levels of western culture alongside poetry, rhetoric, music, drama and the other fine arts. When he says *Gastérea* is the tenth muse, that is the most convenient way of conceptualising gastronomy. First he invokes the muses, which people often did at that time in the dinner, to bring on the classical-allegorical figures; then in one sentence he simply enlarges our idea of culture to include a patroness of his new art and science. The rest of the scenario of Meditation XXX is very simple: a new sacred banquet to replace the old sacred banquet, a new religion to replace the old.

GB: I don't know if you see the relevance of even bringing up Brillat-Savarin in a conference on Australian gastronomy. This paper should perhaps have been given first, because Brillat-Savarin broke new ground and in a sense we are indebted to him - without Brillat-Savarin we wouldn't be having a conference. He was the meditator on gastronomy and, for the moment anyway, we are here under the banner of gastronomy. We may not have set out our definitions and clarified everything but it is important that we are here. Do you want to ask anything about this, have you any thoughts on Brillat-Savarin?

BS: Can you describe what would be the 'entremets' course that you see as equivalent to 'Bouquet'?

GP: In food and music there is often a common vocabulary. Entremets in the music dictionary is a play 'in between', it also means a dish 'in between'. In the ancient banquets the whole thing would often be a spectacle. There would be a spectacle of drama and theatre and involving dishes; so that entremets, 'in between', can refer to a theatrical presentation - there is one in Athenaeus, there are plenty in the renaissance and baroque times - or it can mean a dish 'in between'. There is a number of terms, like entree, farce, which have a gastronomic meaning as well as a stricter culinary meaning, or perhaps a larger theatrical meaning.

GB: I thought, Barbara, that you might like to comment on Graham's aside that Grimod was a greedy man. Do you agree?

BS: Not necessarily. I think Grimod was passionately concerned with food. His Almanach and some of his other writings were distinctly destined for the nouveaux riches who had been turned up by the revolution and who didn't know how to eat. There they were in Paris, supposed to be entertaining and not

knowing how to eat, what to buy, how to instruct their cooks. A lot of his writing was to educate these people and he was often very sarcastic in his treatment of them. He used the word 'gourmand' throughout, writing in the early 1800s but I think that the word had already acquired the connotations that Brillat-Savarin used. If you look at the French dictionaries of that time, you can see that the change from gourmandise meaning gluttony to gourmandise meaning appreciation of food, happened about that time.

GB: I don't find Brillat-Savarin as striking as Graham does but perhaps I need to do his course. I certainly think he should be read.

The next paper is being given by Anthony Coronos who is a student in philosophy at the University of NSW. It is called Culture and Agriculture: Towards a Philosophical Cosmology of Food, and I think it is a nice lead-in after Brillat-Savarin.

AC: I am very glad that Graham had the onerous task of introducing the definitional problems inherent in the concepts of gastronomy and gourmandise. The emphasis in my paper is more on the practical aspects of how the reforms envisaged by Brillat-Savarin can be instituted.

My paper hinges around the concept of gastronomy and the notion of gastronomy as a science and I want to argue that Brillat-Savarin, although he always had a scientific model before him, envisaged something much grander. If you manage to institute gastronomy as he sees it I think it would lead to a reformation of all the other sciences, in line with a more humanistic concept of what we are here on this planet for.

As a philosopher it is rather odd that I should be at this symposium at all because Plato and Aristotle were really very down on food. In the Phaedo, where Plato is talking about death and the immortality of the soul, he asks the people present: Should a philosopher be concerned with the so-called pleasures of food and drink? The response is: No, certainly not.

Plato had a very negative view of the art of cookery. To him cooks were panderers; they tried to stimulate the taste and create what he regarded as a false taste sensation. He was an early advocate of natural whole foods, but in a very ascetic way. Any dwelling on bodily pleasures of any sort, whether food, taste or sexual, was just an encumbrance and had to be done away with.

In line with that kind of typically religious prejudice, the ascetic life style is one which produces results irrespective of culture and religion because the abuse of the body is the most direct way, apart from hallucinogenic drugs, to induce altered states of consciousness. Now Plato instituted this and set up the association between eating food and gluttony. What Brillat-Savarin was so good at was his attack of this association. According to Plato, you have to divorce pleasure from good. Brillat-Savarin says, look what God has done, he has created man such that he must eat to live and he incites him by means of appetite and rewards him with pleasure. So for Brillat-Savarin the goodness of God is in this fact that he gives us pleasure when we eat good food.

Brillat-Savarin tried to institute a notion of the new rational man who dwells in psychosomatic unity. His body and soul are not divided in some kind of schizophrenic morality and to this end his appreciation of food is not purely intellectual. The first part of the book goes to great lengths to associate and integrate all the sensual perceptors of the body with the rational faculty, so that The Physiology of Taste is like saying: Look, food has to do with sight, with smell, with taste, with touch and texture and so on. The mind is brought in to integrate all these things because they are often very difficult to conceptualise.

Part of it again is the reformation in our morality of food. Aphorism 2

says: Animals feed: man eats: only the man of intellect knows how to eat. The theme is repeated in Aphorism X: drunkards and victims of indigestion do not know how to eat and drink. Here, Brillat-Savarin has tried to get away from the gluttonous association, the association with sin. In doing this, he is instituting a new religion or form of life.

Now the problem is how gastronomy would set about to study culture and agriculture. I have developed what I call a philosophical cosmology.

For Greeks the concept of cosmos is one of order and harmony. Without order and harmony there is no universe as such; one of the drives of the physical scientist is to discover the underlying mathematical harmonies inherent in nature. So, too, the process of nourishment is, in essence, our relationship with the greater macrocosm, how we relate to the land, to the environment, through our agriculture. What I am looking at is how the human cosmos or order of culture integrates with the greater order. It is a process of what I call cosmic dialectic, which is the process of action, reaction and synthesis among the various levels of order. Once food is placed in that context we recognise that the whole thing goes to the very stars themselves which, as it were, cook up the matter of the universe and provide the energy which keeps this planet going.

Now the harmonic model is a very traditional one; cultures as diverse as China and Greece have it. What is it about modern western culture that has lost this harmonic perspective? It goes back in a fundamental way to the scientific revolution and what is called the mechanisation of the world view. With the development of modern science the human disappears from the picture; what exists out there are atoms in motion and the only qualities that atoms have are shape, hardness and motion. Now what they did was to conceive the universe as some kind of gigantic machine and in accordance with this metaphor, industrial philosophers like Francis Bacon argued that in order to get a rational society we would have to turn society into a machine. When you take this ideology and put it on to agriculture, what you get is the agribusiness complex, the drive to greater efficiency, the increasing mechanisation of nature. What this does in many ways is to take the peasant off the land and replace him with machines, send the peasant into the city and create a form of cultural chaos because the roots of culture are destroyed. Thus our food habits become rather perverse, as Michael's book shows very clearly.

One of the difficulties of putting Brillat-Savarin's ideas into practice is that what we are fighting against is institutionalised and in the economic structure. It is very difficult to get at this because it is faceless. What is necessary is reform in our entire approach to nature, a reform in our knowledge. If you can get that within the academy, you would change our whole form of life because if the knowledge base changes the power structures will follow.

If we reinstitute the harmonic model of existence and get back to the land and have that intimate relationship with the land and with ingredients, then again we reform our morality, we reform our notions of what true health is, and we get away from exploitation, the mechanical world view, to the notion of the man on the land as a nurturer who works in harmony with nature and whose aim is what we call a permaculture. In line with this, to cultivate the land is to cultivate what I call the varying genius of the land. The French and most other cultures have a very intimate appreciation of ingredients and their relationship to their source. If we cultivate an Australian landscape - and note that in the Australian landscape our flora and fauna are unique - we would get a unique form of agriculture. We would develop a regional character in our cuisine as other great cultures have, and we would get away from the uniformity of industrial food and the availability of foods regardless of season. We would

develop a cuisine which would be in tune with the land, with the people, with the climate, with the cycles of the seasons. To borrow a phrase from Claude Levi-Strauss, we would end up with a culinary universe which is a miniature reflection of the cosmos.

Gastronomy as Brillat-Savarin defines it, as the reasoned comprehension of everything connected with the nourishment of man, is truly a study which could lead to the necessary reformation in science and in culture to bring this about.

GB: I think that that is an extraordinarily provocative paper. We have just a few minutes for discussion.

MStr: I would like to speak in defence of the Greeks, because one might get the idea that because Plato didn't like cooks, the Greeks weren't interested in food. In Greek cities, where the whole population attended the plays, cooks were raised to such a level that they actually presented their new recipes on stage.

AC: Plato was a reactionary, a kind of religious freak. The ethos of Greeks is more like Zorba the Greek, and this is clear in Brillat-Savarin's Bouquet.

AS: I have several disagreements with your paper. The first concerns your relationship between humans and nature; I see the two concepts of dialectic and harmony as completely irreconcilable, in that dialectic always has a sense of movement, going towards change, whereas harmony seems to be static.

The second one is more important. I completely deny your idea of a harmonic tradition. In societies such as those of China or in peasant societies, I don't see any harmony with the land. For instance in China there was deforestation by the peasantry in their exploitation of the land.

Thirdly, and this is the most fundamental point, it seems to me that you consider that ideas can change life. I don't think that we can fight against the forces which are producing, for example, the mass-produced tomato, simply by having ideas. I see no form of praxis, no practical connection between ideas and changing the reality.

AC: With regard to the first point, the notion of dialectic that you are appealing to is the Hegelian one, which is one of conflict. I have redefined this, in a sense, in appealing to a much older model, the Greek, which is a harmonic one because the concept of cosmos is inherently one of balance. If there is chaos, if there is strife, then there is no universe.

GB: Perhaps you could continue this philosophic discussion later. Let's move on to the next paper, from Helen Peacocke who is a lecturer at the William Angliss College in Melbourne. She is going to give us a paper which is relevant to the idea of the Australian cuisine: "If we could eat oysters why not wicketty grubs?"

HP: A lot of this might well be treated by discussion because I haven't got answers, I just have problems that intrigue me.

Last night I put it to my learned colleagues, would they eat particular foods. Yes: not only would they eat them, but we spent the next hour devising recipes to put cockroaches into. We have a marvellous one going which George devised, which was icecream, macadamia nuts and a little strawberry sauce, and we all agreed that perhaps we could actually eat cockroaches.

I put it to you: could we really eat some of those things which we normally

wouldn't be faced with in our diet. If we could eat anything, if when faced with starvation we could eat cockroaches and appalling insects and the sort of things that Magnus Pike advocates, why didn't the settlers do this during the very early days of settlement, rather than relying on the very sparse stores from England, most of which were rancid, filled with worms or salted to the point of being almost uneatable. Yet they preferred these to the kind of food that was readily available in the bush had they actually watched closely what the natives were doing with the food, how they gathered it and how they cooked it.

I feel that we have never embraced a single aspect of the Aboriginal cuisine. Instead we have boiled puddings, we have made meat pies and we have done all sorts of things that are not natural to this climate. So I am intrigued: why was it that certain explorers and settlers preferred death by starvation to death by poison from unknown grubs and berries. If you are dying anyway it is not much of a gamble to pick a couple of berries and hope to hell that they are going to be all right, so why can't we get our mind around the acceptance of certain foods, what is it that stops us and sees certain foods as abhorrent.

In my paper I took a sentence from Brillat-Savarin, who argued that everything eatable is at the mercy of man's appetite. I would like to twist that and say man's appetite is at the mercy of everything eatable.

GB: Do you want to put forward some views, or does anyone have a comment?

CK: I think it is fairly obvious why the early settlers preferred a poor diet and rancid food. They were already firmly entrenched in what we see as modern human beings.

HP: Are you saying that they saw the Aborigines as non-human?

CK: The Aborigines seemed to them to be still very primitive and still at the animal stage.

AC: I know that my parents, who are Greek and who have been in Australia for about 30 years, have never yet eaten Asian food and they refuse to do so. They will only eat the food that their cultural background has brought them up with.

HP: So it's definitely clinging to cultures and the known. I can accept that but why, when you are starving, when the chips are down ...

ML: A person who is starving doesn't know that he is going to die but he has a fairly good idea that if he picks some berries off the tree, that might finish him off.

HP: But we have one instance, given in Anne Gollan's book on Australian food, where in fact the settler was quite convinced he was going to die because he had dug a grave and written out a last letter to be sent to the city saying that he was dying of starvation.

LCh: Where was he when he was dying of starvation? There is a difference between the bush around Sydney or in the middle of NSW, and the Nullabor Plains.

HP: In this example, there was a profusion of fruits and berries in the area in

which he died.

JH: Perhaps one defines one's existence through one's social structure, it is a perceptual thing. As you know, that the early settlers painted the Australian landscape like the English landscape and perhaps they actually couldn't exist outside this structure, so they may as well be dead.

MT: The literature on prisoners and prison escapees, castaways and so on is rich in accounts of people surviving on less than cockroaches, on sea water alone.

HP: Then why did most of the settlers in those early days, and for a long time afterwards, refuse any kind of survival from the land here?

MT: I don't think it was a matter of life and death. I think you are highlighting a few instances and you are not putting as much emphasis on the many instances of survival.

NB: It's interesting that in discussing Aboriginal food we always go to things like wicketty grubs, when there are fish in Australia almost identical to those in Europe. There are mammals of all kinds, and most of the indigenous species make good steaks.

HZ: Having read Helen's paper, I opened at random a journal of Kennedy, the explorer, thinking that he struggled with food shortages. He had trouble with the horses carrying his stores and one died accidentally or had to be shot. The day before he had complained about the shortage of flour, and the day after he issued ammunition to hunters, to try to shoot some pigeons. Now why did he not carve a steak off that horse? Obviously he refused to do this.

YW: To extend this further, there is the situation in the Phillipines where children are going blind from vitamin A deficiency, yet outside their huts are growing pawpaws and other fruits high in vitamin A. I see this as an extension of the same problem.

GB: What you are saying is that we are not innately intelligent eaters.

MS: I disagree totally. I think it is supremely intelligent to be worried about human culture.

LCh: There are some other aspects. For Australian and other expatriates in India and the Arab countries, it's something to do with losing caste. In Algeria, for example, the Australians told us there was no local food, yet we found that the local markets and shops were full of eggs, fruits and vegetables and meat and when we asked the Australians why they didn't buy them, they replied that they preferred to have supplies sent down by the Australian embassy in Algiers. They feel that if they eat the native food, somehow that is going to make them lose caste.

VO'N: I suggest that the reason that the Australian immigrants didn't eat what was native has something to do with the basic philosophy of why they were here. The American settlers incorporated cranberries, pumpkin and corn from the native diet and these became part of their twentieth century traditional diet. The first American settlers were of the same stock as the Australian, but they were grateful to have religious freedom and the Australian settlers hoped they

wouldn't be here in seven years time.

HP: I mentioned that in my paper, arguing that the land was a punishment to them and therefore eating from the land was an extension of that punishment.

JS: In the Mary Thomas diaries there are reports of buying samphire from the natives because they were short of greens.

HZ: Just to turn the whole thing around, if we won't eat native food, why are natives so keen to eat European food?

MH: I was wondering if you could draw an analogy with children - why does one child in a family eat everything that the parents are eating and that is put before him, and with gusto, and why does another child say, I don't like this liver, I don't want to eat this.

HP: Asserting your personality, isn't it?

CK: This links up with self-image. I am fascinated by anorexia, which is thought to be the one way that the girl can have control over her life. It is not just a desire to be thin.

JP: I don't think Australia was anywhere near as productive as people would imagine in the days before white settlement, in the days before fertilizers. We just didn't have millions of kangaroos. The Aborigines ate our food because it was a lot easier to get and a lot more interesting than his. You try to find wicketty grubs - they're very rare.

GB: I think that we are going to have to close that topic now. Yvonne Webb will present her paper, entitled All Things Bright and Beautiful.

YW: The reason that I have called my paper All Things Bright and Beautiful is that I feel very optimistic about Australian food patterns and where we are heading in the twenty-first century, and I feel some of the problems that have been mentioned today will very easily be overcome.

In early and mediaeval times people seem to have eaten until they have felt full. The feeling of a full stomach was one of luxury and was most desirable. In the nineteenth century the food supply of Europe began to stabilise and other aspects, such as the appearance of the food, became important. If you look at, say, French art, this was blooming; the impressionists were trying to do something with painting that hadn't been done before. The French were developing their food habits, in fact it was almost the era of the French visual illusion. Legs of ham were dressed up to look like pineapples. Taste was not all that important; the accent was on the look of the food, it had to look good.

Also most of the main dishes that were being developed were of animal origin. We know that carrots, parsnips and other vegetables were used in abundance but they didn't rate a mention in banquet menus. But the French peasantry and other European groups who didn't have access to the same choice of food were still eating their lettuces and their cucumbers and their garlic and what we consider as French cuisine today not only has taken many of the influences of the so-called upper classes but also of the French peasantry.

In this century we started further reinforcing the eye-appeal of food. We knew that the early food colours weren't safe but that didn't seem to be as

important as making the food look good. The food colours were cosmetics, often expensive, and if we stare into many cake shops we still see the evidence.

Sugar technology was becoming very refined and sugar was available to all, very cheaply. Salt, too, became freely available so we started the era of taste. The two main tastes that seem to have really gone ahead are the tastes of sweetness and of saltiness; in fact many of the dishes of that era could be divided into savoury:salty or dessert:sweet. With food technology firmly established, companies saw the need for pre-packaging products such as custard powder, gravy powder, tomato sauce. Now remember that the dominant tastes were for saltiness and sweetness, and remember too that both of these products had been used since time immemorial as preservatives. From the food companies point of view (a) they were ensuring against food poisoning and (b) it was what people wanted and liked. At the same time icecubes started appearing in every drink glass in the land and so the food companies felt that they needed more highly concentrated tastes.

Then in the 1950s all the senses were being stimulated by the environment. The population didn't really know what they were eating but the taste was good. Some people started to ask questions about additives in the food but various statements were made, such that: "They wouldn't allow it if it weren't safe". However people did start to question and we found that the salt, the sugar and the fat which had made the food taste good were excessive.

Today fruits and vegetables are becoming more plentiful. With migration the range of products has become very much greater. But in response to the earlier question, why didn't we go to our native foods, I suggest a reason is that we had this history of highly salted, highly sweet foods. Most of the native Australian foods in fact have very delicate tastes and aromas. If we also look at the way the Aborigines cooked these ingredients, they didn't add chemicals of any kind to further their flavour, they appreciated the delicate flavours. I suggest that rather than looking at how we can incorporate wicketty grubs into our cuisine, we should be looking at what the Aborigines do with their cuisine.

So if we are going to look at these cuisines we really have to change a very fundamental expectation of our foods. Going away from strong flavours, strong foods looking bright and beautiful, towards something which is very delicate, much more natural. I would like to see developing a more gentle art of flavours and look more to the Aboriginal culture for what we can offer the twenty-first century.

GB: Does anyone want to say anything about that?

LCh: I came from the Riverland in South Australia, and there we ate as a matter of course yabbies, wild duck, murray cod, catfish, all fresh and cooked as naturally as possible. These were the foods the Aborigines ate before we were there and we just carried on their practice.

GB: We are now going to hear from Max Lake. I am going to leave Max's Curriculum Vitae outside and you can go through it at your leisure. He is a man full of wisdom, a winemaker, author and doctor, and Max is going to tell us about Balance and Harmony.

ML: What I am going to talk about is balance, contrast and harmony and I am going to mention a meal that provoked this outburst. Balance applies to all the aesthetics not just to food, but I am applying it only to gastronomy today.

Balance: 1. an apparatus for weighing with a scale pan at each end
2. equilibrium

3. general harmony between parts of anything, etc.

Contrast: Juxtaposition of forms, colours, flavours, textures to bring out the differences.

Harmony: combination of forms, parts, musical notes, to produce an aesthetically pleasing effect. There is also an implication of consistency.

Why is balance so appealing? Why do we feel so right about it? If we look at something that is balanced we feel good because, I believe, it is based on a harmony of contrast and contrast is perhaps our most important educator. Evidence is coming forward now to imply brain hormone reward responses; endorphins are released when we contrast something or achieve something via mastery of contrast. Boredom and pretension destroy pleasure. Rarity, variety and contrast give it zest. This applies to taste, sex, sound and sight. Who said that? Not me. It was Epicurus who was obviously Brillat-Savarin's great-grandfather and that's his order.

Contrast is our most vital educator and pleasurer. The best and earliest example of it is the baby at birth. Just think about the birth of a baby - one minute it's warm and the next minute, cold. Literally, one minute it's wet and the next minute it's dry. Dark:light; silence:noise; rhythm:chaos; nourished:hungry. After an hour or two of that, the baby is learning a hell of a lot. The central nervous system gets tuned, tracks open up and, as I said before, the mastery of these contrasts and the learning process is a source of interest and pleasure and releases endorphins.

Contrast implies variety and this itself can be simple or complex. Simplicity is the last goal of the complex. It may be difficult to improve simple primary textures and flavours.

Great meals are those with horizontal and vertical sequences of contrast and balance. Now what I mean by horizontal sequence is just the food on the plate, and what I mean by vertical sequence is the succession of dishes. Some horizontal examples of contrast are, in terms of presentation, red-green, sour-sweet, flesh and textured vegetables. There is a lot of physiology involved here. A cat plays with a mouse to get its gastric motility and juices going, and we have the same response from great presentation, particularly red-green contrasts.

Now vertical examples of contrast are simple. The sequence in a fairly typical meal could be: fresh, cooked, rich, acid, sweet. You could work out the courses as they might follow each other. Fresh, cooked, rich, acid, sweet. Now the physiological reasons for these hardly need discussing. I've told you about presentation and what it does for your stomach. As regards the rich-acid sequence, if you don't follow up something fatty and rich with acid your bile flow is slow and you get gall stones. You have to have this kind of contrast.

With sweet, the physiological sequence or consequence of anything sweet is a cut-off of appetite. We are programmed for this in an evolutionary manner, not a cultural manner. Sweet is a cut-off of appetite, so it always amuses me when people follow sweets with cheese.

As regards wine, consider the marvellous simple, primitive balance of oily pasta with an aggressive young red. There is nothing in the world better than that, and if the oil is fresh, free-run olive oil, and if the pasta is hard wheat, and if the aggressive young red is really chock-a-block with acid tannin, you have a perfect marriage of unequals, which of course brings me to the point that a gourmet is a glutton with brains.

What started all this was a dinner I attended last year in Sydney, an extremely important gastronomic event. The first course was millefeuille of goose liver with glazed apples and I quote from the restaurateur, "a very smooth pate of goose liver cooked in a lot of butter and pureed". It was served in a pastry of half butter, half flour. Second course: medallions of

lobster with mousse of pumpkin - crayfish served with a classic sauce, à l'américaine, "with knobs of butter whipped into it", plus butternut pumpkin "just done with eggs and whipped cream". Third course: noisettes of venison served with chanterelles and echalote cooked in butter, with sauce made from the trimmings and marinade. Cheeses: Coulommiers, Saint Albray, Tête de Moine, all very high fat cheeses. Dessert: vanilla soufflé, hot, with hazelnut icecream and two fruit coulis, a very rich dish.

Now this meal was served as one of the most important dinners in Australia last year by one of its most successful restaurateurs, and it means that the message still has to be hammered. Troisgros now cooks with peanut oil, Michel Guerard uses pureed vegetables and fruits for sauces, and their clients are surviving. Think about that.

I will just repeat the definitions. Balance: general harmony between the parts of anything. Contrast: juxtaposition of forms, colours, flavours and textures. Harmony: the combination of forms, parts, musical notes to produce an aesthetically pleasing effect.

I am now about to start my fourth career and if you think that what I have said is important, I would like you to say so because it is going to be the basis of a whole lot of writing that I am undertaking. Thank you very much.

GB: I love scrambled eggs and truffles so much that I would give up fat for all other dishes. I wouldn't put cream in, I would use butter.

CK: Remember what Fernand Point said - give me butter, butter and more butter.

ML: And looked what happened to him. The French don't indulge in that now because the penny has dropped. If you were in France 25 years ago all you heard French restaurant or wine people talking about was 'ma foie', they always had their hand on their right upper quadrant holding their big fat livers like the geese. They don't do that any more, they have learnt. I am not against animal fat, it's a moderate thing, a balance, that I am talking about.

GP: I'm delighted to hear that. The subject is one of the oldest in medical literature and it represents the nexus between the philosophy, the music and gastronomy and is of crucial importance.

GB: I think that Nicolas Bonham is ready to give us his view of the Australian Fete. Nicolas is from the Australian National Gallery in Canberra.

NB: The papers that have been delivered have led up to what I would like to say. There was a question earlier on putting Brillat-Savarin into practice. That is really what I am on about, that's what I am here to tell you about. I agree with Max entirely, the whole thing is to harmonise disparate elements, the elements that are traditional in the ritual food exchange, whether it be Aboriginal or in mediaeval England or in Europe or in Australia, all the arts are combined. I believe that is absolutely fundamental, the food is only one aspect.

When I joined the National Gallery, and I have been there for six years, I was very interested to find out just what this aesthetic business was all about. I had seen a lot of pictures and none of them given me anything, certainly no endomorphins. In yesterday's discussion we were talking about the culinary art, and whether it was art or whether it was craft. I believe that art has craft, there is craft of art. The technique is the craft and that's what you master on your way to producing art. Art is in cooking, art is in music, art is in painting. It's very interesting that most of the people who

owned and commissioned works of art of all kinds had them all around them. We buy works of art and we put them in our living rooms; we put on a piece of music; we have a meal. We still do it, it goes right through our culture.

Of course, at the beginning, food was the original sin and the idea that food had spiritual or higher connotations was not missed on the Church. Many works of art depict how you would end up if you pursued the delights of the table to excess or simply enjoyed yourself too much. A great deal of the straightening out of cuisine, the increasing specialisation and divorcing of the total sensory experience is due to the Church, which of course exploited it as well: the ceremonies of breaking bread and drinking wine.

The concept of man in the environment - and please bear in mind what Graham and Anthony have said, because I am following on from them - implies an interrelationship between all the elements, including man's own physiology, his fluids, his electro-magnetic powers, etc. Similarly, a fete is something where all of the arts are married together to provide a unified whole which expresses and uses each of man's sensorial abilities, including ESP and whatever.

