Terra Nullius, Culina Nullius:
The contradictions
of Australian food culture

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A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Creative Arts
University of Technology Sydney
2014

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

In addressing the contradictions of Australian food culture, this project asks four questions. First and most importantly: how is it that after more than 225 years, we have no Australian or regional Australian food culture, nor even any evidence – through recipes and dishes – of its more tangible and visible vector, cuisine? Secondly: what are the consequences for a nation and its people of having bypassed this important stage in the evolution of a society? Thirdly: why in over 200 years living here do we eat practically nothing that grows locally but those fish, birds, crustaceans and shellfish analogous to European produce? And finally, if we do not have a food culture in the historical sense, what do we have? The second third and fourth questions will be answered during the course of the project. The answer to all these questions will require, firstly, an exploration of the history of European occupation of this land and its occupiers.

In 1788, eleven ships, carrying 987 mainly Anglo-Celtic convicts, guards and officers from a society going through tremendous social and economic upheaval arrived on our shores. The vast majority of the convicts were, in one way or another, victims of that upheaval. What greeted them was an alien landscape unlike any, even the few who had travelled, had ever seen.

They arrived with their own food and methods of agriculture. In pressing ahead with planting and stocking, they destroyed the food sources and agricultural practices of the indigenous people. The land appeared inhospitable, and, for the most part, the new arrivals clung to the coast. Gradually, land was taken up in the interior, where the animals they brought with them were grazed, eventually very successfully. Soon, there was more meat being produced than could be eaten by the population, and, although the vast bulk of it was exported (it was produced specifically for exportation to overseas

markets), this over abundance of meat shaped the diet of the Anglo-Celtic Australians. But the ways in which it was cooked, and the diet that surrounded it was, until the 1950s, stubbornly based on the diet they had left behind. But change was on the horizon.

In the 1950s Australia faced a second invasion of refugees from a war-torn Europe. They too brought their food cultures and ingredients with them. At first Anglo-Celtic Australia rejected the food of the newcomers. Then a post war economic boom and the arrival of the Boeing 747 saw millions of Anglo-Celtic Australians leaving the country and travelling to Europe and Asia for the first time, arriving home with a fresh perspective on food and food culture. There followed an explosion of new food, new produce, restaurants and wine. And now, in the 21st Century, this concatenation of events has resulted in Australia having one of the most innovative, multiculinary high (public) tables on the planet.

Lévi-Strauss wrote that food is 'good to think [with].' In thinking with food in the context of this work, I have made connections not previously made which will be helpful in thinking about Australian culture generally. Australia does not have a food culture in the traditional sense of the word. And neither does it have a cuisine or cuisines in any sense of the word. Curiously, the very same set of societal circumstances that prevented us from having a cuisine in the traditional sense has resulted in our having something in many ways richer: we enjoy diverse, eclectic and original offerings from culturally unconstrained chefs at our high tables, an unmatched multiculinarity on our low tables and, paradoxically, mostly mundane dishes on our home tables. As for the long term rejection of our native produce, and whether it contains an element of food racism, this could well be the subject of future research. In sum, these are the major contradictions of Australian food culture.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost my supervisor, Paul Ashton, who has carefully and patiently guided me to the end of this work with skill, academic rigour and endless good humour. Thank you.

To my equally patient wife who allowed me the freedom to work on it and forgave me my bad humour when it wasn't going well.

To Paula Hamilton for the invaluable history seminars she has conducted.

To Juleigh Slater in the FASS office for answering my stupid questions and guiding me through the labyrinth of the Ethics Committee and the grant system.

To Michael Symons, Barbara Santich, Colin Bannerman and Anthony Corones for their pioneering work in the field of Australian food studies. They lit the path.

And to all in the splendid UTS library for providing a safe haven and all the books I needed.

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Orientation

This exegetical analysis accompanies a non-traditional doctorate. That is to say, while it is surrounded by traditional academic 'scaffolding' – endnotes, bibliography – it treads a more literary path, as has its author. Although I have taught, I am not an academic, but a novelist, author and journalist. That, and the situation of this thesis in the field of food studies allows me great latitude to use information I have gathered as a journalist than would be the case in a more formal work.[1]

I have been concerned in this work with why Australians eat what they eat, and what that says about them. Throughout, I will follow, in the main, the developmental approach as laid out by Beardsworth and Keil, working around their concept of the 'aliment', which they define as 'any basic item recognised as edible within a given nutritional culture.' This builds to the *alimentary totality* of the culture, 'the whole range of aliments available during a particular time period. This in turn builds to a group of menus: 'traditional' – pertinent to Australia's long period of adherence to an Anglo-Celtic diet – 'rational', 'convenient', and, especially in relation to late 20th and early 21st century Australia, 'hedonistic.'[2] I am more interested in what is cooked and by whom than I am in the production and allocation of the raw materials. In Goody's terms, I skip growing, allocating and storing, and go straight to cooking and eating.[3] My interest is in the material of the meals but not at all in how they are eaten. That is, I am not interested in what Ashley et al designate as the proper meal: a meal that is cooked by the mother of the family, which is a 'social occasion', where the family sit down together and there is conversation.[4] My attention is drawn to what is on the plate. Where a

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[1] See discussion of Miller and Deutsch below
[2] *Sociology on the Menu: An invitation to the study of food and society* page 67.
[3] *Cooking, Cuisine and Class.*
[4] *Food and Cultural Studies.*

meal is eaten interests me only in whether it was eaten at home or outside the home at a restaurant, café or other form of public eating house. However, I see no problem in referring also to the structuralist approach, especially some of the concepts of Lévi-Strauss. For my purposes the two can quite easily live side by side.

One more note on methodology. The field of food studies is far more intimate than many others. What is being studied – food – is the only subject which is a part of the body of work of the student as well as the body of the student. So that, in addition to both primary and secondary research, the researcher must incorporate personal experience. In their introduction to *Food Studies*, Miller and Deutsch wrote:

> Some of the most widely used methods in food study research fall under the rubric of observational research. Qualitative Observational Research is an umbrella term for a large basket of methods used by qualitative researchers to try to understand the motivation, meaning and context behind the actions, behaviours and rituals of cultures, groups and individuals… What they have in common is they are naturalistic forms of enquiry that usually occur in the field that do not rely on experimental research designs to provide a data set.[5]

As a consequence, I have included in this thesis some of the information and data that I have gathered in the field in the course of working as a journalist.

As stated this work fits into the field of food studies which, while not exactly a new academic field, has only attracted the attention of a critical mass of academics in the last twenty years, arising, most likely, from Nutritional Anthropology, a discipline which can be dated

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[5] *Food Studies: An Introduction to Research Methods* page 137.

from the formation of the Council on Nutritional Anthropology, founded in America in 1974. Food Studies is a cross-disciplinary field which has moved a long way from nutrition to range across many areas of academic scrutiny such as nutrition, agriculture, gastronomy, history, sociology – Beardsworth and Keil are sociologists – and of course anthropology. But as it looks beyond production, consumption and aesthetic appreciation of food to the reasons why we eat what we eat, the work has crossed into the fields of cultural studies, art history, Australian history and Australian indigenous history. Indeed, as gender and cultural studies academic Elspeth Probyn points out 'one of the difficulties that faces any investigation of food is its enormity, and the ways in which it spills into every aspect of life.'[6]

Food studies in Australia as an academic pursuit began at about the same time as it did in the rest of the world – in the late 1970s and 1980s. Consequently for much of my work prior to the 20th century, I have had to look to sources where food was incidentally mentioned, like Watkin Tench's *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay* and especially *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson*, Richard Twopeny's *Town Life in Australia*, Brian Fletcher's *A History of Farming and Grazing in New South Wales Before 1821*, Mrs Charles Meredith's *Notes and Sketches of New South Wales During a Residence in that Colony from 1839 to 1844* and R. Dawson's 1830 book *The Present State of Australia*. It is often a matter of scouring the text for discussion of food, for most indexes, as Bannerman has put it, fail the 'f test': under 'f', food is rarely listed, and the next stop is 'd' for diet, and 'n' for nutrition, et cetera. It's often a case of scrutinising the text for a skerrick of meat amongst the fat and gristle.

But there were two early books which discussed Australian food specifically, apart from the numerous recipe collections. Edward

[6] *Performativity and Belonging*, 'Beyond food/sex' Probyn, Elspeth page 216.

Abbott's *The English and Australian Cookery Book* published in 1864 and Phillip E. Muskett's *The Art of Living in Australia* published almost thirty years later in 1893. Abbott's curious book, written 'for the many as well as the "upper ten thousand"', dedicated to 'his fair countrywomen of '"the beautiful land."' Originally attributed to 'An Australian Aristologist'[7] who was soon outed as the New South Wales born member of the 'upper ten thousand' both a grazier and founder of the *Hobart Town Advertiser*. Part recipe book and part polemic in search of and advocating for a better diet for European Australians, its text, full of aphorisms, homilies and edifying anecdotes puts today's reader in mind of an Antipodean Brillat-Savarin, whose 1825 *La Physiologie du Goût* Abbott had, in all likelihood, read. Abbott advocated wine with meals and the establishment of Mediterranean fruit and vegetables, recognising, as he did in his introduction that newcomers had to 'adjust themselves to living in a more temperate climate.'[8] More than many books following, it paid attention to local produce, listing, for example, the best fish and shellfish available in each state.

Muskett's book was, unabashedly, an argument for the establishment in Australia of a diet and a way of life more suited to its climate, thundering that 'the consumption of butcher's meat and of tea is enormously in excess of any common sense requirements, and is paralleled nowhere else in the world.'[9] That the basic good sense of his advice and analysis was completely ignored by Australians is further evidence of a stubborn adherence to, not only a diet but also dress more suited to 'home'. Muskett even puzzled over the lack of what he calls an 'Australian national dish' and that as early as 1893.

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[7] Aristology, according to *Mrs Byrne's Dictionary of Unusual, Obscure and Preposterous Words* is 'the art of dining.'
[8] *The Colonial Cookbook* unnumbered page of the 'Introductory preface' of the Paul Hamlyn reprint of the book which I have used.
[9] *The Art of Living in Australia* page 1.

Jack Egan's *Buried Alive*, a collection of excerpts from letters, journals and notebooks of the men who accompanied the convicts during the first five years of the colony was invaluable. Although little was used in the final text of the work, *Buried Alive* provided contextual portraits of early Australian eating habits, in much the same way as the back story of characters in a film script or novel will. As do the large number of early cookbooks from my collection and from such printed collections as Colin Bannerman's *A Friend in the Kitchen*. From these we can learn more specifically how tenaciously we clung to the diet, the aliment we brought with us, and, apart from early experimentation, ignored the food that grew in the new land. I develop this aspect of one of Australia's leading food culture contradictions throughout the work.

At the core of this work is the search for the contradictions inherent in Australian food culture.[10] By food culture I mean the culinary identity of the mainly Anglo-Celts who settled (or invaded) this island we now call Australia in 1788, first as convicts, guards and administrators, later as free settlers. Second, since the second world war, those of the other Europeans, Asians, Arabs, Indians and others who have arrived here in larger numbers, many of whom have become naturalised Australians, and the impact of their foods and food cultures on our culinary praxis and national menu.

The interrogation of Australian food culture and its concomitant, cuisine, has perplexed many who have sought to unravel its contradictions. Its very disputatious nature is seen, by at least one academic, Ken Albala[11] in *Food Cultures of the World* as its fundamental nature:

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[10] Many of the terms used in this project are contested, or at least require concise definition. These are dealt with at some length in the Introduction & Definitions chapter at the head of my project.

[11] Kenneth Albala, editor of the series, is Professor of History at The University of The Pacific

> Australian cuisine is elusive to define…Australians themselves take great pleasure in arguing about whether or not it exists, where it comes from, and who gets to define its parameters…the slippery nature of food and eating in Australia and the debate itself, probably is the essence of Australian food culture.[12]

As noted previously, The field of Australian food studies is a relatively recent one, with the urtext being Michael Symons' *One Continuous Picnic*: *A gastronomic history of Australia published* in 1982, the first such history.

In his book, Symons argues that because European Australia was founded during the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution, our farming was, from the outset, industrial and broad acre and that 'there has never been the agrarian interplay between society and soil that created the great traditional cuisines as we know them.'[13] Symons maintains that this is the reason we have cared less about food than any other people in history, and he is right as far as his argument goes. But there are other important reasons we stuck so rigidly to the diet we brought with us, and my work analyses these, and their consequences.

Colin Bannerman's paper, 'Making Australian Food History' gets closer to it than others. His essay '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.'[14] But the paper does not go on to examine 'whether or not that culture amounts to a distinctive cuisine.' In the same essay, he defines food culture as 'the ensemble of shared knowledge, attitudes and practices that people bring to selecting,

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[12] *Food Cultures of the World Volume 3 Asia and Oceania* page 21.
[13] *One Continuous Picnic* page 7.
[14] *Australian Humanities Review* Issue 51, 2011.

preparing and eating food. It exhibits in some degree order, symbolism and continuity.' It is the continuity that is missing, and that continuity is expressed in recipes. The recipe is an important signifier of a food culture. We have none. Barbara Santich writes 'we don't have a repertoire of dishes that say what and who we are'[15] and muses that 'we have to know what it means to be Australian before we can express ourselves through a gastronomic identity'[16] an idea that I examine at length. In works like *Bold Palates: Australia's Gastronomic Heritage*, *Looking for Flavour* and papers like 'Experimentation and the Role of Indigenous Foods in Australian Food Culture' Barbara Santich has been an important source.

While recognising their importance, my work takes up where Symons, Bannerman and Santich have left off, and broadens to a general interrogation of food culture, firstly through such important writers in the field as Jean-Francois Revel's *Culture and Cuisine: a Journey Through the History of Food*, Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson's *Accounting for Taste: the triumph of French Cuisine* and Massimo Montanari's *Food is Culture*. For the task of examining and searching for an Australian food culture and, by extension any evidence of regional or national cuisines, a theoretical structure was necessary.

My contention, based on those theoretical structures, is that neither culture nor cuisines exist. While I accept that this classical theoretical analysis of food culture is outdated, I maintain it is necessary to arrive at this conclusion by these means before going on to dissect and discuss Australian food today, which, in its public iteration at least, is a way of cooking less informed by tradition than experimentation. Although in the homes of Anglo-Celtic Australians, as I show, little has changed: as experimentally as they eat outside, at home the

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[15] *Looking for Flavour* page 93
[16] ibid page 93

aliment, with some post-war additions (like 'spag bol') remains essentially intact.

Crucial texts in this emerging literature of Australian food studies are also to be found in the published proceedings of the 'Symposium of Australian Gastronomy', a loosely organised, largely biennial gathering of food academics, historians and enthusiasts to give papers, eat and argue about Australian food. The first Symposium was held in Adelaide in 1984, convened by Michael Symons, Gay Bilson and Graham Pont. The published proceedings, especially for my purposes, those of the third held in Melbourne in 1987, themed *A Multiculinary Society*, have been germane to my argument and generally to the development of Australian food studies. Of special note papers by Anthony Corones 'Multiculinarity and the emergence of gastronomy' and Marieke Brugman 'Food in Australia or Australian food?' But my examination has gone further – or closer. While Symons mined history for evidence to support his thesis of industrial food and agriculture, and Bannerman and Santich explored literature and cookbooks to interrogate Australian culinary practices more generally, I have narrowed my focus to search for evidence of absence (of food culture), and examined the stubborn refusal to allow native produce into the Australian aliment.

Other themes and concepts are explored. Why are there – with one notable and one slight exception, both examined – no domestic regional cuisines or dishes which Revel defines as 'a corpus of fixed recipes, possessing essential ties to a given region and its resources'?[17] Why, in spite of the much vaunted Modern Australian Cuisine, has not one dish entered into the professional repertoire of Australian chefs as identifiably and uniquely Australian? And, in a culinary cultural sense, what does this more than two centuries of perching

[17] *Culture and Cuisine* page 214.

on the surface of this land and its indigenous produce say about Australian culture generally?

In exploring this link, I refer to Lévi-Strauss' assertion that that 'a society's cookery is a language into which it translates its structure, unless it reluctantly and no less unwittingly reveals there its contradictions.'[18] Perhaps of equal importance when concluding the findings will be Brillat-Savarin's Aphorism IV: 'Tell me what you eat: I will tell you what you are.'[19]

The argument about who or what we are has been running for a considerably longer time than the argument over what exactly is Modern Australian cuisine or Australian food culture, but if Brillat-Savarin is right, then perhaps the two are linked. In an article for Australia Day 1988, Manning Clark wrote: 'We now say with Henry Lawson we are Australians, that we know no other country. But if anyone asks us who we are and what we want to be, we lapse into the great Australian silence'.[20] Does our food culture have anything to say about who we are? The possible links are examined in areas as diverse as the 'new nationalism' of the 1980s and the Cronulla riots of 2005. It is in this area of food culture and culture generally that I believe my work has made an original contribution to the field.

In more than 200 years of occupation of this continent, European Australians have ignored what the indigenous people have been eating for over 60,000 years; ignored their sage and intricate management of the environment and its abundant foods; overlaid an alien system of agriculture which began the process of ecological imbalance the continent now finds itself in; and began exporting back to Europe the

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[18] *The Origin of Table Manners* page 495.
[19] *The Physiology of Taste* page 13. In what for many would be considered blasphemous American writer Adam Gopnik suggests that this aphorism 'is a jest as much as a judgement not meant to be taken entirely seriously – a prejudice dressed up as an absolute. *The Table Comes First* page 44.
[20] 'What do we want to be and what should we believe?', *The Bulletin*, January 26,1988 page 10.

European foodstuffs they planted and raised. And, for around 150 years, cleaved to the diet of the first settlers.

In short, we live on and not in this continent. We did not put down roots and did not see, as Waverley Root asserted, that 'food is a function of the soil, for which reason every country has the food naturally fit for it.'[21] Every country that is, except Australia.[22] Today, it's not possible to identify a single dish, and call it Australian or (with one exception which the project will examine) point at a cuisine and call it regional Australian.

When, in the mid twentieth century, we opened the nation to new arrivals, they brought with them their food cultures, their recipes and their seeds. And they too, like us, continued to eat what they had always eaten. What are the consequences for a nation and its people to have bypassed this important stage in the evolution of a society? If we do not have a food culture in the traditional sense, what do we have? I examine what that might be, and, as already mentioned, in particular the implications of Lévi-Strauss' assertion that (to paraphrase) a society's cuisine is an unconscious guide or language which reveals its structure, and its relationship to the outside world. What, then, does the way we eat, both publically (in restaurants et cetera) and at home, reveal about us?

And what more broadly does it tell us about Australian culture? It is here that I will make another original contribution in the sphere of food studies, by examining the relationship of art, poetry, and food culture, only to find confirmation of theatre director and policy analyst Julian Meyrick's assertion in an article on the Conversation website

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[21] *The Food of France* page 4.

[22] In what Belich calls (in *Replenishing the Earth. The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939* see bibliography) the 'Anglo-New Lands' of America, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia, the European settlers of Australia have least utilized the produce of their new home, closely followed by the New Zealanders.

that 'we are a net cultural importer.'[24] Culinarily this may be a good thing. As Taylor and Foss, editors of *Art & Text* wrote, Australia is 'already postmodern, by virtue of its culture of "second-degree" – its uniquely unoriginal, antipodal appropriations of European culture.'[25]

When we look at our most interesting Australian chefs we see that they are appropriating not just European but Asian, Middle Eastern, Indian, Mexican et cetera ingredients and techniques, weaving together ingredients and techniques from more than one cuisine in a manner that could be described as intertextual[26] (or bricolage).
For example 'Black bean lasagne layered with Atlantic salmon fillets fondant of tomato and beurre blanc' from a 1995 menu by chef Patrick Landelle at Soleil, Sunshine Beach: 'Duck breast poached in fermented ume and oloroso master stock, forbidden rice, umeboshi, spring almonds' from a 2013 menu by chef Peter Gilmore at Quay, Sydney. Although these dishes are 'antipodal appropriations' they are hardly 'uniquely unoriginal.' Our chefs may be working without culture, but they are not un-cultured. Writing of the food of Parisian chef Pascal Barbot, whose restaurant Astrance received three Michelin stars after only one year, Michael Steinberger reveals that Barbot had worked in Sydney under chef Tony Bilson, usually referred to as 'the godfather of Australian cuisine.' Sydney, Barbot told Steinberger offered 'a dizzying array of cuisines' an 'exuberant inventiveness held sway.' Barbot told him 'after Australia…I was *décomplexe* – free.'[27] It is this *trés complexe* intermingling of food, culture and cuisine that has not been closely examined before that is another of the original contributions of this work.

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[24] 'Does Australia get culture?'
[25] Quoted by Daniel Taylor on The Conversation website in 'Explainer: What is postmodernism?'
[26] The curriculum for the Australian Contemporary Cuisine course which was taught in TAFE colleges around Australia from 1994 to 2000 included twelve national cuisines which could be broken down in literally hundreds of regional cuisines. The curriculum is attached as Appendix 5.
[27] *Au Revoir To All That* page 195.

At the head of this exegesis I mentioned Miller and Deutsch's term Qualitative Observational Research, an umbrella term for a collection of methods used by qualitative researchers to 'try to understand the motivation, meaning and context behind the actions, behaviours and rituals of cultures, groups and individuals.' Miller and Deutsch pointed out what they had in common was that they were 'naturalistic forms of enquiry' usually gathered in the field and not relying on experimental research designs. I indicated that I have, in my work, used data that I had gathered during the course of my work as a journalist. Most of these 'naturalistic forms of enquiry' are employed in the last three chapters.

In Chapter Five I examine the restaurant guides of Sydney and Melbourne to analyse the rise of Modern Australian Cuisine. The two dominant guides, published by *The Age* in Melbourne and *The Sydney Morning Herald* in Sydney provide invaluable information on the changing tastes of those cities' restaurant-goers. In Chapter Six I analyse the cookbooks published in Australia from the 1980s to the 2000s to illustrate the shift of authors, from women cookery writers to male restaurateurs and finally male (mainly) television chefs, and then the rise and fall of Masterchef and its effect on the Australian diet through an analysis of viewer statistics and reports from the press. In Chapter Seven, I analyse the food found on what I call Australia's three tables: 'high', 'low' and 'home.' Santich quotes Curnowksy's four distinctive French cuisines: *haute*, *paysanne and bourgeoise*, with *the 'steak-frites'* from the roadside van the nameless fourth but perhaps '*le fast-food*.' What I have called the high table' coincides with the French *haute cuisine*, the low table has no French equivalent (unless it is the café) and the home table perhaps, in a broad sense, *bourgeoise*. Because it is a global, rather than an Australian food cultural phenomenon, I did not deal at any great length with fast food, except to note that in 2011, we were the 11th biggest-spending fast food

nation on earth.[28]

I have also attempted a quantitative analysis of the audience in Australia for the food at the high tables. This was done using media industry research, analysis of the menus of my selection of the thirteen best high table restaurants in the country (see Appendix 7), conversations with chefs and restaurateurs I had met when working as a journalist and what I called 'back of the envelope' calculations. In discussing the findings with chefs and restaurateurs, I have the sense that these calculations are not far from the truth. Why did I do this? Because nobody has ever done research into the size of this market. The research for my analysis of the low tables – what I define as lower-priced restaurants, from the entry level Modern Australian to inexpensive ethnic – was again conducted by media analysis. Firstly an enumeration of the number of restaurant openings recorded in a twelve month period by *The Sydney Morning Herald Short Black* column – a column I wrote for a number of years (see Appendix 11) and further analysis of a number of 'food blogs'. In looking at the home tables, I made extensive use of research from Meat and Livestock Australia, a company owned by Australia's major sheep and cattle producers which provides research and development and marketing services to its owners. Research reports and some raw data kindly supplied to me by the company, along with my own TableWatch research enabled me to see, to a large extent, what was being served on the tables in Australian homes.

As the work moved into the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, research methods moved from analysis of existing history to a popular culture strand of enquiry. From history books to interviews with living chefs and critics and analysis of media: newspapers,

[28] According to a report in the French edition of Huffpost on September 3, 2014, the French are the second largest consumers in the world of McDonalds and pizzas. http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2013/02/28/en-france-le-fast-food-a-detrone-la-restauration-traditionnelle_n_2782834.html

magazines, websites et cetera. This coincides with the changing landscape of history.

In 1991, while preparing a speech, I rang the history department of a large university, and asked to be connected to someone who worked on the history of food. There was a pause, and the person who answered replied with a question: 'And what, might I ask, has food got to do with history?' This was, admittedly, even at that time, a somewhat antediluvian answer, but it does reflect the academic attitude towards food in history until relatively recently. The inclusion, for example, in an academic work of the contents of restaurant guides would have been unthinkable until, again, relatively recent times. This work coincides with the broadening and diversification of sources used in research, and the subjects of that research. Not just academic history, anthropology and sociology, but the writings of (in my field) chefs, critics and bloggers. In their book *History at the Crossroads*, Ashton and Hamilton quote historian Greg Dening that: 'There were those who regarded 'real history' as residing in academic institutions and those who saw it as a 'public thing'.[29] I side with the latter view but also believe that both academic and popular history can live side by side.

The history of food, and the more extensive field of food studies, has emerged from the broadening scope of social and cultural history in the last three decades of the twentieth century. And as this work has moved into the present, as outlined above, it has moved into the realm of personal observation and involvement of the author. Ashton and Hamilton quote cultural historian Johan Huizinga referring to the 'grace of historical experience' and how 'an encounter with history can change one's perspective of both the past and the present.'[30] This has been my experience while writing this work.

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[29] *History at the Crossroads* page 9.
[30] Ibid. page 136.

My personal and professional involvement in almost thirty years of Australian food, restaurants, chefs and producers has, I believe, informed this work and allowed me to better interrogate – and understand – the past. My work as a restaurant reviewer from 1993 to 2013 for *The Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide, The Sydney Morning Herald Good Metropolitan* section, *Cheap Eats* and *Sydney Eats*, my three years (5 October1993 –18 June 1996) as *Short Black* columnist, co-editing various editions of a guide to Sydney's food shops (from 1999 to 2011), and my inclusion as a consultant in the expert group who devised the Australian Contemporary Cuisine course for NSW Technical and Further Education in 1996 and 1997, has put me in a position to use 'the grace of historical experience' to enrich this work. The item in the last *Short Black* column referring back to the first illustrates the minutiae of that involvement:

> THAT first column makes for interesting reading. We recorded the 10th birthday of The Restaurant Manfredi (then just plain 'The Restaurant'); the closure of Tony Bilson's Fine Bouche; Mark Armstrong's denial that he was selling Armstrong's at Manly (he did); Victoria Alexander's first victory in a courtroom battle for the right for the right to develop The Bather's Pavilion building (she's still fighting); and the arrival of the new Remo catalogue. It's with relief and regret that I say goodbye to the column: relief at getting out from under the megapile of weekly information; regret at leaving this space, the epicentre of the new food capital of the world. And to you, kind readers, who've been invaluable in keeping me up to date and on my toes – thank you.

In retrospect, it was my time as a restaurant reviewer that was most valuable for the current work. The assiduous reviewer must place the restaurant reviewed in context – why it is where it is – have a good

working knowledge of the influences of the chef, and an understanding of the provenance of the food on the plate. A recent example from Melbourne reviewer John Lethlean:

> Three [of the oysters served] are Clair de Lune Bouton (Pacifics) from the NSW south coast producer Moonlight Flat; three are Premium Pacifics, from Pristine in Coffin Bay, South Australia. Two of the best growers in the country. They have been opened – not shucked – to order. They remain anchored to their shells, not "turned."[31]

Similar close attention to every detail of a restaurant's offerings has paid dividends in this work. The three streams informing this work – the popular, the personal and the professional/academic have converged to provide its depth and breadth. Of inestimable value throughout the work have been cookbooks of all types and provenance – especially those from the CWA and *The Australian Women's Weekly* – which, as Appadurai has written 'combine the sturdy pragmatic virtues of all manuals with the vicarious pleasures of the literature of the senses' and have been among the most important non-academic sources. My personal contact with CWA members and the lunch they cooked for me was also invaluable in providing a personal encounter with today's home tables (see Appendix 2). An examination of the breadth and variety of my sources emphasizes Ashton and Hamilton's observation that:

> Academic historians are being forced to share. Notions of authority have become more varied: people who have…special social knowledge can assume certain types of authority.[32]

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[31] Lethlean, John, review of Luxembourg Restaurant , *Executive Living The Australian* September 6, 2014.
[32] Ashton, Paul and Hamilton, Paula *History at the Crossroads* page 11.

The very reason for this diversity of sources in food studies especially relates to the avalanche of information following the quite recent academic discovery of – food:

> But it wasn't until the 1980s that the stars seemed to align… and people in a wide variety of roles and places suddenly took notice of food, something that had generally gone unnoticed because, ironically, it was so very much a central part of the dailiness of living. [33]

And once we had noticed, it was everywhere. It was this avalanche of information from a wide variety of sources that informed this work, and led to its being.

[33] 'Food Studies: Critical Collaborations, Challenges and Aspirations' paper delivered by Professor Nathalie Cooke Adelaide 17-19 February 2014, sent to me.

Introduction

> A society's cookery is a language into which it translates its structure, unless it reluctantly and no less unwittingly reveals there its contradictions.[1]
> Claude Lévi-Strauss

> Vegemite may be the best predictor of national identity of any food in the world. That is, if you eat Vegemite, you are almost certainly Australian.[2]
> Paul Rozin and Michael Segal

For some twenty years I have been writing books, newspaper and magazine articles and papers on the subjects of Australian food and farming, cooks and cooking, have worked as a restaurant critic for a number of publications and have taught a short course on 'Writing About Food' at the University of Technology Sydney. During that time, I began to think about the food culture of the country I live in. By that I mean the food culture of those who have occupied the country for the last 225 years, not the original inhabitants. Their produce – that is the produce native to Australia – is curiously and almost entirely missing in what is called 'Modern Australian Cuisine' as well as the domestic kitchen, an absence which will also be explored in this thesis.[3]

By food culture I mean, first, the culinary identity of the (mainly) Anglo-Celts who settled (or invaded) this island we now call Australia in 1788, first as convicts and administrators, later as free settlers. Second, since World War Two, those of the other Europeans, Asians,

[1] *The Origin of Table Manners* page 495.
[2] 'Vegemite as a Marker of National Identity' *Gastronomica.*
[3] 'Aboriginal Australians have the oldest living culinary tradition in the world' *Food Cultures of the World* vol 3 *Asia and Oceania* page 2.

Arabs, Indians and other nationalities who have arrived here in larger numbers and become Australians, and the impact of their foods and food cultures on our culinary praxis and national menu.

I have lived through the elevation of chefs from being seen as 'fat old blokes in dirty white jackets, who drank too much and tortured apprentices in the kitchen' to the point some forty years ago when they 'burst out of the kitchen, shed blubber, grow pecs and attitude, rip off their clothes, and become the new rock stars, right down to having their own groupies'.[4] More recently, I have looked on – even participated – as we have become obsessed with food and written and bought unprecedented numbers of cookbooks by an unprecedented number of chefs. Nielsen BookScan tracked 3.38 million units in the Food and Drink Category in 2011. It is currently the largest non-fiction category.[5] This obsession has more recently been reflected in the vast numbers who watch – or watched, as its popularity appears to be waning – the television show *MasterChef*, and the associated '*MasterChef* phenomenon'. One episode attracted 4.11 million viewers, just under one-sixth of the nation's population.[6]

Over the years, I've asked myself: what do Neil Perry's ponytail, Adriano Zumbo's macarons, Matt Preston's cravats, Tony Bilson's chefs hats, the whole *Good Food Guide* frenzy have to do with Australian food culture? It gradually dawned on me that there seemed to be one important element missing from Australian menus, both domestic and professional. There are no dishes or recipes that could be identified as Australian – or more importantly regional Australian. Jean-Francoise Revel has argued that 'there are no *national cuisines*…The basic unit in gastronomy is the region, not the nation.'[7]

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[4] Newton, John 'Flesh Pots' *The Age Epicure* October 5 1999, pages 1&4
[5] www.nielsen.com
[6] http://www.tvtonight.com.au/2009/07/3-74m-viewers-powers-masterchef-finale.html
[7] *Culture and Cuisine* page 215.

On October 17,1995, in the column *Short Black* that I then wrote in the *Good Living* section of *The Sydney Morning Herald* I noted that Cherry Ripe had also asserted in her introduction to the *Australia the Beautiful* cook book that there are no regional dishes in Australia.[8] Occasionally, I would make use of the resource of tens of thousands of food-interested readers to do some research. In this instance, I asked my readers to write or ring in with any regional dishes that they knew of. After some weeks, I was able to offer one. Dishes that did not make the list included the Pavlova, whose provenance is hotly contested;[9] as is the Anzac Biscuit which may have been first made and named (as the Anzac Tile) by the Arnott Biscuit Company; the Lamington; and Peach Melba which, although named after an Australian, is not Australian. None of these justly celebrated desserts/cakes – with the exception of the lamington – came from Australian domestic kitchens. And none are associated with one place.[10] For the same reasons, I did not offer cocky's joy, a flour dumpling swimming in golden syrup, or damper, the flat bread baked over the campfire. Examples of dishes developed in extreme circumstances and using limited ingredients, they are neither regional nor universally Australian. Nor did I nominate the roast leg of lamb, steak and eggs, and especially not the ubiquitous 'spag bol' – again, none, with the exception of the last, is associated with any particular place or region.

I could only offer my readers the Adelaide pie floater: a meat pie island in a pea soup sea, served in only two or three locations in the country, all pie carts, and all in Adelaide: one at Norwood, the other outside the Casino and the third, occasionally, near Hindmarsh Square. There are

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[8] Ripe, Cherry, Pascoe, Elise, *Australia The Beautiful.*
[9] The provenance of this meringue and fruit creation is the subject of not one but two academic papers (see bibliography). Leach, Helen M. (2010) The Pavlova Wars How a Creationist Model of Recipe Origins Led to an International Dispute, *Gastronomica* vol. 10, no. 2, pages 24–30 and Symons, Michael (2010), 'The confection of a nation: the social invention and social construction of the Pavlova', *Social Semiotics*, vol. 20 no. 2, pages 197-217 http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10350330903566004
[10] The lamington, of disputed provenance, is almost certainly Australian, but definitely not regional. See next footnote.

But only in Adelaide does the pie float in a sea of mushy peas.
I offered two free copies of *Australia the Beautiful* to any reader who could supply more regional offerings. It was the only contest I ran where the prizes went begging.[11] But the provenance of even that lone regional dish has now been questioned:

> The South Australian National Trust has traced the history of the pie floater: an impressive history tracing back 130+ years. Early records in South Australia state that the pie floater was reputedly born in Port Pirie, South Australia, conceived by one Ern "Shorty" Bradley in 1890s – but, no one really knows how. Did he inadvertently drop a pie into a bowl of soup?[12]

It is relevant to the development of my argument, in the light of Michael Symons' analysis of Australian food history, and his description of 'Australia's uniquely "pure" industrial cuisine',[13] that even this one contribution to 'regional' Australian cuisine is an item of industrial food.

This project asks four questions. First and most importantly: how is it that after more than 225 years, we have no Australian or regional Australian food culture, nor even any evidence – through recipes and dishes – of its more tangible and visible vector, cuisine? Secondly: what are the consequences for a nation and its people of having bypassed this important stage in the evolution of a society? Thirdly: Why in over 200 years living here do we eat practically nothing that grows locally but those fish, birds, crustaceans and shellfish analogous to European produce? And finally, if we do not have a food

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[11] Possible exceptions to this assertion that there are no Australian/regional Australian dishes will be addressed at length in Chapter 3.
[12] thepiecart.com.au The website of the Adelaide pie carts, which also states that: 'While the dish has appeared in other Australian locations – 1950s Brisbane and notably in Sydney at Harry's Cafe de Wheels – it has made its biggest mark in South Australia. In 2003, the pie floater was recognised as a South Australian Heritage Icon by the National Trust of Australia.'
[13] *One Continuous Picnic* page xvii. Wht Syhmons refers to as 'industrial cuisine' is, for the most part, industrial agriculture.

culture in the historical sense, what do we have? The second third and fourth questions will be answered during the course of the project. The answer to the first will require an exploration of definitions.

Defining terms

> [Food] culture gains its force through repetition, reiteration, recapitulation, rigmarole, ritual, rhythm, regulation, reproduction – recipes.[14]
> Michael Symons

Before embarking on this search for the complex reasons behind Australia's missing food culture, I will need to define and distinguish several terms and words: first and most importantly, 'food'; then 'culture'; then the two conjoined, 'food culture'; and the distinction between the seemingly interchangeable terms 'food culture' and 'cuisine.' Quite simply, food can be defined as 'any substance that provides the nutrients necessary to maintain life and growth when ingested.'[15] But such a definition, while recognising the material facts, ignores the morass of cultural, religious, national, ethnic and habitual behaviour surrounding our choice of and ways of ingesting those nutrient giving substances, most importantly, cooking.

Eighteenth-century author and diarist James Boswell offers this definition of 'Man' as a 'Cooking Animal': 'The beasts have memory, judgement, and all the faculties of and passions of our mind, in a certain degree: but no beast is a cook'.[16] Indeed, Richard Wrangham contends in his book *Catching Fire*, that it was cooking with fire that

[14] Symons, Michael *The Pudding That Took a Thousand Cooks*, page 26
[15] Kittler, Pamela Goyan and Sucher, Kathryn P *Food and Culture* page 1
[16] James Boswell*, Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson,* quoted by Richard Wrangham in *Catching Fire*, page 15

made us human.[17] Whether this hypothesis is true, there is no doubt, as food anthropologist Lenore Manderson writes that: ‘Food serves to distinguish humanness’.[18] We exhibit that humanness by choosing food from a wide variety of sources, both in terms of produce and provedore; and by the ways in which we choose to prepare our food; by choosing food and preparation techniques specific to the meal being cooked – breakfast is, usually, very different from dinner; by the occasion on which we are cooking – Eid, Christmas, Vesak; and by the group with whom we are eating. More recently ethics have been applied to our choices. We may choose to be vegetarians or vegans in order to support the rights of animals, we may still eat meat but try to eat only meat that has lived well and died humanely, seeking out meat from farmers like the American Joel Salatin whose animals, he asserts have ‘a good life and one bad day’. Salatin, whose books include *The Sheer Ecstasy of Being a Lunatic Farmer*,[19] and American journalist Michael Pollan, who wrote *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*,[20] have gained wide readership with their messages of eating and farming ethically. These issues are not new – for example the Indian religion Jainism which advocates non-violence to all living things has been practiced at least since the ninth century BCE. But their influence on western diets has been gathering force since the late twentieth century.

Food, then, is far more than a material substance which is ingested and excreted. It distinguishes and defines us to ourselves and to our fellows. It can be a primary cultural marker of our clan, tribe, religion, region, province, personal sensibilities and country. For instance, Italians divide themselves into *pollentones,* those people whose carbohydrate of first choice is polenta, and *spaghettimaccherones* (or *mangiamaccherones*), those who eat pasta. The divide is also

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[17] Ibid. passim

[18] Manderson, Lenore *Shared Wealth and Symbol: Food Culture and Society in Oceania and Southeast Asia*, page 6.

[19] Salatin, Joel (2010) *The Sheer Ecstasy of Being a Lunatic Farmer.*

[20] Pollan, Michael (2006) *The Omnivore’s Dilemma: The Search for a Perfect Meal in a Fast-Food World*, Bloomsbury: Great Britain.

geographical, the *pollentones* coming from the north of Italy and the *spaghettimaccherones* from the south.

This culinary cultural specificity goes deeper than a choice of food type. It dictates the ingredients of dishes. Rosa Matto, an Australian-born Italian cooking teacher, told me a story which illustrates this point clearly. As a young woman, she went to live in Tuscany, to learn the Italian that she had shunned as a girl – she was like many of her post-war generation embarrassed to be a 'wog' – and to learn to cook. 'One day', she said, 'I was buying vegetables from a woman in the village, and practicing my Italian. I told her that the night before, I had made a *ribollita* (a vegetable soup specific to Tuscany)'. 'And what did the Signora use to make her *ribollita*?', she asked politely. I told her the ingredients I had used, and she sniffed and said: 'Well, that may be all very well for those people over there' and she pointed towards a village about two kilometres away, 'but we would never use a bay leaf in our *ribollita*!'[21]

Examples of foods specific to regions, ethnic groups and countries abound. The *paella valenciana de la horta* of Valencia – as opposed to the tourist version of paella stuffed with frozen seafood mostly served elsewhere – utilises the rice planted in the delta by the Moors sometime between 711 and 1492. Now, officially, only ten ingredients are allowed: olive oil, rice, chicken, rabbit, *ferraura* and *garrofó* beans (specific to Valencia), tomato, water, salt, saffron and rice. Dispensation is given for the addition of duck, snails and artichokes as regional variations. This was as a result of a recipe submitted in 2012 to the Conselleria of Agriculture in Valencia by the restaurateur Rafael Vidal. His recipe was granted the status of 'paella valenciana tradicional con Denominación de Origen Arroz de Valencia' – a Denomination of Origin.

[21] Pers. comm.

In Ethiopia, *injera* bread is made from a grain grown only in the highlands of that country. It is called *teff* and contains no gluten, so that *injera* is a soft, spongy bread, made in the shape of a large pancake. This bread and the grain from which it is made is specific to Ethiopia and the Ethiopian culture, and around its shape and texture many meals have been created over time. Until recently, practically every meal in Ethiopia consisted of *injera* and *wat*, stew, with the *injera* used as both plate and eating implement for the meal.

Such foods and dishes epitomise and shape the culture, the mores, the habits and even the pastimes of a people. Paella, for example is not just a dish but the centre of a ritual. On Sunday, the family visits their *horta* – market garden – which is first tended and then at lunchtime a fire is lit and a paella is prepared over the fire (the wood must be either cuttings from an orange tree or vine shoots) by the patriarch of the family. Similarly, Italian-Australian chef Stefano Manfredi has said that the only time a man entered the kitchen in northern Italy was to stir the polenta: 'That was, for some reason, a male ritual'.[22]

Thus food becomes culture, as Montanari maintains, in two ways. Firstly, '*when it is prepared'* because, once we have the basic products of our diet, we transform them – by fire or other means of processing or kitchen. Secondly, '*when it is eaten'* because, although we can eat anything, we choose our food according to economic, nutritional or symbolic values. It is in these ways, Montanari says, that 'food takes shape as a decisive element of human identity and as one of the most effective means of expressing and communicating identity'.[23] Food has insinuated itself into the marrowbone of culture. Dishes and meals are central to family gatherings – the paella – religious ritual – the bread and wine of transubstantiation at the centre of Holy

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[22] *Fresh From Italy* page 9.
[23] Montanari, Massimo (2004) *Food is Culture*, pages xi-xii.

Communion, the bitter root of Pesach and even, in its absence, the fasting of Ramadan. But culture is a loaded word, no less so when attached to food.

For the purposes of this thesis, I will apply a narrower definition than is discussed by philosophers, ethicists and aestheticians. In this context, I am interested only in that which binds a people together and will offer one simple definition. Culture is:

> The sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings, which is transmitted from one generation to another.[24]

This is a useful definition, not the least because with the substitution of a single word (by me), it can define food culture as: 'The sum total of ways of *eating* built up by a group of human beings, which is transmitted from one generation to the next.' It is that idea of 'transmission' I will return to.

My own definition of food culture incorporates elements of Mintz's definition of cuisine:

> "Cuisine" in a more practical sense, though, is regional. By "practical" I mean here people using ingredients, methods and recipes on a regular basis to produce both their everyday and festive foods, eating more or less consistently, and sharing what they cook with each other.[25]

The ideas of 'using ingredients, methods and recipes on a regular basis to produce both their everyday and festive foods' can be seen in countless ways around the world: in the paella cooked in the *horta* (and only, as we have seen, in Valencia); in the countless *sagre* –

[24] The Macquarie Dictionary (2002) Revised Third Edition
[25] Mintz, Sydney *Tasting Food Tasting Freedom* pages 97-98

originally feasts in honour of a patron saint in Italy – celebrations of the food or the produce of a village or region: the daily propitiatory offerings of fruits, rice, cakes, pigs et cetera, *pebantén*, to the evil sprits in Bali.[26] A more precise definition can be found in the book *Food Wars*:

> a constellation of socially produced values, attitudes, relationships, tastes, cuisines and practices exhibited through food…[27]

This introduces the idea of the social production of food culture, and a reflection on the ways in which these values, behaviours and choices are built up over time. Food culture, in this framing, extends from the table to behaviour, from the ways in which we sit to eat – on the ground, in chairs, reclining – to the ways in which we choose the implements with which we eat – chopsticks, knife and fork – to the ways in which we hold those implements. We are at once bound together by our food choices and the ways in which we eat. Table manners are clear indicators of social class, and more.[28]

In the final chapter of *The Origin of Table Manners*: *The Moral of the Myths*,[29] Claude Lévi-Strauss reflects back on the myths he has examined, the 'ethical system' concealed in mythology. He asserted that the 'origin of good manners' and more generally of correct behaviour is to be found in deference to the world, by which he means the planet and its ecology. In the modern world, he claims we have failed to obey this ethical system. He asserts that it has never been more important to put the needs of the planet before that of mankind, and respect for others before self-interest because our (humanity's)

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[26] Covarrubias, Miguel *Island of Bali* page 276.

[27] Lang, Tim and Heasmann, Michael *Food Wars*: *The Global Battle for Mouths, Minds and Markets* page 185.

[28] I learnt to use chopsticks while living in Singapore from a colleague. She taught me that if I held them too low, I would identify as a lower class person: too high, and I would be accused of putting on airs.

[29] pages 496-508.

stay here will, one day, come to an end, so that no matter how long we have been here, we cannot make it an excuse for 'appropriating the world as if it were a thing and behaving on it with neither decency nor discretion.' In other words, sit up straight, elbows in, do not smack when eating or humanity will not be long for this earth. Such is the power of table manners.

If food culture is a hand-woven rug, then the warp and the weft is the choice and ritual surrounding preparation and eating; the manner of weaving conveys the warmth and conviviality of the process; the stuff that it is made of is the food, the produce of the land, sea and sky; and the pattern is the dishes created in domestic kitchens since the beginning of civilisation. It is an apt analogy. The rugs of the middle east, like domestic cuisine, are the creations of anonymous women. As Heldke writes: 'Like other kinds of women's traditional creative work…recipe creation has tended to be social…the creative work is frequently the result of many women contributing their own idea to the general plan, often over considerable periods of time.'[30] Compare Valcarenghi: 'The kilim, which is not just a utilitarian object, but also a symbolic one, appears to be closely intertwined with the archetypal universe of the feminine principal.'[31] In each instance the women creating recipes, and the women creating rugs contribute their own idea to a 'general plan' which evolves into a legacy: in the one case of a collection of recipes which contribute towards a cohesive local or regional cuisine, and in the other, a collection of rugs equally easily identifiable as emanating from a particular place. Now we must examine cuisine or, rather, cuisines.

The use of the word cuisine illustrates to what extent the French have appropriated almost everything to do with European eating, cooking and gastronomy. Literally, it means kitchen, but has been taken by

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[30] Heldke, Lisa M *Exotic Appetites: Ruminations of a Food Adventurer* pages 139-40.
[31] *Kilim History and Symbols* page 7.

the French – and since the seventeenth century by English speakers – to mean 'both the kitchen and the manner or style of cooking undertaken there, the task of the *cuisinier*, or cook'.[32] How does a cuisine arise? How is it 'created'?

There are two basic categories of cuisine – low and high.
But there are many more divisions and subdivisions including national, regional, peasant, bourgeois and global. As an epigraph to the section of this chapter entitled *Defining terms*, I have used a quotation from Michael Symons which emphasises the importance of the recipe to food culture (page 4). One essential signifier of a food culture is named dishes that have exact or similar ingredients (see above *ribollita*, paella) in a particular region, amongst an ethnic or religious group, or across a country and which originated in that country or region or with that group. A canon of named dishes is the foundation of most cuisines.[33] The ancient food cultures of Europe and the Middle East supply a myriad of such dishes. Lisa Heldke writes that 'in some cuisines, dishes have persisted for centuries in nearly the same form', and cites Claudia Roden, writing in her *Book of Middle Eastern Food* of being 'thrilled to trace the origin of several of my family's recipes' to a thirteenth-century compilation, probably of Syrian origin, the *Kitab al Wusla il al Habib*.[34] And it is not possible to properly examine cuisine in all its forms shapes and origins, without a brief discussion of gastronomy on which, outside the confines of this work, an entire book could be written.

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[32] Higman, B.W. *How Food Made History* page 145.
[33] There are exceptions. Firstly, many of those cuisines indentified as 'modern' ; secondly what Rosario Scarpato (see below) identifies as 'global' – closely allied to 'modern'. And thirdly as noted in my story 'Pick and Nick' is the Gypsy or Romany culture: 'There is no clearly defined Gypsy cuisine,' my respondent Ina Bergin said, 'it is a concept. Food is a vehicle. We place great value on social gatherings. Food becomes the centre of repaying of debts of a social kind. All ceremonies have been based on giving hospitality, including, of course, good food." Romany cuisine takes on the ingredients of whatever place they find themselves in, it is a cuisine of convenience, 'and very opportunistic' Bergin said and it is 'a dynamic cuisine. But there are no recipes. If people come and say you make the best whatever we have ever eaten, that becomes the recipe.' *Slow: the magazine of the Slow Food movement*, no.17, pages 76-83
[34] *Exotic Appetites: Ruminations of a Food Adventurer* page xix.

For a definition, it is not possible to go beyond Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, who, after all, made the word famous: ‘Gastronomy is the reasoned comprehension of everything connected with the nourishment of man.’[35] The word ‘nourishment’ is worth noting. It doesn’t mean ‘nutrition’ nor just ‘taste’, but more than both: to be nourished is to be enriched by food, to be gratified by all that has to do with a meal – surroundings, company and quality of cooking.[36] Gastronomy, then is the study of all that has to do with the raising, cooking, preparation and enjoyment of food. It is placed, writes food historian Barbara Santich ‘at the confluence of the streams of sensuality and the intellect.’[37] Although it has acquired a somewhat elevated – even snobbish – reputation, it is very simply the sum total of all we know about or want to know about food. ‘Gastronomy’, Brillat-Savarin writes, ‘governs the whole life of man.’[38] For him, according to Gopnik: ‘Something we have to do – eat – becomes something we care to do – dine – and then something we care to do becomes something we try to do with grace.’[39] But before humanity, before culture and the refinement of gastronomy there was the land.

After the invention of agriculture it was the soil beneath our feet that played a determining role in shaping both culture and cuisine. This is succinctly expressed by American food writer Waverley Root: ‘food is a function of the soil, for which reason every country has the food naturally fit for it’[44] – except, I would contend, Australia. The land – and the sea – provided the ingredients, and in some mysterious, pre-literate process, a canon of recipes pertinent to the produce and the

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[35] *The Physiology of Taste* page 52.
[36] Although nourish comes from the same Latin root as nutrition, *nutrire* – to suckle, feed or maintain –- it has so many more layers of meaning. Perhaps suckle is the closest to the modern meaning of nourish, with its intimations of primal satiation.
[37] *Looking for Flavour* page 173.
[38] ibid.
[39] *The Table Comes First* page 39.
[44] *The Food of France* page 3.

cooking techniques on hand were produced, agreed to, disseminated and handed down.[46]

With the advent of human food culture came the divisions of high and low cuisines. Revel writes that 'Cuisine stems from two sources: a popular one and an erudite one, this latter necessarily being the appanage of the well-off classes of every era.' The first type, he asserts, 'has the advantage of being linked to the soil' and thus being able to exploit the products of region and season 'in close accord with nature.'[47] Not only is low – or peasant – cuisine – linked to the soil, but at the outset, linked to language. Higham points out that even when natural resources were much the same over large areas, people did not necessarily eat in the same way. But 'people who shared language tended also to share food cultures across diverse landscapes'.[48] A shared language was necessary for the sharing of recipes, especially in pre-literate times. The recipe is the vector of the virus that spreads the cuisine, and without language these carriers would spread in neither time nor place.[49]

It was women who cooked – before the advent of the hierarchical haute cuisines – and women who devised and spread the recipes. While we will never know how a set of regional recipes was formulated, it is reasonable to assume that they would have been the work of 'many women contributing their own idea to the general plan,

[46] In the Tibetan exile community in Himachal Pradesh in 1975, I saw the logic of the technique of stir-frying. A wok sat on a trivet in the street. The cook meticulously sliced the ingredients for the dish to be cooked. When she had finished, she took a bundle of twigs – firewood was in short supply here – placed them under the wok and lit them. They flared up. At the height of the fire she threw the finely sliced ingredients into the wok. By the time the fire had died down, the dish was cooked.
[47] *Culture and Cuisine: a Journey Through the History of Food* page 19. 'Appanage' is a French word meaning that which belongs rightfully or appropriately to one's rank or station in life. page19
[48] *How Food Made History* page 161
[49] The French usage *recipe* comes from the Latin *recipe* 'take!' which is the imperative of *recipere* 'to take.' The modern meaning 'instructions for preparing food' was first recorded in 1743. The original sense survives in the pharmacist abbreviation Rx. Another possible derivation is the same Latin imperative - 'take' – but in the sense of the first word of any recipe is 'take (an ingredient)'. From etymonline.com

over considerable spans of time'[50] as was the case with other women's creative work: pottery, woven rugs, quilting. So a body of recipes, the foundation of any peasant cuisine, was created, over time, as the property of a language group. This process was repeated all across the world.

Higham argues that the invention of cuisine was an 'element of human evolution' and 'an essential feature of a successful hunter-gatherer food culture' with the recipes, at first transmitted orally, providing 'continuity into the present.'[51] A cuisine – of either type – is made by and requires a community. As Mintz writes 'a cuisine requires a population that eats that cuisine with sufficient frequency to consider themselves experts on it.' This is especially true for 'low' or popular cuisines. The people who eat that cuisine regularly know how it tastes, how it should taste, its ingredients, even variations on its ingredients and how it should be cooked. It is their creation, their inheritance, they are proud of it and nurture it. 'In short', Mintz concludes, 'a genuine cuisine has common social roots; it is the food of a community, albeit often a very large community.'[52]

That community became larger with the invention of the printing press. Although there had been recipe and food books well before printing, they were written for two main reasons: to disseminate specialist information to the professional cooks serving in courts and the houses of the wealthy; and to link food and its preparation with ideas of health, spirituality (in the east) and even philosophy. One other curious form of book is the Thai funeral ceremony book, written about the deceased and distributed to family and friends. Those written for upper class women contain their favourite recipes and menus for dinners they had given during their lives.[53]

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[50] *Exotic Appetites* pp 139-40
[51] *How Food Made History* page 165
[52] *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom* page 96.
[53] Ma, Amy 'In Bangkok, 500 Funerals and a Michelin Star'.

The first cookbook printed in Europe opened the floodgates.[54] These books did more than transmit recipes far and wide to a newly literate audience. They began the process of 'fixing' – standardising and codifying – regional cuisines in a far more rigid way than was the case in pre-literate times – or indeed in far more rigid a way than had it been left to cooks. Anyone who has worked with cooks, coaxing them to write down or at least quantify amounts of ingredients for their recipes, will be familiar with the difficulty. Cooks deal in handfuls and pinches and fair bits, long times and short times, fairly hot and warm. It was the cookbook that imposed precision on the domestic recipe. And it can also be said that cookbooks created the modern idea of cuisines of place – regional cuisines – beyond the boundaries of the place. Some by merely gathering recipes from a certain place and naming them as originating in that place – Tuscany, Sichuan, Catalonia – and putting them between covers, some by intent.

The declared purpose of the – at first – self-published (in 1891) *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Good Eating* by the wealthy amateur Pellegrino Artusi was to 'unite Italy as a culinary "state"'[55] which he set out to achieve by collecting, blending and transforming recipes and regional cultures. It worked. The book was from first publication a best-seller in Italy, and remains so today. It is claimed that Artusi's project of culinary unification 'worked rather better than the project of linguistic unification initiated by Manzoni'.[56] It also pointed the way to a new type of cuisine, placed between high low and high.

The arrival in the eighteenth century of the urban middle classes brought about the first 'fusion' cuisine – a marriage of high and low:

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[54] That first book, *De honesta voluptate et valetudine* (*On honourable pleasure and health*), by Bartolomeo Platina, originally named Sacchi, was printed in 1475.
[55] *Food is Culture* page 78.
[56] ibid. page 78.

bourgeois cuisine, the one rising from the soil and a place, the other consciously created. It is haute cuisine roughed up, 'dumbed down' and taken home. Revel likens the three cuisines to horses: if peasant cuisine can be compared to a draft horse, haute cuisine to a thoroughbred, then bourgeois cuisine is 'what breeders call a half-bred horse: it trots, but it does not gallop'. Further, he adds, like haute cuisine, 'it does not exclude invention'.[57] If haute cuisine invents, and peasant does not, what then is haute cuisine?

We will return first to Revel's statement that it is firstly erudite, and secondly an 'appanage of the well-off classes of every era'. That is to say, haute cuisine is one of the perks of privilege, the privilege of kings, emperors, the nobles and the very rich. Privilege began with inequality, and inequality with the slow and steady progress of agriculture over hunter-gatherer society. As Budiansky writes, fragments recovered from the village of Tel Abu Hureyra in what is today Syria show this was a process that could take a thousand years.[58] But ultimately, it succeeded, and introduced the concept of ownership – of land and stock – to humanity. Those with the most land and the most stock needed to differentiate themselves from their inferiors, 'the symbolism of being able to eat from a more exotic menu than that allowed the common folk.'[59]

But what was the basis of the high cuisine? From the earliest times in Egypt, along the shores of the Mediterranean, the courts employed men as cooks, and it was 'they who took over the women's recipes for daily cooking and transformed them into a court cuisine.'[60] As Revel noted, 'it is a striking fact that a truly great erudite [high] cuisine has arisen principally in places where a tasty and varied traditional

[57] *Culture and Cuisine* pages 20-21.
[58] *The Covenant of the Wild* pages 38-39.
[59] *How Food Made History* page 165.
[60] *Cooking, Cuisine and Class* page 101.

cuisine already existed, serving it as a sort of basis'.[61] Haute cuisine, from the very outset, built upon its domestic foundation and then reached out, beyond the limitations of region, for ingredients and techniques from far and wide: 'the higher in the hierarchy, the wider the contacts, the broader the view.'[62]

It was in the seventeenth century, around the court of Louis XIV (1638-1715) and his aristocracy, that French haute cuisine arose. The second impetus for the rise of this style of cuisine was the advent of the restaurant, the first of which appeared in Paris in the 1760s and increased in number and variety after the revolution and into the nineteenth century. The revolution was about democracy and the rights of the individual; 'The restaurant was one way in which the ordinary person could be served in a manner previously only available to a (mostly) hereditary ruling class.'[63] Thus the French Revolution brought haute cuisine to the people.

Writing on one particular high cuisine in China during the Sung Dynasty, Michael Freeman proposes that such a cuisine 'requires a sizeable corps of critical, adventurous eaters, not bound by the tastes of their native region and willing to try unfamiliar food.'[64] To exist and flourish, it requires an abundance of ingredients both local and exotic; sophisticated and critical consumers and commentators; and cooks and diners free from the restrictions of regional convention but with a more than passing acquaintance (in the case of diners) with the background to and components of the creations they are either preparing or eating. This is modern cuisine.

Modern cuisine, for the purposes of this work, is cooking with two foundations. The first is what French gastronomic writer Jean-

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[61] *Culture and Cuisine* page 20.
[62] *Cooking, Cuisine and Class* page 105.
[63] *Grazing* page 12.
[64] *Food in Chinese Culture* page 144.

Anthelme Brillat-Savarin calls ‘gourmandism’ which he defines as ‘an impassioned, reasoned and habitual preference for everything which gratifies the organ of taste.’[65] Modern cuisine from its very inception is concerned more with taste than authenticity, with novelty than with tradition. European modern cuisine was born in the eighteenth century, where the new was sweeping through science, philosophy and art in the wake of the enlightenment. As Revel writes, the French ‘people of the period could not help but be amazed by the continuous renewal of their cuisine’ and they ‘constantly congratulated themselves on belonging to the century of modern cuisine.’[66] But this appropriation of the new and the search for culinary novelty was not confined to eighteenth-century France. Wherever there was wealth, abundance and leisure – for example in Sung Dynasty China – cuisine slipped its traditional and regional moorings and exhibited a ‘preference for everything which gratifies the organ of taste.’ Such a cuisine is first and foremost, before hunger, about the sheer pleasure of eating and the delight of discovering the new. It was as modern in its day in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as that cuisine that emerged in seventeenth century France – not to mention twentieth century Spain.

The second foundation is traditional cuisines, which are used ‘as a base both from and against which to work’.[67] A perfect example of this ‘from and against’ based cuisine was explained to me by Jose Antonio Campoviejo, in his restaurant el Corral del Indianu in the northern Spanish province of Asturias. Campoviejos cooked in the *nueva cocina* (new cooking) style: I described his food at the time as ‘at once funny, exciting, disgusting and sensational… When asked why he cooks the way he does, he says “my mother is such a good cook, I couldn't possibly compete with her.”’[68]

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[65] *The Physiology of Taste* page 132.
[66] *Culture and Cuisine* page 177.
[67] *Accounting for taste* page 24.
[68] *Grazing* page 213.

In the twenty-first century the modern has moved on radically from the axiom of Vincent La Chapelle, who wrote in the preface of his book *La Cuisinier Moderne* (The Modern Cook) published in France in 1735, that 'Arts have universal rules…nonetheless, these rules do not suffice and perfection demands that that one work untiringly to improve on a constant practice'.[69] In his first book, *Los Secretos de El Bulli*, Ferran Adrià, the most influential chef of the Spanish modern movement, quotes the chef Jacques Maximin, in whose kitchen at the Hotel Negresco in Nice he was doing a 'stage.' [70] Maximin was asked by someone in the kitchen 'what is creativity?'. He answered: 'creativity is not to copy.' Adrià writes: 'this response, so simple and forceful, completely changed my professional life.'[71] Not for Adrià – or many modern chefs in the twenty-first century – the universal rules. There are no rules, other than do not copy. This cuisine exists in no place but the kitchen of the chef cooking it.[72] This abandonment of the regional by the modern leads to the question of the existence or otherwise of national cuisines.

Is it possible to talk of Italian cuisine, Chinese cuisine – even (assuming it existed) an Australian cuisine? I would argue no, recalling Revel's argument that there are no national cuisines, that the basic unit in gastronomy is the region, not the nation. The exception here is France. When we talk of French cuisine – and by this we mean haute cuisine – that was originally served in the palaces and houses of the aristocracy and the rich, and now in the Michelin-starred restaurants, it can easily be argued that it is not just food but what Ferguson calls the 'discourse.' It is – and was – an all-

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[69] Quoted in *Culture and Cuisine* page 178.

[70] An unpaid internship when a cook or chef works briefly, for free, in another chef's kitchen to learn and be exposed to new techniques and cuisines.

[71] *Los Secretos de El Bulli* page 15, my translation.

[72] When I interviewed him in 2002, Adrià told me: 'I believe the future is not the cuisine of different countries, but the cuisine of different cooks.'

encompassing aspect of French life. From Grimod de la Reyniére[73] to the present day, 'we cannot fail to be struck by the degree to which cuisine is assimilated into the intellectual rather than material culture.'[74] French cuisine is a pillar of French culture and is recognized as being part of the country's cultural heritage. And while it has its roots, as all great cuisines do, in Revel's popular cuisine, through centuries of refinement and creation by such culinary artists and philosophers as Carême, Escoffier and Bocuse, it no longer bears any resemblance to the regional cuisines of France.[75] According to Ferguson, at the end of the eighteenth century, when the French language was foreign to most of the 20 million inhabitants of France, it was reasonable to suppose that culinary texts contributed to the spread of the language and the culture.

But step outside national borders and a curious thing happens. Once a regional dish leaves its place, it becomes a representative not of its region but of its country of origin. For example, *spaghetti alla amatriciana*, a dish from the town of Amatrice in northern Lazio, in New York or London or Sydney is served as an Italian dish in an Italian restaurant. The same with pork vindaloo, a dish devised in special circumstances in the Indian state of Goa becomes just another Indian dish. Such is also the case with Chinese and Spanish dishes. As Mintz says, strictly speaking, it does not mean that there is a national cuisine 'except in the sense of an aggregation of foods, styles, cooking methods and signature dishes from the regional cuisines.'[76]

These 'national cuisines' without borders often suffer from two major – and related – disorders. Firstly, substitution of ingredients impossible to obtain – or deemed unsuitable ('they won't eat that') – in the host

[73] Alexandre Balthazar Laurent Grimod de La Reynière (20 November 1758 – 1837 generally regarded as the first restaurant critic and publisher of the *Almanach des Gourmands*.
[74] *Accounting for taste* page 33.
[75] This does not mean that some French chefs do not, to a greater or less extent, like Michel Bras and, formerly, the Troisgros brothers, pay homage to their culinary roots especially in the use of local produce. But they are referring to or appropriating rather than returning.
[76] *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom* page 97.

country and secondly, chefs and restaurateurs increasingly, over time, out of touch with the flavours they are attempting to re-create. But these deracinated cuisines are often what are taken for the national cuisines of their respective countries. Or they can take two steps sideways and become international or, latterly, global cuisines.

