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Edited by Monique Rooney and Russell Smith



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Editors' Introduction

Monique Rooney and Russell Smith

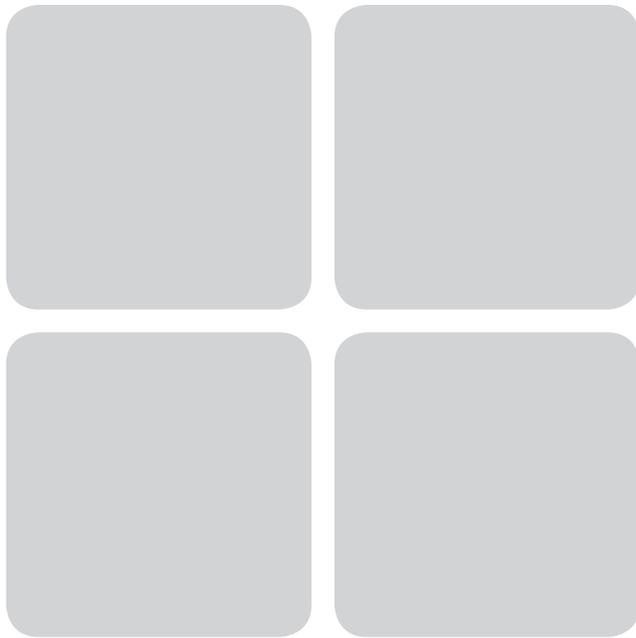
Welcome to Issue 51 of Australian Humanities Review.

This issue kicks off with two essays that engage with the politics of representation in Australian cultural life. Maria Nugent's essay, "'Every Right to be There': Cinema Spaces and Racial Politics in *Baz Luhrmann's Australia*", shows how Luhrmann's recent, controversial film provides insight into the experience of watching movies in segregated cinemas. This important essay brings together analysis of racial segregation as it is represented visually in Baz Luhrmann's *Australia* with the recollections of Aboriginal cinema-goers who experienced or observed segregation first-hand. In doing so, Nugent reminds us of the significance of 'non-realist' cinema images that can captivate audiences and at the same time represent the material conditions of cinema-watching.

While Nugent's essay points to how relations of domination and subordination organize everyday, supposedly egalitarian, practices of cinema-going in Australia, Roger Hillman's essay adds a transnational dimension to representations of an historical event that has become the preeminent site of national memorialisation. In 'A Transnational Gallipoli?', Hillman contrasts the masculinist heroics and celebratory nationalism of Peter Weir's iconic film, *Gallipoli*, and Roger McDonald's *1915*, with more recent novels and films produced outside Australia's borders that provide alternative forms of cultural memory. Louis de Bernières' *Birds Without Wings* and Tolga Örnek's documentary film *Gallipoli: The Front Line Experience* are significant as texts that 'situate the Gallipoli legend in a transnational rather than a national framework, while providing a fuller understanding of how cultural memory works in relation to the national imaginary'.

This issue features a special guest-edited section, "'On the Table': Food in Our Culture'. Lisa Milner has brought together essays and book reviews that engage, in various ways, with how food is produced and consumed. Topics canvassed in this section include Adrian Peace on the ethics and politics of kangaroo consumption; histories of Australian food culture, including Barbara Santich on colonial appetites for native foods, and Colin Bannerman on the quest to define a distinctive Australian food culture; Ferne Edwards on the tension between large-scale capitalist and localized non-commodified food production systems; Elspeth Probyn on the intertwinement of humans, fish and oceans; and Jemàl Nath and Desirée Prideaux on the role of 'mock meats' in vegetarian eating practices.

Our Ecological Humanities section continues the food theme but with a specific focus on the impact of the human/animal divide on attitudes to consumption. Included are Elizabeth Leane and Helen Tiffin's essay on Douglas Mawson's relationship to his sled dogs, as well as excerpts from books by Gary Steiner (on the ethics of veganism), Dominique Lestel (on the human exceptionalism implicit in vegetarianism) and Val Plumwood (on the moral dualisms surrounding meat-eating). Concluding this section is Hollis Taylor's review of Dominique Lestel's *L'animal est l'avenir de l'homme*.



ESSAYS

‘Every Right to be There’: Cinema Spaces and Racial Politics in Baz Luhrmann’s *Australia*

Maria Nugent

During Baz Luhrmann’s childhood in a small country town in New South Wales in the 1960s and 1970s, his father operated the local picture theatre. It’s a detail much mentioned by Luhrmann in interviews, and often included in biographical sketches of him. His *Wikipedia* entry, for instance, notes that: ‘He was raised in Herons Creek, a tiny rural settlement in northern New South Wales, where his father ran a petrol station and a movie theatre, both of which would influence his son’s film-making’ (‘Baz’). An interview with Luhrmann that appears on various fan websites likewise states: ‘Mark Anthony Luhrmann grew up in rural Australia and it was at his father’s movie theatre that he first became enthralled by the world of movies and the power of story telling’ (Fischer). Film theorist Pam Cook says that Luhrmann ‘delights in ... telling his own life story, which he views as inseparable from his creative journey’ (14). As part of that story, Luhrmann credits his father’s cinema with exposing him to the old movies and musicals that would become inspiration for, and sources in, his own films. For instance, when explaining influences for *Moulin Rouge*, Luhrmann told one interviewer that:

I grew up in the middle of nowhere and we got lots of old television and my dad ran a cinema for a while, so I loved musicals as a kid. You know, music cinema, all this artificiality making you feel things, I’ve done a lot of opera and theater, and I just thought that somebody’s got to get around to making that work in the cinema again. And so that was the project. (Keefe)

That Luhrmann’s film-making owes a debt to a childhood spent watching old movies in a country cinema is evident in what Meaghan Morris calls the ‘archivism’ of his oeuvre, by which she means its constant referencing of film history. It is also reflected in the ways in which he stages his films to make his audience conscious they are in or entering into a cinematic or theatrical space. This characteristic has been noted in respect to the films that make up the Red Curtain Trilogy: *Strictly Ballroom* (1992), *Romeo + Juliet* (1996) and *Moulin Rouge* (2001). Describing this impulse in the making of *Strictly Ballroom*, Luhrmann explained that he and his co-writer Craig Pearce

thought, let's look back to a cinematic language where the audience participated in the form. Where they were aware at all times that they were watching a movie, and that they should be active in their experience and not passive. Not being put into a sort of sleep state and made to believe through a set of constructs that they are watching a real-life story through a keyhole. They are aware at all times that they are watching a movie. (Andrew)

Being made aware that you are watching a movie is a device also used in *Australia*, but for different ends. It is part of a repertoire for engaging audiences with Australia's racial history that is so central to the film. In *Australia*, Luhrmann not only makes his audience aware that they are watching a movie; he makes them aware that were they watching a movie in 1930s and 1940s Darwin, the time and place in which *Australia* is set (or indeed in any other Australian town in the same period), they would likely be watching it in a racially segregated cinema. So, in *Australia* Luhrmann works with, as well as contributes to, a more expansive notion of cinema history than previously. In addition to his trademark references to earlier films and film genres, in *Australia* he also registers aspects of the social history of cinema, including audiences and exhibition sites. Within the context of the film he presents the local picture theatre in Darwin as one site, among others such as the pub, as constituting part of what Denis Byrne has called the 'nervous landscape' of a racially segregated society. 'The nervous system of racialized space', Byrne writes, '... has to do with the question of how close people are allowed to get to each other' (17). The complex, contradictory and petty ways in which bodily proximity is policed between races (and indeed between classes and genders) is established early on, when in the opening scene in Darwin the Drover's offsider and brother-in-law Magarri is barred from the local hotel. The local picture theatre is portrayed later in the film as part of this 'nervous landscape', but the politics of race and space are worked out differently within it.

By engaging with this aspect of Australian cinema-going, Luhrmann addresses a theme that is somewhat muted in Australian film studies, even though it is well covered in Aboriginal history scholarship (see, for example, Curthoys; Goodall), and is pronounced in Aboriginal people's personal and collective memories (Lowe; Flick and Goodall; Byrne and Nugent). In general terms, as Kate Bowles argues, there has been relatively little attention given in Australian cinema studies to 'the social meaning of cinema-going', and she singles out racial segregation in cinemas as one notable blind spot (Bowles 254, 255; see also Tomsic). In the place of social, including racial, histories of cinema-going, emphasis continues to be given to film production and distribution, and to analyses of particular films, directors, schools and periods. In terms of Aboriginal themes and issues, the focus has been on representations of Aboriginal people

in Australian film, or their participation in the Australian film industry, or the careers of particular Aboriginal actors and directors, much more so than the experiences of Aboriginal people as cinema-goers and as cinema-consumers (but see Robinson; see also Collins and Davis; Langton).

This is not to say that the phenomenon of segregated cinemas has been completely ignored in Australian film studies. It is often mentioned in passing in histories of Australian cinema or popular culture, but rarely examined in detail (see Collins; Arrow). This is in contrast with North American scholarship, in which, as Kate Bowles notes, 'researchers ... have begun the work of describing and reflecting upon the cultural impact of the racially segregated picture theatre' (Bowles 255). This includes detailed local studies of particular cinemas, as well as more general histories of racial segregation within the film industry and in exhibition sites (Waller; Stewart; Abel). Bowles calls for similarly detailed studies in Australia. Not only would such studies contribute to greater understanding of race relations and the social and cultural effects of practices of segregation; they would also, Bowles suggests, have something important to offer international scholarship. In her view:

Australian research presents a complementary witness demonstrating the social performativity of segregation in Australia was different in matters of means and purpose and at the level of architectural assumption about high status or low status seating. The segregated Australian picture theatre was not simply a derivation of an American cultural instrument, but developed out of pre-existing local practices, enabling Australian communities to transfer the means of socially mixing from one venue to another. (Bowles 255)

Yet, there are real challenges involved in writing social histories of segregated cinema-going in Australia. Nancy Huggett's work on this theme in rural New South Wales indicates that non-Aboriginal people often have difficulty recalling racial segregation, or that their explanations of it are not only contrary to Aboriginal people's remembrances but also different from those of other non-Aboriginal people in the same audiences. In some early oral history interviews Huggett conducted in rural New South Wales, she found that when she introduced the topic of racial segregation in cinemas her interviewees typically responded in two ways. Some could not recall racial segregation at the country cinemas they attended; others could not remember seeing any Aboriginal people when they went to the movies. Huggett concluded that 'speaking of racial segregation at the cinema is difficult because there are so few public accounts available in which to situate personal experiences and because it is not a comfortable reminiscence topic for white audience members' (271). Others have noted the absence of racial segregation as a key theme in public histories of Australian cinemas. The archaeologist Denis Byrne, for instance,

has pointed out that a preoccupation in heritage studies on the architectural features and values of Australian picture theatres can serve to disguise the social meanings and memories of these 'sites', including for Aboriginal people. Other factors might be at play here, including, the practices of segregation itself, that oftentimes aimed to minimise the visibility of Aboriginal patrons in the cinemas they shared with whites.

Experiences of being partitioned off within local cinemas occupy a prominent place in Aboriginal people's remembrances: in autobiographies and memoirs and in oral histories. Aboriginal people's memories and accounts of attending the cinema in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s invariably focus on what it was like to be segregated away from white patrons, and confined to the worst seats in the house. They include vivid accounts of the humiliation felt when they were forced to enter and leave by side doors, to take their seats after the lights went down, and to leave before the lights went up. That this is an experience that Luhrmann engages with in *Australia* is a product, perhaps, of the ways in which, 'a substantial part of the initial research [for the film] was devoted to talking to people in various indigenous communities about their different histories and cultures', as Pam Cook notes (116). Little acknowledged in the critical response to Luhrmann's film is the fact that his sources were as much Aboriginal people's personal accounts as Xavier Herbert's novels or earlier Australian films, like *Jedda* (Conor; Kevin).

If Marcia Langton's response to the film is any measure, then Luhrmann seems to have succeeded in capturing in recognisable ways Aboriginal people's experiences of watching movies in segregated cinemas in rural Australia. In her celebratory review of the film in the *Age*, Langton wrote:

In his imagined cinema of the 1940s, the spatial and social shape of racism is reconstructed with such exact detail, I felt I had been transported back to my own childhood. His white townsfolk are in their designated whites-only seats in back rows under the roof and the Aboriginal and Chinese members of the audience are in the front rows under the open sky, and I found my eye drawn to the location of my own seat on a bench in the cinema of my childhood in western Queensland.

Literary theorist Ken Gelder has noted the productive paradox in Langton's reception of the film (6-7). Langton was among the first to acknowledge *Australia's* fantastical qualities, and indeed to appreciate the ways in which the film veered away from historical realism in order to provide an alternative origin myth of the nation. And, yet, the film itself contains such faithfully realised scenes and images ('with such exact detail'), such as the segregated cinema audience, that it draws Langton so intimately back to her own lived experience that she searches for her own seat.

This contrasts with the response that Germaine Greer had to the film, in which she bemoaned its lack of historical realism and accuracy. In reply to Langton's review of *Australia*, Greer focused on what she considered was the almost total absence of historical accuracy when it came to portraying Aboriginal people's experiences and the material conditions under which they lived. Much subsequent discussion has likewise focused on the film's historical inaccuracies, or has criticised Luhrmann's questionable uses of historical details in the service of romance and epic, or of liberal white myth (see Hogan; Levine).

It is worth noting that in her criticism of the film, and in her responses to Langton, Germaine Greer remained silent on the scene in the segregated cinema, even though this was *the* experience that Langton had recognised so strongly from her own Aboriginal childhood in rural Australia and had singled out in her initial review. Perhaps Greer was prepared to concede that Luhrmann had achieved some accuracy, or at the least truthfulness, on this score. In a throwaway line, made without much context, she claimed: 'The only history Luhrmann seems to care about is the history of the movies' (Greer).

In caring about the history of the movies, Luhrmann has not shied away from engaging with racialised aspects of cinema-going in mid-twentieth century Australia. While not historically accurate on all counts, he nevertheless has portrayed the segregated cinema with a certain verisimilitude. To some extent this is because Luhrmann and his team, especially Catherine Martin, Bazmark's production designer, are faithful to their main 'historical sources', which in this case are Aboriginal people's memories on the one hand, and historical photographs of Australian cinemas and cinema audiences on the other. In the discussion that follows, my aim is to explore in some depth the ways in which *Australia* animates these 'historical archives'. In my discussion, I am influenced by Laleen Jayamanne's approach to 'reading' *Australia*, in which she draws attention to the 'richness of the systems of signs' it emits, as well as to the ways in which the film 'frees itself from the obligation to mirror history with the accuracy of a realist aesthetic' even as it 'situates itself in culturally, racially and sexually miscegenated, multicultural milieux' that made up mid-twentieth century Australia. Jayamanne argues that what matters in *Australia* is the attention to detail in the film's 'aesthetic optic because Bazmark's historical impulse in its embryonic force seems to nestle there and germinate' (134). The historical force that nestles and germinates in the details of the local cinema portrayed in *Australia* is the focus of the discussion below.

I. Knowing your place: the racialised space of Australian cinemas

The idea that *Australia* will be a cinematic experience, in which the viewer is made aware they are watching a film, is seeded even before the film itself begins. Immediately after the promos of the film's two production companies an illustration of the exterior of a building called the Pearl Picture Garden appears on the screen. The illustration is in the vein of a model set design, or an architectural drawing. Like the vernacular architecture of Australian picture theatres of the 1930s, the Pearl Picture Garden's façade is timber, and it incorporates some art deco style flourishes, such as a carved pearl shell design at the apex. The façade hides the corrugated iron sides of the building, and disguises the fact that most of the building has no roof. It's a carefully detailed illustration.

In this opening sequence, the Pearl Picture Garden's art deco doors, flanked by a couple of kangaroo manikins, swing open. The audience is transported swiftly across the foyer, and through the heavy curtained entrance, into the rudimentary cinema. The set design cinema is empty of patrons, but the illustration of the interior displays *in a flash* three distinct types of seating. The best seats in the house are at the rear of the cinema. They are cane planter-style chairs, arranged on a raised platform, and completely under cover of the cinema's roofed section. The second tier of seating is rows of canvas bleachers, some of which are under cover, others in the open. The third section is closest to the cinema screen, and is made up of rows of backless wooden benches. These are completely exposed to the sky, and are flat to the ground on a plane with the theatre's stage. This is back-aching and neck-cranning territory.

This brief animated prologue—a fleeting sign lasting only fifteen seconds—ends with the title sequence for *Australia* projected onto the screen of the cut out cardboard model cinema. The film's title is written in capitals over a map of Australia. This is where we are, it appears to announce, and its story will be told from the vantage point of this cinema in the heart of 1930s and 1940s Darwin. So, even before the movie begins, Luhrmann has put his contemporary audience for *Australia* in the picture, or in the picture theatre, at least. He has not only made them conscious that this is a movie they are about to watch. He has also begun to introduce the idea that the activity of watching movies in this place called *Australia* has its own particular history, in which not all viewing positions are the same, and the comfort of theatre patrons not evenly distributed. The stratified nature of Australian cinemas, and the carefully choreographed spatial arrangement of audiences within them, is a theme that Luhrmann will return to later in a couple of scenes set at the Pearl Picture Gardens. For now, however,

he simply uses the aesthetic device of drawing, and thus drawing attention to, the material features of the interior of a 1930s Australian picture theatre, one in which distinct types of seating of varying quality and comfort could be found.

This opening sequence functions as one of the film's 'fleeting and inventive signs' (Jayamanne 132). To some extent, the illustration of the cinema's interior provokes a 'double take'. On first glance, the Pearl Picture Garden looks like any mid-twentieth Australian picture theatre building in any Australian country town. But the precise portrayal of its stratified seating unsettles any sense of easy familiarity. Here Luhrmann in some sense invites his viewers to take their seats, and in so doing the question of who sits where and why hangs in the air.

It is telling that the theme of social and racial stratification, a theme that is pronounced throughout the film, should be presented initially in the guise of a set design. The production design of Luhrmann's films, created by his partner and collaborator Catherine Martin and her team, is a hallmark of the Bazmark approach to cinematic storytelling (P. Cook; Jayamanne). As set design, though, this historical theme is only sketched in outline. The audience might note the tiers of seating illustrated, but there is nothing explicit in this animated sequence to suggest the function that different seating played in managing social relations among cinema audiences. Indeed, as Denis Byrne has argued, this built fabric does not 'proclaim its identity or significance' (185). Discussing this in relation to a picture theatre in Taree, a town not far from Luhrmann's hometown of Herons Creek, Byrne suggests that: 'The traces of what happened there are largely memory traces. When the Aboriginal people of the Manning Valley talk today about the old cinema, they speak not of architecture but of humiliation and anger' (186).

And yet, Aboriginal people in the Manning Valley, as elsewhere, *do* speak of the architecture of Australian cinemas. In ways that resonate with the preliminary set design sequence in *Australia*, their memories often attach to the inferior quality of the seats they were required to sit upon compared with those reserved for white patrons. Recently, the National Museum of Australia staged a temporary exhibition called *From Little Things Big Things Grow* in its Gallery of First Australians. Focusing on the period from 1920 to 1970, and 'the fight for Indigenous civil rights in Australia from 1920 to 1970', the exhibition had at its centre some cinema seats rescued from the Bowraville Picture Theatre. Bowraville is a small town in northern New South Wales, another place not unlike Luhrmann's hometown of Herons Creek. Its local theatre, perhaps like Luhrmann's father's cinema, had two types of seating: wooden and plush. As was common in many country towns in New South Wales for much of the twentieth century, the proprietors of the Bowraville theatre 'managed' race relations by segregating Aboriginal patrons in the wooden seats in a roped off section at the front of the cinema. Martin Ballangarry, a local Aboriginal man, recalled of the

seats that: 'They were hard on your back, so as kids we would lie on the floor. We would all line up, sometimes 10, maybe 15 people, adults, kids; we were all lying down here' (Pickwick). An Aboriginal woman from Stradbroke Island in Queensland, recalling her movie-going experiences in the 1930s, explained: 'We Aborigines had to sit at the front while the white children used to sit at the back with their mummies and daddies in the comfy chairs' (cited in Robinson 60).

The cinema operating in Darwin from the late 1920s was the Star, and like the Bowraville cinema, it organised race relations by reserving different seats for different social groups. 'But although it brought many different social classes together', historian Charles Brister notes, 'the physical structure of the Star emphasised the social and racial boundaries' (41). In particular, the 'line between social classes was reflected in the seating arrangements' (37).

The theatre was sectioned off into three areas; upstairs on the balcony, downstairs underneath the balcony and the 'blacks', the area near the front of the screen that had no roof cover and a cement floor. The upstairs balcony tended to be reserved for the upper class members of Darwin society, such as senior public servants and local business figures. To those outside this class they were derisively known as 'silvertails'. The working class non-Aboriginal people tended to sit at the back of the theatre hall, beneath the balcony, while the 'blacks', as the name implies, became the area where the Aborigines were expected to sit. (37)¹

The arrangement of bodies in the space of the cinema is a theme that will be returned to later in the film proper. For now, however, the audience has been shown to their seats. Before long, Luhrmann's movie camera will be trained on the local cinema audience, but as a prelude to that a conversation about the politics of cinemas and cinema-going takes place.

II. Every right to be there? Invisibility, censorship, protest

The prelude to the main scene set in the local picture theatre in *Australia* is a conversation between the Aboriginal domestic servant, Bandy Legs (Lillian Crombie), the Chinese cook, Sing Song (Yuen Wah), and the 'half-caste' boy, Nullah (Brandon Walters). The setting for this exchange is their makeshift camp in Darwin, where they have arrived after the successful drive of cattle from Faraway Downs. While Lady Sarah Ashley, who is staying at the local hotel in

1 Although The Star cinema in Darwin was racially segregated, it is not the model for the cinema in *Australia*. The Pearl Picture Garden is based on the Sun Picture Garden, the cinema operating in Broome, Western Australia, in the 1930s. See Cook, *Baz Luhrmann*.

town, prepares to attend a society ball as patron, Bandy Legs announces that she wants to be taken by Sing Song and Nullah 'on a big night at the pictures'. Sing Song responds by saying that 'you can't take half caste to picture show; coppers take him'. Bandy Legs replies with a touching and emotional speech, saying that: 'He got every right to be there. We use magic. He got every right to be there. Cos you're a special boy. He's a special boy. Nobody gonna stop you from going. Nobody'.

Although in this speech Bandy Legs insists that the cinema is an egalitarian space, from which no one can be excluded, she nonetheless does all she can to ensure that Nullah will not be seen at the movies. Her 'magic' is to blacken Nullah's face with charcoal from the fire to help make him 'invisible' so that he can avoid detection.

Two things are at play here. One is that the blackening of his face is used to minimise the threat of him being picked up by the police on the basis that he is a 'half-caste' or a 'creamy'. Government programs to remove children from their families in the Northern Territory in this period were aimed mainly at mixed race children and it was known for mothers or aunties to darken lighter skinned children so as to avoid notice by police, missionaries or government officials (see for example Cummings; Briscoe). The other is that a darkened face helped Nullah to effectively 'disappear', to become invisible, in the darkened space of the cinema. When we see him at the movies in the next scene, the camera has to search him out, following Bandy Legs backward glance to find him sitting alone up high outside the projectionist booth, face blackened, crunching on an apple.

This is an odd scene in the film, because it is not at all clear that Aboriginal people 'blackened up' to go to the cinema, although the practice of darkening fair coloured children's faces in a bid to avoid detection by police and government officials is not unknown. Yet, it seems all too obvious that Luhrmann is referencing a familiar element in a much broader cinema history, particularly the North American film industry, in which it was common practice for white actors to blacken up to play black characters (Collins). It is perhaps this flash of recognition that Luhrmann hopes to provoke in his North American audiences when they watch Nullah, black-faced, watching *The Wizard of Oz* flickering on the screen (P. Cook 137); while also gesturing towards the exposure of Australian audiences to North American racial culture through movies and other forms of popular entertainment.

Rather than Aboriginal people seeking to minimise their own visibility within picture theatres, this is instead remembered as something that picture theatre proprietors sought to achieve. Different entrances were used to shepherd Aboriginal people into the cinema in ways that prevented close contact with white audience members. In their personal accounts, the humiliation of being

only allowed to enter the cinema after the lights had gone down, and ushered out the side door before the lights came up, is often dwelt upon. Ella Simon from Taree recalled in her autobiography that: '[The Aboriginal people] used to be marched down [to the front] when the lights were dim, because the managements were ashamed to let their white customers see just how many black people they were letting in. If they could have completely stopped all Aboriginal people from going to the pictures at all, I believe they would have, you know' (Simon 181). On a return visit to the Bowraville Cinema with curators from the *National Museum of Australia*, Martin Ballengary showed them the side entrance that Aboriginal people were required to use and explained: 'We would walk down this side, then come around the back of the theatre. We weren't allowed in the front door' (Pickwick). Another Aboriginal man, Robert Lowe, recalling his experiences in the misnamed Liberty Theatre in his home town of Warrnambool in Victoria in the 1950s, noted: 'Even as I got older, about ten or eleven years old, I can remember going into Warrnambool to go to the pictures at the old Liberty Theatre (where Coles is now). You'd walk up to buy your ticket—we couldn't get served while anyone else was in the line, we had to wait till the line was finished—then they would serve you. And then you weren't allowed to go in the same door as everyone else, they took you down the side and put you in the side door' (Lowe 43-4). Russell Saunders, who like Ella Simon is from Taree, told me in an oral history interview, recorded in 2000, that:

The picture theatre was ... a case where you paid for the ticket, give them your money at the front office, then you walked around the side. And there was a doorway on either side. ... And when it was finished you went out the side door. Not out the door everybody else walked. And that was it. ... That was your pictures. Your money was good enough but your bodily presence wasn't. (Cited in Byrne and Nugent 95-6)

In Darwin, a further form of segregation was practised: some nights were allocated for whites only. In the 1930s and 1940s, Aboriginal people's attendance was at the discretion of the Chief Protector of Aborigines. Under provisions set out in ordinances, Aboriginal people residing in Darwin were subject to a night curfew, which required them to be out of the town common by dusk (Martínez). Exceptions were made on the nights the chief protector permitted Aboriginal people to attend to the movies. A notice was published in the local newspaper to inform Darwin residents which nights those were:

Now I ... Chief Protector of Aborigines for North Australia, do hereby grant permission for the said aboriginals employed as aforesaid in Darwin Centre to be within the prohibited area of Darwin after eight o'clock in the evening of the first day of ... and the fourth day of ...

until 30 minutes after eleven o'clock of those evenings on the occasions of the Moving Picture Exhibitions to be held at the Star Picture Theatre ... (Cook, 'Regulations')

This meant that there were certain nights of the week, including Saturday, in which the picture theatre was the exclusive preserve of whites. A trace of this appears in *Australia*, in a further scene set in the picture theatre on the eve of the Japanese bombing. Against the backdrop of newsreel footage of the evacuation of Darwin, the local police constable whispers through the curtained entrance of the cinema to tell the antagonist, Neil Fletcher, that Nullah and his grandfather, King George, had been caught. In this scene, Fletcher sits right at the very back row, in what is perhaps the best seat in the house. The camera reveals that the audience that night was whites only.²

So, despite what Bandy Legs tells Nullah about him having 'every right' to go to the pictures, the fact of the matter was that he did not and neither did she. Indeed, rather than a given right, it is more true to say that the right to go to the movies was something that Aboriginal people in different parts of Australia actively fought for during this period. They contested their exclusion from, and their segregation within, cinemas. For instance, the short-lived newsletter, *Australian Abo Call*, which was the organ of the Aborigines Progressive Association, printed an article in 1938 entitled 'Australia's Dark Background', which itemised the pervasive segregation of Aboriginal people in rural Australian society. After citing the pub and local dances, it noted that: 'At the cinema shows, [Aborigines] are put in a special paddock, right up against the screen'. The article concluded that: 'Not until White Australians learn to behave decently toward the dark Australians will this Commonwealth will be able to boast that it is a civilised community' (3). Activist Faith Bandler, who led the campaign for the 1967 Referendum, received her early political education through her and her family's experiences of racial discrimination in northern New South Wales. In 1951, her brother and sister-in-law protested against the segregation of the local cinema in Tweed Heads in northern New South Wales by writing to their local member of federal parliament. They complained: 'When entering the [cinema] the Coloured People are allowed one area and the Whites another area and the coloured people feel that it is a slight against their Freedom' (cited in Lake 571). They further objected to being 'herded' into one area, as though they were little more than animals. These examples indicate that Aboriginal people did not passively accept practices of racial segregation, but nonetheless they persisted in many places up until the 1960s.

2 An example of Luhrmann's trademark nod to other films is the poster on the wall in this scene. It advertises *The Squatter's Daughter*, an early Australian film in which a young woman is nearly duped of her father's sheep property by an 'evil' overseer on an adjoining property by the name of Fletcher.

These various personal and collective experiences, histories and memories of the social activity of going to the movies is further fleshed out when Luhrmann turns his camera onto the audience gathered at the local Darwin cinema one night to watch *The Wizard of Oz*.

III. Double take: turning the camera on racial segregation in Australian cinemas

The film that Bandy Legs, Sing Song and Nullah see at the movies is, not surprisingly, the *Wizard of Oz*. The scene shown playing on the outdoor screen is Dorothy singing 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow', a song that in *Australia's* narrative had (strangely) impelled Nullah to overcome quickly his grief at his mother's death and to participate in Lady Sarah Ashley's dream to drive her cattle to Darwin. Important as that song and that film is to *Australia's* narrative, perhaps as striking is the ways in which Luhrmann also uses it as an occasion to say something about the social history of cinema-going in Australia. In this scene set in the Pearl Picture Gardens, he dwells only momentarily on the *Wizard of Oz* flickering on the screen before turning his own movie camera onto the audience who watches it. From this vantage point, Luhrmann's camera reveals *in a flash* the composition of the cinema's audience. The front rows of backless wooden benches are occupied by Aboriginal, Asian and Islander men and women, dressed up for a big night out at the movies, their eyes glued and their necks craned (see Image 1).

As the camera pans through the cinema, from front to back (reversing the direction of the pre-film animated sequence discussed above), in search of Nullah, it is possible to see that the seats at the back are occupied by whites only. But it is on the front rows that the camera initially pauses. From this front-of-screen position facing into the cinema, Luhrmann's movie camera is made to occupy the same position as earlier still cameras, which snapped for posterity cinema audiences in 1920s and 1930s Australia (see Image 2), and in the process produced incidentally, or accidentally, a visual archive of segregated cinemas (Abel).



Image 1: Still from *Australia*, directed by Baz Luhrmann. Used by permission. 'AUSTRALIA' ©2008 Twentieth Century Fox. All rights reserved.

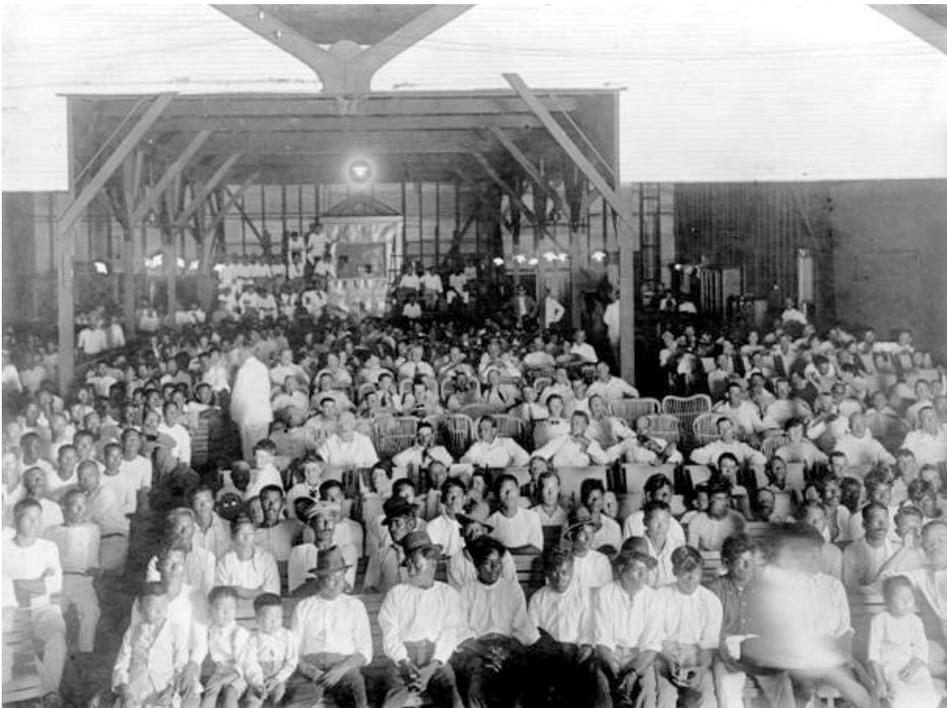


Image 2: An audience at the Sun Picture Gardens, Broome, Western Australia, c. 1920. Used by permission, State Library of Western Australia, image no. 000816D

This is an anomalous archive of historical photographs that bears witness to racially stratified cinemas. Usually taken to commemorate a social or historic event, such as the arrival of the talkies, or the opening night of a new picture theatre, they cannot but help to reveal the racial spatial arrangement of Australian cinema audiences. Ironically, given that Aboriginal people were typically confined to the very front rows, these photographs reveal the very segregation that it is now difficult for some sections of Australian cinema-going public to recall.

These photographs corroborate Aboriginal people's insistent and vivid narration of cinema spaces. When Russell Saunders recalls his experience of going to the movies in Taree in the 1950s, he emphasises the viewing position afforded from the front rows:

You sat in the first four rows with your head like this [demonstrates craned neck], and you watched the pictures. You looked behind you and there was people right up the back up in other seats, and also the top balconies, that had a better view. Our view was like this [demonstrates craned neck again], looking up at the screen ... (Cited in Byrne and Nugent 95-6)

This account is mirrored in other remembrances. Russell Saunders' uncle, Warner Saunders, told me: 'They were very strict, too, them [picture] theatres (laughs). We had one little place up the front where all the Kooris used to sit. You weren't allowed to sit down the back. You were roped off up the front. You got a sore neck lookin' straight up (laughs)' (cited in Byrne and Nugent 162). Isabel Flick, an Aboriginal woman from Collarenebri in western New South Wales, also dwelt on the sore neck syndrome in her reminiscences: 'All the blacks were herded down the front and all the whites at the back. We were right under the screen—there we were, screwing our necks up—they even had ropes around us. That kind of exclusion went on till 1962. Until I said it was time to cut the ropes!' (Flick and Goodall 90). Ella Simon likewise recalled that: 'The black people used to have to sit down at the very front, looking straight up at the screen. They weren't allowed to sit anywhere else' (Simon 181). This action of looking 'straight up' at the screen is the angle that Luhrmann captures when he initially showed *The Wizard of Oz* playing on the cinema's outdoor screen. The scene showing Dorothy singing is shot from below the screen, as well as through the shadows of a criss-crossed iron grate, which is possibly the iron fretwork of the outdoor stage. For those seated at the very front, this structure might well have obscured their view.

In their various accounts, Aboriginal people do not emphasise what they saw on the screen at the movies, but the angle at which they saw it. The emphasis is on the bodily experience of looking straight up at the screen, and of being

conscious of having white people behind you, or over you if they were seated in the balcony. This is the reverse of the spatial arrangement of cinemas commonly found in North America in the same period. There, white cinema proprietors looked for ways to manage race relations within the cinemas they operated, and the convention became to reserve the balcony for black patrons. The balcony could be entered by a separate staircase, much like the side doors that Aboriginal people were required to use to get to their section at the front. As Elizabeth Abel notes, this arrangement in which black people sat up high in the balcony overlooking the white patrons below, represented an odd spatial reversal of relationships of domination and subordination. She suggests that interpreting the implications and experiences of this spatial reversal necessarily relies on the ways in which black cinema-goers remember and narrate their experiences of the cinema as social space (Abel 57). In the Australian context, the configuration of the internal space of the cinema mirrored (rather than inverted) relations of domination and subordination. The whites sat above the blacks, reinforcing a sense of surveillance over them as well as their containment in the least desirable section of the cinema from which to watch. Nonetheless, understanding what it felt like to occupy that space depends just as much on listening to the ways in which Aboriginal people talk about it.

By turning his camera onto the audience, Luhrmann allows his contemporary, early twenty-first century audience, in Australia and beyond, to see the ways in which Australian cinema audiences were racially stratified. He takes his contemporary audience into an earlier cinema space, and invites them to watch another cinema audience watching another film about another place called Oz. As he does so, he brings to light the 'spatial and social shape of racism' that was so recognisable to Marcia Langton that she found herself looking for her own seat in the film's replica cinema.

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A Transnational Gallipoli?

Roger Hillman

Without a uniform, it is impossible to tell the nationality of a soldier's frame, and many an unidentifiable, incomplete and anonymous heap of fractured bones ended up in co-interment with those of former enemies, near monuments speciously engraved with the sentiment that 'Their Name Liveth for Evermore'

Louis de Bernières, *Birds Without Wings*, Chapter 71

Introduction

The Gallipoli campaign was an experience shared by a number of combatant nations. But Australia's memory of it has frequently claimed special status for Gallipoli the national legend. Completely different relationships exist now among those who fought in 1915, and representations of Gallipoli have emerged recently, in Australia¹ as well as in other combatant nations, which themselves reflect tendencies not dominated by any one national state. What are the implications of this for particular disciplines? Or to rephrase that question from within one of them: 'How then should the geopolitical imaginary of the discipline of film studies be upgraded to a transnational perspective, broadly conceived as above the level of the national but below the level of the global?' (Ďurovičová ix). These levels of nationalism/transnationalism can work well with Gallipoli, given the limited number of participating nations, and with the subsequent memory of the campaign, which will never be global. Processing memory of the event has led to 'affinitive transnationalism ... a history of interaction giving rise to shared core values, common practices' (Hjort 17).

Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Germany, Turkey, France and India were the main nations involved, and among these nations consciousness and memorialisation of the campaign have clearly differed. Changing perceptions of Gallipoli are an instructive case study in a world of increasingly transnational perspectives. This is because the strongly national components within the originally opposed

1 Not for the first time, in relation to literary representations, but within a more globalized context. Christina Spittel reminds us that in the interwar years Australian novels appeared in which 'the hitherto mono-dimensional image of the enemy becomes more complex and diverse' (Spittel 128). Historical accounts of Gallipoli are in turn starting to have access to a broader range of (national) source materials, e.g. the ARC-funded research project directed by Harvey Broadbent, which centres on Turkish military archives and the Gallipoli campaign.

alliances had different vested interests in 1915, and subsequent interests that have either converged (UK, Germany and France as EU members) or diverged further (e.g. the loosening of the British Commonwealth). The Australian legend has memorialized Gallipoli the location, and rendered Anzac Cove a virtual sacred site. This core marker of Australian identity is likely to be challenged by representations from outside. The case studies that follow help establish a narratology of Gallipoli, as the one central story is told in different artforms, representing historical narratives that are (nationally) different.

The national element of Gallipoli reception remains firm in mainstream Australian media and political culture, even eclipsing the 'NZ' in 'Anzac'. However, this article focusses on two non-Australian texts whose perspectives are very different, and outright hybrid in relation to issues of national identity. The first is the novel *Birds without Wings* (2004) by Louis de Bernières. The British novelist with a French name assumes a largely Turkish point of view in a work spanning a decade or so of Turkish history, with a substantial segment on the Gallipoli campaign. The second text is the documentary film *Gallipoli: The Front Line Experience* (2005) by Tolga Örnek. The Turkish director combines perspectives of Australian, New Zealand, British and Turkish soldiers, with a voice-over quoting their diaries and letters, alongside documentary footage and stylized re-enactments. De Bernières' novel and Örnek's film offer a memory of Gallipoli that spans former combatants. Both narrative voices convey a transnational perspective that bridges national and cultural differences by respecting them.

State of the nation

The last Australian Gallipoli veteran died in 2002, and yet Australian youths have been flocking to dawn services at Anzac Cove in recent years. So the generation with fewest direct links to the legend wishes to retain it. Beyond the first Anzacs the other combatants, on both sides, are forgotten all too easily. A few days after the 2008 Armistice Day ceremony at Anzac Cove, my Turkish guide on the peninsula, Kenan Çelik, told how the Australian representative had spoken of everyone dancing on the streets some 90 years before. 'We', he added sombrely, 'weren't'. Like 'ours', these different perspectives have been represented in historically based fiction, in literature and film. In an age of global and transnational flows, to what degree do these new angles on familiar stories interact with our self-representations? Alongside the ongoing stories of nationhood, is it possible to conceive of transnational representations of Gallipoli? What is different about those representations of Gallipoli which do not share Australia's investment in it as national myth, and what impact might a transnational approach have?

More than six years ahead of the occasion itself, *The Weekend Australian* of 28-29 March 2009 featured an advertisement for a tour to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landings, on 25 April 2015. Battleground tourism² has been fostered by *The Australian* with group tours arranged to Villers-Bretonneux, billed as 'our other Anzac Day'. Though the battle on the Western front was linked to a sphere of war of far greater military importance, the primary point of reference remains Gallipoli. But there have also been challenges to its exclusivity. Paul Keating inadvertently proved the durability of the Gallipoli campaign as foundation myth³ with his vain attempt to shift focus to the Kokoda Trail. The arts world is already active in the countdown to 2015: on Anzac Day 2008, ABC radio played a movement by Peter Sculthorpe from a planned Gallipoli Symphony, to be premiered at the centenary.⁴ At the same time, the theme is not beyond reworking: Nigel Jamieson's play *Gallipoli* (2008), in the Sydney Theatre Company's production, made an explicit link between the mistakes of the imperial campaign and the Iraq War. Beyond projections, more discoveries are also likely, such as Chris Latham's retrieval of a lost violin sonata composed in the trenches of Gallipoli, and premiered at the Canberra International Music Festival this year.

The Australian Gallipoli legend has a fluctuating reception history. 'At the core of the myth' lies 'a particular construction of the Australian soldier' (Beaumont 139), a citizen soldier representing an egalitarian (and hence non-British) society, with a heightened sense of mateship (viewed, like the soldier, as distinctively Australian, rather than as a universal capacity across different national groups). John Howard even tried to incorporate a reference to mateship into a revised Australian constitution.

As the historical event Gallipoli recedes, 'cultural memory' will come to operate more fully, in the sense defined by Jan Assmann: 'in the cultural memory, the past is not preserved as such but is cast in symbols ... as they are continually illuminating a changing present. In the context of cultural memory, the distinction between myth and history vanishes. Not the past as such, as it is investigated and reconstructed by archaeologists and historians, counts for the cultural memory, but only the past as it is remembered' (113). This is the

2 In a generic sense even this, it would seem, has become 'virtually' possible. A full page advertisement in the *Weekend Australian* of July 28-29, 2007, encouraged a visit to the Australian War Memorial with the clarion call: 'Feel the courage of our Anzacs at the tomb of the unknown soldier'. This approaches the notion of 'prosthetic' history elaborated by Alison Landsberg (2004). Susannah Radstone (335) sounds this salutary warning in relation to the medium of film: "The assumption by theories of cinematic prosthetic memory of an equivalence between spectating a cinematic experience and living through an experience dissolves the distinction between representation and event."

3 Nor is the foundation myth aspect confined to Australia. It is also present in Mustafa Kemal's Turkey, and is further relativized by the following reminder about Turkey's ally: 'in Germany, the war constituted the first common experience for some 60 million Germans' (Julien 385).

4 This is part of a work involving ten composers and many musicians from Australia, New Zealand and Turkey. Thanks to an anonymous reader for alerting me to this.

aspect of Gallipoli on which the present article focusses. However, it in no sense conceives of historians' and archaeologists' accounts of Gallipoli as secondary, nor of those accounts remaining static, as historical representations of the past in turn become contextualized in 'a changing present'.

Among reassessments, it is important to profile what is at stake here against the different project of military historian Robin Prior, signalled in the subtitle of his book *Gallipoli: the End of the Myth*, where his use of the word 'myth' clearly applies to popularized history (124; 144). Prior is 'concerned to strip away the weight of mythology that has so hampered the development of a sophisticated historiography of Gallipoli' (xvi). Even after crucial adjustments to the incursions of national mythmaking on historical account, 'the weight of mythology' would continue to impinge on current perceptions of Gallipoli. Without accepting such mythology as an alternate historical version, approaching Gallipoli via influential, international literary and filmic texts largely runs parallel to Prior's project.⁵

Historical memory and the more mythical inflections of cultural memory need not be mutually hostile; they are assuredly interlocked when the timeframe is that of Gallipoli. Investigating the different course of reception of the story/legend in other nations involved in the Gallipoli campaign must enhance an understanding of Australian versions, and profile more clearly their current status. Reception of the Gallipoli legend in literature and film enables a comprehensive account of cultural memory, and a filtering of that cultural memory, not a reassessment of historical events.⁶ The reception of works from outside Australia can then situate the Gallipoli legend in a transnational rather than a national framework, while providing a fuller understanding of how cultural memory works in relation to the national imaginary.