The meal has always been a ritual food exchange and has always incorporated all of the arts as we know them, and many we no longer consider as arts, such as food. In Australia, the problem with this concept is to get it across to the people who make up the nation, a nation whose cuisine we are discussing. Traditionally food and the fete were elitist occupations; however, I'd like to quote from Brillat-Savarin's 'Bouquet', Meditation XXX, in which he envisages a dinner much of this kind, with the gastronomes sitting around at the end of the ceremony to Gastérea. Then,

"At last the high priest intones a hymn of thanksgiving, all voices join in, together with the instruments; heartfelt homage rises to the heavens, and the service is at an end.

Only then does the popular banquet begin; for there is no true festival in which the people have no share."

We expect about 100,000 people to attend the Australian fete we are planning for Canberra, given the attendances for this kind of event in the past, and what we have to do is marry all the events, using as a model not only Greek, Roman and mediaeval ideas of what eating, drinking and whatever are all about, but also the ideas of people like the Duke of Berry, Catherine de Medici and the Grand Duke Ferdinand, who had a slightly different concept of eating, and of course the master of all, Louis XIV, who once arranged a dinner around an artificial canal which was no small affair, it was certainly on a scale which was in direct relation to his conception of himself.

Now we have a very big country here and one of the big problems is that we have a living room-mentality approach, or a small restaurant-mentality, whereas we live in an enormous country. My solution to that is to get the people out into that enormous country and to have the event outside, at a time of year when it is appropriate. I am not doing anything new, just following precedents and trying to pull together what has already gone on in the past. Louis XIV understood the idea of manipulating the landscape. Now we are not going to start planting gums and pruning them into the shapes of kangaroos, but what we are going to do is to set out the fete in the landscape - we are very lucky in that we have a double venue, two large parks with a large lake running through the middle, the perfect size. We will be spreading right through it and we are hoping that people will therefore be able to see food, dance and the theatre that will be going on in this area, in relation to the environment, which is a bush setting.

Louis XIV more or less systematised and classified the traditional fete - he was well able to, being one of the richest people of his time. He followed a traditional format; the meal started and each dish was accompanied by music,

often especially written for that particular piece of food or the food was designed to complement the music. There were plays, and plays, music, food were all interspersed, the menu in fact had entremets which could have been food or music or a play or whatever. This was then followed by a traditional Court Ball or Masque, in which the members of the Court enacted out scenes from mythology, written by others who were part of the Court. It was finished by a general fireworks display, to which - even at the time of Louis XIV - the populace was invited.

Now again I am talking about marrying all the arts together and trying to get some unified concept. You can see that from the food to this final display involving the people, he wasn't thinking just in terms of having a fancy dinner party. This had political and social relevance and was very important at the time. Often it consolidated the people, at moments when they really felt that they had enough. The final thing after the fireworks display was an illumination of the gardens or, in the case of the enchanted island, which was a very large display in 1664, he illuminated the large buildings around Paris. Interestingly, at that display there was seating for 500,000 people set up on the banks of the Seine.

Inigo Jones was doing the same thing in England for the Stuart Court and Ben Johnson was his collaborator in those masques. Johnson has a very good quote: all representations, especially those of nature, in Court and public life and spectacles, ought be the mirror of man and his life. I think that this is what we hope to achieve in Canberra. We hope to use the multicultural event, which always happens around Australia Day, and we are going to incorporate that as part of the entertainment during the day. The people there will be able to express themselves in the cultures that they have come from, and the whole thing will really be unified although diverse, everything will be in the one place and at the one time, the one thing.

Allegory was most important for Inigo Jones. One thing I find very sad, and I think Anthony touched on this, is that with increasing specialisation - and all of us here are specialists in a sense - we have lost a lot of the allegory that used to flow freely through thought. Things are so literal these days that we have forgotten how to look at something and see different meanings. I think allegory is very important, and it is something that we hope to include in what we are doing. The allegory, of course, at its most basic level will be the sight and the fact that everybody is there. This is often missed on people, who go to an event like that, walking in their own little world and taking a bit of everything, then walking away again - the whole effect is lost. We are still working around this, we are thinking of a program of some kind just to explain to people what they are doing and that it can be fun.

Again, all of these events, these spectacles, were at the height of technology. In fact, the technology was invented by Inigo Jones to put on the spectacles. He was given the task of bringing the entire court, in clouds, from the top of the theatre to the bottom, and he invented new pulleys, new systems of technology, to cope with these things. We intend to use the most appropriate technology. We live in a technocratic society, a society run by scientists, yet technology filters very slowly through to us. It is always a great reassurance to me that in fact Mr. Moog invented the synthesiser in 1957-58, yet it was 1978 before anybody made any music with it. Technology has a sort of built-in factor which prevents us from absorbing it quickly and it is good to see appropriate technology being used in a non-threatening way, because most technology is created for the military. We hope to produce a final display in the manner of Louis XIV, but using lasers, helium-filled structures, inflatable devices, using also the basic pulleys that Inigo Jones might have

had. We hope to marry the advanced technology with something that is appropriate and non-threatening, and again something that is included in the whole.

As to the effect of fireworks, there is no doubt about it, there are endomorphins around when you see them go off. However, when you play music loud enough to disguise the explosions, the whole effect changes completely. When they explode without the noise, they just drop out of the sky. This is just a very simple example of how, by marrying two things that are never put together but always were, you see the effectiveness starting to come through. I believe that you can't fail, because just by mixing these things together you are creating greater than the sum of their parts.

We are going to connect the two parts on either side of the lake with an inflatable device that you can walk over or can walk through. We will use lasers, a really effective outside use of light and quite symbolic, being totally artificial, totally technology-created, but one of the most powerful visual tools any artist could ever look for.

The last display in Canberra was attended by about 60,000 people - that is the police estimate - and this shows you that people will get out of their homes, turn the television off and walk down to the lake. It will take them two hours in total travelling time for a display that lasts eight minutes. The fact that so many people were attracted is an indication to me that people have within them a race memory, or whatever you want to call it, a need for this kind of festival. Australians are devoid of it. We have lost the art completely, having avoided this type of thing for so long, just like most of the people have lost the art of eating.

I don't believe that we have a national cuisine. I think we have an international cuisine. I think that Anthony is right again, that we could develop a national Australian cuisine but it would rely on a relationship between Australian foods, Australian conditions and the Australian landscape. I am perfectly happy to have about ninety stalls of multicultural food at this fete, and where we hope that the art will come in is that we will actually be involved in the control of the quality of this food. At the same time it will not be all Carême spun sugar, there will be the foods of all the countries involved, usually about sixty. There are also about 400 barbecue sites, so that people can bring their own food if they wish, and this is to be encouraged. I think it is a very appropriate and Australian way of doing things. The idea is to set up all of the various countries, with the dancing to take place near the food area, so that you can walk from one side to the other and get a taste of it all - and Aborigines are included. At the end of the day people will, I hope, take away a concept, not in favour of one particular culture, but of having eaten a lot, drunk a lot, and seen a lot of diverse cultures. The blending will go on inside.

GB: I don't think that there is any point in summing up after all of that. They were all terrific papers and you have been left enough to think about. Thank you very much.

(Ed. Note: Nicolas' presentation was accompanied by a series of slides illustrating food and eating through the ages. Unfortunately, we are unable to reproduce them in this publication, but most of those used by Nicolas can be found in the following books:

1. Splendour at Court: Renaissance Spectacle and Illusion, Roy Strong (Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1978)
2. Fabulous Feasts: Medieval Cookery and Ceremony, Madeleine Cosman

- (George Braziller, New York, 1976)
3. Savouring the Past, Barbara Wheaton
(University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia PA, 1983)
 4. Performance: Live Art 1909 to the Present, Rose Lee Goldberg
(Harry Abrams, New York, 1979)

LUNCH, TUESDAY 13 MARCH

Bread guillotine	...created by Vicki O'Neill
Game pie	...cooked by Maggie Beer
Rillettes of pigeon	...cooked by Gay Bilson
Pheasant pate	...cooked by Derrick Casey
Symposium pate	...cooked by Len Collins and George Hill
Ratatouille	...cooked by Glen Conlon and Janet Jeffs
Mushroom, spinach and walnut pate	...cooked by Diana Hetzel
Faggots	...cooked by Cath Kerry
Rabbit terrine	...cooked by Janica Nichols
Jellied rabbit	...cooked by Barbara Santich
Brawn	...cooked by Anita Sibrits
Chicken galantine	...cooked by Jill Stone
Onion marmalade	...cooked by Vicki O'Neill
Green salad	...tossed by Cath Kerry
Polish babka	...baked by Gay Bilson
Quince tarts	...baked by Jennifer Hillier
White wine cake	...baked by Cath Kerry
Symposium cake	...decorated by Helen Peacocke

Yalumba Brut de brut

Mitchell 1983 Watervale Rhine Riesling

Mountadam 1981 Chardonnay and 1980 Pinot noir/Cabernet

Chatterton's 1983 Fume blanc

Brown Bros. Tarango 1982 and Anakie Cab Mac 1983 *

*Cab Mac was made principally from Tarango grapes. This is an experimental grape variety bred by the CSIRO. Both wines were offered by John Possingham.

SESSION 4

DonD: I will be chairing the session this afternoon. To open the session we have a paper from Michael Symons on what future activities are planned.

MS: We thought we should contemplate this, although none of us really knew quite what to expect this time, even whether the First Symposium of Australian Gastronomy should become a Second Symposium.

I think we have met our limited goals with this first symposium, inasmuch as we wanted to get theory and practice together. I hope most people perceive this as having been achieved. Our first aim was for it to be some sort of get together, and it has attracted very keen people, actually people seemed very enthusiastic to come.

If we do have a second symposium it would necessarily be different. That is one possibility for the future. Another thought is some sort of joint research activity, perhaps a bibliography of Australian cookery books. Another idea, suggested by yesterday's discussion, is that not enough is known about culinary resources, like the cheeses from Melbourne, or the imminent closure of the 8 Mile Creek cheese factory, or the varieties of apples available. So one possibility might be to put out some sort of directory.

Another thought is that we could elect officers, adopt a constitution and become a sort of society which might do all these things and also, as Lynne Chatterton suggested, officially propose gastronomers to marketing boards. I have to say that many things can be done individually and I hope that people will be enthusiastic enough to put together a directory, nominate for government boards or whatever.

Another possibility is that we should do a newsletter or a journal so that all of these ideas can be brought together.

I propose that everyone does a bit of everything and that we do have a second symposium and I would suggest that the present organisers be entrusted to get something together for next time. I suggest that we hold one in Adelaide again, probably towards the end of next year, although this does not mean that it should always be in Adelaide.

BS: As you know, all the proceedings have been taped so that they can eventually be published. Some time during the year you should receive a copy, and probably at the same time a questionnaire asking for comments and suggestions for future symposia.

DonD: Thank you. Responses, please, to Michael's suggestions.

GH: I would like to congratulate the organisers for their initiative and the style of this first symposium, but I feel that it misses something. It is a good idea that people come together but next time I would like to see the issues of real food discussed more. I think that we haven't sufficiently addressed food itself. We haven't talked enough about what is currently being eaten in Australia, what restaurants are serving.

I think in future we could look at the commercial versus the domestic market because they represent different responses. If we address the topics from those two points of view, I think we could achieve a lot more.

DonD: Thank you, George. That is implicit support for another symposium.

JJ: I would like to make a comment concerning the nature of the symposium, which I think has been very rarified and esoteric, and not totally relevant to

someone working and teaching in Australia in 1984, and I wonder how you feel about that in terms of conclusions and future directions.

MH: I like your words workers and teachers, but we are also thinkers and writers and perhaps that makes what we were saying a bit less esoteric. The point of the symposium is that all of us have got together.

PW: I think that it is most important that we have all come together and that we will all want to have a second symposium. Although I don't expect it to be too concerned with wine I hope that we will be honest and at least admit that gastronomy involves drinking as well.

LCh: I think that we should have another symposium. This one has given everyone a chance to say about what they feel about food. We've had real food when we've eaten. It's been a good size, we've had a terrific mixture of people. I think that if we could maintain this, it would be good. As for a committee, the fact is that you really have to have somebody who is officially responsible for doing something. I think it would be a pity to lose the impetus that we've developed here, to let all these ideas and opinions drift away. I am all for another one.

NB: To answer Janet's question about elitism, if we keep it to a closed shop symposium then that's what we'll have. I wholeheartedly support the idea of a newsletter, which should have as wide a circulation as possible, and everyone here is qualified to make some sort of contribution.

DonD: If there is to be a newsletter which is distributed to libraries, quite obviously there is a considerable cost and the question of financing it is going to have to be addressed.

DD: Perhaps we could make a submission to the Australia Council for support in establishing a newsletter.

MStr: This symposium has not achieved what I assumed it was setting out to do. It has not represented the people. I am wondering, in regard to Australian gastronomy, where are all the representatives of the school canteens or of industrial canteens that feed thousands and thousands of people every day. The symposium should also represent the lower income brackets. We are talking in a rarified atmosphere. We are eating lunches of lobster and marvellous pate while the rest of the people are still being fed the rubbish that has been fed to them for years and years. We are talking about approaching the Australia Council for support for getting publications out to libraries, yet about the general public we don't seem to give too much of a damn. I feel that it has not achieved what it set out do, which was to talk about an upstart cuisine and an Australian gastronomy.

SA: I would like to think that there is some elitism in the power of public education and that, given value for money, there is a much better chance of reaching the mass of the population through library circulation and access to daily papers than through a mass education campaign, which - fortunately - we can't afford. By addressing the mass media, particularly the daily newspapers, and encouraging people to write and pass comment, we will reach a tremendous number of people.

CK: Why don't we have canteen representatives? because these places are run by

people who don't want to be here, because they are out to make a dollar. Good restaurants - those I consider good - are not making a lot of money.

DonD: I would like to bring us back to what is the basic question. Are we going to have another symposium?

That is generally agreed. When, and are we asking the present committee to organise the next symposium?

GB: The committee structure is possibly very important.

PW: Can I move a motion that the committee that set up this symposium be responsible for the next one, and I offer my services as the wine person.

DonD: Seconded? Yes. Discussion?

CK: I think the present committee should do the next one purely and simply because this is the first. Perhaps the committee could increase in size but I think that the four original people should continue.

BC: Before we take a vote on that, perhaps we ought to think separately about where it should be held, whether it should be in Adelaide or perhaps nearer to a food source, since our discussions have been concerned with the connection with the land.

DonD: Can we take it from the discussion that we move a the motion that the present committee be asked to undertake the organisation of their next symposium, to fix its time and venue and that it be given power to coopt.

I think we have general agreement and I put the motion. All those in favour say aye ... carried unanimously. Now let's plot future activities.

The next part of this session is to discuss what can we do about the Australian cuisine. The question itself inevitably implies that it is possible and/or desirable for us to act as some form of social engineer, otherwise of course we can just go on doing our own thing and hope somebody will take some notice, but the question says: What can we do about the Australian cuisine?

We all feel that something needs to happen for it to change or for it to improve. I would like to go back to an earlier question, is good food destined to remain elitist? That question assumes that 'elitist' continues to be used in what, since Herbert Marcuse, has become the fashionable use of the word, that is, it is used in a perjorative way to imply something that is inevitably bad. Personally, I was never a disciple of Herbert Marcuse, but rather of Karl Mannheim, who used 'elitist' in a positive way because, as he pointed out very effectively, the only way that change occurs within society is by ginger groups who are setting out to get the change. Now, are we going to act, is it possible to act as a ginger group?

It is certainly possible to act as a ginger group. I can speak from experience. In South Australia when I became Minister for Development, which in those days included the tourism portfolio, I could see that if we were to attract tourists to South Australia we were going to have to provide them with better accommodation and better eating and drinking facilities. For instance, we had the possibility of trying to sell the Barossa Valley as a place to which to attract tourists, but to get tourists into the Barossa Valley then meant that you took them to somewhere that had no restaurants. The only place where you could eat and drink at the same time was a hotel, and the hotels in the Barossa Valley were the standard Oz country pub. You couldn't stay anywhere in

the Barossa Valley except at a hotel, and while under the Licensing Act they were required to have some accommodation, they didn't actually encourage visitors to stay. You couldn't have cellar door tastings, because that was contrary to the Licensing Act. So we had to change the whole of that infrastructure. We changed the licensing provisions and changed the industrial support provisions to include tourism areas, so that we could finance restaurants and motels in the Barossa Valley, and we financed a number of them.

In addition to this we had to provide for adequate restaurant training because, while it is true that some of the most inspired and successful cooks and restaurateurs in Australia are not people who had an enormous amount of formal training - and we have some marvellous examples here today - nevertheless the general standard of cooking and service in this country was poor, particularly poor in South Australia. The cooking school in South Australia was then inhabiting part of the plumbing school, down near Port Adelaide. I had to go in for a tremendous fight with my colleagues in the government to induce them to spend the money on establishing the Regency Park Food School. There can be no doubt that, with its establishment, the standard of work within a great many of our restaurants has very markedly improved. While it is true that a number of people in the industrial and mass cooking areas are still serving swill, as Michael says, there has been marginal improvement in some areas because some of those people have actually come from the food school.

Governments can do something and I think individuals can also do something. Before the 1950's there had not been in Australia the explosion of interest in food and wine, and in food writing, which has actually tended to sweep a good deal of the Western world. It is not uniform, and you don't find it in Italy, for example. You do find it in a good deal of Europe, and particularly in the English-speaking countries. Publishers around the world will tell you that best-seller lists have got cookbooks way up the top. Margaret Fulton has managed to sell more books than most authors in Australia, and although I wrote several books, my best seller was my cookbook.

The effect of food writing has really got into the popular press. Food writers have had their effect. If you read what turns up in the Woman's Day or the Women's Weekly today, you find that it is not the old goo from the Green and Gold Cookery Book. They are pressing on with the popularity of the buying of cookbooks and so it is possible for us in a number of ways, either through action as restaurateurs, writing, talking and making representations, to do something about the standards of Australian cuisine. I must say that in Melbourne now, if you know where to eat it is one of the places where you can really eat very well, but I agree with Michael, that at the level of the school or industrial canteen, the average standard of the food remains pretty atrocious. That is partly the fault of food educators. In Victoria I have been horrified to see some of the courses which are still taught in food schools, because they are perpetuating precisely what Michael was talking about. This does not happen, of course, in all food schools in Australia but it does happen in a number of important and recognised ones. I find that some people who are products of the food schools are, in some measures, still doing some of the things that I used to see apprentices doing here, coming out of the technical schools. They were taught the techniques of construction and finishing very well, the design was lousy. A certain amount of agitation is still needed. I hope that that has been sufficiently provocative for you to get going.

BS: On this question of elitism, we concluded that the best way to have an effect was to get to the people who could then influence others, and this is

what we tried to do. There has to be an elite that is going to lead the way.

MStr: What I meant by elitism was a pricing policy which automatically precludes certain people. The same thing is happening at our college. I am here because I love my art and my craft, and I am sure that all of you love your art and your craft, but I find it rather disturbing that a lot of people are being precluded, and there seems to be a disparity between what the people are actually saying and what they are meaning.

MS: We believe that this symposium was open to everyone. Naturally we wanted the best people to come, people who self-selected themselves, and that's what happened.

NB: I think that one of the ways in which this symposium can be most effective is to disseminate the information that has been shared here. I think that a newsletter is essential, and whether it is funded by a government grant or by Orlando is not a point to be discussed here.

DonD: I think that is already in the hands of the committee.

GH: Can we charge that committee to include for the next symposium the topic of catering education in Australia. I think if you want a message to get out into the community there is no better or quicker way than to go through the catering colleges, which handle hundreds and thousands of people who are going to be your future chefs and future dietiticians. If we can get more educators here we can then cross the theorists with the practitioners and have something really productive.

JJ: I disagree, because I think it is probably not the responsibility of the educators in terms of food schools, but rather has to do with exposing people to the best practitioners in the trade. A restaurateur or a working chef has a certain responsibility to teach. Food schools teach a variety of students, and I think it should not be expected of food schools to train someone in all aspects of cuisine or gastronomy, and I think it is important that the industry is involved as well.

DonD: Wouldn't that be something to be discussed under the heading of catering education?

MStr: If we do include the topic of catering education in the next symposium, might I suggest that we get some funding so that two hundred or so catering students can also attend and voice their opinions on what catering education is about and should be about these days.

MS: Are you suggesting that we, as a group, should do the job that I thought was supposed to be happening in your food schools?

MStr: The catering schools are set up and funded with the taxpayers money to provide education, to the best of their ability, to what the trade "requires". Our curriculum is set by the trade advisory committees, our teaching is towards what the industry requires. At the moment we are told that we already teach far too much to our students, that they don't need to learn about history of gastronomy or history of cooking.

MS: I don't see that we can discuss that with the students, that's a discussion

to be had with governments or industry.

MStr: The restaurateur that employs apprentices has a teaching responsibility, yet it seems that the school that takes the students for 800 hours in a four-year apprenticeship gets blamed for everything. For the other thousands of hours that they are out in industry and should be learning, being exposed to gastronomy and all these finer ideals, but that is not part of their education because all the employers want is to get some work out of them.

DonD: It is a proposal that at the next symposium the committee be asked to consider a session on catering education in all its aspects.

GP: Yes, I second that, it is clearly a disaster area. It is clearly the sort of topic the symposium should address and an obvious area in which we can make a contribution.

BC: I think Barbara pointed out that there will be a questionnaire which will give everyone the opportunity to make such comments.

LCh: I think we should think seriously about what Don said, that a ginger group can do a hell of a lot. One of the ways in which we can understand something about the Australian cuisine is to look at what happens to the ingredients, from the time they are grown to the time that we get them to eat or to cook with. If we try to maintain a ginger group that looks at and discusses these sorts of things and makes intelligent representations where necessary - that includes my idea that people put themselves forward for marketing boards and authorities involved with agricultural produce - I am convinced we could do more good than by talking about elitism.

DonD: I put the motion, all those in favour say aye. Carried, with one dissent.

DC: I would like to comment on the feasibility of an Australian cuisine. At Regency Park, although our basic indenture is to apprentices, we also teach at the chef's certificate level, and one of the subjects is regional cuisine in South Australia. I think a ginger group, or the people at this particular symposium, could be of great help to the various colleges, particularly those represented here. If we are looking seriously at something that could be classified as an Australian cuisine, there are definitely people here who have tried in their own areas to develop seriously something that can be recognised as from a particular area, and I think it has to start in those regional areas.

We have to look at the argument concerning the quality of the different produce that we can achieve. The development of regional cuisine requires fairly good in-depth research by interested people, such as Maggie Beer in the Barossa Valley. To make use of the knowledge of a number of people who are here today, possibly to even get a commitment from somebody to say, I would like to provide some research and possibly some time in regards to the development of a particular region, which could then be passed on through the colleges or through other people who are equally interested, that is how we can start to interest the majority. It would be nice to think, after the symposium, that there would be the opportunity of extending our ideas to a far greater range of people. We can do that through education. I would be happy to see included in the next symposium the possibility of distinct contributions towards an Australian cuisine, that is the development of facts about a region, about the conditions, about the area itself, in the same way as one could look at any

other region in the world. There are distinct regions in South Australia which we have identified, with particular characteristics and produce. I believe that acting as a ginger group is the only way to get something done in that respect.

BC: I just want to take up that final point as I think that is the basis of the regional cuisine, and I agree that we want to develop regional cuisine and Australian cuisine as a sort of sum of the regional cuisines. I think that the greatest barrier at the moment is that we don't have regional food. We have this ridiculous condition where the lobsters of the south-east go to Melbourne and are very difficult to buy in the south-east. The tuna of Port Lincoln is certainly not available in Port Lincoln in a fresh form. I think that as a ginger group, we should try to overcome those barriers which currently exist and start from that basis of regional food, developing it into a regional cuisine. There are very good regional products but somehow we have to encourage people to put them on the market and obviously hope that people will develop a cuisine from them.

AC: The real outcome of this symposium will be what each of us does when we go back to where we come from and engage in our daily activities. What do we do in that circumstance? It's not really a feasible thing to meet again next year and each of us say what we've done. What needs to occur is to set up an organisation, and people will stay in contact with the organisation and pass on ideas or make requests. As an organised community effort, whereby people get a newsletter and understand what is going on, they will become much more self-conscious and really bring ideas into practice.

PW: We must never forget the power of the pen and use the existing media .

DonD: When the newsletter gets going it will be possible for everyone to write in to the newsletter and suggest particular activities.

MS: I think the newsletter may in fact grow out of some circulars, as we've already sent. I hope that some newsletter will emerge, but let's be realistic and say, let's achieve what we can, one step at a time.

MStr: I wonder whether we have the time to wait for eighteen or more months to do something about Australian cuisine and about the Australian educational process. I would suggest that maybe the committee would like to utilise the food school's facilities in our Catering Education Week, later this year. I think we are all aiming for the same thing, it is just that we don't seem to be speaking the same language. It seems rather sad and rather dangerous that in a small country like this which has a lot going for it, we are building two different societies of gastronomy and can't seem to meet somewhere in the middle.

DonD: What you are suggesting is that people from here should consider taking part in your Catering Education Week.

DC: The dates are July 2 - 6, and we would be very happy to be have the organisers use the facilities we can offer.

MH: I'm getting a bit nervous about this conversation. I think the terms that people are using - catering schools, the catering industry - are fairly indicative. If you've got this industry going, why do you need this symposium

of private people to put your views across? Why can't you work through that? I'd like to put in a word for us freelancers and say, let's not get too involved with industries that have all sorts of capacities for finance, organisation, subsidies, that the rest of us don't have, and let's remain amateurs, in both senses of the word.

DonD: I think that all of us who have made some money out of cooking, be it by writing or by cooking, call ourselves professionals of some kind. Certainly the tax man regards us as such. I don't know if you know the Catering Institute of Australia very well. I do, I am a Fellow of it. If you read the journals of the Catering Institute of Australia and see their constant promotion of the worst of convenience foods, you will see that there is some reason for us to do something about it.

HZ: As a member of the public and a consumer, come in from the swill to see what is going on, I too am nervous about this concentration on catering and the trade. I think, after all, this isn't a symposium purely and simply for people who are involved in those fields. I understood that it was also to be for people like me, who enjoy food, and I think that you're beginning to talk very much like a trade convention of some sort.

ML: Here, here. I think we have an extraordinary example of transference here. This whole group labours under a cloud of immorality. The enjoyment of food has been immoral for centuries in a certain religious ethic and what has happened here this afternoon is the transference of that feeling of guilt, so that we are now going to do something about the suffering children in school canteens. Surely gastronomy embraces a lot more than that. I will put it more strongly: if the subject of school canteens comes up at the next symposium, I won't be here.