International cuisine is not new. Gastronomes have been gathering ingredients from far and wide for over 2000 years. *The Life of Luxury* was a gastronomic work by Archestratus of Gela, a man of whom it was written by Athanaeus (the author of *Deipnosophistae*, *The Dinner Party Philosophers*, another work of ancient Greek gastronomy):

> This Archestratus, in his love for pleasures, travelled over every land and seas with precision, in a desire, as it seems to me, to review with care the things of the belly.[77]

In Brillat-Savarin's Paris, restaurants served food from 'exotic' Provence, the southwest and Burgundy which at that time were – and remained until the coming of rail and the high way – little countries. But, according to Gopnik:

> Still more, the cooking and the goods of Africa, and America and Asia. "French cooking" was a composite disguised as a whole, an airborne and seaborne thing recast as a shoot from the soil[78]

But in the modern sense, we must go back to Revel, who, while rejecting national cuisines, does acknowledge international cuisine, by which he means 'an international culinary art…a body of methods, of principles, amenable to variations within a given country depending

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[77] The *Deipnosophistae*, *The Dinner Party Philosophers*, was a long account – originally published in 15 books – of a series of dinners given by Athanaeus to his friend Timocrates, which covered a wide range of topics and earlier Greek authors. Published late second to early third centuries CE.

[78] *The Table Comes First* page 28

on different local and financial possibilities.'[79] Revel goes on to delineate two diametrically opposed branches of international cuisine: the one an extension of the French Grand Cuisine, which itself grew out of the growth of the restaurant which 'put Grand Cuisine within reach of the public.'[80] It is this international cuisine, an often debased version of true French haute cuisine, that is the basis of the multitude of haute cuisines to be found in expensive restaurants around the world, especially the new world. The other is that with which we are well acquainted, the anonymous cuisine of the hotel chain. To go from Holiday Inn to Holiday Inn around the globe and, along with the same service, air conditioning and ice machine in the corridor, is to eat almost exactly the same Club Sandwich, Chicken Kiev, Veal Marengo, recipes whose provenance is lost in the mists of jet trails. It is that which is best named global cuisine. As we shall discuss later, the Australian version of haute cuisine – modern or contemporary Australian is yet another of these 'rootless' cuisines, as described above by Revel. And we are well placed for it.

In an article on *The Conversation* website, Julian Meyrick writes: 'we are a net cultural importer, soaking up the art developed for other people and sensibilities.'[81] Writing on the same theme Rickard states: 'My assumption has been that a provincial culture is by definition derivative.'[82] How do these observations relate to our lack of cuisine? In *Art, Culture and Cuisine* Phyllis Pray Bober notes: 'how like the painting of Poussin is the sense of structure, of classical order, in the presentation of a formal French meal. A Chinese menu, on the other hand, unfolds melodically with an ebb and flow like landscape painting on a horizontal scroll…Both consider the art of cookery and

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[79] *Culture and Cuisine* page 214.
[80] ibid. 207.
[81] 'Does Australia get culture?'
[82] *Australia a Cultural History* page xi. Rickard goes on to say: 'The paradox is that that if one focuses on the derivative, one gains a new perception of what might ultimately be seen as "distinctive."' This is what I have done in this work.

refinement of taste to be among the higher values in life.'[83] This clearly conjectural hypothesis nonetheless points to the close connection between culture and cuisine (and is expanded on in her book).

By contrast, the (white) Australian art discussed and depicted in a survey of Australian art related to food, *Cuisine & Country*,[84] shows that we are indeed 'net cultural importers', in that our art is related to and refers to European art. Arthur Streeton's *Melon* (c1926) is shown above Jean-Baptist Simeon Chardin's *La Brioche* (1793), to illustrate that both are examples of the mid-seventeenth century Dutch invention of the still life. So, too, the food depicted whether melons, steaks on a barbecue, oysters, bread or lemons, all are either imports from Europe or, in the case of the oysters, indigenous but a food type well-recognised by settlers.

It's not until the book begins to explore indigenous art that uniquely Australian art and produce is found, as in *Man With Cooked Emu* by William Bilinjara Maralngurru and the photograph by Kerry Trapnell entitled *Hunting and collecting food in the Aurukun 'Supermarket'* which depicts local Aboriginal people collecting what appear to be murrnong and spearing fish in a river or billabong. As Bober writes: 'food serves as a template for examining numerous aspects of human experience.'[85] In a similar way, much early Australian poetry betrays an imported sensibility.

The first Europeans to arrive here did not embrace the land, nor its bounty. They huddled in large part around the edges of the land, and viewed it with fear and distrust, generally ignoring the details of the landscape, craning their necks westward for a view of the distant land they had left or been wrenched from. This alienation is evident in the

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[83] *Art, Culture and Cuisine: Ancient and Medieval Gastronomy* page 6.
[84] Wilson, Gavin (2007) *Cuisine & Country: a gastronomic venture in Australian art.*
[85] *Art, Culture and Cuisine: Ancient and Medieval Gastronomy* page 10

early poetry. Many of the poets, like Charles Harpur (1813-1868), the son of convicts and described as the first native-born Australian poet of any consequence, showed, in their verse, a longing for a cooler, greener and less dangerous land, which Harpur, in particular, had never seen. For example, in his poem *A Midsummer Noon in the Australian Bush* the last verse proclaims:

> O 'tis easeful here to lie
> Hidden from the noon's scorching eye,
> In this grassy cool recess,
> Musing thus of quietness.[86]

A longer, epic poem, *The Creek of the Four Graves*, tells the story of five settlers whose trip to the interior turns to tragedy when they are attacked and murdered by a group of Aborigines. But even before this, they are aware: 'Of danger lurking in its forest lairs.' When the tribesmen attack, and one of the five flees, and fires on them:

> His deadly foes went thronging on his track.
> Fast! for in full pursuit behind him yelled
> Men whose wild speech no word for mercy hath.[87]

The Aborigines are nothing more than (elsewhere in the poem) 'painted savages' whose right to the land is not at issue, nor could he know that their language contained 'no word for mercy.' As late as the 1970s, the much-admired poet A.D. Hope (1907-2000), excoriated his home in the poem *Australia*:

> And her five cities, like five teeming sores
> Each drains her, a vast parasite robber-state
> Where second-hand Europeans pullulate

[86] ibid. page 14.
[87] Heseltine, Harry (ed) *The Penguin Book of Australian Verse* pages 55-62.

Timidly on the edge of alien shores.[88]

There can be many interpretations of Hope's poem, but not one that sees it as an expression of love for country. This is not to deny that there were poets who proclaimed a love for the land. But especially the earlier ones, like Harpur, were fearful and longed for the milder, cooler comforts of the old country. The interior, especially, was a fearful place, as expressed in Where the Dead Men Lie, by Barcroft Henry Boak (1866-1892):

Out on the wastes of the Never Never–
That's where the dead men lie!
That's where the heat waves dance for ever–
That's where the dead men lie![89]

In addition to food, art and agriculture, European Australians arrived with their poetic imagination, an imagination that attached meaning to the rose, the lily, the oak and yew, but not the banksia, the grevillea, the araucaria or the lilly pilly. The food that grew here, as well as the flowers and trees, 'carried no charge of emotion.'[90]

Finally, and on the subject of Australian cuisine, from the *City of Sydney's International Student Guide: Sydney 2012*, examples given include: 'Meat pies & sausage rolls; schnitzel and steak toppings; seafood; the barbecue and fusion cooking,' defined thus: 'Often referred to as Modern Australian Cuisine, fusion cooking refers to the custom of combining several international tastes into one dish.' This definition of confusion rather than fusion does emphasise that absence which will be discussed below

[88] Wright, Judith (ed) *A Book of Australian Verse*, pages 123-24.
[89] Moore, T. Inglis *Poetry in Australia Volume I: From the Ballads to Brennan* pages 115-17
[90] *first place* page 155.

Evidence of absence

This is a curious work in that I am attempting, firstly, to prove an absence: of Australian food culture, of Australian or regional Australian cuisine. My central argument is as follows:

1. Recipes. As noted above, the recipe is an important signifier of a food culture, and the basic building block of a cuisine: named dishes that have exact or similar ingredients and methods of preparation across a country or in a particular region or amongst an ethnic or religious group. We have none. Santich writes: 'We don't have a repertoire of dishes that say what and who we are.'[91] There has not been a single instance of invention or synthesis that has taken its place in a canon of dishes that could be pointed to or out as Australian, in the way that we can point to the pizza as Italian; the paella as Spanish; the rougail as Mauritian; pho as Vietnamese or moussaka (even if it is a late construct) as Greek.[92] This has led to a state where the culinary signifier for Australians is an industrial product, originally made from a waste by-product of the brewing industry: Vegemite. This is a structural definition of food culture: culture as a canon of easily recognisable dishes pointing to a national or regional cuisine.

2. Tradition. There is also a social definition, one of which is: 'a self-conscious tradition of cooking and eating [which] implies the confluence of certain material factors – the availability and abundance of ingredients – with a set of attitudes about food and it's place in the life of man'.[93] Insofar as we do have 'a self-conscious tradition of

[91] *Looking for Flavour* page 93.
[92] Again, with the exception of the Barossadeutsch cuisine which will be discussed in Chapter 3.
[93] Freeman, Michael 'Sung' pages 141-76 in *Food in Chinese Culture.*

cooking and eating' it is not so much Australian as British, Irish, Scottish, Chinese, Lebanese, Greek and so on. There is not one single example of a widely accepted dish arising from a synthesis of the cuisines of more recent arrivals to Australia outside the transience of restaurant menus. Nothing has stuck or broken out of the commercial kitchen into general domestic usage. Yet in other countries, there is ample evidence of a culinary synthesis between two or more cultures forced into close proximity over a number of years. For example, the rougail and vindaye of Mauritius, the kapitan chicken of Malaysia, the rijstsstafel of Indonesia[94], the cotoletta alla Milanese of Italy, the kedgeree of India – all culinary souvenirs of the collision of cuisines.

3. Indigenous foods. There is barely a trace of the foods that grew here before 1788 in our domestic cuisine and most early (1980s) attempts to set up restaurants offering European interpretations of Australian native foods have failed.[95] Santich notes that '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.'[96] She goes on to argue that there is a '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 chilli.'[97] This is a different and, I suggest, an invalid argument. In the case of the chilli and the tomato (as well as items such as potato and corn) these foods were imported and incorporated into an existing food culture which did

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[94] While in modern times this elaborate collecyion of dishes is served mainly in hotels, was a fusion of Dutch and Indonesian food cultures served in wealthy Dutch homes in the colonial era. My source for this is my ex-wife's father, a Dutch Indonesian who lived in Java until 1939. I take the spelling from *Indonesian Regional Food & Cookery.*

[95] The three most prominent of these being Riberries and Edna's Table in Sydney, and Red Ochre in Adelaide, which has re-opened with new owners.. See Appendix I and Chapter 1 for further discussion of the role of indigenous foods..

[96] *Nineteenth-Century Experimentation and the Role of Indigenous Foods in Australian Food Culture* Australian Humanities Review issue 51.

[97] ibid.

include native foods. Practically all of the food that we eat in Australia was imported. That we eat practically nothing that grows locally but fish, birds, crustaceans and shellfish – many of which are analogous with European produce – is rare if not unique.[98]

Jean- Paul Bruneteau, chef and owner at the ill-fated Riberries, and a long term advocate for the use of native Australian produce put it this way:

> Having evolved in harmony with the land, its plants and animals, Aboriginal food preparation techniques are consequently sophisticated and proven by many centuries of established practice, with regional cuisines having developing to accommodate the wide range of food sources, terrains and climatic conditions. It should be said that this process differs not one bit from the metamorphosis to which other great indigenous cuisines – notably French, Chinese, Turkish – have been subject.[99]

Above I have laid out a theoretical structure for the task of searching for an Australian food culture and, by extension any evidence of regional or national cuisines. My contention is that based on those theoretical structures, neither culture nor cuisines exist.

Some colleagues, in discussing this thesis with me, have suggested that the very theoretical structure I am basing my investigation on is outdated, and that food cultural theory has moved on from regional and national cuisines to an attitude to food and cooking dictated by fashion and the media, more of a faddish approach to food than a deeply imbedded culture, a way of cooking less informed by tradition than experimentation. And I agree this does seem to be the case,

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[98] See 'Mongrel nation, mongrel cuisine page XXX for discussion of a green shoots revival of interest in Australian native produce in 2014
[99] *Australian Cooking* unpublished manuscript page 64.

especially when we contemplate Australia. But it is my belief that before we can arrive at an understanding of what is, we must examine and reach some understanding of the circumstances that led us to our current state. Only then can I attempt an answer to the third question: if we do not have a food culture in the historical sense, what do we have? And, as an extension, what implications this has for Australian culture in general. But first, I must answer the central question. How did we arrive at this state, of being perhaps the only country, the only nation, without a discernible food culture or an identifiable cuisine when examined using the conventional cultural yardsticks? While I have outlined the missing elements, to find an answer, we have to go back to the foundation of European Australia, and look at the food culture of those who landed here in 1788.

Chapter 1

A Bad Start

> Once the common land and his own plots were enclosed and belonged to the local landlord the cottager had no fuel to light a fire, nor did he have land to grow vegetables and herbs or on which to graze his few animals. Many cottagers and farm labourers… moved to the cities working in the new factories. There under the slavery of long hours and pittance wages their diet declined to bread, jam sugar and tea.[1]
> Colin Spencer

The majority of the first Europeans to arrive on Australian shores did not come of their own free will. They were convicts. Most of the soldiers and administrators were volunteers. For the great part, they were English or Irish. They arrived in 1788, having witnessed and been affected by the beginnings of both the Industrial and Agricultural Revolutions, social upheavals that had their roots in the United Kingdom. This meant that firstly, many of these new arrivals had been forced from the countryside, from involvement in the growing of food and the raising of livestock, into the cities and the overcrowded, pestilential, urban environments. Being, on the whole, amongst the poorest of the poor, many turned to crime, and so were transported.

Contributing to the upheaval were land enclosures under the Enclosure Acts:[2] two to three million acres of open fields, commons and wastelands were enclosed – handed over to large and wealthy

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[1] *British Food* page 209. Spencer describing the effects of the Enclosure Acts in the eighteenth century.
[2] A series of Acts of the UK Parliament which enclosed open fields and common land in the countryside. They removed previously existing rights of local people to use the lands enclosed for their own benefit, and gave the land to wealthy farmers in the name of agricultural efficiency. The majority were passed between 1750 and 1860. See UK Archival Thesaurus, Inclosure (Enclosure) Legislation http://ukat.org.uk/thesaurus/term.php?i=18335

landowners – in the last half of the eighteenth century. Those left in the countryside often had their small allotments for growing crops and raising domestic livestock taken away from them. These land enclosures had begun in the sixteenth century due to a favourable increase in trade generally, but most especially in the wool and the textile trade, the profits being so high that land owners did everything they could to find more land to graze wool sheep. This included turning over arable land, previously used for food, enclosing waste land used by the poor to grow food and raising rents to force tenants out. But that earlier era of enclosures was 'a drop in the ocean compared with that which was taken from them (the common people) in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.'[3]

Just as the Boulton Watt steam engine introduced between 1763 and 1775 fired up the Industrial Revolution, so too did Jethro Tull's seed drill which went into use in 1701 help promote a revolution in agriculture. Tull's horse-drawn seed drill, especially useful to large landowners, was one driver of the changes in agricultural practices which mitigated against small farms. Spencer quotes eighteenth century commentator Arthur Young as asserting:

> No small farm could effect such great things as have been done in Norfolk. Great farms are the soul of Norfolk culture; split them into tenures of a hundred pounds a year and you will find nothing but beggars and weeds in the whole country.[4]

Between 1750 and 1850, there were 4000 acts of enclosure. As Drummond and Wilbraham have written: 'The ruling classes, the nobility and the new rich had now absorbed most of the fertile land of England'.[5] Once the small-holdings and commons were absorbed,

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[3] *The Englishman's Food* page 27.
[4] 'A six weeks tour through the southern counties of England and Wales' 1768 quoted in *British Food* page 208.
[5] *The Englishman's Food* page 174.

there was nowhere for the small farmers, labourers and cottagers to grow their own vegetables, gather fuel for their fires, keep their pigs or a few cattle.

Many of those displaced villagers and farm labourers were forced to move to the cities[6] and take jobs in the factories springing up in the industrial towns. They were torn from their source of food, and, living in cramped city conditions often had no means of cooking nor indeed money to buy food to cook. As they were, for the most part, illiterate, they had no way of preserving the recipes they and their families had used for generations. And this deprivation happened only in the United Kingdom, Spencer writes, because 'No other European country suffered this experience, for the industrial revolution occurred later and in countries where the land mass was great, as in France, the rural conditions continued undisturbed.'[7]

This had far-reaching effects. As Spencer points out, in all the discussion about the merits – more efficient and productive farming – and demerits – the desolation of the villages – no historian discussed what it had meant for English cooking culture. 'Every cuisine has its roots within the peasant traditions…In such cooking there is a reliance on cereals, wild plants and game; many of these ideas are then filched by more affluent parts of society…and this flow constantly replenishes a national cuisine. It is this profound enrichment from below that our national cuisine was now to lose.'[8] And which would stunt the growth of Australia's by sending here as convicts these impoverished and deracinated unfortunates.

Transported Londoners – many of our first settlers – were drawn, in the main, from places like Stepney, Poplar, Clerkenwell, Seven Dials

[6] There was a striking depopulation of the villages, the most important cause being the attraction of the towns where the growth of industry was calling for more and more labour.' *The Englishman's Food page 176.*

[7] *British Food* page 210.

[8] Ibid page 209.

in Soho and Spitalfields: 'Here were the poorest parts of London both in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and here lived the *classe dangereuse* from whose ranks Australian convicts were drawn.'[9] At least four per cent of men tried in London were born in Ireland, and they also lived in these, the poorest parts of London.

The rapid growth of the cities affected not just the quality but the quantity of food that arrived there. Massive amounts of food needed to be transported, and the roads were often no better than deeply rutted tracks. As Drummond and Wilbraham note: 'Food was required by the townspeople on a scale which could not have been credited a century before…It is not surprising, therefore, the food was unfit for consumption when it did reach the towns.'[10] For those at the bottom of the economic scale in London, life was a struggle, and even for those who could afford it – those in employment – food was scant and expensive. Here is a calculation of the content and cost of a week's worth of food and drink for an unmarried clerk in London in 1767, a year of scarcity and hence high prices:[11]

<u>Breakfast</u>		
Bread & cheese & small beef from the chandler's shop	£ 0 0 2	
<u>Dinner</u>		
Chuck beef or scrag of mutton or sheep's trotters or pig's ear soused; cabbage or potatoes or parsnips, bread, and small beer with half a pint of porter		0 0 7
<u>Supper</u>		
Bread and cheese with radishes or cucumbers Or onions		003
Small beer and a half a pint of porter		0 0 1½
Per week		£ 0 7 10½
An additional repast on Sunday		0 04
		£ 0 8 2½

[9] *The Convict Settlers of Australia* page 11.
[10] *The Englishman's Food* page185.
[11] *London Life in the Eighteenth Century* Page 167.

Even such miserable food and drink leaves little left over for lodgings for which this labourer paid half a crown a week, washing and clothes. And this was someone well above the starvation line.

For those even lower in the scale, the situation was far worse. George writes: 'Saunders Welsh the magistrate told (Dr) Johnson that more than twenty people in London died weekly of starvation…A prospective purchaser was being shown an empty house in Stonecutter Street when in two of the rooms three dead women were found.'[12] These conditions in London and the other newly industrialised cities were instrumental in creating the 'gin epidemic', a disturbing period in both England and Wales and, especially, the crowded industrial towns. Between 1700 and 1751, gin consumption in England and Wales went from about 1.23 million gallons per annum to 7.05 million. Per capita consumption increased by up to eightfold.[13] The causes of this alcoholic outbreak were compounded: population displacement, endemic poverty, unemployment, appalling living conditions and a feeling of hopelessness among the have-nots of the time. Gin provided amnesia and oblivion for those with nothing else.

Not all the inhabitants of London were supping on 'scrag of mutton or sheep's trotters or pig's ear soused' as this verse affirms:

> While the epicure alderman's cramming his belly
> And feasting on pheasants, on ven'son and jelly;
> While turtles and turbots his tables bespread,
> A poor family dines on a morsel of bread.[14]

At the other end of town 'the great roast beef or mutton surrounded by many other dishes'[15] of the fabled Georgian table was more the

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[12] Ibid. page 171.
[13] 'The Gin Epidemic: much ado about what?' Ernest L. Abel.
[14] 'A Song' (1769) reproduced in Lonsdale, *Eighteenth-Century Verse* pp 556-7.

norm. But many of those transported to New South Wales had either been deprived of the land that fed them and forced into the squalid, overcrowded industrial cities, or knew nothing other than those cities.

Take Away

> they must certainly be furnished at landing with a full year's allowance of victuals…with seeds of all kinds of European corn and pulse and garden seeds…[16]
> Joseph Banks

> Here, as J. Martin complained in the 1830s, "trees retained their leaves and shed their bark instead, the swans were black, the eagles white, the bees were stingless, some mammals had pockets, others laid eggs, it was warmest on the hills and coolest in the valleys, [and] even the blackberries were red."[17]
> Alfred Crosby

Largely ignoring what grew here, the colonists planted and raised what they had brought with them from. Crops of wheat, barley and maize, European fruit and vegetables were planted, imported livestock herded, first by the colonial government with convict labour and then by emancipated convicts and free settlers utilising European agricultural methods on a land ill-suited to it. And what grew, flew walked or ran along the ground here was largely ignored, unless it was familiar to the new settlers, the exceptions being readily recognisable fish, molluscs and game birds such as ducks. While it made perfect sense for those journeying to an unknown land to bring with them their own food, it did not to almost entirely turn their backs

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[15] Convicted Tastes page 24.
[16] From the evidence of Joseph Banks to a committee of the House Of Commons, printed in the *Journals of the House of Commons*, recommending Botany Bay as a penal colony.
[17] *Ecological Imperialism: the biological expansion of Europe, 900-1900* pages 6-7.

on what was growing and eaten here, how the indigenous people cared for and cultivated the land and continue to do so to the present day.

The story of tetragon is worth telling here. Tetragon, or (either) Warrigal greens or New Zealand spinach as it is known today, was collected, noted and eaten by Joseph Banks in 1770. On May 6, he wrote, 'We dined today upon the stingray and his tripe…We had with it a dish of the leaves of tetragonia cornuta boild, which eat as well as spinage or very near it.'[18] It was eaten by the crew of the Endeavour to allay scurvy, and seeds were taken by Banks, along with many others, to Kew Gardens where it was successfully propagated. Banks, the Swedish botanist Daniel Solander and the Finnish botanist Dr Herman Spöring, also on the voyage, collected a large amount of Australian flora, around 800 specimens of which were illustrated in the *Banks Florilegium.*[19]

But tetragon obviously made an impression on Banks, perhaps because of the point of reference with a European food plant: spinach. By 1788, Banks had become a general adviser to the English government on Australian matters, and in that capacity wrote a report to the government to help in the planning of the First fleet to the new colony. He wrote there were some edible vegetables, 'particularly a Sort of Wild Spinage.'[20] From Kew, tetragon found its way to France, where it was naturalised.

The story is now taken up by pioneer native produce chef Jean Paul Bruneteau who, on a visit to the south of France, 23 years after he had left there as a twelve year old to come to Australia with his parents, found something in his uncle's garden:

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[18] *The Endeavour Journal of Sir Joseph Banks* pages unmarked online. Tetragon is now *Tetragonia tetragonoides*. This was the first dish of native produce eaten by Europeans.
[19] The first complete full-colour edition of the Florilegium was not published until between 1980 and 1990 in 34 parts by Alecto Historical Editions and the British Museum (Natural History.
[20] Bruneteau Jean Paul *Tukka* page 119.

> In 1989…I went to France. When we arrived at my Uncle's place he had a beautiful garden with everything growing. And there in the corner was a patch of Warrigal greens. I said where the hell did you get these from? And he said he'd been growing it for ages, it's tetragon. My uncle said "you used to eat this stuff when you were a kid."[21]

In a later conversation with me, Bruneteau said, of his interest in native produce: 'I just did what any Frenchman would do in a new place. I looked around for something to eat.'[22] Unlike the first European settlers.

The First Fleet, as it has come to be known, consisted of eleven ships, carrying, according to Watkin Tench, in total, 987 human beings: 212 officers and men, 252 marines and 775 convicts, 565 of whom were men, 192 women and 18 children.[23] One of the soldiers, a marine died on the voyage, as did twenty-two convicts. Of the convicts, just under one third were from the slums of London. They landed at Botany Bay on 18 January 1788, having set out from Portsmouth on 13 May 1787. After only a week at Botany Bay, they decided it was unsuitable, and moved up the coast to Port Jackson, where, it had been ascertained, there was a better supply of water.

These 962 people were to begin a colony in a land that had not been properly explored beforehand. Cook and his crew had merely made landfall on the east coast, stopped at Botany Bay for a few days and sailed up the coast. No subsequent voyages were sent to reconnoitre. They had come half way around the world to an unknown land,

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[21] Appendix 1.
[22] Pers. Comm. As an addendum, anyone who has eaten Warrigal greens, which grow abundantly along coastlines, will be mystified how Banks could have thought this salty, gelatinous vegetable to be at all like spinach.
[23] From *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay* page 19. I have accepted Tench's numbers for administrators and convicts from among many mainly because his is a contemporary account.

officially to establish a colony. But that was not the real reason for the journey. As Hughes writes, 'In their most sanguine moments, the authorities hoped that it (the voyage and subsequent ones) would swallow a whole class – the "criminal class"'[24] which they could then forget about.

As if to prove that the composition of the fleet was hardly conducive to or designed for the business of settling in a new and foreign land, a colony that would need to be fed, there were, on board, only one professional gardener (who was only twenty years old) and one fisherman. But this did not deter Governor Phillip from getting started. In February, he selected a site at Farm Cove and put an agricultural labourer by the name of Henry Dodds in charge of setting up the first garden. He had much to contend with: 'the poor quality of the Sydney soil the difficulty of clearing the bush, the sheer laziness and ignorance of the convict labourers and the shortage of tools.'[25]

At first sight, the heavily wooded shores of Port Jackson had looked promising for agriculture. But on closer inspection, the soils were found to be sandy, shallow and, as they learnt, lacking the nutrients for planting that which they had brought with them. From England they had brought carrots, potatoes, lettuce, asparagus, onions, broccoli, beans, peas, watercress, wheat, barley, rye and oats. Also apples, pears, plums, cherries and a selection of citrus including navels, Seville oranges and Tahitian limes. And in Rio de Janeiro they picked up tamarind, prickly pear plants complete with – and specifically for – the cochineal grubs – the first but not the last botanical blunder, the pear later ran rife and became an environmental problem – coffee, cotton, lemon, orange and guava. In Capetown, they added rice, maize (then known as Indian corn), apples, bamboo (the second mistake), pears, strawberries, quinces,

[24] *The Fatal Shore* page 1.
[25] *Landed Enterprise and Penal Society* page 26.

apples, an assortment of trees and five hundred head of assorted livestock which included a bull, a bull calf, and seven cows, all black – one of the cows died at sea. Also aboard were four goats, 28 pigs and 44 sheep, for mutton not wool, only 29 of which survived the year. Only the goats prospered, climbing in numbers from 19 on May 1, 1788 to 522 registered in 1794.[26] While there were plenty of tools they were of very poor quality. Cameron-Smith writes 'to Governor Phillip's obvious disgust, the cheap tools fell to pieces.'[27]

In that first planting, very little of the wheat survived, and most of the barley and other seeds rotted in the ground. Most of the fruit varieties they brought with them from England didn't survive without a cold winter to set the fruit. The soft fruits were eaten by native insects. Citrus fruits and figs did better, but needed fertiliser to grow well in the nutrient-poor local soil.

They did not entirely ignore what grew locally. Tench believed that a drink made from native sarsaparilla (*Smilax glyciphilla*) saved many from scurvy. And he wrote: 'A few wild fruits are sometimes procured, among which is the small purple apple mentioned by Cook, and a fruit which has the appearance of a grape, though in taste more like a green gooseberry, being excessively sour. Probably were it meliorated by cultivation, it would become more palatable.'[28] This last astute observation, that cultivation would render native produce more palatable to European tastes, was ignored, sadly, until the twentieth century, when chefs like Raymond Kersh and Andrew Fielke worked very hard for many years, with little success, to interest Australians in their own produce.[29]

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[26] Parsonon, Ian *The Australian Ark* pages 2 and 5.
[27] This quote, and the information on plantings from *Starting from Scratch: Australia's first farm* pages not numbered.
[28] *Watkin Tench 1788* pages 71-72 Editor Tim Flannery identifies the former fruit as 'probably a lilly pilly *Syzygium*' and the latter 'possibly a geebung *Persoonia.*
[29] This history will be covered comprehensively below.

Notwithstanding *smilax* and experiments with native fruit, not all fortuitous, as Cameron-Smith writes: 'A group of marines suffered the consequences of eating too many ripe fruit from the rusty Fig, *Ficus rubiginosa*,[30] and discovering edible plants like wild celery (*Apium australe*) and samphire (*Sarocornia quinquefloria*), shooting ducks, netting fish and discovering the Sydney rock oyster, it was not long before illness set in. On March 25, 1788, Cameron-Smith quotes Surgeon Smyth reporting that there 'are now upwards of 200 sick in the hospital on shore' suffering in the main from 'true camp dysentery and scurvy.'[31] The imported cattle escaped almost immediately and made their way up the Nepean River some 40 miles (64kms) beyond Parramatta, where they prospered, and were found in 1795.[32]

After the dismal failure of the crops at Farm Cove, 'Phillip came quickly to the conclusion that free settlers with the proper tools and a knowledge of farming, were essential'[33] and wrote to the British government requesting them. Phillip sent boats to Batavia and India for supplies, but by February 1790, the storehouse had only enough food for four months. Starvation appeared imminent by May 1790. Tench wrote: 'Three or four instances of persons who perished from want have been related to me.'[34]

The second Fleet arrived on June 3, 1790, and replenished the stores but also brought around 1000 additional mouths to feed. Drought didn't help. In November 1790, Phillip wrote: 'I do not think all the showers of the last four months put together would make twenty four hours' rain.'[35] Leaving behind the nutrient-poor soils of Sydney, in November 1788 Phillip established public farms, using convict labour,

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[30] Port Jackson fig, whose fruit is dry and unpalatable, except to several species of native birds. *Starting from Scratch: Australia's first farm* pages unnumbered.
[31] ibid.
[32] By 1880 there were more than 10 million cattle in Australia, a significant factor in the later degradation of the land.
[33] Bromby, Robin *The Farming of Australia* page 11.
[34] *Watkin Tench 1788* page 125.
[35] *The Farming of Australia* page 12.

at Rose Hill (today's Parramatta). They clear-felled the land and planted wheat and maize (ironically, a New World crop), and stocked cattle, horses and sheep at Emu Plains where 'they surprised everyone by making a profit.'[36] He also developed plans to have sentence-expired convicts allotted land for their own farms. By the end of November, James Ruse, Australia's first white farmer,[37] was allowed to occupy and cultivate thirty acres of land at Parramatta. Ruse reaped his first crop in 1790. A year later David Burton, the Public Gardener, listed 918 acres of land in Parramatta either cultivated or cleared. By the time Phillip left in 1792, there were sixty-eight small farms around Sydney.

As these plantings and stockholdings increased and prospered there was, understandably, pride in their achievement of transplanting European farming methods and crops to this distant land. Karskens quotes Lorraine Stacker writing much later of an enormous field of wheat on the Emu plains: 'turn the eye which way you will, you have the most delightful and almost boundless prospect,'[38] a glimpse into the future of broadacre – monocultural – farming. But the transformation of the land to grow more European food would lead to degradation. The activity that Karskens notes in 1804 in the Castle Hill area, where 'six hundred convicts were continually employed in felling trees to open roads through the forest'[39] would be repeated across the entire country for at least the next 150 years. Curiously, the clear-felling of the trees was not in and of itself necessarily a bad thing. But it was evidence of the ways in which these first settlers arrived on a continent which already had a complex land management plan in place, and trampled over it with their heavy boots. Clearfelling facilitated the overstocking of their imported animals, compacting the

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[36] *The Colony: a History of Early Sydney* page 91.
[37] The word 'white' may seem superfluous. However, in his book *The Biggest Estate on Earth*, historian Bill Gammage provides convincing physical evidence of thousands of years of indigenous farming.
[38] *The Colony: a History of Early Sydney* page 91.
[39] *Ibid.* page 89.

soil and encouraging run-off rather than allowing the rain to soak into the soil.[40]

As New South Wales reached the twentieth year of European settlement, a farming settlement was beginning to establish itself in Tasmania. In 1801, John Oxley, then a visitor to the new colony wrote of the state of settler farms at New Town Bay: ' White cottages in the midst of tolerable good gardens afford a pleasing contrast to the wilderness of the surrounding scenery' but the reality was that few of these settlers 'understood anything about agriculture; they have in consequence so exhausted the ground by repeated crops of the same grain that it produces little or nothing.'[41]

Appearances were more important than reality, and by 1825, a visitor to Tasmania wrote that the estates of the wealthy settlers (described by Symons as 'near-feudal') offered vistas of 'nature subdued by art' and the gardens, with their English flowers 'looked and smelt like home'[42] This idea of wilderness being outside the fence is something that was alien to the pre-1788 stewards/farmers of the land. Gammage writes: 'Australia had no fences in 1788. Some places were managed more closely than others, but none were beyond the pale.'[43] The gulf between European and indigenous farming methods were, and remain, insurmountable.

In 1864, Edward Abbott was inspired to write a poem entitled *A Tasmanian Picnic*, describing a spread that would not have been out of place in Warwickshire or on the banks of the Cam:

> For there was a store of viands good –
> Beef, mutton, lamb and veal;

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[40] *The Biggest Estate on Earth,* passim.
[41] *The Farming of Australia* page 26.
[42] *One Continuous Picnic* page 51.
[43] *The Biggest Estate on Earth* page 321.

And tongues, and lambs, and suckling pigs;
As fat as e'er did squeal.....
And puddings crammed so full of plums
The cook "was sure they'd bust!"[44]

Just three years before the publication of Abbott's poem, on 25 February, The Acclimatisation Society of Victoria – the first of a number of such organisations – was formally established at a public meeting presided over by His Excellency Sir Henry Barkly, then governor of Victoria. The Acclimatisation Societies were evidence of the belief of the time that nature was a series of building blocks that could be taken apart and put together again. For centuries, Europeans had been moving plants around their half of the world with no noticeable deleterious effect – even the forced migration of plants and animals of the Columbian Exchange had caused little damage[45] and much enrichment of cuisines. But none of these movements had encountered a land so different in its ecology – not a word much understood in the nineteenth century[46] – as Australia.

In their desire to re-create the environment, the diet and the recreations of the land they had left, and having 'decided that none of the native plants was worthy of cultivation, that the native animals neither provided decent game nor were worthy of domestication, and that the native birds sang nowhere nearly as sweetly as those back home'[47] they set about stocking the land with all that which they missed. From rabbits and foxes to hunt, to trout and carp to fish, privet and bamboo for their gardens and camphor laurels to provide

[44] *The English and Australian Cookery Book* page 177.
[45] Christopher Columbus, returning from the Americas, brought with him fruits and vegetables that dramatically changed cuisines around the world: the tomato, the chilli, maize, and the potato which, later dependence upon devastated Ireland. The reverse of that exchange saw rice, wheat, and livestock being taken to the Americas.
[46] The Danish botanist Eugen Warming (3 November 1841 – 2 April 1924) was seen as the founding figure of the discipline of ecology after the publication, in 1895, of his book *Plantesamfund* or *Oecology of Plants,* a good thirty years after the first acclimatization society was established in Victoria.
[47] 'The Origins of the Acclimatisation Society of Victoria: Practical Science in the Wake of the Gold *Historical Records of Australian Science,* Volume 6, Number 3.

shade. Practically every single one of these introductions produced environmental problems. Of these introduced problems, the worst, perhaps, was the rabbit. 'After many attempts' Dunlap writes, 'the settlers succeeded in establishing European rabbits in Australia. That was in the early 1860s. In 1887 an Intercolonial Royal Commission offered a reward of £25,000 for something to get rid of the animals'[48] To this day, carp infest our rivers and threaten our native fish, and foxes decimate native as well as introduced fauna. All efforts to rid the land of rabbits have failed. Other serious environmental problems persist as a result of European farming practices.

The Murray-Darling Basin comprises much of inland south-eastern Australia and 11,000 kilometres of waterways, the fourth largest river system in the world. It is the nation's most important agricultural region, producing one third of the nation's output, mainly wheat cropping, grazing of sheep and cattle and intensive irrigated horticulture for an annual production of $10 billion. This level of intensive production has taken a severe toll on the environment because the economic development of the basin has required the clearing of native vegetation, the damming of rivers, the heavy irrigation of vast tracts of the semiarid inland (areas, that for millennia received an average annual rainfall of less than 25 centimetres) and the introduction of destructive foreign plants and animals.

Today, the soils in the basin are nutrient-deficient (as they already were in New Town Tasmania in 1804) thin and easily flood-damaged; increasing acidity and rising salty water tables are severe problems. *The Global Restructuring of Agro-Food Systems* report estimated in the late 1980s 'that some $2billion would be required to fix the problems.

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[48] 'Remaking the Land: The Acclimatization Movement and Anglo Ideas of Nature' *Journal of World History*, Volume 8, Number 2 page 311.

Nothing has been done since.'[49] The evidence is abundant. The relentless desire to impose an alien food culture and agricultural regime on the continent has left it dangerously depleted. Rather than attempt to understand their methods of caring for the land, the first settlers treated the first Australians as nothing other than one of the fauna, as expressed in an editorial in *The Sydney Morning Herald* in 1838:

> This vast land was to them (Aborigines) a common – they bestowed no labour upon the land, their right, was nothing more than that of the emu or the kangaroo…The British people…took possession…, and they had a perfect right to do so, under the Divine authority, by which man is commanded to go forth and people, and till the land.[50]

Not all early settlers saw it that way. Gammage quotes Edward Curr, pioneer squatter on the Murray who observed: 'It may perhaps be doubted whether any section of the human race has ever exercised a greater influence on the physical condition of any large portion of the globe than the wandering savages of Australia.'[51] Writing this in 1883, Curr's use of the phrase 'wandering savages' was ironical in intent.

Evidence of the intense and intricate indigenous land management was there for all to see – and it was seen by many Europeans. In the 1820s Dawson wrote 'It is impossible…to pass through such a country without being reminded of a gentleman's park and grounds.'[52]
By park, at the time, was meant the carefully attended grounds surrounding a gentleman's estate 'at home'. The use of the word 'park'

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[49] *The Global Restructuring of Agro-Food Systems*, Chapter 3, *Agricultural Change in the Semiperiphery: The Murray-Darling Basin, Australia* page 84.Since this was written there has been considerable work done on a plan for the basin and its water.
[50] Wednesday 7 November.
[51] *The Biggest Estate on Earth* page 2.
[52] *The Present State of Australia* pages 108-9.

to mean a public space was not current in 1788.[53] Dawson was not the only European to make such an observation. Gammage quotes John Oxley noting that south of Walcha in north-western New South Wales he found 'the finest open country, or rather park imaginable: the general quality of the soil excellent.'[54]

But the parks have gone. Overgrazing had a transforming effect. Our bushfires – Black Thursday on 6 February 1851 and Black Saturday 7 February 2009 – 'are not controlled and lit to manage the landscape' but are out of control and 'devastate and decimate species which flourished during millennia of Aboriginal burning.'[55] As Gammage points out, there is no way we can return to 1788. There are too many of us, we are too urban, too dependant on monoculture, herbicides, pesticides and petro-chemical fertilisers.

And perhaps it was too much to expect of the Georgian colonists that they would take notice of the 'wandering savages' let alone ask them how they cared for country and what they ate to remain so healthy. Too much indeed. It has taken us more than 220 years to learn that, for them 'Land care was the purpose of life'.[56] How different might have been our land and our food culture if we had taken notice of the original inhabitants rather than doing as we did: pretending they weren't here.

Terra Nullius

> The British treated Australia as terra nullius – as unowned land. Under British colonial law, aboriginal Australians had no property rights in the land, and colonization accordingly vested ownership of the entire continent in the British government. The

[53] The first national park, Yellowstone was not established until 1872.
[54] *The Biggest Estate on Earth* page 15.
[55] Ibid. page 17.
[56] Ibid. page 131.

> doctrine of terra nullius remained the law in Australia throughout the colonial period, and indeed right up to 1992.[57]
> Stuart Banner

By proclaiming the land empty, in the eyes of the law – and by extension, the eyes of the European populace – it was agreed that Aboriginal Australians did not really exist.[58] How did this illogical doctrine come about in the first place? Nowhere else in the world, neither in New Zealand nor North America, had the British propounded or adopted such a policy. And it lasted right throughout the 1830s and 1840s, an era which saw 'the rise of an active British humanitarian movement seeking to improve the conditions of indigenous people throughout the empire…'[59] the culmination of this movement being the abolition of slavery. The reasons for the adoption of terra nullius are complex, and tied, in a great part, to agriculture: that is, its invisibility to the colonisers.

Those who arrived in Australia in the late eighteenth century believed that 'a society without agriculture was therefore a society without property rights in land.'[60] Because they were assumed to have no agriculture, and therefore no farms, no fences, no stock, no gardens, they had no property rights. This was not a new way of thinking. European intellectuals such as Adam Smith posited that all societies passed through four stages: hunting, pasturage, farming and commerce.[61] Each of these stages corresponded to a set of political and economic institutions, one of which was property. Hunter-gatherers, as the indigenous Australians were thought to be, owned

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[57] treatyrepublic.net/content/terra-nullius#REF5
[58] It must be noted that the term 'terra nullius ' was not used in Australia until the question of Aboriginal land rights emerged in the 1960s. It is, as Henry Reynolds writes in *The Monthly* in May 2006 'a contemporary term used to describe an old reality.' While the term did not exist, law case after case upheld this proclamation of the empty land. In 1979, to cite one instance, the High Court of Australia (Justice Gibbs, Coe vs. Commonwealth) ruled that Australia was a territory which, 'by European standards, had no civilised inhabitants or settled law.'
[59] ibid.
[60] ibid.
[61] *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* Passim.

no property, did not know the meaning of property and, therefore, had no property rights. As we have begun to discover, although these stages of society were essentially correct for much of the world, Australia, before 1788, was the exception. But there was more to the application of terra nullius than the perceived lack of agriculture.

The first settlers saw the locals as dirty, indigent, lazy and not quite human. On returning to England, William Dampier reported: 'The Inhabitants of this Country are the miserablest People in the World…setting aside their Humane Shape, they differ but little from Brutes.'[62] As for their diet, he wrote: 'There is neither herb, root, pulse, nor any sort of grain for them to eat that we saw; nor any sort of bird or beast that they can catch, having no instruments wherewithal to do so.'[63] *Culina Nullius*. The absence of agriculture implied the absence of any property rights the British were bound to respect and more broadly reinforced the prevailing belief in the Aborigines' backwardness. By 1809, the naturalist George Caley, sent to New South Wales by Joseph Banks to gather botanical specimens, could sum up two decades of British observations: 'I believe it is universally said,' Caley told Banks, 'that the natives of New South Wales are the most idle, wretched and miserable beings in the world.' Banner comments: 'No farms, no houses, no clothes – could a people be any more savage?'[64] Worse, according to missionary William Pascoe Cook in 1803 they 'seemed to be amazing stupid.'[65]

In short, as *The Southern Australian* saw the matter in 1839: 'We found the country in the state in which ages before the black people had found it – its resources undeveloped, unappropriated!' The answer was at hand. Britons 'cannot but feel ourselves delighted at the sight

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[62] *A New Voyage Round the* chapter 16, pages unnumbered online.
[63] *A New Voyage Round the World* (London, 1697) gutenberg.net.au/ebooks05/0500461h.html
[64] *Why Terra Nullius? Anthropology and Property Law in Early Australia* no page numbers online. Caley quote and Banner comment from this source.
[65] ibid.

of smiling harvests taking place of naked wastes', applauded one far-off observer, 'since man's business, as an inhabitant of this world, is to improve and cultivate the face of the earth.'[66] In the twenty-first century, thanks to the work of historians like Bill Gammage, Eric Rolls and Henry Reynolds, we now know much more about the relationship of indigenous Australians to 'country.'

Culina Nullius nullified

They reared possums, emus, dingos, and cassowaries; penned young pelican chicks and let parent birds fatten them. They carried fish and crayfish stock across country. There were duck nets on the rivers with sinkers and floaters; fishing nets of European quality, with the mesh and knot varied to suit their prey, were placed in the right waters. In 1839, the explorer Thomas Mitchell wrote: 'Many fish weirs were seen and one could not help being struck with the ingenuity displayed in their construction, on one creek we were surprised to find what looked like the commencement of work for a line of tramway. There were sapling sleepers about eight feet long in length and various thicknesses laid a few feet apart for at least half a mile. The work must have been done by natives but am quite at a loss to understand their motive.'[67] It is significant, in contemplating the relationship of indigenous Australians to the colonisers, that he did not think to ask.

We have been shown what the first settlers missed: that they were farmers in every sense but one. They had no farmhouses.[68] Aboriginal farmers 'burnt, tilled, planted, transplanted, watered, irrigated, weeded, thinned, cropped, stored and traded.'[69] Most European settlers and explorers did not see any of these activities, because they could see no sign of settlements. The indigenous farmer did not put

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[66] ibid.
[67] *The Biggest Estate on Earth* page 282.
[68] Actually, some did. Gammage records stone houses at Lake Condah; a village of thirteen to fifty huts. But they were inhabited 'mostly only when harvesting', page 300.
[69] *The Biggest Estate on Earth*, page 301.

livestock behind fences, rather the livestock were directed to the farmers by the use of fire. Not seeing, we trampled over their food supplies. The tubers of the Murnong plant (*Microseris scapigera*), or yam daisy, were an important food source. They were abundant and easily collected and one of the staple foods of Victorian Aborigines. Early colonists ate them, and the colonial botanist Baron von Mueller suggested cultivating the plant as a vegetable for European countries. G.A. Robinson, in north-central Victoria in 1840 saw 'women spread over the plain as far as I could see them…I examined their bags and baskets on their return and each had a load (of murnong tubers) as much as she could carry.'[70] But murnong grew in the rich soil of that country called parkland by the Europeans, and favoured for grazing their livestock. By 1831, 700,000 sheep were grazing across Victoria, eating the leaves and digging up the tubers of the murnong.[71] In 1839, a Goulburn Aborigine Moonin-Moonin pointed out that 'plenty eat it murnong, all gone murnong.'[72]

The annals and journals of those who explored the Australian outback make compelling reading for their encounters with native foods. They often ran out of the supplies they took with them, and had to make decisions about 'going native', often with disastrous results.
One of the best know of these stories is that of Burke and Wills, documented by Sarah Murgatroyd in *The dig tree: the story of Burke and Wills*. In August of 1860, Robert O'Hara Burke and William John Wills set off with eighteen companions and camels to cross the country from Melbourne to the Gulf of Carpentaria. They carried eight tonnes of food for a journey planned to last between eighteen months and two years. After travelling through the desert, they reached

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[70] *Wild Food Plants of Australia* page 206.
[71] *The Australian Ark* page 38. In the whole colony, sheep numbers had risen to five million, by 1861, there were 20 million.
[72] ibid. page 206.

Cooper's Creek which was, during a rare period of higher than average rainfall, 'crowded, noisy and brimming with life.'[73]

This rain had produced a feast for the local Yandruwandha people – and other groups invited in to share the bounty – along the creek. And after millennia living near the Cooper, they knew how to eat well, even in times of drought. But at this time of abundance, they chose from among the thirteen fish, yabbies and fresh water mussels and ate marsupials, lizards and snakes, all of which would have been herded by fire to facilitate their capture. From the land they took mulga apples, native figs, coolibah seeds and, importantly, a small aquatic fern known as nardoo.[74] As Murgatroyd writes 'harvesting the local bush tucker demanded knowledge, skill and patience.' But Burke, the expedition leader, possessed none of these qualities, and had 'no interest in the intricacies and possibilities of his new environment. He had come to conquer, not to learn.'[75] Today, the descendents of the tribes along the banks of the Cooper when Burke and Wills came through have been scattered, but their descendents remember their offensive behaviour. Apart from camping too close to the precious waterholes, they rejected, violently, by firing into the air, any attempts of the locals to come closer, and to gift them fish and nardoo flour. As Murgatroyd observed: 'If Burke and Wills had shown even an ounce of friendliness, they might have begun to understand how to harvest the local food sources.'[76] The end of the expedition – which failed within twenty kilometres of their goal, the northern coast in the Gulf of Carpentaria – is tragic. They returned to their Coopers Creek camp only to find that it had been abandoned that same day.[77]

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[73] *The Dig Tree* page 144.
[74] A small fern whose sporocarps (a multicellurar structure that contains the spores in water ferns) are ground by Aborigines between stones. The husks are then removed and the yellow flour moistened and baked into 'cakes.'
[75] *The Dig Tree* 151.
[76] ibid. 154.
[77] ibid. page 145.

Having previously rejected the locals, Wills now realised that 'the men and women he had despised for their "primitive appearance" were now his only chance of survival'[78] and he became interested in nardoo, but at first had no idea where it grew. He and Burke began trying to live off the land but realised it was not as easy as they had thought, and 'without the proper tools and traditional knowledge, the three explorers prepared their nardoo incorrectly'.[79] Eventually, after futile attempts to find help and quarrels with the Yandruwandha people, they died in agony. Why? There are several theories. One is that they did not wash and cook the nardoo as was the traditional method, which destroyed the enzyme thiamanise, which research has shown blocks the absorption of Vitamin B. Another that there is some other toxin in nardoo removed by traditional preparation.[80] And then again, they may have simply died of malnutrition. This tragic tale, perhaps more than any other in the history of European exploration of Australia, illustrates the complexity of relationships between European and indigene: good intentions met with hostility, arrogance with bewilderment and a far too late realisation of the dependence of the intruder on the knowledge of those whose lands they were trampling across. To die either of ignorance or malnutrition in a land with abundant supplies of food, and inhabited by 'a tall athletic people' is difficult to comprehend.

In a similar vein, Anne Gollan writes of the death of a man called Brooks at the Carlo Border Netting Camp near Mulligan River who insisted on eating only his European food: 'It is strange and sad to think of him dying so bravely, in his lonely grave, when all around him were wild yams, anyeroo nuts, growing prolifically in the sand hills, and the various wild bananas and nuts of the region.'[81] Yet not

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[78] Ibid. page 255.
[79] ibid. page 261.
[80] In *Wild Food Plants of Australia*, Low writes of nardoo cakes 'surprisingly, their nutritional content has never been assessed' page 46.
[81] *The Tradition of Australian Cooking* page 18.

all explorers were blind to the food of the indigenous people they encountered and its preparation.

Manunkurra on the eastern Bank of the Wearyan River at Borroloola in the Northern Territory is much revered by the local people for its cycad palms, a rich source of food. Ludwig Leichhardt and his party were the first Europeans to visit there in September 1845. Here, unlike Burke and Wills on the Cooper, Leichhardt found that the local people avoided his party, or left when they arrived. On the banks of the Wearyan he noticed the locals feasting on cycad nuts and, being a scientist, he accurately observed the preparation required to neutralize their poisons and make them edible, but not before some of his team had tried them raw: 'As we passed the Cycad groves, some of the dry fruit was found and tasted by several of my companions, upon whom it acted like a strong emetic.'[82] He noted that the local people seemed to live on the cycad nuts and the seeds of *Pandanus spiralis*, at least in this season 'but both evidently required much preparation to destroy their deleterious properties.' He observed that 'seeds of Cycads were cut into very thin slices, about the size of a shilling, and these were spread out carefully on the ground to dry, after which, (as I saw in another camp a few days later) it seemed that the dry slices are put for several days in water, and, after a good soaking, are closely tied up in tea-tree bark to undergo a peculiar process of fermentation.' Later, he found packets containing soaked cycad seeds which 'were of a mealy substance, and harmless; but had a musty taste and smell, resembling that of the common German cheese.' But in spite of the intelligent observation of explorers like Leichhardt (and others) and the experimentation of home and professional cooks – extensively surveyed by Santich[83] – practically none of the food that grew here before 1788 has been adopted into the contemporary Australian diet.

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[82] This and subsequent quotations from *A Journal of an Overland Expedition in Australia* pages 402-409.
[83] *Nineteenth-Century Experimentation and the Role of Indigenous Foods in Australian Food Culture* Australian Humanities Review Issue 51.

Santich's paper abounds with examples of such experimentation. One, taken from *Mrs. McLurcan's Cookery Book* (printed in 1838) was a recipe for roast scrub turkey which the author claimed she has often 'served…as pheasant and people have not known the difference.'[84] Santich also documents that, notwithstanding a 'certain wariness in relation to plant foods…many hardy pioneers were prepared to sample selected plant parts.'[85] Among examples she gives are murnong, a species of bulrush, the shoots of the native fig, and that perennial substitute for spinach, Warrigal greens.

It is this idea of substitution which puts native produce in its place. In writing of her use of murnong, Santich quotes settler Katherine Kirkland remarking: 'I have put it in soup for want of better vegetables before we had a garden.'[86] Bannerman elaborates on this theme. 'Thus from the earliest days of white occupation, Australian native food resources were exploited on every plane of feeding – survival, nurture and feasting. Their appearance was often tinged with adventure: exploring, pioneering or hunting. However, bush foods also represented failure: the depletion of stores, extreme poverty…or separation from the society of "home".'[87] Even Newling, whose paper sets out to prove that the first European settlers 'did seek to find out about Eora food sources and practices' and that there was 'much experimentation and consumption of local produce' agrees that this was only practiced 'Until introduced foods were successfully produced and in good supply in the colony.'[88]

They were not real foods, because they were not from home. There was, indeed, no real food here: *Culina Nullius* it was, and this attitude

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[84] Ibid. page 3 in my downloaded copy.
[85] ibid. page 6.
[86] ibid. page 6.
[87] Indigenous food and cookery books: Redefining aboriginal cuisine, Journal of Australian Studies, 30:87, 19-36.
[88] *Dining with Strangeness: European Foodways on the Eora Frontier*, Journal of Australian Colonial History Vol. 13 page 27.

has remained, more or less, until the present day – with occasional, determined but mostly failed attempts to reinstate Australian flavours to our plates and kitchens. Why did they fail?

For this work, I conducted interviews with chefs, producers and suppliers who have attempted to or who are (finally it seems) succeeding in incorporating Australian native ingredients into what one of them, chef Jean Paul Bruneteau has, from his first venture, Rowntree's, called Australian cuisine.[89] Indeed, about the only thing that all the respondents agreed on was that until we begin using these ingredients routinely in our domestic and commercial kitchens, we will not have an Australian or regional Australian cuisine.[90] Chef and native foods producer and supplier Andrew Fielke stated his case when he said: 'to me the true cuisine of the country is what comes from the hearts and the homes…I don't think we'll have one (our own cuisine) until…Australian mums and dads start using Australian native ingredients in the home'.

Reasons why this hasn't yet happened did vary, but all – except Fielke – agreed that there was some level of what Bruneteau called 'food racism.' As he saw it:

> The English were here for a long time before anyone came to disturb them. And to them, anything the blacks touched was black food. For example, why is roo regarded as a pest or described as vermin when in actual fact it's one of the cleanest, healthiest most beautiful meats? It was because the sheep farmers wanted it off their properties instead of it cohabiting (with the sheep) which they're doing now.[91]

[89] For all the interviews and associated information, see Appendix I. All quotes in this section are from those interviews, except those cited otherwise.
[90] I have already offered my refutation of Santich's claim that there is no need for native ingredients in a national or regional cuisine in *Evidence of Absence*.
[91] Clayton Donovan, who told me in a conversation later, that as an indigenous Australian, he wasn't 'going to go there.'

This attitude has persisted to this day. Raymond Kersh told a story from his time at the second Edna's Table restaurant he and his sister Jennice Kersh ran in Sydney. Kersh said that in their first restaurant he used Australian native ingredients in the dishes he cooked, but 'you couldn't put on the menu what you were using because nobody knew what they were anyway – we were just using them to create flavours but not specify what we were using.' When they moved the restaurant to another part of the city, he began enumerating the ingredients on the menus, and, he said: 'That was the worst move we ever made. By admitting it. Before we were using it and people were eating it unaware.' Kersh told a story about this time:

> We had a customer who was a real regular. He was a fantastic customer. He came to the MLC (the new location) and ate the same food (he'd been eating at Kent Street) and read on the menu what he'd been eating all along and he turned around and said to me "what are you using this Abo shit for?"[92]

From his perspective as an indigenous chef, Donovan offers another and insightful possibility. When I asked him why there had been no interchange of information between European and indigene on these foods he said:

> They'd be scared to tell you. It would have been lack of trust…ignorance on one side, and mistrust on the other – women were being raped, there were massacres, they would have been scared. It has to change.[93]

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[92] From my interview with Raymond and Jennice Kersh Appendix 1 on website www.newtonwrites.com category Appendix.
[93] Interview with Clayton Donovan, Appendix 1.

And it appears, finally, it might be about to.[94] But it did take a long time. And what is curious is that, as Jennice Kersh noted, while rejecting and ignoring our own foods, 'We have embraced multicultural food more than any country in the world. Australia jumped in there and hugged it all – and they'd go to a Thai restaurant – any kind of restaurant – and have no fear.' Was there a problem in the way these foods were presented? Bruneteau thinks so:

> What's happened over the last few years with (Aboriginal chefs like) Mark Olive and others is we've gone from bush tucker to Aboriginal foods. But they're not Aboriginal foods. They're native plants. Plants don't want to be owned, they're just plants with unique flavours. We have to look at these ingredients as ingredients but not Aboriginal ingredients…I went on the SBS food show, we said this is about native plants and unique flavours it's not Aboriginal. And they said we might need an Aboriginal person. I said no! This is not what it's about. Aboriginal people did not cook barramundi with lemon myrtle butter. They just did not do that. When you see Mark Olive do all those lovely dishes with native plants it's automatically tagged as Aboriginal food. Take the tag away. Podocarpus plums. Riberries. Quandong. Wonderful stuff. Use it.[95]

From 1788 to (around) 1950 European Australians did more than ignore these foods. Let us examine briefly what effect the arrival of the European had on the indigenous population's inextricably intertwined culture and diet. For the purpose of this brief overview of a complex subject, I will quote from a paper published online in *Qualitative Health Research*. This paper examined:

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[94] See Conclusion. The change may be permanent, or just another 'craze'.
[95] Interview with Jean-Paul Bruneteau Appendix 1.

> the social context of food choice and factors perceived to shape food choice' with Aboriginal adults living in a remote Australian community. Those interviewed, especially the older adults, compared and contrasted their traditional food choices with the choices of the Europeans with whom they came in contact.[97]

Firstly, the researchers observed that the participants in the study 'demonstrated deep and intricate knowledge that underpinned daily food choice.' That knowledge extended to the influence on harvesting a particular food crop of the winds, tide, lunar cycle, star formations and the flowering of plant species. All had been learnt, over time, through story, song, dance and experience. They also learnt that 'Strict laws also governed food procurement, preparation, and distribution' and of the consequences of disobeying those laws. Based upon the deep understanding of their own foods, they believed that European Australians with whom they came in contact had:

> similar comprehensive understanding of their own food system. They perceived that knowledge related to such things as food origin, preparation method, and seasonal availability enabled non-Aboriginal people to live in balance with their food environment and thereby make informed food choices.

However, when confronted with having to 'gather' European food – from shops – they had no point of reference:

> [Our] foods, we go by season, what [food] is good for that season. Like [food] from the shop we don't go by season, we only walk in and buy what things we want.

[97] 'Factors Influencing Food Choice in an Australian Aboriginal Community' All quotes in this section are from this paper.

The paper refers to others cited by anthropologists and ethnographers on the ways in which food was integrated into all aspects of life, providing links to country. These:

> afforded a sense of time, place, identity, and responsibility; food was a central tool and theme in teaching and knowledge acquisition and played a major role in society and ceremony.

But not only did European Australians ignore the foods that grew there, they actively discouraged the hunting and collecting of traditional food. The authorities considered such practices 'primitive and undisciplined, with no place in advancing Aboriginal society.' But the reality was another contradiction:

> The average [European] Australian would be eating 70 to 80 different foods a year…The Aboriginal people in traditional times, in the western desert, [ate] 150 different foods in a year. Move up into the tropical north, 750 different foods. And when you look at any components of the foods, antioxidants, anti- inflammatories, vitamin C, enzyme regulators, even mineral content and nutritional density, the wild foods are between 6 and 20 times richer.[98]

Just one of those 750 foods – the Kakadu plum – has been identified as the richest source of antioxidant compounds in nature, containing 'exceptionally high levels of vitamin C, as well as vitamin E, folate, and lutein. It is also a good source of minerals required for genome health.'[99] By actively discouraging indigenous Australians from gathering and eating these foods, and replacing them with white flour, sugar and tea, they severely compromised the health of the people. Symons quotes anthropologist Richard Gould who noted that the

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[98] Scientist and native food provedore Vic Cherikoff, Appendix 1.
[99] 'Health Benefits of Australian Native Foods: An evaluation of health-enhancing properties' Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation.

indigenous population in the Western Desert, estimated to have been10,000-18,000 had fallen to 3200 between 1966 and 1967 when Gould was there.[100]

It is important to make this comparison, to record the contradiction that, in attempting to improve the lives and diets of the indigenous Australians, the exact opposite was achieved. The starkest evidence of the health of indigenous Australians before the arrival of Europeans can be seen in the evidence of Dr David Scrimgeour, who inspected the last full nomadic people to come out of the desert in 1984. Nine individuals of the Pintupi emerged in Kiwirrkurra, about 1200km inland from Port Hedland. When Dr Scrimgeour examined them he said:

> They were the most healthy people I had ever seen…They were literally glowing with health – not an ounce of superfluous fat. They were extremely fit.[101]

Perhaps, by turning our backs on these foods, we have deprived ourselves of a better diet. But that was not what deprived us of an Australian food culture. In many ways the land itself was against us.

This land, as first settled before refrigeration, before any means of taming the weather was, for the great part, such a harsh place to live, such a tough and unforgiving place, peopled by indigenes who appeared to the colonists as though they may as well have been from another planet, or, at the very least, another time – the stone age – that the development of a food culture was the very last thing on our mind. Food was, primarily, fuel. And, as Symons points out, the

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[100] The effects of a European diet on indigenous health have been extensively studied for instance in: Vos T., Barker B., Begg S., Stanley L., Lopez A. D.(2009). 'Burden of disease and injury in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples: The Indigenous health gap.' *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 38, 470–477.

[101] Guilliatt 'Nomad's Land'

development by Macarthur of a vast grazing industry closed off any exit to culinary advancement. 'Grazing's success (see *Land Grabs*) turned us into a nation of meat eaters',[102] and primitive ones at that – eating slabs of meat thrown onto the fire.

That, and the rations of 'Ten Ten Two & a Quarter.'[103] These were paid to an itinerant workforce whose 'glorification of the drifting, shiftless way of life prevented the food supply from ever really developing beyond the high dependence of the convict stage'[104] put paid to anything but the 'characteristic and monotonous' diet of fried meat, damper and tea at our early stage of development. This diet, replaced by a big slab of steak and potatoes, continued until almost – and often – current times. Drawing on his experiences and observations travelling in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide in the early 1880s, English visitor Richard Twopeny wrote: 'Of course meat is a staple of Australian life not that they know how to prepare it in any delicate way, for to the working and the middle, as well as most of the wealthy classes, cooking is an unknown art.'[105]

A meal in Australia was not measured by the excellence of the produce or the skill of the cooking but by its size on the plate. A steak was a 'good feed' if it hung over the edges of the plate. In such a culinary absence, skill and 'daintiness' on the table was provided by women cooking cakes. The woman who cooked a 'tea' of mutton and potatoes for the shearers practiced her skills on the cakes, jellies jams and trifles served around the edges of the main meal. And the preponderance of dessert and cake recipes in Australian cookbooks attests to this.[106]

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[102] *One Continuous Picnic* page 28.
[103] ibid. page 29, that is 10 lb of flour, 10lb of meat, 2 lb sugar, ¼ lb tea and salt.
[104] ibid. page 28.
[105] *Town Life in Australia* page 64.
[106] Chapter headings in the first edition of the *Country Women's Association Coronation Cookbook* (1937) included Tea Cakes, Tea Loaves, Pikelets, Buns, Cakes, Small Cakes, Home Made Sweets – the book was predominantly recipes for sweet things: in 2013, on the CWA Facebook page, there are 43 recipes, 41 are for cakes and sweets.

