

# **The Construction of Contemporary Cuisine**

## **A Case Study**

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## Table of Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE
List of Figures .....	iv
List of Tables .....	iv
List of Appendices .....	iv
Attestation of Authorship .....	v
Acknowledgements .....	vi
Abstract .....	vii
 I INTRODUCTION	 1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Aim and Scope	4
1.3 The Methodological Approach to the Research Question	4
1.4 Significance of the Research	5
1.5 Overview of the Dissertation	5
 II LITERATURE REVIEW	 7
2.1 Introduction	7
2.2 Food, Culture and Identity	7
2.2.1 Omnivore's Paradox and the Incorporation Principle	8
2.2.2 Food as a Paradigm of Ethnicity	9
2.3 Food Choices	10
2.4 Memories	11
2.5 Flavour or Taste	13
2.6 Evolution of Food in New Zealand	14
2.7 Food and Politics	16
2.8 Local and Global Forces	17
2.9 Globalisation and Modern Technology	18
2.10 Summary	19
 III METHODS	 21
3.1 Philosophical Foundation	21
3.2 Positioning the Qualitative Case Study Approach	23

CHAPTER		PAGE
	3.3 In-depth Semi-Structured Interviews	24
	3.4 Positioning Photo Elicitation	25
	3.5 Sampling and Selection	26
	3.6 Data Collection	27
	3.7 Data Analysis	29
	3.8 Ethical Considerations	30
	3.9 Summary	30
IV	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	32
	4.1 Influence of Cultural Background on Food	33
	4.1.1 Braised Pork Belly with Lor Bak Sauce	34
	4.1.2 Deconstructed Batavia	38
	4.1.3 Smoked Bulgogi Miso Marinated Duck Breast	41
	4.2 Visual Presentation of Contemporised Dish	43
	4.2.1 Braised Pork Belly with Lor Bak Sauce	44
	4.2.2 Vietnamese Inspired Sous Vide Kingfish	44
	4.2.3 Purple Smoked Duck	46
	4.3 Searching for a Sense of Identity in Contemporising the Dish	47
	4.3.1 Smoked Venison with Kumara	47
	4.4 Childhood Memories	50
	4.4.1 Rakiraki Lucky Ducky	50
	4.4.2 Smoky Beer Marinated Chicken Breast	52
	4.5 The Influence of Eating Habits in Contemporising the Dish	53
	4.5.1 Vegan Food	54
	4.5.2 Duck Deconstructed	56
	4.6 Summary	58
V	CONCLUSION	59
	5.1 Overview of the study	59
	5.2 Limitations	62
	5.3 Recommendation for Further Research	62
	REFERENCES	63
	APPENDICES	70

## List of Figures

Figure 1:	Traditional Singaporean Braised Pork Belly Served in a Claypot	35
Figure 2:	Marie's Braised Pork Belly with Lor Bak Sauce (October 2015)	35
Figure 3:	Traditional Beef Rendang from West Sumatra in Indonesia	38
Figure 4:	Filipa's Deconstructed Batavia (October 2016)	39
Figure 5:	Lynette's Smoked Bulgogi Miso Marinated Duck Breast (October 2016)	41
Figure 6:	Tracy's Vietnamese Inspired Sous Vide Kingfish (October 2015)	45
Figure 7:	Ursa's Purple Smoked Duck (October 2016)	46
Figure 8:	Monique's Smoked Venison with Kumara (October 2015)	48
Figure 9:	Dyle's Rakiraki Lucky Ducky (October 2016)	50
Figure 10:	Karen's Smoky Beer Marinated Chicken Breast (October 2016)	52
Figure 11:	Hubert's Vegan Food (October 2016)	54
Figure 12:	Tatiana's Duck Deconstructed (October 2016)	57

## List of Tables

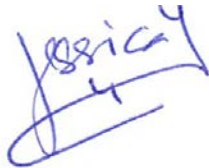
Table 1:	Summary of Participants and the title of their Contemporised Dish	32
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## List of Appendices

Appendix A:	Interview Participant Information Sheet	70
Appendix B:	Consent Form	71
Appendix C:	Sample Interview Questions	72
Appendix D:	Approval from AUTECH	73

## Attestation of Authorship

"I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning".



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Jessica Beng See Yamamoto

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## **Abstract**

Cuisine as representation of culture is always changing and adapting, influenced by the core ingredients, food preparation methods, distinctive flavours and eating etiquette of a culture. As culture is never static, neither are cuisines. Today's contemporary cuisine is distinct from historical combination cuisine in that it is proactive and constantly evolving, forming new hybrids of food which are recognised as contemporary cuisines. One form of contemporary cuisine is a deliberate blending of two or more culinary traditions to create an interesting cuisine. However, there are implications when more than one culinary tradition is combined. This research examined the construction of contemporary cuisine designed by culinary arts students from a cultural perspective. The objective was to identify the culture embedded in the composition of the constructed contemporary cuisine. A case study approach was undertaken, encompassing in-depth semi-structured interviews and a form of photo elicitation. Data were collected from ten culinary arts students who had experience in contemporising a dish relevant to their cultural background. It was found that cultural beliefs and social and environmental influences guided them in the preparation of their contemporary cuisine. Further to this, the findings suggested that conceptualising contemporary cuisine is linked to memories from the past. This study contributes to understanding how cultural identity is embedded in contemporary cuisines. Further research is recommended to include observation of participants, tasting of the contemporised cuisine for authenticity of cultural flavours and images showing ingredients and cycle of developing the contemporised dish.

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This study examines the construction of contemporary cuisine designed by culinary arts students. The objective was to identify the culture embedded in the composition of the contemporised cuisine. An interpretive case study approach encompassing in-depth semi-structured interviews, and photo-elicitation was used to investigate culinary arts students' perspectives on contemporary cuisine. This chapter introduces the background to the research and outlines the aim and scope of the study. Then, it explains the significance of the study and presents the methodological approach taken. The chapter concludes with an overview of the dissertation.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

All cultures have an identifiable cuisine (Belasco, 2008). Cuisine is an expression of our sociality and is impacted by the customs of a culture. It reflects the style and characteristics that are unique and have evolved over a culture's history. Cuisine can be defined in a number of ways, depending on the context. For many, the term "cuisine" refers to a style of cooking based on geographical or from an ethnic area. It can also refer to a professional cooking style. It is a term that can be associated with elite or high culture (Belasco, 2008). However, cuisine is a broad term that is closely linked to culture. Suggested by Farb and Armelangoes and Rozin (1982) there are four key elements that differentiate cuisine between various cultural groups. First, is staple ingredients or core foods; these are based on factors such as availability, production, nutritional benefits, palatability and the religious or social codes a culture has. Next, the specific procedures in order to prepare ingredients. This element associates with how ingredients are incorporated and cut. Third, the distinctive flavours from the combination of tastes that seasoned dishes. For example, the combination of sesame oil, garlic, soy sauce and ginger, hint to flavours recognised in parts of China. The last element is the manner in which food is eaten. This relates to religious practices, who you eat with, the utensils used to eat and where and what you eat on. Cuisine is learnt and shared throughout



the community in a social or geographical space and can be seen as a method of communication within a community (Belasco, 2008).

Food culture is how food is produced and prepared and eating etiquette of a society (Ranta, 2015). Changes in people's food culture is frequently reflected in a society's social and economic development (Atkins & Bowler, 2001). Over the years, New Zealand food culture reflects influences from various ethnic cultures (Bailey & Earle, 2003). It evolves over time through generations, but maintains the cultural and ethnic background of a community (Williams, 2012, Tamang, 2001). With the interaction and combination of various cultures a new food culture is created, that incorporates the unique and traditional elements of the cultures involved (Mak, Lumbers & Eves, 2012). This new culture is often termed creolisation or hybridization, which are used synonymously. These terms are often used in describing the relationship between globalisation and culture, with the increase in individuals with mixed heritage (Cohen, 2007). In relation to cooking, creolisation and hybridization refer to the traditions and elements specific to a culture being mixed. For example, cultural hybridization or creolization between Chinese and Malay in language and cuisine has resulted in Peranakan culture. The language is a creole of Hokkien and Malay and the cuisine is a combination of Chinese and Malay foodways (Wu & Tan, 2001). These new food cultures are also manifested in a variety of contemporary cuisines (Mak, Lumbers & Eves, 2012). These are discussed in the literature review section.

New Zealand's ethnic diversity is brought about by globalisation and modernisation. According to Statistics New Zealand (2013), the census data 2013 indicated that Auckland has the greatest number of diasporic ethnic groups in New Zealand. Furthermore, Friesen (2015) indicated that Auckland has the greatest degree of ethnic diversity in New Zealand and half of the region's population growth derives from overseas migrants. As migrant societies expand, ethnic cuisines flourish and constantly get recreated and reinterpreted contributing to the growth of contemporary cuisine across New Zealand. Simpson (2008) argued that humans cannot live without culture, if they are denied their culture, they will re-invent it. This frequently happens amongst migrant group and the meaning is attached to immigrant food. Further to this, the awareness of cultural differences between local and global have resulted in diversification of food (Steenkamp & de Jong, 2010), for example, Pacific Rim cooking or butter chicken pies. Although there are other definitions of contemporary cuisine, for the

purposes of this study, 'contemporary cuisine' is defined as a deliberate blending of two or more cultures in preparation, cooking and presentation which is characterised by distinctive cultural ingredients, flavours and is predominantly served in restaurants (as opposed to café, takeaway or food unit). According to Sokolov (1991), the concept of contemporary cuisines emerged from the French nouvelle cuisine and became popular in the 1970s. Nouvelle cuisine depicts a combination of French and Japanese cooking which spread to other major European cities and American coasts. Modern technology in transportation has liberated mobility and enable chefs to explore almost unlimited culinary possibilities.

Contemporary cuisines have been met with mixed reactions by researchers because they promote a blending of culinary cultures. For example, Morris (2013) pointed out that cultural contemporary cuisine strategically leads to a restructuring of cuisine. Scarpato and Daniele (2003) added that a cuisine created by combining cultures with divergent culinary traditions and centuries of cooking traditions, such as European and Asian food, can be successful, while in some cases, not so pleasant. Santich (1996) argued that when two or more culinary cultures are put together to create a contemporary cuisine, the result may be fusion or perhaps confusion, thus compromising the culture of each other to the extent of losing each other's culinary tradition.

In contrast, Leach (2010) suggested that culinary tradition is a part of the culture that guides our choice of food, preparation of our meals, composition of our meals and what we think of the food that we eat. Furthermore, Kittler, Sucher, and Nahikian-Nelms (2012) pointed out that the choice of food is influenced by self-identity, and the food is used symbolically due to the relationship to and association with one's original culture. These issues raise an interesting question: Will innovative contemporary cuisines portray the culture of the creators or will they lose their culinary traditions beyond recognition? This research seeks to answer this question.

Food studies, which is a relatively young field (Kong, 2015; Peters, 2011), is beginning to gain prominence in educational institutions (Miller & Deutsch, 2009). According to Miller and Deutsch (2009), food study research in humanities and social sciences, have commonly used food as a focus of their research in anthropology, history, sociology and philosophy criticism. There are a number of researchers, such as Avieli (2005), Lupton (1994), and Rabikowska (2010) whose research focused on festive food, ritualization of food and symbolic meaning of

food. Other researchers, such as Fischler (1980), Ma (2015) and Parasecoli (2014) have studied food habits, self-identity and food culture. Despite this diverse range of approaches, few research studies have been done on the cultural aspect of contemporary food in New Zealand.

## **1.2 Aim and Scope**

The aim of this research was to identify the culture embedded in the composition of contemporised cuisine in New Zealand by aspiring food professionals. By exploring the experiences of culinary arts students, this research sought to fulfil this objective by posing a research question, 'What are the culinary arts students' perspectives on cultural identity presented in their dish?'. ..

The research was undertaken at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT), a university in New Zealand. AUT offers undergraduate degrees in Culinary Art and a postgraduate degree in Gastronomy. The student population at AUT is diverse with a range of ethnic backgrounds which is suitable for the purposes of this study.

## **1.3 The Methodological Approach to the Research Question**

Ontology addresses the nature of reality for the participants. Participants self-created reality in conceptualising the contemporised dishes may be influenced by their cultural background, as well as social and environmental influences. Their cultural beliefs, food taste and cooking methods may be influenced by what they see and how they experience reality. The epistemology framing this research is social constructivism. According to Cresswell (2003), multiple meanings are developed through participants' experiences by means of social interactions. Using the social constructivist theory of knowledge, the researcher's personal and cultural background shaped the interpretation of the data collected. The researcher's position is discussed in Chapter Three.

An interpretive case study approach, using qualitative methods, was undertaken due to clear boundaries of the research site and specific participants (Asmussen & Creswell, 1995). The research site was at the School of Hospitality and Tourism at the Auckland University of

Technology and the specific participants were culinary arts students who are completing the Bachelor of Culinary Arts degree.

A purposive sampling method was used to find participants with the experience and knowledge of contemporising a cultural dish (Patton, 2002). Participants meeting the selection criteria comprised culinary arts students who had completed the final assessment of a Contemporary Cuisine Aotearoa paper. Part of the assessment of the paper was based on a student's knowledge of developing a contemporary dish of their own design. Data were collected from October to November 2016.

Photo-elicitation was utilised as visual records and prompts of the contemporised dish.

According to Harper (2002), photo-elicitation overcomes some of the challenges of in-depth interviewing. Semi-structured interviews were used for data collection, and thematic analysis was used to identify emergent themes. In total ten semi-structured interviews with culinary arts students were conducted.

#### **1.4 Significance of this Research**

This research contributes to understanding how cultural heritage is embedded in contemporary cuisines and addresses the gap of previous research in food studies by building on the knowledge of symbolic meanings and awareness of the cultural representation of contemporised cuisines. The second contribution to food studies is that the study highlights the influence of self-identity on food choices and how our cultural beliefs, as well as social and environmental influences, guide us in the preparation of our meals (Kittler et al., 2012; Leach, 2010). The third contribution is to examine the symbolic nature of cuisines and its relationship to cultural identity in the context of a Bachelor of Culinary Arts degree.

#### **1.5 Overview of the Dissertation**

The dissertation comprises five chapters, with Chapter One as the introduction; the other chapters are organised as follows.