GB: The emphasis hasn't been taken that way by the organisers of the symposium. We felt some sort of responsibility to allow others to have their say, and we needed also to know what was felt by those people. The apparent shift of emphasis does not necessarily have anything to do with the aims and possibilities of our symposium.

LG: I think you have to have the courage of your convictions in what you believe is good food and what you like to eat and what you like your friends to eat, and you don't necessarily expect others to feel the same way. This is what life is all about.

LCh: A ginger group could affect the infrastructure of our food supply, our food production. By being a ginger group and doing just what we have done this time, and doing something about it when we leave here, surely that is going to make it better in school canteens.

DD: As individuals and eaters, I think it is important for us to take courage when we go out, to ask more questions, ask whether where the products have come from. Don't assume that because people are charging a lot of money they are ripping you off, they might be supporting some small grower. Share the information you have about products, and maybe we will meet some of the aims we have talked about, and maybe we will have better food in our restaurants. People are too polite in restaurants.

YW: I just wanted to say that, from the way the discussion has been developing,

we are going out to change the world. The idea of a newsletter is great, if we are going to disseminate information, but if the role of the newsletter is to convert the masses, giving information on how school canteens should be changed or pushing the barrow of the catering industry, I would be very upset. As we are developing our thoughts we really need to have a few objectives which we all agree to, as to the direction in which we are going. We haven't yet resolved the argument as to why we're here, whether for our enjoyment and to learn more about food, or for something more, and this is very important. If I come to future meetings, I would like it to be very small and with the same sort of atmosphere that we have today. I am a member of the Catering Institute, the Nutritionists Society, the Dieticians Association, where one never has this sort of discussion, it is outside the scope of these bodies, so we are filling a niche and this is a very important role.

AC: I'd like to add to that and say that this is what the organisers had in mind. It's something that isn't being done and possibly can't be done in the standard institutions that you mentioned.

NB: I also think it's important to remember who the enemy are! I can hardly imagine a group of fifty ad men racking their souls to find out whether or not they were ideologically sound. They're out there selling Vesta dinners. If anyone here is committed to what he is doing, he should be positive and get out there and do it. It's ridiculous worrying about whether we're elitist.

ML: We are elitist, not a single one of us would be here if we weren't.

BC: I equate elitist in this context with self-starter, and that encourages me to think that something will come out of this.

ML: I see the first line to follow as improving the food that we eat, and the discussion, the social activities associated with food. We ought try to be elitist. What the four organisers have done is achieve all that I hoped this conference would be, and I would be devastated if there was any change in direction.

MStr: We are asking at the moment how can we improve Australian cuisine? When we divorce ourselves from catering colleges, from things like the Catering Institute of Australia, from all of the other people who are purveying food, what are we then going to do, as 48 people?

MS: We have agreed to consider catering education at the next symposium.

MStr: I thought there was a lot of feeling that this was going the wrong way, that we should just remain a small group

MS: The point is that as freelancers, we have come together to discuss whatever we choose to discuss and we happened to have chosen to discuss catering education as well.

BS: What is done in Australian restaurants is not necessarily Australian cuisine, there is a lot of cooking done in homes, and that also influences people. Whenever you cook something and offer it to someone in your house, you are saying something, and that is the sort of statement we can make as individuals. It is as individuals that we are going to act, not as schools, not even as a group, but as ourselves.

ML: And we can take away, from a gathering like this, individual ideas that will influence perhaps 100 people around us.

DonD: I think, if I might try to summarise the discussion, that there are many people who feel that they can, in their own individual ways, influence their own area. There are others who feel that the best way that they can influence cuisine for the better in Australia is to eat better. There are others who feel that there are particular things which they can do, in association with others, and that they can keep in touch through the newsletter, doing something to influence the ways in which food is delivered to those who are going to do something with it, or influencing to some degree what is happening in institutions and in schools of catering. We are going to be able to summarise all of that at the next symposium. So I think that we have all come to our conclusions now about what we are going to do.

We now come to a most important part of the whole symposium, and that is its closing address, to be given by Alan Davidson.

AED: Speech or address is perhaps the wrong term for what I regard as some closing remarks. The operative part of the proceedings this afternoon has been summed up very well already and indeed your own discussion of matters provided a summation of your views on what is to be done.

I don't propose to rehearse the proceedings of yesterday and this morning, which will be covered when the record is circulated. I am most grateful to the organisers, this meritorious gang of four which has just been re-elected with a 100% vote, for inviting me to come. I have found the whole thing most educative and full of revelations. I think that you shouldn't overlook for the future the possible beneficial effects, on persons from outside Australia, of the series of symposia which you seem likely to be holding. It might be worth considering whether to invite somebody from Asia, for example, to a future symposium if the subject matter seems appropriate.

When I say that the proceedings are full of revelations for me, I am thinking also of useful lessons from what happens on the other side of the globe for our symposia at Oxford. I think that the main lesson is that at the next Oxford symposium, we simply must encourage somebody to mention Brillat-Savarin, because we have been overlooking him totally. But seriously, it is very interesting to see in what different ways and what similar ways the same sort of operation, meeting or get-together can be organised and directed. When I get back to England I shall have an eager audience for the account I shall give them of this symposium.

I also feel that being here has helped me understand Australia much better. I remember feeling puzzled a few days ago when I arrived in Perth and was almost instantly whisked out to the village of Kununoppin to spend a day on an Australian farm. I was puzzled as to how to categorize the people who were entertaining me at the farm and showing me around. I couldn't think of any people I had met anywhere else who corresponded to them. Now, after two days discussion I know exactly who they were. They were elitist peasants.

Now, with no further ado, with a very good heart and with many thanks to everybody who has talked to me, I would just like to wish you well for the future in whatever activities you agree on and jointly conduct. I certainly do hope that they will include further symposia and that there will be people as fortunate as myself to come from Europe or Asia and attend them.

Thank you very much.

GB: I'd like to thank Alan for coming, for having the curiosity to come, and

thank everyone who brought food and wine, which played an important part in getting us all together as part of the whole symposium. I'd also like to introduce tonight's banquet, with which the symposium will conclude. The banquet is an integral part of the symposium, and we should all record our thanks to Phillip Searle, who for the past few weeks has devoted most of his time to this dinner, even to the extent of paying out personally for some of the expenses, changing the lighting in the dining room, and he has done this because he loves his work. Think of Phillip as you enjoy yourselves tonight, and enjoy yourselves!

A POTTED HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN GASTRONOMY

Michael Symons

First of all a rich and zealous enthusiast must organise in his own home a series of periodical gatherings, where the best-trained theoreticians will meet with the finest practitioners to discuss and penetrate the different branches of alimentary science.

Brillat-Savarin on an Academy of
Gastronomers (1)

Given the relative poverty of Australian gastronomy, this symposium has an important place. Two things of some significance have also led up to it. Last year at the University of NSW, Graham Pont gave an undergraduate course in Gastronomy, the basis of which was a reading of Brillat-Savarin, and which was one of the very few gastronomy courses ever given at a university anywhere.

The other precursor was the publication in 1982 of my book, One Continuous Picnic: A history of eating in Australia. Although we considered the sub-title, "A gastronomic history of Australia", the book is both: the food of Australia through history and the history of Australia through food. It is probably the first gastronomic (as opposed to economic, social, general, etc) history of any nation.

These two studies - of Brillat-Savarin and of Australia and its food - have come together at this Symposium (2). The upsurge in serious interest in food is not restricted to here, and the fact that we meet under the heading of "gastronomy" may have consequences beyond our shores.

We welcome from London Alan Davidson, a prime mover in the Oxford symposia on food in 1979, 1981 and 1983. Their emphasis on the culinary part of gastronomy has been accepted in this year's label, "Fourth Oxford Cookery symposium". Theodore Zeldin, the historian of France and collaborator with Davidson on the Oxford symposia, thinks we are entering the "Kitchen Age" and says a "new scholarly subject is being born", but sees it as cookery (3).

Alan Davidson also happens to be a director of the American Institute of Wine and Food, established by the University of California at Santa Barbara around the Andre Simon/Eleanor Lowenstein book collection. Notice the suspiciously tautological and strangely ordered "Wine and Food" (4).

Later this year, a scholarly journal is to be launched by two co-editors, Steven Kaplan, an historian in New York, and Jean-Louis Flandrin, a sociologist in Paris. They have chosen the banner, Food and Foodways: Explorations in the history and culture of human

nourishment (5). If you check the list of 42 editorial advisers you will find you will find a preponderance of historians, and a sprinkling of sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists and ethnobotanists; the journal will be "cosmopolitan and interdisciplinary". But notice how they have avoided the word "gastronomy" None of them is a "gastronomer". They represent the "interdisciplinary" rather than a distinct discipline.

In other words, we are making a bid. We believe that Brillat-Savarin was right to expect gastronomy to "assume the rank among the sciences which is incontestably its own". This symposium might play a tiny part in establishing gastronomy. The world needs it. Let's hope this moment will be seen as a proud moment in the not yet enormous history of Australian gastronomy.

Gastronomic philistinism

Australia ought to lead the world in gastronomy on the grounds that we need it more than anywhere. If intellectualism is a form of alienation then this society offers a flying start. But so far this place has bred more than its share of gastronomic philistines.

The Age Good Food Guide to Victorian restaurants customarily quizzes well-known figures as to their favourite eating places. Last year Professor Manning Clark, the historian, listed three places, none of which happened to be in Victoria, and all where the diners didn't bore each other with talk about food (6). In a recent newspaper interview, Patrick White, another of our respected thinkers, revealed how "frivolous I am in many ways". He explained: "I like food and drink" (along with "gossiping on the telephone" and "frivolous films") (7).

On a personal level, I'll tell a slightly exaggerated story about spending a half-hour getting worked up at a dinner party about the seriousness of the subject and being asked, "But how can you devote yourself to gastronomy when half the world is starving?" The question was not only trite but contradictory, because a gastronomer must have opinions on global food politics.

As another case, when I suggested my book to the ALP's book club the manager replied: "While the book sounds entertaining, I regret to say that it is not a suitable type for inclusion." You'll be amused by the date of this particular dismissal, November 11, 1983.

In response, I have done a quick calculation and decided that: You can reasonably expect 76,650 meals during your life, but to die only once. We can look at these everyday events as nourishment, sensual gratification, conviviality, cultural expression and, in accumulation, a commentary upon society and life. Surely that's enough for any intellectual.

The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought defines an intellectual as

a person with higher education "who thinks critically and creatively about the normative problems of the day". They are the "culture bearers of a nation". Arguing that the London leftwing weekly, the New Statesman, should take food seriously, Hannah Wright warned that intellectuals couldn't leave it to the "disintegrated and self-interested attentions of farmers, food manufacturers and retailers" (8).

Food intellectualism, and a gastronomic symposium in particular, is especially justified in a country which lacks agricultural and culinary traditions and is instead subjugated by food multinationals. Against the increasing blandness of food, both within dishes and between nations, I can see an important role being accepted (even by the food corporations) for thinking knowledgeably and creatively about food. But the case for food intellectualism scarcely needs being made at this gathering. I think the important question is what name and form it should take. By discussing historical examples, I hope to illustrate gastronomy (9).

What is gastronomy?

According to Brillat-Savarin, as translated by MFK Fisher, "Gastronomy is the intelligent knowledge of whatever concerns man's nourishment" (10). I like a grand definition. But he spent an entire section, and, indeed, most of the book, amplifying the definition, which he immediately followed with: "Its purpose is to watch over man's conservation by suggesting the best possible sustenance for him". So gastronomy should be a generalist, supervisory, critical discipline (11). A normative science of human feeding needs to be defined and justified much further and I will raise one or two issues as I try to decide what books contribute to a history of Australian gastronomy.

James Busby

Quoting Brillat-Savarin's broad definition, Graham Pont (12) has declared that the first monograph of Australian gastronomy belongs to James Busby, who arrived in 1824 as a very young man committed to developing the wine industry. Having visited France, he immediately published A Treatise on the Culture of the Vine and Art of Making Wine, Compiled from the works of Chaptal and other French writers... (Sydney, 1825)

While this book properly belongs to agricultural science, rather than rating as actual gastronomy, James Busby offered opinions with which we might find sympathy. He believed that the addition of spirit to wines "destroys their lightness and flavour, that peculiar indefinable delicacy, well-known to drinkers of good wine, but quite imperceptible to British drinkers of Port".

He developed this argument in his second work, which I am much more tempted to accept as our first gastronomic book, A Manual of Plain Directions for Planting and Cultivating Vineyards and for Making Wine in NSW (1830). While his introduction explained that the previous book was "chiefly intended to rouse the attention of the

higher classes" to promoting an export industry, the second had a more reforming purpose. Addressed to "that more numerous portion of the community constituting the class of smaller settlers", his mission was to convince them that they might with little trouble and expenses "enjoy their daily bottle of wine". It wouldn't be strong brandied wine, to warm stomachs in cold and wet climates, but more natural and wholesome wine. He deplored "muddling ale" as much as "liquid fire". Instead, every home should have a vine arbour. The man who could sit under the shade of his own vine, with his wife and his children about him, and the ripe clusters hanging within their reach, in such a climate as this, and not feel the highest enjoyment, is incapable of happiness and does not know what the word means."

Busby followed with other horticultural books, including his *Journal of a Recent Visit to the Vineyards of Spain and France ...* (1834), a discussion of olives and dried fruits like raisins, figs and almonds. He told Australians of the "agriculture and rural economy of those countries whose climates are analogous to theirs". While I have to agree that James Busby displayed gastronomic leanings, on balance, I'd say he falls into agriculture.

Edward Abbott

This country's first cookery book must be in the running as still our best. It is the English and Australian Cookery Book: Cookery for the many as well as the "Upper Ten Thousand" by An Australian Aristologist. It was published in 1864 by a well-to-do Tasmanian, Edward Abbott. It is a well-rounded cookery book, spiced with plenty of chat and information.

You can read a rearranged and slightly expurgated version, published in 1970 as The Colonial Cookbook. For reasons best known to Paul Hamlyn's they omitted a section called "The Last Dinner" which is the touching tale of twelve wine lovers who vow to drink one more of their dozen at the death of each member, until the last dies alone.

The modern edition also omitted Abbott's bibliography, which contained about 350 items. While this supports the impression that Abbott was gastronomically learned, much of his information came from one source. This was two excellent essays published in the Quarterly Review in 1835 and 1836. Written by Abraham Hayward, the essays were later published as a book, The Art of Dining, Or, gastronomy and gastronomers (London, 1852). We are hearing at this symposium a deal about French writers, but Hayward's thoughtful surveys, which deserve republishing, capped some very good English contributions early last century. Before Brillat-Savarin, you could have purchased titles like: Gastronomy, or the School for Good Living (1814 and 1824), and Essays, Moral, Philosophical, and Stomachical on the Important Science of Good Living (1822).

Edward Abbott took his nom-de-plume from a word invented by Thomas Walker, whose newspaper, The Original, peddled entertaining advice

on travel, food and living throughout 1835 (13). Under the influence of such self-consciously gastronomical writers, Edward Abbott wrote what I claim is this country's first truly gastronomical work.

Philip Muskett

Dr. Philip E. Muskett would seem to have been a most popular writer. He published nine books, mostly about medicine, especially diet. An unquestionable gastronomic contribution was The Art of Living in Australia (1893) which urged a way of life more suited to the climate. You can read about his visions of smiling vineyards, busy fishing fleets and luncheons on verandahs in One Continuous Picnic.

Muskett fitted into a tradition, recently rediscovered by the medical profession, of preventative medicine through good food. Dr. William Kitchiner prefaced his Apicius Redevivus; or, the Cook's Oracle (1817); my edition, 1821) with "If Medicine be ranked among the Arts which dignify their Professors --- Cookery may lay claim to an equal, if not superior distinction; To prevent Diseases is surely a more advantageous Art to Mankind, than to cure them."

Kitchiner drew attention to the many of his predecessors who were also doctors. In his bibliography of English Cookery Books to the Year 1850 (1913, 1977), Dr.A.W.Oxford explained "my real interest is not in cookery but in the combination of cookery with medicine, which is found in most of the early books, and which, continuing through the first quarter of the nineteenth century, was gradually destroyed by the growth of the railways."

"Rita"

I should have found out more about "Rita", the Social Editress of the Melbourne Herald and Weekly Times around the turn of the century. It would be nice to know her real name, whether she was Australian-born and the period of her editorship. I cannot even say when she published her Cottage Cookery, Hygienic and Economic. My guess is 1897. It was a reprint of newspaper articles which must fall into the category of domestic science. However, I want to claim "Rita" for gastronomy.

To give an idea of Rita's style, let me quote the first lines of Chapter XXX: "Several people have asked me to give hints about men's luncheons. Not a soul has asked me to give a hint about women's luncheons. Nevertheless, I intend to put them first ..." The attitudes of this Social Editress towards food were no less wonderful, and certainly well-informed. She saw a need for a proper grip on "so much of etiquette, history of dishes and manners, chemistry of foods, scientific principles of cooking, refined service, correct ways, the art of cooking, properly so called, and gastronomical knowledge generally."

She quoted American and French examples in support of simplicity. "You may have a very simple dinner, and yet 'dine',"she said. With

flavourings, "Two's company, three's none". She urged that "dainty white or brown bread and butter is just as refined as cake." Lentils were not just for "faddists" and were more nourishing than sago. "Give the selection and dressing of the green vegetable equal consideration with the meat," she said.

Rita concluded her book with a hope that one day there might be a Chair of Gastronomy established, or a Minister of Gastronomy when the "first of the sciences" would receive the attention of which it was worthy. If you thought her proposal "too fantastic an idea for a finale to a practical matter, just remember that when a Minister for Labor was first mooted, it was thought fantastic too... Why gastronomy should not be raised to the place it deserves in civilised life is not apparent to me" With thoughts like that, Rita cannot be dismissed as a gastronomer.

George Dick Meudell

As well as arguing for gastronomy, Brillat-Savarin made a separate case for gourmandism. "Gourmandism is an impassioned, considered and habitual preference for whatever pleases the taste," he wrote (15). Just as he had trouble persuading us to take the study of food seriously, he had difficulty showing that gourmandism was not gluttony. He announced: "Morally, it is an implicit obedience of the rules of the Creator, who, having ordered us to eat in order to live, invites us to do so with appetite, encourages us with flavour, and rewards us with pleasure."

A man who could write his memoirs under the title, The Pleasant Career of a Spendthrift, would have to risk being called a gourmand. George Dick Meudell, a banker, travelled the world in quest of good dining. He claimed to know Melbourne's best restaurants, like Gunsler and Iles' Vienna Cafe, Lacaton's Maison Doree and Halasy and Denat's Cafe Anglais. These have been almost forgotten, but then Meudell also visited Maxim's in Paris, the Cafe Royal in London and Delmonico's in New York. When Meudell wrote in 1929 (so scandalously that the book was suppressed and copies are now rare), his racy contribution cultivated his reputation as an eater, rather than as a gastronomer.

Walter James

Walter James has also been a gourmand, but is a trickier writer to dismiss. He wrote much and well on food and drink, beginning with Barrell and Book (1949) and Wine in Australia (1952), Nuts on Wine (1950) and Wine in Australia (1952). Indeed, James is still writing, his name appearing in the Epicurean and elsewhere. I would not want to say wine writing could not be gastronomy. I would not want to say his was a limited perspective, because his books indicate an unusual scholarship and concern. Yet for some reason I want to count James out (as with others like Oscar Mendelsohn, who deserves mention for devoting himself to A Salute to Onions (1965), among other books).

It might have something to do with the conflict of generations, in

which I think of him promoting a mainly male, wine-centred gourmet club (sexism is insufficient grounds for exclusion, since Brillat-Savarin is among countless offenders.) Perhaps I can simply say that if there is a separate field of gourmet writing, then I put Walter James in the other camp. If our captain is Brillat-Savarin, theirs is Andre Simon, but they kept the flame alive.

Edgars Dunsdorfs

Probably the most erudite of all the books of Australian gastronomic interest is Edgars Dunsdorfs' The Australian Wheat Growing Industry 1788 - 1948 (Melbourne, 1956). Its more than 500 dense pages of economic history may not seem very close to gastronomy, yet I wonder if Professor Dunsdorfs undertook his enormous task simply to arrive at his last, gastronomic sentence. A displaced Latvian scholar arriving at the University of Melbourne in 1948, he was "influenced by the European tradition that farming is an industry of a kind which gives not only an opportunity of working, but also an opportunity of living." And he concluded, opposing the population drift from the land: "He (the author) holds also that a national culture as distinct from international civilisation can spring up on rural farms and give the missing soul to the glittering body of technical civilisation."

Anne Gollan

Finally, as yet another twentieth-century book of not-quite-gastronomy, I mention Anne Gollan's The Tradition of Australian Cookery, (Canberra, 1978). Any Australian gastronome would enjoy this most serious attempt yet at a local recipe history. You will find dampers, lamingtons and much more placed in a framework which collapses as it approaches recent decades. The reason is that Gollan ignored the food industry. As the industry took firmer control, her history became erratic, suggesting her approach to be more sentimental than scientific. As I suggested earlier, gastronomers need a broad perspective and cannot neglect all-powerful forces.

Is the definition of gastronomy any clearer?

I have not considered anything other than books (16). Many other books could have been considered (among countless other cookery books I thought about Don Dunstan's and Gabriel Gaté's, both of campaigning intent). But even out of the eight authors considered I have ended up classifying as gastronomers only three: Edward Abbott, "Rita" and Philip Muskett. If we look at the second part of Brillat-Savarin's sentence definition, "whatever concerns man's nourishment", then gastronomic books would include all those of agriculture, domestic science, nutrition, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, etc, when they touch on food.

On the other hand, Brillat-Savarin required it to be "intelligent knowledge" (:la connaissance raisonnée"), which I have interpreted restrictively. I have assumed that gastronomy requires its authors to hold the following tenets:

1. Eating is what life is all about
2. Gastronomy draws together all useful sciences.
3. Gastronomy speaks with all civilised persons.

These articles might seem so hard to swallow as to prevent gastronomy ever being practised. Nevertheless, those authors I've accepted tend to support them. They seem to place outrageously more importance on food than their peers. I keep finding I do.

Michael Symons

Every book discussed so far could fit in another field, whether viticulture, domestic science, cookery, or whatever, and One Continuous Picnic could certainly be termed history. But it did not start out like that. I set out to write, as a journalist, about Australian food, and soon found that researching the pavlova, for instance, needed a study of economics, politics etc, and quickly turned into history. Writing my book showed me the importance of the historical process in determining feeding. But it convinced me even more of the power of gastronomy in understanding the world.

One Continuous Picnic raised many issues I still find well worth discussing. For instance, I've found widespread disapproval of my chapter, "Chefs to the Court of Whitlam". It is regarded as mere gossip and self-indulgent praise of the Bilsons. To me, it is the fulcrum of the book, which balances the section on Fasoli's where the Bohemians gathered at the turn of the century. It pinpoints when the traditional images of "dainty cooks and sudden drinkers" (Edna Everages and Bazza MacKenzies) were reconciled in the sophisticated "cafe society" (the more compatible Tims and Debs). It confronts the traditional puritanism of socialism. It raises the concept of the "food politics". I could keep arguing, but here I want to highlight two of the main ideas in the book. The first demonstrates how gastronomy speaks about Australia and the second demonstrates what Australia tells gastronomy.

An industrial cuisine

What is the most telling historical point you can make about Australia? One contender would be the idea that "we were settled by the British". Keith Hancock's *Australia* (1930) explored the popular expression that we were "98 per cent British". It's why we fought at Gallipoli. As for our cooking, the cliché has been that it is "very English". All the baked dinners and those puddings were tastes of the Mother Country. Turkey and plum puddings were unseasonally taken from Dickens.

Our cookery books became virtual copies of English models, the first urban writers Margaret Pearson and Harriet Wicken being proud graduates of South Kensington School of Domestic Science. Of course, there is an element of truth, but the "English" idea misses the point.

What people have thought was "Englishness" or "Britishness" was

really our industrial nature. Britain happened to be the world's first developing nation and set us up, along with the Industrial Revolution, as the first purely "advanced capitalist" nation. This idea has been mentioned by historians but scarcely explored. Because gastronomy is concerned with the relationship of society to the soil, the gastronomer quickly notices that Australia has never been an agrarian society - the only country in the world to lack an agrarian past. This is expressed in One Continuous Picnic by terming this the "uncultivated continent". Ours is a "history without peasants". I claim for gastronomy this insight into Australia.

The gastronomic cycle and its industrialisation

One Continuous Picnic adopted the novel historical method of taking diets and dishes - and accoutrements like farms, cooks, restaurants and sewers - and asking why? Very early I realised that the cuisine fell into three periods. I realised that they reflected changes in transport. The first period was dominated by ships, the second by trains and the present by road transport.

As I finished the first draft, I noticed the chapters in the three parts devoted to each cuisine fell into a pattern which went something like "typical diet"/"farms"/"factories"/"fancy dining". This underlying structure, emerging out of a relatively consistent method, had to mean something.

I eventually woke up to the fact that the three cuisines were shaped by the progressive industrialisation of the food supply, or as it could be termed, the gastronomic cycle (17). This process has occurred in other nations, but was made much more obvious here by the purity of our industrial food. Agriculture was first to be industrialised, with the so-called agricultural revolution, which enabled the growth of urban civilisation, including Australia. Slave plantations provided the tea, sugar, flour and rum for damper, billy-tea and wild "sprees". From about the 1870's, food preservation was industrialised. The early food factories provided biscuits, pickles, "lollies" and lager beer, under brand names like Arnott's, Rosella, MacRobertson and Foster's. Finally over the past three decades, food preparation has been industrialised. The factory, which had taken over the garden and the pantry/cellar, now replaced the kitchen. We were given packet mixes, frozen meals and takeaways.

Each period of the cuisine required a different style of cookery book. No recipes were needed to handle the original basic rations. The second stages needed the familiar Commonsense, Presbyterian, Kookaburra, Schauer, etc. The most recent entry of the food corporations into the kitchen gave us Margaret Fulton, on the one hand, and Elizabeth David, on the other.

