

Donna Lee Brien

Writing about Food: Significance, opportunities and professional identities

Abstract:

Food writing, including for cookbooks and in travel and food memoirs, makes up a significant, and increasing, proportion of the books written, published, sold and read each year in Australia and other parts of the English-speaking world. Food writing also comprises a similarly significant, and growing, proportion of the magazine, newspaper and journal articles, Internet weblogs and other non-fiction texts written, published, sold and read in English. Furthermore, food writers currently are producing much of the concept design, content and spin-off product that is driving the expansion of the already popular and profitable food-related television programming sector.

Despite this high visibility in the marketplace, and while food and other culinary-related scholarship are growing in reputation and respectability in the academy, this considerable part of the contemporary writing and publishing industry has, to date, attracted little serious study. Moreover, internationally, the emergent subject area of food writing is more often located either in Food History and Gastronomy programs or as a component of practical culinary skills courses than in Writing or Publishing programs. This paper will, therefore, investigate the potential of food writing as a viable component of Writing courses. This will include a preliminary investigation of the field and current trends in food writing and publishing, as well as the various academic, vocational and professional opportunities and pathways such study opens up for both the students and teachers of such courses.

Keywords:

Food Writing – Professional Food Writers – Creative and Professional Writing Courses – Teaching Creative and Professional Writing

Biographical note

Associate Professor Donna Lee Brien is Head of the School of Arts and Creative Enterprise at Central Queensland University, and President of the AAWP. Her biography, *John Power 1881-1943*, is the standard work on this expatriate artist and benefactor, and she is co-author (with Tess Brady) of the popular self-help books *Girl's Guide to Real Estate: How to Enjoy Investing in Property* and *Girl's Guide to Work and Life: How to Create the Life you Want*. One of the Chief Investigators on a Carrick Institute funded project to create an online support network for postgraduate writing students and supervisors, Donna was, in 2006, awarded a Carrick Institute Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning.

... *penetrating the familiar is by no means a given. On the contrary it is hard, hard work.* (Gornick 2001: 9)

In his introduction to a recent anthology of international food writing, *Choice Cuts*, Mark Kurlansky writes that the genre is important because: ‘Food is about agriculture, about ecology, about man’s relationship with nature, about the climate, about nation-building, cultural struggles, friends and enemies, alliances, wars, religion. It is about memory and tradition and, at times, even about sex’ (2003). Others are less complimentary about food writing’s producers and consumers:

Our media heralds every aspect of food. The programs, advertisers, researchers and advocates have made an industry out of informing and scaring and enticing us ... Lavishly endowed foodies ... devour cultural output. They gorge on images and words, rapturous words, stern words, clever words, words in the mouths of stars, experts, chefs and doctors, words off the fingertips of those like me, who obsess about food, unleash our imaginations on food, craving and coveting it, loving it and fondling it, very much fearing it, and essentially having it replace sex in our middle age. (Hertneky 2006)

However it is viewed, food writing – fiction and nonfiction – makes up a significant, and increasing, proportion of the books written, published, sold and read each year in Australia and other parts of the English speaking world. Food writing also comprises a similarly significant, and growing, proportion of the magazine, newspaper and journal articles, Internet weblogs and other non-fiction texts written, published, sold and read in English. Food writers not only write and produce significant amounts of the concept design, content and spin-off product that is driving the expansion of the already popular and profitable food-related television (network and cable) programming sector, they are also finding their way onto the big screen as writers and consultants for cuisine-related fiction and non-fiction films.

Works that can be classified as ‘food writing’ therefore include food journalism, history and anthropology; creative nonfiction such as food memoir, autobiography, biography and personal essays; restaurant criticism; travel writing; recipe and cookbook writing; writing on nutrition, science, health and environmental issues; fictional forms in literary and popular novels, short story, poetry and theatre, film and television scripts; ghost food writing; and online and interactive food writing, as in food and ‘foodie’ blogs, wikis, websites and portal sites. Many of the above can also be found in various amalgamated and blended forms, for example, cookbooks that are collections of recipes and poems or recipes and local history, or novels, histories, memoirs or blogs that include recipes. The permutations create interesting dilemmas for bookshop staff who tend to shelve such books in multiple places – I have found Lizzie Collingham’s *Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors* (2006), for instance, in the cookbook, food essays and criticism, history, travel, biography, and home and gardening sections of a single major bookshop chain store.