Peter Weir's *Gallipoli*

Peter Weir's film *Gallipoli* (1981) and Roger McDonald's novel *1915* (1979) are key texts from the reception history of the Australian legend. Their historic moments were the after-effects of the Vietnam War and an assertive cultural nationalism; the former came on the crest of a well established New Wave of Australian films that sought to establish Australian cinema in international

5 The two converge in memory: 'Modern shared memory is located between the push and pull of two poles: history and myth'. Avishai Margalit, *The Ethics of Memory*, as cited in Blustein 176.

6 A distinction that can be viewed as a problematic tension by historians, here Marilyn Lake: 'As historians we think it's important to distinguish between history and mythology' (Lake 138); 'in sentimentalising history and in celebrating military virtues we fear that history as a critical practice, and as a way of explaining and understanding the past, is in danger of succumbing to nationalist mythology' (Lake 156).

markets. *Gallipoli* was part of an almost republican discourse then, no longer relevant to its after-image now. It remains one of the most iconic depictions in Australian visual culture.

The collective mythology of mateship is easier to render in focussed form, such as the duo Archy and Frank in *Gallipoli*. Archy and Frank function either as an almost documentary mimesis of the core identity marker of mateship, or else as an instrument of historical persuasiveness, depending on the viewer's predisposition. Their depiction is not without dramatic cracks. The commander tells Archy that his running speed could save hundreds of lives. He is right, yet Archy's decision not to run, but to join the boys going over the top, is vindicated as moral and selfless—the question of whether he could have made it back to the commander ahead of the last whistle signal is never posed. Legend prevails over a potential flaw in dramatic characterization. This could well be Weir's take on the unanswerable paradoxes posed by Gallipoli; the film's outcome could then be read as a kind of fictional reflection of the wrong decisions and tactics associated with the campaign.

A further dramatic paradox, true to history, is the order to the boys going over the top to unload their rifles, with the bayonet charge becoming tantamount to a pointless suicide mission. Such faultlines are perhaps inevitable in 'a drama based on a myth derived from history' (Rayner 115). Outward markers of death take it out of the realm of any Australian mythology, for instance the pyramids, and the evocation of the river Styx in the film's dramatic highpoint. This is the unbridged progression from carefree waltz rhythms in Alexandria, as the troops dance with nurses, to the barely penetrable darkness surrounding the shore-bound boats. The abrupt transition also returns us to what was signalled on the soundtrack over the opening credits, the funereal Adagio ascribed to Albinoni. Complemented by the duet from Bizet's *Pearlfishers* on the commander's gramophone, this music lends this rite of passage a transnational dimension. Both visuals and music at this turning point of the film then proclaim 'the irreducibility of death to the nation' (Ramazani 90), a major qualification of the way this film has been understood in Australia. The turning point marks the end of romanticized youth, its termination for those ultimately going over the top, and its farewelling by survivors like Frank. He has lived up to the emphatic claim made to his father: 'I'm not going to fight for the British Empire', but has lost those who were prepared to. From these supreme stakes it is no longer possible to disentangle Motherland from British Empire outpost, or idealistic selflessness from naïve blindness.

Weir's film has been the most influential among representations of Gallipoli which have sought to combine fiction and documentary. Where McDonald's novel *1915* based trench-scenes on interviews with returned soldiers, Weir strove for fidelity to the account of official war historian C.E.W. Bean, and

enlisted historian Bill Gammage as adviser. He also embodied Ashmead-Bartlett's accolade of 'a nation of athletes' in the images framing the film, Archie's dawn training run at the beginning, and his breasting, in the final freeze-frame, the tape of the good race he was destined to run in life. That final frame is then to be positioned in the tradition of Robert Capa, rather than European art cinema (Truffaut's *400 Blows*). That Bean could have scripted at least the final sequence of *Gallipoli* further explains its seminal effect, given Bean's dual status as official historian of the campaign, and creator of some of its most indelible myths.

Beyond Weir's *Gallipoli*

Recent Australian representations of Gallipoli, especially those considered in the 'Coda' to this article, have moved beyond the static myth of the egalitarian 'mates' and their resistance to, and victimisation by, the mother country. A tone remote from Weir's is to be found in Wain Fimeri's ABC TV documentary *Revealing Gallipoli* (2005), whose thematic range is similar to Örnek's contemporaneous film. Alongside the Australian Peter Stanley, talking head presenters come from Turkey and Ireland, the latter alone ensuring a different shadow of the 'mother country' in its own fraught relationship, especially after Easter 1916. British-born, Australian-based playwright Nigel Jamieson concludes *Gallipoli* with an Iraq link, at a time of 'the final death of a consciousness justifying the national and colonial projects of European powers' (Hamilton 139). He has also created a medium-specific Gallipoli, one of the most memorable scenes being a figure exposed to animated flies emerging from trapdoors in the stage floor, a crucial aspect of the soldier's experience that written history or fiction cannot convey so graphically.

Versions of Gallipoli emanating from campaign enemy nations are becoming available. A German military history of the Dardanelles campaign has appeared recently, likely to have been the first in 70 years. Given that Germany was Turkey's ally, this perspective alone is arresting. Klaus Wolf places very different emphases to those familiar in Australia: 'The battle of Gallipoli ... was the culmination of the struggle to resolve the 'Oriental Question'. ... Viewed from the perspective of military history, Gallipoli was moreover the first and only battle in World War I which was contested to such a degree, and on both sides, in multinational cooperation, across the armed forces. That lends it exceptional significance' (Wolf 4; my translation). Buket Uzuner's Turkish novel *The Long White Cloud: Gallipoli* (2002) employs magical realism to produce a counterfactual account of national heroism as enduring legend. A New Zealand soldier at Gallipoli undergoes a transmigration of souls, and national identity,

with a slain Turkish counterpart. Inherently transnational, Uzuner's *Gallipoli* confounds national legend's foothold in history through celebrating its other foothold in fiction.

Recent revisionist accounts have contributed to a more genuinely rounded Australian context, one that embraces the experiences of women, of Aboriginal servicemen, of Australian soldiers from other national backgrounds. Books have started to appear which explore fascinating byways, signalled in challenging titles like John F. Williams' *German Anzacs and the First World War* (2003) and Eleanor Govor's *Russian Anzacs in Australian History* (2005).⁷ Brenda Walker's novel *The Wing of Night* (2005) in a sense tells the unadorned story that Weir's film elides early in the piece, of the women left on the West Australian land while the males are at the front. The novel goes on to explore the still more daunting societal challenge of reintegrating the returned soldier, whose homecoming to the opposite end of the world can never blot out his own moment of military glory and human abjection. The disorientation of shellshock challenges normative models of masculinity, just as this novel challenges narrower visions of Gallipoli as a crucible of national character. Never absent as authors of WWI-themed works of fiction—witness the powerful prose of New Zealander Robyn Hyde's *Passport to Hell* (1936) and *Nor the Years Condemn* (1938)—women have shed considerable light on war (see too Buket Uzuner above).

Representations of Gallipoli then occupy vantage points along two intersecting axes. One axis links historical accounts and history-related fiction,⁸ and the other links a more documentary realism to an engagement with mythology, within the realm of narrative forms of fiction. It is from these vantage points that war in general, and Gallipoli in particular, is viewed. When Gallipoli is told as a multiple-perspective, transnational story, this can lead various audiences in different nations to a recognition of it as a shared event rather than an exclusive one, as dominates in the Bean/Weir Gallipoli legend.

Two transnational texts

Discourses confined to an Australian perspective are challenged by the view of the Gallipoli campaign emerging from de Bernières' novel *Birds without Wings*,

7 Over 150 Russians fought at Gallipoli—one can only imagine the historical irony for these émigré Anzacs of trying to conquer Constantinople, which would have benefited Russia. For a little known aspect of the peninsula's history, see Shmelev.

8 This spectrum finds confirmation in an unexpected source. In his opening address at the 2008 Chief of Army's Military History conference, Lt.-Gen. Ken Gillespie introduced the year's theme, 'the issue of the media and the military' (165), and expressed his concern 'that the history of the Australian Army of the late twentieth to early twenty-first century is going to be a work of fiction—or of deduction and reconstruction. ... Only minimal holdings of written records may survive to provide the essential underpinning evidence. Without this evidence, history is, essentially, fiction' (Gillespie 168).

and Örnek's film *Gallipoli: The Front Line Experience*. Their engagements with the campaign depart significantly from Weir's *Gallipoli* and McDonald's *1915*, as both de Bernières and offer an explicitly transnational perspective on the Gallipoli campaign. Örnek does this by portraying soldiers from four combatant nations. De Bernières projects his own British background into a Turkish narrator's voice. In 1999 he wrote how his novel 'deals with the Dardanelles campaign from the Turkish point of view, a view that does not appear in the histories of the other combatants, who to this day are unaware of the role that that conflict played in the formation of the modern Turkish psyche'.⁹

De Bernières is best known for *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* (1995), a novel which gives an unusual take on a lesser known theatre of war in WWII. *Birds without Wings* (2004) spins its tales around figures caught up in early twentieth century Turkish history. It features about a hundred pages set during the Gallipoli campaign, and above all—like Örnek, unlike Weir—bookends them with a historic contextualization of the battle. Gallipoli—the historical event, the location, and this segment of the novel—is firmly located within a web of histories, cultures, and traditions associated with the region. The novel's roving perspective includes British and Australian contributions to the campaign, without being limited to them. From *Birds without Wings*, though such a parallel is never explicitly drawn, we get a strong sense of the confluence of many Australian and Turkish perspectives, rather than Australian and British.

According to the Australian legend, the moral high ground allied Australia, New Zealand and Turkey against Great Britain and Germany. This novel foregrounds, further, quite different players (in particular, Greece). Gallipoli became a national rite of passage for Turkey too, as Mustafa Kemal, having gained his spurs there, oversaw the transition from the crumbled Ottoman Empire to the new nation. De Bernières gently poses the historical irony of this defining figure of Turkish nationalism having been born in Macedonia.

Inasmuch as the historical moment of de Bernières' narrative immediately postdates 9/11, the 'clash of civilizations' is viewed very differently in his novel. In fact, the narrator in *Birds without Wings* ultimately laments a transnational element inherent in the Ottoman Empire, and lost in the intervening history. The following excerpt refers to a population exchange between Greece and the new Turkish state, in accordance with the Treaty of Lausanne. The mutual expulsion of Muslims and Orthodox Christians, respectively, testified further to a nation-state mentality sanctioned by the victor powers of World War I. In a 'Postscript' to de Bernières' epic work, entitled 'Fethiye in the Twenty-First Century', we read: 'In 1923 the town of Telmessos changed its name... and became Fethiye' (797). And then, as the very last sentence: 'The truly anomalous

9 'Author's Note' to the short story *A Day Out for Mehmet Erbil* (London: Belmont Press, 1999), 5.

and remarkable thing about Fethiye, its market and the region of Lycia, is that there are no Greeks'. This is not a onesided stance in national disputes, though the outcome is viewed as definitely impoverishing Turkey. Rather it is a dirge for a more colourful past, when twenty-first century aspirations to transnationalism existed as a given, albeit at the cost of imperialism in a Europe defined by nationalism, and not by post-WWII aspirations to unity.¹⁰

That background is of course a major difference between Australian and Turkish focal points. According to the Australian legend, Gallipoli was a liminal space of self-definition for a recently established Federation seeking to leave behind its colonial past and redefine its relation to the mother country. The Turkish nation that ultimately emerged arose from, and in some cases excluded, former ethnic groups co-existing in an unwieldy empire. *Birds without Wings* indirectly pinpoints this divergence between two historical stories of nascent nationhood. Differing Australian versions of the Gallipoli legend largely remain inflections of national self-understanding. De Bernières' novel is more ambitious, and its dedication approaches at least regional history, and potentially world history from below: 'In the grand scheme of things, this book is necessarily dedicated to the unhappy memory of the millions of civilians on all sides during the times portrayed, who became victims of the numerous death marches, movements of refugees, campaigns of persecution and extermination, and exchanges of population'. That resonates with Turkey, and with Eastern Europe, but not with Australia. As does the mode of narrative voice throughout, which is one of an almost Brechtian historical irony. Forsaking the national level, a 'naïve' Turk (a figure named Karatavuk) muses on the divisions within European co-religionists, the British enemy and the German allies. The latter had a Christian 'emperor who had declared himself the protector of the Muslims. ... I thought it strange ... that these German Franks were fighting alongside us when our own Christians were forbidden to do so' (436). To rephrase the paradox: the British and Germans share their religion, and yet are national enemies, while within the work-in-progress Turkish nation, religion could exclude nationals from defending their country. Different versions of the Gallipoli legend across former antagonists begin to converge in an era more strongly marked both by secularism and by transnational influences.

After its release in Turkey, Örnek's *Gallipoli: the Frontline Experience* remained the number one film for five weeks. It features documentary footage, photos, interviews with international military historians, and re-enactments. The combination of 'fact' and fiction, and above all of then and now, reflects the positioning of the spectator, as colour shots of pristine beaches alternate with

10 For de Bernières' contemporary reader, this no doubt resonates with debates about Kosovo during the collapse of the former Yugoslavia. The novel's ending ironically skews contemporary transnational politics, with Greece as EU member and Turkey as EU bridesmaid.

black and white photos of boatloads of troops landing on the same beaches in 1915. Typical of the film's narrative and style are the opening 5-6 minutes of Chapter 7 on the DVD, to which the remainder of this paragraph and the next relate. Documentary visuals, above all black and white photos and newsreel-type footage contemporary with the events, are counterpointed against re-enactments in colour. The photos are of people we know to be absent, their documented thoughts (from diaries etc.) rendered as voiceover, by a voice we know is not theirs. Talking heads in colour (author Les Carlyon, military historian Christopher Pugsley, etc.) provide a further channel of information. Via the visual and acoustic link to the 'talking photos', the latter in this context seem like the animation of different witnesses or experts. The effect is another kind of re-enactment, beyond the performative aspect of voiceovers accompanying photos. In both cases talking head figures, from a range of nationalities, are blended (screen-filling portraits plus voiceover, alongside contemporary interviewees). This mix of ghostly and present voices, a technique which embodies the memory aspects of Gallipoli then and now, contrasts with palpable re-enactments of figures largely shot from behind, and hence faceless. They stand out from the photos' address of us viewers, looking straight out at us. The mismatch between photographic image and a voiceover that emanates from it but not from the person himself, combined with re-enactments that conceal faces and hence (national) identities, engages the viewer's imagination without allowing recourse to familiar stereotypes. The whole is unified by elegiac music, which does not discriminate between nationalities. As employed by Örnek, montage itself functions to suggest a transnational point of view.

In places, the film is irritatingly self-reflexive. While camera movement towards or away from photos is generally gradual, there is (at the beginning) a swish-pan effect across the entourage of Atatürk, to focus on the great man himself. Extravagant fast forwards ensure that waves lapping the shores of Gallipoli are far from *National Geographic*-type footage. The natural beauty of the landscape is further dispelled when a 'whoosh' sound accompanies these gestures, to complete the alienation effect. The occasional 'rush' of the camera also seems to substitute for actual charges of soldiers. This in turn contrasts starkly with the slow motion rendition of soldiers' movements in the re-enactments (in one case there is also a fast forward). The slow motion sequences are a world apart from the conventional dramatic weighting of body movements elongated in time (e.g. in a film like *Chariots of Fire*). With Örnek their pace links photo stills and re-enactment sequences that are shot more naturalistically. A third representational medium is painting, and at the end of this sequence we see details of one by George Lambert, which refers the viewer to an Australian rather than a Turkish cultural imaginary. These details are bookended by (more

conventional, documentary) shots of the same terrain, devoid of human life. Örnek's film is the converse of an action movie, and what emerges is a different, elegiac kind of aestheticization.

The processes and processing of memory are central to the film. Above all, the narrative kaleidoscopically combines different national viewpoints (Simpson), with profiles of a handful of participants from Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain and Turkey. Their diary entries and letters are read out on the soundtrack, conveying a ghostly oral history. But the palpable enactment that is at play, the combination of voice over and photo rather than direct recording, continually implies the limitations of oral history as a privileged perspective, too. The viewer, (re-)animating the freeze frames of history, is positioned beyond any one national perspective. The work of synthesis required of this viewer is very different to the more straightforward battlelines of national identity drawn by Weir, long unchallenged by other notable depictions in film. Jay Winter claims that the historical film genre has 'power in projecting national stereotypes and narratives' (Hughes-Warrington 80). Örnek combines cinematic devices to ensure an interaction of points of view. His montage of case studies, and the narrative voice linking them all, assembles just such a transnational perspective. Reflecting renewed international interest in the documentary genre, this film has already spawned an online study guide produced by Australian Teachers of Media, envisaging the film's use across a number of curriculum areas. This further demonstrates the importance of contrasting its approach with mainstream iconic narratives like Weir's film, something recognized at the level of the school curriculum. With Weir, the battle of the Nek succeeds the far more elaborate 'Romantic', naïve phase of adventure and war games. Örnek's film, on the other hand, gives a strong sense of the whole campaign, focussing if anything on the carnage of the first landings, especially those of the British forces. Beyond the 90th anniversary of the Dardanelles campaign, its own historic moment is Turkey's quest for EU membership, as pendant to Mustafa Kemal's mission to take his Turkey into Europe.

His film was far from uniformly popular at home, regarded by many as not nationalistic enough.¹¹ It thus typifies what Mette Hjort (15), in her quest for 'a typology of cinematic transnationalisms', calls 'epiphanic transnationalism'. In this, 'the emphasis is on the cinematic articulation of those elements of deep national belonging that overlap with aspects of other national identities to produce something resembling deep transnational belonging' (Hjort 16). Örnek's *Gallipoli* diverges from the latter notion in not being part of 'the search

11 Compare debates about Clint Eastwood's *Letters from Iwo Jima* and *Flags of our Fathers* (both 2006), showing the one battle from Japanese and American perspectives.

for effective strategies of counter-globalization' (Hjort 17). But transnational it certainly is, in its constant traversing of the perspectives of participants from a number of nations involved in the Dardanelles campaign.

The wide angle lens

With the death of the last Australian veteran in 2002, direct, first-hand memory of Gallipoli, the historical event, has gone. But remembrance of Gallipoli remains at the forefront of Australian national consciousness. The significance of Anzac Day eclipses Australia Day as the official celebration of nationhood.¹² And there is no doubt that 'Anzacs' are primarily understood as Australians. On its weather page, largely devoted to world capitals, the *Australian* lists Gallipoli. The same newspaper nominated the 'Australian Digger' as Australian of the Year for 2006, confident that today's 'Diggers' are 'continuing the honoured tradition of the Anzacs' (McNicoll and Dodd). Behind Australian remembrance the central paradox remains of a military disaster, fought by civilian soldiers in the name of another country, being fashioned into a crucible of national formation.

However a lens anticipating the transnationalism of Örneke and de Bernières was never totally absent in Australia. Chauvel's 1940 film *Forty Thousand Horsemen* demonizes the Germans, while their Turkish allies in the Palestinian campaign are portrayed almost empathetically (see Gnida and Simpson). The Turks voice respect for the Australians, gained at Gallipoli, and question their German overlords, a constellation neatly paralleling Australian-British connections outside this film. The historical moment of Chauvel's film determines the way he depicts the recurrent enemy Germany, on the one hand, and Turkey, the WWI enemy, but at the time of this film, WWII neutral.

On the one hand, then, the Gallipoli legend has historical national markers within Australia. On the other, it can be aligned more closely with perceptions from outside Australia, such as that afforded by Örneke's film. Jill Matthews writes of a 'model for a transnational approach to film history' which 'derives from the dual nature of moving pictures, as both commodities and cultural products'. With regret she views this model as utopian, since 'most film historians continue to hold a strong allegiance to cultural nationalism, and hold the transnational elements in their accounts to be alien intrusions' (Matthews 168-69). Within both film history and the larger cultural frame of reference, there is no inherent

12 It stands out in a different national context: 'Gallipoli is to Australia at least what Gettysburg is to the United States' (Jackson 182). Jackson's perspectives are altogether arresting, in finding both film and legend transnational: 'It is superb in conveying the tragic futility of the Great War and thus ranks with *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *Paths of Glory* as one of the greatest anti-war movies of all time' and, referring to the Kemal Atatürk memorial on Anzac Parade, Canberra: 'Can any American imagine the United States building a monument to George III, Santa Anna, or Tojo?' (185).

reason why a continued ‘cultural nationalism’, either Australian or Turkish, should prevail. Constrained by cultural nationalism, film historians would simply do violence to Örnek’s film.

Why might viewing Gallipoli from a transnational perspective matter? In his speech to mark the 65th anniversary of the opening of the Australian War Memorial, Peter Stanley contested the resurgent notion of a ‘Battle for Australia’ in 1942, according to which the real danger of Japanese invasion had been averted, by referring to views of Japanese, US and British historians. This battle in turn has accumulated a mythological layer with the subsequent release of Baz Luhrmann’s *Australia* (2008), which may be read as a retraction of the Gallipoli legend (home soil as battlefield; extension beyond white Australia; ‘brotherhood’ replacing mateship; Darwin as neglected site in the Australian imaginary).

The ‘Battle for Australia’ highlights the importance of not pre-empting answers to *The History Question: Who Owns the Past?* (Clendinnen). For ‘critical novelists [and, we might add, filmmakers] share with historians the impulse—for some it is a moral imperative—to own the past, ... and to question the accretions of legend and obfuscation around past events’ (Sheridan 20). Who does own the past of Gallipoli? The plurality of answers to that question need not expose history as taught in schools to the criticism of ‘succumb(ing) to a postmodern culture of relativism where any objective record of achievement is questioned or repudiated’ in John Howard’s 2006 Australia Day Address to the National Press Club (Howard). But the plurality is queried in the name of preservation of a discipline, history as taught in Australia. From one influential vantage point, that anchoring can only be guaranteed by ‘a factual narrative about the meaning of the [Gallipoli] anniversary’ (‘Rescuing’). ‘A factual narrative’ of course begs further questions. The 1915 film *Heroes of the Dardanelles* (dir. Alfred Rolfe), based on Ashmead-Bartlett’s reports, was viewed as documentation when that was convenient, and Weir’s *Gallipoli* obscures the fact that the order to keep going over the top at the Nek came from an Australian, not a British commander. So sensitive are these identity debates, that the first suggested subject for the ‘Inaugural Prime Minister’s Prize for Australian History’ (2006), was ‘historical events’. History lessons at school are viewed from the highest office in the land as mediating national identity (Taylor; Clark). Gallipoli is already approached in the (English and History) classroom not just as event; it is important for a transnational approach to provide materials and perspectives on what goes beyond the event.

The further historical events recede, the greater the danger of ‘commemoration’ answering a present need rather than any fidelity to the past (Megill 22). And that in turn can invest the phenomenon of a Gallipoli legend with new content: ‘The new love of Anzac is not about Australians paying more attention to their history [...] it is about the making of historical legend as a source of national

pride and independence, the foundation stone of a new sentimental nationalism' (McKenna 15). Transnational materials and approaches offer counter-narratives, and potentially correctives. But a sub-genre of history such as memory studies will never sit easily with a case like Gallipoli, 'because collective memory, although not entirely discounting the relevance of history to its understanding of the past, also involves a fundamentally different way of making sense of the past and of social reality, similar to the way of myth' (Blustein 200).

While Gallipoli retains its status as Australia's foundation myth, it is becoming increasingly exposed to alternate depictions in texts such as de Bernières' and Örnek's. The latter suggest new ways in which different artforms can approach the changing reception of Gallipoli over time, from transnational perspectives. They will never supplant national sentiments of celebration or mourning, but have the capacity to shift its focus, to oscillate between the national and the transnational view.

Coda

In the course of this article being written, new novels of relevance to its issues have appeared. Roger McDonald's *When Colts Ran* (2010), spanning much of twentieth-century Australia, has a number of passing references to Gallipoli that taper off as the WWI veteran Buckler ages and recedes from narrative view. In a sense, the novel is a male-authored pendant to Brenda Walker's approach, inasmuch as 'the mythic places where Australian men have formerly so forcefully defined their identity—the battlefield and the outback—are gone' (Hill). That sheds very different light on the ground covered by the same author's *1915*, just as Gallipoli in *When Colts Ran* is a name alongside Troy, the Somme, or Belgium. Buckler's search for machinery in WWII loses him in the outback, emptied of any mythical aura. He embodies the history behind the myth of the battlefield: 'Buckler was the living ghost of old mates, the sworn defender who spoke for the dead. They'd spent their quota of flesh at Gallipoli and in France, and he lived the full nine lives making them right' (6). Gallipoli then figures neither as virtual experience, nor as buffeted myth, but as revenant.

The author of *Traitor* (2010) is Stephen Daisley, New Zealand born, now living in Western Australia. His novel has already received nominations and awards such as the Prime Minister's Literary Award for Fiction, 2011. The figure branded as 'traitor' is a simple sheep farmer, who comes under renewed suspicion for his WWI activities when New Zealand contemplates involvement in the Vietnam War. His act of 'treachery' was to enable the escape of a Turkish captive, a

doctor, Sufi and whirling dervish, altogether a charismatic figure. Between the lines, the greater act of treachery was deemed to be regarding Mahmoud as an exceptional human being, rather than an enemy national.

Colin McLaren's *Sunflower: A Tale of Love, War and Intrigue* (2010) has a less extreme narrative. It tells of the author's grandfather, George Bingham, one of the longest-serving Anzacs. The prologue and acknowledgements that frame the story pay homage to 'the fireside stories of my grandad, a man who was there for 1527 nights' (295). George's 'certificate of discharge' is photocopied on p. 265. He died in 1974, when the author was 19. The narrative in this novel is thus based on fact, while making no pretence to documentary reconstruction. Its origin locates it more in the realm of oral myth, apt for the year of the novel's release, less so for the years of the fireside chats that made such an impression, and still less for the events themselves, distanced as they are in time for both narrator and, to a greater degree, for his captive listener. Among the acknowledgements appears the name of Örnek. Comparable to Örnek's perspective, McLaren introduces a young Turkish soldier, Mehmet, as a secondary character. United by the ravages of dysentery, he and George meet under an olive branch at Gallipoli. Mehmet emigrates to Australia post-World War II, and the book concludes on the note of the peacetime reunion of two reluctant foes. The reader's introduction to Mehmet also provides background details not always present in Australian accounts, such as Churchill's withholding in August 1914 of two battleships which had been commissioned and financed by the Ottoman Empire. Above all, *Sunflower* departs from narratives such as that in Weir's film, in positioning Gallipoli within a far broader context. Not only do years on the Western front succeed Bingham's experiences at Gallipoli, but his return to Australia is followed by years of wandering in the countryside, avoiding family and home town, shellshocked (in this, converging with Brenda Walker's *The Wing of Night*). But for all its social critique the novel contrives to end harmoniously, with mutual recognition between worthy survivors of the battle of the nations.

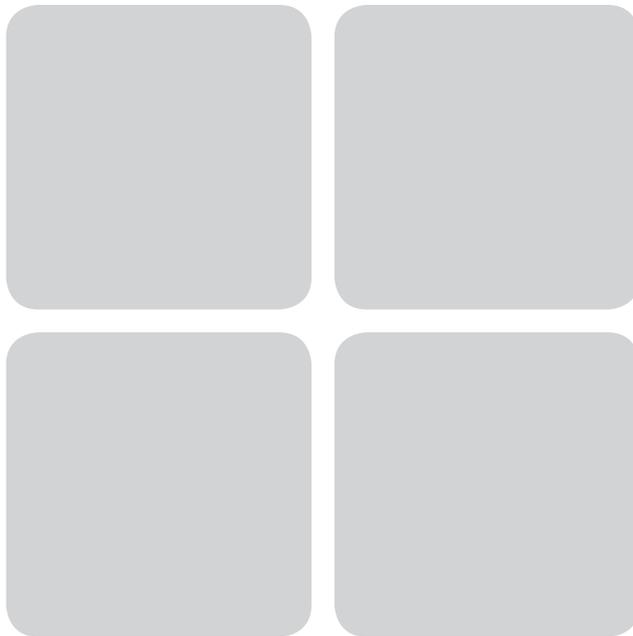
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SPECIAL SECTION

'ON THE TABLE':
FOOD IN OUR CULTURE

Guest Editor's Introduction

'On the Table': Food in Our Culture

Lisa Milner

The 2010 Global Hunger Index notes that the number of people suffering from undernutrition last year was almost one billion (von Grebmer *et al.*). At the other end of the scale is the contemporary attitude to food, not so much as a necessity, but as a consumer ideal, a performance medium, a lifestyle enhancer or a signifier of identity, whether individual, community or national. Italian journalist and author, Giacomo Papi, believes that 'food has replaced fashion. Appearance has given way to the taste. It is a transformation in tune with an era that seems committed mainly to write a rule to its own greed. The mouth has become the most important organ. The kitchen is the art of this time'.

In recent years, there have been seminal changes in the ways in which we think and act when it comes to food. These changes include the development of a 'slow food' movement, the rise in popularity of books, courses and television shows on food, and a growing interest in ethno-specific cuisines. Growing popular awareness of what we put on our tables and where it comes from has taken place alongside a growing field of academic interest in food. Donna Lee Brien writes that:

Food has (at least for many in the West) moved largely from being a source of nourishment ('eat to live') to occupy a series of seemingly polarised positions. On one hand, the food industry intersects with that of the giant leisure entertainment industry (to entice consumers with a 'live to eat' attitude), on the other, food figures in serious discussions around such issues as identity, health, politics, science and local/national/international development. While food can form the locus of personal, physical and emotional matters including concerns about health, wellbeing and self-esteem, it also grounds global discussions about the sustainability and, even, the viability of life on earth.

This special section of *Australian Humanities Review* is dedicated to writing that investigates our relationship to food, past and present, and the changing place of food in society. We present a series of papers that together engage with

a range of perspectives and with topics such as the politics of food, consumption and identity, the philosophy of eating, and the role of food production and consumption in culture.

Responding to a growing interest in the histories of national cuisines, Colin Bannerman opens this issue with a nuanced introduction to written accounts of Australian food cultures. Barbara Santich examines some of the ways in which food provided a mediating pathway between colonial European and indigenous Australians cultures. 'Colonial experimentation' she writes 'required indigenous ingredients to be culturally appropriated, plucked from one culture and incorporated into another so that the foreign became familiar'.

Shifting to a more contemporary context, Adrian Peace's article focuses on how social meanings of eating kangaroo meat resound in contemporary debates. In particular, Peace looks at how the various prisms we view 'roos' through intersect—as nutrition, national symbol, bane of farmers, and a possible contributor to climate change mitigation.

In 'Swimming with Tuna', Elspeth Probyn similarly interrogates a food source as the site of multiple significations by looking at the changing nature of the Eyre Peninsula fishing industry and how the supply chain of tuna to Australia and the world affects many aspects of everyday life. While Probyn's article focuses on a globalised industry in a local context, Ferne Edwards looks at local organisations that are having broader social impacts. Her well-researched examination of localised, grassroots food movements around Melbourne draws attention to the movement's role as a viable alternative to large-scale food production.

Jemàl Nath and Desirée Prideaux, in 'The Civilised Burger', examine meat alternatives and their promotion in Australia. They provide discussions of current debates about ethical foods, the growth of alternative food products, and what this means in terms of human relationships with animals and the environment.

This issue also contains a section of reviews of some of the more exciting food books to be released in recent times. It is our hope that the essays and reviews, together with the food-themed Ecological Humanities section, provide you with much food for thought.

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Making Australian Food History

Colin Bannerman

The importance that food and eating have assumed as components of popular culture in Australia has not yet been matched by thorough historical analysis. This essay briefly surveys existing histories of non-indigenous eating in Australia and outlines a theoretical framework within which an explanatory history of Australian food culture could be constructed. It suggests that, for reasons of relative newness and isolation, the Australian setting is ideal for testing such a framework. Finally, it notes that the processes of communication through which an Australian culture of food and eating developed—whether or not that culture amounts to a distinctive cuisine—largely documented its progress, thus simplifying the task for historians.

Food and eating in popular culture

In the past two centuries there has been a dramatic change in the role of food and eating in Australian public consciousness. Examination of early colonial newspapers, beginning with the *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* (first published 1803), suggests a society in which food was regarded primarily as sustenance. Public discussion of food was largely confined to matters of supply, distribution and price. There was no gastronomic discourse, no mention of food fashions, no trade in recipes. Towards the end of the nineteenth century some newspapers were offering regular columns of advice on housekeeping topics, including menu planning and recipes. However, eating remained essentially a private activity, even when undertaken in company (Bannerman, *Print Media* 36ff). Public dinners or gala social events were often ‘noticed’ in the newspapers as matters of general interest, but journalists confined their reports to questions such as who was present, what they wore and what speeches were made. Rarely was food mentioned in any more than the most general and cursory terms, such as ‘the Company assembled sat down to a splendid dinner’ (*Sydney Gazette*, 6 June 1812: 3).

By the late twentieth century, food and eating had become prominent public preoccupations. Evidence of this dramatic cultural revaluation abounds. In bookstores, for example, cookery and all things related to it are often among the larger displays. Recipe books and instruction manuals are only the core of an expanding genre of literature in which gastro-porn, gastro-humour, gastro-travel, biography, fiction and how-to-save-the-planet are already well represented.

There are specialty stores selling all manner of cookware, tableware and other paraphernalia associated with food, eating and drinking. The commodification of food culture (as distinct from foodstuffs) has progressed to the point where 'reality' television shows about cooking seem to have out-ranked shows about randy moderns sharing house.¹

Perhaps most telling is the extension of the phenomenon of mass media celebrity to include culinary personalities. A few nineteenth and early twentieth century chefs such as Louis Ude, Charles Francatelli, Alexis Soyer and Auguste Escoffier achieved considerable fame and even in the antipodes were venerated among connoisseurs of food and cooking. For example, an outstanding cook might be an 'Australian Soyer' ('Ballarat and Creswick Spring Races') or a 'veritable Francatelli' ('Cooks I have known'). Melbourne had a Francatelli Café in Collins Street ('Visitors to Melbourne'). But such celebrity hardly compares with that achieved by late twentieth century gurus Jamie Oliver, Nigella Lawson and others who have been vigorously promoted as a new kind of culinary commodity. The success of the personality commodification strategy is illustrated by a 2010 report in the *Sydney Morning Herald* ('SNAGS'):

The Cleo Bachelor of the Year competition has turned its back on NRL players, with a move towards foodies, musos and creative men.

It's believed to be the first time in the magazine competition's 24-year history that a rugby league player hasn't been included in the top 50 finalists.

Instead, foodies like patissier Adriano Zumbo, celebrity chef Curtis Stone and food photographer and chef Luke Burgess seem to be the flavour of the day.

Scholars, too, have jumped on the commodification bandwagon. At the beginning of the twentieth century, when cooking and eating were still relative newcomers to the public discourse made possible by a rapidly expanding newspaper industry, Melbourne journalist 'Rita' Vaile dreamt of a day when Australia would have a 'Chair of Gastronomy' and took a faltering step towards it by lending her weight to the establishment of the short-lived Australian Institute of Domestic Economy (Bannerman, *Print Media* 276ff; 'Rita'; Docherty 8). Now degrees in gastronomy seem set to emulate the MBA phenomenon of the 1980s and food has become a respectable subject for investigation with philosophers, sociologists, historians, cultural theorists, ecologists and many others all having a go at it.

1 *Masterchef Australia*, Channel 10, 2009 and 2010; *My Kitchen Rules*, Channel 7, 2010 and 2011.

However, while there is general acceptance that the transformation of food from a practical necessity not generally discussed in polite company to a dominating theme of public discourse has been rapid and dramatic, there is less agreement on *how* it happened. And, surprisingly, the question seems to have held little fascination for most historians. For the best part of two centuries they have managed to write their accounts of colonisation and nationhood with only scant reference to how the settlers and their descendants fed themselves. And even some fairly recent general histories, such as Geoffrey Blainey's *Shorter History of Australia*, fail my version of the f-test, displaying index entries for 'football', but not for 'food'. Thorough investigation of the history of food and eating can help to illuminate the development of Australian society and, more generally, processes of cultural change.

Historiography

Probably the first attempt at a formal history of food and eating was by Anne Gollan in 1978. Despite her disclaimer (vii) that it was 'not a comprehensive history'—and, indeed, her approach was more nostalgic than analytical—*The Tradition of Australian Cooking* was a useful descriptive account beginning with a brief survey of the foodways of indigenous peoples and tailing off in the decades of rapid change following World War II.

Gollan divided her account into three phases: 'the outdoor kitchen' (indigenous foodways, campfire cookery); 'the outhouse kitchen' (pioneer cookery, gadgets and refinements); and 'the respectable kitchen' (gas cooking, the indoor kitchen and the kitchen as a public room). The changing character of the kitchen served as a useful metaphor for the imposition on Australia of Victorian ideals of civilisation and progress. These phases were not strictly chronological, but loosely defined and overlapping stages of development: survival and discovery (before c. 1870); awareness and refinement (c. 1850 to c. 1920); and convenience and commercialism (c. 1880 onwards).

Consistent with the kitchen metaphor, she illustrated her book lavishly with recipes, encouraging readers to trace the parallel histories of kitchen and cooking (and, by extension, eating). The narrative itself was brief, taking less than half the book. Gollan was well aware (23) that diet is determined by what is available and practicable, anticipating Michael Symons's discovery in 1982 that Australians had enjoyed 'one continuous picnic' (discussed below). A weakness of her account stems from her assertion that 'it would be impossible in a book of this size to trace the foreign influences on Australian food' (92,

193). Such 'foreign' (presumably non-British) influences have turned out to be quite significant, and were evident enough even in the early recipe record (Bannerman, *Print Media*), yet she gave them only cursory attention.

Anne Gollan discerned in the history of food and cooking in Australia two seemingly contradictory trends (192). One was the dehumanising of food rituals under the influence first, of the necessities of survival among white settlers and second, under the onslaught of commercialism. The other was a re-humanising process that liberated cooks from drudgery and lifted Australians out of the monotony of meat, flour, tea and sugar. She concluded that 'Australians in the kitchen find themselves at something of a crossroads' between fashion and convenience on the one hand and 'the natural lifestyle' on the other (195-6). With the benefit of hindsight one might now contend that the crossroads at the end of the 1970s offered three main paths: 'convenience', 'gourmet' and 'natural' (now better known as 'organic'). All were fashionable and, in varying degrees, commercialised.

The most controversial and, arguably, influential history of food and eating in Australia has been Michael Symons's *One Continuous Picnic* (1982) which, thanks to a combination of vigorous promotion and provocative thesis, quickly captured the imagination of foodies. Symons had 'set out to write, as a journalist, about Australian food', apparently in an attempt to explain why Australia suffered 'the world's worst cuisine' ('Potted History' 64; *One Continuous Picnic* 254). His efforts convinced him of 'the importance of the historical process in determining feeding' and 'even more of the power of gastronomy in understanding the world' ('Potted History' 64). The resulting book was history driven by an underlying gastronomic mission. This duality—and the brashness of some of his claims—helped to popularise the book, but ultimately limited its usefulness as history (see, for example, Pont 'Upstart Gastronomy'; Kingston).

Symons's central thesis was that the world's best cuisines were founded on a tradition of peasantry engaged in intensive agriculture and that Australia never had such a tradition, but moved abruptly from one of hunting and gathering to a purely industrial system of mechanical farming, processing, transporting, marketing and consuming (Preface and 12). Without a 'true contract with the land', as the dust-cover blurb said, food and eating patterns were founded on considerations of portability and profitability rather than self-sufficiency. Australians in general have therefore failed to develop a taste for fine food and cooking.

Like Anne Gollan, Michael Symons also found three stages of culinary development, but used them to describe a process by which he said Australians became alienated from the sources of their food. First (from 1788 to the 1860s), the growing of food, animal and plant, was industrialised by the implantation

of modern methods of production based on specialisation and economies of scale. In terms of feeding it was the era of bush rations; the dominant form of transport was the sailing ship. Then the processing and retailing of food were industrialised as mass systems of transport, storage and distribution developed to gather, rationalise and sell durable produce to city households and overseas markets. This was the era of tinned and processed food, and of railways (1850s to 1930s). Finally, cooking was industrialised as factories and restaurants took over most of the work of preparing food for table (and Gollan's 'respectable kitchen' became a small nook for final assembly and dishing-up). This was the era of convenience foods and of automobiles (1940s onwards).

Symons's identification—no doubt inspired by Geoffrey Blainey (*The Tyranny of Distance*, 1966)—of distance and transport as important factors in Australia's feeding history was a useful contribution, and the work generally remains a good reference on various events and stages in Australian culinary history. However, his preoccupation with 'understanding why Australian society seemed culturally impoverished' (preface) probably focussed his inquiries in areas relevant to gastronomic judgements already made at the expense of a broader examination of factors influencing the construction of a local culture of food and eating.

Symons concluded his work by offering readers much the same choice as had Anne Gollan: 'Good food has never come from factory farms, process lines, canteens, supermarkets and fastfood [sic] chains. It still belongs to careful vegetable gardeners, painstaking cheese-makers and dedicated chef-patrons, meeting in the bustling market-place' (*One Continuous Picnic* 262).

After Symons, interest in writing a general history of cuisine in Australia seemed to wane. Richard Beckett's *Convicted Tastes* (1984) was not a scholarly work and was apparently not intended for critical reading or close analysis. It was primarily a critique of patterns and styles of eating from about the time of colonisation to the early 1980s, with little to offer by way of explanation. Despite the publisher's blurb on the dust-cover that the work 'proves beyond doubt that the food of Australia is much more than simply an extended version of 'Waltzing Matilda', and occasional disclaimers (for example, page 3), Beckett's contention, consistent with the title, was that Australia had never really recovered from the contempt for food bred into its people in the harsh environment of the early years of European settlement.

In a more recent work, *When Mabel Laid the Table*, Warren Fahey (2002) offered 'a social history of eating and drinking in Australia [which] shows that we in fact have a unique tradition of wining and dining, Australian style, that started expressing itself from the very early colonial days and has never stopped' (vii).

However, it was essentially an ordered collection of folklore, tales, verse and recipes, with an emphasis on the curious, interesting and nostalgic. It serves to entertain rather than to educate or explain.

The few other monographs in the field made more specialised contributions. They included Frederick Clements (1986) on nutrition; Gordon Pickhaver (1986) on cheese in South Australia; Barbara Santich (1995) on dietary advice; Angela Heuzenroeder (1999) on the food of Prussian migrants to the Barossa Valley; Keith Farrer (1980) on food technology in the nineteenth century and (2005) on food science and technology; and my own work (1996) on cookery around the time of federation and (2008) on fashion and fad in Australian cuisine. Journal articles, by their nature, are more limited still. We are thus left with *One Continuous Picnic* as the dominant historical account of eating in Australia.

Graham Pont (Review) was highly critical of *One Continuous Picnic*, arguing that there is no logical or necessary connection between Symons's two premises (that great cuisines are founded on a tradition of peasantry and that the colonial economy produced a 'uniquely "pure" industrial cuisine'). According to Pont, it is far from clear that a peasant tradition is either necessary or sufficient for the development of a great cuisine. He contended that 'the character of Australian food is neither peasant nor aristocratic—it is almost entirely the product of a *cuisine bourgeoise*' and that the argument about a peasant contribution is therefore largely irrelevant. 'The peasants who are most significant in the history of Australian food are those who arrived from the Mediterranean countries after the Second World War' (47-8). Pont also disputed the significance of Symons's second premise as an explanation for Australia's bad eating, arguing that he had 'by no means shown the impossibility of creating something like a traditional fine cuisine in the modern [industrial] context' (42). In short, Symons's analysis owed more to gastronomic romanticism than to history.

How cuisines are made

Leaving aside the question of why Australia failed to produce what he considered to be a satisfactory cuisine, at a more general level Symons left largely unexplained the processes by which Australian cuisine—good or bad—was made. Yet the development of a culture of food and eating among 'migrants' to Australia since 1788 would be an ideal setting for a study of the processes of cuisine-making. The newcomers neither found a greenfield site—since the original inhabitants already had a highly developed food culture that was uniquely adapted to the environment (see, for example, Isaacs)—nor quite succeeded in behaving as though they had, since they continued to exploit those local food resources suited to their European tastes long after the hungry years. The first Australian

cookery book writer (Abbott) catalogued some of these native resources; a few decades later so did Mina Rawson, who famously remarked that ‘whatever the blacks eat the whites may safely try’ (Rawson 54). Nevertheless, the foodways of the hunter-gatherer inhabitants were radically different from those of the semi-industrialised incomers, who constructed a cuisine in which local and imported components were not too difficult to separate. The first fleet brought its own printing press—though it was some seven years before it could be put to use and fifteen before the colony’s first newspaper appeared. The novelty of the colonial enterprise—and therefore its newsworthiness back home—guaranteed that literate colonists would record their experiences and that a good proportion of their records would be preserved. The very newness of the cuisine meant that all its important stages were documented. This documentation is now a rich source of data from which a communication-based model of food culture can be constructed.