It might appear paradoxical that the industry's takeover of cooking should lead to a rush of cookery books. The general cases of this dilemma deserves the title of the Gastronomer's Paradox: The very industrialisation which has tended to degrade food has encouraged

positive aspects, including gastronomy. Each new cuisine introduced into Australia led to a new interest in recipes and restaurants. The shake-up of the food supply renewed experimentation in food, whether by way of vegetarianism, faddish diets or gourmandism.

We can see that Edward Abbott belonged to the first upsurge in gastronomy, stimulated by the industrialisation of the garden. Dr. Muskett and "Rita" belonged to the second era of awareness, produced by investment in the food preservation industry. More recently, the marketing approach to changing food habits, through the ruthless exploitation of colour printing and television, opened up new ideas and provoked reactions, from slimming to Berowra Waters.

To put this in a world perspective, the agricultural revolution produced Brillat-Savarin and his English contemporaries, the preservation revolution led to fancy dining at the turn of this century, and, finally, the preparation revolution formed us.

NOTES

1. The state of English-speaking gastronomy is indicated by the lack of any agreed standard translation of Brillat-Savarin, La Physiologie du Goût. The most accessible is the Penguin, Anne Drayton's The Philosopher in the Kitchen. I have used MFK Fisher's edition, where the title has been translated literally (but still incompletely) as The Physiology of Taste, or Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy, 1949.
2. For a virtual manifesto, consider Anthony Coronos' paper to this symposium.
3. Theodore Zeldin, "The Kitchen Age", *The Listener*, April 15, 1982, pp 6-7.
4. Alan Davidson, "The American Institute of Wine and Food", *Petits Propos Culinaires* 10, pp 8-10. Davidson was a "protagonist" on the issue of it being called "... of Food and Wine".
5. A sample copy available from: Harwood Academic Publishers, C/- STBS Ltd, One Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016, USA.
6. Rita Erlich, *The Age*, September 6, 1983, p 19: "Manning Clark seems to disapprove of the whole idea of a Good Food Guide. He listed three restaurants - one in Sydney, one in Townsville and one in Manuka - with the comment: 'I like all three because the people who go there are my sort of people. They do not talk about food and drink'."
7. Geraldine O'Brien, "No-one realises how frivolous Patrick White can be", *Sydney Morning Herald*, December 10, 1983, p 31.
8. Hannah Wright, "Lacking in Taste", *New Statesman*, March 27, 1981, pp 14-15.
9. The convenors of this symposium have issued a paper, "Definitions of Terms, or word processors and food processors".
10. Brillat-Savarin, *Meditation III*:18.
11. Brillat-Savarin's Aphorisms, especially I-VII, were presented as the basic tenets of gastronomy, "a lasting foundation for the science". When I have a go later in the paper, my tenets are just a crude version of his.

12. Graham Pont, "The French influence in early Australian gastronomic literature", *The French-Australian Cultural Connection*, 1983.

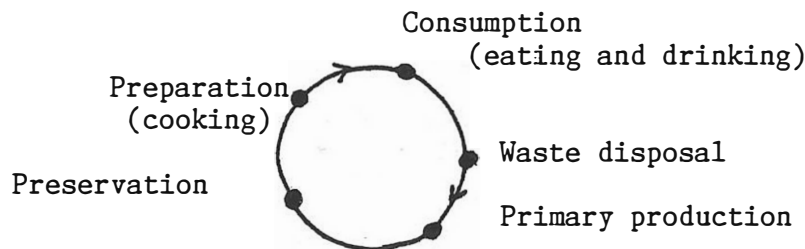
13. Thomas Walker, *The Original*, 1835. The newspaper has been published in book form, either complete or edited, on several occasions.

14. This may at first seem a bizarre conjunction, but one can argue that the railways made the processed food industry possible.

15. Brillat-Savarin, *Meditation XI*:55.

16. By restricting myself to books, I have not considered several notable contributions, for instance: Marion Halligan, "Writing about food", *Quadrant*, January 1977. Some interesting papers were given to the "Women and Food" conference, The University of NSW, February 25-27, 1982. For literary criticism: Don Anderson, "Christina Stead's unforgettable dinner parties", *Southerly*, March 1979, and "Anthropophagy and communion in Patrick White's fiction", *Southerly*, No.4 1980.

17. If the food supply is analogous to the biologist's "food chain", the gastronomic cycle is analogous to the ecologist's "food web", and ties together the biological and cultural aspects of food.



THE WORD MADE FLESH : Can we talk ourselves into
an Australian Cuisine?

Marion Halligan

The ideal gastronome is constantly armed with fork and pen. Both at once, apparently. Whenever he is mentioned, this phrase appears. Sometimes it is obituary, as, he died fork and pen in hand, but that of course is how he lived. The question arises, which is mightier, the fork or the pen?

Manipulation of the fork in our society proceeds space, but the pen is a different matter. We have not been noted for our gastronomic literature. In this paper I want to consider the relationship between a country's cuisine and its food writing, and particularly, as the question in my subtitle suggests, look at whether there is any causal relationship between the two, whether we can talk, or write, ourselves into an Australian cuisine. And by Australian I mean occurring in Australia, I'm not concerned to emphasise ethnicity.

I should warn that I am not really setting out to answer the question, except by implication. What I do intend to do is look at a country where both cooking and writing occur at a serious level, and leave the drawing of conclusions, for ourselves, largely to my listeners.

The model, of course, is France. The Chinese, the English, the Arabs, all have more or less established cuisines, but I don't know of any body of literature accompanying them. Since Grimod de La Reynière, helped by the historical accident of living through the French Revolution, created the genre of gastronomic literature (as well as founding a mode of journalism, namely food criticism, and inventing restaurant guides) and in the words of Jean Aron tied the knot between literature and good food which made such a mark on French nineteenth century civilisation, the French haven't stopped writing about food. It's evident from this that my title is true in reverse: the flesh has made many words, cooking has produced a lot of writing. But what has writing done for cooking?

I don't mean just recipe books. Curnonsky warns against confusing gastronomic and culinary writing. The latter is the province of great cooks who possess the necessary science and authority, whereas gastronomic literature is the work and property only of those gourmets who know how to write. Illiterates are excluded. (Would that that rule could be applied to gastronomic journalism.) For the gastronomic writer, knowing how to cook is not important - just how to judge what is. On the other hand a great cook is allowed to write deplorable prose.

If we don't make too much of the adjective great or even good we have to admit there's plenty of culinary writing around. Cookbooks continue to pour from the presses. They've been the stuff of bestsellers not just in this decade but for several hundred years. In fact Grimod got the idea for his Almanach des Gourmands when he observed that people flocked to the new foodshops (started by all the aristocrats' cooks thrown out of work by the Revolution) as enthusiastically as they fled the bookshops - the nouveaux riches were an uncultured lot. "Parisians have a gut in place of a heart," he said, but he cashed in on the phenomenon all the same.

The difference between him and other cashers-in was this matter of literary quality. He was a patron of the theatre, founded a journal of theatrical notes and criticism, and was author of satirical pieces and poems which were not always brilliant, but he saw himself as first of all a man of letters. He wrote with wit and humour, he was satirical and critical. His Almanach was a kind of Choice magazine, as well as a "nutritive calendar" and an attempt to make a happy combination of belles-lettres et bonne chère - fine writing and good fare. His Manuel des amphitryons - the French word for host, since the most usual hôte means both guest and host, an interest failure (or refusal?) to distinguish, probably worth an article in itself - was, as well as a history of the table and a list of menus, a code of manners, for arranging guests, conversation, and such, and included nice rules like the one that a guest should wait six weeks before saying nasty things about his host. It began with an account of carving, directed again at parvenus: knowing how to carve is the proof of a complete education. A host who can't carve is like the owner of a splendid library who can't read.

Notice the terms he uses: education, reading, libraries, carving, entertaining; all are of a piece.

I'm not going to go into the question of whether Brillat-Savarin plagiarised Grimod: he himself described La Physiologie du goût, ou meditations du gastronomie transcendente - notice the seriousness of its titles. - as a book of high gastronomy beside which his Almanach was only "a sad rhapsodie"; its author" ... a philosopher, a metaphysician, an excellent philologist". He regretted that he had left it too late to write a reflective and definitive work. But he was very sad that Brillat-Savarin didn't see fit even just to mention him; not acknowledge, but mention.

Ever since, if off and on, passions have run high on this matter, people being fanatically of the La Reynière party or the Brillat-Savarin. Few have attempted a balance. Balzac is one of these, pointing out the great debts that Brillat-Savarin must have owed to his predecessor, but concluded that "Brillat-Savarin powerfully co-ordinated (Grimod's) scattered ideas and composed a literary work while the Almanach contains only the rudiments...."

Doubtless true, but it is interesting to see in this symposium just how many lines of research link Adelaide in 1984 with Grimod in Paris at the beginning of the 19th Century.

The involvement of Balzac is significant, because he was just one of the French 19th century literary figures who wrote about food. Dumas as well as writing The Three Musketeers and The Count of Monte Cristo and a great many other novels and plays produced Le Grande Dictionnaire de cuisine. And in the novels of Balzac and later Zola (especially Le Ventre de Paris) food is often both character and plot. Much more so than in English novels; it's amazing how little eating there is in English literature of this period - with the exception of Dickens. (Though Edward Spencer in Cakes and Ale (1897) suggests there is a great deal of drinking of a rather unattractive kind). Yet the Gastronomic Ballads of Thackeray and Charles Lamb's Dissertation on Roast Pig were known to the French through their translation in Monselet's gastronomic works. This minor literary figure revived L'Almanach des Gourmands dedicating his 1862 edition to La Reyniere "the most literary and most original amphitryon of the end of the 18th century", who "consecrated his pen to the art of the table, the first of the arts".

Monselet liked to speak of his artistic labours in a way that made much of both aspects, the gastronomic and the literary. His Almanach offers gastronomic archives, recipes, seasonal menus, a diner's guide, advice to stomachs, conversation for the table, and "elevated poesy". This edition includes "The Banquet Symphony" in a number of movements - Andante, Scherzo, Allegro - and all in dialogue. It goes from the argumentative through the critical and the drunken to the belligerent. There's a dialogue between empty wine bottles, and a play, the scene set inside a gastronome. The characters, who relate to one another quite violently, are the stomach, then a glass of madeira, a glass of vermouth, a herring, a glass of absinthe, a shrimp bisque, sherry, salmon trout, and that's just the beginning, it goes on and on; at one stage there's a macaroni who speaks with an Italian accent, champagne which sings, and then seven liqueurs. (The stomach's master is a notable of Obesopolis, the city of embonpoint) Finally there is punch, a bischof, then beer - which is sent back. Eventually the stomach is saved (one would have imagined it beyond redemption) by tea.

Monselet is a very elegant and formal writer who liked to use high flown poetical and rhetorical terms to speak of gastronomy. "All passion reasoned and directed becomes an art: now, more than any other passion, gastronomy is susceptible to reason and direction." "It attacks all senses at once, includes all poetries: of sound, colour, taste, smell and touch." He compares himself to the clergy, who are also preoccupied with the noble care of keeping the finest work of the creator in a state of well-being and lucidity.

He sees himself most of all as a poet. Lettres Gourmandes (1811) subtitled Manuel de l'homme à table, which consists of letters to friends, acquaintances, or to a professor of philosophy, a coachman a pianist, an artist, describing different dinners he or his friends have eaten, with amusing details, recipes, jokes, anecdotes, menus in summer or winter, home or abroad, has a sonnet about choosing between dining with his love, who promised him

and old wines; the love of the venison triumphed in his heart. He also unearthed lots of other people's culinary poems, and mentions La Cuisine en musique (Paris 1788) in which all the recipes were in verse, to fashionable tunes: sole with white wine a vilanelle, turkey en daube a rondeau, and so on. He edited La Cuisinière poétique and persuaded other literary figures of his day to write in it as Dumas, Theophile Gautier, Theodore de Banville, the last two still famous romantic poets, as much household names as Keats or Shelley or Byron (if not quite so well known to us as Baudelaire and Mallarmé, who also often took notice of food in print).

Gautier writes on British gastronomy - that there is more fun to be had alone in the bottom of the well of the great pyramid without light than in London the grip of its sabbath catalepsy. People go to taverns or else cut their throats, hang themselves, or throw themselves off bridges. (The English have always been good for a laugh - even the clichés don't change.)

But he does go on to describe eating some excellent dishes. He mentions various proprietary sauces, Harvey's anchovy, curry (which is hindu and diabolical), is amused by the "guillotine windows" and leaves readers to make up their own minds.

Theodore de Banville is very funny on the subject of dining in restaurants. However bachelor-keen, however libertine, any man who ate for six months in restaurants would get married instantly, even to a quakeress or the porteress's daughter. However awful his wife - a smoker, or a writer of lyric verse, stupid, miserly, thin or balk, he can console himself with not having to eat in restaurants. Like all the plagues sent by God the restaurant is amazingly powerful. It wounds all the senses - for example, sight, by being hideously ornate. (One is reminded of the vogue for the nineteenth century restaurants in France at the moment.) It never gives you what you want, only what you don't.

De Banville goes on in this amusing and lively vein, with much witty exaggeration. But the writings of these men of letters are interesting not just for what they say as in the fact that they said it. Monselet is a minor poet, even something of a poetaster, he doesn't rate a mention in the Petit Larousse, though last year some of the bouquinistes along the Paris quais had heard of him, and one even had a recent printing of one of his books. But de Banville and Gautier are significant literary figures, and their involvement a mark of the high seriousness which was considered to belong to the art of gastronomy.

Or was it? I did wonder at times if there was perhaps an element of too-much-protesting in some of this, whether perhaps amazing claims were made because it wasn't generally accepted that the art was quite so amazingly all these things? Perhaps we need not cringe gastronomically quite so drastically? Perhaps our latter-day antipodean protestations might work as well for us as theirs did for them? De Banville's diatribe against restaurants suggests there was as much room for refinement then as now, and presumably the current state of the art in France owes a lot to 180 years of

strongly felt writing about it. Perhaps we can talk ourselves, into a decent cuisine - eventually.

The 19th century went on. All through it great cooks - Carême, Escoffier, Soyer, for instance - wrote copiously and vividly on their art. (And curiously felt the fascination of England, and worked there.) Carême thought that Grimod's Almanach showed flashes of gastronomy and wit but that he had played no part in the rapid progression of the art since its renaissance. Oddly enough one can see Carême as the inventor of the nouvelle cuisine of his day, and ironically, because the current nouveaux cuisiniers see him as the symbol of all they revolted against. These men wrote passionately and theoretically, and they are not at all the illiterate great chefs whom Curnonsky would forgive for writing deplorable French. But they are first of all practitioners, and I am limiting this paper to people who are largely theorists.

Curnonsky was that, par excellence. He claimed to know how to eat, not how to cook. He was a native of Anjou, and loved the food and wines of that region. (A great many amateurs - useful word, it means not just non-professional but lover - of food have a peasant-bourgeois background; their passion for food is aroused very early in life.) Curnonsky was a pseudonym; when he began to make a name for himself in Paris at the turn of the century it was felt his own name of Sailland was too dull, he should choose something Russian, fashionable, why not something ending in sky?

- Why-not-sky? said the young man, but in Latin: curnonsky. And so it was. (Notice the erudition.)

He was a man about town, a journalist, a writer of literary and theatrical criticism and of light novels (at one stage in his youth a nègre, a ghost writer, for Willy, Colette's husband) a frequenter of cafes and theatres and restaurants. He associated with men of letters, with poets who weren't above culinary verse, was elected Prince of Gastronomes, and founded an Academy of them. And he wrote about food, always with great elegance and strict standards.

Nevertheless, like Grimod de La Reynière, he was not averse to being a publicist - if he approved of the product. He invented the name Bibendum for the Michelin man, and for a time wrote a column under that name.

He didn't drive, hadn't a car, had a horror of mechanical things and didn't care for speed, but liked to travel. We owe to him the connection of la table et la route, of gastronomy and tourism.

R-J. Courtine who has two pseudonyms, one La Reynière, the other Savarin, nicknamed in pun Brillant Savarin, considers himself Curnonsky's disciple and spiritual son. He wrote an article of homage to the old man, who died in 1956, in the September 1981, revamped, issue of Cuisine et Vins de France, which Curnonsky founded, and called it "Le Gastronomade humoriste". Courtine's standards are as strict as Cur's, but I doubt his prose is so elegant.

Another great companion of the Prince of Gastronomes was Marcel Rouff, an amphitryon, apparently, and author of La Vie et la Passion de Dodin-Bouffant, Gourmet (1934), a novel entirely about food. It's unfortunately not available in this country, and out of print in France (though available as an expensive collector's piece) which is a pity because it makes facinating reading.

Rouff prefaces his novel with a Justification for dealing so soon

after the War with "gastronomic futilities", which makes clear that he doesn't find them futile at all. "Cooking is the art of taste, as painting is the art of sight and music the art of hearing." In other words, why should one sense be less significantly served than another? "Gastronomic art, like all art, involves a philosophy, a psychology, and an ethic, it is an integral part of universal thought, it is linked to the civilisation of our earth, to the cultivation of our taste and thus to the superior essence of humanity."

Hardly a matter of futilities. But, on the other hand, Rouff spends seven pages on this Justification, which suggests he sees the the necessity of persuading the convincing his readers - he cannot take their acquiescence for granted, even as late as 1934.

It seems to me, though I can find no confirmation of it, that Rouff's hero owes quite a lot to Curnonsky - he seems to have the same figure, the same ventripotency. But he also seems to inhabit Brillat-Savarin country. Dodin-Bouffant is "the Napoleon of gourmets, the Beethoven of the kitchen, the Shakespeare of the table", a man of suprasensitive palate who can detect the lack of half a teaspoon of onion and two sprigs of chervil in a sauce at one tasting, and who will not have at his table a man incapable of discerning a pinch of nutmeg in a cauliflower cream sauce, or capable of praising a badly buttered canape under a partridge, and like Curnonsky he likes simple perfect things.

Is a Curnonsky possible in Australia I've been wondering. I think not, because he is above all a Parisian and not one of our cities is at all like Paris. It is the intense life of a huge population inhabiting a tiny space (because Paris is a very small city and people actually live in virtually every street of it) that still allows for such richness of exerieence. And the fact that it feeds on the delicacies of a nation - you could get a greater variety of fresher fish in Paris in the middle ages than you can in Canberra now, which is actually closer to the sea. But that's another story.

While I'm talking about food in novels I must at least nod in the direction of Proust, whose sensuous evocations of meals and dishes are part of the essential stuff on his novels. Books have already been written about that.

This has been a very hasty flight past nineteenth century gastronomic writing, with time only for a glance at a few landmarks. Now I've got to the twentieth century I would, if time

allowed, discuss the journal called Gault-Millau after its editors, which is a direct descendant of Grimod's Almanach, with tastings (légitimations, he called them) menus, recipes, and theoretical articles. Since it doesn't I shall look briefly at two more writers.

The first is Marinetti, something of a sport in this context, since he was an Italian, but appropriate otherwise, since he was a poet. He is worth looking at because he tried to create a cuisine by manifesto.

Marinetti was a Futurist, enamoured of aeroplanes and fast cars and mechanical devices. (1909 vintage, at least that's the date of the first Futurist Manifesto, though it wasn't until 1931 that the first Manifesto of Futurist Cuisine appeared.) He thought the gastronomic art extremely important, but handicapped by needing to be the daily business of nourishment. One solution was for the state to provide free pills to feed people so that cooks could concentrate on artistico-gastronomic fancies.

But nourishment was not just domestic, it was political. Marinetti attached his Futurist doctrines to an ideology, Fascism, that led to the most ardent xenophobia. Italians were to prepare themselves to be the master race; they were to eat works of art that would make them at once virile, aesthetic, and bellicose.

Some of his dishes seem excellent, some are weird, but most exist not to be eaten but to be understood, to be seen or read. The meaning could be patriotic or mechanical or erotic. An example of the last is "Man-Woman at Midnight : on a round plate one pours red sabayon in a hollow shape, with in the middle a ring of onion transfixed with a stalk of preserved angelica. Then one places according to the indications of the design two marrons glacés. One dish per couple". (Who presumably had something better to do than eat.)

His idea of a banquet is to have the guests eating black olives, cumquat and fennel (for the colours?) at the same time as touching little pieces of silk, velvet and sandpaper, and having carnation perfume sprayed on the napes of their necks, while from the kitchen comes the combined noise of an aeroplane motor and Bach.

Today nobody much remembers Marinetti except as violently anti-pasta. He went so far as to suggest that books even mentioning it should be burnt. Pasta is not food for heroes. It makes people heavy, fat and stupid; it's simply quantity, not quality. Once plumpness and whiteness were a sign of richness, then the poor got fat on bad food, so now thinness and brownness (the leisure for tanning in summer and winter) equal wealth. Something of an elitist, Marinetti. And a misogynist.

His ideas aren't all bad, but the fact that they have been almost entirely forgotten seems evidence that you can't talk people into a cuisine if they don't want it. Mussolini could force Fascism on his country, but he couldn't force Marinetti's food down its throats.

It's quite a good proof of cooking as art; it needs its autonomy, unlike politics.

The other writer is Roland Barthes, a man of letters, a philosopher, a semiologist who regards everything in the world about him as fit matter for the elucidation of signs and the perception of myths. Food is a rich source. (He once said novelists should be classified according to their frankness about food.) In his preface to Brillat-Savarin (1975) he is fascinated by the dualism of language and gastronomy. (Earlier in The Pleasures of the Text (1973) he spoke of the orality which produces the pleasures of gastrosophy and language.) Language and gastronomy: these two powers or faculties have the same organ, the tongue; the same equipment - cheeks, palate, nasal passages. So eating, speaking, singing (and kissing) all are intimately connected. Cut the tongue out, there is no more tasting or words. The fleshliness of the word, indeed.

Much earlier than this, in 1957, in Mythologies, Barthes analysed the cooking in Elle magazine - its coloured fiches-cuisine, photograph on one side, recipe on the other, still exist and indeed I have used them a lot - I believe they have changed with fashions in food. Those of the fifties involve, he says, smooth coatings; surfaces are glazed, rounded off, the food buried "under the even sediment of sauces, creams, icings, jellies". It belongs "to a visual category ... cooking ... is meant for the eye alone ... It is based on coating the alibis, and is forever trying to extenuate and even disguise the primary nature of foodstuffs, the brutality of meat or the abruptness of seafood".

"But above all, coatings prepare and support ... ornamentation. Glazing ... serves as a background for unbridled beautification: chiselled mushrooms, punctuation of cherries, motifs of carved lemon, shavings of truffle, silver pastilles, arabesques of glace fruit: the underlying coat (and this is why I call it a sediment, since the food itself becomes no more than an indeterminate bedrock) is intended to be the page on which can be read a whole rococo cookery."

One could say, here we have the philosopher of la nouvelle cuisine. A good decade before it got off the ground Barthes's denunciations promulgate a theory which great chefs will turn into a practice. At last a perfect example of gastronomic writing influencing, perhaps even creating, a whole new cuisine.

Maybe. But I doubt it is so simple as that. I doubt that Bocuse, Guerard, et al, thought Eureka! here is the revelation that we have been waiting for, etcetera. Now we can go off and cook more meaningfully. Rather I think that Barthes, in philosophical terms, and they, in practical, recognized a phenomenon and reacted to it. And in a country where gastronomy is as much a matter of the mind as the body, a whole theory and practice happily grew, at first rampantly, and then with criticism and moderation and refinement more soberly. But I would hesitate to see any causal relationship between philosopher and practitioner.

So we can talk ourselves into a great, good, even half way decent cuisine? Do we need good writing to produce good cooking? I honestly don't know. But I do think it's like chickens and eggs. We don't know which came first. But we do know that we can't have one without the other.

Or, going back to the beginning of this paper, we need a fork in one han, pen in the other - a joint effort.

CHRONIQUES GASTRONOMIQUES AND RESTAURANT REVIEWS

Barbara Santich

In associating chroniques gastronomiques with restaurant reviews I am making two statements: first, that the two can be compatible, in that a restaurant review can also be called a chronique gastronomique, and second, that in practice, here and now, the two are poles apart.

The term 'chronique gastronomique' is obviously French; as Marion Halligan points out, the model for gastronomic literature is France. 'Chronique' has the modern meaning of that part of newspaper devoted to a particular subject, e.g. music, literature; the equivalent English term is column "Gastronomique" obviously means to do with the gastronomy, in other words with the "reasoned comprehension of everything connected with the nourishment of man" as we have accepted the definition of Brillat-Savarin. In the broad sense, nourishment includes both wine and food, the latter being far more than calories, far more than fuel for the human engine. It is nourishment for the mind and soul, entering into all our activities, all our thoughts, all our emotions, all our efforts to give style and meaning to what we do".(1)

Waverley Root was a 'chroniqueur gastronomique'; he used to write a column for the Herald-Tribune. In France Robert Courtine describes himself as a 'chroniqueur gastronomique'. MFK Fisher is a 'chroniqueur gastronomique', although not all her writings appeared in newspapers or magazines.

According to Jean-Claude Bonnet (3), the genre 'chronique gastronomique' began with Grimod de la Reynière and his Almanach des Gourmands, in which the first part, the Calendrier Nutritif, gave a month-by-month review of the choicest ingredients available in Paris, how to treat them and enjoy them and where to find them; and the second part, the Itinéraire d'un Gourmand dans les Divers Quartiers de Paris, offered a guided tour of the best food suppliers, the best restaurants and cafes of the city. Written, in part for the 'nouveaux riches' thrown up by the Revolution, its object was "to act as guide and to light the way for Gourmands in the labyrinth of their dearest pleasures".

Grimod outlines, in the Calendrier Nutritif, how a certain ingredient should be treated (for example, he writes of the sturgeon: "... (whole) it is roasted on a spit, studded with pieces of anchovy and eel, moistened with a marinade thickened with a good 'coulis' of freshwater crayfish. It is a dish of the purest luxury, and the roast of Good Friday. But more often, one buys it in portions, which are served as a ragout, or with croutons, or with fresh herbs..."). He deliberately refrains, however, from giving recipes. His style is discursive and informative, and intended to favour the advancement of the art of gastronomy. He envisaged the creation of a periodical which would review the progress of the art

(or of its practitioners, whom he called 'artists'), provide a guide to the availability and prices of all ingredients, and report on "toutes les indigestions célèbres". Grimod imagined hosts of eager gourmards, desirous of seeing their names in print, acting as voluntary informants all over the country and confiding to him - to publish - details of a certain restaurant in a certain town where one eats the most tender boeuf à la mode, or a particular supplier who offers the most succulent oysters

Had it been realised, this would have been the forerunner of restaurant guides such as those published by Michelin and Gault/Millau. The latter pair can, in many ways, be regarded as the spiritual successors to Grimod de la Reynière.