Chapter Two explains human relationships to food from a cultural aspect. This is based on Fischler's (1988) suggestion that the omnivorous nature of man and the incorporation principle,

which relates to identity formation, are the two aspects of the human relationship to food. The second section in the chapter explores cultural food identities in terms of food choices, memories and flavours. The third section explores the evolution of food in New Zealand dating back to Maori food culture.

Chapter Three presents the theoretical assumptions of the research and justification for using an interpretive case study approach and photo-elicitation. Following on from this, details on how the research was carried out, and ethical considerations are discussed.

Chapter Four presents the results and discussion from the thematic analysis of interview data and photo-elicitation relating to the construction of contemporised dishes.

Chapter Five concludes that our cultural beliefs and social and environmental influences guide chefs in the preparation of contemporised cuisines. There were elements of culture embedded in the contemporised dish designed by participants, which may be culturally meaningful to them but not necessarily to others, because culture is a personal perception.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the literature on human relationships to food by adopting a multi-disciplinary approach. It brings together the understanding of human nature, as well as the socio-cultural and political economic influences on food culture, for the purposes of this research. The first section investigates humans as omnivores and its implications, which includes identity formation and associated representations, and which make us what we are from a cultural perspective. It seeks to relate the processes to ethnic identity construction and food identification, based on the knowledge that food identification is a key element in the construction of identity. As humans adapt to environmental changes and new geographical locations, our food habits and preferences change. The second section, therefore, focuses on food choices, memories and flavours associated with cultural food identities.

The third section explores the evolution of contemporary food culture in New Zealand starting with Maori and their cultural beliefs about food, moving on to the arrival of Captain Cook in 1769 and early European explorers. The impact of socio-economic shifts, globalisation and modernisation will also be considered. These discourses offer important insights to the emerging food culture of the contemporary era leading to the increasing trend of contemporary cuisines. Lastly, how these sections relate to the chosen research topic are discussed.

#### **2.2 Food, Culture and Identity**

The definition of culture varies between different disciplines. However, there are common characteristics across disciplines. According to Mathews (2000), culture is the way of life of a people. Culture incorporates the beliefs, attitudes and practices of a group and is passed down from generation to generation through the acquisition of language and socialisation (Kittler et al., 2012). The choices we make regarding the selection of food, cooking methods and preparation, the way we eat food and with whom are embedded in culture (Visser, 2010).

In associating food with culture and its cultural functions within the society we live, Driver (2008) claims that the rituals of food preparation and consumption are used to build relationships and bonding thus reinforcing group identities. Fischler (1988) suggests that the relationship of food to identity formation runs from biological to cultural, and the two aspects of human relationships to food are the omnivorous nature of man and the incorporation principle, which are discussed below.

### **2.2.1 Omnivore's Paradox and the Incorporation Principle**

Humans as predominantly omnivores are able to survive on the availability of food from the surroundings. However, unlike the koala bear, which eats only the leaves of the Australian eucalyptus, humans, by contrast, need to obtain nutrients, such as protein, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals, from a variety of foods. These two contradictory characteristics constitute the omnivore's paradox. The dilemma of an omnivore is whether to approach or avoid novel food. However, humankind is inclined to explore, innovate, diversify and change to survive, but they must be cautious of what to eat, as unknown food can potentially be dangerous (Fischler, 1988). On the other hand, food sampling is necessary in order to maintain enough range of diet to provide different nutrients for the body (Fischler, 1980). Therefore, we have the neophobia conservatism and the neophilia with curiosity towards new food. This is discussed in the context of culture, below.

Food neophobia is a phenomenon defined as the rejection or fear of unknown food resulting in a habitual diet (Dovey, Staples, Gibson, & Halford, 2008). Bryant-Waugh, Markham, Kreipe, and Walsh (2010) described neophobia as 'selective eating' or 'restricted eating'. On the other hand, food neophilia are those who enjoy trying new food and are adventurous in their style of eating (Latimer, Pope, & Wansink, 2015). Latimer et al. (2015) suggest that the profile of an adventurous eater is someone who values food, health, novelty food and quality. The omnivore's paradox, therefore, reflects a tension as to which food is edible and culturally acceptable. Edibility is shaped by the issues of toxicity in food, though sometimes, toxicity can be resolved through cultural practices such as fermentation or methods of cooking the food to make it safe to eat. In the context of culture, the paradox helps explain the current diet of

humans, evolving from preferences of food to cultural value, palatability, nutrition and availability (Ahn, Ahnert, Bagrow, & Barabási, 2011).

Leading from this, the principle of incorporation sets the foundation of identity: we become what we eat. Incorporation is the action in which we send food from the 'outside' to 'inside' our body. It is regarded as human attempts to control the body, mind and identity (Fischler, 1988). In the world where self-identity and place-identity are woven together, what we eat and the way we eat reveal the basic aspects of who we are. For example, Muslims do not eat pork and Hindus do not eat beef for religious reasons. We are able to identify and differentiate groups by looking at what they eat and what they do not eat. This diversity combined with our omnivore nature has impacted on the development of innovative cuisines. Incorporation not only sets the foundation of individual identity but also collective identity in which food and cuisine are vital components of identity. The consumption of food incorporates the groups into a culinary system which is then practised by the group. It operates as a sort of inherent taxonomy. Basic taxonomies incorporate people into the group and in turn incorporate the group into society which then binds them together towards a religious dimension (Fischler, 1988). The culinary system is said to give meaning to the individual and group in relation to the continuity of culture. It has been observed that even though language itself may be forgotten by second or third generation migrants, certain components of their traditional cuisine are sometimes retained (Vázquez-Medina & Medina, 2016).

### **2.2.2 Food as a Paradigm of Ethnicity**

For migrants who moved to another country with a different culture from their own, ethnic identity determines an individual identity as to who and what an individual wants to be in their cultural and social context. Ethnic identity refers to the psychological view of how individuals locate themselves socially in relation to their ethnic origin (Phinney & Ong, 2007). The uniqueness of identity is knowing who we are and where we stand. Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, and Todorova (2009) suggest that there are three categories of identity construction. Some may renounce the identity of their origin and adopt the dominant culture of the host country, resulting in weakened ties with their own community. Some may reject the dominant culture of their host country. The majority adapt to the new environment and retain some of



their family traditions leading to a bi-cultural identity. Phinney and Ong (2007) explain that ethnic identity is a continuum, because some may have a clear commitment to the group, while others may have conflicting feelings about their identity or are confused. Some may adapt the food of the new culture in making traditional dishes and some may readily accept the food of the dominant culture because of convenience, taste and cost. However, our cultural food habits are one of the last things to change through acculturation (Kittler et al., 2012). For example, Chinese may prefer to eat rice at every meal, and Muslims are bound by religion and will not eat pork regardless of their geographical location. Needless to say, there are other factors which may influence our religious beliefs (Cornwall, 1987) and impact our commitment to what we may or may not eat. It all depends on individual preferences to food choices regardless of cultural or religious reasons.

### **2.3 Food Choices**

Aboud (2011) claims that food choices are influenced by cultural practices and passed on from generation to generation. Primarily, human beings eat to survive but in the social sphere, consumption of food transcends the basic function and affects humans' eating perception. In addition, food choices implicate a complex interaction between sensations, individual preferences, cultural influences, environment and contextual influences (Furst, Connors, Bisogni, Sobal, & Falk, 1996). For example, in many Asian countries, insects, locusts and snakes are eaten, which may seem odd to the Western world. According to Miller (1987), the choice of food eaten is not just related to quantity and availability but also to meaning and representation of individual and group identities. From a commercial perspective, understanding the environment and geographical location that determines food choices are essential for the development of effective contemporary cuisines from a chef's perspective. For example, soup is preferred during winter months because of cold weather, or halal food is popular in a certain suburb because of the predominance of Muslims located in that area.

Kittler et al. (2012) suggested that the choice of food is influenced by self-identity, and food is used symbolically due to relationship, association or convention. Reinforcement of social bonds and expression of nature and culture is through communal sharing of food. Our cuisine serves as a symbolic expression of sociality, first shared within the family and by extension with the

larger community that shares our culinary tradition. In this way, we commonly link food that we eat with our childhood friends, and, conversely, feel attracted to people who share our food taste in the same way as ethnic food serves as an extension of home cooking. The lingering food taste that we acquired in childhood brings back memories in appreciation of ethnic cuisine. These memories are linked to nostalgic food and are used to maintain an ethnic identity (Locher, Yoels, Maurer, & Van Ells, 2005). For example, eating cultural food creates a sense of attachment and solidarity among migrants, hence maintaining one's continuity of self in a foreign country. Food-based nostalgia is a recurring theme amongst migrants as it brings back memories of the past into the present. These memories not only encompass nostalgic food but also cultural objects such as artefacts or heirlooms which are discussed below.

## **2.4 Memories**

Memory is the ability to remember past events and recall experiences. It can be problematic if the past is subvert causing fuzzy or inaccurate memory (Holtzman, 2006). There is a powerful connection between memory and food (Holtzman, 2006). Sutton (2008) adds the term prospective memory where past events recreated as individuals remember the taste of food. This could be from trivial memories like individuals looking forward to a particular seasonal ingredients or influence habits such as having a cup of coffee every morning. Food could be used to forget or remember, for example, rituals like mortuary food being prepared and offered to the deceased. While viewing or preparing food can create nostalgia from childhood and family memories. Holtzman (2006) highlights Meyer (2001) work on the role of food relating to mother-daughter connections through food and the memories surrounding preparing food together or recipes being taught. Vázquez-Medina & Medina (2016) highlight how, in a migratory context, food nostalgia enables the construction of food based on flavours and aroma for Mexican migrants in California. Food based nostalgia is common among diasporic populations. Knowing this is relevant to the research as it shows the significance of what traditional cuisine meant to migrants in a foreign land.

Memories can be both cultural and socially connected. At a collective level, these memories reflect the culture of society through remembering certain events or material objects in the past as something significantly connected to the present (Le Goff & Claman, 1996). Cultural

memories encompass the beliefs and values of a culture within which they exist. For example, artefacts displayed in the museum represent a culturally significant image of the past (Field, 2012). Memories can also be attached to specific objects which give social and cultural meaning, such as heirlooms from grandparents in the form of recipes. Heirloom recipes hold a special meaning and sometimes remind us of home or a moment in time, especially for diaspora migrants. Like the three categories of identity construction suggested by Suárez-Orozco et al. (2009), cultural memories can be discarded or ignored when they do not fit into the dominant culture of who we want to be (Lev-Aladgem, 2006).

The experience of eating specific food of significance evokes recollection of past memories and connects the past to the present, thus prompting one to look forward to certain events (Holtzman, 2006), or socially significant places, such as church, kitchen or outdoor barbeque areas (Dodson & Gilkes, 1995). These specific places which signify shared experiences allow memories to be re-enacted in such a way that reinforces a sense of belonging. Another aspect of social and cultural significance are places where food is grown and produced, for example, New Zealand Bluff oysters and Ohakune carrots. These significant places can be seen in the importance that migrants place on foods from their homeland (Hsiao & Wan, 2007). Memories placed on foods connect people to their cultural heritage and eating specific cultural foods evoke memories of time and place (Collins, 2008).

## 2.5 Flavour or Taste

Food flavour or taste is another reminder that connects people to their cultural heritage. Each ethnic group has their own distinctive cultural taste in food which expresses individual identity (Stallberg-White & Pliner, 1999). For example, ingredients used in Japanese cooking are soy sauce, mirin (rice wine) and dashi (stock made from bonito fish). Koreans use intense flavours such as garlic, sesame oil and chilli. Tomato, garlic and olive oil characterise Italian cuisine, and soy sauce, garlic and ginger typify Chinese cooking. Combinations of flavour ingredients are the most common techniques of cooking and the flavour principles impart a clear characteristic identity of any individual or group. Individuals form an attachment to their cultural characteristic of seasonings and go to great lengths to procure them in unfamiliar surroundings (Rozin & Rozin, 1981). This unique combination of flavour and seasoning typify the cultural cuisines of ethnic groups globally (Kittler et al., 2012).

However, ingredients used are not a rule and therefore act only as a marker of cultural cuisines. Traditional seasoning in any culture may be modified to suit the taste of each household. This does not imply that it is not the tradition of that particular household. Smith et al. (1982) pointed out that 'traditional' and 'new' are interpretive terms, and since culture is constantly changing there can only be what is new, which can take a symbolic value as 'traditional' to a particular household. As a result, humans' continued exposure from early childhood and attachment to traditional flavouring seems to be stronger than attachment to traditional staple food (Pliner & Stallberg-White, 2000).

Flavour determines palatability which represents sensory properties comprising smell, taste and freshness (Ahn et al., 2011). Familiar flavours signal safety and palatability and thus provide a context for new food. Apart from the customary usage of cultural flavour, which leads to familiar culinary themes, the question raised is whether there are any quantifiable principles from a cultural perspective behind certain combinations of ingredients and avoidance of others. Lévi-Strauss (1997) cites the transition between nature and culture where the chef is the cultural agent and food must be good to eat and good to think. Hence, chefs contribute to the development of palatable contemporary cuisines.

Slocombe, Carmichael, and Simner (2016) pointed out that studies have revealed a variety of cross-modal influences on taste, for example, smell and taste, or flavour and visual features,

such as colour, shape and texture. According to Zhou, Wan, Mu, Du and Spence (2015), colour is found to affect evaluations of taste components in food, for example, participants' expectation of red coloured Asian noodles to have a spicy flavour and darker colour is rated as having a more intense flavour. Furthermore, colour can be used symbolically to convey information and messages through material objects. In African, Australian and native North American societies, red is symbolically associated with life, success and victory (Hovers et al., 2003). In Maori culture, red signifies tapu (sacred) and power (Salmond, 1978). In this research, a few of the participants have included colours in their contemporised dishes to represent their ethnic identities.

## **2.6 Evolution of Food in New Zealand**

Immigrants play a significant role in the evolution of food in New Zealand. According to Burton, Tichborne, and Ashton (1983), New Zealand cooking belongs to the immigrants, beginning with the first Maori settlers. In addition, our eating patterns are mostly influenced by nineteenth-century immigrants from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Colonisation has had a significant influence on the restructuring of culture, society and identity in New Zealand. To understand the culture of contemporary New Zealand, one must understand the historical culture starting from the arrival of the settlers. To this, I seek to understand why and how Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, adopted the food and food practices of the settlers, and the consequences and implications of this on contemporary food preparation in New Zealand.

