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Eating at the borders: culinary journeys

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Abstract. In this paper I examine intersections of food, identity, and place within the imagined 'regions' of everyday practices, stories, and memories. As such, I continue traditions of writing in cultural geography exemplified by David Bell and Gill Valentine's [1997 *Consuming Geographies* (Routledge, London)] focus on connecting cultures of food and place, Jon May's (1996a, "'A little taste of something more exotic'" *Geography* **81** 57 – 64; 1996b, "Globalization and the politics of place" *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series* **21** 194 – 215) nuanced explorations of 'exotic' eating in North London, and by Ian Cook, Phil Crang, and Mark Thorpe's [1999, "Eating into Britishness", in *Practising Identities* Eds S Roseneil, J Seymour (Macmillan, London) pp 223 – 248] reflections on British culinary imaginaries and their 'multicultural' inscriptions. Specifically, this paper is concerned with ways that conceptions of ethnicity delineate and divide everyday spaces: how meanings of Britishness and Australianness, based in the primacy of 'tradition', 'the West', and Anglo-Celtic belongings, permeate everyday life in London and Sydney and shape their food cultures. The paper traces moments in the culinary biographies of two women, one English and one Australian of British descent, living in London and Sydney, respectively, and close to shopping streets known for the diversity of their 'ethnic' communities. The women's narratives are instructive in their continuities, as much as in their disjunctions. The argument follows some of these, including unexpected engagements with 'Asia' and 'Europe' and 'cosmopolitan identity'. Resonances from these engagements contribute to a more complex and ambivalent sense of belonging than first supposed. This is still the region of 'mainstream', 'Anglo'-identity, yet it is one marked by constant spatial redefinition and by occasional porosity of boundary.

> "Today cosmopolitan King Street is one of Sydney's most popular shopping thoroughfares. Everything from everywhere is available here. The street is multilingual, multi-aroma, multi-takeaway, multi-most things. ... Its multitude of restaurants meet every taste from Thai to Italian, from Lebanese to Vietnamese, from Chow Mein to Coq au vin."
>
> Alan Sharpe (1999, page 62)

> "[W]hen you take a good look at a Greek grocer's in Haringey, you see cheeses like halomi, kefaloteri, feta and ricotta ... big bunches of fresh herbs ... and a cornucopia of vegetables. Alongside all the in-season English vegetables, there are ... fabulous big misshapen quinces, squashes of various strange shapes and colours ... and real Cypriot specialties like kolokassi."
>
> Dorinda Hafner (1998, pages 28 – 29)

This paper takes as its point of departure the culinary landscapes of two shopping strets—King Street in Newtown, Sydney, and Green Lanes in Haringey, London. The intention is to focus on ways that everyday practices of food shopping, cooking, and eating associated with these streets provide spaces for negotiating meanings of home, ethnicity, and belonging. These are negotiations that trace the outlines of 'mainstream', Western identity. At the same time, they are negotiations that blur 'traditional' boundaries, suggesting subtle movements between and within established identity categories (McDowell, 1999).

Certainly, the streets in question offer opportunities to cross culinary and cultural borders, as they stage their meanings of ethnicity and diversity in the celebratory discourse of food writers, tourism professionals, community historians, or local councils. For example, Newtown in the inner-west of Sydney is where, we are told, you "Eat with your feet ...[as] more than 20 ethnic cuisines can be found in 70 restaurants along ... King Street and Enmore Road" (*Newtown, Sydney* 2000), and where the "back streets [of suburbs] are occupied by libertarians, librarians and lesbians, as well as septuagenarians, Aquarians and vegetarians" (Sharpe, 1999, page 62). Meanwhile, in London's Haringey ('the opportunity borough'), *The Council's Community Plan* announces: "Nearly half of our residents come from black and ethnic-minority communities. In Haringey we embrace that diversity, and the influences that different cultures bring to its character" (Haringey Council, 1999, page 4). As testament to this embrace, Yasar Halim, a Turkish bakery and grocery on Green Lanes, was listed recently as one of London's top ten specialist food shops (Rista, 2000) (see figures 1 and 2).

Nevertheless, this paper is less about the 'public' imaginings of these streets—less about the 'symbolic economy' of cities, how a city represents, reimagines itself through the efforts of image-makers (Zukin, 1995, page 7)—and more about the ways such streets are lived in the minutiae of everyday life. Accordingly, the argument draws on fragments from the culinary biographies of two older women, one of whom is English from a working-class background, the other is a working-class Australian woman of British descent. These women now live in the side streets of Green Lanes and

Figure 1. Fruit and vegetable shop in the central section of King Street, Newtown (source: photograph by Jean Duruz, 2002).

Figure 2. Greek bakery on Green Lanes, Haringey (source: photograph by Joanne O'Brien, 2001).

King Street, respectively.[1] The intriguing question is, of course, what does living near 'cosmopolitan King Street' or among the 'different cultures' of Haringey mean for women with British-centered histories and 'mainstream' identities? I suggest that, recasting these fragments as personal mediations of public meanings, we might detect some interesting shifts in the everyday imagined geographies of 'Englishness' and 'Australianness'—mirroring the recent shifts, perhaps, detected in 'public' meanings of 'Britishness' and 'Australianness' in both Britain and Australia—(Johnson, 2002). Furthermore, in the disruptive crosscurrents of dreaming, remembering, and storytelling, the fragile hold that 'Anglo'-centered ethnicity has on its terrains and the permeability of its borders might emerge.