Sweet and dainty

> Against the male attitudes to food, formed in our early years, was increasingly pitted the adorning approach of woman, expected – as child-bearer, cook and shopper – to make the society decent. She represented gentility: parsley by the back path, little cakes, pots of tea and teetotalism.[107]
> Michael Symons

Bannerman's explanation as to why most early Australian cookbooks – and here he is talking about Federation –(roughly 1890-1920) were so dessert heavy[108] is that the experienced cook didn't need recipes to 'boil, roast, grill or stew a piece of meat, to boil vegetables or to make a white or melted butter sauce'[109] but they did need guidance for the 'unforgiving' puddings and cakes. This may well be so, but such a bias to desserts did not occur in French or Italian cookbooks because there were recipes for dishes other than boiled, roast, grilled et cetera meat. I would argue that the desserts more likely predominated because, (as he states later) the cook's reputation depended on her cakes, pies and biscuits. These products were her chance to show her skill: skill little needed at the front of the meal where, to satisfy the men of the household all that was needed was a large hunk of protein, but needed, as the women on of early Australia saw it, to maintain some civilisation in the midst of the relentless masculinity of the time and place. Halligan writes that: "They [roast dinners] weren't what made you a good cook. That depended on the baking which got done once a week, and kept the cake and biscuit tins full so there was always

[107] *One Continuous Picnic* page 159.
[108] For example the Presbyterian Women's Mission of Victoria's book, The New P.W.M.U Cookery book, 1931, contained 160 desserts and about as many sweet things for tea (the drink).
[109] *A Friend in the Kitchen* page 73.

something to have with cups of tea. It was kind of a shame to serve shop biscuits with cups of tea.' [110]

The dessert top-heaviness of early Australian cookbooks is illustrated by this analysis of the recipes in the first edition (1937) of the Country Women's Association's *Coronation Cookery Book*:

Sweet dishes	
Biscuits:	43
Cakes, small cakes, sponges, Meringues, éclairs:	111
Icings, fillings, for cakes etc.:	50
Scones and tea cakes:	30
Pikelets etc.:	9
Puddings hot and cold (sweet only) Including jellies:	104
Pies and tarts:	27
Home made sweets (toffees etc.)	29
Soufflés (sweet)	29
Total sweet dishes:	432
Savoury dishes	
Vegetables:	21
Fish and oysters:	31
Poultry:	48
Rabbit:	6
Salads:	32
Meat (beef)	45
Mutton (includes lamb)	37
Veal:	10
Pork:	19

[110] *Eat My Words* page 4.

Bacon and ham:	5
Sweetbreads, brains, meat patties	
(including kidneys and tripe)	11
Curries:	9
Total savoury dishes:	274

Symons writes of the importance of 'daintiness' which embodied feminine qualities 'such as lightness, prettiness and gentility' which he sees as 'part of a long campaign [by commercial interests] to twist the traditional, caring concerns of women into petty materialistic preoccupations.'[111] Rather, I would suggest, that the 'daintiness' was part of that attempt to impose some civilisation on the rough-hewn, slab hut, mutton-fuelled mainly masculine Australian culture.[112]

Taking up the theme of daintiness from Symons, Santich, citing the results of a 1953 American survey on 'the real test of a woman's ability to cook',[113] stated that 'women believed their culinary prowess in the eyes of other women was demonstrated through baking.'[114] Santich also posited that 'another possible and more persuasive reason for all these cakes and biscuits [was] they represented female creativity.'[115] In Australia, this prowess would have often been for an audience of one: the female cook. Patrick White's novel *The Twyborn Affair* sets up just such a set of circumstances.

Although the events in this part of the book took place between the two world wars, the Australia it depicts was a tough country, founded by tough men and with women only at the periphery. In *The Australian Legend* Russel Ward writes:

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[111] *One Continuous Picnic* page 160.
[112] In 1833, to take a random year, the Australian Bureau of Statistics tells us there were 44,643 males and 16,151 females in NSW.
[113] *Bold Palates*, page 191. The consensus choice of both men and women was apple pie.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid. page 187.

> [the nature of the pastoral industry], the nature of Australian geography, and the great though decreasing scarcity of white women in the outback, brought into being an itinerant rural proletariat, overwhelmingly masculine in composition and outlook.[116]

To a great extent, this masculinist character has carried down into the present day. In writing of the construction of the Australian national character 'underwriting 1980s nationalism' in *Making it National*, Turner refers to Ward's book and describes the Australian male character depicted by him as 'prescriptive, unitary, masculinist and excluding.'[117] Turner goes on to assert that this is not a version that reflects Australian identity in the 'postcolonial nation state.' Perhaps not. In more recent times, the treatment of prime minister Gillard and the findings of a Fairfax Nielsen poll that highlighted a slump in Labor support among male voters, traditionally stronger supports of Labor than women, during Gillard's prime ministership point to at least the remnants of masculinist character.[118] In *The Twyborn Affair* White emphasises this tension by creating Eddie Twyborn, a gender ambiguous male/female protagonist. Twyborn steps off the train at Fossickers flat on the way to Bogong, a sheep station in the Monaro region in Southern New South Wales where he is to take up the position of jackaroo. As soon as he is picked up by Don Prowse, the manager of Bogong, he is left in no doubt as to the gender orientation of his surrounds. On the way, Prowse points out a nearby town: '"This is the way to Woolambi" he tells his passenger, '"where the good times are – six pubs, four stores, the picture-show. Get a screw too, if you're

[116] *The Australian Legend* page 10.
[117] *Making it National* page 5.
[118] 'Vote Compass data confirms Labor had 'bloke problem' under Julia Gillard', Antony Green *Sydney Morning Herald* 14.8.13.

interested in that…there's a root or two closer to home if you get to know. I always say there's roots for the lookin' anywhere."'[119]

The housekeeper/cook Peggy Tyrell is more comfortable in this 'aggressively masculine world'[120] than the gender ambivalent Twyborn. But she, like many such women in such a world, must carve out her territory. His first breakfast, 'chops and veg followed by wedges of sponge cake and dobs of enormous floury scones,'[121] more or less sets the tone: mutton for bulk, and cake and scones to allow the cook to show her prowess – and to add a little refinement (daintiness) to the meal. As they begin a later meal, dinner this time, White writes: 'Everyone, it seemed, even the newcomer, was involved in a primitive ritual, no grace, but plenty of tomato sauce.' They ate 'black mutton' and slug-infested cabbage**:** 'Eddie had sighted another slug.'[122] And yet again, Mrs Tyrell 'tossed several charred chops and a mountain of fried up cabbage and potato on the plate.'[123] In the face of this mountain of mutton and to save (feminine) face as a cook, Mrs Tyrell continues 'sifting flour for a batch of scones.'[124] But the feminine presence of scones and cakes apart, the main meal in post 1788 Australia and beyond was meat[125] in one form or another. A dietary choice made possible – and eventually culturally central – by the ways in which the land was taken from the indigenous people, and then put to use by enacted laws.

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[119] *The Twyborn Affair* page 178.
[120] ibid. page 179.
[121] *ibid.* page 181.
[122] ibid. pages 186 and187.
[123] ibid. 189.
[124] ibid. 246.
[125] 'Feed the Man Meat' was the slogan of a successful advertising campaign for Meat and Livestock Australia, (then the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation), the marketing arm of the beef industry, in the 1970s.

Chapter 2

Land Grabs

> The most important economic resource [of the new colony] was land. Accordingly, the governor's primary socioeconomic function was to distribute what were called "Crown lands."[1]
> Philip McMichael

The first land grab was from the Indigenous Australians. When we took their land, we took their food source, their intricate system of land care, their spiritual life. For these people, as Gammage argues, 'Theology and ecology are fused'[2] When the flag was raised on February 7 1788 by the officers of the First Fleet, 'The British claimed not only the *sovereignty* over New South Wales – then comprising the whole eastern half of Australia – but also ownership of the million and a half square miles contained therein.'[3] That was the official view then, and it hadn't altered in 1971, when in a judgement in the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory, Justice Blackburn declared that 'on the foundation of New South Wales…And of South Australia, every square inch of territory in the colony became the property of the Crown'[4] to dispose of as they wished. And dispose of it they did. In spite of the fact that, from the 1820s on, a growing number of settlers had begun to understand that the indigenous people had a 'strong sense of identity with a specific homeland.'[5] This counted for little because the official view was that they were merely 'wandering savages.' The various arguments for and against expropriation of the land (covered extensively in Reynold's *Law of the Land*) are of no concern here, but what happened is.

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[1] *Settlers and the Agrarian Question* page 41.
[2] *The Biggest Estate on Earth* page 133.
[3] *The Law of the Land* page 7.
[4] ibid.
[5] ibid. page 66.

Handing out of the spoils began early. Although claimed entirely by the Crown, in 1792, Phillip granted land to deserving convicts. Land grants were then made to ex-marines and in 1793, the decision was made to extend land grants to officers. Soon, land grants were being extended to whoever was deemed by the governor of the day to be worthy. One example, in 1803, involved 400 acres and a town lease granted to third fleet captain and whaler Eber Bunker, a native of Massachusetts, married to the first cousin of the British Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood. The land was on the George's River south of the future town site of Liverpool. He named the property Collingwood. In 1821, Bunker received another grant of 600 acres at Ravensworth on the Hunter River. The grants from 1793 were significant. They were the first drafts of an Antipodean version of the English class system, 'the rise of landed property with all its imported prestige, privileges and rights'[6] and the foundation of a system of farming and food production which had more to do with export markets than putting food on the domestic table.

At first, the colony's priority – and resources of time and labour – had been to provide food and raw materials for the survival of the colonists and the emphasis of the early governors – especially Phillip – was on the establishment of smallholding farms. Before 1821, in spite of the larger grants to officers and other influential gentlemen, three quarters of all land grants were less than a hundred acres. But after 1821, and with the spread of settlement, large blocks of land were held under temporary grazing rights, and some very large grants were given, one million acres of prime land to the Australian Agricultural Company in 1824 for example. And 'as the settlement grew, the emphasis began to shift from agriculture to pastoralism'[7] that is,

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[6] *On the Land* page 16.

[7] *A Most Valuable Acquisition*, includes an essay by Alastair Davidson and Andrew Wells, 'Carving up the Country' page 43. A pastoralist is defined by *The Australian National*

from the mixed farming originally envisaged by Phillip and others to the monoculture and the production of commodities intended in the main for the imperial market. In this and subsequent activities, 'The state played a special role in setting the patterns of land ownership and use'[8] and for all agricultural production.

After 1825, and responding to a more dispersed population, emphasis was shifted to encouraging a mix of large grazing properties and small agricultural holdings. The official desire to continue encouraging small farming was reinforced, and a limit of 9600 acres was set on land grants. At the same time, a system first called 'tickets of occupancy' was initiated. This gave security to those who had occupied land illegally, by taking possession of the land around towns that had not been surveyed and settled. Later known as squatting, the squatter, at first a quasi-criminal, rose to the ranks of what came to be known as the 'squattocracy' in the hurly burly and devious dealing in land in the nineteenth century.[9] As various administrations bent to their wills, the squatters became more powerful. When Governor Gipps proposed new regulations in 1843-44 for their runs that would make the squatters pay £10 per holding and reduced the length of their leases, there was such an outcry that in 1847, new regulations were brought in ceding the squatters 'an ownership little short of freehold.' It was widely believed that any move against the squatters would be dangerous for the economy which began to slide into depression in the 1940s. By now, 'a new consensus was forming in the colonies, grounded in shared belief that pastoral capitalism would be the backbone of the colonial economy.[10]

Dictionary as 'one who lives by keeping flocks of sheep and cattle' and importantly 'the owner of a substantial stock-raising establishment or a number of such establishments.'

[8] ibid. page 42.

[9] Squatter: One who settled on Crown Land to run stock especially sheep, initially without Government permission but later with a lease or license :*Macquarie Dictionary.* In the *Farming of Australia*, Bromby notes… 'When the Melbourne Club was founded, the majority of its first members were squatters from up country.' Page 49 The Melbourne Club is seen today by many as an enclave of privilege, whose members exert disproportionate power both politically and economically.

[10] *Carving Up the Country* pages 47-48.

And so it proved. Accumulated stock grew exponentially, even faster than the human population which doubled between 1860 and 1890. In 1821, a petition from a group calling itself Emancipated Colonists claimed to collectively own some 43,000 cattle and 174,000 sheep, and that at the same time, the free settlers had 25,000 head of cattle and 87,000 sheep for a total of 68,000 cattle and 261,000 sheep.[11] By 1890, with a population of 3.2 million humans, those numbers had grown to 10 million cattle and 100 million sheep.[12] While many of the sheep were grown for their wool, the 10 million cattle were clearly more than were required for Australian tables. This was not seen as a problem, but an opportunity, an opportunity in search of technology to solve the problem of how to get all that beef – and lamb – to export markets. As early as 1830, individual producers had been using an ancient preservation technology, sending salted meat to markets including England and Mauritius. The next step was canning, originally developed in England in 1810. By 1869, manufacturers in Queensland were exporting over one million kilograms of canned meat each year to Great Britain. Then came freezing, which ran into problems. Shipments sent to England in 1873 and 1877 were unsuccessful. But by the early 20th Century, Australia was able to export chilled beef and by 1937/38 the export trade had grown to 28,000 tonnes.[13] And it was not just meat being sent offshore. Twopeny, writing in the 1880s observed that '…the finest qualities of flour are all shipped to England instead of being used here.'[14] Food was not something you grew to eat, but to export. I recall hearing an industry leader in the mid 1990s addressing a 'mob' of beef farmers. He told them: 'what youse blokes have to understand is that you're in the food industry.' As fine an example as any of the attitude of a broadacre cattle farmer who raises his stock, herds them on the

[11] *Landed Enterprise and Penal Society* page 216.
[12] *One Continuous Picnic* page 103.
[13] 'Australian Meat Exports to Britain in the Nineteenth Century' Working Paper 38, Working Papers in Australian Studies.
[14] *Town Life in Australia* page 62.

trucks to the abattoirs, closes the farm gate, and that's the last he hears of them. This attitude has changed dramatically in the last twenty years.

The problem for our food culture is, as Symons writes, that 'There has never been the creative interplay between society and the soil…almost no food has ever been grown by the person who eats it, almost no food preserved in the home…Our history is without peasants.'[15] From the outset, by the design of those who ran the colony – or at least by the design of those who 'grabbed' the land – our food was produced industrially, as commodity. This has in great part been responsible for a food culture where our 'culinary signifier…is an industrial product, originally made from a waste by-product of the brewing industry: Vegemite.' But there was a food culture here in the nineteenth century. It, like the food and the system of agriculture, was imported and unsuitable to the climate, the land and most of the populace.

Rosbif and roast beef

> So much is the blind Folly of this Age, that they would rather be imposed on by a French booby, than give encouragement to a good English cook.[16]
> Hannah Glass

For all but the wealthiest Australians in the nineteenth century, the juxtaposition of an imported Anglo-Celtic food culture with the harshness of the environment and copious quantities of poorly cooked second rate meat – the best was exported – on the table resulted in a diet of abundance and poor quality. Slabs of meat, washed down with tea, followed by cake, would be a short definition of the average

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[15] *One Continuous Picnic* page 7.
[16] From her *Art of Cookery made plain and easy by a Lady* (1747) quoted in *British Food* page 219.

meal.[17] Curiously, and following the tradition of the British upper classes, public eating – celebratory banquets for example – were predominantly French in content and form. Where did this English awe of French culinary arts begin?

According to Colin Spencer, this began around 1660, with the publication of *The Accomplisht Cook* by Robert May, a book which showed its influences by listing nine recipes for snails.1660 was the year that Charles II was returned to the throne. Spencer writes: 'For though the King had to pretend to pursue Protestant policy, all knew that he and his family had strong Papist sympathies and a love of France and French cooking.'[18] As did May, who had spent five years in France and cooked for Royalist nobility. This association of the nobility and the upper classes with French cooking continued through to the eighteenth century. Even while France and Britain were engaging in battles against Louis XIV in 1712 and France was a 'highly emotive subject…French chefs and the food they produced were popular with the aristocracy who thought that French recipes were superior to the English.'[19]

This attitude of reverential awe towards French cuisine arrived in Australia with the officer and governing classes, undimmed by distance, undeterred by unavailable produce, unfazed by the challenges of climate, and took root immediately. It is perhaps understandable, in a new society carving out a class structure based largely on that which they had left, that this marker would be adopted. That there were early hotels and restaurants serving French food, including the first licensed hotel in New South Wales, the Freemason's Arms in Parramatta built in 1800, and the Union Hotel

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[17] This is not to say that there were no good cooks, both professional and domestic, in Australia, just that the general standard of food, as attested to by visitors and locals, was generally lamentable.
[18] *British Food* pp 141-145.
[19] ibid p 218.

in Melbourne[20] is less interesting to this work than the extravagant public banquets held in Sydney. The Mitchell Library has a collection of menus from these events in its ephemera collection.

On January 26th 1888, the Centennial Dinner was held at the Sydney Town Hall[21] to celebrate the first one hundred years of European occupation. It is an archetypical Victorian blowout. Almost the entire menu is in French:

Potage.
Tortue.
Poissons.
Saumon à la Royale.
Filet de Sole, Crême des Anchoies. Schnapper à la Maréchal.
Entrees.
Les Pâtes à la Reine.
Salmi des Perdrix.
Chaud Froid de Volaille.
Releves.
Dinde Rôti à la Perigord. Dinde Boulli, Sauce aux Champignons.
Jambon de Yorc. Langues de Bœuf.
Selle d'Agneau. Haut de Bœuf.
Bœuf en Preserve.
Gibier.
Faisans, Sauce au Pain.
Pâte de Foie Gras en Aspic.
Salade à la Russe.
Mayonnaise des Crevettes.
Entremets.

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[20] *One Continuous Picnic* pages129-13.
[21] Either the Town Hall or the Pitt Street restaurant owned by Baumann's, who catered the dinner. I haven't been able to ascertain exactly where.

Gelée à l'Australienne.

Gelée des Oranges. Gelée au Ponche.

Charlotte aux Fraises.

Pouding à la Princesse. Pouding aux Amandes.

Crême à la Vanille. Crême au Fleur des Oranges.

Crême au Chocolat.

Nougat au Crême.

Fanchettes.

Bouchées des Dames. Tartelettes au Crême.

Pouding Glacé à la Nesselrode.

Eau Glacé aux Oranges.

Dessert.

Café

Wines

Sherry, Hock, Chablis, Australian Wine.

Champagnes: Ruinart, Irroy, Pommery and Greno.

Clarets: Mouton de Rothschild, Latour.

Port.

Liqueurs: Curacoa, Maraschino, Old Brandy.

The meal displays only a tenuous connection with the new land.[22] There are many such menus for many such meals in the library's collection. But what is of particular interest in this context is the number of dishes styled '*à la Australienne'*. In addition to the above a little earlier at a Mayoral Banquet in June 1884, there is on the menu, a Jelly *à l'Australienne*. And then in 1889 at a dinner at NSW Parliament House, Glace *à l'Australienne*. These curious early

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[22] A comment on one ingredient, dinde, turkey. It is telling that an item of native produce immediately adopted by the European colonists in America should be imported to Australia, and served rather than our own wild turkey (or bustard) Ardeotis Australis, praised by nineteenth century cookbook writer Mrs McLurcan: '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.'

descriptions of things as '*à l'Australienne'* persisted. What did they mean? Did they have to do with the news filtering through to local chefs of the codification of the 186 French and 103 foreign sauces of the French cuisine, published by Antonin in his '*L'Art de la Cuisine Français au Dix-Neuvième Siècle*' in 1833? These included *à la Russe*, *à l'Italienne* and *à la Polonaise*. But these appellations had at least a tenuous link with their names. Not so the dishes labelled '*à l'Australienne.'*

Very few of the dishes at these French feasts were made using Australian native produce. For example, at a banquet for the Earl of Carnarvon in the Parliamentary Refreshment Room in Sydney on December 19 1887, in addition to the Filets de Pigeon a la Parisienne (the pigeon, hopefully, would have been local, and not 'hung' for the trip from the 'home'), we find Murray Cod à la Normande. The early European inhabitants were very fond of Murray cod, and had even sent a live specimen back to England as part of the Acclimatisation Society exchange.[23] *Huîtres natives Australienne* or *huîtres au naturel* were served at a banquet for Henry Parks' 80th birthday on May 28 1894, then again on September 7 1897 at a banquet to celebrate the Federal Convention and again, on October 4 1913, at a Banquet for Rear Admiral Sir George Patry, *huîtres native Australiennes.*

Food historian Colin Bannerman, when asked about any possible meaning for *'à l'Australienne'*, suggested that it could have to do with the early stirrings of Republican sentiment leading to up to Federation.[24] In his data base he found a recipe for Peach *à l'Australienne* in *Australian Home Cookery* by E. Futter published in 1923. This was an elaborate confection using a mould lined with Florence paste, royal icing coloured with carmine and employing complex techniques which, Bannerman said, were totally out of

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[23] See *Take Away* page 37.
[24] pers. comm.

context with the rest of the book, suggesting a restaurant hotel or banquet dish. Whatever the naming of these dishes meant, apart from an expression of pride in a century of occupation, and apart from the designation of oysters as native – they could hardly have been imported – they did not represent any move towards the development of a cuisine or food culture. And further down the food chain, it was not much better.

Sticking to our roots

> On the whole, our forebears seemed determined to ignore the riches around them and to implant a familiar but unsuitable cookery. In much the same way, town and city dwellers bought their vegetables from John Chinaman, but made no attempt to learn his ways with them.[25]
> Colin Bannerman

At first, and for a very long time, the roots we stuck to were determinedly British: that is English, Irish and Scottish. But after 1945, and especially after the Jumbo Revolution (see Chapter 4) our roots lengthened, but never entangled: we remained – and remain – multiculinary, both domestically and professionally, with no successful example of fusion entering the canon.[26] This can be shown by an exploration of a selection of cook books published in Australia.

The first such book was written in Tasmania in 1864. *The English and Australian Cookery Book* whose frontispiece proclaimed it to be *For the Many, as Well as For the "Upper Ten Thousand"*, was written by 'An

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[25] *A Friend in the Kitchen* page 9.
[26] There have been adaptations which could be classed as 'fusion', the best-known the industrial Chiko roll, according to the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* 'inspired by the Chinese chop-suey roll, which (its deviser Frank McEnroe) saw being sold outside the Richmond football ground, he developed a similar product, subsequently called the "Chiko roll"' which went on sale in 1951. Another possible contender is Christmas Pudding Ice cream.

Australian Aristologist',[27] later revealed to be one Edward Abbott, whose family had arrived in 1790, and who was a pastoralist and parliamentarian: in other words, one of the 'upper ten thousand.' In many ways this curious book set the tone for many Australian cook books to come although, in the fashion of the time (and especially in the manner of Mrs Beeton), it was as much an instruction book for its dedicatees 'His Fair Countrywomen of the "Beautiful Land"' as a compilation of recipes. The recipes were mainly British, with a smattering of 'continental' – gazpacho, 'sour-krout', Turkish pilau – and a nod in the direction of his new home: roast 'emeu', roast wombat, and a selection of kangaroo recipes, including the famous Slippery Bob, kangaroo brain fritters. Bannerman remarks that 'his recipes for kangaroo suggest it was widely accepted both as a survival food and as meat for the well-served table'[28] But such local delicacies are overshadowed by imports like Devonshire squab pie, jugged hare, Irish stew, Banbury cakes and, from the Raj, Mulligatawny soup. To give Abbott his due, he does offer a comprehensive list of Australian game and fish, both somewhat marred by the inclusion of unavailable produce like salmon, turbot and ortolan.

The second of the early didactic cookbooks, *The Art of Living in Australia* was published in 1893, and written by Philip Edward Muskett, who, at different times, was a surgeon and Senior Resident Medical Officer at Sydney Hospital. He was a health reformer and in private practice, about one third of his patients were children, which prompted him to write two books on health care for children. Muskett had very clear ideas about what Australians should and should not be eating, and was most concerned about what he saw as maladaptation to the climate:

[27] One skilled in aristology, the art of dining.
[28] *A friend in the kitchen* page 27.

> The Australian people [have] never yet realised their semi-tropical environment. It would naturally be supposed that [this would have] exercised an irresistible effect on their mode of living. But, on the contrary, the type of the Australian dwelling-house, the clothing of the Australian people and, what is more significant than anything else, their food habits, prove incontestably that that they have never recognised the semi-tropical nature of their climate.[29]

Most of his dietary advice was, to a modern eye, eminently sensible: more fish less meat, more salads and more vegetables wine instead of beer – a good part of the book is dedicated to the planting of vineyards and the best grapes for the country. His criticism of the meat heavy diet did not stop at content but included cooking:

> The abuse of flesh food in a climate like Australia's would be serious enough under any circumstances, but it is intensified and aggravated by the direct unoriginality of dealing with meat.[30]

He advocated the planting of asparagus, globe artichokes, Jerusalem artichokes, egg plant and many other vegetables that would have been strangers to the Anglo-Celtic plates of Australians of the time. He appended to his text a number of recipes and Mrs Beeton-like 'kitchen information' from a Mrs H. Wicken, a lecture on cookery at the Technical College, Sydney. That the dietary advice offered by Muskett was ignored for the next 60 years was testament to the power of culture over cuisine. Regardless of the unsuitability of the climate, Australians persisted with – many still do – the ritual of Christmas dinner, turkey and pudding, in December one of the hottest months of the year. Montanari writes 'food takes shape as a decisive element of

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[29] *The Art of Living in Australia* page 15.
[30] ibid. page78.

human identity and as one of the most effective means of expressing and communicating identity'.[31] And Australians, for over 160 years, identified as Anglo Celts.

The book from which the epigraph for this section was taken, *A Friend in the Kitchen*, concentrates on Federation cook books which Bannerman dates from the Centenary – 1888 – to 1914 (not the accepted architectural dates of 1901-1914) contending that:

> wave of nationalistic sentiment stirred up by those celebrations (the Centenary) must have been one of the driving forces behind the federation of the colonies…I have taken it as ending formally in 1914 when Australia first went to war as a nation.[32]

In discussing the general problem of ascertaining what was being eaten in these times, Bannerman cites various primary and secondary sources – newspapers, great grandma's scrap books, oral history and old cookery books, which he further breaks down into gatherers, teachers, personal collections and contributors, those containing a collection of recipes, like the Country Women's Association books compiled since 1937 using members' recipes.[33] The teachers books contained, he writes, 'a wider range of everyday dishes and even a few advanced ones.'[34] And as such, provide an insight into what was being prepared in the home at the time. My copy of *The Commonsense Cookery Book* undated but judging by one of its advertisements for Waugh's Baking Powder featuring a light horseman (headline: 'Call to Waugh') more than likely published between 1914 and 1916 and inscribed by hand 'Mary Kalnin, Wolmar' also contains several laid-in cut-out and typed recipes. One for cheese biscuits; another for 'strong-lite' layer cake; maize meal layer cake; caramel layer cake

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[31] *Food is Culture*, pages xi-xii.
[32] ibid. page 10.
[33] ibid. pages 23-25.
[34] ibid. page 21.

marshmallow sauce; economy Christmas pudding; Christmas cake; Almond paste; Substitute almond paste; Christmas pudding; Wine sauce; mock cream; lemon spread; and finally cream of potato soup and scotch broth – that is, 75 per cent sweet dishes.

The contents of the book itself are remarkable for containing not one recipe that would identify its origin, other than Britain. The only vaguely 'foreign' dish is a curry in the Cold Meat Cookery section[35], made from chopped meat, apple, onion, sultanas and a tablespoon of curry powder: in other words, a proper 'British' curry. *The Schauer Australian Cookery Book*, my copy without front and back pages (circa1946?) does contain one concession to place. After the recipe for Ox Tail Soup, there is an instruction that 'Kangaroo tail soup can be made in the same way.'[36] As for other than Anglo food, the only concessions to 'exotica' are things like Brazilian stew, with instructions to 'Mix 1 dessertspoon each sauce and vinegar, salt and pepper together'[37] with no instructions as to what 'each sauce' is; Madras steak whose Indian flavour comes from '1 large teaspoon curry powder'; and Wakefield or French steak, a recipe very close to steak Diane. Garlic does not make a single appearance. Bannerman does, however, trace the Lamington back to the first edition of Schauer, 1909, when it appeared as a cake. It was not until 1916 that a Western Australian book (unnamed) printed a recipe for the small squares of today. The *Schauer* I have, some 35 years later, offers Lamingtons as small squares.

The Goulburn Cookery Book was first published in 1895, with no revision of the text for 30 years, the work of Jean Rutledge (Mrs William Forster Rutledge), and written, as she said herself for 'women in the bush who often have to teach inexperienced maids and would be glad of accurate recipe that anyone of fair intelligence could carry

[35] *The Commonsense Cookery Book* pages 55-61.
[36] *The Schauer Australian Cookery Book* page 81.
[37] ibid. page 135.

out'[38] My edition, the thirty-third, was printed in 1928. What is interesting is the similarity of the two books: Steak Gerard and the mysterious Brazilian stew in both, in the *Goulburn* no mention of sauces, but vinegar which is presumably what makes it Brazilian. Barrier goose is a leg or shoulder of mutton, disguised to relieve the monotony of mutton, mutton, mutton: there are 23 mutton recipes in the *Goulburn*. Why so much mutton? It was, by this stage, the by-product of the wool industry. Growing sheep for meat was no longer profitable. The result was, it was of not very good quality, and cheap. Mundy wrote 'for meat is nothing in price when mutton is merely the soil on which wool is grown.'[39]

Mrs Rutledge presents her oyster stuffed steak as Carpetbag Steak a la Colchester more than likely, as suggested by Santich, because Colchester is an English town famous for its oysters.[40] In the section entitled 'What To Do With Cold Meat', two 'foreign' sounding dishes are discovered. Bobojtes, a baked pudding of minced mutton and bread served with ' a good brown gravy.'[41] Although originally South African, the American William Woys Weaver tells us they were 'considered indispensible at hunt breakfasts in England'[42] and thence America. A recipe for Cannelon of meat contains no pasta, but is a boiled pudding of minced mutton. Another foreign sounding dish, but much changed from the original, Kromeskies, which in Mrs. Routledge's version[43] are chopped cold meat rissoles, in *Larousse*[44] are salpicons, chopped, meat, fish or vegetables bound by a thick sauce, cut into rectangles and wrapped in thin pancakes or caul. There are recipes for steamed kangaroo or wallaby in both Schauer and Goulburn, and a roast Wonga pigeon in Schauer, but no concession to place other than the Lamingtons in Schauer.

[38] *A friend in the kitchen* page 88.
[39] *Our Antipodes* page 259.
[40] *Looking for Flavour* page 25.
[41] *The Goulburn Cookery Book Thirty-third Edition* page 60.
[42] *Thirty-Five Receipts from The Larder Invaded* page 74.
[43] *The Goulburn Cookery Book Thirty-Third Edition* page 63.
[44] *Larousse Gastronomique* page 598.

In the first edition of the Country Women's Association's *Coronation Cookbook* in 1937, there was a dish called Drover's Dream, a casserole of chops, onions and turnips. And a chapter on emu eggs, offering five recipes using them: scrambled, boiled, sandwich, omelette, baked cheese savoury and pound cake. By the next edition, the emu eggs had disappeared. The only indigenous produce used was for rosella jam, a recipe for which lasted until 1981[45]. In the 1958 edition, a new chapter, Chinese cookery, was added including recipes like sweet and sour pork and fish, boiled and fried rice and savoury duck. And in *Country Treasures: a collection of 500 country classics from the Country Women's Association*, published in 2001, the only representation of anything indigenous is a biscuit called 'kangaroo nuttiness.' Outside of the books, what have been laid down as Australian meals, either from those visiting the country and noting what they ate, or from writers attempting to create what they see as ideal Australian meals?

Firstly, the observations of Arnold A. Haskell, a writer, journalist and ballet critic, who wrote *Waltzing Matilda* on a second visit to Australia in 1938. In it he notes that 'Apart from certain regional dishes there is an amazing uniformity about the menus all over the Commonwealth'.[46] He runs through 'a typical tea' as served at 6.30pm in a small country hotel (lunch is much the same).' This comprises 'Vegetable soup (not tinned); fried fish usually schnapper; choice of roast beef, mutton, lamb pork or turkey; salad of young lettuce, tomatoes, spring onions; boiled Or baked potatoes; fruit salad with lashings of cream or apple pie with good apples and medium pastry; very poor cheese'.[47] In a footnote on the schnapper (now snapper) he refers to Louisa Ann (Mrs Charles) Meredith, writing a century previously, that the snapper was:

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[45] I can only assume that this would be the native rosella *Hibiscus heterophyllus* and not the West African *Hibiscus sabdariffa.*

[46] *Waltzing Matilda* page 65. By regional specialties, he means produce, not dishes, for example oysters in New south Wales, scallops in Western Australia et cetera.

[47] ibid. page 65.

> very nice though not esteemed a proper dish for a dinner party why I am at a loss to guess; but I never saw any native fish at a Sydney dinner-table – the preserved or cured cod and salmon from England being served instead, at a considerable expense and, to my taste, it is not comparable with the cheap fresh fish.[48]

Haskell's summary of his experience of the food he encountered on this visit is that:

> Undoubtedly the gastronomic mission of Australia seems to be to preserve the good old-fashioned English cooking, the grills and roasts that it is becoming impossible to find in England.[49]

This process of 'mummification' of a food culture by émigrés is common. Often, dishes long disappeared from the 'old country' – be it England, Italy or Germany – are still cooked, as they were when the migrant left many years before. In 1925 the Melbourne Punch published an all Australian Christmas menu '*from cocktails to coffee'* devised by an anonymous writer who claimed to have 'dined in most parts of the civilised world'.[50] While the author has gone out of his way to use only Australian produce, the menu is French/English in conception and execution with, once again, no sign of any recognisably Australian dish:

Salted almonds. Olives.
Oysters on the shell.
Beche de Mer soup.
Fresh water Blackfish. Maitre d'Hotel.

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[48] *Notes and Sketches in New South Wales During a Residence in that Colony from 1839 to 1844* page 43.
[49] ibid. page 67.
[50] *The Australian Christmas* pages 113-4.

Fillet of beef. Pique. Sauce Bearnaise.
Roast Teal. Port Wine Sauce. Orange Salad.
Ice pudding.
Devilled Prawns.
Dessert.
Coffee.
'Sautern' or Chablis. Burgundy.
Champagne. Cognac.

Much later, in 1968, writing in the *Epicurean* magazine, bon vivant and writer Oscar Mendelsohn used two English Gallup polls, one in 1947 and one in 1962, 'to ascertain the perfect meal at any cost, to introduce his own idea of 'the perfect Australian meal.'[51] Once again, we find a meal devoid of any Australian-ness, other than in its choice of produce, betraying its roots to the old country minus the earlier slavish Francophilia. It included Avocado Oysters, Poached Fillets of Flathead, caper sauce, Roast Turkey, Walnut Stuffing, Fig Sauce (in season) or Brown Gravy Sauce, ending with Girgarre Blue Cheese. It would appear that since the time of Haskell, cheese had found a name and was, we must assume, no longer 'very poor.' [52]

Moving to the present, for Australia Day 2012 on Tuesday January 24 the front page of *The Sydney Morning Herald Good Living* supplement asked: 'What's The Ultimate Australia Day Dish?' A cover photograph of a lamb pie provides one of the answers. The dishes, submitted by a collection of Australian chefs, display a multiplicity of roots both new and old. For instance, pastry chef Jean-Michel Reynaud, who 'arrived in Australia in 1988 at the height of the bicentennial fever' chooses to present Pavlova, a recipe of, at the very least, Australian and New

[51] *In the Land of the Magic Pudding* pages 185-188.
[52] I hesitated over the Avocado Oysters, but a browse through my collection of recipe books and a Google entry found well worn similar recipes from the UK, the Americas, Spain and France.

Zealand provenance[53] Chef Lauren Murdoch proffered a lamb pie with sautéed mushrooms; provedore Brigitte Hafner, barbecued marron with Thai green mango salad; chef Cheong Liew, Prawn and king salmon dim sims with salmon roe; chef Daniel Puskas, sand crab with macadamia nut milk and chamomile; chef and writer Karen Martini, salad of calamari, jamon (sic) and curly endive and goat's cheese; baker Tim Cooper, another purportedly Australian but actually French dessert, Peach Melba:[54] and from chef Ian Curley, kangaroo Wellington. In that list are only four indigenous ingredients: marron, macadamia nuts, kangaroo and the sand crab, a local member of the *Ovalipes* genus. The hallmark of the list is the ethnic diversity of the dishes, none of which would be familiar generally to Australians, unless, perhaps, one who was familiar with a chef's menu and that dish had appeared on their menus.

So it is clear that, in the 220 plus years that Europeans have lived here, and in spite of realising that 'much of the British household domestic order was unsuitable for Australian conditions'[55] and apart from the occasional adaptation (Christmas pudding ice cream) and the massive influx of non-British residents bringing their own food cultures, there has been no emergence of any dishes which speak with a broad or even mild Australian accent. Conversely, in not much longer time than Europeans have inhabited this continent, others have established clearly defined cuisines.

[53] For scholarly discussions on the provenance of the Pavlova, read *The confection of a nation* and *The Pavlova Wars* (links to both in the bibliography). This is briefly covered in Chapter 3, *But What About…*

[54] Not Australian as often asserted, but 'devised in the singer's (Dame Nellie Melba) honour by the French chef Auguste Escoffier in 1893' *One Continuous Picnic* page 161.

[55] *A friend in the kitchen* page 10.

Chapter 3

Startups: culture and cuisines

> The notion of 'food culture' is also useful for expressing how food beliefs and behaviours are socially framed: it refers to a constellation of socially produced values, attitudes, relationships, tastes, cuisines and practices exhibited through food.[1]
> Tim Lang and Michael Heasman

On the last Thursday of November every year, Americans of all ethnic backgrounds, colours and religions, gather in their family homes to eat a ritual meal, comprising a mix of Native American, European and, latterly, ingredients from their own food cultures. This is a feast whose roots can possibly be found (see below) in an expression of joy at bringing in the first harvest in a new land, but which has transformed into a celebration of the idea of America, 'the land of the free and the home of the brave' as expressed in the American national anthem. America, like very few other countries (Liberia and Israel being two) was founded on an ideal. And that ideal is echoed in the culture of the annual meal known as thanksgiving. But it is not as simple as that.

On September 16 1620, 102 passengers seeking religious freedom set off from Plymouth, Devon, and arrived at the mouth of the Hudson River on 6 November after a difficult and uncomfortable journey. They anchored in what is now Provincetown Harbour and arrived in Plymouth in what is now Massachusetts in December. After a terrible winter, they planted their first crops in the Spring of 1621. 'On March 16', James W. Baker has written, 'a lone Indian entered the settlement and astonished the colonists by greeting them in English. This was

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[1] *Food Wars,* page 185.

Samoset, a Native Sagamore from Maine.'[2] Samoset introduced them to Squanto, who also spoke English and who was to become the colony's translator and instructor in the planting of corn and other local resources. In Autumn, 'the all-important corn harvest that would insure Plymouth Colony's survival proved successful, although some of the English crops were a disappointment.'[3]

The claim for a first thanksgiving in1621 to celebrate that crop was not made until 1841 by Alexander Young, author of the *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers of the Colony of Plymouth*. In that book he published a letter from the pilgrim (and later third Governor) Edward Winslow dated 11 December 1621. Originally published in England in the hope of attracting settlers to Plimoth, as it was originally spelt, Plantation the letter was promptly forgotten, only to be rediscovered in the 1820s. It described a three-day event at the Plimoth Plantation, the dates of which were not given. Winslow writes:

> Our harvest being gotten in, our Governor sent four men on fowling, that so we might after a more special manner rejoice together, after we had gathered the fruit of our labours. They four in one day killed as much fowl as, with a little help besides, served the Company almost a week. At which time, amongst other recreations, we exercised our arms, many of the Indians coming amongst us, and amongst the rest their greatest king, Massasoit with some 90 men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted. And they went out and killed five deer which they brought to the plantation and bestowed on our Governor and upon the Captain and others.[4]

In a footnote to Winslow's letter, Young claims this as the first thanksgiving, offering as support Governor William Bradford's report

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[2] *Thanksgiving: The Biography of an American Holiday* page 3.
[3] ibid.
[4] *The First Thanksgiving* page 81.

that in the fall of 1621 the settlers had accumulated ‘a great store of wild turkeys, venison, cod, bass, waterfowl and corn.’[5]

In *The First Thanksgiving*, however, Smith casts doubt on this 1621 feast. He points out that although New England Puritans did observe days of thanksgiving for various events – a good harvest, rainfall, military victory – no thanksgiving day was observed as an annual event and, moreover, a Puritan thanksgiving was a ‘solemn religious day celebrated with attendance at church and prayer.’[6] Smith also points out that little is known about thanksgiving dinners, even if there were any and the only feast mentioned which suggests the possibility of a feast was in 1636. He concludes that ‘while the absence of references does not imply there were no thanksgiving dinners, it is surprising that more records have not been found.’[7]

Later, in *Eating History*, Smith had firmed up his opposition to a 1621 thanksgiving feast which he then described as ‘preposterous.’ [8] If so, the idea was more powerful than reality. In 1827, Sara Josepha Hale published a novel, *Northwood*, in which she devoted an entire chapter to a thanksgiving dinner: ‘The roasted turkey took precedence…yet the pumpkin pie occupied the most distinguished niche.’ [9] Using her fame from the success of *Northwood*, Hale began a campaign to make thanksgiving a national holiday, a campaign that came to fruition in 1863 when, in the middle of the Civil War, President Lincoln proclaimed a day of thanksgiving on the last Thursday in November beginning that year: ‘I do’ he wrote, ‘therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and

[5] ibid. page 81.
[6] ibid. page 79.
[7] ibid. page 79.
[8] *Eating History* page 57.
[9] ibid. page 82.

Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens.'[10] On 26 December 1941 – again in a time of war, indeed just 18 days after America's entry into World War Two – President Roosevelt affirmed the last Thursday in November, for the first time making the date federal law.

At the centre of this national feast is the turkey, which Siskind writes is:

> more than just a part of the wilderness that had been civilized, the thanksgiving turkey powerfully symbolizes the Indians. It is a symbol of a symbol, since the concept of the 'Indian' is already a reduction of all the varied individuals and nations of native America into a homogenous 'other'.[11]

Be that as it may, it is also a native animal at the centre of a ritual feast that defines Americans as Americans. Other native foods at the table were and still are pumpkins and cranberries – recipes for which appeared in the first American cookbook, *American Cookery* by Amelia Simmons, published in 1796 – and barberries. Here it is important to note that America, whose European history started just 181 years before Australia's – counting from the settlement of Jamestown, Virginia in 1607 – has a unifying national feast, comprising native and European foods, and with a history that began with a meal shared by both European and Native Americans. While the thanksgiving meal does not constitute a cuisine, it has insinuated itself into the DNA of culture and remains 'a building block of America's national identity.'[12] Smith writes that 'immigrants readily joined in the feast because it demonstrated their loyalty to their adopted country and their belief in American abundance' and, although adding their own traditional

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[10] Proclamation of Thanksgiving October 3 1863.
[11] *The Invention of Thanksgiving: A Ritual of American Nationality* page 48.
[12] *The First Thanksgiving* page 85.

foods to the feast, 'the turkey retained its place of honor.'[13] Those same immigrants – and former slaves – also contributed to what I will contend are America's cuisines.

Perhaps the most pervasive, persuasive and deep-seated of those is Cajun, which, surprisingly, although the original Cajun people – Acadians – arrived in Louisiana in the 1760s, did not come to full fruition until the twentieth century. The story begins with French colonists settling in Acadia in the colony of New France in Eastern Canada in the first half of the seventeenth century. When the British went to war with the French in Canada, they began to expel the Acadians. Some went to Louisiana, which had been transferred to the Spanish government in 1762, and soon after became the largest ethnic group there.

Those early French settlers were peasants, whose diet would have consisted mainly of soups and whole-grain bread, with little meat. Arrival in Canada changed their diet – pork, poultry, fish and wild game were added – but not their culinary traditions. Two pots were used, a cauldron over the fire and a deep skillet, producing much the same dishes they had left behind, with different ingredients: 'Seventeenth and eighteenth century Acadian cuisine bore little outward resemblance to its modern Louisiana descendant.'[14] The Acadians turned to fishing and farming, including hogs and cattle. By now dubbed Cajuns by their neighbours, they took to salting pork but continued to slow cook using their cauldrons, and through to the early twentieth century their diet consisted of slow-cooked meat, corn bread and seasonal vegetables.

By 1900 one dish had emerged that could define Cajun cuisine – gumbo – which was first mentioned in 1803. Bienvenu et al write that:

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[13] *Eating History* page 64.
[14] *Stir the Pot* page 19.

'The popularity of Cajun gumbo, distinguished from its Creole counterpart by its use of both a roux base and okra…was such that…Louisiana Chief Justice Joseph A. Breaux characterized it as the group's "national dish."'[15] The Cajun roux, the basic flavour that enlivens many Cajun dishes – is French in name only,[16] and consists, as Edward Behr writes in 'The Art of Eating' of 'roughly equal parts – depending on the cook – of flour and fat (originally lard), cooked together to a light or dark brown. As the ingredients of the dish are cooked slowly together, in typical Cajun style, the *roux* produces an amazing depth and degree of flavor.'[17] By the time of the Civil War, there were a number of varieties of gumbo.

From these beginnings, Cajun cuisine has grown in strength and character, aided by such external agencies as refrigeration – which helped add seafood and fresh water fish to the list of ingredients – the improvement of the state highway system in the 1920s and 1930s and the increasing affluence of the population with the expansion of the oil industry and tourism. In a relatively short time – and mostly in the twentieth century – a distinctive cuisine with eight regional variations and both domestic and commercial iterations had arisen.[18] The last major influence was the chef Paul Prudhomme who, in the 1980s, spearheaded its subsequent commercialization.[19]

Surrounding Cajun cuisine is Cajun food culture. As argued in my introduction, food is far more than a material substance: it is a primary cultural marker. Bienvenu writes, for example that 'Class also played a major role in shaping perceptions about beef and pork dishes…poor Cajuns consumed "everything but

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[15] ibid. page 24.
[16] 'A cooked mixture of flour and butter…' *Larousse* page 904.
[17] 'The Art of Eating' No. 34 page 4.
[18] *Stir the Pot* points out that 'during the golden years of the oil boom much of the seafood consumed in restaurants was fried.' But at home, they ate their étoufées, fricassees and brown gravies, because the production of fried foods '"makes a mess" ' Page 29.
[19] In 'The Art of Eating' Behr points out that while Prudhomme's blackened redfish is not Cajun, 'Chef Paul is Cajun and Cajuns are grateful for the respect and the increase in tourism he brought them.' Page 2.

the squeal"…Affluent local families looked askance on such meals [of internal organs] and made pork paté instead.'[20] Jambalaya is another dish, along with gumbo, most identified as quintessentially Cajun. But, as Bienvenu sees it 'jambalaya may be the product of mutually reinforcing culinary traditions introduced into Louisiana from two different continents'[21] – France and Spain – with jambalaya being a naturalised version of paella. And although the exact date of paella's introduction to Louisiana is unclear, 'traditional consumption of [jambalaya] is concentrated in the areas settled by Hispanic immigrants in the late eighteenth century.'[22] To further stir the pot, the colour of jambalaya changes according to where it is made. In rural south Louisiana it is brown because the cast iron cooking pots used there allow for more caramelisation of the sugars in meat and vegetables absorbed by the rice in cooking. And in New Orleans it is red because of the traditional use of tomatoes in Creole cuisine, Creole being a close cousin of, but distinct from, Cajun. Another pointer to the culture of Cajun food can be seen in the title of another of Bienvenu's books: *Who's Your Mama, Are You Catholic, and Can You Make A Roux?* This cuisine and its culture had arisen around 1764, just 24 years before the European colonisation of Australia, but is, in the main, a twentieth- century construction.

This thought occurred to me while on holiday in the South Australian fishing village of Robe immediately after reading American food writer Ed Behr's newsletter, *The Art of Eating*, on Cajun cuisine. Behr explains the theory and practice of Cajun ingredients and techniques, shows the derivation of the word *gombo*, dissects the racial mixes, the culture and offers recipes for Chicken Oyster and Sausage Gumbo and Seafood Gumbo. When I arrived in Robe, a small – winter population around 1000 – and relatively isolated fishing village south east of Adelaide, with the Coonawarra wine growing region right

[20] *Stir the Pot* page 110.
[21] ibid. page 130.
[22] ibid. pages 130/131.

behind it, I wondered whether there was some local – regional – dish or cooking style. The village was established in 1845, mainly by Scots fishing families. Coonawarra, with its famous terrarossa soil, is good farming land, fish were bountiful and crayfish, now the main fishing industry, are still caught by locals, all of whom have a favourite spot to hang out the craypot. All this, I conjectured, should have resulted in at least one local dish.

We were invited to a small cocktail party at the house of one of the oldest families in town. The other invitees were all well-established Robe families, many with roots going back a century. I quizzed several of them on the subject. Not only was there no such dish or style, no one really understood the line of questioning. By contrast an online search uncovered *Louisiana Crawfish Recipe*s,[23] a compilation of almost one hundred recipes using the local freshwater crayfish. This rich treasury of recipes, all of which fit within the general matrix of Cajun cuisine, is even more remarkable when we learn that, according to Bienvenu, 'Many, perhaps most, middle class prairie Cajuns did not eat them [crawfish] at all in the pre-World War Two era, and those who did consume the crustaceans did not boast about it [as they were seen as food of the poor].'[24] An entirely different set of circumstances was behind the creation of Mauritian cuisine, another relatively recent start up.

Mauritius, the largest island of the Republic of Mauritius[25] lies some 2000 kilometres off the south east coast of the African continent. In the space of 298 years it has developed a distinctive cuisine and a well-defined food culture. There is little academic writing on this cuisine, and my knowledge of it derives primarily from two trips to the

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[23] www.crawfish.org *Louisiana Crawfish Recipes* Louisiana Crawfish Promotion & Research Board.
[24] *Stir the Pot* page 97. The exception to this view of crawfish as poverty food was the preparation of crawfish which was, according to Bienvenu, prepared by the cooks in upper-middle and upper class homes and was a dish considered to be 'the most formidable weapon in the culinary arsenal' page 110.
[25] The other islands in the Republic are Rodrigues, Agaléga and Saint Brandon.

island working in the kitchen with chefs, both domestic and commercial, discussions with chefs, restaurateurs and cooks, and *Exotic Cuisine of Mauritius*, the most authoritative book I could find. The first trip was in 2003 to gather material for a story in *Australian Gourmet Traveler* magazine; the second, in 2006, at the invitation of the Republic of Mauritius, to attend the first International Creole Festival, a celebration of Creole culture, music and cuisine.

Prior to the arrival of the Portuguese, Mauritius was uninhabited. The Portuguese came and went several times between1507 and 1513 but preferred Mozambique as an African east coast base. The Dutch arrived in 1598, twice attempted to set up colonies (the second time in 1638) cut down most of the ebony, contributed largely towards the extinction of the dodo[26] and left in 1710[27] but not before naming the island after Prince Maurice Van Nassau, the Governor of Holland at the time, and the pioneer of the Indian Ocean spice trade. They also brought the first sugar cane as well as rabbits, pigs, deer, sheep and geese and the first slaves from Madagascar.

In 1715 the French arrived, bringing with them their own slaves from Africa and Madagascar and extending the sugar plantations. As was the case with the slaves in other plantation colonies, the planters 'mixed individuals from different ethnic groups together, dissolving family structures.'[28] Then, after 1810, when the French had been beaten by the English in the battle of Vieux Port, and the slaves freed, indentured Indian labour arrived. Along the way came the Chinese, many fleeing from the Opium wars. Today, just over fifty percent of the population is made up of people from the subcontinent of India, twenty-eight percent are the descendents of Africans and Malagasy

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[26] Although, according to *The Song of the Dodo,* the Dodos '"were hunted mercilessly.."' mainly by the Dutch, and the introduced pigs and monkeys which 'were capable of deadly efficient predation upon the flightless dodo.' Page 168. The monkeys did not necessarily arrive with the Dutch, they are not native and their origin is uncertain.
[27] The Dutch left in 1658, but returned in 1664 then left finally in 1710.
[28] Erikson, Thomas Hylland *Tu dimunn pu vini kreol* lecture presented at University of Oxford.

people, two percent are of European descent and three percent of Chinese descent.[29] In spite of this multiplicity of ethnic origins, as has been noted 'inter-ethnic marriage and reproduction has produced a heterogeneous people. The heterogeneity of the population is apparent in the islanders' religious orientations, dress, architecture, music, cuisine, and language.'[30]

The dishes, ingredients and cooking methods used on the island betray this mélange of influences. One example rougail (or rougaille) is variously described as Provençal, Caribbean, Mauritian, from the island of Réunion and being a contraction of *roux d'ail*. Larousse says that it is 'a highly spiced seasoning used in the cooking of the West Indies and Réunion'[31] and then gives an entirely different recipe to those I gathered in Mauritius.[32] In its Mauritian iteration, rougail is a fine example of culinary miscegenation: tomatoes with garlic, onion and turmeric (there called Indian saffron), chillis and curry leaves. This dish is not, as might be expected, cooked slowly, but briskly, almost at stir-fry heat, in a wide, open-mouthed cooking utensil, not unlike a wok, known locally as a caraille. The indigenous tomato used in the rougail, known to us as the Roma, in Mauritius (and parts of southern France) is given its original French name, *pomme d'amour*, apple of love. So ubiquitous are sauces based on these tomatoes that there is a Créole expression for someone who is involved in many activities, that they are like pommes d'amour: into everything.

Vindaye is another dish that has moved from west to east.

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[29] Boswell, Rosabelle 'Unraveling le malaise Créole: hybridity and marginalization in Mauritius, Identities' page 3.
[30] ibid.
[31] *Larousse* page 903.
[32] *Exotic Cuisine of Mauritius* gives this definition: 'ROUGAIL (Ourougail): The dish is of Tamil origin, according to J.C. Fleury who takes an interest in such research. He informs us that the tomato or pomme d'amour which was introduced in France in the 17th Century, was totally ignored in the cuisine of China and India. The occurrence of its use in Mauritian cookery may be an influence which travelled from West to East. Possibly from Madagascar, now the Malagasy Republic.' Page 20. I can find no records of any J.C. Fleury, who was, most likely, an amateur and friend of the authors. My information on cooking rougail came from working with chefs on Mauritius.

Vindaye is a Créolisation of *vin d'ail*, meaning a wine and garlic marinade.[33] In the Mauritian version, the wine has turned to vinegar, as it usually did on the trip from France, and Indian saffron has been added, along with ginger, chilli and mustard seed. The vinegar/garlic mixture is also a method of preserving fish and meat. (I tried fish, venison and octopus).

While in Mauritius I ate a meal with and cooked by Franco-Mauritian artist, chef and amateur culinary historian Jacques 'Vaco' Baissac. An account of that meal includes a perhaps apocryphal but telling tale of one dish, a *gateau de patate douce*, using African sweet potatoes:

> 'This pudding' Vaco explained, 'is originally African.
> I am sure a French planter tried it, and decided that it tasted like a marron – chestnut – puree, a dish he could not get in the tropics. And so, he had it dressed up with the egg white topping – and voila! another basic dish entered the Mauritian repertoire.'[34]

Mauritian gastronomy evolved over a period of two and a half centuries, from a modest start with the first French settlers and the help of African, Malagasy and Indian labour. Regional French recipes were adapted to the new environment, and tropical produce as well as introduced Oriental spices were incorporated. The Indian immigrants, then the Chinese contributed. And dishes were created that became, over time, pure Mauritian. Renoir and Lenoir write 'The boredom spawned from standardization never remotely threatened Mauritian cuisine; it is noteworthy that dear Albion never influenced, or made a mark on its style!'[35] The cuisine had evolved, as stated by the authors, in two and a half centuries: about the same amount of time

[33] Another version of this dish from another part of the world is the Goan vindaloo, from the Portuguese vigno and alho, again wine and garlic and once again the wine turned to vinegar.
[34] *Grazing* pages 115-116. In discussing this with Australian chef Damien Pignolet, he opined that it would have reminded the French of a chestnut puree dessert called Mont Blanc.
[35] *Exotic Cuisine of Mauritius* page 2.

Europeans have been in Australia, and they betray, like the layers of an archaeological dig, their origins. And now, briefly, American cuisines.

In the last chapter of his book *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom* – 'Eating American' – Sidney Mintz recalls, in answering a question in a lecture on American eating habits that he had said: 'I did not think that there is such a thing as an American cuisine.'[36] He spent the rest of the chapter proving it. The chapter is of great interest in thinking about the lack of an Australian cuisine, and I will discuss it later. But here, I want to simply provide some material evidence to cast doubt on his assertion. Although, in a sense, he is right. There is no 'American cuisine' there are American cuisines, one of which is Cajun. Although America, like Australia, is both multicultural and multiculinary, in America there has been a coalescence of cuisines to create new forms. For example, Bienvenu points to the contributions to Cajun cuisine as coming from 'Native Americans, Frenchmen, Spaniards, Englishmen, Africans, Germans and Italians.'[37] Similar merging has produced such undeniably American food as the hamburger, the hot dog and spaghetti and meatballs, which was an Italian-American invention.[38] The hamburger story illustrates the process.

The Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia opened on 19 May 1876, featuring 'a wide variety of foodstuffs – many commercially processed – that became mainstays of the American diet today.'[39] One of these was the prototype hamburger, the hamburger steak. The German restaurant at the expo served this hamburger steak as a patty on a plate – the meat grinder was introduced both commercially and domestically also – and 'within two decades, had evolved into the

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[36] *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom* page 106.
[37] *Stir the Pot* page 11.
[38] *From Spaghetti and Meatballs to Pizza* p 4 'While wealthy Southern Italians had eaten spaghetti with tomatoes and cheese in their homeland, this version was invented in America and became an important dish in the households of immigrants…'
[39] *Eating History* page 98.

American hamburger sandwich.'[40] Hamburg steak was soon found on the lunch wagon menu. And because customers ate their food standing up, the steaks were soon placed between slices of bread or buns. Nobody knows who was the first lunch wagon proprietor to do so, but by the 1890s, as the 'hamburger-steak sandwich' it had become an American classic. By the early twentieth century, the name had been shortened to 'hamburger' or 'burger'.[41] Now they are both industrial and domestic, the hamburger being a frequent item in the domestic repertoire.

Food historian Bruce Kraig tells the story of the hot dog, another example of German butchery meeting American opportunism.[42] In April 1901, on a cold night at New York's Polo Grounds, spectators were out to see the New York Giants play. Although there are several versions of this story, in 1935 the journalist Quentin Reynolds told what has become the standard account. Harry Stevens had the franchise to sell food and drinks at the Polo Grounds. He had stocked up on ice cream and soda, but recognised there was a need for hot food: 'Send round to all the butchers in the neighbourhood,' he told his son Frank, 'Buy up all those German sausages you can, those long dachshund sausages – what do they call them, frankfurters. Then hustle around to the bakers in the neighbourhood and buy up all the rolls you can find…And get some mustard!'[43] They were eaten furiously. In the Reynolds version of this story, the renowned cartoonist T.A. Dorgan (TAD), 'delighted by the sight of a sausage-frenzied crowd' and thinking of a cartoon, reasoned that since the dachshund is a dog, why not call the new dish a 'hot dog'?'[44]

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[40] ibid.
[41] According to the Library of Congress website www.americaslibrary.gov 'The first hamburgers in U.S. history were served in New Haven, Connecticut, at Louis' Lunch sandwich shop in 1895'.
[42] *Hot dog: a global history.*
[43] ibid. p 23.
[44] ibid. page 23.

That these dishes, and, to a great extent, what is known in America as 'pizza', are American constructs is in no doubt. That they are a part of American food culture similarly is indisputable. But a difficulty arises when we try to describe them as 'American cuisine'. We can't revert to Revel's distinction that 'Cuisine stems from two sources: a popular one and an erudite one', because he goes on to assert that the first 'has the advantage of being linked to the soil'[45] which none of those popular American foods are. Although it could easily be argued that America is primarily an urban culture, and, unlike the cuisines Revel analyses, the American versions are urban-based. Like soul food, which, although it was linked to the soil, came to fruition in the cities.

In *Paradox of Plenty*, Levenstein writes that: 'The rise of black nationalism in the late 1960s had bought a new appreciation for the southern black culinary tradition, now called "soul food"', and that 'On New Year's Eve, well-off urban blacks ostentatiously eschewed steak and roast beef for the ham hocks, peas and collard greens of their rural forebears.'[46] Such cynicism can't deny the fact that from that time on the street, as Tracy Poe writes, corners of African American neighbourhoods were 'crowded with rib joints, chicken takeout stands and fish markets.' But, she goes on to say, in accord with Levenstein but somewhat more precisely and sympathetically, 'until 1963, when Malcolm X recorded his life story for Alex Haley, there was no such thing as "Soul Food."'[47] As southern African Americans, however, began 'percolating' into the neighbourhoods of their northern brothers and sisters, they brought with them their 'southern rural culture', including music, language idioms and what became, eventually, soul food.

Culturally, this food represented many of the problems associated with African American culture in the twentieth century, and was

[45] *Culture and Cuisine* page 19.
[46] *Paradox of Plenty* page 218.
[47] 'The Origins of Soul Food in Black Urban Identity' page 5.

entangled with that complexity. Poe writes: 'The "discovery" of a distinctly African American cuisine in the middle decades of the twentieth century articulated a multi-dimensional unity among urban African Americans centred on their heritage as Africans, slaves, sharecroppers, and industrial workers.'[48] The food was
an amalgam of their African past, their slave past, and ingredients found in the new land resembling the foods they had left behind – for example the American sweet potato which resembled the African yam – and others imported from Africa and cultivated on American soil – peanuts, known as 'guba' on the West coast of Africa and as 'goobers' in America to this day – watermelon and okra. 'Slave cooks,' as Poe observes, 'created a new cuisine with the corn meal and cured pork that were the daily staples on the plantation.'[49] And so was born not just a cuisine, but a distinctive and easily recognisable food culture, one which obeys Revel's stricture that a popular cuisine is linked to the soil.

The unifying element running through all those stories of culinary creation is language. Dealing more broadly with Australian culture in general, Julian Meyrick writes: 'The accident of English allows us to free-ride the cultural goods and services of the two international powers that have so far dominated our fate, Britain and the US.' He goes on to point out that unlike Israel, bilingual Canada, and I would add Mauritius and New Orleans: 'Our quest for independence did not involve the assertion of a separate linguistic identity' with the result that we are a net cultural importer.'[50] Yet we did transform the English we brought with us in ways that we did not with the food. As philologist Gerhard Leitner points out 'mainstream Australian English, the dominant variety of English, owes everything to Australia's Anglo-Celtic heritage.'[51] Leitner also discusses the various

[48] ibid. p 6
[49] ibid. page10.
[50] Julian Meyrick 'Does Australia 'get' culture?' The Conversation 7 October 2013.
[51] *Australia's Many Voices* page 2.

pidgins and creoles that have formed since European occupation, the linguistic equivalent of cuisines.[52]

Even within what he calls AusE (Australian English) there are regional variations in words particularly those used to describe foods. For example, across Australia, the world 'rockmelon describes *Cucumis melo*, but in south eastern Australia it is often replaced with the word 'canteloupe'; the large numbers of names for the simple *Frankfurt* – described as a small red sausage usually eaten with tomato sauce and mostly at parties. Responses elicited from a group of Australians when shown a photograph of this sausage by Leitner included: 'sausage, banger, cheerio, hot dog, saveloy, cocktail frankfurter, Frankfurt or frank.'[53] Leitner goes on to source these names to their often quite specific origins. Yet in spite of the existence of an Australian English and the broad range of local words for foods, we persisted with our Anglo-Celtic culinary traditions, either from choice or, as Meyrick suggests, cultural inertia due to the 'accident of English.' Did this change when the culture was invaded by predominantly southern European refugees from a war-torn Europe? Yes, but in much more complex ways.

Enter the other: 1950s and 1960s

> We had left behind more than a country when we got off the boat from Italy and went to live in the migrant hostel: we'd left behind an entire culture. And in daily life, that culture was expressed in the preparation and eating of food. It was a feeling, touching, smelling culture. And it was anathema to our new neighbours.[54]
> Stefano Manfredi

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[52] I have previously outlined the existence of a Torres Strait Islands 'creole' cuisine.
[53] *Australia's Many Voices* page 257.
[54] *Fresh From Italy* pages 10/11 Many other feeling, touching, smelling cultures were now jostling Anglo-Celtic blandness.

In the introduction to the book *Wogfood: an oral history with recipes*, a story is told of sitting next to an elderly woman on a flight from Melbourne, and her reaction to the in-flight meal presented to the author and the woman:

> I lifted the foil flap on my plate and on it was airline lasagne. I noticed my neighbour, having placed her bag beside her, cautiously lifting hers, peering in and poking at it apprehensively with her fork, as one would a slug in the lettuce. “What's the mystery?” she asked, perhaps to no one in particular, but I answered anyway. “Lasagne” I said, “a layer of pasta, cheese, tomato sauce and probably mince.” She continued to poke at it before pushing it away with a sigh, adding “I'm too old.”[55]

None of the ingredients of that lasagne would have been unfamiliar to that woman – flour, water, eggs, minced meat, tomato and cheese. But it was the way in which they were constructed, put together and served that was foreign to one whose tastes in food had been set in the 1940s and 1950s. It was, to her, as outlined by Pasi Falk,[56] firstly ‘inedible’ in the sense that it was not seen as something which would have been accepted by her community. That distinction of edible/inedible extends from the choice of foodstuffs to – in this instance – ‘the means of food elaboration’,[57] the way in which the ingredients were transformed from raw to cooked. Furthermore, it was not ‘real food’ : that is, food that is both ‘good’ in a sensory fashion and ‘right’ in cultural terms: both must be present for a food to be acceptable. If the same ingredients had been presented as minced meat on toast with tomato sauce, sprinkled with cheese, it would have been accepted: same ingredients, different form. Lasagne Lady (or

[55] *Wogfood* page 1.
[56] *The Consuming Body.*
[57] ibid. page 70.

rather Anti-Lasagne Lady) had grown up in a curious food culture. Rather than eating Waverley Root's 'food (that) is a function of the soil'[58] the food stuffs she had grown up with were brought from somewhere else: the raw ingredients of her diet were exotic to the land. And secondly, the methods of elaboration of that food – Lévi-Strauss' 'nature-culture transformation'[59] – were both narrow in choice and also devised elsewhere, in a country and culture that she only really knew second hand. As David Malouf writes: 'Yorkshire Pudding was Australian. It was what we had always eaten. What else could it be?'[60]

As commonplace and recognizable as the raw ingredients of the meal were, their cultural transformation rendered them inedible. Falk goes on to discuss the food of others – in this case Italians – and our food. 'The general precondition for the others' food to be conceived of as edible for 'us' , Falk argues, is the relativization of their 'otherness' through a common denominator which puts us and them under the same umbrella – for example as 'different kinds of human beings.'[61] This 'food of the other' dichotomy operated both ways in the post war period in Australia. The massive post war influx of migrants and refugees from the social and economic chaos of Europe following World War Two brought with them more than their hard to pronounce names and impossible to understand languages.[62] They brought their food cultures. They had no interest in what food we had here. And we, initially, had no interest in the food they brought with them. This, initially, caused friction. In *Wogfood*, there are many stories of these culinary clashes.