Their Guide Gourmand de la France, published in 1970, (4) takes one on a tour of Paris and its gastronomic landmarks, although the greater part of the book describes a tour of the whole country. The reader stops at provincial capitals to learn some of their history and character and - more importantly - their gastronomy (at Dijon one learns the history of mustard, of gingerbread, of cassis in all its forms), pauses at some of the more gastronomically important villages on the route (for example La Chappelle-d'Angillon, where there is a fishing competition on the first Sunday of July, or at Lembeye where there is a foie gras contest on each of the three first Thursdays of December, or at Chateau-Chinon, whose specialities are saucisson chaud, brioche, rosette, jambon à la crème, poulet aux cèpes,..)

The monthly Gault/Millau magazine includes 'chroniques gastronomiques' in the form of an editorial, or an article (for example, on the subject of foies gras, or standards of hygiene in French restaurants). Another feature, the analogue to Grimod's 'jury dégustateur', is the 'banc d'essai', or taste test, where a team of six or eight tasters - with some qualifications to the title - taste and award points to various brands of a product, such as orange marmalade, commercial blackcurrant sorbets, canned foie gras. The scores are averaged and the results published, in order of merit, together with comments from Messrs. Gault and Millau. The same process is followed for a selection of new products each month, some of which are recommended, some rejected.

In each issue there are also reviews of restaurants and - as Grimod would have wished - the feature "La Chasse aux Trésors" gives readers the opportunity to recommend previously unknown, but well worth knowing, restaurants or merchants.

Obviously all these derive from the style and ideas of Grimod de la Reynière. Equally obviously, we have none of it in Australia.

Writing about food in this country falls into either of two categories. It is either concerned with producing food (ingredients, cooking, etc) or consuming it. Creation is opposed to destruction, practice to intellectualism.

This dichotomy is unnecessary. While someone like Courtine,

calling himself a 'chroniqueur gastronomique', writes both practically and intellectually, about ingredients and cooking as well as about restaurants and eating, here we have the food writer - which can sometimes be reduced to recipe-monger - and the restaurant reviewer, a slightly more acceptable profession yet one for which lesser qualifications may be required.

The food column in the daily press is often more culinary than gastronomic, in that its main concern is how to prepare and cook a particular ingredient or dish. Sometimes it can be merely "This week's recipes", when there is not even any culinary writing, and at this point cuisine as an art can be said to disappear, or at most to have become a sign without content, an empty language.

Culinary writing is essentially practical and serves a useful purpose. It usually does, but need not include recipes, and this is one way in which it is distinguished from gastronomic writing. Culinary writing tells one what to do, while gastronomic writing invites one to think about it. Courtine, in some of his early writings, was deliberately vague in the few recipes he included because he maintained his style was gastronomic, not culinary, adding that if one simply wants recipes, there are plenty of sources.

Although gastronomic writing does exist in Australia, it is not easy to find examples, Gay Bilson's articles have usually been more gastronomic than culinary. Yet in the more serious and 'intellectual' of the press such as the National Times and the Australian Financial Review, where one might expect to find gastronomic writing, it is notably absent. Similarly, the two Australian food magazines are more concerned with culinary information, recipes and advertisers.

On the other hand, there is a good deal of wine writing, and good wine writing. Christopher Driver (5), in explaining why the language used for wine is far more extensive than that used for food, notes that "Food is a necessity which has only recently become so diverse and abundant in the market that sellers sense a need to draw attention to finer points of discrimination than mere appetite. Wine is optional... and even when all mystique and snobbery are subtracted, it remains a complex, infinitely variable substance. It is sold, as it were, on the nerve endings, as a spark crosses from the verbal evocations of a wine in the vendor's catalogue or advertisement to the first, fleeting impression of the professional taster or the unpredictable impulses of the armchair buyer.

In a sense, this is true, although I would contend that food is also complex and infinitely variable. It is not sufficient to explain the lack of gastronomic writing by saying that the vocabulary is inadequate. I believe that it is more a question of publishers and editors believing that gastronomic writing is not what their readers want.

Perhaps there is an element of revolt against the excesses of the last decade, when suddenly it was fashionable and de rigeur to have

articles, no matter what, on food and restaurants and eating – even the Nation Review had a food column, of sorts. But like nouvelle cuisine, it was done to death, and eventually had to be retired or renewed.

Although the chance to develop good writing, in this period of gastronomic enthusiasm, was missed, restaurant reviews have continued in a form and style slightly modified to suit a slightly different reader. However, restaurant reviews rarely enter the realm of gastronomic writing, no matter how well written or witty they are.

It may be instructive to examine some of the reasons for writing and publishing restaurant reviews. For the reviewer, it may be a source of income, or he/she may write a review because it is in the public interest. The publisher or editor will include restaurant reviews because he wants to sell his publication (by attracting readers) and/or sell advertising.

And why do readers want to read restaurant reviews? To be informed about particular restaurants – how much they cost, the type of menu. Or perhaps to contribute to social small-talk, or to compare their own opinion with that of the reviewer, as Jean-Paul Aron (6) remarked: "Excess verbiage on restaurant eating – for words also can produce indigestion – has provoked a mental saturation which, for many, tends towards nausea. For the last fifteen years we have been subjected to a veritable bombardment of information which has become unbearable, intolerable. People are starting to wake up. One would end up by no longer going to a restaurant to eat, but to verify the judgements of critics that one had read The discussion about eating finished up taking the place of eating. Once one had read the articles, it was as though one had eaten. An abstract discussion, emptied of all content. Signs, that was all they were, signs, that one was going to drink and eat!"

The standard formula for a non-critical restaurant review can be outlined as – description of decor and atmosphere
 description of menu
 I ate – he ate – she ate – etc
 we drank
 description of service

Such a review gives enough information to satisfy most editors and readers, but it's like eating sliced white bread. A review, literally, need not be anything else; but it can also be a critique, in which case it has to be a "critical essay or notice" (Concise Oxford Dictionary).

I would like to see, instead of or even in addition to restaurant reviews, what I would call critiques gastronomiques. Just as literary critics and music critics should have some expertise to claim this title, so should the gastronomic critic have certain qualifications.

Robert Courtine, in his book Feasts of a Militant Gastronomer(7) –

outlined his "10 Commandments" for a journalist writing regularly on food. Although these represent advice from a seasoned practitioner rather than a set of qualifications, they do stress the need to have a good appetite!

I believe that the critic should have both practical and theoretical qualifications, the former gained from both eating and cooking. I know that many respected gastronomic critics - Curnonsky, for example - would not agree with the latter, but to properly appreciate say, a bearnaise sauce, it is important to know the steps involved in producing it. Practically, it is important to know the seasons by the market (this is what the Calendrier Nutritif was all about) and to know what constitutes "quality" in any ingredient. Theoretically, it is important to know what is meant by certain culinary or menu terms, to understand why a particular ingredient may be prepared in a certain way. And, from both practical and theoretical viewpoints, the critic must be able to understand what the restaurateur is trying to say, through cuisine.

This is where 'chroniques gastronomiques' meet restaurant reviews. A gastronomic critique starts by trying to answer the questions: what is the cuisine trying to express, and how, and does it succeed. It becomes more than subjective responses to particular dishes, the 'standard' restaurant review, the style Max Harris had in mind when he wrote (8): "The whole point about restaurant reviewing is that it is pure ignorance and bad taste to describe in detail what you have eaten. You can only say whether it was agreeable or unpalatable."

The gastronomic critique transcends the standard review, especially the poorly written one. It goes beyond the trendy style of reviewing, no matter how witty. It should appeal to both the senses and the intellect, arouse the appetite and excite the mind, in its synthesis of practical experience and theoretical knowledge. The restaurant meal is not the basis of the writing, simply its inspiration.

And so I return to my opening statement; that the style associated with 'chroniques gastronomiques', can be - and perhaps should be - incorporated into a restaurant review. Restaurant reviews provide the occasion for gastronomic writing - albeit an occasion too rarely seized - and for the publication of gastronomic critiques, by means of which the art of gastronomy in Australia could be advanced.

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THE RESTAURATEUR'S RIGHT OF REPLY

GAY BILSON

A few points before I start:

by "restaurant" I mean the kind of restaurant that exists because someone wants to cook for a living, wants to do it their way, with their particular set of aesthetics and their own bias. It is a restaurant run by a passionate cook, and it is a style of restaurant which has existed for sometime and will always exist around the corner from the other kinds.

by "cooking" I mean what I presume all of us here mean, too. It is a curious, excited exploration of possibilities and the practice of a craft.

Can I also say that this is not meant to be a formal statement, or the working out of a hypothesis, but more a statement of DILEMMAS.

The title given to this paper is an example of last-ditch generalisation. You see, one of the excuses that restaurateurs can come up with, and which meets with unfailingly sympathetic reactions, is "being busy".

There seems to be to be a general conception of the dedicated restaurateur as necessarily having lost the greater part of his or her life to the business of restauranting, even having lost her soul to the rigours of finding produce, cooking the produce and pleasing the recipients, with not so much as five minutes to spare for extra-culinary activity - I mean I get the feeling that the public sympathetically wants to believe this image of the perfect restaurateur-cum-cook.

One of the things I'd like to talk about involves misconceptions, and the reason I think that they need to be talked about is that the restaurateur has no right of reply in the traditional, that is, "upstart traditional", order of things.

What I like to think I might be able to do within this symposium is to say a little of what is usually not said while you and I are standing within a diplomatic circle - just for a moment let's presume that the restaurateur might just have the right to review the restaurant reviewer for instance.

You see, at the worst, we restaurateurs could be said to have lost our souls to the pens of reviewers. In Australia the art of food

criticism, with a few rare exceptions, has never gone much beyond the competitive, point-awarding system that allows the writer to exercise a little personal power.

I might say that the art of criticism in any of the other performing professions (for restaurants are within this category) - theatre, ballet, music for instance - rarely goes beyond the limits of like, hate, go, don't go, as well.

Presumably this says something about the Australian public's ability to digest more than two to four hundred words on any subject in any paper, but the lack of serious criticism and the lack of a venue for it only enhances the void.

The restaurateur as victim - this isn't a cry for sympathy, it's more a rallying cry - continues to skim her stocks while the reviewer and restaurant voyeur promote a view of the quality of restaurant life which is divorced from the realities of the profession. The fact that there is little professionalism asked of the judges doesn't help.

One of the things which muddies the quality of food criticism is that everyone judges with the prejudice of their palates, which isn't quite the same as a music critic having a prejudice for strings. This may be interpreted at its very worst as an example of the "I don't know much about food but I know what I like" attitude towards the stomach. The reviewer extends that attitude to include "YOU don't know much about food (and how do we know whether they do either?) but I'LL tell you which restaurant serves the best, and the second best, and the third best and so on."

It's a type of consumer service, like Choice Magazine, but without any scientific method to back it up.

The lack of professionalism (and what constitutes professionalism in a food and restaurant critic might be discussed later - it has certainly got a lot to do with the fact that there is little gastronomic writing involved...) allows the reviewer to promote the misconceptions and myths about restaurateurs.

The point made earlier, that restaurateur/cooks are always seen as wiping sweat from their necks from the heat of the stove is a tiny but nevertheless interesting point - you know, no one ever seems to ring me up without apologizing for having taken me away from the stove. Apart from the fact that I might actually welcome as exit from the kitchen, so they really think I run a restaurant while standing under an exhaust fan?

Why I think that this romantic notion continues to exist is that the reviewer and the public want to identify creativity and craft and hard slog with one person. It is the promotion of the chef as cult figure. No one seems grown-up enough to be able to cope with a restaurant simply being good or bad as a sum of its parts, when I would think that most restaurateurs find that the parts getting their act together is one of the most exciting sides of restaurant

life.

The "points" system for the food and the setting and so on extends to making a star/victim of the owner/chef.

No-one wants to know about the brigade who execute the chef's ideas, or their own ideas, and certainly no-one wants to recognise a waiter in Australia who gives professional service, that is, service which is hardly noticeable. We promote the "personality" all the way through rather than salute the practicalities of the concept.

It may be gross generalisation, but one of the reasons for this is, I think, connected with the "upstart" label I've given to our cuisine.

Though there is some general idea of the extraordinarily hard work of cooking professionally (though to me it is more in the PACE than the execution) the critics and their public have little idea of what it entails. Cooking has no traditional place in our culture - the "cuisine du coeur", the celebration and joy of cooking, which could have produced the caring restaurateurs is actually being created by the restaurateurs themselves, so that we have a situation in which it is the restaurateur in Australia who is the educator, the instigator of a caring attitude towards produce and preparation, however good or not he or she is at the craft. This culinary contradiction may be labelled as "upstart".

The label might also apply to the naivety of a lot of food criticism. In Australian Gourmet recently there was a review of a restaurant in which the writer ate Bavarois for dessert. She was, I quote, "amazed" by its lightness, texture and flavour. Now there is something slightly askew here if a food critic is amazed that a restaurant can produce a well-made bavarois. Surely the person who made it shouldn't be selling it if he can't make one competently. - I have my private opinion of this particular bavarois, which shouldn't be the point except that it is an example of difference of opinion, which is fairly important.

André Simon once said, and he said it in Australia too: "I tried to prepare a simple dish once. I immediately decided to give cooking away and write about it instead". Now were our reviewers "chroniqueurs gastronomiques" as Barbara Santich calls them (writers concerned with gastronomy) and not upstart judges, that sort of line could fit them comfortably enough, though I don't think it does much credit for Simon anyway. He would never have made similar comment about wine.

Of course to exacerbate the problem we are a lot of upstart cooks as well. We are, in a sense, learning as we educate, but we are putting our hearts into the practice, practising what we preach with each plate, and so it is the restaurateurs who could be the "chroniqueurs gastronomiques australiens" except that we are tongue-tied to the stove. The critic in Australia seems to have little conception of gastronomy, and the passionate restaurateur, who I

have suggested is the educator, the moving force, is in a way being left out of any chronicle that could be made of the Upstart Cuisine.

I am not suggesting that all cooks can put two words together on paper with ease, or that they should, but it is a phenomenon of our professional kitchens that quite a few of our chefs are articulate, reflective and literate, especially the women.

Nor am I suggesting that restaurants should not be reviewed, but simply that there should be a less competitive attitude towards the criticism and a little more philosophising.

The ultimate judge is, of course, the diner, at the time of dining, which makes valid critics of us all within the context of dining, and theatre of a kind in every action within the restaurant, which leads me back to the misconceptions and to the distressingly outlandish adulation given to cooks (always called "chefs" by our reviewers) - Paul Bocuse once said something like "Bankers and cooks are the two most admired professionals today".

Cooking is one of the last old-fashioned activities left in our video-screen, fast-food age. Even with the help of the Robot-Coupe and the Dito and the Microwave (not a dirty word, given its proper use) cooking involves discerning labour and intensive care. Because of this the audience, the non-cooks, hold this peculiarly labour-intensive occupation in awe, if not as a slight insanity. I sometimes think it slightly insane too, and then I catch a glimpse of what it is we are trying to achieve and the points system criticism becomes peripheral, a game played by extra-culinary beings, signifying very little.

We need a little "chroniques gastronomiques" to put the reviewing into perspective because while we only have reviewers we will remain consumers and never become gourmands. The title of Marian Halligan's paper says it all - The Word Made Flesh.

Writers who can communicate and therefore excite us do more for the cause of fine eating than a thousand cookery books filled with glossy photos. In Quentin Crewe's book The Great Chefs of France, which is filled with reverent intimacies about the heroes of the hallowed French restaurants, and fine photographs by Anthony Blake, there is only one page which truly moves me - a sequence of small photographs following the actions of two cooks squeezing a bisque through a tamis- there is a glimpse of craft and of explanation. The bisque itself is left for YOU to make.

Photographs of food, says Roland Barthes, distance us from food, and I agree. They leave us with no anticipation, they reduce a meal or a dish, or a bowl of ingredients which all depend on aroma, texture and taste to a two-dimensional colour plate, to a margarine sculpture as opposed to a truffle.

WRITING about food, at its best, can produce something akin to lust, and when that happens somewhere, somehow, between the gastronomers

typewriter and the cook's piano , between the theory and the practice, we just might begin to reach some form of upstart culinary harmony.

TOWARDS DIVERSITY OR DULLNESS IN OUR DAY-TO-DAY DIET

J.V. POSSINGHAM

This contribution is concerned with the erosion in the diversity of the raw materials of our cuisine and with the unfortunate drift that is occurring towards dull and uninteresting food. Over recent years, the concept of eating the fruits, vegetables and even the seafoods that are in season is disappearing. We can now store apples for almost 12 months, table grapes for 6 months and frozen vegetables and seafoods almost forever. These so-called "successes" in the food sciences lead to the situation whereby we consume only a restricted number of popular varieties. We have almost forgotten that there is a wide range of varieties of most fruits and vegetables, each with their own unique characteristics and which can be eaten at different times of the year and so add diversity to our cuisine.

As well as storing our local foods for long periods, to further increase the tendency of consuming only one or two varieties of fruit, we now have in our markets fresh fruits from the northern hemisphere. For example, Californian Navel oranges are currently for sale in our shops six months out-of season, in competition with our own Valencia oranges.

A consequence of the requirement to store fruits and vegetables for long periods of time, and the requirement to transport them over long distances, is that we now mainly grow varieties that are selected for these characteristics. Accordingly, recently bred table grapes are most likely to have tough skins that enable them to be transported long distances than to have good flavour. Strawberries and peaches that transport well and can be grown out-of-season in the sub-tropics are commonly bland in flavour. One of the tomato varieties recently released by the University of California is almost square, to facilitate its transport in semi-trailers. Coincidentally, they lack flavour.

Perhaps the most frightening feature of these developments is that consumers adjust their palates to the food that is available. For example, in taste tests at CSIRO's Division of Food Research, fresh peas receive low scores from young tasters who rate frozen peas more highly. Only older tasters are familiar with the superior taste of fresh peas.

Also, there is a growing tendency for consumers to pay more attention to the appearance of fruits than to their flavour and

texture characteristics. An example of this is the preference consumers exercise for red fruits, such as red apples, peaches, mangoes and table grapes, almost regardless of whether they have flavour. Perhaps these preferences reflect a lack of sophistication in consumers.

With all its faults and abuses, the Appellation Origin system of keeping separate the wines from different areas and from different years brings great diversity to European wines. Considerable diversity also exists in the foods of Europe as typified by "food of the region". The upstart cuisine of Australia must attempt to both develop and maintain diversity as a logical starting point, in the raw materials of the kitchen.

THEY LOOK ALL THE SAME TO ME

GABRIEL GATE

In Melbourne in 1982 I met Masaru Doi, a respected Japanese teacher of traditional Japanese cuisine and visitor to Melbourne. I asked him why one so often talks of Chinese, French and Italian cuisine but not so much of Japanese cuisine. He answered me, via his interpreter, that Japanese cuisine has a strong relationship with Japanese lifestyle, traditions, family life and history. It is therefore hard to copy and not much understood or talked about outside Japan. He told of the impossibility of serving a Japanese meal with all its meaning in Australia, saying that most Australians would not relate to it. He had visited the Melbourne fish market that morning and said that although there was an abundance of fish, there was nothing fresh - the fish had obviously been dead for several hours. He said that in Japanese cooking, the ingredients need to have some life in them when they are utilised. It is only in this manner that one gets the full value of the ingredients.

In most countries where a traditional cuisine is established or simply in countries where one eats well, the market plays an important rôle. It is a constant source of replenishment. By market I mean of course the local place where people can find fresh fruit, vegetables, poultry, meat, cheese, etc.

Recently I visited four markets in four very different places - in Singapore, at Genevilliers on the outskirts of Paris, in Hong Kong and the Prahran market in Melbourne. All four markets were frequented by the working class, except for the Prahran market whose customers were drawn mainly from the middle classes.

The Singapore market was quite modest. The vegetables were in small quantities, but freshly cut and obviously had been selected from the retailer's own garden. The fish and eels were swimming in buckets on the stall counters and the frogs and other reptiles were moving around in cages. Chickens with feathers were singing their last song.

At the Hong Kong market I bought three live fish and a chicken which had been killed half an hour before I bought it. A Chinese woman checked the freshness of the eggs I bought through the light of a lamp. The vegetables were extremely fresh. Next day we saw Aberdeen, a southern fishing port of Hong Kong island. It resembled an ants' nest with people scurrying as fast as they could in all directions, toting huge baskets or buckets full of slithering fish. They couldn't work fast enough. Our local friends told us that most Chinese people go to the market twice a day.

The small market in Genevilliers outside Paris offered the largest choice of the four markets visited. Most of the food items were labelled, telling the consumer where the food came from and its price. The freshness was inspiring and the presentation

fastidious. For example, the most fragile fruits were individually packed to protect them against bruising. There were chickens from three different regions and at different prices, and ducks from two different regions. The hare and rabbits, though no longer breathing, still wore their fur and the pheasants their plumage. The butchers cut the meat as the clients ordered it and the charcutier was justly proud of his pâté maison. The fish and prawns were moving and the langoustines would have nipped me if they'd got a chance. And the cheeses were alive.

The Prahran market is one of the better Melbourne markets - for quality, though not for price. Most of the stallholders obtain their supplies on Wednesdays or Thursdays and the market is open on Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and also on Saturday mornings. Understandably enough, on Thursday the market looks good, but on Tuesday it looks very sad indeed, especially the fruit and vegetables, which are sometimes one week old. When selecting vegetables of the size and quality I want for a special dish, it's not uncommon to be told: "Don't worry, mate. They look all the same to me". To the average stall holder, a tomato is a tomato, ripe, unripe, green or red or rotten. That is the way he bought it and that is the way he'll sell it.

I believe that fruit and vegetables in Australia don't have the richness or fineness of taste of those in France. Especially vegetables like beans, peas, spinach and lettuce, and fruits such as apples, strawberries, raspberries, pears. I wonder if the growers do not do their best or whether the soil and climate in Australia are not as favourable as in France.

In general the fish stalls look dull, and as Masaru Doi indicated, there is no life there. The crays and prawns are overcooked, the thawing prawns are darkening, the aluminium trays are full of sick-looking fillets of fish floating in tap water, the washed scallops are immersed. The natural juice of oysters has gone down the drain. Occasionally there are some fresh thawed fish fillets and sometimes some fresher fish.

My fishmonger who doesn't operate from the market tells me that the fish auction at Footscray market starts at 7 am and that this is far too late for the fishmongers to be ready for their shop opening time. The result is that the fishmongers are forced to buy their fish and seafood for 2-3 days ahead. The freezer plays an important role in their business.

The beef in this country is often killed too young to reach the ideal balance of taste and tenderness. I prefer not to talk about the cheese.

The point of my talk is that although there are some quality ingredients in this country, I believe the standard could be greatly improved and, just as importantly, that foodstuffs could be presented to the public in a better state of freshness.

Gardeners, fishermen, farmers, cheesemakers and retailers: it

is time to wake up. The consumer, preoccupied with marketing once a week, freezing and microwaving, needs to receive the right inspiration and information to change his or her philosophy. The time is ripe.

To finish, I'd like to quote the title of the book of a great French chef, which is: 'La Cuisine: c'est beaucoup plus que des recettes' - or in English, Cooking is more than just recipes.

FOOD AND WINE COMBINATIONS; AND ORGANOLEPTIC PERCEPTION

DERRICK CASEY

Organoleptic perception is the response of any sensory organ to outside stimulus. In order to make a valued judgement regarding agreeable combinations of food and wine we must have a clear understanding of how we taste.

The majority of people know practically nothing about eating. They do not know how to taste, have limited ideas on selection, know practically nothing about cookery, and have never stopped to analyse their own food behavior either before, during or after a meal. Yet as we all partake in eating (or feeding) every day, it is common to consider oneself an expert on food, when in fact most of the responses people give in regard to either food or wine are simply reiterated fallacies or habitual observations.

To the serious consumer who wishes to derive the greatest satisfaction while eating and drinking, it is necessary to embark upon an educational process to familiarise himself with the fundamentals of anatomy and physiology. He must then learn about the selection of foods and wines according to the kinds and varieties, on a qualitative basis. A working knowledge of cookery and wine making and finally a developed sensitivity to food aesthetics are also necessary.

Enjoyment of food and wine can be developed into an art. Or to put it more correctly: some of the principles of the other arts can be applied to the enjoyment of food. When developed to a sufficiently high degree, the enjoyer becomes the appreciator.

Let us first consider the collective importance of the senses to the phenomenon of taste. It could be said that people generally have equally developed senses. It is the subjective, qualitative application of these senses which defines the true artist.

Hearing plays an important part in the mechanics of eating and should be studied, particularly in the direction of the extreme range where crunching and crackling sounds are so high as to dominate the weaker or lower sensibilities of taste and smell. For example smoked haddock would have a high flavour rating for fish, but add coarsely cut blanched almonds to it and in the process of munching fish and nuts together it will be found that the haddock in fact tastes less fishy. This is attributed to an illusion caused by the dominance of the auditory sense over that of taste and smell.

The knowledge of this phenomenon would therefore become applicable when selecting a wine to accompany fish prepared "à l'amandine" as against plain fried. There are many such examples which require a

knowledge of cookery and presentation of foods.

Feel or touch is particularly important when related to texture of foods and drink. An interesting example of the influence of texture is shown when one considers the popularity of champagne or beer, yet without the gas effervescence they are flat and uninteresting, being rejected by even the most avid enthusiast. Similar reactions would be observed when comparing a food such as celery to strained celery juice, or watermelon to its strained juice. In both cases the juice is insipid and unacceptable, compared to the satisfaction gained from eating a piece of fresh crisp celery or firm juicy watermelon.

Taste and smell are the two most important senses related to the process of savouring food. It is necessary to clearly differentiate between these two senses.

Taste receptors are located in the tongue and soft palate, none are found in the hard palate. For our purpose, the term "taste" will refer only to those impressions received by the receptors in the tongue.

Smell receptors are located in the olfactory cleft. It is important to note that the term "flavour" refers to that quality of a given substance which may effect either taste or smell, but which more commonly involves a combination of the two senses.