The seeds of a general theory of the making of a cuisine were offered by Michael Freeman in his 1977 essay on Sung cuisine in China. Freeman suggested that the appearance of a (presumably superior) cuisine requires first, a wealth of local and imported ingredients and second, ‘a sizeable corps of critical, adventuresome eaters, not bound by the tastes of their native region and willing to try unfamiliar food’ (144). He emphasised that this elite corps must be a large one. ‘An individual ruler or a tiny elite may command superlative cooking, but cannot create a cuisine. The eaters must also be sophisticated enough to encourage culinary adventures’ and their attitudes should ‘give first place to the real pleasure of consuming food rather than to its purely ritualistic significance’ (145).

Jack Goody, in *Cooking, Cuisine and Class* (1982), examined the relationship between stratified cuisine and stratified society in a wider context. With no apparent gastronomic agenda, he started from a position that one needs ‘first, to analyse cooking in the context of the total process of production, preparation and consumption of food, and, [second], to set this analysis within a comparative perspective’ (2). Following Freeman, Goody noted that ‘a salient feature of the culinary cultures of the major societies of Europe and Asia is their association with hierarchical man [sic]’ (99). Differentiated cuisines emerge from differentiated societies: it is only the upper class of society that possesses the resources and disposition to sponsor the development of high-class cuisine (Pont, Review 226). Stephen Mennell reached similar conclusions in his comparative study of French and English cuisine (*All Manners of Food*).

Symons’s book more or less coincided with the appearance of Jack Goody’s. Symons was aware of Freeman’s work, but—perhaps out of gastronomic romanticism—regarded the agricultural labours of peasantry as indispensable. ‘So far, great cuisines have arisen from peasant societies, even if recognised by

elites and refined by professionals' (*One Continuous Picnic* 12) was about as far as he was prepared to go. For him, the gastronomic endeavours of an adventuresome elite were not sufficient to guarantee the emergence of a great cuisine because, presumably, the elite necessarily constructed their pleasures from the products of peasants. This left little room for a great cuisine ever to be founded on, for example, trade or industry. Symons's position was the more puzzling because colonial Australia was rather better supplied with farming peasants than with resourceful elites; it would have made more sense to lay the blame for Australia's bad cooking at the feet of an absent aristocracy than an absent peasantry.

Freeman, Symons, Goody and Mennell were all concerned with stratified cuisines: what are the conditions necessary for a high-class cuisine to develop within a society where the presumed norm is merely ordinary? However, stratification in a cuisine is necessarily a secondary development. As I have suggested above, the first question for historians to ask is not why Australians failed to develop a world-class cuisine, but how they made the one they did—and popular narratives, largely based on themes of British colonialism modified by subsequent immigration and industrialisation, hardly answer.

In commenting on Symons's peasant thesis, Pont sharpened Goody's thus: 'stratified cuisines depend on two conditions, the pen and the plough. The high cuisines of the past were formed by the plough but codified by the pen; gastronomy presupposes literacy, for so long the exclusive prerogative of a small, educated elite' ('Upstart Gastronomy' 47). Though an oversimplification of the process of cuisine making (since it omits, for example, diversity of ingredients, the means to acquire them and the drive to create display), Pont's formulation helped to redress an imbalance in *One Continuous Picnic* by pointing out that the role of the elite was not merely as consumer of peasant labour, but as active participant in the construction of a cuisine. Moreover, it suggests the possibility of a more general theory of how cuisines are made.

A conceptual framework used by Jack Goody in his comparative studies (37) provides a useful starting-point for thinking about systems of providing and transforming food:

Processes	Phases	Locus
Growing	Production	Farm
Allocating/storing	Distribution	Granary/market
Cooking	Preparation	Kitchen
Eating	Consumption	Table
Clearing up	Disposal	Scullery

The model is capable of being elaborated or simplified as required. For example, in some social settings the disposal phase is unimportant, if present at all.

The production phase can be understood to include, at one extreme, hunting and gathering and, at the other, the manufacture of food from materials which may never enter the diet in their natural states—the peasants' harvest is thus only one of a range of possibilities. The distribution system can be as simple as a tradition of barter among neighbours or as complex as a multi-layered network of local, regional and global commercial enterprises. A notable consequence of industrialisation, as many foodies have lamented, has been a shift of much of the process of cooking from home kitchen to factory or restaurant.

The whole system can be thought of as a food culture. I prefer the term 'food culture' to 'cuisine' here for two reasons. First, 'cuisine' can easily be a source of confusion, since it is variously used to refer to a body of cookery, a particular style (as in Mennell's study of French and English) or to a gastronomic or aesthetic judgement (as when it is used to distinguish 'high class' from 'low class' cookery). Sometimes, especially in the popular press, it distinguishes restaurant food from home cooking; confusion arises when generalised pronouncements about 'Australian cuisine' are made on the basis of a sample of restaurant meals but understood by readers in the context of the food of everyday experience. Second, food culture means something more than cuisine, which on most understandings is concerned primarily with kitchen and table rather than with farm, granary or even scullery.

It is not necessary to assume that a 'nation' must have a unified food culture, much less a 'national cuisine'. Nor should stratification from 'low' to 'high' necessarily be considered the most important differentiation. A society can differentiate its cuisine along as many dimensions as are important to it. In a multi-cultural environment there are likely to be several—perhaps many—distinctive 'ethnic cuisines'. In old, geographically diverse cultures regional differentiation of cuisine is common. The fairly recent emergence—and commodification—of regional food specialties in some parts of Australia (for example, King Island and Margaret River) hardly suggests that we may yet see significant regional differentiation of the cuisine. However, Alison James has suggested a framework within which it is theoretically possible.

Following work by Ulf Hannerz on 'cosmopolitans and locals in world culture', James identified four contemporary food trends that she described as forming overlapping discourses. The first concerns *global food* and emphasises the increasingly transnational character of food, in which 'foodstuffs are seen to have an international, increasingly homogeneous, character' (82). The second relates to *expatriate food* and is characterised by 'an urgent emphasizing of the heterogeneity of cuisines, of their cultural diversity, of the fine distinctiveness of particular local food stuffs and of the peculiar and special experience of eating food within its own locale'. The third, *food nostalgia*, 'vociferously defends the local [and] is truly anti-cosmopolitan'. Finally, there is a discourse

concerning *food creolization* which accepts, even promotes, the mixing of cuisines. Along with an enthusiasm for East-West fusion, it leads to creations such as lasagne with chips and vegetarian haggis. On her analysis, the end point of global commodification of food resources and food culture is not necessarily homogenisation; sub-cultures may interact with the dominant culture or cuisine without necessarily being absorbed by it. A food culture remains a lively and complex negotiation in which the central or inclusive and the peripheral or specific figure along with innovation, authenticity and other forces for or against change.

In a more general theory, then, Jack Goody's stratification is replaced by multi-dimensional differentiation, Graham Pont's pen is replaced by the communication technologies of the age and Michael Symons's peasant harvest is replaced by whatever food resources are available, whether gathered in the wild, home-grown, artisanal or industrial. (And industrialists can, if they set their minds to it, produce to high standards of gastronomy—gourmet critics should generally be directing their ire to the compromises of consumerism rather than to industrialisation *per se*.) The axiom that people tend to eat what is available to them allows for ever-changing perceptions of availability, including considerations such as price and convenience, and influences from various sources such as peer-groups, advertisers, opinion leaders and policy makers. As others have pointed out, construction of a cuisine is not just a gastronomic project, but takes place within a complex of individual and social activities. A history of eating in Australia would therefore need to be informed by a general understanding of how a food culture evolves within a society and within that, how component cuisines are constructed.

Food culture is the ensemble of shared knowledge, attitudes and practices that people bring to selecting, preparing and eating food. It exhibits in some degree order, symbolism and continuity. Most important, it is a product of interactions among people and is therefore created, shaped and sustained through communication. Following Goody's model, one can expect to read within a food culture the history of a social group exploring, appropriating, exploiting, adapting and supplementing its natural food resources; developing ways to harvest, process, store and distribute its food; negotiating through experimentation and information exchange agreed ways to prepare, present and consume its food; investing food choices and methods with meanings; storing the knowledge of resources, methods and meanings in collective memory; developing ways to preserve, adapt and access collective knowledge, and so on. Food cultures of the distant past can be read, if only dimly, in the archaeological and other evidence they may have left behind. In societies where literacy is not well advanced, the collective knowledge can be accessed and recorded by anthropologists. Modern societies not only create records—written,

pictorial, auditory and physical, all of varying permanency—of their collective knowledge, but conduct much of the discourse of cultural construction through communication media that also create historical records. The challenge for the student of modern food cultures is generally not to find enough evidence, but to select from the great volume of it.

Emergence of food culture in Australia

The process of making a food culture in colonial Australia is remarkably well documented even in the pages of its first newspaper, the *Sydney Gazette*. From the first issues (1803) it recorded the legal and administrative steps taken to secure, regulate and expand the food supply. Through the market reports, shipping notices and advertisements it documented the transition of food from necessity of life to commodity and the establishment of a culture of commercialism. The proportion of space allocated to food provides some (albeit imperfect) measure of the perceived importance of food at any time. As the century progressed new papers took up the story, documenting the emergence of cooking and eating as cultural activities. The newspaper record was supplemented by other print media, especially magazines and cookery books.

Much of my work on Australian food history has been concerned with charting the emergence of food and eating into public consciousness through the record of these media (Bannerman, *Print Media*, 'Recipes come from Kitchens'). I have found within them a discourse in which information about various aspects of feeding was gathered from local and overseas sources and circulated for instruction, entertainment and use. The discourse and the means of conducting it were products of their age. Public participation was evident in the correspondence columns of weekly newspapers and in community cookery books. The discourse drew on various themes that were prominent in other Western discourses and reflected social and moral values of the times. It evidenced beliefs that the manner of a society's feeding demonstrates the extent of its civilisation and that refinement of food and feeding contributes to the improvement of society. It also reflected nationalist sentiment and demonstrated some attempts to develop a distinctive Australian cuisine.

On my reading of the record, the foundation of the cuisine was not the British foodways imported by the early settlers, but the English language. The more recent rise of popular interest in 'gourmet' food and cuisines of the ethnic 'other' were not, on the whole, products of post-war migration but reflected a world-wide movement. They are better explained as outcomes of the cosmopolitan-local dialogue described by Hannerz and James than by tourism or population movements.

The printed record shows not only the discourse through which cuisine was created and maintained, but also that through which it was evaluated. There was general agreement that considerable improvement was needed and again, communication was the key to improvement. The reformers used print media to arouse public interest, to express indignation, to foster understanding by circulating information on overseas practice and ideas for local action, and to encourage enthusiasm by holding up the prospect of a brighter culinary future. The record illustrates the emerging role of the education system in shaping cuisine, the influence of popular attitudes towards science on thinking about cookery, and the early influences of commercialisation and industrialisation. In the day-to-day record of recipes, food journalism and newspaper correspondence columns there was evidence of food culture as both an expression of conceptions of character and identity and a formative influence on them.

I found that the engine of cultural change has been industrial progress and that the communication system that supports and enriches food culture may also tend to undermine it in various ways. Goody noted that the advent of printing had enabled the growing bourgeoisie of early eighteenth century England to develop a taste for French cuisine, previously the province of the aristocracy (147-8). He attributed to J.D. Vehling in 1936 the observation that a feature of the 'avalanche' of cookery literature that started with *Platina* about 1474 was the access it opened up to the culinary property of the aristocracy: English gastronomic literature of the three centuries preceding the First Fleet is crowded with 'closets opened', 'secrets let out' and 'other alluring titles purporting to regale the prospective reader in profitable and appetizing secrets of all sorts'. Kitchen secrets became commercial articles. And, Goody added, 'becoming a commercial article at the hands of the printer could entail impoverishment'.

In the Australian setting impoverishment was of three main kinds. First, the adoption of print by individuals and groups as a medium of self-expression enabled the rapid development of a conscious popular culture that has tended to undermine the culinary authorities by adapting, appropriating or even misinterpreting standard recipes and procedures. (However, in recent decades, post-modernism, the internet and commodification of hero-chefs have so changed the roles of culinary authority and self-expression that the extent of undermining may be difficult to determine.) Second, although the use of communication media to turn food culture into an array of commercial products has brought great benefits to the masses, it has also attracted much critical comment from gastronomes and nutritionists. Third, the print media ensured that Australian food culture developed in dialogue with that of other countries. The tendency to import experience and wisdom and to measure Australian cultural achievements by those of the Old World paved the way for

the internationalising of the cuisine in the second half of the twentieth century. Arguably, the quest for a convincing expression of Australian national identity in its food and eating, if it ever existed, was lost.

Whether or not Australia ever develops a 'national cuisine' or becomes a tourist destination for gourmet travellers, it can host profitable enquiry into how cuisines are made. And the richness of documentation not only facilitates such a study, but to the extent that culture is an outcome of communication, largely answers the question.

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Nineteenth-Century Experimentation and the Role of Indigenous Foods in Australian Food Culture

Barbara Santich

In its periodic quest for culinary identity, Australia automatically looks to its indigenous ingredients, the foods that are native to this country. ‘There can be little doubt that using an indigenous product must qualify a dish as Australian’, notes Stephanie Alexander (357). Similarly, and without qualification, Cherkoff states that ‘A uniquely Australian food culture can only be based upon foods indigenous to this country’ (14), although, as Craw remarks, proposing Australian native foods as national symbols relies more upon their association with ‘nature’ and geographic origin than on common usage (46). Notwithstanding the lack of justification for the premise that national dishes are, of necessity, founded on ingredients native to the country—after all, Italy’s gastronomic identity is tied to the non-indigenous tomato, Thailand’s to the non-indigenous chili—the reality is that Australians do not eat indigenous foods in significant quantities. The exceptions are fish, crustaceans and shellfish from oceans, rivers and lakes, most of which are unarguably unique to this country. Despite valiant and well-intentioned efforts today at promoting and encouraging the consumption of native resources, bush foods are not harvested or produced in sufficient quantities for them to be a standard component of Australian diets, nor are they generally accessible. Indigenous foods are less relevant to Australian identity today than lamb and passionfruit, both initially imported and now naturalised. In the nineteenth century, however, and particularly outside the major cities, indigenous ingredients represented a valued resource. This paper examines nineteenth-century experimentation with indigenous foods and argues that it offers a model for the incorporation of indigenous foods into contemporary Australian food culture.

One source of blame for this unpatriotic lack of appetite for native foods is commonly laid on the attitudes of European settlers who reputedly overlooked or rejected out of hand the foods that, for millennia past, had sustained the original inhabitants, just as they saw Aboriginal people as primitive and inferior. According to Beckett, the Europeans’ low opinion of indigenous inhabitants resulted in their losing ‘whatever chance they might have had to really learn about the land’ (Beckett 8). Many examples testify to their dismissal of indigenous ingredients. ‘The list of esculent vegetables and wild fruit is too contemptible to deserve notice’, wrote Watkins Tench in 1793 (230). In Charles

Rowcroft's 1843 novel, *Tales of the Colonies, or, The Adventures of An Emigrant*, a character complains that 'the country furnishes nothing of itself: no animals, no fruits, no roots. Now I thought before I came here, there must be plenty of fruit in a warm climate; but, bless your heart, you may look a long time in the woods for anything to eat, I can tell you' (Rowcroft 23). Generalising from such observations, many writers at the end of the twentieth century perpetuated the view that '[s]urprisingly little attention was paid by the early colonists to the diet of the Aborigines, from whom they could have learned much about alternative food sources' (Ripe 18). Other commentators noted the colonists' general unwillingness 'to adapt ... to Aboriginal eating strategies' (Ryan, Edwards, and Occhipinti 317). According to Symons, 'we failed to incorporate a single indigenous food into anything resembling an agriculture and cooking appropriate to the environment' (11). Such conclusions are not altogether unjustified; the majority of Europeans did not embrace Aboriginal foods and foodways. Nevertheless, they ignore the accounts of extensive and often successful experimentation of many nineteenth-century settlers. Indeed, many early explorers owed their survival to the example of Aboriginal people; other settlers gratefully learnt from the indigenous inhabitants and adopted their eating practices; many others again tried the foods of the Aboriginal people simply out of curiosity and pronounced them good, even if certain of them were altogether too alien to be considered 'food'.

Though this early experimentation has been insufficiently acknowledged by general historians, it has not escaped the notice of those interested in bush foods and culinary history. In their guide, *Wild Food in Australia*, Cribb and Cribb attest to 'a few white men' taking 'an intelligent and even respectful interest in the race that was being displaced—explorers, missionaries, botanists, naturalists, government officials—they observed, they recorded, and fortunately in some cases they published' (13-14). Beckett, while agreeing that 'white settlers commercially exploited very few of the continent's existing food resources and on the whole disregarded the way the Aboriginals made use of them (in expressing either revulsion or patronising curiosity, and sometimes both at the same time)', nonetheless recognises that 'in the early days they did quite a lot of experimental fiddling themselves' (50). Culinary historian Bannerman concurs: '[f]rom the earliest days of white occupation, Australian native food resources were exploited on every plane of feeding—survival, nurture and feasting. ... However, bush foods also represented failure' (20).

Despite Tench's dismissal of the indigenous fruits and vegetables around Sydney Harbour, he and other European inhabitants had no hesitation accepting animal foods—fish, crabs, oysters and kangaroo. Tench's 1789 journal mentions the 'light horseman' or snapper, as well as 'bass, mullets, skates, soles, leather-jackets and many other species, all so good in their kind as to double our regret

at their not being more numerous' (76). The self-evident similarities between antipodean and Northern Hemisphere seafood would have eliminated any obstacles to their consumption, even had hunger not been the prime motive. The kangaroo, on the other hand, was totally unprecedented, but its meat was red, its carcass was consistent with that of familiar domestic animals, and the example of Aborigines confirmed its edibility. It may have been partly out of desperation that colonists readily accepted and appreciated kangaroo—and its near relatives, such as wallaby—in the earliest years of settlement, but its resemblance in both appearance and flavour to other familiar red meats such as beef, venison and hare must have been reassuring. 'We often killed kangaroos; they are very palatable, particularly the tail, which makes excellent soup,' reported Katherine Kirkland in western Victoria in the 1840s (201). 'Kangaroo steak is palatable enough if dressed in the same manner as veal cutlets or venison collops,' decreed Clement Hodgkinson in his 1845 report on the natural resources of the region from Port Macquarie to Moreton Bay, 'but the small pademella, if cooked in the same manner as hare, is undoubtedly excellent' (200-201).

Similarly, wild duck and other game birds were accepted without hesitation—indeed, wild birds often took the place of scarce and expensive domesticated poultry. The intrepid Lady Franklin, wife of the governor of Tasmania, gladly ate a variety of local fauna—blue duck, black swan, cockatoo and even 'magpye'—on her travels overland from Port Philip Bay to Sydney in 1839 (Russell 41, 51, 58), while Katherine Kirkland relished native fowl as a change from the monotony of mutton (Anderson 201). Mrs Maclurcan, manager of the Criterion hotel in Townsville at the end of the nineteenth century, also considered native birds appropriate substitutes for European species. In her 1898 cookbook, *Mrs Maclurcan's Cookery Book: A Collection of Practical Recipes, Specially Suitable for Australia*, she gave a recipe for roast scrub turkey—'a small bird, not much larger than a wild duck, with a breast like a pheasant and flesh as white. I have often served it as pheasant and people have not known the difference' (Maclurcan 386).

Such was the enthusiasm of Europeans for native game that in the early 1860s a selection of Australian fauna was offered, and eventually sent, to the Acclimatisation Society of the United Kingdom. Chosen both for their exoticism and economic potential, they included the brush turkey (also known as the scrub or bush turkey), 'one of the best birds for the table', in the opinion of Clement Hodgkinson, together with the wonga wonga pigeon, bustard and kangaroo (205). 'Imagine our dovecotes full of these birds [wonga wonga pigeons]', wrote a member of the Society, 'selling, let us hope, at 1s. or 14d. a couple' ('Acclimatisation' 7). Praised as the 'queen of the pigeon tribe ... combining in the most delicate proportion the flavour of the pheasant and the

grouse', the wonga wonga pigeon was considered one of the best birds in the world for eating ('Acclimatisation' 7). Clement Hodgkinson described its flesh as 'quite white and very rich 'and goes on to comment that 'this bird has often furnished my bush table in the wilds of Australia with a 'plat' not to be despised by the most fastidious gourmand' (206). Mrs Maclurcan included a recipe for roast wonga pigeon in her cookbook, and Godfrey Charles Mundy relished 'a delicate wing of the wonga-wonga pigeon' with bread sauce when he dined with the acting governor of New South Wales in 1846 (Mundy 12).

Even the most unfamiliar and unlikely fauna became the subject of culinary experimentation. Inspired by curiosity and a bold spirit of adventure, Louisa Meredith and the resourceful Mina Rawson attempted to cook and eat magpie, ibis, kangaroo rat, flying fox, bandicoot, echidna and wombat. According to Meredith, echidna was similar to sucking pig though 'too rich for most palates', while wombat was 'fatter and coarser, with a strong, rank flavour' (*My Home* 255-257). Mrs Rawson appreciated bandicoot, soaked in vinegar then stuffed with sweet potatoes and onion and roasted or boiled. In her list of 'Things to be Remembered' she decreed onion sauce to accompany both boiled rabbit and boiled bandicoot (*Antipodean* 19). Flying fox, she wrote, 'are excellent eating ... once get rid of the wings and skin and you will hardly know the flesh from pork. I have had people eat it at my table without ever guessing what it was, and they have even complimented me upon the flavour of my chicken pie. ... I cut them up, along with an onion, and seasoned with all sorts of herbs, and stewed them for a couple of hours, then turned them into a pie dish and covered with a good paste. Curried, you would not know flying fish from pork' (*Cookery Book* 32). Despite their best efforts of these trail-blazers, however, some game resisted attempts to be made palatable; Mrs Rawson's cautious appraisal of ibis is hardly a recommendation; 'This bird has a very objectionable odour, and consequently is little used, but the smell is confined solely to the feathers and skin. ... If baked, he requires to be well seasoned and constantly basted, as the flesh is rather dry and it is also very dark' (*Australian Enquiry Book* 41). As for magpie, 'some persons like these birds when cooked', wrote Louisa Meredith, 'but, after exhausting all my culinary skill upon them in roasts, stews, curries and pies, I have finally given them up as not cookable, or rather as not relishable when cooked' (*My Home* 237).

Acceptance of indigenous animals and birds was facilitated by their resemblance to familiar species in the northern hemisphere, but another reason why they were so willingly embraced is that they represented meat, and meat was the most prestigious—indeed, the essential—element of a nineteenth-century dinner. The lack of hesitation in experimenting with black duck and bandicoot contrasts with a certain wariness in relation to plant foods. Nevertheless, many hardy pioneers were prepared to sample selected plant parts, often following the

example of the Aboriginal inhabitants. In western Victoria, Richard Skilbeck praised the Marsh Flag, a species of bulrush 'of which immense quantities exist in the interior'. Its roots could be dried and ground to yield 'an excellent and nutritious arrowroot' while the young new shoots, 'cut and tied up in bundles and dressed in the same manner as asparagus ... forms a most delicate vegetable and can hardly be distinguished from the former plant either in flavor or appearance' (McCorkell 151). Katherine Kirkland harvested the tubers of the yam daisy or murnong/murnong/maranong (*Microseris scapigera*), writing: 'Maranong is a root found in the ground: it is white, and shaped like a carrot, but the taste is more like a turnip. The leubras [Aboriginal women] dig for it with long pointed sticks, which they always carry in their hands. I have often eaten maranong; it is very good; and I have put it in soup for want of better vegetables, before we had a garden' (Anderson 191). Early settlers in the Adelaide Hills similarly relished murnong roots (Low 104).

In northern Queensland, Mrs. Rawson enjoyed the bush yams that 'grow at the root of a vine, and are not unlike sweet potatoes when unearthed, but have a far nicer flavour, more nutty'. She also ate the fresh new shoots of the rough-leaved native fig and considered them an excellent substitute for spinach (Rawson, *Cookery Book* 34). In more temperate regions the fleshy leaves of New Zealand spinach (*Tetragonia tetragonioides*, a native of Australia as well as of New Zealand) served the same purpose; in 1856 the Western Australian Horticultural Society recommended sowing New Zealand spinach in place of the temperamental English spinach ('Horticultural Society' 3). Writing in the pages of the *Brisbane Courier* in 1866, 'L.L.' praised the native plant as superior to the domesticated variety: 'there is a softness and mildness in its taste (added to its flavor, which resembles that of common spinach) in which it has an advantage over that herb. ... In my own house ... it has been a welcome dish for the last three years' (5). Pigweed (*Portulaca oleracea*) was another widespread and widely used green vegetable. According to 'An Overlander', writing in the *Argus* in 1886, it 'really makes a rather good salad. It has a taste something like sorrel' (10). In her *Antipodean Cookery Book* Mrs Rawson gave recipes for pigweed, boiled and served with butter or baked with cheese or made into a salad (*Antipodean* 52-53).

The strangeness of the miniscule fruit of many indigenous plants was often a barrier to their acceptance and consumption, though in comparison with leaves and roots there seems to have been a greater readiness to accept native fruits, especially when domesticated in the form of jam or a preserve of some kind. In Queensland, native limes (*Microcitrus spp.*)—'a little fruit about the size of a large gooseberry, but in colour, taste, smell and shape exactly like a small lemon' (Henning 147) were made into jam; rosellas (*Hibiscus heterophyllus*) were transformed into jelly, jam and pickle; and Mrs Rawson gathered nightshade

berries (*Solanum americanum*) which, despite their 'peculiar flavour eaten raw' could be 'converted into tarts, or jam ... as nice as any of the more familiar berry jams' (*Cookery Book* 91-92). Early settlers in South Australia organised late winter expeditions to the Barossa Ranges to gather native currants to preserve as a dark, tart jam ('Barossa' 3). In the 1860s Rachel Henning made tarts of wild raspberries (*Rubus* spp.), one of the most familiar fruits to the early settlers (Henning 231). Relatively common in tropical and subtropical regions, its habitat extended as far as Tasmania where it was described as the island's best native fruit. Though lacking the sweetness and intensity of the domesticated variety, despite being closely related and of similar appearance, it was considered by Louisa Meredith to be 'a pleasant acquaintance on a warm day' (*Bush Friends* 105). She described another native fruit, the kangaroo apple (*Solanum aviculare*), as 'extremely sweet and luscious' (*Bush Friends* 25).

At the most extreme end of the edible scale, reptiles and insects might have been less readily accepted and consumed than kangaroo or quail, but nor were they totally rejected. Clement Hodgkinson reported that he had tasted a variety of reptiles:

although nothing but the most extreme hunger could make me conquer my aversion, so as to dine on them, I must nevertheless own, that not one of them possessed any disagreeable taste. The flesh of the black snake in particular was rich and juicy, somewhat resembling in flavour the flesh of a sucking pig, whilst that of the guana was whiter and drier, and more approximated to fowl. (224)

Mrs. Rawson relished large brown grasshoppers, 'edible and very good when parched' (*Antipodean* 54), and Lady Franklin noted in her 1839 journal that 'the Corporal has eaten both moths & grubs', referring to Bogong moths (Russell 54). Witchetty grubs, a delicacy amongst Aboriginal people, were also eaten. According to 1840s pioneer Annie Baxter, one of her stockmen, Jack, was not reluctant to pop a witchetty grub in his mouth, preferring to eat them uncooked 'in the savage, undressed state'. Nor was he alone; a gentleman of Mrs Baxter's acquaintance ate them roasted, saying they tasted like filberts or hazelnuts (Baxter 55), and the redoubtable Mrs Rawson commended them:

As a matter of fact, there is nothing nasty or disgusting in these soft white morsels, any more than there is in an oyster. It is all a matter of taste. Both are often swallowed alike; for my own part, I prefer the grubs parched before eating. If done over a clear fire, on a piece of tin or a flat stone, they are delicious. I have never tried them in a curry, but feel sure they would be excellent. (*Antipodean* 54)

While many writers commended indigenous foods for personal sustenance and dietary variation, other nineteenth-century pioneers looked to their commercial potential. As early as 1829 a correspondent to the *Hobart Town Courier* identified a number of plant foods 'as well deserving the attention of the naturalist and physician', including the fungus known as 'native bread' (identified as *Tuber cibarium*). 'The Blacks of Van Diemen's land are exceedingly fond of this fungus', he added, 'and some of our countrymen subsisted chiefly on it for several days when exploring the country for the hostile natives' (*Hobart Town Courier* 2). Around the middle of the nineteenth century French political refugee Anthelme Thozet actively investigated the potential usefulness of native flora, noting that 'Our pioneer explorers and travellers ... often die of hunger although surrounded by abundance of native vegetable food in the very spot where the aborigines find all the luxuries of their primitive method of life, and not a few unacquainted with the preparation which several of the deleterious plants require, lose their lives in venturing to use them' (5). Jams, jellies and other preserves made from native fruits were sent to the 1855 Exposition Universelle in Paris ('New South Wales' 3). Near the end of the nineteenth century, Queensland horticulturists urged experimentation with native fruits in order to assess their practicality and value ('Our Indigenous Fruits' 1161) and attempts were made to cultivate the native raspberry and cross it with the English variety to improve its flavour.

These and a great many other accounts make it amply clear that indigenous foods, of both animal and plant origin, were neither systematically ignored by early colonists, nor excluded from the category of potential food. Driven by curiosity or necessity or both, nineteenth-century Europeans sampled and experimented with an extraordinarily wide range of animals and plants which formed part of the normal diet of the Aboriginal people. The necessary first step, however, was to try the new foods with an open mind and open palate, and this almost always necessitated some interaction with Aboriginal men and women, as Katherine Kirkland indicated. Even though the language of each might have been incomprehensible to the other, some communication may have taken place, and from this came a measure of understanding and appreciation. Numerous writers specifically acknowledged the assistance of the indigenous inhabitants as guides and instructors. 'Whatever the blacks eat the whites may safely try', advised Mrs. Rawson (*Antipodean* 54), who admitted: 'Speaking personally, I am beholden to the blacks for nearly all my knowledge of the different edible ground game' (*Antipodean* 54). 'It is a mistake to imagine the blacks of this country are foul feeders', she added; 'by nature and instinct they are hunters, and what they use for food you may be quite sure is the best and most wholesome' (*Cookery Book* 33). Robert Dawson similarly appreciated the practical wisdom of the indigenous people and showed an enlightened interest in their foods and foodways, writing in 1830:

'He [the Australian Aboriginal] can eat either the kangaroo or the lizard, the oyster or the grub, all of which exist in the greatest abundance around him. We can join him in the kangaroo and oyster, while we recall at the lizard and the grub. Where is the difference? The latter are as tender and as wholesome as the former. The black eats the grub without cooking; do we not do the same with the oyster. ... I would therefore recommend those who place the Australian natives on the level of brutes, to reflect well on the nature of man in his untutored state in comparison with his more civilised brother, indulging in endless whims and inconsistencies, before they venture to pass a sentence which a little calm consideration may convince them to be unjust. (152)

Without diminishing the achievements of these gastronomic pioneers, it should be acknowledged that those who willingly experimented with the food resources of the bush and lived to tell the tale represented a select few, those educated colonists with enquiring minds—the same ones who wrote the letters, journals and memoirs which testify to their adventures. It is impossible to know the extent of this experimentation nor whether it was shared by most of the educated and curious. Despite the enthusiasm of the experimenters, ignorance or disdain of natural resources seems to have prevailed and the majority of the population was probably more likely to share the views of Louisa Meredith's servants who 'looked upon our eating kangaroo as something absolutely monstrous, and turned away in horror at the thought of partaking what they expressively designated as *'just a weird beast!'* (*My Home* 252-253). Nor were the less educated alone in turning up their noses at native produce. In Sydney in the 1840s, again according to Mrs Meredith, local seafood was not considered 'a proper dish for a dinner-party' (*Notes and Sketches* 44).

Nevertheless, the acceptance, albeit limited, of native foods by European settlers in nineteenth-century Australia depended on their transformation by means of familiar culinary practices. Mrs Rawson seemed to believe that there was no ingredient that could not be accommodated by curry. European reliance on the experience and knowledge of Aboriginal people did not go so far as adopting their traditional cooking methods; rather, it was limited to determining what was edible, in both a literal and cultural sense, and to borrowing some preliminary preparation techniques. Despite sometimes enthusiastic commendation of Aboriginal cooking techniques there is no evidence that they migrated into European kitchens:

we have often partaken of a choice cutlet of turtle with our sable brethren, from a five-hundred-weight animal, cooked in its own shell; and we can aver that it was far more savoury than the spiced dishes John Bull has served up from *calipash* and *calipee*, in the shape of turtle-

steaks and turtle-soup. The fact is, the *chef de cuisine* at the Mansion House might add a recipe or two worth knowing to his cookery-book from these natural gourmands. (Mossman and Banister 294-295)

Aboriginal culinary practices were recorded and assessed, even praised, but they were rarely accepted, and only through absolute necessity rather than by preference. Over time the pioneers' need to rely on natural resources, whether kangaroo or wild duck or native greens, diminished, and with this, the opportunity to engage with Aboriginal foods and foodways. Writing in the *Brisbane Courier* in 1872, 'G.' lamented the opportunities missed through lack of interest in the food potential of the bush 'which has only to be known to be valued, and which, when prejudices are removed, might be thankfully used' (7). At the same time 'G.' hoped that a greater understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal foodways might generate 'a little kindly feeling for the blacks, who are by no means so black as they are painted' (7).

Colonial experimentation required indigenous ingredients to be culturally appropriated, plucked from one culture and incorporated into another so that the foreign became familiar. The agent of transformation, as Lévi-Strauss, Fischler, Rozin and Rozin and many others have pointed out, is cuisine; preparing the unknown and potentially risky ingredient according to a familiar technique and flavouring it with familiar seasonings facilitates its acceptance. According to Lévi-Strauss, cooking is situated between nature and culture and ensures the necessary articulation of one with the other; it transforms the raw, in the realm of nature, to the cooked, a cultural product (405). In nineteenth century Australia, essentially only one culinary model—the English—was available, yielding dishes such as boiled bandicoot, parrot pie and curried wattle birds.

In the twentieth century, as Australians became more urbanised and more distanced from the origins of their foods, so they became estranged from native ingredients. Only in relatively remote parts of the country did any appreciation of foods such as kangaroo and quandong persist. In the more densely populated coastal regions, much of the native Australian bush was razed, and with it the flora and fauna as well as the hunting and gathering practices and knowledge of both the indigenous inhabitants and the early Europeans. The introduction of sheep to Victoria destroyed the murnong, once a staple of the indigenous people (Low 108). Certain plants and animals, including the wonga wonga pigeon, are now protected. In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that indigenous foods had virtually no relevance to most settler Australians. Nevertheless, from the 1980s there has been a revival of interest in Australian 'bush foods'—a category today typically limited to foods of plant origin—which roughly coincides with the celebrations of Australia's bicentenary and debate about national identity. The motivation of necessity has long disappeared but, as in the nineteenth century, curiosity might still kindle a desire to sample indigenous foods. Today,

as Craw notes, the emphasis is on 'the gastronomic characteristics and 'gourmet' quality of such ingredients' (42) which are 'inserted into a 'modern Australian' cuisine' (Craw 54) to yield dishes such as Tetragon, macadamia and bunya nut pesto and Witjuti grubs with peanut sauce (Bruneteau 122, 54). Modern experimentation and acculturation has generally been in the kitchens of non-Aboriginal chefs whose preferred models are Mediterranean and Asian cuisines, but Aboriginal chefs such as Mark Olive are increasingly contributing to the development of dishes using indigenous ingredients.

Using cuisine as the agent of transformation, as the means to make the unfamiliar familiar, echoes the example of the early pioneers who incorporated native foods into their familiar English model. Nonetheless, two important features distinguish the nineteenth-century experimentation from the practices of today. In the nineteenth century, indigenous ingredients were cooked in home kitchens and formed the main part of a family meal, or at least a significant component; in the twenty-first century they are processed in commercial kitchens, most often into sauces, chutneys and other condiments, seasonings and preserves, and constitute a mere accessory to the meal. Further, the actual proportion of indigenous ingredients in these commercial products can be extremely small (Craw 47). Bannerman refers to this way of incorporating indigenous foods as commodification (31), putting an economic value on natural resources and marketing them as representative of Australia.

If the goal is not merely occasional acceptance but rather the co-opting of indigenous ingredients 'as national symbols' (Craw 48), or even the more ambitious one of making indigenous ingredients the base of a national cuisine, then greater efforts need to be made to harness the transforming power of cuisine. Only if they are regularly and widely consumed can indigenous plants and animals—which include the familiar fish, crustaceans and shellfish from Australian waters as well as the lesser known plant foods—be considered part of Australian food culture, understood as not only what is eaten by a significant proportion of the population but also the common preparation, cooking and eating practices and the ideas and values associated with these. Only if they are regularly and widely consumed can their consumption symbolise Australian-ness; as Bannerman notes, 'Australian cuisine is the cuisine Australians *experience*' (36).

If indigenous foods are to be a genuine part of Australian food culture—which implies their presence at backyard barbecues as well as sophisticated restaurants—they must be mainstreamed into the supermarkets where approximately four out of every five consumers buy their household's supplies. Bannerman points out that it is only with the support of the food industry that indigenous foods can find a place in mainstream Australian cooking (36), but instead of occupying just the condiment periphery they should capture territory

in the ever-increasing range of convenience foods, such as the packets and jars of stir-fry and simmer sauces and the marinated meats. The Adelaide company, *Bush Tucker Ice Cream*, offers an example, producing icecream flavoured with indigenous ingredients such as wattleseed, Davidson's plum, quandong, Kakadu plum and desert lime (*Bush Tucker Ice Cream*). Similarly, indigenous herbs and fruits should become as ubiquitous as mint and parsley in backyard gardens—and perhaps mandatory in school kitchen gardens. Some species, such as native thyme and lemon myrtle, are already commercially available, if not common, but their diffusion should be expanded; further research may be necessary to ensure that native plant species can be successfully grown in a range of environments. One of the most exciting recent introductions is the range of unique limes—the Australian Sunrise, Australian Blood and Australian Outback limes—all crosses between conventional and native citrus developed by CSIRO Plant Industry at Merbein, Victoria (CSIRO).

The relatively recent revival of interest in indigenous foods explains their rarity on our daily tables, yet the potential for them to move from a niche to a popular market is enormous. The processes of experimentation and acculturation have only just begun. The challenge facing bush foods today, apart from adequate supplies and accessibility, is to become a genuine part of Australian culture and their consumption an identifiable component of Australian identity, in the same way that pasta and pizza are associated with Italian identity. This requires their widespread acceptance and a move from the novelty and niche categories to everyday fare. While indigenous ingredients need to conform to today's culinary styles and tastes to have a role in and relevance to contemporary Australian food culture, this adaptability should not be at the expense of history and mythology. If they are to join the ranks of foods which symbolise Australian-ness, they should not only be valued for their present-day ability to add a distinctive flavour to a particular dish but also for their past, for the stories associated with their role in traditional Aboriginal culture as well as with nineteenth-century experimentation.

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Kill Skippy? Red Meat versus Kangaroo Meat in the Australian Diet

Adrian Peace

One of the less evident axioms of anthropological research is that, when significant events take place, it is as important to note the identities of those who are not present as it is to record the details of those who are. Since I have spent several years observing the social changes within a small Irish village where not attending meetings was as much a political statement as being there (Peace, *A World of Fine Difference*), I have come to regard this as a methodological imperative rather than an option. In a similar vein, I propose in what follows that if anthropologists aim to critically explore the politics behind specific 'food events' (Douglas), it is as necessary to specify which foodstuffs do not appear on the dinner table as those that do. I emphasize the influence of politics since a good deal of anthropological research into food habits details the limited relevance of nutritional considerations by contrast with the inescapable force of political ones. As is often remarked in this field of study, food is never 'just food' (Caplan 3).

Specifically, I am concerned to explain in cultural terms why kangaroo meat remains such a modest, indeed minor, presence on the Australian culinary landscape.¹ It is to be found in the upper echelons of the consumption hierarchy—gourmet restaurants—and at the lowest ones—camp fires in Aboriginal fringe camps—but nowhere much in between. This is all the more striking when few Australians can remain unaware of kangaroo meat's many nutritional attributes. It is true that, as the Kangaroo Industry Association of Australia (KIAA) occasionally trumpets, the kangaroo meat industry is worth \$250 million annually. But this represents a mere 0.5 percent of what Australian households spend on red meat each year and the figure has not changed much for some time (Ampt and Owen). Then again, more than two-thirds of the industry's output is consumed outside Australia. The most important purchaser is Russia where kangaroo meat is used as beef substitute filler in cheap sausage products, a level of dependence that caused havoc in the industry in 2009 when Russia banned all kangaroo meat imports due to the threat of e-coli contamination.²

1 Killing kangaroos has attracted relatively little attention from anthropologists, except in the context of Aboriginal society which is not relevant here. The article by Morton is somewhat dated whilst that by Lien looks at it from an international vantage point. For a brief account of the kangaroo as a 'symbol of Australia', see Hatton and Thompson.

2 For details, see Delahunty, and ABC Rural, 'Russian decision puts roo shooters out of work', 14 July 2009. <www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/2009/S2625213.htm> Accessed 5 March 2010.

Kangaroo meat was a significant subject of national debate in late 2008 when the senior government advisor and prominent economist, Professor Ross Garnaut, presented the final report of his climate change review (Garnaut) to the Federal Government. Given that the Garnaut Report had been commissioned by the Labor governments of Australia's states and territories and was later adopted by a newly elected federal Labor government, this was always going to be a closely scrutinized document. The recommendation that captured media headlines was that the country aim for a 25 per cent reduction in carbon emissions by 2020, by any standards a highly ambitious target. But what became a focus of interest across the rural sector was Garnaut's proposal to greatly expand the market in kangaroo meat. In the future, he argued, Australian farmers would have to realize their incomes through a combination of conventional commodities, tree plantations, bio-fuels and the storage of carbon in soil and trees. In the mix, he proposed a wholesale shift away from cattle and sheep production to farming kangaroos in drier parts of the country where conventional agricultural practices were increasingly vulnerable to climate change.

What particularly attracted attention was Garnaut's claim that economic modelling showed that by 2020 rangeland sheep and cattle numbers could be cut by 36 million and 7 million respectively, the kangaroo population could jump from 34 million to 240 million, and the increased availability of meat from the latter could more than offset the shortfall created elsewhere. The environmental gains would be wide-ranging because kangaroos emit minimal amounts of methane from enteric fermentation whilst cattle are especially prolific. Also important would be the replacement of hard hooves by soft paws in already variously degraded landscapes.

As Garnaut hit the airwaves to detail and defend his report, the prospect of such a marked transformation in the source of meat for internal consumption and overseas export became one of the most hotly debated political issues of late 2008. At times, discussion of this specific recommendation clearly sidelined debate over the general proposals about bio-sequestration under which it needed to be subsumed; but at all events, the prospect of kangaroo meat appearing regularly on Australia's dinner table became part of the national political discourse.

Within just a few weeks, however, the issue disappeared from view almost as quickly as it had surfaced, and having made no impact of real note on either the availability of kangaroo meat or its consumption. So the question addressed in this paper is: how did this come about and what are the lessons to be drawn about the obstacles facing those who aim to transform Australian food habits? What I propose is that, for a brief period of time and in a concentrated way with the Garnaut Report as catalyst, a host of social and cultural considerations surrounding the production and consumption of kangaroo meat came to the fore, and the fact that these were preponderantly negative in character meant

the outbreak of competing discourses was destined to be short-lived. I make no claim to this being a comprehensive account and my approach is exclusively anthropological. My aim is capture a revealing moment when social and cultural considerations ensured that the overall trajectory of debate over kangaroo meat consumption was negative, and these included factors ranging from the sheer practicality of kangaroo harvesting to the ever emotive issue of Australian nationalism.

'A few roos loose in Garnaut's top paddock?'

To the forefront of the reaction to Garnaut's proposal was the KIAA, the national organization representing all producers involved in the kangaroo meat industry as well as the source of its significant marketing initiatives. The KIAA has played a leading role in ensuring that most kangaroo meat is currently consumed by humans rather than by pets. It was hardly surprising then that the KIAA was immediately on the front foot in support of Garnaut's recommendations: he was after all proposing an enormous expansion of consumption inside Australia in a short period of time and was doing so on lines consistent with the KIAA's current marketing strategy. Garnaut wrote: 'For most of Australia's history—about 60,000 years—kangaroo was the main source of meat. It could again become important'.³ KIAA's Executive Officer was quick off the mark in support: 'I'm fond of claiming that kangaroo has been the red meat of choice among Australia's consumers for some 40,000 years. It's only in the last 100 years or so that there's been a bit of a hiccup in its marketing program'.⁴ Mr. Kelly went on to say that kangaroo meat 'is probably the most appropriate food of our times ... (because) ... roos don't emit methane when they burp (whilst) sheep and cattle do by the tonne and methane is 21 times worse than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse warming gas'.