In some respects, the paper is not actually a meditation on particular streets as such. Both Green Lanes and King Street move beyond their built form to become places of symbolic departure and of return: landscapes of microscopic, ritual engagements to which memories of other times and places are attached; landscapes of imagined

[1] Informally structured interviews were carried out from August 2000 to May 2001 with each of a small group of residents who lived near either King Street or Green Lanes. Note that, in the interests of confidentiality, I have not used the real names in relation to interview stories discussed in this paper. The groups are diverse, with people interviewed differing from each other in any number of ways—for example, in terms of ethnicity, culinary history, class, gender, sexuality, age, marital status, number of children, participation in and nature of paid work, number of years living in Newtown or Haringey, and composition of household. To build relationships through the research process and to facilitate the comfort of interview discussion, I focused on particular streets, and approached particular people, for their connection with my own personal history or for the opportunities to extend this history. For example, Meg Banks's son and Alice Wilson's daughter are members of my friendship networks; I lived in Newtown myself during the 1960s; Meg Banks's son took me on a tour of Green Lanes, describing it as it had been in his childhood; a network of both English and Australian friends, now living near Green Lanes, organized a number of informal 'food walks' to local shops and cafés for my benefit.

possibilities, threaded through with the dense imagery of global and local media discourse. Here, Arjun Appadurai's (1996, page 48) conceptualization of ethnoscapes as mobile "landscapes for group identity" will prove useful. Concerned about the traditional focus of anthropology on a fixed, unchanging relationship between identity and place, particularly in an era so obviously shaped by the forces of globalization and transnationality, Appadurai says:

> "The task of ethnography now becomes the unraveling of a conundrum: what is the nature of locality as a lived experience in a globalized, deterritorialized world? ... [T]he beginnings of an answer to this puzzle lie in a fresh approach to the role of the imagination in social life" (page 52).

Imagination (and I would argue its flip side, memory) allows travel through time and space: to leave Green Lanes or King Street for childhoods elsewhere; to taste the 'other' as 'exotic'; to fear difference as unhomely; to confront the changing streetscape with the nostalgia of loss; to embrace it as emblematic of possibility. Nevertheless, although any number of culinary journeys is possible, their outcomes are not guaranteed. In fact, my intention is to seek out unpredictable or disruptive moments of storytelling to 'unsettle' assumptions that eating from the so-called 'mainstream' does not have its own 'ethnic' boundaries to confront.

And it is storytelling itself that provides a sense of constant jostling in memory, in imagination—a consciously shaped narrative tracing the dynamic of everyday negotiations with meanings of place and identity. Hence, this project has adopted informal interviews as its modus operandi: the opportunity, within relations of friendship (or at least acquaintance), for those present to exchange moments of remembering, reflection, and dreaming. This is an opportunity, too, in the writing that emerges from these interviews, to engage, perhaps, in 'thick storytelling' [following Clifford Geertz's 'thick description' (1973)]—storytelling that narrates the 'practice' of everyday life and its density of detail (de Certeau, 1984). To set the scene, however, for stories that King Street or Green Lanes might produce—whether stories of residents' 'lived' negotiations or accounts of a 'visiting' cultural theorist—the first of our journeys will abandon the contemporary urban fabric of inner London and Sydney for the comforting spaces of the 'rural' and the 'past'.

Recipes for a country childhood

Alice Wilson, Australian born of Anglo-Irish background, is a widow in her early seventies. She lives in a renovated Victorian cottage that is within walking distance of King Street, with its throbbing beat of main-street traffic, its bustling shops and cafés, quirky public art installations, and lively streetlife. Alice, however, spent her childhood in country towns of the northwest of the state of New South Wales, where her father ran a motor-repair business and her mother kept house. Alice's memories of an Anglo-Celtic Australian childhood in the early 1930s resonate with the pleasures and constraints of rural life. These memories include a cuisine that is unmistakably 'British' in orientation, although the need for thrift and an economy of exchange allowed a degree of 'colonial' invention:

> "I still remember her cooking there and we always had lots of lovely home-made cakes ... [and my father] would come back [from a repair job] maybe with some emu eggs and some mutton ... and Mum would corn the legs of mutton ... [and] I know that at times we ate kid ... [b]ecause food was scarce ... and money was scarce ... [a]nd we had our own goats. ... Mum would also cook rabbit ... with nice white sauce ... and onions ... [a]nd she made all her own pickles and jam" (transcript of interview, 21 August 2000, pages 37 – 42).[(2)]

[(2)] Available from Jean Duruz. All further quotes from Alice Wilson are from this interview.

Elsewhere, I have discussed the romance of country cooking, particularly from the perspective of the remembering child who receives food rather than provides, or from the perspective of a generation, now kitchenless and 'time poor' in the cities of the West, nostalgic for the mythic tastes, smells, and textures of a rural 'past' (Duruz, 2001). Here, I simply want to draw out the apocryphal threads from this remembering to produce a tale of Anglo-Celtic Australian belonging: a tale of the resourcefulness of femininity, with mutton corned out only to preserve it when refrigeration is lacking but also to tenderize older, tougher cuts of meat; a tale of household thrift, with food accepted as part of the informal economy, 'wild' ingredients incorporated in the diet, and domestic animals raised for meat; a tale of the productivity of country kitchens and the cycle of abundant seasons, with preserved fruits and vegetables on offer for leaner months, and the skills of baking perpetually on display.[3] After all, according to Santich, a focus on baking was embedded in traditions of Anglo-Australian rural cooking from the beginning:

> "It is clear from early recipe books that women's creativity went into scones and cakes and biscuits that adorned the afternoon tea, rather than the soups and stews and roasts that represented the inevitable compromise with mutton, mutton, and yet more mutton" (1996, page 109).

Santich continues by drawing attention to the British origins of many of the colonial teatime 'dainties', together with peculiarly Australian adaptations of their ingredients or of cooking techniques (pages 110 – 112).

Interestingly, in Paul Richardson's recent account of his memories of British food (after an absence of a decade, traveling through Europe), it is possible to detect traces of the culinary cultures and domestic economies on which Alice's memories draw, at least in part [see also Symons (1982) for a discussion of Britain's contribution to Australia's culinary heritage]. While Richardson (2000, page 4) deplores the "meanness, the sensual poverty of British institutional [eating]" which has now become legendary as the dark side of British 'cuisine' (see also Scruton, 2000), at the same time he applauds "the solid, savoury repertoire of English home cooking" he remembers from growing up there—a repertoire that included:

> "Joints of roast meat ... steak and kidney pudding .... Hot pot. Jugged hare. Sometimes we had pheasant, when someone ran one over in the road. Vegetables from the garden .... Gooseberry fool, fruit pies, jam tarts, and the endless parade of sweet puddings" (Richardson, 2000, page 5).