Perhaps understandably, the readership for food writing has dramatically increased¹

during a period in which consumers' relationship with food has become increasingly complex. Food has (at least for many in the West) moved largely from being a source of nourishment ('eat to live') to occupy a series of seemingly polarised positions. On one hand, the food industry intersects with that of the giant leisure entertainment industry (to entice consumers with a 'live to eat' attitude), on the other, food figures in serious discussions around such issues as identity, health, politics, science and local/national/international development. While food can form the locus of personal, physical and emotional matters including concerns about health, wellbeing and self-esteem (see, for instance, Griffiths & Wallace 1998), it also grounds global discussions about the sustainability and, even, the viability of life on earth.

Yet, despite this high visibility in the marketplace of goods, services and ideas, and while food and other culinary-related scholarship are simultaneously growing in reputation and respectability in the academy – although this is also contested territory (see, for instance Ruark 1999) – this considerable part of the contemporary writing and publishing industry has, to date, attracted only localised and fragmented study in Australia. Internationally, while the field of food writing is becoming more established as an emergent subject area at tertiary level, this study is more often located in Literature, Food History, Anthropology and/or Gastronomy programs² or as a component of practical culinary skills courses than in Writing or Publishing programs, with MIT an exception to this.³ Moreover, there is, to date, only one Australian university program in food writing – the Graduate Certificate in Food Writing at the University of Adelaide in South Australia. There is no evidence of any other units of study named 'food writing' in Australian Writing programs, although there may be instances of food writing studies that are either not named as such or that exist as modules within other more generally named courses of study such as non-fiction writing or journalism.⁴

As part of a continuing project to bring neglected and/or potentially viable areas of writing to the notice of interested parties, this paper will, therefore, investigate food writing's potential as a component of Writing programs. This will include a preliminary investigation of the field and current trends as well as the various academic, vocational and professional pathways opened up for both the students and teachers of such programs.

Recent trends in food writing

In 2004, the *American Journalism Review* noted the rapid growth of what it called 'food journalism' and that newspapers and magazines were dedicating their leading writers and reporters to 'the food beat' (Brown 2004).⁵ Even the most cursory survey of a range of 'quality' serials such as *The Australian* and *The Financial Review* in Australia, *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker* and *The Atlantic* in the USA and *The Times* and *London Review of Books* in the UK, reveals that their food (and food writing) sections are expanding and produced by respected, high profile writers. Examples of this are Julian Barnes' 'The Pedant in the Kitchen' column in *The Guardian* (2003)⁶ and *The Nation's* (USA) series of political and environmental writers in its 'Food Issue' (11 September 2006). The number of general news stories

about food and culinary matters are similarly increasing in number, length, seriousness and relative importance in such publications.

As food writing, thus, relocates from the woman-as-housewife/homemaker pages of newspapers and women's magazines to a broad spectrum of publications (in the process moving from a focus on cooking to a broad range of 'extra-recipe' material), more writers are establishing and sustaining careers in this genre. At the apex of this field are figures such as Ruth Reichl, one-time cook and restaurant owner (1974-1977), restaurant critic for *New West* and *California* magazines, *The Los Angeles Times* (1984-1993) and *The New York Times* (1993-1999), where she was also named food editor and, since April 1999, editor-in-chief of *Gourmet* magazine. Reichl kick-started this writing career with a cookbook, *Mmmmmmm: A Feastyary* (1972). Currently also editor of the food series for the Modern Library, which aims to publish series of long-neglected and disregarded 'classics' in a number of genres – including war, movies, gardening and science – (MLS 2007), Reichl says of the food books:

You can certainly cook from these books, but you can also read through the recipes to the lives behind them. These are books for cooks and armchair cooks, for historians, for people who believe that what people eat, and why, is important. (2003)