It was, however, the nutritional properties of kangaroo meat that the KIAA chiefly proclaimed very much in line with its customary marketing practices. The KIAA had long pinned its marketing flag firmly to the mast of nutrition and, as it now climbed on the Garnaut bandwagon, it continued in the same vein. Mr. Kelly said: 'Kangaroo meat is extremely low in fat and half of this fat is polyunsaturated. But better still it's also very high in a compound called linoleic acid which, among other things, actively reduces blood pressure'. I will return to this consistent corporate emphasis on nutrition. For the moment, it is appropriate to note that, although the KIAA was undoubtedly the commercial

3 ABC News, 'Roo industry backs Garnaut climate change report', 2 October 2008. <www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/10/02/2379796.htm>. Accessed 22 January 2010.

4 The West, 'Roo cullers see gold in Garnaut report', 3 October 2008. <www.thewest.com.au/default.aspx?MeunuID=2&ContentID=100810>. Accessed 3 October 2008.

body with most to gain from Garnaut's proposal, even its Executive Officer expressly doubted the industry's ability to meet the prominent economist's targets. No wholesale substitution of kangaroo meat for beef and lamb could occur in the meat marketplace until there was 'some sort of campaign convincing the world that kangaroo is the one red meat you can eat with a carbon-free conscience'.

It was not too long, however, before distinctly hostile responses to Garnaut's proposal came to the fore, the first being that of the columnist Miranda Devine, who already had a formidable reputation for her relentlessly right wing opposition to even quite modest claims from the anthropogenic global warming movement. In her column in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and appearances in the electronic media, she had extensively attacked international and Australian scientists for exaggerating the threat of climate change, so there was a predictability to her reaction to Garnaut and she did not disappoint her followers. 'Act hastily, roo the scare tactics' began like this:

I don't want to eat kangaroo. It's dark, chewy, gamey and smelly. But, says Ross Garnaut, the Government's guru on climate change, kangaroo is what we will all have to eat in a few years. Beef and lamb will be reserved for only the very wealthy in the brave new future he envisages, in which Australia leads the world on tackling climate change. (Devine)

Not only then was kangaroo meat unpalatable, this was an elitist proposal that would foist it on the masses whilst the professional classes would continue as normal, an abominable prospect in egalitarian Australia. Devine went on to emphasize how minor Australia's contribution to global warming was by contrast with countries like the USA and China, yet the Labor government persisted with the idea of playing a leading global role in response to climate change. Her conclusion was unqualified: 'So even if you believe everything coming out of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and even if all Australians and their farm animals committed hara-kiri, the long-term impact on global warming of the mass martyrdom would be negligible'. Other prominent and populist climate change sceptics such as Andrew Bolt in Melbourne's *Herald Sun* seized on much the same point.

The next contribution was much more substantial, for it comprised the collective, enduring voice of Australia's farming population whose support for Garnaut's vision was clearly imperative. The charge—which was certainly how it appeared at the time—was led by the national president of the Australian Workers Union, Bill Ludwig. An influential power broker within Labor party ranks, he scorned the proposal that Australians consume more kangaroo meat

because of purported environmental gains ('Climate change adviser'). Whilst he emphasized to his union members that he was 'not a climate change sceptic', his immediate reaction to Garnaut was 'hello, here's another wacko'.

The response from regional and local rural groups was somewhat more restrained, but it was noteworthy that any weakness perceived in Garnaut's argument was connected with his ivory tower status, his remoteness from the grassroots where any kind of significant structural change would have to begin. For a start, the very idea of enclosing kangaroos on any scale was so impractical as to constitute a flight of fancy on the professor's part. The amount of fencing required to corral even a small population would involve inordinate capital outlay because, not only would it have to be of exceptional length, it would need to be higher and stronger than what was required for cattle.⁵ Then again, even if they were somehow contained, mustering kangaroos would be either uneconomic or downright unfeasible depending on local conditions. One farmer summarized the difficulties like this: 'Let me know when you are about to yard your first mob for the weekly auction for it will be a sight not to be missed. You might make more money if you sell seats and have a grandstand to see the fun as you mark, brand and tag them for trucking to the works'.⁶

The next set of objections related to the extensive natural resources required for kangaroo harvesting and the likely quality of the product. Environmentalists critical of the beef industry had long bemoaned the enormous quantities of water that went into producing a kilo of prime steak, but at least some kind of informed estimate was possible. By contrast, even though some authorities estimated that kangaroos consume only 13 per cent as much water as sheep (Zukerman), the corralling of large numbers would require inestimable quantities of water to maintain them, and this was to take place in rangeland areas already impacted by drought. This criticism was linked to others: kangaroos do not grow anywhere as quickly as sheep and cattle, when killed only a small proportion of their body weight is suitable for consumption (Hardman; Hacker *et al.*; Ben-Ami *et al.*), and, in the net-broadcast words of a livestock and crop farmer: 'Kangaroos are not a herd animal like cattle and sheep, and their natural instinct is to roam freely. They are highly sensitive to any obtrusive behaviour. Herding kangaroos in any circumstances causes immense stress resulting in death from myopathy or injury'.⁷

5 <<http://www.agmates.com/herald/eat-skippy-to-save-the-planet-what-a-cruel-joke/>> Accessed 3 October 2008.

6 <<http://nqr.farmonline.com.au/news/nationalrural/agribusiness-and-general/general/but-well-skip-garnauts-kangaroo-suggestion-farmers-say/1321947.aspx>> Accessed 22 January 2010.

7 <<http://nqr.farmonline.com.au/news/nationalrural/agribusiness-and-general/general/but-well-skip-garnauts-kangaroo-suggestion-farmers-say/1321947.aspx>> Accessed 22 January 2010. Comment no longer online.

Lastly, in this fast-accumulating litany of problems, it was repeatedly claimed that Garnaut was indifferent to the social and cultural consequences of his proposal. Farmers through to butchers, it was pointed out, share ways of life wholly determined by sheep and cattle production: to have these patterns of existence transformed within a mere two decades beggared belief, but not because farmers and their co-producers are attached to them by social inertia. On the contrary, recent decades have seen unprecedented changes in patterns of farm production and community organization. The introduction of further imposts on agricultural output in order to drive farmers away from beef and cattle to kangaroos could have no other consequence than further decimating the rural population.

In sum, the overwhelming response from the bush, the population on which the adoption of Garnaut's proposal would most impact, was negative. It failed to gain traction amongst the farmers who would have to be fully on board even to test its longer-term prospects. 'A few roos loose in Garnaut's top paddock?'⁸ was one of the more restrained headlines, whilst a fairly representative comment posted on the same *Farm Online* website read like this:

Garnaut's suggestion about farming kangaroos demonstrates how little he understands the land in which we live and its wildlife as he carries about his 'bubble world' modelling. All he has got to go on with this suggestion are some unevaluated, incomplete and unscientific trials by a few farmers in Broken Hill and Central Queensland ... If this is the best analysis Garnaut can come up with in relation to kangaroos, what does it say about the veracity of the rest of his modelling? Take away the fetish for numbers and it's stuffed.⁹

Another email to *Farm Online* read: 'Only an urban-based academic would have such an impractical idea and only warm and fuzzy urban-based politicians would think it a good deal!!!', and this was quickly endorsed by another farmer: 'And this clown calls himself a Professor, after these comments he might as well because no one else will. It's time we had someone with a few brains look at the situation. Get Real!!'¹⁰

What was finally most striking was the frequency with which Garnaut's proposals were condemned as 'un-Australian' in the sense of being antithetical to national well-being because their implementation might undermine the cultural integrity—'our unique way of life'—of the Australian bush. Garnaut himself,

8 <<http://theland.farmonline.com.au/news/nationalrural/agribusiness-and-general/general/a-few-roos-loose-in-garnauts-top-paddock/1323407.aspx>> Accessed 23 September 2011.

9 <<http://theland.farmonline.com.au/news/nationalrural/agribusiness-and-general/general/a-few-roos-loose-in-garnauts-top-paddock/1323407.aspx>> Accessed 22 January 2011. Comment no longer online.

10 <<http://theland.farmonline.com.au/news/nationalrural/agribusiness-and-general/general/a-few-roos-loose-in-garnauts-top-paddock/1323407.aspx>> Accessed 23 September 2011.

of course, argued strongly that his proposals for environmental reform were crucial to the country's future economic prosperity and stability in the face of anthropogenic climate change. But the collective voice from rural Australia was the reverse: as one farmer put it 'the professor needs to be educated about the Australian bush and to get out of fantasy land and into the real world where beef and sheep producers actually work hard for a better Australia'.¹¹ On talk-back radio, the voice from 'the real world' was even more vehement for here was an 'egg-head academic' in the pay of the 'socialistic Labor party' who had neither attachment to nor respect for the rural heartland and the culture 'which has made Australia what it is today'. As we shall see, nationalist ideology surfaced in other forms to this. What is important to bear in mind at this stage is that it proved a consistent undercurrent as the debate gained momentum.

'Just another fucking pest'

So Garnaut's proposals provoked a range of commentary about the prospect of kangaroo as an alternative source of meat in the Australian diet, but it was the preponderantly negative response that determined the short-lived nature of significant discussion. At this stage, however, two considerations are especially relevant.

One is that the proposals were taken up and subjected to scrutiny in different quarters of Australia's animal rights movement. But these responses rarely received much attention from the mass media outlets that the farm lobby captured to marked advantage. One of the reasons for this was their calculated and dry scientific approach to the Garnaut Report, qualities that are undoubtedly meritorious but rarely generate much media interest. A good example of this was the contribution of THINKK, 'the think tank for kangaroos' at the University of Technology Sydney, which is supported by the prominent animal protection organization Voiceless and the Institute for Sustainable Futures. THINKK produced a thorough assessment of the arguments, including Garnaut's (Ben-Ami *et al.* 2), in favour of kangaroo meat replacing sheep products. But whilst the think tank cogently covered the scientific evidence, the very nature of its scientific discourse ensured that it remained marginal to the wider public debate.

The other consideration is that it would be inappropriate to detail the relatively brief response to Garnaut without also describing the predominantly negative views that were already circulating in admittedly occasional but nevertheless on-going discussion over kangaroo meat consumption. All political exchanges

11 See footnote 10.

need to be analyzed in terms of time and place: but their impact and endurance turn on the broader discursive flows of which they are initially a product and in which they become further enmeshed. This was assuredly the case with the Garnaut proposals: both 'roos' and 'meat' taken separately, so to speak, were the subjects of on-going political dialogue well before the economist's ideas and his 'fetish for numbers' burst on the national scene.

The immediate difficulty was that, by the beginning of the twenty-first century, kangaroos were widely and definitively labelled as 'pests'. By 2008 they were near-irrevocably saddled with this stigmatized identity, and this could hardly do other than undermine their being considered a significant source of food for the straightforward reason that Australians, like most other populations (Farb and Armelagos ; Leach), have no appetite for such creatures. Pests are to be eaten only at times of outright necessity, and even then their consumption provokes a sense of disgust. To be sure, by this juncture a number of wild animals had been singled out and depicted as threatening and invasive by departments of the environment, national research organizations and rural corporate enterprises. Kangaroos were lumped into the same stigmatized category as foxes, wild cats, cane toads and camels: together, as evidenced by the proliferation of such characterizations as 'plague', 'pestilence' and 'epidemic', they presented a serious threat to national economy and society. Kangaroos were especially prominent in media imagery since photographs of 'roo hordes' in 'plague proportions' destroying everything in their path were readily available.

What distinguished kangaroos from other pests, however, was their native status, and it was this that compounded their unattractive nature as food. In official discourse, it was obligatory to explain that they were now pests by virtue of rapid population growth, declining health and, most telling, their susceptibility to disease. Since customary rangelands could no longer support their increasing numbers, kangaroos were taking on an 'unnatural' condition, and were therefore becoming increasingly disposable. This was by no means a line of argument advanced solely by government agencies and the rest. In 2005 when I was engaged in ethnographic research in peripheral parts of South Australia, it was a regular refrain amongst local farmers. One explained to me how intensely he disliked shooting the animals encroaching on his cereal crops, but his entire livelihood was at stake: 'I don't like it at all, y'know, it's Skippy, the national symbol and all that. But the plain fact is nowadays Skippy's just another fucking pest, and we've all got to deal with it'.

Anthropologists (Fiddes) and others (Lupton; Franklin) have long pointed out the ambivalent status of meat: on the one hand a source of health, strength and power, on the other a source of sickness, revulsion and disgust. Here the important point is that the management of domestic animals is nowadays so extensive as to weight the balance in favour of the former qualities—which is

precisely why exceptional developments that indicate the contrary prove so decisive. Overseas, the outbreak of mad cow disease is all the more devastating because cattle are considered so healthy, clean and risk-free. In Australia, the irrevocably wild and increasingly diseased status of kangaroos inexorably works against their being considered likely alternatives to beef and lamb where mainstream consumers are concerned.

Paradoxically, where this receives most confirmation is within the kangaroo meat industry, especially the KIAA which, by 2007-2008, was very much concerned about these persistent public perceptions. It mounted a series of public relations exercises to allay fears about kangaroo meat as a risk-replete commodity. 'Kangaroo harvesters' were mobilised to take journalists and photographers out into the bush to show how selective they were in targeting healthy animals, how humane they were in dispatching animals with a minimum of suffering. Rural abattoirs for kangaroo meat processing opened their doors to demonstrate their standards of hygiene were every bit as stringent as conventional meat processing works. In an article in 2008, it was reported:

To be licensed as a kangaroo harvester, Gebhardt not only needed to be a cool and consistently accurate shot but also undergo TAFE-approved training regulatory controls and compliance and strict hygiene requirements, before being assessed by two government departments.

So the roo shooter dons white plastic boots, he cuts meat up with clean knives, tags them, and puts them into stainless steel mobile freezers.
(Tippet)

Perhaps not surprisingly, such attempts to present the killing and processing of wild creatures as if it were as clean and sanitized a process as deriving meat from domestic animals occasionally went awry. At the end of the day, it had to be acknowledged that kangaroos in the wild had to be killed by a bullet, joeys dispatched with a blow to the head, and carcasses butchered out in the open, in other words to illuminate precisely the violent and unsavoury features of meat supply that the mainstream meat industry has thoroughly eliminated from public view (Vialles; Franklin). In an extended article 'An industry that's under the gun' in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (26 September 2007), the 'kangaroo harvester' had worked hard to convince the journalist and his photographer that he was engaged in a clean and humane operation until the ultimate question was posed:

Does he knock the joey on the head or shoot it?

'You just have to give it a hard blow to the back of the head, which is as quick as being shot. Shooting it would be ridiculous; you'd wound the joey because they're so little.

As if to underscore the point, when Maunder aims for his next kill, he accidentally hits a doe instead of the buck he wanted, although it's a clean kill.

He disposes the female's joey quickly before the journalist and the photographer see the deed. (Dow)

Despite such setbacks, the relevant point remains that in order to counter the negative influence of kangaroo meat not only being derived from wild animals but just possibly diseased at source, those involved in the industry make every effort to convince the Australian consumer that their product is as risk-free and culturally palatable as those from the mainstream meat industry. When Garnaut put forward his proposals in 2008, all such efforts were relatively commonplace. But whether they managed to impact much on the public at large remained a moot point. At all events, as mentioned previously, sales of kangaroo meat inside Australia remained relatively static.

The relevance of the mainstream meat industry was, however, more contextually consequential than this, for Garnaut's proposal coincided with one of the most expensive marketing programs mounted by Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA), the paramount nation-wide corporation in this sector. The main object of the Red Meat—Feel Good campaign was to reverse a distinct slowing up of consumption which had chiefly resulted from lower prices and effective marketing in the white meat industry, and on this count it was to prove strikingly successful. When the campaign began, red meat sales for the period 2004-2005 amounted to \$8 billion annually; in 2006-2007, they reached \$9 billion.

I have provided elsewhere a critique of the ideology behind this campaign (and the part played by anthropology in it) (Peace, 'Meat in the Genes'). In this context, the most significant consideration is that, because of the MLA's extensive financial resources, the media corporation hired to mount the campaign was able to blitz the meat marketplace with advertisements on television and magazines through to free recipes in participating butchers' shops throughout the country. The most important element was a 60 second commercial featuring Sam Neill, best known perhaps for his performance in Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park*. Other prominent figures from different walks of professional life were recruited to give the campaign scientific authority and popular appeal. The name and ideas of Lord Robert Winston, whose television series had recently been shown in Australia, were deployed to give the campaign a scientific veneer. The American anthropologist Lionel Tiger was flown in from the USA to explain why Australians revel in ritually assembling to savour a roast meal.

The campaign aimed at persuading Australian consumers that eating red meat was the most natural thing in the world to do; they should surrender to the

call of their instincts. In image and in text, the theme was that once the apes had descended from the trees and our ancestors developed the ability to hunt, *Homo sapiens* emerged as the dominant species. Eating meat became, as one advertisement put it, 'as natural as drinking water', its natural proteins 'helped our brains grow', it became integral to the creativity which culminated in our superiority over other species.

According to this 'evolutionary logic', the average Australian was thus justified in following his or her instincts where red meat consumption was concerned. Rather than heeding the cautious directives of the 'body technocrats' (Lupton, Ch. 5), still less the carping of environmentalists, engrained evolutionary instincts should determine the choice of meat as a foundation food. As Sam Neill intoned whilst watching a 'typical' nuclear family at their evening meal: 'Lean meat three or four times a week is still an essential part of the diet of the most highly developed species on the planet. Red meat. We were meant to eat it'.

It was certainly the case that the nutritional value of red meat was specified in the campaign, and it (almost) goes without saying that red meat was throughout rendered synonymous with beef products and no other. But this was secondary to the neo-evolutionary theme that red meat had played a key part in mankind's unilinear progress over the millennia. Essentially, the Red Meat—Feel Good campaign aimed to explore the neo-Darwinian concerns which inform the zeitgeist of modern societies like Australia. Plain and uninspiring issues such as nutrition—which, it will be recalled, are most prominent in the effort to sell kangaroo meat—were distinctly secondary to the imaginative and innovative claim that by instinctually consuming red meat, the average Australian was part of the process of evolution and its culmination in high consumerist civilization.

In sum, Garnaut's proposal that the paramount place occupied by conventional meat in the national diet could be filled by kangaroo meat could hardly have been more ill-timed. By 2008, not only was the stigma of being a diseased pest more firmly attached to kangaroos than ever before, but the ways in which the industry's efforts to dispel these concerns were having limited effect. In addition, Garnaut's proposal was up against the MLAs innovative campaign that tapped into significant myths in the popular imagination. That campaign was, naturally, backed by substantial corporate finances; the KIAA was and remains a financial minnow by comparison. But the latter's persistent and undoubtedly worthy emphasis on kangaroo meat's nutritional composition—'extremely low in fat and half of this fat is polyunsaturated ... also very high in a compound called linoleic acid'—seemed most unlikely to significantly boost its sales.

Conclusion: to replace or to reduce...?

By way of conclusion, it is appropriate to step back from the details of the exchanges provoked by the Garnaut Report and to emphasize the relative ease with which a narrow language about meals was uncritically reproduced across this emergent political field.

It is proper to acknowledge at this juncture that changes have been made to patterns of meat consumption in Australian society over the past few decades. As already mentioned, the Red Meat—Feel Good campaign was a response to a substantial consumer shift from red meat to white meat; and in itself, acknowledgement from within the industry that the quantity of meat consumed by the average Australian should be somewhat reduced, constituted a development with some merit. But at a somewhat different level, what was emphatically but discreetly normalized throughout the debate over Garnaut was the idea that, in the future as in the past, a proper Aussie meal still had to have meat as its centrepiece. Notwithstanding the substantial changes in eating habits which have taken place, especially amongst the younger generation with their pervasive grazing habits, whether the political protagonists were against Garnaut or with him, the taken-for-granted understanding was that the structure of a meal always revolves around the meat which constitutes its core. What remained strikingly intact throughout was the way in which meat was reproduced as ‘a metonym of the very idea of food itself’ (Lupton 28). Despite the irritation and ire that Garnaut provoked in different quarters of Australian society, there was a fundamental if implicit agreement between most that a real meal had to be structured around meat in some form or other.

The major result of this is to play directly into the hands of those economic and political organizations that profit most from prevailing food consumption habits. Regardless of their deleterious environmental impact, it ensures that their hegemony remains intact, for whether it is, say, MLA or McDonald’s, what has to be ensured is that the meat-centred meal gets preserved at all costs. The paramount requirement is that it remains embedded in the culinary and cultural habitus of the average Australian household whose members presently consume their own weight in meat each year.

To be sure, these organizations have different corporate interests. In its Red Meat—Feel Good campaign, MLA was above all concerned to ensure that the meat-centred meal was consumed in domestic settings, which is why its light humour was targeted at mothers and wives. McDonald’s, by contrast, increasingly promotes its restaurants as simulacra of the family home, places in which not only can the family meal be consumed without the labour required from the real thing, but even where it can be ascertained who and what the

family is. But behind these corporate differences, what remains absolutely intact is the notion of a particular meat-focused meal structure, a culinary and cultural food event with deep historical roots.

Far from this being straightforward, all this is distinctly problematic since at the very least what is required from an environmentalist vantage point is the overall consumption of less meat, whatever its provenance. Put simply, we consume and waste far too much food, so the major goal has to be an overall and substantial reduction in our consumption habits. The main concern is not roast beef versus kangaroo steak, eggplant versus eggs, veggie burger versus the genuine article, and so on; it is rather that, as in so many other areas of mass consumption, our habitual eating patterns far transcend what is needed, and what the earth is able to provision us with. But at least in the short to mid-term, what needs to be debated in a modern society such as Australia is whether a meal as a significant food event can only be defined according to the presence of some meat or other. In the last analysis, the problem with the Garnaut Report was that its author was by no means radical enough: his uncritical concern was with finding a replacement, not a critical focus on facilitating some reduction.

I have already indicated that nationalist sentiments played a significant part in setting the farm population against Garnaut's proposals for significant agricultural reform in Australia. By way of conclusion, it seems appropriate to point to this same insidious influence at work elsewhere, if only to underline the specifically cultural obstacles which stand in the way of even the modest ambition of reducing meat consumption levels. Consider the influence of 'banal nationalism' of the type exemplified by, and embodied in, the government-funded advertisement that in 2010 promoted the celebration of Australia Day. This advertisement was to be found in a wide range of publications prior to 26 January, and it was headed 'Your Country Needs You TO BBQ LIKE YOU'VE NEVER BBQ'D BEFORE This Australia Day'. The coloured illustration depicted three positively Aryan-type figures, two men and one woman, each clutching a cellophane-wrapped plate of conventional red meat—chops, sausages and steak—and in the background, several family members milling around a barbeque draped with the Australian flag. In this fashion, through the consumption of red meat products at this unquestionably significant food event, Australians were exhorted by their own government to 'Get Involved in This Australia Day'.

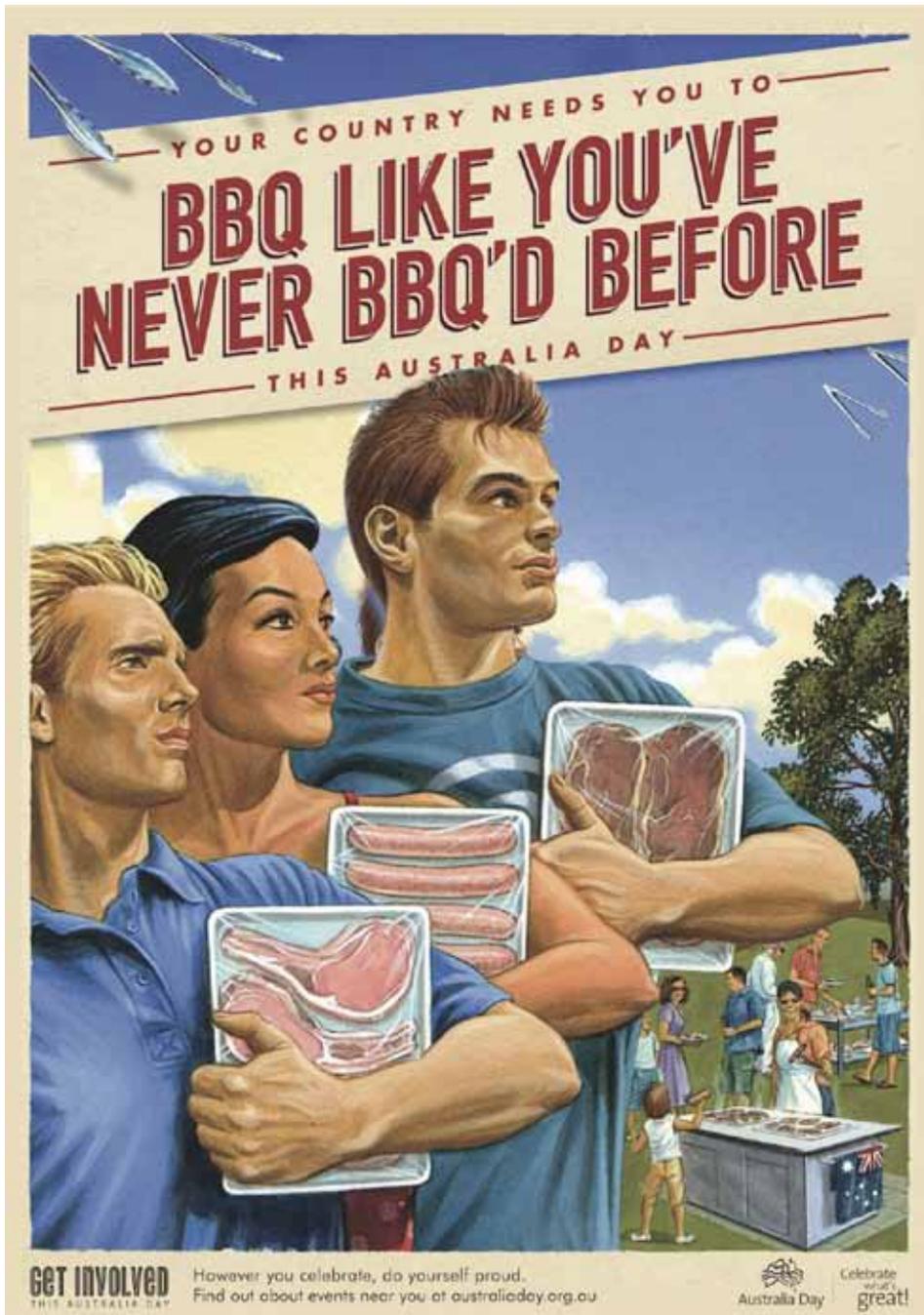


Figure 1: 'Your Country Needs You to BBQ LIKE YOU'VE NEVER BBQ'D BEFORE This Australia Day.' Advertisement, 2009.

Reproduced by permission of the National Australia Day Council.

The important point about 'banal nationalism' is the way in which entirely ordinary and unassuming items are marshalled and represented to reinforce a 'gentle and comfortable sense of belonging which is low key, taken for granted, but immensely sustaining' (Billig 6). In this advertisement (Figure 1), the consumption of red meat is strikingly associated with ideas as to what it means to be a good Australian, of what is entailed in being a proper citizen. It is the sheer ordinariness of the link humorously forged between a particular type of food and a specific understanding of national identity that is most telling. When federal and state governments throw their financial weight and much else behind promotion of such a banal notion, even the prospect of promoting a different language about meals to that which metonymically associates them with conventional red meat seems a distinctly distant one.

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Swimming with Tuna: Human-Ocean Entanglements

Elsbeth Probyn

We're on a pontoon somewhere in the middle of Boston Bay, at the bottom of the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia—the birthplace of tuna ranching. The fairly short ride over in the Adventure Tour boat was enough to churn my stomach, and the sideways swaying of the pontoon isn't helping my general queasiness. I can handle anything if I am in water. One of my favourite pastimes is to swim straight out into the middle of the ocean, but this has been curtailed by being in South Australia, home of the great white pointer shark and assorted cousins. I tend to swim on the water rather than *in* water. Analogous to a critique levelled by Aboriginal people about how whites walk through country rather in it, I have too often floated above the densely populated world of the sea. It's a one-sided view of the world that we need to re-address if we are to do justice to the immensity of human-ocean entanglements.

Steve, our handsome tour guide, has given us all sorts of information gathered over some 20 years of his life as a prawn trawler man, deep sea fisherman, and now occasional guide on his mate, Matt Waller's tour boat. Matt got out of fishing to set up Adventure Tours, a fully eco-offset enterprise, which takes tourists from around the world to see at first hand tuna, and sea lions. He recently has added swimming with great white sharks—which is beyond me. Matt is clear-eyed about the difficulties facing the fishing industry, which includes the fierce and ultimately ecologically untenable competition for dwindling world-wide stocks, and long and dangerous work for a family man. But he also remembers vividly what he calls the 'high of fishing'. Those were the days when the fish were easy and Port Lincoln would be full of young hard working guys with lots of money ready to party. Money doesn't flow as easily these days, and the town is besieged with worries about the future of the fisheries and of fishing itself. Matt himself is in a fierce price war with another outfit that coined the name, 'Swim-with-the-tuna', some years after Matt had initiated the idea. Such are the emotions that normally voluble fishers around town go quiet when I mention the feud.

Out at sea our boat pulls up next to a floating enclosure—heavily protected against the pirates who will steal the fish if they can. We've also reached the pinnacle of our tuna tour and here we are with a pen of some 300 juvenile Southern Bluefin tuna. The idea is now to jump in with them—as they speed for pilchards. Apparently they can go from 0 to 70 km faster than a Porsche and

with better brakes. Steve and his young helper show us how the tuna rise to the surface when they are fed. He has several crates of frozen pilchards, which he tries to get us to handle. He shows us how to carefully hold the pilchard from its tail above the water so that the tuna don't get your hand in their haste for food. Commercial pens will hold a couple of thousand tuna and they consume huge amounts of feed—sometimes whole blocks of frozen feed are placed in the pens. Even relatively small operators will spend \$3 million in pilchard feed a year. Unlike salmon farms, the tuna farms in the Eyre Peninsula apparently don't use antibiotics, and because they are so far out there are fewer problems with the nitrate in their faeces polluting the water.¹

While the others mill about and drag on wetsuits, I dive in. I can feel the fish beneath my feet. Then the young boy helping out on the tour chucks pilchards at me. Sure enough these sleek beauties zoom towards me at top notch, get the fish and then stop just short of my nose. It's an eerie introduction to meeting tuna. I eat several tins of their cousins each week—mainly skipjack; Bluefin are much too expensive to eat any way but raw or slightly seared. The chances are slim that you can eat Bluefin tuna in Australia given the massive export to Japan. Within 16 hours of being speared in the head in Boston Bay, a Southern Bluefin tuna will be delicately carved and served to discerning customers at a sushi bar in Tokyo.

Diving and floating miles above the bottom of the sea, dodging pilchard debris and flirting with passing tuna—is this a commingling of human and tuna, or just the pretty face of an industry out to render extinct these magnificent beasts of the ocean?

It's my aim to further an argument that recognises and materialises human-fish-water entanglements, or what Michel Callon calls 'a network of relationships in which social and natural entities mutually control who they are and what they want'). This is a challenge on many fronts. Focusing on the proximities of natural and social entities threatens to veer into anthropomorphism—how can I but project onto the tuna my thoughts about what they are? At the same time it can radically challenge what we know about the limits of human and nonhuman existences. Bringing this abstract (and well-trodden) framing down

1 The pros and cons of aquaculture are unfortunately too vast to do justice to here. Suffice to say that there are heated arguments on both sides, and also that aquaculture covers an immense variety of practices, and also spans history: small scale pond aquaculture has been used in Asia for millennia and in the work, for instance, of the *WorldFish Centre* headquartered in Malaysia, continues to promote aquaculture as the best means to feed the poor in developing countries, see <<http://www.worldfishcenter.org/wfcms/HQ/article.aspx?ID=827>>. Accessed 8 June 2010. On the con side, badly managed fish farms have been responsible for contaminating wild stocks both genetically and with disease, and contributing to the pollution of oceans—estimates about the faecal residues compare one fish farm to a town of 60,000. The tuna farmers of Port Lincoln as well as all the town's inhabitants remember vividly a catastrophe in the mid 1980s when for some reason the ocean currents quickly changed and all the farmed tuna died in a few short hours.

to earth, swimming with tuna provokes questions about their conditions of existence. David Goodman's take on the enmeshment of social and natural is straightforward: 'to explore nature-society co-productions' (34). While I may have learned a fair amount about tuna through reading about the various aspects of their 'life'—from the analyses of fishing trade through to what makes their flesh so delicious—being in their milieu (or at least their medium, given that they probably prefer not to be in pens) raises different questions. And as I wallow in an experiment where humans seem to be at the beck and call of the tuna ('feed me'), I am viscerally out of my domain. Indeed I feel very green. It is a greenness that Gisli Palasson, the Icelandic anthropologist, captures in his understanding of seasickness, which he says can be seen as a kind of culture shock—indicating a lack of 'emotional and physical manifestations of mastery and enskilment' (905).

Eating into the global

There is perhaps no area where the global inserts itself into the intimate and emotional lives of people than in the realms of food production and consumption. The gamut of emotions that coincide with eating run from disgust (Darwin's 1872 example of visceral disgust involved dried meat and a 'native') through to the sublime of oyster eating (most beautifully conveyed by M.F.K. Fisher; see also Probyn, 'Interests'; Kurlansky).

While the worldwide circulation of food and people has spectacularly accelerated through the ever-increasing complexity and reach of global technology, supply chains and logistics, food has long travelled and connected very different peoples and land. As the economic historian Harold Innis argued in the 1920s and 1930s, staples such as fish were integral to the development of the economic world as we know it. Innis' classic thesis on the cod fisheries of the Canadian Maritime (1940), demonstrated the far-reaching effects of one staple economy. From the sixteenth century onwards, the Grand Banks of Newfoundland became a battleground between the Old World powers: 'Cod from Newfoundland was the lever by which she [England] wrested her share of the riches of the New World from Spain' (52). In Innis' terms, food staples caused empires to rise and fall as their routes rearranged the political economic face of the world.

The role of food has continued to be the site through which global politics are played out in local and highly emotional ways. The field of food, understood in Bourdieu's sense as a field of forces and a field of struggles (30), is also a minefield, which pits ethnicity, gender, globalisation and class privilege. Recently, 'feel-good' food politics have increased in many sections of the developed world, with the rise of farmers' markets and other 'alternative' food outlets in most urban

Western regions. This plays out in public debates and at times polemics about 'food miles' and carbon footprints of what we eat. As I've argued elsewhere (Probyn, 'Interests'), this has a tendency to become a fetishization of the local, which can lead to a rather parochial politics of food. Michael Winter calls this 'defensive localism', which he sees emerging from a mixture of 'parochialism and nationalism' (30). Class, gender and ethnic privileges and distinctions are often overlooked in this putative progressive food politics. One of the original founders of the Italian Slow Food movement, Fabio Parasecoli, reminds of us some of the shortcomings of some food politics. His critique focuses on the North-South divide, as well as the gender bias in the rhetoric of Slow Food:

In a world doomed by pollution, biological homogenization and globalization, women are transformed into the defenders of the holy environment that constitutes the family. Their role would be to stay at home and protect it against the evil forces that haunt our present. (38)

Julie Guthman's critique of the neo-liberal force of such politics has incisively revealed the moralistic tone and the ethnic- and class-blindness of much of the 'alternative' food circles ('Neo-Liberalism'; 'Can't Stomach'; 'Fast Food'). Writing about the rise of organic from the 1980s in northern California, of which the most successful product is organic salad mix or what the growers call 'yuppie chow', Guthman questions the motivation of 'those whose moral sensibilities increasingly privileged environmental concerns over social ones' ('Fast Food' 54). The key thrust of her critique concerns the ways in which the privileged have taken on the congratulatory mantle of self-reflexivity in eating at the expense of those others who are said to lack the cultural capacities to know that local, organic, slow food *tastes* better.

Like many feminists much of my own work has been on questions of subjectivity and was prompted by Adrienne Rich's call to 'begin ... with the geography closest-in' (9). I responded to Rich's politics of location and the politics of positionality with detailed descriptions of my body. That this body, my body, had an overly reflexive relationship to eating led me into analyses of anorexia and control ('The Anorexic') and then away from food and into sex (*Outside*) and then back to food *and* sex (*Carnal*). Working through a Foucauldian and then a Deleuzian frame, I sought to examine subjectivity obliquely through eating.

However, I want to go beyond my previous work, and also a prevalent feminist focus on questions of human sovereignty and agency under the regime of neo-liberalism. With Gerry Pratt and Victoria Rosner I want to go 'beyond the usual register of map-reading' (at which I am atrocious) to try to convey the sounds, smells and tastes of the material ground of what we eat (17). Drawing on fieldwork, I want to consider how micro and very intimate practices intersect with the macro forces of supply chains and foodways—in many ways similar

to what Ian Cook calls ‘geographies of food: following’. As Terry Marsden and Jonathon Murdoch argue forcefully about the complexity of global-local food forces, this is ‘to recognize that some food spaces are integrated into global systems of food provisioning while others are integrated into regionalized and localized relations’ (1-2).

Following tuna, following fishers ... the argument I am trying to construct (and this is very much a work-in-progress) of necessity takes me away from debates about representation. In geography, as Sarah Whatmore and many others have argued, the very matter of life and the planet need to be rethought. Whatmore argues that ‘cultural geographers have found their way (back) to the material in very different ways that variously resonate with ... the most enduring of geographical concerns—the vital connections between the *geo* (earth) and the *bio* (life)’ (601).

You could call this an alimentary ecology where, as Deborah Bird Rose and Emily Potter have respectively argued: ‘Matter is recognised as having the ability to “express” itself in complex and creative ways’ (Rose cited in Potter). The research that fuels my interest builds on ways of thinking intimacy, emotions and globalisation in a different voice, and is part of a larger project on how the relationships between taste (consumption) and place (production) are being rearranged in the globalised food system.² Here I want to explore taste in its various guises, in a conscious move away from the dominant sociological framing of taste as first and foremost, if not always, about social distinction. As with Whatmore’s approach, I will employ a self-conscious act of ‘storying’, what she calls ‘an envoy of the recuperation of “materiality”’ (601), or what elsewhere I call a rhizo-ethology of bodies (Probyn, ‘Eating for a Living’). This casts research as a wending through ethnographic observation and the stories told by different individuals. It places me as a myopic mole burrowing along various pathways and networks, occasionally morphing into the stance of meerkat surveying the topography. My concern here is what I am calling the interests of taste and place. Taking ‘interests’ as both economic and social, and as also driven by curiosity, the etymology of ‘interest’ refers us to the ‘inter—esse’, and the materiality of the different forms of being in-between. Isabelle Stengers, the Belgian feminist philosopher of science, uses the etymology of interest to talk ‘of bearing witness to the many aspects of entangled slow stories’. There are just so many interesting slow stories about the place of taste and the tastes of places. Telling them, listening to them and passing them on are part of the process whereby we relearn to be interested in the material connections of taste and place. This is for me one aspect of a crucial ethics of eating, of taste and place.

² Elspeth Probyn, ‘Taste and Place: The Transglobal Production and Consumption of Food and Drink.’ Australian Research Council Discovery Project. 2009-2011.

Tuna tastes

Let's go back to the tuna. So there I am or rather there we are splashing around together in water dense with pilchard-feed—a strange mixture of human and non-human swimmers. The sardines are an integral part, even if sardine fishers may feel like handmaidens to the economies of tuna. The tuna farms take 98% of the sardine and pilchard quota to fatten up the fish. It's a strange business whereby one fish goes to feed another. The South Australian Sardine Fishery is South Australia's largest volume single species fishery. In 2008–09, 26,692 tonnes of sardines, with a value of \$16,331,000 were harvested.³ Apparently 25 pounds of sardines go into every pound of farmed tuna.⁴ Despite being named one of Oprah Winfrey's 25 'super foods',⁵ it is tough for the sardine industry to break away from their ties with the tuna farms. When I talked to one veteran about the possibility of setting up a side venture, he shrugged in despair. 'What would be the point?'⁶

So in every way, tuna are in a league of their own—the fastest predators in the sea, they travel huge distances in their annual migration. Southern Bluefin can grow to 200 kilos, whereas their Northern Bluefin cousins get even larger—up to 700. The Southern Bluefin spawns in the Indian Ocean near Java and from there the juveniles make the trip to the Western coast of Australia and around through to the Great Australian Bight. They are amazing swimmers, and in fact have to keep moving because they get oxygen from water flowing across their gills. In their long journeys they can speed along at up to 70 km per hour when their fins retract into their bodies, and eyes close to make them into the most perfect aqua-dynamic eating-swimming-breathing machine. For me and for many, this is what makes tuna so special. For fisheries management they pose a particular problem in that they routinely range across the jurisdictions of so many countries. As Robin Allen argues for the FAO, 'Free riding states would be able to enjoy the benefits of the efforts of conservation made by responsible states' (2). For me, they encapture globalization itself: moving widely around the world, they are landed in quite specific economic relationships. Tuna also starkly sum up the quandaries of food production and consumption: as the top of their food chain, they eat anything that goes—squid, rockfish and sardines.

3 <<http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/fisheries/sa/pilchard/pubs/sardines-re-assessment.pdf>>. Accessed 17 April, 2010.

4 See *Sustainable Sushi* website: <<http://www.sustainablesushi.net>>. Accessed 28 October 2011.

5 See <<http://www.oprah.com/food/The-Superfood-Menu>>. Accessed 10 June 2010.

6 This unnamed sardine fisher was deeply pessimistic about the future of fishing—and in fact was planning on selling up and moving away. Later, however, at an event in Adelaide I happened upon sardines for humans. Jim Mendolia founded the Fremantle Sardine Company to further the dream of his father, Frank—a fisher originally from Sicily whose dream it was to establish a sardine processing plant in Fremantle, Western Australia. Jim has ties with the Port Lincoln sardine fishers and takes some of their catch, and turns them into lovely salted and marinated fillets for the Asian markets, and now gradually for Australian consumers.

There is a great deal of debate about whether Northern or Southern Bluefin taste better but as we'll see because of human-aqua-cultures, the taste of and for tuna is changing. But what is undeniable is that it really would be better for all if we were to eat fish lower on the food chain—in other words, we should be eating the tuna's food.

While humans have been eating them for millennia the techniques and technologies that mediate human-tuna interaction have changed considerably—leading to huge increases in tuna's value, and of course massively decreasing their stock. In Australia, coastal Aboriginal people on the southeastern part of NSW and in the Eyre would have caught tuna using baskets when they came into shallow waters. The baskets on display at the Museum of South Australia look very much like prototypes of the purse-seine nets now used commercially. It is only relatively recently that Westerners have taken to tuna. The Eastern seaboard of North America had long had large stocks of tuna but until the Japanese came calling in the 1960s and 70s they were seen as inedible trophy fish. People would catch them, have their photo taken with the dead fish and then dump the tuna in the landfill. That all changed when in the 1970s Japanese airlines began to experiment with loading tuna from the Eastern seaboard of North America to fill their empty cargo holds after delivering electronic goods to American markets. As Sasha Issenberg describes it, tuna went from being pet food to one of the most valued natural resources in the space of two decades—an event 'that has little parallel in history' (xii).

The distribution of the tuna fisher population in Australia is historical, ethnic and geographical. The Italians (the Puglisis) rule the southeastern coast from Ulladulla to Eden, NSW, and the Croatians own the sea turf in the Eyre Peninsula. In Ulladulla there have been Puglisis in fishing from before WWI when the first family emigrated from Sicily first to Wollongong and then followed the fish down the south coasts of NSW. Waves of familial migration consolidated the family's name among fishers, although as several of the cousins told me, there was considerable resistance among the Anglo-Celt and primarily farming community to their acceptance.

There is a curious but strong bond between Port Lincoln, which Matthew Flinders found as he was charting the coast in 1802, and the tiny town of Kali in what is now Croatia. But I'll let the tuna fishermen I interviewed tell the tale.⁷

⁷ The interviews were conducted in Port Lincoln over three weeks in February 2010, and then again over two weeks in March 2011. Unless noted, I have with their permission used real names. My thanks to Len Stephens, the CEO of the Collaborative Research Centre on Seafood for his help in contacting people in the industries. And of course my thanks to those I interviewed. The interviews were open-ended, and lasted for one to two hours.