Maori brought their culture from Polynesia; this was subsequently adapted by the various tribes prior to British colonisation. According to Leach (2010), archaeologists have described Maori culture as Ancestral East Polynesian, which is similar to all the larger islands of East Polynesia. This archaeological evidence and knowledge of food traditions of Polynesia has enabled us to trace Maori ancestors' culinary tradition. Maori legend described foods as sacred gifts from the sons of Ranginui representing the Sky (Father) and Papatuanuku, the Earth (Mother) (Burton et al., 1983). Most of their foods came from gardening and fishing. The most important root crops were taro, yam and kumara. Kai (starchy food) formed the bulk of a proper meal comprising root crops and starchy fruits such as bananas and breadfruit. At that time, a substantial meal was dominated by carbohydrates in the kai portion with fish providing most of the protein (Leach,

2010). According to Burton et al. (1983), archaeological evidence points to native birds, rats, insects and fish as the variety of foods eaten during the initial period of Maori occupation in New Zealand.

The arrival of Captain Cook in 1769, and early European explorers transformed the lifestyle of the Maori population. They introduced a whole variety of plants and animals marking a change in the traditional eating habits of the Maori. When the Europeans first arrived in New Zealand, they relied on Maori expertise in cultivation (Wright-St Clair, 1980). According to Leach (2010), the Europeans brought with them exotic food products, cooking practices and habits which were shared with indigenous Maori. For example, potatoes, a European crop, were eventually adopted into their own diet. The potato was successfully grown in areas unsuitable for other root crops such as yam and taro. By the nineteenth century, potatoes became a lucrative commodity for trading with European settlers. The Europeans also introduced animals such as deer, pigs, rabbits and ducks. Pork became a favoured food in the Maori diet.

The New Zealand culinary heritage is also derived from other early immigrants, for example, it has been suggested that the Arab food customs of spicing methods and dried fruits indirectly contributed to New Zealand cooking using nuts and dried fruits in Christmas cakes and mince pies (Simpson, 2008). In the 1930s, European Jewish refugees introduced European bakeries and delicatessens. Over the years, family evening meals or the Sunday roast of meat and vegetables, which were usually served at the dining table, have developed into a New Zealand tradition (King, 1985).

Preparation and consumption of food eventually evolved into a tradition of social cooking and baking. The colonial tradition of hospitality with an emphasis on home cooked meals along with baking is entrenched in New Zealand's heritage and memories (Simpson, 2008). Other contributions to the evolution of New Zealand foods are global forces and technology, which are discussed later in this chapter.

The methods and traditional way of baking and borrowing of recipes indicate a paradigm of food preparation and adoption of food culture. However, evidence suggests that the assimilation of settlers' ingredients and technology into Maori culinary tradition and the borrowing of recipes was not reciprocated (Leach, 2010). This raises the question of why some food and food

practices are ignored or rejected, and the consequences in terms of politics and social relations. This is discussed further below.

## **2.7 Food and Politics**

Food and politics are best described in terms of Bourdieu's (1985) fields of capital. There are many ways in which cultural food and consumption practices can be introduced to others, for example, through ritual performances, such as feasts and daily meals, which eventually become a standard practice. In social politics and cultural studies, it has been acknowledged that food is the marker of status and class, as suggested in Bourdieu's theory (Sato, Gittelsohn, Unsain, Roble, & Scagliusi, 2016). Bourdieu's major fields of capital are identified as economic capital or wealth, cultural capital, which includes the knowledge acquired over a lifetime, social capital pertaining to resources available and symbolic capital which represents prestige and honour. It is the symbolic capital that possesses the ability to be known and recognised in the social world (Bourdieu, 1985). Whilst Bourdieu is talking in the context of a specific place and time based on French society during the 1970s, some of the ideas are applicable to this research. Cultural capital is said to be the governing capital in the field of cuisine including the knowledge of preparation and consumption of food.

Bourdieu's fields of capital can be considered as a competitive arena where dominant societies struggle to maintain a monopoly. Cuisines are positioned differently according to cultural value. Bourdieu highlights the consumption of food, and food as an arena in which hierarchy of value in lifestyle choices is used to demonstrate distinction. Food hierarchies existed a long time ago and researchers have shown how the meaning of food is transposed onto ethnic identity in various contexts. For example, in India food plays an important role in the Hindu caste system of Brahminical rules of purity and pollution (Iversen & Raghavendra, 2006). In China, serving expensive and rare foods symbolises respect to the guests and represents the social status of the host (Fabinyi, 2012; Lau, Krondl, & Coleman, 1984). Food such as shark's fin and lobsters are normally expensive due to their rareness and being associated with the upper-class lifestyle. According to Bourdieu, it is the combination of social origins and level of education which develop individual's 'taste' as marker of social class.

Food consumed by one culture may be considered as not suitable for consumption by another culture. Maori food was regarded as unappealing and had little presence in New Zealand cuisine (Morris, 2010). She stated that the Maori traditional cooking method known as hangi is a tourist attraction and is cooked on special occasions at weddings and celebrations. Morris (2010) argued that the food that goes into a 'hangi' is not Maori traditional food. All types of meat, poultry, fish, shellfish and vegetables can be cooked in the 'hangi'. However, vegetables such as potatoes and pumpkin were introduced by the early European settlers. It is likely that from a tourist's perspective and from my personal experience, questions regarding the origin of potatoes or pumpkin did not cross my mind when experiencing a traditional 'hangi' dinner. Therefore, from my perspective, the unique method of cooking and the name 'hangi' itself is a fulfilment of experiencing the Maori traditional method of cooking regardless of the ingredients.

In recent years, Maori have staked a claim for capital value in the field of cuisine by enhancing the value of their food through the strategy of Maori cookbook writers. Maori culture provides a symbolic unity between Maori and Pakeha despite disadvantages in material resources and well-being (Liu, 2005). Stringfellow, MacLaren, Maclean, and O'Gorman (2013) argued that critics have proposed that Bourdieu's framework focuses on reproduction rather than social change. This research takes the approach that his framework helps understand the relationship of food hierarchy in capital fields.

## **2.8 Local and Global Forces**

Local and global forces are factors which have contributed to the increase and development of contemporary cuisines. New Zealand has emerged as a culturally diverse country because of the arrival of migrants from various cultural backgrounds. According to Bawden (1999), this is currently reflected in the different ethnicities, religions, languages and eating habits. Austin and Whitehead (1998) state that Auckland has the fastest population growth in New Zealand and half of the region's growth are migrants from overseas. As a result, Auckland has become one of the super-diverse cities in the world (Neill et al., 2013). Appadurai (2014) emphasised that the interaction of globalisation and localisation has resulted in heterogenisation. For example, McDonaldisation in Israel did not bring about the local delicacy, 'falafel', but brought about a new commodified version. American corporations such as McDonald's, KFC and Starbucks have an influence on local food cultures and practices due to globalisation. In the case of New



Zealand, the increasing awareness of cultural differences between local and global has resulted in increased diversity of food. For example, McLamburger from McDonald's reflects on the McDonalised New Zealand products and taste.

## **2.9 Globalisation and Modern Technology**

Globalisation and modern technology have also contributed to the development of contemporary cuisines in New Zealand. Globalisation gave opportunities for people to travel to other countries and experience other cultural cuisines and vice versa (Scarpato & Daniele, 2003). Furthermore, new technology in transport, information and communication bring about integration and global consciousness (Mak, Lumbers, & Eves, 2012). The mobility of humans associated with migration and tourism has impacted on the globalisation of food. Chefs who travelled around the world seeking innovation of cuisine tend to combine the techniques and flavours from their home country and bring back new ideas on flavours, ingredients and techniques observed from their travels. One of the early advocates of contemporary cuisine is Peter Gordon, a New Zealand chef. His techniques and ingredients from Asia and the Pacific are borrowed to create complex dishes. His culinary philosophy is influenced by his travel through Asia on his way to Europe, exploring a variety of cuisines, food and cooking ideas, where he developed a liking for coconut, bamboo, spices, chillies and relishes, bringing his creativity back to New Zealand. "Without fusion, the Italians wouldn't be serving Polenta, as corn and maize are from America" (Gordon, 2010). Chefs' expeditions overseas and the desire to create new dishes and experiment with new culinary styles constantly change the development of contemporary cuisine. However, mismatching the ingredients may result in an unpalatable contemporary cuisine which adversely discourages customers' interest in contemporary cuisines. For example, combining two ingredients with strong flavours, such as cheese on black bean sauce spaghetti.

The diversification of cuisines has increased the demand for new food from migrant groups involved in production and consumption of these food items (Hall & Mitchell, 2002). The impact of migration and the increased number of New Zealanders travelling overseas have changed our culinary tastes. New Zealanders who have travelled widely tend to write about their experiences overseas when they return and their travel pattern matches the evolution of food

taste (Tourism New Zealand, 2017). According to Airey (2009), exposure to new food through travel and craving for the taste that they have experienced has created a market for new taste with the added desire for familiar flavours, thus resulting in the creation of innovative cuisine or contemporary cuisine which is the trend of today's society.

Bailey and Earle (2003) pointed out that there has been a growth in the number of local and ethnic restaurants in New Zealand since the 1970s, with increasing numbers of people dining out. The power of the food industry, distribution system and advertising through various channels such as media and commercials tend to pervade the eating habits of young and old (Utter, Scragg, & Schaaf, 2006). Pearson and Kothari (2007) added that food television on prime time in New Zealand deploys food as a symbol of cultural politics to satisfy the emotional, physical and social pleasures of the viewers. Furthermore, the presence of daily culinary columns for the public in the press, publications and magazines, together with culinary critics have contributed to the rise of restaurants in New Zealand (Morris, 2013). The diversity found in New Zealand, being a multi-ethnic society, has resulted in cafes or restaurants with hyphenated-identities such as Korean-Chinese and Chinese-Indian (Friesen, 2015).

Despite this diversification of eateries, ethnic cuisine is constantly re-creating, not to the response of pre-existing food taste, but as a marker of identity and reinforcement of social bonds, as a result of food nostalgia, which was discussed earlier.

## **2.10 Summary**

A multi-disciplinary approach was adopted in exploring human relationships to food starting from biological to cultural, individual and society, local and global, consumption and preparation of food, from a cultural and social perspective. Based on Fischler's (1988) 'Incorporation principle' and 'Omnivores paradox', the relationship between human identity and food was considered. Our behaviours and identities stem from the food we consume. Thus, the consumption and preparation of food incorporate an individual into a group or culture. The paradox also indicated that humans as omnivores are inclined towards exploration, innovation and change, but they have to be careful of the potential danger in food. Furthermore, food is not just an answer to our biological needs but for pleasure derived from the evolution of food resulting from globalisation and modern technology. The evolution of food is further impacted

by an influx of migrants from diverse cultural backgrounds who brought their culture and culinary traditions to New Zealand. As ethnic and regional cuisines have combined, diversified cuisines were created which we have recognised as contemporary cuisines. Further to this, each culture has a distinct method of preparation and cooking of food. The next chapter will discuss the methods used in this research.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

This chapter outlines the methods used in this research. Firstly, the theoretical assumptions underpinning this research will be discussed with particular attention given to social constructivism. Secondly, the rationale for choosing a qualitative approach is presented, including a discussion of the philosophical assumptions underpinning the research. Then, the use of an interpretive case study approach encompassing semi-structured interviews and photo-elicitation is justified. Recruitment of participants, methods used for data collection and the process of data analysis and ethical considerations are also discussed.

#### 3.1 Philosophical Foundation

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), self-constructed reality is made up of how we interpret perceptions of our experiences and the way things are. Hence, the ontological issue addresses the nature of reality created in the mind of participants. For example, an individual participant may view their personal experiences differently. Their cultural, social and environmental experiences from childhood may form memories that continue to influence into adulthood. This reality is ontologically subjective in the sense that they exist only as experienced by the participants. Their cultural beliefs influence what they see and how they experience reality. Likewise, Schutz (1967) found that reality is difficult to explain unless we understand the meaning of the constructed everyday life attached to participants. For this reason, the researcher sought to understand the constructed reality of participants who were from diverse cultural backgrounds. The researcher believes that the participants' upbringing, social and environmental influences contribute to the way their cultural dishes were contemporised.

The epistemology framing this research is social constructivism, which is an interpretive theory of knowledge and meaning. This philosophical idea arose from works such as *The Social Construction of Reality* by Berger and Luckmann (1967), and *Naturalistic Inquiry* by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Social constructivists believe that individuals are seeking to understand the

happenings in their lives (Cresswell, 2003). The objective of applying social constructivism to this study was to focus on the social reality created by participants through their interactions as social beings. Social reality is what they experienced and assigned meaning to, and it is constructed through engagements with society (Neuman, 2011). Thus, meaning is not simply discovered but rather constructed through on-going social interactions. Social constructivism explains how the world is constructed through social practices, and our knowledge of the world is primarily an interpretative attempt that seeks to provide an explanation (Polkinghorne, 1983). Cresswell (2003) added that subjective, varied and numerous meanings are developed through the participants' experiences, following which the researcher searches for patterns or common themes in the situation being studied. For example, open-ended questioning helped the researcher to understand the historical, cultural and social settings of the participants; data was gained from an exploration of the respondents' subjective experiences.

The social constructivist theory of knowledge constructed through experiences also indicates that the researcher's background shapes the interpretation of a particular inquiry (Cresswell, 2003). For this, I acknowledge that the interpretation of the data collected is filtered through my personal, cultural and historical experiences. Furthermore, this research focused on the pattern of meaning which was inductively developed by interpreting the personal experiences and cultural meanings participants placed on conceptualising the contemporised dishes.