This "solid, savoury repertoire" is echoed in Meg Banks's memories of her London childhood, which occurred mostly during the 1920s. Now in her mid-eighties, Meg, the youngest of a family of thirteen children, was born in Bedfordshire where her mother ran a village pub and her father was a wheelwright. After the father's death, the family moved to London in 1917 to a small terrace house near Green Lanes—the house where Meg still lives with her husband Tommie. This is the house, in fact, where she has spent almost her entire life. In remembering her childhood, Meg recalls her mother as a "brilliant cook" who used to make "beautiful, home-made brawn ... lovely meat pies ... rabbits ... stuffed with the baked potatoes all around them ... all the jams, all the pickles, cough mixture ... [a]ll the cakes, pastries", and comments tartly, "Pity they don't do it today" (transcript of interview, 19 December 2000, pages 3 – 5).[4] At the same time, Meg is anxious to stress the costs that a necessary regime of austerity

[3] For the role of cheaper cuts of meat, especially mutton, and 'wild' foods in Australia's culinary history see Barbara Santich (1996) and Michael Symons (1982; 1993). Recipes for corned mutton are still in circulation, especially among country women—for example, see the recipe for boiled corned leg of mutton in Flo Bjelke-Petersen's *Classic Country Collection* (1996, page 38).

[4] Available from Jean Duruz. All further quotes from Meg Banks are from this interview.

imposes: "[She] never bought anything, never" (page 6); "She never stopped working" (page 5), "[T]hings were very hard. Very hard when we were kids" (transcript, page 23).

It is also interesting to note that, despite differences in Meg's and Alice's ages, family backgrounds and economic circumstances, 'ethnic' identities and geographical locations, their memories display some striking continuities. For example, brawn (a form of jellied meat that uses up leftovers or less tender parts of the animal) becomes the equivalent of mutton—cheap, nourishing, tasty, and evidence of the housewife's thrift and ingenuity. This strikes a chord in my own remembering: my mother, Australian born but with English parents, became well known among her extended family for her brawn, made from a pig's face. The figure of the good woman serving plain but sustaining British-based fare, connected to the countryside's cycles of abundance and shortage, hovers in all of these accounts.

Furthermore, both Meg and Alice declare their own connections with this tradition. Meg, for example, describes herself as an "old-fashioned [cook] like my mum", and lists pies and roasts among the dishes she most enjoys cooking (transcript, page 28; interview records).[5] She is also a keen gardener, and recalls with pleasure the two large allotments she, her husband, and brother-in-law maintained for twelve years until quite recently. These allotments—one of vegetables, one of fruit trees—required, in addition to the actual work of digging, planting, thinning, and spraying, an hour-long bus journey each way from home, three times a week. On the other hand, the allotments also provided forms of leisure—"We used to ... have our little picnics" (transcript, page 12)—sociability, and opportunities to exchange excess produce (see Bell and Valentine, 1997).

Meanwhile, Alice remembers an adolescence in the southern suburbs of Sydney, where her parents, in a symbolic connection with their previous rural life, ran a family business growing and delivering fruit and vegetables as well as selling them from a roadside stall (transcript, pages 47–48). Later, Alice, having learnt to cook from her mother and grandmothers, continued her commitment to the cooking of the previous generation in the early years of her own marriage:

> "I probably did very much the same as my mother .. it was roast meals and ... nice salads ... but my husband was reared on stew, stew and stew ... [so] we had casseroles and stews often ... because he had a liking for those" (transcript, pages 45–46).

As confirmation of her Anglo-Australian heritage, Alice declares her favorite meal to cook is still a roast dinner, and describes her cooking style as "home, country and occasional international" (see interview records)—the 'international' offering an unusual twist, and one to which we shall return at a later point.

Such memories as these hardly rewrite the maps of English and Anglo-Celtic Australian femininity. In fact, they present a solid portrait of family and community maintenance through food. This is a portrait reflecting endorsement of particular traditions of 'home' and 'country', as well as a portrait to some extent tinged with regret that these traditions are now under threat ("Pity they don't do it today"). Meg and Alice, however, are not unusual in their attachment to roast dinners and other economical but sustaining slow-cooked meals that constitute part of the heritage of British rural life. Jeremy Paxman (1999, page 258), for example, says, "Once the Industrial Revolution drew workers into towns, knowledge of country cooking died", while Symons argues that in (white) Australia the cuisine has always been an industrial one, lacking a 'traditional' basis, and has been, accordingly, impoverished by this (1993, pages xi–xiii).

[5] Interview records (including biographical details) are available from Jean Duruz.

The laments continue. Derek Cooper, a British food journalist, comments in relation to the reprinting of Dorothy Hartley's *Food in England* (first published in 1954):

> "There was a simplicity about rural life, a sense of fitness which we have lost. Leafing through this gazetteer of good things is to be reminded not only of vanished skills but the whole repertoire of the ordinary kitchen which has been displaced by the ready meals on the supermarket shelves" (2000, page 283).

Meanwhile, Roger Scruton in his elegy for 'lost' forms of English identity says that the English "have become an urban people, extolling their countryside as the symbol of what they no longer are" (2000, page 242).

So, it is possible to recast Alice's and Meg's stories as negotiations with landscapes of 'mainstream' identity, even though their surfaces seem to need a degree of shoring up. Vulnerable to changes in local and national imaginaries, these identities are textured with the loss of some of their 'traditional' certainties (Massey, 1994). However, the stories do not finish at this point. Instead of opting for an almost mythical account of the love and nurturance of the working femininity—its capacity to provide, even under conditions of hardship, and its ability to live in harmony with others and nature—I suggest we take a second look. And, here, my purpose is to seek out disruptive or simply less usual fragments in these narratives, ones that will 'trouble' (Butler, 1990) the outlines of 'mainstream' identity, rendering these more complicated and less certain than myth implies – whether this mythmaking involves celebrating 'traditional' comforts, on the one hand, or mourning their loss, on the other.