Humans have about 9,000 taste buds. Each consists of a number of elongated cells ending in a hair like process which extends through the opening of the taste bud to the surface of the tongue. Disregarding the sensations of touch, temperature and the chemical sense - all of which are received by other organs as well as the tongue - the taste buds give rise to four distinct cardinal tastes: sweet, sour, saline and bitter. Certain areas of the tongue are far more sensitive to specific tastes than others, thus saltiness is best perceived on the tip and front edges of the tongue, sweetness near the tip, sourness along the side and bitterness at the back.

How then do we analyse the the various flavours of foods and wines, for the purposes of selecting a complementary, and of course enjoyable, combination of the two. By now it is obvious we must have a sound knowledge not only of foods and wines in general but of their production and preparation methods, for it is the end result of each product (or combination of) which we are concerned with. For example, if we take a fillet of whiting, it could be poached, fried, steamed, coated or deep fried. It may then be served with numerous accompaniments, sauces, dressings, garnishes, or be served hot or cold, each results in a different product and may lead to a slightly different choice of wine to accompany it.

It is important to first consider why we drink wine with our food before discussing suitable combinations of the two.

Food and wine stimulate and sensory nerves of our taste buds and olfactory system, as do heat, cold and pain. The initial

perception of these stimuli by the brain is extreme as our senses are highly tuned towards these. Consequently the first taste of a food or wine gives us the most pleasure, if the same stimulus is constantly applied our senses are dulled as the brain automatically starts ignoring similar stimuli.

A simple analogy may be drawn between consumption of food and wine, and stepping into a hot bath. On initial contact with the hot water our sensory-warning system prevents us from plunging straight in due to the sensation of pain. Consequently we usually lower ourselves in slowly until we are used to the water temperature. What in fact has occurred is that our initial warning system has operated, heightening our sensation of the hot water; we have consciously chosen to ignore the signal, and the sensations become less apparent, even though the water temperature has not significantly changed. If we now hopped out of the bath and took a cold shower before again plunging into the hot bath, the heightened sensations of hot and cold would be repeated.

Such is the sensation created by eating food or drinking wine. If we consume a dish, for example, a steak with a mushroom sauce, the first few bites are the most pleasurable in regards to perception and appreciation of taste. After that our senses become accustomed to the complex array of messages which formulate the actual sensation of taste. It is for this reason that we introduce the "cold shower" or in this case wine. The consumption of wines with our food allows continual refreshment of our senses, to more fully appreciate both food and wine for a longer period of time.

The difficulty in food and wine combinations is to select a wine which does re-stimulate the palate and does not conflict with the food. We are of course dealing with many more complex stimuli than hot and cold, which makes this area extremely challenging and demanding upon our knowledge-perception of the innumerable tastes and smells associated with food and wine.

There are rules, I cannot accept the common phrase, "you can drink what you like with any food", as it is taken out of context. If a delicate white fish is prepared with a subtly flavoured saffron sauce, to drink a full-bodied white wine or a red wine would completely defeat the purpose of eating the fish and enjoying the more subtle flavours apparent in it.

The flavour of a food or wine is never constant in the mouth, it peaks then subsides then trails away. At the point where it is trailing away the complementary factor (i.e. introduction of a wine) must be sufficient to overcome the trailing food flavour, but not to dominate the following mouthful of food, and vice versa.

It must also be realised at this point that the characteristics of both the food and wine are changed due to the intertwining effect of the trailing flavours.

There are many examples of food and wine combinations that are totally unacceptable. If we assume that one is eating and drinking

not only for feeding purposes, but to derive a most pleasurable experience, then we must do so sensibly.

So to the rules:-

First: when eating and drinking clear the palate of all food and appreciate the lingering flavour sensations before taking your wine, likewise before taking the next mouthful of food. Never take wine while you have food in your mouth.

Second: the food and wine should have similar characteristics in regard to sweetness, acidity, flavour (fruit as opposed to meat, acid as opposed to sweet) as this opposition is complementary.

Third: there are absolutely no rules regarding particular styles of wine and their suitability to particular foods e.g. red wine - red meat, white wine - white meat, game - full-bodied red wine, pork - lighter fruitier red or fuller bodied white. This type of recommendation is entirely incorrect and bears no relevance to correct selection of wine with food.

To justify the above statement, assume you have the opportunity to taste a slice of pork, lamb, beef, venison, buffalo, pheasant and any other meat, poached in plain water and lined up in front of you cold. If you could see them you may be able to prepare your palate for what you think you are tasting by recalling information about the meat from memory and past experience. On the other hand, if you had to taste them blindfold you would have great difficulty in identifying what you are eating, because meat itself, especially lean meat is quite bland, in fact in similar experiments people have not even been able to identify certain fish amongst the meats treated in the same manner.

As a starting point to a value assessment in regards to wine with food we must look at the preparation and cooking method employed. If we for example take a piece of fillet steak and poach it, fry a second piece, roast another piece, braise, steam and stew further pieces, each would have a different flavour profile and require a different wine accompaniment. If we then look at reality and consider the cooking method together with the sauce or accompaniment, which is how we normally eat our food, we see that it is possible to change completely the flavour of one meat across a wide profile range. Therefore, dependent on its preparation, the wine required for fillet steak may vary from a fruity rhine riesling to an old mellow Hunter burgundy.

It is common practice to associate particular foods with particular styles of wine, which often leads to a disappointing experience. One example is game (pheasant, quail, hare, wild duck, venison) which is normally thought to have a rich, strong flavour. In Australia we have very little real game available, as most of our "game" animals are farm-reared. Secondly, and more importantly, the strong rich flavour is mainly achieved through hanging the game for a period of time, fully intact (skin, feathers, etc.) to allow a natural deterioration of the meat. If correctly done it is not harmful, but

does produce a strong gamey flavour. It is illegal, due to health restrictions, to sell hung game in Australia so it is unlikely that you will be able to buy it in your local restaurant. The restaurateur who wishes to achieve a stronger flavour in game will have to do it by marinating, adding stronger flavouring components and by the method of cookery, but it will not be the meat that is strong.

Many restaurants serve game freshly and lightly cooked, in a light cream or fruit sauce which is delightful but not strong or rich and not in need of a big, full-bodied wine, so next time you opt for the medallions of venison in blackcurrant sauce don't order a full-bodied, big hermitage; look at a young pinot noir or fruity Coonawarra cabernet or a chardonnay.

As a very brief guideline consider the following terms and procedures when browsing through your next menu.

- (1) If a dish is braised (other terms which denote similar methods of cookery - ragout, casserole, pot roasted, stew) the dish will normally be rich; look for garnishes used in the preparation - eg with apricots or other fruits add sweetness and a little acidity: with olives, garlic or other strongly flavoured foods, or spices, add body and long lingering palates.
- (2) If a dish is pan fried or sauteed it will usually be lightly cooked, look to the sauce/accompaniment for the main guidance with respect to flavour profile, i.e. is it light and creamy, peppery, fruity, sour, sweet, strong, dominant or subtle.
- (3) If a dish is poached it will normally be accompanied by a subtle sauce, but take care because this is not always the case - for example, poached brains with chilli sauce.
- (4) If it is treated (batter, crumbs etc) and deep fried, it will dull your palate so select something to clean it.

Be hesitant about wasting your money and time on wines when eating chilli, garlic, salads with vinegar dressing or other highly flavoured foods which will not allow recovery of the palate for full appreciation of the wine you are drinking. Also, be conscious of the quality of the wine; some wines are best consumed on their own, as their quality and complexity may be best appreciated without the interference of a meal; in this case a little cheese may be appropriate.

After considering these points comes the actual selection, the food and wine should complement each other as follows. When you have just swallowed a mouthful of food you have a lingering flavour in your palate reminiscent of the components within the dish, this is as pleasant an experience as actually eating the food. On taking the wine it should remove all traces of food from your palate and be opposing enough in character to cleanse your palate and give you the same enjoyment of a lingering palate, when you identify the fruit, bottle age, and other characters in the wine. This process

is repetitive and at no time should the flavour of the food or wine linger through the other phase. To further enhance this enjoyment and keep your palate at its best, consider changing your wine midway through the main course, for example from an older full-bodied red to a fresh spicy white or vice versa, providing both wines are complementary to the food.

I have spoken of cleansing the palate with the wine for the food, and this may be reversed. If we are looking at a wonderful old sauternes with all of its complexities of fruit, bottle age, botrytis, acid, sugar etc., we need to select a food to cleanse the palate such as fresh fruit desserts or a creamy blue vein cheese.

There are no printed charts available which give reasonable guidance to wine and food selection, in fact all I have seen add to the confusion, and misguide in their incompleteness. The artful combination of food and wine is learned by correct association of flavours and smells, experimentation and experience, so familiarise yourself with the primary components of wines and of foods (methods of preparation, cooking).

The rules are few, but are more complex than a game of chess. The better you become at the game the more horizons you find, but don't spoil the game by assuming that every good chess player uses the same tactics. The most important fact is that the game is played for enjoyment; there are many alternatives available for each move and no one opinion is absolutely correct.

BRILLAT-SAVARIN'S BOUQUET

GRAHAM PONT

The Physiology of Taste, I maintain, is planned as a feast which everyone seems to have enjoyed, without noticing the pièce de résistance - Meditation XXX. My aim is to explain the central importance of 'Bouquet' and the implications of its 'gastronomical mythology'.

'Bouquet' concludes the theoretical part of the book with a grand vision: a new society based on a religion of scientific gastronomy and enlightened gourmandise. By placing this religion under the patronage of the tenth Muse, Gastérea Brillat-Savarin resolves two problems posed by the emergence of gastronomy, as a distinct concept, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. First, what is the nature of gastronomy as a form of knowledge; and secondly, how does it relate to gourmandise as an art or way of life? Through underestimating or ignoring 'Bouquet', the commentators have failed to grasp the core of Brillat-Savarin's philosophy.

In adding gastronomy to the 'musical' arts and sciences, Brillat-Savarin locates his theory and practice within the classical system of western culture, whose separate departments are personified by the various Muses (Melpomene for tragedy, Thalia for comedy, Clio for history, and so on), and whose wholeness is represented in the figure of Apollo, god of music, archery, medicine, law and reason. Thus, whereas Grimod de la Reynière and Carême had tried to conceptualise gastronomy and gourmandise on the model of architecture, Brillat-Savarin subsumes their conceptions under a broader and more fundamental theory of gastronomy as pure and applied music. In this way, he establishes the foundations of his new science and religion on the oldest bedrock of western civilisation.

Brillat-Savarin was well-versed in the theory and practice of music, and some of his associates and favourite authors were closely involved in the revolution that occurred, during the late eighteenth century, in the idea of opera and public spectacle generally. Consequently, his 'musical' conception of gastronomy can be elucidated by reading it against the background of contemporary philosophy of music and neo-classical poetics.

Thus interpreted, 'Bouquet' emerges as a manifesto of the ideal 'opera gastronomica' - the total work of art whose celebration as a religious festival unites gastronomy in all its scientific, technological, artistic, political and social manifestations, with the practice of gourmandism as the ethical basis of a happy and healthy society.

CULTURE AND AGRICULTURE; TOWARDS A PHILOSOPHICAL COSMOLOGY OF FOOD

ANTHONY CORONES

As an academic philosopher, my presence at this First Symposium of Australian Gastronomy is a strange historic irony, and there is something darkly comic about it. This paper is a gesture of atonement, atonement for a sin of my philosophical forbears: a sin of omission. For all their brilliance, the Greek fathers of the philosophical tradition, in particular Plato and Aristotle, omitted Gastronomy from the academy. But this omission was no mere oversight - it was a deliberate exclusion of food and the art of cooking and dining from the classical liberal arts tradition, a deliberate and rather puritanical denigration. And here, at a symposium, the traditional setting for philosophical discussion and debate, we have gathered to discuss what was so long ago judged unworthy of consideration.

Although it's still a non-issue in philosophy (with some rare exceptions like Dr. Graham Pont's course on Gastronomy which, incidentally, is conducted outside the School of Philosophy), food has recently begun to find its way into the academy in the guise of courses on food technology and engineering, and nutritional and agricultural sciences. Such acceptance, however, is obviously based solely on the epistemic terms of the academy, and this has so transmuted food that a few concerned people at least are finding it increasingly difficult to recognize the end product as 'real' food. And so we have the irony of a philosopher trying to help save a subject rejected by his ancestors from the mangling jaws of the epistemic monster they created.

The irony, however, is not yet complete. In his condemnation of cookery, Plato classed it with the false and deceitful arts of pandering generally. As such, cookery becomes, for Plato, a form of "pandering (which) pays no regard to the welfare of its objects, but catches fools with the bait of ephemeral pleasure and tricks them into holding it in the highest esteem" (Gorgias:464). In his passionate search for the 'good life', the life of truth and virtue, Plato pinned his hopes on the scientific enterprise. The epistemic expert becomes the sole capable and only rational judge of life and truth, the only man of honour. Cookery remains outside the pale. "I declare," says Plato, "that it is dishonourable because it makes pleasure its aim instead of good, and I maintain that it is merely a knack and not an art because it has no rational account to give of the nature of the various things which it offers" (Gorgias:465). We live in an age where the Platonic dream of the utopian scientific community has soured, and failed to live up to its promise. Rather than heralding in an age of the 'Good Life' for all, it has left us stranded in a nightmare from which there is no awakening, and food, as Michael Symons' book, *One Continuous*

Picnic, demonstrates so clearly, is one of the major casualties of the techno-structure. The loss of good food is symptomatic of the loss of good living in general. Paradoxically then, the issue of the 'Good Life' remains the same, but I find it necessary to turn away from the scientific idol fashioned by Plato to the very thing he condemned. What is needed is a radical change in perspective.

In order to understand the perspective needed, however, we need first to understand the Platonic one. Why was Plato so antagonistic? The reason is essentially moral. In his championing of the eternal soul and the ascetic life or spiritual ascent, Plato saw the body and its pleasures as a demonic and negative influence to be resisted and overcome. As we saw earlier, what is wrong with cookery is that it "makes pleasure its aim instead of good". By divorcing pleasure from good Plato effectively divorced body and soul, producing a form of moralistic schizophrenia which has remained the hallmark of the puritanical conscience. The association of the enjoyment of food with gluttony and luxury was thus firmly established in the Western mind. Nor is this attitude peculiar to the West. In India, Mahatma Gandhi, revered as a moral and spiritual authority, was notorious for his dietary extremes. His guiding principle was a stark austerity: the more tasteless food was, the better it was for the good of the soul. Needless to say, the existence of one extreme always betokens its opposite, and Plato was reacting to what he regarded as gross excesses in Athenian cuisine.

We are confronted here with a rather perverse joke: good food is often associated with the 'Good Life', but this 'Good Life' is seen as one of luxury and even debauchery, whilst the Platonic 'Good Life' is seen as one of hardship and denial. The former is envied but morally condemned, the latter is morally condoned but never envied. Surely a more harmonic middle path is possible, but how? The solution is simple once we realize that the dilemma only exists because it is called into being by the perspective inherent in the dichotomy between a corrupt and ephemeral body, and an eternal and good soul. If we change our perspective, the dilemma vanishes.

To his credit, Brillat-Savarin saw this clearly. He sought to break down the association between good eating and gluttony by reforming our notion of morality. In a brilliant piece of theological reasoning, Brillat-Savarin forged a new view of God to accord with what he regarded as the facts of our existence. His insight is concisely formulated in Aphorism V of his *La Physiologie du Goût*: "The Creator, who made man such that he must eat to live, incites him to eat by means of appetite, and rewards him with pleasure". The plea is merely to live the way God made us, rather than seek to escape and deny God's creation. If we were meant to deny and renounce the world, only a mad and evil God would put us here. For Brillat-Savarin, the goodness of God manifests in His giving of pleasure, and in this way the Platonic schism between good and pleasure is undermined and invalidated. In accordance with this reform, our image of the man of knowledge and his 'Good Life' also changes. The intelligent man is no longer the unwordly Platonic refugee seeking to escape from the cave of the body into the light,

but the man who engages in rational enjoyment of the world in psychosomatic unity, not divided body and soul. Thus we have Aphorisms II&X: "Animals feed; man eats; only the man of intellect knows how to eat"; "Drunkards and victims of indigestion do not know how to eat or drink".

Brillat-Savarin decries the confusion between gourmandism and gluttony, arguing that "Gourmandism is the enemy of excess" (p.132); rather, gourmandism is "a previous quality, which may well be called a virtue" (p.132). To complete the attack on the Platonic tradition, Brillat-Savarin raises food to the status of a science by invoking the Muse *Gastérea* to preside over the new science of Gastronomy, which he defines as "The reasoned comprehension of everything connected with the nourishment of man" (p.52). It does not join the academy as just another science, however, but as a queen attended and served by all the others, for it is truly a multidisciplinary science, embracing physics, chemistry, commerce, political economy, agriculture, history, and much more besides ... which is understandable when we adopt Brillat-Savarin's stance that "Gastronomy governs the whole life of man" (p.52). If this seems rather extravagant, it is only so because it generally remains uninspected. When you start to pursue it, it embraces life itself, and it is in this sense that he makes the claim. As Brillat-Savarin confesses in his Preface, "When I came to consider the pleasures of the table in all their aspects, I soon perceived that something better than a mere cookery book might be made of such a subject, and that there was a great deal to be said about such a basic everyday function, bearing so closely upon our health, our happiness, and even our work" (p. 21).

By making gastronomy and gourmandism rational activities, Brillat-Savarin undermines Plato's reason for denying the status of art to cookery, for it is now in a position to offer the 'logos' of rational account demanded by Plato. But is this logos enough? Is the inclusion of Gastronomy in the academy sufficient reform? I think not. It is necessary, but not sufficient. No consideration of Gastronomy can be complete which does not pursue the 'roots' of food to the primal mothers of life: Earth and Culture.

The question of food, or life support, is ultimately a question of the human microcosm and its relationship to the macrocosm: Man in Nature. I say relationship, but man is not other than nature to be related to it. Rather he is in and of it, a smaller principle of order or 'cosmos' within a greater inclusive cosmos to which we owe all our ingredients, for the stars themselves ceaselessly cook up the elements of all life, nourishing the universe with energy and matter. The process of life or nourishment is a form of cosmic dialectic, or action, reaction and synthesis among the levels of order. If we are to understand it, what we require is a logos of this cosmic interaction, a philosophical cosmology of food.

The field of this interaction is fundamentally that of agriculture. Indeed, the theme of culture is inseparable from that of agriculture, for there is no significant sustained human order without an established relationship to the sustenance of the land.

If we apply the concept of this cosmology to our present situation, we find that a study of our food relationships, especially the largely industrial ones in Australia so well described in Michael Symons' book, and captured in his title, One Continuous Picnic reveals a forgetfulness of the land and the greater macrocosm, a culture uprooted as it were, its nourishment gone berserk. The effect is the uprooting and perversion of food itself, for when food is isolated from its sources, our ideas of food also undergo aberration. Food is not just some physical substance to be consumed, but an ideological product as well, the study of which provides us with a vivid picture of our cultural life. As Roland Barthes argues, "a representative contemporary existence is implied in the consciousness we have of the function of our food" (1: p.171). Food is thus "a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usages situations and behaviour" (1: p. 167). If you doubt this, just look at the way advertising plays upon and creates food imagery which directs and changes the individual and social conscience. For example, milk is now sexy, Milo makes you a winner; Tab makes you slim and beautiful; Solo makes you a macho male; Mars bars imply work breaks; Coke is young and fun; etc., etc. Even when people react to the artificiality of industrial foods, industry bounces back with 'natural' products that are 'good for you', but such foods are, as Joseph Rykwert argues, merely "surrogate wholefoods" (6: P. 58). This kind of rhetoric produces a false consciousness which is detrimental to the emergence of a rational understanding and appreciation of good food.

How can this situation be remedied? I don't think that it can be resolved without taking a radical look at what made the whole situation possible in the first place. The key to understanding the unsettling and forgetting of the land is to look at what's being done to it now, at the 'logos' of our present cosmic dialectic in agriculture. The story is no doubt familiar to you all - the agribusiness complex, with its profusion of artificial fertilizers, escalating pesticide usage, hormonal and genetic engineering, ever-increasing mechanisation, the 'get big or get out complex', absurd marketing practices, environmental insensitivity, and catastrophic exploitation. This situation is disturbing. The unsettling of the farming 'peasantry' and their unwitting herding into the cities and factories, rather than seeming a sign of progress, is not bemoaned as a cultural disaster. The rape of the land and the people by the exploitive industrial mind seems a strange course for a culture which prides itself on its rationality, but the rationality of efficiency and increased production is the rationality of the machine, and sits ill on human shoulders. Why should such a seemingly good idea as the scientification and industrialisation of agriculture have landed us in such dire straights? It is, I want to argue, symptomatic of a disastrous course embarked upon in the enterprise for knowledge, a course whose essential logos is mechanical.

The fundamental image of the Scientific Revolution, which is regarded as having brought the modern age into being, is that of the machine; in particular, of the cosmos itself as a great machine or clock. The two basic elements of this cosmic machine were

thought to be atoms and motion. All order and regularity were merely an outcome of these. Such a machine universe is inherently lifeless - the appearance of life is merely an illusion. It is also without values - these are just the imaginary creations of humans, themselves a mechanical cosmos, interacting with the larger cosmos in a mechanical way. The knowledge generated by such a perspective on nature is likewise valueless; hence the ethical failure of science. If we wonder why our relations with the environment and among ourselves have gone awry, we need look no further than this mechanical logos for our cosmic dialectic. As Henryk Skolimowski argues in his book, Eco-Philosophy, "most of our crises ... do not arise as a result of mismanagement, ill-will or the insufficiency of rationality in our approaches, but for more fundamental reasons: they arise because we have constructed a deficient code for reading nature, leading to a deficiency in our interacting with nature. The root cause lies in the very foundations of our scientific world view and in the very perceptions which this world view generates" (7: p. vii). What is necessary is nothing less than the reorientation of knowledge itself to life and human values, the provisions of a new rationality and lifestyle.

If we are willing to enter into a cosmic relationship whose logos commits us to a living environment, our moral responsibility will be reawakened; then we will be weaned of the exploitive conscience engendered by regarding nature as dead raw material to be manipulated at will. The piecemeal analytic approach of science typically tends to the wholistic ignorance of separate specialisation, the reduction of life to inert particles, and action based on insufficient research, presumably on the assumption that what is yet unknown can be disregarded. By adopting a new cosmology which sees our cosmic dialectic in a wholistic way, as synthesis rather than a one-sided rape, we can restore our love for Mother Earth, and enjoy the fruits of her womb through tender and responsible intercourse. Through such agricultural intercourse, our food will be restored to life, our bodies to health, our minds to peace, and our characters to cultural integrity. Through such intercourse we can escape the tyranny of the cult of expertise, and replace the exploitive experts with the ideal of the farmer or peasant as a caring nurturer, responsible to the land, to himself, his family, and his community.

Such an ideal belongs to a harmonic cosmology, which will bring about a cosmic music which will not incite us to the cultural madness which possesses us now, driving us to frantic war-dancing. It will relieve us of the exploiter's goal of money or profit, and replace it with health and love. It will relieve us of servility to soul-destroying machines and organizations for fear of unemployment, for the unsettling of the man on the land merely herds desperate sheep into the cities, destroying real employment with the threat of unemployment. Instead of thinking in terms of number and quantity, our categories should become character and quality.

If such thinking strikes you as going too far for a plate of good food, I can only reply that I don't want to sell, as Esau did, my birthright for a plate of lentils. This is not utopian thinking, or

raving political extremism. Indeed, it is conservative. I'm only harking back to traditional cultures. The peasant is not some new political animal. The harmonic tradition has been the mainstay of cultures as seemingly diverse as Greece and China. Good food should not be the exclusive preserve of the rich, the powerful, the intellectuals, or any other elite, but the right and sustenance of us all. If this is too much to ask, then I take refuge in the philosophical tradition. Except for when they ask for nothing and expect the worst, philosophers, rather than merely apating to the status quo, have always been an unreasonable bunch - and this is the only justification they have ever had for speaking at all.

To retreat from such a challenge to the safety of cookery books is to betray the gastronomic visions of Brillat-Savarin. It is to trivialize cookery. From such a position, it is not far at all to Plato's stance, to the degrading of cooking to pandering, an artless knack with no logos. This occurs because you end up, as Plato did, divorcing cookery from culture and agriculture, which he respected. For what kind of cuisine do we ask? What possibilities are there for an Australian cuisine? If we seek uniqueness, it can only come from the uniqueness of the land. To cultivate an Australian landscape is to cultivate an Australian cuisine. Cooking technique, no matter how important, is not the whole of cookery. As the great and not-so-great cooks among us know so well, without high-quality fresh ingredients and a deep understanding of their qualities and potentials, even the best technician can only produce mediocre results. The task of the cosmology of food we have been considering is to ensure not only the goodness of food from its point of origin, but to enter the kitchen as well, to give a logos to cooking, and to make intelligent dining possible on such a basis. Perhaps this cosmology may even lead to the establishment, to borrow a phrase from Claude Levi-Strauss, of "a culinary universe which is a miniature reflection of the cosmos" (4:p.228). Such a cuisine would no doubt take on the regional character of the cuisines of other traditional cultures in accordance with the varying genius of the land, rather than assume an anonymous uniformity. In tune with the land and the people, the climate and the cycle of the seasons, it would be an Australian cuisine to be proud of.

To conclude, although I don't have the time to fully sketch out all the necessary details of this philosophical cosmology of food, it can, I think be seen as a valuable prolegomenon to the realization of a new human order or microcosm through a profound appraisal of the cosmic dialectic. Redemption from the machine through a new perceptive in our knowledge will lead not only to restoration of man as the master rather than the servant of the machine, but ultimately to the redemption of the land and the people, of culture and agriculture. The path lies in the resettling of the land, and the restoration of peasantry. Such a peasantry is not an ignorant servile mass, but a group of healthy and intelligent freemen, cultivating not only the land, but themselves, their character, and their culture. An agriculture that is truly whole nourishes the whole of man, and as "the reasoned comprehension of everything connected with the nourishment of man", Gastronomy is truly a

science which can lead to the necessary reformation of all science, the reformation of man and his relationship to nature, and to the establishment of a benign and harmonic permaculture. Then, perhaps, we may also attain to the truly 'Good Life'.

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IF WE COULD EAT OYSTERS - WHY NOT WITCHETTY GRUBS?

HELEN PEACOCKE

Introduction

I have been intrigued by the fact:

1. That there has been no marriage between the British cuisine and that of the Aborigines. Moreover, right from the first day of British settlement native food has been ignored - and this has continued to be the case throughout Australia's culinary history.
2. That there have been instances of early settlers who, when faced with the choice between Aboriginal foods and starvation, chose the latter.

and this paper is an attempt to investigate the possible reasons behind this phenomenon.