Australian Margaret Fulton has had a similarly sustained career in food writing. Alongside her positions as cookery writer and editor with a series of the most popular Australian women's magazines: *Woman* (1954-1955), *Woman's Day* (1960-1979) and *New Idea* (1979-c.2000), more than three million copies of her some twenty cookbooks have sold nationally and internationally (Fulton 2004), and many have remained in print for decades. Her signature works, *The Margaret Fulton Cookbook* (1968, 2004) and *Margaret Fulton's Encyclopedia of Food and Cookery: The Complete Kitchen Companion from A to Z* (1983, 2005) have recently been released in new and revised editions and continue to attract both repeat purchasers wishing to update their Fulton collections and a new generation of readers.⁷ Currently, aged in her eighties and retired from magazine work, Fulton remains an in-demand speaker at writer's festivals and literary and other events.⁸

Fulton was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1983. In 1997, she was inducted into the World Food Media Awards Hall of Fame and named as one of the National Trust's original 100 Living Australian National Treasures. Other food writers are winning not only such general recognition, but also prestigious writing awards. Australia recognises food writing in the Food Media Club of Australia's annual food media awards, New Zealand's Guild of Food Writers hosts the Culinary Quills Awards and the USA has such specialist prizes as the James Beard Foundation Awards (for 'culinary professionals including cookbook authors, chefs, restaurateurs, winemakers, journalists, broadcasters, and restaurant and graphic designers' (JBF 2007) and the International Association of Culinary Professionals food journalism prizes. American food writers such as Reichl, Jeffrey Steingarten and Jonathan Gold are, however, also regularly shortlisted for the coveted National Magazine Awards alongside acclaimed war correspondents and political and economic writers.

A high level of reader interest in these writers as individuals, as well as in their work, is revealed by the sales success of what could be seen as a new offshoot of what is already a sub-genre of publishing, the 'food memoir' (or 'foodie memoir') – the food

writers' memoir.⁹ Reichl has authored three memoirs musing on her career, *Tender at the Bone: Growing Up at the Table* (1998), *Comfort Me With Apples: More Adventures at the Table* (2001) and *Garlic and Sapphires: The Secret Life of a Critic in Disguise* (2005), all of which have had lengthy periods on the *New York Times* best selling nonfiction lists. In 1999, at the height of the interest in the celebrity memoir, Fulton published her revealing *I Sang for My Supper: Memories of a Food Writer* to positive public and critical response. Gael Greene's *Insatiable: Tales from a Life of Delicious Excess* (2006), her memoir of more than thirty years as the *New York Magazine's* 'Insatiable Critic' has given a career boost to this 'retired' critic and author of non-fiction books: *Bite: A New York Restaurant Strategy for Hedonists, Masochists, Selective Penny Pinchers and the Upwardly Mobile* (1971) and *Delicious Sex: A Gourmet Guide for Women and the Men Who Want to Love Them Better* (1986) and two *New York Times's* best selling novels, *Blue skies, No Candy* (1976) and *Doctor Love* (1982). In late 2007, Mathew Evans, chef, freelance food writer and decade-long restaurant critic for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, published both a memoir and a cookery book (Evans 2007a, Evans 2007b). Another recent trend intersects with this: the growth in the popularity of collections of restaurant reviews by particular (and increasingly, celebrity) reviewers. These collections are obviously published, and purchased, for the reader's enjoyment of the writing in these reviews, as the content of any individual review is largely irrelevant as information almost as soon as it is published. Interestingly, many such high-profile food writers are what could be called 'text-based' celebrities, in that their fame and popularity has been largely gained without the help of a profile on television.¹⁰