There is an additional incentive to return to Alice's and Meg's stories. This involves a closer scrutiny of the everyday, lived experience associated with 'mainstream' 'Englishness' and 'Australianness'. The need to reincorporate 'mainstream' identities and experiences into images, discourses, and meanings of ethnicity is an important political project. Too often, 'ethnic' demarcates the figure of the 'other' who is to be constrained or marginalized, while the 'mainstream' is rendered as 'self'. From this perspective, the power of the dominant group becomes naturalized, invisible, supposedly stripped of 'ethnic' (and other) interests and imperatives. Instead, I suggest, as others have done, we need to reverse this gaze, examining Anglo-Celtic Australian and 'mainstream' British identities as territories concerned for their own 'ethnic' protection. By making the borders of these territories more explicit and by testing their points of instability and fluidity, I suggest we might begin to trace territorial imperatives on cultural power and moves to strengthen its associated 'ethnic' boundaries. As well, and importantly, we might unearth some productive possibilities for border crossings (Cook et al, 1999).[6]

English shops and Spanish sherry

Green Lanes, a dense shopping street stretching from the arch of an overhead railway bridge (displaying its entry sign "Welcome to Green Lanes") near the southern end to the more conventional spaces of an English high street at the northern end is a very different foodscape from the one of Meg's earlier memories. Today, to travel north along Green Lanes, one passes Greek bakeries, Turkish-Cypriot cafes, halal butchers, English pubs, large delicatessens (such as Yasar Halim's) selling a range of 'Mediterranean' food, and small mixed businesses with dazzling displays of fresh fruit

[6] In Australia, Ghassan Hage (1998, pages 225 – 229) notes that in recent times, particularly during the rise of Hansonism (a political movement criticizing the government for 'favoring' certain 'interest groups', such as migrants and indigenous people), 'discourse of Anglo decline' and of the need to protect the 'mainstream' has shaped the national imaginary in significant ways. At the same time, Jon Stratton (2000, pages 23 – 26) argues that absorption of British, and particularly English, migrants into the Anglo-Celtic Australian "core culture" (page 24) is not itself unproblematic for such migrants, and has resulted in moves towards differentiation and self-ethnicization.

and vegetables—pomegranates, plaits of chillis, apples, and, of course, kolokassi—spilling into the street (figure 3). Most shops are open until quite late at night and the street supports a lively street culture. "It's Little Istanbul", an acquaintance remarks to me, "Very un-English. At night, no-one goes to bed".(7)

Haringey Council's claims for the diversity of the borough are not unfounded. Drawing on the 1991 Census figures, we find that the 'black and minority ethnic' category accounts for 43.2% of the residents of the borough, and includes 'black Caribbean', 'black African', Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Chinese people, as well as 'minority whites', such as those born in Turkey, or those with the household head born in Ireland or Cyprus. Even the 'other white' category of 56.8% that accounts for the rest of the residents of the borough includes, presumably, the substantial Greek population living in Haringey (though census figures do not identify 'Greek' as an ethnic group as such). Meanwhile this trend is even more pronounced for the Green Lanes Ward of the borough, with the 'black and minority ethnic' category accounting for 60.2% of residents (Haringey Council, 1994). Daniel Miller et al sum up the population profile of Haringey accordingly:

> "Haringey, an inner-city borough, has for many years been a Labour stronghold and has a significant concentration of people from ethnic minority backgrounds. ... Haringey's cultural diversity is also illustrated by the number of languages spoken in its schools. An Education Service Survey [see London Borough of Haringey, 1993] ... found that ... Turkish ... was the most widely spoken [minority] language, followed by Greek ... and Bengali" (1998, page 45).

Figure 3. Yasir Halim, nominated as one of London's best food shops in 2000, is a Turkish bakery, patisserie, grocer, and greengrocer (source: photograph by Joanne O'Brien, 2000).

(7) As well as interviews, fieldwork involved documenting the street in photographic images at different times of day, conducting a series of ethnographic observations during October 2000–January 2001, and having informal conversations with friends and acquaintances who lived near, and shopped in, Green Lanes.

In conversation with Meg about the changing character of her neighborhood, I am not surprised to find her observations tinged with a palpable sense of loss:

Meg: "[F]or all the years I've lived ... here, there's only three houses I've ever been in."

Jean: "Really! So people keep to themselves? ..."

Meg: "[Y]ou could be dead, nobody would know here. ... Of course, how many English have we got here, you see? ... They're all dead and left ... all moved, all gone, dead ..." (transcript, pages 78 – 79).

Generational nostalgia, particularly from the perspective of a long life that has seen many deaths, is not unexpected. Meg's litany of "all dead ... all gone" is easily attached to the iconic sentiments of a particular life stage, as much as to changes in the streetscapes and their cultures. Nevertheless, the losses take on a distinctly racial dimension with Meg's "how many English have we got here ...?" The question is an interesting one for a context in which English working-class propriety, centered on domestic privacy, would have restricted neighborhood visiting anyway, and one which, ironically, allows exchange of courtesies and shared moments of conviviality with current neighbors.[8] Nevertheless, despite those ritual interactions that everyday life allows—moments in which the borders of ethnicity are permeated—Meg's lament is not only for a lost generation but also for lost meanings of ethnicity. Not surprisingly, Jon May (1996b, pages 200 – 202), interviewing long-term working-class residents in Stoke Newington, North London, records the telling of similar racialized 'narratives of decline'. And hand-in-hand with the loss of 'traditional' Englishness come fears, for such communities, that something alien has taken its place.

The 'otherness' of Green Lanes is nowhere more apparent than in its food and shopping cultures. Although Dorinda Hafner, in the opening quotation of this paper, may find cause to celebrate the 'exotic' of the Cypriot vegetable kolokassi, or reviews of Yasar Halim might extol the pleasures of "*louka* (honey balls) ... black-eyed beans and colourful sweet peppers" (Rista, 2000, page 136), for Meg shopping means the security of large 'British' chains such as Safeway or Sainsbury's or the small traders in Wood Green Shopping City (figure 4, over).[9] To reach these shops, Meg must walk a considerable distance, bypassing many Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot businesses along the way. When asked why she does not tend to shop in the immediate vicinity of Green Lanes, Meg replies, "Well, there aren't any English shops ... [and] I don't know what half the stuff is" (transcript, pages 75 – 76; see also pages 71, 72 – 74).

At this point, the imperatives of ethnicity appear firmly in place, its borders warding off unfamiliar figures, their 'stuff' regarded with suspicion. This is a story, in fact, to write against the growing tide of gastronomic celebration as food writers proclaim London to be 'the world on a plate' with a cornucopia of food available for the tasting (Cook and Crang, 1996; see also Cook et al, 1999). For example,

[8] Meg looks after the house of an Indian neighbor annually, regularly chats with the Pakistani woman at the checkout of the supermarket, claims "everybody knows me if I go out", and relishes visits to the local laundromat where, with her Indian friend and other neighbors, Meg would "sit and have a talk ... [get] to know all their business ... discuss the world ..." (transcript, pages 78, 81, 82 – 84).