First off is Dinko Lukin, one of the original tuna barons (Port Lincoln is widely known as the capital of Australian millionaires made nearly exclusively from tuna). I met up with Dinko at his factory just outside of town, which certainly doesn't look like a millionaire's pad. Dinko is now in his late 70s, and he arrived in Melbourne from Croatia in the 1950s. I was early, so I wandered down to the water to look at the 'resting' farming pens. These are the commercial ones, much bigger than the one I swam in. Pelicans and other seabirds line the pen, hopefully waiting for some action.

Back at his office I meet Dinko and a young woman—both have stunning blue eyes. It turns out that the young woman is his second wife and from Thailand. We sit and he looks at me intently—soon it turns out that he is a bit of a charmer, and has me girlishly giggling in no time. I am to find out that the tuna boys are a seductive lot—something to do with those blue eyes and intensity, and who knows maybe power. In the 1960s Dinko built his first tuna boat, the *Orao*, which held a tiny crew of seven. This was in the days that tuna were long-lined and poled. The Japanese had been long lining in the Java where they spawn and into Australian waters since the 1950s. This requires large boats, which subsequently became the infamous 'factory ships' when the Japanese came up with the technology to freeze fish on board at minus 60 degrees. In the early 1960s the Japanese boats would catch over 81,000 tonnes of SBT. By comparison, in 2005 the quota set by Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna for *all* member countries was 14,000 tonnes although it is estimated that the total global catch was more like over 21,000 tonnes. The fishermen in Port Lincoln are stewing over this year's quotas, which reduced the Australian allowable catch by 25%, down to 4,015 tonnes. Several of the big operators complain that they can fulfil their allowable catch in a day or two of fishing a year.

Back then to Dinko's little boat, which was limited to surface catches with lines and poles. The tuna were caught on line and then hoisted up by pole. It didn't do much for the tuna, who were bruised in the operations. That's unthinkable now that the price for perfect fresh tuna can be over 600 dollars per kilo at the Tsukiji markets. The work was hard on the men too—you can imagine what they faced in the waters of the Great Bight. Dinko's son, Dean, was a testament to the muscles required—he was the first and only Australian ever to win an Olympic gold in heavy weightlifting in the 1984 Olympics, and was said to test his talent in the famous Tuna Toss, hosted by John West at the Port Lincoln Tunarama.

As Dinko describes it, life was pretty good in those early days. 'The crew did not feel any fear as they faced the strongest elements that a god created.' Not only didn't they fear the elements ('I'd never give one inch to the weather'), they preferred going out in bad weather. It was said by his crew that the *Orao* was

a magic boat, often hauling in huge amounts of tuna when no one else could. Later magic was aided by technology with the use of spotter planes, which fly low over the seas reporting down to the boats on the location of the large schools that swim close to the surface.

With the downturn of stocks in the 1980s, the fish seemed to have disappeared. According to *Greenpeace*,⁸ by the end of the 1970s ‘overfishing had depleted the stocks to 2.5% of the original population’. Long lining is seen as responsible for the worst of by-catch. Now mainly used by the Japanese (according to non-Japanese sources, that is), these boats work 24 hours a day laying out fishing lines of up to 100 kilometres long, each carrying up to 3000 baited hooks. Blaming long-liners and ‘the Japanese’ for the downfall in stocks doesn’t bear much scrutiny. While, as I discuss later, the Japanese taste for raw tuna has spread around the world, and Japan remains the hub for world prices on sashimi grade and usually Bluefin tuna, there is considerable debate about the pitfalls of fishing methods within Japan. The Tokyo-based Organisation for the Promotion of Responsible Tuna Fisheries (OPRT) has been quite successful in bringing together the large tuna long liners from around the world. According to *World Fishing & Aquaculture*, a UK based site for commercial fishing, OPRT has managed to bring on board 90% of the world’s large scale tuna long liners over 24 metres in length in 12 countries. One of the significant problems in steering the industry towards better and more sustainable fishing is the number of boats that sail under Flags of Convenience (FoC)—which is to say those that take on flags from smaller and non-member states, who routinely disregard national and international attempts to regulate the industry. Japan for its part has committed to not buying fish from such vessels, however the routes of fish sales are circuitous (‘Japan Urges’).⁹

The purse seiners that travel the world are hardly ecologically correct either, and in fact they scope up juvenile tuna to the detriment of all concerned—the fishers make much less money from small Bluefin or other potential sashimi grade tuna because of their lack of the distinguishing and sought after fat on the mature fish, and of course catching juveniles can only lead to the further decimation of the stock.

That is, if the smaller fish are merely turned into canned tuna. This is where Dinko enters the story again. When the quotas hit in the 1985, Dinko was the

8 <<http://www.greenpeace.org/australia/issues/overfishing/our-work/save-our-tuna>>. Accessed June 10, 2010.

9 For a focused analysis of Japan’s tuna industry, and its links to development strategies in the Pacific, see Kate Barclay. As Barclay and others have pointed out, fish and fishing is particularly important to Japan given its very limited capacity to feed itself from terrestrial sources. Historically this has produced very close relations between the government and Japanese fisheries (Barclay and Koh). For another view of the special relationship that fish has in Japan, see also Bestor’s ethnographies of sushi in Japanese culture as well as his account of Tsukiji Fish Market (‘When Sushi Went Global’ and *Tsukiji*).

first to come up with the idea of cultivating tuna. Now the idea of catching the tuna in purse seine nets is practiced the world over. The nets round up the tuna a bit like cattle are wrangled, and very slowly and carefully transfer them into sea cages and then slowly drag them back to port. Back then everyone thought that Dinko was mad. But in fact the idea made absolute sense: catching a smaller tuna and then feeding it up 'effectively doubled the fishermen's quota as the limit on their catch was determined by the weight of the fish caught in the wild, with any weight gained in captivity a bonus' ('About Dinko').

As I talk to Dinko, we travel through his stories of glory, and of his numerous 'firsts'. But underlying there is another story—one of migration, of families torn apart in divorce and greed, and of sadness at the end of his life. His son, Dean, apparently no longer talks to him and the sign 'Dinko and Sons' has had the last bit painted through. As I leave he asks me if I like tuna. 'Yes' I say a little hesitantly because I'm ready to leave now. He directs me to the back office, which looks like a junk yard of old computers, equipment and boxes, and he tells me to climb up and get a box of what is labeled John West tuna in brine. When I pass it to him he gives it back saying proudly that the box contains unmarked tins that are Southern Bluefin Tuna in oil—yum, we've been eating the most expensive tuna sandwiches ever since. I leave with my tins of tuna, and as I say goodbye he looks at me closely as his wife joins me. 'She is older than she looks—45—she must be your age.' I laugh at the compliment—she looks 20 and I look my age.

Watery commons

Released from the magnetism of an aging tuna baron I can ponder more closely the backdrop of jurisdiction and fisheries management, which frame the tuna industry now. A meeting with a very senior fisheries expert puts the boasting into perspective. He reminds me of what he calls 'the first principles', the first of which is that the ocean and all within are common resources. This, of course, recalls Garrett Hardin's infamous essay, 'The Tragedy of the Commons'. In 1968 Hardin, a genetic biologist, debated the consequences of population growth in terms that are instructive and provocative:

It is fair to say that most people who anguish over the population problem are trying to find a way to avoid the evils of over-population without relinquishing any of the privileges they now enjoy. They think that farming the seas or developing new strains of wheat will solve the problem—technically. (1243)

In other words, we want to eat our tuna too. Hardin's response wends through a critique of the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

which a year before had framed the family—and most crucially its size—as ‘the natural and fundamental unit of society’ (cited in Hardine, 1246), to which Hardin declares that the ‘Freedom to Breed is Intolerable’. He finishes with the argument that ‘social arrangements that produce responsibility are arrangements that create coercion, of some sort.’ Hardin’s pithy phrase is: ‘Mutual Coercion, Mutually Agreed Upon’ (1247).

This is precisely the structural framing of fisheries management, which according to my senior bureaucrat began in 1968. The law of the commons comes down to enforcing measures of in-put versus out-put—as he put it, it is about controlling the number of dead fish. In the case of Australia, fisheries management has been set up as a kind of proxy custodian to ensure some hope that extraction will be balanced by regeneration. In-put control sought to stem the diminishing stock by controlling the size of nets, and delimitation of fishing grounds and seasons, whereas out-put control is legislated through the quota system. The logic behind an individual quota system is that by making the commons into ‘owned’ or rented patches of sea, it is in the self-interest of the fishers to preserve stocks. As a tool of conservation it is hardly perfect: as Palasson and Helgason argue, it can also be an element of privatization. However, in some ways it removes competition—if, as happened last year, you catch your yearly quota of SBT in a couple of days, that’s it. The yearly cuts to quotas have also substantially reduced the fishing fleet. For tuna it went from 250 tuna operators to 22, all located in Port Lincoln.

The poster boys of tuna

I next meet with the younger generation, which according to Christian Pyke—the SA Sardine Industry Association’s executive officer—are the best skippers out, with a depth of ‘enskilment’ and tacit knowledge passed on from father to son—but never to daughters: women are believed to be unlucky on board.

I meet Rick Kolega and Semi Skojarev at the bar at the fancy new marina outside of town. The marina was built by number one tuna baron, Sam Sarin. Number two, Tony Santic, puts his money into horses including the multiple Melbourne Cup winner Makybe Diva (of whom there’s a statue in town). Number three is Hagen Stehr, who as we’ll see spends his money on science. In terms of their quotas, Sarin owns a bit over 2000 tonnes, or 40% of the Australia quota, Santic has 1,200 and Stehr, 700 tonnes. It’s hard to give an exact account of how much that is worth as the price fluctuates so much, but let’s say it’s between \$110,000 and \$180,000 per tonne. Rick and Semi’s company SEKOL has 10%, so they’re not starving either.

In fact no one is. From the perspective of the marina, the place is flush with yachtsmen, trophy wives, and money. Rick and Semi also come from Kali, and are keen to recount their parents' stories—Semi's father is Dinko's first cousin. Sitting with a glass of wine facing the mansions built around the marina, they seem to relive the past. Rick's parents fled Soviet Croatia/Yugoslavia by boat to Italy, were interned in Italy and then escaped by foot to Paris. From there they managed to get on a boat to Sydney and after several camps there they made the trek to Port Lincoln. Semi's father got caught trying to get out of Kali, but tried again and again until he too arrived in Sydney to eventually find his way to the tuna. Both men have been on the boats since they were teenagers but in the late 1980s they took advantage of the introduction of quotas to buy and merge with others to form their company, which like all the others is 95% focused on the Japanese market. With Dinko and other Croatian-Australians, they went back to post-Soviet Croatia to set up tuna farming there. Some see this technological transfer as overly patriotic—and to the wrong country. Others comment on the volatile mix of ethnicities and egos.

As far as I can see Rick and Semi are nice guys who seem to hold the community close. While there is worry about generational continuity, the old adage of the second generation squandering the wealth doesn't seem to hold. Semi and Rick are first and foremost businessmen—although they still do go out on the boats, and you can see how much they love the ocean, their priority is diversifying their company. They know it is important to develop the local market, and that 'it's nice to know the product stays in Australia' but add as a caveat 'if the prices are right.' They're also fed up with competing with foreign imports into Australia. For instance, the prawn market is dominated by Thai and Vietnamese product.¹⁰

Arguably the most famous face in tuna is that of Hagen Stehr, the owner of Clean Seas, which is now experimenting with breeding tuna on land. Stehr is a larger than life type of guy—he slipped off ship as a member of the Foreign Legion, fell in love with a local girl, and made his first million in ways that don't get talked about—much. Since then he has poured millions into a joint venture with the Japanese and Kinko University. The idea is that tuna larvae can be bred into fingerlings at the Arno Bay site, which then can be raised into fully-grown fish. It's beginning to happen but for many it is in the realm of science fiction. However Kinko University and its affiliated company A-Marine Kindai are already selling their fully 'artificial' tuna, which comes 'with an "authenticity declaration" covering its life history, from its 20 days of gestation to its diet

10 Aquaculture in Thailand and Vietnam is now a huge enterprise with many worried about the sustainability of the industry. While aquaculture has been practised in Asian countries, and especially China, for millennia there is now serious concern about the havoc it is wreaking on small-scale fishing communities.

in an open-water facility to the material on netting surrounding it' (Barron). They are of course tiny compared to the big tuna brokers—it comes as a bit of a surprise that Mitsubishi is one of the world's biggest Bluefin tuna brokers.

Entangled slow stories and fast fish

So far I have presented the merest tip of an iceberg of information. The salient points remain, and they are all emotional: is eating Southern Bluefin tuna sustainable? To whom does it matter and why, and where? As I've sketched out, tuna is the lifeblood of Port Lincoln. Although it is estimated that less than half the town's 14,000 population is directly employed by the tuna industry, the indirect ties are much tighter. For instance, the sardine industry directly employs over 200 people. With festivals like the Tunarama, which has been going since 1962, and tour operations such as Matt Waller's, the buzz of the town mainly comes from tuna.

However, as the debate and politics around the tuna industry becomes ever more heated, there is increasingly a global distaste about the tuna. Much of it is media-fed, and with the release of the BBC documentary *The End of the Line*, food businesses such as the mega UK Prêt-a-manger now proudly announce that their tuna sandwiches are sourced from skipjack. More upscale enterprises such as Nobu have taken Bluefin sushi off their menu. *The End of the Line* presents a fair and grim portrait of the state of fish stocks. However the more sensational American documentary, *The Cove*, which won an Oscar, is drenched in hysterics against the Japanese—and as critics such as Emma Tom have pointed out, the rampant anthropomorphism which depicts dolphins as our childhood friends does little to address the complicated issues to do with who eats what, where.

There is no doubt that the Japanese are regularly fingered as the cause of tuna stocks' demise. Japan is of course central to the value of Bluefin tuna—they are what Issenberg calls 'the brokers of taste' (247). While Japanese companies are now huge vertically integrated entities, as Theodore Bestor strongly argues, one can't overlook the ways in which fish is linked to 'cuisine, work, gender and class identity' (37). Indeed he makes the point that fish in Japan lead what he calls 'the social life of seafood', whereby highly prized fish like tuna have 'cultural biographies'. So while the Japanese gave value and turned tuna into food, they also place tuna within an anthropomorphic cultural matrix (131).

Taste in tune with technology is what has fed the tuna industry since the 1950s. Others point to the greed of the tuna fishermen, however with the introduction of quotas they have invested large amounts in trying to achieve some semblance of sustainability. Over the last two decades there has been a seismic shift from fishing to farming, and while the basis for farming does sound strange—feed

one fish to another—is it less disgusting and less devastating than feeding one animal to another, which has led to spectacular diseases in humans and animals, such as Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) or ‘Mad Cow’ disease? The questions raised by fish farming are numerous and I have only barely begun to articulate some of them. Pressing concerns about the state of wild-caught fisheries are not answered by a turn to fish farming, which indeed does eat into the ocean’s ecology, and has substantial impacts on developing countries where fish farming has become a major source of income at the expense of feeding local populations.

Is Bluefin Tuna bad? Wouldn’t it be nice if there were simple solutions? But the ones that are regularly trotted out tend to be simplistic and often racist. The fury at the 2010 meeting of CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species in Qatar was directed at Libya and Japan. While it may have been Japan’s lobbying that foreclosed a motion for a moratorium on the fishing of Northern Bluefin Tuna, the constant refrain of how bad Japan is begins to sound one-sided. While, as we’ve seen, most of the tuna in the world goes through Japan, much of it then goes on to the sushi bars around the world, and now increasingly to China. Japan has taught the rest of us to savour the taste of raw tuna flesh, and sushi bars have now become a sign of prosperity. But little attention is paid to the changing taste of and for tuna in Japan. Over the last decades the preference for wild tuna is slowly changing to the fattier taste of farmed. And equally the effects of global diets are being felt, as more and more Japanese kids prefer ‘spag bol’ to sushi.

To recall Guthman’s point, we need to be aware of when ‘moral sensibilities privilege environmental concerns over social ones’. In terms of our own areas of study, the complex and vexed questions of eating and human and non-human relations cannot be reduced to which species is most anthropomorphically endowed. If we are truly to advance a program of research, and of ethics, in eating we need to attend to both the singularity of species as well as our mutuality. This is a tough call, but necessary if we are to attend to the material conditions of what makes for emotional geographies and for whom. As researchers we are compelled to pay close attention to the faceted aspects of life, recognizing the multiplicity of what makes things feel. We may not like that the tuna men are businessmen, but they are also complex people with ties to places, fish, families, and communities and of course the sea. We do not know what tuna feel, and to speculate on that risks drawing us into the false security of sentimental comfort. We can chart their movements, physical and emotional, in price as well in national and affective value.

Travelling alongside the many actors, human and non-human, my tale of tuna, told from the stories of so many, may allow for an oblique but hopefully useful conception of the field of taste, in this instance, of the human-ocean entanglement,

as it is being formed and re-formed in localities and regions seemingly outside of the mainstream. As Callon recounts, ‘the growing complexity of industrialised society, [and] a level of sophistication due in large part to the movement of technosciences, are causing connections and interdependencies to proliferate’ (12). But to extend his thoughts we need to attend to the emotional and affective forms of embodiment that are formed and re-formed within the materiality of hybrid forums. These complexities cannot be solved or resolved by (the often recognized male) experts working on their own alone in labs. As Graham-Gibson so clearly urge, experts and non-experts as well as humans and nonhumans must continually interact (628). Research as a clustering of objects, different experts, and contexts—an ecology of research—brings together very different actors to work at understanding large-scale issues through grounded and localised action.

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Small, Slow and Shared: Emerging Social Innovations in Urban Australian Foodscapes

Ferne Edwards

Bring your surplus home grown fruit, vegies, herbs, food/plant seeds, seedlings, eggs, honey, jams and preserves and swap your produce with other local home producers! ('Bacchus')

Grab your spades and gloves, get sweaty, have fun, learn lots and feel all warm and fuzzy afterwards! ... ('Events')

The quotes above, drawn from alternative food networks that are based in major Australian cities, optimistically call for participation in produce and growing 'swaps'. They do so in the belief that such exchanges will promote greater food security, sustainability and community resilience in cities. Other enticements include: 'We are different—in a good way! Great tasting local produce, as fresh as can be, we play fair with our farmers, we use way less packaging...' (Foodconnect). These more urban-based, fresh food initiatives represent an emerging alternative to 'You don't have to go to a supermarket—woo hoo!' (Foodconnect).¹

New social practices based around food are emerging as a response to many uncertainties and contradictions evident within the current industrial food system. Critical changes in economic, political and environmental conditions over the last few years have challenged the sustainability and security of the world's food supplies. Australia is not insulated from the impacts of these global changes, suffering from climate change and increased agricultural costs, contributing in part to health impacts such as obesity and food poverty (Edwards, Larsen and Ryan). Economic and social inequalities present within the global food chain are further expressed in Australia due to the concentration of power held by the national supermarket duopoly.

As a reaction to the vulnerabilities of the dominant neoliberal food system based on industrialisation, privatisation, deregulation, standardisation and commodification, there are a growing number of informal, localised and community-based social practices based around food appearing in Australian cities. These new producer-consumers go beyond green consumerist,

1 <<http://brisbane.foodconnect.com.au>>. Accessed 26 October 2011.

supermarket-purchased certified organic, Fair Trade, and Australian-made choices and extend from the community garden model to suggest new ways of engaging with food. Grassroots initiatives are driven predominantly by social and ecological concerns and tackle associated issues arising along the food chain, carving new spaces into urban territories. Building on urban food practices of the past, these innovations represent a formalisation of non-commercial food exchange and distribution networks, many of which engage emerging digital technologies to extend beyond the personal. The number and diversity of models emerging within the city promotes social, environmental and economic resilience, while engaging a wide audience. Although seemingly meagre set against the sheer scale of the formal economy, these pockets of change reveal patterns of community understanding and concern. They also represent a creative source of ideas on the edge that provide potential food system innovation. Furthermore, this groundswell of social action is constantly changing and growing.

This paper focuses on the emergence of this new wave of urban, local food practices in the city of Melbourne in 2008. It builds on food mapping research conducted at the Victorian Eco-Innovation Lab (VEIL) involving a broad literature review spanning commercial and community food enterprise sources including organic food directories, newspaper articles, community and environmental websites and newsletters. This initial food mapping research contributed to a Briefing Paper (Edwards, Larsen and Ryan), informed the VEIL Food map (<http://www.ecoinnovationlab.com/veil-food-map/96-veil-food-map>), an online repository of garden sites, and was further extended by student participation in the RMIT University subject, 'Meals in Metropolis' (Edwards and Mercer). This research reveals but a brief snapshot of the diversity and richness of this emerging grassroots movement that would benefit in time from more in-depth research to analyse its overall outcomes. While these food activities are based in Melbourne, they are also translatable to other Australian and global cities where food has once again become a central focus for community engagement, expression and action.

The paper is structured in three parts: 1) a brief historical context and overview of emerging grassroots food practices in Melbourne; 2) a discussion of three case study organisations, Permablitz, Urban Orchard, and Food Connect, and their key characteristics of small, slow and shared; and 3) future food possibilities. The research contributes to Alternative Food Network theory by recognising the social and political significance of the often-overlooked informal, non-capitalist and non-commodified alternative food networks.

1. Mapping Melbourne's food movement— from past to present

The tides of domestic food production in Melbourne

Melbourne was pronounced an official settlement in 1837, offering an excellent site for food production with fertile soils located in a temperate zone with an adequate water supply. This site that once provided, and still continues to provide, many indigenous foods (see Gott and Conran; Sola and Gott) became, by the year 1881, stocked with livestock and poultry in both Melbourne's outer and inner urban suburbs,² part-providing for milk, eggs, vegetables and fruits on a house-hold scale (Barrett). Increased interest in local food growing, in the period leading up to World War I, was due to a general lack of capital investment in property and infrastructure requiring residents to provide for themselves (Mullins). A food supply deficit occurred during World War II resulting from the additional need to provide for the troops, prompting a nationwide 'Grow Your Own' campaign. Food was produced in the domestic sphere in urban centres similar to the Victory Garden movement in wartime Britain (Hujber), and commercial food industries grew in peri-urban Melbourne.

The postwar era saw the rise of multinational corporations as supermarkets promoting mass-produced items negated the need for domestic production (Mullins). 'Low maintenance' gardens became popular in the 1950s with reduced vegetable beds, while fruit trees, compost and large animals moved out to rural regions. Many theorists contend that the backyard shifted from a site of production (utilitarian) to consumption (recreation use), as the vegetable patch and chicken coop were removed to make way for the chlorinated swimming pool. However, as Gaynor attests, food production never completely disappeared from the suburbs, and instead persisted, hidden away in backyards, practiced predominantly by people who valued food production for more than primary economic reasons.

The 1960s and 70s brought immigrants from southern Europe and their cultural gardening practices to Melbourne. Their enthusiasm for gardening is represented by 34% of Italian-born citizens keeping chickens compared to 7% of Australian-born residents (Halkett). The emergence of the environmental movement in the 1970s encouraged greater domestic food production for purposes of self-reliance and independence, with residents wishing to reduce their involvement in a wasteful global system. Such a trend in Australia emulated aspects of the 1968

² 40% of outer urban residents owned large livestock and 63% owned poultry; 8% of inner urban residents owned livestock and 21% poultry (Barrett).

'right to the city' movement in France, as expressed in Henri Lefebvre's book of the same title. This movement called for an inclusive and transformative political re-imagining of how, and for whom, cities might work, no doubt reuniting the role of cities and food production in a bid to the right to sustainability (Patel).

However, in more recent years, both urban and peri-urban food production declined significantly in Melbourne due to the increasing power of supermarkets, the climatic effects of drought, the population and planning impacts of urban densification and peri-urban sprawl, and due to socio-economic conditions of rising house prices and everyday financial pressures (Buxton *et al.*; Gaynor; Low Choy *et al.*). However, productive remnants remain: it is still possible to 'pick-your-own' strawberries, blueberries and cherries, to find market gardens producing commercial vegetables, to locate chicken hatcheries and egg laying industries, and to sight transitory beekeepers in Melbourne's peri-urban zones, while lemon trees and passion fruit vines perch above or over fences in urban streets.

There has also been a shift, in recent years, whereby some enterprises are now located within city boundaries, as environmentally-friendly producers seek to reduce transport costs and take advantage of the city's access to water, labour, energy and markets. Examples include Mountain Goat Brewery, which produces beer in inner urban Richmond and incorporates passive heating, wind turbines, solar panels, water tanks and wastewater treatment processes; Melbourne's numerous farmers' markets, that have recently expanded in number and size and create direct links between Victorian farmers and city consumers; and Tiffins Caterers and Catering Service which 'tricycles' freshly cooked curries to city diners. The Melbourne-based, not-for-profit food organisations, FareShare, SecondBite and VicRelief FoodBank, also take advantage of the city's resources to address social justice, environmental and corporate social responsibility concerns by redistributing, to charity organisation and others in need, still-edible food that is no longer commercially viable from open markets, supermarkets, airlines, restaurants and hospitals..

These commercial and not-for-profit food initiatives illustrate alternative, innovative, divergent forms of capitalism that maintain neoliberal political-economic relationships. However, there are also grassroots social practices emerging in Melbourne that represent a further unexpected turn in food gardening and that demonstrate the growth of non-capitalist and non-commodified practices. Often overlooked as insignificant and invisible hobbies, these emerging urban food practices build on past knowledge to make productive potential of local resources. Such practices suggest some of the ways that new enterprises, based on older models, develop in a way that responds to the needs of growing cities and urban concerns, while engaging with accessible new technologies that move local production beyond the 'backyard'. These

initiatives form one strand of Alternative Food Networks (AFNs). This research contributes to AFN literature in general, and more specifically to food research currently conducted within Australia (Hujber; Gaynor; Head and Muir; Holmes, Martin and Mirmohamadi).

Consumer becomes producer—I eat what I sow

Melbourne's citizens are responding to local and international concerns by growing more food either on their own land, communally with neighbours and friends, or in public plots, while others simply pull down their fences to maximise space, extending their vegetable patch onto footpaths or parklands. Guerrilla gardening provides a more radical approach whereby people repossess underused public space to grow food. Evidence of an increase of gardens and growers in Melbourne is revealed by a rise in the number of food-related resources, services (or advocacy for these), conferences, programs, projects and plots. In 2009, the Australian television current affairs show *Sixty Minutes* reported on the groundswell of the 'backyard revolution', while local newspaper *Northcote Leader* reported that chook food sales were at their highest in a Thornbury shop's forty year history (Gallagher). Further, the advocacy group, The Food Gardeners' Alliance, established in 2007, represents home gardeners, horticulturalists and landscape designers and lobbies government for more suitable water allocations for food gardens. New services to support people growing their own include Permablitz (<http://www.permablitz.net>), informal gatherings where volunteers come together to create food-producing gardens; and the local business Book A Chook (<http://www.bookachook.com/>) that 'rents' chickens to householders to encourage keeping poultry in urban areas.

People who grow their own food often want to better understand and control their food production to ensure access to a healthy, affordable supply. Food scares are often associated with intensive, industrial production where the origins, contents and processes of food manufacturing are difficult to ascertain, and hence, control (Pollan; Crittenden). By growing their own, citizens take back control over what they eat. Of course, many people often enjoy gardening too—according to Hujber, Melbourne gardeners' main motivation is pleasure to be gained from growing (and eating) fresh, tasty produce, with health, environmental and community involvement as equal seconds, and economic reasons as an insubstantial third.

Many organisations also use food to unify related issues, such as ownership, community and responsibility. The social networking site Grow Local connects food producers expressing the need to 'foster relationships that are not based on want' (<http://www.growlocal.net.au/>). The Victorian Department of Human Services 'Victoria in Bloom' Award emphasises the importance of food gardening

to the building of vibrant communities (<http://www.housing.vic.gov.au/living-in-housing/getting-involved/victoria-in-bloom-garden-competition>), and the community garden Sprout (<http://www.mindaustralia.org.au/Sprout.htm>) serves as a social support space for people with psychiatric disabilities, drug or alcohol issues or at risk of homelessness. VicHealth's 'Food for All: Improving Access to Food for Healthy Eating' program unites health with urban planning and community engagement, supporting local councils to increase food security (<http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/en/Publications/Healthy-Eating/Healthy-Eating-Programs/How-local-government-is-improving-access-to-nutritious-food.aspx>). Also important are schools that recognise the multiple benefits of food production and that educate children about nature, the food system, cooking and healthy diets. Melbourne has a plethora of popular school kitchen garden projects run by the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden National Program, Cultivating Community, CERES (Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies), the Gould Group, and by independent schools.

Producer becomes distributor: I share what I grow

As people grow more food, they also create new ways to redistribute surplus. Many redistribution schemes exist at the community level and never enter the commercial sphere. Popular Melbourne-based, food-surplus-swap models include Urban Orchard, Moreland Community Health Service's 'Grow and Share' project, and the proposed Pedalling Fruit Pickers' project. At Urban Orchard, people exchange surplus food grown in their own backyards (<http://www.ceres.org.au/node/114>); 'Grow and Share' targets the disadvantaged community by teaching how to grow specific foods to be shared (Moreland Community Health Service); while Pedalling Fruit Pickers aims to harvest and collect unwanted crops from residential properties to redistribute to the community (Environment Victoria). These informal exchanges differ past food exchange practices as they aim to reach broader community members. At the same time, surplus produce is now able to be freely redistributed through online technologies, such as through the Melbourne-based GrowLocal and the Australia-wide Home Growers' Exchange (<http://homegrowers.ning.com/>). These online networks often complement rather than replace face-to-face exchanges and provide avenues for socially isolated individuals to participate. Although not yet officially based in Australia, 'backyard sharing' 'encourages urban gardening by connecting those who have space to garden and are willing to share with those who would like to have a gardening space' (Hayes).³

³ *Landshare Australia*, an online service that links growers to people with land to share, was launched in Australia in 2011 (see <<http://www.landshareaustralia.com.au>>). Accessed 26 October 2011.

2. Small, slow and shared

From this brief history, it is apparent that alternative methods of food production and distribution in Melbourne have not disappeared but are instead re-emerging, using new technologies while formalising new models of civic engagement. A key characteristic of this new wave of urban food activities as expression of alternative food production, and as discussed in relation to the organisations Permablitz, Urban Orchard and Food Connect, is 'small, slow and shared'. All three organisations are relatively new, innovative and popular. Each example, explored in what follows, illuminates a different aspect of the alternative food system: Permablitz tackles production; Urban Orchard is concerned with waste; and Food Connect is about distribution.⁴ They vary in size, scope and produce, yet all are community based and function primarily to address social and environmental concerns.

Permablitz is a grassroots-led, community volunteer project committed to improving the sustainability of cities through the creation of edible landscapes. Launched in 2006, Permablitz originally derives from the reality television show, *Backyard Blitz*, where backyards were transformed into gardens using 'permaculture', the sustainable, ethical design system established by David Holmgren and Bill Mollison. Working in a group, volunteers share their permaculture skills to transform residential properties into organic, food producing landscapes by integrating resources such as water, energy, waste, shelter, community, economy and governance to close the energy loop. Currently most suburban blocks produce little and consume a lot of resources, but Permablitz aims to reverse this trend by advocating for stronger, local community networks (Kizilos). Permablitz also offers health and economic advantages as people eat the seasonal fruit and vegetables they grow. Asha Bee-Abraham expressed her anticipation of an upcoming blitz: 'I'm mostly looking forward to being able to wander around my garden and just bite at random plants' (cited in Smith).

The Urban Orchard project was established in 2004 at CERES in East Brunswick. It differs from older forms of exchange in that it is specifically designed for purposes of food exchange and is organised by people concerned about food security, sustainability, public health and community building (Jackson). The project initially focused on exchanging unused fruit from residents' homes with neighbours in the inner northern suburbs and has since spread to sharing

⁴ Food Connect did not originate in Melbourne, as is the case for the other two studies, but it is included in analysis as it was often referred to at Melbourne food movement events in 2008 and has since been established at CERES.

vegetables, herbs, knowledge and ideas with the local community, endorsing self-reliance while reflecting the seasons, diversity and food cycle (<http://www.ceres.org.au/node/114>).

Food Connect is defined by founder, Robert Pekin, as 'a local and fair trading company, using a business model to address an environmental and social need' (cited in 'Funding') that is based on the Community Supported Agriculture model. Established in 2004 in Brisbane, it connects urban consumers with rural farmers to distribute fresh, predominantly organic, seasonal and affordable produce. Food Connect accepts all standards of food from farmers, packs it into boxes in their central warehouse and delivers the produce to 'City Cousins' delivery points across the city. Food Connect aims to pay farmers a fair price, supporting them to stay on their farms while benefiting the environment. Food Connect does not represent a non-commercial AFN model, but in its alternative approach to the distribution of surplus and other aspects, it embraces the characteristics of 'small, slow and shared' while further illustrating the diversity of non-capitalist alternatives.

Small

One feature of these grassroots initiatives is that they are 'small': small in number, short in supply chain, and simple in their structure and technologies. Permablitzes—free gardening workshops open to the public—exemplify the characteristic of 'small'. Although each chapter reaches a significant number of people over time, the actual size of each event is quite small. For example, two or more designers are involved to organise materials, the day's timetable and to facilitate the blitz, while the number of volunteers at an event depends on the property size but is usually capped at between 20 and 40 people. Likewise, an Urban Orchard event ranges from only one to a few people as the 'swap table' caters to an audience averaging 25 to 50 people. Food Connect is the largest of the three initiatives. In 2008, there were 40 paid staff at their Brisbane warehouse, a client base of approximately 1500 active consumers and 70 city cousins distributing 900 to 1000 boxes a week (Cameron and Gerrard).

By remaining small, each group remains engaged with their local community and their environmental needs, while providing fresh, seasonal foods. They also reduce energy consumption by not transporting produce long distances. Each case study organisation, as an example of an AFN, identifies 'local' as a key concept, embedding meanings, values and trust through proximate place-based relations of 'product-in-place' or 'process-in-place' (Renting, Marsden and Banks). Such local boundaries are important in that they tie specific food products or processes to specific regions and in doing so reinscribe a specific sense of place, for 'a place without boundaries is not a place' (Pascual-de-Sans

351). For Permablitz, the boundaries are foremost residential yards or any other unused space fit for food production that serves as a dual site of production and consumption. For Urban Orchard, the harvest is conducted in the private spaces of an urban neighbourhood while exchange is public and kept close to production. Food Connect, on the other hand, has the most stringent parameters. Produce is collected from within a five hour radius, held together over this distance by transport, a business model and shared values, further complemented by social interaction at *City Cousin* nodes, farm visits, and by phoning the farmer. These boundaries encompass not just the 'local' but also the extent of the supply chain itself, often called 'Short Food Supply Chains' (SFSCs). SFSCs are tied to the local, shorten producer-consumer relations and short-circuit long, anonymous supply chains, and are assumed to capture local economic returns. SFSCs are the result of an active construction of networks, where the role of the relationship between producers and consumers is to construct value and meaning (Renting, Marsden and Banks).

In terms of simplicity, each initiative is relatively easy to establish and manage by using basic, inexpensive and accessible technologies. All projects require a web presence and a communication strategy, such as an email list, to organise and promote activities. Permablitz requires shared tools, Urban Orchard a table, while Food Connect needs warehouse space and locations for food deliveries in addition to transport, labour and food packaging. Costs remain negligible as organisers draw on no- or low- cost resources such as the internet or recycled materials. Work spaces are often shared, as members' houses, community centres or schools become delivery and drop-off points. Also, because there is no corporate ownership for these models, organisations can be easily replicated and reproduced by new groups elsewhere.⁵ The primary goal of such networks is, rather than focused on profit-making, to benefit groups and locales with each initiative aiming to stay small and simple to maintain integrity and be easily transferred.

Slow

Although the organisations represented here are small, they remain costly in terms of time. However, 'time' in these examples is associated not with cost efficiency but with quality produce and environmental ethics and in a way that compares to the ethos of the Slow Food and Slow Cities movements. The slowing of time in the Slow Food movement counters the loss of local distinctiveness as it relates to food, conviviality and sense of place, while Slow Cities aims to protect and enhance urban livability and quality of life, both of which are threatened

⁵ Although no-one 'owns' the initiatives, it is common for local leaders to establish the initial connections and to mobilise the community.

by the fast pace of modern, corporate-centered, urban lifestyles (Mayer and Knox). As stated on a Slow Food website, key goals are: 'to counteract fast food and fast life, the disappearance of local food traditions and people's dwindling interest in the food they eat, where it comes from, how it tastes and how our food choices affect the rest of the world' ('What is Slow Food?'). So too do many grassroots food initiatives signify resistance as they re-ascribe values within spaces of contested meanings by re-connecting planet, people, place and plate in new ways. Food Connect's shortlisting in the Best Slow Money Enterprise in North America awards demonstrates its important place as advocate for cultural, ecological and economic diversity in an economy based on healthy people in healthy places (<http://www.slowmoneyalliance.org/>).

Likewise, the 'quality turn' within AFNs represents the knowledge gained from gardeners and farmers exchanged through interpersonal relations and localised tacit knowledge that emphasises the quality of the process and the produce. It is a place-based, ecological rationale that realigns nature, quality, locale, producers and consumers (Feagan). The moral economy of AFNs then represents a double movement that disconnects one from the current system, to critically reflect on established truths, to form new moral understandings for (re)connection (Goodman).

The simplicity of these activities incorporates ethical values into citizens' everyday routines. As expressed by Permablitz co-founder, Adam Grubb (cited in Fawcett 20), Permablitz design emphasises a laid-back existence: 'We're basically lazy gardeners. ... You have to be really committed to go up to the back corner, whereas here the most high-maintenance things are in between where Steve is going to collect his eggs from the chicken coop and the clothesline'. Although the quickness of a blitz seems to contradict the AFN aspect of 'slow', Grubb explains: 'Blitzing implies something fast, but it's a way of hastening our way to simpler things. It's about taking care of yourself and the environment. And, with food prices going up, it's becoming increasingly about that, too' (cited in Bounds 30).

Importantly, the case study organisations discussed here differ to the Slow Food and Slow Cities movements as they provide greater affordability and accessibility to produce, helping to address concerns that the movement is intrinsically elitist. Both Permablitz and Urban Orchard are free to attend to exchange organic resources, and Permablitzes are performed on both rental and owned properties, while Food Connect provides fresh, predominantly organic produce for twenty percent less than supermarket cost.

Costs are reduced through reciprocal practices and through reusing wasted resources found both within the food system and the city. Permablitz and Urban Orchard rely entirely on volunteer support with all participants required

to contribute time and energy—participants’ properties will be blitzed after participation on at least three events, while Urban Orchard allows products exchanged to be as small as worm castings or seeds, allowing those who make an effort to join in. Food Connect is built on an equity approach, as customers buy a share in the harvest by paying for their food four weeks in advance to guarantee an income for the farmer (even if crops fail), ensuring both farmers and workers a fair price; there are no volunteers (Cameron and Gerrard). Each initiative reuses waste and transforms it into a resource in various ways: Permablitz recognises wasted urban space as potential garden sites and uses organic matter as compost; Urban Orchard re-distributes surplus harvests; and Food Connect accepts food that would be rejected by supermarkets and has recently also included excess produce from backyard growers in its supply chain (Readfearn).

Pink identifies the creation of slow as ‘alternative urban sense-scapes’, revitalising urban spaces with the shared, social experience of rediscovering food. Permablitzes reinvigorate the ignored backyard, Urban Orchard attracts new faces to public parks and markets to share, taste and talk, while Food Connect reconnects country and *City Cousins* on communal territories of exchange. ‘Slow’ acknowledges that it takes time to do ethical things: to grow-your-own food, to talk to your neighbours, and to live your life according to social and environmental justice principles. This temporal shift is illustrated in the case study organisations as one takes the time on the weekend to share one’s knowledge and learn how to grow a new plant at a Permablitz, as one takes the time to taste and discuss an unusual fruit on offer at the Urban Orchard, and as farmers take the time to experiment with new crops thanks to the support offered by the Food Connect. In order to fully appreciate the values of a sustainable food system, in order to re-embed multiple values into one activity, simply put, one must learn to slow down.

Shared

Finally, ‘shared’ refers to the sharing of skills, time, space, meals, tools, responsibilities, risk, values, language and enjoyment as expressed in a range of ways by the case study organisations. Participants consider the shared worth of the food they eat and the responsibilities that consumption signifies for the producer, the consumer and the environment. For example, swappers at an Urban Orchard must assess the value of their contributions in exchange for other items while considering factors of quality and uniqueness (Jackson). Food Connect expects farmers to set their own price: ‘We tell the farmers to tell us what they want to get paid so it puts the onus on them to think what are my costs? What are the environmental considerations?’ (Pekin cited in Hall 14).

Shared, grounded participation helps to overcome citizens' feelings of being overwhelmed by the complex, powerful and all-encompassing scope of the industrial food system. As recognised by British activist, Helena Norberg-Hodge (cited in Humphery), such forms of social networking help to address perceptions about alternative food practices as a kind of 'opting out'. Hence, by working together, people can harness the skills, resources, time and motivation to achieve more than they could alone. By experiencing graspable change in the here and now, such as by participating in an AFN, they can begin to visualise change already occurring elsewhere.

Although this article focuses primarily on the immediate, positive characteristics of AFNs it is important to note that more in-depth research is needed to ascertain the overall long term outcomes of these practices. For example, the extent of accessibility and desire to engage in such food initiatives may be influenced by issues of class, location, and/ or mobility, in addition to other factors, such as urban pollution. Class reflects certain priorities and values, influencing citizens' knowledge of, interest in, and ability to participate and commit to activities, while differences in peoples' immediate environments and transport options between the outer and inner city could also affect peoples' involvement. Questions arising from this new wave of food engagement include if and how these activities reach across the socio-economic spectrum in cities, and if they do in fact promote greater urban resilience and future contributions to food security and population health in times of climate change.

3. Future food possibilities: pathways of transmission

These different forms of sharing create community ties that, if harnessed correctly, can lead to established networks that can potentially yield greater influence and power, as AFNs can reproduce their meanings and values and influence other structures, thus extending into new spaces (Murdoch and Marsden). Latour asserts that structures are continually reproduced through processes of interaction that exert power *in actua* over others. Hence, the analysis of power becomes the study of associations that produce collective action, where success is the ability to 'colonise' the worlds of others by battling contested meanings. Hence, new meanings and values can be transported through associations from one place (such as the periphery) to influence or dominate another (such as the centre) (Murdoch and Marsden).

There is evidence that AFNs are achieving success as their knowledge, values and ethics grow richer and wider, extending across the world. According to Seyfang and Smith, innovations can produce either intrinsic or diffusion

benefits. 'Intrinsic benefits' represent a symbolic embodiment that 'another way is possible' (594), while their contrast to mainstream behaviour reveals the inconsistencies and contradictions embedded within the traditional system. Alternatively, 'diffusion benefits' could contribute to the mainstream by influencing the uptake of new consumer behaviours, such as green consumption. Success of AFNs, and more specifically of the case study organisations, can thus be determined in two ways: by the replication of these models while maintaining the integrity of their values ('intrinsic benefits'); and by the translation of these values into the mainstream community ('diffusion benefits').

Permablitz, Urban Orchard and Food Connect have all successfully 'self-budded' to grow into new sites. The Permablitz concept has rocketed in participation since its inception with more than 100 offshoots spreading across Australia and overseas (<http://www.permablitz.net/>); the Urban Orchard project has sprouted multiple swap programs both in Melbourne and around Australia (Jackson); and the Brisbane Food Connect model has propagated into new cities such as Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne (<http://www.foodconnect.com.au/>). In terms of numbers, Grubb estimates that, as of April 2010, 2000 individuals will have attended Permablitzes in Melbourne alone. Meanwhile, in Melbourne, the monthly Yarra Neighbourhood Orchard and the Western Urban Harvest Swap receive 25 to 50 regular attendees in addition to regular attendees at the weekly Urban Orchard at CERES (Jackson).

Evidence of diffusion benefits from the case study organisations includes positive broad media coverage and the uptake of the models by new institutions and groups. All groups have received extensive media coverage with standout publicity such as at the 'World's Biggest Eva Vegie Swap' at the 2009 Melbourne Food and Wine Festival (Jackson), Permablitz's profile story on the television program, *Costa's Garden Odyssey* ('Episode 3'), and Food Connect winning the Minister's Award for Climate Smart Leadership in the Queensland Sustainable Industries Awards, as first recipient of itank's Designers for Good Benefit Award, and as finalist for the Banksia Awards (Locklear). Although Permablitz seems to be subversively advocating for the transformation of pristine lawns into productive landscapes and decentralizing food production, this model is now endorsed by local councils, environmental and community groups and by the Dandenong Development Board who applied the Permablitz model to their Greater Dandenong Edible Gardens Project (Underwood).⁶ Food Connect have also encouraged others to take up other AFN schemes. Ray Palmer, a farmer with Food Connect says: 'We got lots of encouragement from Food Connect to start our own organic community-supported agriculture box service' (cited in Channon 13).