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[58] *The Food of France* page 3.
[59] *Anthropology and Myth. Lectures 1951-82* page 39.
[60] 'Made in England: Australia's British Inheritance' page 19.
[61] *The Consuming Body* pages 79-80.
[62] In 1945, there were 7,512 'Permanent Overseas Arrivals' – migrants – excluding those from the UK. In 1950, 164,640, then from 1961 to 1970 there were 1,380,055 arrivals. Between January 1945 and June 1975, citizenship was granted to 962,765 what we once called 'New Australians.' Figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Maria La Spina arrived with her family from Sicily in 1955. When she went to school in Melbourne, she and her sister were the only two Italians. No one could understand them but they understood that they had to take their lunch to school:

> Sliced bread just wasn't heard of where we came from so we used to buy the *pane* and Mum would slice it and we'd take these two bricks with a bit of salami between them. All the kids would come around, and kids can be so cruel, they used to point and laugh at us and we'd cringe and hide, and nobody could understand us.[63]

They thought if they had sliced bread like all the other children, they'd fit in: their 'otherness' would be hidden. Their father took them to a shop where Italian was spoken, and the shopkeeper explained what kind of bread they needed, white sliced:

> 'Dad asked what did they have in their bread and the guy said Vegemite and peanut butter - yuk, no way!
> We weren't going to eat that, and Dad said, look, you'll just have salami sandwiches and we said alright. The first day back with our lunch, we were wrapped! We had the same bread as everybody else. We get to school and we sit in the lunch shed and we pull out our lunch box and the kids are looking in our sandwiches to see what we've got and it was Friday. Oooooh, they said, look, salami, you can't have that, and they went to the nun and said look, meat on Friday – and we had to throw them in the bin! So they got us anyway. After that – no more – we never took our lunch to school. [64]

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[63] *Wogfood* page 97
[64] ibid.

This antipathy to otherness cut both ways. And it would appear that even as late as 1968, when a young Bill Marchetti arrived with his family at the Bonegilla migrant camp in north eastern Victoria, the quality of the food had not improved:

> An army camp in a dustbowl… The food was disgusting, unbelievable, army mess food. I remember walking past the kitchen and all you could smell was mutton, everything was mutton fat.[65]

But it was around this time that saw the beginnings of a dissolution of the membrane of separation. Rosa Matto's family arrived in the 1960s, and settled in the Adelaide suburb of Prospect, which, unlike predominantly Italian Thebarton, was mixed. The Mattos lived next door to a traditional Australian family. Matto tells the story:

> My father hated the smell of lamb roasts – a lot of Italians do – I love them. On Sunday morning, all of Prospect would have this smell. My father's usual habit was to get up in the morning, open all the windows and go into the garden. On Sundays, he'd get up at the usual time, and shut all the doors and windows tight to keep the smell out. Our neighbours, the Greys – Aunty Bubs and Uncle Tom we'd call them – would always give me and my brother a roast potato which we thought was fabulous – my mother couldn't roast potatoes – but we weren't allowed to bring them inside, so we had to eat them in the garden.[66]

Matto and her younger brother had made friends with the neighbours and had acquired a taste for their food. Matto's father 'gave us the impression we [Italians] were better than anyone else [Anglo-Celts]

[65] ibid. pages 121 and 122. In 1951, there was a riot in the Bonegilla migrant camp, partly caused by cultural insensitivity. With a population of 3000 Italians, the camp authorities put Russians in charge of the kitchen. They served pasta with sugar.
[66] ibid. page 139. Marchetti grew up to be chef and owner of Marchetti's Latin and the Tuscan Grill in Melbourne.

when it seemed to me we weren't at all because all the things I longed for and wanted were all Australian and Anglo-Saxon.'[67]

To go back to Falk, for the food of the others to be seen as edible, then we have to shift our perception of the other so we see them in relation to ourselves. As Falk puts it 'for example, as different kinds of human being.' Once Aunty Bubs and Uncle Tom were accepted as human beings, just like Mama and Papa, albeit different, with 'desirable things', their food could be eaten. For others, it was too late: 'I'm too old' the elderly lady on the flight from Melbourne said somewhat ruefully. Such suspicion of unfamiliar foods was coming to an end.In a 1982 paper, psychologist Paul Rozin postulates an evolution of food choices, from the fear of new foods – neophobia – to the desire for variety – neophilia.[68] Within a very short time span – from the1950s to the1980s – Australia leapt from neophobia to neophilia. In an interview for this thesis (see Appendix 1) restaurateur Jennice Kersh said: 'We have embraced multicultural food more than any country in the world.'[69] But before examining our general tendency to neophilia, we will observe one curious anomaly: The Chinese Paradox.

Racism against Chinese immigrants to Australia began early. Its most obvious manifestation, the so-called White Australia Policy, began as the *Chinese Immigrants Regulation and Restriction Act* 1861 and was not repealed until 1958. In 1937, two local officials in their report to the Board of Inquiry into Land and Land Industries of the Northern Territory opined that: 'Our great ideal of a "White Australia" is worth living, striving and paying for.'[70] But apart from the official slights, it was the daily indignities, the jeering of children, the petty restrictions which must have tried the patience. Businessman King Nam Jang,

[67] *Wogfood* page 139.
[68] Cited by Falk *The Consuming Body* page 81.
[69] Ms Kersh was comparing this culinary acceptance of all cuisines with our rejection of indigenous foods.
[70] *Citizens* p 457.

whose ship's providoring business was in The Rocks, told historian Shirley Fitzgerald that '[During World War Two] … all the Chinese were registered. We all had a badge with a number on it. To get rice, we had to go to a certain place to buy the rice and you had to show your registered number, otherwise you didn't get any.'[71] Writing of the continued and highly publicised raids on the 'opium dens' of Chinatown in the late 1940s Fitzgerald concludes that 'the negative outcome of the image of Chinatown was assured. Here was a place where the 'otherness' of the Chinese was carefully and consciously linked to criminality and the underworld.'[72]

How closely is this 'otherness' allied to visual appearance?
In her paper 'The Tyranny of Appearance', Carole Tan notes that it is easier for a new migrant of European appearance to be accepted as a 'real Australian' than a Chinese Australian whose family had been here for decades. 'The insidious effects of facialisation/racialisation on people of Chinese descent in Australia is referred to as "the tyranny of appearance" by William Yang'[73] she wrote. Is this the source of The Chinese Paradox?

We rejected the Chinese, yet ate their food. To refer back, again, to Falk, the precondition for the 'others' food to be conceived of as edible for 'us' is the 'relativization' of their 'otherness' How did we 'relativize' the otherness of the Chinese? The Chinese, as a racial group, have been in Australia since the 1840s, when they were imported as indentured labourers to make up for the lack of workers after the end of transportation. In the 1850s, thousands arrived to mine the gold at Ballarat and Bendigo. The first Chinese restaurant, owned by Chinese butcher and eating-house owner John Alloo, opened on the goldfields in Ballarat around 1855, serving both Chinese and Australian

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[71] *Red Tape, Gold Scissors* page 169. I remember a faded sign on a wall in Thomas Street Haymarket opposite Paddy's Market: 'Aliens queue for rice here.'
[72] ibid. page 126.
[73] 'The Tyranny of Appearance': Chinese Australian Identities and the Politics of Difference' page 68.

meals.[74] Since then, the Chinese restaurant has proliferated across the country to the point where, according to Shun Wah and Aitkin, in 1999, there were 3000.[75] And we ate their food – albeit a heavily Westernised version of it – without fully accepting them as equal human beings.[76] The complexity of our relationship with the Chinese – and the way in which each side 'relativized' the other – is outlined, perhaps unconsciously, in this anecdote told to Shun Wah and Aitkin by Chinese Australian cattle breeder Peter Young:

> One Tamworth restaurant had a special line in feeding drunks. It was the only restaurant open after the pubs shut. It seemed okay to the customers to play up in a Chinese restaurant, because they were Australian and the owners were Chinese, so they would be as obnoxious and abusive as possible. Funny the people who ran the place didn't seem to mind. The cook would come out with the chopper and threaten the customers throwing food. It was all part of the show. There was a kind of a stand-off. The drunks didn't want the Chinese restaurant to close down or there'd be nowhere to eat, and the Chinese didn't want the drunks to stop coming because they were a good source of money.[77]

This anecdote encapsulates the complexity of our relations at that time – and perhaps even now for some – with the Chinese amongst us. Young says that the town drunks, presumably young males, felt that they could 'play up in the restaurant because the owners were Chinese, that is, not on the same level as (white) Australians. The Chinese perspective can only be imagined. The 'gwei lo' (red devil as

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[74] *Banquet: Ten Courses to Harmony* page 12
[75] ibid. Introduction. According to Banquet, the first Chinese landowner, Mak Sai Ying arrived in Botany Bay in 1817.
[76] *Goodbye Culinary Cringe* page 8And Chinese food wasn't restricted to eating out. Cookery editor of *New Idea* magazine, Anne Marshall, told Ripe that in the 1970s, when she published Chinese cookery supplements, which she did twice a year, they pushed weekly sales figures up by 50,000.
[77] Ibid. page 119.

they called us) were uncultured drunks, but they spent money. And they could be controlled by the appearance of the chopper which confirmed, for the drunken Australians, the latent brutality of 'the heathen Chinee'.[78] Relativisation to mutual advantage.

There were Italian and Greek restaurants in Australia prior to 1945. But the Italians tended, like Mario's and Fasoli's in Melbourne, to be for the upper classes, and the Greeks, on the whole, served Australian food and hid their own food or served it only to Greek customers. The café (now restaurant) Xenos in Crows Nest first opened in 1969, and even then, on the conservative lower north shore, 'if there was a whiff of garlic anywhere near the place' founder Peter Xenos told me, 'they wouldn't come in.'[79] They couldn't come in when the doors were locked. As Lex Marinos writes in his memoir of his grandfather, 'The second world existed when the shop was closed.' It was then that the local Greeks – other café owners family and friends – would produce their own food: 'Lamb baked with garlic and oregano. Cabbage rolls. Spinach and beans in olive oil…Food that we ate. Food that was never on the café menu. I thought it was our secret food.'[80] But the other element of the Greek café was its introduction of American style, not just in food like the hamburger, and beverages like the soda fountain with its milk shakes and Spider sodas, but in their streamlined art deco architecture. In country and city, the Greek café or milk bar provided a curious amalgam of Hellenic Australian and American culture. Anna Funder quotes one time waitress Mary McDermott: 'Greek cafes were a little bit of Hollywood glamour, a little bit of American life…That's why there were called the Niagara, the

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[78] A joke my father used to tell casts light on this relationship. A European Australian found himself sitting next to Chinese man at a banquet. When the Australian passed something to him he would say 'you like-ee salt-ee? You like-ee bread-ee?' After the meal, the Chinese man was called to the front of the room and gave an erudite speech on current politics in China. In English. When returned to the table he turned to his companion and said 'you like-ee speech-ee?'
[79] Pers. Comm.
[80] *Selling an American Dream: Australia's Greek Café* 'Papou's Café' page 9.

Monterey, the California and the Golden Gate.'[81] As Funder points out, many of these Greek cafe owners had worked in America before coming to Australia and had brought these design ideas with them.

There was one other group of migrants who came in their thousands after 1945 who could not be described as 'the other' and whose food culture fit right in. Indeed, for many of them the food they found in Australia was better than any they had ever known: the British migrants who arrived under the assisted package schemes, the first of which began in 1947. They were known, colloquially, as 'ten pound Poms' because that is what they paid per head for passage: at one time children under 18 were free. The desire was, post-second World War Two, with the White Australia Policy still in force, to 'stock' the country with good British stock. In 1946 Arthur Calwell, first minister in the new Ministry of Immigration argued that for every foreign migrant there will be 'ten people from the United Kingdom.'[82] It didn't work out like that. By 1951, they settled for 50 per cent, which was only achieved in the 1960s, the peak years. The peak year was 1969, when almost 80,000 Britons migrated. Even so, 'About one and a half million people emigrated to Australia from the United Kingdom between 1945 and 1982.'[83] Unlike the non-British migrants, they were not dispossessed, but were still escaping from the post-war austerity of Britain and were lured by advertisements and brochures making a purely material 'pitch'. For example, promises made in *Australia Invites You*, a brochure published by the Chief Migration Officer at Australia House on behalf of the Department of Immigration were for 'A high Standard of Living', and that 'a very high proportion of families have motor cars' and 'Australia's famous climate'. According to an Australian journalist based in London they boiled down to two things: 'sun and meat'.[84] In spite of such promises 'Almost a quarter of the

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[81] ibid. page19.
[82] *Ten Pound Poms: Australia's invisible migrants* page 30.
[83] ibid. page 34.
[84] ibid. page 37.

post-war British migrants returned to Britain, though some…re-emigrated to Australia.'[85] Those who stayed merged successfully into what the Chief Migration Officer told them was 'A British way of life.' So successfully did they merge that they have been called 'Australia's invisible migrants.' And, as such, they played no part in the multiculinary revolution that was taking place.

Another post-1945 influence on Australian food and food ways came directly from America with the soldiers on leave ('overpaid, oversexed and over here') during World War Two with their cigarettes and chocolate bars – in short supply for the locals – and less obvious influences. Norman Lee was born in 1913 on the first floor of the building now housing the tea and feng shui shop Live Craft Centre, and lived in and around Sydney's Chinatown for all but 16 of his 93 years. Speaking of Dixon Street during the war he said:

> There were cook shops back then, they didn't call them restaurants. It was good food, genuine stuff. Most of the customers were Chinese, only the Australian drunks came then… When the Americans came over during World War Two, they would bring their Australian girlfriends here. The girls liked the food and brought their families, and after the war the Chinese restaurants began to boom.[86]

Another American influence was coffee replacing tea after dinner. And although this coincided with the influence of Italian coffee with the introduction of the first espresso machines,[87] most of the coffee first drunk – and still drunk – in Australia – was instant, products of the invasion of multinationals such as Nestlé.[88] Domestically, as

[85] ibid. page 14.
[86] 'Chinatown', *the (sydney) magazine*, February 2007 page 48.

[87] Although there are several claimants for the first espresso machine, a strong one is that for the Gaggia machine imported in 1952 for Melbourne's University Café which still hangs on the wall.
[88] Indeed as Symons points out in *One Continuous Picnic*, Nestlé product Nescafé arrived in 1939, and was made locally from 1947 page 267.

documented by Sheridan 'The immediate post-war years in the *Weekly* saw a vogue for 'American' food sensations such as mixing sweet and savoury – casserole tongue with raisin sauce, pineapple Swiss liver' are among the recipe suggestions.[89]

Little is left in the domestic sphere of the predilection for American combinations and dishes, although Shepherd states that the barbecue came here as an American invention. This is perhaps true of the word, but the idea of cooking outdoors was around long before. *The Australian National Dictionary* supports Sheridan's assertion by not listing the word barbecue, but only 'barbie', the earliest citation being 1976, and of such cultural significance it has entered the language as 'a few snags short of a barbie'.

Of greater importance than any American domestic dishes was the gradual insinuation of convenience foods – cake mixes, packaged sauces, TV dinners and supermarkets undoubtedly as a result of our adoption of American marketing and retailing. The supermarket had enormous influence on the quality of the food that we ate, but little on the culture. As Michael Symons wrote, 'supermarkets prefer longer life, which tends to lower quality…They prefer hard tomatoes and frozen chickens…food becomes cheap, so cheap that it's hardly worth eating.'[90] Cheapness, in a land without food culture, often becomes the only criterion, just as the judge of a good meal is its size: a steak so big it hung over the edges of a plate was, and often still is, the measure of 'a good feed.' Although Shepherd does note large corporations like Kraft bought up successful ethnic food companies at this time in the USA, and proceeded to sell, via the supermarkets, a mix of products and brands which included frozen and canned facsimiles of the foods of the cultures which had begun to have some influence on Australian eating habits. But as far as both domestic and

[89] 'Eating the Other: Food and cultural difference in the Australian Women's Weekly in the 1960s' p 322. Recipe suggestions *Australian Women's Weekly*, June 29 1946 page 46.
[90] *The Shared Table* page 18.

commercial cooking was concerned, these food cultures were kept in silos. But it was around this time that a new cuisine crept into the Australian lexicon: continental.

In a 2003 *Quarterly Essay*, David Malouf wrote:

> There was an intermediate period in the '50s when food was represented on menus all up and down the country by T-bone steak, often in the form of 'Steak and the Works' which in Brisbane at least mean spaghetti, chips and salad (nothing more transitional, surely, than this early version of fusion). The first clear move from an entrenched English style to a rather eclectic 'something different', half Italo-American, half Central European, and the first timid indication we were ready to break away and experiment.[91]

That 'something different' fusion – seen mainly as a mixture of dishes other than the traditional Anglo-Celtic on menus of the period – was soon being called 'continental'. In *The Daily Mirror* in June 1963, in the column 'Goings on About Town', the pseudonymous Elizabeth Pitt described the food at Milano's as 'good continental food.'[92] Jean Duruz writes of a dessert 'served in a 'continental' cafe in Newcastle in the early 1960s.'[93] There were, as well, continental delis, continental cakes – it was a grab-bag word meaning any foods from the cuisines of the 'new Australians' who had recently appeared, in droves, in our midst. The word 'fusion' used by Malouf is not quite correct. It was, rather, a jumble, as can be seen on two of the following menus from that period:[94]

Dinner for State Parliamentarians NSW in the

[91] 'Made in England: Australia's British Inheritance.'
[92] 'Goings on About Town' column, *Daily Mirror* 24 June 1963 'Elizabeth Pitt' was my mother, Gloria Newton.
[93] 'Food as nostalgia: Eating the fifties and sixties'.
[94] Recipes from the ephemera collection Mitchell Library, Box 3, 1930-1999.

Parliamentary Refreshment Room 9th October 1951

Soup.

Potage Tyrolienne

Fish.

Fried Filet of Bream

Entrees.

Victoria Steaks and Onions

Tomato, Eggs and Bacon

Spaghetti Italienne

Cold Joints.

Oxford Brawn

Devon Sausage

York Ham

Corned silverside

Ox tongue

Pickled Pork

Hot Joints.

Roast beef au jus

Roast Seasoned Veal

Poultry.

Boiled Fowl and Ham, Parsley Sauce, Vegetables in Season

Sweets.

Baked Caramel custard

American Fruit Slice and Custard Sauce

Vanilla Ice Cream

Fruit

Cheese

Civic Luncheon

at the Oaks Hotel Albion Park

to commemorate

The Centenary of Local Government in the

Municipality of Shellharbour

Saturday 10th October 1959

Entree;

Indian Curry and Rice

Curried Chicken and Rice

Main Course:

Cold Chicken

Cold Leg Ham

Roll and Butter Mayonnaise

Salads in Season

Pickles Nuts Sweets

Sweets:

Fruit Salad and Ice Cream

Wine Trifle Jelly

Tea or Coffee

State Dinner for the King and Queen of Thailand

Parliament House Canberra August 1962

Lobster and Prawn Cocktail

Fillets of John Dory

Roast Turkey and Ham

In the domestic sphere, there's very little evidence of American influence, but some for continental food. In *The Australian Women's Weekly Picture Cookery* printed in 1952, apart from American Meatburgers there is little change from the cookbooks of the 1930s and 1940s, with four mutton dishes and each of the chop dishes specifying either lamb or mutton. And was the case pre-war, there was an enormous number of cake, biscuit and sweet recipes: 67 pages of them. Other indications of the time included instructions to boil baby carrots for 20 minutes, and older specimens for an hour; and that 'Poultry requires to be hung for at least 2-3 days after being killed.'

In a later but undated edition of *The Australian Women's Weekly Cookery Book* [95] under the guidance of food editor Leila Howard (nom de plume of Betty Dunleavy) there are clear signs of American and international – or perhaps continental – influence. Among the American dishes, recipes for 'Oysters Rockfeller' [96] and a true Chicken Maryland (the earlier one in the 1946?) *The Schauer Australian Cookery Book*[97] stews this dish which is in reality crumbed and deep-fried) and 'Prawns Jumbolaya'. In the impressively comprehensive but often culinarily naïve International Dishes section are the following (numbers indicate recipes): Austria 7; Brazil 1; Ceylon 1; China 8 (including mushrooms and tomato chicken chop suey); Czechoslovakia1; Denmark 1; France 9; Germany; 2; Greece 2; Holland 5; Hungary 3; India 1; Indonesia 4 including meat kabobs;

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[95] An email from food AWW food editor Pamela Clark in answer to my query states: 'As I understand it, it could have been printed somewhere between 1940 and 1949, but, from what I know of the history of the place, I reckon it was 1956, possibly a second print – and the look of the food fits that year too.'

[96] In the Oxford Companion to Food, Davidson states that Oysters Rockefeller originated in New Orleans in the early twentieth century. Wikipedia says they were created at the New Orleans restaurant Antoine's in 1899 named for John D. Rockefeller the richest American of his time for the intense richness of the sauce.

[97] 1946? Because the date on my copy is missing, and this is a deduction.

Italy 1 (zabaglione); Japan 1; Norway 1; Pakistan 1; Russia 3; Spain 1 (fried eggs in oil as done in Spain) South Africa 1; Thailand 1 (mu-tom-kem Thai sweet pork made with one pound pork, 7tblspns sugar, 5tblspns soy, pepper, clove garlic (optional) and 5 hard boiled eggs).

But what about…?

> Our chosen 'national' sweet dishes are loved everywhere…pavlova, lamingtons and Anzac biscuits are embraced by Australians in the heart and on the plate.[98]
> Sarah Jane Shepherd Black

When explaining the premise of this work to friends or colleagues, I'm often met with protestations, sometimes angry, and then attempts to disprove that premise: 'But what about…'.[99] Here, I'm going to analyse the list of dishes and the one cuisine offered in an attempt to counter the core premise.

There is one major exception to the general rule that there are (or were) no regional food cultures in Australia. And that is the food of the Barossadeutsch, that group of immigrants who arrived in South Australia having sailed from the port of Cuxhaven, downstream from Hamburg, in July 1841. They were Lutherans, and were escaping what they saw as their persecution which followed the unification of the Lutheran and Reformed churches, a process instigated by Kaiser Frederick William III in 1798. When the journey began, they were 270, but 50 died on the voyage. They came from the provinces of Posen, Brandenburg and Silesia in Prussia, and although many did not know

[98] 'Tried and Tested' page 365.
[99] At the Sydney Writers' Festival in 2013, I moderated a panel discussion entitled 'What Our Food Says About Us.' The panellists were Stephanie Alexander, Pauline Nguyen (*Secrets of the Red Lantern*) and blogger Lorraine Elliott. I introduced the premise of this thesis as a question – that is, why is there in no Australian food culture, and no Australian cuisine? I was shouted down by both the audience and Alexander.

each other, they were led by a pastor, Gotthard Daniel Fritsche, who had 'ministered to their several parishes in Prussia.'[100]

About half of those surviving the voyage went to the Barossa Valley and took up land at what they called Bethany or New Silesia, and carved out those small, mixed farms so rare in Australia. They were followed by other families from other parts of Silesia, and what is now Poland. Earlier migrations of German people had settled in the Adelaide Hills. But the regional food culture and cuisine described as Barossadeutsch came from the Barossa Valley where 'the original German culture remained strongest'[101] in spite of a surrounding English-speaking community.

What's more, in the tradition of other expatriated food communities – Mauritian, Cajun – many of the recipes which arrived with the new settlers were adapted to incorporate local ingredients, most notably rote grütze, a red berry dessert from Mecklenburg, Brandenburg and northern Germany. Traditionally made with red berries or gooseberries, the Barossa adaptation uses red wine grapes from the surrounding vineyards to replace the berries. Other adaptations include Silesian steuselkuchen which once again substitutes grapes – fresh sultanas – for fresh fruit; and Schlesisches Himmelreich, Silesian heaven, a savoury dish of 'smoked pork (eg bacon) , dried fruit (eg apples, plums and pears) and dumplings.'[102] The Barossa version substitutes pie-melons or stewed quinces for the dried fruit. An interesting sidelight on the food of the Barossadeutsch is the contact of early German settlers with indigenous Australians. Heuzenroeder writes that, as it was in their nature to use wild foods in their homeland, they were vitally interested in what there was to forage in their new country. 'Aboriginal people showed them what they

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[100] Heuzenroeder, Angela *Barossa Food* page 4. Much of the information on these people and their food comes from this, the definitive book on the subject.
[101] ibid. page 8.
[102] ibid. page 9.

could gather, what was good food.'[103] Plants pointed out to them included murnong, native cranberries (*Astroloma humifusum*), bitter quandong (*Santalum murrayanum*) and wild currants (*Acrotiche depressa*) the last of which was used in making Native-currant jam.

And yet, although 'All the elements were there in the Barossa to keep the original culture intact for a good long while'[104] the many dishes created there neither broke out of the valley nor flourished as one would imagine such a vibrant food culture should have. The reasons for this are many, foremost being the influence of two world wars. As Heuzenroeder wrote: 'If any dishes were declining in popularity, the 1914-1918 World War and its aftermath sent them underground.'[105] It was not a good idea, at the time, to show your German background. Names were anglicised, as were the names of dishes: the round yeast dough delicacy known in German as Berliner pfannkuchen became a Kitchener bun. The 1939-45 war would also prove to be a time for German-Australians to duck for cover. Apart from the uncertainties of war, there was intermarriage with the locals as pointed out by Heuzenroeder: 'The English invasion into Barossa kitchens continued as, little by little, children in the third generation of Lutheran families began to marry partners outside the Lutheran church.'[106] In introducing a list of local dishes Heuzenroeder wrote in 1999 'now is a good moment to look at a list of foods from the early communities that numbers of people make or at least remember today.'[107]

At least one other minor and limited (in distribution) cuisine has arisen in the Torres Strait Islands. This group of 274 islands inhabit the 150 kilometres between Cape York Peninsula and Papua New Guinea PNG). Most are recognized as belonging to Australia while a few are administered by PNG. This is Australia's most porous border,

[103] ibid. page 148.
[104] ibid. page 8.
[105] ibid. page 14.
[106] ibid. page 13.
[107] ibid. page 9.

and consequently its culture and cuisine is a mélange of Melanesian, Polynesian and Anglo-Celtic sources. As Ron Edwards wrote: 'A Fijian or Tahitian would recognize most of the dishes, and their ingredients, but he would call them by different names.'[108] He went on to explain:

> As the Torres Strait Islands became a melting pot for
> a number of different cultures their cooks adopted
> a little of each regional style that seem appropriate, changing them here and there to fit in with the local tastes and available ingredients.[109]

The influences came from as far afield as the Philippines, other Pacific Islands, Malaysia via the beche-de-mer and pearl shell fishers, the Asian storekeepers who followed the British, the Maori and those mentioned above. But the recipes he collected are, Edwards wrote, 'those of the Islanders, not necessarily of the Islands' and he doubts that any individual islander would claim to have tried them all: they were collected from many individuals.'[110] Nevertheless, they represent the kinds of dishes that should have, by now, developed in the rest of the country and it raises the question, once again: why this did not happen? So what of dishes originating from the Anglo-Celtic population?

In the children's book *Possum Magic*, author Mem Fox has her protagonists Grandma Poss and Hush set off on a quest to find the 'people' food that will make Hush visible again:

> They ate Anzac biscuits in Adelaide,
> mornay and minties in Melbourne,
> steak and salad in Sydney

[108] *Traditional Torres Strait Island Cooking* page 10.
[109] ibid. page 11.
[110] ibid.

and pumpkin scones in Brisbane.
… in the far north of Australia,
… they found a vegemite sandwich.[111]

After further travels and more ‘Australian’ food – pavlova in Perth and a lamington in Hobart – Hush re-appears. From then on, every year, on Hush’s birthday, she and Grandma Poss ate a Vegemite sandwich, a piece of Pavlova and a half a lamington so that Hush would remain visible. In her paper *Without Food Everything is Less than Nothing*, Carolyn Daniel surmises that ‘By eating these significantly Australian foods Hush not only becomes visible: she can also be recognized as having a legitimate place within Australian society.’[112] That these foods are culturally Australian with the exception of ‘mornay’ and ‘salad’ is not in dispute. That they constitute an Australian food culture in the sense in which I have defined it in the introduction is only possible if we accept industrial foods.

I have already discussed Vegemite, but in *Bold Palates* Santich points out that the Anzac biscuit we know today was nothing like the original, which was manufactured by Arnott’s and called the Anzac Wafer or tile and supplied by the company to the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps during the World War One, a reality somewhat at odds with the cultural construct of women baking batches of Anzac biscuits to send to the troops at the front. At time of writing, the history of the Anzac biscuit is being revised, but nothing I have seen has negated what Santich has written: this could change. Indeed, arguments about the provenance of these foods are rife. At least two papers have been written on the Pavlova – was it invented in Australia or New Zealand? – and a book has been published on the

[111] In the 1983 book, Fox has Grandma make Hush invisible to keep her from harm. When Hush wants to be made visible again so that she can see herself, Grandma has to remember the spell.
[112] *Without Food Everything is Less than Nothing* page 278.

lamington.[113] But these arguments about provenance, in most cases, concern this work less than the size of the stage that these dramas are being played out on.

In his book *Convicted Tastes*, writing of the popular and much reviled by what he called the *beau monde* staples of the Australian table, the emblematic quaternity – lamington, pavlova, meat pie and Vegemite – Richard Beckett laments that 'none of them had ever played an important part in past or present food styles of the country.' This is somewhat missing the point. The reason these foods are so often mentioned is that there is little else available to represent Australian food. Later, he writes 'to enshrine [the pie] as an absolute in national cuisine would be, by example, to judge British cooking on the number of jellied eels and whelk stalls, or Italian on the consumption of pizza.' [114] The two foods chosen are actually examples of regional cuisines. Jellied eels, using eels from the River Thames, are representative of Cockney food; the pizza, while it has been adopted by the world (and is regarded by Americans as theirs), has its provenance in Naples. While neither could be 'enshrined' as absolutes in the cuisines of their respective countries and/or regions of origin, they are single dishes from a wide range representing the regional cuisines of those places.

Beckett does add two savoury dishes to the Australian repertoire: the spaghetti sandwich, which, he claimed, and understandably, 'really did appal Europeans who took over food bars after World War Two'[115] and camp pie, the Australian name for beef tinned primarily for export, first in the 1870s, to deal with the produce of excess herds of cattle. Camp pie was the tinned beef that remained at home. Beckett makes a mistake common to many when writing of 'regional food', conflating cuisine with produce. 'Australia taken region by region', he

[113] *The Lamington Enigma: a survey of the evidence*. From the evidence presented by French it would seem that the lamington is indeed an Australian creation, provenance a little murky, and hardly enough on which to build a cuisine.
[114] *Convicted Tastes* page 200.
[115] ibid. page 204.

writes, 'still offers a lot to delight the palate.' [116] He quotes from Donald Horne's book *Right way Don't Go Back* (1978) Horne's partner buying shelled crayfish legs and claws, and eating them washed down with two bottles of West End beer in their Robe hotel room. This is produce, not cuisine: a regional cuisine is constructed using regional produce. As Italian restaurateur Beppi Polese said: 'it's not the ingredients that make the cuisine, it's the cuisine that makes the ingredients.'[117] He cited pasta – which is after all, only flour and water, sometimes with eggs.

In *Lily on The Dustbin*, Nancy Keesing proffers some micro-regional dishes. She records 'muttai' which, she says, is 'green corn boiled (often in corned beef water) and eaten on the cob, the name is certainly local to the New South Wales North Coast.'[118] This was contributed by the poet Les Murray, who also contributed 'pommage', a coarse porridge of cracked maize. Keesing goes on to record dishes which are made of corned and/or smoked meat which she says have several names, some regional. One, 'red flannel hash' from cold minced corn beef, and another, also from the NSW north coast, 'Yankee Hash' the same as Red Flannel but with an egg on top.

In seeking 'muttai' all that could be found was a variety of Indian egg curries – there is no muttai in the *Australian National Dictionary*. Neither the *Australian National Dictionary* nor any other recognise pommage (or pomage). Red Flannel Hash is 'traditionally made in New England [in the United States] for breakfast, with leftovers from a boiled dinner the night before, and gets its name from the somewhat obvious similarity of its colors to red flannel plaid cloth.' [119] This would explain Yankee hash. Of those four examples, two are not to be found, one is a borrowing and the fourth a reference to the third. I'm

[116] ibid. page 206.
[117] *Wogfood* page 196.
[118] *Lily on the Dustbin* page 116.
[119] *simplyrecipes.com*

sure that such dishes exist/existed in very small communities, but doubt that they represent regional cuisines, especially as they no longer exist. And so, as we move into the late twentieth century how do the multiculinary food cultures, commercial and domestic begin to take shape?

Chapter 4

The multiculinary society emerges: Australia in the 1970s

> I wish to use the word 'multiculinarism' in a strong sense – to point not just to the presence of many cuisines but to the awareness of other cuisines, to mutual comparison and influence. And multiculinarism, in this sense, has the consequence of raising our consciousness of food.[1]
> Anthony Corones

I have demonstrated that we do not have an Australian food culture in the traditional sense, and have answered the first question of the project posed in the introduction: how it is that after more than 225 years, we have no Australian or regional Australian food culture, nor even any evidence – through dishes – of its more tangible and visible vector, cuisine? My task now, over the next three chapters, is to answer the second and third questions: what are the consequences for a nation and its people to have bypassed this important stage in the evolution of a society? And finally, if we do not have a food culture in the traditional sense, what do we have? I will be examining what that might be, and in particular the implications of Lévi-Strauss' assertion that 'a society's cookery is a language into which it translates its structure, unless it reluctantly and no less unwittingly reveals there its contradictions'[2] In other words, a society's cuisine is an unconscious code or language which reveals the structure of the society, and its relationship to the outside world. What, then, does the way we eat, both publically (in restaurants) and at home, reveal about us?

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[1] 'Multiculinarism and the Emergence of Gastronomy' *Proceedings of the Third Symposium of Gastronomy* 1987 page 18.
[2] *The Origin of Table Manners* page 495, my italics.

If, as Platine said, the British diet went directly from 'from Mediaeval barbarity to industrial decadence'[3] then the Australian diet went from T-bone steak with a dozen fried eggs,[4] from eating as sustenance to eating for pleasure and entertainment, from eating in to eating out to multiculinarity within the space of a decade, from the
1960s to the 1970s. In that short time frame, as a nation, Australians became aware of the food they ate. It moved from the edge of our consciousness, from something the 'little woman' or an anonymous chef prepared in the kitchen to a source of curiosity, pleasure and status. This change did not happen on the stroke of midnight 1969, nor was it uniform across the country. As Newman and Gibson wrote, 'rural and regional Australia…felt itself increasingly left behind by change.'[5] But the change did happen and it was profound. And we had to change more than what we ate. We had to change the way we viewed what we ate. Goody tells the story of the Scottish observer in the 1850s, while checking the wages of Chinese tea-pickers, observing that 'the poorest classes in China seem to understand the art of preparing their food much better than the same classes at home.'[6]

While the same could not be said of the 'poorest classes' in Australia (with the important exception of indigenous Australians following their traditional diets) profound changes in attitudes to and awareness of food and cooking – for the better – across large sections of the Australian community were taking place, and continue to do so. What brought this change about?

I'm livin' in the 70's
Eatin' fake food under plastic trees

[3] *Cooking, Cuisine and Class* page 154 Goody is quoting from Platine's paper 'Variations franco-britanniques' *L'Histoire* 5, October 1978 pages 102-103.
[4] From an interview with members of the East Maitland CWA Friday July 5, 2013. See Appendix 2.
[5] *Ordinary Lifestyles* page 89 See also comments on Appendix 2.
[6] *Cooking, Cuisine and Class* page 135.

My face gets dirty just walkin' around
I need another pill to calm me down[7]

To paraphrase another song (written of an earlier decade), the times they definitely were a'changing. There was Germaine Greer on the front page of *The Weekend Australian* of January 16 1972, 'bra-less and busty' as described by the journalist, launching her book *The Female Eunuch* in Australia. In the same issue a story on Nixon's imminent visit to China and another headlined 'Eton Head defends pot and permissive society.' By December of that year, there would be a radically new government led by Gough Whitlam, the first Labor government for twenty-three years. Among many reforms at this time was the formal abolition of the White Australia Policy in 1973 while the 'colourful' Al Grassby was the Minister for Immigration. The Spanish-Irish Grassby wore what were seen by the conservatively dressed men of the time as garish ties and shirts, and was constantly criticised and lampooned for doing so. But as Finkelstein points out:

> the sustained critical commentary against him in the mass media was…not about fashion but was a form of political attack. Grassby was a public figure bringing in significant cultural changes to a conservative electorate.[8]

Grassby became the champion of multiculturalism after a speech, *A Multi-Cultural Society for the Future*, which he delivered on 11 August 1973. This was a manifesto presented as a basis for migrant settlement, welfare and social-cultural policy, and went against prevailing public opinion.[9] Hand in hand with this commitment to

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[7] 'Living in the seventies' Skyhooks, lyrics by Greg Macainsh.
[8] 'The taste of boredom: McDonaldization and Australian Food Culture.'
[9] Contemporary opinion polls suggested that about 90 per cent of Australians were opposed to multicultural ideas at the time they emerged, according to a paper delivered at the tenth Biennial Conference of the *Australian Population Association entitled* 'The politics of the origins of multiculturalism: lobbying and the power of influence' by Mark Lopez.

multiculturalism goes a commitment to multiculinarism because 'cuisine cannot be separated from culture.'[10]

Another crucial element in this cultural and economic mix was the extraordinary rise in income and affluence in the post-war boom. Between June 1960 and June 1970, gross disposable income rose by 700 per cent.[11] This is the background against which Australian society went through major social changes and the birth of consumer society. It was the side effects of increased spending power that had the greatest effect on our eating habits. As already noted, writing on high cuisine in China during the Sung Dynasty, Michael Freeman proposed that such a cuisine 'requires a sizeable corps of critical, adventurous eaters, not bound by the tastes of their native region and willing to try unfamiliar food.' In the 1970s, all but one of those criteria were present among urban Australians who were beginning to eat out regularly. The missing attribute was 'critical' and that was about to be redressed, after a fashion.

James Goody writes that the cuisines of the major societies of Europe and Asia were shaped firstly by their practicing intensive forms of agriculture, and secondly, the employment of writing for a number of purposes, not just economic and administrative but literary and 'practical'.[12] I'd like to suggest a 1970s Australian variation on the Goody duality of plough and pen: jumbo jet and typewriter. In *Wogfood*, Bill Marchetti is quoted as saying: 'My big hero in this story is the Boeing 747. All of a sudden everybody could afford to get on a plane and fly to wherever they wanted and taste the food there.'[13] The first Boeing 747-238B, popularly named the Jumbo Jet, went into

[10] *Proceedings of the Third Symposium of Gastronomy* 1987 'Multiculinarism and the Emergence of Gastronomy' page 26.
[11] Gross Disposable Income, Australian Bureau of Statistics: June 1960: $3,257,000,000; June 1970: $6,728,000,000 June 1975: $14,095,000,000. By June 1980, it had risen to $25,385,000,000.
[12] *Cooking, Cuisine and Class* page 99.
[13] *Wogfood* page 125

service in September 1971.[14] And jump on Jumbos they did,[15] going to discover the other, coming home with a broadened perspective on food and wine. And not just to Europe, but to Asia. In her memoir, Australian chef Stephanie Alexander writes of her trip to Bali: 'Roadside stalls sold the delectable *babi guling* (roast suckling pig to locals – and I was quick to taste it too, carrying my portions away inside folded banana leaves.'[16] It was around this time that I also took my first trip out of the country, also to Bali, and discovered that kitchens were not all white-tiled and scrubbed clean, and that durian fruit smelt foul and tasted sublime. So many of us were making that pilgrimage that by 1984, Redgum could sing their hit song *I've Been to Bali Too.*

In his memoir, Tony Bilson writes: 'Australia in the 1970s was ready for change…Australians were curious and they wanted to travel.'[17] Bilson, with his then partner Gay, made a first trip to France in 1976, visiting, with introductions, some of the finest restaurants. They were just three of the eight million (out of a population of 13.5 million) short-term resident departures recorded in the 1970s. Many of those were Australians leaving for the first time to smell, taste, sip and savour the planet and arrive home hungry.[18] Hungry for more of what they had tasted. And, as pointed out by Ripe: 'from the 1960s on…the "hippie trail" took young people overland to Europe…In order to get to Europe, we had to pass through Asia.'[19] Along the way, these early travelers ate the cuisines of the Asia they were passing through,

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[14] www.qantas.com.au
[15] In 1961, 64,361 Departures Short Term Movements, Australian Citizens, were recorded. By 1974, that figure had lifted to 769,650: by 1984 1,418,600 and 1994 2,354,300. Of those, in '84 837,200 stated they were departing on holiday; in 94, that figure had climbed to 1,143,700 (As a point of comparison, in 2012 there were 8.2 million short term departures). Australian Bureau of Statistics Overseas Arrivals and Departures. See Appendix XX for 1970-79 departures.
[16] *A Cook's Life* page 131.
[17] *Insatiable: My Life in the Kitchen.*
[18] Australian Bureau of Statistics Overseas Arrivals and Departures. Total 1970-79. These numbers are totals and do not mean 8 million people departed, just that there were that number of departures. For example, one person could have departed more than once. See Appendix 3.
[19] *Goodbye Culinary Cringe* page 14.

unlike similar young travelers of the time from Europe or America. In this way, we were, quite early on, softened up for multiculinarism.

The other great change on the Australian table which began to take effect in the 1970s was the appearance of table wine, and for much the same reasons as the culinary changes. Grapes had been first planted in Australia on January 24 1791, as reported by Watkin Tench who wrote that 'two bunches of grapes were cut in the Governor's garden from cuttings of vines brought three years before from the Cape of Good Hope.'[20] Like most early plantings, they didn't thrive. The first commercial vineyard was planted by John Macarthur at his property Camden Park, which 'played a vital role in the fledgling wine industry through its importation and distribution of vine cuttings throughout NSW and the Barossa Valley. By 1853, Camden Park listed some 33 grape varieties for sale.[21] But wine remained a minority drink for many years. Twopeny observed that: 'Next to tea may be ranked beer…but no colonist drinks much at meals.'[22]

It was immigrants from Switzerland and Germany who were responsible for the early growth of the Australian wine industry, 'particularly in the southern regions of the country, specifically regions such as the Barossa in South Australia…By the turn of the 19th century there were vineyards in many of today's viticulture areas.'[23] However, right up until the 1960s, 'Most Australians considered wine to be "plonk", continuing to prefer fortified wines, beer and spirits.'[24] This was about to change. Through the influence of wine lovers like Melbourne's Jimmy Watson, Sydney's J.K. Johnny Walker, surgeon and winemaker Max Lake and the art dealer and

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[20] *Watkin Tench 1788* page 179.
[21] Sydney Vigneron's Association hawkesbury.net.au/sydneywine/overview/history
[22] *Town Life in Australia* page 64.
[23] anicedrop.com/historyofaustralianwine
[24] *The Ten Apostles: The Story of Australia's Iconic Winemakers* forthcoming, Halstead Press, Sydney

wine judge Rudy Komon, Australians slowly then rapidly transformed from beer-swilling 'bloody barbarians'.[25]

When Evans joined the Australian Wine Bureau in 1965 as its first director, Australians were drinking 'just over five bottles per head per annum of which four were fortified',[26] the fortified being what was known as 'fourpenny dark' cheap Australian port, the preferred beverage of impoverished drinkers. By 2013, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) found that the average person consumes 304 glasses of table wine a year: at 7.7 glasses per bottle, that figure has risen to 39.5 bottles per head per annum. Again, from the ABS, in 1972, Australia produced 154,309,000 litres of wine and in 2013 1.23 billion litres.

We returned from our travels and began eating – and drinking – out, partly to re-discover the food and wine we had encountered. The first restaurant guides and reviews began to appear, and for the home we bought woks in their thousands.[27] It was also the decade when food and cooking shows first appeared on our televisions. Graham Kerr's *Galloping Gourmet*, produced in Canada, ran on Australian television from 1969-1971.[28] For a viewing public who had most likely never heard of, let alone tasted such dishes, he cooked Jambalaya, huevos rancheros, Jamaican pepper pot and gateau St Honore. Bernard King's pioneering *King's Kitchen* began in 1972, finishing in1983. King was a flamboyant showman, who 'pioneered television advertorials in Australia, doing whatever it took to promote sponsor-supplied

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[25] What Komon continued to call the people he had landed amongst from his native Vienna after the second world war adb.anu.edu.au/biography/komon-rudolph-john-rudy-12754
[26] Len Evans obituary independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/len-evans-412767.html
[27] The stir fry technique – not necessarily using Chinese ingredients – was ubiquitous in domestic Australian kitchens from the mid 1970s, coinciding with the release in 1976 of Charmaine Solomon's *The Complete Asian Cookbook* which went on to sell a million copies.
[28] By the 1970s, television, introduced in 1956, was well established in Australia. One adverse result was the evening meal. Glued to the box, Australians wanted quicker, easier to prepare food. The TV dinner came and went, and never had the penetration that it did in the US. But food manufacturers responded with 'quick and easy' meal solutions, which they could advertise – on television.

products, even if it meant cooking a whole fish in saccharine-sweetened grapefruit-flavoured soft drink'.[29]

Although Kerr and King and television food shows generally didn't reach the audience numbers and obsessive following of the early 2000s, it was then that we began to develop our distinctive 'Essengeist', a browsing across cuisines at home and, in a few restaurant cases – Cheong Liew, Hermann Schneider and others – a cross-cultural blending of ingredients and techniques. For example, at Mietta's in Brunswick Street North Fitzroy in 1974, restaurateurs Mietta O'Donnell and Tony Knox introduced what was most likely the first mixed menu in Australia. One menu grouped together the following dishes:

> Old English (eg saffron and honey chicken, gammon bacon)
> Classic Escoffier (eg *fricadelles*, *blanquette de veau*)
> Italian (eg *osso buco, bollito misto*)
> Cantonese (eg steamed chicken and Chinese sausage, hoi sin pork, beef stir fry with oyster sauce and onions)
> Indian (eg spiced mushrooms, lamb shanks, vindaloo)
> Elizabeth David provincial (soups and desserts mainly)
> Middle Eastern (their first dinner featured *bstilla* and *muhallabia*.)

And at his South Yarra restaurant Two Faces (1960-1987) German-born chef Hermann Schneider was the first in Australia to use Chinese vegetables – bok choy, snow peas, and soups with Chinese soup melons – in a European context.[30] This bold experimentation was to become our only claim to a cuisine, later dubbed Modern Australian or Mod Oz, a cuisine whose very existence is unverifiable. As Albala wrote: 'Australians themselves take great pleasure in

[29] 'A talented hand at stirring the pot' *Sydney Morning Herald* obituary December 24 2002, Stephanie Clifford-Smith.
[30] *Australian Cooking* Unpublished.

arguing about whether or not it exists, where it comes from, and who gets to define its parameters…the slippery nature of food and eating in Australia and the debate itself, probably is the essence of Australian food culture.'[31] But there were other forces helping shape the way we ate in the 1970s.

Australians passed from Rozin's[32] postulated evolution of food choices, from neophobia to neophilia, swiftly. And in so doing, many cuisines from countries that they had not travelled to widely joined the repertoire. In both Sydney and Melbourne, for example, Lebanese restaurants became extremely popular, and in Sydney a Lebanese quarter sprang up around the corner of Cleveland and Elizabeth Streets, remnants of which are still there. But in the main, the catalysts were travel and, if not quite literature, journalism.

Prior to the 1970s, apart from recipe books, there was very little writing about food. Restaurant reviews, such as they were, were short puff pieces in newspapers to accompany advertising, the earliest form of advertorial. One of the notable exceptions to this lacuna of culinary literature was the curious *Oh, for a French Wife* by Ted Moloney and Deke Coleman with illustrations by George Molnar, first published in 1952.[33] While not quite the Antipodean Brillat-Savarin or Grimaud,[34] it was a light-hearted if determinedly Gallic attempt at imparting more than recipes (supplied by four French wives), accompanied by essays such as: 'How Can You Cook With Air?', touching on the importance of air to the cooking of omelettes; the 'Philosophy of Frying' and 'Observations on the Sense of Taste', all by Lloyd Ring 'Deke' Coleman. That they read more like advertising copy than serious gastronomic analysis was because Coleman was in his working life managing

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[31] Albala, Ken editor (2011) *Food Cultures of the World Volume 3 Asia and Oceania,* Greenwood: Santa Barbara California pag

[32] Cited by Falk *The Consuming Body* page 81.

[33] *Oh, for a French Wife* first published by Shepherd & Newman Sydney in 1952. My edition Ure Smith Sydney 1965.

[34] Brillat-Savarin, the author of *The Physiology of Taste*; Alexandre Balthasar Laurent Grimod de la Reynière (1758-1837) is generally regarded as the first restaurant critic.

director of the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency. His co-author, Ted Moloney, also worked for J. Walter Thompson and was known in advertising circles as the co-creator (with cartoonist Syd Miller) of Chesty Bond.[35] It is perhaps not entirely coincidental that so many writers on food and restaurant critics worked in advertising. These include not only Moloney but Margaret Fulton who had also worked at J. Walter Thompson with Moloney and Coleman (who hired her), Leo Schofield, Terry Durack, Jill Dupleix and this writer. Much of the work of advertising is carried out over lunch, and for many, the food became more important and interesting than the work being discussed. By the 1970s, the media were beginning to take notice of what *The Sydney Morning Herald* called, in a story by Margaret Jones, 'The Dining Out Boom'.[36]

This story analyses the genesis and the possible directions being taken by this phenomenon of the times. 'The dining out boom', Jones wrote, 'is probably the biggest thing which has happened to Australia recently outside uranium shares.' To support this contention she provided figures (un-sourced but probably from the Restaurateur's Association, whose chairman, Jacob Gobes, she quotes in the story). In New South Wales in 1950, there were 99 licensed restaurants, in 1960, 230 and in 1970, 551 of which 359 were in the metropolitan area.[37] If reliable, those figures represent a significant 420 per cent increase in just twenty years. Jones wrote that the future of the restaurant business in Australia depended on whether we 'go European' – lingering over the meal with wine – or 'go American' – fast food, self service, no frills. This depended much on the young who preferred self service, simple menus and fast eating. As evidence of

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[35] Obituary *Sydney Morning Herald* April 1 1982 page 13. Chesty Bond was a long-lived cartoon character used in advertising for a clothing company.

[36] 'The dining-out boom', *Sydney Morning Herald*, September 5 1970.

[37] ibid. Marion Jones was a reputable journalist, but these figures are hard to verify or otherwise. Restaurant & Catering figures don't go far enough back. In her paper *Eating Out in Sydney*, Melissa Harper writes that 'at the beginning of the decade, Australia had 1000 licensed restaurants and by its close that figure had climbed to over 3000' page 49. Today, by comparison according to figures from Restaurant & Catering NSW, there are 7,900 licensed restaurants, cafes and caterers in NSW and 11,500 cafes, restaurants and caterers.

what was then 'fast eating' she cited the Cahills Brass Rail chain of restaurant wine bars. Cahills used to be, she writes, 'quiet places full of ladies in flowered hats eating ice cream cake served by haughty waitresses in black dresses.' The chain changed dramatically to themed self-service in the 1960s and by 1970 they were flourishing. By the end of the 1980s, they had disappeared. A significant event in the tussle between American and European was the opening in 1971 of the first McDonald's in Australia in Yagoona.

Jones raises the issue of class in the development of dining- out culture by reporting that while 'Most of the credit for the gastronomic revolution must go to the migrants, who introduced the native-born to a whole alphabet of delights, from avocados to zabaglione…Some of the credits for changing the habits of the working-man is also claimed by the clubs.' She quotes the executive director of the Registered Clubs' Association, Jerry Shaw, as saying: 'They taught him [the club member] to drink wine and to look for an entrée before his main course.' Clubs drew their members from a different socio-economic level to the more expensive restaurants. The 1970s was the dawn of the democratisation of Australian dining. Before World War Two, and through the 1950s, eating out was the preserve of the middle and upper classes. In 1996, I interviewed Lina Holderegger, who had been the owner of The Chalet restaurant in Circular Quay – she was then 86 – which opened in 1948 and closed in 1979, and a long term employee of hers, Trixie Rule. When asked about the clientele, Rule said: 'woolbuyers, shipping people, bank people, a fairly good class of people.' Customers included stockbroker Sir Reginald Reid and Marcel and Nola Dekyvere, then the leading lights of 'Sydney society.' Rule told a story which epitomised the social rules at the time:

> One night this fellow banged on the door and he was like a hobo and he said I want to eat here, and I said I'm terribly sorry you can't, we're booked up. I said if you're coming here you have to

> book a table and have a collar and tie and a suit on. One night there was a table booked for one. The door opened and in walked this fellow. With a suit and a collar and tie on. He ate a lot and we thought my goodness he's not going to pay, but he came up to the counter and paid and said I've never had such a delightful meal and never came back again.[38]

Rule then went on to recount that 'when Barry Humphries was in Sydney every night he'd come in with his old mac on.' The dress code was flexible. 'By the mid-fifties, writes Margaret Fulton, 'Australians were becoming food conscious. With post-war travel the well-heeled were able to eat in restaurants like the Tour d'Argent in Paris…in London's Savoy or New York's Plaza.'[39] By the 1970s, the not-so-well-heeled could afford to – and were being encouraged to – eat in a rapidly growing number of restaurants by a fledgling corps of critics. Leo Schofield's guide *Eating Out in Sydney 1976*, for example, lists over 160, all of them considered by this Petronius of the public palate to be good enough to review.[40]

The clash of the critics

> Avoid the cliché dishes. Disparage the garlic prawn. Sniff at steak. Hiss and boo the Idaho potato and the Forbidden Apple.[41]
> Leo Schofield

There is no doubt that the reviewers had an enormous influence on what we ate, how we ate it and how we used restaurants. Until the advent of Schofield, Sam Orr (nom de plat of journalist Richard

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[38] Unpublished interview 1996.
[39] *I sang for my supper* page 84 And it was not just the well-heeled. Many of the 1.5 million taking overseas holidays between 1961 and 1984 were ordinary Australians taking off on packaged holidays, especially the Qantas Jetabout tour, which were established in 1972, and heavily marketed.
[40] *Eating Out in Sydney 1976* This is the second edition of the guide first published in 1974.
[41] From the introduction to *Eating out in Sydney 1976* page 2. Vintage early Schofield, snobbish and proscriptive. Forbidden Apple was an industrial dessert served by most Italian restaurants at the time.

Beckett), Len Evans and Peter Smark, for most Australians, the only experience of eating out would have been the inevitable Chinese, the Greek café and those post-war 'chophouses' such as the New York in Kellett Street Kings Cross. From 1953 until it closed in 2010, it fed mainly locals without kitchens and transients in boarding houses the kind of food they would have been used to at home. In other words, it was eating out not for pleasure but for sustenance.[42]

The critics heralded the new age of restaurants as entertainment, and we needed to learn the rules. There is more to the restaurant than sitting at a table and ordering a meal. The restaurant is one of the most complex and difficult of our public spaces, and it is the restaurant critic who guided the tyro restaurant users of the 1970s through its labyrinthine complexities and nuances of manners, behaviour and comportment. And Australians took their advice very seriously. As late as 1993, I reviewed a new restaurant in Bondi and, as was my habit, rang the chef to discuss the meal I had eaten with him. He pleaded with me not to review him. When I asked why he told me: 'because your readers will come waving your review, demanding to have what you had which will probably be out of season, swamp me for three months and I'll have to hire staff, then they'll go, never to return.'

The dangers were not all one way. Reviewers could close restaurants as well as fill them. Writing in *The Sydney Morning Herald* in 1979, Marie Toshack claimed that Leo Schofield 'had his life threatened' after one review and that 'he took the threat seriously enough to go overseas till the temperature cooled'.[43] Not quite said Schofield: 'I did

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[42] In 2006 I reviewed the New York restaurant for the Sydney Morning Herald. One of my companions for the meal was ex-restaurateur Gay Bilson. On the way out, she said: 'I walked down Oxford Street, Paddington, today. It occurred to me that all the shops and cafes and restaurants were designed for the same people. This place,' she indicates the New York, 'is for everybody else. I hope your story doesn't ruin it for them.'
[43] 'The Gastronomic Decade' December 19 1979.

have a death threat but certainly didn't take off overseas. Just didn't visit that particular restaurant, now gone, in Crown Street.'[44]

Beginning in the 1970s, restaurant food, the restaurants themselves and the conversation around them generated by the critics became important elements in the urban social mix. And, more than that, as I shall argue, and in part due to our increasing familiarity with the restaurants and their food, important contributors to what I have already called our Essengeist and the move towards what we have to call an Australian style of cuisine.[45] Two critics in particular tell the story of that time. Their 'literary' personae could not be more contradictory: the suave opera buff adman Leo Schofield and the garrulous, bibulous journalist Sam Orr.[46]

Schofield, as previously noted, worked in advertising, although he had served briefly as a cadet at *The Sydney Morning Herald* in the 1950s. His first review, for Café Florentino in Melbourne, was published in the *Sunday Australian* on May 23, 1971. This new career came about because he was the creative director at the Jackson Wain advertising agency in Sydney and the *Australian* was one of his clients. When they decided to publish a Sunday edition, Schofield was asked by the editor to contribute a restaurant column. It was not the first. In 1966 the *Sun Herald* and the *Financial Review* had both instigated food pages and Ted Moloney occasionally wrote restaurant reviews for them. Schofield, because of his engaging and entertaining writing style, was immediately popular. His column moved from the *Sunday Australian* which ceased to exist when Murdoch bought the *Daily Telegraph* and *Sunday Telegraph* in 1972 and he began reviewing for the *Sunday Telegraph*. In 1974 he published the first *Eating Out in Sydney Guide*, and his first article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* in

[44] Leo Schofield to JN July12 2013.
[45] This will be discussed at greater length in a study of the genesis and fate of Modern Australian cuisine in Chapter 5.
[46] In the next chapter, I will examine eating out in Melbourne and the different trajectories of our two major cities.

1982. From 1984 he wrote restaurant reviews and the column Short Black (originally written by Jenna Price) in the *Good Living* section of that paper. Also in 1984, Schofield established *The Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide* with co-editors David Dale and Jenna Price, and remained editor until the ninth edition was published in 1993.[47]

Schofield was the food critic that Sydney needed. While Sydney was gradually supplanting Melbourne as the financial capital of Australia, Melbourne, with its earlier start due to the discovery of gold in the 1850s and the subsequent property boom, then – much later – the mining boom of the late 1960s, was the more sophisticated and 'cosmopolitan' city.[48] Symons quotes *Age* restaurant writer Claude Forell's article on the Italian restaurant families of Melbourne who 'helped to establish civilized eating and drinking in Melbourne' in the 1920s and 1930s.[49] Sydney had some Italian restaurants, notably Beppi's which opened in 1956, nightclubs Romano's and Prince's and places like The Chalet for the upper and middle classes. But Schofield wanted to expand the eating out base and 'saw his role as a pedagogical one…to inform readers about good places to eat, to warn them about bad and indifferent restaurants to encourage diners to broaden their food education and to try new cuisines, and to define and explain good (food) taste.'[50]

He not only exposed readers to his own predilections – for vegetables served separately for example – but along the way educated them on how and what to eat. Although his first reviews were self-indulgent and self-aggrandizing, they did evolve, over time, to the genuinely informative. At the earlier self-indulgent end, on May 21 1972 in *The Sunday Australian* he told his readers: 'Le Trianon has been around

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[47] *The Age Good Food Guide*, edited by Rita Ehrlich and Claude Forell, first published in 1980.
[48] In the early 1880s, Richard Twopeny wrote '..it is in the Victorian city that the trade and capital, the business and pleasure of Australia chiefly centre….the people dress better, talk better, think better are better…' *Town Life in Australia* pages 3-4.
[49] *One Continuous Picnic* pages 261-2.
[50] 'Feeding the Public Stomach' page 43.

for a long time. Madame Angela Rezzonico opened the place in 1958 and what a shock to Sydney's system it was. Schofield wrote, in his review, that 'The idea of eating in pleasant, well-decorated surroundings obviously hadn't occurred to anyone since 1770.' They were then given the name of the new manager, Andre Villnave (but not the chef), after a divagation on recent changes in Kings Cross. The restaurant was at first empty but for Schofield and his female companion who regaled him with stories about her past husbands. In between this chatter his readers learnt a little about the food – but not a lot. He chose Ouefs sur le plat Meyerbeer because he is 'an opera nut' even though Meyerbeer is not his favourite composer – much on Meyerbeer – and it was a disappointing dish. He concludes: 'we folded our serviettes like the Arabs and crept away. The waiter (whose dinner suit could have done with a touch of the nettoyage a sec) said a polite farewell. It had been a smashing lunch ($23.00) except for the rush (a misprint - assume brush was meant) with Meyerbeer. Next time I'll try lasagne Verdi.'[51]

By 1976, in a review for Le Catalan in *Eating Out in Sydney*, he imparts more useful information: 'the openers, at the time of writing, included a splendid Fenouil au Jambon (layers of fennel and ham in a creamy sauce baked in white Pilivit bowls.[52]' This at a time when fennel would have been difficult to find and ham would have been served, more often than not, in a tomato and iceberg lettuce salad and Pillivuyt bowls only just in the stores. In the notes at the front of that guide, under the heading SPECIALTIES, he writes:

> Nothing is more depressing for an enterprising chef or restaurant proprietor who has evolved a series of interesting house specialties, than to find customer after customer ignoring

[51] Much later, in 1993, a bad review of *Le Trianon* by Leo Schofield forced then owners Peter and Beverley Doyle to close, completely re-furbish, and re-open – more successfully - under another name, Cicada, in 1994.

[52] *Eating Out in Sydney 1976* page 93.

> them and ordering an unimaginative meal of oysters, steak and cheese-cake which could be as easily prepared at home. In this guide we have listed the specialties of each restaurant, and we urge customers to try them. Only if diners are adventurous in their eating can we foster better culinary standards in Australian restaurants.

Schofield was on a voyage and a crusade, dragging the people of Sydney along with him. His credo was that 'honest food presented with style in agreeable surroundings…simplicity of preparation and presentation, value for money and freshness (were) of prime importance'[53]. As Harper opines: 'His reviews produced an influential discourse about restaurant dining, about where and what to eat and why it mattered, and played an important role in fostering a community of gourmets.'[54]

The first restaurant review by Sam Orr appeared in *Nation Review,* an iconoclastic and irreverent journal, on March 21, 1971 (exactly two months before Schofield's first review in *The Sunday Australian*). In achieving the balance between cogent criticism and straight out entertainment, the 'big bluff bearded man, always handsomely turned out in a well-tailored suit, occasionally boasting a flamboyant handkerchief in the breast pocket'[55] invariably opted for the latter – and a large splodge of vulgarity. Beckett/Orr gave us the restaurant as a site for bad behaviour, hopefully – but rarely – good food, and copious quantities of alcohol. His first offering, a review of a Russian restaurant called Berioska (in Melbourne, where the *Nation Review* was published) was described, by Richard Walsh in an introduction in *Ferretabilia* as not yet showing signs of his 'rumbustious persona'. It does, however, display his characteristically opinionated aggression by

[53] *Eating Out in Sydney 1975* page 4.
[54] 'Feeding the Public Stomach' page 44.
[55] *Ferretabilia* page 19. This is a collection of articles from *Nation Review*, collected and introduced by *Nation Review* editor Richard Walsh. The name refers to the mascot of the publication, and its slogan: 'lean and nosy like a ferret.' It was published from 1971 to 1981.

stating that the only two cuisines that matter are French and Chinese, followed by: 'It is an undisputed truism that most of Melbourne's restaurants are fairly bad' and that is why 'it is with a feeling of distaste that I have embarked on this, a plain man's guide to Melbourne restaurants.'[56]

The 'guide' eventually spread to Sydney, but the choleric copy did not abate. By April 19, 1973, Orr had become, in a letter to the editor, 'Orrful Sam'[57] and reading the offending review of Melbourne's Bistro Alexander, it is easy to see why. In a style much later made popular by London's A.A. Gill, Orr spent 75 per cent of the review on other topics – the state of restaurant criticism and food writing in Australia – before launching into an excoriation of everything about the restaurant: from the 'totally tasteless dish of overcooked and what appeared to be thawed Taiwan shrimp' which on second thoughts he decided 'tasted like cardboard' to 'jam rolls in various stages of disintegration, all topped with foam cream.'[58] While Schofield was teaching us about new foods, new ingredients and how to behave properly in these new spaces, Orr was appealing to our larrikin instincts and confirming for us that most of them were second rate, and service was, invariably, 'abominable.' They balanced each other out: Schofield the sophisticate we wished we were, and Orr the barbarian we feared we were – and secretly relished: we were in transition. But these weren't the only two reviewers at this time, only the most read and noticed.