[9] The interesting point here is the perception of such shops as English icons, despite the ramifications of the multinational ownership and their promotion of a diverse range of 'ethnic' food, including 'traditional' English food as another form of 'ethnic' food. Recipe cards collected in Waitrose in 2000, for example, included "Chilli and Lemon Rub Steak with Couscous Tomatoes", "Stilton Tartlets with Chestnut Mushrooms", "Chicken Chorizo Rice", "Turkey and Pesto Risotto", and "Toad in the Hole with Onion and Mustard" among their offerings.

Figure 4. The 'English' end of Green Lanes (where it becomes High Road, Wood Green) includes global stores such as Marks and Spencer (source: photograph by Joanne O'Brien, 2001).

Sybil Kapoor invites readers to:

> "Hunt through this season's cookbooks and you will discover recipes crammed with exotic ingredients, from nigella seeds and blanchan to galangal and char siu sauce. But food writers don't always cross the globe for inspiration—instead they visit their local ethnic store to plunder an alien but intriguing world" (2000, page 32).

In contrast to enthusiasm for the 'culinary plunderer', Meg's discomfort with such "alien but intriguing" foodscapes offers hints of a different kind of journey: this is one in which insular and conservative forms of classed, gendered, and generational identity, bound by 'traditional' British loyalties and histories, seem out-of-step with recent forces of globalization, deterritorialization, and cosmopolitanism, described by Bell and Valentine as follows:

> [Cosmopolitanism] involves the cultivating of 'globalised cultural capital' as a form of lifestyle shopping which, crucially, involves possessing considerable knowledge about the 'exotic', 'the authentic' .... [It is] often referred to as a colonialism ... of popular culture" (1997, pages 135 – 136).

Meg's story, however, refuses to fit neatly into the above analysis, even as its 'other'. As May comments in response to arguments that assume a binary of 'bounded' versus 'progressive' place identities, "we may need to recognise the multiple place identities people now draw upon and consider more carefully the ways in which such identities are constructed" (1996b, page 210). Meg is a case in point. Hardly a member of the new cultural class prominently displaying 'distinction' as its cultural capital (May, 1996a, page 60), Meg, nevertheless, embarks on an imaginary journey that draws on memories of travel to Italy, Canada, Spain, Austria, and Australia, courtesy either of postwar package tours or visits to family members who had migrated there from Britain. In Italy in the 1950s, where she and Tommie celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary, Meg developed a love of pasta, experimenting with cooking it on her return, and in Austria she remembers having "fun with the waiter" at a ski resort as she "used to love a drink

in those days". The waiter, in his turn, remarked approvingly: "'You're not like the English with the long faces!'" (transcript, page 54, see also pages 29 – 31).

However, it was in Spain, during the course of the six visits she and Tommie made there before Meg's sister's death in 1979, that Meg confirmed her enjoyment of café society and of European-style food:

> "Well ... we used to eat out ... [My sister would] take us to real little Spanish places ... and for a pound you'd ... have a glass of wine and pork and beans and dumplings ... . Sweet for a pound! ... She knew all those little places ... the tapas ... and of course those bars where you stand in the sawdust ... and for about fourpence in ours, you'd have a glass of sherry, didn't you ...?" (transcript, pages 45 – 47).

Later Meg was to discover the joys of having sushi at outdoor cafés in Adelaide, Australia—an opportunity to "see how the world goes and what other people are having ... and trying everything ... and the carry on with the waiters. I had the time of my life!" (transcript, pages 119, 120 – 121).

It is obvious that Meg relishes the performance of cosmopolitan connoisseur in European-style café society—a performance that manages to intersect with both her class needs for economical travel and her liking of boisterous, English pub culture. The opportunity to be 'not English' as a traveler (presumably, not reserved, not 'proper') with an entrée into 'real little places' is obviously one to be seized. Here, Meg presents a slightly different figure of the British abroad to the one that, according to Karen O'Reilly, has persisted in Spain, particularly during the last decade:

> "[T]he image remains of upper-class, colonial-style, or lower-class, mass-tourist style expatriates searching for paradise, living an extended holiday in ghetto-like complexes, participating minimally in local life or culture, refusing to learn the language of their hosts, and re-creating an England in the sun" (2000, page 6).

On the other hand, we should not overestimate the degree of intercultural participation and the operations of difference implied on Meg's remembering. Whereas Meg might declare she had the "time of my life" as an engaged tourist "trying everything" in Spain or in Australia where migration has supported the establishment of British-based communities, her cosmopolitanism arising from travel and family connections is less useful to her in the spaces of 'home'. It seems that although some productive border crossings can be established—crossings that involve reworking meanings of Englishness or flirtation with 'safe' forms of difference—other identity boundaries, lacking to some extent those points of connection, become even more entrenched.

Lotus root friendships

Returning to Alice and her narratives of food and place, we remember Alice's home is in the Sydney suburb of Newtown. Once a "solidly working class" inner-city suburb with its residents "mostly of British origin", Newtown (particularly its main street, King Street) is now regarded as an urban village of ethnic diversity and culinary opportunity. From the 'migrant boom' of the 1950s, and from subsequent waves of migration and gentrification, King Street (figure 5, over) has emerged (at least in the local imaginary) as "multi-most things" (Sharpe, 1999, page 62): a site embracing differences in ethnicity, age, class, and sexuality; a built landscape of Victorian shop fronts, cottages, warehouse apartments, restaurants, clubs, and galleries; a home for 'lifestyles' embedded in social activism, in campaigns for food security, environmental protection, and indigenous rights; a meeting place for 'tribes' – ferals, greenies, gays, lesbians, "grungey university students riddled with body piercings, yuppie professional couples, black-draped goths and punks" (Reiden, 2000, page 32).