⁶ Dan Palmer, Permablitz co-founder, received a breach of duty notice from his landlord giving the tenants two weeks notice to either deconstruct their productive foodscape and restore the lawn or pay \$2100 (Kizolas).

Diffusion benefits raise concerns about the future of AFNs in the wake of dominant capitalist forces. Mainstreaming innovation can fragment the original context in which AFNs are created, risking losing the integrity of original meanings and values and co-opting them within the capitalistic framework, as illustrated by the varied meanings of 'organic', 'sustainable', 'natural', 'green', 'local', and even 'alternative' (see Johnston, Biro and MacKendrick). Gibson-Graham recognise that diverse economies have, and continue to, exist within a world dominated by capitalism, while neoliberal strategies that attempt to subvert them include 'co-option, seduction, capture, subordination, cooperation, parasitism, symbiosis, conflict, coexistence, (and) complementarity' (71). Furthermore, Guthman believes that many of the very AFNs that strive to be different from the neoliberal economy instead reproduce neoliberal forms, spaces of governance, and mentalities. In her analysis of food politics in California, she argues that many food activists employ neoliberal concepts such as consumer choice, localism, entrepreneurialism, and self-improvement, distracting activists from larger issues of systems change, who instead focus on aspects of individual consumption and local concerns while continuing to use market mechanisms.

However, many examples cited by Guthman and by agro-food academics in general focus on AFNs that exist as divergent forms of capitalism based around food rather than as AFNs that exist outside of a dominant capitalist system. Other types of AFNs that may have greater distance from (and possibly resistance to) capitalist coercion are those that do not exist within the commercial sector. I argue that by placing AFNs within Gibson-Graham's diverse economies framework (see 71), often ignored and invisible 'nonmarket, unpaid, and noncapitalist' AFNs can instead be considered to offer possible alternative discourses of change. By maintaining their integrity and by extending the current networks of certain types of non-commodified AFNs, such as the ones described in this essay, new stronger networks featuring both intrinsic and diffusion benefits could become possible.

The grassroots initiatives discussed in this paper could be seen as a contemporary re-working of the 1960s food subcultures that ushered in organic production, cooperatives and wholefoods both in Australia and abroad (Belasco; Gaynor), whose future success depends upon the integration of new accessible technologies in a landscape of knowledge that is aware of, and sensitive to, neoliberal politics. Steel suggests a 'semi-lattice' form for emerging AFNs: a complex network of interactions that are localised, personal, flexible, multidirectional, and all of which can affect the other (310). This desire to build new networks is apparent in many AFNs. The South Australian 'Plains to Plate' Conference Declaration affirms this desire:

The building of a just, sustainable and secure food system necessitates the convergence of diverse groups to work together. At From Plains to Plate, we have come together in recognition of our common ground. The work we do as a network of farmers, community members, health and government workers, neighbourhood organisations, teachers, academics, educators and community members in South Australia is echoed in the actions of social and environmental movements across Australia and the world. We are a global movement, an alliance across a diversity of sectors to assert the importance of the justice, sustainability, security and sovereignty of our food system.

Possible future outcomes stemming from grassroots innovation and AFNs include Food Policy Councils that push ahead consolidated food security action in municipalities (Blay-Palmer; Harper *et al.*);⁷ the Friends of the Earth Melbourne proposal to create sustainable super 'eco-markets' ; and the concept of Food Sensitive Planning and Urban Design that aims to incorporate food within the city in new ways to harness greater sustainability (VEIL and David Locke Associates). In other words, future food possibilities could form a force of change, a change in system parts, or a change in the system overall.

In conclusion

Melbourne's current food movement represents a rich tapestry of historical backyard production complemented by capitalist, institutional, and emerging alternative, innovative food practices. This new wave of civic engagement based around food is diverse in approach and participation, offering new connections to place, people and produce. The three case study organisations of Permablitz, Urban Orchard and Food Connect and their characteristics of 'small, slow and shared' offer new insights to AFN theory, as in their non-commodified and non-capitalist forms they re-position and question traditional relationships between producer and consumer, returning the 'consumer' to the status of an empowered, active citizen within a social network. Regardless of the future outcomes—be it as symbolic resistance, as contributing to green consumerism, or as networks guiding system change—these grassroots initiatives place food within the community and, in doing so, place value on the specifics of a locale or region, environmental sustainability and social equality. That these practices are reaching broader and more diverse communities suggests an emerging urban foodscape of citizen empowerment, action and hope.

7 A Food Policy Coalition was proposed by Dr Cate Burns for Melbourne in 2009.

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The Civilised Burger: Meat Alternatives as a Conversion Aid and Social Instrument for Australian Vegetarians and Vegans

Jemàl Nath and Desireé Prideaux

Australians consume and enjoy a variety and abundance of meats. The preferred protein sources in the typical Western diet are flesh foods derived from cattle, sheep, pig, bird and aquatic species. There is, however, an emerging marketplace that offers alternatives. This paper explores the centrality of meat alternatives in the food habits and practices of Australian vegetarians and vegans. The term 'meat alternatives' refers to the variety of foods that are commonly referred to as 'mock meats'. They are plant-based products that approximate the aesthetic qualities and/or nutritional value of certain types of meat, and they are part of a quietly booming alternative food economy.

The data reported here are drawn from a grounded theory study of alternative diets. A majority of the informants in this study discussed their consumption of a variety of meat-like foods. Of all 44 informants interviewed, 34 (77%) rely on and enjoy foods that they refer to as, 'burgers', 'hot dogs', 'chicken', 'schnitzels' and 'bacon'. This essay describes the social contexts in which these products are enjoyed, and explains their function, cultural meaning and ethical value to consumers.

The potential significance of meat alternatives in modernity has yet to be fully accounted for in studies of food across disciplines. An explication and critical analysis of how meat alternatives challenge, accept, or subvert established *gastro-ontological* assumptions about what is 'real', healthy, ethically sound, or 'authentic', will therefore contribute to broader empirical and theoretical expositions of human cultures, and food and eating practices.

Introduction

One of the earliest literary examples of a gastro-ontological awareness of fake meats as 'civilised' foods, and the tensions between their acceptance and rejection, can be discerned in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*:

But when it came to pan-glandular biscuits and vitaminized beef-surrogate, he had not been able to resist the shopman's persuasion. Looking at the tins now, he bitterly reproached himself for his weakness. Loathsome civilized stuff! (202)

In Huxley's dystopia, John, the Savage, was confronted with a sharp distinction between the 'natural' and the synthetic world, and food within this dichotomy was a distinct marker of civilisation. In contemporary societies, fake meats such as vegetarian or vegan 'hot dogs', 'bacon', and 'burgers' continue to present a range of dilemmas for modern diners. Thus, the 'vitaminized beef-surrogate' so disdainfully cast by Huxley, is now a reality in Western and Eastern societies. Interestingly, while these foods steadily grow in popularity, they also continue to provoke uncertainty and debate.

People's food habits and practices are undeniably informed by a variety of experiences and ideas, but this essay suggests that these are always mediated through an ontological understanding of what constitutes acceptable or desirable foods. Gastro-ontology can be defined as any food-related thoughts, emotions and discourses that people develop throughout their life course. These ideas form a critical basis for decision-making about what foods should or should not be eaten. This can relate to the source of a particular food, such as plants or animals, and be guided by food preparation practices, such as whether food is raw or cooked (Lévi-Strauss). In addition, there are familial, scientific and other socially derived notions of 'good', 'bad', 'normal', or 'safe' foods, and taboos drawn from spiritual or philosophical doctrines that shape these determinations (Bourdieu 192; Nath 356). Assumptions about the value or appropriateness of particular foods, which may also incorporate opinions about their masculine or feminine qualities, constitute a gastro-ontological framework, which then enables and prompts choices and actions about what to eat. These gastro-ontological paradigms are open to challenge and revision in response to new experiences and knowledge. Vegetarians and vegans, for example, often experience a moral epiphany which disrupts established ideas about the worth of animals and the nutritional merits of eating meat, and this ultimately motivates a change in diet. Threats to gastro-ontological assumptions about food can thus serve as a catalyst for change. Paradoxically, they may also clarify and strengthen cultural norms. Therefore, an ontological view of food can help us to understand continuities, departures and developments in human food habits and practices. One area in which shifts in nutritional preferences are particularly notable is the vegetarian and vegan use of fake meats. The emergence of these products raises questions about the ways in which food is fashioned in modernity. They also offer insights into the changing nature of human perspectives on what food is, and the extent to which it signifies the social development of cultures and the technological progress of societies.

The idea that the more progressive a society is, the further divorced it will be from its organic animal origins, is not exclusive to satirical social commentaries of the kind written by Huxley. The German social theorist, Norbert Elias, argued in *The Civilising Process* (originally published in 1939), that fundamental transformations in human behaviour will destabilise the dominant position of meat in Western cultures. Rather than an increased human interest in alternative social movements, this mass orientation toward meat abstention is argued as part of an evolution of manners and a growing distaste for all things 'animal'. Elias suggests that there is evidence at the family dinner table that such an evolution is underway. Whilst medieval feasts of the ruling classes proudly displayed whole joints of what was obviously an animal of some sort, modern meat production and consumption often disguises the animal origin of the displayed meat product (120). For Elias, such concealment is a deliberate attempt by meat producers and processors to avoid offending a modern consumer population that defines civilisation to be the antithesis to the animal world, and thus prefers not to encounter stark evidence of the beast origins of their food: 'The increasingly strong tendency to remove the distasteful from the sight of society deeply applies with few exceptions to the carving of the whole animal' (121).

Elias envisages a 'civilising process' that evolves gradually, in step with the popular attitudes and food practices of mainstream Western cultures. From this theoretical standpoint, meat-eaters will eventually decide that the rearing and slaughtering of animals for human consumption is an unacceptable practice for a society that deems itself to be 'civilised'. Elias considers modern vegetarians to be somewhat visionary and ahead of their time, because they have already chosen a lifestyle that he regards as inevitable for 'civilised' societies. However, it is precisely because vegetarians are in a sense *too civilised* that they are perceived to be radical by a meat-eating majority that fulminates over departures from time-honoured culinary practices. Elias explains that the marginal status of vegetarianism in the twentieth century exists because alternative food choices are too advanced along the civilising process continuum to have captured the popular imagination: 'these are forward thrusts in the threshold of repugnance that go beyond the standard of civilised society in the 20th century, and are therefore considered "abnormal"' (120).

Thus, Elias sees a future in which the perceived radicalism of today (vegetarianism) is destined to become tomorrow's gastronomic convention. This theory is to some extent supported by studies of meat abstention across disciplines. They indicate that for vegetarians and vegans, food and eating practices are often an extension of personally developed ideas about social justice and ethical perspectives about how humanity should develop as a species (Allen *et al.* 1405; Beardsworth and Keil; Kalof *et al.*; McDonald; Stiles 217). Elias could not, of course, have foreseen the success of *Iron Chef*, or a number of other forms of

culinary entertainment that champion themes that feature the whole animal such as 'paddock to plate', 'nose to tail' and 'farm to fork', all of which celebrate nature, and reject waste and other perceived vagaries of the processed food age. Elias also underestimated the symbolic significance and social status of meat. This is most profoundly reflected by the vegetarian and vegan consumption of foods with the taste, texture and even appearance of an animal food.

The emergence of meat alternatives in Australia has been driven by the economic success of these products globally. In the United States, the vegetarian food market has become a multi-billion dollar industry, with meatless hot dogs, deli slices and bacon making impressive inroads into the traditional animal-based gastronomy of the North American continent (Liebman and Hurley 14). Evidence linking high fat meat-oriented diets to coronary artery disease and other ailments has resulted in a rise in 'transitional eating'. This does not mean that there has been a rapid growth spurt in the number of people converting to vegetarianism. Rather, it is emblematic of more meat-eaters consuming vegetarian meals on an occasional basis. This rise in 'transitional' or 'crossover' eaters in the United States has had a positive impact on the bottom line of vegetarian food companies, with sales growth at 100% to 125% from 2001 to 2007. Although soy milk boasts the greatest growth, meat substitutes continue to increase their sales (Ebenkamp 17; Kuhn 26; Roberts Jr. 24). There are a number of health reasons that would explain why 'transitional' eaters might try a meat-free meal, and these relate to the growing body of evidence linking meat and animal products with increased risk of developing arthritis, heart disease, diabetes and various cancers (Barnard *et al.* 972; Campbell and Campbell II, 7; Kjeldsen-Kragh 646; Thorogood *et al.* 1667). This explains mainstream dietary changes, but why then do vegetarians and vegans choose to indulge in meat-like foods? The data to be presented in this essay provides some answers, and raises a number of other questions about the character, constitution and future of food in modernity.

The qualitative study

The data excerpts for this paper were collected as part of a larger study of the social, ethical and spiritual dimensions of vegetarian and vegan eating practices, completed by one of the authors in 2007. The study was contextualized by first drawing from historical materials to identify political, economic and cultural turning points in the emergence of plant-based food and eating practices in Australia and other countries. Following University ethics committee approval, the data was collected between October 2003 and January 2005. Adult men and women across age groups who identified as 'vegetarian' or 'vegan' were recruited by sending flyers and information letters about the study to vegetarian

restaurants, vegetarian societies, environmental groups, a Hare Krishna temple, Buddhist temples and two Seventh-Day Adventist Churches in South Australia. A total of 44 persons participated in audio tape-recorded interviews that ranged in length from one hour to two and a half hours. Part of the interview schedule also consisted of a brief questionnaire with closed questions ascertaining basic demographic information such as age, gender, marital status, income, occupational and educational attainment.

Grounded theory was considered to be the most appropriate method for understanding the vegetarian and vegan experience, as it allows data drawn directly from the informants to determine what ideas, themes and concepts the researcher will develop. Rather than relying on preconceived hypotheses or a set of numbers gathered from survey instruments, it is an iterative process, where the researcher becomes steeped in the data, derived in this case through in-depth interviews. Following the central tenets of this process meant that as the data collection advanced, unexpected issues raised by informants could be taken up with the next informant. The interview guideline thus expanded throughout the data collection period. This resulted in a variety of issues being canvassed and provided informants with greater scope to emphasise the unique and hitherto unknown dimensions of their vegetarianism.

The grounded approach followed a constructivist incarnation of the original Glaser and Strauss model (Charmaz 133). An important aspect of this method is the navigation of the power relationship between the researcher and the interviewees. The choice of questions on the original interview guideline was central in addressing this issue. Power relations were deemed critical in terms of the marginal dietary status of informants and the defensive posture this might provoke when informants were asked to discuss their vegetarianism. Following the pilot interviews, questions on the guideline were constructed in anticipation of *rehearsed political statements* that would defend or justify the participants' nutritional choices. Thus, whilst informants expected the 'why are you a vegetarian?' question, which might then be answered by a rehearsed political statement such as 'I don't eat anything with a face', they were instead asked 'How did you become a vegetarian?' During the interview the researcher therefore manipulated and 'colluded' with the interviewee to 'create and construct' stories (Nunkoosing 704) but nonetheless enabled reflexivity and talk by advancing politically neutral *how* questions, rather than the demanding or justifying *why* questions that vegetarians encounter regularly throughout their social life course. The interpretive theorising of the interview data utilised in this constructivist approach then covered 'overt processes' such as food and eating experiences at home, at work, and in other social contexts (Charmaz 146). It also delved into the implicit meanings and thinking processes of the informants regarding the kinds of foods they chose to eat and what ideas or experiences

helped to form these choices. In keeping with established conventions for grounded style research, the resulting inferences were constantly compared throughout the interviewing process, and written analyses were supported by verbatim extracts transcribed from the data (Glaser and Strauss; Ryan and Russell Bernard; Strauss and Corbin).

Findings: meat-like vegetarian food as a conversion aid and social instrument

As noted, there are a number of reasons why a person might choose to consume mock meats which are not necessarily related to individually conceived ethical or moral discourses. These might include religious taboos related to particular animals, or the growing issue of health-related dietary restrictions. There are also food sensitivity and allergy-related avoidances. This paper mainly addresses the more predominant moral/ethical related preference for foods that do not contain meat. Two themes related to the consumption of fake animal products emerged from the data, and these themes exemplify the primary functions of meat alternatives. Firstly, they are viewed as a valuable aid for converts to a meat-free diet. The transition process to vegetarianism presents innumerable social challenges as converts attempt simultaneously to appease family misgivings and find suitable foods in an environment that heavily favours meat and animal products. One consequence of this often dramatic change is that the converts sometimes miss their once favourite home-cooked or take-away foods. This transition process was clearly a significant and ongoing part of the life-course for converts and as such it is difficult, without the benefit of longitudinal analyses, to ascertain for each informant where it ends, and how the key constituents of their diet change over time. What is abundantly clear from the data is that meat alternatives, or mock meats, allow vegetarians, and the more marginal vegans, to enjoy familiar tastes and textures without jeopardising their utilitarian and environmental principles, and maintain a meat-free food and eating regime. Secondly, these foods are a social instrument for vegetarians and vegans. Meat alternatives have socially integrative properties. They closely resemble familiar meat and animal products and facilitate the full participation of informants at social gatherings that revolve around the consumption of meat, such as barbecues, Christmas festivities and other celebratory dinners. It should be noted here though, that the eating of mock meats, whilst popular, is not universally encouraged by all of the informants, and in some cases it is described as an unnecessary and counterintuitive act.

Josh, an administrative officer and student on a low annual income (26-35k) described 'not dogs' 'TVP'¹ and 'not burgers' as some of his staple foods, and he lamented the limited range of products that are available in Australia, in comparison to the North American varieties. Interestingly, Josh said that to cope with his transition to veganism, which for him meant completely abstaining from all meat and animal products, he substituted all his 'old favourites' with vegan alternatives. This substitution process was essential to Josh, as when he would go out he wanted to feel like he still ate 'pretty much like any other twenty-two-year-old guy' and he wanted a seamless and convenient change in the meals that he prepared at home:

I've replaced milk with soy milk obviously, TVP for mince, a lot of the fake meats I'm pretty big on. I didn't have a radical shift in the style of food I was preparing like some other vegans that don't want meat because they hate the taste of meat and change their style of cooking altogether...but the range isn't so good. I've got a lot of friends in the States, and they have like twenty different kinds of not dogs, and a lot of the Asian food is a lot more diverse as well. (Single Male, 18-25 age group)

Alice, a project manager on a moderate annual income (46-55k), is a recent convert to vegetarianism. She also talked about the importance of convenience and how meat-like meals make the transition to vegetarianism easier:

I wish the range they had in *Coles* was more available elsewhere, like the *Sanitarium* range. I live in the Adelaide Hills so it's okay, but I think when you work full-time you need easy options. If you eat meat you can buy things like chicken fillets that you just cook and chuck on a salad and then you've got a meal. When you're doing vego stuff, if you have a salad without anything else, it's not necessarily filling. So you want something else, so you need pasta and that kind of thing. So the easy stuff like not dogs, vegetarian schnitzels, that kind of thing I tend to rely on during the week. (Partnered Female, 26-34 age group)

Informants in this study who raise vegetarian children were especially aware of the high social status of meat and animal products. Eve, a former retail worker and now full-time postgraduate student on a low annual income (16-25k), converted to vegetarianism over a decade ago. Her daughter joined her in converting and is still a vegetarian. Despite giving up meat and almost all animal products, they are still committed to finding ways of maintaining an active social life of entertaining and eating with their non-vegetarian friends. The

1 TVP stands for *textured vegetable protein*, the most widely produced meat substitute in Western nations. It comes in granules with a hamburger mince consistency and has for decades been used as a 'meat extender' in commercial meat patties (Scarborough 1).

importance of meat alternatives for parties, especially her daughter's birthday celebrations and other occasions, is a key motivational factor in Eve's desire to source and sample a phenomenal range of meat substitutes:

I love all sorts of new things. There are vegetarian roasted chicken pieces which are a real favourite. We use them in stir fries, kebabs, we marinate it and it's a very big hit with our meat-eating friends especially. They could not believe that it wasn't chicken and that all the pieces were so perfect with no nasty animal bits. We also do vegetarian chicken fillet burgers, so vegetarian chicken fillet things crumbed, and made into a burger, that's really nice. Vegetarian sausages are popular here and they are good standby things. There are a couple of varieties of vegetarian beef; one's really good for making fake steak sandwiches, and the other for veggie beef goulash. Oh, there is also a dried version that makes a damn fine veggie beef, onion and mushroom pie. (Partnered Female, 43-50 age group)

The aforementioned products are a fundamental part of Eve's social actions and interactions with family and close friends. She further suggested that it has taken her over a decade to source these products, which are not all readily available from the local supermarket. Other informants similarly described their delight at finding specialty items such as 'vegetarian prawns' and 'vegetarian squid'. These products are made from taro or yams that provide a chewy texture and include seaweed extract to simulate a 'seafood' taste. They are imported from the Asia-Pacific region and are intermittently available at a small number of Asian grocery stores. The key point here is that informants find the experience of sharing vegetarian food with non-vegetarians a valuable opportunity simply to enjoy a variety of cruelty-free tastes and textures that everyone finds familiar, acceptable and highly pleasing to the senses.

These ideas have their origins in Buddhist philosophy. Also known as 'Buddha's meat', mock meat was created in the monasteries of China over two thousand years ago. In ancient China, the Buddhist religion prohibited the taking of life. However, Chinese hospitality required that hosts defer to the culinary tastes of their guests. In accordance with these beliefs, special efforts were made in the preparation of gourmet vegetarian meals that tasted and looked like popular flesh foods such as pork, beef, poultry and seafood (Neilson 1). Today, the quest to convincingly render soybeans, taro, mushrooms or gluten into traditional meat favourites has ventured out of the temple kitchens of Buddha devotees and into the global marketplace. Throughout the Western world and Asian regions, there are small numbers of restaurants that marry carnivorous tastes with vegetarian practices. They attempt to attract meat-lovers and curious

vegetarians by offering plant-based versions of classic meat dishes, from the ubiquitous lemon chicken, to the lesser known traditional Chinese delicacies, such as vegetarian intestines or vegan abalone (Beattie 1).

Buddhist informants are acutely aware of the social and cultural significance of meat and animal products in their original ethnic foodways and in Australian cultures. Lishi, a Sino-Vietnamese Buddhist now residing in Australia, part-owns a South Australian vegetarian restaurant that attempts to appeal to non-vegetarians with a variety of meat-like foods. She described why these foods are an important addition to the menu in both her restaurant and her diet:

we still have fried chickens and fried prawns and honey chickens, beef with black bean sauce, sweet sour pork and all those yummy dishes normally a meat-eater would prefer to eat. Also when I think back to when I was a meat-eater, I wasn't actually missing meat, it was the texture that I missed, the taste I missed and the kind of dishes that I missed. (Single Female, 35-42 age group)

The desire for social integration is also significant within familial contexts. Five of all 44 informants in this study (11%) are, in a nutritional sense, in a mixed marriage, because they are partnered with non-vegetarians. Michelle, a schoolteacher on a low to moderate annual income (36-45k), is a Seventh-Day Adventist and was born and raised as a vegetarian, but she is married to a non-vegetarian Adventist. She describes herself as somewhat of a reluctant meat abstainer because of the social constraints brought about by the marginal status of vegetarianism in Australia. In Michelle's home, meat substitutes have a role in maintaining family commensality, that is, the widely established practice of people dining together, especially at the same table. She explained that it was essential to her that despite their dietary differences, the family could all sit down and eat together because she had suitable alternatives:

Usually when I have things like that I would just have salad or vegies with it. So when I'm cooking for the family quite often they will have their lamb chops and I will have my vegetarian version and we will all have salad or vegies with it, so it is a bit like a meat and three vegetable meal without the meat portions for me. (Married Female, 35-42 age group)

In contrast to vegetarian converts who were born and raised with an abundance of meat and animal products in their diet, Adventist informants often have little or no experience of eating meat, and they describe meat alternatives as a lifelong staple. Consequently, meat-like foods are deeply embedded in their diet and consciousness. Michelle and other Adventist informants made specific mention of meat alternative products made by *Sanitarium*, a health-food company that

has a strong affiliation to the nineteenth-century American Christian Physiology Movement and also with the Adventist church (Le Blanc 91; Levenstein 93). In Australia, this company has manufactured meat alternatives for decades and was well known by the majority of informants. Carol, an Adventist, who receives a low annual income as an aged care worker (16-25k), was born and raised as a vegetarian. Now in her sixties, she has consumed a variety of traditional meat substitutes for over half a century:

I was brought up on nutolene and nut meat, that's been around since forever. In the 1920s those products came out and so yes I have had them all my life. I love their frozen products like the soy cutlets and schnitzels and things. I'm not so keen on some of the *Longa Life*² products, they are the ones in the refrigerator, but that is because I am an older person and they have a more modern flavour. I'm not happy with smoky flavours at all, can't stand them and I never could. So I do avoid the ones that sound like they will have a smoky flavour, but beyond that I am fairly flexible with what I eat. (Single Female, 59-66 age group)

Another informant who was born into an Adventist vegetarian family talked at length about meat alternatives and vegetarian 'junk foods' that continue to constitute a significant portion of his diet. Mal is a builder on a moderate annual income (56-65k). Although he is no longer a member of the Adventist Church he still abstains from most meats and some animal products because he dislikes the smell and taste. He also talked about consuming new products as well as his preferred staple of some fast foods and meat-like foods:

McDonald's advertised that they have vegie burger, and in my opinion it taste like shit! (laughter) I wasn't impressed with that at all. I went to Burger King in New South Wales when I was there and they were quite nice. We were staying near Darling Harbour and there was a Burger King near there and we went and had a vegie burger. I mean, I go often to a fish and chip shop and I'll have a vegie burger you know and they're lovely, you know... I've always had vegie sausages and all that, ready burger and nutolene, I quite like, but most people haven't heard of that. (Married Male, 51-58 age group)

As mentioned, while most of the vegetarians in this study have eaten mock meats, a smaller group stated that they did not regularly consume them, and some of these informants questioned the logic of a vegetarian wanting to eat something that resembled meat. George, a graphic designer on a low annual

2 The informant is referring to a vegan oriented food company named *Longa Life*, which made a small variety of meat-like products such as 'not bacon', 'not dogs' and 'not burgers'. The company no longer trades, but their range was taken over by *Sanitarium*, who have remained faithful to the original recipe, relaunching them under the new 'Vegie Delights' label (Ryan 1).

income (26-35k), flatly stated that he and his partner felt that it was just, 'a bit weird' to purchase products such as vegetarian burgers and hot dogs. However, their curiosity did lead them to a memorable and somewhat dramatic first encounter with meat alternatives:

We went to a restaurant, a big Chinese restaurant. It was a fantastic place, and they had this monk menu because of a lot of the Chinese were Buddhist monks, and they eat there, and I guess in their particular clan they have this tradition, because monks get bored right? So they make the best mock meat they can out of tofu, all these sculpted things. So I thought: I'm going to order the vegetarian flathead! And no shit, it came out and it was really like a flathead! It was like a baked fish (laughter) texture and everything. It was so realistic and I thought man, shock horror! I didn't enjoy it very much because the sauce wasn't fantastic, but the weirdness of it! So we really haven't had very much, but we know a lot of vegos have sausages and that sort of stuff. (Married Male, 26-34 age group)

One vegan informant, Jelena, a part-time student and administrative officer on a low annual income (16-25k), was appalled by the idea of eating meat-like foods and totally boycotted such products, with a small exception made for some types of vegetarian burgers, and only in immediate familial social contexts:

at home we don't ever eat things like that. It doesn't appeal to us because the thought of eating meat is repulsive so the thought of sitting down to something that tastes or resembles meat is repulsive and I can't understand why anyone would want to do that. Even things like mock meat we wouldn't have, I mean sometimes you can get sandwich meats and stuff which are vegetarian, and we wouldn't get that. The only thing that we eat when we go to mum and dad's which I don't mind is vegetarian burgers, vegetarian patties. They don't look like meat; they're just patties. (Married Female, 26-34 age group)

The six informants from the total sample who converted to vegetarianism as part of their Hare Krishna devotional service (14%), are a standout group of vegetarians who are also not interested in any sort of vegetarian 'junk food' or meat alternative. Krishna Das, a Hare Krishna priest on a low annual income (Under 15k), exemplified the brief and to the point devotee responses on this matter and certainly did not mince words when asked if he had tried vegetarian fast foods and meat alternatives:

No I've never had that sort of thing. My understanding is that there is no need to substitute meat. We are not meant to eat meat. My understanding is that we are constitutionally vegetarian beings. So no fast food and I would not even look in McDonald's. (Single Male, 26-34 age group)

This informant is certainly not alone in his attitude towards McDonald's. However, for the majority of informants who converted to vegetarianism, memories of the greasy burger or hot dog when out with friends, the roasted chickens, the pan-fried sausages, the schnitzels at the family dinner table, are all indelibly etched in their minds long after their dietary change. These informants do reject the flesh foods that are commonly sold at fast food outlets, or cooked on the barbecue in the backyard and on the grill at the fish and chip shop, because of the living animal origins of the foods served in such places. Yet, they do not relinquish the memory, nor do they underestimate the social meaning and worth of sharing a burger or a hotdog with friends, or the commensal pleasures of a hearty egg and bacon breakfast with their families.

Conclusion

The comments of the informants throughout this essay suggest that meat alternatives are much more than guilty pleasures or ersatz food substances that are consumed merely to satiate meat cravings. There is a discernible social dimension to the informants' incorporation of meat alternatives in their vegetarian diets. It is also clear that products such as vegetarian or vegan sausages, bacon and hot dogs are effective social instruments. They seem to perform their tasks well and are the ultimate means by which vegetarians participate in and enjoy potentially uncomfortable situations, such as barbecues or Christmas feasts. Rather than altering their social circle, vegetarians and vegans choose foods that are socially efficacious as well as being pleasing to the senses.

There are however, a number of public health and ethical dilemmas that arise from the emergence of plant-based processed foods. The findings presented highlight how vegetarian diets could become nutritionally inadequate. As the well-known Australian nutritionist and author, Rosemary Stanton, warned over a decade ago, 'Being vegetarian does not, in itself, guarantee a healthy diet' (vi). Stanton, who is not a vegetarian, is one of very few nutritionists in Australia who was willing to endorse vegetarian diets in the late 1990s and publish medical-science based tips for 'healthy vegetarian eating'. The data presented in this essay does confirm Stanton's warning. The informants' consumption of mock meats clearly indicates that some vegetarians might make nutritionally poor choices on a regular basis, although it appeared that none of the informants in

this study chose to live exclusively off a range of meatless junk foods. These products are usually defined as an indulgence or as an accompaniment to fresh, plant-based whole foods.

In varying degrees, these processed foods challenge the gastro-ontological security of some vegetarians and vegans, and further research with non-vegetarians would undoubtedly reveal mixed reactions. For example, highly health conscious consumers might appreciate a convenient product that contains no saturated animal fats and cholesterol, but be deterred by high sodium or sugar levels. Then, there are the environmental considerations. Vegans might like a little fake bacon, burger, or sausage, but be dismayed by the wasteful packaging and general resource waste typical of processed food industries. Some writers have already questioned whether these foods are ethically sound. Michael Pollan represents a growing number of 'foodies' who encourage more plant-based eating, but are nonetheless concerned with humanity severing ties with 'nature'. Pollan's *In Defence of Food* is highly critical of the soy industry, and he asks readers to regard 'nontraditional' foods with scepticism (176). In a disquisition on the moral malaise inherent in vegetarianism, Keith Tester is more cynical. Citing the meat-free frozen food sales that are worth over 100 million pounds annually in the United Kingdom, he argues that factories which mass produce meat-free meals like the Linda McCartney range (multinational owned) resemble the factory farm and its McDonaldized operational structure:

There can be little or nothing 'natural' about the production processes which are relied upon by the plant in Norfolk. This is most definitely a long way from what Peter Singer undoubtedly had in mind when he made his call for vegetarianism. (219)

Tester is rightfully ambivalent about the ethical nature of vegetarian foods when they are manufactured and marketed in the same manner as their animal-based counterparts. However, he did not fully explain why this should matter. Does a vegetarian who wants to live a cruelty-free existence also have to abandon all of the fundamental principles, products and structures of the free-market, capitalism and modernity? Perhaps because of the processing and convincing meat-like imagery alone, the consumption of these products can easily be interpreted as a compromise in the core values of vegetarianism. Yet, in the Australian study, the majority of informants who indulge in meat alternatives maintain that if eating foods such as vegetarian sausages is a compromise, it is so in an aesthetic sense only, and is certainly not a moral concession. Put simply, animals are not reared and slaughtered for vegetarian bacon or chicken; no animals are killed, nor are their basic freedoms interrupted. A major theme for lovers of meat alternatives in this study was that they want to enjoy and fully participate in meat-oriented feasts such as Christmas and barbecues, but they also want to subvert the regular animal-based feature of these occasions

with various meat substitutes. One informant, Eve, exemplified the views of the majority of informants regarding meat-like foods with a clearly articulated moral disclaimer for why vegetarians and vegans should freely enjoy meat alternatives:

We like all this stuff because it's a big joke, as long as it didn't die! I never said I didn't like the taste and texture of meat, I just don't like what it is, where it comes from, and as long as it didn't die I'm happy to eat meat alternatives. (Partnered Female, 43-50 age group)

It could be argued that the vegetarian penchant for meat-free hot dogs, burgers and other meat alternatives is evidence of compliance with cultural and gastronomic norms that place a premium on meat and animal products. Conversely, the informants' consumption of meat-like foods could be interpreted as a form of resistance to these norms, as these products are chosen precisely because they usually contain no animal-based ingredients. Irrespective of whether the consumption of meat alternatives is indicative of acceptance, resistance, or subversion of cultural norms, there is more of an irreverent than reverent quality to the informants' understanding of the status of meat and animal products in Western cultures. They certainly view plant-based nutrition as the key ingredient for transforming their respective communities into more egalitarian and cruelty-free spaces. Provided, therefore, that there is no 'real' meat on their plates, vegetarians and vegans in this study acknowledged with varying degrees of impertinence and humour that they can, metaphorically speaking, have their civilised burger and eat it too!

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For the Love of Farming

Deeply Rooted: Unconventional Farmers in the Age of Agribusiness

By Lisa M. Hamilton

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Reviewed by Kelly Donati

There is a familiar zealotry in the overwhelming abundance of recent writing on the place of food and farming in contemporary culture and economy, a religiosity that is too often laden with self-righteousness and good doses of hysteria. This is not to suggest that, when it comes to agribusiness, there is not much about which to be concerned and critical. It is to say only that in the burgeoning popular literature on food and farming, it is sometimes hard to strike the right balance between good writing and good critique. Photographer and writer Lisa M. Hamilton's *Deeply Rooted: Unconventional Farmers in the Age of Agribusiness* offers both.

Hamilton is not without her own crusading zeal in her portrayals of three unorthodox farming families. 'They are the faithful,' she begins, 'the ones who believe, despite anything that society shows them, that what they are doing is worth it—that it is vital' (5). The affective and spiritual dimension of farming is indeed familiar and favoured territory for Hamilton. Her first book, *ShumeiNatural Agriculture: Farming to Create Heaven on Earth*, profiles farmers following the teachings of spiritual leader and farming pioneer Mokichi Okada. In this most recent book which traverses three agricultural regions of the United States, she attempts to capture what compels her subjects to pursue their unconventional mode of thinking, working and being, as they resist the dominant economic and political forces of agribusiness which shape how the world is fed. If, as A. Whitney Sanford suggests, '[s]tories help us develop and enact our ethical frameworks that help us think through various courses of action and depict the consequences of those choices' (285), then the value of Hamilton's farming chronicles is that they disrupt industrial agriculture's linear narratives of productivity, efficiency and progress which privilege yield and profitability over vitality, ethics and care. Hers are stories of mindful farming: philosophies, belief systems and ways of life that are imbued with the drama of love, pain and deep connections with the more-than-human world of farming—that is, interactions between people, animals, plants and even microbes. It is agriculture at its liveliest.

Hamilton approaches farming not only as an industry, but as the material expression of an agrarian belief system and an act of survival, one that 'determines whether we as a society will live or die' (4). The stakes are high, yet she handles the subject with a delicate, observant calmness that is rare in much contemporary food writing. Hamilton's challenge to the logic of industrial agriculture is achieved by capturing the art and spirit of farming, producing a moving and inspiring book that is relevant to both academic and non-academic readers with an interest in agrarian literature.

Deeply Rooted is divided into three sections, each dedicated to a different type of food production. Hamilton's exploration of her farming subjects' diverse backgrounds personalises and particularises the racial politics and cultural histories of agribusiness in the US, weaving threads from the past into the present to tell stories that are personal, political and well-informed. She begins with a pair of fourth generation dairy farmers, the loquacious Harry West and his more reserved son Wynton who hail from a corner of east Texas settled by their descendants as freed slaves. Their herd of 42 cows earns the Wests just enough to make a living, though the tiny farm is increasingly rare. A good many have been consolidated into larger farms as part of a national strategy of economic rationalisation in which 'efficiency was the new gospel' (56). As Hamilton describes sitting through an annual meeting of the organic dairy cooperative of which the Wests are members, the emerging debates and diverse opinions of organic milk production highlight the challenges of maintaining family-sized farms and the conflicting perspectives and vested interests at stake in defining what it means to be 'organic'. Even amongst the cooperative's longhaired CEO and barefoot employees, Harry's own understanding of organic dairying is somewhat unconventional—it is 'pasture as a principle and a code, which guides farmers toward doing what is deep-down right' (87). By bringing attention to how ethics and pasture are inextricably bound up together for Harry, Hamilton opens up the space to the possibilities offered by thinking about organic food production as a spiritual practice rather than a certification system.

The second section of the book introduces the reader to tenth generation rancher Virgil Trujillo from Abiquiu, New Mexico, the Ranchlands Manager of Ghost Ranch, a 21,000 acre property of rangeland which he maintains and on which he grazes his own cattle. The ranch, once belonging to his great-grandfather, forms the backdrop for the tensions inherent not only in Virgil's personal and professional life but also in the history of his people. His dream is to rehabilitate the land and bring agriculture back to his community. It is not about food *per se* but about 'the deeper rewards the land offers. Independence. Purpose. Continuity' (161-162). A bureaucratic injustice and deception against Virgil's ancestors two centuries ago remains unfinished business, representing

a loss of cultural and economic independence that perpetuates his own and his community's alienation from the land. In the world of agribusiness, this is an all too familiar story, and Hamilton draws these painful parallels of alienation eloquently throughout the book.

Virgil is embroiled in an ongoing battle with environmental activists who object to ranchers on public land and want to see the ranch returned to its 'natural' state. Hamilton doesn't explicitly weigh in on either side of the debate but pauses long enough to question the value of enclosing nature from humanity in this way. It is clear that, like Virgil, she believes the health of the land and those who live off it are inextricably entwined in ways that are often poorly understood or appreciated, even within the environmental movement. Virgil's story illustrates how land, livelihood and identity are entangled like roots in the soil in ways that will always exceed the economic and political calculations of agribusiness. Hamilton presents a narrative of farming as a practice of care, responsiveness and renewal that sits in stark contrast to the extractive forms of industrial agriculture which surround her subjects. At the same time, she problematises attempts to protect and preserve the 'wild' from human intervention in the name of environmental conservation and explores both the practical and philosophical difficulties of positioning nature and culture in radical opposition to one another.

The book concludes with the Podoll family: two brothers, Dan and David, along with Dan's wife, the very busy Theresa who is also a gardener, cook, farming activist and farmers market coordinator. Theresa presents a clear challenge to the stereotype of the farmer's wife as playing a secondary or supportive role. Though Hamilton takes note of David's comment that 'we took a bad turn in our culture when we took food production away from women and gave it to the men' it is a point that she might have allowed more space to explore (235).

As organic producers of millet, triticale and buckwheat, the Podolls go against the grain of their small community in North Dakota, regarded with suspicion by neighbours who farm in what David describes despairingly as a 'biological desert' of conventional agriculture (229). Of the three families profiled in *Deeply Rooted*, the Podolls are the only ones for whom the pleasures of eating and questions of taste sit at the heart of their everyday lives and their farming philosophy. The Podolls' emotional and spiritual attachment to food production is expressed through their kitchen garden which David humbly credits with providing him vital lessons in sensual awareness and teaching him everything he needs to know about being a good farmer:

You crawl around on your hands and knees, picking weeds, and you see things, ... you smell things. All your senses are used. Being a careful

observer like that gives you a better sense of where to plant what, how to rotate things. With that level of awareness you have an infinite ability to finesse the production of your food. (245)

Like the other farmers in the book, David has a profoundly spiritual interpretation of what it means to be a farmer and seed saver, describing the garden as the 'world's salvation' (245). This religiosity might be grating for some. But Hamilton's subjects are so moving and articulate in their understanding of farming as the righteous path to ecological and personal deliverance (and David is not the only one) that there are many moments in the book when it is tempting for even the most detached of readers to give oneself over to the occasional 'amen'.

Hamilton has written elsewhere that to understand the rhythms of agriculture and to gain an appreciation of what farming *means* rather than what farmers *do*, a writer must bear witness to the tedious and repetitive: 'To write about farmers, one must instead slow down to that rhythm of repetition. ... Being witness means a willingness to pass the same barn or tree or fencepost two dozen times and continually try to learn something new about it' ('From the Author'). Lengthy silences, frustrating tasks and time wasted are used by Hamilton as opportunities to see things differently. Long drives through the endlessly repetitious landscape of corn, soybeans and wheat in North Dakota reveal how the 'same act has been done over and over, the same decision made so many times it has almost ceased to be a choice' (215).

There is a moment in the book when—sitting in a dairy covered in sweat and surrounded by cow excrement, flies and the muddy mess of the milking barn—Hamilton is offered a cup of milk which she drinks after some hesitation, surprised by its tantalising, buttery richness. What marks the difference between this and ordinary milk is Harry's artfulness as a food producer. *Deeply Rooted* is a little like Harry's styrofoam cup of cold milk—refreshing, clean and well-crafted. The clear, evocative and palatable prose artfully navigates the reader through vastly contrasting vistas, from the putrid, treeless landscape of industrial-scale dairies in New Mexico to the chaotic beauty of the Podoll's experimental tomato patch. Moving from one story to another, Hamilton's writing evokes a sense of sadness in leaving behind the powerful narratives and poignant reflections that each farmer offers.

Though Hamilton at times proselytises on topics ranging from how genetically modified agriculture threatens the practice of seed-saving to the lifeless, inhuman nature of industrial farming, it is always relevant to the story at hand. Nor does it get in the way of her primary objective of unearthing narratives that illustrate the nuanced sensuality of an ancient vocation grounded in a deep love of the land. As anthropologist Laura Delind points out, 'few of us retain

the language or the arguments sufficient to explain the spirit or address the substance of how we come to be local,' calling on 'food advocates and activists ... to see, record, and argue for the value of the emotive, the cultural, the spiritual (127). While Hamilton's project is not specifically to valorise the local as many writers have done before her, her contribution to the field of agrarian writing and her skill as a storyteller is the subtlety with which she captures the values of hope, artfulness, creativity, taste, beauty and generosity which inspire and motivate her farming subjects. Hamilton's agenda is not about bringing farmers to the table, but one that is even more basic: to bring farmers back to the farm and to suggest an emotional and spiritual currency by which agriculture might be valued and accounted for. More than documenting the practices of unconventional farmers, hers are love stories. *Deeply Rooted* is a worthy undertaking in the spiritual accounting of farming on a human scale.

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Democracy at the Table

The Taste for Civilization: Food, Politics and Civil Society

By Janet A. Flammang

University of Illinois Press, 325pp, \$25.00, 2009

ISBN 978-0-252-07673-2

Reviewed by Bethaney A. Turner

Whilst researchers are increasingly concerned with contextualizing our everyday, local food practices in relation to international issues such as climate change, rising food costs and concerns over food security, Janet A. Flammang offers a systematic analysis of the role of food, or foodwork—the planning, growing, purchasing, preparation and serving of food—in underpinning the civic values which maintain democracy. She writes specifically of America, but the ideas are highly relevant to an international audience, including Australia. Indeed, she makes a compelling case to broaden the purview of civil society to include what she refers to as ‘household foodwork’. As she notes, it is an area overlooked within her discipline of political science for three key reasons: firstly, it is gendered work; secondly, foodwork destabilises the deep-seated privileging of mind over body in Western philosophical and political thought; and lastly, because it is about appetite and taste, which are all too readily relegated to the realm of individual subjectivity and the exercising of personal control, when they can in fact tell us much about our socio-cultural context.