In tandem with these developments, the print food media, one of the main venues for publishing such writing, is also increasing in both popularity and credibility among readers and writers. *Saveur Magazine* (USA), for instance, launched in 1994 (with some 104 issues to September 2007), focuses on in-depth, crossover writing (in that it publishes scholarly research-informed writing for a specialist but not particularly academic audience). This is specifically in the area that it classifies as 'authentic cuisine': that is, analyses of food traditions and contemporary practice in an anthropological, historical, local, social and/or cultural context. As an example, the August/September 2007 issue featured detailed social/cultural gastronomic histories of root beer (Zajac 2007: 38-42) and avocados (Nguyen 2007: 76-87), informative articles on classic and speciality foods sourced from Colorado (Bone 2007: 44), Sicily (Jenkins 2007: 46-47) and Vladivostok (Hudgins 2007: 64-73), as well as survey articles on the recipe booklets produced by the (USA) National Livestock and Meat Board from 1930s to the 1960s (Lukas 2007: 25-26) and international food museums (Brooks & Bowen 2007: 34). *Saveur* has won three National Magazine Awards including, in 2000, the coveted USA National Magazine Award for 'General Excellence', and has recently won its seventh such consecutive nomination, tying with *Vanity Fair* for the longest current persistence in this prestigious category (ASME 2007). *Gastronomica* is another contemporary, cutting edge, crossover publication. A large format glossy magazine/journal published by the University of California, *Gastronomica* features interdisciplinary scholarly research on the relationship between food and culture, as well as articles, features and creative works (including fictional pieces and images) by a wide range of scholars, historians, culinary professionals,

poets and other ‘literary’ authors, architects, photographers, photographers, illustrators and artists. Edited by academic, Darra Goldstein, who is a Professor of Russian and food cultural historian as well as a cookbook author, *Gastronomica* prides itself on providing both art and scholarship in a readily consumable (that is, readable) form. In terms of impact, even the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (USA) has discussed *Gastronomica*, finding it ‘a feast for the eyes ... renew[ing the] connection between sensual and intellectual nourishment’ (CHE 2001: B6).

In Australia, such periodicals as *Vogue Entertaining + Travel* and *Australian Gourmet Traveller* – which publish as much social, cultural and historical information as detailed recipe instructions – have a similarly excellent (but widely unrecognised) reputation in terms of content and writers. This is a unexplored part of local media production, with the work of key figures such as Sue Fairlie-Cuninghame (editor, stylist and publisher), Julie Gibbs (publishing director) and Geoff Lung (photographer) largely unknown (Evans 2007c: 12). Unlike the much more straightforward recipe (and often supermarket-linked) serials such as *Good Taste*, *Australian Table* and *Super Food Ideas*, publications such as *Gastronomica*, *Vogue Entertaining + Travel* and *Australian Gourmet Traveller* are produced to be read and enjoyed for the quality of their content in terms of writing and image (what is now commonly critically called ‘gastro-porn’) rather than as practical manuals to guide cooking practice. A lively discussion about *Saveur*, for instance, on the popular *Chow* website (May 2007) found that most readers, while voting this ‘the best’ food magazine, did not use its recipes. An indicative response: ‘It’s great reading and the photos are gorgeous. As for cooking from it, I should say I don’t usually (‘amyzan’ 2007).

Critics of some food writing find it little more than ‘a handmaiden to consumer culture’ (Belasco, cited in Brown 2004), encouraging excessive consumption. Such a view does not, however, take into account the significant food writing that is, itself, highly critical of the food industry. Such critical food writing ranges from such scholarly texts as Paul B Thompson’s *Food Biotechnology in Ethical Perspective* (2007) to widely read works such as Eric Schlosser’s *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal* (2001) – a critique of the fast food industry and its influence on individual health as well as the global landscape, economy and employees. Famously, the *Rolling Stone* article on which it was based generated more reader mail than any other piece run in the 1990s (Schlosser 1998). The book itself (a researched piece of narrative creative non-fiction), moreover, has made a fascinating transition to the screen, being transformed into a fictionalised drama (Linklater 2006) (also co-written by Schlosser) that narrates the content of the book from the point of view of a series of fictional/composite characters involved in the industry, rather than in a documentary format. Citing such works as Upton Sinclair’s novel *The Jungle* (1906), describing the life as an immigrant working in Chicago’s Union Stock Yards abattoirs, and Rachel Carson’s environmental-movement-provoking *Silent Spring* (1962), the success of Schlosser’s work indicates a significant readership for a wide range of texts on food ethics, safety and environmental issues. In Australia, as internationally, the increasing number of public forums on the ethics and

environmental sustainability of food systems feature food writers and attract significant audiences.¹¹