Unlike Meg with her long history of living near Green Lanes and in Haringey, Alice is a relatively recent arrival to Newtown and to the 'multi' of King Street. Alice and her

Figure 5. King Street is a relatively narrow street, often congested with traffic. Its footpaths, too, are often filled with shoppers, browsers, people 'hanging out', and people sitting at outdoor cafés (source: photograph by Jean Duruz 2002).

husband moved to Newtown approximately eight years ago, prompted by their increasing inability to maintain a three-bedroom house and garden in Sydney's southern suburbs and their desire for a smaller, more manageable home. As well, with Alice's husband Malcolm retired and in ill-health, the Wilsons wanted to access the transport, shopping, and other community services that more densely populated urban centers appeared to offer. From the time of Malcolm's death several years ago, Alice has lived alone, although she has constant contact with her two daughters and all her grandchildren (transcript, pages 1 – 2, 4 – 10, 30).

Alice's house is only a short distance from King Street, and she walks to its shops or catches buses to nearby shopping centers almost on a daily basis. As well as going to her favorite food shops ("The delicatessen is very good. They have lovely fresh cheese and nice Greek foods"), Alice will browse in book shops, travel further for "nice quality" meat, and "take a walk ... and look in the hat shop along the way" (transcript, pages 7 – 9, 12 – 13, 18, 19). Alice continues:

Alice: It's fantastic [to have a walkable neighborhood] and you feel safe. People say, 'Are you scared?' but I am not. And it is so busy here ... always busy."

Jean: "[T]here's always people to look out for you ...?"

Alice: "Yes, exactly, yes" (transcript, pages 19 – 20).

Newtown here resembles the model of the walking village provided by new urbanism, or that densely textured urban core of people, places, and interactions described in Jane Jacobs's account of the sidewalks of Greenwich Village, New York City in the 1960s. According to Jacobs, "eyes on the street" and 'busyness' operate as 'informal' ways of protecting residents, managing strangers, and offering variety in the everyday rhythms of the 'village' (1995 [1961], pages 116 – 117; see also Johnson, 1997, in relation to new urbanism in Australia).

However, King Street is not only a site of comfort and security with interesting possibilities for browsing. Alice, in fact, relishes its culinary diversity, its 'olfactory geographies' (Law, 2001, pages 273 – 274), and the opportunity to be a more adventurous cook and eater:

> **Jean:** "And so do you think your cooking has changed over the years?"
> **Alice:** Yes, it has. [Now] I'm ... trying all sorts of recipes. I love North African, Moroccan type of cooking ... and I like Indian cooking. ... And I like ... Lebanese foods ... I do tabouli and things like that ... and my [Indonesian] friend down the street has interested me in her style of cooking ... and ... [my daughters] ... introduced [me] to a lot of these things ... so if they find a nice recipe ... they'll pass it on to me and if I find one I'll pass it on to them" (transcript, pages 50 – 51, 56).

Savoring the smell of spices and bulk peanuts in a local Indian shop, the taste and textures of 'crispy and nice' Chinese vegetables which she buys from a shopping center close to Chinatown (see figure 6), Alice concludes: "I think we've diversified from English cooking a lot" (transcript, pages 62 – 63, 80 – 81). Diversifying from English cooking also incorporates movement across the borders of cuisines and culinary 'styles': at reasonably modest cafés and restaurants along King Street, Alice eats 'vegetarian', 'Italian', 'Lebanese', 'Vietnamese', especially when her family is visiting (transcript, pages 82, 84 – 85, 95 – 96).

Here King Street, in its gastronomic 'regions', appears a long way from the remembered landscapes of Alice's childhood. In grazing along the street, Alice, in imagination, travels to other places and engages in the everyday food practices of other cultures. Perhaps the smelling of spices, the buying of Chinese vegetables, and

Figure 6. The Burlington Centre, in Sydney's Chinatown, contains a large Asian supermarket, as well as noodle shops and *yum cha* (dim sum) restaurants (source: photograph by Jean Duruz, 2002).

the tasting of 'Italian', 'Lebanese', or 'Vietnamese' in favorite cafés together produce images of 'elsewhere'—those images, formed at the intersection of memory and imagination and shaped within mediations of 'global' and 'local', that Appadurai claims as the stuff of the ethnoscapes of identity? Certainly, the promotional literature, quoted at the beginning of this paper, seems written in this vein. In its celebrations of 'cosmopolitan King Street' we find a classic performance of Australian multiculturalism. This is a performance scripted with discourses of diversity and discourses of opportunities to 'eat across borders' and, by implication, a performance radiating approval for that 'diversification from the English' that Alice's own culinary history represents. At last, it seems, Australians have made their escape from those ghosts of "meanness, the sensual poverty" that English cooking supposedly represents (Richardson, 2000; see also Duruz, 1999a).

However, although King Street may offer a range of culinary 'styles'—"African, Balkan, Chinese, Creole, French, Greek, Indian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Lebanese, Malaysian, Mauritian, Mexican, Mongolian, Portuguese, Serbian, Singaporean, Sri Lankan, Thai, Turkish and Vietnamese" (*Newtown, Sydney* 2000)—recent Australian government statistics based on the ethnic indicators [language, birthplace, parents' birthplace(s)] of Newtown's current residents suggest a somewhat different story (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001, tables B05, B06, B08). For example, focusing on the data collected in regard to languages spoken at home, we find that most of Newtown's 12 000-odd residents speak only English, while, of the remainder, the more substantial groups (of 100 – 400 people) speak Mandarin, Cantonese, Greek, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Interestingly, there are no Thai residents specifically recorded for Newtown, although King Street alone has several Thai restaurants, and a Sydney food guide, specifically devoted to cataloguing the city's 'ethnic' cuisines, declares:

> "We all have our neighborhood Thai these days, to the extent that Thai food is becoming part of our culinary vocabulary. Many of us can say 'tom yum goong', 'pad thai' or 'tom ka gai' with ease and even buy instant noodles and pastes in the supermarket to create those very dishes" (O'Meara and Savill, 2002, page 442).