My perceptions of contemporised cuisine have been shaped by my cultural and personal experiences. I come from a diverse cultural background and grew up in a multi-cultural country. My ancestors were from China and I am a fourth-generation Chinese, who was born in Malaysia and lived there for over twenty years. Growing up in Malaysia, my daily meals were commonly a combination of cultural dishes which were from a mixture of the prominent cultures, Malay, Chinese and Indian. My cultural knowledge acquisition and exposure to diversify cultural and contemporised dishes have been further enhanced by living in New Zealand for over twenty years and being married to someone from another ethnicity with a different culture from mine. These cultural experiences, whether constructed or inherited, underpinned my interest in the research topic. The research topic arose from my curiosity in seeking to understand how cultural and social settings influenced respondents' perceptions in the preparation of contemporary cuisines. The reflection of my cultural upbringing and assimilation from my past and present environmental settings have contributed in helping me to understand and see the settings from

the participants' perspectives. As stated by Locke, Schweiger, and Latham (1987), the researcher's contribution to the research setting is not detrimental but can be useful and positive. My position as an interpretivist is to offer a carefully considered interpretation of the perception of the participants in relation to the conceptualisation, preparation and presentation of their contemporised cuisines. Although every effort will be made to ensure objectivity, my biases from my personal experiences may shape the way I interpret and view the data collected.

The ontological and epistemology assumptions formed a guideline for choosing a qualitative research method which was directed towards an emic (insider) perspective from the participants. This research drew on the participants' view of the situation being studied and focuses on specific contexts in which the participants interacted socially and culturally in order to understand how this was manifested through their cuisines (Cresswell, 2003). This constructed reality does not make them illusionary. It was what they saw and experienced in the social world and these experiences became a reality to them. In seeking to understand the meaning of the data, an etic (outsider) view is provided by the researcher examining the viewpoint of participants in contemporising the dish. Therefore, a qualitative interviewing approach combined with social constructivist theory of knowledge were used. In the next section, I will discuss the rationale for using a qualitative approach.

### **3.2 Positioning the Qualitative Case Study Approach**

Qualitative research is an inquiry process conducted in natural settings where the researcher builds a holistic picture, and describes, analyses and interprets the shared patterns of behaviour of the informants (Cresswell, 1998). In addition, qualitative research often comprises the use of multiple research methods which involve interpretive and naturalistic approaches, and may include case study, interviews, observations and interpretation of written visual texts that describe the moments of individual lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). A qualitative research approach was used because the nature of this research called for an exploration and in-depth understanding of what was going on rather than enumeration and measurement characterised in quantitative research. Furthermore, a qualitative approach is considered more relevant to

gain a rich description and an in-depth meaning based on participants' social and cultural experiences from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Using qualitative methods, an interpretive case study approach was deemed appropriate because of the clear boundaries of the research site and the specific participants (Asmussen & Creswell, 1995). It is interpretive because it relies on the underlying research framework of a social constructivist epistemology which indicates that reality is socially constructed. According to Creswell (1998), case study research is bounded by time and place; the case being studied is an event, activity or individuals, and the context of the case involves natural settings. This study was bounded by time (six months) and by a single case (culinary students at AUT). Some of these students were in their last semester of study before graduating from AUT to embark on their culinary careers. Hence, these formed my rationale for using an interpretive case study approach. There are various techniques for gathering data; however, the most common technique used in an interpretive case study is the interview.

### **3.3 In-depth Semi-Structured Interviews**

Interviews were undertaken to gain a better understanding of the intentions, behaviours, stories, feelings and thoughts of the other person; if a quantitative approach was used it would be unable to uncover these (Patton, 2002). In this context, interviews were particularly useful for finding out participants' motivation and their rationale as to why they conceptualised the dish in a certain way. In addition, qualitative interviewing enables the researcher to achieve a level of depth and complexity that is not available to survey-based approaches (Seale, 2004). A semi-structured interview was used to give respondents the flexibility to elaborate and add important insights as they arose during the course of conversation. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) considered a semi-structured interview as the art of questioning and listening. All interviews were conducted after respondents had cooked, plated and submitted the final contemporised dish for assessment. Semi-structured questions were pre-formulated to guide the interview towards the research objectives, and additional probe questions emerged during the interviews. Besides interviews, photo-elicitation was utilised as visual records and prompts of the contemporised dish.

### 3.4 Positioning Photo Elicitation

Photo-elicitation is a research tool using images in conjunction with other methods. The rationale for including the photo-elicitation method was to utilise it as a base for the interviews, to evoke memories of the development process of respondents' contemporised dish and as a visual record of the contemporised dish presented by the respondents. It gave me the flexibility to structure my questions around what the participant was telling me. Harper (2002) stated that photo elicitation overcomes some of the challenges of in-depth interviewing in establishing communication between two people from diverse cultural backgrounds. English language is my second language and often it is a barrier when talking; therefore using photographs helped me and the respondents to explain what we wanted to say. Collier and Collier (1986) added photographs for discussion because it lessened the awkwardness of putting the interviewee on the spot by the interviewer, and direct eye contact need not be maintained, but instead, both interviewee and interviewer can turn to the photographs as a kind of neutral party. This proved to be very useful during the interviews.

As Bignante (2010) suggested, photo-elicitation is a useful tool for exploring values and emotions as information gathered generates deeper insights. Photographs of participants' contemporised dishes used in the research represented a 'signature' dish created by them. During the interviews, these images stimulated a pleasant emotional response from the participants. The images of participants' dishes were used as a tool to prompt participants to recall and elaborate on decisions made during the planning and creation of their dish. This was particularly helpful when discussing influences from their cultural heritage. By looking at the images, participants were able to recollect and explain the intentional use of cultural elements, which reflected aspects of their cultural identities. Ten photographs of the contemporised dishes were taken by the culinary lecturer when participants submitted their dish for assessment. Hence, the use of photo-elicitation encouraged recollection of the conceptualisation of the dish and facilitated memory work (Seale, 2004).

Smith, Gidlow, and Steel (2012) claimed that the research interest is in the significance of the participants' attributions to the photographs and not the photographs itself. Photographs used in this research have elicited some elements of participants' cultural identities displayed in the dish, which were of interest in the research.



A qualitative research method and photo elicitation were combined, including semi-structured interviews and photographs of participants' contemporised dishes to cross-check results for consistency (reliability), and to offset any bias of a single research method. The qualitative semi-structured interviews revealed the views of the respondents in contemporising the dish in relation to their culture, and photographs of participants' contemporised dish confirmed respondents' conceptualised dish. This enhanced the validity.

### **3.5 Sampling and Selection**

A non-probability purposive sampling technique was used. Purposive sampling methods select members based on knowledge and relationship regarding a research subject (Freeman, deMarrais, Preissle, Roulston, & St. Pierre, 2007). Potential participants who had the experience and knowledge of contemporising a cultural dish were the targeted population. The specific selection criteria comprised students who had completed the final assessment of a Contemporary Cuisine Aotearoa paper at AUT, as part of their bachelor's degree in Culinary Arts, as well as the willingness to participate in the study. These participants were potential professional chefs, trained in all aspects of food preparation at the university. They are our future chefs who may hold responsibilities for planning menus, cooking and preparing meals for customers in restaurants. Therefore, they play an important role in advocating contemporary cuisines. In this context, ten culinary arts students ranging in age from their early twenties to thirties were recruited and data was collected from October to November 2016. These students were in their last year of the Bachelor of Culinary Arts degree and they comprised a heterogeneous group from diverse cultural backgrounds. They were predominantly female (eight out of the total of ten participants), and nine of them had work experience in a commercial kitchen.

The Contemporary Cuisine Aotearoa paper was taught by Chef Lecturer, Glenn Dentice. Glenn has been consulted and was chosen as a gatekeeper for this research. Chef Lecturer Dentice is one of the chef lecturers teaching the Contemporary Cuisine Aotearoa paper and has been teaching culinary subjects for more than thirty-four years. His years of culinary chef experiences, knowledge in culinary areas and teaching relationship with culinary students from diversified cultures facilitated access to the sample; also, he has a rich source of knowledge about the role of the dishes in the course.

The research was carried out on the city campus at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT). Presentation of a contemporised dish was submitted by the culinary arts students as their final assessment for The Contemporary Cuisine Aotearoa culinary paper. The final assessment was based on the student's theoretical and practical culinary skills and knowledge to produce a contemporary culinary dish of their own design. Participants were given a meat protein to cook for their final assessment, and they did not have a choice in selection. This dish was developed by the students over the semester. One of the assessment criteria was that the dish must be suitable for service in an A La Carte restaurant in New Zealand and must be presented to a standard suitable for photographing and inclusion in a cookbook. The photographs were taken by Chef Lecturer Dentice when participants submitted their contemporised dish for final assessment.

Reflecting on the influence of the assignment the parameters of the assignment may have shaped the way cultural identity was represented in the dishes. For example, the type of meat protein allocated to them may not have been what they would have chosen themselves to explore their cultural identity. Furthermore, the assessment criteria of developing a dish suitable for restaurant service may have constrained the participants from developing a contemporised dish suitable for eating at home, which reflects wider cultural practises.

### **3.6 Data Collection**

Initial contact with potential respondents occurred at one of the lectures in class. I introduced myself during class lectures to the culinary arts students. There were less than forty students from two classes combined who attended the lectures that day. After explaining the nature and scope of the research study, the students were invited to participate in the research. Invitations and Participant Information Sheets were given to those who expressed interest (see Appendix A). Contact details of the researcher were listed on the Participant Information Sheet for students to respond to the invitation. Only six students responded to my first invitation. Hence, a second invitation was extended to culinary arts students who had completed the paper in previous semesters. Four students responded, which made up the ten participants interviewed.

A pilot test was done with the first interviewee prior to conducting a full interview process. It was discovered that the interviewee was struggling to answer some of the questions and needed

further clarification. After reflecting on the pilot interview experience and answers given by the interviewee, some of the questions were re-worded to provide clarity for the rest of the respondents to understand the context of the research.

Participants were contacted by mobile phone and email to arrange a convenient time to meet. All interviews were held at one of the meeting rooms located at AUT city campus where respondents felt more at ease in familiar surroundings. A face to face interview session was carried out and took approximately 40 - 50 minutes.

Respondents were asked a uniform number of open-ended questions and were free to elaborate further if they wished (Appendix C). These questions followed a logical progression, starting with simple questions to establish rapport and to put the participants at ease. Then, the questions progressed to complex issues relating to cultural background and the process of contemporising their cultural dish.

The interviews started with demographic questions about the ethnicity of respondents followed by questions on cultural background with the aim of understanding the root of respondents' cultural heritage. The semi-structured interview gives the interviewer the flexibility to re-word and change the sequence of the questions (Patton, 2002). Other questions were then categorised into five sections based on the development cycle of the dish design: 1) Planning; 2) Preparation: ingredients and equipment selected; 3) Production: cooking, flavour and accompaniment; 4) Presentation: plating, visual appeal, contemporary style; and 5) Conclusion. The sequence of some questions was changed depending on the answers given by the respondents.

At the start of the interview, participants were reminded of the purposes of the research and the research question. Handwritten notes were taken by the researcher as a reminder to return to the key points later and to highlight emerging thoughts. Photographs were used to evoke memories of the conceptualisation of their contemporised dish, and these photographic images helped in gaining a deeper understanding of participants' perspectives from a social and cultural context (Harper, 2002). During the interviews, photographs helped in easing the awkwardness and maintained the flow of communication. There was a clear strong link between the photographs and respondents because the photographs portrayed the respondents' contemporised dish designed by them. In addition, these photographs were used as prompts

during the interviews and assisted the respondents in engaging in conversation about their achievement in contemporising their 'signature' dish. Furthermore, new understandings and deeper insights of the cultural aspects displayed in the photographs were gained through discussion and analysis.

With the approval of respondents, interviews were recorded using an audio recorder to ensure accurate transcription (Merriam, 1998). The interviews were transcribed by the researcher and each transcript was reviewed and checked against the audio recorder to ensure accuracy. Transcribing the interviews helped the researcher to become immersed in the data and enhanced understanding of the topic.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

Qualitative analysis typically commences in the early stages of the research (Patton, 2002) by continually reflecting on the theoretical ideas and research data, as an inductive process. During the interviews, the researcher took observational notes which were written immediately after each interview to capture the expressions of the participants. Body language such as facial expressions (smile, ponderment, excitement, puzzled looks etc.) and tone of voice (uncertainty, confident, happy, etc.) were noted. This contributed to the interpretations and analysis of the data.

The data were analysed using NVivo 11 Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS). This software is a data management tool which helps researchers to sort and organise sections of text for analysis and to examine relationships in the data. However, it does not analyse the data, nor provide a rationale for analysis. Interview transcripts in Word format were imported into NVivo and the content was coded as P1 (Participant 1) to P10 (Participant 10). After sorting the data into coding categories, the data were compared to look for emerging themes.

Thematic analysis was used to identify emergent themes. Thematic analysis is regularly used by researchers in many disciplines and allows a researcher using a qualitative method to communicate observations, findings and interpretation of meaning to other researchers who are using different methods (Boyatzis, 1998). Thematic analysis involves developing themes and

codes. The concepts from the literature review and headings on the interviews are commonly used as initial nodes (Buston, 1997). Nodes are containers of ideas representing the themes identified by the researcher. Codes were created by looking through the data and identifying patterns and ideas discussed by participants. The initial themes were therefore from the researcher's literature review and covered the interview questions. Relevant texts from the data and segmented sentences were then categorised. Some of the nodes were further categorised into hierarchies of parent nodes and child nodes in NVivo to reflect the hierarchical relationships.

The final step involved mapping and interpreting the coded data by identifying recurring emerging themes and making comparisons between participants. During the interpretation process, the researcher's personal and cultural experiences helped in understanding the participants' stories and perceptions of their experiences. This was discussed previously, and suggested by Cresswell (2003), that the researcher's own background shaped the interpretation.

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

Researchers have an ethical obligation to respect the rights of the people they study. Thus, ethics approval was obtained. An application for ethics approval was submitted and approved in July 2016 before recruitment of participants and initiating research interviews. Written consent (Appendix B) was obtained from respondents prior to conducting the interviews, and respondents were also informed of the right to withdraw before completion of data collection. The aim was to reassure respondents that their participation in the research was voluntary and confidential.

### **3.9 Summary**

This chapter discussed the ontology and epistemology underpinning this research and the social constructivism, an interpretive approach. It explored the emic (participants') perspective of contemporising cultural dishes. The philosophical assumptions provided a rationale for using an inductive approach; hence, a qualitative research method was undertaken. The rationale for using a case study and photo-elicitation was provided. Then, it outlined the methods used for

sampling, data collection, data analysis and ethical issues. The next chapter will discuss the results and discussion.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to examine the construction of contemporary cuisines in New Zealand. The objective was to identify the culture embedded in the composition of dishes prepared by a culturally diverse group of AUT culinary arts students, who designed a contemporary cuisine for their final assessment. In addressing the research question, 'What are culinary arts students' perspectives on cultural identity presented in their dish?' ten students studying culinary courses at the Auckland University of Technology were interviewed.