Food-based sub-genres of popular fiction – novels which feature descriptions of food, recipes, menus and other cooking related information – also attract large readerships. There are ‘food/restaurant-based romances’ (by romance authors including Miranda Lee, Crystal Green and Sara Orwig), but by far the most significant of these fictional sub-genres – in sales and quality – is the mystery sub-genre that is commonly called the ‘culinary cosy’. Featuring amateur detectives who are either chefs/caterers, restaurant critics/food writers and/or gourmands or professional private detectives and/or police who are interested in food, these books not only utilise richly written descriptions of food as background settings for characters and action but, when most successful, feature characterisations and plotting that are based on this food related content. This sub-genre has both male and female precursors – Rex Stout’s gourmet detective Nero Wolfe was launched in 1934, while Virginia Rich’s Eugenia Potter series begun with *The Cooking School Murders* in 1982 (see Sadler 1989) – but recent international examples are largely the province of women writers. Current successful series include JoAnna Carl’s ‘Chocoholic Mysteries’ series (2002-2007), Cleo Coyle’s ‘Coffeehouse Mystery’ series (2003-2007) and Isis Crawford’s ‘Mystery with Recipes’ series (2003-2007). Marion Halligan’s *The Apricot Colonel* (2006) – and its forthcoming sequel *Murder on the Apricot Coast* (2008) – continue Halligan’s characteristic autobiographical (and semi-autobiographical) writing about food, wine, cooking and dining but in a new, completely fictional form. The central character/amateur sleuth, Cassandra Travers, is a freelance editor, who loves books, writing and food.

Although, as indicated above, sessions featuring food writers are becoming increasingly common at writer’s festivals and other such events in Australia and overseas, it is only relatively recently that significant literary criticism has begun focus on food writing. Much of this comment has focused on women’s fiction and has come from women critics and commentators – although, as noted by Blodgett, when men write critically about food in literature they make ‘only token acknowledgement’ of women authors (2004: 261). Margaret Atwood’s first published novel *The Edible Woman* (1969), Isak Dinesen’s short story ‘Babette’s Feast’ (1958), Nora Ephron’s *Heartbreak* (1980), Laura Esquivel’s *Like Water for Chocolate* (1992) and Joanne Harris’s *Chocolat* (1999) have attracted such comment, as has the work of Edith Wharton, Collette, Joyce Carol Oates, Katherine Mansfield and many other women authors. Such studies include explorations of the significance of food and food related matters in: discovering a feminist aesthetic (Bender 1986), writing popular/genre fiction (LeCroy 1989, Sadler 1989); literature and culture generally (Schofield 1989); ways of reading women’s writing (Leonardi 1989), issues of power and control (Patnaik 1998), body theory (Sceats 2000), the significance of labour (for example, meal provision) in literature (McGee 2001) and, most recently, the wide use, meanings and implications of food-related imagery (Blodgett 2004) and food writing in children’s literature (Daniel 2006). Women have also been active anthologists of such food-based fiction and literary nonfiction (see for example Atwood 1987, Digby & Digby 1987, Alford & Harris 1992, Golden 1993 and Allen 1995, Santich 2000).

Food writers also produce material for a wide range of multimedia and convergent forms. This includes much of the concept design, content and spin-off product that is driving the expansion of the already popular and profitable food-related network and cable television programming sectors. Food writers also produce material for new forms of text such as 'foodie blogs' and food 'blooks'. The prevalence of 'foodie blogs' and the crossover from media consumer to producer they witness has been discussed by de Solier (2006) and, like much of Internet studies, is becoming a rich area of academic inquiry. The term 'blook' – only in use for the past few years, but already being considered for inclusion in the next edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Gibson 2006) – refers to a book that is either serialised online in a weblog (or 'blog') or one that is printed in traditional form but contains, or is based on content from, a blog. Julie Powell's *Julie and Julia: 365 Days, 524 Recipes, 1 Tiny Kitchen Apartment* (2005), published in Australia as *Julie and Julia: My Year of Cooking Dangerously* (2007), is a food memoir which began as a weblog in August 2002, *The Julie/Julia Project*, detailing the author's quest to cook all the recipes in Julia Child's *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* (1961). Powell's online musings drew a large following and attracted a publisher, with the ensuing book version selling more than 100,000 copies in the USA alone and winning the first Lulu Blooker Prize in 2006. Russell Davies' literary tribute to London's traditional cafes, *Egg, Bacon, Chips and Beans: 50 Great Cafes and the Stuff That Makes Them Great* (2005), was also shortlisted for this award.

