



THE EDUCATION OF THE SENSES: AESTHETICS OF FOOD AND DRINK
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Helen Benny

How to cook an albatross: the place of culinary traditions in the modern world

Food scholars agree that what people eat, and the ways in which they produce and prepare it, have been radically transformed by modern food systems. For some, the industrialisation of food production and the globalization of food markets have led to homogenization and standardization; for others these processes have resulted in an unprecedented proliferation of consumption choices. Underlying these divergent views, however, there is a broad consensus that traditional cuisines rooted in agrarian practices are being eroded. This paper argues that, on the contrary, traditional culinary cultures have endured these processes and are more resilient than is generally believed.

The paper is based on in-depth interview with 30 people from diverse backgrounds who live in Brunswick, a multicultural suburb of Melbourne. These interviews revealed that culinary traditions retained important symbolic significance for the people who took part, especially in relation to their identity. However, the study also found culinary traditions are practically embedded in daily life and are crucial for supporting views about environmental and healthy eating practices. In addition, the people interviewed related how - sometimes through necessity; sometimes through innovation - culinary traditions often form a living part of everyday aesthetic practices. In conclusion, the study found that the transmission of culinary traditions between generations suggest that modern footways provide a way of sustaining traditions rather than leading to their desuetude. It recognises that a definition of food traditions must be one that encompasses mutability and change.

Tania Cammarano and Lilly Cleary, William Angliss Institute

The romance and the glamour: a *flâneur* through Italian Brisbane

Italian immigration has long been credited, especially in popular media, with sparking Australia's love affair with Italian food. While Italian migrants have played an integral role in popularising and diffusing Italian food and foodways, the influence of aesthetic ideas of Italy has been largely overlooked.

Explore how Italian aesthetic imagery has shaped Brisbane's Italian food culture by joining a *flâneur* through the streets of Fortitude Valley and New Farm.

We draw on the 19th century figure of the *flâneur*, a detached wanderer skilled in the practice of looking as resistance to the pace and lure of commercialism, to contemplate how the influence of two key aesthetic ideals: *Romantic Italy*, which came in the baggage of the colonisers and *Glamorous Italy*, which emerged during the 1950s, have been woven into the fabric of the city, seen and unseen.

We use *flânerie* as a method to *experience* that which ties glamour to visualist aesthetics and exclusive consumption. By positioning the modern *flâneur/flâneuse* as motivated less by critical detachment and more by feelings of displacement, we seek to unravel how it was possible for Anglo-Australians to embrace Italian beauty while often rejecting or scorning Italian migrants themselves.

The *flâneur* will take approximate 1.5 hours and will begin outside McWhirters building in Fortitude Valley. The walk will be approximately 2.5km and participants will be limited to 25.

Biography

Dr Tania Cammarano

Tania Cammarano explored the history of Italian food and foodways in Australia for her doctoral thesis. She has presented papers on different historical aspects of Italian food at conferences in both Italy and Australia. Prior to embarking on an academic career, she wrote about food for News Limited and AAP. She was also the founding editor of food and recipe website, taste.com.au. She has taught food writing

at the University of Adelaide, and is currently a lecturer in the food studies program at William Angliss Institute in Melbourne.

Dr Lilly Cleary

For her doctoral thesis Lilly examined the underlying assumptions and implications of narratives of trust and social change in food provisioning networks. She has played an integral role in the development of the William Angliss Institute Bachelor of Food Studies and the Master of Food Systems and Gastronomy. She currently teaches in both programs, with a special interest in performative and sensory practice and more-than-human dynamics in food production.

Xan Chacko

Painting Pomes and Putrefaction: A challenge to the supremacy of visual representation

Rendered for the University of California from 1911 to 1915, the pomological water colours of Ellen Isham Schutt can be read as a progressive era desire for control over nature for the purposes of nation building. In the preceding decade, Schutt had been hired by the United States Department of Agriculture in Washington D.C., to create a catalogue of standards for both foreign and domestic fruit varieties. In 1911 Schutt was poached by the University of California to paint a comparative series on locally farmed apples, grown, harvested and stored under differing conditions, showing a gradation of mould and rot. These paintings embody a vision of a 'normal,' even 'perfect,' apple grown in an ideal soil, harvested at the optimal time, and stored at the correct temperature to ensure its longevity. But what does a multispecies interpretation of these paintings look like? Rethinking these images as composites rather than singularities opens up the affective entanglements (Myers 2008) of both the human (producer, intended audience) and non-human (apples, bacteria, virus). By the 1930s the use of the newly popularised colour photography techniques in the first plant patents, relegated water colour illustration to the archive of Natural Philosophy. However, I read Schutt's water colour paintings as more than technologies of standardisation but speculative explorations of the aesthetic and/or repulsive. Through a close reading of a few paintings, I think with feminist science

studies to complicate the role that these hyperreal images play in the eugenic aspirations of food regulation. (247 words)

Bio: Dr Xan Chacko joined the UQ School of Law in 2018 as a Research Fellow, on the ARC project 'Harnessing Intellectual Property to Build Food Security'. She was awarded her PhD in Cultural Studies from the University of California, Davis in 2018. Her project, "Moving, Making, and Saving Botanic Futures: The History and Practices of Seed Banking." is a comparative history of seed banking as a particular strategy that is being taken up in the wake of the unprecedented anthropogenic environmental changes. Dr Chacko holds a MSc in the History and Philosophy of Science from Imperial College London.