During the in-depth interviews, participants were asked questions relating to their culture, culinary background, the concept of their contemporised dish, planning, preparation and presentation of the dish, and the significance of the dish in relation to their cultural background. Photo elicitation was used to evoke memories of the conception of participants' contemporised dish as some of the participants had submitted their dish in the previous semester. These photographs were also used as prompts during the qualitative interviews. Table 1 summarises the participating culinary arts students and the dishes they created. All participants were given a pseudonym, to keep their identity anonymous.

Table 1: Summary of Participants and the Title of their Contemporised Dish

Participants	Cultural background	Contemporised dish
Dyle	Maori/Pakeha	Rakiraki Lucky Ducky
Filipa	Indonesian Chinese	Deconstructed Batavia
Hubert	Pakeha	Vegan Food
Karen	South African	Smoky Beer Marinated Chicken Breast
Lynette	Korean	Smoked Bulgogi Miso Marinated Duck Breast
Marie	Indian/Portuguese/Chinese	Braised Pork Belly with Lor Bak Sauce
Monique	Italian/Japanese	Smoked Venison with Kumara
Tatiana	Hong Kong Chinese	Duck Deconstructed
Tracy	Vietnamese	Vietnamese Inspired Sous Vide Kingfish
Ursa	Tongan	Purple Smoked Duck

Thematic analysis of the interviews identified patterns or repeated responses from participants. Initial themes were developed from the literature review and questions from the interviews;

emerging themes were themes that had their origin in questions and recurring responses in the data. Some of the themes may not be prevalent across the data but they captured important elements related to the research. The emerging themes are discussed in the following sections.

#### **4.1 Influence of Cultural Background on Food**

Mathews (2000) described culture as the way of life of a people. Although there are other definitions of culture, in this context, culture incorporates the belief and daily practices of a group of people, their unique blend of customs, cuisine, traditions and patterns of behaviour. Visser (2010) added that culture embeds the choices we make in food selection, cooking preparations and the way we eat the food. From a very young age, a group is raised in a belief system of perceptions, logic and reasoning about food preparation and choices specific to their group. For example, if given a piece of fresh salmon, Japanese prefer to eat it raw, Europeans prefer to cook (fry or bake) the salmon and Chinese prefer to steam it. Muslims abstain from eating pork and pork products due to religion, but Chinese eat practically every part of the pig including the offal. The rejection of unknown food resulting in a habitual diet is a phenomenon termed as food neophobia (Dovey, Staples, Gibson & Halford, 2008), whereas other studies described neophobia as 'selective eating' or 'restricted eating'. The neophiliacs, on the other hand, are those who enjoy trying new food and are audacious in their eating style (Latimer et al., 2015). Therefore, there is no right or wrong way in food choices and food preparation.

According to Barthes (1997), food allows people to re-enact their cultural background through cooking and food preparation which has been passed down from generation to generation. This culinary system gives meaning to the individual in relation to the continuity of culture and identity. However, there are factors that may disrupt the traditional culinary system intentionally or unintentionally, for example, designing a contemporary cuisine. In this context, contemporised means designing a dish that reflects influences from generations of migrations, social relationships and globalisation. Contemporising a dish can be done through using different modern techniques of preparation, such as using modern kitchen equipment, global ingredients, non-traditional plating or borrowing flavours from other cultures.

In the section below, three contemporised dishes are discussed in relation to how participants have demonstrated the role of taste or flavour derived from childhood memories and



recollections which connected them to their cultural heritage. As Stallberg-White and Pliner (1999) have pointed out, each ethnic group has their own distinctive cultural taste in food which expresses individual identity.

#### **4.1.1 Braised Pork Belly with Lor Bak Sauce**

Field (2012) suggested that memories can be attached to specific objects which give cultural meaning, such as heirlooms from grandparents in the form of recipes. The first dish was a contemporised traditional dish that originated from a recipe passed down from previous generations.

Marie is from an Indian/Portuguese/Chinese background, and her reconstructed dish was titled '*Braised Pork Belly with Lor Bak*' sauce. The concept for her dish originated from a recipe passed down from her grandfather to her father. Marie's mother works during the week; therefore, Marie spends most of her time with her father at home. Marie said,

"I would just stand there and watch my father cook and fry things and he would just talk to me about it".

Marie's family came from Singapore but she was brought up in New Zealand. Her mother is of Indian-Portuguese heritage and father is Chinese. Her recipe, '*Braised Pork Belly with Lor Bak sauce*' was originally from her grandparents and was handed down to her father and then to her. She said,

"It's a childhood dish to my father and a childhood dish to me" ... "Sadly, there's nothing on my mum's cooking on this plate" ... "I love how my dish represented me as a person and that I could take my father's Loh Bak recipe, make it into my own and execute it as best as I could".

Traditionally, this dish is served in Singapore, is plated in a clay pot and comprises braised pork belly, preserved vegetables, tofu, hard boiled eggs and mushrooms submerged in a soup-like dark sauce, and served with a bowl of rice (Figure 1). Marie commented,

"Um ... I know it was in my thinking, it was kind of like a, ... I would think of it as a poor man's dish besides the pork".



Figure 1. Traditional Singaporean Braised Pork Belly Served in a Claypot

Retrieved 30 March 2017 from <http://rasamalaysia.com/braised-pork-belly-in-soy-sauce-tau-yew-bak/>



Figure 2. Marie's Braised Pork Belly with Lor Bak Sauce (October 2015)

Marie contemporised the dish by braising the pork for four hours, took the braised pork belly out of the pot to trim off the fat and pan-fried the pork belly. The pan-fried pork belly was presented on a wooden-marbled plate with an accompaniment of broccolini, potato and carrots, which she termed as “classic kiwi vegetables” from her memories of a typical New Zealand Sunday roast. The egg and mushroom were replaced with New Zealand vegetables, boiled with pandan leaf to add Asian fragrance, and the potato was baked and presented with sour cream and chives, symbolising a New Zealand element. She combined the tofu, a staple food in Asia, with kumara, a root vegetable commonly grown in New Zealand, to show fusion of both cultures. The kumara tofu was served in the hollow cavity of the bamboo stem (internode). According to her, “*the*

*bamboo stem brought an interesting, fun, new modernised element while maintaining the traditional Singapore culture*". She said that her favourite element was the kumara tofu. A slice of lotus root was displayed on the dish to represent her Asian heritage. Lotus root is a popular vegetable used in Asian cuisine. The lotus was placed on the plate intentionally, but at the very last moment, she said, *"I've never ever cooked with lotus, that was a whole new thing for me"*. I asked if she had eaten lotus before and she replied, *"Ah...not until that day, yeah, ... it was really strange"*.

The soupy sauce was reduced until it was thick and caramelised and served on the pork belly.

"When I went home and told my dad (this is his recipe, like family recipe), when I said, "I pan fried the pork belly", he was like ... "oh, you're not supposed to do that" ... and I was like, "no, no, but this is what they do here" (referring to New Zealand) and he was like "oh, ok," and he tried it and he was like, "Oh, this is quite good".

For Marie, her perspective of contemporising the dish was pan frying the braised pork belly and she mentioned *"this is what they do here"* (meaning in New Zealand). Pan frying gave the braised pork belly a crispy texture and that was how she would eat the pork.

"I never, even till today, I never ate the braised pork that was in there, like, the fact it was boiled, so when I took it out and pan-fried it, I kind of like it more this way. So, from my father's parents to him and to me, we changed it each generation".

Trimming the fat off the pork, was a healthier option preferred in today's trend of healthy diets.

Although Marie's father was taken aback when she told him that she pan-fried the pork belly, but on tasting the pork, he commented that it tasted quite good. Marie's eating preference of the pan-fried pork belly version and her father's acceptance of the way the pork belly was pan-fried, symbolised a compromise of two concepts of cooking a traditional pork belly dish.

Edwards, Hartwell, and Brown (2010) suggested that food preference and consumption are influenced by geographical location influenced by the acculturation process. First-generation immigrants are more inclined to remain connected to their original culture (Kittler et al., 2012) as seen in the case of Marie's father. Second and third generation will often adopt food of other cultures to suit their own palate, as in the case of Marie. In research carried out amongst Caribbean immigrants in the United Kingdom, it was found that immigrants do not always retain their traditional eating habits long term (Atkins & Bowler, 2016). It will be interesting to know whether Marie's father will pan-fry the pork belly, the next time he cooks his traditional one-pot meal because that is how Marie will eat the pork.

According to Atkins and Bowler (2016), immigrant groups often associate certain foods with poverty in their homeland. This food may induce shame or pride among immigrant groups. For Marie, this 'poor man's dish' reminded her of her father's and paternal grandfather's recipe rather than poverty. The contemporised dish represented her cultural heritage, giving her a sense of identity, as seen in her comment, "I love how my dish represented me as a person". In revealing her Chinese culture and identity, she had intentionally placed a slice of lotus which can be clearly seen on her dish. By combining tofu and kumara served on a bamboo internode, she had intentionally infused some Asian and New Zealand elements in her dish. Since the traditional dish was not plated in a pot, it has lost its well-known name as a 'one pot dish'.

A question that arose during the research was whether Marie's mother has passed on her Indian/Portuguese culinary culture to Marie. In researching diaspora Goan women in Toronto, D'Sylva and Beagan (2011) suggested that the role of cooking food by diaspora women retained ethnic identities and food mediates a strong bond between mothers and daughters (Bugge & Almås, 2006). Women, when preparing food, share the knowledge and ideas which facilitate the transfer of the culinary system. This knowledge is passed down matrilineally from mother to daughter to grand-daughter. Fox and Smith (2011) added that mothers especially are often expected to take the responsibility of caring for the family through food. On the contrary, Marie mentioned watching her father cook and talk about food. There is a shift in the role of fathers today which Lamb (2013) described as a new fatherhood, implying that today's fathers differ from fathers of the past. Fathers are more involved when mothers are employed; however, this does not mean that mothers are doing less. Marie's recipe was from her father, and therefore, I was not able to detect her mother's ethnic identities in the dish. This was confirmed by her saying that "... *sadly, there's nothing on my mum's cooking on this plate*" ... (referring to the contemporised dish).

#### 4.1.2 Deconstructed Batavia

The concept of the second contemporised dish originated from Minangkabau, Sumatra in Indonesia (Figure 3). Rendang is commonly served in traditional Minang ceremonies and religious festivals.

Filipa is from an Indonesian/Chinese background and has lived in New Zealand for four years. Her contemporised dish was titled '*Deconstructed Batavia*'. The word '*Batavia*' is an old name for the capital of the Dutch East Indies, which is the present-day city of Jakarta. It is possible that using the word '*Batavia*' symbolised something from the past being '*Deconstructed*' into the contemporary era. Traditionally, water buffalo meat was used in cooking rendang because the meat was readily available in the region. Spices and coconut milk were added to slow cook the meat until tender, then it is served with steamed rice, accompanied with vegetables (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Traditional Beef Rendang from West Sumatra in Indonesia

Retrieved 30 March 2017 from <https://mustardwithmutton.com/2014/01/22/best-ever-beef-rendang-recipe/>



Figure 4. Filipa's Deconstructed Batavia (October 2016)

Filipa's dish represented her culture and country, and she chose to contemporise the traditional rendang dish even though she does not know how to cook traditional rendang. She said,

"It is popular in Indonesia and I think different place have different version (referring to rendang). I actually didn't know how to cook rendang but I got a friend from church who knew and taught me how to cook it and she told me, that's the traditional way from Minangkabau (Sumatra)".

Filipa's dish comprised beef rendang steak, dauphine potatoes, spinach mousse, pickled cucumber, yellow baby carrots and spinach crisps. Potatoes were used to replace rice because the potato is a staple food of New Zealand. The potatoes were poached in coconut milk, turmeric, lemon grass and mixed with choux pastry mix and deep-fried. The cucumber was pickled with sugar, white wine vinegar and salt to suit New Zealanders' palates. According to her, it was unheard of to serve fresh cucumber on the plate in New Zealand. She said,

"We normally serve fresh cucumber but we can't really serve raw cucumber on the plate if it's a plated dish. Well, we can if it's in Indonesia but it's unheard of here (New Zealand) ... so, I thought, if I just lightly pickled it, it will conform to the taste bud of the people here".

The blanched baby carrots were served with oil, bay leaves, salt and pepper. The sauce was made from coconut milk infused with rendang flavour. Spinach leaves were used as a substitute for cassava leaves. One portion of the spinach leaves was deep fried and the other was made into spinach mousse to compliment the dish.

"... because we don't have that (referring to cassava leaves), ... Umm ... even though we can get that frozen, it's like fibres, stringy cassava leaves".

Filipa wanted to introduce an Indonesian flavour profile to the New Zealand palate. When I asked her in what ways her dish revealed her tradition and culture, she replied,

“the meat and the potato” ... “ah because we have deep fried stuff (referring to the dauphine potatoes), we have a lot of deep fried food in Indonesia” ... “the rendang is definitely different from the western world, the rest are not really (referring to the rest of the accompaniments on the plate)”.

Filipa took the challenge of taking a popular Indonesian dish to contemporise even though she had not cooked the rendang dish before. Evidently, she chose to use a popular Indonesian dish as an emblem and marker of her national identity (Cook & Crang, 1996). Like language, food acts as a mechanism for expressing her identity, who she is and the place she is from. Although potatoes are a staple food in New Zealand, which was the reason for replacing rice with potatoes, deep frying the potatoes brought memories of deep fried food in her home country. These memories, which are linked to nostalgic food, maintained her ethnic identity (Locher et al., 2005). In addition, tastes and aromas from the rendang spices triggered her cultural memories (Hayes-Conroy & Hayes-Conroy, 2008). Filipa has only lived in New Zealand for four years, and the nostalgic longing and consumption of food linking to her past maintained the continuity of her identity in unfamiliar surroundings. It brings back memories of her past into her present surroundings and creates a sense of attachment to her home country.