As humans, we enjoy a great deal of flexibility within our diets, but we are after all omnivorous. We are to select, therefore, from a far wider choice of foods than those available to such creatures as the koala whose very survival rests firmly upon the availability of a very particular species of gum leaf.

Omnivores rely upon experience to aid selection, whereas the koala has inbuilt aids to assist in the continual quest for 'safe' foods. It seems that the design of the koala's metabolism determines choice. (1) Koalas like humans will die rather than eat a food which is not of a recognised type. However, the intriguing differences between the two is that human rejection appears to be founded upon the emotions rather than rational experience or innate knowledge. (Elizabeth and Paul Rozen (1) note that many animals are equipped with receptors which respond to poisonous foods and produce an innately-based avoidance or rejection response.)

A great number of foods which are abhorrent to humans are - in most instances - safe in the required sense. They would, if eaten, preserve life. Given the wide range and diversity of foodstuffs available to us, and the fact that we could not have the koala's security of recognition - it would seem in principle that the sight of another human eating a particular food should be sufficient for that food to be deemed edible, and therefore safe to be consumed by others. Yet, this ruling seldom operates, individual tastes determine choice. We bring to the table our likes, dislikes, fads, phobias and personal inhibitions and prejudices; moreover, we allow these to set parameters around the food choices we make. Humans do not necessarily eat that which others eat; individual intuitions

set the pattern for personal consumption. Just the sight of certain foods is enough to send certain humans running from the table; others react violently when they witness the eating of particular 'foreign' items. Frederick Simoons illustrates this splendidly by an anecdotal example contained within his work Eat Not This Flesh:

"Two young biologists were engaged to be married. On a field trip a caterpillar fell on the young woman's blouse and frightened her. Her fiance removed it, laughed at her fright, and apparently to show her that her fear was groundless, swallowed the larva. Far from soothing the young woman, his act so shocked her that she broke their engagement. "

It seems that certain food avoidances can be determined by a person's sex, age, status in life or simply health. Other reasons for food avoidance are often quite illogical and clearly derived from the emotional preferences which have developed for any one of many complex reasons within the individual. The most emancipated person will sometimes refuse food of considerable merit because of a reluctance to partake of anything new, whilst others will not be able to eat because the food is too familiar, for example, the chicken that has always been considered the family pet. The family have been able to organise the chicken's slaughter - but are quite unable to take part in the ritual roast dinner that it has provided.

Brillat-Savarin suggests that : "Everything eatable is at the mercy of his (human's) appetite". If one makes allowance for the emotional connotations I am discussing, along with the negative vibrations that certain foods appear to have upon our appetite, I believe that it would have been more exact if he had suggested that: "The human's appetite is at the mercy of everything eatable". Furthermore, it is in the light of this particular twist that I would like to discuss the gastronomic developments (or lack of them) as witnessed in Australia during its developing years.

On the fact of it, it seems that the British allowed fastidious ideas and illogical prejudices to irrationally retard the growth of what could have otherwise been a unique cuisine. For, given the desperate plight of those early settlement days it would have seemed both logical and natural to have bonded the indigenous foods and the diet of the Aborigines to these scanty stores that were made available periodically from England and India. That this did not happen is an aspect of Australian gastronomy that I find fascinating and well worth investigating further.

Johnathon Swift said that it was a brave man who ate the first oyster - if that was the case where were the brave in Australia when the witchetty grub first presented itself? The two creatures are not unlike in substance, and both can be eaten raw or cooked. That such 'bravery' did not operate to any extent in Australia emphasises the curious state of those early days. Humans after all are inquisitive by nature, if that was not the case in relation to foods, our tastes would never have developed beyond the first breast milk offered. That such progression was possible is

relevant. (4)

Naturally, the gentle weaning of the child is progressively attended to by its parents who operate with the cuisine that biological and ecological constraints allow. Guided thus, curiosity does not play a very large part in early diets. The offspring learns to imitate within certain boundaries. Later experimentation becomes possible for the individual as an individual but it is always heavily influenced by those early exposures, social taboos and often - religion. Perhaps an instinctive abhorrence for anything too removed from those early cultural experiences plays a large part in the whole question of the acceptable and the unacceptable. If the Aborigines were so far removed in type from anything remotely linked with the British "accepted-norm", to the extent that curiosity in relation to their diet was never a possible exploration, it could follow that humans who ate oysters, along with whelks, eels and all manner of offal were quite unable to build up a gustatory enthusiasm for witchetty grubs and bogong moths, even when they were in fact close to starvation - regardless of how brave they were in other matters. Such foods were simply too far removed from the established boundaries of normality that they were not seen as foods at all.

This could then account for the settler's act, in the famous example cited by Anne Gollan in the Tradition of Australian Cooking, where it seems starvation was a more acceptable death than accidental poisoning by the unknown grubs and berries. A settler lay down to die in a grave dug for the purpose, whilst all around him a plentiful supply of wild yams, anyeroo nuts and wild bananas grew in profusion. These would have preserved his life.

Possibly the standard foods he had accepted all his life were so different from those offered by the bush that he did not even see their potential food value. For, it seems strange that such foods should have been shunned in an emergency, particularly when one admits that many familiar foods are in fact quite obnoxious when looked at objectively. Besides which, if one digs deeply into the darker side of human eating habits, cannibalism has played a part in survival diets from time to time. (5)

"The most powerful motivation towards cannibalism is desperate hunger and the basic instinct to eat human flesh when no other food is available, is ever present lurking below the surface of human consciousness." (6)

If this statement holds, and there is a certain amount of fragmented evidence to suggest that it may, what on earth was going on during those very early days? Did they simply not understand the food potential offered by the bush? For, if humans have been able to eat "long-pig" from time to time - and I believe that this is one of the most abominable ideas that one can come to grips with - surely the fruits from the trees and grubs from the soil were nothing by comparison.

Perhaps certain answers are obvious. Australia, after all, unlike

the North American continent, was initially colonised mainly by convicts. These unwilling victims of a harsh British judicial system must have seen all aspects of Australia as cruel and unremitting. To be surrounded by this harsh, unfamiliar environment could have been viewed as part of their punishment, therefore something to be avoided, yet this was not possible. There was only one protest that they could make, the refusal of the indigenous foods, that the impoverished soil provided. These foods if eaten could have been viewed as an extension of their punishment. Better therefore, to chew on pork that had been salted for several years and eat the rice that was so inhabited with all manner of crawling creatures that it moved before one touched it, for, rancid and infected though these items were, they were British and therefore familiar.

Such attitudes could have accounted for the failure to incorporate a single indigenous foodstuff into Australian agricultural and cooking (7).

Recreation of all that was British within the young colony is evidenced in the early architecture, clothing, furnishing and all manner of trivia. Settlers and convicts alike all struggled, against great odds, to create a home away from home. It may be possible to argue that the early colonists gave no thought to anything beyond the known - insomuch as they simply did not recognise its existence. I suggested initially that the settlers may not have been able to see the indigenous food as food because it was too unfamiliar. Here, I am suggesting that they knew of its existence, but chose rather to ignore it, preferring that which came from England. (I have often noted on my travels overseas that there are still little pockets of England wherever ex-patriates congregate - and to my amusement I have noted that these pockets are often more British than the British themselves, every aspect of the motherland being both exaggerated and celebrated in a fashion that would seem quite melodramatic if it were actually transported back to real British soil.)

Early settlers, I believe, even kept the ritual of sewing folk into their red flannel underwear during the months from November to May. If one can get one's mind around that, it is very easy to understand the need to cling to boiled beef and carrots in preference to anything else that the soil offered.

Unlike North America there were no other nationalities to influence the first British settlers who were therefore able to cling singlemindedly to ALL that was familiar. From the very beginning in North America, the French, Spanish and the Dutch cultures influenced food habits. These habits and cuisines can still be witnessed now in the areas which were first settled by a particular nation. As well as bringing their own cultural preferences the early settlers of North America were also influenced by Indians - eventually adopting some of their foods. In Australia on the other hand, there was in the beginning nothing to compete with the simple range of dishes imported along with the convicts - the Union Jack triumphed.

Australian Aboriginals were not utilized as domestic servants in anything like the same manner as the natives of other colonial territories. Had this been otherwise, possibly there would have been gradual acceptance of Australian foods, served alongside the standard British fare in a skillful blend concocted by the native cook. This may have brought about an appreciation of the particular merits, flavours, and styles from within the Australian Aboriginals cuisine. But, there was no mixture of cultures. The nomadic nature of the native and the isolation of the white settlers from the Aboriginal encampments was an accepted norm from the first, and may well have highlighted the monopoly which British cooking (of a sort, given the limitation of supplies) enjoyed for so long.

"No real reapproachment could have been made between white man and the Aborigines in their wild state, the gap between them was too great." (8)

The Aboriginals cooked without pots or kitchen utensils, and although their cooking utilized all manner of unusual items - even taking advantage of flavours gleaned from indigenous leaves - there were few real flavouring agents added. The Aborigines did not cook with salt. In fact, they did little preparation before eating certain foods:

"Their cooking was hardly more than a scorching off of an animal's hair and they had no cooking utensils - nevertheless nearly everything they ate, whether fish or birds, kangaroos, or lizards, birds' eggs or witchetty grubs was either grilled in the embers or covered with ashes and roasted" (8)

This lack of sophistication did nothing to attract the settler to native cuisine. It lacked the essential flavour principles which led British colonials to adopt for example Indian curries. A race capable of picking up queen ants and eating them without even having the decency to at least squash them first could hardly be classified as "civilised" in the accepted British sense.

Meals, after all, as Brillat-Savarin noted in his book, began with the second age of man, that is to say, as soon as he ceased to live wholly on fruits and berries. (9) Whilst the Aboriginal cuisine had clearly progressed beyond berries, possibly it still hovered between stage one and stage two insomuch that their meat dishes were merely a slight extension of earlier vegetarian diets. As hunter-gatherers they had not mastered basic flavour principles. This simple fact alone and the primitive nature of the natives (as Banks put it - "Being one degree away from the brute") could have been enough to have driven even the poorest of Sydney's socialites to rush out more and more orders for rancid (but British) salt cod, which I may add was served in style at dinner tables for many years, in preference to the local fresh fish. This is a further indictment of their need to hold onto all that was British and illustrates the narrow attitudinal approach held towards their newly adopted country. Their action echoes the essential message in Captain Cook's famous speech, when he referred to Australia as a

land which:

"Naturally produces hardly anything fit for man to eat and the natives know nothing of civilization."

That these natives had a botanical expertise concerning the bush, and were seen clearly to be able to withstand great physical endurance, were obvious facts which appear to have had little bearing upon the abhorrence the Aborigines generated amongst those early British. Their food choice was seen as neither appetising, exciting or exotic. Perhaps much of the problem here lies in our definition of exotic. An interesting idea that has been recently put forward by Dr. Graeme Marshall of Melbourne University argues for these being three categories of food.

1. The Staple.
2. The Natural.
3. The Exotic.

The Staple comprises of foods which are not necessarily indigenous to the country in which they have been adopted, though they have nevertheless been included into the cuisine to such an extent that many basic dishes depend upon their use for substance. For example, sugar, rice and potatoes are considered staples by the British and were in fact imported along with tea in those early colonial days. These staples are not indigenous to Britain - but have been accepted into the cuisine.

The Natural can be indigenous to the country in which it is eaten but is seen more properly as a food that is appropriate to the geographical location. (Staples differ here for they are not necessarily appropriate to the situation.) The cuisine that the British brought to Australia was not a natural cuisine for the geographical location - far better to have brought the foods of a Mediterranean country than those that normally served to warm and fill those who were constantly exposed to the foggy chill of the British climate. Starchy foods and steamed sweet puddings are natural to the Northern Hemisphere and not the Southern Hemisphere.

The Exotic differs from both the staple and the natural as it has to be seen in the context of the exotic in order for it to flourish as such. By this, I mean that an item such as a witchetty grub, when offered in outback conditions is seen against the background from whence it comes - and as such is not always close enough in type to the accepted staples known to the participants of the meal, for them to appreciate its merit. If the same grub is transported to London's Clarendon Club where it is placed on a large silver dish and served with an elegant sauce, it is transformed into the category of the exotic. Secured as it is by the institutional integrity of the Club it takes on a different guise. The concept of the exotic, therefore, can only operate when the food is removed from the basic setting from which it came. Serving it at the Clarendon Club automatically provides the item with a guarantee - this guarantee is not available when it is eaten in the outback. There it loosens its institutional security and carries with it the repulsion that one feels for anything too removed from known staples.

Dr. Marshall's definitions certainly solve the problems posed in relation to the oysters; naturally oysters could be enjoyed with gustatory enthusiasm if they carried a tacit social guarantee not available to the witchetty grub. However, unfortunately these definitions do nothing to accommodate my question in relation to individual preferences - that it should be enough for us to note another's diet for that diet to be deemed safe for us to eat too. Here I believe we must recognise that we are dealing with questions about individuals and that as individuals, humans will carry with them their unique brand of preferences. That there will always be those within a community who would prefer something other than that which is enjoyed by the minority - and that such a fact is an essential part of the human condition. In some ways this may appear an unsatisfactory solution - but to push the reasons for individual preferences any further would require a book rather than a paper.

Throughout this discourse I have called upon large general theories to support my discussions and in doing so have been in danger of overlooking what, in the long run, may be one of the most important facts of all. I have assumed all along that regardless of conditions, the settlers here wished to survive and therefore looked to food for life support. I have worried about their refusal to eat particular foods; after all, given the primitive sanitary conditions that prevailed in those days both in England and in Australia, why should settlers have rejected and been so repulsed by Aboriginal cuisine? After all, these times were not like those that Fisher describes when:

"the Victorian influence of our squeamish ancestors who were taught to avert their eyes from the foreign messes - which might contain unmentionable parts" (10)

they were rough, dirty, and downright impossible. Many of the men who were transported to Australia were in fact sent there for stealing a LOAF OF BREAD. That they should ignore food sources does not fit into the pattern of things. Unless we add one small aspect that I have so far omitted - the will to live. Possibly the recorded instances of death by starvation, amidst a profusion of fruits have overlooked the fact that those affected by this malaise had in fact lost their will to live. That without such a will, there is no appetite, and no appetite, regardless of food around is a death wish. If life is no longer desired neither is food. I am suggesting therefore, that within the majority were a minority of people who did not desire to continue the life they were forced to endure here. The best way of expressing this fact may be to add a further maxim to

"Everything eatable is at the mercy of man's appetite"

or

"the human appetite is at the mercy of everything eatable"
and sum up the whole Australian situation by suggesting:

"We are at the mercy of actually having an appetite."

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- (5) Edel May The story of our ancestors
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ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL

YVONNE WEBB

The twenty-first century promises a bright and beautiful future cuisine. Our country represents the meld of cuisines of every continent and many, many differing cultures. Because food patterns develop slowly over time we are lucky to be able to take advantage of the vast experience of countless generations.

Eating is a sensorial experience. It is so designed, thus having survival value. Ever since the Garden of Eden man has been doing what is pleasurable. Many moralists have suggested that to satisfy the senses is a mortal sin. However, through the ages man has considered eating as pleasurable and the feasts described in the Old Testament of the Bible give proof of this.

It seems that the most primitive sense to be satisfied is to feel full. And early mediaeval reports suggest just that. Food was usually not freely available at all times due to crop failures, so meal patterns, as we describe them today, did not exist. The rich plundered or demanded food from the poor, the poor stole from the rich. Food was scarce in winter. So the feeling of a full contented stomach was a luxurious feeling.

However, as countries were able to stabilize their food supplies and hunger was more an economic problem rather than a political one, the word "gluttony" became less frequently used. People no longer were pre-occupied with food and the stimulation of man's other senses was not just related to eating. As life became more comfortable various other art forms flourished. During the times in our history when the arts were dominant, the writings are full of descriptions of feasts. Chaucer and Shakespeare both give good descriptions of meal platters of the times. In contrast, in Dickensian England, the poor were obsessed with obtaining their next bowl of gruel.

The last century was a time of great extremes and excitement in Europe. The monarchies were generally extravagant, great technological changes were occurring and the era of railways and mass communication had begun. Cross fertilization of the arts occurred. The "French" era was a good example of this. And whilst the French impressionists were busy trying out new styles of art, the French cooks were busy developing the visual illusion also. The stimulation of the sense of vision was of paramount importance. And it had to be French. English ladies were scrambling for French fashion, the bustle creating the illusion here. Genteel households became enviable pillars of society if a French cook could be procured for that household. And so developed the grand era of French Haute Cuisine. In the extreme, legs of hams were dressed to look like pineapples and radish roses were born. Foods were macerated, incarcerated and disguised to look like anything other

than what they were. Taste at this time was of secondary importance and dishes were not encouraged to have a strong aroma.

Generally speaking, vegetables and fruit were used because of their colour to accompany the "pièce de résistance". Even in the Doomsday Book vegetables had secondary importance. An inventory of foods eaten at the banquets of Elizabeth I listed animal foods only. In this visual era vegetables suffered from a low status value. In 1871, Charles Dudley Warner writing his 'My Summer in a Garden' said, "Lettuce, like conversation, requires a good deal of oil to avoid friction and keep the company smooth". Samuel Johnson earlier had even more scathing remarks: "a cucumber should be well sliced, and dressed with pepper and vinegar and then thrown out as good for nothing".

However the French peasantry had other ideas and also they were not as influenced by the fashionable life. They depended more on their own produce and vegetables were cheaper to produce than cows. So they ate their lettuces, cucumbers and garlic and persisted in doing so together with southern Europeans.

Plate presentation is still important today. Colour is considered paramount. Although many of the early food colours were not safe to ingest in any quantity this did not seem to be as important as helping nature to be brighter and more beautiful. Food colours were cosmetics - often expensive and unsafe but fun. Fruit cakes were now not brown due to the caramelization of the sugar, but because a few drops of something called Browning Essence was added from a bottle. And who needs to be reminded of the ubiquitous glace cherry.

Because of the great advances of science, several relevant changes were occurring. Firstly sugar and salt were now available to all at low cost. Thus the taste sensation was developed to the fore. Foods had to taste good as well as looking good. Eventually there were two main tastes. Meals were either salty or sweet. Salt was associated with savoury dishes and sweet with desserts.

For social as well as technological reasons people were being organized into institutions - be it to live or work - so food had to be provided for large numbers. Very quickly, it was realized that a recipe for 2 cannot simply be multiplied by 50 to provide custard for 100. With food technology now firmly established, companies saw the need for pre-prepared "disaster-proof" products for institutional catering. And so custard powder and tomato sauce were born. Although the sugar was there as a component of the taste, high concentrations of it prevented spoilage. Companies were aware of the quality of their product but they could not guarantee that their products would be used by qualified cooks. Therefore tastes and colours had to be strong to overcome the likely abuse of the food. Cold temperature foods such as ice-blocks became the vogue and so taste had to be concentrated to titillate the frozen taste buds. So even more sugar was added to such products.

In many cases, the population didn't know what they were eating.

Industry's beef and chicken boosters arrived producing tripe which tasted like chicken and vegetable protein tasting like beef.

Suddenly society wanted maximum stimulation of all the special senses. The Rock 'n' Roll era was with us, strobe lighting was new and exciting and lots of new 'hi-tech' foods appeared. So, with vibrating ear-drums, frozen taste buds and eating a concoction of some sort we were having fun. Even though people didn't know what they were eating, it tasted and looked good. So it must be okay. "Otherwise they wouldnt allow it." But eventually the brave did start to question.

It was demonstrated that an excess of salt could produce hypertension, excess sugar could produce obesity and excess fat could produce heart disease. Excess of colourings and flavourings were blamed for some behavioural disorders and various itches and sniffles were blamed on food components. People started demanding to know what were the constituents of the food they ate. And so the "health food" movement was born. Unfortunately, the term now refers to "high tech" foods rather than to natural wholesome foods. It is not the butcher or the fruiterer who is called the Health Food Shop but the place next door selling packets and bottles in which are pills and potions.

The development of Cuisine Minceur, in the first instance and later Cuisine Nouvelle was an expression of Western man's dissatisfaction with the general cuisine of the time. Why was it that one was not able to have a healthy diet if one ate regularly at restaurants or institutions? The savoury recipes of home economists and caterers up to this time included, as a matter of course, salt as an ingredient even if other ingredients were cheese or bacon.

In the new awakening, artificial colours and flavours were replaced with natural equivalents. The plate, once again, became the cook's palette. Each colour applied deliberately and expertly. But now balance and harmony of taste and texture were just as important. Flavours, rather than tastes were considered. And these flavours could be dramatic or complementary - a sweet fruit sauce could complement a savoury meat and the distinction between sweet and savoury dishes became blurred.

Well, what of the future - Are All Things Bright and Beautiful? Food is no longer a mysterious commodity. Health authorities, governments and other experts are telling us what to eat and how. Amongst the Dietary Guidelines adopted by the Australian Department of Health is the recommendation to increase consumption of fruit, vegetables and cereals and decrease the consumption of salt, sugar and fat.

Fruit and vegetables are, at last, becoming fashionable. To incorporate stimulation of the senses, balance and health aspects, a menu with a balance of food from each of the food groups can be constructed. Already many of the appetizers in restaurant menus are of vegetable origin, e.g. vichysoisse, avocado, melon etc. It behoves the cook to refrain from adding salt, sugar or fat so that

the delicate textures and flavours can provide maximum enjoyment.

Australian agriculture is looking to the development of exotic fruits and vegetables. At present, these are mainly South American or South East Asian in origin. It took the Americans to develop the Queensland nut. On the other hand, Bunya nuts are known in general to Aborigines and Queenslanders only. The Aborigines thought bunya nuts so delicious and desirable that rituals and ceremonies were performed when the ripe nuts fell to the ground. We have now exploited this excellent, delicious and healthy food. I believe it is to Aboriginal culture that white Australians need to turn to adopt and develop the new cuisine. The Aborigines were healthy when they ate the foods of the land. They developed appropriate cooking methods and many foods, which are toxic in their raw or natural state were rendered harmless and edible. New cuisines are required for new foods.

Aboriginal food patterns satisfy the Dietary Guidelines and good nutrition principles. At the same time, food is treated as a sensual experience. Flavours of foods are important and therefore preserved in Aboriginal food preparation rather than melding and blending to strengthen sensory stimulation artificially. Yams and tubers were most often baked. Orchid pods, related to the vanilla bean, were carefully chosen and treated and then used to enhance taste and smell. It was a gentle cuisine; gentle to the environment and gentle to the senses.

Canadians have exported maple syrup, the Americans potatoes and tomatoes. What uniquely Australian food have we exploited and exported to the world.?

We have arrived at the crossroads. Never in the history of Australia have governments given such positive direction as to our desirable food patterns. Never have we had food available in such variety. Never have so many people bought or sold cookbooks, joined clubs, enrolled in cooking classes. We even have the first conference of gastronomy.

All Things can be Bright and Beautiful if we can understand the past development of our present cuisine and admit that good nutrition encompasses the sensory qualities of food and vice versa. Thus, the "hi-tech" foods which were masquerading as part of the "sight era" and "taste era" will gradually disappear.

However training institutions which teach food preparation, such as catering colleges or home economics colleges, must change directions to include good nutrition and sensory stimulation as part of their recipe preparation tuition. A high-fat meal where cheese, bacon and butter are used excessively must quickly be relegated to the history books as this is neither nutritionally nor sensorially desirable. So many recipes suggest adding salted butter, to cooked vegetables for flavour. Yet less cooking might be more appropriate to bring out the qualities of colour, taste and smell. So often sauces are used to provide taste rather than to enhance flavour. There is more than just a subtle difference.

As we enter the twenty-first century, our nouvelle cuisine is likely to consist of less fat, sugar and salt and more vegetables, fruits and cereals cooked in such a way to provide maximum nutrition and maximum enjoyment. We are likely to adopt many more of the sensory cues of Aboriginal cuisine and enjoy food more. A balance of all these will make life more relaxing, beautiful and enjoyable.

READING LIST

To help participants get in the right frame of mind for the symposium, we decided to publish a reading list. Each of the four organisers submitted a "top ten" list of favourite books. From this we hoped to derive a manageable selection, but we found a forbidding diversity. It showed how much reading we could do among the classics, histories and cookery books. The only two on all four lists were: Brillat-Savarin's classic and Symons's local effort. Accordingly, rather than trying to reduce the list we publish all titles.

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DEFINITION OF TERMSor word processors and food processors

Gastronomer, gourmet, gourmand, epicure ... Such labels seem to be used interchangeably for gluttons, questors after new delicacies, believers in simplicity and freshness and even scholars of food who might scarcely eat. A similar disagreement over the word "cuisine" means that some believe that Australia does not have one, while others analyse its manifestations. We wanted to hold a symposium of "gastronomy", and yet who knows what it means? This preliminary discussion of terms raises some of the issues and proposes some definitions.

Gastronomy: Gastronomy is the reasoned comprehension of whatever concerns people's nourishment. We owe this definition to Brillat-Savarin ("la connaissance raisonnée de tout ce qui a rapport à l'homme, en tant qu'il se nourrit").

Ours is at variance with many other definitions. Jean-Claude Bonnet (1979) writes that: "Gastronomy is a cult, the fostering of mystery. In its exclusive preoccupation with taste, it sets to define what makes for a glorious culinary achievement" Showing a little more respect, the Concise Oxford Dictionary defines gastronomy as "the art and science of good eating and drinking". However, this still restricts it to the study of good dining.

Another mistake is to confuse the phenomenon (eating in all its manifestations) with the theory of the phenomenon (gastronomy includes statistics of starvation, lists of poisonous additives, etc). Perhaps we can clarify this with an ostensive definition: gastronomy overlaps with food technology, nutrition, dietetics, agronomy, economics, writing recipe books ... so much as these involve theorising about food. If it is practice without theory, then it remains part of the subject of gastronomy.

To take an analogy, according to classical theory, a musician is strictly a theorist: the performer is not a musician but a cantor. One way out is to use the word musicology, which the COD says is the "study of music other than that directed to proficiency in performance or composition". Note how the dictionary does not require the musicologist to study "good" music.

At the symposium, Michael Symons defined gastronomy as "food intellectualism" while Marion Halligan has drawn attention to the relationship between gastronomy and literature. "Gastronomic literature", she explained, "is the work and property only of those gourmets who know how to write", where as culinary writing is "the province of great cooks who possess the necessary science and authority."