Is this, in fact, "a multiculturalism without migrants" (Hage, 1997, page 118)? As she explores King Street, does Alice walk in the footsteps of Hage's "classy and more often than not an 'Anglo'-cosmopolitan eating subject" (page 118), eager to satisfy that appetite for novelty, and dazzled by the commodities of the marketplace of ethnicity? Is this a landscape of 'home' where "our neighborhood Thai" becomes simply a nostalgic eating 'style'? Are specific ethnic communities appropriated for this performance of style, but in themselves forgotten and overlooked (Hage, 1997, page 118)? In other words (and continuing with Hage's arguments), we find that this is the paradox in which "cosmo-multiculturalists [cosmopolitan identities developed in isolation from migrant subjects] derive a homely feeling from 'the five Thais in our street' " but have little daily "home-making" interactions with Thai or other migrant-based communities (Hage, 1997, page 134).

If we follow the direction of this analysis, Alice is easily cast as the consuming cosmopolitan, at ease with a range of 'Australian', 'European', and 'Asian' foods and cooking 'styles'. Through the global circulation of products and performances ("the instant noodles and pastes in the supermarket", the culinary instruction of recipe books and television programs, the 'ethnic' designations of food at the nearest Hawker Centre, or the ritual pleasures of "our neighbourhood Thai"), Alice is able to acquire a certain amount of 'taste' and to conduct judicious 'raids' across the boundaries of ethnicity. While holding true to her favorite meal to cook as a 'roast', Alice has added 'international' to her repertoire. Culinarily speaking, she has become a world traveler.

However, as with Meg's memories, such an analysis might prove too neat and is certainly incomplete. Alice's narrative is not so easily attached to the shadow of Hage's cosmo-multiculturalist (and certainly not to the 'authentic' migrant home-builder, as its opposing figure). To some extent the exigencies of her class and gender positioning muddy the outlines of this opposition anyway. I have developed a gender critique of Hage's argument elsewhere (Duruz, 1999b), so here I simply want to draw on two fragments that complicate the attribution of 'cosmopolitan' to Alice's everyday practices of shopping, cooking, and eating. The first of these fragments follows. Imagine Alice standing in the Indian food shop in Newtown, inhaling its pungent aromas. She says:

> "When we lived [in the country] ... there was a shop opposite our house ... [and] they had a cellar ... underneath where they kept their bulk foods ... [and] we'd be invited to go over there [to play with their granddaughter] .... [A]nd occasionally her grandparents would say 'Go down in the cellar and bring up this or bring up that' .... [E]very time I go into the Indian shop it reminds me because of all the ... spices they have and their peanuts and ... things like that, because I can remember ... [deep breath] taking a deep breath ... when I was standing near the peanuts ... down in the cellar .... You do have memories of those things" (transcript, pages 61 – 63).

Contradictorily, I find this vignette reminiscent less of Hage's 'cosmo-multiculturalist' and more of his homesick migrant who uses the tastes, smells, and textures of food—the 'homely intimations' to be found in the smell of coffee or the taste of Lebanese cucumbers—to assist with home-building in Australia, the new home (Hage, 1997, pages 109 – 111). Alice, nevertheless, is certainly not a migrant in this sense, but neither is she clearly the 'disembodied' cosmopolitan, greedy to devour the commodified products of other people's home-building practices. The roles of memory and imagination are crucial here, with hints of some fluidity of boundaries and possibilities for passage through these. For Alice, memory (particularly memory attached to the senses) provides a richly textured, embodied past as a resource for reembodying herself in a new location. Meanwhile, imagination, used creatively, allows unusual connections. Through imagination, it is possible to link the food from one's 'traditional' childhood (the smells of bulk food for a predominantly Anglo-Celtic community) with those of a very different, yet similarly 'traditional', 'Asian' community in the 'present'. Certainly, power disbursements, in all their inequities, should not be underestimated here. Although one would not want to exaggerate the significance of such border crossings, these moments—of deep breathing, embodied remembering, and sympathetic, creative thinking—indicate that Alice's King Street is not one without migrants, nor is it one without her own 'Anglo' past. The ghosts of all these haunt the streets, and sometimes these ghosts meet.

I am wary, however, of an analysis that, primarily, seems to serve the remembering Anglo-Australian subject. This is one that threatens to enter those politically dubious waters in which multiculturalist policies and practices are endorsed as nonthreatening 'enrichment' (food, music, festivals) for dominant cultures (Hage, 1998, pages 118 – 122). So, now I want to return to Hage's conception of multiculturalism as multiculturalism *with* migrants, and to my second fragment.

Alice has been in constant contact with her Indonesian friend, Stella, ever since the two women met through the local church. As well as exchanging food, recipes, and cooking techniques ("I make her a diabetic fruit cake" and "Stella show[s] me how to ... cut a chilli ... [and] make it like a little flower"), Alice and Stella take trips to Chinatown together:

> **Alice:** "[S]he tells me what nice foods to buy and where to buy them."
>
> **Jean:** "Oh, that must be lovely."

Alice: "It's wonderful. And then we might go and have yum cha ... ."

"And outside of the Centre [the Burlington Centre, Chinatown's main shopping center] there's other places ... that she buys from and they know her and ... are good, and I bought some lotus root things and cooked those [laughter] ... but they were good in a soup ... because they're crisp ... and you get that difference of crisp and soft, you know" (transcript, pages 89, 92, see also page 70).

The critical point here is the economy of exchange (a complex one of food, ideas, experiences, knowledge, caring) that is operating between the two women. While Alice, no doubt, takes pleasure in "lotus root things" as 'exotic', she, in turn, draws on her own culinary history and expertise, making 'unfamiliar' forms of fruitcake to meet Stella's dietary needs or approving a 'different' from usual contrast between "crisp and soft". Once again (though this time forging a friendship based on shared and divergent realms of experience), Alice can summon her own childhood memories of improvisation and exchange involving food, as well as her own positioning within 'traditional' feminine networks, with recipes passed between mothers, daughters, and neighbors. At the same time, both Alice and Stella acknowledge ways of establishing 'different' relationships through food, however uneven these moments of exchange might be.

Indeed, Hage supports such practices of cultural interactivity, despite the incompleteness, unevenness, and inadequacy of the exchange. He says:

"any reality worthy of the title of multiculturalism in Australia has to involve a certain degree of homely forms of intercultural interaction in which both eater and feeder experience themselves as subjects. [This is a] ... multiculturalism that provides this homely space for the migrant by interpellating him or her as a subject: a dominated subject sometimes, but a subject nevertheless" (1997, page 146).