According to Santich (1996), immigrants often adopt ingredients available in the host country because of unavailability of ethnic ingredients. Filipa substituted cassava leaves for spinach leaves. She then created a spinach mousse and deep fried the spinach leaves. Young cassava leaves have a high proportion of protein, iron and vitamins and are popular in Indonesia (Wargiono, Richana, & Hidajat, 2011). The contemporary serving of a traditional rendang dish nowadays comprises rendang meat, rice and raw cucumber. Hence, the cassava leaves, which Filipa thought would depict her culture, may not be necessary from an eaters' perspective; however, from a personal viewpoint, Filipa felt strongly that cassava leaves were one of her cultural ingredients. In looking at Filipa's dish, the aroma from the beef rendang was indicative of her culture except for the plating. The presentation of the dish without the rice and the fact that the meat was presented as a steak and not a stew, looked like a Western contemporised dish.



#### 4.1.3 Smoked Bulgogi Miso Marinated Duck Breast

The third contemporised dish was conceptualised from a popular Korean barbeque dish. This dish was designed as a symbolic expression of sociality in reinforcing social bonds through sharing with friends (Kittler et al., 2012). Eating cultural food creates a sense of attachment among migrants and evokes memories of the past into the present (Locher et al., 2005).

Lynette is from a Korean background and both her parents are first generation Koreans living in Auckland. She was born and grew up in New Zealand. The title of her dish was '*Smoked Bulgogi Miso Marinated Duck Breast*' (Figure. 5). 'Bulgogi' is a Korean dish of marinated meat, grilled over an open flame, giving the meat a smoky-charred flavour. This dish is accompanied by various side dishes, for example, vegetables, eggs, kimchi and fermented soya bean soup.



Figure 5. Lynette's Smoked Bulgogi Miso Marinated Duck Breast (October 2016)

Lynette marinated the duck breast in Asian flavoured ingredients such as onions, spring onions, garlic and ginger for two hours, then brushed it with miso paste and grilled it to char the meat. The rice cake is crumbed in 'panko' (breadcrumbs) and deep-fried, giving it a crunchy texture and chewy on the inside. According to Lynette,

*"Korean rice cakes are popular as well. When a baby turns one they buy rice cakes ..."*

Other accompaniments were pickled radish, confit quail eggs, shitake mushrooms and baby carrots. The miso jus was made by using beef stock, white wine, thyme, bay leaves, shallots, garlic and miso paste. Miso jus was served as a gravy rather than the traditional serving of a



bowl of soup, and baby carrots were used instead of kimchi. The side dish of boiled eggs was replaced with confit quail eggs. She said, “using this technique enhanced my dish and made it slightly more modern and interesting”. The main profile of her contemporised dish was to keep the strong charred flavour of the meat, the saltiness from the miso paste and the crispy side dishes. The duck breast was charred using a grill on an open flame.

Lynette grew up in New Zealand. Her contemporised dish was based on the concept of Korean barbeque. The dish was chosen to represent her identity because it was a popular dish, not only for Koreans but has gained popularity in New Zealand. She told me that it was also a dish where she can spend her time socialising with friends during a meal while she waited for the meat to cook, although she did not specify the nationality of her friends.

“Well, I decided to work around the concept of Korean barbeque, I decided to choose that because it’s really popular not only in the Korean culture but also in the Westernize ... umm ... like even in New Zealand, it’s really popular and that’s one of my favourite things to eat, just sit down, socialise over Korean barbeque, so I just decided to take all the elements of that and contemporised that”.

Lynette’s dish portrayed a dominant Korean culture. She emphasised keeping the flavours of the traditional dish. She said,

“I’d say Korean or Asian based because of all the ingredients, ... flavours that I have produced on this particular dish”. “Umm ... if you keep to the concept and keep with the flavours, I don’t think you can never lose the culture in the dish ...”.

The title of Lynette’s dish ‘*Smoked Bulgogi Miso Marinated Duck Breast*’ revealed her ethnicity. In keeping with her culinary culture, she emphasised the Asian flavours and smoky-charred flavour on the meat. She intentionally added rice-cake, a significant food item commonly used in Korean festivities and celebrations. She did not include or mention ‘*kimchi*’ which is a traditional side dish served in most Korean restaurants and eaten at nearly every meal by Koreans. This was not specifically explored in the interview.

The cultural dish that Lynette has chosen to contemporise gave her a sense of connection to her ethnicity and served as a vehicle for social interaction with her friends. The sense of connectedness to home preserved her ethnic identity as well as reinforced her sense of belonging (Stephens, Flick, Wen Li, Hodgetts, & Ho, 2010), The communal sharing of food with her friends reinforced social bonds and expression of culture (Kittler et al., 2012).

In this section, I focussed on the influence of the cultural background by presenting the upbringing of participants, their length of stay in New Zealand and the ways they intentionally displayed their cultures embedded in their dish. The three participants' cultural representations of their contemporised dish showed distinctive cultural elements (Fox & Smith, 2011). Even though the traditional dishes were de-constructed and transformed, there were elements of cultural identities embedded in the dishes that linked to the creators' ethnic heritage. For Marie, placing a slice of lotus root was her final touch in confirming her Chinese ethnicity. The taste and aroma from Filipa's rendang dish brought memories of a well-known dish from Indonesia. The rice cake displayed on Lynette's dish and the title of her dish showed her Korean culture. These participants had the intentions of making known their cultures which were embedded in their dish. For Filipa and Lynette, their dishes were strategically planned to include their culture. For example, Filipa utilised the taste and fragrance from rendang flavoured spices to make the sauce and dauphine potatoes, and Lynette added the rice cake which is a significant Korean food item. However, Marie had to add a slice of lotus root to reinforce her culture. From the perspective of visual appeal, without the slice of lotus root, Marie's culture may not have been prominently seen on the plate.

In the next section, I explore the visual presentation of the contemporised dish displayed by two participants in relation to their culture.

#### **4.2 Visual Presentation of Contemporised Dish**

Food presentation is the art of arranging or decorating a dish to make it more appealing and is as important as taste or flavour. Our first experience of food is how it looks, how it smells and lastly how it tastes. Douglas (1997) pointed out that the texture, colour and other visual patterns, such as plate ware or cutlery such as chopsticks, forks, spoons and knives are as important as the food. Lévi-Strauss (1997) added that food must not only be good to eat but also good to think. In this context, the focus is on the cultural decoration of dishes which may or may not reinforce participants' ethnic identities or reveal their cultural heritage.

#### 4.2.1 Braised Pork Belly with Lor Bak Sauce

Marie's de-construction of a traditional dish of braised pork belly in soupy sauce served in a clay pot was transformed into braised pork belly, pan-fried and served with thick sauce. The dish was presented on a wooden-marbled plate with blanched vegetables. The plating display was contemporised from a traditional one-pot dish to plating on a flat plate. In her opinion, the dish was ninety percent European and ten percent Asian because of the plating.

"Um, ... I really wanted a clay pot. I tried it in a big bowl, like a clay pot but it just wasn't realistic, like how are you going to eat with a bowl, if you're going to cut the pork up you know, but yeah, probably the plating was the hardest part of the whole thing".

The visual appeal of the contemporised dish did not portray Marie's original traditional dish served in a clay pot. Marie had chosen practicality over traditional plating of the dish. Cutting pork belly in a bowl would be a struggle for diners, and thus, placing it on a flat plate was logical and practical. In doing so, the method of serving this dish had lost the traditional visual appeal and was no longer a one-pot meal. The change in plating style may have upgraded the concept of a 'poor man's meal in one pot' to plating suitable for serving in restaurants, but had lost its humble status as a poor man's dish and her father's comfort food. It was elevated to 'hospitality standard', and, in doing so, had lost quite a bit of meaning.

#### 4.2.2 Vietnamese Inspired Sous Vide Kingfish

Tracy is an international student and both her parents are from Danang, Vietnam. Her dish was inspired by Luke Nguyen, an Australian born Vietnamese chef and titled '*Vietnamese Inspired Sous Vide Kingfish*'. Tracy's contemporised dish comprised sous vide kingfish, New Zealand seasonal vegetables, such as roasted carrots, asparagus and sugar peas toasted with pistachio butter. Instead of steaming the fish in banana leaf, she used the sous vide technique to contemporise the cooking of the fish. Sous vide is a cooking technique in which the food is vacuum sealed in a bag, then cooked to a precise temperature in a water bath to ensure that the inside is properly cooked without overcooking the outside, and also to retain the moisture. Tracy chose to display her Vietnamese culture by intentionally plating her dish on a banana leaf in a bamboo basket with chopsticks resting on a chopstick rest along the side. Although a chopstick rest is commonly used in restaurants rather than at home, the black rectangular

plating looked contemporary. The basket was not available in New Zealand: she had requested her friend to send one to her from Vietnam. (Figure 6).

“... I want to bring more Vietnamese culture, so I bought the basket ... you can see chopsticks, banana leaf, fish sauce, the basket ... Yeah ... it's all about Vietnamese”.

The aesthetic dimension of food is gaining more relevance in the contemporary world. For example, the visual display of food can enhance a person's experience of a dish with the assumption that we eat with our eyes first (Delwiche, 2012). The visual presentation of Tracy's dish provides us with a perspective on what it symbolised culturally. By displaying chopsticks, banana leaf, basket and using fish sauce, Tracy has provided the diners with a cultural aesthetic experience of her cuisine which was rooted in her cultural heritage.



Figure 6. Tracy's Vietnamese Inspired Sous Vide Kingfish (October 2015)

Unlike Marie, Tracy emphasised display to show her dominant culture. (Figure 6). Her display of chopsticks and bamboo basket symbolised her Vietnamese culture. Different cultures use different utensils for eating such as hands, chopsticks, spoons, knives and forks. Using chopsticks for eating remains a tradition for Chinese and is practised by other cultures such as Vietnamese, Thai, Korean and Japanese. According to Slocombe et al. (2016), the choice of cutlery (chopsticks, knives, spoons, forks and hands) is said to influence the enjoyment of food. It is up to the diners to choose their preferred cutlery for the enjoyment of this contemporised dish, which may not necessarily be chopsticks. On the other hand, using a bamboo basket to incorporate plating of the dish displayed a significant Vietnamese culture.

#### 4.2.3 Purple Smoked Duck

Ursa's background is Tongan. She was born in New Zealand and both her parents are from Tonga. Her contemporised dish was titled '*Purple Smoked Duck*'. She wanted to work with game meat, to develop a taste for gamey flavours; hence, she chose duck as a protein to contemporise. Her dish was based on the idea of contemporary coq au vin and she changed the flavours to reflect the flavours of Asian influence by using Asian ingredients such as star anise, coriander seeds and dried chillies. Ursa's dish comprised smoked duck poached in rhubarb almond mix, rhubarb puree, baby leeks and baby turnips.



Figure 7. Ursa's Purple Smoked Duck (October 2016)

She told me that she wanted the dish to be purple to represent Tongan culture.

"Well, I view purple as a royal colour and, ... Um ... it represents royalty in Tonga ... So, I wanted to make the whole thing purple. It doesn't look purple (referring to the photograph) but it was more purple on the day (day of assessment) I think".

Although Ursa's dish originated from French cuisine, she wanted to display her culture by naming her dish '*Purple Smoked Duck*' and use purple, a colour of royalty in Tonga, which represented her homeland. Purple is associated with mourning for the royal family in Tonga. The traditional sign of mourning is to drape the buildings and homes in purple and black to show respect and share the grief of the royal family.

In view of the visual presentation, Tracy and Ursa intentionally brought in elements that were significant to their country and elements which represented part of their culture. In terms of

taste, the fish sauce was a significant Asian ingredient and the title of the dish 'Vietnamese' re-confirmed the culture and ethnicity of Tracy. However, identifying the culture or ethnicity embedded in Ursa's dish may not be as simple based on the colour 'purple' as its representation. In addition, the title of Ursa's dish was presented in French which clouded her cultural representation. The use of Asian spices such as star anise, coriander seeds and dried chillies complicated the conception of her dish which was based on coq au vin. Coq au vin is a classic Burgundian dish made by slow cooking poultry in red Burgundy wine. But it did not mean that the dish was not palatable because the focus of this research was on the culture of the creator embedded in the dish.

The next section highlights a participant from multiple ethnic identities. It explored the underlying cultural beliefs and identification which guided the participant in the conceptualisation of her contemporised dish.

#### **4.3 Searching for a Sense of Identity in Contemporising the Dish**

Who we are and where we stand in terms of ethnic identity is a choice which migrants, who move to another country with a different culture from their own, have to make. According to Suárez-Orozco et al. (2009), some may renounce the origin of their identity and adopt the dominant culture of the host country or some may adapt to the new environment leading to a bi-cultural identity. Phinney and Ong (2007) pointed out that some may be confused or have conflicting feelings about their identity while some may have a clear commitment to their ethnic identity. The contemporised dish presented by the participant below revealed a multi-cultural identity.

##### **4.3.1 Smoked Venison with Kumara**

Monique was born in New Zealand, but her mother's background is Japanese and her father is Italian. She was raised by her mother and maternal grandparents, although recently she moved to live by herself. She said,

"I'm probably quite Japanese but not quite Kiwi" ... "In terms of how I think and how I approach things, it's Japanese, like ... um ... how ... I treat people. I noticed recently,

like this year, the way I deal with situations is very different from, like, New Zealander. It's just like how culturally I was raised".

The conceptualisation of her dish was based on an Italian antipasto platter. She wanted to incorporate the smoking, marinating and dehydration methods while at the same time modifying the dish to form a contemporised traditional New Zealand "meat and two vege" meal.

"Japanese people don't really eat meat and so, um... I focused more on New Zealand cuisine and kind of ... Um ... I like the traditional methods of cooking so like pickling, smoking".



Figure 8. Monique's Smoked Venison with Kumara (October 2015)

Monique was given venison as a protein to cook. She found difficulties in using her Japanese culture as a base for her concept of cooking venison, because according to her cooking venison is not common in Japanese culture.

"It was hard for me because I can't, I can't like impose my culture (referring to cooking venison using her Japanese culture as a base) in something that is not in my culture. So, I took the road of like my Kiwi culture in this sense".

She added, "... *meat and vegetable is also very Italian. Kind of reminds me of my dad's grandma*". Her dish comprised smoked venison, citrus caviar, parfait, marinated eggplant, lavosh, beetroot chips, pickled pea sprouts and kumara puree. As part of her Japanese culture, she added a pickling element by pickling pea sprouts, and for her New Zealand culture, she used manuka chips and juniper berries to smoke the venison. She said,

"Yeah, I think ... even though I would consider myself more Japanese, I think I went very Western in this approach, so I did go more Italian in my roots, um ... and that's

why, I think I can see more how this is Italian (referring to the photograph), um, like the lavosh and the parfait is like, um, in Italy, you always have something to start with before the meal ...”