In an article, 'Writing About Food' in *Quadrant* in 1977, the novelist and gastronome Marion Halligan[59] reviewed the reviewers – Moloney, Walker, Schofield, Smark and Orr – and found them wanting. While acknowledging that 'Several decades ago, this article could not have

[56] ibid. page 19.
[57] ibid. page 175.
[58] ibid. page 179.
[59] Halligan is a novelist, food lover and, later, frequent contributor to the gastronomic discourse at the Symposium of Australian Gastronomy from its debut in 1984.

been written,' Halligan asks 'Where is our Brillat-Savarin, our Carême, our Dumas – the philosopher, the cook, the man of letters to provide us with this food for thought? The answer is, he doesn't exist.'[60] She criticises Moloney as belonging to 'the school…who write about the wonderful times they have in restaurants', Johnny Walker for the 'uninformative praise he lavishes on every restaurant he mentions', and, while agreeing that Schofield has done 'magnificent pioneering work' she expressed doubts that he is 'destined to become our local philosopher of the idea of eating well.'[61] Smark she praises, faintly, as 'clearly honest and…well-informed'. But she lavishes her opprobrium on Orr, who, she writes, 'actually manages to divulge practically no information at all about food or restaurants, but quite a lot about Sam Orr' characterising his prose style as 'contemporary trendy obscene.'[62] Halligan goes on to compare the domestic crop unfavourably with French critics like Robert-J. Courtine. While her criticism of the critics is justified, the comparison of French criticism with the brash, new, feeling their way in a new environment Australians, is a little premature. For all their faults, they were performing a service: familiarising us with what would become a vital element in the development of our Essengeist. But she did point out one curious omission from these first attempts at restaurant criticism.

'A great chef', Halligan writes, 'is one who has made his dishes so much the expression of his own individuality that they are recognisable anywhere as his.' To illustrate this she quotes from a restaurant review in the French women's magazine *Elle*, whose: 'pretensions to intellectuality are very mild…yet it runs a critical…restaurant column of real seriousness.' The review discusses the career and cuisine of a chef (Bernard Louiseau)[63] which

[60] 'Writing about Food' page 16.
[61] ibid. page 17.
[62] Ibid. page 18
[63] In a tragically ironic coda to this story Loiseau shot himself in 2003 after losing a Michelin star: death by critic. And proof of the deadly seriousness with which the French take their gastronomy.

'encapsulates what is lacking in Australian food writing…Notice how it places the chef…His teachers, his previous experience…'[64] In hardly any of the early reviews of Australian restaurants, either in newspapers or guides, were the chefs mentioned by name.[65] They were still at this time and on the whole, anonymous toilers in the hidden 'empire of smoke' [66] Indeed, it was not until 1995 that *The Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide* added the names of chefs to their restaurant listings.[67] Meanwhile, in the domestic kitchen, other influences were at play.

The magazines: kitchen dictators

> A special section on International Cookery…can make you think you've just done a world tour! You can sample the German way with roast pork, a new chicken dish from Hawaii, Beef Vindaloo from India, new and old favorites from China and Italy – all without moving from your comfortable kitchen! Naturally, Australian and English foods are included in the cookbook, too.[68]

To a great extent it was the women's magazines, two in particular, that decided what was cooked in the home, introducing new dishes and new cuisines, although this was tempered by another powerful negative influence: husbands. Sheridan notes '…men tend to exert a conservative influence over the family's diet', giving several examples of women who prefer 'foreign' foods' but can't get their husbands to accept them; for instance, '"he doesn't like anything Chinese or

[64] 'Writing about Food' page 19
[65] The two exceptions in Schofield's 1977 guide were Tony Bilson and Gay Morris at Tony's Bon Gout and Michael and Monique Manners at Glenella. All other entries list only 'Host'.
[66] in *The Pudding That Took a Thousand Cooks* Symons quotes a Greek play in which a cook describes his domain as 'an empire of smoke' page 58.
[67] *The Age Good Food Guide* listed the names of chef and owners from its first edition in 1980.
[68] From a 1971 advertisement for the *Australian Women's Weekly* cookbook reproduced in 'Eating the Other: Food and cultural difference in the Australian Women's Weekly in the 1960s'.

foreign."'[69] Although Sheridan was writing of the 1960s, this constraint was echoed even in my 2013 interview with a cohort of CWA women, one of whom said: 'I like stir fries but when I try something, my husband says you know savoury mince would be nice – it's nice on toast'.[70] But with increased affluence, travel and availability of ingredients, the influence of the magazines began to make inroads on the domestic kitchen, eventually dragging the husbands along.

Perhaps the most influential at that time we are examining was the *Australian Women's Weekly* (AWW). As Sheridan says:

> The major influence on a magazine's representation of food and cooking, apart from its advertisers, is its Cookery Editor, whose role it is to introduce new food ideas while at the same time keeping up the supply of recipes for familiar/family food.[71]

Pamela Clark was a long time Food Director and is now Editorial and Food Director, Cookbooks, at the AWW. She first joined the magazine in 1969, left in 1973, returned in 1978 and still works there. When I interviewed her on April 24, 2013 she told me that when she first arrived, Ellen Sinclair 'had only been here a couple of years…[but] was never recognized as the food director until [Editor] Ita [Buttrose] arrived.' Until then the kitchen had been run under a fictitious name, Leila C. Howard, in reality Betty Dunleavy. I asked Clark how the AWW reflected and influenced the way we ate in Australia at that time:

> I guess we got a feel for what people were eating – we used to have a hell of a lot of contact with our readers either by mail or

[69] This and previous quote from 'Eating the Other' page 328.
[70] Interview July 5 2013, Appendix 2.
[71] 'Eating the Other' page 323. The word used at the AWW was not 'Cookery' but 'Food' as in Food Editor or Food Director. In the 1970s, Ellen Sinclair was Food Editor.

> by telephone – we had a lot of phones and they were always ringing and people were always talking to us and telling us what they wanted – and they wanted vol au vents and comfort food. Vol au vents were pretty fancy, as were Indonesian prawn puffs and Dutch bitterballs. These sorts of things were common because the women weren't going to work and they had the time. French onion dips made using [Continental brand] French Onion Soup powder, salad cream, fondues, mulligatawny soup, short soup, long soup – Australian adaptations of Chinese soups – and soufflés because they had the time to and because it was clever: it was showoff food. The wives were at home and the husbands would have dinner parties.[72]

In 1978 the AWW published a Chinese cookbook. Clark said: 'A home economist came and worked for Mrs. Sinclair, and she was half Chinese and had worked in the restaurant business. She went into restaurants and watched them cook, and came back to the [AWW] kitchen with the recipes.' Some of the recipes in that *Australian Women's Weekly Chinese Cooking Class Cookbook* credited to Food Editor Ellen Sinclair were:

> Spring rolls
> Gow gees
> Ham and chicken rolls
> Dim sims
> Long soup
> Short soup
> Szechuan soup
> Prawns on toast
> Crab in ginger sauce
> Garlic pork rashers (2 cloves)
> Sweet and sour pork (canned pineapple)
> Steamed pork buns (cha siu pau)
> Lemon chicken

[72] Interview April 24 2013, Appendix 4.

Braised duck

Chicken chow mein

Beggar's chicken

Billy Kee chicken (from a section named Restaurant Dishes which including this from Four Seas; flower blossoms from the Dixon; Stuffed chicken wings from The New Dynasty Cremorne, Sizzling Steak from The Golden Lily in Malabar, Honey Prawns from Dragon City in city; Pork Chops with Plum Sauce from Rose Bay Chinese; Chicken Hotpot from The Eastern and Toffee Apples from the Peking Palace Cremorne.

'By this time', Clark said: 'we were dictating [tastes]. The Chinese book was Mrs Sinclair's decision. She loved Chinese food. We always went to Chinese restaurants – her sister lived in Hong Kong and she went there for holidays. We were setting the [culinary] agenda because we got confident. The minute these books would hit the streets they would sell out. We'd have newsagents ringing up and pleading for more. The demand was incredible. We had the market to ourselves – there was only Bay Books and Margaret Fulton.'[73]

Unlike Betty Dunleavy, who was a home economist, and Ellen Sinclair, a writer, Margaret Fulton was a trained chef, having studied French cooking at East Sydney Technical College under Jules Weinberg. While *Woman's Day* circulation was lower than AWW,[74] the readership was a little more sophisticated. When I asked Clark who they saw as the reader of AWW she said: 'They say our reader lives at Eastwood and Ryde. Our [books] don't sell as well in the eastern suburbs [of Sydney].'[75] Middle Australia is who we're aiming at' Fulton, on the other hand, travelled widely, ate in all the best restaurants, and brought recipes from her travels back to Australia, and shared them with her readers.

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[73] ibid.

[74] 'During the 1960s, it was read in one in four Australian homes, and had the highest circulation per head of any women' s magazine in the Western world' 'Eating the Other' page 320. According to Santich in *Margaret Fulton a celebration*, in 1972, AWW's circulation was 830,000, Woman's Day 514,00 page 34.

[75] Interview April 24 2013, Appendix 4. Eastwood and Ryde were then Anglo-Celt middle class suburbs: the Eastern Suburbs were seen as more affluent.

When Fulton joined *Woman's Day* in 1960, her editor, Joan Reeder, 'encouraged people to travel, enjoy good food, good wine, live life to the full and bring back results to match for the magazine.'[76] And with her training as a chef, she was able to speak to chefs on an equal footing, resulting not only in good features, but in books like *Margaret Fulton Superb Restaurant Dishes.*[77] While Ellen Sinclair was publishing Chinese restaurant dishes, Margaret Fulton was meeting Caesar Cardini, the originator of the Caesar Salad, in Mexico City and bringing back the original recipe. Early in her career at *Woman's Day*, and perhaps because of her stint at J. Walter Thompson, Fulton understood the importance of mixing celebrity with food and wrote cover stories telling of her cooking with Graham Kennedy, Bob and Dolly Dyer among others. These stories were mixed with others, more practical, like 'How to Run a Lamington Drive' in 1972 and 'Margaret Fulton's $2 Family Meals' in 1975[78] Writing in *Margaret Fulton a celebration,* of her time working with Fulton in the 1970s, Santich said of Woman's Day that it had 'certainly a better food section' which was 'generally more up-to-date, more lively and more stylish.'[79] At the same time, it was the AWW that retained the larger circulation and had, perhaps, the greatest influence as a magazine on domestic cooking. On the other hand, the Margaret Fulton Cookbook, published by Paul Hamlyn in 1968 with a first print run of 100,000, had a wider and longer lasting influence.

Finally, and apropos the core of this chapter – the multiculinary society – in his book *The Shared Table* Symons criticises the 'muticultural myth', claiming that globalisation and economic changes in the food industry *per se* have substantially shaped postwar 'multicultural' eating, rather than the presence of immigrants alone.

[76] *I Sang for My Supper* page 137.
[77] 1982 Octopus Books.
[78] *I Sang for My Supper* pages 136-138.
[79] *Margaret Fulton a celebration* page 34.

In the chapter entitled 'The Multicultural Myth' he claims that the supposition – he calls it a cliché – that 'our cooking has been radically transformed by post-war immigration is erroneous.'[80] But as we have seen, it was not solely post-war immigration that changed our cooking. After the incoming migrants went the outgoing Australians. And it would seem to me difficult, at least, to suggest that the large group of newcomers who arrived with their own fixed ideas of what they wanted to eat had no influence on our diet. As Rosa Matto says of her mother in *Wogfood,* 'She had no intention of falling into whatever the natives of the new land ate.'[81] Symons himself was a part of this complex interaction of travel, culture and cuisine. In the preface to the first edition of *One Continuous Picnic* he writes of the sojourn in Italy that led to his writing the book: 'And so it was that at Radda-in-Chianti we started gardening, discovered how sublime food could be, and came to understand Australia's deprivation'.[82] Such revelations, if not leading to such thoughtful responses as *One Continuous Picnic*, were in large part responsible for the changed Australian foodscape.

Many other points are taken up by Symons, but one in particular deserves attention: 'how can we explain all the Hungry Jacks Big Macs and Sizzlers? No-one, to my knowledge, claims that the parallel increase in fast food is an immigrant phenomenon.'[83] This is puzzling because no one I have read has attributed that phenomenon to immigration. The link with fast food, and the rise of industrial food, which he comes to, can be clearly sheeted home to two other closely linked post war phenomena: marketing and advertising. After the first wave of 'hippie trail' blazers in the late 1960s and early 1970s, it was marketing, advertising and the overseas travel that saw two million Australians fly out to the world.[84] It was also marketing and

[80] *The Shared Table* page 7.
[81] *Wogfood* page 145.
[82] *One Continuous Picnic* page xvi.
[83] ibid. page 8.
[84] Between 1969 and 1978, I was a part of that marketing push on a series of airline advertising campaigns aimed at persuading Australians to holiday internationally.

advertising that sold us fast food, instant food and convenience food. In that way they were linked. I fail to see how this move to industrial food in any way repudiates the linked influence of immigration and world travel on the multiculinary food habits of Australians since 1950. More importantly for this project, it has no bearing on our lack of a food culture. We now move into the next decade with everything in place for the next stage in our culinary development. Beginning with a curious construct.

Chapter 5

ModOz: the cuisine that never was? The 1980s to the 2000s

> To eat Australian food is to be Australian, to be non-traditional, to be innovative, open-minded and sophisticated. However, unlike some hybrid forms such as Australian music that have erupted 'naturally', Australian food is orchestrated. The conductors have been the chefs in the fine dining restaurants in tandem with food producers.[1]
> Danielle Gallegos

> A cuisine is the collective aroma of everyday domestic food…Until we show ourselves to be more interested in the fair and equitable distribution of the whole, huge idea of what all Australians eat, then our celebration of 'Australian Food' will remain a cult for the affluent.[2]
> Gay Bilson

The Bunyip is a mythological Australian animal whose presence sorely taxed the early European inhabitants. On February 11 1847 the *Port Phillip Herald* wrote, in a satirical mode, that 'Naturalists of every grade have, since the plantation of the Australian colonies, been racking their brain with fruitless researches as to the existence or non-existence of the supposed amphibious monster y'clept, amongst many other designations, the Bunyip.' By the 1980s we had a modern Bunyip in our midst, what has been called Australian cuisine or Modern Australian cuisine, or simply Mod Oz. Although it was not

[1] *Ordinary Lifestyles* 'Cookbooks as Manuals of Taste' page 108.
[2] From a letter to the Weekend Australian, May 1999.

first categorised as such until 1993,[3] its ingredients, its *mise en place*, was assembled in the 1970s and placed in the oven in the 1980s, but only in the public sphere. Modern Australian cuisine is the creation of chefs, not cooks. What exactly was it that prompted us to reach out for such an ambitious construction as a national cuisine at that time?

If the 1970s was the decade during which Australians took off *en masse* in silver birds to discover the rest of the world, and began to adjust their way of life to incorporate their discoveries – including the way they ate and ate out – the 1980s was the decade in which they began to assert themselves and to believe they could compete with and even beat the best in the world.[4] Our much admired national trait of egalitarianism gave way to triumphalism and nationalism, a feeling amplified by the election of a new government. The election in 1982 of the Hawke Labor government coincided with a national mood of optimism. As Suter wrote, 'Hawke was easily one of the most popular leaders in Australia's history.'[5] Australian nationalism swept the country:

> Mr. Hawke, with his rugged Australian accent, has caught the nationalist mood…Australians are now proud to be Australians. No major sporting fixture is complete without Hawke putting in an appearance. Indeed, just as his electoral victory coincided with the US economic recovery and rain, so Australia won the America's Cup (something the British have never done).[6]

Winning the America's Cup in 1983 was a massive boost to national confidence and pride, and, perhaps, helped that confidence to slip over into hubris. The headlines of the day convey the general mood.

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[3] The 1993 *Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide*, the last edited by Leo Schofield, added a category of Modern Australian in the Index by Cuisine. The term was first used in the 1985-86 edition. The appellation didn't arrive in Melbourne until 2003.
[4] In 1981 there were 14.5 million Australians, twice as many as there had been in 1945, with 6 million in the cities of Sydney and Melbourne.
[5] Suter Keith D. 'Australia's New Government.'
[6] Ibid. page195.

On September 28,1983, *The Sydney Morning Herald* ran with the headline: 'The biggest thing since peace in 1945: triumph unites nation'. On the same day *The Australian* proclaimed: 'Yes we can do anything if we try.' It was no accident that the hero of this saga was neither the boat nor the skipper, but the owner, Alan Bond, in many ways himself a symbol for this decade of over-reach. The discourse was entirely masculine, as were the larrikin capitalists. Graham Turner noted 'The story of Bond and the America's Cup…is that of the self-made Australian armed with determination and ingenuity taking on the world and winning.'[7] Something happened in Australia in the 1980s. As Meaghan Morris wrote it was the decade when: 'political debate in Australia collapsed almost entirely into a discourse of economic management.'[8] This was the start of a new era in Australian politics which is with us still.

Two months after the America's Cup win in 1983, the Hawke government floated the dollar and suspended 'virtually all exchange controls (the regulations, administered by the Reserve Bank of Australia, which then governed foreign exchange movements into or out of Australia).'[9] These bold moves gave permission to the audacious men waiting in the wings to take their business into the world. As the decade progressed, in business, 'Australians were leading the world, taking on the establishment here and overseas with a brash vigour that took the market's breath away.'[10] During the first half of the 1980s, the businessman, until then a grey individual in a grey suit, emerged as a star. Two prime examples were Alan Bond, a sign writer in the 1950s then a property dealer who branched into the media, gold and beer and Christopher Skase, former *Australian Financial Review* journalist who became a resort builder and the owner of a

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[7] *Making it National: Nationalism and Australian popular culture* page 33.
[8] *Ecstasy and Economics: American essays for John Forbes* page 65.
[9] quadrant.org.au/magazine/issue/2012/1-2/part-i-floating-the-dollar-facts-and-fiction Part 1: 'Floating the Dollar: Facts and Fiction' John Stone.
[10] *Making it National: Nationalism and Australian popular culture* page 17.

media group. Others included Robert Holmes à Court and John Elliott. By the end of the decade all had crashed and burnt.[11]

But while they remained airborne, it was a heady time, its soubriquet 'the excessive eighties.' The very rich were very rich indeed. Between 1967 and 1982, "The listing of professional landscapers in the Sydney telephone book swelled from six columns to eighteen'.[12] In 1976, Leo Schofield's *Eating out in Sydney* listed 160 of the city's best restaurants. By 1984, in the first edition of *The Sydney Morning Herald's Good Food Guide*, Schofield wrote in his introduction that he and his co-editors had chosen 400 from some 2000. 'The high-livers (in the 80s)' Bruce Grant observed, 'are not music-lovers or theatre-goers but they eat frequently in fashionable restaurants and drink good (occasionally imported) wine.'[13] The other decade-defining event of the 1980s was the Bicentenary, whose high point was January 26, 1988.

Celebration of nationalism

The Bicentenary was, as Castles et al pointed out, one more in a 'long series of attempts to define Australia and what it means to be Australian'[14] According to the Bicentennial Authority's booklet*, How to Make it Your Bicentenary* its aim was:

> To celebrate the richness and diversity of Australians, their traditions and the freedoms they enjoy.

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[11] 'On Friday, October 16 1987, (the All Ords) closed at 2144, down nearly 170 points in four weeks. Then, on the Monday, stocks fell another 100 points amid a feeling all was not well. After Black Tuesday (as October 20 is now called), there was a slight recovery over a few days but it didn't hold and the All Ords went sideways for a few months before reaching a low in early 1988.' 'A crash course on financial crises' Philip Baker, *Australian Financial Review* October 20 2012.
[12] *Ecstasy and Economics: American essays for John Forbes* page 27.
[13] *The Australian Dilemma* page 227.
[14] *Mistaken Identity* page 6.

> To encourage all Australians to understand and preserve their heritage, recognize the multicultural nature of modern Australia and look to the future with confidence.[15]

How were we to achieve this? The Authority tells us:

> Plant shrubs, hedges and trees…make community litter bags…bake an Australia-shaped cake for a raffle…Plan to have a meal from a different culture once a month.[16]

In addition to Australia-shaped cakes, a new $1billion parliament house was built, roads were pushing further into the interior and a highway completed that almost circumnavigated the continent. In 1986, the Sydney chef Tony Bilson was approached by the government architect, Andrew Andersons, to help design some of the government catering outlets in time for the Bicentennial celebrations. These included the Hyde Park Barracks, the Centennial Park Café and East Circular Quay (which he eventually took over with restaurateur and property developer Leon Fink and opened as the first Bilson's).[17]

At the top of the Bicentennial agenda was the 'forging of a nation', and, alongside this, developing, creating or uncovering a national character: it was an ambitious project. Whereas the 1888 Centenary as conceived by Henry Parkes was designed to 'commemorate the establishment of British rule in Australia'[18] by 1988, as the title of the jingle said, it was 'Celebration of a Nation.' If, in celebration, a society is committed to the telling of a story about itself, what story should we choose?[19] Perhaps we should give up trying. As Moorhouse writes:

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[15] ibid. page 5.
[16] ibid. page 6.
[17] I*nsatiable* pages 158 and 159.
[18] *Celebrating the Nation* page xv.
[19] ibid. page192.

> …in a sense, all cultures are interdependent and derivative and that perhaps we are a remarkably rich synthesis. Perhaps we should go with the synthesis instead of painfully pursuing a unique nationalism.[20]

Although this attempt at the construction of a nation was highly problematic, if not, like the tycoons, over-reaching, something was going on: and food had to be in it.

The eighties was the decade which ushered in the kind of jingoistic boosterism that gave us 'Come on Aussie Come on', which led to the more aggressive 'Aussie Aussie Aussie Oy! Oy! Oy!' cry. Along with this aggressive nationalism came the – at first embryonic – desire for an Australian cuisine. Chef Neil Perry was at the time at Bluewater Grill. *The Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide* in 1988 called his food 'a more modern kind of food, somewhat Californian in style, involving lots of grilling and a slew of oriental influences.' This is a close description of a cuisine that did not yet have a name nor even codified components. But in the 1980s it was busy being born. And its birthplace was in the newly minted good food guides.

We needed guidance. We got guides

Any examination of the birth of Modern Australian cuisine must take into account the publication of *The Age Good Food Guide* in 1980 and then *The Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide* whose first edition was published in 1984. In introducing the Melbourne guide, editor Claude Forell wrote:

> Why *The Age Good Food Guide*? Several reasons. One is THE AGE POLL finding that dining out is a more popular leisure

[20] *Australia, The Dædalus Symposium* page 318.Nicholas Jose, quoting Moorhouse from *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* in his essay *'"I think I'm something else"'*

> activity than going to parties, football or cricket, the races, the cinema, theatre or concerts. Another is the bewildering proliferation of restaurants. Victoria now has nearly 300 licensed (to serve liquor) restaurants and 1500 BYO (bring-your-own liquor) restaurants. Most are in metropolitan Melbourne and new ones seem to spring up every week.[21]

In this first edition, the majority of the restaurants awarded two and three hats were French, which accorded with the index by cuisine, with the largest category being French followed by International. Although five 'Australian' restaurants were listed, only two served Australian native produce. By 1983, little had changed, other than those restaurants listing their cuisine as 'Individual' had grown from 11 to 23, and the number of 'Australian' restaurants had shrunk to three, with none serving native produce. Rita Erlich, who was to become Forell's co-editor in the second edition and continue so for fifteen years, wrote of the 1980s: 'It was the decade of more BYOs than licensed restaurants, and the time the licensing laws changed to allow for bars and cafes to serve alcohol, with or without food.'[22] This was instrumental in Melbourne having the jump on Sydney at the time.

The first edition of *The Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide* was a natural progression of Schofield's *Eating Out in Sydney*, and marked the beginning of his long relationship with Fairfax. Schofield's introduction, unlike Forell's examination of the local scene, took the form of a Q&A (written by Schofield). The first exchange was:

> *You must have a wonderful life, eating out all the time.*

[21] *The Age Good Food Guide* 1980 page vii.
[22] *Melbourne by Menu* page 10.

> Well, it's not all beer and skittles you know…problems with weight…nice just to have a chop occasionally, something simple. You can get awfully bored with French food.[23]

In this way Schofield set the tone for a more relaxed and chatty guide than Melbourne's. In the first guide three hats were given to Berowra Waters Inn and Reflections and two hats to Bagatelle, Claude's, Glenella, Imperial Peking Harbourside, Pegrum's, Rostbif, Suntory and Taylor's. Of those, seven served French-based cuisine, one Italian, one Japanese and one Chinese. Those serving French would acknowledge, as Gay Bilson noted:

> An indebtedness to European cuisines, especially French…informing the use of Australian produce…
> It would not be too great a generalisation that most accredited, self-consciously, culinarily explorative restaurants of the early eighties fitted into this category.[24]

By far the largest category in the index is French followed by Italian. And, although there are ten listing as Australian, unlike Melbourne, there is no sign of native produce at Len Evans Beef Room ('two whacking slices of perfectly cooked beef with Yorkshire pudding') or Carey Cottage, where roast beef and Yorkshire pudding was also served, nor in any of the others.

The introduction to edition two of the Schofield-edited guide begins with a stern admonition: 'Sydney restaurants need to pull their socks up.'[25] It goes on to list hiked prices, indifferent pasta served by indifferent waiters and others gastronomic sins, ending with the stern warning that: 'Short-term economies and profit-maximising scams can

[23] *Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide* 1984 page 5.
[24] *Plenty* page 70. Here, Bilson is acknowledging the 'legacy' of her partner Tony Bilson, but all the chefs were singing from the same hymn book – even the French (Claude Corner at Claude's and Jean-Luc Lundy at Bagatelle.
[25] 1985/6 *Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide,* page 5.

only lead to long-term oblivion.'[26] He argued that Sydney diners-out know good value and can spot rip-offs, which, he concludes has, perhaps, 'led them to patronise the Vietnamese and Thai restaurants that have proliferated throughout last year, and whose popularity shows no sign of abating.'[27] In 1985/86 three hats were awarded to Berowra Waters Inn, Reflections and Suntory and two hats to Bagatelle, Barrenjoey House, Glenella, Imperial Peking Harbourside, Pegrums, Perry's and Taylors.

Much the same line-up with the addition of Neil Perry's first inner city appearance at Perry's, in Paddington (formerly Le Café first under the leadership of Patric Juillet and then a number of indifferent owners). And while Gallic influence continues at the core of most of the (non-Japanese or Italian) menus, Perry has already begun his quest for an Australian style with (from the review) 'a salad of yabbies and avocado in a hazelnut oil mayonnaise.'[28] Closer inspection of this second edition uncovers a curiosity. While Perry's is listed in the Index by Cuisines as 'Modern', and there is no listing for Modern Australian, there are two restaurants listed in the body of the guide as Modern Australian[29], one being September in Surry Hills of which Schofield wrote: 'Revolving fans and Victorian furniture suggest Somerset Maugham, but the cuisine is modern [no upper case] Australian.'[30] To support this he lists 'king prawns coated in crushed pine nuts' and boned chicken breast stuffed with camembert and baked in puff pastry.' The other is Bennelong, the food of which Schofield (or the reviewer) complained 'tends to combine too many disparate flavours, one example given being 'a cold cake of scallops, salmon and pickled

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[26] ibid.
[27] ibid. Mr Schofield was prescient, and perhaps had noticed the popularity of the rival restaurant guide *Cheap Eats* which had first appeared in 1981 and was, at the time, very popular and full of such cheap alternatives.
[28] ibid. page 109.
[29] In addition to the Index by Cuisine at the end of the guide, each restaurant is afforded a description on the top right hand side of the review.
[30] *The Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide* 1985/1986 page 125.

walnuts.'[31] In the index, both of these restaurants and twelve others are listed merely as Australian. In the next edition, 1986-87, Bennelong, The Pitts in Pitt Street and EJ's in Canberra are listed, again in the body, as Modern Australian. There is still no listing for Modern Australian in the index. It does indicate that the idea was in the air as early as 1984, when the 1985-86 book was compiled.[32] What was curious that a listing under the heading of Modern Australian in the index had to wait. But what is the story of the genesis of this nebulous, chimerical style, ultimately indexed as Modern Australian?

The Australian tendency to argue about the existence of Modern Australian cuisine and Albala's assertion that 'the slippery nature of food and eating in Australia and the debate itself, probably is the essence of Australian food culture'[33] has been noted before. This exercised many minds in the late 1980s and through the 1990s. In 1995, a debate was held at the Treasury Restaurant in the Inter-Continental Hotel in Sydney. The question was: 'Is Australian Cuisine Possible in a Multicultural Society?'. For the affirmative, food writer Jill Dupleix, restaurateur Victoria Alexander, and chef Neil Perry: the negative, chef Tony Bilson, food writer and broadcaster Lyndey Milan, and me. During the course of the debate, two arguments set the parameters. Dupleix asserted that it was 'a glorious new way of cooking that is sweeping all other cooking under the carpet.' Bilson suggested that it exists 'only because Neil Perry said it does.'[34]

As we have seen, the first serious 'cuisine' in Australia in the nineteenth century was French. This lasted well into the 1970s. In an

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[31] ibid. page 26.
[32] Other categories of those restaurants listed as 'Australian' included Innovative Australian, Australian Creative and, in one memorably confused case, Australian/Mexican.
[33] *Food Cultures of the World Volume 3 Asia and Oceania* page 21.
[34] Excerpted from an interview with Schneider in *Australian Cooking*, unpublished. The government won on audience applause. A member of the audience approached me later and whispered that our argument was better but was frightened to appear 'un-Australian' so cheered loudly for the affirmative.

article in the *Financial Review* chef Stefano Manfredi wrote of the time: 'I remember a lot of mousselines and bavarois and turned vegetables and rich sauces like beurre blanc.'[35] Two important restaurants of the decade in Sydney, Tony's Bon Gout (Tony and Gay Bilson) and Le Café (Patric and Chrissie Juillet) were run by chefs steeped in the French method. Underlining the persistent Francophilia of the era, in his book *Advanced Australian Fare*, Melbourne restaurant critic Stephen Downes cited as examples of the emerging Australian style, two dishes from Le Café in the 1970s: a loin of lamb with wild garlic puree and a sauce containing Volnay; and a fish and shellfish broth containing Meursault, both white wines from Burgundy.[36] By 1976, a review of Tony's Bon Gout (which opened in 1973) by Schofield told his readers to 'Forget the aspics, the decorated foods, the chaud-froids. Today's food is different – less got-up, less complicated, letting the ingredients speak for themselves.'[37]

But Bilson's food was still French-based. At the same time, other chefs had already begun a cross-cultural blending of ingredients and techniques. As previously noted, at Mietta's in North Fitzroy in 1974, restaurateurs Mietta O'Donnell and Tony Knox introduced what was most likely the first mixed menu in modern Australia.[38] Even earlier than this, as Mietta O'Donnell acknowledged, Hermann Schneider the chef/patron of Two Faces in Melbourne had been using Asian ingredients in his dishes since the mid-sixties. Schneider said 'I was the first restaurant chef [in Australia] to use Chinese vegetables – bok choy, snow peas, I made soups with Chinese soup melons – but

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[35] 'Casual dining with a twist of sublime' August 22 2013.
[36] *Advanced Australian Fare* page 104. In an article in *Griffith Review* 16 May 2007, Downes writes: 'Yet people say – just about all Australians say, unfortunately – that migrants have brought us our world-beating restaurants, our unique culinary culture. They're wrong. The migrants-donated-gastronomy argument is utter rubbish.' The chefs he is citing are Patric Juillet and Cheong Liew: both migrants.
[37] *Eating Out in Sydney 1976* page 159.
[38] As previously noted, the first restaurant set up by a Chinese person, was John Alloo's Chinese Restaurant in Ballarat dating from 1856. Although Alloo advertised 'Plum Puddings, Jam Tarts, Roast and Boiled Joints' for his Australian customers, he served Chinese food to his compatriots.

always within a European flavour context.'[39] Cherry Ripe cites Adelaide's Cheong Liew as the first in the world to cook 'East-meets-West' style in 1975. She points out that Cheong acknowledges his colonial past as his inspiration and pointed out that although food fusion has its origins in colonial countries like Malaya, where the local food was adapted for European palates, he believes he was the first (certainly in Australia) to apply Asian methods to European food.'[40] But before examining the components of Modern Australian I want to explore one more dimension of the French/Australian nexus.

Once, when asked by a journalist who was the most influential cook in Australia, Tony Bilson replied 'Michel Guérard'.[41] The journalist was, apparently, taken aback. Bilson defends that position, even today.[42] He notes that he: 'was using him [Guérard] as a metaphor, because that revolution (nouvelle cuisine) was the most influential thing that happened in French cooking internationally. That's the basis of the contemporary aesthetic, internationally.'

A detour into the history of nouvelle cuisine and its influence on modern cooking in general, and Australian in particular is necessary. *Larousse Gastronomique* tells us that nouvelle cuisine was…'A movement in cookery, started in 1972 by two food critics, H Gault and C Millau, with the aim of encouraging a simpler and more natural presentation of food.' The principles are 'absolute freshness of ingredients, lightness and natural harmony in the accompaniments, and simplicity in the cooking method.'[43] Two examples quoted were Guerard's aubergine puree cooked in saffron flavoured steam; and Alain Senderens's calf's sweetbread in a sea-urchin cream.

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[39] Excerpted from *Australian Cooking*, unpublished.
[40] *Culinary Cringe* page 15. This claim of 'world first' is disputed by O'Donnell and Schneider.
[41] One of the principal founders and proponents of nouvelle cuisine in France.
[42] Much of the following discussion of nouvelle cuisine arise from a discussion with Tony Bilson published in *Divine* 'Un chef Australien" pages 32-39.
[43] *Larousse Gastronomique* Page 732.

The timing was significant. It was1972, giving a couple of years for the news to travel, when some chefs in Melbourne and Adelaide especially were beginning to break out of the rigid European mould. Nouvelle cuisine gave the professional chef and restaurateur permission to go somewhere else. Chefs need no longer be merely the faithful servants of convention, re-creating dishes from a stern and unvaried canon[44] but could become artists, using produce as a palette, creating new dishes, new combinations of flavours, based on the classic techniques and dishes of a variety of national and regional cuisines.

It was this admission of other cuisines, something that had not been done in France since Carême, in his own estimation, invented modern French cuisine, having 'borrowed nothing from anyone'.[45] Even if that claim of Carême's was an exaggeration, the freedom to borrow and *acknowledge* it was one the great liberating effects of the nouvelle cuisine, in particular, the addition of elements, techniques and the aesthetic from Japanese cuisine.[46] More than anything, it is this openness to the influence of other cultures – at first especially Eastern – that is one of the hallmarks of modern Australian cooking. But could the components of Modern Australian cooking be codified?

ModOz codified

In 1994, I was asked to join a group of Australian food professionals - officially an Industry Reference Group – as a representative of the food media to help develop a course to be taught in TAFE (Technical and Further Education) Colleges around Australia. It was to be called Australian Contemporary Cuisine (ACC), and it was the vision of one

[44] Escoffier, Carême et al.
[45] *Accounting for Taste* page 51.
[46] In the early 1980s, at Kinsela's, Bilson employed a young Japanese unknwn by the name of Tetsuya Wakuda in the kitchen, and before him, a master Japanese sushi chef. Bilson says "the Japanese aesthetic has been the leading aesthetic in international cuisine for a very long time. There's a zen thing with food - going to the essence, and celebrating the essential nature of the ingredients you are using. The Japanese aesthetic is in the quest for perfection." 'Un chef Australien" pages 32-39.

man, Graham Latham, who, from 1973 to 1995, had been the founder and principal of the Regency Hotel School in Adelaide.[47] Latham was imported to Sydney to run Tourism and Hospitality for TAFE which he did from 1995 to1997. In that short time he devised and implemented this groundbreaking course. This industry reference group was charged with making the course happen and a structural definition of the Australian cooking style in the late 20th Century was hammered out over three years of meetings and sub-committees.[48] The course was inaugurated in 1997. Latham was relieved of his position the same year. 'TAFE didn't believe in the concept' Latham said, 'the managers (at TAFE) were trained in the old Swiss and German hotel traditions. Their ideas were deeply entrenched, and the course never got out of being peripheral. By 2000 it had arrived at the guillotine.'[49] While the course was decapitated, the style itself, whatever it was, captured the attention of the world.

Australian chefs were following Australian businessmen onto the world stage, with considerably more success: 'I have been given an insight into the food of the millennium' wrote an English journalist, 'there was no flash of lightning or crystal ball involved. It simply involved a trip to Australia.'[50] In 2000, R.W. Apple wrote in the *New York Times*:

> Between carrying on about Ian Thorpe, the young swimmer with feet almost as big as a kangaroo's, and marveling at Sydney's magnificent harbor and opera house, the writers and broadcasters covering the Olympic Games have somehow found

[47] I asked Latham why he had not called it Modern Australian Cuisine 'It [Contemporary] implied a more sophisticated approach. I thought at the time the word 'modern' was a little jaded. I was trying to be conscious of where we were and where we were going. Pers. comm. January 20, 2014. It appears he was right. Contemporary it is today.
[48] See Appendix 5.
[49] Telephone interview with Graham Latham September 22 2013.
[50] *The Sunday Times* February 1997.

> time to rave about the food and wine they have discovered in Australia.[51]

And in 2004 in the *Guardian Weekly* Veronica Horwell wrote:

> The real missionaries for fusion's casual freshness were a new international catering corps of Anzacs…the antipodean recruits' active approach suited the Californian styles, which they loosened up, jettisoning the waffly philosophy and the footnotes; then, as vineyards spread across Australia through the 1980s, Sydney rather than San Francisco became a leading model for good times, while culinary hands with Oz experience could work their way around the world's kitchens.[52]

In their essay 'Monoculture versus Multiculinarism', Newman and Gibson write 'Sydney competed with San Francisco as a leader in 'fusion' cuisine – merging the flavours of various ethnic cuisines with local produce. An eclecticism, inventiveness and imaginative use of local ingredients has been more recently captured, in gastronomic circles, in the idea of 'Mod Oz Cuisine', or more widely and generally as 'Contemporary Australian.'[53]

In 1996, Andre Cointreau, the owner of Le Cordon Bleu International claimed: 'Ten years ago, I thought it was going to be Tokyo. But now, in my opinion, it is Sydney making the kind of synthesis that was made in Paris 100 years ago.'[54] Synthesis is the correct word, but it was not the 'kind of synthesis made in Paris 100 years ago.' If Cointreau was alluding to Antonin Carême,[55] his construction of

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[51] 'Dispatches From a Culinary Frontier' *New York Times Dining In, Dining Out* September 20 2000.
[52] Quoted in *Ordinary Lifestyles* page 85.
[53] ibid. Pages 84-85
[54] Cointreau explaining why he chose Sydney to open his first Southern Hemisphere Cordon bleu cooking school. Interview with JN.
[55] *Accounting for Taste* page 49. Marie-Antoine Carême (1783-1833) was the single most important influence on modern French haute cuisine. '… not just because he was a great

French cuisine was in direct contrast to Modern Australian. Carême 'did not hesitate to "frenchify" foreign dishes to make them more palatable to French tastes and practicable for French chefs… this Frenchness was secured and enriched by Carême's entire culinary system.'[56] The synthesis that Cointreau alluded to had more in common with a far more ancient cuisine: Roman. Like Australia – but via immigration rather than conquest – Rome's market offered foodstuffs from the length and breadth of the then known world (its Empire). When they conquered Africa that country's 'fantastic flora and fauna were an inexhaustible source of inspiration for the cook.'[57] After conquering the western Mediterranean, they took control of the trade routes to India and China and so added spices to the mix. With its diversity of culinary influences and ingredients, Rome was a closer model for ModOz. But we have assimilated them in an entirely different and more conscious way.

Australia, since 1945, has been a multiculinary society, the opposite of which is a monoculinary society. As Corones points out: 'Within monoculinary societies, food is not usually "conscious", or reflected on, because a food tradition, no matter how highly articulated, is handed down from generation to generation uncritically.'[58] In such a society, the only variations from the unquestioned monotony of an unvarying diet are seasonal. For example: 'To eat bread and olive oil is a daily habit of most of the inhabitants of the archipelago [the Balearic Islands]', writes Tomás Graves.[59] The romantic notion promulgated in countless books on Mediterranean food ignores or glosses over this dietary tedium. Corones went on to state:

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chef…but because he was an extraordinary cultural entrepreneur. He was the first culinary modern.' Escoffier, who followed Carême, merely refined his method.

[56] ibid. page 72 & 74.

[57] Faas, Patrick *Around the Roman Table* pages 18-19.

[58] *Proceedings of the Third Symposium of Australian Gastronomy* page 18. Corones and I are both talking here of the daily food of the ordinary people. In such countries as Italy and parts of China, there will be such food, and higher up the social ladder, a more varied table.

[59] *Bread & Oil* page 17.

> I wish to use the word "multiculinarism" in a strong sense to point not just to the presence of many cuisines but to the awareness of other cuisines, to mutual comparison and influence. And multiculinarism, in this sense, has the consequence of raising our consciousness of food.[60]

Surrounded as we are, and have been for some fifty years, by an ever-increasing variety of cuisines and ingredients, many of us have become acutely aware of and knowledgeable about the foods we eat.

In the midst of this culinary plenty, our chefs have created a style of cooking that skitters across a large number of cuisines. I use the verb skitter advisedly, because nothing permanent has been created, only innumerable dishes, most of which disappear from the menu within a week. Very few of those chefs have arrived at the state where they 'realise that food is more than just feed [and]…begin to become sensitive to the philosophical dimensions of it, to the idea that is not just recipes that make a cuisine but principles.'[61] Corones illustrates this by citing the Chinese principle of 'fan-ts'ai' with 'fan' being grains and starch foods and 'ts'ai' vegetable and meat dishes. With that principle in mind, Corones suggests – quoting K.C. Chang[62] – a Chinese cook could enter an American kitchen containing either Chinese or American ingredients and prepare a meal whose 'Chineseness' would increase with the right ingredients but still be, essentially, a Chinese meal. At least in 1998, we had not reached that stage and I am inclined to agree with Corones, even 26 years later:

> There is little sense then in talk about an Australian cuisine if we mean by it the single cuisine of all the people. Given time, perhaps the various cuisines will mingle and blend, but we

[60] *Proceedings of the Third Symposium of Australian Gastronomy* page 18.
[61] ibid. page 19.
[62] *Food in Chinese Culture.*

> would lose a great heritage in the process.[63]

That great heritage being our 'very Australian way' – to borrow a phrase from comedian John Clarke – of assimilating those multiculinary influences that surround us.[64]

And defined

In *Australian Cooking*[65] chefs were asked: 'If you were to open an Italian restaurant in Frankfurt, you would know, more or less, what to serve: a French restaurant, the same. But what would you serve at an Australian restaurant in Frankfurt?' Frankfurt was chosen because it is a large, cosmopolitan city, which had a similar mix of 'ethnic' restaurants to Australia. At the time there was no Australian restaurant in Frankfurt. Here are some of the responses:

> Peter Conistis:
> Firstly I'd use whatever produce I could find there. Australian cuisine is a lot to do with whatever you
> can find. If I was going to do a ModOz restaurant – whatever that is – it would be a mixture of Mediterranean and slightly Asian influences using whatever was at hand.
>
> Christine Manfield:
> Exactly what I'm doing here [at her Kings Cross restaurant Paramount at the time]. What's happening in this country is great diversity. And that's the positive thing we have to play on. What David [Thompson], Tetsuya [Wakuda] , Neil [Perry] etc are doing is their personal interpretation – but it all fits under the umbrella of Australian cuisine. It's not slavishly copied from somewhere else, it's not definitive, and it's not the only food experience you'd get if you came to Australia. We have that freedom because we haven't been bound in by strict rules that define the way a cuisine develops.

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[63] *Proceedings of the Third Symposium of Australian Gastronomy* page 26.
[64] 'Australia is not the only country to be obsessed with sport,' but it is the only country called Australia to be obsessed with sport. And it is obsessed with sport in a very Australian way.' John Clarke on the debut of his television show Sporting Nation, *Sydney Morning Herald* 18 June 2012.
[65] *Australian Cooking* unpublished.

Sean Moran:
I'd draw on Anglo-colonial history, it would be along those lines, with maybe an Italian flavour to it, but definitely using Australian produce.

Ian Parmenter:
They don't use Australian produce [in Woolloomooloo the Australian restaurant then open in Paris] everything is French – except for emu, they can't get French emu – but what makes it an Australian restaurant is the approach to the food of the Australian chef there. So I'd first put in an Australian chef - or an English chef who'd worked here.

Tony Bilson:
I wouldn't [open an Australian restaurant in Frankfurt] because the term Australian restaurant would only be a marketing term and have no real cultural relevance outside of Australia. That is not to say that some other enterprising soul might make it relevant.

If the Modern Australian chef was not creating a new cuisine, what was he or she doing?

What our chefs are, suggests Gallegos, is bricoleurs.[66] Bricolage is the right term for Modern Australian, especially as the word is used in the arts, to signify the creation of a work or works from a diverse range of materials at hand. For Lévi-Strauss bricolage was an attempt to re-use available materials in order to solve new problems. Thus the Modern Australian chef casts about for ingredients and techniques which can be used in ways that they would not have been used in their original context to create a dish never before seen and in most instances, never to be seen again. But along the way, something of the personality of the chef is revealed: 'the bricoleur [gives] an account of his personality and life by the choices he makes…he always includes some of himself.'[67] Whatever else it is, Modern Australian cooking is a chef-creation, and has arrived from 'the top down, not the bottom up'.

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[66] *Ordinary Lifestyles* page 108.
[67] *The Savage Mind* page 21.

For it to become *the* food chosen by people for self-identification, all groups in Australia would need to become equal stakeholders.[68] That is clearly not the case. The same journalists who created Modern Australian then attempted to eradicate it.

The first official appearance of the term Modern Australian occurs in the second edition of *The Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide*, compiled from visits in 1984, and published as 1985/86.The description appears next to the entry for The Bennelong, but not yet as a listing in the index. In the next edition, 1986/87, Bennelong, The Pitts in Pitt Street and EJ's in Canberra are listed, again in the body, as Modern Australian. There is still no listing for Modern Australian in the index. Although the descriptions of the food in these restaurants bears no relation to what was to become later Mod Oz it does indicate that the idea was in the air as early as 1984.

As a separate indexed category, it first appeared in *The Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide* in 1994, the last to be edited by Schofield and Dowe. There was not, according to Schofield, much serious deliberation before adding it. He wrote:

> I recall that Michael and I had a discussion about this. There was much talk about categorisation – Greek, Italian etc – and we needed a name to describe the local style, often a hybrid, that had evolved and emerged in force at the time.[69]

By 2000, it was far and away the largest category in the guide, with over 130 entries and at least that many in 2005, the year before it disappeared from the Sydney edition.[70] The editors at the time, Matthew Evans and Simon Thomsen, replaced it with Contemporary

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[68] *Ordinary Lifestyles* page 108.
[69] Email to JN August 8 2013.
[70] The other addition from that year were the terms Modern Italian, Modern French, Modern Italian et cetera. From 2006, this was all replaced by a single category: Contemporary.

in 2006. Thomsen said in a later interview, they 'decided that Modern Australian cuisine did not exist. It was merely an affectation.'[71] *The Age Good Food Guide* introduced the description under the editorship of Sally Lewis in 2003, replacing it with Contemporary when editors Necia Wilden and John Lethlean took over in 2007. Lethlean later reflected:

> Modern Australian didn't seem to me…to mean that much in the sense that it was being used in the *Guide* for so many different cooking styles. Contemporary seemed to cover it much better.[72]

If journalists thought they had done away with Modern Australian cuisine/cooking style, as is often the case, they over-estimated their influence. The style, if not the name, lives on. And at the end of this exploration, I now offer two possible definitions of (Modern) Australian cuisine (cooking).

Speaking at an *Australian Gourmet Traveller* event to announce the restaurant of the year in 1994, *New York Times* restaurant critic Bryan Miller said:

> While I've travelled around the country, I've constantly been asked the question: what is Australian food? Having thought about it a lot, I've found the answer. Australian food is food cooked in Australia.[73]

A more precise and less capricious definition of Australian haute cuisine – or high cooking would be: the cuisine of chefs working in Australia who create it daily. A largely rootless 'personality-cuisine'

[71] 'Casual dining with a twist of sublime' August 22 2013.
[72] Pers.comm.
[73] Pers.comm. In a typical, for the times, act of 'culinary cringe' the magazine would import prominent foreigners to judge the competition. Miller was one, English chef, writer, teacher and proprietor of cookery school La Varenne, Anne Willan another.

borne not of the anonymous creations of mysteriously dispersed dishes, but from the hands and minds of talented individuals working with an ever-increasing range of materials that can be chosen, either at random, or filtered through a chosen but not imposed set of traditional technique and ingredient sets using 'bricolage.' It differs from French haute cuisine in that although individual chefs may have been trained in the French method, or may have been influenced by nouvelle cuisine, they are not within the sphere of influence of either, or indeed any rules at all, but are out on a distant planet. As Brugman wrote in her paper 'Food in Australia or Australian Food?' 'Sometimes isolationism creates a particularly open-minded curiosity.'[74] But did it ever 'trickle down' to the domestic kitchen? Perhaps in small ways.

In his introduction to the 1999 book *Australian Food*, Alan Saunders wrote:

> Ghassan Hage tells a story from the western Sydney suburb of Westmead, where a Lebanese family introduced their Anglo neighbours to *lahmeh w'snoobar*, a mixture of minced meat, onions and pine nuts. The woman of the (Anglo) house thought this was the best minced meat she had ever tasted so she used it in making meat pies.[75]

Before leaving this attempt at defining modern Australian, a story offering a far from flattering definition from a story told to Ronnie Scott, and relayed in his book, *Salad Days*. A chef friend, Jesse Gerner, told Scott that at the London Michelin-starred restaurant Moro, where Garner had worked, 'modern Australian was an in-house

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[74] *Proceedings of the Third Symposium of Australian Gastronomy* page 209.

[75] *Australian Food* page 35 In a similar vein, in Chinatown in a Chinese cake shop, I found a version of a bun filled with cha siu (barbecued pork): not the usual cha siu pao, a steamed dough bun but a cha siu pie, with the pork encased in pie shaped puff pastry. This delicious invention recently disappeared with the sale of the shop.

term for a stuffed up course: "Check this out, I burnt a chicken breast. It's modern Australian!" chefs said.'[76]

At the end of the 1990s, I ate a meal at the home of a friend who could be described as a 'foodie'. His life was devoted to reading about food, eating at the best restaurants, and cooking. His obsessions informed the meal. It began with plates of oysters delivered that afternoon by one of the growing number of seafood brokers supplying the white tablecloth trade, Sydney's now defunct Flying Squid Brothers, who made home deliveries for special customers. That was followed by deep fried harbour prawns, a recipe taken from Armando Percuoco of Buon Ricordo restaurant still in Sydney's Paddington. Next, an assembly of buffalo mozzarella, radicchio and cold roast veal from a menu at Ecco, a small Italian restaurant then in a hotel in the suburb of Five Dock, followed by a fennel risotto, the recipe of another guest who had imported it from the Villa d'Este on Lake Como in Northern Italy, followed by an assortment of French and Australian cheeses from Simon Johnson, provedore to the restaurant trade. This reverence for our high level chefs was reflected in our cookbooks which I shall examine in the following chapter.

[76] *Salad Days* page 19.

Chapter 6

Chefs leap from the page to the screen: towards the 2000s

> Cookbooks, which usually belong to the humble literature of complex civilizations, tell unusual cultural tales. They combine the sturdy pragmatic virtues of all manuals with the vicarious pleasures of the literature of the senses. They reflect shifts in the boundaries of edibility, the proprieties of the culinary process, the logic of meals, the exigencies of the household budget, the vagaries of the market, and the structure of domestic ideologies.[1]
>
> Arjun Appardurai

Writing of the recipes in the rash of celebrity chef cookbooks emanating from the 1990s, Gallegos says: 'they are directed towards those who have the access to ingredients, those with culinary skill, time to both cook and reconnoitre for ingredients, and those with the economic and cultural capital to want to indulge in such tasks'. She concludes that 'Australian food is…still very much the domain of the upper-middle classes, but there is some evidence of a trickle-down effect.'[2] If this was true in 2005 (when *Ordinary Lifestyles* was published) it is even truer today. But first, a brief survey of a selection of 1980s cook books.

The cookbooks published in Australia in the 1980s and 1990s reflect the changes of a society in culinary and cultural flux. The vast majority of the almost seven hundred Australian cookbooks published between 1980 and 1989[3] were authored by women. The most

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[1] 'How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India' page 1.

[22] *Ordinary Lifestyles* pages 108 and 109.

[3] In the absence of any other sources, I compiled my list of cookbooks in those two decades from Trove and Libraries Australia. These are not ideal sources – I am aware that many did not show up, but I had no choice. Nielsen BookScan did not begin tracking retail sales until 2003, but for consistency I have used the sources named throughout.

prominent and multi-published names on the list were Margaret Fulton, Charmaine Solomon, Jacki Passmore, Beverley Sutherland-Smith and Tess Mallos, all of whom worked either in magazines and newspapers or wrote cookbooks and food articles. This is the era before the masculinisation of the cookbook, before the emergence of the 'celebrity chef', the vast majority of whom are male. There was not one book by a restaurant chef, and only two by television chefs: Peter Russell-Clark and Gabriel Gaté.[4] In the 1980s, we still took our kitchen cues from women.

Of the rest, many were concerned with health: losing weight, diabetes, vegetarian cookery et cetera. Several were published by food and food industry associated companies, like *The Comalco Alfoil Nostalgia Cookbook*, compiled by the *Australian Women's Weekly*'s Betty Dunleavy, and *Fairy's Collection of Ultimate Recipes* by Anne Marshall, once food editor for *New Idea* : Fairy was a Unilever brand of margarine. Both these books were published in 1980, as was *Marvellously succulent…magnificently simple minced steak recipes* compiled by the Geelong Multiple Sclerosis Auxiliary, representative of another sub-category of books from charity organizations. At the end of the decade, in 1987 and 1989, two books were published that looked forward to one of the movements of the next decade: *Bush Food: Aboriginal food and Herbal Medicine* by Jennifer Isaacs and *The Bushfood Handbook: how to gather, grow, process & cook Australian Wild Foods* by Vic Cherikoff.

If the mainstream cookbooks of the decade were either retrograde, conservative or 'ethnic' *the Australian Women's Weekly Dinner Party Cookbook No.2* (1983) included some 'creative' recipes worthy of the best restaurant menus of the time[5] These included Avocado with Jellied Gazpacho; Oyster Vichyssoise; and, in an all-Japanese menu,

[4] Although Gaté did work as a chef in restaurants in London and Paris, he has not done so in Australia.
[5] See collection of dishes from restaurant menus of the 1980s and 1990s in Appendix 6.

a variation on the traditional Tonkatsu (breaded deep-fried pork cutlet), Eggkatsu, made using beef.

These Australian 'variations' on classic dishes recall a passage in Gay Bilson's book *Plenty*. Commenting on the conversation between an Australian food journalist and Singaporean chef and cookery teacher Violet Oon. The journalist asked Oon if she was considering opening a school in Sydney, to teach us how to make (the Nonya dish) laksa so our chefs could 'fiddle' with it. 'Fiddling with the traditional foods of our Asian neighbours might just be the best definition of what some commentators hopefully call "Australian cuisine."'[6]

Such experimentation or 'fiddling' is not exhibited in the only two books that I could find published for the Bicentenary*: The Australian Gas Cookbook: The Bicentennial Edition* and *The Terrace Times Minimum Effort Maximum Effect Bicentennial Cookbook* (both 1987). They, and especially the first, contain nothing remotely 'fiddled with' or fused, although the second wanders further afield in terms of cuisines, going as far as Poland, Russia and Moldavia. Neither offers native produce: the Gas Cookbook gives yet another recipe for kangaroo biscuits (first encountered in the CWA books). But by the end of the decade, change was in the kitchen.

The 1990s saw the first waves of the deluge of 'celebrity' chef cookbooks, with first publications by Serge Dansereau (Kable's), Neil Perry (Rockpool), Liam Tomlin (Banc), Bill Marchetti (Marchetti's Latin), Phillip Johnson (e'cco), Greg Malouf (O'Connell's), Stefano Manfredi (The Restaurant Manfredi), Jean-Paul Bruneteau (Riberries), and Armando Percuoco (Pulcinella). It was also the decade in which we began to scrutinize the food our chefs were cooking, with books like *Great Australian Chefs*, a series of essays with recipes by Mietta O'Donnell and Tony Knox; *The Food of Australia*, a collection of recipes

[6] *Plenty* page 220.

from Australian chefs compiled by Stephanie Alexander; *Australian Food* with a long reflective introduction by Alan Saunders on the nature of Modern Australian cooking/cuisine; and the celebratory *Australia the Beautiful* with a foreword by Cherry Ripe.

Two notable books published in this decade were *The Cook's Companion* by Stephanie Alexander, and *New Food* by Jill Dupleix, the first a restaurateur/food journalist, the second a food journalist. The second of those achieved impressive international sales, the first for an Australian cookbook.[7] Their differences were stark. The Alexander book was a scholarly, meticulously researched and produce-based compendium of information and recipes, all information, little polemic. *New Food*, on the other hand, was an enthusiastic and colourful (predominantly orange and yellow) celebration of the new found freedom of the (Modern) Australian chef translated for the domestic cook. It contained a credo which proclaimed that the reader should 'Buy only what is fresh and in season' and 'Have fun' and 'Buy the best quality food you can and do less to it.'[8] But the celebrity chef cookbook phenomenon had to wait until the new millennium to take off. Television was the next stop for these chefs, fast emerging from the kitchen and embracing the word 'celebrity' in their titles. And all were men.[9]

The new decade saw the beginning of the domination of the television chefs/cooks/hosts/restaurateurs as authors, and the birth of television cooking show themed books. Among the authors were Gary

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[7] According to Ms Dupleix in an email 60,000 copies in Australia and the rest of the world.
[8] *New Food* pages 6-7.
[9] The provenance of the term 'celebrity chef' is difficult to ascertain. An email (to me) from British food historian Paul Levy on Tuesday October 28, 2013 said: 'I don't actually know, though I'm pretty sure I used it myself -- as a pejorative term - in *The Observer* in the 80s or early 90s. I've had a quick trawl through the Foodie Handbook [*The Official Foodie Handbook* by Ann Barr & Paul Levy 1984], which seems to be carefully avoiding using the expression…I very much doubt that there is a single source for the coinage, as once one started speaking and writing about "celebrities," "celebrity chef" was inevitable, and I imagine dozens of writers coined it all at once. And there's the additional problem that the first uses of the expression may well have been on TV, and not in print. In the UK, for example, there were food "magazine' programmes on the BBC from the early 80s.'

Mehigan Matt Preston and George Colombaris, Jacques Reymond, Peter Evans, Matthew Evans, Lyndey Milan, Bill Granger, Kylie Kwong, Curtis Stone, Miguel Maestre, Ed Halmagyi, Peter Kuruvita and the first of the MasterChef books, *MasterChef Australia: the cookbook* which was published in 2009: nine more have been published since. At time of writing (early 2014) Wikipedia lists 42 television food shows, all but four of them beginning or still running in the 2000s.[10] Of those television food shows, none had the impact of MasterChef Australia.

MasterChef: cooking, competing or conning?

A few statistics. In its first year, 2009, each episode averaged 1.42 million viewers, peaking to two million a week for the final weeks.[11] The finale of the first series began with 3,475,000 viewers and soared to 4.11million for the last half hour. The first series was the most watched show of 2009.[12] On June 16 2009, a story on news.com.au reported that 'cooking schools have been flooded with students eager to learn how to simmer, marinate, braise and sizzle like the contestants on Channel 10's reality hit *MasterChef*.' The story went on to report that: 'Judges and chefs George Calombaris and Gary Mehigan had sell-out crowds of 2700 at their celebrity theatre appearances at Melbourne's Food and Wine Festival last weekend.'[13] As the show built, its sponsors, particularly Coles supermarkets, benefitted enormously. *The Australian* reported that:

> 'COLES is reporting dramatic sales increases of ingredients thanks to Network Ten's hit show MasterChef…Sales of everything from rabbit to certain spices and even lamb brains

[10] One of them *The Chef Presents*, a five minute segment which aired from 1957-1959 in Melbourne may have been Australia's first television food show. Its presenter, German chef Willi Koeppen, disappeared in 1976. It is believed he was murdered.
[11] Knox, David 'Biggest Loser tops 2M Viewers", *TV Tonight* April 28 2009.
[12] Knox, David "2009: Top 100', *TV Tonight* December 6 2009.
[13] 'Cooking schools flooded with MasterChef fans' news.com.au June16 2009.

> have gone up after being featured on the program. Cooking equipment, from croquembouche cones to kitchen blowtorches used to make creme brulee, to expensive appliances, have also seen demand spikes.'[14]

While there is no doubting the commercial success and viewer popularity of this show, what of its wider influence? Presenter Matt Preston said in an interview, 'the purpose of this show is to pull as many people as possible over to our side and to show them there is value in cooking, that you can create great food in short periods of time.' In the same interview presenter Gary Mehigan said:

> When a six-year-old bounds up to me and says,
> "I made ganache on the weekend with mum," I almost want to burst into tears. [I'm] looking at this little kid who is so excited because she's seen you on TV and her mum went and bought couverture. I mean, I didn't know what couverture was until I was 17. I didn't know there was good and bad chocolate. I think that is an amazing influence.[15]

Those two statements epitomize the antinomies to be found within this show and its relation to food culture. Preston sees it as influencing quotidian food: Mehigan was overwhelmed by a child making ganache, hardly a daily food item. In discussing this show with students while teaching the course Writing About Food, one of those students said that she believed it was influential because her husband, who had previously had no interest in food, had become 'really interested in plating' after watching the show.[16] But is MasterChef a cooking show? Gay Bilson thinks not:

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[14] *The Australian* June 21 2010. Sinclair, Lara 'MasterChef sparks Coles sales surge.'
[15] Huntley, Rebecca, 'Interview with The MasterChef Judges' rebeccahuntley.blogspot.com.au
[16] Plating refers to the way food is displayed on the plate in a restaurant, and can range from the simplest placement to artful creations using props.

> Like most television shows, *MasterChef* and its offspring are first and foremost entertainments devised around the advertisements that will pay for them…As an entertainment, *MasterChef* has an edge because it is a competition, a sport; not any old gladiatorial sport, but *culinary* gladiatorial sport – a home-grown version of Japan's *Iron Chef*.[17]

And, in so far as it is a cooking show, it is a restaurant cooking show. Bilson again:

> In the episode of *Celebrity MasterChef* I watched, a woman cooked lamb cutlets with Moroccan spices and suitable accompaniments. She stacked the three cutlets on top of each other at semi-rakish angles and then dribbled something extra on the plate. The panjandrum declared the dish "very chefy" and, peering over his paper-towel cravat, he said to the cook, "You have an artist's eye. Beautiful."[18]

The show is less about cooking for friends or family, and more about cooking professionally, in competition with others. It is 'less about demonstrating the feminine attributes assigned traditionally to the mother and hostess and more about embracing the masculine traits of strength, vigor and authority.'[19] This type of programming resonates in the masculinist Australian setting, presenting a way of giving men permission to move into a traditionally feminised workspace – the kitchen, and to take over domestic duties usually assigned to women. What's more, according to Swenson, 'By supporting hegemonic masculinity rather than a domestic masculinity, competitive contests counter constructions of cooking as nurturing, democratic and family-

[17] Bilson, Gay MasterChef Published in *The Monthly*, November 2009, No. 51 (pages un-numbered online).
[18] ibid.
[19] *Culinary Capital* page 44.

centred labor.'[20] Bilson points out that 'Restaurant food makes up only a tiny percentage of food consumed in this country. Television's endless parade of food programs gain audience in inverse proportion to the number of people who handle real food and cook good meals'[21] But the important question is – has MasterChef had or will it have any real and lasting effect on what Australians eat in the home? Social researcher Rebecca Huntley began sceptically:

> Look at kids who are aged seven to nine now: will they be living on two-minute noodles in 10 years' time or cooking good meals?...Mothers should seize upon this show to teach their sons to cook. As long as everyday cooking is something that mainly women do, all the MasterChef shows in the world aren't going to change the reality for them, for whom cooking is a difficult, stressful, chore-like task.[22]

Three years later, research by her company which found that 'of 1000 Australians [polled] 61%...felt that watching the show had encouraged them to be more creative when cooking meals at home.'[23] This prompted to her to post, on her blog, a piece entitled 'I heart MasterChef' with this comment: 'I was slow to become a fan of *MasterChef* but by mid-series, I was a full-blown devotee; ironically, perhaps, we planned our evening meals around the show.'[24]

My own research, TableWatch,[25] nowhere near as extensive, does not indicate huge support for or influence of *MasterChef* on cooking in the home. Of the 50 people I interviewed, 12 said they watched it, 29 said they don't watch it, only three said they had cooked anything from it (one 'my wife might have cooked something from it'). One told me: 'It's

[20] 'Domestic Divo? Televised Translations of Masculinity, Femininity and Food' page 50.
[21] *The Monthly*, November 2009, No. 51 (pages un-numbered online). Bilson, Gay 'MasterChef'
[22] 'MasterChef sparks Coles sales surge'
[23] 'Interview with The MasterChef Judges'
[24] rebeccahuntley.blogspot.com.au October 2009.
[25] See Appendix 10.

influenced the way I would like to cook.' Another that her husband watches 'but he doesn't cook, just likes to watch the shows.' Another's husband asks her, after watching the show: 'to do certain things and I say no that's not going to happen.' One woman told me she and her husband loved *MasterChef*, never cooked from it, but they: 'record it and we sit down when the children have gone to bed and watch it. It's quite relaxing.' Only one said 'in a sense I might be more experimental I'll give it a go if I see something' and another said her it made her daughter 'a bit more adventurous.' Nine watched *My Kitchen Rule*s. Other shows mentioned were Jamie Oliver, Ian Hewitson, *The Barefoot Contessa*, Luke Ngyuyen, Peter Kuruvita and *The Chef and the Cook*. One said 'I like to watch a lot of the shows on Channel 2, a bit more exotic than *MasterChef*.' There were a number of negative comments concerning *MasterChef* especially: 'they've taken the fun out of food it's become a competition and 'I'm not sure they love cooking for the sake of cooking': 'I don't like those other shows [MC and MKR] they're horrible': 'I'm not mad on *MasterChef*, to me they're rather pompous.'