While the search for spaces for Hage's 'intercultural interaction' might seem like a utopian project, I suggest that Alice's story does provide some glimpses of possibility in those 'lived' moments of everyday life. Also, her story indicates that 'lotus root friendships', based on women's responsibility for feeding others and on their own pleasure in food shopping, cooking, and eating (however problematic this balance of responsibility and pleasure) have the capacity for confronting not only the boundaries of ethnicity but the ghosts of 'mainstream' identity as well. And to return to our analysis of King Street, we need to problematize the spaces of the urban as simply sites of 'our neighborhood Thai', and instead constitute these as ethnoscapes of remembering and dreaming, with the potential to foster different forms of intercultural interaction and different kinds of Anglo-cosmopolitans as well.

'Unsettling' journeys and eating 'between' meals

Reflecting on the usefulness of the concept of hybridity for an intellectual project that supports undoing 'traditional' boundaries and challenging cultural imaginaries as fortresses of ethnic exclusivity, Ien Ang states:

"by recognizing the inescapable impurity of all cultures and the porousness of all cultural boundaries in an irrevocably globalized, interconnected and interdependent world, we may be able to conceive of our living together in terms of complicated entanglement, not in terms of the apartheid of insurmountable differences. If I were to apply this notion of complicated entanglement to my own personal situation, I would describe myself as suspended in-between: neither truly Western nor authentically Asian; embedded in the West yet always partially disengaged from it; disembedded from Asia yet somehow enduringly attached to it emotionally and historically. I wish to hold onto this hybrid in-betweenness not because it is a

comfortable position to be in, but because its very ambivalence is a source of cultural permeability and vulnerability which, in my view, is a necessary condition for living together-in-difference" (2001, page 194).

While recognizing the particular inflections of Ang's speaking position—she describes herself as "an ethnic Chinese, Indonesian-born, European-educated, who now lives and works in Australia" (2001, page 3)—I want to underline her argument that all cultural groups are 'impure' and all cultural boundaries are potentially 'porous'. [And, in a similar fashion, we could argue that all cuisines are 'hybrid' and involved in 'messy boundary crossing' rather than being 'fixed' or unproblematically 'authentic' (Cook et al, 2002, page 113; see also Cook et al, 1999)]. In other words, it is significant that Ang does not present the 'in-between' of identity solely as that uncomfortable state of not-quite-belonging that is usually attributed to migrant and diasporic communities—see also Dean Chan (2000, page 150) for the "hierarchy of ... belonging ... between ... 'old' and 'new' migrants". Likewise, in this paper, I have deliberately set out to expand my own meanings of 'in-between', to address the 'in-between' as a reading between the lines of women's stories, and as a position from which to acknowledge the tensions and ambivalences contained *within* taken-for-granted identities. All in all, the journey has been a mildly disruptive one, its purpose to 'unsettle' those seemingly uncomplicated outlines of 'mainstream' Britishness and Anglo-Celtic Australianness, constituted through histories of imperial and colonial meanings of belonging, and to 'unsettle' unthinking acceptance of their mythic comforts and their positions of privilege.

In terms of disruption, however, these stories from King Street and Green Lanes are hardly that, with their nostalgia for 'traditional' country cooking and the 'past', and their catalogues of the effort these women make towards maintaining their culinary heritage. However, the disruptive turn in both narratives appears not only in the ghostly presence of a cosmopolitan imaginary but also in the differing conceptions of cosmopolitanism embedded in, or written against, the streetscapes of 'home'. For Meg, both her own travel and her history of family migration have enabled her to cross borders literally, and to embrace Europe, although a very particular 'Europe' at that. While Meg's cosmopolitanism certainly draws on some typical destinations of English travelers and migrants, at the same time her cultural boundaries are less permeable around those unfamiliar and more ambiguous parts of 'Europe' and places that are 'not-Europe' which, contradictorily, occupy her own 'home' territories.[10] In other words, through migration, diaspora, and settlement, place meanings such as 'Turkey', 'Greece', and 'Kosovo' intervene in Meg's understanding of 'home'. In the process, 'home' threatens to become 'not-English', disrupting, for Meg, the very basis of homely attachment.

For Alice, on the other hand, travel has involved the move from the country to the suburbs to the cosmopolitan spaces of the inner city. Here, in King Street, as a knowing citizen of Western consumer capitalism, Alice savors the 'taste' of both 'Europe' and 'Asia'. However, it is in the everyday of Alice's 'lived' experience—in the nuances of memory, imagination, social interaction, and practices of "doing-cooking") (Giard, 1998, page 153)—that borders are occasionally crossed and understandings (and recipes) exchanged. Again, as with Meg, one needs a safety zone for encounters with the 'other'. In Alice's case, the local church and neighborhood provide meeting points to develop intercultural understandings, while the ritual tasks and networks of femininity provide contexts for their performance. Curiously, although church, 'community', and femininity itself may be regarded as conservative institutions, they also provide border

[10] Haringey Council's website (http://www.haringey.gov.uk/about_haringey/fact_file.htm) emphasises that Greek and Turkish Cypriots are core "ethnic minority groups" in Haringey, but also points out that, recently, numbers of Kurdish, Somali, and Kosovan nationals have settled in Haringey.

crossings to 'other' ethnicities—moments of 'unbounding' of 'tradition'—while reaffirming other 'traditions', such as the gender of cooking and care.

From these brief instances of 'unsettled' culinary journeys, I feel there is a need to acknowledge that sense of 'in-between'—spaces of complicated allegiances, edgy tensions, creative connections—for all cultural groups, including the 'mainstream', and to acknowledge, too, the significance of ethnoscapes as spaces of everyday remembering, dreaming, imagining, and exchange. These are cultural landscapes on which to chart subtle moments of arrival at, passage through, containment by culinary and cultural borders – moments mediated by a myriad of microencounters within the built environment, as well as by discourses and images of 'elsewhere'. With an eye to intriguing and unexpected detail, we also need to develop more complicated narratives for challenging the figuring of the consuming 'Anglo-self' and his or her 'migrant other', while unraveling other dimensions of difference, such as class, gender, and generation. To use Ang's phraseology, a focus on such 'entanglements' should be instructive for imagining how to eat into the borders of ethnicity and for questioning the limits of eating contained by these.

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