Opportunities for the academy

As the field continues to expand, students of food writing have a range of future vocational and professional opportunities. As indicated above, such roles include restaurant or food product reviewer, food editor, staff or freelance food writer, recipe writer or syndicated food columnist. In terms of book length works, opportunities include cookbook author, food historian, food memoirist, biographer or autobiographer, and food related romance or murder mystery author. The subject of food is a way into many topics in high demand areas of publishing such as travel, health and environmental writing. Advanced writing skills are also essential in a range of food-related occupations involving product, menu and recipe development; food styling, photographing and testing; work in museum occupations, food advertising and public relations and, obviously, in all food related fields of communications and media including a range of editing and publishing positions. There is also, of course, consulting, teaching and research in the area, including in the important areas of public and community education.

In terms of research opportunities, 'food studies' – food and other culinary-related scholarship – is gaining academic reputation and respectability. An expansive field, a growing number of themed conferences devoted to the subject attract such a wide range of participants that includes research scholars, professional food writers, creative practitioners (professional and amateur chefs and cooks), museum professionals, popular historians, food enthusiasts and a range of interested personnel including visual and performing artists. Food studies and, particularly, food writing,

form important streams in the influential Association for the Study of Food and Society, and Popular Culture Association (both USA) and their regional chapters. In April 2007, Harvard University's Radcliffe Institute's conference 'Women, Men, and Food: Putting Gender on the Table' explored the relationship between food and gender, in particular how food has been 'a source of creativity, joy, self-expression, "even hedonism" – yet has also been an instrument of oppression' (Faust qtd in Ireland 2007) focusing on food writing and food writers. The Research Centre for Food and Drink (Adelaide) runs a vibrant program of events and, in July 2006, hosted an international conference on 'Cookery Books as History'. Food writers are prominent participants of the Symposium on Australian Gastronomy, which (with fifteen meetings from 1984 to 2007) has been actively involved in promoting 'Australian gastronomy; that is, one relevant to the culture, climate, and history of the Australian continent' (SAGA 2007) through a series of conferences and circulation of its papers.

Publishers of peer-refereed articles in this specialist subject area include national and international journals in the disciplinary and interdisciplinary areas of Food and Culinary Studies and History; Gastronomy; Communication, Cultural, Media, Gender and Women's, New Media and Internet Studies; Folklore, History, Anthropology, Sociology, Philosophy and Literature. Moreover, from the 1980s, alongside the popular periodicals discussed above, special issues of significant international peer-reviewed journals have featured food and cuisine related research. These include special issues of *Littérature* (1982), *Dix-huitième Siècle* (1983), *Papers in French Seventeenth-Century Literature* (1985), *Dalhousie French Studies* (1986), *MLN* (1991), *Mosaic* (1991), *Southern Quarterly* (1992), *Social Research* (1999), *Proteus: A Journal of Ideas* (2000) and *Text and Performance Quarterly* (forthcoming, an issue titled 'Food and Performance, Food as Performance').

While general publishers are actively soliciting food-related material for publications with popular readerships, many USA and UK university presses have begun new food-related series in the past decade. In more good news for the writers of such texts, these publishers often openly state they are seeking to attract non-academic as well as academic readers with such texts. The University of California Press's California Studies in Food and Culture series, aiming 'to broaden the audience for serious scholarship as well as to celebrate food as a means of understanding the world' (UCP 2007), is a good example of this trend. In terms of funding such research, an obvious opportunity exists for food writing scholars to link into health related areas of national competitive and other funding. The Australian Government's National Health and Medical Research Council's strategic plan for 2007-2009, for instance, states that the 'NHMRC is committed to all research relevant to health ... [and] recognises that multidisciplinary approaches are needed to solve the complex problems of health (NHMRC 2007).