Of course, food and foodwork are mightily important in all of our lives and Flammang extols their potential to shape and promulgate the civic virtues of thoughtfulness and generosity. For her the table around which we eat teaches us the skills necessary for civilized relationships. The key is the skill of conversation. The table, and its conversations, are offered as significant sites for forming generational connections, learning and practicing culturally specific or significant familial rituals, as well as learning manners. These everyday familial activities socialise us and equip us with the knowledge and skills to operate effectively in public life. However, we run the risk of producing younger generations incapable of fulfilling their duties and obligations in civil society; generations ill-prepared for diplomatic conversation due to the increasing work hours of their parents and competition from an ever-increasing array of screen based activities.

Persuasive as these ideas are, I still recoil somewhat at the importance ascribed to manners, as if frightened by the weight of societal judgement related to what seem to be inconsequential and rather irrelevant conventions. Of course,

food is so often about conventions, which is why we can learn so much about people, culture and society through its study, but I doubt whether civic virtues require one to know which eating implement to wield when. I suspect Flammang would agree here, but my bodily cringe at the mention of manners suggests that, for some, the intersection of the alien public domain into the intimate familial setting is quite an uneasy one warranting further exploration. It is also here that the bodily nature of foodwork could be further emphasized. Flammang notes that '[m]anners make table conversation possible' (99). As such, it is disciplined bodies which facilitate the 'courtesy of a conversation' which she locates as 'an essential building block of civil society' (99). Whilst Flammang's work certainly contributes to destabilizing the privileging of the mind in the mind/body binary, I would have liked to see more body in the text. This would illustrate and emphasise the ways in which rules, regulations and rituals are habitualised bodily actions able to be given new life in different settings. Growing, provisioning, preparing and consuming food are embodied experiences. A carefully prepared meal, a plate full of homegrown veggies, the arrival of casseroles from family, friends and neighbours in times of need, are all non-verbal acts demonstrating and teaching the civic virtues of generosity and thoughtfulness. We can learn a great deal from table talk, but so too can we from the careful observation of and participation in the art of nurturing bodies, as grower, careful consumer and dedicated cook. Still, I come away from the text deeply engaged with the foundational role of generosity and thoughtfulness in civil society and, also, with the complementary and interconnected ideas of practices of care and trust, as articulated and embodied through foodwork.

Of course, the ground Flammang covers is quite familiar territory within disciplines such as anthropology and sociology which take seriously the everyday practices of our lives. We know that food matters. We know that the personal is political. But Flammang presents us with an artful argument from a different sphere. The ideas are closely and carefully developed in the early chapters to firmly situate the work within the Western philosophical tradition upon which her discipline of political science rests. However, it is once the abstract concepts find themselves grounded in her detailed analysis of Alice Waters' *Delicious Revolution* that you feel the constraints of the discipline loosen somewhat and the prose is lightened and enlivened. The *Delicious Revolution*, as Flammang writes, 'illustrates how one woman [Californian restaurateur, Alice Waters] fused delicious food with both a political philosophy and practical applications in her community' (173). It is premised on the notion that 'good food is a right, not a privilege'. It aims to encourage critical participation in the food system from the production of local, organic food in jails and schools to the importance of creating savvy food consumers able to purchase accurately labeled organic goods. I hear echoes here of Stephanie Alexander, the pioneer of

a systematic program of school kitchen gardens in Australia, and, of course, also the exhortations of other famous Australian cooks, Margaret Fulton and Maggie Beer: local, seasonal, shared food is best.

Flammang's case study is treated well, and serves effectively to ground and allow detailed exploration of the possibilities of foodwork in relation to civil society as alluded to in the early chapters. In the analysis of the Delicious Revolution, the table as a site of civic virtue finds itself discussed alongside gardens and farmers markets because, as the author notes, 'given the time crunch at the family table, civilizing practices need to be fostered in as many settings as possible' (174). Foodwork is important because it is about multiple points of connection, not just with family or the community, but with the land and the environment. There is little attention to the latter in this book, but many others are filling this gap. Instead the focus here is on how we build and maintain civil society. The text is very much about future proofing; about developing guidelines to prevent, or at least delay, disconnection from others, society and the environment, particularly for those living in urban areas. Disconnection seems to be increasingly built into our lives and lifestyles, from an urban planning focus on densification in cities, to the overworked workforce with little time for foodwork. Alongside the need to degender foodwork, Flammang calls for reduced work hours to allow people to focus on food and the table, the civic virtues this can promote and, thus, the contribution to democratic practices it can make. In the meantime, as occurs in the Delicious Revolution, much of this now must occur in spaces outside the home such as school kitchen gardens.

Even if food and foodwork is degendered, I do wonder how many people would choose to use more non-work time to focus on foodwork. Such an initiative would of course require a simultaneous increase in education or support for people who have actually become so disconnected from the food system that cooking and sourcing fresh food, let alone growing their own, would feel overwhelming. This is, of course, a problem arguably solved by food itself in communal gardening plots where we can learn from others or in food co-ops and farmers markets where people share ways of using their produce. But, I suspect the people willing to get involved in these activities are already the converted. I think there are far too many people that will remain untouched by this Revolution. Still, Flammang convinces me that foodwork makes a significant contribution to constructing and supporting civic virtues, civil society and, consequently, democracy itself. It is certainly a revolution worth fighting for.

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The Social Life of Food

A Sociology of Food and Nutrition: The Social Appetite (3rd edition)
Edited by John Germov and Lauren Williams
Oxford University Press, 425pp, \$49.95, 2010
ISBN: 9780195551501

Reviewed by Mandy Hughes

The recent success of food documentaries, such as *Food Inc* and *The Community Solution: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil*, suggests not only the popularity of 'food' as a topic but also indicates growing social awareness of and interest in the role of food in a global system dominated by the manipulation (and scientisation) of agricultural production. Community gardens and growers' markets are expanding rapidly across the globe, as a new appreciation of locally grown, and often chemical-free food influences consumers' daily habits. So it is timely to explore the third edition of *A Sociology of Food and Nutrition: The Social Appetite* (2010), a book that takes readers on a journey through the complex and politically vexed question of food consumption.

A Sociology of Food and Nutrition is the result of a collaboration between sociologist John Germov and dietician Lauren Williams. The editors' interdisciplinary partnership is reflected in a book that traverses a range of disciplines including anthropology, public health, gender studies, psychology, epidemiology and more. Germov and Williams draw on Charles Wright Mills' idea of the 'sociological imagination' to examine how we, as social agents, interact with food. They argue, for example, that 'food and eating are imbued with social meanings and are closely associated with people's social interactions in both formal and informal settings' (6) and explore the idea that the 'personal is political' in relation to food industries and the promotion of health messages.

The book is divided into five cohesive parts logically commencing with 'An Appetiser' that introduces the reader to the key themes of the book, including what we eat and why, the application of sociology to food, and trends in food production. This is followed by the subsequent parts: 'The Food System: Globalisation and Agribusiness'; 'Food and Nutrition Discourses, Politics and Policies'; 'Food Consumption, Social Differentiation and Identity'; and 'Food and the Body: Civilising Processes and Social Embodiment'. *A Sociology of Food and Nutrition* is essentially a banquet that entices the reader to reconsider how we as individuals, in connection (and sometimes in opposition) with society, make choices about our diets that, in turn, have effects on the (social and physical) body.

Germov and Williams have organised their book in a logical and easy to follow manner that makes the chapters accessible to a variety of readers regardless of their disciplinary base. Chapter Two: 'World Hunger: Its Roots and Remedies' offers the kind of 'big picture' explanation required to set up this discussion from a social justice perspective. Rather than perpetuating the myth of the 'scarcity frame' in relation to world hunger, Moore Lappe stresses the need to re-evaluate, stating: 'We breathe in like invisible ether this scarcity-as-cause and economic-growth-as-cure framing, making it difficult to even register the contradictory evidence that is all around us' (30). The effect of power regimes on food production is a central theme in this chapter, where the denial of access to land has clearly limited the 'capacity to act' for many families in the Global South.

The rest of this section discusses unsustainable food production and highlights the role of global capitalism in exacerbating environmental problems. Terry Leahy uses the example of permaculture to argue effectively for the ill-effects of the monoculture resulting from large scale agricultural production. Continuing on this theme but focusing more on the scientisation and corporatisation of food, Geoffrey Lawrence and Janet Grice overview the 'appropriationism' and 'substitutionism' used in agribusiness (Chapter 4). In Chapter Five, Jane Dixon deploys a 'cultural economy' approach to explore the questionable practices of supermarkets in influencing/creating consumer habits to further increase the strength of the prevailing duopoly (as is the case in Australia).

Moving on to the much-contested area of public health, Jennifer Lisa Falbe and Marion Nestle examine the highly political domain of government dietary advice. It is clearly demonstrated here that the most influential stakeholders in public health are the lobby groups representing the food industries. This trend is further discussed in Chapter Seven, where Lawrence and Germov outline the current debate on (and function of) so-called 'functional foods'. These are foods that provide health benefits beyond nutrition and make claims to offer specific health benefits, such as reduced susceptibility to certain diseases. This chapter examines the specific example of folic acid fortification of staple foods, amongst others, and asks the question: who benefits and who is potentially at risk from such mandatory inclusion? It seems the potential health risks to those in the community who do not need increased folic acid have not been fully accounted for. It is important to note, however, that there is more to functional foods than the examples given in this chapter, which focuses more on 'additives' than natural foods such as blueberries, for example, which are also promoted as a functional food. The intent is to demonstrate the role of food industries in constructing a need for their products and extracting the largest possible profit.

Although the humble blueberry farmer would surely welcome an increase in profits, I imagine their marketing would not be as aggressive and targeted, nor would they have the industry leverage of the 'manufactured' food companies.

Elizabeth Murphy's chapter on infant feeding provides an excellent discussion on an issue that is highly pertinent for mothers in that it includes analysis of ongoing prejudices concerning women's social roles. Often, for public health professionals, the issue of breast feeding is presented as a 'personal' or individual choice and structural factors (such as class) are not often considered. Elizabeth Murphy here emphasises the link between feeding and widespread social perceptions that the mother's social role is as a kind of moral guardian. Murphy's even-handed discussion in this chapter ultimately contends breast feeding advocates need to consider both the cultural conditions and material contexts that affect breast feeding. A useful addition to this chapter might be an exploration of those mothers who are physically unable to breastfeed.

The theme of sustainable food production is taken up again in Deirdre Wick's discussion of vegetarianism. This chapter also continues another theme of the book which focuses on the role of power and exploitation as applied to food. Wick draws on the work of anthropologist Mary Douglas to expose the link between meat consumption and patriarchal power structures—a legitimate analysis especially when we consider the role of meat as 'status' in hunter gatherer societies, despite women being responsible for the collection of the majority of a group's daily calorific intake. The social construction of meat consumption is also highlighted by this chapter's focus on uses of language in food production and consumption, especially the way in which names for animals are altered once they have been butchered, from sheep to lamb, cow to beef and so on (289).

The final section of the book focuses on the interconnection between food and bodies. Williams and Germov explore the 'thin ideal' for women by means of a discussion on structural versus post-structural approaches, and conclude that a synthesis between the two is necessary in order to fully understand the way we 'do' our 'body work'. However, it is important to mention here that some women will by virtue of their social positioning be more enabled to exercise 'agency' than others. Williams and Germov conduct a semiotic analysis of magazine covers to demonstrate the role of history and culture in defining and re-shaping the ideal body shape for women. Cultural and historical factors are also drawn on in the subsequent chapters on eating disorders and the stigmatisation of obesity, concluding another theme of this book concerned to map the way we mark out our identity via interaction with food.

There are many worthy chapters in this book, and unfortunately it is not possible to comprehensively review them all. Although the editors do not claim

to be all encompassing in terms of their social food journey, they have done justice to the topic by providing many relevant case studies that successfully reveal our relationship with food. I do feel however, there are two topics of direct relevance to this book that would complement and round out the discussion. My suggestion, for the fourth edition, would be a case study of the social role of the community garden movement; particularly the role of such gardens in incorporating migrant gardening traditions. Food is clearly a source of cultural transmission and such gardens are highly successful in promoting and maintaining cultural identity (especially for refugees who may have fled their homeland without any form of 'transportable' culture). I would also like to see a specific chapter on food security. Although food insecurity is mentioned in Moore Lappe's chapter on world hunger, Leahy's discussion on unsustainable food production and McIntosh and Kubena's work on food and ageing, there is indeed much more that could be explored here, especially with regard to the many food based community programs offered both internationally and in Australia.

As a frequent user of Germov's *Public Sociology: An Introduction to Australian Society*, a text often set on university curricula, I am familiar with the chapter layout and recommendations for additional sources of information to extend student learning. This user-friendly approach has been successfully translated to *A Sociology of Food and Nutrition*—making it an excellent student resource. But the target audience is not limited. Anyone with an interest in food and society, across a range of disciplines will find this book both engaging and informative. The book also serves as a general reader for anyone with a conscience/consciousness about food.

Mandy Hughes is a sessional academic at Southern Cross University. Her interests include Sociology of Health and Development Communication. Mandy has also worked in the community sector for international and Australian NGOs in the area of Food Security, Community Education and Development Effectiveness.

Devouring the Social Appetite

The Slow Food Story: Politics and Pleasure

By Geoff Andrews

McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, 196pp, \$19.95, 2008

ISBN 978 0 7735 3478 0

Bite Me: Food in Popular Culture

By Fabio Parasecoli

Berg, Oxford, 168pp, \$29.95, 2008

ISBN 978 1 8452 0761 8

The Globalization of Food

Edited by David Inglis and Debra Gimlin

Berg, Oxford, 296pp, \$34.95, 2009

ISBN 978 1 84520 816 5

Reviewed by Lauren Williams and John Germov

Introduction

We live in an era seemingly obsessed with food, where celebrity chefs are household names—Jamie Oliver, Gordon Ramsay, Nigella Lawson, and Heston Blumenthal to name a few—and reality TV shows like *Master Chef* and *My Kitchen Rules* dominate the ratings. Food documentaries and books critiquing the food industry top the bestseller lists, such as Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation* (2001; subsequently used as the basis for a Hollywood film), Michael Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (2006), and Raj Patel's *Stuffed and Starved* (2008). Our hunger for food clearly goes beyond physical consumption to a desire to consume information about food. It comes as no surprise then that the academic study of food is also gaining force and developing into a substantial body of literature.

The three books reviewed here examine the social origins of why we eat the way we do—what we have previously referred to as the 'social appetite'—to distinguish socio-cultural perspectives on food and eating as opposed to biological or individualistic accounts (see Germov and Williams 2008). *The Slow Food Story* describes the rise of the Slow Food movement and its culinary, environmental, and ethical challenge to the global food industry. *Bite Me* uses pop culture to illustrate the ways in which food and foodways define us as individuals and as a society. The final book, *The Globalization of Food*, is an

edited collection of essays on the consequences of globalizing processes for food production and consumption. The contributions each makes to the literature of the social aspects of food and eating are examined in turn.

The Slow Food story: politics and pleasure

Geoff Andrews provides a detailed account of the rise of the Slow Food movement that aims to transform the way we produce and consume food—a global phenomenon which has continued to expand since the book was published and now has around 100,000 members in over 150 countries (Slow Food). Using the emblem of the snail, the movement promotes culinary diversity, indigenous ingredients, artisan techniques, fair trade and sustainable agriculture. As the subtitle of Andrews' book highlights, Slow Food blends political activism with the pleasure and sociality of producing, preparing, and sharing (quality) food. It is this cultural politics, mixing ethics with pleasure, that Andrews presents as explaining the unique appeal of Slow Food.

Andrews presents a readable and informative account of the origins and growing popularity of the movement, detailing its evolution, its activities and to a lesser extent its critics. His book complements the other major work in the field, Parkins and Craig's *Slow Living* (2006), which posited slow food as part of an alternative movement arising in opposition to our fast-paced society. Andrews' book is pitched at the educated lay public, though it makes use of scholarly sources and would be essential reading for any academics interested in the study of Slow Food. That said, this apparent attempt to bridge two potential readerships has its drawbacks. Andrews is a journalist and an academic, and at times the book segues between engaging with the scholarly literature, and journalistic accounts depicting the key players and events in Slow Food's history. Most of the key literature on Slow Food has been appropriately drawn upon, but it is a pity that many of the scholarly debates and critiques within this literature, and the broader alternative food and ethical consumption fields, are dealt with only superficially. While we accept it is always a judgment call about what to include or exclude, in our view too much space in the book was dedicated to overly detailed descriptive accounts of the movement's emergence and its key facets, crowding out the potential for greater analysis.

The Slow Food Story makes a number of important and insightful contributions to understanding the appeal of the movement. The pleasure focus of Slow Food means it avoids negative and oppositional discourses—it is not anti-globalisation or anti-capitalism despite its founders' origins in Italian left-wing politics. Andrews rightly states that part of Slow Food's success has been due to effective media use and successful culinary tourism events, which have

connected ‘foodies’, farmers, academics and chefs. Underlying its popularity is Slow Food’s emphasis on pleasure, which the movement claims is not meant to convey hedonism, but as Andrews reiterates, rather an appreciation of cultural tradition, non-standardisation and support for re-localised food production. Yet the findings of social science research on Slow Food to date indicate that members tend to exhibit a preference for gastronomic experiences over political action (Gaytan). As noted by Andrews, Slow Food founder Carlo Petrini has acknowledged this very issue—of many *convivia* (local Slow Food groups) merely acting as dinner clubs providing gourmet food experiences—which, while of benefit in supporting local produce, fails to address wider political issues within communities. An intriguing matter raised by Andrews is Petrini’s failure to convince members to drop the term *convivia* in favour of ‘food communities’, ostensibly because the latter lacked an elitist image. Petrini’s response to the elitist foodie club critique is to encourage *convivia* to seek out producers to become members, in his belief that the effectiveness of the movement lies in creating a network of producers and consumers, so that consumers can be transformed into what is termed ‘co-producers’ of their own food.

Andrews points out that Slow Food appeals to both radicals and conservatives alike; offering in our view an ideological ‘third way’ by extolling the democratic right to the pleasure of good food, whilst offering protection against the cultural and economic imperialism of global markets. Andrews notes there have been organisational problems in different countries, where the decentralised ground-up organisational structure can lead to problems. Indeed, shortly after the book was published, the fledgling Australian national Slow Food association was disbanded after many *convivia* members organised to oppose its centralised coordination of activities.

The Slow Food Story focuses mainly on Italy, US, and the UK, with a few references to other European countries. It conveys the great potential of the movement and its various innovations in a sympathetic way. It is a worthwhile addition to the alternative food movement literature, and an excellent description of Slow Food’s history, but would have benefited from subjecting the movement to more sustained critique.

Bite Me

Fabio Parasecoli’s salaciously entitled book seeks to further the area of food studies by examining the ‘layers of meaning that are often left unexplored’ (2) within the lived experience of pop culture. He defines pop culture as ‘*any form of cultural phenomenon, material item, practice, social relation, and even idea that is conceived, produced, distributed, and consumed within a market-driven economy*’ (4; our italics).

The author lives between Italy and the United States, working as both an academic and a journalist, and is the President of the Society for the Study of Food. His justification for the book is that, until recently, both food and pop culture have been viewed as rather 'low brow' topics of examination. He argues that it is important to study food and pop culture as they reflect the way in which food, eating and the body influence our society.

The book comprises an introduction outlining the author's approach to the analysis, six chapters, and an afterword. Each chapter deals with a different aspect of examining food in society, from the biological in Chapter 1 (how the brain works) to the social in Chapter 6 (cultural tourism). Pop culture examples are used to exemplify the points made, predominantly drawn from the world of film (or books which have become film) and television. The author draws upon his previously published academic works, as well as those of other authors from a breadth of disciplines, from Freud to Foucault, to examine food relationships through the lens of pop culture. Some theorists are mentioned more often than others, for example the work of the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, but there is no overarching theoretical framework to the text. Rather, the content of each chapter is examined from the point of view of the theorist that applies to that topic; for example, the work of the psychoanalysts Freud and Melanie Klein are cited in the second chapter which examines the way in which psychiatry and psychoanalysis relate to food. In this chapter, Parasecoli notes that the pop cultural fascination with vampires is an extension of our earliest experience of eating as human beings—that is, ingestion by sucking milk as the product of the maternal body. His point is that the resurgence in popularity of films and television shows featuring vampire protagonists arises from our unconscious desire to revisit our deepest, narcissistic childhood desires of obtaining nourishment from the body. Cannibalism is also examined within this chapter.

In fact, vampirism and cannibalism are rather overemphasised throughout the book, perhaps due to a special interest in pop culture reproduction of these ideas by the author. Taken together with Chapter 4, 'Quilting the empty body: food and dieting' and Chapter 5, dealing with African-American bodies, this book is perhaps more about the body as a product, or even subject, of ingestion, than about food *per se*. In Chapter 3, which is about the worlds that are created by science fiction (utopias or dystopias, depending on the story), Parasecoli draws on Bourdieu's idea of *habitus* and Foucault's concept of power to discuss how eating and drinking are acts that form part of the *techniques of the body*.

The final chapter 'Tourism and taste' examines the role of tourism in changing food perceptions and behaviours. This chapter, while interesting, did not seem to sit well with the other chapters. While the definition of pop culture given might be stretched to include a discussion of the tourist experience, the other chapters drew so strongly on film and television that it was strange not to have examined

that experience through the medium of film or television. There are certainly a plethora of television series and specials about gourmet travel, and films where tourists find themselves dislocated from their sense of what constitutes food, that Parasecoli could have drawn on, and analysis of such sources would have improved the consistency of the work. The author concludes the book with a plea for pleasure, and again we see mention of the Slow Food movement, except this time from the perspective that it has grown too politically focused, lamenting that the aspect of pleasure may have been forgotten.

As mentioned, most of the pop culture references are from film or television, with some from the written word, but few from the Internet. Some reference is made to YouTube in Chapter 5, but it would have been interesting to include more analysis of these newer sources, although Parasecoli acknowledges at the outset that the pop culture sources follow his personal interest. While truly multidisciplinary in scope and theorists, the book will be of particular interest to students of cultural and media studies, and any disciplines with an interest in food, from the sociological to the nutritional. The book is written in a manner accessible to the educated lay reader with a passion for food, and at least a passing interest in popular culture. This work adds to the literature on food and society, through the lens of pop culture which, after all, reflects back to us, if not reality, then the version of reality we are happy to consume.

The Globalization of Food

The Globalization of Food explores the impact of globalization on food production and consumption, showing the centrality and importance of food politics in our lives. The book comprises 15 chapters from 21 authors from the US, UK, Europe and Australia, though there is no preface to explain how the volume was assembled. Contributing author biographies providing more information than current university affiliation would have been helpful, given that the only hint the reader gets of the disciplinary background of the authors is to be gleaned from the chapter content. The authors are apparently from diverse backgrounds, both in the geographic and the disciplinary sense.

The book is divided into three parts: a substantial introductory chapter, a section on food production and distribution, and a section on food preparation and consumption. The editors' introductory chapter provides an expansive discussion of globalization as it pertains to food, providing a good overview of the key debates within the globalization literature. Inglis and Gimlin highlight the social, cultural, economic and political dimensions of globalization,

preferring to pluralise the term as 'globalizations' to acknowledge its multiple forms and differing impacts across the regions of the world. The editors propose the following 'working definition' of globalizing processes related to food:

The multiple modes of interaction (e.g. connection, penetration and mutual, although not necessarily equally weighted, influencing and restructuring) of the economic, political, social and cultural dimensions of globalization (i.e. forces, processes, institutions, structures, actors, networks, etc.) as these affect food-related matters, and as the latter in turn come to affect the former, in a series of ongoing dialectical relations characterized by the constant generation of forms of complexity. (9; original italics)

Thankfully, the remainder of the chapter is not as longwinded or opaque. On the same page the editors point out that 'it is not enough to study food consumption in isolation from the means of production' and state their preference for analytic syntheses that avoid 'unhelpful dyads' and integrate 'structure with agency, materiality with symbolism', noting some chapters in their collection have done just that. It's somewhat intriguing then that the book structure divides chapters between production and consumption, though this divide is somewhat artificial given that several chapters traverse both. These quibbles aside, the introductory chapter does a good job of historically situating food globalization, from early forms in centuries past to the contemporary period. The editors draw out the key issues covered in the book chapters in a synthetic rather than chronological way, making this chapter more substantive than the obligatory overviews of chapters that can appear in some edited works. Inglis and Gimlin conclude that the 'general thematic' of the book is that 'food globalizations are many and manifold, not singular and uniform' (31).

The production and distribution section of the book contains six chapters, and in the opening chapter we again find a discussion on Slow Food, used here as an example of the politics of food. Other chapters deal with globalization from the perspective of food production standards (aquaculture in Chapter 3 and Fairtrade products in Chapter 7), food locales (Chapter 4), the global governance of the wine trade (Chapter 5), and the scale of food systems (Chapter 6). The chapters vary in the scope with which they consider production and distribution issues, and an alternative way to view this section would have been through treatment of key themes, such as valorisation of the local, or the consequences for food producers of globalization.

Chapter 3 by Marianne Lien is a particularly interesting and lucidly written account of how globalised aquaculture has challenged the definitions of food, food standards and international trade, using the example of Tasmanian Atlantic salmon—which we would point out is a paradox of nomenclature in that Tasmania is nowhere near the Atlantic—to exemplify the complexity of

these issues. Also instructive is discussion of scale research in geography by the authors of Chapter 6, and the reminder that scale (local versus global) is socially constructed, non-permanent and relational. In Chapter 7, Caroline Wright gives a clear analysis of the relationship between Fairtrade and globalization, and reminds the reader that globalization does not necessarily equate to capitalism. The definition of globalization that Wright gives in her chapter (141) is more accessible than that given by the editors.

The final section of the book tends to be more internally cohesive than section 2, and deals with food preparation and consumption. The eight short chapters discuss the themes of how food helps establish a national or cultural identity (Chapters 8, 9, 11, 12 and 13), as well as personal identity (Chapter 10). In Chapter 10, Danielle Gallegos looks at the Mediterranean diet to examine nutrition as a pathway to risk minimisation. The role of environmental sustainability is also considered by Gallegos which, somewhat surprisingly, is not mentioned elsewhere in the book aside from a passing reference in Chapter 4 and a very brief section in Chapter 6.

While the book covers an ambitious range of topics, there are a few notable omissions such as 'third world' hunger, environmental sustainability, and genetically modified foods. In view of these gaps it is somewhat odd that a chapter on obesity was included. Although the chapter is fascinating and well written, it is more about the nutritional consequences of globalization than it is about food, especially since it also discusses the contribution of physical activity to obesity.

As editors of a similar collection of chapters, we are well aware of the challenges in achieving a consistent voice through multiple authors, and this book does not quite achieve it. If the editors gave the authors a brief to consider their topic from the point of view of globalization (as one would imagine they did), some authors seem to have ignored it. The fact that the chapter authors employ different theoretical frameworks and perspectives adds to both the richness and confusion in this work. The book will appeal to a broad readership, and will be useful to students of food studies, food sociology, as well as disciplines considering nutrition.

Conclusion: slow, popular, and global social appetites

Food is as fundamental to our cultural, social and personal life as it is to our physical survival. In quite different ways, the three books reviewed here advance our understanding of the social appetite—the social organisation, distribution, preparation and consumption of food. The symbolic and material pleasures and politics of food are rightly the province of many disciplines, from sociology and anthropology, to cultural studies, psychology, human geography and public health nutrition, in addition to the interdisciplinary field of food studies. Collectively, these books provide an entrée to these differing though often compatible approaches to studying the social origins of food.

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Lauren Williams is Professor of Nutrition and Dietetics at the University of Canberra. She holds tertiary qualifications in science, dietetics, social science, health promotion and public health. Lauren has published journal articles, books and book chapters on her quantitative and qualitative research into weight gain, weight control practices, body acceptance in women and the sociology of food. She is co-editor of A Sociology of Food and Nutrition: The Social Appetite (2008), with John Germov.

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Five Food Microhistories: Stories of What, How and Why We Eat

Cake: A Global History

By Nicola Humble

Reaktion Books, 144pp, \$24.95, 2010

ISBN 978 1 86189 648 3

Cheese: A Global History

By Andrew Dalby

Reaktion Books, 128pp, \$24.95, 2009

ISBN 978 1 86189 523 3

Tea: A Global History

By Helen Saberi

Reaktion Books, 184pp, \$24.95, 2010

ISBN 978 1 86189 776 3

Soup: A Global History

By Janet Clarkson

Reaktion Books, 152 pp, \$24.95, 2010

ISBN 978 1 86189 774 9

The Bloody History of the Croissant

By David Halliday

Arcadia (imprint of Australian Scholarly Publishing), 111pp, \$19.95, 2010

ISBN 9781921509865

Reviewed by Donna Lee Brien

In the 1990s, I discovered, and became highly enamoured of, the form of historical narrative known as microhistory. Microhistory's focus on single ordinary subjects including localities, events, lives, families or everyday products means that these studies can illuminate broader culture. This aspect of microhistory, together with its compelling narrative style, is attracting more and more readers. This interest is due, in part, to microhistorians' ability to fashion fascinating and even dramatic stories from data that can often appear uninspiring in its raw form.

In food history terms, there is nothing more ordinary than the everyday food ordinary people eat, and microhistorical studies of these unprepossessing subjects are popular, so much so that, at times, they are topping the bestseller lists. Books such as Mark Kurlansky's *Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World* and Lizzie Collingham's *Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors* have all reached sales figures that have surpassed many other historical texts. These, and other authors, have, moreover, described their books in terms that greatly surpass the significance of the single food item, with Kurlansky describing such food writing as 'about agriculture, about ecology, about man's relationship with nature, about the climate, about nation-building, cultural struggles, friends and enemies, alliances, wars, religion. It is about memory and tradition and, at times, even about sex' (*Choice Cuts* 1). Microhistories of single food items are published frequently today, and deal with some, many or all of the above topics. They also move beyond these topics to range into discussions of topics of personal interest such as diet and health, of social and cultural importance such as the media, and of global significance such as environmental sustainability and food security. The five books reviewed here are indicative of these current trends.

Soup: A Global History, *Cheese: A Global History*, *Cake: A Global History* and *Tea: A Global History* are from Reaktion Press's delectable Edible series. I have nothing but praise for the books that make up this wonderful series, each of which is quite different in scope and tone, but each of which contributes to a series of a consistently high standard. I am not alone in this assessment, with individual books praised highly in reviews and the series winning a special commendation in the prestigious 2010 André Simon Food and Drink Awards. The approach of each, as the subtitles suggest, moves outside a narrow Western focus and despite their concise length (all less than 200 pages), the information included is detailed and interesting, even for readers like myself who are familiar with other works on these topics. The writing is both scholarly and accessible, while the production of each book is nothing short of beautiful. Each is published in hardcover format, with the series marked by an elegant cream slipcover with coloured drawing. Each is lavishly illustrated throughout with high quality images that illustrate and enhance the text: *Cake* has 53 illustrations, 31 in colour; *Soup* has 60, 37 in colour; *Cheese* has 60, 40 in colour; while *Tea* has 77, with 62 of these in colour.

Each of these books reveals real passion for the subject from the author, all of whom reveal both personal and scholarly interest in the subject. *Cake: A Global History's* author, Nicola Humble, for instance, is Professor of English Literature at Roehampton University (UK), and author of an important book on British cookbooks, *Culinary Pleasures: Cook Books and the Transformation of British Food*, as well as books on women's cultures: *The Feminine Middlebrow Novel, 1920s to 1950s* and *Victorian Heroines: Representations of Femininity in Nineteenth-*

Century Literature and Art (the latter with Kimberley Reynolds). Humble begins her dissertation on cake with a personal memory (of her fifth year birthday cake—a train) which focuses the discussion to follow on how ‘Cakes are very strange things, producing a range of emotional responses far out of keeping with their culinary significance’ (8). This is followed by a fascinating discussion of the difference between cakes, bread and biscuits; cakes from around the world; a history of baking; rituals and symbolism associated with cakes; famous cakes in literature; and a chapter on postmodern cakes (which includes cupcakes and the representation of cakes in contemporary art). While I devoured this volume in one sitting, I returned to Humble’s thoughtful discussion of what makes a cake as opposed to other food items made from similar ingredients, and her detailed discussion of the place of baking in American culture. Her ideas on food in literature could easily be expanded into a volume of its own.

Based in France, Andrew Dalby is also well regarded in food history circles for his many books on culinary topics from the ancient world, including *Bacchus: A Biography*, *Flavours of Byzantium*, *Food in the Ancient World from A to Z*, and *Empire of Pleasures: Luxury and Indulgence in the Roman World*. His books have won prestigious awards with *Siren Feasts: A History of Food and Gastronomy in Greece* winning the Runciman Award, offered by the Anglo-Hellenic League for a work published in English dealing wholly or in part with Greece or Hellenism, and *Dangerous Tastes: The Story of Spices* named Food Book of the Year by the Guild of Food Writers. In *Cheese: A Global History*, Dalby brings this considerable erudition to his study, which he divides into a discussion of the various types of cheese and how their names have changed through time, as well as the history, making and consumption of cheese—all of which are tackled from a historical perspective. In terms of food security, Dalby explains how cheese was a way of transforming milk—a good but unstable source of protein—into a much more reliable food resource. His chapter on cheese making deals with continuity and variety in cheese making from the Cyclops in *The Odyssey* to modern times, discussing the various types of milk used (sheep, goat, cow, buffalo) and how it is curdled, treated, flavoured, aged and stored.

Like many today in the West, I use cheese largely as a simple food on its own or as a flavouring ingredient in such dishes as soups, pasta or salads, and was unaware until I read Dalby’s work how widely cheese has been used as a culinary ingredient throughout Western history, and especially appreciated this part of Dalby’s text. I also really enjoyed the series of historical recipes and was prompted to tackle some of them.

Helen Saberi, author of *Tea: A Global History*, also has a significant published profile in culinary history. She is the author of *Noshe Djan: Afghan Food and Cookery* and co-author with David Burnett of *The Road to Vindaloo: Curry Cooks and Curry Books*. She assisted the late, great Alan Davidson for many

years on his *Oxford Companion to Food* (as research director), and co-authored the microhistory, *Trifle*, and co-edited the compilation *The Wilder Shores of Gastronomy: Twenty Years of the Best Food Writing from the Journal Petits Propos Culinaires* with him. In *Tea*, after defining and describing various forms of tea, the world's second most popular beverage after water, Saberi follows tea's story geographically from China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan, to the Middle East and Mediterranean and hence to the West through India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. Detailing the differences between white, yellow, green, oolong, black and puerh teas, Saberi also discusses the different grades of teas and provides a glossary of tasting terms that is just as detailed and descriptive as those used in tasting wine. Tea's rise and fall as exotic and costly beverage of high status to drink of the masses is traced, as are its traditional uses such as in the Japanese Zen tea ceremony. Modern teas, such the current fashion for Bubble tea and Chai in the West, and the market for organic, fair trade and origin-specific teas are not neglected, and herbal teas, which are not teas at all, are also defined and discussed. The meals that are centred around tea, such as morning, afternoon and high tea, are described, as are methods of preparation, including the invention and current high rates of use of tea bags. Australian billy tea gets a mention, as does ongoing medical research into tea's therapeutic properties. Like the other volumes in this series, Saberi manages to pack in a great deal of fascinating information, while paying attention to scholarly detail.

Food historian Janet Clarkson admits in the beginning of *Soup* that she panicked a little when she had committed to writing an entire book on soup, especially as soup—unlike many other food products—she finds, is not inherently sexy, extravagant, mysterious, exotic, cute or sporty. Yet, it is soup's very familiarity, universality and ubiquity that Clarkson finds as its 'claim to fame' (9). Clarkson, who lives in Queensland, and is author of numerous culinary encyclopedia entries as well as the books *Menus from History: Historic Meals and Recipes for Every Day of the Year* and *Pie: A Global History* in the Edible series, took a thematic approach to her study, beginning with the origins of soup, and then progressing to what she classified as medicinal (including a fascinating dissertation on soup as comfort food and its role as medicine), charitable (soup kitchens and the role soup has played in feeding those in need), portable (soups as preserved and concentrated foods for travel and what this has meant for the history of exploration and colonisation) and global soups. In the latter, Clarkson posits that 'Soup is unequivocally a human cultural phenomenon, not a geographic or political entity' (84). She finishes with a glorious chapter on noteworthy soups that details a series of extravagant (the soups of kings and other wealthy diners), aphrodisiac, unusual (cold and sweet soups), dangerous (poisoned) and even sad soups (as in the nineteenth-century mania for turtle soup), a list that certainly challenged my idea of soups' comfortable familiarity.

Each book in the Edible series includes a menu of choices for further reading on the topic—a list of references, select bibliography, and a number of relevant websites and associations. Other books in the series include *Caviar* by Nichola Fletcher, *Chocolate* by Sarah Moss and Alexander Badenoch, *Curry* by Colleen Taylor Sen, *Dates* by Nawal Nasrallah, *Hamburger* by Andrew F. Smith, *Hot Dog* by Bruce Kraig, *Ice Cream* by Laura B. Weiss, *Lobster* by Elisabeth Townsend, *Milk* by Hannah Velten, *Pancake* by Ken Albala, *Pie* by Janet Clarkson, *Pizza* by Carol Helstosky, *Potato* by Andrew F. Smith, *Sandwich* by Bee Wilson, *Spices* by Fred Czarra, and *Whiskey* by Kevin R. Kosar. I want to read all of these, and cannot recommend this series highly enough.

The Bloody History of the Croissant, David Halliday's first book, similarly takes an historical approach in tackling the topic of what he asserts is the world's most beloved pastry. The book is endorsed by two luminaries in the Australian food world, with a foreword by Neil Perry and a cover quote by Gabriel Gaté—both Perry and Gaté are celebrity chefs who have written popular cookbooks. Gaté found it a 'great little book ... very interesting and beautifully written', while Perry's first line mirrors my own first impression of this little volume, 'Who would have thought the Croissant would have such a rich history' (ix). Perry continues to express a sentiment which is at the heart of much current scholarship about food, 'Most often we know nothing of the history or the provenance of the food we eat ... the humble croissant ... has quite a story to tell ... I know when I take a bit of my next croissant that memories ... will flood back' (ix). I should give a spoiler alert here, but one of Halliday's contributions to this history is to discover and document that, despite common belief, the croissant is not a French product. Halliday traces the pastry's origins, outlining the use of the crescent shape in breads in ancient Greece and what this signified. To tell the pastry's story, he looks at this symbolism as well as how the croissant's history is closely tied to political and military conflict throughout European history. At less than a hundred pages in length, written in an accessible style and illustrated with line drawings, the book is clearly intended for a general readership. It is the kind of attractive little volume that one might pick up at the register attracted by the cover or choose as a gift for a foodie friend. Halliday nevertheless provides an (albeit brief) annotated bibliography, a list of further readings as well as summary information on the historical figures featured in his text and a three page timeline that ranges from ancient Sumeria to the popularity of the croissant in the 1920s and today.

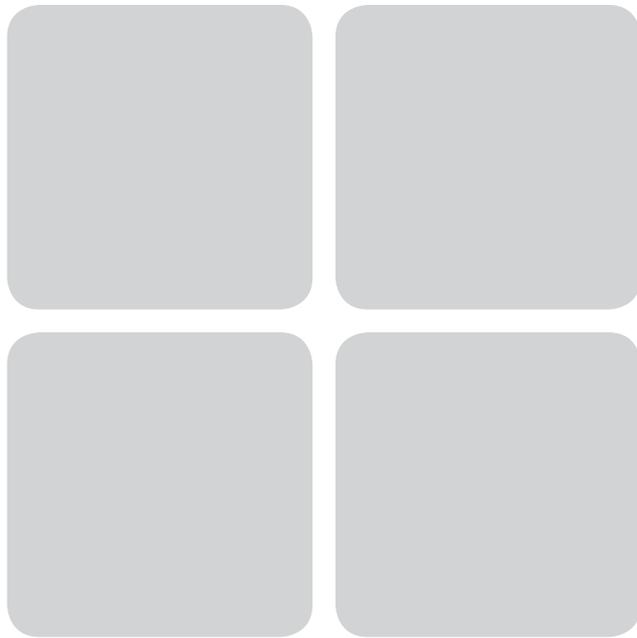
Like many others who enjoy food history, I like not only reading about food, but am often inspired to cook from these volumes and Halliday's book would have been enriched for me if it had included instructions for both making croissants and recipes which use the pastries. I am thinking specifically here of Nigella Lawson's deliciously thrifty but decadent Caramel croissant pudding

from *Nigella Express*, which bakes stale croissants in a creamy egg and bourbon custard, but there are others that could have been referenced. In researching this review, I indeed attempted a number of the recipes from each of the Edible series volumes and found them clear and reliable. I was indeed able to construct an entire dinner party menu from them, and served a delicious meal of Watercress Soup and Damper (from *Soup*), Viking Pies of cooked lamb, cheese, currants and pine nuts (from *Cheese*), and a Hazelnut and Raspberry Cake (from *Cake*) with a Jasmine Tea Sorbet and hot Spiced Tea (both from *Tea*). These books certainly took me on a delicious and informative journey. My favourite? That's as difficult to choose as to select which dishes I enjoyed making and eating the most from them.

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THE ECOLOGICAL HUMANITIES

Introduction

Thom van Dooren and Deborah Rose

In this issue of *Australian Humanities Review*, the Ecological Humanities takes up the key theme of the main section of the journal, which has been dedicated to a special issue on food: 'On the Table: Food in Our Culture'. As might be expected, the material collected in the Ecological Humanities section explores this topic through a distinctly multispecies lens. In particular, the focus is on eating animals; primarily nonhuman animals, but human cannibalism does surface briefly in Elizabeth Leane and Helen Tiffin's detailed and engaging account of Douglas Mawson's Antarctic Expedition. In 'Dogs, Meat and Douglas Mawson', Leane and Tiffin offer a new account of this infamous expedition, one that focuses primarily on the killing and eating of sledge dogs by desperate explorers. In short, their account explores 'who ate whom on the journey', and with what consequences.

The rest of the Ecological Humanities section is a stage for a conversation on the ethics of meat eating. Primarily comprised of three short excerpts, all from forthcoming books, the views expressed represent a broad spectrum of philosophical perspectives on some of the many ethical questions that arise around this complex topic. We begin with a short argument in support of veganism from Gary Steiner's *Animals and the Limits of Postmodernism* (forthcoming from Columbia University Press). Following on from this, Dominique Lestel offers a very different approach in an excerpt from his defence of carnivory, *Apologie du carnivore* (Fayard, 2011; translation by Hollis Taylor and Dominique Lestel). Finally, we turn to Val Plumwood, in an excerpt from a paper that was originally published in the journal *Animal Issues* in 1997, but is now forthcoming in a posthumously published collection titled *The Eye of the Crocodile* (manuscript submitted for publication).

To complete this short tour of forthcoming books on eating (and being eaten by) animals, Hollis Taylor reviews Lestel's 2010 *L'animal est l'avenir de l'homme* (at this stage only available in French).

Dogs, Meat and Douglas Mawson

Elizabeth Leane and Helen Tiffin

When the *Aurora*, the ship used to convey the Australasian Antarctic Expedition (AAE), left London on the first leg of its journey in late July 1911, its departure was accompanied by an unsettling sound. One of those on board, Lieutenant B.E.S. Ninnis, described the event evocatively: ‘No soul but a solitary dock policeman witnessed our departure, and although noise we had in plenty, it did not originate from the enthusiastic outpourings of a patriotic populace, but from the forty-eight Greenland sledge dogs, which swarmed about our decks and made the sultry July night hideous with [their] din ... as they voiced their protest at the unaccustomed heat and confinement’ (1). Although unusual, the accompaniment was not inappropriate, for dogs were to play a pivotal role in the expedition, and six of them would die alongside Ninnis the following year.

During the Australasian Antarctic Expedition, dogs and men were thrown into several different, sometimes contradictory relationships. The Greenland dogs were considered to be ‘semi-wolves’ who required thrashings to keep them in line (Madigan 146), but were also at times treated as pets and were certainly loved. They were working dogs on whose muscle the success of the expedition partly depended, but no one had any prior expertise in caring for or training them. These contradictions came to a head in the Far Eastern sledging journey undertaken by the expedition leader, Douglas Mawson, along with the dog-handlers Ninnis and Xavier Mertz. Its main events are well known to polar enthusiasts: Ninnis’s sudden plunge into a crevasse with the healthiest dogs and most of the supplies; Mawson and Mertz’s desperate flight back towards base; Mertz’s mysterious death; and Mawson’s astonishing—to some, suspicious—completion of the journey on next to no rations. The remaining dogs, who until Ninnis’s death had been partly fed on native Antarctic animals (as well as each other), suddenly found themselves fodder for the men, with unpredictable results. In this essay, we examine the relationship between dogs and men during the AAE, and in particular on the Far Eastern sledging journey, looking at who ate whom on the journey, and what the consequences were of eating—or not eating—meat.