Bev Laing

Eat the Curriculum

How should we educate a young gastronome? Is this a job we can leave to corporations and media, health promoters, busy parents and carers?

From inciting curiosity about the natural world to practical hands-on cooking, there is much food activity in schools, often undocumented and sometimes woefully portrayed in the media (remember the 'yoghurt that grew on trees'?)

With the experience of over 15 years writing food education resources for Australian schools, Bev explores in this paper the power of persuasion when working inside the 'system' to create exciting, curriculum-linked food education.

Optional food programs are by their nature limited (to a 'message' on health, cooking, or taste) -- but there's huge potential for food education in the mandated curriculum. Does the education system mismanage food education and its powerful potential? What is happening that will surprise and delight Gastronomers?

Bev Laing, Oxford University masters graduate and passionate cook, specialises in linking the core curriculum to food curiosity: teaching reading through recipes, maths through hands-on cooking, and the intricate history of humanity through food. She wrote the curriculum for the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation, writes

for 'Phenomenom!' (on ABC Education and Qantas, SBS/NITV's 'Little J and Big Cuz', and is working with Monash University to wire up 'worm cams' and IoT sensors to excite kids about their school garden as a problem-solving paradise.

This paper relates to the theme 'Environmental aesthetics' through education and deep cross-disciplinary learning that broadens students' palates, explores multicultural understanding and creates a real buzz about food.

Alva Lim, Tracy Berno, Mark Peter Notaras

Chalk, but not Cheese: Navigating the Aesthetics of a Cuisine. The case study of the Timor-Leste Food Lab's sensory approach to understanding the palate, culture and world view of the Timorese people

What is Timorese food and its collective way of eating, "cuisine"? A quick google search reveals very little, or that the discourse is still in its early days. Rather than being a constraint, this offered the Timor-Leste Food Lab the rare opportunity and great freedom to ask the fundamental question "How are we to eat in Timor-Leste?" We in this case being all peoples: the various ethnolinguistic groups of Timor-Leste and those from the outside visiting or who now call it home. The 'how' can encompass: practically (how food is gathered); ethically (how food is chosen to honour commitments); aesthetically (how the palate is cultivated); physically (how food is used to care for each other); educationally (how the next generation is taught that food is important); ecologically (how food choices are used to exercise responsibilities to the living world); nutritionally (how a nourishing meal is composed); and, epistemologically (how they know their decisions about food choices makes sense to them).

In this proposal, we will primarily focus on sharing how we have navigated the aesthetics of Timorese food, including "how their palate is cultivated", through a sensory approach: tasting, talking about taste, testing, and tasting again, and again. Our methodology is centered around the restaurant's necessity of tasting ingredients every day before service, in order to ensure both consistent quality of what is served on the plate, as well as to develop and refine the team's tasting abilities. Our collective experiences from this daily process and ritual, in the context of a highly

seasonal, tropical gastronomy, offers a unique way of understanding the role of food labs in curating aesthetic experiences for both chefs and patrons.

Anna Peters

Cultural Variations on a Theme: Aesthetic experiences of food and wine

The aesthetic experience of food and wine are the confluence of learnt values and beliefs and underpinned by the cognitive and emotional processes. Values and beliefs are subjective and substantive sources of understanding the variables and concepts of habits, rituals, norms and actions. The variables of life experiences broaden the cognitive and perceptive processes of values and beliefs. Social, economic, political, religious, education and environmental concepts influence the habits, rituals, actions and norms of society's senses.

Understanding the intangible and tangible elements to educate the senses, is to 'practice the [art] of rhythm...harmony...construction and the co-ordination of parts.' (Stevenson 1932, p. 37). The organoleptic functions of the aesthetic experience, are the parts that require the first application of rhythm, harmony and construction. Not dissimilar to the composition of music. Therefore, the auditory, optical, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile senses are variable in the context of culture and require deep and broad research to ensure the sensory perception is an aesthetic experience.

This paper will discuss how an aesthetic experience of food and wine is constructed to educate a broad and deep cultural variation examining two contrasting cultures, social media and cookbooks. Both media seek to 'create [an aesthetic experience]' (Rappoport 2003, p. 108) using tangible and intangible parts.

References

Rappoport, L 2003, *How we eat: Appetite, culture and the psychology of food*, ECW Press, Toronto, pp. 107-130.

Stevenson, R.L 1932, *Memories and Portraits*, Angus and Robertson LTD, Sydney. pp. 36-47

Sol Salbe

Cultural Appropriation and the Lenses we see it through

How we see things often depends on the lens we see it through. Mostly we are aware of those lenses and make allowance for them. But sometimes we are not aware of just how much they can distort our perceptions. It is my contention that analysis of the delicate issue of the culinary relationship between Palestinian and Israelis is impeded by the way such lenses operate.

In the particular case, those who hinder clear analysis are in most cases unaware of their negative role. Their intention isn't malicious. It is just that, on the whole, restaurant reviewers and people who introduce us to new recipes on a whole slew of media are often out of their depth. They are not food historians or even specialised journalists. They mean well, but time after time, they start with A and end up with B.

The consequent impact is that Palestinians are hurt and angry. But to what extent is it the case? My research project looks at restaurants run by Israelis in the West, the way they describe their food, which is often indisputably Palestinian and what reviewers assume it to be. In addition, I look at some specific websites and publishing houses which have played a role in creating those perceptions.

This particular research is part of my book project: *Intertwined Cuisines – the impact of Palestinian and Israeli cuisines on each other – A culinary Detective Odyssey.*