Gastronomer: "One versed in gastronomy" (OED). To the French magistrate Henrion de Pensey is attributed the thought: "I regard

the discovery of a dish as a far more interesting event than the discovery of a star, for we have always stars enough, but we can never have too many dishes." If the science of the heavenly bodies, astronomy, is conducted by astronomers, then the practitioners of the "far more interesting" science should be gastronomers. (The French term, also adopted into English, is 'gastronome'.)

Gourmandism, gourmand: According to Brillat-Savarin, gourmandism is the impassioned, reasoned and habitual preference for everything which gratifies the organ of taste. It implies an inquiring mind and a healthy appetite. While gastronomy is the theory, gourmandism is the practice. The gourmand can be regarded as the artist of gastronomy, either the professional (the restaurateur) or the dilettante (good cook, diner, etc). Francis Ambrière, quoted in the Guide Gourmand de la France, wrote that, while gastronomy is a science, gourmandism is an instinct. If we can be permitted gobbledegook, the relationship between gastronomer and gourmand is that between word processor and food processor.

Again, our definition is at variance with others. Most authorities retain the seven deadly sins meaning - 'gourmand' equivalent to 'glutton' - that Brillat-Savarin remonstrated against. According to Le Trésor de la Langue Française, a gourmand is: "a. someone who eats with avidity and to excess (outdated), b. someone who likes good food and can appreciate it". According to the OED, a gourmand is "1. one who is overfond of eating, a glutton, 2. one who is fond of delicate fare, a judge of good eating". After upbraiding the lexicographers, Brillat-Savarin wrote: "When gourmandism becomes gluttony, greed and debauchery, it loses both its name and its advantages."

Epicure, gourmet, connoisseur: To make life more difficult, an epicure is "one who cultivates a refined taste for the pleasures of the table" (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary). Carême was an epicure, but not a gourmand since he ate and drank very little. Closely related is a gourmet, originally a "wine merchant's valet" then extended to a "connoisseur of wine" and, in the eighteenth century, to "someone who appreciates refined eating and drinking" (Petit Robert, 1980). This "connoisseur of eating and drinking" is not necessarily a gourmand, nor necessarily an epicure; the gourmet may be a theorist, without activity enjoying or cultivating the table. The defining characteristic of the connoisseur is knowledge, expertise and the ability to judge, and these qualities are not necessarily present in the gourmand or the epicure. A gourmand can enjoy a good wine without necessarily being able, like the connoisseur or gourmet, to recognise the vintage.

Before proceeding, we must draw attention to the Oxford dictionary's attempt to differentiate: "The gourmand unites theory with practice and may be denominated gastronomer. The gourmet is merely theoretical, cares little about practice and deserves the higher appellation gastrologer."

Aristologist: A word coined (from the Greek for lunch) by Thomas Walker in 1835 to mean a "student of the art of dining". It was

adopted as pen name by the author of Australia's first cookery book.

Cook, chef: A cook is not necessarily a chef, though usually vice-versa. A chef is a manager, a practical theorist. Chef is short for "chef de cuisine, chef cuisinier" (Petit Robert), ie, head of the team.

Food: Substances taken into the body to maintain life and growth. Food must therefore include air and can usually be taken to include drink. Roland Barthes asked: "For what is food? It is not only a collection of products that can be used for statistical or nutritional studies. It is also, and at the same time, a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usages, situations and behaviour."

Cuisine: If we take a French dictionary like the Petit Robert, cuisine appears to have a reasonably restricted meaning: "1. Room in which one prepares and cooks foods for meals; 2. Preparation of foods the art of preparing foods; 3. Prepared foods that are served as meals". In English, we tend to use the word "cooking" at this level. We reserve the French word, according to the COD, to the much grander thought: "(country's or establishment's style of) cooking."

In the preference to Cooking, Cuisine and Class (1982), Jack Goody explains three distinct meanings: "in the general sense of the products of the kitchen, more specifically (as in the title to the book) for a culturally differentiated cuisine - the high and the low - and finally in the specialised sense of those highly elaborated forms of cooking found in only a few societies such as China, the Middle East and post-Renaissance France". Australia has cuisine in the first two senses, but not the third.

Domestic arts: Includes all technics of the domestic microcosm: construction, maintenance, decoration, furnishing, etiquette, cookery, child-rearing, gardening, clothing, education, entertaining, love-making, healing, harvesting... an important subject, often badly misrepresented by its exponents.

Symposium: Strictly a Greek drinking party after the meal, and devoted to art, conversation, games, love and especially education. The symposium was the ancestor of the university, just as the coffee shop was the ancestor of the club and the Royal Society. The symposium should have a shared (loving) cup and controlled drinking (by the elected symposiarch).

- Gay Bilson, Graham Pont, Barbara Santich, Michael Symons
Adelaide, February 1984.

Food

PHILLIP SEARLE
CHEONG LIEW

TRISHA VEITCH
BARRY ROSS
JOHN SIMPSON
JANET SIMPSON
TOM CLARKSON

Wine

PHILIP WHITE

Servers

GEOFFREY RUSH
DEREK KREKKLER
JAN STEWART
MELISSA
EDDIE AMERIKA
PEAT MOSS

Musicians

SARAH BALDACCHINO
SHANI WILLIAMS
PEQUITA SPURR
NIGEL SABIN
RICHARD WESTPHALEN
WAYNE FREER
JENNY NEWSOME
LARRY TODD
STEPHEN TOOD

Costumes

SALLY BLUFF
JONATHON PHILLIPS
RENE GAY
ROSE LARNER

Glass

IAN MOWBRY

FELLINI'S CLOWNS AND CIRCUSES

Seppelt Seppeltsfield Show
Fino Sherry D.P. 117
Seppelt Great Western
Sparkling Burgundy NV

JELLIED SEASCAPE
GOOSE GALANTINE
CONSOMME
SAND CRAB CUSTARD
GOOSE LIVERWURST
STEAMED LAMBS' BRAINS

Heemskirk Tasmanian
Chardonnay 1981

SUCKLING PIG
QUAILS EN VESSIE
A BASKET OF GOOSE
AND VENISON
SUCKLING PIG
SNAPPER WITH RICE WINE
MOUNT OF PIGEONS

Geoff Merrill
Cabernet Sauvignon
(McLaren Vale/Coonawarra)
1980

RASPBERRY AND
VANILLA ICECREAM
BLACKBERRY TRIFLE

Petaluma Coonawarra
Rhine Riesling
Beerenauslese 1982

Bailey's HJT Liqueur Tokay

A BANQUET

MARION HALLIGAN

The essence of all art is tension, between what we know and what we expect, what we see and what we fear, what we hope and what is.

A banquet is a high art. It's not just a feast, the sophisticated gratification of our will to nourish. It is a wooing of all the senses, sight and hearing and smell and touch as well as taste, and of the mind. It is a pinnacle of cultivation, and always runs the risk of toppling over into decadence. That act of balance, of remaining a shapely culmination and not collapsing into either decay nor disgust, is the rare and delicate pleasure of the banquet.

So there is wine: sparkling burgundy once the delicious vulgarity of embryonic wine drinkers, and white and red and sweet and spiritous in proper measure. And musicians baroque on the staircase and in the bay of the dining room.

There are bare white tables with places marked by large folded napkins, strewn with rose petals scented yellow and red, and a simple denial of our glittering expectations, of the busy glamour of silver and glass, the fiddle of salts and peppers and side-plates and breadbaskets, as well as an empty stage for the opulence to come, of enormous silver salvers and their intricate burden of food.

But above all clowns. Processing, bowing, nimble, mocking, presenting their salvers with ambiguous deference, underlined with primitive drum rolls. The clown is anarchy; he is the all licensed fool, allowed by society to break its rules in return for entertainment, and perhaps wisdom. He is slightly sinister; just enough to titillate. To have this most exquisitely formulated of banquets served by clowns produces a delicious tension.

Of course they only adumbrate anarchy, only tease with wicked-eyed glints: the cutlery put down wrongly, and picked up and put down more wrongly still, with impatient pretend frowns. Or the last too-rich morsel of liverwurst swallowed with elaborate naughty gusto. And the wine - will he bring some more, or leave us like Tantalus deprived? The wine comes. We knew all the time it would. Didn't we?

There is something of the same tension in the food. The hideous head of the snapper glaring. The faint swamp redolence of the jellied seascape, the strong flavour of sea at its earthiest. (Think of Venice: the primordial scent of the sea in that most highly wrought of cities, where the nervous balance of nature and art is exciting - and threatened.) The suckling pigs' heads emblematic of morality. The glazed pastry basket of goose and venison gainsaying edibility.

And especially the quails en vessie. The tension here is exquisite. Dante, murmurs one. Hieronymous Bosch. (T.S. Eliot might have said, Were we led all that way for / Birth or Death?) As the clown, enigmatic eyebrow cocked, black mouth pursed, cuts with nervous scissors into the round speckled womb of the bladder and pulls out a pink succulent creature we are assistants at a gastronomic caesarian, delight and doubt fearfully balanced.

And still the pure sharp flute soars and the clowns dance on silent feet, their bodies mute inside the thick satin of their gowns with patterns hard-edged like black and with sugared almonds - and there's another tension; we know that such extremes of black and white are illusory, that the speckled brown-grey of the nested quails is much more truthful.

But it all ends rosily, with blackberry trifle and a conical carnival icecream striped raspberry and vanilla, and best of all a great mound of raspberries straight, sharp, and fresh, reminding us that there are moments when nature needs no help at all.

I now have a pattern for a banquet in my mind. Rather sad; I doubt I shall savour one so perfect again.

THE BANQUET - AN AUSTRALIAN INTERPRETATION

BARBARA SANTICH

Obviously, it was no ordinary banquet, its form dictated by the tenets of classicism. This was the production of an artist, asked to create a spectacular finale to a symposium of gastronomy, an extravaganza which would not only say something about gastronomy, as the previous two lunches had, but respond in an exciting and original way to the tag of "upstart".

In direct contrast to the abstract language and ideas of the Symposium papers and discussions was a menu where each dish was described in the barest, most basic terms which, explicit and unexpected, were as shocking as mention of parts of the anatomy in the Victorian era. Added to this was the discord between the dish, as imagined from the menu description, and the dish as realised. All were surprises: no one could have conceived of 'Steamed Lambs' Brains' as individual domes under the palest, translucent green cover, nor 'Raspberry and Vanilla Icecream' as an outsize cone of alternate spirals of pink and white, nor 'Goose Liverwurst' as a massive, solid black block over which was draped a pale, phallic sausage. And if there had been preconceptions about the terms "dinner" or "banquet", these too were destroyed before the evening was out.

Jean-Paul Aron wrote that feasts demand sound and music, singing and laughter, while fasts are accompanied by silence. And feasting, theatre, music and dance can all trace common origins in the Dionysiac rites, religious festivals of ancient Greece. The last three of these arts have followed separate evolutionary paths, but they come together again in the feast which is more than just sumptuous eating. At this banquet there was music, and theatre in the form of pantomime, by definition a performance associated with clowns where a story is told by arts other than the spoken word. But these were not ordinary clowns, the boisterous, vulgar, good natured, ridiculous, leaping tumbling, laughter-producing clowns of the circus; they were Pierrots, shadowy and inscrutable.

These Pierrots were more than just pantomime personages. They acted as detached commentators, outside the event : at the start of the dinner, in the face of impending chaos with one chair short, a whisper from the white-faced chorus reached an agitated organiser - "Anxious, are we?"

They were dissociated from the main action - that of eating and drinking - and at the same time acted as intermediaries between the guests-as-performers and the guests-as-audience, facilitating these Janus-like roles.

Anthropologists suggest that three types of ritual behaviour are associated with festive occasions, one of which is "role reversal". These Pierrot-waiters reversed the customary master-servant roles

and were in a position of power with regard to the guests. They could express attitude reversals, encouraged by their freedom from conventional morality. Thus they frowned on abstinence and encouraged drinking, when moderation is the usual counsel; they showed disgust at the goose liverwurst sausage, when good manners would dictate appreciation; they used fingers for serving, when orthodox waiters would have skilfully manoeuvred standard serving implements. They could display mockery rather than respect, scorn rather than envy, ridicule rather than reverence.

Further, because the clown is equally at home in the worlds of reality and of the imagination, he symbolises the creative artist. These Pierrots - some of whom were professional actors - emphasised that this banquet was no mere meal but a total artistic experience. The feast is the special occasion which delights and stimulates all the senses, la fête, la festa. It is a spectacular event, a "spectacle" in the French sense. The philosopher Rousseau, in his famous "Lettre à M.D'Alembert sur les Spectacles" offered his ideas for "la fête": "Donnez les spectateurs en spectacle," he wrote; "Rendez-les acteurs eux-mêmes; faites que chacun se voie et s'aime dans les autres, afin que tous en soient mieux unis." ("Put the spectators in the spectacle. Make them actors themselves; make each see himself and love himself in the others, in order that all become one.")

Seated around the outer periphery of the rectangle, we realised, in part, Rousseau's suggestion, and became aware that we were not only audience but also performers. Looking up from eating, across the void to the table opposite, we saw our reflections in the act of eating. It was as if we were in the simultaneous positions of actor and voyeur, object and image, active and passive. We could see ourselves greedily attacking and passionately consuming the foods on our plates and, as detached observers, we could perceive the inherent cruelty of the act.

For there is an aspect of cruelty in eating, nourishing one life at the expense of another. It is an aspect usually avoided - the crudeness of a slab of blood-red meat is disguised by cooking it, camouflaging it with sauces and garnishes. Yet at the Symposium Banquet, little attempt was made to hide this crudeness and cruelty. Few of the dishes were "pretty", like colour illustrations in cookbooks and glossy magazines, nor were they the Japanese-influenced works of art of the nouvelle cuisine school. The sausage of goose liverwurst had an appearance of flesh-coloured, shiny plastic; the solid block of the same was encrusted with jagged pieces of truffle, like broken glass on prison walls. The large poached snapper, grey and lifeless, was arranged in swimming position, its teeth bared and vicious; the pyramid of pigeons resembled a funeral pyre of charred corpses. Such dishes defied, rather than invited, consumption; yet, faithful gourmands that we were, we consumed them.

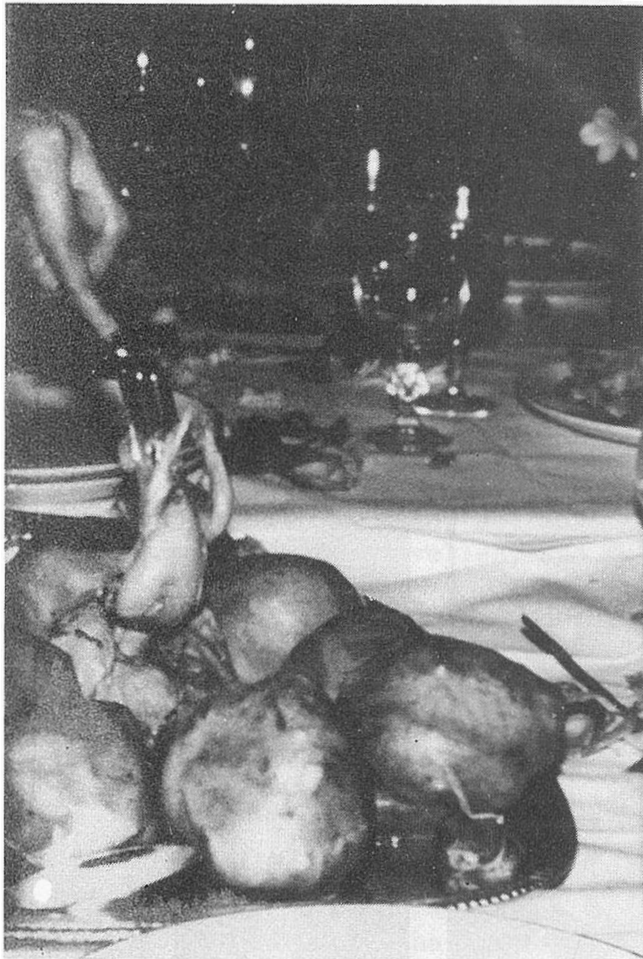
Crudeness and cruelty are also related to a mediaeval influence and the rites of the carnival. With its masquerades and street theatre, carnival was one of the traditional "fêtes"; it embodied

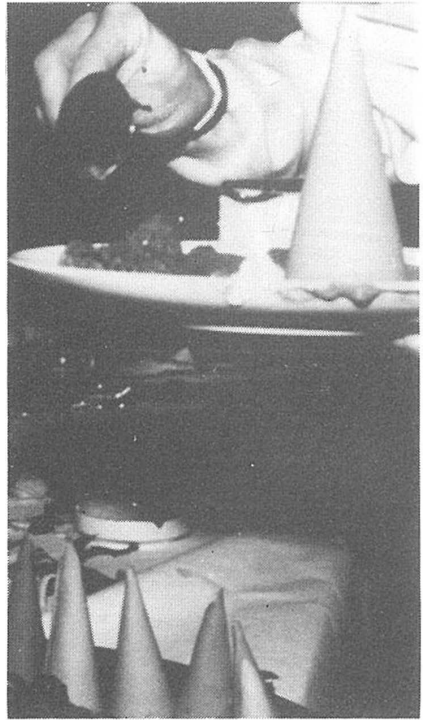
unbridled pleasure and glorified feasting. It was the time for an orgy of flesh eating before the piously monotonous fish and legume days of Lent. For such carnival feasts, the common meats like beef, mutton and veal were disdained; instead, game and poultry, and the best and freshest fish, symbolised the rich and conspicuous consumption which is always part of the feast. And likewise at this banquet, where there was no lamb, beef or chicken, none of the everyday foods, but goose, venison, quail, pigeon, suckling pig - extravagant, traditional feast ingredients. Nor were there any vegetable dishes, not even a salad to interrupt the succession of flesh-based dishes.

The choice of dishes, too, evoked a mediaeval feast. Analogous to the boar's head of twelfth-century banquets, traditionally borne in by a succession of domestics to the acclaim of trumpets, was the platter of suckling pig surmounted by the whole head, mouth agape as if in mocking laughter, eyes heaven-fixed. There was the Mount of Pigeons, waiting to be lustily attacked and ripped apart, as the mediaeval style of eating is so often portrayed. And there was the mediaeval allegory of milky-white quail, untimely torn from the soft bladder wombs, innocent to the tips of their pink translucent claws.

This Symposium banquet, in its assemblage of multifarious influences, was somehow akin to Gastronomy, loosely defined as the art and science of human nourishment, a discipline which touches on and extends into many other disciplines. It fulfilled its function as a banquet, in establishing a desirable, albeit fleeting, ideal which exorcised the banality of everyday life. And as a finale to the First Symposium of Australian Gastronomy, it was appropriately an upstart banquet, a new and revitalised form which incorporated diverse elements from other cultures and other civilisations.

(This is an extract of an article which first appeared in the Journal of Gastronomy, vol 1. Summer 1984.)





PRAISE OF CLOWNS

MICHAEL SYMONS

Everyone knew that this was fabulous food. Fish floating in jelly and spooned out of an aquarium ... Quails breaking out of pigs' bladders and smelling like milk...

But the magic of the banquet at the recent First Symposium of Australian Gastronomy in Adelaide was greatly enhanced by being served by clowns.

We immediately agreed that Adelaide's leading chef, Phillip Searle, presented some of the best food this country had eaten. Suckling pig with raisin-filled brioches... a woven-bread basket of ginger-flavoured goose and venison...

But I was so bowled over by the white-faced fools that I told Don Dunstan how privileged he was to attend "this historic dinner". The next day I urged Gay Bilson to paint her waiters at Berowra Waters Inn with white makeup. I must attempt to explain.

Phillip Searle, who is a partner in the North Adelaide restaurant, Possum's, had a free hand, so that no one knew what to expect. We were welcomed into the grounds of North Adelaide mansion, Carclew, by the bounding and signalling figure of the first clown.

Inside, sparkling burgundy was served by other tricksters in superb black and white costumes, while a black-costumed quintet played on the stairs. Then, a clown announced something like, "Cooks, food philosophers, nutritionists, passionate amateurs, dinner is served..."

We filed into the ballroom past the jellied seascape in its handsome aquarium, to find the tables strewn with nothing but rose-petals. Importantly, the tables were set up in one huge ring, so all 48 of us sat on the outside looking in.

The clowns entered by a single gap, and served wine. The banging of drums drew attention to the first dishes, paraded out of the makeshift kitchen, set down at various points around the ring, and served. We marvelled, and the musicians played.

Then, the clowns swapped the six dishes around, served the nearest diners, and so on, until we had sampled most offerings. The tables were cleared, some of us exchanged seats, the process was repeated with a second parade of six dishes, and then came the finale of desserts.

A fellow diner later expressed disappointment - not at the food, but at the lack of any dramatic development, or even any special entertainment provided by the clowns.

But that would have distracted from the magic. Just as the food

combined French and Asian flavours, with Searle being helped by another local chef, Cheong Liew, this banquet recreated not past glories, but firmly established its own style.

Searle has now told me that the very night he agreed to undertake the banquet, he watched Fellini's television documentary, *The Clowns* (produced, significantly in this context, as a deliberate reaction to his Fellini *Satyricon*, 1969) The chef intuitively saw how the use of clowns could solve many practical problems and convey a strong statement, taking up many issues raised in the symposium.

The clowns added much merriment but also carried the inner meaning of the age-old tradition of fools (described in William Willeford's *The Fool and His Sceptre*, 1969). Something so deeply symbolic does not have a single point to get; rather, it ultimately remains inaccessible to rational explanation. But let's start with the elegant solutions that the clowns offered to practical difficulties.

The usual meal these days employs so-called service à la russe, in which successive plates are individually presented to each diner. But such a banquet should follow service à la française, where several large dishes are displayed and then served, as in the much humbler buffet.

As handled nearly two centuries ago by Carême, the first service involved an architectural construction of perhaps 32 or 48 dishes, which would be admired and then sampled, before a second service of an equal number of dishes, followed by frivolous desserts.

So Phillip Searle's immediate question of how to display the food was solved by seating the diners as if around a circus ring, with dishes shown off in a grand parade. The delighted diners applauded the procession.

In a restaurant service is from behind, but we were to be served from the front. So Phillip trod on a few toes by not hiring waiters, but rather six actors and dancers. They were listed on the menu not as 'waiters' but as 'servers'. They had to look good, but this could create a dilemma.

During the symposium, restaurateur Gay Bilson had described perfect service as "invisible". So how could actors exaggeratedly juggling wine bottles and tending to stagger under heavy platters be made unnoticeable? They could be mimes with painted faces.

Clowns had other advantages. They could make mistakes (drop a fork), lose their dignity (dodge under the table to get out of the ring) and improvise (hold up a toppling tower of icecream).

They could also play magic tricks. Do you remember how a battered car would arrive in a circus ring and an almost impossible number of clowns tumble out? In the same way, Phillip made a virtue of his tiny, box-like kitchen, by having his clowns emerge with an procession of elaborate dishes.

Beyond these practical abilities, the clowns could also make a political statement. During the symposium, discussion had drifted to whether good food was reserved for elites. This puritan criticism does not bother Searle, but he had to persuade others that this was no "bourgeois wank".

Clowns are upstarts, as much at home telling unpalatable truths in the monarch's court as expressing foolish wisdom in popular entertainment. Our jesters showed how the grand banquet could be adapted to this "upstart" society.

At the Carême banquet you took your personal servant to attend you. However, the Fellini movie had shown two main types of clowns, the Augustine and the white-faced. While the former is the loud, baggy trousered buffoon, Searle chose the beautifully-dressed, arrogant aristocrat.

These white-faced sophisticates were thus more than a match for those they served. One clown stole food off my plate. When a neighbour asked for a doggy-bag, another clown nodded vigorously and pointed at her tummy. Searle had not only symbolically reversed the class relationship he had established an assertive status for waiters. The tables had been turned.

We are approaching the central point, which can be regarded as the clowns' universal message, "Who is the Fool?" No one takes food more seriously than Phillip Searle, but he prefers not to intellectualise his passion, and so, in a circular way, his clowns mocked our symposium, and also himself.

Take his most amazing-looking dish, disguised under the modest title, "Goose Liverwurst". After the original procession of dishes, applauded with delight, a clown dashed into the ring with disgust on his face and holding at arms' length a glistening black mass with a glistening pink entrail draped over it.

When served, the "liverwurst" was disclosed to be so thickly coated in black truffles that they could be scraped off as a meal on their own. The most revolting-looking dish turned out to be the most extravagant. This is called irony.

The most satisfying account of clowns is still regarded as the book written in 1511 by the Dutch humanist, Desiderius Erasmus, Praise of Folly. It is non-stop irony, so sophisticated that is difficult to know when he mocks himself and when he mocks his enemy.

He was regarded as the best-trained classicist of his day, and yet he argued passionately the Christian message of simplicity. He lampooned the excessive scholasticism of a mediaeval theologian like John Duns Scotus. Indeed, the followers of Erasmus came to abuse the hair-splitting followers of Duns Scotus as "dunsmen" or "dunces".

During a discussion of whether gastronomy was an art or a science,

we had, in a sense, tackled this need to balance the head and the heart. And I suggest that Phillip Searle, Like Erasmus, told those of use theorising so seriously about food that, while we were talking, he was doing.

This theological discussion has now brought us to the desserts, with which Searle summed up his case. The key dish was described on the menu as "Rasberry and Vanilla Icecream".

Just as he had done away with normal waiters, he had approached this new set of culinary challenges by replacing some of his usual kitchen staff with friends with talents like engineering. They had adapted as an icecream mould one of those large, orange "witches' hats" off the roads. Not only was the icecream superb to eat, but it thus arrived spectacularly as a towering red and white barbershop spiral. The cone-shape of the icecream was repeated in dozens of wafer cones upside-down around a generous pile of rasberries.

Now think about it a moment. Phillip Searle had thrown himself into sleepless days constructing a banquet which was now all but demolished, surely an act of magnificent folly. It was also deliberate irony that a chef so desperately trying to communicate his artistry should finish with "mere" icecream, and then to trump that with the most beautiful untouched rasberries.

Beyond that, the effect of simple flavours, colours and shapes was innocent and clownish, to at last reduce the mighty banquet to a children's party. And, to top the Erasmus-like message, the cones were to crown the earnest gastronomers with dunces' caps.

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