*

The Australasian Antarctic Expedition was one of many attempts to explore the far south that took place in the early twentieth century—the period that polar historians often refer to as the ‘Heroic Era’ of the continent’s exploration. Mawson had been a member of Ernest Shackleton’s *Nimrod* expedition (1907-

09), and Robert F. Scott, whose expedition left in 1910, had offered him a place in his polar party—the small sledging team that aimed to reach 90 degrees south. Mawson, more intent on scientific research than reaching this geographical goal, chose instead to lead his own expedition south, to the then largely unexplored region of the continent that lies approximately south of Australia. His expedition established three bases (including one on Macquarie Island) and produced significant scientific, geographical and political results, playing an important role in the later establishment of a British claim to the region (which then became part of the Australian Antarctic Territory). However, Mawson's own sledging journey—usually referred to as the Far Eastern journey—was disastrous, with his only compensation for its traumatic events being his own remarkable survival: his return to the Main Base is recognized as an epic journey of the period, with one historian terming it 'the ultimate Antarctic saga' (Pyne 147). Central to his sledging expedition's proposed success and its actual failure were its seventeen sledge-dogs.

The wider story of the AAE dogs is not a pleasant one. Of the 50 dogs who left Greenland,¹ at least 48 died during the voyage south or in Antarctica, and over 60 pups born during the expedition also perished. The care of the dogs was placed in the hands of two expeditioners travelling from Europe to join the largely Australasian team: Ninnis, a soldier in the Royal Fusiliers, and Mertz, a Swiss law graduate, mountaineer and world-class skier. Neither was an expert on dogs, although Ninnis was considered to be 'good with animals' (Bickel 2). They struggled with their duties on the voyage to Hobart: the dogs found the ceaselessly wet, crowded on-deck conditions extremely uncomfortable, especially as they passed through the tropics, and their diet (largely cod liver oil biscuits) disagreed with them. A number were lost through disease or washed overboard, and one who was exhibiting symptoms of madness had to be shot (Mertz, 18-20 Oct. 1911).²

In Hobart, where the dogs were quarantined, Mertz was able to talk to Ernest Joyce, dog-handler on Ernest Shackleton's *Nimrod* expedition (and also a veteran of Scott's first expedition). He had originally been included in Mawson's expedition but was dismissed in Tasmania; according to one historian he 'spent too much time in the hotels and drank too much' (Jones 432). As the journey

1 The dogs had been purchased in Greenland by the Danish agent C.A. Bang, with the assistance of Ernest Joyce (see below). Two dogs died before the party reached London, one washed overboard and the other bitten to death by its fellows. Showing some prescience, a third absconded in Greenland, and was replaced at an expense of around 1 pound 2 shillings (Bang, Letter; List of Expenses).

2 The location of Mertz's original diary (in German) is not known, but a typed transcription is available in the Mawson Collection. Here we have used an English translation of this typescript by Gabrielle Eisner, arranged and deposited in the collection by Robyn Mundy. This has been supplemented where necessary by examination of the German typescript and an earlier translation of part of the diary by Marian Hill, held in the Southcott files in the Mawson collection. All quotations are from Eisner's translation, except where otherwise indicated.

south continued problems still beset the dogs, with one ‘savage brute’ being abandoned among the ‘abundant food’ on Macquarie Island (Laseron 40), and ten more dogs dying en route. Mertz’s and Ninnis’s trials were far from over once the dogs were established in Winter Quarters.³ If let off the chain, they created havoc amongst the Antarctic wildlife, and also got into the men’s store of mutton. The cold weather and constant gales made keeping them outside problematic—they would become so covered in snow that they could not be located, and would sometimes freeze to the ground and have to be dug out. Occasionally they were kept in the air-tractor hangar, but more often in the veranda space, from which they continually escaped. One dog was mysteriously wounded with a cord, and had to be anaesthetized and operated upon. There were desultory attempts to segregate the female dogs, for whom special kennels were built, but numerous puppies were nonetheless born, few of whom survived the first year. Early sledging journeys created further hazards, with Grandmother dying after a group of dogs was accidentally abandoned, and Scott⁴ falling down a crevasse.

But the worst fate lay in store for the seventeen who left with the Far Eastern party in November 1912. On the eve of departure, three female dogs were about to give birth, and the men could not afford to do without their pulling power. Not long into the journey Pavlova (named after the dancer) produced a litter of puppies, all of whom were eaten by her or other dogs (Mertz 15 Nov. 1912)—something that occurred fairly commonly throughout the expedition. A couple of days later Gadget was shot as ‘her pups had tired her too much’ (Mertz 17 Nov. 1912). She was ‘cut up into 24 rations counting 7 pups’, but the other dogs did not enjoy the meal (Mawson *Diaries* 17 Nov. 1912). She was soon followed by Jappy, then six days later by Fusilier, and two days after that by Blizzard, who as a pup had been a ‘great favourite’ with the men (Mawson, *Home* 70; Mertz 20, 26 and 28 Nov. 1912). Meanwhile, Ginger Bitch⁵ had given birth to 14 puppies who, along with Jappy, were fed to the remaining dogs (Mawson, *Diaries* 21 Nov. 1912). As this summary makes clear, from the start Mawson (like the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen) had a policy of feeding dog to dog to maximize the possible distance covered. In his account of the expedition, *The Home of the Blizzard*, Mawson states that he expected that at least six dogs would survive the journey (164); expedition secretary Conrad Eitel told the press that the plan was for three of a proposed 18 to return (‘The Mawson Expedition’).

In mid-December came the event that changed the fate of the party. Ninnis, bringing up the rear, disappeared down a crevasse, along with the six strongest

3 According to *The Home of the Blizzard*, nineteen of the surviving dogs were deposited at the Main Base with Mawson, and the other nine went on to the Western Base (61, 262). Of these nine, at least seven died. We have been unable to track the fate of the two remaining Western Base dogs (the only possible survivors of the original group of 50), Amundsen and Zip.

4 A number of the AAE dogs were named after well-known polar explorers.

5 Ginger Bitch and Ginger were two different dogs, both female.

dogs, the tent, most of the supplies and all of the dog food. That night, instead of their usual diet of seal meat, blubber and pemmican, the remaining dogs were thrown some of the worn out wolf-skin mitts, reindeer-skin finnesko boots and leather straps, all of which they consumed avidly. The devastated men knew that they themselves would have to survive largely on dog meat.

The next day they shot George and fried him for breakfast (Mawson, *Diaries* 15 Dec. 1912). One by one the remaining dogs collapsed, were carried on the sledge and then shot. Eventually the rifle had to be discarded to save weight, so the penultimate dog, Pavlova, was dispatched with a knife, 'a revolting and depressing operation' (Mawson *Home* 174). The last dog, Ginger, gave in on 28 December, and according to Mawson they had a 'great breakfast off [her] skull—thyroids and brain' (*Diaries* 29 Dec. 1912). Mertz, however, was not so convinced, noting that he got up an hour earlier than usual to cook the dog meat, 'otherwise it wouldn't be edible' (29 Dec. 1912). The last sentence in his diary, made on New Year's Day 1913, reads, 'The dog meat looks indigestible to me, because yesterday I felt a little weak [etwas flau]'.

The events that followed are often recounted and their causes much debated. Mertz rapidly grew ill, suffering from stomach pain, diarrhoea, nausea, dizziness, hair and skin loss, and delirium. Putting his own survival at very serious risk, Mawson nursed Mertz until he died about a week later, then faced the long journey home alone, eventually arriving in terrible shape but alive.

Speculation has reigned ever since over the cause of Mertz's death, with the dog-diet central to the theories that have emerged. In 1969, an article in the *Medical Journal of Australia* suggested that Mertz's symptoms were consistent with Vitamin A poisoning, due to the consumption of the dogs' livers (Cleland and Southcott). This theory became part of received wisdom but is still subject to periodic debate. Denise Carrington-Smith in a 2005 article in the same journal argues against the Vitamin A theory, suggesting instead that Mertz died of starvation, aggravated by the change from his 'usual vegetarian diet' and the 'psychological stress of being forced to eat the dogs he had cared for for 18 months' (638).

Striking in this recent account is Mertz's labelling as a vegetarian—a very unusual and certainly a problematic thing for a Heroic-Era Antarctic explorer to be. Carrington extrapolates from an earlier source in the *British Medical Journal* that terms Mertz a 'near-vegetarian', and this article in turn provides no evidence for the claim (Shearman 285). The original source is probably Mawson. In a letter to Mertz's father, he stated that Mertz 'believed my greater capability to deal with [dog meat] was probably due to the fact that Swiss people are not used to a large meat diet, whereas English people and especially Australians eat a large proportion of meat'. To the press Mawson was more specific, stating that

Mertz's Swiss diet consisted of meat three times a week, while meat made up about fifty per cent of the Australian diet ('Alone in the Antarctic').⁶ Whether or not this claim is accurate, it elides the fact that Mertz had been with the expedition for a year and a half when he died. He ate with the other men, whose diet included mutton on Sundays, penguin on Mondays and Thursdays, and seal on Tuesdays and Fridays (Mawson, *Diaries* 28 Feb. 1912). His diary shows that, while cognisant of possible dietary issues, he experienced none: he found English cooking bland, but noted that 'Fortunately I am not having trouble digesting, otherwise it would be difficult for me to eat seal or penguin meat and grilled sausages' (7 April 1912).

Diary evidence is also against the psychological impact on Mertz of eating dog. Carrington-Smith argues that Mertz 'had lost seven friends, one human and six animals.... In addition to witnessing their suffering, he then had to assist in their final killing and to eat their flesh' (641). Although this situation was from any perspective horrific, Mertz was by then well accustomed to the gruesome deaths of his canine charges. Scores of them had been lost in one way or another, and he had repeatedly witnessed pups being devoured by or fed to adult dogs. His diaries show strong affection and concern for the dogs,⁷ but his descriptions of killing and consuming them during the sledging journeys are fairly matter-of-fact, the only emotive phrase occurring at the death of their 'dear last dog' ('unser lieber letzter Hund'), Ginger.⁸ Whatever the causes of Mertz's death, his distress at the death of his dogs and supposed vegetarianism should be low on the list.

While the last of the Main Base's original Greenland dogs died with Ginger, their story does not end there. Three pups, born to Ginger in May 1912 and the subjects of 'much petting' (Madigan 144), survived into 1913. They were joined by twenty-one dogs brought down by ship on the relief journey, donated by Amundsen in Hobart on his triumphant return from the Pole. After a second winter, eleven dogs eventually arrived in Australia when the expedition returned. They were quarantined in Adelaide Zoo, in cages near the bears ('Mawson Expedition: The Official Reception'), where they were 'admired and petted to the general satisfaction of visitors' ('Gallant Antarctic Survivors'). Members of the expedition were invited to adopt them as pets. Mawson kept his 'favourite dog' Admiral D'Urville, who was soon entertaining guests at a reception held by his fiancée's family ('To Meet Dr. Douglas Mawson'). The irony

6 Most of the contemporary newspaper articles cited in this chapter can be found in the scrapbooks of press cuttings held in the Mawson collection. Page numbers are rarely provided, but the articles can be located through the call numbers of the scrapbooks, included in the Works cited.

7 At one point (3 Oct. 1912) Mertz writes of his 'love' for two missing dogs. He was particular attached to one of them, the pack leader Basilisk, writing a poem about him in his diary. The dog had been named after the mythological creature that is an emblem of Mertz's home town, Basel.

8 Hill's rather than Eisner's translation ('our good last dog') is used here. As Hill notes, Mertz's description in this entry of Ginger as a male dog is incorrect.

of this choice of pet—Mawson had after all eaten the dog's mother, Ginger—was not lost on the Australian media. A gossip piece in the form of a letter published in the *Bulletin* describes Admiral D'Urville as 'a cross between a lion and a sheep-dog', adding, 'I suppose the Mawsons will give an Antarctic dinner some night and feed their guests on it' ('Melbourne Chatter').

What the *Bulletin* took as an opportunity for black humour others considered a moral wrong. A long letter to the editor of the *Animal's Guardian* in 1914 condemns the use of animals in polar exploration. The anonymous writer finds it 'positively sickening to read how Dr. Mawson (lately returned) worked his dumb, long-suffering canine team'. Given the lack of any 'practical usefulness' of the polar regions, the writer suggests desisting from further exploration, but adds that if men still insist on it 'by all means let them do so, being creatures of freewill ... but, in the name of humanity, let them leave the dogs behind, and not drag these brave, patient martyrs to the horrible, undeserved fate described by Dr. Mawson, and also by former explorers' ('Antarctic Expeditions').

Given reactions such as this, it would be no surprise if Mawson were careful about the way events were described in official accounts of the expedition. As the *Animal's Guardian* letter shows, his expedition took place at a time when cultural attitudes towards the treatment and killing of animals were undergoing a shift. Historians such as Hilda Kean have outlined the ways in which issues surrounding animal cruelty, animal slaughter and meat-eating came to public attention during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. While in certain contexts animals were becoming increasingly visible—recall Mawson's surviving dogs displayed in the zoo—their slaughter was becoming increasingly invisible. The killing of animals for food was moving out of public view, considered something to be 'hidden from sight' (Kean 130), sanctioned only 'outside the public field of vision' (Burt 208). Mawson thus had reason to be careful how the animal killings which took place during his expedition were transmitted to the reading (and viewing) public.⁹ One planned publication was the expedition newspaper, the 'Adelie Blizzard',¹⁰ which featured an article, 'Our Dogs', written by Cecil Madigan, who took over the role of dog-handler during the winter of 1913. After giving lengthy descriptions of both the breed and the individual dogs, Madigan concludes, 'The Esquimo dog never gives in. He will

9 The film of the expedition *The Home of the Blizzard*, shows no dog deaths, which is not surprising given that cinematographer Frank Hurley was not part of the Far Eastern party. More significantly, it shows no scenes of the slaughter of native Antarctic animals, although many were killed for food or scientific research. This is true also of the film of Scott's second expedition, *90° South*, and that of Ernest Shackleton's *Endurance* expedition, *South*. Unusually, the film of Amundsen's Norwegian Antarctic expedition does include a scene of a seal being shot, as well as a pig being slaughtered onboard ship, which may indicate different cultural attitudes towards the public visibility of animal slaughter at the time.

10 We have drawn here both on the marked-up original newspaper and an edited version of it prepared for publication. Neither version was published in Mawson's day, but the original has recently appeared in a facsimile edition.

pull, starved and exhausted, until he drops dead in his harness. Many Polar explorers have written of the brave struggles of their hardy little companions, and the pity of it' (147). This was not allowed to stand when the newspaper was edited for publication by the expedition doctor, Archie McLean. 'Drops dead' was changed first to 'drops absolutely exhausted' and then to 'drops worn out'. The final sentence was removed, to be replaced by a more stirring—and startlingly anthropocentric—one: 'Polar exploration has done its best work by the aid of the courageous breed, and in many tales the magnificence of a dog's courage and its pertinacity even to death has almost humanised it' (95).

Mawson need not have worried too much, however, as for the most part the media was less interested in questions of the dogs' welfare than in opportunities for gruesome sensationalism. This was particularly the case in the U.S., which produced newspaper headlines such as 'Boiled Dog Jelly Fine, Says Explorer' and 'Dog Meat as Delicious as Chocolate'. Some reports were particularly creative, replacing canine cannibalism with an even more sensational topic. In early 1915, the *New York Evening Globe* published an article under the unlikely headline 'Mawson Tells of Horrors of the Antarctic / Companions Die, and Explorer After Two Days Decides Not to Eat One of Them'. The following quotation is attributed to Mawson: 'I thought for two days about eating Merz [sic]. I was awfully short of food and about 100 miles away from the base. But finally I decided that if I did get back to civilization it would always leave a bad taste in my mouth, so I buried him and went on'. The same version of events, with minor variations, appeared in a number of North American papers.

Mawson officially denied these reports ('Mawson Had No Idea'), but the rumours have continued to the present day: posterity, which turned Mertz into a vegetarian, seemed determined to turn Mawson into a cannibal. Thomas Keneally's 1969 novel *The Survivor* tells of an Antarctic explorer with striking similarities to Mawson who is tortured by a secret from his past, which most of those around him assume to be cannibalism. Mawson's great-granddaughter Emma McEwin recalls that the book upset the explorer's wife, Paquita (96); yet McEwin accepts that the possibility of cannibalism would likely have occurred to Mawson, who was no stranger to the concept. She points out that in the 1880s the *Aurora* had transported the infamously cannibalistic Greely expedition, and that Mawson himself had lived amongst cannibalistic tribes in the New Hebrides (94, 97). The press noted at the time of the controversy that he had spent months among 'the cannibals in the New Hebrides' (Olmsted). As a young man Mawson had even dressed up as a cannibal about to cook a missionary on a float in a university procession (Ayres 9). One of his dogs was called Franklin, a famous polar name with its own cannibalistic associations. And according to some reports, the day before Mertz died Mawson had witnessed his companion biting off one of his own frostbitten fingers and spitting it onto the ground (Bickel

129)—an act of self-treatment which had obvious cannibalistic associations. But our purpose here is not to contribute to debates about Mawson's possible cannibalism; rather, it is to point to the connection between these speculations and the actual breaking of meat-eating taboos that took place on the journey. With dogs eating dogs, and men eating dogs, the accepted hierarchies of who might eat whom had well and truly broken down by the time Mawson was confronted with his friend's dead body.

*

Close to a century later, in the summer of 2006-7, Australian environmental scientist and adventurer Tim Jarvis set out to recreate (as best he could under very changed Antarctic circumstances) the Far Eastern sledging party expedition from the point where Ninnis died to where Mawson found a depot of food left for him by an advance rescue party—a journey of around 500 kilometres. With the 1991 Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty having banned the presence of alien organisms other than humans on the continent (the last dogs were removed in early 1994), dog-sledging was not an option for Jarvis; neither could he retrace the exact route because of the changing topography of the area. Moreover, although Jarvis would make a large part of the trek alone, the companion standing in for Mertz leaving him at the point where the dog-handler died, he would still be accompanied by a camera crew filming the undertaking. Perhaps most importantly, he would not have to suffer the psychological trauma of having to watch his fellows die, and would know that he himself could always be rescued (he would be periodically monitored by a doctor).

Given these rather significant differences, one needs to ask the purpose of Jarvis' reenactment, at least as he saw it. Despite the unavailability of dogs (as both transport and fodder), Jarvis attempted to scrupulously recreate ounce for ounce Mawson's diet, substituting dried kangaroo meat for dog. That this equivalence should be an exact one was crucial to Jarvis' purpose, for he wanted to see if he 'could accomplish the journey without having to eat supplementary food—which would have been the equivalent of cannibalising Mertz's body'. The 'hypothesis behind [the] journey', according to Jarvis, was similar to that of Thor Heyerdahl's famous *Kontiki* voyage: 'Like him, if I successfully completed the journey, I would prove that it *could* have happened but (significantly) not that it definitely *did*' (136; original emphasis). But as the going got tougher for Jarvis his purpose appeared to crystallize:

On polar expeditions ... you play all sorts of mental tricks to keep yourself going, operating for much of the time in a very altered reality. ... I convinced myself ... that it was down to me to try to protect Mawson's

honour by making it. No one was going to pin cannibalism on him. ... I knew then and there I had hit on something I could use to bolster my mental resolve and I felt Mawson would have approved. (139)

Later, with head pounding and listening to the driving wind of the Antarctic night, he did not find it difficult 'to imagine Mawson up there on the plateau right now, lying there beside the cadaver of his fallen colleague and considering his options'. Jarvis concludes his speculation by deciding that Mawson would have felt 'an overwhelming sense of loyalty' towards his companion, and would have buried rather than eaten him (226). The word choice is significant here, with 'fallen' invoking the exigencies of war, and 'loyalty' the faithfulness of dogs (a line from the BBC series *Absolute Power* runs, 'If you want loyalty, buy a dog').

During the imperial era of conquest and exploration cannibalism was significant as that which ultimately drew the line between the 'civilised' and the 'savage' (see e.g. Hulme 1-3). The act was thought to put individuals beyond the pale of the human, relegating them to the realm of the beast (where the 'last resort' is actually considered rare, except in terms of survival in extremes). As has often been observed, although cannibalism is the very act that literally renders self and other 'same', it has had a central place demarcating the line between self and absolute other. Yet almost a hundred years separated Mawson's and Jarvis' treks—a period which saw two world wars (during the latter of which 'long-pig'¹¹ was resorted to in survival situations), the Holocaust, and perhaps most significant of all in this context, the football-team air disaster in the Andes in which survivors were forced to eat their dead fellows to save their own lives. Survival cannibalism in 1913 would no longer seem in 2007 to need such a complicated 'proof' or refutation as Jarvis' journey. One could of course argue cynically that there is still nothing like the frisson of cannibalism to sell books and DVDs and publicise one's journey; and that Jarvis' initial position of not quite closing off the possibility of Mawson's cannibalism, despite his own survival on similarly limited rations, supports this view. There are, however, other reasons why the spectre of cannibalism still 'dogs' our view of polar exploration.

While the so-called species boundary between humans and non-human animals may seem an inviolable one, there are, as Nick Fiddes observes (132-43), exceptions. We have already noted that dogs on Antarctic journeys were placed in several different and sometimes contradictory relationships with humans—as loyal friends, as beasts of burden, and as food. As many commentators have noted, our (i.e. human) attitudes to animals—or even to vertebrates or mammals, to restrict the absurdist category of 'animal' (i.e. the not-us)—are in any case

11 The *OED* glosses this term as a translation of 'a cannibal's name for human flesh'.

wildly inconsistent and contradictory; they have to be, or we could not live in the world in the way in which we do. But, as Fiddes has argued, while the species boundary—us and them—seems an obdurate one, we occasionally allow individual and even certain categories of animals to cross that line, to become part of the ‘club’, just as, conversely we have historically relegated slaves or enemies in war to the category of ‘animal’. Just where beings are placed across this line is of great consequence. Cary Wolfe, drawing on the work of Jacques Derrida and Georges Bataille, argues:

the humanist concept of subjectivity is inseparable from the discourse and *institution* of speciesism, which relies on the tacit acceptance ... that the full transcendence of the ‘human’ requires the sacrifice of the ‘animal’ and the animalistic, which in turn makes possible a symbolic economy in which we can engage in a ‘non-criminal putting to death’ (as Derrida puts it) not only of animals, but other *humans* as well by marking *them* as animal. (43; original emphasis)

Dogs in Western society, however, are frequently marked as human—not only as ‘man’s best friend’, but as valued members of human families. Working sledge dogs may perhaps be regarded in a different light, akin to that of working kelpies or cattle dogs, though farmers’ actual lives rarely depend on the work of the dog in the way those of Antarctic explorers did. But the according of quasi-human status to the dog means, at least in the West, that we do not eat them.¹² As Fiddes argues, exceptions to what we will regard as food are made for very different reasons, and can be grouped into three categories: pets, primates and carnivores. Dogs, as both pets and carnivores, seem thus doubly prohibited for us as food; and in their being eaten by humans and by other dogs, a kind of doubled or reinforced cannibalism is evoked. Just as humans eating dog, as in the survival case of Mawson and Mertz, while quite understandable, violated a cherished taboo, dogs being fed dogs can be considered similarly ‘against nature’.¹³

Early Antarctic explorers were well aware of the disturbing nature of using dogs as working fodder on sledging journeys, as it had been addressed by Scott in his account of the *Discovery* expedition of 1901-04. Scott was deeply affected by their having to be fed to each other on his first attempt on the Pole. Contrary

12 The question of which animals are permitted to cross the species boundary is, of course, historically and culturally specific, with the result that dog-eating has long been a ‘basis for discriminating against others’ (McHugh 36). Like cannibalism, then, dog-eating can be employed by one cultural group to label another as ‘savage’ (see e.g. Griffith, Wolch and Lassiter, particularly 3-4). Certainly in late nineteenth-century Britain, where Mawson spent his formative years, the eating of dogs and other carnivores ‘constituted the dividing line between civilization and barbarism’ (Ritvo 208).

13 Many people interviewed in Britain about mad cow disease and their own meat eating were inclined to regard the human contraction of ‘mad cow’ as a kind of punishment for violating the natural order of things since the disease was transmitted (it was thought) by feeding cows the ground-up remains of so-called downed cows and other livestock (Tiffin 18).

to popular opinion, he considered the issue of dog treatment not through the lens of excessive 'sentiment', but in a sympathetic yet rational way, pointing to our constant inconsistencies in the treatment of dogs and those animals we do consume, such as sheep. It was the animals' pain rather than their slaughter that 'weighed heavily' on him (466).¹⁴ His refusal to employ this strategy on his second, fatal expedition, and Amundsen's willingness to do so on his successful attempt on the Pole, was a point of controversy at the time and has remained so ever since.¹⁵ By Amundsen's account of his expedition (published in 1912), his dogs had a far better time than Mawson's on their shipboard journey south in 1910, but shared a similarly gruesome fate during the polar journey, with the explorers vowing to 'shrink from nothing' in their determination to reach their destination. Dogs were fed to both men and each other; Amundsen describes how he looked forward to a tasty meal of dog steaks and cutlets (2: 57, 63-4), but his dogs were not always so keen. Even though they were beaten and starving,¹⁶ some showed reluctance to eat their slain fellows, and at one point had to be 'entic[ed]' to abandon their 'scruples' (2: 63-4). Thus, Mawson's possible (if unlikely) survival cannibalism of Mertz entered an arena of cannibal taboo already invoked in the Heroic Era of Antarctic exploration by both deliberate and forced dog consumption by humans and other dogs.

The relations between men and dogs in Antarctic exploration, therefore, suggests their imbrication in what Peter Hulme has termed the 'cannibal complex' (31): our acute sensitivity to what and whom we eat, our cultural taboos in relation to edibility, as well as our extreme psycho-cultural fear of being eaten. And it is not absurd to speculate that one reason the issue of cannibalism continued to dog Mawson and to catalyse Jarvis' reenactment is that, as Fiddes notes, eating pets or 'loyal companions' is (and was) regarded by most Westerners as a kind of cannibalism in itself. Even after the last dogs had departed from Australian and other territories, the deed that could not be named as such continued to haunt Antarctic exploration.

14 Scott knew that dogs could increase the reach of a sledging trip, but only if they were worked to exhaustion and then consumed by their fellows: 'To say that they do not greatly increase the radius of action is absurd; to pretend that they can be worked to this end without pain, suffering, and death is equally futile' (467).

15 For detailed discussion of Scott's and Amundsen's attitudes towards the use of dogs, see Murray; and for criticism of the negative connotations of 'sentimentality' as applied to animals, see Armstrong. Controversy also surrounds Scott's use of ponies, who were worked and then used for meat on his second expedition; for different views see Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies 2*, and Fiennes, *Captain Scott* 265-6, 276-8.

16 They were given a 'hiding' if they 'failed to do their duty' in sledge-pulling, and were so hungry that they would eat 'whips, ski-bindings, lashings, etc.' (Amundsen 2: 21, 40).

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Justice Towards Animals Demands Veganism

Gary Steiner

Adapted from Gary Steiner, *Animals and the Limits of Postmodernism: A Vegan Manifesto* (Columbia University Press, forthcoming 2012).

In November 2009, the Sunday immediately prior to the Thanksgiving holiday traditionally celebrated in the United States, I published an opinion piece in the *New York Times* entitled 'Animal, Vegetable, Miserable'. 'Animal, Vegetable, Miserable,' *New York Times*, 22 November, 2009, 'Week in Review' 12. The traditional Thanksgiving meal is centred around turkey, and my aim in writing the opinion piece was to challenge the supposed moral legitimacy of the practice of killing and consuming animals such as turkeys. I went so far in the piece as to argue that consuming turkeys and other animals raised in 'free range' circumstances is in effect no better morally than consuming animals raised in traditional intensive factory farming circumstances—for, after all, in both cases we kill sentient creatures with lives that are meaningful to them just as our lives are meaningful to us, even if non-human animals such as turkeys cannot, as we humans can, reflect on the ways in which their lives are meaningful to them.

I received a torrent of responses to my opinion piece, most of which were from people who were supportive of my views. A small but extremely vehement proportion of the responses was from individuals who excoriated me for my views, typically on the grounds that because many animals kill and eat animals, and because human beings are animals, it is therefore perfectly acceptable for human beings to eat non-human animals. Eating meat is 'natural', hence we are closer to nature by engaging in the slaughter and consumption of animals than we would be if we sought to avoid the consumption of animal flesh. From this standpoint, being an ethical vegetarian or vegan is the stuff of pure fancy, the expression of an utterly unrealistic desire to remake nature along the lines of a Disney movie—but one in which Bambi's mother does not get shot. Rather than engage in this sort of childish fantasy, these critics urged, let us celebrate our superiority over the rest of nature, let us take what belongs to us as a matter of natural right.

Given a 2500-year history of thinking in our culture according to which human beings are superior to non-human animals in virtue of possessing *logos*, the capacity for reason and language, what was most surprising to me in the responses I received to my opinion piece was not the vehemence of the criticism, but the fact that such a small proportion of those responding to my piece sought

to defend the practice of consuming animal products. The history of Western philosophy is as much an articulation and reinforcement of human superiority and a justification of the consumption of animal products as it is anything else. From Aristotle's categorical exclusion of animals from the *polis* to the Stoics' denial that animals have any share in justice to Descartes's characterization of animals as biological machines to Kant's insistence that we have no direct moral duties to animals, the history of Western philosophy has generated and reinforced an ideology of human superiority and a conception of animals as instrumentalities for the satisfaction of human needs and desires.

It is for the sake of the 53 billion land animals who are killed annually for human consumption, not to mention the countless sea creatures, that this legacy of speciesism stands in dire need of critical examination. This number is provided by the United Nations World Agriculture Organization. For if it is permissible to eat animals, and if human beings are animals, why do we not eat our fellow human beings? I believe there are very clear reasons for this that ought to hold with equal force for non-human animals. Historically it has been argued that the human possession of *logos* constitutes a difference in kind between human and non-human animals, such that there are good reasons not to kill and eat human beings but equally good reasons why killing and eating non-human animals is perfectly permissible. Thinkers including Jeremy Bentham and Peter Singer have argued that because animals lack the capacity for rational reflection, they are incapable of grasping the remote past and distant future, and hence are incapable of contemplating what they have to lose by dying. Death, in other words, is not a harm for animals: animals cannot be said to possess an interest in what they cannot contemplate rationally, hence we do no wrong by depriving them of what they cannot contemplate in the abstract.

What convenient reasoning, offered by precisely that being that appears to be alone among living beings in possessing the capacity for rational contemplation. What few have bothered to ask is why we should suppose that a being can be harmed only by those things that it can grasp conceptually. The urgency of this question has been systematically obscured by a history of speciesistic thinking that has provided an easy justification for the use of animals as tools for the satisfaction of human desires. What has also been systematically obscured is a fundamental fact of existence that has largely been forgotten ever since Plutarch and Porphyry urged it on us: that animals are our kin, that they strive to realize their natural potential just as we seek to realize our own, and that we owe duties of justice to animals just as we owe duties of justice to our fellow human beings. First among these duties is the obligation to refrain from using animals or consuming animal products, and to let animal beings be in a manner that corresponds to their dignity as sentient beings.

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The Posture of the Human Exception

Dominique Lestel

Excerpted from Dominique Lestel, *Apologie du carnivore* (Paris: Fayard, 2011), 61-65.

Translation by Hollis Taylor and Dominique Lestel.

Paradoxically, the position adopted by the vegan concerning the split between humans and animals resembles that of the humanist. The latter considers that there is a fundamental ontological barrier between humans and animals, and that when animals are treated as instruments, this does not necessarily constitute a moral offence. Contrary to the European humanist, the vegan does not assume that he can do whatever he wishes with animals, but rather he reinstates the assumption of man's exceptional status in a new form, by refusing to allow himself to be intoxicated by the animal and in considering that the metabolic connections between man and animal should be minimised when it is not possible to suppress them altogether. However, to eat meat can be perceived as a sort of *animalisation* of the human, as the animal's flesh becomes human flesh.

Such a conception of man's intoxication by the animal is clearly evoked by Florence Burgat in her book *Liberté et inquiétude de la vie animale (Freedom and Anxiety in Animal Life)*, published by Kimé in 2006. In her passionate chapter on xenografts, she quotes professor Pierre Cüer, a specialist in organ transplants, who believes that one of the two ethical considerations that he owes each of his patients is 'to reassure a transplant recipient of his continued membership in the human race'.

This would be of no consolation to the vegan, who refuses the wild by rejecting all forms of savagery or, in other words, any possibility of being metabolically transformed by a living being of another species. In this way, the vegan rehabilitates the thesis of human exception, considering that he is the only carnivorous (or potentially carnivorous) animal who must place himself above his condition as an omnivore by not taking on one of the carnivore's central characteristics: the predation of other animals.

His position appears fundamentally a posture of apartheid, one that is self-assured though lacking any acknowledgement of the full consequences of such a posture, and ultimately very peculiar in Western thought: even if the animal is unthreatening, it must be kept at a distance.

Although the vegan defends other species and even campaigns for their recognition as equals, he nevertheless restores man's exceptional status. At first sight, the situation appears somewhat paradoxical, but it can be explained well enough. In effect, the vegan considers that man is a *moral exception* who should adhere to untold moral prohibitions vis-à-vis other living beings. He is consequently the only moral being, and what distinguishes him *ipso facto* from all other living beings is that he assumes the right to modify animals biologically. In this respect, one question merits further consideration: to what extent can man construct universal principles that contain competencies that he alone can perform?

The vegan could object that such a position resembles that of social Darwinism, with which he would refuse to identify. The objection is weak. In effect, social Darwinists evoked a quite imaginary struggle for life, but they wanted to regulate the social behaviour of power, not fundamental metabolic processes. Opponents of social Darwinism could dispute that we can draw lessons for human social life from that of animals. The vegan works in yet another way, basing her morality on a refusal to partake of what constitutes a fundamental characteristic of all living beings.

By what sort of pride, one that is intrinsically speciesist, can we consider it unethical for a living being to do what other living beings do, unless we give ourselves special status? The vegan wants to remove himself from the circle of life. He imagines that there is a position where he can evade the constraints of the ethics of reciprocity. In this sense, he assigns himself a problematic extraterritoriality. By this act of rupture, he radically excludes himself from animality and attempts to exclude animality from the sphere of living beings.

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'Babe': the Tale of the Speaking Meat: Part I

Val Plumwood

Excerpt from *The Eye of the Crocodile* (MS submitted for publication).

There is injustice for a communicative and ethical being in being conceived systematically in ways that refuse recognition of this status and these characteristics. There is injustice for such a being in being conceived reductively as body, first because such conception singles its referent out for treatment as radically less than it is, and second because such an instrumental reductionism defines the Other in terms that assume the right of a 'higher' group to treat them as a resource for their ends. Animals so conceived are subject to both radical exclusion (as having a radically different nature discontinuous from that of the human meat consumer) and homogenisation — they 'drown in the anonymous collectivity' of the commodity form meat. The radical exclusion aspect of the meat concept denies kinship and generates a conceptual distance or boundary between humanity and its 'meat' which blocks sympathy, reduces the risk of identification with those so designated, and silences them as communicative beings. The reductiveness of the meat concept permits a conceptual strategy designed to block recognition of these injustices, and its disruption in the concept of the speaking meat is one source of the flavour of paradox that lingers around that idea.

But from the injustice of industrial society's institution of meat as commodity, and the moral cowardice and evasion of the associated conceptual strategies of denial, we cannot conclude that there is no moral alternative to a universalised vegetarianism, that there are no other, less ethically problematic ways to resolve the tensions between conceiving non-humans both as communicative others and as food. In the complex biological exchange which sustains all our lives, we must all gain sustenance at the expense of the other, 'the one living the other's death, and dying the other's life', in the words of Heraclitus. Shagbark Hickory outlines an alternative, non-reductive perspective on this exchange which does not refuse the moral complexities and perplexities involved:

For most or all American Indians food (plant as well as animal) is kin. Relationships to plants and animals as, on the one hand, food and, on the other hand, kin creates a tension which is dealt with mythically, ritually, and ceremonially, but which is never denied. It is this refusal to deny the dilemma in which we are implicated in this life, a refusal to take the

way of bad faith, moral supremacy, or self-deception which constitutes a radical challenge to our relationships to our food. The American Indian view that considerability goes "all the way down" requires a response considerably more sophisticated than those we have seen in the West, which consist either in drawing lines of moral considerability in order to create an out-group, or in constructing hierarchies of considerability creating de facto out-groups in particular cases. (Hickory)

Many forms of vegetarianism remain trapped in the western strategies of denial and radical exclusion which create further out-groups, merely redrawing the boundary of otherness in a different place, at the border of animality rather than humanity. In contrast, the indigenous recognition that the central philosophical problem of human life is that '*all our food is souls*' points towards non-reductive practices and understandings of food that resolve the moral failings of 'bad faith, moral supremacy, [and] self-deception' Shagbark Hickory finds implicit in the dominant western meat concept. However, to the extent that these alternative understandings of food form part of a different 'form of life', in Wittgenstein's sense, they are not readily available, either practically or conceptually, within the context of contemporary industrial life and its commodified food relationships. Conversely, the fact that vegetarianism may usually be the course which, in the context of such a commodity society, will best minimise our complicity in injustice towards others does nothing to support the eurocentric conclusion that vegetarianism is a universal moral requirement for all people in all societies in all situations (Adams).

The paradox of the speaking meat is both the product of a particular social context, and a powerful symptom of some of the most indicative moral failings of that context. The western solution to the moral dilemmas of food is the creation of a set of moral dualisms, involving a sharp discontinuity between those who deserve and those who are beyond ethical consideration. As we have seen, the speaking meat forces us to confront the way this moral dualism and discontinuity is based on reductionism, denial and silencing. Our civilisation's orientation to the creation of moral dualisms may be one reason for its technological dominance, since it removes any constraints of respect which might otherwise hold back development, but it remains a major source of corruption of our ethical practices. The silencing solutions of moral dualism are always potentially capable of extension to selected groups of humans counted as lesser in their humanity, and we have seen this extension made many times in this century. This silencing possibility is always present, of course, in any human society, but it is greatly reinforced by the entrenchment of the dualist model in the basic case of food.

Val Plumwood (1939-2008) was a founding intellectual and activist in the global movement that came to be known as ecofeminism. She published three major books as well as over a hundred articles and encyclopaedia entries, and her work has been translated into numerous languages.

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The Bioethics of Reciprocity: A Manual

L'animal est l'avenir de l'homme

By Dominique Lestel

Fayard, 188 pp, \$68.00, 2010

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Reviewed by Hollis Taylor

Animals are our future, proposes philosopher and ethologist Dominique Lestel, turning the popular conception of Darwin's Tree of Life on its head. While not denying that human and non-human animals share a common ancestor, Lestel details how minding animals holds currency for us today—and tomorrow—in this volume of practical philosophy. He navigates the contested zone of human/animal interactions, taking snapshots through the lenses of ethology, philosophy, history, epistemology, psychology, and the man on the street.

The book is laid out in four chapters plus two *entr'actes*. In Chapter 1, 'The animal is not a machine', he revisits a theme he fleshed out in earlier works (*Les amis; L'animalité*), where he drew the distinction between the classic representation of the Cartesian animal-machine and an *animal machiné* (which he characterised as a living being that, when mistreated, is compelled to transform itself into an automaton as a coping mechanism). In this latest work, he begins by listing the most common arguments put forward by animal rights opponents:

- Serious people don't care about animals.
- People who love animals don't like people.
- There is something more urgent than saving animals: saving suffering children.
- People who love animals should refuse to eat meat.

Lestel then suggests how to mount a successful defence of animal rights, with the goal of rehabilitating both the image of animals *and* of those who would defend them. He presents this without sentimentality or caricature.

Perhaps no issue within the animal rights movement is more contentious than that of eating animals. It might surprise some to read that Lestel supports meat eating as a natural part of our humanity. The case for vegetarianism is traditionally argued on ecological, health, or moral grounds. Lestel plays devil's advocate, suggesting that human carnivores also have clout in the campaign for the ethical treatment of captive animals. He feels that by informing ourselves

of where our animal products come from, we help to insure that the animal enjoyed maximum wellbeing during its life. However, this is by no means a straightforward task for the consumer—nor is it for the philosopher, as evidenced by the two extracts from upcoming books published in this issue of *AHR*, one of them Lestel's, that highlight the terms of current debate on vegetarianism in more detail.

The *Entr'acte historique* that follows is a summary of key people who have thought about or worked on (and occasionally *with*) animals from the seventeenth century forward. The list inevitably includes Descartes, Pavlov, the behaviourists John Broadus Watson and Frederic Skinner, and the classical ethologists Konrad Lorenz and Nikolaas Tinbergen. Lestel also briefly profiles some lesser-known twentieth century figures that he feels were unjustly rejected, marginalised, or forgotten because they attributed to animals an ability or trait assumed to be the sole province of humans. Those seeking a more in-depth account would do well to refer to Lestel's *Les origines animales de la culture* (2001).

In the next chapter, 'The animal, a favourite partner', Lestel dismisses concepts that have made their way at least subliminally, and however partially, into much human thinking. These concepts include that an animal is a marvelous machine, a small version of a human, a less successful copy of a human, or a species that will eventually evolve into a more human-like life form. Instead, he would elevate their status to that of a human interlocutor, in dialogue with humans, or even in partnership with them (38). He notes that animals suffer and feel pleasure (the latter being more significant than the former in his mind), that they have positive and negative emotions, and that these emotions are potentially recognisable by us. He calls attention to the quotidian examples of animals living in human communities and reviews cases of animals as innovators and creators, and he itemises some of their notable aesthetic activities and inclinations.

In contrasting academic psychology with its popular counterpart both in this chapter and the *entr'acte* that follows, Lestel makes a case for common sense and the average person's assessment of animal abilities, which he finds more generous and credible than, and almost entirely incompatible with, that of the scientist. He credits the American philosopher and essayist Paul Shepard (1925-1996) for innovative thinking about the place animals occupy in our lives, including how they stimulate and enrich our imagination. Both authors have written about how animals help us to navigate the very essence of our humanity, including areas like development and communication.

At the centre of *Entr'acte épistémologique* is man, quite literally. In his analysis of anthropomorphism, Lestel argues that it is not so much a methodological error as it is an artefact of human thought; he believes that much 'anthropomorphism' could be more accurately described as 'anthropocentrism'. While many assume

that we long ago left our condition of animality, Darwin wrote that ‘the difference in mind between man and the higher animals, great as it is, certainly is one of degree and not of kind’ (105). Our evolutionary continuity and alignment with animals is an abiding theme for Lestel.

He catalogues the unwritten rules for university ethologists, whose taboo areas of research include:

- Attributing sentiments to animals.
- Giving any credence to anecdotes about animals.
- Having an emotional relationship with an animal that you are studying.

Lestel himself has spent time in the field observing orangutans. Thus, when he writes, ‘To speak of anthropomorphism with distaste signifies on the one hand that it is possible and pertinent to describe an animal as if it had no rapport with a human, and on the other hand that it is possible to make an “objective” representation of it totally independent of the observer who is working it out’ (88), he speaks from practice and not just in theory.

In Chapter 3, ‘The infinite debt’, the discussion centres on the manifold benefits brought to humans by animals, from the economic and ecological to the ethical, spiritual, pedagogical and intellectual. Such a debt stretches back into pre-history and forward into time, reminding us that both the book’s title and its reverse have purchase. His claim that the human spirit needs the animal to become and remain human (111-112) echoes Rose’s ethnography, *Dingo Makes Us Human*.

In his final chapter, ‘The bioethics of reciprocity’, he ranges far and wide, including a return to themes introduced in previous chapters. He begins with biosemiotics and Uexküll’s *Umwelt* theory, and then moves on to a critique of some of ethology’s most problematic issues—animal torture, vivisection, experimentation, and other mistreatment. He interrogates field observation versus laboratory experimentation—or, more to the point, the field observer versus the laboratory experimenter. The tension between engagement and disengagement, and which posture makes the better researcher, is a subject over which much ink has been spilt. The former implies a bodily knowledge, which Lestel contrasts to the abstract knowledge of the experimenter, who forgets that he has a body (158). The book concludes with a meditation on the concept of reciprocity, suggesting that, at its richest, it goes far beyond a simple exchange. Reciprocity has the potential to foster interconnectivity, interdependence, and obligation; reciprocity invokes kinship.

One of Lestel’s gifts is the ability to move (and move us) effortlessly between matters of continental philosophy and the everyday. And yet, while he excels at synthesis, his writing is peppered with provocative contrarian notions. In

this concise manual, and indeed throughout his oeuvre, Lestel uses animals as an entry point into a compelling examination of Western thought and human development through the ages. To date, the book is only available in French. The writing is clear and the vocabulary straightforward—those with intermediate French skills should be able to navigate its pages. Lestel’s ordinary, accessible, non-technical language underlines animals as acting subjects (Crist 2), rather than calling upon the distance of a technical idiom that tends to portray animals as objects. In eschewing the specialised for the commonsense, Lestel’s linguistic medium mirrors his message.

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