In summary

The above discussion outlines a clear opportunity to develop food writing as a specialist teaching area of Writing, Editing and Publishing at undergraduate, course

work postgraduate and Research Higher Degree level within Australian universities. In terms of workplace learning, the subject area has the potential to open up a rich new and previously untapped source of internships for students and industry partners for their teachers. It may, moreover, necessitate an approach that utilises not only workplace learning but also multi-institutional delivery. In this, a number of institutions would collaborate to offer a series of subjects from which each student could build a unique, and personally- and vocationally-relevant program.

Implicit in this call for the consideration of food writing as a possible avenue for the learning and teaching of Writing is, of course, a recognition that all Writing courses need to be continually alert to the imperative to renew their content, approach and focus in order to align their offerings with both possible student interest and the range of futures facing Writing program graduates. In the current higher education climate such industry-focused subjects and programs could offer opportunities for pooling wisdom and abilities on a local, national and global scale. Such initiatives will allow tertiary Writing courses to not only reflect, but also influence, developments at the cutting edge of culture.

Endnotes

1. In 2003-2004, the Food Media Club (Australia Inc.) organised a discussion around the topic of 'Food in Print' and subtitled this 'Australia's Insatiable Appetite' (FMC c. 2004).
2. See, for instance, Boston University's Master of Liberal Arts in Gastronomy <http://www.bu.edu/met/adult_college_programs/graduate_school_program/post_graduate_degree/food_science_degree/index.html> and New York University's Master of Arts in Food Studies <http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/nutrition/masters/food_studies_food_management> which include food writing.
3. In 2005 MIT offered a course titled '21W.730-2 Expository Writing – Food for Thought: Writing and Reading about Food and Culture'.
4. From 2001 to 2004, for instance, food writing was taught in a creative nonfiction unit I designed and delivered at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, which also led to a number of honours and other projects in food writing. In 2006, I supervised an Honours student wanting to specialise in food writing at the University of New England.
5. The USA has an Association of Food Journalists with a code of ethics and an annual conference, as well as an International Food, Wine and Travel Writers' Association. In the UK the Guild of Food Writers represents some 350 of these authors, while in Australia, these writers are represented by both the peak body, the Australian Society of Authors which represents a wide range of 'literary creators' including 'biographers, illustrators, academics, cartoonists, scientists, food and wine writers, children's writers, ghost writers, librettists, travel writers, romance writers, translators, computer programmers, journalists, poets and novelists' (ASA 2007). The Food Media Club Australia Inc (FMCA), is an association of food professionals who have expertise in diverse food-related areas such as journalism, production, marketing, public relations, food science, nutrition, education, recipe development, food styling catering for restaurants and small businesses.

6. These columns (1 March – 14 June 2003) were collected into a book of the same name (Barnes 2003).
7. For a detailed discussion of how a series of Australian women writers of various genres – Linda Jaivin, Marion Halligan, Margaret Fulton, Stephanie Alexander and Barbara Santich, have been able to establish varied careers as food writers in Australia, see Brien, ‘More than Just a Good Nosh Up: Women and Australian Food Writing’ (forthcoming).
8. Canberra’s Manning Clark House’s 2005 Weekend of Ideas, ‘Food for Thought’ for example, featured Fulton alongside literary food authors Marion Halligan and Kate Llewellyn, and famed chef and author, Stephanie Alexander; and her life’s work, and contribution to Australian culture, is being celebrated at a National Library of Australia event in November 2007 (Cappe 2007: 3).
9. For an analysis of how a number of both Australian and international celebrity/television chefs have based their careers on their food writing and particularly on a sub-genre I have named as food writing-as-memoir (or ‘memoir with recipes’), see Brien & Williamson 2006; Brien, Rutherford & Williamson 2007.
10. The phenomenon of the television celebrity chef/cookbook author is also becoming an area of scholarly interest – see, for instance, the work of Joanne Hollows, Frances Bonner, and Brien 2006.
11. A more than year-long public discussion between Michael Pollan, lead food writer for *The New York Times Magazine* and author of the 2006 bestseller *The Omnivore’s Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*, and John Mackey, CEO of health food store chain Whole Foods (with \$5.6 billion in sales in 2006), has featured numerous press and online features as well as a public debate at the University of California where 2,200 people paid to listen to these figures’ views on sustainable food systems (Shea 2007: n.p.).

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