While recognising that this is a tiny and statistically insignificant sample, my observation suggests me that these responses are typical, and that *MasterChef* is going the way of all reality television shows: into oblivion. Already the audience figures are dropping dramatically. By 2012, ratings were slipping, with audiences for some weeks as low as 745,000, and rating only 40th in its time slot. By 2013, compared to three million viewers who watched Julie Goodwin named as the inaugural *MasterChef* champion, barely one million watched Emma Dean win the 2013 title. 'With the exception of a few nights of sunshine, the fifth season has struggled against heated competition' wrote Knox.[26] It will be instructive to read the results of Huntley's research in ten years time. Although there is no doubting the broad-ranging influence of MasterChef as entertainment.

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[26] 'MasterChef finale barely scrapes 1 million viewers' David Knox, TV Tonight. September 2 2013.

In an interview with Huntley, presenter Gary Mehigan recounted the following story: 'It has crossed a strange number of demographics. I was in a traffic jam – they were digging up Burnley Street in Melbourne – and this big hairy-arsed guy with his stop sign sees me and yells "Yah, MasterChef!" and all the guys down the line did the same thing.'[27]

Television cooking shows and magazines like *Australian Gourmet Traveller* in general have had some 'trickledown' effect as shown on one episode of the satirical show Kath & Kim, which offered an acute observation of Australian suburban society of its time. Kel Knight, Kath Day-Knight's husband is not just a butcher, as his profile on the MySpace site attests:

> As a purveyor of fine meats, I'm always in search of the perfect gourmet sausage, so if you want to discuss your recipes with me, just waltz on down to my butcher shop and have a yarn – don't be backward in coming forward![28]

The shift in Australian culinary culture – magazine and television-driven – is clear when even a 'bogan' like Kel Knight has become a 'gourmet.' In one episode, Kel is inveigled by his wife-to-be Kath to go out on a buck's night before their marriage. But Kel has different plans. He and Brett Craig, Kath's sister Kim's estranged husband, go to a local restaurant. We first see them eating squid in linguine and drinking 'a Riesling, Cockfighter's Ghost 2000, it makes the spaghetti taste better, that's the trick with matching your wines' is how he puts it to Brett. When Brett toasts to 'our wild buck's night', Kel corrects him 'our wild night of degustation.'[29] Kel represents one kind of Australian infected by the media 'gourmet' culture. For Kel,

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[27] rebeccahuntley.blogspot.com.au July 2011.
[28] The show ran in Australia from 2002 to 2007.
[29] Series 1 Episode 7 October 'Party' aired June 27 2002.

gastronomy is still a foreign culture, one he is copying from what he has seen on television and read in magazines and is interpreting for the less sophisticated Brett. But it is his hobby rather than an embrace of food culture. This, I think, is relatively common. More generally, there appears to be a dichotomy between the food we eat at home and the food we read about, watch on television and – if we can afford it – eat at restaurants.

Chapter 7

Australia's tables today

> The single most important ingredient in the Australian restaurant kitchen today? A passport…I love this restaurant [The Bridge Room]. It's hospitable, mature and adventurous, in a grounded manner. You know, the phrase 'international cuisine' used to be the kiss of death for a restaurant; suddenly, it makes a whole lot of sense.[1]
> John Lethlean

In this chapter, I examine the food we are eating currently on three tables: the high and low public tables and the domestic table. I also investigate how and why, regardless of our lack of a food culture as defined traditionally, or a clearly delineated national or regional cuisine, some of us do eat contemporary food as fine as any in the world: those fortunate enough to be able to afford a place at our high public tables.[2] I do this firstly through a discussion of the chef at The Bridge Room, Ross Lusted.

Lusted's career began in Australia, where he worked at – among other places – Darley Street Thai, whose head chef, David Thompson, is today a world-renowned authority on the food of Thailand; at Rockpool, with Neil Perry, the country's leading exponent of and practitioner of Modern Australian cooking; Mezza9 at the Grand Hyatt in Singapore; and then Amanresorts, a group which owns 26 small luxury resorts around the world, whose emphasis in each one is fine versions of local cuisine. Lusted was in charge of food and beverage

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[1] *The Australian Magazine* page 34, October 20 2011. Review of The Bridge Room.
[2] 'Fast food' will not be discussed at length but cannot be ignored. Although a subset of 'cuisine' that is created by advertising and marketing, as a by-product of globalisation, it is much the same from one country to another and – with the exception of the Australian predilection for beetroot in the hamburger – it has little relevance to this thesis, except in the Low Tables section where its popularity is mentioned.

for each of the Amanresort hotels, supervising the food offer in culinary environments as diverse as Italy, Cambodia, China, Greece, India and America. Such multiculinary training is not unusual in Australian chefs. And, as discussed by Anthony Corones, a consequence of multiculinarism is a raised culinary consciousness.[3] In the review quoted above, Lethlean raises the issue of 'international cuisine' which, in one context, is used to describe the food served at large hotels around the world, usually what Revel calls 'false grand cuisine',[4] debased versions of dishes from French haute cuisine. This is not the context here.

The food cooked by Lusted and other Australian 'bricolage' chefs is not from a body of recipes but 'a body of methods, of principles amenable to variations, depending on different local and financial possibilities.'[5] And, as always, the imagination and abilities of the original chef. It does not always turn out as well as Lusted and Perry's food. In May 1997, outside a restaurant in Sydney's Rocks just around the corner from the original Rockpool, I found a menu containing these dishes, chosen at random:

> Risotto of Japanese Scallops and fresh herbs with a green coconut curry sauce
>
> Breast of Chicken filled with a Smoked Salmon and Shallot Mousse, accompanied by lemon peppered potatoes, green beans with a light dill cream sauce
>
> Our own sun-dried tomato Fettuccine, Fetta, Olives and Asian Vegetables in a roma tomato sauce

Freedom in the kitchen can be dangerous when it is not accompanied by wisdom and technical ability. But it has been the judicious use of

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[3] 'Multiculinarism and the Emergence of Gastronomy' *Proceedings of the Third Symposium of Gastronomy* 1987.
[4] *Culture and Cuisine* page 214.
[5] ibid.

that freedom which has resulted in the chefs of Australia being hailed as some of the finest in the world. There is a parallel here with the Australian and American wine industries.

The success of new world wine has been partly attributed to the freedom from the creative constraints of denomination of origin controls where a wine from a certain area is limited as to how it can be made by the strict classification, supervised in France by the *Institut National des appellations d'Origine*, at the head of which is the *Appellation (d'Origine) Controlee*, AC or AOC. To receive such a classification is to exert strict control of origin, grape varieties and winemaking methods used. Similar restrictions and rules also apply in Italy and, to a lesser extent, Spain. Because Australian and American wine makers had no such traditional reins, they could experiment freely with blends and winemaking methods.

As with freedom in the kitchen, freedom in the vineyard also had its downside. Pioneer Hunter Valley winemaker Maurice O'Shea was 'appalled at the ad hoc approach that Australian winemakers took to the production of their wines, the lack of hygiene, the lack of measurement, and most of all, the "fruit-salad" planting of grape varieties that had characterised the early industry.'[6] Both Australian food and wine have overcome the pitfalls of freedom to achieve international renown. But even within the freedom of a multiculinary society, there have to be some self-imposed limits.

There are two paths for Australian chefs wanting to be taken seriously for their cuisine. They can choose a national/regional cuisine, and approach it with the formula outlined by Revel above. These choices can be made based on ethnicity or predilection. Examples of the former include Damien Pignolet, who, although Australian-born,

[6] *The Ten Apostles: The Story of Australia's Iconic Winemakers* (forthcoming no pages numbers).

chose to utlilise his French ancestry and cook determinedly French food; Kylie Kwong, also Australian-born, who chose to pursue her Chinese ancestry in the kitchen. On the other hand, the previously mentioned David Thompson's choice of Thai cuisine was based on his fascination with the culture and cuisine of Thailand; Tony Bilson, whose food, although contemporary Australian, was based strictly upon French principles, especially those of the nouvelle cuisine; and Mark Jensen, Australian chef at the two Vietnamese Red Lanterns in Sydney. These are just a few of many chefs whose path is to 'choose' a cuisine not their own.

Then there is the more problematic – and perilous – path of Modern/Contemporary Australian, unrestricted by any particular national/regional culinary guidelines. Such a course has been steered by Peter Gilmore at Quay in Sydney who, although originally taught French technique – most institutions teach French technique – has, more recently, been utilising both French and Asian techniques and ingredients: as did Phillip Searle at Oasis Seros.[7] So too New Zealand born Ben Shewry of Attica in Melbourne whose food was first influenced by his growing up in rural New Zealand where much of what the family ate was foraged or home-grown. Apart from eating the food of these contemporary Australian chefs, the best way to get some idea of the breadth of their influences is to look at the dishes they serve and the ingredients/techniques used in them. I have chosen thirteen of the most acclaimed of these restaurants from around the country, although mainly from Sydney and Melbourne, and three dishes, entree main and dessert from their current – November 2013 – menus. The dishes have been chosen to demonstrate that breadth of ingredient and technique mentioned

[7] While writing a review of Oasis Seros in 1995, I rang Searle to ask him about a marinated beetroot sauce that had accompanied seared kangaroo fillet. I was on the telephone to him for twenty minutes as he explained its preparation, which combined French, Chinese and Vietnamese techniques.

above, but the choice did not skew the overall direction of the individual cuisines on any one direction.[8] Some examples.

A dish from *Quay* and chef Peter Gilmore – 'Duck breast poached in fermented ume and oloroso master stock, forbidden rice, umeboshi, spring almonds' – was chosen for a quite 'outlandish' mixture of ingredients, even for contemporary Australian cuisine. Ume is a Japanese apricot often macerated in alcohol; oloroso a style of Spanish sherry; umeboshi the dried, pickled and salted version of ume; forbidden rice a black or purple Chinese rice; and 'spring almonds' are green, soft uncured almonds, which I have never seen used before but which are well-known to anyone who has tended almond trees which, I would surmise, is why they were on the menu at Quay. Gilmore is a keen gardener growing a selection of fruit and vegetables.

By contrast, but equally apposite for the contemporary kitchen, from *Attica* and Ben Shewry, 'A simple dish of Potato cooked in the earth it was grown'. This seemingly satirical dish was the subject of an extended examination by Adam Sachs in the American magazine *bon appétit*:

> The dish is a hangi [A traditional New Zealand Māori method of cooking food, using heated rocks buried in a pit oven] in miniature and essential Shewry: a humble potato, buried in dirt and shrouded in personal narrative.
>
> The what is simple: a potato (variety: Virginia Rose, selected after Shewry tasted at least 39 varieties), peeled, lightly dressed

[8] For the full list of restaurants, the criteria used to choose them and the dishes see Appendix 7.

> in a touch of grape seed oil and salt, packed into layers of the very soil whence it had been dug two weeks before.[9]

Sachs' quotes American chef David Chang – who opened a branch of his international restaurant chain, *Momofuku Seiobo*, in Sydney – on the food at *Attica*: 'When I eat there I feel like I'm eating what Australian food should taste like.' The list of ingredients used in the menus in Appendix 7 includes: organic Korean green rice, silken tofu, garam masala, Jerusalem artichoke dates, Aerated passionfruit, paperbark, Foie gras, red cabbage granita, sangria jelly, Camargue organic red rice, mojama, kim chi, wallaby, Pedro Ximénez prunes and Forbidden rice. This eclectic list, which includes some indigenous ingredients, is used by chefs in a country that, until even thirty years ago, was suspicious of the use of garlic. How did this happen? What was the impetus that drove young men and women to a career that, again, until thirty years ago, was seen mainly as a trade. In other words, when, in Australia, did the profession of chef become one of the arts rather than a relatively low status trade?

New kids in the kitchen

As already noted, in Australia between 1960 and 1970, an affluent, inquisitive and acquisitive middle class was emerging with surplus income. We had been invaded by large numbers of Europeans and we began to use some of that surplus income to leave the country and return with a new-found respect for the way our new neighbours ate and drank. We were emerging from a long hibernation under the blanket of 'Britishness', and a people who had brought with them 'their culinary xenophobia [and] distrust of foreign food.'[10] But it wasn't just in Australia that there were rumblings of revolution in the essengeist.

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[9] bonappetit.com/people/chefs/article/ben-shewry-s-attica-restaurant-in-melbourne-focuses-on-foraging
[10] *Looking for flavour* page 105.

The year 1972 saw the codification of the principles of Nouvelle Cuisine by Gault and Millau, the French restaurant guide editors who were mounting a challenge to Michelin's never before challenged position as the pre-eminent gastronomic guide. This coincided with a change in the economics of the restaurant business in France. Chefs emerged from the anonymity of the kitchen, and opened their own restaurants:

> Far from being humble employees, chefs were now businesspeople – and creative ones at that. The nouvelle cuisine revolution meant that instead of merely churning out classic dishes according to the book (Escoffier, Carême), chefs began to create their own dishes. Now they were more than technicians, they were artists.[11]

And they were media stars. In France, Paul Bocuse took up the position of spokesperson for the new breed of 'star' – not yet 'celebrity' – chefs. As Stephanie Alexander remarked, 'He rather reveled in being the strutting cocky Frenchman, and he got headlines everywhere.'[12] He wasn't the only one. Books of the time like *Great Chefs of France* eulogised the star chefs of the day like Alain Chapel, Paul Bocuse and the brothers Jean and Pierre Troisgros.[13]

It was during this time of expansiveness, curiosity, openness to new culinary experiences and the elevation of cooking from trade to craft – some would say art[14] – that a handful of intelligent middle-class young men and women who would normally have been expected to enter the more staid professions – the law, banking, business – made

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[11] '*The Age Epicure* October 5 pages 4 and 7 'Flesh Pots'
[12] Stephanie Alexander quoted ibid.
[13] *Great Chefs of France*.
[14] Its status as an art is still in dispute. As Symons wrote in The Pudding That Took a Thousand Cooks ''The very repetitiveness of cooking is part of the reason why many Western intellectuals have snubbed it.' Page 26.

what were then radical decisions to make their careers in the kitchen. This was a time for Australians to make radical decisions. A surge of nationalism was emboldening us in many fields aside from cuisine, business and a resurgent film industry being just two. I interviewed five of these people to get some idea of what were the influences on their decisions.[15]

In 1963, Michael Manners left Cranbrook, one of Sydney's Greater Public Schools – public as in the English use of the word – to attend the École Hôtelière in Lausanne. At Cranbrook, Manners said: 'You were encouraged to be an individual unlike [The] Kings [School] for example which spat them out like clones.' He chose a hotel school because 'international hotels were starting up, the Hilton chain was just starting, and I thought if I get onto the bandwagon, Australia will need hotels.' But on graduation, life as a hotelier didn't suit the young Manners. His best subject at the school had been cooking, and after spending time in London working as a hotelier, the experience palled: 'you get to London and you get your first job as a night receptionist in a hotel and you go Jesus, balancing the books.' It was not long before he was interviewed by and landed a job in the kitchen with George Perry Smith, the owner/chef of The Hole in the Wall restaurant in Bath. 'I don't know whether you've ever had one of those moments in life' he recalled, 'I went for the interview and walked in and immediately the smell of good food hit my nostrils – and I thought shit – I've got to get this job.' Perry-Smith is described as the father of modern English cooking. Manners thrived in the job. After The Hole in the Wall, he spent some time in Cannes in France learning French and working on the beach: 'I'd go into the Cannes market. It was just extraordinary, the colour for a start, and the smells and we ate brilliantly on the beach [but] back home it was roast and three veg. There was a bit of bad Italian creeping in.'

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[15] All quotes are from my interviews For the full transcripts see Appendix 8, half of which are on www.newtonwrites.com in the Appendices category.

One memory of growing up in Sydney in the late 1950s was of a dinner his mother cooked for his fourteenth birthday. She was a good cook and for that dinner served a boeuf bourguignon 'and it had bay leaves in and I remember one of my friends pulling the bay leaf out and saying: 'omigod what's a leaf doing in here? I always wanted to bring [that European influence] back to Australia.'

Manners returned to Sydney in 1970. On a personal note,
I knew Michael Manners, and when he left Cranbrook to go to hotel school in Switzerland, our circle was mystified: Why would you go to hotel school? When he returned after some years with a beautiful French wife and we spent hours queuing to get into his first restaurant, Upstairs, we got it. Of that 1970s era Manners said:

> Australians were realising that food can be an adventure whereas before it was a necessity. I remember saying to someone in the early days in Glenella [a guest house and restaurant he and his wife Monique set up in Blackheath in 1973] – who said food's becoming popular and I said they'll have a food section in [the magazine] *Popular Mechanics* soon. Now, every magazine you open, every television channel. It's gone mad!

Damien Pignolet was born in Melbourne and after leaving school went to William Angliss College to study hotel management and catering. After graduating he spent some time in Melbourne working as a hospital and institutional cook and running a cooking school. His career as a prominent chef/ restaurateur began in Sydney, first at Pavilion in the Park in The Domain, then at Butler's, Claude's and finally the Bistro Moncur at the Woollahra Hotel which he owned with his business partner the late Dr Ron White.

Pignolet belongs to that school of Australian chefs who chose to cook the food of their heritage, in his case French. Before beginning his course, he recalled that he had ‘cooked for school friends giving dinner parties, making cakes and enjoying my Mum's delicious fare.’ At the age of nine he was taken to The Old Vienna Inn in Russell Street:

> I cannot imagine what the occasion was since there was little money for such extravagance. However, I have never forgotten the room, a classical European restaurant with three lines of tables running the length of the room, two service corridors and in/out to the kitchen. Red flock wallpaper, banquettes, low levels of lighting – you have the picture no doubt. This together with my passion to cook is what sent me down my career path.

When he left school in 1966 and told his father – a mechanic who had worked his way up to a managerial position at General Motors Holden – that he wanted to learn to cook, his father said: ‘No son of mine’s going to be a bloody chef – you’re going to be a manager!’ But Pignolet wasn’t deterred. He remembered that he ‘went to the library and discovered Escoffier and it was [as if] the sun came down from the heavens and shone on me! The romance of it: “take 47 eggs”. That was it!’ Of his choice of a career at that time, he wrote:

> In reality I am a product of the revolution as I like to think of what happened to create 'the craft of cooking and serving food and beverages' as something higher than it had been…from about 1976 we [that new wave of Australian chefs] became a respected 'professional' group of CRAFTSMEN and WOMEN. Now here is the really important point – who were the absolute leaders – THE WOMEN in Gay Bilson and to a greater degree or influence, Stephanie Alexander and not to be forgotten, Jenny Ferguson [You and Me in Sydney] and a bit later and to great

> acclaim, Anne Taylor – bloody brilliant cook with an astonishingly natural and fine palate.[16]

Tony Bilson was born Tony Marsden in Sydney. His parents, Jack and Evelyn Marsden, owned the Collingwood Hotel in Liverpool. When his father was killed in a car accident his mother married a wealthy retailer, Bob Bilson, who adopted Tony and his two sisters. His interest in food and restaurants is inherited from his mother: 'I wanted to be a restaurateur from the time I was thirteen', Bilson told me: 'it was an entirely literary decision. One of the first books I remember was *Fine Bouche* [a history of the restaurant in France by Pierre Andrieu, translated into English in 1956].' From those earliest of times, Bilson's influences and inspirations have been French. Using his mother's accounts, he ate very well during his school years, especially at Georges and Mirka Mora's restaurant Balzac, which was also a haunt for Melbourne's artistic libertarian set.

After finishing school at Melbourne Grammar, and graduating from Monash University in politics and economics, he took a job at The Reserve Bank. But he was not happy: 'You were on a filing cabinet for three to five years at least until your mid-twenties. That doesn't seem like a long time now but at 20 it's a lifetime to be dealing with filing cards and the people working in accounting I found dreary – I was far more interested in the arts.' His early ambition to be a restaurateur was not encouraged: 'I didn't have permission really. My parents didn't want me to go into cooking.' And then his mother died: 'My stepfather remarried a woman that none of us liked – I didn't have much to do with him after that – I was really an orphan at 20 so I was free to go my own way.'

And go his own way he did: 'I was always a libertarian, I don't know why but I always was', he remembered. 'My sister was married to a

[16] Pers.comm.

ballet dancer at the Australian Ballet, my claim to fame at the time was that I taught Rudy [Nureyev] the twist.' It was this concatenation of art, gastronomy and the bohemian life that drew Bilson to his eventual career. He came to Sydney in 1965 and began working for restaurateur and president of The Wine & Food Society, J.K. (Johnny) Walker, at one of his restaurants, Rhinecastle Cellars – the other was The Angus Steak Cave – first as a dishwasher. Then, in 1973, after buying a restaurant in Melbourne called La Pomme D'Or with the proceeds of an inheritance, with his partner Gay Morris – who changed her name to Bilson but never married him – he returned to Sydney and opened the first of his Sydney restaurants, Tony's Bon Goût. It was here that many saw Bilson's style of cooking representing the vanguard of the new Australian style. In 1976 Schofield wrote:

> Forget the aspics, the decorated foods, the chaud-froids. Today's food is different – less got-up, uncomplicated, letting the ingredients speak for themselves. Less is more. And Bilson is the best of the practitioners of this style in Australia.[17]

Although Anne Taylor began her life as a chef/restaurateur somewhat later than the others, the restaurant she opened in Sydney's Taylor Square, Taylor's, was highly regarded by other chefs. Taylor was born on a dairy farm run by her parents in Cobargo on the NSW far south coast, with Jewish and German grandmothers, both obsessed with food. She attended Bega High School. Her parents, she said, expected her 'to be educated and not to be dependant on a man, to be able to look after herself – and to do better than they had.' After school she went to the University of NSW:

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[17] *Eating Out in Sydney 1976* page159. Mr Schofield does not include Gay Bilson in this accolade, yet she and Tony worked as a team to develop the early style.

> where I was going to be a teacher but when I saw the other teachers who just wanted to get married and not do anything I thought, I better find something else to do. Fortunately I got a good enough result to get a Commonwealth scholarship so I started on a PhD then I asked: did I really want to spend my life in academia?

The PhD was on the English seventeenth-century playwright Nathaniel Lee and 'how his dramas differed from renaissance plays in that his was the new baroque style.' This was combined with a major in drama and a part time job at the Old Tote and Parade Theatre. She had bought a small house in Taylor Street East Sydney and her tenant suggested she should get a job. She applied for a position as a censor with the Film Censorship Board, and was successful. This was in either 1975 or 1976. She dropped out of University after a year and a half. To be a censor was 'a highly desirable job' not least because it was well paid and 'we had lots of money and we'd all go out for lunch every day. It was in the days when Greg Doyle had his first restaurant in the city in a pub and Patric and Chrissie Juillet were in the Imperial Arcade. Most days we all went out for Chinese lunch.' In 1976 Taylor took her first trip to Europe, spending six weeks travelling to the UK, France Italy and Greece. It was while on this trip that she first contemplated opening her own restaurant. She lost weight in London because 'the food was so bad', and regained it in France. But it was Italy that was the revelation. She realised: 'I could open an Italian restaurant in Sydney and serve food like this!'.

Her knowledge of food came from the books that she and all her friends were reading at the time – Marcella Hazan and Elizabeth David just two – and the cooking that she and those friends did for each other:

> And of course I was of an age and a time when if you wanted to do something in Australia you didn't need a million dollars you just worked hard and did it.

Some time after returning from this first European trip, Taylor met her life and business partner, chemical engineer Ian McCullough who was then working at Esso in corporate planning. Taylor told him of her plan to open an Italian restaurant and 'he thought [it] was an interesting idea and set it up with a business plan.' The plan included Taylor cooking, and their buying a building to avoid paying rent. She admits that in those early days she hadn't thought much beyond the kitchen, and it took her some time to realise that a restaurant was run by a team, and that décor was important: 'if you're serving fantastic food and the room's dreary and your staff is bad people aren't going to come back'.

They opened Taylor's near Taylor's Square in 1982, and she went from a home cook to a professional cook overnight. The transition was made, not without difficulty and some glitches, but they soon learnt. And soon had support from culinary luminaries such as Damien Pignolet and Gay Bilson. And how did her parents feel about the daughter who had abandoned a PhD to become a film censor and had then landed in the kitchen of an Italian restaurant?

> They were delighted, they were surprised. They were entirely ignorant about restaurants…they had no idea of what the financial situation was. They just thought that Ian was a money person he could manage this.
>
> I'd been bought up to think that if you couldn't use your brain you used your hands – and now when I look at many of the so-called chefs I can see that they have very good skills with their hands and they're bright too.

Gay Bilson[18] was born in Hawthorn, Melbourne, in a house owned by her grandmother. Her mother worked when she was young and then stopped. Her father was a foreman in a family owned factory. Schooling was first at a suburban state school, then a girls only public high school.

When asked what the kitchen meant to her at an early age, she replied: 'Having to do the dishes.' Later, she remembered making some simple food for people when she was around 12 years old, and sensing the gratitude of those who ate it:

> I have said often and written often that one of the reasons I found such fulfilment in a business which is really to do with feeding people is I love the thanks.

Of her grandmother's kitchen she said:

> it seemed sort of musty and old-fashioned but it certainly wasn't a kitchen where a lot of cooking was done. But I do have a very strong memory of sitting on…there must have been a mat on the floor of this kitchen and eating my grandmother's porridge with linseed and raisin in it and loving it. It seemed to me to be the kind of food that was offered with love, I mean the food of comfort and domesticity and a generous bowl of porridge and I liked its smell.

Her parents had the usual aspirations for her, medicine being one because of the reverence for doctors in the middle class. She studied Arts at Melbourne University, but didn't finish her degree. She became

[18] The interview with Gay Bilson is made up partly from questions I put to her and also from a National Library of Australia archived interview.

a cataloguer in a library. It was at this time she recalls her first experience of 'eating out':

> The first time I ever ate in a restaurant – if you could call it a restaurant – was the cafeteria at Melbourne University Union Building when I went there in 1962. My first real date, I suppose, was at an Italian restaurant in Lygon Street in Carlton – this would be 1963. I suppose I was enchanted by the accoutrements and paraphernalia but I don't think that's got anything to do with my ending up as a restaurateur.

While still a student, she started reading recipe books so that she could invite friends to dinner as she had seen others do:

> I started inviting people to dinner and going to far too much trouble and probably not cooking anything terribly well at all but I don't think I made any great mistakes of taste.

Bilson cooked at Tony's Bon Goût, and was (primarily) the pastry chef later at Berowra Waters, but did not see herself as such. She saw and called herself a restaurateur:

> I'm interested in all the details of the table and the table in the dining room and the dining room's place in its environment – it's a sort of Gestalt of the whole experience of eating. My contribution, I like to think, is one of good taste in the serious definition of that term, not its lesser and trivial definition.

Bilson married her first boyfriend, had two children in the mid-sixties and went to live in America where he worked for IBM. When the marriage ended, she came back to Australia in 1972 and met Tony Bilson at a pub in Carlton. They went to the NSW ski resort Thredbo, where Tony worked as a cook in a ski lodge, then to Sydney here he

had been offered the space that was to become what Gay called 'the very grotty and unsavoury Tony's Bon Goût.'[19] She was then pregnant by him and 'began a decade – or more than a decade – of crazily hard work.'

It was during this time that Tony and Gay first went to France, where, at the time, *la nouvelle cuisine* was emerging:

> It was a sort of French revolution within one area of culture because one of the things we tend to forget is food is part of our culture. We took notice of it here because we were still under the impression that the only really fine food that we could aspire to was French food and I would still say there's absolutely nothing wrong with that.

After three years, Tony and Gay sold Tony's Bon Goût and went to Berowra Waters. Tony left her, and she went on to create what was called, at the time, one of the world's best restaurants. After that, she took her chef at Berowra Waters, Janni Kyritsis, to Bennelong in the Sydney Opera House. But it was during her time at Berowra Waters that she developed her restaurant 'philosophy':

> I have very strong ideals about the way the food is served, how we treat the diner, across all levels of what it needs to run the restaurant, including the whole aesthetic of the dining room and sense of welcome and leave taking and all that sort of thing. It doesn't suit everyone but I won't compromise. I'm not going to have someone say to me, well, the majority of the Australians want this, therefore if I'm to be a successful part of this market I'm going to give them what they want. We've never worked like that, so in that sense we're part of a small group of people who

[19] Tony and Gay's accounts of this time differ.

> please the few but those few are enough. I mean, Australia has an extraordinarily small population and I'm incredibly grateful that there are enough people to enjoy eating there, that we have enough support to keep on going.

It was the courage, curiosity and tenacity of such as these five – there were, of course, many more – who have inspired another generation of chefs from their kitchens. They leapfrogged the usual path, as outlined by Revel: 'it is a striking fact that a truly great erudite [high] cuisine has arisen principally in places where a tasty and varied traditional cuisine already existed, serving it as a sort of basis.'[20]

Such a traditional cuisine never existed in Australia (and still does not, see below). Neither have we developed an identifiably Australian 'high' cuisine. Notwithstanding, we do have large numbers of chefs daily creating an 'erudite' cuisine. Ripe quotes American chef and restaurateur Alice Waters who contends that 'it takes at least a hundred years for cuisine to develop.' She goes on to suggest that 'it could be argued that the best Australia can hope to do is develop a 'culinary identity.'[21] I would argue we have done that, since Ripe wrote those words in 1993, with an identity that proclaims only that our best chefs are remarkably resourceful and imaginative, taking advantage of the quality and variety of ingredients available to them. It would no longer be possible for a visiting Frenchman such as Edmond Marin La Meslée to paradoxically remark, as he did in 1883, that '…no other country on earth offers more of everything needed to make a good meal or offers it more cheaply…but there is no other country either where the cuisine is more elementary, not to say abominable.'[22] How this happened, here, in this land of culinary

[20] *Culture and Cuisine* page 20.
[21] *Goodbye Culinary Cringe* page 6.
[22] From his book *L'Australie Nouvelle,* first published in 1883, published in English as *The New Australia,* Heinemann, 1973 pages 45/46. He goes on:' 'Everywhere the menus are identical and, what is worse, they never change throughout the three hundred and sixty five days of the year. Invariably beef, mutton and poultry, boiled and roasted, roasted and boiled;

contradictions, is a conundrum that will be examined in the conclusion to this work. But who can afford to eat from the high tables? As there are no figures, I have done a calculation based on the thirteen restaurants whose menus I have listed in Appendix 6.

Money and market at the high tables

In an attempt to put a dollar figure on eating out at the top end in Australia, using data from the 13 top Australian contemporary cuisine restaurants already selected I have:

1. Multiplied their average price by the number of seats by an average of 5 nights a week open (Tuesday to Saturday) by 50 weeks a year[23]

2. Taken 60 and 40 per cent of that figure (supposing 60 and 40 per cent seat occupancy)

The resulting figures give a very approximate expenditure at the top end on food only (the general industry practice is to add an extra 30 per cent for drink) for dinner expenditure only: some are and some are not open for lunch and some are open 7 days. It's important to remember these are only 13 of the thousands of restaurants in Australia: there are over 600 in each of the Sydney and Melbourne Good Food Guides. The result of these calculations are:

Total expenditure: $29,018,000 PA

Adjusted for estimated percentage occupancies:

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the everlasting dish of potatoes and sometimes some soggy boiled vegetables: the meal ends with a kind of hash, an incredible concoction rejoicing in the title of pudding.' Page 46.

[23] I have only calculated for one cover – one use of each chair – per lunch or dinner. Some will have more, but it is too difficult to generalise.

60 percent: $17,410,800 PA
40 percent: $11,607,200 PA

Number of patrons

Total: 296,500 PA
60 percent: 177,900 PA
40 percent: 118,600 PA

The average spend per head is $98 a head for both 60 per cent and 40 per cent occupancy rates.[24]

Even with these 'back of the envelope' figures, it is clear that firstly, a lot of money is being spent in Australia on eating out at the top end. And secondly, there is a large audience. How large is hard to gauge. The circulation figures for the two Bauer owned food publications, *Australian Gourmet Traveller* (AGT) and *Delicious*, as well as the combined Fairfax weekly supplements, *Good Food* in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *Epicure* in *The Age* give some idea. In 2012, The Audit Bureau of Circulation found that the circulation of AGT was 68,808, and its readership – which includes additional readers for each copy – 424,000. For *Delicious*, the circulation was 115,621, readership 774,000. The combined circulation for Good Food and Epicure 332,697, with readership at 1,100, 000.[25]

More usefully, research done for Fairfax suggests that the 1.1 million readers of *Epicure* and *Good Food* dine out at least once a month.[26] The same research indicates the income of those readers:

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[24] Although the percentage occupancy made no difference to the per capita expenditure, it would make a huge difference to profit. The lower occupancy would make no difference to fixed costs: rent, wages and food costs, just that there are less covers to pay for them.
[25] Source: emmaTM, conducted by Ipsos MediaCT. The large gap between readership and circulation reflects the habit of one copy being passed around to several readers.
[26] Source: emmaTM, conducted by Ipsos MediaCT.

$70,000+	24%
$80,000+	19%
$100,000+	11%
$120,000+	6%

The lack of figures for the industry makes it very difficult to calculate the audience for our top restaurants, but I have attempted another rough calculation based upon the above figures. Taking those earning above $100,000 per annum as the most likely regular users of the top restaurants – 17 per cent of 1.1 million diners is 187,000 – a figure somewhat lower than the 296,500 according to my first calculation. But based upon those figures, believe it is reasonable to suggest that the audience for the top 13 restaurants in Australia (principally Sydney and Melbourne) is somewhere between 200,000 and 300,000. If these calculations are anywhere near the (unverifiable) truth, then the audience for the top restaurants of Australia – again, mainly Sydney and Melbourne – represents just under three per cent of the population of Sydney and Melbourne aged between 25 and 64.[27] But who are these people who eat in the best – or at least the most expensive restaurants in the country? And how often do they do so?

The figures I worked with were those who dined out at least once a month. Again, without research, it is impossible to be definitive. But my 'field work' as a critic tells me this. The vast majority of that three percent would come from the 'upper class.' For fear of disturbing the hornet's nest of class in Australia, let me quote Craig McGregor:

> It is impossible to live in Australia without coming to realize that the different social classes have different sorts of jobs, live in different suburbs, go to different schools, get different incomes, speak in different ways, experience crucial differences in privilege

[27] Additional population figures sourced from *State of Australian Cities 2012,* Department of Infrastructure and Transport, Major Cities Unit see bibliography.

and inequality, indeed live different lives.[28]

Generally speaking it is difficult to disagree with this, other than to add that the class divide is a little more porous in Australia than in older civilizations – we have no aristocracy – and so money plays a greater part in determining who lives 'different lives'. One aspect of the activity of those lives is regular dining at the more expensive restaurants. This has always been the case in the capital cities.

Before we had social media, we had the social pages. In *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*, from the 1950s until the 1980s, these pages featured the comings goings dining and lunching of 'society', then a circumscribed group from the 'best families'. Typical of such notices was: 'Wednesday, June Hordern gave a dinner at Beppi's with Mari Livingston and David Vincent.'[29] The 'upper class' has always been the market for such restaurants. Revel wrote that 'Cuisine stems from two sources: a popular one and an erudite one, this latter necessarily being the appanage of the well-off classes of every era'.[30] Today, the descendents of the social pages, for example 'Party Parade' in *The Sun Herald*, record the comings and goings of the modern version of Sydney 'society' which includes, apart from the scions of the older families (who appear less and less), celebrities, actors and the recently wealthy. My observation is that the three per cent also includes two other groups. Chefs and restaurateurs eating and drinking out to compare their offerings with those of their rivals.[31] And those who could be described as 'hard-core foodies', not necessarily wealthy but whose obsession is eating out. Earning much lower wages than the three per cent, they will save to eat as regularly

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[28] *Class in Australia* page 3.

[29] *Beppi: a Life in Three Courses* page 149, sourced from *The Daily Telegraph* 1962. June Hordern was a member of the family that owned department store Anthony Hordern's whose last branch closed in 1986.

[30] *Culture and Cuisine* page 19.

[31] In October 2013, my younger daughter, who worked in hospitality while at university, told me that a sommelier from a Sydney restaurant paid $6000.00 for a bottle of French wine in the wine bar she was working in.

as they can afford at the restaurants they read about in the food pages, magazines and blogs. But the furious interest in food exhibited in Australia and the world today is not confined to the ‘high’ public tables.

The low tables

> We're not entirely sure where Sydney is going to find the diners to fill them all, but you have admire the pluck of the operators behind the tsunami of new venues headed on our way. The sheer number of new restaurant seats is staggering.[32]
> Scott Bolles

Since 1999 Bolles has been the editor of the column ‘Short Black’ which appears every Tuesday in the *Good Food* supplement of *The Sydney Morning Herald.* This column is often referred to as the ‘bible’ of Sydney’s restaurant business. It’s main business is recording the openings and closings of restaurants, cafes and (lately) bars and the comings and goings of the more prominent chefs and restaurateurs. To illustrate his phrase ‘tsunami of new venues’ I recorded the openings listed in his column between December 2012 and December 2013: this amounted to a total of 72 new restaurants, bars and cafes.

Although these listings are for only one column in one newspaper, there is a joke in the Sydney hospitality industry which goes: ‘if it didn’t appear in Short Black, did it really happen?’ There is no doubt that food as a topic of conversation and eating out as a pastime has reached, at time of writing, a frenzy. As young food journalist Katie Gibbs writes: ‘Foodism has, basically, taken on the sociological features of culture. Young people used to churn their scanty incomes on drugs and rock'n' roll, but now food is their drug.’[33]

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[32] ‘Short Black’ *Sydney Morning Herald Good Food* supplement October 3 2013.
[33] ‘ *Sun Herald Sunday Magazine* Dec 15 2013 The Age of Foodism.’ Gibbs is the grand

Many such can now be found on food blogs. Technorati.com the first global blog search engine lists over 21,000 food blogs. Typical is *Excuse me Waiter*, whose creators describe themselves and their blog as:

> a documented food adventure run by two hungry Gen Y food fanatics DK & Yvn. We can often be found roaming Sydney in search of interesting foods from food courts to high-end restaurants.[34]

Another from Melbourne is *My Town, Melbourne*. Its Creator, Daniel Machuca, describes himself as a:

> 30 year old blogger living in central Melbourne. Lover of all things foodie, pop culture, science and history, and sharing all of this from in and around the heart of Melbourne.[35]

The post-*MasterChef* world is undoubtedly food-obsessed, particularly, in Australia, in the inner suburbs of the capital cities. 'I am not a foodophobe', writes Maria Tumarkin:

> But when I walk the streets of my city and sometimes not a single bookshop comes my way and instead I encounter – and this easily in the space of one walk – maybe 30 cafes and eateries, one after another, filled with people in what appears to be the perfect representation of the supply-and-demand model, and my eyes fall on tables that cannot possibly have any more stuff on them, and above those tables are jaws moving fast, waiters moving faster still, full plates in, empty plates out; what

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daughter of Margaret Fulton.

[34] excusemewaiter.com

[35] melbtown.wordpress.com

is my dizzy head meant to think?[36]

The phenomenon is not confined to Australia. American journalist William Deresiewicz, writing in the *New York Times Sunday Review*, claims that food 'is a vehicle of status aspiration and competition, an ever-present occasion for snobbery, one-upmanship and social aggression. (My farmers' market has bigger, better, fresher tomatoes than yours.)' This extreme 'foodism' is more widespread in the Anglosphere – Australia, Great Britain and North America. While our foodism is obsessive, it is also all-consuming. And, harking back to what Gibbs wrote – 'taking on the sociological features of culture' – Deresiewicz writes 'food centers life in France and Italy, too, but not to the disadvantage of art, which still occupies the supreme place in both cultures.'[37] As an Italian friend once remarked to me 'it's like you [Anglo-Celtic Australians] think you invented food.'

This widespread foodism and its adherents, the foodists, is the next level down from the 'high tables.' These affluent young food hobbyists swarm to the latest cheap restaurants, cafes and bars reviewed online or in the food supplements. And not just the latest new places. Many of the blogs - *Grab Your Fork* and *Noodlies*[38] for example specialize in discovering ethnic restaurants serving unusual and 'authentic' food in outer Sydney, and lately, around the world. On *Grab Your Fork* blogger Helen Chung writes about the food she discovered on a trip to Bulgaria. It is not possible to even roughly calculate the size of this market as I did for the high tables.[39] But like that upper end, it is obvious that the food hobbyist segment does not represent the majority of Australians who buy food outside the home. The really big market is fast food.

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[36] 'Sublime and Profane: Our Contemporary Obsession With Food' *Kill Your Darlings* accessed online.
[37] *New York Times Sunday Review* October 26 2012 'A Matter of Taste?'
[38] noodlies.com: grabyourfork.blogspot.com
[39] Multiplying the number of new restaurants listed in Short Black by 50 (an average number of seats) gives 3600 new seats in just one month.

In 2011, it was reported that 'Australia is expected to spend more than $37 billion on takeaway food this year, making us the 11th biggest-spending fast food nation on earth.'[40] This figure represents an increase of $4 billion in three years, and was translated by the journalist to 343 Whopper Burgers for every Australian. Social researcher Rebecca Huntley wrote of a visit to Munno Para shopping centre outside Adelaide of the 'lurid ring of fast-food outlets that surrounds it: Red Dragon Chinese, Hungry Jack's, McDonald's, Red Rooster, Pizza Hut and Barnacle Bill's.'[41] This is the reality, a far cry from the smart eateries listed weekly in 'Short Black' or the obscure Vietnamese or Iraqi restaurants in the outer suburbs listed in the foodist blogs. An even wider dichotomy is uncovered when we look at what Australians are cooking at home.

The home tables

> If it be true that, while the French eat, the English only feed, we may fairly add that the Australians 'grub.'[42]
> Richard Twopeny

In her memoir, Stephanie Alexander writes:

> we have come a long way from chops on Monday, sausages on Tuesday, steak on Wednesday, cold cuts on Thursday, fish on Friday.[43]

But have we? According to two pieces of research from Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA)[44] at home most Australians are still eating much the same food as we were before the 'food revolution', and, in

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[40] www.news.com.au May 27 2011.
[41] *Eating Between the Lines* pages 12-13.
[42] *Town Life in Australia* page 71.
[43] *A Cook's Life* page 7.
[44] 'Connected Cooking' and 'Last Night's Dinner' see Appendix 9. All quotes attributed to MLA research are from these two reports.

spite of the welter of television cooking shows, with no greater cooking ability.
As the research states:

> In the qualitative stage of the research we found that consumers (both young and old) were being inspired to re-create the impressive masterpieces that they had seen in challenges on shows such as MasterChef or exotic molecular cooking by Heston Blumenthal, so they could impress their friends…when it came to cooking good meals for themselves or their family each night, they struggled to get beyond the basics.

Put another way 'Australians are watching and reading more about cooking than ever before. Yet, they still have limited knowledge about how to cook a steak.' This lack of cooking knowledge – as opposed to lack of food knowledge – extends to all age groups:

> the twentysomethings right now are probably one of the most educated food generations ever. And by that I mean they can talk to you about foie gras or cooking sous vide. But what they can't do is truss a chicken or cook a pot roast.[45]

Notwithstanding, the research found that:

> more than seven out of ten dinner meals [are] freshly prepared, cooked and eaten in the home. Typically, these home cooked meals are cooked from scratch with fresh ingredients.

And these meals are not the exotic fare offered in cookbooks and on television:

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[45] Cheryl Brown, Editor of Slashfood.com quoted in MLA report.

> Interestingly, Australians seem to prefer familiar, traditional meals such as steak and vegetables, roast chicken and spaghetti bolognaise.

The research found that the typical meal on the domestic table would be a red meat dish with three or four fresh vegetable accompaniments: 'On average, Australian families sit down to steak and vegetables at least once a week.'

The raw data from the 'Last night's dinner' research recorded 1007 meals. From those, I have chosen the following:

Most exotic meals
Usually only a single mention
Beef rogan josh
Chicken Provencale
Kangaroo casserole
Indian mutton curry
Pork vindaloo
Steak with curry pasta and veg
Osso buco
Beef Bourgion (sic)
Moroccan stew
Chicken princitessa(sic)
Cray fish mornay and cold meat
Steak Diane

Approximately 50 curries
Chicken curry, chicken, curry powder, onions, mushrooms

Approximately 35 Stir fries
Stir fry tomatoes rice and potato pizza
Steak 86 recorded meals
Approx 15 Mexican meals, including 'tacos minestrone'
Italian including pizza 176 – approximately 33 of these were Spaghetti Bolognese

The MLA research correlates to a great extent with my own small study, TableWatch.[46] As previously noted, this survey is limited in size – fifty respondents – and scope – five questions only. In addition, because it was conducted by telephone (by me) I could not survey non-English speaking respondents. I think it is fair to say that they would be cooking the food of their own culture. As it was, I did speak to two Germans and one Italian, who did report cooking their own food. But even with all those provisos, the findings of TableWatch are useful. Firstly, they show that those who eat out so adventurously, eat conservatively at home. Secondly, they echo the findings of the MLA research (see Appendix 9) that many Australians do cook from scratch: only three of the fifty reported using pre-prepared food.[48]

Where it does differ from the MLA research is that the most mentioned ingredient was chicken (15), followed by vegetables (10) then rice, potatoes and steak (7) Casserole and barbecue were the most mentioned methods (4), followed by roasts (2). There were four mentions of Italian, two of Asian, one of Thai and one of English.

It is, with only a couple of exceptions (scallops with chorizo; filet mignon sous vide) an unremarkable list of dishes. People might be watching television cooking shows, but they are not taking the experience into their own kitchens. Out of 50 respondents, 29 said they didn't watch *MasterChef,* 12 did, and 9 watched *My Kitchen Rules*. When asked the question 'had watching *MasterChef* or *My Kitchen Rules* changed the way you cook?', those who watch either show said things like: 'my daughter watches it, it made her a bit more adventurous; another that 'it's influenced the way I would like to cook; two others said although they loved *MasterChef*, they had never cooked anything from it; another that it was 'too gourmet for us' I

[46] For complete details of this study, see Appendix 10.
[48] There is always the chance that the 'please the interviewer' response was in play and that meals were 'made up' or pre-preps were not admitted to. Although not an experienced interviewer, I'd say this is unlikely because our interaction was brief, by telephone, the question was straightforward and there was very little interaction.

suspect that for most people this relates to both skill levels and time: to cook outside a repertoire of dishes need specialist shopping as well as specialist preparation time. In the main, when they cook, at home, they do so from the standard repertoire of their Anglo-Celtic culture.

This preference for plain Anglo-Celtic fare at home contrasts starkly with the food offered in the *Australian Women's Weekly* publication *Modern Australian Food.*[49] The introduction – 'The Australian Table' – begins:

> Australian food is a celebration of the way we live: the generous abundance of country-style cooking, the simplicity of freshly-caught seafood and the vibrant café culture. It is our marriage of food and lifestyle that makes Australian cuisine truly unique.

It goes on to point out that what we eat has been 'heavily influenced by our multicultural society' and goes on to name those influences. 'Over time', the anonymous author(s)[50] opine:

> we have adopted the best ingredients, techniques and flavours from these foreign cultures. Ironically, it is this diversity for which Australian food is known and loved' and ends 'Australian cuisine is not only a story of what we eat but where and how we enjoy food'.[51]

A random flick through the three hundred and thirty odd pages of recipes yields:

Chorizo and manchego rolls

[49] 2012, no author, edited by Pamela Clark, ACP Books: Park Street Sydney.
[50] Listed as food writers in the credits are Madeleine Jells and Abby Pfahl.
[51] *Modern Australian Food* pages 6 and 7.

Gyozas
Grilled mussels with jamón
Osso buco
Slow-cooked lamb with white beans
Porterhouse steaks with blue cheese mash
Tonkatsu don
Raspberry hotcakes with honeycomb butter
Beef shiraz pies
Moussaka
Roast chicken with tomato braised beans
Roast leg of pork with apple sauce
Raspberry almond crumble tart
Oyster shooters
Chicken and mango salad
Chilli and salt prawns
Cajun chicken burgers
Beef and reef with tarragon butter
Dukkah prawn skewers
Ice cream sundaes

A more careful search through its pages yields the following 'Australian' offerings:

Kangaroo skewers with bagna cauda
Balmain bug salad
Mango and macadamia tart with lime syrup
Neenish tarts[52]
Lamingtons
Anzac biscuits

If, as Gay Bilson insists, 'A cuisine is the collective aroma of everyday domestic food'[53] then what is wafting out of most Australian kitchens most often is the aroma of fried or grilled steak and roast or fried chicken. And the research demonstrates, fairly conclusively that our own 'erudite cuisine', not withstanding Revel, has arisen without the

[52] Often claimed as Australian but of indeterminate origin: I am giving it the benefit of the doubt.
[53] From a letter to the Weekend Australian, May 1999.

existence of ‘a tasty and varied traditional cuisine…serving it as a sort of basis.’[54] What then are we to make of this curious mixture of a sophisticated public high table, a voracious and busily blogging crowd occupying the ever-churning low tables and the unchanging dishes being laid on the domestic table that appears to be Australian ‘food culture’ at the beginning of the 21st Century? Or, to be more specific, if as Australian television chef Pete Evans writes in the Australia Day (2014) *Good Food* supplement:

> [although] many of our national dishes may not have originated in our homeland…but we’ve done an exceptional job of incorporating Aussie spirit into our food and making it our own.[55]

What is it then that constitutes the ‘Aussie spirit’ in our food?

[54] *Culture and Cuisine* page 20.
[55] *Sydney Morning Herald Good Food* page 12 January 21 2014. The dishes Evans offers are: Macadamia crumbed fish; Lamb shank pie; Lamingtons.

Conclusion

The contradictions

> A society's cookery is a language into which it translates its structure, unless it reluctantly and no less unwittingly reveals there its contradictions.[1]
> Claude Lévi-Strauss

What are the contradictions in the structure of Australian society revealed by our cuisine (cookery), or, rather, lack of one, our – to return to the title of this work – 'culina nullius'? First, quotidian 'cuisine', domestic cooking: the food cooked and eaten in the home as opposed to that which Revel calls erudite cuisine and here I have called high table cooking: that will be examined below. The first contradiction, then, is geographic.

The Europeans who first occupied this land, and most of those who arrived much later, came to an opposite and alien hemisphere, with 'contrary seasons, different plants animals and birds, and different and disorienting stars overhead.'[2] While it was perfectly reasonable for these strangers migrating to a strange land to bring their own food, what they did when they arrived was not so reasonable. With little understanding of where they found themselves, they planted crops and raised livestock that were detrimental to their new homeland. And then, for over 225 years, they persevered with a diet derived from these foods, ignoring the more than180 native plants offering a rich variety of foods that grew beneath their feet.[3] While initial rejection of

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[1] *The Origin of Table Manners* page 495.
[2] *a first place* page 149.
[3] 'The rich Australian flora, comprising over 25,000 native plants which have developed in geographical isolation from the northern hemisphere, offer a number of attractive edible species that have been used as a food and medicine by the native population for thousands of years.' From 'Antioxidant capacity and phenolic compounds in commercially grown native Australian herbs and spices' *Food Chemistry* 2010. In his book *Wild Food Plants of Australia* (see bibliography) author Tim Low offers more than 180 native food plants, and this is far

the native food plants could be put down to ignorance, its persistence can be seen as prejudice: against the native foods, and the indigenous population.

These contradictions underlie a tenuous connection to the land, and the related restless search for what it means to be Australian, and, by extension, for what is Australian culture. In the opening article for the Australia Day 'special bicentennial edition' of *The Bulletin*, Manning Clark wrote: 'We now say with Henry Lawson we are Australians, that we know no other country. But if anyone asks us who we are and what we want to be, we lapse into the great Australian silence.'[4] That silence perhaps comes from the fact that, as Malouf writes: 'there is, and always has been, something rootless and irresponsible about our attitude to the land.'[5] Which leads us back to the roots of culinary culture. As Malouf says:

> In the Old World, but also in Africa and the Americas, 'culture' means the long association of a native people with their land: the process of coming out of the wilderness, bringing with them the wild grasses and fruits and beasts that over the years have been improved and domesticated to provide a diet, and which, after long sophistication, may become a cuisine.[6]

The Europeans who became Australian brought their diet with them, deracinated, planted in alien soil. The roots they put down were alien roots. They did not come out of a wilderness, they entered into one. These are the contradictions revealed by our lack of cuisine. In short, we live on and not in this continent. We did not see, as Waverley Root asserted, that 'food is a function of the soil, for which reason every

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from an exhaustive list.
[4] *The Bulletin*, January 26,1988 'What do we want to be and what should we believe?' page 10.
[5] *first place* page 104.
[6] ibid. page 103.

country has the food naturally fit for it.'[7] He could have added every country except Australia.[8] Today, as I have shown, it's not possible to identify a single dish, and call it Australian or point to a cuisine and call it regional Australian.[9] When, in the mid twentieth century, we opened the nation to new arrivals, they brought with them their food cultures, their recipes and their seeds, and they too, like us, continued to eat what they had always eaten.

The Europeans who colonized Australia arrived with an intact culture – or, rather, habitus[10] – and that included their culinary culture. From the outset, they imposed that culture and its foodways on their new land and its original inhabitants, as we have seen, to their detriment. This culinary determinism is the most material evidence of the disjunction between where we are, and what we eat. The intimate relationship between indigenous foods and the land shaped and created their culture and their world view. The opposite is true of the non-indigenous Australians (and I now include all those who have arrived from 1788 to the present day and who also bought their cultures and foodways with them). Ferguson writes: 'Above all by socializing appetite and taste, cuisine turns the individual relationship with food into a collective bond.'[11] Do Australians have this collective bond?

For the Anglo-Celtic Australian there is the barbecue, the Sunday roast, beer and pies at the footie, Vegemite and toast for breakfast. But this is not in any way a cuisine. Everything European Australians eat and the way that they cook it has come from another place

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[7] *The Food of France* page 4.
[8] In what Belich calls (in *Replenishing the Earth. The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939* see bibliography) the 'Anglo-New Lands' of America, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia, the European settlers of Australia have least utilized the produce of their new home, closely followed by the New Zealanders.
[9] With the partial exception of Barrosadeutsch, examined in chapter 3.
[10] Bourdieu Pierre, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* page 72. Bourdieu defines 'habitus' as 'sets of durable, transposable, dispositions', meaning that 'Culture is historically created and recreated under specific conditions.
[11] *Accounting for Taste* page 19.

(including Vegemite), from their Anglo-Celtic beginnings and then from the multitude of cuisines of successive waves of immigrants, who brought their culture with them – and stuck to them. And finally, there is the imported cultural influence of marketing, especially from America. Indeed all Australian culinary preparations and techniques are borrowings, imports. None are inventions, none are a permanent, reproducible result of a blending of elements from the food cultures of other cultures who have made Australia home.[12] Another contradiction. Outside the restless, ever-changing restaurant kitchens, there has been no forging of a 'collective bond' between the Anglo-Celtic dishes we have lived with for so long and the riot of imported cuisines. There is no macaroni Melbourne, souvlaki Sydney, pad Thai Perth or bratwurst Brisbane with identifiable ingredients able to be reproduced and recognized anywhere.

As early as 1893, the percipient but largely ignored Philip Muskett was perplexed by the lack of what he called an 'Australian national dish':

> Is it not strange that so far ingenuity, universal approval, or general consensus of opinion, call it what you will, has not up till the present given us an Australian national dish?...I have seen a dish of peaches, dubbed *Pêches à l'Australienne*. It is a sort of a compote of peaches, but to the best of my belief it is simply entitled Australian for the sake of giving it a name, and for no other reason.[13]

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[12] I have already mentioned two minor exceptions to this general rule that I am aware of: firstly the industrial Chiko roll, adapted from what is called in Australian-Chinese food the 'dim sim.' Secondly, the adaptation of the Chinese cha siu pao (roast pork steamed bun) to a cha siu pie by one cake shop in Sydney's Chinatown. There may be other isolated examples. It could also be argued that short (dumpling) and long (noodle) soups found in Australian Chinese restaurants are adaptations, but they and remain restaurant dishes, arising from the Australian customer's inability to pronounce the Chinese names for noodles (mien or miam) and dumplings (goe jee or jiaozi).

[13] *The Art of Living in Australia* page 83

But perhaps the most glaring contradiction of all is that Australians, among the most enthusiastic adopters of foreign cuisines on the planet, have stubbornly refused to incorporate into their diet that which has grown there for tens of thousands of years. In many cases not just refused, but violently rejected. When Australian native produce chef Raymond Kersh first revealed to his customers the produce that he had been cooking with for many years, one of those customers asked why he was using 'that Abo shit.'[14] Such a racist reaction was not unusual at the time, Kersh reported. Indeed it is hard not to conclude, taking into account the rapidity and enthusiasm with which Australians have taken up the new foods that have arrived on their shores in the past fifty years, that much of the rejection of Australian native foods has been racist in origin, in that these foods are so closely identified with indigenous Australians. As the customer said, 'Abo food.'

On the last page of *The Biggest Estate on Earth* [15]Gammage writes: 'We have a continent to learn. If we are to survive, let alone feel at home, we must begin to understand our country. If we succeed one day we may become Australian.' I believe that part of that understanding is coming to terms with the foods that grow here, the abundant Australian native produce, what I call culinary reconciliation. 'Amalgamation of these foods with European foods' said Aboriginal chef Clayton Donovan, 'is the best form of reconciliation – in the mouth – and it's the only time that everybody shuts up.'[16]

In the introduction to this work, I stated that it would ask four questions. First and most importantly: how is it that after more than 225 years, we have no Australian or regional Australian food culture, nor even any evidence – through dishes – of its more tangible and

[14] Interview with the Kershs on www.newtonwrites.com Appendis category, Appendix 1.
[15] *The Biggest Estate on Earth* page 323.
[16] Appendix 1

visible vector, cuisine? Secondly: why in over 200 years living here do we eat practically nothing that grows locally except those fish, birds, crustaceans and shellfish analogous to European produce? Thirdly: what are the consequences for a nation and it people to have bypassed this important stage in the evolution of a society? Accepting Lévi-Strauss' dictum at the head of this conclusion, I have outlined the major contradictions revealed in our society by our lack of a recognisable national cuisine or regional cuisines on our domestic tables. These contradictions explain much about the difficulty we have in coming to terms with what it means to be Australian. And they will help to answer the fourth question posed at the outset: that is, if we do not have a food culture in the historical sense, why not? And what do we have in its place?

Mongrel nation, mongrel cuisine

> For let there be no mistake. Australia's future culture will be plural. And there is no other way forward but to think about how all of us can learn to embrace its plurality.[17]
> Ghassan Hage

In 1988, Santich wrote: 'It seems to me that Australian cuisine…is now in the proving stage and, depending on the power of the ferment, is ready to rise.'[18] Twenty-six years on, if the ferment is still rising, it is the slowest proving ever recorded. So what is needed for a cuisine – and here we are dealing with what I have called a high cuisine, prepared by professional chefs in the better restaurants – to develop?

In his essay on Sung Cuisine, Freeman lays out the conditions. Firstly:

[17] 'Roots will be with you always'.
[18] 'Australian Culinary Xenophobia' page 38.

> the appearance of a cuisine, a self-conscious tradition of cooking and eating implies the confluence of the availability and abundance of ingredients – with a set of attitudes about food and its place in the life of man.[19]

It also requires the use of many ingredients, 'a sizeable corps of critical, adventuresome eaters, not bound by the tastes of their native region and willing to try unfamiliar food.'[20] And it needs to be 'the product of attitudes which give first place to the real pleasure of consuming food rather than to its purely ritualistic significance.'[21] From my examination of Australian cooking, let me break down those requirements.

Firstly, there is the availability and abundance of ingredients. Arguably no country on earth has such a variety of ingredients from every country on the planet as Australia. In 2002, in *The Sydney Morning Herald Food Shoppers' Guide to Sydney*, it was recorded that according to figures supplied the Sydney Markets Recording Service, 185 varieties of fruit and vegetable passed through the wholesale market at Flemington. In 2014,the same source reported 378. It is, however, somewhat doubtful that a large part of the audience for this food (see below), the Anglo-Celtic section, has a set of attitudes about food and its place in life.[22]

The audience at this end of the food chain is more influenced by fashion and fad than its opposite, gastronomy, defined by Brillat-Savarin as: 'the reasoned understanding of everything connected with the nourishment of man.'[23] In this matter Australians – at least those at the top of the food chain – are more foodists[24] than gastronomes.

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[19] 'Sung' , *Food in Chinese Culture* page 144.
[20] ibid. page 144.
[21] ibid. page 145.
[22] *The Food Shoppers' Guide to Sydney* page 240. Much of the food passing through the market is destined to end up in European and Asian hands. They are more likely to have a set of attitudes about food and its place in life. This reflects the mongrel nature of Australian food culture. see below.
[23] *The Physiology of Taste* page 52.
[24] My definition of 'foodism' is: 'An attitude to food and cooking dictated by fashion and the media'.

What of the requirements for a sizeable corps of critical adventurous eaters? By my calculations in Chapter 7 there are between 200,000 and 300,000 out of 24 million Australians eating regularly at the high tables. This is a not-so-sizeable corps (say around 1.25 per cent), but large enough to be influential within the milieu of the high tables perhaps. As there are no 'native regions' as Freeman would define them in China, then that is not a consideration. But they are more willing than most to try unfamiliar food. They are adventurous, but are they critical? In 1977, Marion Halligan asked: 'Where is our Brillat-Savarin, our Carême, our Dumas – the philosopher, the cook, the man of letters to provide us with this food for thought?'[25] In 2014, the public discourse on gastronomy has not much improved. Outside of academia and the hermetic world of the Symposium of Gastronomy, there are only restaurant reviews and blogs. And when they do attempt analysis, as does the journalist quoted in a piece by Durack in *The Sydney Morning Herald* attempting to define Australian Cuisine, it is usually banal: 'We live on the driest continent on Earth, most of us on the coastline, so we like to eat outside a lot and we eat a lot of seafood. And we don't mind doing that with a cold drink in hand.'[26]

Finally, to the real pleasure of consuming food. Although it is not possible to contrast this, as Freeman does, with 'purely ritualistic significance' which is lacking in Australia, with the possible exception of Christmas, then I would suggest that the 'not so sizeable corps' does give first place to the real pleasure of consuming food.

Australia has the ingredients and an audience with a genuine liking for food. But there is one important component missing, apart from a real gastronomic sensibility: 'People who have the same culture', Freeman writes,

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[25] 'Writing about Food' page 16.
[26] *The Sydney Morning Herald*, May 12, 2014 Durack, Terry, 'Is it time to define an Australian cuisine?

'share the same food habits…the same assemblage of food variables.'[27] This is the great lacuna.

In the epigraph at the head of this section, Hage states, I believe correctly, that Australia's future culture will be plural, and that Australians must learn to embrace this plurality. This is why it is futile to search for an Australian cuisine, or Modern Australian cuisine. As our best chefs are showing us daily, we have a multiplicity of cuisines, just as we have a multiplicity of cultures or at least habitus. To search for a defining Australian culture or a definition of Australian culture amongst the clamour of competing tongues, ways of life, ways of worshipping, eating, living and seeing in an increasingly globalised world is regressive. To be Australian *is* to be multicultural and multiculinary.

Stuart Hall writes: 'The capacity to live with difference is, in my view, the coming question of the twenty-first century.'[29] To continue to attempt to slash through the thicket of difference and diversity in search of a single unifying idea that means Australia or Australian is pointless. This has long been understood. In 1985 Nicholas Jose wrote: 'In Australia, there is not the continuity and congruency of land, population, history, tradition and language that knit together a people's soul. The search for that elusive centre is the great Australian dream'.[30]

[27] '*Food in Chinese Culture* page 145.
[29] Culture, community, nation' page 361.
[30] 'Cultural Identity: "I think I'm something else"' page 314.

The note in my pocket notebook on November 23 2013 reads:

> I am sitting in a food court in Sydney's Chinatown eating unadon[31] which, more than likely, uses Australian eel, cooked in Japan, and re-imported. I am surrounded by some of the many different nationalities who live in this, my home town, cheek by jowl, eating daily their own and other culture's foods. A television is on, tuned to a Spanish channel, showing the American president, Barack Obama. He is talking to an interviewer. The sub-titles, in Spanish, show that he is being interviewed about the problems in the Ukraine.