Monique described the culture portrayed in her dish as “*I would say, my Kiwi culture, with a hint of Japanese*”.

The interview with Monique revealed an uncertainty of her cultural identity. She confirmed that she was more Japanese than New Zealand in approach because of her upbringing, but not much was mentioned about her Italian background. She was raised by her mother who is from a Japanese cultural background; Monique said that when growing up in New Zealand, her father, who is Italian, was not very involved in her upbringing. Both her parents were born in their home countries. Therefore, she has had the cultural influence handed down from first generation diaspora from both countries. From the interview, it was apparent that her upbringing in Japanese culture was very strong as she was living with her mother and her Japanese grandparents in New Zealand before moving out on her own.

The concept of her dish which originated from an Italian antipasto plate was based on a typical New Zealand meat and two vegetables. This may have emerged from her being raised in New Zealand. During the interview, she mentioned that her dish portrayed her Italian roots, for example, the lavosh and parfait. However, she also mentioned that her dish portrayed her New Zealand and Japanese culture when she said, “*I would say, my Kiwi culture, with a hint of Japanese*”. These were evidence of fluctuations in identity. Baumeister (1986) described identity conflict as an individual striving to find commitments due to multiple components of identities. It seemed that Monique was confronted with three sets of identities which were her home country of New Zealand, her Japanese mother and her Italian father. Her dish showed her strong commitments to New Zealand and Japanese culture, but she also has an Italian heritage from her father’s side. Sommers (1969) pointed out that first generations primarily remained loyal to their culture of origin, but their children may encounter difficulties in growing up between two different sets of identities and commitments.

The next section explores the contemporised dishes inspired by memories of participants’ childhood which were reflected in the dish. These memories helped transformed the dish into one that represented the creators’ culture and ethnic identities.



## 4.4 Childhood Memories

Food based nostalgia brings memories of our past into the present. The lingering food taste that we acquired in childhood brings back memories in appreciation of our ethnic identity (Locher et al., 2005). Such memories are ways of preserving ethnic identities. Memories are not only cultural but have a social nature.

### 4.4.1 Rakiraki Lucky Ducky

Dyle's mother is from New Zealand and his father is Maori from Gisborne, New Zealand. When he was growing up, he remembered spending time cooking with his grandparents and dining together as a family. He found food to be a good way to connect to people and enjoyed sharing food with other people. Kittler et al. (2012) suggested that our cuisine serves as a symbolic expression of sociality, first shared within the family and by extension with the larger community that shares our culinary tradition. Dyle's dish was based on cottage pie, which he said was "*rich in sentimental value and is a well-known British classic, famous for its nostalgic power*". Inspired by his lecturer, Glenn Dentice's words "*all food has a story*", he used memories of growing up during his childhood to express his identity in his contemporised dish.



Figure 9. Dyle's Rakiraki Lucky Ducky (October 2016)

The title of Dyle's dish was '*Rakiraki Lucky Ducky*'. Dyle has a cheerful and jovial personality. He told me that the dish was a representation of his life in Aputerewa, Northland in New

Zealand. The introduction of kawakawa and horopito herbs in his dish stirred memories of kawakawa tea from Aputerewa. Kawakawa and horopito are native plants of New Zealand (Orwin, 2007). Kawakawa leaves were commonly used as a tea for treatment of stomach pain or indigestion from overeating. Horopito leaves have a hot peppery taste and anti-fungal properties.

Collins (2008) suggested that reminders placed on foods connect people to their cultural heritage and eating specific cultural foods evoke memories of time and place. Dyle substituted the potato toppings of the cottage pie with kumara puree. Kumara is of cultural importance as a staple crop of his Maori ancestors. The Polynesian ancestors of Maori brought kumara with them when they first arrived in New Zealand and kumara formed part of Maori kai diet (Burton et al., 1983). Kumara is associated with the Maori god, Rongomatane who is also the god of peace and agriculture (Orbell, 1995). Dyle told me that it was only right that he uses kumara as part of the ingredients because kumara is of great significance to his Maori culture.

Like Tracy, Dyle talked about intentionally using a red placemat as visual appeal because, in Maoridom, red is Papatuanuku, the Earth Mother, the sustainer of all living things, and the role of food is to purify the body from *tapu* (the sacred). According to Barlow (1991), *tapu* is the power and influence of God. Another intentional element introduced by Dyle was placing cutlery alongside a small kete (a pocket woven from the leaves of New Zealand flax) to symbolise the incorporation of gifts of another culture. Maori weaving is full of symbolism and has meanings embodied with the spiritual beliefs of the Maori (Puketapu-Hetet, 1989). The art of weaving called *raranga* has been passed down for many generations. The pocket kete symbolised a container of knowledge and wisdom according to Maori culture (Puketapu-Hetet, 1989). Dyle also placed a serving of a short glass of port to signify the idea of a night cap after the meal, which was a good gesture of hospitality. Hospitality and kindness have always been an important aspect of Maori culture. The term *manaaki* is used to express love and hospitality towards people in Maori culture (Barlow, 1991). The presentation of Dyle's dish was deeply meaningful and influenced by symbolic Maori culture.

#### 4.4.2 Smoky Beer Marinated Chicken Breast

Karen is from South Africa and she has lived in New Zealand for seven years. Her background is British. Karen chose a traditional South African 'braai' to contemporise because it reminded her of her childhood days where family and friends got together to drink, socialise and eat. The word 'braai' is Afrikaans for barbeque or grill at social events where family and friends gathered together. According to Holtzman (2006), eating specific food evokes a recollection of past memories thus prompting one to look forward to certain events. Dodson and Gilkes (1995) added that significant places signify shared experiences and allow memories to be re-enacted as well as reinforce a sense of belonging. Karen's conceptualisation of her dish originated from pleasant memories of her homeland, childhood, family and socialising with friends. The title of her dish was '*Smoky Beer Marinated Chicken Breast*'.



Figure 10. Karen's Smoky Beer Marinated Chicken Breast (October 2016)

Karen wanted to give her dish a traditional flavour by taking the idea from "beer can bird" which involves inserting a can of open beer into the bird's cavity and placing it in a braai. The aroma of the beer is absorbed into the meat giving it a beautiful flavour. She also wanted to include corn, a staple food of South Africa and bananas. She contemporised the dish by marinating the chicken breast in a traditional South African beer marinade, then stuffed the chicken breast with banana. She created a corn custard, a rich tomato sauce and sticky caramelised onions as accompaniments. Meat is the main part of a meal in South African braai and corn porridge is traditionally eaten with meat accompanied by tomato and onion sauce. Karen's concept of her contemporised dish clearly showed a re-enactment of a braai which comprised the main

ingredients of a braai, such as meat, corn, rich tomato sauce and onions. However, these ingredients were cooked differently.

Dyle and Karen both talked about memories of dining together as a family and sharing food with friends when they were growing up. According to Rozin and Rozin (1981), food serves to express personal and group identities and to cement social bonds. Dyle emphasised the use of food to connect to people, which reflects his Maori culture. He introduced ingredients which reminded him of the place where he grew up and Maori artefacts such as 'kete' in the presentation of his dish. Karen used a traditional South African braai to conceptualise her dish and emphasised the beer marinade by displaying a glass of beer next to her dish when presenting it for assessment. Both Dyle and Karen were eager to reveal their culture and ethnic identities embedded in their dishes.

The next section explores the eating habits of two participants which guided them in contemporising their dish. One is on a vegan diet by choice and has a vision of making a profitable industry by promoting vegan meals, and the other is vegetarian for religious reasons. Although vegetarian, she took on the challenge of contemporising a meat dish.

#### **4.5 The Influence of Eating Habits in Contemporising the Dish**

According to Miller (1987), the choice of food eaten is not just related to quantity or availability but also a representation of individual and group identities. Furst et al. (1996) suggested that food choices implicate a complex interaction between individual preferences, socio-cultural influences and environmental influences. For example, individual food choices may be related to food intolerances or personal experiences of specific food either good or bad or one's dietary habits may be dictated by religion. The next two dishes showed a comparison between personal choices made in contemporising a dish. One was conceptualised based on motivation from personal eating habits and the other was created with the intention of revealing her cultural identity rather than dietary habit.

#### 4.5.1 Vegan Food

Hubert is a vegan who grew up in Hawkes Bay and his cultural heritage descends from New Zealand and the Netherlands. He learnt how to cook from his father.

“... um, I remember one of the first recipes when my dad taught me was spaghetti bolognaise, um, which was one of the staple in my family meal ... “

His concept of a contemporised dish was to develop a vegan contemporary dish. Hubert's healthy vegan dish reflected his eating habits. He said,

“... I have chosen to change my eating habits (referring to a vegan diet). I can't draw from my own heritage because Dutch cuisine and English cuisine are very dominant on meat ... I don't think this dish reflects my upbringing or my culture very much ... “

The title of his dish was ‘*Vegan Food*’, which comprised four components: a nut and seed loaf, vine tomatoes stuffed with Middle Eastern spiced tofu, rocket oil foam and capsicum puree (Figure 10).



Figure 11. Hubert's Vegan Food (October 2016)

Hubert's ideal of healthy eating was influenced by “*the modern vegan movement*” as he called it and he chose to eliminate meat, dairy and eggs from his diet. He said,

“I foresee the only realistic future where sustaining a profitable hospitality industry will have minimal animal products on the menu”.

Hubert intentionally developed a cuisine to match his vision. The concept of his dish originated from recipe books, borrowed culture from Middle Eastern cuisine and ideas from working in a restaurant serving Israeli style cuisine.

Hubert's dish was constructed based on a healthy nutritional vegan diet with the concept of an 'open sandwich'. Although Hubert said, "*I don't think this dish reflects my upbringing or my culture very much ...*". that is because his culture is dominant on meat-eating. but the idea of creating a nut and seed loaf reflected his culture. He said,

“... well, it's a little bit like an open top sandwich (referring to the nuts and seeds loaf)  
...”

It is common to serve a loaf of bread with meals in his culture. As Hubert is vegan, he can start creating his cuisine outside the constraints of his cultural background. He has the advantage of exploring ingredients which conformed to his choice of eating preferences. The conception of his dish was based on his personal eating habits rather than his cultural identity. His dish portrayed contemporary New Zealand cuisines, borrowing on global influences as many of our café dishes do. In addition, the dish reflected the diverse culture of New Zealand. According to Shepard, Guy, Watson, and Szabados (2000), café culture in New Zealand has helped integrate and unite the cultures and socio-economic groups under one roof thus promoting the feeling of harmony with each other. Cafes are used as meeting places for business, leisure, mothers with children to meet or catching up with friends. Most New Zealand cafés cater to special dietary requirements, providing vegetarian, vegan, and celiac friendly food.

The most visually prominent component of the dish was the tofu. Tofu is a staple food of Asia, originating from China, which provides protein for vegetarians and vegans. The rest of the components that made up the dish were nuts and seeds (loaf), which are high in protein, as well as tomatoes, rocket, anastasia flower and capsicum which are commonly produced in New Zealand. There were hidden ingredients such as za'atar and sumac blended in the spiced tofu, and tahini in the capsicum puree. These ingredients are often used in Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cuisines. Unless the ingredients were revealed by means of a recipe or written on paper or made known to eaters, one will not be able to ascertain the cultures embedded in the dish.

Like Marie, Hubert learnt how to cook from his father and had fond memories of his grandmother's cooking. He said,

“... when I eat meals with my oma who is Dutch ... she cooks a lot of Indian and Sri Lankan, she lived in Sri Lanka for years, and Indonesian cuisines ... there is a lot of variation from just Dutch, she has her classic soup and dishes and things like that but then she also incorporates a more multicultural perspective.”

When asked whether he has a craving for his grandmother's type of food, he replied,

“I have taken control of what I eat and so, a lot of what I eat is for myself. Being vegan, it is just finding the different plant-based product that I can consume”.

Lev-Aladgem (2006) has pointed out that when cultural memories do not fit into the dominant culture of who we want to be, they can be ignored. This is similar to Hubert, who has chosen a vegan diet over his cultural diet even though he grew up eating meat and had memories of his grandmother's cooking.

#### **4.5.2 Duck Deconstructed**

Tatiana's background is Chinese from Hong Kong. She was raised in New Zealand and her dish was titled '*Duck Deconstructed*'. Her contemporised dish was based on a recipe obtained from her research and was known as the 'Eight Treasure Duck', which originated from Shanghai during the Qing Dynasty (1644 – 1912). The original ingredients in the 'Eight Treasure Duck' recipe were duck and glutinous rice as central components, accompanied by another eight components of dried scallops, red dates, bamboo shoots, lotus seeds, *lap cheong* (Chinese style sausage), chicken, duck neck and dried mushrooms. Tatiana found that having eight components on the plate was too crowded, and thus reduced and replaced the components with leeks, wood ear fungus, lotus roots, abalone and scallops. The glutinous rice took too long to make and was replaced by glass noodles. She used the broth as a sauce and duck *bakkwa* (jerky) as a garnish. I noticed that Tatiana used abalone and scallops, which are expensive ingredients. In Chinese culture, serving expensive food symbolises the social status of the host. According to Sato et al. (2016), rare and expensive food marks the social status indicated in Bourdieu's theory. This status represents the social origins and level of education according to Bourdieu's theory.



Figure 12. Tatiana's Duck Deconstructed (October 2016)

Tatiana's concept of contemporising the dish was to de-construct the original recipe. In doing so, she has replaced most of the components of the traditional recipe. The dried scallops were replaced with fresh scallops because they were readily available in New Zealand. The original version of deep fried stuffed duck with glutinous rice was developed into a smoked duck breast with glass noodles. She said,

"So, like what I kind of assumed to be like contemporised dish is basically taking it all apart and then re-making it so that's what I like, kind of aimed to do".

In the process of contemporising the dish, she said that she felt connected to her identity.