While I eat my cheap, delicious, multiculinary and globalised unadon, I'm attempting to knit together the strands of this work and to bring it to a conclusion. The arguments I have advanced about Australian food culture don't begin in 1788, with the arrival of the Anglo-Celtic 'invaders' who still form the backbone of this multicultural, multiculinary land. They begin with the original inhabitants who had, over the last 60,000 or more years until then, created a patchwork of tribal cultures that overlaid the vast continent with a set of spiritual values and farming practices that sustained the land, and allowed them to thrive. From 1788 onwards, this changed dramatically, both for them, for us and for the land itself. For whatever reason, the new arrivals ignored the original inhabitants, largely ignored the produce that originated here, and overlaid a system of inhabitation, agriculture and animal husbandry that has resulted in the degradation of the land and an unprecedented level of animal extinctions.[32] This posture of living on and not of or in the land, this 'something rootless and irresponsible about our attitude to the land',[33] continued for 225 years. During this time, for the main part, the Anglo-Celtic population

[31] A Japanese dish, consisting of a large bowl filled with steamed white rice, topped with fillets of eel grilled in a style known as kabayaki, similar to teriyaki.
[32] 'Since 1788, at least 23 mammal species have become extinct, and since about 1940 almost a third of all mammal extinctions have been in Australia.' *The Biggest Estate on Earth* page 17.
[33] Malouf, David *first place* page 104.

adhered to the foods and culinary culture they had brought with them, an almost unprecedented practice.[34] Does this mean we have no cultured food? No. As Malouf writes:

> The truth is that nations, like individuals, can live simultaneously in different places in the same place, and are no less complex and resourceful than minds are in using diverse paradoxical and sometimes contrary influences to make something that will be entirely their own.[35]

Australians must learn to swim in the polyglot pool, and that the best we can hope for is to weave a rich and mutually supportive synthesis from all the strands of our population. A synthesis which, like the hand woven rug alluded to in Chapter 1, forms a whole from its many parts, a rich pattern rather than a separate and distinct national culture.

In *Imaginary Homelands* Salman Rushdie writes of his book, *Satanic Verses* that it:

> celebrates hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs. It rejoices in mongrelization and fears the absolutism of the Pure. Mélange, hotch-potch, a bit of this and that, is how newness enters the world…change-by-fusion, change-by-co-joining. It is a love-song to our mongrel selves…Perhaps we are all, black, brown and

[34] Almost, because of the similar but more complicated situation in New Zealand between European or non Māori New Zealanders (Pākehās). For example, two dishes regarded as Māori are the 'boil-up' consisting of pork, potatoes, kumara and dumplings, and pork and puha, both a mixture of native New Zealand and imported produce: *rēwena* or Māori bread is a sour dough made from potatoes. Generally, although it is minimal, it is possible to say there is more crossover between Māori and Pākehā cuisine than there is between Anglo-Celtic and indigenous Australian – and more indigenous New Zealand dishes as a result.
[35] *a first place* page 33.

> white, leaking into one another, as a character of mine once said, like *flavours when you cook* [my emphasis].[36]

This is a fine definition of what the best Australian chefs are doing. Australian food is, as Rushdie writes of his book, 'a love-song to our mongrel selves', flavours, ingredients and origins leaking into one another. We only have to refer back to the list of (a few of) the ingredients used by contemporary Australian chefs as noted in Chapter 7 and here:

> organic Korean green rice, silken tofu, garam masala, Jerusalem artichoke dates, Aerated passion fruit, paper bark, Foie gras, red cabbage granita, sangria jelly, Camargue organic red rice, mojama, kim chi, wallaby, Pedro Ximénez prunes and Forbidden rice.

It is what I have called the 'concatenation of semi-attached populations' that both denied us the chance of a traditional food culture and, much later, gave impetus to our most talented chefs at our high public tables to daily create a mongrel cuisine, a cuisine lauded globally. But what of our low public tables? What does the lack of a solid culinary cultural foundation mean there? It lays them wide open to the influence of fashion.

Crazes – that is short-lived fashions – come and go. Having passed through Mexican, tapas, Korean, Hamburgers, we have, at time of writing, reached indigenous: 'Australians are getting more Australian in the way they eat, looking ever closer to home for a real taste of their sunburnt country',[37] enthuses food writer Jill Dupleix. The way in which this burst of enthusiasm for ingredients judiciously ignored for

[36] *Imaginary Homelands: essays and criticism* page 394.
[37] 'Australia's key food trends for 2014' *Tourism Australia news and media* 30 January 2014 tourism.australia.com/story-ideas/food-and-wine-10414.aspx. Among other trends noted Austral-Asian, green juices and Aussie Izakayas.

220 odd years came about is pertinent here. Going back to the quote at the beginning of this conclusion, elsewhere Santich writes:

> A culinary tradition, like any other tradition, takes many years to evolve, to establish a reasonably stable core which can accept the fluctuations of fashion.[38]

We do not have this stable core. A case in point is the rise and fall and rise of the use of indigenous ingredients by our chefs. In Appendix 1,[39] chefs whose inability to attract an audience to their restaurants which used these ingredients tell their stories. There are stories of neglect, scorn, racism and desertion from journalists and customers. Then, in 2010, the Danish chef Rene Redzepi, the winner of the San Pellegrino and *Restaurant* magazine's World's Best Restaurant title for that year,[40] arrived in Sydney. He extolled the virtues of foraging. During a speech at the Sydney Opera House to open the Sydney Food Festival, he explained his cuisine: 'We are rediscovering our region gastronomically…We're very much with our wildlife, our wild plants, berries, mushrooms, wild animals.'[41] He went on to suggest that this inclusion of foraged wild ingredients was essential to a cuisine:

> For me, I think this is the essence of a great cuisine…it's a poor culture if it doesn't have a true, unique expression that can only be represented right there at the place.

In off the cuff remarks, he admitted to being puzzled at the lack of native ingredients in the menus he had encountered here. The organisers of the festival did not need prompting. Accompanied by what the ABC television's 7.30 Report called 'a gaggle of food writers', Redzepi was taken to the Flinders Ranges in South Australia to forage for produce with an indigenous

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[38] 'Australian Culinary Xenophobia' page 37.
[39] Some of Appendix 1 is now on www.newtonwrites.com in the Appendices Category.
[40] Redzepi won again in 2014
[41] This and the next excerpt from Redzepi's speech are taken from a transcript of the ABC's 7.30 Report, broadcast 5.10.2010.

family. Writing in *Australian Gourmet Traveller,* one of the gaggle outlined the prevailing attitude:

> Somewhere along the line, it seems, top chefs and diners decided that native Australian ingredients had become a déclassé remnant of the '80s and '90s, something as shunned by three-star restaurants as sun-dried tomatoes and sweet potato mash.[42]

To the top chefs and diners could have been added food writers. But, *Australian Gourmet Traveller* assured its readers, 'Noma is the restaurant all young chefs are scrambling to work at' and predicted that there would be an outbreak of foraging for native ingredients. There was. The imprimatur of Redzepi combines two assurances of success. The status of international celebrity chef; and the not quite dead 'Australian Cultural Cringe', a belief that nothing is worthwhile unless it comes from somewhere else. Redzepi's immediate influence can be seen in such restaurants as Sydney's Stanley Street Merchants, whose menu boasts 'honey harvested in Neutral Bay to paper bark sourced on the streets of Marrickville…vegetables foraged or picked just hours before' and dishes like 'kangaroo, native fruits, herbs and spices; charcoal toasted meringue, ryeberries, ants.' Also at Charcoal Lane in Melbourne 'pepperberry spiced cauliflower and quinoa cake' and Orana in Adelaide, of whose food critic John Lethlean wrote:

> …expat Scot Jock Zonfrillo is trying to fuse the spirit
> of Copenhagen's Noma with that of the Never-Never.
> I doubt indigenous Australian ingredients and modern,
> Scandinavian-inspired foraging and "cooking" have been put
> together before as they are here.[43]

But it is not just fashion driving the low public tables.

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[42] 'Flinders Foraging' *Australian Gourmet Traveller* December 2010. http://www.gourmettraveller.com.au/restaurants/restaurant-news-features/2010/11/rene-redzepi-in-austral

[43] *The Weekend Australian* magazine May 12, 2014.

As noted in Chapter 7, there was and continues to be an eating out 'frenzy' in Australia (and the rest of the Anglophone and Scandinavian world) in the first decades of the twenty-first century. And the vast majority of that eating out is and has been for some time conducted in the multiculinary environment, no where more so than in Australia. In Glebe Point Road in Sydney, for example, just one 'eat street' in that city, there are Polish, Italian (three at last count) Nepali, Indian (three), Turkish (two), Greek, Spanish, Mexican, Chinese (one serving Sichuan cuisine one Xinjiang, one Cantonese), northern European, Vietnamese/Malaysian and seven Thai restaurants.[44]

In addition to the 'eat streets' of the inner city – in Melbourne Acland, Chapel and Brunswick Streets for example, there are 'ethnic enclave' suburbs. In Sydney, Cabramatta for Vietnamese food, Auburn for Middle Eastern, Bankstown for Vietnamese and Lebanese, Harris Park for Indian. In Melbourne, Brunswick for Italian, Indian and Turkish, Dandenong Afghan and Indian, and Footscray Vietnamese and African. Individual diners and now food tourism groups regularly descend on these suburbs in search of culinary excitement, guided by the myriad food blogs. That same process, noted above, which has precluded Australia from developing a food culture has resulted in a multiculinary society, arguably a better result. As Corones noted in 1987: 'The more we fall under the sway of multiculinarism, the more we understand how food is a vehicle for culture' or, in our case, a vehicle for other cultures.

With that in mind, it is curious how, as enthusiastically as they eat out – either at the creative high or low tables, or multiculinarily, sampling a different cuisine every week – at the home table, Australians, especially Anglo-Celtic Australians, stick to their

[44] Recently I noted a curious addition to the multiculinary mix on Glebe Point Road: 'Brixton lounge & dining', offering 'Modern Australian cuisine with a British twist.' Might this be a new craze – British food?

conservative food choices, ‘stick to their roots’. As the Meat and Livestock Australia research has shown: ‘Australians seem to prefer familiar, traditional meals such as steak and vegetables, roast chicken and spaghetti bolognaise.’ [45]

The contrast (contradiction) of the tenacity of our adherence to our culinary roots with the promiscuous multiculinarity of our eating outside the home (at least in the five capital cities)[46] is stark and can be explained by what I have called ‘this concatenation of semi-attached populations.’ Having accepted ‘the others’ culinarily, we have also embraced multiculinarism – outside the home. At home, old habits die hard. Can we extrapolate from our multiculinarism to other aspects of Australian society? I believe so.

I would like to briefly examine multiculinarism’s impact on racism from the 1970s to today. As far as I can ascertain, no studies of this link have been carried out apart from passing references:

> some argue that though nowadays Australians accept a multiculturalism that celebrates ethnic food, music, and dancing, general they tend to accept immigration only if it implies a strong commitment to Australia and its ways of living.[47]

Corones stated that the more we accept multiculinarism, the more we understand how food is a vehicle for culture. In that same paper, he cited Lévi-Strauss whose view it was that: ‘a cuisine can carry a

[45] ‘Connected Cooking’ and ‘Last Night’s Dinner’ see Appendix 9. These findings were replicated in my own small research project, TableWatch, which is outlined in Chapter 7
[46] Which account for 64 per cent of the national population according to Industry Analyst rpdata: blog.rpdata.com/2012/04/population-centralizationthe-australian-way
[47] ‘The roots of contemporary attitudes toward immigration in Australia: contextual and individual-level influences’ pages 1089-1090

world-view which defines the relationship of a society to the environment.'

As a case in point, I would like to briefly discuss the Cronulla Riots which began on Sunday December 11, 2005 at Cronulla Beach, 25 kilometres south of Sydney. On that day, some 5000 mainly young males of Anglo-Celtic background gathered to protest an incident where young males of Middle Eastern appearance had, allegedly, assaulted lifesavers. The next day, after inflammatory broadcasts, mainly by Radio 2GB announcer Alan Jones,[48] large numbers of young Lebanese men from south-western Sydney descended on Cronulla and assaulted Anglo-Celtic residents. This incident was unprecedented in modern Australian community relations. In general, as noted by Jock Collins:

> Considering the large influx of new minority immigrant communities [over the last 60 years] Australia has been remarkably free of serious ethnic conflict. Cronulla must be assessed in this light.[49]

Why then did this happen? Cronulla is what is known as 'a white bread suburb': that is, in the Australian context, one with a largely Anglo-Celtic population; 77.8 per cent Australian-born, with only 8.5 per cent who speak a language other than English at home. Only 46 per cent of the population of the City of Sydney, by contrast, is Australian born, with 29.9 per cent speaking a language other than English at home.[50] An *Eatability* search in 2014 for Lebanese restaurants in Cronulla yields this response: 'Sorry, no listings for Lebanese restaurants in Cronulla, Sydney.' A similar search in the

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[48] 16 months after the event, the Australian Communications and Media Authority found, that Jones had broadcast material 'that was likely to encourage violence or brutality and to vilify people of Lebanese and Middle-Eastern backgrounds on the basis of ethnicity'.
[49] 'Lessons from the Cronulla Riots' page 31.
[50] Both sets of figures for 2011 from profile.id.com.au Community Profile.

City of Sydney yields 116 Lebanese restaurants. I suggest there is a link.

There have never been such riots in the large cities. Collins lists clashes between ethnically based soccer teams, and isolated incidences where migrants of 'Middle Eastern appearance' have been subjected to vilification. In 2009 the media in Australia and India reported a series of crimes against Indian students which were described as 'racially motivated.' But a report compiled by the Indian High Commission in Brisbane made it clear that only 23 of 152 reported attacks had racial overtones. In these cases, the attackers hurled racial abuses, made threats and even resorted to anti-Indian remarks.[51] It is fair to say that the size, intensity and physicality of the Cronulla riots were unique in recent Australian history. I believe there were two, perhaps three causes. Firstly, territory. In a suburb with a very low level of non Anglo-Celtic penetration, the gradual increase in the numbers of Middle Eastern males on Cronulla beach was seen as a threat. Second was the enabling 'inflammatory broadcasts' of Jones and other right wing 'shock jocks.' And thirdly, the lack of understanding of 'the other' (in this instance Middle Eastern culture) through culinary contact.

A study carried out in Malaysia[52] offers a:

> comparative analysis on the extent to which acculturation through education, social interaction and media influence the foodways between three Malaysian major ethnic groups (Malay, Chinese and Indian).

It concludes by noting that: 'When two or more ethnic groups share foodways, they become closer.' More specifically:

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[51] Express News Service: New Delhi, Thursday February 25 2010

[52] 'Influence of Acculturation on Foodways among Ethnic Groups and Common Acceptable Food' Three following quotes from this study.

> food could also act in strengthening the integrative force, solidarity and social bonding and alliances among the communities and ethnic groups.

As pointed out by Flowers and Swan in their paper on food multiculturalism in Australia:

> There is a long history in Australia of concerted efforts to construct food as a medium through which people learn about other cultures and as a sign, when they eat diverse cultural foods, that their cities and regions are more tolerant of difference.[53]

This positive view has itself been extensively critiqued both here and (especially) in America, and their paper offers summaries of many of the arguments from the view that 'eating the Other' – eating ethnic food – comes with problematic politics. The term 'eating the Other' comes from the US race theorist bell hooks (nom de plume of Gloria Jean Watkins) who argues that eating ethnic food is the consumption of racial difference, and represents a disaffection on the part of those consuming the ethnic food, with the dominant white culture. Others, according to Flowers and Swan, 'see possibilities that eating and cooking ethnic food can facilitate productive inter-cultural exchange in spite of uneven power relations.'[54]

In her paper 'Eating at the Borders: Culinary Journeys', Jean Duruz[55] suggests that the presence of a 'white person' in an ethnic restaurant presents more ambivalence and blurring of meanings than many writers on the subject realise. While this is a fascinating area of study, it is beyond my scope here. I can only point out that eating

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[53] 'Eating the Asian Other? Pedagogies of Food Multiculturalism in Australia.'
[54] ibid. page 2.
[55] 'Eating at the Borders: Culinary Journeys' passim.

multiculinarily, at least in the larger Australian cities, has become deeply entrenched in Australian society, a society that appears to have coped with a massive and rapid influx of 'others' in a remarkably peaceful manner. There is, however, a singular and notable exception.

There is, as has been extensively referenced and written about in this work, one group in Australia who have been subject to widespread and at times government sanctioned racism: indigenous or first Australians. One of the most obvious of our rejections of Australian indigenous culture is that of the food that they ate. Apart from current craze for foraging native ingredients in our low table restaurants, non-indigenous Australians continue to ignore these foods in their quotidian diet. And even that 'craze' for native foraged ingredients distances itself from indigenous culture. A journalist in *Australian Gourmet Traveller* wrote that their success is due to the fact that: 'they're not marketed on the strength of being native.'[56] In this work I have made several conjectural links to ways in which the culinary and the cultural are related. I can do no more than suggest the strong likelihood of such links. Further research is needed.

In a very different context, Lévi-Strauss wrote that food is 'good to think [with].' In thinking with food in the context of this work, I have made connections not previously made, connections which, I believe, will be helpful in thinking about Australian culture generally. Australia does not have a food culture in the traditional sense of the word. And neither does it have a cuisine or cuisines in any sense of the word. But, curiously, the very same set of societal circumstances that prevented us from having a cuisine has resulted in our having something in many ways richer. The contradiction has enabled us to enjoy diverse, eclectic and original offerings from unconstrained chefs at our high tables, an unmatched multiculinarity on our low tables

[56] *Australian Gourmet Traveller* December 2010 'Flinders Foraging'

and, paradoxically, mostly mundane dishes on our home tables. In sum, these are the major contradictions of Australian food culture.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Interviews with Australian native food chefs, restaurateurs and producers

My initial aim in conducting these interviews was to ask these chefs producers and suppliers why, in their opinion, we had not adopted, adapted, cultivated or farmed Australian native produce since our arrival.

There have been exceptions, most notably the macadamia nut, but that was first extensively cultivated in Hawaii, and only in 1997 did Australian production exceed that of the United States.

And while I did receive answers – illuminating and varied – to my original question, the interviews took off in directions that I did not predict, but which proved very useful to my overall research question: for example Cherikoff's analyis of the nutritional density of some Australian native foods and the food choices of pre-occupation in Aborigines: and Bruneteau's assertion that Australian native foods as used in European kitchens have nothing to do with the Aboriginal people, and should belong to the country rather than it's original inhabitants.

I've edited the interviews only to remove criticism of other members of the industry and some of the criticism of journalists. I have left intact that which I judge is relevant to the argument.

CLAYTON Donovan interview at Jaaning Tree Nambucca Heads, January 7th January 2013

From a plaque in the restaurant: 'Our name, Jaaning pronounced "jaa-nee" is Gumbaynggir for the Acacia Irrorata or Wattle tree. For centuries this tree has been a

unique source of food for the local indigenous people. The new tree stems are rolled in the thick sweet sap that oozes from the bark to make “bush lollies”. The tree is also unique in its ability to flower when all other wattles have finished.’

Donovan is the only indigenous Australian native food chef I interviewed. There are not that many, two others I can think of. His relative, Mark ‘Black’ Olive , Steve Sunk and Dale Chapman. I’m sure there are others.

His restaurant is doing well, and is well placed to take advantage of the renaissance – or naissance – of an Australian native cuisine.

While visiting Clayton, he and his wife Jane took me to Mick Griffiths’ finger lime farm at Newee Creek behind Nambucca Head, which in itself is further proof of the growing popularity of Australian native foods. Mick successfully grows and markets grows twenty different varieties including Alstonville, Pink Ice, Jiggi Red, Judy’s Everlasting, Byron Sunrise and Durham’s Emerald.

CD: I grew up in Macksville and Scotts Head, went to high school here. I wasn’t allowed to do Home Science – it was the best place to be, in the kitchen with heaps of girls and loads of food. I had to do metal work. But I always did casual jobs in kitchens – my Mum cooked a lot. Mum and Dad broke up when I was nine or ten. There was my little sister, my brother me and Mum, and Mum always cooked amazing meals. I got the tongue that way . On Dad’s side all the girls cooked, all the aunties and sisters.

I had a good mate, Nino Romino, an Italian background. So I had Mum’s culinary tourism, and my best mate was an Italian.

When I was about four or five my aunty Jess picked me up and took me out and showed me bush foods at Nambucca Heads. We’d go out

and find Jaaning – she had a bit of a sweet tooth and we'd go out and collect the sap off the wattle trees. She showed me bush carrots and parsnips, plants that healed, herbs. Every time we'd get ready to go and see Aunty Jess we'd go and collect things for her. Obviously I was too young to remember it all but she planted this monster in the back of my head.

(I asked how Aunty Jessy used the herbs)

When my grandparents got native pippies they'd make pippy fritters with the native carrots. But the other stuff, they'd just eat them. There are no Australian native recipes – no structured sense of creating a dish. The food was there: eat it.

But (my mother and grandparents) would make Bolognese and use kangaroo mince – stuff like that. And my (paternal) family up in Cairns – Dad's sister Aunty Val works for the church. She incorporated a lot of Indonesian and PNG food – flying fox stew for example –it's a really good sweet meat. An amalgamation of PNG, and Indonesian. Only there and in Broome have I seen those kinds of dishes.

As an eighteen year old I played football for Ballina, got a scholarship with Cronulla and broke my back. I had to take time out. I wanted to box, I wanted to play footy and I wanted to be a chef. I told the doctor and he said you'll never be a chef. That's what kicked me on.

I started getting into kitchens when I was around 22/23. I had started playing music, we had a band in Newcastle that broke up – then I went to law school in Lismore. I didn't like it.

I remember my grandfather – who just passed – saying to do me do something that makes you happy every day. So I got back into the kitchen and went down to Sydney.

I started knocking on doors. And I heard about this Kenneth Leung[732] guy who was using bush foods. He began using pippies, wattle seeds, myrtle and kangaroo and amalgamated it with his food from all around the world. This was in the mid 90s.

At the time, Raymond and Jennice were running Edna's Table, there was a restaurant at The Rocks and Lillipilli in Newtown, and Mark olive was in Melbourne[733]

From Watermark I spent a little time at Aria my wife (to-be) overstayed her visa and we had to leave – we went to Cornwall where I worked and we got married. We returned to Australia and I opened here four years ago. We're doing well. There's a need for something like this because it gives An identity to the food and the culture. Amalgamation of these foods with European foods is the best form of reconciliation – in the mouth – and it's the only time that everybody shuts up.

(I mentioned Watkin Tench's remark about how cultivation of native foods would change them and why we hadn't done that)

I don't know why. Blatant ignorance on both sides? There was a period of time when I was growing up when knowledge would not be passed on – and it wouldn't be passed on to a white person

(Even if we'd asked?)

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732 The chef at the now closed Watermark restaurant in Balmoral, Sydney.
733 The restaurant in The rocks, whose name I forget, was run for a time by the late activist Bobbi Sykes.

They'd be scared to tell you. It would have been lack of trust. Knowledge is power. Would they give it to the new settlers to farm? In hindsight it would have been great for our people…ignorance on one side, and mistrust on the other – women were being raped, there were massacres, they would have been scared.

(And now?)

It has to change

Now the idea of sustainability and the rest of the world falling in love with our native foods, we might decide we love them. If you put them in a space where people can understand them better. For example I've got some really good scallops and I do a coconut water foam and a quandong and native peach reduction around the bottom, and if they ask they'll find out what they're eating. After four years I've got people coming back and saying they've found a quandong plant and they're growing it at home – what can they do with the fruit?

When I opened, a friend called Dennis said I've been waiting for you _ he and his wife grow native foods.[734] Once it gets into the cultivation stage it'll snowball

Jean Paul Bruneteau, interviewed at his home at Umina Beach Monday 18th February 2013.

I caught the train to Umina and was picked up at the station by Jean Paul in his white VW Golf. He's living in the house that belonged to his late father with his partner Paul James and a young man called Luke – handyman and general factotum I think is his status.

[734] Dennis and Marilyn Ryan grow native fruit and nut trees on their farm Valley of the Mist outside Macksville

JP has put on some weight but is otherwise in good mental and physical shape at 56. He is not doing much at the moment, fixing the house, recovering from the death of his father, and pondering his next move. He considered and rejected a deli, reasoning correctly that Coles and Woolworth would kill it. And is contemplating some sort of café/restaurant although determinedly not serving Australian Cuisine.

We sat at the kitchen table overlooking the road running past the house and drank Evian water, one of a small number of French traits the naturalised Australian chef retains.

> The total disregard of a civilisation's cultural basis was evident from the theft and fencing of land within traditional collection areas. Unless a food could be cultivated, it was considered to be of no real value. [735]

Jean Paul: that (above) took a little longer than the rest of the introduction to pen because I really believe that was the case. What really got me going was that Gay Bilson once did a commercial for AGL (Australian Gas Limited) and she started off saying "there's no such thing as Australian cuisine" and I nearly jumped out of my tree – Rowntree's was open and Jennifer and I were doing Australian cuisine and I thought the bitch! How dare she say this!

I was already in the mode of thinking we'd ignored what the Aborigines were doing with food and also I'd discovered that the early explorers were eating Australian foods and they'd eaten bunya nuts and tasted murrnong and kangaroo and much else. And I thought the Aboriginal people must have some sort of method for dealing with these foods. And they did. They dried them and stored them in tree

[735] *Tukka* page 12

trunks, they fermented them or pulverised them or leached the toxins out of the burrawangs and cycads. That was process and storage, and they'd also hunt and cook kangaroo and other game. As far as I was concerned, that was a cuisine.

We opened at Rowntree's (in1984), and I was determined that we could do Australian Cuisine and what we could do to attain it was use native ingredients.

I knew I was at the forefront of doing this, and that at the time as I was the only person doing it I'd have a hard time. But it became (like a) religion for me, I just got totally immersed in it. I thought if the Aborigines could do it I could 'Europeanise' the foods. But it wasn't as easy as I thought it's be.

Vic [Cherikoff] passed on a lot of foods to me – the samples were given to me and they had been tested and I was delighted.

The first thing I wanted to do in the restaurant was to serve the ultimate native food: a witchetty grub. I'm a snail eating Frenchman – there was a similarity. I put a note in *The Land* (rural newspaper) looking for tenders and got quite a few calls. A bloke called Bruce Henley became our source, and I got some local press very quickly. A local journalist came and she got us a story in *The New York Times.* Then it made the BBC, the Los Angeles Times, we had NBC's Bryant Gumbel – and that was when Vic came along. He said "I've just read about you. I've got all these foods and would you like to try them?" We paid Vic a retainer to supply us with ingredients.

The first thing was the wattle seed. I stored it on the shelf for a year and kept smelling it. I thought this smells like coffee. You can't put it with fish, or meat – I couldn't get my head around it until one day we roasted it and ground it and put it through Vic's Atomic coffee maker

– and I thought, oh my God, this is magic. We went out and bought three tons of the stuff.

I was sure we were on the right track to develop this cuisine. I thought these flavours are unique, this is just Australian – being a European I knew what those flavours were and I'd been brought up on Chinese on Sunday nights and I knew a little about Asian flavours and I'd travelled the world on merchant ships and I knew what we had here was unique. These were flavours that no one really knew and I was going to go out and tell the world. Flavours were more important than ingredients in a way because we had flavours here that were not found anywhere else in the world, and to me that is what would constitute an Australian cuisine. We developed menus and all sorts of original recipes around these native foods.

But there were things like the Illawarra plums that didn't work with any European methods. You have to heat them and cool them down to get the flavour. I tasted them and thought this isn't going to work and put them in the fridge and tasted them again and thought this is amazing. How did that happen? And when I put riberrries in sugar, they went crazy.[736]

In 1989 Jennifer (Dowling, business partner) and I went to France. When we arrived at my Uncle's place he had a beautiful garden with everything growing. And there in the corner was a patch of Warrigal greens. I said where the hell did you get these from? And he said he'd been growing it for ages, it's tetragon. And sure enough, as I did more research, as I did more research, I found that (Sir Joseph) Banks and (Captain James) Cook were very keen on it – they actually found it in New Zealand before they found it in Australia, and it saved the crew

[736] In *Tukka*, Bruneteau tells the story of accidentally leaving riberries cooking for 45 minutes, evaporating the liquor without ruining the fruit. 'After cooling overnight, the fruit regained its vigour and retained its full flavour.' Page 155.

from getting scurvy. It's a very important plant in Australian food history.

My uncle said "you used to eat this stuff when you were a kid." It seems Banks sent seeds not only to Kew Gardens but to France. Warrigal Greens and skate were cooked on the Endeavour.[737] That should be celebrated as an Australian meal – we've got enough skate. Here's something to celebrate if we really wanted to do something on Australia Day as the Americans do with turkey and cranberry and pumpkin – we could do the same with ray. When Steve Irwin died, I thought, there we go, ray will be off the menu – and it was, for months.

(I asked why we never cultivated some of these foods over the years, as was done with the tomato when it first went to Europe, for example.)

I don't know why we didn't do it. It drove me nuts asking that question. I think there's a couple of things. I've often described it as food racism. The English were here for a long time before anyone came to disturb them. And to them, anything the blacks touched was black food. For example, why is roo regarded as a pest or described as vermin when in actual fact it's one of the cleanest, healthiest most beautiful meats? It was because the sheep farmers wanted it off their properties instead of it cohabiting [with the sheep] which they're doing now.

[737737] Banks, Joseph, *The Endeavour Journal of Sir Joseph Banks*
'**1770 May 6.**Went to sea this morn with a fair breeze of wind. The land we saild past during the whole forenoon appeard broken and likely for harbours; in the afternoon again woody and very pleasant. We dind to day upon the stingray and his tripe: the fish itself was not quite so good as a scate nor was it much inferior, the tripe every body thought excellent. We had with it a dish of the leaves of tetragonia cornuta boild, which eat as well as spinage or very near it.' Online, no page numbers.

The Aborigines were not recognised as an organised society so the Europeans didn't understand how these people lived – in my understanding they had a very well organised society and culture. People didn't want to eat roo because black people ate roo – noble English people don't need roo – no reason not to eat it. The roo only gets worms or parasites because of the importation of cats. It was an excuse not to have it on the menu.

We've had this discussion at (gastronomic) symposiums before – what would it have been like if the French had got here first? If the French had colonised Australia kangaroo would have been a staple, Warrigal greens obviously, skate and more than likely a lot of the other native foods. It's the English. They're not food people. It's interesting since we opened and closed Riberries there are riberries growing all around Sydney, and I go for walks with people and I say aren't they lovely, and they say, no we can't eat that, it's poison, it's red.

When we came here in 1969, I didn't see anything that grew here, I didn't see anything until the realisation in New Zealand that the Maoris were cooking paua[738] and all these wonderful things. I remember in New Zealand these women who stayed with us said, we're going to go and pick some wild foods so I went out with them and they were picking this and that and I thought – the Aborigines – what did they eat? IK did the research and found all the descriptions are there and the flavours – and that's what sparked me.

I was on a merchant ship then and that was my last trip even though I was earning good money. I thought there's good food out there and I've got to go and find it and do a restaurant around it. I got off the ship and went to India and Sri Lanka and found food everywhere!

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[738] The Maori name given to three species of edible sea snails, known in the United States and Australia as abalone, and much prized by the Maori as food

(I mentioned the Newling and Bannerman papers that talked of native foods only being used as substitutes until they had the real thing)

That's because the English wanted English gardens and they wanted sheep and wheat. They did the experiment at Farm Cove and it failed, they ate a bit of kangaroo – until the real thing came from home. If you read the Sydney Gazette[739] they used to use burrawang flour because the flour stocks arrived wet and full of weevils – there wasn't a lot left by the time it got here. They knew the Aborigines were leaching burrawang to make flour. They'd get the nuts, leave them out, the possums ate the cyanide around the outer casing, they'd crush them between stones, put them in string bags which were made for this purpose and wash them in the river. Then they'd dry the nuts and grind them into flour and make cakes. The whites knew how to do it. They'd supplement the flour with burrawang flour The Sydney Gazette would tell you what percentage of burrawang to white flour. And you get this absolutely stunning bread. I used to serve it in the restaurant, I never made too much of a noise about it – I didn't want the authorities on my case, but I knew it had been tested (by Cherikoff) at the university. But it just went away. I've got colonial cook books with instructions on how to cook native birds. No one eats them now. Bunya nuts. They're better than chestnuts

These foods don't have to be mainstream. They're better as an elevated truffle kind of a product. Most people don't eat truffles at home. There are lots of things that a restaurant kitchen has that household kitchens don't. I've always thought these ingredients are good enough for that: they're haute cuisine

When you start looking at the original cultures inland and coastal there are definitely culinary links. The roo is always cooked whole in the ground. They'd all follow the same process. They'd gut it and give

[739] Published from 1803-1842, the first newspaper in Australia

the offal to the elderly and what I liked about it most of all was that it was cooked rare right around the country – you could say it was because the fire didn't last long or it was an easier way to cook, but the thing is roo tastes better cooked rare so why would they over-cook it in the first place? I'm sure they ate for enjoyment just as much as we do.

Much later I met Gay Bilson. She came to my book launch, she said it was amazing. I reminded her of what she had said many years ago – I wanted to show you. She said I'm sorry. I said I'm happy you're here today. You're doing French cuisine, my cuisine, I wanted to show you we can do an Australian cuisine with very little effort. It's not rocket science, it's just knowing the right flavours and not doing the thing with bunging wattle seeds and quandongs and riberries together, just to prove a point. That was another thing that bothered me about Australian cuisine, those who thought everything had to go together, which is perfectly wrong.

When Jennifer and I opened Rowntree's, it was billed as 'International Cuisine.' Yellow Pages said you can't call it Australian because there isn't such a thing. And we said, well there is so get with it. Create one. And we were the first restaurant to be listed as an Australian restaurant. I knew if we got Australian restaurant we'd get Australian cuisine too. They were great days, we were rolling.

I couldn't get the Australian cuisine thing across. It was always bush tucker. I let it go a few times then eventually I would stipulate to the journalist please, whatever you do, this is an Australian cuisine, not bush tucker. And it always came out as bush tucker[740] Bush tucker is about collecting food in the bush and eating it in the bush. I was using Australian native foods, plants that grew in Australia that had

[740] Starting in 1988, Les Hiddins had a television show called *Bush Tucker Man* on the ABC, in which he drove the outback finding Australian native produce

different flavours. These were new ingredients, the newest oldest ingredients on earth

It's all very well for Aboriginal chefs on television saying that wattle seed tastes like coffee and hazelnut, using my script…I went travelling with Vic, we went to the Daintree forest and looked at native foods and Aboriginal people weren't even interested in native foods back in the mid eighties. Thancoupie[741] was great. She took us out into the mangroves and we had periwinkles out of the mud and oysters and she put on a pretty good feast for us when we were up in Cairns.

(In 1996 Riberries was awarded one hat in *The Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide* Riberries opened in 1991. Disclosure: I wrote the review and was instrumental in the award being given.)

The year we got the hat I went to the reception and watched it from the top. I never went and collected my prize. Jennifer and I went dressed to the hilt – I hired a suit, I didn't own one. Everyone was there, (chef) Neil Perry… (SMH reviewer) Terry Durack was there. He turned up scruffy as, with dandruff on the back of his jacket. It infuriated me. I can't believe I went out of my way to look decent and he looked like he'd just turned up from the office. I thought fuck it, I don't need it. The next year we put a sign in the window saying this restaurant chooses not to be reviewed by the *Good Food Guide*. I got a call from Mr Durack saying it's not your choice and I said I'm afraid it is. I sold the restaurant before the *Good Food Guide* came out and went overseas.[742]

I knew I was onto something and I wanted the press to understand this was a development of Australian cuisine. I didn't invent it but if we want to develop it this was the way to go. If you're in Germany and

[741] The late Dr. Thancoupie Gloria Fletcher (Thanakupa) was an Aboriginal potter.
[742] In 1997, Riberries lost its hat, and the review was lukewarm, ending 'a bit more snap and sizzle would enliven both the plate and the table.'

I put a German meal in front of you, a Thai meal in Thailand, A French meal in France, and an Australian meal it will stand on its own because it is different in flavour to the others. It has these additional flavours incorporated into it from the ingredients grown here.

Then along came Raymond Kersh and Andrew Fielke.

We had Aboriginal apprentices. There was one called Daniel Mason who just couldn't do TAFE. I spoke to his teacher and said he's a natural chef can we do a deal. I knew I could do a deal because he was Aboriginal. As an 18 year old I could leave him on his own in the kitchen…I loved that the product that came out of the kitchen had passed through Aboriginal hands.

I was certain that this was the advancement of the Australian cuisine – but I could never get past this fucking bush tucker thing[743] Okay, in hindsight, I got what I wanted and I got what I deserved – I'm not getting the recognition for it but at least it's out there. People like Kylie Kwong and Chris Manfield[744] and Clayton Donovan have taken it up. That's fine. I started something.

You say we don't have an Australian cuisine. But you know what? It may have taken twenty years to get where we are now, but there are massive finger lime farm, lemon myrtle is taking off. It's going to take a bit longer.

I spoke to (Sydney Food Festival Organiser) Joanna Saville. I said let's do a three tenors thing, Andrew Fielke, Raymond Kersh and myself. She said what a great idea. I never heard a word from her. I'm over it. I enjoy cooking at home.

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743 The phrase appeared in the 1997 review

744 Respectively chef and ex-restaurateur and chef/restaurateur owner of Sydney's Billy Kwong

In 1998 Jean Paul and Paul James went overseas and eventually opened an Australian restaurant, Bennelong, in Paris, which did very well until the backer pulled out.

(I asked did he think what was happening now was a more positive understanding of Australian native cuisine)

I think so. With people like Chris Manfield and Kylie Kwong taking it up – others are re-discovering it. Me being out of the way, Vic Cherikoff being out of the way leaves a clean field. When I went overseas I just wanted to disappear

(I asked whether he thought renewed acceptance had anything to do with a different attitude today to indigenous Australians?)

This is very important. What's happened over the last few years with [Aboriginal chefs like] Mark Olive and others is we've gone from bush tucker to Aboriginal foods. But they're not Aboriginal foods. They're native plants. Plants don't want to be owned, they're just plants with unique flavours. We have to look at these ingredients as ingredients but not Aboriginal ingredients. The Aborigines didn't use most of these ingredients. They're Australian native foods and they belong to everyone. They're not that emblematic that they belong to the Aboriginal people. If we keep tagging them as Aboriginal or bush tucker we're never going to develop an Australian cuisine. They'll be stuck in that racist – they'll be shelved as being something different. I just want the podocarpus plum to be known as the podocarpus plum all over the world.

I went on the SBS food show, we said this is about native plants and unique flavours it's not Aboriginal. And they said we might need an

Aboriginal person. I said no! This is not what it's about. Aboriginal people did not cook barramundi with lemon myrtle butter. They just did not do that. When you see Mark Olive do all those lovely dishes with native plants it's automatically tagged as Aboriginal food. Take the tag away. Podocarpus plums. Riberries. Quandong. Wonderful stuff. Use it.

They're unique ingredients. What's important is not that they're Aboriginal but that they're flavours and components that can turn into cuisine. The Asians have done it with all their ingredients. Why can't we? And let's make things like the wonga pigeon and the magpie goose special, not every day food.

(I asked about incorporating native ingredients into the domestic diet)

Some of it is happening. Juleigh Robbins produces a whole range of food products for supermarkets which incorporate native ingredients. I think she has a barbecue sauce with bush tomato in it. It's not on the label, it's in the list of ingredients. She's using the ingredients in the main stream but not flogging them on the label. We talked about this years ago and we always thought it was the way to go. Get it off the label or you're going to get a bush tucker label. People are going to say – what's that peppery flavour? It's pepper leaf. She uses a lot of ingredients like this in her products.[745]

I was cooking smoked buffalo in Tokyo in 1988 for a contest. And I lit up the banksia cones in my barbecue
and I could smell the Australian bush. That's what Australian flavours are about. That's what I was on about. That's what Australian cuisine can be and should be, serving up those unique flavours. You won't get them in Thailand. You won't get them in Germany.

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[745] Juleigh Robbins markets these products under the label of Outback Spirit.

For the remainder of these interviews, go to www.newtonwrites.com, Appendices category

Appendix 2

Friday July 5, 2013 CWA lunch

This lunch was held after a long correspondence with various CWA branches. The email below is the same as all which were sent out:

XXXX your name was given to me by Luisa Deacon, who was very helpful to me at the CWA office in Sydney

Let me explain why I am contacting you.

I am working on a Master's degree by research at the University of Technology Sydney on the subject of Australian Food Culture – or rather the lack of it. The title of my thesis is Terra Nullius, Culina Nullius: if we don't have an Australian food culture, what do we have?[746]

It has always seemed to me if there is any vestige of Australian food culture, it resides with the CWA. And with that in mind here is what I am proposing.

I would like to visit a region - not too far from Sydney, perhaps the Central West – and arrange to eat a meal there with perhaps five CWA members. A meal cooked by them but paid for by me (I have a small grant from UTS for this purpose). During the course of this meal I would interview the members.

Luisa has suggested to me that you would be the best person to put me in touch with a group that would be interested in working with me.

If you could give consideration to my request, I would be most grateful.

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[746] Subsequent to this email I have changed to a Doctor of Creative Arts, and the name of thesis has changed to: *Terra Nullius, Culina Nullius. The contradictions of Australian food culture.*

I have copied my supervisor, Professor Paul Ashton, into this email in case you wish to check my identity with him

Kind regards

After several such emails, I was invited to join members of the East Maitland Branch at the home of convenor Kay Teterin. At the lunch were:

Janice Dunkley: Anglo Celt Australian with similar husband (from now on I'll use Australian)

Brigitta Falconer: Latvian born with an Australian husband

Mary Wingent: Australian-born and Australian husband

Doris Bates: German born with Australian husband

Kay Teterin: Australian born with a Russian husband

All but Ms Falconer are members of the East Maitland branch of the CWA, she is with Nelson Bay. Kay's husband Norm came home for the lunch

We met at the Teterin home at Melville, a large Georgian house, dating from 1836 and fully restored by Kay and her husband Norm.

This is an 'affinity' group in that they know each other well, and have already worked out their 'pecking order'

I'm not always clear about who is talking – I taped the conversation and it was difficult to tell them apart. Where I am unsure I have added a ?

Menu

Before lunch:
Cheese twists and water crackers (both packet) with dips: corn relish and cream cheese; sun-dried tomato and olive; sun-dried tomatoes cream cheese and mixed dried herbs.

Lunch:
Pumpkin soup
Beef burgundy and rabbit stew (both cooked in crock pots)
Boiled potatoes
Carrots and beans

Dessert:
Impossible pudding
Apple turnovers
Cream
Blue ribbon vanilla ice cream

Q: Have we forgotten about Australian cooking?

?: No I wouldn't agree with that. I'm still a basic cook. I'll occasionally throw in a pasta I'll occasionally throw in a spag bol, but on the whole I think they're sick of it. They like to get back to the roast veg

Q: Do you bake?

Yes (all bake)

?: If you live near a lot of restaurants – it's also a cost thing it's not always.

Brig: I lived in Sydney for the first 30 years and my mother used to bake a lot of stuff – meats and roast and then they went on to sandwiches for the rest of the week.

Kay: same for me I was one of six, we had a roast and what was left over sandwiches I remember Mum making fritters.

(All except Brigitta and Doris) And shepherd's pie

Q: Cakes?

Kay: You'd make sure you'd cook when the kids were all at school because if they were at home as they were coming out of the oven they'd disappear as quick as you baked them. I've got Leanne who's 44 and Stephie's 36 – more so when they were in primary school we did a lot – but as they got to high school this health came in so you didn't cook a lot of biscuits and cakes because they were more health conscious. You had to change your way of thinking and looking at health slices – oat meal slices, things made out of muesli. Now if I cook anything a cake or something Norm says are you going somewhere?

Q: Cakes are not that important?

(All) No not really

Doris: I make cakes for a special occasion but if we just want something to have a with a cup of tea, it's alright to go to the cake shop and buy something

?: Or a scone

Do you make scones?

(All emphatically) Oh yes

Q: That's a given?

Jan: Yes

Mary: No, very badly

Kay: I could never make scones until one day my Mum came – she's now passed away – but she came into the kitchen and saw me making scones and said are you putting them into the oven I said I'm having another go at it because they came out like rock cakes and she said they will if you put them in that oven I said why? It's not hot enough – when I turned the oven up I make great scones now

Doris: The men in my family makes scones – not my husband and they only do it for Mother's day

Q: Can you tell me what you think Australian food is?

Mary: Still meat and three veg. I was doing stir fries and pastas but I've gone aback to meat and three veg – its quicker

Jan: It's basic food for us as well but I supplement it with a stir fry or a pasta – fish – don't mind it but can't stand the smell; of it, I don't know what to buy and I don't know how to cook it, I've never been shown

Kay: I'll mix mine up, we'll have fish we have a lot of chicken and meat – not a lot of meat now – I use frozen fish and I steam it in alfoil and put lemon juice on it and I have some herbs I sprinkle on the top and we'll have that with a tossed salad

? I'll mix it up – I'll have meat and veggies I like stir fries but when I try something my husband says you know savoury mince would be nice it's nice on toast (much laughter)
I gave him savoury mince on toast ten nights in row, that got over it (laughter).

Norm: I remember it was either steak chips or eggs that was a meal

(All) Nothing wrong with that

Jan: most of us kept chooks when we were children – we always had chooks and we always had eggs

Brig: My husband is Australian and he was brought up on meat and three veg. He's not every adventurous he doesn't like spiced food he doesn't like Thai food he doesn't like a lot of stuff he won't eat spaghetti, he won't eat a lot of rice dishes except bread and butter pudding. We do eat a lot of fish and I'm tending to use the slow cooker more – we get a lot of fresh fish and seafood – but we also tend to barbecue a lot (murmurs of assent) even in the middle of winter I remember living in Lithgow and my husband was out there in the snow barbecuing – he likes his steak barbecued – it's a mixture but not spag not lasagne not quiches. It's alright occasionally. I also do schnitzels and German food. I also used to bake my own bread – lots of grains and I love black bread and sweet and sour but you can't get the good stuff,
I bring it back from Sydney.

Doris: We have spag bol on Saturday night, soup on Monday night we usually have a meat dish with vegetables on a Tuesday night, we have curried mince with rice, on a Wednesday night we have some sort of fish – salmon baked in the oven with some butter and salad with that – Thursday night we used to eat a lot of schnitzel and now on Thursday night I've been buying the pork chops and bashing them out and rolling them out with egg and breadcrumb and making potato and onion salad – that's a warm dish you make the salad when it's warm – we'll also have a tossed salad. Friday night is fish and chip night

General: She's so organised!

Doris: Of course it varies. If I've been minding the grandchildren and I come home and I'm knackered he will say why don't you pick up a pizza. Our cultures are a mixture, I prefer more European foods whereas my husband is an Australian he is trying them but he doesn't eat chicken because his parents had chickens and he had to hold the chook while his father chopped the head off and he will not eat chicken. However I did the same thing and I love chicken. I don't know what that says about our personalities.

Jan: My husband cooks a lot –

Mary: My husband cooks a lot

Doris: Do you cook Norm?

Norm: My Mum died when I was three years old. My Dad cooked Russian food. I learnt from him

Doris: My husband is of the generation where you get married and you get someone to cook for you

Mary: My husband's dad cooked – he'd cook the pasta and the chopped up steak in the tomato sauce – puree and that was the first time I had the steak – he was English – he'd dice the steak and stew it and add tomato puree and have that with the pasta.

(?) Doesn't sound English

Jan: I've got a neighbour he does all the cooking all the shopping and I asked him why - his wife does nothing.
He said then I get what I want. I was thinking about our meals, we very rarely have dessert at our place only when we have visitors – I'll always finish a meal with a apple

Doris: I always have to have something sweet to finish my meal off if I have something savoury

Jan: I always finish with an apple, my dad used to cut the apples up and pass them around the family. Mum always cooked dessert because she couldn't cook otherwise.

Doris: My mother was a brilliant cook but it was a job for her whereas it just came natural to my dad. He was a pastry cook by trade in Germany – coming to Australia he worked in a tyre factory. He had his own business in Germany – he had a rough time that's why they came to Australia, they had so much and then they had nothing. When he came to Australia he worked as a chef at the migrant hostel – in his spare time he was making continental cakes. They were all hanging out for some proper cakes, not just the sponge and the cream which was the ultimate cake in Australia in the 50s – he had a nice little business going there.

Q: Why didn't he follow on with that?

Doris: Well, he was a businessman, once he had established the family he decided to go into business – we had a café in Maitland, the Maitland Café. First he had the Top Hat Café where they made hamburgers and chips and that sort of thing and then Mum had a little grocery shop then they sold up and bought the Maitland Café. We bought it off a Greek family – there were about 8 cafes in the street and they were all run by Greeks except ours.

Q: Did you do different food?

Doris: No, steak and chips – chicken was expensive back then. Steak and chips, fish and chips, roast lamb – the sixties – you'd get the people coming in off the farms. One chap – he was a bus driver – he would have a T-bone steak and 12 eggs. We're talking about café food plain simple egg on the hot plate – he'd have peas, mashed potato, pumpkins and a big plate of chips. In those days Dad would cut up the pumpkin at six in the morning and put it on to cook. He'd make the mashed potatoes by seven, all the veggies were kept hot all day in a dish with hot water on it on the gas. The peas would start off green in the morning and by the afternoon they were yellow. Pie and veg and chips with bread and butter and tea was four and six – served at the table with a knife and fork – this is the late sixties

Q: This is possibly a little bit behind Sydney perhaps?

(General laughter) A little! Definitely

Doris: Back then Maitland was a real country town

Jan: Monday was auction day – the place would be inundated with all the cockies – they'd come in and they'd all go out for lunch – the women would be all dressed – they'd go to the Greek cafes

Q: Was there a flash place?

Jan: The Imperial Hotel it was just a little bit above…

Doris: This was before the clubs became popular.

Jan: (?) wasn't allowed in even to the dining room

Doris: The Chinese came to Maitland in the mid sixties as well. We would be so sick and tired of cooking fish and chips and steaks for a treat we'd go and get a Chinese meal for dinner after we closed the shop

Jan: You remember Chang and his rocket fuel? At West Maitland you'd go to Chang's and he'd serve food it'd come out dish after dish after dish and he'd serve rocket fuel – which was a Chinese wine. It used to knock the top of your head off.

Norm: In the 1930s Maitland was going to be the capital city of NSW?

Doris: When my father came out to Australia with two young children, four pound he had in his pocket, his first pay packet went towards buying a Sunbeam Mixmaster, the second pay packet went towards buying an oven.

(They asked me): What sort of food you do you cook?

I replied: Last night we had a steak with mushrooms and potatoes

(Discussion of Maggie's German restaurant in the Cross which is around the corner from the CWA headquarters. Complaints about the spaetzli and the dumplings from Doris.)

Q: Favourite cookbooks?

Mary: Margaret Fulton was my first and I still look at it. given to me as a gift at my engagement party. I don't still buy cookbooks sometimes I'll find second hands opens. Soups was my last one.

Jan: The original Margaret Fulton signed by her. And lately I use a lot of the recipes from the New Idea and Woman's Day. A lot of my cooking is basic anyway, I can just do my recipes – I'm not into recipe books

Kay: My two favourite ones are Maggie Beer, and I like the AWW books on different things. I've got one of Margaret Fulton's, I've also go a Greek book by Tess Mallos and
I make quite a few things out of that – and a couple of the Pritikin books. I've got a library of them and I'm always pulling them out and having a look. That last Maggie Beer
is beautiful because she tells you all about the products
and I have cooked from it. Her recipes are simple.

Brig: I have tons of cookbooks but the basic one is the old Ellen Sinclair Australian Women's Weekly (1970) – I use a lot of recipes from there and sometimes I vary them. But when I'm having a dinner party I'll go to some of the more exotic books. Latvian – a lot of sweets, I love schnitzels and a lot of pork, I love pork. Learnt how to cook cakes and tortes from my mother – I love doing the big fancy things – I cook for weddings.

Kay: my favourite is the book from high school The Commonsense Cookery Book and I always go back to it.

(Mary and Doris have it too)

Doris: The Nursing Mother's Cookbook and the Commonsense (Cookery Book) are two that I refer to more than any others. And the other one is Mr Google. I do like Donna Hay, she's simple, I don't mind some of her things but if there's anything I want I Google it

Kay: I Googled last night for rabbit recipes and there was one I would have loved to have done but I didn't have any brandy – I was so upset about that. It was a rabbit dish done with prunes and brandy. So many different ways but what I notice is so many are cooked with tomato.

(They discussed the TV show of 'the guy who'd been through Iraq and Iran' – Shane Delia, they couldn't remember his name)

Doris: He made caviar from tapioca and squid's ink I think –I couldn't believe it

Doris: John, I do not watch Masterchef (chorus of approval)
Why?

Doris: Crap! Did I say that?

Jan: It's not about the cooking, its about tearing each other apart its negative

Doris: I'm not into reality TV

Doris: The chap last night who' d just gone from south to north and ended up at the Caspian sea and I've learnt so much from it [Shane Delia's Spice Journeys]

Kay: It's culture with food in it and they show you what they're cooking and the way they cook it.

Doris: [re Masterchef] You stack four or five pieces of choc cake in a tier pour something over it and sprinkle something on top – any mug can do that, that's not cooking.

Do you cook from the shows you watch?

Kay: I did I had cous cous and the one they did was with blue vein cheese through it – he did four or five different countries, that wasn't last night.

Mary: I watched it [Masterchef] when it first started but now I don't like it. But I do like the other one. Can't think of the name.

Brig: I don't watch any cooking shows.

Kay: I used to like the two fat ladies. One of them was from Scone. My girlfriend from Scone remembered the one who came from there [Clarissa Dickson] and that's why I watched it, then I fell in love with it.

[Norm talking about the two fat ladies changing drivers on the bike when the bike was going]

Kay: I used to do guide cooking and taught the girls to cook in big iron pots and how to make dampers in the fire – best think ever.

Do you read any food magazines?

Jan: At the doctors

Doris: I buy the New Idea and the Woman's Day for the puzzles that are in them but when there's recipes in it I will read it.

Kay: I've bought Australian Gourmet Traveller when we're away somewhere and I wanted something decent to read because they've got some good stories. I actually go to the library in Maitland and they've got the AGT - they're getting very expensive now.

Doris: I enjoy looking at them and the way they're presented.

Kay: and there's ABC Delicious

Jan: Better Homes and Gardens I often read at my daughter's house, there's recipes in that.

Q: How does what you and your family eat differ from the food you grew up with?

Doris: My husband grew up with lamb chops and egg peas and carrots and mashed potato and chips piece of steak - the most exotic food he ever had was curried mince with rice. He gets that Wednesday nights now exactly as his mother made it. He loves it. I'm not used to cooking for two so I make enough to freeze one portion and enough for him to have on toasted sandwiches the next day. I'm a little bit different.

Q: What do you remember as a kid?

Doris: I remember sitting at the table eating my porridge at lunch time because I didn't want to at it at breakfast. And they were sitting down to stuffed chicken – this is like the dumpling mixture in the stuffed chicken and I make it exactly like that. If I ever want to do a birthday dinner for my children it's always got to be the stuffed chicken and a

potato and cucumber salad because they like it. I remember schnitzels – rouladen – I also remember goulash with spaetzle – real spaetzle – its so easy to make, its just self raising four and eggs and a bit of water and mix it up and roll it and just chop it into the boiling water. after that the secret is you've got to cook it in butter and let it get crispy – unsalted butter is OK with that, margarine even.

Q: Did your parents still cook Latvian food?

Brig: there was a whole group who came out together and they stuck together in Sydney and they had lots of dos and parties as a group – everybody bought things – salted herrings anchovies on eggs, caviar. Traditionally we ate a lot of pork at home and fish, my dad was a big fisherman, he used to catch eels and jelly them and cook them. He caught them down the George's River. I still eat eel. And trout. Lots of schnitzels. I married an Australian. He won't eel, herrings black bread, rollmops – he'll eat rye at a pinch, multigrain he loves. I still make things for myself. My son and his fiancée like traditional food. My mother changed, as she realised the foods we were eating were too heavy for the climate, she changed and she changed to salads and lighter food – we very rarely had mince – it was always chicken.

Doris: I remember having finger noodles with jam and custard as a meal or apple strudel as a meal

Brig: We had pancakes, my Dad used to make pancakes and he'd fill them with Jam and roll them – that's the one thing my mother would used mince on, fill them with mince and cabbage and roll them and fry them crisp on both sides and that was a meal. Soups weren't served as an entrée, heavy soups were a meal, dumpling soup.

Doris: Liver dumpling soup, that was beautiful

Q: Offal?

Jan: Stuffed heart. Erk. My father was English and my mother couldn't cook, so my grandmother cooked, she was from Northern NSW she came from a very basic background, the food was very plain, but a lot of offal. Brains and bacon, stuffed hearts, tripe, kidney – now I couldn't possibly eat it.

Kay: Mum would make a tripe, with white sauce and tomato and onion. But the thing I love and I haven't learnt how to cook them was Mum used to do crumbed brains

Mary: I loved crumbed brains

Kay: And I loved them. Dad's mother lived with us, she used to do them. Mum was a great sponge maker – I'd make a sponge and the kids used to say, ha! we're getting trifle for tea tonight. Failed sponge. I got a gas oven – thought it was electric – I love it now and I learnt to cook sponge and I put it on Facebook. My friend in Kyogle we stayed with and she said I'll teach you how to do a sponge, and we made four sponges and I made two and they turned put well. It's practice.

Doris: Do you use the eggs straight out of the fridge? Or at room temperature?

Kay: I take them out overnight if I know I'm going to make a sponge if you leave them in they don't rise as high.

Q: What does Mod Oz mean to you?

Doris: It means all the new Asian and Indonesian and all the new flavours and all the multicultural people have brought to Australia.

Q: How are they used?

Doris: Takeaways.

(Laughter)

Jan: Twice a week if you're a home cook person like I am you'll cook a dish from a different country.

Q: Have you all got woks?

Doris: I cook everything on the stove in a frypan with big sides - a flat bottomed wok

[Two have woks]

Jan: Just another thing to shove in the cupboard. Stir fries great, I don't have a wok

Mary: I have a wok a proper one – I cook on electric.

Brig: I've got two, one out on the BBQ with the big gas ring and I've got a gas stove too.

[They've all got barbecues]

Doris: for 2 years I cooked every meal on the BBQ. We had a sea change and I cooked scones on the BBQ, cakes on the BBQ and I cooked everything on the BBQ

Q: Those of you who grew up in Anglo-Celtic households did you have BBQs back then?

Kay: Mum and Dad had a big steel plate on a half 44 gallon drum [lots of talk and memories of the same kind of BBQ].
And you stuck it up on a couple of bricks and the grate came out of an old stove and you could take it with you if you wanted to go bush [collective responses]

Kay: The lovely hot plate out on the paddock you don't have to clean it.

Doris: If you keep your oven spotlessly clean the food doesn't taste the same – if you have the oven and you cook a roast in it the flavours in it are better.

Jan: We grew up with a fuel stove and the way Granma used to work it out she'd put a piece of brown paper in and if did certain things she knew it was OK to cook scones or if it did something else that'd be OK for the Sunday roast.

['One tested the oven by placing one's elbow inside. I remembered being taught how to judge the temperature by the colour of a piece of brown paper left on the oven shelf for two minutes. A friend said sharply, well my mother would have called that incompetence!' from "Stephanie's Australia", Stephanie Alexander]

Jan: I never figured out what the brown paper had to do with it. By the time I grew up I was using gas.

Kay: I got a big Waterford fuel stove we had when I came here. It had a thermostat

Jan: How modern! We had brown paper

Kay: and it worked – I cooked on that all the time when the thermostat broke that was it.

Jan: why didn't you ring me? I had plenty of brown paper

Brig: I think the younger generation cooks differently looks at food differently. They're really into a lot of health stuff – they have a lot of salads even in the winter time, my son and his fiancée – they're in their thirties – she's got a new baby and she's still working. She does a lot of stuff she can put in the oven – lasagne – they like stir fries, they like the different flavours and the spices and the chillis and the garlic – we were bought up with garlic

Jan: I wasn't

Brig: My husband didn't have garlic ever – but my son was bought up with spices - Keith [her husband] was a TAFE teacher he taught at night so Rob [her son] and I would have meals on our own – we had things that we liked and I'd make something else for him – the young ones think differently about food.

Kay: The eldest daughter, she works and they cook a lot of spicy foods and Thai foods and the two boys when they've been down her - 14 and 16 – they came shopping with me – pain in the neck – we had to look at everything it couldn't have this in it and it couldn't have that in it – MSG, any artificial flavours, food additives. And salads – we'd make a salad but for him (the younger boy) buy him an ice cream or a bottle of olives he'd rather eat the olives – when I made a salad he'd say Nan you've got to put some olives in it and what about getting some fetta cheese and all the different things we didn't have when we were growing up. It's change.

Doris: My husband grew up with lettuce and tomato being the entire salad. The typical Australian.

Kay: I can remember us having iceberg lettuce in a bowl on its own and Nanna used to make tomato and onion with vinegar and sugar.

Q: Salad cream?

Mayonnaise with condensed milk and mustard I love it! (they all exploded)

Kay: I can specifically taste the tomato and onion with vinegar and sugar and Nanna sometimes put twisted orange slices in it.

Jan: My grandchildren are fruit bats – they eat a lot of fruit

Doris: When we used to serve the fish in the café we would have lettuce, shredded lettuce, a piece of tomato on each end a piece of beetroot on each end and a lemon in the centre – people would be happy with that.

Brig: My son knows all the different pastas – I wouldn't know one from the other

Doris: My son makes his own. He and his wife went and did a course and they bought the pasta machine and he makes the little – ravioli – spinach and some sort of cheese I haven't actually watched.

Kay: Mum used to do the catering at the church and the salads all us kids were involved, you'd have to, potato salad and they'd serve the salad up and then they'd have the lettuce and grated carrot and orange twists. And the thing for sweet was wine trifle. We used to go up two days before we'd be up there cutting the cake up putting the

cake in the bowls and somebody put the sherry in the cake Mum never did that. She'd put the sherry in the custard and pour the custard all over the cake because there's nothing worse than getting a lump of cake with a mouthful of sherry

Jan: what's wrong with that?

Kay: Then we'd have the red and green and orange jellies with nuts in it. I make the trifles like that now.

Jan: For no religious reason none of my kids drink. We use orange juice instead of sherries. My children are 50, 49 and 48 and they don't drink. I make up for them.

Comment: Two brief comments on the discussion. Firstly, the way in which in the mixed marriages (German and Australian, Russian and Australian et cetera) each member of the family clung to their 'aliments; in the Beardsworth and Keil sense ('any basic item recognised as edible within a given nutritional culture') but negotiated within the overall structure of the weekly meals to serve each others preferences. And secondly, and once again, the tenacity with which both Anglo-Celtic and other nationalities cling to their own aliments – and at this time I include the stir fry, a staple dish and cooking method added to the Australian repertoire in the last 30 years.

Appendix 3

Departures Short Term Movements Australian Citizens (Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics)

1970: 499,298

1971: 590,795

1972: 718,149

1973: 901,087

1974: 769,650

1975: 911,815

1976: 973,799

1977: 971,253

1978: 1,062,234

1979: 1,639,463

Total: 8,063,744

Appendix 4

Interview with Pamela Clark, long time Food Director and now Editorial and Food Director, Cookbooks at *The Australian Women's Weekly* Wednesday 24th April 2013 at 54 Park Street.

PC first went to the AWW in 1969, then left in 73 and came back in 1978 – still there. When she first arrived, Ellen Sinclair "had only been here a couple of years…she was never recognized as the food director until Ita (Buttrose) arrived. Until then the kitchen had been run under a fictitious name. Leila C. Howard." I asked Clark how the AWW reflected the way we ate in Australia at that time.
"I guess we got a feel for what people were eating – we used to have a hell of a lot of contact with our readers either by mail or by telephone – we had a lot of phones and they were always ringing and people were always talking to us and telling us what they wanted – and they wanted vol au vents and comfort food. Vol au vents were pretty fancy, as were Indonesian prawn puffs and Dutch bitterballs. These sorts of things were common because the women weren't going to work and they had the time. French onion dips made using French Onion Soup powder, salad cream, fondues, mulligatawny soup, short soup, long soup – Australian adaptations of Chinese soups – and soufflés because they had the time to and because it was clever: it was showoff food. The wives were at home and the husbands would have dinner parties."

Who was the reader? "They say our reader lives at Beecroft or Ryde (or the equivalent suburbs in other cities). Our (books) don't sell as well in the eastern suburbs (of Sydney). Middle Australia is who we're aiming at, but with the books we sometimes go a bit aspirational."

In 1978 they published a Chinese book. "A home economist came and worked for Mrs. Sinclair, and she was half Chinese and had worked in

the restaurant business. She went into restaurants and watched them cook, and came back to the (AWW) kitchen with the recipes”

AWW Chinese Cooking Class Cookbook, 1978 cookery editor Ellen Sinclair
Including:
Spring rolls
Gow gees
Ham and chicken rolls
Dim sims
Long Soup
Short soup
Chicken and corn soup
Szechuan soup (no chilli!)
Prawns on toast
Crab in ginger sauce
Garlic pork rashers (2 cloves)
Sweet and sour pork (canned pineapple)
Steamed pork buns (cha siu pow)
Lemon chicken
Braised duck
Chicken chow mein
Beggar’s chicken
Billy Kee chicken (from restaurant dishes at the back including this from Four Seas, flower blossoms from the Dixon; Stuffed chicken wings from The New Dynasty Cremorne, Sizzling sreak from The Golden Lily in Malabar, honry prawns from Dragon City in city, pork cops with plum sauce from Rose Bay Chinese. Chicken hotpot from The Eastern toffee apples from the Peking Palace Cremorne
Hoi sin, black bean, tofu [called bean curd]
JN: But still no chilli

"By this time we were dictating [tastes]. The Chinese book was Mrs Sinclair's decision. She loved Chinese food. We always went to Chinese restaurants – her sister lived in Hong Kong and she went there for holidays. We were setting the [culinary] agenda because we got confident."

And they did seem to have the finger on the pulse of their readers. "The minute these (recipe) books would hit the streets they would sell out. We'd have newsagents ringing up and leading for more. The demand was incredible. We had the market to ourselves – there was only Bay Books and Margaret Fulton.

Appendix 5

Australian Contemporary Cuisine Course, 1994-1997

These were the relevant modules in the curriculum (leaving aside the technical ones like Basic Accounting Practices) of the Australian Contemporary cuisine course.. It was a one year course open to all students who have completed the Commercial Cookery Grade 3 certificate, or its equivalent:

Module	Hours
Specialty desserts	36 hours
Advanced Fish & Shellfish Skills	24 hours
Malay, Nonya & Indonesian Skills	25 hours
Japanese Skills in Australian Cookery	25 hours
Native Australian Cookery	15 hours
Indian Skills in Australian Cookery	10 hours
Guangdong Skills in Australian Cookery	25 hours
Thai Skills in Australian Cookery	25 hours
Gastronomy	35 hours
Technology in the Kitchen	25 hours
Research & Development New Recipes	40 hours
Master Chefs in the Kitchen	30 hours
Italian Skills in Australian cookery	30 hours
French Skills in Australian Cookery	30 hours
Middle Eastern Skills in Australian Cookery	15 hours
Australian Contemporary Commodities	15 hours
Wine & Wine Service	18 hours
Wine Knowledge	24 hours
Wine - Sensory Evaluation	27 hours
Wine and Food Philosophy	18 hours

Appendix 6

Modern Australian dishes from the 1980s-1990s
A selection of dishes,
Sources: The Schofield collection in the Mitchell Library (Ephemera Box 5)

And: The Newton collection 1992-1999 (Box 15)

Plus dishes from Tetsuya's, from *The Sydney Morning Herald Good Living* section, 8 August 1989, Leo Schofield's story on Sydney BYO restaurants.

<u>The 1980s</u>

Claude's in Paddington, Claude Corne 13.6.81 La Soiree de l'adieu (the last night of Claude's under Claude Corne)

Filet de Snapper Claude Corne: stuffed with lobster mousse, wrapped in a leaf of lettuce, champagne sauce and chives, fish fumet

Roast Suckling lamb (with a stuffing with truffles) champignons persilles [illegible?]

Bluewater Grill, North Bondi, Neil Perry 1986

Noodles with pesto olives and sun-dried tomatoes.

Salad of hot salami, mozzarella and Gippsland Blue.
Panfried Lamb's Brains with tomato sauce.

Prawn and vegetable tempura.
Redfish and Coconut Curry.

Char-grilled Tuna Steak with Mustard Seed.

Char-grilled kingfish with béarnaise.

Char-grilled garlic sausage with tomato relish.
(eight char-grills on menu)

The Chelsea Kings Cross, Simon Johnson, 1988

Octopus with roasted Eggplant and Onion salad

Goats Cheese Salad Sundried tomatoes with a Herb Vinaigrette

Penne with Cotechino and Snow Peas

Chargrilled Tuna with Nicoise Salad

Chargrilled Sirloin with Bernaise (sic) and Potato Cakes

Chicken Curry with Banana Chutney

Poached Pears with King Island Double Cream

Sticky Date Pudding and Caramel Sauce

Le Trianon, Kings Cross, Peter Doyle, 1988

Tartare of Ocean Trout and Tuna

Aromatic Shellfish Consomme with Prawn Ravioli

Feuillet of Veal Sweetbreads and Asparagus

Fricasee of John Dry, Prawns, Artichokes and chervil

Rack of Lamb, Boned, with Thyme Noodles, Tomato and Courgette

Noisettes of Venison, sauce Poivrade, Turnip Gratin

Pear poached in Cassis with mascarpone and sorbets

Gratin of Pink Grapefruit and orange and Grand Marnier

Pegrums, Paddington Ralph Potter, 1989/90

Pigeon breast tartlet with creamed onion, mushroom puree, and a sprinkling of Spanish sherry vinegar and virgin olive oil

Roast nuts of lamb with French shallots parsley puree and braised provincial vegetables

Roast Muscovy Duck black olive puree and tomato rouillet

Baked custard with tomatillos and a gratinated sugar crust.

Hot marmalade soufflé

Ultimo's, Ultimo Tetsuya Wakuda, (sometime between) 1983-1989

Warm salad of deboned quail and avocado in a nest of carrots with walnut oil dressing

Large triangular ravioli filled with lobster mousseline, and dressed with mushroom and shredded seaweed

Deep fried quail with gossamer thin slices of pickled ginger

Oxtail broth with cress, carrot and Japanese custard

Fillets of water buffalo on a bed of wild rice served with garlic butter, grilled tomato

Grilled breast of cornfed chicken filled with pesto sauce served with tomato coulis

Medallions of fillet of veal with port wine and tarragon sauce.

Rockpool The Rocks, Neil Perry, May 9, 1989

Golden Oscietre Caviar or Sevruga Caviar

Spicy Mussel Broth with Mussel Ravioli
Due to excessive rain Sydney rock Oysters are not in prime condition

Raw Tuna and Chinese Cabbage with Sweet Sesame Dressing

Blacklip Abalone Steak Meuniere

Sea Snails, Garlic, Fine Noodles and Pesto

Grilled Tuna Steak with Stuffed Tomato and Black olive Puree

Deep Fried Whole King George Whiting with Thai Dressing, Corn and potato Fritters

Sauteed Ray wing with roast Jerusalem Artichokes and Eschallots

Caramelised Pear and ginger Brioche with Nougat Ice Cream

Orange Mascarpone Tart

Cheese made for Rockpool by Richard Thomas of Milawa Cheese Company

The 1990s

Botanic Gardens, Restaurant Tony Bilson (1990)

Baby Beetroot and Fennel Salad with anchovy vinaigrette
Coffin Bay Scallops gratine with pernod coconut milk
Sushi

Tortellini in cream sauce
Onion and olive Tart
Sashimi
Whole Baby Snapper Ratouille
Salade Nicoise

Paragon Café, Circular Quay, Chris Manfield 1990

Garfish and coconut pancake

Scallops and chilli and cumin lentils

Eggplant goat cheese and pesto ‘sandwich’

Braised blue eye cod fillet with saffron and spiced yoghurt

Veal medallions and spice eggplant

Chargrilled pork chops and soy, sesame and ginger and steamed pork bun

Fresh lemon curd tart and cape gooseberries and candied orange

Steamed raisin and Cognac pudding and vanilla custard

Dean's Verandah, Kings Cross , (chef unrecorded) 1991

Chargrilled ocean trout with tapenade and tzatziki
Fried mussels with corn cakes and coriander

BBQ Spatchcock with Red Curry and Jasmine Rice

Chargrilled Fillet of Beef with Parmesan Spatzle

Roast Guinea Fowl with Quince and Preserved Lemon

Caramelised Banana Millefeuille with Peanut and Ginger Ice Cream

Food Of The Orange District Orange Function Centre
4 May1992, Phillip Searle (inaugural dinner)

Brook Trout with Mousseline and Milt, Fragrant and Crispy Leek

Fricassee of Wild Mushrooms (Scotch bonnet, Saffron Milk Cap and Slipper Jacks), Puff Pastry

Roast Saddle of Venison with Spiced Chestnuts

Salad of Goats Cheese, Pickled Walnuts, Landcress and Rocket Walnut Sourdough

Baked Botrytis Cream Caramelised Apple Drunken Black Muscats, Glass Biscuit

Tabac, Kings Cross, Tony Barlow, 1995

Seared Sea Scallops with Coriander Noodles Snowpeas and Mint Relish

Deep Fried prawns with Caramelised Carrots and Bok Choy

Cod Baked in a Yoghurt Sauce (Indian Style)

Goan Style Chicken with Roasted Coconut and Spicy Green Beans

Italian Ricotta Trifle with Biscotti and Plums

Peanut cookies with Orange Parfait and a Chocolate Sauce

Soleil, Sunshine Beach, Patrick Landelle,1995 (three pages of small dishes like this early tapas)

Black bean lasagne layered with Atlantic salmon fillets fondant of tomato and beurre blanc

Papadums piled with tandoori lamb drizzled in raita and chutney

Prawns wrapped in soba noodles deep fried with lemon mayonnaise

Caribbean baked spatchcock spiced with jurk and garlic

Merrony's Circular Quay, Paul Merrony 1994

Prawn Salad with Celeriac and Coriander

Zucchini Flowers filled with Pea Puree, Artichoke Hearts

John Dory with Eggplant Puree, Crushed Olives and Potato Galette

Grilled Veal Chop with Sage and Risotto Milanese

Poached Figs with Fennel Seeds and Pineapple

Crème Brulee with Mango, Almond Tuile

Forty One, Chifley Square, Dietmar Sawyere, 13.10.94

Yamba prawns in crisp potto waistcoats on a sauce of Indian spices

Tasmanian Pacific oysters on chilled soba noodles with oriental flavourings

Ragout of local fish and shellfish in a hot and sour Thai style broth

Roast fillet of beef on oriental mushrooms cepe cream sauce

Sesame dentelle of new season berries with mascarpone sorbet

Dark chocolate truffle cake with a banana and Bacardi sauce Anglaise

Nediz Tu, Adelaide, Genevieve Harris, Winter 1994

Pigeon and ox tailed ravioli with parsnip chips
Braised tripe and butter beans with polenta

Braised pig's trotter with chicken farce veal sweetbreads and smashed potato
Red duck curry with rice pilaf and spring onion fritters

Hot Christmas pudding soufflé with brandy ice cream
Passionfruit tart

Cosmos Bourke Street Darlinghurst, Peter Conistis August 1994

Moussaka of eggplant, seared sea scallops and taramosalata

Lemon marinated sardine fillets with rossiki and Kalamata olive puree

Blue cod on a salt cod cake with tahini dressing

Duck and olive pie Cephalonian style

Chocolate halva ice cream with walnut cake and candied walnuts

Cos blood orange and almond tart with blood orange in orange blossom syrup

CBD King and Castlereagh, Luke Mangan, April 1995

Jasmine tea smoked ocean trout, snow peas, zucchini, ginger and chilli vinegar

Terrine of chicken goats cheese and black olives

Lasagne of crab, eggplant, zucchini, pickled ginger and fresh tomato sauce

Breast of corn-fed chicken fennel cream snow pea leaves and pomegranate

Frozen prune and Armagnac soufflé

Water basket filled with persimmon cream and fresh persimmon slices

Rockpool The Rocks, Neil Perry, October 1996

Seared Yamba King Prawns with Gabrielle's Goat Cheese Tortellini and Burnt Butter

Crumbed Sardines with Grilled Polenta, and Tomato and Caper sauce

Red Emperor Fillet in a Pot with Coconut Milk and Garam Masala Snow peas and Semolina noodles

Tea Smoked Ocean Trout Grilled with Shiitake Mushroom Sauce

Seared duck inspired by Alain Passard

Jasmine Rice Pudding with Honey Ice Cream and Apricot Sauce

Tamarillos Poached in Red Wine Served with Orange
Rosemary Cake and Crème Fraiche Ice Cream

Date Tart

Morans Potts Point, Matthew Moran, January 1997

Game broth with quail egg and dumpling
Salt cod and shallot ravioli with burnt butter

Crisp skin sugar smoked salmon with bok choy and Asian flavours

Baby lamb cutlet crepinettes with sweet potato puree and spinach

bel mondo The Rocks, Stefano Manfredi, February 1997

Salad of hot-smoked river trout, baby beans and Milawa mustard dressing

Polenta torta with a piccata of chicken liver and onions
Warm black lip abalone shiitake and corzetti salad

Yabbie and eggplant cannelloni

Potato gnocchi with sea scallops burnt butter and sage

Pan-fried Beaumont organic pork with roasted onions, sage and peas

Roast Illabo suckling lamb with rosemary and roast potatoes

Tiramisu

Cannoli

Food Of The Orange District Dinner, Orange function Centre, Ralph Potter, 10 April 1997

Tartare of Golden Trout with Sesame Oil and Ginger on Sourdough Baguette Toast

Cured Brook Trout on Indian Spiced Rosti with Coriander and Lemon Grass Dressing

Egg noodles with Wild and Farmed Mushrooms, Truffle Oil, Roast Garlic and Parmesan

Confit of Pork hock with Star Anise, Caramelised Onions, Roast apple, red wine Reduction and Braised Red Cabbage

Goat's Cheese Crouton with Pickled Walnuts and Lemon Infused Oil

Frozen Hazelnut Praline Bombe with Meringue and Caramelised Sugar

Hugo's, Bondi Beach, Peter Evans, 1998

Homemade Tortellini Filled with roasted tomatoes, ricotta and served with a burnt butter basil sauce

Scallops wrapped in nori and fried, served with pickled ginger and soy and mirin sauce

Thai dressed ocean trout tartare with potato, yoghurt and salmon roe

Roasted duck breast on bok choy with spicy pear and honey and clove sauce

Tomato Flavoured risotto with char-grilled asparagus and swiss brown mushrooms

Pan-fried snapper fillets served on charred Pontiac potato and a Thai flavoured sauce

Mascarpone Tira Misu served with a Sambucca and espresso ice cream

Fresh summer berries layered with sale biscuits and served with a passionfruit coulis

Kables, The Regent Hotel The Rocks, Serge Dansereau,
15 September 1998, Coldstream Hills wine dinner

Variation of Coffin Bay, Hervey Bay and Victorian Scallops Ginger-Spring Onion, Soya-Shiitake, Black Olive and Tomato Dressings

Salad of Roast quail with Mache Leaves, Crisp Pancetta, Mushroom and Balsamic Dressing

Wood-Charred Federation Beef Tenderloin, Nicola Potato Confit in Duck Fat, spinach an Roast Onion

Poached Sugared Mandarin and Fromage Blanc, Sesame Biscuit, Citrus Sauce

Edna's Table, Book Launch at Star City Casino, Raymond Kersh, 1998

King Crab, Bay Prawn and Kipfler Potato salad
Warrigal and Tropical wild Lime Dressing

Medallions of Veal, Stir Fry Vegetable Stack Polenta Flavoured with Wattle Seed, Quandong Cabernet
Vinegar Jus

Illawarra Plum and Riberry Tartlet Lemon Myrtle Bavarois, Rozella Bud Coulis

Ampersand Restaurant & Bar Cockle Bay 5 November 1998 Tony Bilson

A Light Jelly of Lobster with Asparagus Cream, Salted Seaweed Crostini, Brawn of Oysters Poached in Shiraz with Fresh Horseradish Sauce

Tomatoes Braised in Pernod with Seafood

Breast of Free Range Chicken in Half Mourning

Rum Baba with a Salad of Red Fruits and Vanilla Ice Cream

Bridgewater Mill, Adelaide Hills, Le Tu Thai, 2 July 1998

Garfish and Scampi Souffle and shellfish Saffron Sauce
Fried Salt and pepper quail with Lime and Ginger Relish

Farmed White Rabbit Savoy Cabbage Chestnut Fritter and Grainy Mustard

Roasted Duck Breast and Bok choy, cumquat and Cinnamon Glaze

Beef Fillet and Ox Cheek Ravioli and Jerusalem Artichoke

Passionfruit crème caramel with tuile

Date Tart with Tarago River Cream

MG Garage, Surry Hills, Janni Ktyritsis 1999

Rockpool of Shellfish and Seaweed in a Chilled Fish Consomme

Warm Salad of Snails, Pig's Trotters, Pigs Ears, Purslane and Escarole

Pepper Crusted Mackerel Fillet with Celeriac and Smoked Mullet roe Sauce

Tripe and Pork Sausage with Mustard Apples and Caramelised Onions

Baked Veal Shanks in Parchment with Garlic, Lemon, Green olives and Skordalia

Pink Gin and Lemon Granitas with Lemon and Juniper

Berry Biscuits

Deep-fried Figs with Walnut and Pomegranate Sauce

Australian Contemporary Cuisine Dinner, Ryde Campus, (cooked by students), 18 October 1999 (cooked by students)

Gravlax of Tasmanian Salmon with Dill and Orange Confit Red Bell Pepper, Spanish Onion and Thyme Tart

Duck Consomme

Blue Swimmer Crab custard with a Warm salad of Asparagus, Fennel, and Saffron Vinaigrette

Pink Grapefruit Granite

Fillet of Grain Fed Beef with Bordelaise Sauce, Mushrooms Fricassee and Caramelised Belgium Endives

Light Chocolate Savarin with spice Mascarpone Sorbet Poached Vanilla Rhubarb, Gooseberries and Blood Orange

Galileo, Observatory Hotel, The Rocks, Haru Inukai, 30 November 1999, Cult Wines of Australia

Snow Crab Tostaditos with Lime Aioli and Avocado Pittwater Pacific Oysters with Tomato-Chilli relish

Prawn cocktail with Lemongrass Tomato Water

Red cooked Squab with Seared Queensland Scallop and Roast Onions on wilted Roundhill Farm Greens

Quail Breast with Crisp Polenta Baby Beetroot and Fig

Confit of Saskia Beer's Barossa Lamb, Root Vegetables and Cabernet Tapenade.

Achiote Smoked Kangaroo Loin, Sweet Potato Cake and Smoked Chilli Hollandaise

Pear soufflé, Pear Caramel Sauce, and a Truffle Honey Ice Cream

Salopian Inn, McLaren Vale Summer Autumn Menu 1999 (chef not recorded)

Spiced McLaren Vale Kalamata olives
Dukkah, McLaren Vale Olive Oil and Baguette

Panfried Duck Breast with Savoy Cabbage, duck Liver, Shiitake Mushrooms, Shallots, and Soy Mirin Sauce

Goat's Cheese and Walnut Pithivier with Rocket and Pickled Walnut Salad

Warm Corned Ox Tongue and Pressed Ox Tail with shallot, Tomato and Coriole Aged Sweet vinegar Dressing

Crown Roast of Rabbit with Kalamata Olives, Preserved Lemon and Almonds

Baked Tomato with Kangaroo Island Feta Cheese and Wilted Spinach and Pinenuts

Fig Tart with Blackberry Ice Cream Kangaroo Island Brie with Walnut Bread

Appendix 7

The top thirteen

My criteria for the choice of these restaurants were first,
if in Sydney Melbourne or Victoria (*Lake House* in Daylesford) they had to have scored at least two hats and preferably three in the latest (2013) edition of the *Good Food Guides*. Second, they had to have a reputation for daring innovative food. And thirdly, they had to be Australian-owned, thus disqualifying *Momofuku* in Sydney.

Also the basis for my calculations on how much these restaurants make.

Sydney

Quay

Congee of Northern Australian mud crab, fresh palm heart, egg yolk emulsion

Smoked and confit pig cheek, shiitake, shaved scallops, Jerusalem artichoke leaves, bay and juniper

Organic Korean green rice, seaweed, buckwheat, mountain spinach, sesame

Duck breast poached in fermented ume and oloroso master stock, forbidden rice, umeboshi, spring almonds

Average price: 4 Courses dinner $175
Seats: 110

Rockpool

Asparagus salad, silken tofu, kale and buttermilk dressing

Chirashi zushi of squid, prawn, bonito, tuna and kingfish

Snapper poached in coconut milk with garam masala and fine noodles

Seasonable vegetables dressed with Chinese black olive and ginger gremolata

Vacherin of pandan custard, coconut parfait, lime granite and jasmine rice ice cream

Average price: (old RP) $100.00
Seats (old RP) 140

Marque

Blue Swimmer Crab with Almond Gazpacho, Almond Jelly, Sweet Corn & Avruga

Smoked Eel with Parmesan Gnocchi & Pumpkin

Average price for food: Degustation $165
Seats: 50

The Bridge Room

Smoked Eel with Parmesan Gnocchi & Pumpkin

Sea scallops, roasted cauliflower butter, biltong cauliflower in mustard seed pickle, verbena, green apple

John Dory, cured in sake, smoked milk pudding organic white sesame oil, grilled cucumber miso, rock kelp crisp

Aerated passionfruit, roasted nougatine, passionfruit ice cream passionfruit seed powder, glass biscuit

Average price: $89.00 (E,M,D)
Seats: 66

Gastro Park

Foie gras, wild hare, beetroot, plum vinegar, red cabbage granita

Mushroom & onion macchiato, caramelized veal sweetbread

Foie gras, sangria jelly, textures of fig, pomegranate, grilled sourdough

Average price: $68
Seats: 70

Melbourne:

Attica
King George Whiting in Paperbark

Wallaby with Herbs Tended by the Hands of our Cooks

Vinegar Ice Cream

Average price: 8 course degustation $180, 5 course $130.00
Seats: 50

Jacques Reymond

Clear broth of shiitake, fragrant lemon balm, clams

Salad of Flinders Island lamb, smoked eucalyptus scallop, scampi, masterstock jelly

Camargue organic red rice, apricot and sencha sorbet, champagne

Average price: 8 courses $185
Seats: 60

Vue de Monde

Kangaroo, nettle, onion, smoked bone marrow

Flinders Island Lamb, olive, Australian anchovies, mustard

Pear, Amaro, smoked milk ice cream

Average price: 4 course degustation $150
Seats: 70

Stokehouse

Seared Hervey Bay scallops, tomato jam, sheep’s milk yoghurt, macadamia nuts,mojama 28.50

Confit Huon Ocean trout, celeriac remoulade, verjus and cucumber gazpacho, almonds, roe 45.50

Caramel ice cream pave, Valrhona chocolate mousse, caramel malt, popcorn sorbet 19.50

Average price: E,M,D $94
Seats: 140

Cutler & Co

Smoked duck breast, boudin noir, beetroot & sour cherry 26

Grilled asparagus, burrata, globe artichoke & black rice 39

Earl Grey ice cream, chocolate, Pedro Ximénez prunes & honey 19

Average price: $85
Seats: 80

Some around Australia

Esquire Brisbane

air dried beef, kim chi

murray cod, buttermilk and parsley

campari, mandarin, curds and whey

Average price: 15 course degustation $150
Seats: 90

Print Hall Dining Room Perth

Tartare of Point Samson Scampi, carrot, ginger, orange

Pan roasted gold band snapper, wood grilled mussels and squid, brandade, sofrito

Pumpkin pie, pepita sponge, maple ice cream

Average price: 3 courses $90
Seating: 150

Lake House Daylesford.

Smoked Skipton eel, pancetta, shallot confit, beetroot remoulade, mustard crème fraiche

Tart of Comté and late season pumpkin, truffle, winter vegetables, pickled walnuts, aromatic grain pilaf

'Violet Crumble' - Textures of chocolate, winter violets, honeycomb

Average price: $80
Seats: 110 (inside more out)

How much do the top restaurants take?

In an attempt to put a dollar figure on eating out at the top end in Australia, here is what I have done.

1. Selected 13 of the top Australian contemporary cuisine restaurants

2. Multiplied their average price by the number of seats by an average of 5 nights a week open (Tuesday to Saturday) by 50 weeks a year

3. Taken 60 and 50 per cent of that figure (supposing 60 and 50 per cent seat occupancy)

4. The resulting figures will give an approximate expenditure at the top end on food only (as a rule of thumb we could add an extra 30 per cent for drink) for dinner expenditure only: some are and some are not open for lunch and some (like the Print Room in Perth and The Stokehouse in Melbourne) are open 7 days for lunch and dinner

5. And of course this is only 13 of the thousands of restaurants in Australia: there are over 600 in each of the Sydney and Melbourne Good Food Guides

The figures against each restaurant assume 100 per cent occupancy:

Quay

175 x110 x 5 x 50 = 4,812,500

Rockpool

100 x 140 x 5 x 50 = 3,500,000

Marque

165 x 50 x 5 x 50 = 2,062,500

The Bridge Room

89 x 66 x 5 x 50 = 1,468,500

Gastro Park

68 x 70 x 5 x 50 = 1,190,000

Attica

130 x 50 x 5 x 50 = 1,625,000

Jacques Reymond

185 x 60 x 5 x 50 = 2,775,000

Vue de Monde

150 x 70 x 5 x 50 = 2,625,000

Stokehouse

94 x 140 x 5 x 50 = 3,290,000

Cutler & Co

85 x 80 x 5 x 50 = 1,700,000

Esquire

150 x 90 x 5 x 50 = 3,375,000

Print Hall

90 x 150 x 5 x 50 = 3,375,000

Lake House

80 x 110 x 5 x 50 = 2,220,000

Total: $29,018,000 PA

Adjusted down for estimated occupancies:

60 percent: $17,410,800 PA

40 percent: $11,607,200 PA

Number of patrons

Covers: 296,500 PA

60 percent: 177,900 PA

40 percent: 118,600 PA

Appendix 8

Pioneer chef interviews

In November of 2013, I sent the email below to pioneer Australian chefs Anne Taylor, Michael Manners, Gay Bilson, Tony Bilson and Damien Pignolet:

I am mainly occupying myself these days with a Master's by thesis at UTS. The topic is Australian food culture, that we don't have one and that in spite of this, we eat well and have some excellent chefs.

Although the thesis concerns both public and private tables, at the moment I'm examining the public tables.

And as I have said, there is no doubt that at the top end it is possible to eat very well in Australia (provided you can afford it…) And it struck me as I was outlining the chefs and the food that they serve that chef has only really been a profession – an artistic profession – in this country for thirty years.

I'm interested in finding out when the profession of chef moved from a humble trade to a desirable – even sexy – occupation in this country.

To that end, and if you're up to it, could I phone interview you on your own trajectory? If you agree, it will take no more, I would imagine, than half an hour. Or, alternately, you may prefer to write your answer to my question, which, in essence, is: In Australia when did cooking as a profession become one of the arts rather than a trade? And how did that affect your own choice of cooking as a profession

To elaborate a little: I remember when a boy who was a couple of years older than me, Michael Manners, left Cranbrook to go to hotel school in

Switzerland. Us snotty-nosed public school boys were mystified if not horrified. Hotels? Cooking? We would have added WTF? You did the law, medicine, went into your father's stockbroking business. But hotels....

But when he returned after some years with a gorgeous French wife and we spent hours queuing to get into his first restaurant, Upstairs, we got it.

I'd love to interview or read your thoughts on this.

From this, I constructed the interviews below, except for Gay Bilson. Her answer to the email was sparse, so I have supplemented it with one I found on the National Library of Australia Sound Archive, as well my own personal knowledge of her.

Michael Manners went from Cranbrook school in Sydney to hotel school in Switzerland in the 1960s and returned to open his first restaurant upstairs in East Sydney in 1970. There followed several other restaurants, from then on outside Sydney, Table Manners in Katoomba, Glenella restaurant and guest house in Blackheath and Selkirks in Orange.

Q: you went to a private school, Cranbrook, where in all probability, most of your classmates became professionals, lawyers, doctors. You chose a different path.

MM: Most of my friends didn't become lawyers – it was more film directors, artists and various other things. I'm just trying to think do I have a friend from that time who is a lawyer? [he remembers a couple]. You were encouraged to be an individual [at Cranbrook]

unlike Kings who spat them out like clones – I remember going to parties and you'd go – Kings boy, Kings boy, Shore, Scots…

Q: Why did you decide to go to hotel school?

MM: I think originally international hotels were starting up – the Hilton chain was just starting, and I thought if I get onto the bandwagon, Australia will need hotels. What did we have – the Menzies, the Australia, the Wentworth, back then there wasn't much. And without knowing it I wasn't thinking about it, although maybe I was. Australia was going to become a tourist destination, of course travel was so much longer in those days, you went by ship and it took a month. But with air travel and what it's become – basically it was about I had to have something to do and I could go to Switzerland and have somewhere to ski and all those sorts of things. Got the shock of my life when I got there and found we had to actually work – rigorous – anyway the more I saw of hotels the less I liked them. It wasn't personal enough for me, people became their room numbers not a person and it wasn't until I got to London and found the Hole in the Wall that it all changed.

I left for hotel school in '63, and went to the École Hôtelière in Lausanne.

I didn't have a father he was killed in the war, only a mother. My mother cooked reasonably well, she had *Oh For a French Wife!* - that was the cook book in those days. I remember for my 14th birthday party she did a boeuf bourguignon and it had bay leaves in and I remember one of my friends pulling the bay leaf out and saying. 'omigod what's a leaf doing in here?' That was about '58

My family was a bit toffy I suppose, my grandfather was the surgeon-general for the Australian Navy. Mum was very independent– she

worked she didn't want handouts. She worked in real estate, as Professor Rundle's PA for a while – and then she had the library in Double Bay at 21 Knox Street behind the Hungarian restaurant 21

Q: What were you being groomed for?

MM: General manager of a five star hotel. Not everyone made it. A lot of the kids there, they're parents had hotels – some very wealthy guys – there was a Portuguese guy who used to get a new Lotus Elite every year, they had a chain of hotels down the coast of Portugal, guys like that. They came from Columbia, Greece, around 30 nationalities, really interesting. One of my closest friends had come across from East Germany – they allowed a few like that in – he escaped. He was overheard [in East Germany] saying to a few mates when Dulles died what a shame, an American working for peace – he was sent down from school so he and a couple of others defected. One of them was blown up going across a minefield to get out. Last I heard he was running a hotel in Ibiza. Another great friend, his family has a hotel outside of Innsbruck. I did the three years, did graduate, got my diploma or whatever you call it

I did [want to follow through with the hotel work] at the time but you get to London and you get your first job as a night receptionist in a hotel and you go Jesus, balancing the books.

We did a year of cooking at the school and I did well at that, that probably saved my bacon actually. The rest of it wasn't spectacular – then it was another friend of mine an English guy I ran into him in London and he was working at The Wife of Bath with George [Perry-Smith owner/chef of The Hole in the Wall restaurant in Bath] and he told me what a great time he was having and I was stuck in a dead end job in London by now managing a chain of pizza restaurants spending more time in the pub next door. I saw a lot of Martin Sharp

in those days. My friend got me an interview at the Hole in the Wall in Bath and I'd never heard of it.

I don't know whether you've ever had one of those moments in life – I went for the interview and walked in and immediately the smell of good food hit my nostrils – and I thought shit – I've got to get this job. Sometimes you walk in and you have an epiphany. George was quite charismatic and different and it wasn't hotel school where everything was regimented and portioned. It was a whole different philosophy, great produce it was run with a lot of energy and a lot of fun.

George was the father of modern English cooking – the Hestons and the Gordon Ramsays wouldn't agree but he was. He based a lot on Elizabeth David's principles. He ran the restaurant quite differently – one of our biggest selling dishes was roast tarragon chickens. We'd roast these big free range birds and he'd send the whole bird out and it'd be carved at the table.

All the girls that worked there were chosen for their looks and their personality – he advertised in *The Lady*, he'd get all these home county young things who were terribly, terribly and we used to put them through their paces – if we worked in the kitchen we had to do two shifts on the floor during the week and they had to do two shifts in the kitchen. There was never a kitchen/floor demarcation which happens so often.

The hotel school was very classic – we learnt all the basics that I'll never forget. I think that's the problem now with a lot of the young chefs they go to work in the top restaurants and spend the first year of their apprenticeship putting things into plastic bags and cryovaccing them – they're not learning much butchery, not learning the other skills and the basics. It's like a good architect – you can't

really design beautiful buildings if you don't understand the fundamentals.

[the training] you keep coming back to the basic principles – when I had restaurants the moment I felt I was going off on a tangent I'd go back and read Elizabeth David and Escoffier again and get grounded or go back to books that talk about terroir and the classic dishes – everyone says they're so passé but no, they're not. Escoffier all the time, therein lie the great sauces.

[modern Australian cooking – bricolage] But that doesn't work unless you have the fundamentals. I call it dots and dashes now all the little dots around the edges of the plates.

[recently] We went to Provenance in Beechworth on the way down and it was a shame in a way – we had an eel dish – beautifully cooked but then it had all these add-ons.

Q: Do you ever think this is all my fault?

MM: It was bound to happen anyway I think.

Q: Was it?

MM: My take on it is we're both products of the same era, it was pretty bland when we were growing up and then we all travelled we went away and there's a lot of food and flavour put there. I was blown away when I worked in Cannes when I first got over to France. I worked for nine months on the beach to learn a bit of French and I'd go into the Cannes market. It was just extraordinary, the colour for a start, and the smells and we ate brilliantly on the beach. Back home it was roast and three veg. There was a bit of bad Italian creeping in.

That European influence I always wanted to bring back to Australia. We got back and opened Upstairs in 1970 – we sold up and went back to France for two years and came back and everybody was raving about Tony and Gay Bilson [Tony's Bon Goût opened in 1973]. People wanted an adventure in food. Australians were realising that food can be an adventure whereas before it was a necessity. I remember saying to someone in the early days in Glenella – he said food's becoming popular and I said they'll have a food section in Popular Mechanics soon – now, every magazine you open every television channel. And people talk about food. It's gone mad!

Q: Where do you think we are and do you think we've got something going in the higher level of cooking.

MM: I think so yeah, I really do. Gone are the days of the '70s when every year we ran back to France to be inspired to see what the standard was. Now you go to France and it's all a bit ho hum. We go to Spain and Norway or Chile. It's quite an interesting time really, it's a but like nouvelle cuisine when no one quite knew what it was.

The last time we went to France the best meal we had, taking everything into consideration, was a 13 euro lunch
in the Dordogne – we had a big pot of terrine, crusty bread cornichons, a local wine and a pork chop beautifully cooked and the hospitality – we finished the carafe of wine and another one appeared but not on the bill, they said oh you're enjoying yourselves.

Damien Pignolet was born in Melbourne, went to William Angliss College and after spending some time on graduation working as a hospital and institutional cook and running cooking school. His career as a prominent chef/ restaurateur began in Sydney, first at Pavilion on the Park in The Domain, then at Butler's, Claude's and finally the

Bistro Moncur at the Woollahra Hotel which he owned with his business partner Dr Ron White.

The first part of this interview is in reply to the email.

DP: Frankly, I consider the affair [Australia's obsession with food] totally out of control due in the main to TV promotional shows like Masterchef.

In reality I am a product of the revolution as I like to think of what happened to create 'the craft of cooking and serving food and beverages' as something higher than it had been.

I went to catering college in 1966 to start a 4 year full time course in 'hotel management and catering' as it was called. Up to that year I had cooked for school friends giving dinner parties, making cakes and enjoying my mum's delicious fare. Dinner out was in the local 'chows' (Chinese restaurant) where we had short soup, sweet and sour pork, spring rolls and fried noodles; not to be forgotten were the banana fritters!

I guess at the age of 9 I had the experience of 'The Old Vienna Inn' which I believe was in Russell Street, Melbourne. Naturally Schnitzel and fried fruit dumplings remain a memory - I cannot imagine what the occasion was since there was little money for such extravagance. However, I have never forgotten the room, a classical European restaurant with three lines of tables running the length of the room, two service corridors and in/out to the kitchen. Red flock wallpaper, banquettes, low levels of lighting - you have the picture no doubt. This together with my passion to cook is what sent me down my career path.

OK, by the early '70's Melbourne had a few elite restaurants such as Fanny's and Two Faces but all the top hotels served what we would now call International Cuisine and wait staff were generally Italian. By mid way through that decade Mietta O'Donnell and Stephanie Alexander were attacking the establishment along with Tony Bilson and handful of would-bes. But, it was the beginning of the revolution, one that would bring about the emergence of cooking as a craft, a profession, an enviable career.

The public were travelling by air which exposed them to French cuisine in particular, magazines and the journals had lifted their game beyond the cakes, slices and biscuit cooking to feature Coq au Vin, Beef Burgundy and Profiteroles au Chocolat. Cooking schools such as those of Wivine de Stoop, Beverly Sutherland-Smith, Diane Holuigue and Elise Pascoe were thriving including the one I ran called Cooking Co-Ordinates Cooking School. We published a newsletter which I researched in 6 sections offering deals in exchange for a small membership fee from 8,000 members within a year - actually a good result in those days.

Bloody fantastic. Fine dining outside of restaurants was the efforts of the Beef Steak and Burgundy Clubs and La Chaine des Rotisseurs - I started the first chapter in Melbourne with Diane Holuigue.

A primary influence were the cookery books by the great French chefs, Michel Guerard being the first with Cuisine Minceur and later Cuisine Gourmande, as well as many other greats. What is so important to note is the way we chefs devoured these tomes and put the new ideas of La Nouvelle Cuisine onto our menus. This changed the way we approached our cooking since by then I had moved to Sin City and held the role Exec Chef of Sydney's busiest restaurant, Pavilion on the Park.

We took the track of Cuisine du Marché and actually the menu changed every day based on availability. Lunch was a la carte but dinner was a real 6 course table d'hôte. We took over one million dollars annually!

Gay and Tony Bilson, Patrick Juillet, Claude Corne, Michael Manners, Dany Chouet - the names go one and we Aussies owe so much to the frisson that spurred us all on to achieve more and better what our colleagues were doing. What is so interesting is the camaraderie and sharing of knowledge that we enjoyed without jealousy or envy; we all just wanted to make a mark on this brilliant country . We had fantastic support from suppliers such as Andrew Morello of Tom and Frank’s, fruit and veg suppliers. Few had mobile phones so at 6.30am Andrew would call me with the best of the market. Within 30 minutes I had a list of a few items left from the previous day and had written both lunch and dinner menus and placed the order. By 9.15 EXQUISITE produce arrived, carefully packed and so perfect. The kitchen team was so excited and the reward was inestimable for cooks, waiters and more to the point the finished product was something to feel very proud of.

I know I am going on but this would have been shared by our colleagues in a similar manner.

So, the answer to your question is from about 1976 we became a respected 'professional' group of CRAFTSMEN and WOMEN. Now here is the really important point - who were the absolute leaders - THE WOMEN in Gay Bilson and to a greater degree or influence, Stephanie Alexander and not to be forgotten, Jenny Ferguson and a bit later and to great acclaim, Anne Taylor - bloody brilliant cook with an astonishingly natural and fine palate.

A telephone conversation. An accident in early life left Damien in a full body suit for four/five years. During that time and because of a family friend he decided he wanted to be an architect or interior designer, spent a lot of time drawing. But he also loved to cook, and as a very young child he was given a little toy truck and added a trailer which he filled up with pots and pans and went around the neighbourhood pretending to cook for people.

1966 When he left school and told his father, who was a mechanic who had worked his way up to a managerial position at GMH at Fishermen's Bend he wanted to learn to cook his father said "No son of mine's going to be a bloody chef - you're going to be a manager!"

But eventually he ended up doing the course (see above) at William Angliss which taught cooking, and running a restaurant. For his practical work, he went to a small family hotel in St Kilda where he cooked and waited.

1966, when Damien started at William Angliss was the leading edge of the wave, but it was tenacity that took him there.

DP: I decided I was beyond the Australian Women's Weekly recipes – I remember a dinner party I did when I was 14 and cooked Sauerbraten – and I went to the library and discovered Escoffier and it was the sun came down from the heavens and shone on me! The romance of it: ' take 47 eggs'. That was it!

And his secondary school classmates?

DP: I don't know, a few became solicitors…

For the remainder of these interviews, go to www.newtonwrites.com, Appendices category

Appendix 9

MLA RESEARCH

Below excerpts from two Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) research projects. MLA also kindly supplied me with the raw data for the second project, 'Last Night's Dinner'

Connected Cooking: The Changing Influences on Australian Cooking Behaviours

MLA Research project, Connected Cooking
Developed in partnership by Meat and Livestock
Australia, Ruby Cha Cha and Nourish Brands, 2011

'Australians are watching and reading more about cooking than ever before. Yet, they still have limited knowledge about how to cook a steak.

Nor do they know the difference between chuck steak or rib eye and how to cook them well. In the qualitative stage of the research we found that consumers (both young and old) were being inspired to re-create the impressive masterpieces that they had seen in challenges on shows such as Masterchef or exotic molecular cooking by Heston Blumenthal, so they could impress their friends.

But when it came to cooking good meals for themselves or their family each night, they struggled to get beyond the
basics. It proved there is a need to educate Australians on how to cook, as the desire is there driven by mainstream media but still a gap in individual ability.'

Despite being surrounded by an abundance of inspiration to cook amazing new recipes, an astounding 78%

of meals cooked by our respondents used a recipe they defined as a 'classic meal' or a 'classic with a twist'.

> the twentysomethings right now are probably one of the most educated food generations ever. And by that I mean they can talk to you about foie gras or cooking sous vide. But what they can't do is truss a chicken or cook a pot roast.
> Cheryl Brown, Editor of *Slashfood.*

61 per cent of respondents cooked the meal based on previous experience – average frequency 15 times a month

MLA Research: Last night's dinner: what Australians prepared for dinner last night.

Over one week in May 2009, The Clever Stuff research and analytics agency asked 1,421 people about the dinner meal they had last night. This sample represents 1,007 meals prepared in the home and 414 meals eaten out of the home.

The person responsible for preparing last night's dinner meal (the meal preparer) was interviewed by telephone. If they were not available, the person who answered the phone (the non-meal preparer) was interviewed about the meal they had last night.

Method: Interviews took place from Tuesday 5th to Monday 11th of May 2009. This period was chosen in an
attempt to avoid seasonal bias in food habits related to the height of summer and the depths of winter.

People aged 18-65 were interviewed and quotas were set by State (including metro, regional and rural areas), age and day of week to ensure a representative sample of Australian meal preparers**.**

Findings: Overall nearly nine out of ten dinner meals are eaten at home, with more than seven out of ten
dinner meals freshly prepared, cooked and eaten in the home. Typically, these home cooked meals are cooked from scratch with fresh ingredients. Interestingly, Australians seem to prefer familiar, traditional meals such as steak and vegetables, roast chicken and spaghetti bolognaise. Less than two out of ten meals eaten at home include pre-cooked or pre-prepared meals, frozen meals bought from a food outlet and take-way or home delivered meals.

Most Australians still preferred familiar, traditional food for dinner. Old favourites such as steak and vegetables, roast lamb or chicken, spaghetti bolognaise and lamb chops are consistently nominated as favourite dishes. Typically, these popular meals are prepared on a very regular basis, either once a week or, the very least, once a month.

The ten most popular dishes are all familiar and recognisable, all reasonably straightforward to cook
and all contain healthy ingredients. Half of the top ten popular dishes are beef or lamb dishes, four are chicken dishes and one fish meal makes the top ten.

The typical meal served and eaten on the Australian dinner table would be a red meat dish with at least three or four different varieties of fresh vegetables. Whether it is rump, porterhouse or fillet, fried, grilled or barbecued, steak and vegetables is by far our most popular dish.

On average, Australian families sit down to steak and vegetables at least once a week, most commonly pan-fried,
trimmed of its fat and served with three vegetables such as carrots, peas, pumpkin and corn, as well as potatoes.

Some random dishes from the raw data from ‘Last Night’s Dinner’

117 pages and 1007 meals recorded

Most exotic meals

Beef rogan josh

Chicken Provencale

Kangaroo casserole

Indian mutton curry

Pork vindaloo

Steak with curry pasta and veg

Osso buco

Beef Bourguignon

Moroccan stew

Chicken principessa

Cray fish mornay and cold meat

Steak Diane

Approximately 50 curries

Chicken curry, chicken, curry powder, onions, mushrooms

Approximately 35 Stir fries

Stir fry tomatoes rice and potato pizza

Steak 86

Approx 15 Mexican

Minestrone and tacos minestrone

Italian

(including pizza) 176, approximately 33 Spaghetti Bolognese

Appendix 10

TableWatch

Between September 2013 and March 2014 I conducted ten ‘phone interviews with people randomly selected from the phone book in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth. I asked them the following questions:

1. What was the last major meal you cooked? By major I mean lunch or dinner

2. Who did you cook it for?

3. Do you watch or does anyone else in your house Masterchef or My Kitchen Rules regularly? If not why not?

4. Has it changed the way you cook?

5. And finally, do you have a favourite cookbook?

This was a follow up to a similar research project I conducted in April 1998, except for the fact that then I asked only questions 1 and 2.

Although statistically a very small number of respondents a limited number of respondents – I conducted the interviews alone – the results, surprisingly, tallied with the much larger sample from research conducted by Meat & Livestock Australia (Appendix 9).

For the thesis, I will analyse and compare the results of the two surveys.

Sydney: 19th September 2013

A. Haberfield, woman, Italian background (information offered).

1. I'm the cook I cooked a chicken casserole with vegetables and potatoes

2. Just me and my husband

3. I used to watch MC but now watch the Masterclasses to pick up tips. Jamie Oliver because he's simple and straightforward which suits my Italian background. MC is a little too complex. They've taken the fun out of food it's become a competition and I'm not sure they love cooking for the sake of cooking.
4 –
5. My mother was my first teacher, I do my own research find my own recipes and cook that. But as for books, I like Jamie Oliver, Nigella Lawson, Antonio Carluccio and Gennaro Contaldo, the Two Greedy Italians.

B. Merrylands, woman

1. Dinner the night before last. A slow cooked casserole

2. Cooked for three people – husband and grown up daughter

3. I watched MKR last time – I hate cooking – it's a chore but a necessity. I'm not a competitive person but I really enjoyed the MKR show they're supportive of each other
4. –
5. I'm old enough not to need it any more – my mother's cookbook – traditional good old hearty food. Hello old friend where are you? *Good*

Housekeeping Picture Cookery from 1953, English compiled by the Good Housekeeping Institute.

C. Lilyfield, woman

1. dinner the night before. Taco shells bought in
2. To two people in the household
3. No
4. No
5. None. My husband's a bit of a good cook. I might use the internet. Husband the cook. Doesn't have a favourite book.

Kensington, woman

1. A spaghetti sauce. Last Sunday
2. My husband and myself
3. I haven't watched MC this time around but did MKR. Just because I liked the concept of the different people
4. No. It's just entertainment
5. No I do not. Recipes from my head or things I'll read in a magazine.

D. Bexley, man

1. We just had some steak and vegetables very unusual. That was last night. We cook together
2. The two of us plus our son
3. We've watched Luke Nguyen and Peter Kuruvita we mainly eat Asian or middle Eastern food.
4.We already eat that sort of stuff, we learn a little more from it – we get tempted to try.
5. I've got so many I don't know where to start – the one I pull out most is South East Asian food Rosemary Brissenden

E. Sydenham, woman

1. My daughter cooks not me. Pork, a couple of small pieces of pork and mashed potatoes. Lat night she wasn't here so I had a couple of cheesy macs
2. Just the two of us
3. We used to watch the Chef and the Cook. I don't like those other shows they're horrible.
4. No she's always liked pottering around the kitchen instead of paying rent she cooked tea every night.
5. We've got stacks of cook books she goes through them every so often but no special book. Chicken brocolli au gratin is her favourite meal

F. Smithfield, man
1. Shepherd's pie type thing. Last night
2. My daughter. Three of us ate
3. My daughter is really keen on Master Chef
4. It made her a bit more adventurous
5. My wife is the main cook in the house, she collects a lot of different recipes, a more personal book of cooking.

G. Blacktown, woman
1. Last night I had salad, Monday night curried sausages. I'm the only one in the house
2. Served to me. I cook for myself occasionally
3. I'm addicted to Master Chef, My Kitchen Rules, the Bakeoff… all I can think of at the moment.
4. It's influenced the way I would like to cook.
5. One of the old AWW ones. Can't remember….I like desserts too, I use one of the Family Circle dessert ones – here it is – Wine and Entertaining Woman's Day

H. Homebush West, young man

1. Hamburgers. Made them myself.
2. Five
3. No.
4. No.
5. We don't use one.

I. Ashfield, young woman (babysitting but Ashfield was where she lives)

1. A chicken and pumpkin risotto
2. Four
3. No
4. No
5. No. I don't have any cook books. I use the internet

J. Rose Bay, man

1. Dinner last night. I cooked, it was chicken in white wine and mustard with rice. I enjoy cooking
2. Just two of us
3. I like to watch the food shows, don't get the time to watch MC or MKR –I'm a teacher and retired I do some tutoring I'm out at that time. I like to watch a lot of the shows on Channel 2, a bit more exotic than Master Chef

4 I try to pull some hints out of whatever I watch.

5. I've got a thousand cook books. There is a rice book that I love to bits. It's called the Essential Rice Cook book

Brisbane 9th September 2013

A. North Lakes Woman (sadly forgot to use the mic button and missed a lot of what this very chatty lady said.)

1. Last night, Atlantic salmon, grilled with salad. Cook this a lot.

2. Husband and self

3. Occasionally watch Masterchef also MFK. Watch Huey

4. I get recipes from Huey and have tried them. Both my husband and I cook and have tried these recipes.

5. Women's Weekly – I get on the computer and download recipes. We have adult children with families so we no longer have dinner parties. We cook a lot on the Weber, the other night cooked a roast for the first time.

B. Gordon Park, woman

1. Spaghetti Bolognese the night before

2. The family – three

3. My husband watches various different ones. No he doesn't cook, just likes to watch the shows

4. He talks about it, asking me to do certain things and I say no that's not going to happen.

5. I've got several cookbooks with family friendly type recipes and I refer back to them – but I know what I'm doing. No favourite.

C. Fitzgibbon, woman

1. Last night, lamb chops and vegetables

2. Just myself

3. No I don’t

4 I’m not that interested in cooking

5. I don’t bake as such, I eat really basic meals. I use one occasionally to make a slice or something – just recipes I’ve dug out of magazines.

D. Man, Deception Bay

1. Bacon and eggs this morning

2. I cooked it for my wife and me.

3. We do actually. Masterchef regularly

4. My wife probably has cooked something

5. She’s got more bloody cookbooks than anybody else in Australia – don’t know if she has a favourite.

E. North Stradbroke Island, man

1. That’d be me because I live alone – beef stroganoff

2. Served it to myself

3. They piss me off – totally crap. I dunno who watches them

4 –

5. I’ve got cookbooks – I’ve been married four times I’ve accrued quite a few cookbooks.

F. Closeburn, man

1. My wife cooks. Last night we had crumbed steak with egg and tomato

2. Just the two of us

3. Not usually, occasionally

4. No it hasn't influenced the way she cooks

5. I dunno the name of it – it's got loose leaf plastic sleeves one that she's accumulated over the years one page at a time.

G. Arana Hills woman

1. A piece of beef fillet steak and vegetables

2. Just me

3. No. They're all cooking for a family.

4 –

5. No favourite. I mainly cook a grill and I buy a whole lot of frozen vegetables and put a bit of them in it's the only way I can get a variety without anything going to waste. And salad of course.

H. Eatons Hill man

1. Both of us – it depends. We cook separately. My wife cooked. Steak, rice, carrots, spinach – silver beet – we usually have three or four vegetables – tiny serves otherwise it gets too much. Then yoghurt sand brown sugar

2. The two of us

3. Occasionally. Huey on Channel 10 at 3pm

4. Very seldom

5. No. I'm on a pension and I want to do something so my wife is teaching me cooking.

I. Bald Hills woman

1. It was last night – we had chicken with pasta. I bought different coloured capsicums. Chopped up the capsicum, bit of garlic, chorizo, chopped up the chicken breast and I put that leggo tomato paste and some water and it came up as a thick gravy – I had it with gluten free pasta and my husband with normal pasta. We had ice reqam – we have dinner between 50 and 5.230 and about 7 or 8 we had a ic e cream

2. Just the two of us

3. I do. I don't watch Masterchef, I like Jamie Oliver, I like Barefoot Contessa.

4. Yes. I have cooked a Jamie Oliver recipe

5. No favourite cookbook I look through recipes. I have a file of recipes in the kitchen.

J. Woman Mount Samson

1. Dinner last night – nachos – something easy because my husband's away

2. Served four

3. Occasionally. I used to watch Masterchef but recently I haven't been. I think I'd just seen enough of it. Had my quota

4. Not really. I cook a lot at home nothing fancy, I'm a home cook – I did see some things, I just mainly watched it to see them cooking.

5. I learnt most of my cooking in home economics at school I did the Day to Day Cookery Book. I do basic cookery like bolognaise, the normal old fashioned roasts and like that and sometimes I might like to try to make them a little bit

Melbourne 14th & 15th September 2013

A. Greensboro woman

1. We've just had a weekend out. A roast lamb with vegetables

2. To family – just two

3. No. couldn't care less

4 –

5. I just use a variety of cookbooks

B. Sandringham woman

1. Dinner last night – scallops with chorizo, the children had oysters Kilpatrick and then we had Moreton Bay bugs on the barbecue

2. Husband I and the four children

3. We love Masterchef

4. No. I haven't cooked anything from the show. We record it and we sit down when the children have gone to bed and watch it. It's quite relaxing.

5. Cookery the Australian Way which was my school text book – it's got all the basics in it. I make up a lot of recipes myself. If I can't work out how to make pancake batter I'll go back to my old school book.

C. Ashdale Gardens woman (83)

1. Last night I had roast chicken mashed potato mashed pumpkin and broccoli

2. Just myself

3. My Kitchen Rules I've watched that. I'm not mad on Masterchef, to me they're rather pompous – the thing is the other one is on a channel I watch.

4. Sometimes – you can always learn things My mother was an excellent cook. I have three children they're very good cooks. And I've always cooked a lot.

5. I've got an old one of Margaret Fulton's. I do use that more often.

D. Warrandyte woman

1. Currently we're having our kitchen re-done – the last meal we cooked was toasted cheese last night cooked in a toaster oven.

2. My husband and I.

3. No. Occasionally I see them if I visit my children.

4. Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union. There was one that came out for the centenary. It has grown as our palates have and as well as basic Australian farm cooking, it has Chinese, Thai and other recipes. Everything from how to boil an egg to far more elaborate stuff. (JN: First published in 1895, 500,000 copies sold)

E. Frankston woman

1. Last night salmon – it comes in a packet and it had teriyaki sauce on it and it cooks for 20 minutes. I had vegetables with it – I did sneak a dessert I'm trying to lose weight – I buy these little tiramisu packets

2. Served to myself

3. No. I'm not a very good cook. I cook very basic – I've lived to 74 so, so far so good.

4 –

5. No favourite cookbook

F. Mt. Waverley woman

1. Last night tuna pasta

2. Myself and my husband

3. No

4 –

5. I use quite a lot. (long deliberation) Ahm, the book on Mexican cook. We cook it quite often.

G. Ringwood woman

1. Last night I had a casserole. Cooked last night

2. Served to myself

3. No I hate them

4 –

5. I have several cookbooks.

H. Reservoir woman

1. About 11.30 this morning. That was our big lunch. My sister had a turkey wing, baked potatoes, pumpkins peas and spinach and gravy and a little bit of sweet potato – me nearly all of that bar the sweet potato. I had a chump chop.

2. Me and my sister

3. My sister does we flip – we watch Masterchef but probably not every night we might watch it a few night running then miss a night but we do watch it.

4. No – I'm just a basic cook, I'm no chef – we just have ordinary meal but nothing spectacular nothing like they have on telly I mean come on, what they dish up on telly
I'd want about eight serves of that.

5. I don't use cookbooks, it's all in my head. I'm just a 78 year old lady cooking – potatoes spinach cabbage carrots, peas beans broad beans.

I. Berwick man

1. I live by myself. Banana sandwiches at lunchtime
Main meal would have been roast pork with vegetables – don't like vegetables much – potatoes and beans and pumpkin.

2. Served it myself

3. No I don't watch any of those

4 –

5. Not at the moment. When my wife died I gave them all to my daughter. I've been cooking myself but I haven't got a cookbook. Nothing fancy sausages and steak and things like that.

J. Sunbury man

1. Pasta marinara with a seafood mix – with wholegrain pasta.

2. Cooked for the six in the family

3. No

4 –

5. We use a couple of cookbooks – not actually published cookbooks – recipes handed down from family generation to generation. We're all cooks. The wife and I both cook and the kids will have a go every now and then.

Adelaide 28th October 2013

A. Aldgate Man

1. roast veggies, potato, pumpkin along with a couple of massive T bone steaks. Last night

2. Me and my daughter.

3. Wouldn't see it regularly, just occasionally… the one with the three fellows with that big tall fellow Matt.

4. Not at all. I likes what I likes

5. I've got a cupboard full of the damn things, but no - if something takes my fancy then I'll open one

B. Oaklands woman

1. Dinner last night, baked potatoes, porterhouse steak and green veggies

2. I cooked and served to my partner and my three children

3. No

4. –

5. Probably the CWA cookbook I often refer to that for different things.

C. Inglewood Man

1. Breakfast this morning. No dinner last night. Oats – porridge.

2. Only two of us here help ourselves

3. My wife might – I don’t know which one I don’t watch them

4. No

5. No.

D. Para Vista woman

1. I was cooking yesterday lunchtime – it was organic flour noodles and then it was chicken thigh bone in because the meat tastes better on the bone, made like a schnitzel but slow cooking with the lid on it then we had baby peas and fresh carrots the ones with the green leaves on the top and then I was making some ginger in it and making a nice sauce. And some mixed salad with fresh lettuce what I’m growing in the garden chives and parsley and shallots and tomatoes little radishes cucumber. When I was crumbing this chicken I was

putting garlic through a press and I was mixing it through the eggs and I was dunking it in the flour salt pepper and then the breadcrumbs. And really good virgin olive oil from the Barossa Valley. I'm between fifty and sixty kilometres away form the Barossa.
2. Me and a friend.

3. I do but not always – I'm an outside person so more in winter than now I come in when its coming dark. I switch it over with all the different people.

4. I reckon in opinion I grew up in Germany and I never save money on food and I'm very careful the way I prepare the food and I would say how they cook on the TV you could never cook in the house you would waste so much money – never in my life would I do this thing.

5. Not from Australia if I do use one it's from Germany when I was fourteen years old and it tells you how you can save money and still have good tasting food.

E. Walkley Heights woman

1. Probably roast chicken. A few days ago

2. Daughter-in-law and son

3. No

4 –

5. I've got an old Green and Gold cookery book and a church cookery book

F. Seaton woman

1. Lunchtime. Spaghetti tomato sauce and boiled potatoes. As an Italian I mainly cook Italian food

2. My husband and me

3. Yes we do every now and then - Masterchef mostly

4. It's interesting but no, it hasn't – I haven't cooked anything from the show

5. No. If I see a Women's Weekly, I liked it I'll clip it.

G. Seaton woman

1. Saturday night we had chicken satay. My husband cooked that on the barbecue. With rice.

2. That was for three of us

3. Yeah I do, but not so much Masterchef but My Kitchen Rules I watch that

4. No. Never cooked anything from the show

5. No not regularly, I've got a Women's Weekly cookbook, but not regularly.

H. Fulham Gardens woman

1. It was lunch I had soup out of a tin and some toast and a banana. And some cheese

2. Just me

3. Not every often

4. No

5. I'm fairly old and I make what I've been making for years.

I. Fulham woman

1. Last night – it was a chicken casserole – chicken and pears and carrots and zucchini and potato and a bit of rice on the side

2. My husband and myself

3. We do. Both – mostly My Kitchen Rules

4. Not really – too gourmet for us

5. Snippets of different ones – no favourite

J. Pasadena woman

1. It was a mince dish with (she seeks recipe) onions and rice and cheese a tin of corn and a tin of carrots and peas baked in the oven.

2. I served it to my dearly beloved and me.

3. No. We've had a fairly different year this year insomuch as we've both been in hospital and we're both avid readers.

4 –

5. Not really when the kids were home I used to go back to my parents' recipes they'd collected.

Perth, Monday March 24

A. Doubleview, man

1. Last night. Essentially a barbecue combination salads and cooked corn and steamed potatoes an beef and sausages.

2. Cooked by my brother-in-law and served to his partner and family and myself and my wife

3. I know my brother in law's family does and my wife has watched parts of it but I refuse to. My son's a chef , he's an award-winning chef and they spend most of their time trying to get paid. I don't mind the cooking side of it the thing that puts me off is that it's not about the cooking it's about the drama and carry-on and it's all set up. I know one of the contestants here from Perth who's now in a psychiatric ward.

4. –

5. A load of cook books but not one special one. My wife is on a special diet, and my son has his own cookbook in his head.

B. Nedlands, woman

1. Breakfast this morning. A little weird, but quesadillas with refried beans, capsicum, chicken and cheese and a glass of milk. And then any fruit that's available.

2. I cooked it for my son. My husband only eats it on the weekend.

3. No. We don't watch any of that. The chef shows on TV. We don't want much TV, if we watched TV it wouldn't be that

4 –

5. The Biggest Book of Soup and Stews, Better Homes And Gardens New Cookbook, but it's the old one. And an Indian cookbook. The Soups and Stews is my favourite.

C. Palmyra, woman

1. Last night we had an experimental meal. It was chickpeas and quinoa curry patties with salads because we had gorged ourselves stupid for mother's day.

2. I cooked it and served it to the family, two adults and two children

3. We sometimes flick it on to have a bit of a look. Bit of both really, probably more Masterchef in the past

4. In a sense that I might be more experimental if I see something that inspires me I might give it a go. I have done that, it doesn't happen all the time I still stick to my staple meals. I can recall an occasion where I said to myself that looks good I might try that.

5. I've got lots and lots. The Thermomix cookbook is the most frequently used of all my cookbooks

D. Lathlain, man

1. Last night. Chicken. A chicken pie thing.

2. Cooked by my wife. For me and her.

3. No. We never watch them.

4 -

5. Jamie Oliver, the fifteen minute one, but it takes an hour.

E. Maida Vale, woman

1. It would have been Saturday lunch, a pie, I cooked it from scratch, a beef pie.

2. Served to four

3. Not regularly, occasionally.

4. No, never tried any of the recipes.

5. I like the AWW cookbooks

F. Riverton, woman (Man answered, handed me to his wife "I've only just got back from the bush.")

1. Beef casserole.

2. Served to two

3. MKR

4. Well, maybe. I haven't cooked anything from the show this year.

5. I have a few favourites. Some of the AWW ones. The Delicious magazine and their cookbook.

G. Wilson, woman

1. Last night, my husband cooked a sweet and sour chicken. We both share the cooking. He likes hot spicy stuff stuff and I don't

2. Just me there's only the two of us.

3. No not really, you don't sort of see what they're doing it's more the personalities and everything

4 –

5. We like to go back to basics, we've got quite a few of the AWW books, but just a basic thing the CWA or the Golden Wattle – it's WA and very much like the CWA

H. Anketell, man

1. We had for Mother's Day we had filet mignon cooked sous vide by my son. My wife usually cooks.

2. Served to three

3. We don’t watch reality shows at all.

4 –

5. Mainly the old AWW cookbook and the CWA cookbook

I. Armadale, woman

1. I cooked it, noodles with cream and let it cool off and put fresh vegetables and fresh herbs in it. I grow my own herbs, basil, garlic, garlic chives, Italian parsley all in pots.

2. That was to take to a lunch that a crowd of get together and we all make a dish

3. I don’t necessarily watch Masterchef but MKR I enjoy

4. No I’ve always been a good cook.

5. Mrs Beeton and also a CWA cookbook. I don’t use them I cook from my head

J. Melville, woman

1. Tonight, I cooked it, minestrone soup.

2. Only me, I live alone

3. Normally not but I did watch MKR the last time, there was a Western Australian couple on it I didn’t like and I wanted to see them knocked off. I don’t watch Masterchef.

4. No. When you look at it, think about it. What sort of people have those sorts of meals at dinnertime? Fine if they went to work in a restaurant

5. The Golden Wattle – its been around since my Mum was a little girl. It goes back to the 1920s and it's what people could afford to cook at the time, very basic wholesome meals

Appendix 11

72 restaurant, bar and café openings between December 2012 and December 2013. Recorded in the Short Black column of *The Sydney Morning Herald*:

Guillaume
El Topo
Suzie Q
Sefa Kitchen
Cipro Pizza al Taglia
Excelsior Jones
Mr Crackles
Le Village
Mejico
Lox Stock and Barrel
Three Blue Ducks (new branch)
The Cookhouse Randwick
Pigs & Pastry
Artusi
Two Stews and a Cockatoo
Despana
Ombretta
Avalon Brasserie
Brooklyn Hide
Lord of the Fries
Pizza Mario (branch)
Tappo Osteria
Section 8
Hello Sailor
Devon
Riley Street Garage
Chow Bar
China Diner
Taronga Zoo Café
Sgt. Sam's
Bridge St. Garage
Square O1
121BC
Vincent
Neighbourhood
Ester
Chow
Bar Lou Lou
Franco Franco
Sopra (branch)
Alpha (2 restaurants)
The Hunter
3t07
Fish Face (branch)
Pelicano
Golden Age
Red Rabbit
House of Crabs
Madame Mofongo
Palm Beach Trattoria
Lucio Pizzeria
Pony (branch)
Nomad
Waitan

SoCal

Mercato e Cucina

Three Williams

Moon Park

Nine

Munich Butcher

Mach 11

Chur Burger

Parlour Burger

Goodtime Burger

Giro Osteria

Star Bar

Café del Mar

Café Boheme

Tapas Joint

Bentley (re-located)

Cucko

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