"I felt more connected to my ethnicity and knowing I am capable of making these connections and relate back to more "authentic" Chinese recipes even with a second-hand experience of Chinese culture growing up in New Zealand"

Tatiana is vegetarian and had little prior knowledge of cooking meat. She was given a meat protein to cook in her culinary assessment in class and took on the challenge of contemporising a meat dish. Her dish reflected her ethnicity even though most of the components were reduced and replaced. Part of the reason for doing so were that the replacement ingredients comprising glass noodles, lotus roots and abalone were commonly used in Asian cuisines. However, the re-constructed dish had lost its name recognition as '*Eight Treasured Duck*' which originated from the Qing Dynasty. The eight original components which gave the traditional recipe the name 'Eight' were reduced and duck breast was used instead of a whole deep-fried duck stuffed with glutinous rice. The replacement ingredients, which were mainly used in Asian



cooking, revealed Tatiana's culture and ethnic identity even though the traditional dish no longer had eight components.

This section showed a comparison of two participants' dietary habits, one is vegan and the other vegetarian. Tatiana chose to contemporise a cultural meat dish even though she is vegetarian. Her dish was strongly connected to her cultural identity. Hubert chose a dish which conformed to his vegan eating habits, and his dish, although comprising borrowed ingredients from other cultures, reflect the diverse culture of contemporary New Zealand.

#### **4.6 Summary**

This chapter examined the construction of contemporary cuisines by ten participants. The objective was to identify the culture embedded in the composition of contemporary dishes prepared by them. Participants were from diverse cultural backgrounds representing ten nationalities. Thematic analysis of the in-depth interviews and photographs of the contemporised dishes had identified emerging themes which influenced participants' perceptions of contemporising their dishes. In the discussion, it was found that participants' cultural background played a role in influencing the conceptualisation of the dishes. Furthermore, the majority of the participants were eager to reveal their culture and had intentionally included cultural ingredients, ethnic flavours and objects to show their ethnic identities. Culturally and socially connected memories of eating specific food and places had evoked recollection of the past for participants. Food and culinary nostalgia had led to the creation of contemporised dishes related to food prepared in their homeland. The next chapter will conclude the research findings.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Overview of the study

This final chapter discusses how the research findings addressed the research question: 'What are culinary arts students' perspectives on cultural identity presented in their dish?' The literature suggests that the relationship of food to identity formation runs from biological to cultural (Fischler, 1988), and the omnivore's paradox contributes to our current diet, evolving from preferences to cultural values (Ahn et al., 2011). Belasco (2008) suggested that preservation of our identities is perceived to be endangered due to migration, globalisation and mobility. Furthermore, Santich (1996) argued that cultures were being compromised to the extent of losing each other's culinary tradition as a result of culinary hybridization. As food is a central component of our identity, this research explored how cultural identity can be reflected through the composition of contemporary cuisines. As an interpretive approach to a qualitative case study, it encompassed in-depth semi-structured interviews and photo elicitation. The findings suggested that the majority of the participants were eager to reveal their cultural identity and had intentionally included cultural elements to symbolise their ethnic identities in creating their contemporised cuisines. Even though the original dishes were deconstructed and re-constructed, there were some identifying elements of the creators' cultural heritage.

The literature suggested that immigrants were able to retain their cultural links by maintaining their food traditions and ethnic identities (Law, 2001). The preparation and consumption of food from the homeland and the transferring of food tradition from one generation to the next keep the ethnic identities alive (Fortier, 1999). Furthermore, Kittler et al. (2012) pointed out that our cultural food habits are one of the last to change through acculturation. This was demonstrated in the works of a number of the participants in the study. For example, Marie's traditional 'one pot meal' recipe was passed down from her grandfather to her father and onto her. Filipa's rendang dish recipe was from her Indonesian friend from church. Lynette's 'Bulgogi' concept originated from Korean barbeque which has gained popularity in New Zealand. The choice of recipes to contemporise was influenced by the awareness of all these participants' own cultural heritage and the environment. Marie, a second-generation immigrant, who grew up in a family environment where she had the opportunity to watch her father cook, used her father's recipe to

contemporise. For Filipa, who came to New Zealand four years ago and lives by herself, the origin of her recipe was not a family recipe but represented a well-known dish in Indonesia, her homeland. Lynette, who was born in New Zealand but has Korean parents, chose to contemporise a Korean barbeque recipe which reminded her of a cuisine which she often eats when socialising with friends.

Secondly, the findings suggested that the majority of the participants had intentionally included elements in the contemporised dish to represent their culture. These elements were represented in a variety of ways which may or may not be visibly displayed on the dish, such as distinctive cultural ingredients embedded in the components of the dish, artefacts associated with certain cultures and the title of the dish. These elements emerged from memories which were both culturally and socially connected. Dyle used native herbs such as *kawakawa* and *horopito* in his contemporised dish that reminded him of his childhood from Aputerewa. He talked about memories of spending time with his grandparents and dining with his family. Karen reinterpreted a traditional South African dish called braai for which she had memories of socialising with family and friends in her home country. These varieties of cultural elements illustrated the insights of Holtzman (2006) and Dodson and Gilkes (1995), who pointed out that the social and cultural significance of places where food is grown, or eating specific food evokes recollection of past memories. Similarly, Field (2012), suggested that memories can also be attached to specific objects which give cultural meaning, such as artefacts. In presenting the dish, Dyle intentionally displayed a *kete* to show his Maori culture, and Tracy brought in a bamboo basket from Vietnam. Another intentional act by participants to reveal their culture was the title of the dish, such as *Rakiraki* – a Maori word, *Bulgogi* – Korean, *Batavia* – Indonesian, and Vietnamese inspiration by Tracy.

Thirdly, flavour and aroma were further distinct elements in identifying ethnic identities. Stallberg-White and Pliner (1999) suggested that each ethnic group has their own distinctive taste in food, although, in any culture, seasoning may be modified to suit the taste of the individual. Rozin and Rozin (1981) suggested that individuals form an attachment to their cultural characteristic of seasonings. Kittler et al. (2012) added that the unique combination of flavour and seasoning typified the cultural cuisines. These flavours were found in participants' dishes, for example, Marie's *Lor Bak* sauce, Filipa's *rendang* spices, Tracy's fish sauce, Lynette's smoky charred flavour and Karen's South African beer marinade.

It is also important to note that the representation of culture or ethnic identities embedded in the presentation of the dish is a personal perception of the creator. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) pointed out, interpretation of our perceptions of the way things are is self-created in the mind of participants. Take for example the colour red, which is significant to Dyle whose background is Maori, and the colour purple, which is significant to Ursa from Tongan. However, eaters with no prior knowledge of the symbolic significance of cultural colours will not be able to associate culture to colours presented in the dish. For example, according to Hovers et al. (2003), red is symbolically associated with life, success and victory in African, Australian and native North American societies.

The findings also showed evidence of conflicting identity in conceptualising the dish due to the presence of multiple ethnic identities. Lev-Aladgem (2006) suggested that when cultural memories do not fit into the dominant culture of who we want to be, these memories may be ignored. For example, Monique has a very strong influence in Japanese and New Zealand culture, being born and raised in New Zealand, and has lived mostly with her Japanese mother and Japanese maternal grandparents. However, she also has an Italian heritage from her father's side. Her dish originated from an Italian concept but was also based on New Zealand's two vegetables and meat concept and she incorporated the Japanese method of pickling her vegetables. In concluding her interview, she said that her dish showed her '*New Zealand culture with a hint of Japanese*' although the initial concept originated from her Italian background. In contrast, Hubert's dish portrayed borrowed cultures which typified contemporary café culture in New Zealand. He incorporated fresh New Zealand produce and used ingredients from Asian, Mediterranean and Middle Eastern concepts in his contemporised vegan dish. Furst et al. (1996) suggested that food choices play a significant role in symbolic, economic and social aspects of our life in expressing our preferences and identities. For example, Hubert, who is a vegan, chose to design a vegan dish since he was not constrained by his cultural background. Although changes in lifestyle and dietary habits may have influenced Hubert's conceptualisation of his dish, it was ultimately an individual decision whether to retain and reveal elements of one's identity in contemporising a dish. In the case of Tatiana, who is a vegetarian by religion, her meat dish revealed elements of her culture rather than her personal dietary identity.

In conclusion, the research objective of identifying the culture embedded in the composition of contemporised cuisine has been achieved as discussed in the findings. The research examined

the symbolic nature of cuisines and its relationship to cultural identity in the context of a Bachelor of Culinary Arts degree. The research question of 'What are the culinary arts students' perspectives on cultural identities presented in the dish?' has also been addressed. The participants intentionally included cultural elements in presenting their dishes. Taken in its totality, this research contributes to the understanding of how cultural identities are embedded in contemporary cuisines and how awareness of the cultural representation of contemporised cuisines is manifested. It highlights the influence of cultural beliefs and social and environmental influences which guide us in the preparation of our meals.

## **5.2 Limitations**

This current research is somewhat limited by the small sample size and time constraints. A bigger sample would allow a more comprehensive analysis. In addition, this research is limited to culinary arts students at AUT, and therefore the results do not generalise to other contexts for groups in other settings. Moreover, because the participants were students, the parameters of their assessment may have shaped or constrained the way in which they expressed their cultural identity in their dish.

## **5.3 Recommendations for Further Research**

The framework presented in this research raises questions about more detailed cultural elements embedded in contemporised dishes. As this research focus was on visual appeal using photo elicitation and interviews, future research should encompass observation of participants in the preparation and cooking stages. Another source of data is having photographs of the dish at the various development stages and photographs of ingredients that reflect the participants' culinary heritage. These may enhance the researcher's understanding of participants' intentions in blending cultural flavours and ingredients. Future research may also wish to consider tasting the contemporised dishes to confirm cultural flavours and palatability of the dishes.

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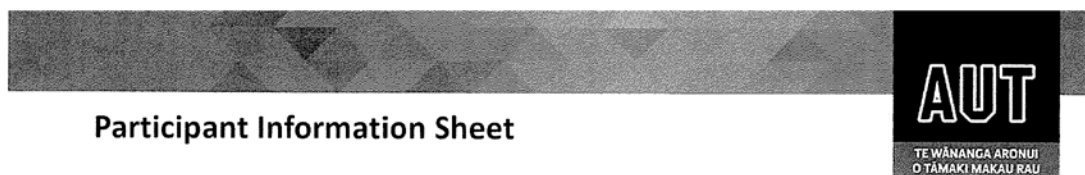
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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Interview Participant Information Sheet



### Participant Information Sheet

#### Date Information Sheet Produced:

22 July 2016

#### Project Title

The Construction of Fusion Cuisine – A Case Study

#### An Invitation

Greetings. My name is Jessica Yamamoto and I am a final year student enrolled in the Master in International Tourism Management degree. I am interested in undertaking a research on the construction of fusion cuisine and would like to invite you to join me in this research. This will involve your participation in an interview for about 60 minutes and the discussion at the interview will be recorded. Photographs of your innovated fusion cuisine for final assessment will be taken to act as a platform for discussion at the interview.

#### What is the purpose of this research?

This research aims to examine the construction of fusion cuisine from three perspectives: production, preparation and serving. The objective is to identify the dominant culture embedded in the composition of fusion cuisine. This research is also undertaken to complete a Master in International Tourism Management degree.

#### How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have been identified at my presentation in class and invited to participate because you meet the following criteria:

- a) Above the age of 16 years
- b) A culinary student who has previously submitted a fusion dish for assessment OR
- c) A culinary student who will be developing a fusion dish for assessment in November.

#### How do I agree to participate in this research?

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

#### What will happen in this research?

This research will involve your commitment to a 60 minutes interview after you have completed your final fusion dish for assessment. Interview will be held at one of the meeting rooms or classrooms located at AUT city campus. The interview session will be informal and consist of questions relating to the construction of your innovated fusion dish. I will require your permission to approach your lecturer and obtain photographs of your dish from your lecturer. This request for permission is stated in the Consent Form. The data collected will be analysed and used for the purpose of this research.

#### What are the discomforts and risks?

Should discomforts arise during the course of the interview due to the questions asked, you are under no obligation to respond to all questions.

#### What are the benefits?

The findings of the study will benefit academic chef lecturers who are constantly engaged in teaching students from diversified cultures in creating fusion cuisine, institutions offering food studies programs, owners of fusion food



## Consent Form

*Project title:* **The Construction of Fusion Cuisine – A Case Study**  
*Project Supervisor:* **Tracy Berno**  
*Researcher:* **Jessica Yamamoto**

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 22 July 2016.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- ☐ I permit the researcher to use the photographs that are part of this project and any other reproductions or adaptations from them, either complete or in part, alone or in conjunction with any wording solely and exclusively for (a) the researcher's and (b) examination purposes
- ☐ I understand that my fusion dish will be identified.
- ☐ I agree that the researcher may obtain from the lecturer a photograph of my dish: Yes ☐ No ☐
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature: .....

Participant's name: .....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Date:

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 22 July 2016 AUTEC Reference number 16/270.**

**Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.**

**Research title: The Construction of Fusion Cuisine – A Case Study**

**Participant:**

**Research Aim:** To address the issues of compromising the culture of culinary tradition due to culinary hybridisation

**Research Question:** What are the culinary students' perspective on contemporary dish designed by them?

**Demographic**

Filling in this section will help in categorising the specific group

1. Gender:  
Male  
Female
2. Age:  
16 – 20  
21 – 30  
Above 30
3. Origin:  
New Zealand / Permanent Resident Status  
International  
How long have you been living in NZ? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Ethnicity:  
Maori  
New Zealand European/Pakeha  
Samoan  
Tongan  
Asian (please specify country of origin) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Part-time Employment:  
Yes  
No

**Interview Questions:**

**Cultural Background**

6. Tell me about your cultural background

**Probe:**

- Can you elaborate



**AUTECH Secretariat**

Auckland University of Technology  
D-88, WU406 Level 4 WU Building City Campus  
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316  
E: [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz)  
[www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics](http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics)

22 July 2016

Tracy Berno  
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Tracy

Ethics Application: 16/270 The construction of fusion cuisine - A case study

Thank you for submitting your application for ethical review to the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTECH). I am pleased to confirm that your ethics application has been approved for three years until 21 July 2019.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTECH:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 21 July 2019;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 21 July 2019 or on completion of the project;

It is a condition of approval that AUTECH is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTECH approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTECH grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, we ask that you use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz).

All the very best with your research,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K O'Connor', is placed above the printed name of the signatory.

Kate O'Connor  
Executive Secretary  
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Jessica Yamamoto